



CONFLICT BAROMETER | 2018

Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research



disputes
non-violent crises
violent crises
limited wars
wars

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The HIIK evolved from the 1991 research project COSIMO (Conflict Simulation Model), led by Prof. Dr. Frank R. Pfetsch, University of Heidelberg, and financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

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Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research

CONFLICT BAROMETER | 2018

Analyzed Period: 01/01/18 – 12/31/18

PREFACE

With the 27th edition of the *Conflict Barometer*, the HIIK continues its annual series of reports covering political conflicts worldwide.

The global political conflict panorama in 2018 was marked by reverse trends. While the overall number of wars clearly decreased, the number of limited wars significantly increased. In Asia, Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa, wars de-escalated, such as in Myanmar, Ukraine, DR Congo, and South Sudan. In contrast, three limited wars intensified to full-scale wars in the Middle East Northern Africa (MENA) region, seeing escalations on Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, in Syria's Afrin region, and in the conflict between Turkey and the Kurdistan's Workers' Party (PKK). In spite of these changes, many conflicts maintained their intensity, such as the wars in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya, Central African Republic, Somalia, and Nigeria, or, for instance, the limited wars in Brazil, Colombia, and the Philippines. As in previous years, violent intrastate crises such as the opposition conflicts in Venezuela or Nicaragua continued to represent the most common conflict type and shaped the global conflict landscape. Moreover, non-violent or medium intensity interstate conflicts, for instance between the EU, USA, et al. and Russia or between India and Pakistan, have also been a central determinant of 2018. Finally, peace initiatives, for instance between Greece and Macedonia, in Ethiopia, or in South Sudan, aimed to pave the way for more peaceful future relations.

In addition to our qualitative and quantitative conflict data, the Spotlight section introduced last year complements our core competencies with a focused analysis of issues related to political conflicts. The Spotlights in the *Conflict Barometer 2018* present both region-focused and global perspectives. The former for example analyze social media as a recruitment strategy by Islamists in Indonesia and the transformative influence of peace initiatives in the Horn of Africa. The latter for instance demonstrate the importance of a gendered understanding of conflict, address vicious cycles between food insecurity and conflict, or elaborate how HIIK's methodology tries to capture conflict dynamics.

The Board of Directors would like to thank all editors and heads of regions who contributed to this report for their outstanding efforts, especially during the final stages of editing. Without their commitment, a publication like this would be impossible. When time resources seem to be more limited than ever, voluntary efforts spent on a project like this become even more extraordinary.

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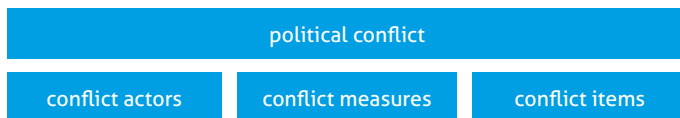
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Methodology

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 a shared 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

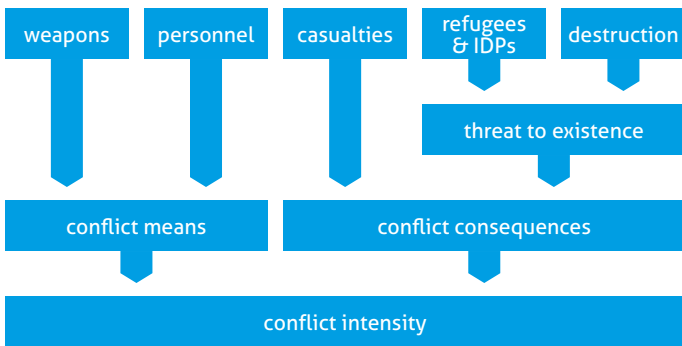
intensity Level	terminology	level of violence	intensity class
1	dispute	non-violent conflicts	low intensity
2	non-violent crisis		
3	violent crisis	violent conflicts	medium intensity
4	limited war		high intensity
5	war		

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.

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.

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

UP- AND DOWNGRADING

When assessing conflict intensities, the HIIK differentiates between violent and non-violent conflicts. If violence occurred, we assess the region-month intensity (RMI, see above). RMIs are the first pillar for determining the yearly intensity for a specific conflict region (region-year intensity) as well as the overall area-year intensity of a conflict (area-year intensity). A conflict area is the sum of all subnational units affected by the violent conflict in question. In the standard case, the area-year intensity is equal to the highest RMI in a given area-year. Like this, intensities of a certain spatiotemporal unit directly translate into a certain conflict intensity level. However, methodological issues such as a considerable variance in the size of administrative regions might threaten the comparability between different conflicts on the same intensity level. Up- and downgrading becomes relevant in the following example: two conflicts have an area-year intensity of a violent crisis according to the assessment based on the first pillar. The first conflict accounted for 30 casualties in three RMIs with ten fatalities each, while the second conflict accounted for more than 370 casualties in 37 RMI. In this case, it might be out of proportion to assign the same conflict intensity to both conflicts. Therefore, we apply up- and downgrading rules, the second pillar of our conflict intensity assessment, fine-tuning conflict intensities in order to ensure a better comparability.

This decision is based on the conflicts' annual and area-wide numbers of refugees / IDPs and casualties. A violent crisis must thereby be upgraded to a limited war level if more than 360 casualties or more than 18,000 refugees were counted in the whole year in the conflict area. A limited war must be upgraded to war level if more than 1,080 fatalities or more than 360,000 refugees were counted. In contrast, a limited war must be downgraded to a violent crisis if less than 120 casualties and less than 6,000 refugees were counted. Likewise, a war must be downgraded to limited war level if less than 360 casualties and less than 120,000 refugees were counted. The area-year intensity is both displayed above each conflict description in this publication as well as in the regional conflict overviews.

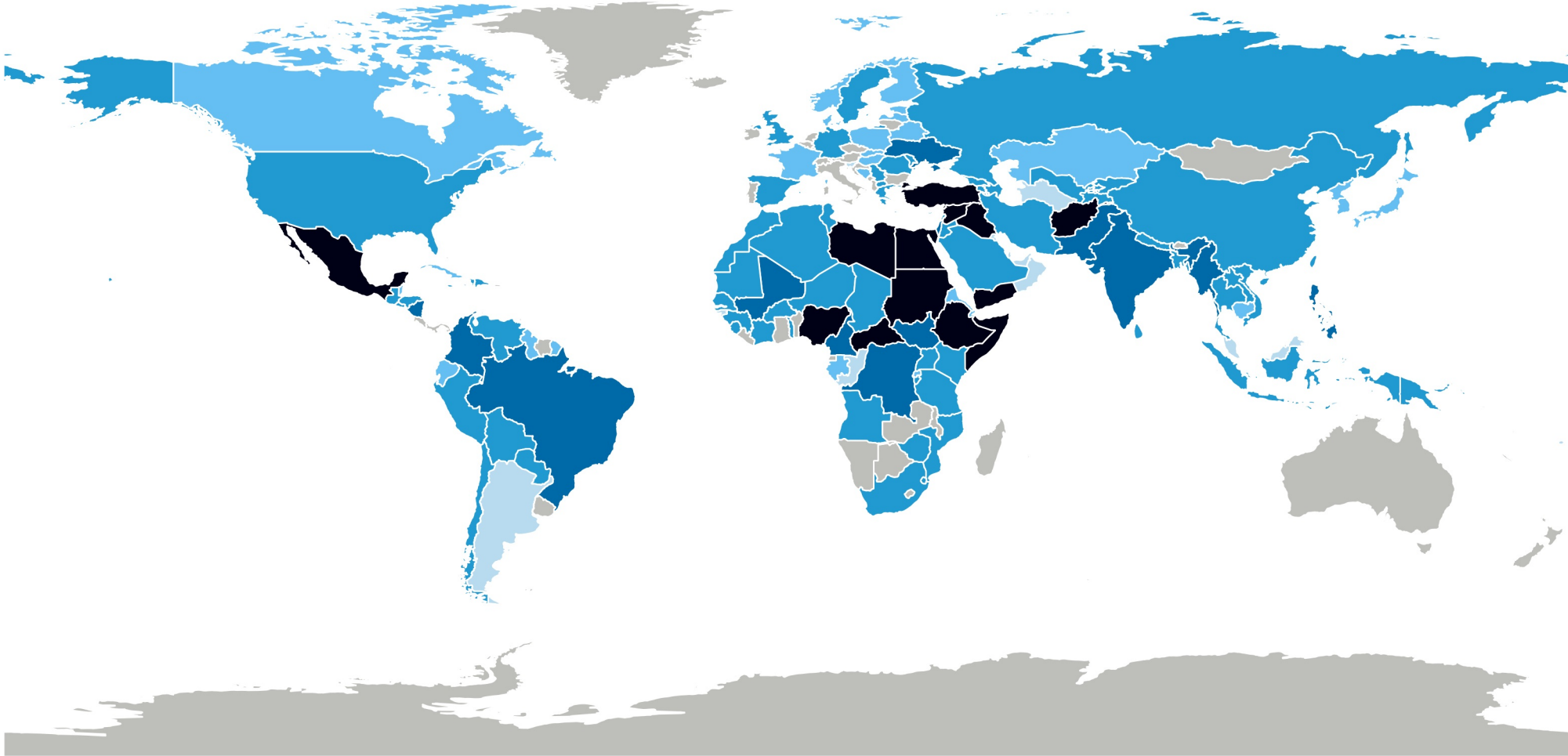
CONFLICT TYPES

The methodology of HIIK distinguishes between interstate, intrastate, substate, and transstate conflicts. Whereas interstate conflicts only involve internationally recognized state actors, intrastate conflicts involve both state actors and non-state actors. Substate conflicts are carried out solely among non-state actors. Transstate conflicts involve both state and non-state actors and meet the criteria of political conflict for at least two sovereign states.

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

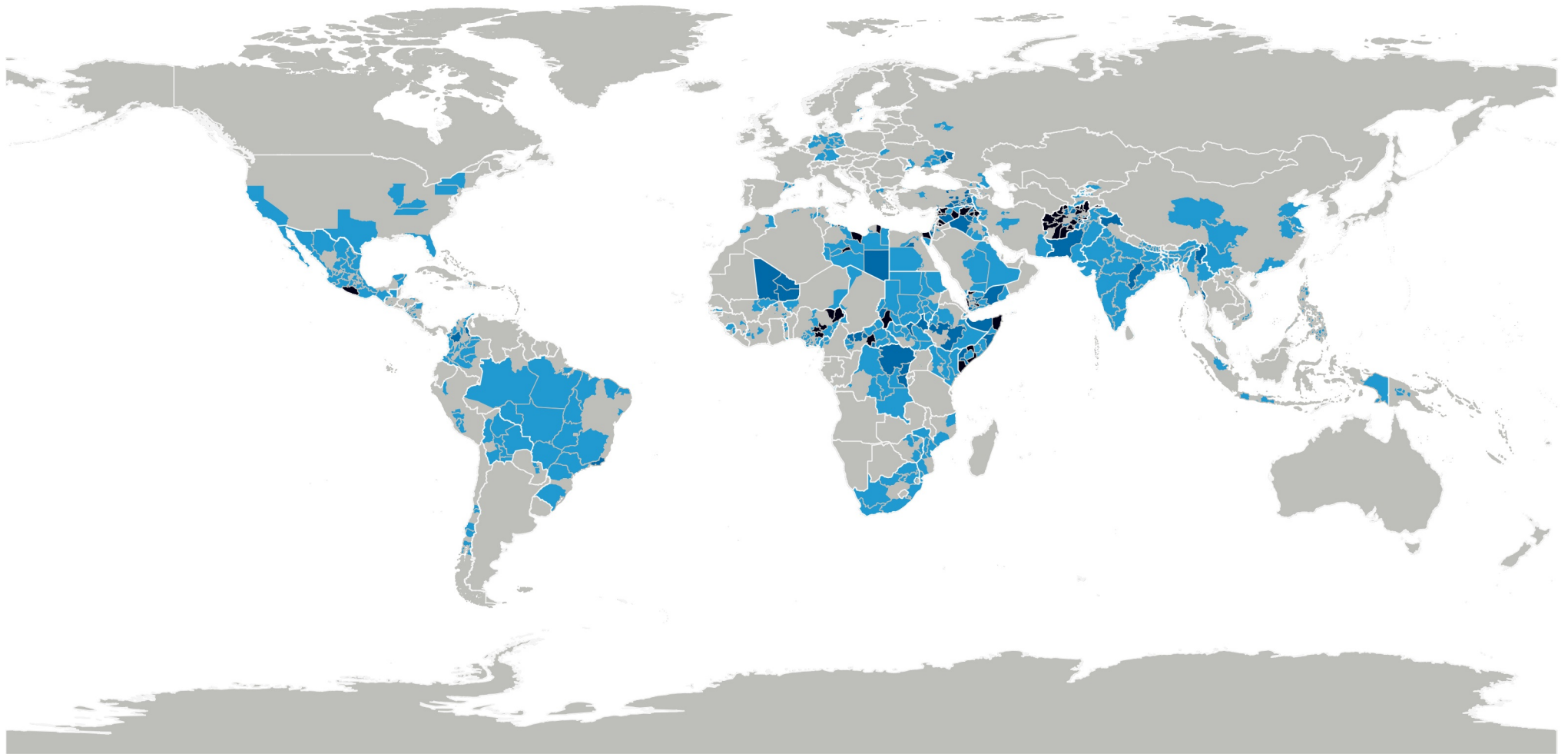
Global Conflict Panorama

CONFLICTS IN 2018 (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)



- INTENSITY**
- 5 WAR
 - 4 LIMITED WAR
 - 3 VIOLENT CRISIS
 - 2 NON-VIOLENT CRISIS
 - 1 DISPUTE
 - NO CONFLICT

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2018 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS

HIGHLY VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2018

LIMITED WARS (25)

WARS (16)

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Israel (Hamas et al.)
 Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)
 Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)

Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)
 Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)
 Libya (opposition)
 Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)
 Syria (opposition)
 Syria (Afrin region)
 Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)
 Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)
 Turkey (PKK / TAK)

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)
 Cameroon (English-speaking minority)
 DR Congo (Ituri militias)
 DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)
 DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)
 Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)
 South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)
 South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)
 Somalia (Somaliland – Puntland)

Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)
 Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)
 Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)
 Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)
 Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)
 Sudan (Darfur)

THE AMERICAS

Brazil (drug-trafficking organizations)
 Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)
 Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)
 Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)
 Nicaragua (opposition)

Mexico (drug cartels)

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Myanmar (Rohingya)
 Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)
 Philippines (Islamist militant groups)
 Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)
 Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)
 India (Naxalites)
 India – Pakistan

EUROPE

Ukraine (Donbas)

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, HIIK observed a total of 374 conflicts worldwide. More than 57 percent, 214, were fought violently, while 151 remained non-violent. HIIK ended the observations of nine conflicts through either active settlement by the conflict parties or year-long inactivity. Compared to 2017, the overall number of full-scale wars decreased from 20 to 16. However, the number of limited wars increased from 16 to 25. An additional eleven conflicts that are currently observed as currently inactive are unaccounted for in these numbers.

WARS

In 2018, three conflicts escalated to full-scale wars. All three were located in the Middle East and Maghreb region. Worldwide, six conflicts that had been on war-level in 2017 de-escalated, while 13 wars continued at the same intensity as the previous year.

While the number of wars rose from six to nine in the Middle East and Maghreb, in all other regions the number of wars either decreased, as in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Oceania, and Europe, or remained constant, as in Americas. In both Asia and Oceania and Europe, no wars were observed in 2018 at all.

In 2018, the Middle East and Maghreb overtook Sub-Saharan Africa as the region with the highest number of full-scale wars. Three new full-scale wars were observed, while all six conflicts that had already been on war-level in 2017 continued at the same intensity. In Syria's Afrin region, a new conflict broke out when Turkish troops, allied with Syrian opposition groups, conquered the region from the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) between January and March in an operation called Olive Branch [→ Syria (Afrin region)]. Resulting in the deaths of at least 1,600 people, among them at least 300 civilians, and causing more than 150,000 IDPs, the conflict directly escalated to war-level. Last year's limited war between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) escalated to a war, primarily because the Turkish military increased its number of airstrikes against PKK facilities in Northern Iraq [→ Turkey (PKK, TAK)]. In Egypt, the conflict between the government and Sunni militant groups on the Sinai Peninsula escalated from a limited war to war-level [→ Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) started a military operation called Sinai 2018 in February and, according to state sources, killed more than 740 militants. Amnesty International accused the EAF of using cluster bombs.

The governments of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey continued to fight the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. As in previous years, IS continued to suffer substantial territorial losses in Syria and Iraq, where it had declared a caliphate in 2014. The Afghan IS branch, moreover, continued to clash with Taliban forces in Afghanistan, for instance between July 12 and August 1, when Taliban defeated IS in Jowzjan Province's Darzab District, leaving more than 300 people killed [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. The Afghan government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and additional US forces, continued to fight the Taliban. However, government-

controlled areas reached the lowest level since the coalition had seized control of Afghanistan in 2001. Moreover, the civilian death toll in Afghanistan reached an all-time high; according to UNAMA, 1,692 civilians were killed between January and July, more than at any comparable time over the last ten years since records have been kept. Apart from the war against IS and the war in Afrin region, a further two wars were fought in Syria, yet again the country most affected by highly-violent conflicts. The government of President Bashar al-Assad, backed by Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, continued to fight the opposition [→ Syria (opposition)]. The war between opposition groups also continued, while jointly fighting against both the Syrian government and IS on several occasions, especially between Islamist and moderate groups, and among different Islamist militias [→ Syria (inter-opposition)].

In Yemen, the war between President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, supported by the Saudi Arabian-led coalition, and al-Houthi forces continued to affect civilians to the highest degree [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. In 2018, the conflict was marked by operation Golden Victory by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates against Houthi forces in the Houthi-controlled Hudaydah governorate, which started in mid-June. Fighting affected the port of Hudaydah, which delivered over 80 percent of food and aid to famine-ridden Yemen, and forced more than 450,000 people to flee the governorate. In mid-December, the conflict parties agreed to a ceasefire in the city of Hudaydah, which was brokered by the UN in Stockholm, Sweden, and observed until the end of the year. The political future of Libya remained embattled, with rival state institutions backed by loyal or loosely affiliated militias and autonomous armed groups fighting each other on war-level [→ Libya (opposition)].

In comparison to the previous year, the number of full-scale wars in Sub-Saharan Africa declined significantly in 2018. Four of last year's ten wars de-escalated, while no new war commenced. In DR Congo, the conflict between the Kamuina Nsapu militias and the government, which had been on war-level in 2017, de-escalated to a violent crisis [→ DR Congo (KN)], and last year's war over subnational predominance and resources between more than 100 armed groups and the government, supported by MONUSCO, receded to a limited war [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. In South Sudan, two wars also de-escalated: the conflict between various ethnic groups over cattle and pastureland [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)] as well as the conflict between the government and the main opposition group [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)].

The remaining six conflicts that were on war-level in 2017 continued at the same intensity. In Sudan, the conflict in Darfur region between various ethnic African armed groups and the Arab-affiliated Sudanese government entered its 15th consecutive year as a war [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. In 2018, the AU and UN joint / hybrid peacekeeping mission UNAMID entered the second phase of its reconfiguration, including the reduction of military and police personnel by more than half. Civilians in Darfur remained highly affected by fighting, while the Sudanese army and government-affiliated militias also frequently attacked IDPs in camps. In the Central African Republic, Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups continued to fight the government at war-level, supported by MINUSCA, even though the number of reported casualties and IDPs decreased

in comparison with the previous year [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. Moreover, at the end of August, 14 armed groups signed a document in Bouar, Nana-Mambéré, which may pave the way for future peace talks with the government. Members of different ethnic groups such as Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Gedeo, and Tigray, among others, continued to fight over grazing and arable land as well as water in Ethiopia, at war-level [→ Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)]. According to UN estimates, ethnically motivated violence in Ethiopia led to the displacement of 1.4 million people between January to June. The war between two Boko Haram factions, both of which pledged allegiance to IS, and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, continued in its eighth year [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. In 2018, the conflict accounted for more than 2,000 deaths, marking a slight decrease in comparison to the year before. Also the war in Nigeria's Middle Belt between farmers and pastoralists continued [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. While the conflict revolved primarily around the control over arable land and cattle, it was further fueled by political, ethnic, and religious issues between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other. In 2018, the conflict accounted for 1,200 deaths; twice the number of 2017. The governments of Somalia and Kenya, supported by AMISOM and US military forces, continued to fight against the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. Between 7,000 and 9,000 al-Shabaab fighters allegedly operated in Somalia, attacking politicians, other state officials, joint forces, and civilians in Somalia and in Kenya's border region to Somalia. The group launched several attacks in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, using car bombs, mortar shelling, and gun fire.

In the Americas, the war between various drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the Mexican government continued, especially affecting the states of Tamaulipas, Guerrero, Veracruz, and Guanajuato [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. As in previous years, the Mexican government continued its kingpin strategy, targeting leading figures of drug cartels, and thus contributed to the increased fragmentation of cartels and heavy fights over local predominance.

LIMITED WARS

While the overall number of wars decreased, the number of limited wars increased significantly from 16 to 25. While five of these 24 limited wars had been on war-level in 2017, nine escalated from either violent or non-violent crises, and nine remained on the same level as the preceding year.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIIK counted nine limited wars; more than twice as much as in the year before. Three de-escalated from war-level, while another three escalated from either violent or non-violent crises. One limited war, taking place in Cameroon between the government and the English-speaking minority, was observed in its first year [→ Cameroon (English-speaking minority)]. The remaining two limited wars continued at the same intensity as the year before. Due to several intercommunal peace conferences and agreements, the death toll of last year's war in South Sudan between various ethnic groups over cattle and pastureland decreased to

around 280 and thus almost halved in comparison to the year before [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)]. And last year's war between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) government of President Salva Kiir, backed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and Riek Machar's opposition group SPLM-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) de-escalated to a limited war due to a peace agreement signed in September by Kiir, Machar, and several other opposition movements [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)]. However, the conflict continued to affect civilians, especially in former Unity State, where a military opposition against SPLM/A-IO in April and May left 232 civilians dead and 31,500 displaced. In DR Congo, HIIK counted three limited wars. The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between more than 100 armed groups and the government, supported by MONUSCO, which had been on war-level in 2017, receded to a limited war [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. In Ituri Province, the conflict between militias such as the predominantly Lendu armed group Front for Patriotic Resistance (FRPI) and the government, backed by MONUSCO, escalated from a violent crisis to a limited war, where violence was also conducted along ethnic lines, most notably between the Lendu and Hema communities [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Moreover, last year's limited war between the Islamist armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the governments of DR Congo, again supported by MONUSCO and Uganda, continued at the same intensity [→ DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)]. While in 2017, the conflict in Somalia between the regional governments of the self-declared state of Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland over their common border region had been on the level of a non-violent crisis, it escalated to a limited war in 2018, when fights escalated in May and left more than 100 soldiers death and at least 15,000 people displaced [→ Somalia (Somaliland – Puntland)]. In Mali, HIIK observed two limited wars. In central Mali, the conflict over subnational predominance between Fulani and Dogon tribes escalated from a violent crisis to a limited war [→ Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)]. Moreover, Mali was the most affected country by the transstate limited war between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), its affiliates, and the IS in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), on the one hand, and the governments of Mali, Algeria, Niger, Tunisia, Libya, and Burkina Faso, on the other [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM, ISGS et al.)]. In Cameroon, the conflict between the government, representing the French-speaking majority of the country, and the English-speaking minority had already started in 2016. However, it had not escalated to a highly violent level until 2017, when English-speaking separatists declared the independence of the Anglophone territories, calling them Ambazonia, in Northwest Region and Southwest Region [→ Cameroon (English-speaking minority)]. In 2018, more than 800 people were killed in clashes between separatists and Cameroonian military and security forces.

In Asia and Oceania, HIIK observed seven limited wars, which marks an increase by five compared to 2017. Both conflicts in Asia and Oceania which had been on war-level in 2017 de-escalated to limited wars, such as last year's war in Rakhine State between the Muslim minority Rohingya and the Buddhist government [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. While last year, 620,000 Rohingya had fled to neighboring Bangladesh, 20,000 Rohingya fled in 2018, mostly due to the govern-

ment's destruction of former Rohingya villages in northern Rakhine. At the end of August, the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar released its report, stating that the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) had conducted both ethnic cleansing as well as systematic sexual violence against Rohingya in Rakhine in 2017, which was however denied by the Burmese government. Moreover, last year's war in the Philippines between the government and Islamist militants such as Abu Sayyaf and Maute groups de-escalated to a limited war [→ Philippines (Islamist militant groups)].

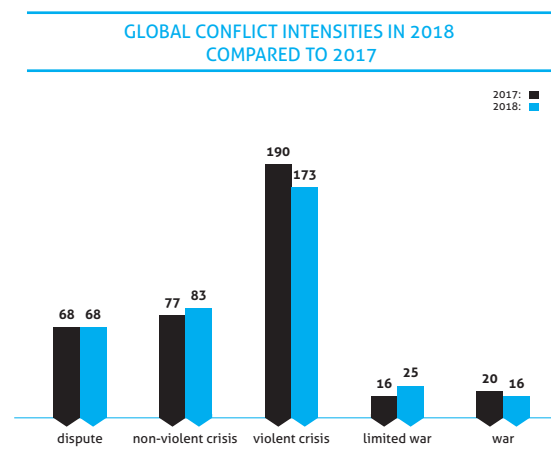
A further three limited wars escalated from violent crises, while the remaining two were fought at the same intensity as the year before. In Kachin state, the conflict between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), politically represented by the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the Tatmadaw over resources and self-determination escalated to a limited war [→ (Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Shan State))]. At least 14,000 people were displaced by fighting which included airstrikes and other heavy weapons. The conflict between India and Pakistan, especially over the status of Kashmir region, escalated from a violent crisis to a limited war, since both sides violated the 2003 ceasefire agreement in the border region more than 5,000 times, which left at least 182 people killed and forced more than 80,000 civilians in India to flee their homes [→ India – Pakistan]. Also in India, the conflict between left-wing extremist Naxalite groups and the government escalated to a limited war, since at least 411 people, including 251 Naxalites, 77 members of security forces and 83 civilians were killed in clashes and IED explosions throughout the year [→ India (Naxalites)]. The conflict between the government of Pakistan and Islamist militant groups, which had de-escalated from war-level in 2017 for the first time in ten years, continued as a limited war [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. Fighting between the government and groups such as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, al-Qaeda, and the IS, left at least 472 people killed. In the Philippines' Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the limited war between several Moro Muslim armed groups and the government continued and displaced more than 48,000 civilians [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)].

Compared to the previous year, the number of limited wars in the Americas decreased by one to five. Two of last year's limited wars de-escalated to violent crises, namely the conflict in Colombia between the government and the left-wing armed National Liberation Army [→ Colombia (ELN)], as well as the conflict in El Salvador between the government and several militant gangs [→ El Salvador (Maras)]. The opposition conflict in Nicaragua, which had been at the level of a violent crisis in 2017, escalated to a limited war, when mass protests against social security reforms turned violent and clashes between protesters and security forces left up to 448 people dead [→ Nicaragua (opposition)]. Furthermore, about 8,000 people fled the country and nearly 600 were reported missing. The remaining four limited wars in the Americas continued at the same intensity as last year. In Brazil, predominantly the favelas of Rio de Janeiro continued to be highly affected by violence connected to drug trafficking [→ Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)]. As in 2017, the demobilization of the FARC in Colombia intensified the conflicts between several armed groups over subnational predominance and the control of illicit economies [Colombia

(neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels); Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. In Mexico, the government's kingpin strategy against the leaders of drug cartels contributed to the increased fragmentation of cartels and heavy fights between them over local predominance [→ Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)]. In the Middle East and Maghreb, HIIK observed three limited wars in 2018; one less than the year before. While the conflict in Yemen between the government and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its Ansar al-Sharia arm in Yemen's southern governorates had already been fought on the level of a limited war in 2017 [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)], the remaining two limited wars in the Middle East and Maghreb escalated from violent crises. In the south of Libya, various tribal and ethnic groups increasingly clashed over the control of trafficking routes and scarce resources, especially in Sebha district [→ Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)]. Militias were mostly mobilized along ethnic lines. And in the Gaza strip, the violent crisis between Hamas and Israel escalated to a limited war, especially due to the so-called Great March of Return, a series of weekly protests by Palestinians along the border fence to Israel, during which at least 180 Palestinians as well as one Israeli soldier were killed [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)].

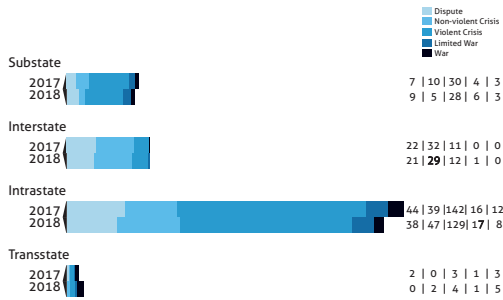
In Europe, the only war to observe in recent years, affecting Ukraine's Donbas region, de-escalated to a limited war for the first time since the conflict's outbreak five years ago [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. The conflict, primarily over the secession of the Donbas region, between several militant anti-government groups, including the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, supported by Russia on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government, supported by Western countries on the other, left approx. 200 people dead in 2018. This marked a significant decrease compared to preceding years and coincided with a 22 percent decline of ceasefire violations. (mag)

GLOBAL CONFLICT STATISTICS 2018

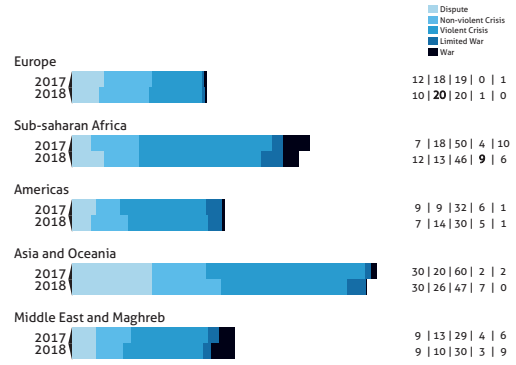


GLOBAL CONFLICT PANORAMA

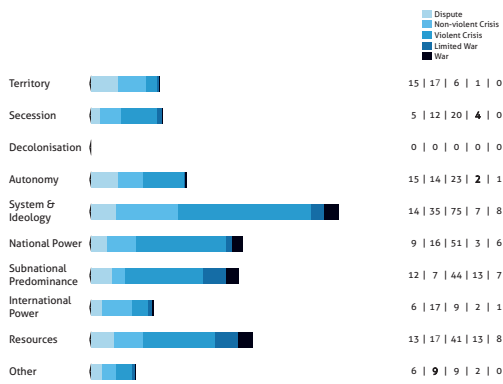
FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN 2018 AND 2017



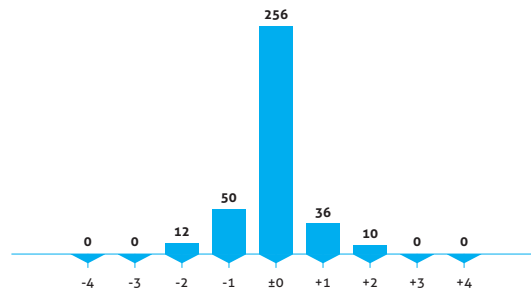
FREQUENCY OF REGIONAL CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN 2018 AND 2017



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN 2018



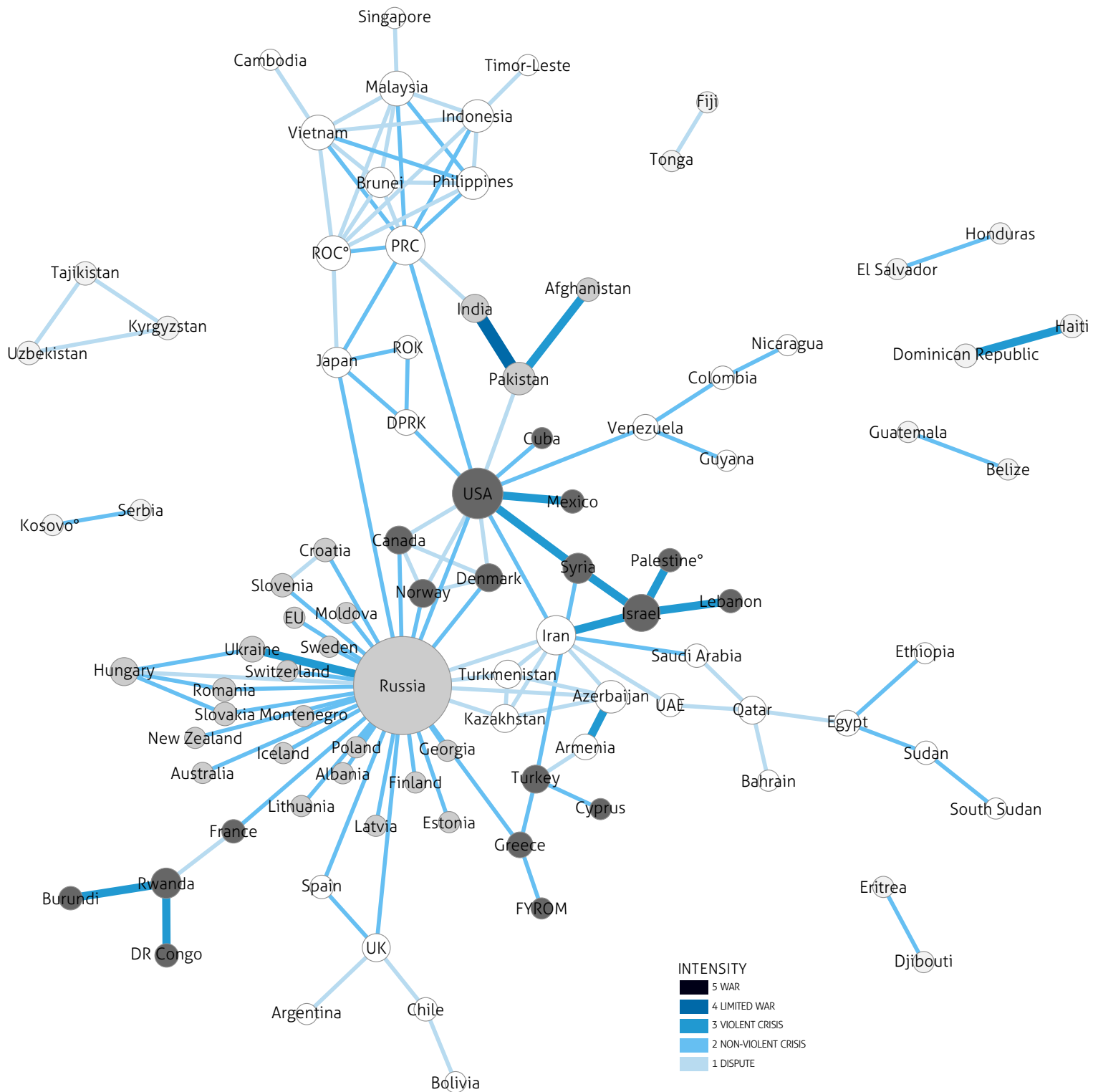
GLOBAL CONFLICT INTENSITY CHANGES IN 2018



CORRELATION OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN 2018

Given conflict item A \ Relative occurrence of conflict item B	Conflict Item B									
	Territory	Secession	Decolonisation	Autonomy	System & Ideology	National Power	Subnational Predominance	International Power	Resources	Other
Territory	■	0	0	0	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.41	0.37	0.10
Secession	0	■	0	0.22	0.12	0.02	0.07	0	0.17	0
Decolonisation	0	0	■	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Autonomy	0	0.17	0	■	0.17	0.02	0.09	0.02	0.30	0.02
System & Ideology	0.01	0.04	0	0.06	■	0.40	0.09	0.08	0.15	0.04
National Power	0	0.01	0	0.01	0.65	■	0.02	0	0.10	0
Subnational Predominance	0	0.04	0	0.06	0.15	0.02	■	0	0.38	0.04
International Power	0.47	0	0	0.03	0.31	0	0	■	0.31	0.11
Resources	0.16	0.08	0	0.18	0.23	0.10	0.35	0.12	■	0.05
Other	0.16	0	0	0.04	0.20	0	0.12	0.16	0.20	■

INTERSTATE CONFLICT CONSTELLATIONS 2018



This network maps all conflictive bilateral relationships monitored in 2018. It comprises 93 nodes (representing states) and 127 undirected edges (representing conflict relationships). Node size is determined by weighted degree, i.e. the number and intensity of the conflict relationships the state was involved in. Edges are sized and colored by conflict intensity. The shading of the nodes indicates their community affiliation, calculated with weighted degree using the Louvain modularity algorithm. The layout is force determined. Independent components are placed near their regional affiliates. State-like entities with contested international status are marked with an asterisk. The EU is treated as an independent actor. EU member states who take conflict positions that are not congruent with the position of the EU or who take part in conflicts in which the EU is not a party, are depicted as independent nodes. Visualizations and statistics were created with Gephi. (jfr)

INTERSTATE CONFLICTS IN 2018

In 2018, 63 political conflicts were conducted on interstate level. Mapped as a network with edges representing dyadic conflict relationships and nodes representing states as well as state-like entities, the global interstate conflict landscape consisted of 127 conflict relationships among 89 states, the supranational actor of the EU, and the three state-like entities of Kosovo*, Palestine*, and the Republic of China (ROC*). An additional eleven states partook in interstate conflict as members of the EU, which upheld its sanction policy vis-à-vis Russia. 80 nodes were connected in a single component, involving states from all regions. The remaining thirteen nodes formed seven independent components, namely six dyads and one triplet. In terms of density, the network of interstate conflict relations displays 59 closed triplets and has an average clustering coefficient of 0.47, indicating that states were often in conflict with states that were also in conflict with each other. This mirrors the continuation of several multi-party interstate conflicts in 2018, most importantly among them the conflict in the South China Sea [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. Evident from the network is that clusters of conflictive relationships corresponded closely with geographic regions. Only a few states engaged in conflictive relationships across different regions – most prominently the United States and, to a lesser degree, the United Kingdom (UK).

The network is ignorant of the number and types of conflict issues involved in the state relationships. It also does not include indirect conflict relationships constituted by supportive or intervening measures. However, in many cases, these relationships are captured by the network through their thematization in direct conflict relationships. They are also apparent from open triplets in the graph, with states that are separated by one node tending to be allies.

The states with the highest numbers of conflictive relationships were Russia (34), the United States (12), the People's Republic of China (9), and Iran (8). This remained also true when ranked by weighted degree, i.e. by the number of conflictive relationships as weighted by intensity.

As 52 of the bilateral conflicts were conducted on the level of a dispute and 62 on the level of a non-violent crisis, about 90 percent of all conflicts between states remained under the threshold of direct violence against people. Among the 13 conflict relationships involving the use of violence, the limited war between India and Pakistan remained the only highly violent conflict [→ India – Pakistan]. Half of the relationships entailing a violent crisis were observed in the Middle East. Among them were the conflictive relationships between Israel and four of its neighbors, seeing escalations in the cases of Iran and Lebanon [→ Iran – Israel; Israel – Lebanon]. Other areas affected by violent state relationships were Eastern Europe, figuring prominently in the re-escalation of tensions between Ukraine and Russia [→ Russia – Ukraine], Central America [→ Dominican Republic – Haiti], South Asia [→ Afghanistan – Pakistan], and the Great Lakes region in Sub-Saharan Africa, where tensions escalated between Rwanda and its neighbors [→ Burundi – Rwanda; DR Congo – Rwanda].

With regard to non-violent conflictive relationships, the two main regions of concentration remained East Asia and Eastern Europe. Due to the major multi-party conflicts in the South

China Sea, the East China Sea, and on the Korean Peninsula, conflict relationships in East Asia were much more tightly knit than in Eastern Europe, featuring an average clustering of 0.51 compared to 0.34. States in East Asia were thus more frequently in conflict with states that were also in conflict with each other, suggesting a considerably less stable structure than in Europe. This is exemplified by the conflict between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), which are both members of an alliance with the US in the conflict over the nuclear program of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) [→ Japan, South Korea, USA – North Korea]. In 2018, their bilateral dispute escalated to a non-violent crisis, with Japan claiming on December 20 that an ROK destroyer had locked its fire-control radar on one of its patrol aircrafts [→ Japan – South Korea]. By contrast, conflict relationships in Eastern Europe continued to be highly structured by the cleavage between Russia and the member states of the NATO [→ EU, USA et al. – Russia]. The only major conflict cross-cutting this cleavage was the one between Hungary and its neighbor states over minority questions, escalating in 2018 to the level of a non-violent crisis [→ Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities)]. By contrast, the fronts in the multi-party conflict over the Arctic were highly congruent with those of the NATO-Russia conflict in 2018 [→ Norway et al. – Russia (Arctic)]. The Middle East and Latin America featured even lower degrees of clustering.

A descriptive analysis using the Louvian modularity algorithm on the basis of weighted degrees detected nine communities in the central component. The largest conflict community formed around Russia, counting 22 nodes. It was followed in size by two conflict communities detected across the Middle East and in East Asia, each consisting of 13 nodes. The first centered around Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, while branching out into the multi-party conflicts of Northeast Africa [→ Egypt – Ethiopia, Sudan (GERD)] and the Caspian region [→ Kazakhstan – Russia et. al. (Caspian Sea)], including also the violent conflict in the Caucasus [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan]. The second comprised the major conflicts in East and Southeast Asia, with the PRC, Japan, and the ROC as major hubs. It did not include the intense conflicts between Pakistan and its neighbors, which were identified as a separate South Asian community. The fourth largest community formed around the US, spanning across the Arctic conflict system, the conflicts between the US and its neighbor countries, and the conflicts in the Levant. The conflicts between Venezuela, Colombia, and their neighbors were identified as a separate community. Turkey was located in a community with Greece, including also the countries' non-violent crises with Cyprus [→ Cyprus – Turkey] and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [→ FYROM – Greece]. Finally, communities of four nodes were detected around the UK and France. The former comprised the UK's conflicts with Argentina, Chile, and Spain [→ Argentina – United Kingdom (Falkland Islands / Islas Malvinas); Chile – United Kingdom (Antarctica); Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar)], the latter the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, linked to France through its conflict with Rwanda over the judicial reappraisal of the genocide [→ France – Rwanda]. (jfr)

AUTHORITATIVE DECISIONS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

In 2018, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), or the Court rendered four judgments and registered five new applications. Moreover, public hearings were held and deliberations are now pending in both the case concerning Certain Iranian Assets (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America) and the advisory opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965 [→ Iran – USA]. On May 29, the case by Malaysia and Singapore for Interpretation of the Judgment of 05/23/2008 in the case concerning Sovereignty over Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge (Malaysia v. Singapore) was removed from the Court's dockets on the request of both parties [→ Malaysia – Singapore].

The four judgments were rendered in favor of Costa Rica, France, and Chile, respectively.

First, in the case on Certain Activities Carried Out by Nicaragua in the Border Area (Costa Rica v. Nicaragua), the Court rendered a judgment on compensation on February 2. It awarded Costa Rica approx. USD 350,000 in environmental damages caused by Nicaragua on its territory. This was the first time in the history of the Court that it had determined a compensation claim for environmental harm.

Second, the Court joined the two cases between Costa Rica and Nicaragua on Maritime Delimitation in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean as well as on the Land Boundary in the Northern Part of Isla Portillos and rendered its judgment on the merits on February 2. The Court found, *inter alia*, that Costa Rica had sovereignty over the whole northern part of Isla Portillos, including its coast (with the exception of Harbor Head Lagoon and the sandbar separating it from the Caribbean Sea), and that Nicaragua is to remove its military camp from Costa Rican territory.

Third, in the case on Immunities and Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France), the Court delivered its judgment on the preliminary objections raised by France on June 6. By fourteen votes to one and on the basis of the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes, the Court declared its jurisdiction concerning the status of the building located at 42 Avenue Foch in Paris as premises of the Equatorial Guinean mission.

Fourth, in the case concerning the Obligation to Negotiate Access to the Pacific Ocean (Bolivia v. Chile), the Court delivered its judgment on October 1 [→ Bolivia – Chile (access to sea)]. Bolivia alleged that Chile had established an obligation to negotiate Bolivia's sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean through a variety of measures. The Court found by twelve votes to three that Chile did not establish a legal obligation.

Four new applications were filed by Guyana, Qatar, Iran, and Palestine, while Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) jointly appealed to the Court.

On April 4, Guyana filed an application against Venezuela in order to settle a century-old border dispute [→ Guyana – Venezuela]. It requested the Court to confirm the legal validity and binding effect of the arbitration court decision regarding the border between the colony of British Guiana and the United States of Venezuela of 10/03/1899.

On June 11, Qatar instituted proceedings against the UAE with

regard to alleged violations of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Qatar v. United Arab Emirates) [→ Qatar – Saudi Arabia et al.]. Qatar asserted *inter alia* that the UAE enacted and implemented a series of discriminatory measures against Qataris based on their national origin in June 2017. The Court indicated provisional measures on behalf of Qatar on July 23, after having conducted public hearings one month earlier. It held by a close margin of eight votes to seven that the UAE must ensure the reunification of Qatari families separated by the measures, give Qatari students the opportunity to finish their education, and allow affected Qataris access to judicial organs of the UAE.

On July 5, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE submitted to the Court a joint application constituting an appeal against a decision rendered by the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) [→ Qatar – Saudi Arabia et al.]. Following the imposition of airspace restrictions on aircrafts registered in Qatar, Qatar had submitted on 10/30/2017 an application against aforementioned states. The ICAO found that it had jurisdiction over the dispute, thus rejecting the preliminary objections. Consequently, Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE appealed to the Court to declare this decision void.

On July 16, Iran instituted proceedings against the United States of America (US) with regard to alleged violations of the Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations and Consular Rights concluded between the two states in 1955 (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America) and requested provisional measures [→ Iran – USA]. After US President Trump had announced the end of the US's participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a multilateral agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in 2015, he reimposed sanctions against Iran. According to Iran, this constituted a violation of its rights under the 1955 Treaty, in particular concerning the import and purchase of goods required for humanitarian needs. On October 3, the Court indicated provisional measures in order to preserve certain rights claimed by Iran and asked the parties to refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute. In particular, it held that the US had to remove any impediments on the export of medicines, agricultural products, and equipment necessary for civil aviation to Iran.

On September 26, Palestine instituted proceedings against the US following the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem in May (Palestine v. United States of America). On November 15, the Court ordered that the written pleadings would first be addressed to the question of jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of the application. Palestine based its claim on Article I of the Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes (1961), to which it had acceded on March 22. The US, in turn, did not consider itself to be in a treaty relationship with the applicant under the Vienna Convention or the Optional Protocol. (sst)

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

In 2018, the International Criminal Court (ICC, or the Court) celebrated the 20th anniversary of its founding treaty, the Rome Statute. It undertook ten preliminary

examinations, namely of the situations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh/Myanmar, Colombia, Guinea, Iraq/UK, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, Ukraine, and Venezuela. The preliminary examination of the situation in Gabon was closed on September 21. The prosecutor concluded that the information did not provide a reasonable basis to believe that acts allegedly committed in Gabon in the context of the 2016 post-election violence constituted crimes against humanity within the meaning of the Rome Statute.

In the course of the year, the Court opened three new examinations. On February 8, the prosecutor opened preliminary examinations into the situations in the Philippines and in Venezuela. The examination concerning the Philippines is to focus on crimes allegedly committed since at least 01/07/2016 in the context of the "war on drugs" campaign launched by the government. In turn, the Philippines deposited a written notification of withdrawal from the Rome Statute on March 17. According to the Court, the withdrawal had no impact on the proceedings under consideration prior to the date on which the withdrawal will become effective (twelve months after the notification).

Concerning Venezuela, the prosecutor examined crimes allegedly committed since at least April 2017 in the context of demonstrations and related political unrest [→ Venezuela (opposition)]. Moreover, on 27 September, the prosecutor received a referral from a group of state parties, namely Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Chile, and Paraguay to investigate alleged crimes against humanity committed in Venezuela since 02/12/2014. This constituted the ninth referral by a state party since the Rome Statute came into force in 2002 and the first referral submitted by a group of states concerning a situation on the territory of another state party.

On September 6, Pre-Trial Chamber I decided on a request by the Prosecutor filed on April 8 concerning the jurisdiction of the Court over the alleged deportation of the Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. While Myanmar was not a state party to the Rome Statute, the Chamber argued that it had jurisdiction over the crime against humanity of deportation allegedly committed against members of the Rohingya people, as an element of this crime, the crossing of a border, had taken place on the territory of Bangladesh, which was a state party to the Statute. Subsequently, on September 18, the Prosecutor announced the opening of a preliminary investigation.

As in last year, the Court continued to examine eleven situations, namely in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Darfur/Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Republic of Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Central African Republic II, Georgia, and Burundi.

20 individual cases were pending at the Court. In the case concerning *The Prosecutor v. Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud*, the accused was transferred from

Mali on March 31 to the Court, following an arrest warrant issued by Pre-Trial Chamber I in March. He was held on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in Timbuktu since 2012, when he had become the de facto chief of the Islamic police. On July 4, a second arrest warrant was issued for Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf Al-Werfalli, commander of the Libyan National Army, charged for the commission of murder as a war crime in Benghazi [→ Libya (opposition)]. Furthermore, two high-ranking Anti-Balaka leaders were transferred to the Court at the end of the year [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. First, on November 11, an arrest warrant was issued for Alfred Yekatom, who had allegedly commanded a group of around 3,000 members operating within the Anti-Balaka movement. He was transferred to the Court six days later and appeared before the Court on November 23. Yekatom was alleged to be responsible for crimes committed in this context in various locations in the CAR, including Bangui and the Lobaye Prefecture, between 12/5/2013 and August 2014. Secondly, on December 7, an arrest warrant for Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, alleged most senior leader and the "National General Coordinator" of the Anti-Balaka in the CAR, was issued. He was alleged to be responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in various locations in the CAR, including Bangui, Bossangoa, the Lobaye Prefecture, Yaloké, Gaga, Bossemp-télé, Boda, Carnot and Berberati, between at least 12/5/2013 and December 2014. French authorities arrested him on December 12.

Two judgments were rendered in connection to DRC politician and former rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo [→ DR Congo (opposition)]. On 8 June, the Appeals Chamber decided, by majority, to acquit Bemba from the charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The former presidential candidate had been found guilty by Trial Chamber III on 3/21/2016 for murder, rape, and pillaging committed under his effective control in the CAR. The Appeal Chamber found that the Trial Chamber erroneously convicted Bemba for specific criminal acts that were outside the scope of the charges and erred in its evaluation of his motivation and measures that could have been taken. In the case of *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo et al.*, the Appeals Chamber rejected the appeals submitted by the accused against their 2016 conviction on March 8. It confirmed the convictions in respect of most of the charges, but acquitted Bemba, Kilolo, and Mangenda of the charge of presenting false or forged documentary evidence. Subsequently, their sentences were amended by Trial Chamber VII on September 17. Bemba returned to the DRC where he planned to run for president in the December elections but was excluded by a decision of the electoral commission due to his conviction of bribing witnesses. (sst)

Spotlights

A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR FOR ETHIOPIA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

In recent years, media coverage of the Horn of Africa was dominated by headlines on natural disasters and political instability. The latest El Niño-driven drought in 2017 severely affected approx. 17 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, leading to widespread malnutrition, a sharp increase in displacement, a huge number of livestock deaths, and the spread of diseases. In October 2017, a truck bombing in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, the deadliest attack in the country to date, claimed the lives of at least 587 people. Security experts and the government later attributed the attack to the militant Islamist group Al-Shabaab [→ Kenya, Somalia (Al-Shabaab)]. In 2018, Ethiopia eventually hit the headlines with the unfortunate record of having the highest number of IDPs worldwide. Furthermore, the ongoing 'no war no peace' situation between Ethiopia and neighbouring Eritrea since their border war between 1998 and 2000 kept the region in suspense due to recurring violent clashes along the border [→ Eritrea – Ethiopia]

Breakup and shakeup in Ethiopia

Anti-government protests against the ruling coalition Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which is mostly dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), emerged in 2015 and were largely driven by ethnic Oromo, who account for roughly 25 percent of Ethiopia's population [→ Ethiopia (opposition)]. As protests grew more and more violent, the government declared a state of emergency in late 2016, which, on the one hand, allowed the executive to abuse their power to some extent, and fuelled the conflict between rivaling ethnic groups such as the Oromo and Somali, on the other [→ Ethiopia (inter-ethnic rivalry)]. Nevertheless, a transformation process commenced in Ethiopia when Abiy Ahmed took office in April, after former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn (2012-2018) had resigned in February due to the growing unrest across large parts of the country. Ahmed belongs to the Oromo ethnic group, who for decades had felt oppressed by Tigrayan-dominated politics. Considered to be of particular symbolic value, expectations were high that his appointment would help building a bridge between the rivalling ethnic groups in the country. Furthermore, he consequently pursued a liberal reform agenda and paved the way for the implementation of the 2000 Algiers Agreement.

Two sides of the same coin – Ahmed's political reforms

Abiy Ahmed lifted the 2016 state of emergency in June 2018, released thousands of political prisoners, took former rebel groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and Ginbot 7 off the country's terrorist list, and lifted censorship measures by unblocking hundreds of TV channels and websites. The latter marked a first step towards a more independent climate in Ethiopia's previously highly restrictive media landscape. Although the EPRDF had already paved the way for more gender balance and justice in Ethiopian politics, Ahmed took this up by appointing Sahle-Work Zewde, the country's first female president. Additionally, half of his cabinet ministers are women. In Ethiopia's predominantly patriarchal society, the mere existence of a gender-balanced cabinet could point to a novel

public discourse on gender rights. However, these progressive liberalisation attempts did not remain without resistance. In June, Abiy Ahmed was targeted in a bombing attack during a rally in the capital Addis Ababa but remained unharmed. Furthermore, his inclusive approach that led to the changed status of former rebel groups had both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, the government's appeasement efforts, aiming to overcome long-lasting hostilities, resulted in respective peace agreements with OLF, ONLF, and Ginbot 7 [→ Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya); Ethiopia (ONLF/Ogaden)]. On the other hand, the return of former rebels from Eritrea triggered violent protests and clashes between non-Oromo and Oromo ethnic groups across large parts of Oromia regional state. Additionally, violent encounters between federal military forces and OLF fighters took place in the group's suspected strongholds in Western Oromia. Ethnically-motivated violence involving Oromo and Somali along the border between Oromia and Somali regional states did not only continue, but new ethnic-based conflicts emerged in the Gedeo and Guji zones, Southern Ethiopia. These widespread clashes accounted for 1.4 million displaced people in 2018.

While the recent developments may point towards a climate of transformation and change in Ethiopia, the country still remains strongly divided along ethnic lines and faces multiple challenges that must be addressed.

From enemies to brothers

Domestic transformations in Ethiopia were closely linked to regional developments, especially in relation to Eritrea. After the Ethiopian-Eritrean border war between 1998 and 2000, a situation of 'no war no peace' had prevailed. The Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission's (EEBC) decision over demarcation of the border had constantly been rejected by Ethiopia and intermittently led to violent clashes at the border, lastly in 2016. Further, the conflict had also been fuelled by Eritrea allegedly hosting and training Ethiopian militant groups.

After signalling his readiness to end the dispute and reconcile with Eritrea during his inauguration speech on April 2, Ahmed announced to fully implement the EEBC's ruling in June 2018 and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from the border town of Badme.

The TPLF at first objected the planned restitution of territory and complained about their insufficient involvement. Furthermore, residents of the town of Badme and members of the Irob ethnic group took to the streets in Tigray region, bordering Eritrea, publicly opposing the rapprochement in June. Nevertheless, bilateral talks between a high-level delegation of Eritrea's and Ethiopia's federal governments were held in Addis Ababa on June 26.

A first symbolic step within the process of establishing peaceful relations was the 'Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship' signed by Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki and Abiy Ahmed during a visit to Asmara on July 9. In the following two months, a series of bilateral talks were held, telecommunication lines restored, and flights between Asmara and Addis Ababa resumed for the first time in 20 years. The re-opening of the embassies in the respective capitals marked another formal act of re-establishing diplomatic ties and paved the way for the reopening of border crossings on September 11. Five days later, Afwerki and Ahmed signed the Jeddah Peace Agreement in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The agreement officially

declared the end of hostilities, the pursuit of peaceful relations, and cooperation in politics, security, defense, economy, trade as well as cultural and social fields. The agreement also foresaw the implementation of the EEBC's decision and the establishment of a Joint Special Economic Zone.

Fostering diplomatic ties in the Horn of Africa

The Eritrean-Ethiopian rapprochement also positively affected regional relations. In July, Ethiopia offered to mediate talks between Asmara and Djibouti over the renewed Ras Doumeira border demarcation dispute, which continued after Qatar had withdrawn its peacekeeping troops in June 2017 [→ Djibouti – Eritrea]. Furthermore, Eritrea and Somalia, who had suspended their diplomatic relations over allegations that Eritrea funded Al-Shabaab and provided them with weapons in opposition to Ethiopia, restored their diplomatic ties. In September, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia signed a tripartite agreement, aiming to enhance their political, economic, security, and cultural relations. A meeting held in Djibouti between the foreign ministers of the three nations and Djibouti culminated in an agreement between Djibouti and Eritrea to restore their friendly relations and pursue a peaceful way of conflict resolution.

On September 13, Eritrean efforts to peacefully integrate into the region were rewarded with the lift of multiple sanctions imposed by the UNSC in 2009 and 2011, including an arms embargo, a travel ban, and an assets freeze. The Djiboutian government, which had initially condemned claims by Ethiopia and Somalia to lift the sanctions against Eritrea, eventually welcomed the unanimous decision by the UNSC. The past year has shown that even long-lasting hostilities and seemingly irreconcilable differences can be overcome and that, under the right circumstances, the path is clear for more friendly and peaceful relations. Without a doubt, the catalyzing factor for the peaceful resolution and rapprochement in the Horn of Africa was the change in Ethiopian leadership. Nevertheless, Abiy Ahmed's ambitious reform agenda does not leave the formerly dominant TPLF in the lurch, creates new tensions within Ethiopia, and deepens existing cleavages. In February 2019, despite appeasement measures and an ostensible rapprochement with Ethiopian rebel groups, the government launched its first airstrikes against OLF fighters in western Oromia. Further, particularly high-ranking TPLF members from the Ethiopian military and intelligence community were arrested on corruption allegations in previous months. It remains to be seen what impact the first census in ten years planned for April 2019 will have on the ethnically divided country and what action Abiy Ahmed will take on an already tense situation on the way to the 2020 parliamentary elections.

BINTA BAH, LISA WALDHEIM, ANNA FEIEREISEN

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN ARMED CONFLICT

Sexual violence has been synonymous with armed conflict for millennia. However, over recent decades, legal, institutional and feminist academic effort has come to shape our understanding of sexual violence in armed conflict, not as an inevitable by-product of war, but as an illegal use of power against members of communities experiencing conflict. In

the past year, there have been some specific trends and occurrences that make the issue particularly worthy to look at. This spotlight will focus on three case studies where conflict and its immediate effects are ongoing in 2018: Syria, Iraq, and Myanmar. Then, it will consider the details of each case study including questions of recognition and accountability, closing with a brief discussion of the question of justice.

The armed forces of the government of Myanmar, the Tatmadaw, have used sexual violence as a tool of coercion and control against minority ethnic groups for years (Women's League of Burma 2014). But this year the international community came to recognise their use of sexual violence against the Rohingya as a tool of genocide [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. Early analysis of the number of pregnant women and new mothers in the refugee population in neighbouring Bangladesh supported reports that sexual violence had been perpetrated as part of ethnic cleansing (Hutchinson 2018). By August, the international community was talking more definitively about genocide. The UN Human Rights Council published the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar stating that "rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated on a massive scale" (UN Human Rights Council 2018a: 347f). The Tatmadaw used rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, forced nudity, and mutilations. The report found that the commander in chief and top five generals of the Tatmadaw had effective control of operations in Rakhine State and should therefore be investigated and prosecuted for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The chair of the fact finding mission said that civilian oversight of the Tatmadaw and accountability for these crimes "is the greatest impediment to Myanmar's development as a modern democratic nation ... Myanmar's democratic transition depends on it" (UN Human Rights Council 2018b). The United States imposed sanctions on an additional three senior leaders and two military units and the European Union imposed sanctions on a further three senior leaders (European Union 2018).

In Syria, government forces and allied militia have used sexual violence against opposition communities since the beginning of the conflict in 2011 [→ Syria (opposition)]. According to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, sexual and gender-based violence was initially conducted by government forces during ground operations, at checkpoints, and during detention of victims (Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic 2018). Survivor testimonies have shown "rape has served as a weapon to attack Syrian people perceived as pro-opposition by humiliating women and damaging communities, and by punishing and taking revenge on people involved with the opposition" (Forestier 2017: 10). Importantly, this sexual violence has clearly been perpetrated not just against women and girls; but men and boys; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQI) people as well (Chynoweth 2017).

This year, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic released a report detailing the rape and sexual violence perpetrated by government forces and associated militias (Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic 2018). However, in areas retaken by the government, the issue remains unmentionable, largely out of fear of reprisal.

Sexual violence directed against civilians is a means of instilling fear into the population; discouraging and punishing alleged support of rebel groups (Meger 2016: 72). According to Sara Meger, this use of sexual violence by authoritarian state regimes is part of a larger campaign of repression (ibid.). It creates long term psychological effects and social trauma that continue to be a barrier to peace, justice, and stability in Syria.

The great powers at work in the Syrian conflict have hampered intervention by the Security Council. China, Russia and the US each have very different views on what is needed and have used their veto powers accordingly. It is for this reason that sexual violence, including as war crimes and crimes against humanity, has not been referred to the International Criminal Court. In the end, it was the General Assembly who took the unprecedented step, creating the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. Although the IIIM has a particular mandate to consider crimes of sexual violence, it is not a court in and of itself. Throughout 2018 it continued to "collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence" (United Nations General Assembly 2016) for future use by national and possibly international courts.

Although the so-called Islamic State (IS) were also responsible for sexual violence in Syria, it was in northern Iraq where they attacked the Yazidi minority group that sexual violence conducted by IS exceeded even the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. They killed or kidnapped approximately 10,000 Yazidis in a matter of days in August 2014 (Cetorelli et al. 2017). Survivors suffered forced religious conversion, recruitment as child soldiers, torture, and sexual slavery. Sexual slavery may have injected up to USD 21 million into the economy of IS, providing opportunity to fund ongoing operations (1). According to Yazda, the global Yazidi Organization, to this day it is thought that as many as 3,000 women and children are still missing or held captive by IS. Buying back a single Yazidi sex slave from IS costs between USD 20,000 and 30,000 (2), providing a maximum of USD 90 million ongoing income to IS. Neither Iraqi nor allied forces adapted their operations in the battles for Mosul or Raqqa, where most captives were held. In 2018, the Armenian parliament recognised IS' genocide of the Yazidis and both houses of the Australian parliament specified the use of sexual violence as a tool of this genocide, calling for criminal accountability of individual perpetrators.

The Nobel Peace Prize was jointly awarded to Yazidi activist Nadia Murad, and Congolese gynaecologist Dr Denis Mukwege, "for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict." Murad has been fighting for justice for survivors of human trafficking and sexual violence since she escaped IS captivity. She has publicly stated that she wants the courtrooms, not executions for the perpetrators of these crimes. Iraq has a very poor record of gender justice in their judicial system and ranks nearly the lowest possible for legal discrimination in the Women, Peace and Security Index (Klugman 2017). In 2018, up to 11,000 alleged IS members were held in Iraqi counterterrorism courts (Alleruzzo 2018). Human rights campaigners have reported concerns about due process (Human Rights Watch 2017).

These courts do not call witnesses and hundreds of people found guilty have been executed. Not only does this deny victims their chance to tell their story in court, but there are increasing concerns the lack of due process is feeding into the grievances that allowed IS to rise in the first place, and now threatens their return.

However, the quest for justice was also hampered this year, with the acquittal of Jean-Pierre Bemba by the appeals chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Bemba's case had set a precedent in 2016 when he was found guilty of the crime against humanity of rape. His trial was the first to focus exclusively on sexual violence crimes (Brady 2012). He was tried for command responsibility for acts perpetrated by his militia in the Central African Republic. But he was acquitted on procedural grounds that upend the established processes of the ICC and diverge from standard appeals court procedure (van den Wyngaert et al. 2018). The decision by the appeals chamber may also have impact on future prosecutions based on the principle of command responsibility, in which a military commander can be found criminally responsible for the acts perpetrated by his subordinates if they fail to prevent to prevent and punish particular crimes. The acquittal does not mean Bemba did not perpetrate the acts for which he was accused. It just means the appeals chamber did not believe the prosecution had met the legal standard for the ICC to continue detaining him. After his acquittal, Bemba returned to the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he intended to run in the Presidential election. However, the ICC had upheld charges of witness tampering and the national electoral commission accordingly deemed him ineligible to run. Nonetheless, his influence remains strong in Congolese politics and the justice Dr Mukwege, vulnerable civilians in the east of the Congo, and the victims of sexual violence in neighbouring Central African Republic seek remains notably absent.

In conclusion, in this selection of these cases, sexual violence has been an indicator of increasing armed conflict, driver of armed conflict, or a barrier to peace and stability. Historically disregarded, and still regularly overlooked in international peace and security operations, it is fundamentally important to have a gendered understanding of conflict. Understanding sexual violence, its short and long term effects, is just one aspect of what is required to fully understand conflict dynamics to work toward peace and security.

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(1) The USD 21 million figure is calculated from the following data: UNODC published testimony of ISIS defectors reporting prices of USD 1000 to 3000 per transaction for a sex slave (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2018). USD 3000 was multiplied by the 7000 (an estimate used by many sources) Yazidi women and girls held in sexual slavery by ISIS. Anecdotal evidence and other reporting provides transaction prices of both much more and much less than the USD 3000 used in this estimation. The vast majority of slaves were sold and resold many times.

(2) This is the figure provided by Nobel Laureate Nadia Murad during a Washington DC press conference in October 2019 (George 2018).

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ISLAMISM ONLINE – THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY RADICAL ISLAMISTS IN INDONESIA

Indonesia, the country which is home to the world's largest Muslim population, has seen a boom in the access to and use of social media in recent years. According to a report by We Are Social and Hootsuite (2018), around 23,000,000 Indonesians created their first social media account between January 2017 and January 2018, making Indonesia the country with the third largest increase in the number of social media users worldwide. The same study found that Indonesia also ranks third worldwide in the time each user spends on social media, which amounts to an average of three hours and 23 minutes per user per day. Additionally to this striking increase in the popularity of social media, Indonesia has also seen a rise in the presence of fundamentalist and radical Islamist groups, particularly since the fall of the "New Order" regime in 1998. International and local Islamist organizations such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia and the Islamic Defenders Front have received wide media coverage and have greatly influenced public discourse in political and religious matters. Militant Islamist organizations that claim affiliation to the so-called Islamic State (IS), such as Jemaah Islamiyah or Jamaah Ansharut Daulah, have carried out several attacks in Indonesia in the past few years [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. Well-known examples of such attacks include a series of bomb attacks in Bali in October 2002, which left 202 people dead and more than 200 injured, and a bomb attack and ensuing firefight in Jakarta in January 2016, which killed eight people and injured over 20.

Radical Islamist ideas, including the rejection of democracy and the demand to establish a caliphate based on Sharia law, have gained ground not only with isolated, fundamentalist groups, but have also found popularity with a large part of Indonesia's overall population. For example, in Indonesia's Aceh province, regulations derived from Sharia law have already been in place since the Indonesian government granted the region special autonomy in 2003, following 27 years of violent conflict. The regulations in Aceh were further amended in 2014 in order to follow Sharia law more strictly. The aspiration to establish an Islamic state can also be seen in other Indonesian provinces, and is, as a recent survey conducted by the Indonesian National Intelligence Agency (BIN) suggests, relatively widespread among the younger generation. The survey conducted in high schools and universities in 15 Indonesian provinces in 2017 found that 23.3 percent of the high school students and 24 percent of the university students who participated in the survey supported the idea of violent jihad as a means of establishing a caliphate based on Shariah law (Azzam and Dianti 2018).

Considering the growing popularity of social media and the present fundamentalist tendencies that several Islamist groups are actively promoting in Indonesia, it is not surprising that social media has become a platform on which radical content is regularly published and shared. Given that 90 percent of the social media users in Indonesia are younger than 34 (Halim 2018), it is to be expected that social media content supporting Islamist ideas is primarily consumed by users of this age group. The use of social media for religious purposes is, however, not monopolized by fundamentalist groups. Almost all Muslim organizations in Indonesia, rang-

ing from the moderate to the very radical end of the spectrum, operate regularly updated social media channels where content on organizational and religious matters is published. Platforms such as Facebook or WhatsApp are used by a wide array of imams and religious "influencers" to stream religious speeches or publish both religious and political statements (Halim 2018). Social media has thereby opened up new possibilities for people to become popular preachers. While traditional media such as TV or radio stations might choose to refrain from publishing controversial religious content, social media platforms allow individuals to publish content with little or no censorship (Hew 2018). Felix Siau, a famous religious "influencer", is a prominent example of this phenomenon. He regularly publishes content associated with Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, a group banned in July 2017 because of their anti-democratic and radical Islamist views, on several social media platforms. The ban of the group does not seem to have had a negative impact on Siau's popularity. As of January 2019, he had about 4.4 million subscribers on Facebook, 3.1 million followers on Instagram and 2.8 million followers on Twitter. Siau publishes content in a youthful and modern style, with the explicit goal of promoting Islamist views to a young audience (Hew 2018).

Posting radical content on social media in order to attract attention is, according to the American Southeast-Asia Intelligence Analyst Nathaniel Moir (2017), one of the strategies adopted by Islamist groups to recruit new members. Potential members are attracted through public posts on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter and are ultimately redirected to closed, private groups on platforms which allow end-to-end encryption, such as the messaging apps WhatsApp or Telegram. These smaller groups then create a sense of community and common identity for the individual members, who share and discuss radical ideas in this environment of like-minded people. Beside its facilitative effect on radicalization, the communication through these end-to-end encrypted messenger apps also simplifies the organization of violent attacks and, in the case of Telegram, provides a means of communication which is free from surveillance. In the aforementioned attack in Jakarta in January 2016, for example, Telegram was used for this very purpose (Moir 2017).

Not only do social media groups create a sense of belonging and a shared identity between like-minded people but they have also given rise to the phenomenon of "lone wolf terrorism", which has been widely discussed in Indonesia particularly after a 17-year-old IS sympathizer attacked a church in North Sumatra in 2016. Police could not find direct offline links to any Islamist group, but discovered the attacker had been in touch with radical networks and had been exposed to their content online, where he also learned how to build the bomb used in the attack (Heneghan 2016).

The Indonesian government has recently started to take measures in response to the online activities of Islamist groups. In June 2017, for example, a presidential decree was issued by President Joko Widodo, creating the Indonesian National Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN). Among other tasks, the BSSN focuses on controlling online activities by Islamist groups in order to prevent online and offline attacks (Parameswaran 2018). While cyber-attacks against state networks have so far not played a role in the conflict between Islamist militant groups and the Indonesian government, there

are indications they could become relevant in the future. One of these indications is a statement published in August 2018 by a group called Hacktivist 1435 Anshar Caliphate Army, in which the Indonesian government was threatened with a series of cyber-attacks should they continue detaining members of Islamist groups (Chew 2018).

The conflict between militant Islamist groups and the Indonesian government has thus clearly gained a new, online dimension that will certainly continue to develop and become more relevant in the future. The adoption of online activities, and particularly the use of social media, have provided Islamist groups and individuals in Indonesia with a whole set of new opportunities. Social media provides a platform on which content can be published with few restrictions, so that groups or individuals can present themselves as active players in religious and political matters. Furthermore, they allow for an easier connection to like-minded people over a large geographical area, thus facilitating the recruitment and radicalization of new members, as well as the communication about specific measures. The use of end-to-end encrypted messaging apps in addition to other technical means to stay anonymous make the online activities significantly harder to detect and potentially prosecute. Considering that the government has only recently started to take action against the online dimension of this conflict, it remains to be seen in how far it can limit the already established ways in which radical Islamist groups use the internet for their purposes.

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DYNAMICS OF CONFLICTS IN AND BEYOND THE HEIDELBERG APPROACH

One decisive innovation of the Heidelberg approach to conflict research, initiated by Frank R. Pfetsch in the early 1990s (cf. Pfetsch 1991, Billing 1992) and further developed by the HIIK and its associated researchers, is to conceptualize conflicts as dynamic. Combined with the decision to include non-violent conflicts as well – uniquely so in the field of quantitative conflict research (cf. Schwank/Trinn/Wencker 2013: 51ff.) –, this conceptualization allows to trace processes of conflict escalation and de-escalation. In doing so, the Heidelberg approach creates a basis for investigating how and why non-violent conflicts eventually develop into full-scale wars. Furthermore, other dimensions of conflicts such as conflict parties and items are conceptualized as dynamic. However, the Heidelberg approach to the analysis of conflict dynamics has hitherto been largely limited to tracing said dynamics of escalation and de-escalation. In the following paragraphs, I will firstly elaborate the Heidelberg approach's grasp of dynamics. Secondly, I will sketch how the neglected elements of conflict dynamics, especially the question of how actor-related dynamics are linked to escalation processes, can be analyzed more profoundly.

1. Conflicts as dynamic processes in the Heidelberg approach: Elaborating implicit elements

The Heidelberg methodology clearly shows the conception of conflicts as dynamic processes, if both the definition of conflicts and the model of conflict intensities are taken into account. According to the current methodology, conflict is defined as "a positional difference between at least two assertive and directly involved actors regarding values relevant to a society (the conflict items) which is carried out using observable and interrelated conflict measures that lie outside established regulatory procedures and threaten core state functions, the international order, or hold the prospect of doing so. [...] Conflict measures are described as all actions and communications by a direct or indirect actor within the context of a specific political conflict."

While this definition also implies structuralist references (the core of conflicts is located in positional differences), a decisive dimension is process-oriented: Conflicts are being carried out in a process of action and interaction, so-called conflict measures, between at least two conflict parties. These conflict measures are aimed at the pursuit of their respective, incompatible interests, and the achievement of the specific goals related to them; they constitute a social process which has a duration over time. All elements involved in this process are, in principle, conceptualized as dynamic (cf. Schwank/Trinn/Wencker 2013: 48ff.; and Schwank 2012).

Although the methodology as explained in the Conflict Barometer only focuses on the dynamics of conflict intensity as abstract from conflict measures, the conflict actors, their constellations, and the disputed items are regarded as possibly underlying change, too. Firstly, conflict actors may change over time. I.e., new conflict parties as well as other conflict actors, such as supporters or interveners, can become involved in a given conflict without the methodology necessarily demanding to consider this a new conflict. The

same holds true for the opposite case: When conflict parties, even those who were constitutive for the emergence of the conflict, dissolve or withdraw from the conflict arena, the methodology does not force the conflict observer to mark the conflict as ended, as long as other conflict parties continue the conflictive interaction.

Secondly: The Heidelberg approach allows taking into account more than two opposing actors, either by various conflict parties forming a coalition against another conflict party or coalition, or even by introducing a third side (see below). Thus, dynamics concerning actor constellations and coalitions become discernible. By displaying and tracing such changes both in its databases and in the Conflict Barometer since the early 2000s, the Heidelberg approach has been ahead of the discussion: Actor fragmentation was systematically discussed in quantitatively-oriented journals about a decade later (cf. Findley/Rudloff 2012, Bakke/Cunningham/Seymour 2012, Cunningham 2013, Cunningham 2006), and only with regard to the number of conflict parties. Nevertheless, the complex actor constellations and constellation structures and their dynamics the Heidelberg approach allows for have not yet been focused on so far (although intra-state conflicts with complex actor constellations have made an at least occasional appearance in the Conflict Barometer from 2008 on, and inter-state conflicts even earlier so).

Thirdly, conflict items are regarded as dynamic as well. The broad range of conflict items, combined with the possibility to assign more than one item to a conflict, allows to depict and trace dynamic changes: One conflict item can replace another or new conflict items can be added to already existing ones. Items can also cease to be disputed among the conflict parties. If other items still persist or new items come up within a short period of time, the conflict is regarded as ongoing.

Both the parties and the items of a conflict can change, sometimes repeatedly, over the course of time. Such cases pose the methodological challenge of deciding, in retrospect, whether these transformations were so profound that they constitute another conflict that gradually emerged out of the other or not, whether the original conflict has ended or is still ongoing, and, more fundamentally, to develop criteria for such a decision.

Fourthly, the most elaborate dimension of conflict dynamics concerns the interaction process between conflict parties. The methodology distinguishes between five levels of intensity, from non-violent through sporadically violent conflicts up to full-scale wars, based on the conflict measures conducted (i.e. conflict conduct). These intensities allow to trace processes of escalation and de-escalation of specific conflicts over time. Thus, it is possible to characterize and classify the interaction process between the conflict parties at a given time as well as the development of this process. The Conflict Barometer has made use of this possibility firstly by displaying the change of conflict intensity in comparison to the previous year (from its very first publication in 1992 on), and secondly by depicting the intensity changes throughout the course of the respective year for selected conflicts based on region-month intensity (since 2011). More importantly, both the HIIK methodology and its database in principle allow tracing escalation and de-escalation processes throughout the entire duration of a conflict. Conflicts do not "vanish" if they

cease to be carried out violently or re-emerge as "new" conflicts in case of a re-escalation (cf. Schwank/Trinn/Wencker 2013: 56f.). By contrast, the oscillation of conflict conduct between sporadically or even non-violent and highly violent phases become visible. Therefore, both single case studies, comparative research with small samples, and quantitative approaches on processes of escalation are possible. However, so far this opportunity has mainly been used for the purposes of quantitative research (cf. Trinn 2015, Schwank 2012, Rohloff/Pfetsch 2000).

Put more generally: The given possibilities to grasp and analyze conflict dynamics have hitherto only been elaborated with regard to conflict intensities, and have only been used in a quantitative way. Case studies have been few, and in quantitative analyses, the number of conflict actors as well as the conflict items have been treated as independent variables whose values were kept constant and then related to conflict intensities (e.g. Schwank 2012: chap. 5.4.5). Like this, certain dynamics of conflict conduct are linked to specific structural features – but not to the latter's change. Due to these limitations, the chance to relate dynamic processes in various conflict dimensions to each other, e.g. the change of items to the change of intensity and vice versa, or the change of conflict actors to the change of conflict items, remains unused. In the following section, I will briefly sketch an attempt to tackle this research gap (cf. in extenso Mayer 2019), concentrating on the relation between actor-related dynamics and dynamics of conflict conduct.

2. The interrelation of conflict dynamics: Analyzing escalation

Conflict structure also encompasses the conflict parties and further actors, on the one hand, as well as the specific actor constellations and the constellation structure, on the other hand. If they are conceptualized as dynamic, changes in the conflict structure can be assessed systematically. In addition, they can be linked to the conflict conduct, both on the level of the specific conflict measures and on abstracted, related levels of the form of conflict conduct and of conflict intensity. Actor-related conflict dynamics encompass far more than the changing participation of actors in a given conflict arena, i.e. the involvement of new or the withdrawal of former conflict parties. Firstly, a special form actor-related change is the splintering of conflict actors, or the reverse, which would be the (re-)unification of splinter groups or factions. Secondly, conflict parties can change their constitution in many ways throughout the course of a conflict. An unorganized conflict party can develop organized structures; a hitherto civil group can take up arms or vice versa. This transformation can be due to their involvement in the conflict: A joint confrontation of the authorities might consolidate a spontaneous group, and thus constitute an organized social movement, which is able and willing to stage regular demonstrations. Repeated violent clashes with the police might make a group consider and eventually take up armed struggle, which might lead to an increased and more hierarchical organization. As this example shows, conflict parties are not necessarily antecedent to conflict and even less so are they fixed in their constitution. They are not only the conflict's active "carrier groups" (Weber 1988), but rather formed and re-shaped by their involvement in the conflict: Conflicts make conflict parties as much as con-

flict parties make conflicts (cf. Simmel 1992 and Tilly 1990). Thus, the interrelation between interactions within and between conflict parties is decisive for the understanding of conflict dynamics, including escalation and de-escalation.

Conflict configuration, i.e. the actor configuration in the conflict arena, refers to the relatively stable relations between conflict parties and other types of conflict actors such as supporters and interveners. Actor constellations are central to conflict configuration, i.e. the antagonistic relationships between conflict parties. In addition, there are coalitions, relations of support, and of intervention. In order to analyze these relations, it is necessary to introduce a more abstract level: the structure of configuration, or constellation, respectively. While specific actor constellations can be depicted as a network displaying all relations between all conflict parties involved in a certain conflict, the term constellation structure refers to the relatively stable patterns these actor constellations form: e.g. whether a multitude of political parties and civil society groups constitute two sides along one major cleavage (such as - put very simplistic - for or against leaving the EU in the case of Great Britain), or rather three clusters of conflict parties pitted against each other (such as left-wing opposition groups and right-wing opposition groups both opposing the government, but also each other). The former would be termed a dyadic structure, the latter a triadic structure.

Conflict configuration is variable both on the level of specific actor constellations or other relationships and on the abstract level of the structure of the configuration, or constellation, respectively: Consequently, both change within the existing structure and a change of the structure itself is possible. The former would comprise e.g. a conflict party changing sides within a dyadic constellation structure. The transformation of constellation structure refers to the possible expansion of the dyadic structure (A vs. B) to a V-shaped (A vs. B vs. C) or even triadic structure (A vs. B vs. C vs. A), due either to breaking coalitions on one side or the emergence of a new party opposing one or both of the previous sides. This increasing complexity leads to a polyadic constellation structure in which all sides are fighting against each other (e.g. [→ Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry); Kenya (inter-communal rivalry)]).

The change of actor constitution, actor constellations, and of constellation structure is linked to the change of conflict conduct, including changes of conflict intensity. This can be illustrated with help of an ideal-type construction of the escalation of intra-state conflicts based on Herbert Blumer's analysis of social movements (Blumer 1978) and Georg Simmel's insights on social conflicts (Simmel 1992). The hypothetical starting point is an unorganized and heterogeneous "unrest group", voicing its opposition to the government. While such social unrest tends to subside quickly, as the carrier group dissolves, organized social movements emerge in some cases. Their emergence is due to the experience made by individuals and groups participating in the movement in their interaction with the authorities Blumer argues that collective action, especially if defined as successful by its carrier group, has a unifying dimension, making it possible to organize the group. At the same time, the emerging organization fundamentally changes the protesters' form of conflict conduct: By virtue of organization, protest loses its

erratic character, and becomes guided by established long-term goals and strategies.

In the course of ongoing protest, the relationship between protesters and the authorities tends to become polarized. Polarization increases the likelihood of spontaneous violent acts on both sides, and is, in turn, increased by them. If groups located within the protest movement interpret their own sporadic acts of violence as successful compared to civil protest, as legitimate, and possibly even as necessary due to the authorities' eventual attempt to violently crack down on the protests, a process of militarization may begin. This process can result in the formation of an organized armed group. If the authorities react by employing the military instead of police forces, the form of conflict conduct might turn highly violent. If the armed non-state conflict party comprises a large number of fighters organized according to the principles of open or guerilla warfare, not just a (by far smaller) clandestine group, the conflict may assume the "classical" form of a dyadic civil war.

However, this is not the end-point of conflict development. According to the Conflict Barometer and the HIIK dataset, the majority of highly violent conflicts involves more than two parties: more than one armed group fighting against the government, or militias loyal to the government, paramilitary groups, and communal self-defense groups, or more than one state's army. This already indicates that the said groups can relate to each other in more than one way, constituting possibly complex and dynamic configurations and constellation structures. Thus, in conflicts characterized by actor fragmentation and associated dynamics on the structural level like an increasing complexity of the constellation structure, conflict conduct might change its form from relatively concentrated fighting to tactics employed by relatively weak actors. As each conflict party is at least potentially threatened by more than one opponent, it becomes difficult to concentrate all forces on the fight against one particular adversary. By contrast, some or even all conflict parties are forced to fight on multiple fronts, and to use their forces sparingly.

3. Empirical illustration: Darfur

The example of the Darfur conflict in Sudan [→ Sudan (Darfur)] well illustrates the interrelation of actor-related dynamics and escalation (cf. Flint and de Waal 2008, Flint 2010, Tanner/Tubiana 2007, Gramizzi/Tubiana 2012). In order to fully cover the conflict's dynamics, I include both the precursors of the current war and constellations involving various communities and armed groups in the region [→ Sudan (intercommunal violence)]. Put in very simplistic terms, the Darfur conflict can be traced back to the 1950s and 60s with Darfurians criticizing the region's marginalization by the government in Khartoum. Tensions intensified due to serious droughts and the subsequent famine that hit Darfur in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the Sudan Federal Democratic Alliance (SFDA) movement, dominated by Darfur's majority ethnic group Fur, began to consider taking up arms against the government. Also due to the drought, conflicts and violent clashes over land rights and water access between local farming communities and nomads increasingly occurred. These were further fueled by local nomad groups' adoption of "Arab supremacy", an ideology spread by Libyan then-president Muammar al-

Gaddafi. As a consequence, a sharp ethnic boundary was drawn between "Arab" and "African" groups – labels until then unknown in Darfur. When local conflicts between nomads and farming communities escalated to war in the mid-1990s, with the government arming and supporting the "Arab" groups instead of intervening, a group of Fur academics became convinced that "armed resistance" was necessary. They began to establish an armed opposition movement, the later Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), comprising the main "African" groups Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa, and demanding autonomy for Darfur. When the SLA openly started to attack government forces in 2002, the conflict soon escalated to a war according to the HIIK definition.

The multi-actor but yet dyadic structure of the civil war lasted only for a short time. The SLA was quickly joined by a second armed opposition movement, the Islamist Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The government started to recruit "Arab" militias called the Janjaweed from communities already involved in local violent conflicts. Consequently, the dyadic constellation structure was transformed into a V-shaped structure: government vs. "African" armed opposition movement vs. "Arab" militias. The constellation structure became increasingly complex following the failed Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) of 2006. SLA and JEM split into a multitude of factions (at least 16 in 2007), fighting each other especially along the lines of signatory vs. non-signatory groups, and sometimes also within these camps. Some "Arab" communities as well as militias turned against the government, sometimes even fighting alongside militant opposition groups, and sometimes fighting each other. When Minni Minawi's SLA faction pulled out of its DPA-constituted alliance with the government in 2010 and returned to the armed opposition movements' side, the government started to arm "African" communities to fight the militant opposition groups' communities of origin. Finally, these "African" militias became involved in fighting with "Arab" militias. Thus, the number of conflict lines increased and additional conflict items emerged. Distinguishing these lines allows for the disaggregation of the conflict intensity: While the overall intensity of the Darfur conflict has remained on the level of a war since 2003, the heavy fighting constitutive for this classification occasionally shifted from one conflict line to another. Hence, the interrelated dynamics concerning the conflict parties – changing constitutions, fragmentation, change of actor constellations and constellation structure etc. – and the dynamics of conflict conduct become discernible. Thus, the example of the Darfur conflict illustrates the potential of the Heidelberg approach to trace and analyze conflict dynamics in a multi-dimensional approach.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUNGER AND POLITICAL CONFLICT – THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND EMPIRICAL REALITIES

For humanitarian workers in the field of food security, the UN Security Resolution 2417 (2018) on the link between hunger and conflict was a milestone. It constituted an important element for the further development of international law on hunger and complemented the already existing rules in international humanitarian law aiming at protecting civilians during armed conflict (IHL). Moreover, it raised awareness for the fact that the bi-directional causal relationship between hunger and conflict had received insufficient attention in the last decades.

Thus, this spotlight wants to theoretically discuss and empirically show that food insecurity and conflict form a bi-directional causal relationship. It follows that both conflict researchers and humanitarian aid practitioners have to improve their knowledge of each other's field.

The UNSC resolution might have been a major achievement. However, it should be considered first and foremost a starting point, and an incentive for researchers and practitioners to join efforts in order to build resilient and food-secure societies.

The link between food insecurity and conflict

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Simmons 2013: 9). Hunger is a specific, severe form of food insecurity. It may be defined as "an uncomfortable or painful sensation caused by insufficient food energy consumption" (FAO 2008: 1). The absence of food insecurity can be seen as one central element of a positive peace understanding (Galtung 1969). Food security is characterized by four dimensions; the availability of food, the access to food; the utilization of food, and the stable access to food all the times. While all hungry people are food insecure, not all food insecure people are necessarily hungry. It is well-established knowledge that armed conflict affects food security in these four dimensions (Simons 2013). First, armed conflict negatively affects the availability and the flow of goods, which usually goes along with the destruction of assets and supply of food, causing a decrease of productivity. It also hampers investment. Second, armed conflict reduces both the economic and physical accessibility to food storage and production sites as well as the ability of people to purchase it. The frequent use of landmines, for example, in Angola or Bosnia and Herzegovina, makes large areas inaccessible. Third, armed conflict usually reduces levels of health care and limits the possibility of adequate nutrition. Finally, food availability can often neither be predicted nor guaranteed during armed conflict (ibid). Although not mentioned by Simmons, the gravity of the psychological impact caused by all forms of food insecurity cannot be emphasized enough.

Considering this causal path from the other direction, there are several ways in which food insecurity may contribute to conflict. One possibility is that the rise of food prices may

lead to or catalyze unrest. Risk of unrest is higher in countries with low levels of income, indicating lower levels of resilience and coping capabilities (Raleigh et al. 2015). Since in many cases these countries are not able to stabilize food price fluctuation, populations that had already spent a high share of their income on food are not any more able to pay for even higher prices.

Additionally, scarcity of food-related resources such as cattle or general levels of poverty, increasing the risk of food insecurity and hunger, may cause conflict (Hegre et al. 2013).

Finally, in the absence of established mediation mechanisms or the rule of law, human necessities such as nutrition frequently become a valuable good in conflicts. When war economies are based on resources, for instance from mining or food trade, the violent contestation between non-state armed groups and governments or between different non-state armed groups may further deteriorate living conditions. In this context, food insecurity may prolong conflicts, contributing to vicious cycles of reproducing instability and violence (Simmons 2013).

These arguments shape our understanding of individuals affected by food insecurity. We should assume an interaction of different layers of motives such as relative deprivation (Gurr 1974), food insecurity, hunger, and social ties that may activate grievances and eventually lead to the decision to engage in violence (Martin-Shields/Stojetz 2018; related research by Humphreys/Weinstein 2008). In the case of already ongoing wars, individuals or groups may attack preemptively out of fear of an attack by others that may reduce the share of certain limited and essential resources such as water. This classic security dilemma is especially present when considering food-related goods that are easy to transfer and highly important for survival. In this regard, it is not only the "objective" level of food insecurity but also an individual's perception of food insecurity in absolute and relative terms in comparison to a reference group that has to be taken into account (Gurr, 1974).

Food (in)security as a variable in conflict research

Since hunger as conflict consequence is intensively covered by research, the emphasis in the following is on the state of the art regarding hunger as explaining variable for armed conflict. For a long time, quantitative research with armed conflict as explanandum has been mainly based on macro-level, country-year indicators. Meta-analyses (e.g. Colaresi et al. 2016) identified the dimensions demographics, economy, geography, state capacity, the conflict's historical and geographical context as well as exogenous shocks as essential predictors of armed conflict. Within these dimensions, the time horizon with which these variables affect the emergence of conflicts varies between short-term and long-term consequences.

