



CONFLICT BAROMETER | 2015

Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research



disputes
non-violent crises
violent crises
limited wars
wars

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PREFACE

In this 24th edition of the annual Conflict Barometer, the HIIK provides a broad account of the world's conflict dynamics in 2015 on different levels of violence. Burundi, Yemen, Turkey, and the Philippines saw a sharp increase in violence and a total of 19 full-scale wars was observed on all continents. In contrast, with the de-escalation of the Indo-Pakistani conflict, the world witnessed no highly violent interstate conflict in 2015. China, Russia, and the DR Congo were less affected by highly violent conflicts as well. Overall, the number of highly violent intrastate and substate conflicts remained relatively constant, with 43 highly violent conflicts in total.

With this publication, the HIIK introduces the new category "substate conflict", depicting a type of conflict solely conducted by non-state actors. Also for the first time, the maps entailed in this report display all levels of yearly national conflict intensity, reaching from dispute to war. This enables the reader to benefit from the large amount of data on non-violent conflicts as well as to identify and compare the conduct of political conflicts more easily. Moreover, the Conflict Barometer 2015 comprises a new chapter on conflict issues providing an inter-regional perspective on the objects of contention. Lastly, the extended chapter on measures of conflict resolution entails, among others, information on the activities of the International Criminal Court and regional security cooperation.

The Board of Directors,
February 2016

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Methodology

Since 1991, quantitative conflict research at the HIIK has analyzed political conflicts by focusing on conflict processes rather than e.g. purely quantitative thresholds of casualties of war. Thus, the HIIK is particularly concerned with the concrete actions and communications between conflict parties. Such a process-oriented approach gives the analysis of political conflicts, especially regarding intensities, a broader and more detailed empirical foundation.

Beginning in 2011, the HIIK in cooperation with Heidelberg University has taken steps to further elaborate its methodological approach. In particular, the institute has revised its definition of political conflicts and restructured its conflict intensity assessment. The latter now not only takes into account the intensity for a given conflict area in a given year, but determines the intensity of a conflict for first-level sub-national political units and months as well. As such, it allows for a much more detailed measurement of conflict dynamics. Furthermore, the conflict actions and communications, on which the assessment of violent conflict episodes is based are now evaluated by combining qualitative and quantitative indicators of the means and consequences of violence. This is intended to further enhance the exactitude, reliability, and reproducibility of the conflict information provided.

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT



According to the Heidelberg approach, a political conflict is a perceived incompatibility of intentions between individuals or social groups. Such an incompatibility emerges from the presence of actors who communicate and act with regard to certain objects. These actions and communications are known as measures, while the objects form the issues of positional differences. Actors, measures, and issues are the constitutive attributes of political conflict.

CONFLICT ACTORS

Conflict actors are individuals or collectives that are relevant because they are taken into account by other conflict actors in their decision-making processes. Collective actors are characterized by their high degree of internal cohesion manifesting in a coherent structure of preferences. They include states, international organizations and non-state actors.

CONFLICT MEASURES

Conflict measures are actions and communications carried out by a conflict actor in the context of a political conflict. They are constitutive for an identifiable conflict if they lie outside established procedures of conflict regulations

and—possibly in conjunction with other measures—if they threaten the international order or a core function of the state. Established regulatory procedures are defined as those mechanisms of conflict management that are accepted by the conflict actors. Examples include elections and court proceedings. Established procedures of regulation must be performed without resorting to the use or threat of physical violence. Core state functions encompass providing security of a population, integrity of a territory and of a specific political, socioeconomic or cultural order. A state function or the international order is threatened if its fulfilment and persistence, respectively, becomes unlikely in a conflict actor’s point of view.

CONFLICT ISSUES

Conflict issues are material or immaterial goods pursued by conflict actors via conflict measures. Due to the character of conflict measures, conflict issues attain relevance for the society as a whole—either for the coexistence within a given state or between states. Conflict issues are classified on the basis of ten items representing common goals of conflict actors: System/Ideology is encoded if a conflict actor aspires a change of the ideological, religious, socioeconomic or judicial orientation of the political system or changing the regime type itself. National power means the power to govern a state. Whereas Autonomy refers to attaining or extending political self-rule of a population within a state or of a dependent territory without striving for independence, Secession refers to the aspired separation of a part of a territory of a state aiming to establish a new state or to merge with another state. Furthermore, Decolonization aims at the independence of a dependent territory. Subnational Predominance focuses on the attainment of the de-facto control by a government, a non-state organization or a population over a territory or a population. The item Resources is encoded if the possession of natural resources or raw materials, or the profits gained thereof, is pursued. Territory means a change of the course of an international border, while International Power as an item describes the change aspired in the power constellation in the international system or a regional system therein, especially by changing military capabilities or the political or economic influence of a state. The item Other is used as residual category.

THE CONCEPT OF CONFLICT INTENSITY

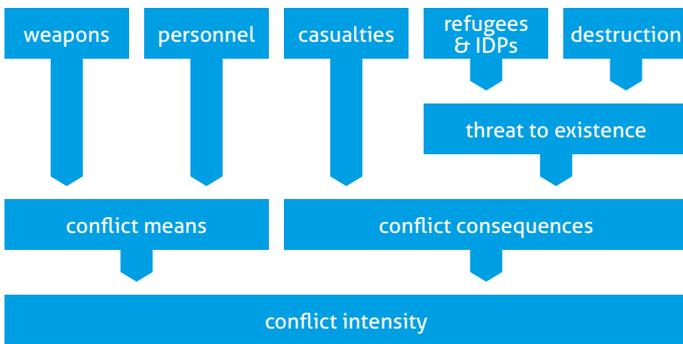
intensity Level	terminology	level of violence	intensity class
1	dispute	non-violent conflicts	low intensity
2	non-violent crisis		
3	violent crisis	violent conflicts	medium intensity
4	limited war		high intensity
5	war		

In addition to the three constituting elements—conflict actors, measures, and items—conflict intensity is an essential feature of political conflicts. Conflict intensity is an attribute of the sum of conflict measures in a specific political conflict in a geographical area and a given space of time. The primary units of analysis are the calendar month and the 'region,' i.e. the first-level subnational administrative unit of a country. The basic conflict intensity is therefore determined for a 'region-month.' Since 2003, the HIIK has been using a five-level model of conflict intensity. Under its revised methodology, the intensity levels are now known as dispute, non-violent crisis, violent crisis, limited war, and war.

The last three levels constitute the category of violent conflicts, in contrast to the non-violent conflicts (dispute and non-violent crisis). Whereas a dispute is a political conflict carried out without resorting to violence, in a non-violent crisis one of the actors threatens to use violence. This includes violence against objects without taking the risk to harm persons, the refusal of arms surrender, pointing weapon systems against each other and sanctions.

ASSESSING THE INTENSITIES OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS

When measuring the three levels of violent conflict, five proxies are used indicating the means and consequences of violent conflict measures. The dimension of means encompasses the use of weapons and personnel, the dimension of consequences the number of casualties, destruction, and refugees/internally displaced persons.



Each indicator is scored on a ternary scale. Aggregating the five individual scores results in the total intensity of a region-month.

		conflict means		
		0 points	1 point	2 points
conflict consequences	0 points	violent crisis	violent crisis	limited war
	1 point	violent crisis	limited war	war
	2 points	limited war	war	war

WEAPONS

		weapons employment	
		light	heavy
weapon type	light	0 points	
	heavy	1 point	2 points

The weapons indicator determines whether light or heavy arms are used (e.g. handguns or hand grenades vs. artillery or heavy bombs). Regarding the extent to which the fighting capacity of heavy arms is exploited, we differentiate restrictive and extensive use.

PERSONNEL

low	medium	high
≤ 50	> 50 ≤ 400	> 400
0 points	1 point	2 points

The personnel indicator measures the highest number of participants in an individual measure. Counted are all persons who, by their actions, collectively represent a conflict actor in the context of a violent measure. Low, medium, and high numbers of personnel are distinguished, based on two thresholds: 50 and 400 persons.

CASUALTIES

low	medium	high
≤ 20	> 20 ≤ 60	> 60
0 points	1 point	2 points

Third, the overall number of casualties in the conflict in a region-month is evaluated, comprising the number of deaths from violent measures or their direct consequences. Persons dying due to indirect effects, e.g. starvation or disease, are not counted. The thresholds employed here are 20 and 60 persons killed.

REFUGEES & IDPs

low	medium	high
≤ 1 000	> 1 000 ≤ 20 000	> 20 000
0 points	1 point	2 points

Evaluated is the overall number of cross-border refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in a region-month. Displacement is the migration of human beings provoked by conflict measures, e.g. by creating inhumane living conditions. Taken into account is flow, not stock data. The thresholds employed here are 1,000 and 20,000 refugees.

CONFLICT TYPES

The methodology of HIIK distinguishes between interstate, intrastate, and substate conflicts. Whereas interstate conflicts only involve internationally recognized state actors, intrastate conflicts involve both state actors and non-state actors. Sub-state conflicts are carried out solely among non-state actors.

DESTRUCTION

The amount of destruction resulting from the conflict during the whole month and within the subnational unit is determined in four dimensions considered essential for civil populations: infrastructure, accommodation, economy, and culture.

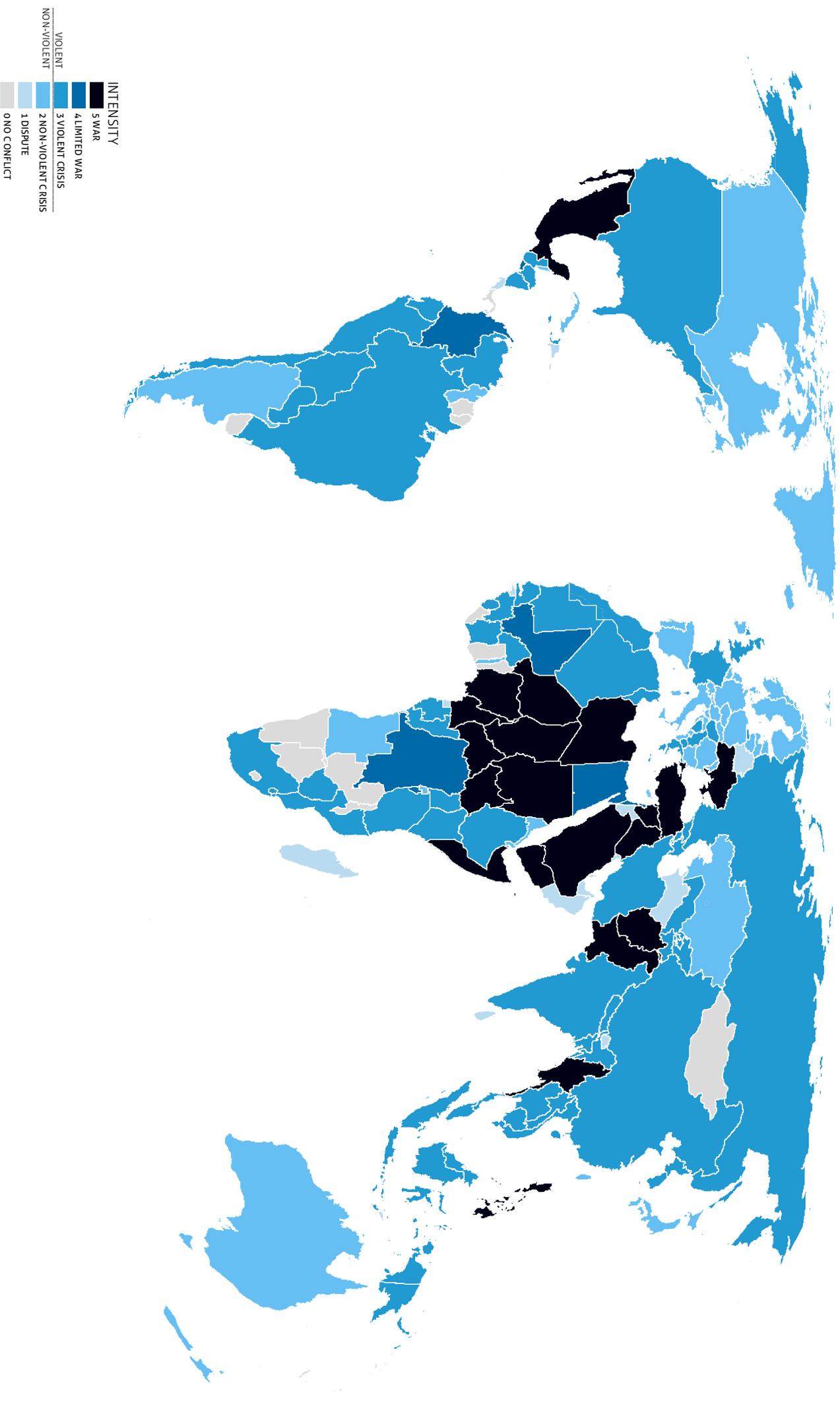
Nicolas Schwank, Christoph Trinn, Thomas Wencker, Lotta Mayer, Natalie Hoffmann, Stephan Giersdorf, Mark Gombert, Jens Hofmann, Gregor Pawlowski

low	medium	high
within 0 dimensions	within 1 - 2 dimensions	within 3 - 4 dimensions
0 points	1 point	2 points

The region-month intensities can be aggregated to inform about the conflict intensity in a given calendar year for a specific conflict area. A conflict area is the sum of all subnational units affected by the violent conflict in question. The area-year intensity is basically equal to the maximum region-month intensity in a given area-year. Furthermore, the exact area-year intensity is fine-tuned by looking at the annual and area-wide numbers of casualties and refugees as the two core indicators of conflict assessment. A violent crisis can thereby be upgraded to limited war level if there were more than 360 casualties or more than 18,000 refugees in the whole year in the conflict area. A limited war can be upgraded to war level if there were more than 1,080 fatalities or more than 360,000 refugees. In contrast, a limited war can be downgraded to a violent crisis if there were less than 120 casualties and less than 6,000 refugees. Likewise, a war can be downgraded to limited war level if there were less than 360 casualties and less than 120,000 refugees. The area-year intensity is both displayed above each conflict description in this publication as well as in the regional conflict overviews.

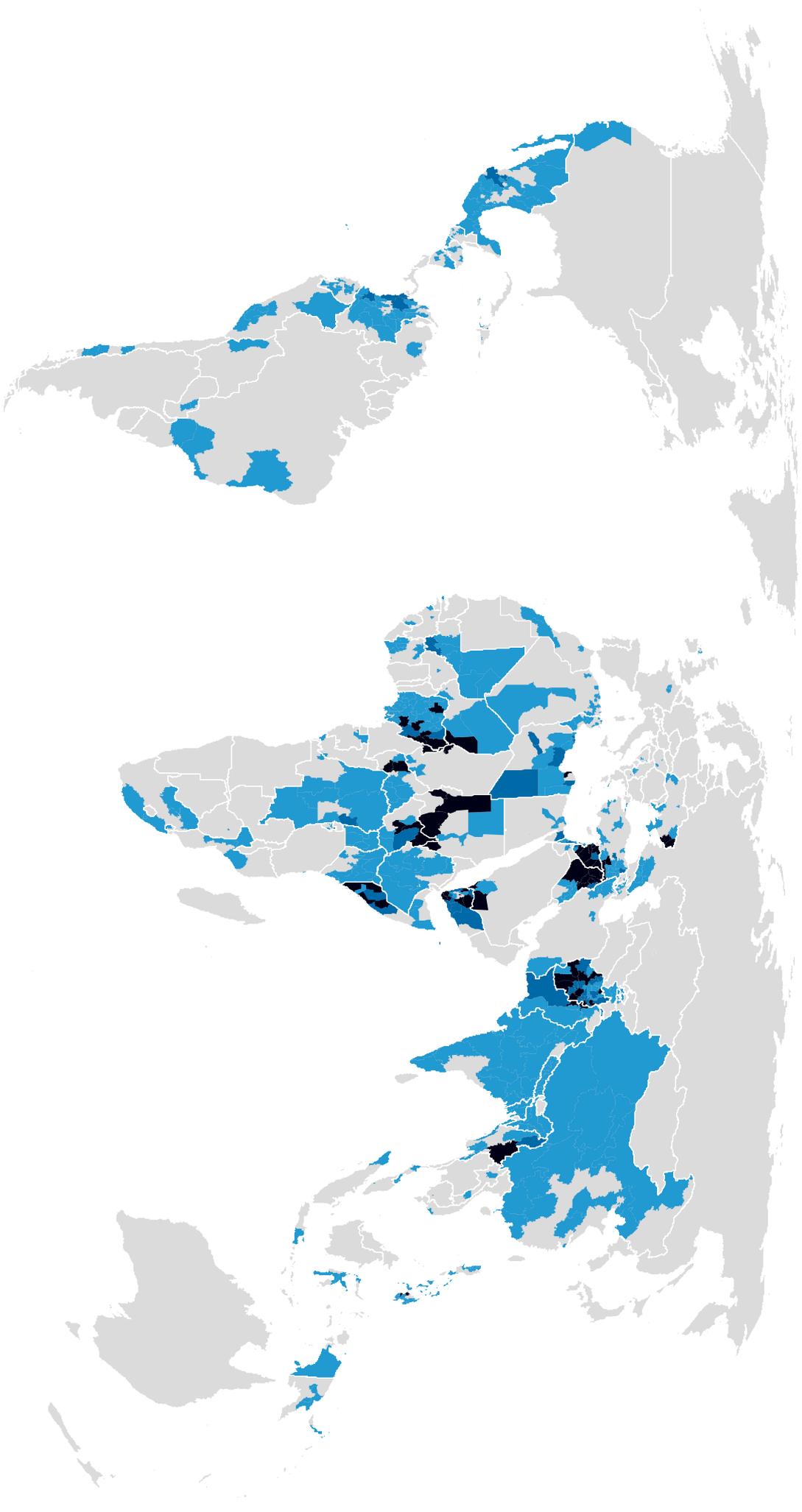
Global Conflict Panorama

CONFLICTS IN 2015 (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)



VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

INTENSITY
5 WAR
4 LIMITED WAR
3 VIOLENT CRISIS
NO VIOLENT CONFLICT



HIGHLY VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2015

LIMITED WARS (24)

WARS (19)

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Burundi (opposition)
 Burundi, DR Congo (FNL)
 Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan,
 Uganda (LRA)
 DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa / Katanga)
 DR Congo (Ituri militias)
 DR Congo (Kata Katanga / Katanga)
 DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)
 DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)
 DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)
 Kenya (inter-ethnic violence)
 Mali (Islamist groups)

Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)
 Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)
 Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)
 Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)
 South Sudan (inter-communal violence)
 South Sudan (SPLM/A – in-Opposition)
 Sudan (Darfur)
 Sudan (inter-communal violence)
 Sudan (SPLM/A-North / Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile)

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)
 Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)
 Libya (inter-tribal)
 Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al Sharia)

Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)
 Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)
 Libya (opposition)
 Syria (opposition)
 Turkey (PKK)
 Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)
 Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)
 Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)
 Philippines (MILF)

Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)
 Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)

THE AMERICAS

Colombia (FARC)
 Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary
 groups, left-wing militants)
 Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)
 Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)
 El Salvador (Maras)

Mexico (drug cartels)

EUROPE

Ukraine (Donbas)

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, the global number of political conflicts remained constant at 409, of which 223 were conducted on a violent level. The number of full-scale wars remained 19, while the number of limited wars decreased by one to 24. A total of 186 non-violent conflicts were counted, marking an increase by one compared to the previous year. The number of non-violent crises increased by one to a total of 89, while the number of disputes remained constant at 97.

WARS

Compared to 2014, three conflicts escalated to war level. PKK and the Turkish government ended a two-year-long ceasefire, engaging in heavy fighting in the Eastern provinces of Turkey [→ Turkey (PKK)]. In the Philippines, fighting between BIFF, on the one hand, and the government and MILF, on the other, escalated to a full-scale war when the government launched a large-scale offensive against BIFF [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. Fighting resulted in at least 250 deaths and tens of thousands of people displaced. Lastly, intercommunal violence over subnational predominance, cattle, and arable land in South Sudan escalated to a war in the context of the proliferation of weapons and increasing instability in the country [→ South Sudan (intercommunal violence)]. A total of 16 conflicts continued at war level.

Nine wars were observed in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Sudan, the war in Darfur continued in its 14th consecutive year, SPLM-North and the government engaged in heavy fighting and intercommunal fighting continued to cause significant numbers of casualties [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. In Somalia, al-Shabaab lost substantial parts of its previously controlled territory, especially in the South, due to the advances of AMISOM and the Somali National Army [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. In the Central African Republic, the first half of the year was marked by several rounds of negotiations between ex-Séléka groups, Anti-Balaka groups, and the interim government, while violence re-escalated in September after the killing of a Muslim moto driver [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. Around Lake Chad, Boko Haram extended its area of operation and changed its tactics from control of territory to hit-and-run attacks, increasingly abusing women and girls as suicide bombers [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. At least 12,000 people were killed throughout the year and 2.4 million people remained displaced. Furthermore, pastoralists and farmers continued to fight over arable land and cattle in the Middle Belt [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. As desertification in the Sahelian Zone reduced fertile grounds, farmers appealed to their right to use their ancestor's farmland, while Fulani nomads claimed the territory as grazing areas for their cattle.

The Middle East and Maghreb witnessed six wars. Several governments, supported by an international coalition, continued to fight the so-called Islamic State (IS) in Syria, Iraq, and several other countries in the region. The network extended operations to Afghanistan, France, and Bangladesh, among others, and consolidated its control over areas in most states of the Maghreb. Due to a methodological revision, the conflict interactions directly related to IS were extracted from the conflicts Syria (opposition), Syria (inter-opposition violence), Syria (NC, Islamist groups – KSC / Kurdish regions), Iraq (IS et al.), Afghanistan (Taliban et al.), Algeria (AQIM et al.), Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula), Libya (opposition groups), Tunisia (AQIM et al.), Yemen (AQAP - al-Houthi rebels) to form one transnational conflict [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The death toll in the Syrian opposition conflict rose to

approx. 250,000 since the beginning of the conflict in March 2011, with more than 50,000 fatalities in 2015 alone. As of December, at least 4.3 million people sought refuge in neighboring countries and 6.6 million were internally displaced. On December 18, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2254 outlining a road map for a ceasefire and a peace process. In terms of civilian fatalities, 2015 was the most fatal year in the war between the Taliban and the Afghan government since 2002 with at least 3,545 dead civilians by December 31 [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. Another significant development in Afghanistan was the emergence of IS. Throughout the year, IS engaged in fighting with the Afghan National Army, NATO forces, and the Taliban mostly in Farah and Nangarhar provinces [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The war between al-Houthis and the government of the Yemen continued with Saudi Arabia significantly extending its engagement in the Yemen [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. The war in Libya continued with ongoing confrontations between the House of Representatives and its internationally recognized government based in Tobruk and al-Bayda, one the one hand, and the Tripoli-based General National Congress on the other [→ Libya (opposition)]. Despite their participation in UN-led peace talks, both parliaments remained internally split over the initiative to form a unity government while launching an inter-Libyan dialog and signing a declaration of principles on December 5. The war between Islamist groups and the Pakistani government left at least 3,000 people dead, with US-operated drone strikes killing at least 60 militants of various networks [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)].

Constituting the Americas' sole full-scale war, the conflict between drug cartels and the Mexican government saw an increase in violence in Jalisco compared to the previous year [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. After several attacks on police officers carried out by the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación* the government launched "Operation Jalisco", deploying 6,000 military forces to the state.

Europe's sole highly violent conflict, namely the war in Ukraine over the control of the Donbas region between separatists and the government, continued with more than 4,000 fatalities in 2015 [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Despite several rounds of talks to reach a ceasefire, violence continued.

LIMITED WARS

In 2015, seven conflicts escalated to a limited war, while two former wars de-escalated by one level. In Sub-Saharan Africa, eight limited wars were observed in the DR Congo. The fight between the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and the government escalated to a highly violent level after the military and MONUSCO launched a large-scale offensive against the militants [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. In contrast, violence related to the Allied Democratic Forces de-escalated to a limited war [→ DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)]. In Mali, various Islamist groups continued to fight the government [→ Mali (Islamist groups)]. While in 2014 the militants mostly launched attacks in remote northern areas, 2015 was marked by an extension of violence towards the south of the country. For the first time, Islamists conducted attacks along the borders with Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire as well as in the capital Bamako. The Burundian opposition conflict escalated to a limited war in the context of President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third term in office [→ Burundi (opposition)]. Kenya continued to witness highly violent clashes between different ethnic groups over subnational predominance, water, cattle, and grazing grounds [→ Kenya (inter-ethnic violence)].

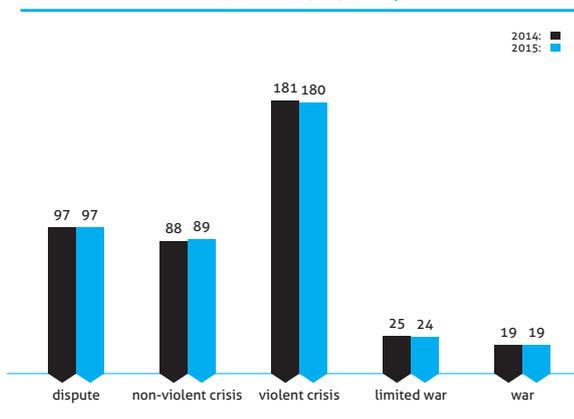
The Americas witnessed five limited wars. In Colombia, the

intrastate conflict between neo-paramilitary groups and drug cartels, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued at the same intensity level similar to the substate conflict between these groups and the fighting between the FARC and the government [→ Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants); Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels); Colombia (FARC)]. The conflict over subnational predominance in El Salvador between the country's main criminal gangs, mainly Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18, and the government escalated to a limited war [→ El Salvador (Maras)]. Lastly, the limited war over subnational predominance, illegal drugs, and natural resources between various drug cartels in Mexico continued with the same intensity [→ Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)].

In the Middle East and Maghreb, four limited wars were observed. Jabhat al-Nusra and other Sunni militant groups continued to engage in violence with the Lebanese government and Hezbollah [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. Clashes between Tuareg, Tibu, and Zuwayya tribes over subnational predominance and the control of the trade with illicit goods and oil in southern Libya continued throughout the year [→ Libya (inter-tribal violence)]. Lastly, the limited war over ideology between Egypt, supported by Israel, and Afnan Misr et al. continued [→ Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. Between January 1 and December 15, at least 292 people were killed and 103 wounded by Islamist groups and Egyptian security forces.

Two of the four limited wars observed in Asia and Oceania constituted an escalation from a violent crisis. In Myanmar, the 2014 dispute between MNDAA, supported by TNLA forces, and the Tatmadaw saw the resurgence of violence, leaving at least 330 people dead and 80,000 displaced [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)]. Furthermore, KIA and its military wing KIA, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued to engage in heavy fighting over autonomy and the control of jade, ruby, farmland, and timber [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIA / Kachin State)]. In Pakistan, the conflict over the secession of Balochistan province escalated to a limited war [→ Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)]. Violence between MILF and the Philippine's government escalated to the level of a limited war, following the army's withdrawal into MILF-controlled territory after fighting BIFF [→ Philippines (MILF); Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. This violated a former agreement to notify the presence of government troops beforehand. jli

GLOBAL CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN 2015 COMPARED TO 2014



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As in previous years, with a total of 126, Asia and Oceania saw the highest number of conflicts among the five regions. This represents 30 percent of all recorded conflicts. Sub-Saharan Africa again ranked second with 97 conflicts, followed by 71 in the Middle East and Maghreb, 62 in Europe, and 53 in the Americas.

The number of highly violent conflicts increased from 17 to 20 and from five to six in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas, respectively. Numbering six, the number of highly violent conflicts remained constant in Asia and Oceania, while it decreased from three to one in Europe. In the Middle East and Maghreb, ten wars and limited wars were counted, constituting a reduction by three compared to the previous year.

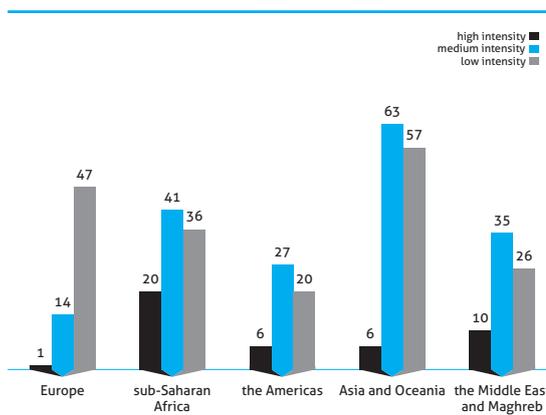
Regarding the number of wars, the region of Asia and Oceania saw an increase from one to two, with a conflict in the Philippines escalating to the level of a war [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF - MILF, government)]. The number of wars in the Middle East and Maghreb decreased by one from seven to six. There was no change in the other regions, with nine wars in Sub-Saharan Africa, and one in the Americas and Europe respectively.

The number of limited wars in Sub-Saharan Africa increased from eight to eleven. The Americas saw one additional limited war, while Asia and Oceania counted one less than last year. In the Middle East and Maghreb, the number declined from six to four and in Europe both 2014 limited wars de-escalated by one level in 2015 [→ Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus); Ukraine (opposition)].

The region of Asia and Oceania displayed, as in previous years, the highest number of violent crises, with 63 cases compared to 60 cases last year. It was followed by Sub-Saharan Africa with 41, the Middle East and Maghreb with 35, the Americas with 27, and Europe with 14.

The number of non-violent conflicts decreased throughout all regions, except for the Americas which saw an increase by four. In total, 57 non-violent conflicts took place in Asia and Oceania, followed by Europe with 47 cases, Sub-Saharan Africa with 36, the Middle East and Maghreb with 26, and the Americas with 20.

DISTRIBUTION OF ALL CONFLICTS IN 2015 BY REGION AND INTENSITY TYPE



ANALYSIS INTRASTATE - INTERSTATE - SUBSTATE

According to the HIIK Methodology, an interstate conflict is conducted between two or more states whereas intrastate conflicts are conducted between non-state actors and national governments. Substate conflicts comprise only non-state actors. In 2015, the HIIK counted 74 interstate conflicts, of which ten were fought on a violent level. In contrast, 61

percent of all intrastate conflicts (172/280) and 75 percent of all substate conflicts (41/55) were violent. The HIIK observed four new interstate conflicts and three new intrastate conflicts in 2015.

In Europe, only one of the 17 interstate conflicts was fought with violent means. The violent crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the break-away region Nagorno-Karabakh, internationally recognized as belonging to Azerbaijan but mostly populated by ethnic Armenians, continued. 30 percent of all European intrastate conflicts (13/43) were conducted on a violent level, with the sole highly violent conflict being observed in Ukraine’s Donbas region. The only two substate conflicts continued between right-wing and left-wing militants in Greece and between right-wing militants and ethnic minorities in Hungary.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, eight interstate conflicts were observed, of which only the violent crisis between Sudan and South Sudan was conducted on a violent level. In comparison, 49 of the 75 intrastate conflicts and eleven of the 14 substate conflicts were fought violently.

The Americas saw 16 cases of interstate conflict. The violent crisis over border security between the USA and Mexico was the only violent interstate conflict in the region. 85 percent of the 34 intrastate conflicts (29/34) and all three substate conflicts reached a violent level.

In Asia and Oceania, three of the 21 interstate conflicts saw the use of violence, while more than 60 percent (50/80) of all intrastate conflicts and 64 percent (16/25) of all substate conflicts were fought violently.

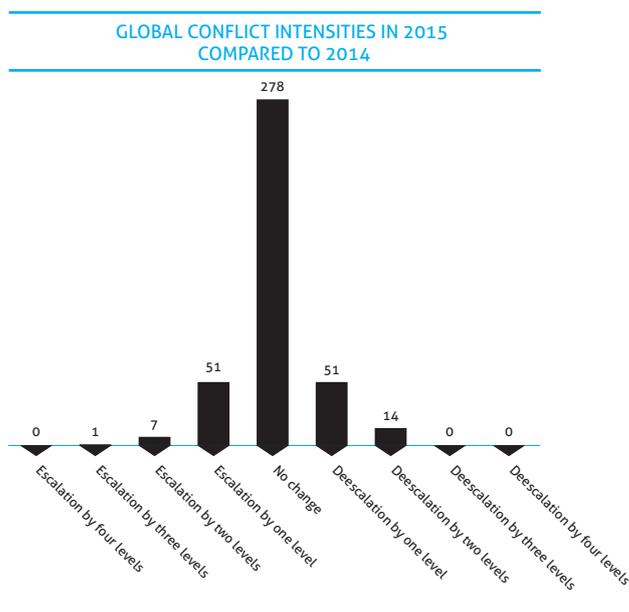
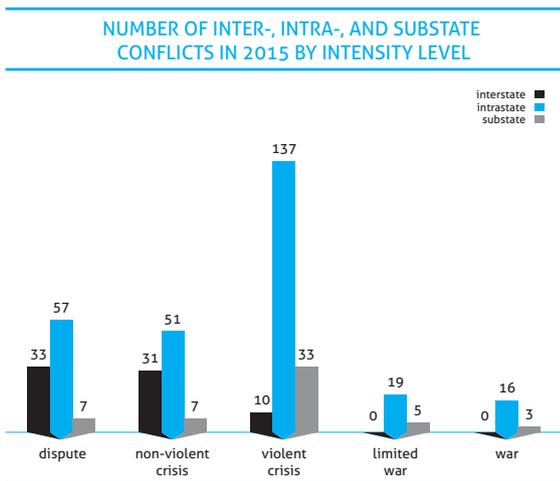
The Middle East and Maghreb saw the highest share of violent interstate conflicts (4/12), with three violent crises taking place in the context of the Syrian civil war. Of these, a new conflict emerged between Turkey and Russia after the downing of a Russian fighter jet by Turkish aircraft. 65 percent of all intrastate conflicts (31/48) and all ten substate conflicts were violent. The limited war between different tribes in Libya constituted the only highly violent substate conflict in the region. jli

war [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)].

Seven conflicts escalated by two levels. For instance, Asia and Oceania, the Maldives, Myanmar, and Nepal saw an escalation of disputes with the opposition to violent crises [→ Maldives (opposition); Myanmar (opposition); Nepal (opposition)]. In the region of the Middle East and Maghreb, the 2014 violent crisis over autonomy between the PKK and the Turkish government escalated to a war [→ Turkey (PKK)]. In Sub-Saharan Africa, a conflict over national power in Sierra Leone escalated from the level of a dispute to a violent crisis [→ Sierra Leone (APC-SLPP)].

In 13 cases, former violent crises de-escalated to disputes. In Europe, the conflict over autonomy and the orientation of the political system between the Serbian minority and the Kosovar government de-escalated to a dispute [→ Serbia (Serbian minority – Kosovar government)]. Two examples for the same dynamic in the Americas and in Sub-Saharan Africa, respectively, constituted the conflict over autonomy and resources in Brazil and the dispute between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria [→ Brazil (indigenous groups); Nigeria (Christians – Muslims)]. In Asia and Oceania, four violent crises de-escalated to dispute level, such as the opposition conflict in Thailand [→ Thailand (opposition)]. Five conflicts with the same intensity change could be observed in the Middle East and Maghreb.

The war over secession, the orientation of the political system, and resources between Hamas and the Israeli government de-escalated by two levels to a violent crisis [→ Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian Territories)]. psc



DYNAMICS WITHIN INDIVIDUAL CONFLICTS

Out of 409 reported conflicts in 2015, 131 witnessed a change in intensity. A total of 66 conflicts escalated and 65 de-escalated by one level respectively. Additionally, seven new conflicts were registered in 2015, of which four reached the level of a violent crisis [→ Republic of Congo (opposition); Nicaragua (indigenous groups); Russia – Turkey; Serbia (Kosovo – opposition)].

One conflict over subnational predominance and resources in Myanmar escalated by three levels from a dispute to a limited

CONFLICT ITEMS

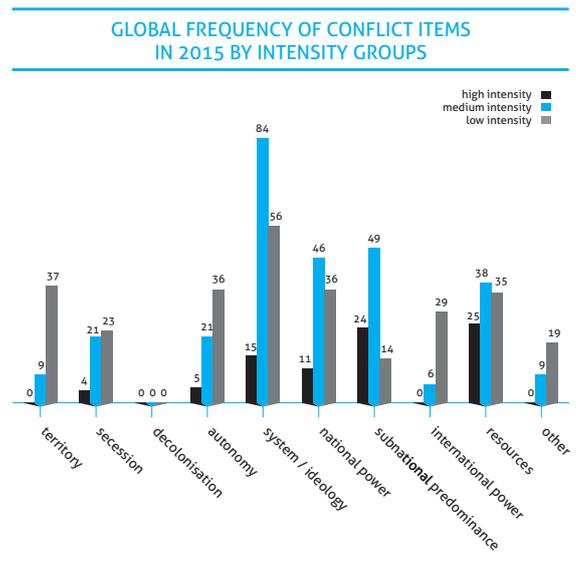
The Heidelberg Methodology of Conflict Research differentiates between ten conflict items defined as material or non-material goods which are claimed by the direct conflict actors through constituent conflict measures. Two of these represent exclusively interstate items (Territory, International Power), while five are solely subjects of internal conflicts (National Power, Secession, Autonomy, Subnational Predominance, and Decolonization). The remaining items, System/Ideology, Resources, as well as the residual item Other, may be part of intrastate, interstate, or substate conflicts.

Moreover, a conflict may feature several items or change its item(s) over time. As in previous years, frequent combinations of conflict items in 2015 were System/Ideology paired with National Power as well as Subnational Predominance with Resources, and – in the interstate dimension – Territory combined with Resources. System/Ideology was once again by far the most prevalent conflict item. It was featured as the sole item or one item among several others in 155 of the total 409 conflicts. Actors in these conflicts aimed at changing or preserving the political or economic system or were concerned with ideological differences, e.g. striving for a theocracy. Nine of the 19 wars observed in 2015 featured this item, distributed among the Middle East and Maghreb (4), Sub-Saharan Africa (3), Asia and Oceania (1), and Europe (1). Altogether, System/Ideology was part of 99 of the 223 violent conflicts observed.

Conflicts that included the claim of Resources, i.e. natural resources, raw materials, or the profit generated thereof, amounted to 98 cases and were especially prone to violence. Of the total number, about two thirds (63) were conducted violently and nine conflicts fought over resources reached the intensity level of war. Six of these wars took place in Sub-Saharan Africa, one each in the Americas, Europe, and in the Middle East and Maghreb. While in the latter region eight of the nine conflicts over this item involved violence, this was the case in about two thirds of resource conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa (18/27), made up around 60 percent in Asia and Oceania (17/28) and around 80 percent in the Americas (19/26). In Europe, only one out of the eight conflicts over this item included violent means. With a total of 93 cases, National Power ranked third this year, displaying heterogeneous regional distributions concerning violence. In total, 57 National Power conflicts were conducted violently, including eight wars. While violence was used by conflict actors in about one third of the National Power conflicts in Asia and Oceania (9/19), in Sub-Saharan Africa this was the case for two thirds (25/36) and in the Middle East and Maghreb the share was about half of the conflicts (13/22). In the Americas, all five conflicts over National Power constituted violent crises, while in Europe five out of eleven conflicts over this item were violent.

Subnational Predominance, defined as the de facto control of an area or population, accounted for 87 cases. It was part of two conflicts in Europe, twelve in the Middle East and Maghreb as well as in the Americas, 30 in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 31 in Asia and Oceania. In total, three of the six wars over Subnational Predominance were observed in Sub-Saharan Africa, and one each in Asia and Oceania, the Middle East and Maghreb, and the Americas. A total of 108 conflicts concerned Autonomy and Secession, with the latter accounting for 48 cases. While only one conflict in the Americas dealt with secession, it appeared more frequently throughout Asia and Oceania (19), Europe (15), Sub-Saharan Africa (8), and the Middle East and Maghreb (5). Conflicts regarding Autonomy, i.e. the achievement or extension of political autonomy of a non-state group or dependent region without claiming independence, amounted to a total of 62 cases. In total, 24 Autonomy conflicts took place in Asia, 13 in Europe, twelve in Africa, eight in the Middle East and Maghreb, and five in the Americas. Of the 62 Autonomy conflicts, 26 included the use of violence, with twelve cases in Asia and Oceania, five in both Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and Maghreb, and three in the Americas. One of the 13 conflicts in Europe concerning this item was conducted violently.

The items least prone to violence were Territory and International Power. Conflicts over Territory, defined as the intended change of an interstate border, accounted for a total of 46. Out of these disputed territories, 14 were located in Asia and Oceania, eleven in the Americas, nine in Europe, seven in the Middle East and Maghreb, and five in Sub-Saharan Africa. International Power struggles, i.e. conflicts over changes in the power structure of international systems on global or regional level, totaled 35. A threat of force was observed in 21 of these power struggles this year, whereas in six cases states resorted to violent means. Conflicts over Territory included the threat to use violence in 18 cases and the actual use of violence in nine, marking a slight decrease from last year's twelve cases. No highly violent conflict between two or more states was observed in 2015. peh



COUPS D'ÉTAT

Throughout the year, only two attempted coups d'états were observed, none of which resulted in the ousting of the state's leadership. Both attempts took place in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Burkina Faso, which already had witnessed a coup in 2014, the continuing tensions between groups loyal to ousted president Blaise Compaoré and the interim government led by President Michel Kafando triggered an unsuccessful coup attempt [→ Burkina Faso (opposition)]. In October 2014, Compaoré fled to Côte d'Ivoire after violent mass protests had taken place and the military had declared the dissolution of the government. This year, the Regiment for Presidential Security (RSP) staged a coup against the interim government. The latter had adopted a new electoral code banning pro-Compaoré candidates from running in the presidential elections. On September 16, following a report of the Reconciliation Commission recommending the RSP's dissolution, members of the RSP led by Compaoré affiliate General Gilbert Diendéré staged a coup storming a cabinet meeting and abducting the prime minister and the president. Diendéré declared himself president, prompting thousands to protest in the capital Ouagadougou. The RSP targeted the demonstrations using live ammunition, killing at least eleven and injuring more than 270. Against the backdrop of international pressure and the military issuing an ultimatum for RSP's surrender, the coup plotters agreed to step down on September 22. Four days later, the interim government dissolved the RSP and, on October 1, Diendéré was arrested.

Ultimately, the postponed presidential elections were successfully held on November 29. They were considered the most democratic elections in the country's history and resulted in the appointment of Roch Kaboré, a civilian politician, as president, winning an absolute majority of the votes.

In Burundi, General Godefroid Niyombare, former head of intelligence, along with Defense Minister Cyrille Ndayirukiye staged an unsuccessful coup attempt on May 13 [→ Burundi (opposition)]. The announcement of President Pierre Nkurunziza to run for a third term on April 25, which was considered unconstitutional, sparked massive popular uprisings. Dozens of people were killed in clashes between protesters and security forces in the capital Bujumbura and hundreds of thousands fled the country due to the ongoing unrest. On May 13, while Nkurunziza was attending an extraordinary summit of the East African Community in Tanzania to discuss Burundi's current situation, a group of militaries led by Niyombare staged an attempted coup. Heavy fighting took place in the capital, but security forces quickly repelled the plotters, arresting several. However, Niyombare was not captured and was reportedly named chief of the militant group Forebu. The coup attempt was also subject to tensions between Burundi and Rwanda, as Burundi accused Rwanda of hosting Niyombare and facilitating the coup plotters' actions [→ Burundi – Rwanda]. fsc

Measures of Conflict Resolution

NEGOTIATIONS AND TREATIES

The year 2015 saw numerous efforts by actors to settle their conflicts. For instance, India witnessed the signing of two peace agreements between the government and the two ethnic groups Garo and Naga. Furthermore, the conflict between Western states and Iran over Iran's nuclear program made significant progress towards a normalization of relations. In contrast, several rounds of talks between al-Houthi and the Saudi-backed Yemeni government did not yield substantial results. The same applied to negotiation efforts in the Sudans and Burundi.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Most negotiations in Sub-Saharan Africa were observed in Sudan concerning the conflict between several tribes and communities over subnational predominance and resources [→ Sudan (intercommunal violence)]. The Ma'alia and al-Rezeigat Abballa in East Darfur held a peace conference in February without reaching an agreement. A peace deal between Berti and Ziyadiya groups on July 13 did not prevent further violence between the groups. In mid-August, the security committee of South Darfur summoned the leaders of the Fellata and Salamat tribes to establish a buffer zone between them. On September 15, the leaders of al-Rezeigat and Misseriya held a reconciliation conference intending to bring an end to revenge attacks over cattle. In the context of the war in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the government and SPLM/A-North held several rounds of negotiations without results [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. In November, the parties held face-to-face negotiations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. While the government was only willing to discuss the situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the SPLMA-North sought to address the crisis in the whole country.

On March 23, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn signed an agreement approving the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). All three parties signed a new framework on December 29 although the other parties opposed Ethiopia's plan to store water inside the dam for five years [→ Ethiopia – Egypt, Sudan (GERD)]. In South Sudan, a peace agreement was reached between the government and several militant groups such as the SPLM/A-in-Opposition in August. The agreement entailed a demilitarization of the capital Juba and a shared control of oil fields [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)].

The Central African Republic saw intensified efforts by all parties to end the war between ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. While ex-Séléka leader Michel Djotodia and Anti-Balaka representative Joachim Kokate agreed on a ceasefire after negotiations in Nairobi, Kenya, in January and April, the transitional government and other groups rejected the deal. In May, an inclusive peace forum was held in the capital Bangui, leading to an agreement on the terms of the upcoming general elections, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration as well as decentralization and judicial reform. On December 16, the Somali clans Hawadle and Surre signed a peace deal including a ceasefire and demilitarized zones [→ Somalia (Hawadle – Surre / Hiiraan)]. In Mozambique, peace talks between the government and RENAMO continued. On December 21, RENAMO called for international mediators to lead the negotiations and blamed national mediators for the failure of the talks with the government [→ Mozambique (RENAMO)]. In the DR Congo, two attempts by the government and FRPI

in January and May to negotiate an integration of the armed group into the military failed [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Negotiations between the government and the opposition concerning a potential third term for President Joseph Kabila started in November with the assistance of UN representative Said Djinnit [→ DR Congo (opposition)]. In Mali, a peace agreement between the government and the Platform as well as the CMA was reached in May and June, respectively [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad)]. Also in Mali, the leaders of the Imghad and Ifoghas Tuareg tribes signed a peace agreement on October 9 [→ Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)]. After the Burundian opposition had rejected UN-appointed mediator Djinnit and the government had opposed Djinnit's successor Abdoulaye Bathily, the East African Community appointed Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni mediator on July 6. The talks started on July 14 but were suspended the next day.

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Most negotiations in the Middle East and Maghreb were observed in the Yemen, concerning the national power conflict with the al-Houthis. In February, al-Houthis dissolved the parliament after the National Dialogue Conference failed to provide a political solution to the conflict. The international community repeatedly attempted to mediate between the conflict parties. In November, delegates of the al-Houthis, the Hadi-government, and the Saudi-led coalition met in Oman to prepare for peace talks. The talks started in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 15, accompanied by a seven-day ceasefire. They stopped on December 17, after al-Houthis had refused to release several high-profile PoWs. The negotiations ended on December 20 with an agreement to resume talks in January 2016 [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)].

In Syria, the government and opposition fighters agreed on a conditional truce on December 2, permitting anti-government forces to leave safely. In the following days, hundreds of people were evacuated from al-Waer neighborhood of Homs city [→ Syria (opposition)]. The so-called Islamic State (IS) left southern Damascus after reaching an agreement with the government to retreat to al-Raqqa [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The peace talks between the Turkish government and the Kurdish PKK came to an end after violence had intensified significantly in the second half of the year [→ Turkey (PKK)]. In the last week of August, increasing tensions between Islamist groups and al-Fatah culminated in intense fighting in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh in Lebanon. Several people were killed, scores wounded, and about 3,000 fled to the nearby city of Sidon before the factions reached a stable ceasefire agreement.

A breakthrough was reached with the final agreement on Iran's nuclear program on July 14, in which Iran had made major technical concessions to the P5+1/E3+3 group regarding the function of its civilian nuclear program in exchange for moderate sanctions relief [→ Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program)]. In July, Taliban members and the newly-formed government held peace talks in Pakistan with international participation [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. Negotiations stopped after the public announcement of Mullah Omar's death on July 29.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Most negotiations in Asia and Oceania were observed in India. Concerning the conflict over the secession of various areas of Assam and West Bengal states, the pro-talk United Liberation Front of Assam Independent (ULFA-I) faction continued peace talks with the government [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. To

de-escalate the conflict over the secession of various parts of Meghalaya state, the Garo United Achik Liberation Army signed a peace agreement with the government on December 18 [→ India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya)]. Another peace accord was signed by the Indian government concerning the secession of territory inhabited by ethnic Naga with the newly-formed National Socialist Council of Nagaland Reformation (NSCN-R) on April 27 and with the NSCN Isaak Muivah on August 3.

In addition, the government's special interlocutor for the Naga talks held separate consultative meetings with the NSCN Khole-Khitovi as well as with the Naga National Council on December 7 in Dimapur District [→ India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland)].

On March 7, the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments signed an agreement concerning the demarcation and delimitation of disputed border parts in Dushanbe [→ Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan – Tajikistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)]. In Pakistan, negotiations between representatives of the provincial government of Balochistan and the unofficial leader of the geographic predecessor of Balochistan province, Mir Suleman Dawood Jan, concerning the latter's participation in the ongoing peace process ended without results [→ Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)]. After two separate agreements suggesting the division of Nepal into eight or six provinces on June 8 and August 8, protests erupted and turned violent [→ Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai)].

In Myanmar, the limited war over autonomy and resources between the Kachin Independence Organization, along with its military wing, and the government saw some progress regarding peace efforts [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. A total of eight armed groups signed a ceasefire agreement with the government on October 15 after almost two years of negotiations. A summit for the non-signatory groups was held in Panghsang on November 1.

In Vietnam, the National Wage Council decided on a wage increase in 2016 after months-long negotiations between the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry [→ Vietnam (socioeconomic protests)]. Representatives of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the House of Representatives met in the Netherlands for exploratory talks on July 10 [→ Philippines (CPP, NPA)]. After CPP and its military wing had declared a unilateral ceasefire effective from December 23 to 01/03/2016, President Benigno Aquino announced a pause from military operations for the same period. After having reached an agreement in talks between August 22 and 26 to end the military standoff, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea met from December 10 to 12 in Kaesong for high-level talks without achieving any result [→ North Korea – South Korea]. The USA and the PRC reached agreements on several issues, such as cyber security and energy, in late September [→ China – USA]. To resume peace talks concerning the conflict over the territorial status of the Kuril Islands, the foreign ministers of Japan and Russia met in Moscow from September 21 to 22 and again on October 8. Furthermore, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks on September 28 and November 15. [→ Japan – Russia].

EUROPE

In Europe, most agreements were reached in the Ukraine [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Despite a ceasefire agreement in the conflict over the Donbas region reached on September 8 in Luhansk, fighting continued. However, the intensity decreased during the last three months of the year. The conflict

parties met numerous times for consultations. On May 21, they jointly decided on the establishment of observation posts at the contact line to document ceasefire violations. Two month later, the Trilateral Contact Group agreed on a DMZ in Luhansk during a meeting mediated by the OECD. Throughout the year, several meetings concerning, among others, de-escalation measures, the reconstruction of Donbas, and the demilitarization of Shyrokyne were held between the Normandy Four states. They also agreed on extending the validity of Minsk II to 2016. In the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine, the parties signed Minsk II concerning the re-establishment of border controls on February 12 [→ Russia – Ukraine]. Following a complete power breakdown in Crimea due to activist attacks on the power supply line, Kherson city officials stated on December 8 that they partly repaired the power line after reaching an agreement with the activists [→ Ukraine (Crimean Tatars)].

After the OSCE had voiced its concern over the increased use of heavy weapons in the Azeri-Armenian conflict, Armenian President Serge Sarkisian and his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev met in Bern, Switzerland, for OSCE-mediated talks on December 19, expressing their willingness to settle the conflict [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan]. Starting in March, the EU, UN, OSCE, and the US facilitated four rounds of talks in Geneva, Switzerland, between representatives of Georgia and Russia as well as those of the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The negotiations concerning the status of the two de facto autonomous regions ended without result [→ Georgia (Abkhazia); Georgia (South Ossetia)].

Serbia and Kosovo agreed on delegating greater administrative powers to Kosovar areas on August 25 as part of a 2013 EU-brokered landmark agreement [→ Serbia (Kosovo – opposition)]. This deal, in addition to a demarcation agreement with Montenegro, led to violent opposition protests. Concerning the conflict over the secession of Northern Ireland, Republicans and Loyalists reached an agreement on welfare, history conceptions, and paramilitarism on November 17, putting an end to the political stalemates between the conflict parties [→ United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland)]

AMERICAS

Despite ongoing peace negotiations in Havana, Cuba, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government further engaged in violence [→ Colombia (FARC)]. The agreements included a deadline for reaching a final agreement, drafting an amnesty law for political crimes, as well as measures of reparation, truth-seeking, and guarantees of non-repetition. After the government had suspended aerial bombardments in reaction to FARC's unilateral ceasefire on July 20, the number of violent encounters decreased. Exploratory peace talks between the Army of National Liberation (ELN) and the Colombian government continued over the course of the year, with Ecuador offering the mediation or hosting of future formal negotiations [→ Colombia (ELN)]. Following the reduction of the fuel price after negotiations between the National Platform of Transport Syndicates and the Haitian government on February 3, violent protests erupted in which demonstrators demanded further cuts [→ Haiti (opposition)]. ska

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The notion of international peacekeeping had been first advanced after the United Kingdom terminated its mandate over Palestine in 1948. In the follow-up, the newly-founded

UN assumed responsibility for peace efforts in Israel and its neighboring countries. Since then, 69 peacekeeping operations have been deployed, with a big majority - 56 in total - since 1988. UN military personnel served to alleviate political tensions on international, and, more recently, on national and subnational levels.

In 2015, the UN Department for Political Affairs (UNDPA) and the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) administered 28 country missions in total. Out of these, 16 were peacekeeping missions which in total deployed 106,245 uniformed personnel and 16,791 civilian personnel. The UNDPA conducted eleven missions with the assistance of its special envoy system and other regional representations, employing a total of 838 uniformed personnel as well as 915 international officers and 1,819 local staff.

Most peacekeeping missions were carried out in the Middle East and Maghreb (Western Sahara, Syria, Lebanon, and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization) as well as in the Sub-Saharan region (Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan). In Asia, the DPKO oversaw the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir [→ Pakistan – India]. In Europe, the DPKO mandated two missions in Cyprus and Serbia, respectively [→ Cyprus (TRNC / Northern Cyprus); Serbia (Kosovo)]. In the Americas, one mission was carried out in Haiti in order to support national reconstruction after the 2009 earthquake.

UNDPA supervised 24 operations and offices, among which five consisted of political representations to regional organizations and coalitions (AU, West Africa, Cameroon-Nigeria, Central Africa, and Great Lakes). Eleven missions were field-based operations, five missions were conducted in the Middle East and Maghreb (Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Middle East, and Afghanistan), three missions were located in Sub-Saharan Africa (Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, and Sudan - South Sudan), and one in Central Asia. In the Americas, one UNDPA mission was present in Guyana and Venezuela. Eight new missions supervised by the UNDPA were launched under the special UN envoy system to the UN Secretary-General (Cyprus, Yemen, Sahel, Syria, Western Sahara, Myanmar, and FYROM-Greece). In total, 123 UN personnel was killed in the course of operations, amounting to a slight decrease compared to the previous year (126).

EUROPE

As of 1990, a common European security policy for conflict prevention was created with the objective to promote regional dialog and a permanent basis for political consultation. After the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, a “mutual assistance and solidarity clause” became the foundation of the new European External Action Service (EEAS). Since then, about 30 civilian and military operations have been launched under the EU's Common Defense and Security Policy (CSDP). In 2015, six military and eleven civilian missions were conducted under the CSDP. Further, EEAS targeted crisis situations concerning the Syrian civil war, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as several ongoing conflicts in the Sub-Saharan region. On May 18, the European Council approved the Crisis Management Concept for a military CSDP operation to prevent smuggling and human trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean. In collaboration with NATO, military operations were conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the EU deployed 7,000 troops for the purpose of capacity building and training.

The OSCE commits itself to politico-military cooperation in its 57 participating countries in and beyond Europe. Its mandate

encompasses the development of “security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, as well as counter-terrorism, political state building, and economic and environmental activities.” In 2015, the OSCE administered 17 operations, primarily in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in order to foster the development of national rule of law and the expansion of democratic institutions. The largest mission was carried out in Kosovo, where the OSCE accompanied and supervised judicial institution building and national reconciliation processes [→ Serbia (Kosovo)]. The war over the status of Ukraine's Donbas region with at least 4,000 fatalities was of concern to the members of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Due to disagreements between the EU and Russia, inter alia over the political status of Crimea, the EU suspended several bilateral agreements and negotiations and imposed a range of economic and political sanctions [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. The OSCE mission in Baku, Azerbaijan, expired as of December 31.

AMERICAS

In 2015, various UN agencies observed the political situation in Haiti and assisted in the fight against drug trafficking activities, and cartel rivaling in Mexico and Columbia [→ Haiti (opposition); Mexico (drug cartels); Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups); Colombia (FARC)]. With regards to DPKO's Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), operations aimed at providing assistance to the political and economic reconstruction of the country. UNDPA conducted one other mission in Guyana and Venezuela, where it helped to assist the implementation of national elections. The UN with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) passed several resolutions targeting drug trafficking in the Americas. Further, OHCHR - in order to alleviate the humanitarian situations of IDPs in Colombia - maintained nine offices operational in approx. 80 communities affected by armed conflicts.

Regional cooperation on a supranational level in the Americas was only slowly emerging. Although considered the oldest international organization of regional cooperation, the Organization of American States (OAS) lacked power to bind and sanction its members if these were not under the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR). Colombia's request to the OAS for a meeting concerning the lack of security at the Colombian-Venezuelan border failed to muster the necessary votes, whilst offers of support by UNASUR and the UN were ultimately not taken up [→ Venezuela – Colombia (border security)]. Building upon the activities of the UN-led anti-impunity body in Guatemala, Honduras' indigenous peoples sought to establish a similar institutional mandate against government corruption [→ Honduras (opposition)]. Despite OAS-led and UN-backed negotiations advocating for a comprehensive national reform, the government rejected the proposal.

The IACtHR passed 18 decisions in 2015, of which most were related to questions of subnational predominance and autonomy between indigenous peoples and state authorities. Another important decision concerned the case of Ayotzinapa calling responsibility on 80 suspects for the alleged abduction and killing of 43 students [→ Mexico (public security)].

The non-violent crisis over maritime possessions and the Guyana Esequiba territory between Venezuela and Guyana resurfaced. Guyana's position was supported by the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) and the Commonwealth. Venezuela made clear its preference for mediation by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) [→ Venezuela – Guyana].

ASIA AND OCEANIA

The UN's sole peacekeeping mission in Asia was conducted under the auspices of UNMOGIP serving the purpose to monitor compliance of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in the border region of Kashmir. Throughout the year, the UN counted numerous violent incidents on both sides. Whereas Pakistan had previously declared Kashmir and Jammu to be internationally-recognized disputed territories, India rejected this notion and claimed authority of Kashmir as an "integral part" of its own territory [→ Pakistan – India].

On political level, the situation within Myanmar, the Maldives, Uzbekistan, and DPRK prompted several UN statements and adoptions of resolutions. As for Myanmar, the UN issued a statement in which they called attention to the aggravating intercommunal violence between Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists in Rakhine State when the numbers of displaced boat refugees in the Andaman Sea peaked again in 2015. In response, the government of Myanmar rejected recommendations of the OHCHR Universal Periodic Review which called for the better implementation of rights of religious groups [→ Myanmar (Buddhists – Rohingyas / Rakhine State)]. With regards to the human rights situation in the DPRK, the UN opened a new regional office in Seoul with the objective to better monitor incidents of human rights abuses in North Korea [→ North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan]. On June 12, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Uzbekistan. During a meeting with PM Karimov, he brought the attention to the situation of forced labor and urged Karimov to improve the treatment of prisoners. Apart from UN activities, other international organization such as the OSCE conducted five missions in Asia, namely in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, which ended as of December 31, 2015.

Regional cooperation was observed through the activities of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN was founded in 1967 in order to promote economic and political cooperation in the region by simultaneously guaranteeing full national sovereignty of its members. As a consequence thereof, ASEAN developed fewer binding instruments and mechanisms than other regional organizations such as OAS or the EU. In March, the 9th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting was held in Malaysia. Following this, the ten defense ministers signed a joint declaration with the objective to strengthen regional security cooperation against terrorist activities. In April, the 26th ASEAN Summit took place. Among topics discussed, commitment was emphasized to a region free of weapons of mass destruction. On August 4, the 48th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ASEAN members issued a joint statement in which they reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to preserving Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. Furthermore, ASEAN issued a statement on April 29, following Chinese seizure of Mischief Reef/Meiji in the Spratly Islands, in which they condemned the activities [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)].

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

The UN carried out several peacekeeping and political missions in the Middle East and Maghreb. The UNIFIL mission in Lebanon started in 1978, first mandated to control the retreat of Israeli soldiers from southern Lebanon and to restore government control of the area. Following the Lebanon war in 2006, the mandate was renewed with the addition of control of illegal arms trade [→ Israel - Lebanon]. In 2015, one Spanish UNIFIL member was killed after Israel had re-

sponded with airstrikes and artillery to Hezbollah attacks [→ Israel (Hezbollah)]. Also based in the Levant was the UN observer mission UNDOF controlling the demilitarized Zone between Syria and the Israeli occupied Golan Heights. While the mission was established in 1974 in order to observe the ceasefire between both countries, the UNDOF-controlled area saw frequent cross-border shelling in the context of the Syrian civil war [→ Syria – Israel]. The first ever peacekeeping operation established by the UN was UNTSO in the Middle East in 1948. The Jerusalem based mission was mandated to observe the truce in Palestine territories, ceasefire between Israel and its Arab neighbours, and to assist UNIFIL in Lebanon [→ Israel (PNA / Palestine territories)]. In Western Sahara, the peacekeeping mission MINURSO was implemented in 1991 to observe the ceasefire agreement and to take steps to a referendum aimed at the clarification of the status of Western Sahara as a part of Morocco or as an independent state [→ Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara)]. UN Envoy to the Western Sahara Christopher Ross stated in March this year that the establishment of a state led by POLISARIO had become impossible due to a lack of consensus within the group. The two political missions of the UN in Iraq and Afghanistan were extended to 2016. Since 2002, UNAMA supported the transition process in Afghanistan, coordinating the work of UN departments and NGOs [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. Established in 2003 having a similar mandate as UNAMA, UNAMI continued its operations in Iraq. The political mission UNSMIL in Libya was established in 2011 to provide assistance to the authorities in rebuilding statehood, tackling illegal arms trade, and securing borders. In 2015, representatives of Libya's two rival parliaments frequently participated in UN-led peace talks in order to form a national unity government. In October, UNSMIL presented the agreement's final draft and announced Faiz al-Saraj prime minister of the unity government. Neither of the parliaments voted on the agreement [→ Libya (opposition)].

Throughout the year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued several statements concerning conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb. For example, on March 3, he criticized the Iranian government for repeated human rights violations in a report to the UNHRC. In response, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif rejected those claims referring to double standards and politicization of those issues [→ Iran (opposition)]. Ban Ki-moon was also calling for an end to the violence as well as for meaningful negotiations between Israel and Palestine Authorities [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. For this purpose, he met separately with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Jerusalem on October 20. Violence did not subside until the end of the year.

The removal of Syria's chemical weapons, led by the 2013 implemented joint OPCW-UN mission, continued. According to OPCW-UN, a total of 98 percent of the production sites had been destroyed by October 2015 [→ Syria – USA]. A major breakthrough was reached between Iran and the P5+1/E3+3 group concerning the Iranian nuclear program [→ Iran – USA, EU et al. (nuclear program)].

EUPOL COPPS, the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories, constituted an 800 personnel CSDP mission based in the West Bank in support of Palestinian state building process. In July, the Council of the EU decided to extend the mission's mandate in Palestine until 06/30/16 [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. The EU was also active in Libya to support border enforcement. Due to the political situation, however, the staff of EUBM operated from Tunisia, from where 14 officers coordinated activities with the internationally rec-

ognized Libyan government [→ Libya (opposition)].

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The UN peacekeeping missions in Sub-Saharan Africa were located in Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Liberia, Mali, Sudan, and South Sudan. In Côte d'Ivoire, the UNOCI mission had been established in 2004 with the aim to stop violence carried by armed groups and facilitate their disarmament and demobilization. Lastly, UNOCI's mandate entailed activities aimed at strengthening border security [→ Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)]. Since 2014, the 10,806-strong MINUSCA mission operated in the Central African Republic with the mandate to protect civilians, support the political transition process, and deliver humanitarian assistance. Throughout the year, MINUSCA soldiers repeatedly engaged in fatal encounters with Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka militants [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka - ex-Séléka)]. Constituting the world's largest DPKO mission with 19,784 personnel, MONUSCO continued to operate in the DR Congo. A so-called Force Intervention Brigade equipped with an offensive mandate by the UNSC formed the core of the mission. In July, the deployment of several thousand troops by FARDC and MONUSCO significantly reduced violence between Bantu and Batwa communities in Eastern Katanga province [→ DR Congo (Bantu - Batwa / Katanga)]. MONUSCO bolstered the army's offensives against several armed groups in the East [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL); DR Congo (Ituri militias); DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)]. Notably using attack helicopters against FRPI in Orientale province. The UNMIL peacekeeping mission in Liberia was established in 2003 to oversee the ceasefire after the civil war as well as to assist a national security reform. The MINUSMA mission operated in Mali since 2013 to support and monitor the ceasefire between Tuareg armed groups and the government [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad)]. Throughout the year, the mission carried out airstrikes against MNLA in Gao region. Islamist militants attacked MINUSMA on a frequent basis in the regions of Gao, Timbuktu, Bamako, and Kidal [→ Mali (Islamist groups)]. The UNMISS peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, was established in 2011. While its original mandate was to support peace consolidation as well as long-term state building and economic development, due to the deteriorating political and security situation in 2013, the mission shifted its focus to the protection of civilians [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. In August, UNMISS gave shelter for civilians after clashes between tribes had erupted in Yambio, Western Equatoria [→ South Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. The disputed region of Abyei between South Sudan and Sudan remained under interim administration by the UNISFA mission established in 2011 [→ Sudan - South Sudan]. The UN-AU hybrid mission in Darfur, Sudan, UNAMID was established in 2007. With its core mandate continuing to be the protection of civilians, UNAMID additionally aimed at securing humanitarian assistance and promoting human rights and the rule of law. Moreover, it also monitored the situation along the borders with Chad and the Central African Republic. The mission's mobility was often restricted by government forces and UNAMID peacekeepers were repeatedly attacked by unknown assailants [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. In addition to the joint mission in Darfur, the AU established two own missions which were approved by the UNSC. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was established in 2007 and was mandated to "take all necessary measures, as appropriate, [...], to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed groups", as well as to assist the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to expand the control of its national territory [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. Furthermore, AMISOM supported the FGS in state building and the coordi-

nation of humanitarian aid. In Central Africa, the AU-led and US-supported Regional Task Force for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA) continued its fight against the armed group in its third year [→ Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA)].

The EU conducted most of its civil and military activities in Africa, including missions in the Central African Republic and Mali and two missions in Somalia. On January 19, the organization issued the mandate for a subsequent mission in the Central African Republic, following the deployment of a military advisor to support the Central African authorities in preparing a reform of the security sector with respect to the armed forces of the Central African Republic (FACA). The 600 officers of EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali provided support to the country's security sector reform and supported the government in its fight against terrorism and other criminal activities. On January 15, the EU started planning a new mission in the country after being invited by the government in order to support its efforts in regaining control of the northern territory. Civilian EU missions were present in Libya, Mali, Niger, and DR Congo and a joint mission additionally supervised operations in Djibouti, Somalia, Seychelles, and Tanzania.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions were a tool used by countries or international organizations to bring about a change in policy of a particular government or group of governments by restricting trade, investment or other commercial activity, and visa rights.

The UNSC may issue sanctions against states, groups, or people who violate UN resolutions or human rights issues. The sanction can be arms or trade embargos, freezing of assets, cutting of communication and traffic lines as well as breaking off the diplomatic relations. States targeted by at least one type of sanction in 2015 were Afghanistan, DR Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, DPRK, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe, with the UN also sanctioning groups such as al-Qaeda or the so-called Islamic State. For instance, in 2015, the UNSC announced the freezing of bank accounts of 20 members of the militant outfit Mujahideen Indonesia Timur [→ Indonesia (Islamist militants)].

Based on Article 215 TFEU, the EU can adopt restrictive military and economic measures in order to bring about a change in policy or activity by the target country, part of a country, government, entities, or individuals. As of March 2014, the EU has progressively imposed restrictive measures in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. On September 14, the Council extended these measures until 03/15/16. The Council imposed substantial restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol. These measures included an import ban on goods from Crimea and Sevastopol, imposed in June 2014, as well as restrictions introduced in July 2015 on trade and investment related to certain economic sectors and infrastructure projects. In addition, a full ban on investment was in place since December 2014, along with a prohibition to supply tourism services in Crimea. Exports of further key goods for certain sectors were also banned, including equipment for the prospection, exploration, and production of oil, gas, and mineral resources.

Following UN resolution 2231 of the UNSC, UN member states lifted several sanctions on Iran on January 16. In the pursuit of the implementation of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Iran and the "E3/EU+3" (France, UK, Germany, EU, USA, Russia, and China) adopted the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on July 14. ska, ela

Overview: Current UN Missions led or supported by DPKO

Mission Acronym	Name of Mission	Start	Country
Europe			
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	1964	Cyprus
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo	1999	Serbia
Sub-Saharan Africa			
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo	2010	DR Congo
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire	2004	Côte d'Ivoire
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia	2003	Liberia
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	2013	Mali
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan	2011	South Sudan
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur	2007	Sudan
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei	2011	Sudan
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	2014	Central African Republic
The Americas			
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti	2004	Haiti
Asia and Oceania			
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	1949	India, Pakistan
The Middle East and Maghreb			
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	1978	Lebanon
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	1991	Morocco
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization	1948	Middle East
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	1974	Syria

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

The year 2015 has seen the International Court of Justice (ICJ) make four judgements and nine court orders. While no new cases were introduced to the Court in 2015, three existing cases were concluded.

CROATIA v. SERBIA

On February 3, the ICJ delivered its judgment in the case concerning "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia)", rejecting both Croatia's claim and Serbia's counter-claim over alleged violations of the Genocide Convention, committed during the armed conflict from 1991 until 1995.

The application was filed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 07/02/99, and invoked "Article IX of the Genocide Convention as the jurisdictional basis of the Court." Following February 2003, when the FRY notified the Court that its name had changed to "Serbia and Montenegro," and Montenegro's subsequent declaration of independence in 2006, Serbia remained the sole respondent in the case. Serbia's counter-claim was filed on 01/04/10. Public hearings on the merits of both, Croatia's claim and Serbia's counter-claim, were held in 2014. In its final judgement on February 3 the Court underlined the sovereignty of both States after having emerged from the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It further recalled that, shortly after Croatia's declaration of independence on 06/25/91, an armed conflict broke out between Croatia's armed forces, the so-called Serb forces created by parts of the Serb minority within Croatia, as well as several anti-independence paramilitary groups and, from September 1991 onwards, the Yugoslav National Army (JNA). Croatia claimed that genocide had been committed from late 1991 until 1995, when Serb forces and the JNA controlled approximately one-third of Croatian territory within its boundaries of the SFRY. Following a sequence of military operations

in the spring and summer of 1995, Croatia regained control over the greater part of the previously lost territory leading up to Operation Storm in August 1995, during which the genocidal acts asserted by Serbia's counter-claim allegedly took place.

Croatia had argued that certain attacks were not simply directed against an opposing military force, but "against the civil population" and subsequently that the aim and intent of these attacks was the destruction of ethnic Croats in the region. While the Court found that acts perpetrated by the JNA and Serb forces against ethnic Croats constituted the *actus reus* of genocide "within the meaning of Article II (a) and (b) of the 1948 Genocide Convention, the acts that would fall under Article II (c) and (d) could not be sufficiently established" under the same parameters. Furthermore, the Court concluded that the crucial "mental element" of intent to destroy an ethnic group, the *dolus specialis* of genocide, had not been established. In fact, the ICJ found that the aim toward the group in question was one of forceful displacement, not of destruction, and so dismissed Croatia's claim in its entirety. Serbia's counter-claim accused Croatia of committing genocide during and after Operation Storm in 1995. One crucial piece of evidence here was the transcript of a meeting held between Franjo Tudjman, then President of the Republic of Croatia, and the country's military leaders on the island of Brioni in order to prepare Operation Storm. Serbia had argued that this transcript was proof of the aim of the alleged genocide acts perpetrated during Operation Storm. However, the Court found that the existence of an intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the national or ethnic Serbs in Croatia had not been sufficiently demonstrated and hence the intentional element of genocide, the *dolus specialis*, was lacking. While certain acts committed by the forces of the Republic of Croatia fell within the definition of Article II (a) and (b), and constituted the *actus reus* of genocide, they were not of sufficient gravity to demonstrate reasonable existence of genocidal intent. The ICJ found that neither genocide, nor other

violations of the Genocide Convention had been proven, and rejected Serbia's counter-claim in its entirety. Both governments accepted the judgement. While the outcome of this ruling was widely expected, it took the Court 16 years to decide that neither state had a claim against the other. This, and the financial expense of the proceeding had, yet again, made some critics question the significance and efficiency of the ICJ. Others however, have pointed out that this case highlighted the inherent difficulty in legally applying the Genocide Convention. This being primarily due to its narrow definition of genocide; demanding proof of definitive intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

TIMOR-LESTE v. AUSTRALIA

The case concerning "Questions relating to the Seizure and Detention of Certain Documents and Data (Timor-Leste v. Australia)" was brought before the ICJ by the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste against the Commonwealth of Australia [→ Timor-Leste – Australia]. This occurred amid strained relations between the two states over a spy scandal resulting in Timor-Leste contesting the validity of the "Treaty on Certain Maritime arrangements in the Timor Sea" regulating the joint exploration and utilisation of gas and oil deposits in the Timor Sea estimated to be worth USD 40 billion at the Permanent Court of Arbitration on 12/03/13.

On 12/17/13 Timor-Leste instituted proceedings against Australia at the ICJ, contending that on 12/03/13 agents of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, "allegedly acting under a warrant issued by the Attorney-General of Australia, seized documents and electronic data, inter alia, from the office of a legal adviser to Timor-Leste" in the Australian capital Canberra in order to gain intelligence of the applicant's strategy and negotiation positions. The documents in question contained correspondence between the government of Timor-Leste and its legal advisers, relating to the pending "Arbitration under the Timor Sea Treaty of 20 May 2002" between the two states. Timor-Leste contended that Australia, through seizure and detention of these documents and data, had violated its sovereignty and state property under international law, further requesting that Australia should issue a formal apology and immediately return the documents and data, as well as any copies of the material.

On 03/03/14, the Court ordered Australia not to use the seized materials to the disadvantage of Timor-Leste until the case has been concluded and to keep the seized documents under seal. Furthermore, Australia was ordered not to interfere in any way in communications between Timor-Leste and its legal advisers in relation to the pending "Arbitration under the Timor Sea Treaty of 20 May 2002" between the two States or with "any future bilateral negotiations concerning maritime delimitation."

In March 2015, Australia indicated that it wished to return the seized documents and data, requesting a modification of the ICJ Order from 03/03/14, so far as to allow for the return of the documents to the legal adviser they had been taken from, which was granted by the Court on April 22. Through a joint letter dating June 2, both parties "confirmed to the Court that Australia had returned the sensitive documents and data in question." The case was subsequently taken off the Court's list on June 11 June, at the request of Timor-Leste.

COSTA RICA v. NICARAGUA / NICARAGUA v. COSTA RICA

On December 16 the ICJ delivered its final judgment in the joined cases "Certain Activities carried out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua)" and "Construction

of a Road in Costa Rica along the San Juan River (Nicaragua v. Costa Rica)" [→ Nicaragua – Costa Rica (Río San Juan)].

On 11/18/10, the Republic of Costa Rica instituted proceedings against the Republic of Nicaragua, contending that the latter had invaded and occupied Costa Rican territory, where it dug a channel and conducted works in "violation of its international obligations." On 12/22/11, Nicaragua instituted proceedings against Costa Rica, alleging that Costa Rica had breached procedural and substantive obligations in connection with the construction of "Route 1856 Juan Rafael Mora Porras" and that this construction resulted in substantive environmental consequences. By two separate Orders on 04/17/13 the Court joined the proceedings of both cases. Disagreements regarding Costa Rica's navigational rights under the 1858 Treaty had previously been settled by the ICJ in 2009.

The Parties had concluded a Treaty of Limits in 1858, fixing the course of the disputed boundary, and the validity of the 1858 Treaty was subsequently confirmed by the 1888 Arbitral Award of United States President Grover Cleveland and Awards rendered during the demarcation commissions in 1896.

Based on an analysis of these, the Court established in the "Costa Rica v. Nicaragua" that sovereignty over the disputed territory belongs to Costa Rica. Further, the ICJ concluded that Nicaragua's activities in the territory since 2010, including the excavation of three channels and establishment of a military presence in parts of the region, though not of a "hostile" nature, had breached Costa Rica's territorial sovereignty. The Court decided that Nicaragua "bears the obligation to make reparation for any damage induced by its unlawful activities on Costa Rican territory." Both Parties were given twelve months to negotiate a settlement on the compensation for the material damages ensued by Nicaragua's unlawful actions on the territory, after which the Court will, at the request of either party, determine the amount of compensation necessary. eud

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first permanent, treaty-based, international and autonomous criminal court of its kind and is governed by the Rome Statute. It was instituted to "end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community" - war crimes, the crime of aggression, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide.

UKRAINE

Following its first declaration under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute in April 2014, the government of Ukraine lodged its second declaration with the Registrar of the ICC under the same article on September 8, recognising the Court's jurisdiction with regard to alleged crimes committed "in the territory of Ukraine since 20 February 2014." On April 25, the ICC opened a preliminary investigation of the situation in Ukraine "as a matter of policy and practice," its original focus being the events of the "Maidan" [→ Ukraine (Opposition)]. Ukraine's second declaration allowed for the "temporal scope" of the current preliminary examination to be extended in so far as to encompass any alleged crimes carried out on its territory since 02/20/14.

GEORGIA

The situation in Georgia has been under preliminary examination since August 2008, when clashes occurred between

breakaway region South Ossetia and Georgia, subsequently escalating into an armed conflict involving the Russian Federation [→ Georgia (South Ossetia)]. On October 8, the Presidency of the ICC assigned the situation in Georgia to Pre-Trial Chamber I. After finding that there were reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed in Georgia during that time, Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda requested the judges to authorize the opening of a formal investigation on October 13. On November 3, Georgia became the twenty-sixth State to have ratified the amendments to Article 8 of the Rome Statute on war crimes. The prosecutor alleged that crimes were committed as part of an offensive to forcibly displace ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia, in addition to “intentional attacks on peacekeepers and peacekeeping facilities by Georgian as well and South Ossetian forces.”

PALESTINE

On January 1, the Government of Palestine lodged a declaration under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, acknowledging the jurisdiction of the ICC over alleged crimes committed “in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, since June 13, 2014” [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. Subsequently, the entity acceded to the Rome Statute on January 2. A preliminary investigation of the situation in Palestine was opened by the Prosecutor on January 16. On April 1, Palestine became the 123rd State Party to the Rome Statute.

MALI

“The Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi” constituted the first case with regard to the ICC Prosecutor’s investigation of the situation in Mali, and the alleged crimes committed on its territory since January 2012. It was also the first ICC case regarding the destruction of cultural heritage as a war crime. On September 26, “the authorities of Niger surrendered Mr. al-Faqi (known as Abu Tourab) to the ICC,” following an arrest warrant charging him with war crimes concerning the intentional destruction of religious and historical monuments in Timbuktu during the time period between 06/30/12 and 07/10/12. According to the arrest warrant issued, there was reason to believe that an armed conflict of non-international character had begun in January 2012 and was ongoing in Mali when the alleged acts occurred. During this timeframe, Timbuktu was “under the control of armed groups, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar al-Din, a mainly Tuareg movement associated with AQIM” [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad); Mali (Islamist groups)]. Allegedly, al-Faqi was an “active personality” during the occupation of Timbuktu: It is believed that he was a member of the militant Islamist group Ansar al-Din, having had close working connections with its leaders, and that al-Faqi was “at the head of the Heshbah (“Manners Brigade”) until September 2012, executing the decisions of the Islamic Court of Timbuktu.” Al-Faqi first appeared before the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber I on September 30 where it was found that the case could proceed, as the evidence presented established reasonable grounds to believe that al-Faqi was criminally responsible for attacks directed against nine mausoleums and the Sidi Yahia mosque in Timbuktu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

UGANDA

The alleged Brigade Commander of the Sinia Brigade of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), Dominic Ongwen, was brought under the custody of the Court on January 16 - ten years after the arrest warrant against him had been issued. The

initial warrant listed seven counts on the basis of his individual criminal responsibility “allegedly committed on or about 20 May 2004 at the Lukodi IDP Camp in the Gulu District, Uganda: for three counts of crimes against humanity (murder; enslavement; and other inhumane acts) and four counts of war crimes (murder; cruel treatment; attacks against the civilian population; and pillaging)” [→ Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA)]. Mr Ongwen’s initial appearance hearing before the Court took place on January 26. On February 6, so as not to delay the proceedings against him and since the other three suspects had not been apprehended yet, Dominic Ongwen’s case was severed from “The Prosecutor v. Joseph Kony, Vincent Otti, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen”. On December 21, Ongwen was charged with crimes further to those set out in the arrest warrant, summing up to seventy counts in total. Relating to attacks on the Odek, Pajule and Abok IDP camps, the charges brought against Ongwen included, among others: “murder, torture, cruel treatment, attacks on the civilian population, enslavement, pillaging, destruction of property, and persecution”. Further charges against Ongwen involved “sexual and gender based crimes such as forced marriage, rape, sexual slavery and enslavement, committed from 2002-2005 in Sinia Brigade”, as well as the “conscripted and use of children under the age of 15 to actively participate in hostilities”. Proceedings against the alleged LRA Deputy Army Commander, Mr Okot Odhiambo, were terminated on September 10, after forensic confirmation of his death.

CÔTE D’IVOIRE

Laurent Gbagbo, former President of Côte d’Ivoire, and Charles Blé Goudé stood accused of four counts of crimes against humanity allegedly carried out during the post-electoral violence from 12/16/10 until 04/12/11 in Abidjan. While the charges against both had been established separately on 06/12/14 and 12/11/14, Trial Chamber I joined the two cases on March 11, so as to allow for more efficient and expedient proceedings.

On May 27, the separate case of Simone Gbagbo was declared “admissible before the Court.” Gbagbo was charged with allegedly “carrying individual criminal responsibility as an “indirect co-perpetrator” for four counts of crimes against humanity.” The case remained in its pre-trial phase, with Gbagbo not being in custody of the Court.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In “The Prosecutor v. Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui” the Appeals Chamber of the ICC confirmed on February 27 the controversial acquittal of the charges of “crimes against humanity (murder, rape, sexual slavery) and war crimes (using children under the age of 15 to take active part in the hostilities; directing an attack against a civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities; wilful killing; destruction of property; pillaging; sexual slavery and rape)” against Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui. The alleged former leader of the National Integrationist Front (FNI) had previously been released on 12/21/12. The acts were allegedly committed on 02/24/03, when an attack was carried out on Bogoro village in Ituri district, Orientale province [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Mathieu Ngudjolo Chui was first acquitted on 12/18/12, after which the verdict was appealed on 20 December 2012 by the Office of the Prosecutor.

The trial in “The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda” was opened on September 2 before the Court’s Trial Chamber VI. Ntaganda was accused of thirteen counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity. The acts were alleged

to have been committed in Ituri district in 2002 and 2003. Ntaganda, former Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Patriotic Force for the Liberation of Congo (FPLC), remained in the Court's custody.

On December 19, Germain Katanga former commander of the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI), sentenced in 2014, and Thomas Lubanga Dyilo former leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), sentenced 2012, were transferred to the capital Kinshasa, to serve their individual sentences of imprisonment [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. This decision marked the "first time the ICC has designated a state for the administration of imprisonments' sentences." Lubanga was found guilty of war crimes and sentenced, by Trial Chamber I on 07/10/12, to 14 years of imprisonment, while Katanga was sentenced to twelve years of imprisonment on 23 May 2014 and found guilty (as an accessory) of one count of crime against humanity and four counts of war crimes. On November 3, the Trust Fund for Victims filed a "draft implementation plan for collective reparations to victims in the case against Mr Thomas Lubanga Dyilo." Referred to the Court by the Congolese government in 2004, the situation in the country remains under investigation. eud

Conflict Issues

INTERNATIONAL POWER & TERRITORY

In 2015, 65 of all 75 interstate conflicts revolved around international power and/or territory. Ten of those conflicts reached the level of a violent crisis and were distributed across the Middle East and Maghreb (5), Asia and Oceania (3), Europe (1), and Sub-Saharan Africa (1). Nine of these cases related to territory and six of them to the struggle for international power. After the de-escalation of the limited war between Pakistan and India, no highly violent interstate conflict was observed in 2015. The remaining 55 conflicts were of low intensity, divided into 29 non-violent crises and 26 disputes. Conflicts over territory accounted for a total of 46, with 14 of the disputed territories being located in Asia, eleven in the Americas, nine in Europe, and five each in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Middle East and Maghreb. A total of 16 cases saw the combination of both territorial issues and international power struggles. Just over half of them were fought in Asia and Oceania. Apart from the eight violent territorial conflicts, another 18 cases saw a threat to use force or the imposition of sanctions, defining the level of a non-violent crisis. A total of 19 territorial conflicts were conducted as disputes.

International power struggles, i.e. conflicts over changes in the power structure of the international system or one of its regional subsystems, totaled 35. About one third of them was located each in Europe (11) and Asia and Oceania (11), while nine of them were located in the Middle East and Maghreb, two in the Americas, and two in Sub-Saharan Africa. With the exception of one new conflict between Russia and Turkey that erupted in November over the Turkish downing of a Russian fighter jet, international power conflicts saw the use of violence only in cases that also involved territorial issues (5) [→ Turkey – Russia]. Most international power conflicts were conducted at the level of a non-violent crisis (21), compared to a number of eight conflicts remaining at dispute level.

In Europe, all interstate conflicts were conducted without the use of force. Only in the intercontinental conflict between Western powers and Russia, actors sought to transform the international system [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. The majority (11/17) of European interstate conflicts revolved around international power. Notably eight out of 17 European interstate conflicts were associated with domestic issues of national minorities, most noteworthy in the context of the violent crisis in the Caucasus [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan]. Minority issues were emphasized especially by Russia and Hungary in conflicts with their neighboring countries [→ Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities); Russia – Ukraine; Russia – Estonia; Russia – Lithuania].

Fourteen of the 21 interstate conflicts in Asia and Oceania revolved around territory and eleven over international power. All three observed violent crises between states revolved around international power and territory, but two also involved the issues of system/ideology or water [→ North Korea – South Korea; Pakistan – India]. In the territorial conflicts of North East Asia, history conceptions remained a prominent issue, although tensions eased over conciliatory steps taken by all sides. Japan and South Korea reached a major agreement on the “comfort women” issue, while Japan and the People’s Republic of China made progress towards reconciliation [→ Japan – South Korea; Japan – China (East China Sea)].

None of the 13 American interstate conflicts over international power and/or territory were conducted violently, but a total of seven cases saw threats of violence. Both the United Kingdom and Chile were involved in a dispute over Antarctic territory [→ United Kingdom – Chile (Antarctica)]. Seven interstate conflicts focused on territory as the sole contended

issue and, in four conflicts, states also sought control of resources. A new conflict emerged in 2015 between Venezuela and Guyana over maritime possessions and the Guayana Esquiba territory [→ Venezuela – Guyana].

The Middle East and Maghreb showed the highest ratio of violent interstate conflicts when compared to non-violent conflicts (4/12). The region was the center of three intercontinental conflicts revolving around power and/or system/ideology [→ Iran – USA; Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program); Syria – USA]. Two disputes in the Middle East and Maghreb concentrated solely on territory and one on international power [→ Iran – UAE; Egypt – Sudan (border); Turkey – Iraq].

Sub-Saharan Africa saw the lowest number of territorial and/or international power conflicts with a total of six. In the Great Lakes region, two non-violent crises over regional power also involved territorial claims [→ Burundi – Rwanda; DR Congo – Rwanda]. Sub-Saharan Africa’s only violent interstate conflict was fought over the oil-rich Abyei area [→ Sudan – South Sudan]. The only interstate conflicts over international power and/or territory were disputes over territory [→ Equatorial Guinea – Gabon (Mbanié, Cocotier, Conga islands); Ethiopia – Eritrea].

In 2015, a total of eleven conflicts between states from different continents were observed, all of them non-violent. Among them were six international power conflicts and three territorial conflicts. While among the latter, only the conflict between Argentina and the UK over the Falkland Islands involved threats of violence, all except one of the international power conflicts remained on crisis level. The US was a party to all five non-violent, international power crises and also to the territorial and resource dispute in the Arctic [→ Russia – Norway et al. (Arctic)]. Iran, Russia, and the EU were each involved in two intercontinental conflicts. Three intercontinental conflicts involved more than two parties [→ Russia – Norway et al. (Arctic); Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program); USA, EU et al. – Russia]. All three remained non-violent, as did six of the seven regional multilateral conflicts, excepting only the violent border crisis in the Central Asian Fergana Valley, which involved also non-state actors [→ Uzbekistan – Tajikistan – Kyrgyzstan (border communities / Fergana Valley)].

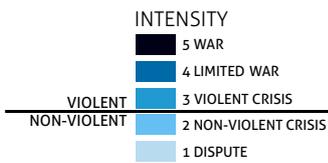
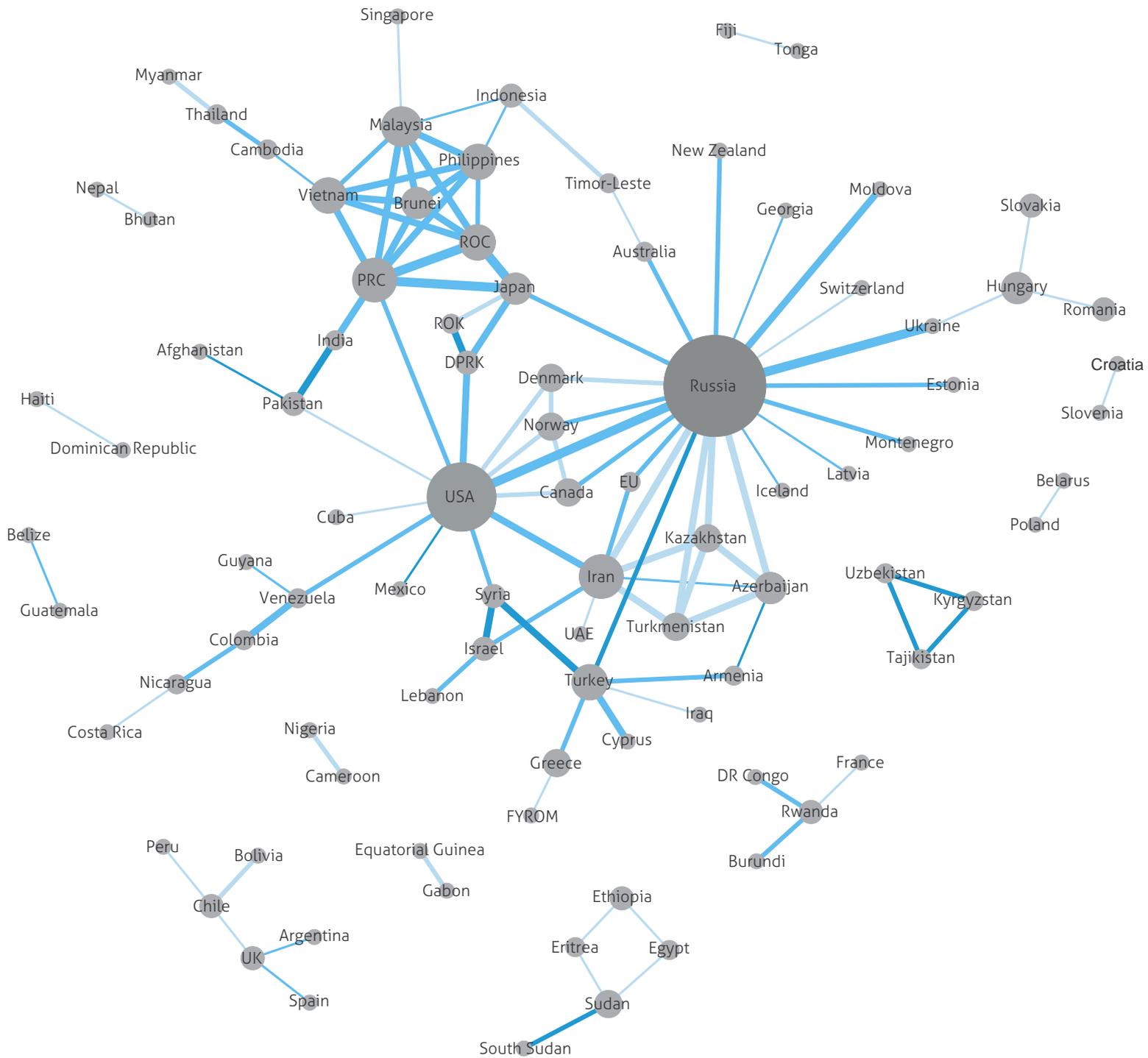
The conflicts over the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea, both involving US-led state coalitions, continued as non-violent crises [→ Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program); North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan]. While the Iranian case saw a considerable ease of tensions with the final nuclear agreement reached by the P5+1/E3+3 group on July 14, the North Korean case saw renewed nuclear threats by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and a partial extension of sanctions. On December 10, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un proclaimed the country’s readiness to detonate a hydrogen bomb.

The countries most frequently engaged in interstate conflict in 2015 were the US (12), Russia (9), Turkey (6), Iran (5), Japan (5), and the PRC (5). Accounting for multiple dyads within multilateral conflicts, the countries with the highest number of conflictive bilateral relationships were Russia (21), the US (12), Iran and the PRC (8), and Malaysia (7), with the EU member states counted as a single block.

As a supranational organization, the EU engaged in two conflicts as direct party, imposing collective sanctions [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia; Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program)]. Among EU member states, the UK (3), Hungary (3), and Greece (2) had the most conflictive bilateral relationships, with conflicts continuing between the UK and Spain, Slovenia and Croatia, as well as Hungary and its neighbors Romania and Slovakia [→ Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar); Slovenia – Croatia (border); Hun-

CONFLICT ISSUES

INTERSTATE CONFLICTS IN 2015



This network shows all conflictive bilateral relationships monitored in 2015. Node size is determined by the number of bilateral conflicts the state was involved in. Edges are sized according to the number of conflict issues and coloured by conflict intensity. The layout is force determined and independent components were placed adjacent to their regional affiliates. The EU is treated as an independent actor.

data: HIIK map: los

gary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities)].
jfr, ceb, lmp

SYSTEM/IDEOLOGY

The item system/ideology was assigned to a conflict if a conflict actor aspired a change to the ideological, religious, socioeconomic, or judicial orientation of the political system or a change to the regime type itself. In total, 155 of the 409 conflicts in 2015 involved the item system/ideology, which made it the most common conflict issue out of the ten conflict items this year.

While three conflicts in Mexico, Panama, and Yemen ended in 2015, Serbia saw the start of a conflict between Kosovar opposition parties and the government over the orientation of the political system and subnational predominance [→ Mexico (EPR / Guerrero); Panama (opposition); Yemen (opposition); Serbia (Kosovo / opposition)]. One third of all system/ideology conflicts changed their intensity in 2015, while two thirds continued at the same level of violence. Of the 28 cases of escalation, 23 turned violent. The former violent crises in Israel and the Philippines both reached a highly violent level [→ Israel (Hezbollah); Philippines (MILF)]. At the same time, 27 conflicts de-escalated. A total of 17 conflicts turned non-violent, while two wars de-escalated by one and two levels respectively [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al Sharia); Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian Territories)].

In 39 cases, system/ideology was the sole item. In 98 cases it was combined with one, 17 times with two, and one time with three additional conflict items. In 63 cases, conflict actors aspiring a change to the political system also sought national power, while natural resources were the additional claim in 24 cases. This was followed by subnational predominance (15), autonomy and secession (10), international power (9), territory (2), and the residual category other (2).

More than 60 percent of the system/ideology conflicts saw the use of violence (99). Nine extended to the level of a war, which means almost half of the 19 wars in 2015 revolved around system/ideology. Six out of 24 limited wars dealt with this item and 84 cases (out of 178) reached the level of a violent crisis. Furthermore, 31 non-violent crises and 25 disputes were counted.

About half of the intrastate conflicts worldwide included the item system ideology (134/280), while nine out of the 74 interstate conflicts had this item. Only the interstate conflict over territory, the orientation of the political system, and international power between North and South Korea reached a violent level [→ North Korea – South Korea], while intrastate conflicts were fought on a highly violent level (15).

While in Europe, Asia and Oceania, and in the Middle East and Maghreb system/ideology was the most frequent conflict item, it ranked second in the Americas and fourth in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most often it appeared in the Middle East and Maghreb (47/71) and Asia and Oceania (47/126). In total, 21 conflicts over the orientation of the political system were observed in the Americas (21/53) and 20, respectively, in Sub-Saharan Africa (20/97) and Europe (20/62).

The lowest share of violent system/ideology conflicts were observed in Europe, as half of the conflicts were conducted on a violent level (10/20). The region saw nine violent crises as well as one full-scale war in the Ukraine over the orientation of the political system, secession, and resources [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 15 out of 20 conflicts over system/ideology were violent, including three full-scale intrastate wars and one limited intrastate war.

The Americas showed the highest share of violent conflicts

over system/ideology, as 17 out of 21 conflicts were violent. However, among the violent conflicts over the orientation of the political system, there was no war and only one limited war could be observed [→ Colombia (FARC)].

Two thirds of the system/ideology conflicts in Asia and Oceania were violent (29/47), including one intrastate limited war in the Philippines and one war in Pakistan [→ Philippines (MILF); Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. In the Middle East and Maghreb, about 60 percent of the system/ideology conflicts were violent (28/47). Among these, four wars and three limited wars were counted. maw

NATIONAL POWER

In 2015, 93 out of 409 political conflicts worldwide revolved around the item national power, meaning the aim to govern a state. It was therefore the second most common conflict issue following system/ideology.

One new conflict erupted over national power in the Republic of Congo between opposition groups and President Denis Sassou Nguesso's Congolese Party of Labour (PCT) [→ Republic of Congo (opposition)]. In reaction to Nguesso's attempt to change the constitution, thereby enabling himself to run for president for a third time, thousands of protesters demanded his removal.

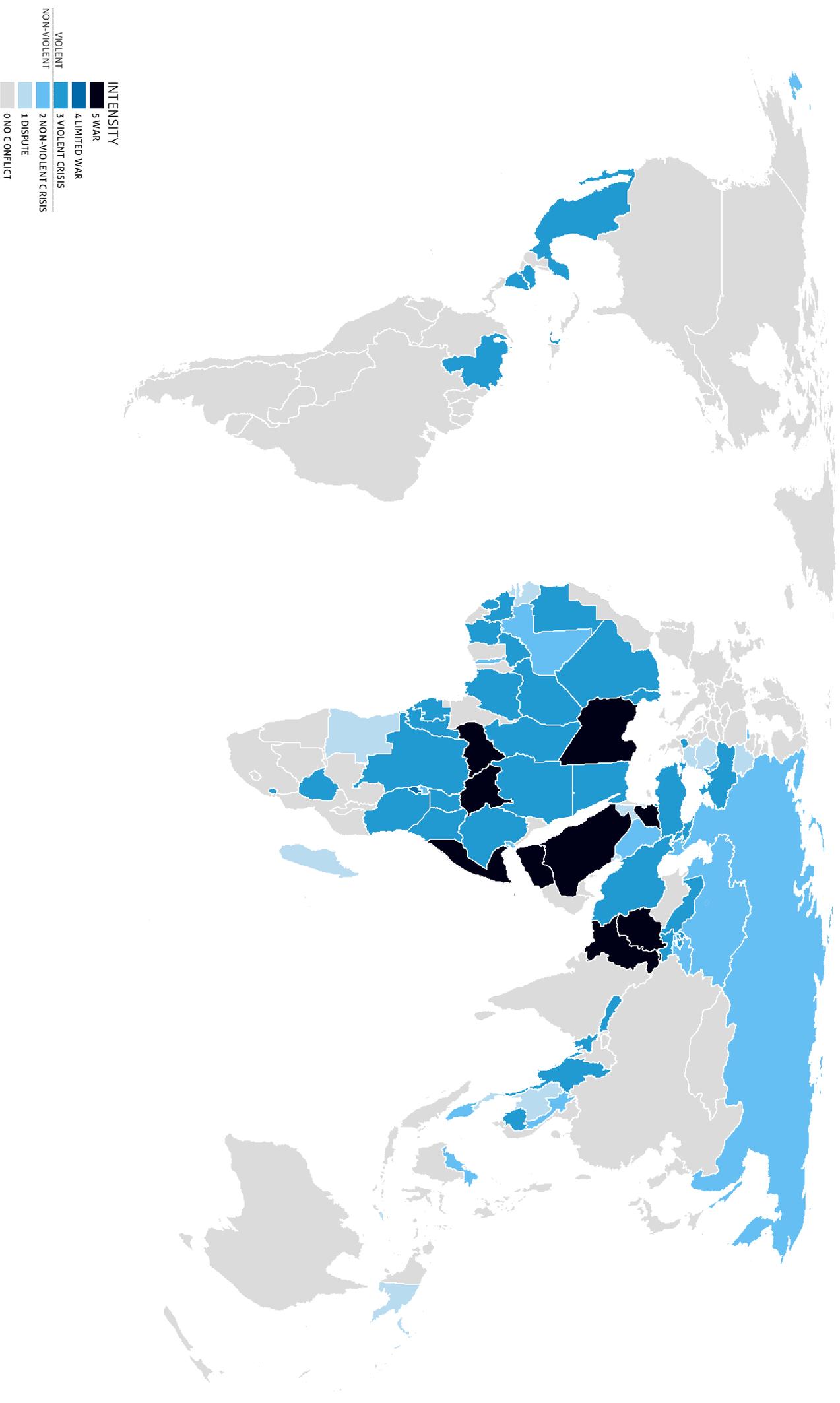
In contrast, the national power conflict in Madagascar ended when former president Marc Ravalomanana accepted the legitimacy of the ruling government and the presidency. Subsequently, the house arrest he had lived under since his return to Madagascar in October 2014 was lifted. His return and legal status had been one major issue of the national reconciliation efforts since his ouster in early 2009.

The majority of national power conflicts were conducted at a violent level (57/93), comprising eleven highly violent conflicts. Eight out of 19 wars were fought over national power. This made national power the second most violent conflict item after system/ideology in 2015. With the exception of the conflict revolving around national power between Islamist groups and the government in Pakistan, all wars over central government control were observed in the Middle East and Maghreb (4) and Sub-Saharan Africa (3).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, national power was the most frequent conflict item (36/97). The war between Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups saw several attempts to negotiate in the first half of the year, while violence re-escalated in September [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. In Somalia, al-Shabaab continued to engage in heavy fighting with government and AMISOM forces while carrying out several attacks on Kenyan ground [→ Somalia (al-Shabaab)]. In South Sudan, the war between the SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) led by former vice president Riek Machar and the government of President Salva Kiir continued [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. The SPLM/A-IO continued to advocate a federalist reform, arguing this would help to overcome ethnic differences. Notably, the conflict increasingly concerned the control of oilfields.

In the Middle East and Maghreb, national power was the second most frequent conflict item after system/ideology (22/71). In terms of civilian fatalities, 2015 was the most fatal year in the war between the Taliban and the Afghan government since 2002, with at least 2,730 civilians killed as of October 31 [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. In 2015, numerous former Taliban fighters joined the so-called Islamic State [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Furthermore, the war in Libya between the House of Representatives and its internationally recognized government based in Tobruk and al-Bayda, on the one

NATIONAL POWER CONFLICTS IN 2015 (NATIONAL LEVEL)



hand, and the Tripoli-based General National Congress, on the other, continued [→ Libya (opposition)]. The Syrian opposition conflict saw renewed attempts by the international community to put an end to the violence that claimed more than 50,000 fatalities in 2015 alone [→ Syria (opposition)]. On December 18, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2254 outlining a road map for a ceasefire and a peace process. The war between the al-Houthi militants, on the one hand, and the government of Yemen as well as a Saudi-led military coalition, on the other, transformed the entire conflict landscape in the Yemen [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. Numerous actors previously fighting the government of Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi turned against the al-Houthis.

In other regions, national power played only a minor role in comparison to other items. In Europe, eleven out of 62 conflicts revolved around central government control, in the Americas five out of 53 conflicts, and in Asia and Oceania 19 out of 126.

Besides being the two most common conflict issues 2015, the combination of claims of national power and seeking change to the political system was more frequent than any other combination of conflict items. In 63 cases, actors sought national power and a change to the political system at the same time. In five cases, actors also claimed control of natural resources. While four out of the five conflicts were located in Sub-Saharan Africa, one took place in Asia and Oceania [→ Cambodia (opposition)]. tk

SECESSION

The year 2015 saw 48 conflicts over secession, with four highly violent, 21 low-violent and 23 non-violent cases. Numbering 19, most of the secession conflicts took place in Asia and Oceania, followed by Europe with 15 cases. Asia and Oceania also showed the highest figure of violent secession conflicts, numbering 13. While in the Americas no violent conflict over secession was observed, the Middle East and Maghreb witnessed five and Sub-Saharan Africa three. In 19 cases secession conflicts were combined with at least one more conflict issue. Most commonly, secession was combined with system/ideology or natural resources (10).

Four of the 15 European conflicts over secession were fought violently in 2015, with the region's only war being observed in Ukraine. The war over the status of the Donbas region between several militant anti-government groups, supported by Russia, and the Ukrainian government, supported by Western countries, left at least 4,300 people dead, tens of thousands injured, and at least 985,000 people displaced by the end of the year [→ Ukraine (Donbas)].

In Russia's Northern Caucasus region, the conflict over secession and system/ideology between Islamist militant groups fighting under the umbrella of the Caucasian Emirate (CE), on the one hand, and the central as well as regional governments, on the other, de-escalated to the level of a violent crisis [→ Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)]. Although the number of CE attacks significantly decreased, over 200 people were killed in the conflict. The violent crisis over the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan continued [→ Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. The regional government of Nagorno-Karabakh held parliamentary elections, which, however, were not recognized by the government, the EU, NATO, and the OSCE. The conflict over the secession of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom saw renewed violent clashes in Belfast between Loyalists and the police [→ United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland)].

Non-violent crises over secession could be observed in

Cyprus, Georgia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Notably Russian Armed Forces conducted joint military exercises in the Georgian regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia [→ Georgia (Abkhazia); Georgia (South Ossetia)]. Secession disputes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Serbia, and Spain continued on the same level. Two of the 15 secession conflicts in Europe revolved around the issue of the orientation of the political system, while three cases included claims for natural resources.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, eight conflicts were fought over a territory's secession from a state. Nigeria and Senegal both saw the escalation of conflicts to a violent level. In Nigeria, the Igbo-based Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra demanded an independent state of Biafra in the oil-rich Niger delta region since 1967 [→ Nigeria (MASSOB / Biafra)]. Since 1982, the Diola-based Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance demanded independence for Senegal's Casamance region [→ Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)]. The Oromo Liberation Front continued its violent struggle for the secession of the Oromiya region in Ethiopia [→ Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)].