In the majority of these quantitative studies, hunger was not seen as an independent explaining variable for conflict onset. One reason for this is the strong correlation between food security and both the general level of economic development as well as state capacity. Both variables are major predictors of armed conflict (Dixon 2009), and are of high importance for explaining food security. Measurement-related endogeneity issues may derive from this interrelatedness, explaining why

many authors might have refrained from adding food security in addition to economic development / state capacity. However, there are good reasons to assume that this neglect of explicitly investigating food insecurity as explaining variable led to an underestimation of how it may contribute to armed conflict. Fortunately, more recent research in the last decade was marked by a sudden increase of attention for food security as explanans for armed conflict after the world food price crisis in 2008 (Rudolfson 2018).

Food security, on the macro level, may be perceived as another indicator for the country's level of development, thereby only representing a different form of operationalizing the independent variable. However, micro data on food insecurity allow to trace causal evidence for how hunger may be a motive for individuals to engage in violence that goes beyond their general socioeconomic situation.

For a long time, mostly due to a lack of micro-level data, research on individuals' motives for participating in armed conflict was rare – with some exceptions, such as the study by Humphreys/Weinstein (2008) using survey data from combatants and non-combatants in Sierra Leone. It would therefore be valuable if future research investigated how food insecurity interacts with other individual motives such as perceived horizontal inequality to increase one's susceptibility to engage in violent action (Rudolfson 2018).

A study by Pinstrup-Andersen and Shimokawa (2008) uses national measurements for poverty, nutritional status, and a country's economic performance in their analysis in order to explain armed conflict. Their regression – while providing only correlational evidence – is crucial, since it shows the importance of hunger-related variables while controlling for economic development: When partializing the effect of economic development, food insecurity is still a substantial factor explaining armed conflict. Moreover, the results suggest that economic performance in general is less predictive than poverty and nutritional status. This insight needs further attention and micro-level investigation regarding individuals' motive to engage in combat. Thus, the main objective for further research will be to better understand the transmission mechanisms from food security to armed conflict (Martin-Shields/Stojetz 2018).

Another relevant food-related variable is food price uncertainty. Smith's (2014) analysis shows that food price increases are indeed related to spontaneous violent outbreaks such as riots because they might take up underlying grievances and offer an opportunity for mobilization. In these cases, food insecurity functions as trigger (Rudolfson 2018). Wischnath and Buhaug (2014) accordingly show that losses of food production contribute to an increase of violence by lowering the opportunity costs for engaging in violence and at the same time increasing recruitment opportunities and more accentuated social grievances.

In sum, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is a need for context-specific analyses of how hunger and conflict may affect each other.

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that different forms of food insecurity lead to different manifestations of violent conflicts. For instance, a sudden increase of food prices – as in the case of some of the Arab Spring demonstrations – are more likely to trigger national unrest because they mobilize more people at the same time and strongly affect their

perception of food security. In contrast, continued, local tensions over cattle, as in South Sudan, are untouched by price changes. In this case, conflict formed over time as a consequence of permanent scarcity of resources and persisting food insecurity. Also, climate as one context-specific variables is of highest importance (Martin-Shields/Stojetz 2018). However, it is out of the scope of this Spotlight to address climate properly. Finally, there is some evidence that food aid may also prolong armed conflicts (Nunn/Qian 2014; Chu et al. 2017). For humanitarian workers, this implies to base their interventions on conflict analysis in order to anticipate potential negative effects.

Framework for case studies: Food Wars

In order to present a conceptual framework for determining the relationship between hunger and armed conflict in the following case studies, the essay refers to food wars. Messer and Cohen (2015: 213) define them as "situations where hostile parties use food (or hunger) as a weapon of war, where food insecurity follows as a consequence of conflict and where food insecurity consequently contributes to continuing cycles of underproduction and political violence." This concept contains three possibilities to arrange the causal and temporal relationship of food insecurity and conflict. First, hunger may structurally cause or trigger violence, or may be a prolonging factor for violent conflict. Second, food insecurity and hunger may be used as a strategic weapon in armed conflict. Even though using starvation as method of warfare is prohibited by IHL, this tactic is still frequently used in the 21st century. Finally, hunger may be a consequence of conflict. While the first and the third manifestation of this link have been described in the previous sections, hunger as a method of warfare will be addressed in one of the following empirical case studies.

These three ways of perceiving the causality between the two may be separated conceptually. However, as will be shown later in the case studies, hunger may be a cause for, a weapon in, and a consequence of conflict at the same time.

Empirical Cases: HIIK Case Studies

Patterns of co-occurrence of food insecurity, according to the FAO, and political conflicts, based on HIIK data, indicate a strong relation between both. Clustering in Africa may lead to the question if this correlation might only be a geographical artefact. However, qualitative assessment suggests that the vicious cycles between food insecurity and conflict are not geographically limited but rather aggravated by the lack of infrastructure and climate-related conditions, which are especially present in Africa. While geographical correlation provides no information on the causal relationship, such patterns suggest that conflict and hunger are strongly interrelated.

Hunger as structural cause: the Sahel

In many countries of the Sahel part of Africa, where droughts happen every few years, HIIK observes several so-called inter-communal conflicts, which all share some features regarding their structure and dynamics. In the extremely dry Sahel, resources such as arable or pastureland and water are scarce and have become conflict items. The conflicts are carried out

along different lines. In Nigeria, for instance, farmers fight against herders over land, which cannot be used for growing crops and grazing cattle at the same time [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. Moreover this conflict is further fueled by ethnic and religious issues, given the fact that the farmers are predominantly Christian ethnic African, while the herders are predominantly Muslim ethnic Arab. In 2018, this conflict accounted for at least 1123 deaths. At this point, it is important to recall that HIIK measures only direct conflict consequences. Indirect conflict consequences of the vicious cycles formed by hunger and violence may be significantly higher. In South Sudan, currently affected by famine in parts of former Unity state, fighting takes place both between farmers and herders, but also among different herding groups [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)]. Especially Dinka, Nuer, and Murle people fight over cattle and grazing land. In a country so badly hit by food insecurity such as South Sudan, cattle has become a decisive currency. This inter-ethnic conflict is therefore also called "battle for cattle", since the groups repeatedly conduct highly violent cattle raids, not only stealing cows but also killing people, raiding villages and, as of late, abducting each other's children to use them for domestic work. These cattle raids are especially numerous and violent in times of drought and subsequent food insecurity. Pastoral migration was therefore the central topic of different inter-communal peace conference held throughout the year [→ Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei)].

Other inter-communal conflicts in which ethnic groups fight over scarce land for crops or grazing or over cattle are observed by HIIK in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Sudan, and Uganda.

Hunger as weapon: Hudaydah

The war in Yemen between the government of President Hadi, who is supported by an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia, and al-Houthi forces, is responsible for the world's largest food security crisis in 2017 and 2018 [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)]. According to UN's World Food Programme, up to 20 million people in Yemen face hunger as we speak, more than 14 million of them are in need of immediate assistance in order to sustain or save their lives. Yemen is one of the most infamous cases for hunger being used as a method of warfare. Both conflict parties unlawfully (Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions; Customary Rule 53) impeded the delivery of needed humanitarian aid throughout the last years. The humanitarian situation had already been devastating when in November 2017, Saudi Arabia had imposed a blockade on all commercial and humanitarian shipments to Yemen in response to a missile launched by Houthi rebels towards Riyadh international airport. Houthi-Saleh forces, in return, blocked and confiscated food and medical supplies and denied access to populations in need.

In 2018, the port of Hudaydah, eponymous governorate, became a tragic symbol of hunger as conflict weapon. Since the escalation of the conflict in 2014, the port of Hudaydah had functioned as entry point point for over 80 percent of food aid and medical supply to Yemen and thus constituted a vital lifeline for the majority of Yemen's population. On June 13, the Saudi-led coalition, Hadi-aligned forces, and United Arab Emirates-backed tribal militias launched the so-called "Operation Golden Victory", a military offensive against the

Houthi-controlled Hudaydah city. Airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition not only affected the port but also the airport, and targeted hospitals, markets, and grain silos. According to UN data, more than 450,000 people fled al-Hudaydah governorate in relation to "Operation Golden Victory". Humanitarian agencies warned of the possible consequences to which a full siege of Hudaydah would lead. The Saudi-led coalition's strategy is frequently described as attempts to cut the Houthis' supply lines (Reuters 2018). After failed UN attempts to reach a political solution, fighting in Hudaydah continued until the end of the year. Finally, in UN consultations initiated by UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in Stockholm, Sweden, between December 6 and 12, the warring parties agreed upon a ceasefire in Hudaydah, including the city's demilitarization under UN observation and the exchange of up to 16,000 prisoners.

Hunger as conflict consequence: DR Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, HIIK observes ten conflicts, three of which are currently fought at the intensity of a limited war [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias); DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.); DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)]. In 2017, DR Congo was affected by two full-scale wars, which were not covered by Western media at all [→ DR Congo (KN), DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. These highly violent conflicts led to the internal displacement of 4.5 million people by the end of 2018. Moreover, the country also hosts over half a million refugees from neighbouring countries affected by violent conflict, such as Burundi, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, making for Africa's largest displacement crisis. It is especially these displaced people, the "most vulnerable", who are in dire need of protection and aid (Brinkman/Hendrix 2011). Due to ongoing fighting and insecurity, farmers have been unable to plant their crops for the past seasons. This especially hit the previously peaceful region of Kasai, where the food and nutrition situation is alarming. Hunger is now affecting up to 7.7 million Congolese and a national cholera epidemic is spreading across the country. Meanwhile, the level of international humanitarian funding is at a ten-year low. In combination with aggravating conditions such as droughts, which are especially harmful when they hit countries and regions with weak political structures and a weak civilian infrastructure, ongoing highly violent conflict is one major determinant to explain the high level of food insecurity in DR Congo.

However, it is important to keep in mind that the lines between these three different roles of hunger in conflict are in reality blurred, and that in many cases, unfortunately, more than one category is fitting. In Venezuela, for instance, hunger and conflict are currently interrelated in all three ways possible [→ Venezuela (opposition)].

While poverty and undernourishment strongly decreased in the 2000s, this trend has been reversed from 2010 on. The lack of an alternative to oil exports as major revenue for the government's programs strongly limited the capacity to react to oil price volatility. In combination with the economic policies by then-president Hugo Chávez and, later, by Nicolás Maduro – in power since 2013 –, this led to a strong inflation, an increase of unemployment, and shortages of food, water, and electricity. In 2018, Venezuela's GDP decreased by 18 percent; the inflation rate was 1.37 million percent

(IMF 2019). In 2017, Venezuelans lost on average eleven kilograms in weight (Reuters 2017). Unable to tackle these issues, the Maduro administration became more authoritarian in order to maintain its power, circumventing the opposition's majority in the National Assembly and conducting repressive measures against protesters and opposition figures. Food insecurity, thus, initially provided a motive for protesters and the opposition. Additionally, as a consequence of these high levels of food insecurity and political oppression, more than three million people have already fled the country since 2015 to neighboring countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru. Finally, "hunger as a weapon" can be seen in the current blockade of humanitarian aid from Colombia, Brazil, and islands such as Curacao, initiated by Juan Guaidó, recognized by about 50 countries as interim President. Maduro refuses to accept humanitarian aid, stating that there was no famine in Venezuela, instead blaming an "economic war" against his government, staged by the US.

Summary and Conclusions

The previous theoretical considerations and case studies show the complexity of the link between hunger and armed conflict. The difficulty to classify conflicts into the categories shows that hunger and conflict form vicious cycles that are hard to contain. For instance, Yemen – listed as example for using hunger as means of warfare – had already been the region's country with the highest level of food insecurity before the outbreak of the war (World Bank 2018). Moreover, the use of hunger as starvation also has long-term consequences for food security. The research overview demonstrated that while there has been a significant increase of attention for food security as explanans in the last years, there is still a long way ahead.

If hunger and conflict form vicious cycles, humanitarian work and conflict research have to join efforts to improve knowledge and strategies in order to tackle both. Analytical tools such as Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) should be refined to food-specific needs. Humanitarian interventions that are accompanied by PCIA might be more efficient to reduce both food insecurity and causes for engaging in violence since they are aware of potential, unintended negative outcomes of their work: "Relief and development organizations [...] have learned from recent experiences in war-torn societies that well-intended activities might have unintended outcomes and that development cooperation is never neutral in conflict situations. Under unfavourable conditions it may further entrench unjust power structures and prolong situations of war" (Schmelzle 2005: 1). Regarding these considerations, PCIA might be an important bridge between research and practice.

VINCENT STÜBER, MARILENA GEUGJES

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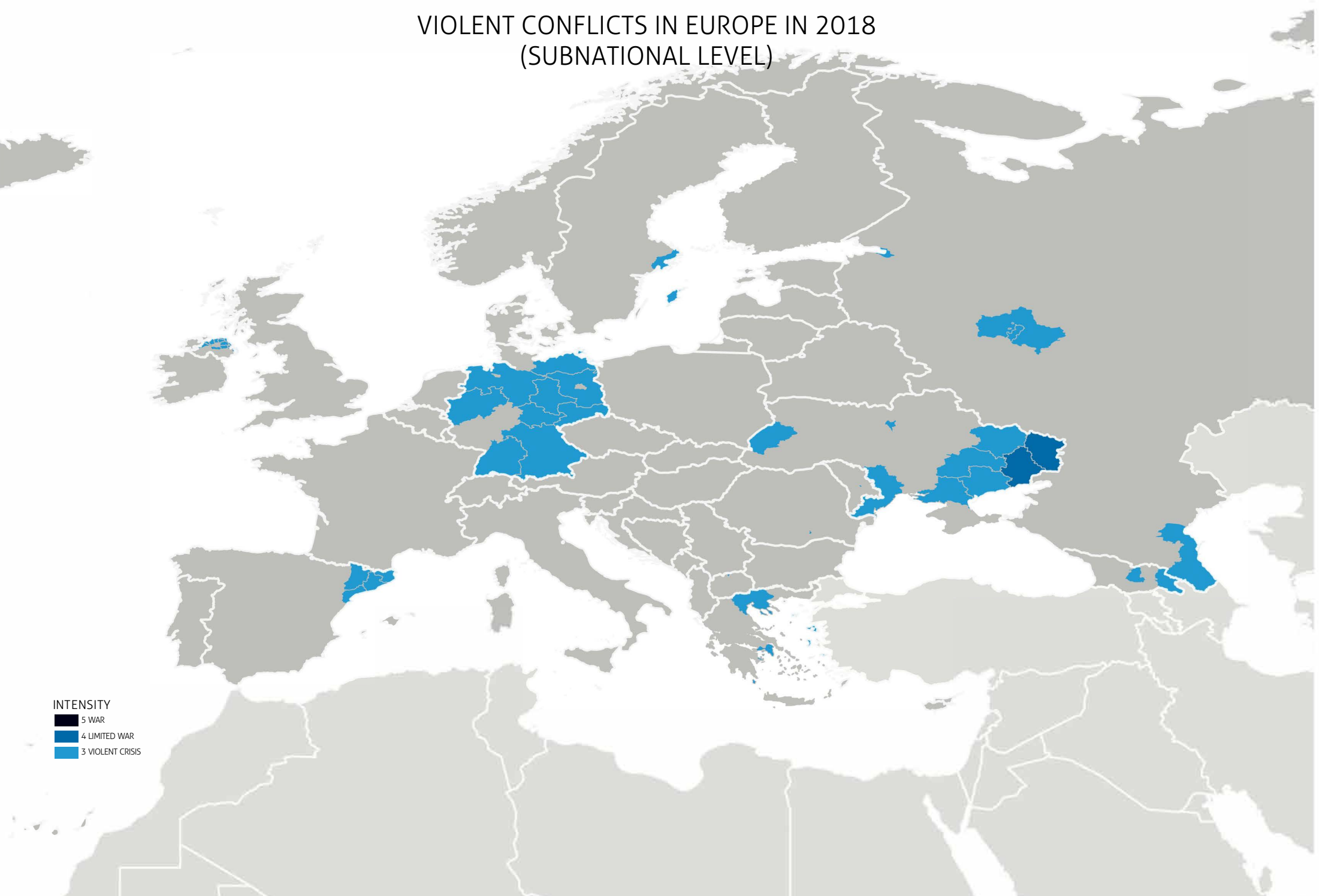
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Europe

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN EUROPE IN 2018 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, Europe counted a total of 51 conflicts. As in previous years, only one highly violent conflict was observed. Almost 60 percent of the conflicts in Europe remained on a non-violent level. Moreover, Europe's only war in recent years, taking place in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, de-escalated to a limited war in 2018. Consequently, in 2018, no conflict was fought on war-level in Europe.

Last year's war between the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government, on the other, de-escalated to a limited war for the first time since its eruption in 2014 [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Both sides repeatedly blamed each other for violating the 2015 Minsk II agreement. Several rounds of renewed ceasefire negotiations only led to short cessations of hostilities. Since the beginning of the conflict, nearly 13,000 people have been killed. In 2018, fighting concentrated in five areas, mostly in Donetsk Oblast. The use of heavy weapons, which were supposed to have been withdrawn according to Minsk II, decreased significantly. For the first time, Russian military deliveries to the separatists were observed by OSCE drones. Following the opening of the Kerch Strait Bridge linking mainland Russia and the annexed Crimean peninsula, both Russia and Ukraine deployed additional naval and land forces in the region [→ Russia – Ukraine]. In November the conflict turned violent, when a Russian ship rammed a Ukrainian tugboat and fired shots at an accompanying patrol boat, wounding several. Throughout the year, right-wing groups attacked members of the Roma minority, resulting in several killed and wounded [→ Ukraine (right-wing / opposition)]. Additionally, an increased number of members of civil-right groups were injured or killed by unknown perpetrators.

In Russia, the conflict between the opposition and the government and its ruling United Russia party [→ Russia (opposition)] remained on the level of a violent crisis. Throughout the country, protests against corruption and the re-election of President Vladimir Putin were staged. Especially the presidential election in March as well as the government's decision to raise the retirement age in July sparked large demonstrations. Moreover, more than 4,000 people in over 100 Russian cities demonstrated against the ban against opposition leader Alexei Navalny, which prevented him from running for president.

In Belarus, the government introduced oppressive media laws, while police forces conducted raids on independent media outlets [→ Belarus (opposition)]. For the first time since Alexander Lukashenko became president, the opposition was allowed to hold festivities for the unofficial Day of Freedom in some cities such as in the capital Minsk, where they were attended by up to 50,000 people.

The relationship between the EU, the US, and others, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, remained tense due to troop deployments or large-scale military exercises on both sides [→ EU, USA et al. – Russia]. The attempted poisoning of former double-agent Sergej Skripal in Salisbury, UK, led to increased diplomatic and economic sanctions, since the Western states held Russia responsible for the attack. Furthermore, both US and Russia accused each other of breaching the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and threatened to leave it.

In the context of the conflict over the secession of Catalonia, more than one million pro-independence protesters gathered in Barcelona on October 1 [→ Spain (Catalonia / Catalan Nationalists)]. Violence erupted after protesters pelted stones at police forces, leaving 14 protesters injured. Both in Germany and Sweden, attacks on asylum seekers continued [→ Germany (xenophobes); Sweden (xenophobes)]. In Germany, the conflict intensified after a group of immigrants had been involved in the murder of a German-Cuban person at a festival in Chemnitz. This sparked large protests by right-wing groups against both immigrants and the government's immigration policies. The British exit from the EU remained an issue of contention in several conflicts [→ United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland); United Kingdom (Scottish Nationalists / Scotland); Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar)].

In the Balkans, the conflicts between the opposition and the government in FYROM, Kosovo^o, and Romania remained violent. After 27 years of contestation, FYROM and Greece signed a landmark agreement, consenting on the name Republic of North Macedonia [→ FYROM – Greece (official name of FYROM)]. In reaction, NATO extended an official invitation to FYROM to start accession talks. However, the name compromise triggered week-long protests by opposition groups in both countries, with violence occurring on several occasions. In Romania, massive anti-government protests also took place throughout the year [→ Romania (opposition)]. The largest demonstration gathered more than 100,000 people in Bucharest and 40,000 all over the country, resulting in more than 450 injured people after violence erupted between protesters and police in Bucharest. Tensions between Kosovo and Serbia also continued, with confrontations occurring both on a diplomatic level and within civil society [→ Kosovo^o – Serbia]. Even though both parties raised the idea of redrawing borders, no clear proposal for Kosovo's status was made. Relations worsened further due to factors such as the arrest of a Serbian official in Kosovo and plans to transform the Kosovo Security Force into a military force.

In the South Caucasus, the violent crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued with its dynamic closely related to the conflict over secession between the self-proclaimed government of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) and the government of Azerbaijan [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. Cross-border violence occurred on a monthly basis and dominated the conflict throughout the year.

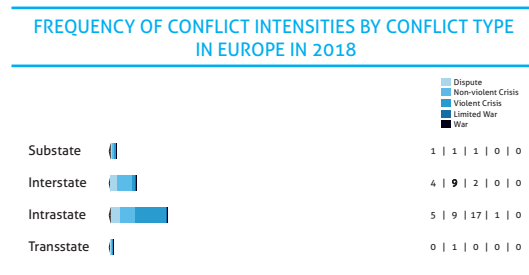
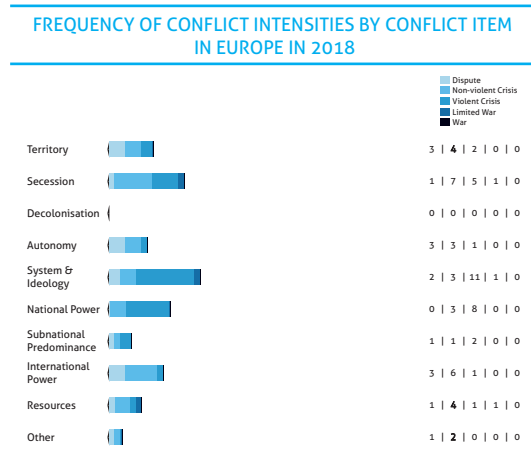
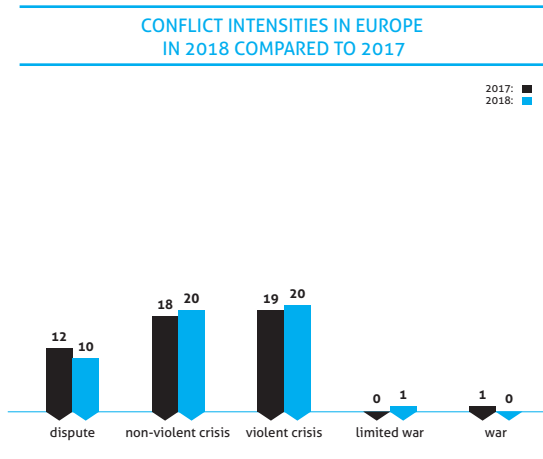
The opposition conflict in Georgia [→ Georgia (opposition)] was especially marked by the presidential elections. Independent candidate Salome Zurbishvili was backed by the ruling party Georgian Dream and won the elections in the second round. Her inauguration day was marked by a stand-off between opposition protesters and the police.

In Georgia's breakaway-region South Ossetia, the so-called borderization process, the setting up of border fences along the administrative borderline between Tbilisi-controlled territory and South Ossetia, continued [→ (Georgia (South Ossetia))]. The relations between the government of Georgia and South Ossetian de-facto authorities further got strained by an incident, in

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which a Georgian citizen was detained, tortured, and killed by breakaway authorities. His body wasn't handed over to the family until a month later.

In Greece, social protests and violence between radical leftist groups and security forces remained on a high level [→ Greece (social protests, left-wing militants)]. Public life was marked by several 24-hour general strikes and partially violent demonstrations against austerity measures by the government.



Overview: Conflicts in Europe in 2018

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Armenia (opposition)	ANC, ARC, Heritage Party, PAP et. al vs. government	national power	2003	↗	3
Armenia – Azerbaijan	Armenia vs. Azerbaijan	territory	1987	•	3
Armenia – Turkey*	Armenia vs. Turkey	international power, other	1991	•	1
Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)*	Nagorno-Karabakh regional government vs. government	secession	1988	•	3
Azerbaijan (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2003	↘	2
Belarus (opposition)	opposition parties, opposition movement, civil-society activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1994	↘	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian Serbs / Republic of Srpska)	Bosnian-Serbs, government of Republic of Srpska vs. government, government of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	secession	1995	•	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Islamist militant groups)*	Islamist militant groups vs. government	system/ideology	2007	•	1
Croatia (Croatian Serbs / Krajina, East, and West Slavonia)*	Croatian Serbs vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Croatia – Slovenia (border)*	Croatia vs. Slovenia	territory	1991	•	1
Cyprus (TRNC / Northern Cyprus)*	TRNC / Northern Cyprus vs. government	secession, national power, 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
Estonia – Russia*	Estonia vs. Russia	territory, international power	1994	↘	1
EU, USA et. al – Russia	EU, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, UK, USA et al. vs. Russia	system/ideology, international power	2007	•	2
France (Corsican nationalists / Corsica)	CL, FC, FCNL et al. vs. government	secession, autonomy	1975	↗	2
FYROM (Albanian minority – ethnic Macedonians)*	Albanian minority vs. ethnic Macedonians	subnational predominance	1991	↘	2
FYROM (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2014	•	3
FYROM – Greece	FYROM vs. Greece	other	1991	↗	2
Georgia (Abkhazia)*	Abkhazian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2
Georgia (opposition)	UNM, various opposition groups vs. government	national power	2007	•	3
Georgia (South Ossetia)*	South Ossetian regional government vs. government	secession, subnational predominance	1989	↗	3
Georgia – Russia*	Georgia vs. Russia	international power	1992	•	2
Germany (xenophobes)	GIDA-movements, various right-wing groups, xenophobes, et al. vs. government, pro-asylum activists	system/ideology	2014	•	3
Greece (left-wing militants – right-wing militants)*	left-wing militants vs. right-wing-militants, Golden Dawn	system/ideology	1976	•	3
Greece (right-wing militants)*	Golden Dawn, right-wing-militants vs. government	system/ideology	1985	•	3
Greece (social protests, left-wing militants)	left-wing militants, social groups, workers unions vs. government	system/ideology	2010	•	3
Greece – Turkey*	Greece vs. Turkey	territory, resources, other	1973	↗	2
Hungary (right-wings – minorities)	Jobbik, Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom vs. Jewish community, LGBT groups, refugees and Muslim community	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2008	↘	1

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities)*	Hungary, Hungarian minorities (Transylvania / southern Slovakia /Transcarpathia) vs. Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine	autonomy, international power	1989	↗	2
Kazakhstan – Russia et. al. (Caspian Sea)*	Azerbaijan vs. Iran vs. Kazakhstan vs. Russia vs. Turkmenistan	territory, international power, resources	1991	•	1
Kosovo ^o (opposition)*	Vetevendosje, LDK, Serbian List vs. government	system/ideology, national power, subnational predominance	2015	•	3
Kosovo ^o – Serbia	Kosovar government vs. Serbian government, Serbian minority (in Kosovo ^o)	secession	1989	•	2
Latvia (Russian-speaking minority)*	Russian-speaking minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Latvia – Russia*	Latvia vs. Russia	international power	1994	•	2
Moldava (opposition)	opposition parties vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2009	↑	3
Moldova (Transnistria)	Transnistrian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2
Norway et al. – Russia (Arctic)	Norway, Canada, Denmark, United States vs. Russia	territory, international power, resources	2001	•	2
Romania (opposition)	opposition movement vs. government	national power	2012	•	3
Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)*	IS Caucasus Province vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1991	•	3
Russia (opposition)	Progress Party, Russia of the Future Party, Communist Party et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	•	3
Russia – Ukraine	Russia vs. Ukraine	territory, international power, resources	2003	↗	3
Spain (Basque Provinces)	EH-Bildu, ETA, PNV, Gure Esku Dago vs. government	secession	1959	•	1
Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia)	Catalan regional government, ANC, Omnium Cultural, CDR vs. government	secession, autonomy	1979	•	3
Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar)	Spain vs. United Kingdom	territory	1954	•	2
Sweden (xenophobes)*	Nordic Resistance Movement, Nordic Youth vs. government	system/ideology	2015	•	3
Ukraine (Crimean Tatars)*	Crimean Tatars vs. Crimean regional government, Russia, pro-Russian activists	autonomy	1988	•	2
Ukraine (Donbas)	DPR, LPR vs. Ukraine	secession, system/ideology, resources	2014	↘	4
Ukraine (right-wing / opposition)	right-wing groups vs. minorities, civil-right groups, opposition parties vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2013	•	3
United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland)	AnP, CIRA, IRM, ÓNH, RIRA, SDLP, SF vs. Alliance Party, DUP, government, RHC, UDA, UUP, UVF	secession	1968	•	3
United Kingdom (Scottish Nationalists / Scotland)	AUOB, SGP, SNP et al. vs. government	secession	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

⁵ Disputed statehood is marked with a °. HIIK follows UN conventions.

ARMENIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: ANC, ARC, Heritage Party, PAP et. al vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the opposition and the government of President Serzh Sargsyan escalated to a violent crisis. The protests peaked during late March and April and led to the resignation of former President and PM Elect Serzh Sargsyan. The protests continued at a lower level until

December, when snap elections resulted in a win for Nikol Pashinyan's protest movement.

Unrelated to the elections, members of the RPA attacked female opposition members on February 13 in a dispute over an environmental question during a session of the Yerevan City Council.

On March 2, Armen Sarkissian was elected as the new president and replaced Sargsyan, who, despite pledging not to compete for the office of PM, announced his participation for the elections in April. After initial protests in March, the leader of the protest movement, Nikol Pashinyan (MP of opposition party Civil Contract), began the protest march through different Armenian cities on March 31, and reached the capital Yerevan on April 13. The protest march was accompanied by, among other things, blockades and occasional confrontation with police forces by tens of thousands supporters of Pashinyan and other protesters. On April 14, the day of Sargsyan's nomination, demonstrators blocked the party's headquarters. Two days later, protesters blocked various government buildings in the capital.

Police intervened with stun grenades, which injured several persons, and arrested hundreds of protesters. On April 17, the demonstrators tried to prevent the election of Sargsyan through blockades. The protests spread further over the following days.

On April 22, a meeting between Sargsyan and Pashinyan took place, in which Sargsyan warned against the continuation of protests and threatened to use force. On the same day, Pashinyan and two other members of the opposition were arrested. Further protests and arrests took place that evening. The next day, Pashinyan was released and Sargsyan resigned. On April 25, demonstrations took place calling for the election of Pashinyan as PM. These continued over the following days. In the first round of elections for PM on May 1, Pashinyan did not meet the required majority in parliament, lacking support from the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA). Following further protests the next day, the RPA assured its support for the second round. Pashinyan was subsequently elected as PM on May 8. On October 16, he resigned to enable snap parliamentary elections, which took place on December 9. As a result, Pashinyan's alliance gained a majority and consolidated its power. ctr

ARMENIA – AZERBAIJAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1987

Conflict parties: Armenia vs. Azerbaijan
Conflict items: territory

The violent crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan mostly populated by ethnic Armenians, continued. The conflict's dynamic was closely related to the conflict over secession between the self-proclaimed government of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) and its armed forces Nagorno Karabakh Defense Army (NKDA) on the one side, and the government of Azerbaijan on the other [→ Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)].

Azerbaijan treated the NKDA as part of the Armenian forces although the Armenian Defense Ministry denied the presence

of Armenian soldiers in NKR. From September 11 to 13, the Armenian armed forces and the NKDA held joint military exercises. Throughout the year at least two soldiers were killed and several civilians injured. The ministries of defense of Armenia and Azerbaijan accused one another regularly throughout the year of cross-border violence in the districts Gadabay, Tovuz, Agstafa and Gazakh, Azerbaijan and Tavush, Armenia, violating the ceasefire agreement of 1994. In May, Nakhichevan, an Azeri exclave in Vayots Dzor, Armenia, was at the center of the clashes.

Allegedly, an Armenian soldier killed an Azeri soldier on May 20 in Sharur, Nakhichevan. In the days before that incident, the Azeri Forces took control of between 10 and 15 square km of territory around the village Gunnut, Sharur, without fighting. This resulted in the relocation of the northern borderline closer to the Armenian main north-south highway that connects Yerevan and Stepanakert, NKR.

On June 15, a member of the Armenian armed forces shot and injured an Azeri civilian in Gazakh, Azerbaijan. In September, the clashes intensified. On September 15, Azeri Forces opened fire in the village of Kohu, Armenia, injuring one civilian. The next day, Armenian soldiers shelled Tovuz and allegedly killed three Azeri soldiers, although this was denied by the Azeri Ministry of Defense. On September 19, Azeri forces killed a member of the Armenian armed forces in a fire exchange. Following these clashes, Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan and Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, at the sidelines of an international summit. Both leaders agreed to improve communication and stated their mutual interest in preventing clashes. In the following months, ceasefire violations continued but decreased considerably. In December, Elmar Mammadyarov, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan and Zohrab Mnatskanyan, Acting Foreign Minister of Armenia, met with representatives of the OSCE Minsk Group, reinforcing their commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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BELARUS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: opposition parties, opposition movement, civil-society activists vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition parties such as the United Civic Party, as well as opposition movements, on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

On March 25, the unofficial "Day of Liberty", commemorating the first Belarusian Republic in 1918, was celebrated by the opposition. For the first time since Alexander Lukashenko became president in 1994, festivities were authorized in many cities. In the capital Minsk they were attended by up to 50,000 people. During other, banned demonstrations all over the country, around 110 people were arrested. Several opposition politicians had been detained before they could at-

tend events. On March 27, the EU called for their release, the implementation of democratic principles, and fundamental freedoms. During Independence Day on July 3, commemorating the liberation of Minsk from Nazi forces in 1944, 20 protesters were detained, including the former presidential contestant Mikalay Statkevich.

During local elections all over Belarus in February, none of the 400 opposition candidates was elected. This was criticised by observers and the EU called for a reform of the election law to address "systemic shortcomings".

On April 19, the parliament adopted new media legislation, limiting foreign participation in national media and increasing government control of online publishing. Throughout the year, several journalists were detained. For instance, on August 7 and 8, several national and international media outlets were raided and 18 journalists temporarily detained in Minsk, which led to international criticism.

Additionally, both the UN and the US reported on the restriction of human rights such as torture, other ill-treatment of prisoners, indiscriminate arrests, and the restriction of the freedom of opinion. eun

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BOSNIAN SERBS / REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1995

Conflict parties: Bosnian-Serbs, government of Republic of Srpska vs. government, government of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession between the Bosnian-Serbs and the government of the Republic of Srpska (RS), on the one hand, and the central government and the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other, continued.

The first half of the year was dominated by a display of force by the Bosnian-Serb entity. Like the previous year, on January 9, the RS celebrated its Statehood Day, during which the right-wing group Serbian Honor paraded in full combat gear. In response, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Security Minister Dragan Mektic called it a paramilitary formation and announced an investigation into the group's activities.

On February 12, RS's President Milorad Dodik confirmed that the RS police force had bought 2,500 new automatic rifles. Although Bosnian Serb authorities claimed that the arms were needed to ensure civilian security, high officials, including the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, expressed concern about the purpose of the purchase.

During the rest of the year, the conflict revolved around RS's foreign relations. On February 26, RS announced that its school curriculum would be synchronized with the Serbian one. In August, Dodik stated that if Kosovo^o became a member of the UN, RS would demand the same. On September 21, while the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced that Russia would refrain from meddling in the upcoming general and presidential elections in RS, Russian President

Vladimir Putin expressed his support for Dodik. On October 7, Dodik won with 54 percent and was elected Serb member of the tripartite presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On December 3, Dodik declared he would continue to object Bosnia's bid for NATO. By contrast, Sefik Dzaferovic and Zeljko Komisc, the Muslim and Croat members of the tripartite presidency respectively, expressed their support for membership, as NATO's Foreign Ministers invited Bosnia to submit its first annual national program on December 5. jhb

EU, USA ET. AL – RUSSIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: EU, USA et al., UK, Poland, Norway, Germany, Finland, France, Estonia vs. Russia

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis over ideology and international power between the EU, the US, Canada, Norway, and several other states, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other hand, continued.

Over the course of the year, both sides used rhetorical threats and deterring strategies.

On several occasions, Russian strategic bombers and transport planes violated NATO's airspace. Both sides also conducted military exercises. In September, for instance, the Russian-Chinese-Mongolian maneuver near Tsugol, Zabaykal'ye Krai, Russia, included approx. 297,000 Russian and 3,000 Chinese troops. From October 25 to November 23, NATO conducted large-scale exercises, Trident Juncture 2018 and North Coasts 2018, in Norway and Finland.

Throughout the year, the US, UK, Germany, France, and the Baltic States accused Russia of conducting cyber attacks against them. The alleged Russian rigging of the 2016 US presidential election remained contentious.

On March 4, Russia allegedly poisoned Sergei Skripal, a former Russian-UK double agent, and his daughter in Salisbury, UK. The UK accused Russia of being responsible for the attack which had allegedly been conducted using the nerve agent Novichok.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov rejected these claims and blamed the UK for spreading "propaganda" on March 9. In reaction to the alleged poisoning, the US, the UK, and several other European states imposed sanctions against Russia, including the expulsion of more than 100 Russian diplomats, the restriction of travel for Russian individuals, and the freezing of Russian assets. On March 30, Russia responded to these measures by inter alia expelling 60 US diplomats.

Both the EU and US prolonged sanctions against Russia due to the ongoing conflicts over Crimea and Donbas, Ukraine [→ Russia – Ukraine]. In regard to the conflict in Georgia [→ Georgia – Russia], on May 21, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemned "Russia's occupation on Georgian soil". On August 6, in turn, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev warned of a "horrible conflict" if Georgia joined NATO.

Turkey remained committed to purchase Russian S-400 air-defense systems, which they had ordered in 2017. Other NATO members strongly criticized this move. Throughout the

year, troop and weapon deployment in Europe caused tensions. Moreover, both sides accused each other of violating the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987. As in previous years, the US claimed that Russia had developed and deployed a medium-range missile and threatened to cancel the INF treaty. Russia dismissed the accusation and claimed in turn that the US provision of land-based missile defense systems, the so-called Aegis Ashore, in Poland and Romania violated the INF treaty. tcr

FRANCE (CORSIKAN NATIONALISTS / CORSICA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: CL, FC, FCNL et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The dispute over the session or autonomy of Corsica between the militant organization, National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC) - now disintegrated into several minor groups - and the Corsican regional government, formed by the nationalist alliance For Corsica (PaC) - consisting of separatist Free Corsica (CL) and autonomist Let's Make Corsica (FC) - on the one hand, and the French government under President Emmanuel Macron on the other, escalated to a non-violent crisis.

On January 22, FC's Gilles Simeoni, President of the Corsican Executive Council, and CL's Jean-Guy Talamoni, President of the Corsican Assembly, met French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe in Paris. While the latter offered increased investments and power transfers, nationalists demanded a special status for Corsica within the constitution, the recognition of Corsican as an official language, and an amnesty for detained militants. Before Macron's visit to Corsica on February 6, Simeoni threatened to resume violence if the government should decline extended autonomy rights. On February 3, around 15,000 people joined a PaC-organized rally in the regional capital Ajaccio, demanding greater autonomy for Corsica. During his stay, Macron refused the nationalists' demands. In return, CL accused Macron of "neo-colonial speech".

On July 2, as part of a constitutional reform, a commission of the French parliament announced it would recognize Corsica in the constitution but ruled out any special status for the region as demanded by Corsican deputies. The same day, further negotiations between Simeoni and Philippe ended without resolution.

The French judiciary continued to investigate the 2012 FLNC attacks on non-Corsican-owned secondary homes. On June 23, the Magistrates' Court in Paris sent three nationalists to prison. A convict's father assaulted a police officer after being barred from embracing his son.

On September 11, a court in Bastia imposed a fine of USD 17,300 on CL's Charles Pieri for insulting the widow of former French prefect Claude Érnigac on Facebook. Érnigac was killed by FLNC members in 1998. crs

FYROM – GREECE

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: FYROM vs. Greece
 Conflict items: other

The dispute between the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece over the official name of FYROM escalated to a non-violent crisis. Since 1991, Greece has argued that the designation Republic of Macedonia implied territorial claims to a northern Greek region of the same name. Greece had blocked FYROM's accession to NATO and the EU since this time.

Over the course of the year, multiple meetings between Greek and Macedonian government representatives took place, some of them mediated by the UN Special Representative for the naming dispute, Matthew Nimetz. On May 19, the two parties agreed on the compromise name 'Republic of Illinden Macedonia'. However, this was opposed by several opposition parties in both countries. A final compromise was reached on June 17, when the two prime ministers signed an official agreement for the first time, consenting to the name "Republic of North Macedonia". Over the following weeks, opposition groups and supporting parts of society staged frequent protests in both countries in vehement rejection of the deal. On several occasions, violence erupted between protesters and security forces [→ FYROM (opposition)]. In spite of Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov's refusal to sign the law to change the country's name on June 26, the EU approved the start of accession talks with FYROM the following day. On July 11, NATO invited FYROM to start accession talks. In FYROM, a referendum on the agreement was held on September 30 with 91,48 percent backing the name change. However, due to the low voter turnout, the referendum was declared invalid. Despite this, on October 19, a two-thirds majority backed the government's motion to initiate the required procedure for constitutional amendments. On November 2, the government submitted a draft to parliament for the constitutional amendments.

dve

GEORGIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: UNM, various opposition groups vs. government
 Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the governing party coalition, Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia (GDDG), and the opposition party, United National Movement (UNM), continued.

Overall, GDDG further consolidated its national power in 2018. In April 2018, Givi Chichinadze of the ruling GDDG obtained victory in MP by-elections in Khoni and Vani, Imereti region. The International Society for Fair Elections and Democ-

racy, which fielded a monitoring mission for the by-elections, said in its interim assessments that the polls were held largely peacefully and without major violations.

In the same month, founder of GDDG and former Prime Minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili, returned to GDDG as its chairman. In June, Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili resigned and was replaced by Finance Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze. During the presidential election campaign in the second half of this year, both, GDDG and UNM incriminated each other by disclosing private recordings. Most prominently, the recordings, which are more than a decade old, describe a plot to assassinate the Georgian oligarch Badri Patarkatsishvili.

In October, neither candidate was able to acquire at least 50 percent of the vote in the first round of presidential elections. In November, the representative of GDDG, Salome Zurabishvili, won elections in the second round with 60 percent of the vote. Grigol Vashadze, the representative of UNM, received 40 percent. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) criticized a substantial imbalance in donations in favor of Salome Zurabishvili and questioned the enforcement of campaign financial rules. In addition, OSCE found campaign violations such as a misuse of state resources, including the partially unlawful involvement in campaigning of senior state officials from GDDG. However, overall, the observation mission gave a positive assessment of the election process. UNM condemned the election results, declared them illegitimate, and called for protests. The demonstrations resulted in a stand-off between supporters of the opposition and police forces, which included occasional confrontations in the village of Velistsikhe, Gurjaani Municipality, leaving at least eight injured as well as the damaging of the car of a MP on December 16, the day of the inauguration. fas

GERMANY (XENOPHOBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: GIDA-movements, various right-wing groups, xenophobes, et al. vs. government, pro-asylum activists

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system, in particular asylum and immigration policies, continued between right-wing groups such as Pro Chemnitz, various movements against Islamization of the Occident (GIDA), as well as xenophobic individuals on the one hand, and the government and pro-asylum activists on the other.

The German Bundestag answered to a minor interpellation for 2018, reporting at least 1,118 acts of violence against asylum seekers, accommodations, or other facilities related to refugees. At least 120 asylum seekers were injured in these attacks which were mostly politically motivated.

A cluster of conflict measures took place in Saxony after two refugees had allegedly killed a German of Cuban origin in Chemnitz on August 26. This led to near daily protests by both anti-immigrant groups and counter-protesters until September 7. In demonstrations shortly after the killing on August 26, so-called "man hunts" for immigrants conducted by

right-wing supporters were reported. On August 28, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that the government possessed video evidence of the said incidents and condemned actions like these. On September 1, around 8,000 right-wing supporters from the groups Pro Chemnitz, PEGIDA, and politicians of the party Alternative for Germany (AfD) such as Björn Höcke demonstrated in Chemnitz. At the same time, 3,000 people from various pro-asylum groups held a counter-demonstration. During the demonstrations, 18 people were injured, among them police forces.

In a similar event in Chemnitz on September 7, about 2,350 supporters of the right-wing group Pro-Chemnitz and 1,000 members of the left-wing group Chemnitz Nazifrei demonstrated.

Throughout the year, xenophobes attacked refugees. For instance, on January 1, six xenophobes chased three Afghan refugees into their accommodation and injured them in Cottbus, Brandenburg. On December 12, a xenophobe injured an asylum seeker from Gambia with a hammer in Rostock, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Additionally, xenophobes conducted various attacks on infrastructure for refugees. For instance, on November 26, a xenophobe committed an arson attack on the house of Syrian refugee family in Bad Oeyenhausen, Northrhine-Westfalia. tcr

GREECE (SOCIAL PROTESTS, LEFT-WING MILITANTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

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

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis continued over the orientation of the political system between various left-wing and anarchist groups and the government. Throughout the year, the conflict was dominated by the issue of anti-austerity in the form of protests and attacks on government buildings.

On January 12, police forces used tear gas against protesters in Athens during a national 24-hour strike organized by the metro workers and seamen unions.

In the last week of January, the National Federation of Greek Hospital Workers (POEDIN) organized protest marches in Athens and clashed with the police when trying to storm the the Ministry of Health.

On May 1, the two biggest unions, the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) and the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), and the communist-affiliated union PAME mobilized more than 10,000 people in a countrywide anti-austerity protest.

During the second half of the year, the POEDIN staged a series of protest rallies in Athens against austerity measures, for example on July 10 and 16 and November 22, clashing with police forces.

On November 14, ADEDY staged a nationwide 24-hour walk-out. On November 28, GSEE staged a 24-hour walkout in Athens and other parts of Greece to protest against pension cuts and labor reforms.

In the last week of February and the first week of March, Rouvikonas and other anarchist groups launched protests in Athens, damaging public facilities after jailed anarchistic leader Constantinos Giagtzoglou had gone on hunger strike. On February 26, anarchists attacked a police precinct in Athens with a hand grenade injuring one person. On February 28, groups of anarchists in Athens, Thessaloniki, Central Macedonia region, and Patra, Western Greece region, raided public shops, set up burning barricades and attacked government buildings using stones and Molotov cocktails. Anarchists clashed with riot police in Athens during the night from March 1 to 2 and exploded gas canisters in front of the Ministry of Culture. In the last week of May, anarchists in the Exarchia district of Athens used Molotov cocktails and stones to attack police forces who responded with tear gas. On June 11, 20 anarchists briefly occupied the office of the ruling party, SYRIZA, the prefectural committee in Volos, Thessaly Region. Meanwhile, 4 anarchists broke into the building of the Hellenic American Union to express support for the hunger-striking jailed anarchist, Dimitris Koufodinas, in Thessaloniki.

On July 21, a group of 10 anarchists attacked the house of State Minister Alekos Flambouraris in Exarchia with firebombs, and threw firebombs and stones at riot police officers afterwards. A day later, five members of Rouvikonas attacked the tax office in Psychico, Attica region, with sledgehammers smashing windows. On November 17, anarchists barricaded themselves inside the National Technical University of Athens and around the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Exarchia, erected burning barricades outside and threw firebombs and stones at police, who responded with stun grenades and tear gas. Similar clashes occurred, damaging buildings and sidewalks.

In December, anarchists repeatedly clashed with police forces in Athens and Thessaloniki. For example, on December 6, anarchist group members attacked police forces with firebombs, flares, and stones, injuring at least three. The anarchist Group of Popular Fighters is suspected of having detonated a 10-kilogram bomb at the Athens headquarters of Skai TV on December 17, significantly damaging the building. jth

HUNGARY (RIGHT-WINGS – MINORITIES)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: Jobbik, Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom vs. Jewish community, LGBT groups, refugees and Muslim community

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The non-violent crisis over ideology and subnational predominance between various far-right parties such as Fidesz, the Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom (Hungarian self-defence Movement), and Mi Hazánk Mozgalom (Our Home Movement) on the one hand, and the Jewish, LGBT and refugee and Muslim communities on the other, de-escalated to a dispute.

In the wake of the April parliamentary elections, the Prime

Minister Viktor Orbán and his Fidesz party issued contentious statements against refugee and Muslim communities. For instance, Orbán declared Europe divided in East and West on February 18 and called the West the immigration zone. Furthermore, he emphasized the need to defend Europe from alleged Muslim invaders. On August 28, Orbán paid a visit to Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, where both vowed to pursue a hardline approach to migrants entering Europe.

On April 8, Fidesz won the elections with a two-third majority and Orbán was re-elected as Prime Minister. After its defeat in the elections, the far-right party Jobbik went bankrupt and its President, Vona Gabor, resigned. On June 23, former members of Jobbik founded the new party Mi Hazánk Mozgalom as they were allegedly dissatisfied with the recent mainstream approach that Jobbik had taken before the elections.

On April 10, parliament passed a law called "Stop Soros", restricting the funding and activities of all NGOs working with migrants and asylum seekers. On December 14, the president of the George Soros' founded Central European University announced a move to Vienna, after working in Budapest for 25 years.

dbu

KOSOVO° – SERBIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Kosovar government vs. Serbian government, Serbian minority (in Kosovo°)

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession between the Kosovar government and the Serbian government continued. Although Serbia refused to acknowledge Kosovo°'s status, the two parties resumed their talks, supported by the EU. An agreement between the two parties had been set as a condition by the EU for their eventual membership.

On February 5, Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic stated that Serbia would not recognize Kosovo's independence under any circumstances. On March 26, the Kosovar Police arrested the Director of the Serbian Government Office for Kosovo, Marko Djuric, for allegedly entering Mitrovica, eponymous district, illegally. The Kosovar government claimed his entry was a Serbian provocation against Kosovo. The same day, police in Mitrovica used sound grenades and tear gas to disperse hundreds of Serbs protesting a round-table meeting, the goal of which was to improve relations between Serbia and Kosovo.

In August, both parties raised the idea of redrawing borders. Kosovar President Hashim Thaci clarified, on August 8, that a potential deal would include the correction of the border and would not mean the partition of Kosovo along ethnic lines or a territorial swap. However, no clear proposal was made. On September 7, an EU-facilitated meeting in Brussels failed to maintain the dialogue, due to Thaci's and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic's abrupt refusal to meet. On September 8, Vucic visited Gazivoda (Gazivodës) Lake, whose water resources are contested between Serbia and Kosovo. Around

200 Kosovo Albanians blocked the roads in protest of Vucic's visit.

On November 8, Thaci and Vucic met in Brussels as part of the EU-mediated dialogue. Amidst worsening relations, on November 22, Kosovo approved a law to put a 100 percent tax on all products imported from Serbia. On December 14, the Kosovar assembly endorsed a bill paving the way for the transformation of the Kosovo Security Force into a military force. Serbian authorities criticized the development as a threat against Serbs and Serbia.

Over the course of the year, several violent events conducted by unknown assailants and protesters impeded the dialogue process. For instance, on January 16, an unknown assailant killed the Kosovo Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic in Mitrovica. There were several further attacks on civil visitors to Serbia and Kosovo. For example, a Kosovar bus was attacked in Serbia on September 9, while Serbian pilgrims were attacked in Studenica (Sudenicë), District of Peć (Peja), on October 21. met

MOLDAVA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: opposition parties vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between several opposition parties, mainly the pro-Russian Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), on the one hand, and the government of the pro-EU Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) and the European People's Party of Moldova on the other hand, escalated to a violent crisis. As in previous years, Moldovan politics remained split between pro-EU and pro-Russian factions, exacerbated by the status of breakaway Transnistria [→ Moldova (Transnistria)].

Moldova's pro-Russian President Igor Dodon was temporarily suspended from his powers three times by the Moldovan supreme court - on January 2, September 24, and December 10. He had created an institutional blockage by refusing to appoint new ministers to the government and to sign bills into laws. Subsequently, the court temporarily transferred legislative power to the Parliament speaker and the Prime Minister. On June 3, the mayoral election in the capital, Chisinau, was won by the pro-EU candidate Andrei Nastase of the Dignity and Truth Platform Party (PPDA). However, on June 19, the results of the election were invalidated by court ruling, arguing that the candidates had addressed voters on social media after the legal end of campaigning on election day. A day later, thousands of citizens protested this decision in Chisinau. On June 26, the Supreme Court confirmed the ruling despite the protests and criticism from the EU and the US. Consequently, the EU froze a EUR 100 million aid package to Moldova due to fulfillment of democratic standards and the rule of law.

On July 26 and 27, the parliament passed a package of 50 bills, among them the Fiscal Amnesty Law, which provides the option to legalize illicitly obtained money through a tax payment of three percent. Subsequently, a majority of the opposition MPs left the chamber. The package was also criticised

by the EU, the US, and the IMF. Due to this contestation, on July 27, the parliamentary elections scheduled for fall 2018 were postponed until February 2019.

On August 26 and 27, the pro-European Action and Solidarity Party, PPDA, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova organized demonstrations against corruption in the current government. They were joined by several thousand people. Approx. 400 protesters were injured due to police using tear gas, water cannons, and batons. On November 18, more than 20,000 supporters of pro-Russian PSRM demonstrated in Chisinau in favor of joining the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union and cancelling the Association Agreement with the EU signed in 2014.

At the beginning of February, at least 10 local councils in Moldova passed symbolic votes that backed a reunion with Romania, highlighting close historical ties between the two formerly unified countries. On March 25, around 10,000 protesters rallied in Chisinau in favor of the reunification with Romania. awi

MOLDOVA (TRANSNISTRIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Transnistrian regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession between separatists of the breakaway region Transnistria, the self-proclaimed Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, supported by Russia, on the one hand, and the Moldovan government, on the other hand, continued. Since 1992, Russian military personnel has been stationed in Transnistria, which consisted of around 1,500 military personnel in 2018.

On February 1, the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration called upon Russia to withdraw its troops after the Russian military had held a drill together with Transnistrian forces. This demand was supported by a joint statement by pro-EU parliamentary speakers of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, calling the Russian military presence "destabilizing" on March 2. On April 24, the Moldovan Foreign Minister called upon the UN to increase its pressure for the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict.

On June 22, the UN passed a resolution calling on Russia to withdraw its troops from Transnistria. The resolution was criticised by Moldovan pro-Russian President. Despite the resolution, Russian and Transnistrian military held another exercise on August 14 and 15. On September 18, the president restated that the Russian forces should stay in Transnistria until the conflict was ultimately settled. awi

NORWAY ET AL. – RUSSIA (ARCTIC)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: Norway, Canada, Denmark, United States vs. Russia

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The non-violent crisis over territory, international power, and resources in the Arctic between Russia on the one hand, and Norway, Canada, Denmark, and the United States (US) on the other, continued.

In 2018, only Norway, Russia, and the US were actively involved in the conflict. Tensions remained high, especially due to both parties staging military exercises near the Norwegian-Russian border or in international waters close to Norway. Throughout the year, Russia carried out multiple drills, for instance the launch of four Bulava missiles in the White Sea on May 22. In reaction, Norway's navy chief expressed concern over Russia's military development and its increased activity close to Norway. On June 13, Russia carried out its largest naval maneuver in ten years, deploying 36 warships and support vessels, about 20 aircrafts and over 150 weapon systems in the Barents Sea. Norway also participated in several NATO-led drills such as the Trudent Juncture exercise, which took place from October 25 to November 7. It was reportedly the largest NATO exercise since the end of the Cold War, with 50,000 participants from 31 countries.

Furthermore, in June, Norway announced to extend the deployment of US marines to Norway by five years. The number of US marines increased to up to 700 in total, and training activities expanded into the north. The Russian Embassy responded that the decision was clearly unfriendly and would not be without consequences. The Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson also accused Norway of undermining trust in the bilateral relations.

Throughout the year, another point of contention was the jamming of GPS signal in the region along the two countries' shared border. Norway accused Russia on several occasions in March and November for causing the disturbance, due to its nearby military activities. Russia rejected the accusations. tlu

ROMANIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between the opposition movement, led by the Save Romania Union (USR) party and President Klaus Iohannis, and the Social Democratic (PSD) government. On January 29, following the resignation of Mihai Tudose, Viorica Dăncilă became the third Prime Minister in 12 months.

Throughout the year, mass protests took place, due to an alleged decline of the rule of law after the government had adopted a judicial reform in December 2017. Opposition leaders criticized that the reform would harm the independence of judges and prosecutors, and impede the fight of high-level graft. On January 21, approx. 50,000 people protested in the capital Bucharest, with smaller demonstrations taking place in the cities of Cluj, Timisoara, Constanta, Bacau, Sibiu, and Iasi. While the law passed the legislative process, similar anti-corruption protests also took place on May 12 and June 20, involving several thousand people. Around 10,000 protested in Bucharest on June 24. The biggest demonstration took place on August 10, when more than 100,000 people in Bucharest and 40,000 all over the country demanded the government's resignation. Many of them were from the Romanian diaspora. In Bucharest, more than 450 people were injured when police used tear gas, pepper spray, a water cannon, and gas grenades, while protesters threw rocks and bottles. 70 people were hospitalized, including 3 gendarmes. Nearly 300 complaints were filed against the police.

Tensions between PSD party leader Liviu Dragnea and President Iohannis erupted in April when the latter refused to dismiss Laura Codruța Kövesi, the chief prosecutor of the National Anticorruption Directorate. However, the Constitutional Court decided on May 30 that Iohannis must submit to the Minister of Justice Tudorel Toader and dismiss Kövesi, which he did on July 9. On June 21, Dragnea received a three-and-a-half-year prison sentence for corruption. On September 16, several hundred magistrates engaged in a silent protest at the Court of Appeals in Bucharest protesting changes to the criminal code in the process of judicial reform, which allegedly threatened their independence. On October 24, Toader requested the dismissal of public prosecutor Augustin Lazar, who had been very outspoken against the judicial reform in the previous months. In turn, Iohannis publicly called for the resignation of Toader.

In early October, the European Parliament debated the justice reform, and European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans heavily criticized recent developments. The Venice Commission shared this assessment in their legal analysis published on October 20. On November 13, the European Commission urged the government to suspend the implementation of the justice laws immediately, in the annual Cooperation and Verification Mechanism report. sst

RUSSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: Progress Party, Russia of the Future Party, Communist Party et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between various opposition groups and the Russian government.

On March 18, President Vladimir Putin won the presidential

election, with 76,7 percent of the votes. Beforehand the elections, several demonstrations had taken place. On January 28, more than 4,000 people took to the streets in more than 100 Russian cities including the capital Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vladivostok, Primor'ye territory. They protested the ban of the popular opposition politician Alexei Navalny, who had been prevented from running for election due to a conviction for alleged embezzlement in 2017, which he claimed to be politically motivated. Several Russian election monitoring groups reported irregularities in polling stations and the OSCE criticized restrictions of fundamental freedoms as well as lack of genuine competition during the election. On May 5, more than 6,000 people protested in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Sverdlovsk Oblast, and several other Russian cities against Putin's inauguration. Around 1,600 people were detained by police nationwide, 600 of them in Moscow, including Navalny.

On May 19, Navalny formed a new political party called Russia of the Future, after several attempts to officially register his Progress Party had failed. On August 23, the Ministry of Justice denied the registration due to missing documents. In May, August, and September, Navalny was convicted and sentenced to twenty to thirty days in prison for violating public protest laws and organizing unauthorized rallies, respectively. On November 15, the European Court of Human Rights found that several arrests of Navalny between 2012 and 2014 had been politically motivated and ordered Russia to pay compensation. On September 11, in response to a report published by Navalny accusing the National Guard of being corrupt, the head of Russia's National Guard publicly threatened Navalny and challenged him to a duel.

Coinciding with the FIFA World Cup in July, proposals to raise the pension age from 55 to 63 for women and from 60 to 65 for men triggered protests in several Russian cities, given the fact that average life expectancy in Russia suggests that a huge number of people would not survive to collect their pension. The numerous protests in July and September were led by the Communist Party and supported by other opposition forces, including Navalny. As protests were banned from World Cup host cities, demonstrators gathered in regional cities such as Omsk, eponymous Oblast, where more than 3,000 protesters gathered on July 1. On July 28, around 12,000 people took to the streets of Moscow and several other cities such as Yekaterinburg and Volgograd, eponymous oblast. Around 3 million people signed a petition against the pension reform. Though Putin announced he would limit the raise for women on August 29, protests continued. On September 2, several thousand people took to the streets in different cities, with around 9,000 in Moscow. During rallies on September 9 in around 80 cities, including Moscow and St. Petersburg, police arrested more than 800 protesters, reportedly beating some of them with batons.

On September 9, regional elections were held in several districts, in which the ruling United Russia party lost votes to opposition forces such as the Communist Party. On September 17, several hundred supporters of the Communist Party protested against alleged vote-rigging in the governor election in Vladivostok in favor of the pro-Kremlin candidate. A re-run of the election took place on December 16, which was won by the pro-Kremlin candidate, while the Communist Party's candidate had been banned from running.

On January 9, human rights activist Oyub Titiev was arrested for alleged drug possession and put on trial in July. On November 7, a trial for financial fraud began against Kirill Serebrennikov, theater director and a critic of arts censorship. Russian policy-makers further tightened their control on the media. On April 16, Russian authorities started to block the messaging app Telegram, after the company refused to grant access to users' private messages. A few days later, thousands of people rallied in Moscow to protest against this move. In October, the Russian authorities fined a leading critical newspaper approx. USD 350,000 for failure to provide information on receiving funds. vpa

RUSSIA – UKRAINE

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Ukraine

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The non-violent crisis over territory, international power, and resources between Russia and Ukraine escalated to a violent crisis. As in previous years, the conflict was affected by both the contested status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the limited war in Donbas (→ Ukraine (Donbas)).

On May 16, Russia opened the Kerch Strait Bridge, linking Russia and the Crimean Peninsula. In April, Russian authorities had started to block and control merchant ships passing the Kerch Strait to reach Ukrainian harbours, causing delays in Ukrainian trade. A 2003 bilateral treaty had not demarcated the Sea of Azov, but declared that both countries were free to navigate it, as well as the Kerch Strait. Both countries stationed additional naval and land forces in the area. Tensions escalated on November 25, when a Russian guard boat rammed a Ukrainian military tugboat passing the Kerch Strait. One of the Russian vessels, which were later supported by two fighter jets and two helicopters, opened fire on the tugboat and two accompanying gunboats. Six Ukrainian sailors were wounded in the clash. The Russian guards seized the three vessels and detained the 24 crew members. Both countries accused one another of provoking the incident. The day after, Ukraine declared martial law in 10 of its regions and, on November 30, restricted the entry for male Russian nationals between the ages of 16 and 60. Martial law ended on December 26 but tensions remained high, as both sides held various military drills in the region.

Ukrainian energy security continued to be a point of contention. After Gazprom, a partly state-owned Russian energy company, terminated their contract with Naftogaz, a state-owned Ukrainian energy company, on March 1, Ukrainian public buildings experienced energy shortages. On March 21, Ukraine declared its exit from the Convention for Economic Cooperation with Russia, its biggest trading partner, and on May 19, ended its association with the Commonwealth of Independent States, comprised of former Soviet Republics. On November 1, Russia imposed economic sanctions on 322 Ukrainians and 68 Ukrainian legal entities in reaction to Ukrainian sanctions against Russia. Additionally, the Ukrainian parliament declined the renewal of a friendship

treaty with Russia that would have included territorial guarantees, in the beginning of December.

In April, Poroshenko started his attempt to build an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC). Until then, a large part of the UOC had belonged to the Moscow Patriarchate (MP). Poroshenko submitted a plea for UOC independence from MP before the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (EPC) in Istanbul, Turkey, on April 22. The EPC acted as the formally highest authority on Orthodox Church matters. On September 18, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), also organised under the MP, threatened to cancel all relations to the EPC due to its alleged interference. The EPC decided in favor of the UOC's independence in October and established an interim council in Kiev, which met for the first time on December 15.

Following the poisoning of Sergej Skripal [→ Russia – USA, EU et al.] and his daughter in the UK on March 4, Ukraine expelled 13 Russian diplomats. This move was reciprocated by Russia. The murder of Russian journalist and Kremlin critic Arkady Babchenko in Kiev was reported on May 29. The next day, Babchenko himself revealed that the murder had been staged by the hired killer, Oleksiy Tsymbaliuk, and the Ukrainian secret service, in order to uncover the initial plotters. Ukraine deemed Russian officials responsible, whereas Russia denounced any involvement. On August 7, the Ukrainian government announced to file a lawsuit with the European Court of Human Rights against Russia for detaining over 70 Ukrainian political prisoners. [sov](#)

SPAIN (BASQUE PROVINCES)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1959

Conflict parties: EH-Bildu, ETA, PNV, Gure Esku Dago vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The dispute over the secession of Basque Country between the Basque militant group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty, ETA), the nationalist Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV), and the radical left-nationalist coalition EH Bildu, on the one hand, and the Spanish central government, on the other, continued. The history of the Basque independence movement goes back to the nineteenth century and its political representation PNV, founded in 1895. ETA was founded in 1959 as a reaction to the repression of the Basque independence movement during the Franco regime. Between 1960 and 2009, ETA conducted several terrorist attacks and targeted assassinations on representatives of the Spanish state, entrepreneurs, and political opponents, killing more than 820 people. In 2011, after years of vanishing support in the Basque society, a ceasefire was negotiated and in 2017, ETA surrendered their weapons to the French authorities in the French part of Basque Country.

On May 2, ETA declared their self-dissolution that ended the group's 59-year long activity in the region. Previously, on April 8, ETA had issued an official letter assuming responsibility for their role in the "immeasurable suffering" of Basque society in the past decades and expressing their respect to the victims of the actions of ETA who had not been directly

involved in the conflict. However, ETA explicitly did not apologize for their actions, stating that "[f]or many others the actions of the government forces have been totally unjust as well, in spite of using the disguise of the law [...] and those citizens do not deserve to be degraded either". The letter was criticised by the Spanish media for only apologizing to the victims in part and for justifying the actions of ETA again. Three weeks later, ETA issued a document declaring the "complete dissolution of all structures and the termination of its political activity". The disbandment was echoed internationally. The media portraying it primarily as the expected end of an era.

On May 31, Spanish PM Mariano Rajoy lost a vote of no-confidence after PNV had given up support for his government, accusing the government party of corruption, collaboration with the populist party, and the lack of progress in the transference of Basque prisons to the regional authorities. Instead, Pedro Sánchez of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) was elected Prime Minister after making significant concessions to PNV, including the transference of prisons as well as ETA prisoners, and the acceptance of the new autonomy statute that PNV and EH Bildu were drafting at that point. The draft statute was published in September. It included mention of a Basque nation and equipped the Basque province with quasi-sovereign rights. It was met with rejection by the other Basque parties and was submitted to a cross-party commission for revisions. In the second half of 2018, approx. 15 of the remaining 285 ETA prisoners were transferred to the Basque province.

The independentist civil society network Gure Esku Dago organized several protests throughout the year in support of Basque and Catalan self-determination [→ Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia)]. For instance, on June 10, 200,000 people formed a human chain connecting the three biggest cities of the Basque country, San Sebastián, Bilbao, and Vitoria.

In October, insufficient progress in the transference of prisons, among other grounds, caused PNV to question their consent to the Spanish 2019 budget, and in November and December, the Basque parliament issued two declarations denouncing the deficit of legitimacy of the Spanish constitution, the imprisonment of Catalan politicians, and the instrumentalization of the judiciary. [bal](#)

SPAIN (CATALAN NATIONALISTS / CATALONIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Catalan regional government, ANC, Òmnium Cultural, CDR vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over secession continued between the Catalan regional government and civic organizations such as the Catalan National Assembly (ANC), Òmnium Cultural, and the Committees for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) on the one hand, and the Spanish national government on the other hand.

On January 22, the new speaker of the Catalan regional parliament proposed fugitive former President of the Government of Catalonia Carles Puigdemont as the sole candidate to run for presidential office. On January 27, the Spanish Constitutional Court confirmed that a legal election would only be possible if the candidate was physically present. After Puigdemont withdrew his candidacy on March 1, the President of the Parliament of Catalonia appointed Jordi Sánchez to run for presidency, who had been arrested on 10/16/17, accused of sedition. This was immediately dismissed by the Spanish government, given that Sánchez was in custody. On May 15, Quim Torra was elected as President of the Government of Catalonia. He nominated a cabinet that included two ministers who were also in prison, and another two seeking political asylum abroad.

On March 25, Puigdemont was detained in Schuby, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, after an European arrest warrant was issued. On April 5, Puigdemont was released from prison after paying a bail fee of USD 85,000. The prosecutor's office of Schleswig-Holstein stated that Puigdemont did not have to face accusation of rebellion, but he could still be extradited to Spain on charges of misusing state funds. On July 12, the Spanish Constitutional Court withdrew the arrest warrant for Puigdemont, who returned to Belgium from Germany two weeks later, reiterating his aim to strive for Catalan independence. On February 1, Oriol Junqueras, the former regional vice president, and Jordi Cuixart, the president of Òmnium Cultural, as well as Jordi Sánchez, member of Catalan parliament and former president of ANC, who had all been arrested in October and November 2017, accused of sedition, lodged a complaint with the OHCHR Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. On March 23, the Spanish Supreme Court ruled 25 Catalan leaders including 13 politicians to be tried for rebellion, embezzlement, and disobeying the state. Five of them were arrested immediately. On December 1, the imprisoned Sánchez, among others, went on hunger strike, claiming that the Spanish Constitutional Court was deliberately blocking their appeals to prevent them of progressing to the European court of human rights.

Several demonstrations in favor and against Catalan independence were held throughout the year. On March 4, for example, tens of thousands of people protested in Barcelona, autonomous community Catalonia, against Catalan independence. On April 15, more than 300,000 people protested in Barcelona, demanding the release of Catalan separatist leaders. On September 11, on Catalan National Day, approx. one million people took part in a demonstration in Barcelona, renewing their calls for Catalan independence as well as for the release of jailed political leaders. On October 1, around 180,000 pro-independence protesters took to the streets in Barcelona again. Several protesters threw stones at police officers and tried to break a barricade in front of the regional government of Catalan. The same day, dozens of pro-independence protesters besieged the office of the Spanish National Police deputy in Barcelona, which led to clashes between protesters and Catalan regional police forces, who used batons and foam bullets to disperse the crowd. At least 14 protesters were injured and six people arrested. The same day, organized by the pro-independence network CDR, hundreds of activists occupied train tracks and highways in Girona, Lleida, and Barcelona, and replaced the

Spanish flag at a regional government building in Girona with the Catalan separatist flag. pmr

SPAIN – UNITED KINGDOM (GIBRALTAR)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1954

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

The non-violent crisis over the peninsula of Gibraltar between the UK and Spain continued.

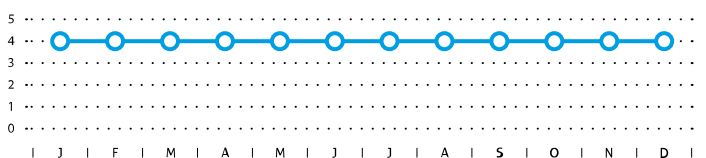
Despite the ongoing Brexit negotiations, the status of Gibraltar remained unclear. In late February, Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso Dastis stated that Spain wanted a bilateral agreement with the UK that would include joint management of the airport of Gibraltar, free cross-border movement, and furthered cooperation concerning the prevention of tax fraud and tobacco smuggling. However, bilateral meetings between Spanish and British representatives throughout the year did not result in significant progress towards such an agreement. In spite of EU notification in 2017, which had stipulated that the Brexit treaty would not apply to Gibraltar without Spanish approval, disagreements over the applicability of a possible Brexit treaty almost resulted in the cancelation of the EU Brexit summit on October 17. In last-minute negotiations, Spain received further guarantees that deemed Spain's approval necessary for any change of Gibraltar's status.

Throughout the year, Spanish patrol and military vessels repeatedly accessed British territorial waters off Gibraltar. On September 20, a Spanish patrol boat of the Guardia Civil approached the British nuclear-powered submarine HMS Talent, prompting British patrol boats to fire warning flares. On December 4, a Spanish battleship entered Gibraltar waters playing the Spanish anthem through loudspeakers. bal

UKRAINE (DONBAS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: DPR, LPR vs. Ukraine
Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources



The war over secession, the orientation of the political system, and resources in the Donbas region between several militant anti-government groups, including the self-proclaimed Donetsk (DPR) and Luhansk (LPR) People's Republics supported by Russia on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government, supported by Western countries on the other, escalated to a limited war. The affected region comprised parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine. Both are important coal and ore mining areas as well as heavy

UKRAINE (DONBAS)



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December

industry centers.

According to the UN, up to 13,000 people in total and at least 3,318 civilians have been killed and between 7,000 and 9,000 injured since the beginning of the conflict in April 2014. From January 1 to December 24, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) recorded 43 civilian deaths and 182 injuries. Moreover, the Ukrainian government reported that approx. 100 soldiers were killed and 380 wounded, while approx. 100 militants were killed in 2018. This marked a significant decrease in the death toll compared to preceding years, coinciding with a 22 percent drop in ceasefire violations. Especially shelling with heavy weapons, which were supposed to have been withdrawn according to the Minsk Agreements, decreased significantly. The majority of civilian casualties were caused by shelling, light weapons, and landmine explosions. On June 8, SMM stated that "[t]he sides are not demining, they are in fact laying more mines". On April 21, the UN estimated that 3.4 million people urgently required humanitarian assistance. The Donetsk water filtration station was repeatedly forced to shut down due to shelling, leaving up to 600,000 people with insufficient water supply. As in previous years, civilians suffered restrictions of freedom of movement and speech, as well as lack of food, energy, and shelter. International organizations highlighted the serious humanitarian situation and held both sides accountable.

Violence was reported in both regions throughout the year, however, Donetsk oblast was worse affected. Fighting concentrated in areas near Svitlodarsk, Avdiivka and Yasinuvata, Mariupol, and outskirts of Horlivka. In Luhansk, fighting was less intense during the first months of 2018 and concentrated in the area near Popasna and Pervomaisk.

In January and February, 27 people were killed and 86 injured in Donetsk oblast. Hostilities increased at the beginning of February. SMM recorded 1,740 explosions in Luhansk oblast on February 7 alone, marking the highest number of ceasefire violations since March 2017. The fighting decreased during the second half of February.

On March 5, the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), comprising of OSCE, Russia and Ukraine negotiated a ceasefire with representatives of the DPR and the LPR. Despite the agreement, two civilians were killed and six further injured on March 11. A second ceasefire, on the occasion of Easter, came into effect on March 30. In the week following this ceasefire, hostilities decreased marginally.

Between April 10 and 11, three civilians were injured and several civilian houses, vehicles and gas pipelines damaged as a result of shelling in Donetsk city, Donetsk oblast.

On April 18, the Donetsk Water Filtration Station suspended its services for five days, because five of its employees had been injured by small arms fire the day before. The fighting increased between April 24 and 25, particularly in Donetsk oblast, and left eleven soldiers wounded in total. The UN recorded 13 killed civilians and 33 injured in April. In May, the fighting concentrated on the government-controlled town of Svitlodarsk, Donetsk oblast, where, on May 8 and 9, for instance, SMM counted 875 explosions and about 650 bursts of heavy machine gun and small arms fire. On May 21, two soldiers were killed and four were wounded in Pivdenne, Donetsk oblast. The fighting also spread to non-government-controlled Horlivka and Yasinuvata, all in Donetsk oblast, in the latter half of the month. According to the UN, 12 civilians

were killed and 49 injured in May. On June 6, the Ukrainian Army moved into the village of Chyhari, Donetsk oblast. Subsequently, 13 houses burned down and around 125 villagers fled.

On June 15 and 22, the power supply of Kominternove, Donetsk oblast, was cut due to shelling. On June 19, one civilian was wounded when a residential building was shelled in Zholobok, Luhansk oblast.

On July 1, another ceasefire came into effect on the occasion of harvesting season. It was renewed on July 9. Between July 9 and 22, eight civilians were injured due to shelling and small arms fire. On July 18, one militant of DPR was killed and another one was injured. Between June 25 and July 8, SMM reported the deployment of heavy weapons, among them tanks, towed howitzers, multiple launch rocket systems, and infantry fighting vehicles close to the front, violating Minsk II. On August 10, SMM published video footage of seven cargo trucks crossing the border from Russia to Ukraine near non-government controlled Manych, Donetsk oblast, during the night of August 8. Press stated this would support Ukrainian claims that Russia supplied DPR and LPR with weapons. Cargo trucks crossing the border were also reported on September 4 as well as from October 9 to 11. In the October incident, SMM spotted an anti-aircraft gun and an armoured personnel carrier among the cargo. In a five-hour fight near non-government controlled Kadiivka, Luhansk oblast, four soldiers were killed and seven wounded on August 23. On August 29, both sides agreed on a ceasefire on the occasion of the new school year. This was the 24th ceasefire since the beginning of the conflict in 2014. On August 31, DPR head Aleksandr Zakharchenko and another person were killed and nine other people wounded in an explosion in a café in Donetsk city. Both sides blamed one another, while the DPR deputy defense minister accused the US of direct involvement. During September, shelling caused damage to residential buildings and infrastructure in Gorlovka Shakanka, and Pikuzy, all in Donetsk oblast, and injured two civilians in Shakanka on September 23. On October 13, two civilians were killed in Mykhailivka, Luhansk oblast. On November 2, at least one Ukrainian soldier was killed and at least two wounded in Peski, Donetsk oblast. At least five Ukrainian soldiers and eight militants were killed in fighting during December, with at least 30 people were injured. A ceasefire was implemented on the occasion of Orthodox Christmas and New Year's Eve, on December 29. SMM reported to have been repeatedly denied access to different locations near the frontline by all sides. For instance, DPR members consistently denied SMM access to Siedove, Donetsk oblast, from April 2017. On July 7, a SMM member was intercepted near Kremynets, Donetsk oblast, and threatened with a rifle by a DPR-member. For reference, in 2018, SMM was actively denied access nearly 1,200 times, which marks an increase by one-third compared to last year.

Throughout the year, Russia and Ukraine took steps to de-escalate the conflict. On January 15, their foreign ministers met to discuss the release of detainees held by Ukraine, the details of a possible UN Peacekeeping Mission in Donbas, as well as the return of Russian officers to the Joint Center for Control and Coordination. Moreover, TCG met repeatedly throughout the year to discuss ceasefires, the exchange of detainees, water deliveries to the Donbas region, and the so-

called "Steinmeier formula".

However, political tensions between Ukraine and Russia continued, including the extension of economic sanctions by both sides and the attempt to detach the Ukrainian Orthodox Church [→ Russia – Ukraine]. The Ukrainian parliament passed the so-called Donbas Reintegration Law on January 18, which came into force on February 24. It redefined Ukrainian security policy in Donbas by replacing the "Anti-Terrorism Operation" with the "Joint Forces Operation", extending the use of Ukrainian armed forces and enlarging the territory. Russia criticized the law as preparation for war. On November 11, both DPR and LPR held elections. OSCE, EU, and US criticized this as a violation of Minsk II.

Throughout the year, governments supporting either side were engaged in the conflict. On March 2, US President Donald Trump extended sanctions against Russia for another 12 months [→ USA, EU, et al. – Russia]. On May 1, the US delivered 210 Javelin anti-tank weapons to Ukraine and, on July 20, announced it would support Ukraine with USD 200 million in security cooperation funds for "training, equipment and advisory efforts". On May 30, the US Representative to the UN called on Russia to recognize their responsibility for the conflict in Donbas as well as for the downing of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014. Six days earlier, an international investigation led by the Netherlands had found a Russian SAM unit to be responsible for the strike.

On March 10, NATO recognized Ukraine's status as an aspirant member and held joint military exercises with the Ukrainian army from September 3 to September 15 in Lviv Oblast. mst, cbi

UKRAINE (RIGHT-WING / OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: right-wing groups vs. minorities, civil-right groups, opposition parties vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the Ukrainian government, right-wing groups, and opposition parties supported by civil-right groups continued. In 2018, right-wing attacks against civil-right groups and civilians significantly increased in number.

Throughout the year, over 40 attacks against civilians took place, which left at least seven people killed. For instance, on January 1, the body of a human rights lawyer, who had disappeared at the end of 2017, was found in a river in Kiev Oblast. Moreover, on June 5, the leader of the Odessa branch of the AutoMaidan group was stabbed in Odessa, eponymous oblast. On July 31, a civil-rights activist was attacked with acid by an unknown person in Cherson, eponymous oblast, and later died of injuries. Also on July 31, an anti-corruption activist was shot dead in Berdjansk, Saporischschja Oblast. Furthermore, on September 22, a member of the opposition party "Syla Ljudej" was shot and severely injured by an unknown assailant near his house in Odessa.

The number of attacks against minorities, such as the Roma

community, also increased significantly in number. For instance, on April 21, members of the right-wing group C14 torched a Roma settlement in the Lysa Hora nature reserve in the capital Kiev. Moreover, on June 7, right-wing activists, who belonged to either the Azov militia or to C14, destroyed tents belonging to a Roma settlement in Kiev. On June 23, right-wing activists attacked a Roma settlement outside Lviv and killed one civilian, while four other people were injured with knives and by Molotov Cocktails. Both attacks and the lack police response gained international attention. For instance, on June 14, several international human rights organizations demanded of the Ukrainian authorities a stronger commitment to stop violence by right-wing groups. Additionally, violence against members of the LGBT community increased. On June 17, about 3,500 LGBT supporters participated in the "March of Equality" for rights and recognition of the LGBT community in Kiev, which was protected by 2,500 police officers. On July 1, a group of unknown right-wing activists assaulted the chairman of an LGBT festival organization in Krywyj Rih, Dnipropetrowsk Oblast. On November 18, when protesters rallied in support of transgender rights in Kiev, right-wing extremists injured three people.

Following a naval standoff in the Sea of Azov [→ Russia – Ukraine] nationalists protested in front of Russian diplomatic missions in Kiev, Lviv, and Kharkiv, eponymous oblast, on November 26. The protesters threw flares at the Russian embassy in Kiev, later clashing with Ukrainian police.

Furthermore, tensions between opposition groups and the government continued. Former Georgian President and ex-Mayor of Odessa, Mikheil Saakashvili, was expelled to Poland on February 12. However, his party "Movement of New Forces" (MNF) organized several demonstrations in support of him. For instance, on February 27, MNF members clashed with police in front of the parliament building in Kiev. On March 3, police arrested over 100 MNF supporters camping in front of the parliament, injuring at least eleven. The activists demanded the resignation of President Petro Poroshenko. On March 22, MP and former military pilot Nadia Savchenko, who had spent two years in a Russian prison after fighting in Donbas [→ Ukraine (Donbas)], was detained by Ukrainian authorities for allegedly planning an attack on the parliament.

On January 18, Human Rights Watch accused the Ukrainian government of restricting the freedom of press and expression. Furthermore, they criticized the judiciary's and government's reluctance to investigate over 100 deaths in Kiev during the so-called EuroMaidan in 2014. sdr

UNITED KINGDOM (NATIONALISTS / NORTHERN IRELAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1968

Conflict parties: AnP, SF, SDLP, RIRA, ÓNH, IRM, CIRA vs. Alliance Party, DUP, government, RHC, UDA, UUP, UVF

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis between the Unionist and the Nationalist communities and their respective loyal and republican

paramilitary groups over the secession of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom continued.

On January 24, Northern Ireland's five main political parties resumed talks, aiming to restore the power sharing government that had collapsed in January 2017. The talks failed on February 14. Moreover, the Brexit negotiations between UK and EU and the possibility of a no-deal Brexit continued to affect North Ireland's peace process. Nationalist party Sinn Féin (SF) repeatedly reiterated their demand for an Irish unity referendum, for instance on April 1. The UK and EU made a draft agreement on November 14, which contained a special protocol on North Ireland, aiming to avoid a hard border between both parts of Ireland and to preserve security cooperation. While Nationalists welcomed the announcements, Unionists criticized the planned customs and regulatory border between North Ireland and the rest of the UK for threatening the country's integrity. On December 19, the EU announced the implementation of a "no-deal" Contingency Action Plan, while the Irish government declined any preparations for the return of a hard border.

Tensions between Unionists and Nationalists continually led to clashes throughout the year. For instance, on March 24, a Protestant schoolboy was injured with bats and hammers by three assailants at an interface area in North Belfast.

As in previous years, violence occurred around Ulster Protestant celebration day on July 12, especially in Derry, Derry and Strabane District, and Belfast region, eponymous district. On July 7, Catholic youths from Bogside attacked property in the Protestant Fountain Estate in Derry with petrol bombs and projectiles. After Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) intervened, clashes ensued for days, with crowds repeatedly attacking property and police forces with bricks, bottles, as well as petrol and pipe bombs. On July 12, about 200 people built barricades and threw over 70 petrol bombs and two IEDs at vehicles and PSNI. The latter responded with plastic bullets. PSNI arrested at least six people in total in relation to the clashes in Derry that had left at least one civilian and two police officers injured. PSNI accused the republican paramilitary Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) of causing the turmoil in Derry and of deliberately involving children in protests. In Newtownards, Ards and North Down Borough, close to Belfast, a group of masked men, one carrying a suspected firearm, hijacked a bus on July 11. There were no casualties reported, but the group torched the bus. PSNI accused the loyalist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). Representatives of all major parties and religious leaders condemned these clashes.

As in previous years, paramilitary activity by republican and loyalist groups continued. On February 13, members of the RIRA splinter Arm na Poblachta, formed in 2017, killed a civilian using a shotgun in west Belfast. Furthermore, around 500 families had to leave their homes due to "paramilitary intimidation" throughout the year, according to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. RIRA splinter Óglaigh na hÉireann (ÓNH) declared a ceasefire on January 23. In April, dissenting ÓNH members formed the Irish Republican Movement, announcing attacks on security forces and members of their own

community involved in drug trade and crime. In their first joint statement since 1994, the three main loyalist paramilitary organizations, Ulster Defence Association (UDA), UVF, and Red Hand Commando announced on April 9 that they would "fully support the rule of law" and any members involved in crime would be expelled.

PSNI and Irish police continued their operations against dissident republicans. For instance, on April 2, 200 people attended an illegal Easter Rising commemoration parade in Derry. As PSNI intervened, about 20 masked nationalist youths attacked their vehicles with petrol bombs and projectiles. *mcm*

UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS / SCOTLAND)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: AUOB, SGP, SNP et al. vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over the secession of Scotland from the United Kingdom (UK) continued, between the Scottish regional government, formed by the Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Green Party, backed by nationalist civic organisations such as All Under One Banner (AUOB) on the one hand, and the Conservative British government on the other hand.

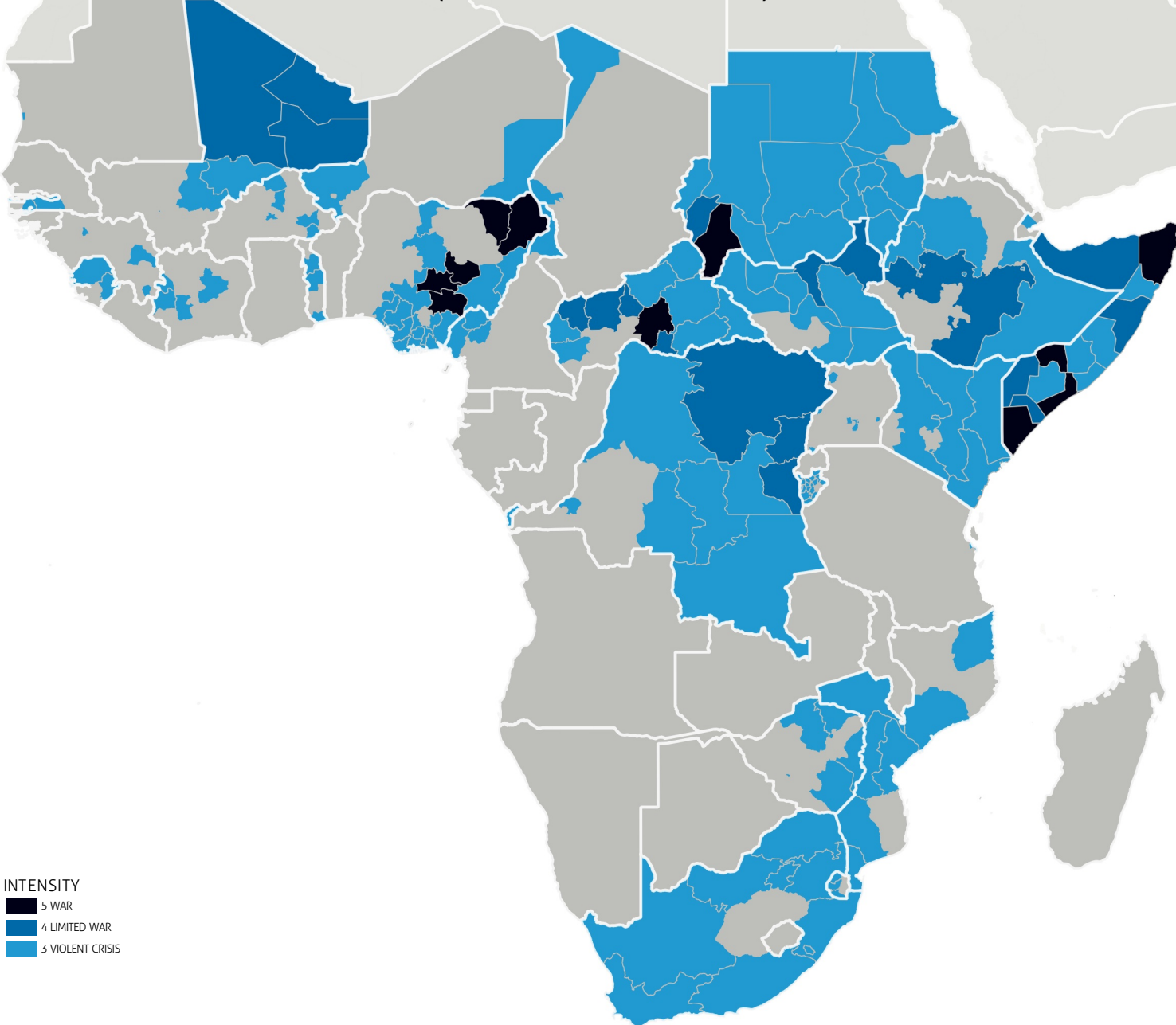
Throughout the year, the drafting of possible post-Brexit legislation dominated Scotland's political discourse. On February 21, the Welsh and the Scottish regional government demanded the amendment of clause 11 of the EU Withdrawal Act draft. Clause 11 dealt with the devolution of powers from EU to the UK and the regional governments feared the loss of decisive power over regional issues to Westminster, with the Scottish government speaking of a "power grab".

After the EU Withdrawal Act became law on June 26, the SNP's UK parliamentary leader, Ian Blackford, rhetorically clashed with other speakers and was ordered out of the chamber, leading to an unanimous walkout of all SNP MPs. On November 18, Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, reiterated her call for a second referendum on Scottish independence in the "not too distant future", referring to Brexit's uncertain future.

Scottish pro-independence protesters rallied several times throughout the year, also demanding a second independence referendum. On May 5, the grass-root movement AUOB organized a protest march in Glasgow, eponymous council area, with around 35,000 participants. An SNP politician claimed that he had been insulted by protesters of a pro-union demonstration the same day, who brandished "a Nazi salute and the middle finger". Throughout June, AUOB organized further demonstrations in Bannockburn, Stirling council area, and in Edinburgh, City of Edinburgh council area, which, according to the AUOB, had around 8,000 and 100,000 participants respectively. *crs*

Sub-Saharan Africa

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2018 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY
5 WAR
4 LIMITED WAR
3 VIOLENT CRISIS

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2018, HIIK observed 90 active conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. While the year before ten wars and four limited wars had been counted in Sub-Saharan Africa, which had made it the region most affected by highly violent conflicts, Middle East and Maghreb region overtook Sub-Saharan Africa in 2018. Four of ten conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa which had been fought on war-level in 2017 de-escalated to three limited wars and a violent crisis in 2018. No new war emerged. Nine limited wars were counted, of which three had de-escalated from war-level, another three had escalated from either violent or non-violent crises, one was observed in its first year, and the remaining two continued with the same intensity as the year before.

In Chad, the conflict between militant groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis. Clashes started to take place from August onwards and caused deaths as well as injuries on both sides. The militant groups main objective was to overthrow the government and take control over gold mines located in Tibesti region [→ Chad (militant groups)]. In Sierra Leone, presidential, parliamentary, mayoral, and local council elections were held, causing tensions between the SLPP and APC, as SLPP won. Although the election itself was considered relatively peaceful, being the second democratic transition since the country's independence, the pre- and post-election phases were accompanied by violent clashes between both parties [→ Sierra Leone (SLPP-APC)]. In the Republic of Congo, the conflict between ninja militias and the government ended, due to a peace agreement that had been signed in 2017 and led to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration this year [→ Republic of Congo (Ninja militias)]. The opposition conflict de-escalated to a dispute [→ Republic of Congo (opposition)]. In Mali, the conflict between various militant groups continued as a violent crisis [→ Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)], while the conflict over subnational predominance in central Mali between Fulani and Dogon tribes escalated to a limited war [→ Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)]. Furthermore, Mali as well as Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad were affected by the transstate conflict taking place in Western and Northern Africa [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM, ISGS et al.)]. The conflict continued as a limited war, further destabilizing the affected countries. In Guinea, the first municipal elections since 2005 were held and resulted in the ruling parties' victory. The elections were followed by protests against electoral fraud as well as by clashes between the opposition and the government [→ Guinea (opposition)].

In the Horn of Africa, the war between the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab and the Somali and Kenyan governments, supported by, amongst others, the African Union Mission for Somalia as well as American military forces, continued [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. As in previous years, al-Shabaab frequently attacked governmental and civilian targets in Somalia as well as neighboring Kenya, attempting to gain control over territory. On the whole, the number of US airstrikes against Al-Shabaab strongholds and subsequent casualties in Somalia has sharply increased since US President Donald Trump took office in January 2017. For instance, on December 15 and 16, the US launched six airstrikes in total, killing at least 62 al-Shabaab militants. The Islamist militant group Islamic State Somalia (ISS), unlike Al-Shabaab loyal to the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), expanded their operations to Somalia's southern regions, becoming especially active in urban areas such as the capital Mogadishu [→ Somalia (ISS)].

The conflict over subnational predominance between the regional governments of the self-declared state of Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland over their border region, comprising the regions Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn (SSC), escalated to a limited war. After Somaliland forces took control of Tukaraq town in Sool region in January, fights escalated in May, leaving more than 100 soldiers killed and approx. 15,000 people displaced [→ Somalia (Somaliland – Puntland)]. Further, the rivalry between various Somali subclans, such as Habar Gedir and Biyamal, continued on the level of a violent crisis. In Sool region, between 40 and 100 people were killed and more than 100 injured when Baharar and Qayaad, rivaling Dhulbahante subdivisions, fought at Dhammay village, Sool region, between October 22 and 23 [→ Somalia (subclan rivalry)]. Allegedly, the clashes were triggered by violent encounters between the regional governments of Somaliland and Puntland in Sool region. In Kenya, last year's violent crisis between the governing Jubilee coalition led by president Uhuru Kenyatta and the National Super Alliance Party (NASA), headed by opposition leader Raila Odinga, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. In March, a symbolic handshake between the two leaders after the troubled General Elections in August 2017 laid the foundation to the setting up of an advisory board called Building Bridges Initiative to tackle corruption as well as electoral and ethnic tensions [→ Kenya (opposition)]. In Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed implemented numerous political reforms after he succeeded former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in April, who had resigned over the growing internal unrest and anti-government protests. For instance, the state of emergency which had started in October 2016 was eventually lifted in June. Further, he removed the militant groups Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden Liberation Front (ONLF), and Ginbot 7 from the country's list of terrorist organizations, allowing a peaceful rapprochement which culminated in peace agreements between the government and each militant group [→ Ethiopia (opposition); → Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)]. The Jeddah Peace Agreement, signed by the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia and instigated by Abiy Ahmed, put an end to over 20 years of hostilities between the two neighboring countries [→ Ethiopia – Eritrea]. Despite these appeasing developments in and initiated by Ethiopia, the war between rivaling ethnic groups in Ethiopia continued. Contrary to previous years, clashes over access to resources as well as subnational predominance did not only take place between the ethnic groups of Oromo, Amhara, and Somali in Somali and Oromia regional states, but spread to southern and western regions of the country. Due to this, Ethiopia eventually hit the headlines with the unfortunate record of having the highest number of IDPs worldwide [→ Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)]. Djibouti and Eritrea agreed to resolve their violent crisis over the border region, the so-called Ras Doumeira, peacefully. The conflict had escalated into violence in 2017 after Qatar had withdrawn its peacekeepers [→ Eritrea – Djibouti]. In February, Djibouti held peaceful parliamentary elections. In Uganda, the violent crisis between the government, led by President Yoweri Museveni, and various opposition groups, continued [→ Uganda (opposition)]. MP and musician Robert Kyagulanyi, alias Bobi

Wine, was accused of having attacked the president's convoy during a campaign rally in Arua, Northern region. The arrest and Kyagulanyi's allegations of having been tortured in prison caused an public outcry in the country.

In Nigeria, the war between the two Boko Haram factions, called the Islamic State's West African Province (ISWAP) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad, on the one hand, and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger on the other continued for the eight consecutive year [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. As in 2017, the conflict accounted for approx 2,000 deaths. ISWAP intensified their operations from July on, attacking and raiding more than 30 military bases in the border region to Niger, where the group was based. The war 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 [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. In 2018, the conflict accounted for 1,200 deaths, twice the number of 2017. The two violent crises in the Niger Delta [→ Nigeria (Ijaw groups / Niger Delta); Nigeria (pro-Biafra Groups / Biafra)] also persisted. The conflict between the Islamic Movement Nigeria and the government caused several large demonstrations [→ Nigeria (Islamic Movement)]. As in previous pre-elections years the violent conflict between supporters of the All Progressives Congress and the People's Democratic Party intensified, leading to several political motivated homicides.

The conflict in the CAR between Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups and the government supported by MINUSCA continued as a war [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. However, the number of reported casualties as well as newly internally displaced persons decreased compared to the previous year. Furthermore, a meeting between 14 armed groups in Bouar, Nana-Mambéré, organized by the AU with MINUSCA facilitation, resulted in the signing of a document with demands to the government for entering a peace deal.

In Cameroon, the conflict between the government, representing the French-speaking majority of the country, and the English-speaking minority in Northwest Region and Southwest Region had already started in October 2016 [→ Cameroon (English-speaking minority)]. However, it had not escalated to a highly violent level until 2017, when English-speaking separatists declared the independence of the Anglophone territories, calling them Ambazonia. In 2018, more than 800 people were killed in clashes between separatists and Cameroonian military and security forces.

In the DR Congo, the security situation in the Kasai region improved significantly following a peace conference in September 2017 [→ DR Congo (KN)]. However, violence between Lendu and Hema communities in Ituri province, especially in Djugu territory, escalated at the beginning of the year, leaving at least 200 people dead and 300,000 displaced until mid-April [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Various armed groups remained active in eastern DR Congo, fighting over subnational predominance as well as resources, attacking the civilian population and repeatedly clashing with the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC), supported by MONUSCO [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.); DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR, CNRD)]. Notably, attacks on civilians in North Kivu, allegedly committed by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), increased throughout the year, leaving at least 190 people dead [→ DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)]. For the first time in several years, FARDC and Rwandan Defense Forces clashed in the border area in Rutshuru territory, North Kivu, on February 12. Both sides claimed breaches of territorial sovereignty and requested the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism to investigate the incident. Five days later, Rwandan Defense Forces handed over the bodies of three Congolese soldiers killed in the fighting [→ DR Congo – Rwanda]. Meanwhile, general and presidential elections were held on December 30 with results scheduled to be released in 01/2019 [→ DR Congo (opposition)]. Violence, not observed within our political conflicts, erupted between members of the Banunu and Batende communities in Yumbi territory, Mai-Ndombe province, on December 16. According to reports, at least 890 people were killed between December 16 and 18 while 16,000 people fled to neighboring Republic of Congo. Reportedly, a dispute over the burial of a Banunu customary chief had triggered the violence.

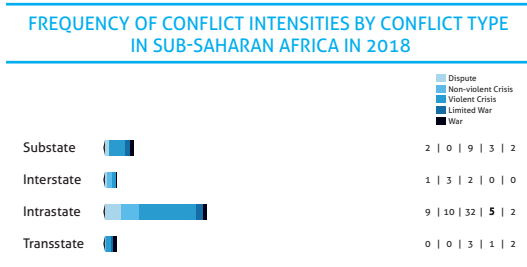
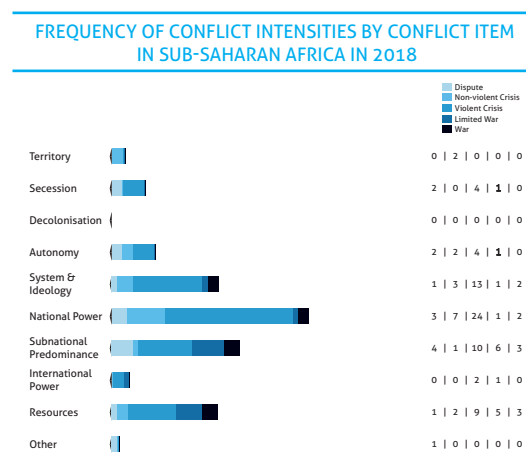
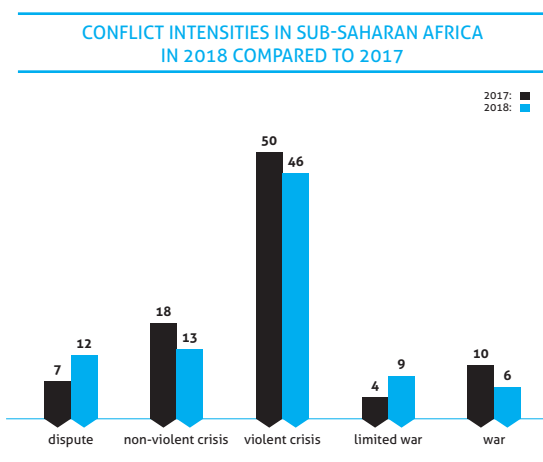
In South Sudan, a peace agreement between President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar in September led to the de-escalation of two conflicts. The war between Machar's Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and Kiir's Sudan People's Liberation Movement, backed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), de-escalated to a limited war [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)], while the opposition conflict between the government and several opposition groups, some of them militant, was downgraded to a non-violent crisis [→ South Sudan (opposition)]. However, the limited war between the SPLM government, backed by the army SPLA, and SPLM/A-IO continued to affect civilians to great extend. According to a UN report, SPLA conducted a military operation against SPLM/A-IO in the border region between Northern and Southern Liech from April to May, which left 232 civilians dead and 31,500 displaced. Violence significantly decreased but did not stop after the signing of the peace agreement. Peacebuilding efforts in the form of inter-communal conferences between various ethnic groups in South Sudan also led to the de-escalation of the war over subnational predominance and resources, especially cattle [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)].

In Sudan, the conflict in Darfur region entered its 15th consecutive year as a war, with fighting mainly concentrating in Jebel Marra region [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. Civilians were affected on a large scale, while the Sudanese army as well as government-affiliated militias also frequently attacked IDPs in camps. However, the conflict in Darfur remained the only highly-violent conflict in Sudan. The limited war between various cattle-herding pastoral tribes, especially over cattle and pastureland, de-escalated to a violent crisis, coinciding with an extensive disarmament campaign by the state government [→ Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)]. The opposition conflict in Sudan stayed on the level of a violent crisis, however, tensions increased notably towards the end of the year when mass protests over price increases erupted all over the country and government forces killed at least 37 protesters [→ Sudan (opposition)]. In Sudan's so-called Two Areas, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the conflict between the SPLM/A-North and the government had significantly de-escalated in 2017 after SPLM/A-North had split into two factions [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. While one faction engaged in peace efforts with the government, the other faction continued to fight against government forces. In Abyei region, a territory contested

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

between Sudan and South Sudan [→ South Sudan – Sudan], the conflict between the Ngok Dinka people and the nomadic Arabic Misseriya tribe continued [→ Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei)]. However, due to a peace agreement reached by the two groups on March 5, fighting decreased notably, now mainly concentrating on the Amiet common market.

Former South African president Jacob Zuma's withdrawal from office led to a reduction of violence between opposition groups and the government in South Africa. However, the size and number of socioeconomic protests increased significantly [→ South Africa (socioeconomic protests)]. While protesters repeatedly clashed with police over service delivery, housing, and land redistribution, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged that the protests reflected weaknesses in local governance. Further, violence against immigrants, mostly of Nigerian nationality, continued in the country, with frequent mob and looting attacks [→ South Africa (xenophobes)]. In Mozambique, peace negotiations between the main opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the ruling party Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) continued throughout most of the year, led to a containment of violence, but were put on hold after disputed municipal elections in late October [→ Mozambique (RENAMO)]. In Cabo Delgado, Mozambique's northernmost province, the Islamist militia Ahlu Sunna Wal Jammaa continued its attacks against civilians and security forces, leading to the death of over 300 civilians [→ Mozambique (ASWJ)]. In Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa was confirmed as president in nationwide elections on July 30. He had already held the office since the coup d'état against Robert Mugabe in 2017. The elections were characterized by political intimidation and violence between and within the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement of Democratic Change Alliance (MDC) [→ Zimbabwe (opposition)]. The conflict over national power in Tanzania between the ruling Party of the Revolution (CCM) and the two main opposition parties, Party for Democracy and Progress (CHADEMA) and Civic United Front (CUF), also continued on a violent level [→ Tanzania (opposition)]. In Burundi, members of the opposition coalition Democratic Alliance for Change-Ikibiri (ADC-Ikibiri) were subject to many violent intimidation attempts by the government under President Pierre Nkurunziza, his National Council for Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) party, and its military armed wing Imbonerakure [→ Burundi (opposition)]. Over 8,000 people left the country because of the ongoing violence. Furthermore, in the border area between Burundi and DR Congo, the Burundian armed groups National Forces of Liberation (FNL) and RED-Tabara frequently clashed with security forces of the two countries [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL, RED-Tabara)]. While diplomatic tensions between Burundi and Rwanda also continued, the Rwandan opposition conflict de-escalated to a dispute [→ Burundi – Rwanda; → Rwanda (opposition)].



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Overview: Conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in 2018

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM, ISGS et al.)	JNIM, Al-Mourabitoun, ISGS, Ansar Dine, MLF, Ansaroul Islam, AQIM, OIC vs. France, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Chad, Libya, USA	international power	1998	•	4
Angola (FLEC et al. / Cabinda)*	MIC, FLEC vs. government	secession	1975	•	3
Angola (opposition)*	UNITA vs. government	national power	1975	↘	2
Burkina Faso (opposition)*	CDP vs. government	national power	2014	•	2
Burundi (opposition)	ADC-Ikibiri, FNL d'Agathon Rwaswa, RED-Tabara vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	3
Burundi – Rwanda	Burundi vs. Rwanda	international power	2015	↗	3
Burundi, DR Congo (FNL, RED-Tabara)	FNL, RED-Tabara vs. Burundi, DR Congo	national power	2005	•	3
Cameroon (English-speaking minority)*	English-speaking minority vs. government	secession, autonomy	2016	NEW	4
Cameroon, Nigeria (militants / Bakassi)*	Cameroon, Nigeria vs. BSF	secession	2006	END	1
Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka)	Anti-Balaka vs. Ex-Séléka vs. government	national power, resources	2012	•	5
Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA)*	LRA vs. CAR, DRC, South Sudan, Uganda	subnational predominance, resources	1987	•	3
Chad (militant groups)	militant groups vs. government	national power, resources	2005	↑	3
Chad (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1990	•	3
Côte d'Ivoire (militant groups)*	militant groups vs. government	national power	2012	↗	3
Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)	FPI vs. government	national power	1999	•	3
Djibouti (FRUD)*	FRUD vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	•	2
Djibouti (opposition)*	MJO, USN vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	2
Djibouti – Eritrea*	Djibouti vs. Eritrea	territory	2008	•	2
DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa)	Bantu militias vs. Twa militias	subnational predominance	2013	↘	3
DR Congo (ex-M23)*	ex-M23 vs. government	subnational predominance	2004	↓	1
DR Congo (Ituri militias)	Ituri militias vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1999	↗	4
DR Congo (Kata Katanga)*	Kata Katanga vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2011	•	1
DR Congo (KN)	KN vs. government	subnational predominance	2016	↓	3
DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)	Mayi-Mayi groups vs. Nyatura groups vs. Raia Mutomboki vs. APCLS vs. FDLR vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2003	↘	4
DR Congo (opposition)	CLC, Lamuka, CACH et al. vs. government	national power	1997	•	3
DR Congo – Rwanda*	DR Congo vs. Rwanda	international power	1998	↗	3
DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR, CNRD)	FDLR vs. CNRD vs. DR Congo, Rwanda	national power, subnational predominance, resources	1994	•	3
DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)	ADF vs. DR Congo, Uganda	subnational predominance, resources	1995	•	4
Egypt – Ethiopia, Sudan (GERD)*	Egypt vs. Ethiopia, Sudan	resources	2011	•	2
Eritrea (RSADO)*	RSADO vs. government	autonomy	1999	•	1
Eritrea – Ethiopia*	Ethiopia vs. Eritrea	territory	1998	END	1
eSwatini (opposition)	SUDF, COSATU, PUDEMO, SNAT, SNUS, SWACOPA vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	↗	3
Ethiopia (ARDUF)*	ARDUF vs. government	autonomy	1995	↘	2
Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)	Oromo vs. Gedeo; Oromo vs. Somali; Oromo vs. Oromo; Oromo vs. Guraghe, Gedeo; Amhara vs. Tigray vs. Kimants	subnational predominance, resources	2017	•	5
Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)	OLF vs. government	secession, autonomy	1992	↗	3

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Ethiopia (ONLF / Ogaden)	ONLF vs. government	autonomy, resources	1994	•	3
Ethiopia (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2005	•	3
Ethiopia (TPDM)*	TPDM vs. government	system/ideology	2002	END	1
France – Rwanda*	Rwanda vs. France	other	2004	•	1
Gabon (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2009	↘	2
Gambia (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2016	•	3
Guinea (opposition)	UFDG, SLECG et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	3
Guinea Bissau (opposition)*	PRS vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	↓	1
Kenya (inter-communal rivalry)	Degodia vs. Ajuuran; Pokot vs. Marakwet; Degodia vs. Garre; Tugen vs. Pokot; Turkana vs. Pokot; Turkana vs. Daasanach; Masaai vs. Kalenjins; Gabra vs. Borana	subnational predominance, resources	1963	•	3
Kenya (MRC / Coast)*	MRC vs. government	secession	2008	•	1
Kenya (opposition)	NASA vs. government	national power	1999	↘	2
Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad)*	CMA et al. vs. government	autonomy	1989	↓	1
Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)*	Fulani vs. Dogon, Dozo vs. Islamist groups	subnational predominance	2012	↗	4
Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)	CMA vs. Platform vs. Islamist groups	subnational predominance	2012	•	3
Mali (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	•	3
Mozambique (ASWJ)	ASWJ vs. government	system/ideology	2017	•	3
Mozambique (RENAMO)	government (FRELIMO) vs. RENAMO, MDM	national power	2012	•	3
Niger (opposition)	MODEN/FA Lumana vs. government	national power	2009	•	3
Nigeria (Christians – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1960	•	3
Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)	farmers vs. pastoralists	subnational predominance	1960	•	5
Nigeria (Ijaw groups / Niger Delta)	Ijaw groups, NDA, CNDA vs. international oil companies, government	autonomy, resources	1997	•	3
Nigeria (Islamic Movement)	IMN vs. government	system/ideology	1991	•	3
Nigeria (northerners – southerners)*	northerners, APC supporters vs. southerners, PDP supporters	system/ideology, national power	1960	•	3
Nigeria (pro-Biafra groups / Biafra)*	pro-Biafra groups vs. government	secession	1967	•	3
Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)	Boko Haram vs. Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger	system/ideology	2003	•	5
Republic of Congo (Ninja militias)	Ninja militias vs. government	subnational predominance	1993	END	1
Republic of Congo (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2015	↘	1
Rwanda (opposition)*	UDF, DGRP vs. government	national power	2003	↘	1
Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)*	MFDC vs. government	secession	1982	↗	3
Sierra Leone (opposition)	APC vs. government	national power	2007	•	3
Somalia (ASWJ)*	ASWJ vs. government vs. Interim Galmudug Administration	subnational predominance	2014	•	2
Somalia (Hiraale militia – Jubaland)*	Hiraale militias vs. Jubaland State of Somalia	subnational predominance	1991	↘	1
Somalia (ISS)	ISS vs. al-Shabaab vs. government	national power	2015	•	3
Somalia (Somaliland – Puntland)	regional government of Somaliland vs. regional government of Puntland	subnational predominance	1998	↑	4
Somalia (Somaliland)*	regional government of Somaliland vs. government	secession	1991	•	1

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Somalia (subclan rivalry)	Habar Gedir vs. Hawadle vs. Dulbahante vs. al-Shabaab vs. Biyamal vs. Abgal	subnational predominance	2012	•	3
Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)	al-Shabaab vs. Somalia, Kenya	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	5
South Africa (opposition)*	ANC factions, EFF, DA, COSATU vs. government	national power	2015	•	3
South Africa (socioeconomic protests)	residents of informal settlements vs. government	system/ideology	2018	NEW	3
South Africa (xenophobes)	immigrants vs. xenophobes	system/ideology	1994	•	3
South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)	Murle vs. Dinka vs. Nuer	subnational predominance, resources	2011	↘	4
South Sudan (opposition)	SSOA, SS-UF vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↘	2
South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)	SPLM/A-IO vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	2011	↘	4
South Sudan – Sudan*	South Sudan vs. Sudan	territory, resources	2011	↘	2
Sudan (Darfur)	SLM-AW, SLM-MM, SLM-TC, JEM vs. government, RSF	subnational predominance, resources	2003	•	5
Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)	Misseriya vs. Rizeigat vs. Zaghawa vs. Fellata vs. Ma'aliya vs. Salamat et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2007	↘	3
Sudan (opposition)	National Consensus Forum, Sudan Call Forces vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	3
Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)	SPLM/A-North-Agar vs. SPLM/A-North-al-Hilu vs. government	autonomy, resources	2011	•	3
Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei)	Ngok Dinka vs. Misseriya	subnational predominance, resources	2011	•	3
Tanzania (opposition)	CHADEMA, CUF vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1993	•	3
Togo (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1963	•	3
Uganda (Bakonzo / Rwenzururu)*	Kingdom of Rwenzururu vs. government	autonomy	2014	↘	2
Uganda (inter-communal rivalry / Rwenzururu)*	Bakonzo vs. Bamba et al.	subnational predominance	2012	↓	1
Uganda (opposition)	FDC, DP, UPC, Jeema vs. government	national power	2001	•	3
Zimbabwe (opposition)	MDC Alliance, MDC-T vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2000	•	3

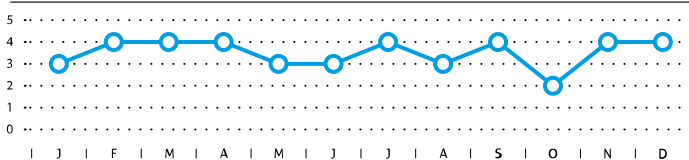
^{1 2 3 4} cf. overview table for Europe

ALGERIA, MALI ET AL. (AQIM, ISGS ET AL.)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: JNIM, OIC, AQIM, Ansaroul Islam, MLF, Ansar Dine, ISGS, Al-Mourabitoun vs. Libya, Chad, Algeria, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, France, USA

Conflict items: international power



The limited war over the orientation of the international system continued between the Islamist group Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM), comprised of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Mourabitoun, Ansar Dine, Macina Liberation Front (MLF), and its regional affiliates Ansaroul Is-

lam, Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade (OIB) and various other Islamist militant groups and the so-called Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) on the one hand, and Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger (G5 Sahel), and France, as well as other governments on the other.

In 1998, AQIM had emerged in Algeria under its former name, Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and joined the transnational al-Qaeda network in 2006. The expansion of the so-called Islamic State to the Maghreb region and Western Africa since 2014 [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)], as well as marriages between AQIM fighters and members of communities in Northern Mali in the early 2000s, enabled the group to gain a foothold in the region and recruit local personnel.

In 2012 the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL), supported by newly founded Islamist groups such as Ansar Dine and MUJAO, declared the independent state of Azawad comprising the regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu in Mali. Subsequently, various Islamist militant groups expanded their activities to central Mali and neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger and Ivory Coast. Since 2013, international, regional and national efforts have aimed to expel Islamist militants from the Sahel area.

In late 2012, after a call from the Malian interim administration for French military assistance was established to oust Islamic militants from Mali's North, the French Operation Serval. The operation was followed by Operation Barkhane in mid-2014. Over the past five years, the French forces intensified their support for national and regional counter-insurgency operations in Mali, as well as in neighboring Burkina Faso and Niger. In April 2013, UNSCR resolution 2100 established the Mali-based United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN's most fatal peacekeeping mission. In May 2015, MUJAO spokesperson Adnan Abu Walid Sahraoui had founded ISGS and had pledged allegiance to IS. The group operated mainly in the border region between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. In March 2017, Ansar Dine, the Macina Liberation Front, Al-Mourabitoun and the Saharan branch of AQIM had formed JNIM as an alliance of the major Islamist militant groups in the Sahel zone. In July 2017, at the behest of France, the so-called G5 Sahel Joint Force was established with the mandate to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime and human trafficking. (anf)

MALI

This year, ISGS, JNIM, Ansar Dine, MLF, Ansaroul Islam, and Al-Mourabitoun attacked MINUSMA facilities, the Malian military and police, civilians as well as the Tuareg-led armed groups Imghad Tuareg Self-Defense Group and Allies (GATIA) and Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MSA).

In the first half of the year, pro-Mali militias MSA and GATIA, as well as the Malian and Nigerien military, conducted several joint operations against ISGS militants in Menaka, Gao, and Mopti regions. Soldiers of Operation Barkhane supported some of the operations both from the air and on the ground. Reportedly, during these operations, more than 50 militants were killed, dozens arrested and several militant strongholds destroyed, as well as vehicles, weapons and ammunition seized. For instance, on February 17, the French forces, in cooperation with MSA and GATIA militias, carried out an airstrike close to the town of Intamedia, Gao, leaving ten suspected ISGS militants killed.

Islamist militants also targeted MSA and GATIA militiamen this year. For instance, on July 19, suspected JNIM militants ambushed a GATIA convoy close to the town of Tidimbawen, Menaka, killing 16 militiamen and four civilians.

From end of March onwards, inter-ethnic violence further fueled the conflict between MSA and GATIA and Islamist groups. For instance, on April 26 and 27, suspected ISGS militants killed 40 ethnic Tuareg in two separate attacks in the villages of Aklaz and Alakassa, Menaka. In alleged retaliation, MSA and GATIA militiamen killed dozens of ethnic Fulani near the Nigerien border to Mali the same day. Between December 11 and 12, alleged ISGS militants attacked camps of ethnic Dawsahak in Gao, leaving more than 45 civilians killed.

Ansar Dine carried out attacks throughout the year, especially targeting MINUSMA bases and peacekeepers. For instance, between May 9 and 19, Ansar Dine conducted several IED and mortar shells attacks on MINUSMA bases in the towns Amachach and Aguelhok, Kidal region. During the incidents, three peacekeepers were wounded.

AQIM was particularly active in Timbuktu. For instance, on

September 28, AQIM militants attempted to assassinate Coordination of Azawad Movements' coordinator Ahma Ag Mohamed Aly close to the city of Timbuktu. Two French-led airstrikes on September 15 and 18 targeted two presumed AQIM convoys near Timbuktu. Casualties remained unknown. Compared to previous years, the intensity of MLF attacks conducted in Mopti and Segou regions increased. They targeted mostly civilians but also clashed with the Malian army. For instance, on May 19, MLF militants allegedly killed six ethnic Dozo near the town of Nawalouma in Segou. Reportedly, the group's leader Amadou Kouffa was killed during a joint operation of French and Malian forces on November 22 and 23 between the village of Farimake and Dogo in Mopti. Throughout the rest of the year, the group's activities decreased.

In the first four months of the year, JNIM conducted several complex attacks, especially targeting bases of the Malian military, police stations, and MINUSMA throughout northern Mali. For instance, on January 27, JNIM militants attacked and subsequently burned a military camp in Soumpi, Timbuktu, killing 14 soldiers and wounding 20. The militants used heavy machine guns and RPGs.

This year, counter operations of the Malian army and soldiers of Operation Barkhane made substantial advances. Furthermore, several high-level coordination meetings of representatives of the G5 Sahel member states, France, as well as other countries, took place in order to discuss transnational border security issues and foster regional and international efforts. (anf)

BURKINA FASO

ISGS, Ansaroul Islam and JNIM conducted attacks on civilians, military and security personnel in northern Burkina Faso, especially in Soum province, as well as in the capital Ouagadougou. This year, ISGS and Ansaroul Islam expanded their activities to eastern Burkina Faso, allegedly entrenching themselves in the W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP) Complex, a protected natural reserve in the tri-state border area of Niger, Burkina Faso, and Benin. Attacks were increasingly frequent, lethal, and professional.

On March 2, JNIM conducted an attack on the capital, targeting the army headquarters and the French embassy. The militants detonated a car bomb in front of the army headquarters and engaged in heavy gunfights with Burkinabé and French soldiers throughout the day. During the attack, eight assailants and eight soldiers of the Burkinabé military were reportedly killed and more than 85 people injured. JNIM later stated the attack was in retaliation for a French-led operation at the Malian border to Algeria in February, when several of their senior commanders were killed.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 5,000 people had fled their homes in Soum province by March due to the conflict.

In three separate events between August and September, in total 23 soldiers and police officers were killed and dozens wounded when IEDs, allegedly set by ISGS and Ansaroul Islam militants, struck their vehicles in Gourma, Kompienga and Soum province.

On October 3 and 4, after an attack allegedly carried out by Ansaroul Islam fighters on a goldmine in Inata the previous day, the French military conducted its first airstrike in Burkina

Faso against a convoy of militants, killing seven.

On December 27, 10 police officers were killed and three wounded in an ambush by alleged JNIM militants between the towns of Toeni and Loroni, Sorou province, close to the Malian border. Four days later, the government declared a state of emergency in the northern provinces due to intensified activities of Islamist militants. On the same day, ethnic clashes erupted in central Burkina Faso amid rising ethnic tensions in bordering Mali, allegedly fueled by Islamist violence [→ Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)]. (anf)

NIGER

In Niger, violence occurred solely in the Tillabéri region, bordering Mali and Burkina Faso. ISGS conducted several attacks, particularly targeting police and military. For instance, on March 12, suspected ISGS militants aboard motorbikes attacked a gendarmerie checkpoint in Goube, killing three gendarmes and wounding one. On April 11 and September 17, presumed ISGS militants abducted two international aid workers in the town of Inates and Bomanga. On November 30, one police officer was killed during an attack on the police station in the town of Tera. JNIM later claimed responsibility for the attack.

From October onwards, the Nigerien army and soldiers of Operation Barkhane carried out several joint operations against ISGS, attacking presumed strongholds close to the border with Burkina Faso. Allegedly, seven ISGS militants were killed and several captured in an operation by the French forces on November 8, close to the village of Titahoune. On the same day, the Nigerien government announced a state of emergency in Say, Torodi and Tera departments, stating increased militant activity. On December 27, French and Nigerien forces carried out a joint air-ground operation in the village of Tongo Tongo, killing 15 presumed ISGS militants and seizing numerous weapons and ammunition. (anf)

ALGERIA

Throughout the year, the Algerian People's National Armed Forces (ANP) claimed to have killed AQIM members on several occasions. For instance, on January 26, ANP killed eight alleged AQIM members during a military operation near Chechar commune, Khenchela Province. On January 30, AQIM propagandist Adel Seghiri, responsible for the group's media outlet Al-Andalus, was killed in the Jijel region together with another militant.

AQIM, on the other hand, claimed to be responsible for several attacks on military convoys using roadside bombs, in which at least seven soldiers and two civilians were killed.

Furthermore, according to the Ministry of National Defense, ANP killed 14 Islamist militants and arrested 14, while 62 surrendered. However, their respective allegiance could not be determined. (tjb)

LIBYA

This year, the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) conducted its first airstrikes against suspected AQIM members in Libya. AFRICOM disclosed information about three drone attacks against Al Qaeda members, killing 15 in total. For instance,

on 24 March, an airstrike left two al-Qaeda members dead in Ubari, Wadi al Hayat district, including a high ranking recruiter. (aht)

TUNISIA

In Tunisia, two violent incidents between the AQIM-affiliated Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade (OIB) militants and security forces occurred, whilst other clashes with militants could not be clearly attributed. The government extended the state of emergency imposed in November 2015 until 05/01/2019 due to the volatile security situation.

On January 20, according to the Ministry of Interior, special units of the National Guard killed two OIB militants, near Samama Mountain, Kasserine Governorate. One of the militants was identified as a top aide to AQIM leader Abu Musab Abdul Wadud and was reportedly on a mission to reorganize AQIM's Tunisian branch. On July 8, OIB militants targeted two vehicles of the National Guard with an IED in Ain Sultan area in Jendouba Governorate. During the attack and the following exchange of fire, six National Guards were killed and three wounded. The militants seized the patrol's weapons and fled in one of the vehicles. (wih) hiiik

BURUNDI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: ADC-Ikibiri, FNL d'Agathon Rwaswa, RED-Tabara vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between various members of the opposition coalition Democratic Alliance for Change-Ikibiri (ADC-Ikibiri) and the government under President Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), supported by its militant youth wing Imbonerakure.

Tensions between the conflict parties flared up in March, when Nkurunziza announced a referendum on a constitutional reform for May 17. 73 percent of the population voted in favor of the amendment that extended the presidential term from five to seven years, allowing the president to remain in office until 2034. The months leading up to the referendum saw increased violence, with Human Rights groups accusing Imbonerakure members of systematically tracking down and assaulting Burundians who failed to register to vote. In addition, Imbonerakure youths abducted, detained, injured, and in some instances killed supporters and members of opposition groups, accusing them of campaigning against the constitutional amendment.

On February 14, police tortured a civilian in Cendajuru, Cankuzo province, who refused to register to vote. He died three days later, which attracted national media attention. On February 25, two soldiers shot dead the secretary of the CNDD-FDD on Mutoyi hill, Bugendana commune, Gitega province. On April 13, Imbonerakure members attacked the deputy of the Coalition of Indigenous Peoples of Hope, in the commune of Muha, Bujumbura province. In Rumonge province, Imbonerakure members kidnapped and injured the

treasurer of the Amizero y'Abarundi coalition of the National Forces for Liberation (FNL), member of ADC-Ikibiri, on Gatwe hill in Kizuka area on April 21. On May 13, an Imbonerakure militia injured twelve FNL members, killing one of them in Ntega, Kirundo province.

In the aftermath of the constitutional referendum, the security situation further deteriorated. Opposition party members who voted against the amendment were subject to human rights violations by government forces, particularly by Imbonerakure, police staff, and the National Intelligence Service (NIS). This included murder, abductions, and arbitrary arrests. On June 6, Imbonerakure beat up five militant FNL members in Mutaho, Gitega, for having campaigned against the amendment. As part of a wider campaign that encouraged Imbonerakure members to chase down political opponents, Imbonerakure members tortured three FNL members on September 18 in Gashikanwa, Ngozi province. The head of Buganda NIS arrested and tortured a civilian on September 22 in Cibitoke province. They accused him of having failed to participate in public protests denouncing the UN report on human rights violations in Burundi. In February 2018, the outgoing UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had called the country one of the "most prolific slaughterhouses of humans in recent times". On December 5, the Burundian government requested the UN human rights office in Burundi to close. According to UNHCR, over 340,000 Burundians have fled the country due to the ongoing conflicts; in 2018, approx. 8,000 people left the country. abü

BURUNDI – RWANDA

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Burundi vs. Rwanda

Conflict items: international power

The non-violent crisis between Burundi and Rwanda over international power escalated to a violent crisis.

Since the re-election of Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza's in 2015, the two countries have openly exchanged hostilities. Rwanda hosted more than 68,000 Burundian refugees at the end of the year. Both governments accused each other of harboring political opponents which further intensified diplomatic tensions. Specifically, Burundi accused Rwanda of providing military training to Burundian refugees. On December 4, Nkurunziza called for a special regional summit on the conflict with Rwanda within the framework of the East African Community, declaring Rwanda to be the origin of the political crisis in Burundi. Rwanda denied this and dismissed calls at the special summit.

Throughout the year, several violent attacks on the countries' common border took place. On January 12, Burundi military guards shot dead a Rwandan national who was crossing the border in Cibitoke province. Shortly after, on January 31, Rwandan police allegedly killed a Burundian national in the province of Ngozi, subsequently throwing his body into Kan-yaru river. Furthermore, a Burundian police officer illegally crossed the Rwandan border in Cibitoke. He was arrested and tortured by Rwandan officials. abü

BURUNDI, DR CONGO (FNL, RED-TABARA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: FNL, RED-Tabara vs. Burundi, DR Congo

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) over national power in Burundi between the countries' governments, on the one hand, and a militant faction of the National Forces of Liberation (FNL), as well as RED-Tabara, on the other, continued. Both groups operated in the border area between the two countries. They have committed themselves to removing Burundian President Nkurunziza from power. However, there was no cooperation reported.

The militant faction of the Burundian FNL has been active in the South Kivu province, DRC, for over two decades. In March 2016, the Burundian and Congolese armies had initiated a joint border operation to fight the FNL factions. Moreover, in 2015, RED-Tabara, a militant organization considered to be affiliated with the Burundian opposition party Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD), had started activities.

Throughout 2018, all conflict actors reported fatalities. While many of the incidents were reported inconsistently, at least 110 people were killed in total. For instance, on January 29, the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) killed three FNL fighters in Rusabagi, South Kivu. Likewise, three FNL members were shot dead on April 24 by FARDC soldiers in Muhungu, South Kivu. On May 24, the FARDC killed three FNL members, after the militants had shot dead a FARDC soldier on patrol between Kiliba and Rungu, north of Uvira city, South Kivu. Furthermore, on July 16, FNL members injured five civilians near Kawizi village, South Kivu. According to witnesses, the attacking group comprised approx. 100 individuals. On September 14, FARDC killed two FNL fighters near Kamvivira, South Kivu. Furthermore, in November, several clashes between the armies and unidentified militants occurred in South Kivu, in which at least 33 combatants died. On December 3, four FARDC soldiers were killed in a battle with armed groups supported by the FNL near Fizi, South Kivu. 14 members of these armed groups died.

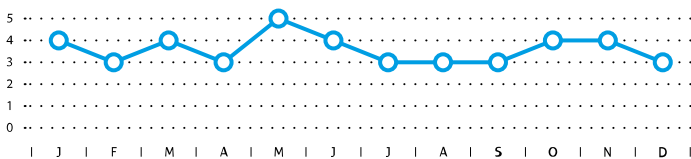
RED-Tabara claimed responsibility for an attack in Ruhagarika, Cibitoke province, on May 11, which had left 26 civilians dead and more than seven injured. Its aim was to demonstrate the government's inability to uphold security in Burundi. Likewise, it claimed responsibility for wounding six and killing four Burundian soldiers in an attack in Nyamitanga, Cibitoke, on October 19. abü

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

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Anti-Balaka vs. Ex-Séléka vs. government

Conflict items: national power, resources



The war over national power and resources between anti-Balaka militias, ex-Séléka militias and the government, supported by MINUSCA, continued.

Various predominantly Muslim armed groups, such as the Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC) and the Patriotic Rally for the Rebirth of the Central African Republic (RPRC), had formed the Séléka in 2012, overthrowing then-president François Bozizé's government. The Séléka movement had officially been dissolved in 2013, after its leader Michel Djotodia had declared himself president of the country. Subsequently, the fighters who remained active were referred to as ex-Séléka. In response to Séléka activities, predominantly Christian militias had formed the anti-Balaka movement which had been reportedly strengthened by parts of the former security forces, including members of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA). Despite the election of Faustin Archange Touadéra as president in 2016, violence had continued and escalated in 2017, when the number of displaced persons had reached a record high of 1.1 million: more than one person out of five.

The number of casualties in 2018 varied according to different sources. However, throughout the year, at least 850 people were killed and more than 110,000 displaced due to clashes between various armed groups, as well as in attacks against civilians, state authorities, MINUSCA personnel, and humanitarian actors. Almost all prefectures were affected by violence with armed groups controlling an estimated 70 to 80 percent of the country. While anti-Balaka groups continued to have their strongholds in the west, ex-Séléka groups controlled large parts of northeastern CAR. In these areas, armed groups reportedly established parallel administration and taxation structures, and engaged in the exploitation and trade of natural resources such as diamonds and gold.

Fighting over territory in Ouham-Pendé prefecture between the predominantly Christian armed group Revolution and Justice (RJ) and the predominantly Muslim National Movement for the Liberation of Central African Republic (MNL) led to the displacement of more than 65,000 people in early January. Reportedly, RJ fighters mainly targeted civilians belonging to Muslim and Peuhl communities while the MNL attacked villages north of Paoua and burned down hundreds of houses. More than 100 people were killed during the attacks.

The fighting between RJ and MNL spilled over to the Ouham prefecture in mid-January. For instance, on January 13, both

groups clashed on the Markounda-Kouki axis, displacing an unspecified number of civilians. Furthermore, between October 31 and November 6, attacks on civilians as well as clashes between the two ex-Séléka Central African Patriotic Movement (MPC) and the Front for the Rebirth of Central Africa (FPRC), on the one side, and anti-Balaka groups, on the other, left eleven people dead and 37 injured in and around Batangafo. Around 27,000 people were displaced. On October 31, MPC and FPRC fighters attacked an IDP camp in Batangafo after a Muslim man had allegedly been stabbed to death by an anti-Balaka fighter. Numerous huts were set on fire, leaving thousands without shelter.

Furthermore, violence between anti-Balaka fighters and the UPC escalated in Ouaka prefecture in mid-March, after anti-Balaka fighters had killed 15 ethnic Fulani civilians in Mbaidou. On March 20, UPC fighters reportedly killed an anti-Balaka member in Gotile. In response, anti-Balaka fighters killed at least 15 people and burned down several houses in Tagbara on the same day. On April 3, several hundred anti-Balaka fighters attacked the MINUSCA base in Tagbara, leaving 23 anti-Balaka fighters, one peacekeeper, and 21 civilians dead. To fight off the attack, MINUSCA forces, which were guarding an IDP camp in Seko, were deployed to the village. Subsequently, UPC fighters attacked the IDP camp and killed 23 civilians. On May 15, violence reached Bambari, when UPC fighters attacked security forces and civilians after the dead bodies of three Fulani men had been found. Until May 17, UPC fighters killed at least ten people, set up checkpoints throughout the city, and engaged in looting, which resulted in the displacement of around 7,000 people. Between May 29 and 31, fighting in Bambari between UPC fighters, on the one side, and MINUSCA as well as internal security forces, on the other, killed around 90 people. Apart from fighting on the ground, MINUSCA reportedly conducted an airstrike on a UPC position in the town. Violence in Bambari as well as its surroundings continued until the end of the year. At the beginning of November, MINUSCA and FACA increased their patrols in the city due to several UPC attacks.

On April 7 and 8, MINUSCA and FACA forces conducted Operation Sukula in the predominantly Muslim PK5 neighborhood in the third district of the capital Bangui, eponymous prefecture, aiming to expel so-called self-defense militias and to establish the presence of state security actors. Two people were killed and 45 injured during the operation. Between April 10 and 12, subsequent fighting killed more than 30 people and injured more than 100. Violence further escalated on May 1, when one of the self-defense groups attacked the police at a checkpoint close to Fatima church, near PK5. The police officers fled into the church where more than 1,000 people were attending a ceremony. Approx. 30 people were killed, including the priest, and around 185 injured by automatic weapons and grenades. In response, a crowd stormed the Bangui Community Hospital where most of the injured had been transferred, and stoned to death a Muslim caretaker. Furthermore, members of a crowd carrying the body of the dead priest to the presidential palace killed two Senegalese Muslims in Lakouanga neighborhood. In total, around 70 people were killed and 330 injured in Bangui throughout April and May.

On April 11, the ex-Séléka groups MPC, FPRC, and UPC organized demonstrations against MINUSCA in the prefectures of

Ouaka, Haute-Kotto, Nana-Gribizi, and Bamingui-Bangoran, claiming that Operation Sukula constituted an attack against all Muslims in the country. Four days later, FPRC leader Abdoulaye Hissène threatened that the group could attack Bangui and encouraged MPC and UPC to join the offensive in Kaga-Bandoro, Nana-Gribizi. Reportedly, FPRC mobilized and concentrate units around Bambari. Subsequently, MINUSCA reinforced its positions in the area and reportedly conducted airstrikes against FPRC vehicles. Furthermore, violence was reported in Nana-Gribizi prefecture in June. For instance, on June 22, MPC fighters burned down 460 houses in attacks on three villages close to Mbres. On June 28 and 29, MPC and anti-Balaka reportedly clashed in the same area.

In Nana-Mambere prefecture, fighters of the mainly ethnic Fulani militia Retour, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (3R) increased their activities in early September. For instance, on September 4, a 3R fighter killed a civilian in Ndongori. On October 6, the leaders of the local 3R and anti-Balaka group signed an agreement in Bouar, Nana-Mambéré, ensuring their commitment to peace and encouraging displaced persons to return.

Throughout the year, UPC and anti-Balaka fighters repeatedly clashed in Basse-Kotto prefecture. For instance, on January 5, fighting between UPC and anti-Balaka left at least 15 people dead in Kembe, while 1,000 houses were burned down. Furthermore, anti-Balaka repeatedly attacked MINUSCA in Alindao. In an ambush on a MINUSCA patrol on May 17, anti-Balaka fighters killed one soldier and wounded eight, while MINUSCA killed 40 anti-Balaka fighters. The most fatal attack against civilians occurred in Alindao on November 15. Following clashes with anti-Balaka, UPC fighters attacked and burned down an IDP camp in the city, killing at least 60 people while 18,000 fled to the local MINUSCA base, other IDP camps, and the surrounding areas.

A new armed group called Coalition Siriri, which had emerged in Mambéré-Kadéï prefecture in late 2017, expanded its activities throughout the year. The group, reportedly aligned to the UPC, recruited most of its members from Fulani communities and claimed to defend cattle owners from attacks by anti-Balaka fighters. Between January and June, the Coalition Siriri looted several villages in the Amada-Gaza area. Furthermore, the group repeatedly attacked MINUSCA patrols and bases. For instance, on April 12, MINUSCA forces killed four Siriri fighters after the latter had attacked a patrol in Amada-Gaza. On June 3, Siriri fighters killed one MINUSCA soldier and wounded seven in an attack on a patrol in Dilapoko village.

Different ex-Séléka factions clashed in the two northern prefectures Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran. On June 20, fighting between FPRC and MPC killed at least 28 people and injured five in Ndélé, Bamingui-Bangoran. In Charahibou, Vakaga, clashes between FPRC and RPRC left at least five people dead on December 16.

In the eastern prefecture of Haut-Mbomou, thousands of residents fled Banangui following fighting between UPC and anti-Balaka on November 22.

Violent UPC and anti-Balaka activities in neighboring Mbohou prefecture led to the reinforcement of MINUSCA patrols in Bangassou in March. On April 9, anti-Balakas, civil society, and authorities negotiated a peace agreement during the joint visit of Cardinal Nzapalainga and Imam Kobine to Ban-

gassou. Nevertheless, violence continued on July 17, when clashes between anti-Balaka fighters and MINUSCA left one civilian dead and 20 people injured. One day later, fighting between so-called self-defense militias, allegedly allied to an anti-Balaka group, and UPC fighters killed at least 17 people in Pombolo. On December 31, FPRC regained control over the mining town Bakouma. At least twelve people were killed, several homes burned down, and property looted.

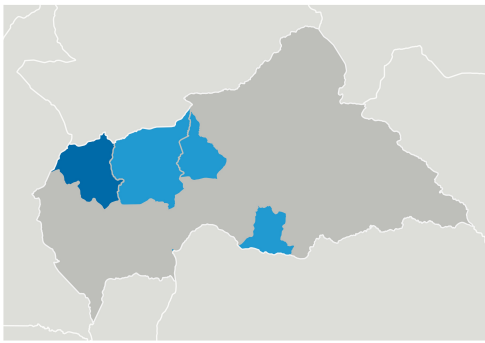
In Bria, Haute-Kotto, MINUSCA arrested a local anti-Balaka leader in the town's IDP camp on March 16. The arrest triggered demonstrations by inhabitants of the IDP camp, blocking the access road. Fighting around Bria between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka on August 5 and 12 left at least four civilians dead. On August 25, anti-Balaka and FPRC clashed again, with the latter killing eleven civilians. Violence spread to the city when FPRC killed nine IDPs on September 6. One day later, more than 400 people protested in front of the MINUSCA base, carrying the bodies of those killed the previous day. Reportedly, two grenades were thrown into the MINUSCA base while MINUSCA allegedly used tear gas to disperse the demonstration. On October 2, the anti-Balaka group, led by Diandi and the FPRC, reached a local peace agreement for Bria.

Until November, armed groups targeted humanitarian workers on at least 338 occasions. For instance, on February 25, alleged MPC fighters killed six aid workers in an ambush on a convoy in Boguila, Ouham.

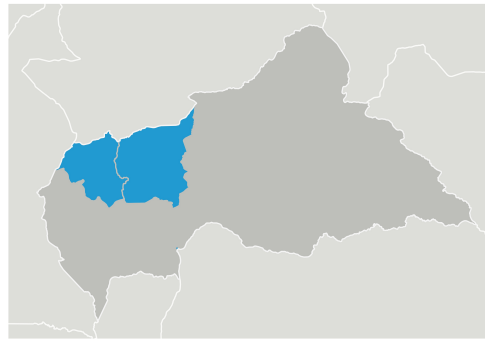
On December 13, MINUSCA's mandate was renewed by the UNSC until 11/15/2019, after it had only been extended for one month in November. Starting in February 2018, with the approval of the UNSC, Russia began to supply the Central African Republic (CAR) with arms and military instructors, as well as a special military adviser to President Touadéra. On August 28, the Russian and Sudanese governments initiated a meeting between FPRC, UPC, and MPC, on the one hand, and Maxime Mokom, leader of the largest anti-Balaka faction, on the other, in Khartoum, Sudan. As a result, the conflict parties signed a declaration of understanding and pledged to support peace and dialogue within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR, led by AU and regional states with the support of the UN. However, UPC and MPC withdrew from the declaration in October while expressing their continued commitment to the African Initiative. Between August 28 and 30, AU, with MINUSCA facilitation, organized a meeting between 14 armed groups in Bouar. The meeting resulted in a document with demands to the government, signed by all present armed groups. Subsequently, the document was handed over to the government. On October 3, Anti-Balaka and the 3R militia signed a commitment to peace in Khartoum.

Throughout the year, two former anti-Balaka commanders were turned over to the ICC. MP Alfred Yekatom was arrested on October 29, after he had fired his gun during a parliament session. He was handed over the ICC and on November 23, he was charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in 2013 and 2014. Patrice-Edouard Ngaissona, a member of the executive committee of the Confederation of African Football, was arrested by French authorities in Paris on December 12. At the end of the month, a French court ruled that he was to be transferred to the ICC to face charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Further-

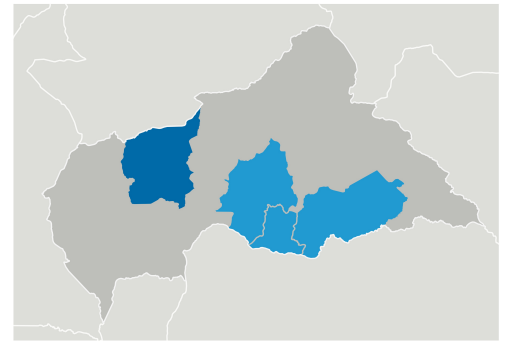
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (ANTI-BALAKA, EX-SÉLÉKA)



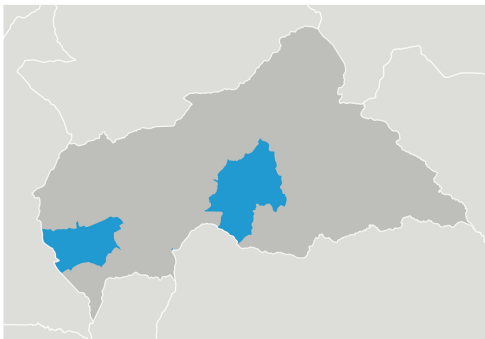
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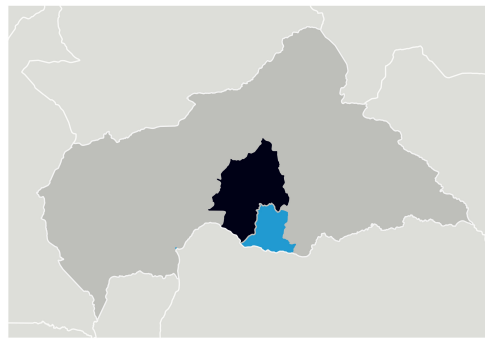
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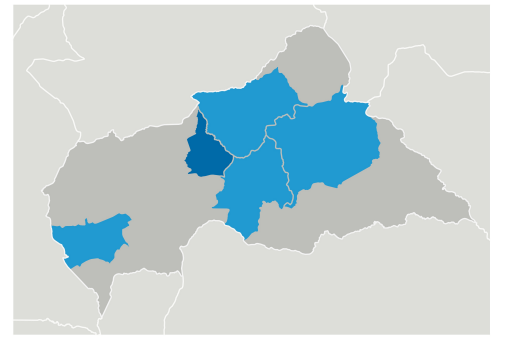
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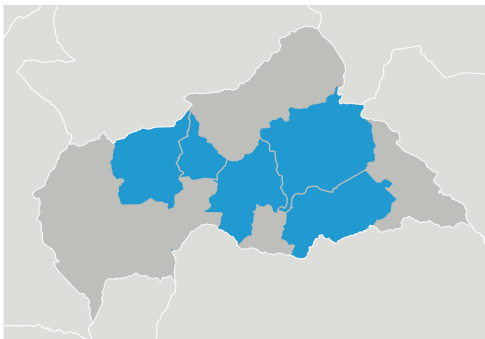
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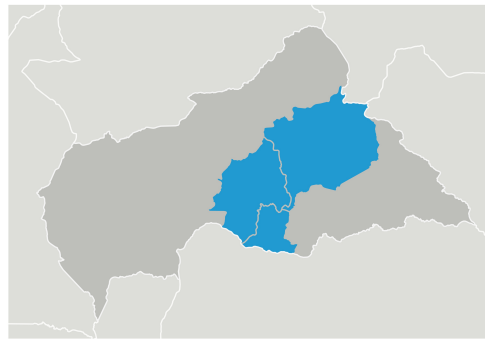
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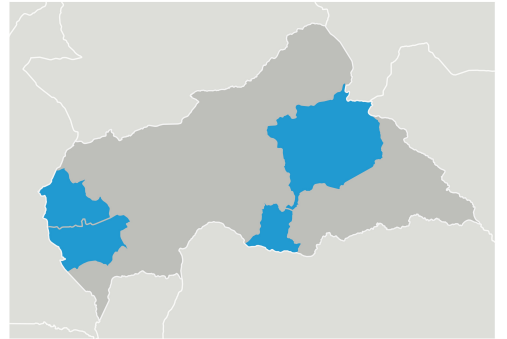
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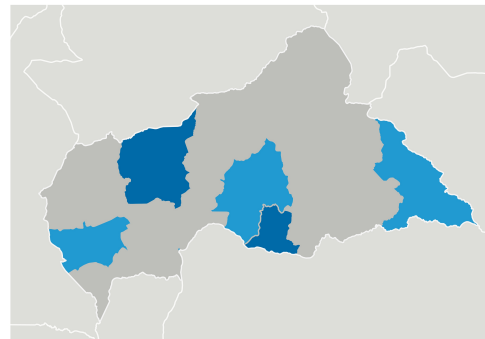
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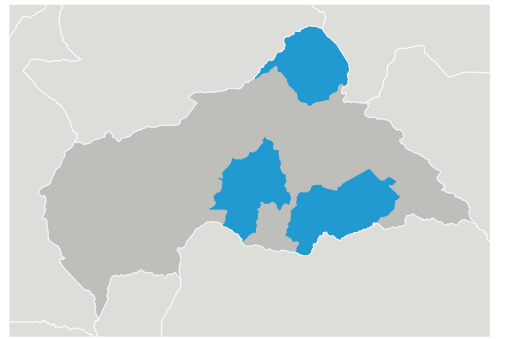
September



October



November



December

more, former Congolese vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba's conviction for war crimes and crimes against humanity in CAR was overturned by the ICC in June [→ DR Congo (opposition)].
kda, emh

CHAD (MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: militant groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power, resources

The dispute over national power and resources, especially gold, between various militant groups, mainly the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), and the government of President Idriss Déby escalated to a violent crisis. The CCSMR had been founded in 2016 and was based in Libya. Its main objective was to overthrow the Chadian government.

All conflict measures took place in Tibesti region in the north of Chad. The area of Kouri Bougri has been especially affected by violence since gold mines were discovered in 2012.

On August 11, the CCSMR reportedly raided two gold mines in the area of Kouri Bougri. The CCSMR attacked with heavy machine guns, leaving at least three military officials dead and reportedly taking another three officers captive. On August 16 and 17, the Chadian Air Force bombed the area around Kouri Bougri, after having ordered civilians to leave the area. According to security sources, there was no damage, however, other sources report that herders and animals were injured by shrapnel.

On August 21, CCSMR reportedly attacked Kouri Bougri a second time, seizing weapons and documents. This was, however, denied by the government, who claimed that "the situation is under control". Furthermore, the government stationed army personnel in the north of the country to fight the CCSMR.

After the incidents in August, the government ordered gold miners operating in Tibesti region to evacuate the area. Many gold miners dismissed the order and stayed.

On September 1, the air force bombed a civilian convoy between Miski and Yebibo, Tibesti, confusing it with a militant convoy, and leaving dozens of civilians injured.

On September 13, the Chadian army again attacked the town of Kouri Bougri with two helicopters, injuring at least four civilians.

On October 24, military forces clashed with armed inhabitants in Miski. Both sides accused each other of attacking first. After this incident, the armed inhabitants formed the Committee of Self-Defence (CSD), accusing the government of withholding gold revenues from the locals. Throughout the following weeks, the government tried to take control over the region, using the air force as support for troops on the ground. According to CSD, dozens of soldiers died and several were wounded, while they also recorded several dead and injured on their own side.

On November 16, CSD stated that the CCSMR would not operate in the area of Miski and distanced themselves from CCSMR. On November 17, the government stated to have defeated CSD in Miski. This was denied by CSD who instead

claimed on November 22 to have defeated the Chadian military forces in the area of Miski.

On December 28, clashes in Kouri Bougri left more than 30 people dead and at least 200 injured after unidentified militants crossing from Libya attacked gold miners. Sources cited that the attackers were of Arab descent, assaulting all "non-Arab" miners who had come to Kouri Bougri in search of gold.
dke

CHAD (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between opposition groups and the government led by President Idriss Déby and his Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) continued. The opposition consisted of various political parties, the Union of Trade Unions of Chad (UST), civil society groups, and loosely organized protesters, mainly students.

On 31 December 2017, President Déby stated that parliamentary elections would be held in 2018 and a national forum should work on constitutional reforms. However, the elections did not take place until the end of the year.

On January 29, public servants launched a general strike against austerity measures imposed by the government. Several opposition parties backed the trade unions and called for protests. Over the course of the following few weeks, anti-austerity protests erupted in several cities, often turning violent. For instance, on February 10, protesters clashed with police forces in the capital of N'Djamena, leaving dozens of people injured as police dispersed the crowds using tear gas. Police arrested at least 90 protesters. In response to the demonstrations, the government suspended 10 opposition parties for a duration of two months for "disturbing public order" and "inciting violence". On March 15, the government and UST reached an agreement to end the general strike.

The national forum, comprised of 1169 Chadians proposed changes to the constitution on March 27. The forum was boycotted by the opposition. Proposed changes included, for instance, the abolishment of the office of the prime minister and thus the introduction of a presidential system, as well as the extension of the presidency legislature period from five to six years. Furthermore, it restricted the number of presidential terms to a maximum of two without applying this retrospectively, making it possible for President Déby to govern until 2033. On April 30, the parliament accepted the new constitution. 33 opposition members boycotted the vote and two activists were taken into custody for staging a sit-in in front of the parliament building.

On May 28, the speaker of UST announced the resumption of the strike of public service workers against the austerity measures, claiming that the government had not honoured the agreement made in March. The strike lasted almost five months until October 26, when the government and UST reached another agreement.
dke

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: FPI vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the opposition parties around the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) and the coalition government of President Alassane Ouattara continued.

On March 22, opposition parties around the FPI organized a walk of democratization in Xinhua, Abidjan District, to unify the opposition and call for more transparent and equitable elections. Police dispersed the unauthorized demonstration using tear gas. The conflict peaked during the municipal and regional elections in October. On October 13, the ruling coalition maintained its majority in the municipal elections. The next day, violent confrontations occurred between law enforcement and followers of defeated candidates in Lakota, Gôh-Djiboua District and Séguéla, Woroba District, leaving three people dead and multiple injured. In August, Ouattara pardoned 800 people, among them the former first lady Simone Gbagbo, currently FPI's vice president. She was freed from prison after serving three of the 20 years of her sentence.

Throughout the year, the country has been hit by several strikes by among others civil servants, police and teachers. For instance, on October 25, police officers and civil servants threatened to strike, demanding better payment and similar cash bonuses to what soldiers had received in 2017 after staging two mutinies.

According to a statement of President Ouattara on April 13, ninety-five percent of the people who had fled the country due to the post-electoral crisis in 2011 have returned to Côte d'Ivoire, although this could not be confirmed by UNHCR statistics. jwi

DR CONGO (BANTU – BATWA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Bantu militias vs. Twa militias

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The limited war over subnational predominance in the provinces of Tanganyika, Haut-Katanga and Maniema, between Bantu and Twa militias de-escalated to a violent crisis. Throughout the year, the situation improved significantly and most of the more than 100,000 who were newly internally displaced in 2017 returned to their homes. While violence was mainly restricted to the first half of the year, the situation has remained relatively calm since July.

On January 14, Twa militia members reportedly killed several people and attacked the health centre in Kabulembe village, Pweto territory, Haut-Katanga. Subsequently, around 10,000 fled Kabulembe, Kanzunzi, Lwantete and other villages in Pweto territory, Haut-Katanga. On March 27, about 30 Twa militiamen sexually assaulted nine women from Keshole vil-

lage, Kabalo territory, Tanganyika. Alleged members of a Twa militia attacked Kagoba, Kalemie territory, Tanganyika, with arrows and firearms, looting stores and forcing people to abandon their houses on April 22. Between May 18 and June 26, three attacks by alleged Twa militias members were reported on the road Kalemie-Kabwela, Tanganyika. Two attacks targeted NGO vehicles, while one targeted a public transport vehicle. On July 12, alleged Twa militiamen armed with arrows and rifles, took two members of a Catholic Relief Service (CSR) team hostage close to Kalemie, Tanganyika.

Throughout the year, Congolese authorities together with a variety of humanitarian organizations hosted several music and sporting events, and workshops to promote peace between the Bantu and Twa ethnic groups. MONUSCO and partner organizations facilitated two community dialogues between Twa and Bantu and government representatives providing training in conflict resolution. On April 7, 59 Bantu and Twa representatives took part in the community dialogue in Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga. On July 9, the Catholic Diocesan Commission Justice and Peace together with the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) conducted a workshop for 40 young Twa and Bantu community leaders in Kalemie, to strengthen inter-communal dialogue and peace.

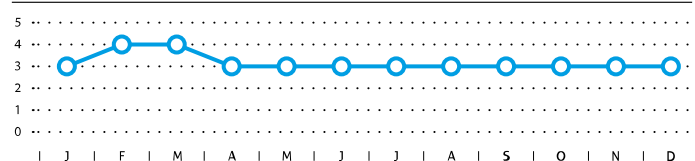
In October, a mission consisting of UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other humanitarian organizations met with Bantu and Batwa community leaders in Tanganyika and evaluated the security situation, as well as the life circumstances of IDPs in the region. Locals in Tumbwe-Koki, Tanganyika, reported a stable security situation but difficult living conditions for returned IDPs from the Kalemie region. kda

DR CONGO (ITURI MILITIAS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: Ituri militias vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources in Ituri province between various militias and the government, supported by MONUSCO, escalated to a limited war.

Between 1999 and 2003, violence between the two ethnic groups Hema and Lendu had escalated in the context of the Ugandan and Rwandan occupation. Following the integration of the major armed Hema group Union of Congolese Patriots into the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) in 2007, the conflict had been dominated by violence of the predominantly Lendu armed group Front for Patriotic Resistance (FRPI) against civilians and the FARDC, mainly in Irumu territory, Ituri. However, since December 2017, the conflict was characterized by the escalation of violence between the

Lendu and Hema communities, especially in Djugu territory, Ituri.

Until mid-April 2018, more than 200 people were killed and at least 300,000 displaced, including around 42,000 people who fled to neighboring Uganda. Thousands of houses were burned down and at least 70 villages destroyed. Reportedly, a confrontation between Lendu youth and FARDC soldiers, allegedly assisted by Hema youth, resulted in reciprocal attacks. For instance, between February 2 and 5, at least 30 people were killed in violence between Lendu and Hema militias in Djugu. Subsequently, MONUSCO installed three temporary bases and intensified patrols in the conflict region. Despite this, Lendu militias attacked the village of Maze on March 1 and 2, killing between 30 and 49 people. Between March 12 and 14, around 40 people were killed in militia attacks on three villages in Djugu. Attacks continued throughout April but decreased in frequency following meetings between FARDC commanders and local customary chiefs on May 1. While sporadic attacks against civilians continued, Lendu militias increasingly attacked the FARDC in September and the following months. For instance, on September 15, alleged Lendu militia attacked a FARDC position in Muvaramu, killing nine soldiers and six civilians. Three days later, Lendu fighters attacked four other FARDC positions, killing three soldiers. Subsequently, FARDC killed eight Lendu fighters in operations against the militias. Attacks continued until the end of the year, additionally leaving at least 23 civilians and 33 soldiers dead.

In 2018, the FRPI comprised around 300 to 400 fighters and attacked civilians as well as FARDC forces in Irumu territory. For instance, on February 22, around 50 FRPI fighters pillaged several villages in the Walendu Bindi chiefdom, killing one civilian and one soldier. In April, at least one civilian, one soldier, and two FRPI fighters were killed in attacks by the latter on villages as well as FARDC positions. FARDC forces conducted Operation Hero between May 22 and 25 against FRPI positions, killing seven fighters.

On August 18, the provincial government of Ituri and the FRPI held peace negotiations in Walendu Bindi and on November 6, the government announced to allocate USD 500,000 to the disarmament and demobilization process of former FRPI fighters. Nevertheless, FRPI activities in Irumu continued until the end of the year. For instance, between October 1 and 7, at least 16 villages were looted in the Gety and Aveba areas.

DR CONGO (KN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2016

Conflict parties: KN vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The war over subnational predominance between the government and the Kamuina Nsapu (KN) militia in the Kasai region de-escalated to a violent crisis.

The conflict had started in August 2016 when a dispute over the right to appoint a local customary chief had turned violent in the context of popular discontent with the central government [→DR Congo (Opposition)]. Subsequently, some mem-

bers of local communities had formed militias which they named Kamuina Nsapu, after the hereditary title of the chieftaincy. The KN militias had mostly recruited among the Luba ethnic group. In response, members of the ethnic groups Tshokwe, Pende, and Tetela had formed the Bana Mura militia to counter KN activities in April 2017.

Following the peace conference in September 2017, KN militias continued to fractionalize. In 2018, the conflict was confined to Kasai and Kasai Central provinces.

Throughout the year, various KN factions attacked other KN groups and individuals whom they accused of cooperating with the government. For instance, at the end of April, at least three people were killed in clashes between two rivaling factions of the governing KN family in the village of Nsapu, Kasai Central. On May 10, KN fighters decapitated a family of eight in Mulombela, Kasai Central.

Furthermore, KN militias and the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) clashed several times. For instance, on January 2 and 17, KN fighters killed at least six FARDC soldiers during two attacks on the airport in Kananga, Kasai Central. In September, at least twelve people were killed in KN attacks on FARDC positions in Kasai Central. On November 7, FARDC attacked a group of alleged KN fighters in Kasai Province, killing 17. According to the UN, FARDC repeatedly conducted reprisal attacks against the civilian population under the pretext of KN activities.

Meanwhile, the trial over the killing of two UN experts in March 2017 continued. In March, police arrested a suspect who later died in custody. On December 7, authorities arrested a high-ranking FARDC member for the first time, due to his suspected role in the killings. Further, trials against former KN members were held throughout the year. For instance, on February 22, two KN members were sentenced to several years in prison, while 19 others were discharged. In March, MONUSCO organized a meeting of customary chiefs in Tshikapa, Kasai, to start reconciliation between three ethnic groups whose members had fought on opposing sides of the conflict.

According to a UN report published on June 26, all conflict parties had committed crimes against humanity and war crimes since 2016.

Starting in October, the Angolan government expelled Congolese nationals, including refugees who had fled the conflict region in 2016 and 2017. Overall, about 300,000 people returned to the Kasai region.

bal

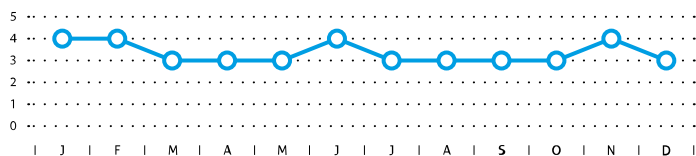
DR CONGO (MAYI-MAYI ET AL.)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2003

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

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



The war over subnational predominance and resources in the eastern provinces North and South Kivu, Maniema, Tanganyika, and Ituri de-escalated to a limited war. The war had been between local armed groups on the one hand, and the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) with the support of MONUSCO on the other. It had also involved clashes between local armed groups.

Between 1998 and 2003, various militias had formed in the context of the Second Congo War opposing Rwandan and Ugandan-backed armed groups. After the end of the war, local militias continued to emerge and many groups fragmented further into small factions, increasing in number from around 70 in 2015 to at least 120 in 2017 in North and South Kivu alone. The militias varied in size and strength, often consisting of less than 100 fighters and recruiting among ethnic lines. Most of them were named after their commanders and relied on the illegal taxation of individuals and goods in areas under their control. By the end of the year, at least 500 people were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. In South Kivu and Maniema alone, around 133,500 people were displaced in 2018.

Throughout the year, violence continued between armed militias of the ethnic groups Banyamulenge and Bafuliiru as well as Bembe and Nyindu around the Haut Plateaux in Uvira and Fizi territories, South Kivu. The main Banyamulenge groups comprised Ngumino and Twiganeho, while Mayi Mayi Biloze Bishambuke, Mayi-Mayi Mwenyemali, Mayi-Mayi Makanaki, and Mayi-Mayi Nyerere were the most active Bafuliiru armed groups. Violence escalated in the beginning of May, when Twiganeho fighters killed nine civilians and burned down several Bafuliiru villages in the Bijombo area in retaliation for killing dozens of cows that belonged to Banyamulenge herders. Between April 30 and May 7, at least 21,000 people were displaced, 900 huts burned down, and 17 schools destroyed. Ngumino and Twiganeho fighters clashed with Bembe, Bafuliiru, and Nyindu militias in Bijombo area between June 12 and 20, leaving at least twelve people dead and 3,500 displaced. According to reports, the Rwandan armed group Rwandan National Congress (RNC), led by Kayumba Nyamwasa, supported Ngumino and Twiganeho, while fighters of the two Burundian armed groups Popular Forces of Burundi (FPB) and RED-Tabara cooperated with Bafuliiru, Bembe, and Nyindu militias [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL, RED-Tabara)]. For instance, on July 1, Biloze Bishambuke fighters attacked a coalition of Twiganeho, Ngumino, and RNC fighters in Kagogo, Uvira. After gaining control over the village, Biloze Bishambuke fighters burned down several houses and stole the cattle. On August 23, RED-Tabara fighters carried out raids on cattle belonging to the Banyamulenge community around Mulenge. Violence decreased throughout the rest of the year, with sporadic reports of attacks and clashes. For instance, on September 14, a FARDC attack on Makanaki fighters near Kitundu, Uvira, left three dead. By October 1, around 76,000 people were displaced due to intercommunal violence.

Activities of armed groups associated with the National People's Coalition for the Sovereignty of Congo (CNPSC), such as

Mayi Mayi Yakutumba, Mayi Mayi Malaika, Mayi Mayi Réunion, Mayi Mayi Shetani, and Mayi Mayi Ebu Elahave decreased in 2018. The armed groups operated in Shabunda, Fizi, and Uvira territories, South Kivu province, and Kabambare territory in Maniema province, targeting civilians and FARDC. Fighting spread to Tanganyika province in January when Mayi Mayi Hapa na Pale, member of the CNPSC coalition, and FARDC clashed in Butondo, Kposition near Lumumba, Kongolo territory, on January 1. One day later, Hapa na Pale and Yakutumba fighters killed three FARDC soldiers in an attack on a FARDC position near Lumumba, Kalemie territory. On January 7, three civilians and two Hapa na Pale fighters were killed in clashes between the latter and FARDC in Kongolo. In April, the leader of the Hapa na Pale group and his troops surrendered to FARDC in Makutano, Kongolo. However, violence continued. For instance, on July 21, clashes between FARDC and a coalition of Malaika and Hapa Na Pale killed two people in Kongolo. On August 19, Hape na Pale fighters kidnapped four Red Cross employees in Mponda Luganza, Kongolo.

On January 5, Yakutumba and allied groups killed four FARDC soldiers and five police officers in an attack against a FARDC position near Uvira city. Yakutumba fighters ambushed a FARDC convoy carrying General Philemon Yay, commander of FARDC in South Kivu, killing at least three near Lulimba, Fizi, on January 18. Three days later, FARDC started an operation against Yakutumba. On February 8, FARDC announced that it had regained control over the Ubwari peninsula as well as the coastline of Lake Tanganyika from Kalemie to Uvira. According to FARDC, at least 83 Yakutumba fighters and six FARDC soldiers were killed in the offensive on Fizi and Kabambare. Furthermore, at least 20,000 people were displaced in the offensive, including more than 8,000 people who fled to Burundi and 1,200 to Tanzania. On February 14, Malaika attacked FARDC positions in Shabunda. At least 20 civilians and one Malaika fighter were killed, while six FARDC soldiers were injured and several houses burned down. On May 24, a coalition of Yakutumba and Malaika fighters attacked the mining site Salamabila, Kabambare, killing 21 FARDC soldiers, two police officers, and two civilians. At least eight assailants were killed. Violence decreased until mid-September when clashes between CNPSC and FARDC in Kilembwe, Fizi, left at least eight people dead. On September 19, FARDC killed a commander of the Yakutumba group in Kipupu, Kabambare. Throughout the year, Yakutumba fighters reportedly cooperated with the Burundian armed group National Forces of Liberation (FNL). For instance, on December 2 and 3, clashes between FARDC and Yakutumba and FNL in Fizi left at least twelve people dead. By the end of the year, at least 1,300 Malaika, Hapa na Pale, and Shetani fighters had surrendered to FARDC forces.

The predominantly ethnic Hunde Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) reduced its activities in 2018. In December 2017, a group led by Mapenzi Bulere Likuwe had broken away and formed the APCLS-Renewed (APCLS-R), while APCLS was led by Janvier Buingo Karairi. Reportedly, Karairi was opposed to President Joseph Kabila and the split had been encouraged by political actors linked to the presidential majority [→ DR Congo (Opposition)]. The two rival factions operated in Masisi, Walikale, and Rutshuru territories, North Kivu. The groups repeatedly clashed over the control of territory as well as mining sites,

targeting civilians and other armed groups. At least 21 people were killed and ten injured. For instance, on April 18, APCLS and Nyatura Domi fighters clashed after holding a meeting in Bunkuba, Rutshuru. Four Nyatura and nine APCLS fighters were killed. Clashes between APCLS and APCLS-R started in early 2018 and continued to intensify until July, resulting in the displacement of the local population towards Nyabiondo and Pinga, Masisi. APCLS-R and Nduma Defense of Congo-Renewed (NDC-R) fighters collaborated in fighting the APCLS. For instance, on June 30, seven people were killed in an attack by APCLS on NDC-R and APCLS-R fighters in Manyema, Walikale. In December, NDC-R and APCLS-R dislodged APCLS from Nyabiondo vicinity, Masisi.

The Mayi-Mayi Mazembe consisted of loosely connected armed groups that recruited its fighters predominantly from the local ethnic Nande population. The group operated in Lubero, Beni, Rutshuru territories, North Kivu. Throughout the year, at least 54 people were killed and 25 injured in attacks on civilians, as well as in clashes with FARDC, MONUSCO, and other armed groups. For instance, on January 21, a FARDC attack on a Mazembe position in Mnyakondomi, Lubero, left eight dead. On February 15, five people were reportedly killed in an attack by Mazembe fighters on a farm belonging to President Joseph Kabila in Kabasha, Beni. One week later, Mazembe clashed with FARDC and MONUSCO in Vuhoyi, Beni. One person was killed and the local police station was destroyed. On April 6, FARDC detained Mazembe faction leader Mboka Kambale in Beni. In May, Mazembe fighters repeatedly clashed with predominantly Hutu Nyatura groups in Rutshuru and Lubero. For instance, on May 16, five people were killed and five injured in a clash between Mazembe and Nyatura fighters in Mirangi, Rutshuru.

Activism by the Nduma Defense of Congo (NDC) decreased in 2018 after its leader, Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka, surrendered on 26 June 2017. However, break-away faction NDC-Renewed (NDC-R), led by Shimiray Mwiswa Guidon, emerged as one of the largest groups in North Kivu, consisting of around 1,000 to 1,250 fighters and controlling large parts of Walikale and Lubero territories and small parts of Masisi territory. In clashes between NDC and NDC-R as well as in attacks by the two groups against civilians, other armed groups, and FARDC, at least 89 people were killed and 69 injured. NDC activities mainly concentrated on clashes with NDC-R as well as attacks on FARDC. For instance, on March 18, seven people were killed and four injured in clashes between the two groups near Burumbi, Walikale. On August 22, NDC fighters ambushed FARDC at Maninge mining site, Walikale. The attack left one person dead and one injured. Meanwhile, NDC-R forces mainly targeted APCLS and Mayi-Mayi Mazembe, but also clashed with Mayi Mayi Kabido and Nyatura fighters. For instance, on January 15, NDC-R fighters attacked and burned the headquarters of APCLS in Matembe, Lubero territory. The attack left at least six people dead, seven injured and led to the displacement of the local population. On January 27, five people were killed and eight people injured in NDC-R attacks on Mazembe positions in Pitakongo, Mubughaviywa, and Kinyatsi, Lubero. On May 30, NDC-R attacked a Mazembe camp in Pitakongo, Lubero, looting several goods and burning down the camp. Mazembe fighters killed three NDC-R fighters and injured four. Between July 13 and 18, clashes between NDC-R and APCLS in Kahira, Masisi, left at least 15 people

dead and four injured. On August 8, at least twelve civilians were killed in clashes between NDC-R and Nyatura fighters in Kiniana, Walikale. On October 1, seven people died and two were injured in an NDC-R attack on a Mayi Mayi Kabido position in Masika, Lubero. Furthermore, NDC-R imposed taxes on individuals and goods in the areas under its control. For instance, on July 20, NDC-R detained 45 civilians accusing them of failing to pay taxes in Kasugho, Lubero. Between August 6 and 9, at least 89 civilians were arrested and detained for the same reason in Kasugho.

Various Nyatura factions, predominantly recruiting among Hutu communities, mainly operated in Lubero, Rutshuru, Masisi, and Walikale territories, North Kivu. Nyatura groups cooperated with the predominantly Hutu armed group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and repeatedly clashed with the National Council for Renewal and Democracy (CNRD) [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR, CNRD)]. Reportedly, FDLR provided training, ammunition and uniforms to Nyatura groups, while the latter provided security for FDLR camps. At least 74 people were killed and 30 injured in Nyatura attacks against civilians and clashes with other armed groups as well as the FARDC. For instance, on February 22, Nyatura fighters attacked Mutanda, Rutshuru, burning at least 100 houses and killing one civilian. On February 25, Nyatura Love attacked Mazembe fighters in Kanyasi, Irumu territory, Ituri, killing at least two fighters. Additionally, at least six civilians were killed in the fighting. On the same day, a clash between Love fighters and FARDC soldiers left at least five fighters and six civilians dead in Bwalanda, Rutshuru. On July 16, a coalition of Nyatura Domi and FDLR attacked Mazembe fighters in Kahumbri, Rutshuru. Eight people were injured in the attack. On August 8, a coalition of Nyatura Kavumbi and APCLS-R fighters clashed NDC-R in Kiniana, Masisi. At least twelve civilians were killed in the fighting. On September 2, Love fighters attacked two CNRD positions in Lubwe and Kitunda, Rutshuru, killing one CNRD fighter. Two weeks later, the leader of a Kayumbi faction surrendered to the FARDC in Kibarizo, Masisi. On November 3, Love fighters killed five FARDC soldiers in an attack on a FARDC position in Mashango, Rutshuru.

Mayi-Mayi Charles fighters, led by Charles Bokande, mainly operated in Rutshuru territory but were also active in Lubero territory, North Kivu. The group depended on the taxation of the local population along the southern shore of Lake Edward and in Virunga National Parc. The group repeatedly targeted civilians, as well as FARDC and members of the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN). Throughout the year, at least 26 people were killed. For instance, on June 25, Charles fighters attacked a FARDC position in Kafunzo, Rutshuru, killing 16 soldiers. The attackers stole weapons and ammunition. ICCN and FARDC dislodged Charles fighters from their positions at the shore of Lake Edward, Lubero, between August 1 and 2. However, Charles fighters re-occupied Tchanika and Ndwali, Lubero, after FARDC and ICCN had withdrawn. On November 16, Charles fighters killed two fishermen near Mulindi, Rutshuru, after they had reportedly refused to pay tax. Following the withdrawal of FARDC and ICCN, on August 8, Mayi Mayi Charles fighters occupied Tchanika and Ndwali in Lubero territory and reimposed a parallel tax administration. For instance, civilians refusing to pay the illegal tax were attacked by Mayi Mayi Charles fighters on Novem-

ber 16. One person was killed and another one injured in the attack.

Different factions of Mayi Mayi Kifuafua operated in Walikate territory, North Kivu. The groups predominantly recruited members of the Tembo community. Two rival factions, one led by Delphin Mbaenda and consisting of around 300 fighters, and its breakaway faction Shalio, led by Shabani Shalio, repeatedly clashed in 2018. For instance, on January 20, the two factions clashed in Rukarabe, Walikale, leaving two people injured and causing civilian displacement. Between June 10 and 12, fighting between the two factions left at least eight people dead, among them Shalio. Mayi-Mayi Kirikicho fighters had cooperated with Shalio fighters during clashes with Mbaende fighters on June 11. Mbaende fighters tortured and killed a civilian in Madje, Walikale territory, on October 1.

Various Raia Mutomboki (RM) factions continued to operate in Shabunda, Wulungu, Kalehe, Kabare, and Mwenga territories, South Kivu, as well as in Walikale territory in North Kivu. RM groups targeted civilians, FARDC, and other armed groups. At least 60 people were killed and eight injured. For instance, on April 18, a coalition of RM Ndarumanga and Kokodikoko attacked FARDC at the mining site Parking, Shabunda, killing one soldier. The local population and workers fled the site. On April 22, FARDC killed the leader of RM Mabala in Lutika, Shabunda. Five people were killed and one injured in an attack on Kilimoto mining site, Kalehe, on August 18. In September, FARDC killed the leader of the RM Kazimoto faction in Bamuga, Shabunda. On October 24, 10 people were killed and two injured in a clash between RM Hamakombo and RM Safari in Kasimba, Kabare. Six days later, clashes between RM Blaise and FARDC in the Ninja chieftaincy, Kabare, left at least 33 people dead. lhu, emh

DR CONGO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: CLC, Lamuka, CACH et al. vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between opposition parties and civil society groups on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued.

In the first half of the year, opposition groups continued to urge President Joseph Kabila to step down and organize free and fair elections, in fulfilment of the 12/31/2016 political agreement mediated by the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO). Marches organized by the religious civil society group Laic Coordination Committee (CLC) on January 21 and February 25 in the capital Kinshasa, eponymous province, in Kisangani, Tshopo province, and in Mbandaka, Equateur province, were violently dispersed by police and military using live ammunition, batons, and tear gas. At least seven people were killed, 70 injured and more than 250 arrested.

On August 8, a coalition of the Presidential Majority and other parties designated Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary presidential

candidate of their electoral platform, the Common Front for the Congo (FCC). On August 25, the National Electoral Commission (CENI) nullified the registration of six presidential candidates. Among them was Jean-Pierre Bemba, president of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), who was excluded with reference to his ongoing trial at the ICC. The government also prevented Moïse Katumbi of the political platform Together for Change from entering the country to register as presidential candidate, owing to his prison sentence for real estate fraud. Between November 9 and 11, several opposition parties met in Geneva, Switzerland, for talks to agree on a single candidate for the presidential elections scheduled for December 23. The meeting ended in an agreement designating Martin Fayulu, president of the party Ecidé, as the unity presidential candidate of the opposition and forming the alliance Lamuka. However, within 24 hours, the two major opposition parties Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), led by Felix Tshisekedi, and Union for the Congolese Nation, led by Vital Kamerhe, withdrew from the agreement and subsequently formed the alliance Coalition for Change (CACH) with Tshisekedi as presidential candidate while Bemba and Katumbi continued to support Lamuka with Fayulu as joint candidate.

At least six protesters were killed, and several dozen people injured when police and government supporters cracked down on Lamuka and the UDPS rallies in mid-December in the provinces of Haut Katanga, Maniema, Tanganyika, and Kasai-Oriental. Youth protesters took to the streets in Beni and Butembo, North Kivu province, on December 27 and 28, challenging CENI's decision to postpone elections until March 2019 in the territories of Beni, Butembo, and Yumbi, Mairi province, due to insecurity and an Ebola outbreak in these areas. At least two protesters died and six were injured. Furthermore, protesters demolished and looted Ebola clinics and a police officer's home.

The national elections scheduled for December 23 were postponed by a week after a fire destroyed 8,000 electronic voting machines in Kinshasa on December 13. Voting on December 30 was accompanied by intimidation of voters and in North and South Kivu provinces, by activities of armed groups [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. At least four people were killed during the elections in Walungu territory, South Kivu. The results were scheduled to be published in January 2019. jli

DR CONGO, RWANDA (FDLR, CNRD)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: FDLR vs. CNRD vs. DR Congo, Rwanda

Conflict items: national power, subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over national power, subnational predominance and resources between the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) on the one hand, and the governments of the DR Congo with support from MONUSCO and Rwanda on the other, continued.

Following the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, former Rwandan army members and Interahamwe militias had crossed the

Congolese border and had formed the FDLR in 2000. In May 2016, high-ranking FDLR members had defected to form the National Council for Renewal and Democracy (CNRD), significantly weakening the FDLR.

Throughout the year, FDLR was mainly active in Nyiragongo and Rutshuru territories, North Kivu province, while CNRD activities focused on Rutshuru and Walikale territory, North Kivu. According to a UN report, the FDLR comprised between 600 and 700 fighters. Both the FDLR and CNRD continued to cooperate with Mayi-Mayi Nyatura groups, clashing with other Mayi-Mayi militias in North Kivu as well as the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)].

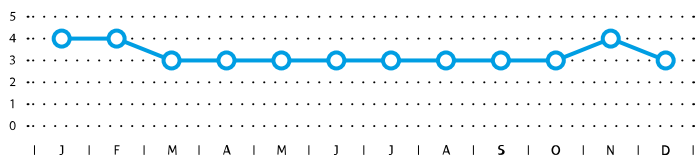
Throughout the year, FDLR and CNRD attacked civilians on several occasions. For instance, on January 9, fighters of the FDLR-FOCA faction killed five people and abducted eleven close to Kahumiro village, Rutshuru. On April 9, the FDLR-RUD faction killed three people in the same village.

Furthermore, FDLR fighters repeatedly attacked the FARDC in North Kivu. For instance, on September 12, FDLR-FOCA fighters ambushed a FARDC convoy in Virunga Park, Rutshuru, killing four soldiers and two civilians. On September 29, FDLR attacked the FARDC at Mutaho village, Nyirangongo, killing at least two soldiers. On December 16 and 17, FDLR-FOCA killed seven FARDC soldiers and wounded nine in two separate attacks at Kasizi village and in the Mount Mikeno area, Nyirangongo.

Moreover, for the first time in more than two years, FDLR fighters reportedly crossed the border into Rwanda on December 9, where they clashed with soldiers of the Rwanda Defence Forces. At least five FDLR-FOCA fighters and three Rwandan soldiers were killed.

In late November, the UN disarmament camp for former FDLR fighters and their dependents in Kanyabayonga, North Kivu, as well as the UN-supported government-run camps in Kisanгани, Tshopo province, and Walungu, South Kivu province, were closed. In consequence, 1,594 people were repatriated to reintegration camps in Rwanda. On December 17, Congolese authorities arrested two high-ranking FDLR officers in Bunagana, Rutshuru and stated that they were to be repatriated.

On October 31, the appeal against the 2015 sentences of former FDLR president Ignace Murwanashyaka and vice president Straton Musoni started at the Federal Supreme Court of Germany. On December 20, the court upheld the conviction that they had acted as ringleaders of a terrorist organization. However, the conviction of Murwanashyaka for war crimes was partially overturned and referred to a different court. fb



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources continued between the Islamist armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the governments of Uganda and the DR Congo (DRC), supported by MONUSCO.

The ADF was mainly active in Beni territory, North Kivu province, DRC. The group maintained cross-border economic and logistical networks, especially those of illegal logging and gold mining. The UN estimated the number of ADF fighters at approx. 400 to 450. Recruiting in Uganda continued, primarily among its youth. As in previous years, the UN found no evidence for sustained links between ADF and international jihadist groups.