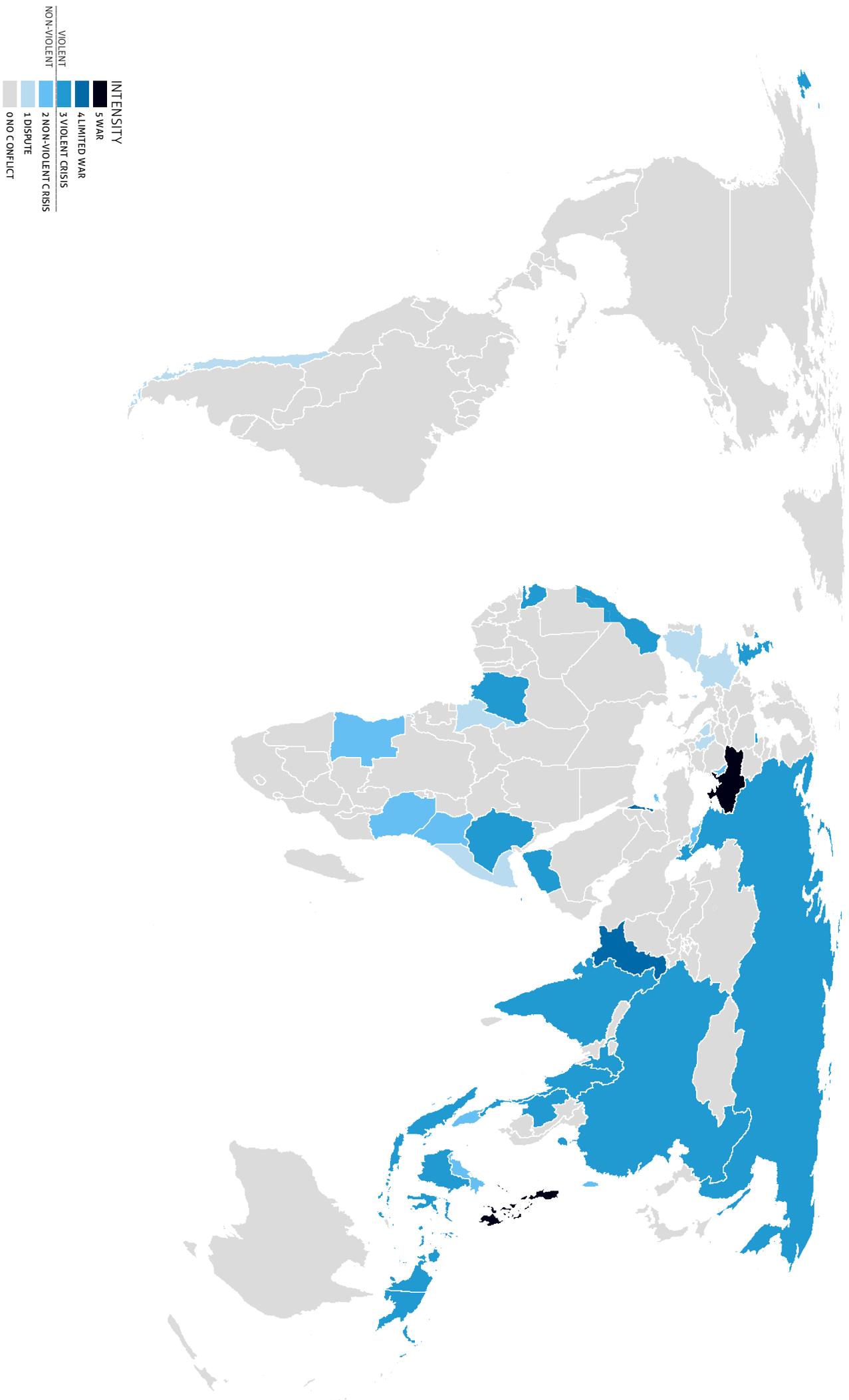
The two conflicts over the secession of the Kenyan coast and the Tanzanian island of Zanzibar de-escalated to a non-violent level. Likewise, the conflict over the status of Angola's oil-rich enclave Cabinda de-escalated to a non-violent crisis despite the Front for Liberation of the Enclave Cabinda threatening to return to violent means after accusing the government of murdering one of its leaders [→ Angola (FLEC / Cabinda)]. Furthermore, no settlements were reached in the disputes between the self-declared government of Somaliland and the government of Somalia as well as in the Cameroon's Bakassi region [→ Somalia (Somaliland); Cameroon (militants / Bakassi)]. Only two conflicts saw the combination with other items: While the Uamsho movement in Tanzania's Zanzibar island demanded the change of the political system, in Angola, the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda sought the control of oil.

Asia and Oceania witnessed 19 conflicts over secession, with 13 being fought on a violent level. While the total number of violent conflicts remained constant, two conflicts escalated to a violent level and two others turned non-violent [→ India (Sikhs); Philippines (MNLF)]; India (NLFT factions, ATTF / Tripura); Malaysia (Sulu Sultanate Supporters / Lahad Datu District)]. In two cases, secession conflicts were fought on a highly violent level. The conflict between BIFM and BIFF, on the one hand, and MILF and the government of the Philippines, on the other, escalated from a limited war to a war [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)].

In Pakistan, Baloch nationalists and the government intensified their fighting to the level of a limited war [→ Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)]. The secession conflict between Uyghurs and the government de-escalated from a limited war to a violent crisis [→ China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)]. Although the number of fatalities decreased in comparison to the previous year, violence was observed almost every month. In addition, the secession conflict in the Philippines between the MNLF and the government, lasting since 1969, turned violent in 2015 [→ Philippines (MNLF)]. In general, around half of the secession conflicts were combined with other strategic goals such as the orientation of the political system, resources, and subnational predominance.

All five conflicts over secession in the Middle East and Maghreb were fought on a violent level, four of them as a violent crisis. The limited war between Jabhat al-Nusra and other Sunni militant groups, on the one hand, and the Lebanese government and Hezbollah, on the other, contin-

SECESSION CONFLICTS IN 2015 (NATIONAL LEVEL)



ued [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. The 2014 war over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state between Hamas and the Israeli government de-escalated to a low-violent level [→ Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian Territories)]. The violent crisis between the Palestinian National Authority led by al-Fatah party and the Israeli government continued at the same intensity level [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. The status of the Western Sahara region remained the object of a violent crisis between the Popular Front of the Liberation of Saguia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro and the government of Morocco [→ Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara)]. On several occasions, the police violently dispersed protesters supporting the group. In the Yemen, the Southern Mobility Movement (SMM) shifted its focus to the fight against al-Houthi rebels but continued to engage in violent clashes with government forces [→ Yemen (SMM / South Yemen)]. Three of the five secession conflicts in the region revolved around the orientation of the political system. In the Americas, only one secession conflict was observed in 2015, being the dispute between the Rapa Nui and the Chilean government over the status of the Easter Island [→ Chile (Rapa Nui / Easter Island)].
jli, lxl, cwl, emh

AUTONOMY

A total of 62 autonomy conflicts could be observed in 2015, of which 26 were violent with five being highly violent. Most of the autonomy conflicts took place in Asia and Oceania (24), followed by Europe (13) and Sub-Saharan Africa (12). Asia and Oceania was also the region witnessing the highest figure of violent autonomy conflicts (12). Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and Maghreb followed with five violent autonomy conflicts each. In 31 cases actors had additional strategic goals, most frequently the control of natural resources (19) and the orientation of the national or international political system (10). One of the 13 autonomy conflicts in Europe was fought on a violent level, marking a decrease by one compared to 2014 [→ FYROM (Albanian minority)]. The previously violent conflict between the Serbian minority and the Kosovar government de-escalated by two levels to a dispute against the backdrop of the normalization process which had been initiated in 2013 [→ Serbia (Serbian minority – Kosovar government)]. Compared to the global average, actors involved in autonomy conflicts in Europe rarely pursued other conflict issues. The Serbian minority in Kosovo aimed at both an enhancement of their autonomy rights and a pro-Serbian orientation of the political system. Secondly, the Hungarian government engaged in a struggle for enhanced autonomy of its national minorities settling in Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, thereby trying to enlarge its international power [→ Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities)]. Five of the twelve autonomy conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa were pursued on a violent level. Two out of three wars over autonomy worldwide continued to be observed in Sudan [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North/South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. While the autonomy strife of the SPLM/A-North in the regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile continued on war level in its fifth consecutive year, the war in Darfur continued in its 13th consecutive year. Other violent conflicts took place in Ethiopia, Mali, and Mozambique [→ Ethiopia (ONLF / Ogaden); Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad); Mozambique (RENAMO)]. The confrontation between the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization and the Eritrean government as well as the conflict between the Bakonzo tribe and the government of Uganda both de-escalated to non-violent crises

[→ Eritrea (RSADO); Uganda (Bakonzo / Rwenzururu)]. As no threats of violence could be observed in 2015, the conflict between the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People and the Nigerian government de-escalated to a dispute [→ Nigeria (MOSOP, Ogoni / Niger Delta)]. Further three disputes over autonomy continued in Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda [→ Somalia (Puntland); Sudan (Eastern Front); Uganda (Baganda / Buganda)]. Five autonomy conflicts included the claim for natural resources.

In the Americas, five conflicts over autonomy were observed, of which three reached the level of a violent crisis. A new violent conflict over autonomy and resources in the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region of Nicaragua emerged between members of the Miskito indigenous community and the government [→ Nicaragua (indigenous groups)]. In contrast, the violent crisis between various indigenous groups and the Brazilian government over autonomy, hydroelectric projects, and the demarcation of indigenous territories de-escalated to a dispute [→ Brazil (indigenous groups)]. All autonomy conflicts also involved the claim for natural resources, two of them additionally the strife for a change to the political system. For instance, the indigenous Zapatista Army of National Liberation in Chiapas, Mexico, continued to fight for increased autonomy, the attainment of ore and farmland, as well as the establishment of direct democracy [→ Mexico (EZLN / Chiapas)].

Out of the 24 autonomy conflicts observed in Asia and Oceania, twelve saw the use of violence, with two of them reaching the level of a limited war. The limited war between militant Kachin and the government of Myanmar over the autonomy of Kachin State continued [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. Meanwhile, the conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the government of the Philippines over autonomy of the Bangsamoro Republic escalated from a violent crisis to a limited war [→ Philippines (MILF)]. In both cases, the conflict parties were also striving for resources, i.e. jade, ruby, farmland, and timber in Kachin as well as gold, copper, and rubber in the Philippines. Additionally, the MILF aimed at changing the orientation of the political system. Four autonomy conflicts in the region escalated to a violent crisis. Lethal attacks by militant Hmar against the Indian government and vice versa were conducted for the first time since 2008 [→ India (HPC-D / Mizoram, Manipur, Assam)].

Nepal saw a violent escalation in its Terai region as well as in the eastern Kosi zone [→ Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai), Nepal (Kiratis / Kosi, Mechi, Sagarmatha)]. Especially in the Terai, violence increased when Madhesis blocked the border to India, protesting against the constitution promulgated in September. Furthermore, protests by Indian Sikhs, some of them demanding autonomy some secession, turned violent [→ India (Sikhs)]. In contrast, four conflicts de-escalated to a non-violent level. For instance, Hong Kong pro-democracy groups continued their protests, with no fatalities being reported [→ China (Hong Kong pro-democracy groups)]. In total, 14 of the 24 autonomy conflicts involved at least one additional political goal. In eight cases resources were an issue in the conflict, as was the orientation of the political system in five other cases. Besides the MILF in the Philippines, Tibetans also demanded an enlargement of autonomy, a change to the political system, and access to farmland and water [→ China (Tibet)].

In the Middle East and Maghreb, five violent and three non-violent autonomy conflicts could be observed. The conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the government of Turkey escalated to war level after both parties had ended the 2013 ceasefire [→ Turkey (PKK)]. In Iran, the conflict

between the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan and the government escalated to a violent level, while Sunni armed groups continued to engage in violent attacks on government forces, with some them allegedly attempting to join the so-called Islamic State [→ Iran (PJAK / Kurdish Areas); Iran (Jundallah et al. / Sistan Baluchistan); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

Conflicts over autonomy of Kurds in Syria and Yemeni tribes in the Ma'rib region continued to be fought on a violent level [→ Syria (Kurdish groups); Yemen (tribes / Ma'rib)]. The autonomy conflict between Kabylia Berbers and the Algerian government turned non-violent [→ Algeria (Berbers / Kabylia)]. Furthermore, the formerly non-violent crisis between Cyrenaica federalists and the Libyan government de-escalated to a dispute [→ Libya (Federalists / Cyrenaica)]. The dispute between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the central government of Iraq continued due to tensions over the control of the oil trade with Turkey and the status of Kirkuk [→ Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)].
jli, lxl, cwl, emh

SUBNATIONAL PREDOMINANCE

In 2015, there were 87 conflicts attributed to the item subnational predominance, defined as the attainment of the de facto control of a territory or population. Of those, 34 conflicts also involved claims for natural resources, making subnational predominance and resources the most common item combination (34/87). In 37 cases, actors fought solely over the de facto control of a territory or population. Conflicts over subnational predominance tended to be comparatively more violent than conflicts that revolved around other conflict issues. In total, 24 conflicts were conducted on a highly violent level, including six wars. With 13 conflicts, the region of Sub-Saharan Africa saw the highest number of wars and limited wars over subnational predominance in 2015, followed by the Americas with six highly violent conflicts.

In Asia and Oceania, approx. a quarter of all conflicts revolved around subnational predominance (31/126), of which 23 were conducted violently. The Philippines saw the only war over subnational predominance in the region [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and government forces frequently clashed throughout the year, resulting in at least 250 deaths. Of the 23 violent conflicts over subnational predominance, six also included the claim for natural resources. In these cases, the importance of each item varied from predominantly resource-related conflicts to those with actors predominantly aiming at subnational predominance.

Out of the 97 conflicts observed in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2015, almost a third were related to subnational predominance (30/97). In total, 25 of these were fought violently, among them ten limited and three full-scale wars. In Nigeria, farmers appealed to their right to use their ancestor's farmland in the context of increasing desertification, while Fulani nomads claimed the areas as grazing areas for their cattle [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. Two wars between militias attached to local communities continued in Sudan and South Sudan [→ Sudan (inter-communal violence); South Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. Ten highly violent conflicts over local de facto control also included the claim for natural resources (10/13).

In the Americas, twelve out of 53 conflicts revolved around subnational predominance. All conflicts were violent, with six being highly violent, including one war between drug cartels and the Mexican government [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Furthermore, in nine cases, non-state actors sought control of natural resources. The only three conflicts also involving the

item system/ideology were observed in Colombia and Peru [→ Colombia (FARC); Colombia (ELN); Peru (Shining Path)]. A total of twelve out of 71 conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb region comprised the item subnational predominance, of which only the conflict between al-Fatah and Hamas was carried out non-violently [→ Israel (al-Fatah – Hamas)]. The only war over subnational predominance in the region was observed in the Yemen [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. Al-Houthi militants expelled the government of President Abed Rabbo Mansur Hadi from the country, engaging in heavy fighting with pro-government troops, local militias, and a Saudi-led military coalition in the Yemen and at the border to Saudi Arabia. In Europe, only two out of 62 conflicts revolved around subnational predominance [→ Bosnia and Herzegovina (Islamist militant groups); Serbia (Kosovo – opposition)]. In both cases, actors sought local de facto control non-violently, also contesting the orientation of the respective political system.
iro, jkr

NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2015, a total of 98 conflicts revolved around the ownership of natural resources and raw materials for actual usage or trade therewith. The most resource-related conflicts took place in the Americas, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia and Oceania, with the number of cases ranging from 26 to 28. In Europe (8) and the Middle East and Maghreb (9), the overall number was significantly lower. In relation to the total number of conflicts by regions, actors contested resources in about half of the conflicts in the Americas and in nearly one third of the conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, while natural resources were a conflict issue in less than a fifth of all conflicts in the other three regions.

The majority of conflicts were carried out violently with a total of 25 conflicts being highly violent, of which nine reached the level of war. The region most prone to highly violent conflicts over resources was Sub-Saharan Africa (13), followed by the Americas (5), Asia and Oceania (4), the Middle East and Maghreb (2), and lastly Europe with only one violent conflict over the Donbas-region in Ukraine. On average, the most violent conflicts were those in which actors combined their claim for resources with the de facto control of territory or population. This was followed by resource conflicts linked to the aim of changing the orientation of a political system.

In total, more than one fourth of all interstate conflicts (20/74) in 2015 involved the claim for resources, in the majority of which actors also aimed at changing the course of an international border, thereby making resources and territory the most prevalent combination of conflict items in interstate conflicts. Only three interstate conflicts were violent, however, none of them highly violent. Pakistan and India competed over the usage of the Indus river water, similarly Syria and Israel continued to rival over the status of the Golan Heights and its water resources, and Sudan and South Sudan contended for the oil-rich border region of Abyei.

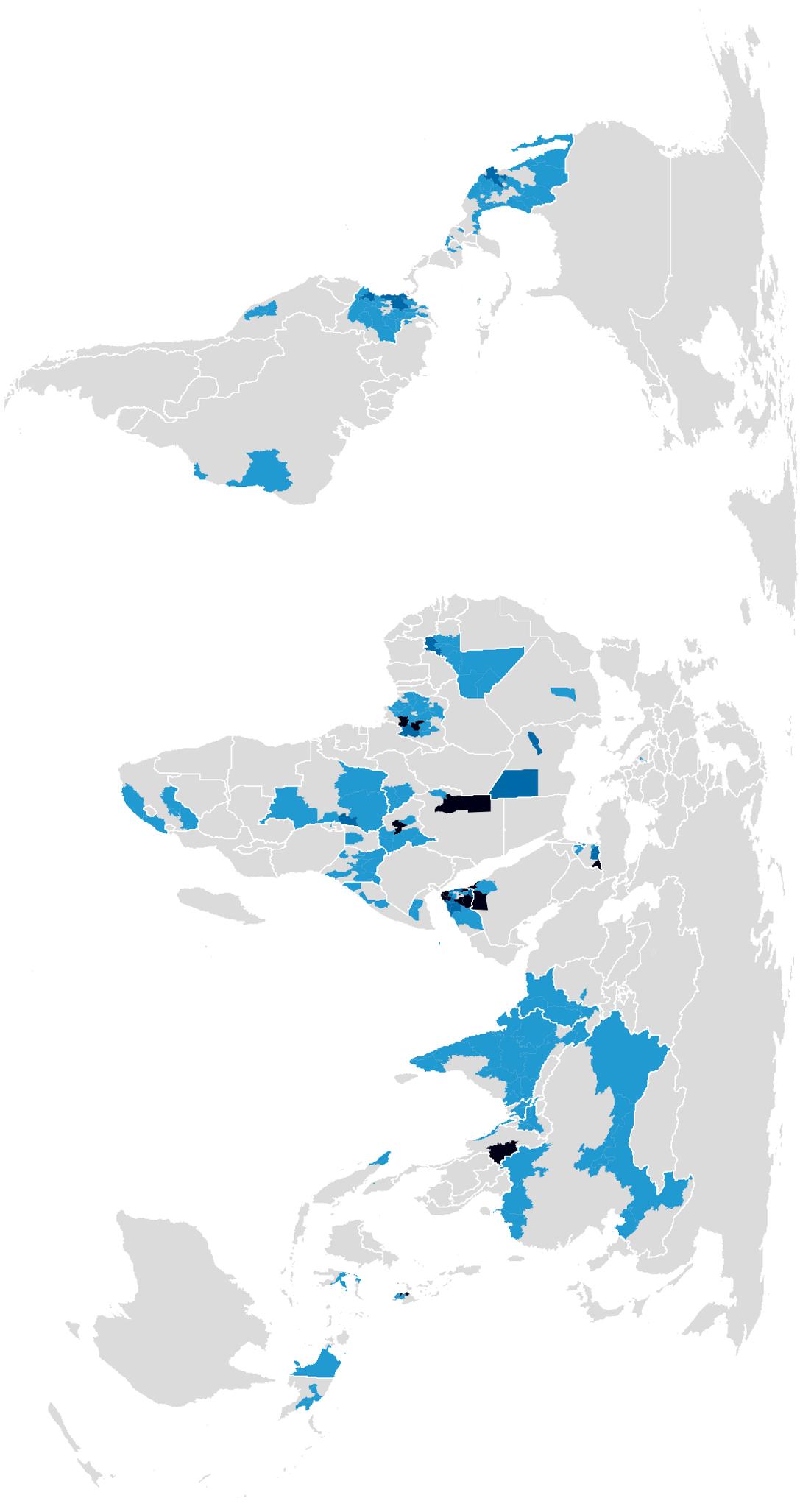
In terms of specific resources, conflicts over cattle were confined to Sub-Saharan Africa only, with all of them being carried out highly violently. Similarly, around 90 percent of conflicts related to plant-based drugs were violent, with approx. half of them being highly violent. Of a total of 40 conflicts over hydrocarbons, eight were highly violent with five being wars, thus not indicating a clear propensity for large-scale violence.

In Asia and Oceania, 28 conflicts encompassed the item resources. Nine conflicts revolved around hydrocarbons and

VIOLENT SUBNATIONAL PREDOMINANCE CONFLICTS IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS
- NO VIOLENT CONFLICT



ore respectively, with gold and copper being the most contested metals. Regarding renewable resources, conflicts in Asia outnumbered all other regions, with water and farmland being claimed most frequently. Highly violent conflicts linked to resources occurred in Myanmar [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State); Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)], Pakistan [→ Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)] and the Philippines [→ Philippines (MILF)].

A total of 13 other violent resource conflicts were observed all over the region. The most disputed resource was arable land [e.g. → Japan – China (East China Sea), Philippines (MILF); Papua New Guinea (socioeconomic protests)], followed by ore [e.g. → Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)], and water [e.g. → China – India, China (Tibet), Uzbekistan – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan]. Japan and China continued to non-violently claim control of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea in 2015. The uninhabited islands lie close to important shipping lanes and inherit rich fishing grounds. Moreover, in the late 1960s undersea oil reserves near the islands had been discovered.

The region of Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 27 resource-related conflicts, of which 18 were violent, and 13 highly violent. The most often disputed resource was oil, followed by ore, farmland, cattle, gemstones, and water. Nine highly violent conflicts over non-renewable resources such as ore, gemstones, and oil were fought in central Africa. With six limited wars, the DR Congo accounted for more than one third of all limited wars over resources in 2015 worldwide. Additionally, Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Sudan experienced five wars involving resources, making Sub-Saharan Africa the region most severely affected by resource-related violence in 2015.

Conflicts involving scarce agricultural resources such as farmland, cattle, or both experienced high intensities, with the average intensity amounting to the level of a limited war. In one of those conflicts, clashes between pastoralists and farmers in Nigeria's middle belt led to approx. 1,400 fatalities in 2015. As desertification had reduced fertile grounds, predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes appealed to their right to cultivate their ancestor's farmland, while mainly Muslim Fulani nomads claimed those as grazing areas for their cattle. As in other similar conflicts in the Sahel region, the conflict was further fueled by disagreements over identitarian (political, ethnic, and religious) issues. All aforementioned cases recorded frequent clashes and raids, leading to several hundred fatalities each year.

The Americas faced 26 resource-related conflicts. All four interstate conflicts remained non-violent, while, in contrast, 19 out of 22 sub- and intrastate conflicts were violent. Specifically, ten out of eleven conflicts over plant-based drugs, ten out of twelve conflicts over ore, and nine out of 13 conflicts over farmland were conducted violently. However, only conflicts with conflict parties engaging in drug trafficking were highly violent [e.g. → Mexico (drug cartels)]. Further, drug trafficking organizations engaged in several other resource-related activities like illegal mining and oil theft. Oil theft by

drug cartels especially constituted a challenge to the Mexican government. Facing an increase of over 40 percent of illegal pipeline taps connected to oil theft in 2014, the state-owned Mexican utility Pemex announced in February 2015 not to transport fully refined fuels in its pipelines anymore in order to impede oil theft.

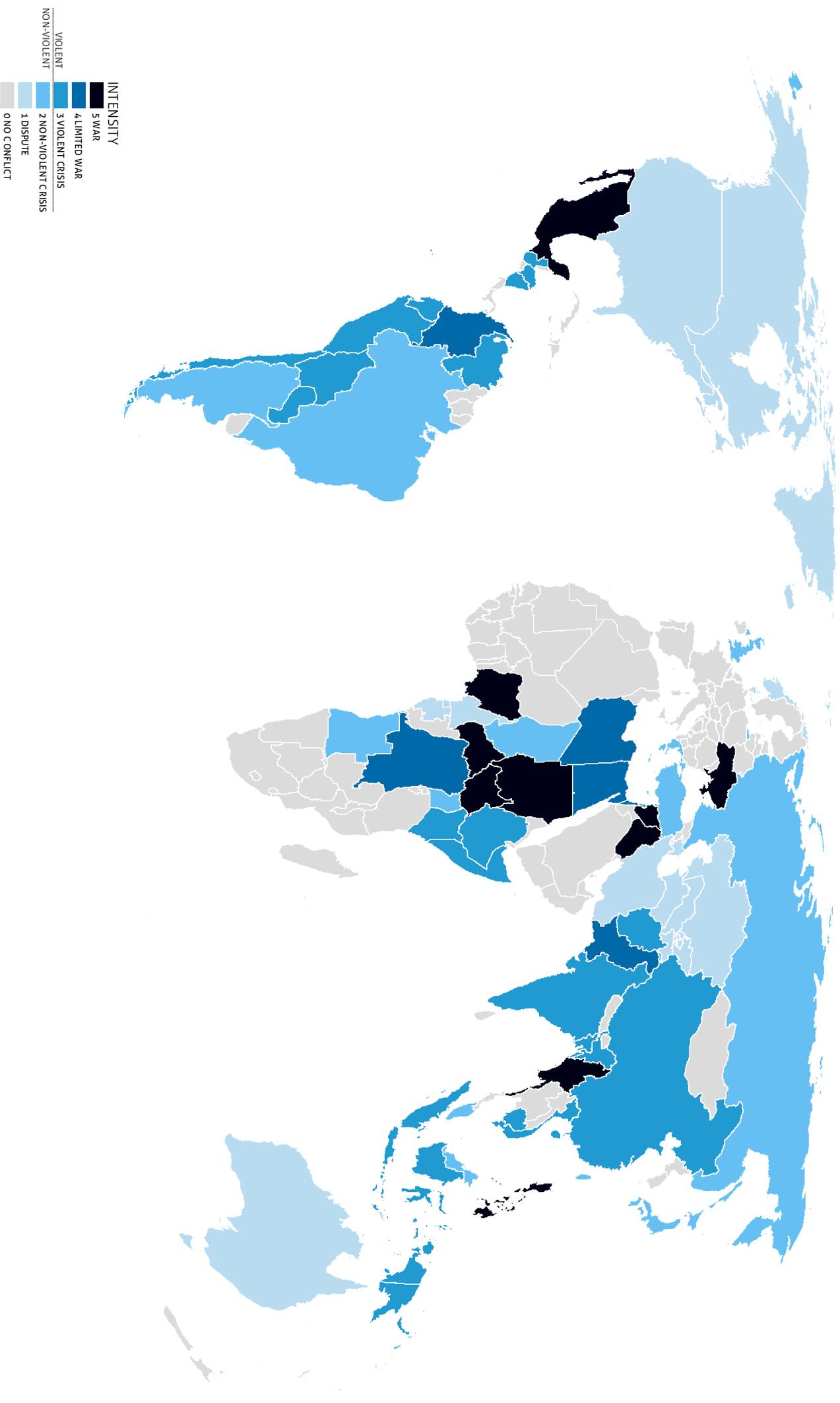
All five highly violent conflicts over ore revolved around drug-trafficking organizations engaging in illegal mining. For instance, the Colombian government sent 600 troops in May to raid 63 mining sites controlled by the FARC. Further conflicts over ore involved primarily protests exercised by opposition groups and local residents against mining projects like the Las Bambas mining site in Peru, where police forces shot dead four protesters when approx. 2,000 people tried to enter the mine on September 28 [→ Peru (opposition movements)].

In the Middle East and Maghreb region, the nine recorded conflicts over resources revolved around hydrocarbons and renewable resources such as water, farmland, and fishing grounds. Seven sub- and intrastate conflicts revolved around hydrocarbons, with only Kuchi nomads and Hazara tribes competing exclusively over farmland in Afghanistan [→ Afghanistan (Kuchi Nomads – Hazara)]. The Afghan Taliban allegedly supported the mainly Sunni Kuchi tribes against the Shiite Hazara in 2015 and, additionally, the so-called Islamic State (IS) targeted the Shiite tribes. The conflict between IS, on the one hand, and Syria, Iraq, numerous other governments, and militant groups, on the other, saw repeated airstrikes against oil infrastructure of the IS in Iraq [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

Of all resource-related conflicts in the region, only the dispute between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Iraqi government over autonomy and the distribution of oil revenues remained non-violent [→ Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)]. Syria's and Israel's conflict over water from the disputed area of the Golan Heights was the only resource-related interstate conflict of the region. Israel had seized the area from Syria in the 1967 Six Day War and annexed it in 1981, with the area now providing approx. one third of Israel's water supply. In early June 2015, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanded from the international community to acknowledge Israel's annexation.

In Europe, eight conflicts pertained to resources, with seven being conducted non-violently and one amounting to the level of a war [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Hydrocarbons were the most frequently claimed resource being contested in seven conflicts. Besides the secession conflict in Donbas, Ukraine, all resource-related conflicts were linked to claims for territorial waters. In the Mediterranean Sea, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, and Northern Cyprus upheld their interests. Two further conflicts over resources focused on the Caspian Sea and the Arctic. As such, in the Arctic, hydrocarbons, ore, and fishing grounds were claimed by Russia, Denmark, Canada, Norway, and the United States. On August 4, Russia announced to have sent a revised bid to the UN, claiming 1.2 million square kilometers of Arctic Sea. iro, jkr

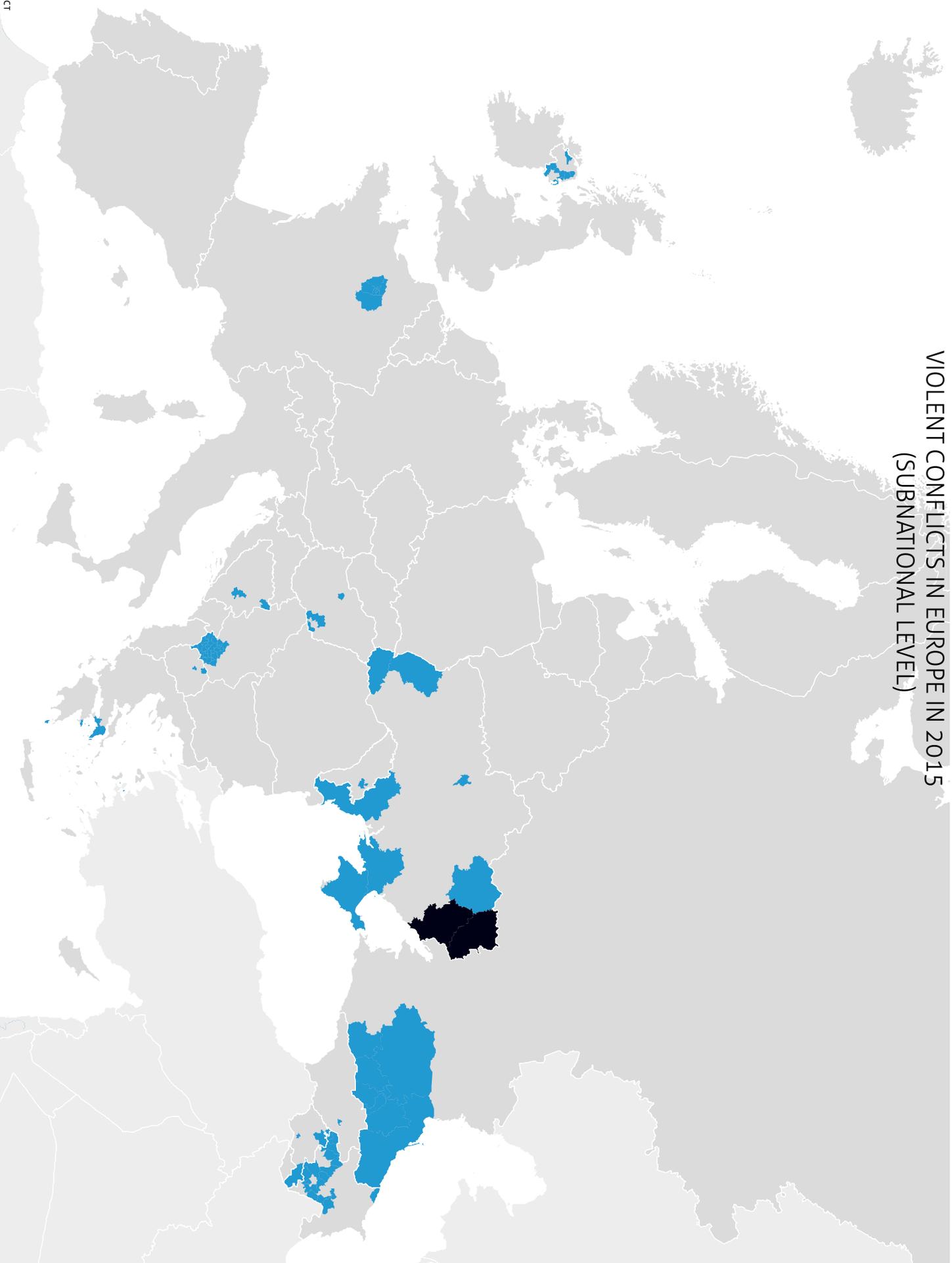
NATURAL RESOURCE CONFLICTS IN 2015 (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)



Europe

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN EUROPE IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

INTENSITY
5 WAR
4 LIMITED WAR
3 VIOLENT CRISIS
NO VIOLENT CONFLICT



In 2015, with a total of 62, the number of conflicts increased by one compared to 2014. As in the previous years, only one highly violent conflict was observed in Europe. Nevertheless, the number of violent conflicts increased by one to a total of 15. A violent crisis erupted in 2015 between opposition parties and the Kosovar government [→ Serbia (Kosovo - opposition)]. While the situation in the Donbas remained at the highest intensity level, last year's two limited wars, one between various opposition groups and the Ukrainian government and the other between Islamist militants and the Russian government in Northern Caucasus, de-escalated to the level of a violent crisis [→ Ukraine (Donbas); Ukraine (opposition); Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)]. In total, a quarter of all conflicts in the region were violent. Whereas most of them were located in Ukraine, South Caucasus, and Western Balkan states, three violent conflicts took place in EU member states. Compared to other regions, Europe remained relatively calm with a share of nearly two thirds of the observed conflicts being non-violent. By that, Europe is the only region in 2015 where the number of non-violent conflicts exceeded the number of violent ones. Accounting for more than one third of all conflicts in the region, the majority of conflicts in Europe were disputes. The number of violent crises increased from eleven to 16 compared to last year. Most frequently, European conflicts concerned system/ideology (20), secession (15), and autonomy (13).

The relatively new Ukrainian government under President Petro Poroshenko still had to face several inter- and intrastate conflicts [→ Russia - Ukraine; Ukraine (Crimea); Ukraine (Crimean Tatars); Ukraine (Donbas); Ukraine (opposition); Ukraine (right-wing militants)]. At least 4,327 fatalities and more than 985,000 refugees were counted in the conflict between the government supported by different groups, on the one side, and the Donetsk People's Republic as well as the Luhansk People's Republic on the other [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Even though Minsk II negotiated between the participants of the Normandy format and aimed to ease the tension, the situation remained at war level throughout the year. Both conflict parties blamed each other for violating ceasefire, torturing, and committing war crimes. The conflict between the government and several opposition groups de-escalated from a limited war to a violent conflict with approx. 40 bomb and arson attacks counted in 2015 [→ Ukraine (opposition)]. In total, three out of six conflicts affecting Ukraine were violent. Furthermore, Ukraine played an important role in the conflict between the USA, EU, and several other states, on the one hand, and Russia on the other. While the Council of Europe extended the EU sanctions against Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol until 06/23/16, Russia announced an embargo on imports of agricultural products from the EU, US, Norway, Canada, and Australia as of 08/07/2015.

The ongoing conflict between the Transnistrian regional government and the Moldovan government continued as a non-violent crisis [→ Moldova (Transnistria)]. Even though the conflict remained predominantly non-violent, no signs of an effective conflict resolution were reported in 2015.

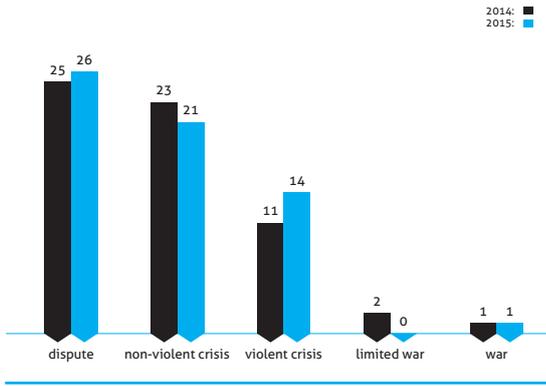
For the first time since its beginning in 1989, the system/ideology and secession conflict between Islamist militants and the Russian government in the Northern Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) de-escalated to a violent crisis. However, the conflict still accounted for approx. 210 deaths. In the South Caucasus region, three violent crises were observed. The interstate conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory as well as the intrastate conflict between the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and the central Azerbaijani government continued at a violent level and reached a new peak. At least 81 fatalities were counted in both conflicts [→ Armenia - Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. In Armenia, countrywide mass protests over electricity tariffs resulted in clashes between protesters and riot police when the latter used batons and water cannon to disperse a sit-in strike in Yerevan [→ Armenia (opposition)]. In Georgia, the opposition conflict turned violent when supporters of the ruling Georgian Dream coalition and the oppositional United National Movement clashed in Zugdidi, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region [→ Georgia (opposition)].

In the Balkan region, especially the situation in Kosovo and neighboring FYROM remained tense. The promising development of the normalization process between Serbia and Kosovo was overshadowed by violent outbursts between opposition parties led by the self-determination movement Vetevendosje, on the one hand, and the Kosovar government on the other. In FYROM, violent clashes in early May between ethnic Albanian militants and the police in Kumanovo left 22 people dead, while continuous protests by the broad opposition movement against the government led to early elections in January 2016 [→ FYROM (Albanian minority); FYROM (opposition)]. Throughout the Balkans, the threat of radical Islam remained visible, resulting in the conviction of several Islamist militants fighting abroad in most countries. However, violent clashes only occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina [→ Bosnia and Herzegovina (Islamist militant groups)].

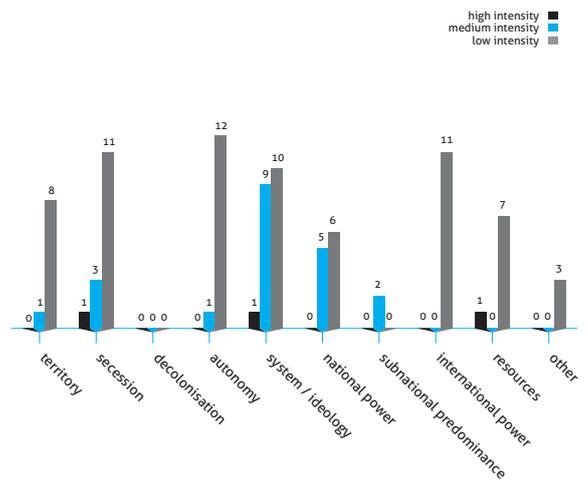
In Greece, the former violent conflict between right-wing militants, particularly the neo-fascist party Golden Dawn (GD), and the government again de-escalated after a violent uprising in 2014 [→ Greece (right-wing militants)]. On April 20, a trial against all GD members of the 2012 election started in which the public prosecution mainly accused them of participating in a criminal organization operating under the guise of a political party but also of murder and carrying out racist attacks. Having said this, the conflict between several social groups and citizens, backed by left-wing militants, on one hand, and the government, on the other, continued at a violent level. A salient issue was a protest staged by unions and workers to demonstrate against austerity measures. While thousands of people demonstrated peacefully, a group of anarchists attacked the police. The two secession-conflicts on the British Isles, the violent crisis over the secession of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and the non-violent conflict over the secession of Scotland [→ United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland); United Kingdom (SNP / Scotland)] continued. While in the former a political stalemate occurred over the Stormont House Agreement between the Loyalist and Republican parties, among them Sinn Féin, lasting until the parties struck an agreement on November 17, the latter most notably gained attention in consideration of the upcoming referendum on the continuance of Britain in the European Union. During the year, Scottish authorities let it be known, that in case of a "Brexit", the Scottish parliament will hold a new referendum on Scotland's independence.

What is more, the two secession-conflicts in Spain continued, the dispute over the secession of Catalonia from the Spanish Kingdom and the dispute over the secession of the Basque country [→ Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia; Spain (ETA, PNV / Basque Provinces)]. In Catalonia, pro-independence parties signed a preliminary agreement on independence in which they envisaged the region's independence before April 2017. On June 21, several thousand Basques demonstrated in order to hold a referendum on Basque independence by forming human chains in several Basque cities.

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN EUROPE
IN 2015 COMPARED TO 2014



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN EUROPE
IN 2015 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



Overview: Conflicts in Europe in 2015

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Armenia (opposition)	ANC, ARC, Heritage, PAP, opposition movements vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2003	↗	3
Armenia – Azerbaijan	Armenia vs. Azerbaijan	territory	1987	•	3
Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)*	Nagorno-Karabakh regional government vs. government	secession	1988	•	3
Azerbaijan (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2003	↗	2
Azerbaijan – Iran*	Azerbaijan vs. Iran	international power	2011	•	1
Belarus (opposition)	People's Referendum, UCP, BSDP NG, BCHD vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1994	•	1
Belarus – Poland*	Belarus vs. Poland	international power	1994	•	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian Croats / Herzegovina)*	Croat parties vs. Bosniak parties, Bosniak-Croat Federation, government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian Serbs / Republic of Srpska)*	Republik of Srpska vs. Bosniak-Croat Federation, government	secession	1995	•	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Islamist militant groups)*	Islamist militants vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2007	↗	3
Bulgaria (opposition)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2013	•	1
Croatia (Croatian Serbs / Krajina, West and East Slavonia)*	Croatian Serbs vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Cyprus (TRNC / Northern Cyprus)*	TRNC / Northern Cyprus vs. government	secession, resources	1963	•	2
Cyprus – Turkey	Cyprus vs. Turkey	territory, international power, resources	2005	•	2
Estonia (Russian-speaking minority)*	Russian-speaking minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
France (FLNC / Corsica)*	FLNC vs. government	secession	1975	↘	1
FYROM (Albanian minority)*	Albanian minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	3
FYROM (opposition)	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2014	↗	3
Georgia (Abkhazia)	Abkhazian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2
Georgia (Armenian minority)*	Armenian minority vs. government	autonomy	2004	•	1
Georgia (Azeri minority)*	government vs. Azeri minority	autonomy	2004	•	2
Georgia (opposition)	UNM, various opposition groups vs. government	national power	2007	↗	3
Georgia (South Ossetia)*	South Ossetian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2
Greece (left-wing militants – right-wing militants)*	left-wing militants vs. right-wing militants, Golden Dawn	system/ideology	1976	↘	2
Greece (right-wing militants)*	government vs. right-wing militants, Golden Dawn	system/ideology	1985	↘	2
Greece (social protests, left-wing militants)	social groups, left-wing militants vs. government	system/ideology	2010	•	3
Greece – FYROM (official name of FYROM)*	Greece vs. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	other	1991	•	1
Hungary (right-wings – minorities)*	Betyársereg, Jobbik, 64 Counties Youth Movement, Hungarian football ultras vs. refugees, Roma minority, Jewish community et al.	system/ideology	2008	↗	3
Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities)	Hungary, Hungarian minority (Transylvania / southern Slovakia / Transcarpathia) vs. Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine	autonomy, international power	1989	•	1
Latvia (Russian-speaking minority)*	Russian-speaking minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Moldova (opposition)*	Our Party, PCRM vs. PPDA, PSRM, government	system/ideology, national power	2009	•	2
Moldova (Transnistria)	Transnistrian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2

EUROPE

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Romania (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	national power	2012	↘	1
Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)	CE vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1989	↘	3
Russia (opposition)	POP, PARNAS, Yabloko, Democratic Choice, December 5th Party, Libertarian Party, Citizen initiative, opposition movements vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	•	2
Russia – Estonia	Russia vs. Estonia	territory, international power	1994	•	2
Russia – Georgia	Russia vs. Georgia	international power	1992	•	2
Russia – Kazakhstan et al. (Caspian Sea)*	Russia vs. Kazakhstan vs. Azerbaijan vs. Turkmenistan vs. Iran	territory, international power, resources	1991	•	1
Russia – Latvia*	Russia vs. Latvia	international power	1994	•	2
Russia – Norway et al. (Arctic)*	Russia vs. Norway vs. Denmark vs. Canada vs. USA	territory, resources	2001	•	1
Russia – Ukraine	Russia vs. Ukraine	territory, international power, resources, other	2003	↘	2
Serbia (Albanian minority / Presevo Valley)*	Albanian minority vs. government	autonomy	2000	•	1
Serbia (Bosniak minority / Sandzak)*	Bosniak minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Serbia (Islamist militant groups / Sandzak)*	Islamist militants vs. government	system/ideology	2007	•	1
Serbia (Kosovo – opposition)	Vetevendosje et al. vs. Kosovar government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2015	NEW	3
Serbia (Kosovo)*	Kosovar government vs. government	secession	1989	•	1
Serbia (Serbian minority – Kosovar government)*	Serbian minority vs. Kosovar government	autonomy, system/ideology	2012	↓	1
Serbia (Vojvodina)*	regional parties vs. government	autonomy	1989	•	1
Slovenia – Croatia (border)	Slovenia vs. Croatia	territory	1991	•	1
Spain (Catalan nationalists / Catalonia)	CiU, UDC, CUP, Together for Yes (CDC, ERC, DC), Catalan regional government vs. government	secession	1979	•	1
Spain (ETA, PNV / Basque Provinces)*	EH-Bildu, ETA, PNV vs. government	secession	1959	•	1
Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar)	Spain vs. United Kingdom	territory	1954	•	2
Turkey – Armenia	Turkey vs. Armenia	international power, other	1991	•	1
Turkey – Greece (border)*	Turkey vs. Greece	territory, resources	1973	•	2
Ukraine (Crimea)*	Pro-Russian groups, Crimean regional government vs. government	secession, resources	1992	↘	2
Ukraine (Crimean Tatars)	Crimean Tatars vs. Crimean regional government, Russia	autonomy	1988	•	2
Ukraine (Donbas)	DNR, LNR, et al. vs. DPSU, NGU, volunteer bataillons, government	secession, system/ideology, resources	2014	•	5
Ukraine (opposition)	Opposition Bloc, KPU, opposition groups et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2013	↘	3
Ukraine (right-wing militants)	Svoboda, Right Sector, Radical Party, right-wing militants vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2014	•	3
United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland)	CIRA, RIRA et al., SDLP, SF vs. UUP, UDA, Orange Order, government, DUP, Alliance Party, UVF	secession	1968	•	3
United Kingdom (Scottish nationalists / Scotland)	SNP, Scottish regional government, Scottish Green Party, SSP et al. vs. government, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, pro-union supporters	secession	2007	•	2
USA, EU et al. – Russia*	USA, EU, Norway, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Moldova, Iceland, Albania, Montenegro, Switzerland, Japan vs. Ukraine, Russia	system/ideology, international power	2007	•	2

¹ Conflicts marked with * are without description

² Mentioned are only those conflict parties relevant for the period under review

³ Change in intensity compared to the previous year: ↑ or ↗ escalation by one or more than one level of intensity; ↓ or ↘ deescalation by one or more than one level of intensity; • no change

⁴ Levels of intensity: 5 = war; 4 = limited war; 3 = violent crisis; 2 = non-violent crisis; 1 = dispute

ARMENIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: ANC, ARC, Heritage, PAP, opposition movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition parties, such as the Armenian National Congress (ANC), Prosperous Armenia (PAP), and Heritage, as well as different opposition movements, on the one hand, and the government of President Serge Sarkisian, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, opposition parties organized rallies against a planned constitutional reform transforming the country's political system into a parliamentary republic. Furthermore, mass protests against electricity tariffs were staged countrywide from May 27 onwards.

Following the temporary abduction and beating of prominent PAP member Artak Khachatryan by three unknown attackers on February 7, hundreds of PAP supporters rallied in the capital Yerevan two days later, calling Khachatryan's kidnapping politically motivated. On March 1, ANC organized a rally of up to 10,000 people in central Yerevan to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the violent clashes following Sarkisian's inauguration. On May 8, the Electric Network of Armenia submitted a request to the Public Services Regulatory Commission to increase the electricity fee for public customers by 40 percent. Protests against the increased tariffs erupted in 15 cities on May 27 with about 15,000 protesters attending a rally on Liberty Square in Yerevan. On June 17, the government announced the implementation of a 16 percent rise in the price of electricity as of August 1. In reaction, two days later, thousands of people led by the newly-created "No to Plunder!" movement took to the streets in Yerevan, calling for the cancellation of the decision. On June 23, riot police tried to disperse a sit-in in Baghramyan Avenue using batons and water cannon. As a result, 18 people, among them eleven police officers, were injured and 237 protesters detained. On July 6, the police eventually dispersed the sit-in strike. The opposition, human rights groups, and the US Embassy expressed their concern over reports of violence and called for the immediate release of the protesters. Protest campaigns led by the two movements "No to Plunder!" and newly-formed "Rise up, Armenia!" continued in Yerevan throughout the following months.

On October 5, the parliament voted to hold a referendum on the constitutional reform. This was criticized by opposition groups as strengthening the executive power of the Office of Prime Minister and enabling Sarkisian to run for prime minister in 2018 after the end of his second and final term as president. Subsequently, Heritage and ANC organized themselves in the "No!" front, while several small opposition groups founded the "New Armenia" movement, jointly staging protests against the referendum. After over 60 percent had voted in favor of the constitutional reform on December 6, hundreds took to the streets in central Yerevan one day later. Protests continued until the end of the year.

jme

ARMENIA – AZERBAIJAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1987

Conflict parties: Armenia vs. Azerbaijan

Conflict items: territory

The violent crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the break-away region Nagorno-Karabakh, internationally recognized as belonging to Azerbaijan but mostly populated by ethnic Armenians, continued. Both sides accused each other of regularly breaking the ceasefire agreement of 1994, increasingly using heavy weapons, and concealing the real number of fatalities. Throughout the year, at least 41 soldiers of both the Armenian Armed Forces as well as of the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army, 37 Azerbaijani soldiers, and three civilians were killed along both the Azeri-Armenian border and the Line of Contact (LoC) between the Nagorno-Karabakh region and Azerbaijan [→ Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. On January 23, Azerbaijani special operation units fired grenades and mortar bombs in the direction of Berd, Tavush region, killing at least two Armenian soldiers. On February 2, Azerbaijani Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov launched a military maneuver alongside the border involving 20,000 soldiers, 300 armored vehicles, 200 missile launchers as well as artillery units and up to 20 military jets. Four days later, one Azerbaijani and two Armenian soldiers were killed in an exchange of fire along the Karabakh border. The following day, the OSCE Minsk group and OSCE chair Ivica Dačić expressed their concern over the escalation. On July 25, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry accused Armenian forces of firing at Azerbaijani positions in the Goranboy, Terter, Aghdam, Fuzuli, and Gadabay regions, killing one Azerbaijani soldier. While Azerbaijan reported that five Armenian soldiers had been killed in the incident, Armenia claimed that there had been no fatalities on their side, blaming Azerbaijan for breaking the ceasefire. Armenia conducted military command and staff exercises from September 3 to 6, involving mass evacuation in case of war. In reaction, from September 7 to 13, Azerbaijan launched a large-scale military exercise involving 65,000 soldiers, 700 armored vehicles, and 90 aircrafts. On October 10, the OSCE voiced its concern over the increased use of heavy weapons and stated that the conflict had reached a new stage of escalation. Thereupon, on December 19, Armenian President Serge Sarkisian and his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev held a meeting mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group in the Swiss capital Bern. Both sides expressed their willingness to settle the conflict. faw

BELARUS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: People's Referendum, UCP, BSDP NG, BCHD vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The dispute over the orientation of the political system and national power between opposition parties, such as the People's Referendum, the United Civic Party (UCP), the Belarusian Social-Democratic Party People's Assembly (BSDP NG), oppositional movements, and civil society activists, on the one hand, and the government of President Alyaksandr

Lukashenka, on the other, continued.

The People's Referendum comprised of the Belarus People's Front (PBNF), the Belarusian Social-Democratic Party Assembly (BSDP), the "For Freedom" movement and the "Tell the Truth" campaign, as well as several smaller oppositional organizations.

On January 1, a new amendment to the Law on Mass Media came into force, allowing the Ministry of Information to block websites after two formal warnings concerning the content of the pages which would "threaten national interests." Following the amendment, the ministry blocked the online magazine *kyky* from June 18 to June 24 and gave a formal warning to four websites, among others, to the homepage of the UCP.

On August 28, Lukashenka pardoned six political prisoners, among them the former presidential candidate and leader of BSDP NG Mikola Statkevich. On October 10, one day before the presidential elections, between 1,000 and 5,000 people staged an unauthorized rally led by Statkevich, Anatol Lyabedzka of the UCP, and civil rights activist and former "Tell the Truth" chairman Uladzimir Nyaklyayew in the capital Minsk, calling on eligible voters to boycott the elections. Since most opposition parties remained absent or did not succeed in collecting the necessary 100,000 signatures in order to nominate their own candidates, the elections took place in the absence of presidential candidates of major opposition parties like the BSDP NG or UCP.

Lukashenka won the elections with over 80 percent of the votes, enabling his fifth term. The OSCE and UN called the elections "non-transparent and unfair." Main opposition candidate Tatsiana Karatkevich, who was initially nominated by the People's Referendum, but later opposed by several opposition parties and mainly supported by the "Tell the Truth" campaign, called on the Central Election Commission to revoke the election results. Unlike the presidential elections in previous years, no mass post-election protests took place.

Opposition groups further held one unauthorized and two authorized rallies in Minsk between March and November, drawing between respectively 400 and 2,000 participants. During the two authorized rallies, state authorities detained a total of seven participants.

On December 8, PBNF, BSDP Assembly and the "For Freedom" movement withdrew from the coalition due to disagreement with "Tell the Truth" over the presidential candidate and the implementation of the election campaign. One month earlier, UCP, the "For Freedom" movement and the Belarusian Christian Democracy party had announced the establishment of a center-right coalition to run for the 2016 parliamentary elections.

Following the non-violent elections and the release of the political prisoners, the EU and the US announced on October 29 to suspend most of the sanctions on Belarus for four and six months, respectively. However, the arm embargo as well as sanctions on four individuals remained in place. jkr

CYPRUS – TURKEY

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: Cyprus vs. Turkey
 Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict between Cyprus and Turkey over international power, the maritime border demarcation, and resources such as oil in the Aegean Sea continued on a non-violent level.

A prominent issue was the further three-month extension of a Turkish seismic vessel's mission to explore parts of Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for hydrocarbon reserves which was announced on January 6. The mission caused diplomatic tensions, also with regard to the Cyprus peace talks [→ Cyprus (TRNC / Northern Cyprus)]. For instance, on February 19, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades stated that the peace talks would not be resumed unless Turkey refrained from suchlike explorations. On March 30, the Foreign Ministry of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) announced the withdrawal of the seismic vessel and called for an immediate resumption of the talks. Three months later, the European Parliament stressed that Cyprus would have a right to lawfully dispose its EEZ and is able to make agreements on it. Furthermore, the Parliament called upon Turkey to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, to withdraw its troops from Northern Cyprus, and to stop the settlement of Turkish citizens in TRNC. Beforehand, on May 26, Cyprus had sent a protest note to the UN stating that throughout April, Turkey had repeatedly violated Cyprus' national air space, the Nicosia Flight Information Region, and Cypriot territorial waters. Further tensions arose on October 17 when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the TRNC to inaugurate a new Turkish pipeline supplying Northern Cyprus with drinking water. The Cypriot government protested Erdogan's visit and claimed that the pipeline violated international law.

After talks on the Turkish EU accession had recommenced on November 29, Turkey refused to apply the EU visa liberalization to Greek Cypriots, and reaffirmed its non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus in a letter to the European Commission. As a consequence, Cyprus reiterated its veto against a Turkish EU membership on December 15. jra

FYROM (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict concerning national power and the orientation of the political system between the government of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and a broad opposition movement escalated to a violent crisis. Throughout the year, different social groups staged protests demanding political changes, such as Gruevski's resignation, and a fight against corruption.

On May 5, amid a prominent wiretapping scandal, the leader of the oppositional Social Democratic Union for Macedonia (SDSM), Zoran Zaev, accused Gruevski and Interior Minister Gordana Jankuloska of attempting to cover up the murder of one civilian by a police officer in 2011. A violent anti-government protest followed on the same day when up to 2,000 people gathered in the capital Skopje. Protesters set garbage containers on fire and threw stones at the police, which used tear gas, water cannon, and stun grenades. In total, 38 police officers and one civilian were injured and dozens of people arrested. The following day, more than 1,000 people rallied again. On May 12, Jankuloska, Minister of Transport and Communications Mile Janakieski, and Head of the Secret Police Saso Mijalkov resigned due to the rallies. On May 17, tens of thousands gathered for another anti-government protest, calling for Gruevski's resignation, and

setting up a tent camp in front of the parliament building. The next day, tens of thousands rallied in support of Gruevski in a counter-protest, organized by the ruling VMRO-DPMNE party, also establishing a camp. During the next weeks, opposition supporters continued their protests. After a series of EU-mediated talks, on July 15, the leaders of the four main parties agreed on the formation of an interim government under a new prime minister in January 2016, early elections to be held on April 24, and the appointment of new ministers from the ranks of the opposition. Opposition MPs returned to parliament after a 15-months boycott and a Special Prosecutor was appointed to investigate the wiretapping. On October 7, hundreds of demonstrators rallied in Skopje against the proposal of the ruling parties to outlaw the publication of materials related to the surveillance scandal.

Further social groups expressed their discontent over governmental policies and an alleged autocratic turn on several occasions, demanding the resignation of government members. For instance, university and high school students repeatedly protested against the government. After first protests in winter 2014, university students again rallied in Skopje, opposing the educational reform on January 14 and October 21. On February 11, over a thousand students occupied the University of Skopje, which lasted until February 25. High school students staged rallies in the following two months, for instance on March 19, when hundreds gathered in Skopje and thousands in total in the towns of Tetovo, Resen, Kumanovo, Negotino, Bitola, and Struga. On April 23, approx. 10,000 university students and high school students protested in Skopje, demanding the resignation of Education Minister Abdilaqim Ademi. Journalists also rallied on several occasions throughout the year. On January 20, more than a thousand protesters rallied in Skopje over the conviction of reporter Tomislav Kezarovski. Several other smaller protests over alleged government attempts to limit media freedom took place in Skopje on January 16, March 30, and April 22. dve

GEORGIA (ABKHAZIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Abkhazian regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession between the breakaway region Abkhazia and the central government continued. On February 4, Russia's President Vladimir Putin ratified the Treaty on Alliance and Strategic Partnership concluded with Abkhazia's de facto president Raul Khadjimba on 11/24/2014. The agreement included, among other things, the creation of a common security and defense space. Khadjimba subsequently appointed former Russian general Anatoliy Khrulev as Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Abkhazia on May 18. The Abkhazian Parliament ratified an agreement on a combined Russian-Abkhazian army group on December 18. Georgia repeatedly condemned these steps as a violation of international law and a Russian attempt to annex Abkhazia [→ Russia – Georgia]. Russian Armed Forces conducted joint military exercises in Abkhazia and South Ossetia on March 5 and again on September 8, involving 2,000 soldiers and 700 soldiers, respectively [→ Georgia (South Ossetia)]. Georgia denounced this as unacceptable. Negotiations mediated by the EU, UN, OSCE, and the US between

Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia began in March and continued throughout the year. Four rounds of talks were held in Geneva, Switzerland, bringing the total number of negotiation rounds to 34. However, no agreement was reached between the conflict parties concerning the restraint on the use of force, the regulation of IDPs, and the return of ethnic Georgian refugees to Abkhazia. lsu

GEORGIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: UNM, various opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between various opposition groups, most prominently the United National Movement (UNM), and the government of the ruling party Georgian Dream (GD) escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, opposition groups repeatedly demonstrated against the government. On March 12, members of the pro-UNM youth group Free Zone, demonstrating against the government's economic policy, and activists of the Free Generation movement, supporting GD, scuffled in front of the parliament in the capital Tbilisi. The police detained six Free Zone members. On March 15, UNM and GD supporters clashed in Zugdidi, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, using sticks, clubs, and stones, after GD activists had burst into the local UNM headquarters. At least six people were injured, among them one police officer. Tens of thousands followed UNM's call and demonstrated in Tbilisi on March 21, demanding the government to step down and accusing it of a failed economic policy and corruption. On October 2, Free Zone activists attacked a GD Member of Parliament in front of the parliament building in Kutaisi, Imereti region. Police detained three activists.

In early August, the former co-owner of the leading oppositional and independent broadcaster Rustavi 2, Kibar Khalvashi, filed a lawsuit claiming that ex-president Mikhail Saakashvili of UNM had forced him to sell his shares of the company. UNM and other opposition parties condemned the lawsuit as an attempt of GD government to seize control over the opposition government-critic broadcaster. On November 3, the Tbilisi City Court ruled in favor of Khalvashi, however, the Constitutional Court issued an injunction against the implementation of the ruling until all possible appeals were exhausted. On November 5, the City Court ordered Rustavi 2 top management to be replaced by provisional administrators, but adjourned the implementation until the appeal was completed. The EU delegation, Tbilisi-based ambassadors from the EU-member states, the US, and the OSCE voiced their concerns over the case, stating it would raise "serious questions about the independence of the judiciary" and calling on the government to ensure media pluralism. jde

GREECE (SOCIAL PROTESTS, LEFT-WING MILITANTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: social groups, left-wing militants vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The conflict over the orientation of the political system between several social and left-wing groups, among them Informal Anarchist Federation/International Revolutionary Front (FAI/IRF) and Group of Popular Fighters (GPF), backed by left-wing militants, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued at a violent level.

Throughout the year, police forces seized arsenals of weapons of left-wing paramilitary organizations and arrested suspects. For instance, on January 3, the police arrested fugitive Christodoulos Xiros, former member of the disbanded militant group "November 17". Xiros was charged with leading a terrorist organization and with illegal gun possession. During the investigations, police forces found one gun, hundreds of bullets, several chemically prepared missiles, and explosive devices in his hideout in Loutraki-Perachora, Corinthia region. According to authorities, Xiros had planned an attack on the Korydallos prison in the capital Athens to free several inmates, among them members of the militant organization Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei. On September 30, police forces detected RPGs, Kalashnikov rifles, and ammunition allegedly connected to GPF.

From January to March, militants conducted several arson and bomb attacks, destroying private property as well as damaging public buildings. For instance, on February 7, an arson attack destroyed the car of Evripidis Styliandis, MP of the New Democracy Party (ND). On March 28, during clashes with police forces, left-wing militants threw IEDs on police stations in Athens, injuring no one. While most incidents remained unsolved, a local cell of FAI/IRF claimed responsibility for attempting to torch the bookstore of Adonis Georgiadis, MP of the ND, in the Kifissia District of Athens on January 22.

Violent clashes occurred in the course of the year when social groups backed by left-wing militants held protests and rallies in Athens. On March 8, 50 members of the anarchist group Rubikon occupied the headquarters of the ruling party Syriza to demand the release of several imprisoned left-wing militants and the abolition of high-security prisons. On March 28, participants of an anti-establishment rally spray-painted buildings in the popular Monastiraki street and injured a shop owner. Some protesters placed burning barricades inside the National Technical University of Athens and threw stones at police forces. On April 7, during a leftist rally, militant protesters torched at least four cars and threw fireworks and petrol bombs at police forces in Exarcheia district. Similar clashes occurred on April 16 and June 7. On December 6, 18 masked participants of a memorial march marking the killing of 15-year old student Alexandros Grigoropoulos in 2008 injured four police officers with stones and Molotov cocktails. Police arrested 13 suspects. In November and December, hundreds of thousands of workers held general strikes to protest austerity measures and caused a disruption of public transport. For instance, on December 12, 2.5 million people demonstrated in Athens. While the protest remained mostly peaceful, a group of anarchists attacked the police with fireworks and petrol bombs. jth

HUNGARY – ROMANIA, SLOVAKIA, UKRAINE (HUNGARIAN MINORITIES)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Hungary, Hungarian minority (Transylvania / southern Slovakia / Transcarpathia) vs. Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine

Conflict items: autonomy, international power

The dispute over autonomy and international power between the Hungarian government and its extraterritorial minorities, on the one hand, and Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, on the other, continued. On February 7, the Hungarian Parliament claimed that the situation of the Hungarian minority in Western Ukraine deteriorated as the Ukraine crisis escalated and therefore it had decided to protect the ethnic Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia. On March 5, the Hungarian government announced that it had handed out 94,000 passports to ethnic Hungarians in Western Ukraine. On March 7, Romanian authorities banned the Szekler Hungarians' annual Freedom Day in Targu Mures, Mures county, on the basis of creating "ethnic unrest." On April 17, ethnic Hungarian activists installed a Hungarian language sign at a railway station in Dunajska Streda, Southern Slovakia. On December 2, Romanian authorities stated that they had prevented a bomb plot on the National Day Parade the previous day by a nationalist member of the Hungarian minority in Targu Secuiesc, Covasna county. ako

MOLDOVA (TRANSNISTRIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Transnistrian regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The conflict between separatists of the breakaway region Transnistria, the so-called Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, and the government over secession continued on the level of a non-violent crisis.

On February 9, Radojko Bogojevic, special envoy of the OSCE for the Transnistrian settlement process, visited the Moldovan capital Chisinau and the capital of the breakaway region Tiraspol in preparation for the so-called 5+2 talks including representatives of Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, USA, EU, and OSCE for negotiations. They had been suspended in September 2014.

On March 18, Transnistrian security forces detained critical journalist Sergei Ilchenko accusing him of extremism, prompting the Moldovan government to express concerns as well as demands for his release.

On April 1, de facto Transnistrian border guards allegedly injured a Moldovan citizen at the Transnistrian side of the Moldovan-Ukrainian border.

On May 20, Ukraine blocked the trade in cigarettes, alcohol, petroleum, gas, and cars with Transnistria at two checkpoints, Cuciurgan and Platonovo, Odesa oblast, Ukraine. As a consequence, on June 25, then-de-facto foreign minister of Transnistria Nina Shtanski threatened to introduce visas for Moldovans and a 100 percent tax system for goods produced

by Moldovan companies.

On November 16 and 17, Bogojevic held talks with Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Osipov and the new Transnistrian de facto foreign minister Vitaly Ignatyev. They identified the main obstacles for bilateral relations, such as the Moldovan and Ukrainian joint customs control at the border with Transnistria and the criminal prosecution of Transnistrian officials. Furthermore, Osipov claimed that the laying of preconditions for talks by the Transnistrian side violated earlier agreements. As a reaction to elections in Transnistria on November 29, Moldovan Defense Minister Anatol Salaru announced not to recognize the election. Moldova asked foreign embassies located in Chisinau to restrain from sending representatives to the elections.

On December 4, Foreign Minister of Moldova Natalia Gherman demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria and, instead, to transform it into a civilian mission with an international mandate.

Allegedly, Transnistria would receive USD 1.8 million as financial aid by Russia until January 2016. On December 18, the EU-Moldova Association Council decided to extend the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area to the whole area of Moldova including Transnistria by 2016. tka

RUSSIA (ISLAMIST MILITANTS / NORTHERN CAUCASUS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: CE vs. government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The conflict over ideology and secession between Islamist militant groups fighting under the umbrella of the Caucasian Emirate (CE), on the one hand, and the central as well as regional governments, on the other, de-escalated to the level of a violent crisis. The CE aimed at establishing an independent Islamic Emirate under Sharia law in the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) comprising the republics of Dagestan (RoD), Chechnya (RoC), Ingushetia (RoI), Kabardino-Balkaria (RoKB), Karachay-Cherkessia (RoKC), and North Ossetia Alania (RoNOA), as well as the region Stavropol Krai (SK).

The number of violent incidents sharply declined compared to 2014. However, at least 210 people, among them 18 officials and 19 civilians, were killed and 49 people were injured. State officials reported to have killed more than 185 militants, including 36 leaders.

Bombings, assassinations, and attacks on security forces as well as civilians frequently took place in DoG and RoKB, while the number of fatalities decreased significantly in RoC and RoI. In RoKC, RoNOA, and SK only a few violent incidents were reported.

Throughout the year, militants conducted at least nine bombings and 37 attacks on police officers and military servicemen. On April 19, government troops killed CE leader Aliaskhab Kebekov alias Abu Mukhammad al-Dagestani in a special operation raid in the village of Gerei-Avlak, Buynaksk district in RoD. He was considered the successor of Dokku Umarov, who had been killed in 2013. Kebekov was succeeded by Magomed Suleimanov alias Muhammad Abu Usman. On August 10, Suleimanov and four other militants were killed in a clash with special forces near the village of Gimry in the Untsukul District of DoG.

As in previous years, RoD remained the most violent region

with approx. 128 deaths, including those of nine government officials. For instance, on August 24, special forces killed Abdul Kurbanov, leader of the Makhachkala militant group, and two other militants in a shootout in Novy Khuseht in the city district of Makhachkala. One soldier was wounded in the fire exchange.

In Kabardino-Balkaria, violent incidents occurred almost every month. For instance, on November 11, government forces killed Robert Zankishiev alias Amir Abdullah, the so-called emir of the jamaat of Kabarda, Balkaria, and Karachay when they stormed a private house in Nalchik.

In comparison to last year, violent incidents decreased significantly in RoC. On January 1, government forces killed two militants, including the self-declared emir of the Western sector of the Chechen welayat in a special operation in Meken-skaya, Naur District. Four soldiers were injured. On February 28, a bomb explosion killed one and injured four other soldiers in the village of Shalazi, Urus-Martan District.

In Ingushetia, violence accounted for at least 17 deaths. Special units killed eight militants, including Adam Tagilov, leader of the western sector of Ingushetia, on August 1. Tagilov had been involved in organizing a major attack in the Chechen capital Grozny in December 2014. On October 31, special forces killed Ingush jamaat leader Beslan Makhauri alias Amir Muhammad and another militant in Nazran when they opened fire on the authorities during their detention.

Between November 2014 and June 2015, the so-called emirs of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Chechnya, and Ingushetia had sworn allegiance to the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. On June 24, IS spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani announced that IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had accepted the pledge of allegiance sworn by most jamaat leaders of the NCFD and proclaimed to establish an IS province in the North Caucasus under the leadership of Rustam Asilderov alias Abu Muhammad al-Qadari.

According to the Russian Federal Security Service, an estimated 3,000 ethnic Russians and natives of the NCFD left Russia to fight in Syria and Iraq on the side of IS. okl

RUSSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: POP, PARNAS, Yabloko, Democratic Choice, December 5th Party, Libertarian Party, Citizen initiative, opposition movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups, such as the Party of Progress (POP), People's Freedom Party (Parnas), and Yabloko Party, as well as different opposition movements, on the one hand, and the government of President Vladimir Putin, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, the opposition as well as pro-government groups organized protest campaigns and rallies. On February 21, the pro-government Anti-Maidan movement organized a march with 35,000 participants close to the Red Square in the capital Moscow to condemn the protests in Kiev, Ukraine, the previous year [→ Ukraine (opposition)]. Several other pro-government groups, such as the National Liberation Movement and the Night Wolves, took part in the rally. In the night of February 27 to 28, opposition leader Boris Nemtsov

was killed in a drive-by shooting at the Bolshoy Moskvoretzky Bridge in Moscow. Subsequently, tens of thousands gathered in St. Petersburg and Moscow to commemorate Nemtsov on March 1. Despite government investigations, it remained unclear who had conducted the assaults until the end of the year.

In spite of a ban, about 100 demonstrators gathered on Bolotnaya Square on May 6 at the third anniversary of the violent clashes that had followed Putin's inauguration. Police detained 65 protesters. On May 23, Putin signed the law on "undesirable organizations", allowing prosecutors to ban international NGOs if they were considered a threat to constitutional order or national security. Human rights groups and oppositional parties expressed their concern and deemed the law an attempt to restrict civil society. On May 30, during an unsanctioned rally organized by LGBT activists, riot police detained around 20 people, including both LGBT activists and members of the Orthodox 'God's Will' movement who had tried to interrupt the rally.

In the September 13 elections comprising of both the regional parliamentary elections in eleven, and gubernatorial elections in 21 regions, ruling party United Russia (UR) claimed countrywide victories. While the party gained between 50 to 70 percent of the votes in the regional parliaments, UR succeeded in 19 out of 21 regions in the governor elections. In Smolensk Oblast, UR was defeated by the Liberal Democratic party candidate, whereas Sergey Levchenko of the Communist Party won the second round of voting in Irkutsk Oblast.

Shortly after the elections, between 2,000 and 4,000 protesters, including POP leader Aleksey Navalny and Ilya Yashin of the PARNAS party, rallied in Moscow, claiming fraud, manipulation, and irregularities. Prior to the elections, the Justice Ministry had cancelled the registration of Navalny's POP in all regions beside the Kostroma Oblast, on the grounds that it had failed to register its regional branches within the required period of time.

On December 4, the Duma passed a law allowing the Constitutional Court to overrule judgments by the European Court of Human Rights if deemed incompatible with the constitution.

In reaction, activists gathered at Pushkin square in Moscow to protest the decision on December 12. Police arrested 33 protesters, including the head of the Yabloko party Sergei Mitrokhin and Lev Ponomaryov, director of the For Human Rights movement. cbe

RUSSIA – ESTONIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Estonia
Conflict items: territory, international power

The non-violent conflict between Russia and Estonia over the demarcation of the common border and international power continued. Besides Estonia's participation in NATO maneuvers, Russia repeatedly criticized the treatment of the Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic states as discriminatory [→ Estonia (Russian-speaking minority)].

On several occasions, Estonian government officials called for an extension of sanctions against Russia in case of non-compliance with the Minsk agreement [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. Furthermore, Estonia and other Baltic states repeatedly called for an increase in NATO military presence on their

territory, which Russia considered a "destabilizing provocation" and a "direct attack on the principles of the Russia-NATO Founding Act." Estonia, along with other European states, repeatedly expressed support for a common media strategy targeting Russian-speakers in Eastern Europe, in response to the Russian media coverage which these countries regarded as a "hybrid war." On September 14 and October 15, Estonia refused entry to representatives of Russian media such as Rossiya Segodnya and VGTRK, a step criticized by Russia as restriction of freedom of speech and censorship.

On March 20, Russian President Vladimir Putin forwarded the Russian-Estonian border treaty, signed on 02/18/14, to the Duma for ratification. The treaty passed the first reading in the Estonian Parliament on November 26.

On June 30, the Russian prosecutor-general's office announced a review of the Soviet Union's decision to recognize the independence of the Baltic states, a measure later presented as a formality. Estonian Foreign Minister Keit Pentus-Rosimannus called this an example of the "imperialistic mood" existing in Russia. On August 27, Estonia announced the planned installation of a fence along its border with Russia as of the beginning of 2018, which the head of Russian Parliament's International Committee Konstantin Kosachev deemed as "ideological" and an aim to depict Russia as a threat for Europe. On November 5, the justice ministers of the Baltic states signed a memorandum agreeing to submit a claim to Russia for the compensation of damage inflicted on their states during Soviet occupation.

Soldiers from several NATO members, including the U.S., participated in a military parade celebrating Estonia's Independence Day in Narva, Ida-Viru County, on the Russian-Estonian border on February 24. The next day, Russia conducted military drills including 2,000 paratroopers and armored units in the Pskov region, bordering Estonia. On May 4, Estonia started its largest-ever military exercise involving 13,000 soldiers and lasting two weeks. On September 1, the NATO Force Integration Unit to facilitate rapid deployment of forces was activated in Estonia. Estonia accused Russian military planes of violating its airspace on June 22, July 9, and December 17. vpa

RUSSIA – GEORGIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Georgia
Conflict items: international power

The conflict between Russia and Georgia continued on a non-violent level. On June 19, Georgia joined the EU's sanction against Russia banning the import of products manufactured in Crimea [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. Russia, however, refrained from adding Georgia to its list of sanctioned countries. Both governments upheld informal diplomatic contacts in the framework of three working meetings in the Czech capital Prague regarding humanitarian and economic issues. Russian ratification of integration treaties with the breakaway Georgian regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as the "borderization" processes in South Ossetia led to a further deterioration of bilateral relations [→ Georgia (South Ossetia); Georgia (Abkhazia)].

After NATO exercises had taken place in the Black Sea on March 4, the Russian Defense Ministry launched a month-long large-scale military exercise involving 2,000 troops in Abkhazia and South Ossetia the following day. Starting from

August 17, Russia again launched military exercises in the two regions, which the Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili deemed “unacceptable.” According to the Foreign Ministry of Georgia, Russia violated Georgian airspace during the drills on August 19. Georgia accused Russia of further airspace violations on December 9 and 10. The opening of the NATO-Georgian Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC) in August, situated close to the capital Tbilisi, triggered additional tensions. For instance, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had already called the opening a “step towards escalation of tension and worsening of regional security” on February 18. *msa*

and November 25.

Russia and Ukraine agreed on decentralization measures of Ukraine, providing greater autonomy for the disputed territories Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Both sides repeatedly stressed their support for this point at a meeting held in the German capital Berlin on March 6.

On March 31, Ukraine-controlled energy company Naftogaz and Russia’s Gazprom agreed on an interim gas price agreement. However, the Ukrainian government announced to completely stop the import of gas from Russia on June 30. Gazprom responded by halting gas supplies from July 1. Following the second gas price agreement of September 27, Gazprom halted imports while Ukraine stopped purchase on November 25.

On December 21, Russia suspended the Russian-Ukrainian Free Trade Agreement and announced to prolong a food ban on Ukraine for another year starting 2016. A few days later, Ukraine’s parliament reacted and allowed the Ukrainian government to impose sanctions against Russia. *tbu*

RUSSIA – UKRAINE

Intensity: 2 | Change:  | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Ukraine

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources, other

The conflict over territory, international power, and the supply of energy between Russia and Ukraine de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. Throughout the year, Ukraine accused Russia several times of illegal border-crossing by military personnel.

On January 20, for instance, Ukraine reported the deployment of at least two Russian battalions of 400 men each, multiple rocket launchers, 20 tanks, ten missile systems, and numerous weapon systems on its territory [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Russia denied the allegations.

Three days later, Ukraine estimated that 9,000 Russian soldiers were situated on Ukrainian territory. Russian officials repeatedly raised the possibility of deploying nuclear weapons in Crimea as on March 25. During the year, Russia expanded its military forces in Crimea, for instance through the deployment of an air force division on April 30 [→ Ukraine (Crimea)]. On October 2, OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) noticed Russian-made weapon systems in eastern Ukraine. Russia, however, consistently denied any accusations, but admitted on December 17 the presence of Russian personnel in eastern Ukraine. Allegedly, Ukrainian authorities arrested at least three Russian military servicemen in Donetsk and Luhansk oblast, in May and July. On June 22, the secretary of Russia’s security council stated that it was impossible to keep Russians, guided by “emotions”, from fighting in Ukraine.

In the Minsk II agreement, signed on February 12, France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine agreed among others to reestablish Ukrainian control of the border with Russia until the end of the year. However, in the following months, Russia repeatedly accused Kyiv of not fulfilling terms of the agreement, especially by breaking the truce with Donbas militants and by determining the conditions for regional self-governance unilaterally. Ukraine canceled a local border traffic agreement with Russia on March 4. Shortly after, Ukraine continued constructing trenches and a barbed wire fence at the border.

On February 10, around 3,000 Russian troops started large-scale exercises in Russia’s southern military district, next to the Ukrainian border, and held further maneuvers on Crimea, the latter involving 2,000 aircraft-troops. On February 2 and May 21, Ukraine’s parliament suspended two military cooperation agreements with Russia. Mutual air space bans on each other’s airlines were enacted between September 25

SERBIA (KOSOVO – OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Vetevendosje et al. vs. Kosovar government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

A violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and subnational predominance erupted between Kosovar opposition parties, led by the Albanian nationalist party Vetevendosje, and the Kosovar government. On August 25, Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement on the Association of Municipalities delegating greater administrative powers to Kosovar areas with an ethnic Serbian majority. This was part of a 2013 EU-brokered landmark agreement between Serbia and Kosovo to work towards normalization [→ Serbia (Kosovo)]. The August deal and another bilateral agreement on demarcation with Montenegro sparked violent protests by the opposition. Since October, three opposition parties led by Vetevendosje tried to block the proceedings in the Kosovo Parliament using tear gas, pepper spray, and throwing water bottles. The opposition called for a referendum or new elections if the government did not halt the deals.

On October 8, opposition MPs set off tear gas for the first time in the parliament. Throughout October, November, and December, tear gas and pepper spray were used several times by the opposition MPs. On October 12, several hundred protesters clashed with the police in the capital Pristina after the arrest of former leader of Vetevendosje MP Albin Kurti. The protesters threw cobblestones at the main police station and torched several authorities’ vehicles. Kurti urged the protesters to continue until they prevented the deal. During the protests, 15 people were injured. Kurti was released several hours later. On October 24, MPs from Vetevendosje used tear gas inside the parliamentary chamber while protesters in front of the parliament hurled Molotov cocktails at the police. During the protests, 40 people were injured and ten detained. President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga referred the August deal to the Constitutional Court. On November 11, the Court put the deal on hold. Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic criticized the decision as a violation of the agreement and a threat to regional stability. On November 17, several hundred op-

position activists and riot police clashed in Pristina, leaving seven people injured. Following the protests, opposition MP Donika Kadaj-Bujupi was arrested. The issuance of arrest warrants for several other opposition politicians caused further protests the following day, whereby 13 protesters were detained. On November 28, the police arrested Kurti for setting off tear gas as well as twelve other Vetevendosje party members. On December 23, Kosovo's Constitutional Court ruled that parts of the agreement with Serbia were unconstitutional. iti

SLOVENIA – CROATIA (BORDER)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Slovenia vs. Croatia
Conflict items: territory

The non-violent conflict between Slovenia and Croatia over their shared maritime and land border continued.

After the dispute had been submitted to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in November 2009, a decision was expected by 2015. On July 22, a Slovenian representative at the PCA and an official of the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were accused of collusions. Both resigned the next day. On July 29, the Croatian Parliament decided to withdraw from arbitration, although Slovenia deemed this act as illicit. The same day, the European Commission announced that the PCA would continue its work without Croatia, in spite of Croatia claiming the Commission's decision to be outside EC jurisdiction and refusing to recognize any future decisions of the PCA.

On November 11, Slovenia began to erect a fence to curb migration flows at the demarcation of the Slovenian-Croatian border, respectively on areas Croatia considered its territory. Slovenia claimed the temporary fence was raised on its territory and did not violate the border, Croatia, however, urged the other side to take it down. Police forces gathered on either side of the fence. jra

SPAIN (CATALAN NATIONALISTS / CATALONIA)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: CiU, UDC, CUP, Together for Yes (CDC, ERC, DC), Catalan regional government vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The dispute over secession between the Catalan regional government and the Spanish central government continued. On January 14, President of the Catalan government Artur Mas announced that early regional elections acting as a plebiscite on independence would be held on September 27. Four days later, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy denied the plebiscitary character of the Catalan elections. In a final ruling on February 25, the Spanish Constitutional Court (SCC) declared the November 2014 Catalan referendum on independence unconstitutional. On March 30, the pro-independence parties Convergence and Union (CiU), Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), Association of Municipalities for Independence, and Omnium Cultural signed a preliminary agreement on independence. The document envisaged

the region's independence before April 2017, given that the elections in September 2015 would be successful. However, Rajoy declared the document illegal the following day. On June 17, the Democratic Union of Catalonia (UDC) dissolved the CiU pact between Catalonia's two governing parties UDC and Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC) due to a disagreement over Mas' plan for independence. On July 15, CDC and ERC announced that they would run a unified slate of candidates for regional elections in September. By signing an election bill on August 3, Mas officially scheduled the regional elections for September 27. On September 11, the Catalan National Day, at least half a million Catalans demonstrated in the regional capital Barcelona supporting the region's independence. The day of the elections, the pro-independence coalition Together for Yes obtained the absolute majority of votes. On October 13 and 15, several thousand Catalans protested the outset of an investigation by Spanish prosecutors against Mas regarding the referendum process in November 2014. On October 27, Together for Yes and Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP) agreed on a draft resolution about independence. On November 11, the SCC suspended the Catalan Declaration starting the process to secede from Spain and subsequently declared it unconstitutional on December 2. pha

SPAIN – UNITED KINGDOM (GIBRALTAR)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: Spain vs. United Kingdom
Conflict items: territory

The conflict over the territory of Gibraltar between Spain and the United Kingdom continued at a non-violent level. On February 12, Spanish Foreign Minister José García-Margallo announced plans to issue a 50 euro fee for every vehicle entering or exiting Gibraltar. Furthermore, he stated that in his opinion Gibraltar is a part of Spain since every citizen speaks Spanish. On May 31, Governor of Gibraltar Lieutenant General Sir James Dutton resigned over the tensions with Spain. On July 3, the British government accused a Spanish survey vessel of having entered British waters illegally. On August 3, Spanish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ignacio Ybáñez confirmed that Spain would like to re-establish a regional cooperation mechanism in Spain's Campo de Gibraltar region, Cádiz. On August 9, the British government accused Spanish police vessels and a customs helicopter of having entered Gibraltar's territorial waters and airspace illegally, calling the acts "a clear violation of UK sovereignty." The Spanish Foreign Ministry denied the accusations and stated that the area was Spanish maritime territory. On August 25, Gibraltar stated that Spanish customs officers had fired in the direction of one of its fishing boats. On August 28, the British government accused Spain of a further provocation by permitting a Russian submarine to refuel in the Spanish Ceuta enclave. pih

TURKEY – ARMENIA

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Turkey vs. Armenia
 Conflict items: international power, other

The dispute over international power between Turkey and Armenia as well as the controversy over the use of the term “genocide” to depict the mass killings of Armenians between 1915 and 1917 continued.

On February 12, Armenian President Serge Sarkisian recalled the protocols signed on 10/10/09 establishing diplomatic ties with Turkey from the Armenian Parliament, arguing that Turkey had shown no political will towards reconciliation. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu consequently demanded Armenia that the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was to be returned to Azerbaijan before ratification of the protocols could be considered [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. On April 12, Pope Francis described the mass killings as “the first genocide of the century.” Three days later, the EU Parliament passed a resolution to officially define the mass killings as “genocide” and encouraged the EU member states to adopt the term. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in turn accused the EU and Pope Francis of using the term as an international campaign against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and recalled the Turkish ambassador from the Holy See. On April 24, several thousand Armenians commemorated the 100th anniversary of the mass killings in the Armenian capital Yerevan. Delegations from 65 countries attended the commemoration, including Turkish delegates in favor of a reconciliation process. Other major cities around the globe such as New York, Los Angeles, Rome, and Paris held similar events. On the same day, Turkey hosted commemorating celebrations it had scheduled for this date, marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli.

On October 15, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that it was not illegal to reject the naming of the mass killings as a “genocide.” Nevertheless, over the year, several countries acknowledged the mass killings as genocide, among them Austria, Belgium, Paraguay, and Luxembourg. On October 6 and 7, Turkish military helicopters violated Armenia’s airspace. Turkish military officials attributed the violation to bad weather. Ira

UKRAINE (CRIMEAN TATARS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: Crimean Tatars vs. Crimean regional government, Russia
 Conflict items: autonomy

The non-violent crisis over autonomy between the minority group Crimean Tatars, on the one hand, and the Crimean regional government and Russia on the other, continued. Representatives of Crimean Tatars continued to mainly oppose the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Throughout the year, alleged members of pro-Russian defense forces repeatedly abducted Crimean Tatar activists. For instance, at least two men, apparently dressed in police uniforms, abducted the Crimean Tatar activist Mukhtar Arislanov

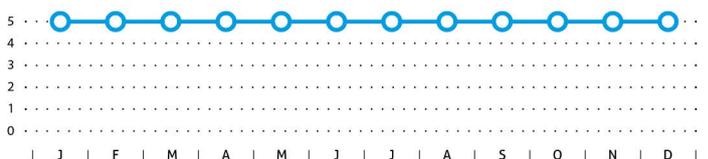
near his house in Fontany District, Simferopol, on August 27. International organizations repeatedly criticized the human rights situation in Crimea regarding the Crimean Tatar minority. In the course of the year, six Crimean Tatars were arrested due to their participation in a rally in Simferopol on 02/26/14, one of them the deputy head of the Crimean Tatar parliament Mejlis, Akhtem Chiygoz. On October 12, another arrested activist, Eskender Nebiyev, received a sentence of two years in prison, later commuted to a suspended sentence. On October 21, unknown individuals vandalized a Crimean Tatar memorial in the village of Koreiz.

On January 26, police forces raided the offices of the Crimean Tatar TV channel ATR in Simferopol and seized some of its property. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, condemned the raid. Since Russian authorities did not issue a license, the channel shut down on March 31, along with other Crimean Tatar media. On September 20, Crimean Tatar activists and members of the right-wing party Right Sector blocked food supply to Crimea at all three road connections between mainland Ukraine and Crimea. The Ukrainian police provided the activists with tents, water, and food. OSCE criticized the blockade. On November 20, unidentified individuals cut the power supply of Crimea by attacking the supply line near Kherson connecting mainland Ukraine with Crimea with explosives. Afterwards, at least four Crimean Tatars and Right Sector activists blocked access to the pylons, impeding the repair of the line. Consequently, major parts of Crimea were left without electricity. On the following day, clashes between Ukrainian security forces and the activists left several people wounded, among them one journalist [→ Ukraine (right-wing militants)]. In the night from November 21 to 22, further explosions damaged two more electricity pylons, and caused a complete power breakdown in Crimea. Crimean authorities subsequently declared a state of emergency. The governments of Russia and Ukraine condemned the attack. Following an agreement with the activists, the power line was repaired on December 8, and the power supply to Crimea partly restored. bew

UKRAINE (DONBAS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: DNR, LNR, et al. vs. DPSU, NGU, volunteer bataillons, government
 Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources



The war over secession, the orientation of the political system, and resources in the Donbas region, consisting of Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Luhansk oblasts, between several militant anti-government groups, supported by Russia, and the Ukrainian government, supported by Western countries and several nationalist volunteer battalions, continued.

According to the UN, since the beginning of the year, at least 4,327 people were killed and more than 10,372 were injured until December 9. Approx. 1.5 million inhabitants were in-

ternally displaced and infrastructure was heavily damaged since the beginning of the conflict. In addition, approx. one million people fled to neighbouring countries, most of them to Russia. The Armed Forces of Ukraine (ZSU) and militants of the self-proclaimed Donetsk (DNR) and Luhansk (LNR) People's Republics blamed each other for torturing, breaking the ceasefires, committing war crimes, and using weapons banned under the terms of the Minsk agreements. The UN, OSCE and NGOs criticized both sides. The humanitarian situation remained serious, including restrictions of freedom of movement and speech, payment of social benefits, and allocation of food, water, energy and shelter.

Humanitarian access was restricted in certain areas due to heavy fighting. Throughout the year, residents of several villages, as of Pavlopil, Shyrokyne, and Vuhlehirsk in Donetsk, as well as Kuriache, Novoborvytsi, and Popasna in Luhansk complained about the humanitarian situation and problems of landmines, according to OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM). On September 25, numerous NGOs like Médecins Sans Frontières were expelled from the DNR- and LNR-controlled areas. Throughout the year, several dozen convoys allegedly for humanitarian aid from Russia arrived in Donbas. According to the government, the convoys supplied DNR and LNR with weapons, who stated in turn that the convoys only provided humanitarian aid [→ Russia – Ukraine].

SMM reported numerous ceasefire violations on an almost daily basis in the first half of January. For instance, SMM counted 69 ceasefire violations within 24 hours from January 4 till 5. BM-21 Grad multiple-rocket launchers (MRLs) struck close to a bus in Volnovakha, Donetsk, on January 13, resulting in twelve people dead and 17 injured. The battle over the control of Donetsk airport, which had begun on 09/28/14, intensified from January 11 to 21. Over four days, DNR forces shelled government-held positions in the complex. On January 21, DNR fighters captured the airport under heavy fighting and stayed in control of the airport for the rest of the year. Fighting in other parts of the conflict region also continued. On January 22, DNR-leader Alexander Zakharchenko ruled out further peace talks and announced new offensives. The same day, UN stated that 262 people had lost their lives in the previous nine days. On January 23, at least 30 civilians died and over 102 were injured in a multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS) attack in Mariupol, Donetsk. Since mid-January, DNR and LNR forces tightened their attack on the Ukrainian-controlled city of Debaltseve, Donetsk, with heavy artillery for several weeks. On February 9, militants announced that they had encircled Debaltseve, with several thousand civilians and about 6,000 Ukrainian forces trapped inside. The next day, a MRLs attack on ZSU's headquarters in Kramatorsk, Donetsk, killed 15 and wounded 60. On February 17, militants entered the encircled town. Although the ceasefire from Minsk II agreement should be implemented, violations were reported from the city of Debaltseve. Approx. 500 civilians were found dead, according to the UN.

SMM counted several explosions, especially in the area of the contested Donetsk airport and Shyrokyne, on an almost daily basis in early April. On May 1, heavy shelling by both sides occurred at Shyrokyne. On May 23, SMM reported explosions, mortar, and artillery fire few kilometers from the north of the railway station of Donetsk and in the village Avdiivka, Donetsk. Up to early June, skirmishes had persisted on a daily basis. Fighting especially affected numerous smaller places along the line of contact. West of Donetsk City, hostilities culminated in heavy clashes around the government-controlled towns of Maryinka and Krasnohorivka on June 3. The government stated, it fought off a combined DNR-Russian attack,

which allegedly included 1,000 fighters, killing up to 100 combatants. DNR on the other side blamed Kyiv and the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU) for attacking its positions and shelling Donetsk City with MLRS, which left at least 21 people killed and about 124 injured. Less intense fighting continued in the following weeks. On June 22, the situation at the Donetsk airport tensed up, when both sides used automatic grenade launchers, heavy machine guns, and anti-aircraft weapons. On July 10, SMM counted 617 instances of weapons fire including heavy weapons. SMM noticed numerous violations of terms of Minsk II throughout August and September. The government blamed DNR fighters for an attack on its positions near the village of Starohnativka, Donetsk, on August 10. Reportedly 400 fighters were involved, one soldier killed and 16 wounded. Fighting and shelling continued throughout August with both sides repeatedly redeploying heavy weapons at the line of contact and dozens of people killed or wounded.

The Contact Group, consisting of representatives of OSCE, Russia, Ukraine, and the Donbas militias, announced on August 26 that both sides agreed on a renewed ceasefire, starting September 1. Despite that, fighting continued. However, the intensity decreased between September and December. On September 30, the government and the militants struck an agreement on the withdrawal of smaller weapons and MBTs from the line of contact, beginning October 20. The Dutch Air Safety board, mandated to investigate the 07/17/14 crash of Malaysia Airlines flight MH 17, stated on October 13 that a Russian-made Buk 9M38M1 missile likely downed the plane. The same day, Russian state-owned defense company and Buk designer Almaz-Antey announced that MH 17 was downed from Kyiv-controlled territory with another Buk type. On November 9, militants and government forces engaged in Maiorsk, Donetsk, which left one soldier wounded and several militants killed or wounded, according to Kyiv. Violence continued with both sides blaming each other of breaking the truce, for instance on December 27.

SMM visited military holdings of both sides almost daily, monitoring the compliance with Minsk II concerning the withdrawal of heavy weapons. Throughout the year, both sides kept SMM from observing weapon holding areas or delayed their entrances by several minutes. SMM reported several times that the sites as well as the movements of weapons were not in compliance with the withdrawal lines.

Throughout the year, both sides undertook diplomatic efforts. Leaders of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, the so-called Normandy format, met in Minsk on February 11 for peace talks. On February 12, they agreed on the Minsk II agreement: a 13-point roadmap, including a ceasefire to start on February 15, the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the conflict line, exchange of prisoners, withdrawal of foreign militias from Ukrainian territory, local elections in Donbas as well as decentralization for militant-controlled regions, and Ukrainian control over its complete border by the end of the year. Between April and May, both sides tried to establish a demilitarized zone at Shyrokyne. In the German capital Berlin on April 13, Normandy Four decided to boost the withdrawal of heavy weapons in Donbas. They also agreed to establish four working groups on the reconstruction of Donbas, exchange of prisoners, and local elections. On June 23, Normandy Four affirmed their commitment to fully implement the Minsk agreements and agreed on the soonest demilitarization of Shyrokyne. On July 1, DNR proclaimed Shyrokyne as a demilitarized zone and began to withdraw from the village.

On July 16, Ukrainian parliament passed a law to grant

militant-held regions greater autonomy. Representatives of the Donbas militants and the Russian Foreign Ministry criticized the proposals as inadequate. DNR and LNR representatives stated on September 16 to hold local elections in their territories on October 18 and November 1. The announcement sparked protests by Kyiv, which considered them as a violation of the terms of Minsk II. On October 6, the militants announced to postpone elections, which was welcomed by Normandy format representatives.

On August 24, state leaders of Ukraine, France, and Germany met in Berlin without the attendance of Putin. In early December during a visit to Ukraine, Vice President of the USA Joe Biden assured support to Ukraine and accused Russia of violating Minsk II. On December 22, militant anti-government groups and the government of Ukraine agreed on a new ceasefire deal during the holidays. Furthermore, on December 30, Normandy Four agreed to extend the validity of Minsk II to 2016. mbar lmv

UKRAINE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Opposition Bloc, KPU, opposition groups et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political and socioeconomic system between the Opposition Bloc, the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU), and various opposition groups, on the one hand, and the government of President Petro Poroshenko, on the other hand, de-escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, militants conducted approx. 40 bomb and arson attacks, especially in the oblasts of Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odessa, leaving several people dead or injured. Attacks mostly targeted offices of government parties, army recruitment bureaus, headquarters of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), institutions and meeting venues of pro-government volunteer organizations and NGOs. Furthermore, militants attacked banks, railroad tracks, supply lines, billboards, and Russian newspaper offices. Most incidents remained unsolved, with no one claiming responsibility. While governmental representatives repeatedly blamed Russia or so-called pro-Russian groups for having conducted the attacks, the opposition blamed the government for carrying out a false-flag strategy. For instance, on February 22, a bomb attack took place in the city of Kharkiv during a pro-government rally marking the first anniversary of the so-called Maidan Revolution. Four people were killed, among them two police officers, and ten were injured. SBU arrested four suspects claimed to be instructed and trained in Russia. In reaction to the attacks, on June 16, President Poroshenko signed a law enabling the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) to increase the number of police forces in the country. Additionally, the NSDC launched a crackdown on so-called terrorists in the following weeks. However, further incidents took place. For instance on September 27, the local anti-government paramilitary group Odesskoe Podpolye carried out a bomb attack in the city of Odessa, damaging the regional SBU headquarters as well as several nearby buildings and vehicles.

In the course of the year, the government pursued judicial and executive action against oppositional groups, media, and parties as well as supporters of the ousted government of

then-president Viktor Yanukovich and so-called pro-Russian activists. On May 15, Poroshenko signed four laws banning symbols deemed to be totalitarian, especially those of Soviet and Communist origin, and recognized right-wing WWII nationalist groups as independence fighters. On September 30, the District Administrative Court of Kyiv banned a KPU splinter group and the Communist Party of Workers and Peasants, as well as the KPU itself on December 16.

Furthermore, the government enforced measures against oppositional and Russian media. On January 1, NSDC Secretary Oleksandr Turchynov threatened to shut down the TV station Inter after it had broadcasted a Russian New Year's show. On February 7, SBU detained journalist Ruslan Kotsaba on charges of high treason in Ivano-Frankivsk, in the eponymous oblast, after he had called for a boycott of military recruitment and deployment in the country's east [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. On September 16, authorities imposed sanctions against 388 people, among them many Russian journalists and over 100 companies from 23 countries, accusing them of anti-Ukrainian propaganda and connections to terrorism. International academics, the Council of Europe (CoE), OSCE, and international watchdogs repeatedly denounced these acts as being politically motivated and a threat to freedom of speech. They further criticized the government for not protecting opposition politicians and journalists from attacks by right-wing militants. For instance, on April 16, OSCE called on the government to immediately investigate and ensure journalist's safety after presumed right-wing militants had killed opposition-near journalist Oles Buzyna in the capital Kyiv that day [→ Ukraine (right-wing militants)]. In total, twelve oppositional and pro-Russian activists were killed by the end of the year.

While Poroshenko condemned the killings and urged law enforcement agencies to investigate the circumstances, the opposition as well as the Russian foreign ministry accused the government of repression. By the end of the year, the majority of incidents remained unsolved.

On October 25, Opposition Bloc politicians criticized the government's postponement of the elections in Mariupol, Donetsk oblast. Poroshenko accused the Opposition Bloc and the benefactor, businessman Rinat Akhmetov, of electoral fraud, while the opposition and several members of the former Yanukovich government accused the government of distorting the election process. However, OSCE commended transparency and organization of the elections.

Concerning the 2014 Maidan killings, the 2014 Odessa clashes, and the overthrow of the Yanukovich government, international watchdogs repeatedly accused the government and national law enforcement agencies of impeding the investigations. For instance on March 31, CoE blamed the government for failing the investigations due to a lack of independence of the General Prosecution and the destruction of evidence. On October 19, Yanukovich filed a case at the European Court of Human Rights against the government for missing a legal impeachment trail and repeated breaches of his rights. tfr

UKRAINE (RIGHT-WING MILITANTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: Svoboda, Right Sector, Radical Party, right-wing militants vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power, the orientation of the political system, and ideology between right-wing parties such as Svoboda and Radical Party, military-political groups such as the Right Sector and its armed unit Ukrainian Volunteer Corps, and other smaller right-wing groups, on the one side, and the government, on the other, continued.

During July and August, five people died in clashes between Right Sector militants and the police in Uzhhorod, Zakarpattia oblast, and the capital Kyiv.

In mid-July, the government deployed military units to Zakarpattia and re-appointed the governor after members of the Right Sector had initiated a shootout with police forces in Mukacheve, Zakarpattia, on July 11. According to local media, the shooting was a result of an attempt to control smuggling routes from Ukraine to the EU between the Right Sector and supporters of MP Mykhailo Lanyo. At least two members of the Right Sector were killed and four injured. Dmytro Yarosh, then-leader of the Right Sector, claimed their aim was to prevent crimes, in which the local police was involved. Criminal investigations were launched against around a dozen activists of the Right Sector on charges of founding a criminal organization and committing terrorist acts. On July 21, several thousand supporters of the Right Sector gathered on Maidan in Kyiv to protest against the government. During the event, Yarosh called for a referendum in order to decide about questions on loyalty to state institutions and state policy. Consequently, the party decided not to take part in future local elections. On August 31, a parliamentary session was held on a constitutional reform, which would grant more autonomy to militant controlled territories in the East [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Meanwhile, protesters allegedly linked to far-right Svoboda party, demonstrated in front of the parliament. A nationalist protester killed three members of the Ukrainian National Guard securing the parliament and injured over 100 people, by throwing a grenade. In response to the constitutional reform, the Radical party quit the coalition government. On September 20, an economic blockade of Crimea was initiated by the Crimean Tatar leadership and assisted by Ukrainian activists from the nationalist volunteer battalions [→ Ukraine (Crimean Tatars)]. During the blockade, activists of Right Sector and members of the extreme-right Azov battalion conducted extrajudicial identity checks, vehicle searches, confiscation of goods, and arrests, as reported by UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Ukrainian nationalists organized parades commemorating the Day of the Defender of Ukraine and the Day of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army on October 14 in the cities of Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lutsk, Mariupol, and Odessa. A number of Ukrainian far-right organizations, in particular the Svoboda party, Right Sector, and the Azov battalion participated. The marches were dominated by harsh anti-government, anti-Russian, and nationalist rhetoric. On December 21 in the city of Krasnokutsk, Kharkiv oblast, demonstrators wearing masks and waving the flags of the Azov battalion, pelted stones and Molotov cocktails at the houses of local police chiefs. This happened during a demonstration of local residents, who protested against the actions of the police, in particular the release of two homicide suspects.

Furthermore, right-wing groups and nationalists also targeted pro-Russian journalists, LGBTI activists, and the Jewish community. For instance, a nationalist group calling itself "Ukrainian Insurgent Army" claimed responsibility for the murders of pro-Russian politician Oleh Kalaschnikow, on April 15, and Ukrainian pro-Russian journalist Oles Buzina on April 16. On June 18, the government announced the detention

of two alleged murderers of Buzina, Andrey Medvedko, Svoboda party member and radical nationalistic movement activist, and Denis Polishchuk, platoon officer of the far-right Ukrainian People's Self-Defence (UNSO). On June 6, the pro-LGBTI "March of Equality" in Kyiv was accompanied by homophobic statements. Poroshenko supported the event calling it "a constitutional right" of citizens. During and after the march, participants were exposed to attacks of radical nationalists despite the presence of police. One police officer was seriously injured and about 20 participants and passers-by were injured. More than ten attackers were arrested. vap

UNITED KINGDOM (NATIONALISTS / NORTHERN IRELAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1968

Conflict parties: CIRA, RIRA et al., SDLP, SF vs. Alliance Party, DUP, government, Orange Order, UDA, UUP, UVF

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of Northern Ireland (N-IRL) from the United Kingdom between the antagonistic communities continued.

Throughout the first half of the year, Loyalist and Republican parties held several rounds of talks discussing the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement signed on 12/23/14. In the aftermath of the signing, Irish Republicans had criticized the Republican Sinn Féin (SF) for its policy on various occasions. On March 9, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness (SF) announced that SF would block the welfare bill which is a crucial part of the agreement. In response, Loyalists and First Minister Peter Robinson (Democratic Unionist Party, DUP) criticized SF's decision and warned of a breakdown of N-IRL's devolution process. The political stalemate continued in the course of the year until Republicans and Loyalists struck an agreement on welfare, past, and paramilitarism on November 17. While SF assented to transfer powers to the British Parliament concerning welfare issues, the British government announced to give N-IRL an additional financial support of USD 761.1 million and to allow it to establish its own 12.5 percent corporation tax. In addition, the parties agreed on establishing an international body to monitor the status of paramilitary groups and intensify their fight against cross-border crime in N-IRL and the Republic of Ireland. While British and Irish governments welcomed the agreement, Irish Republicans blamed SF for betrayal.

Sectarian violence continued throughout the year, leaving several people and police officers injured. However, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) stated on July 31 that the number of sectarian crimes decreased by 15.8 percent compared to the 2013-14 period. The Parades Commission's decision on July 6 to ban, for the third consecutive year, the Protestant Orange Order's parade scheduled to take place on the Ulster Protestant celebration day Twelfth of July in Belfast caused several dozen Orangemen to stage a rally in Belfast on July 9. Republicans like SF, however, welcomed the decision. On the day of the parade, tens of thousands of people initially peacefully took part in celebrations across N-IRL. Clashes ensued in Belfast as Loyalist rioters attacked police lines using bottles, bricks, slingshots, metal ladders, paint bombs, stones, and hurled up to 30 petrol bombs at the riot police. The latter responded with water cannon and plastic bullets. Later

that day, further clashes broke out after an Orangeman had steered a car into a group of Catholics, injuring two. Moreover, Republican youths stoned a bus carrying Orangemen through Greysteel, Causeway Coast, and Glens district (N-IRL), injuring one passenger. Overall, the clashes left 29 police officers and several demonstrators injured. The police arrested nine people. Members of the N-IRL and British governments as well as the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland condemned the violence. As in previous years, paramilitary activity by Republican and Loyalist groups continued. Allegations of an ongoing Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) activity and the group's involvement in the killing of former PIRA member Kevin McGuigan intensified the conflict in the second half of the year. Unidentified perpetrators killed McGuigan on August 12 in Belfast. In the following days, the incident was deemed by authorities and group members to be a revenge attack for the murder of former PIRA member Gerard Davison on May 5. PSNI Chief Constable George Hamilton stated on August 22 that PIRA members were involved in McGuigan's murder, albeit the organization itself no longer existed as a paramilitary group and had not sanctioned the killing. While SF leader Gerry Adams denied the same day that PIRA had taken part in the incident, the Loyalist Ulster Unionist Party left the mandatory coalition in protest on August 30. On September 10, Robinson and three DUP ministers also quit after PSNI had detained SF's N-IRL chairman Bobby Storey and two other men related to the killing. However, the DUP returned into the coalition after a British government assessment had stated that PIRA had a "wholly political focus" on October 20. The Loyalist paramilitary group Ulster Defense Association, which had officially announced to stand down its paramilitary activities on 11/11/07, stated on October 6 that it was still existent and refused to dissolve. In the first half of the year, PSNI had already blamed the group for a series of paramilitary-style attacks, leaving one person dead and four people injured. mcm

UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS / SCOTLAND)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: SNP, Scottish regional government, Scottish Green Party, SSP et al. vs. government, Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, pro-union supporters

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over the secession of Scotland from the United Kingdom (UK) between the Scottish regional government formed by the Scottish National Party (SNP) and backed by several minor parties and social groups, on the one hand, and the central government backed by the Labour Party and pro-union supporters, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, both sides disagreed over the extent of Scottish legislative powers. On May 7, the SNP outpolled its opponents in the UK general election gaining 57 out of 59 Scottish seats. Related to the electoral results, Scottish First Minister and SNP chairwoman Nicola Sturgeon renewed her demands on further powers for the Scottish Parliament. Despite stressing that another referendum on Scottish independence would be off the agenda for the next parliament, Sturgeon stated several times throughout the year that the Scottish voters could push the SNP to a second referendum if Scotland was taken out of the EU against its will. British Prime Minister David Cameron repeatedly ruled out the possibility of a second independence referendum.

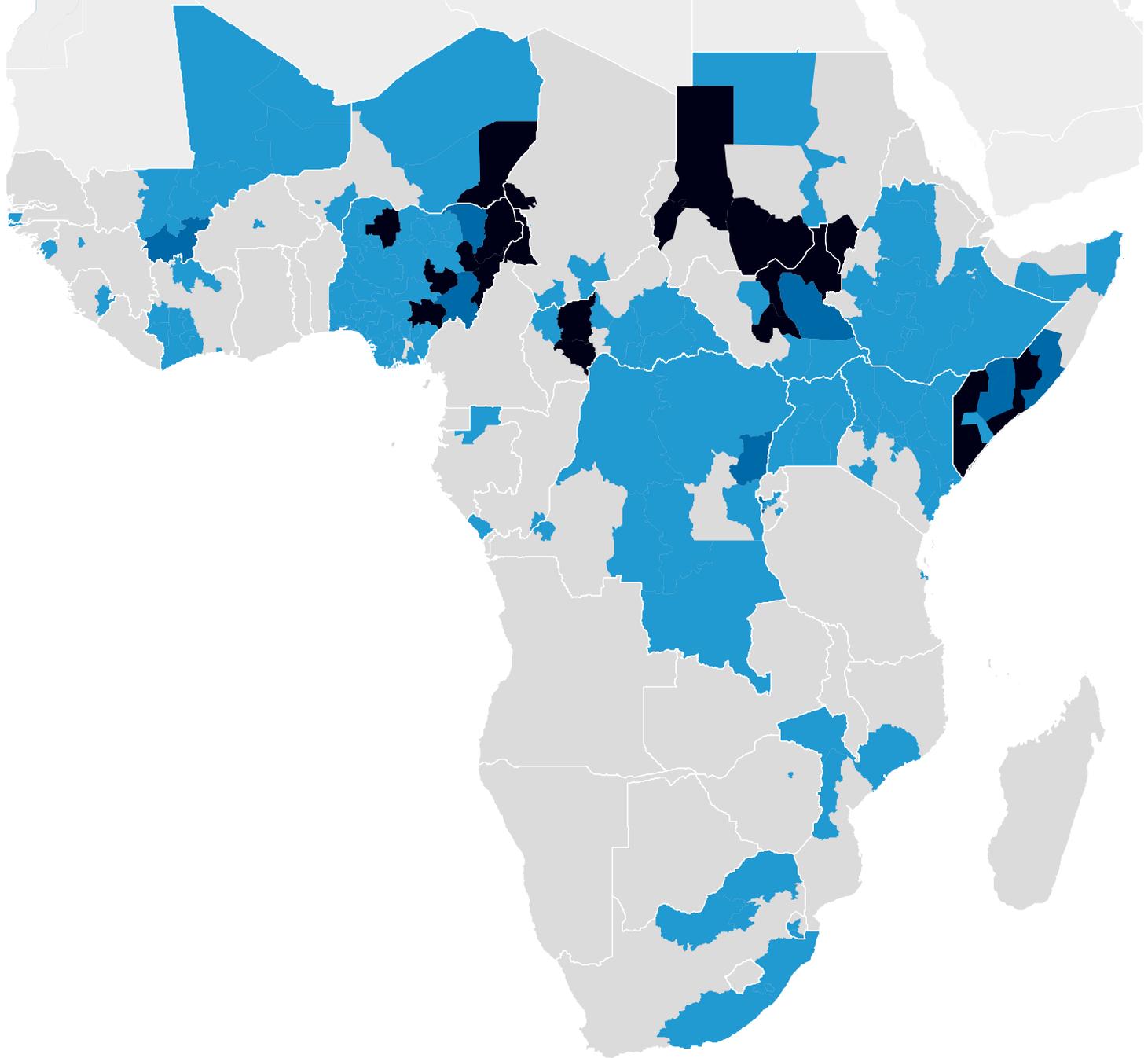
Minor scuffles took place in the course of the year. For instance, on May 4, anti-austerity activists and a left-wing pro-independence group forced the leader of the Scottish Labour Party, Jim Murphy, to abandon an election rally in Glasgow, Scotland. Murphy described the incident as "aggressive nationalism" and accused SNP of undemocratic conduct. Sturgeon condemned the event and denied any linkages.

On November 30, a dozen pro-independence protesters set up a camp next to the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood in the capital Edinburgh. Although the Scottish Parliament announced on December 10 that the activists were given 48 hours to leave ground, the protesters remained. Anxious to force the protesters to leave, the parliament issued a legal bid to evict the camp until 07/01/16.

csc, mcm

Sub-Saharan Africa

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS
- NO VIOLENT CONFLICT

Counting 97, the number of conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa remained constant in 2015, accounting for nearly a quarter of the world's political conflicts. New conflicts erupted between the government of Burundi and Rwanda in the context of the political crisis in Burundi as well as between opposition parties and the government of the Republic of Congo [→ Burundi – Rwanda; Republic of Congo (opposition)]. Nearly half of the world's highly violent conflicts took place in Sub-Saharan Africa. The number of limited wars increased from eight to eleven, while the number of full-scale wars remained constant (9). The 2014 war between the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Congolese and Ugandan governments de-escalated to the level of a limited war [→ DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)], while inter-communal violence in South Sudan escalated to war level [→ South Sudan (inter-communal violence)].

The war between the militant group Boko Haram and the Nigerian government saw a significant rise in attacks in neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. After Boko Haram had been pushed out of its stronghold in Gwoza, Borno state, in early 2015, the group changed its tactics from seizing and controlling territory to hit-and-run attacks. The year accounted for more than 12,000 conflict-related deaths, among them 8,110 people being killed by Boko Haram, and 2.4 million IDPs and refugees. Compared to the previous year, with more than 2,000 fatalities the death toll outside Nigeria almost tripled. Due to the deteriorating security situation, presidential elections were postponed to March 28 and 29. They were won by Muhammadu Buhari, candidate of the APC. Furthermore, the conflict over arable land in Nigeria's Middle Belt between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other, continued at war level [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]

In Mali, the limited war between Islamist groups and the government supported by France continued, leaving at least 190 people dead [→ Mali (Islamist groups)]. While in 2014 violence was restricted to the northern regions of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, the militant groups extended their activities towards the south of the country in 2015, conducting attacks along the borders with Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire as well as in the capital Bamako.

In June, the MINUSMA, comprising more than 10,000 personnel, was extended by one year. Meanwhile, negotiations between northern militant groups, such as Ifoghas Tuareg MNLA, and the government continued resulting in the signing of a peace agreement on June 20 [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad)]. However, both sides clashed several times in April and May.

Violent opposition conflicts were observed in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo. In Burkina Faso, the RSP loyal to the resigned president Blaise Compaoré staged a coup, denouncing the interim government's ban on pro-Compaoré candidates from running in the October presidential elections [→ Burkina Faso (opposition)]. Ahead of the presidential elections in neighboring Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, violent confrontations between supporters of the opposition parties and of the governments caused several deaths [→ Burkina Faso (opposition); Guinea (opposition)]. In Senegal, the secession conflict between MFDC and the government escalated to a violent crisis despite ongoing peace efforts [→ Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)]. In the Republic of Congo, a new conflict erupted between opposition groups and the ruling PCT when President Denis Sassou Nguesso sought to change the constitution, thereby enabling himself to run for president for a third time, which prompted large-scale protests especially in the capital Brazzaville.

In the Horn of Africa, the war between the Islamist group al-Shabaab and the Somalian and Kenyan governments remained the most violent conflict. Although the military supported by AMISOM was able to regain territory from al-Shabaab, the group continued to conduct bomb attacks and assassinations throughout Somalia and Kenya [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabab)]. In the northern region of Somalia, the autonomous region of Puntland was increasingly involved in border conflicts between the self-declared Republic of Somaliland and Khatumo State [→ Somalia (Khatumo State – Puntland – Somaliland)]. Inter-clan violence in the center regions of Hiiraan and Lower Shabelle continued at a violent level, while the government made efforts to stop the fighting. Inter-ethnic violence in Kenya continued at the level of a limited war. The border region of the country's Eastern Province was entered several times by Ethiopian military claiming to pursue members of the Ethiopia-based Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) [→ Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)]. Furthermore, tensions rose between the political opposition and the Ethiopian government in the context of the general elections held in late May. The conflict over the disputed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) de-escalated when Ethiopia signed an agreement with Sudan and Egypt in December on the project's further development [→ Ethiopia – Egypt, Sudan (GERD)].

The war between Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups in the Central African Republic (CAR) continued. The transitional government, led by interim President Catherine Samba-Panza, and other armed groups rejected ceasefire agreements signed in January and April between several groups, claiming they had not been involved in the talks. In preparation for upcoming elections, the interim government held a national forum in May, but a new wave of violence gripped the capital Bangui in late September, leaving more than 90 people dead and more than 37,000 displaced. However, after several delays, the first round of elections was held peacefully on December 30.

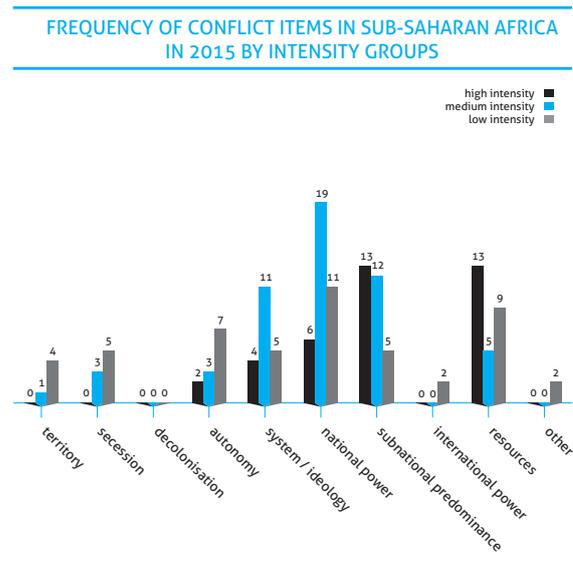
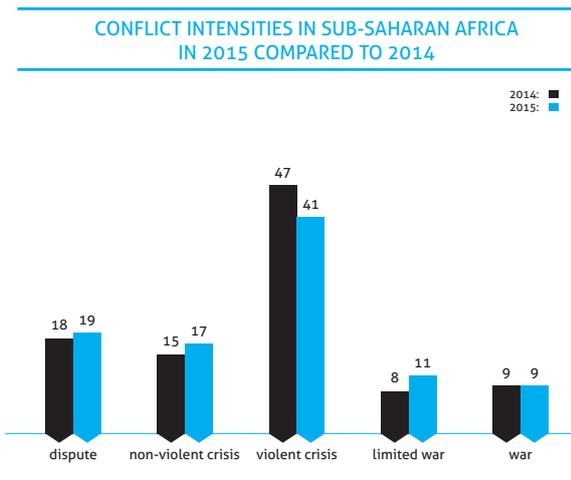
The East of the DR Congo saw the continuation of eight limited wars between local and foreign militias and between militias and the government. After a failed demobilization process in 2014, the government launched operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in North and South Kivu, expelling the militants from their main bases [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. Furthermore, after two failed rounds of negotiations, the military and MONUSCO engaged in heavy fighting with the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI) in the second half of the year [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. In the run-up to the 2016 general elections, opposition supporters staged several protests in the capital Kinshasa against a proposed change to the constitution that would allow President Joseph Kabila to run for a third term [→ DR Congo (opposition)]. The protests were violently dispersed by government forces and resulted in the deaths of dozens of opposition members.

In Burundi, the national power conflict between opposition parties and the government led by President Pierre Nkurunziza escalated to a limited war in the run-up to the presidential elections. The opposition accused Nkurunziza of violating the constitution as well as the terms of the 2000 Arusha agreement by seeking another term. An attempted coup in May by Major General Godefroid Niyombare and Leonard Ngendakumana failed. The political crisis in Burundi negatively affected the relationship between Burundi and Rwanda [→ Burundi – Rwanda]. Both governments accused each other of supporting the opposition.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

With the number of wars in the region rising by one to five, the situation in Sudan and South Sudan remained highly volatile. In Sudan, the year was marked by the general elections held in April when Omar al-Bashir was re-elected president, thereby securing his third term in office since he came into power through a military coup in 1989. While the political and armed opposition boycotted the elections, the government intensified its crackdown on opposition groups, especially on rebel groups active in the country's peripheries of Darfur, Blue Nile, and West Kordofan [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North/South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. In the first half of the year, al-Bashir launched operation "Decisive Summer 2", the second phase of last year's military campaign. Although al-Bashir had called for the African Union/United Nations hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to leave the country in late 2014, in June the mission extended its mandate by another year due to the deteriorating security situation in the region. In South Sudan, the war between the governing Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/A) under President Salva Kiir and its splinter faction Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by former vice president Riek Machar continued [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. Meanwhile, violence between different tribes and subtribes over scarce resources such as arable land and water as well as cattle also increased in the context of instability and arms proliferation in the country [→ South Sudan (intercommunal violence)]. The announcement of President Kiir to solve the crisis by creating 28 new states was repeatedly criticized by various opposition groups, also leading to the emergence of a new militant group called Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation (REMNASAS) [→ South Sudan (various militias)]. Due to the ongoing conflicts in both countries, the food situation further deteriorated, leaving thousands at risk of starvation.

South Africa saw a new wave of violence against immigrants from other African countries. Throughout the year, various attacks on foreign nationals left dozens dead, leading to diplomatic tensions with some of the victims' countries of origin [→ South Africa (anti-immigrants – immigrants)]. In Mozambique, the biggest opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) continued to fight the government of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and increasingly promoted autonomy. Regardless of a peace agreement that had been signed on 09/05/14, RENAMO and police forces continuously clashed throughout the year, leaving around 45 people dead and RENAMO repeatedly threatening to seize control of Mozambique's six northern and central provinces [→ Mozambique (RENAMO)]. In Madagascar, the conflict between I Love Madagascar (TIM) and the party of ex-president Andry Rajoelina, Tanora malaGasy Vonona (TGV), was settled in 2015 due to the official lifting of the house arrest of former president Marc Ravalomanana by Hery Rajaonarimampianina, president in office [Madagascar (opposition)].



Overview: Conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Angola (FLEC / Cabinda)*	FLEC vs. government	secession, resources	1975	↘	2
Angola (UNITA)*	UNITA, CASA-CE vs. government	national power	1975	•	1
Burkina Faso (opposition)	CDP vs. interim government	national power	2014	•	3
Burundi (opposition)	ADC-Ikibiri et al. vs. government	national power	2006	↗	4
Burundi – Rwanda	Burundi vs. Rwanda	international power	2015	NEW	2
Burundi, DR Congo (FNL)	FNL-Rwasa, FNL-Nzabampema vs. Burundi, DR Congo	national power, subnational predominance	2005	↗	4
Cameroon (militants / Bakassi)*	BSDF vs. government	secession	2006	•	1
Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)	Anti-Balaka vs. ex-Séléka	national power, resources	2012	•	5
Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA)	LRA vs. Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda	subnational predominance, resources	1987	•	4
Chad (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1990	•	3
Chad (rebel groups)*	FPR, UFDD et al. vs. government	national power, resources	2005	↘	2
Côte d'Ivoire (militant groups)*	militant groups vs. government	national power	2012	•	3
Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)	CNC, FPI vs. government	national power	1999	•	3
Djibouti (FRUD)*	FRUD vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	•	3
Djibouti (opposition)*	MJO, USN vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	2
DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa / Katanga)	Bantu vs. Batwa vs. government	subnational predominance	2013	•	4
DR Congo (ex-M23)	ex-M23 vs. government	subnational predominance	2004	↗	3
DR Congo (Ituri militias)	FRPI vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1999	•	4
DR Congo (Kata Katanga / Katanga)*	Kata Katanga vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2011	•	4
DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)	Mayi-Mayi groups vs. Nyatura groups vs. Raia Mutomboki groups vs. APCLS vs. FDLR vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2003	•	4
DR Congo (opposition)	MLC, FIS, UNC, UPDS et al. vs. government	national power	1997	•	3
DR Congo – Rwanda*	DR Congo vs. Rwanda	territory, international power	1998	↘	2
DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)	FDLR vs. DR Congo, Rwanda	national power, subnational predominance, resources	1994	↗	4
DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)	ADF vs. DR Congo, Uganda	subnational predominance, resources	1995	↘	4
Equatorial Guinea – Gabon (Mbanié, Cocotier, Conga islands)*	Equatorial Guinea vs. Gabon	territory, resources	1970	•	1
Eritrea (RSADO)*	RSADO vs. government	autonomy	1999	↘	2
Ethiopia (ARDUF)*	ARDUF vs. government	autonomy	1995	•	2
Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)	OLF vs. government	secession	1992	•	3
Ethiopia (ONLF / Ogaden)*	ONLF vs. government	autonomy, resources	1984	•	3
Ethiopia (opposition)	AEUP, Arena, EDP, ERP, Ginbot 7, MEDREK, Semayawi Party, UDJ vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2005	↗	3
Ethiopia (TPDM)*	TPDM vs. government	system/ideology	2002	•	2
Ethiopia – Egypt, Sudan (GERD)*	Ethiopia vs. Egypt, Sudan	resources	2011	↘	1
Ethiopia – Eritrea*	Ethiopia vs. Eritrea	territory	1961	•	1
Gabon (opposition groups)*	various opposition groups vs. government	national power	2009	•	3
Guinea (Guerze – Konianke)*	Guerze vs. Konianke	subnational predominance	2001	•	1
Guinea (opposition)	UFDG, UFR et al. vs. government	national power	2006	↗	3
Guinea-Bissau (opposition)*	PAIGC vs. PRS	system/ideology, national power	1998	•	1
Kenya (inter-ethnic violence)	Pokot vs. Turkana; Samburu vs. Turkana; Degodia vs. Garre; Maasai vs. Kipsigis; Giriama vs. Orma; Pokot vs. Luhya; Maasai vs. Kisii; Ajuraan; vs. Degodia et al.	subnational predominance, resources	1963	•	4

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Kenya (MRC / Coast)*	MRC vs. government	secession	2008	↘	2
Kenya (Mungiki)*	Mungiki factions vs. government	subnational predominance	1997	•	3
Kenya (opposition)*	TNA vs. ODM	national power	1999	↘	2
Madagascar (opposition)	Mapar, TIM vs. government	national power	2009	END	1
Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad)	HCUA, MNLA et al. vs. government	autonomy	1989	•	3
Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)	Ansar al-Din vs. HCUA, MAA, MNLA vs. GATIA	subnational predominance	2012	•	3
Mali (Islamist groups)	al-Mourabitoun, Ansar al-Din, AQIM, MLF, MUJAO vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2009	•	4
Mali (military factions)*	red berets vs. CNRDRE/Sanogo supporters vs. government	national power	2012	•	1
Mali (opposition groups)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	↗	2
Mozambique (RENAMO)	RENAMO vs. government	autonomy	2012	•	3
Niger (Islamist groups)*	AQIM, MUJAO vs. government	system/ideology	2008	•	3
Niger (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2009	•	3
Nigeria (Christian – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1960	↓	1
Nigeria (Eggon groups / Nasarawa State)*	Eggon, Eggon militia (Ombatse) vs. Fulani, Alago, Agatu, Gwandara, Migili	subnational predominance	2012	↗	2
Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)	farmers vs. pastoralists	subnational predominance, resources	1960	•	5
Nigeria (Ijaw groups / Niger Delta)*	Ijaw Youths, MEND vs. government, International Oil Companies in the Niger Delta	subnational predominance, resources	1997	•	3
Nigeria (Islamic Movement)*	IMN vs. government	system/ideology	1991	•	3
Nigeria (MASSOB / Biafra)	MASSOB vs. government	secession	1967	↗	3
Nigeria (MOSOP, Ogoni / Niger Delta)*	MOSOP vs. government	autonomy, resources	1990	↘	1
Nigeria (northerners – southerners)	northerners vs. southerners	system/ideology, national power	1960	•	3
Nigeria – Cameroon (Bakassi)*	Nigeria vs. Cameroon	territory, resources	1961	END	1
Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)	Boko Haram vs. Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger	system/ideology	2003	•	5
Republic of Congo (opposition)	opposition groups vs. PCT	national power	2015	NEW	3
Rwanda (opposition)*	DGPR, PS-Imberakuri, RDI, RDU, RNC, UDF et al. vs. government	national power	2003	•	2
Rwanda – France*	Rwanda vs. France	other	2004	•	1
Senegal (June 23 Movement)*	June 23 movement vs. government	national power	2011	•	1
Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)	MFDC vs. government	secession	1982	↗	3
Sierra Leone (APC – SLPP)*	APC vs. SLPP	national power	2007	↑	3
Somalia (ASWJ)*	ASWJ vs. government	subnational predominance	2014	•	3
Somalia (Habr Gedir – Biymal / Lower Shabelle)	Habr Gedir militias vs. Biymal militias	subnational predominance	2013	•	3
Somalia (Hawadle – Surre / Hiiraan)	Hawadle militias vs. Surre militias	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Somalia (inter-militia rivalry / Jubaland)*	Hirale militias vs. Interim Jubaland Administration	subnational predominance	1991	•	3
Somalia (Khatumo State – Puntland – Somaliland)	regional government of Somaliland vs. Khatumo State vs. autonomous region of Puntland	subnational predominance	1998	•	3
Somalia (Puntland)*	autonomous region of Puntland vs. FGS	autonomy	1998	•	1
Somalia (Somaliland)*	regional government of Somaliland vs. FGS	secession	1991	•	1
Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)	al-Shabaab vs. Somalia, Kenya	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	5
South Africa (anti-immigrants – immigrants)	groups of anti-immigrants vs. immigrants	subnational predominance	1994	•	3

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
South Africa (KwaZulu-Natal)*	NFP vs. ANC vs. IFP	subnational predominance	1990	↓	1
South Sudan (inter-communal violence)	Muok-Akot vs. Thony, Aguok vs. Apuk-Giir, Panyon vs. Pakam, Kuei, Mundi vs. Dinka Bor vs. Murle, Azande vs. Dinka vs. Shilluk, Dinka sub-groups vs. Dinka sub-groups	subnational predominance, resources	2011	↗	5
South Sudan (opposition)*	PLP, SPLM-DC, opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↗	3
South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)	SPLM/A-in-Opposition, SPLM/A-FD, Arrow Boys vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	2013	•	5
South Sudan (various militias)	REMNASAS, TFNF vs. government	system/ideology, resources	2011	↗	3
South Sudan, Uganda (border communities)*	Kuku vs. Mandi	subnational predominance	2011	•	3
Sudan (Darfur)	JEM, SLM-AW, SLM-MM, SRF vs. government	autonomy, resources	2003	•	5
Sudan (Eastern Front)*	Beja Congress vs. government	autonomy, resources	2005	•	1
Sudan (inter-communal violence)	al-Rezeigat Abballa vs. Ma'alia, Habaniya, Misseriya vs. Salamat, Fellata, Berti vs. Ziyadiya	subnational predominance, resources	2007	•	5
Sudan (opposition)	Alliance of the Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, NCF, student-led groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	3
Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)	SPLM/A-North vs. government	autonomy	2011	•	5
Sudan – South Sudan	Sudan vs. South Sudan	territory, resources	2011	•	3
Swaziland (opposition)*	COSATU, PUDEMO, SFTU, SNUS, SWACOPA, SWAYOCO, TUCOSWA, SNAT vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	↗	3
Tanzania (Christians – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	2012	•	3
Tanzania (CUF, Chadema – CCM)	Chadema, CUF vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1993	•	3
Tanzania (Uamsho / Zanzibar)*	Uamsho vs. government	secession, system/ideology	2003	↘	2
Togo (opposition)*	ANC, CST vs. government	national power	1963	↘	2
Uganda (Baganda / Buganda)*	Kingdom of Buganda vs. government	autonomy, other	1995	•	1
Uganda (Bakonzo / Rwenzururu)*	Kingdom of Rwenzururu vs. government	autonomy, resources	2014	↘	2
Uganda (inter-communal rivalry / Rwenzururu)*	Bakonzo vs. Bamba vs. Banyabindi vs. Basongora	subnational predominance, resources	2012	↘	2
Uganda (opposition)*	FDC, DP, UPC, Jeema, PPP vs. government	national power	2001	•	3
Zimbabwe (opposition)	MDC-T, MDC-R, NAVUZ, People First, OASUS et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2000	•	3

^{1 2 3 4} cf. overview table for Europe

BURKINA FASO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: CDP vs. interim government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), supported by the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), and the interim government comprising, among others, ex-opposition members continued.

After days of anti-government protests had been cracked down by the RSP in the capital Ouagadougou in late October 2014, CDP leader and then-president Blaise Compaoré resigned and fled to Côte d'Ivoire. Subsequently, an interim

government headed by Isaac Yacouba Zida was installed. In September, the RSP loyal to Compaoré staged a coup d'État, denouncing the interim government's ban on pro-Compaoré candidates from running in the presidential elections scheduled for October 11.

In response to Zida's repeated call for the dissolution of the RSP, the latter disrupted a cabinet meeting on February 4, demanding Zida's resignation. The next day, a compromise was reached when Zida accepted the appointment of Compaoré-affiliated Colonel-Major Boureima Kéré as president's personal chief of staff. On April 7, the National Transition Council (NTC) adopted a new electoral code, banning supporters of Compaoré from running in the presidential elections. In response, CDP and other parties withdrew from the NTC to protest against the decision. Tensions between RSP and Zida revived when the military arrested three RSP members on June 29 charged with involvement in a planned coup. Interim President Michel Kafando reached a compromise be-

tween both sides on July 16, taking over the defense portfolio.

In reaction to a report of the Reconciliation Commission recommending the RSP's dissolution, RSP members led by Compaoré affiliate General Gilbert Diendéré staged a coup on September 16, storming a cabinet meeting and abducting Zida and Kafando. The following day, Diendéré declared himself president. Subsequently, hundreds of thousands of protesters took to the streets of the capital, demanding the interim government's return. RSP dispersed the demonstrations using live ammunition, killing at least eleven and injuring more than 270. On September 21, the military entered Ouagadougou and issued an ultimatum demanding the RSP's surrender and disarmament. This was refused by Diendéré. After ECOWAS-mediated peace talks on September 22, the RSP agreed to step down and to return to the barracks. Two days later, Kafando was reinstated as interim president.

On September 26, the interim government dissolved the RSP, imposing asset freezes on alleged coup supporters and establishing an investigation commission. On October 1, Diendéré surrendered and was arrested charged with crimes against humanity, attack on state security, and treason. Furthermore, on October 10, the investigation commission accused Diendéré and Djibril Bassolé, former foreign minister under Compaoré, of colluding with Islamist groups to destabilize the country. Four days later, the interim government rescheduled presidential elections for November 29. With 53.49 percent of the votes, Roch Kaboré, former prime minister and candidate of the People's Movement for Progress (MPP), won the presidential elections.

On November 12, the leaked recording of a conversation between Bassolé and Côte d'Ivoire National Assembly Speaker Guillaume Soro held in mid-September revealed an alleged plan to stage further attacks in Burkina Faso in order to prevent the coup's looming failure.

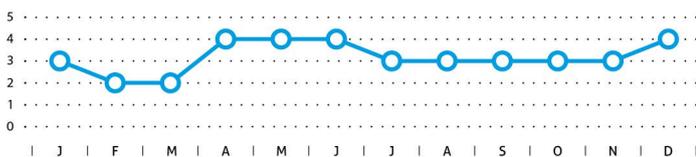
On December 4, judicial authorities issued an international arrest warrant against Compaoré charging him with the involvement in the murder of his predecessor Thomas Sankara. Two days later, Diendéré was indicted on the same charges. Zida stated on December 27 that 20 RSP members had been arrested for plotting to free Diendéré and Bassolé from prison.

ats

BURUNDI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: ADC-Ikibiri et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: national power



The national power conflict between opposition parties primarily organized under the Democratic Alliance for the Change-Ikibiri (ADC-Ikibiri) and the government led by President Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) escalated to a limited war. Throughout the year, violence left at least 300 people dead, hundreds injured, and more than 230,000 displaced. Furthermore, security forces arrested several hundred opposition members. The alliance ADC-Ikibiri comprised opposition parties such

as Union for National Progress (UPRONA), Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD), Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), National Forces of Liberation (FNL), Union for Peace and Democracy (UDP), and Hope of the Burundians. The Hutu-dominated CNDD-FDD was supported by its youth wing Imbonerakure.

The conflict revolved around the question whether or not President Pierre Nkurunziza was allowed to run for a third term and intensified in the run-up of parliamentary and presidential elections in June and July. While the 2005 constitution limited presidential terms to two, parts of the government claimed that the first term between 2005 and 2010 did not count since Nkurunziza was appointed by parliament and not elected. In contrast, opposition members insisted that he had already served two terms. Ahead of the elections, different national and international actors such as the Civil Society Organization Forum, the National Council of Roman Catholic Bishops, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon expressed their opposition against a third term of Nkurunziza. Police and military stakeholders were divided over this issue. While the chief of police expressed his readiness to support the president with force, the minister of defense underlined the neutrality of the army.

On March 20, more than 70 CNDD-FDD members signed a petition urging Nkurunziza not to run. About 1,000 opposition members protested in the capital Bujumbura on April 17 against a third term. After some protesters threw stones, the police responded with tear gas and water cannons. At least two policemen were injured, 65 protesters were arrested and charged with participating in an armed insurrection. On April 25, Pascal Nyabenda, head of CNDD-FDD, announced that Nkurunziza was chosen as presidential candidate for the party. The opposition called for a mass demonstration the next day. The rally turned violent when protesters threw stones and lit tires, while the police responded with tear gas and water cannons and fired live ammunition in the air. Two protesters were killed and five injured. In the following night, two more people were killed by Imbonerakure. In a press statement on April 26, the chairperson of the AU, Dlamini Zuma, "called on all stakeholders to strictly respect the 2000 Arusha Agreement, the constitution, and the electoral law."

On April 27, the government banned nationwide broadcasts by Burundi's main independent radio stations and deployed the army to Bujumbura. Three days later, social networks, including Twitter and Facebook, were shut down and Imbonerakure were reported to mark houses of those opposing a third term. On May 5, the Constitutional Court allowed Nkurunziza to run for a third term, arguing that he was appointed in 2005 and not elected. One day before, the court's vice president, Sylvère Nimpagaritse, had fled to Rwanda, stating that judges had come under enormous pressure to decide in favor of a third term. On May 11, the former Burundian presidents Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, Pierre Buyoya, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, and Domitien Ndayizeye – the former two being Tutsi, the latter two Hutu – addressed the East African Community (EAC) in a letter, stating that they regarded Nkurunziza's bid as unconstitutional.

Internal military divisions culminated in an attempted coup d'état on May 13 by Major General Godefroid Niyombare. Thousands of people celebrated the proclamation of a transitional government, while heavy clashes erupted between pro- and contra-Nkurunziza security forces in multiple parts of the capital. Protesters set a pro-government radio station on fire and released inmates from the national prison. Nkurunziza declared the coup had failed and he managed to return to Burundi from EAC summit in Tanzania on May 14,

after being unable to land in Bujumbura the day before. The same day, Niyombare admitted the failure of the coup and pro-Nkurunziza troops regained control of strategic sites. At least two protesters and three soldiers were killed during the attempted coup d'état. On May 15, Imbonerakure allegedly encircled a 3,600-strong Tutsi refugee camp in Bugendana, Gitega province, threatening to kill Tutsi refugees. Local security forces dispersed the assailants.

After being postponed twice, local and parliamentary elections took place on June 29. CNDD-FDD won 77 out of 100 seats, Hope of the Burundians gained 22 and UPRONA two. Opposition members had called for a boycott of the elections and later demanded the annulment of the results. The UN Electoral Observation Mission declared the elections neither free nor fair. Presidential elections, initially scheduled for July 15, were postponed to July 21. According to the election commission, Nkurunziza won the first round of the elections with 69.41 percent of the vote, while Rwasa gained 18.99 percent. On July 27, the National Assembly held its first session since the elections. While Nditije's UPRONA part of Amizero y'Abarundi boycotted the session, Rwasa's FNL part of the coalition took its seats. With CNDD-FDD's votes, Rwasa was elected the assembly's first deputy president. Shortly after the presidential elections, in a meeting in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, oppositionals founded the umbrella organization National Council for the Restoration of the Arusha Accords and the Rule of Law (CNARED). The organization comprised a large number of oppositional parties, existing coalitions such as the ADC-Ikibiri led by Leonce Ngendakumana (FRODEBU), and civil society groups, both exiled and non-exiled, as well as prominent exiled individuals like former second vice president Gervais Rufyikiriri. Rwasa, however, did not participate.

Throughout the year, politicians from both sides were repeatedly attacked. At least seven CNDD-FDD members, including a close aide to Nkurunziza, Adolphe Nshimirmana, and one Imbonerakure were killed in Bujumbura and the provinces of Ruyigi and Kirundo. Army Chief of Staff Prime Niyongabo survived an attack by alleged military members in the capital on September 11, in which seven people were killed and seven others injured. Several CNDD-FDD politicians fled the country, including Second Vice President of Burundi Gervais Rufikiriri and two members of the National Independent Electoral Commission.

Furthermore, several leading opposition figures were targeted by violent attacks. The wife of FNL leader Agathon Rwasa, Annonciate Haberisoni, was shot and injured by a gunman in Bujumbura on March 15 [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL)]. UDP leader Zedi Feruzi and his bodyguard were shot dead in a drive-by shooting in the capital on May 23. One month later, Jean Paul Ngedakumana (FRODEBU) was hacked to death with a machete in Cibitoke province. Furthermore, several religious figures and journalists were targeted by violence. For instance, on October 26, unknown gunmen targeted the residence of the Archbishop and President of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Jean-Louis Nahimana. On November 1, President of the Senate Révérien Ndikuriyo (CNDD-FDD) warned that the police would soon go to "work" – an expression used during the Rwandan Genocide. The next day, Nkurunziza set a deadline for the opposition to disarm by November 7. On December 11 and 12, security forces raided neighborhoods held to be opposition strongholds in Bujumbura. According to the army, 79 alleged opposition members, four soldiers, and four police officers were killed. According to the UN, government forces committed acts of torture and sexual violence during the raids, deliberately targeting Tutsi. In

reaction to the incident, CNARED spokesman Jeremie Minani stated a "genocide" against oppositionals was under its way in Burundi, with an "ethnic element." He blamed CNDD-FDD of trying to provoke Tutsi into revolting in order to rally the country's Hutu majority behind the government and called on the international community to intervene. On December 17, the AU demanded an end of violence in Burundi and warned it would not allow "another genocide" to take place.

The international community frequently attempted to initiate dialogue between the government and the opposition. After the latter had rejected UN-appointed mediator Said Djinnit and the government had opposed Djinnit's successor Abdoulaye Bathily, the EAC appointed Ugandan President Museveni as mediator on July 6. The talks started on July 14, but were suspended the next day. In the following months, both sides repeatedly stressed their support for the peace process, but also regularly backed out of it. While the EU froze assets and imposed travel bans on three Burundians for "inciting violence" on October 2, the AU imposed sanctions against several individuals on October 17. On November 12, the UNSC adopted resolution 2248 (2015) paving the way for a UN mission in Burundi. On December 17, the EU announced to financially support Museveni's mediation efforts. The next day, the AU declared its readiness to send a 5,000-strong peacekeeping force to Burundi, asking the government to give its consent within four days, but at the same time invoking the option of intervening against the member state's will. After the government had rejected the deployment, thousands protested in Bujumbura on December 26. Two days later, Nkurunziza publically announced that Burundians would fight the AU troops. On December 28, a new round of negotiations mediated by Museveni started in Uganda's capital Kampala. nbe

BURUNDI – RWANDA

Intensity: 2 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Burundi vs. Rwanda

Conflict items: international power

A non-violent crisis over regional power erupted between Burundi and Rwanda. Tensions between the two neighboring states emerged in the context of an intensifying opposition conflict in Burundi, centering on controversies over a third term of President Pierre Nkurunziza [→ Burundi (opposition)]. Rwandan President Paul Kagame repeatedly criticized Nkurunziza for seeking a third term. Furthermore, both governments accused each other of supporting armed opponents in their respective countries [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. Neither Nkurunziza nor Kagame attended the East African Council (EAC) summit on the Burundian crisis in Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania, on May 31. However, Kagame sent a representative. In July, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, who had been appointed mediator in the Burundian crisis by EAC, visited both countries and reportedly gave Nkurunziza a note from Kagame.

Rwandan officials accused Nkurunziza of close links to the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), an armed group active in the DR Congo since its involvement in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. According to Rwanda, FDLR delivered arms to the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of Burundi's ruling party. On May 13, Rwandan Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo warned that FDLR rebels had crossed from DR Congo to Burundi stating that the group "might even

get involved directly in the continued unrest.” On November 8, Kagame accused Nkurunziza of perpetrating massacres against the Burundian population.

Burundi accused Rwanda of seeking to destabilize the country by enabling Burundian militants to launch cross-border attacks and further of hosting General Godefroid Niyombare, leader of the coup attempt on May 13. However, Rwandan officials denied these allegations. Kayanza’s governor Canisius Ndayimanisha claimed that on July 10 around 500 armed fighters had entered the country from Rwanda and engaged the military in shootouts, a charge denied by Kigali. At the end of September, Burundi’s Foreign Minister Alain Nyamitwe accused Rwanda of recruiting rebels in Rwandan refugee camps to fight Nkurunziza’s government. He also claimed that Rwanda had facilitated the coup plotters’ actions in Burundi. Kagame denied all allegations.

On October 18, Burundian police reportedly killed six arrested Rwandans. 30 Rwandan citizens were arrested in September. Following negotiations between Rwanda and Burundi, 14 prisoners were released. Between April and October, some 200 Rwandan citizens were arrested in Burundi. As of December 14, more than 70,000 Burundians, among them opposition politicians, had fled to Rwanda, particularly to Kigali.

On December 22, Kagame announced that Rwanda would not contribute troops to the planned AU peacekeeping mission in Burundi. hlm, lmp

according to army sources. Human rights groups claimed that captured rebels had been executed by the ruling party’s youth wing Imbonerakure. Thousands of civilians fled. The army stated that it had “wiped out” the armed group and seized a 60mm mortar, five rocket launchers, and machine guns. The attacker’s identity remained unclear. Nzabampema’s FNL denied any involvement. Following the expiration of an ultimatum to lay down its arms, MONUSCO and the FARDC launched an air and ground offensive called “Kamilisha Usalama 2” against FNL-Nzabampema bases in Ruhoha locality, Uvira territory, South Kivu, on January 5. According to FARDC, the seizing of the bases left 39 FNL-Nzabampema fighters as well as eight FARDC soldiers dead and four wounded. About 200 FNL fighters surrendered or were captured. The operation continued until mid-March, with several FNL-Nzabampema fighters being arrested across Uvira. For the remainder of the year, only minor incidents involving FNL-Nzabampema were reported from DR Congo. For instance, in late July, 13 FNL-Nzabampema fighters armed with AK-47 were captured in Rukoko together with four fighters of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda [→ DR Congo (FDLR)].

In Burundi, Rwaswa and his wing of the FNL party participated in the general elections in June and July. Rwaswa repeatedly criticized President Pierre Nkurunziza’s intention to run for a third term, calling for a postponement and then a boycott of the elections [→ Burundi (opposition)]. As Rwaswa’s wing of the FNL was not recognized by the government, Minister of the Interior Edouard Nduwimana forbade him to use FNL insignia in his election campaign. In coalition named Amizero y’Abarundi, Rwaswa’s FNL campaigned together with the non-recognized Union for National Progress (UPRONA) faction led by Charles Nditije. When the opposition mobilized for demonstrations against Nkurunziza running for a third term, Rwaswa did not join the protests. Following the parliamentary elections on June 29, in which Amizero y’Abarundi gained 11.16 percent despite its boycott, Rwaswa called for an annulment of the results. Despite his criticism, Rwaswa ran for presidency, gaining 18.99 percent of the votes on July 21. The following day, he declared his readiness to join a government of national unity, as proposed by the East African Community. The elected FNL members of Amizero y’Abarundi took their seats in the National Assembly on July 27. With the votes of the ruling party CNDD-FDD, Rwaswa was elected the assembly’s first deputy president.

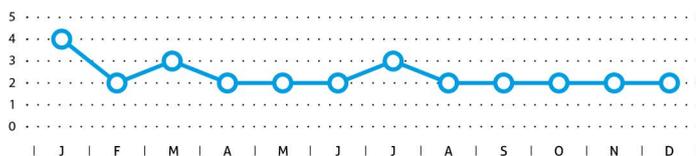
FNL was repeatedly suspected of being behind violent attacks in Burundi, while alleged FNL members were targeted by security forces as well as the ruling party’s youth wing Imbonerakure. Rwaswa’s wife Annonciate Haberisoni was shot and injured in Bujumbura on March 15. The UN condemned the attack. Police repeatedly arrested FNL representatives and raided homes of alleged FNL supporters. For instance, the police arrested Augustine Burikukiye, a FNL-Rwaswa representative, in Cibitoke on June 27. A member of FNL-Rwaswa was shot dead, allegedly by Imbonerakure, in front of his parent’s house in Bujumbura on July 22. Hundreds attended his funeral. FNL was also linked to grenade attacks and armed assaults by unknown perpetrators in Burundi. For instance, local media reported that a part of the fighters attacking Kayanza province on July 10 had crossed into Burundi from neighboring DR Congo. In reaction, security forces arrested, among others, about 30 supporters of Rwaswa in the northeastern province Muyinga. Rwaswa refuted allegations of involvement in armed attacks against the government. In addition, reports suggested that FNL was recruiting new fighters both in Burundi and among Burundian refugees in Rwanda [→ Burundi

BURUNDI, DR CONGO (FNL)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: FNL-Rwaswa, FNL-Nzabampema vs. Burundi, DR Congo

Conflict items: national power, subnational predominance



The conflict over national power in Burundi and subnational predominance between various factions of the National Liberation Front (FNL), on the one hand, and the governments of Burundi and the DR Congo, on the other, escalated to a limited war. FNL remained split into various factions. One wing, led by Jacques Bigirimana, was officially recognized as a political party in Burundi and perceived as an ally of the ruling party. In contrast, the party wing led by FNL’s historical leader Agathon Rwaswa was opposed to the Burundian government. In addition, at least one armed FNL splinter group, led by Aloys Nzabampema, was active in Burundi and the neighboring DR Congo, with its rear bases located in the latter’s South Kivu province. The Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) was supported in its fight against FNL-Nzabampema by MONUSCO.

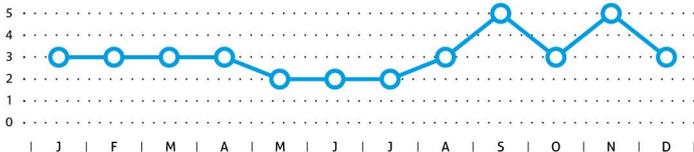
In the night to 12/30/14, an up to 200-strong armed group coming from South Kivu crossed the border into Burundi’s Cibitoke province. Burundian security forces intercepted them. In at least five days of non-stop military operations concentrated around Buganda, Cibitoke, about 100 of the attackers, up to twelve soldiers, and two civilians were killed,

– Rwanda]. In October, FARDC handed over 13 young men to the Burundian army who said they had been abducted by Nzabampema's FNL in Burundi and forced to become FNL fighters. hlm

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (ANTI-BALAKA – EX-SÉLÉKA)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Anti-Balaka vs. ex-Séléka
Conflict items: national power, resources



The conflict over national power and resources, such as gold and diamonds, between ex-Séléka and Fulani militias, on the one hand, and Anti-Balaka groups, on the other, continued at war level.

Ex-Séléka were composed of several predominantly Muslim armed groups, mainly the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central Africa (FPRC), the Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC), and Patriotic Rally for the Rebirth of the Central African Republic (RPRC). In September 2013, then-president and ex-Séléka leader Michel Djotodia had officially disbanded the alliance, but it continued to exist under the label ex-Séléka. In reaction to increasing violence against the civilian population after Djotodia's rise to power in March 2013, local predominately Christian militias and parts of the former security forces loyal to ex-president François Bozizé united under the name Anti-Balaka, forcing the ex-Séléka government to resign in January 2014.

Ex-Séléka and pastoralist militias continued to dominate the northeast of the country and Anti-Balaka groups mostly operated in the southwest. UPC controlled, among others, the trade of diamonds and gold at the Ndassima mines, Bambari, Ouaka prefecture. Anti-Balaka militias controlled, among others, gold production in several mines in Nana-Grébizi sub-prefecture and diamond production in Amada-Gaza and Sosso-Nakombo sub-prefectures.

The first half of the year was marked by intensified political negotiations in the run up to the general elections postponed several times. While FPRC and Maxime Mokom's Anti-Balaka faction signed ceasefire agreements in January and April, the government of Interim President Samba-Panza rejected these deals, claiming it had not been involved in the talks facilitated by the Kenyan government in Nairobi. From May 4 to 11, the interim government held a national forum in the capital Bangui, involving ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups as well as the private sector. The forum discussed upcoming elections, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration as well as decentralization and judicial reform. Several armed groups rejected the deal signed by ten other groups and the government on May 10. The agreement obliged all militias to disarm within 30 days. On August 10, former ruling party Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) announced that Bozizé would return from exile to participate in the presidential election. A few days after KNK Secretary-General Bertin Bea had stated that transitional authorities did everything to prohibit Bozizé's return, he was arrested by the police on August 15. Meanwhile, Bozizé's

former prime minister and KNK member Faustin Archange Touadera had announced to run for president.

Violence between ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups and attacks on civilians continued throughout the year, peaking in October.

Ex-Séléka militias killed at least ten civilians in a flare-up of violence in Bria, capital of Haute-Kotto prefecture, on February 9. After MINUSCA soldiers had intervened in clashes between ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka fighters in Bolom, Ouham prefecture, seven civilians, mostly Christians, were killed the next day. On February 15, heavily armed Fulani herdsmen attacked the villages of Ouandago, Botto, and Mbrès as well as central parts of the provincial capital Kaga-Bandoro, killing two Christian civilians.

Sparked by the assassination of one Muslim motorbike taxi driver on September 26, violent clashes in Bangui intensified significantly. Thousands demonstrated against the interim government and international peacekeeping forces, destroying or looting numerous buildings, including those of international NGOs. At least 90 people died, more than 400 were seriously injured, and another 40,000 fled the capital until the end of the year. Subsequently, the electoral commission postponed the constitutional referendum as well as the presidential and parliamentary elections to December. While fighters of the ex-Séléka wing FPRC tried to reach Bangui, they clashed with MINUSCA and French Sangaris troops near Sibut, Kémo prefecture, on October 10 and 11. On October 18, Anti-Balaka militants briefly abducted the vice president of the National Transitional Council, Léa Koyassoum Doumta, near Bangui.

On November 2, ex-Séléka fighters attacked civilians in the capital, killing at least five and setting fire to numerous houses. As a consequence, hundreds of people fled Bangui. Two days later, hundreds protested in the city, demanding the rearmament of the military. After Christian IDPs had killed a Muslim with sticks and stones on November 10, ex-Séléka fighters killed at least five people and burned down more than 730 shelters at an IDP camp in Batangafo, Ouham. When MINUSCA troops intervened, at least one peacekeeper was killed. Approx. 24,000 people fled the camp. Two other ex-Séléka attacks on IDP sites in Ouaka, one in Bambari on November 12 and one in Ngakobo on December 4 left at least eleven civilians and five rebels dead as well as 30 people wounded. The violence in Bambari had been sparked by the murder of a UPC member.

On December 4, FPRC Vice President Nouredine Adam announced he would not allow the government to hold elections in Kaga Bandoro region. Ten days later, he proclaimed the independent "Republic of Logone" in the country's north. FPRC spokesman Maouloud Moussa stated "the time has come to divide the Central African Republic for the two communities to find peace." He invited Muslims to live in the "Republic of Logone", adding that Christians could stay.

On December 8, the Constitutional Court announced the list of approved presidential candidates, rejecting the candidacy of Bozizé and Anti-Balaka leader Patrice Edouard Ngaissona. The constitution was adopted with 90 percent of the votes on December 13 and presidential elections were held peacefully on December 30. On 01/07/16, the National Election Authority announced the two former prime ministers Anicet-Georges Dologuele and Touadera as winners of the first electoral round, with 23.78 percent and 19.42 percent, respectively. jli, lmp

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, DR CONGO,
SOUTH SUDAN, UGANDA (LRA)**

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1987

Conflict parties: LRA vs. Central African Republic,
DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda

Conflict items: subnational predominance,
resources

The limited war over subnational predominance and resources between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on the one hand, and the governments of the Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, and Uganda on the other, continued. After being pushed out of northern Uganda in 2006, LRA operations concentrated on the border triangle of the DR Congo, Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan.

According to the UN, LRA killed at least 19 people and abducted more than 300 in 2015. The group engaged in cross-border trade with ivory, diamonds, and gold. A 5,000-strong African Union Regional Task Force supported by 100 US Special Forces continued to pursue the 100 to 150-strong LRA. In January, high-ranking LRA leader Dominic Ongwen surrendered to US forces and was transferred to the International Criminal Court to stand trial for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In DR Congo, LRA was active in Orientale province, concentrating on the area of Garamba National Park, Haute-Uele district. In the first half of the year, at least 49,000 people fled due to LRA operations. Clashes between FARDC and LRA in Nagome on January 20 left two civilians and one soldier dead and another injured. On February 16, around 20 LRA fighters ambushed a vehicle on the Route Nationale N° 4, Haute-Uele, killing the driver, injuring three people, and pillaging goods. At the end of April, the group killed one park ranger in Garamba. On May 25, nine alleged LRA fighters armed with AK-47 killed two civilians, abducted 17, and looted several shops in Yangili, Bas-Uele district. On July 19, FARDC operations against LRA in Li-Mbio, Haute-Uele, left four militants and one soldier dead. Alleged LRA fighters attacked the village of Nanzinga on October 5, killing two civilians, wounding two others, and pillaging domestic goods. On November 15, members of the group killed two boys and kidnapped another six in Dialimo village.

Throughout the year, LRA also engaged in fighting with the Sudanese People's Liberation Force in Garamba National Park near the Sudanese border. For instance, clashes between the two groups in the village of Aba, Haute-Uele, left three fighters dead.

In Central African Republic, sporadic LRA lootings were observed. On December 2, ten LRA members armed with AK-47 attacked the mining site of Kpambayamba in Haute-Kotto prefecture. In retaliation, one ex-Séléka fighter killed one LRA member [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. cke

CHAD (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the opposition and the government led by President Idriss Déby Itno and his Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) continued as a violent crisis. The opposition consisted of various political parties and loosely organized protesters, mainly students. As in previous years, opposition parties, like the National Union for Democracy and Renewal (UNDR), repeatedly demanded the president's resignation, accusing him of violating human rights. Furthermore, due to internal disagreements, former Prime Minister Joseph Djimrangar Dadnadji left the MPS and founded the party Popular Action Framework for Solidarity and Unity of the Republic (CAP-SUR) in mid-April. Djimrangar Dadnadji stated his aim was to defeat the MPS in the upcoming 2016 elections. During the first half of the year, anti-government protests erupted in several cities, often turning violent. For instance, on January 26 in Doba, department of Logone Oriental, police forces clashed with dozens of students protesting against new baccalaureate regulations. The clashes left four protesters and one civilian dead and approx. ten people seriously injured, including policemen. On March 9, students protested against a rise in helmet prices in the capital N'Djamena, after the use of motorcycle helmets had become obligatory at the beginning of the month. The protesters set several vehicles on fire, blocked access to schools, and attacked motorcyclists, stealing and breaking their helmets. In subsequent clashes, police forces dispersed the crowd using tear gas. Moreover, they shot dead up to three protesters and injured and arrested dozens. A few days later, media released a video showing policemen torturing several students who had participated in the protests. On April 25, the death of a person in police custody led to protests in Kyabé, department of Moyen-Chari. When protesters attacked the local police station ransacking offices, burning two police cars, and destroying parts of a market, the police opened gunfire, killing at least three protesters and injuring up to ten. The relation between opposition groups and the government remained tense throughout the year, even though no further clashes were reported after the end of April. For instance, in reaction to Boko Haram's suicide attacks in N'Djamena on June 15 [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)], the government tightened anti-terror measures, including the reintroduction of the death penalty. Subsequently, several opposition parties accused the MPS of taking advantage of this situation in order to strengthen its power by repressing civil society organizations and restricting the freedom of assembly. In October, police forces arrested a journalist who had accused the director of the National Customs Service, Salaye Déby, of embezzlement of state funds. das

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: CNC, FPI vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) and the National Coalition for Change (CNC), on the one side, and the Rally of the Republicans (RDR) of President Alassane Ouattara, on the other, remained violent. The year was marked by the holding of presidential elections on October 25.

On March 27, the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)

under former president Henri Konan Bédié promised to endorse Ouattara's candidacy. However, Charles Konan Banny, former prime minister and PDCI member, refused to support Ouattara and announced his own candidacy. On May 15, he formed the National Coalition for Change (CNC) incorporating parts of the FPI and other opposition parties.

Throughout the year, opposition parties organized multiple protests especially in the south-west, accusing, among others, the National Electoral Commission of being biased in favor of the RDR. The government detained several journalists, anti-government protesters, and opposition politicians. For instance, on June 9, hundreds protested against the government in the capital Abidjan and in several towns in the districts of Comoé, Gôh-Djiboua, Sassandra-Marahoué, and Montagnes. In Guiglo, Montagnes, RDR supporters killed one FPI demonstrator. Furthermore, security forces used tear gas during all protests, leaving 15 people injured. Police suspected CNC of being responsible for organizing the demonstrations, which was denied by the coalition.

On July 29, the publisher of a privately owned newspaper was arrested for having printed critical articles against the government. On September 10, FPI and government supporters clashed over Ouattara's candidacy in the presidential elections in several cities all over the country. While two people were killed in Logouata, Gôh-Djiboua, the clashes left a total of 52 people injured. The government arrested another 20 opposition members, among them leading CNC politician David Samba. The CNC and human rights organizations blamed the authorities for restricting political rights and detaining people based on their suspected opposition to the government.

From October 13 to 23, three CNC presidential candidates, among them Banny, withdrew their candidacies, claiming that the elections would neither be transparent nor inclusive. With 83.7 percent of the votes, Ouattara won the presidential elections on October 25. FPI candidate Pascal Affi N'Guessan received 9.3 percent. On November 3, the Constitutional Council denied CNC's request to challenge the election results and announced Ouattara as legal winner of the election. On January 6, trials started against former FPI chairman Simone Gbagbo and 81 other people connected to the party. They were charged of crimes during the November 2010 post-election crisis. On March 10, an assize court sentenced Gbagbo to 20 years in prison. Another 79 people were also found guilty. lud

DR CONGO (BANTU – BATWA / KATANGA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Bantu vs. Batwa vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational predominance in the east of Katanga province between militias of the ethnic groups Bantu and Batwa as well as between Batwa and the government continued as a limited war.

On January 13 and 14, Bantu militiamen raided the towns of Lwabe and Kabozo, Nyunzu territory, raping several women. On January 17, Bantu fighters armed with axes, bows, and machetes burned down a refugee camp in Nyunzu, killing at least five Batwa and forcing several thousands to flee. At the end of January, Batwa fighters attacked the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) in Mukebo village, Manono territory. This

was the first incident of this kind. Also in January, Batwa established their own administration in Sange. As a reaction, Bantu in nearby Lwaba organized in a new militia. On February 9, Batwa militias attacked the village of Nsenga-Tshimbu, Manono, killing four civilians, injuring three, and kidnapping several others. In multiple attacks on settlements in north-east Manono between February 10 and 28, Batwa fighters reportedly armed with bows and arrows killed between eight and 18 civilians, injured at least twelve, and forced approx. 800 to flee. On March 8, another Batwa attack against the village of Kinsukulu, Kalemie territory, left twelve Bantu dead and several injured. On March 23, the military arrested twelve fighters allegedly belonging to the Bantu militia called Elements in Mukwaka, Nyunzu. Bantu militants armed with machetes, axes, bows, and arrows attacked the refugee camp Cotanga, Nyunzu, on April 30, killing at least 30 and forcing several thousands to flee. A Batwa attack and following clashes with Bantu fighters on May 1 left at least six people dead, 30 injured, and 28 Bantu houses burned down. On May 5, eight Bantu and a number of Batwa were killed and at least 30 injured in clashes between militias in Mukobo, Manono. Further clashes between Bantu and Batwa in Kituwa, Manono, on June 3 left four dead. During the first half of the year, at least 200 people were killed, 60 women raped, and 113 villages destroyed.

According to the UN, the deployment of several thousand troops by FARDC and MONUSCO in July reduced violence significantly. A total of 330 Batwa militants belonging to the group of Nyumba-Isha surrendered to the military in Mukebo, Manono, while Nyumba-Isha refrained from turning himself in. At the end of July, his group arrested the chiefs of three villages in the groupement of Mambwe, Manono, accusing them of issuing fishing licenses without prior authorization. Sporadic attacks on villages by Batwa and Bantu militants continued until the end of the year, with several people being injured and property being looted. On December 6, FARDC soldiers arrested a Bantu leader accused of founding an ethnic militia in Nganza, Manono. wef

DR CONGO (EX-M23)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: ex-M23 vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict about subnational predominance in North Kivu province between the former armed group M23 and the government escalated to a violent crisis. M23 originated from the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), a former rebel group mainly composed of ethnic Tutsis which had been formed when ex-CNDP fighters deserted from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2012. For 18 months, M23 controlled large areas of Rutshuru territory in North Kivu province, temporarily occupying North Kivu's capital Goma in November 2012. After their defeat in November 2013, 1,320 fighters fled to Uganda, while another 95 fighters surrendered in Rwanda. In the Nairobi Agreement signed by both parties on 12/12/13, the government and M23 agreed on an amnesty and a demobilization program for its fighters without clarifying the terms and details of those processes.

Throughout the year, the former rebels and the government continued to quarrel over the terms of the agreement and its

implementation. On February 2, Rwanda and the DR Congo agreed on a plan for the repatriation of the remaining ex-M23 fighters on Rwandan territory to the DR Congo. Former M23 leader Jean Marie Runiga demanded on April 21 that no ex-M23 member should be sent back from Rwanda to the DR Congo before terms for the repatriation were set. On April 25, he further threatened that ex-M23 could easily regroup. Five days later, the government granted amnesty to 375 former M23 fighters. While the amnesty included acts of war, it did not include crimes against humanity and war crimes.

On June 20 and 21, ex-M23 fighters and other demobilized fighters mutinied at the demobilization camp in Kota Koli, Equateur province, in the context of a deteriorating food situation in the camp. The ex-fighters looted a nearby town and committed acts of sexual violence.

On September 2, a trial against former M23 leader Bosco Ntanganda started at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, where he was charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed between 2002 and 2003. In early November, ex-M23 political leader Bertrand Bisimwa addressed the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region expressing concerns about a possible failure of the Nairobi Agreement.

jhe

DR CONGO (ITURI MILITIAS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: FRPI vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The limited war over subnational predominance and resources in Ituri district, Orientale province, between the Front for Patriotic Resistance of Ituri (FRPI) and the government, supported by MONUSCO, continued. Violence between armed groups belonging to the two rival ethnic groups Hema and Lendu had started in 2002 in the context of Ugandan and Rwandan occupation. In 2007, the main Hema group Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) integrated into the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC). Since then, the predominantly Lendu armed group FRPI directed its fight against the government. Comprising between 400 and 600 fighters, FRPI only operated in Irumu territory. The group permanently controlled several gold mining sites and frequently pillaged diggers. Between November 2014 and January 2015, the militants and the government negotiated over an amnesty for all FRPI fighters, the integration into FARDC with retention of ranks for officers, and the provision of food and logistical support by FARDC. After negotiations had failed, FARDC arrested FRPI leader Justin Banaloki alias Cobra Matata for war crimes including crimes against humanity on January 2. Subsequently, FRPI appointed Adirodu Mbadhu their new leader. On January 15, a FRPI attack against military bases in Avebawas countered by FARDC and MONUSCO. A total of 22 militants and seven soldiers were killed, while one peacekeeper and six soldiers were wounded. In March, the military and MONUSCO captured 34 rebels.

Between May 23 and June 3, FRPI and the government again held negotiations in Aveba, with the aim of the group's integration into FARDC. According to the UN, the 505 FRPI members present at the venue comprised around 180 armed fighters and five "leading officers". After talks had ended without results on June 3, FARDC and MONUSCO launched operations

against the group which continued until the end of the year. Both sides employed heavy weapons. While the rebels used rocket launchers, the UN force supported the army with MI-24 attack helicopters. For instance, on July 11, two MONUSCO helicopters destroyed a FRPI base near Aveba. On October 6, FARDC troops killed "Major" Abdul, naval officer of FRPI. MONUSCO reported that at least 49 FRPI fighters and four soldiers were killed between June and December. Additionally, 153 militants surrendered or were arrested. Throughout the year, FRPI frequently raided villages, engaging in sexual violence against civilians and pillaging of livestock and other goods.

The group also turned against local chiefs to retaliate supposed collaboration with FARDC. On February 4, FRPI militants attacked the villages of Kyiereta and Bikima, injuring two men, raping one woman, and stealing approx. 300 heads of cattle. The next day, FRPI fighters kidnapped several Hema girls and stole cattle in Mitifo village. On April 8, 40 militants armed with AK-47 and rocket launchers injured several people when they raided Kakado village, looting around 100 houses. Many villagers fled. On November 26, a mining site south of Bunia town was attacked by FRPI. The militants pillaged large quantities of gold and domestic goods. On December 3, around 15 alleged FRPI militants attacked Kaya village, killing one civilian and injuring two.

On December 18, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands, transferred former FRPI leader Germain Katanga and former UPC leader Thomas Lubanga to a prison in the capital Kinshasa. In 2014, the ICC had sentenced Katanga to twelve years of imprisonment on counts of crimes against humanity connected to the killing of at least 200 people in Irumu in February 2003. In 2012, Lubanga had been sentenced to 14 years in prison for his role in the Ituri conflict between 2002 and 2003. jli, soq

DR CONGO (MAYI-MAYI ET AL.)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Mayi-Mayi groups vs. Nyatura groups vs. Raia Mutomboki groups vs. APCLS vs. FDLR vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between local and foreign armed groups and between local armed groups and the government, supported by MONUSCO, continued as a limited war. Most of the local militias were either labelled "Mayi-Mayi" or "Raia Mutomboki" (RM) and originally claimed to protect a population against perceived foreigners, most notably the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. The militias ranged from larger groups to smaller localized units and were usually named after their commanders. In 2015, they continued to operate in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema, and Katanga. The groups repeatedly clashed with the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) and other militias, but also targeted civilians. At least 300 people died, while tens of thousands fled the violence. Several armed groups controlled mining sites. RM groups were mainly present at cassiterite mines in North and South Kivu, engaging in illegal taxation and pillaging. Activities of Mayi-Mayi groups, especially Mayi-Mayi Simba, encompassed

illegal taxation of the population, forced buying, and pillaging at gold mines and 3T mines in North Kivu, Orientale and Maniema.

In Walikale territory, North Kivu, Ngowa Bisiri and Shebitembe Muhisa led two rival factions of RM. Between June 1 and 10, a coalition of RM Ngowa Bisiri and Nduma Defense of Congo (NDC), also known as Mayi-Mayi Cheka, engaged in fighting with the alliance of RM Shebitembe Muhisa and Mayi-Mayi Kifuafua in the villages Nsindo and Ntoto. Around 20 people were killed, including at least ten civilians. Thousands fled the violence. Further clashes between RM Ngowa Bisiri and NDC, on the one hand, and a coalition of Mayi-Mayi Kifuafua and NDC-Renewed (NDC-R), also known as Mayi-Mayi Guidon, on the other, led to five civilian fatalities in Ntoto and Mwiki on August 5. One week later, RM Ngowa Bisiri and NDC clashed with the Movement of Action for Change (MAC) in Mukoberwa, leaving three civilians injured. The group's leader Ngowa Bisiri surrendered to MONUSCO on August 28. In Shabunda territory, South Kivu, other RM factions continued to engage in violent actions and gold mining activities. Throughout the year, fighting between RM groups and the military in Shabunda left at least 40 militants dead. Most notably, 33 militants were killed in clashes between RM Mabala and FARDC in Kiseku and Nzovu forest on December 9. Furthermore, RM factions expanded their territorial control in Shabunda. On May 16, RM Kabazimya/Clément seized control of Lugulu, Milenda, Kaligila, Mitonko, and Mumbano, reportedly committing acts of sexual violence against women. RM Makombo gained control of at least ten villages around Kigulube and Mulungu in late August, extorting money from the population and forcing more than 600 families to flee.

Throughout the year, several RM leaders surrendered to the government. In mid-February, RM Sisawa leader Félix Digondi turned himself in. On September 17, RM faction leader Ms. Cynthia, the former spouse of ex-leader Paul Ngumbi Wangozi, surrendered in Shabunda center. Subsequently, Willy Alexandre and 16 of his fighters laid down their weapons on September 28 and on October 9, Kabe Sanga together with 20 of his companions surrendered to the government, handing over several IEDs, rocket launchers, and AK-47 rifles.

RM groups were also active in Walungu, Kabare, Kalehe, and Mwenga territories in South Kivu. On April 7, RM Blaise and RM Lukoba clashed in the groupement of Nindja, Kabare. Eleven people were killed while numerous fled the violence. During fighting between RM factions and FARDC in Bunyakiri, Kalehe, on June 18, five civilians were killed, four injured, and three women raped. In mid-June, RM groups also carried out attacks on humanitarian organizations in different mining areas. On December 1, FARDC arrested RM leader Ndarumanga in Ngando, Mwenga.

NDC, led by former mineral trader Ntabo Ntaberi Cheka, continued to operate in Walikale and Lubero, North Kivu. Throughout the year, NDC frequently clashed with the dissident group NDC-R, led by Guidon Mwisha Shimweray, also targeting civilians. Furthermore, NDC committed acts of sexual violence. At least 39 people were killed in clashes between the two groups in the groupement of Ihana, Walikale, between March 27 and the beginning of August. Furthermore, at least 10,000 people were displaced. The group NDC-R also operated in Walikale and Lubero. On July 5, FARDC attacked the militia in Mianga, Walikale, killing one militant and forcing numerous people to flee the area. At the end of July, alleged NDC-R fighters attacked a commercial convoy on the road between Nsindo and Mera, Walikale, killing one civilian and one policeman. Subsequently, inhabitants of the area set up self-defense militias. The coalition between NDC-R and Mayi-Mayi

Kiyanda-Yira, labelled Union of Patriots for the Defense of Innocents (UPDI), launched attacks against FDLR in the groupement of Ikobo, Walikale, on November 22. Furthermore, UPDI carried out attacks against FDLR and Lafontaine's Union of Congolese Patriots for Peace (UPCP) in Lubero. Tit-for-tat violence continued until the end of the year, leading to at least 15 fatalities, massive displacement and destruction of residential houses.

The Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) continued to operate in the territories of Masisi and Walikale, North Kivu. One civilian was killed and thousands were displaced due to fighting between APCLS and FARDC in the areas of Lwibo, Kinyumba, and Lukweti, Masisi, between March 14 and 19. Reportedly, heavy weapons were used. On September 23, the rebels attacked MONUSCO soldiers near the medical center of Kashebere, Masisi. One peacekeeper and four militants were injured and around 6,000 people fled the area. FARDC wounded one militant and arrested at least one APLCS leader in clashes in Mberere, Masisi, between October 8 and 11. The arrest led to violent demonstrations by ethnic Hunde, which left at least two civilians injured. A total of 37,000 people fled the violence. APCLS also engaged in fighting with FDLR in Masisi in mid-September, forcing around 60 families to flee.

The ethnic Hutu Nyatura militias operated in the North Kivu territories of Masisi, Walikale, and Rutshuru, as well as in Kalehe, South Kivu. On February 11, a Nyatura group clashed with ethnic Nande militants of Mayi-Mayi Shetani near the Nyamilima-Katwiguru road in Rutshuru. On July 10, Nyatura and APLCS members jointly kidnapped ten civilians and pillaged goods in the villages of Biriba, Bukondo, and Buhima, Walikale. Around 100 families fled the area. A Nyatura attack against FARDC in Bukombo, Masisi, on June 17 left two soldiers and three militants dead. When Nyatura fighters and the military clashed in Lumbishi, Kalehe, on August 12, two rebels were killed, among them Nyatura leader Bahati.

Mayi-Mayi Kirikicho continued to attack civilians and other militias in Kalehe. During fighting between a coalition of Mayi-Mayi Kirikicho and Kifuafua and an unidentified RM faction in Bulembwe and Kaholo on January 6, militants killed one civilian, raped ten women and burned down approx. 20 houses. Government forces captured Kirikicho leader Marongo in Katiri on January 24.

Mayi-Mayi Werrason continued to carry out attacks against civilians in Mambasa territory, Orientale province, using rifles, machetes, spears, and arrows. From the end of April until the end of August, the group killed at least six people, including four policemen. For instance, during the night of August 23, Mayi-Mayi Werrason members killed one civilian and raped two women in the mining zones of Lelesi and Wamba in central Mambasa. According to MONUSCO, this led to significant displacement.

Mayi-Mayi Simba continued to be active in the territories of Mambasa, Bafwasende, and Wamba, Orientale province, Lubutu, Maniema province, as well as Butembo and Beni, North Kivu. Overall, at least 31 people were killed, including seven civilians. For instance, 15 Simba militants and five members of Mayi-Mayi Yira were killed in clashes in Kambau, Butembo, on July 22. In early August, a coalition of Mayi-Mayi Simba and Mayi-Mayi Luc took control over several villages in Bafwasende and Lubutu. On November 12, around 100 militants attacked park rangers in Mabukusi, Mambasa, killing one guard and kidnapping another.

Active in South Kivu's Fizi and Uvira territories as well as Kalemie territory in Katanga, Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba carried out attacks against the military and civilians. Up to 14 people

were killed and at least 12,000 fled. On June 26, the militants attacked the village Lubondja in Uvira in order to steal cows, thereby killing two civilians and injuring one soldier. Military forces drove the fighters back to Ngandja forest. [jli](#), [hsp](#)

the opposition. On December 19, a civil society coalition was formed with prominent members such as Vital Kamerhe, Felix Tshisekedi, and Moise Katumbi, aiming to prevent Kabila's third term. [ceb](#)

DR CONGO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: MLC, FIS, UNC, UPDS et al. vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between opposition parties such as the Front for Social Integration (FIS), the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC), the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), and the Union for the Congolese Nation (UNC), on the one hand, and the government of President Joseph Kabila, on the other, remained violent.

The opposition campaigned against proposed constitutional changes that would allow Kabila to be re-elected for a third term in the 2016 presidential elections. Tensions also arose over delays in the electoral process. Government crackdown on protests resulted in the death of 26 to 50 opposition members until the end of the year. By September, the UN Joint Human Rights Office counted 143 human rights violations linked to the electoral process and at least 649 arbitrary arrests.

From January 19 to 22, FIS, MLC, UDPS, and UNC led demonstrations against the proposed electoral legislation in the capital Kinshasa and Goma, North Kivu province. While police forces dispersed the demonstrations with tear gas and live bullets, several protesters threw stones. Human rights organizations claimed that up to 42 people were killed, dozens injured, and many arrested during these four days, whereas the government stated that 27 died. During the protests, the government shut down the internet in the capital. On January 24, Western diplomats and the UN urged Kabila to abandon the constitutional amendment plans. On April 20, the opposition threatened to boycott the provincial elections in November unless the Independent National Electoral Commission added the names of those citizens to the electoral roll who had become eligible to vote after the 2011 election. On April 24, the police dispersed UPDS demonstrations in Mbuji-Mayi and Kinshasa, arresting UPDS Secretary-General Bruno Mavungu, his deputy Bruno Tshibabi, and other party members. The protesters called for an official investigation into a mass grave discovered in Maluka, Kinshasa, presumed to hold bodies of the January violence. On June 29, UDPS proclaimed its leader Etienne Tshisekedi as their presidential candidate.

On September 14, the G7, a group of seven parties holding 13 out of 47 ministerial posts, openly spoke out against a third term of Kabila. Two days later, Kabila dismissed seven G7 leaders from the government, including National Security Advisor Pierre Lumbi and Planning Minister Olivier Kamitatu. On October 29, Kabila appointed 21 commissioners by decree to govern the newly established provinces after their election had been postponed. Under the condition of international assistance, UDPS announced in November to take part in a national dialogue initiated by Kabila in order to discuss the elections. UNC, MLC, and G7 continued to reject the dialogue. Kabila requested UN assistance for the political dialogue on November 21. Two weeks later, the new UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region Saïd Djinnit arrived in Kinshasa in order to facilitate negotiations between the government and

DR CONGO, RWANDA (FDLR)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: FDLR vs. DR Congo, Rwanda

Conflict items: national power, subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over national power, subnational predominance, and resources between the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), on the one hand, and the government of DR Congo, supported by MONUSCO, as well as the government of Rwanda, on the other, escalated to a limited war. FDLR originated from parts of the former Rwandan army and the Interahamwe militia, which both had entered the DR Congo in 1994 after having been involved in the genocide in Rwanda. Since then, FDLR continued to seek national power in Rwanda and repeatedly linked demobilization to political dialogue with the Rwandan government. In DR Congo, the group and the government fought over the control of Walikale, Masisi, Lubero, and Rutshuru territories in North Kivu province, as well as Walungu, Fizi, Mwenga, and Uvira territories in South Kivu province. Occasionally, the group was active in Kalemie, Katanga province. According to the UN, FDLR continued to engage in illegal taxation of villages and roads under its control, the exploitation of gold, the sale of timber products, and the looting of vehicles.

Apart from fighting with government forces, FDLR frequently clashed with other armed groups [[→ DR Congo \(Mayi-Mayi et al.\)](#)].

Throughout the year, at least 100 people died due to encounters between FDLR and the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) as well as in FDLR attacks against civilians. On January 2, a six-month ultimatum for the voluntary disarmament of FDLR fighters expired. According to the government, only 339 out of an estimated total of 1,400 FDLR fighters had surrendered. The army also accused the group of holding back weapons and lamented that only a few high ranking members of the FDLR had turned themselves in. After the end of the ultimatum, the Rwandan government called for immediate actions against FDLR.

On January 28, FARDC and MONUSCO announced the start of the joint operation "Sukola 2" against the group. However, on February 11, MONUSCO suspended cooperation with the army after its demands for the withdrawal of two FARDC generals from the operation were not met. The generals had been suspected by the UN to have committed human rights violations. Subsequently, FARDC launched "Sukola 2" in March without MONUSCO's support.

In North Kivu, fighting between FDLR and FARDC near Nyamilima, Rutshuru caused the death of two soldiers and three rebels on March 11. On June 18, FDLR fighters killed six soldiers and two civilians in an ambush in Muchamba, Rutshuru. According to the UN, military operations forced FDLR to withdraw from strategic positions in North Kivu.

In South Kivu, one FDLR rebel was killed by FARDC forces in Walungu town, on July 5. The UN reported that military operations forced FDLR to retreat from their positions in the highlands of Uvira and Mwenga, congregating in the Itombwe and Hewa Bora forests in southern Mwenga. How-

ever, the group allegedly returned to some positions towards the end of the year. In early January, FARDC arrested FDLR leader Jacques Mukashama alias Bwanyama in Kalusu, Kalemie, Katanga province. He allegedly headed a faction that carried out attacks against vehicles and undertook pillages in the mountainous border area with Fizi territory.

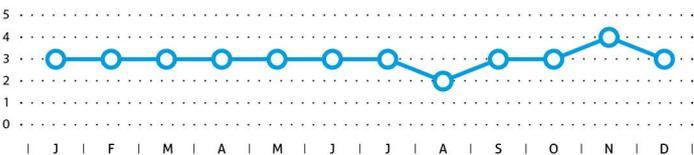
Throughout the year, FDLR killed at least 49 civilians, executing some of them for alleged collaboration with FARDC. The group also carried out kidnappings, lootings, illegal taxation and committed acts of sexual violence. On March 12, FDLR fighters killed five civilians during raids on villages in the south of Lubero territory. On April 15, FDLR kidnapped at least 30 civilians in Rwindi, Rutshuru, near Virunga National Park. FDLR forces attacked a refugee camp close to Kalembe, Masisi, on October 26, killing one civilian. On December 4, FDLR looted another camp in Nyanzale, Rutshuru. Four days later, the group abducted and later killed six people in Kalevya, Lubero.

In total, the Rwandan government arrested 17 people, accusing them of collaboration with FDLR. In March and May, eight people were sentenced to life imprisonment by the High Court in Musanze. Five were acquitted on all charges. In August, Head of MONUSCO Martin Kobler announced the end of UN financial aid for the demobilization camps in DR Congo as of October 1 and demanded the return of the ex-fighters and their families to Rwanda. On September 24, Rwandan Defense Minister James Kabarebe met with his Congolese counterpart Aimé Ngoy Mukena for the first time since June 2012 to discuss security matters. The two ministers agreed to eliminate FDLR and to cooperate in the repatriation of FDLR fighter to Rwanda. However, many demobilized FDLR fighters refused to return and repeatedly linked demobilization to participation in a joint government in Rwanda. The Rwandan government refused to enter talks with the rebels. On September 28, a court in Stuttgart, Germany, sentenced former FDLR leaders Ignace Murwanashyaka and Straton Musinguzi to 13 and eight years in prison, respectively. The two were convicted of being ringleaders of a terrorist organization and Murwanashyaka was found guilty of war crimes in the DR Congo. The trial had started in 2011 after the two had been arrested by German police in 2009. The government in Rwanda welcomed the decision. emh

DR CONGO, UGANDA (ADF)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1995

Conflict parties: ADF vs. DR Congo, Uganda
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between the predominantly Ugandan armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the governments of the DR Congo and Uganda, supported by MONUSCO, de-escalated to a limited war.

ADF continued to operate in DR Congo's northern Beni territory, North Kivu province, and southern Irumu territory, Orientale Province, close to the border with Uganda. ADF continued

to forcibly recruit civilians and extort money as well as other goods. In previous years, the group maintained cross-border economic and logistic networks, especially taxi business, illegal logging, and gold mining. According to the UN Group of Experts, due to military offensives by the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO, the estimated strength of 800 to 1,500 ADF combatants in early 2014 was reduced to a number of 100 to 260 fighters by the end of 2015.

According to the UN, the rebels abandoned most of their bases with the remaining fighters organizing in small decentralized groups. Tanzanian authorities arrested ADF leader Jamil Mukulu in April and extradited him to Uganda in July. Furthermore, high-ranking ADF leader Kasada Karume was allegedly killed during an encounter with FARDC near Bango, Beni, on April 22. The police also arrested several FARDC officers for the killing of civilians in operations against ADF and for the alleged support and provision of intelligence to the group.

Throughout the year, FARDC seized several bases in Beni, including former FARDC positions under control of the rebels such as Mutara, Mbau, and Mayongose. Furthermore, the Congolese military took control of the ADF bases Baruku, Mavume, Pilote, and Issa in Beni. On April 18, FARDC freed seven ADF hostages near Oicha, Beni. Suspected ADF fighters killed two peacekeepers and kidnapped another two near Kikiki, Beni, on May 5. On October 26 and 27, the group attacked several FARDC positions near the villages of Makembi, Jericho, and Nadwi, Beni. Eleven soldiers and 19 militants were killed. FARDC and MONUSCO carried out an attack against ADF south of Eringeti town in the border area between Irumu and Beni on October 30. Three FARDC personnel were killed and another three soldiers and three peacekeepers were wounded. An ADF raid on November 29 against a military base in Makembi near Eringeti left at least seven ADF combatants, seven civilians, four soldiers, and one peacekeeper dead. During the attack, ADF torched 43 residential houses, several shops, one police station, and partially burned down Eringeti Hospital. As a consequence, at least 14,000 people fled to Irumu. On December 1, MONUSCO used attack helicopters to fight ADF in several villages near Beni town, destroying multiple buildings. By the end of the year, clashes between ADF, on the one hand, and military and MONUSCO, on the other, had left at least 75 rebels, 28 soldiers, three peacekeepers, and several civilians dead.

Alleged ADF fighters, mostly armed with machetes, continued to carry out attacks against civilians in Beni, killing at least 200, abducting over 20, and looting dozens of villages. However, the UN claimed that some of the killings attributed to ADF were in fact carried out by other militias. Violence against civilians peaked in mid-May when alleged ADF members killed at least 67 people in different locations, employing machetes and axes. At least 15,000 were forced to flee. Throughout May, hundreds of civilians, including many students, in Beni town and other locations in the territory protested against insecurity due to ADF violence. At least one civilian was shot and wounded by the police. bbr, mko

ETHIOPIA (OLF / OROMIYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: OLF vs. government
 Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of Oromiya region between the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), its armed wing, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), and the government continued. Throughout the year, OLA continued to attack government forces in Oromiya region. The OLF claimed its fighters killed 13 government soldiers and injured another 15 during an attack on July 20 in Bokko, Fadis district. On August 21, government soldiers attacked residents of Oda Bultum district, West Harerge zone, whom they had accused of assisting OLA fighters. Six days later, OLA militants ambushed and destroyed a truck carrying government soldiers on the highway linking Harer and the capital Addis Abeba in Kara Garbu, West Harerge, killing three soldiers and injuring another nine. On August 29, OLA militants reportedly shot dead three soldiers in Gaba Jimata, East Welega zone. On September 13, OLF stated to have killed 20 soldiers, wounded more than 22 others, destroyed a military truck, and seized seven AK-47 rifles in numerous attacks in Gemechis, Midaga, and Hawi Gudina Woredas in East and West Hararghe zone in early September. OLF claimed to have killed at least 33 and injured at least 22 in the zones of East and West Hararghe as well as East Welega from September 18 until the end of the year.

Ethiopian forces repeatedly crossed the border to Kenya chasing OLA militants. On May 24, a Kenyan civilian was shot dead during gunfire between government forces and OLA militants in Sessi, Moyale region, Kenya. Since May, Ethiopian soldiers repeatedly abducted Kenyan police reservists on several occasions in Sololo, Marsabit County, allegedly accusing them of hiding OLF members in the border area. After having chased OLA militants to northern Marsabit, Kenya, Ethiopian soldiers engaged in fighting with Kenyan police forces on November 20, killing three of them. Furthermore, they reportedly abducted 24 Kenyan civilians from villages in northern Marsabit. The next day, the Kenyan Defense Force deployed tanks in the border region.

On December 7, Ethiopia and Kenya, supported by UN and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), set up the "Marsabit County of Kenya-Borana zone of Ethiopia Integrated Cross Border and Area-based Program" in order to end border conflicts.

jar

ETHIOPIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: AEUP, Arena, EDP, ERP, Ginbot 7, MEDREK, Semayawi Party, UDJ vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and system/ideology between various opposition parties and the government led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) escalated to a violent crisis ahead of the elections on May 24. The opposition mainly consisted of Semayawi Party, All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP), Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ), Arena Tigray for Democracy and Sovereignty (Arena), Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP), the Ethiopian Raie Party (ERP), and Ginbot 7, which were partly organized in the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK).

In the elections, the EPRDF won all 547 parliamentary seats and 1,966 of 1,987 regional council seats, stripping the opposition of the one parliamentary seat it had held since the 2005

elections. All opposition parties rejected the election process and results, citing obstacles in campaigning and registering candidates with the National Election Board of Ethiopia and reporting serious harassment of their members by armed government forces on election day. The African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) to the 24 May 2015 Parliamentary Elections in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia called the elections credible despite minor irregularities.

On January 25, at least 26 people were injured when the police dissolved a UDJ demonstration in the capital Addis Ababa. On April 22, the government held a rally to commemorate the 28 Ethiopians killed by the Islamic State in Libya [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. After some demonstrators had thrown stones at the police, the latter responded with tear gas and batons. At least seven policemen were injured and eight Semayawi members were arrested. On May 17, authorities prohibited a demonstration by the Semayawi Party.

Between March 3 and 24, at least seven opposition members and two of their family members were arrested by public authorities. On April 1, authorities confiscated the passport of Semayawi chairman Yilkal Getnet. On May 16, Tesfahun Alemnew, public relation head of the AEUP, was reported missing. On election day, two MEDREK observers were killed in the towns of Kofele and Arsi, Oromiya State, while the work of other opposition observers was hindered by armed government forces in Addis Ababa and the cities of Hawassa, SNNPR, as well as Mekele, Tigray Region. MEDREK reported that during the elections, 640 of its members were arrested, 66 beaten up, and 17 shot. In the aftermath of the elections, four opposition members were killed. Samuel Awoke (Semayawi Party) was stabbed in Debre Markos, Amhara Region, on June 16, Tadese Abraha (Arena) was strangled in Mai Kadra, Tigray, one day later, Brhani Erebo (MEDREK) was found dead in Hadiya, SNNPR, on June 19, and Asrat Haile (MEDREK) was beaten to death on July 4 in Ginbot district in SNNPR.

At the end of November, students started protests similar to those in early 2014 in different cities in Oromiya against a so-called master plan to expand Addis Ababa into Oromiya State. Opposition members claimed that at least 25 students had been killed in clashes with the police by mid-December, while hundreds had been arrested. The government confirmed five deaths.

On July 18, Ginbot 7 leader Berhanu Nega left the United Kingdom to unite with other opposition members in Eritrea [→ Ethiopia – Eritrea]. Four days later, Ginbot 7, TPDM, and ADFM formed the coalition United Movement for the Salvation of Ethiopia Through Democracy. On August 21, the Ethiopian National Transition Council and the Ethiopian National Youth formed the Government of Ethiopia in Exile Organizing Committee with the aim to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy.

Throughout the year, the government continued to put journalists and opposition members on trial under the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Law. For example, on March 15, the sentences of Daniel Shibeshi (UDJ) and Yeshiwas Aseda (Semayawi Party) as well as Abrasha Desta (ARENA) were increased to 14 and 16 months, respectively. The UN Human Rights Council asked on July 5 for the immediate release of former secretary-general of Ginbot 7, Andargachew Tsige, after the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture had expressed concerns on May 22 that Tsige was being tortured.

On October 30, the government detained 13 people in Arba Minch, SNNPR, allegedly engaged in "anti-peace activities." On December 24, Bekele Gerba, former secretary-general of the opposition Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), was arrested in his house in Adama, Oromiya, and imprisoned. Former head

of the public relations office of the Semayawi Party, Yonatan Tesfaye, was arrested by the police and imprisoned in Addis Ababa on December 28. On July 8, the journalists Tesfalem Wedeyes, Asmamaw Hailegiorgis, and Edom Kasaye were released after 15 months in prison. One day later, journalist Reyot Alemu was released after having served four years of her five-year sentence. By October 17, all members of the Zone 9 bloggers had been released from prison.

nbe

GUINEA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: UFDG, UFR et al vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the opposition coalition and the government of President Alpha Condé escalated to a violent crisis ahead of the presidential elections scheduled for October 11. The opposition coalition, consisting of numerous opposition parties, was led by the presidential candidates Cellou Dalein Diallo, Union of Guinea's Democratic Forces (UFDG), and Sidya Touré, Union of Republican Forces (UFR).

Throughout the year, violent confrontations took place between supporters of the opposition parties and of the government as well as with security forces all over the country and especially in the capital Conakry.

Between February 2 and 4, around 24 police forces and 25 civilians were injured during anti-government protests in Labé, eponymous region. From April 13 to 14, opposition supporters protested in Conakry, which partly turned into rioting and looting. The police used tear gas and guns, while protesters threw stones. In the course of the actions, two people were killed and 146 injured, at least 37 of whom by gunshots. Furthermore, two women were gang-raped, one of whom by security forces while being in custody. In clashes with opposition supporters in the capital on April 23, security forces shot dead one protester and 14 people were injured, among them eleven police personnel. The security forces that had been deployed in hundreds there arrested 93 people.

On September 20, supporters of the opposition and of the government threw stones at each other in Koundara, Boké region. During the protest, several people were injured and the police arrested at least 35. Between October 8 and 9, opposition activists clashed with Condé-supporters in Conakry, Kérouané, Kankan region, and Kissidougou, Faranah region. In Conakry, protesters used stones and clubs, while security forces fired shots and used tear gas and batons. At least twelve people were killed and 50 were injured.

The violent clashes went along with the opposition's strong objections to the organization of local and presidential elections. On March 18, the opposition parties withdrew 49 MPs, declaring they would no longer recognize the National Independent Electoral Commission. The opposition asked for local elections, which had initially been scheduled for 2014, to be held before the presidential elections. On June 19, the opposition and the government agreed to reschedule the local elections for 2016. Four days later, on June 23, UFDG's Diallo announced to ally with former military ruler Moussa Dadis Camara in the presidential election. Camara, still living in exile in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, accused the government of having prevented his return to the country when he failed to register as presidential candidate.

President Condé was declared winner with 57.84 percent of the votes on October 11, after opposition parties had repeatedly demanded a delay of the election. EU observers described the election as mainly fair and free, but noted some irregularities in the voting process. All opposition candidates asked for the result to be annulled, accusing the government of electoral manipulation. However, four days later, the Constitutional Court confirmed the result. jhe

KENYA (INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1963

Conflict parties: Pokot vs. Turkana; Samburu vs. Turkana; Degodia vs. Garre; Maasai vs. Kipsigis; Giriama vs. Orma; Pokot vs. Luhya; Maasai vs. Kisii; Ajuraan; vs. Degodia et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The limited war over resources and subnational predominance between various ethnic groups continued. Clashes erupted over cattle rustling, land use, grazing and water rights, as well as competition over political representation and control of oil-rich areas both between different ethnic groups and among sub-clans within ethnic groups. Most affected areas were located in the Rift Valley in the northwestern counties Turkana, Baringo, Samburu, Marsabit, and Isiolo. Furthermore, in the northeastern counties Mandera and Wajir, militias from different communities clashed repeatedly. Throughout the year, hundreds of people were killed, hundreds of thousands internally displaced, and thousands of heads of cattle stolen.

According to the UN, in the first six months alone, inter-communal violence in the north of the country resulted in the deaths of 310 people, thereby matching the overall death toll of the previous year, and displaced some 216,000 people.

Most fatalities resulted from frequent clashes between the rivaling groups of the Turkana and the Pokot as well as between militias from the Samburu and the Turkana. While traditionally the groups had mostly fought over grazing grounds and cattle, local officials stated that the importance of controlling oil-rich areas further fueled the conflict. For instance, starting on May 4, several days of attacks and reprisal attacks between Pokot and Turkana left up to 75 people dead in villages along the border between Turkana and Baringo county.

On June 6, in one of many clashes between Turkana and Samburu, fighters from both sides engaged in a gun battle in Atan, Isiolo county, which lasted for six hours despite an intervention by the police. The attack resulted in eleven fatalities. In order to curb the violence in the North, the government launched in cooperation with county leaders a campaign to decrease the amount of firearms in the region and to punish communities for engaging in cattle rustling.

In the beginning of the year, Interior Cabinet Secretary Joseph Nkaissery announced to increase security presence in the Rift Valley in order to have all weapons registered and to start a disarmament campaign in the conflict-torn Northwest. In February, the government deployed security personnel to Kapedo, an oil-rich region contested between Baringo and Turkana, among other regions, in order to disarm herders.

In the Northeast, in Mandera and Wajir county where more than 100 people had been killed in clashes between Degodia and Garre in the previous year, fighting between the two

communities continued, leaving dozens dead in 2015.

For instance, between June 15 and 17, despite increased presence by Kenyan Defense Forces and the police in the area, at least 14 people were killed in a series of clashes between the warring groups.

In the southwestern Narok county, the theft of livestock led to several clashes between Maasai and Kipsigis, a sub-group of the Kalenjin. In reaction to the death of two people, the destruction of at least 200 houses, and the displacement of up to 5,000 people from Olposimoru, Narok county, the government deployed 100 security personnel to quell the violence. Following a peace meeting led by Nkaisser, local officials stated that peace was restored.

Throughout the year, numerous trans-border incidents were observed, with militias from Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan launching attacks on Kenyan soil or vice versa. For instance, in mid-March, raiders from the Toposa, coming from South Sudan, repeatedly attacked Lokichogio, Turkana, killing four people and stealing several hundred heads of cattle.

sel

MADAGASCAR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: **END** | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: Mapar, TIM vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the opposition parties Together for President Andry Rajoelina (MAPAR) and I Love Madagascar (TIM) of former president Marc Ravalomanana, on the one hand, and the government of President Hery Rajaonarimampianina and his supporting party A New Force for Madagascar (HVM), on the other, ended. Since the five-year institutional turmoil was brought to an end with the 2013 presidential elections, the initial conflict between the TGV-led coalition MAPAR and TIM, now both in opposition, shifted to a power struggle between them and the government.

On January 14, Rajoelina legally contested the appointment of Air Force Commander Jean Ravelonarivo as new prime minister due to alleged irregularities. In February, former presidents Albert Zafy and Rajoelina exited reconciliation talks but acknowledged their continuation. In reconciliation talks in mid-April, which he had initially challenged, Ravalomanana accepted the legitimacy of the ruling government and the Presidency. The house arrest he had lived under since his return to Madagascar in October 2014 was lifted. In July, Justice Minister Noeline Ramanantenasoa announced that Ravalomanana was officially free. His return and legal status had been one major issue of the national reconciliation efforts since his ouster in early 2009.

In late May, a large majority of the parliament's lower house proposed a motion for the impeachment of President Rajaonarimampianina due to unconstitutional governance. The motion was later officially disapproved by the country's constitutional court. In early July, opposition MPs called a censure motion against the government due to its alleged failure to resolve socioeconomic problems but failed to achieve the required two-thirds qualified majority.

Municipal elections took place on July 31, with HVM gaining a countrywide majority. In late December, Senate elections were held for the first time since 2009, with HVM again winning the majority of seats. dt

MALI (HCUA, MNLA ET AL. / AZAWAD)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: HCUA, MNLA et al. vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis in the northern regions between various militant groups, specifically between the Tuareg groups National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

The two sides disagreed over the degree of autonomy for the northern regions Kidal, Timbuktu, and Gao, where MNLA had established its own state, Azawad. However, MNLA suspended their secessionist goal in December 2012 and MINUSMA-supported negotiations with the government started in Algiers, Algeria, in June 2014. In the course of negotiations, MNLA, HCUA, and three other groups formed the Coalition of Azawad Movements (CMA), while the Self-Defense Group of Imrad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) united with other groups in the so-called Platform [→ Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)].

On January 23, the CMA threatened to withdraw from peace talks after MINUSMA forces had killed MNLA fighters in an airstrike in the town of Tabankort, Gao, three days before. The peace talks resumed in Algiers on February 16, yielding a trilateral ceasefire three days later. On March 1, the government and the Platform signed a preliminary peace agreement, while the CMA asked for a delay for further consultations with its grassroots movements. The CMA rejected the drafted agreement two weeks later, but expressed its willingness to continue the peace talks. After a delegation from the UNSC had met with CMA representatives in Kidal in the eponymous region in mid-March in order to persuade the coalition to sign the peace agreement, the government stated on April 9 CMA's readiness to do so. However, CMA subsequently refused, demanding its proposed amendments to be taken into account. Violent confrontations were limited to the first half of the year. In the most fatal incident, militants of CMA attacked the town of Léré, Timbuktu, on April 29, killing at least nine soldiers, wounding six, and taking another six hostage. In the ensuing fighting, the army killed up to ten militants, injured 16 others, and destroyed vehicles belonging to the attackers. Between April 29 and May 22, CMA militants and security forces clashed several times in the regions Timbuktu, leaving at least 47 people dead and more than 40 injured in total.

On May 15, the Platform signed the peace accord with the government in a ceremony in the capital Bamako, which was boycotted by CMA. One day after the Platform had withdrawn from Ménaka, Gao, which it had seized from CMA in April, the latter signed the peace agreement with the government and the Platform on June 20. The next day, a follow-up committee (CSA), comprised of the government, the armed groups, and the international mediation team, met for the first time. The CSA was established in order to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement.

In mid-August, further clashes erupted between the Platform and the CMA over the town of Anéfis, Kidal. The latter announced to suspend its participation in the CSA on August 24, accusing the Platform of having violated the peace agreement. After President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta had insisted on the Platform's withdrawal from the town, it finally retreated on September 14. In late September, CMA announced to have

resumed its participation in the CSA. On October 1, CMA and government exchanged a total of 47 prisoners. jas

MALI (INTER-MILITANT RIVALRY / NORTHERN MALI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Ansar al-Din vs. HCUA, MAA, MNLA vs. GATIA

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis between various militant groups in northern Mali over subnational predominance continued. In early 2012, the Ifoghas Tuareg group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) had joined forces with Islamist groups in an attempt to establish their own state Azawad consisting of the three northern regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad); Mali (Islamist groups)]. In May 2012, heavy fighting erupted between the Islamist groups al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Ansar al-Din, on the one hand, and MNLA, on the other, due to differences over the ideological orientation of Azawad. In the course of peace negotiations with the government, starting in June 2014, MNLA, the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA), the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), and other groups organized in the Coalition of Azawad Movements (CMA). Furthermore, the Self-Defense Group of Imghad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) and a splinter faction of MAA united with other groups to form the so-called Platform.

Despite peace negotiations, CMA and Platform fighters continued to engage in combat numerous times throughout the year. Between January 16 and 20, clashes between the two sides in and around the town of Tabankort, Gao, resulted in deaths of at least eleven fighters. On January 23, GATIA gunmen and two suicide bombers attacked an MNLA position near Tabankort, killing twelve people. A third suicide bomber was shot dead before he could blow himself up. GATIA took control over CMA positions in Tabrichat, Kidal, on February 4. On April 27, GATIA and MAA defectors seized parts of MNLA-controlled Ménaka, Gao. GATIA stated that the group killed ten MNLA members and captured another seven. Further clashes from May 13 to 21 between fighters of the CMA and the Platform in several locations in Gao left more than 20 dead and at least 30 injured. According to UNHCR, a total of 57,000 people were internally displaced as a consequence of the fighting in May.

On June 20, CMA signed a peace agreement with the government and the Platform. However, GATIA and CMA again clashed in the valley of Amassine and the town of Anéfis, Kidal, between August 15 and 17. At least 10 members of CMA were killed. On August 17, GATIA occupied CMA-held Anéfis. One week later, CMA announced to suspend its participation in the follow-up committee of the peace agreement, accusing the Platform of having violated the terms of the accord. On September 14, five days after GATIA had completed its withdrawal from Anéfis, CMA announced its return to the town. Three days later, fighting between the groups erupted in the town of In Khalil, Kidal, close to the border with Algeria, resulting in the deaths of at least 15 militants.

The leaders of the Imghad and Ifoghas Tuareg tribes signed a peace agreement on October 9. Furthermore, between September 29 and October 16, delegates of CMA, the Plat-

form, and the government held talks in Kidal region.

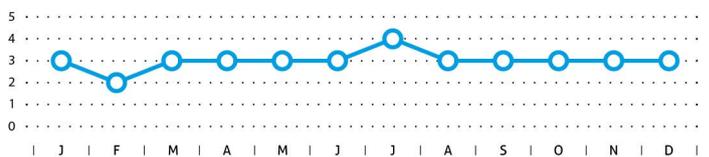
On December 19, CMA members clashed with an Islamist group for the first time since May 2014. CMA killed four Ansar al-Din fighters and captured at least three northeast of Kidal town. On December 24, Ansar al-Din attacked a CMA position in Talahandak, Kidal, leaving at least six CMA members dead. The next day, four CMA members were killed when Ansar al-Din ambushed a CMA convoy on its way to the Algerian border in Kidal region. maw

MALI (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: al-Mourabitoun, Ansar al-Din, AQIM, MLF, MUJAO vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance



The limited war over ideology and subnational predominance between the Islamist groups Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Mourabitoun, Ansar al-Din, and Macina Liberation Front (MLF), on the one hand, and the government, supported by France, on the other, continued.

The MINUSMA mission, comprising more than 10,000 personnel, was extended by one more year in June in order to stabilize the country [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad)]. The MLF was formed in January and mainly targeted victims thought to have collaborated with Malian or international forces. The group allegedly had links with Ansar al-Din's leader Iyad Ag Ghali. While in 2014 the militant groups mostly launched attacks in remote northern areas, 2015 was marked by an extension of violence towards the south of the country. For the first time, Islamists conducted attacks along the borders with Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire as well as in the capital Bamako.

On January 5, AQIM assaulted army forces in Nampala, Ségou region, killing eight Malian soldiers. Islamists had never carried out attacks this far south since the beginning of the French intervention in early 2013. Suspected AQIM fighters and the army clashed in Ténenkou town, Mopti region, on January 16, resulting in the deaths of at least three people. The following two days, MUJAO killed one person each in attacks in Kidal and Gao in the eponymous regions. On January 31, French ground troops conducted an operation between Boureissa and Abeissa, Kidal, killing around a dozen Islamist fighters.

In Bamako, al-Mourabitoun fighters shot dead five people, including two foreigners, in an attack on a restaurant on March 7. The group stated that the attack had been in revenge for the killing of their commander Ahmed al-Tilemsi in December 2014. In mid-April, al-Mourabitoun fighters killed three civilians and injured nine peacekeepers in an attack on a MINUSMA base in Ansongo, Gao. On May 3, unidentified militants blew up the mausoleum of Sheikh Amadou Barry in Hamdallahi, Mopti, continuing a strategy of targeting spiritual and cultural sites which had begun in 2012 in the city

of Timbuktu, Timbuktu region. In the night of May 17 to 18, French forces conducted an operation between Bouressa and Abeïbara, Kidal, killing four Islamists, among them two important Islamist leaders, namely Amada Ag Hama of AQIM and Ibrahim Ag Inawalen of Ansar al-Din.

On June 1, AQIM claimed responsibility for two attacks in late May on MINUSMA personnel in Bamako and Timbuktu region, respectively, which left one peacekeeper dead and three wounded. On June 27, Ansar al-Din attacked the town of Nara, Koulikoro region, close to the border with Mauritania, killing twelve people. The next day, the group attacked and briefly took control of Fakola town, Sikasso region, close to the border with Côte d'Ivoire. In response, on June 29, Côte d'Ivoire announced to reinforce its troops at the Malian border. On July 2, AQIM again attacked a MINUSMA convoy near the city of Goundam, Timbuktu, killing six and injuring five peacekeepers. Three days later, French forces killed Mohamed Ali Ag Wadossene, a local operations chief of AQIM, in battles close to Kidal. Throughout July, the Malian army destroyed three camps of Islamists in Sikasso region close to the border with Côte d'Ivoire and killed 30 militants. Furthermore, they arrested more than 50 in the regions Ségou and Sikasso.

On August 3, AQIM attacked an army outpost in Gourma Rharous, Timbuktu, killing at least ten soldiers, burning several vehicles, and stealing army equipment. Four days later, al-Mourabitoun laid a 24-hour siege on a hotel housing foreigners in Sévaré, Mopti, leaving 13 people dead. In early September, the army arrested three Islamists, allegedly belonging to an MLF cell in the capital. MLF Islamists were also suspected of being responsible for two attacks in Mopti region, close to the border with Burkina Faso, on September 12 and 19, which had left seven people dead. On October 27, following an increase of attacks in Mopti region, close to the Burkinabe border, the government launched a three-month military operation named "Seno" around the towns of Bandiagara, Koro, and Mopti. Two days later, Malian troops killed seven Islamists in Tiébanda forest, Mopti.

On November 20, in an eight-hour siege on the Radisson hotel in Bamako, Islamist militants took 170 hostages and shot dead at least 20 of them. Al-Mourabitoun as well as MLF claimed responsibility for the attack. Eight days later, Ansar al-Din fighters fired mortar at a MINUSMA camp in Kidal, killing two peacekeepers and one contractor and injuring 20 others. In early December, Germany decided to send 650 troops to reinforce MINUSMA. On December 20, French forces launched an operation against al-Mourabitoun in Ménaka, Gao, killing ten fighters.

In total, at least 190 people were killed throughout the year. bkm

MOZAMBIQUE (RENAMO)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: RENAMO vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy between the main opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) continued. RENAMO, which fought against FRELIMO in the 1977 civil war and transformed into a political party afterwards, repeatedly resorted to violence since 2012. Although a peace agreement had been signed on 09/05/14, violence between RENAMO

and the government continued. Throughout the year, approx. 45 people died in clashes between RENAMO and police forces in Tete, Manica, and Zambezia provinces.

RENAMO continued to reject the results of the 2014 presidential elections and accused FRELIMO of fraud. On March 16, RENAMO submitted a bill to the parliament that would allow the appointment of a provincial president in each province by the 2014 election winner of the respective province. After the bill failed to pass on April 30, Dhlakama repeatedly threatened to forcibly take control of Manica, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala, Tete, and Zambezia provinces. On December 16, Dhlakama said in Maputo that he planned to seize the six provinces in March 2016.

On June 14, RENAMO and government forces clashed near a RENAMO base in Mucumbedzi, Tete. Two policemen were injured, of whom one died later. In an attack on government forces in Moatize and Tsangano districts, Tete, in early July, houses and barns were destroyed and about 700 residents fled into the neighboring country Malawi. Nyusi condemned the RENAMO violence in Tete on July 29. Clashes became heavier in the second half of the year. On September 25, RENAMO clashed with the police in Amatongas, Manica. In total, 24 people were killed, most of them were reportedly RENAMO members. On October 2, ten people died in clashes near Chicata, Gondola, Manica. Another ten people were killed during fighting in Morrumbala, Zambezia, on October 28.

FRELIMO repeatedly called for the disarmament of RENAMO's militia as agreed upon in the 2014 peace deal, but there was only limited integration of RENAMO fighters into the armed forces. RENAMO and the government held talks to resolve the conflict until RENAMO ended the weekly meetings on August 21. However, in October, RENAMO indicated willingness to resume dialogue. On December 21, RENAMO called for international mediators to lead the negotiations and blamed national mediators for the failure of the talks with the government. lsc

NIGER (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The national power conflict between opposition groups and the government led by Mahamadou Issoufou and his Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS) continued as a violent crisis.

In September 2014, judicial authorities issued an arrest warrant for Hama Amadou, the leader of the main opposition party Nigerien Democratic Movement (MODEN) and a former parliament speaker, who had fled the country shortly before. He was charged with alleged involvement in baby trafficking, but claimed the charges were politically motivated. 2015 was marked by tensions concerning the organization of the upcoming presidential and local elections in 2016. Furthermore, violent confrontations between anti-government protesters and security forces took place especially in the capital Niamey. Authorities detained several journalists, anti-government protesters, and opposition politicians.

Between January 16 and 17, more than 1,000 protesters took to the streets of Niamey and the city of Zinder, eponymous region, denouncing Issoufou's participation in the march against the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, France, on January 11. Protesters attacked PNDS offices as well as houses of

members of the ruling party and burned and looted, among others, 45 churches as well as a French cultural center. At least ten people died and more than 170 were injured during the protests. Despite a ban on demonstrations, about 300 opposition supporters rallied in Niamey on January 18, criticizing the government's treatment of opposition parties. Protesters threw stones, while the police used tear gas and arrested 90 people. On January 30, the responsible criminal court withdrew the charges against Amadou without lifting the arrest warrant.

On July 29, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) scheduled presidential elections for 02/21/16 and local elections for 05/09/16. The opposition coalition Alliance for Reconciliation, Democracy, and the Republic (ARDR) comprising several opposition parties such as MODEN announced on August 9 to reject the electoral calendar, denouncing that there was no consensus on it and demanding the local elections to be held before the presidential elections. During a visit in Niamey, on September 9, Ibn Chambas, UN Special Representative for West Africa and head of UNOWA, called for calm, inclusive and transparent elections, and offered UNOWA's support in preparing the elections. Four days later, MODEN declared Amadou its presidential candidate.

On November 1, thousands of anti-government protesters rallied in the capital, criticizing alleged irregularities in voter lists. On November 11, 34 opposition MPs proposed a motion in parliament demanding Issoufou's prosecution for high treason due to alleged involvement in a corruption case, but was rejected by parliament. Three days later, the police arrested Amadou after he had landed at Niamey's airport, returning from exile. Security forces installed barricades in order to block the airport and used tear gas to disperse hundreds of stone-throwing Amadou supporters who tried to remove the roadblock. In the course of the actions, four reporters were arrested. Earlier that day, authorities also arrested more than a dozen supporters of Amadou planning to welcome him at the airport.

On December 7, the opposition rejected ECOWAS-appointed envoy to monitor the election process, Bakary Fofana, accusing him of being biased. Issoufou claimed on December 17 that the government foiled a coup attempt and had detained at least four senior military officials two days before, among them the former military chief of staff and the head of the air force base in the capital Niamey. Opposition politicians accused the government of not being able to prove the claim and of trying to manipulate the political climate ahead of the elections. low

and cattle, it was further fueled by differences concerning political, ethnic, and religious issues between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other. As desertification in the Sahelian Zone reduced fertile grounds, farmers appealed to their right to use their ancestor's farmland, while Fulani nomads claimed the areas as grazing areas for their cattle. Due to increasing violence between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria's Middle Belt since 2009, the government established a Special Task Force (STF) to observe the situation in Plateau State and intervene if necessary. Following continuing violence, many communities formed vigilante groups to defend their farmland or livestock, but also conducted retaliatory attacks, which exacerbated hostilities.

In their regular way of operation, pastoralists stormed and raided villages using light weapons. For instance, on January 25 and 26, hundreds of pastoralists armed with AK-47, rifles, and machetes attacked the villages in Agatu Local Government area (LGA), Benue state, from different directions, opening fire on residents, stealing cattle, and burning dozens of houses and farmlands. In total, 34 people were killed and more than 500 displaced.