Throughout the year, alleged ADF fighters repeatedly clashed with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) as well as MONUSCO. Fighting left at least 96 FARDC soldiers, eight peacekeepers and 26 ADF fighters dead. For instance, on January 13, FARDC seized control of two ADF camps in the Oicha area, using artillery fire, after ADF fighters had repeatedly attacked FARDC positions in previous days on the Mbau-Kamango axis. On January 19, ADF fighters attacked several FARDC positions in the same area, killing 12 soldiers, while four ADF fighters were also killed. Five days later, ADF fighters killed five FARDC soldiers and wounded 36 in an attack on a FARDC position in Mapobu. Between April 12 and 17, ADF fighters repeatedly attacked FARDC close to Semuliki, killing at least 12 soldiers and wounding more than 50. MONUSCO used attack helicopters to hold back an ADF attack on FARDC close to Mayimoya on April 14. In May, at least 10 civilians, 12 FARDC soldiers and 16 ADF fighters were killed in several attacks by the latter against FARDC positions in Mayimoya and around Mbau. Hundreds of families fled the area to Oicha, Mavivi and Mandumbi. On August 24, ADF fighters attacked FARDC in Ngadi, killing 17 soldiers. ADF repeatedly attacked MONUSCO forces in July. For instance, on July 6, ADF fighters injured two MONUSCO soldiers in an ambush in Biokene. On November 13, FARDC and MONUSCO launched a joint operation against ADF in Beni territory. While eight MONUSCO soldiers and thirteen FARDC soldiers were killed, ADF positions were retaken during the offensive. Ten days later, ADF fighters attacked a MONUSCO patrol close to Beni town, injuring one MONUSCO soldier. The Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) reportedly deployed troops to secure the border with the DRC against a potential ADF incursion on November 19.

Attacks by fighters on civilians in Beni territory increased considerably compared to the previous year. According to a UN report, the killings were likely to be carried out by various ADF factions, local Mayi-Mayi groups as well as FARDC officers and soldiers [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. Although no armed group took responsibility for the attacks, they were attributed to ADF. In 2018, at least 190 civilians were killed, 38 injured, and thousands displaced. For instance, on February 2, ADF fighters attacked Kitheyya, killing seven civilians, looting houses, shops, and the health center. One week later, ADF fighters killed eight civilians in Ngite. At the end of March, at least 10 people were killed in an attack by ADF fighters on the outskirts of Beni city. Between April 23

DR CONGO, UGANDA (ADF)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1995

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

and 27, thousands protested against state authorities as well as MONUSCO in Beni city, calling on them to protect civilians after attacks had occurred close to the town. One day later, around 700 protesters threw stones at a MONUSCO patrol, injuring several peacekeepers. ADF attacks continued and according to the UN, at least 120 people were killed between January and October 1. Between October 9 and 28, ADF fighters attacked the Mayangose market and three other locations close to Beni city, killing 30 civilians. On October 21, protests erupted against state authorities and MONUSCO in Beni city. Protesters threw stones, set up barricades, and set several buildings on fire. Police and FARDC forces reportedly used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse the protesters. In November and December, at least 42 people were killed in several ADF attacks around Oicha, Paida, and around Beni city. tag

ESWATINI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: SUDF, COSATU, PUDEMO, SNAT, SNUS, SWACOPA vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between various opposition groups, including political parties, trade unions, and other opposition movements, on the one hand, and the government of King Mswati III, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis.

The king continued his absolutistic rule over the country, upholding restrictions on political freedom and civic rights. This led to increasing protests by opposition groups throughout the year.

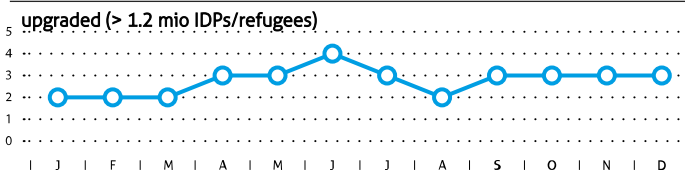
On January 31, during a protest by students enrolled at the Christian University in Mbabane, Hhohho region, the police fired live ammunition and arrested at least 11 protesters for damaging property. On March 15, police shot rubber bullets at students of the Limkokwing University in Mbabane, who were demonstrating for better teaching facilities. On June 20, the Trade Union Confederation of Swaziland (TUCOSWA) organized a protest against bad service delivery, misuse of state pension funds, and a law draft proposing a ban on marrying foreigners. The protest turned violent when police forces attacked the protesters with rubber bullets, stones, tear gas, and batons, leaving four injured. Similarly, on September 18 and 19, police disrupted a protest organized by TUCOSWA in the regions of Hhohho and Manzini, injuring several people. On August 29, in Mbabane, police attacked members of the Swaziland Democratic Nurses' Union with tasers, who were protesting against unfair payment. On August 30, police fired gunshots at a textile-workers' protest against low salaries in Nhlanguano, Shiselweni region, after the workers vandalized property. In addition, police assaulted a journalist for recording the attacks against the textile workers. mab

ETHIOPIA (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2017

Conflict parties: Oromo vs. Gedeo; Oromo vs. Somali; Oromo vs. Oromo;; Oromo vs. Guraghe, Gedeo; Amhara vs. Tigray vs. Kimants

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The war over subnational predominance and resources between various ethnic groups such as the Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Gedeo, Guraghe, Gamo, Tigray, and Kimants, as well as between their sub-groups, continued.

In the previous year, ethnic clashes occurred primarily between ethnic Oromo, Amhara and Somali, fighting over grazing and arable land, and water. This year, however, further ethnic groups were involved in ethnically motivated violence. The violent clashes mainly took place in the Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNPR), as well as in the Tigray regional states.

Since April the border area between the Gedeo zone, SNNPR and West Guji zone, Oromia experienced several waves of inter-communal violence that led to, according to UNHCR estimates, the displacement of approx. 1.2 million people by September. On April 13, violent clashes between Gedeo and Oromo ethnic groups broke out in Kecha woreda, West Guji and later spread to other woredas along the border. The ongoing clashes resulted in hundreds of deaths, and damage to properties and public infrastructure including schools and health facilities. Both ethnicities have fought sporadically over resources such as land and water in recent decades. Dispute over access to resources is also assumed to be the cause of the violent unrests this year.

Sporadic violent clashes over access to land have taken place since 2012, between the Oromo sub-group Borana and the Somali sub-group Garre living in the Moyale area, located between the Oromia and Somali regional state alongside the Ethiopian-Kenyan border. Worsened by recent drought, this year was marked by a renewed outbreak of violence between the two ethnic sub-groups. For instance, on March 11, soldiers reportedly killed nine demonstrating civilians and wounded 12 after mistaking them for militants of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) [→ Ethiopia (opposition)]. On April 17, a grenade explosion at a bus station killed at least three people and injured 60. During clashes on May 26, at least four people were killed and several wounded after Garre and Borana allegedly torched 250 houses along the border between the regional states of these communities. According to UN estimates, 93,870 individuals were displaced. By July, more than 20,000 people had crossed into Kenya to escape the ethnic-based fightings.

In July, clashes in Bale Goba, Oromia regional state, led to the

death of 10 civilians and injury to at least 100. Reportedly, the violence was ethnically motivated and an unknown number of perpetrators had targeted ethnic Amhara.

In September the government took the militant groups OLF, Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Ginbot 7 off the country's list of terrorist organisations [→ Ethiopia (ONLF/Ogaden)]. Ahead of the return of exiled OLF leaders scheduled for September 15, violent clashes took place in Addis Ababa between rivaling youth groups and OLF supporters, who had placed their flags in the city. Security forces tried to disperse the crowd. In response, hundreds of protesters gathered on September 17, to condemn former inter-communal violence. Furthermore, on September 24, OLF supporters violently attacked Guraghe and Gamo ethnic groups, living in Burayu District, the part of Oromia that encircles Addis Ababa. The ethnic violence killed at least 28 people and more than 2,500 youths were arrested. Furthermore, at least 12,000 non-Oromo were displaced.

Between September 28 and 30, unknown youth groups from rival ethnic groups clashed in Benishangul-Gumuz, after regional state officials were killed by unidentified assailants, reportedly operating disguised as OLF militants. During this wave of violence, 44 people were allegedly killed and 70,000 people fled their homes in Benishangul-Gumuz.

Starting in November, territorial claims and border disputes led to ethnically motivated violence between the Amhara and Tigray regions, north-western Ethiopia. Ethnic Amhara, Tigray and Kimants were involved in several violent clashes, forcing about 300 Tigrayan and Kimants to flee into neighboring Sudan. Furthermore, on November 11, Oromo subgroups Gabbra and Borana allegedly attacked Garre Somali in Moyale. Reportedly, at least 10 people were killed and several injured. On December 13, clashes between Somalis and Oromo in Moyale town led to at least 21 deaths and injured 61.

According to UN estimates, ethnically based violence led to the displacement of 1.4 million people between January to June. bib

ETHIOPIA (OLF / OROMIYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: OLF vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The non-violent crisis over the secession of Oromia region and the autonomy of the Oromo people between the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), supported by the Oromo people, and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

In December 2017 and March 2018, the OLF and other groups jointly condemned the government's response to the newly erupted ethnic clashes between Oromo and Somali and accused the government of being responsible for the violence. Ethnic Oromo as well as Amhara have been protesting against the government since late 2015, calling for political reforms and claiming their right for self-determination.

When Abiy Ahmed was appointed as first Oromo prime minister in April, he initiated, amongst other reforms, a peace process with the country's militant groups such as the OLF, Gin-

bot 7, and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF).

A grenade attack on June 23 targeted Ahmed during a speech at Mekele square in the capital Addis Ababa, which he survived uninjured. In September, five alleged OLF members were charged for carrying out the assassination attempt.

Following several rounds of peace talks and a ceasefire agreement in July, the OLF and the government signed a peace agreement in Eritrea's capital Asmara on August 7, terminating hostilities and allowing the OLF to conduct their political activities in Ethiopia through peaceful means. Additionally, they agreed to establish a joint committee with the mandate to oversee the implementation of the agreement. Further, OLF leaders and fighters were allowed to return from neighbouring Eritrea in September. Reportedly, more than 1,500 OLF members followed this call.

In October, after the OLF had been blamed for several attacks in the preceding months, the government requested the disarmament of the militants. Reportedly, approx. 1,000 members of the estimated overall 2,800 members in the country were disarmed accordingly. However, reports indicated the involvement of some OLF fighters in violent encounters with the military in Western Ethiopia. Reportedly, intermittent fighting took place throughout December in the zones Western Wellega, East Wellega, Selalie, Guji, and Bale, presumed OLF strongholds in the Oromia region. Gemeinschaftskundeklasse des Les

ETHIOPIA (ONLF / OGADEN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: ONLF vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over the autonomy of the Ogaden region between the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the government continued. However, there were steps towards a resolution of the conflict this year.

The ONLF claimed to have killed an unknown number of soldiers and injured several of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) during clashes on January 8 in the Shillabo District, Korahe zone and January 25 in Degehabur, eponymous state, both in Somali Regional State.

On July 4, Human Rights Watch released a press statement on systematic torture of inmates in Jijiga Central Prison accused of ONLF affiliation. Consequently, the regional government shut down the prison on September 25.

Unofficial peace talks between the ONLF and the Ethiopian government started in February, hosted by Kenyan officials in the Kenyan capital Nairobi. There were further steps towards resolving the conflict after the election of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister on April 2. On July 5, the parliament passed a resolution that removed the ONLF, among other rebel groups, from the national list of terrorist organizations. Following this event, the ONLF declared a unilateral ceasefire on August 12. As a result both parties signed a peace deal in the Eritrean capital Asmara on October 21. Therein, ONLF promised to pursue its objectives peacefully, whereas the government guaranteed to respect the rights of the movement. On November 21, the ONLF returned to the Ogaden

capital Jijiga, Somali Regional State, from exile in Eritrea. On August 22, Mustafa Omar was appointed president of Somali Regional State until the next elections in 2020. Former president Abdi Iley resigned after violent clashes involving federal and regional forces between August 4 and 6, which had led to numerous deaths, displacement, looting of properties and the destruction of two churches in the regional capital Jijiga. Additionally, Iley and other officials from his administration were arrested in August for human rights abuses and stoking disputes along ethnic and religious lines. In the context of the investigation, the police discovered a mass grave containing around 200 bodies in the border region between Oromia and Somali Region on November 9. Chinese oil company Poly-GCL concluded an investment agreement with the government on January 19. Poly-GCL discovered further oil and gas reserves in the region in March. Test production started on June 28, extracting the first barrel of oil in the country's history. Ogaden's oil and gas reserves triggered an attack on 26 April 2017, in which the ONLF assaulted a Chinese oil platform, killing 72 and leading to a government crackdown in the region.

lih

ETHIOPIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

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 various opposition groups and the government continued.

Following last year's ethnic unrest in the border region between Oromia and Somali regional state [→ Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)], the government released over 6,000 political prisoners in January to calm violent mass protests staged predominantly in Oromia. In response to the resignation of former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, the state of emergency that began in October 2016 was reinstated on February 16 and lifted in June.

Subsequently, Abiy Ahmed, an ethnic Oromo, was appointed the new Prime Minister on April 2. Throughout the year, he sought numerous political reforms, such as the partial privatization of massive state-owned companies, or the removal of the rebel groups Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Ginbot 7 from the country's list of terrorist organizations. As a consequence, former leaders of the ONLF, OLF, and of Ginbot 7 returned from exile from October onwards. All three groups signed peace agreements and engaged in peace talks with the government. However, the return of former OLF leaders triggered violent clashes in the capital Addis Ababa among different ethnic groups [→ Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)]. Ahmed started an anti-corruption campaign, in which many high-ranking officials, accused of being involved in criminal activities or corruption scandals, were arrested over the year. Furthermore, he released political prisoners and signed a peace agreement with neighbouring Eritrea on July 9 [→ Ethiopia – Eritrea].

Nevertheless, Ahmed was the target of a bomb attack dur-

ing a public speech he held at Meskel Square in Addis Ababa on June 23. He was unharmed but at least two people were killed and more than 100 injured in the attack. In October, a group of several hundred partially armed soldiers rallied on the Prime Minister's office grounds, allegedly demanding a raise in wages. However, the situation was peacefully defused when Ahmed ordered the soldiers to do press-ups.

Additionally, violent clashes between security forces and civilians took place throughout the year. For instance, on January 20, security forces shot at protesters singing anti-government songs during a religious ceremony in Woldiya City, Amhara regional state. In reaction, protesters demonstrated against the soldiers' use of gunfire, burning private and public properties and clashing with security forces. On January 27, violent protests took place in Woldiya, Kobo and Mersa, Amhara, leaving 21 dead and an unknown number of suspected perpetrators arrested. On February 2, in response to a rampaging youth group, federal forces opened fire in Hamaressa IDP camp, Oromia regional state, killing nine and injuring several. Ten days later, federal security forces opened fire on civilians at a market in Mada Walabu district, Oromia, leaving three people dead and seven injured. In early March, a military unit killed nine civilians and injured 12 in Moyale town, Oromia region, close to the Ethiopian-Kenyan border. The military unit was sent to Moyale to arrest an OLF unit. In the aftermath of the violent military operation, about 5,000 residents of the Moyale area fled to Kenya. The majority of operations conducted by the military and police targeted members of the country's biggest ethnic group, the Oromo. bib

GUINEA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: UFDG, SLECG et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between the opposition coalition, led by the party Union of Guinea's Democratic Forces (UFDG), and the government of President Alpha Condé and his party Rally of the Guinean People (RPG). Education and election rights were points of particular contention.

In the first municipal elections since 2005 in February 4, RPG won the most council seats. Following a peaceful election day, opposition rallied against the government for alleged electoral fraud. Subsequently, in February and March, violence erupted throughout the country, particularly in the capital Conakry, between supporters of UFDG on the one hand, and RPG and security forces on the other. This conflict overlapped with teachers' strikes against low wages, led by the Free Trade Union of Teachers and Researchers of Guinea (SLECG), and student protests for the return of their teachers. Reports stated that the combined protests had left 89 protesters and at least 80 police officers were injured during the first week. In total, the clashes reportedly left at least 15 people dead in February and March. For instance, on February 6, five civilians were killed in a fire related to clashes in Dinguiraye, Faranah region. Furthermore, on March 14, during

opposition demonstrations in Conakry, police forces killed at least three and injured several protesters.

Protests continued throughout the year as agreements made between UFDG and the government to implement political reform had failed. For instance, opposition protesters took to the streets and burned tires in Conakry on May 14. Furthermore, on November 7, the opposition entered a general strike and protested in Conakry, where they clashed with police forces, leaving two dead and two injured. The next day, opposition members allegedly killed a policeman in Conakry. Protests and strikes by teachers and students took place sporadically throughout the year. For instance, on November 25, SLECC started a two day sit-in in front of the PM's office in Conakry, and were dispersed by the police who used tear gas and arrested six. The next day, in Conakry, police dispersed a student protest with tear gas. afi

KENYA (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1963

Conflict parties: Degodia vs. Ajuran; Pokot vs. Marakwet; Degodia vs. Garre; Tugen vs. Pokot; Turkana vs. Pokot; Turkana vs. Daasanach; Masaai vs. Kalenjins; Gabra vs. Borana

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources between various ethnic and sub-ethnic groups continued.

The areas most frequently affected by inter-communal violence were Wajir County, Baringo County and the area around Mau forest in Narok and Nakuru counties. The parties involved in the conflict predominantly fought over access to resources, such as grazing land and water, as well as control of land and opposing territorial claims. This year, inter-communal violence led to the displacement of 4,500 people. In Wajir County, clashes between members of the Somali Degodia and Ajuran clans left seven dead at the border of Eldas and Wajir North sub-counties during the first week of the year. Fighting between members of the two parties continued in Wajir North in February, leaving three people dead.

In Mandera County, Degodia militias attacked members of the Somali Garre pastoralist clan, resulting in six fatalities and several sustaining injuries in Banisa village, on March 28.

In Marsabit County, sporadic clashes between the Oromo sub-ethnic groups, Gabra and Borana, forcing hundreds of people to flee their homes in September and October. 16 people were allegedly killed.

On July 11, a group of the ethnic Daasanach from neighboring Ethiopia killed two ethnic Turkana and injured six following an alleged cattle raid on the shores of Lake Turkana, Turkana County. On July 31, the Todonyang village chief, who was claimed to be a key promoter of peace in the region, was shot in Lowareng'ak town, Turkana County, supposedly by Daasanach cattle raiders.

On February 2, Marakwet, both sub-groups of the Kalen-

jin ethnic group, invaded a Pokot town at the border of the West Pokot and Elgeyo-Marakwet counties, leaving four people injured, 116 houses torched and 2,500 people displaced. Shortly after a truce between Pokot and Marakwet in the beginning of October, suspected Marakwet raided a village in West Pokot, leaving two dead, one person injured and dozens of livestock stolen.

In Baringo County, clashes between Pokot and Tugen, another sub-group of the ethnic Kalenjin, as well as Pokot and ethnic Turkana continued. Throughout the year, the rivalry between Pokot and Tugen resulted in three dead and more than 150 livestock stolen. In April and May, clashes between Pokot and Turkana led to six fatalities and several sustaining injury.

After government evictions in Mau forest, Narok County, fights over control of land broke out in Narok and Nakuru counties between ethnic Masaai and Kalenjin on September 7. The incident left 8 people killed, 13 injured, and 60 houses torched. Furthermore, on September 23, clashes between the two rivaling groups resumed in Narok County, leaving one dead, more than 21 injured, and dozens of houses torched. In mid-December, one person was killed and up to 15 injured in Olooloipang, Narok County.

jwe

KENYA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: NASA vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the National Super Alliance Party (NASA) and the government, formed by the Jubilee Party of Kenya (JP) de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

After President Uhuru Kenyatta announced his new cabinet on January 26, NASA leader Raila Odinga unofficially inaugurated himself as the 'people's president' on January 30 in front of thousands of supporters in the capital, Nairobi. The government called Odinga's actions illegal and thus arrested opposition legislator and lawyer TJ Kajwang for administering the 'swearing-in' on January 31. Furthermore, the government cut off major TV channels for plans to broadcast the inauguration of Odinga.

Between February 1 and 6, the government undertook various measures against the opposition. For instance, they withdrew the security detail provided for opposition MPs, arrested opposition member Miguna Miguna, later deporting him to Canada, and withdrew the passport of NASA strategist David Ndii.

Furthermore, Odinga's inauguration ceremony caused tensions in the opposition movement. For instance, Kalonzo Musyoka, leader of NASA's Wiper Democratic Movement party did not attend the inauguration due to the withdrawal of his security detail.

On March 9, a surprising symbolic handshake between President Kenyatta and opposition leader Odinga took place, through which they promised to work together to unite the divided country by creating an advisory office to tackle corruption, and electoral and ethnic tensions. Furthermore, they

planned to compensate the victims of violence during last year's General Elections.

Despite the intense first weeks of the year, the overall political situation stabilized. No violent incidents were reported, marking a dramatic decline in violence, especially in comparison to the election related death toll in late 2017. rbe

MALI (INTER-MILITANT RIVALRY / NORTHERN MALI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: CMA vs. Platform vs. Islamist groups
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between various militant groups, primarily the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), the so-called Platform, and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), in northern Mali, comprising the regions of Kidal, Gao, Ménaka, Taoudenni, and Timbuktu.

In 2013, the CMA was formed by, among others, the pro-Azawad Ifoghas Tuareg group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad and the High Council for Unity of Azawad (HCUA) that had both formerly cooperated with various Islamist groups. In reaction, the Self-Defense Group of Imghad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) and the Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MSA), together with other government-loyal armed groups, had founded Platform [→ Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad); Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM, ISGS et al.)]. Despite a peace agreement from 2015, namely the Bamako Agreement, CMA and Platform members had clashed repeatedly before signing a ceasefire agreement in September 2017.

Compared to the previous year, the number of violent incidents between members of CMA and Platform has significantly decreased, although tensions have prevailed around the establishment of the so-called Operational Mechanism for Coordination (MOC), which aims to pacify the northern regions. For instance, on March 1, HCUA clashed with MSA in Talataye, Gao, killing one of their officers, after mutual accusations of attacks against one another's posts. The deployment of joint patrols by the government, the CMA, and Platform within in the framework of the MOC, started in Kidal city on May 4 and in Timbuktu city on May 24, as agreed in August 2017. However, participation in joint patrols in the city of Gao was limited to Platform members and government forces, while, in late August, CMA stated that GATIA roadblocks prevented them from moving their forces to Gao.

This year, violence erupted between signatory groups of the Bamako Agreement and Islamist groups for the first time since November 2016. Fighting took place, particularly in the regions of Gao and Ménaka, throughout the first half of the year. For instance, in two series of operations were carried out between February 17 and 26, and between March 6 and 12, in the two regions GATIA and MSA, alongside French, Malian, and Nigerien forces. Approx. 60 ISGS militants were killed in these operations. The most fatal ISGS attack in 2018 took place on July 19, when their fighters ambushed a GATIA convoy in Tidimbawen, Gao region, killing 20, among them four civil-

ians. In total, the confrontations between signatory groups of the Bamako Agreement and Islamist groups left at least 190 people dead.

Furthermore, GATIA and MSA attacked, abducted, and arrested mainly Fulani herders and Arabs, in the regions of Gao and Ménaka throughout the year, accusing them of supporting or being part of Islamist groups. According to MINUSMA, the two groups killed at least 147 civilians before the beginning of June. MSA rejected MINUSMA's accusations, stating that the two groups did not target any civilians. jas

MOZAMBIQUE (ASWJ)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2017

Conflict parties: ASWJ vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between the Islamist militia Ahlu Sunna Wal Jammaa (ASWJ), also referred to as Ansar al-Sunna or locally as Al-Shabaab, and the government continued. All measures took place in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The violent attacks against civilians by ASWJ increased in intensity and frequency. Throughout the year, ASWJ conducted 30 attacks against civilians, in which more than 100 civilians died. For instance, on May 29, ASWJ attacked the village of Monjane, and beheaded at least 10 people, after the village leader allegedly supplied the police with information on the militia. On September 20, an ASWJ attack left 14 people dead and a further 12 injured in Piquere. 55 houses were also destroyed by arson. On November 22, alleged ASWJ militants killed twelve people and burnt down 40 houses in Chicuaia Velha, causing several hundred villagers to flee towards the Tanzanian border. On December 5, a militia of local villagers raided an alleged ASWJ camp in the surroundings of Lilonge and beheaded two presumed militants, after ASWJ had destroyed 60 houses and stole livestock from that village.

The government reacted to the increasing violence with a stronger military presence in the area. On May 30, eight alleged islamists were killed in a raid by the Mozambique Defense Armed Forces (FADM) near 25 de Junho. One day later, FADM killed nine suspected ASWJ members during an operation close to Olumbi. On June 9, FADM established an operational command in Macomia and deployed more soldiers to the area throughout June. In the beginning of December, FADM killed at least twelve people in Chicuaia Velha accusing them of being ASWJ members. This operation caused harsh criticism from several international human rights organizations.

On July 6, the governor of Cabo Delgado imposed a curfew to restrict rebel movements.

In October, trials against around 200 accused Islamists started in Pemba, Cabo Delgado. The indictment states that the group sought to prevent the exploitation of natural gas in the area and to build an independent state, annexing Cabo Delgado and the southern regions of Tanzania. The South African Andre Mayer Hanekom and the two Tanzanians Chafim Mussa and Adamu Nhangwa Yangue were named leaders of

the organization. len

MOZAMBIQUE (RENAMO)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: government (FRELIMO) vs. RENAMO, MDM

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between the main opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) on one hand, and the ruling party Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) on the other.

Peace negotiations that had started in 2016 continued with few setbacks. On May 3, Afonso Dhlakama, RENAMO's leader of 16 years, died of a presumed heart attack in his hideout in Gorongosa, Sofala province. The peace talks were thus halted until RENAMO's interim leader, Ossufo Momade, resumed negotiations in late May. The most important issues in the negotiations were: the integration of RENAMO's armed members into the country's military, police and civil society; their demobilization; and the decentralization of power. On June 28, RENAMO declared its fighters should integrate into the country's military and police within three months. On August 6, a memorandum of understanding was signed between FRELIMO and RENAMO, defining the process of reintegration. The legal foundations for the decentralization of power were laid with a constitutional reform passed on May 23 as well as a corresponding electoral bill, which was passed on July 20.

The first municipal elections under the new electoral regime were conducted on October 10. The days preceding the elections were characterized by protests and violence between the competing parties. On October 9, RENAMO members ripped down posters from and vandalized the FRELIMO provincial headquarters in Milange, Zambezia province, injuring one FRELIMO member. On the same day, FRELIMO and RENAMO marches met in Maputo, eponymous province. RENAMO supporters torched a car presumably parked to stop their march, leaving one person injured. Subsequently, police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the groups. Also on October 9, police raided the RENAMO headquarters, beating the campaign aides with batons and arresting 12 people. The police later claimed that FRELIMO supporters had been held hostage in the headquarters.

On October 24, RENAMO officially put the peace negotiations on hold after the official results of the municipal elections were published. RENAMO accused FRELIMO of electoral fraud which allegedly robbed it of its victory in five municipalities. FRELIMO won 44 municipalities, RENAMO won five and MDM one. len

NIGER (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: MODEN/FA Lumana vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between opposition groups around the Nigerien Democratic Movement for an African Federation and the government, led by President Mahamadou Issoufou and his Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism, continued.

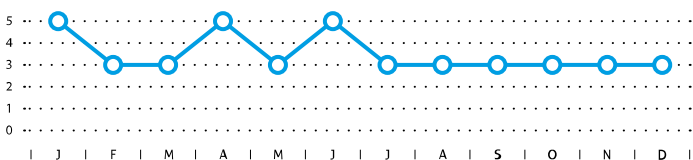
Demonstrations against the finance law of 2018, adopted in 2017, took place throughout the year. Protesters criticized its national budget and tax amendments as unfair. For instance, on January 14 and 28, thousands of people demonstrated against the finance law in the departments of Niamey, Zinder, Dosso, Tahoua and Tillabéri. On February 4, 10 opposition activists organized a sit-in protest at Toumo, Niamey Department, of whom police arrested seven. Furthermore, national authorities interdicted protests against the law on March 25 and April 15. Despite this, on March 25, thousands of people took to the streets in the capital Niamey. Security forces dispersed the protesters, using tear gas grenades, and arrested 22 people, including seven opposition leaders. On June 13, the government declared a state of emergency for three months in several regions starting on June 18, and extended it by three months on September 9. In reaction, civil society organizations called for protests on the same day, in which thousands took to the streets the same day in Diffa, eponymous department, and the capital, Niamey. They opposed the state of emergency and the finance law, and demanded an improvement of security and infrastructure. Furthermore, an opposition demonstration in the capital Niamey and headed by former president Mahamane Ousmane was staged on November 11, in which thousands of Nigerian protesters accused the government of bad governance and demanded a consensual electoral law. pli

NIGERIA (FARMERS – PASTORALISTS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: farmers vs. pastoralists

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The war over resources and subnational predominance between farmers and pastoralists continued. While the conflict mainly revolved around the control over arable land and cattle, it was further fueled by political, ethnic, and religious issues between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes on the one hand, and mainly Muslim Fulani nomads on the other. In total, violence between farmers

and pastoralists accounted for 1123 conflict-related deaths, which is twice as much as in 2017. Desertification in the Sahel reduced fertile ground, and farmers appealed to their right to use their ancestor's farmland, while Fulani nomads claimed the areas as grazing land 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) in Plateau State to observe the situation and interfere if necessary.

In May 2018, the Nigerian military launched Operation Whirl Stroke in the states of Benue, Zamfara, Nasarawa, and Taraba to prevent violent herdsmen and other militias from operating in these states. In previous years, many communities had formed vigilante groups to defend their farmland or livestock and conduct retaliatory attacks, which exacerbated hostilities.

Throughout the year, 345 farmers were killed in attacks by herdsmen in the Plateau state located in Nigeria's Middle Belt. In the most fatal attack, from June 22 to 24, Fulani herdsmen launched a reprisal attack after Berom farmers killed five herdsmen in Barkin Ladi, Mangu, Riyom, and Jos South Local Government Areas (LGA). Herdsmen occupied villages, took over farmland, and changed names of villages, leaving 2,000 people displaced. False information on social networks fueled the conflict yet further. In villages not under attack, Berom farmers found images of dead bodies in their Facebook feeds, causing them to believe they were about to be attacked. A total of 238 farmers and pastoralists died in these clashes. In further attacks, 107 farmers were killed in Barkin Ladi, Bassa, Bokkos, Jos North, and Jos South LGAs.

In Benue, a total of 307 farmers and 11 herdsmen died in attacks in different regions of the state. In the most fatal attack on January 1, Fulani pastoralists killed 72 farmers and displaced 80,000 in several attacks on communities in Logo and Guma LGAs.

On April 5, herdsmen killed 30 and injured many more in Gwer West LGA. This year, pastoralists were attacked once in Benue, when Tiv farmers killed 11 herdsmen on April 7, in Guma LGA. Moreover 39 farmers were killed throughout the year in Logo LGA. In other areas, as Guma, Okpokwu, Gwer, Keana, Kwande, and Ushongo LGAs, a total of 125 farmers died in attacks by pastoralists.

In the eastern state of Adamawa, 126 farmers died in clashes with pastoralists. On September 13, 200 Fulani pastoralists carried out an attack in Numa LGA, killing 51 and burning down villages. On May 2, approx. 400 herdsmen killed 15 farmers, and burned down entire villages in Numa LGA. Furthermore, Fulani herdsmen killed a total of 43 farmers in Demsa LGA. 2000 were displaced. A further seven farmers died in attacks in Guyuk and Lamurde LGAs. On July 9, Fulani herdsmen attacked several villages and killing 50 in the states of Adamawa and Taraba, which is located south of Adamawa. Throughout the year, 102 people were killed in various attacks all over Taraba state. For instance, on March 1, Mambilla farmers killed 20 Fulani pastoralists and injured 12 in Sardauna LGA. Moreover, 26 farmers died in Lau, 25 in Wukari, and a further 31 in attacks in Gassol, Donga, Takum, Bali, Ussa LGAs.

In Nasarawa, a state next to Taraba, Fulani pastoralists killed a total of 99 Tiv farmers. From April 14 to 16, Fulani pastoralists attacked Tiv farmers in Awe, Keana, Obi and Doma LGAs,

Nasarawa, with guns and machetes and killed 78. Moreover, 19 were injured and 100,000 displaced. A further 21 were killed in the areas of Awe, Keana, and Obi LGAs.

In Kaduna, north of Nasarawa, 36 farmers were killed by pastoralists, 26 in Birnin-Gwari and 10 in Jema LGA. On March 14, 500 herdsmen invaded Omala LGA, Kogi, killing 32 farmers.

In the northern state Katsina, pastoralists killed 10 farmers in a single attack this year. In the southern states Delta and Edo, four farmers were killed in the former and one in the latter.

sas

NIGERIA (IJAW GROUPS / NIGER DELTA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: Ijaw groups, NDA, CNDA vs. international oil companies, government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over resources and the autonomy of the Niger Delta continued between numerous Ijaw militias including the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), the Coalition of Niger Delta Agitators (CNDA), and several other ethnic Ijaw groups on the one hand, and the government and multinational oil companies stationed in the Niger Delta on the other.

The conflict began due to heavy environmental pollution caused by international oil companies drilling for oil in the area. Moreover, Ijaw groups reiterated their discontent with the distribution of profit generated from the oil production, which they claimed did not benefit their own region. Another contentious issue was the 2009 Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) which addressed the reintegration of former Niger Delta militants into society. The programme had been extended in 2016 at the demands of the local population. In 2018, however, protests erupted over alleged corruption and the lack of agreed payments. For instance, on January 26, 500 former militants protested in Akure, Ondo State, threatening to restart fighting. NDA issued a threat against international oil companies on January 17, announcing 'fatal' attacks on offshore oil facilities. Such threats against oil infrastructure were announced monthly by various militant groups. However, only small-scale attacks were reported throughout 2018 in the nine Niger Delta states Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers.

In total, 13 clashes between security personnel and militant groups resulted in approx. 48 deaths. For instance, on July 6, four people were killed in a shootout between suspected militants and troops of the army's Joint Task Force (JTF) in Olusiri community, Bayelsa State. Moreover, 37 conflict-related kidnappings were reported, resulting in three deaths. For instance, alleged militants abducted 19 ExxonMobil workers and killed one of them on July 5 in Ibeno LGA, Akwa Ibom State. Furthermore, militant groups frequently assaulted security personnel, using this as a method of arms procurement. Throughout the year, the army conducted several military operations to destruct illegal oil refineries and to combat oil theft. The one-month Operation Crocodile Smile III, for instance, was launched on October 22, comprising 800 soldiers and targeting militancy, pipeline vandalism, and kidnappings in all nine Niger Delta states. Oil theft and illegal oil refin-

ing led to several accidents over the course of the year, such as on October 12, when a pipeline explosion in Umuimo and Umuaduru communities, Abia State, killed up to 60 people. Moreover, instances of oil piracy violence off the Nigerian coast significantly increased in number compared to previous years. According to a report by the ICC International Maritime Bureau, published in January 2019, pirate attacks in Nigeria increased by over 40 percent in 2018, counting 48 incidents.

yme

NIGERIA (ISLAMIC MOVEMENT)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: IMN vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology

The conflict over the orientation of the political system, its ideology, and subnational predominance between the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and the government continued as a violent crisis.

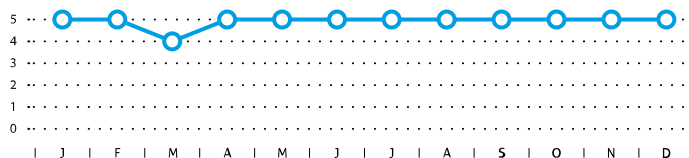
The IMN, a minority Shia sect mainly based in Zaria, Kaduna state, sought to end Western influence in the country and promoted the adoption of Islamic legal principles and systems. IMN protesters demanded the release of their leader Ibrahim El-Zakzaky, who was arrested in 2015 and charged for murder in April this year. The protesters frequently clashed with police throughout 2018. For instance, on January 7, clashes between IMN members and police reportedly left two dead and three injured in Kaduna. This was not, however, confirmed by the police. The following day, in a protest of IMN members in the capital Abuja, Federal State Territory, protesters tried to storm the National Assembly complex. The police intervened using tear gas. On April 16, IMN members protested for the release of their leader in Abuja. At least one person was killed and up to 30 injured as police dispersed the protest. Clashes between hundreds of protesters and security officials on April 16 and 17 led to at least one death in Abuja. A few days later, on April 23, IMN members threw stones and other objects at security officials, damaging nearby cars and buildings. In May and July similar clashes between IMN and police took place in Abuja. Furthermore, on September 21, after an Ashura procession in Potiskum, Yobe State, participating IMN members clashed with the military, leaving one dead and three injured. Between 27 and 30 October, IMN members protested against El-Zakzaky's detention once again, setting up barricades in the capital and leading to clashes with police as they refused to turn back. According to IMN, 42 members were allegedly killed in the protests, while over a hundred were injured, and more than 400 arrested. ras

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 war over system and ideology continued for the eighth consecutive year between the two Boko Haram factions, namely the Islamic State's West African Province (ISWAP) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS), on the one hand, and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger on the other.

The groups remained radically opposed to secular and liberal values, in particular the Western education and democratic systems, seeking to establish an Islamic caliphate in the region. Throughout the year, the Nigerian government received different types of intelligence and materiel support as well as military training from the US, the UK, France, and Israel.

In 2018, the conflict accounted for more than 2,000 deaths, which marks a slight decrease in comparison to the approx. 2,100 deaths in 2017, and a significant decrease compared to 2015, when more than 10,000 people were killed. As a consequence of the violence, around 1.95 million people were displaced in 2018, which marks an increase of 150,000 IDPs compared to estimates at the end of 2017.

The overall humanitarian situation continued to be severe in the Nigerian states affected by Boko Haram, namely Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. According to the UN, approx. 2.9 million people suffered from food insecurity, while 1.5 million people lacked access to fresh water largely due to destroyed or damaged water and sanitation infrastructure. This situation as well as overcrowded IDP camps contributed to intensify the yearly cholera outbreaks in the region. On May 2, the Minister for Education stated that Boko Haram had destroyed more than 1,500 schools and killed 1,280 teachers in the north-east of the country since 2014.

As in previous years, the government under President Muhammadu Buhari repeatedly claimed that Boko Haram would soon be defeated. In contrast to these statements, Boko Haram frequently conducted attacks in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe with the majority of the attacks taking place in Borno's border region to Niger and Chad and in the area around Borno's capital Maiduguri. Over the course of the year, the number of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria's neighboring countries increased.

The number of attacks in Cameroon increased, accounting for more than 150 deaths 2018. In Niger, at least ten incidents, accounted for more than 50 fatalities. The number of incidents in Chad quadrupled to at least nine, leading to the death of 117 people.

Alongside troops of the affected countries in the Lake Chad

Basin, comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, forces from Benin contributed to the AU-mandated Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Although MNJTF troops were stationed in all regions affected by Boko Haram, reports from 2017 and 2018 indicated that some of the member states relocated their troops to their own territory. For instance, Chad had withdrawn hundreds of soldiers from Diffa Region, Niger, in October 2017.

In order to fight Boko Haram locally, the Nigerian government authorized a Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to counter Boko Haram, consisting of 26,000 local vigilantes. The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) frequently conducted air strikes on Boko Haram hideouts in the Sambisa Forest as well as in the Lake Chad region. Drones and reconnaissance platforms were often deployed to scout for Boko Haram training camps and other facilities in order to attack them with various types of fighter aircraft, such as Alpha Jets and Helicopter gunships. Aircraft were also used for close air support during clearance operations and were regularly deployed to repel Boko Haram attacks on remote villages and military bases. For instance, on November 4, Boko Haram militants attacked troops in Kangarwa, Borno. The NAF subsequently repelled the attack with three fighter aircraft.

In May 2015, Boko Haram led by Abubakar Shekau had officially sworn a type of allegiance to the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In August 2016, IS had proclaimed Abu Musab al-Barnawi, son of Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusuf, the new leader of the Islamic State's West African Province. Internal disagreements led to a split of Boko Haram into two factions, one led by Shekau, the other by al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur, the latter faction acknowledged by the IS. Shekau renewed his pledge of allegiance to IS and stated that his group would not follow al-Barnawi's leadership. In a book written by Shekau and published in 2017, he reverted to calling his faction Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS).

JAS was based in the Sambisa Forest, located southeast of Maiduguri. While both factions used suicide attacks, most of the incidents involving suicide bombers happened in and around Maiduguri, the area where the Shekau faction was mostly active. Suicide bombers, including children and women, attacked civilian targets such as markets, mosques, and schools, often in coordinated operations involving multiple suicide bombers. On May 4, four suicide bombers attacked the villages of Mainari Kanuri and Shua, Borno, killing three people. The year's most fatal suicide attack took place in Mubi, Adamawa State, on November 20. Two suicide bombers attacked a mosque and a market, reportedly killing 86 people.

ISWAP, the faction led by al-Barnawi, established its base on islands on Lake Chad near the border with Chad. Opposing the indiscriminate killings of Sunni Muslims, after the split in 2015 the group had announced it would target western, military, and Christian institutions in particular. They focused on military bases from July 2018 onwards. Reportedly, ISWAP was less violent towards civilians and ordered its fighters to spare the life of civilians while raiding villages for supplies. In late August, Nur, one of ISWAP's leaders, was reportedly assassinated by members of his own group who claimed that his approach to the government had been too soft. His murder had allegedly been triggered by Nur's unconditional release

of more than 100 girls, who had been abducted on February 19 from a school in Dachpi, Yobe. Moreover, ISWAP continued to target aid workers and foreign companies. For instance, on March 1, Boko Haram attacked the community Rann, Borno, where the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conducted food distributions, killing four ICRC workers and abducting one. The hostage was murdered in October.

Due to continuing military crackdowns and tactics designed to limit Boko Haram's movement by means of military outposts, Boko Haram's operations were mostly limited to hit-and-run raids: A group of militants would attack their, mostly civilian, targets, overpower the security forces, loot their target for supplies and retreat before reinforcements arrived. However, from July and August onwards, ISWAP changed its tactics and started to frequently attack military bases in the border region to Niger and Chad. Between July and December, 32 attacks were carried out. Hundreds of militants on pick-up trucks armed with high caliber weapons stormed the bases and raided them over the course of several hours, looting large caches of weapons and ammunition. While most of the military bases were recaptured within hours, on December 26, hundreds of Boko Haram militants of the al-Baranawi faction took over the headquarters of the MNJTF near Baga, Borno. The next day, the militants stormed a navy base in the same area, forcing the soldiers to retreat even further. The next day, on December 28, the militants attacked another naval base three kilometers away from Baga, in an area called Fish Dam. During these events, the militants also invaded the town of Baga, forcing marine police to withdraw. Allegedly, the towns of Doron-Baga, Kross Kawwa, Bunduran, Kekeno, and Kukawa, Borno, were also captured. According to reports, more than 2,000 soldiers were trapped during the attack and 700 soldiers remained missing afterwards, which hindered the NAF from conducting counter measures. After intense fighting the following days, the Nigerian Army and NAF forced ISWAP militants to retreat from Baga, allegedly killing more than 100 militants. Around 30,000 people fled the area due to the battle.

Throughout the year, both factions attacked remote villages and ambushed military as well as civilian convoys. For instance, on July 17, militants ambushed a civilian convoy comprised of 23 vehicles near the village of Mussini, killing six merchants and looting the convoy for food and supplies. On August 19, Boko Haram militants stormed the village Mailari, Borno, and burned down 40 houses in an alleged reprisal attack for the arrest of a Boko Haram militant. nre

REPUBLIC OF CONGO (NINJA MILITIAS)

Intensity: 1 | Change: **END** | Start: 1993

Conflict parties: Ninja militias vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance in Pool department between Ninja militias and the government ended after a ceasefire agreement was signed on 12/23/2017.

On March 7, June 26 and July 28, the government released a total of five Ninja militants from prison and discharged a further 81 Ninja militants. Their release had been part of

the ceasefire agreement. Furthermore, on July 28, the government lifted the arrest warrant issued against Frédéric Bit-samou, alias Pastor Ntumi, the leader of the Ninja militias. The government also started disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs in cooperation with the UN. By June, over 100,000 displaced persons had returned to their homes.

SIERRA LEONE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: APC vs. government
 Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the All People's Congress (APC) and the government led by the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), continued.

In 2016, elections had been postponed due to the Ebola epidemic, and were instead held on March 7 this year. SLPP candidate Julius Maada Bio succeeded President and APC leader Ernest Bai Koroma, leading to a change of government. Additionally, parliamentary, mayoral and local council elections were held. International observers described the elections as generally peaceful. This marks the second democratic transition in the country since its independence in 1961.

During the pre-election phase, several violent incidents between APC and SLPP were reported. For instance, on February 20, APC members attacked Bio's convoy with stones in Kamalo village, North-Western Province, injuring several people. Furthermore, on February 28, APC members stabbed SLPP members, in the capital Freetown, injuring at least three of them. The same day, in Waterloo, Western Area, APC members attacked the SLPP East District chairman in his residence and set fire to his car.

In the months following the election, clashes between opposition and government continued. For instance, on April 5, SLPP supporters attacked APC members in the streets and torched a police station, whereupon police used guns to disperse them. The clash left at least six police officers and several SLPP members injured. On May 24, SLPP members assaulted the Mayor of Freetown, member of APC. On December 31, APC members protested against the arrest of a former defence minister in Freetown. In reaction, security forces attacked their headquarters using tear gas and live ammunition, injuring six.

lel

SOMALIA (ISS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: ISS vs. al-Shabaab vs. government
 Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) and the Federal Government of Somalia, supported by security forces of the

semi-autonomous region of Puntland, the US military, and al-Shabaab.

According to ISS media channels, the militant group claimed ownership of 66 attacks this year. As in previous years, ISS mainly operated in Bari region, Puntland. For instance, on March 14, ISS assassinated a police officer in Bosaso town. On April 9, the US military carried out an airstrike targeting ISS near Qandala town, with an unknown number of casualties. On May 29, ISS militants shot dead a soldier from Puntland security forces near the village of Anjil, south of Qandala. On August 7, ISS allegedly killed a well-known Puntland businessman, Abdullahi Ali Omar, for not paying taxes to the group.

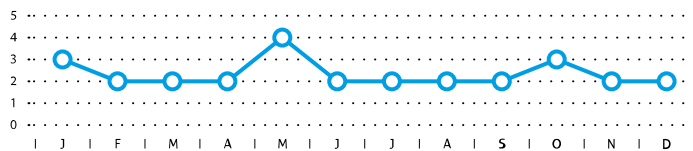
Contrary to previous years, ISS expanded their operations into the country's southern regions, becoming especially active in urban areas. For instance, the group started taxing businesses in the capital Mogadishu, Banaadir region. Separately, four FGS soldiers were killed in a bomb attack in the capital on June 17 that was later claimed by ISS. On June 29, in separate attacks ISS shot dead two FGS soldiers in Mogadishu and one civilian in the nearby village Elasha Biyaha, Shabeellaha Hoose region. On September 20, ISS militants allegedly shot dead two FGS soldiers in the capital. During the third week of October, the Somali National Army announced that the dead body of ISS deputy chief Mahad Moalim had been found in the capital after his abduction by an unknown group. In November, ISS attacked several employees of Somalia's largest telecommunications company Hormuud in Mogadishu, assassinating more than 10 in total. Allegedly, the employees were killed because Hormuud declined to pay extortion to the militant group.

As in previous years, tensions between al-Qaeda affiliated al-Shabaab [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)] and ISS continued. On December 20, ISS claimed to have killed 14 al-Shabaab militants in the B'ir Mirali mountain area near Galgala town, Bari region. The following day, an al-Shabaab spokesman announced an offensive codenamed "Disease Eradication", targeting ISS fighters. jtr

SOMALIA (SOMALILAND – PUNTLAND)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: regional government of Somaliland vs. regional government of Puntland
 Conflict items: subnational predominance



The non-violent crisis over subnational predominance between the self-declared state of Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, supported by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), escalated to a limited war.

Since the beginning of the conflict in 1998, the border region between Somaliland and Puntland, comprising the provinces Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC), have been subject to recurring

and opposing territorial claims by the two states as well as by different clans inhabiting the region.

In 2012, members of the Dhulbahante clan had declared the SSC provinces an autonomous state, the so-called Khatumo state. Several violent incidents were reported in the following years. Subsequently, peaceful negotiations between the Somaliland government and the Khatumo state administration resulted in a peace agreement in October 2017. The two agreed to change Somaliland's constitution in order to formally incorporate the SSC provinces and the Khatumo administration into Somaliland. However, the Puntland government did not participate in these talks.

On January 8, Somaliland took control of Tukaraq, Sool region, from Puntland, after clashes erupted between the military forces of Puntland and Somaliland. The number of casualties remained unknown. This event coincided with FGS President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo Mohamed's first visit to Puntland and the SSC provinces the previous day. Throughout the year, intermittent clashes continued and soldiers from both forces allegedly changed sides.

In May, fights between Somaliland and Puntland forces intensified after the UN Envoy to Somalia visited both Galkayo, capital of Puntland, and Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland, aiming to mediate talks between the rivaling sub-states. On May 15 and 24, more than 106 soldiers were killed, dozens wounded and 11 Somaliland soldiers captured during clashes in the outskirts of Tukaraq, Sool. According to the UN, 15,000 civilians were displaced.

On May 28, protesters rallied in Las Anood, Sool, demanding the withdrawal of Somaliland forces from the SSC provinces. The Somaliland police reportedly arrested 64 civilians and shut down two TV channels that covered the protests.

At the end of July, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and UNSOM conducted a joint mediation mission to Somaliland and Puntland, resulting in a ceasefire agreement. However, neither of the two rivaling sub-states publicly supported the terms until the end of the year.

On September 19 and 20, Puntland Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas held a cabinet meeting in Badhan in the disputed region Sanaag. This was considered a provocation by the government of Somaliland.

The violent confrontations between Somaliland and Puntland contributed to triggering clashes of rivaling clans in the SSC provinces in January and October, leaving at least 60 dead and more than 150 injured [→ Somalia (sub-clan rivalry)].

Additionally, Al-Shabaab expanded its presence in Somaliland and Puntland by intensifying the group's attacks there, particularly assassinations, in the SSC provinces [→ Somalia, Kenya (Al-Shabaab)]. lem, anf

SOMALIA (SUBCLAN RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Habar Gedir vs. Hawadle vs. Dulbahante vs. al-Shabaab vs. Biyamal vs. Abgal

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between various subclans, such as the Habar Gedir, Hawadle, Dhulbahante, Biyamal and Abgaal and their subdivisions, as well as al-Shabaab.

The major Somali clans Darod, Dir, Hawiye, Isaaq and Rahanweyn are divided into different subclans, which in turn have a number subdivisions. Violence mostly occurred on the subclan and subdivision level. As a general rule, violent confrontations took place primarily in rural areas over access to resources, such as grazing land or water, as well as the control of critical infrastructure and local cultural order. This year, particularly Hiraan, Sool, Lower Shabelle and Togdheer regions were affected by clan-related violence.

In Hiraan, clan-related violence continued throughout the year and involved members of Hawadle and Habar Gedir, subclans of the Hawiye clan, members of Cabdalla and Agoon, subdivisions of the Hawadle, and of al-Shabaab. For instance, on January 22, one civilian was killed and two others injured by Hawadle members in the town of Buulo Xuubey. On February 9, al-Shabaab and Hawadle members clashed in the Tardo area at the border of Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions over disputed land in the town of Xalfooley. On July 20 and 21, members of Habar Gedir and Hawadle clashed in Banyaaley, an area close to the town of Belet Weyne, leaving eight dead and 20 injured. On September 3, the two subclans fought again in Banyaaley, leaving one Hawadle member killed and another injured. Members of the Cabdalla and Agoon clashed in Beletweyne on September 18 in an alleged clan revenge dispute. One member of Cabdalla was killed. On October 20, one Macawisley-Hawadle member was killed in a fight with al-Shabaab in Dib-Ugal village.

In Lower Shabelle region, southern Somalia, militiamen of Biyamal, a subclan of the Dir, clashed with militiamen of Abgaal, a subclan of Hawiye. For instance, on January 13, the detonation of an explosive device killed two Biyamal militiamen and injured two civilians in Osman Quule village, close to Merca. On March 24, Abgaal militiamen killed two members of Biyamal in the Muuri Settlement near the town of Afgooye. On April 28 and June 6, Biyamal and Abgaal clashed in the town of Muuri over alleged clan feuds, leaving seven dead and at least three injured.

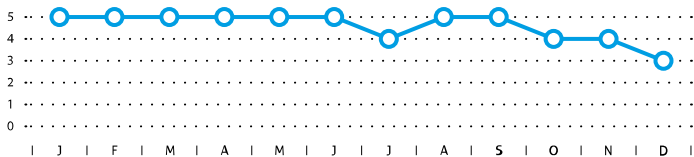
Further affected regions were Sool and Togdheer in the self-declared state of Somaliland. Violence occurred between various subdivisions of the Dhulbahante, a Darod subclan. In Sool, between 40 and 100 people were killed and more than 100 injured when Baharar and Qayaad, rivaling Dhulbahante subdivisions, fought in Dhammay village between October 22 and 23. In Togdheer, violence peaked in September. For instance, the killing of a Baharsame member, on September 6, set off clashes between Qayaad and Baharsame subdivisions.

During the incident, 20 clan members were injured and 11 killed. rbe

SOMALIA, KENYA (AL-SHABAAB)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2006

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



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system continued for a thirteenth consecutive year between the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab, on the one hand, and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Kenyan government, on the other.

The Somali National Army (SNA) was supported by local government forces from the semi-autonomous region of Puntland as well as from the states of Jubaland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and South West State. It was further aided by the USA and the EU as well as the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) and the Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF). In March, the UN mandate for Somalia (UNSOM) was renewed by Security Council resolution 2408 and is valid until March 2019. In Somalia, al-Shabaab was mostly active in the capital Mogadishu, Banadir region, in South West State, specifically in Lower Shabelle region, in Jubaland, specifically in Gedo and Lower Juba regions, and in Puntland, specifically in Bari and Mudug regions. Furthermore, the group conducted attacks in Kenya. Allegedly, between 7,000 and 9,000 al-Shabaab fighters operated in the country by the end of 2017.

Al-Shabaab continued its attacks on politicians, other state officials, joint forces, and civilians in Somalia, and in Kenya's border region to Somalia. The group launched several attacks in the capital Mogadishu, using car bombs, mortar shelling, and gun fire. For instance, on February 23, at least 45 people were killed and 36 injured during a twin car bomb attack near the presidential palace called Villa Somalia and nearby Dorbin Hotel. On May 11, al-Shabaab launched mortar shells against a Turkish military base, killing ten people. On December 22, at least 16 people were killed and more than 20 injured after al-Shabaab detonated a car bomb at a military checkpoint near Villa Somalia. Throughout the year, further suicide bombings, mortar shelling, and gunfire exchanges in the Banadir region led to the deaths of at least 544 people.

A majority of attacks outside Mogadishu took place in Lower Shabelle region in southern Somalia, where at least 799 people were killed throughout the year. Al-Shabaab repeatedly attacked SNA and AMISOM troops using IEDs, landmines, and guns. For instance, on June 22, a radio-controlled IED targeted AMISOM forces in Afgoye. After the explosion, al-Shabaab militants engaged the AMISOM troops in a direct ambush attack with rocket-propelled grenades and heavy gunfire, leading to the deaths of at least 11 people. On September 24, 35 al-Shabaab militants and one Somali sol-

dier were killed and several others injured in a gunfight in Qoryoley. On October 14, an AMISOM Uganda night patrol was ambushed by al-Shabaab militants in Marka, leading to the deaths of one soldier, one civilian, and 11 al-Shabaab militants.

Al-Shabaab was also active in Jubaland. At least 851 people were killed in Lower Juba and Gedo regions as a result of the conflict. For instance, on July 23, at least 93 people were killed after al-Shabaab attacked an SNA military base in Bar-Sangun, Lower Juba. On September 19, SNA forces killed 30 al-Shabaab militants during an operation in Dolow, Gedo, after al-Shabaab had demanded local citizens to bring their livestock to a specified location for taxation.

Al-Shabaab also conducted various attacks in Puntland. On January 7, al-Shabaab carried out a mortar attack on a Puntland Security Force (PSF) forward operating base in Bosaso, Bari region, killing at least 10 soldiers. Between January and November, at least 135 al-Shabaab militants were killed in Puntland as a result of PSF offensives and US airstrikes. For instance, on October 13, a US airstrike in Hardere, Mudug region, killed at least 60 militants. On November 19, two separate US airstrikes in Galkayo, Mudug region, killed at least 27 and 10 al-Shabaab militants, respectively.

On the whole, the number of US airstrikes and subsequent fatalities in Somalia has sharply increased since US President Donald J. Trump took office in January 2017. On December 15 and 16, the US launched six airstrikes in total, killing at least 62 al-Shabaab militants. These were the most fatal air attacks in Somalia since November 2017. The total number of airstrikes carried out in Somalia this year was at least 40, compared with 35 in 2017. The marked increase in airstrikes has forced al-Shabaab to noticeably change tactics by the third quarter of the year. The number of massed attacks on military bases sharply declined by September, replaced by an increase in urban guerrilla warfare consisting predominantly of bombings targeting Somali government offices and businesses that refuse to pay al-Shabaab taxes.

On Kenyan territory, most attacks took place in Lamu, Mandera, and Garissa counties. Throughout the year, a total of at least 163 people were killed in Kenya as a result of to the conflict. For instance, on September 25, al-Shabaab militants attacked a KDF camp in Lamu county, killing at least 10 soldiers. On May 3, al-Shabaab killed four quarry workers and injured several others in Mandera, Mandera county. On June 6, five Kenyan paramilitary police officers were killed when their vehicle drove over a homemade landmine laid by al-Shabaab militants in Garissa county.

On June 25, al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Diriye, also known as Abu Ubeidah, reportedly died of cancer in Jilib, Middle Juba region. Al-Shabaab denied this, claiming their leader is alive and well.

On July 30, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution postponing the departure of 1,000 AMISOM troops from Somalia, originally scheduled for October this year, to the end of February 2019 due to concerns that SNA forces were not sufficiently prepared to take over the fight against al-Shabaab. A full withdrawal of AMISOM troops from Somalia is planned for December 2020. hss

SOUTH AFRICA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: NEW | Start: 2018

Conflict parties: residents of informal settlements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

A new conflict erupted over the orientation of the political and economic system after tensions between residents of informal settlements and the government intensified.

Protests over basic services such as electricity, water, sanitation, infrastructure, and the living conditions in illegal settlements in general, so-called service delivery protests, and the occupation of privately owned land for settlement have been the primary subjects of political discourse for over 10 years. However, it was not until 2018 that these protests gained broader momentum and were recognized as political acts. In November, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that the protests reflected 'severe weaknesses in local governance, poor consultation with communities and a perceived distance between communities and their public representatives'. While the Poor People's Alliance, consisting of Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM), the Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Landless People's Movement, and the Rural Network, was very active throughout the country in voicing the residents' demands, most actions were decentralized and organized in an uncoordinated fashion.

Protests were organized throughout the country on a daily basis. Often, the residents used burning tyres and debris to block central roads, regularly causing the police to forcibly remove them. For instance, on February 6, protesters blocked roads in Sekoto Village, Free State, demanding electricity and the resignation of their mayor. One protester was allegedly shot dead by police, while more than 20 people were arrested. On March 19, around 2,000 people blocked roads in Keiskammerhoek, Eastern Cape province, protesting bad road conditions. Police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters and arrested 20. One protester was allegedly killed in police fire. In the night to June 2, residents of Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, Western Cape province, protested over lack of housing and basic services. An ATM, a petrol station, and several vehicles were set alight and shots were fired at police. At least one person died when a taxi drove into a group of protesters after having been attacked by them. On October 18, around 500 protesters demanded the establishment of police stations, schools, and a community hall in Witsand, Western Cape. They threw stones at police, who responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and stun grenades, injuring at least one protester. Between October 31 and November 2, several hundred protesters repeatedly clashed with police in Stutterheim, Eastern Cape. The protesters burned down several municipal buildings, a clinic, and a shop, while police was not immediately able to contain the situation. In the early morning of November 16, over 1,500 people blocked roads and threw stones at passing cars and police in Saldanha, Western Cape. A community hall, a hotel, a municipal office, and a local clinic were burned down during the protests. Police contained the crowd with tear gas

and rubber bullets, and detained 17 people.

Furthermore, privately owned, unused land was frequently occupied by informal settlers, often leading to their forceful removal by security forces. For example, between February 2 and 22, about 500 people repeatedly tried to build huts in Macassar, Cape Town, but were forcefully removed by police. On March 22, police removed settlers in Zwelihle, Hermanus, Western Cape. Subsequently, a group of 500 people started protesting, burning tyres, throwing stones and looting a nearby municipal office. Protests continued throughout the following week, especially after the local council had refused to negotiate with the protesters. On May 28, a group of approx. 2,000 marched to a court in Hermanus, where one of the detained protesters was heard. Protesters demanded permission to settle on the private plot.

On October 8, several hundred protesters joined a march by AbM in Durban, KwaZulu Natal, protesting political killings, intimidation, illegal evictions, and corruption of political officials. On May 25, a local AbM chairman had been shot dead by unknown attackers in Mariannhill, KwaZulu Natal. len, deb, ttw

SOUTH AFRICA (XENOPHOBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: immigrants vs. xenophobes

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over local labor market shares and cultural hegemony between groups of immigrants and xenophobic South African nationals continued. High rates of unemployment and nationwide social inequality continued to have a negative impact on the living conditions of the black South African population. This led to several violent clashes between South Africans and various groups of immigrants, with the latter accused of taking jobs from locals as well as involvement in criminal activities. These clashes left at least six people dead.

Especially North West Province was affected by xenophobically motivated violence. After a local taxi driver had been found dead in Rustenburg, his colleagues attacked West African nationals, especially Nigerians, on January 10. They raided and torched at least eight Nigerian-run guest houses which they suspected of being brothels and drug dens. They claimed that the taxi driver had been killed by drug addicts and accused local Nigerian nationals of selling drugs and making South Africans addicted. Eleven days later, 14 Nigerians went to Rustenburg police station, complaining that they had been attacked by residents and that police was not helping them. They were consequently arrested for blocking the entrance. On February 9, Rustenburg residents protested and demanded that Nigerians should leave the town and that the 14 arrested should be deported to Nigeria. Police used rubber bullets and smoke grenades to disperse the protesters. Five days later, again in Rustenburg, a Nigerian man was stabbed and doused with petrol in his hair salon. Police intervened before he was set alight, which caused the formation of a protesting crowd. Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse them. On April 22, a Nigerian national was burnt

to death in his car, which had been torched by a group of unknown people in Rustenburg. On September 9, local taxi drivers killed a man of Zimbabwean descent in his shop in Klerksdorp, North West, as part of a series of attacks on foreigners. The taxi drivers made foreign nationals responsible for the murder of one of their colleagues. Subsequently, one day later, violence between taxi drivers and foreign nationals left several buildings and vehicles torched.

Other regions were affected by xenophobic violence as well. On May 29, shops mostly belonging to immigrants were looted and torched in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, Western Cape Province, when violence over land and housing flared up. On June 9, residents destroyed a shack belonging to an immigrant from the Democratic Republic of Congo and his South African wife in Siyahlala informal settlement, Khayelitsha, Cape Town. Violence against foreign nationals culminated on August 29 in the Soweto area of Johannesburg, Gauteng Province. Four people were killed by a mob of local residents, who looted and destroyed the property of foreign nationals, many of them Somalis. The Somali nationals had been accused of selling fake and expired food products. On August 30, an Ethiopian trader's shop was burnt down in KwaDabeka, Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal Province, and one day later, an Ethiopian shopkeeper was injured when he was locked inside his workplace before it was torched in Newlands West, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. On September 8, the shop of a Bangladeshi national was torched while he and his brothers were sleeping inside in Brixton, Johannesburg. Both were able to flee unhurt. On October 17, property of foreign nationals was looted after a 26-year-old man was arrested for murder in Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province. mag

among the Thiik and Ngap-Agok communities in Tonj state, bringing together youths, traditional as well as religious leaders, government officials, and civil society activists. Nevertheless, several violent clashes between ethnic communities took place in Tonj throughout the year, leaving at least 65 people dead. For instance, at the beginning of February, at least six people were killed and 17 others injured in Tonj after Yar and Tonj communities clashed over the ownership of land. The state government sent the army to contain the fighting and three chiefs were arrested. On February 28, 21 people were killed and 20 injured in clashes between members of the Thiik and Jalwau sub-clans over livestock in Tonj. Security forces were reportedly deployed to the area afterwards. During the second week of March, 16 people were killed in Jalwau, Tonj, during a clash over cattle between youth from Jalwau County and youth from northern Rumbek of Eastern Lakes State. On March 17, four people were killed in Tonj South County in a revenge attack between Dinka and Luo communities. Throughout August, in clashed over livestock between Luanyjang and Jalwau communities in Jalwau, Tonj, at least 14 people were killed and 41 injured.

In Western Lakes state, ten people were killed and 32 injured in clashes between Manuer and Gak communities on February 16. On May 6 and 7, four people were killed and 15 injured in the area of Pakam, Western Lakes, in an attack by assailants allegedly coming from Panyijiar and Ganyiel areas in Unity region. An army officer was killed on May 26 in a shootout between security personnel and cattle rustlers in Eastern Barnaam County, Western Lakes, when security forces attempted to recover stolen cattle in the area. On December 28, 12 people were killed and 45 injured during fighting between the communities of Pakam and Luanyjang in Western Lakes.

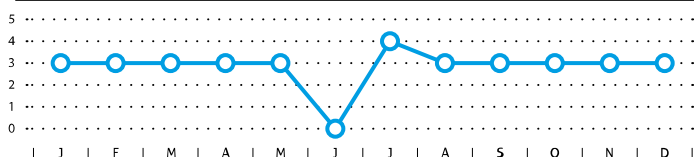
In Eastern Lakes state, three children were abducted and hundreds of cattle raided by an armed group on October 23. Cases of child abduction had already been reported in 2017. Allegedly, rivaling clans had kidnapped one another's children to use them for domestic labor.

In Jonglei state, the communities Nyara and Biong from Bor South County signed an agreement on February 19, agreeing to resolve their land disputes by peaceful means. Moreover, on March 28, a two-day pre-migration conference organized by UNMISS took place in Duk Padiet, Jonglei, among Hol Dinka, Lou Nuer, and Gawar Nuer. As a result, 30 youth representatives of the communities reportedly agreed to end violence during pre-migration and post-migration in greater Jonglei. Moreover, they settled to build peace centers, schools, and markets at cross-border points to "promote social interaction". Furthermore, on September 11, during a peace conference in Bor town, Ater clan of Makwach County and Palek clan of Anyidi County agreed to end their hostilities over a piece of grazing land along the Nile, which they had fought over for years. Despite these peace efforts, Jonglei continued to be affected by inter-communal violence throughout the year. For instance, during the first week of February, 15 people were killed in clashes among four clans of the Abii community in Bor South County. The fighting had been triggered by the contested ownership of grazing land and the naming of a village. On October 30, a group of armed Murle attacked a cattle camp in Poktap town, Duk Payuel County, killing five people and injuring 14. The attackers stole 10,000 cattle,

SOUTH SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Murle vs. Dinka vs. Nuer
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources



The war between various ethnic groups over subnational predominance and resources, especially cattle and pasture, de-escalated to a limited war. According to the World Food Programme, the famine that had started in 2017 continued in parts of former Unity State. Against this backdrop, cattle raids between ethnic groups and their subgroups, especially between Dinka groups and Murle, triggered a series of revenge attacks on both sides. Due to the rurality of the conflict, the actual number of violent incidents is presumed to have been substantially higher than reported. Moreover, the exact location of clashes could not always be established.

In comparison to 2017, the death toll approx. halved to 284 conflict-related deaths in 2018.

On January 4, an intercommunal peace conference took place

reportedly causing civilians to be displaced. The same group of armed Murle was alleged of conducting another attack in Jalle Payam, Bor North county, one day later, killing 10 people and injuring six.

In Eastern Bieh state, five people were killed and 270 cattle stolen when an armed group, allegedly from neighboring Boma state, attacked Gweir village on February 16.

The most fatal attack of the year took place on July 6 in Jebel Boma County, Boma state, when Murle attacked Jieh community, killing 86 people, injuring 23, and raiding 42,000 cattle. The minister for local government of Boma state later claimed that government officials and army generals had been involved in the attack.

In Northern Liech state, three people were killed, five injured, and 1,500 cattle stolen when a group of Misseriya, allegedly from Sudan, attacked Malual and Nyideng areas in Greater Bul County on March 16. Reportedly, the attackers used machine guns. On April 8, two people were killed and four injured in an attack by a group of armed Luo, Kongor, and Apuk.

In Eastern Equatoria state, following a raid on cattle camps in Olianga village, two people were killed in a retaliatory attack on July 15.

In Dollo County, Jubek state, a total of 18 people were killed, 14 injured and many displaced in four separate attacks by armed groups between July 27 and August 19. Reportedly, local farmers were not able to access their farmland due to fighting in the area.

In Amadi state, tensions between farmers and pastoralists intensified at the end of September, when the movement of cattle destroyed the lands of 38 farms during migration. Pastoralists reportedly disregarded government instructions to leave the state within a period of 21 days. lvo

SOUTH SUDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SSOA, SS-UF 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 of President Salva Kiir, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. The government acted predominantly through police, National Security Service (NSS), and the military (SPLA). On March 1, the nine most active opposition groups formed the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA). The alliance comprised, for example, People's Democratic Movement (PDM), National Salvation Front (NAS), Federal Democratic Party (FDP), South Sudan Patriotic Movement (SSPM), and National Democratic Movement (NDM).

The conflict was marked by peace talks, resulting in the peace agreement signed by President Kiir and Riek Machar, leader of the militant opposition faction SPLM/A-IO, on September 12 [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)]. On September 28, the SSOA also signed the final peace agreement. On January 2, the mediating Troika comprising of the US, the UK, and Norway, had called on all armed factions to end their military operations

and had threatened to impose sanctions on violating parties. Consequently, no violence between opposition groups, except SPLM/A-IO, and the government was reported throughout the year. On July 1, civil society and women representatives had been allowed to take part in the peace talks after initially being excluded. Still, some SSOA members such as NAS and PDM rejected the final version of the peace agreement and on November 28, a PDM leader called for the renegotiation of the peace deal, criticizing that it would not include the people of South Sudan.

Throughout the year, NSS reportedly pressured opposition groups in various ways. For example, on February 1, the head of the media sector of the UNHCR-backed National Dialogue Committee claimed the NSS was obstructing the initiative's media coverage.

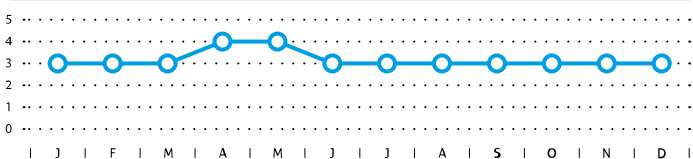
On July 28, NSS arrested Peter Biar Ajak, leader of South Sudan Youth Leaders Forum, who had been critical of the peace process, demanding that both Kiir and Machar should resign to "allow a new generation to lead". No reasons were given for his arrest, which had caused international criticism. On October 19, NSS personnel disrupted leadership elections held by a civil society group in the town of Bor, Jonglei state, and detained 20 people.

On April 9, ex-army chief Paul Malong, who had been dismissed in 2017 and put under house arrest for several months, formed the new opposition group South Sudan United Front (SS-UF). Malong announced that SS-UF would participate in the peace talks. The mediators however rejected its application, seeing as Malong was on both US and UN sanctions lists. SSOA also declined to accept SS-UF as a member. On October 2, SS-UF reportedly dismissed Malong as leader and declared to stop violence and support the peace agreement. lvo

SOUTH SUDAN (SPLM/A-IO)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-IO vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between the armed opposition faction Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) on the one hand, and the government of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), supported by Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the armed group Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on the other hand, de-escalated to a limited war.

On March 15, the UNSC extended the UNMISS mandate until March 2019. On September 2, President Salva Kiir issued a decree to formally change the army's name from SPLA to South Sudanese People's Defence Forces (SSPDF).

In 2018, the conflict was marked by peace talks between President Kiir, leader of SPLM, and former vice president Riek Machar, leader of SPLM/A-IO, which culminated in the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on September 12. Also main opposition groups and militias, forming the South Sudan Opposition Alliance, majoritarily signed the peace deal [→ South Sudan (opposition)]. The agreement, mediated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), was the renewed version of a deal reached in 2015. A troika of the US, UK, and Norway were involved in the 2018 mediation as well, but was excluded from the final negotiations and therefore declined to co-sign the agreement. The peace deal agreed on the reinstatement of Machar as First Vice President and on the establishment of a transitional government in May 2019. Subsequently, Machar was allowed to return from his South African exile at the end of October. On September 27, in line with the obligations of the peace agreement, Kiir ordered the release of all prisoners of war and detainees. Kiir and Machar jointly attended peace celebrations in the capital Juba on October 31, together with the presidents of Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, and Ethiopia, as well as Egypt's prime minister.

The peace agreement formally ended the conflict which, according to a report published by the University of London in September 2018, had led to around 400,000 deaths as well as to the displacement of approx. 2 million IDPs and a further 2.5 million refugees. However, violence reportedly continued throughout the country in 2018, both during the peace negotiations as well as following the deal. Until the signing of the peace agreement on September 12, at least 405 people had been killed in clashes between SPLA and SPLM/A-IO. After the agreement, conflict-related violence continued to take place in the former states of Unity, Central Equatoria, and Western Bahr el Ghazal until the end of the year and left at least 27 people dead.

Former Unity state, now comprising the states of Ruweng, Northern Liech, and Southern Liech, was especially affected by clashes. According to a UNMISS report, SPLA and associated forces started to clash frequently with SPLM/A-IO in Southern Unity from late February onwards. In consequence, the government conducted a military operation to take control of the counties Koch, Leer, and Mayendit, in the border region between Northern and Southern Liech. UN stated that the intention of this military operation was not only to drive SPLM/A-IO out of the area, but also 'to forcefully displace civilians, prevent their return and control these areas, removing support for opposition forces'. SPLA violence against civilians escalated between April 16 and May 24. In this period, SPLA and associate forces attacked more than 40 villages, killed 232 civilians, and raped 120 girls and women. Subsequently, around 31,500 civilians fled the area. According to UN, the SPLA acts may amount to war crimes. Even though clashes in former Unity decreased in number after May, they nevertheless took place on a monthly basis until October. For instance on July 3, SPLM/A-IO and SPLA forces clashed in Gadur and Naya-giny areas, close to Leer. Reportedly, three SPLM/A-IO members were killed, while 'heavy casualties' were reported for the government's side. On September 24, SPLM/A-IO reported that government forces had attacked their positions in Koch, Mirmir, and Ngony in the border re-

gion between Northern and Southern Liech. However, the military stated that SPLM/A-IO had attacked them. On October 10, the government of Northern Liech accused SPLM/A-IO of attacking SPLA forces in Koch County, killing one SPLA soldier and wounding three. The spokesperson of SPLM/A-IO, however, denied knowledge of this incident. According to Doctors Without Borders, acts of organized sexual violence became more frequent in former Unity. For instance, between November 19 and 29, 125 girls and women were treated in a clinic in Bentiu, Northern Liech, for injuries caused by sexual violence and beating. The attacks took place on the way to a food distribution site in Bentiu and were reportedly carried out by men in both military uniforms and civilian clothing. In former Western Equatoria, now comprising Gbudwe and Maridi states, clashes between SPLM/A-IO and SPLA also affected civilians to a great extent, especially in the counties of Nagero and Tambura, both Gbudwe, between April and August. A report by UNMISS and OHCHR stated that in this period, SPLM/A-IO abducted nearly 900 people, among them 568 girls and women, to force them into sexual slavery or combat. 43 cases of rape were recorded, while 24,000 civilians were displaced from their homes. SPLM/A-IO attacked 28 villages and killed nine civilians in at least four separate incidents in Makpandu, Rimenze, and Bazumburu, all in Gbudwe. SPLA killed 14 civilians on May 20 in an offensive aimed at retaking Nagero from SPLM/A-IO.

In former Central Equatoria state, now comprising the states of Terekka, Jubek, and Yei River, clashes between SPLM/A-IO and SPLA took place on a weekly basis until October. At least 47 people were killed and thousands of civilians fled to neighboring Uganda. Particularly badly affected were Morobo county, Kajo-Keji county, and the area around Yei, all in Yei River. Moreover, SPLM/A-IO accused the government forces of abducting and mistreating civilians, raping women, raiding houses, and looting cattle in IDP areas in Morobo County and in Apidi area of Mugwo Payam, Yei river, around February 22. They reiterated this accusation on March 14. The government, in turn, repeatedly accused SPLM/A-IO of abducting civilians to forcefully recruit them. For instance, a government official claimed that during early June, the SPLM/A-IO abducted around 300 youths from both sides of the border with DR Congo, which SPLM/A-IO denied. After the signing of the peace agreement on September 12, SPLM/A-IO continued to report attacks by SPLA on their positions. For instance between September 11 and 14, SPLM/A-IO accused the government of repeatedly attacking its forces in Kendiri and Mangalotore. Allegedly, 15 SPLA soldiers were killed in subsequent clashes. However, SPLA did not comment on any of these reports.

In former Western Bahr el Ghazal, now comprising Lol and Wau state, at least 131 people were killed in clashes between SPLM/A-IO and SPLA that took place regularly until October. Wau state was especially affected. For instance, on June 23 and 24, SPLA attacked SPLM/A-IO positions in Bisellia, Bag-gari, and Ngo-halima. The next day, SPLM/A-IO retook these areas in a counter-attack. SPLM/A-IO claimed that 76 government soldiers and 18 SPLM/A-IO fighters were killed in the fighting. One day later, SPLM/A-IO claimed that SPLA and JEM jointly attacked SPLM/A-IO forces stationed at Omboro, close to Wau city. The government denied this, stating that "there is no fighting because peace talks are ongoing" and moreover

strongly denied any cooperation with JEM.

In former Jonglei, now comprising the states of Western Bieh, Eastern Bieh, Jonglei, and Boma, clashes also continually took place until June. For instance, in April, SPLM/A-IO and SPLA clashed five times in Uror county, Eastern Bieh, especially fighting over the areas Motot, Motdit, and Pieri, killing at least 11 civilians.

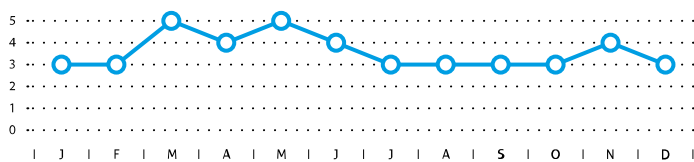
In former Upper Nile, especially Latjoor state was affected by conflict-related violence. Heavy fighting for instance occurred around Nasir town on February 12, which left 22 civilians killed and 72 people injured, and between March 21 and 25, when SPLM/A-IO and SPLA fought over the control of Nasir town. On May 5, SPLM/A-IO and SPLA clashed in the strategic town of Pagak as well as in several villages of Maiwut county, Latjoor, accusing each other of attacking first. SPLM/A-IO claimed to have killed 81 government soldiers in total, while reporting the death of three killed SPLM/A-IO fighters. mag, fyk

SUDAN (DARFUR)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: SLM-AW, SLM-MM, SLM-TC, JEM vs. government, RSF

Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources



The war over subnational predominance and resources between various ethnic African armed groups, organized under the alliance Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), on the one hand, and the Arab-affiliated Sudanese government, the Sudanese military, and government-backed ethnic Arab paramilitary groups, on the other hand, continued in its 15th consecutive year on war-level.

The armed groups of SRF mainly come from ethnic African tribes, who constitute the majority of Darfur's population. The SRF has been fighting the government since 2003, accusing it of oppressing the African population in Darfur region and of affiliating with Arab armed groups. The SRF comprised the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and its two main factions which are led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) and by Minni Minnawie (SLM-MM), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), as well as the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), primarily active in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. In July, the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council (SLM-TC) officially joined the SRF. The government of the Sudan mainly acted through the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Sudanese Air Force, as well as paramilitary forces, namely the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), and the Border Guards. Fighters of these paramilitary forces were, inter alia, recruited among the Janjaweed, a group of nomadic Arab fighters.

The AU and UN joint/hybrid peacekeeping mission UNAMID,

implemented in 2007, continued to operate in Darfur region in 2018. During the year, however, UNAMID entered the second phase of its reconfiguration which had started in 2017 and which included the reduction of military and police personnel by more than a half. Subsequently, UNAMID was largely absent in the hot spot region of Jebel Marra, making battle reports difficult to verify. Part of the mission's reconfiguration process in 2018 was also the handing over of UNAMID sites in Darfur to the government.

Throughout the year, the conflict parties did not agree on a permanent ceasefire but regularly extended temporary cessations of hostilities. President Omar al-Bashir renewed a 2017 unilateral ceasefire for Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan three times in 2018, extending it until the end of the year. Similarly, the militant movements JEM, SLM-MM, and SLM-TC extended the unilateral cessation of hostilities several times, last time until February 2019.

Following heavy rainfalls and landslides in the region of Jebel Marra in September, also SLM-AW declared a three-month unilateral cessation of hostilities until December 18, allowing humanitarian aid to access affected areas.

Throughout the year, fighting took place intermittently between government forces, backed by RSF, and SLM-AW, the only armed opposition group involved in recent fighting. These clashes were largely limited to Jebel Marra, a mountain range spanning over the three states of South, North, and Central Darfur. In some instances, violence spilled to other Darfuri areas.

Despite the cessations of hostilities, violence intensified with the beginning of dry season in March, when the army and its allied paramilitaries reportedly started the attempt to eliminate the last strongholds of SLM-AW in Jebel Marra. The government forces and particularly RSF, however, not only attacked SLM-AW but also and to a large extend civilians, raiding and burning villages and displacing at least 100,000 civilians throughout the year. For instance, from March 10 to 11, SLM-AW attacked a military camp in Jawa and ambushed a military convoy in Deribat, East Jebel Marra, South Darfur state. Eight fighters of both sides were killed and several others injured, including three civilians. On March 30, government troops launched an attack on presumed SLM-AW strongholds in Sawani and Rokona in East Jebel Marra and destroyed eleven villages. The Darfur Displaced and Refugees Association estimated that about 50,000 people were forced to take refuge in nearby mountain caves. The following day, members of the paramilitary RSF and other militias arrived in several villages in Sawani with more than 18 vehicles and 50 motorcycles and raided and burned the villages. At least eleven civilians were killed and 21 injured. Tension increased again in mid-April, when SLM-AW attacked government forces in Torong Tura, Jebel Marra, on April 18, proclaiming to have killed 27 soldiers. In retaliation for the attack, government forces torched houses and property in the villages which forced hundreds of villagers to flee. On April 20 and 21, RSF assaulted and burned 13 villages in Jaldo, northern Jebel Marra, displacing about 30,000 people. Clashes between army, backed by RSF, and SLM-AW erupted on May 18 in Kass, South Darfur, after the Sudanese army had mobilized more than 1,500 troops for launching an attack on SLM-AW bases. Two civilians and an unknown number of fighters were killed, and thousands of people displaced. From May 23 to

24, both parties clashed in Kara Gobo, Jebel Marra, forcing a large number of citizens to leave their villages. SLM-AW claimed to have killed 37 soldiers and to have seized vehicles and weapons. Renewed clashes three days later in Kass, South Darfur, occurred after government militias attacked the sites of SLM-AW. Reports of the group stated that 27 army forces were killed, and more than 3,000 civilians were forced to flee. On June 12, government forces shelled suspected SLM-AW sites in the areas of Golol, Badia, Jebel Kali, and Kuja in western Jebel Marra, Fuju in central Jebel Marra, and Jariya area in southern Jebel Marra with artillery. This led to several days of fighting, reportedly leaving nine civilians dead and twelve injured. While a UNAMID report stated that at least 16 soldiers and three SLM-AW fighters were killed, the SLM-AW itself claimed to have killed 89 soldiers. Moreover, they accused army and militias of burning six villages in south Jebel Marra, including Saboun El Fagor, Koya, Tara, Tringel, and Jonglei, and of raping six girls. The attacks forced at least 7,000 people to flee their villages. On July 19, SLM-AW ambushed government forces near Golo in Jebel Marra by attacking a convoy of armed troops and RSF members. Four soldiers were killed, ten wounded and large quantities of weapons seized. On July 27, the army launched an attack on a militant site in the area of Barfara, East Jebel Marra, which was repulsed by SLM-AW. According to SLM-AW, eleven soldiers were killed. From September 16 to 18, heavy clashes between RSF and SLM-AW took place in Gubbo area of southern Jebel Marra, reportedly leaving 16 RSF soldiers and six SLM-AW dead and 37 RSF soldiers and five SLM-AW fighters injured. According to reports by IDPs, ten civilians had been killed in the clashes as well. On October 14, heavy military shelling by government forces targeted the area around Wadi Tremel village in southern Jebel Marra, which was under the control of the SLM-AW. Reportedly, two civilians were killed and three injured. On November 12, RSF forces attacked the weekly market in Deribat, East Jebel Marra, killing six civilians and injuring dozens. On November 23, SLM-AW clashed with RSF forces in Feina area of Jebel Marra. The armed group stated to have killed 18 members of the RSF.

Throughout the year, the army and government-controlled militias, especially RSF, frequently attacked IDPs. The paramilitaries regularly raided camps for displaced, robbed persons of their belongings, and injured or killed them. For instance, on January 19, militiamen attacked and injured seven women from a displaced camp in Zalingei locality, Central Darfur state, reportedly raping two of them. The same day, a group of militiamen raided the Hasahisa IDP camp in the same locality, injuring at least four people and causing large protests against insecurity by IDPs from Hasahisa. Militiamen and security forces responded with violence, killing five of the protesters and injuring 44. From May 22 to 23, RSF militiamen allegedly attacked Aradeiba camp in Garsila, Central Darfur, killing three IDPs and injuring 17 others. In the beginning of June, militiamen attacked civilians, including IDPs, several times in Gireida locality, South Darfur, leaving at least seven people dead and 15 injured. Moreover, several cases were reported in which IDPs were forcefully prevented from returning to their villages by militiamen and new settlers. For example, backed by Border Guards, new settlers cut about 2,000 trees in Kutum, North Darfur, in the beginning of June. The new settlers thereby allegedly tried to prevent the dis-

placed people from returning to their land.

Over the course of the year, several attempts were made to bring forward a peace process in Darfur. On April 16, leaders of JEM and SLM-MM and a delegation of the Sudanese government conducted informal consultations in Berlin on invitation of the German government. Nevertheless, the negotiations failed after two days and the government of Sudan on the one hand and the Darfur movements on the other hands blamed each other for the failure. On June 28, consultations concerning the peace negotiations for Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan took place between Sudanese opposition leaders, the German Foreign Ministry, and the Berghof Foundation in Berlin, but ended with no concrete results. During the meetings of the Leadership Council of the SRF in Paris from October 27 to 29, the SRF renewed its commitment to a comprehensive political solution. Following a two-day meeting in Berlin from December 6 to 7 under international auspices, the Sudan government, SLM-MM, and JEM signed a pre-negotiation agreement and thus agreed on resuming negotiations. svb

SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: Misseriya vs. Rizeigat vs. Zaghawa vs. Fellata vs. Ma'aliya vs. Salamat et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The limited war over subnational predominance and scarce resources such as cattle and pastureland between various cattle-herding pastoral tribes de-escalated to a violent crisis. In 2017, the government had started a disarmament campaign, including the establishment of buffer zones in conflict hotspots, the rapid deployment of security forces, and an extended involvement of local administrations. Subsequently, the number of inter-communal clashes decreased significantly.

Violence continued to be concentrated in the regions of Darfur and Kordofan, where various armed groups were active throughout the year [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North)]. In July and September, respectively, the governors of West Darfur state and South Darfur state announced another state-wide disarmament campaign. In early November, the National Disarmament Committee announced that the second phase of the national disarmament campaign would begin in the following weeks.

In East Darfur, a joint mechanism between the tribes of Ma'aliya and Rizeigat was established on January 7. It replaced a buffer zone committee that had been organized in 2017, and aimed at regulating farming activities. On November 27, both tribes signed a peace accord in Khartoum, Sudan. In Shearia, East Darfur, representatives of Birgid and Zaghawa peoples signed a peace agreement on January 23. On July 7, a peace conference between Fulani and Massalit people started in Bulbul Tumbisco, South Darfur. On July 11, both parties signed a peace accord.

Inter-communal clashes took place throughout the year. For

instance, in Milaibiday, West Darfur, Zaghawa herders from Chad attacked and killed nine Misseriya tribesmen on February 12 and stole their cattle. On April 8, members of Awlad Zaid and Zaghawa clashed over livestock theft in Kirkir area, West Darfur, leaving two people dead. On both occasions, the Sudan-Chad Joint Forces intervened and established a buffer zone between the groups. Members of Beni Halba tribe clashed with Zaghawa people in Kurti, Northern state, on June 17, leaving 10 people injured. On July 25, Fulani and Salamat tribespeople clashed in the villages Nadeif and Dangol, West Darfur, leaving six people dead. Throughout February, three separate clashes in El Dibab locality, West Kordofan, between South Sudanese Dinka and Misseriya, left more than 46 people dead. In total, the two parties stole around 10,000 cattle from one another. Between June 12 and 16, intra-tribal fighting between members of Kenana tribe in the villages El Jangur and Fatatat, South Kordofan, left two people dead and 43 injured. Police forces intervened and detained several fighters. Displaced farmers and villagers clashed over arable land in Dëshisha village, South Darfur, on June 16, leaving 17 people injured. In El Hamra, El-Gadarif state, violence between Hausa and El Jawamis El Lahaween erupted, after livestock belonging to the latter had trespassed on Hausa farmland. At least 11 people were killed, dozens injured, and 13 tractors were torched. On September 8, fighting following dispute between Hausa and Rufaa in El Dindir, Sennar state, left two people dead and 12 injured. Police forces and the local administration intervened. jow

SUDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: National Consensus Forum, Sudan Call Forces vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and the government of the National Congress Party (NCP), led by President Omar al-Bashir, continued.

The opposition comprised the Popular Congress Party (PCP), the National Consensus Forces (NCF), and the Sudan Call Forces, which comprised the National Umma Party (NUP), the Sudanese Congress Party (SCoP), as well as other anti-government groups and militias.

Following President al-Bashir's decision to raise the exchange rate of the Sudanese Pound to the US Dollar in December 2017, the price for basic commodities doubled and tripled in the beginning of 2018. In response to austerity measures and the sharp price increases, mass protests took place in many major cities throughout the year and were frequently dispersed by police and the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

For instance, during a protest on January 7, demonstrators allegedly set fire to the local NCP headquarters and subsequently clashed with government forces in Geneina, West Darfur state. One student was killed, at least eight people were injured, and dozens arrested. The same day, police violently dispersed a student demonstration at the University

of Khartoum, Khartoum state, using tear gas, injuring an unknown number of students and detaining dozens. Between January 16 and 19, police and security services used tear gas, batons, and rubber bullets, when thousands of people demonstrated against the price increases in Khartoum and Omdurman, Khartoum. Some protesters were injured and hundreds detained. On May 8, the University of Sudan for Science and Technology in Khartoum dismissed 1,500 students who had previously been involved in protests. On May 18, the dead body of a student leader was reportedly found with marks of torture in Khartoum.