Violence spread to Kogi State when villagers from Agatu moved on to Odagbo and Okaba on February 11, killing many herdsmen. In a similar incident, approx. 80 were killed by gunfire and machetes in Omala, Kogi State, on June 27. Militants from both sides clashed in Omala, where dozens sought refuge from previous attacks, following a series of raids and retaliatory attacks. The killing of one Fulani pastoralist was followed by severe clashes among Fulani and Tiv militias in five communities in Logo LGA, Benue, on January 30. A total of 44 people were reportedly killed and hundreds fled the area.

Over the course of February, communal violence linked to the conflict occurred in the states of Benue, Kaduna, Kogi, Plateau, Oyo, Ogun, Taraba, and, for the first time since the beginning of the conflict, near the capital Abuja, leaving a total of 66 dead. The most fatal attack occurred in Agatu LGA on March 15, when heavily armed herdsmen, suspected to be Fulani mercenaries commissioned by hostile communities, stormed Egba village, looting and burning houses as well as farmland. More than 100 were killed and approx. 20,000 fled the area. Disputes over a fishing pond between Egba and Ologba communities in Agatu LGA turned violent on April 6. Egba villagers attacked a funeral in Ologba and subsequent clashes claimed the lives of approx. 60. At the end of April, recurring attacks by Fulani militants and reprisals by the military killed six soldiers and more than 50 civilians, militants, and Tarok cattle rustlers in several villages in Plateau and Taraba. Another 29 were killed in raids by herdsmen in Guma LGA, Benue.

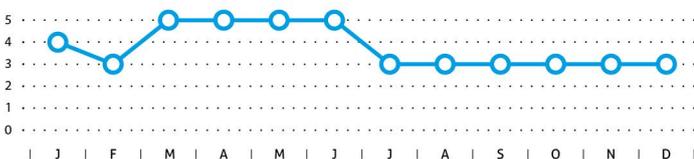
Recurring violence occurred frequently in Logo LGA. At least 96 were killed by pastoralists attacking five villages armed with guns and machetes between May 20 and 25. In Barkin Ladi, Kanam, and Riyom LGAs, Plateau, violence increased over the course of May and June, resulting in the deaths of more than 160 people. In Bat, Foron, and Zakupang villages, Barkin Ladi LGA, 34 were killed in Fulani attacks and subsequent clashes with Christian farmers erupted from May 2 to 5. About 50 cattle rustlers attacked Cigama, Zamfara State, looting cattle, burning houses, and killing at least 37 villagers on July 4.

As in years before, conflict intensity decreased in the second half of the year due to climatic conditions. While more than 1,000 were killed from January to July, violence between pastoralists and farmers led to the deaths of approx.

NIGERIA (FARMERS – PASTORALISTS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: farmers vs. pastoralists
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over resources and subnational predominance between farmers and pastoralists remained at war level. While the main cause of conflict still concerned arable land

250 since August. Approx. 5,000 fled following an attack in Mangu LGA, Plateau, on September 16, when Berom youths invaded Kadunung village in an alleged reprisal attack, shooting indiscriminately at fleeing residents, killing 23 people and destroying 295 houses. In a similar attack on Shiroro LGA, Niger State, six days later, Fulani militants killed more than 35, shooting with automatic rifles on fleeing villagers. On October 10, Berom youths engaged cattle rustlers in Foron, Barkin Ladi LGA, in a gunfight, killing twelve pastoralists. In November, another wave of violence affected the states of Delta, Edo, Enugu, Gombe, Kogi, and Taraba. In the most violent incident, nine communities came under attack by pastoralists in Dekina LGA, on November 12. A total of 22 were killed and thousands displaced when militants entered the villages, shooting sporadically. In a reprisal attack for two Fulani herdsmen ambushed and killed by Berom villagers, herdsmen killed 16 on the outskirts of Jos, Plateau, on December 13. Over the course of the year, the conflict claimed more than 1,400 lives and displaced approx. 300,000 people.

NIGERIA (MASSOB / BIAFRA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1967

Conflict parties: MASSOB vs. government
 Conflict items: secession

The conflict over secession between the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the government escalated to a violent crisis. Throughout the year, MASSOB members staged several demonstrations, reiterating their demand for establishing an independent state named Biafra consisting of the south-eastern states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Delta, Imo, and Rivers. The government continued to prescribe membership in the organization as illegal. During a burial ceremony of a MASSOB member in Imo state on January 23, police forces used tear gas and shot at MASSOB members. While MASSOB claimed that three people died and five were injured, the police denied this. On March 4, police forces raided a MASSOB office in Awka North Local Government Area (LGA), Anambra state, confiscating documents of the group.

MASSOB organized protests in the states of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo on March 13, demanding the removal of the Independent National Electoral Commission's chairman Attahiru Jega. They accused him of favoring the All Progressives Congress's presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari [→ Nigeria (northerners – southerners)]. On April 9, the police claimed to have uncovered a MASSOB-run bomb factory in Umuokirika village, Aboh Mbaise LGA, Imo, seizing IED components and arresting two members of the group. In mid-April, MASSOB issued a statement demanding the UN recognize Biafra as a sovereign state. A MASSOB demonstration turned violent in Owerri, Imo, on May 30 when security forces tried to disperse the crowd of more than 500 people with tear gas. Protesters subsequently threw stones at the police. In the course of the actions, the police arrested 68 MASSOB members and charged 62 with conspiracy and belonging to an illegal organization. Reportedly, Biafran uniforms, ID cards, and flags were confiscated from the detainees. On August 22, two individuals allegedly carrying MASSOB insignia were shot dead by police officers in Onitsha, Anambra. Beginning in late August, MASSOB staged several large-scale

protests in the south-east. On November 13, thousands of protesters, belonging to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and MASSOB, protested in Owerri, demanding the release of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu, director of the London-based Radio Biafra. Reportedly, the police had arrested Kanu in mid-October. On November 30, MASSOB expelled its leader Chief Ralph Uwazuruike from the organization, accusing him of only pursuing his own interest. He subsequently founded a new organization, the Biafra Independent Movement. On December 1, thousands of protesters blocked Onitsha's Niger Bridge linking the states of Anambra and Delta. They demanded Kanu's release. Eight protesters and two police officers were killed in confrontations during the demonstrations. Reportedly, 137 demonstrators were arrested. Five days later, MASSOB ended the protests in the south-east, declaring their willingness to negotiate over Kanu's release.

NIGERIA (NORTHERNERS – SOUTHERNERS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: northerners vs. southerners
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between northerners and southerners remained violent due to ongoing rivalries between the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), accompanying the general elections.

Due to security concerns regarding heavy Boko Haram violence, the elections were postponed from February 14 to March 28 [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. The origin of the presidential candidates underlined regional disparities as PDP's candidate and then-president Goodluck Jonathan from the Niger Delta was widely supported by Christian southerners, while APC's candidate Muhammadu Buhari from Katsina State was said to represent the mostly Muslim inhabited north. APC and the influential Northern Elders Forum (NEF) strictly denied Jonathan's entitlement to run for another presidency, claiming a third term would have contravened the PDP's unwritten zoning agreement according to which presidency should alternate between a northern candidate and a southern candidate.

The NEF and its southern counterparts, former Niger Delta militant leaders as well as the Niger Delta Peoples Salvation Front, repeatedly threatened violence in the run-up to the elections. Political campaigning by both APC and PDP was pervaded by inflammatory language and several rallies were followed by violent clashes in 22 states, leaving a total of 67 dead, dozens injured, and many campaign offices damaged. On January 9, suspected APC supporters set ablaze campaign buses of Jonathan in Jos, Plateau State. On January 11 and 16, dynamite explosions destroyed two APC secretariats in Rivers State, injuring three people in Okrika Local Government Area (LGA).

On February 2, a campaigning event in Lagos, Lagos State, was followed by clashes between supporters and reprisals by gunmen, leaving six people dead, and twelve injured. The same day, PDP members allegedly defaced posters of the APC candidates in Bakin Ruwa, Kaduna State. In retaliation, APC supporters attacked PDP members on their way to a campaign rally, resulting in eight fatalities and 25 damaged vehicles. Two were killed and 50 wounded when PDP supporters attacked an APC rally with explosives and guns in Okrika LGA,

Rivers, on February 17. In two attacks, nine members of the APC were killed in Port Harcourt, Rivers, on March 7. APC claimed PDP responsible for the killings. During election day on March 28, small-scale election-related violent incidents resulted in the deaths of 66 people, of whom most died in the states of Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ebonyi, and Ondo. Eight officials from the Independent National Electoral Commission were kidnapped in Enugu the same day. During the elections, several polling stations as well as campaigning offices were attacked and supporters of both parties clashed with each other.

Sporadic violence continued in the aftermath of the elections. For instance on April 3, when gunmen invaded Obrikom community in Ogba-Egbemi-Ndoni LGA, Rivers, and killed nine APC supporters. On April 11, suspected APC supporters hacked a former chairman of PDP to death and killed another six people in Ezza South LGA, Ebonyi, while several cars and houses were burned. The next day, PDP and APC clashed in Ife, Osun State. Sporadic violence resurfaced the following day in several areas around the city, killing a total of three.

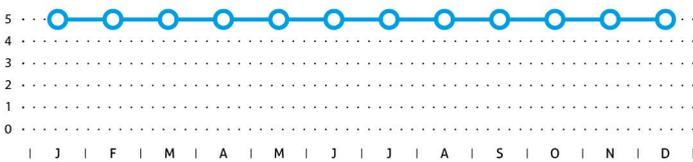
In its post-election report, the National Human Rights Commission estimated a total of 200 people killed in election-related violence before and after polls. Despite the significant decrease in violent incidents since May, the conflict continued violently. For instance, on November 8, clashes between supporters of PDP and APC in Wukari LGA, Taraba State, left at least seven people dead and 15 injured after the election tribunal verdict had annulled the election of the PDP candidate as Governor, replacing him by a member of the APC.

NIGERIA, CAMEROON, CHAD, NIGER (BOKO HARAM)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Boko Haram vs. Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger

Conflict items: system/ideology



The conflict over system and ideology between the Islamist group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger continued at war level for the fifth consecutive year.

The group was radically opposed to secular ideals and sought to establish an Islamic caliphate in the region. The year accounted for more than 12,000 conflict-related deaths, among them 8,110 killed by Boko Haram, and 2.4 million IDPs and refugees. The death toll thereby exceeded the previous year's 10,000 fatalities, reaching the highest number of deaths since the beginning of the conflict. Due to the deteriorating security situation, presidential elections in Nigeria were postponed from February 14 to March 28 and 29. The elections resulted in the victory of Muhammadu Buhari over the incumbent Goodluck Jonathan.

While the group had started its activities in northeast Nigeria in 2003, it significantly increased its regional impact through-

out 2015, conducting more than 100 attacks in neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The death toll outside Nigeria almost tripled compared to the previous year, reaching over 2,000 fatalities. With 1,071 fatalities, Cameroon was the most affected neighboring state, followed by Chad (568) and Niger (464).

Furthermore, Boko Haram's regional supply routes for recruitment, training, equipment, and funding had spread from Mali to Sudan and the Central African Republic to Libya. At the end of January, the AU mandated a 7,500-strong Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) from Nigeria, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger in order to counter Boko Haram activities in the region and recapture territory held by Boko Haram since July 2014.

After Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi accepted the group's pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau referred to the militant group as the Islamic State's West African Province on March 7 [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Boko Haram members fought alongside IS-affiliated militants in Sirte, Libya, and underwent training in IS camps in Iraq as well as in camps run by the IS-affiliated Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa in Mali [→ Mali (Islamist groups)]. Furthermore, the group increased propaganda campaigns via social media to attract foreign fighters, a tactic also used by IS.

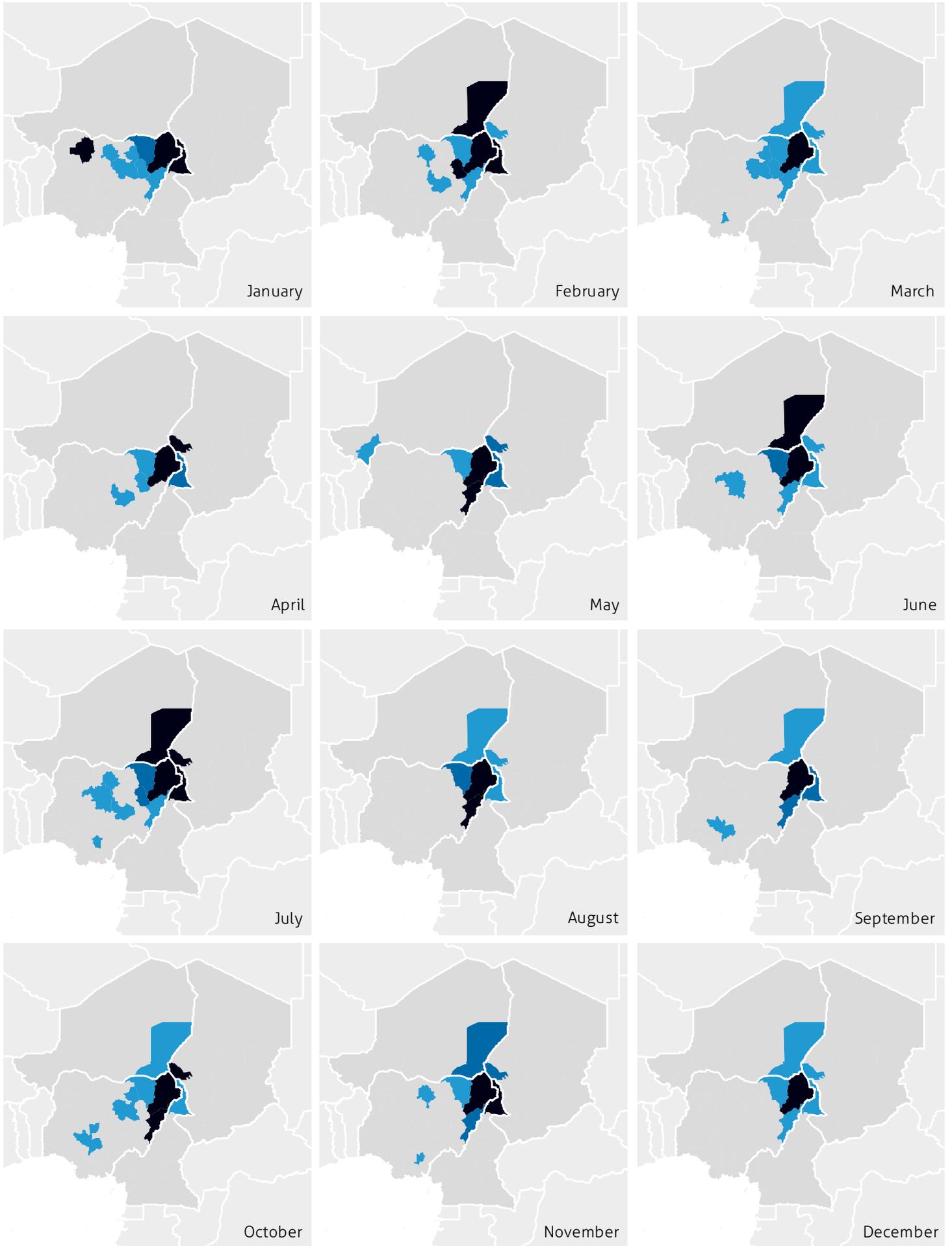
Following a military offensive at the beginning of the year, Boko Haram did not continue tactics of conquest and of control of territory but proceeded with hit-and-run tactics. At least 59 such attacks resulted in the deaths of about 850 people throughout the year. In the last four months of the year, the number of suicide bombings increased to 37, most of which involved women and girls blowing themselves up in crowded places, leading to almost 500 fatalities. The most fatal bombing occurred in Baga Sola, Chad, where five suicide attacks killed 41 civilians at a fish market and a refugee camp on October 10.

In the most fatal attack since the beginning of the conflict, hundreds of Boko Haram militants completely destroyed the town of Baga, Borno State, and its hinterlands from January 3 to 7 using RPGs, IEDs, and assault rifles. Reportedly, up to 2,000 were killed and several thousand displaced. When Boko Haram militants entered the town, civilians fled to nearby Chad or surrounding villages. Military forces, including those of the MNJTF, also fled their bases. Boko Haram continued their attack in surrounding villages and returned to Baga, going from house to house killing all civilians left and burning houses. Nigerian Military (NA) immediately responded with airstrikes but could not force Boko Haram out of Baga until February 21.

In the first quarter of the year, Boko Haram conducted three major attacks in Cameroon's Far North region. On January 12, Cameroonian military (FAC) repelled a Boko Haram attack on a military base near Kolofata, killing 143 insurgents. One week later, Boko Haram raided several villages in Tourou area, kidnapping up to 80 people and burning houses. Approx. 800 militants invaded Fotokol town, shooting people and slitting throats as well as destroying houses and mosques with IEDs on February 4. According to Cameroonian Minister of Defense Joseph Beti Assomo, about 90 civilians, 13 Chadian, and six Cameroonian troops were killed together with hundreds of insurgents. Militants clashed with NA in Bosso Region, Niger, and Chadian military (FAT) conducted an air and ground offensive in Gamboru Ngala, Borno, the same day, claiming more than 300 lives.

Throughout February and March, enforced military operations dislodged Boko Haram from several villages in Borno.

NIGERIA, CAMEROON, CHAD, NIGER (BOKO HARAM)



On February 21, NA freed 200 hostages who had been held in nearby Sambisa forest, Borno. In a joint military operation, Chadian and Nigerian forces recaptured Boko Haram-held Damasak, Borno, on March 9. During the operation, approx. ten Chadian soldiers and 200 militants were killed. Two weeks later, Boko Haram attacked Damasak and abducted over 500 women and children. During the following weeks, hundreds of bodies were discovered in mass graves in and nearby the town. On March 27, military forces attacked Gwoza, Borno, where the alleged Boko Haram headquarters were situated. One day later, Boko Haram attacked several polling stations set up for presidential elections in the states of Anambra, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe, killing a total number of 51.

In a series of raids, approx. 170 people were killed by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria and Cameroon throughout April. While the NA continued conducting airstrikes against Boko Haram hideouts in the Lake Chad area, militants carried out suicide bombings in the states of Gombe and Yobe as well as village raids in Borno, Plateau, Yobe, Chad, and Cameroon. In fear of attacks, thousands left the border area of Niger. Militants overpowered Nigerian troops in Karamga, Diffa region, Niger, on April 25, reportedly resulting in 160 fatalities in total. Five days later, Nigerian troops rescued 234 women and girls, of whom 214 were pregnant, from Boko Haram camps in the Sambisa forest.

Boko Haram captured Marte, Borno, on May 15. By December, fights over the control of the town and surrounding areas between militants and NA continued. Throughout June, Boko Haram violence caused approx. 670 fatalities, of which more than 150 resulted from bomb attacks in Borno. On June 6, Chadian forces killed 208 militants in Gamboru, Borno. For the first time, Boko Haram hit the Chadian capital N'Djamena with two suicide bombings on June 15, killing 27 people. Two subsequent suicide bombings in the city resulted in the deaths of 26.

On June 17, Boko Haram killed 38 people during attacks in Lamina and Ungumawo, Diffa region in Niger. From June 18 to 23, the Niger Armed Forces (FAN) responded with air and ground offensives, killing 15 militants and arresting 20.

On July 1, Boko Haram staged multiple attacks with explosives on mosques in Kukawa, Borno. Subsequently, the militants shot at fleeing villagers, killing 118. Two days later, Boko Haram gunmen rounded up 48 men and killed them in Nusharan, Borno. From July 5 to 7, militants conducted several bomb attacks in Jos, Plateau State, as well as in Zaria and Kaduna, Kaduna state, killing 106. On July 7, the Nigerian government expressed its will to negotiate with Boko Haram. President Muhammadu Buhari dismissed the country's military chiefs on July 13, claiming their failure in their fight against Boko Haram as a reason.

Violence increased in July and August, with more than 1,500 fatalities in about 80 Boko Haram attacks concentrated in the Lake Chad area. During the two months, more than 750,000 IDPs and approx. 40,000 refugees were reported.

On August 13, Boko Haram raided the village of Kukawa-Gari, Yobe. Over 100 inhabitants who tried to flee were shot dead or drowned in a nearby river. Local hunters killed approx. 100 Boko Haram members in Madagali, Adamawa state, three days later. Between August 18 and 21, NA carried out aerial bombardments on the group's stronghold Gwoza, claiming to have killed hundreds of militants. Mounted Boko Haram members killed nearly 80 people in attacks on three villages in Damboa area, Borno, from August 30 to September 1. In a series of bomb attacks in Maiduguri, Borno, more than 100 people were killed on September 20. The NA killed 100 Boko

Haram militants and lost seven soldiers in Gujba, Yobe, when militants attacked a battalion headquarter near Damaturu on October 7.

Between November 26 and 28, Cameroon's Intervention Brigade killed approx. 100 militants and freed up to 900 hostages previously held by Boko Haram in Mayo-Sawa department, Far North, Cameroon. On December 20, Cameroonian troops killed 70 in Kirawa-Jimni near Gwoza. Troops entered the village, where they suspected a Boko Haram hideout, and shot at fleeing villagers.

Contrary to Buhari's claim that Boko Haram had been "technically defeated" the group attacked Maiduguri on December 27 armed with assault rifles, RPGs, and IEDs. Subsequent clashes between Boko Haram and the military as well as suicide bombings left 52 people dead and 124 injured. Reportedly, security forces prevented 14 militants carrying explosive belts from further advancing into the city. On December 28, a bomb exploded at a mosque in Maiduguri, killing 20. The same day, two female suicide bombers blew themselves up in Madagali, killing about 30.

seb, asg

REPUBLIC OF CONGO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. PCT

Conflict items: national power

A new conflict over national power erupted between opposition groups and President Denis Sassou Nguesso's Congolese Party of Labour (PCT). In reaction to Nguesso's attempt to modify the constitution, thereby enabling himself to run for president for a third time, thousands of protesters demonstrated especially in the capital Brazzaville, demanding his removal. The 71-year old Nguesso announced to plan a referendum over revising the constitution on September 22. Five days later, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in Brazzaville, protesting peacefully against the planned referendum. The demonstration was organized by the coalition Republican Front for the Respect of Constitutional Order and Democracy (FROCAD) and the opposition party Union for Congolese Democracy. Security forces used tear gas to disperse several dozens of activists in southern Brazzaville on October 9. According to the organizers, more than 30,000 government supporters rallied in the capital the following day, calling for the constitutional amendment. After authorities had banned a planned opposition protest, thousands of anti-government protesters, however, held a demonstration in Brazzaville on October 20. The police fired warning shots and used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, while the latter installed barricades and set tires on fire. Subsequently, the police allegedly opened fire at the crowd, killing at least four people after protesters had refused to disperse. FROCAD claimed that at least 20 people were killed. Demonstrators also attacked police stations in the southern part of the city. Simultaneously, the government shut down phone lines and internet services in the capital. In addition, a FROCAD-organized protest took place in Point-Noire, eponymous region, where police shot at demonstrators, leaving at least two people dead and three injured on October 17. In the referendum on October 25, more than 92 percent voted in favor of the amended version of the constitution with an electoral turnout of about 72 percent. The changes allowed the president to run for a third term

and increased the maximum age of presidential candidates to over 70. The opposition accused the government of having forged the turnout figure, estimating a turnout of around ten percent. They had called for a boycott of the referendum and had urged their supporters to avoid violence. On October 30, after authorities had renewed a ban on protests in the capital, several hundred opposition supporters attended a ceremony in Brazzaville, commemorating the people killed during anti-government protests. On November 6, Nguesso promulgated the new constitution. The same day, opposition groups met with UN-appointed mediator Abdoulaye Bathily, again demanding the annulment of the amendment. On December 1, FROCAD President Paulin Makaya was sentenced to jail for his participation in the protest on October 20, arson, and the illegal possession of weapons. Between December 20 and 23, the police arrested at least 100 people in southern Brazzaville. While human rights organizations accused the security forces of detaining opposition members, the police claimed to have detained criminals.

On December 22, Nguesso announced to hold presidential elections in the first trimester in 2016 instead of in June. Five days later, opposition groups declared to participate only under certain conditions, demanding, for instance, the establishment of an independent electoral commission. jas

SENEGAL (MFDC / CASAMANCE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1982

Conflict parties: MFDC vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The conflict over the secession of the Casamance region between the Casamance Movement of Democratic Forces (MFDC) and the government escalated to a violent crisis despite ongoing peace efforts.

In the course of the year, violence was restricted to the Ziguinchor region in Casamance. On April 8, fights involving members of MFDC and the government between the towns of Sigamar and Emaye, Ziguinchor, left several MFDC members injured. In retaliation, MFDC militants attacked an army post in Emaye three days later. In the exchange of gunfire, one soldier was wounded while numerous members of MFDC were allegedly killed. On August 15, MFDC militants attacked several vehicles in Diarone, Ziguinchor, robbing the passengers and raping one woman. They had disappeared into the forest before members of the army arrived. When members of MFDC resisted in a drug raid in Mongone, Ziguinchor, on October 26, a firefight between the militants and authorities broke out. There were no fatalities, but several MFDC members were arrested. Four days later, at least 20 members of MFDC used RPGs to attack soldiers on the National Road 5 between the villages Badia and Djignaky, Ziguinchor. At least three soldiers were wounded in the fighting while injuries among members of MFDC were reported.

Throughout the year, efforts to resolve the conflict continued. When President Macky Sall visited Casamance for a week in February, he inaugurated several development projects as part of a greater economic strategy intended to resolve the conflict in the region. Women's organizations marched several times, calling for ultimate peace in the region and their inclusion in the peace process. For instance, they protested on May 3 in Kédougou in the eponymous region. On May 23, several hundred women belonging to different women's organi-

zations from Guinea-Bissau and Casamance marched from the airport to the Place de héros in Guinea-Bissau's capital Bissau and handed over a memorandum to the parliament's president. The same objectives were discussed during a conclave held by women from Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau that took place in the city of Ziguinchor in the eponymous region from September 18 to 19. On December 26, 120 imams and scholars jointly called for peace in the region during sessions of Koran reading and praying taking place in the community Suelle, Ziguinchor. joh

SOMALIA (HABR GEDIR – BIYMAL / LOWER SHABELLE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Habr Gedir militias vs. Biymal militias

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between the Habr Gedir clan and the Biymal clan in the Lower Shabelle region continued. Tensions rose in recent years between the Biymal clan, who initially populated the region, and the Habr Gedir clan, who resettled to Lower Shabelle in more recent times.

On January 10, government administrators initiated mediation talks between the two rival clans in Qoryolay district and restarted talks in Afgooye district later that month. The president of South West state, Sharif Sheikh Aden, led the conference in which both clans participated. They signed a nine-point agreement on January 28 that included obeying Somali customary law as well as the legal system of the government and the acceptance of the presence of security forces in the area. On May 23, reports claimed that fighting between two clan militias in the town of Marka caused casualties. A few days later, the town commissioner denied any fighting between the two rival clans had taken place, while traditional elders called for the end of fighting. On June 17, the two clans reached a ceasefire agreement. However, on July 5, fighting broke out in Buufoow locality, leaving at least two people dead and several injured. On August 8, fighting between clan militias broke out again in Marka town, resulting in the death of at least three people. The AU and the government ordered the relocation of AU peacekeepers and government troops to Marka. While AU soldiers captured the town of Gendershe on October 15, an AU soldier shot dead a traditional clan elder and injured two bystanders. Between December 12 and 16, clashes between both clans over disputed land killed at least ten people and wounded several more in and around Marka. A ceasefire agreement brought the clashes to an end. Subsequently, the deputy administrator of Marka asked the government to remove all clan militias from the city. loc

SOMALIA (HAWADLE – SURRE / HIIRAAAN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Hawadle militias vs. Surre militias

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and grazing lands between the Hawadle clan and the Surre clan in the Hiiraan region continued. After the selection of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the government in 2012, conflict broke out between the two clans. Clan elders attempted to mediate ever since the fighting started.

Between January 20 and March 27, at least 50 people were killed and approx. 25 injured in fighting over grazing lands around and in the city of Beledweyne. Furthermore, fighters burnt down several houses and over 100 people fled the area. On June 4, after a Hawadle militia had attacked a Surre militia near Defow village, ten people died and 25 were wounded in ensuing clashes. The same day, the government deployed troops to Defow to stop the inter-clan fighting.

In the months of August and September, the government proposed establishing a new federal state encompassing the regions of Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle. On October 4, clan violence broke out anew in Udugley, resulting in two fatalities. Fighting involving government militiamen in Beledweyne erupted due to a dispute over tax collection on October 19. During the clashes, 14 were killed and at least 25 wounded. In the aftermath of the incident, the government and the AU deployed troops to the region and initiated peace talks with clan elders. On November 15, government troops shot dead a UN official belonging to one of the clans in a reportedly clan-related dispute. Subsequently, his clan barricaded roads and businesses in the region for several days. Retaliatory attacks caused four deaths in Buulobarde and Dabayodley on November 30. On December 13, three-day clan-related clashes broke out in Beledweyne, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than 45. During the fighting, the AU and the government sent troops in order to intervene as well as delegations to prepare peace talks. A Somali military officer was killed in failed mediation efforts. However, on December 16, the involved parties signed a peace deal. The national government threatened that in case such clashes did not stop in Beledweyne, the city would not host any conferences concerning the formation of a new federal state and, instead, Jowhar in Middle Shabelle would be selected as capital for this new state. loc

SOMALIA (KHATUMO STATE – PUNTLAND – SOMALILAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: regional government of Somaliland vs. Khatumo State vs. autonomous region of Puntland

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between the self-declared independent state of Somaliland, the self-declared Khatumo State, and the autonomous region of Puntland continued. The area of contention comprised the

provinces of Sool, Sanaag, and Togdheer's Cayn section (SSC). On January 4, Khatumo State supporters protested against Somaliland's Wadani party opening an office in the town of Buhoodle, Cayn. Khatumo militants carried out an attack against soldiers of the Somaliland National Defence Force (SLNDF) based at Sayidka Mountain, Sool, in the night of February 4. When the latter responded with artillery fire, the Khatumo militia withdrew from the area. On February 8, Khatumo militiamen attacked Somaliland troops in Hudun, Sool. Three Somaliland and two Khatumo militants were killed in the incident. Between February 17 and 22, SLNDF and Khatumo militiamen clashed in Horufadhi village, Cayn, leaving several people dead and others injured. Reportedly, the Somaliland forces had attempted to arrest Khatumo officials. An ambush by Khatumo militants against a Somaliland military convoy in Qudhac Maqsin near Dabo Taag Village, Sool, on February 24, left one shepherd dead and several soldiers wounded.

Several hundred people participated in anti-Somaliland demonstrations in cities and villages all over SSC between March 7 and 20, showing their support for the Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) decision to halt the talks with Somaliland administration. After Khatumo militias repeatedly had attacked SLNDF based in Taleh, Sool, for over one month, the Somaliland forces withdrew at the end of May. At least one SLNDF soldier was killed. On May 18, pro-Somaliland protesters of Las'anod celebrated Somaliland's "Independence Day".

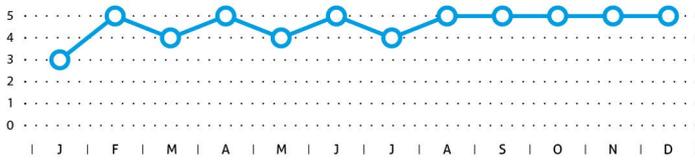
In contrast to previous years, tensions also arose between Puntland and Khatumo State. On August 1, more than a hundred supporters of Khatumo state staged a violent demonstration against the Puntland authority in Buhoodle. Khatumo militants and Puntland forces engaged in fighting in Sool on August 15. On November 11, Khatumo fighters in combat vehicles fired at Puntland soldiers in Boocame Village near Las'anod.

Throughout the year, the dispute between Somaliland and Puntland led to political tensions and several violent incidents. On January 17, administrative delegations of Somaliland and Puntland visited Buhoodle. After both had claimed in speeches that the town was part of their administration, a shooting between their security forces broke out. Puntland condemned Somaliland's President Ahmed Mahamoud Silanyo's visit to Las'anod on January 22. On January 30, Puntland officials accused Somaliland of illegally importing heavy weapons and armored vehicles as well as supporting al-Shabaab militants operating in the Galgala region in northern Puntland, which was denied by Somaliland shortly after [→ Somalia (al-Shabaab)].

SLNDF stopped mining exploration activities by Mohamed Farah Aden, former Puntland minister of fisheries, accompanied by local clan forces and mining experts in Carro Weyne village, Cayn, on April 8. During the incident, the former minister and four others were arrested by Somaliland troops, while a local clan member was killed. Somaliland and Puntland mobilized troops in Sool province on June 10. Subsequently, both military forces clashed in the region of Tukaraq, Sool, on June 12 and 13. On October 18, Puntland police forces arrested several Somaliland election officials in Badhan region, Sanaag. The detainees were released the next day after local elders had arranged a dialogue between Somaliland and Puntland officials. rbr

SOMALIA, KENYA (AL-SHABAAB)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: al-Shabaab vs. Somalia, Kenya
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict between al-Shabaab and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Kenyan government over national power and the orientation of the political system remained at war level for the tenth consecutive year. The FGS was supported by the USA, the EU, the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM), and by additional Ethiopian and Kenyan forces. The AMISOM support mission UNSOA was replaced by the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) on November 9. Following the military involvement by the Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF), al-Shabaab steadily expanded its operations on Kenyan territory with dozens of attacks on civilians and the KDF throughout the year.

In the second half of the year, the Islamic State (IS) repeatedly called upon al-Shabaab to pledge allegiance (→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)). Due to the rivalry between the IS and al-Qaeda, violent tensions arose within the originally al-Qaeda-affiliated group. Contra-IS members of al-Shabaab arrested and killed several pro-IS members.

In the course of the year, al-Shabaab lost substantial parts of its previously controlled territory, especially in southern Somalia, due to the advances of AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA).

In early January, SNA soldiers killed seven al-Shabaab fighters in an offensive in Diine Digle, Puntland, and recaptured three villages in Bakool region later that month. In the beginning of February, joint SNA and AMISOM airstrikes in Lower Juba region left 27 al-Shabaab members dead. On February 27, the SNA killed 47 al-Shabaab fighters in Elbar, Bakool. On March 14, SNA forced al-Shabaab out of the town Jalalaqsi, Hiiraan, killing seven militants and injuring 15. In the end of March, SNA seized strategic coastal areas such as Lower Juba, including Kudhaa island. An SNA attack on an al-Shabaab base in Aborray, Hiiraan, left eight people dead on May 8. During "Operation Juba Corridor", al-Shabaab lost two of its major strongholds in Gedo and Bay regions to SNA and AMISOM in the end of July. On July 31, local militias supported by AMISOM forces attacked al-Shabaab in three cities in Hiiraan. At least eleven people were killed. On August 3, AMISOM killed ten militants when al-Shabaab attacked its army base in Mokoqori, Hiiraan. In an offensive on August 11, AMISOM recaptured strategic towns in Hiiraan and killed 98 militants. On August 25, SNA regained control of Tula Barwako, Gedo, killing twelve militants. One month later, AMISOM and SNA forces killed at least 20 al-Shabaab members in Baladweyne, Hiiraan, after the Islamists had attacked their base. Furthermore, SNA seized control of villages in Bay and Gedo in mid-October. On October 25, KDF operating within AMISOM killed 15 al-Shabaab members in Jilib, Middle Juba region.

Six days later, battles between SNA and the Islamists near Hudur, Bakool, resulted in the death of 50 militants. SNA killed at least 20 al-Shabaab militants in two different op-

erations in Garasyani, Buurwayne, and Mahaas, Hiiraan. On November 28, the joint SNA-AMISOM operation "Sweep the Enemy" led to the recapture of Aysoora, Lower Shabelle.

SNA killed up to ten al-Shabaab militants, destroyed two camps, and confiscated several weapons in Dinsor, Bay, on December 2. KDF jets bombed several al-Shabaab camps in Lower Juba and Lower Shabelle between December 3 and 6. Later that month, SNA and AMISOM retook several towns in Lower Shabelle, killing at least five militants. Coalition forces were ambushed twice in the end of December in Gedo and Hiiraan, resulting in the death of at least 15 Islamists. The US killed several senior al-Shabaab commanders in drone strikes throughout the year, including Ismail Jamhad on July 16, and Abdirahman Sandhere alias Ukash on December 2. Nevertheless, al-Shabaab exerted control over several areas, especially in the South of Somalia, and continued its suicide and IED attacks in the capital Mogadishu as well as in central and southern Somalia. They targeted SNA and AMISOM soldiers, UN employees, MPs, and other officials, while attacks on the civilian population remained high as well.

The majority of attacks took place in Mogadishu. On January 4, al-Shabaab killed at least four people detonating a car bomb. On February 20, the militants detonated bombs in a Mogadishu hotel, killing 25 people and injuring 45. The Makka al-Mukarama hotel attack on March 27 ended with at least 24 people being killed. Islamists also targeted the Jazeera Palace Hotel on July 26, leaving at least 13 people dead and 21 injured as well as the Sahafi hotel on November 1, leaving 15 people dead and dozens injured. On April 14, al-Shabaab attacked the Ministry for Higher Education, killing at least eleven people. Seven militants also died. One week later, al-Shabaab killed approx. ten people detonating a car bomb outside a restaurant. Another car bomb was detonated on June 24 near a vehicle carrying diplomats from the United Arab Emirates, leaving twelve SNA soldiers and civilians dead. On August 22, al-Shabaab killed 25 people in two car bomb attacks in Mogadishu and Kismayo, Lower Juba. The presidential palace was attacked on September 21, leaving at least eleven dead. Throughout the year, at least eleven MPs and lawmakers were killed in the capital.

Other attacks took place in southern and central Somalia. Attacks in the Bay region included the raid on a SNA base outside Baidoa, killing seven soldiers on January 2. An attack on an AMISOM convoy two weeks later left at least ten people dead on both sides.

On March 12, al-Shabaab killed at least six people when they attacked the compound of the South West State President, Sharif Sheikh Hassa, with IEDs and guns. On June 12, an al-Shabaab ambush in Burhakaba left ten people dead on both sides. In the Gedo region, two officials were killed, including the senior Somali Military Officer Iman Adow along with five members of his family in Luuq on March 15 and the Kenyan chief of Mandera County, Muktar Otieno, in Bardera on April 24. Other attacks in Gedo included two assaults on June 18, killing 19 SNA soldiers in Adado, Galgudug, and Gedweyne. On August 26, al-Shabaab killed at least seven people when they attacked a government convoy between Garbaharey and Balad.

More attacks took place in the Lower Shabelle region. On March 11, al-Shabaab killed five people raiding Wanla Weyn. One month later, al-Shabaab attacked an AMISOM convoy and killed six people. On May 15 and 16, the militants killed approx. 15 AMISOM soldiers in twin attacks in Mubarak and Awdheegle. On June 26, al-Shabaab killed up to 50 people in an attack on an AMISOM base in Leego with a car bomb, machine guns, and IEDs. The militants attacked the town Janale

several times, killing the commissioner of the town on August 3 and killing up to 50 AMISOM soldiers on September 1. On December 24, al-Shabaab expelled SNA and AMISOM from Beerhani. Later that month, they killed five SNA soldiers in a gun battle after raiding their base in Qoryoley. Attacks on SNA bases in Lower Juba in late June and early September led to the death of at least 22 soldiers. In Middle Shabelle region, on July 13, al-Shabaab killed five civilians and two AMISOM soldiers when attacking troops in the southern district of Rage Ceele. They were repelled by AMISOM who also killed 25 militants. On August 19, fighting between SNA and the Islamists in Bakool left at least 20 people dead. Throughout the year, al-Shabaab publicly executed at least 15 people in Hiiraan, Bay, and Lower Shabelle. Several attacks also took place in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland [→ Somalia (Puntland)]. In early February and May, Islamists killed five policemen with IEDs in Bosaso, Bari region, and shot dead the Somali Legislator Saeed Nur Dirir. On February 14, Puntland Security Forces killed 16 militants and injured 26 others when Islamists raided Madarshoon. Al-Shabaab carried out attacks in Kenya numerous times throughout the year, including the attack on the Garissa University College on April 2, killing 147 people with explosives and guns. In response, KDF attacked several key suspects of al-Shabaab three days later in Gondodowe and Ismail, Gedo. jtr

SOUTH AFRICA (ANTI-IMMIGRANTS – IMMIGRANTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: groups of anti-immigrants vs. immigrants

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict between immigration opponents and foreign nationals over subnational predominance continued on a violent level. Against the background of a difficult job situation and social inequality in the whole of the country, tensions between parts of the South African population and various groups of immigrants, especially foreign-born shop owners, led to three major waves of violence, which especially affected the highly urbanized province Gauteng. In January, violence erupted after a Somali shop owner had killed a 14-year-old alleged robber in Soweto, Gauteng, close to Johannesburg. In the following weeks, at least eight people were killed and around 100 shops owned by foreign nationals were looted and destroyed. At the end of March, Goodwill Zwelithini, traditional leader of the Zulu, called on immigrants living in South Africa to leave the country, which was followed by a new wave of attacks and aggression against foreign nationals. Especially affected was the city of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, where at least seven people were killed, hundreds of foreign-owned shops looted and approx. 5,000 immigrants had to flee their homes. The latter were sheltered in ad hoc refugee camps. The weapons mostly used by the attackers were knives, firearms, and picks. The violence against immigrants then spread to Gauteng, affecting Johannesburg as well as its suburbs. President Jacob Zuma and the police were accused of passiv-

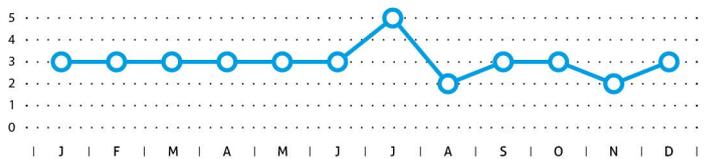
ity by the media and parts of the opposition. In countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria, a boycott of South African products and companies was requested by several activists and lobbies. In mid-April, Nigeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi started evacuating their citizens from South Africa, mostly from Durban. The situation de-escalated by the end of April. Around the same time, several thousands of protesters in Durban, Rustenburg, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Port Elizabeth, marched for a peaceful coexistence between South Africans and immigrants. In October, aggression against foreign shop owners erupted again, first in Limpopo, Transvaal province, and then in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape province. The latter wave of violence lasted for several days and affected more than 500 foreign nationals, who lost their shops, homes, and belongings due to arson and looting. The attacks mainly targeted Muslims. mag

SOUTH SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Muok-Akot vs. Thony, Aguok vs. Apuk-Giir, Panyon vs. Pakam, Kuei, Mundi vs. Dinka Bor vs. Murle, Azande vs. Dinka vs. Shilluk, Dinka sub-groups vs. Dinka sub-groups

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict between various ethnic groups over subnational predominance, arable land, and cattle escalated to war level. The escalation was facilitated by the proliferation of weapons and increasing instability in the region [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. Inter-communal violence predominantly in the form of retaliatory attacks was mainly sparked by incidents of cattle rustling. On January 19, a cattle raid in Manteu, Rumbek area, Lakes state, by youths from Mayendit county, Unity state, left more than 55 people dead and several houses destroyed. Another clash between two cattle-keeping communities in Lainya near the Juba-Yei highway, Central Equatoria state, on February 24, left twelve people dead, among them one soldier. In the context of a series of cattle raids, two Dinka Bor children from Bor, Jonglei state, were allegedly kidnapped by Murle tribe members on March 8. On March 28, alleged members of the Mundi tribe ambushed a boat on Nile river, Central Equatoria, killing all nine passengers, most of whom Dinka Bor, and stealing the cattle transported on the boat. In a conflict over tribal territory between Dinka and Shilluk, Dinka ambushed Major General Bwogo Olieu belonging to the Shilluk tribe in Malakal, Upper Nile, on April 1. The Major, who had come second in the government affiliated Shilluk militia led by Major General Johnson Olony, and 13 other people died. On May 15, Olony defected from the SPLA/M and joined the SPLM-IO. On May 16, Muok-Akot and Thony tribal clans fought over landownership in Majak-loot, Tonj South county, Warrap state.

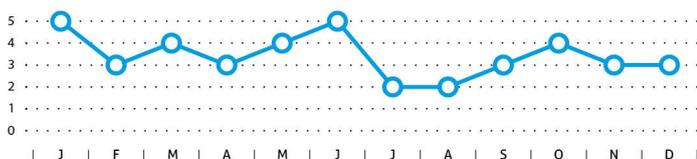
The same day, the Aguok community of Gogrial West county and the Apuk-Giir tribe of Gogrial East county clashed in Gogrial region, Warrap. Overall, five people were shot dead. As part of a series of clashes between two Dinka Agaar sections called Gong and Thuyic, eleven people were killed in an encounter in Malek-Agok, Rumbek East, Lakes, on June 1. On the same day, two police officers were killed while intervening in a cattle raid in Abeer Payam, Rumbek Central, Lakes. An attack by one sub-tribe of the Pan section of the Dinka, Pan-Nguong, targeting another sub-tribe, Pan-Awour, in Cueibet county, Lakes, left 15 people killed and 21 wounded on July 3. On July 12, a cattle raid in Papul, Lakes, involving the Oanyon and the Dhiei sections of the Dinka, left nine people dead and twelve wounded. Three days later, members of the Pakam and Kuei tribes burned down over 75 houses in a village inhabited by Panyon people in a dispute over cattle in Rumbek Central, Lakes. The incident resulted in thousands of IDPs, left many wounded, and one dead. In Wunrel, Majak Nyiom, and Ajogo Market in Gogrial East, Warrap, the Dinka sub-tribes Apuk and Agouk clashed on July 27, leaving at least 19 people dead and many wounded. On July 31 and August 1, heavy shootings in Yambio, Western Equatoria, between Azande tribe and Dinka led to the death of dozens of people. Many inhabitants fled to a UNMISS base. On October 16, inter-communal clashes in Tonj East county, Warrap, between the Luacjang and the Thiik sections of the Dinka tribe left 92 people dead and at least 140 injured. The killing of a head teacher in Cueibet, Lakes, on December 1 in the context of an intra-tribal Dinka conflict provoked a revenge attack on the following day, which left 14 people dead and 35 injured. A Number of raids in Jonglei state was carried out by Murle members from the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) governed by David YauYau, former leader of the South Sudan Democratic Army-Cobra Faction (SSDA-Cobra Faction). On January 13, Murle fighters attacked the Pawuoi Cattle Camp, Twic East, Jonglei, leaving at least one dead and one injured. Another cattle raid carried out by Murle members in a Dinka Bor Camp in Jalle Payam, Jonglei, on February 2, left five dead and several houses burned. In March and July, Murle fighters abducted several Dinka children from Bor. On September 9, a Murle attack in Bor left three dead and two injured, while on October 22, Murle fighters killed 37 and stole hundreds of heads of cattle in the same area. lib

SOUTH SUDAN (SPLM/A-IN-OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-in-Opposition, SPLM/A-FD, Arrow Boys vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources



The war between the SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) led by former vice president Riek Machar and the government of President Salva Kiir continued. The conflict mainly centered on national power and the orientation of the political system, but increasingly concerned the control of oilfields as well. The SPLM/A-IO continued to advocate a federalist re-

form, arguing this would help to overcome ethnic differences. Kiir opposed the idea, establishing 28 new states with state-appointed governors instead of the ten existing ones on December 24. While Kiir was mainly supported by ethnic Dinka, Machar was predominantly supported by Nuer. Ugandan forces supported government forces, while several militias, amongst them the Arrow Boys militia and the newly-formed Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation (REMNAS), reportedly supported SPLM/A-IO forces in various attacks. In August, peace talks initiated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) led to the signing of a peace agreement by the conflict parties that included the demilitarization of the capital Juba, the share of control over the country's oil fields, and Machar's reinstatement as vice president.

According to the UN, both conflict parties systematically targeted civilians, frequently raping women and killing children. Government forces reportedly ran over fleeing civilians with tanks in northern Unity. Against the backdrop of this conflict and the increasing proliferation of arms in South Sudan, violence between other ethnic groups increased as well [→ South Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. In the context of continuous high levels of violence, the United Nation Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), which had been established in 2011 as a peace and state building mission in response to the country's secession from the North, remained active.

Fighting concentrated mainly on Upper Nile and Unity states. Between January 2 and 4, government and SPLM/A-IO forces clashed in Juba, Central Equatoria state, leaving at least six civilians dead. SPLM/A-IO's Military Spokesman Lul Ruii Koang accused the government of attacking two of its positions near Bentiu, Unity, and Nasir, Upper Nile, respectively, on January 4, leaving six SPLM/A-IO fighters and two soldiers dead. Around 2,000 SPLM/A-IO fighters attacked government bases in and around Malakal, Upper Nile, on January 8. They killed 18 soldiers and wounded 26, while government forces killed 36 SPLM/A-IO forces. In Maper, Lakes state, hitherto unaffected by the fighting, SPLM/A-IO forces killed an unknown number of civilians and burned several houses to the ground on January 19. On the same day, SPLM/A-IO launched an attack in Ondulwich, Renk County, Upper Nile, capturing heavy artillery from government forces. While SPLM/A-IO claimed to have killed 189 soldiers, the government counted four dead soldiers and 24 dead SPLM/A-IO fighters.

On January 21, a reconciliation agreement aiming to reunify the SPLM party was signed in Arusha, Tanzania. However, six days later, an SPLM/A-IO attack on a military base in Maridi, Western Equatoria left six soldiers dead. On February 10, a large number of SPLM/A-IO fighters attacked army positions in Obudo county, Upper Nile, and Bentiu, Unity, using heavy machine guns. Peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, failed on March 6. In early March, SPLM/A-IO attacked army positions in Upper Nile and Western Bahr el Ghazal states, killing at least 15 soldiers. Fighting peaked on March 16 and 17, when heavy clashes between government troops and SPLM/A-IO in Renk, Upper Nile, left scores of SPLM/A-IO fighters as well as government troops dead. On March 27, SPLM/A-IO troops killed about 150 soldiers in an attack in Ayod County, Jonglei state, and captured tanks as well as military equipment. Fighting broke out again on April 21, when government and SPLM/A-IO forces clashed between Nasir and Malakal, with the SPLM/A-IO reportedly losing 28 of their fighters. On May 4, opposition forces carried out an attack in Parieng county, Unity, claiming to have killed 125 soldiers and have wounded 91.

In May, fighting over the Paloch oil fields in Upper Nile intensified in the context of Major General Johnson Olony's defection from the SPLM/A. Olony and his Shilluk militia, who had already been fighting the government between 2010 and 2013, but fought alongside the SPLM/A in 2014, playing an important role in the defence of Malakal, joined the SPLM/A-IO on May 15. One day later, SPLM/A-IO forces attacked government troops in Malakal, inflicting heavy losses on them. The government confirmed that Malakal had been captured by SPLM/A-IO. When stray mortar bombs in nearby Melut hit a UNMISS compound and a civilian housing site on May 20, four civilians were killed. Government officials were evacuated. Later that day, opposition forces claimed to have captured the oil-rich town Melut and the nearby Paloch oil fields. The government asserted it was in control of the entire Upper Nile state. On June 3, thousands of government forces launched a major attack in Rot Riak town, Unity. SPLM/A-IO took full control of the Unity oil fields, leaving scores of government soldiers dead. On the same day, government forces attacked an opposition position in Wau county, Western Bahr el Ghazal. In August, the USA expanded its economic sanctions on several high-ranking officials, while the IGAD renewed its attempts to reach a peace agreement between the warring factions. On August 20, the SPLM/A-IO and the Former Detainees (SPLM-FD), also known as G10 group, a political opposition group to the Kiir regime, signed a peace agreement in Juba. Salva Kiir, following pressure by UN, USA, and IGAD, eventually signed the deal on August 26. The terms of the agreement included an immediate ceasefire, the installation of a 30-month interim administration, the de-militarization of Juba, and the consolidation of forces. Some days later, SPLM/A spokesperson Colonel Philip Aguer Panyang accused the SPLM/A-IO of attacking a SPLA truck near Leer county, Unity, thereby violating the ceasefire.

The USA advocated the implementation of a UN arms embargo for South Sudan in case of violations of the peace agreement. Neighboring Sudan was repeatedly accused of delivering arms to SPLM/A-IO forces, with Sudan-produced ammunition being found in opposition-held areas. Both Sudan and the SPLM/A-IO denied these claims [→ Sudan – South Sudan]. In the following months, frequency and scope of attacks decreased. Twelve soldiers were killed, 28 wounded, and another 50 people were killed when government and opposition forces clashed in Duar, Unity, in mid-September. From September 31 to October 2, government and opposition forces fought in Leer and Koch counties, Unity, leaving 88 SPLM/A-IO forces and twelve soldiers dead. On December 9, fighting between government and SPLM/A-IO in Wau county, Western Bahr el Ghazal, displaced at least 2,500 people. By the end of the year, the number of battle-related deaths amounted to at least 1,091. The UNHCR registered 264,247 South Sudanese refugees and at least 1.1 million IDPs. Conflict-induced food insecurity affected 3.9 million people according to OCHA. Approx. 30,000 faced catastrophic food insecurity. Estimated tens of thousands of fatalities were reported since the beginning of the conflict in 2013. des

SOUTH SUDAN (VARIOUS MILITIAS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: REMNANA, TFNF vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and resources between various militant groups and the government re-escalated to the level of a violent crisis. In the context of the war between the government and its opposition faction SPLM/A-IO leading to growing instability and ethnic tension, a number of ethnic-based militias formed throughout the year. [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition); South Sudan (inter-communal violence)].

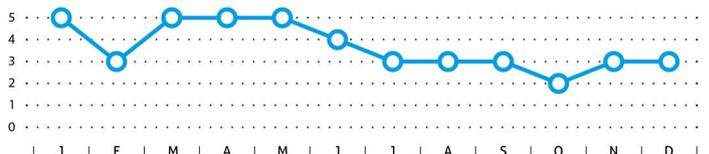
On January 9, a new rebel movement called Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation (REMNASANA) formed in Western Equatoria state, consisting of defected government forces and led by former Major Lasuba Lodoru Wongo. On January 19, the movement attacked a Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A) unit in Maridi, Western Equatoria, killing six soldiers and injuring several others as well as stealing arms and ammunition. REMNASANA again attacked the SPLM/A on May 22 in Mundri, Western Equatoria, killing one and temporarily seizing the local army headquarters. Six days later, one soldier was killed in a REMNASANA attack on government forces in Yambio, Western Equatoria. On May 29, a large number of SPLM/A soldiers defected to REMNASANA, whereupon the movement ambushed the SPLM/A on June 6 in Maridi, killing five soldiers. REMNASANA declared the attack a reaction to previous SPLM/A actions in Maridi, including violence against civilians and the destruction of infrastructure. On October 28, REMNASANA merged with the SPLM-IO, joining their fight over national power against the government of President Salva Kiir. In October, a new militia called Tiger Faction New Forces (TFNF) arose out of a group of SPLM/A defectors, whose members recruited mostly from the Shilluk tribe and opposed the government's plan to create 28 new states – a move that would divide the Shilluk Kingdom into two parts. On November 28, the TFNF claimed to have shot down a helicopter gunship during a government attack on their base in Upper Nile state.

On February 25, 600 child soldiers were demobilized from a former armed group associated with the Murle tribe, namely the South Sudan Democratic Army – Cobra Faction of David Yau Yau. Having signed a peace deal on 05/09/14, the Murle had been officially granted control over the newly-created Greater Pibor Area Administration (GPPA) in Jonglei state by the government. However, a faction of GPPA, who regarded the special rights and autonomy for the Murle tribe laid down in the agreement unfulfilled, defected on February 12 and announced its allegiance to the SPLM-IO. One day later, Greater Pibor Administration officials claimed the splinter group had never really belonged to the Cobra faction, thereby affirming Yau Yau's continuous association with the government.

SUDAN (DARFUR)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: JEM, SLM-AW, SLM-MM, SRF vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, resources



The war over autonomy and resources in Darfur between various rebel groups and the government continued. The armed insurgency movements comprised the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), including its factions led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) and Minni Minawi (SLM-MM), as well as the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Gibril Ibrahim. The government employed both its regular armed forces, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudanese Air Force, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). SLM and JEM were also part of the umbrella organization Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) that operated nationwide. On 12/23/14, President Omar al-Bashir had announced the second phase of "Operation Decisive Summer" that was conducted in the first half of 2015 [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. SLM-MM and JEM were significantly weakened by the offensive, while SLM-AW was confined to a very small geographical area.

On January 16, the former rebel organization Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), a signatory to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, split into two parties following internal conflicts. This was due to tensions between the leader of LJM and chairperson of the Darfur Regional Authority, El Tigani Seisi, and the secretary-general of LJM, Idriss Bahar Abu Garda. Seisi and Abu Garda disagreed about the implementation of security provisions of the Doha Document. Each of them declared the removal of the respective other and separately registered a political party under the name Liberation and Justice Party.

After the government had requested UNAMID to leave the country in 2014, a working group was established to develop an exit strategy. On January 26, the government of Sudan, the hybrid UN and AU Mission for Darfur (UNAMID), the Darfur Regional Authority, and Darfur civil society organizations launched the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation process in al-Fasher, North Darfur. On June 29, UNAMID's mandate was extended until 06/30/16. As in previous years, the mission's access to conflict regions as well as its mobility were often restricted by government forces. Throughout the year, UNAMID peacekeepers were repeatedly attacked by unknown assailants. For instance, peacekeepers were attacked twice in South Darfur on January 6. The troops killed two of the attackers. When UNAMID soldiers were attacked in South Darfur on April 23, four attackers were killed and one UNAMID soldier was injured. While the government accused UNAMID of killing four civilians in the incident, the soldiers claimed to have acted in self-defense. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon supported their claim and criticized the government for having denied a flight request to evacuate the injured UNAMID soldier, who subsequently died. On September 27, a UNAMID soldier was killed and another injured in an ambush by unknown gunmen on the road between Mellit and Almaliha, North Darfur.

The security situation severely worsened as a consequence of fighting between SLM and JEM, on the one hand, and government troops, on the other, mostly in the first half of the year. On January 13, SAF soldiers killed 31 SLM-MM fighters, including the group's general commander of operations, Mohamed Hari Sardogo, in an ambush in Orshy, North Darfur. On January 24 and 25, SLM-AW fought government forces at Sur Reng near Golo in Central Darfur. According to the rebels, 95 government and militia troops were killed and government equipment seized, while three members of SLM-AW died. SLM-AW killed 14 SAF soldiers and militiamen in clashes in Karmel area between Golo and Sorenq, West Jebel Marra, on February 19, according to the rebels. On March 13, SLM-AW captured the SAF garrison in Rokerro, West Darfur, and

claimed to have killed 68. On April 26, the RSF attacked a large SRF convoy in Nihara area, South Darfur, supported by aerial bombardments. The government stated that SRF lost thousands of its fighters. JEM announced to have sustained heavy losses. The aerial bombardments also resulted in the deaths of 16 civilians and the injuring of another eleven. On May 2, SLM-MM clashed with RSF and SAF forces in Kutum, North Darfur. According to rebel sources, 60 government forces as well as four SLM members were killed. SLM-AW attacked the SAF military base in Sileia, West Darfur, on June 16, killing 13 RSF forces, while aerial bombardments by government troops in the same region left 17 civilians dead. On July 4, SLM-AW troops attacked and killed nine SAF soldiers in Guldo, Central Darfur.

On August 15, the leaders of SLM-MM, SLM-AW, and JEM issued a joint statement with the Acting Joint Special Representative of UNAMID, Abiodun Bashua, reaffirming their commitment to start an inclusive political peace process under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel. Following a five-day meeting in Paris under international auspices, SRF announced on September 14 that it was ready to participate in the National Constitutional Dialogue and sign a six-month cessation of hostilities for the duration of the negotiations. However, two days later, Abdel Wahid al-Nur stated that his movement would not partake in these consultations. SRF declared a unilateral ceasefire for Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile on October 18. On December 14, SLM-AW forces killed an unknown number of government troops north of Golo in Jebel Marra. Throughout the year, civilians were subject to systematic attacks by government forces and severely affected by hostilities between the conflict parties. The number of IDPs reported by OCHA varied between 223,000 and 100,000. On January 28, aerial bombardments of villages in East Jebel Marra conducted by the Sudanese Air Force killed twelve people. On February 3, RSF attacked the market of Ba'ashim, northeast of Kutum, killing ten civilians and wounding 17. One month later, RSF and army troops looted and set ablaze the villages of Birdani, Kara, Korma, Loni, and Tiro, all in Jebel Marra, destroying a total of 299 houses. From March 30 to April 1, attacks of government-affiliated militiamen on the villages of Jambo, Ghireiban, and Turra, North Darfur, led to the deaths of 41 people. Seven people were injured and four abducted. On April 26, SAF airstrikes in El Tomat, Tullus, South Darfur, killed 16 people and injured eleven. Simultaneously, intense fighting took place between SRF troops and joint SAF and RSF forces in the same area. Between May 18 and 24, SAF Antonov bombers dropped a total of 74 bombs on East Jebel Marra, killing twelve people. On June 15, as SAF and RSF tried to regain control of Rokerro, their shells killed 13 civilians, while aerial bombardments killed another four in villages north of Rokerro. On July 26, RSF killed eight people, injured two, and abducted one in attacks on Anka, Amarei, Goz Kajo, Umbaro, and El Malha in North Darfur. On August 31, pro-government militiamen attacked Katur and Barakande, North Darfur, killing four civilians, injuring five, and raping four women. RSF attacked Nemra in North Darfur on September 21, wounded ten villagers, raped two women, and destroyed around 250 huts. On November 29 and 30, SAF Antonov bombers dropped more than eleven barrel bombs on Fanga, West Darfur. RSF and border guards attacked Tur in Kass locality, South Darfur, on December 9, seriously wounding one civilian and abducting five after pillaging the houses.

Musa Hilal, former leader of the Janjaweed, a group of Arab tribal fighters merged with other paramilitary groups in 2013 to form the Rapid Support Force (RSF), continued to challenge

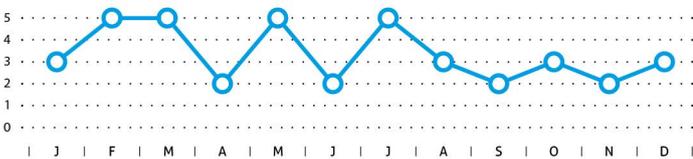
the government with his 2014-founded umbrella movement Sudanese Revolutionary Awakening Council (SRAC). In December 2014, SRAC and leaders of other Arab tribes had created a management board for the gold mines of Jebel Amer area, North Darfur. SRAC boycotted the 2015 elections alongside the political opposition and other armed groups. On January 12, Hilal met with a government delegation to discuss their differences. jub

SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: al-Rezeigat Abballa vs. Ma’alia, Habaniya, Misseriya vs. Salamat, Fellata, Berti vs. Ziyadiya

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over subnational predominance and resources, such as cattle, arable land, water rights, and gold mines, between various pastoral tribes and sub-tribes of Arab descent continued at war level. In the context of this year’s national and presidential elections, inter-communal fighting escalated, particularly in Darfur and the disputed area of Abyei still claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan as well as the pastoralist Misseriya tribe and the Ngok Dinka [→ Sudan – South Sudan]. As in previous years, violence mostly concentrated in areas where armed groups were simultaneously fighting the government, namely Darfur, Blue Nile, and West Kordofan [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. Throughout the year, heaviest clashes occurred between members of the Ziyadiya and the Berti tribes.

During the first eight months, Ziyadiya fighters allegedly associated with paramilitary Border Guards and Central Reserve Police troops continuously attacked Berti members in the town of Mellit, North Darfur state. Between late February and early March, intense fighting between the two tribes led to the displacement of around 67,000 people. While no fatalities were officially reported during that period, two other attacks carried out by a large Ziyadiya group on Berti villages on March 27 and 28 left at least 44 Berti members dead. Furthermore, the attackers looted about 30 houses, at least eleven shops, and stole large amounts of livestock. In a similar incident on July 6, Ziyadiya fighters riding 17 Land Cruisers attacked a Berti village, killing seven and robbing hundreds of livestock.

Regardless of a peace deal signed between the leaders of the two tribes on July 13, another clash between Berti and Ziyadiya groups at Mellit market claimed at least 106 lives and left about 190 houses destroyed.

The fighting reportedly broke out over mutual accusations concerning the killing of respective members.

In mid-February a peace conference was held between the Ma’alia and the al-Rezeigat Abballa in East Darfur state in reaction to last year’s deadly clashes between the two communities. The two sides did not reach an agreement, however, both parties released one captive, each on May 4. Seven

days later, clashes over land re-erupted north of Abu Karinka, with several hundred fighters on both sides being killed or wounded, around 24,000 families displaced, and numerous houses destroyed. Subsequently, the government deployed 1,800 security forces to separate the two tribes.

On July 14, fighting between Rezeigat and Habaniya tribesmen erupted over 39 head of cattle that Rezeigat had stolen from the Habaniya village of Abyads Tabaldiya in Sunat, South Darfur state. When the Habaniya ambushed the Rezeigat group to retrieve their cattle, five Rezeigat and one Habaniya were killed. In reaction to the ambush, a group of Rezeigat attacked Abyad Tabaldiya with RPGs and other missiles, burning the village to the ground. At least 130 Rezeigat and 40 Habaniya were killed.

In West Kordofan state, clashes throughout January between Rezeigat members and people from the Misseriya tribe left at least eleven on both sides dead. On September 15, the leaders of the two tribes held a reconciliation conference intending to bring an end to revenge attacks over cattle. On December 12, renewed clashes between the Rezeigat and the Misseriya left 17 people dead and 29 injured. Misseriya members attacked Salamat in Um Dukhun town, Central Darfur, on October 22, after the latter had reportedly stolen about 150 cows from them. Five Salamat and two Misseriya were killed and several other wounded.

A series of revenge attacks between the Salamat and Fellata tribes in late January and early February left at least 30 people dead and numerous injured. The violence was sparked by the killing of a Salamat trying to attack a Fellata-owned house.

Another clash took place between the Salamat and Fellata on March 22 in Buram town, South Darfur, leaving at least 40 dead and about 70 others wounded. In mid-August, fighting in Buram re-erupted over the alleged theft of 50 head of cattle, leading to at least 20 Salamat and 100 Fellata casualties. In the aftermath, the security committee of South Darfur summoned the leaders of the Fellata and Salamat in the state capital of Nyala, establishing a buffer zone between the two tribes.

On March 15, intratribal violence erupted between the Misseriya sub-groups Awlad Omran and al-Ziyoud within the Kilo 13 area in West Kordofan, which was intended to be a buffer zone. At least one person died, while eight people were wounded on both sides.

On July 1, clashes between two smaller tribes, the Birgat and the Khazam, left five people dead, including one police officer.

On March 26, a local group of lawyers blamed the government of President Omar al-Bashir for the escalation of the conflict between tribal communities in the country’s peripheries, claiming that it was encouraging tribes to compete for resources and power as well as arming them in the context of its fight against armed groups in Darfur, West Kordofan, and Blue Nile. According to the UN, approx. 166,000 people were newly displaced in Sudan in 2015, most of them due to inter-communal violence. The fighting also aggravated the food situation in the conflict areas due to the levels of looting and destruction. nab

SUDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Alliance of the Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, NCF, student-led groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and the government under President Omar al-Bashir and his National Congress Party (NCP) continued. The opposition included several political parties, most notably the members of the National Consensus Forces (NCF), a coalition between the National Umma Party (NUP), the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), and the Popular Congress Party (PCP). Besides political parties, the opposition was composed of different student-led groups and supported by armed groups in favor of the opposition's political agenda [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. Throughout the year, the mid-April national and presidential elections and the National Dialogue, which started on October 10, dominated the political landscape.

The first general elections after the secession of South Sudan in 2011 were carried out between April 13 and 16. Al-Bashir won officially with 94 percent of the votes.

In the months leading up to the election, all main opposition parties decided to boycott the election. Furthermore, all major opposition parties as well as the armed opposition boycotted the opening of the National Dialogue, a meeting aimed at settling the many conflicts in Sudan and achieving constitutional reforms.

On January 4, the parliament passed three new constitutional amendments introduced by NCP, endowing the president with the authority to appoint provincial governors and granting the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) the same status as the armed forces. Throughout the year, the NISS detained at least 150 journalists, activists, and opposition politicians and continued its crackdown on newspapers, confiscating more than 100 prints.

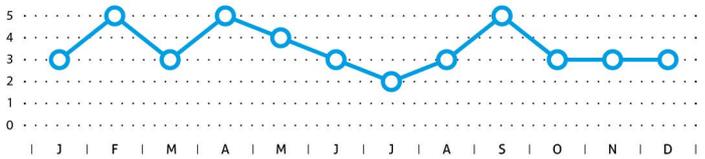
According to several reports, the police and members of the NISS used violence to break up demonstrations, as they had done in previous years. Especially against the backdrop of the election, security forces violently ended several protests and detained hundreds of participants for a short time. On June 12, police forces killed a protester while dispersing a demonstration in front of a local police station in eastern Khartoum. Moreover, NCP associated students repeatedly attacked and beat Darfuri students, in some cases reportedly supported by the police and NISS. Attacks were mainly carried out with metal bars and machetes. Throughout the year, student militant groups of the NCP and security forces killed at least two people, injured about 230 Darfuri students and detained at least 275 of them. For instance on April 29, an alleged attack carried out by 150 militant students of the NCP, supported by security forces, killed one and seriously injured seven Darfuri students at a Khartoum university. loc

SUDAN (SPLM/A-NORTH / SOUTH KORDOFAN, BLUE NILE)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-North vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy



The conflict between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-North) and the government concerning autonomy in Blue Nile and South Kordofan, two states bordering South Sudan and forming the so-called Two Areas, continued in its fourth year. In South Kordofan, fighting erupted in the lead-up to South Sudan's independence in 2011 [→ Sudan – South Sudan] and later expanded to neighboring Blue Nile State. From November 2011 onwards, SPLM/A-North was partially operating under the banner of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an alliance of armed groups from Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan, aiming to topple Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. Against the backdrop of presidential elections scheduled for April, the government increased its attacks on rebel-held areas, continuing its strategy of systematic violence against civilians including the burning of crops, the targeting of infrastructure, and, allegedly, the rape of civilians. Throughout the year, SPLM/A-North repeatedly seized garrisons. In addition, SPLM/A-North repeatedly attacked gold mining areas in the course of the year, e.g. on June 25, near the town of Talodi, South Kordofan, allegedly killing dozens and injuring about 100 civilians. Altogether, major clashes in the Two Areas led to approx. 90,000 people newly displaced by September.

Peace negotiations between the Sudanese government and SPLM/A-North held under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) had reached a deadlock in December 2014. SPLM/A-North had insisted on a comprehensive solution for the entire crisis in the country, while Khartoum had demanded a cessation of hostilities for the Two Areas only. On August 20, al-Bashir expressed his readiness for a two-month ceasefire in Darfur and Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and renewed his amnesty offer to rebels willing to join the national dialogue. In mid-September, SRF announced its readiness for a six-month cessation of hostilities and declared a unilateral ceasefire for Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile on October 18. Between November 19 and 23, the tenth round of peace negotiations on the Two Areas was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In December, the government and SPLM/A-North expressed their willingness to sign a comprehensive agreement and AUHIP organized a round of informal talks from December 16 to 18. After disagreeing on whether SPLM/A-North would be allowed to keep its troops, both parties agreed to resume discussions in January 2016.

Against the backdrop of the failing negotiations in late 2014, the fighting in the Two Areas intensified in early 2015. Al-Bashir expressed his intention to put an end to all conflicts in the country and regain all rebel-controlled areas before the presidential elections to be held in April. Throughout the year, the government army Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) continued its campaign "Operation Decisive Summer 2" with

ground forces, intensive aerial bombardments, and shelling. On the ground, SAF forces were supported by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). On January 20, for instance, SAF bombed a *Médicins Sans Frontières* hospital in Frandala in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan. In the same region, SAF dropped cluster bombs on a civilian-populated area on February 6. Moreover, they bombed a new primary school and a church in Heiban County, South Kordofan, on March 5, killing at least one civilian and injuring ten. When SAF recaptured al-Qnezhiah and Oanagarto areas in South Kordofan from SPLM/A-North on January 12, the rebels sustained heavy losses in lives and equipment. SPLM/A-North claimed that in renewed clashes in the same region two days later, it killed 100 SAF troops, leaving dead one of their own. According to UN sources, SAF carried out 68 bombings and shellings in the Two Areas between February 1 and March 22, leaving at least ten people dead and 61 injured. The attacks also resulted in displacements and caused significant destruction of civilian infrastructure and livelihood, killing livestock as well as damaging hospital and school facilities. In an SPLM/A-North attack on Kalogi, South Kordofan, on March 12, 40 civilians died, 45 were injured, and an estimated 25,000 displaced. According to the UN, at least ten civilians were killed and 19 injured in 55 incidents of bombing, shelling, or ground attacks in the counties of Umdorein, Delami, Al Buram, and Heiban, South Kordofan, throughout April. In an attack on Mediam Al Jabal village, Blue Nile, on April 8, SAF reportedly ordered the residents to leave their homes and then set fire to the 450 houses. On April 12, SPLM/A-North fired shells on the village Al Madina, Blue Nile, killing seven civilians and severely injuring another seven. During the presidential elections between April 13 and 16, SAF conducted intensive aerial bombardments, while SPLM/A-North fighters attacked three major South Kordofan towns with missiles. On April 16, for instance, four civilians were killed in such an attack on Kadogli and Dilling towns.

In the aftermath of the elections, the government intensified its offensive on the ground amid ongoing aerial attacks. Throughout May, according to the UN, 56 bombings and shellings, seven ground attacks, and two incidents of looting were carried out by SAF, leaving at least nine people dead, 19 injured, and 7,000 displaced. The attacks also caused significant destruction to civilian infrastructure and property, with about 347 civilian homes burned and dozens of livestock killed. With the start of the rainy season in June, ground fighting between SPLM/A-North and SAF troops decreased while aerial bombardments intensified. For instance, SAF dropped more than 22 bombs and 74 shells on civilian locations in Dilling county as well as on Tangle payam in Umdorein county and on Sabat payam in Dalami county during August. No fatalities were reported. According to SPLM/A-North, its forces killed ten SAF troops in the area of Jebel Kolgo, Blue Nile, on August 17, and another 200 SAF soldiers and RSF fighters in a battle at Kilgo, Blue Nile, from September 16 to 17. One week later, SAF dropped ten bombs on Allobu and Tablo villages in Umdorain, causing severe damage. SAF fired 20 rockets on Umserdiba and Alnugra villages, South Kordofan, on the following day, wounding two civilians and damaging several farms. Also in August, SPLM/A-North forces attacked and took control of the garrisons of Gadeer and Abu Girein, South Kordofan, seizing a number of canons and large quantities of guns, machine guns, and Kalashnikov rifles. In October, aerial bombardment and shelling in South Kordofan as well as ground fighting in the Ingeessana Mountains, Blue Nile, continued on a smaller scale. According to SPLM/A-North, its forces repelled a government

attack on the strategically significant area of Jebel Kolgo, Blue Nile, on October 30, killing 20 SAF soldiers. On November 2, SPLM/A-North fighters killed several SAF troops in an attack on a military convoy between Banet and Agadi, Blue Nile. On November 20, SPLM/A-North claimed to have repelled an SAF attack and seized a government base in Soda, Blue Nile. On November 24, al-Bashir declared his intention of seizing rebel strongholds, therefore deploying additional troops. In response, SPLM/A-North mobilized troops five days later. On December 19 and 28 SPLM/A-North fighters repelled government attacks in Towred and Torda area, Blue Nile, killing at least 17 people. Imp

SUDAN – SOUTH SUDAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Sudan vs. South Sudan
 Conflict items: territory, resources

The violent crisis between Sudan and South Sudan concerning the disputed oil-rich border region of Abyei and the so-called 14-mile area alongside the border continued. While the relations between the countries remained tense, the conflict was predominantly conducted via diplomatic means. The conflict parties only sporadically resumed to the use of violence. The region remained under UNISFA interim administration, as the secession of South Sudan in 2011 left the status of Abyei undefined and subject to a future referendum. Ngok Dinka inhabiting Abyei aimed for the region to join South Sudan, while the nomadic Misseriya, roaming between Abyei and Darfur, preferred Sudanese administration. Intense fighting between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka, especially in the early months of the year, led the UNSC to reiterate its demand for the two countries to form an Abyei police service to protect the area including the oil infrastructure. The UNSC extended its mandate for the mission UNISFA three times over the past year, most recently on December 15. Against the backdrop of the upcoming national elections, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir promised that the disputed regions would belong to Sudan [→ Sudan (opposition)]. On March 30, the two heads of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) from Sudan and South Sudan held a meeting in which both sides pushed for a demilitarized zone in Abyei in order to avoid further tribal conflicts. On April 9, South Sudan accused Sudan of dropping bombs from Antonov planes on South Sudanese territory, killing four people and wounding nine. Later on April 26, at a visit in South Darfur, al-Bashir accused the South Sudanese government of supporting Darfuri rebel groups [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. A day later, when Darfuri Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) fighters reportedly entered into Sudan, the Sudanese government threatened to bomb their bases in South Sudan. In the following months, both sides continued last year's policy of trading accusations concerning the respective support of each other's armed opposition groups, including arms deliveries [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. South Sudan also accused Sudan of conducting airstrikes on June 14 to 16 in Maban County, close to the oil-rich Upper Nile border area. The airstrikes killed one soldier and five civilians, and wounded several others. After the South Sudanese government and SPLM/A-IO had signed an internationally-backed peace agreement in late August, President Salva Kiir reached out to Khartoum for support in implementing the deal. The two countries held several meetings over the peace agreement and the status of the border

region. On October 14, the defense ministers from both countries agreed to operationalize the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), as foreseen in a 2012 agreement between the conflict parties. Even though both sides stressed that their relations had improved, Sudan stationed new troops along the border in late November in order to prevent border crossings of armed opposition groups. On November 26, a UNISFA soldier in Abyei was killed in clashes between Ngok Dinka and Misseriya. In reaction, the UN called for an investigation by both governments and renewed its demand for no other forces to be deployed in Abyei except for UNISFA and the Abyei Police Service. loc

TANZANIA (CUF, CHADEMA – CCM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1993

Conflict parties: Chadema, CUF vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the structure of the political system and national power between the opposition parties Civic United Front (CUF) and Party for Democracy and Progress (Chadema), on the one hand, and the ruling Party of the Revolution (CCM), on the other, continued.

Together with other opposition parties, CUF and Chadema organized in the so-called Coalition of Defenders of the People's Constitution (Ukawa). The main controversial issues the three parties faced were the general election on October 25 and the referendum on the new constitution that was scheduled for April 30, but later postponed to an undefined date. While the new constitution proposed the continuation of a two-government system for Tanzania, favored by most members of CCM, CUF and Chadema members backed a three-government structure in which Zanzibar would gain a more autonomous status.

In the first half of the year, CCM passed laws limiting the freedom of the media, such as banning various newspapers. Several CCM members switched to Chadema, among them former Prime Minister Edward Lowassa, who was then declared Ukawa's joint presidential candidate on August 4. In response, two leading figures of the opposition parties resigned from their positions. On October 25, general elections were held in Tanzania and Zanzibar. John Magufuli contested for CCM in Tanzania and was declared winner on October 29. In contrast, the Zanzibari Electoral Commission declared the election in Zanzibar as invalid as CUF's presidential candidate claimed to have won the presidency before the results had been officially published. New elections were announced, but opposed by the CUF. Furthermore, Ukawa refused to collaborate with the new government, demanding the conflict over the elections to be resolved first.

The conflict turned violent several times throughout the year. On January 6, clashes broke out between supporters of the opposition and of the government in Dar es Salaam due to the unclear status of the December 2014 municipal election votes in the capital's Kinondoni municipality. During the clashes, local party members were injured. The police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. On January 27, CUF chairman Ibrahim Lipumba and about 30 supporters were arrested for holding an unapproved political rally at Temeke municipality, Dar es Salaam. On September 10, a confrontation between supporters of CCM and of Chadema left one dead and

five injured. CUF reported on October 26 the use of tear gas and pepper spray by the police to stop a celebration of the claimed victory of the party on Zanzibar. Two days later, the annulment of Zanzibar's presidential election by the Election Commission sparked youth protests. jsp

ZIMBABWE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: MDC-T, MDC-R, NAVUZ, People First, O AUS et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis between opposition groups and the government of President Robert Mugabe over national power and political, economic, and social matters continued. Throughout the year, supporters of the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and supporters of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T) clashed frequently, mostly in the capital Harare. For instance, in mid-January, ZANU-PF and MDC-T members clashed in Harare's suburb Budiro following a rally by MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Several people were injured. The first two weeks of November saw multiple violent clashes between MDC-T and ZANU-PF supporters in Harare's suburb Hopley. On November 1, several people were injured when ZANU-PF supporters attempted to prevent an MDC-T rally. Furthermore, MDC-T youths clashed with the police during a protest in Harare on November 12, the police arresting at least 25 people. Violence between supporters of the opposing parties also ensued in localities all over the country when opposition supporters were denied food donations. Since July, the police and street vendors clashed frequently as the former enforced a relocation policy enacted by the government. Vendors were prohibited to sell their goods in the inner parts of cities like Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, and Masvingo. The National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe (NAVUZ) and MDC-T opposed the new policy and called on vendors to resist police instructions. Violence mainly occurred in Harare. On July 9, vendors clashed with the police, leaving some people injured and the police arresting 26 vendors. Five days later, NAVUZ leader Sten Zvorwadza and vendors were beaten and arrested by the police. On October 12, vendors threw stones at police officers, injuring at least four. The police arrested 13 people.

After Itai Dzamara, leader of the opposition movement Occupy Africa Unity Square, had been abducted by unknown men in Harare on March 9, MDC-T accused the government of being responsible for the abduction. The police violently broke up prayer meetings expressing hope for the return of Dzamara, for instance in Harare's suburb Highfield on June 14. MDC-T was among the organizers of the gathering. After 21 members of parliament aligned with the MDC-Renewal had been expelled by MDC-T, by-elections were held on June 10. MDC-T boycotted the elections and ZANU-PF won all vacant seats in parliament.

Following internal struggles and exclusions from ZANU-PF, some politicians, including former vice president Joice Mujuru, founded a new party called People First. In an address to military representatives on September 2, the commander of Zimbabwe's Presidential Guard said he would use force to prevent activities by People First. lsc

the Americas

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE AMERICAS IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY
5 WAR
4 LIMITED WAR
3 VIOLENT CRISIS
NO VIOLENT CONFLICT

The overall number of conflicts in the Americas increased by three to a total of 53. Three new conflicts broke out and one conflict ended this year. A violent internal conflict involving indigenous groups of the Miskito erupted in Nicaragua. Clashes between Miskito groups and so-called colonos led to various deaths and the displacement of around 1,000 people in September [→ Nicaragua (indigenous groups)].

The two interstate conflicts between Venezuela and its neighbors reached the intensity of non-violent crises. A new conflict was constituted as a non-violent crisis when Venezuela started deporting Colombian nationals from the border area after alleged Colombian paramilitaries had shot and injured Venezuelan soldiers in August. The closure of the border and aerial incursions into Colombian airspace by Venezuelan military aircraft led to heightened diplomatic tensions and to both countries recalling their respective ambassadors [→ Venezuela – Colombia (border security)]. Venezuela also engaged in a non-violent crisis with its eastern neighbor Guyana. After claiming territory west of the Essequibo river and maritime areas, Venezuela was accused of threatening regional security and impeding economic development and oil explorations off Guyana's coast [→ Venezuela – Guyana]. Adding to a total of 16 interstate conflicts, the region once again showed the highest percentage of this conflict type.

In contrast to last year, only the conflict between Mexico and the US involved violence, with US Border Patrol agents shooting and killing a Mexican national near a border crossing in California. Last year's violent interstate conflicts between Guatemala and Belize, on the one hand, and Honduras and El Salvador, on the other, de-escalated to non-violent crises. The 55-year old conflict between the US and Cuba showed an easing of tensions when presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro met in Panama; however, economic and financial sanctions remained in place.

The territorial dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica over the San Juan river and the river island Isla Calero / Harbor Head ended after both sides had accepted a final ICJ ruling which determined Costa Rica's sovereignty over the disputed islands and Nicaragua's right of free navigation.

The conflict between drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the Mexican government remained the region's sole war. Security forces growingly skirmished with *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación*, whose members reacted with increased violence to the launch of "Operation Jalisco" in May [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Authorities especially considered the shooting down of an army helicopter by the cartel the same month a sign of growing militarization of the conflict. The repeated outbreak of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera, the most wanted drug cartel leader and head of the Sinaloa Cartel, from a high-security prison in July received worldwide media attention. In the limited war pertaining cartel infighting, almost all major drug cartels faced further fragmentation. Besides the states of Guerrero and Tamaulipas, turf wars particularly flared up in Baja California state due to fighting between rivaling factions of the Sinaloa and the Tijuana cartels [→ Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)]. This year, the conflict between the left-wing group FARC and the Colombian government was marked by both escalations and a significant decrease in violence, with the conflict parties achieving several breakthroughs at the negotiation table in Cuba. In April, FARC killed ten state soldiers in Cauca department, prompting the president to order the resumption of airstrikes against the group, which had previously been halted for a month. Dozens of FARC members were killed in operations of state forces in April, May, and June. Throughout the year, at least 156 people died in this conflict. FARC declared a new unilateral ceasefire in July which subsequently led to a notable reduction of violent conflict measures. In Cuba, negotiators made significant advances towards an eventual peace accord by reaching preliminary agreements for example on transitional justice. The conflict between different neo-paramilitary groups, ELN, and FARC continued to be associated with high homicide rates in some regions and high displacement figures. A hotspot for violence was Chocó department where traditionally FARC-controlled areas were contested by Los Urabeños and the two left-wing groups [→ Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. In the fight against the neo-paramilitary groups, the government set a precedent by conducting an aerial bombardment against a neo-paramilitary group for the first time. Twelve members of Los Urabeños died in an airstrike against a camp where they had allegedly been meeting ELN members. On December 18, the Attorney General signed a guideline deeming legal the bombardment of these groups the government called "Criminal Groups" [→ Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)]. In total, at least 91,000 people registered as IDPs in Colombia by the end of the year.

The conflict over subnational predominance in El Salvador between the main criminal gangs, namely the Mara Salvatrucha and the Barrio 18, and the government reached the intensity level of a limited war. Rising numbers of attacks on security forces and civilians, inter-gang violence, and multiple homicides deteriorated the country's security situation in 2015. Throughout the year, the government engaged in more resolute and confrontational security policies against gang activities, thereby setting a de-facto end to the 2012-brokered gang truce. In August, the country's Supreme Court further criminalized both gangs by officially declaring them terrorist groups and prosecuting their activities under the act of terrorism. The US Treasury Department had already designated the Mara Salvatrucha as a transnational criminal organization previously in 2012.

With 103 murders per 100,000 inhabitants and 6,650 homicides committed, El Salvador was the country with the highest murder rate worldwide in 2015.

Although drawing from different sources about gang involvement in the crimes, both the government and the UNHCR attributed a high percentage of the murders and displacement to gang violence.

In the context of the federal legislative, state, and municipal midterm elections, the opposition conflict in Mexico escalated to a violent crisis. National and international media reported between six and 23 political murders in the run-up to the election on June 7, considered the most violent one in recent history [→ Mexico (opposition)]. Elections in Venezuela were accompanied by violence and intimidations against opposition candidates. The ruling PSUV of Nicolás Maduro lost its majority in parliament and accepted defeat [→ Venezuela (opposition)]. In Haiti, legislative elections and the first round of presidential elections took place on August 9 and October 25 respectively, both events being accompanied by violent incidents [→ Haiti (opposition)].

In various countries, indigenous groups continued to protest social marginalization, resource policies, land distribution, and lack of security. Amidst nationwide anti-government protests in Ecuador, indigenous groups also continued to demonstrate against mining and oil drilling projects on their land. Some of these protests turned violent as, for example, the Shuar and

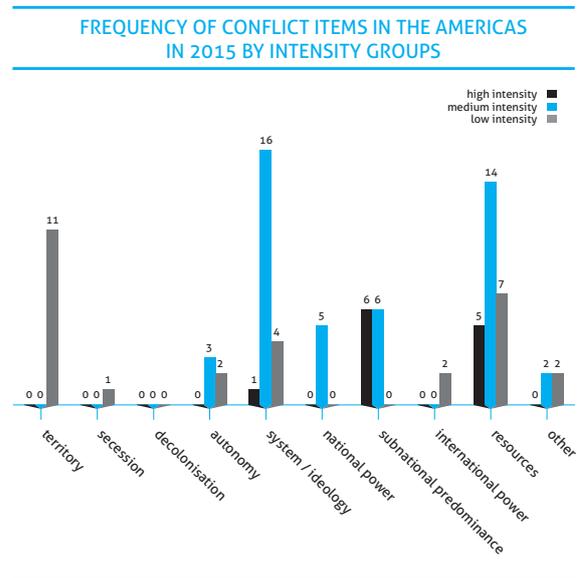
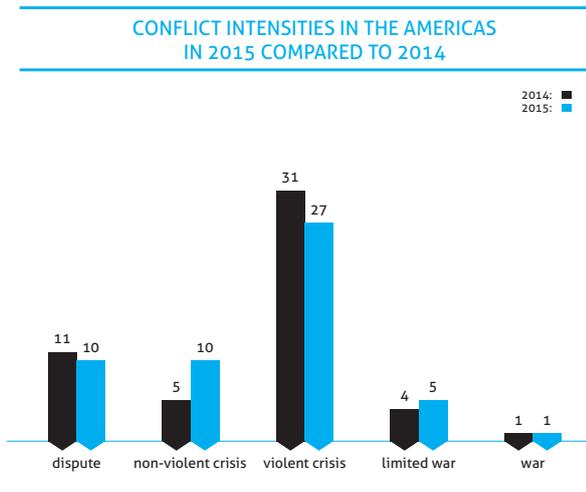
THE AMERICAS

Achuar communities attacked government officials and policemen in Morona Santiago province in late August. In Peru, indigenous communities joined the nationwide mining protests demanding compensation for environmental damages resulting primarily from land exploitation and oil contamination. The Achuar community was involved in the January occupation of 14 oil wells run by the company Pluspetrol. In Colombia, protests escalated in early 2015 as indigenous activists, who had been occupying haciendas in Cauca department, clashed with special police forces. Protesters demanded integral reparation for massacres committed against indigenous communities.

Americas remained the region with the most conflicts over drugs as a resource. Apart from Mexico and Colombia, drugs also played a major role in Honduras and Peru, among others.

In Honduras, the conflict between drug trafficking organizations and organized crime groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, remained violent. As in previous years, the government continued to focus on the capture of drug “kingpins” and drug cartel members. The government’s efforts showed achievements in 2015 as, for example, the decree to shoot down unidentified airplanes effectively impeded aerial narcotrafficking. Overall, the amount of drugs being trafficked through Honduras dropped significantly by 72 percent compared to 2014.

In Peru, the government continued their fight against drug traffickers and the cooperating rebel group Shining Path in VRAEM, the main coca growing region in the country. The shooting down of small planes suspected of smuggling narcotics and the eradication of about 35,000 hectares of coca crops conducted by anti-drug authorities proved to be successful as recent surveys by the United Nations indicated that Colombia had surpassed Peru as the world’s number one producer of cocaine in 2015.



Overview: Conflicts in the Americas in 2015

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Argentina – United Kingdom (Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas)	Argentina vs. United Kingdom	territory, resources	1833	•	2
Bolivia (socioeconomic protests)	COMCIPO vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1983	•	3
Bolivia – Chile (access to sea)*	Bolivia vs. Chile	territory, resources	1883	•	1
Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)*	drug trafficking organizations, militias vs. government	subnational predominance	2010	•	3
Brazil (indigenous groups)	indigenous groups vs. government	autonomy, resources	1985	↓	1
Brazil (MST, MTST)*	MST, MTST vs. government	resources	1996	↘	2
Brazil (social protests)	MPL et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2013	•	3
Chile (anarchist groups)*	Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, other anarchist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2014	↘	2
Chile (Mapuche / Araucanía)	Mapuche vs. government	autonomy, resources	2008	•	3
Chile (Rapa Nui / Easter Island)*	Rapa Nui vs. government	secession	2010	•	1
Chile (social movements)	ACES, CONES, CONFECH vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
Colombia (ASCAMCAT / Catatumbo)*	ASCAMCAT vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	2013	•	1
Colombia (ELN)	ELN vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1964	•	3
Colombia (FARC)	FARC vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1964	•	4
Colombia (indigenous groups)	indigenous groups vs. government	resources	2005	•	3
Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)	Los Urabeños vs. Los Rastrojos vs. Libertadores del Vichada vs. Bloque Meta vs. FIAC vs. La Empresa vs. ELN vs. FARC	subnational predominance, resources	2013	•	4
Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)	drug cartels, neo-paramilitary groups vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1983	•	4
Dominican Republic – Haiti	Dominican Republic vs. Haiti	other	2009	•	1
Ecuador (opposition groups)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1980	•	3
El Salvador (Maras)	Mara Salvatrucha, Barrio 18 vs. government	subnational predominance	2012	↗	4
Guatemala (drug cartels)*	drug cartels vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2009	•	3
Guatemala (opposition)	CCDA, CUC, indigenous groups et al. vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1985	•	3
Guatemala – Belize (territory)*	Guatemala vs. Belize	territory	1981	↘	2
Haiti (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1986	•	3
Honduras (drug trafficking organizations, organized crime)*	drug trafficking organizations, organized crime vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Honduras (MUCA, MARCA, PARCA, farmers of Bajo Aguán – landowners)*	MUCA, farmers of Bajo Aguán vs. landowners, government	resources	2009	•	3
Honduras (opposition)	LIBRE, PAC, PINU, PL, FNRP, anti-government activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2009	•	3
Honduras – El Salvador (Isla Conejo)	Honduras vs. El Salvador	territory	2013	↘	2
Jamaica (drug gangs)	drug gangs vs. government	subnational predominance	2010	•	3
Mexico (CNTE et al.)	CNTE et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
Mexico (drug cartels)	drug cartels vs. vigilante groups vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2006	•	5
Mexico (EZLN / Chiapas)*	EZLN vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources, other	1994	•	3
Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)	CDG et al. vs. Los Zetas et al. vs. CJNG et al. vs. Sinaloa et al. vs. LCT et al. vs. LFM et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2005	•	4
Mexico (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	national power	2006	↗	3
Mexico (public security)	normalistas et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	3

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Nicaragua (indigenous groups)	Miskito groups, YATAMA vs. government	autonomy, resources	2015	NEW	3
Nicaragua (militant groups)*	FASN-EP, CGN, FDC 3-80 vs. government	system/ideology	2012	•	3
Nicaragua (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2008	•	3
Nicaragua – Colombia (sea border)	Nicaragua vs. Colombia	territory, resources	1825	•	2
Nicaragua – Costa Rica (Río San Juan)	Nicaragua vs. Costa Rica	territory	1858	END	1
Paraguay (EPP, agrarian movements)	EPP, ACA, agrarian movements vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1989	•	3
Peru (opposition movements)	opposition movements vs. government	system/ideology, resources	2008	•	3
Peru (Shining Path)	SL vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1980	•	3
Peru – Chile (border)	Peru vs. Chile	territory	1883	•	1
United Kingdom – Chile (Antarctica)*	United Kingdom vs. Chile	territory	2007	•	1
USA – Cuba (Guantanamo)*	USA vs. Cuba	territory	1959	•	1
USA – Cuba (system)	USA vs. Cuba	system/ideology, international power	1960	•	2
USA – Mexico (border security)	USA vs. Mexico	other	2005	•	3
USA – Venezuela	USA vs. Venezuela	system/ideology, international power	2001	•	2
Venezuela (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1992	•	3
Venezuela – Colombia (border security)	Venezuela vs. Colombia	other	2015	NEW	2
Venezuela – Colombia (Monjes Islands)	Venezuela vs. Colombia	territory, resources	1871	•	1
Venezuela – Guyana	Venezuela vs. Guyana	territory	2015	NEW	2

^{1 2 3 4} cf. overview table for Europe

ARGENTINA – UNITED KINGDOM (FALKLAND ISLANDS/ISLAS MALVINAS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1833

Conflict parties: Argentina vs. United Kingdom
Conflict items: territory, resources

The non-violent crisis between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the territory of the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas and the adjacent oil fields continued. On March 24, Britain's Secretary of State for Defense Michael Fallon announced, with regard to the islands, his plans to increase security spending over the next ten years. Fallon cited a continuing and "very live threat" identified by the Defense Secretary even 30 years after the war over the disputed islands.

The announcement followed Argentinean plans to buy twelve SU24 strike aircrafts from Russia that had been made public on 12/28/14. Daniel Filmus, Argentina's Secretary for Matters Relating to the Malvinas/Falklands, insisted on April 17 that Argentina did not pose any threat and would not use any military means to reclaim the territory under dispute.

Tensions increased when Argentina launched lawsuits against three British and two US oil drilling companies near the islands on April 15. Filmus declared that Argentina would take all necessary legal measures to stop the exploitation of oil in the area. On July 2, the Tierra del Fuego-based judge Lilian Herráez ordered a freeze on the assets of five international oil companies, accusing them of operating around the islands

without authorization. According to the British Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire this act was to be seen as "merely symbolic" since Argentine domestic law did not apply to the disputed area.

On June 11, Argentina's then-Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman accused British Prime Minister David Cameron of "colonialism" and of "living in a fake reality," arguing that Britain was not respecting the UN resolution on a peaceful dialogue over the issue. The night before, Cameron had accused Argentina of threatening the inhabitants of the islands and not respecting their right to self-determination. Tensions rose as Britain ordered a USD 70 million mobile air defense radar on August 25 to protect the area from possible Argentinean attacks. The claim on the islands did not play a crucial role in the Argentine presidential campaign.

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BOLIVIA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1983

Conflict parties: COMCIPO vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The socioeconomic conflict over resources and the orientation of the political system continued at the level of a violent crisis. Involved parties this year consisted of the civil society group Civic Committee of Potosí (COMCIPO), on the one hand, and the government, on the other.

The government's infrastructure policies were a continuous issue throughout the year. On May 28, COMCIPO declared a general strike in the city of Potosí in the eponymous department due to the lack of government's attention to a list of 26 demands mainly concerning infrastructural projects. About 300 members started a 12-day protest march towards La Paz on June 26, demanding to talk with President Evo Morales and rejecting the dialogue with Potosí's local government. On July 10, 1,500 protesters in Potosí peacefully took over the offices of three mining companies (Manquiri, San Bartolomé, and San Cristobál) and six people, among them COMCIPO leader Johnny Llally, entered into a hunger strike. The next day, protesters in La Paz clashed with the police. The encounter left two protesters and one police officer injured when protesters hurled dynamite and the police responded with tear gas. Meanwhile, in Potosí, about 30,000 people had been mobilized in order to support COMCIPO's demands. Throughout the following week, protests intensified with increasing numbers of protesters in Potosí and La Paz, the city of Potosí being completely isolated due to road blocks and lack of communication between COMCIPO's leaders and the government.

The movement spread to other departments on July 17, when residents of Potosí blocked the main square of the capital Sucre and residents of Cochabamba, Cercado province, entered into hunger strike. A total of 91 tourists were evacuated from Potosí. The same day, a violent clash between more than 2,000 protesters and the police in La Paz left seven people injured as a result of the use of tear gas, rubber bullets, and dynamite. After another failed attempt to dialogue on July 22, protesters attacked a government building in La Paz with dynamite and rocks, which led to the evacuation of government officials. A total of 51 persons were arrested. Due to remaining discrepancies regarding the terms and conditions of further dialogue, protests continued in spite of the leaders of COMCIPO returning to Potosí on July 30. On August 3, the strike, which had paralyzed Potosí for 27 days, was lifted without the 26 demands having been met. Despite the intense protests, no further violence occurred throughout the remainder of the year. lme

BRAZIL (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: indigenous groups vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The conflict over autonomy, hydroelectric projects, and the demarcation of indigenous territories between various indigenous groups and the government de-escalated to a dispute.

On February 2, about 50 Kayapó demonstrated outside the presidential palace in the capital Brasília to demand the renewal of the Basic Environmental Plan protecting indigenous territories. To meet with government officials, they agreed to lay down bows and arrows.

From April 13 to 17, 1,500 indigenous from 200 tribes protested in the capital Brasília against the government's proposed constitutional amendment 215 (PEC 215) that would shift the power to demarcate indigenous territories from the National Indian Foundation to the congress. On June 24, Ademir Kaba, a Munduruku leader, denounced Brazil at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva for violating interna-

tional law. He criticized the government for constructing the Belo Monte dam in 2011 without consulting the affected indigenous communities. During the first World Indigenous Games in Palmas, Tocantins state, from October 23 to November 1, indigenous people protested against PEC 215 on various occasions. cpn

BRAZIL (SOCIAL PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: MPL et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between different protest groups such as the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL), truck drivers, and teachers, on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand, continued. Throughout the year, thousands of people took to the streets against the government of President Dilma Rousseff. On March 15, at least 1.5 million people participated in protests mainly organized by Vem pra Rua, Movimento Brasil Livre, Revoltados Online, and Cariocas Direitos in 212 cities. According to the Military Police (PM), about 580,000 persons protested against corruption in São Paulo, 45,000 in the capital Brasília, and 25,000 in Rio de Janeiro. Additionally, they demanded the impeachment of President Rousseff and some of them also called for a military intervention. On April 12, several thousand protesters marched in 19 states. The third major nationwide protest took place in 150 cities on August 18, including 135,000 demonstrators in São Paulo. After the initiation of impeachment proceedings against Rousseff on December 2, protests continued in all 26 states and Brasília on December 12. Four days later, tens of thousands protested against an impeachment across the country.

Besides demonstrations directly targeting the president and the ruling Worker's Party, various pressure groups expressed their discontent with socioeconomic policies. On January 9, about 30,000 people protested in São Paulo against rising public transport fares. The police ended the demonstration using tear gas and rubber bullets and arrested more than 50 participants. Following the MPL's call for a second protest, supported by the Homeless Workers' Movement about 5,000 people again took to the streets of São Paulo on January 20 [→ Brazil (MST, MTST)]. The police dispersed the protesters with tear gas bombs and arrested nine. In similar protests three days later, 1,100 police forces arrested four demonstrators and injured another four, deploying tear gas and rubber bullets. On February 7, truckers blocked sections on major highways in nine states, protesting against the rise in fuel prices. Following more than one month of strike, about 200,000 teachers demanding better salaries and opposing changes in social security regulations protested in front of the Legislative Assembly in Curitiba, Paraná state, on April 29. PM arrested 13 people and dispersed the crowd with tear gas grenades and rubber bullets, injuring 200 teachers. On November 11, truck drivers in eleven states ended a three-day strike led by the National Transport Command after the government had announced to increase penalties and to forcefully remove vehicles blocking highways. cpn

CHILE (MAPUCHE / ARAUCANÍA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: Mapuche vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent conflict over autonomy and resources in the La Araucanía region between members and organizations of the indigenous Mapuche, on the one hand, and the government of President Michelle Bachelet, on the other, continued. Among the main demands of the Mapuche were the devolution of ancestral land and the decrease of police presence in their communities. Throughout the year, La Araucanía and adjacent regions were affected by hundreds of incendiaries, occupations, and road blockades. In reaction to the violence, the government strengthened police presence in the region, but stated that not all violent actions could be credited to Mapuche.

One such occupation took place on April 20, when about 80 Mapuche entered an estate near Temuco, La Araucanía, torching a trailer with hay bales. In ensuing confrontations with police special forces, the so-called Carabineros, Mapuche hurled stones while the police responded with tear gas. Another land occupation in Traiguén, La Araucanía, ended after one month on November 12 with clashes between Mapuche and Carabineros, leaving eight persons injured. Eleven occupiers were detained. In Temuco, 30 Mapuche students occupied educational buildings on July 2 to protest against a proposed educational reform that they criticized for not reflecting their values and beliefs.

On August 17, about 100 Mapuche occupied the head office of the National Indigenous Development Corporation (Conadi) in Temuco, demanding quicker land redistributions and denouncing harassment by Carabineros within their communities. Three days later, nearly 200 Mapuche supporters demonstrated in Temuco. On September 7, Carabineros cleared the building wherein 33 Mapuche still remained. They used tear gas and detained 31 Mapuche, several of which were injured.

Several other demonstrations took place. For instance, on October 12, 5,000 to 15,000 people marched in the capital Santiago in support of the Mapuche's demands. Hooded individuals tried to enter the presidential palace and threw stones and Molotov cocktails at the police, causing minor material damage.

The government's approach in the conflict was increasingly criticized. On January 10, the Mapuche advisor for the Conadi, Ana Llao, accused the government of distributing lands to violent instead of moderate Mapuche groups. To protest against the growing insecurity in the region, truck drivers marched in late August from Temuco to Santiago. In response, Bachelet dismissed the governor of La Araucanía, Mapuche Francisco Huenchumilla, on August 25. On December 29, Bachelet paid La Araucanía the first visit during her presidential term. In Temuco, she united with representatives of the Association of Victims of Rural Violence, among them relatives of the Luchsinger-McKay landowner couple killed in a 2013 arson attack attributed to a Mapuche. Furthermore, she met with Mapuche farmers in Cholchol and announced the establishment of a working group on the region. Mapuche criticized Bachelet for the visit's secretive nature and for not meeting with Mapuche victims of the conflict. *cgu*

CHILE (SOCIAL MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: ACES, CONES, CONFECH vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over system and ideology between social movement organizations such as the Confederation of Chilean Students (CONFECH), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. The implementation of education system reforms was among the main demands of these groups.

On January 26, President Michelle Bachelet's education reform initiative was passed in the National Congress. After years of massive student protests, the government passed legislation to ensure equal, non-selective access to state-owned and state-subsidized schools, as well as free university education. Despite these efforts, a demonstration with 20,000 to 150,000 people organized by CONFECH took place in the capital Santiago on April 16. It remained largely peaceful, however the police used tear gas and water cannon to disperse protesters who were throwing objects. Seven were injured and 134 arrested. Two students were killed on May 14 in Valparaíso shortly after taking part in one of several multi-city demonstrations organized by CONFECH with between 50,000 to 150,000 participants in Santiago alone. Reportedly, the students were killed by a civilian after having sprayed graffiti on the wall of a residential building during clashes between 100 to 200 hooded protesters and the police. The event spurred further protests. On May 21, while Bachelet was delivering a state of the nation address in the National Congress in Valparaíso, about 6,000 protesters gathered in front of the building demanding educational reforms. In violent clashes between masked protesters and the police, 20 people were injured and 37 arrested. The protesters used stones while the police responded with tear gas and water cannon.

On June 10, one day before the beginning of the football championship Copa América, thousands of students organized by Teachers College Santiago, the Coordinated Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES), and the National Coordinator of Secondary Students (CONES) protested in Santiago presenting a document which outlined their demands for a coherent higher university education and pointing out the lack of consultation by the government over the proposed education reform. The protest turned violent and riot police fired tear gas and water cannon against masked protesters. Following a massive demonstration with around 300,000 teachers and students nationwide and around 100,000 in Santiago on June 17, Bachelet appointed former Minister for Natural Resources Adriana Delpiano as new education minister on June 27. On June 30, Delpiano rejected any plans for a meeting with the teachers' and students' associations and demanded a stop to their protest actions.

On December 10, the Constitutional Tribunal ruled against Bachelet's education reform and her proposed mechanism that would have determined which education institution should provide free university education using state funds. A total of 260,000 of the poorest students would have benefited from this reform in 2016. CONFECH had already criticized this mechanism as non-transparent on October 1 and further stated their plans to uphold countrywide demonstrations and

protests.
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COLOMBIA (ELN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: ELN vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational
predominance, resources

The violent conflict over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources between the Army of National Liberation (ELN) and the government continued. The Marxist-Leninist ELN, the country's second largest guerrilla organization with about 1,500 to 2,500 members, was primarily active in the Norte de Santander, Bolívar, Arauca, Chocó, Antioquia, and Boyacá departments. The group financed its activities mainly through involvement in drug production and trade, extortion, illegal mining, and kidnapping.

The government continued to conduct military and police operations against the group. On March 10, President Juan Manuel Santos announced to increase military pressure on ELN, while suspending air bombardments against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the country's largest rebel group [→ Colombia (FARC)]. For example, in a military operation in Segovia, Antioquia on June 14, José Amín Hernández alias Marquitos, leader of an ELN front, was killed. In an aerial bombardment on October 22, nine ELN members were killed and one was injured in Morales, Bolívar. According to the military, up until December, 49 ELN members were killed and 282 captured.

Throughout the year, ELN targeted state security forces, often killing and injuring civilians. On October 26, ELN ambushed an army escort of a commission carrying material of the October 25 regional elections in an indigenous reserve zone in Güicán, Boyacá. Armed with guns and explosives, they killed eleven soldiers and one policeman and injured three. Two soldiers taken hostage by ELN during the attack were released on November 16. Santos condemned the attack and ordered an intensification of military action against ELN. On November 30, an ELN member allegedly responsible for the ambush was killed in a joint military and police operation in Onzaga, Santander department.

The government blamed ELN for several IED attacks in the capital Bogotá. In the largest bombing, on July 1, two artifacts exploded at banks in the Chapinero and Puente Aranda neighborhoods, injuring ten people and damaging several buildings. In the aftermath of the event, the police apprehended 14 suspects, the last of which were acquitted on September 11.

As in previous years, ELN continued to attack the country's infrastructure, in particular the Caño Limón-Covenas oil pipeline. One such attack, on April 19, left 15,000 inhabitants of Arauca in the eponymous department without water.

Confrontations between ELN and government forces led to the displacement of civilians in some regions. For example, in April, up to 1,000 people, among them indigenous and Afro-Colombians, were displaced in Chocó, with another 1,000 confined to their homes due to ongoing combats between ELN, FARC, and the military.

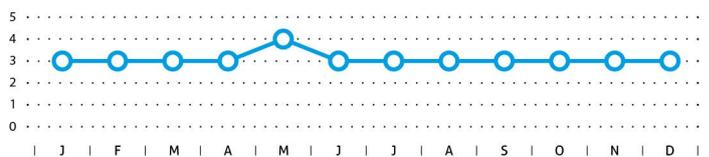
Exploratory talks between ELN and the government continued, while no formal peace talks were initiated. On January 5, Santos invited ELN to finalize discussions about an agenda

for the talks, to which ELN responded by emphasizing their willingness to enter negotiations. Throughout the year, ELN commander Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista alias Gabino repeatedly stated that exploratory talks were advancing and formal talks would soon be initiated. The talks received international support, for example by Ecuador offering to mediate or host formal negotiations. kgr

COLOMBIA (FARC)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: FARC vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-
dominance, resources



The limited war over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government continued. The Marxist-Leninist FARC, reportedly comprising about armed 6,300 members, was mainly financed through involvement in drug production and trafficking, extortion, and illegal mining. Violence concentrated on Nariño, Norte de Santander, and Cauca departments, but also occurred in Chocó, Antioquia, Caquetá, and Meta departments, among others.

The peace negotiations, initiated in 2012, continued in Havana, Cuba. On September 23, the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC set 03/23/16 as deadline for reaching a final agreement, with the FARC having an additional 60 days to relinquish arms. Furthermore, they agreed on drafting an amnesty law for "political and related crimes" as well as creating a "special peace jurisdiction" for people accused of having committed serious crimes during the conflict such as crimes against humanity, genocide, and forced displacement.

On October 17, the conflict parties agreed to realize efforts to retrieve and identify the people disappeared since the beginning of the conflict. On October 28, Santos announced that the government was willing to establish a bilateral ceasefire as of 01/01/16. On November 22, the government announced to pardon 30 imprisoned FARC members "as a gesture of building trust." On December 14, the plan to set up a referendum aimed at legitimizing a possible peace deal was approved by Congress. An agreement regarding the victims of the conflict was reached one day later, including measures of reparation, truth-seeking, and guarantees of non-repetition. Details regarding the inclusion of civilians and members of the military in the transitional justice framework were announced the same month.

After the FARC's December 2014 unilateral ceasefire had largely been upheld, Santos ordered a one-month stop to aerial bombardments against the group on March 10. One month later, Santos extended the suspension for another month.

Despite the ongoing negotiations, both conflict parties engaged in combats and executed one-sided attacks. On April 15, the FARC ambushed a group of soldiers in Buenos Aires,

Cauca, killing ten and injuring 21. The FARC later called the incident an “act of defense” and stated that the unilateral ceasefire had been upheld. Subsequently, Santos ordered the air force to resume airstrikes. On April 18, aerial bombardments on a FARC explosives production site in Vista Hermosa, Meta, left at least two FARC members dead. On May 21, air force, army, and the police conducted a joint operation in Guapí, Cauca, with aerial bombardments followed by a ground attack, killing 27 FARC members. Due to the combats, more than 350 civilians were displaced. On May 23, at least eight FARC members were killed in another joint operation in Segovia, Antioquia. Two days later, five FARC members, including the leader of the 18th Front Alfredo Alarcón alias Román Ruiz, were killed in another airstrike in Riosucio, Chocó.

After the airstrikes in Guapí, the FARC suspended the unilateral ceasefire. In the following weeks, the group conducted various attacks against state forces. Among the regions hardest hit during the resumption of FARC attacks was Tumaco, Nariño. Within few weeks, the FARC killed one policeman and injured at least ten in various attacks on police stations and military patrols. On June 12, approx. 2,500 people marched in Tumaco to protest against the violence. On June 22, the FARC attacked an oil pipeline near Tumaco, spilling more than 410,000 gallons of oil into the Mira river, thereby causing significant environmental damage and leaving 160,000 people without water.

The FARC targeted the infrastructure in other parts of the country as well. For example, on June 10, the FARC blew up an energy tower in Caquetá, leaving the entire department and half a million people without power. In Norte de Santander, an attack on the Caño Limón-Coveñas pipeline on June 16 left 16,000 people without water and caused the displacement of 20 families.

In the beginning of June, combats between the FARC and the military caused the displacement of about 400 civilians in López de Micay, Cauca. On June 26, 430 indigenous people were displaced due to ongoing combats and the hazard of anti-personnel mines in Urrao, Antioquia.

On July 20, the FARC implemented a new unilateral ceasefire, to which Santos responded by ordering the military to suspend aerial bombings against the FARC once again. In the remainder of the year, the number of violent encounters was sharply reduced. On October 28, during combats in Cartagena del Chiará, Caquetá, four FARC members were killed and another one injured. On November 25, FARC members abducted a soldier in San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá. He was released on December 9. *cb, kgr*

20,000 acres of what they considered their ancestral land from the government as reparation for massacres committed against Nasa communities between 1991 and 2001.

The Ministry of Agriculture offered 3,000 acres of land and a payment of COP 2,000 million for productive agricultural projects during a negotiation on February 18. However, the indigenous representatives rejected the proposal.

In the following week, clashes between indigenous activists and the Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron (ESMAD) erupted in Cauca. On February 24, in Mondomo, a group of protesters blocked the Panamerican Highway. Two days later, activists attempted to destroy a bridge on the road between Corinto and Miranda. In both encounters, protesters, armed with staves, machetes, and stones, clashed with ESMAD officers who employed tear gas and a water cannon. At least 60 were injured in total. In spite of the introduction of a temporary truce, negotiated by the Ombudsman’s Office and OHCHR representative Todd Howland on February 28, violent encounters resumed in March, with violence extending to Santander de Quilichao and Caloto.

On April 10, during a violent clash in Corinto, ESMAD fatally injured an indigenous protester. The largest confrontation occurred between May 21 and 23, when around 1,000 ESMAD officers, reinforced by the military, attempted to evict 3,000 activists from the occupied haciendas. Some sources reported that ESMAD employed two armored vehicles and three helicopters, while activists used IEDs, machetes, and rocks. At least five people were injured in total. Sporadic confrontations occurred throughout the second half of the year. For instance, on October 13, indigenous activists blocked the road to Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca, clashing with ESMAD officers, who used tear gas to disperse the protest and detained two people.

Indigenous activists also held peaceful demonstrations throughout the year. On May 14, around 3,000 protesters marched from Mandibá to Santander de Quilichao, in order to demonstrate against the violence in Cauca. The CRIC also held a protest march between November 22 and 27 from Cauca to the capital Bogotá, in defense of their Special Indigenous Jurisdiction, gathering around 2,000 supporters.

After an indigenous was found shot dead in Puracé, Cauca, on October 19, members of the Cauca Indigenous Guard retained at least 15 soldiers and handed them over to the Ombudsman’s Office. The military stated that troops had been responding to gunfire in the area. *osv*

COLOMBIA (INTER-CARTEL VIOLENCE, NEO-PARAMILITARY GROUPS, LEFT-WING MILITANTS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Los Urabeños vs. Los Rastrojos vs. Libertadores del Vichada vs. Bloque Meta vs. FIAC vs. La Empresa vs. ELN vs. FARC

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The limited war over subnational predominance and resources between several neo-paramilitary organizations, drug cartels, the Army of National Liberation (ELN), and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) continued. According to the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office for Organized

COLOMBIA (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: indigenous groups vs. government

Conflict items: resources

The violent crisis over resources between several indigenous groups, including the Nasa and Embera Chami communities, and the government continued.

Violence mostly concentrated in the Cauca department, where thousands of indigenous activists had been occupying several haciendas in the municipalities of Corinto and Miranda since 12/14/14 under the leadership of the Regional Indigenous Council of the Cauca (CRIC). They demanded

Crime, with its nearly 3,000 members, Los Urabeños, also called Clan Úsuga or Autodefensas Gaitanistas, surpassed in size Los Rastrojos and their affiliate La Empresa as well as the two splinter groups of the Anti-Subversive Popular Revolutionary Army of Colombia (ERPAC) Libertadores del Vichada and Bloque Meta. These groups, called "BACRIM" (Criminal Gangs) by the government, were composed of ex-members of the demobilized paramilitary organization United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and of dismantled drug cartels of the 1990s. Along with other smaller groups, these organizations fought over the dominance over drug trafficking and smuggling routes, areas of coca production, and the extraction of resources such as minerals and wood.

Violence concentrated in the departments of the Pacific coast, Orinoquía in the east, and in border regions. Confrontations between the armed groups repeatedly caused high numbers of displaced people as well as high homicide rates in several cities. The Urabá region in the northwest saw violent conflicts between FARC, ELN, and Los Urabeños as well as between these groups and state forces [→ Colombia (FARC); Colombia (ELN); Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)].

Chocó department saw confrontations between ELN and Los Urabeños as both groups increased their presence in this key region for drug trafficking and illegal mining, which had previously been dominated by the FARC. Reportedly, ELN and Los Urabeños clashed at least 130 times in the Medio Atrato region in September and October, with several confrontations between the FARC and Los Urabeños taking place in Río Ciego, Bajo Atrato region. Three members of Los Urabeños died in combats with ELN in Bajo Atrato on October 15. As a consequence of clashes between these groups in Bajo Baudó, Chocó, more than 600 indigenous and Afro-Colombians were displaced by March. According to UNOCHA, up until November, more than 1,000 people were displaced in the region around the Baudó river, with more than 3,000 experiencing significant restrictions of mobility.

On June 14, a grenade explosion injured 14 civilians and two policemen in the country's main Pacific port Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca department, as part of the turf war between Los Urabeños and the Los Rastrojos-related La Empresa. Several homicides were attributed to inter-gang violence, for example the killing of two people on September 27 and November 7 by Los Urabeños. In addition, from December 2014 to February 2015, the police found twelve dismembered bodies along with abandoned houses the gangs continuously used as so-called "chop-up houses" in order to let victims disappear.

The turf war between Los Urabeños and Los Rastrojos affected the Colombian-Venezuelan border region as well. For example, on May 5, Venezuelan police found 13 corpses with gunshot wounds in mass graves in Ureña, Táchira state, which some sources linked to gang rivalry. The presence of Colombian armed groups in Venezuelan border states contributed to the eruption of an inter-state conflict between Venezuela and Colombia [→ Venezuela – Colombia (border security)]. Moreover, in the border city Cúcuta, Norte de Santander department, Los Urabeños experienced an internal split to which the police attributed the majority of the 161 homicides registered until November. In Barrancabermeja, Santander department, the police attributed 89 percent of all homicides registered in the city to inter-gang rivalry between Los Urabeños and Los Rastrojos. Up until September, a total of 53 people were killed and more than 100 displaced by the violence.

In the Orinoquía region, the Irregular Armed Forces of Colombia (FIAC) had formed in late 2014. According to the research

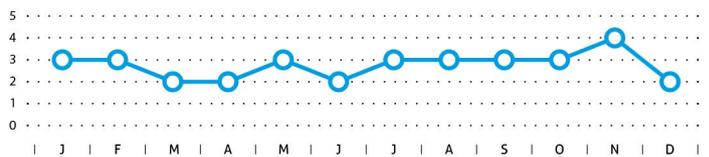
institute Indepaz, FIAC was competing primarily with Libertadores del Vichada for territorial control, with the latter being allied with Los Urabeños. Libertadores del Vichada were also involved in a continued turf war with Bloque Meta in Villavicencio, Meta department, to which the police ascribed the majority of the 138 homicides in the city registered by November. mkr

COLOMBIA (NEO-PARAMILITARY GROUPS, DRUG CARTELS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1983

Conflict parties: drug cartels, neo-paramilitary groups vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war concerning subnational predominance and resources between several neo-paramilitary organizations and drug cartels, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. Most of these organizations, called "BACRIM" (Criminal Gangs) by the government, consisted of dismantled drug cartels of the 1990s and former members of the paramilitary organization United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) officially demobilized in 2006.

According to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for Organized Crime, the following paramilitary groups were the most active ones in Colombia: Los Urabeños also known as Clan Úsuga (approx. 2,700 members), Los Rastrojos and their affiliate La Empresa (450 members), and two splinter groups of the Anti-Subversive Popular Revolutionary Army of Colombia (ERPAC) called Bloque Meta and Libertadores del Vichada (80 members each). However, Los Urabeños, calling themselves Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, claimed to command more than 8,000 members. Moreover, the research institute Indepaz listed several other groups such as Águilas Negras as smaller armed organizations with limited regional presence.

According to the UN High Commission for Human Rights in Colombia, the neo-paramilitary groups represented the biggest threat to public security in the country. President Juan Manuel Santos declared the fight against these groups a state priority.

The main interests of these groups were the control over production and transportation of drugs, especially cocaine, as well as illegal mining, extortion, contraband, and human trafficking. The violence was concentrated in Urabá in the northwest, the Pacific port Buenaventura, and Orinoquía in the east due to confrontations both with state forces and between different illegal groups [→ Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. According to Indepaz, until September, the neo-paramilitary groups were active in one third of all municipalities. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense declared 86 percent of the national territory as "free from BACRIM" and claimed to have captured 2,062 presumed members of these groups by the end of October.

In the beginning of 2015, the government initiated the na-

tionwide “Operation Agamemnon” involving 1,250 soldiers and policemen and Blackhawk helicopters in order to capture Los Urabeños leader Dairo Antonio Úsuga alias Otoniel. On November 3, the air force launched the first-ever aerial bombardment against Los Urabeños in Unguía, Chocó department, killing twelve of their members and destroying five of their camps. The government claimed to have targeted the camp due to a presumed meeting of Los Urabeños with members of the country’s second-largest guerrilla group Army of National Liberation [→ Colombia (ELN)].

Apart from Los Urabeños other armed groups were targeted by police operations as well. On June 5, special forces of the police and army captured Carlos Hernán Quintero alias El Tío, leader of the neo-paramilitary organization La Empresa, in Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca department. On September 27, the police killed Martín Farfán González alias Pijarbey, co-founder of ERPAC and leader of Libertadores del Vichada, in Asocortomo, Vichada department.

On October 1, in Hacarí, Norte de Santander department, the armed forces and the police bombed a camp of the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), a former guerrilla group officially demobilized in 1991 which had turned into a drug-trafficking organization operating mainly in Catatumbo, Norte de Santander. Five members died in the operation, among them EPL leader Víctor Ramón Navarro alias Megateo.

Neo-paramilitary groups also targeted civilians. For example, on October 1, Los Urabeños killed a mining worker of the Canadian company Gran Colombia Gold in Segovia, Antioquia department, and forced the other employees to lay down their work in order to force the company to pay extortion fees.

The violent actions of the armed groups caused massive displacement in different regions of the country. For example, in November, a total of 200 people left San José de Apartadó, Antioquia, due to threats, road blockades, and detentions by Los Urabeños.

Various criminal groups collaborated with foreign drug cartels, especially with Los Zetas and the Sinaloa cartel from Mexico, in international drug trafficking [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Reportedly, in 2015, the latter controlled 35 percent of the trade in Colombian coca, with Colombia replacing Peru as the main producer and exporter of coca worldwide. mkr

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – HAITI

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: Dominican Republic vs. Haiti

Conflict items: other

The dispute between the Dominican Republic (DR) and Haiti over the issues of illegal immigration and racial sentiments continued. On 09/23/13, the Dominican government had decided to change the nationality law in order to tackle illegal immigration from Haiti. The ruling 168-13 denied Dominican citizenship to people of Haitian descent born on Dominican territory, which left, according to UNHCR figures, up to 200,000 people stateless and at the risk of being deported. This was followed by a significant increase in illegal immigration, further complicating diplomatic relations between the two nations.

On February 10, a group of residents of the sector Los Ciruelitos publicly burned a Haitian flag in the Dominican city Santiago to protest against the presence of Haitian immigrants in the area. The next day, a man of Haitian descent was

found hanged in a public park in Santiago. Although police discounted xenophobic motivations for the incident, human rights groups linked it to the constant discrimination against people of Haitian origin. On February 25 and on July 22, thousands protested peacefully in Haiti’s capital Port-au-Prince in solidarity with the undocumented residents of Haitian descent who faced deportation from the DR.

On June 17, the registration deadline for legal residency in the DR expired. While Dominican Interior Minister Ramón Fadul stated that there would not be large-scale deportations, Defense Minister William Muñoz Delgado referred to repatriations and possible protests when addressing border security guards. On June 26, Haitian Prime Minister Evans Paul accused the DR of “creating a humanitarian crisis.” According to UN figures, some 20,000 people had left the DR in late June.

On September 16, the Haitian government announced its decision to ban the import of 23 Dominican products via its land borders. The Dominican foreign ministry responded that this decision would further damage bilateral diplomatic cooperation. A week later, the EU Ambassador to the DR Alberto Navarro called on both states to resume diplomatic relations. jf

ECUADOR (OPPOSITION GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1980

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis concerning system and ideology as well as resources between various opposition groups and the government of President Rafael Correa continued. The proposal for constitutional amendments and a new tax legislation, changes to water and education policies as well as demands of civil and indigenous representatives led to multiple violent anti-government protests throughout the year. Main supporters of the protests were the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), the country’s largest indigenous organization, as well as the trade union Ecuadorian Workers Confederation (CTE) and its umbrella organization “Frente Unitario de los Trabajadores” (FUT).

Nationwide protests started on June 8, following Correa’s announcement of a planned revision of the current inheritance and speculation tax legislation. Thousands of protesters demonstrated in front of the headquarters of the ruling party Alianza PAÍS (AP) in the capital Quito and clashed with pro-government groups. One minister and at least two policemen were injured. On June 13, approx. 300 anti-government protesters blocked the streets in Santa Cruz and San Cristóbal, Galápagos province, and attacked police forces.

On June 24, workers and trade unionists, mainly from FUT and CTE, staged demonstrations against Correa in Quito and Guayaquil, Guayas province, demanding amendments to the 2014 labor code. In respect to Pope Francis’ visit, Correa temporarily postponed the intended tax reform on July 5, and called on the opposition and civil society to participate in a broad dialogue to stop violence. Subsequently, protesters canceled demonstrations until July 8.

Nationwide demonstrations and protests marches of indigenous and social movements as well as strikes by trade unions flared up again in August. Large demonstrations were held in the respective capitals of the provinces Azuay, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Loja, and Tungurahua. In most cities, protests

turned violent and the police arrested approx. 56 people for blocking streets, using weapons, and attacking police forces. On August 17, approx. 1,500 policemen and soldiers arrested 31 people in Saraguro, Loja province, in response to the previous blockade of the Pan-American Highway. According to CONAIE, many people were injured by police violence and the use of tear gas bombs during the arrests. Three days later, the Shuar and Achuar communities attacked government officials, soldiers, and policemen with spears in Macas, Morona Santiago province, injuring eight. The indigenous rejected the government's plans for mining and oil drilling on their land, demanded the construction of a road to the isolated locality Taisha, and further called for Correa's resignation.

On August 28, government officials announced first agreements with labor representatives as a result of the national dialogue initiative. Between June and August, hundreds of assemblies had taken place in which citizens had had the possibility to express ideas for the state's social and economic policies. On December 3, the parliament adopted several constitutional amendments, including one to remove term limits on the presidency. Although Correa had already declared on November 18 that regardless of the parliament's vote he would not run for re-election, oppositional groups and labor unions demonstrated in front of the parliament building. In the ensuing clashes with police and AP members, several policemen were injured. *sen*

EL SALVADOR (MARAS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Mara Salvatrucha, Barrio 18 vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational predominance between the country's main criminal gangs, mainly Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18, and the government escalated to a limited war.

Throughout the year, the government confronted gang criminality more drastically implementing so-called "Mano Dura" security initiatives as the country's homicide rate reached an all-time peak. With 103 murders per 100,000 inhabitants and a population of approx. 6.4 million people, El Salvador had the highest murder rate in the world in 2015. On December 1, the Attorney General's Office attributed 65 percent of the homicides to gang attacks against state officials as well as civilians, and to inter-gang violence. In contrast, police statistics claimed only 27.8 percent as victims of gang-related crimes. By the end of the year, 6,650 homicides were committed, leaving 62 police officers, 24 soldiers, and one prosecutor killed by gang members. The departments most affected were Cuscatlán, La Paz, Usulután, and San Salvador. Furthermore, the Office of the UNHCR reported a total of 11,120 refugees and 21,885 asylum seekers from El Salvador by June 2015, indicating a significant rise compared to the previous year. The UNHCR attributed the displacement to the increasing rates of homicide, extortion, armed theft, and the recruitment of children by gangs.

In February, the Police Inspector General Ricardo Salvador Martínez declared that police forces were "at war" with the Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18, justifying the shooting of gang members by the police and civilians in legitimate self-defense. Two weeks before, gang members had attacked a police station in Chalchuapa, Santa Ana department, killing

one police officer with an AK-47 and injuring another two. On April 17, approx. 30 members of the Mara Salvatrucha ambushed a military unit in Zacatecoluca, La Paz department, resulting in the deaths of nine gang members. President Salvador Sánchez Cerén announced on May 7 the deployment of three battalions of special forces, each consisting of 200 elite soldiers, in addition to the 7,000 soldiers already deployed in major cities in order to combat gang activity more effectively. In mid-June, leaders of the Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18 proposed new peace talks and urged the government to end its new security policies. Vice President Óscar Ortiz declined to negotiate one month later. In late July, gang members caused a major breakdown of public transportation by forcing bus drivers to stop work in the capital San Salvador and surrounding areas. Gang members killed seven non-complying transportation workers and burned two buses. In response, Sánchez Cerén ordered an additional 600 military troops to end the forced public transportation strike. Throughout August, authorities arrested approx. 130 members of the Barrio 18 for their involvement in the strike. On August 24, the Supreme Court classified the Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18 as terrorist groups. Two weeks earlier, Attorney General Luis Martínez had declared that 300 alleged gang members would be charged with acts of terrorism. The Attorney General's Office also reported an increase of multiple homicide cases and a rise of gang attacks using IEDs and grenades to target police and security forces. Throughout the year, police and military were involved in about 243 confrontations with gang members and seized 2,039 weapons. At a conference on October 21, Security and Justice Minister Benito Lara announced that the government's recent hardline policies were unsuccessful in decreasing the homicide rate and improving security. Therefore, he proposed the implementation of the new "Gang Reinsertion Law" which would allow for gang members not to be charged on the terrorist act as far as they did not commit serious crimes and comply with the law. *sen*

GUATEMALA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: CCDA, CUC, indigenous groups et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and resources between various farmers' associations such as the Peasant Committee of the Highlands (CCDA) and the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC) as well as various indigenous groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Violent protests against hydroelectric power plants and operating mines occurred in the Guatemala and Huehuetenango departments. Sparked by the arrest of two indigenous activists during a protest against the Santa Cruz Barillas hydroelectric power project in San Mateo Ixtatán, Huehuetenango, on January 19, approx. 200 protesters marched to the local court in Santa Eulalia, Huehuetenango, the following day. After the two activists' release on January 21, the mayor of the municipality, a supporter of the project, shot into the crowd in front of the courthouse, injuring two indigenous people. One of them died in hospital as a result of his injuries on March 15. On March 24, Pascual Pablo Francisco, a prominent activist against the project and community leader of Barillas,

was found killed in Chancolín, Huehuetenango, after having been missing for three days. On May 26, 300 officers of the National Civil Police (PNC) cleared a blockade by 75 opponents of the El Tambor silver mine in La Puya, Guatemala department, who had camped in front of the mine for three days, resulting in eleven activists and 15 PNC members injured.

On August 3, after six local residents had blocked the access road to the mine with trucks, 100 PNC forces were deployed to the mine's entrance. The Human Rights Ombudsman Jorge de León Duque successfully mediated with both parties.

On April 17, 450 Mayan families from the Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, and Izabal departments, headed by CCDA, camped in front of the presidential palace in the capital Guatemala City to reinforce their demands for an end of forced evictions and the criminalization of activists as well as to call for reforms of the agrarian law.

After the Public Prosecutor's Office and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala had uncovered major corruption scandals of the government in April, nationwide protests took place, culminating on April 25 with 50,000 people protesting in Guatemala City. This led to the resignation of Vice President Roxana Baldetti on May 8 and President Otto Pérez Molina on September 2. As the scandals were unveiled, 72 farmers' organizations and indigenous communities, including CCDA and CUC, formed the Social and Popular Assembly on April 28, calling for a constituent assembly to implement major changes to the electoral law, the Political Parties Act, and the constitution. General elections were held without any changes in the electoral law on September 6, followed by a run-off on October 25.

On December 3, 449 representatives of 165 indigenous and civil society groups passed a manifesto aiming to found a plurinational state on the concept of "buen vivir" and especially seeking to overcome the current economic system considered exploitative. tk

HAITI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent conflict over national power between several opposition groups, partly under the banner of the Patriotic Movement of the Democratic Opposition (MOPOD), and the government continued.

Opposition groups held several protests in the capital Port-au-Prince in January, gathering several thousand participants protesting the execution of the agreement between the executive, the legislative, and the judicative on 12/29/14. Some protests turned violent as the police used tear gas and water cannon while protesters threw stones. Activists claimed that President Michel Martelly was not honoring the commitments made for the creation of a consensus government and that he had appointed a new prime minister without involving the legislative.

Along with the National Front of Haitian Labor Unions, MOPOD held protests in Port-au-Prince and Pétit-Goâve, Ouest, on February 2, demanding a lowering of fuel prices. Following negotiations with the National Platform of Transport Syndicates the next day, the government reduced the price of fuel at the pump. Dissatisfied with the outcome, the New Political Alliance and the Mixed Liberation Front held another protest

in Petit-Goâve on February 4, followed by a demonstration on the next day by students of the University of Haiti in Port-au-Prince. Clashes with the police left ten people wounded. Further clashes flared up in both cities throughout February and extended to Cap-Haitien, Nord, with demonstrations held by MOPOD and the drivers' union, demanding further cuts on the fuel price and the demission of President Martelly. During the last of these protests in Port-au-Prince on February 27, protesters set a MINUSTAH pick-up vehicle on fire and several people were injured.

Claude Joazard, a local candidate of the opposition party Fanmi Lavalas, called for protests in Ouanaminthe and Fort Liberté, Nord-Est, with several hundred protesters taking to the streets on April 13 and 16. They demanded the electrification of the area, the provision of drinking water, and the reduction of food prices. The protests led to the death of one MINUSTAH officer and left several people injured.

Haiti's legislative and first round of presidential elections held on August 9 and October 25 respectively, sparked violence around voting stations in several parts of the country. The National Network for the Defense of Human Rights (RNDDH) reported that throughout July and August, at least five people were killed and 36 were injured in relation to electoral campaigns in the Ouest department alone. For example, on July 22, three persons were fatally shot in a drive-by while they were hanging up posters for a parliamentary candidate of the VERITE platform. During a demonstration organized by the Pitit Dessalines opposition organization on November 22, two men in police uniforms attacked the activists with machetes, killing one and injuring another. Several protests across the country flared up on December 20 after the publication of the legislative elections results. In Terrier Rouge, Nord-Est, clashes with the police left one activist dead. The second round of the presidential elections, originally slated for December 27, was postponed by the Provisional Electoral Council. osv

HONDURAS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: LIBRE, PAC, PINU, PL, FNRP, anti-government activists vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over system and national power between opposition parties and non-party opposition groups, on the one hand, and the government of the National Party (PN), on the other, remained violent.

On April 22, the Honduran Supreme Court (CSJ) adopted constitutional amendments enabling presidential re-election, which had been highly disputed since the 2009 ouster of then-president José Manuel Zelaya. On the initiative of the PN, the proposal had been submitted to the CSJ earlier this year. The opposition parties Liberty and Refoundation (LIBRE), the Anti-Corruption Party (PAC), the Innovation and Unity Party (PINU), and the Liberal Party (PL) appealed before the CSJ against the re-election ruling on April 27, calling for the impeachment of the court's magistrates.

In early May, high-ranking government officials and PN members were involved in a corruption scandal concerning allegations of fraud and embezzlement within the social security institute IHSS. From May 29 onwards, several thousand people protested in nationwide marches with torches against the corruption scandal. Members of LIBRE, PAC, and the civil so-

ciety organization National Popular Resistance Front (FRNP) supported the protesters. On June 3, President Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado admitted that the 2013 presidential campaign had received funds from the IHSS. Two days later, about 8,000 protesters demanded the resignation of President Hernández as well as the installment of an international commission to fight impunity and corruption (CICIH), similar to the UN-led CICIG in Guatemala. The main supporter of the establishment of the CICIH was the newly-formed civil “Los Indignados” movement which started a hunger strike on June 22 and set up tents near the presidential palace in the capital Tegucigalpa. By the end of June, the strikers had clashed with riot police on several occasions. On June 23, Hernández proposed a national dialogue to stop protests and to promote the creation of an anti-corruption system other than the CICIH.

Throughout the second half of the year, protests continued. For instance, on June 29, members of several civil society organizations blocked the street to Guatemala for several hours near Copán, Copán department. On July 3, members of “Los Indignados” filed lawsuits against the police due to previous violent acts against the protesters’ camp. One month later, Congress rejected an initiative to hold a plebiscite on the creation of the CICIH by 66 votes for and 56 against. On September 29, the OAS announced the Mission to Support the Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). Despite previous talks with the OAS, the “Los Indignados” rejected the MACCIH by declaring it to be biased in favor of the government. FRNP also opposed the installation of MACCIH and organized a nationwide strike on October 1. Hundreds of people participated and blocked streets and bridges in major cities including Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, Cortés department. The protests intensified following the September resignation of Guatemala’s president Otto Pérez after a UN-backed institution had uncovered a corruption network [→ Guatemala (opposition)]. On November 4, protesters clashed with riot police at an anti-corruption demonstration in Tegucigalpa and other cities. The police fired tear gas and water cannons to stop the approx. 500 protesters from blocking the main road between the capital and San Pedro Sula. rma

HONDURAS – EL SALVADOR (ISLA CONEJO)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Honduras vs. El Salvador

Conflict items: territory

The territorial conflict between Honduras and El Salvador over the island Isla Conejo and adjacent waters in the Gulf of

Fonseca de-escalated. Both countries upheld their claims to the disputed area. For instance, in early February, former Ambassador to Honduras and member of the Salvadoran Parliament Sigifredo Ochoa Pérez urged Honduran President Orlando Hernández to vacate the island from Honduran military personnel and accused Honduras of a policy of “territorial expansionism.” In a subsequent meeting with his Salvadoran counterpart Sanchez Ceren on February 15, the issue was not part of the agenda. The SICA meeting in December, in which El Salvador received the presidency from Honduras, also did not mention the dispute. peh

JAMAICA (DRUG GANGS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: drug gangs vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational predominance between various drug gangs and the government remained violent. According to the US Overseas Security Advisory Council, most crime and violence in the country was gang-related. The country remained the largest Caribbean supplier of marijuana to the US and local Caribbean islands and an important transit hub for cocaine and synthetic drugs trafficked from South America to international markets.

At a press conference of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) on January 7 in the capital Kingston, police officials voiced their intentions to further curb gang violence and to decrease homicide rates. Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of crime Glenmore Hinds stated that the police would employ a number of anti-crime strategies such as the formation of a Guns-For-Drugs-Trade task force to disarm the gangs.

Various arrests took place in the areas most affected by violence, such as Spanish Town, Tivoli Gardens, and St. James, all part of the capital Kingston. On March 14, the police arrested a leading member of the One Order gang in St. Catherine, reportedly a major contributor to the ongoing violence in the capital. On May 27, several members of One Order were charged under the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, the so-called “anti-gang law”, in St. Catherine, among them a police constable.

In mid-July, three police officers were killed in seemingly systematic and coordinated attacks against the JCF in Kingston. On July 28, the JCF launched a joint military operation against the Sparta Gang and Rebel Gang in St. James with more than 100 policemen and 55 soldiers. According to Superintendent Steve McGregor, two gunmen were shot dead. In addition, the JCF stated that inter-gang violence caused by power struggles among the gangs themselves remained rampant. On July 14, three civilians were shot dead and one was injured in an inter-gang shootout in St. James. Six days later, police intervened in a gunfight between two rivaling and heavily armed gangs in Kingston, leaving one policeman injured. The overall number of homicides increased by about 20 percent compared to 2014, marking a five-year high of about 45 killings per 100,000 inhabitants in comparison to 36 per 100,000 in the previous year, 44 in 2013, and 62 in 2009. jf

MEXICO (CNTE ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: CNTE et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) and the government led by President Enrique Peña Nieto continued. CNTE mobilization predominantly took place in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Michoacán, sporadically joined by smaller unions and teacher trainees, the so-called normalistas [→ Mexico (public security)].

Protest marches, blockades, and attacks on government of-

fices were carried out throughout the year. On February 24, Federal Police (PF) cleared the airport of Acapulco, Guerrero, which had been occupied by around 4,500 CNTE-associated unionists demanding the payment of outstanding salaries. A subsequent clash left approx. seven policemen and five protesters injured. Another 120 were arrested. Protesters threw stones while the police responded using tear gas. Protests increased in frequency as the mid-term elections scheduled for June 7 approached. The day before the elections, PF disbanded the occupation of the National Electoral Institute's office in Huajuapán de León, Oaxaca, which CNTE had set up in the attempt to boycott the elections. A total of 20 people were injured when the police used tear gas and protesters hurled stones and wielded clubs.

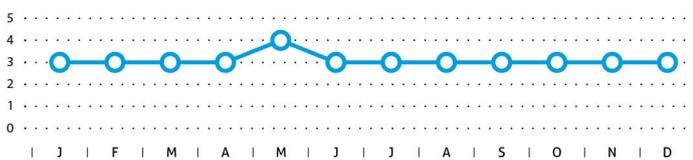
Between October and December, teachers' unions and normalistas repeatedly tried to disrupt the performance of teacher evaluation tests, a crucial part of the president's education reform. On October 18, for instance, protesters tried to obstruct the evaluations in Ocozocoautla de Espinosa, Chiapas, leading to a clash with state police, leaving eleven people injured. Teachers torched a police car and damaged a public bus. On December 8, normalistas blocked a toll booth in Zirahuén, Michoacán, demanding jobs without evaluation tests. After anti-riot police had cleared the place, about 200 normalistas and locals returned and attacked the platoon of around 40 policemen with Molotov cocktails, explosive devices, stones, and clubs. A total of 52 normalistas were arrested while the injured amounted to five policemen and twelve normalistas. The same day, a protest march numbering 3,300 participants in Ocozocoautla de Espinosa, Chiapas, escalated when CNTE members attacked a 5,000-strong PF contingent with stones, clubs, and incendiary devices. Three policemen were injured and six protesters arrested. One teacher was run over by a car and died. This incident and the Michoacán clashes triggered a series of further protests. For example, on December 10, 50,000 CNTE members marched in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. They attacked the police with clubs and stones, injured five policemen, damaged three police buses, and stole police equipment. Three policemen were taken hostage and were only released when authorities agreed to exchange them for the six protesters detained on December 8. Despite widespread protests, 86.2 percent of all convened teachers participated in the nationwide evaluations. jok

MEXICO (DRUG CARTELS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: drug cartels vs. vigilante groups vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The war over subnational predominance, illegal drugs, and natural resources between various drug cartels and vigilante groups known as autodefensas, on the one hand, and the government under President Enrique Peña Nieto, on the other, continued. The most active drug cartels were the Gulf Car-

tel (CDG), Los Zetas, the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación* (CJNG), the Sinaloa Cartel, and Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT). Jalisco, Tamaulipas, Michoacán, and Guerrero were the most affected states. Clashes between government forces and armed groups took place almost daily. Additionally, the inter-cartel conflict remained highly violent [→ Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)].

Violence in Jalisco increased compared to the previous year. On March 19, supposed CJNG gunmen armed with assault rifles and 9mm pistols attacked a patrol from Jalisco's Joint State and Municipal Police Force (FU) near the town of Ocotlán. Five police officers, three presumed criminals and three civilians were killed. In another attack on a FU convoy on its way from Puerto Vallarta to Guadalajara on April 6, five police officers and ten alleged CJNG members were killed. On May 1, the government initiated "Operation Jalisco" deploying 6,000 military forces, Federal Police (PF), and prosecutors targeting CJNG. In response, up to 250 CJNG members set up roadblocks with burning vehicles in 25 municipalities, set fire to eleven bank branches and five petrol stations, and engaged the state forces in four separate firefights. One police officer and eight cartel members were killed and 13 people injured. The same day, CJNG brought down a Cougar EC725 helicopter of the air force using a RPG and killing six.

Violent encounters took place on a weekly basis in the north-eastern border state of Tamaulipas. Federal troops on February 4 killed eight people intervening in separate battles of the rivaling Matamoros and Reynosa factions of CDG along the highway Matamoros-Reynosa. The arrest of José "El Gafe" Hernández Fuentes, presumed head of the Reynosa CDG cell Los Metros, on April 17, sparked an outburst of violence in the city. At least six people were killed and five injured during gun battles in the following nine days.

Michoacán remained a hotspot. PF and the military killed 42 CJNG members during a three-hour-long shootout on a ranch in the municipality of Tanhuato on May 22. CJNG killed one police officer. PF confiscated 38 large-calibre weapons and one grenade launcher. On October 6, the newly-elected Governor Silvano Aureoles Conejo announced to increase the 3,000 deployed PF, military, and marine forces in the state by 5,000. Similarly, on October 27, Secretary of the Interior Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong and Guerrero's new Governor Héctor Astudillo Flores announced to deploy 1,500 federal security forces to Guerrero as part of a new security strategy. Despite the vigilantes' formal integration into Rural Defense Corps (FRE) on 05/10/14, they repeatedly clashed with both drug cartels and state authorities. In Michoacán, on January 6, at least 300 federal forces regained control of the city hall in Apatzingán, which had been occupied by vigilantes for several days. The federal forces opened fire, killing 16 and arresting 44. On June 23, 17 FRE troops and presumed CJNG gunmen died in two firefights near Tumbiscatío. After more than 600 vigilantes of the United Front for the Security and Development of the State of Guerrero (FUSDEG) occupied the town of Petaquillas, Guerrero, at least 1,000 military forces aimed to disarm them. On May 9, around 300 vigilantes armed with shotguns took control of the municipality of Chilapa and disarmed 40 municipal policemen of their AR-15 and AR-70 weapons. Rivaling FUSDEG factions clashed in Xolapa on June 6, leaving 13 vigilantes dead.

In the course of the year, security forces arrested and killed several cartel leaders. On February 27, the police arrested Servando "La Tuta" Gómez Martínez, leader of LCT, in Morelia, Michoacán. In a raid on March 4, 50 elements of PF and marines captured Omar "Z-42" Treviño Morales, head of Los Zetas, in San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León state. After

MEXICO (DRUG CARTELS)



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December

NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

data: HIIK map:jok

marines and US Drug Enforcement Administration officers had arrested Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán Loera, head of the Sinaloa Cartel, on 02/22/14, he escaped from the Altiplano maximum security prison in Almoloya de Juárez, Mexico state, on July 11.

Drug cartels engaged in many illegal businesses other than drug-trafficking, such as human trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion. Oil theft sharply increased in 2015, amounting to more than nine million barrels, according to Pemex figures. asm

MEXICO (INTER-CARTEL VIOLENCE, PARAMILITARY GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: CDG et al. vs. Los Zetas et al. vs. CJNG et al. vs. Sinaloa et al. vs. LCT et al. vs. LFM et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over subnational predominance, illegal drugs, and natural resources between various drug cartels remained highly violent. The most involved combat groups were those of the Gulf Cartel (CDG), Los Zetas, Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), Sinaloa Cartel, and Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT). CDG and Los Zetas stayed the most powerful, albeit almost all major cartels fragmented further. Baja California, Guerrero, and Tamaulipas were the most contested states.

Fights between rivaling factions of the Sinaloa and the Tijuana cartels caused a wave of violence in Baja California, leaving 101 people dead from January 1 to March 10. On April 5, 13 banners were hung from bridges in the northwestern border city Tijuana signed by CJNG and the Tijuana Cartel, warning of an upsurge of confrontations with the Sinaloa Cartel. Intercartel violence in Tijuana left 78 people dead during August and September.

In Guerrero, violent power struggles between the Beltrán Leyva remainders Los Ardillos and Los Rojos, and the LFM splinter group Guerreros Unidos were on the rise. On January 5, authorities discovered six graves near Chilapa containing eleven heads and ten corpses of supposed Los Ardillos members next to a message signed by Los Rojos. Battles between Los Ardillos, Los Rojos, and Guerreros Unidos from April 3 to 9 left 25 people dead, twelve of these in Acapulco and seven in Chilpancingo. On July 22, Los Rojos killed 23 Los Ardillos members in Acapulco, Iguala, and Zitlala during separate incidents.

On December 28, the bodies of LFM founder Carlos “El Tísico” Rosales Mendoza and three more supposed LFM members were found on a highway close to Parácuaro, Michoacán. Shortly before, a nearby reunion of alleged Tierra Caliente cartel leaders had ended in a shootout.

The fourth year of fights between CDG and Los Zetas as well as CDG infighting remained highly violent. On February 4, confrontations between the rivaling CDG factions Los Ciclones and Los Metros claimed the lives of over 30 people and led to road blockades in Matamoros, Reynosa, Rio Bravo, and Valle Hermoso, Tamaulipas.

27 CDG gunmen were killed in an intra-cartel shootout in Camargo on March 26. Following the capture of José “El Gafe” Tiburcio Hernández, the presumed leader of Los Metros, on April 17 [→ Mexico (drug cartels)], shootouts of combatting

CDG groups were reported in six suburbs of Reynosa. On June 9, 40 gunmen died in a firefight between Los Ciclones and Los Metros in Control, Estación Ramírez, La Sierrita, and Lucio Blanco. A total of 36 people were killed in clashes between CDG and Los Zetas in Nuevo León state from June 19 to 21. On June 19 for example, supposed CDG members shot dead ten Los Zetas members in a beer distribution center in the municipality of García.

Rivalries between the Los Memos and Los Salazar cells of the Sinaloa Cartel led to an upsurge in violence in Sonora state. Near Sonoyta, 28 gunmen and two civilians died between April 30 and May 5. Especially in the area of Desierto de Sonora, more than 1,200 fled their homes due to heavy fighting in May.

In Veracruz state, shootouts between CJNG and Los Zetas left ten people dead near the state capital Xalapa on May 3. From November 1 to 28, the bodies of 41 people were found near the municipality of Cosolapa, Oaxaca state, and identified as members of rivaling Los Zetas factions. asm

MEXICO (PUBLIC SECURITY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: normalistas et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis concerning the political system and the handling of public security between teacher trainees, so-called normalistas, and teachers’ unions, on the one hand, and the government under President Enrique Peña Nieto, on the other hand, continued. The conflict had been triggered by the abduction of 43 normalistas and bystanders as well as the killing of six and the injuring of 25 on 09/26/14 in Iguala, Guerrero state. The case remained largely unsolved by the government. On January 27, then-Attorney General Jesús Murillo Karam declared the missing students dead.

Normalistas, teachers’ unions, and other solidary organizations continued protests against the government [→ Mexico (CNTE et al.)]. They blamed it for covering up the collusion of local government agencies with the local cartel-offshoot Guerreros Unidos [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Particularly every month around the date of the Iguala incident, protests in different parts of the country were staged, mainly in Guerrero and in the capital Mexico City, often involving violence. For instance, on January 26 marking the four-month anniversary, protesters took to the streets in 21 Mexican states and in nine other countries, calling upon the government to thoroughly investigate the Iguala case. On March 28, a police check in Tixtla, Guerrero, resulted in a clash, leaving four state policemen and two students injured while another two were arrested. A few hours later, normalistas torched one fire station, one police station, two buses, and three motorcycles. On June 5, five state policemen and around ten protesters were injured when the police cleared the blocking of a gas station in Tlapa, Guerrero. In view of the upcoming state elections on June 7, normalistas and other protest groups announced to boycott the polls. Elections in Tixtla had to be annulled due to normalistas stealing election material the day of the election. On several occasions, police intercepted normalistas on their way to protest marches. For instance, on September 26, the police stopped students travelling by bus near El Correo, Michoacán state. While the former used tear gas, the students hurled stones and torched tires, leaving 20 normalistas in-

jured. The same day, more than 15,000 people demonstrated in at least eight Mexican states as well as abroad to commemorate the first anniversary of the disappearances.

The Interdisciplinary Independent Group of Experts, designated by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to investigate the Ayotzinapa case, signed a ten-point agreement with the government on October 19. The agreement encompassed the procedure of further investigations in the case. The following day, the group of experts presented its final report on the Ayotzinapa case before the IACHR. On November 30, relatives of the 43 normalistas and the director of the Attorney General's Office agreed on the terms of further investigations. Subsequently, the protesters removed their camp near the presidential residence in Mexico City. *jok*

NICARAGUA (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Miskito groups, YATAMA vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

A violent crisis over autonomy and resources in the coastal regions of the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN) erupted between members of the Miskito indigenous and the indigenous party Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Aslatakanka (YATAMA), on the one hand, and the government of President Daniel Ortega, on the other.

YATAMA and other indigenous organizations had been granted enhanced autonomy rights after the civil war in the 1980s, in which armed indigenous groups had fought against the government. YATAMA developed into a political party after an autonomy agreement had been signed in 1988. In recent years, the party had repeatedly expressed its dissent with policies of the government, especially regarding the enforcement of indigenous rights [*→* Nicaragua (opposition groups)].

Tensions developed after a series of murders and abductions of indigenous and their leaders in Waspam municipality in the RACCN, allegedly conducted by illegal settlers called colonos. Up to 15 Miskitos were reportedly killed, mostly by bands of about 30 colonos armed with AK-47 assault rifles. After Miskito groups had allegedly burned down about 20 accommodations of colonos, clashes between Miskitos and settlers in late August and early September left numerous indigenous dead or wounded. More than 1,000 Miskitos fled the region in September in fear of reprisal attacks by colonos, crossing the border to Honduras or resettling in the regional capital Puerto Cabezas/Bilwi.

Miskito groups took up arms and organized into self-defense groups in the beginning of September. They accused the government of neglecting the issue as well as individual politicians of supporting the clear-cutting of tropical forest and exploitation of hardwoods by colonos. The government, in turn, ordered an investigation and deployed national police and military forces to the indigenous territory Wangky Twi Tasba Raya on September 7.

On September 14, an armed clash between members of YATAMA and the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) left an indigenous leader dead and eight others injured in Waspam. The same evening, about 100,000 indigenous marched in Waspam requesting the government to end violence by taking action against the colonos and to enforce

the land title regulation. The next day, former leader of the Gobierno Territorial Indígena de Wangki Twi Tasba Raya Constantino Rommel and two others were injured on a road near Waspam, when they allegedly failed to stop at a control post, resulting in police and military opening fire on their vehicle. YATAMA leader and member of the National Assembly Brooklyn Rivera Bryan was accused of illegally selling land titles to settlers, acting "against the fatherland" as well as of inciting violence in the Caribbean Coast, having him removed from his parliamentary seat by the FSLN majority vote on September 21.

Ortega condemned Miskitos taking up arms, but stated that the indigenous communities had the support of the government and that they would regain their belongings according to the Autonomy Law of the Caribbean Coast. *peh*

NICARAGUA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis concerning the orientation of the political system and national power between various opposition groups and the government of President Daniel Ortega's ruling party Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) continued.

On February 25, leaders of the two main opposition parties, the Independent Liberal Party (PLI) and the Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC), as well as the initiative "Cruzada PLC por la Unidad" formed an alliance called the National Coalition for Democracy (CND) to run in the 2016 presidential elections against the FSLN.

From April onwards, the CND and civil society movements organized weekly demonstrations in the capital Managua in demand of free and fair presidential elections in 2016. Several of these marches turned violent. On July 8, a police unit clashed with anti-government protesters outside the Supreme Electoral Court (CSE) in Managua demonstrating for the independence of the CSE. The police used tear gas, rubber bullets, and physical violence against the protesters, leaving several of them injured, including PLI deputies. On September 2, protesters were fired at during a demonstration. PLI officials later accused the FSLN of having infiltrated protests in order to provoke disturbance and violence. On November 18, members of the Sandinista Youth (JP), the FSLN youth organization, attacked a protest march. The same day, the police detained three civil society activists and three PLI members, two of them deputies, accusing them of violence against journalists and attempted murder. PLI President Eduardo Montealegre rejected the accusations and designated the detained as political prisoners.

Throughout the year, opposition groups and civil society organizations also demonstrated against the construction of the Inter-oceanic Canal. Ortega had awarded the construction contract to the Hong Kong Nicaragua Canal Development Company in June 2013. Approx. 15,000 people took to the streets in Juigalpa, Chontales department, on June 13. At a protest march to Managua in late October, JP members attacked participants, while another seven protesters were injured in clashes with riot police. One week later, government officials announced that the environmental and social impact assessment for the canal project had been approved.

Further demonstrations of indigenous groups and parties took place in late August in Puerto Cabezas, Autonomous Region of the Northern Atlantic (RAAN). Alleged JP and Sandinista supporters attacked members of the indigenous YATAMA party, leaving one dead and five injured. The attacks followed violent clashes between the indigenous Miskito group and illegal settlers in RAAN [→ Nicaragua (indigenous groups)]. After confrontations between mine workers and police in the Bonanza mine in the same region, hundreds of workers started a protest in the El Limón mine, León department, on September 25. Clashes with the police left one policeman dead and further 23 officers as well as eight protesters injured when mine workers hurled Molotov cocktails, rocks, and sticks at the police. On October 12, the government canceled a gold mining project in the El Limón mine due to environmental concerns and the recent violent confrontations. hzi

NICARAGUA – COLOMBIA (SEA BORDER)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1825

Conflict parties: Nicaragua vs. Colombia

Conflict items: territory, resources

The non-violent crisis between Nicaragua and Colombia over the maritime border surrounding the archipelagos of San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina continued. On March 25, the Chief of the Nicaraguan army General Julio César Avilés Castillo confirmed the plan to acquire military devices from Russia. He justified the decision as necessary to protect the waters the ICJ had attributed to Nicaragua in a 2013 ruling. Two days later, Colombian Senator Jimmy Chomorro called the statement of Avilés Castillo an “unfriendly signal.” Avilés Castillo reiterated the decision to purchase the military devices on April 23, deeming it necessary to fight drug trafficking. In September, Colombian Ambassador to the Netherlands Carlos Gustavo Arrieta repeated earlier statements that Colombia would not abide by the 2013 ICJ ruling because the ICJ did not have had the competence to resolve the border conflict. Instead, Colombia insisted on a bilateral treaty. On October 23, Colombian Foreign Minister María Ángela Holguín stated that there had been informal negotiations between Nicaragua and Colombia about a solution of the border conflict besides a hearing in The Hague. The Nicaraguan President of the Commission of Foreign Affairs in the National Assembly Jacinto Suárez denied this later, adding that Nicaragua’s position was non-negotiable. hzi

NICARAGUA – COSTA RICA (RÍO SAN JUAN)

Intensity: 1 | Change: **END** | Start: 1858

Conflict parties: Nicaragua vs. Costa Rica

Conflict items: territory

The territorial dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica over the San Juan river and the river island Isla Calero / Harbor Head ended after a final ICJ ruling, which both sides accepted. The origins of the conflict date back to 1858, when the two countries had signed the Cañas-Jerez Treaty granting Nicaraguan sovereignty over the San Juan border river and Costa Rica the right of free navigation for commercial purposes. Throughout the years, both parties had accused each

other of stationing security personnel and violating the border as well as causing environmental damage. Despite previous ICJ rulings, tensions between the two countries persisted. On December 16, the ICJ issued a final ruling granting Costa Rica sovereignty over the disputed island Isla Calero / Harbor Head and concluding that Nicaragua had violated Costa Rica’s sovereignty. Although there was no evidence for environmental damages by a Costa Rican road parallel to the border river, the ruling found that Costa Rica did not fulfill its obligation to carry out an environmental impact study before constructing the road. Nicaragua was granted the right to navigate and dredge in the San Juan River. Both sides announced to normalize their relationship. hzi

PARAGUAY (EPP, AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: EPP, ACA, agrarian movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over land reform between several farmers’ organizations, the left-leaning People’s Army of Paraguay (EPP), their splinter cell Armed Peasant Association (ACA), indigenous groups, and landless people, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. These groups continued to express their demands for integral agrarian, social, and political reform.

On January 7, the Joint Task Force (FTC), a military unit deployed to counter EPP’s activities, killed Albino Jara Larrea, one of the founding leaders of the ACA, during a shootout in the city of Tacuara, Concepción department. Four other ACA members and a civilian were also killed. On January 28, EPP kidnapped a farmer couple of German descent near Azotey, Concepción. They were subsequently killed during a confrontation between EPP members and the FTC. Each side accused the other of shooting and killing the hostages. On February 18, members of the EPP attacked two police stations in Concepción, causing only material damage. On March 24, EPP killed three rural workers in a farm located in the district of Tacuatí, San Pedro department. They destroyed one tractor and two motorcycles. The group left pamphlets at the scene, threatening to kill local landowners who cut down forests or used genetically modified crops. On July 12, EPP members killed two police officers in an ambush in Colonia Pacola, San Pedro. Violence continued on July 17, when three police officers were killed and their vehicle was torched in a similar assault by members of the EPP near Santa Rosa del Aguaray in San Pedro.

On August 3, members of the EPP killed an employee of Lagunita estate in San Pedro. Five days later, two members of a Mennonite colony were kidnapped by EPP in Tacuatí. One was released to communicate a ransom of USD 500,000. On August 9, a group called Justicieros de la Frontera threatened relatives of EPP leaders, in one case attacking the house of one senior leader in San Pedro del Ycuamandyju, San Pedro. On August 30, the EPP sabotaged a power pylon in Colonia Manitoba in Tacuatí, leaving approx. 750,000 people without electricity. The group left behind a pamphlet condemning weapon possession, the use of herbicides, and the entrance into forest areas, as well as threatening to kill anyone pursuing such activities. Subsequently, on September 1, the FTC dismissed its spokesperson Army Major Alfredo Jonás

Ramírez due to his remarks denouncing alleged lack of support and complicity of national authorities with the EPP.

In addition, Defense Minister Bernardino Soto Estigarribia accused the military of acting unilaterally and eventually would resign on November 5. On September 4, members of the EPP entered an estate in Colonia Pacola, capturing three members of the Mennonite community and four farmers. They later released the hostages, leaving an EPP pamphlet at the scene as well as one shed, two tractors, a car, and four chainsaws torched.

On September 7, the FTC found both ACA and EPP uniforms in an abandoned pick-up truck in Horqueta, Concepción, leading authorities to the conclusion that the two groups were again reunited after the ACA's emergence in September 2014. The alleged ACA logistics chief, Daniel Rivarola Areco, was arrested on September 8.

On November 16, the FTC killed ACA leader Alfredo Jara Larrea and three other heads of the group in a shootout in the district of Yby Yauú, Concepción.

Several farmers' and workers' organizations organized protests throughout the year, demanding a fair distribution of land. For instance, in late October, thousands of farmers led by the Pyahurā political party and the National Farmers' Federation marched towards the capital Asunción to protest the "unsustainable development model," demanding instead the creation of a "patriotic junta" to protect farmer interests. cb

PERU (OPPOSITION MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: opposition movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The conflict over resources and the orientation of the political system related to socio-environmental issues such as water pollution, water shortage, and better working conditions between various opposition groups and the government remained violent. Throughout the year, many of the nationwide demonstrations and strikes in the mining sector turned violent.

On January 23, local farmers blocked the entrance to the Las Águilas mine in Ocuvi, Puno region, and hurled rocks with slingshots at police officers. In turn, the latter used tear gas to disperse the crowd. The protesters accused the mining company Cimesa of having contaminated their water resources. The clash left two police officers dead. Three days later, indigenous communities occupied at least 14 oil wells operated by the company Pluspetrol in Loreto region. They demanded compensation for environmental damages resulting from land exploitation and oil contamination. The Achuar indigenous community ended the occupation one month later, after they had reached an agreement with Pluspetrol. On February 10, police forces killed at least one protester in a demonstration against natural gas exploration in Pichanaqui, Junín region. Further, 37 civilians and 38 police officers were injured as a crowd stormed the Juan Valer Sandoval Army base used by Pluspetrol. Energy and Mines Minister Eleodoro Mayorga and other cabinet members traveled to Pichanaqui one day later to initiate dialogue with protest leaders.

Demonstrations against the proposed Tía María mining project also flared up again in Arequipa region. Although, Mayorga had issued a statement in early April announcing

that the project would not contaminate water, protests continued. On April 22, police forces killed one protester and injured several others during clashes. Another protester was killed by police officers on May 5, as they tried to clear a highway blocked by about 500 people. The following day, protesters killed one officer and injured four others using metal chains and rocks. On May 9, the government deployed further 2,000 police officers to Islay, Arequipa region, to restore order. After further clashes, the mining company Southern Copper announced a 60-day interruption of the project. On May 23, the government declared a 60-day state of emergency for Islay after approx. 400 protesters had blocked the Pan-American Highway. In clashes, police forces killed one civilian.

In August, another mine conflict turned violent in the town of La Oroya, Junín region. Protesters called for flexible environmental standards, which would help to reopen the La Oroya mine. Police officers killed at least one protester and wounded further two dozen people while attempting to clear the Carretera Central Highway.

A further protest against the Las Bambas mine project erupted in the town of Challhuahuacho, Apurímac region, by the end of September. The government deployed 1,500 police and 150 military officers to the region where 15,000 people had gathered to protest against the mine project. On September 28, police forces killed four protesters and wounded a dozen others when approx. 2,000 people tried to enter the mine. One day later, the government declared a 30-day state of emergency and deployed further military personnel. mgm

PERU (SHINING PATH)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1980

Conflict parties: SL vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources

The conflict between the left-wing Maoist rebel group Shining Path (SL) and the government over subnational predominance and resources remained violent.

SL had split up into Huallaga Regional Committee (CRH) and Center Regional Committee (CRC) years before, with only the latter remaining the fighting force in Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro river valley (VRAEM). In 2015, the National Counterterrorism Directorate estimated the number of active fighters at 170 to 200. The government accused SL of protecting and operating with coca growers and drug traffickers in VRAEM, the main coca growing region in the country.

In February, the government established a no-fly zone over VRAEM and in August, Congress approved legislation that allowed the Peruvian Air Force to shoot down small planes suspected of smuggling narcotics. By late June, the Armed Forces and the National Police (PNP) had destroyed 86 clandestine airstrips used by drug traffickers, 195 drug labs, and had seized 13 light aircrafts. On February 12, SL attacked a military base in La Mar province, Ayacucho region, wounding one soldier. In reaction to the attack, the government extended the state of emergency in parts of the departments Huánuco, San Martín and Ucayali. On June 1, the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control labeled SL as a significant foreign narcotics trafficker. On June 28, the police arrested the SL's logistics chief Neymer Keni "Pepe" Maldonado Bermeo (CRH) in the district of La Pólvara, San Martín

region. Thereafter, the government lifted the 30-year lasting state of emergency in the Alto Huallaga jungle. On July 21, SL killed one military officer and wounded another near Paquichari, Ayacucho region. In a military operation in VRAEM one week later, security forces rescued 39 people who had been kept as slaves by SL for up to 30 years. In a second operation, on August 2, military and police forces freed further 15 captives in Pangoa province, Junín region. According to Defense Minister Jakke Valakavi, the hostages, most of them indigenous Ashanika, had been forced into manual labor and had been trained for combat. In early August, police arrested two SL leaders, namely Alexander Alarcon alias Comrade Renan and Dionisio Ramos alias Comrade Yuri, in La Convención province, Cusco region. On September 2, the elite anti-terrorist unit "Brigada Lobo" conducted an operation in Virgen Casa, Ayacucho region, using three Mi-17 combat transport helicopters and a Mi-35 helicopter gunship. Deputy Defense Minister Iván Vega stated that six soldiers were wounded and six guerillas equipped with PKT machine guns were killed. On October 24, SL blew up a transmitter mast in Puerto San Antonio, Huancavelica region. Two days later, the Armed Forces Joint Command declared the area to be under control again, with aerial and ground patrols controlling the town. mgm

PERU – CHILE (BORDER)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1883

Conflict parties: Peru vs. Chile
Conflict items: territory

The territorial dispute between Peru and Chile continued. While the implementation of the 2014 ICJ ruling remained pending due to controversies over the exact coordinates of the new maritime border, tensions developed with regard to spying accusations, military exercises at the common border, and Peru's alleged support for Bolivia in its dispute with Chile [→ Bolivia – Chile (access to sea)].

Peru recalled its ambassador to Chile in March, after issuing an official complaint on February 20, accusing Chile of spying on Peruvian naval movements. Peru later accepted an apology and reinstated its ambassador on May 5. On June 26, in a meeting with his Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales in Puno, Peruvian President Ollanta Humala expressed his "solidarity" and that both countries dismissed "threats or the use of force" in international disputes. Chile rejected these remarks and President Michelle Bachelet cancelled a meeting with Humala planned for the following week. In October, Chile recalled its ambassador after the Peruvian congress had voted to form a new administrative district in the land triangle claimed by both countries. The annual military exercise "Huracán" that Chile conducted near the border with Peru and Bolivia and included more than 5,500 troops, sparked renewed diplomatic tensions in November. While Morales called the exercise an "act of intimidation" for both Peru and Bolivia, Peru abstained from using harsh rhetoric in their commentaries. peh

USA – CUBA (SYSTEM)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: USA vs. Cuba
Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The conflict between the USA and Cuba over ideology and international power remained non-violent. The US continued to uphold commercial, economic, and financial sanctions against Cuba. However, both countries formally re-established diplomatic relations after 54 years and numerous rounds of negotiations. The most pressing points of contention were the reopening of their respective embassies and the removal of Cuba from the US Department of State's List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

US President Barack Obama and his Cuban counterpart Raúl Castro met on April 11 at the Summit of the Americas in Panama, marking the first meeting of US and Cuban heads of state in more than 50 years. Obama stated that "disagreements about human rights and democracy" should be countered by engaging with Cuba. The US announced on July 1 to formally re-establish diplomatic relations on July 20. Obama called on the Congress to lift sanctions, most notably the trade embargo.

After 33 years, Cuba was removed from the list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism on May 29. Despite normalization of relations between the US and Cuba, restrictions remained in place. Cuba had been submitting annually a resolution to the UN General Assembly since 1992, demanding an end to the trade embargo the US had imposed on it in 1960. On October 27, as in every year, only the US and Israel voted against the resolution. swa

USA – MEXICO (BORDER SECURITY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: USA vs. Mexico
Conflict items: other

The conflict over border security between the USA and Mexico continued as a violent crisis. Strategies to end illegal immigration and cross-border drug and weapon trafficking as well as the treatment of illegal aliens remained disputed.

On June 18, one Mexican national drowned and another three were injured in a collision between a boat with 20 illegal immigrants and a US Customs and Border Protection vessel off the US coast. US Border Patrol (USBP) personnel had fired warning shots before stopping the boat from entering the US near Encinitas in San Diego County, CA. Mexico demanded an investigation.

On June 5, an FBI-issued statement reported that a USBP helicopter had been shot at from the Mexican side of the border forcing it to make an emergency landing. Mexico supported investigations of the incident. US Representative Henry Cuellar stated in June that the USBP would receive two UH-60 Blackhawk military helicopters in response to the incident. The same month, Texas governor Greg Abbott doubled the budget on border security to USD 800 million for the next two years.

On October 21, a USBP agent fatally shot a Mexican armed with a 20 cm long knife at the Calexico Port of Entry, CA. The

officer shot the man four times in the chest. In response, the Mexican Department of Foreign Relations condemned the practice of using lethal force against Mexican nationals and demanded an investigation.

The number of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) dropped by more than 50 percent as compared to the previous fiscal year. As was the case in the previous period, most of the UAC came from Guatemala, followed by Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras. swa

USA – VENEZUELA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: USA vs. Venezuela

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The conflict between the USA and Venezuela over international power as well as system and ideology continued at a non-violent level. US sanctions against the Venezuelan state oil company Petroleum of Venezuela (PDVSA) remained imposed.

On March 2, Venezuela called on the US to reduce its embassy staff size in the Venezuelan capital Caracas in order to match the Venezuelan staff size in the US capital Washington. A week later, an executive order by US President Barack Obama included targeted sanctions calling Venezuela an “extraordinary threat” to US national security. The next day, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro reacted by deeming Obama’s executive order “a pretense for an intervention.” The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) responded with extraordinary summits between March 16 and 18, condemning the US actions. However, Counselor to the US State Department Thomas Shannon and the chairman of the Venezuelan National Assembly Diosdado Cabello met in Haiti in June. Both sides described the meeting as productive.

Venezuela criticized US comments on Venezuela’s border tensions with Colombia [→ Venezuela – Colombia (border security)]. Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino accused the US of having violated Venezuela’s airspace with a spy plane on November 9. The US Coast Guard denied any involvement.

On November 18, Maduro announced investigations against US National Security Agency’s (NSA) alleged spying activities on PDVSA. A website citing Edward Snowden had revealed the information and claimed that the NSA had spied on the PDVSA for over a decade. While the US refused to make a statement, PDVSA workers protested in Caracas and Guayana on November 23. swa

VENEZUELA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the opposition and the government of President Nicolás Maduro continued.

The implementation of Resolution 8610 enabling security forces to use lethal force against protesters sparked national

and international protest in late January. Violent clashes between the police and demonstrators took place at the anniversary of the 2014 unrest in Caracas and San Cristóbal on February 12. At least 14 policemen and five demonstrators sustained injuries as police used buckshot and tear gas and protesters hurled Molotov cocktails. Tensions rose further when police shot dead a 14-year-old in clashes with protesters on February 24 in San Cristóbal, Táchira state.

The government brought charges against several opposition politicians. Former mayor of San Cristóbal and member of the Popular Will party Daniel Ceballos received additional charges after he had completed his prison sentence in late March. In April, the mayor of Caracas Antonio Ledezma was charged for allegedly having staged a US-funded coup attempt. Ceballos and former opposition leader Leopoldo López (Popular Will), detained in February 2014, went on hunger strike on March 23 and called for a mass rally to protest the government’s failure to set an election date. Tens of thousands took to the streets in Caracas as well as Barquisimeto, Maracaibo, and Valencia on March 30. Finally, the National Electoral Council (CNE) set December 6 as the date for parliamentary elections. Ceballos was later transferred to house arrest due to health reasons, while government critic and former defense minister Raúl Isaías Baduel was granted early release from prison in August. In late June, opposition parties protested against a CNE decision that required gender parity of candidates in the upcoming elections, while the opposition parties’ candidates lists had already been finalized. Due to the barring of various prominent opposition politicians from holding public office, opposition politicians stated that it was impossible to organize free and fair elections.

After the government had closed the border to Colombia and declared a state of emergency in August, the opposition protested against feared restrictions for voters in the border area [→ Venezuela – Colombia (border security)]. On September 10, López was found guilty of “public incitement to violence” and sentenced to 13 years in prison. Clashes outside the courthouse in Caracas between opposition and government supporters as well as police in riot gear left one person killed. On November 25, opposition politician Luis Manuel Díaz was assassinated at an election campaign event of the oppositional Table for Democratic Unity (MUD) in Altigracia de Orituco, Guárico state, by attackers allegedly associated to the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).

Election day passed without violent incidents. The MUD won 112 and the PSUV 55 seats of the overall 167-strong unicameral parliament. The PSUV accepted the results and Maduro called on the opposition to “respect the law” and “end the economic war against the government.” bkm, pch

VENEZUELA – COLOMBIA (BORDER SECURITY)

Intensity: 2 | Change: NEW | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Venezuela vs. Colombia

Conflict items: other

A non-violent crisis between Venezuela and Colombia regarding the situation in their shared border area erupted.

After an incident on July 29 in which Venezuela’s National Guard had clashed with Colombian vendors and killed an alleged smuggler, both countries’ authorities briefly closed the border crossing between Venezuelan Táchira state and Colombia’s Norte de Santander department. On August 19,

three Venezuelan soldiers were injured in a shootout with alleged Colombian paramilitaries in the border town of San Antonio, Táchira. This event resulted in the renewed closure of the border near San Antonio del Táchira and Ureña by Venezuela, subsequently declaring a 60-day state of emergency in five municipalities of Táchira and deploying an additional 1,500 military forces to the area. President Nicolas Maduro accused paramilitary groups from Colombia of operating in the area and called on his Colombian counterpart Juan Manuel Santos to assist in tackling violent groups in the border regions [→ Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)]. Amid the extension of areas affected by the declaration of emergency, Venezuela started to deport Colombian nationals from the border area. In early September, according to local NGOs and the UN, deportation numbers reached 1,400, with another 15,000 people fleeing the area. In total, more than 23,000 people fled the area or were deported. Venezuelan authorities destroyed hundreds of houses built by Colombian immigrants around San Antonio del Táchira. Both countries recalled their respective ambassadors in late August. Colombia's request to call an OAS meeting on the crisis failed to muster the necessary votes whilst offers of support by UNASUR and the UN were ultimately not taken up. On September 8, Venezuelan security forces killed two alleged members of a Colombian-based paramilitary group at the border in Táchira. On September 14, Colombia accused Venezuela of having violated its airspace with F-16 fighter jets the day before, an incident Venezuela explained with adverse weather conditions. This followed two incursions on August 29 and September 12 with a Cougar transport helicopter and a Sukhoi Su-MK2 fighter aircraft, respectively. On September 18, about 15 Venezuelan soldiers crossed the border into Colombia's La Guajira department, prompting the Colombian army to permanently deploy military forces in Maicao municipality.

Mediated by Ecuador and Uruguay, Maduro and Santos held a meeting on September 21, agreeing to normalize relations and work toward the resolution of the crisis. bkm

VENEZUELA – COLOMBIA (MONJES ISLANDS)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1871

Conflict parties: Venezuela vs. Colombia

Conflict items: territory, resources

The dispute between Venezuela and Colombia over the territory of the Monjes archipelago and adjacent maritime possessions and resources in the Gulf of Coquibacoa continued. While Venezuela referred to the islets as its federal dependencies, Colombia repeatedly expressed its claim to the territory. This year, tensions resurfaced after a territorial dispute between Venezuela and Guyana had erupted and led to a region-wide controversy about maritime possessions [→ Venezuela – Guyana]. On May 26, a decree issued by Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro defined extensive sea areas as one of several "Operating Zones of Integral Maritime and Insular Defense" (Zodimain) for Venezuela, implicitly including the Gulf of Coquibacoa. Colombian Foreign Minister María Ángela Holguín delivered a protest note to the Venezuelan government shortly thereafter. On June 23,

Maduro proposed the establishment of a bilateral commission in order to find a solution. On July 6, Maduro underlined that the two countries "will never have a war-like conflict" and offered a revised decree omitting the area under dispute. peh

VENEZUELA – GUYANA

Intensity: 2 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Venezuela vs. Guyana

Conflict items: territory

The non-violent crisis over maritime possessions and the Guayana Esequiba territory between Venezuela and Guyana resurfaced. Guyana's position was supported by CARICOM and the Commonwealth. Venezuela made clear its preference for mediation by the CELAC. The conflict had developed after a 1899 territorial settlement was declared null and void by Venezuela in 1962. Instead, Venezuela laid claim to almost the whole area west of the Essequibo River, extending to almost two-thirds of Guyana's territory without having resorted to escalatory measures since.

In response to oil exploration activities by ExxonMobil in March, which had been authorized by Guyana in maritime areas also claimed by Venezuela, the latter issued Decree No. 1787 that included the region in an extensive "Operating Zone of Integral Maritime and Insular Defense" (Zodimain) on May 26. This measure implied future military deployments and naval activities, which also led to renewed tensions with Colombia [→ Venezuela – Colombia (Monjes Islands)]. Guyana's newly elected President David Granger deemed the decree "a violation of international law." On June 8, Guyana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused its neighbor of causing "a threat to regional peace and security" and of Guyana "vigorously resisting" Venezuelan attempts to enforce changes in the existing boundaries.

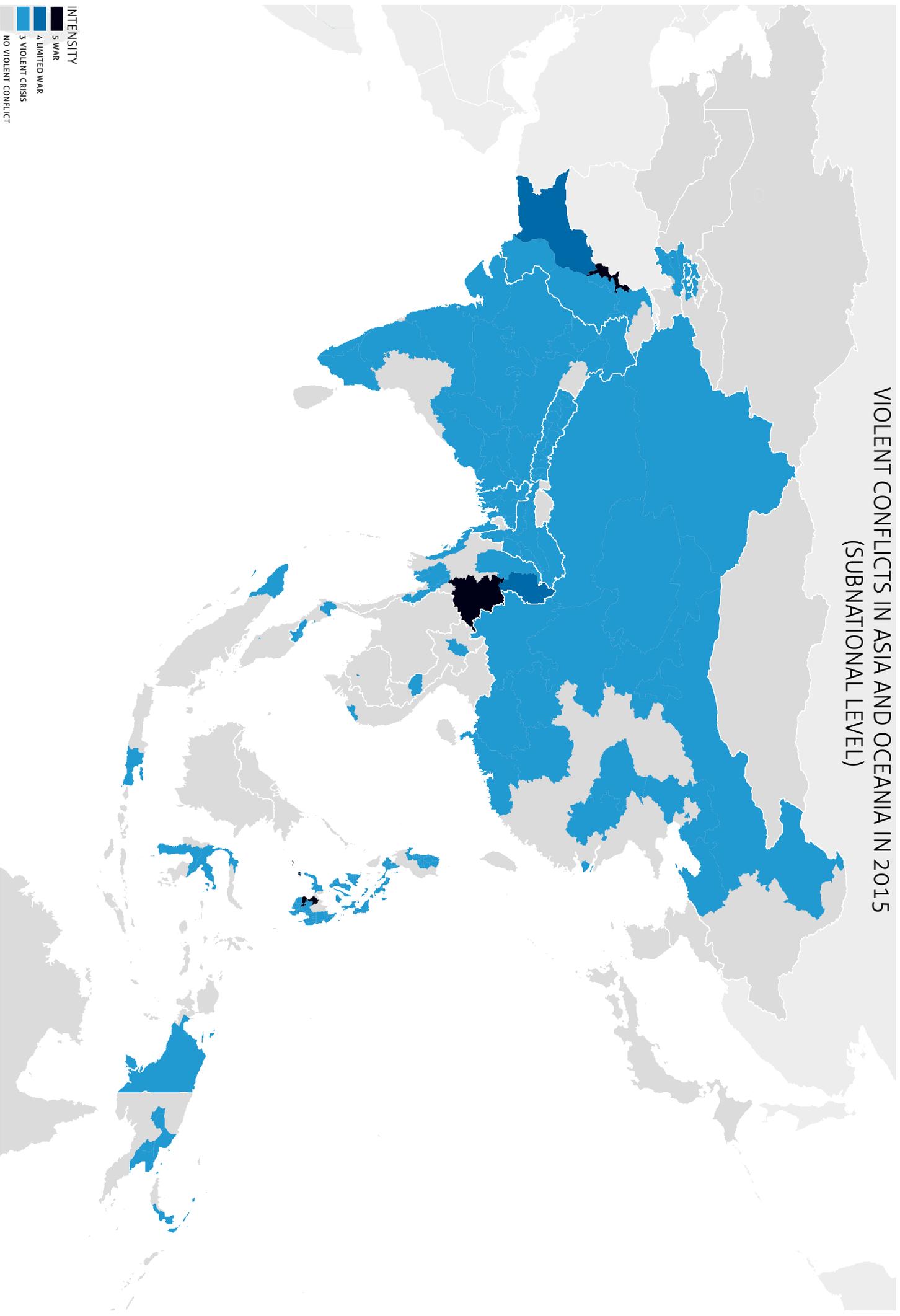
In early July, Venezuela ended its rice import agreement with Guyana, a move with considerable consequences for Guyana that had been selling 40 percent of its rice to its neighbor in exchange for oil on concessionary terms. On July 6, Maduro announced the recalling of its ambassador to Guyana as well as the reduction of its diplomatic staff in Guyana amid a re-consideration of relations. The same day, Guyana suspended flights by Venezuela's state airline Conviasa. Venezuela later replaced its Decree 1787 with Decree 1859 which no longer included the geographical coordinates of the claimed maritime territories.

On July 10, Venezuela announced its plan to issue identity cards to 200,000 residents in the Essequibo region and to distribute information about the territory allegedly being Venezuelan. Guyana promptly announced resistance to the proposal. In late July, Guyana published the country's maritime coordinates in its official gazette.

In early August, ExxonMobil stated it had removed its oil platform from the disputed location but said that it continued conducting corresponding studies. On September 1, a UN team arrived in Guyana to assist in resolving the conflict with Venezuela. However, Venezuela re-emphasized its claims in October by protesting against the activities of Canadian mining company Goldfields in the Essequibo area. bkm

Asia and Oceania

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



With 126 active conflicts in total, Asia and Oceania continued to be the region with the highest number of conflicts in 2015, accounting for more than a quarter of the total worldwide. While more than 90 percent of the conflicts were carried out low-violently (63) or non-violently (57), the region continued to face six highly violent conflicts evenly distributed among Myanmar, the Philippines, and Pakistan. While Pakistan's intrastate war against the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) and other Islamist militant groups continued unabatedly for the ninth consecutive year, a war over secession escalated on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups); Philippines (BIFF, BIFM - MILF, government)]. With the de-escalation of highly violent intrastate conflicts in China and India as well as the Indo-Pakistani conflict, the overall number of limited wars decreased from five to four. In Myanmar, highly violent tensions erupted between the government and militant groups in the Kokang region, constituting the country's second limited war besides its protracted conflict with the Kachin Independence Army [→ China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang); India (inter-ethnic violence / Assam); Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State); Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin state)]. Both Pakistan and the Philippines saw one violent crisis escalating to a limited war [→ Pakistan (Balochistan); Philippines (MILF)].

Asia and Oceania again was the region with the highest number of interstate conflicts, including three violent and eight non-violent crises. Most prevalent conflict issues were related to territory (14) and international power (11). As in previous years, the density of interstate crises between China and its neighbors in the East and South China Sea was particularly high. On the Korean Peninsula, the situation escalated after South Korean soldiers had been wounded in several landmine explosions. Nine of the 14 observed conflicts in China were conducted violently. The highly violent conflict between the Uyghurs, on the one hand, and the government as well as Han Chinese, on the other, de-escalated but remained violent [→ China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)]. Although casualties decreased in total, violence was carried out almost every month, also involving other countries such as Thailand and Turkey. With the adoption of the National Security Law in July, the Chinese government strengthened its combat against alleged separatists and terrorists in the border regions. Additionally, dozens of civil rights activists and dissidents were reportedly arrested in July. In the first half of the year, heavy fighting between government forces and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army left at least 330 people dead and tens of thousands internally displaced in Shan State, reviving a Burmese conflict which had remained quiet for several years [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)]. Following almost two years of negotiations between the government and ethnic armed groups, a nationwide ceasefire in Myanmar was agreed upon by the signatories on October 15. However, not all armed groups agreed with the ceasefire, among them was the largest one, the United Wa State Army. Some of the non-signatories met for talks about their future involvement and contributions to national politics. However, fighting erupted anew in their controlled territory [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. On November 8, opposition party National League for Democracy won the general elections with an absolute majority [→ Myanmar (opposition)]. In the Philippines, the conflict between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) showed mixed developments. Despite one violent incident claiming the lives of over 50 people, civil and military cooperation as well as joint infrastructural development flourished [→ Philippines (MILF)]. This year, the conflict between government forces and MILF fighters, on the one hand, and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, on the other, escalated to a war [Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. In Indonesia, the government conducted large-scale security operations on the island of Sulawesi and mobilized about 150,000 security personnel throughout the country in response to threats by IS-affiliated militants [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. The country also saw an increase of subnational, religious violence [→ Indonesia (Muslims – Hindus)], which diffused to the provinces of Aceh and Papua, sites of long-standing secession conflicts [→ Indonesia (Aceh); Indonesia (Papua)].

In the eastern part of South Asia, an increase of low-intensity violence was observed. Seven conflicts escalated to a violent level, four of them being located in Nepal. Following an earthquake in April, leaving over 8,800 people dead, the major parties agreed upon a new constitution after years of deadlock. However, the future demarcation of provinces and the question of secularism sparked violent protests countrywide. The ethnic Madhesis blocked the border to India, causing a severe shortage of fuel and medicine [→ Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai)]. Similarly, right-wing Hindu groups staged violent protests demanding the declaration of Nepal as a Hindu state [→ Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups)]. Additionally, Maldivian opposition supporters engaged in violent clashes with security forces after the arrest and conviction of former president and opposition leader Mo-hammed Nasheed [→ Maldives (opposition)]. Furthermore, the situation in Bangladesh aggravated. The tensions between the ruling Awami League and the oppositional Bangladesh Nationalist Party cumulated in a months-long road blockade in the first half of the year, during which reportedly over 100 people were killed and up to 14,000 arrested [→ Bangladesh (opposition)]. Throughout the year, the government continued the prosecution and execution of opposition leaders. Meanwhile, Islamist violence increased, mainly targeting secular bloggers, Hindus, Shiites, and non-Muslim foreigners [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)].

Various militant groups in northeastern India continued their violent struggle for secession. Tensions in the region intensified after the Khaplang-led faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K) had ended its ceasefire with the Indian government and nine armed groups from Assam, Manipur, and after Nagaland had declared to launch a comprehensive umbrella organization called the United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNLFW) [→ India (Manipur); India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland); India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. The demand by radical Sikh groups for an independent state of Khalistan regained momentum in the northern states of Punjab and Kashmir, with pro-Khalistan Sikhs also alienating more moderate Sikh groups [→ India (Sikhs)]. In Gujarat state, the Patel community magnified its demand for socioeconomic benefits under the socioeconomic reservation system [→ India (Patels et al)]. Communal violence over the consumption of beef was reported throughout the year in Maharashtra and Haryana [→ India (Hindus – Muslims)]. Contrastingly, in Sri Lanka, the conflict between Sinhalese nationalists and Buddhists, on the one hand, and Muslims and Christians, on the other, de-escalated after the election of President Maithripala Sirisena in January.

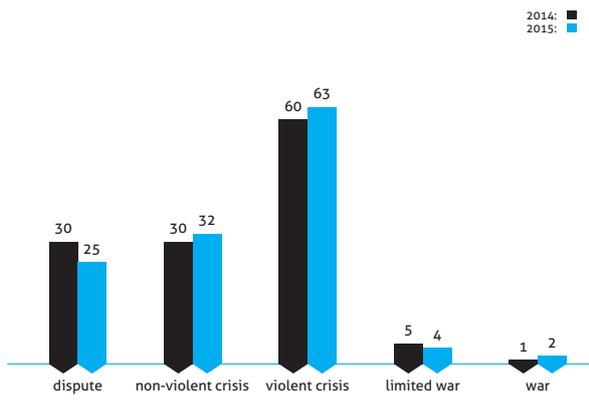
To combat terrorism in Pakistan, the government set up military courts to pass faster judgements in terrorism-related cases and targeted financial and media resources of militant groups. Moreover, executions continued throughout the year. In another effort to bring about regional stability, hundreds of suspected Baloch militants were granted amnesty by the central government as part of the Peaceful Balochistan Plan. However, violence continued countrywide with the Federally Administered

ASIA AND OCEANIA

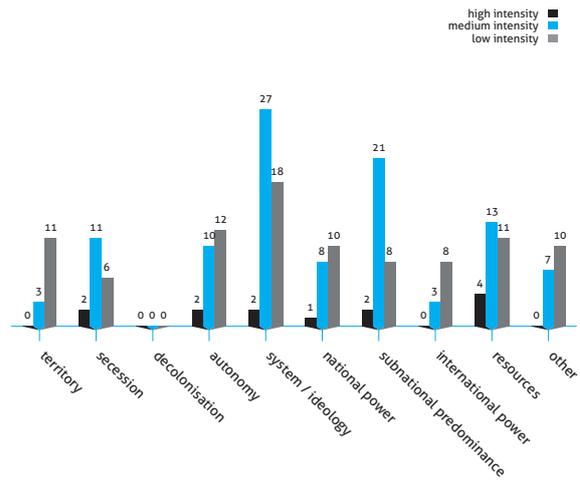
Tribal Regions being most severely affected. After several groups had split off from TTP the previous year, it strengthened its rank and file in 2015 with some groups renewing their alliance with TTP this year [→ Pakistan (inter-Islamist rivalry)]. Even though cross-border skirmishes between Pakistan and India continued in 2015, diplomatic steps were undertaken to ease tensions [→ Pakistan – India].

In Central Asia, elections took place in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Even though no instances of violence were reported, especially the presidential election in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan lacked democratic standards such as a credible electoral alternative [→ Kazakhstan (opposition); Uzbekistan (opposition)]. In particular, the situation in Tajikistan turned increasingly tense when several high-ranking military officers and officials defected to militant Islamist groups and engaged in violent clashes with the government [→ Tajikistan (Islamist militant groups)]. Outrage was caused by the ban of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, formerly being the only legal religious party in Central Asia, which was also classified as an extremist and terrorist organization by the Tajik Supreme Court in September [→ Tajikistan (opposition)].

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN ASIA AND OCEANIA
IN 2015 COMPARED TO 2014



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA
IN 2015 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



Overview: Conflicts in Asia and Oceania in 2015

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts)	PCJSS-SL, PCJSS-MNL, UPDF vs. government, Bengali settlers	autonomy, subnational predominance, resources	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (inter-militant rivalry / Chittagong Hill Tracts)*	PCJSS-SL vs. UPDF	subnational predominance	1997	•	3
Bangladesh (Islamist groups)	Hindus, Christians, Buddhists et al. vs. ABT, AAL, JMB, HeI, IS et al. vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (opposition)	BNP, Jel vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	•	3
Bangladesh (RMG workers)	RMG workers vs. government	other	2006	•	3
Cambodia (opposition)*	civil society groups, CNRP vs. CPP	system/ideology, national power, resources	1997	•	3
Cambodia – Vietnam*	Cambodia vs. Vietnam	territory	1969	↗	2
China (Christians)	Government vs. Christians	system/ideology	1949	•	3
China (Falun Gong et al.)*	Falun Gong vs. government	system/ideology	1999	•	3
China (Han – Hui – Tibetans)*	Tibetans vs. Hui vs. Han	subnational predominance	1949	↗	3
China (Hong Kong pro-democracy groups)	HKFS, Umbrella Movement vs. government, SAR government	autonomy, system/ideology	1997	↘	2
China (Inner Mongolia)	Mongolian ethnic minorities vs. government, Han Chinese	autonomy, subnational predominance, resources	1981	•	3
China (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	1978	↗	3
China (socioeconomic protests)	environmentalists, migrant workers, peasants et al. vs. government	resources, other	1978	•	3
China (Taiwan – opposition)	opposition vs. ROC government	system/ideology	2014	↘	2
China (Taiwan)	ROC government vs. ROC opposition vs. PRC	secession, system/ideology	1949	•	2
China (Tibet)	CTA, Tibetans, TYC vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1950	•	3
China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)	ETIM, TIP, WUC, Uyghurs vs. government, Han	secession, subnational predominance, resources	1949	↘	3
China – India	China vs. India	territory, international power, resources	1954	•	2
China – USA	PRC vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1949	•	1
China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)	Brunei vs. PRC vs. ROC vs. Malaysia vs. Vietnam vs. Philippines	territory, international power, resources	1949	↘	2
Fiji (Indo-Fijians – indigenous Fijian ethnonationalists)*	Indo-Fijians vs. indigenous Fijians	subnational predominance	1970	•	1
Fiji (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1987	↗	2
Fiji – Tonga (Minerva Reefs)*	Fiji vs. Tonga	territory	2005	•	1
India (GJM et al. / West Bengal)*	GJM, GNLF, AIGL vs. government	autonomy	1907	•	2
India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya)	GNLA, ASAK, AMEF, ANVC, ANVC-B, UALA, HNLC et al. vs. government	secession	1988	•	3
India (Hindus – Christians)*	VHP, RSS, Shiv Sena, Dharam Sena, Bajrang Dal, radical Hindus vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1999	•	3
India (Hindus – Muslims)	Hindus, radical Hindu organizations vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1947	•	3
India (HPC-D factions / Mizoram, Manipur, Assam)	HPC-D Zosangbera faction, HPC-D Sanate faction vs. government	autonomy	1986	↗	3
India (inter-ethnic rivalry / Assam)	Bodos vs. Adivasis vs. Bangladeshis, Biharis, Hindi-speaking groups vs. Assamese	subnational predominance	1979	↘	3
India (inter-factional rivalry / Nagaland)*	NSCN-K, ZUV vs. NSCN-IM vs. NSCN-KK vs. NSCN-R	subnational predominance	1988	•	3
India (inter-militant rivalry / Meghalaya)*	GNLA vs. ASAK	subnational predominance	1992	•	3
India (Islamist militant groups)*	HM, JeM, LeT, SIMI, TuM vs. government	system/ideology	2000	•	3
India (JeM et al. / Kashmir)	HM, JeM, LeT, TuM vs. government	secession	1947	•	3

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
India (Mafia Raj)*	sand mafia, timber mafia vs. civil society actors vs. government	subnational predominance, resources, other	2007	•	3
India (Manipur)	Meiteis, KNF, Kukis, JCLIPS, KYKL, KCP, PREPAK-Pro, PLA, UNLF et al. vs. government	secession, autonomy	1964	•	3
India (Nagas – Assamese Adivasis)*	Nagas, NSF vs. Assamese Adivasis, AANLA, AASU et al.	subnational predominance	2014	↘	2
India (Nagas – Kukis)*	NSCN-IM vs. Kukis, KIM	subnational predominance	1992	↗	2
India (Naxalites)	CPI-M, PLFI, TPC et al. vs. government	system/ideology	1997	•	3
India (NLFT factions, ATTF / Tripura)*	NLFT-BM, NLFT-P, ATTF vs. government	secession	1978	↘	2
India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland)	NSCN-K, NSCN-R, NSCN-IM, NSCN-KK, NNC, NNC-NA, ZUF et al. vs. government	secession	1947	•	3
India (Patels et al.)	Patel community, Gurjar community, Jat community, Maratha community vs. government	other	1981	•	3
India (PULF)*	PULF vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1993	•	2
India (Sikhs – DSS)*	Sikhs vs. DSS	system/ideology	2007	↘	2
India (Sikhs)	SAD, SAD (Amritsar), Sikh groups vs. government	secession, autonomy, other	1947	↗	3
India (TJAC / Telangana)*	TJAC, bar associations vs. government	autonomy	1969	↘	2
India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)	ULFA-I, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-S, KLO, KPLT, KNLA et al. vs. government	secession	1979	•	3
Indonesia (Aceh regional government – opposition / Aceh)*	Aceh regional government vs. opposition	subnational predominance, resources	2006	↘	2
Indonesia (Aceh)*	Aceh regional government, PA, KPA vs. government	autonomy, resources	1953	•	1
Indonesia (Ahmadiyya)*	Ahmadiyya vs. FPI, FUI et al.	subnational predominance	1980	•	2
Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)	JAT, MIT, JI, Lintas Tanzim vs. government	system/ideology	1981	•	3
Indonesia (Muslims – Christians)	Muslims, FPI vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1998	•	3
Indonesia (Papua)	OPM, KNPB, ULMWP vs. government	secession, resources	1961	•	3
Indonesia – Timor-Leste*	Indonesia vs. Timor-Leste	territory, other	2002	•	1
Japan – China (East China Sea)	Japan vs. PRC vs. ROC	territory, international power, resources, other	1971	•	2
Japan – Russia	Japan vs. Russia	territory, international power	1945	•	2
Japan – South Korea*	Japan vs. ROK	territory, other	1951	↘	1
Kazakhstan (Islamist militant groups)*	Jund al-Khalifa et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1
Kazakhstan (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	↗	2
Kyrgyzstan (Kumtor Gold Mine)*	mine workers vs. government	system/ideology, resources	2009	•	1
Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyz – Uzbeks)*	ethnic Kyrgyz vs. ethnic Uzbek	subnational predominance, resources	1990	•	1
Kyrgyzstan (opposition)*	opposition parties vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2005	↘	2
Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan – Tajikistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)	Kyrgyzstan vs. Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan	territory, international power	2000	•	3
Laos (Christians)*	Christians vs. government	system/ideology	1975	↗	3
Laos (Hmong, royalists)*	Hmong, Royalists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1975	•	2
Malaysia (Malay – Chinese, Indian, Indigenous Malaysians)*	Malay Malaysians vs. Chinese Malaysians, Indian Malaysians, Indigenous Malaysians	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1946	↗	3
Malaysia (opposition)	various opposition groups, Bersih vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1969	•	2
Malaysia (Sulu Sultanate Supporters / Lahad Datu District)*	Royal Security Forces of the Sultanate of Sulu and North Borneo vs. government	secession	2013	↘	2
Malaysia – Indonesia, Philippines (Immigrants)*	Malaysia vs. Indonesia, Philippines	other	1998	•	2

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Maldives (opposition)	MDP, AP vs. government	national power	2003	↑	3
Myanmar (Arakan Liberation Army, NUFA / Rakhine State)*	Arakan Liberation Army, NUFA vs. government	secession	1948	•	1
Myanmar (Buddhists – Rohingyas / Rakhine State)	Buddhists vs. Rohingyas	subnational predominance, other	2012	•	3
Myanmar (CNA, CNF / Chin State)*	CNA, CNF vs. government	secession	1988	•	1
Myanmar (farmers et al. / Sagaing Region)*	farmers, students et al. vs. government	resources, other	2012	•	3
Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)	KIA, KIO vs. government	autonomy, resources	1961	•	4
Myanmar (KNPP, KnA, KNLP / Kayah State)*	KnA, KNLP, KNPP vs. government	autonomy	1948	•	2
Myanmar (KNU, KNLA, DKBA / Karen State, Kayah State)*	DKBA, KNLA, KNU vs. government	autonomy	1948	•	3
Myanmar (MNDA / Shan State)	MNDA vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1989	↑	4
Myanmar (MNLA, NMSP / Mon State, Kayin State)*	government vs. MNLA, NMSP	secession	1948	•	1
Myanmar (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1962	↑	3
Myanmar (Rohingyas, ARNO / Rakhine State)*	ARNO, Rohingyas vs. government	other	1948	↗	2
Myanmar (SSA / Shan State)*	SSA-N, SSA-S vs. government	autonomy	1952	•	3
Myanmar (UWSA, NDAA / Shan State)*	NDAA, UWSA vs. government	autonomy	1988	•	2
Nepal (Kiratis / Kosi, Mechi, Sagarmatha)*	FLP, KNF, KJWP vs. government	autonomy	1992	↗	3
Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai)	UDMF, MJF-L, TJSC vs. government	autonomy	2004	↗	3
Nepal (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2008	↑	3
Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups)*	RPP-N, RPP, Hindu Morcha et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2006	↑	3
Nepal – Bhutan*	Nepal vs. Bhutan	other	1985	•	1
North Korea – South Korea	DPRK vs. ROK	territory, system/ideology, international power	1948	↗	3
North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan	DPRK vs. Japan, ROK, USA	system/ideology, international power, other	1990	•	2
Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)	BLF, BRA, UBA, LeB, BNP, BRP, BLA vs. government	secession, resources	1948	↗	4
Pakistan (inter-ethnic rivalry / Sindh)	MQM, Mohajirs vs. PPP, Balochs, Sindhis vs. ANP, Pakhtuns	subnational predominance	1947	•	3
Pakistan (inter-Islamist rivalry)	TTP vs. LI vs. TNSM vs. AMNAM	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2010	•	3
Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)	TTP, LI, al-Qaeda, Haqqani Network vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	•	5
Pakistan (opposition)*	PAT, PTI vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	•	3
Pakistan (Sunni militants – religious groups)	LeJ, Jundullah, TTP, JuA vs. religious minorities	subnational predominance	1985	•	3
Pakistan (Taliban – tribes)	LI, TTP vs. tribal militias, various tribes	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2001	•	3
Pakistan – India	Pakistan vs. India	territory, international power, resources	1947	↘	3
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)	civil society groups, MDF, Bougainville Hardliners vs. Meekamui Tribal Government, PMALA, MGU vs. ABG, BCL, government	autonomy, resources, other	1964	↗	2
Papua New Guinea (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↘	1
Papua New Guinea (socioeconomic protests)*	customary landowners vs. government, resource companies	autonomy, resources	1995	↘	2
Papua New Guinea (tribal violence)	Kukurin vs. Yapetalin; Wapiago vs. Tapamu; et al.	subnational predominance, resources	1975	•	3

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Papua New Guinea (urban tensions)*	highlanders vs. lowlanders vs. ethnic Chinese	subnational predominance	1975	•	3
Philippines (Abu Sayyaf)*	Abu Sayyaf Group vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1991	•	3
Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)	BIFF, BIFM vs. government, MILF	secession, subnational predominance	2008	↗	5
Philippines (CPP, NPA)	CPP, NPA vs. government	system/ideology	1968	•	3
Philippines (MILF – MNLF)*	MNLF vs. MILF	subnational predominance	2009	↓	1
Philippines (MILF)	MILF vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1977	↗	4
Philippines (MNLF)*	MNLF vs. Government	secession, system/ideology, resources	1969	↗	3
Samoa (landowner protests)*	customary landowners vs. government	autonomy	1946	•	2
Singapore – Malaysia*	Singapore vs. Malaysia	territory	1963	•	1
Sri Lanka (Buddhists, Sinhalese nationalists – Muslims, Christians)	Sinhalese Buddhists, BBS, Sinhala Ravaya, JHU, JVP vs. Muslims, SLMC, Christians	system/ideology	1948	↓	1
Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)*	drug traffickers, Pamiri people vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	2012	↓	1
Tajikistan (Islamist militant groups)	Hizb ut-Tahir, IMU, Jamaat Ansarullah, Jundullah, Tablig-i-Jamaat vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	↗	3
Tajikistan (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	•	2
Thailand (Islamist Separatists / Southern Border Provinces)	various Islamist separatists vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1902	•	3
Thailand (opposition)*	PTP, UDD vs. PAD vs. RTAF	system/ideology, national power	2006	↓	1
Thailand – Cambodia (border)*	Thailand vs. Cambodia	territory, international power	1954	↗	2
Thailand – Myanmar*	Myanmar vs. Thailand	territory, other	1948	•	1
Timor-Leste (FRETILIN – CNRT)*	FRETILIN vs. CNRT	national power	2006	•	1
Timor-Leste – Australia*	Timor-Leste vs. Australia	resources	2002	•	1
USA – Pakistan*	USA vs. Pakistan	other	2003	•	1
Uzbekistan (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	↗	3
Uzbekistan – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan*	Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	international power, resources	2010	•	1
Vietnam (Montagnards)*	Montagnards vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1958	↘	1
Vietnam (socioeconomic protests)	factory workers, peasants, other civilians vs. manufacturing companies, government	system/ideology, resources	1986	•	3

^{1 2 3 4} cf. overview table for Europe

BANGLADESH (CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: PCJSS-SL, PCJSS-MNL, UPDF vs. government, Bengali settlers

Conflict items: autonomy, subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over autonomy, subnational predominance, and arable land between indigenous Jumma groups, on the one hand, and the government and Bengali settlers, on the other, continued. The Jumma militants were mainly organized in the two factions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts United People's Party (PCJSS) and the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF). The groups upheld their demand for the implementation of the 1979 peace accord granting autonomy to the districts of Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban in Chittagong

division. They repeatedly clashed with Bengali settlers organized in groups such as Jago Parbatyabashi. Furthermore, they accused the government and the settlers of land grabbing.

On January 10, Pahari Chatra Parishad (PCP), the student wing of the PCJSS faction led by Santu Larma (PCJSS-SL), blocked roads in Rangamati, protesting against the inauguration of Rangamati Medical College. They conditioned the opening to the implementation of the peace accord, expressing concerns about an increasing influx of Bengalis. The protesters clashed with supporters of the ruling Awami League (AL) and Bengali settlers. Up to 30 people were injured. In response, the district administration imposed a curfew. On October 17, PCP staged another blockade at the college. At least eight were injured in the following clashes.

At the end of January, the Ministry of Home Affairs imposed entry restrictions for foreigners to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and set interaction with Jumma under obligatory supervision. Two months later, after protests by civil society organizations,

the government eased entry restrictions for all foreigners except researchers.

On March 10, Jago Parbatyabashi started a 72-hour long strike in Bandarban, protesting against alleged extortion and killings by the PCJSS. On the third day of the blockade, Jago Parbatyabashi supporters damaged a bridge that Santu Larma was supposed to pass on his way to Bandarban town. Furthermore, they attacked vehicles of Santu Larma's supporters, throwing stones. At least nine PCJSS-SL members were injured.

Five days later, the Jumma Dighinala Bhumi Rakhha Committee (DBRC) demonstrated in Khagrachari against the resettlement of 21 Jumma families as part of the planned construction of new military headquarters. The police and army resolved the blockade by firing tear gas and live bullets, while protesters threw bricks. At least eleven people were injured and several arrested. On March 16, DBRC protested against the violent police reaction and the following arrests. On May 25, the 21 families publicly accused paramilitary forces of having evicted them from their lands.

On August 15, around 25 Jumma clashed with security forces at the militants' hideout in Khagrachari. Five militants were killed and three arrested while one soldier was injured. This was the first shootout between militants and army personnel since the peace agreement. The army held UPDF and PCJSS' Manabendra Narayan Larma faction (PCJSS-MNL) responsible, while both organizations denied their involvement. On September 7, the army raided another camp of alleged PCJSS-MNL militants in the same district, arresting one.

Non-violent protests by Jumma groups continued until the end of the year. tap

BANGLADESH (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Hindus, Christians, Buddhists et al. vs. ABT, AAL, JMB, Hel, IS et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over ideology and the orientation of the political system as well as religious predominance between radical Muslims, mainly organized in Islamist groups, the government, and religious minorities such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians continued. Violent attacks against religious minority groups and secularists increased compared to last year and took place in Chittagong, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions. In light of the attacks and alleged activities of the so-called Islamic State (IS) in Bangladesh, leaders of religious minority organizations, especially the Hindu Buddhist Christian Union Council (HBCUC), repeatedly voiced concern over their perceived insecurity. They further demanded governmental protection as well as prosecution of the attackers.

Throughout the year, four bloggers were hacked to death with Avijit Roy killed on February 26, Wahiqur Rahman on March 30, Ananta Bijoy Das on May 12, and Niloy Chakrabarti alias Niloy Neel on August 7. Furthermore, the publisher of Avijit Roy was killed and three others injured on October 31. The attacks were claimed by Islamist Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) and Ansar al-Islam (AAL), both alleged of having links to al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Until the end of the year, over a dozen Jamatul-Mujahideen-Bangladesh (JMB),

ABT, and Hefazat-e Islam (Hel) members were arrested in connection with the killings.

IS claimed responsibility for eight attacks in Bangladesh in 2015. For instance, on September 28, attackers on a motorbike shot dead an Italian Catholic missionary in the capital Dhaka. Five days later, a Japanese national was killed the same way in Kaunia, Rangpur. On October 24, three IEDs detonated during a Shia procession in Old Dhaka, leaving two people dead and over 80 injured. However, the government denied all IS activities in Bangladesh. Instead it accused the oppositional Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of the attacks, claiming BNP tried to destabilize the country [→ Bangladesh (opposition)].

Other active Islamist groups were JMB, Hel, and Hizb ut-Tahir (HuT), with JMB playing a prominent role. For instance, alleged JMB militants injured two by hurling IEDs and firing gunshots at worshippers at the ISKCON temple in Kaharole, Rajshahi, on December 10. Security forces killed two JMB militants during a raid of their hideout in Gazipur district, Dhaka, on December 29.

Furthermore, radical Muslims attacked Hindus and their spiritual sites, especially during the celebration of the Hindu festival Diwali. For example, up to eleven Hindus were injured and several houses looted during a clash between Muslims and Hindus in Jeleparha, Chittagong, on October 28. After Hindus continuously reported cases of land grabbing, the HBCUC accused prominent Muslim politicians from the ruling Awami League and BNP on August 6 to be involved in certain cases. Condemning the extremist violence, protests by civil society organizations, including Muslim groups, were held throughout the year. The demonstrations demanding protection intensified in November after Alok Sen, secretary-general of HBCUC's Faridpur unit, had been severely injured by unknown attackers in Dhaka division.

State authorities arrested and convicted dozens of Islamists in 2015. While a Dhaka court sentenced five JMB members to death, the Jhalakathi district court passed a ten-year sentence on 17 JMB militants for blasting a lethal bomb in 2005. On December 31, two students, allegedly affiliated with ABT, were sentenced to death for the killing of a secular blogger in 2013. A total of 59 JMB, ABT, IS, Hel, and HuT activists were arrested. mwf, fli

BANGLADESH (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: BNP, Jel vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and national power between the opposition parties Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued as a violent crisis. BNP and Jel were supported by their student wings Bangladesh Jatiyotabadi Chhatradal (BJC) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) respectively, while the ruling Awami League (AL) fought along with its student organization Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

Exactly one year after the national elections on 01/05/14 Jel and BNP had boycotted, violent protests erupted again all over the country. In total approx. 270 people were injured in clashes between BNP and AL supporters, including at least 35 policemen. Four BNP members were killed in Rajshahi division. Two of them were shot dead by police and two by AL

members.

BNP leader Khaleda Zia did not leave her office from January 3 until April 5, first being confined there on order of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and then out of protest. On January 6, Zia called for a peaceful countrywide blockade to protest her confinement and to push for a government dialogue about free and fair elections. However, the next three months saw highly violent blockades all over the country, leaving approx. 150 people dead and thousands injured. Most of them died in arson attacks. The Industry Minister confirmed on January 22 that 7,000 had been arrested by then, later NGOs claimed that over 14,000 people were arrested until March 30.

The local polls in Chittagong city and North and South Dhaka on April 28 were troubled by irregularities and obstructions. For instance, the motorcade of Zia was attacked twice on April 20 and 22 on the way to election campaigns. Although BNP firstly had participated, the party then announced the boycott of the elections during the election day due to allegedly observed fraud.

Nevertheless, BNP participated in the nationwide municipal polls on December 30. Up to 33 candidates from various parties withdrew their candidacy on the very same day, claiming electoral manipulation. One man was killed in clashes in Chittagong division and dozens were injured. AL won almost 70 percent and BNP subsequently rejected the results.

Similar to the previous years, several high rank members of BNP and Jel were prosecuted. Two Jel leaders and a former BNP minister were hanged for committing war crimes in 1971. Zia was prosecuted for corruption and instigating an arson attack on a bus in January. Also her son, BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, was charged for a similar incident. BNP Secretary-General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was sent to jail for vandalism during protests in January, but was released on bail on December 1.

Further, the government blamed the BNP for frequent attacks on bloggers and religious minorities, while it denied any presence of Islamic State in Bangladesh [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)]. mwf

BANGLADESH (RMG WORKERS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: RMG workers vs. government

Conflict items: other

The conflict over working conditions, social security, and payment between ready-made garment workers (RMG) and the government continued as a violent crisis.

RMG workers could only irregularly attend their factories between January and April. This was due to a nationwide transportation blockade by the oppositional Bangladesh Nationalist Party [→ Bangladesh (opposition)]. In response, they staged several protests demanding an end to the blockade. For instance, RMG manufacturers and workers jointly started a daylong hunger strike on February 14 on the premises of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Dhaka division.

Also after the end of the transportation blockade, RMG workers continued their protest. For instance, on April 26, around 400 RMG workers rallied in the capital Dhaka, demanding the payment of their salary. Police forces injured 15 people in the following clashes. Two years after the Rana Plaza collapse on 02/24/13, which had left 1,135 people dead, the

compensation for the survivors and victim's families was still not fully paid. As in previous years, affected families repeatedly staged protests. On June 1, the police charged Rana Plaza complex owner Sohel Rana and 40 others with murder. Furthermore, on July 4, the police arrested 67 workers on charges of vandalism during protests that called for due salary in Savar, Dhaka. On December 9, over 1,000 RMG workers staged a demonstration in Dhaka after one worker had been killed and two others injured in a bus accident. The protesters vandalized at least 20 buses, blocking the roads and demanding compensation for the family of the dead man. As in previous years, safety deficiencies in factory buildings led to several accidents. For example, on December 20, at least 20 people were injured when a defect boiler blasted in a garment factory in Ashulia, Dhaka. In various cases, RMG workers fell sick after consuming contaminated food or water provided by the factories. mbl

CHINA (CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: Government vs. Christians

Conflict items: system/ideology

The conflict over religious freedom between Christian groups and the government continued as a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, authorities repeatedly raided house church meetings and masses. For instance, on January 11, police officers disrupted a house church meeting, questioned worshippers, and confiscated bibles and hymnals in Shunyi District in the capital Beijing. In a similar incident, on January 19, dozens of police officers arrested about 20 worshippers in Langzhong, Sichuan Province. On April 11, two Christians were placed under an eleven-day police detention for teaching children Chinese characters based on the Bible in Huocheng County, Kazakh prefecture, Xinjiang Province. More than 100 policemen raided a house church's summer camp on July 28, arresting one in Chuzhou, Anhui Province. On November 18, the police detained approx. 60 Christians during a crackdown in Zepu county, Kashgar prefecture, Xinjiang.