At the University of El Gezira, Gezira state, a group of opposition-affiliated students clashed with NCP-affiliated students on October 6 and 7. NISS dispersed the protests, using batons and tear gas, injuring six people and arresting several. The same day, the court in Wad Madini, Gezira, sentenced two students to fines and flogging. As a reaction, students allegedly set fire to university facilities the next day, which led to the arrest of more than a hundred students. Students from the University of El Nilein, Khartoum, gathered to express their solidarity on October 15 and 25. NISS violently dispersed the gatherings, injuring several protesters and detaining dozens.

Tensions intensified from December 19 with mass demonstrations in Atbara, River Nile state, in response to another rise in food and fuel prices. Protests spread to other cities in El-Gadarif, Gezira, Red Sea state, North Kordofan state, Sennar state, White Nile state, and Khartoum. Police forces used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse the demonstrations, killing nine people and injuring dozens on December 19 and 20. The protesters broadened their demand, soon requesting the overthrow of the government. State of Emergency was declared in Gadarif and River Nile on December 19.

On December 31, the demonstrations throughout the Sudan were still ongoing. Reports about the total number of casualties were contradictory. While Amnesty International stated that 37 people had been killed by government forces, opposition groups claimed that 45 people were dead and more than 1,000 injured since the outbreak of the protest on December 19. The government stated that 19 people had been killed and 219 injured.

NISS detained several journalists who covered the anti-government protests. Entire print-runs of newspapers with reports on the crackdown of protests were prevented from being distributed or were confiscated without justification.

On August 9, the NCP re-nominated Al-Bashir as their candidate for the 2020 election. On December 5, 33 parties affiliated to the NCP called for an amendment of the Sudan Constitution, which would allow Al-Bashir to run for a third presidential term. svb

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

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-North-Agar vs. SPLM/A-North-al-Hilu vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over autonomy and resources such as arable land and oil between the banned opposition group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM/A-N) and the government of President Omar al-Bashir continued.

SPLM/A-N continued to operate in the so-called Two Areas, comprising the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The SPLM/A-N remained split into two factions, one led by Malik Agar and the other led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu. The conflict had de-escalated significantly in 2017 due to peace negotiations between the conflict parties as well as the split of SPLM/A-N into the two factions.

On January 4, the government extended its unilateral ceasefire with the SPLM/A-N for three months. On January 30, SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu also declared a unilateral cessation of hostilities. Both parties repeatedly extended their respective unilateral ceasefires throughout the year.

On February 12, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) arrested nine student members of SPLM/A-N-Agar. On February 18, fights between both SPLM/A-N factions took place in Blue Nile, destroying a tank and two vehicles. According to SPLM/A-N-Agar, the government attacked their positions on April 23 and April 28 in Blue Nile state, which left eight government soldiers dead, four SPLM/A-N-Agar soldiers injured and displaced several civilians. On December 9, five government soldiers and two SPLM/A-N-Agar fighters were killed in an attack on the latter's positions in Blue Nile.

On January 11, the government announced the resumption of the peace talks with SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu at the beginning of February in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, but rejected their demand for autonomy. Agar's faction did not attend, arguing that the approach taken would not achieve a sustainable solution. The government and SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu failed to reach an agreement on February 4 and adjourned the negotiations. The government blamed SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu for the failure, stating that it had not been possible to reach an agreement on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and aid.

Between October 19 and 30, several meetings took place between representatives of the government and SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu in Addis Ababa, and Johannesburg, South Africa, but both sides were unable to agree on resuming the peace talks.

On November 3, the government agreed to the proposal of SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu to appoint the South Sudanese President Salva Kiir as a mediator. The initiative was welcomed by SPLM/A-N-Agar a day later. SPLM/A-N-Agar and SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu separately met with AU representatives in Addis Ababa on November 17 and November 26, respectively, to discuss ways to end the conflict.

On December 8, a committee was formed by Kiir to reunite both SPLM/A-N factions. coc

SUDAN, SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Ngok Dinka vs. Misseriya

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources between the Ngok Dinka people and the nomadic Arabic Misseriya tribe in the border region Abyei continued. UNISFA has administered the area since 2011. Although fewer violent incidents were reported in comparison to the preceding year, the safety situation remained uncertain, as Abyei's status remained unresolved. Therefore, the UNISFA mandate was extended twice in 2018 until 15/05/2019.

In December 2017, local residents, primarily Ngok Dinka, had started to protest UNISFA's alleged practice of hiring mainly foreign workers instead of locals. Moreover, they claimed that UNISFA was favouring the Misseriya with their road renovations. On January 23, the protests peaked with almost 2,000 people demonstrating in front of UNISFA headquarters in Abyei town. On February 11, protesters blocked all headquarter exits for 60 hours. Four days later, on February 15, UNISFA responded to the demonstrations by temporarily relocating the chief engineer who had been in charge of the recruiting process for road construction workers.

Representatives of Ngok Dinka and Misseriya met at a pre-migration conference held in Abyei in the beginning of March. The Misseriya pastoralists roam between South Kordofan in Sudan and Unity State in South Sudan, following the rainy seasons. Supported by the International Organisation for Migration, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, and UNISFA, the conference was attended by more than 150 people from both communities. As a result, the representatives of Ngok Dinka and Misseriya signed a peace agreement on March 5, committing to support the peaceful coexistence of both groups. Against the backdrop of these developments, fighting decreased notably. Also, the annual migration of the nomadic Misseriya through Abyei proceeded mostly peacefully.

The Amiet common market, established by the UNISFA in 2016 in order to facilitate trade and dialogue between the two groups, continued to grow as an economic hub of Abyei. However, due to the influx of people wanting to trade at the market, also from other parts of Sudan and South Sudan as well as from neighboring countries, violent clashes between Ngok Dinka, Misseriya, and other groups around Amiet market continued to occur.

On June 27, two Ngok Dinka were shot dead by unidentified assailants, believed to be Misseriya, in Wut Amath. In an alleged retaliatory act, nine armed men attacked a group of Misseriya returning from the market along the Todach-Goli road on July 11. One person was killed and three injured. On July 15, one Ngok Dinka was shot dead at Dungop by armed men, allegedly Misseriya.

On November 15, UNSC decided to increase UNISFA police personnel from 50 to 345, and decreased the troops from 4,500 to 4,140. Moreover, the UNSC urged the governments

of Sudan and South Sudan to make progress regarding the status of Abyei, utilize and strengthen existing joint administration mechanisms, and establish joint police forces. mta

TANZANIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1993

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

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the two main opposition parties, Party for Democracy and Progress (CHADEMA) and Civic United Front (CUF), on the one hand, and the government led by Party of the Revolution (CCM), on the other continued. Tensions intensified in the capital Dar es Salaam, eponymous region, within the first three months of the year. On February 12, a group of men associated with CCM attacked and killed a local leader of CHADEMA in Hananasif, Dar es Salaam. On February 16, police used tear gas during a CHADEMA protest in Dar es Salaam, injuring four people. One student sitting in a bus nearby was fatally hit by a stray police bullet. During the night of February 22, a group of men armed with machetes attacked and killed a CHADEMA official in Namwawala ward, Morogoro region. On March 27, police arrested the chairman of CHADEMA as well as five other officials for having attended anti-government protests on February 16. On April 26, the leader of the CHADEMA Women's Wing for Kisutu District, Dar es Salaam, was arrested by police forces for organizing anti-government protests. Moreover, 20 members of CHADEMA, including one member of parliament, were arrested on July 14 in Tunduma, Mbeya region. On August 12, supporters of CHADEMA and CCM clashed in the city of Arusha, eponymous region, amidst by-elections for vacant parliament and ward councillor seats. ebe

UGANDA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: FDC, DP, UPC, Jeema vs. government
Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between various opposition parties, such as the main opposition party, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), as well as the Democratic Party (DP), Uganda People's Congress (UPC), and Justice Forum Party (Jeema) on the one hand, and the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) on the other.

From January to May, the conflict was mainly shaped by the aftermath of the so-called Age Limit Bill which was signed into law by President Yoweri Museveni on January 2. The bill amended the constitution and allowed Museveni, who has been in office since 1986, to run for a fifth term in 2021. Further, it extended the terms of office for MPs from five to seven years. On January 19, six MPs belonging to the opposition filed a petition with the Constitutional Court seeking to an-

nul of the bill. From April 9 to 19, the petitioners' hearing was held at the Constitutional Court in Mbale, Eastern Region. The event was accompanied by demonstrations. After the Judiciary had moved the court hearing from the capital Kampala to Mbale, petitioners and members of the opposition criticized that they may not be able to attend due to capacity issues. On July 26, the Constitutional Court approved removing the presidential age limit of 75 years.

On June 6, NRM MP Ibrahim Abiriga and his brother were shot in Kawanda, Central Region. Museveni stated that there was a high probability of a political assassination. One week later, opposition MP Betty Nambooze was arrested in Mukono, Central Region, in conjunction with the murder.

Museveni accused MP and musician Robert Kyagulanyi, alias Bobi Wine, of throwing stones at his motorcade during a by-election campaign in Arua, Northern Region, on August 13. In response, the police killed Kyagulanyi's bodyguard and injured six people. The following day, in relation to the incident, police arrested dozens of opposition supporters for treason in Arua, among them Kyagulanyi, MP Francis Zaake and election candidate Kassiano Wadri. On August 31, after his release on bail, Kyagulanyi traveled to the United States for medical treatment. He claimed to have been tortured in prison. On September 20, Kyagulanyi returned from the US.

On December 12, Museveni met with leaders of the opposition parties DP, UPC, and Jeema at the Inter Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) near the capital. The FDC, the biggest opposition party, refused to participate citing a lack of right to associate and doubting the effectiveness of electoral adaptations. On December 18, Museveni launched a national dialogue process, inviting opposition and civil society groups such as IPOD, the Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy, and the Women Situation Room to discuss the country's political and societal state, pan-Africanism and regional responsibilities.

jos

ZIMBABWE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: MDC Alliance, MDC-T vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and ideology between the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), on one hand, and the opposition coalition around the Movement of Democratic Change Alliance (MDC) on the other hand, continued.

The conflict was mainly characterized by this year's presidential and parliamentary elections, which took place on July 30. ZANU-PF's Emmerson Mnangagwa was confirmed in office, which he has held since the coup against former president Robert Mugabe in November 2017.

Before and during the elections, several clashes and cases of intimidation were reported. For instance, on January 2, ZANU-PF supporters attacked the MDC headquarters in Harare, eponymous Province, firing guns and throwing petrol bombs. As a result, several security officers were injured and furniture and equipment was destroyed. On April 21, a ZANU-PF official

composed a list of MDC members, who had attended a MDC rally in Bikita on April 13, and threatened them with assault and the withdrawal of food aid. Two days later, an explosion during a ZANU-PF rally attended by President Mnangagwa in White City Stadium, Bulawayo Province, left at least 49 people injured. The responsibility remained unclear. On April 29, a MDC member and a soldier assaulted the local ZANU-PF chairman in Bikita, Masvingo Province, accusing him of forcing people to vote for his preferred candidate in the ZANU-PF primary elections.

Human rights groups and the opposition criticized irregularities during the elections, addressing the relocation of several ballot boxes, the removal of electoral rolls, and cases of voter intimidation. On August 1, soldiers and police used tear gas and guns to disperse opposition protests in Harare, killing six people and injuring 35. On the following day, the police arrested 25 protesters based on allegations of public violence.

On August 8, police arrested a MDC leader on the border to Zambia for organizing the opposition protest. On August 10, the MDC officially challenged the election results, which was overruled by the Constitutional Court, but led to the postponement of the president's inauguration. On August 26, Emmerson Mnangagwa was sworn in as president.

Furthermore, several intra-party clashes took place, both within ZANU-PF and between different factions of the MDC-Tsvangirai, the main opposition party in the MDC Alliance. The latter were caused by the death of the party's leader Morgan Tsvangirai on February 14. For instance, on January 2 in Harare, ZANU-PF members assaulted other members, accusing them of dividing up land between factional lines. They threw petrol bombs at a members' house, injuring two people. On May 27, during MDC primary elections, two MDC members started a fistfight, causing the termination of the ongoing by-elections in Mkwini Ward Centre, Manicaland Province. mab

the Americas

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE AMERICAS IN 2018 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Counting a total of 57, the number of conflicts in Americas region remained constant in comparison to the year before. However, in 2018, 36 conflicts were fought violently, which marks a decrease of three compared to 2017. The only war in the Americas region continued [→ Mexico (drug cartels)], while HIIK observed five limited wars – one less than in 2017.

In Brazil, the limited war between several drug trafficking organizations and security forces continued [→ Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)]. Especially the favelas of Rio de Janeiro continued to be a hotspot of violence. Former president Michel Temer decided to intervene in the state of Rio de Janeiro, deploying 10,000 federal and military agents to the state. In Colombia, the demobilization of the FARC intensified the conflict between several armed groups over subnational predominance and the control of illicit economies [→ Colombia (ELN); Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels); Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. The formation of several armed FARC dissident groups, separating themselves from the peace process outlined in the 2016 agreement, intensified regional turf wars in 2018 [→ Colombia (left-wing militants, FARC dissidents)]. The civilian population continued to be highly affected by this violence, with several social and humanitarian organizations expressing their concerns about the lack of security for community leaders and human rights activists. According to data provided by OCHA, the number of displaced people in Colombia increased by 94 percent in comparison to 2017. Moreover, at least 68 civilians were injured in accidents with landmines or unexploded ordnance. The newly elected government of President Ivan Duque tightened the conditions for continued peace negotiations with the ELN, demanding a unilateral permanent ceasefire from ELN [→ Colombia (ELN)].

In Mexico, the government continued its strategy to target drug cartels' leading figures, contributing to increased fragmentation of cartels and heavy fights over local predominance [→ Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)]. Thus, America's only war between drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the Mexican government continued [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Mexico's homicide rate hit a new high in 2018, making it the deadliest year on record. However, in El Salvador, the National Civil Police registered 3,340 homicides in 2018, marking the lowest figure since the 2012 gang truce. The government declared the decline to be a result of their repressive measures against gang members, holding gang violence mainly responsible for the high murder rates of the country [→ El Salvador (Maras)]. In Paraguay, the People's Army of Paraguay (EPP) continued to carry out attacks on agricultural sites and kidnappings throughout the year [→ Paraguay (EPP, agrarian movements)].

In several American countries, opposition conflicts were conducted violently. For instance, in Venezuela, the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis deepened [→ Venezuela (opposition)]. On May 20, the National Electoral Council declared Nicolás Maduro winner of the Presidential Election, obtaining 67 percent of the vote. During a Bolivarian National Guard parade on August, two drones carrying C4-explosives blew up close to Maduro and state officials, wounding seven soldiers. As of November, approx. 37,000 Venezuelans crossed into Colombia per day, totaling more than one million since May 2017. In Nicaragua, the conflict between opposition groups and the government escalated to a limited war as clashes between protesters and security forces as well as paramilitary groups left up to 448 people dead and approx. 2,830 injured. Protests started in April, demanding President Ortega's resignation and the cancellation of the new social security reforms. By the end of 2018, the protests had become the largest since the end of the Nicaraguan Revolution in the 1970s [→ Nicaragua (opposition)]. Violent protests against the presidential results in Honduras continued, as opposition groups accused the government of electoral fraud and contested President Juan Orlando Hernández' narrow win. The death toll rose to over 40. Throughout the year, the pressure on journalists, bloggers, and activists intensified and at least two students were found dead. In rural regions, such as the Atlántida department, protests against government-supported energy projects continued, leaving at least two activists dead [→ Honduras (opposition)]. In Bolivia, opposition parties demonstrated against the government of President Evo Morales. The groups organized a nationwide demonstration to commemorate the results of the referendum of 2016, in some cases, the protests turned violent [→ Bolivia (socioeconomic protest)].

In the run-up of Mexico's presidential, state, and municipal elections, a series of unresolved killings, kidnappings, and threats against politicians took place [→ Mexico (opposition)]. Andrés Manuel López Obrador from the party National Regeneration Movement won the presidential elections and was inaugurated on December 1.

In Haiti, up to 100,000 people took to the streets to demonstrate against rising fuel prices and alleged fraud of the government. The protests turned violent and approx. 20 people were killed [→ Haiti (opposition)]. In the course of the year, the Dominican Republic responded to the violent protests in Haiti by reinforcing its border crossing with additional troops to prevent Haitians from fleeing to the Dominican Republic [→ Dominican Republic – Haiti].

In Guatemala, several farmers' associations as well as indigenous groups continued to call upon the government to halt resource exploitation and to protect indigenous rights [→ Guatemala (opposition)]. As in previous years, residents and activists violently protested against hydroelectric plants in the departments of Huehuetenango and Baja Verapaz. Tensions concerning the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) continued.

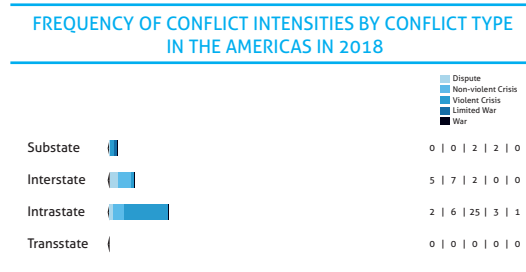
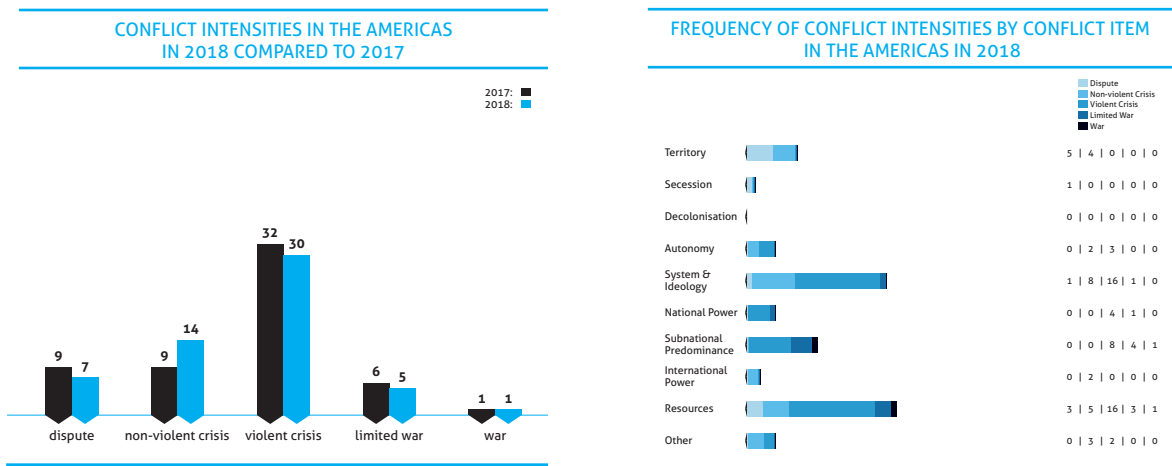
Conflicts between indigenous groups and environmental activists on one hand and security forces on the other remained active in the region. In Colombia, several indigenous groups clashed with police forces [→ Colombia (indigenous groups)]. In new developments, the Colombian government intervened after clashes between the indigenous communities Nasa and Misak over land rights in the Cauca department. The confrontations increased the tensions between government and the Nasa community. In Brazil, the conflict over the demarcation of indigenous territories, the enforcement of indigenous rights, and autonomy continued as a violent crisis. In several occasions, indigenous groups clashed with police and military police forces. After the elections, attacks in indigenous territories increased, leaving several indigenous people injured [→ Brazil (indigenous groups)]. In Nicaragua, killings and abductions of indigenous people in the RACCN region continued. According

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to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, intimidation and threats against human rights lawyers of the indigenous Miskito increased in 2018 [→ Nicaragua (indigenous)]. In Chile, the death of one Mapuche indigenous during a police operation sparked nationwide protests [→ Chile (Mapuche / Araucanía)] some of which turned violent. Moreover, numerous arson attacks were attributed to the Mapuche activists.

The conflict between Belize and Guatemala over more than half of the Belizean territory continued as a non-violent crisis. In accordance with the 2008 agreement with Belize, the Guatemalan voters agreed in a referendum to submit the territorial dispute to the International Court of Justice [→ Belize – Guatemala]. The dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands/Islands Malvinas continued as both countries renewed their claims of ownership [→ Argentina – United Kingdom (Falkland Islands / Islas Malvinas)].

In the United States of America, the violent conflict between various right-wing extremist groups and the government continued as members or affiliates of right-wing groups carried out mass shootings and attacks in 2018, leading to several casualties. Throughout the year, the Department of Justice filed at least 22 hate crime cases, with Jewish and Afro-American people being the most targeted groups [→ USA (right-wing extremists)].



Overview: Conflicts in the Americas in 2018

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	•	1
Belize – Guatemala*	Belize vs. Guatemala	territory	1981	•	2
Bolivia (socioeconomic protests)	various social groups 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	2008	•	4
Brazil (indigenous groups)	indigenous groups vs. government	autonomy, resources	1985	•	3
Brazil (MST, MTST)*	MST, MTST vs. government	resources	1996	•	3
Brazil (social protests) *	MPL et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	3
Chile (anarchist groups)*	anarchist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	3
Chile (Mapuches / Araucania)	Mapuches, CAM, WAM vs. government	autonomy, resources	2008	•	3
Chile (Rapa Nui / Easter Island)*	Rapa Nui vs. government	secession	2010	•	1
Chile (social movements)*	CONFECH, ACES, CONES vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
Chile – United Kingdom (Antarctica)*	Chile vs. United Kingdom	territory	2007	•	1
Colombia (artisanal miners / Antioquia)*	local miners, Mesa Minera vs. Gran Colombia Gold, government	resources	2017	↘	2
Colombia (ASCAMCAT / Catatumbo)*	ASCAMCAT vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	2013	↘	2
Colombia (Cumbre Agraria)*	Cumbre Agraria vs. government	system/ideology	2013	↗	2
Colombia (ELN)	ELN vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1964	↘	3
Colombia (FARC dissidents, left-wing militants)	FARC dissidents, EPL vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2017	•	3
Colombia (indigenous groups)	indigenous groups vs. government	resources	2005	•	3
Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)	AGC vs. Los Caparrapos vs. ELN vs. FARC dissidents vs. EPL	subnational predominance, resources	2013	•	4
Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)	drug cartels, neo-paramilitary groups vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1983	•	4
Colombia – Nicaragua (sea border)*	Colombia vs. Nicaragua	territory, resources	1825	•	2
Colombia – Venezuela (border security)*	Colombia vs. Venezuela	other	2015	•	2
Colombia – Venezuela (Monjes Islands)*	Colombia vs. Venezuela	territory, resources	1871	•	1
Cuba – USA (Guantanamo)*	Cuba vs. USA	territory	1959	•	1
Cuba – USA (system)*	Cuba vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1960	•	2
Dominican Republic (anti-corruption)*	Marcha Verde, social protest groups vs. government	system/ideology, other	2017	↘	2
Dominican Republic – Haiti	Dominican Republic vs. Haiti	other	2009	•	3
Ecuador (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1980	•	2
El Salvador (inter-gang rivalry)*	Barrio 18 vs. MS-13 vs. MS-503	subnational predominance	2003	•	3
El Salvador (Maras)	Barrio 18, MS-13 vs. government	subnational predominance	2003	↘	3
Guatemala (drug cartels)*	drug cartels vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2009	↗	3
Guatemala (opposition)	CODECA, CUC, indigenous groups et al. vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1985	•	3
Guyana – Venezuela*	Guyana vs. Venezuela	territory	2015	↗	2

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Haiti (opposition)	Fanmi Lavalas, Pitit Dessalines, anti-government protesters vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1986	•	3
Honduras (Bajo Aguán)*	MUCA, MARCA, farmers of Bajo Aguán vs. landowners	resources	2012	•	3
Honduras (drug trafficking organizations, organized crime)*	drug trafficking organizations, organized crime vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Honduras (opposition)	Libre, PAC, anti-government activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	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	•	2
Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)	CJNG et al. vs. CDS et al. vs. CDG et al. vs. Los Zetas 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
Mexico – USA (border security)*	Mexico vs. USA	other	2005	•	3
Nicaragua (indigenous groups)	Miskito groups, YATAMA vs. government	autonomy, resources	2015	•	3
Nicaragua (militant groups)*	FASN-EP, CGN, FDC 3-80 vs. government	system/ideology	2012	↓	1
Nicaragua (opposition)	opposition groups, anti-government protesters vs. paramilitary groups, government	system/ideology, national power	2008	↗	4
Paraguay (EPP, agrarian movements)	EPP, agrarian movements vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1989	•	3
Peru (opposition)	opposition movements vs. government	system/ideology, resources	2008	•	3
Peru (Shining Path)*	SL vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1980	•	3
USA (racial tensions)*	BLM, NBPP, local protesters vs. right-wing groups vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	2
USA (right-wing extremists)	right-wing extremists vs. government	system/ideology	1990	•	3
USA – Venezuela	USA vs. Venezuela	system/ideology, international power	2001	•	2
Venezuela (opposition)	opposition (MUD) vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1992	•	3

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

BOLIVIA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1983

Conflict parties: various social groups vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis between various social groups and the government of President Evo Morales over the orientation of the political system and resources such as coca farmland continued.

In 2017, the government had proposed a change in criminal law and planned an executive decree that would sanction doctor's malpractice and create a new national health

authority. From November 2017 onwards, medical staff, students, as well as the Colegio Medico de Bolivia (CMB) demonstrated mainly in urban regions, like La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, setting up roadblocks. On January 4, a woman allegedly died from the delayed effect of tear gas used by police one month earlier. On January 8, after 47 days of strike, an agreement was signed between the government and the CMB, revoking the contested articles and fully re-establishing health services. However, the government's prosecution of protesters led to mass demonstrations in the cities of La Paz, Tarija, Santa Cruz, Potosí, and Sucre. On January 11, more than 6,000 people gathered in the city of Cochabamba.

These protests merged with other protests against Morales' intention to run for another consecutive presidential term. In 2016, a referendum had rejected a constitutional modification in this regard. After a Supreme Court ruling in November

2017 had overruled its results, protests were staged on the second anniversary of the referendum in February 21, taking place in La Paz, Cochabamba, Trinidad, Santa Cruz, Sucre, Tarija and Oruro. Some protests resulted in injuries, for instance in La Paz, where police used tear gas while protesters used stones.

On May 24, one student was killed in a protest demanding financial support for the local public university (UPEA) in El Alto, La Paz. While the government and protesting students blamed one another for the violence, mass protests erupted all over the country and lasted until the end of June.

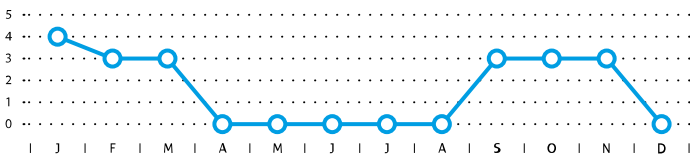
Violent confrontations between coca farmers and security forces took place over the regulation of coca farmland and production. For instance, on August 24, police conducted an operation in San Antonio, La Asunta to enforce farmland regulations, during which coca farmers killed a police officer. Five days later, clashes with security farmers in the same region left two coca farmers dead and a further injured. In response, more than 1,000 protesters demonstrated in La Paz on August 31. fgo

BRAZIL (DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: drug trafficking organizations, militias vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The limited war over subnational predominance between the main drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) Comando Vermelho (CV), Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), Amigos dos Amigos (ADA), and Família do Norte (FDN) as well as militias, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Río de Janeiro, capital of the eponymous state, remained the center of the violence. Nevertheless, in recent years the influence of Brazilian DTOs operating throughout the country increased. As a result, violent clashes in other parts of the country intensified, especially in the border regions to Colombia, Bolivia and Paraguay. During the year, numerous confrontations in Río de Janeiro between DTOs and security forces led to the death of more than 90 Military Police (PM) officers and at least 1,308 DTO members and civilians. For instance, on February 2, three alleged members of CV were killed during a PM operation in Goiânia, capital of Goiás state. On March 24, an armed confrontation between PM and DTO members left at least eight persons dead in the favela Rocinha, Río de Janeiro. Police forces seized a rifle, six pistols and two grenades. Three days earlier, on March 21, during a gunshot exchange in the same favela a PM officer and a civilian were killed.

On February 16, former President Michael Temer decreed the federal intervention with participation of Federal Security Forces in the autonomous state of Río de Janeiro due

to increasing security problems. The intervention ended on December 31, succeeding in the decrease of robberies, but leaving hundreds of persons dead during confrontations between security forces and DTO members. In the course of this intervention, on August 21, PM officers captured four DTO members and seized 60 kg of marijuana during an operation in the favela Do Jacaré, northern Río de Janeiro.

In the first four months of the year, police officers arrested several high-ranking DTO leaders and members such as the PCC leader for the bordering region with Paraguay, Elton Leonel Rumich da Silva, known as Embaixador, and the CV head of Morro do Borel, in Tijuca, northern Río de Janeiro, Severino Cícero de Lima. One PCC leader, Rovilho Alekis Barboza, known as Bilão, was arrested on April 30 during an operation in Ciudad del Este, capital of Alto Paraná, Paraguay. The Paraguayan government subsequently ordered the extradition of the detainee.

On January 1, a prison rebellion took place in the Prison Complex of Aparecida de Goiânia in the metropolitan region of Goiânia. The rebellion occurred as a result of the feud between rival DTO groups, and the invasion of restricted parts of the prison. The riot caused the deaths of nine prisoners whose bodies were chained and burned. 14 prisoners were injured and approx. 233 escaped, but 29 were recaptured on the same day and 127 returned to jail after the end of the rebellion. tci

BRAZIL (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: indigenous groups vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over autonomy and the demarcation of indigenous territories between various indigenous groups and the government continued. Over the course of the year, indigenous groups staged protests and blocked streets predominantly in the states of Pará, Paraná, and the Federal District (DF).

Several indigenous groups, namely the Guaranies, Kaingang, and Tupinikims, continued to urge the government to delimitate their lands and ensure their rights. Tensions rose when about 50 Kaingang indigenous began setting up camp in front of the Office of Infrastructure in Passo Fundo, Rio Grande do Sul state, on February 15. A military brigade consequently evicted them using rubber bullets, injuring at least 10 indigenous people. On April 26, about 2,000 indigenous people, among them 100 indigenous leaders, demonstrated peacefully for a week, and camped in the capital Brasília, DF.

On several occasions, indigenous people blocked roads, asking for more political participation and basic services. On May 22, some Potiguara indigenous people blocked an avenue in João Pessoa, capital of Paraíba state, after the government had prevented an elected Potiguara indigenous from starting his work in the Health Ministry in Paraíba. Furthermore, from July 2 to 4, Arara and Xipaia indigenous blocked the roadway Transamazonica (BR-230) between the municipalities Uruará and Medicilândia, in the southwest of Pará.

In November, after the election of President Jair Bolsonaro,

indigenous groups expressed their increasing concern over their rights and the future of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). During his campaign, Bolsonaro had announced his intention to shift FUNAI from the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice to either the Ministry of Agriculture or the newly created Ministry for Women, Family, and Human Rights. Since 1967, FUNAI handled demarcation of indigenous lands and oversaw other initiatives for indigenous communities such as health care, housing and language preservation. Therefore, on December 6, about 80 leaders of 40 different indigenous groups protested at a meeting of Bolsonaro's cabinet in front of the Bank of Brazil Cultural Center in Brasília. Two weeks later, several indigenous people blocked streets in Chopirinzinho and Mangeirinha, Paraná, demanding not to shift FUNAI to another ministry's jurisdiction.

In October and November, landowners attacked an indigenous reserve located in Dourados, Mato Grosso do Sul state, four times, using rubber bullets and torching houses, leaving more than 20 Kaiowá indigenous people injured.

cpn

CHILE (MAPUCHES / ARAUCANIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: Mapuches, CAM, WAM vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over resources and autonomy between the Mapuche indigenous people and their affiliated organizations on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued. The main Mapuche resistance groups, Weichan Auka Mapu (WAM) and the Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco (CAM), continued to confront the government over the property of ancestral Mapuche lands.

Tensions intensified in January when the pope visited the country. On January 17, in the lead up to the pope's visit, arson attacks were conducted on three churches located in the neighborhoods of Central Station and surrounding areas, Santiago Metropolitan Region. Pamphlets on the Mapuche cause and containing threats to the pope were found near one of the three churches. During his visit, the pope condemned the violence of the Mapuche and met with 11 representatives of the indigenous group.

In 2017, three members of the Mapuche community were absolved for the murder of Vivian Mackay and Werner Luchsinger. However, during the second process in 2018, the crime was reclassified as murder under the Anti-terrorist law. Subsequently, three Mapuches were sentenced guilty. This sparked further arson attacks and protests. On April 4, pamphlets demanding the release of the arrested Mapuches were found at the site of an arson attack that destroyed 16 trucks in the area of Vilcun, Araucania Region. On June 7, police intervened in a peaceful protest in support of the Mapuche convicts in Santiago de Chile, using water cannons. No casualties were reported.

The Chilean President Sebastian Piñera, who came into office in March, announced tougher measures in response to

the Mapuche violence. His intent to end the conflict through economic subventions to the Mapuche community earlier this year has proven unsuccessful so far. Instead, thousands marched against his plans on September 24, thereby supporting the Mapuche people. On October 14, a further protest took place. It eventually turned violent, leaving one person injured, according to official reports. In reaction to the shooting of a Mapuche during a police operation on November 14, numerous protests were staged all over the country. As a result, five police officers were injured and 39 people were arrested in Santiago de Chile.

cae

COLOMBIA (ELN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: ELN vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources

The limited war over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources between the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the government decreased to a violent crisis. In 2018, the number of conflict-related measures that included heavy weapons such as airstrikes remained low, partly due to unilateral ceasefires by ELN. Furthermore, the number of conflict-related deaths decreased by one, accounting for at least 55 killed people. For 2018, OCHA reported that 30,068 people were internally mass displaced due to the conflicts in Colombia, with the number of overall IDPs being significantly higher. At least six percent of these are attributed to the ELN. This constitutes a reduction of the ELN's share in comparison to last year.

The Marxist-Leninist ELN predominantly financed itself through involvement in the production and commercialization of narcotics, extortion, illegal mining, and kidnapping. The ELN was furthermore involved in a substate conflict with other armed groups, which continued to affect the civilian population [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. The region of Catumbo, Norte de Santander department was especially affected by constant skirmishes between the ELN and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL) dissidents.

Fighters joined the ELN that had left the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) due to its ongoing peace process. As in the last year, ELN engaged in turf wars expanding their control to areas previously controlled by the FARC. Moreover, ELN started recruiting Venezuelan immigrants fleeing the economic crisis in the country. In total, the group was estimated to consist of about 2,500 members. According to the research foundation Insight Crime, the group conducted military operations targeting infrastructure in at least 12 states in neighboring Venezuela.

The first bilateral ceasefire between the government and ELN set for three months began in 10/2017 and ended on January 9. After the ELN and the government failed in negotiating a new ceasefire, measures intensified. For instance, on January 10, ELN attacked the Caño Limón – Coveñas pipeline in Saravena, as well as a Colombian army patrol in Arauquita,

both in Arauca department. On the same day, two oil wells were blown up by ELN in Cubara, Boyaca department. Most notably, however, was the detonation of an explosive device in two police stations in Barranquilla, Atlantico department, on January 27. Five police officers were killed and 41 injured, among them 14 civilians.

The negotiation process was severely affected by the kidnappings and killings of five Ecuadorian citizens conducted by former FARC members and suspected ELN militants in April [→ Colombia (FARC dissidents, left-wing militants)]. In March, the ELN allegedly settled an explosive device, killing four Ecuadorian soldiers in Esmeraldas, Ecuador. In protest against the violence perpetrated against Ecuadorian nationals, the Ecuadorian government announced to no longer guarantee the peace talks.

After Cuba had offered to host the talks, negotiations were resumed in La Habana, Cuba, in May. Over the course of the two rounds of presidential elections, the ELN announced ceasefires lasting from May 25 to 29 and June 15 to 19 respectively. However, the newly-elected President, Ivan Duque, suspended the talks with the ELN after stepping to office on August 7, demanding from the group to announce a permanent ceasefire, free all kidnapped persons, and stop their criminal activities. The ELN rejected the condition of a permanent ceasefire calling it unacceptable.

Violence continued over the course of the year. For instance, on November 1, a high-ranked commander of the ELN's Taraza Heroes front was killed in a confrontation between the ELN and the army in Taraza, Antioquia department. On December 17, the ELN called for an unilateral ceasefire for twelve days during the festive period. Later on December 30, a Colombian soldier was killed in a violent clash near to the municipality San Calixto in Norte de Santander. smo

COLOMBIA (FARC DISSIDENTS, LEFT-WING MILITANTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2017

Conflict parties: FARC dissidents, EPL vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis between several breakaway groups of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and other left-wing guerrillas on the one hand, and the government, supported by the Ecuadorian government, on the other, continued.

The parties disputed over Marxist-Leninist ideology, subnational predominance, and resources, especially drug production and trafficking, and illegal mining.

Several FARC fronts rejected the Peace Agreement of 2016 with the government, refusing to demobilize, and subsequently abandoning the peace process. Some fronts continued the original fight for the FARC's ideology like the 1st front allied with the 7th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 27th, 40th, 42nd, 43rd and 44th fronts. Others formed new criminal organizations like the United Guerrillas of the Pacific and the Pacific Front. The government presented a military report to Congress in

December counting 1,749 FARC dissidents. However, a Military Intelligence report from October revealed by the media assured that there were around 3,000 dissidents operating in ten departments. Most affected were the departments of Narino, Cauca, Guaviare, Caqueta, Meta, and Antioquia.

While FARC dissident groups claimed responsibility for many attacks, for example on social leaders, others were ascribed to the groups as they took place in their area of operation. For instance, on March 30, FARC dissidents killed an activist supporting the Comprehensive National Program for the Substitution of Crops for Illicit Use (PNIS) in Mapiripan, Meta. The dissidents also attacked police stations, patrols, and international bodies supervising the peace process. On January 30, alleged dissidents of the 14th front assaulted six members of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Caqueta and stole their vehicle.

The government responded to the attacks by launching special police and military operations including airstrikes, killing and detaining several dissidents. For example, on March 9, special forces of the army and police bombed camps of the 1st front in Calamar and Miraflores, Guaviare, killing nine dissidents. On September 8, police and military forces killed the commander of the United Guerrillas of the Pacific, alias 'David', and the group's financial commander, near Tumaco, Nariño. President Iván Duque announced in December to have imprisoned more than 500 dissidents since the beginning of his presidency in August.

Apart from the dissident groups with origins in the FARC guerrilla, dissidents of the left-wing Popular Liberation Army (EPL), also known as Los Pelusos, were active in the Catatumbo region, Norte de Santander department. For example, on September 2, dissidents of the EPL allegedly killed a political activist in Ocaña, Norte de Santander. In response, Duque announced in October to deploy an additional contingent of 5,000 soldiers to the area.

The security situation in Catatumbo deteriorated due to an intense fighting over regional control between EPL dissidents and the National Liberation Army (ELN) [→ Colombia (ELN); → Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)].

In Nariño, a violent conflict between the FARC dissidents' groups United Guerrillas of the Pacific, Pacific Front, and Oliver Sinisterra Front took place throughout the year. Among these groups, the Oliver Sinisterra Front had the most members, counting up to 600, and the widest range of operation, reaching into the department of Esmeraldas, Ecuador. In 2018, the Oliver Sinisterra Front, led by a commander with the alias "Guacho", killed at least three soldiers, abducted and killed five civilians, and injured 11 people, both Colombian and Ecuadorian nationals. The Ecuadorian and Colombian governments responded with various joint military operations on Colombian territory, claiming on December 21 to have killed "Guacho" near Tumaco. mkr

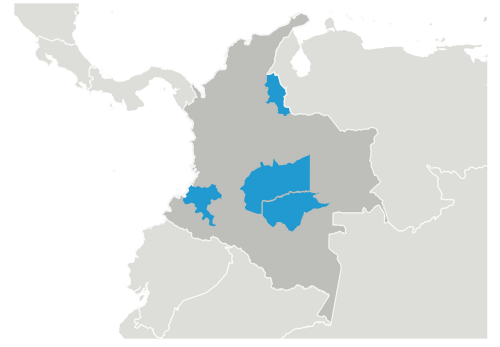
COLOMBIA (FARC DISSIDENTS, LEFT-WING MILITANTS)



January



February



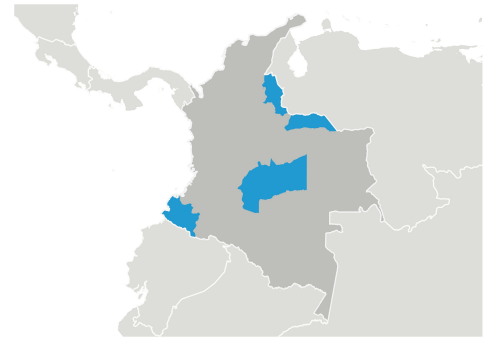
March



April



May



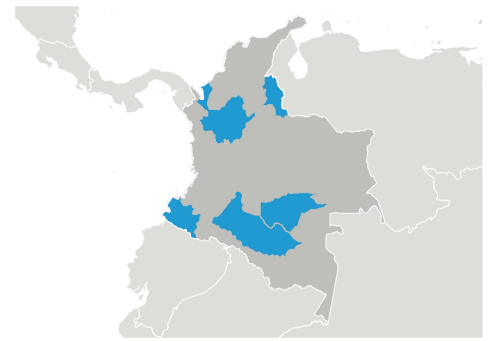
June



July



August



September



October



November



December

NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

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 Nasa, Embera, Wounaan and Wayuu on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued. Since the eruption of protests in 2005, the request for a land reform and a reparation law that recognized the expansion of indigenous preservation areas for marginalized indigenous communities was reiterated. The different indigenous groups furthermore demanded access to thus far neglected basic services such as infrastructure and the restitution of rights for those communities affected by the armed conflict in the country [→ Colombia (ELN); Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants); Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels); Colombia (left-wing militants, FARC dissidents)].

Over the course of the year, violence used against indigenous communities remained a contentious issue. On January 26, security forces shot dead an Indigenous Guard when the Embera Katio blocked the road to protest over the poor road infrastructure between Quibdo and Medellín, in Choco and Antioquia department respectively. The military forces apologized publicly after the use of excessive force was proven. On January 30, the National Organization of Indigenous People of Colombia (ONIC) published a press release condemning an airstrike carried out by the government in an indigenous reserve area in Choco. Although the bombing targeted the armed group National Liberation Army (ELN), two indigenous Wounaan were killed in the attack [→ Colombia (ELN)]. One day later, Amnesty International called upon national authorities to respect the indigenous communities settled in the littoral of the San Juan River, Choco.

As in previous years, indigenous communities staged protests and occupied land. The tensions between military forces and indigenous groups increased after an attempted occupation of a private sugarcane field by 80 members of the Nasa community on April 3 in the rural area of Santander de Quilichao, Cauca department. On August 24, police unit Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron (ESMAD) evicted a Nasa group from a sown field in Caloto, Cauca, leaving one indigenous activist dead. Tensions intensified in October after indigenous groups declared to join demonstrations scheduled by several social and farmer organizations. After the ESMAD had destroyed Nasa built installations on a private property in Corinto, Cauca, they clashed violently, using rocks, tear gas and rubber bullets on October 25. After President Ivan Duque was sworn in on August 7, he met with indigenous representatives two days later. During this meeting, the government agreed upon including the indigenous communities in the land and energy policy development plans. However, indigenous groups continued to demand the realization of the agreements.

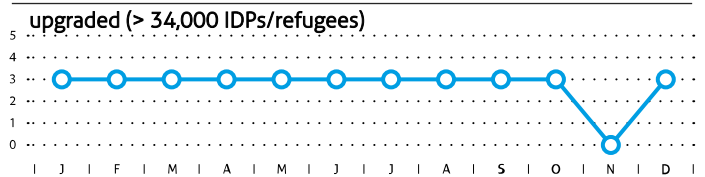
For instance, a group of 150 Embera blocked the entrance of the Victim Protection and Reparations Unit (UARIV) in Bogota

on September 5. After a clash with ESMAD units that left one person severely injured, Emberas claimed that ESMAD had used excessive force against them. ago

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

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: AGC vs. Los Caparrapos vs. ELN vs. FARC dissidents vs. EPL
Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-
sources



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources between several non-state armed groups such as neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels, and left-wing militants, including the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), Los Caparrapos, the National Liberation Army (ELN), dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), continued.

Throughout the year, armed groups clashed frequently in attempts to control lucrative regions and during activities such as drug trafficking, resource exploitation, and extortion.

The increase of coca cultivation, together with the government targeting leading members of the groups [→ Colombia (Neo-paramilitary Groups, Drug Cartels); → Colombia (ELN); → Colombia (left-wing militants, FARC dissidents)], resulted in the fragmentation of these organizations and heavy fights over local predominance, especially in urban areas. Further, in the context of the peace process and demobilization of the FARC, rivalry and turf wars increased in areas formerly occupied by this armed group. Several violent encounters affected the civilian population, forced displacement, extortion, and restricted mobility. The departments of Narino, Choco, Antioquia, Norte de Santander, and Arauca were most affected by violence. According to OCHA, an estimated of 34,064 people were displaced by conflict measures and 1,037,491 were affected by related mobility restrictions.

For instance, on January 17, clashes between the ELN and a FARC dissident group triggered the displacement of 172 peasants in the municipality of Roberto Payan, Narino. One day later, armed confrontations between AGC and Los Caparrapos resulted in the displacement of more than 300 people in San José de Uré, Córdoba department.

In Norte de Santander, the conflict between armed groups led to a humanitarian crisis. Incursions of ELN into EPL-controlled areas prompted a series of clashes between the two groups from mid-March on. By the end of July, OCHA estimated that at least 16,000 people had been displaced from the Cataumbo area. On July 30, heavily armed men raided a commercial billiard hall in the municipality of El Tarra, killing nine people, including two demobilized FARC members and the

president of the Council of Communal Action. Both EPL and ELN emitted public statements blaming each other for the attack. On November 1, civilians were caught in a crossfire during an armed confrontation in the rural area of Hacari. The clash left one person dead, another injured, and more than 60 families displaced.

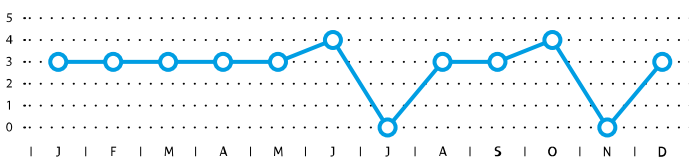
In Antioquia, the Colombian Unit for Victims reported 11,563 IDPs principally from the municipalities of Caceres and Taraza, areas of confrontation between the AGC and Los Caparrapos. Between January 19 and February 23, 2,000 IDPs were reported in Caceres as a consequence of the clashes between these two groups. bkm

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 over subnational predominance and resources between various neo-paramilitary groups and drug cartels, including the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), also known as Clan de Golfo, Los Caparrapos, Los Rastrojos, and Los Puntilleros, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

In September, the Ombudsman's Office of Colombia reported activities of neo-paramilitary groups and drug cartels in 17 departments of the country, most prominently in Antioquia, Choco, Meta, Córdoba, and Cauca. Throughout the year, violent confrontations between security forces, neo-paramilitary groups, and drug cartels affected the civil population through forced displacements and recruitment, restricted mobility, minefields, and a general reduction of security [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)].

Moreover, the government undertook several middle and large-scale military operations against the groups. For instance, on January 10, security forces launched an operation in Canaleta, Córdoba, targeting AGC and killing four militants, while two soldiers were wounded. On May 10, military forces reported the arrest of 30 AGC members in the municipalities of Acacias and Villavicencio, Meta. Further, on September 15, police and military captured a total of 20 members of the AGC in Antioquia.

The Colombian government continued its strategy to target drug cartels' and neo-paramilitary's leading members. On February 21, during a military operation that included five helicopters, a leading member of the AGC was killed in Santo Domingo, Choco. Other leading figures were arrested throughout the year, among them a high-ranking member of

Bloque Meta who was captured on January 23 in Granada, Meta.

In July, the government of then-president Juan Manuel Santos enacted a law that facilitated the demobilization of illegal armed groups. Authorized delegates of the AGC were part of the initial negotiations of the pre-agreement. However, no organization succeeded in disbanding their troops within the six months established by the law. The newly elected President Ivan Duque concluded the negotiations and increased the military actions in the country. During his first 80 days in office, on August 7, the government reported the arrest of 32 members of Los Carrapos and 143 AGC militants in Antioquia. On November 25, three people were reported injured in clashes between military forces and AGC fighters in the rural area of San Jose de Ure, Cordoba. On December 4, Police announced that the leader of Los Puntilleros died during a police operation in Medellin, Antioquia.

Additionally, community leaders, human rights activist, and local authorities were frequently targeted by armed groups. A report published by the National University of Colombia declared that by August an estimated 100 community and political leaders were killed, allegedly 20 belonging to the AGC and five to Los Caparrapos. bkm

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – HAITI

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: Dominican Republic vs. Haiti

Conflict items: other

The violent crisis over the status of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic (DR) continued between DR and Haiti continued.

In 2018, the DR's Directorate General of Migration (DGM) continued to enforce immigration laws that regulate migrant flows to DR by detecting and deporting undocumented foreigners to Haiti. In the first six months of 2018, over 28,000 Haitians were expelled.

Throughout the year, violent continued took places in the border regions between Haitians on the one hand, and Dominicans and DR security forces on the other.

On March 12, Haitians allegedly killed two Dominicans in Pedernales province, DR. Villagers set a 24-hour ultimatum for Haitians to leave the province. Approx. 250 families fled to Haiti. On April 22, DR security forces killed a Haitian in Manzanillo, Monte Cristi Province, DR, during an operation against human trafficking. According to the Dominican Border Guard (Cesfront), a group of Haitians attacked a DR army unit with stones and gunfire on August 18 at the Carrizal, Elías Piña border crossing, DR. Three Haitians and a Dominican soldier were injured. From September 10 to 14, the DGM, supported by the army and prosecutors, detained 1,037 foreigners in nationwide operations. 665 undocumented Haitians were deported to Haiti. On November 10, a group of Haitians carrying machetes and knives abducted a doctor and seven other people in Pedernales province and released them two hours later. In reaction, three days later, the DGM, border security officers, and Army soldiers carried out raids in Pedernales province and arrested dozens of Haitians. On November 24, a clash

in the Malpasse border crossing in Haiti, left six Haitians and four DR customs officers dead.

During the second half of the year, DR responded to the violent demonstrations in Haitian cities by reinforcing border crossings in Pedernales, Jimaní, Elías Piña, and Dajabón, DR, to prevent Haitians from fleeing to DR [→ Haiti (opposition)]. On September 27, DR's army deployed additional 360 soldiers to the border regions to support Cesfront. On November 16, DR's senior military and police commanders met with Haitian authorities in Jimaní, DR, to discuss security at the border and the violent demonstrations in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince. Two days later, DR's army moved several elite units to border crossings in Elías Piña, Jimaní, Dajabón, and Pedernales, DR, after protests in Haiti left two people dead. On December 17, the DR government refused to adopt the Global Pact on Refugees and declared that only the Dominican State could grant refugee status. lju

ECUADOR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1980

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

The non-violent conflict over the orientation of the political system and natural resources between various opposition groups and the government continued.

In 2018, tensions intensified between President Lenín Moreno and his predecessor Rafael Correa, who are both members of the ruling Alianza País. However, the disagreement between the indigenous Shuar people and the government continued without violence. This was mostly due to the fact that for the first time the government started to address its exploitation of indigenous land, which has taken place in recent decades.

On February 4, the government held a referendum on the restriction of extensive mining on indigenous or protected lands. It was accepted by 64 percent. However, the government announced it would issue new oil and mining concessions shortly after.

On March 8, approx. 350 indigenous women took to the streets in Puyo, Pastaza Province, to protest against extensive mining and oil drillings, and against sexual abuse in the exploration sector. Almost 100 protesters camped on Independence Square in the capital Quito, demanding a meeting with Moreno.

Protests of indigenous groups continued throughout the year. For instance, on November 3, a group of 80 Shuar people set out to march more than 600 km from Zamora-Chinchipec Province to Quito, calling for an end to mining both on and near indigenous territories.

As a result of the referendum on February 4, presidential term limits were also reintroduced after they had been eliminated by a 2015 constitutional amendment. This led to tensions within Alianza País, as this would ban Correa from running for president ever again. In consequence, Correa's supporters decided to split from the ruling party. On July 3, a court ordered the arrest of Correa, accusing him of involvement in

the kidnapping of an opposition politician in 2015. Two days later, approx. 20,000 people demonstrated in Quito and several other cities, demanding the end of the alleged political prosecution of Correa and the release of former vice president Jorge Glas. On September 23, Interpol rejected the warrant against Belgium-based Correa. cae

EL SALVADOR (MARAS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Barrio 18, MS-13 vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational predominance between the country's main gangs, namely the Barrio 18 and the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), on the one hand, and the government on the other, de-escalated to a violent crisis. As in previous years, gangs controlled significant territories within and outside the capital San Salvador. They engaged in illegal activities such as murder and extortion, human and drug trafficking, thereby undermining the control of state. Moreover, they were also active in Honduras and Guatemala [→ Honduras (drug trafficking organizations, organized crime); → Guatemala (drug cartels)].

Throughout 2018, the country's overall homicide rate dropped significantly by 16 percent. By the end of the year, the National Civil Police (PNC) registered 3,340 homicides, the lowest figure since the gang truce in 2012.

The government described the decline as a direct result of its anti-gang measures such as crackdowns on illicit businesses, arrests, and prosecutions of alleged gang members. However, in 2018 the number of missing persons reached a new high counting 3,382. In late December, the PNC in La Paz department reported the existence of at least 20 hidden graves of people who had been missing since 2016.

Throughout the year, the PNC continued operations to dissolve gang structures. Police units arrested 39 gang members on May 24 for murder, drug smuggling, and extortion in the departments San Salvador, San Miguel, and La Libertad. On November 29, police arrested 76 Barrio 18 gang members in Jocote, San Matías, and Quezaltepeque, La Libertad department, for murder, kidnapping, and robbery.

National and international organizations criticized police for human rights abuses as well as extrajudicial killings, and accused government officials of corruption and affiliation with gang members. On June 22, the Attorney General's Office announced that four former PNC officers had been sentenced to 60 years in prison for extrajudicial killings in La Paz department in 02/2017. Prior to their conviction, Defense Minister David Munguía Payés had criticized the trial and denied the existence of so-called death squads within police and army. Attorney General Douglas Melendez announced further investigations into alleged extrajudicial killings and corruption. On October 12, Melendez also issued arrest warrants against former president Mauricio Funes and former attorney general Luis Martínez for corruption and alleged ties to gang members. On December 28, the legislative assembly denied Melendez a second term and elected Raúl Melara as the new At-

torney General.

In 2018, related homicides and arrests of gang members in Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, the US, and Spain gave further evidence on Mara cells operating outside El Salvador.

In his State of the Union Address, US President Donald Trump denounced MS-13 activities in several US cities, linked it to illegal immigration, and threatened to cut payments to El Salvador. One month later, approx. 35 members of MS-13 were put on trial in Alicante, Alicante province, Spain, for extortion and drug smuggling. According to the Spanish Attorney General's Office, the gang had formed five factions in the city and received financial and logistical support from the gang's leadership in El Salvador. In Mexico, one gang member of MS-503 was shot dead by MS-13 members in the capital Mexico City on March 1 [→ El Salvador (inter-gang rivalry)]. Prior to this, Mexican authorities had arrested an MS-13 leader in Tijuana, State of Baja California, for setting up a drug trafficking business at the US border. He was later extradited to the US for a further criminal charge in Ohio. *sen*

GUATEMALA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: CODECA, 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 opposition groups and the Guatemalan government continued. Various farmers' associations, such as the Peasant Development Committee (CODECA) and the Peasant Unity Committee (CUC) as well as various indigenous groups and other civilian protesters called upon the government to halt resource exploitation and to protect indigenous rights.

As in previous years, residents and environmental activists opposed the Pojom II hydroelectric power project in San Mateo Ixtatán, Huehuetenango department. After protesters regularly blocked the only access road and clashed with security forces over the course of four months, the government deployed 195 police officers to the area in October. During negotiations between police forces and protesters on October 9, protesters attempted to bring a police-owned tear gas launcher under their control. The subsequent confrontation left three police officers and three activists injured. Three days later, protesters allegedly attacked and killed a power plant worker on the blocked road. Tensions escalated on December 16, when unknown assailants attacked and killed two and injured one protester in Ixquisis, Huehuetenango.

Residents and activists also demonstrated against the hydroelectric power plant in Purulhá, Baja Verapaz department. For instance, on July 29, the power plant should have resumed its operation following a repair break. The government sent 80 police officers to protect the relaunch. Protesters entered the plant, attacked the police officers, seized 18 weapons and injured at least five police officers by pushing them over the edge of the dam. The company running the power plant estimated the economic loss from the attack at approx. USD 2.7

million.

No violent confrontations took place at the El Escobal silver mine in San Rafael Las Flores, Santa Rosa department; the mine remained shut after a Supreme Court resolution from 05/07/17.

On July 13, unknown assailants killed Ángel Estuardo Quevedo, one of the main opposition leaders, in El Salitre, Santa Rosa. Throughout the year, at least 18 environmental and human rights activists belonging to CODECA and other opposition groups were killed.

Tensions concerning the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) continued. The CICIG had been created by UN and the government to dismantle powerful criminal networks in 2006. On August 31, President Jimmy Morales announced that he would not extend the CICIG mandate after 09/30/19. The announcement was followed by country-wide protests by thousands of people, especially from the indigenous communities. On September 12, at least 5,000 people protested in the capital Guatemala City.

tk

HAITI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: Fanmi Lavalas, Pitit Dessalines, anti-government protesters vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between several opposition parties, including Fanmi Lavalas and Pitit Dessalines as well as anti-government protesters, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Due to rising fuel prices and alleged fraud of USD billions from the Venezuelan PetroCaribe Fund, several demonstrations took place throughout the year demanding the resignation of President Jovenel Moïse. The police used tear gas and gun fire to repel the crowds. Dozens of people were killed and injured during the protests.

After the government's announcement to increase the price on fuel, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and in other cities from July 6 to 8. The protests left up to 20 people dead, approx. 100 injured, and at least 100 people arrested. Furthermore, protesters looted businesses and hotels. Moïse later suspended the price increase. Following the nationwide demonstrations, Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant resigned. On August 6, Moïse nominated Jean-Henry Céant as new Prime Minister, who was later ratified by the senate. Opposition leaders criticized Céant's election as corrupt, and also his major role in the autocratic regime of Prosper Avril.

From September onwards, demonstrators took to the streets once more to demand transparent investigations following reports of approx. USD 3.8 billion, either lost or embezzled, of the Venezuelan PetroCaribe Fund between 2008 and 2016.

The fund had been established a decade ago by former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and the past Haitian gov-

ernment to finance projects for the Haitian people. Between September 9 and 16, nationwide and international demonstrations were held, accusing the government of fraud and diverting money. On October 17, demonstrations all over the country reached up to 100,000 participants. After six people had been killed in the protests, Moïse removed several political figures from office, who were under investigation. During the funeral for the victims of the protests, police opened fire on demonstrators, injuring six. By November, 50 political and social organizations called for Moïse's resignation. From November 18 onwards, thousands of people participated in national protests against corruption and impunity. Police used tear gas to disperse the protesters. The protests left up to 11 people dead and several injured.

Throughout the year, the opposition and several organizations continued to accuse the government of human rights abuses and the abuse of power. On December 1, the National Network for the Defense of Human Rights published a detailed report on a massacre, which had occurred on November 13 in La Saline, district of Port-au-Prince. During the massacre, 59 people had been tortured and killed, seven women raped, five injured, and two had disappeared. The report stated that most of the victims had an affiliation with the Fanmi Lavalas party and that survivors accused the government of being involved in the events. Céant had stated earlier that the massacre resulted from inter-gang rivalry. lju

HONDURAS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: Libre, PAC, anti-government activists vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources

The violent crisis over national power, the orientation of the political system, and resources between opposition parties such as the Partido de Refundación y Libertad (Libre) and other anti-government groups, on the one hand, and the governing National Party (PNH), on the other, continued.

Demonstrations against the newly elected president Juan Orlando Hernández continued nationwide. The protesters accused the government of electoral fraud during the presidential elections in 2017. Police units responded to the marches by using tear gas, truncheons and firearms, killing over 40 individuals. On January 24, the OAS, which monitored the election in 2017, recognized its legitimacy. One week before President Hernández' inauguration in the capital Tegucigalpa, protests took place all over the country. Security forces injured and detained several protesters in the capital Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán department, and in San Pedro Sula, Cortés department. More than 15 police officers were injured during the protests. On January 28, protesters rallied during the presidential inauguration. Police forces tried to disperse the crowd using rubber bullets, injuring at least one journalist.

Since the November election, threats against journalists, bloggers and activists intensified. There were reportedly over

50 cases of violent and non-violent intimidation of media representatives by civilians or security forces. Civil groups accused the government of targeting students for their involvement in protests. For instance, on September 13, two students were supposedly tortured and shot dead by unknown uniformed assailants in Comayagüela, Francisco Morazán. Since August, students have been involved in demonstrations demanding fair public transportation fares in the area. Protests took place regularly throughout the year. For instance, on May 20, police and military forces, using handguns, shot three protesters. On July 19, protesters around the country started week-long demonstrations, demanding the decrease of fossil fuel taxes and clashing with police forces who used tear gas. On November 21 and 22, one civilian and at least six police officers were injured by gunshots during demonstrations against the visit of state officials to the region in Choluteca, capital of the eponymous department. Protesters burned down tires, threw molotov cocktails and stones.

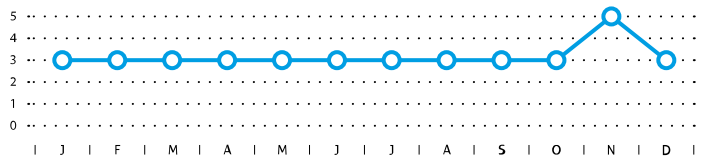
In rural regions, especially Atlántida department, the protests against government-supported energy projects went on. On January 23, eight uniformed agents abducted and killed an environmental activist. On the same day, in the municipality of Arizona, Atlántida, another activist was shot dead during a protest. On March 3, the Council of Indigenous Human Rights granted protective rights to inhabitants of the region Pajuiles, southwest Atlántida, where the construction of hydropower plants is controversial. Despite this, the repression continued. For instance, on May 3, around 300 private security forces of a power plant company backed by several police units destroyed a protest camp in Pajuiles using tear gas, truncheons and water cannons. mwo

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 and the production, trade, and trafficking of illegal drugs as well as other illicit activities between various drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the government, continued. Andrés Manuel López Obrador succeeded former President Enrique Peña Nieto on December 1.

The most active cartels were Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), the Gulf Cartel (CDG), the Sinaloa Cartel (CDS), and their respective splinter groups as well as Cartel del Noreste (CDN), and Los Zetas. Tamaulipas, Guerrero, Veracruz, and Guanajuato were the most affected states. The Mexican government continued its strategy to target leading figures of drug cartels, contributing to increased fragmentation of car-

tels and heavy fights over local predominance [→ Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)]. The country's homicide rate hit a new high in 2018, making it the deadliest year on record.

Throughout the year, Tamaulipas remained a hotspot of violence when CDG, CDN, and its splinter groups violently contested federal security. In January, the government deployed 500 soldiers to Ciudad Mier in order to increase public security. From January 22 to 24, members of the CDG installed road barricades in the city of Reynosa and frequently clashed with security forces. The violent encounters left at least 12 people dead. On March 24, navy forces clashed with alleged cartel members in Nuevo Laredo, leaving eight people dead and 15 injured. In the same city, from November 23 to 24, several shootouts between CDN members, armed with a Barrett Calibre 50 and grenades, and soldiers left seven people dead.

In Guerrero, vigilante groups, drug cartels, and security forces violently clashed over local predominance. For instance, on January 7, in the village of La Concepción south of Acapulco, members of the local vigilante group Regional Coordinator of Community Authorities (CRAC) clashed with unknown assailants, leaving eight people dead. Later that day, when federal and state security forces arrived to restore order, another shootout took place, leaving three people dead. In the aftermath, security forces arrested 30 CRAC members and seized military grade weapons. On September 5, about 100 cartel members armed with Ak-47, AR-15, and G-3 guns attacked the police station of the village La Laguna. Another group of cartel members torched cars in order to block the road to hinder police reinforcements. The encounter left a police officer dead. In the same area, on November 11, about 3,000 members of the vigilante group Front of Communitarian Police of the State of Guerrero (FPCEG) entered into various villages of the municipality Leonardo Bravo, among them also the village La Laguna. They clashed with more than 100 cartel members, leaving seven people dead as well as 20 houses and 30 cars damaged. On November 28, members of Cartel del Sur tried to reclaim the villages but were repelled by FPCEG. The clash left 13 people dead, among them the local cartel leader.

On March 3, unknown assailants shot a police commander in Acapulco. On June 20, the municipal police commander in Zitlala was killed by unidentified assailants, while his successor was shot dead on December 30.

On April 17, a police patrol clashed with about 20 armed men in the village of Cuacoyul, leaving three people dead. Subsequently, seven people died in a second shootout when reinforcements from army, navy, and state police arrived at the site. Later that day, an armed group ambushed a police patrol in nearby Petatlán, leaving six police officers dead.

In Guanajuato, on June 1, unknown assailants shot dead six police officers who were directing the traffic in the center of Salamanca. On August 11, the commander of the municipal police force of León was shot dead in his car. On September 28, a federal police patrol persecuted a pick-up truck on the highway leading to a meeting point near the village of Jerécuaro with more than 40 members of CJNG. In the following shootout ten people died and five were injured.

In the state of Sinaloa, near the village Alcoyonqui, marines discovered a drug laboratory of the Sinaloa Cartel on August

16. The abandoned site had an area of about 500m² and offered shelter for 30 people. The marines seized 50 tons of crystal meth, in liquid as well as in solid form.

Throughout the electoral process of this year's presidential, state, and municipal elections on July 1, a series of unresolved killings, kidnappings and threats against politicians took place, allegedly with members of drug cartels involved [→ Mexico (opposition)].

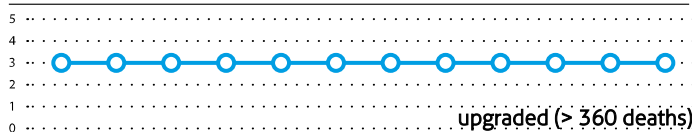
As in the previous year, Mexico remained one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists. According to Reporters Without Borders, at least nine journalists were killed in 2018. mbr

MEXICO (INTER-CARTEL RIVALRY, PARAMILITARY GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: CJNG et al. vs. CDS et al. vs. CDG et al. vs. Los Zetas et al. vs. LFM et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war over subnational predominance and the production, trade, trafficking of illegal drugs, and other illicit activities between various drug cartels continued. The most involved groups were those of the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), Gulf Cartel (CDG) and its splinter groups, as well as Los Zetas, and the Sinaloa Cartel (CDS) and its splinter groups. The Mexican government continued its strategy to target drug cartels' leading figures contributing to increased fragmentation of cartels and heavy fights over local predominance [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Out of the 31 states of Mexico, at least 20 were reportedly affected by conflict-related violence in 2018.

CJNG, the cartel with the largest territory under its control, continued its turf wars with Los Zetas, Los Viagras, CDS, and La Familia Michoacana (LFM). Throughout the year, CJNG left numerous so-called narcomensajes, messages by drug cartels threatening or explaining their criminal activity, next to the dead bodies of their opponents. In the state of Veracruz, for instance, on March 16, CJNG left a message next to three dismembered corpses in Fortín de las Flores. On December 4, CJNG members killed seven Zetas and left their bodies on a highway near Ciudad Mendoza.

Clashes between Gente Nueva, a splinter group of CDS, and La Línea, affiliated to the Juarez Cartel (CDJ), turned the northern state of Chihuahua into a hotspot of violence. For instance, on January 5, several violent encounters between the two groups left at least 32 people dead in Ciudad Juarez. On May 6, several members of La Línea killed eight alleged members of CDS on various locations in Ignacio Zaragoza.

Internal rivalries and violence continued between several splinter groups of CDG in the state of Tamaulipas after soldiers had killed the local head of the Gulf cartel on

04/22/2017 in Reynosa. On July 18, two rivaling groups of CDG clashed in the same city using grenades leaving three alleged gang members dead.

Further violence spread to the tourist area of Cancún, Quintana Roo, when CJNG, CDG, Los Zetas, and other local drug gangs violently fought over local predominance. On August 21, authorities recovered the bodies of eight people allegedly killed by drug cartels. By July, the homicide rate for Quintana Roo had doubled in comparison to last year.

Throughout the year, drug cartels continued to show a strong presence also in illegal businesses apart from drug trafficking, especially in fuel theft centered in the states of Puebla, Guanajuato, and Veracruz. For instance, in the state of Guanajuato, CJNG frequently clashed with Cartel Santa Rosa de Lima, a cartel allegedly especially involved in large-scale fuel theft. On July 26, authorities recovered a message signed by CJNG next to the corpses of two members of the Cartel Santa Rosa de Lima. On September 20, CJNG killed an engineer of the national oil company in Salamanca, accusing him of being an informant of the rivaling cartel. mah

MEXICO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the leftist opposition, led by Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador's Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (MORENA), and the government continued in the context of this year's presidential, state, and municipal elections on July 1. Andrés Manuel López Obrador of MORENA won the presidential election against candidates of the tripartite coalition of Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), and Movimiento Ciudadano, and the coalition led by former ruling party Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Obrador was formally inaugurated on December 1.

Throughout the electoral process, which began on 09/08/2017, a series of unresolved killings, kidnappings and threats against politicians took place. According to Mexican newspapers, unknown assailants and alleged members of drug cartels killed at least 130 candidates, most of them running for municipal elections [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Furthermore, at least 1,000 candidates running for this year's federal or state elections withdrew their candidacies. In the first half of the year, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission, as well as several NGOs, repeatedly called upon the PRI-led federal government to ensure the protection of electoral candidates.

Prior to the election day, supporters of PRI, PAN, and MORENA occasionally clashed in several states of the country. For instance, on January 3, PRD clashed with MORENA supporters when they threw chairs and other objects at a MORENA party event in the municipality of Coyoacán, Mexico City, eponymous state. Three days later, a MORENA supporter died as a result of her injuries. On June 30, a violent encounter between supporters of PRI and PRD left three supporters dead

in Nocupétaro, Michoacán.

On election day, one person was killed in a clash between PRI and PAN supporters in Chignahuapan, Puebla state. After the election, tensions eased between supporters of the political parties. mah

NICARAGUA (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Miskito groups, YATAMA vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis in the coastal regions of the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN) over autonomy and resources between members of indigenous groups and the party Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Aslatakanka (YATAMA) on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued.

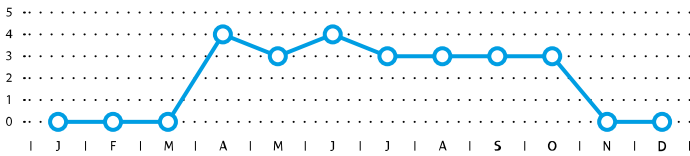
Throughout the year, abductions of and attacks on indigenous people continued. For instance, on February 18, two indigenous people from the village Santa Clara, Nueva Segovia department, were abducted. On May 16, illegal settlers, so-called colonos, killed five and injured three indigenous people in the village Santa Martha, RACCN. According to indigenous community leaders the confrontation took place while the indigenous people were trying to protect their land. On September 20, approx. 20 armed men attacked the property of an indigenous leader and burned down a house in the municipality San Esquipulas, Waspam, RACCN, killing one indigenous man and abducting five. The indigenous leader claimed the attack was a retaliation to measures taken to avoid colonos from invading indigenous land. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), intimidation and threats against human rights lawyers of the indigenous Miskito of the RACCN increased in 2018. The lawyers had stated earlier numerous cases of murders, attacks, sexual violence, and abductions committed by illegal settlers, so-called colonos, against indigenous people trying to defend their ancestral land. In a press release on August 10, the IACHR urged the Nicaraguan government to increase protection for the lawyers and to ensure the territorial and cultural rights of indigenous people. In September, the organization Justice and Human Rights of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua moved before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to accuse the Nicaraguan government of not implementing measures to protect the state's indigenous population. In 2018, spillover effects of the violent anti-government protests also led to an increase in colonos entering indigenous land and appropriating property, as security forces were withdrawn and deployed to the cities to ensure public order [→ Nicaragua (opposition)]. mbo

NICARAGUA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: opposition groups, anti-government protesters vs. paramilitary groups, 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 anti-government protesters, on the one hand, and the government of President Daniel Ortega's Sandista National Liberation Front (FSLN), on the other, escalated to a limited war.

In April, the government announced new social security reforms, which led opposition groups and anti-government protesters demonstrating for Ortega's resignation.

By the end of April, approx. 40 people had died in protests. Nationwide demonstrations increased to become the highest in number since the end of the Nicaraguan Revolution in the 1970s. According to the Nicaraguan Pro-Human Rights Association, clashes between protesters and security forces left up to 448 people dead and approx. 2,830 injured by the end of the year. Furthermore, about 8,000 people fled the country and nearly 600 were reported missing. National and international organizations such as the UN, the Organization of the American States (OAS), and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) called on the government to find a peaceful solution and condemned the violence and torture reportedly committed by security forces and paramilitary groups.

Commencing on April 18, people protested in the capital Managua and six other cities against the increase of taxes and the reduction of social benefits. Five days later, after nearly 30 people had died during the demonstrations, President Ortega announced to cancel the reforms and to start negotiations.

From April to July, demonstrations intensified with hundreds of thousands of people acting under different group aliases, such as the April 19 Movement, the Student movement, and the Blue and White caravan, calling for Ortega's resignation. Crack downs of protesting groups and the use of live ammunition by security forces left hundreds of people dead throughout the year. For instance, on July 13, police and paramilitary groups attacked protesting students at Rubén Darío University Campus in Managua. When more than 100 students sought refuge in the Church of Divine Mercy, police opened fire at them and killed at least two students. Between July 15 and 17, police and paramilitary forces regained control in joint operations of the city of Masaya, eponymous department. Police and paramilitary groups used machine guns, while protesters responded with stones and homemade bombs. At least six civilians and four police officers

died during the clashes.

After the National Dialogue process initiated on May 16 had failed on May 23, the government resumed repressive measures.

During the process talks between representatives of the civil society, the opposition, the Catholic Church as well as the government, the opposition urged Ortega to resign before the end of his presidential term. The government refused calling the proposal an attempted coup. On July 16, the parliament approved the Anti-Terrorism Law which could be used to label demonstrators as terrorists, thereby criminalizing their civil right to assembly freely. By the end of September, police declared demonstrations illegal.

Throughout the year, the OAS and the Secretary General of the UN, urged Ortega to end repressive measures and to disarm paramilitary groups. On May 17, a delegation of the IACHR arrived in Nicaragua during the National Dialogue process to monitor the situation of human rights. Four days later, it issued a first report, stating multiple violations by the government.

The UN criticized the Anti-Terrorism Law, subsequently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua stated the critic was biased. From July onwards, the government shut down national human rights groups and denied entry to an OAS working group. Furthermore, they expelled the IACHR as well as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from the country after accusing them of interventionist actions. On December 20, US President Donald Trump signed the Nica Act which imposed financial sanctions on the Nicaraguan government as a result of human rights violations. sen

PARAGUAY (EPP, AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: EPP, agrarian movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over land reform between the People's Army of Paraguay (EPP), several farmer organizations, indigenous groups, and landless people on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued for the 30th consecutive year. The non-government groups continued to express their demands for integral agrarian, social, and political reform.

Throughout the year, attacks on agricultural sites and kidnappings by the EPP took place. In January, one person, kidnapped by the EPP in August 2015, was found dead in Tacuatí, San Pedro department. In the same month, the Joint Task Force (FTC), a military unit deployed to counter EPP's activities, announced that the EPP had released near the city of Yby Yaù, Concepción department, two people who had been abducted in August 2017. On April 7, EPP members threw grenades at FTC forces when they approached an EPP-controlled ranch in Guaraní, Concepción. The subsequent clash left one policeman and one soldier as well as an unknown number of EPP members injured. Later the same day, another clash in the same place was resolved with no casualties. On May 6, security forces found the body of a FTC

personnel, allegedly killed by EPP members near Paso Tuyo, Concepción. On July 27, a shootout between FTC forces and presumed EPP members left an unknown number of militants injured in Arroyito, Concepción. The state forces discovered weapons and leaflets at the location. In November and December, the EPP attacked and destroyed agricultural sites in San Pedro and Canindeyú department. For instance, on November 19, EPP members attacked a lumber trade site near Santa Rosa de Aguaray, San Pedro, and held six people hostage. While five of the hostages were released unharmed, one person was killed. Afterwards, the EPP burned down the site. On December 8, the EPP attacked a ranch in San Vicente Pancho, San Pedro. According to national media, the EPP planned to kidnap the owner but failed to do so. Instead, the EPP burned down and destroyed three agricultural airplanes and other machines and vehicles. Attacks continued on December 23, when EPP militants killed an employee and destroyed several vehicles of another ranch in the same city. In a case that received nationwide attention, the group continued to hold two people hostage by the end of the year. In the fourth quarter of the year, amid rising fears over EPP attacks, residents staged several protests, demanding the resignation of the head of the Concepción department in the city of Concepción. For instance, on November 3, after protesters had installed barricades and burned tires, security forces responded with tear gas and rubber bullets in order to disperse the crowd. Furthermore, protesters called upon newly elected President Mario Abdo Benítez to take action against deteriorating living conditions. mdh

PERU (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: opposition movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis between various opposition movements and the government over the orientation of the political system and resources, predominantly related to socio-environmental issues in the extractive sector, continued. In 2018, miners, members of indigenous communities, trade unions, and other movements staged numerous strikes and protests throughout the country. The mining industry is one of the primary sources of Peru's foreign trade. Rural communities continued to contest mining projects because of the lack of benefits and prior consultation. In recent years, mining activities have led to environmental pollution, water shortages, and health impairment. On January 11, the government declared a state of emergency to guarantee public order and to address social conflicts related to the mining sector in the regions of Apurímac, Cuzco, and Arequipa. On April 24, for example, members of the Huayllay community in Pasco region carried out road blockades demanding compensation for environmental impacts on their land as well as service contracts for construction work. A mediation process led by the Social Affairs General Office of the Peruvian Ministry of Energy and Mines was initiated.

In the Amazon region of the country, indigenous people protested against Peru's trade accord with the United States, which facilitate the government to grant mining, logging, and drilling concessions on indigenous land, for several months. The dispute turned violent on June 5, when police evicted protesters during a strike from a highway near Bagua, region of Bagua. 24 police officers and at least ten civilians were killed during the clash. During the general strike, different social groups also protested against rising prices of petrol and food, and against the corruption of Peruvian politicians and judges. 41,000 police officers and soldiers secured state property and touristic infrastructure. In some suburban areas of the capital Lima, region of Lima, protesters burned tires and threw rocks at buses.

In February, another strike turned violent in Huancavelica and Pasco regions due to a sharp price drop for potatoes and crops. Farmers demanded that the government should buy their potatoes and crops, blocked highways, and tried to occupy a state-owned hydroelectric dam. Police killed at least two protesters in the ensuing clashes. On March 21, president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski resigned due to a corruption scandal concerning the Brazilian construction company Odebrecht. Prior to this, members of the opposition party Fuerza Popular had released videos showing allies of Kuczynski offering lawmakers public work projects in return for help in the second impeachment vote against Kuczynski in December 2017. On March 23, former vice president Martín Vizcarra was sworn in as new president and declared to fight corruption during his presidency. On September 11, Vizcarra announced that he would not run for reelection in 2021.

mgn

USA (RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: right-wing extremists vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over ideology and the orientation of the political system between various right-wing extremist groups and the government continued. The extremists were mainly comprised of white supremacist and anti-government groups, who label themselves 'sovereign citizens', rejecting federal authority and government legitimacy. Official data has shown a significant rise of violent acts by white supremacists and other far-right groups since President Trump took office. In 2018, the Justice Department filed 22 hate crime cases; race and religion remain the two biggest drivers of hate crimes. Throughout 2018, members or affiliates of right-wing extremist groups carried out attacks that led to several fatalities. Most notably, on February 14, a gunman opened fire at a high school in Parkland, Florida, using a semi-automatic rifle, killing 17 and injuring at least 17. The perpetrator reportedly made racist and hateful comments before and during the attack. On April 22, in a mass shooting in Antioch, Tennessee, a Sovereign Citizen Movement affiliate killed four and injured several. In 2018, attacks on and the harassment of people with Jewish

background were on the rise.

On January 2, a member of the right-wing extremist group Atomwaffen Division stabbed a gay Jewish man to death in Orange County, California, because of his sexual orientation and religious background. Since 2017, five people have been killed by members of the group. On October 27, a gunman killed 11 and injured six in a mass shooting in a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, using several semi-automatic weapons. Since the shooting, four non-violent anti-semitic incidents targeting synagogues were recorded by the ADL.

Overall, people of African-American descent remained the most vulnerable group to racially motivated attacks in 2018. For instance, on October 25, after having failed to break into a black church, a perpetrator shot dead two African-Americans in a grocery store in Jefferson Town, Kentucky. Investigators interpreted the incident as an attempt to carry out a massacre similar to the one in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015.

In October, at least 13 mail bombs were sent to high-profile politicians, liberal figures, and to a media station. The suspect's social network activity revealed hyper-partisan and conspiratorial thinking. According to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, the incident could be linked to the so-called leaderless resistance model of operations propagated since the 1970s by various white supremacy groups, such as the White Aryan Resistance.

ssa

USA – VENEZUELA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: USA vs. Venezuela

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis over international power and clashing political-ideological orientations between the USA and Venezuela continued amid the humanitarian, political, social, and economic crisis in Venezuela [→Venezuela (opposition)]. Following remarks by then-US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, on February 2, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro ordered nationwide military exercises that would commence on February 24 to prepare the National Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela (FANB) for purported US incitements to overthrow his government.

According to press reports published on July 4, US President Donald Trump, Tillerson and then-National Security Advisor Herbert McMaster met on various occasions in 2017 to discuss military intervention in Venezuela. On July 12, Maduro accused the US of provoking armed confrontation and warned the FANB to be alert. On September 8, US media outlets reported that from 2017 to 2018, US officials had secretly promoted a coup d'état against the Maduro administration to Venezuelan military officers, which unraveled due to dozens being arrested for involvement in the plot, and missing material support. Speaking to the UN General Assembly on September 26, Maduro accused the US of seeking political control over Venezuela and of fabricating the migration crisis to justify military intervention.

Over the course of the year, the US repeatedly imposed in-

dividual and economic sanctions. On February 20, Trump prohibited US-based transactions with the new Venezuelan cryptocurrency Petro, via decree, to prevent Venezuela from circumventing previous US economic sanctions. The same day, the US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on four current and former Venezuelan government officials for corruption allegations. On May 7, it added three government officials on its Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act's list.

US pressure on the Maduro government augmented following the presidential elections in Venezuela on May 20 deemed illegitimate by the US. Only hours after the official election results had been announced on May 21, Trump imposed economic sanctions which barred US citizens and firms from buying assets or bonds issued by the Venezuelan government, including by the state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela. The following day, Maduro expelled the two highest-ranking US diplomats in Venezuela for allegedly conspiring against his administration. On September 25, further sanctions inter alia targeted Venezuela's Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, Defence Minister General Vladimir Padrino López and Maduro's wife and United Socialist Party of Venezuela leader Cilia Flores. Furthermore, the US lobbied within the region throughout the year for the imposition of further economic sanctions to pressure the Maduro administration into negotiations with the Venezuelan opposition.

asm

VENEZUELA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: opposition (MUD) vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the opposition, led by the multi-party alliance Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), and the government under President Nicolás Maduro continued.

While last year's wave of violent anti-government protests abated, the humanitarian, political, and economic crisis deepened. Reportedly, during the first 11 days of the year, shortages of food and medicine, and hyperinflation and rampant crime rates sparked 386 protests throughout the country and 107 lootings that left five people dead. The MUD renewed last year's demands for a humanitarian corridor, free, fair and transparent elections, the release of alleged political prisoners, and the restitution of powers of the National Assembly (AN).

The deteriorating situation peaked into a regional migration crisis, affecting Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. Reportedly, departures accelerated between May and November this year, totaling to over 3 million since 2015. The influx of Venezuelan migrants sparked violence in border regions. For instance, on February 8, two fire bomb attacks on refugee residences in Boa Vista, Roraima state, Brazil, left five Venezue-

lans injured. Consequently, Brazil deployed 200 soldiers to reinforce public security. Following some of the incidents, Venezuelans partly crossed the border back into Venezuela. The internationally-sponsored dialogue, ongoing in the Dominican Republic's capital Santo Domingo since 12/01/17, resumed on January 13. Two days later, a Bolivarian National Guard (GNB), special police, and military operation killed Oscar Pérez, who led an armed militant group that allegedly sought to oust Maduro on 12/19/17, and six others in the capital Caracas, Federal District. In rejection of reports about Pérez's extrajudicial killing, the MUD suspended its participation in the next dialogue round scheduled to start the same day.

On February 7, the government announced to move the presidential elections to April 22. In repudiation, Chile and Mexico withdrew from their observer status in the dialogue held in Santo Domingo and talks broke down indefinitely. On February 16, MUD politician Henri Falcón unilaterally disclosed his candidacy. Consequently, the MUD declared a boycott of the elections, called on the electorate to abstain from voting and accused Falcón of being instrumental to the Maduro administration. It insisted the government postpone the elections until the second half of the year and that they permit an international electoral observer mission. Having been rescheduled twice, the presidential elections took place on May 20. Despite repeated calls by the US, the EU, and the Lima Group of American countries for suspending the elections and warnings not to recognize its results, Maduro was declared winner on the same day with 67 percent of the vote.

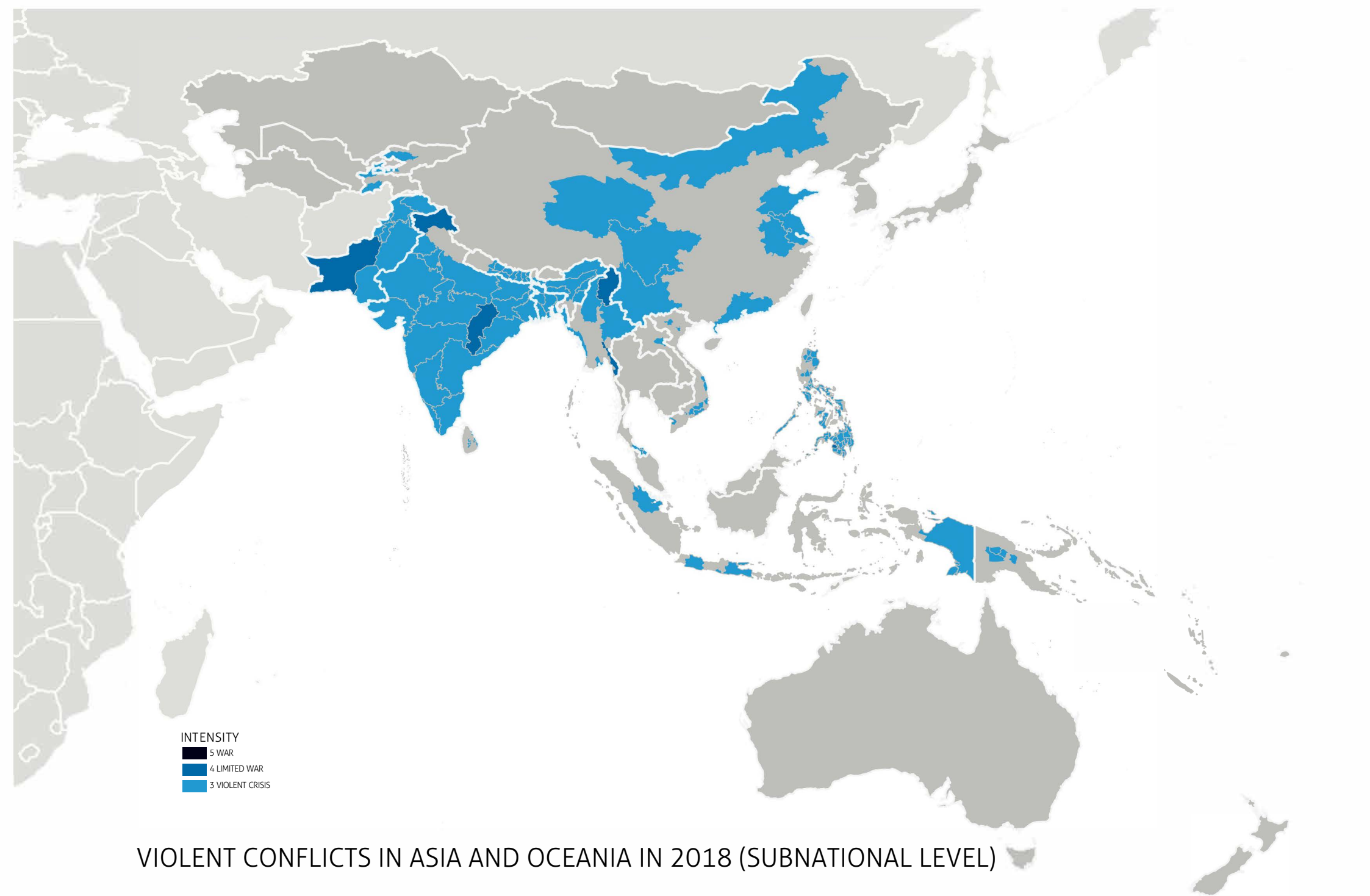
In protest, all Lima Group members announced they would recall their remaining ambassadors from Caracas on May 20.

The US imposed new sanctions the following day, to which the government reacted by expelling the two highest-ranking US diplomats in Venezuela [→ USA – Venezuela]. In an apparent gesture to convince the MUD to re-establish national dialogue, authorities confirmed the release of 124 people considered political prisoners between June 1 and 13, including several MUD members.

During a GNB military parade in Caracas on August 4, two drones carrying C4-explosives blew up close to Maduro and other state officials, injuring seven soldiers. While Maduro claimed to have been the target of an assassination attempt by local right-wing groups supported by the US, Colombia, Mexico, and Chile, the opposition expressed doubts as to the authenticity of the incident. In August, MUD deputy Juan Requesens and exiled opposition leader Julio Borges and on October 5 Fernando Albán were arrested, respectively, for purportedly attempting the assassination and treason. On October 8, Albán allegedly committed suicide while imprisoned in the capital.