In early March, authorities reportedly prevented Chinese Christians from attending the "Three-fold-Visions" Training Conference by withholding passes for entering Hong Kong. On March 25, eight Christians who had obstructed the removal of a church's cross in the previous year in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, were charged with "illegal occupation of farmland." On various occasions, authorities demolished or removed church crosses in Zhejiang, triggering violence on August 6. That day, the police in Rui'an City removed a church's cross and injured six who had attempted to protect it. The next day, the local government mobilized more than 700 officials to tear down another church's cross in Rui'an, which worshippers had guarded for 20 days. In late August, Zhejiang's provincial government issued new regulations for churches regarding the disclosure of their expenses and requiring their activities to be compliant with the government.

asc

CHINA (HONG KONG PRO-DEMOCRACY GROUPS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: HKFS, Umbrella Movement vs. gov-
ernment, SAR government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology

The conflict over autonomy and the orientation of the political system between Hong Kong pro-democracy groups, on the one hand, and the governments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

In January, the police arrested several leaders of the so-called Umbrella Movement for illegal protests. In 2014, the movement had involved tens of thousands of people protesting for democracy and the direct election of the Hong Kong Chief Executive. On January 7, the SAR government released the Consultation Document on the Method for Selecting the Chief Executive by Universal Suffrage advocating the pre-screening of candidate nominees. On January 14, SAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying affirmed his loyalty to the PRC and his support of the Consultation Document. On February 1, a total of 2,000 police officers were deployed to meet thousands of protesters who took to the streets for a democratically and a directly elected leader. On April 22, the SAR government published its proposed 2017 election rules which would allow Beijing to pre-select candidates for the 2017 Chief Executive election. In ensuing clashes with protesters, the Hong Kong police used pepper spray and batons, and arrested eight people.

On June 18, pro-democratic MPs unanimously rejected the reform bill regarding the election of the Chief Executive by blocking its passage. On June 19, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the PRC State Council stated that the rejection of the bill hindered the realization of universal suffrage and did not represent the opinion of Hong Kong's general public. On June 24, the Hong Kong police peacefully dismantled the remaining camps set up during the 2014 Umbrella protests. On July 1, marking the 18th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to PRC, thousands of protesters called on Leung to resign while being opposed by pro-Beijing protesters. On July 15, SAR authorities charged the leader of the student organization Scholarism, Joshua Wong, with unlawful assembly during last year's protest. One day later, the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS) and the Hong Kong University Student Union organized a protest against Leung's attempts to influence university councils. On August 27, pro-democracy activists supported Joshua Wong by protesting outside the court building. On September 28, approx. 1,000 pro-democratic protesters rallied to commemorate last year's protests. On October 15, the seven policemen who had beaten an activist during last year's protests were charged with grievous bodily harm. On November 22, pro-democratic candidates won 112 seats out of a total of 431 seats in the district council elections. kol

CHINA (INNER MONGOLIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Mongolian ethnic minorities vs. gov-
ernment, Han Chinese

Conflict items: autonomy, subnational predomi-
nance, resources

The conflict in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR) over land use, subnational predominance, and autonomy between Mongolian ethnic minorities, on the one side, and Han Chinese and the government, on the other, remained violent. Mongolian herders staged numerous protests over detentions of fellow herders and land use.

From January 11 to January 13, dozens of herders from IMAR's Durbed Banner/Siziwang Qi and Sunid Banner/ Sunite Qi staged a protest in Beijing complaining about their forced relocation. On January 19, a Mongolian herder from Zargalant Sum, Abag Banner/Abaga Qi hanged himself in front of the local government building to protest against the occupation of his grazing lands. One day later, several protests took place in IMAR. A protest by more than 60 herders who took to the streets in Shilinhote/Xilinguole City demanding the return of their grazing lands from government authorities was dispersed by the police. Furthermore, protests by Mongolian herders also took place in front of various government branches in the capital Beijing. On January 26, a total of 200 police officers cracked down on a protest by about 300 Mongolian herders from Durbed Banner and Urad Middle Banner/Ulade Zhongqi against the occupation of their grazing lands and arrested around 30 of them in Hohhot/Huhehaote City. One day later, when more than 200 herders from Sunid Right Banner/Sunite Youqi protested in Saihantal Township, the police used violence and arrested five. On February 6, eight Mongolians were detained by the police after protesting in front of the Chinese embassy in Outer Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar demanding the release of Inner Mongolian herders and the protection of their traditional way of life. In demonstrations lasting from March 20 to April 6, more than a thousand Mongolians protested against the pollution of their grazing lands in Daachin-tal village, Naiman Banner/Naiman Qi. About 2,000 policemen ended the protest with rubber bullets, tear gas, and water cannons, killing one herder, injuring more than 100, and arresting approx. 50. On May 28, more than 100 herders from Gegeen-engger village in Bairin Right Banner/Balin Youqi blocked a construction site on a national highway that was running through their grazing lands and were dispersed by around 40 police officers with pepper spray and electric batons. On September 6 and 7, more than 200 herders protested against a cut of subsidies in front of the government building in Xilingol League/Xilinguole Meng, with many of them being beaten and eight of them being arrested by the police later. On September 8, more than 400 herders marched down a highway in order to block a visit by officials to the Banner capital Mingant Township. On October 15, police beat up and arrested the son of a known Inner Mongolian dissident, Hada, who had been imprisoned for 19 years. asc

CHINA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1978

Conflict parties: environmentalists, migrant workers, peasants et al. vs. government

Conflict items: resources, other

The violent crisis over social and economic resources between peasants, workers, environmentalists, and other social groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. People engaged in illegal protests against pollution, corruption, land grabs, working conditions, and restrictive urban management. Thereby, they contested the government's economic growth and social stability maintenance policies.

Accompanying the slowdown of economic growth and instability of the Chinese stock market, the number of bankruptcies and strikes increased drastically. The China Labor Bulletin reported a double increase of strikes, from 1,379 to 2,774 cases, in comparison to 2014. On July 18, about ten migrant workers reportedly protesting for higher wages at a road construction site in Luoyang, Hebei Province, attacked the police with bricks, a claw, and hammers. The police killed one and injured one severely. On November 9, workers in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, camped outside a toy factory after their manager disappeared. Mobilization for environmental issues and against corruption continued to increase and turned out violent more frequently. From June 22 to 28, up to 30,000 people protested the construction of a PX chemical plant in Jinshan district, Shanghai. From June 26 to 28, authorities partially slowed down local internet access and obstructed access to social media. On June 27, public transportation was restricted as locals travelled to Shanghai city center to protest. Shanghai People's Park was temporarily closed. The police dispersed the masses on the same day, injuring at least ten people and deporting dozens of protesters with busses. Waste incinerators became the trigger of public discontent in many cases, including violent protests by thousands in Lantang and Yangchun, Guangdong Province, in Luofa, Hebei. Approx. 10,000 residents of dozens of surrounding villages clashed with 1,000 policemen using tear gas from November 29 to 30 in Jinzao Township, Shantou, Guangdong. Dozens were injured, 40 protesters detained, and police vehicles burned. On May 20, up to 20,000 people protested against the planned construction of a waste incinerator in Qianshui, Guangdong, clashing with riot police. Similar protests were staged from August 11 to 12 by up to 3,000 villagers against the construction of a nuclear power plant in Jieshi village, Guangdong. On November 1, by up to 10,000 people protested against pollution caused by an industrial park in Shangrao, Jiangxi Province. Many protesters were injured in both incidents.

While the government endeavored to reform rural land use, strikes against land grabs turned violent and were met with increased police presence. For instance, clashes between hundreds of policemen and up to 1,000 villagers who protested from May 11 onwards in Zhaotong, Yunnan Province, left two dead and 18 people injured. Similarly, up to several thousand locals damaged government buildings and overturned police cars in two separate cases on June 27 and on August 9 in Yulin, Guangxi Province. On May 16, approx. 20,000 locals protested against the provincial government's decision to let the planned high-speed rail track by-pass Linshui, Sichuan

Province, in favor of Deng Xiaoping's hometown Guang'an. In clashes with tactical police forces, three protesters died, about 100 were injured, and police cars were destroyed. After the protest, public transportation and access to and from Linshui was restricted. los

CHINA (TAIWAN – OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: opposition vs. ROC government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The former violent crisis over the political system between opposition groups and the government of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. In 2014, the so-called "sunflower movement", made up of students and civil society groups, had protested against the signing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) between the ROC and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Up to 400 protesters had occupied the Legislative Yuan between 03/18/14 and 04/10/14 and at least 137 people had been injured in clashes with the police.

This year, on February 10, Taiwanese public prosecutors raised charges against 118 people involved in the sunflower movement for, inter alia, trespassing, obstructing official business, and inciting others to commit criminal acts. On May 5, an additional 39 people were indicted for participation in last year's occupation.

On March 22, the Black Island Nation Youth Front (BINYF), a group involved in the protests, organized a demonstration with around 300 students in front of the Legislative Yuan in order to commemorate the 2014 occupation. On the evening of March 31, 30 members of the BINYF and additional supporters protested in front of the Presidential Office against the government's decision to apply as a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), initiated by the PRC.

Student protests were also sparked by a controversy over guidelines in textbooks for history teaching introduced in Taiwanese high schools in 2014. While the Ministry of Education insisted that the proposed changes to the textbooks only constituted "minor adjustments," the protesters claimed that the changes were politically motivated and did not accurately portray Taiwan's authoritarian period. On July 24, dozens of students protested in front of the Ministry of Education, 18 students managed to enter the building. The police evicted and arrested 33 students. After a student leader of the protest had committed suicide on July 30, about 700 students protested again in front of the ministry during the night of July 31. Some attempted to tear down barricades surrounding the building and around 200 protesters managed to occupy parts of the grounds of the ministry. The police received orders not to remove the students. In the context of the meeting between President Ma Ying-jeou and the PRC's President Xi Jinping in Singapore, a series of protests organized by civic groups such as the Taiwan Democracy Watch were carried out at several spots in the capital Taipei. For instance, on November 6, dozens of people protested in front of the Presidential Office and dozens of protesters attempted later to enter the Legislative Yuan. When the police tried to dissolve the protest, violent clashes led to slight injuries on both sides. abr

CHINA (TAIWAN)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: ROC government vs. ROC opposition vs. PRC

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The non-violent crisis over the political status of Taiwan between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) continued. The ROC government led by Kuomintang (KMT) President Ma Ying-jeou remained committed to the strengthening of economic and political relations, but faced strong domestic opposition from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and pro-independence civil society groups [→ China (Taiwan – opposition)]. In the Legislative Yuan, the DPP insisted on the passage of its proposed cross-strait agreement oversight bill. Together with some KMT members, it continued to block the ratification of the controversial Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement which had triggered the 2014 protests of the “sunflower movement.” It also prevented the review of a Cross-Strait Merchandise Trade Agreement. Despite the legislative gridlock, economic exchange was promoted via the ROC's easing of mainland tourism on the Kinmen, Matsu, and Penghu islands and the PRC's reaffirmation of its preferential tax policies for Taiwanese investors.

In January, a controversy emerged over PRC's announcement of four new civil aviation routes which would come close to ROC-controlled airspace. ROC condemned the move as unilateral and filed a complaint with the International Civil Aviation Organization over safety concerns. After negotiations, PRC began operating the first route on March 29. On March 31, Taiwan launched a bid to join the PRC's Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a founding member, which was rejected by the PRC. However, the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) stated that Taiwan was welcome to join under “an appropriate name.”

After the KMT's defeat in the November 2014 local elections, PRC officials voiced concerns over prospects of a possible DPP victory in the upcoming presidential and legislative elections on 01/16/16. On March 4, PRC leader Xi Jinping warned that peaceful relations could only continue on the basis of the “1992 consensus”, comprising the One China principle. On April 8, DPP chairwoman and presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen stated that the DPP's cross-strait policy would be to maintain the “status quo” of peaceful and stable relations. Within her party she encouraged cross-strait exchanges of DPP mayors. Two days later, the TAO responded by insisting on the “1992 consensus”. Similarly, PRC officials temporarily stopped proceedings of a planned city forum between Shanghai and Taipei after Taipei Mayor and DPP member Ko Wen-je had denied the consensus. From May 29 to June 9, Tsai paid a twelve-day visit to the USA, publicly assuring her commitment to cross-strait peace and meeting with officials from the US State Department and National Security Council. On June 10, the TAO condemned the US's reception of Tsai as a “wrong signal to the island's separatist forces” that would go against the stability of the Taiwan Strait. On November 7, Ma met with Xi in Singapore, marking the first meeting of the Communist and Kuomintang leadership since 1945. The DPP condemned the move, while pro-independence groups organized a series of protests in the capital Taipei. In a joint press conference after the meeting, both leaders emphasized the common Chi-

nese nation and praised the progress of relations under the “1992 consensus”. However, Ma also mentioned both sides' different political systems and voiced concerns over the continued deployment of missiles against Taiwan.

In its annual report in December, ROC's Ministry of National Defense repeated its earlier assessment that the PRC would be able to launch an invasion of the island and deter foreign intervention by 2020. In line with this, the DPP announced in its election campaign that it would increase the defense budget by one percent of GDP and further strengthen the country's domestic defense industry to reduce its reliance on arms deals. On December 16, however, US President Obama authorized a USD 1.83 billion arms package for Taiwan, the first of such kind in four years. The PRC condemned the move and announced sanctions against the companies involved [→ China – USA]. On December 30, PRC and ROC established a hotline between their semi-official representative offices. jfr

CHINA (TIBET)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1950

Conflict parties: CTA, Tibetans, TYC vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis between Tibetans and the government over the status of the greater region of Tibet, its system, and resources such as water and farmland continued. At least seven Tibetans set themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule in Tibetan populated areas, demanding more freedom of expression and association.

Throughout the year, Tibetans protested against forced land expropriation, infrastructure projects, mining activities, and environmental degradation. Local authorities stopped most of the reported protests, some of them violently.

A Tibetan monk living in Ngaba town, Ngaba county, Sichuan Province, was beaten and detained by the police after he had launched a solo protest calling for Tibetan freedom on March 9. One day later, in Dronru village, Draggo/Luhuo county, Sichuan, police shot and injured a Tibetan carrying a prayer flag on his motorcycle after he refused to stop at a traffic stop. On July 13, in Nyagchuka county, Sichuan, police fired shots at a crowd of over 1,000 protesters to disperse them. The Tibetan protesters had gathered to mourn Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a Buddhist leader who had died in prison. Moreover, a dozen Tibetans were beaten and detained on September 24 in Thangkor, Dzoerge/Ruo'ergai county, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), after they had reoccupied land used for a government development project. Between October 16 and 21, local authorities destroyed around 300 Tibetan private homes and shops in Trelnak township, Chabcha/Gonghe county, Qinghai Province, after deeming them illegal, leaving approx. 900 people homeless.

Authorities imposed severe restrictions on Tibetan religion and culture. In February, Chinese authorities in Rebkong/Tongren county, Qinghai, published a list of 20 illegal activities deemed to challenge Beijing's rule, among them prohibitions already in force against self-immolation protests and online advocacy of Tibetan independence. On June 10, Chinese authorities banned a two-week religious assembly at the Jonang monastery in Dzamthang/Rangtang county, Sichuan, for which the participation of 3,000 monks had been expected.

During the year, members of regional Temple Management Committees in Sershul/Shiqu county, Sichuan, awarded financial grants to Tibetan monasteries that were not involved in protests challenging Beijing’s rule in Tibetan areas. At the same time, monasteries involved in protests were confronted with “patriotic re-education” classes and enhanced ideological control. On April 8, Tibet’s regional Party Chief Chen Quanguo stated that all Tibetan monasteries would be evaluated for their patriotism and equipped with Chinese national flags, telephone connections, newspapers, and reading rooms. On July 1, the Chinese government published a new National Security Law, which stressed the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and explicitly opposed “foreign influences” interference with domestic religious affairs.’

From about September 30 to October 3, in Pekar township, Driru/Biru county, TAR, several residential quarters of the Jada Ganden Khacholing convent were demolished by local authorities, forcing 106 nuns to leave the town. The nunnery was accused of noncompliance with the official patriotic re-education campaign and of hosting more nuns than authorities had permitted to live in the convent. In November, the county government of Nangqian/Nangchen county, Qinghai, announced that it would deploy local officers to all monasteries of the region for “moral, ideological, and legal education amongst Tibetan Buddhists” and to “secure social order.”

The Tibetan exile community remained split between autonomy and secession advocates. While the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in Dharamsala, India, adhered to their goal of genuine Tibetan autonomy and pursued the “Umay-lam”/“Middle Way Approach”, the Tibetan Youth Congress demanded full independence. In early February, the Dalai Lama met US President Barack Obama [→ China – USA]. The Chinese government responded to the event with criticism and, as in previous years, it dismissed the possibility of the Dalai Lama returning to China. ffa

CHINA (UYGHURS / XINJIANG)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: ETIM, TIP, WUC, Uyghurs vs. government, Han

Conflict items: secession, subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over secession and subnational predominance between Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and several Uyghur organizations based abroad, on the one hand, and the government and Han Chinese, on the other hand, de-escalated but remained on a violent level. The government strengthened its “strike hard” campaigns in XUAR, referring to the region as the frontline in the battle against “separatism, terrorism, and religious extremism.” At the same time, ethnic Uyghurs continued to attack government officials and Han Chinese civilians in XUAR, targeting police patrols, government facilities, and public places. Violent encounters took also place in the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Liaoning, and Yunnan. In total, more than 100 people were killed, including at least 40 Uyghurs. Tensions erupted also against the backdrop of socioeconomic and environmental discrimination. Several Uyghur communities complained over pollution of industrial plants and the over-exploitation of coal mine.

On January 12, police killed six Uyghurs suspected of carry-

ing explosives in a shopping center in Shule county, Kashgar prefecture, XUAR. On February 13, one Uyghur youth killed seven police officers in a suicide bomb attack in Pishan county, Hotan prefecture, XUAR. Four days later, a police raid in Baicheng county, Aksu prefecture, XUAR, left four policemen stabbed to death and four Uyghurs shot dead. On March 6, while the annual meeting of the National People’s Congress and the Chinese Consultative Conference were held, two Uyghurs stabbed random people in the Guangzhou railway station, Guangdong, injuring twelve. The police killed one attacker and arrested the other. A week later, six attackers reportedly attempted to intrude a casino visited by Han Chinese in Kashgar. When security personnel shut the door, attackers stabbed random civilians outside and burned four vehicles, injuring eight. Police shot dead four attackers and arrested two. On March 24, the government executed three Uyghurs charged with organizing the 2014 Kunming railway station attack. Two days later, one Uyghur was killed during a police check in Kaiyuan, Yunnan, while three others escaped. On April 19, in Lengger township, Hotan, six suspected Uyghur militants were killed in an explosion during a police raid. On May 12 and 13, militants killed three police officers and injured four in two successive suicide bombings on a security checkpoint in Lop county, Hotan. On July 14, in an apartment raid in Shenyang, Liaoning, the police killed three suspected militants who were reportedly armed with knives and clubs. One Uyghur was injured by gunfire and the other were taken into custody. On September 18, a group of Uyghurs attacked a Han Chinese-owned coal mine in Baicheng, killing 50 mine workers with knives, including five police officers and injuring at least 30. In search of the attackers, authorities conducted large-scale operations near the borders to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Throughout the year, hundreds of Uyghurs fled to countries in Southeast or Central Asia, assisted by human trafficking organizations. The Chinese government declared many Uyghur refugees as terrorists and demanded countries such as Thailand and Afghanistan to repatriate them. Many refugees were killed in encounters with Chinese police and border guards. On January 18, the police shot dead two Uyghurs in Pingxiang, Guangxi, close to the Vietnamese border. On April 17, Chinese security forces and Vietnamese border guards killed two suspected Uyghur militants in an operation in the border city Dongxing, Guangxi. On July 9, the Thai government announced the repatriation of about 100 Uyghurs to China. A week before, hundreds protested outside the Chinese consulate in Turkey’s capital Istanbul and vandalized a Chinese restaurant. On August 17, a bomb attack in Thailand’s capital Bangkok killed 20 people, most of them Chinese tourists. A month later, Thai police arrested one perpetrator stating that he was a Uyghur. lx

CHINA – INDIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: China vs. India

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict between China and India over territory, resources, and international power remained non-violent.

On February 20, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the border state of Arunachal Pradesh. Most of its border area is claimed by China arguing that it belonged to Tibet. The Chi-

nese Foreign Ministry criticized the visit and demanded that India refrain from taking actions that might complicate the border issue. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs rejected the critique, stating that Arunachal Pradesh was an integral part of India. From May 14 to 16, during Modi's visit to China, he and Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang agreed to seek a fair resolution to the border disputes. The two sides also signed several trade and economic cooperation deals. On June 22, China opened a new border crossing between India and Tibet, enabling Indian pilgrims to visit Mount Kailash. In June, China blocked a move from India at the UN Sanctions Committee to question Pakistan's release of Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, a Lashkar-e-Toiba commander involved in the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai [→ India (JeM et al./Kashmir)]. In response, India addressed its concerns to the Chinese government. In September, the Indian Home Ministry claimed that China conducted construction activities in the border area close to Burtse, Jammu and Kashmir, subsequently leading to a standoff between the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police together with the Indian Army. China denied the standoff. On October 8, senior officials from both sides committed to resolve border disputes through dialogue and negotiations at a meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. On November 14, a PLA team in a light armored vehicle was seen patrolling on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control in Chushul, Leh district, Jammu and Kashmir.

A high-level Chinese military delegation and senior Indian officials held talks from November 15 to 17. Both sides endorsed concrete actions to implement the Border Defense Cooperation Agreement reached in 2013. During a visit to Beijing from December 14 to 20, the head of Indian Army's Northern Command held talks with General Sun Jianguo, PLA Deputy Chief of General Staff. Both expressed their hope for increased cooperation between the two armies and on the issue of counterterrorism. *als*

CHINA – USA

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: PRC vs. USA

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The dispute over international power and ideology between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the USA continued. While bilateral relations saw agreement on economic cooperation, climate change, cybersecurity, and peacekeeping, tensions over regional issues remained unresolved. In early April, the US condemned Chinese construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. On May 21, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) repeatedly warned a US P8-A Poseidon surveillance aircraft to leave the airspace over disputed islands in the South China Sea. In late May, during the 14th IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, diplomatic tensions between the two countries arose. US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter labeled PRC's activities in the South China Sea a challenge to international law and norms. Subsequently, the Pentagon claimed that the PRC had placed mobile artillery weapons systems on the Spratly Islands. Admiral Sun Jianguo, Deputy Chief of the PLA General Staff, reiterated PRC's "Peaceful Development" policy and the legitimacy of the construction activities in the South China Sea. The Chinese Foreign Ministry later released a rebuttal to Carter's speech, stressing that the South China Sea should not

be an issue between the US and China. On October 27, the missile destroyer USS Lassen conducted a "freedom of navigation operation," passing within twelve nautical miles of the Spratly Islands' Subi Reef. Two Chinese vessels followed the destroyer and issued warnings to leave the territory. On December 10, the Chinese Defense Ministry criticized the crossing of the twelve-nautical-miles zone off one of the Spratly Islands by two US B-52 bombers. The Pentagon declared that the route had been taken accidentally due to bad weather conditions.

On April 28, PRC criticized the US–Japan New Defense Guidelines for bilateral defense cooperation as "Cold War practices" [→ Japan – China (East China Sea)].

In early February, the Dalai Lama met US President Barack Obama. The Chinese government responded to the event with criticism. At the 19th US-China Human Rights Dialogue on August 13, US representatives criticized the Chinese government for the crackdown on lawyers, discrimination of Tibetan and Uyghur minorities, and the newly-passed National Security Law [→ China (opposition); China (Tibet); China (Uyghurs/Xinjiang)]. In response, China pointed out racial discrimination in the United States. On December 16, the PRC condemned US authorization of an arms deal with Taiwan and announced sanctions against the companies involved [→ China (Taiwan)].

Cybersecurity remained another source of tensions. In June, the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) had confirmed a massive data breach, compromising the records of an estimated 21.5 million government employees. China denied any involvement. On September 16, the US warned China that it would consider state-sponsored cyber espionage as an "act of aggression." Nine days later, during a summit meeting between US President Barack Obama and Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Washington, both sides reached an agreement on cybersecurity, which included the establishment of a high-level dialogue mechanism on cybercrime. The summit also resulted in the confirmation of a crisis reporting mechanism between both sides' militaries. *lsc*

CHINA – VIETNAM ET AL. (SOUTH CHINA SEA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: Brunei vs. PRC vs. ROC vs. Malaysia vs. Vietnam vs. Philippines

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict over territory, resources, and international power in the South China Sea between Brunei, the governments of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam escalated to a non-violent crisis.

During the year, the PRC increased construction activities on its artificial islands in the disputed waters, building airstrips on Fiery Cross / Yongshu Reef and Subi / Zhubi Reef in the Spratly Islands. In early February, satellite images discovered the PRC's reclamation activity on Mischief / Meiji Reef. On October 9, it completed the construction of two lighthouses on Cuarteron/ Huayang Reef and Johnson South / Chigua Reef in the Spratly Islands.

On April 29, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) criticized China's landfill activities in the disputed waters and urged the adoption of a code of conduct in the South China Sea in a joint statement. The Chinese govern-

ment criticized the statement.

In late May, the Philippines claimed that the PRC had challenged its aerial reconnaissance for six times in April and thereby had been effectively imposing an air defense zone over the South China Sea. The Philippines announced on July 16 the reopening of the former US naval base in Subic Bay for its own military use. On October 29, the Permanent Court of Arbitration announced that the case brought by the Philippines was “properly constituted,” after the latter had submitted a supplemental document to counter the PRC’s claim that the South China Sea issue would not fall under the jurisdiction of an international body.

On May 26, ROC President Ma Ying-jeou presented the South China Sea Peace Initiative, calling for the freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea as well as joint exploration of resources.

Vietnam held talks with EU and US contractors on June 5 in a bid to acquire the necessary equipment to upgrade its air forces. In the same month, PRC moved an oil rig closer to Vietnam’s coast where the two countries’ exclusive economic zones (EEZ) overlap. However, during PRC President Xi Jinping’s visit to Vietnam in early November, both sides agreed in a joint statement to enlarge their maritime cooperation and to launch an inspection of waters outside the mouth of the Beibu Gulf in December.

On June 9, a Chinese Coast Guard ship entered Malaysian waters near Borneo. Malaysia claimed that incursions into its territorial waters by Chinese ships had been occurring on a daily basis since the end of 2014.

Throughout the year, the US, Japan, India, Australia, and other external actors increased their presence in the conflict. In March, Indonesian President Joko Widodo stated that China’s claims to the South China Sea have “no legal foundation in international law.” On April 20, the Philippines began joint military exercises with the US in the vicinity of the South China Sea. In early June, it concluded a deal with Japan over the delivery of ten patrol vessels. The PRC criticized the move [→ China – Japan (East China Sea)]. At the East Asia Summit, taking place from November 21 to 22 in Kuala Lumpur, Japan supported the Philippines’ critique of the PRC, declaring that “artificial land features” had no legal status. On 27 October, the US sent navy destroyer USS Lassen close to the Subi / Zhubi and Mischief / Meiji reefs in the Spratly archipelago [→ China – USA]. The PRC denounced the move as threats to its sovereignty. Designating it as freedom of navigation operations (FONOP), the US furthermore sent two B-52 bombers near Chinese platforms in the Spratly Islands on November 8. Between late November and early December, an Australian surveillance aircraft flew over disputed waters in the South China Sea, triggering warnings by the Chinese navy. als

INDIA (GNLA ET AL. / MEGHALAYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: GNLA, ASAK, AMEF, ANVC, ANVC-B, UALA, HNLC et al. vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The conflict between militant groups seeking secession of various parts of Meghalaya state and the government continued as a violent crisis. While the Garo militants demanded a separate Garoland out of the five Garo Hills districts, the Khasi militants aimed at a sovereign state in the Khasi-Jaintia hills.

Reportedly, the groups also coordinated their activities from Bangladesh and Myanmar. Throughout the year, the armed groups were involved in criminal activities like extortion and increasingly carried out abductions.

On April 2, the government launched “Operation Hillstorm II” in which, according to the state police, security forces destroyed five militant camps and killed at least 17 people. On November 2, the Meghalayan High Court prompted the central government to introduce the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) in the Garo Hills. The AFSPA would grant extensive powers and judicial amnesty to soldiers. During the following two weeks, thousands protested against the AFSPA in Tura, West Garo Hills, in Williamnagar, East Garo Hills, and in the state capital Shillong. Meghalayan Chief Minister Mukul Sangma stated that he saw no need for the AFSPA. On December 18, Sangma offered militants to hold talks within the next six months if they abandoned violent means.

The Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) continued to cooperate in training their personnel with the independent faction of the United Liberation Front of Assam [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. Clashes with security forces continued over the year, leaving several GNLA members and security personnel dead. For instance, on March 10, GNLA militants killed four policemen and injured two in an ambush near Rongara, South Garo Hills. One month later, the police and GNLA clashed near Kherapara village, West Garo Hills, after GNLA had threatened to start bombings if the police did not stop persecuting them. Security forces arrested one GNLA member and injured two. On October 27, GNLA abducted a governmental official, demanding an end of operations against militants. He was released one week later.

Other active Garo groups were the Achik Songna Anpachakgipa Kotok (ASAK) and Achik Matgrik Elite Force (AMEF). On May 2, police forces killed AMEF leader Jack Marak in a shootout in North Garo Hills. On September 24, ASAK abducted the Bihari Intelligence Bureau officer Bikash Kumar Singh and the trader Kamal Saha. One month later, the police found their bodies close to Bolchugre village, South Garo Hills.

The Garo Achik National Volunteer’s Council (ANVC) and its breakaway faction ANVC-B had officially disbanded after a peace agreement with the government in December 2014. However, on July 14, the chairman of ANVC-B claimed that the police still continued operations against the group. Further, he repeatedly demanded to issue the agreed rehabilitation packages. Furthermore, the Garo United Achik Liberation Army (UALA) signed a peace agreement with the state government on December 18.

On January 7, the Khasi armed group Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) stated their willingness for a political solution and unilaterally declared a ceasefire on March 22. However, the government rejected the offer. HNLC claimed responsibility for an IED blast in Jhalupara, East Khasi Hills district, on November 12. The group repeatedly conducted strikes and road blockades regarding various political issues. twe

INDIA (HINDUS – MUSLIMS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: Hindus, radical Hindu organizations vs. Muslims

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent conflict over subnational predominance between members of the Hindu and Muslim community continued with clashes erupting on a regular basis.

On January 18, Hindu and Muslim groups clashed in Sarayan village, Bihar state, after the killing of a Hindu boy. Three Muslims burned to death after Hindu rioters had set their homes on fire. On April 3, Hindu and Muslim communities in Neemuch district, Madhya Pradesh state, clashed during a Hindu religious procession. The rioters threw stones and set several shops on fire, leaving 15 people injured. On May 25, violence erupted in Attali village, Haryana state, over the construction of a mosque. As part of one clash between a group of around 2,000 Hindus and the Muslim minority, the former set the mosque, 17 Muslim-owned houses, and several vehicles on fire. Two people suffered severe burns and at least 20 sustained minor injuries. Around 500 Muslims fled their homes to seek refuge at a police station for several days. On October 2, communities clashed over a saffron flag, a symbol commonly associated with Hinduism, close to a mosque in Mumbai, Maharashtra state. A total of 20 people sustained injuries before police forces dispersed the crowd. On November 10, Hindu nationalists protested against an event honoring an 18th century Muslim leader in Madikeri, Karnataka state. As violence erupted, Hindus and Muslims pelted stones at each other, leaving one person dead and at least 20 people injured.

In March, the states of Maharashtra and Haryana passed strict laws banning the slaughter of cows and the sale of beef, which contributed to communal tensions throughout the country. On September 28, a group of Hindus beat a Muslim to death in Bisara village, near Dadri city, Uttar Pradesh state, after rumors of him having eaten beef had spread. On October 14, Hindu villagers in Sarahan, Himachal Pradesh state, attacked five Muslims accused of smuggling cattle, killing one of them. Muslim activists blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist BJP party for not rigorously condemning these incidents. In Jammu and Kashmir state, violent protests erupted after the state's high court upheld a law banning the slaughter of cows on September 10.

The debate on the so-called reconversions of Muslims to Hinduism conducted by nationalist Hindu groups such as the Hindu nationalist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) continued. For instance, on March 1, members of the Hindu Munnani group reportedly reconverted 55 people in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu state, drawing criticism from Muslim organizations.

On August 25, demographic data of the 2011 census was released indicating a decrease in the share of the Hindu population and a higher growth rate of the Muslim community. RSS called for a national population policy to correct this trend.

On December 8, over 10,000 people in Indore, Madhya Pradesh state, staged a protest after a leader of the Hindu nationalist party Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha had made insulting remarks about Islam. A participating Muslim activist group called for the Hindu politician's death. [abo](#)

INDIA (HPC-D FACTIONS / MIZORAM, MANIPUR, ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: HPC-D Zosangbera faction, HPC-D Sanate faction vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The conflict over autonomy between two factions of the Hmar People's Convention Democracy (HPC-D), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis. HPC-D consisted of two splinter groups led by H Zosangbera and Lalhmingthang Sanate respectively. They demanded the establishment of an Autonomous District Council for areas inhabited by Hmar in the states of Mizoram, Assam, and Manipur. Violence erupted for the first time since 2008.

On March 5, alleged HPC-D militants shot at a police station in Khawlian, Aizawl district, Mizoram. Two weeks later, Mizoram police forces arrested three HPC-D members in Kolasib district, Mizoram. On March 28, gunmen ambushed a state government convoy at Zokhawthiang village, Aizawl. They killed three policemen, injured up to six people, and captured firearms including two AK-47 rifles. Zosangbera's faction claimed responsibility for the attack, while Sanate's faction condemned the violence and denied its involvement. In response, Minister of Home Affairs R Lalzirliana announced the establishment of more police posts in the conflict area and to conduct counter-insurgency training for police officers. In mid-April, HPC-D called for a boycott of the village council elections on April 30 and allegedly threatened potential candidates. In a meeting on April 13, Mizoram's government and opposition parties unanimously decided to initiate the classification of HPC-D as an unlawful organization by the central government. Combined Assam and Mizoram police forces arrested three HPC-D militants in Silchar, Cachar district, Assam, two days later. On May 8, Mizoram police killed one of the two suspected organizers of the March ambush in an encounter in Tiaulian village, Churachandpur district, Manipur. The Zosangbera faction of HPC-D offered to hold conditional tripartite talks with Mizoram government, but Lalzirliana rejected the proposal in July. Shortly after, HPC-D resumed its extortion activities in Mizoram villages. On September 17, Mizoram police arrested three HPC-D members for extorting money from villagers in Bilkhawthlir village, Kolasib. On October 16, the police arrested the other suspected organizer of the March ambush in Manipur. Lalzirliana stated on November 10 that the government would only restart peace talks if the HPC-D returned all weapons they had seized from security forces. [mw](#)

INDIA (INTER-ETHNIC RIVALRY / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Bodos vs. Adivasis vs. Bangladeshis, Biharis, Hindi-speaking groups vs. Assamese

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational predominance in Assam state between various ethnic groups de-escalated to a violent crisis. Violent attacks of the separatist militant organization

United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) against the Hindi-speaking population continued. ULFA-I further opposed ethnic Biharis and Bengalis. Militant Bodos, such as the National Democratic Front of Bodoland I.K. Songbijit faction (NDFB-S), did not conduct violent attacks against Adivasis as in previous years, but continued their armed fight for an independent Bodoland [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. Furthermore, indigenous groups, such as Adivasis, Assamese and Bodos, carried on non-violent protests against Bangladeshi immigrants.

On July 14, members of ULFA-I shot dead two Hindi-speaking people and injured three in Tinsukia district. The following day, Tinsukia residents organized demonstrations and road blockades demanding protection against ULFA-I. When police forces tried to disperse the protests, they killed one person and injured up to ten. Demanding a stop to the demonstrations, ULFA-I threatened to conduct more violent actions against the Hindi-speaking population. They also urged two civil Bihari organizations to stop their activities, accusing them to work against the indigenous population. On December 1, ULFA-I militants shot at a group of Hindi-speaking people in Dibrugarh district, injuring two.

After NDFB-S had killed at least 64 Adivasis, most of them Santhals, in Sonitpur and Kokrajhar districts in December 2014, over 100,000 Adivasis and Bodos were internally displaced by the end of 2014. During the first three months of 2015, student organizations such as the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), the All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam (AASAA), and the Assam Tea Tribes Association repeatedly staged joint sit-ins, demonstrations, strikes and road blockades. They collectively appealed to the government to take action against NDFB-S and to increase support for Adivasis and Bodos affected by the 2014 attacks.

In the context of the actualization of the National Register of Citizens in July, members of indigenous tribes held demonstrations and submitted memoranda to the state and central government. They demanded that Bangladeshis who had immigrated before 1971 would not be acknowledged as citizens of Assam. On September 9, the central government allowed Bangladeshis, who were persecuted for religious reasons in their home country to stay in Assam [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)]. Subsequently, indigenous' protests intensified. For instance, on November 17, the All Assam Students Union organized a demonstration with thousands of participants in Morigaon, eponymous district, followed by a sit-in in front of the district court.

Throughout the year, ethnic Assamese, Bodos and Santhals staged several demonstrations for the enhancement of their rights, more autonomy or the legal acknowledgement as a Scheduled Tribe. juh

INDIA (JEM ET AL. / KASHMIR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: HM, JeM, LeT, TuM vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The secession conflict in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) between Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued as a violent crisis. No activities from other groups such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen were reported. Throughout the year, a total of at least 195 people died. Members of mili-

tant groups repeatedly attempted to cross the Line of Control (LoC) from Pakistan, but army and security forces reportedly prevented many of these efforts. Security forces undertook a series of extensive search operations, discovering at least 19 militant hideouts stocked with large amounts of weaponry.

In the course of the year, militants attacked the Indian police and army numerous times, killing a total of 69 and injuring 100. Furthermore, 78 civilians were injured. For example, on March 21, two militants opened fire in an army camp in Kathua district using automatic weapons and grenades, killing three Indian soldiers, two civilians and injuring eleven people. Soldiers consequently killed both attackers. On July 29, TuM members hurled a grenade at security forces in Anantnag district, injuring four officers and civilians respectively. On August 5, two Pakistani LeT militants ambushed a Border Security Force convoy in Udhampur district, killing two soldiers. In a subsequent search operation, security forces killed one militant while capturing the other.

Indian security forces killed 104 militants and three civilians. For example, on October 4, police and army forces killed the high-ranking JeM commander Aadil Pathan and his associate in a joint operation in Pulwama district.

Several pro-secession demonstrations took place throughout the year. Violent clashes between protesters and security forces erupted in Srinagar town on November 7 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally there. Over the course of the day, security forces using tear gas and bullets killed one protester. The clashes lasted for another day, leaving a total of 23 protesters and ten police officers injured. In preparation of the event, the government had deployed thousands of security forces to Srinagar as well as connecting highways and had detained nearly 400 Kashmiri separatists in order to prevent demonstrations. In total, security forces injured 126 protesters throughout the year. jam

INDIA (MANIPUR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: Meiteis, KNF, Kukis, JCLIPS, KYKL, KCP, PREPAK-Pro, PLA, UNLF et al. vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy and secession of Manipur state between Kuki and Meitei ethnic groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. While various civil groups held violent protests against the government to demand the restriction of migration to Manipur, militants fought for an independent state to be created out of varying areas in Manipur. The latter were organized in groups such as United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People's Liberation Army (PLA), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak Progressive faction (PREPAK-Pro), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL).

On April 17, these militant groups and four formations belonging to Assamese, Naga, and Bodo ethnicities set up an umbrella organization called United National Liberation Front of West South East Asia (UNLFW) [→ India (UFLA-I et al. / Assam); India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland)]. UNLFW claimed responsibility for an ambush on soldiers of the 6th Dogra Regiment in Chandel district on June 4, using RPGs and IEDs. The militants killed 18 soldiers and injured eleven. This was the highest loss in a single attack for government forces since the

mid-1990s. The same week, the government launched a military operation and declared having killed 80 militants. In contrast, several media reports claimed the number to be much lower. According to the government, security forces crossed the border to Myanmar during the operation. The government of Myanmar, however, denied this.

Throughout the year, at least 80 people were killed in violent encounters between government forces and militant groups. Furthermore, around 400 militants were arrested. On January 6, the police killed two alleged leaders of the United Revolutionary Front at Kwahta Khuman, Bishnupur district. PREPAK-Pro claimed responsibility for three violent attacks against army personnel in Ukhrul, Thoubal, and Moirang districts the same month. On March 31, PLA militants attacked the paramilitary group Assam Rifles (AR) with IEDs and firearms in Ukhrul district. PLA thereby killed two and injured one AR member, while the security forces killed one PLA member. On May 23, security forces killed two militants of the Kuki National Front (KNF) Nehlung faction and one civilian in two separate clashes in Bongbal Khullen, Senapati district. Since 2006, the Meitei demanded the implementation of the Inner Line Permit System (ILPS) under which non-Manipuris require permission to enter the state and are prohibited to purchase land. When the state legislative assembly instead introduced the Manipur Regulation of Visitors, Tenants and Migrant Workers Bill, violent protests erupted from March 16 onwards. The bill rendered the obligation to register all non-Manipuri entering the state. During the protests mainly organized by the Meitei Joint Committee of Inner Line Permit System (JCLIPS), demonstrators clashed with government forces, destroying private property and imposing street blockades and strikes, so-called bandhs. On July 8, the police killed one person in Imphal district when they tried to disperse the protesters. The state government withdrew the bill one week later. However, protests demanding the ILPS continued.

On August 19, Meitei protesters clashed with Kukis who opposed the demand for ILPS in Moreh, Chandel. During the clashes, several shops and offices were looted or burned down. The Manipur Legislative Assembly passed three revised bills on August 31 including the demanded restrictions on land purchase by non-Manipuris. While the Meitei accepted the bills, Kukis and the Nagas who settled in Manipur resumed violent protests. During clashes in Churachandpur district in the following days, security forces killed nine people. Protesters burned down houses of at least one state minister, five members of the state legislative assembly, and one member of the Lok Sabha. Until the end of the year, Meitei organizations refused to bury the killed protesters unless state authorities would investigate their deaths. In December, JCLIPS threatened to resume its protests unless the bills were implemented by the beginning of 2016. mbl

INDIA (NAXALITES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: CPI-M, PLFI, TPC et al. vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over ideology and the orientation of the political system between the Naxalites and the government continued. Maoists known as Naxalites were mainly organized in the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) and in minor groups like the People's Liberation Front India (PLFI) and the

Triptiya Prastuti Committee (TPC). The groups operated primarily in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh but also in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam.

In the course of the year, 81 violent encounters between security forces and militants took place in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Telangana. In total, security forces killed 82 militants, while Naxalites killed 45 security personnel. For instance, on April 10, a clash between seven PLFI members and security forces left one militant dead in Kunjla village, Khunti district, Jharkhand. One day later, about 150 CPI-M militants attacked a group of 60 Chhattisgarh Special Task Force (STF) personnel close to Pidmal village, Sukma district, Chhattisgarh. They killed seven and injured eleven STF personnel, while security forces shot dead up to 35 and injured 15 CPI-M members. In the night of June 9 to 10, the police killed twelve CPI-M members in a shootout in Palamu district, Jharkhand. The police claimed that they had to shoot back after the Naxalites had opened fire at a traffic check post.

Throughout the year, Naxalites killed 51 civilians in 69 incidents, frequently accusing them of being police informers. In one of those incidents, on January 5, a group of about 40 Naxalites beat two villagers to death in Kalimela, Malkangiri district, Odisha. They left a poster appealing to the youth not to cooperate with the police. On another occasion, on May 9, in Marenga village in Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, approx. 100 militants kidnapped about 250 villagers in an attempt to thwart the construction of a bridge. The Naxalites later killed the villager responsible for the construction and released the other hostages. On July 12, around 30 alleged TPC militants entered Bindi village, Koderma district, Jharkhand, and beat up over 20 residents.

On March 24, the state government of Jharkhand raised the reward money given to Naxalites who decided to surrender. The next day, eight militants surrendered to the police. A total of about 255 militants demobilized nationwide throughout the year. ans

INDIA (NSCN FACTIONS ET AL. / NAGALAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: NSCN-K, NSCN-R, NSCN-IM, NSCN-KK, NNC, NNC-NA, ZUF et al. vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The secession conflict between several militant Naga groups and the government continued as a violent crisis. The groups aimed for sovereignty of territories inhabited by the ethnic Naga in Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh states as well as border areas of neighboring Myanmar.

The Nagas were mainly organized in various factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), namely the NSCN Isaak Muivah (NSCN-IM), NSCN Khaplang (NSCN-K), NSCN Khole-Khitovi (NSCN-KK), and the newly-formed NSCN Reformation (NSCN-R). Other active militant groups were the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF), the Naga National Council (NNC), and its Non-Accordist faction (NNC-NA).

After Myanmar-based NSCN-K ended its ceasefire with the Indian government on March 27, members opposing the abrogation split off and formed the NSCN-R on April 6. On April 27,

the newly-formed faction signed a ceasefire agreement with the government. The same day, NSCN-KK's ceasefire was extended by one year. The NSCN-IM signed a peace accord after two decades of fighting on August 3. NSCN-K, NNC and NNC-NA jointly spoke out against the agreement in a statement issued on September 9 [→ India (inter-factional rivalry / Nagaland)]. The interlocutor of the August 3 agreement held a meeting with NSCN-KK and NNC leaders on December 7 to elaborate on the chances of a comprehensive peace accord. On March 27, the government extended the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), granting military personnel amnesty from judicial prosecution, to another nine districts of Arunachal Pradesh. After the state government and civil society organizations protested against the AFSPA, the government lifted the act in the previously added districts on May 5. NSCN-K was the most active group and especially increased its violent activities in Arunachal Pradesh. For instance, on April 2, the group attacked an army convoy in Tirap district, leaving three soldiers dead and four injured. On April 17, nine north-east militant groups officially formed an umbrella organization, the United National Liberation Front of West South East Asia (UNLFW), under the leadership of NSCN-K [→ India (Manipur); India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. On June 4, in the most fatal attack on security forces since the mid-1990s, UNLFW militants killed 18 soldiers of the 6th Dogra Regiment in Chandel district, Manipur. During the following week, the army responded by carrying out operations in Myanmar close to the Indian border. According to the Indian government, army forces killed 80 militants, including 15 NSCN-K members. The government banned NSCN-K for five years on September 16 and declared it a terrorist organization two months later. fli

INDIA (PATELS ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Patel community, Gurjar community, Jat community, Maratha community vs. government

Conflict items: other

The conflict between various communities, most prominently the Patels, Jats, and Gurjaris, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, over benefits under the reservation system turned violent. A reservation system allocating government jobs and access to education based on a community's status as either Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) had started to evolve under British colonial rule and was expanded by the Other Backward Caste (OBC) status after Indian independence.

The Patel community in Gujarat state magnified their demand for OBC status. Up until August 25, a total of 37 rallies had allegedly been organized in Gujarat by Hardik Patel, leader of the organization Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS). On August 25, PAAS and Sardar Patel Group (SPG) organized a protest rally in the city of Ahmedabad, demanding reservations in education and jobs. Addressing a crowd of at least 300,000 people, Hardik Patel set a two-day ultimatum for Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel to meet their demands after she had already ruled out the OBC status for the community two days earlier. Following the detainment of Hardik Patel in the evening for disobeying orders to disperse the gathering, stone-pelting protesters clashed with the police who used tear gas and firearms. Nine people died and at least

70 buses and cars as well as police stations were torched. The following day, five army columns were deployed to the city. Meanwhile, Hardik Patel had called for a state-wide shutdown. A curfew authorities had imposed on several parts of the state on August 25 was lifted three days later. In September, district authorities of Gujarat prohibited several rallies planned by Patel communities and opposing groups and increased the number of police and paramilitary forces. On September 14, Patel community members withdrew large sums from their bank accounts, partly paralyzing Gujarat's financial infrastructure. On October 18, after Hardik Patel had threatened to stage a protest at the cricket stadium in Rajkot, more than 8,000 police forces were deployed to the city while 2,500 policemen along with 500 private security personnel were sent to the stadium to secure an international cricket match. The state government blocked internet services for the whole day and Hardik Patel and six others were briefly detained. Consequently, protests erupted in some cities of Gujarat with one bus being torched in Morbi district. The Hindu-nationalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad came out in support of the community's demands on September 9 and the Indian National Congress party followed on October 1. Patels in the USA uttered their support on several occasions.

Other communities, such as the Jats in Uttar Pradesh state (UP) and the Gurjars in Rajasthan state, upheld their reservation demands. After the Indian High Court rejected the March 2014 proposal by a previous central government coalition to grant the OBC status to Jats in nine states, communities in UP and Haryana state protested. On July 27, for example, Jats blocked the Delhi-Hisar national highway in UP. Starting on May 21, ten trains had to be cancelled and 57 others diverted due to a sit-in protest involving nearly 1,000 Gurjaris in Bharatpur, Rajasthan, demanding a five percent quota in government jobs. By the eighth consecutive day of protests, the government dispatched 4,500 paramilitary personnel for assistance. However, the community ended its protest on the same day after they had been promised a five percent job reservation by the Rajasthan state government. iro

INDIA (SIKHS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: SAD, SAD (Amritsar), Sikh groups vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy, other

The conflict over autonomy, secession, and the reappraisal of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots between the political party Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), its subgroup SAD (Amritsar), and other Sikh groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to the level of a violent crisis. The conflict was carried out in the state of Punjab, with only a few incidents occurring in Jammu and Kashmir state (J&K). As against previous years, the demand for the establishment of an independent state of Khalistan emerged again as the main contentious point and led to increased tensions between radical and moderate Sikh groups.

On India's Republic Day on January 26, Sikh organizations demanded a separate homeland during protests all over Punjab. On January 27, Sikh activists raised pro-Khalistan slogans in Jalandhar against the backdrop of the arrest of Singh Tara, chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force.

On March 5, SAD (Amritsar) president Singh Mann reiterated

the demand for Khalistan at a party conference in Anandpur Sahib city, Punjab. On June 4, 2,000 Sikhs protested in Jammu, J&K, against the removal of posters of the deceased Sikh activist Bhindranwale. The police killed one Sikh youth while protesters injured two policemen in a subsequent clash. After an attack on a police station in Gurdaspur district, the police took measures to increase security at the Nabha central jail, Patiala district, Punjab, in which several Sikh hardliners were imprisoned [→ India (Islamist militant groups)]. Furthermore, central and state intelligence agencies and Punjab Police announced to intensify the monitoring of Khalistan sympathizers.

Statewide protests erupted after the alleged desecration of the holy Sikh book Guru Granth Sahib on October 5 at Bargar village, Faridkot district, Punjab. On October 11, the police injured 19 people by using canes and water cannon against protesters in Moga district, Punjab. One day later, the police killed one person and injured 27 people during demonstrations at Behbal Kalan village and Kotkapura town in Faridkot district. Protesters for their part injured 35 policemen in Kotkapura. Protests against police violence lasted until November.

On November 1, a parliamentarian of the Indian National Congress party condemned SAD (Amritsar) president's demand for taking up the Khalistan-issue at the upcoming Sikh assembly Sarbat Khalsa in Amritsar city on November 10. Three days after the demand had nonetheless been reiterated at the assembly, police arrested the event organizers, among them Singh Mann, on the charge of sedition. On November 20, Punjab government also cracked down on several Sikh online appearances supposedly spreading seditious material. cch

tion Army in Meghalaya state [→ India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya)].

As a response to the killing of 64 Adivasi civilians by NDFB-S on 12/23/14 in Sonitpur and Kokrajhar districts, Assam, the government launched "Operation All Out" in late December 2014, deploying approx. 9,000 soldiers, paramilitaries, and policemen. In September, air force units joined the operation. The government cooperated with Bhutan in January and June and planned to cooperate with Myanmar in April in order to coordinate military operations against ULFA-I, NDFB-S, and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland Khaplang faction. In the course of the year, security forces killed 28 militants, arrested at least 231, and destroyed several arms depots and camps. The militants killed 19 security forces and injured 15. For instance, on May 18, security forces killed one KPLT militant in a shootout in Bhelughat, Karbi Anglong. On June 4, the UNLFW claimed responsibility for an ambush in Chandel district, Manipur state, in which 18 soldiers were killed and 15 injured. In the following week, Indian forces crossed the border to Myanmar and killed at least 15 militants, among them several ULFA-I members.

On March 27, the government extended the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) to nine more districts of neighboring Arunachal Pradesh state, claiming the presence of militant groups from Assam and Nagaland. The AFSPA granted military personnel amnesty from judicial prosecution and provided special powers, for instance arrest without warrant. After the state government and civil society organizations had protested against the AFSPA, the government lifted the act in the additional nine districts on May 5.

The pro-talk faction of ULFA (ULFA-PTF) continued peace talks with the government. cbo

INDIA (ULFA-I ET AL. / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: ULFA-I, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-S, KLO, KPLT, KNLA et al. vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over secession of various areas of Assam and West Bengal states between militias belonging to the Assamese, Bodo, Karbi, and Koch-Rajbanshi ethnic groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. Most of the groups continued to operate from hideouts in the neighboring states Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

While the Assamese United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) strove for an independent socialist Assam, the other groups claimed territories inhabited by their kin in the respective states. Bodo organizations, including the National Democratic Front of Bodoland I.K. Songbijit faction (NDFB-S), demanded the Assam territory north of Brahmaputra river. Koch-Rajbanshi groups, such as the Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO), aimed at six districts in eastern West Bengal as well as four districts in western Assam, while Karbi militants, for example the Karbi People's Liberation Tigers (KPLT), claimed the Karbi Anglong and Nagaon districts of Assam.

In late April, NDFB-S, ULFA-I, KLO, and another six ethnic-based militias from Nagaland and Manipur founded the United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNLFW) [→ India (Manipur); India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland)]. Additionally, ULFA-I continued to conduct joint military training with the secessionist Meghalayan Garo National Libera-

INDONESIA (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: JAT, MIT, JI, Lintas Tanzim vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis between Islamist militant groups fighting for an Islamic state in Indonesia and the government continued. Throughout the year, violent encounters between militants and security forces resulted in 15 fatalities. Violence concentrated mainly on the island of Sulawesi, where the government launched a series of large-scale security operations and military exercises. The operations were accompanied by programs aimed at de-radicalizing imprisoned militants and tracking returnees from the Islamic State militant group (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In addition, the government blocked 22 websites it accused of proliferating radical Islamism. Based on Press Release SC/12063, the UNSC announced the freezing of bank accounts of 20 members of the militant outfit Mujahideen Indonesia Timur (MIT). The US and the EU followed up by implementing financial sanctions and embargos against the same people and groups.

As announced in 2014, the government proceeded with large-scale police operations in the region of Poso, Central Sulawesi province, to arrest militants suspected of cooperating with IS. With about 300 personnel from the police and the National Armed Forces (TNI) already in place, authorities deployed an additional 1,000 security forces with the launch of "Operation Camar Maleo I" on January 26. Initially scheduled

to last until March 26, it was later followed up with operations Camar Maleo II, III, and IV, announced to last until 01/09/16. The operations involved units from both the districts' and the provincial command, as well as a Mobile Brigade Corps and elements of counterterrorism unit Densus 88. While the operations continued, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo authorized military exercise Anoa Laut in Poso, involving approx. 3,200 TNI soldiers and lasting from March 22 to April 3. Government officials declared that it served as a training exercise and a security measure for the sailing parade Sali Tomini. On March 31, then-Commander of the TNI Moeldoko announced that a battalion of 700 soldiers would remain stationed in Sulawesi as a Quick Response Strike Force to support police raids if necessary after the military exercise had ended. During operations "Camar Maleo I-IV", the police arrested at least 27 suspected militants in Sulawesi accused of connections to MIT and supporting IS. In total, the operations led to 14 fatalities in Sulawesi, among them six militants, two security personnel, and six civilians.

Throughout the year, police seized small weapons, ammunition, and explosive devices in Sulawesi and Jakarta. Outside of Sulawesi, police officers killed one militant in a shootout in Kediri, East Java province, on January 16. The following month, suspected IS-supporters launched a bomb attack in a shopping mall in the capital Jakarta, causing light damage. Police and Densus 88 arrested at least 29 people, among them 24 on the island of Java and five on the island of Nusa.

On November 22, MIT leader Abu Warda Santoso published a video on Facebook calling for attacks on police headquarters and the presidential palace in Jakarta. As a consequence, government officials increased the security personnel and raised the security alert from low to medium. In December, the National Police, supported by security agencies from Australia, Singapore, and the US, detected an alleged suicide attack plot planned for New Year's Eve. The government subsequently increased the security alert to the highest level for the entire country and launched "Operation Candle", scheduled from December 24 to 01/02/16. It mobilized approx. 150,000 TNI and National Police personnel to secure important sites and to conduct targeted raids against Islamists throughout the country. In Jakarta, more than 20,000 security forces safeguarded New Year's festivities. lwe

INDONESIA (MUSLIMS – CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: Muslims, FPI vs. Christians

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational, religious predominance between Muslims and Christians continued at the level of a violent crisis. While violent inter-religious tensions had sporadically occurred since the early years of the country's independence, large-scale violence broke out with the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. In the transition period between 1998 and 2002, clashes between Muslims and Christians on the Maluku archipelago and the islands of Sulawesi repeatedly reached the level of a limited war. In February 2002, Christian and Muslim community leaders concluded two separate peace treaties for the Moluccan island of Ambon and the city of Poso in Sulawesi, which had been the epicenters of the violence. Despite this, violent tensions between Muslims and Christians continued to erupt in both regions as

well as other parts of Indonesia, reinforced by the transmigration of Muslims to predominantly Christian regions and countrywide anti-Christian mobilization by Islamist organizations, most notably the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI).

In 2015, tensions on the Maluku archipelago de-escalated, while outbreaks of violence occurred in the provinces of Aceh, Papua, and Central Sulawesi. On January 15, Islamist militants killed three Christian villagers in Tangkura near Poso, Central Sulawesi [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. On June 13, members of the Christian Indonesian Bible Church Congregation (GIDI) reportedly circulated flyers in Tolikara, Papua, complaining about the use of loudspeakers at a local mosque and demanding prayers not to take place near a Christian seminar. Four days later, during the festival of Eid al-Fitr, about 200 GIDI members gathered to stop Muslim migrants from conducting their prayers. Breaking into a riot, the Christian mob hurled stones, set the mosque ablaze, and torched several houses, kiosks, and vehicles in the Muslim-populated vicinity. About 150 Muslims fled to a nearby military compound. Security forces shot dead one rioter and injured eleven others. On July 22, community leaders in Tolikara shook hands in a public peace ceremony. In the aftermath of the widely circulated attack, arson attacks against churches were reported in several cities on the island of Java. The government arrested two Christians for instigating the riots and deployed more than 300 additional police and military personnel to Central Sulawesi to protect churches and viharas.

In Aceh, an autonomous province adhering to Islamic Law, incidents of burning churches attributed to Islamist arsonists were reported in August and September. In early October, members of Islamist organizations staged a demonstration demanding the demolition of churches constructed without building permit. The local government acceded to the protesters' demands, but did not proceed with the demolition immediately. Under the 2006 decree on the construction of houses of worship, religious minorities were required to attain supportive signatures from at least 60 people of other religious belief as well as the approval from the local religious agency. On October 13, members of FPI and the Aceh Singkil Islamic Care Youth Students Association torched two Protestant churches in the villages of Suka Makmur and Dangguran as well as one Catholic church, claiming they had been built without permits. The attackers, numbering at least 500 people, were confronted by local Christians as well as military and police personnel, which had been deployed in anticipation of the attacks. In the ensuing fights, one Muslim was shot dead with an air rifle, while three others as well as one soldier were injured. The police arrested at least ten attackers. In the aftermath, thousands of Christians fled to neighboring districts. President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and the Indonesian Ulema Council condemned the violence. The government deployed at least 1,300 police and military forces to the region to oversee the return of the IDPs, patrol the streets, and guard Christian services and churches. They also oversaw the demolition of the unlicensed churches, which started on October 19. jfr

INDONESIA (PAPUA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: OPM, KNPB, ULMWP vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources

The secession conflict over the provinces of Papua and West-Papua and resources such as timber, gold, and copper be-

tween indigenous Papuans and the government continued at a violent level. The Papuan side remained divided between a militant spectrum spearheaded by the fragmented Free Papua Movement (OPM), and a civic spectrum consisting of mostly non-violent domestic and transnational activist groups. In 2014, Papuan civil society and diaspora groups had formed the umbrella group United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) in Vanuatu, incorporating the Federal Republic of West Papua, the National Coalition for Liberation, and the National Parliament of West Papua which includes the National Committee for West Papua.

Throughout the year, the groups organized rallies for Papua to become a member of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). Between June 24 and 26, during the leader summit in Honiara, Solomon Islands, the MSG declined ULMWP's membership bid, but granted it observer status. Indonesia was accepted as an associate member due to its five Melanesian provinces. On the government side, newly-elected Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo reiterated his commitment to peace in Papua. In May, Jokowi formally lifted the media ban on Papua, extended the moratorium on new forestry concessions, and released several activists and OPM members in line with an announcement of further amnesties. He did not, however, respond to Papuan demands of a withdrawal of the National Armed Forces (TNI). The military, its special force Komando Pasokan Khusus (Kopassus), and paramilitary mobile police brigades known as brimobs continued to conduct sweeping operations that targeted both militants and civilians.

On January 1, militants killed two policemen and one security guard at the PT Freeport mine complex in Papua. Six days later, a 500-strong joint police and military force burned down houses, arrested about 100 people, and caused hundreds to flee during a sweeping operation in Utikini village, Timika Baru district, Papua. In Tembagapura, a village close to the Freeport mine, police and military forces set up security posts and expelled about 1,000 illegal gold miners on January 14, accusing them of financing militants. On April 30, the police arrested commander Leonardus Magai Yogi and two other OPM members after a car chase and shootout in Nabire district, Papua. Yogi was shot and died after one month in hospital. On May 20, students and members of the West Papua National Committee (KNPB) in Jakarta staged protests in support of ULMWP's bid for MSG membership. The same day, the police arrested about 70 students and KNPB members during a rally in Manokwari, West Papua. On May 21, 400 police officers escorted a rally of 700 KNPB members driving on trucks and motorcycles from Wamena to the Papua Provincial Council (DPRD) office in Jayapura and back. One week later, the police arrested at least 71 KNPB members in two rallies in Wamena and Jayapura, heavily injuring five. On June 28, two soldiers killed two people and injured three in a street quarrel with Papuan civilians in Timika, Timika Baru district. On November 29, militants in Namunaweja, Central Mambamo district, Papua, shot dead TNI Major John Frans de Fretes with his own pistol. Fretes had been sent to the village by the Regional Military Command, following reports of OPM activities. In early December, at least 120 families from the Namunaweja villages fled into surrounding forests in fear of military retaliation. On December 27, 15 militants raided a police station in Sinak town, Puncak district, Papua, killing three policemen. The militants stole seven assault rifles and ammunition. tve

JAPAN – CHINA (EAST CHINA SEA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Japan vs. PRC vs. ROC

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources, other

The non-violent crisis between the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC), and Japan over international power, resources, and territory continued. Throughout the year, all conflict parties reiterated their claims over the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Diaoyutai Islands and their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the East China Sea. Both Japan and the PRC repeatedly sent ships and airplanes into the disputed area, accusing each other of territorial incursions. Both sides also continued to build up military and constabulary capabilities, including the procurement of aircraft and helicopter carriers. The PRC voiced concerns over Japan's new security bills, lifting the country's constitutional restrictions on collective self-defense. The diet passed the bill on September 19, against strong protests of opposition parties and civil society groups. In the course of the year, Japan announced the deployment of ground troops on the islands of Ishigaki, Miyako, and Yonaguni, close to the disputed territories. On January 23, satellite imagery confirmed the construction of a Chinese military base with a radar installation and reportedly ten helicopter landing pads on Nanji Island, Zhejiang Province, roughly 300 km from the disputed islands.

On March 4, the PRC launched a website that stated its territorial claims in multiple languages. On March 16, Japan's foreign ministry published an official Chinese map from 1969, contending that it proved Chinese acknowledgement of its claims. Three days later, senior Chinese and Japanese officials met in Tokyo for the first security dialogue since January 2011, negotiating the establishment of a maritime hotline. On April 9, both sides resumed their parliamentary exchange, last held in January 2012. On April 27, Japan and the USA issued new guidelines for their defense cooperation, improving the interoperability of their armed forces and establishing an Alliance Coordination Mechanism to control escalating crises on remote islands, among other things. The PRC urged the US not to include the disputed territory in the guidelines and to stay neutral. In May and June, the US approved potential arms sales to Japan including 17 V22-Osprey tiltrotor planes and four E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircrafts.

On June 5, Japan and the Philippines agreed to strengthen their security cooperation, jointly opposing "unilateral attempts to change the status quo." One week later, the PRC warned Japan against jeopardizing the improvement of relations by "hying up" the South China Sea issue [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. On September 15, Japan and Vietnam jointly expressed concerns over unilateral actions in the South China Sea.

On June 12, a PRC military document showed its consideration of the use of drone patrols in the East China Sea. On July 22, Japan's foreign ministry published 14 photographs showing PRC offshore platforms, claiming that they violated the 2008 agreement on jointly developing the gas and oil resources in the disputed waters. China rejected the accusations, stating that the platforms were in undisputed territory. In late July, former ROC Prime Minister Lee Teng-hui visited Japan and asserted Japan's territorial claims, referring to them as "Senkaku" instead of Diaoyutai, ROC's official designation.

The ROC government condemned the statement with President Ma demanding Lee to apologize to the nation. One day later, the Japanese cabinet office posted 200 historical documents online to support its maritime territorial claims [→ Japan – Russia; Japan – South Korea]. In September and October, the PRC confirmed that it had arrested four Japanese citizens it accused of espionage. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga Yoshihide denied the claims and demanded their immediate release.

On November 1 in Seoul, Japan, the PRC, and the Republic of Korea resumed the trilateral summit and discussed economic cooperation. Three days later, the defense ministers of Japan and the PRC met in Malaysia for the first time since 2011 and agreed a maritime crisis management mechanism was needed. On November 12, Japan's Ministry of Defense claimed that a PRC navy intelligence vessel sailed close to the disputed islands in an attempt to monitor a Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) exercise. Subsequently, the MSDF announced to increase their patrols. On December 22, tensions increased when the Japanese Coast Guard spotted a cannon-equipped frigate of the Chinese Coast Guard close to the disputed islands.

Despite continuing confrontation in the East China Sea, tensions over differing accounts of history eased with conciliatory statements from both sides and a damping of domestic anti-Japanese propaganda in the PRC. On April 22, during a meeting in the Indonesian capital Jakarta, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and PRC leader Xi Jinping confirmed their commitment to rapprochement. However, Xi also stated that the history issue would lie at the political foundation of bilateral relations and criticized continuing visits by Japanese MPs to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which also enshrines WWII class-A criminals. On May 23, Xi held a speech in front of 3,000 Japanese visitors in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, extending his cordial greetings to the Japanese people and concurring that they also were victims of WWII. On June 5, Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Aso Taro met with Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli in Beijing, expressing his "deep remorse" about China's wartime suffering. On August 14, Abe delivered his cabinet's statement on Japan's pre-war role, acknowledging the country's past "aggression" and reaffirming its apologies. On September 3, the PRC celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Victory over Japan Day with a massive military parade. kol

JAPAN – RUSSIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1945

Conflict parties: Japan vs. Russia

Conflict items: territory, international power

The conflict between Japan and Russia regarding the territorial status of the Kuril Islands as well as international power continued. Throughout the year, Russia continued the construction of military compounds and civilian buildings on the islands of Iturup/Etorofu and Kunashir/Kunashiri, both belonging to the Kurils. Between April and September, Japanese Self-Defense Forces jet fighters scrambled 108 times against Russian planes entering Japan's airspace. In late August, Russia and China conducted "Joint Sea 2015 II", their so far largest joint naval exercises. Taking place in the Sea of Japan, the exercises also included joint amphibious operations in Russian soil off Vladivostok. On October 15, Russia held a military exercise with fighter jets near the Kuril Islands.

On January 21, Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida Fumio drew parallels between Russia's behavior in the Kuril Islands dispute and in the Ukraine conflict, a statement which the Russian Foreign Ministry condemned. On June 6, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō met with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, stating his respect for the country's territorial integrity [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. The Japanese Foreign Ministry criticized Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev's visit to Iturup / Etorofu on August 22 and postponed a visit of Foreign Minister Kishida planned for late August / early September. Between July and September, four other Russian cabinet members paid visits to the disputed islands. On August 28, the Japanese government released historical documents to back its claim on the islands [→ Japan – China; Japan – South Korea]. From September 21 to 22, both foreign ministers met in Moscow, formally resuming negotiations over a peace treaty. A new meeting on the issue was scheduled for October 8, but neither side announced any outcome afterwards.

Prime Minister Abe and Russian president Vladimir Putin held two summit meetings, one on September 28 during the UN General Assembly and one on November 15 during the G20 summit. In both meetings, they addressed the territorial dispute, but reached no agreement. Additionally, both leaders stressed the importance of good relations several times. However, a planned visit to Japan by Putin was once more postponed to the following year. psc

KAZAKHSTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and the government continued.

On April 26, President Nursultan Nazarbayev was re-elected with 97 percent of the votes. Throughout the year, authorities particularly enforced measures against oppositional activists. During the official visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly, the police detained the editor-in-chief of oppositional magazine "Adam Bol" Guljan Yergaliyeva as well as the editors Ayan Sharipbayev and Miras Nurmukhanbetov, and activist Rozlana Taukina, who intended to attend an event on Republic Square in Almaty on January 23. On August 20, authorities imprisoned human rights lawyer Ermek Narymbaev for 20 days. He was arrested again on October 15, along with Serikzhan Mambetalin, former head of oppositional Rukhaniyat party, for "inciting national discord." On November 11, authorities detained activist Bolatbek Blyalov on the same charges.

Additionally, authorities took action against independent news outlets. On February 26, the Almaty Appeals Court upheld a 2014 ruling to close "Adam Bol." Subsequently, Yergaliyeva started an 18-day hunger strike in protest. The successor newspaper "ADAM" was closed down for three months by the regional government of Almaty on August 27. On June 19, the Municipal Court of Almaty found news website Nakanune.kz guilty of libel. On December 26, the Almalinsky District Court of Almaty put Nakanune.kz journalists Guzyal Baidalinova and Rafael Balgin under a two-month arrest for spreading false information after the police had searched

their homes and Nakanune.kz's offices six days earlier.
afo

KYRGYZSTAN – UZBEKISTAN – TAJIKISTAN (BORDER COMMUNITIES / FERGANA VALLEY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: Kyrgyzstan vs. Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan

Conflict items: territory, international power

The conflict over territory and international power between inhabitants of enclaves/exclaves and the respective governments of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan continued at a violent level.

Throughout the year, border guards shot dead at least one civilian and injured about a dozen others of the three countries' enclaves/exclaves. According to the Kyrgyz State Border Service, 219 people were arrested for violating Kyrgyz borders from January until October. They also confiscated a small number of weapons and approx. 1.8 tons of narcotics. On May 12, Uzbek border guards killed a Kyrgyz citizen at the border of the Uzbek Sokh region and arrested another Kyrgyz. On June 29, one Uzbek border guard was injured in a fire exchange between Uzbek and Kyrgyz border guards at a non-demarcated border section near the Masha-lang border crossing in the Uzbek village Shahimardan, Fergana region. The same day, Uzbek border guards opened fire at two Tajiks trying to cross the Uzbek-Tajik border near Andarkhan, Fergana, injuring one. On August 3, Kyrgyz and Tajiks clashed near Vorukh, Sughd region, Tajikistan, engulfed by Batken province, Kyrgyzstan. Tajik citizens had allegedly blocked a road to a cemetery near the Kyrgyz Kok-Tash village, while Kyrgyz citizens had presumably blocked a water canal of the Tajik Chorku village. The order of events was contested. The following day, according to Tajik Border Troops, Kok-Tash residents fired shotguns and threw Molotov cocktails at Tajiks who had built a disputed water pipe in the Tajik village Somoniyon, damaging several houses. Around 200 to 500 people participated in the events both days, leaving seven Kyrgyz and six Tajiks injured. Kyrgyz and Tajik border services sent deputies to the affected villages for mediation talks.

On February 10, Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldaev and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon emphasized the need for a peaceful solution and agreed on confidence building measures during an official visit in the Tajik capital Dushanbe. Accordingly, in early March, the governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan resumed talks in Dushanbe on the demarcation and delimitation of disputed border parts and signed a joint agreement on March 7. In mid-November, Kyrgyz and Tajik governments drafted an agreement on 519.9 km of border sections. However, several disputed areas were left out of the agreement. kwu

MALAYSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1969

Conflict parties: various opposition groups, Bersih vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The system and power conflict between the pro-democracy opposition, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued at a non-violent level. The opposition consisted of parties such as Parti Tindakan Demokratik, Parti Keadilan Rakyat, and Parti Islam Se-Malaysia, as well as of several non-governmental organizations such as Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih).

On February 15, the Federal Court upheld the 2014 decision by the Court of Appeal to imprison opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim on homosexuality charges and sentenced him to five years in jail. After the verdict, Anwar questioned the judges' independence from the executive. The court's decision drew heavy criticism from international human right groups and the US government, which questioned the independence of the judiciary in Malaysia and expressed its disappointment over the ruling.

In July, accusations of corruption arose when approx. USD 600 million from a government-run strategic development company, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), were allegedly transferred to the private bank account of Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak from the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN). In reaction, Swiss authorities began to freeze bank accounts linked to the development agency in September. The same month, the US Justice Department investigated property purchases in the US involving Najib's step-son and the transfer of millions of dollars into Najib's personal account. On August 29 and 30, Bersih organized nationwide rallies protesting corruption and demanded Najib to step down. In contrast to former rallies organized by Bersih, police forces did not intervene. Approx. 200,000 people participated in the largest rally in the capital Kuala Lumpur.

In October, opposition leader Wan Azizah Wan Ismail filed a no-confidence motion against Najib. In December, parliament and senate passed the National Security Council Bill 2015 allowing the Prime Minister to declare so-called security areas as well as enabling security forces to arrest and search without warrant. The opposition heavily opposed the bill and called it unconstitutional. sg

MALDIVES (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: MDP, AP vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between opposition parties, primarily the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and Justice Party (AP), and the government escalated to a violent crisis. Throughout the year, the police dissolved several demonstrations against the government, injuring protesters with tear gas and pepper spray. On February 22, the police arrested former president and MDP leader Mohammed Nasheed after the Criminal Court of Maldives had charged him under the Anti-Terrorism Act. Demonstrators immediately gathered in

the capital Male to demand Nasheed’s release, but were dispersed by the police using tear gas and pepper spray. Five days later, approx. 9,000 people protested in Male against the arrest and demanded the resignation of President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom. Pro-government groups armed with bats and knives attacked the protesters while the police arrested 33 opposition members. On March 13, the Criminal Court convicted Nasheed to 13 years in jail, holding him responsible for the abduction of a judge during his presidency. Additionally, Tholath Ibrahim, who had been Defense Minister under Nasheed, was sentenced to ten years in prison for his involvement on April 10. On May 1, clashes erupted between the police and approx. 10,000 opposition supporters, leaving two policemen and several others injured. A total of 200 protesters, among them AP President Sheik Imran Abdulla, were arrested. After Nasheed’s sentence had been commuted to house arrest on July 19, he was transferred to prison again on August 23. The police dispersed ensuing opposition protests.

Yameen claimed to have been subject to an assassination attempt when an IED exploded on his speedboat on September 28 and injured three people. Yameen suspected Vice President Ahmed Adeeb to be behind the attack, who was then arrested on October 24 on Yameen’s orders. However, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation asked to examine the case later stated it could not find traces of an IED. On November 4, Yameen declared a state of emergency for 30 days claiming a threat to national security as security forces allegedly had found arms and IEDs close to his palace in Male. A few days later, Yameen lifted the state of emergency. On November 27, thousands of opposition supporters started a 72-hour protest in Male demanding the release of Nasheed and 1,700 oppositional detainees. The police injured several protesters with pepper spray and tear gas, among them former ministers and high-ranking members of MDP.

The UN, USA, India, and several European countries repeatedly criticized the developments in the Maldives.

mmu

MYANMAR (BUDDHISTS – ROHINGYAS / RAKHINE STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Buddhists vs. Rohingyas
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, other

The violent crisis between the Buddhist majority and the Muslim Rohingya minority over subnational predominance in Rakhine State continued.

On February 1, three military personnel and five members of the nationalist-Buddhist “969 movement” robbed a Rohingya neighborhood in Anak Parang, Rathidaung Township, Rakhine State. The attackers injured six Rohingyas protesting the incident.

The next day, the Assembly of the Union adopted a law guaranteeing temporary registration certificate holders, most of whom being Rohingya, the right to vote for a referendum on constitutional reforms. After protests against this law were held by Buddhist monks throughout February in several towns in Rakhine State and Yangon Region, President Thein Sein announced that the permissions would expire on March 31. On July 5, the government started to issue new identity cards to the former holders of temporary registration certificates or

“white cards.”

In the course of the year, four bills proposed by the Buddhist ultra nationalist group “Association for Protection of Race and Religion” (Ma Ba Tha) were approved by the Assembly of the Union. For instance, these laws restricted inter-religious marriage and religious conversion. Human rights groups considered them to mostly affect ethnic and religious minorities negatively. Throughout the year, refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh stranded in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. For instance, in May, at least 3,500 Rohingya and Bangladeshi fled their countries. Many of the Rohingya refugees had been confined to camps under inadequate basis of existence.

After the UN and the US put pressure on Myanmar to solve the root causes of the refugee problem, hundreds of Buddhist monks and activists staged a protest against the Rohingya and international criticism in Yangon Region on May 27. The Deputy Foreign Minister Thant Kyaw stated that the government was not willing to discuss the migrant movements if it was considered a Rohingya issue since this ethnic group did not belong to the Burmese people. On November 10, the government officially rejected key recommendations, such as improving Rohingya’s rights, made by the UNHRC during its Universal Periodic Review. tno

MYANMAR (KIA, KIO / KACHIN STATE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: KIA, KIO vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, resources



The limited war over autonomy and the control of jade, ruby, farmland, and timber between the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and its military wing Kachin Independence Army (KIA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. In mid-2014, the conflict had spilled over from Kachin State to neighboring Shan State, where several armed groups, especially the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) continued to align their forces with the KIA [→ Myanmar (MNDA / Shan State)].

During fighting in the first half of the year, at least 80 people were killed, over 200 injured, and more than 3,000 forced to flee their homes.

For instance, on January 15, fighting erupted between KIA fighters and the Burmese military, Tatmadaw, in Hpakant, Kachin, after KIA had temporarily abducted the Kachin State Minister for Transport. At least ten people were killed, 30 injured, and more than 2,000 people fled the region due the fighting that saw the use of heavy weaponry including artillery shells and bombs.

From May 6 to 26, fighting between KIA and government troops were observed on a daily basis near the abandoned village of Nam Lim Pa, Kachin. The military employed both air force and approx. 1,000 troops on the ground. Exact casualty numbers remained unknown. On July 14, Tatmadaw launched an attack against KIA in Kaung Kha village in Muse Township, Shan. The army fired artillery shells into the settlement, leaving one civilian dead, two injured, and approx. 140 displaced. On September 8, the Union Peacemaking Working

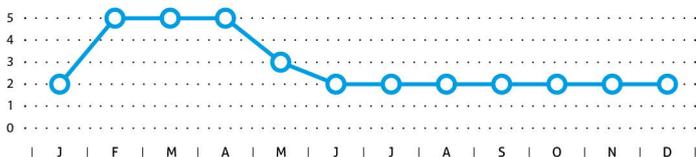
Committee held exploratory talks over a nationwide peace agreement in the capital Naypyidaw. Meanwhile, KIA and TNLA forces clashed with Tatmadaw troops in Muse Township's Mong Paw, Shan, causing approx. 200 villagers to flee. On October 6, Tatmadaw troops fired 60 mm and 120 mm artillery against KIA militants in Hpakant, Kachin. The fighting resulted in several injured people on both sides. Between November 16 and 19, the military used one fighter jet, two helicopters, and ground troops to expel KIA members from their 8th Brigade headquarters close to Mohnyin, Kachin. Approx. 500 residents fled the area. Nevertheless, efforts to reach the nationwide ceasefire agreement between the government and various ethnic armed groups, led by the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), continued [→ Myanmar (opposition)]. The government set the precondition of a formerly signed bilateral ceasefire agreement in order to acknowledge ethnic armed groups as potential signatories to a future nationwide ceasefire agreement. KIA had not yet signed such a deal but was still recognized by the government as potential signatory. On May 4, President Thein Sein announced that the government was ready to sign the peace agreement draft that was endorsed on March 30. However, on May 6, rebel leaders called on the government to prove its commitment to peace through constitutional reforms regarding autonomy rights of ethnic groups and by stopping military operations in Kachin, Ta'ang, Kokang, and Arakan territories. They warned that the clashes undermined trust and endangered the peace deal. On September 30, seven ethnic armed groups decided to sign the ceasefire agreement with the government on October 15. However, the rest of the armed groups, including KIO and KIA, decided to abstain claiming that not all ethnic armed groups were involved. On October 8, the Restoration Council of Shan State decided to join the other seven armed groups willing to sign the ceasefire agreement. One week later, they signed the deal after almost two years of negotiations. On November 1, the United Wa State Army hosted a summit for twelve non-signatory ethnic armed groups in Panghsang, the capital of the Wa Special Region. They discussed their potential engagement with the new government after the country's general elections seven days later. On December 15, the newly-created Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee signed a draft framework for political dialogue between the government and the eight signatory ethnic groups in Naypyidaw. On December 18, President Thein Sein announced that the political dialogue between ethnic group signatories and the government would commence on 01/12/16. nwu

(MNDAA) supported by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a limited war. After the MNDAA had completely split from the Communist Party of Burma in 1989, the armed group aimed at regaining power over the Special Region 1 of Kokang claiming to fight for the rights of ethnic Kokang. Additionally, MNDAA focused on trafficking drugs such as heroin and opium at the border to China. In 2009, following the withdrawal of its leader, Peng Jiasheng, to China, MNDAA largely withdrew from Kokang to neighboring Yunnan Province, China, after heavy clashes with the Burmese armed forces Tatmadaw. However, over the course of the year, MNDAA, supported by TNLA forces, clashed anew with Tatmadaw especially during February and May, leaving at least 330 people dead. During the fighting, heavy weapons such as fighter jets and military helicopters were used and thousands of soldiers and MNDAA fighters involved. From February 9 to 10, fighting erupted between MNDAA and government troops in the regional capital of Kokang, Laukkai, and between MNDAA and TNLA, on the one hand, and the armed forces, on the other, in Chin Shwe Haw town, Shan. The fighting included heavy exchange of gunfire, artillery shelling, and at least five rounds of airstrikes by Tatmadaw using MiG-29 fighter jets and MiG-35 helicopters, killing at least three soldiers, four MNDAA members, and some TNLA members and wounded several combatants. According to both local residents and TNLA, more government troops were deployed to Laukkai in the course of the clashes. Approx. 20,000 local residents and Chinese traders fled the region. On February 11, fighting between TNLA troops and Tatmadaw erupted in four areas near Laukkai. On the same day, the secretary-general of MNDAA stated that the group was confronting the military which deployed more troops and equipment into the area including attack helicopters and fighter jets. Reportedly, on February 13, numerous clashes between MNDAA and the military occurred in the Laukkai area, leaving 47 soldiers and at least 3 MNDAA members dead and 81 injured. The MNDAA used heavy weapons including anti-aircraft machine guns. Between February 9 and 16, approx. 5,000 people fled their homes due to the fighting. After the clashes did not stop within the following days, the government declared a state of emergency and brought martial law into effect in Kokang. Around February 20, Tatmadaw established control in Laukkai, with only a limited number of MNDAA and affiliated fighters remaining in town. After the fighting had spread to other parts of Shan between February 22 and 25, Tatmadaw targeted positions of the allied MNDAA, TNLA, and Arakan Army troops in Laukkai and surroundings until November, killing at least another 200 combatants, injuring 150, and displacing thousands internally as well as causing heavy infrastructural damage. On November 17, the government lifted martial law in Kokang. Nevertheless, minor fighting continued. Despite the fighting, the leader of the MNDAA sent an open letter to President Thein Sein on February 18 appealing for recognition of MNDAA, more extensive rights for the ethnic Chinese Kokang minority and the commencement of talks in order to restore peace in the area. The same day, the government rejected the offer stating that it would neither accept the MNDAA nor its participation in the nationwide ceasefire negotiations [→ Myanmar (opposition)]. nwu

MYANMAR (MNDAA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: MNDAA vs. government
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over subnational predominance in the Kokang region in Myanmar's Kokang Special Region 1 in Shan state between the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army

MYANMAR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1962

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and national power between various opposition groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

The first free and fair general elections since 1990 were held. Nevertheless, the veto power of the military remained contentious and numerous pro-democracy protests took place. Police forces cracked down the demonstrations, injuring at least 100 activists and arresting over 180.

For instance, from March 3 onwards, about 500 police officers blocked the march against the National Education Law of approx. 200 protesters from Letpadan, Pegu Division, to Yangon. The law had been questioned by student groups for, among other issues, a lack of consultation during its drafting process. Protesters sought refuge in a nearby monastery in Letpadan. On March 5 in Yangon, the police cracked down on approx. 200 students and activists protesting against the ongoing police blockade in Letpadan. Demonstrators were beaten with batons, leaving many injured. The police arrested at least eight protesters. Five days later, the police stormed the monastery after student protesters had attempted to break through the blockade, striking students and Buddhist monks with batons and leaving at least 100 injured. The police arrested at least 120. In the following months, many detainees were released. However, at least 50 activists remained in prison facing prison terms of nine and a half years.

Following protests in January by The 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, a political organization that had emerged after the student-led uprising of 1988, on June 2, President Thein Sein announced a bill to amend the Constitution. The amendment would lower the threshold of votes needed for future constitutional amendments from 75 to 70 percent and would decentralize political power. The 2008 adopted Constitution guaranteed the military 25 percent of parliamentary seats, granting them a veto power over constitutional amendments. The National League for Democracy (NLD), Myanmar's main opposition party, criticized the proposals as insufficient. On June 25, the parliament voted against major changes to the Constitution, officially keeping the military's power in the parliament in place.

On January 18, NLD met with the United Nationalities Alliance, an umbrella group of ethnically based political parties [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State); Myanmar (MNDAA, Shan State)]. On April 10, representatives of the government, parliament, political opposition, and ethnic minorities, among them President Thein Sein and NLD chairwoman Aung San Suu Kyi, met for the so-called six-party talks on constitutional reform in the capital Naypyidaw. They agreed on further talks. In advance of the polls, on July 30, 6,966 inmates, including political prisoners, were granted presidential amnesty. During the official campaigning period lasting from September 8 to November 6, campaigning was restricted in the provinces of Kachin and Shan due to the volatile security situation [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State); Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)].

On November 8, general elections were held with the NLD winning an absolute majority in parliament. Although some procedural irregularities occurred, international election ob-

servers perceived the election as peaceful, free, fair, and transparent. After the announcement of the final results at the end of November, Thein Sein and Suu Kyi met on December 2 in order to discuss how government and opposition can ensure a peaceful transfer of responsibilities. On December 10, the outgoing Union Solidarity and Development Party and the NLD appointed representatives to negotiate the transfer of power until the inauguration of the succeeding government by the end of March 2016.

nwu

NEPAL (MADHESIS, THARUS / TERAI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: UDMF, MJF-L, TJSC vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy

The autonomy conflict in the western Terai region between various Madhesi and Tharu groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis. The conflict was characterized by highly violent protests and blockades directed against the new constitution as well as the proposed demarcation of the future provinces. Since its establishment in 2008, the Constituent Assembly had not been able to promulgate a new constitution.

Until April, Madhesi parties, mainly organized under the umbrella of the United Democratic Madhesi Front (UDMF), participated in protests staged by the oppositional 30-party-alliance led by the Unified Communist Party Nepal Maoist (UCPN-M) [→ Nepal (opposition)]. They demanded the introduction of an ethnic-based federalism and the promulgation of the new constitution by consensus and not by a two-third majority as set out in the Interim Constitution. The protests frequently escalated to clashes with security forces. For instance, on February 28, approx. 35,000 protesters gathered in the capital Kathmandu. In the following clashes, around two dozen protesters were injured. Demonstrations stopped after an earthquake on April 25, which left up to 9,000 people dead.

On June 8, UCPN-M, Nepali Congress, the Communist Party Nepal United Marxist-Leninist, and the Madhesi People's Rights Forum Democratic (MJF-L) signed a 16-point-agreement suggesting to divide Nepal into eight provinces, of which each would compromise plain and hill areas. UDMF rejected the agreement and expelled MJF-L two days later. The subsequent demonstrations escalated on July 20, when over 50 protesters were injured in clashes with the police in central and southern Nepal.

After another agreement proposing a six-provinces-model had been signed on August 8, protests and bandhs turned violent on August 10 and 11. Tharus, mainly represented by the Tharuhat Joint Struggle Committee (TJSC), took to the street opposing Karnali zone's integration into Farwest region and demanding a separate Tharu province. In Surkhet district, Midwest region, security forces opened fire at protesters attacking government offices, killing two and injuring six.

Two weeks later, ruling and opposition parties brought forward a seven-province-model proposing Karnali as part of the Midwest. However, the Tharus and Madhesi rejected the model and continued to demand separate provinces. On August 24, approx. 20,000 Tharus staged a demonstration in Tikapur, Farwest. Some protesters attacked police forces with knives, axes, and spears, killing at least nine police personnel. The government deployed paramilitary forces and imposed a

curfew.

Violent protests continued until the end of the year, leaving over 50 people dead. After the Constituent Assembly had passed a new constitution on September 20, the UDMF blocked border points with India and the East-West Highway. Hence, the supply of petrol, medicine, and grocery to central Nepal and Kathmandu was cut off. The following petrol shortage nearly caused a standstill of traffic and domestic flights, which was eased by Chinese petrol donations. Nepal accused India of closing the borders, but India denied this.

In the night of November 1, Nepali security forces cleared the bridge connecting Nepal and India at the Raxual-Birgunj border point, Central region, after UDMF supporters had been blocking the site for weeks. Police opened fire and killed a civilian during subsequent protests the following morning.

The protests regained momentum in the second half of December, when the government announced to pass a constitution amendment bill to increase the representation of ethnic groups in government bodies. The UDMF opposed the bill, claiming the government did not take their demands seriously. cwa

NORTH KOREA – SOUTH KOREA

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: DPRK vs. ROK

Conflict items: territory, system/ideology, international power

The conflict between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) over territory, the orientation of the political system, and international power escalated to a violent crisis.

On January 1, DPRK's leader Kim Jong-un called for talks between the two sides on the highest level in his New Year's Speech. On January 6, activists in the ROK, including some defectors from the DPRK, sent balloons with leaflets and DVDs over the border which criticized the Northern regime and accused it of human rights abuses. Similar campaigns in 2014 had led to a fire exchange at the border and had impeded planned high-level talks. On February 24, the DPRK informed the joint management committee of the Kaesong Industrial Complex that they changed labor regulations and would raise minimum wages for North Korean workers. Coinciding with the ROK-US joint military drills "Key Resolve" and "Foal Eagle," DPRK fired a total of nine short-range missiles into the Sea of Japan/East Sea in the first half of March [→ North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan]. On March 17, the ROK blamed the DPRK for having conducted cyberattacks on their nuclear reactors in December 2014. The DPRK denied any involvement. The DPRK declared a no-sail and no-fly zone off its east coast on April 1. Three weeks later, the DPRK Defense Minister announced that they had sent patrol boats close to the Northern Limit Line, a disputed maritime demarcation line in the Yellow Sea, and deployed artilleries for firing drills there. On May 9, the DPRK successfully tested a Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile, which fell into the sea near Sinpo, South Hamgyong Province of DPRK. On June 23, the Supreme Court of the DPRK sentenced two South Koreans accused of spying to hard labor for life. ROK's Ministry of Unification later expressed strong regret about the incident and demanded the release of the two. On July 16, the sixth joint Kaesong Industrial Complex Committee meeting between both sides ended without a solution for the wage issue. On August 4, three

landmines exploded on the ROK side of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and severely injured two South Korean soldiers. Five days later, ROK blamed the DPRK and restarted its anti-Pyongyang broadcasts on the border after ten years. On August 15, 182 delegates from DPRK joined the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule in Seoul. Two days later, despite tensions due to the landmine incident, the ROK and the US began their annual joint military exercises. On August 20, after DPRK fired at a loudspeaker spreading anti-Pyongyang broadcasts, ROK shot back dozens of artillery rounds and raised a military war-alert.

Two days later, both sides sat down for talks lasting four days and agreed to end the military standoff. Furthermore, the North expressed regret over the wounding of South Korean soldiers in the mine blasts and the South accepted to stop anti-Pyongyang broadcasts on the border. On October 20, reunions for over 700 family members who were separated from each other in the Korean War were held in Mount Kumgang border region. From December 10 to 12, both sides met for high-level talks in the border town of Kaesong, with no outcome. lxl

NORTH KOREA – USA, SOUTH KOREA, JAPAN

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: DPRK vs. Japan, ROK, USA

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power, other

The non-violent crisis over international power and ideology between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), on the one hand, and the USA, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Japan, on the other, continued. Further points of contention were the abductions of Japanese nationals as well as cyberattacks.

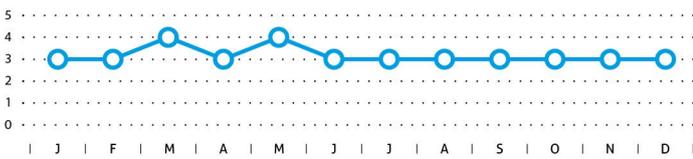
On January 2, US President Barack Obama authorized new sanctions targeting three North Korean organizations and ten of their former employees in response to the alleged DPRK cyberattack on the company Sony Pictures Entertainment. A week later, the DPRK offered to suspend its nuclear test in exchange for the termination of joint annual military exercises between the US and the ROK. The US rejected this proposal. During ROK-US joint military drills "Key Resolve" and "Foal Eagle," DPRK fired a total of nine short-range missiles into the Sea of Japan/East Sea. The next day, at a UN conference on disarmament, DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs Ri Su-yong stated the country's ability to conduct preemptive strikes against the US. At the end of March, Japan extended sanctions against the DPRK for two more years in regard to DPRK's delay in investigating the issue of abducted Japanese nationals. In June, North Korea undertook a series of diplomatic efforts by sending high officials on visits to Russia, Cuba and African countries. Concerning the case of two South Korean soldiers injured in a landmine explosion near the border, the UN Command endorsed the claims of South Korea after an investigation [→ North Korea – South Korea]. On August 17, despite tensions due to the landmine incident, ROK and the US began their annual joint military exercises "Ulchi Freedom Guardian," which also simulated countering an invasion from the North. A month later, the KCNA announced that all nuclear facilities in the DPRK had resumed operations and announced possible nuclear strikes against the US and other hostile forces if they "behave badly." On November 11, DPRK again declared the Sea of Japan/East Sea, off Kang-

won province, a no-sail zone until December 7. On December 8, the US added another four North Korean agencies and six bank representatives to its sanction list, targeting DPRK's missile development. According to KCNA, Kim Jong-un declared on December 10 that North Korea had already turned into a nuclear state and was ready to detonate a hydrogen bomb. Repeatedly, the human rights situation in North Korea was object of UN activities. On February 3, Ri Su-yong demanded the UN to withdraw its 2014 resolution concerning DPRK's human rights issues. In early March, the Unification Media Group sent a speech of the US Ambassador to the UN via shortwave broadcast to reach North Koreans informing them about human rights abuses in their country. On June 23, a UN office responsible for monitoring the human rights situation in the DPRK opened in Seoul. lxl

PAKISTAN (BALOCH NATIONALISTS / BALOCHISTAN)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: BLF, BRA, UBA, LeB, BNP, BRP, BLA vs. government
 Conflict items: secession, resources



The conflict over the secession of Balochistan province and resources such as oil and coal between several separatist militant groups and Baloch political parties, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a limited war. Throughout the year, at least 182 combatants, mostly militants, died in clashes between the police, army, and paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC), on the one hand, and various separatist militant groups such as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Balochistan Republican Army (BRA), United Baloch Army (UBA), and Lashkar-e-Balochistan (LeB), on the other. At least 69 civilians died in attacks carried out by militant groups. Numerous kidnappings and disappearances were reported as well. The BRA carried out at least seven attacks against local infrastructure, including gas pipelines, power transmission lines, a radar station, and train tracks. The Balochistan National Party organized several peaceful protests and strikes, demanding an end to killings and illegal arrests of party members. Most deaths were recorded during FC-led operations in search for militant hideouts in various districts of Balochistan province. Reportedly, paramilitary forces used helicopters and up to 1,000 security personnel in these operations, arresting or killing suspected militants, recovering weapons, and destroying hideouts. Militant groups carried out two attacks against civilians from other provinces. On April 11, the BLF targeted a construction site in Turbat, killing 20 workers from the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, leaving the Baloch security guards unharmed. According to FC officials, on April 13, a FC unit killed 13 militants allegedly involved in the Turbat attack. However, the leader of the organization Voice of Baloch Missing Persons claimed that five of the 13 alleged militants killed by the FC had been missing for several months. In a statement, he accused the FC

of killing people in custody after "terrorist attacks" to present them as the responsables. In another attack, the UBA stopped a bus in Mastung district on May 29 and shot dead 22 passengers, allegedly targeting Pashtuns only. The home minister of Balochistan accused the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing of being involved in the attack. The militant groups also expanded their actions to regions outside of Balochistan with four alleged members of the BLA being killed by paramilitary forces in Karachi, Sindh province, on May 16. Supposedly, they had had ties to gangs operating in the Lyari area of Karachi [→ Pakistan (inter-ethnic violence / Sindh)]. Security officials also suspected BLA to be responsible for an explosion at a bus station in Multan, Punjab province, on September 13, killing at least ten civilians and injuring up to 80.

In July, the provincial government of Balochistan sent representatives to London, United Kingdom, for negotiations with the Khan of Kalat, Mir Suleman Dawood Jan, who had been living in London in self-imposed exile since 2006. The Baloch government requested him to return to Balochistan to participate in the ongoing peace process as he was considered the unofficial leader of the former Khanate of Kalat, the geographic predecessor of parts of Balochistan province. However, the Khan of Kalat stated that only the Grand Baloch Jirga, a big gathering of Baloch political and tribal leaders, could make a decision regarding his return. On August 1, the Baloch government announced that it would approach the Grand Baloch Jirga to send an appeal for the Khan's return. After the implementation of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) linking Gwadar port in Balochistan with Kashgar in China via an infrastructure network had been approved on May 28, the central government increased its peacemaking efforts within Balochistan. On August 4, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif approved the Peaceful Balochistan Plan granting amnesty to militants in order to rehabilitate them. Subsequently, around 580 suspected militants who had laid down their weapons since June were granted amnesty. Reports about peace talks between the government and several militant groups were not confirmed by either party. On August 26, the exiled leader of the Balochistan Republican Party, Brahamdagh Bugti, stated that he would give up his demand for independence if that was the Baloch people's wish. eko

PAKISTAN (INTER-ETHNIC RIVALRY / SINDH)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: MQM, Mohajirs vs. PPP, Balochs, Sindhis vs. ANP, Pakhtuns
 Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent conflict over subnational predominance between different ethnic groups and their affiliated political parties in the province of Sindh continued. It was carried out between the Mohajir people and its political party Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), Pakhtuns represented by the Awami National Party (ANP), and Balochs and Sindhis backed by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The majority of violent incidents took place in Sindh's capital Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and economic hub mainly populated by Mohajirs. While most attacks could not be ascribed to a certain conflict party, authorities attributed at least 22 deaths to ethnic and political rivalries. In January, eight people related to the MQM were killed in

targeted attacks in Karachi. ANP’s president for District West was shot dead in a drive-by shooting on January 5 in Baldia Town. Attacks continued throughout February and March, with a local leader and a party member of the PPP as well as four MQM members being shot dead in separate incidents. On May 2, a grenade attack on the PPP’s office in the Lyari area of Karachi killed a PPP functionary’s relative. One MQM activist was shot dead ten days later. The same month, two PPP members were killed in a targeted attack. Throughout August, three MQM members were killed in Karachi, with MQM parliamentary leader Rashid Godil together with one relative being injured and a civilian being killed. In September, at least one PPP and four MQM members were killed and several suspects, including MQM activists, were arrested in Karachi. On October 29, members of PPP and MQM clashed using clubs and bricks in the city Sukkur, Sindh, leaving at least two people injured. Two days later, one MQM member was shot dead in Gulshan-e-Iqbal Town, Karachi. On November 13, two attacks with explosives took place in Lyari. The first targeted a PPP election office, while the second left at least six PPP members injured.

As a part of the government’s intervention efforts, “Operation Karachi” had been launched in September 2013 “to fight terrorist and criminal activities” in the area. On March 11, Sindh Rangers raided the “Nine-Zero” headquarters of the MQM in Karachi. One MQM member was killed and four high-profile functionaries arrested. In April, Sindh Rangers shot dead three allegedly hired gunmen with ties to MQM. On July 17, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah extended the Sindh Rangers’ stationing by one year. According to the Rangers’ spokesperson, the paramilitary unit killed at least 350 “terrorists” and arrested over 10,000 suspects since the start of the operation until July 8. aho

PAKISTAN (INTER-ISLAMIST RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: TTP vs. LI vs. TNSM vs. AMNAM
 Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over ideology and subnational predominance in Pakistan’s northwest between the Islamist militant groups Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Tehreek-e-Nafaze-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), and Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar (AMNAM) continued.

However, in the course of the year, several Islamist groups also allied with the TTP. On March 12, leaders of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) led by Khalid Khorasani and the militant group Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) led by Mangal Bagh pledged allegiance to TTP in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. JuA had been formed in 2014 after several factions had seceded from the TTP due to internal disagreements [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. According to TTP’s spokesperson Muhammad Khurasani, three outfits, namely Qari Ihsan Group, Shikari Group, and Abdus Samad Group united with the TTP in South Waziristan Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on May 6. The groups promised to abide by the central command of TTP’s leader Mullah Fazlullah.

Throughout the year, at least seven people were killed and three were injured in clashes between militant groups. On April 6, militants shot dead two members of TTP in Kurram Agency, FATA. One week later, a clash between AMNAM and LI

members in Khyber Agency, FATA, left five militants dead and three injured. Among the dead were LI commander Shahmat Khan and two AMNAM commanders.

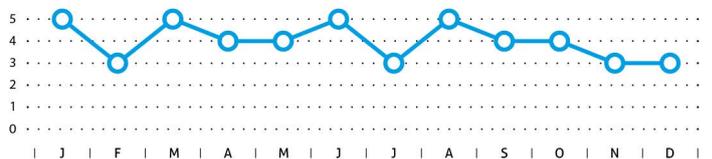
In May, the imprisoned leader of TNSM, Maulana Sufi Mohammad, issued an informal decree challenging the Muslim denomination of TTP members for not fulfilling the “Prophet’s definition.” Furthermore, he advised his supporters to boycott the group. The statement was written on 12/20/14, shortly after an Army Public School in Peshawar had been attacked by TTP militants [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. sma

PAKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: TTP, LI, al-Qaeda, Haqqani Network vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

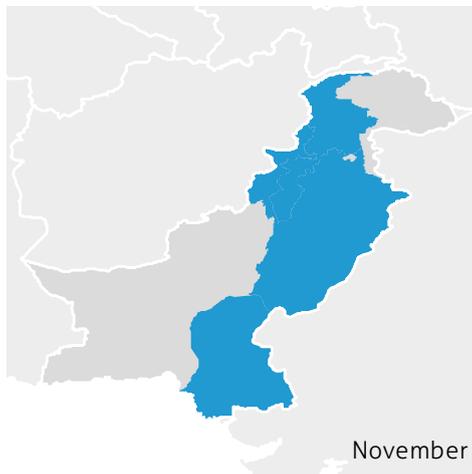
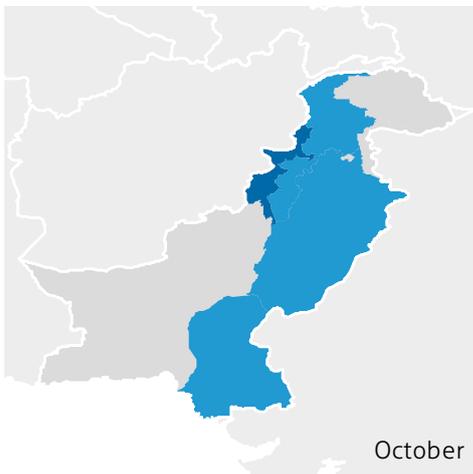
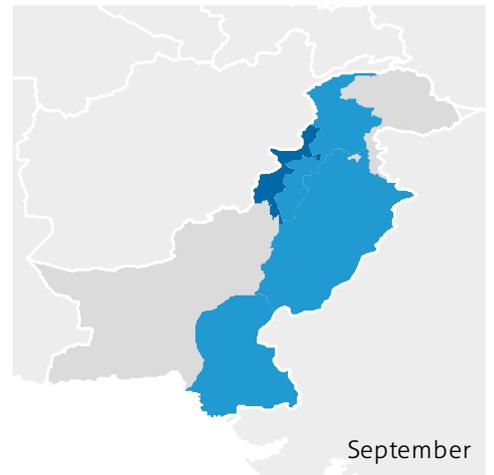
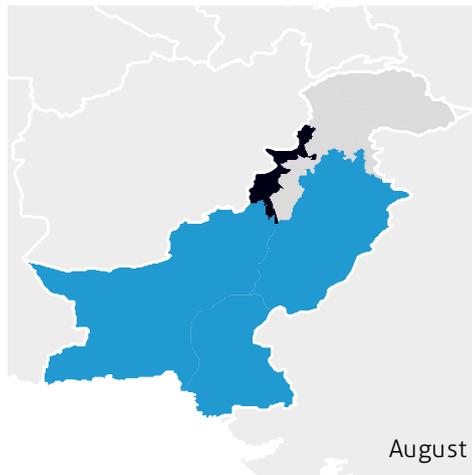
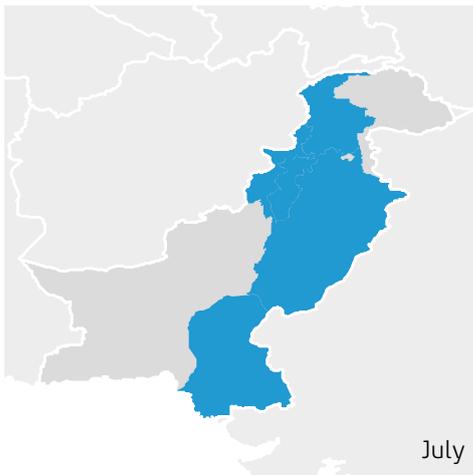
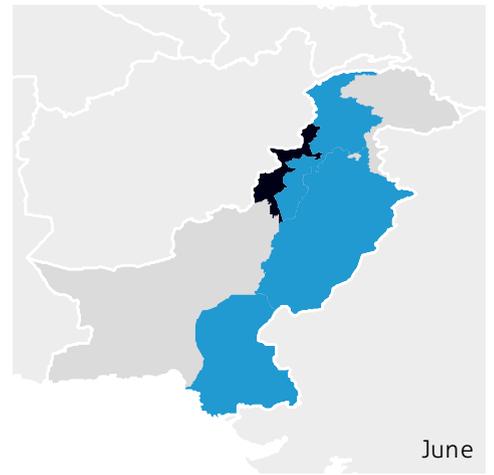
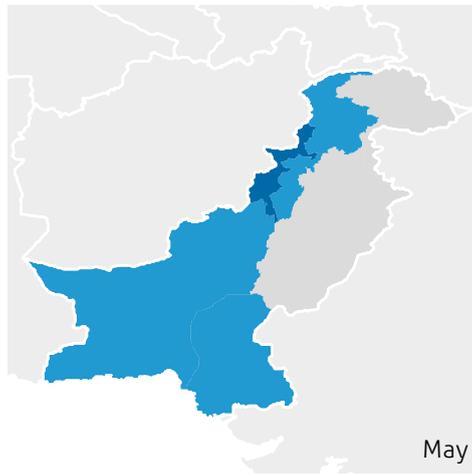
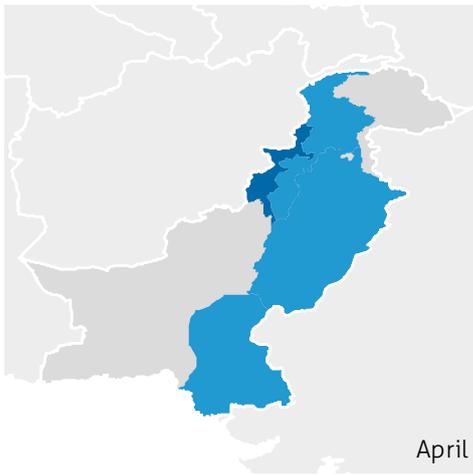
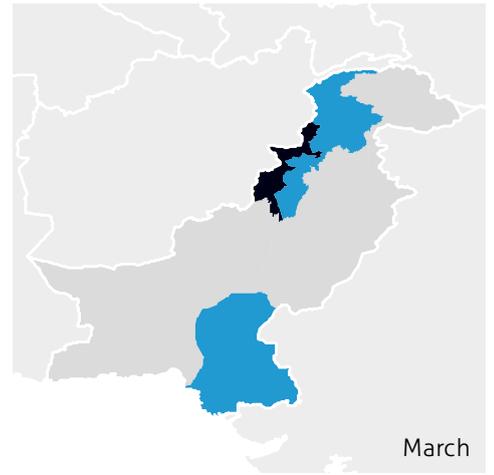
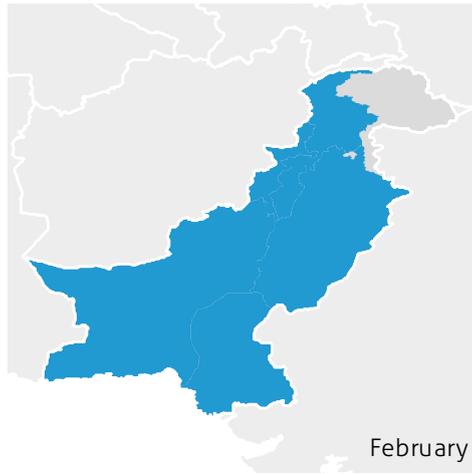
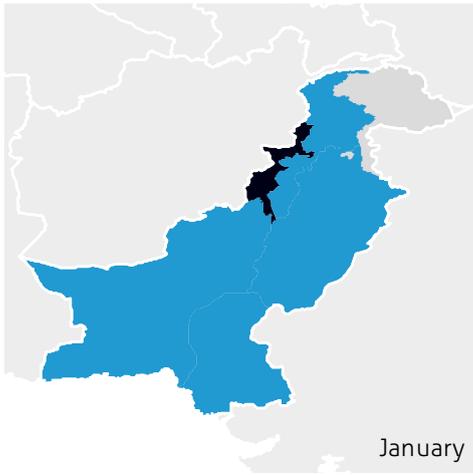


The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between various Islamist militant groups such as al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Islam (LI), the Haqqani Network, and, most prominently, the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP), on the one hand, and the government, supported by the USA, on the other, continued. On March 14, LI announced to join the TTP [→ Pakistan (inter-Islamist violence)]. By August, the Islamist Movement of Uzbekistan’s leader Usmon Ghazi had taken an oath of allegiance to the so-called Islamic State [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. No attacks by the group were reported in 2015 in Pakistan. The conflict claimed the lives of at least 3,000 people, with US-operated drone-strikes killing at least 60 militants of various networks, for example of the TTP and al-Qaeda, in North and South Waziristan Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) [→ USA – Pakistan]. As of July, the number of IDPs figured up to more than 1.5 million.

The heaviest clashes between security forces and militants occurred in FATA, albeit the number of attacks in other provinces increased. Militants mainly targeted key army and police installations. For example, on September 18, 14 TTP militants with automatic rifles and light weapons such as RPGs stormed into a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) camp in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), killing 23 PAF members, three army personnel, and three civilians. All attackers were killed. Militants also targeted politicians. For example, on May 31, three TTP militants killed PLM-N party member Rana Shamshad and two civilians in Gujranwala, Punjab state. On August 16, alleged LI militants conducted a suicide attack on Punjab Home Minister Shuja Khanzada at his political office in Attock district, Punjab, killing him and 16 others.

Throughout the year, various militant groups, most prominently TTP, conducted at least 20 attacks on polio health workers mainly in remote areas of KP and FATA as well as Karachi, Sindh province. For example, on February 17, a health worker and three other people were found dead in Balochistan province after having been abducted four days earlier. A month later, three people, among them two health workers, were shot dead in Mansehra city, KP. Since 2012, Islamist militant groups targeted polio workers, accusing them

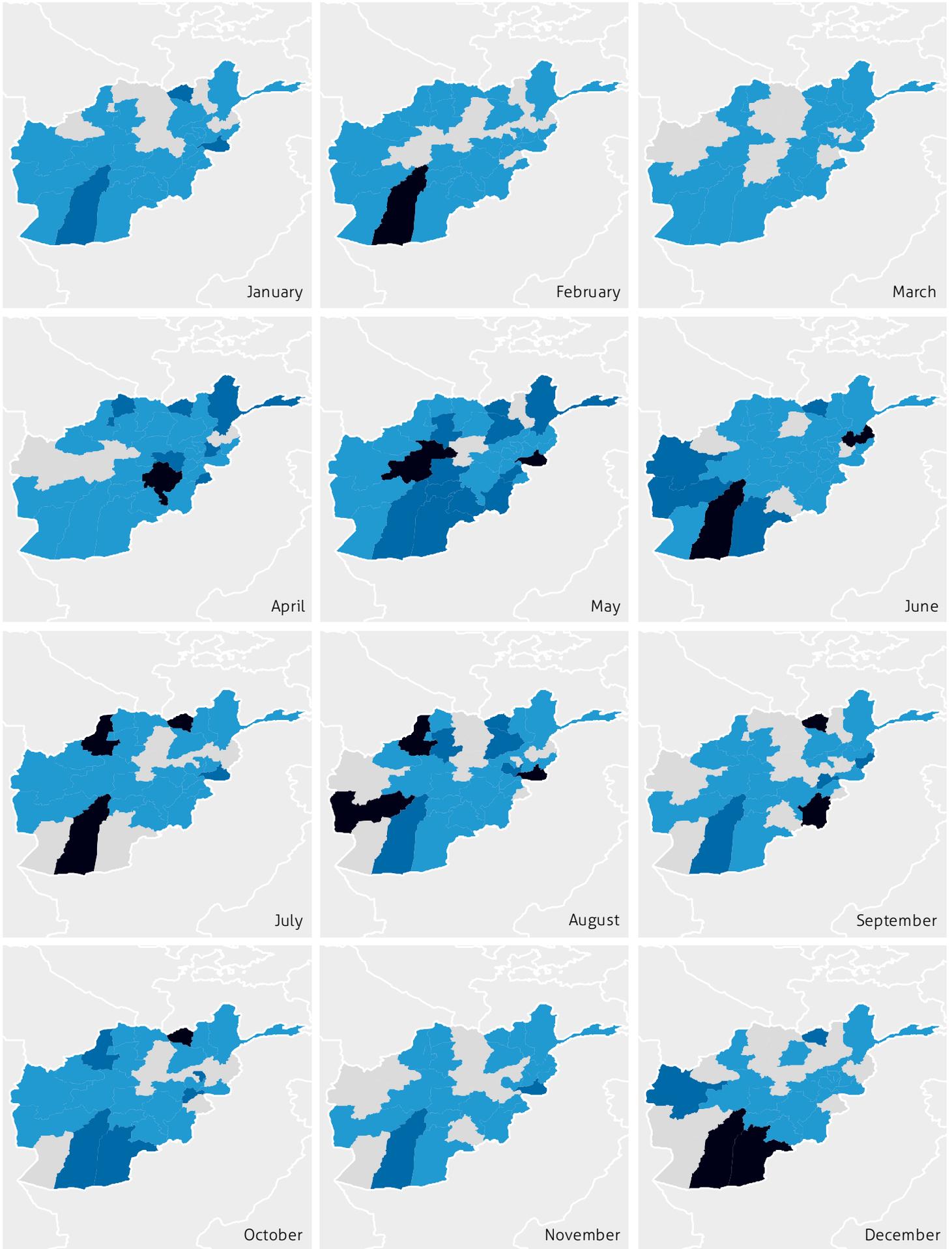
PAKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)



NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

data: HIIK map:jok

AFGHANISTAN (TALIBAN ET AL.)



NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

data: HIIK map:jok

of being spies and sickening and sterilizing locals through vaccinations.

On January 6, the two legislative houses of Pakistan passed the 21st constitutional amendment and an amendment to the Pakistan Army Act, setting up speedy-trial military courts for two years and extending their jurisdiction to terrorism-related offences. The measure was part of a national action plan to combat terrorism, which had been initiated by the government after the December 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, KP. The plan also targeted the militants' finances and media presence.

Meanwhile, the government upheld its military counterinsurgency strategy. On January 27, at least 70 militants were killed in two airstrikes in North Waziristan's Dattakhel area, FATA. Similar measures were taken during the rest of the year. After the government had launched intelligence-based operations supplementary to the ongoing "Operation Zarb-e-Azb" in major cities like Karachi, Sindh, the air and ground "Operation Khyber II" mainly covering Tirah and adjoining valleys in Khyber Agency, FATA, was initiated in March. On March 13, PAF fighter jets targeted hideouts of TTP and LI in Tirah Valley, Khyber Agency, FATA, killing 48 militants. More than 150 militants and 50 security forces were killed and more than 190 militants and 180 security forces were injured in the following US-supported airstrikes until the operation's official termination on June 15. According to officials, many militants had retreated to neighboring areas and their crossing points to Afghanistan had been blocked. However, airstrikes continued for the rest of the year. On August 17, security forces killed more than 60 militants in airstrikes in North Waziristan and Khyber Agency, FATA. From August 18 to 29, more than hundred militants were killed by PAF aerial bombardments in Shawal Valley and Gharlamai area of North Waziristan. sak

PAKISTAN (SUNNI MILITANTS – RELIGIOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: LeJ, Jundullah, TTP, JuA vs. religious minorities

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between several Sunni militant organizations and various religious groups continued. The Sunni militant organizations Lashkar-e-Janghvi (LeJ), Jundullah, and Jamaat-ur-Ahrar (JuA) claimed responsibility for several attacks. Jundullah had pledged allegiance to the so-called Islamic State in November 2014 while JuA rejoined the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan on March 12 [→ Pakistan (inter-Islamist rivalry)]. Suicide attacks with explosives targeting places of worship were the most common sort of assault. In total, at least 216 people died and at least 307 were injured throughout the year.

Main target of attacks were Shiites with four of their places of worship being attacked by Jundullah in January and February and two more attacks being carried out by the LeJ during the Shiite festivities of Muharram in October. Another two attacks by Jundullah and LeJ respectively targeted a bus carrying Ismaili Shiites in Karachi, Sindh state, on April 29, and a Shiite market in Kurram Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, on December 13. At least five Shiite Hazaras were killed in Balochistan province throughout the year. On February 13, Jundullah attacked a Shiite mosque in Peshawar, Khy-

ber Pakhtunkhwa province. A total of 21 people were killed and about 50 more injured. According the group's spokesperson, another attack at an Imambargah in Rawalpindi, Punjab province, on February 18, was carried out in revenge for the government's anti-terrorism efforts [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. On June 7, alleged members of LeJ opened fire in Quetta, Balochistan, killing five members of the Shiite Hazara community. The attack prompted about 500 members of the community to protest in Quetta against the government's failure to protect them. At least eight similar attacks were carried out against members of the Hazara community in the city throughout the year. On October 20, the government deployed 16,000 soldiers and paramilitary personnel to protect Shiite festivities in the country. However, LeJ carried out two suicide attacks. The first attack in Bolan district, Balochistan, killed eleven people and injured another twelve on October 22. One day later, an attack against a Muharram procession in Jacobabad, Sindh, killed 27 people and injured at least 40 others. Thereafter, violent protests broke out in the city. One person died when the police and protesters exchanged gunfire.

Other religious groups were targeted as well, with JuA attacking two Christian churches in March and at least five assaults on members of the Ahmadi community being reported throughout the year. On March 15, JuA carried out parallel suicide bombings against two Christian churches in Lahore, Punjab, killing at least 13 people and injuring more than 70. Subsequently, the situation escalated when two people suspected of being militants were beaten up and set on fire by church members. Violent protests against the attacks continued for the next two days, with up to 4,000 Christians demonstrating in the city. Protests by Christians were also observed in Karachi and other parts of the country on the day of the attacks. On March 17, the police used tear gas and batons against the protesters in Lahore and paramilitary forces were called in to regain control of the situation. eko

PAKISTAN (TALIBAN – TRIBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: LI, TTP vs. tribal militias, various tribes

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The conflict over ideology and subnational predominance between Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Lashkar-e-Islam (LI), on the one hand, and tribal militias, also referred to as lashkar or peace committees, on the other, continued as a violent crisis.

The conflict was primarily carried out in subdivisions of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP), with FATA recording the highest number of incidents and deaths. In the course of the year, targeted attacks against tribal militias left at least 61 people dead. During a minimum of five clashes between tribal militias and militants, at least eleven people died and four were injured.

In FATA, at least 54 lashkar members were killed and six injured in targeted attacks and bomb blasts. Tribal militias killed eight alleged Islamist militants. Most incidents took place in the agencies of Khyber and Bajaur.

In early January, LI and members of the peace committee Tauheedul Islam (TUI) clashed in Khyber, leaving two TUI

members dead. On February 8, LI members destroyed the compound of TUI in Tirah valley, Khyber, by detonating an IED, killing five lashkar members. In May, four explosions of IEDs in Bajaur, Khyber, and Mohmand Agency, killed at least eight and injured three tribal militia members. After having arrested three militants in July, TUI members publicly executed them at the end of August in the Bazaar Zakhakhel area of Khyber. In two separate incidents between September 7 and 9, LI abducted and subsequently killed twelve lashkar members in Khyber. On October 25, elders of the Utmankhial and Tharkani tribes reiterated their will to cooperate with the government at a jirga, a traditional assembly, in the village Khar, Bajaur, announcing to monitor "suspicious activities" in the area.

In KP, at least five lashkar members were killed in a minimum of six targeted attacks. An elder of a peace committee died and two others were critically injured in gunfire when their vehicle was attacked in Tank district on March 31. On September 14, one lashkar member and one civilian were shot dead in Swat district. On October 1, alleged militants shot dead a peace committee member in the same district. Three days later, an IED killed a tribal elder and injured another relative in Bannu district. cga

PAKISTAN – INDIA

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: Pakistan vs. India

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict between Pakistan and India over international power, usage of the Indus river water, and the status of the Indian state of Kashmir de-escalated to a violent crisis.

Between January 2 and November 17, Indian and Pakistani soldiers violated the 2003 ceasefire agreement at least 77 times along the contested Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) of Jammu and Kashmir state (J&K), leaving a total of 66 people dead, among them ten Indian soldiers, 20 Indian civilians, three Pakistani soldiers, and 33 Pakistani civilians. At least 170 people from both sides were injured. In 49 of these clashes both armies used heavy weapons such as mortar shells and RPGs.

Between January 2 and 13, heavy cross-border firing erupted along 13 border outposts of the IB, killing three Indian soldiers, one Indian civilian, three Pakistani soldiers, five Pakistani civilians, and injuring twelve people. Subsequently, around 10,000 civilians fled the Indian border area according to Indian media reports. On January 24, the UN military observer group UNMOGIP visited the affected border area along the IB in Punjab, Pakistan. Between July 5 and September 17, cross-border firing erupted in several locations along the LoC and IB. In at least 40 skirmishes involving heavy firing with mortar shells, rockets, and RPGs from both sides, five Indian soldiers, 17 Indian civilians, and 25 Pakistani civilians were killed. Additionally, five Indian soldiers, 81 Indian civilians, and 65 Pakistani civilians were injured. According to Pakistani newspapers, hundreds of residents fled the border areas. UNMOGIP visited the affected border region in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on July 20, August 18 and 29.

Despite India calling off peace talks between National Security Advisors of both countries on August 22, the following months a series of bilateral talks were held, including meetings between military officials along the LoC and IB on

September 10 and 21 as well as December 22. Furthermore, both prime ministers briefly met along the sidelines of the climate summit in Paris, France, on November 30, followed by a National Security Advisor meeting in Thailand's capital Bangkok on December 6. They discussed security and terrorism-related issues with a particular focus on J&K and the situation along the LoC and IB. Three days later, Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, her Pakistani counterpart Sartaj Aziz, and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met at the sidelines of the Heart of Asia conference in the Pakistani capital Islamabad. On December 25, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi unexpectedly visited the Pakistani city of Lahore, Punjab state, to meet Sharif in order to strengthen ties between the two countries. This was the first time an Indian prime minister had visited Pakistan in twelve years. Furthermore, they agreed on another meeting to take place between the National Security Advisors on 01/15/16 in order to discuss the status of Kashmir, the Siachen glacier, "cross-border terrorism", and water-related issues. jam

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (BOUGAINVILLE)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: civil society groups, MDF, Bougainville Hardliners vs. Meekamui Tribal Government, PMALA, MGU vs. ABG, BCL, government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources, other

The conflict over the conditions for the reopening of the Panguna Mine in Bougainville escalated to the level of a non-violent crisis. In 1988, the mine had been closed over tensions which had evolved into a ten-year civil war. A peace agreement signed in 2002 granted the island province autonomous control over its resources and the right to hold a referendum on independence between 2015 and 2020. With Bougainville entering the referendum period, the question of the copper mine's reopening returned to the center of politics. While the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG), led by President John Momis, and the national government in Port Moresby continued to advocate a reopening, a coalition of civil society groups and civil war veterans rejected both the proposal and the ongoing discussion. They strongly opposed the pending Bougainville Mining Act passed by the ABG on March 26. As a condition for talks over the mine's potential reopening, the ABG sought to pursue a "Bel Kol" reconciliation ceremony between the Panguna Mine Affected Landowner Association (PMALA) and former mine operator Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL). Informed by the Nasioi customary principle of reconciliation, known as Domang Miita, the ceremony was originally put forward by the Panguna landowners as a non-negotiable condition to reopen the mine. The Meekamui, factions of civil war veterans who were in control of different areas around the mine, remained split over the issue. While the Meekamui Government of Unity (MGU), led by Moses Pipiro, and the Meekamui Tribal Government expressed their support for Momis during the ABG election in May, the Meekamui Defence Force (MDF), led by Chris Uma, which controlled the "No-Go-Zone" around the mine, remained in staunch opposition to it. In May, Momis was re-elected as president of the ABG with an absolute majority despite losing votes in the area around the Panguna Mine.

On March 13, the Tinputz community filed a petition signed by 700 people against the passing of the Bougainville Min-

ing Act. Several NGOs expressed their concerns. Jimmy Miringtoro, Member of Parliament for Central Bougainville in the national government, criticized the passage of the law for being rushed before the ABG general elections and for not being subject to sufficient consultation with local communities. Objections were also raised by Sam Kauona, former leader of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). On August 24, chairman of the Central Bougainville Council of Elders John Dona demanded Momis to halt the negotiations over the mine's reopening and to focus on alternative means to achieve economic growth.

Tensions continued in the second half of the year, with the ABG's planned "Bel Kol" ceremony between the PMALA and BCL scheduled for September 30. On August 13, a new group named "Bougainville Hardliners" launched an island-wide campaign, announcing to stop the ceremony by any means. Following the threats, the ABG deferred the "Bel Kol" ceremony for an indefinite time. In November, the Bougainville Referendum Committee suggested a reconciliation between the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) and the BRA. In early December, Momis voiced concerns over the national government's reported plans to become the major shareholder of BCL, stating that it would be completely unacceptable and a possible source of conflict. mrl

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (TRIBAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: Kukurin vs. Yapetalin; Wapiago vs. Tapamu; et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The conflict between clans and tribes over subnational predominance and resources remained violent, resulting in more than 50 fatalities throughout the year. Heavy fighting occurred in the highland provinces of Enga, Hela, Eastern Highlands, Western Highlands and Southern Highlands, as well as in the coastal province of Morobe. With the continuing trend of migration from the highlands into the cities, outbreaks of violence between clansmen were also observed in the suburbs of the country's two biggest cities, the capital Port Moresby and Lae, provincial capital of Morobe. In the highlands, several tribal clashes broke out in the surroundings of large-scale mining and drilling projects. As in previous years, local communities around these projects had often seen tensions over profit sharing, compensation schemes, and environmental destruction [→ Papua New Guinea (socioeconomic protests)]. Other common triggers of tribal fights were accusations of sorcery, adultery, and the theft of pigs. In many cases, local police explained attacks as payback for past incidents, often dating several years back.

In early April, violence erupted over sorcery accusations between different clans of the Kintex tribe in Kenemote village, Eastern Highlands. Continuing over four months, the fighting involved both bows and guns and resulted in nine fatalities, 1,500 displaced people, and most of the village burnt to the ground. In mid-May, fighting erupted between clansmen from the highland provinces of Simbu and Eastern Highlands in Port Moresby's suburb Six Mile. Involving the use of machetes and bow and arrows, the confrontation left twelve people injured, among them one severely. Between June and July, eleven people were killed in the course of attacks and

retribution attacks between the Kukurin and the Yapetalin tribes in the border areas between Enga and Western Highlands.

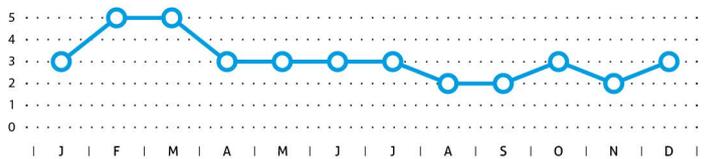
On July 17, tribal fighting broke out around the Porgera Mine area in Enga, involving several tribes after six people reportedly had been killed in a case of mistaken identity. After clashes had resulted in 15 fatalities within two weeks, the government declared the area a tribal fighting zone and deployed additional security personnel. On November 24, armed confrontations erupted between the Sialum and Kabwum tribes in a suburb of Lae, leaving two people dead and at least 17 injured. Several houses were destroyed. Local officials called for additional police reinforcements and considered the eviction of illegal highlander settlements [→ Papua New Guinea (urban tensions)]. In late December, two Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) soldiers and a former policeman were killed in areas around the PNG Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project in Hela Province. In the previous months, the project had seen tensions rising over outstanding payments with local landowners. Reportedly, the soldiers were killed while attending a funeral of two fatalities in an ongoing tribal war between the Tomburuma-Hura-Maya and Tobe clans of the Komo tribe. The local government had deployed security personnel to stop the fighting, which had also affected the operation of the project. jfr

PHILIPPINES (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, GOVERNMENT)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: BIFF, BIFM vs. government, MILF

Conflict items: secession, subnational predominance



The conflict over secession and subnational predominance between the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), on the one hand, and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government, on the other hand, escalated to a war. The conflict concentrated on the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos (SOCCSKSARGEN) region.

BIFF and government forces clashed throughout the year, resulting in at least 250 deaths and 129 injured people. Violence escalated particularly during February and March. For instance, on January 5, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) seized a BIFF camp in Sultan Kudarat in a coordinated attack with MILF forces, killing five and injuring eight BIFF members. On January 14, BIFF members bombed two power relay pylons in Cotabato City, SOCCSKSARGEN, leaving the surrounding region without power for three hours. Members of the police Special Action Force (SAF) killed Malaysian BIFF-affiliated militant Zulkifli bin Hir alias Marwan in BIFF-controlled territory near Mamasapano, Maguindanao province, ARMM, on January 25. Subsequently, SAF forces withdrew into territory controlled by MILF without notifying the group beforehand, disregarding an existing agreement between the two [→ Philippines (MILF)]. On February 9, MILF members killed one BIFF member in a clash in Maguindanao.

Two days later, MILF and BIFF clashed in Barangay Kalbugan, Maguindanao, leaving no casualties. On February 14, 10,000 people fled their homes when the same MILF and BIFF members clashed anew, killing seven BIFF members.

On February 21, government troops started a large-scale offensive against the BIFF, the most extensive since the group's foundation in 2008. It lasted until March 30, involving more than 3,000 government troops and targeting the same number of BIFF militants. The fighting included the use of heavy weapons such as howitzer, MG-520 attack helicopters, tanks, anti-tank rockets, mortars, and other artillery. In total, 151 BIFF members died, 64 were injured, and twelve captured. Twelve soldiers died and 31 were injured. During this offensive, the army seized four BIFF camps in Mamasapano and regained control over several towns in Pikit, North Cotabato, SOCCSKARGEN. During at least 26 skirmishes, between 120,000 to 130,000 people fled their homes. Government troops killed high-profile militants, such as Yusoph Abisali alias Bisaya and the Indong siblings, and captured Imam Mohammad Tambako who had founded a new BIFF splinter group called Justice Islamic Movement in December 2014. After the leader and founder of BIFF, Umbra Kato, had died of natural causes on April 14, Sheik Esmael Abubakar alias Bongos assumed leadership. Abdul Basit Usman, head of the BIFF special operation group, was allegedly killed by MILF on May 3.

BIFF continued to target state forces, killing a total of 16 soldiers and policemen between March and October. For example, on April 17, BIFF launched an attack in Maguindanao injuring six soldiers. On June 19, BIFF killed two soldiers in Maguindanao and another two soldiers three days later. Following a clash between government forces and BIFF militants in Talayan town, Maguindanao, on July 24, dozens of villagers fled the area. On October 24, the BIFF attacked an army detachment in Mamasapano, injuring three soldiers. On December 24, AFP killed four and injured three BIFF members in an attack in Datu Abdullah Sangki, Maguindanao. On the same day, BIFF members killed one local councilman in Pigcawayan town, North Cotabato, and eight civilians in three separate attacks in SOCCSKSARGEN, one of which resulted in a confrontation with AFP in Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat. More than 1,000 families fled their homes due to the fighting. prü

1,500 IDPs. On February 15, approx. 30 NPA members attacked a police station in Mati City, Davao region, leaving one NPA member dead. An IED explosion killed four AFP troops of a reinforcement convoy. The next day, a firefight between NPA members and AFP troops involving two attack helicopters on the AFP side left six NPA members dead in Alabel, SOCCSKSARGEN region. An IED exploded on March 24, injuring two civilians in Monkayo, Davao region. Following the explosion, infantry troopers clashed with NPA personnel, resulting in 518 IDPs. In April and May, NPA members and AFP troops clashed in the regions of Northern Mindanao and SOCCSKSARGEN, leaving nine infantry troops and four NPA members dead and causing at least 200 people to flee. On June 28, infantry troops killed NPA leader Leoncio Pitao and another group member in Davao City, Davao region.

The AFP declared the provinces of Camarines Norte, Iloilo, and Lanao del Norte as well as several towns nationwide pacified, with the NPA expelled or significantly weakened in the areas. Human rights groups criticized the army regarding the treatment of indigenous peoples and the killing of civilians claimed to be NPA members. Throughout the year, at least twelve civilians were reportedly killed in firefights between AFP and NPA members.

The NPA also continued their extortion activities, destroying equipment of companies refusing to pay. In the run-up to the local and national elections in May 2016, the NPA reportedly demanded a "permit to campaign" fee from candidates. AFP Public Affairs Chief Colonel Noel Detoyato advised the campaigners not to pay and to report these demands instead.

Government officials and AFP personnel expressed their will to resume peace talks with the CPP on multiple occasions, for instance during the ceasefire in relation to the holiday season and the visit of Pope Francis that began on 12/19/14 and lasted until January 20. On July 10, CPP founder José María Sison and the speaker of the House of Representatives, Feliciano Belmonte, met in the Netherlands for exploratory talks regarding a peace agreement. On December 15, the CPP and NPA declared a unilateral ceasefire from December 23 until 01/03/16. Three days later, President Benigno Aquino approved a suspension of military operations against the NPA during the same period. psc

PHILIPPINES (CPP, NPA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1968

Conflict parties: CPP, NPA vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology

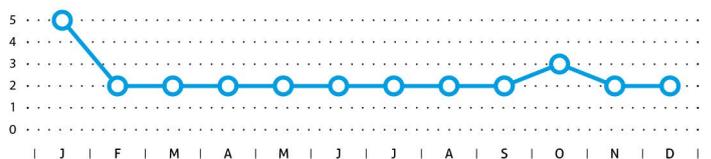
The conflict over the orientation of the political system between the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, remained violent. The NPA aimed to overthrow the government by an armed revolution. Peace talks between the two parties had stalled in 2004 and broken down again in 2013.

Members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the NPA clashed throughout the year, leaving at least 190 people dead, 300 injured, and several thousand internally displaced. NPA members were also suspected to have launched numerous IED attacks, killing and injuring government forces as well as civilians. In January, infantry troops killed five NPA members during clashes in Caraga region, resulting in at least

PHILIPPINES (MILF)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1977

Conflict parties: MILF vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, resources



The conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government over autonomy of the Bangsamoro republic encompassing the Philippine islands of Basilan, Mindanao, Palawan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, as well as over the orientation of the political system and resources such as gold, copper, and rubber escalated to a limited war.

During an operation on January 25, the police Special Action Force (SAF) clashed with Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)], resulting in the death of Malaysian militant Zulkifli bin Hir alias Marwan in Barangay Pidsandawan, Maguindanao province, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). After the clash, SAF withdrew into MILF-controlled territory, disregarding the former agreement to notify their presence beforehand. MILF then killed 44 members of SAF in Mamasapano, ARMM. The clash also left 17 militants and five civilians dead. The encounter between approx. 300 militants and 392 policemen lasted for eleven hours and included the use of automatic guns and RPGs. At least 2,000 families were displaced by the fighting. Later in January, the government deployed a battalion of 300 to 500 soldiers to the area. Following a dispute over rubber cooperatives, MILF militants attacked the convoy of Mayor Randy Climaco of Tungawan, Zamboanga Peninsula, on October 12, killing Climaco and injuring six people.

Nevertheless, both parties continued with civil and military collaboration. For instance, on May 3, MILF members allegedly killed Abdul Basit Usman, a foreign-trained militant wanted by the government. In June, soldiers and MILF members jointly repaired school buildings damaged in previous clashes. Later the same month, 145 MILF members handed over their weapons to the government and the Army's 603rd Brigade withdrew from Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao, ARMM, a former stronghold of the MILF.

Moreover, the peace process which had followed the truce in April 2014 continued. On May 9, MILF registered its party United Bangsamoro Justice Party in preparation for the upcoming elections in 2016. The House of Representatives Ad Hoc Committee dealing with the Bangsamoro political party accepted the application on May 21. Four days later, delegates of the MILF and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process discussed the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), which aimed at establishing a new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region replacing the ARMM and granting a new structure of administration, at the Grand Maguindanao Peace Summit in the town of Buluan, ARMM. At the beginning of December, the House of Representatives Ad Hoc Committee submitted an amended version of the draft BBL and renamed it into Basic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BLBAR). It remained pending at the end of the year. prü

SRI LANKA (BUDDHISTS, SINHALESE NATIONALISTS – MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: Sinhalese Buddhists, BBS, Sinhala Ravaya, JHU, JVP vs. Muslims, SLMC, Christians

Conflict items: system/ideology

The conflict over ideology between Sinhalese nationalists organized in the National Heritage Party (JHU) and the marxist People's Liberation Front (JVP) as well as radical Buddhist groups such as Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and Sinhala Ravaya, on the one hand, and Muslims represented by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and Christians, on the other hand, escalated to a dispute.

On January 8, Sinhalese Buddhist Maithripala Sirisena was elected president, being supported by JHU, SLMC, and JVP.

On several occasions, he stressed the importance of religious freedom, reconciliation, and unity. In February, BBS threatened to pull down a Sufi mosque in Karagula, Ratnapura district, Sabaragamuwa province. They emphasized the mosque had been built on an ancient Buddhist site. On April 4, the police prevented 150 Sinhala Ravaya protesters from demolishing the building. On October 13, BBS Secretary-General Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara surrendered to the police after an arrest warrant had been issued against him. The government accused him of defaming Islam and disturbing a news conference held by the Buddhist organization Jathika Bala Sena in 2014.

In several statements throughout the year, BBS emphasized the Sinhalese roots of the Sri Lankan nation and warned of Islamic extremism.

rth

TAJIKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: Hizb ut-Tahir, IMU, Jamaat Ansarullah, Jundullah, Tablig-i-Jamaat vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and national power between various Islamist groups such as Jamaat Ansarullah and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, the government of President Emomali Rahmon intensified its efforts against Islamist groups. Moreover, former legal Islamic groups such as the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) faced increasing pressure and the practice of religion was further restricted [→ Tajikistan (opposition)]. Rahmon repeatedly emphasized the threat of Islamism to the country and imposed various legislative and executive measures to prevent citizens from joining extremist groups, for instance, the ban of the hajj for Tajiks younger than 35 and the mandatory return to Tajikistan of thousands of students studying in Islamic schools abroad.

In January, Tajik Islamist militant Abu Umariyon fighting along IS in Syria requested permission to wage jihad in Tajikistan together with Jamaat Ansarullah. However, IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi refused his permission [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. On May 27, the Interior Ministry's Special Forces Commander Gulmurod Khalimov claimed he had joined IS in protest against current restrictions for Muslims in Tajikistan. In August, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) stated that it considered itself part of IS, following continuous disputes with the Afghan Taliban [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)].

In the course of the year, the government arrested and sentenced to prison terms at least 190 alleged Islamists. For instance, on February 17, a Tajik court sentenced 13 members of the banned Jamaat Ansarullah to prison terms between nine and twelve years. On December 1, seven men were sentenced to prison between seven and 27 years for publicly raising the IS flag in Shahrtuz, Kathlon province, calling to overthrow the government, and recruiting people to fight abroad. Violence occurred in several incidents, leaving at least 55 people dead. On September 4, militants attacked the police headquarters in the town of Vahdat, Districts of Republican Subordination, and an arsenal close to the airport of the capital Dushanbe, resulting in the deaths of nine police officers and at least 13 alleged militants as well as in the detention of

another 32.

The government blamed an Islamist militant group led by then-Deputy Defense Minister Abduhalim Nazarzoda for the attacks. Nazarzoda had been an Islamic opposition commander during the Tajik civil war. Officials accused him of being a member of the IRPT, which had been outlawed a week ago. The IRPT denied any ties with Nazarzoda. On September 6, the government deployed 150 security forces to the mountainous Romit Gorge area, Districts of Republican Subordination, supported by three military helicopters, killing four militants. According to officials, security forces killed around 20 gunmen and detained another 100 until September 11, among them two Defense Ministry officers. Five days later, the Interior Ministry confirmed the killing of Nazarzoda and ten of his supporters in a shootout. During the clashes, militants killed two members of the elite Alfa special forces unit and wounded another two.

The government set up a new military base at the Tajik-Afghan border to meet a security threat posed by allegedly 8,000 Islamist militants operating outside the border. On May 17, the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization conducted a 2,500-strong troop maneuver simulating an incursion of 700 militants into allied territory. Additionally, Russian officials announced plans to increase the number of troops stationed in Tajikistan from 7,000 to 9,000 and to deploy attack and military transport helicopters to the Tajik-Afghan border. fsc

TAJIKISTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and national power between the opposition and the government continued at the level of a non-violent crisis.

Throughout the year, the government took several measures in order to oppress opposition groups and independent media outlets, and restricted practice of religion, particularly through widespread judicial actions.

For instance, Shuhrat Quدراتov, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan (SDPT), was accused of bribery and fraud and sentenced to a nine-year prison term on January 13. In the March 1 parliamentary elections, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and SDPT failed to win parliamentary seats for the first time since 1991. President Emomali Rahmon's People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan won an absolute majority of the seats. According to the OSCE, the elections took place in a restricted political space with limited competition. Serious procedural violations were frequently reported. On March 5, Umarali Quvatov, the self-exiled leader of banned oppositional Group 24, was killed in Istanbul. Another member of the group accused the government of masterminding the assassination.

On August 28, the government banned the IRPT claiming it had not enough members to qualify as a party. A total of 23 IRPT top officials were detained following violent clashes near the capital Dushanbe on September 4 [→ Tajikistan (Islamist militant groups)]. On September 29, the Supreme Court classified IRPT as an extremist and terrorist organization. Reportedly, around 200 IRPT members were detained between early September and the end of the year. fsc

THAILAND (ISLAMIST SEPARATISTS / SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1902

Conflict parties: various Islamist separatists vs. government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The conflict over secession and ideology between various Islamist separatists including Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), and Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued at a violent level. The Islamist separatists sought the separation of the predominantly Muslim southern border provinces Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Sonkhla.

Throughout the year, militants carried out numerous attacks, such as bombings and drive-by shootings, primarily on civil servants and Buddhist monks. The Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Centre and the Police Education Bureau trained more recruits of Islamic schools in the southern provinces to reduce attacks motivated by religion or ethnicity. In the course of the year, the conflict resulted in a total of approx. 200 people killed, including ten militants and at least 35 Thai Royal police and security forces.

On January 9, the Police Special Task Forces killed one RKK commander and two other militants in a shootout in an Islamic school in Mayo district, Pattani. On February 20, separatists planted a car bomb which exploded in front of a karaoke bar in Muang district, Narathiwat, injuring two soldiers and eleven civilians. On March 25, the Thai 41st Paramilitary Task Forces killed four suspected RKK militants and arrested 22 in a raid in Baan Toh Sud village, Pattani province. The fatalities later proved to be civilians. On April 12 and 13, militants shot dead eight civilians in different locations in Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala, while two militants were killed by an armed civilian. On July 25, separatists planted a bomb killing a Buddhist monk and a soldier and injuring six others behind the Sai Buri police station in Pattani. The same day, the Royal Thai Army issued tighter security guidelines advising Buddhist monks to stay in their temples in order to prevent further attacks. On August 3, the military announced the ban of the use of metal cooking gas tanks in the southern provinces as they had been consistently used for IEDs. On November 12, a separatists planted a bomb, killing four defense volunteers in Khoh Pho district, Pattani. An arrested militant died in prison on December 4. Reportedly, this was the third militant to die under arrest since October. On December 13, a bomb planted by a local separatist group killed a ranger of the 43rd Regiment and injured one civilian in Yala. On December 28, Masuki, an important RKK member, was arrested in Bannang Sata district, Yala.

The conflict parties met to explore the possibility of peace talks. In mid-May, three factions of PULO, BRN, the Barisan Islam Perberbasan Pattani, and the Gerakan Mujahideen Islami Pattani formed the umbrella organisation Mara Patani in preparation for formal peace talks with the government. During exploratory peace talks on November 11 and 12 in Malaysia, the government discussed the proposal for a safety zone in north Narathiwat with Mara Patani. BRN, the largest separatist group constituting Mara Patani, called for international observation of the peace talks, which the Thai government rejected. ceb

UZBEKISTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict between opposition groups and the government over national power and the orientation of the political system continued as a violent crisis. Throughout the year, civil society organizations and activists played a prominent role. On March 29, Islam Karimov was re-elected for his fourth presidential term. According to the OSCE Election Monitoring Mission, there was little competition as incumbent Karimov had been endorsed by the other presidential candidates.

Elena Urlaeva, head of the Uzbek Human Rights Defenders Alliance, stated in early June that she had been detained on May 31 after documenting forced labor in cotton fields in Chinaz, Tashkent region. During her detainment, she claimed she had been subjected to a body cavity search and allegedly beaten. Several international actors such as Human Rights Watch and the United States' Mission to the OSCE condemned the incident. On his visit to Uzbekistan on June 12, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged Karimov to end forced labor and improve the treatment of prisoners.

In late August, the Ministry of Education announced that Political Science would no longer be offered in Uzbek universities. The ministry claimed that the respective literature was only based on Western publications and did not take into account the specific Uzbek model of development. All textbooks and related literature were removed from university libraries. In October, human rights activist Mutabar Tadjibayeva won a UNHRC ruling against Uzbekistan. Tadjibayeva had been imprisoned in 2005, thereafter convicted and during her detainment subjected to rape, torture, and forced sterilization. In November, Murod Juraev, former mayor in southern Uzbekistan and member of opposition party Erk, was released from prison after 21 years.

In mid-November, human rights activist Uktam Pardayev, who also had monitored forced labor in the Uzbek cotton industry, was arrested in Jizzakh province.

fb

VIETNAM (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: factory workers, peasants, other civilians vs. manufacturing companies, government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over the socioeconomic system and re-

sources, especially over working conditions, social insurance, and land allocation, between peasants, factory workers, and other civilians, on the one hand, and the government and manufacturing companies, on the other, continued.

The conflict evolved with the Doi Moi reform in 1986, which initiated the shift from a Centrally Planned Economy to a socialist-oriented market economy. As is the case each year, the government handed out land use rights for a limited amount of time and as in previous years, local authorities withdrew land for socioeconomic projects.

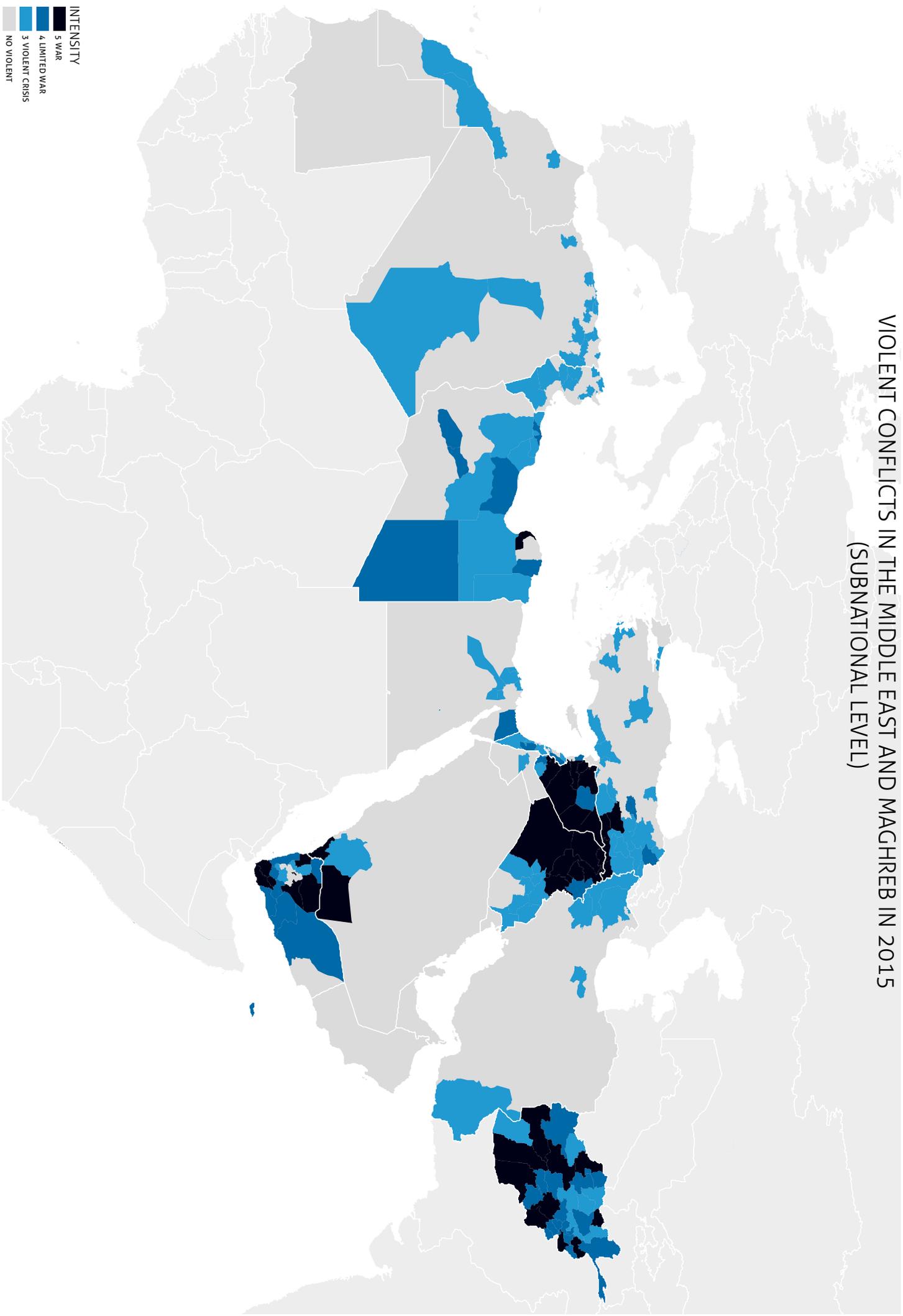
In the days before the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, which took place from February 17 to 21, peasants and other civilians rallied in front of government offices in Hanoi, protesting against land confiscations and the imprisonment of their relatives. Civil society organizations, such as Rice for Victims of Injustice, provided meals for the protesters. Land compensation disputes turned violent on June 29 when hundreds of local residents in Ky Trinh Commune, Ha Tinh province, damaged the temporary huts for workers of an electricity company and clashed with approx. 100 police officers. At least ten of the latter and dozens of protesters were injured. In late December, traders and their children gathered in front of local government offices and some schools in Ninh Hiep, Hanoi, to demonstrate against the municipal government's decision to sell the local market parking lot to a company, planning to build a shopping mall there.

Unauthorized strikes against FDI companies frequently took place in the strongly industrialized southern provinces. In response, the government raised the minimum wage by roughly 15 percent on January 1 and issued a decree concerning the rights and obligations of employers and employees on January 12. From March 26 to April 1, thousands of workers of a Ho Chi Minh-based footwear factory went on strike after the government had announced the abolishment of the one-time payment to be received after quitting the job from 2016 onwards. Consequently, the National Assembly voted for a revised social insurance law on June 22 that included the lump sum payment again. In another incident from May 19 to 22, at least 600 garment workers of a shoe factory in Hai Phong province went on strike after the company had forced their employees to work extra time without remuneration. On August 3, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs announced a nationwide inspection of the garment industry, supported by the International Labor Organization (ILO), in order to evaluate compliance with labor regulations. After months of negotiations between the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the National Wage Council decided in early September to increase the minimum wage by roughly twelve percent in 2016.

Civilians also engaged in environmental protests. On April 14 and 15, thousands of residents in Binh Thuan province blocked a highway, protesting against air pollution caused by the coal-fired power plant Vinh-Tan 2. They threw rocks, bricks, and gasoline bombs at police officers, leaving 17 of them injured, and damaged the windows of a hotel. Two months later, the police arrested six people after investigation of the incident. vun

Middle East and Maghreb

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2015 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



In 2015, a total of 71 conflicts was observed in the Middle East and Maghreb, which marks a decrease by two compared to the last year. With ten highly violent conflicts, the region accounted for almost a quarter of all highly violent conflicts worldwide, while the region's six wars make up nearly a third of all wars. Compared to last year, the share of full-scale wars dropped due to a methodological optimization: The conflict interactions directly related to the so-called Islamic State (IS) were extracted from the conflicts Syria (opposition), Syria (inter-opposition violence), Syria (NC, Islamist groups – KSC / Kurdish regions), Iraq (IS et al.), Afghanistan (Taliban et al.), Algeria (AQIM et al.), Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula), Libya (opposition groups), Tunisia (AQIM et al.), Yemen (AQAP - al-Houthi rebels) into one transnational conflict [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. System/ideology continued to be the conflict parties' most pursued item, with nearly two thirds of all conflicts focusing around it. In contrast, conflicts revolving around the items territory and international power tended to be less violent.

Syria remained the country with the highest fatalities in all its conflicts combined. The war between the government of President Bashar al-Assad and various opposition groups was marked by a shift of momentum [→ Syria (opposition)]. While opposition groups were able to capture the complete Idlib Governorate in spring, there was a deadlock throughout the summer. With the start of the Russian intervention on September 30, pro-government forces made significant gains, especially in Aleppo and Homs Governorate. The violence between the opposition groups continued, especially Jabhat al-Nusra was involved in inter-opposition fighting [→ Syria (inter-opposition violence)]. The opposition conflict had also impact on two interstate conflicts, due to cross-border shelling [→ Syria – Israel; Syria – Turkey]. The conflict with the major impact on the conflict landscape in the Middle East and Maghreb was the conflict with the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Within its core in Syria and Iraq IS made significant territorial gains in the first half of the year capturing Ramadi, al-Anbar Governorate, Iraq and the ancient city Palmyra, Homs Governorate, Syria. But throughout the second half of the year losing territory to Kurdish groups in northern Syria and northern Iraq, as well as against the Iraqi army, supported by Shia militias, in central Iraq and al-Anbar. A US-led coalition targeted IS with airstrikes in both countries. In Iraq all other conflicts were non-violent, due to the focus on IS. Beside Syria and Iraq IS also intensified its operations in other countries throughout the region like Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, or Yemen.

Yemen continued to be one of the countries in the region most affected by highly violent conflicts. However, the structure of the conflicts in the country saw a significant change in 2015. Saudi Arabia, which until then supported the Yemeni government in its conflict with the al-Houthis, started a large military operation together with an Arab coalition after President Hadi had fled the country in March. Several other groups engaged in ongoing conflicts with the government joined forces loyal to President Hadi in their fight against the al-Houthi militants and their allies [→ Yemen (Marib tribes); Yemen (SMM / South Yemen)]. Among the latter were most notably members of the Special Security Forces and others loyal to former president Saleh. Militants from AQAP and Ansar al Sharia continued to fight both the government and al-Houthi forces, while IS especially targeted Shia mosques frequented by al-Houthi fighters.

The war in Afghanistan between the Taliban and various other militant groups, on one side, and the government, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and US forces, on the other, continued. RSM was launched on January 1 as the ISAF mission formally ended on 31/12/14. In terms of civilian fatalities, 2015 was the most fatal year in Afghanistan since the beginning of the ISAF mission in 2002 with at least 3,545 dead civilians by December 31. Another significant development was the emergence of IS in Afghanistan. Throughout the year, IS engaged in fighting with the Afghan National Army, NATO forces, and the Taliban mostly in Farah and Nangarhar provinces. The IS militants often proved to be former Taliban fighters and tried to establish several regional strongholds, but were regularly pushed back by the Taliban.

In Turkey, the conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the government escalated to a war. On July 22, PKK militants killed two soldiers in Ceylanpinar, Sanliurfa province. From July 24 onwards, the Turkish Armed Forces carried out airstrikes and ground operations against PKK targets in the southeast, especially in Diyarbakir in the eponymous province. By the end of the year, at least 2,057 were killed and over 100,000 internally displaced as a result of the fighting between PKK and the government. The conflict was exacerbated by several IS attacks in Turkey, most notably the Ankara bombings on October 10 when IS suicide bombers killed at least 102 civilians and wounded more than 400. In late August, Turkey actively joined the US-led anti-IS coalition and started to carry out airstrikes against IS targets in Syria.

In Israel, two conflicts were carried out regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state with major conflict action located in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, respectively [→ Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian territories); Israel (PNA / Palestinian territories)]. The conflict between Hamas, PRC, PIJ, and others against the government focused on the Gaza Strip and de-escalated from a war to a violent crisis [→ Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian territories)]. The de-escalation followed the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas reached on 08/26/14 and led to a significant decline in fatality numbers. Violent incidents in the West Bank in 2015 mostly concerned rockets fired from the Strip towards Israel and prompting Israeli airstrikes in return. Violence was also carried out by both sides during demonstrations in the proximity of the border fence between the Palestinian territories and Israel. In the West Bank, conflict conduct mostly focused on the violent crisis between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the government [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian territories)]. While the PNA accepted the Jurisdiction of ICC in January, the remainder of the year was marked by stabbing attacks carried out by Palestinian civilians against Israeli civilians and security personnel. In July, Israeli settlers killed three Palestinians in an arson attack in the village of Duma. Clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces were especially frequent around the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. Furthermore, the conflicts between Hamas and Salafi groups in the Gaza Strip escalated to a violent crisis, while the conflict between Israel and Shiite militia Hezbollah escalated to a limited war.

In Lebanon, a limited war was conducted between Sunni militant groups, most notably al-Qaida affiliate al-Nusra Front, on the one hand, and the government and Shiite militia Hezbollah on the other [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. The conflict was heavily affected by the Syrian civil war and the conflict with IS and mainly took place around the cities of Aarsal, Baalbek, and Ras Baalbek in Beqaa governorate, where IS tried to establish a bridgehead.

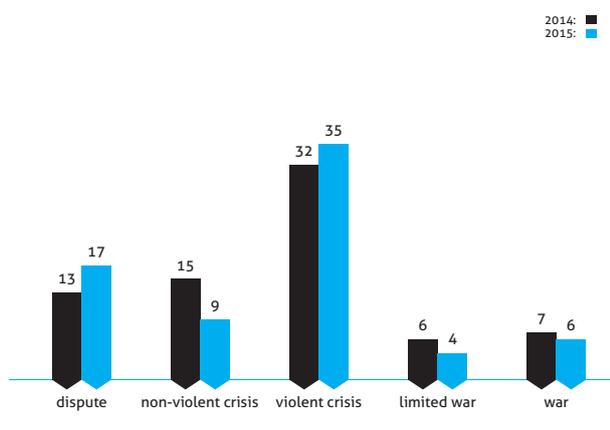
In Egypt, the conflict between Aynad al-Misr and other militant Islamist groups against the government constituted a limited war and was mainly conducted on the Sinai Peninsula [→ Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. Here, as in the case of Lebanon, an existing conflict involving Islamist militants was heavily influenced by the conflict regarding IS [→ Lebanon

(Sunni militant groups)]. After the Islamist militant group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis had pledged allegiance to IS on 11/10/14 and subsequently changed its name to Wilayat Sinai ("Sinai Province") it was merged into the IS conflict. The remaining confrontations between the government and Islamist militant groups nevertheless constituted a limited war and left at least 292 people killed and 103 wounded, most of whom being security personnel or militants. The confrontations were characterized by clashes around the towns of Sheikh Zuwaid and Arish in North Sinai as well as attacks with explosives throughout the country.

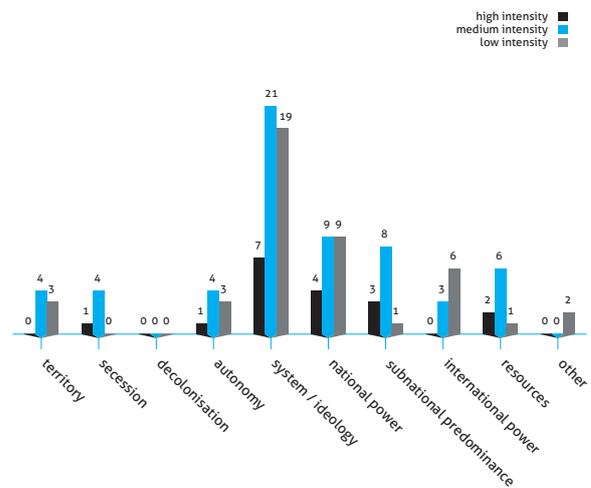
The opposition conflicts in Algeria and Tunisia continued at a violent level. While Algerian opposition groups mainly demanded the government to stop its shale gas extraction projects in the southern province of Tamanrasset, the Tunisian conflict was marked by various socioeconomic protests. In both countries, demonstrations and police interventions turned violent several times [→ Algeria (opposition); Tunisia (opposition)]. Furthermore, AQIM and affiliated militant groups continued their activities in most North African countries, most notably in Algeria and Tunisia, where they respectively carried out several attacks on police and army personnel over the course of the year [→ Algeria (AQIM et al.), Tunisia (AQIM et al.), Mauritania (AQIM), Morocco (AQIM)]. Several former AQIM-loyal fighters in Algeria and Tunisia pledged allegiance to IS. Newly formed IS group Jund al-Khilafa in Tunisia carried out the most prominent attacks in the area, namely on the Bardo Museum as well as a presidential guard bus in the Tunisian capital Tunis and on a hotel in Sousse.

In the Libyan opposition conflict, ongoing confrontations between the two rival parliaments, the House of Representatives and its internationally recognized government based in Tobruk and al-Bayda, one the one hand, and Tripoli-based General National Congress, on the other, with their respective loyal as well as affiliated forces, constituted a war [→ Libya (opposition)]. Fighting took place in northern and central Libya between various groups belonging to, loyal to, or affiliated to one of the conflict parties. Despite their participation in UN-led peace talks, both parliaments remained internally split over the initiative to form a unity government while initiating a Libyan-Libyan Dialog and signing a declaration of principles on December 5. IS activity in Libya was mostly observed in the areas of Sirte, Benghazi, and Derna. The group expanded its control of the town of Sirte where confrontations with Libya Dawn intensified. Over the course of the year, IS repeatedly fought against forces belonging to or siding with the internationally recognized government in Benghazi and extended its influence over the town. IS clashed with forces loyal to the internationally recognized government as well as with the GNC-backing Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) in Derna, which was largely under IS control since the end of 2014, and the eponymous district. In June and July, DMSC launched several offensives driving IS out of the town.

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2015 COMPARED TO 2014



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2015 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



Overview: Conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb in 2015

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Afghanistan (Kuchi Nomads – Hazara)	Kuchi Nomads vs. Hazara	subnational predominance, resources	2007	↗	3
Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)	Taliban, Haqqani Network, Hezb-i-Islami et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1994	•	5
Afghanistan – Pakistan*	Afghanistan vs. Pakistan	territory	1947	↗	3
Algeria (AQIM et al.)	AQIM, Blood Signatories, MUJAO vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1989	↘	3
Algeria (Berbers / Kabylia)*	Berbers vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1963	↘	2
Algeria (Malekites – Mozabites / Ghardaia)	Malekites vs. Mozabites	subnational predominance	2013	•	3
Algeria (opposition)	CNDDC, National Collective for a Moratorium on Shale Gas in Algeria et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	3
Bahrain (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1975	•	3
Egypt (Bedouin activists)*	Bedouin activists vs. government	system/ideology	2004	•	1
Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)*	Ajnad Misr et al. vs. government	system/ideology	1992	•	4
Egypt (Muslims – Christians)*	Muslims vs. Christians	system/ideology	1952	•	3
Egypt (opposition)	Muslim Brotherhood, opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1954	•	3
Egypt – Sudan*	Egypt vs. Sudan	territory	1958	•	1
Iran (Jundallah et al. / Sistan Baluchistan)*	Jundallah, Jaish al-Hadl, Ansar al-Furqan et al. vs. government	autonomy	1979	•	3
Iran (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1993	↗	3
Iran (People's Mujahideen)*	PMOI vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1965	↘	2
Iran (PJAK / Kurdish Areas)	PJAK vs. government	autonomy	1979	↗	3
Iran – Israel*	Iran vs. Israel	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iran – UAE*	Iran vs. UAE	territory	1971	•	1
Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program)	Iran vs. USA, EU	international power, other	2002	•	2
Iran – USA*	Iran vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)*	KRG vs. government	autonomy, resources	1971	•	1
Iraq (opposition)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1
Iraq (Shiite militant groups)	Al-Mukhtar Army, Asaib Ahl al-Haqq, Mahdi Army, Shiite militias vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	↘	2
Iraq (Sunni opposition)*	Sunni opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	•	1
Israel (al-Fatah – Hamas)*	al-Fatah vs. Hamas	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1994	•	1
Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian Territories)	Hamas, PRC, PIJ et al. vs. government	secession, system/ideology, resources	1988	↓	3
Israel (Hamas – Salafist groups)*	Hamas vs. Salafist groups	system/ideology	2007	↗	3
Israel (Hezbollah)	Hezbollah vs. government	territory, system/ideology	1982	•	3
Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)	PNA vs. government	secession, system/ideology, resources	1948	•	3
Israel – Lebanon*	Israel vs. Lebanon	territory, international power	1948	•	2
Jordan (Hamas)*	Hamas vs. government	system/ideology	1994	•	1
Jordan (opposition)	Muslim Brotherhood vs. Muslim Brotherhood (Zamzam) vs. opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↓	1
Kuwait (Bedouins)*	Bedouins vs. government	other	1960	↓	1
Kuwait (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	↓	1

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al. – Fatah)*	Fatah al-Islam, Jund al-Sham et al. vs. Fatah	subnational predominance	2007	•	3
Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al.)*	Fatah al-Islam, Palestinian Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2006	↓	1
Lebanon (March 14 Alliance – March 8 Alliance)*	March 14 Alliance vs. March 8 Alliance	system/ideology, national power	2005	•	1
Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)	Jabhat al-Nusra, Sunni militant groups vs. government, Hezbollah	secession, system/ideology, subnational predominance	2014	•	4
Lebanon (Sunni – Alawite)*	Sunni vs. Alawite	subnational predominance	1975	•	3
Libya (Federalists / Cyrenaica)*	Congress of the People of Cyrenaica, Council of Cyrenaica in Libya, Cyrenaica Federalists, Cyrenaica Transitional Council, Political Bureau of Cyrenaica vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	2012	↘	1
Libya (inter-tribal)	Tibu vs. Awlad Suleiman tribe vs. Qaddadfa tribe vs. Tuareg vs. Zuwayya	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	4
Libya (opposition)	Operation Dignity forces, HoR, LNA, PFG vs. Libya Dawn alliance, ARSC, GNC, BRSC, DMSC	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	5
Mauritania (AQIM)*	AQIM vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2007	↗	3
Morocco (AQIM)*	AQIM vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2003	•	2
Morocco (opposition)*	Justice and Spirituality vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↗	3
Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara)	POLISARIO vs. government	secession	1975	•	3
Oman (opposition)	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	1
Saudi Arabia (AQAP)*	AQAP vs. Saudi Arabia	system/ideology, national power	1990	↓	1
Saudi Arabia (opposition)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology	1990	↑	3
Saudi Arabia (Shiites)*	Shiites vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1979	•	3
Syria (inter-opposition violence)	Jabhat al-Nusra vs. Ahrar al-Sham vs. Islamist groups vs. NC	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2013	↘	3
Syria (Kurdish groups)*	KDPS, PYD vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	1962	•	3
Syria (NC, Islamist groups – KSC / Kurdish regions)*	NC, Islamist groups vs. KSC	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Syria (opposition)	NC, FSA, Jaish al-Fatah, Jaish al-Islam, al-Sham Front vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	5
Syria – Israel	Syria vs. Israel	territory, international power, resources	1948	•	3
Syria – Turkey	Syria vs. Turkey	territory, international power	1946	•	3
Syria – USA*	Syria vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	2003	•	2
Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)	IS, Sunni tribes vs. YPG, Jabhat al-Nusra, FSA, al-Sham Front, KRG, Shiite militias, Sunni tribesmen, Taliban, Hezbollah, GNC, PFG, al-Houthis, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, France, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, US-led coalition	system/ideology, resources	2014	•	5
Tunisia (AQIM et al.)	AQIM, various militant groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	3
Tunisia (opposition)*	labor unions, Popular Front, Manich Msameh et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2010	•	3
Turkey (Huda Par – PKK / Kurdish Regions)*	Kurdish Nationalists vs. PKK	system/ideology	1992	•	3
Turkey (opposition groups)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2013	•	3
Turkey (PKK)	PKK vs. government	autonomy	1974	↑	5
Turkey – Iraq*	Turkey vs. Iraq	international power	1979	↘	1
Turkey – Russia	Turkey vs. Russia	international power	2015	NEW	3
Yemen (AQAP – al-Houthi)	AQAP vs. al-Houthi	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2010	↘	3

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al Sharia)	AQAP, Ansar al Sharia vs. government	system/ideology	1992	↘	4
Yemen (SMM / South Yemen)	SMM vs. government	secession	2009	•	3
Yemen (tribes / Ma'rib)	militant tribesmen vs. government	autonomy	2012	•	3
Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)	al-Houthi militants, troops loyal to Saleh vs. popular resistance forces, Sunni tribal forces, Yemen, Saudi Arabia	national power, subnational predominance	2004	•	5

^{1 2 3 4} cf. overview table for Europe

AFGHANISTAN (KUCHI NOMADS – HAZARA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: Kuchi Nomads vs. Hazara
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between Kuchi nomads and Hazara tribes escalated to a violent crisis. The mainly Pashtun and Sunni Kuchi nomads claimed access to pastures in the Hazajarat area, where Shiite Hazara tribes had settled.

Between March and July, violent clashes repeatedly erupted between both groups, with Kuchi tribesmen allegedly being supported by Taliban militants on several occasions [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)].

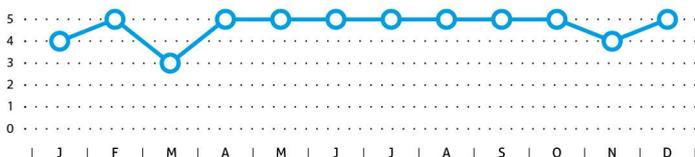
On March 15, local officials reported that armed Kuchi nomads had set up their own posts and blocked roads in the Baraki Barak district, Logar province, thereby violating a ceasefire agreement from January. On April 5, hundreds of members of the Kuchi tribe rallied against government plans to reallocate some of their pastures situated in the Bihud district in eastern Nangarhar province to local infrastructure projects. On June 20, clashes between Kuchi and Hazara tribesmen in the Behsud-1 district, Wardak province, left one person dead and one injured on both sides. Three days later, members of the Hazara armed group Faqiri abducted at least five Kuchi tribesmen, thereby breaking a ceasefire the groups had signed after the previous clashes. Following the June clashes, a presidential commission for resolving the crisis resumed work on June 29. On July 2, members of the Kuchi tribe torched six Hazara houses in the Aimerdad district, Wardak province.

Throughout the year, Islamist militants repeatedly targeted members of the Hazara tribe. Most notably on February 23, when 25 to 31 Hazaras were abducted by Taliban militants on a highway between Herat province and the capital Kabul, and in November, when IS militants beheaded at least seven Hazaras in the Khak-i-Afghan district of Zabul province. [→ Iraq, Syria et al. (IS)]. twt

AFGHANISTAN (TALIBAN ET AL.)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: Taliban, Haqqani Network, Hezb-i-Islami et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and various other militant groups, on the one hand, and the government supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and US forces, on the other hand, continued.

After the end of the ISAF mission on 12/31/14, NATO launched RSM as a non-combat follow-on mission with approx.

13,000 personnel on January 1. The main objectives were to provide training, advice, and support to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The same day, the Bilateral Security Agreement between the US and Afghanistan came into force, allowing an additional 9,800 US troops to remain deployed. In March, the UNSC extended UNAMA's mandate until March 2016 to support the transition process. According to UN figures, 3,545 civilians were killed and 7,457 injured throughout the year, exceeding the number of casualties of 2014. Furthermore, the UN estimated that the conflict left around 335,400 people internally displaced.

Following the elections in 2014, cabinet members were sworn in on April 21, seven months after President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah had agreed on a unity government. On July 7, Taliban members and the newly formed government opened a first round of peace talks in Murree, Pakistan. Representatives from China, the US, and Pakistan attended the meeting. Negotiations stopped after the public announcement of Mullah Omar's death on July 29.

Since the end of ISAF, ANSF increasingly conducted operations against militants without support of international forces. On February 15, Afghan forces started a week-long operation in various districts of Helmand province. According to the government, at least 300 Taliban were killed and 114 injured, while 42 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were killed during the operation. Between May 15 and 16, ANSF carried out a series of strikes against the Taliban in eight provinces, killing at least 138 militants and wounding over 80. Additionally, security forces confiscated ammunition for light and heavy weapons. During a similar crackdown on Taliban militants on October 13 and 14, ANSF killed at least 125 fighters in separate operations in ten provinces.

NATO continued to provide military support to Afghan forces. In a joint operation on October 8, Afghan Border Police and NATO killed about 100 Taliban militants and wounded another 50 in Shorabak, Kandahar province. On November 23, at least 45 militants died in a joint ANSF-NATO operation in Sangin district, Helmand. The US carried out a drone strike against Taliban forces in Khost province on November 26, killing twelve fighters and wounding another 20. Among those killed was Khan Saeed Sajna, a senior Pakistani Taliban leader [→ Pakistan (Islamist groups)].

As in previous years, militants frequently attacked the ANSF and international troops. For instance, on February 26 one Turkish soldier and one Afghan civilian were killed and another Turkish citizen was wounded by a suicide bomber targeting a Turkish military convoy in the capital Kabul. On April 10, a Taliban suicide attack on a NATO convoy in Kabul left three civilians and one soldier injured. Starting their annual spring offensive, Taliban militants fired rockets at a US air base outside Kabul on April 24. No fatalities were reported. In another attack against a NATO convoy in Kabul on June 30, a Taliban suicide bomber killed one civilian, another 22 were injured. On July 8, Taliban militants beheaded three policemen in Qaiser district, Faryab province. In early August, Taliban targeted several security compounds in central Kabul. On August 7, four suicide bombers killed 25 police cadets in an attack on the Kabul Police Academy, leaving another 25 wounded. Later that day, a suicide attacker blew himself up at the gates of an American base in northern Kabul, while other militants engaged in firefights with US military. One soldier and nine contractors were killed. During fights in the airport area of Kandahar that started on December 8 and lasted approx. 26 hours, Taliban killed 39 civilians and 15 ANSF personnel while wounding at least 42 people. On December 21,

six NATO soldiers were killed in a suicide blast near Bagram Air Base, the US military headquarters in Afghanistan.

In the course of the year, the Taliban took temporary control of different territories in several provinces. After a failed attempt to seize Kunduz city, Kunduz province, in April, Taliban fighters took control of the city on September 28, freeing 500 prisoners. In the following days, approx. 7,000 ANSF troops supported by US airstrikes tried to expel the militants. On October 3, a US airstrike hit the Médecins sans Frontières hospital in Kunduz, killing at least 30 staff members, patients, and assistants while wounding another 37. After 15 days of fighting, the military regained full control of the city, ending the first Taliban siege of a major city since 2001. A total of 289 civilians died, 559 were injured, and more than 20,000 families were temporarily displaced during the battles.

Apart from the siege of Kunduz, the Taliban also tried to regain control of other parts of the country. For instance, Taliban fighters seized Yamghan district, Badakshan province, on June 6. After heavy clashes leaving over 120 militants and five security forces dead, ANSF troops supported by local police regained control of the area on June 21. Furthermore, on October 1, militants seized Tala wa Barfak district, Baghlan province, which was then recaptured by security forces two days later. On December 20, the Taliban took control of Sangin district, Helmand. During fights in the following two days, fighters killed at least 90 soldiers. By the end of the year, the group lost control of Sangin, but seized another four districts in the province. Reportedly, 5,000 families fled the violence. Throughout the year, Taliban militants repeatedly attacked civilians and civilian government facilities. For example, a Taliban gunman killed three American contractors and one civilian on January 29 in an attack at Kabul airport. On March 25, at least seven civilians were killed and 36 others were wounded in a suicide car bombing in the capital. On April 2, a suicide bomber of the Haqqani Network killed 16 civilians and wounded approx. 40 during an anti-corruption demonstration in the city of Khost, Khost province. Two civilians were killed, six injured, and over 30 abducted during a Taliban attack on a volleyball game in Zazi Aryub, Paktia province, on May 7. Six days later, Taliban militants attacked a hotel in Kabul, killing 14 people and wounding another seven. On May 19, Taliban carried out a bomb attack in front of the Afghan Ministry of Justice, leaving at least five people dead and several dozens wounded. On June 22, Taliban fighters attacked the parliament building in Kabul. After a car bomb had detonated outside the building, militants with firearms tried to enter the complex, engaging in firefights with security forces. All six gunmen died while at least one civilian was killed and over 30 were injured. On August 7, a suicide bomber attacked the National Directorate of Security, killing 15 and wounding at least 240. Three days later, a suicide blast on Kabul International Airport left five civilians dead and at least 16 injured. Taliban fighters attacked a guesthouse of the Spanish Embassy on December 11, killing at least seven people, among them two Spanish police officers. Following the announcement of Mullah Omar's death, internal fights among the Taliban erupted. On July 31, Taliban sources declared Mullah Akhtar Mansoor the group's new leader. However, different factions frequently engaged in fighting. For instance, fighters loyal to Mullah Mansoor and a splinter group, allegedly backed by Uzbek and IS fighters, clashed in Arghandab district of Zabul province on November 9, leaving more than 50 militants dead.

Throughout the year, Taliban frequently engaged in fights with militants of the so-called Islamic State, especially in the provinces of Nangarhar and Farah [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. chf,

mkp, spv, ssd

ALGERIA (AQIM ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: AQIM, Blood Signatories, MUJAO vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The limited war over national power and the orientation of the political system between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and the Blood Signatories, on one hand, and the government, on the other, de-escalated to a violent crisis. After former AQIM fighters had joined the IS under the name Jund al-Khalifa in September 2014, the al-Ghuraba brigade pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in July [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Over the course of the year, the conflict claimed approx. 110 lives in Algeria, mainly on the side of the militants.

On November 20, AQIM and al-Murabitoun allegedly carried out the hostage-taking in Bamako, Mali [→ Mali (AQIM, MUJAO – HCUA, MAA, MNLA – GATIA / northern Mali)]. On December 3, AQIM claimed responsibility for the attack. In the same statement, AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdel declared that al-Murabitoun and its leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar had joined AQIM.

In January, the Algerian People's National Army (APNA) decided to conduct monthly meetings and exchange information on fighting regional armed groups [→ Morocco (AQIM)]. The axis of Boumerdès, Tizi Ouzou province, and Bouira province in the north of the country continued to be the main venue of confrontations between government forces and Islamist militants.

On January 2, Islamist militants shot dead two policemen in a restaurant in El-Adjiba in the province of Oum El Bouaghi.

In the following two weeks, the army arrested twelve suspected AQIM members during operations carried out in the cities of Ghardaia, Laghouat, and In Amenas. On May 12, militants killed four community guards in their vehicle in Merouana, Batna province. One month later, AQIM members killed one army colonel and injured his deputy by using an IED in the city of Batna. From January to June, security forces killed 28 Islamist fighters during numerous search and sweep operations in several provinces.

After the attacks in Tunisia on June 26 [→ Tunisia (AQIM et al.)], the Algerian army began to deploy 12,000 troops in order to enhance the security situation in its northeastern provinces bordering Tunisia. On July 17, AQIM militants ambushed a military convoy and killed nine soldiers close to Tariq Ibn-Ziad, Ain Defla province. Three days later, around 20 members of AQIM's al-Ansar brigade attacked and killed three police officers and wounded one in the same province. On August 15, militants killed one military commander and one soldier in Colo, situated between Skikda and Jijel province. After this incident, APNA intensified operations against Islamist militants in Jijel province, killing seven fighters in August. Military operations in Boumerdès, Jijel, and Tizi Ouzou left 13 militants dead by the end of the year. ala

ALGERIA (MALEKITES – MOZABITES / GHARDAIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Malekites vs. Mozabites
 Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between the Arab Malekite and Berber Mozabite communities in Algeria's southern province of Ghardaia continued.

Between January 7 and 10, rival gangs of the two conflict parties started confrontations in the city of Ghardaia. When the police tried to restore order by using tear gas, Mozabites as well as Malekites responded by throwing Molotov cocktails and stones. The confrontations left three civilians dead. Around 15 people were injured, including five policemen. The situation calmed down until May 16, when violent clashes between Mozabites and Malekites re-erupted. When the police tried to intervene, members of both communities threw Molotov cocktails and stones, injuring 15 policemen. In addition, three houses and three cars were set on fire by rival community fractions. On June 13, the communal confrontations continued in the town of Berriane. Riot police intervened by using tear gas and rubber bullets to separate the conflict parties. Overall, two people died and 40 people were injured, including 14 policemen.

The violence reached its peak on July 7 and 8, when 23 people were killed in the Southern cities of Guerera, Berriane, and Ghardaia, most of them being Mozabites. Alleged Malekites used firearms to shoot at members of the Mozabite community in Guerera, accounting for 19 of the 23 deaths on both sides. During the clashes in the three cities, several shops, cars, palm gardens, urban infrastructure, and public buildings were set on fire or damaged by other means.

At an emergency meeting on July 8, President Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika announced the deployment of the military to the region in order to restore order and stability. Collective recognition for the army's efforts was demonstrated in a so-called ceremony of gratitude in the city of Ghardaia on December 20. The event was organized by community leaders and was attended by representatives of the conflict parties as well as civil and military authorities. [ala](#)

ALGERIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: CNDDC, National Collective for a Moratorium on Shale Gas in Algeria et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and the government continued.

The year was marked by several violent demonstrations, mainly organized by the National Committee for the Defense of Rights of Unemployed Persons (CNDDC), who demanded the government to stop its shale gas extraction projects in the southern province of Tamanrasset. Over the course of the year, at least 17 CNDDC members were arrested.

Continuous demonstrations were held for two months in Ain Salah, Tamanrasset, the town closest to the drilling sites. The

anti-shale gas demonstrations then spread across other parts of Algeria's Saharan region, with their frequency decreasing in the second half of the year.

On January 4, a total of 4,000 people demonstrated in the cities of Ain Salah, Tamanrasset, El Ménéa, and Ain Ghar, Tamanrasset. More than 3,000 police forces were mobilized to restore order. On February 25, demonstrators formed the "National Collective for a Moratorium on Shale Gas in Algeria." Violent clashes erupted for the first time on February 28, when protesters and police forces clashed in Ain Salah. Demonstrators threw stones and set ablaze a police station after a coalition of liberal and Islamist parties such as the Movement for Society and Peace had called for the demonstration. Security forces used tear gas to disperse the crowds. Three security forces and at least four demonstrators were injured. On March 1, a total of 4,000 people demonstrated in Ain Salah and Tamanrasset. The same day, the government deployed 1,200 soldiers. The protesters set fire to the residence of the district's prefect, one police dormitory, and one police bus. According to the Ministry of the Interior, 40 police forces were injured. A local hospital reported 20 injured protesters. On March 14, several thousand people staged demonstrations in multiple Southern cities. The largest demonstration took place in the town of Ouargla in the eponymous province, where more than 3,000 protesters marched against the government's plan to extract shale gas in the region. Five days later, President Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika called for the restoration of national unity and condemned the shale-gas demonstrations. On April 4, several hundred people protested in the city of Batna, Batna province. After the police shot dead a young person in Ain Bessem, Bouira province, on July 2, demonstrators and security forces clashed. The protesters attacked the local police station, burned down a police vehicle, and placed burning tires to close access to the village. [ala](#)

BAHRAIN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between the mainly Shiite opposition groups and the Sunni government led by King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa continued.

Throughout the year, the opposition, consisting among others of the main opposition parliamentary group al-Wefaq National Islamic Society and the Coalition of February 14 Youth, reiterated demands for the release of opposition members and called for a constitutional monarchy with a prime minister elected by the people.

After Sheikh Ali Salman, leader of al-Wefaq, had been arrested on 12/28/2014, protests demanding his release erupted in and around the capital Manama, located in the Capital Governorate, throughout January. Reportedly, the demonstrations turned violent several times. For instance, on January 9, Shiite opposition supporters clashed with police forces who fired in the air and used tear gas to break up the demonstration, leaving several protesters injured. On January 31, the government revoked the citizenship of 72 opposition members, human rights activists, and journalists who were deemed to have threatened national security.

Marking the fourth anniversary of the protest movement inspired by the so-called Arab Spring in February 2011, opposition groups such as the Coalition of February 14 Youth staged unauthorized protests all over the country demanding political reforms and Salman's release. They blocked village roads, while riot police responded with tear gas and sound bombs on major roads.

On March 10, riots broke out at Jaw Prison, Capital Governorate, which held a large number of opposition group members. Police reportedly employed tear gas, batons, fired at people, and allegedly tortured the jailed protesters after the crackdown. On June 16, the High Court sentenced Salman to four years in prison on charges of inciting violence. Subsequently, rallies against the government were held in Nuwaidrat, Central Governorate, and Bilad al-Qadim, Capital Governorate, on June 29.

Clashes reportedly ensued in the northern part of the country in October, when police took down banners put up for the Shia festival of Ashura. Security forces used rifles and tear gas to disperse the people, allegedly leaving several injured.

Throughout the year, the government upheld the suppression of people critical to the government as well as certain media outlets. For instance, popular human rights advocate Nabeel Rajab was sentenced to a six-month imprisonment after he allegedly insulted public institutions on Twitter, but was released in June for health reasons after two months. Furthermore, the publication license of the critical newspaper al-Wasat was revoked for two days in August. ^{ivo}

EGYPT (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: Muslim Brotherhood, opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), and the government continued as a violent crisis.

Over the course of the year, courts issued and confirmed hundreds of death sentences for MB leaders and supporters. Former president of Egypt and leader of the Freedom and Justice Party Mohammed Morsi was sentenced to death, along with 105 MB members on May 16, with Cairo Criminal Court confirming the death sentences on June 16. After having previously banned 1,137 organizations on January 21, the government dissolved 169 MB-affiliated NGOs in nine governorates on February 23. On the 4th anniversary of the 2011 uprisings on January 25, at least 19 protesters and one police officer were killed in clashes between mostly Morsi supporters and police forces in the capital Cairo and Alexandria. Police fired live ammunition to disperse the crowd. On March 3, a court suspended upcoming parliamentary elections. The suspension came after Supreme Constitutional Court ruled electoral laws unconstitutional. On July 9, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi signed a new electoral law, allowing for parliamentary elections at the end of the year. On May 31, activist and human rights lawyer Mahienour al-Masry and two others were sentenced to one year and three months in prison for storming Al-Raml police station in Alexandria in March 2013.

Clashes between MB supporters and police forces in the city of Giza, Cairo governorate, on July 17 led to the death of six and arrests of 15 allegedly armed MB members and another 20 MB supporters. The clashes erupted after over 500 MB supporters had gathered on the occasion of Eid prayers. On August 18, the government extended police powers of detention and surveillance, passing counterterrorism legislation. In connection to the 2013 attack on a police station in Port Said, a court sentenced 95 MB affiliates, including MB leader Mohammed Badie, to life in prison on August 22. On August 29, a Cairo court sentenced three Al Jazeera journalists to three years in prison for allegedly spreading false news. Two of the journalists were released from prison on 23 September following a mass pardoning by President al-Sisi. On October 12, a court released former president Hosni Mubarak's sons Alaa and Gamal Mubarak convicted of embezzling state funds in 2011.

After the formation of the Supreme Electoral Committee in mid-August, the first round of parliamentary elections took place in stages between late October and early December, being characterized by poor voter turnout and widespread boycott by the opposition. The coalition "For the Love of Egypt" supporting al-Sisi won all seats reserved for party lists. The military detained rights activist and journalist Hossam Bahgat from November 8 to 10, accusing him of disseminating false news. On December 1, following the death of a man in police custody, hundreds protested against police violence in the city of Luxor, Luxor governorate. Subsequently, al-Sisi announced the punishment of nine police officers. On December 31, al-Sisi called for the newly elected parliament to assemble on 01/10/16. ^{sep}

IRAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1993

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and national power between opposition groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

For the fourth year in a row, the leaders of the oppositional Green Movement, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hussein Moussavi, both candidates in the presidential elections of 2009, remained under house arrest in Tehran without being charged. Throughout the year, the government targeted opposition activists, using primarily judicial means. In May, the journalist Ahmad Zeidabai was sent into exile to Gonabad in northern Iran one day after he had been released from prison. On June 2, Atena Daemi, an anti-death penalty activist, was sentenced to a 14-year prison term based on four different charges, among them insulting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. On June 27, security forces detained the president of the Iranian Teachers Trade Association, Ismail Abdi, in Tehran, accusing him of organizing and participating in illegal gatherings. Furthermore, on October 13, the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced film-maker Keywan Karimi to six years in prison and 223 lashes for propaganda against the government.

Ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections in February 2016, the government increased pressure upon journalists. On October 16, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) cyber unit reportedly arrested 170 people in Qazvin Province,

accusing them of having published obscene content via social media. However, the Iranian judiciary spokesman Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei denied those arrests on November 8. On November 2, IRGC arrested at least three oppositional journalists in Tehran, accusing them of belonging to an infiltration group connected to the USA and the United Kingdom. According to Reporters Without Borders, by the end of the year a total of 37 journalists were in detention. On March 3, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon criticized the Iranian government for repeated human rights violations in a report to the UNHRC. In response, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif rejected those claims referring to double standards and politicization of those issues. jko

IRAN (PJAK / KURDISH AREAS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: PJAK vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The conflict over autonomy in Iran's Kurdish areas between the Party of Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

While PJAK's armed wing, the East Kurdistan Defense Units (YRK), and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) repeatedly clashed in August, combats receded in the following months. Throughout the year, the government executed several Kurds allegedly linked to PJAK. On February 20, the brothers Ali and Habib Afshari, two alleged PJAK members, were hanged in the Orumiyeh prison, West Azerbaijan province, for "spreading corruption on earth" and "acting against God's will." Kurdish political activist Sirwan Nejawani was executed on August 9 in the Tabriz prison, East Azerbaijan, on charges of collaboration with PJAK. In response to the execution, YRK attacked military barracks near the city of Sanandaj, Kordestan province, on August 12. While the government reported that five soldiers died in the fighting, the Kurdish group claimed having killed twelve. eth

IRAN – USA, EU (NUCLEAR PROGRAM)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2002

Conflict parties: Iran vs. USA, EU

Conflict items: international power, other

The non-violent crisis over international power and Iran's nuclear program between the USA and the EU, on the one hand, and Iran, on the other, continued.

On April 2, Iran and the P5+1/E3+3 group consisting of the US, Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany agreed on the key points of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) related to Iran's nuclear capabilities, for instance nuclear enrichment facilities, international inspections, and transparency standards. Furthermore, it stated that the EU and the US would lift sanctions after inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed Iran's compliance with JCPOA. However, US sanctions imposed after the 1979 Iranian Revolution remained in place [→ Iran – USA]. On July 14, the P5+1/E3+3 group reached a final agreement with Iran over its nuclear program, calling it JCPOA. It was announced by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Feder-

ica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Vienna. The final agreement was based on the Joint Plan of Action of 11/24/13, in which Iran had made major technical concessions regarding the function of its civilian nuclear program in exchange for moderate sanctions relief, and on the framework agreement from April. The deal demanded Iran to reduce its stockpile of low-enriched uranium, to redesign and transform the nuclear facilities at Fordo, Natanz, and Arak, as well as to grant the IAEA access to facilities for enrichment, centrifuge production, and storage throughout the country. In return, if Iran complied with those requirements, the arms embargo would be lifted for conventional weapons after five and for ballistic missiles after eight years. Furthermore, sanctions concerning financial restrictions and energy could be lifted in early 2016. A large number of restrictions imposed by JCPOA, however, will be lifted after a period of 15 years. On December 2, the IAEA issued a final report on the Iranian nuclear program. It stated that after 2009, there was no evidence for activities concerning the development of nuclear weapons. In response, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi claimed that the Iranian nuclear program only had peaceful aims, denying any research related to the development of nuclear weapons. By the end of the year, all sanctions imposed on Iran remained in place. krk

IRAQ (SHIITE MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: Al-Mukhtar Army, Asaib Ahl al-Haqq, Mahdi Army, Shiite militias vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over system and ideology as well as national power between Shiite militant groups such as al-Mukhtar Army, Asaib Ahl al-Haqq, Hashid al-Shaabi, Harakat al-Nujaba, and Mahdi Army, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

After the Islamic State (IS) had launched its offensive beginning in June 2014, the government turned to Shiite militias to bolster their security forces. The militias, backed by Iran, were essential for strengthening Iraqi forces and helped to retake areas in Iraq. In January, the government started to form three brigades of Shiite militias in the Kirkuk Governorate under the directive of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. Since then, IS frequently targeted Shiite areas across the country. The US Department of Defense stated that it would support operations involving both the Iraqi army and those militia forces operating under command and control of the Iraqi government. Shiite militias mobilized to help the army to fight IS gained more military and political influence [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Shiite militias reportedly singled out and killed 72 people on January 26 in the Barwana area in Muqdadhiyya, a predominantly Sunni region in Diyala Governorate. Local residents remained apprehensive about returning to their homes for fear of the armed militia groups, which allegedly operated outside governmental control and was accused of resorting to vigilante justice by Sunnis. Shiite militias reportedly destroyed civilian buildings in the aftermath of the retake of Tikrit, Salah ad-Din Governorate, in March and April. On June 17, Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of Mahdi Army, warned the group's primary target would become US troops if they were redeployed to Iraq, expressing their distrust of American forces since the 2003

US-led invasion.

The head of Asaib Ahl al-Haqq confessed to the kidnapping of 18 Turkish workers in Baghdad on September 2 and condemned Turkey as Iraq's biggest enemy. The Mukhtar Army, supported by Iran, claimed responsibility on October 30 for a rocket attack on a camp near Baghdad that had killed 23 members of Iranian opposition group Mujahideen Khalq [→ Iran (People's Mujahideen)]. Tensions between Shiite militants and Turkey remained, especially after Turkish troops refused to leave Iraqi territory near Mosul after a 48-hour deadline set by the government had expired. Badr Brigade spokesman Karim al-Nuri likened the Turkish incursion with the presence of IS in Iraq. Akram al-Kaabi, leader of the Iran-backed Harakat al-Nujaba militia, stated on November 4 that his group was not plotting a coup but would do so if the religious leaders from Iran demand it. mas

ISRAEL (HAMAS ET AL. / PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: Hamas, PRC, PIJ et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources

The conflict over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state and resources between the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and other Islamist militant groups operating from Gaza strip, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, de-escalated to a violent crisis.

After Egypt had mediated a long-term ceasefire between Hamas and Israel in August 2014, fatality rates dropped significantly from over 2,000 in 2014 to at least 53. In the first half of the year, the conflict left at least one Palestinian and one Israeli dead. In the second half, 27 Gazans, 21 other Palestinians and at least three Israelis living in West Bank were killed. On February 9, IDF destroyed the last tunnel connecting the Gaza strip and Israel, near Nahal Oz, Southern District. However, newly constructed tunnels were found several times in 2015. Throughout the year, rocket fire from the Gaza strip onto Israel, often followed by airstrikes from Israel on targets in Gaza, was observed. For instance, on May 25, Hamas' military wing, the al-Qassam-Brigades, fired a rocket from the Gaza strip towards the Israeli city of Ashdod, Southern District. Shortly after, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) conducted airstrikes on four military infrastructure sites of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

In at least three incidents in June, the militant Salafi group Omar Brigades claimed responsibility for rocket fire from the Gaza strip towards the Israeli cities of Netivot and Ashkelon in the Southern District, expressing discontent with Hamas' policies [→ Israel (Hamas – Salafi)]. Subsequently, the IAF struck military sites of Hamas. While Hamas denied responsibility for the attacks, the IDF declared on September 30 that it considered Hamas, as the governing party in the Gaza strip, to be responsible for all attacks on Israel. Apart from rocket attacks from various sites in Gaza, most violence occurred in Gaza Sea at the border between Israel and Gaza as well as in the West Bank.

Throughout the year, Israeli naval forces attacked Palestinian fishing boats in the Gaza Sea. At least one Palestinian was killed and nine injured.

Several incidents took place in the border region between

Gaza and Israel, which led to the death of at least 16 Gazans. During violent demonstrations in eastern Gaza on October 9, the IDF first used rubber bullets and stun grenades and then fired live ammunition, resulting in the death of eight and injuries of about 70 Gazans. On December 18, one demonstrator was killed and another 43 injured by live ammunition and rubber bullets in clashes with the IDF close to the Erez border crossing, Southern District.

Furthermore, violence between the IDF and Palestinians occurred in the West Bank. For instance, the al-Qassam-Brigades claimed responsibility for an attack on two Israelis in Dolev on June 19, killing one. When IDF forces arrived in about 40 army vehicles in the city of Jenin in order to arrest the group's senior commander, Bassam al-Saeedi, on September 1, at least twelve Palestinians were injured by gunfire and tear gas in a shootout between Israeli forces and PIJ members. On November 16, one Hamas member was shot by undercover Israeli forces in a hospital in Hebron.

Israel froze Palestinian tax funds on January 4, shortly after the Palestinian Authority had applied for membership at the International Criminal Court, acceding on January 2 [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)].

vs

ISRAEL (HEZBOLLAH)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1982

Conflict parties: Hezbollah vs. government
 Conflict items: territory, system/ideology

The violent conflict over ideology and territory between Israel and Hezbollah operating from Lebanese territory continued. On January 5, Israel Air Force killed six Hezbollah members in the Syrian Golan, among them the son of former Hezbollah operations chief Imad Mughniyeh, Jihad Mughniyeh. On January 27, Hezbollah fighters from Lebanon opened fire on Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) vehicles with anti-tank missiles near the village of Ghajar, Golan Heights, killing two soldiers and wounding seven. In response, the IDF used aircraft, artillery, and tanks to fire at Hezbollah. One Spanish member of the UNIFIL was killed.

On April 26, an Israeli airstrike killed four Hezbollah fighters planting bombs after crossing into Israel from Syria, near the Golan Heights Majdal Shams. Several militants, among them two Hezbollah members and one militiaman loyal to the Syrian government, were killed in an IDF airstrike in southwestern Syria on July 29. On December 20, the IDF killed Samir Kuntar, an alleged Hezbollah commander, and four others in an airstrike in Jaramana city, near Syria's capital Damascus. Kuntar had been released in a prisoner exchange in 2008.

On the same day, three rockets that were supposedly fired from a village south of the city of Tyre, Lebanon, exploded in the Western Galilee, causing no damage. hl

ISRAEL (PNA / PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: PNA vs. government
 Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), led by President Mahmoud Abbas of the al-Fatah party, and the Israeli government continued. On January 1, the Government of Palestine accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court retroactively from 07/13/14, acceding to the Rome Statute on January 2.

Throughout the year, Palestinians increasingly attacked Israeli security personnel and civilians. Especially stabbing attacks and car ramming attacks increased. For instance, on March 6, a Palestinian drove his car into a crowd of people standing at a tram stop near Jerusalem. At least five people were injured. After the attack, the perpetrator attempted to stab passengers with a knife before he was shot and wounded by the Israeli police. Subsequently, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted raids, searches, and arrests in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Furthermore, Israeli settlers repeatedly attacked Palestinians. For instance, on July 31, Israeli settlers carried out an arson attack in the village of Duma, West Bank, killing a toddler and his parents. Following this incident, hundreds of Palestinians gathered in Duma vowing to take revenge. Subsequently, Israelis and Palestinians clashed in Jerusalem's Old City and the West Bank numerous times. On September 13, the Israeli police entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque after being told that Palestinians planned attacks on Jews visiting the Temple Mount. They fired rubber bullets and stun grenades, injuring several worshippers. Palestinian protesters threw stones and fireworks. On September 18, two Palestinians were shot and wounded while throwing firebombs at Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. Furthermore, on October 3, a Palestinian stabbed and killed two Israelis in Jerusalem's Old City, further wounding one woman and one toddler. After these attacks, on October 4, Israel imposed a 48-hour ban on Palestinians to enter the Old City. The day after, hundreds of Arab Israelis protested. The imposition of the ban was followed by a series of Palestinian attacks on a nearly daily basis. Proclaiming a "Day of Rage" on October 13, Palestinians in several locations killed three Israelis and wounded several others.

Calling for an end to the violence and for meaningful negotiations, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met separately with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Jerusalem on October 20. Despite the visit, violence did not subside until the end of the year. ari

JORDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Muslim Brotherhood vs. Muslim Brotherhood (Zamzam) vs. opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis between opposition groups, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), its breakaway faction MB (Zamzam), and the government over national power and the orientation of the political system continued.

In a 2,000-strong demonstration organized by the MB after Friday prayers on January 16, protesters clashed with security forces in the capital Amman. The protesters chanted paroles against the French magazine "Charlie Hebdo" as well as King

Abdullah II bin al-Hussein and Queen Rania al-Abdullah for their participation in the commemoration of the victims of the January 8 Paris attacks [→ Iraq, Syria et al. (IS)]. Police fired batons against protesters who tried to march to the French Embassy. In February, after 70 years, MB formalized its severance into two factions. Members belonging to the Jordanian Building Initiative called Zamzam Initiative declared their breakaway from the main organization after the MB Shura Council had expelled them from the organization on February 14. Thereafter, the Zamzam Initiative applied for registration as legal association under the name "Muslim Brotherhood". On March 3, the Ministry of the Interior approved the legal status of the breakaway faction and thereby made it the only legal society by the name of "Muslim Brotherhood". The government declared the remaining MB faction illegal. Subsequently, the ability of the now illegal MB organization to assemble was limited. On April 23, Minister of the Interior Hussein al-Majali announced a prohibition of assemblies of groups that would aim at imposing their agenda on the country. The government denied the old MB faction to celebrate its 70th anniversary on April 30 in a public rally, arguing that it was now an illegal group.

On May 28, the Legislation and Opinion Bureau permitted the government to transfer properties of the old MB to the newly licensed MB group. The legal dispute continued in July when the government's Department of Land and Survey transferred ownership of seven properties worth several millions of dollars to the new MB. During Ramadan, the government banned the original MB from organizing public prayers, but approved the holding of an Iftar for MB (Zamzam). Until December, a total of 28 leaders resigned from the old MB and joined MB (Zamzam).

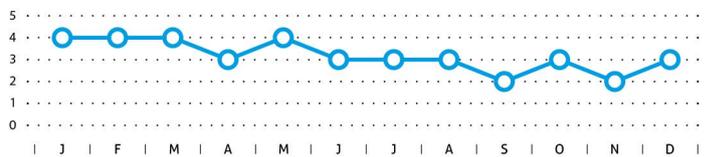
Furthermore, on September 6, the Jordanian Opposition Coalition announced its election platform. anm

LEBANON (SUNNI MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: Jabhat al-Nusra, Sunni militant groups vs. government, Hezbollah

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, subnational predominance



The limited war over subnational predominance between Sunni militant groups, most notably al-Qaida affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, on the one hand, and the government and Shiite militia Hezbollah, on the other, continued.

The conflict was affected by the Syrian civil war and IS' attempt to establish a base in Lebanon's northeastern border region [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. It mainly took place in the Beqaa governorate, specifically in and around the cities of Arsal, Baalbek, and Ras Baalbek, but also spread to Tripoli, Northern governorate. Since the 08/02/14 attack by ISIS and al-Nusra in Arsal, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) maintained its hold on Arsal and continued to execute its security plan in the Beqaa Valley, which

included a heightening of security measures and widespread raids and arrests.

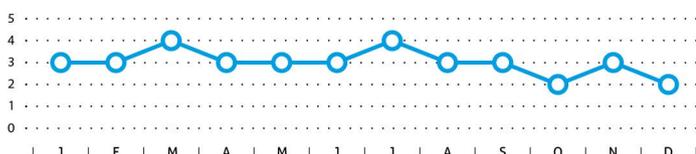
Between January and June, the LAF and Hezbollah gained control of multiple militant's positions in the proximity of the border with Syria, which were important for entering Lebanon. On January 1, the army attacked militant positions to prevent them from advancing towards Arsal. On January 10, al-Nusra carried out a twin suicide bombing in Jabal Mohsen, a mostly Alawite neighborhood of Tripoli, killing nine people and wounding up to 40. In the following days, the army carried out raids in Arsal, the capital Beirut, as well as Tripoli and arrested at least four people allegedly involved in the bombings. On January 23, militants and army troops clashed near Ras Baalbek. Eight soldiers and at least 18 militants died during the fights, in which the army used heavy artillery and helicopter gunships to oust militant positions. In the beginning of May, Hezbollah started a military offensive together with the Syrian army against al-Nusra in the Syrian Qalamoun mountains. On May 5, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah threatened to attack al-Nusra in the Arsal area, claiming that the LAF was unable to address the threat. On June 2, al-Nusra attacked a Hezbollah checkpoint near Arsal and killed three Hezbollah fighters. The next day, Hezbollah captured 15 militant's positions around Arsal. At least eleven al-Nusra militants were killed in the fighting. On June 5, Nasrallah stated that Hezbollah had no intention to enter the mostly Sunni-inhabited Arsal. Military officials had previously warned Hezbollah of entering Arsal and thereby provoking open confrontation with the LAF. On July 30, the LAF struck militant strongholds in the outskirts of al-Qaa, Beqaa Governorate, with heavy artillery. Dozens were reportedly killed and wounded by the army's shelling. The army fired missiles at Arsal on October 19, targeting militants who had gathered there. At least eight people were killed and ten wounded, although it was not clear whether the casualties were civilians or militants. After months of negotiations brokered by Qatar, al-Nusra released 16 Lebanese security personnel as part of a prisoner exchange deal on December 1. The handover took place outside Arsal; Lebanese authorities released 13 prisoners in return. The day after, the army heavily shelled al-Nusra positions near Arsal, injuring several militants. On December 5, a suspected Islamist militant blew himself up during an army raid in the town of Deir Ammar close to Tripoli. He killed two civilians and wounded at least ten others, including four security personnel. LAF and Hezbollah killed at least nine al-Nusra militants, among them senior commander Abu Firas al-Jebbeh, in a joint operation near Arsal on December 9. ema, twt

LIBYA (INTER-TRIBAL)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Tibu vs. Awlad Suleiman tribe vs. Qaddadfa tribe vs. Tuareg vs. Zuwayya

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources between tribes in southern Libya continued. Among other issues, trafficking routes for illicit goods as well as fuel were contested.

In the course of the year, Tuareg and Tibu periodically clashed in the area of the southern towns of Awbari, Wadi al-Hayat district, and neighboring Sabha, located in the eponymous district. In confrontations, heavy weapons such as artillery and mortars were employed by armed tribal forces. For instance, Tibu forces stated to have attacked a Tuareg forces' camp in Awbari, killing around ten people on March 20, including one commander. Two days of confrontations reportedly left more than 25 dead on both sides. Between May 18 and 19, fighting between the two groups in Awbari resulted in the deaths of 17 and the injuries of at least 16 people.

Clashes between Tibu and Tuareg erupted on July 13 near the airport of the town of Sabha and resumed the next day after a short-term ceasefire. At least 40 people were killed and hundreds of families displaced before another truce was agreed upon on July 25. However, skirmishes continued and further negotiation attempts in September were accompanied by ceasefire violations. On December 23, Tibu and Tuareg representatives signed a peace agreement in Doha, Qatar. Nevertheless, clashes including rocket fire were reported the following night in Awbari, but without resulting in people killed or wounded. Reportedly, clashes in July between Tibu and the Qaddadfa and Awlad Suleiman tribes in Sabha left several people dead or injured.

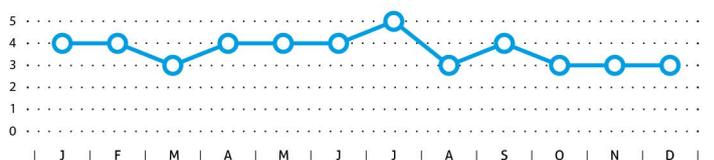
In the area of the town of Kufra, located in the eponymous southeastern district, armed Tibu repeatedly clashed with members of the Arab Zuwayya tribe. For example, two students belonging to the Zuwayya tribe were killed in a gunfight with Tibu students at the University of Kufra on May 6. The following two days, Tibu neighborhoods were reportedly shelled with mortar fire and two Tibus were shot dead. On May 11, Tibus and Zuways agreed on a ceasefire. Fighting between July 25 and August 6 resulted in the deaths of about 50 people and included the use of mortar and heavy artillery by both Tibu and Zuwayya fighters. The two groups clashed again on September 20, when Tibu fighters and alleged Sudanese mercenaries arriving in a convoy of at least 20 vehicles attacked Zuwayya forces. Around 30 attackers and eight Zuways were killed. sul

LIBYA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Operation Dignity forces, HoR, LNA, PFG vs. Libya Dawn alliance, ARSC, GNC, BRSC, DMSC

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between the House of Representatives (HoR) and its internationally recognized government, their Libya National Army (LNA) interlinked with the Operation Dignity coalition, and loyal militias and loosely affiliated forces, on

the one hand, and the General National Congress (GNC), supported by the Libya Dawn alliance, as well as Islamist groups based in Ajdabiya, Benghazi, and Derna, on the other, continued at war level. Whereas the GNC-backing Tripoli and Misrata militias exerted control of the capital Tripoli, HoR and the internationally recognized government were based in the eastern cities of Tobruk and al-Bayda.

In western Libya, the camp supporting the internationally recognized government, particularly the Zintan al-Qaqa and al-Sawaiq brigades as well as the Noble Tribes Army (NTA) from Wershefana region, clashed with the Misrata-led Libya Dawn alliance in the course of the year. Forces loyal to the al-Bayda-based government carried out air raids against Libya Dawn, targeting, for instance, Mitiga International Airport in Tripoli on five occasions in March, damaging the runway on March 19. This forced the GNC delegation to postpone their departure for their participation in the UN Dialogue in Morocco. Two days later, another airstrike killed Libya Dawn senior military commander Salah Burki in Tripoli. On March 23, an aerial bombardment hit the town of Tarhouna, Murqub district, allegedly killing eight civilians. The same day, a warplane belonging to Libya Dawn was shot down by pro-internationally recognized government forces, killing one pilot in the area of the town of Zintan, al-Jabal al-Gharbi district. Libya Dawn's less frequent airstrikes targeted the town's airport several times. Furthermore, ground forces engaged in fighting. For instance, in the first months of the year, al-Qaqa and al-Sawaiq brigades, together with the NTA, countered Libya Dawn's advance from al-Zawiya towards the western al-Watiya air base, al-Nuqat al-Khams district. Reportedly, tanks and Grad rocket launchers were employed in the confrontations. The area separating the coastal towns al-Zawiya and Tripoli from the Nafusa mountains, location of the town of Zintan, was the scene of major confrontations. For example, between March 18 and 19, in Bir al-Ghanam area, al-Zawiya district, clashes between Libya Dawn and Zintan brigades claimed the lives of nine Libya Dawn fighters, as reported by the alliance. In addition, according to a military source, 17 militiamen from the group loyal to the internationally recognized government were killed. Around 15 were injured in total. On March 20, the al-Bayda-based government announced an offensive to retake the capital. The following day, heavy weapons were used in the fighting around al-Aziziya, al-Jafara district. Fighting on April 3 in the same area left ten pro-official government forces dead and eight wounded as well as eight killed and four injured from Libya Dawn alliance. In clashes on April 17, four Libya Dawn and 14 pro-internationally recognized government fighters as well as a number of civilians were killed according to a military source from the al-Bayda-government camp. Heavy weapons were used in ground combats fought in Tripoli suburbs, particularly in Tajoura. Simultaneously, LNA conducted airstrikes against Libya Dawn. After peace agreements between pro-internationally recognized government forces and some Libya Dawn-aligned groups, brigades from Misrata and Tripoli formed the Steadfastness Front, rejecting non-GNC authorized negotiations. The number of confrontations in western Libya decreased considerably in the second half of the year. However, on October 27, after GNC-alliance blamed NTA for allegedly downing a helicopter near al-Maya, al-Zawiya district, killing at least 18 people including three Libya Dawn colonels, clashes between Libya Dawn and NTA erupted.

In central Libya, in the district of Sirte, the Ibrahim Jadhran-led Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG), siding with the internationally recognized government and supported by LNA, clashed with Libya Dawn forces. The latter had launched "Operation

Sunrise" in December 2014 in order to seize PFG-controlled oil ports such as Ras Lanuf and al-Sidr. On January 3, for instance, five Libya Dawn fighters were killed and around 50 injured, whereas PFG reported the deaths of three and the wounding of ten on its side. Warplanes loyal to al-Bayda-based government carried out airstrikes against Libya Dawn. PFG, again backed by internationally recognized government forces conducting airstrikes, stated six of its forces killed and others wounded during confrontations on February 3, while 24 Libya Dawn fighters reportedly died. On March 3, the GNC-aligned forces carried out air raids targeting the oil ports. In late March, Libya Dawn withdrew from its offensive.

In neighboring al-Wahat district, forces supporting the al-Bayda-based government fought against the Ajdabiya Revolutionaries' Shura Council (ARSC). On May 21, ARSC shelled two LNA checkpoints between the district's capital Ajdabiya and the town of Tobruk, wounding a number of soldiers. LNA supported by PFG forces repelled the attack. Reportedly, a US airstrike targeting al-Mourabitoun leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar killed seven Ansar al-Sharia members outside Ajdabiya on June 14. Subsequently, a group of militants, including ARSC members, tried to enter the town in order to treat their wounded. Five people were killed and 18 wounded on the side of armed locals, LNA, and PFG forces which engaged in a firefight with the group to prevent their access to the town. On August 1, LNA supported by other armed forces attacked ARSC in the industrial area, leaving at least eleven LNA troops injured. LNA warplanes bombarded ARSC positions. Clashes lasting for several days erupted in mid-December between armed locals, PFG, and LNA-aligned al-Tawhid al-Salafiya Brigade, on the one hand, and ARSC, on the other. LNA launched airstrikes on the industrial district of the town. The confrontations left at least 14 people dead and approx. 15 wounded. Some 75 families reportedly fled the area.