Over the course of the year, international sanctions and condemnations intensified the diplomatic pressure on the Maduro administration. On January 21 and June 25, the EU imposed new economic sanctions on high-ranking government officials, including the Interior and Justice Minister, then-Vice President Diosdado Cabello, and Attorney General Tarek William Saab democratic rule, human rights violations, and the repression of political dissidents. On May 29, the OAS presented an independent report accusing the Maduro government of crimes against humanity, extrajudicial killings and torture of political prisoners aiming to sue the president before the ICC. ^{asm}

Asia and Oceania



VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2018 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Counting 114, Asia and Oceania remained the region with the highest number of conflicts. Both conflicts that had been fought on war-level in 2017, the war in Myanmar between the Muslim Rohingya minority and the Buddhist government [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)] as well as the war between the Philippine government and several Islamist groups [→ Philippines (Islamist militant groups)], de-escalated to limited wars. No new war emerged. Consequently, in 2018, no conflict was fought on war-level in Asia and Oceania. The number of limited wars, however, increased from two to seven, three of which have escalated from violent crises.

The HIIK observed 14 active conflicts in or involving China. While four were fought on the level of violent crises, another five de-escalated to non-violent crises in 2018, such as the conflict between Mongolian ethnic minorities and the government in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which did not record violence for the first time since observation started [→ China (Inner Mongolia)]. However, protests took place against policies, with protesters criticizing land expropriations and the lack of legal possibilities to address especially herders' issues. While the Chinese government continued to surveil and incarcerate Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in detention camps, there were no incidents of open violence. The practices however were protested by foreign governments and Uyghurs abroad [→ China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)]. In Hong Kong, the conflict over autonomy de-escalated as protests and policing were conducted nonviolently.

In the East China Sea and South China Sea, maritime conflicts between the PRC and its neighbors continued to be characterized by increased militarization, with most claimant states further orienting their defense posture towards the disputed islands. In the first half of the year, the PRC installed anti-ship and surface-to-air missiles on the platforms it constructed at the Spratly Islands [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. The US continued to conduct Freedom of Navigation operations in the area. For the first time, such operations were also carried out also by the United Kingdom and France. The maritime conflicts however did not exceed the level of a non-violent crisis, as there were no reports of clashes involving coast guards or fishermen.

In Myanmar, eight of eleven conflicts were conducted on a violent level, which marks an increase in comparison to last year. In Kachin state, the conflict between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), politically represented by the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), and the Tatmadaw over resources and self-determination escalated to a limited war [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Shan State)]. At least 14,000 people were displaced by fighting which included airstrikes and other heavy weapons. Last year's war in Rakhine State between the Rohingya and the government de-escalated to a limited war [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. On August 27, the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (FFM) released its report, stating that the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) had conducted both ethnic cleansing as well as systematic sexual violence against Rohingya in Rakhine in 2017. The government denied this. According to reports in February and March, the government had started to destroy former Rohingya villages in northern Rakhine the year before. Subsequently, an additional number of approx. 20,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh. In 2018, the various conflicts over autonomy regarding areas of minorities in Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Chin, and Shan states continued. As in previous years, the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) did not sign the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in their dispute with the government [→ Myanmar (UWSA, NDAA / Shan State)].

The Karenni National Progressive Party had two standoffs with the Tatmadaw in the context of their conflict over regional autonomy, although no casualties were reported this year [→ Myanmar (UNFC et al.)]. The KIA, Arakan Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)], and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)] continued to fight Tatmadaw in skirmishes in their respective territories in Shan and Kachin States. As in the last two years, they continued to occasionally provide each other military support under the so-called Northern Alliance. A newly formed anti-war opposition movement protested several times throughout the year in solidarity with ethnic groups. Protesters clashed violently with police on May 12 in Yangon Region and in mid-January in Rakhine State [→ Myanmar (opposition)].

In Thailand, the violent crisis between Islamist separatists and the government over the secession of several mainly Muslim provinces near the southern border continued [→ Thailand (Islamist separatists / Southern Border Provinces)]. Throughout the year, at least 66 people were killed and 101 injured in related fighting, although the government had called for all militant groups to take part in peace talks.

Vietnam saw a continuation of its violent crisis over land rights, pollution, and working conditions, as the government continued to arrest environmental and other activists protesting socioeconomic shortcomings throughout the year [→ Vietnam (socioeconomic protests)].

Last year's war in the Philippines between Islamist militant groups such as Maute and Abu Sayyaf and the government de-escalated to a limited war [→ Philippines (Islamist militant groups)]. As in the previous year, the Philippine government, in cooperation with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), continued to fight the the Moro Muslim groups Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in a limited war [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)].

In Bangladesh, beforehand the parliamentary elections which took place on December 30, opposition groups regularly clashed with security forces [→ Bangladesh (opposition)]. In total, 91 people were killed and more than 1,500 injured in conflict-related events. As in previous years, the opposition, human right organisations, and journalists criticized the government for authoritarian practices. Moreover, the government continued its intense operations against Islamist militants [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)]. For the first time in many years, Islamic militant groups were subsequently not able to carry out a successful

attack on government institutions, minorities, or civilians. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, fighting between splinter groups of prominent indigenous Jumma militant groups, like the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), intensified, resulting in at least 28 people dead in 2018 [→ Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts)]. Readymade garment (RMG) workers continued to demand the introduction of a higher minimum wage, which led to several large, country-wide protests in the course of the year [→ Bangladesh (RMG Workers)].

In Nepal, Hindu nationalist groups and political parties continued to press the government to reinstate Hinduism as the national religion. Amidst reports of religiously motivated violence, several Christians churches were attacked by alleged Hindu nationalists [→ Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups)].

The conflict in Indonesia between Islamist militant groups such as Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) and the government continued as a violent crisis, leaving at least 68 people dead and 57 injured. A series of bombings in Indonesia's second biggest city Surabaya in May marked the peak of the conflict in 2018 [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. In the provinces of Papua and West Papua, the violent crisis over secession and resources between indigenous Papuan groups and the government also continued, accounting for at least 45 deaths [→ Indonesia (Papua)]. While political tensions intensified in the context of gubernatorial elections at the end of June, the center of the conflict regarding the fight over resources remained to be the Grasberg mine, one of the world's largest copper and gold mines.

In Sri Lanka, communal tensions between the Buddhist majority and the Muslim minority continued and led to the most violent anti-Muslim attacks since 2014. The violence concentrated mainly in Kandy District, where Buddhists attacked 450 Muslim-owned shops and homes as well as 24 Muslim places of worship during a ten-day state of emergency in March [→ Sri Lanka (inter-religious tensions)].

The opposition conflict over national power in Maldives escalated to a violent crisis [→ Maldives (opposition)]. After President Abdulla Yameen had declared a state of emergency due to ongoing opposition demonstrations, several opposition leaders and high-level officials, such as two supreme court judges and the police chief, were arrested. Following the arrests, large-scale anti-government protests were staged in the capital Malé. However, the opposition coalition won the elections in September, which led to a significant change in the conflict actor constellation. In Papua New Guinea, the violent crisis over subnational predominance as well as arable land and other resources between various tribes, such as Kala and Kii, continued. In the aftermath of a 7.5 magnitude earthquake in Hela province, which destroyed infrastructure and deteriorated the life circumstances of local civilians, tribal tensions sharply increased [→ Papua New Guinea (tribal tensions)]. The conflict between the opposition and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis, while corruption allegations against Prime Minister Peter O'Neill remained central [→ Papua New Guinea (opposition)].

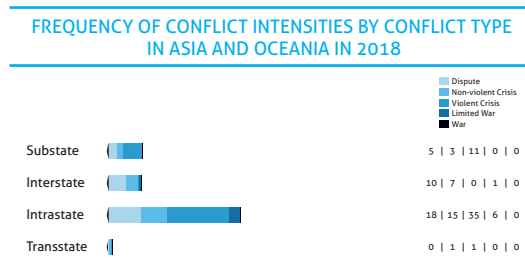
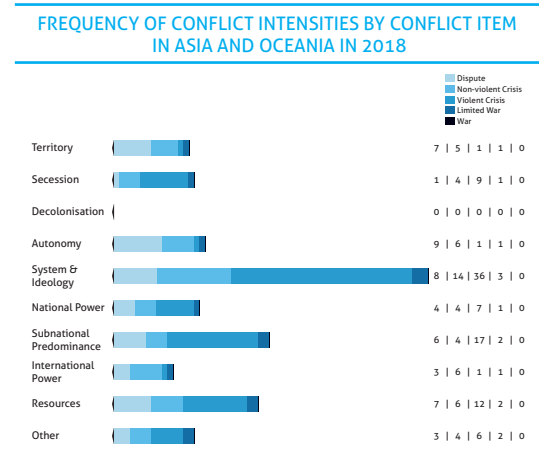
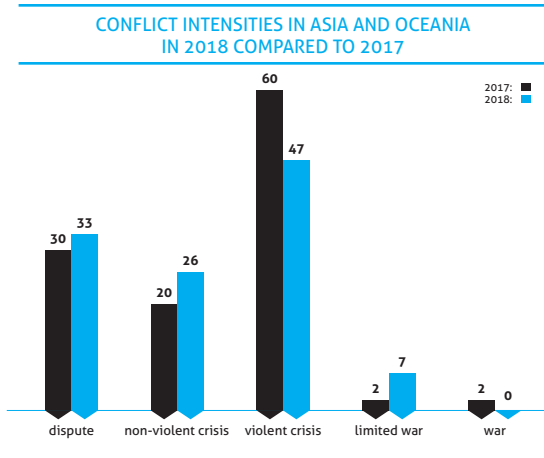
In India, the violent crisis over ideology and the political system between Naxalites and the government escalated to a limited war, accounting for at least 411 deaths. Whereas the number of killed security forces decreased, the number of fatalities of the Naxalites' side increased significantly compared to the year before, also due to the largest operation in the last 38 years conducted by security forces in the region of Maharashtra [→ India (Naxalites)]. Moreover, various militant groups continued their violent struggle for secession [→ India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya); India (Manipur); India (Nagalim); India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. However, fatalities on both sides of these conflicts decreased. After protests and an escalation of the conflict between Nepalese-origin Gorkha groups and the government in June last year, the violent crisis over autonomy in the Doars region de-escalated to a dispute [→ India (GJM et al. / West Bengal)]. The violent crisis over subnational predominance between various groups and over the issue of Bangladeshi immigration in Assam State continued, while inter-ethnic violence further declined. Most incidents occurred in the context of the central government's proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill of 2016, perceived as discriminatory by Assamese groups, and the release of the National Register of Citizenship on July 30, which excluded almost four million people, mainly of Bengali ethnicity, from citizenship [→ India (inter-ethnic rivalry / Assam)].

Inter-communal tensions between different religious groups continued [→ India (Hindus – Muslims), India (Hindus – Christians)]. Demands for socioeconomic benefits under the Indian reservation system raised by several communities were reiterated, leading to protests which often turned violent [→ India (Patels et al.)]. Several militant Sikh groups in India, mainly in Punjab state, and abroad, were fighting for a separate Sikh country Khalistan, some demanding a referendum in 2020 on the matter [→ India (Sikhs)]. Throughout the year, incidents of violence against members of Dalit and Adivasi communities were reported across the country, especially in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu [→ India (Dalits / Adivasis)]. In Kashmir, violent clashes between security forces, Islamist militants, and local protesters continued while Hizbul Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba allegedly increasingly collaborated and the presence of IS intensified [→ India (Kashmir)]. The violent crisis between India and Pakistan escalated to a limited war, since army skirmishes in the contested border area along the line of control forced more than 80,000 civilians to flee their homes in May [→ India – Pakistan].

In Pakistan, the National Assembly in May passed a constitutional amendment to merge the Federally Administered Tribal Areas with the province Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. In the weeks leading up to the general elections on July 25, campaign rallies and polling stations were targeted by militant groups such as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and IS. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz was replaced by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as the governing party and Imran Khan became the new Prime Minister. The religious party Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan as well as the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement challenged the government throughout the year [→ Pakistan (opposition)]. Islamist militant groups continued to target security forces and civilians, as well as members of religious minorities [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups); Pakistan (Sunni militants – religious groups)]. In Balochistan, the militant groups Balochistan Liberation Army, Balochistan Liberation Front and Baloch Republican Guards announced consolidating cooperation under the name Baloch Raji Ajoi Sangar. Militant attacks on projects and institutions related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) continued [→ Pakistan (Balochistan)].

ASIA AND OCEANIA

In Fergana Valley, a clash between Kyrgyz and Tajik residents in April left two people injured in April [→ Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – Uzbekistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)]. Additionally, a Kyrgyz citizen was shot by Uzbek border guards in April. However, the Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments determined two further segments of the disputed border for demarcation in July. In Tajikistan, five alleged Islamists killed four foreign cyclists and injured three at the end of July [→ Tajikistan (Islamist groups)]. Furthermore, a prison riot in November, for which IS claimed responsibility, left 25 people dead. In Kazakhstan, the government continued to persecute Islamist groups and detained individuals for allegedly propagating terrorism [→ Kazakhstan (Islamist groups)]. Moreover, governmental pressure against opposition groups were reported from both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan [→ Kazakhstan (opposition); Uzbekistan (opposition)].



Overview: Conflicts in Asia and Oceania in 2018

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Australia – Timor-Leste	Australia vs. Timor-Leste	territory, resources	1962	END	1
Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts)	Bengali settlers vs. PCJSS, UPDF, PCJSS-MN Larma, UPDF-Democratic vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (Islamist groups)	Hindus, Buddhists vs. JMB, ABT, HuT, AAI 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. factory owners, BGMEA, government	other	2006	•	3
Cambodia (opposition)	CNRM, opposition parties, civil society groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	1997	•	2
Cambodia – Thailand (border)*	Cambodia vs. Thailand	territory, international power	1954	END	1
Cambodia – Vietnam*	Cambodia vs. Vietnam	territory	1969	•	1
China (Christians)*	Christians vs. government	system/ideology	1949	•	3
China (Falun Gong et al.)*	Falun Gong vs. government	system/ideology	1999	↘	2
China (Han – Hui – Tibetans)*	Tibetans vs. Han vs. Hui	subnational predominance	1949	↑	3
China (Hong Kong)	pro-democracy groups, pro-independence groups vs. government, SAR government	autonomy, system/ideology	1997	↘	2
China (Inner Mongolia)	Mongolian ethnic minorities vs. Han Chinese, government	autonomy, subnational predominance, resources	1981	↘	2
China (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	1978	•	1
China (socioeconomic protests)*	environmentalists, factory workers, peasants, civilians vs. government	resources, other	1978	•	3
China (Taiwan ^o – opposition)*	opposition vs. ROC government	system/ideology	2014	END	1
China (Taiwan ^o)	ROC vs. PRC	secession, system/ideology	1949	•	2
China (Tibet)*	CTA, Tibetans, TYC vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1950	•	3
China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)	TIP/ETIM, WUC, Uyghurs vs. government	secession	1949	↘	2
China – India	India vs. PRC	territory, international power, resources	1954	↘	1
China – USA	PRC vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1949	•	2
China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)	PRC vs. Vietnam vs. Brunei vs. ROC vs. Malaysia vs. Indonesia vs. Philippines	territory, international power, resources	1949	↘	2
Fiji (Indo-Fijians – indigenous Fijian ethnonationalists)*	Indo-Fijians vs. indigenous Fijian ethnonationalists	subnational predominance	1970	•	1
Fiji (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1987	•	1
Fiji – Tonga (Minerva Reefs)*	Fiji vs. Tonga	territory	2005	•	1
India (Dalits / Adivasis)	Dalits (Scheduled Castes), Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes) vs. Upper caste members	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1950	•	3
India (GJM et al. / West Bengal)	GJM, GNLF vs. government	autonomy	1907	↓	1
India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya)	GNLA, HNLC, ANVC-B, ANLA, UNLFW et al. vs. government	secession, autonomy	1992	•	3
India (Hindus – Christians)	Hindus, BJP, VHP, BD, RSS, Hindu Munnani vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1999	•	3
India (Hindus – Muslims)	Hindus, BJP, VHP, BD, RSS vs. Muslims	subnational predominance, resources	1947	•	3
India (HPC-D factions / Mizoram, Manipur, Assam)*	HPC-D Zosangbera faction, HPC-D Sanate faction vs. government	autonomy	1986	•	1
India (inter-ethnic rivalry / Assam)	Assamese, ULFA-I, AASU vs. Bangladeshi immigrants, AAMSU vs. Adivasis, AASAA et al.	subnational predominance, other	1979	•	3

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
India (Islamist militant groups)*	SIMI, LeT, JeM, HM, TuM, IS vs. government	system/ideology	2000	↘	2
India (Kashmir)	LeT, HM, JeM, HuM, TuM, IS, APHC, local protesters vs. government	secession, autonomy	1947	•	3
India (Mafia Raj)	sand mafia, timber mafia vs. government, journalists	subnational predominance, resources, other	1986	•	3
India (Manipur)	KRA, UNLF, PLA, PREPAK, KCP, KYKL, KNF vs. government	secession, autonomy, subnational predominance	1964	•	3
India (Nagalim)	NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-U, NSCN-R vs. government	secession, autonomy	1947	•	3
India (Nagas – Assamese Adivasis)*	Nagas, NSF vs. Assamese Adivasis, AANLA, AASU et al.	subnational predominance	1988	•	2
India (Nagas – Kukis)*	NSCN-IM, Nagas vs. KIM, Kukis	subnational predominance	1992	↘	1
India (Naxalites)	Naxalites vs. government	system/ideology	1967	↗	4
India (NLFT factions et al. / Tripura)*	NLFT, ATTF, ATP, NFNS, IPFT vs. government	secession, autonomy	1978	↘	2
India (Patels et al.)	Patel community, Jat community, Maratha community vs. government	other	1981	•	3
India (Sikhs – DSS)*	Sikhs vs. DSS	subnational predominance	2007	↓	1
India (Sikhs)	KLF, Dal Khalsa vs. SFJ vs. government	secession	1947	•	3
India (TJAC / Telangana)*	TJAC, TJS vs. government	autonomy	1969	↓	1
India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)	CorCom, ULFA-I, NDFB-S, NSCN-K, NSCN-R, UNLFW vs. government	secession	1979	•	3
India – Pakistan	India vs. Pakistan	territory, international power, resources	1947	↗	4
Indonesia (Aceh regional government – opposition / Aceh)*	opposition vs. Aceh regional government	subnational predominance, resources	2006	↘	1
Indonesia (Aceh)*	Aceh regional government, PA, KPA vs. government	autonomy, resources	1953	•	1
Indonesia (Ahmadi)*	Ahmadi vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1980	•	2
Indonesia (Christians – Muslims)*	Muslims vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1998	•	3
Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)	MIT, JAD et al. vs. government	system/ideology	1981	•	3
Indonesia (Papua)	OPM, ULMWP, KNPB, FRI-West Papua, TPN, AMP vs. government	secession, resources	1961	•	3
Indonesia – Timor-Leste*	Indonesia vs. Timor-Leste	territory, other	2002	•	1
Indonesia, Philippines – Malaysia (immigrants)*	Malaysia vs. Indonesia, Philippines	other	1998	•	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	↗	2
Japan, South Korea, USA – North Korea	Japan, ROK, USA vs. DPRK	system/ideology, international power, other	1990	•	2
Kazakhstan (Islamist groups)*	government vs. Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, al-Jihad al-Islami, Jamaat Takfir, Jund al-Kilafah	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1
Kazakhstan (opposition)	opposition, DVK, civil rights activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	•	2
Kyrgyzstan (opposition)*	opposition 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
Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan – Uzbekistan*	Kyrgystan, Tajikistan vs. Uzbekistan	international power, resources	2010	↘	1
Laos (Christians)*	Christians vs. government	system/ideology	1975	•	1

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Laos (Hmong, royalists)*	Hmong, royalists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1975	↑	3
Malaysia (Malay – Chinese, Indian, Indigenous Malaysians)*	Malay Malaysians vs. Chinese Malaysians, Indian Malaysians, Indigenous Malaysians	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1946	•	1
Malaysia (opposition)	various opposition groups, Bersih vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1969	END	1
Malaysia (Sulu Sultanate supporters / Lahad Datu district)*	Royal Security Forces of the Sultanate of Sulu and North Borneo vs. government	secession	2013	•	1
Malaysia – Singapore*	Malaysia vs. Singapore	territory	1963	•	1
Maldives (opposition)	opposition vs. government	national power	2003	↗	3
Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)	KIA, KIO vs. government	autonomy, resources	1961	↗	4
Myanmar (KNU, KNLA, DKBA et al. / Karen State, Kayah State)	KNU, KNLA, DKBA, DKBA-splinter group vs. government	autonomy	1948	•	3
Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)*	MNDAA vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1989	•	3
Myanmar (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1962	↑	3
Myanmar (Rohingya)	Rohingya, ARSA vs. government, Buddhists	subnational predominance, other	2012	↘	4
Myanmar (socioeconomic protests)*	local protesters vs. resource companies, government	resources	2012	•	1
Myanmar (SSA / Shan State)*	SSA-N, SSA-S vs. government	autonomy	1953	•	3
Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)	TNLA vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2013	•	3
Myanmar (TNLA – RCSS / Shan State)*	TNLA, PSLF vs. RCSS, SSA	subnational predominance	2015	↗	3
Myanmar (UNFC et al.)	NSMP, KNPP, LDU, ANC, CNF, KNO vs. government	autonomy	2011	↘	2
Myanmar (UWSA, NDAA / Shan State)	UWSA, NDAA vs. government	autonomy	1988	•	1
Nepal (Kiratis / Kosi, Mechi, Sagarmatha)*	FLSC, KNF, SLRM vs. government	autonomy	1992	↓	1
Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai)*	UDMF, JTMM, NLF, RJPN vs. government	autonomy	2004	•	3
Nepal (opposition)*	Nepali Congress, CPN–UML, Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist (UCPN–M) vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2008	•	3
Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups)	RPP, SSN, RPP-D et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
North Korea – South Korea*	North Korea vs. South Korea	territory, system/ideology, international power	1948	•	2
North Korea, China (defectors)*	DPRK vs. Christian aid groups, defector support networks, ROK	system/ideology, other	2000	↘	2
Pakistan (Balochistan)	BLA, BRA, UBA, LeB, BLF, BNM, BRG vs. government	secession, resources	1948	•	3
Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)	TTP, JuA, LeJ, al-Qaeda, IS vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	•	4
Pakistan (opposition)	PTI, TLP, PTM vs. government, and PML-N, TLP, PTM vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, national power	1973	•	3
Pakistan (Sindh)*	MQM, Mohajirs vs. PPP, Balochs, Sindhis vs. ANP, Pashtuns vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1947	•	3
Pakistan (Sunni militants - religious groups)*	TTP, LeJ, IS, JuA vs. Shiites, Ahmadis, Hindus, Christians	subnational predominance	1985	•	3
Pakistan – USA*	Pakistan vs. USA	other	2003	•	1
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)*	civil society groups, MDF, Bougainville Hardliners vs. Meekamui Tribal Government, PMALA, MGU vs. ABG, BCL, government	autonomy, resources	1964	•	1

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Papua New Guinea (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↘	2
Papua New Guinea (socioeconomic protests)*	customary landowners vs. government, resource companies	autonomy, resources	1995	↘	2
Papua New Guinea (tribal tensions)	Kala vs. Kii vs. Homu vs. various tribes	subnational predominance, resources	1975	•	3
Papua New Guinea (urban tensions)*	highlanders vs. lowlanders vs. ethnic Chinese	subnational predominance	1975	•	2
Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)	BIFM, BIFF vs. MILF, government	secession, subnational predominance	2008	•	4
Philippines (CPP, NPA)*	CPP, NPA vs. government	system/ideology	1968	•	3
Philippines (Islamist militant groups)	Abu Sayyaf, Maute et al. vs. government	system/ideology, other	1991	↘	4
Philippines (MILF – MNLF)*	MILF vs. MNLF	subnational predominance	2009	•	3
Philippines (MILF)*	MILF vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1977	•	3
Philippines (MNLF)*	MNLF vs. government	secession, system/ideology, resources	1969	•	2
Sri Lanka (inter-religious tensions)	Sinhalese Buddhists, BBS, Mahason Balakaya, Sinhala Ravaya vs. Muslims, SLMC, Christians	system/ideology	1948	•	3
Sri Lanka (Northern Province, Eastern Province)*	Sinhalese Nationalists, JHU, BBS, JVP vs. Tamils, TNA vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	2009	•	2
Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)*	Pamiri people, drug traffickers, vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	2012	•	1
Tajikistan (Islamist groups)	various Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	•	3
Thailand (Islamist separatists / Southern Border Provinces)	BRN, PULO vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1902	•	3
Thailand (opposition)*	PTP, UDD vs. PAD vs. Royal Thai Armed Forces	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	1
Uzbekistan (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	•	1
Vietnam (Montagnards)*	Montagnards vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1958	•	1
Vietnam (socioeconomic protests)	factory workers, peasants, other civilians vs. manufacturing companies, government	resources, other	1986	•	3

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

AUSTRALIA – TIMOR-LESTE

Intensity: **1** | Change: **END** | Start: **1962**

Conflict parties: **Australia vs. Timor-Leste**
 Conflict items: **territory, resources**

The dispute over maritime borders as well as ownership of oil and gas resources in the Timor Sea between Australia and Timor-Leste ended.

On March 6, Australia and Timor-Leste signed the Treaty on Maritime Boundaries in the Timor Sea (TMBTS) at the UN Headquarters in New York, establishing permanent maritime boundaries that comply with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The treaty followed compulsory conciliation proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), which Timor-Leste initiated on 04/11/2016. The so-called 'Timor Gap', which lacked permanent maritime borders, was created in 1962, when Australia issued petroleum permits for oil and gas re-

serves north of the median line between Australia and then-Portuguese Timor-Leste. While Portugal disputed this claim, Indonesia accepted the Australian maritime borders based on continental shelf expansion in the Seabed Boundary Treaty (SBT) of 1972.

After Indonesia occupied Timor-Leste in 1975, Australia and Indonesia established the Zone of Cooperation (ZOC) located in the Timor Gap in 1989, defining the division of future revenues.

Under UN supervision in 2000, the UN Transitional Administration (UNTAET) negotiated a new deal with Australia on behalf of the Timorese people. The Joint Petroleum Development Area (JPDA) replaced the ZOC. The Timor Sea Treaty (TST) was signed on 05/20/2002, after Timor-Leste gained independence, entitling Timor-Leste to 90 percent of the revenue generated in the JPDA.

However, because the gas and oil field of Greater Sunrise Field (GSF) straddled the borders of the JPDA, additional arrangements were made in the Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS) on 01/12/2006, which left Timor-Leste with 50 percent of the revenue of the GSF.

After Australian Intelligence Services wiretapped intra-Timorese negotiations, Timor-Leste unilaterally declared CMATS to be null and void on 12/12/2012. Based on this, Timor-Leste initiated arbitration proceedings against Australia at the PCA, but adjourned the case in 2014 in favor of bilateral negotiations on the permanent maritime boundaries. After Australia abandoned negotiations, Timor-Leste initiated compulsory conciliation proceedings against Australia at the PCA, eventually leading to the TMBTS. Most of the contested oil and gas fields now fall into Timorese territorial waters. The treaty must still be ratified by both the Australian and the Timorese parliament. lre

BANGLADESH (CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Bengali settlers vs. PCJSS, UPDF, PCJSS-MN Larma, UPDF-Democratic vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over autonomy, subnational predominance, and resources such as arable land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) between Jumma militant groups, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), the government, and Bengali settlers continued. The Jumma activists and the PCJSS leader reiterated their demand for the full implementation of the 1997 CHT Peace Accord, which granted autonomy to the districts Khagrachari, Rangamati, and Bandarban in Chittagong division. On February 25 and November 10, PCJSS leaders stated that many of its activists as well as indigenous civilians had been falsely accused and imprisoned by the government for crimes such as murder or abduction. Lawmaker Ushaton Talukder emphasized that without full implementation of the accord, the indigenous people of CHT could not live and move freely. The government and military established task forces to investigate an arson attack on a Jumma village in June 2017 as an act of truth-finding and reconciliation after police and military forces were criticized for not intervening earlier when a protest by Bengali settlers, gathered to protest against the extrajudicial killings, turned violent.

The most prominent indigenous Jumma militant groups, UPDF and PCJSS, have both splintered into rivaling groups known as UPDF-Democratic and PCJSS-MN Larma. Fighting between the splinter groups and the original parties intensified this year. At least 28 activists of UPDF, UPDF-Democratic, PCJSS, and PCJSS-MN Larma were killed throughout the year, for which the parties hold one another responsible. For instance, on January 3, an activist of UPDF was kidnapped and killed by supposed activists of either UPDF-Democratic or PCJSS in Khagrachari town, though both parties stated that they were not involved. This led to blockades of roads and waterways by the UPDF on January 5 in Khagrachari District. On May 3 and 4, a series of killings involving PCJSS and UPDF-Democratic personnel led to a strike by various Bengali groups on May 6, demanding the arrest of the unidentified killers, the res-

cue of three abducted Bengali traders, and the ban of all 'terrorist tribal organisations' and the recovery of illegal arms in the hills. On June 15, 16, and 17 three UPDF-Democratic and PCJSS-MN Larma activists were killed and one injured in Rangamati and Khagrachari. Throughout the rest of the year violence continued between the rivaling groups. pso

BANGLADESH (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Hindus, Buddhists vs. JMB, ABT, HuT, AAI 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 Buddhists and Hindus, continued.

Security forces continued their countrywide operations against alleged Islamist groups and arrested militants belonging to Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB) or its faction Neo-JMB, Ansar al-Islam, Ansurallah Bangla Team, and Hizb ut-Tahrir. For the first time in many years, Islamic militant groups did not carry out any successful attacks targeting government institutions, minorities, or civilians.

According to Bangladesh's security agencies, militant groups tried to reorganize. Subsequently, the police and its special units, the Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police as well as the Rapid Act Battalion (RAB), conducted security operations in order to thwart allegedly planned attacks and prevent further mobilization of Islamic militant groups. The operations were carried out in the divisions of Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Sylhet. In total, more than 218 militants were arrested and 12 militants killed during these operations. Additionally, police forces recovered numerous hand bombs, gunpowder, suicide vests, Jihadi books, leaflets, and recruitment forms. For instance, on January 12, the RAB conducted an operation against JMB militants in the capital Dhaka, eponymous division, leaving three militants dead and two RAB officers injured. During the raid, the RAB discovered three suicide vests, two pistols, 14 IEDs as well as material to make IEDs. The police arrested four alleged JMB members on a recruiting mission in Meherpur district, Khulna division on October 3.

Violence against religious minorities decreased significantly compared to previous years. For instance, on March 3, university professor and author Zafar Iqbal was injured in a knife attack at Shahjalal University in Sylhet, eponymous division. The assailant claimed to have stabbed Iqbal for "being an enemy of Islam", but was not a member of an organized militant group, according to investigators. Secondly, on March 7, a Hindu priest was strangled by suspected Islamic militants in Chatmohar Upazila, Rajshahi Division.

Throughout the year, a number of trials and convictions of alleged Islamist militants took place. On March 19, a Rang-

pur court sentenced seven JMB members to death for their involvement in the killing of Khadem Rahmat Ali in 2015. On December 3, a special tribunal in Dhaka started the trial against eight militants suspected to having been involved in Bangladesh's most fatal attack from July 2016 when 22 people were killed.

Ahead of the general elections in December, security officials repeatedly warned of Islamist militant groups possibly trying to sabotage the election process. Nevertheless, no incidents were reported. ksa

BANGLADESH (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: BNP, Jel vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between the opposition parties Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel) on one hand, and the government, led by the Awami League (AL) on the other, continued as a violent crisis. The BNP and Jel were supported by student organizations, the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (BJC) and the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), whereas AL was supported by its student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL). Throughout the year, clashes between and within the parties left the at least 91 people dead and 1,538 injured. For instance, on November 16, four people were killed and 100 injured in Nilakkha and Bashgari union parishads in Dhaka Division, as two factions of AL attacked each other with firearms and fishing spears in a clash over establishing supremacy in the area.

As in previous years, the opposition, human right organizations, and journalists criticized the government for increasing authoritarian practices. On March 12, Jakir Hossain Milon, vice president of BNP's student wing, BJC, Dhaka city unit, died in custody six days after police arrested him after a protest in the capital Dhaka, eponymous division. BNP and Milon's family claimed he had been tortured. Throughout the year, the government used force to disperse student protests. For instance, on April 8, violence erupted in Dhaka as police used tear gas and water cannons, leaving at least 100 students injured as they protested countrywide against government recruitment practices. Students protested nationwide from July 29 to August 9 over dangerous road conditions, following the death of two students who had been hit by a bus. AL and BNP accused each other after at least 100 people were injured during the protests. On August 8, photojournalist and activist, Shahidul Alam, was arrested after he had connected the student protests to a lack of democracy in an interview. Local elections in Rajshahi, Barishal, and Sylhet Divisions were accompanied by allegations of irregularities such as vote rigging or ballot stuffing. Tensions intensified in the run-up for the parliamentary elections. On October 28, the Election Commission canceled Jel's registration, stating it would violate election laws. Supporters of Jel and BNP clashed with followers of AL throughout the country during the elections, resulting in the death of at least 17 people and 200 injured.

For instance, on November 14, at least twelve BNP activists and 20 police officers were injured in a clash in front of the BNP's Nayapaltan office in the capital. BNP supporters allegedly set fire to two police vehicles and hurled brick chips on police while police used baton charges to disperse them. On December 30, incumbent prime minister, Sheikh Hasina's ruling coalition, AL, won 288 out of 300 seats in parliament after BNP leader Khaleda Zia had been jailed on February 8 and again on October 29 in corruption cases, which she called politically motivated. The opposition rejected the parliamentary election results and demanded new elections but they were dismissed by the Election Commission. From December 29 until the end of the elections, the Telecommunication Commission suspended mobile data connections, making it nearly impossible to upload videos or photos.

vli

BANGLADESH (RMG WORKERS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: RMG workers vs. factory owners, BGMEA, government

Conflict items: other

The violent crisis over working conditions, social security and payment for ready-made garment workers (RMG) on the one hand, and the government and factory owners on the other hand, continued. Despite the formation of a new wage board committee earlier in the year, RMG workers reiterated their demands for workplace safety, securing regular payments and higher minimum wages by protesting frequently over the course of the year.

As in previous years, the introduction of a higher minimum wage remained a contentious issue, leading to several protests over the course of the year.

In January, following the requests made by the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturing Export Association (BGMEA), the State Minister for Labor and Employment announced the formation of a new wage board committee to establish a new minimum wage structure for RMG workers. However, RMG workers staged a sit-in during the committee's first meeting on March 21 in Dhaka, demanding a minimum wage of Tk 16,000. On the fifth anniversary of the Rana Plaza collapse, where more than 1,000 people died, several hundred workers, activists and relatives of the killed workers in the collapse, protested in Dhaka on April 25, demanding workplace safety. On September 14, after the wage board committee introduced a new fixed minimum wage structure of Tk 8,000, half of what the RMG workers demanded earlier in the year, worker unions conducted demonstrations in the capital. Another protest took place over the implementation of the pay structures on December 20, when several hundreds of RMG staged a protest in the cities of Savar, Ashulia and Gazipur, Dhaka division. BGMEA officials fearing an outburst of protests within factory facilities, kept 50 factories closed throughout the day.

Further protests evolved over pending payments and violations of labor laws. For instance, on January 31, at least 200 RMG workers demanding pending payments clashed with em-

ployees of the BGMEA in the capital Dhaka, eponymous division, leaving one RMG worker and two BGMEA employees injured. During the clash, several machines, furniture and a car were damaged. On June 24, police used batons against approx. 100 RMG workers demanding their pending salaries. At least 15 people were injured. After the closure of a factory, several hundred RMG workers blocked a main road in Dhaka province, on July 10, claiming the closure without prior notice had been unlawful. On October 22, about 3,000 workers protested for pending salaries in Narayanganj, Dhaka. Clashes with the police left 50 protesters and five police officers injured and several vehicles were damaged. nsk

CAMBODIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: CNRM, opposition parties, civil society groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources

The non-violent crisis over national power, ideology and resources between the exiled opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), as well as other opposition parties and civil society groups on the one hand, and the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) on the other, continued.

Despite living in exile since the CNRP's dissolution in November 2017, some of its former leaders, such as Sam Rainsy and Mu Sochua, formed the Cambodia National Rescue Movement (CNRM) on January 13. The government labelled the CNRM a terrorist organization. After a meeting of exiled CNRP members on December 1 and 2 in Atlanta, USA, Rainsy assumed leadership. Supporters of incumbent but detained CNRP leader Kem Sokha criticized Rainsy as not legitimized. Throughout the year, the CNRM lobbied foreign governments and organized rallies in several foreign cities against the government, such as on October 7 in Tokyo, Japan, with 600 people attending.

Parliament approved amendments to the constitution and criminal code on February 14, prohibiting insults to Cambodia's monarchy and government. This resulted in arrests of opposition members throughout the year.

Elections on February 26 and July 29, which disallowed the CNRP to contest, were subject to the conflict between government and opposition. The CPP declared winning every seat in both, on the respective days before official results were published. The CPP and minor opposition parties pressured supporters of the so-called Clean Finger boycott campaign of the CNRP. Several domestic and foreign organisations and foreign governments announced they would not monitor the elections due to claims of undemocratic process, among others the UN, Australia, EU and Japan, which nevertheless continued to be a major donor to the elections. In contrast, the Chinese and Russian governments supported the elections. The elections were allegedly preceded by nationwide surveillance and intimidation efforts to vote, also affecting Cambodians living abroad.

Regarding the elections, the US again imposed visa and finan-

cial sanctions on authorities and further discussed passing the so-called Cambodia Democracy Act. On October 5, the EU announced to remove trade preferences for Cambodia which are especially important for garment industry and might affect land disputes.

After re-election, the government released several political prisoners starting on August 17, as well as considering a return option for banned CNRP members, which was made legally possible on December 13. Kem Sokha was released on bail over health issues on September 10 but remained under house arrest despite foreign governments and rights groups demanding all charges against him to be dropped.

Throughout the year, the government continued to limit and control independent media through threats, newly raised taxes and arrests of leading figures. For example, in May, the Phnom Penh Post was sold to a Malaysian businessman suspected to have acted on behalf of the Cambodian government, which denied the allegations. sov

CHINA (HONG KONG)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: pro-democracy groups, pro-independence groups vs. government, SAR government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology

The violent crisis over autonomy and the political system between various Hong Kong (HK) pro-democracy and pro-independence groups on the one hand, and the governments of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. The HK Basic Law does not allow advocacy for HK independence.

Throughout the year, pro-democracy and independence protests were staged. On January 1, about 6,200 pro-democratic protesters marched on HK's government headquarters and demonstrated against the PRC's efforts to undermine HK's autonomy. On May 27 and June 4, large-scale pro-democracy protests were staged in HK in remembrance of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. During the anniversary ceremony of the 1997 HK handover on July 1, HK police arrested about 20 pro-democrats demonstrating for universal suffrage and opposing one-party rule.

On January 17, the HK High Court sentenced pro-democratic leader, Joshua Wong, to three months imprisonment due to his participation in a demonstration held in an illegal protest zone. One week later, he was released on bail. On February 6, three pro-democrats, Wong, Nathan Law and Alex Chow, were exonerated by the HK Court of Final Appeal from their prison sentences judged last year in August. On September 28, HK High Court denied Wong's request for alleviating his bail conditions and confiscated his passport.

Throughout the year, at least three pro-democrat lawmakers were barred from running in local elections. For instance, on January 27, HKSAR banned a member of the pro-democracy organization Demosistō from the HK Legislative Council by-election. One day later, about 2,000 pro-democrats protested

in response in front of HK's government.

On April 17, Wong applied at HK High Court for a review of the Companies Registry's refusal to register Demosistō. On August 27, he accused PRC's authorities of detaining two Demosistō members in an attempt to silence pro-democrats. After an HK police request to ban the pro-independence HK National Party in July, hundreds of pro-democrats protested against the proposal. Subsequently, on September 24, HK Secretary for Security declared the party illegal, arguing that it posed a threat to national security. In response, thousands of pro-democrats protested on October 1, also against investment programs of PRC in HK. kol

CHINA (INNER MONGOLIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Mongolian ethnic minorities vs. Han Chinese, government

Conflict items: autonomy, subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region over resources, autonomy and subnational predominance, between Mongolian ethnic minorities, consisting mainly of nomadic communities and herders on the one hand, and the Chinese government and the Han majority in the region on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

Throughout the year, ethnic Mongolians continued to express their discontent with the government's policies on land expropriations and herders' inability to access legal channels. On January 24, the People's Court in Tongliao City sentenced 35 ethnic Mongolian herders for their attempts to hinder the construction of a highway by a Chinese company in April and May 2017. Chinese authorities had allegedly expropriated the herders' grazing grounds. On March 27, police forces detained approx. nine ethnic Mongolian herders, who traveled to China's capital Beijing to use the petition system to lodge complaints against land expropriations, pollution and corruption.

Further complaints were lodged over the ethnic Mongolians' socioeconomic situation and the suppression of the Mongolian language. On May 21, more than 2,000 ethnic Mongolian teachers and educational workers dismissed by the government in 2017, staged a protest in Inner Mongolia's capital Hohhot, demanding re-employment, compensation payments, and a pension fund for unemployed teachers. They spoke out against the closure of schools teaching in the Mongolian language or mergers with Chinese schools. The last school in China teaching in Mongolian was banned from doing so in January. gko

CHINA (TAIWAN^o)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: ROC vs. PRC

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The non-violent crisis over secession and ideology between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) continued.

Throughout the year, the competition for diplomatic allies between the ROC and the PRC continued. On May 1, the Dominican Republic cut its diplomatic ties with Taiwan^o in compliance with the "One China" policy, followed by Burkina Faso on May 24. Furthermore, El Salvador cut ties with the ROC on August 21, reducing the number of Taiwan's diplomatic partners to 17. The US State Department expressed its disappointment with the decision. On September 8, the US recalled its ambassador to El Salvador to further discuss the country's decision, stating concerns over the ROC's increasing diplomatic isolation. The PRC also continued to attack the ROC's status in international organizations.

On May 7, the ROC Mainland Affairs Council accused the PRC of blocking Taiwan's participation as observer in the World Health Assembly, thus politicizing the health of the Taiwanese people. The PRC continued to conduct military drills in the vicinity of Taiwan. On March 21, the PRC sent an unspecified number of bombers, fighter jets, and transport aircraft over the Bashi Channel between Taiwan and the Philippines. In response to this, Taiwanese fighter jets followed the aircrafts until they had returned to the mainland. In addition, the PRC's issuance of aviation rules for commercial jets in the Taiwan Strait drew strong criticism from the ROC. On January 7, ROC President Tsai Ing-wen had accused the PRC of "damaging the current situation in the Taiwan Strait" after the PRC had opened a new flight route in the island's vicinity without informing the ROC government.

As in previous years, the Taiwan issue also incited frictions between the PRC and the US on several occasions. On March 5, after the US Senate had passed a bill aiming for the improvement of official contacts between the US and Taiwan, PRC Premier Li Keqiang warned Taiwan that China "would not tolerate any separatist activities". Eleven days later, US President Donald Trump signed the bill. On September 25, the PRC foreign ministry further criticized the US' approval of military aircraft spare parts sales to Taiwan for up to USD 330 Mio [→ China – USA]. lja

CHINA (UYGHURS / XINJIANG)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: TIP/ETIM, WUC, Uyghurs vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis between the Uyghur community and the Chinese government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

With the government upscaling its policy of repression, no organized activity by Uyghurs was observed on the territory of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The Uyghur diaspora remained active in several countries and mobilized support by western governments and Muslim fellow believers, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. The increasing pressure of the Chinese government widened the political and generational rift within the international Uyghur community between more moderate, established organizations such as the Munich-based World Uyghur Congress and more radical, younger organizations such as the Istanbul-based East Turkistan Education and Solidarity Association. Reportedly, many Uyghurs fled the PRC and Asia via networks of Islamist escape agents, also used by Rohingya refugees [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)].

While some Islamist Uyghur militants were reported to have joined the so-called Islamic State (IS), the main organization of Uyghur Islamism continued to be the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), which is believed to be identical with the East Turkistan Islamic Movement and is allied with al-Qaeda. In the past years, both al-Qaeda and IS had declared jihad against the PRC for its repression of Muslims.

Reportedly, the TIP has been active in the Syrian Civil War since 2015 and controls the town of Jis-al-Shughur in western Idlib, commanding heavy weapons and an estimated 3,000 fighters [→ Syria (opposition)]. Emphasizing the threat of returning Uyghur militants, the PRC has expanded its security and intelligence cooperation with governments both in the Middle East as well as in Central and South Asia. However, several of them faced increased domestic pressure from Muslim and Turkic citizens solidarizing with the Uyghurs.

Since the last observed attack by Uyghur militants in February 2017, Chinese authorities have implemented a comprehensive policing, surveillance, and incarceration program in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which nullified the civil liberties of ethnic Uyghurs. By massively enlarging the police force with semi-official assistants and dispatching over a million officials to monitor about 1.6 million rural Uyghur households, the XUAR government perpetuated and normalized its preceding 'Strike Hard' campaigns and its 2014-declared 'people's war on terror'. To disarm the population, authorities had imposed strict controls on the sale and use of knives and scissors. Using advanced surveillance technologies and a tight network of police stations and checkpoints, the government divided the target area into squares of 500 people, in which it controls the flows of persons and information, and retains rapid response capability.

Suspects were identified by machine learning algorithms, provided with real-time data from compulsory spy apps for smartphones, GPS tracking devices for vehicles, and facial recognition systems fed by closed-circuit cameras. Extensive biometric data was supplemented by mandatory health checkups.

Key target of these policies were the crackdown on 'backward' beliefs and practices, assisted by restrictions on language use, worship, Islamic diets and clothing, as well as traditional wedding and funeral rites. In line with a nationwide policy of religious and cultural repression, authorities closed or destroyed several mosques and persecuted unofficial Quranic schools [→ China (Han – Hui – Tibetans), China (Christians), China (Falun Gong et al.)].

The main target area of the policies were cities and counties in the XUAR with large minority populations, which include also Kazakh and Kyrgyz people. Migrants from these areas were in large numbers forced to return to their hometowns and often interned in extrajudicial detention centers and re-education camps. Satellite imagery indicated that their construction had begun by mid-2017. Arrests and detentions of ethnic Uyghurs have significantly increased since, with scholars and NGOs estimating that up to 1.1 million have been interned, making up approx. 10 percent of the adult Uyghur population. Among them were leading Uyghur intellectuals and officials, the latter being purged under allegations of 'two-facedness'. Several were reported to have died in detention, among them prominent Islamic scholars Muhammad Salih Hajim and Abdukerim Abduweli. Former detainees reported that they underwent torture and indoctrination and were forced to provide labor for Chinese textile factories. Having initially denied the existence of the camps, the Chinese government reversed course in October by legalizing them as 'vocational and educational training centers', turning 'analphabetes into people of culture' and 'vagabonds into 'working men'. Also targets of the incarceration policy were Uyghurs working or studying abroad, whose return the government reportedly secured by threatening left-behind family members and by requesting host governments to extradite them. In this, it succeeded also in the case of Muslim-majority countries such as Afghanistan, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

The Uyghur diaspora staged protests against Chinese policies throughout the year, gathering in New York on March 15, in Brussels on April 27, and in Geneva on November 6.

In the fourth quarter of the year, solidarity protests were staged by Muslims in India, Bangladesh, and especially Indonesia. The most persistent popular reactions were observed in Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, where family members of detained Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, and Kazakhs organized and started campaigns, in some cases successfully pushing their governments to pursue the matter diplomatically.

Western governments became more attentive to the issue in August and September, as UN organs, NGOs, and exiled Chinese intellectuals raised alarm about the situation in the XUAR. Germany and Sweden, important host countries of the diaspora, halted all deportations of Uyghurs to China. In September, the US State Department openly criticized Chinese incarceration of 'possibly millions of Uyghurs' and publicly considered sanctioning the Chinese officials involved in it [→ China – USA]. On October 11, Malaysia decided to ignore Chinese extradition requests and sent eleven Uyghur refugees to Turkey. In November, 15 western ambassadors submitted a letter of concern to the PRC. jfr

CHINA – INDIA

Intensity: 1 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: India vs. PRC

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict between China and India over issues relating

to territory, international power and water resources de-escalated to a dispute. After a border standoff in 2017, both sides engaged in mutual rapprochement.

Most notably, on March 7, the Indian government prohibited Tibetans from holding a rally in New Delhi for the 60th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising in 1958, easing bilateral tensions over the Tibet issue [→ China (Tibet)].

Following a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 28 in Wuhan, China, both governments further agreed to maintain peace along the Line of Actual Control and improve communication between their militaries. Tensions decreased after both presidents reaffirmed the sharing of hydrological data on the movement and water distribution of the Brahmaputra River at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Qingdao on June 9, addressing the dispute over Chinese dam-building at the upper reaches. India and Pakistan had joined the SCO at its summit in Astana 2017. During the same meeting, the Chinese government complied to amend barriers on Indian rice exports to China, facilitating a slight decrease of India's trade deficit.

On August 21, Prime Minister Modi and Chinese State Councilor Wei Fenghe emphasized the strong bond between India and China at the latter's visit to New Delhi. On October 25, the Chinese defence ministry issued a statement that both countries would hold joint army drills by the end of the year. lja

CHINA – USA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: PRC vs. USA

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The conflict over international power and system/ideology between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States of America (US) remained as a non-violent crisis. Tensions increased regarding economic issues.

On March 22, US President Donald Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum regarding results of the United States Trade Representative's investigation on alleged damage to American companies' intellectual property rights in China. The investigation estimated losses to the US economy of at least USD 50 billion annually. On April 16, the US government imposed sanctions on China's second largest telecommunication company, ZTE, charging a fine of USD 1 billion and banning the latter from buying technologies from American companies due to alleged violations against American sanctions on Iran and North Korea. On July 6, August 23 and September 24, the US increased tariffs on Chinese goods by 25 percent, 25 percent and 10 percent, respectively, worth USD 250 billion in total. On the same days, China increased 25 percent, 25 percent and 5-10 percent tariffs, respectively, on imported American goods worth USD 79 billion in total. On December 1, during the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, presidents from both sides agreed to postpone another tariff increase scheduled to take effect from January 2019.

On September 18, the US government authorized a USD 330 million arms sale to Taiwan despite opposition of the Chi-

nese government. On September 20, the US announced sanctions on the Equipment Development Department of the Chinese military for purchasing Su-25 combat aircraft and S-400 surface-to-air missile system equipment from Russia. Consequently, the next day, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the US for 'damaging relations' and summoned the US Ambassador. On September 30, a Chinese 052D destroyer approached a USS Decatur within 45 yards in the vicinity of the contested Gaven Reef in the South China Sea, which was later criticized by the US Navy [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. On November 28, two US Navy vessels transited the Taiwan Strait after similar operations on July 7 and October 22. The next day, the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged the US to 'cautiously handle the Taiwan issue' and avoid damaging PRC-US relations. On December 1, Meng Wanzhou, the CFO of China's largest telecom company Huawei, was arrested in Vancouver, Canada, for breaking US sanctions on Iran. On December 9, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the US and Canadian ambassadors in 'strong protest', accusing the US of 'directing Canada' to detain Meng and demanding her release. Two days later, she was granted bail.

lxl

CHINA – VIETNAM ET AL. (SOUTH CHINA SEA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: PRC vs. Vietnam vs. Brunei vs. ROC vs. Malaysia vs. Indonesia vs. Philippines

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict over international power, territory, and resources in the South China Sea (SCS) between the People's Republic of China (PRC), Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, the Republic of China (ROC), and Indonesia, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis but remained tense.

The conflict was primarily structured by extensive territorial claims of the two Chinas, vaguely delineated by the so-called 'nine-dash line'. Besides the sea areas and its resources, the line encompassed the northern Paracel Islands, also claimed by Vietnam, the eastern Scarborough Shoal, also claimed by the Philippines, and the southern Spratly Islands, claimed by all parties except Brunei and Indonesia. Claims of the latter two confined to disputed sea areas, which they defined as part of their exclusive economic zones. On December 18, Indonesia inaugurated its new tri-service military base on the Natuna Islands, close to the disputed area. Except the two Chinas, all claimants were members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which remained the main venue of coordination both with and vis-à-vis the PRC. On August 2, PRC-ASEAN negotiations over a code of conduct for the conflict reached an intermediate goal with the agreement on a single draft negotiating text. In late October, the PRC and ASEAN members conducted their first joint naval exercise near Zhanjiang, Guangdong, focusing on maritime safety. However, the conflict also remained internationalized, with the US, Japan, Australia, and India expanding their defense

cooperation with several Southeast Asian states.

All parties except Brunei and Indonesia developed infrastructure on the disputed islets, usually backed by massive land reclamations. Satellite imagery disclosed extensive building activity by Vietnam on Spratly Island, by the Philippines on Thitu Island, by Malaysia on Swallow Reef, and by the ROC on Itu Aba. With approx. 27 dual civil-military bases, the PRC erected more structures than all other countries combined, concentrating on Paracel's Woody Island, the Spratly Islands' Mischief, Fiery Cross, and Subi reefs. Constructions included runways, hangars, deep-water ports, and storage facilities. Over the course of the year, platforms were also equipped with radar jammers and sophisticated information systems. In early May, it became public that the PRC had installed anti-ship and surface-to-air missiles on its main platforms. Vietnam strongly protested this. Australia denounced the move as 'militarizing' the dispute, a criticism later echoed by the US. On May 18, Chinese bombers conducted takeoff and landing exercises on the islets. The Chinese steps were also criticized by the new government of Malaysia, with newly elected Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad calling for the demilitarization of the SCS. Reverting the Malaysia's China policy, he suspended major Chinese investment projects in the country and warned of Beijing's 'new colonialism', instead advocating more coordination among ASEAN members.

Throughout the year, the US conducted freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) in the SCS, repudiating artificial islands as bases for territorial claims by sailing within twelve nautical miles of the Chinese platforms. This practice was followed by the United Kingdom and France and supported by Japan, Australia, Canada, and India. The US conducted FONOPs with destroyers and cruisers in all disputed areas, namely around Scarborough Shoal on January 17, at Mischief Reef on March 23, close to the Paracel Islands on May 27 on November 26, and near the Spratly's Gaven Reef on September 30. The UK conducted a joint FONOP with France around the Spratly Islands in June, and another close to the Paracel Islands on August 31. The PRC denounced the FONOPs as sovereignty violations by 'outside parties' and routinely dispatched air and naval forces to warn off patrolling warships [→ China – USA]. PRC vessels also shadowed three Australian warships and a Japanese helicopter carrier group when they cruised the SCS in April and October, respectively. During the September FONOP, Chinese destroyer Lanzhou provoked a close encounter with the USS Decatur, criticized by US officials as 'unsafe and unprofessional'. From August to November, the US repeatedly sent pairs of B-52 bombers across the SCS. It also continued to cruise the region with its aircraft carrier (AC) groups, paying visits to littoral states and conducting joint exercises with their navies. On March 5, the AC USS Carl Vinson paid a historic visit to Da Nang, Vietnam. Later that month, it conducted joint exercises with Japanese helicopter carrier Ise in the SCS and the Western Pacific [→ Japan – China]. On April 11, AC USS Theodore Roosevelt paid a visit to Manila, demonstrating its combat readiness along the way. The PRC in turn conducted a series of major exercises along its southern coast from late March to mid-April, involving AC Liaoning and initially 40 warships. In mid-May, the US disinited the PRC from its annual RIMPAC exercise while inviting Vietnam for the first time, together with longstanding participants Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

In the case of the PRC's conflicts with Vietnam and the Philippines, territorial conflicts corresponded with disputes over offshore exploration and extraction of oil and gas resources. In 2017, the PRC had reportedly threatened both countries with responding to exploration attempts from their side with attacks. In March, the PRC successfully pressured Vietnam into halting exploration by Spanish company Repsol in the Red Emperor field, but state company PetroVietnam continued its partnerships with other companies, notably from Russia, India, and Japan. In May, Russia's Rosneft started drilling a new well in the Lan Do oil field, despite Chinese concerns. By contrast, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte pursued joint exploration with the PRC through bilateral negotiations, leading to an memorandum of understanding in late November. Duterte refrained from asserting the Permanent Court of Arbitration's 2016 award on the dispute, which had invalidated most of China's claims. Both countries also extended their defense cooperation, while the implementation of the 2014-signed US-Philippine Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement largely stalled. Despite this, the Sino-Philippine relations suffered from Philippine aerial patrols to the PRC-held Scarborough Shoal and Chinese harassment of Philippine fishermen and resupply missions to occupied islets. Duterte's foreign policy also encountered strong domestic opposition. PRC President Xi Jinping raised bilateral relations with Brunei and the Philippines to the level of strategic partnerships when visiting the countries in mid-December.

Apart from fossil resources, the SCS's rich fishing grounds remained a critical issue in the conflict, still employing more than half of the global fishing fleet. With disputed sea borders and unilaterally defined fishing seasons facilitating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), stocks were reported to be at the verge of collapse. Due to tense encounters at sea, the fishing fleets of the PRC, Vietnam, and the Philippines have increasingly turned into militias or were provided with armed escorts. On April 18, Vietnam publicly considered loosening the rules of engagement of its coast guard. On October 18, the Indonesian Fisheries Minister referred to Chinese fishing in the Indonesian waters as 'transnational organized crime', championing her own country's aggressive IUU policy that has reportedly led to more than 364 blown-up fishing vessels since 2014. jfr

INDIA (DALITS / ADIVASIS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1950

Conflict parties: Dalits (Scheduled Castes), Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes) vs. Upper caste members

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The violent crisis over the Hindu caste system and subnational predominance between Dalits and Adivasis, recognized by the government as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) on the one hand, and upper caste members on the other, continued. Adivasi and Dalit groups repeatedly denounced structural discrimination against their groups as well

as the restriction of their rights. The groups staged several protest marches throughout the year. Moreover, incidents of violence against members of Dalit and Adivasi communities were reported across the country, particularly in rural areas. The states of Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu counted the most violent incidents.

On February 15, in Patan city, Gujarat state, a retired revenue officer self-immolated in front of the district magistrate's office, protesting against the administrative delays to a Dalit community member's application for land allotment. On February 20, in Gollanabeedu village, Karnataka state, an upper caste woman was killed by her relatives for refusing to end a relationship with a Dalit man, following a caste custom that prohibits marriage between upper caste members and Dalits. On May 28, in Kachanatham village, Tamil Nadu state, 15 upper caste Hindus attacked a group of Dalits, killing two and injuring six. The attack was allegedly in response to the Dalits failing to show temple honours towards the upper caste Hindus and sitting cross-legged in front of them, interpreted as an insult within the Hindu caste system. On September 3, in Nawar, Madhya Pradesh state, three upper caste Hindus scalped a Dalit man for wearing a turban. The Dalit alleged that the notifying police officer initially refused to register the attack and to conduct an inquiry into the allegations.

Over the course of the year, Dalit and Adivasi groups protested all over the country. On January 1, for instance, thousands of Dalits gathered near Pune, Maharashtra state, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Bhima Koregaon, in which the British East India Company had defeated a faction of the upper caste Maratha Confederacy. When Dalits clashed with a local group of upper caste Marathas during the commemoration, riot police used tear gas and sticks to disperse the crowds. Overall, one person was killed, three injured and approx. 25 vehicles were torched. On March 20, the Supreme Court passed an amendment to the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. It removed the provision that had allowed the immediate arrest of people suspected to have committed crime against SC and ST members. After the amendment, approval from higher authorities was to be sought prior to an arrest. On April 2, in response, a nation-wide protest was organized by Dalit and Adivasi organizations across the country, claiming the ruling would curb the Act's effectiveness. Protesters clashed with riot police in several cities. 11 people were killed, 10 of them Dalits, and more than 100 were injured.

stv

INDIA (GJM ET AL. / WEST BENGAL)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 1907

Conflict parties: GJM, GNLF vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy between different Nepalese-origin Gorkha groups and the government in the Dooars region de-escalated to a dispute.

Among others, Gorkhas were organized in the groups Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) and Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). All Gorkha groups continued to demand a fully au-

tonomous Gorkhaland in the area around Darjeeling, in parts of Dooars floodplains, and on Terai lowland.

On January 11, the former GJM leader Bimal Gurung agreed to participate in talks with the West Bengal State government. Gurung assured that the implementation of Gorkha autonomy would be peaceful and democratic as well as within the Indian Constitution. On February 21, the Supreme Court decided the withdrawal of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) from Darjeeling area after March 8. The forces had been deployed to the area during the protests in 2017. On April 27, Gurung claimed that the West Bengal government had deliberately settled Rohingya refugees in Darjeeling area in order to marginalize Gorkhas and other native communities [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. On October 6, the Union Home Secretary agreed to hold tripartite talks between the Indian government, the West Bengal State government, and GJM to discuss relevant issues for creating a separate Gorkhaland. On December 30, GJM called for elections for Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, the semi-autonomous administrative body for Darjeeling and Kalimpong hills, as soon as possible, which was opposed by GNLF. jnb

INDIA (GNLA ET AL. / MEGHALAYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: GNLA, HNLC, ANVC-B, ANLA, UNLFW et al. vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis between militant groups seeking secession in the Garo Hills and Khasi Hills region of Meghalaya State and the government continued. Militant groups associated with the Garo ethnicity, such as Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA), A'chik National Liberation Army (ANLA), and A'chik National Volunteer Council-Breakaway (ANVC-B), aimed to establish an independent Garo state. Further, militant groups associated with the Khasi ethnicity such as the Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC) strove for an independent Khasi province.

Throughout the year, violent encounters between security forces and GNLA militants and an IED attack on a government official left six people dead and three injured. On January 11, police forces killed the GNLA deputy commander-in-chief in a shooting at Bawe Duragre village, East Garo Hills District. Moreover, a convoy of a Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) candidate Jonathone N. Sangma from William Nagar constituency was hit by an IED in Samada, East Garo Hills on February 18, which left four people including the candidate dead and three people injured. Police suspected GNLA for committing the attack. After GNLA commander-in-chief Sohan D. Shira had renewed the demands for a separate Garoland in exchange for an end of militancy on February 3, he died in an encounter between GNLA members and security forces on February 24. On August 4, former GNLA member Grikseng N. Sangma was arrested at Rongmi outpost, East Garo Hills District, for being suspected of inviting members of National Democratic Front of Bodoland-Saraigowra (NDFB-S) to take out operations in the Garo region [→ ULFA-I et al. / Assam].

On December 5, hundreds of people from the Garo community rallied for a separate Garoland in Shillong. The rally was supported by Garoland State Movement Committee (GSMC), the Garo National Council (GNC), and A'chik Holistic Awakening Movement (AHAM) led by a former chairman of GNLA.

After the Indian Government introduced a new rehabilitation policy for surrendered militants in North East India, on March 22, a former GNLA chairman called upon remaining members to surrender before the authorities. Peace negotiations between the Meghalaya Government and HNLC came to a halt on May 5, because HNLC accused the government of providing them with worse negotiation terms compared to those offered to the disbanded ANVC-B. On August 13, however, the HNLC stated to be ready for unconditional peace talks with the Meghalaya Government.

Over the course of the year, several militants surrendered before the Meghalaya authorities, among them the ANLA leader and the General Secretary of HNLC. lge

INDIA (HINDUS – CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: Hindus, BJP, VHP, BD, RSS, Hindu Munnani vs. Christians

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between various Hindu groups and Christians continued.

On January 16, a group of Hindus set fire to two tractors and a shop belonging to the Christian community in Sial, Jammu and Kashmir state. On March 11, functionaries of the extremist Hindu Munnani party vandalized at least one Christian prayer hall in Sikkander Savadi, Tamil Nadu state. On March 12, supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attacked a Catholic hospital with pickaxes and bulldozers in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh state, after a BJP MP had claimed that the hospital's piece of land belonged to him. The attack left one person of the hospital staff injured. Hindu radicals destroyed the church in Sangameshwar village, Maharashtra state, on July 14.

In 2018, Christians were repeatedly charged on allegations of illegal conversions. In May, the state of Uttarakhand became the seventh state to adopt an anti-conversion law, rendering forceful conversions illegal. On July 17, Indian police arrested 16 Christian missionaries on conversion charges in Phoolpahari, Jharkhand state, after they had been abducted by tribal Adivasi. Approx. 20 Christians were detained by the police on September 23 in Kariyabar, Uttar Pradesh state, after Hindu nationalist groups had made allegations concerning conversions. Authorities prosecuted a pastor under the same charges on June 16 in Sardhana, Uttar Pradesh, after members of Bajrang Dal (BD), the youth arm of Hindu nationalist Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), had assaulted him. A pastor was first kidnapped by Hindu nationalists in Rajasthan state, then jailed on September 12 with his abductors on the suspicion of converting a woman to Christianity.

On January 7, the Catholic church held protests in Garo Hills, Meghalaya state, against the growing numbers of attacks on

Christians and their institutions. The Archbishop of Goa and Daman claimed in a pastoral letter in May that the constitution and freedom of religion were in danger. In response, the VHP accused churches in India of conspiring with the Vatican. Two traditional Hindu artists were subject to similar accusations by right-wing Hindu groups for announcing to include songs about other faiths in their program for a concert organized by Christian groups in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

mor

INDIA (HINDUS – MUSLIMS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: Hindus, BJP, VHP, BD, RSS vs. Muslims

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between Hindus and Muslims continued. Throughout the year, several violent clashes between members of the communities left at least 11 people dead and 218 injured.

Starting on January 3, Hindu youth organization Bajrang Dal (BD) organized a 15-day campaign in Karnataka state and Gujarat state to prevent marriages between Muslim men and Hindu women. The groups collected signatures and handed out pamphlets. On January 26, India's Republic Day, members of Hindu and Muslim communities clashed in Kasganj, Uttar Pradesh state, after an unauthorized Hindu Tiranga Yatra rally. One man belonging to the Hindu community was killed and another injured as the groups threw stones and fired gunshots at one another. Local police forces arrested at least 100 people.

On March 17, a clash occurred between Hindus and Muslims after Hindu organizations such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and BD held an unauthorized religious procession in the Nathnagar area of Bhagalpur, Bihar state. The clash left 40 people injured, including 35 police officers, and protesters set houses and shops on fire. The violence spread to six more districts and lasted several days. Subsequently, the police arrested at least 200 people.

In Gurugram, Haryana state, several right-wing Hindu organizations led by the local Sanyukt Hindu Sangharsh Samiti (SHSS) demanded a ban on the daily Muslim public prayer and frequently disrupted these prayers starting mid-April. As a consequence of these disruptions, police arrested six members of the SHSS on April 20.

On May 1, violence erupted at the Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, when Hindu groups, such as the Hindu Jagran Manch, forcibly entered the campus. They protested the public display of a portrait of Pakistan's founder in the university building, assaulting Muslim students. In reaction, the students resorted to stone pelting and police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. This clash left 14 people injured, including two police officers.

Two separate incidents occurred on September 13, in Tinsukia district, Assam state. After a Facebook post allegedly insulting Hindu deities had gone viral, protesters of the Hindu community blocked a national highway at Borhapjan Gaon village

and clashed with members of the Muslim community, which left six people injured. In the neighboring town Doom Dooma, another clash erupted over a dispute concerning community festivities with the police trying to disperse the confrontation with tear gas and blank shots. Subsequently, another six people were injured.

asa

INDIA (INTER-ETHNIC RIVALRY / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Assamese, ULFA-I, AASU vs. Bangladeshi immigrants, AAMSU vs. Adivasis, AASAA et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, other

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and over the issue of Bangladeshi immigration between various groups in Assam State continued, while inter-ethnic violence, which had last peaked in 2014, further declined. Most incidents occurred in the context of the central government's proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) of 2016, perceived as discriminatory by Assamese groups, and the release of the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) on July 30, excluding almost four Million people of mostly Bengali origin from citizenship.

Throughout the year, both, proponents and opponents of the NRC staged numerous protests. On August 6, the Asom Andolan Sangrami Manch staged a protest in New Delhi, demanding the withdrawal of the CAB and full implementation of the 1985 Assam Accord. On October 31, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) burnt the education minister's image in Golaghat City, eponymous district, to protest against the use of Bengali in schools. Most notably, between November 10 and 17, AASU, supported by tribal organisations, students and teachers, staged large-scale torchlight rallies in more than 50 locations to protest the inclusion of Hindu Bengalis in the NRC. On July 5, the Bengali United Forum of Assam demanded protection for the Bengali community during a protest in Bongaigaon city, eponymous district. Twelve days later, the All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) protested against discrimination of religious minorities and their categorisation as so-called "doubtful voters" in both Bongaigaon and Lakhimpur districts. On September 7, different groups, amongst them All Assam Bengali Students' Federation, and the Gurkha Students' Union organised a protest rally at Thelamara area, Sonitpur district, protesting the exclusion of Indian citizens from the NRC draft.

Furthermore, various groups continued to demand scheduled tribe status (ST), a category granting priority treatment by the government. On June 20, 100 members of All Assam Chutia Students' Union called for an indefinite hunger strike in Guwahati City, Kamrup Metropolitan district, also demanding ST status. In another incident, on August 6, the All Assam Koch-Rajbongshi Sanmilani organised a rail track protest at Chatuara station, Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar district, lobbying for ST. On August 23, All Assam Scheduled Caste Students' Union (AASCSU) staged a protest in Guwahati City, demanding several improvements, including regular scholarships for

SC students. Between September 3 and 6, Assam Tea Tribes' Students Association and the All Assam Adivasi Students' Association held a state-wide protest to demand the implementation of the revised wage proposed by the government for plantation workers.

Throughout the year, tensions rose over the granting of special rights and territory to some groups. On January 27, local protesters clashed with police at a train station in Dima Hasao district over the latter's alleged integration into Nagaland, leaving nine protestors injured, two of whom later died [→India (Nagas – Assamese Adivasis)]. In another incident, on December 22, one civilian was killed and three others severely injured when a truck was set ablaze during a strike by different Koch tribe groups protesting the central government's announcement to give Union Territorial Council status to Bodoland Territorial Council. On November 22, the United Garo Autonomous Council Movement Committee protested in front of the Office of the Deputy Commission, Goalpara City, eponymous district, demanding the creation of a Garo Autonomous Council.

Moreover, Assamese armed group ULFA-I continued to conduct operations. On October 13, four people were injured in an explosion in Guwahati claimed by ULFA-I. ULFA-I later stated that the blast was a warning against people supporting the CAB. In October, AASU leader Pankaj Pratim Dutta joined ULFA-I, publicly stating that armed resistance was the only remaining means of safeguarding Assamese rights. On November 1, suspected ULFA-I members shot dead five Bengali civilians at Kherbari village, Dhola area, Tinsukia district, allegedly in reaction to NRC and CAB [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)].

nbm

INDIA (KASHMIR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: LeT, HM, JeM, HuM, TuM, IS, APHC, local protesters vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over secession and autonomy in the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) continued between Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), the Islamic State (IS), the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and local protesters, on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand.

Over course of the year, at least 196 alleged HM, LeT, JeM and TuM militants and 62 security personnel were killed. Moreover, at least 76 civilians died and several hundred were injured, mostly during protests and clashes with security personnel. Separatists initiated strikes to protest violence against civilians and to commemorate the death of HM leader Burhan Wani. HM, JeM and LeT allegedly collaborated to conduct militant attacks.

On April 1, the Indian army initiated the most extensive series of anti-militancy operations in South Kashmir in the last decade. In an encounter in Dragad, Shopian district, the Indian Army killed seven militants and one civilian. In Kachdoor, Shopian district, five militants, three civilians and three

security personnel died in gunfights. Furthermore, one militant was arrested while another one was killed in DIALGAM, Anantnag district. According to police reports, the militants belonged to HM and LeT.

On May 6, security forces killed five HM militants, among them four local commanders, in a violent encounter, and six civilians during subsequent protests in Badigam village, Shopian district. After security forces had killed three JeM militants in Laroo, Kulgam district, a blast killed six civilians and injured several others on October 21. On December 15, an encounter between HM militants and the army left one soldier and three militants dead in Sirnoo village, Pulwama district. The army opened fire on local protesters and killed seven.

Throughout the year, the presence of the IS in J&K intensified. For instance, on February 25, security agencies verified that IS militants had killed a policeman in Srinagar, eponymous district. On May 11, IS claimed responsibility for the killing of a policeman in Wardwan, Budgam district. Police retaliated on June 22, attacking a suspected IS cell in Nowshera village, Anantnag district. Four suspected militants, a civilian and a policeman died. As civilians were trying to help the suspected militants escape, clashes erupted with the police that left more than 20 civilians injured.

nrö

INDIA (MAFIA RAJ)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: sand mafia, timber mafia vs. government, journalists

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources, other

The violent crisis over natural resources, the protection of the environment, and subnational predominance between the sand and timber mafia on one hand, and the government and civil society actors on the other hand, continued.

Over the course of the year, members of both sand and timber mafia conducted a series of attacks on government officials. On January 3, members of the sand mafia killed a village revenue assistant by running him down with a truck in Kamareddy district, Telangana state. The same day, sand mafia members opened fire on an Indian Forest Service officer in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh state, who was able to escape. One week later, on February 14, a village leader was killed in an attack by members of the sand mafia in Hindpura Village, Rajasthan state. A few weeks later, on May 7, sand mafia members killed a security officer in Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu state, while he was trying to arrest them. On September 7, a Forest Department officer was run over by a tractor laden with sand in Morena district, Madhya Pradesh. A forest guard of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in Lakhimpur Kheri district, Uttar Pradesh state, was killed by suspected members of the timber mafia on October 20.

Members of the sand mafia also targeted journalists. On March 26, a journalist was killed in Bhind district, Madhya Pradesh, after investigating activities of the sand mafia in the state. Another attack on two journalists reporting on illegal sand mining occurred on July 29 in Amir Khas village near

Jalalabad, Punjab state, leaving both injured.

Authorities, on the other hand, seized illegally mined sand and logged timber as well as arrested members of both sand and timber mafia. On February 7, government officials raided illegal sand mining sites in Handady village and Amara Madnur village, both Karnataka state, arresting 41 workers and seizing equipment. In Thane district, Maharashtra state, on March 24, forest and police personnel seized 60 tons of wood from the timber mafia. On May 19, Jaipur police arrested 10 people involved in illegal sand mining and seized nearly 12 trucks and four tractor trolleys filled with illegally mined sand from Banas river belt, Rajasthan state. Two days later, the police in Palghar, Maharashtra, arrested 100 people and seized 43 trucks used for illegal sand mining in the Vaitarna riverbed. On September 28, authorities detained 13 trucks of illegal sand in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

mki

INDIA (MANIPUR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: KRA, UNLF, PLA, PREPAK, KCP, KYKL, KNF vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over autonomy, and secession of Manipur state between militants and activist groups of mainly Meitei and Kuki ethnicity, on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued.

Militants were mainly organized in the Kuki National Front (KNF), Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK), People's Liberation Army (PLA), Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), and United National Liberation Front (UNLF).

Violent clashes between militant groups and the government, as well as among different militant groups, left at least 19 people dead and 39 injured. While attacks by armed groups decreased significantly in comparison to 2017, security forces intensified their operations against armed groups. In total, 137 presumed members of militant groups were arrested, among them alleged members of UNLF, PREPAK, KYKL, and KCP.

On February 6, alleged militants threw two grenades in a military camp located near Minuthong bridge, Imphal West district, injuring nine people. On July 9, PLA militants killed six security forces with two IEDs in Chandel district.

On September 7, one PLA militant and one security personnel were killed in a clash at Zouopi area, Chandel district. On September 19, an IED accidentally exploded and killed three PLA militants in their camp in Kamjong district. On November 16, a hand grenade exploded on the premises of Manipur Legislative Assembly and injured three security forces. Four days later, UNLF claimed responsibility for the attack.

Inter-militant fighting especially took place in December. On December 8, UNLF also claimed responsibility for killing a former KCP-Lamphel commander at Thangmeiband Watham Leikai in Imphal West. In their announcement, they stated that

he was shot for acting against the armed struggle for Manipur independence and also threatened other surrendering militants. On December 13, unidentified militants killed one KRA officer inside a hotel at Saikul, Kangpokpi district. nwa, ths

INDIA (NAGALIM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-U, NSCN-R vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis between militant Naga groups and the government over either secession or autonomy of the Naga-inhabited area, which includes parts of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh, as well as bordering territories in Myanmar, continued.

Naga militants were mainly organized in various factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), for instance in the NSCN Isaak-Muivah (NSCN-IM), the NSCN Khaplang (NSCN-K), and the NSCN Unification (NSCN-U). Although ideological views differed among the various groups, they all aimed to establish an independent greater Nagaland.

As in previous years, NSCN-K remained the most active group. In 2015, it had withdrawn from the 2001 ceasefire agreement with the government. On June 17, NSCN-K attacked Assam Rifles soldiers using IEDs, grenades, and firearms in Mon district, Nagaland, killing two and injuring at least six soldiers. In Myanmar, near the Nagaland border, paramilitary forces of the Indian Army killed five NSCN-K militants during an operation against a NSCN-K camp on June 27. In August, after a change of leadership, the NSCN-K split into an Indian-origin faction and its Myanmar counterpart. The Indian-origin faction led by the former leader reportedly held informal talks with the government in Delhi on December 17 after revoking its decision to abrogate the 2001 ceasefire agreement.

The peace talks between NSCN-IM and the government continued throughout the year. The two parties had signed a peace framework agreement on 08/02/2015. On July 19, details of the framework agreement of 2015 were disclosed for the first time, when the government informed a parliamentary panel that the Nagas would be granted a special status within the Indian Federation. This special status was supposed to be extended to Nagas living outside Nagaland, without violating other state's territorial integrity.

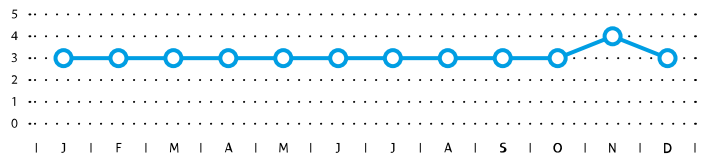
In an inter-militant clash on May 31 between NSCN-IM and NSCN-U, two NSCN-U members were killed and one civilian injured. NSCN-IM later claimed that this clash had been an accident. nrö

INDIA (NAXALITES)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1967

Conflict parties: Naxalites vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology



The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between the left-wing extremist Naxalites and the government escalated to a limited war. Naxalites were primarily organized in the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M), the Jharkhand Jan-Mukti Parishad (JJMP), and the People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI).

Most fatalities were reported in the federal states of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand. Additionally, violence occurred in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Odisha, Telangana, and West Bengal.

Throughout the year, at least 411 people, including 251 Naxalites, 77 members of security forces and 83 civilians were killed in clashes and IED explosions. Overall, the number of security forces killed decreased, whereas the number of fatalities on the Naxalites' side increased significantly compared to last year, due to a higher presence of security forces in the most affected areas.

For example, in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, security forces killed at least 37 Naxalites in an ambush on April 22. This was the largest operation in the region in the last 38 years. On November 26, 1,200 personnel of several paramilitary security units carried out an operation in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh and killed nine Naxalites. Naxalites continued to attack security forces, especially by using IEDs, for instance in Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, on March 13, where they killed nine members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and injured six. In a similar attack on October 27, Naxalites killed five CRPF members and injured one in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh.

The CPI-M called upon voters to boycott the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly election on November 12. Further, on November 12, heavily armed Naxalites attacked a remote polling station in Bijapur district. In subsequent fighting, five security personnel were wounded and five Naxalites killed. Naxalites regularly targeted former members as well as civilians, frequently accusing them of being police informers. For example, on March 14, Naxalites shot dead two villagers in Jharkhand's Seraikela-Kharsawa district and left hand-written posters, accusing the victims of being police informers. On May 5, Naxalites killed a former member in Chhattisgarh, who had surrendered and joined security forces. In another incident, villagers killed one Naxalite and injured a further in Latehar district, Jharkhand, when the Naxalites tried to blackmail a local contractor on July 11.

Throughout the year, Naxalites attacked employees and property of construction and mining companies. For instance, on May 29, Naxalites killed an employee of a road construction

company in Latehar district. The denial of extortion money was supposed to be the reason behind the killing. In Chhatisgarh's Sukma district, Naxalites killed a road construction contractor, injured three workers, and torched six vehicles on November 15. jpf

INDIA (PATELS ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Patel community, Jat community, Maratha community vs. government

Conflict items: other

The violent crisis over benefits under the reservation system continued between various communities, most prominently the Patels, Jats, and Marathas on one hand, and the central government of India as well as the governments of the respective federal states on the other. The reservation system allocated government jobs and access to education based on a community's status as either Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST). In order to emphasize their demands, different communities and their affiliated organizations staged protests across India, which occasionally turned violent.

On May 26, the Patel community staged a demonstration in Moti Malvan, Gujarat state, demanding to be included in the reservation system. Approx. 4,000 people attended the demonstration, showing a decline in the movement's numbers, which had peaked at about 300,000 supporters attending the marches in August 2015.

On June 6, the leader of the Jat umbrella organization, Akhil Bhartiya Jat Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti (ABJASS), announced in Jasia village, Rohtak district, Haryana state, that Jats would disrupt political rallies of the state's leading party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), from August 15 onwards. He accused the BJP government of not fulfilling its promises to grant reservations to the Jat community.

On August 9, the Maratha Kranti Morcha (MMK) community staged protests in the Latur, Jalnar, Solapur, and Buldhana districts of Maharashtra state as well as in the state's capital Mumbai, demanding a 16 percent reservation for the community. The Maratha protesters blocked roads in several districts. On that day, schools and colleges were closed in Pune and other cities, and public transport was suspended in Osmanabad and Buldhana districts. Furthermore, Maratha protesters torched vehicles and tires, and damaged a police car and a local administrative office, leaving one person injured. The police detained at least 185 people. On August 22, several Maratha organizations set a deadline for the state government to grant reservation to the community, threatening with major protests in Mumbai. On September 1, the state government, after a meeting with delegates of the Maratha community, assured to provide reservation for the community by November. On November 15, the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC) submitted a report in favor of the community's reservation to the state government, confirming that the Maratha fulfilled the criteria to be classified as backward. On November 29, the state government of Maharashtra officially granted the community 16 percent reservation in state government jobs and education.

asa

INDIA (SIKHS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: KLF, Dal Khalsa vs. SFJ vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over secession between various Sikh groups and the government continued. Several militant Sikh groups in India, mainly in Punjab state, and abroad fought for a separate Sikh country Khalistan, some demanding a referendum on the matter in 2020. However, the largest Sikh party Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has shifted its focus on regional development, having shared power in the Punjab state government in a coalition with India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since the 1990s.

Throughout the year, police arrested 13 people in connection with the referendum campaign in India. On March 20, Sikh protests arose outside the district civil hospital Kurukshetra after the politically motivated suicide of a pro-Khalistan activist in Thaska Ali village, Punjab. On June 6, the anniversary of Operation Bluestar, an Indian military operation in 1984 against the Sikh independence movement, pro-Khalistan activists demonstrated at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab. Three people disrupting the demonstration were injured by a Sikh task force and later detained by police. Amritsar was partially shut down due to a general strike called for by Dal Khalsa.

A US-based diaspora group called Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) campaigned in demand of the referendum on a separate Sikh country throughout 2018. On August 12, SFJ organised a pro-Khalistan demonstration in London. Several hundred people attended the demonstration and the smaller counter-demonstration. The issue of a referendum divided different pro-Khalistan groups, with e.g. Dal Khalsa and the SAD faction Amritsar opposed. Several other incidents took place in the UK. During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to London on April 18, protesters tore down and burnt an Indian flag on Parliament Square and replaced it with a Khalistan flag. On the same day, members of the Sikh diaspora staged a protest in London, demanding the release of British national and Sikh activist Jagtar Singh Johal who had been imprisoned in India due to his alleged involvement in politically motivated killings in Punjab in 2017. On July 23, several hundred protesters in Birmingham also demonstrated for his release and accused Indian police of torturing him. On August 27, four pro-Khalistan Sikhs disturbed an Indian Congress Party event in London.

Violence between different Sikh groups also occurred. On August 26, around 25 Khalistan supporters, allegedly related to SFJ, attacked a SAD leader in Yuba, California, US. Another group of activists had already assaulted him on August 21 in New York City. Between October 14 and 26, six pro-Khalistan activists were arrested for allegedly planning an attack on a Punjab ex-chief minister and SAD member and his family in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab. On November 1, an alleged pro-Khalistan militant, supposedly linked to SFJ, was

arrested in Chandigarh, in both Punjab and Haryana state, for launching the "Khalistan Ghadar Force" and for planning attacks in the area. On November 18, two members of the Khalistan Liberation Forces (KLF), allegedly supported by Pakistani intelligence service ISI, threw a hand grenade into a religious gathering of the Sikh Nirankari community near Amritsar, killing three people and injuring up to 20. evs

INDIA (ULFA-I ET AL. / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: CorCom, ULFA-I, NDFB-S, NSCN-K, NSCN-R, UNLFW vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over secession of various areas of Assam state between different Assamese, Bodo, Karbi, and Koch-Rajbanshi groups, on the one side, and the government, on the other, continued.

The most active groups throughout the year remained United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland I.K. Songbijit faction (NDFB-S). The ULFA-I continued their campaign for an independent socialist Assam, while the NDFB-S maintained their goal to create an independent, sovereign state of Bodoland, in Northern Assam.

In 2018, violence between security forces and ULFA-I as well as NDFB-S resulted in at least nine fatalities, five injured and the arrests of at least 43 militants. However, violence between the conflict parties decreased.

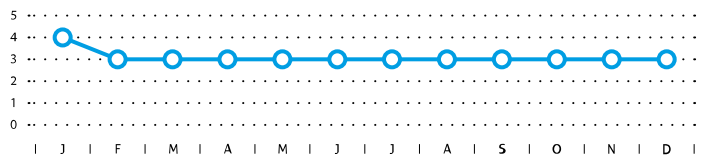
On January 1, security forces killed one NDFB-S militant in Kokrajhar district of Assam in a conducted counter-insurgency operation. On January 24, militants of ULFA-I and Coordination Committee (CorCom), a conglomerate of six Imphal Valley-based militant groups, ambushed an army convoy with a grenade between Nongtau Khamti and Piyong, Namsai district, leaving one security force injured. Army forces and Chirang police killed one NDFB-S militant on February 4 in Chirang district. In a launched operation by troops of Assam police and the Central Reserve Police Force's Cobra Battalion on May 4, ULFA-I militants killed one police officer in Tinsukia district along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border. There have also been reports of two killed ULFA-I militants, although the militant group denied fatalities. On June 17, ULFA-I carried out an ambush with the Myanmar-based Nationalist Social Council of Nagaland- Khaplang (NSCN-K) on Assam Rifles and Territorial Army jawans in Mon district of Nagaland killing at least two security forces and injuring four [→India (Nagalim)]. In a joint statement, the militant groups declared that the ambush was conducted "to enhance the progress of the national liberation movement of Western Southeast Asia". On December 3, security forces killed at least three militants, reportedly belonging to a joint group of NSCN-K and ULFA-I militants near Wangla village, Mon district, Nagaland. ita

INDIA – PAKISTAN

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: India vs. Pakistan

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources



The violent crisis between India and Pakistan over international power, water distribution, and the status of the Kashmir region escalated to a limited war.

The United Nations Military Observers Mission for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) continued its presence in the border region. On June 14, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published the 'Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir', which addressed the repeated ceasefire violations by Indian and Pakistani border forces.

Both sides violated the 2003 ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) of Jammu and Kashmir state (J&K) more than 5,000 times in 2018, which represents a significant increase in comparison to the previous year. In consequence, more than 80,000 Indian civilians fled their homes along the LoC and IB in May. Throughout the year, at least 182 people were killed and more than 314 people injured on both sides, mostly in clashes between military forces. In these clashes, the armies increasingly used sniper rifles and several heavy weapons, such as mortars and recoilless guns.

On February 24, the Indian and Pakistani armies exchanged heavy artillery fire in Uri and Nowshera sector, J&K. It was the first such exchange since 2003. On March 13, Indian troops shot at and injured two Pakistani locals in Abaspur, Pakistan-administered J&K, after they had briefed three members of the UNMOGIP on alleged ceasefire violations.

Between January 19 and 21, troops from both sides exchanged fire along the LoC, killing at least 36 people and injuring 84. More than 35 people from both sides were injured with automatic guns, small arms and mortars during border clashes along the LoC on June 3.

During the year, Pakistani Rangers and Indian Border Security Forces held several meetings to discuss continuous ceasefire violations along the LoC and IB. On May 29, the governments of India and Pakistan stated their intention to fully implement the ceasefire agreement signed between the two countries in 2003. Furthermore, on November 22, they agreed to establish a new border entry point to allow Sikh pilgrims from India to visit a shrine in Pakistan. In September, during the UN General Assembly in New York, representatives from India and Pakistan expressed their differences over the disputed region of Kashmir. On September 21, India cancelled a meeting between the countries' foreign ministers at the UN, which would have been the first high-level contact in three years.

cno

INDONESIA (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: MIT, JAD et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between Islamist militant groups such as Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), fighting for an Islamic state, and the government continued. Throughout the year, attacks on civilians and violent encounters between militants and government forces left 68 people dead and at least 57 injured. Approx. 400 people were arrested on suspicion of belonging to or supporting an Islamist militant group. Most of the arrests were connected to a series of bombings conducted by three families in Surabaya, Jawa Timur province, in May. On May 13, a family of six related to JAD simultaneously attacked three churches, conducting suicide bombings in Surabaya, leaving all perpetrators and 13 civilians dead as well as 41 people injured. On the same day, a bomb exploded prematurely in the home of a suspected JAD member in Surabaya, killing two family members and injuring him and a further two family members. Subsequently, police forces shot dead the alleged JAD member who had survived the explosion. On May 14, another family related to JAD attacked the police headquarter in Surabaya, using two motorcycle bombs, leaving four attackers dead and injuring 10 people. In the following three months, police and military forces arrested approx. 300 suspects in connection with the attacks in Surabaya, leaving at least 20 of the suspects dead. On May 25, the government passed a new law, extending the police's competences to take preemptive measures against potential militants, such as detaining them for 21 days. Police forces would also be able to charge people for joining or recruiting for militant organizations in Indonesia or abroad. On June 22, the South Jakarta District Court sentenced Aman Abdurrahman, the leader of JAD, to death for the involvement in the coordination of several attacks, notably the January 2016 attack in the capital Jakarta. On July 31, the government banned JAD.

Apart from the Surabaya attacks, violent incidents occurred in several regions. For instance, on May 9, a prison riot in Depok, Jawa Barat province, left four convicted JAD members and five members of the Densus 88, the counter-terrorism police force, dead. On July 14, three alleged Islamist militants attacked police forces in Selman, Yogyakarta province, leaving the attackers dead and two police forces injured. On August 10 and 13, police forces arrested five MIT members in Sulawesi Selatan province.

The government deployed 94,946 personnel to secure places of worship and celebrations in its annual 'Operation Candle' during the Christmas and New Year season. tgu

INDONESIA (PAPUA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: OPM, ULMWP, KNPB, FRI-West Papua, TPN, AMP vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources

The violent crisis over the secession of the provinces West Papua and Papua and resources between indigenous Papuans and the government continued. Both provinces, located in the resource-rich border region of western New Guinea and hosting large mineral deposits, remained the country's poorest and least developed region.

The Papuan independence movement remained internally divided. On the one hand, militant groups under the umbrella of the Free Papua Organization (OPM) and its armed wing, the National Liberation Army (TPN), operated in small, lightly-armed units. On the other hand, non-violent groups trying to mobilize the civil society comprised groups such as the National Committee for West Papua (KNPB), the Papuan Student Alliance (AMP), Indonesian People's Front for West Papua (FRI-WP), and the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP). The non-violent groups were supported by Indonesian human rights organizations and by Melanesian nations such as Vanuatu, which advocated their cause at the UN General Assembly in October. Throughout the year, violent encounters mainly between TPN and government forces left at least 45 people dead and many injured.

In the course of the year, KNPB and AMP rallied for a referendum on Papuan independence, mobilizing mostly in Papua's capital Jayapura, but also in Surabaya, Jawa Timur Province, and the national capital Jakarta. On December 1, Papuans staged countrywide mass demonstrations demanding Papua's independence. In Surabaya, ensuing clashes between pro-government organizations as well as militias such as Pemuda Pancasila, and the AMP left at least 17 injured. In response to the protests, police detained 537 protesters.

A focus of political tensions were the Papuan gubernatorial elections on June 27. After KNPB had called on West Papuans to abstain from the vote, government forces raided the KNPB office in Jayapura on April 4, arresting 45 group members. On June 25, alleged separatists shot at a plane, which carried security personnel for the upcoming elections, at Nduga airport, Papua province, killing three civilians and injuring one. On election day, alleged separatists shot at two boats, which carried government officials as well as voters on a river in Torere district, Papua province, killing three people.

At the center of the resource conflicts remained the Grasberg mine in Papua's Mimika regency, one of the world's largest gold and copper mines and Indonesia's greatest single revenue source. Operated and previously owned to 90 percent by US company Freeport-McMoRan, the conclusion of long-standing negotiations in December raised the state's share from 9.36 to 51.23 percent for a payment of USD 3.85 billion. In January, the government had promised ten percent of the shares to the administrations of Papua and Mimika. In October, the governors of Papua and West Papua pledged to delineate 70 percent of the provinces as conservation areas,

following up on a nationwide moratorium on oil palm licenses imposed in September.

The government continued to restrict media coverage and access to legal process in Papua. It retained key roles for the National Armed Forces (TNI) and the paramilitary Mobile Brigades (Brimobs), despite new reports of extrajudicial killings and torture on their behalf. Both forces continued to secure the Grasberg mine and other extractive projects against artisanal miners and the TPN. On February 13, TPN members shot a soldier at a market in Sinak, Papua province, later stating that the shooting had been a "message to the government of Indonesia that the TPN would not cease to oppose the military". Later in February, TPN issued a new declaration of war, demanding the removal of Indonesian forces out of West Papua and Papua as well as the closing of foreign mining companies.

On April 1 and 2, security forces clashed with TPN members in Timika, Papua province. After security forces tried to reclaim villages near the Grasberg mine that reportedly had been seized by militants in 11/2017, at least one soldier and two TPN members were killed as well as dozens of separatists injured. Furthermore, a hospital, a school, and a house were torched and more than 100 civilians fled into the jungle. The TPN claimed that fatalities among security personnel had been much higher.

Joint military operations by TNI and Brimobs were also conducted in the highland regencies of Nduga, Puncak Jaya, and Lanny Jaya. In early October, soldiers reportedly burned down dozens of villagers' houses and killed their pigs during a search operation with close air support in Puncak Jaya, displacing many people and killing up to seven.

On December 2, in Nduga regency, militants killed at least 17 non-Papuan workers near a construction site of the Trans-Papua Highway. Two days later, they attacked a nearby army outpost, killing one soldier and injuring another. The TPN claimed responsibility for the attacks, alleging that the workers had been soldiers in civil clothes. In the ensuing joint operation by TNI and Brimobs, involving helicopters and grenade launchers, at least four civilians were killed while at least 300 fled into the jungle. Journalists reported aerial bombardments with explosives, shrapnel, and white phosphorus. The government rejected these reports. By mid-December, Papuan authorities openly demanded the government to halt the military operations. Throughout December, hundreds of Brimob and TNI personnel raided and vandalized KNPB offices. jfr, mmu

JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA, USA – NORTH KOREA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: Japan, ROK, USA vs. DPRK
 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 detainment of US citizens, cyberattacks, and

the return of abducted South Korean and Japanese civilians. Throughout the year, the US continued its policy of so-called maximum pressure and engagement towards North Korea. DPRK did not test any missiles in 2018, but did not abandon its nuclear program.

In early 2018, tensions between US and Japan on the one hand, and DPRK on the other, continued to increase. On 12/31/17, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un declared that North Korean Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles are capable of reaching US mainland territory and indicated the continuation of its WMD program towards mass production. In response, US President Donald Trump threatened Kim Jong-un with the nuclear capabilities of US on January 3. Tensions further rose after a false alarm on Hawaii, US, on January 13 and in Japan, on January 16, where a news broadcaster mistakenly warned people about a DPRK missile launch. On January 22, Japan reacted by conducting its first missile attack simulation in Tokyo since World War II. Within the US administration, concrete scenarios for military action, including a limited pre-emptive strike on DPRK military infrastructure, were discussed and prepared.

In parallel, ROK President Moon Jae-in encouraged talks about potential participation of DPRK athletes in the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, ROK. During the subsequent participation of North Korean athletes at the Games in February and March, relations between ROK and DPRK continued to improve. In this context, Kim Jong-un signaled readiness to discuss denuclearization bilaterally with the US and freeze its nuclear and missile program during the negotiation period. On May 2, three US detainees were released by DPRK ahead of an upcoming US-DPRK summit.

On June 12, President Trump and Kim Jong-un attended the summit in Singapore. It was the first ever meeting between two acting leaders of their respective countries. As an immediate result of the summit, President Trump ordered the suspension of US-ROK joint military exercises. In return, Kim Jong-un signed a joint statement, in which he committed himself to work toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. During the rest of the year, nuclear talks between US and DPRK stalled.

Over the course of the year, the US cooperated closely with Japan regarding DPRK. For instance, President Trump and PM Shinzo Abe met on April 17 and June 7 in the US capital Washington, D.C. On the first occasion, President Trump discussed his stance towards the upcoming inter-Korean summit, on the second, the outline of the summit in Singapore. In contrast, an ROK-US working group on North Korean affairs was established on November 20 in Washington, D.C., to improve communication between the two countries. pen

KAZAKHSTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: opposition, DVK, civil rights activists vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between various opposition

groups and individual civil rights activists, on one hand, and the government, on the other hand.

Mukhtar Ablyazov, exiled businessman and long-time critic of President Nursultan Nazarbaev, continued to develop his organization Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK). On March 13, the DVK was banned by a court in the capital Astana. On May 10, several demonstrations calling for the release of political prisoners, spearheaded by the DVK in Astana and Almaty city, led to the detention of dozens of protesters. On November 30, a court in Almaty sentenced a citizen to four years in prison after finding him guilty of participating in activities of a banned organization and financially supporting a criminal group. On December 21, Kazakh authorities found three men guilty of disseminating terrorism and inciting ethnic hatred. Both cases were allegedly linked to the DVK.

On April 2, police raided the local office of Forbes Magazine in Almaty and seized documents allegedly linking Finance Minister Zeinulla Kakimzhanov and his son with corruption. The news site ratel.kz was shut down under court authority after the chief editor had been arrested on libel allegations. Several non-government organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and The Committee to Protect Journalists, urged authorities to dismiss the case. On September 27, a French journalist was detained by the police in Aqtau, Mangghystau Region, while researching violent protests of 2011.

There were several allegations concerning torture in Kazakh prisons in 2018. For instance, an Uzbek national, who claimed that he had been tortured, was found dead in a prison in Atyrau, West Kazakhstan Region. On July 20, the human rights activist Yelena Semyonova was put under investigation by the authorities after she had reported to the European Parliament about inmates' mass self-mutilation. On October 8, Semyonova was barred by the authorities from travelling to a scheduled meeting with EU officials to discuss problems in Kazakh penitentiaries.

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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 violent crisis over territory and international power continued in the border triangle in Fergana Valley between Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Tajiks, backed by their respective governments.

On April 3, 50 residents of the Kyrgyz village Uch-Dobo and of the Tajik village Macha'i near the Kyrgyz-Tajik border clashed and threw stones at each other, after a Kyrgyz woman had attempted to build a fence in her backyard on the disputed part of the border. Two people were injured, one of them a Tajik border guard. On April 4, following the clash, the governors of Kyrgyzstan's southern Batken district and Tajikistan's Isfara district met. On April 7, a Kyrgyz citizen was shot by Uzbek border guards near the settlement of Mamai in Kyrgyz Jalal-Abad region, because he had allegedly crossed the border il-

legally and refused to submit to Uzbek authorities. In reaction to the shooting, the Kyrgyz foreign ministry summoned the Uzbek ambassador. On April 13, government officials from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan agreed to limit the use of live ammunition on the border to extraordinary circumstances. On July 9, Kyrgyz authorities temporarily detained eleven Uzbek shepherds in Jalal-Abad region because their herds had been grazing on Kyrgyz state territory.

Throughout the year, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tajik diplomats met on several occasions to discuss demarcation, delimitation, and common border security. For example, after one-week long negotiations, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan determined on July 16 two further border segments in Gava and Chawasai in Jalal-Abad region. Heretofore, 85 percent of the 1280 km long Kyrgyz-Uzbek border were demarcated. ama

MALAYSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: END | Start: 1969

Conflict parties: various opposition groups, Bersih vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups, led by the Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition, and non-government organizations such as the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (Bersih), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, ended with the victory of the opposition in the general elections in May.

Before the elections, on March 28, hundreds of Bersih supporters led a protest against a proposal concerning the delineation of electoral districts in front of the parliament in the capital Kuala Lumpur. However, the motion was accepted by the parliament the same day. Two days later, the police raided the Bersih office and called in four Bersih staff members for questioning about the protest. The Registrar of Societies ordered Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu), led by former PM Mahathir Mohamad, to temporarily dissolve due to missing documents on April 5.

For the first time since the country's independence in 1957, the opposition consisting of Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), the Democratic Action Party (DAP), Bersatu and Parti Amanah Negara (AMANAH) defeated the ruling coalition, winning a majority in the national parliament, on May 9. The PH won 113 seats, while formerly ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition secured 79 out of 222 parliamentary seats. On May 11, Mahathir was sworn in as the new prime minister. Five days later, PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim was released from prison after being pardoned by King Sultan Muhammad V. Subsequently, Anwar won the parliamentary seat in by-elections in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan, on October 13.

Three days after the election, former PM Najib Razak and his wife were blacklisted from leaving the country due to corruption accusations from 2015 regarding the government-run development fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). A special task force was set up in May, reopening the investigations to pursue individuals involved, and seize assets related

to money missing from 1MDB. For instance, in mid-May, police raided several apartments of Najib and close family members in search of government documents, instead reportedly discovering cash worth USD 28.6 million and seizing other luxury items. On May 22, authorities questioned Najib. Following that, Najib and several close associates as well as institutions including Goldman Sachs and former high-ranking officials were investigated. Some were charged with money-laundering, corruption, misconduct, abuse of power and other offences. For instance, on December 12, Arul Kanda who was the 1MDB chief executive until July was charged alongside Najib for tampering with the 1MDB's audit report. Furthermore, on October 19, then-parliamentary opposition leader Ahmad Zahid Hamidi was charged with 45 counts of corruption, mainly relating to alleged misuse of funds from a family-owned charity foundation. emh

MALDIVES (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government
 Conflict items: national power

The non-violent crisis over national power between opposition parties, primarily the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), the Junhooree Party (JP), the Adhaalath Party (AP), and the Maumoon Reform Movement (MRM) on the one hand, and the government led by President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom Yameen (Yameen) of the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) on the other hand, escalated to a violent crisis.

For the presidential elections on September 23, the opposition parties formed a coalition, the Maldivian United Opposition (MUO), to nominate Ibrahim Mohamed Solih as their joint candidate. After the MUO candidate Solih won the presidential elections, the MUO formed the new government, whereas the PPM became the opposition party.

On February 1, the Supreme Court ruled on releasing nine opposition leaders, among them MDP leader and former president Mohamed Nasheed, and former vice-president Ahmed Adeeb from prison. It also reinstated 12 MPs of the PPM faction of former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom (Gayoom), who were expelled by their own party in 2017 due to allegations of intending to overthrow the government led by Yameen. On July 26, supporters of Gayoom formed the MRM. Following the government's refusal to implement the ruling, hundreds rallied in favor of the court's decision in the capital Malé. The police violently dispersed the demonstrations using tear gas and arresting several people. On February 5, President Yameen declared a state of emergency for 15 days starting on the same day, which was further extended until March 22. On the same day, soldiers stormed the supreme court building and arrested Gayoom. Also, a parliamentary session was cancelled due to security reasons. However, on February 14, opposition members tried to enter the parliament building but were forcibly removed by soldiers.

The state of emergency was marked by arrests of several opposition leaders, the police chief, and judicial officers including two supreme court judges, as well as anti-government

protests. For instance, on February 16, police forces dispersed thousands of protesters in Malé by using pepper spray, leaving dozens injured and, reportedly, 25 people arrested. One month later, the police dispersed an opposition demonstration in Malé, using tear gas and pepper spray, arresting 139 protesters.

On May 10 and June 13, the Criminal Court sentenced two supreme court judges and Gayoom to 19 months in prison on charges of manipulating court rulings and misconduct, respectively.

On August 29, MDP supporters clashed with government supporters during the preparation for a visit of Solih in Kolamafushi, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, leaving several opposition members injured and 18 arrested. After the presidential election on September 23, the Supreme Court rejected Yameen's legal challenge against the Election Commission's results.

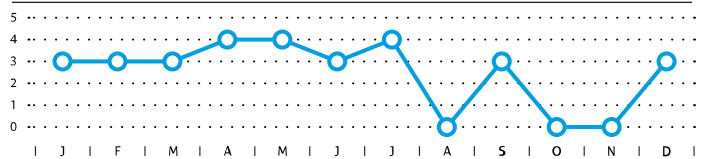
The Criminal Court released several political prisoners, including Gayoom and the AP leader Imran Abdulla. On November 17, Solih was sworn in as president. On November 26, the Supreme Court cleared Nasheed's jail sentence.

On December 14, PPM supporters demonstrated against corruption accusations against Yameen. The same day, the Maldivian police froze Yameen's bank accounts in connection with investigations on money laundering related to his presidential elections campaign. After disputes over leadership in the PPM, Yameen founded a new political party, the People's National Congress, on December 18. To strengthen the new formation ahead of next year's parliament elections, the PPM announced to suspend all political activities on December 29. jhk

MYANMAR (KIA, KIO / KACHIN STATE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: KIA, KIO vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, resources

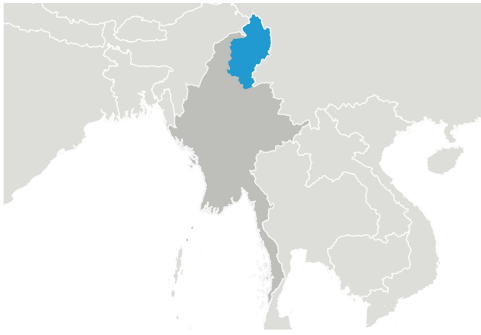


The violent crisis between the ethnic Kachin Independence Army (KIA), politically represented by the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), and the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) over regional autonomy, self-determination and resources, such as farmland, jade, gold, and timber, in Kachin State escalated to a limited war.

Fighting between the KIA and the Tatmadaw escalated between January 22 and 26 when the latter carried out airstrikes targeting KIA positions. The KIA countered the strikes with attacks on Tatmadaw in Lwele village, Moe Kuang township, Myitkina District, using mainly guns, thereby wounding an unknown number of Tatmadaw. From January to April, the two conflict parties clashed in Sumprabum, Tanai, Mansi, Namti, Mohnyin, and Injangyang townships. The Tatmadaw regularly used aerial bombardments and fired mortar shells, while the KIA ambushed Tatmadaw convoys, using guns, bombs, and rocket launchers.

On April 27, the Tatmadaw reportedly sent fighter aircrafts,

MYANMAR (KIA, KIO / KACHIN STATE)



January



February



March



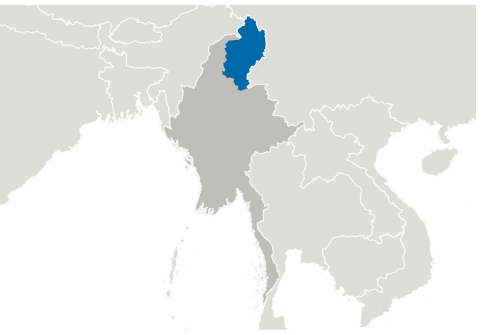
April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December



helicopters, and deployed approx. 2,000 additional soldiers to combat KIA forces. Skirmishes continued in June with nearly daily battles for territory, especially in Tanai, Mansi and Hpakant townships. The territorial focus of fighting shifted in July and August, when clashes regularly occurred in KIA- and Tatmadaw-controlled areas of northern Shan State, for instance at the KIA headquarters in Theinni township. No casualties occurred there, however, whereas in an attack by the KIA 6th Battalion on July 24 near Hpakant, seven Tatmadaw were wounded. Throughout the year, both conflict parties planted landmines, killing at least three civilians, three KIA, and two Tatmadaw soldiers. In several clashes against the Tatmadaw forces, the KIA was supported by its allies, the Myanmar Democratic Alliance Army [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Kachin State)], the Arakan Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)].

Furthermore, the Tatmadaw reportedly intensified interrogations, occasionally involving violence, and military presence among local civilians for potentially helping the KIA. According to Fortify Rights, the Tatmadaw forcefully involved civilians by using them as human shields or taking their property for military purposes.

According to UNOCHA, between January and September, more than 14,000 people were temporarily displaced in camps close to the Chinese border due to the clashes, about 5,000 of whom fleeing in April. For instance, during a Tatmadaw attack on the KIA in Injangyang township on April 24, around 1,400 civilians fled to nearby Myitkyina and Waingmaw townships. Hundreds of others were, however, temporarily blocked from escaping Injangyang, and similarly, on May 6 and 7, 152 civilians were prevented from fleeing from Hpakant and allegedly forced to act as human shields. The government further restricted access to Kachin State by declaring the mostly KIA-controlled areas a prohibited military zone on May 21. This also hindered the provision of humanitarian aid by several NGOs and the UN. Chinese authorities restricted the access to those areas via the border in late November.

From July 11 to 16, KIO representatives attended the 21st Century Panglong Conference as observers, which was held in the capital Naypyidaw between the government and ethnic leaders of the National Ceasefire Agreement signatory groups. An informal peace meeting between the KIO and the government on November 18 had no significant outcome. The Tatmadaw began a four-month unilateral ceasefire on December 21 that also included Kachin State. eku

MYANMAR (KNU, KNLA, DKBA ET AL. / KAREN STATE, KAYAH STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: KNU, KNLA, DKBA, DKBA-splinter group vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy between the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), the Karen National Union (KNU), its armed wing, the Karen National Liberation Army

(KNLA), and the DKBA splinter group Democratic Karen Buddhist Army on the one hand, and the government with its supporters, the Border Guard Force (BGF), on the other, continued.

Violating the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed in 2015, six BGF battalions moved without permission into areas controlled by the KNLA in Kay Pu and Ler Mu Plaw, Lu Thaw township, Hpapun District, Karen State, on March 4. This resulted in several clashes between the two sides in the following days, in which government troops fired mortars and reportedly ten of their soldiers were wounded. Similarly, after another territory breach on March 15, KNLA Company no. 3 opened fire on the BGF Light Infantry Battalion no. 203 in Dweh Loh township, Hpapun, killing two BGF soldiers and wounding two. On April 5, the BGF shot a Karen aid worker dead near Ler Mu Plaw, while he was giving a KNLA soldier a lift. Both had been suspected of sabotage attacks and planting mines. Fighting continued from August 28 until at least September 1 after the KNLA declined the request by BGF's Light Infantry Division no. 44 subordinated Infantry Battalion no. 2 to search for DKBA splinter soldiers in the area of Bu Tho township, Hpapun. The ensuing skirmishes led to the displacement of over 200 villagers from Kan Nyi Now, Dwe Loh. On August 31, the BGF fired 20 mortar shells into Ka Nyee Naw village, Bu Tho, with the goal of clearing the area from DKBA splinter soldiers. On September 8, the KNLA Company no. 4 clashed with the BGF Light Infantry Battalion no. 207 in the area of Ta Lah Aw Ka Lar, Bu Tho, after the BGF entered the KNLA company's territory without permission. Between March and April, the KNLA and the BGF clashed at least 57 times using firearms and mortars, leaving approx. 2,400 Karen villagers displaced.

By the end of last year, the BGF Southern Command had informed the KNLA 5th Brigade of their intention to take up repairs of KNLA-controlled roads again in Hpapun, that had been suspended in 2009. Throughout this year, the KNU condemned the road construction in Hpapun as well as in Taungoo District as military actions. During negotiations with the KNU on May 17 in Yangon, eponymous region, the BGF agreed to temporarily postpone the Hpapun road building activities and to halt military deployments in Ler Mu Plaw. On October 27, the KNU put peace talks with the government's Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee on hold, citing the military's demand to give up their right to secede from the Committee as one reason among others. After the enactment of a law on September 11 which stated that land not yet registered with local committees within six months would be seized, the KNU called for its abolition on December 15, calling it a violation of the NCA. vun

MYANMAR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1962

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The dispute over national power and civilian liberties between opposition groups and the government, led by the National League for Democracy since 2016, escalated to a vio-

lent crisis.

Throughout the country, opposition groups staged protests over the government's failed peace process and ongoing violent ethnic conflicts in late April and May. The protests remained mostly peaceful and were part of a new anti-war movement, formed of civil society groups and ethnic activists showing solidarity with different ethnic groups. However, on May 12, riot police and plain-clothes agents dissolved a sit-in of anti-war protesters in support of the Kachin people [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)], injuring protesters with batons and detaining 17 organizers in Tamwe township, Yangon District, eponymous region.

From January 22, over a hundred students rallied in a four-day long demonstration against the government's ban on student-led protests and for more educational funding in Mandalay, eponymous region. Consequently, 14 were expelled from their respective universities. Further demonstrations were staged calling for far-reaching constitutional amendments in Bago District, eponymous region, on February 27. On March 5, almost 190 domestic civil society groups petitioned for an amendment to the protest law, followed by a march by approx. 500 activists through downtown Yangon, Yangon District.

After banning celebrations of ethnic Rakhine people for the anniversary of their historical regional kingdom, police put down protests of over a thousand civilians, primarily school students, in Mrauk-U District, Rakhine State, on January 16. In reaction to the protesters throwing stones and damaging police trucks, the police shot at them, killing at least seven civilians and injuring twelve. In the aftermath, several incidents took place, reportedly taking revenge for the protest crackdown. For instance, several IEDs were detonated on February 24 near a land office, a high-ranking local official's house and a court in Sittwe, Rakhine State, injuring a policeman and a civilian.

On August 23, the 88 Generation pro-democracy group also related to student activists was allowed to register as a new political party and possibly stand in the 2020 general election.

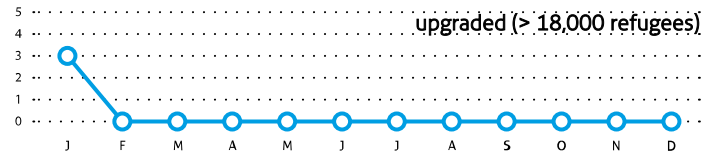
In September, two reporters originally arrested on 12/12/17 were sentenced to seven years imprisonment by a court in northern Yangon District for violating a non-disclosure law over reporting on the conflict in Rakhine State [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. On September 16, around 100 domestic youth activists and journalists protested peacefully for the reporters' release in Yangon. The EU, UN, several foreign governments and dozens of domestic civil society groups condemned the arrests throughout the year. sbl

MYANMAR (ROHINGYA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Rohingya, ARSA vs. government, Buddhists

Conflict items: subnational predominance, other



The war over subnational predominance and citizenship between the mainly Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority, on the one hand, and the Buddhist majority as well as the government, on the other, mainly in northern Rakhine State, de-escalated to a limited war.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army claimed responsibility for an ambush on a Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) vehicle in northern Maungdaw township on January 5, using guns and supposedly a remote-controlled landmine, wounding at least five soldiers.

The government reportedly worked on rebuilding destroyed infrastructure and economy in the region, supported by several other Asian governments. It also claimed to neutrally investigate the recent happenings. For this purpose, it established the four-member Independent Commission of Enquiry on July 30. However, few substantial charges were made, since the Commission followed the policy of not holding anyone accountable but instead questioned the international condemnation of supposed crimes against humanity.

The government repeatedly claimed that there neither was nor had been ethnic cleansing or systematic sexual violence against Rohingya which had been revealed by the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (FFM). However, they admitted some cases of sexual violence and torture. On August 27, the FFM released its report, which was partly based on refugees' testimonies. The government rejected the report, doubting the credibility of these testimonies, whereas the Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO) welcomed it. The FFM had recommended the UNSC to sanction the government and to refer leading generals involved in the ongoing conflict to the ICC, reiterating this demand in its final report on September 18 and again on October 24. The ICC ruled in September that it had jurisdiction over Myanmar due to the Rohingyas' displacement to Bangladesh and that it would conduct preliminary investigations.

On February 23, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published satellite images, reporting the demolition of at least 55 abandoned villages in northern Rakhine State since 2017. The villages had been affected by violence last year and HRW claimed that the government was destroying evidence. The government, in turn, stated that the villages were destroyed for the sake of resettlement. Amnesty International reported land-grabbing and the building of Tatmadaw bases in these former villages, which national media said comprised four new border force bases in Maungdaw, and Buthidaung townships. On May 9, a UNSC delegation observed region-wide destruction in Rakhine State, repeating the call for prosecution of the perpetrators. Authorities in Maungdaw township had allegedly threatened Rohingya in surrounding villages not to talk with the delegation. Between August 9 and 12, Bangladeshi officials visited sites of last year's military operations in Sittwe, Maungdaw, and Buthidaung townships. They reported burned mosques, shut down businesses of Muslims, and Rohingya people being dependent on food aid due to travel restrictions and curfews. The government continued to refuse access for the UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

who instead visited other affected countries, talking to organizations and governments.

On January 16, the government signed an agreement with Bangladesh to facilitate the Rohingyas' return to Myanmar. Moreover, it signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding with UNHCR and UNDP about more dignified living conditions for Rohingya on June 6. However, the details of this memorandum were not made public due to the government's request. Government representatives visited the refugee camps in Cox' Bazar district, Bangladesh, on October 31. The government stated on the same day that 5,000 Rohingya had been confirmed for resettlement, even though the UN, among others, stated that the conditions for returning any refugees were not reached yet. The Chinese government approved of Myanmar's resettlement plans on November 9. However, by the end of the year, no resettlement had taken place and UN officials regularly reported that the displaced Rohingya were still scared to return. HRW alleged on August 21 that six returnees had been threatened, beaten and tortured while being interrogated. The FFM stated in September that until then, 1,733 Rohingya refugees per month had registered as new arrivals in Bangladesh. Throughout the year, approx. 20,000 arrived in the UNHCR camps in Cox' Bazar.

On June 26, the EU and Canada imposed sanctions against seven military officers related to Rohingya persecution, and the US similarly sanctioned six individuals on August 17. On October 4, the EU stated in reaction to the FFM report that they were in the process of considering trade sanctions against the Myanmar government. From late September onwards, ARNO called upon the UN and US to increase pressure on Myanmar. Moreover, in an unprecedented move, Facebook shut down 19 social media accounts of high military officials on August 27 who, according to the FFM, had contributed to the conflict by spreading hate speech and misinformation. Further takedowns followed in October and December. kv

MYANMAR (TNLA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: TNLA vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources, such as poppy, between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the government continued.

In the course of the year, TNLA members and armed forces of Myanmar, known as the Tatmadaw, frequently clashed, leaving at least 33 people dead, 48 injured, 450 civilians internally displaced, and 250 seeking refuge in China.

For instance, on May 12, at least 50 TNLA troops launched attacks on a government-backed militia outpost at Pan Khan Bridge, Namtu township, a casino as well as against police forces in Muse, Muse township, using firearms and artillery. The ensuing clash resulted in at least 20 people dead, most of whom were militia leaders and their families, and 27 injured. A further 250 fled across the border to China. TNLA Colonel Tar Aik Kyaw claimed the attack had, on the one hand, served as retaliation for previous Tatmadaw attacks against

TNLA posts, and on the other hand, against a militia-run casino distributing illegal drugs. On March 21, TNLA members conducted searches for illegal drugs in the northern Shan State, resulting in local claims of having kidnapped villagers and demanding ransom payments for their release. On April 9, TNLA Colonel Mine Aik Kyaw denounced any such allegations as rumors on social media.

In mid-August, the TNLA evoked regional discontent, when its forces detained an ethnic Shan in Namkham, Namkham township. The TNLA accused their detainee of disclosing information about the TNLA to government forces. Among local opposition towards this measure, the neighboring Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signatory Restoration Council Shan State condemned this action by the TNLA [→ Myanmar (UNFC et al.); Myanmar (TNLA – RCSS / Shan State)]. After over 10,000 protesters rallied in mid-September in Namkham, demanding the release of the detained person, local authorities requested support from the central government. However, on October 5, the TNLA central court sentenced the detainee to three years in prison. Following negotiations with their new ally Shan State Army-North 10 days later, the TNLA granted the detainee amnesty.

In an unprecedented move on December 21, the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief's office announced a four-month unilateral ceasefire starting on the same day, covering conflict zones in Shan and Kachin states, which also concerned the TNLA. nro

MYANMAR (UNFC ET AL.)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: NSMP, KNPP, LDU, ANC, CNF, KNO vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over regional autonomy between the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), comprised of several parties, and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

Following the government's revocation of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) as terrorist organizations on February 11, and after separate meetings between the two groups, the government, and military leaders on January 23, the NMSP and LDU signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on February 13 in the capital Naypyidaw. Subsequently, the UNFC held a meeting from February 23 to 25, announcing that NMSP and LDU would stay members and that the former members Kachin National Organization (KNO) and Chin National Front (CNF) would be readmitted. The NMSP continued to chair the UNFC throughout the year but articulated its desire to fully resign and act independently soon. In meetings with the government in March and April, the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) signaled its willingness to sign the NCA. Yet, despite further meetings with the government in June, July and November, the KNPP did not sign. The July discussions happened on the sidelines of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference for NCA signatories which the KNPP attended as an observer.

There were two incidents involving security forces. The first

took place on June 23, in Kanalou village, Kyaikmayaw township, Mon State, where 50 Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) and Border Guard Force personnel non-violently occupied a previously vacated NMSP outpost. The second was a firefight between seven KNPP soldiers and the Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion 428 on October 20, in Hpa Saung township, Kayah State. After the Tatmadaw moved into KNPP-controlled territory on a non-designated route without giving the KNPP notice in advance, as agreed upon in the bilateral 2012 ceasefire, the KNPP soldiers opened fire. While there were no fatalities or injured soldiers, the incident led to accusations of ceasefire violations and threats from both sides. jgi

MYANMAR (UWSA, NDAA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: UWSA, NDAA vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The dispute over autonomy continued between the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), on the one hand, and the government.

As in previous years, the UWSA and NDAA did not sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) introduced by the government in 2015. Between July 11 and 16, the UWSA and NDAA attended the 21st Century Panglong Conference in the capital Naypyidaw as observers. In this context, the UWSA delegation stated it would consider signing the agreement if the government gave them the right to reform the NCA and resign from it at any time.

The UWSA continued to head the political coalition called Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee throughout the year. On September 5 and later on November 1, the UWSA was an observer to other ethnic groups' talks with the government's Union Peace Commission, held in Kunming, China, but without decisive progress. The NDAA and UWSA were also among the ethnic groups invited to a technical political framework meeting in Yangon, eponymous region, between November 1 and 3, which the UWSA chose not to attend. jpa

NEPAL (RIGHT-WING HINDU GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: RPP, SSN, RPP-D et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and its ideology between right-wing Hindu groups and the government continued.

Political groups such as the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), a prominent Hindu Nationalist political party, and Shiva Sena Nepal continued their struggle to reinstate a Hindu Kingdom. On May 18, Kamal Thapa, chairman of the RPP, instructed the party's youth chapter, Nepal Democratic Youth Organization, to press the government for a Hindu state and monarchy. On

September 26, Shankar Bhandari, a central member of the Nepali Congress party, urged his party to draw up an agenda for making Hinduism the state religion, arguing the spread of Christianity was destroying Nepal's Hindu identity. On February 12, members of the World Hindu Council burned the effigy of Federal Socialist Forum Nepal party chairman Upendra Yadav in Birgunj, Province 2, protesting the appointment of a Muslim as Chief Minister.

Tensions intensified over political statements by Hindu religious leaders leading to unrest between religious communities. On April 8, Acharya Srinivas, a Hindu religious leader with ties to Shiva Sena Nepal, was shot and injured by an unidentified group during a Hindu religious event in Province 1. Pamphlets were reportedly spread after the incident claiming religious minorities had committed the shooting. Two days later, 48 Hindu groups protested in the capital city Kathmandu, Province 3, condemning the shooting of Srinivas. However, on May 5, Acharya Srinivas was arrested for allegedly plotting his own shooting to incite religious violence between Hindus and religious minorities and establish a Hindu state.

Amidst reports of religiously motivated violence, several Christians churches were attacked by alleged Hindu nationalists. Between May 9 and May 13, three Christian churches were set on fire and one partially destroyed by a bomb in Province 7 after receiving threats from Hindu extremist groups. Following a dispute over the immersion of the Goddess Durga idol, member of Hindu and Muslim communities clashed on October 19, at a market place near the Nepal-India border in Krishnanagar, Province 5. A number of people from both communities suffered minor injuries and authorities issued an indefinite curfew in Krishnanagar following the clash. aer

PAKISTAN (BALOCHISTAN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: BLA, BRA, UBA, LeB, BLF, BNM, BRG vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources

The violent crisis over the secession of Balochistan province and the control over its gas, oil, coal, and mineral resources between several Baloch militant groups and political parties on the one hand, and the government supported by China on the other, continued.

Over the course of the year, at least 16 alleged militants and 15 security personnel were killed and at least two militants and 17 security personnel were injured in clashes between security forces and militant groups such as the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and the Baloch Republican Guards (BRG) which are cooperating under the umbrella organization Baloch Raji Ajoie Sangar (BRAS). Furthermore, at least 17 civilians were killed and 19 injured in attacks by BLA, BLF, United Balochistan Army (UBA), or Balochistan Republican Army (BRA).

Security forces conducted several raids against alleged militants throughout Balochistan. For instance, on June 4, Frontier Corps (FC) personnel killed three alleged BLA members in

a gun fight during a raid in Kohlu district. In an attack on security forces on July 2, BLF members killed at least five with rocket-propelled grenades and guns in Mashkai, Awaran district. On September 9, security forces carried out an intelligence-based operation in Jhal Jhao, Awaran district, killing four BLF members. Also, one member of the security forces was killed and one injured. On November 10, BLA, BLF and BRG announced consolidating cooperation under the name BRAS. On December 14, six security officials were killed and 14 injured in a firing attack in Kech district while four militants were also killed. BLA, BRG and BRAS claimed responsibility for the attack. Addressing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on February 2, the Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, Yao Jing, had stated that militant attacks were no longer a threat to the infrastructure projects. However, several projects and institutions related to the CPEC were targeted in militant attacks. For instance, on May 4, six Punjabi workers were shot dead in Kharan district. BRA and UBA that have a history of targeting infrastructure projects both claimed responsibility for the attack. On July 3, three officials of an oil and gas exploration company were killed and five injured in a landmine attack in Dera Bugti district, which BRA claimed responsibility for. In a suicide attack by a BLA militant on a bus in Chagai district on August 11, three Chinese engineers, two security personnel and a driver were injured. On October 31, five construction workers of a CPEC-related housing project were killed and three injured in an attack by BLA militants in Gwadar district. In opposition to the Chinese presence in Balochistan, three BLA militants attacked the Chinese consulate in Karachi, Sindh, killing two civilians and two members of security forces on November 23.

In 2018, more than 500 militants of BRA, BLA and Lashkar-e-Balochistan (LeB) surrendered to the government. For instance, on January 25, more than 200 militants of various separatist groups, including 15 commanders, surrendered to the government in Turbat, Kech district.

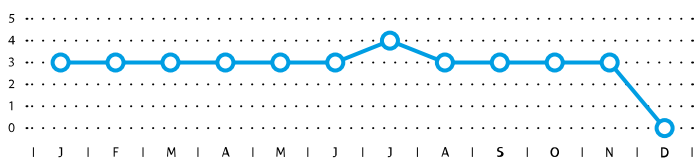
plo

PAKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: TTP, JuA, LeJ, al-Qaeda, IS vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The limited war over national power and the orientation of the political system between various Islamist groups, most prominently the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), as well as Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State (IS), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

A total of at least 472 people were killed and 616 injured throughout the year. Most fatalities were counted in the

province of Balochistan, followed by the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, and Punjab.

In the months leading up to the general elections, campaign rallies and polling stations were targeted by militant groups such as TTP and IS. For example, on July 10, in a suicide blast by TTP in Peshawar, KP, at least 20 people including an Awami National Party candidate were killed and at least 65 injured. In the province of Balochistan, at least 253 people died in militant attacks, in fire exchanges between militants and security forces, and in IED detonations. TTP conducted one of the most fatal attacks on July 25, the day of the general elections, in the district Mastung, Balochistan. At least 149 civilians died and over 180 were injured in a suicide bombing. On the same day, another 31 people were killed in a suicide bombing at a polling station in Quetta, Balochistan, for which IS claimed responsibility.

In KP, FATA, and Balochistan, numerous violent encounters between security forces and militants of TTP, JuA, and al-Qaeda occurred. For example, on February 19, six suspected TTP militants were killed in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the FATA region. On May 16, security forces killed the leader of LeJ along with two other alleged militants during an IBO in Quetta while one member of the security forces was also killed and several injured.

Attacks on security forces and civilians continued throughout the year in all named provinces. On February 3, eleven security officials were killed by militants affiliated with the TTP in Swat District, KP. In a suicide attack by TTP at a police check post in Raiwind, Lahore, Punjab province, on March 14, nine people, including five police officers, were killed and another 20 people injured. On April 24, in a suicide attack by three Hizbul Ahrar militants, a splinter group of JuA, at least seven police officers were killed and 15 people injured, while the militants also died in the attack. Furthermore, on June 4, TTP attacked protesters of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement in Wana, South Waziristan, killing four and injuring a lot more [→ Pakistan (opposition)].

Throughout the year, the relationship between the US and Pakistan changed significantly under the Donald Trump administration. The US cut off security assistance to the Pakistani military as well as training assistance in order to pressure the Pakistani government to target all militant groups more insistently. Also, the number of US drone strikes in Pakistan significantly decreased in number in 2018 [→ Pakistan – USA]. After the elections in July, the new governing party Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led by Imran Khan announced the implementation of a new National Action Plan (NAP) to fight terrorism especially in Pakistan's North West. The first NAP had been implemented in 2015, its success had been contested.

On June 15, TTP leader Mullah Fazlullah was killed in an US airstrike in Konar province, Afghanistan. The new leader Mufti Noor Wali was named just a few days after the strike [→ Afghanistan – Pakistan]. On November 2, Maulana Sami ul Haq, head of the Haqqania madrassa network in KP where many Taliban members had studied, was stabbed to death by unknown attackers in his residence in Rawalpindi, Punjab province. lva

PAKISTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1973

Conflict parties: PTI, TLP, PTM vs. government, and PML-N, TLP, PTM vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power, the orientation of the political system and ideology between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) continued. Furthermore, the religious conservative party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and the regional Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) opposed the government, which was led by PML-N until the elections in July, and by PTI throughout the rest of the year.

Over the course of the year, PTI and PML-N party supporters clashed repeatedly, especially in the months leading up to the general elections. On January 17, PTI, Pakistan Awami Tehreek and other opposition parties rallied for two days on Mall Road, Lahore, Punjab province, demanding the removal of Punjab's Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif (PML-N) from office. On June 9, a PML-N activist was killed when PML-N and PTI workers clashed in Karachi, Sindh province.

On July 13, former Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif and his daughter were arrested by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) officials upon their arrival in Lahore. Meanwhile, dozens of PML-N workers clashed with the police in an attempt to reach the airport to welcome their party leader.

In the general elections on July 25, PML-N was replaced by PTI as the governing party. Followers of both parties clashed in several areas of the country, leaving two people dead and several injured. For instance, a party worker was killed and four were injured in a brawl between PTI and PML-N supporters in Sahiwal, Punjab province on July 29. On August 18, PTI leader Imran Khan was sworn in as PM.

On October 5, the NAB arrested Shahbaz Sharif due to corruption accusations. The PML-N thereupon staged protests in Lahore against the arrest, which escalated when police forcefully tried to clear the roads, leaving several people injured.

On December 24, former PM Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to seven years in jail on corruption charges.

As in the previous year, the TLP contested the government on the issue of blasphemy. After TLP leaders had demanded the government to implement the Faizabad agreement, which had been reached after extensive protests in November 2017, the TLP terminated the agreement on April 12 and asked its workers to block highways throughout the country. Party supporters then occupied the main entry points of Lahore and staged sit-ins in Rawalpindi and other cities of Punjab. A day later, the TLP ended its countrywide protests after the government announced to implement the Faizabad agreement.

On October 31, followers of religious parties staged violent protests and blocked streets across major cities after the Supreme Court had acquitted the Christian Asia Bibi of blasphemy charges. For example, two civilians were shot dead and 12 others were injured during a clash in New Karachi, Sindh province. On November 5, the protests ended when the

government agreed that Bibi would remain in Pakistan while a final review of the Supreme Court's ruling took place.

On November 24, Lahore police took TLP leader Khadim Husain Rizvi into protective custody as law enforcement agencies arrested the TLP leadership and more than 1,000 of its supporters. In the resulting clashes, three people were injured. On December 1, Rizvi was booked under treason and terrorism charges.

Furthermore, the PTM demanded the government to implement the rule of law without discrimination of their ethnic group. The movement had been founded in 2014 to pressure the government to ensure the protection of civilians during anti-terrorism operations and to remove checkpoints and land mines from the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

On January 13, police forces killed the Pashtun Naqeebullah Mehsud in Karachi, which was later judged by the Additional Inspector General of the Counter-Terrorism Department to be an extra-judicial killing. As a reaction, several protests, called the 'Pashtun Long March', were held by the PTM led by Manzoor Pashteen. The government and security forces reacted to the PTM protests with arrests and alleged media restrictions. On September 24, authorities withdrew a case against 37 PTM activists, who were arrested for organizing protests against state institutions and the armed forces, in an Anti Terrorism Court in Islamabad.

Throughout the year, solidarity protests and support for the PTM were also held by Pashtuns in Europe.

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over ideology and the political system as well as national power between the opposition, led by MP Patrick Pruaitch, and the government, led by Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. Over the year, the conflict was marked by corruption allegations and consecutive demands against O'Neill to resign.

Although UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein urged the government to tackle corruption during his visit in February, the issue arose several times over the year. For instance, on November 12, the Guardian revealed that in 2014, the construction company Wild Cat Developments Limited, whose sole shareholder was then-Prime Minister O'Neill, had won a government infrastructure contract, worth USD 32 million. As the contract allocation had allegedly breached anti-corruption guidelines, the opposition called onto O'Neill to resign as Prime Minister on November 15. In late-November, the opposition announced plans for a no-confidence vote against O'Neill in February 2019.

On June 14, the National Court upheld the mandate of Governor William Powi, which was questioned by the challenging candidates Joseph Kobol and Bernard Peter Kaku after the 2017 election. Subsequently, supporters of Kobol and Kaku torched the governor's residence, the local courthouse,

and an aircraft at the airport in the provincial capital Mendi, Southern Highlands province. One day later, O'Neill declared a nine-month state of emergency in the affected region, suspended the provincial government, and deployed troops of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force to Mendi. Following this, the opposition demanded O'Neill to resign and filed a criminal case over electoral irregularities on August 24. After having hosted the 2018 APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in the capital Port Moresby on November 17 and 18, security staff and members of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary stormed the national parliament building over missing allowances for having secured the summit, destroying windows and interior on November 20. After oppositional MP Bryan Kramer had confirmed security staff demands, Police Commissioner Gari Baki accused the opposition of being involved in the incident, which Kramer later denied. [nro](#)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (TRIBAL TENSIONS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: Kala vs. Kii vs. Homu vs. various tribes

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis continued between various tribes, for instance the Kala and the Kii, over subnational predominance and resources, such as arable land.

During the course of the year, encounters involving different tribes in the provinces Enga, Hela, Southern Highlands, and Western Highlands left at least 44 people dead and numerous people injured.

On February 26, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake in and around the provincial capital Tari, Hela, destroyed infrastructure and impeded the construction of aid centers, deteriorating the life circumstances of local civilians. In the aftermath of the earthquake, tribal tensions sharply increased, especially in and around Tari.

For instance, on March 18, tribesmen shot the local level government (LLG) councilor and Homu member Hepe Keparia in Linapini village, Hela. Consequently, rivaling tribes clashed several times, leaving at least 12 people dead, numerous injured or raped, and around 100 houses torched. On March 28, members of the Homu tribe ambushed the vehicle of an enemy tribesman, killed him and injured several other passengers in revenge of the killing of Keparia. Two days later, 400 heavily armed tribesmen attempted to pass through Tari in order to attack a close-by Homu village in retaliation, but were stopped by the local Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary police forces. Despite the initiation of inclusive mediation by the police, rival tribesmen continued clashing during the following months, leaving at least nine dead and many injured. On May 6, Kii members attacked Kala members who were gardening on disputed land near Wabag town, Enga. In the ensuing clash, Kala members shot dead two Kii members, while three Kala members were injured. Local police tried to intervene, but was chased away by the tribe members. After both tribes repeatedly clashed, leaving at least a further six dead, the Enga Provincial Peace and Good Order Committee

initiated mediation. As a consequence of ongoing clashes, on May 28, the Enga Provincial Peace and Good Order Committee declared the neighboring towns of Wabag and Laiagam fighting zones until August 7. This entailed the suspension of government services, increased presence of security forces, and a curfew.

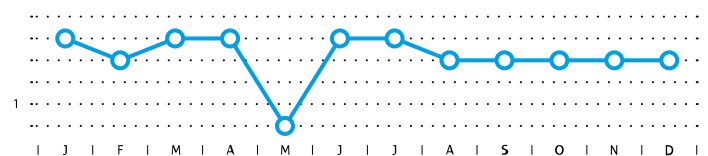
In early June, 34 tribal LLG councilors from the Western Highlands passed a law on traditional fighting rules in order to contain the impact of future fights on people and property. The chairman of the Western Highlands Provincial Law and Order Committee, Gabriel Kiap, welcomed the new law, stating that current ways of tribal fighting wrongfully targeted, among others, women, children, healthcare providers, and public goods. [nro](#)

PHILIPPINES (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, GOVERNMENT)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: BIFM, BIFF vs. MILF, government

Conflict items: secession, subnational predominance



The limited war 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, continued.

The conflict was concentrated in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and Soccsksargen, and especially around Liguasan Marsh. Throughout the year, frequent clashes between the conflict parties left 142 BIFF members, six members of the military forces, and 13 civilians dead. 29 BIFF members, 28 military forces and 80 civilians were injured. More than 48,000 civilians were displaced. Over the course of the year, 33 BIFF members surrendered to the armed forces and 13 were arrested.

On January 4 and 6, 10 BIFF members and one soldier were killed when the army attacked the BIFF with artillery and helicopter airstrikes in Datu Unsay and Datu Saudi Ampatuan in Maguindanao province, ARMM. One BIFF member was killed in a clash with the army in Rajah Buayan in Maguindanao on January 26. From March 8 to 13, the army started an offensive with armed vehicles, artillery and airstrikes against 80 BIFF members in Datu Saudi Ampatuan and in Maguindanao. As a result, 49 BIFF members were killed, six BIFF members and one member of the armed forces injured, and more than 2,500 people displaced.

Later that month, one BIFF member and one civilian were killed and 24 civilians injured in clashes in Midsayap in Cotabato and North Cotabato, Soccsksargen.

From April 9 to 11, the army launched artillery and airstrikes against 100 BIFF members in various towns in Maguindanao. The army seized two BIFF camps and killed 13 BIFF members.

Two soldiers were wounded and 2,300 people fled the area. On June 10, another offensive by the army killed 15 BIFF members and injured eight in Liguasan Marsh, using helicopter airstrikes and 105-mm howitzer artillery. Additionally, 20,000 people were displaced. Clashes in Datu Unsay and Datu Hoffer, Midsayap, and S.K. Pendatun in the following days killed nine BIFF members, five civilians and one soldier. From July 1 to 4, 13 BIFF members and two soldiers were killed in air and land strikes in various towns in Maguindanao. Four BIFF members and 15 military forces were wounded in the clashes, leaving more than 23,000 people displaced. On August 8, two BIFF members were killed in M'lang in Cotabato. On August 20, the army attacked 80 BIFF members in Sultan sa Barongis in Maguindanao with 105-mm howitzer artillery, killing seven and injuring four.

On August 28, a BIFF bomb attack killed three and injured 36 civilians in Isulan in Sultan Kudarat province, Soccsksargen. Another BIFF bomb killed two and injured 12 civilians in the same town, on September 2. On the same day, BIFF members killed two civilians in Datu Hoffer and wounded two soldiers in Datu Unsay. Four BIFF members were also wounded. Subsequently, the army killed two BIFF members in Sultan Kudarat on September 6.

On October 2, another clash in Shariff Saydona Mustapha in Maguindanao left four BIFF members dead and two wounded. On October 18, MILF forces killed one BIFF member in Mamasapano in Maguindanao. On November 19, two BIFF members were killed in a clash in Tacurong City in Sultan Kudarat. On December 4, the armed forces killed four BIFF members using artillery fire in Ampatuan in Maguindanao.

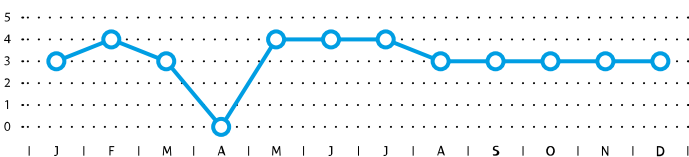
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PHILIPPINES (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Abu Sayyaf, Maute et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, other



The war over system and ideology between various Islamist militant groups, such as Abu Sayyaf and Maute, and the government, de-escalated to a limited war. Throughout the year, at least 149 people were killed and 162 injured. Police and military forces arrested at least 71 people for presumed membership of an Islamist militant group, while at least 146 surrendered to authorities. In the course of the year, Abu Sayyaf abducted a total of 17 people with the goal of demanding ransom. While 18 hostages were either freed or released from captivity, Abu Sayyaf were still holding five hostages by the end of the year.

On December 5, the government announced the introduction of a new, 4,500 personnel-strong infantry division tasked with neutralizing members of Islamist militant groups in Sulu, Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which is

planned to be fully functional until 2022. On December 12, the government extended martial law in Mindanao, ARMM, which was first introduced in May 2017 due to the occupation of Marawi city, until December 2019.

In the province of Sulu, ARMM, military forces conducted raids in order to detain alleged Abu Sayyaf militants and free hostages. Throughout the year, continuous clashes in Sulu resulted in a total of 77 killed and at least 15 wounded Abu Sayyaf militants, as well as 24 killed and 129 wounded military troops. For instance, on May 14, firefights between alleged Abu Sayyaf members and the armed forces in Patikul left 15 Abu Sayyaf members and four soldiers dead, as well as 19 soldiers wounded. Furthermore, on August 15, police and military forces killed one alleged Abu Sayyaf sub-leader, while trying to arrest him on the southern island of Jolo.

In the province of Basilan, ARMM, incidences were marked by attacks from Abu Sayyaf against government employees, as well as operations launched by the military to detain alleged Abu Sayyaf militants and free hostages. Throughout the year, continuous clashes in this province left at least 16 Abu Sayyaf militants, as well as four soldiers, two government employees and five civilians dead. Two government employees and five soldiers were injured. For example, on January 31, alleged Abu Sayyaf members attacked government employees of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Lamitan, killing two and injuring two. On February 24, a clash between Abu Sayyaf militants and armed forces, which also saw the use of combat helicopters by the military, left six Abu Sayyaf members dead in Maluso. On July 31, alleged Abu Sayyaf militants killed 10 and injured five people, detonating a car bomb at a military checkpoint in Lamitan.

In the province of Lanao del Sur, ARMM, the government continued efforts to track down members of Maute, who were, among others, responsible for the occupation of Marawi in 2017, notably the group's new leader Abu Dar. Throughout the year, clashes between alleged Maute and Abu Sayyaf members, on the one side, and government forces, on the other, left two civilians, nine militants, and one soldier dead, as well as six soldiers wounded. For instance, on June 19, military forces raided a camp used by Maute members in Tubaran, leaving five alleged Maute members dead, while around 11,000 civilians were internally displaced.

Similar clashes between Islamist militant groups and military forces, as well as military operations, in the regions of Northern Mindanao, Soccsksargen, Zamboanga Peninsula, and Eastern Visayas, left seven militants and two civilians dead as well as two soldiers and three civilians injured. tgu

SRI LANKA (INTER-RELIGIOUS TENSIONS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: Sinhalese Buddhists, BBS, Mahason Balakaya, Sinhala Ravaya vs. Muslims, SLMC, Christians

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over ideology continued between Sinhalese Buddhists, extremist Buddhist groups such as Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and Mahason Balakaya, and members of other reli-

gions, especially Muslims, represented by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC).

Communal violence between Sinhalese Buddhists and Muslims occurred primarily in Kandy district, Central Province. These violent incidents marked the worst outbreak of violence between Buddhists and Muslims since 2014. On February 22, a group of at least four Muslims attacked a Buddhist truck driver in Kandy district. Subsequently, the group was arrested but the truck driver later died in hospital. On February 26, Buddhists clashed with Muslims in Ampara district, Eastern Province, leaving at least five people injured. Simultaneously, Buddhists damaged a mosque, five Muslim-owned shops and several vehicles. On March 4, a group of Buddhists attacked and torched over two dozen Muslim-owned shops and houses as well as one mosque in Kandy, leaving at least one person dead. Police arrested several attackers. The following day, a curfew was imposed and thousands of military personnel were deployed to Kandy. On March 6, President Maithripala Sirisena declared a state of emergency for 10 days due to the communal violence. However, attacks on Muslim-owned shops and houses as well as Muslim places of worship continued for another two days, leaving at least two people dead. Reportedly, 450 Muslim-owned shops and homes as well as 24 mosques were attacked and torched by groups of Buddhists during the state of emergency in Kandy. On March 7, police arrested 10 people accused of organizing the attacks. Among the detained was Amith Jeewan Weerasinghe, leader of Mahason Balakaya. All of the arrested were released on bail on October 29.

On March 9, hundreds of Buddhist monks rallied in the capital Colombo condemning the violence against the Muslim minority.

On June 14, authorities arrested the extremist Buddhist monk and BBS leader, Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara. Later on August 8, he was found guilty on contempt of court for his behavior during a 2016 court hearing and sentenced to six years in prison.

Throughout the year, the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka (NCEASL) reported at least 16 violent incidents against Christians and 48 attacks on churches. mmu, ede

TAJIKISTAN (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: various Islamist groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between various Islamist groups and the government continued.

According to authorities, more than 1,000 Tajiks traveled to Iraq and Syria to join the so-called Islamic State (IS), of which approx. 300 were killed and 100 have returned to Tajikistan since 2015 (→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)). Throughout the year, the government detained and convicted several alleged Islamist militants on allegations of attempting to join a terrorist group. However, dozens were pardoned according to a law amend-

ment passed in 2015 for returning to Tajikistan voluntarily.

On July 30, five alleged Islamist militants ran over a group of foreign cyclists with their car on a road in Danghara district, Khatlon region, and afterwards attacked them with a gun and a knife, killing four cyclists and injuring three. According to officials, security forces subsequently killed four of the suspected militants. The following day, IS claimed responsibility for the attack, while the government accused members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), a former opposition party that had been banned as terrorist organization in 2015. On July 31, the IRPT leadership denied these allegations and IS released a video that supposedly showed the attackers pledging allegiance to the Islamist group. The July 30 attack constituted the first terrorist attack on foreigners, and the first known attack conducted by IS in Tajikistan. Reportedly, a Tajik court sentenced 15 suspects of involvement in the attack to prison terms in a closed-door trial.

On November 4, authorities detained 12 presumed IS militants near the Russian military base in the capital Dushanbe who were allegedly plotting an attack on the base.

On November 7, 25 people were killed in a riot in a high-security facility in Khujand, Sughd Region, where mainly inmates convicted of membership or affiliation with extremist groups were imprisoned. According to officials, rioters killed two prison guards and injured five, while security forces killed 23 inmates. IS claimed responsibility for the riot, stating that it broke out after one of its members had attacked a prison guard. fsc

THAILAND (ISLAMIST SEPARATISTS / SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1902

Conflict parties: BRN, PULO vs. government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The violent crisis over secession and ideology between various Islamist separatists, such as Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) and Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. Factions of those separatist groups and others organized under the the umbrella organization known as Majlis Syura Patani (MARA Patani). Separatists carried out numerous attacks, primarily targeting security personnel, civil servants, and rubber plantation workers in the predominantly Muslim southern border provinces Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and the south of Songkhla.

Throughout the year, MARA Patani and the government held Malaysian-brokered peace talks on ceasefires, safety zones, and development projects. On February 2, 288 separatists laid down their weapons and joined the government's rehabilitation project 'Bring People Home'. On July 4 and 5, landmines allegedly of militant factions of BRN killed one rubber plantation worker in Yaha district, Yala, and injured four in Muang district, Yala. Consequently, the organizations Human Rights Watch and the Buddhist Network for Peace, respectively, called on BRN to cease using land mines in their attacks.

In mid-October, MARA Patani announced its expansion from five to eight separatist groups and their inclusion in peace talks with the government, and renamed itself MARA Patani Plus. On November 21, PM Prayut Chan-o-cha and Defense Minister General Prawit Wongsuwan urged all remaining separatist parties to join the peace talks. In the beginning of December, Malaysia called upon all BRN factions to take part in negotiations or to cease using Malaysia as an operational base.

Throughout the year, the conflict resulted in at least 66 people killed and 101 injured, most of whom, respectively, were civilians. The police killed 8 alleged militants in clashes and arrested 46, and the Pattani Provincial Court sentenced six militants to death for an attack on a shop in Pattani two years ago and another for fatal ambushes on paramilitary and civilians in 2013 and 2014. For instance, on January 22, separatists killed three civilians and injured at least nineteen with a motorcycle IED in a market in Muang district, Yala. The next day, up to 1,000 residents gathered for a peace rally. On April 10, in an ambush on a police unit in Yarang district, Pattani, two BRN members injured three police officers and were shot dead.

On May 20, Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK), a semi-autonomous militant group typically affiliated with BRN, blew up several ATMs in districts of Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani and Songkhla, injuring three people. Two days later, the police arrested an RKK leader in Pattani as well as eight others suspected to be involved in the ATM bombings. In a violent clash, security forces shot dead one suspected militant and arrested two others in Thepha district, Songkhla, on October 8. On December 24, a roadside IED killed one policeman and injured five others in Bacho district, Narathiwat.

The Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre stated on October 23 that the number of incidents connected to the insurgency in 2018 had decreased by 70 percent since 2011. However, as in previous years, human rights organizations criticized the military for alleged arbitrary arrests, torture and extrajudicial killings. ceb

sources, especially industrial pollution, land allocation, and working conditions, between peasants, factory workers, activists, and other civilians, on the one hand, and the government as well as manufacturing companies, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, protesters rallied against industrial pollution. From January 21 to 24, hundreds of fishermen protested in Van Dong, Quang Binh province, for the delayed compensation from authorities for the large-scale fish poisoning after the Taiwanese steel plant incident in April 2016. From February 26 to March 1, hundreds of residents of the Hoa Lien commune, Da Nang municipality, protested against the pollution from two steel plants. Subsequently, on March 2, the government decided to relocate the plants and met the residents' demands to offer resettlement for affected households. In My Tho, Tien Giang province, on April 18, hundreds of villagers protested against the construction of a wind power plant, police arresting 14. Two days later, about 500 protesters kept five authorities as hostages to demand the release of the detainees, which succeeded. Throughout August, protesters set up camps demanding the relocation of the waste treatment plant of Pho Thanh commune, Quang Ngai province, due to pollution. On September 2, around 50 of them locked a highway leading to the plant, resulting in clashes with police. Some of the activists used sticks, rocks and petrol bombs, injuring two police officers. Consequently, police officers arrested nine activists. Two days later, approx. 500 protesters marched to a committee building in Pho Thanh and took a police officer and the plant's manager hostage for four hours before releasing them unharmed.

On June 10 and 11, thousands of protesters rallied nationwide against new special-economic zones with Chinese investors and a strict new cybersecurity law. After violent clashes between the police and protesters, the former arrested hundreds. Some detainees reported incidents of police violence in custody. The protests continued on June 17, when tens of thousands of Catholics rallied peacefully after attending special masses on justice. The crackdown on environmental and human-rights activists exacerbated after the June protests.

For a limited time, the government handed out land use rights as they have annually since the Doi Moi reform in 1986. Several members of the banned Brotherhood for Democracy movement that criticizes corruption, land appropriations, and corporate negligence were sentenced to up to 15 years in prison. Activists reported incidents of beatings outside of arrests by plain-clothes agents and alleged gang members, supposedly hired by authorities. For instance, plain-clothes agents attacked a land petitioner with batons on September 9 in Di Linh district, Lam Dong province. fte

VIETNAM (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

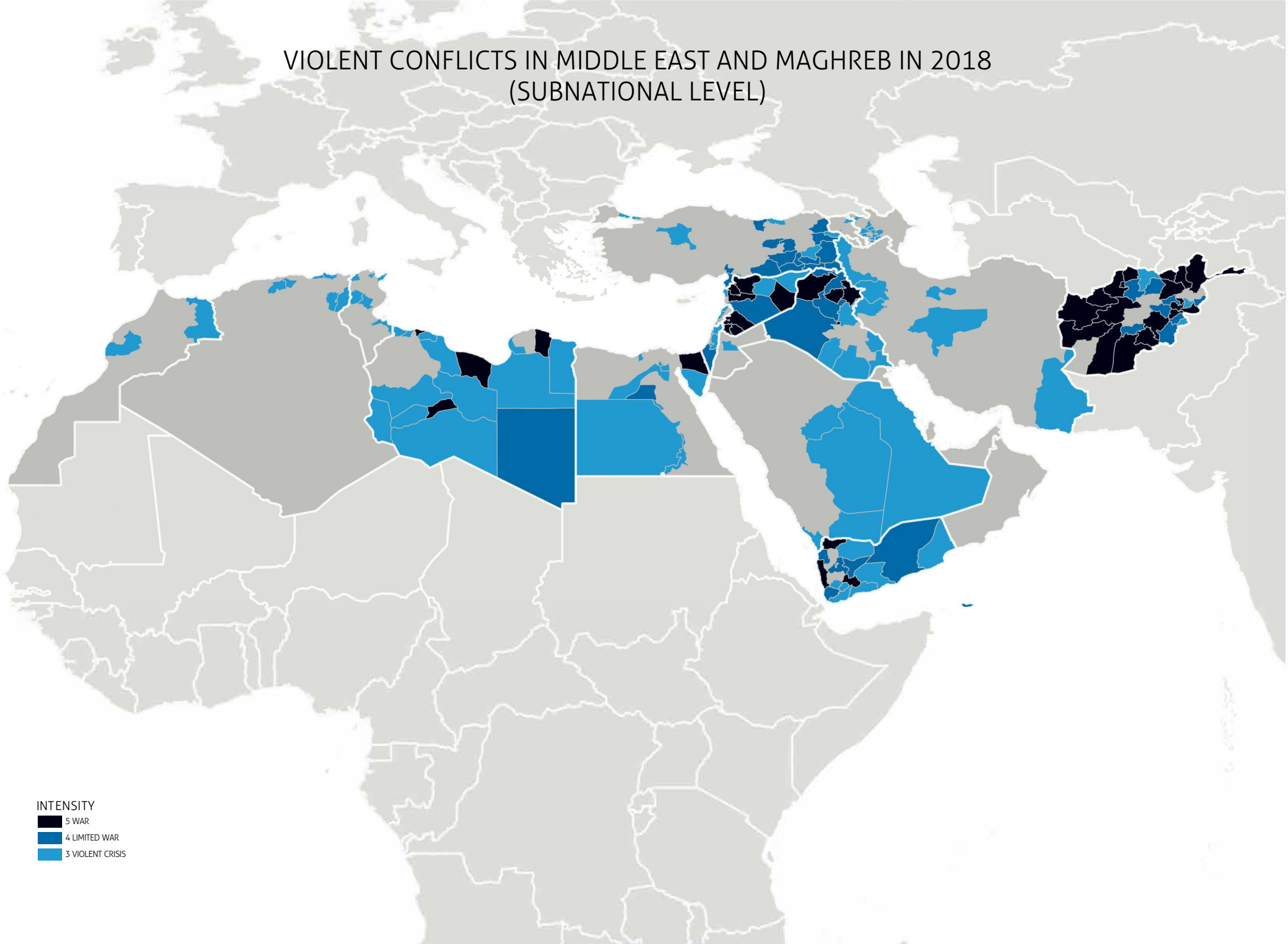
Conflict parties: factory workers, peasants, other civilians vs. manufacturing companies, government

Conflict items: resources, other

The violent crisis over the socioeconomic system and re-

Middle East and Maghreb

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2018 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY
5 WAR
4 LIMITED WAR
3 VIOLENT CRISIS

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Middle East and Maghreb region, HIIK observed a total of 62 conflicts in 2018. Three new full-scale wars were counted, while all six conflicts which had already been on war-level in 2017 continued at the same intensity. In Syria's Afrin region, a new conflict broke out between Turkish troops, allied with Syrian opposition groups, and Kurdish SDF forces, and directly escalated to war-level [→ Syria (Afrin region)]. In Turkey, last year's limited war between the Turkish government and the Kurdish PKK escalated to a war [→ Turkey (PKK, TAK)], while in Egypt, the conflict between the government and Sunni militant groups on the Sinai Peninsula escalated from a limited war to war-level [→ Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. Moreover, three limited wars were observed; one less than in the previous year.

The ongoing war between the Afghan government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and additional US forces, and the Taliban continued to affect the civilian population to the highest degree [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. The overall number of civilians killed in conflict-related violence in Afghanistan remained around 3,500. Some peace efforts were made, when the Taliban agreed to the first formal ceasefire in June, which lasted three days. In November, Taliban representatives held three days of talks with US officials in Qatar. In the same month, a Taliban delegation attended for the first time an international conference in Moscow to discuss Afghan peace efforts. In October, the third parliament elections since 2001 took place, which had originally been scheduled for 2015. According to UNAMA figures, violence against voters and polling centres was for the most part conducted by the Taliban. At least 112 incidents of election-related violence were reported.

In Algeria, labor unions organized large-scale strikes, mostly in the first half of the year, demanding better working conditions, better pay, and health care [→ Algeria (opposition)]. AQIM-affiliated militants continued to be targeted by the military in Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM, ISGS et al.)].

In Egypt, violence concentrated on the Sinai Peninsula, where Egyptian Armed Forces launched a military offensive against militant groups [→ Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. In the same area, IS' Sinai Province frequently clashed with Egyptian Armed Forces, backed by local Bedouin tribes, and attacked civilians [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Ahead of the Presidential election, the government further limited the opposition's rights to exercise their freedom of speech and hindered opposition members from running for presidency. In addition, the government continued to persecute militant opposition groups such as Hasm, making them responsible for attacks on police and armed forces [→ Egypt (opposition)]. Occasionally, attacks against Coptic Christians took place, for instance in November, when IS claimed an attack on bus in Minya Governorate [→ Egypt (Muslims – Christians)].

In the Gaza strip, the violent crisis between Hamas and Israel escalated to a limited war [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. In March, Palestinians launched the so-called Great March of Return, a series of weekly protests along the border fence to Israel, leading to heavy clashes with Israeli forces throughout the year. In total, at least 180 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed during the Great March of Return or died later from their injuries. In July, August, and November, tensions increased with Palestinian militant groups firing hundreds of projectiles towards Israel and Israeli Forces conducting airstrikes in Gaza. Furthermore, the conflict between Hamas and Salafi groups continued on a violent level [→ State of Palestine° (Hamas – Salafi Groups)]. In West Bank, the violent crisis over the creation of a Palestinian state continued [→ Israel – State of Palestine° (PNA)]. Throughout the year, the conflict between Hamas and Fatah intensified, such as on the end of December, when Fatah blamed Hamas of arresting hundreds of their members in Gaza [→ State of Palestine° (Hamas – al-Fatah)].

The non-violent crisis over international power between Iran and Israel escalated to a violent crisis [→ Iran – Israel]. Besides a rhetorical escalation regarding the Iranian nuclear program, when Israel claimed an Iranian violation of the nuclear program agreement on April 30, the Iranian presence in Syria in the context of the Syrian conflicts led to a direct military confrontation between the two conflict parties [→ Syria (opposition); Syria (inter-opposition rivalry); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The Israeli Defence Ministry announced on September 4 that Israeli forces had conducted more than 200 airstrikes and fired more than 800 rockets against Iranian and Iranian-backed forces in Syria since 2017.

In Iraq, the number of civilian casualties decreased to 3,319, marking the lowest figure since 2011. Clashes occurred mainly between the Iraqi government, affiliated militias, and Western intervention forces, on one hand, and IS militants on the other hand [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Various rivaling Shiite militias continued their struggle for political influence [→ Iraq (Shiite militant groups)].

In Jordan, countrywide protests formed in opposition to austerity measures and economic reforms. Protests peaked in June and December, leading to occasional clashes between protesters and security forces [→ Jordan (opposition)].

In Lebanon, the limited war between the government and Sunni militant groups de-escalated to a violent crisis, following a military operation of Lebanese forces against Sunni militant groups and the IS in the previous year [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups); → Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In the contest of the Lebanese general elections, the conflict between supporters of the March 14 Alliance and the March 8 Alliance intensified [→ Lebanon (March 14 Alliance – March 8 Alliance)]. In addition, the violent crisis between various Palestinian Islamist groups over subnational predominance in Palestinian refugee camps continued. In 2018, fighting mainly concentrated in the Ain al-Hilweh and Mieh Mieh refugee camps [→ Lebanon (inner-Palestinian tensions)]. Furthermore, Israeli security measures on the border to Lebanon led to increased tensions between the two governments [→ Israel – Lebanon].

In Libya, the ceasefire between the Government of National Accord and the House of Representatives, supported by the Libyan National Army, was generally observed. Both actors focused on fighting regional Islamist groups, as well as on resolving internal power struggles [→ Libya (opposition)]. In the south of the country, various tribal and ethnic groups clashed over the control of trafficking routes and scarce resources, especially in Sebha district [→ Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)].

In Mauritania, anti-slavery protests were dispersed by police throughout the year, whilst the leader of the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA), Biram Dah Abeid, was detained for several months [→ Mauritania (anti-slavery activists)]. In Morocco, socio-economic protests addressing marginalization and unemployment turned violent during the first months of the year in Jeraba, eponymous province, after the death of two people in a coal mine [→ Morocco (opposition)]. Meanwhile, the violent crisis over the status of Western Sahara^o de-escalated to a non-violent crisis, as threats of military action of both the Moroccan government and Polisario caused no casualties [→ Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara^o)].

In Saudi Arabia, the dispute over the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis [→ Saudi Arabia (opposition)]. Throughout the year, the government targeted journalists, women's rights activists, human rights defenders as well as Sunni clerics and arrested at least 67 people. The conflict reached its peak with the presumed murder of journalist and government critic Jamal Khashoggi after he entered the Saudi Arabian embassy in Istanbul, Turkey, on October 2.

In Tunisia, protests over increasing prices escalated in January, leading to over 900 arrests and the injury of many others [→ Tunisia (opposition)]. IS fighters continued to carry out attacks against civilians and security personnel in Tunisia [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

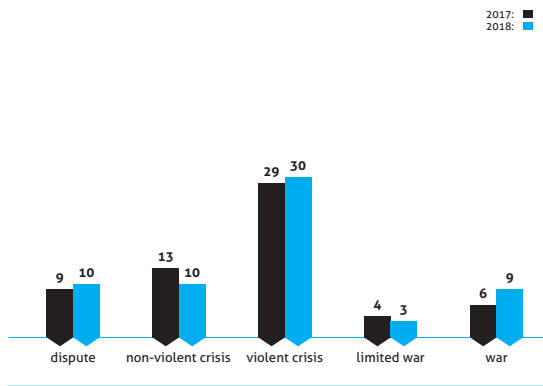
In Turkey, the conflict between the government and the Kurdish PKK escalated, mainly due to an increased number of military air strikes against PKK facilities in Northern Iraq [→ Turkey (PKK, TAK)]. The government continued its approach against opposition parties and journalists, expelling more than 18,000 government employees for alleged support of terrorist organizations [→ Turkey (opposition)].

In Yemen, the war over national power between al-Houthi forces, on the one hand, and the government of internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, on the other, continued [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)]. The conflict was marked by the battle over the port city Hudaydah and the offensives of the coalition and Hadi-aligned forces in the Houthi-controlled Hudaydah governorate. Between December 6 and 12, UN organized consultations between the conflict parties in Sweden's capital Stockholm. As a result, the warring parties agreed upon a ceasefire in Hudaydah, including the city's demilitarization under UN observation. The non-violent crisis between al-Hirak and the government over the secession of southern Yemen escalated to a violent crisis [→ Yemen (al-Hirak / Southern Yemen)]. At the end of January, heavy clashes erupted between Southern Resistance Forces (SRF) and Hadi-aligned forces. The clashes left at least 36 dead and more than 141 injured. Furthermore, the conflicts with Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Yemeni branch of IS continued in Yemen's southern governorates [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. For the first time since the establishment of an IS branch in Yemen, IS militants also attacked AQAP militants.

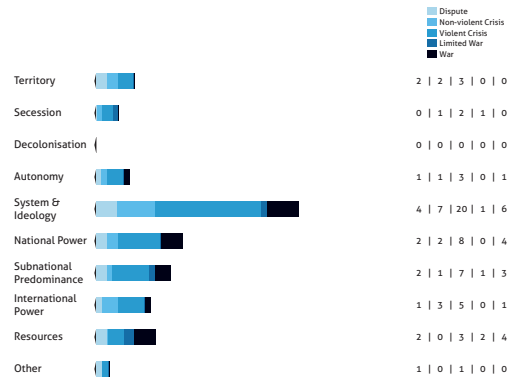
In Syria, three wars continued and one new war erupted. The government of President Bashar al-Assad, backed by Russia, Iran, and Shiite militias, continued to make territorial gains in the conflict with various opposition groups [→ Syria (opposition)]. Pro-government troops retook most territories in southern Syria as well as in and around the capital Damascus. The territorial gains left the opposition groups only in control of Idlib Governorate, parts of western Aleppo Governorate, the Turkish co-controlled areas in northern Aleppo, as well as the al-Tanf pocket in the southern desert. The opposition conflict also had an impact on the territorial conflict between Syria and Israel, due to cross-border shelling, and on the conflict over the Iranian involvement in Syria [→ Syria – Israel; Israel – Iran]. The war between opposition groups, such as the al-Nusra Front successor Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, mainly affected Idlib Governorate [→ Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)]. The fight against IS continued throughout the year, with Kurdish-led SDF forces regaining the vast majority of the former IS-controlled areas east of the river Euphrates. A new war erupted in Afrin region in northern Aleppo Governorate when Turkish troops, allied with Syrian opposition groups, conquered the region from predominantly Kurdish SDF forces [→ Syria (Afrin region)]. In the main combat period between January and March, at least 1,600 people were killed, among them at least 300 civilians, and more than 150,000 civilians were internally displaced.

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2018 COMPARED TO 2017



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2018



MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Overview: Conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb in 2018

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	↓	1
Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)	Taliban et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	1994	•	5
Afghanistan – Pakistan	Afghanistan vs. Pakistan	territory, international power, other	1949	•	3
Algeria (Berbers / Kabylia)*	Berbers vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1963	↘	2
Algeria (opposition)	opposition groups, labour unions vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	3
Bahrain (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1975	•	3
Egypt (Christians – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1952	•	3
Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)	militant groups vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2011	↗	5
Egypt (opposition)	HM, MB, Ansar al-Islam, civil rights activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1954	•	3
Egypt – Sudan*	Egypt vs. Sudan	territory	1958	↘	1
Iran (opposition)	intra-systemic opposition, nonsystemic opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1993	•	3
Iran (PDKI et al.)	PDKI, various other Kurdish parties and groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1979	•	3
Iran (People's Mujahideen)*	PMOI vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1979	•	2
Iran (PJAK)*	PJAK vs. government	autonomy	1979	•	3
Iran (Sunni militant groups / Sistan Baluchistan)*	Jaish al-Adl, Ansar al-Furqan et al. vs. government	autonomy	1979	•	3
Iran – Israel	Iran vs. Israel	system/ideology, international power	1979	↗	3
Iran – Saudi Arabia*	Iran, Saudi-Arabia	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iran – UAE*	Iran vs. UAE	territory	1971	•	1
Iran – USA*	Iran, USA	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iraq (KRG – YBS)*	YBS vs. Kurdistan Regional Government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2017	END	1
Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)*	KRG vs. government	autonomy, resources	1971	↓	1
Iraq (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↑	3
Iraq (Shiite militant groups)	Badr Organization, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Kata'ib Hezbollah, Saraya al-Salam vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	↗	3
Iraq (Sunni opposition)*	Sunni opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	•	1
Israel (Hamas et al.)	Hamas, PIJ, other Islamist militant groups vs. government	secession, resources	1988	↗	4
Israel (Hezbollah)	Hezbollah vs. government	territory, system/ideology	1982	•	2
Israel – Lebanon*	Lebanon vs. Israel	territory, international power	1948	↗	3
Israel – State of Palestine ^o (PNA)	PNA vs. government, Israeli settlement movements	secession, system/ideology, resources	1948	•	3
Israel – Syria	Israel vs. Syria	territory, international power, resources	1948	•	3
Jordan (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↑	3
Kuwait (Bedouns)*	Bedouns vs. government	other	1959	↘	1
Kuwait (opposition)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1

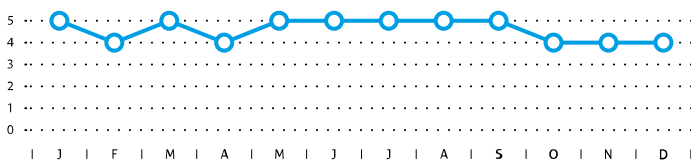
MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al.)*	Palestinian Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2006	↘	2
Lebanon (inner-Palestinian tensions)	Ansar Allah, other Palestinian Islamist groups vs. Fatah, other Palestinian factions	subnational predominance	2006	•	3
Lebanon (March 14 Alliance – March 8 Alliance)*	March 14 Alliance vs. March 8 Alliance	system/ideology, national power	2005	↑	3
Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)*	Sunni militant groups vs. government, Hezbollah	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2014	↘	3
Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)	Tebu vs. Awlad Suleiman vs. Zway vs. Qaddafi vs. Touareg	subnational predominance, resources	2012	↗	4
Libya (opposition)	HoR vs. GNA, HSC vs. LNA vs. BRSC vs. CMSR vs. DMSC vs. Militia of Ibrahim Jadran	system/ideology, national power, resources	2011	•	5
Mauritania (anti-slavery activists)*	IRA, opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	2015	•	3
Morocco (opposition)*	Justice and Spirituality, 20 February Movement, AMDH, labor rights activists, Hirak movement vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	3
Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara°)	POLISARIO vs. government	secession	1975	↘	2
Oman (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	1
Qatar – Saudi Arabia et al.*	Qatar vs. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Egypt	international power	2017	↘	1
Saudi Arabia (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology	1992	↑	3
Saudi Arabia (Shiites)*	Shiites vs. government	system/ideology	1979	•	3
State of Palestine° (Hamas – al-Fatah)*	al-Fatah vs. Hamas	subnational predominance	1994	↗	2
State of Palestine° (Hamas – Salafi Groups)*	Hamas vs. Salafist groups	subnational predominance	2007	•	3
Syria (Afrin region)	Turkey, FSA vs. SDF, pro-Syrian government militiamen	subnational predominance	2018	NEW	5
Syria (FSA, Islamist groups – KSC / Kurdish regions)*	FSA, Islamist groups vs. KSC	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)	HTS vs. SLF vs. FSA	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2013	•	5
Syria (Kurdish groups)*	KDPS, PYD vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	1962	•	3
Syria (opposition)	NC, FSA, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, Syrian Liberation Front vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	5
Syria – Turkey*	Syria vs. Turkey	territory, international power	1946	•	2
Syria – USA*	Syria vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	2003	•	3
Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)	IS vs. Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, USA, France, United Kingdom, Russia, Iran, Syrian opposition groups, SDF, al-Houthi, Taliban, Hezbollah, et al.	system/ideology, international power, resources	2014	•	5
Tunisia (opposition)	opposition groups, civil society groups vs. government	system/ideology	2010	•	3
Turkey (opposition)	Nation Alliance, HDP vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2013	•	2
Turkey (PKK, TAK)	PKK, TAK vs. government	autonomy	1978	↗	5
Yemen (al-Hirak / Southern Yemen)	al-Hirak vs. government	secession	2007	↗	3
Yemen (AQAP – al-Houthi forces)	AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. al-Houthi forces	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2010	•	3
Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)	AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. government, UAE-backed forces, USA	system/ideology	1992	•	4
Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)	al-Houthi forces vs. government	national power	2004	•	5

¹ ² ³ ⁴ cf. overview table for Europe

AFGHANISTAN (TALIBAN ET AL.)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: Taliban et al. vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources

The war over national power, the orientation of the political system, and resources between the Taliban and various other Islamist militant groups such as the Haqqani Network, on the one hand, and the government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and additional US forces, on the other, continued.

In February, President Ashraf Ghani publicly invited the Taliban to participate in peace negotiations, explicitly dropping any preconditions. In consequence, pre-peace talks started in June between the US and the Taliban and resulted in a ceasefire around Eid Al-Fitr in mid-June, lasting three days. According to UNAMA, the number of killed civilians reached an all-time high in 2018: 3,804 civilians were killed and 7,189 injured. The report attributed 37 percent of the civilian casualties to the Taliban.

In 2018, Kabul, Ghazni, Nangarhar, Baghlan, Helmand, Kandahar, Farah, and Jowzjan were the most-affected provinces, where civilians were increasingly targeted in bombings and suicide attacks. For instance on January 21, Taliban combatants attacked the InterContinental hotel in Kabul. At least six civilians and four assailants were killed in the attack and during the subsequent counter-operation by Afghan Security Forces. A few days later, on January 27, a car bomb exploded in a security zone of Kabul, which hosts government facilities and embassies, killing 103 people. President Ghani claimed that the Pakistani Security Forces' inability to dismantle terrorist networks in their country enabled the Taliban to conduct such attacks [→ Afghanistan – Pakistan]. In early June, seven religious scholars were killed when a bomb struck their tent near a university in Kabul. The scholars had gathered to speak out against suicide bombing. On December 15, at least 20 civilians were killed when US drones tried to strike a Taliban commander connected to Al-Qaeda in Kunar province. Moreover, Taliban conducted targeted suicide attacks against journalists throughout the year, such as on April 30, when 36 people were killed in a twin bombing in Kabul, among them ten journalists. According to Reporters Without Borders, Afghanistan was the deadliest country worldwide for journalists, with Taliban and IS considered as the biggest threat.

Furthermore, the Taliban continued to punctual raids as well as large-scale attacks against government positions. For instance, on February 24, Taliban Forces conducted a attack on an Afghanistan National Army (ANA) base in Balabluk district, Farah province, resulting in the death of 18 soldiers.

In late April, the Taliban and its allies launched their annual,

countrywide spring offensive. The fighting concentrated on Farah province throughout May, where high number of fatalities were reported. On May 10, Taliban suicide bombers targeted police stations in Kabul, eponymous province, and Jalalabad, Nangarhar province, resulting in the death of at least eight Afghan National Police (ANP) officers.

On May 15, approx. 2,000 Taliban fighters attacked Farah City, eponymous province. After three days of fighting, ANA and ANP forces repelled the attack. Hundreds were killed while over ten thousand civilians were displaced. Between May 15 and 18, Taliban fighters and security forces clashed in the districts of Zana Khan and Jaghato, Ghazni province, leaving dozens of Taliban fighters and security forces dead. On November 23, 26 soldiers were killed and over 50 wounded when a suicide bomber attacked the mosque of an ANA base in Khost province. The government accused the Taliban of conducting the attack.

In 2018, the amount of government-controlled area reached to its lowest level since the US-led coalition had seized control of Afghanistan in 2001. This coincided with an increase of the production of raw opioids for another consecutive year. According to a report by the US Congress, the Afghan government was controlling 55.5 percent of the Afghan territory by November 2018, whereas 30 percent were designated as contested between anti-government forces and the government, and the remaining 12.5 percent of the country were referred to as 'controlled by militias'. For instance, following the three-day ceasefire between June 15 and 17, the Taliban and associated groups conducted attacks throughout the country, winning over the formerly government-controlled Khak-e-Jabbar district near Kabul.

Moreover, clashes between the Taliban and the Afghan branch of the so-called Islamic State (ISKP) continued. In July, Taliban defeated the ISKP in Darzab district, Jowzjan province, a territory which had been contested for over two years [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Both the government and the Taliban claimed responsibility for the withdrawal of ISKP from Darzab.

On March 8, a US drone killed the son of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan chief and 19 other militants in Kunar province. On October 18, a bodyguard killed the Security and Police General and the Intelligence Chief of Kandahar province, while the Commander of the US Forces in Afghanistan and the Governor of Kandahar province survived the attack. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

On October 20, the third parliament elections were held since 2001; these had originally been planned for 2015. Voter registration offices, election commissions, and schools were repeatedly attacked in the months beforehand the election and 10 parliamentary candidates were assassinated during the campaign process. A parliamentary candidate from Helmand, for instance, and seven other people were assassinated at the candidate's house on October 17. This was claimed by the Taliban. On election day, Taliban forces conducted several attacks throughout the country, for example on polling stations, leaving at least 58 people dead. twu

AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: Afghanistan vs. Pakistan
 Conflict items: territory, international power, other

The violent crisis between Afghanistan and Pakistan over territory and international power continued. The demarcation of the border, border security, mutual allegations of supporting terrorism and the status of Afghan refugees in Pakistan were contested issues [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)].

Throughout the year, the two governments continued negotiations. In February, meetings in the two capitals Kabul and Islamabad ended without an agreement, whereas in April and May, Pakistani PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, later succeeded by Imran Khan, and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani agreed to the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity. In the agreement, the two countries expressed willing to cooperate on shared issues such as border security and migration and announced formal mechanisms to facilitate said cooperation.

In January, the Pakistani government announced that registered Afghan refugees were allowed to stay in the country for two more months. The deadline was later extended until June 2019.

Furthermore, the Ghulam Khan border in North Waziristan Agency, Pakistan, that was closed in June 2014 was reopened in March.

On September 1, the government of Pakistan shut down their consulate in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province due to security concerns and an alleged interference in the Consulate General's authority. The mission was reopened on October 8.

As in previous years, military forces on both sides engaged in skirmishes throughout the border region.

For instance, on January 8, Pakistan army fired several artillery rounds at locations in the Sarkano district, Kunar province, Afghanistan, killing one person and injuring eight.

In April, at least two Pakistani paramilitary soldiers were killed and five others wounded in skirmishes with Afghan troops during a patrol in the border area of Khost province, Afghanistan and Kyhber Pakhtunkhwa Agency, Pakistan.

Furthermore, the Pakistani government continued building fences along the contested Durand Line border demarcation, established in 1896. On October 14, Pakistani and Afghan border forces clashed in the border area between Kandahar province, Afghanistan, and Balochistan province, Pakistan, after the Pakistani forces had tried to install border fences. No casualties were reported but the border crossing between Spin Boldak, Kandahar and Charman, Balochistan was closed for two days. pfr

ALGERIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition groups, labour unions vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and labor unions, on one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, protests over affordable housing, adequate pay, the country's labour laws, and retirement regulations, as well as the educational system, took place in several cities despite the protest ban introduced in Algeria in 2001. At the center of the protests were the health and education systems. Evolving from protests initiated by medical students, two general strikes were staged during the year. The Autonomous Medical Residents Collective (CAMRA) had started weekly protests demanding for a regulatory change to the compulsory civil service in state-owned hospitals in November 2017.

On January 3, health professionals and medical students demonstrated in Algiers, eponymous province, for an improvement in working conditions and wage increases. After the police had dispersed the sit-in, at least 20 protesters were injured and several arrested in the following clashes. Medical workers and students continued to protest weekly. On February 14, 12 unions of workers in the health, education, postal and electricity services organized a nationwide general strike. Thousands of teachers and medical staff went on strike and organized sit-ins and marches in several provinces. 3186 of the striking professors of the major teachers' union, Conseil National Autonome du Personnel Enseignant du Secteur Tertiaire de l'Education (CNAPESTE), were suspended until February 26. On March 19, medical students protested at the Ben Aknoun Medical College in Ben Aknoun, a suburb of Algiers. Algerian security forces intervened and several protesters were injured. Algerian police also detained several doctors and students. The weekly protest of health professionals and medical students escalated on April 29 to a general strike, which continued for two months up until June 24. Within this time medical residents stopped working night shifts in several government hospitals. Protests continued over the course of 2018, with negotiations with the Algerian Ministry for Health bringing no results.

Between September 18 and 24, 20,000 veterans of the Algerian People's National Army, according to the organizers, protested in Haouch El Makhfi, Boumerdès province, over better pensions, especially for better housing and health care. On September 23, Algerian police used tear gas and batons to disperse a sit-in, leaving at least 30 people injured. tjb

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 Shiite opposition groups and the Sunni government continued.

As in previous years, the government limited opposition activities. On February 20, the government issued a law banning former members of opposition parties from running in elections, affecting around 70,000 Bahrainis. The government further introduced new punishments to combat election fraud on June 4, which included punishing the act of preventing voters from reaching electoral centers and spreading false information about candidates.

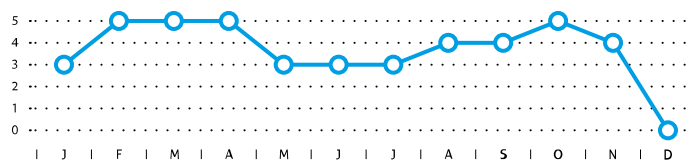
On February 19, the banned al-Wafaa Islamic Party accused the government of killing four of its members, while attempting to flee the country by sea. On February 21, Human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, was sentenced to another five years in prison on charges of "offending national institutions" and "spreading rumors during wartime". Furthermore the trial against Shia cleric Ali Salman, former secretary general of the now-dissolved Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, continued this year. On November 4, the Bahraini High Court sentenced Salman to life imprisonment over charges of espionage after the prosecution had appealed his acquittal on June 21. In addition, Bahraini authorities allegedly summoned Shia citizens to take DNA tests in June, including Shia cleric Hani al-Banaa. Throughout the year, the government cracked down on numerous opposition protests, arresting several demonstrators. In the wake of the seventh anniversary of the 2011 uprising on February 14, anti-government protests were held throughout the country. During a demonstration in the village of Bu Quwah, Northern Governorate, protesters reportedly threw various objects at police forces, while the latter used tear gas. On February 17, as well as on April 6, security forces cracked down on rallies in Diraz, Northern Governorate, and Bilad al-Qadeem, Capital Governorate, respectively. On April 24, demonstrations in Diraz, Northern Governorate, escalated between security forces and protesters, throwing bricks, rocks, metal rods as well as Molotov cocktails. During the clashes, five protesters were shot dead, while 31 security forces were injured.