In the nearby city of Benghazi, the Operation Dignity coalition led by General Khalifa Haftar sought control of the town fighting against the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council (BRSC). Haftar, first self-declared head of his own Libyan National Army, was officially depicted by HoR as LNA's commander-in-chief in March. For instance, on January 3, six pro-internationally recognized government soldiers were allegedly killed by BRSC fighters, with LNA forces subsequently shelling al-Sabri area with tanks and other heavy weapons. In January, Muhammed al-Zahawi, founder of the BRSC group Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi, died, reportedly due to injuries of fighting against al-Bayda-based government forces last year. In total, clashes claimed the lives of at least 47 people and left about 230 injured in January. On February 5, confrontations left seven internationally recognized government forces dead and at least 20 wounded. At least two BRSC fighters were also killed. Two days later, BRSC reportedly killed at least seven and wounded around 40 Operation Dignity troops in further confrontations. Operation Dignity forces, which had employed tanks, missiles, and combat-helicopters in clashes, claimed the killing of some 30 BRSC members. An LNA tank battalion supported by armed residents fought BRSC on April 10, leaving ten Operation Dignity forces dead and more than 40 injured. Clashes with BRSC fighters on May 20 resulted in the death of at least nine soldiers and at least 30 were wounded. As in most cases, the number of fatalities among BRSC remained unknown. On June 19, five LNA soldiers were killed in a mortar attack. Two days later, five LNA soldiers died when they triggered a booby trap. On June 22, a suicide car bomb reportedly claimed by Ansar al-Sharia left four forces loyal to al-Bayda-based government dead

and 20 wounded in Nawagia, an area outside Benghazi disputed by LNA and BRSC. On September 19, Haftar announced "Operation Doom" as final phase in military efforts against Islamists in Benghazi. Coinciding with peace talks between GNC and HoR, the UN criticized the new military campaign as an attempt to undermine the peace process. The same day, Operation Dignity fighters attacked BRSC making use of artillery fire and airstrikes. Confrontations left six of the former dead and ten wounded. Clashes continued in various Benghazi neighborhoods around November 10, reportedly leaving more than 15 fighters on the side of the internationally recognized government dead. In the course of the year, Operation Dignity forces frequently carried out aerial bombardments on BRSC positions. Especially towards the end of the year, with IS getting more involved in Benghazi, it became less clear which of the groups was targeted by LNA and involved in confrontations.

In Tobruk, the prime minister of the internationally recognized government, Abdullah Thinni, stated that an assassination on him failed on May 26.

Further in eastern Libya, in the district of Derna, internationally recognized government forces were involved in confrontations with the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC), particularly in the first half of the year. On January 10, clashes in the area of Ain Mara left five LNA troops and at least the same number of DMSC members dead. More than a dozen were wounded on both sides. Confrontations between LNA and Islamist fighters in the same area on February 2 claimed the lives of at least ten LNA soldiers and left around 25 wounded. Between June 27 and 30, DMSC killed about 20 troops while a number of its forces also died in the course of confrontations around Ain Mara. LNA launched airstrikes on Derna before as well as after the expulsion of the IS by DMSC [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. For instance, on July 13, it bombarded DMSC headquarters, killing at least one and wounding four people.

Throughout the year, representatives of Libya's two rival parliaments frequently participated in UN-led peace talks in order to form a national unity government. A major issue was the future role of Haftar. Whereas GNC made a unity government conditional upon his replacement, HoR rejected this demand. In October, UNSMIL presented the agreement's final draft and announced Faiz al-Saraj Prime Minister of the national unity government. Neither of the parliaments officially voted on the agreement and GNC continued to demand modifications. Besides, GNC claimed UN envoy Bernardino León to be biased towards HoR, which was aggravated with the revelation of the envoy's post-UNSMIL job position in the United Arab Emirates, a supporter of HoR. Separate from UN-talks, GNC and HoR initiated a Libyan-Libyan Dialogue, signing a declaration of principles on December 5. HoR and GNC were both internally split over the UN initiative, while their presidents, Aqila Salah and Nuri Abu Sahmein, backed the Libyan-Libyan Dialogue and rejected the UN agreement after their meeting in Malta on December 15. However, individual MPs from both parliaments signed the UN-brokered deal two days later in Shirkhat, Morocco. ^{sul}

MOROCCO (POLISARIO / WESTERN SAHARA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: POLISARIO vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The violent conflict between the Popular Front of the Liberation of Saguia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) and the government over the secession of Western Sahara continued. Ahmed Boukhari, POLISARIO representative at the UN, stressed in September that the only solution to the conflict was "a free, just, and fair referendum" and frequently called upon the UN to initialize negotiations with Morocco. In contrast to the group's leadership, POLISARIO splinter group Khat Achahid favored Morocco's 2007 autonomy plan for Western Sahara. UN Envoy to the Western Sahara Christopher Ross stated in March that the establishment of a state led by POLISARIO had become impossible due to a lack of consensus within the group.

Throughout the year, demonstrators in different cities of Western Sahara repeatedly demanded independence from the Moroccan government and condemned the exploitation of natural resources. Frequently, government forces violently dispersed protests by Sahrawis. For instance, on January 8, Sahrawi women protested for independence in the city al-Aaiún, Laâyoune-Boujdour-Sakia El Hamra region. Police forces, both uniformed and in plainclothes, attacked them with sticks, causing injuries. On April 14, Sahrawis held a demonstration in al-Aaiún calling for an independent human rights monitoring system in Western Sahara. After police forces had attacked them with rocks, the protesters fled into the house of Aminatou Haidar, head of the Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders, where she was hosting Sahrawi rights activists and UN staff. Police forces attempted to enter the premises forcefully.

On April 28, the UNSC extended MINURSO in the disputed territory until 04/30/16. The resolution called on Morocco and POLISARIO to conduct negotiations for a "just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political situation."

On November 6, King of Morocco Mohammed VI visited al-Aaiún. POLISARIO Secretary-General Mohammed Abledaziz called the king's speech a direct "confrontation with the UN." Despite rumors about Abledaziz's resignation from POLISARIO's leadership, officials at Dakhla camp, Algeria, re-elected him for the twelfth consecutive time on December 23. Khat Achahid criticized the "closed election process" and called on all Sahrawis to reject the election results. ^{sgc}

OMAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology

The dispute over reforms in the political system between opposition groups and the government continued. On January 21, the police arrested opposition activist Saeed Jaddad for undermining the state's prestige, inciting protest, and spreading information that would cause public disturbance.

In two trials, on March 8 and 31, Jaddad was sentenced to four years in prison, a fine of OMR 2,700 and received a publication ban. On April 10, Jaddad was released on bail and again arrested on November 25 for disseminating material that, in view of the government, would undermine public order. Throughout the year, at least 14 opposition activists were arrested and held captive for periods ranging from a few hours to up to several months.

In February, a citizenship law was introduced allowing the state to revoke citizenship from members of groups supporting principles considered to harm the state's interests. On October 28, the government passed a law prohibiting any member of an elected council to publish news targeting the state's prestige or aiming to weaken confidence in it or to obstruct the implementation of state projects. son

SYRIA (INTER-OPPOSITION VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Jabhat al-Nusra vs. Ahrar al-Sham vs. Islamist groups vs. NC

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources

The conflict between the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NC) and their military wing Free Syrian Army (FSA), various moderate and Islamist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham over subnational predominance, ideology, and the orientation of the political system de-escalated to a violent crisis.

While the groups fought on several occasions jointly against the Syrian government or the so-called Islamic State, tensions among Islamist groups themselves and between Islamist and moderate groups persisted [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

In Aleppo governorate, Jabhat al-Nusra and the US-backed Harakat Hazm were engaged in heavy clashes between January and beginning of March, leading to the dissolution of the latter. Jabhat al-Nusra had previously accused the group of having shelled civilians and tortured prisoners. For instance, on January 29, clashes erupted between Jabhat al-Nusra and Harakat Hazm fighters, after the former had attacked headquarters of Harakat Hazm in Salman camp. Reportedly, the attack was a response to the kidnapping of two Jabhat al-Nusra fighters. On February 5, Jabhat al-Nusra attacked Harakat Hazm fighters near the village of Sheikh Ali. Jaish al-Mujahideen intervened and mediated the situation. Between February 27 and March 1, Jabhat al-Nusra attacked all Harakat Hazm headquarters in the vicinity of al-Atarib, whereby 80 fighters were killed, including 50 from Harakat Hazm. Moreover, Jabhat al-Nusra seized the group's weapons, namely ammunition, cannons, missiles, and tanks. As a result, the US-backed group dissolved and announced to join the Aleppo-based umbrella group al-Sham Front. On July 29, Jabhat al-Nusra captured seven members of the US-backed group Division 30, including three group leaders, in the town of Azaz. Two days later, Jabhat al-Nusra attacked the same group's military base in Aleppo, killing five and injuring 18. In a statement, Jabhat al-Nusra warned other opposition groups not to participate in what it deems "the American project in Syria." On September 21, the members of the US-trained Division 30 handed over their weapons to Jabhat al-Nusra immediately after entering Syria from Turkey.

In Idlib governorate, inter-opposition skirmishes mainly occurred between Ahrar al-Sham and Jabhat al-Nusra fighters. On January 1, residents of the town of Salqin continued to protest against the Jabhat al-Nusra-controlled courthouse and police in the town. Jabhat al-Nusra accused Ahrar al-Sham of instigating the protests. On January 23, Ahrar al-Sham-affiliated groups captured a Jabhat al-Nusra headquarters in the town of Shinan in southern Idlib. The local Jabhat al-

Nusra emir was taken hostage and weapons were seized. On January 31, in order to prevent the construction of a Jabhat al-Nusra checkpoint in Idlib, the local Ahrar al-Sham branch attacked the group. In subsequent clashes, one Ahrar al-Sham fighter was killed and several other injured. In following negotiations, Ahrar al-Sham agreed to remove their checkpoints in the area.

In Damascus and Rif Dimasqh governorate, clashes erupted mainly between local militias and Jabhat al-Nusra after residents repeatedly protested against the latter. For instance, on January 4, residents of the southern Damascus suburb held protests for the sixth day in a row, demanding that Jabhat al-Nusra leaves the area. Reportedly, Jabhat al-Nusra briefly withdrew from the village of Beit Sahem by mid-January. In the end of January, Jabhat al-Nusra announced to withdraw from the Sharia courts in Eastern Qalamoun. Moreover, they annulled all agreements with other groups in the area. In the beginning of February, the Damascus-based group Ajnad al-Sham accused Jabat al-Nusra of having killed two of their commanders in the city of Irbeen. On March 6, Jabhat al-Nusra shot at demonstrators protesting against the group's control of Beit Sahem. Subsequently, clashes erupted between Jabhat al-Nusra, on the one hand, and local militias supported by residents, on the other, in the villages of Babilla and Beit Sahem. After an agreement with the local groups was reached, most of the Jabhat al-Nusra fighters withdrew from Beit Sahem.

In Dara'a governorate, tensions between the Southern Front, a coalition of several FSA brigades, and Jabhat al-Nusra rose in the beginning of April. For instance, on April 13, Southern Front fighters issued a joint statement in which they disassociated themselves from Jabhat al-Nusra and rejected any military cooperation. Two weeks before they had launched a joint operation on the Nasib border crossing to Jordan. On October 20, fighters of al-Habib al-Mustafa Brigade, a member of Southern Front, clashed with Jabhat al-Nusra in the town of Tafas, whereby one person was killed and several others injured.

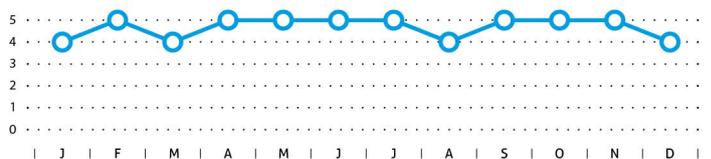
In Homs governorate, nine militant groups formed the Jaish al-Tawhid coalition in the beginning of May. On May 9, the coalition accused Liwa Usud al-Islam of having attacked a field hospital held by other militant groups in the town of Telbisa and having kidnapped injured Jabhat al-Nusra members. yal

SYRIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: NC, FSA, Jaish al-Fatah, Jaish al-Islam, al-Sham Front vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and the government of President Bashar al-Assad continued for the fifth consecutive year.

The opposition mainly consisted of the National Coalition for

Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NC), its military wing Free Syrian Army (FSA), and umbrella groups such as the Islamist Jaish al-Fatah, Jaish al-Islam, and the al-Sham Front. The government was supported on the ground by Iran and various Shiite militias from Syria and neighboring countries, most prominently the Lebanon-based Hezbollah. Moreover, Russia started to support the government with airstrikes on September 30. Additionally, the government, its allies, and opposition groups fought against the so-called Islamic State [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. According to a human rights organization, the death toll rose to approx. 250,000 since the beginning of the conflict in March 2011, reporting more than 50,000 fatalities in 2015. As of December, at least 4.3 million people sought refuge in neighboring countries and 6.6 million were internally displaced. On December 18, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 2254 outlining a road map for a ceasefire and a peace process.

The removal of Syria's chemical weapons, led by the joint OPCW-UN mission, continued [→ Syria – USA]. According to OPCW-UN, 98 percent of the production sites had been destroyed by October. However, the Syrian American Medical Society stated that between mid-March and June, ten people were killed and 530 sought medical treatment after having been attacked with barrel bombs containing chlorine in Idlib governorate. The government denied the allegations.

In Aleppo governorate, military and opposition forces clashed heavily throughout the year. The government mostly conducted airstrikes, while the opposition employed artillery, mortars, TOW rockets, and IEDs. Moreover, Aleppo city continued to be divided between government and opposition groups. Backed by Russian air force and Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as well as Iraqi Shiite militias, government forces regained control of some parts of southern Aleppo in the second half of the year. In February, Jabhat al-Nusra, Jaish al-Muhajiren wal-Ansar, and the al-Sham Front repeatedly fought with government forces over the villages of Rityan, Duweir al-Zeitoun, and Herdeetnin, north of Aleppo city. By February 24, reportedly 129 pro-government and 116 opposition fighters had been killed in the clashes. The opposition groups could recapture the villages, detaining 30 pro-government fighters. In mid-October, government forces supported by the Russian air force as well as Iranian and Iraqi Shiite militias started an offensive in southern Aleppo. The aim was to regain control of Aleppo city and to break the siege over the Shiite majority towns of Nubl and Zahraa, northern Aleppo. Approx. 1,000 Iraqi Shiite militia members from the Kataib Hezbollah and 2,000 IRGC fighters under Major General Qasem Soleimani were involved in the offensive. Subsequently, opposition groups reinforced their positions with hundreds of fighters from northern Aleppo and Aleppo city. Between October 16 and 26, the government recaptured 15 towns from opposition groups, leaving at least 40 fighters dead. According to the UN, 35,000 people were displaced due to the offensive. On December 12, government troops attacked the opposition north of Aleppo city with Russian air force carrying out at least 40 airstrikes, cutting off the opposition's major supply route to the governorate's capital.

In Homs governorate, the military and opposition fighters repeatedly clashed in Homs city, with the former controlling almost all neighborhoods. On December 2, both parties agreed on a conditional truce, permitting anti-government forces to leave safely. In the following days, hundreds of people were evacuated from al-Waer neighborhood of Homs city. Mainly Jabhat al-Nusra fighters left al-Waer, whereas the majority of moderate opposition militants stayed. On December 16, a twin bomb attack at a government-controlled Shiite neigh-

borhood in Homs city left 16 people dead.

Starting in November 2014, government forces intensified airstrikes on cities such as Douma and towns in Eastern Ghouta, Rif Dimasq governorate. In response, between the end of January and the beginning of February, Jaish al-Islam led an offensive from its strongholds in Eastern Ghouta, attacking the capital Damascus. In the first three months of the year, over 3,000 people were evacuated from Eastern Ghouta. On September 9, Jaish al-Islam started an offensive against government artillery battalions in Tell Kurdi, seizing the area within one day. The army had previously attacked opposition-stronghold Douma from its positions in Tell Kurdi. On December 25, the head of Jaish al-Islam, Zahran Alloush, was killed along with several other leaders during a government airstrike east of Damascus.

In the first half of the year, opposition groups advanced in Hama, Idlib, and Latakia governorates, gaining control of areas along the Sahl al-Ghab plain, which separates the central governorates from the coastal governorate Latakia – a government stronghold. Syrian and Russian warplanes increasingly conducted airstrikes in the area in an attempt to prevent a further advance of the groups towards to coastal region.

The government lost control over large areas in Idlib after an opposition alliance had launched an offensive in the beginning of the year. For instance, on February 28, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and Jund al-Aqsa seized the governorate's capital Idlib after four days of fighting. On March 25, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Jund al-Aqsa, and several other groups formally established the umbrella group Jaish al-Fatah. On May 5, Jaish al-Fatah seized Idlib's last major military base, forcing the army to withdraw. One month later, the alliance took control over government checkpoints on the Ariha-Latakia highway, killing dozens of soldiers and taking 30 hostages. By September, Jaish al-Fatah had captured most of Idlib. Syrian and Russian warplanes continued to conduct airstrikes on opposition-held areas of the governorate.

In Hama governorate, Jaish al-Fatah repeatedly led attacks against government forces, attempting to fully seize the Sahl al-Ghab plains. At the end of April, more than 100 fighters from both sides were killed during three days of clashes. On July 27, hundreds of Jaish al-Fatah fighters joined the offensive against government forces in Sahl al-Ghab plains, using artillery, rocket launchers, and self-made missiles. The group seized several hills and advanced towards a military camp. On August 18, government forces recaptured some parts of the area after heavy shelling, leaving at least six Jaish al-Fatah fighters dead. Around 30 villages were severely damaged during clashes, forcing residents to flee towards the Turkish border.

The access to Sahl al-Ghab increasingly enabled Jaish al-Fatah to re-enter Latakia and to attack targets from the al-Nabi Younis hill in the Jabal al-Akrad mountains. In the beginning of March, the army recaptured the village of Dorin in Jabal al-Akrad. One week later, a large-scale Jaish al-Fatah attack on the village left 50 killed from both sides. On August 13, Jaish al-Fatah conducted a rocket attack on Latakia city, killing two civilians and wounding 14. Due to intensified Russian airstrikes against Jaish al-Fatah positions in Latakia, the militants partly retreated and reinforced troops in Hama. Between mid-October and the end of December, military and Jaish al-Fatah fighters were involved in heavy clashes over the village of Salma, killing hundreds from both sides and destroying thousands of military vehicles. On October 20, opposition fighters attacked Russian military personnel with mortar shells in al-Nabi Younis, killing three and wounding 15. On December 12, government forces regained the al-

Nabi Younis hilltop, killing several militants. In subsequent clashes, opposition fighters regained the hill within three days.

In the southern governorates Dara'a and Quneitra, the government reinforced their troops in an attempt to repel opposition fighters from the area. Reportedly, Iranian commanders directed the government offensive in southern Syria. In the north of Dara'a, government forces deployed an additional 40 tanks on February 9. After days of clashes, the Lebanese Hezbollah and IRGC-aligned Shiite militias seized the opposition-held towns of Deir al-Adas, Deir Makr, and al-Danajah. Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, and several other groups announced an offensive against government forces on February 18 to regain areas in northern Dara'a. On March 25, reportedly 10,000 opposition fighters attacked government forces from three sides in the historic town of Bosra al-Sham close to the Jordanian border, killing 20. The government withdrew after four days of heavy clashes. In the following months, government forces conducted airstrikes on opposition-held areas. For instance, on September 17, government airstrikes on the towns of Bosra al-Sham, Alma, al-Hrak, and al-Gharya left 17 people dead.

Violence continued to affect neighboring countries, causing foreign casualties. For instance, on January 10, Jabhat al-Nusra claimed responsibility for a double suicide bombing in Tripoli, Lebanon, killing nine and wounding 30 [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. In mid-January, the Israeli air force conducted an airstrike in Quneitra, killing five Lebanese Hezbollah members [→ Syria – Israel]. On November 24, the Turkish military shot down a Russian warplane along the Turkey-Syria border with an air-to-air missile, killing two Russian pilots [→ Syria – Turkey]. yal

SYRIA – ISRAEL

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: Syria vs. Israel

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The violent conflict over territory, international power, and resources between Syria and Israel continued. The main conflict issues concerned the status of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and the water resources situated in the disputed area. On January 18, the Israeli Air Force killed at least twelve people in the city of Quneitra, Quneitra Governorate, by shooting out of a helicopter. The named governorate borders the disputed Golan Heights. UNDOF peacekeepers, stationed at the Golan Heights to monitor the 1974 ceasefire agreement between Israel and Syria, reported drones coming from the Israeli side before and after the air strike. On January 25, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad accused Israel of giving aid to Syrian rebels. Three days later, rockets hit the Israeli side. Israel in turn conducted air strikes on two military bases in Quneitra the next day. On March 18, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon criticized the Syrian government for violating the 1974 agreement and cautioned that the ongoing use of heavy weapons would jeopardize the ceasefire. On April 24, UNDOF declared to reinforce its presence in the buffer zone between Syria and Israel in response to 87 reported artillery fire incidents in the week before the declaration. In an airstrike the day after the declaration, the IDF killed at least three armed men who had tried to plant an IED on the Syrian-Israeli border. On April 30, the IDF reportedly started to aug-

ment its forces in the Golan Heights due to increasing activities of Islamic militants [→ Syria (opposition)].

On June 7, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanded from the international community to acknowledge Israel's 1981 annexation of the Golan Heights. On June 16, rebels killed seven inhabitants of the Druze village Khadr, Quneitra Governorate. After Israel had provided humanitarian aid to the Druze village, Netanyahu declared Israel's commitment in order to prevent a massacre of refugees at the Syrian-Israeli border. The following day, the IDF and the Israeli police declared a closed military zone in the north-eastern part of the Golan Heights. Four days later, Syria accused Israel of providing Jabhat al-Nusra militants with medical treatment. Druze attacked an Israeli military ambulance on June 22, leaving one treated Syrian dead. A similar incident occurred a week later when Druze attacked two ambulances, killing one person. On June 30, the UNSC unanimously adopted a resolution to continue the 750-strong UNDOF mission until the end of the year. On July 27, the Israeli army declared that only non-combatants would be allowed to enter Israel for receiving medical treatment.

On August 21, four rockets fired from Syrian territory killed twelve people and left several injured. In response, the IDF struck 14 targets in Syria, leaving at least five people dead and at least seven injured. On October 13, the IDF targeted two Syrian army posts after two rockets fired from Syrian territory had hit the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. On November 11, Israeli aircrafts struck targets near the international airport situated close to the Syrian capital Damascus.

kwi

SYRIA – TURKEY

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1946

Conflict parties: Syria vs. Turkey

Conflict items: territory, international power

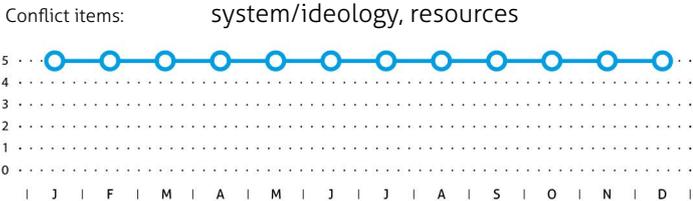
The violent crisis between Syria and Turkey over international power and the status of the Turkish Hatay Province, exacerbated by spillover effects from the Syrian civil war, continued [→ Syria (opposition)]. Turkey and Syria continued to exert diplomatic pressure on each other throughout the year. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan publicly promoted the idea of a safe and no-fly zone in northern Syria multiple times. On February 6, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu stated that Syrian opposition groups trained and equipped by a joint US-Turkish program would fight the troops of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. On February 22, Turkish troops transferred the tomb of Suleyman Shah and its guards in an overnight raid from the Turkish exclave close to Sarrin, Aleppo Governorate, to a new location near Kobane, Aleppo. The Syrian government condemned the operation as "flagrant aggression." On March 25, a Scud rocket launched by Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) damaged a Turkish military base in Hatay Province. The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) responded by firing across the border at a Syrian artillery unit using two howitzers. On April 26, Turkey sent two fighter jets to intercept a Syrian warplane which almost entered Turkish air space. The training program for Syrian opposition forces led by the USA and Turkey started on May 9. One week later, Turkish jets downed a Syrian drone which had crossed the border into Turkish airspace. On May 19, Turkey increased the number of jets patrolling the border to Syria to ten. The Syrian government sent a note to the UNSC on June 5 asking to force the

Turkish government to control its borders and stop supporting terrorist organizations. Turkey reinforced its border troops with heavy weaponry and armored vehicles in the province of Kilis, Aleppo, on June 30. On the same day, Davutoglu declared that there were no plans for any invasion into Syria. Despite Turkish interests in keeping the Patriot missile systems in the border region deployed, German and US officials announced the withdrawal of its missile batteries from Turkey in mid-August. On October 10, a bomb exploded at a peace rally in Ankara and left at least 102 civilians dead. President Erdogan blamed the Islamic State (IS), the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and Syria's military intelligence Mukhabarat for the attack. On December 27, German newspapers reported that German AWACS planes would be moved to the province of Konya to support Turkey. Three days later, a Turkish official announced that Syrian citizens would need visa permits for entering Turkey as of 01/08/2016. *aje*

SYRIA, IRAQ ET AL. (IS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: IS, Sunni tribes vs. Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, France, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, al-Houthis, GNC, PFG, Hezbollah, Taliban, KRG, Shiite militias, Sunni tribesmen, YPG, Jabhat al-Nusra, FSA, al-Sham Front, US-led coalition



INTRODUCTION

The war over the orientation of international system and the control of resources between the so-called Islamic State (IS), on the one hand, and Syria and Iraq as well as other governments and several militant groups, on the other, continued. Following the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, several militant groups, notably the so-called al-Zarqawi network, started to fight US forces and their allies. In 2004, the network led by Jordanian Salafi Jihadist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden and renamed itself "al-Qaeda in Iraq". Following the 2006 killing of al-Zarqawi by the US, the group declared itself "Islamic State in Iraq" (ISI). In 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took over the leadership of the group. In 2011, al-Baghdadi and other al-Qaeda leaders sent Abu Mohammad al-Golani to Syria in order to found an al-Qaeda offshoot, the Jabhat al-Nusra, to fight the Syrian government [→Syria (opposition)]. After a failed merger of ISI and Jabhat al-Nusra under the name of "Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria" (ISIS) in April 2013, ISI continued to operate as ISIS. After having severed all ties with al-Qaeda in February 2014 and after gaining control over large parts of Syria and Iraq, al-Baghdadi declared himself "Caliph" of an "Islamic State" (IS) on 06/29/14. In the territory under its control, IS implemented sharia law and set up state-alike administration and social services. Following large-scale mobilization via social media, many for-

eign fighters from over a hundred countries joined the group. Following the proclamation of the caliphate, IS expanded its operations to Afghanistan, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria in 2014, followed by Yemen, Tunisia, and Turkey in 2015. Apart from the core IS organization, various militant groups in the Middle East and Maghreb and other parts of the world pledged allegiance to IS, including Boko Haram, the Caucasus Emirate, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as well as Taliban splinter groups, Abu Sayyaf, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters [→ Nigeria (Boko Haram); Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus); Afghanistan (Taliban et al.); Tajikistan (Islamist militant groups); Philippines (Abu Sayyaf); Philippines (BIFF, BIFM – MILF, government)]. In order to halt the advances of IS, a US-led coalition launched airstrikes against the group in Iraq in August 2014, expanding operations to Syria one month later under the name "Operation Inherent Resolve". Furthermore, IS claimed responsibility for attacks in Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, France, Kuwait, and the US in 2015. Following the attacks in Paris on November 13, which left 130 people dead, France intensified its involvement in the US-led coalition against IS. *ska*

SYRIA

In Syria, IS had lost previously gained territory in the northern parts of Aleppo, ar-Raqqqa, and al-Hasakah governorates. Additionally, the group retreated from southern Damascus towards the end of the year. On January 6, the US approved a military mission to train and equip Syrian opposition forces fighting IS [→ Syria (opposition)]. On September 30, Russia started airstrikes in support of the Syrian government. However, the US claimed that most of the Russian airstrikes targeted moderate opposition groups. Most of Deir ez-Zor governorate remained under IS control after the militants had repelled other opposition groups in July 2014. Moreover, IS made large gains in Homs governorate. The US-led airstrikes continued throughout the year, mostly targeting IS sites in Aleppo and al-Hasakah governorates and, to a lesser extent, in ar-Raqqqa, Deir ez-Zor, and Idlib governorates.

In Aleppo governorate, IS engaged in fights with government forces, the Kurdish People's Defense Units (YPG), and the al-Sham Front, an umbrella group of several Aleppo-based militias. In the beginning of February, IS partially withdrew from northern Aleppo to ar-Raqqqa, Deir ez-Zor, and al-Hasakah. IS and al-Sham Front recurrently clashed over strategic cities and surrounding areas mainly in the north of Aleppo city using suicide bombers, mortars, artillery, and tanks. For instance, on August 27, al-Sham Front attacked IS fighters, after IS had attempted to reach Aleppo city with several armored vehicles and artillery. Six al-Sham fighters and dozens of IS fighters were killed during the clashes. On October 23, IS attacked a major government checkpoint on the Khanaser-Ithriya highway, the only supply route to government-held areas in Aleppo city, with two car bombs. Two days later, IS seized parts of the route and checkpoints thereon. Dozens of fighters were killed on both sides. Government forces re-captured the area on November 4. Throughout the year, the military repeatedly attempted to break the IS siege on the Kuwairi military airport in eastern Aleppo where reportedly 1,000 soldiers were trapped. On November 10, large-scale government airstrikes against IS positions enabled dozens of soldiers to enter the air base. In total, 55 IS fighters, 18 soldiers, and 19 Hezbollah fighters were killed during the fighting. On January 26, YPG supported by airstrikes from the US-led coalition regained areas in the eastern part of Kobane,

Aleppo, from IS. The four-month-long siege of Kobane left more than 1,600 dead, including many foreign fighters, and forced tens of thousands of people to flee. On January 28, YPG claimed they had repelled IS from the city. Subsequently, a large number of refugees returned from Turkey. Fighting continued in the villages southwest and southeast to Kobane. In February, an YPG spokesperson stated that the group had reinforced troops in the Kurdish areas with 50,000 fighters. The group continued to recapture surrounding territory. By February 9, YPG had taken more than 120 villages. On June 16, YPG took control of the border town Tell Abyad, cutting a supply line from Turkey to IS' proclaimed capital. On July 1, YPG backed by US airstrikes regained full control of Tell Abyad, resulting in the deaths of four IS fighters. Due to the fighting, 26,000 people fled to Turkey. On July 27, YPG captured the town of Sarrin from IS, cutting off the supply lines along highway M4 between Aleppo and ar-Raqqa.

IS was also active in al-Hasakah governorate and the eponymous city. There, YPG launched a major military offensive on February 25, severing an IS supply line near the Iraqi border. Backed up by US airstrikes, the Kurdish fighters seized 70 villages in the governorate. In total, 132 people were killed during the offensive. Furthermore, IS abducted at least 90 Assyrian Christians and forced hundreds to flee. On February 26, US airstrikes targeted IS fighters near the town of Tell Tamr, where IS had seized ten Assyrian villages. At least 35 IS fighters as well as 25 YPG members and Christian militias were killed in the fight for the villages. Around 3,000 people were displaced. The next day, YPG announced the capture of Tell Hamis. During the offensive, YPG backed by the US-led coalition took at least 103 villages, leaving 175 IS members dead. IS had previously raided Assyrian Christian villages, abducting at least 200 people. On April 11, IS launched an attack against YPG in the towns of Tell Tamr and Tell Hamis. The fighting left at least 41 IS and ten YPG fighters dead. By mid-July, YPG roughly controlled about two-thirds of al-Hasakah city, with the remainder split between the Syrian government and IS. On September 14, two car bombs targeting Kurdish fighters and government forces in different areas exploded in al-Hasakah, leaving at least 26 dead and dozens wounded. On October 12, YPG, Arab militias and Assyrian fighters jointly announced the creation of the Democratic Forces of Syria (DFS) consisting of approx. 40,000 fighters. One month later, DFS captured the town of al-Houl after a two-week-long offensive. On December 11, IS attacked YPG-held Tell Tamr with three suicide car bombs, leaving 60 civilians dead. After six weeks of fighting, the DFS advanced towards Tishreen Dam on December 24, seizing several villages such as Sahareej, Obeidat, and al-Manseeh.

In Deir ez-Zor governorate, government forces conducted airstrikes on IS-held areas, whereas IS attacked the military airport and western neighborhoods of Deir ez-Zor city, the last remaining government-controlled areas. IS employed suicide vehicles, artillery, and mortars. For instance, between May 22 and 25, the government targeted IS-held areas in eastern Deir ez-Zor with barrel bombs, leaving over 40 civilians dead. Meanwhile, IS executed 34 civilians they accused of apostasy and collaboration with the government. On September 10, IS seized a small base close to the military airport after sending two suicide vehicles. In subsequent clashes, 30 IS fighters and 20 government forces were killed.

In Homs governorate, clashes between IS and government forces intensified in mid-May after IS had advanced towards the ancient city of Palmyra. After days of fighting, IS seized the city on May 20. At least 123 soldiers, 115 IS fighters, and 57 civilians were killed during the fights. In the follow-

ing months, IS destroyed large parts of the heritage sites at Palmyra.

In Damascus governorate, IS repeatedly clashed with other armed groups in the refugee camp Yarmouk which hosted 18,000 Palestinians. On March 31, the Palestinian militant group Aknaf Bait al-Maqdis called for the arrest of all IS fighters in Yarmouk after the latter had allegedly assassinated the leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Subsequently, IS staged attacks on the group in Yarmouk camp starting on April 1, whereby several al-Maqdis fighters were killed or kidnapped. Supported by Jabhat al-Nusra fighters, IS had seized most of Yarmouk district by April 4. Meanwhile, the army conducted airstrikes on the camp.

Moreover, throughout the year, government forces clashed with IS in al-Qadam district, south of Damascus. For instance, on December 10, IS attacked two government headquarters, killing 20 soldiers and forcing the military to withdraw. In late December, IS evacuated its southern Damascus stronghold after the group had reached an agreement with the government to retreat to ar-Raqqa. yal, kwi

IRAQ

In January, IS held about a third of the territory of Iraq, including parts of the governorates of al-Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Salahuddin. The group, supported by several Sunni tribes, fought against the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), Peshmerga forces, and the Iraqi government, supported by Shiite militias, Sunni tribesmen, Iran, and the US-led coalition. According to the UN, the violence had caused 12,740 fatalities, including 7,515 civilians, by the end of the year and 3,962,142 IDPs by the end of June.

Al-Anbar, Iraq's geographically largest governorate and predominantly populated by Sunnis, was largely controlled by IS. On February 27, IS militants seized a strategic bridge between the cities of al-Baghdadi and al-Haditha, killing 20 soldiers of the Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF). In early April, IS militants executed 300 members of Sunni tribes in al-Anbar. In reaction, government forces supported by the Sunni fighters launched an offensive on IS-held Al-Karmah on April 14. Twelve days later, Iraqi forces expelled IS from parts of the city. At least 650 IS militants were killed. On May 14, ten IS suicide bombers destroyed the main gate to the provincial capital of Ramadi. During the following three days, IS seized the entire city despite airstrikes carried out by the US-led coalition. At least 500 people were killed and the IAF fled the city. On December 23, the IAF launched an offensive to retake Ramadi. Six days later, the army controlled the city center, while a few hundred IS militants remained in the eastern parts of the town. The conflict caused at least 1,177 civilian fatalities and 3,526 injured in al-Anbar.

Throughout the year, IS fighters carried out daily bomb attacks in the capital Baghdad, Baghdad governorate, concentrating on predominantly Shia parts of town such as Sadr City. Over the course of the year, the attacks resulted in approx. 3,630 civilian fatalities and 9,270 injured. Seven bomb blasts in or nearby the city on February 25 left 37 people dead and dozens injured. A refrigerator truck packed with explosives planted by IS detonated at a food market in Sadr City on August 13. At least 76 people were killed and at least 212 injured.

IAF and allies expelled IS from the predominantly Shiite populated Diyala Governorate bordering Iran. Throughout the year, the group continued to carry out several suicide bombings in Diyala. On January 23, IAF attacked several villages near the city of Muqadiyah, the only remaining inhabited area of the governorate controlled by IS. After three days of

fighting, the military had seized control of the area. A total of 58 pro-government forces and approx. 50 IS militants were killed and 248 injured. On July 17, an IS suicide bomber killed 120 people and injured 130 on a market in the predominantly Shia town Khan Bani Saad during Eid al-Fitr celebrations. It was one of the deadliest single attacks in the country in the last ten years. Throughout the year, at least 948 civilians were killed and 1,183 injured in Diyala.

IS maintained control of large parts of Nineveh Governorate, at the border to Syria. On January 10, a total of 30 Peshmerga fighters were killed when they halted an IS attempt to retake the city of Gwerim. Eleven days later, about 5,000 Peshmerga captured villages near Mosul also disrupting several supply routes. During the battles, 200 IS militants were killed. On January 22, 16 airstrikes by the US-led coalition destroyed IS infrastructure and equipment in and around Mosul. IS released a video on February 3 showing its members burning a Jordanian jet pilot to death in early January. In reaction, Jordan's military carried out airstrikes on February 4 in Mosul, killing 55 IS militants among them an IS commander known as "Prince of Nineveh". The incidents were accompanied by mass demonstrations against IS in Jordan's capital Amman. Coalition airstrikes on Mosul carried out on March 18 reportedly injured al-Baghdadi. The recapture of Mosul by 30,000 IAF troops was postponed several times. On November 13, Peshmerga retook the town of Sinjar from IS. The Kurdish fighters were supported by Yazidi militias and fighters from the Syrian-Kurdish YPG. With the fall of Sinjar, IS lost control over Highway 47, a main supply route between ar-Raqqa and Mosul. Throughout the year, at least 935 civilians were killed and 304 injured in Mosul governorate.

Control of the central Iraqi Salahuddin governorate, hosting the city of Tikrit and the country's biggest oil refinery in the town of Baiji, was heavily contested. On March 3, IAF took control of oil fields in eastern Tikrit, marking the start of the city's recapture. At least 20,000 soldiers were deployed, backed by Sunni tribes as well as Shiite militias and advised by Iranian Quds forces. Six days later, security forces recaptured the city of al-Alam, cutting off IS' last communication line to its other territories. From March 11 to 16, they pushed into Tikrit, firing about 200 mortar shells. On March 25, the US-led coalition carried out 17 airstrikes on Tikrit, assisting the security forces advance into the city. On April 2, IAF recaptured the city center after three days of fighting. Shiite militias withdrew from Tikrit after they had been accused of looting and vandalizing in the Sunni city, meeting a condition by the US that only the Iraqi government was to be in charge of the troops in Tikrit for further airstrikes [→Iraq (Shiite militant groups)]. Fighting between IAF and the remaining IS militants in Tikrit lasted until April 17. At least 1,000 security forces and allied fighters as well as over 800 IS militants were killed during the recapture. Between April 11 and June 24, IS controlled parts of the Baiji Oil Refinery, but was increasingly engaged in fighting by Shiite militias from July onwards. On October 14, IAF supported by Shiite militias launched a large-scale offensive to retake the city and the oil refinery. Approx. 50 pro-government forces and at least 1,920 IS militants were killed in the offensive. Nine days later, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared Baiji free of IS militants. Throughout the year, at least 541 civilians were killed and 480 injured in Salahuddin.

In Kirkuk Governorate, IS and Peshmerga controlled different areas, with the latter holding the city of Kirkuk and most of the surrounding oil fields. On January 27, Peshmerga, supported by coalition airstrikes, repelled an IS attack on Kirkuk and regained control of areas west of the city in the following

days. Throughout the year, at least 203 civilians were killed and 106 injured. ska

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, violence involving IS concentrated in Nangarhar province in the East and Farah province in the West. The group fought against Afghan and US government forces as well as the Taliban. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) included the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan Local Police (ALP). The Afghan IS offshoot reportedly recruited large numbers of former Taliban fighters from both Afghanistan and Pakistan [→Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)].

On January 16, Gen. John Campbell, commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, stated that IS had begun recruiting in the country. According to local officials, IS militants, led by two former Taliban members, had set up a training facility in the Khak-i-Safaid district, Farah. On January 26, IS spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani announced the group's expansion to Khorasan, referring to a historical region comprising parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also declared Hafez Saeed Khan the leader of IS in this region, with former Taliban commander Mullah Abdul Rauf as his deputy. Two days later, the Taliban announced that it had captured 45 IS members in Kajaki district, Helmand province, among them Rauf. On February 9, US forces killed Rauf and two others in a drone strike in Kajaki, Helmand.

A suicide attack on the Kabul Bank in Jalalabad, Nangarhar, on April 18 killed at least 33 people and injured over 140. While the local IS outfit claimed responsibility for the attack, high-ranking IS member Abdul Rahim Muslim Dost later denied IS involvement. In late May, Taliban members captured Maulvi Abbas, one of its former leaders who had defected to IS. Subsequent clashes between IS and Taliban in Batikot, Nangarhar, on May 26 left two IS and three Taliban fighters dead. One day later, Taliban expelled IS militants from two villages in Anar Dara district, western Farah. Reportedly, numerous militants on both sides were killed and about 40 families fled their homes.

On May 30, the ANA killed at least 16 IS and Taliban militants in an airstrike in Anar Dara. The next day, Taliban militants attacked IS positions in the same area. The clashes left several militants on both sides dead and led to the withdrawal of some IS fighters. Others surrendered to the Taliban.

On June 16, the Taliban addressed IS leader al-Baghdadi in an open letter, urging him to stop interference in Afghanistan and to adopt formal ways of communication between the two groups in order to prevent misunderstandings. The group threatened to react harshly if IS activities in Afghanistan continued. On June 22, lawmakers in the Wolesi Jirga urged the government to counter the influence of IS, warning of a further deterioration of the security situation. Six days later, First Deputy Chief Executive Officer Deputy Mohammad Khan officially acknowledged IS presence in the country and called for the surrender of both IS and Taliban. In Nangarhar region, MP Hazrat Ali urged the residents to revolt against IS and criticized the lack of government response.

At the beginning of July, ANSF intensified its air and ground operations in the eastern regions. Airstrikes killed up to 98 Taliban and IS militants. At least eight civilians died, several schools were closed, and more than 200 families displaced due to heavy inter-militant fighting in Nangarhar on July 4. On July 10, the Afghan National Directorate of Security announced the killing of IS leader Khan in an US airstrike. IS denied his death, but admitted the killing of two other high-ranking members.

On July 28, security forces killed eight IS fighters in a raid in

Jalalabad, among them the two commanders Ghulam Farooq and Mir Wais. The Taliban and IS engaged in heavy fighting in Haska Mina district, Nangahar, on August 5, leaving at least ten dead and four wounded. A US drone strike targeting the battle area killed at least 60 fighters of both groups. In September, Achin district chief Hajji Ghalib Mujahid claimed that IS controlled several towns in the region and operated three prisons where up to 19 soldiers and close to 130 religious scholars were held. While a UN report in September indicated that IS was active in 25 of the 34 Afghan provinces, the government stressed that IS fighters were only present in Helmand and Nangarhar.

Inter-militant fighting in Nangarhar's Pachiragam district on September 4 left at least 23 militants dead. On September 27, ANA forces attacked IS militants in the Achin district, Nangahar, after IS fighters had attacked several checkpoints in the region. The fights lasted for over four days and led to approx. 100 fatalities on the side of the militants, while there was no valid information about ANA deaths. When IS militants fired a rocket on a mosque in Achin district on October 30, six individuals were killed and four wounded. Clashes between Taliban and IS militants in Zabul province between November 6 and 9 resulted in up to 100 fatalities on the side of the combatants and left at least 21 civilians dead. Numerous IS fighters defected or were captured by the Taliban. Until November, up to 15,000 families fled their homes in Nangarhar province due to IS attacks. On December 4, clashes between IS and security forces in Achin district resulted in the deaths of at least 22 militants and two soldiers. During the following two days, the ANSF carried out several airstrikes in the area, killing at least 49 IS fighters.

On December 16, the government demanded joint operations with NATO and US forces against IS. Throughout December, Taliban and IS militants repeatedly clashed in Nangarhar province, leaving at least 31 militants dead and more than 36 wounded. Another wave of government airstrikes between December 27 and 28 killed at least 60 IS fighters in Achin district, while at least 38 militants were killed in similar operations in Chaparhar district, Nangarhar, the next day. twt, chf

ALGERIA

In addition to newly-formed Jund al-Khilafa in Algeria that had pledged allegiance to IS on 09/14/14, Ansar al-Khilafa Battailon, al-Ghuraba Brigade, and al-Ansar Battallion as well as Humat al-Daawa al-Salafiya, all four comprising former AQIM fighters, pledged allegiance to IS in May, July and September. In April and May, the army conducted several large-scale military operations directed against Jund al-Khilafa in Bourmerdés and Bouira Province, leaving a total of at least 26 militants dead. In early June, after IS militants had taken control over areas in western Libya, the Algerian army raised its state of alert along its eastern border. In reaction to the attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia, on June 26, the Algerian army began to deploy 1,200 troops to its northeastern border provinces. On July 14, two Jund al-Khilafa emirs declared war on Algeria. ala

EGYPT

In Egypt, the IS branch Wilayat Sinai fought against the government, which was supported by Bedouin tribes [→ Egypt (Bedouin activists)]. Wilayat Sinai evolved from the Islamist militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis which had pledged allegiance to IS on 11/10/14 [→ Egypt (Islamist groups)]. Throughout the year, violence carried out by Egyptian security forces and members of IS Wilayat Sinai left at least 259 dead and more than 308 injured. Another 224 people were

killed in the downing of a passenger jet.

North Sinai saw repeated clashes, suicide attacks, and abductions. For instance, on January 13, IS Wilayat Sinai abducted and killed one Egyptian police officer near Rafah city, North Sinai. The day after, the police killed 17 suspected members of the group. On February 6, Egyptian security forces killed at least 27 IS Wilayat Sinai members in North Sinai. On March 10, an IS Wilayat Sinai fighter attacked a state security building in al-Arish, North Sinai, with a truck packed with explosives. One person died and more than 30 people were injured. On April 16, members of IS Wilayat Sinai targeted a police station in the same town with a car bomb, killing six and injuring at least 40. In response to the roadside bombing, the Egyptian military shot dead three suspected militants. One month later, members of IS Wilayat Sinai shot dead four civilians and injured one on the al-Arish/Rafah road. On September 16 and 19, members of IS Wilayat Sinai killed one police officer and one police general in al-Arish. On November 4, an IS Wilayat Sinai suicide bomber killed five and injured 10 by driving his car into a police facility in al-Arish.

Furthermore, IS Wilayat Sinai carried out several simultaneous large-scale attacks. On April 2, the group attacked five security checkpoints on the al-Arish/Rafah road, killing 17 and leaving at least 29 injured. Responding to the attacks, the military shot dead 15 militants in an operation on the same day. On July 1, IS Wilayat Sinai fighters conducted 15 attacks in the towns of al-Arish and Sheikh Zuweid, North Sinai, killing at least 64 and leaving dozens injured.

On October 31, a passenger jet operated by Russian carrier Metrojet, en route from Sharm el-Sheikh, Sinai Province, to St. Petersburg, Russia, crashed in the Sinai, costing the lives of all passengers and crew, 224 in total. On November 18, IS claimed to be responsible for downing the jet.

However, attacks by IS Wilayat Sinai were not limited to Sinai Peninsula. On July 11, the group conducted a car bomb attack on the Italian consulate in the capital Cairo, killing one and injuring ten. Five days later, IS Wilayat Sinai fired a missile from Rafah on an Egyptian naval vessel in the waters north of Rafah, Governorate of Gaza, Gaza Strip. At the beginning of August, the IS Wilayat Sinai militants executed a Croatian national kidnapped in Cairo on July 22. In exchange for the hostage, they had demanded the release of several women imprisoned in Egypt. The bombing of a Cairo courthouse on August 20 left at least 29 wounded. On November 28, IS Wilayat Sinai fighters shot dead four police officers on the Sakkara road near Giza city, Governorate of Giza.

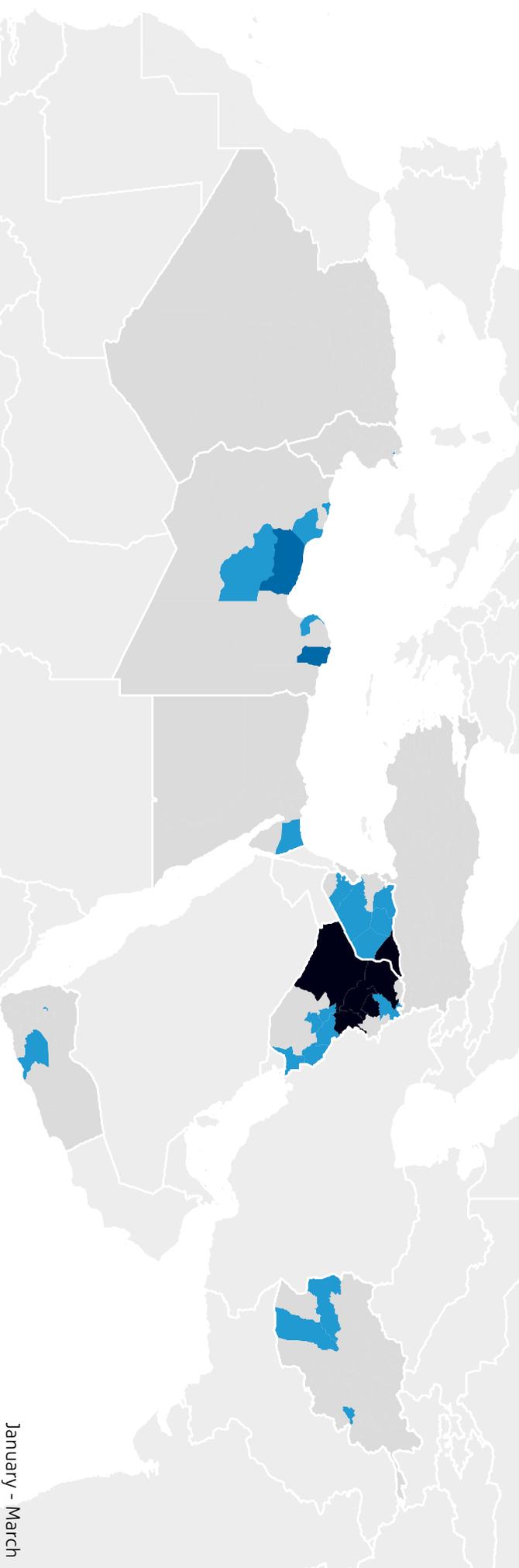
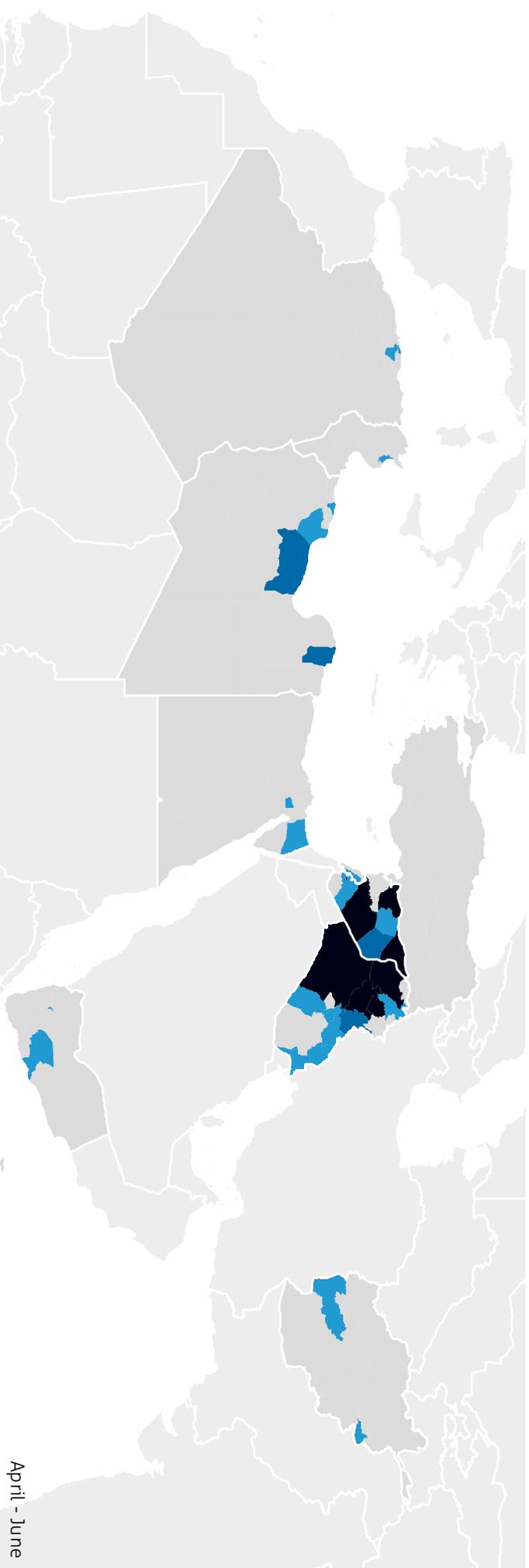
Throughout the year, several Bedouin tribes renewed vows to fight IS Wilayat Sinai and engaged in combat. On April 18, the Tarabin tribe issued a statement vowing that it will fight IS Wilayat Sinai. Shortly after, the IS group distributed leaflets, threatening to execute individuals collaborating with the army. In early May, tribal leaders conducted a meeting of the "Sinai Tribal Federation" near al-Arish, issuing a communique declaring that they would support the army by sending armed volunteer troops. ppr

LEBANON

Clashes between IS and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), supported by Hezbollah, continued. The government was confronted with militant groups such as IS and Jabhat al-Nusra, who were trying to gain control of Lebanese villages on the border to Syria.

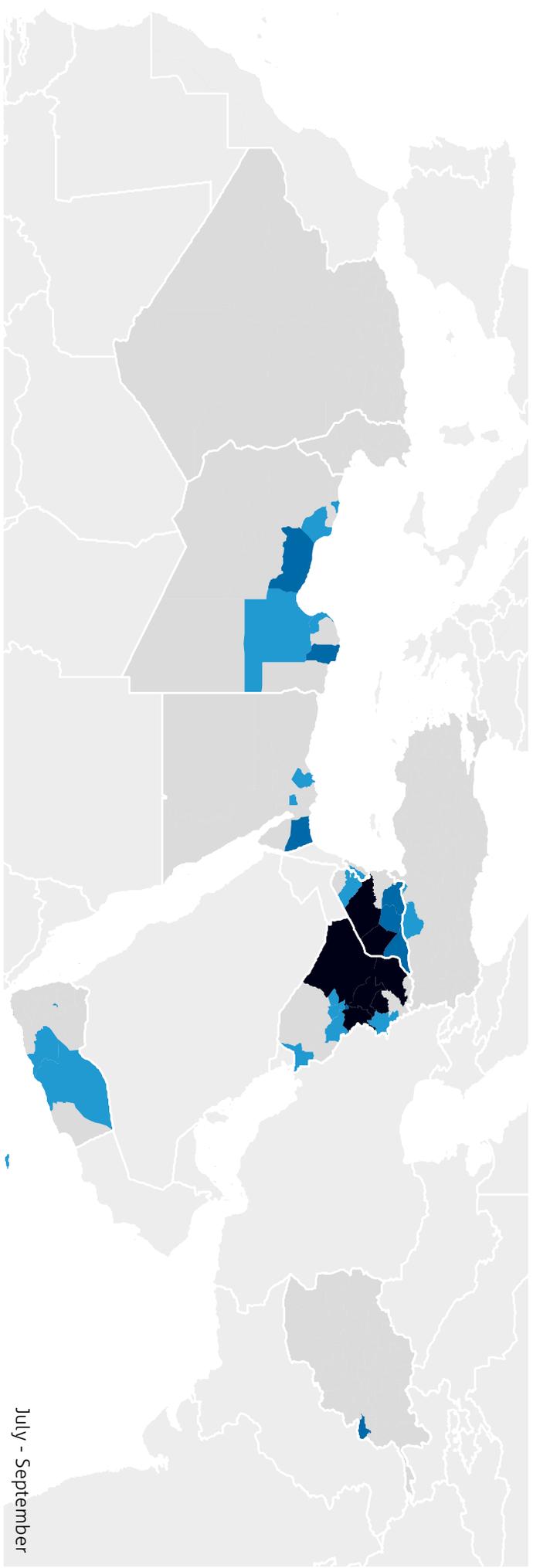
Firefights were observed throughout the year between the LAF and Hezbollah, on the one hand, and militant groups, on the other, mainly around the towns of Arsal, Baalbek, and Ras Baalbek, Beqaa governorate. Since the 08/02/14 attack

SYRIA, IRAQ ET AL. (IS)

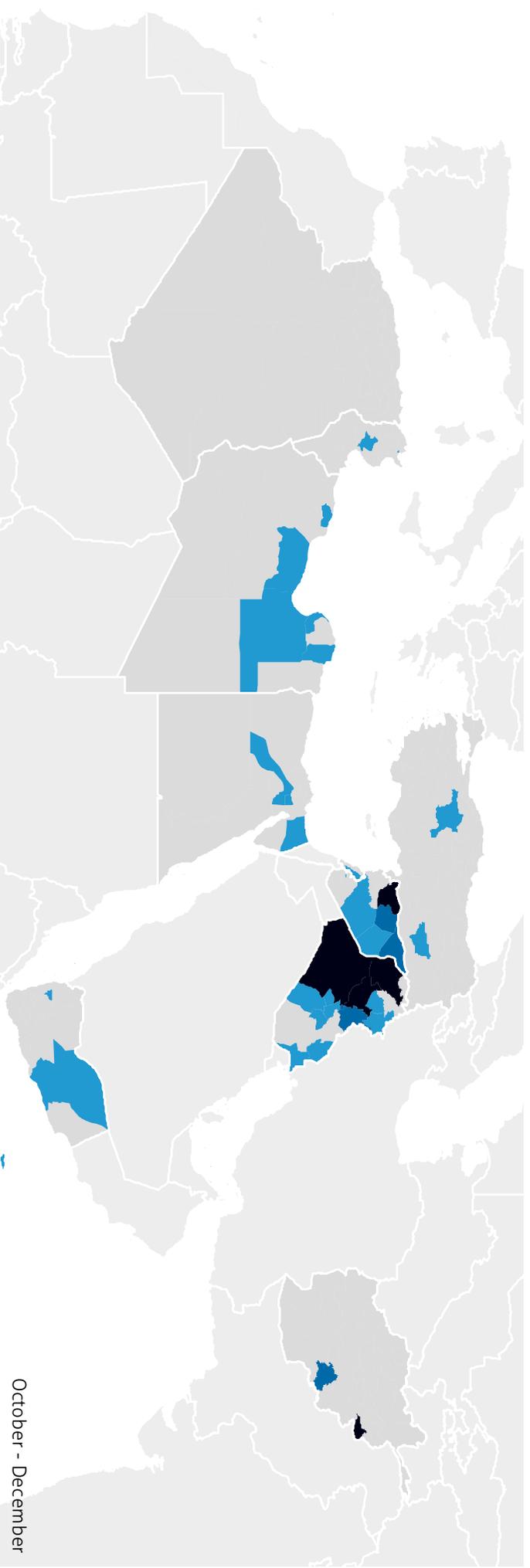


April - June

January - March



July - September



October - December

Please note that in highly violent conflicts, reliable reports on violent measures become even more sparse. HIJK opting for a conservative estimate of violence, is only considering incidents verifiable by detailed and reasonably reliable data.

NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

data: HIJK map: flr

by IS and al-Nusra in Arsal, the LAF maintained its hold on Arsal and continued to execute its security plan in the Beqaa Valley, which included heightened security measures and widespread raids and arrests [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)].

In February, Arsal residents reported that IS had started to establish both a Sharia-based court system as well as hospitals for wounded fighters in the outskirts of Arsal, where no army forces were stationed. Clashes erupted between IS and Jabhat al-Nusra outside of Arsal on May 25. The fighting broke out after IS had allegedly shot and abducted a man identified as a Jabhat al-Nusra member.

On June 9, IS attacked Hezbollah positions near Ras Baalbek. At least eight Hezbollah fighters and up to 48 IS militants died in the skirmishes. The army targeted militant positions with attack helicopters and mortars. On June 10, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah announced the beginning of Hezbollah's fight against IS in the Qalamoun mountains on the Syrian-Lebanese border. Hezbollah sources claimed that they had shelled IS positions on the outskirts of Ras Baalbek on October 16, thereby killing five.

On November 12, two suicide bombers staged an attack in the predominantly Shia inhabited southern Beirut suburb Burj al-Barajneh, killing 43 people and wounding at least 239. The explosion damaged at least four buildings. IS claimed responsibility for the attack. Subsequently, the military conducted several raids in different locations, including Tripoli and Syrian refugee encampments surrounding Baalbek, where they arrested more than 20 individuals. On November 25, a military court charged 26 people with belonging to IS, of which 23 were charged with direct involvement in the Burj al-Barajneh bombings.

The Lebanese head of the General Security Directorate, Major General Abbas Ibrahim, announced on December 1 that the directorate was ready to negotiate with IS the release of nine soldiers, whom the group had held captive since August 2014. On December 9, the LAF killed at least four IS members, using a guided missile that hit the militants' convoy on the northeastern border. According to Hezbollah sources, the group killed the head of the IS Sharia court in the region, Abu Abdullah Amer, with a roadside bomb on December 15. ^{ema}

LIBYA

In Libya, IS was divided into three regional branches, namely Wilayat Tarabulus in the west, Wilayat Barqa in the east, and Wilayat Fezzan in the southern area.

Fighters belonging to the Fezzan branch attacked an army checkpoint in Sukna town, al-Jufra district, on January 2, killing at least 14 soldiers of the infantry battalion 168 as well as three civilians.

In the course of the year, IS clashed with forces loyal to the General National Congress (GNC), particularly the Libya Dawn alliance.

In Tripoli controlled by armed groups supporting the GNC, IS members set off a car bomb in front of the Corinthia Hotel before storming the building on January 27. The assailants killed at least nine people, including five foreigners, and blew themselves up using a grenade. IS also carried out gun and IED attacks against foreign diplomatic missions. For example, on April 12, IS militants shot dead two guards in front of the South Korean embassy. On September 9, four Wilayat Tarabulus fighters stormed the GNC-aligned Special Deterrence Force's headquarters, also functioning as a prison, on the compound of Mitiga International Airport. The attackers killed three militiamen and one inmate before themselves being shot dead.

In the town of Sirte, located in the eponymous district in central Libya, IS expanded its control in February, taking over radio stations, the Ibn Sina hospital, administrative offices, and the university and warned other groups to leave the city. Clashes with Libya Dawn's Brigade 166 erupted on March 14 in Sirte's outskirts and near Nawfaliya in the same district. Libya Dawn forces also carrying out airstrikes claimed to have killed at least 17 IS fighters, among them Tunisian former Ansar al-Sharia figure Ahmed al-Roussi. Two days later, dozens of families fled Sirte. On March 25, a Wilayat Tarabulus suicide bomber killed five Libya Dawn fighters at a checkpoint outside the city. On May 14, when IS fighters attacked the village of Harawa between Sirte and Nawfaliya, armed locals killed one militant, while IS captured and later beheaded two people. On May 28, the Libya Dawn alliance conducted aerial bombardments against IS in and around Sirte. However, IS continued its advance. On June 9, IS seized a power plant from Libya Dawn and declared full control of the town. At least three fighters of the latter group were killed in the attack. Libya Dawn reportedly retreated to Abu Qurayn in eastern Misrata district. On June 21, Libya Dawn warplanes targeted IS in Sirte and Nawfaliya, allegedly killing at least 15 militants.

With IS increasingly taking control of Sirte since February and confrontations between IS and Libya Dawn intensifying in the district, IS also carried out attacks in neighboring Misrata district and its eponymous capital, Libya Dawn's stronghold. For instance, on April 1 and 5, respectively, IS attacked checkpoints near Misrata, shooting dead seven members of pro-GNC Libya Shield Force and killing at least four people as well as injuring more than a dozen in a suicide bombing. On May 31, IS conducted a suicide bombing at the entrance of Dafiniya near Misrata, killing five and wounding seven people. In al-Murqub district between Misrata and Tripoli, two IS car bomb attacks killed ten Libya Dawn forces at checkpoints outside the city of Khoms on November 10 and 24.

Again in Sirte, IS cracked down on Salafists and other locals, mostly members of Ferjan tribe, in the town's District No. 3. The latter revolted after IS gunmen had killed Salafist cleric Khalid bin Rajab al-Ferjani in front of Cordoba mosque on August 10. Dozens of people were killed in clashes before IS re-established its control over the neighborhood on August 14. Throughout the year, IS repeatedly targeted oil installations in Sirte district. On February 3, for instance, IS fighters killed 13 people in an attack on Mabruk oil field. On March 6, a raid on al-Ghani oil field in neighboring Jufra district left dead at least seven members of the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG). Nine foreign workers were abducted. Officials blamed the attack on IS. On October 1, in the east of Sirte district, IS fighters opened fire on a PFG checkpoint near al-Sidrah oil port, killing one guard and wounding two. Later that day, IS attempted to strike the gate with a car bomb. According to PFG, four militants were shot dead.

In al-Wahat district on the road between Ajdabiya and Tobruk, militants attacked a checkpoint of forces loyal to the internationally recognized government on July 31, killing five. Two reinforcement troops were killed in subsequent clashes. IS claimed responsibility. Moreover, the group stated it was behind IED and gun attacks on individuals in Ajdabiya, killing the town's military intelligence chief and a Salafist cleric as well as injuring another in a separate attempt in October. The assassination of a third cleric on November 5 was blamed on IS.

In neighboring Benghazi, where IS influence increased over the year, the group clashed with forces belonging to, loyal to, or loosely affiliated with the internationally recognized

government, mainly consisting of the official Libyan National Army (LNA), the interlinked Operation Dignity alliance, and local armed supporters. For instance, IS' Wilayat Barqa branch claimed responsibility for a suicide car bomb attack on an army checkpoint in al-Laithi neighborhood that had left seven people dead and more than ten wounded on March 24. A mortar attack on May 24 left four civilians dead. IS stated it had shelled the area. On July 15, Salem "Afareet" al-Naili, a commander of al-Saiqa forces, and another soldier were killed in the same area in an attack claimed by IS. On August 14, IS fighters killed nine soldiers, wounded another seven, reportedly destroyed a tank, and seized army vehicles during an attack in the area of al-Sabri district. IS attacked LNA troops in al-Nawaqiya outside of Benghazi on September 7, killing eight soldiers and wounding at least ten. Due to the operations of the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council (BRSC) against the same forces as IS, it was not always certain if IS, BRSC, or both were involved in attacks. Throughout the year, internationally recognized government forces regularly conducted aerial bombardments on BRSC and IS positions. In the further eastern town of Derna, largely under IS control since the end of 2014 such as its eponymous district, confrontations took place. Throughout the year, IS regularly attacked and clashed with forces loyal to the internationally recognized government. Shortly after IS had released a video on February 15 showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians, Libyan and Egyptian government forces carried out airstrikes against IS targets with F-16 fighter jets, later claiming to have killed dozens of the militants. Suicide bombings in Qubba, claimed by IS' Wilayat Barqa branch, left more than 40 people dead and dozens more injured on February 20. Forces loyal to General Khalifa Haftar conducted airstrikes against IS and Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) positions in Derna in May [→ Libya (opposition)]. DMSC, a GNC-backed Islamist coalition announced in October 2014, was also present in the city. The coalition most prominently included the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade (ASMB). Furthermore, fighting erupted between IS and DMSC. After the latter's senior figure Nasser al-Aker had been shot dead on June 9, four days of clashes resulted in the death of about 20 people in total, including Salim Darbi, a DMSC founder. People demonstrating against IS were shot at and targeted by a suicide car bomb. Heavy weapons were employed in the fighting, with DMSC forces driving out IS from most of Derna by June 14, reportedly capturing local Yemini IS leader Abu al-Bara al-Azadi sent by IS in Syria and Iraq last year. During the last days of July, DMSC launched an offensive against IS, pushing it further out of the town. The Council claimed it killed at least 27 IS militants, while the clashes reportedly left 13 DMSC fighters dead and almost 50 wounded. Meanwhile, LNA conducted air raids against IS in al-Fata'ih area, the group's hideout outside the city. In July, IS fired rockets from the area and car bomb attacks repeatedly hit Derna. On September 5, four soldiers were killed in a confrontation outside the town between forces loyal to the internationally recognized government and those belonging to IS. On November 15, Colonel Muhammed Abu Ghafayar, commander of the al-Bayda-based Ali Hassan al-Jaber-Brigade, was killed during an offensive against IS in al-Fata'ih that also included DMSC and forces from Tobruk. The Ali Hassan al-Jaber Brigade had entered the fight against IS in Derna in September. The US announced the killing of senior IS figure Wissam Najm Abd Zayd al-Zubaydi alias Abu Nabil al-Anbari, in an air raid by F-15 aircraft on November 13. However, local sources denied this. sul

TUNISIA

After having pledged allegiance to IS in March, the recently-formed group Jund al-Khilafa in Tunisia carried out several attacks in Tunisia.

On March 18, two gunmen stormed the Bardo Museum in Tunis, killing a total of 22 people and injuring around 15. One day later, IS claimed responsibility for the attack in an audio speech distributed online, praising the attackers as "knights of the IS." Despite this claim, the government attributed the attack to an AQIM- and Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade-linked cell and arrested its 23 members on March 21 [→ Tunisia (AQIM et al.)]. Following the attack, the government arrested at least 46 people and deployed troops to major cities. On March 31, Jund al-Khilafa claimed responsibility for the museum attack, stating it was "the beginning of its military campaign", and confirmed its link to IS.

On June 26, a gunman who reportedly had been recruited by Jund al-Khilafa attacked civilians on a beach near the Imperial Marhaba hotel in Sousse, Sousse Governorate, killing 38 people. The same day, IS claimed responsibility for the attack. In reaction, Prime Minister Habib Essid announced to close down 80 mosques for inciting violence and President Beji Caib Essebsi declared a state of emergency on July 4 that was extended several times and lifted on October 2.

In early July, the government initiated the construction of a wall at the border to Libya to keep foreign-trained militants from entering the country. On July 25, the parliament passed an anti-terror bill allowing capital punishment for convictions on terrorism and easing the arrest of suspects. After security had been tightened, troops stopped two cars crossing the border from Libya on October 1, seizing arms and documents bearing the symbol of IS. On November 11, militants kidnapped and later beheaded a shepherd at Djebel Mghila, Sidi Bouzid Governorate. They accused him of spying for the military on Jund al-Khilafa. Four days later, a counter-strike operation left one soldier and at least three militants dead. On November 24, a suicide bomber attacked a presidential guard bus in Tunis, killing at least twelve people. Authorities placed Tunis under curfew until five in the morning and declared a state of emergency. One day after the attack, IS claimed responsibility. The government decided to close borders to Libya for 15 days and to hire an additional 6,000 security forces. During the following five days, security forces arrested at least 40 people, placed 94 under house arrest, and seized an arms cache. wih

TURKEY

In Turkey, IS conducted suicide bombings and attacks on border posts in the second half of the year. In July, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) started to attack IS positions in Syria, later entering the US-led anti-IS military coalition.

On July 20, an IS suicide bomber killed at least 32 civilians and wounded over 100 in an attack on a cultural center in Suruc, Sanliurfa province. It was the first IS suicide bombing on Turkish territory. Later that day, hundreds gathered on Istanbul's Taksim Square to commemorate those killed in the attack and to protest against an alleged government collaboration with IS. On July 23, one Turkish soldier was killed near Kilis, eponymous province, when IS militants attacked an army post from the Syrian side of the border. TAF responded with artillery fire and tank shelling on IS positions in Syria. Also on July 23, Turkey and the US reached an agreement that allowed the anti-IS coalition aircrafts to use air bases at Incirlik, Adana province, and Diyarbakir, eponymous province. In the end of August, Turkish jets started to carry out attacks against IS positions in Syria as part of the US-led coalition. On September 1, one soldier was killed and another wounded in

a second round of cross-border fire by IS militants.

On October 10, in the deadliest attack in Turkey's modern history, two IS suicide bombers killed 102 people and wounded over 400 during a demonstration in the capital Ankara. The demonstration was against the resurgence of violence in the Kurdish regions [→ Turkey (PKK)]. In late October, the government blamed IS militants from Gaziantep, eponymous province, of having perpetrated the attack, after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had initially declared the bombing a collaboration between IS, PKK, PYD, and Syrian intelligence forces [→ Syria – Turkey]. On October 26, seven IS militants and two police officers were killed during raids on IS in Diyarbakir. Furthermore, four police officers were wounded and at least twelve alleged IS militants arrested. During several raids in Istanbul in October, police forces arrested around 50 alleged IS militants. On November 17, the US announced joint operations with Turkey to secure the Syrian-Turkish border in order to crack down on IS smuggling activities. twt, pko

YEMEN

After setting up a branch in Yemen in November 2014, IS carried out attacks in Sana'a, Aden, and Shabwah governorates, with Sana'a being the worst-affected region. IS' organizational structure in Yemen mirrored the administrative division of the country in governorates called Wilayas. Most of the assaults targeted the Shiite al-Houthi minority, also known as Zayadis [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. IS especially attacked Zayadi mosques.

The first IS attack in Yemen targeted mosques in the capital Sana'a during Friday prayers on March 20. Two suicide bombers detonated their vests in and in front of the Zayadi al-Badr mosque, while two others targeted worshippers in and in front of the Zayadi Hashoush mosque in al-Jiraf, Sana'a. Both mosques were frequented by al-Houthis. At least 137 people were killed, among them the prominent al-Houthi cleric al-Murtada bin Zayd al-Mahatwari, the imam of the al-Badr mosque. Another 357 were wounded. It was the deadliest attack for years in Yemen.

On April 14, IS released a video claiming responsibility for the execution of 14 Yemeni soldiers from the Second Mountain Infantry Brigade in Mayfa'a, Shabwah. Furthermore, the video displayed the beheadings of alleged al-Houthi militants. On May 22, IS militants belonging to the IS Wilaya Sana'a again targeted a Zayadi mosque in Sana'a with an IED, wounding 13 people. During Ramadan, from June 18 to July 16, IS militants carried out at least eight attacks with IEDs, seven of which were vehicle based. On June 17, four different car bombs were detonated by IS militants in Sana'a, targeting two mosques, the home of an al-Houthi member, and the al-Houthi political headquarter. The attacks left at least 50 people dead or wounded. A fifth car bomb explosion left two people dead and six wounded at the Qiba al-Mahdi mosque in Sana'a three days later. Further bombings targeted the al-Houthi-controlled Saba News headquarters in Sana'a as well as citizens gathered near a military hospital in the Shu'ab district in Sana'a mourning the victims of previous IS attacks. Another car bomb attack during Ramadan hit the Shiite al-Raoudh mosque in Sana'a on July 7, leaving one dead and wounding five. On July 18, IS Wilaya Aden claimed responsibility for its first attack, the capturing and killing of alleged al-Houthi fighters in Crater district, Aden. Two days later, IS Wilaya Sana'a detonated a car bomb at the al-Moayd mosque in Sana'a, leaving an unknown number of people dead. Furthermore, IS Wilaya Sana'a targeted an al-Houthi-controlled building in the capital on August 13, again using a car bomb. On August 15, IS Wilaya Shabwah claimed responsibility for

their first action, the raid of the al-Houthi-controlled Jordan barracks in the southern city of Ataq, Shabwah, killing several al-Houthis. On August 24, the IS Wilaya Sana'a targeted al-Houthi guards near the US embassy in Sana'a. Again in Sana'a, a suicide bomber detonated a vest with explosives in the al-Muayid mosque on September 2, killing at least 28 and leaving 75 wounded. Arriving medics were hit by a car bomb. Among the fatalities were Ali al-Mashraqi, a prominent member of the Islah party, as well as several al-Houthi fighters. An IS suicide bomber disguised as a woman killed at least 10 people and wounded at least 36 when he blew himself up at the Zayadi al-Balili mosque in Sana'a on September 24. On October 10, another IS suicide bombing at al-Nour mosque in Sana'a killed at least seven al-Houthi fighters and reportedly wounded several others. A bombing on the house of Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, son of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in al Wazirat, Sana'a, on October 12 was claimed by IS Wilayat Sana'a. According to his father, Ahmed was in the UAE under protection of the Emirate when the attack took place. IS also claimed responsibility for a second IED attack which targeted al-Houthi responders at the scene of the first attack. On November 13, another IS-attack targeted prayers at an al-Houthi mosque, in the Shibam area of Mahwit governorate. The attack reportedly wounded and killed several. The first high-profile assassination by the IS in the Yemen was carried out by IS Wilayat Aden on December 6, when militants killed the governor of Aden Jaafar Mohammad Saad and at least six members of his security staff. kpb, jri

TUNISIA (AQIM ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: AQIM, various militant groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. The most prominent attacks in the region, namely on the Bardo Museum in the capital Tunis, on a hotel in Sousse, and a presidential guard bus in Tunis were carried out by newly formed IS-group Jund al-Khilafa, comprising former AQIM-loyal fighters [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

The year was marked by several militant attacks and government operations, most of them taking place in Kasserine governorate close to the Algerian border. More than 55 people were killed on both sides. In addition, troops seized several arms caches and arrested at least 208 people for suspected connections with past or planned attacks. On February 7, the Interior Ministry claimed that the army had killed and arrested militants in Jebel Chaambi National Park, Kasserine, without providing exact numbers of people killed. Ten days later, around 20 Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade members attacked a checkpoint in Kasserine with firearms, killing four police officers. The government deployed troops to secure major cities one day after the Bardo Museum attack on March 18 in Tunis. Despite claims of responsibility by IS, the government attributed the attack to militants linked to Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade and AQIM. The army conducted operations in Kasserine and Gafsa governorates until May 14, resulting in the deaths of three soldiers and at least 25 militants, one of whom was Uqbah

ibn Nafi Brigade leading figure Lokman Abu Sakhr. Militant attacks on checkpoints in Sbitla, Kasserine, and Sidi Bouzid in the eponymous governorate on April 7 and June 15, left seven soldiers and one militant dead as well as several people injured. Another militant died on June 15 when militants and police clashed in Jendouba governorate. The army intensified operations and killed at least five militants in Gafsa following the Sousse hotel attack on June 26. In a statement on July 12, the interior minister claimed that the government had decimated almost 90 percent of Ubqah ibn Nafi Brigade. Furthermore, President Beji Caib Essebsi declared a nationwide state of emergency that was then extended several times and lifted on October 2. On August 9, the army killed Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade's high-ranking Abdelhak Dabbar at Djebel Samama, Kasserine. On August 23, gunmen reportedly belonging to Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade attacked a customs office in Bouchbka, Kasserine, killing one person and injuring three people. On October 12, when the army tried to free a kidnapped civilian at Jebel Samama, militants killed two soldiers. Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade later stated that it had killed the abductee. In reaction to the attack on one presidential guard bus on November 24, Essebsi imposed a nationwide 30-day state of emergency and announced to hire 6,000 additional security forces. On December 9, Uqbah ibn Nafi Brigade claimed to have killed five soldiers at Jebel Chaambi. Essebsi frequently stressed the importance of combating extremism and improving security capabilities. The measures included, for instance, the deployment of eight additional helicopters and campaigns to take back or shut down extremist-controlled mosques. On July 27, the parliament passed an anti-terror bill allowing capital punishment in cases of conviction on terrorism and facilitating the arrest of suspects. wih

TURKEY (OPPOSITION GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups, mainly protesters related to the Gezi protests of 2013 as well as the Islamic Gülen movement, and the government continued. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) restricted the right of assembly in many cases throughout the year. The infringement on the freedom of the press by the government also continued, further highlighted by the imprisonment of several journalists accused of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and "cooperating with terrorists." The general elections in June and the following failure to form a government were accompanied by tensions between political opponents and led to re-elections in November in which the AKP regained the absolute majority [→ Turkey (PKK)]. On January 21, a court in Kayseri, eponymous province, sentenced two police officers involved in the death of the student Ali Ismail Korkmaz during the 2013 Gezi protests to a ten-year prison term each. In reaction, about 1,000 protesters, claiming the sentence was too lenient, clashed with riot police outside the courthouse, which resulted in several injuries among the protesters. The police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds. Similar protests took place in Ankara, Istanbul, and other major cities. On February 13, the police used water cannon and tear gas against 2,000 protesters boy-

cotting schools in Izmir, eponymous province, and criticizing the growing influence of religion in classrooms. The police detained dozens of protesters. On March 11, protesters in the provinces of Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir gathered to commemorate Berkin Elvan, a youth killed during the 2013 Gezi protests. The police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd and detained 20 people. Protesters threw stones and Molotov cocktails. On March 31, members of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front stormed a courthouse in Istanbul, kidnapping Mehmet Selim Kiraz, the prosecutor investigating the Elvan case. When security forces stormed the building, Kiraz and both militants died in the ensuing shootout. On May 1, protesters gathered on Istanbul's Taksim Square despite a governmental ban on demonstrations. The police used water cannon, tear gas, and batons, while the protesters threw Molotov cocktails and stones. In total, 23 people were injured, among them six police officers and MP Sebahat Tunçel. The police further detained 203 protesters.

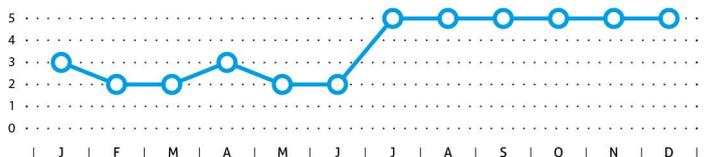
During the two months before the second round of elections, independent media outlets were repeatedly targeted by government supporters and Turkish authorities. On September 6 and September 8, about 200 followers of the AKP, led by AKP parliamentarian Abdurrahim Boynukalin, attacked the office building of major newspaper Hürriyet in Istanbul. They destroyed several windows until riot police dispersed the crowd. A week later, authorities announced to start criminal investigations against Hürriyet, as they suspected the newspaper of "spreading terrorist propaganda."

On November 3, two days after the re-elections, the police detained at least 43 people the government accused of membership of the Gülen movement, among them journalists and police officers. The arrest of the journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül on November 26 incited protests across the country. A total of 2,000 people gathered in Istanbul and another 1,000 in Ankara, including Members of Parliament. The journalists were charged of "espionage," "terrorist propaganda," and "divulging state secrets" after having released footage allegedly depicting the state intelligence agency sending weapons to Syria. On December 7, a lawsuit on behalf of the Turkish embassy in the US was filed against Gülen in Pennsylvania, USA, where he lives in self-imposed exile since 1999. He was accused of inciting unlawful arrests of political opponents in 2009. dse

TURKEY (PKK)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1974

Conflict parties: PKK vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy



The conflict over autonomy between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the government escalated from a violent crisis to a war.

During the first half of the year, peace negotiations between the PKK and the government as well as sporadic violence continued. In the second half of 2015, violence intensified,

with repeated airstrikes by the government and PKK attacks, leaving at least 2,057 people killed and approx. 100,000 displaced by the end of the year. Furthermore, the government frequently imposed curfews on several provinces.

On February 28, Turkish government officials held a joint press conference with representatives of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) announcing their willingness to negotiate with the PKK over political solutions for common issues regarding for example Kurdish authorities or disarmament of the PKK. Earlier the same day, the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan urged his party to find a peaceful solution for the conflict. However, according to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), PKK fighters attacked a TAF security task force in Diyadin district, Agri province, on April 11, injuring four soldiers. In an ensuing shootout, soldiers reportedly shot dead five PKK militants.

On June 7, HDP gained 13.1 percent of the votes in the general elections, thereby obtaining 80 seats in parliament, while the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan failed to gain an absolute majority for the first time since 2002. After the formation of a coalition government failed, new elections were set for November 1 [→ Turkey (opposition)].

From July onwards, tensions between the government and the PKK continuously escalated. PKK blamed the government for not having prevented the suicide bombing conducted by the so-called Islamic State (IS) in Suruc, Sanliurfa province, on July 20 [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. On July 22, PKK militants killed two Turkish police officers, whom the group accused of having cooperated with IS, in their homes in Ceylanpinar, Sanliurfa. On July 24, TAF began air raids on PKK positions in Dahuk, Arbil, and As Sulaymaniyah governorates, northern Iraq. The following day, TAF carried out strikes on PKK camps, shelters, and storages using 90 fighter jets including F-16 and F-4E-2020. On July 25, PKK stated that the 2013 ceasefire was meaningless, accusing the government of having ended it unilaterally with its air strikes. From July 24 to 31, TAF airstrikes left at least 200 PKK fighters dead and over 300 injured in Dahuk governorate in the autonomous Kurdish Region in Iraq. The strikes continued until the end of the year. Starting on July 24, TAF and police launched several operations in Hakkari, Sirnak, Mardin, and Diyarbakir provinces, detaining members of the PKK and its youth wing Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik Hareketi.

The PKK-affiliated Kurdistan Community Union declared autonomy of the districts of Silopi and Cizre, Sirnak province, and Nusaybin, Mardin province, on August 10. Five days later, regional Kurdish officials made similar statements for the Silvan district in Diyarbakir and the province of Batman. Starting on August 23, Turkish security forces responded with the arrest of several Kurdish local officials in the southeast, among them Silvan co-mayors Yüksel Bodakçı and Meliksah Teke as well as the co-mayors of Sur district Seyid Narin and Fatma Barut. During a TAF military operation from September 4 to September 11 in Cizre, Sirnak, which was placed under curfew, TAF killed 40 PKK members and allegedly killed over 30 civilians. In Hakkari, between September 25 and November 5, TAF used fighter jets and helicopters and deployed over 6,000 troops to attack PKK positions, shelters, and storages, leaving 119 PKK members and nine security forces dead. In attacks against police stations and government offices as well as military and police convoys mainly carried out in Bitlis, Bingöl, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sirnak, Sanliurfa, Izmir, and Van provinces, PKK militants killed at least twelve security personnel in July, 59 in August and 55 in September.

In the run-up to the November elections, the government

accused PKK of complicity in the October 10 suicide bombings carried out by IS in Ankara that had left 102 civilians dead. PKK, in contrast, stated that the government was involved in the bombings and announced a unilateral ceasefire for the election in which AKP then won the majority. After continuous military attacks, the group ended the ceasefire on November 5.

Between November 3 and November 14, TAF used tanks and fighter jets in Silvan, Diyarbakir, to destroy PKK shelters, caves, and ammunition depots. At least five security forces and twelve PKK members were killed in the fighting and over 10,000 residents were displaced. On December 14, TAF started a continuing operation with over 10,000 troops using tanks, armored vehicles, and helicopters in Cizre and Silopi, Sirnak. By the end of the year, a total of 183 PKK members and 38 civilians were reported killed. In a similar operation in Sur, Diyarbakir, TAF killed 45 PKK members. According to the government, a total of 100,000 residents fled the violence in Sirnak, Diyarbakir, and Mardin provinces since the beginning of the military operations in December. In his New Year's address on December 31, Erdogan claimed his government had killed 3,100 PKK members in 2015 and announced to continue operations against the group in 2016.

pko

TURKEY – RUSSIA

Intensity: 3 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Turkey vs. Russia

Conflict items: international power

A new violent crisis over international power erupted between Russia and Turkey. While the immediate trigger of the conflict was the downing of a Russian military jet by Turkey in November, the latter repeatedly criticized Russia's involvement in the Syrian civil war [→ Syria (opposition)]. Furthermore, Turkey accused Russia of aerial bombings on Turkmen dominated regions, while Russia claimed that Turkey supported the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Turkey's foreign ministry reported two incursions of Russian warplanes in Turkish airspace on October 3 and 4. Russia confirmed the entrance of a Su-30 fighter jet on October 3 and argued that bad weather had been the cause of the violation. In mid-November, Turkey summoned Russia's ambassador over Russia's alleged bombing of Turkmen villages in the Syrian Bayirbucak region, Latakia District. On November 24, Turkish F-16 fighter jets shot down a Russian Su-24 military jet near the Turkish town of Yayladagi, Hatay Province, along the Turkish-Syrian border. While one crew member was shot dead by Syrian rebels when parachuting, the other was rescued by Syrian government troops.

Turkish authorities claimed the jet had violated Turkish airspace and had been warned repeatedly. Russia rejected these claims, stating that there had been no warnings from the Turkish side. The same day, Russian President Vladimir Putin harshly criticized the downing, calling it a "stab in the back." One day later, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced it would suspend military cooperation with Turkey. Russia further deployed S-400 anti-aircraft missiles to its Syrian airbase in Hmeimin, Latakia.

On November 29, Putin signed a decree imposing economic sanctions on Turkey. The decree issued, among other things, import restrictions regarding food, the banning of charter flights to Turkey, and the suspension of the visa-free agree-

ment with Turkey, starting in January 2016. On December 2, Russia accused Turkey of buying oil from IS-controlled refineries in Syria and Iraq. The next day, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan denied those claims and in turn accused Russia of being involved in oil trading with IS. okl, twt

YEMEN (AQAP – AL-HOUTHI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: AQAP vs. al-Houthi
Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The conflict over ideology and subnational predominance between al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), also known as Ansar al-Sharia, on the one hand, and the al-Houthi rebels, on the other, de-escalated from a limited war to a violent crisis.

As in 2014, AQAP sporadically joined forces with Sunni tribal militias to fight widening al-Houthi influence in the southwest of the country [→ Yemen (al-Houthi – Sunni tribal forces)]. For example, on March 2, AQAP and allied local tribes attacked al-Houthi militants in Dhi Na'im, al-Bayda Governorate. Reportedly, 18 al-Houthis and seven tribal militants were killed in the fighting. Also, in mid-October, AQAP militants fought alongside local Sunni militias, referred to as popular resistance forces, against al-Houthi militant in Taiz city, the capital of the eponymous governorate.

On March 27, al-Houthi militants and allied government troops, reportedly loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, clashed with alleged AQAP militants and recaptured a military base in Bayhan, Shabwah governorate [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)].

On June 22, AQAP militants clashed with al-Houthi fighters in al-Zowb, al-Bayda, leaving dozens killed on both sides. The same day, AQAP conducted a rocket attack on an al-Houthi gathering in al-Hudayda governorate.

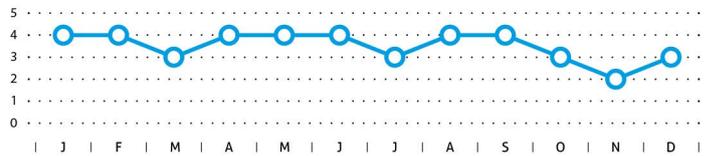
Throughout the year, AQAP continued attacks with car bombs and IEDs against al-Houthi sites and gatherings in many parts of the country, mostly in al-Bayda and the capital Sana'a. For instance, on June 10, AQAP detonated an IED in Shaqra, Abyan governorate, killing 15 al-Houthi militants. Moreover, on August 12, AQAP detonated a car bomb at an al-Houthi gathering in Ataq, Shabwah governorate, reportedly killing dozens. From October 23 to 25, AQAP carried out seven attacks against al-Houthi targets in al-Bayda and Sana'a using guns, IEDs, and a grenade. Between November 18 and November 30, AQAP conducted another series of attacks on al-Houthi forces in al-Bayda, using firearms and IEDs. No casualties were reported in both cases.

In sum, at least 260 people, including civilians, were killed over the course of the year. jri

YEMEN (AQAP, ANSAR AL SHARIA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: AQAP, Ansar al Sharia vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology



The conflict between Ansar al Sharia and Al Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), on the one hand, and the Hadi government, supported by the US, on the other, de-escalated to a limited war.

On January 1, Ansar al Sharia killed approx. four soldiers in an IED attack on a military patrol outside of Sayun city, Hadramawt governorate. Six days later, an AQAP suicide bomber in a minibus killed around 26 applicants in front of the local police academy in the capital Sana'a detonating a vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) next to the queue. The police arrested five AQAP-affiliated suspects on the same day. Another six militants were arrested on January 14, believed to be responsible for the assassination of an Abyan Popular Committee leader that took place the day before. Also on January 14, suspected Ansar al Sharia militants ambushed a military convoy in Belhaf, Shabwah governorate, killing three soldiers and wounding several other. Another military convoy was ambushed in al Saeed, eponymous governorate, on January 19. Between January 20 and 23, drive-by shootings by militants on motorcycles in Hadramawt left five soldiers and one security officer dead. Militants further destroyed an Islamic shrine on January 28 in Hawta, Lahij governorate.

Throughout the year, Ansar al Sharia continued to attack military targets such as a patrols, checkpoints, convoys, and bases, most of them in the governorates of Hadramawt and Abyan. On February 1, militants launched coordinated attacks against the 117th Infantry Brigade and other security forces in al-Bayda, leaving three soldiers and four militants dead. On February 12, Ansar al Sharia fighters seized the base of the 19th Infantry Brigade in Bayhan, Shabwah. They looted military equipment of the camp and kidnapped several soldiers. IEDs and VBIEDs remained frequently used weapons of AQAP and Ansar al Sharia. Between February 4 and February 23, militants detonated at least eleven IEDs, two of them vehicle-borne, in several locations. The explosions and following gunfights killed approx. 21 people and left more than eight wounded. Later in the year, Ansar al Sharia used IEDs and VBIEDs to attack military and civilian targets, including an intelligence building in al-Hudaydah on October 16 and an attack on the headquarters of the General People's Congress (GPC) east of al-Bayda city on December 21.

Further assassinations by militants riding motorcycles targeted members of the security forces, including one in Hawta, Lahij, on March 6, another security officer in al-Qatan, Hadramawt, on March 10, and a deputy director of political security in Hudaydah city, al-Hudaydah, on April 16. In the course of the year, Ansar al Sharia was targeted by US drone strikes, the first of which killed three AQAP members in Harib, Shabwah, on January 20.

Another four militants were killed in a drone strike on January 31 in al-Said, Shabwah, among them senior AQAP leader Harith bin Ghazi al-Nadhari. After AQAP leader Nasser al Wahayshi had been killed in a US airstrike, presumably on June 9, he was replaced by Qasim al Raymi. At least 19 further airstrikes hit AQAP-related targets over the year, killing at least 50 militants and destroying several vehicles. During a major attack in al-Mukalla on April 2, militants freed 300 prisoners, looted the central bank, clashed with security forces and the military, and also established checkpoints in the city. During the fights, which also continued the next day, AQAP militants set the prison on fire and reportedly killed five guards. Another Ansar al Sharia attack on a prison in Ataq, Shabwah, resulted in the escape of 60 prisoners on April 9, among them AQAP-fighters.

AQAP militants allegedly robbed several banks. For instance, on January 6, USD 200,000 were obtained in a robbing in al-Mukalla, Hadramawt. In the same city, three government vehicles were ambushed and robbed on January 13 by suspected Ansar al Sharia affiliates. On May 2 and 3, demonstrations against AQAP presence took place in al-Mukalla. AQAP also took full or partial control of several cities. For instance, by October 10, Ansar al Sharia reportedly seized Tawahi, one of the largest districts in Aden. On October 14, militants captured a government complex in Zinjibar, a port city in the southern Abyan governorate. Furthermore, they seized Abyan's regional capital Zinjibar and nearby Jaar on December 2. kpb

YEMEN (SMM / SOUTH YEMEN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: SMM vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over secession between the Southern Mobility Movement (SMM) and the government continued in the beginning of 2015. However, since the start of the Saudi-led intervention against al-Houthi rebels on March 26, SMM shifted its focus towards fighting the al-Houthis [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)].

President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi reached an agreement with al-Houthi rebels on January 21 to grant both the al-Houthis and SMM more representation in state institutions. Hadi resigned from office the next day [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. In reaction to the agreement, several governorates announced that they would no longer follow directives from the capital Sana'a. On January 30, an unknown number of people was killed in a clash between the Yemeni military and SMM fighters in al-Milah, Lahij Governorate.

In the late March, pro-Hadi forces supported by SMM members clashed with al-Houthi and the 33rd Armored Brigade in al-Dhaleh, eponymous governorate. At least eight people were reportedly killed in the fighting.

Throughout the rest of the year, members of SMM fought as part of popular resistance forces against the al-Houthi forces. This could for example be seen on December 31, when an unknown gunmen shot dead five people in Aden, Aden Governorate. Among them was Ahmed al-Idrisi, an SMM leader and commander of popular resistance forces. kpb

YEMEN (TRIBES / MA'RIB)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: militant tribesmen vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

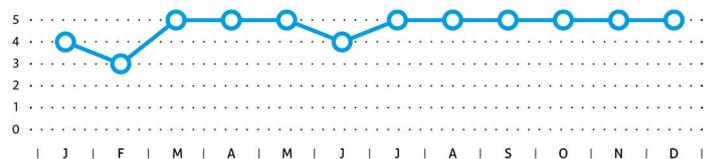
The violent crisis over autonomy between local tribes in the Ma'rib governorate and the government continued in the beginning of 2015. However, since the start of the Saudi-led intervention against al-Houthi rebels on March 26, the tribes shifted their focus towards fighting the al-Houthis [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)].

On January 1, tribal militants attacked a military convoy headed towards al-Houthi-controlled areas in Nakhla, Ma'rib. During the fights, an estimated 15 people were killed. On February 13, local militants seized a military camp and captured weapons without resistance as soldiers surrendered and retreated. Militants from the Obeidah tribe clashed with the military on February 25 near Ma'rib city, injuring three soldiers. Attacks on pipelines continued throughout the year. Allegedly, tribal militants bombed an oil pipeline in Asilan, Shabwah governorate, and furthermore sabotaged a natural gas facility in Ma'rib on March 4. On April 20, eight people were reportedly killed in fights with Yemeni soldiers in Safir along the border of the governorates Hadramawt and Ma'rib. kpb

YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA (AL-HOUSHI)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: al-Houthi militants, troops loyal to Saleh vs. popular resistance forces, Sunni tribal forces, Yemen, Saudi Arabia
Conflict items: national power, subnational predominance



The war over national power between the al-Houthi militant group, on the one hand, and the government of Yemen supported by Saudi Arabia, on the other, saw great shifts in 2015. On March 26, after the Yemeni government fled the country, a Saudi-led coalition intervened and became a dominant actor in the conflict. Numerous actors previously fighting the government of Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi turned against the al-Houthis. After Hadi's government had fled the country on March 26, the al-Houthi militants initially seized strategically important cities and military bases. In response, local Sunni militias, known as popular resistance forces, joined government forces to fight back al-Houthis, among them the Southern Mobility Movement and tribes from the Ma'rib governorate [→ Yemen (SMM / South Yemen); Yemen (tribes / Ma'rib)].

The clashes between al-Houthi forces and Saudi troops over subnational predominance on the Yemeni-Saudi border intensified. Al-Houthi militants were supported by considerable parts of the former Yemeni military forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, among them units of the former Republican Guards and Special Security Forces (SSF). Overall, at least 6,000 people were killed, among them more than 2,800 civilians, about 29,000 wounded, 2.5 million internally displaced and 125,000 to 200,000 fled the country throughout the year.

The attempt of Hadi's government to vote on a new constitution despite Houthi objections was followed by clashes in Sana'a between January 19 and 21. Al-Houthi fighters seized the presidential palace on January 21, putting Hadi under house arrest. One day later, the government resigned. On February 2, in the context of the National Dialogue Conference in Sana'a, al-Houthis set Yemen's political parties a two-day ultimatum to find a political solution. As this did not materialize, they dissolved the parliament on February 6, forming a 551-member interim National Council overseen by the al-Houthi's Revolutionary Committee. Hadi first fled to Aden on February 21 and then escaped advancing al-Houthis to arrive at the Yemeni-Omani border on March 26. One day before, Hadi had requested immediate military intervention by the Arab League against what he called an Iranian expansion in Yemen.

Subsequently, an Arab coalition, led by Saudi Arabia and supported by the USA, France and the United Kingdom launched a military intervention targeting the al-Houthi movement and providing assistance to the forces loyal to the Yemeni government. The coalition consisted of the states of UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Egypt, Senegal and Pakistan. The coalition launched "Operation Decisive Storm" on March 26 using warships, ground troops, and reportedly 185 fighter jets, bombing al-Houthi targets at al-Daylami Air Force Base and Sana'a International Airport. In the following days, the airstrikes targeted weapon depots, army and air force bases of both al-Houthi forces and those loyal to Saleh, especially in the governorates Ma'rib, Sa'ada, Shabwah, Taiz, and Sana'a. Between February and June, al-Houthis seized the capitals of the governorates al-Bayda, Taiz, al-Abyan, Shabwah, and al-Jawf. They extended their control of numerous cities and military sites. For instance, they seized a military camp of troops loyal to Hadi in al-Sabahah on February 24 and 25, killing ten people. On March 25, al-Houthi forces gained control of al-Anad Air Base in Lahij Governorate. The following day, the militants seized further parts of Aden, Aden International Airport, and al-Badr military camp. By April 2, al-Houthi forces controlled most of Aden but had to cede territory to pro-Hadi forces the next day. Starting from April 15, the pro-Hadi 35th Armored Brigade clashed with al-Houthi fighters supported by SSF in al-Nour, Taiz. On April 22, al-Houthi forces seized the brigade's base. On April 20, an airstrike on a military base in Faj Attan near Sana'a killed at least 30 people and left up to 250 wounded, most of them reportedly civilians.

"Operation Decisive Storm" officially ended on April 21 with "Operation Restoring Hope" starting the next day. Compared to the former, the latter involved larger foreign ground troop contingents, including 2,100 Senegalese soldiers, and had the stated aim of protecting citizens and fighting terrorism.

In the second half of the year, 6,000 Sudanese, 1,000 Qataris, and other foreign troops were sent to reinforce the coalition in Ma'rib. Saudi Arabia remained the largest provider of ground troops. In addition to coalition troops, the UAE sent 450 mercenaries, predominantly of Colombian origin. On April 22, al-Houthi forces seized the brigade's base. On April 20, an airstrike on a military base in Faj Attan near Sana'a killed at least 30 people and left up to 250 wounded, most of them reportedly civilians. "Operation Decisive Storm" officially ended on April 21 with "Operation Restoring Hope" starting the next day. Compared to the former, the latter involved larger foreign ground troop contingents, including 2,100 Senegalese soldiers, and had the stated aim of protecting citizens and fighting terrorism. In the second half of the year, 6,000 Sudanese, 1,000 Qataris, and other foreign troops were sent to reinforce the coalition in Ma'rib. Saudi Arabia remained the largest provider of ground troops. In addition to coalition troops, the UAE sent 450 mercenaries, predominantly of Colombian origin.

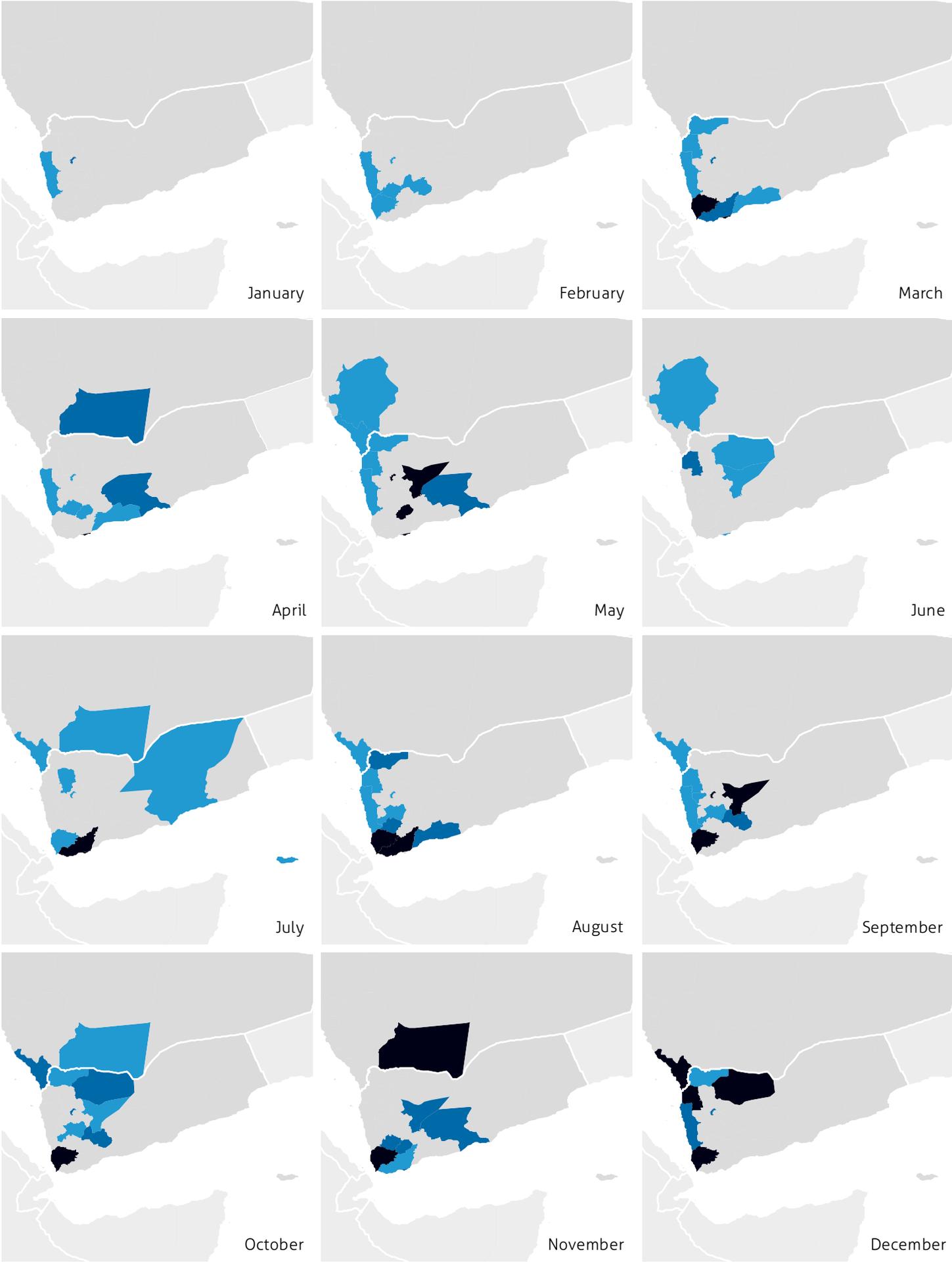
Coalition-led airstrikes continued to target al-Houthi positions. For instance, in Hajjah and Sa'ada governorates on May 6, strikes left 43 dead and more than 100 wounded. Another severe strike reportedly targeting a missile base in Sana'a, killed approx. 90 and wounded more than 300. Coalition airstrikes in Aden, Amran, Ma'rib, and Lahij on July 6 left at least 176 people dead. This was the highest number of fatalities caused by airstrikes on a single day. Forces of the popular resistance and Saudi Arabia made significant territorial gains, seizing Aden International Airport on July 14. Subsequently, senior members of the government returned to Aden, announcing to set up state institutions within Aden. The city was fully recaptured by southern popular resistance fighters and coalition troops on July 17. Yemeni Vice President Khaled Bahah returned to Aden on August 1. In the beginning of September, the coalition intensified airstrikes in Ma'rib, Taiz, and Sana'a in order to secure the governorates and to reduce al-Houthi military capacities. On September 13, the coalition launched a ground operation in Ma'rib and Aden with the aim to recapture Sana'a. After Saudi-led military forces retook Anad air base in Lahij in August, Yemeni fighter jets started to participate in the coalition's airstrikes on October 28. One of the most contested cities was Taiz. On August 4, local popular resistance forces reportedly regained control of large parts of the city from al-Houthi forces. Al-Houthi fighters re-took al-Bayda from pro-Hadi forces on October 16, but were continued to be challenged by popular resistance forces in Taiz. The fighting for Taiz continued until the end of the year, with intense clashes on December 26 leaving more than 30 people dead.

The international community repeatedly attempted to mediate between the conflict parties. Hadi insisted on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2216 demanding al-Houthis to disarm and to leave occupied territory. In the end of the year, delegates of the al-Houthis, the Hadi-government, and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition met in Oman on November 11 to prepare for peace talks. The talks started on December 15 in Geneva, accompanied by a seven-day ceasefire. On December 16, delegates agreed on a prisoner exchange affecting 360 al-Houthi fighters and 265 members of the popular resistance. Talks stopped on December 17, after al-Houthis had refused to release several high profile PoWs. The negotiations ended on December 20 with an agreement to resume talks in January 2016.

The Saudi Arabian military and al-Houthi militants continued to clash at the Saudi-Yemeni border. These clashes intensified significantly in the course of the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen. Starting on March 31, al-Houthi militants and Saudi forces exchanged rocket fire and artillery shelling, most heavily in Shida and al-Hisama, Sa'ada, as well as Haradh, Hajjah. These fire exchanges had left at least several dozen people dead on both sides by the end of the year. Furthermore, ground troops repeatedly clashed at the border. Saudi troops first entered Yemen on June 8. Al-Houthi militants claimed to have fought back the attack. Al-Houthi fighters frequently targeted infrastructure, including Jazan Airport, oil facilities, and border posts as well as watchtowers. At the end of September, al-Houthi troops intensified their attacks, trying to penetrate Saudi Arabian territory. On September 24, Saudi forces reportedly killed up to 40 al-Houthis during an attempt to infiltrate Jazan province.

Throughout the year, coalition airstrikes repeatedly hit civilian and humanitarian targets. For instance, up to 50 refugees were killed in the northern governorate of Hajjah on March 30 and May 21. Furthermore, the UN reported that 29 health centers faced attacks between March and October. kpb

YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA (AL-HOUTHIS)



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