The Bahraini government continued to accuse Iran of interfering in the conflict. yad

EGYPT (MILITANT GROUPS / SINAI PENINSULA)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: militant groups vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance



The limited war in the Sinai Peninsula over ideology and subnational predominance between militant groups and the government escalated to a war. As in the previous year, most clashes between Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) and militant groups took place in North Sinai Governorate. The conflict overlapped with the fight against the Islamic State's (IS) local branch Sinai Province, operating in the same area [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

On February 9, EAF launched 'Sinai 2018', a comprehensive military operation against militants in Sinai, leading to heavy clashes throughout the year. In some instances, operation-related fighting also took place in other parts of Egypt, including the Nile Delta and the Western Desert [→ Egypt (opposition)]. On March 1, Amnesty International accused EAF of using cluster bombs in airstrikes targeting militant groups in Sinai. According to state sources, more than 740 militants were killed and many others arrested in raids within "Sinai 2018". For example, on February 21, according to state sources, EAF and Egyptian National Police (ENP) forces killed four militants and arrested 112 suspects. In addition, EAF claimed to have destroyed 350 militant hideouts, four bomb stocks, and 37 vehicles. During an air and ground raid on March 4, EAF killed 10 militants and arrested 245 others. Three EAF soldiers died and three others were wounded during the fighting.

During the first days of August, EAF and ENP killed 13 suspected militants in the city of al-Arish, North Sinai Governorate, and another 39 in various other operations across northern and central Sinai. On November 22, ENP killed 12 militants during a raid in North Sinai Governorate. According to state sources, fighting in Sinai and along the border with Libya killed one EAF soldier and 27 militants on December 12. Few days before, the Egyptian parliament had extended the state of emergency for three month, which had first been declared in April 2017. Security restrictions imposed by state authorities such as travel restrictions and the temporary closure of universities and schools also impacted civil life in North Sinai Governorate.

Over the course of the year, militant groups attacked EAF and ENP. For example, on January 4, militants killed at least three police officers in an ambush near the city of al-Arish. On February 1, militants attacked a military checkpoint in al-Arish, killing one police officer and injuring another. In September, the Al-Qaida-affiliated group Jund al-Islam, operating in North Sinai, released a video accusing the Egyptian government for collaboration with Israel and attempting to demonstrate their military strength. However, the group did not claim responsibility for any attack in 2018. On November 20, unknown militants kidnapped four workers and the head of a construction company in North Sinai, releasing the workers soon after. imh

EGYPT (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: HM, MB, Ansar al-Islam, civil rights activists vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between militant opposition groups such as Hasm Movement (HM), as well as the political opposition and civil rights activists, on the one hand, and the government on the other, continued

During the year, Egyptian National Police (ENP) and Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) forces killed at least 90 militants, including 19 suspected HM members, while seven ENP officers were killed.

On February 9, EAF and ENP forces launched 'Sinai 2018' a military operation against militants, mainly concentrated in Sinai, but also comprising raids in Nile Delta as well as in Western Desert [→ Egypt (militants / Sinai Peninsula), Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. For instance, on August 29, EAF conducted an airstrike in Western Desert, killing at least seven militants. On October 24, eleven militants died during clashes with EAF forces near Farafra, Western Desert, according to state sources.

Throughout the year, militants frequently attacked ENP forces and civilians. ENP forces, in turn, clashed with armed groups when searching for militants. For example, on March 24, two ENP officers died and five others were injured by a car bomb that was supposed to targeted a police general in the city Alexandria, eponymous Governorate. One day later, ENP killed six alleged HM militants in a shooting in Beheira Governorate. On June 28, EAF announced the killing of another four suspected HM members during a raid in Assiut Governorate. On December 28, a roadside bomb killed three Vietnamese tourists and an Egyptian guide and injured a further 10 civilians close to the Giza pyramids, Giza Governorate. No militant group claimed the attack. The following day, ENP killed 30 militants during two raids in the same governorate. On October 8, Egyptian militant Hisham al-Ashmawy, suspected of being linked to Islamist militant groups such as Ansar Al-Islam and of being involved in attacks in Egypt in 2017, was arrested by the Libyan National Army in Derna, Libya. In 2017, a military court had sentenced him to death in absentia over terror charges.

Beforehand the Egyptian presidential elections in March, the government reportedly suppressed opposition members and opponents to President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. In consequence, at least five candidates withdrew their candidacy. For example, on January 23, EAF raided the home of lieutenant general Sami Hafez Anan, four days after he had announced his candidacy. He was detained on allegations of not fulfilling the requirements to run for presidency. Four days later, unknown assailants attacked an Egyptian judge and supporter of Anan outside his home in Cairo. On February 13, he was detained and sentenced to five years in prison on April 24 for publishing state documents. On January 31, President al-Sisi threatened more than 150 opposition figures who had appealed to

boycott the elections, stating that he would 'die first' before allowing any disruption of national security. Moreover, the government reportedly restrained the work of journalists and activists. For example, on February 4, a journalist was detained over charges of spreading 'false news'. Another journalist, arrested under similar charges in May, was conditionally released from jail in December. According to Freedom House, 500 websites, including those of news agencies and human rights organizations, had been blocked until February 2018. In March, the Egyptian public prosecution opened hotlines for citizens to report on the spreading of 'false news' by journalists and social media activists. On March 7, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights criticized a 'pervasive climate of intimidation' prevalent in Egypt beforehand the elections. On July 16, a new media law was approved by the Egyptian parliament, empowering state authorities to block popular social media accounts.

In total, at least 64 opposition members, activists, and journalists were arrested. Furthermore, around 280 activists and opposition members received jail sentences up to life-long imprisonment. In addition, at least 135 opposition members were sentenced to death, including 75 supporters of the Muslim Brothers on September 9. elu

IRAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1993

Conflict parties: intra-systemic opposition, non-systemic opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between non-systemic opposition groups, intra-systemic opposition groups and the government continued. As in previous years, national power was contested between intra-systemic opposition actors, such as former president Mohammed Khatami and conservative political figures, most prominently Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

The violent protests that began on 12/28/17 in Mashhad city, eponymous province, extended to more than 70 cities until February. Contrary to the Green Movement, the protests were not called primarily by any specific opposition group and were presumably caused by dissatisfaction from socio-economic issues, especially economic deterioration but extended to nationwide protests against the political system.

On 1 January, a police station was set alight by protesters and six people were killed in Qahdarijan, Isfahan province. In Najafabad, two members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard corps (IRGC) were killed during protests. On January 2, at least 450 people were arrested in the capitol Tehran and 100 in Markazi province. On February 27, 15 political activists inside and outside Iran, including former reformist Mohsen Kadivar, announced the Islamic Republic could not be reformed and called for a referendum to change the regime democratically. The overall number of killed people during public protest activities until the end of February was confirmed at 25 people, and around 4000 to 5000 were arrested according to differ-

ent reports. UN secretary General Antonio Guterres called for avoiding more violence and respecting the right of peaceful protest.

On March 8, around 80 women rights activists and journalists were arrested in Tehran, protesting against unequal family laws on International Women's Day, in front of the Iranian Labor Ministry.

On March 11, in a meeting with academics, Khatami called for fundamental changes in the government.

Later in June, the government assigned and announced specific public places like sports stadiums and parks in Tehran and other cities as acceptable locations for legal public protests. On July 16, Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi, the General Prosecutor of Tehran announced that 258 of the arrested people during the last December-January protests have been convicted to sentence.

In the context of the increasing inflation of the Iranian currency strikes and protests in different cities started first in Isfahan on late July and extended during the next days to other cities like Shiraz, Fars province, capital Tehran, Kermanshah, eponymous province, resulting in the death of at least one protester and arrestment of 20 other.

In September, a new opposition group consisting of 40 political activists outside Iran named 'Farashgard' announced its formation with the stated goal of overturning the Islamic Republic political system. hiik

IRAN (PDKI ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: PDKI, various other Kurdish parties and groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) as well as various other Kurdish parties and groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

In the first quarter of the year, PDKI Peshmerga frequently clashed with the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), killing four IRGC members in gunfights in Zewe, West Azerbaijan province, and Baneh, Kordestan province.

Between July and October, the frequency of clashes between PDKI Peshmerga and government forces increased, resulting in the death of at least 74 people. For instance, on June 8, PDKI Peshmerga forces killed nine and injured 18 IRGC members on Siakew Mountain, West Azerbaijan. Two weeks later, on June 23, IRGC shelled PDKI Peshmerga forces in the mountains of Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan, killing two Kurdish fighters. On October 12, fighting between PDKI and IRGC in Kermanshah, eponymous province, led to the death of three IRGC members, two PDKI Peshmerga, as well as one civilian.

Furthermore, in November and December, PDKI-associated Zagros Eagles carried out three militant operations against IRGC forces in Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan. The Iranian government allegedly initiated operations in Iraq against the PDKI and its splinter group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party

(PDK). On March 1, a PDKI Peshmerga was killed by an explosive attached to his car in Erbil, Iraq, and a PDK commander was shot dead in Ranya, Sulaymaniyah province. On September 8, IRGC fired seven short-range ballistic missiles at the PDKI-headquarters in Koy Sanjaq, Iraq, damaging an adjacent refugee camp as well. 17 PDKI politicians and civilians were killed and 50 more injured, including high-ranking party officials. In response, people of several cities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq launched a general strike and protested in front of the UN embassy in Erbil.

mwe

IRAN – ISRAEL

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Iran vs. Israel

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis over international power between Iran and Israel escalated to a violent crisis. While the alleged Iranian support of militant groups such as Hezbollah [→ Israel (Hezbollah)] and the Iranian nuclear program remained contentious issues, the Iranian presence in Syria in the context of the Syrian conflicts [→ Syria (opposition); Syria (inter-opposition rivalry); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)] led to a direct military confrontation between the two conflict parties.

In 2017, allegedly Iranian-backed militias extended their presence close to the Israeli-controlled part of Golan Heights in Syria.

Direct confrontations between Iranian and Israeli forces started on February 2018, when Israel shot down an allegedly Iranian drone over Israeli territory, which was reportedly the first Iranian violation of Israel airspace since the beginning of the conflicts in Syria. In the aftermath, the Israeli Airforce (IAF) attacked targets in Syria, reportedly including Iranian military sites near Damascus. In response, Syrian air defense hit an Israeli airplane, coming down on Israeli territory.

Over the following months, the IAF continued to conduct airstrikes against Iranian targets in Syria. In most supposed incidents, Israel neither confirmed nor denied involvement.

On April 9, 14 persons, including seven Iranians, were killed in a missile strike targeting the T-4 air base outside Palmyra in Homs Governorate, according to Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

On April 29, Syrian opposition sources reported rocket strikes on the 'Brigade 47' army base known as a recruitment center for Iranian-backed Shiite militias, near Hama city, eponymous province. According to the reports 38 persons were killed and 57 injured.

On May 10, Iranian forces reportedly fired 20 rockets at Israeli army positions in the Western Golan Heights. The Israeli military reacted to the incident, starting the operation 'House of Cards', which included airstrikes on alleged Al-Quds Forces and their military facilities in Syria.

In August, Israeli defense minister Avigdor Lieberman stated that the construction of missile production facilities by Iranians has been stopped after several operations and attacks targeted Iranian facilities in Syria. Israel defence ministry announced on September 4, that Israeli forces had conducted

more than 200 airstrike operations and fired more than 800 rockets against Iranian and Iranian backed forces in Syria since 2017.

After President Trump had announced the withdrawal from US forces from Syria, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel would intensify its operations against Iran in Syria, if necessary. hiik

IRAQ (SHIITE MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: Badr Organization, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Kata'ib Hezbollah, Saraya al-Salam vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and its ideology, as well as national power, escalated to a violent crisis between Shiite militias, such as Badr Organization, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Kata'ib Hezbollah and Saraya al-Salam, the former Mahdi Army, organized under the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), on the one hand, and the government, on the other.

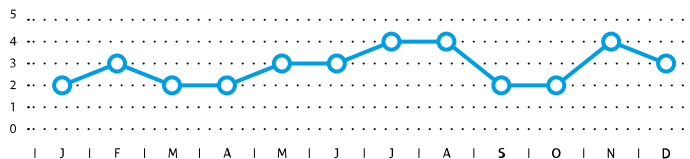
After the so-called Islamic State (IS) had launched its offensive in June 2014, the government turned to Shiite militias to support the Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) to retake territory previously lost to IS [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Although the parliament had formally recognized PMF as a state-affiliated institution, however, it operated largely outside government control. PMF comprised approx. 50 predominantly Shiite militias, affiliated with either Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, or Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. On January 14, the Victory Alliance, headed by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, announced a coalition with Fatah Alliance, a political union consisting of Shiite militias such as Badr Organization and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, with regard to the upcoming elections. However, the alliance broke down the day later. On March 8, Prime Minister al-Abadi issued a decree formalizing the inclusion of Shiite militias in IAF, though the tensions remained. For instance, five days later, Saraya al-Salam militia and the Iraqi Prime Minister's guard clashed in Salahuddin Governorate, killing a brigadier general and at least one of his bodyguards. On May 12, the fourth parliamentary elections since 2003 took place, resulting in a deadlock between the three major blocks, namely the Alliance Towards Reforms, headed by Sadrist Movement, and the Fatah Alliance cooperating with several other PMF groups, as well as the Victory Alliance. The deadlock ended on October 2, when the parliament elected President Barham Saleh, who subsequently named former vice president Adel Abdul Mahdi as Prime Minister. jmr

ISRAEL (HAMAS ET AL.)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: Hamas, PIJ, other Islamist militant groups vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources



The violent crisis over secession of a Palestinian state and resources between Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and other Islamist militants operating from the Gaza Strip, on the one hand, and the Israeli government, on the other, escalated to a limited war. Throughout the year, at least 265 Palestinians and 5 Israelis were killed.

Clashes between Palestinian protesters and Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) related to the 'Great March of Return', a series of weekly protests along the border fence starting in March, caused the most conflict-related deaths. The protests, organized by Palestinian activists, were backed by Hamas and other Islamist militant groups. During these protests, Palestinians set up camps in each of Gaza's five governorates, demanding the return of Palestinians to Israeli territory and the end to the blockade of the Gaza Strip, as well as criticizing the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem. Protests frequently escalated when Palestinians threw stones, Molotov cocktails, and IEDs and cut off pieces of the Israeli-installed barbed-wire barrier in front of the border fence. IDF forces in turn used tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition against Palestinians. On March 28, two days before the first demonstrations, an Israeli general stated that more than 100 snipers were deployed at the border to Gaza. On March 30, approx. 30,000 Palestinians participated in the first demonstrations. IDF forces killed at least 15 and injured more than 750 protesters with live ammunition, when Palestinians approached the border fence at different locations. According to Hamas, five of their members had been killed. Protests peaked on May 14, the day of the US embassy's opening in Jerusalem, when about 35,000 Palestinians demonstrated in Gaza, some of them trying to breach the border fence. Throughout clashes, including airstrikes and tank shelling targeting alleged Hamas militants, IDF and Israeli Air Forces (IAF) killed at least 60 Palestinians and injured more than 1,300 others with live ammunition. According to IDF, at least 24 Hamas and PIJ militants were among the deaths. In total, at least 180 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed during the Great March of Return or died later from their injuries. The actions of Israeli forces and Hamas during the protests, especially the use of live ammunition, resulted in international criticism. For example, in a report published on April 27, Amnesty International accused IDF of using high-velocity military projectiles and criticized the shooting of unarmed civilians, medical staff, and journalists. On August 1, OHCHR and UNICEF held a joint press conference, calling on Hamas and Israel to take steps against children's rights violations during the protests. The IDF opened investiga-

tions into some cases of killed Palestinian civilians. During the protests, Palestinians launched incendiary kites and balloons, frequently causing forest fires and burning hundreds of hectares of agricultural land in Southern Israel.

Furthermore, throughout the year, international and Palestinian groups attempted to break the naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. In the second half of the year, Palestinian groups increasingly organized naval protests, leading to clashes between IDF and Palestinians. For example, on October 1, IDF injured 93 Palestinians, 37 with live ammunition. In reaction to ongoing protests, Israel reduced the fishing-zone along Gaza's coastline five days later.

Throughout the year, Palestinian militant groups launched rockets and mortars towards Israel, IDF reacted with airstrikes. Between July 14 and 15, militants launched more than 190 projectiles, hitting a house in Sderot, South Israel, injuring four people. In response, IDF targeted about 40 alleged Hamas facilities, killing at least two civilians and injuring 14 people. In overnight clashes between August 8 and 9, Hamas and other militant groups fired more than 180 rockets and mortars, injuring at least 17 civilians in Sderot and Hof Ashkelon. In return, IDF struck about 150 targets in Gaza, killing three and injuring more than 18. Among others, IDF airstrikes hit a Hamas internal security forces facility in north-western Gaza and a cultural center in Gaza city. In both cases the violent confrontation ended with a ceasefire agreement. Tensions escalated again on November 8, when Israeli Special Forces, backed by air support, conducted a covered operation in east of Khan Younis, Gaza, leading to the deaths of a soldier, six militants, including a military commander, and a member of the Popular Resistance Committees. In the aftermath, Hamas and PIJ fired more than 450 projectiles between November 11 and 13. For example, on November 12 an anti-tank missile from Gaza struck a bus carrying soldiers, wounding one. At the same day a rocket killed a Palestinian from West Bank and injured two others when hitting a house in Ashkelon, South Israel. According to OCHA, rocket attacks injured at least 20 civilians, caused the displacement of 15 families and material damage to a gas depot and industrial building. In Gaza, Israeli airstrikes and tank shelling killed at least seven people and injured 27, among them civilians. Beside military infrastructure of Hamas and PIJ, IDF hit a hotel and the headquarters of the TV channel al-Aqsa, 33 housing units in Gaza city. The fighting ended with a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas brokered by Egypt and UN, among others, on November 13. One day later, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman resigned due to a disagreement with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was in favor of the agreement.

Furthermore, IDF accused Hamas of carrying out attacks in West Bank. In January, an alleged Hamas militant killed an Israeli civilian in a drive-by shooting near the settlement of Havat Gilad. In the aftermath, IDF forces conducted several raids, killing at least three Palestinians, among them the assailant. In December, tensions rose in West Bank after a series of attacks [→ Israel- State of Palestine (PNA)]. On December 9, a Palestinian shot at Israelis in the settlement of Ofra, injuring seven. In the following days, IDF conducted raids, resulting in the killing of the Palestinian attacker, son of a senior Hamas leader, on December 13. The same day, a Palestinian shot dead two soldiers and wounded two others near the Israeli

outpost Givat Assaf. According to IDF, both attackers belonged to a Hamas operative cell in West Bank.

Over the course of the year, UN Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Jamie McGoldrick, repeatedly warned of the shutdown of essential services in Gaza due to a lack of funding of UN emergency fuel and import restriction imposed by Israel. In October, Qatar announced a USD 150 million fund for humanitarian purposes and sent emergency fuel to Gaza. On November 8 and December 7 each, a Qatar official transferred USD 15 million in cash with Israel's approval to Hamas, designated for humanitarian aid and the salaries of civil servants in Gaza. The Palestinian National Authority rejected the Qatari financial support, stating the move was done without their coordination and undermined inner-Palestinian reconciliation efforts [→ State of Palestine* (Hamas – Fatah)]. jhe

ISRAEL (HEZBOLLAH)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1982

Conflict parties: Hezbollah vs. government

Conflict items: territory, system/ideology

The non-violent crisis over ideology and territory between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah continued.

Over the course of the year, both conflict parties reiterated threats of military actions. For example, in February, Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah threatened to target Israel's Mediterranean oil and gas rigs in future confrontations. Following Iranian missile attacks from Syrian territory on Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) positions at the Golan Heights, Nasrallah stated that the conflict had entered a 'new phase'. After Hezbollah and allied parties gained parliamentary seats in the Lebanese general elections on May 6, the Israeli minister of education tweeted 'Hezbollah = Lebanon'.

IDF frequently conducted military exercises in preparation of fighting with Hezbollah. For instance, in November, IDF forces conducted a military exercise lasting '10 days, simulating fighting with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. Throughout the year, the Israeli military accused Hezbollah of expanding their military presence along the Lebanese-Israeli border. In October, UNIFIL refused Israeli reportings of new Hezbollah observation posts along the border, camouflaged as facilities of the environmental NGO Green Without Borders.

Throughout the year, Israel developed its border security, leading to tensions with the Lebanese government [→ Israel – Lebanon]. By September 6, Israel had built 11 km of a planned 130 km-long concrete wall at the border with Lebanon, stating to protect border communities from Hezbollah. On December 4, IDF forces started operation "Northern Shield", aiming to destroy tunnels from Lebanese territory into Israel, allegedly dug by Hezbollah. Until December 25, IDF announced the discovery of five tunnels. UNIFIL confirmed that at least three tunnels crossed the Blue Line border demarcation into Israel. According to IDF, their soldiers opened fire on suspected Hezbollah members close to one of the tunnels on September 8. Lebanese sources denied this, stating that IDF fired warning shots after spotting a bor-

der control of Lebanese Armed Forces. No casualties were reported. On December 19, UNIFIL stated that no tunnel existed on Israeli territory. IDF flooded one of the tunnels with cement while destroying another using explosives.

As in previous years, Israeli Air Force allegedly conducted airstrikes on factories, weaponry, ammunition depots, and military positions in Syria, due to Hezbollah's ongoing involvement in the conflicts in Syria in support of President Bashar Assad and Iran [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS); Israel – Syria]. For instance, on May 24, IDF allegedly hit a Hezbollah weapon depot on the Daba'a military airport, Homs governorate, causing about 20 fatalities. IDF confirmed several airstrikes conducted in the night between September 17 and 18 on weapon transports to Hezbollah. Syrian forces responded with anti-aircraft fire and accidentally shot down a Russian fighter plane, leading to tensions between Israel and Russia. In the second half of the year, deliveries of advanced weapons to Hezbollah were increasingly reported. On September 27, during an UN General Assembly in New York, Netanyahu showed satellite images of suspected Hezbollah facilities in Beirut, allegedly used to convert projectiles into precise-missiles. The Lebanese government rejected that these facilities existed in Beirut, whereas Nasrallah claimed that Hezbollah did possess precise missiles.

jpm, jhe

ISRAEL – STATE OF PALESTINE° (PNA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: PNA vs. government, Israeli settlement movements

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state – involving secession and resources – between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), on the one hand, and the Israeli government as well as Israeli settlement movements, on the other hand, continued. Throughout the year, at least 37 Palestinians and 9 Israelis were killed.

In the first half of the year, violent protests erupted in West Bank in the wake of US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. For example, on January 3, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) killed a Palestinian reportedly belonging to a group of 30 protesters who had thrown stones at the soldiers in the village of Deir Nidham. In the same month, three other Palestinians were shot dead by IDF forces during similar incidents in the villages of Iraq Burin, al-Mughayyir, and the town of Jayyous. On March 9, one Palestinian was killed and several injured when hundreds protested in Hebron, throwing stones and incendiary devices at IDF forces. According to OCHA, Israeli Forces injured 641 Palestinian in May, most of them during clashes between May 14 and 15. On May 14, the day of the opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem, tens of thousands of Palestinians protested in Gaza and West Bank, which led to heavy clashes between IDF and protesters [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. In West Bank, demonstrations escalated, for instance in Ramallah and at the Qalandiya border crossing, when protesters threw

stones and Molotov cocktails. In response, IDF forces shot tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition at protesters. On May 15, the day after Israeli Forces had killed at least 60 Palestinians in Gaza, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas urged the international community to intervene in order 'to end the massacre of our people'.

Throughout the year, Palestinians frequently attacked Israeli civilians and Israeli Security Forces in West Bank, using knives, guns, and cars. In response, Israeli Security Forces (ISF) conducted raids and demolished homes of alleged Palestinian assailants. For example, on March 13, a Palestinian killed two soldiers and wounded two others when ramming them with his car close to the Mevo Dotan settlement. On July 26, a Palestinian stabbed three Israelis with a knife in Adam settlement, killing one. Residents shot dead the attacker. On October 7, a Palestinian fired at Israeli citizens with a homemade gun at the Barkan industrial area, killing two and injuring another. At the same day, ISF raided the house of the attacker and arrested several relatives, which led to clashes. Over 100 Palestinians have reportedly been arrested by ISF over alleged links to the attacker. On December 13, he was killed in a shootout with Israel's Counter Terrorism Unit in Nablus. Tensions increased in mid-December, due to several Palestinian attacks as well as ISF killing alleged assailants.

Furthermore, Israeli settlers frequently attacked Palestinians and damaged their property, such as olive trees, vehicles, and buildings. According to UN data, violence committed by settlers increased compared to the previous year. For example, during April and May, Israeli settlers punctured over 100 tires of Palestinian-owned vehicles and committed arson attacks on mosques in Nablus, Ramallah, and Beit Iksa. On October 13, a Palestinian was killed close to Nablus when Israeli settlers allegedly threw stones at her car. In addition, clashes between Palestinian and Israeli settlers occurred when the latter group entered Palestinian localities.

Throughout the year, Israel continued its settlement policy in West Bank. According to OCHA, the demolition of Palestinian-owned infrastructures, houses, and buildings, led to the displacement of 472 Palestinians. For instance, on February 4, Israeli authorities demolished two classrooms belonging to a school in the Bedouin village of Abu Nuwar, causing critique by the EU that funded the facilities. On July 4, residential buildings, agricultural facilities, and infrastructure were destroyed in the same village, resulting in the displacement of at least 51 Palestinians. On November 21, Israeli authorities demolished three fuel stations and 16 shops in the Shu'fat refugee camp, East Jerusalem, on the grounds that building permits were missing. In May, the Israeli Supreme Court had approved the demolition of the Bedouin village Khan al-Ahmar with approx. 180 residents, stating that the buildings had been built illegally. After international critique and protests with thousands of participants, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced the postponement of the destruction on October 20. Throughout the year, according to the NGO Peace

Now, Israeli authorities pushed forward the planning process of 5,618 housing units, in different stages of approval, in West Bank. For instance on January 11, Israeli authorities advanced the approval of 1,222 new settlement units across 20 settlements in West Bank. In addition, the Israeli Knesset pursued new bills and rules that would expand Israel's

sovereignty over West Bank's Area C. In February, Netanyahu claimed negotiations with US officials about the application of Israeli law to settlements in West Bank had taken place, which was later denied by the White House.

In January, the US withheld more than half of its month's funding for the UNRWA and cut additionally USD 45 million of food aid, deteriorating its relations with the Palestinian Authority. In West Bank, UNRWA supported Palestinian refugees in 19 camps. Due to financial constraints, UNRWA released more than 250 employees in West Bank and Gaza in June. On August 31, the US stopped its funding to UNRWA. Subsequently, other donor countries filled the financial gap. ank, jhe

ISRAEL – SYRIA

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: Israel vs. Syria

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The violent crisis over territory, international power, and resources between Israel and Syria continued. As in previous years, Israel stuck to its policy of accusing the Syrian government of any attack from Syrian territory.

Throughout the year, Israel targeted Syrian army positions, Hezbollah outposts, and Iranian infrastructure in Syria [→ Israel (Hezbollah); Israel – Iran]. In most instances, Israel did not comment on its military operations. However, on October 10 then-defence minister Avigdor Liberman indicated that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) carried out more attacks against Syria than the media reported. For example, on February 7, the IAF destroyed Syrian ammunition depots in Jumraya, Damascus Governorate, Syria, firing from Lebanese airspace. These depots had reportedly held chemical weapons used in conflicts in Syria [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

On February 10, the allegedly first direct military confrontation between Iran and Israel since almost four decades took place when an Israeli Apache helicopter shot down an Iranian unmanned drone in Beit Shean, Northern District, Israel, that was assumed to come from a Syrian military base. Shortly afterwards, the IAF attacked Syrian military bases in Damascus. After having attacked Iranian positions, an Israeli F-16 fighter jet was hit by a Syrian anti-aircraft fire and downed in Harduf, Haifa District. The two pilots were injured. Hezbollah called the downing of the jet the 'beginning of a new strategic phase'. On the same day, the IAF reportedly conducted airstrikes on a further 12 targets in Syria, eight of them in Damascus, destroying an airbase of Syria's First Armored Division as well as Iranian positions. On July 22, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) evacuated 422 Syrian pro-opposition rescue workers, known as the White Helmets, at the Syria-Israel border and brought them to Jordan. On September 17, following Israeli airstrikes on Syrian positions in Latakia Governorate, Syria, Syrian anti-aircraft fire downed a Russian IL-20 reconnaissance aircraft which was preparing to land at the Bassel al-Assad airbase close to Latakia city. Syria and Russia afterwards blamed Israel of having used the IL-20's radar shadow

to disguise their attacking F-16 jets. Israel denied the accusa-

tions, stating that the Israeli F-16 had already returned to Israeli airspace when the Russian plane was hit. On October 15, the Quneitra border crossing, Quneitra Governorate, between Syria and Israel reopened for the first time in three years. On the first day of reopening, several UNDOF vehicles entered Syria via the crossing. jpm

JORDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The dispute over the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups, comprising trade unions and civil society organizations, and the government escalated to a violent crisis. Countrywide protests, in particular in the governorates of Amman, Balqa, Karak, Ma'an, Zarqa and Madaba, peaked in March and December in response to economic reforms. Among others, protesters demanded the dissolution of the government, the withdrawal from economic reforms and effective anti-corruption measures.

In January, the government imposed new austerity measures including a package of tax increases and the cut of bread subsidies, leading to protests in the following month. For example, on February 2, hundreds of protesters gathered in the cities of Amman, Karak and Salt, demanding the withdrawal of current price and tax hikes. In Amman, farmers organized a sit-in in front of the parliament for several days, criticizing planned tax increases on agricultural goods and equipment. Occasionally, demonstrations escalated. On February 8 and in the following days, protesters blocked roads, burned tires and set on fire an official building in the city of Karak. As protests continued, Prime Minister Hani Mulki reshuffled the cabinet on February 25.

On March 30, 33 trade unions and professional associations launched a national strike following the cabinet's approval of proposed changes to the income tax law, comprising the reduction of taxable income. In the following days, mass protests took place throughout the country, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister on June 4. On June 1, after protests at the Forth Cycle close the Prime Minister's office in Amman, Jordan's King Abdullah II decreed the suspension of tax increases on fuel and electricity which were announced the day before. Occasionally, demonstrations turned violent as in the night between June 2 to 3, when police forces blocked roads and used tear gas in order to hinder thousands of protesters to approach the cabinet office in Amman, leading to the injuring of several protesters. In course of overnight protests in other governorates, including Ma'an and Zarqa, protesters blocked roads and burned tires. According to state sources, 42 security forces were injured in clashes until June 4. Mass protests continued until June 7, when the newly appointed Prime Minister Omar al-Razzaz announced the withdrawal of the proposed income tax changes.

At the end of November, new demonstrations formed against economic reforms and against a new cybercrime law, accused by civil society activist and journalists of limiting civil free-

doms. Inspired by the yellow vest movement in France, some protesters started to wear yellow jackets. On December 13, several thousands of protesters clashed with security forces, allegedly backed by the paramilitary Badia Forces in Amman, resulting in injuries to at least 10 security forces.

jhe

LEBANON (INNER-PALESTINIAN TENSIONS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: Ansar Allah, other Palestinian Islamist groups vs. Fatah, other Palestinian factions

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between various Palestinian Islamist groups such as the Hezbollah-affiliated Ansar Allah, on the one hand, and the Palestinian political party Fatah, on the other hand, continued. In 2018, at least 11 people were killed and 40 injured. Conflict measures mainly concentrated in the Palestinian refugee camps Ain el-Hilweh and Mieh Mieh, South Governorate.

On January 2, the militant leader Bilal Badr announced to move from the Lebanese Ain el-Hilweh refugee camp to Syria. In 2017, the Islamist group headed by Badr had clashed with Fatah, resulting in the reformation of a Joint Palestinian Security Force (JPSF) under exclusion of his group. JPSF comprised various Palestinian factions in charge of security and stability in Lebanese Palestinian refugee camps. On February 9, Islamists allegedly attempted to assassinate the head of JPSF in Ain el-Hilweh. Subsequently, clashes between Islamist militants and members of Fatah left one person dead and two injured. In July, JPSF suspended its activities in Ain el-Hilweh following a dispute between Fatah and the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which subsequently withdrew its forces from JPSF. After reconciliation talks in the following month, JPSF resumed its work in early October.

On March 7, members of Fatah al-Intifada, a splinter group of Fatah, and Al-Saeqa, a Palestinian militant group with links to the Syrian branch of the Ba'ath Party, clashed in Shatila refugee camp, Beirut Governorate, killing one person and injuring two.

Over the course of the year, tensions between Ansar Allah and Fatah in the Mieh Mieh refugee camp intensified. Between October 15 and 27, clashes left at least five people dead and 26 injured. Both conflict parties used machine guns, RPGs, and mortars that damaged houses and civilian infrastructure. As a result, most residents fled the camp and a UNRWA school in the camp temporarily closed. Despite the efforts of various Palestinian factions to restore peace, which resulted in fragile ceasefire agreements, Ansar Allah and Fatah repeatedly clashed between October 15 and 16. On October 18 and the following days, LAF deployed soldiers inside the camp and at its entrances. Fatah and Ansar Allah clashed again between October 25 and 27. On October 28, two days after another ceasefire had failed, representatives of both conflict parties as well as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Amal movement met in the Palestinian Embassy in Beirut and reached a new ceasefire agreement. A delegation of various Palestinian mili-

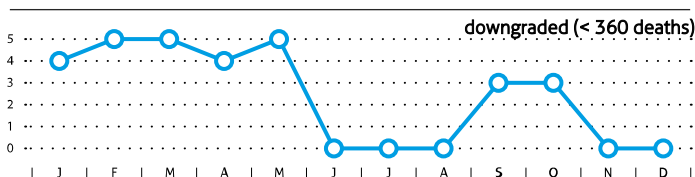
tant groups including Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine entered the camp at the same day in order to oversee the ceasefire. On November 5, Ansar Allah leader Jamal Suleiman agreed to leave the Mieh Mieh camp within 72 hours. Two days later he moved with his family to Syria. ebi

LIBYA (INTER-TRIBAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Tebu vs. Awlad Suleiman vs. Zway vs. Qaddadfa vs. Touareg

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The violent conflict over subnational predominance and resources between tribes in south Libya escalated to a limited war. The conflict revolved mainly around the control of trafficking routes and scarce resources in the South, with fighting concentrating in Sebha district. Militias were mostly mobilized along ethnic lines.

Despite inter-tribal violence, Libyan ethnic minorities of Tebu, Amazigh, and Touareg shared their criticism of the country's general political situation as well as of the economic situation in the South [→ Libya (opposition)]. Their representatives repeatedly expressed their opposition to the work of the Constitution Drafting Assembly for excluding minority linguistic rights in the draft constitution and therefore called for a boycott of the future constitutional referendum.

Clashes between Tebu and the Arab tribe of Awlad Suleiman started on January 27 in Sebha, when Awlad Suleiman militiamen opened fire on a Tebu coffee shop, killing one person. The following attacks by Tebu militants on Awlad Suleiman members resulted in heavy fighting in the city center. In February, tribal leaders tried to mediate, but without success. Over the course of the month, six civilians and an unknown number of fighters were killed and important infrastructure, such as the Sebha hospital and the city's historical citadel, was damaged. On March 13, the Government of National Accord and the House of Representatives failed to foster a ceasefire between Tebu and Awlad Suleiman [→ Libya (opposition)]. On March 20, UN OCHA reported the displacement of 870 local families due to the clashes. In April, Tebu and Awlad Suleiman reportedly negotiated in Niger under French auspices, while fighting continued until May 14, when Tebu took the citadel of Sebha. On May 20, Tebu and Awlad Suleiman signed a non-aggression pact, which has since been observed.

Additionally, other tribes clashed sporadically. For example, on September 20, members of the Arab Qadhafha tribe killed a Awlad Suleiman militant at a checkpoint in Sebha district. Following the killing of a Tebu member, Tebu fighters

killed two Touareg and injured three in Wadi Al Hayaa district on October 12.

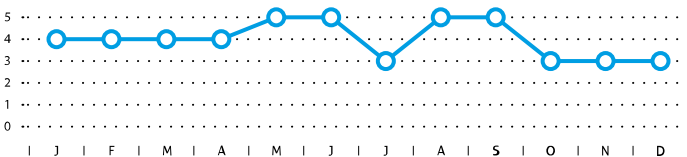
In other parts of the country, different ethnic and tribal groups reconciled and reached peace agreements on a local level. For instance, on February 21, representatives of Tebu and the Arab tribe of Zway from Kufra district signed a reconciliation pact in Tunis, Tunisia, agreeing inter alia on freedom of movement and individual accountability for crimes. riv

LIBYA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: HoR vs. GNA, HSC vs. LNA vs. BRSC vs. CMSR vs. DMSC vs. Militia of Ibrahim Jadran

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources



The war over national power, resources, and the orientation of the political system between rival state institutions backed by loyal or loosely affiliated militias and autonomous armed groups continued.

The Tripoli based Government of National Accord (GNA), internationally recognized as the legal government of Libya, and the High State Council (HSC), the legislative body allied with the GNA, were opposed by two competing bodies in the east, the Tobruk based House of Representatives (HoR), and the Benghazi-headquartered Libyan National Army (LNA). The eastern institutions rejected the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Agreement of 2015 that had created the GNA. Both parties continued to respect the ceasefire agreement of 07/25/2017. On May 29, GNA, LNA, HoR, and HSC met in Paris, France, within UN-brokered talks, and agreed to elections on December 10. However, on November 12, representatives of the four parties met in Palermo, Italy, and agreed to postpone elections until mid-2019 due to rivalries between legislative bodies and security issues.

In the course of 2018, LNA concentrated forces against Islamist militias in the east and armed groups from Sudan and Chad in the south. In the east, LNA continued the siege on Derna, capital of the eponymous district, controlled by the Derna Mujahedeen Shura Council (DMSC). Up until the end of April, LNA targeted DMSC positions with heavy artillery and air raids, killing a high number of militants. DMSC responded with sporadic attacks causing few casualties amongst LNA ranks. In May, LNA launched a ground offensive mobilizing tanks and hundreds of allied militia fighters, killing approx. 100 DMSC militants. The location of 20 remains unknown. On June 28, LNA announced it had taken control of Derna, however sporadic fighting continued for the rest of the year, especially in al-Maghar neighborhood. For instance, on September 2, DMSC killed 11 LNA fighters.

In the LNA controlled Benghazi, Islamists attacked civilians on

several occasions. While no group claimed responsibility, Islamist groups, such as AQIM [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM, ISGS et al.)], Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council (BRSC) as well as the so-called Islamic State [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)] were still active. For instance, on January 23, a car bomb exploded near a mosque, killing 30 people. The next day, Mahmoud al-Werfalli, an officer of LNA Special Forces, wanted by the ICC, executed 10 prisoners, allegedly belonging to BRSC. Other incidents included an IED attack inside a mosque on February 9, killing two and injuring 75 people, and a car bomb on May 25, killing seven.

In the south, LNA started operation Desert Fury against Sudanese and Chadian armed groups in January. However, some of the groups reportedly also fought as mercenaries for LNA, as well as GNA, and were engaged in human trafficking and kidnapping throughout the year. On January 16, Sudanese fighters of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) [→ South Sudan [SPLM/A-IO]; Sudan (Darfur)], killed six LNA soldiers in Al Boutnan District. On January 18 and 20, LNA conducted airstrikes against JEM members in Al Kufra District. Furthermore, LNA airstrikes targeted militants of the Chadian Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCMSR) [→ Chad (militant groups)] on March 20 in Al Kufra district and on March 25 in Murzuq District. On July 28, clashes between LNA and CCMSR in Murzuq District left one dead and several wounded. On December 27, alleged CCMSR militants, attacked a LNA base in Traghen, Murzuq District, killing one soldier and wounding 13.

In central Libya, on May 31, the Islamist Benghazi Revolutionaries Brigade took Tamahint airbase in Sebha District from LNA. LNA responded with intense airstrikes, forcing the group to retreat the same day.

In the oil crescent, the militia of Ibrahim Jadran, former chief of the Petroleum Facilities Guard, launched an offensive against LNA controlled oil terminals in Sidra and Ras Lanuf, district of Sirte, on June 14. LNA took back the area on June 21, reportedly at least 28 people were killed. Additionally, two oil tanks were damaged, thus halving the national oil production. The attempt of LNA leader Khalifa Haftar to trade oil, bypassing the GNA-controlled National Oil Company, failed due to international objections, including Haftar's allies United Arab Emirates and Russia.

Over the course of the year, internal tensions erupted between LNA affiliated militias, increasing during Haftar's absence in April due to medical treatment in France. Following his return, Haftar reportedly cracked down on LNA-internal opposition, such as former Benghazi mayor, who was abducted on October 2.

GNA tried to consolidate its power in Tripoli and surrounding districts. However, infighting between GNA-affiliated militias over the control of state resources continued. For instance, at the end of August tensions intensified in Tripoli, when militias mainly from Misrata, Zintan and Tarhuna fought with local militias over the responsibility of securing official GNA buildings. All groups used heavy weaponry, such as tanks and mortars, in densely populated areas causing a high number of civilian casualties and damaging infrastructure. According to the UN, at least 120 people were killed and 5,000 internally displaced, by the end of September. Following a ceasefire on September 4, UNSMIL announced a plan to rearrange the security structure of the capital, which strengthened the po-

sition of Misrata militias. However, the situation remained tense in Tripoli and sporadic fighting continued. riv

MOROCCO (POLISARIO / WESTERN SAHARA°)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: POLISARIO vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over secession of Western Sahara° between the Popular Front of the Liberation of Saguia al-Hamran and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO), claiming to represent the Sahrawi people inhabiting Western Sahara, as well as Sahrawi people living in the Moroccan parts of the disputed territories on the one hand, and the government on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. The Moroccan government continued to claim Western Sahara as part of the kingdom, while POLISARIO continued to demand the right for self-determination of the Sahrawis in the proclaimed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

Throughout the first half of the year, military movements and threats by both conflict parties caused increased tensions. In the course of January, tensions between the conflict parties arose at the occasion of the Africa Eco Race leading through Western Sahara, which POLISARIO criticized as a violation of the ceasefire agreement. According to MINURSO, POLISARIO members temporarily conducted border controls in the first week of January near Guerguerat. According to local newspapers, the Moroccan army reinforced its troops close to the border in response. Subsequently, UNSG Antonio Guterres voiced his concerns over the increased tensions on January 6. In April, the Moroccan government claimed that POLISARIO members had moved into the UN-monitored buffer zones. On April 9, Moroccan officials as well as NGOs, local and tribal chiefs issued the 'Laayoune declaration', denouncing POLISARIO's alleged move into the buffer zone and criticizing Algeria's involvement in the conflict. Morocco also accused MINURSO of failing to respond accordingly and threatened to take military action. UN denied the allegations of POLISARIO having moved into the buffer strip on April 2.

UN Envoy Horst Köhler hosted the first round of talks in six years with both parties, as well as Mauritania and Algeria, in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 5 and 6. The parties agreed to meet again in the first quarter of 2019.

Throughout the year, representatives of the SADR strengthened diplomatic ties with various governments, for instance during a visit to Zimbabwe in June. Morocco cut diplomatic ties with Iran in May, claiming it supported POLISARIO via the Shiite militia Hezbollah.

The European Court of Justice ruled on February 27 that the EU's fisheries agreement with Morocco was not applicable to the Western Sahara and its waters. According to the court, Morocco violated the right of the inhabitants to perpetual sovereignty over natural resources for their benefit. The fisheries agreement was renewed in July and included the commitment of Morocco to optimize its approach towards the local population in the Western Sahara. yad

OMAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The dispute over the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and the government under Sultan Qaboos bin Said, continued.

On January 11, Qaboos signed a royal decree enforcing Penal Law and restricting the freedom of assembly, speech, and opinion. Over the course of the year, the Internal Security Service (ISS) arrested at least 11 activists and journalists who criticized government authorities, leading to detentions of up to one month without charge. Furthermore, the ISS denied the detainees access to their lawyers or contact to their families. On January 2, the Court of First Instance sentenced Khaled Al-Rashdi, a former media presenter, to one year in prison and a fine of USD 2,600 for criticising government institutions. The Court of Appeal upheld the three year sentences against Abdullah Habib, a political activist, on April 2 and Hassan Al-Basham, also a political activist, on April 3. However, Habib was released on June 13 as part of an amnesty issued by Qaboos. Al-Basham died in custody on April 28 due to poor health.

Throughout the year, several activists called peacefully for reforms in the Musandam Governorate and were convicted to life imprisonments and fines of USD 2,600. son

SAUDI ARABIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The dispute over the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

The conflict was marked by the alleged murder of journalist and government critic Jamal Khashoggi after he entered the Saudi Arabian embassy in Istanbul on October 2. Among others, Turkey, the UN, the EU, Egypt, and the US as well as numerous human rights groups condemned the killing and called for an independent investigation into Khashoggi's death. Between October 21 and December 16, several states stopped arms sales to Saudi Arabia, including Germany and Denmark. In addition, states such as Canada, France, Germany, and the US imposed sanctions against at least 17 Saudi nationals presumably connected to the killing. Furthermore, on December 13, the US senate passed two resolutions, the first stopping the refueling of Saudi aircrafts fighting in Yemen [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)] and the second holding Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman accountable for Khashoggi's death.

Throughout the year, the government targeted journalists and women's rights activists and human rights defenders as

well as Sunni clerics within the country and arrested at least 67 individuals. On various occasions, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, the EU, and UN condemned the increasing number of arrests and of death sentences, and called for the release of those awaiting execution. Between May 15 and 18, authorities arrested at least eleven women's and human rights activists, releasing four of them in the following days. On May 23, the government lifted the ban on women driving cars. On July 12, Saudi Arabia detained prominent Sunni scholar Safar al-Hawali and three of his sons, after Hawali published a book criticizing the close relationship between Saudi Arabia and the US. After the Canadian foreign minister had called for the immediate release of detained human rights activists, Saudi Arabia expelled the Canadian ambassador on August 5. On November 20, Amnesty International released reports of torture and sexual harassment of detained activists in Dhahban prison, Mecca province. The government denied these claims. On December 10, human rights organizations including the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights, the Gulf Center for Human Rights, the International Federation for Human Rights, and the MENA Rights Group called upon the government to improve the human rights situation both within the country and in countries in which it had influence.

Furthermore, the government continued its crackdown on citizens of the Shiite minority in the Eastern Province [→ Saudi Arabia (Shiites)].

Throughout the year, businessmen and members of the royal Saudi family were detained on corruption charges. For instance, on January 7, 37 detained princes were transferred to Ha'il prison after refusing to pay large financial settlements for their release. On March 12, Human Rights Watch called the government to investigate allegations of physical abuse in Ritz Carlton Hotel where those charged with corruption had been held until the beginning of the year. On December 25, Prince Khaled bin Talal was arrested for criticizing the government's crackdown on businessmen and princes. He had just been released from eleven months in prison in November. ceb

(TAF) and the SDF occurred in the border area between Turkey and Syria. The situation escalated when TAF and FSA units started their 'Operation Olive Branch', entering SDF-controlled Afrin on January 19. TAF and FSA had already cooperated during the 2016 Turkey-led 'Operation Euphrates Shield' [→ Syria – Turkey; Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Turkey declared the SDF as directly linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and therefore justified its attacks with concerns over Turkish border security [→ Turkey (PKK, TAK)]. The Syrian government opposed the Turkish operation, calling it a violation of Syria's territorial integrity.

By January 21, up to 10,000 people had fled the contested areas mostly towards areas controlled by the Syrian government in the south of Afrin. Most attacks followed the same pattern, with Turkish airstrikes being followed by FSA fighters advancing on the ground. On February 2, TAF claimed to have killed 947 SDF fighters, having named them PKK fighters since the beginning of the operation. The same day, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported the desecration of the dead body of a female SDF fighter by FSA members. On February 10, the SDF attacked a Turkish military vehicle and shot down a Turkish helicopter, killing eleven soldiers. On February 21, a small group of pro-Syrian government fighters were sent to the region after the SDF had asked for military support. The deployment was responded with Turkish warning shots.

Turkish soldiers and FSA fighters declared captured the strategic city of Rajo, 20 km away from Afrin city, on March 1. In consequence, 10,000 people fled the city of Afrin, mostly seeking refuge in Shehba region. On March 16, Turkish troops seized the local water dam, cutting the residents of Afrin from water supply. By March 18, the city center of Afrin was fully controlled by the Turkish army and the FSA. The following day, a large wave of lootings was documented by local groups and journalists. In the main combat period between January and March, at least 1,600 people were killed, among them at least 300 civilians, and more than 150,000 civilians were internally displaced. Moreover, cross-border rocket shelling killed at least seven people in Turkish Hatay and Kilis provinces.

In the aftermath, a large number of refugees from Eastern Ghouta, Rif Dimashq, were resettled in Afrin, in line with agreements between the Syrian government and the opposition [→ Syria (opposition)].

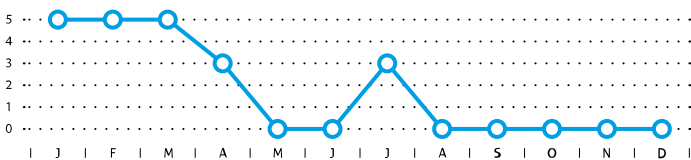
After the end of the operation on March, SDF switched to guerilla and sabotage tactics against Turkish troops and FSA militants for the rest of the year. For instance, on August 30, YPG claimed the killing of 19 FSA militants in an ambush in Afrin region. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced an expansion of the operation soon to the city of Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, east of Euphrates. On November 9, the border between Syria and Turkey in Afrin was reopened. daj

SYRIA (AFRIN REGION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: **NEW** | Start: 2018

Conflict parties: Turkey, FSA vs. SDF, pro-Syrian government militiamen

Conflict items: subnational predominance



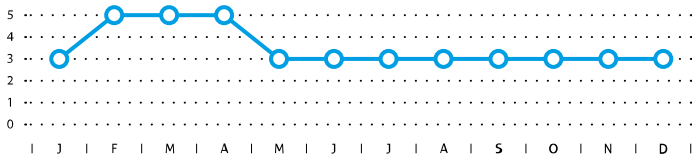
A war over subnational predominance and international power in the Afrin region, Aleppo Governorate, broke out between Turkey and the Turkey-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA), on the one hand, and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), predominantly comprising of Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units (YPG), on the other.

Throughout 2017, fighting between the Turkish Armed Forces

SYRIA (INTER-OPPOSITION RIVALRY)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: HTS vs. SLF vs. FSA
 Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance, resources



The war over resources, subnational predominance, and the orientation of the political system between the Free Syrian Army (FSA), various moderate and Islamist groups such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), and Syrian Liberation Front (SLF) continued. While the groups fought jointly against the Syrian government and so-called Islamic State (IS) on several occasions, tensions between Islamist and moderate groups as well as among different Islamist militias persisted [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

On February 16, the HTS commander Abu Ayman al-Masri was assassinated by Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement at a checkpoint near al-Huta village, Aleppo Governorate. Two days later, the Islamist groups Ahrar al-Sham and Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement joined forces under the name Syrian Liberation Front (SLF). The next day, fighting between HTS and SLF started in northern Idlib Governorate and western Aleppo Governorate. On February 21, SLF captured the Wadi Deif military base and surrounding villages formerly controlled by HTS in Idlib. In a battle on February 26, HTS took over the largest base of Ahrar al-Sham, Khirbet Bantanta Military Camp, in northern Idlib, securing caches of weaponry, including 20 tanks, towed artillery, rocket launchers, and self-propelled guns. The next day, HTS was expelled from western Aleppo when they lost their last position in Khan Shaykhun. On March 4, HTS launched a large-scale offensive in Idlib and Aleppo, capturing approx. 50 towns and villages. During the offensive, SLF destroyed three HTS tanks and damaged a further two using TOW missiles. Subsequent clashes between SLF and HTS in Shamiku village, Aleppo, reportedly killed three militants and injured three civilians. On March 17, a ceasefire agreement between HTS and SLF was mediated by Faylaq al-Sham, including the release of prisoners and the opening of roads leading to the frontline with the Syrian Arab Army (SAA). The negotiation of a truce failed on March 22 due to disagreement on the hand-over of recently captured localities. Subsequently, HTS and SLF clashed again in western Aleppo on March 23. Four days later, SLF repelled an attack by HTS in Aleppo, killing six HTS militants, while HTS killed two SLF commanders. Three civilians were killed in SLF and HTS shellings in Darat Izza, Aleppo, on March 31. On April 7, Sham Legion negotiated another ceasefire agreement between HTS and SLF for one week in order to reach a final agreement. After this failed, HTS launched an large-scale offensive against the SLF and Suqour al-Sham in the southern part of Idlib, capturing several towns and villages on April 15. On April 24, a ceasefire agreement was signed by Hassan

Soufan, leader of SLF, and Abu Muhammad al-Jolani, leader of HTS, agreeing to end all aggression. These two months of fighting left at least 430 people dead, among them 26 civilians.

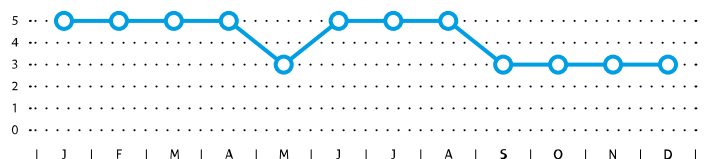
However, after this agreement, several assassinations and assassination attempts against members of both groups took place, leaving at least 30 people dead. For instance, on April 29, two HTS militants and a defected SAA lieutenant were killed by an IED attack in northern Idlib and on May 1, an HTS militant was killed by unknown assailants.

Tensions rose at the end of December, after several HTS militants had been allegedly assassinated by Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement members in western Aleppo. ska

SYRIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: NC, FSA, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, Syrian Liberation 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 eighth consecutive year.

The opposition mainly consisted of the National Coalition for the Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NC), its military wing Free Syrian Army (FSA), and Islamist umbrella groups, such as Syrian Liberation Front (SLF) and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). The latter was a merger between Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly al-Nusra Front, the Ansar al-Din Front, and other Islamist militant groups which had been formed in January 2017. On February 18, Ahrar al-Sham and Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement merged to become SLF. The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) was supported by Iran and various Shiite militias from Syria and neighboring countries, most prominently the Lebanon-based Hezbollah. Since 2015, Russia has been supporting the government with airstrikes as well as ground forces. Furthermore, the government, its allies, and also opposition groups fought against the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

Depending on the source, the overall death toll was disputed and varied from 370,000 to 560,000. In April 2016, UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura had estimated the death toll to be up to 400,000 since the outbreak of war in Syria. As of December, at least 5.6 million people sought refuge in neighboring countries and 6.2 million have been internally displaced since 2011.

On January 30, Russia organized the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi, Russia, with 1,500 delegates from the different conflict parties. The ninth round of the Astana peace talks took place in the capital of Kazakhstan on March 16. The meeting included representatives of Iran, Russia,

and Turkey. All parties agreed on maintaining the so-called 'de-escalation zones' in Syria. On July 30, the tenth round of the talks took place in Sochi, additionally including representatives of Jordan and the UN, among them de Mistura. The meeting addressed various humanitarian issues like the return of refugees, as well as the latest situation in the so-called 'de-escalation zones'. The UN-brokered Geneva peace talks were on standstill this year.

Throughout the year, SAA conducted three major military campaigns taking back control over 60 percent of the country. The campaign in the northwest had started in October 2017 and comprised offensives in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib and Hama. In the first ten days of the year, SAA captured at least 50 localities in the Sinjar region, Idlib, including Sinjar town and advanced to Abu al-Duhur Airbase, Idlib. By January 14, SAA had captured more than 100 villages in the southern countryside of Aleppo also moving towards the Abu al-Duhur Airbase. On the same day, HTS and Turkistan Islamic Party fighters attacked SAA forces with heavy weaponry in southern Idlib, capturing 21 villages. The militants took advantage of bad weather conditions, leaving the SAA without Russian air support. On January 22, SAA took control of the Abu al-Duhur Airbase. One day later, HTS detonated a car bomb, killing five SAA soldiers near Abu al-Duhur town, Idlib. On February 3, militants shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-25 near the town of Maarrat al-Nu'man, Idlib, presumably using a MANPAD. The pilot ejected, but was later killed in a gunfight on the ground. The Syrian government announced an end to its operations in Idlib, Aleppo and Hama on February 10, after having gained ground in the operations. In September, Turkey and Russia came to an agreement to demilitarize a bufferzone on the frontlines, preserving the status quo.

In February, the SAA shifted its military focus on East Ghouta in Damascus and Rif Dimashq governorates, where it faced an offensive by various opposition groups targeting the Damascus suburb Harasta, Rif Dimashq, since December 2017. The fighting in Harasta between January 1 and 17 left at least 300 people dead, among them approx. 170 civilians. On February 18, SAA started its operations to recapture the opposition-held pocket of East Ghouta by shelling and bombarding the towns of Douma, Hamouriyah, Saqba and Mesraba, Rif Dimashq. On the first day, SAA conducted more than 250 rocket- and airstrikes, reportedly killing at least 90 civilians. One day later, the Russian Air Force joined the offensive. Opposition groups fired rockets into Damascus city, killing at least 16 civilians between February 18 and 20. The UNSC adopted a resolution for a 30-day ceasefire in Syria on February 24, but the airstrikes reportedly continued. A few hours after the UNSC resolution had been adopted, SAA started its ground offensive on the area by capturing positions in the southeast of the pocket near Hazrama, Rif Dimashq. On February 27, SAA opened a humanitarian corridor near Harasta for civilians to evacuate. The corridor was shelled by opposition forces hindering civilians to leave the area. By March 5, the SAA had taken control over 35 percent of the Eastern Ghouta pocket. One week later, opposition-held territory in Eastern Ghouta was split into three pockets; one around Douma held by Jaysh al-Islam, another in the south around Hamouria controlled by Faylaq al-Rahman, and one in the west around Harasta controlled by Ahrar al-Sham. On March 21, Ahrar al-Sham agreed to an evacuation of its 1,500

fighters and 6,000 dependents to opposition-controlled Idlib. Additionally, Faylaq al-Rahman evacuated its forces and dependents from Hamouria first to Douma and then further to opposition-held parts of northwestern Syria. On April 6, SAA started air and ground attacks on Douma to capture the last opposition-held territory in East Ghouta. One day later, in the follow up of a strike in Douma at least 49 people were killed and 650 injured by a chemical gas. The opposition, as well as the US, UK and France, blamed SAA for the attack. Syria and Russia denied the occurrence of the attack and instead accused British intelligence of staging the incident. On April 8, the remaining opposition fighters in Douma accepted an evacuation to Idlib, resulting in SAA's full control over the region for the first time in seven years. In total, at least 2,760 people were killed in the offensive, among them at least 1,800 civilians. In response to the alleged chemical attack by SAA, the US, UK and France carried out missile strikes on targets linked to chemical weapons on April 14 [→ Syria – USA].

After the campaign in East Ghouta, the SAA shifted its military focus to the southern governorates of As-Suwayda, Daraa and Quneitra. On June 18, SAA captured several farms near Busra Al-Harir and Masekah, Daraa. Government forces also attacked the opposition-held towns of Bosra, Eastern Ghariyah, and Western Ghariyah, Daraa. In retaliation, opposition groups fired rockets on government-controlled As-Suwayda city. Three days later, SAA conducted airstrikes in the area specifically targeting an Ahrar al-Sham base near Al-Hirak, Daraa, killing 10 fighters. On June 25, SAA took control over a territory of 400 square km including the al-Lajart area in Daraa and As-Suwayda. By July 1, SAA had recaptured 60 percent of Daraa, displacing 160,000 people and killing at least 200 civilians. On July 6, SAA regained control over the strategically important border crossing to Jordan near Nasib, Daraa, and evacuated the last opposition fighters to Idlib. Four days later, SAA controlled 84 percent of Daraa. On July 15, SAA bombarded HTS positions in western Daraa, in preparation of ground attacks against Quneitra. Five days later, opposition fighters in Quneitra were evacuated to Idlib after an agreement with the Syrian government, allowing SAA to capture several localities, including the UNDOF base Camp Faouar. By July 21, only one IS pocket remained outside government control in Quneitra. On August 2, the government had regained full control over the governorates of Daraa and Quneitra for the first time since 2011. The operation had left at least 740 people dead, among them at least 230 civilians.

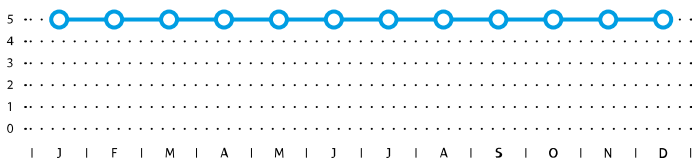
ska

SYRIA, IRAQ ET AL. (IS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: IS vs. United Kingdom, Russia, Iran, Syrian opposition groups, SDF, al-Houthi, Taliban, Hezbollah, France, USA, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, et al.

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power, resources



The war over the orientation of the international system and the control of resources, such as oil, continued between the so-called Islamic State (IS), on the one hand, and Syria, Iraq, other governments, and several militant groups, on the other hand.

After its founding on 06/29/14 by Iraqi citizen Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS had brought large territories in Syria and Iraq under its control. It has also declared the caliphate, implemented its interpretation of Sharia law, and set up state-like administration as well as social services. Due to large-scale mobilization campaigns on social media, foreign fighters from over a hundred countries have joined the group. IS expanded its operations to Afghanistan, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria in 2014, followed by Yemen, Tunisia, and Turkey in 2015, as well as to Saudi-Arabia in 2016. Outside the Middle East and Maghreb region, IS operated in Pakistan [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. Various militant groups in the Middle East and Maghreb, and other parts of the world, pledged allegiance to IS, including an al-Shabaab breakaway faction, a Boko Haram faction, the Caucasus Emirate, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as well as Taliban splinter groups, namely Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyaf, and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters [→ Somalia (ISS); Nigeria (Boko Haram); Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus); Afghanistan (Taliban et al.); Tajikistan (Islamist militant groups); Indonesia (Islamist militant groups); Philippines (Abu Sayyaf); Philippines (BIFF, BIFM – MILF, government)]. In order to halt the advance of IS, a US-led coalition had started launching airstrikes in Iraq in August 2014, expanding its operations to Syria under the name "Operation Inherent Resolve" one month later. Russia justified its military intervention in Syria starting in September 2015 as a fight against radical Islamist militants, referring to IS and then al-Qaeda affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra, now Hayat Tahrir al-Sham [→ Syria (opposition)]. In 2016, Turkey intervened in Syria and pushed IS back from its border. IS' significant territorial losses in Syria and Iraq, which had started in 2016, continued this year. IS claimed responsibility for attacks in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan, carried out this year. (ska)

SYRIA

In Syria, IS was pushed out of most of its territories west of the Euphrates river by December 2017, only remaining in pockets in the desert of As-Suwayda Governorate and the Palestinian Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus Governorate. On January 5, the Jaish al-Islam opposition group attacked IS positions in Yarmouk, starting a six week long battle over control of the area between IS and opposition groups. Fierce house-to-house fighting led to more than 100 fatalities on both sides. The fighting stopped on February 20, after the opposition groups reached an agreement with the Syrian government over relocation to Idlib Governorate. Due to this, IS gained control over the vast majority of the Yarmouk area. IS then started an offensive against the evacuating opposition fighters and their families on March 13. One day later, IS turned against the Syrian Arab Army (SAA). On March 19, IS carried out a surprise attack against the SAA, driving them out of the al-Qadam neighborhood and killing at least 62 soldiers. One month later, the SAA and Palestinian-Syrian militias started an offensive to recapture Yarmouk. After four weeks most IS militants agreed to be evacuated to the desert of As-Suwayda. By May 21, SAA had fully recaptured the area, controlling the entire capital of Damascus for the first time in six years. The clashes in April and May left at least 579 people dead, among them 73 civilians.

On June 7, SAA started an offensive against IS in As-Suwayda and small parts of Rif Dimashq. In the first two weeks of fighting SAA made territorial gains and at least 71 people were killed. On July 25, IS conducted a so-called Inghimasi attack with 63 fighters, a tactic where militants attack with gunfire and detonate their explosive vests if they are in danger of being captured or killed. As-Suwayda city, primarily members of the Druze minority, were the target, killing at least 258 and injuring 180. At least 14 people were abducted by IS, some of them managed to escape while others were executed. In retaliation, SAA started an offensive against IS on August 6, driving them out of their last holdings in the area by November 19, thereby gaining full control over southern Syria for the first time since 2011.

On the eastern side of the Euphrates river in Deir ez-Zor Governorate, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), mainly comprising the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), backed by the US-led anti-IS coalition, continued "Operation Roundup" against IS. Due to the conflict in the Afrin region, Aleppo Governorate, SDF had to shift its military focus away from the fight against IS, leading to a stalemate at the frontlines in the first months of the year [→ Syria (Afrin)]. On May 1, SDF announced to resume the operations against IS. Territorial advances were made in the beginning of June. On June 4, IS initiated a counter-attack in Baghus village that left at least 10 people dead. From July onwards, SDF gained ground backed by coalition airstrikes, leading to high IS losses, especially near the town of Abu Kamal. On September 11, US airstrikes hit IS strongholds near Abu Kamal, killing at least 200 IS militants. In October, the coalition and the SDF headed towards the city of Hajin, air dropping leaflets announcing the upcoming advance. The capture of Hajin advanced significantly on December 3, after a series of 38 airstrikes left at least 300 IS militants dead and destroyed critical IS military infrastructure, including explosive device factories, anti-aircraft systems and vehicle depots. By December 19, SDF forces seized

control of Hajin and subsequently advanced on the cities of Abu al-Khatir, Buqan, and al-Qahadi. This year, more than 100 airstrikes were conducted and approx. 8,000 IS militants have been killed in Deir ez-Zor Governorate. Growing tensions between Turkey and the SDF forced the latter to switch military priorities and bolster its defensive capabilities in the Syrian-Turkish border region. (ska), (daj)

IRAQ

According to UN, about 10,000 to 15,000 IS militants were present in Iraq throughout the year. While IS failed to hold strategically important territories, militants carried out a high number of attacks, mainly in the governorates of Baghdad, Al Anbar, and Niniveh, while other governorates such as Salahuddin and Diyala were also affected. According to estimates, IS militants temporarily took control of about 70 villages in the Hamrin Mountains of northeast Iraq. Reportedly, about 3,300 civilians were killed, the lowest number since 2003, while about 2 million people remained internally displaced. The US-led coalition forces also conducted attacks against IS positions, in cooperation with the Iraqi army.

Baghdad Governorate was targeted by IS bombings on a weekly basis, although attacks decreased in number towards the end of the year. For instance, on January 15, two suicide bombers targeted al-Tayaran Square, killing 38 people and injuring at least 105. On May 23, an IS suicide bomber targeted a park in the north of Baghdad, killing at least seven people and injuring 16 others. On June 6, an attack on a Shiite mosque killed 20 and injured 110. A series of IS bombings on November 4 killed seven and injured 14.

In Kirkuk Governorate, IS militants tried take control of remote rural areas. For instance, on March 11, IS fighters set up a roadblock on a major road, killing at least 15 and injuring 5. On September 3, IS militants attacked a village west of Kirkuk and killed seven civilians. Throughout the year, coalition forces conducted several airstrikes against IS infrastructure such as tunnel systems and positions. For instance, on April 21, airstrikes destroyed five IS tunnels and two weapon caches near Kirkuk, killing an unknown number of militants.

Meanwhile, Iraqi security forces as well as militias of the predominantly Shiite Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) [->Iraqi (Shiite militias)] attacked IS strongholds in Niniveh Governorate on a weekly base. For instance, on March 26, Iraqi troops killed 18 militants, including one Turkish and two Russian nationals, during an operation in Kan'ous village, south of Mosul. From October on, security forces with the support of PMF and coalition forces launched a military campaign. On November 11, Iraqi security forces, supported by coalition warplanes, killed five militants during a raid.

Additionally, IS attacked members of the security forces as well as civilians. On April 12, an IS explosive killed 25 and injured 18 attendants of a funeral of anti-jihadist Iraqi fighters in the village of Asdira, Salahuddin Governorate. On August 29, a car bomb detonated at a checkpoint close to Qaim, Al Anbar Governorate, killing 11 and injuring 16. On October 10, IS militants attacked a gas field in Al Anbar Governorate, killing ten guards. On October 23, a militant detonated a car bomb at a market in Qayyarah, Niniveh Governorate, killing seven people and injuring at least 40. (vba), (mhb), (lru)

AFGHANISTAN

The war between the Afghan branch of the so-called Islamic State (IS), called Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), and the government continued. ISKP activities continued predominantly in the provinces of Nangarhar and Konar in the east and Jowzjan province in the northwest of the country. According to UNAMA, ISKP killed at least 700 civilians in 2018.

Throughout the year, ISKP conducted numerous attacks and suicide bombings, especially in Kabul, targeting civilians, especially the Shia community, as well as government and foreign organizations.

For instance, on January 29, ISKP attacked the Marshal Fahim National Defense University in Kabul, killing at least 11 soldiers and wounding 16, while four militants were killed and one arrested. On March 9, an ISKP suicide bomber attacked a police checkpoint in Kabul, which left nine civilians dead and 18 injured, mostly members of the Shia community. In another suicide bombing in a Shia shrine in Kabul on March 21, ISKP killed at least 33 people, injuring more than 65. ISKP claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a voter registration center on April 22 in which 69 people were killed. On April 30, ISKP conducted another suicide bombing, which left 26 people dead and 50 injured in central Kabul. Until the end of the year, ISKP conducted at least seven other suicide bombings and attacks in Kabul, killing at least 150 people.

Clashes between ISKP and Taliban continued to take place and especially escalated in Darzab district, Jowzjan, between July 12 and August 1 [-> Afghanistan (Taliban)]. On July 2, ISKP militants had captured Aqbalaq village in Darzab district and beheaded ten Taliban members. Subsequently, Taliban attacked ISKP positions in Darzab and Qush Tapa on July 12. Following heavy fighting between the two groups in Darzab throughout July, more than 200 ISKP fighters surrendered to the government, while 128 others were captured by the Taliban. Consequently, in early August, the Taliban took full control of ISKP's former territory in Darzab. At least 3,000 civilians were displaced due to these clashes and about 300 people killed. The reports on fatalities were, however, highly contradicting.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) continued to conduct joint operations with international coalition forces against ISKP. For instance, on February 6, a US B-25 bomber struck an ISKP hideout in Sar Dara locality, Darzab, killing 28 militants. On March 16, US military stated that US and Afghan forces had killed 90 ISKP fighters since the beginning of 2018, mostly in Darzab. On July 7, the Commander of International Forces in Afghanistan stated that during the previous two months, Afghan-led air and ground operations against ISKP command and control nodes had killed more than 157 ISKP militants from China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Chechnya in Nangarhar. On August 26, a joint air raid operation of NATO and Afghan forces in eastern Nangarhar killed eleven ISKP militants, among them the fourth leader of ISKP. On December 31, Afghan security forces killed 28 ISKP fighters, among them the head of ISKP intelligence, and destroyed four ISKP bases in Achin District, Nangarhar.

EGYPT

In Egypt, clashes between the Egyptian government, supported by Bedouin tribes, and the local branch of IS, Sinai Province, formerly Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, continued.

On February 9, Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) launched "Sinai 2018", a comprehensive military operation against militants in Sinai, the Western Desert, and parts of the Nile Delta, leading to heavy clashes throughout the year. In a report published on March 1, Amnesty International claimed that EAF used cluster bombs. According to state sources, at least 740 militants were killed during "Sinai 2018" [→ Egypt (militants / Sinai Peninsula)], more than 100 belonging to IS. For example, on April 18, EAF killed at least four alleged IS militants in a shooting, including the IS commander of central Sinai. The "Sinai 2018" offensive was backed by local Bedouin tribes that fought alongside EAF forces against IS militants. Compared to the previous year, increased military cooperation between EAF and Bedouin tribes have been reported. On June 20, Bedouin representatives announced on social media the death of four IS militants after clashes between Tarabin tribe members and IS. In addition, Egyptian National Police (ENP) regularly conducted raids against IS militants such as on July 25, when ENP killed 13 IS fighters and seized IEDs, automatic weapons, and ammunition near the city of al-Airsh, North Sinai.

Throughout the year, IS continued to carry out attacks on ENP and EAF forces, mainly in the city of al-Arish and in the Egyptian part of the city Rafah and the respective surroundings, North Sinai. For instance, on April 14, IS fighters, including four suicide bombers, attacked a military camp in central Sinai, resulting in the death of up to 20 EAF soldiers and of all 14 assailants. On May 18, IS attempted to assassinate the head of Sinai's Central Security Forces, an Egyptian paramilitary force, killing one police captain with an IED south of al-Arish. In late August, a group of IS militants attacked an army checkpoint in northern Sinai. The assailants killed four soldiers and injured eleven others, while EAF shot dead four militants.

Furthermore, IS claimed responsibility for attacks on civilians who they suspected of having links to EAF via their news outlet Amaq. For instance, IS released photos showing the execution of three men for alleged links to EAF in June and in November.

Also, IS claimed that they shot dead four workers in front of their house in al-Arish on October 21. The workers had taken part in the construction of a security wall around the Arish airport which IS opposed. On November 2, presumed IS assailants opened fire on a bus carrying Coptic Christians returning from Saint Samuel Monastery in the Minya Governorate, killing at least eight and injuring 13 [→ Egypt (Muslims – Christians)]. Two days later, security forces killed 19 militants allegedly involved in the November 2 attack during clashes in a mountainous area in the western part of Minya.

On February 3, the newspaper New York Times published an article, stating that Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) has conducted airstrikes with the consent of the Egyptian government in Sinai during the last years. A few days later, an Egyptian Army spokesman denied any IDF airstrikes on Egyptian territory. In November, IS militants seized a weapons shipment in Sinai, allegedly including missiles, destined for the Palestinian militant group Hamas [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. (imh)

LIBYA

IS continued to be present in Libya, although the group did not control any territory permanently and the number of attacks decreased. Militants conducted attacks on cities and remote checkpoints. The internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA), the two major actors in Libya [→ Libya (opposition)], continued to fight IS despite their rivalry. US forces also targeted IS using armed drones and warplanes.

For instance, measures against IS included the arrest of two IS members, accused of planning car bomb attacks in Tripoli by GNA forces, on January 10. On June 6, US drones killed four IS fighters near Bani Walid, Misrata District. On July 24, LNA raided an IS hideout in the central Jufra District, killing twelve, including the IS Eastern Region Commander.

Throughout the year, IS carried out several attacks against civilians and infrastructure. For instance, on February 4, in Jufra District, a LNA soldier was killed by IS during an attempt to sabotage oil infrastructures. On May 2, IS suicide bombers attacked the headquarters of the High National Election Commission in Tripoli, killing 16. At the end of October, alleged IS members attacked the city of al-Foqha, Jufra District, killing four, kidnapping ten and setting fire to local government offices. On December 9, six of the hostages were executed. Militants raided the police station of Tazirbu, Kufra District, on November 23. The attackers killed nine police officers affiliated to LNA and kidnapped eleven others. On December 25, three IS members attacked the GNA Foreign Affairs Ministry in Tripoli, setting off a car bomb. One IS fighter was killed by the guards, while the other two entered the building and detonated their suicide belts. Three people were killed and 21 injured, while ministry facilities were severely damaged. In addition, IS conducted several car bomb attacks on military checkpoints. For instance, on February 21, a suicide attacker targeted a checkpoint in Jufra District, killing three LNA soldiers. On March 29, an IS member drove a car bomb into a LNA checkpoint in Al Wahat District, killing himself and six soldiers. (riv)

SAUDI ARABIA

In Saudi Arabia, IS carried out at least one attack against security forces. On July 7, three assailants attacked security forces at a checkpoint in Buraidah, al-Qassim region, killing one soldier and one Bangladeshi national. In response, the security forces killed two assailants and injured one. IS later claimed responsibility for the attack. After a US-led coalition airstrike killed a high-profile IS leader in Syria in April, a report, published by the US Central Command on July 24, stated that the IS leader had been planning attacks on Saudi territory. On August 16, Saudi authorities arrested an alleged IS sympathizer, armed with an explosive belt, a machine gun and two pistols. After resisting the arrest, the suspect was shot and injured. On August 22, a video of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi encouraging sympathizers to overthrow the Saudi government was published online. (nar)

TUNISIA

In Tunisia, the conflict was marked by attacks carried out

by the local IS branch Jund al-Khalifa and military search operations, whilst further clashes with militants could not be clearly attributed. Over the course of the year, security forces arrested several individuals with presumed links to IS who were inter alia involved in recruitment and seized weapons and other material. The Tunisian government extended the state of emergency imposed in November 2015 several times until 05/01/2019 due to the generally unstable security situation in the country.

On March 19, security forces carried out a search operation for two militants presumably linked to IS close to Sidi Toui national park, Gafsa Governorate. While one militant blew himself up, the other was killed during the following exchange of fire. On April 5, IS news agency Amaq confirmed the incident. On April 10, the military clashed with militants reportedly belonging to IS-affiliated Jund al-Khalifa near Mount Mghila in Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid Governorates. One soldier was killed during the attack, others were wounded. On October 21, security forces killed a wanted Jund al-Khalifa linked militant in Kasserine Governorate, who was reportedly associated with multiple attacks on security personnel, as well as the beheading of a civilian in June 2017. On October 29, an IS-linked suicide bomber blew herself up on Avenue Habib Bourguiba in the capital Tunis, eponymous Governorate, wounding nine. (wih)

TURKEY

In Turkey, operations against IS, such as raids and detentions, continued, while militants conducted no further attacks during the year. A high number of the detained were foreign nationals. However, many suspects were released after questioning.

On January 23, 13 suspected IS members were detained in Sanliurfa Province, including an Iraqi doctor who had joined Tawhid wal-Jihad, an IS predecessor, in 2004 and later served as Emir of Health under IS. Between January 22 and 29, security forces killed one suspected IS member and detained 27. In a large-scale operation in Istanbul Province, police arrested 82 suspects, including 77 foreign nationals, on February 3. On April 27, the IS Emir of Syria's Deir al-Zor Governorate was arrested in Izmir Province. According to police reports, he was hiding among refugees and attempting to leave Turkey for Europe. In June, security forces arrested at least 174 suspects in the provinces of Istanbul, Sanliurfa and Samsun. In October, at least 223 suspects were detained across the country. On November 5, security forces conducted simultaneous operations in 11 districts of Diyarbakir Province, detaining 24 suspects, who were accused of having transferred money to IS in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Indonesia. Reportedly, about USD 770,000 were seized during the operation. In December, at least 200 suspected IS-members were detained. (yal)

YEMEN

In Yemen, IS claimed responsibility for at least 27 attacks targeting al-Houthi forces and UAE-backed al-Hizam Security Forces. For the first time since the establishment of an IS branch in Yemen IS militants also attacked AQAP. Most of the fighting occurred in al-Bayda governorate, while incidents

also took place in Ibb and Aden governorate. In September, IS announced the merging of its three active Yemenite branches, or wilayats.

Throughout the year, IS militants continued to fight against al-Houthi forces in the northwestern part of al-Bayda, leaving 16 to 21 Houthi soldiers dead. The number of attacks claimed by the local IS branches in Aden and Ibb declined in comparison to 2017. IS Wilayat Liwa al Akhdar carried out IED attacks on February 18 and March 3, leaving twelve people dead. IS Wilayat Aden-Abyan claimed responsibility for three attacks. For instance, on February 24, IS militants conducted SVBIED attacks on a counter-terrorism headquarters in al-Tawahi district, killing 14 people and injuring more than 40, including civilians.

According to AQAP social media channels, 13 AQAP militants were killed on July 12 during clashes with IS without providing further information. In a statement on August 1, IS accused AQAP of collaborating with forces aligned to internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Five days later, AQAP denied the accusations, in turn criticizing IS for their lack of fighting against the al-Houthi movement. In October and November, IS claimed five more attacks on AQAP positions in al-Bayda. The fighting intensified in December in the same governorate, when IS militants allegedly killed at least seven AQAP militants in IED and sniper attacks. (sbr) ska

TUNISIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: opposition groups, civil society groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups, such as the main opposition group Popular Front, backed by various civil movements, on one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. The conflict was marked by socio-economic protests all over the country, especially concerning high rates of unemployment and inflation, as well as human rights violations. The state of emergency imposed in 2015 was extended until 05/01/2019.

The conflict peaked in a week of nationwide protests at the beginning of January caused by a tax reform issued on January 1, which led to an increase in prices of gas and basic goods. On January 8, protests called for by the Popular Front started and quickly spread to at least 20 cities all over the country. The same day, one protester died in Tébouira, Manouba Governorate. Local protesters and NGOs claimed his death was caused by being hit by a police car, which further spurred the protests. In the following week, clashes between protesters and security forces continually took place, with protesters constructing roadblocks by burning tires, throwing stones and looting buildings. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowds in several instances. In Thala, Kasserine Governorate, a National Security Building was torched by protesters on January 10. By the evening of the same day, 2,100 soldiers were deployed to protect pub-

lic buildings and banks. On January 13, the government announced a set of measures including an increase in social payments for families in need. Over the course of the protests, more than 930 protesters were arrested and over 105 police officers were injured according to the government. By January 20, the protests started to decrease in size and frequency. Opposition groups and workers' unions continued with large-scale protest on several occasions throughout the year. From end of January until March 18, protesters interrupted the state-run export of phosphates in Gafsa Governorate, demanding jobs and a share of the revenue. On June 12, the Commission on Individual Freedoms and Equality (COLIBE) published its official report, pleading for the equality of inheritance, the abolition of the death penalty, as well as the repeal of the law criminalizing homosexuality. President Beji Caid Essebsi announced the implementation of the report through a parliamentary bill, causing protests of several thousands in Tunisia both against and in favor, led by religious groups as well as citizens supporting equal rights. On November 22, after failed negotiations with the government concerning wage increases, around 650,000 public sector workers followed the call of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) to go on strike all over the country. Further protests erupted after the self-immolation of a journalist on December 24 in Kasserine, eponymous Governorate, who had denounced the country's poor economic situation. During the night, youths throwing stones and burning tires clashed with security forces in several cities including Kasserine, eponymous Governorate, Téboura and Jebiniana, Sfax Governorate, with police firing tear gas. One policeman was injured and several protesters were arrested.

Incidents with refugee boats carrying Tunisian migrants represented a further cause for protests on several occasions. For instance, after a boat accident on June 2 in the region of Sfax causing the death of at least 112 refugees, protests erupted in El Hamma, Gabès Governorate, and Tataouine, eponymous Governorate, and followed by the dismissal of the Tunisian minister of the interior four days later. mls

TURKEY (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Nation Alliance, HDP vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and parties, such as the Nation Alliance, headed by the Republican People's Party's (CHP), and the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), on the one hand, and the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the other, continued.

After an attempted military coup in July 2016, the government declared a state of emergency, which had been extended several times. The latest extension on April 18 was accompanied by nationwide protests. On July 8, the government passed an emergency decree that ordered the dismissal of more than 18,500 government employees, including police officers, soldiers and university staff for alleged support

of terrorist organizations. On July 18, the state of emergency ended but was replaced by a set of laws retaining a number of state of emergency regulations, including the option to dismiss security personnel and public servants. The move was criticized by opposition groups as an attempt to permanently weaken dissent against the government.

On March 13, the government introduced new electoral laws. These allowed the formation of alliances to surpass the existing 10 percent threshold to enter parliament, and authorized law-enforcement officials to monitor the voting process, as well as to validate unsealed ballot box papers. The process was accompanied by protests of opposition MPs in parliament. Subsequently, CHP contested the changes before the Constitutional Court, stating it would undermine democratic electoral procedures. However, on May 31, the court rejected all objections.

On April 18, President Erdogan announced early parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for June 24. From June 4 to 23, several opposition parties criticized the government, citing obstructions to their election campaigns by security forces. On July 9, the Supreme Election Board confirmed President Erdogan's re-election with 52 percent of the votes. Although opposition politicians criticised the elections as unfair due to alleged irregularities in polling stations, they accepted the results.

Throughout the year, a number of civil right demonstrations took place which the police dispersed violently, using tear gas and anti-riot squats. For instance, on July 1, hundreds of LGBT activists protested for gay rights in Istanbul, after the authorities had prohibited the demonstration in advance. Police forces stopped the demonstration, injuring a high number of protesters with tear gas and plastic bullets.

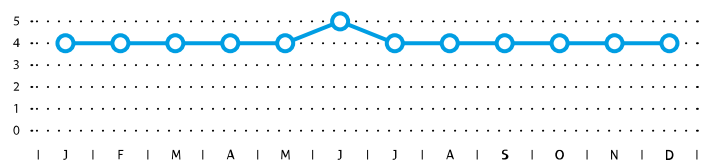
Several opposition MPs and journalists were also arrested due to several charges, such as support of terrorist groups. For instance, on August 7, in Diyarbakır, authorities arrested a journalist of a pro-Kurdish news agency. Furthermore, on September 7, the former head of HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, was sentenced to four years and eight months for terrorism-related charges.

The government's continued prosecution of opposition MPs and journalists resulted in international criticism. For instance, in November, the European Court of Human Rights ruled Selahattin Demirtas conviction unlawful and demanded his immediate release. hfe

TURKEY (PKK, TAK)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1978

Conflict parties: PKK, TAK vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy



The limited war over autonomy between the Turkish government, on the one hand, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the PKK's alleged offshoot, the Kurdistan Freedom

Falcons (TAK), on the other, escalated to a war. Over the course of the year, at least 1009 casualties were recorded. In regard to several unconfirmed airstrikes on Iraqi territory, listed by Human Rights Watch, a higher number can be assumed.

On July 18, the government lifted the post-coup attempt state of emergency of 2016 which had been extended several times, citing among others continuing PKK activities in the southeastern regions. However, the government passed a new anti-terror law on July 25, retaining some of the state of emergency regulations, including the option to dismiss security personnel and public servants. Subsequently, authorities arrested 842 people for terrorism charges and in October, dismissed 559 pro-government paramilitary village guards. Moreover, on October 15, the government dismissed 259 local officials due to alleged PKK-links, which included 94 of the 102 mayors of Kurdish cities. Foreign citizens were also arrested due to alleged PKK-links, which strained bilateral relations between Turkey and other countries.

Throughout the year, clashes between Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and PKK mostly affected Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Siirt, and Sirnak provinces. Sporadic clashes also occurred in eastern Turkey, in the northeastern provinces Kars and Igdir, and in the provinces of Giresun and Trabzon, bordering the Black Sea. In northern Iraq, clashes mainly took place in the governorates of Erbil and Dohuk, especially in the regions of Avasin-Basyan, Gara, Qandil mountains, and Zab. In contrast to previous years, TAK conducted no attacks.

In January, TAF claimed to have killed 49 militants in several airstrikes in northern Iraq. In February, clashes occurred mainly in Hakkari Province, where four militants were killed and seven wounded by guided missiles. In March, military operations of TAF continued primarily in the provinces of Diyarbakir and Hatay. After several clashes in the border region, TAF increased cross-border airstrikes targeting PKK positions in northern Iraq. In April, TAF started several military operations in the provinces of Diyarbakir, Hakkari, and Mardin, which allegedly left at least 151 militants and nine TAF-members dead. In May, military operations in these provinces continued, while less fatalities were reported. TAF also started operations in the eastern province Kars and claimed to have killed at least 18 militants. Moreover, during military operations, TAF enforced curfews on 65 settlements in the province of Diyarbakir starting on May 25. Compared to May, fatalities in June from military operations and clashes increased by threefold, resulting from military operations and clashes, mainly in the southeastern provinces of Hakkari and Sirnak. In August, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi agreed to military cooperation against PKK in northern Iraq. In October, TAF claimed to have killed at least 48 militants in airstrikes in northern Iraq. Airstrikes continued in December killing at least 25 militants. Throughout the year, PKK conducted several attacks. For instance, on September 26, an IED killed two and injured two security guards in Sirnak Province, which authorities attributed to PKK. On October 4, a PKK IED killed eight soldiers in Batman Province, Turkey. In the aftermath, hundreds of alleged PKK supporters were detained across Turkey. On November 27, PKK celebrated its 40th anniversary and announced the killing of 15 TAF soldiers in Igdir Province. kar

YEMEN (AL-HIRAK / SOUTHERN YEMEN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: al-Hirak vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession of southern Yemen between al-Hirak, also known as the Southern Movement, and the government of internationally recognized President Abdabbuh Mansur Hadi escalated to a violent crisis.

During the first months of the year the United Arab Emirates-backed (UAE) Transitional Political Council of the South (STC) strengthened its effort to gain autonomy from the Yemeni central government under President Hadi. On January 1, STC President Aidarus al-Zubaidi issued a decree to form local STC leadership councils in Aden, Abyan, al Dhale, Socotra, and Lahij governorates. On January 21, the STC leadership released a statement calling for the unification of Southern Resistance Forces (SRF), declaring a state of emergency in the city of Aden, and banning activities of officials and military forces of the Hadi government. The statement included a one-week ultimatum for Hadi to dismiss Prime Minister Ahmed bin Daghr and form a new cabinet. On January 27, one day before the ultimatum expired, the Hadi government banned public gatherings in Aden.

One day later, heavy clashes erupted between SRF forces and Hadi-aligned forces, after the latter had cracked down on demonstrators in Aden. In the following two days, the SRF seized key government and military infrastructure in Aden. The clashes between January 28 and 30 left at least 36 dead and more than 141 injured. Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE criticized the military actions of the SRF and reaffirmed their support for Hadi. Clashes ended on January 31, when the STC and the Hadi government reached a deal mediated by Saudi Arabia, allowing Hadi-loyal forces to return to Aden and keeping southern Yemen under control of the central government. On May 30, SRF forces attacked Hizam Security Forces, an UAE-backed militia, located in Abud military base in al-Dhale city. In the two days of clashes, Hizam Security Forces temporarily lost the base to SRF forces. Two assailants were killed and three injured. On August 18, assailants supporting the southern Yemeni separation effort killed a cadet and injured a further two in an attack on the Salah al Din Military College in Aden city. The attackers targeted the academy's graduation ceremony, where the flag of the unified Yemen was hoisted. Throughout the year, the STC emphasized the importance of including its representatives in future peace talks between the Hadi government and the al-Houthis [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. For instance, on December 17, the STC released a statement criticizing their exclusion from the peace talks in Sweden's capital, Stockholm, and called for the integration of the STC in future consultations. pmu

YEMEN (AQAP – AL-HOUTHİ FORCES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. al-Houthi forces

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The violent crisis over ideology between al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its militant arm Ansar al-Sharia, on the one hand, and al-Houthi forces on the other, continued. As in previous years, AQAP conducted IED attacks against al-Houthi forces in al-Bayda and al-Dhale governorates. Furthermore, AQAP militants fought alongside Sunni tribal militias. For instance, AQAP claimed to have killed four al-Houthi fighters in Juban district, al-Dhale governorate and three others in Rada'a city, al-Bayda governorate, with IEDs, on January 11. In the following month, AQAP militants killed two al-Houthi fighters in Damt district, al-Dhale. On April 18, AQAP claimed to have killed a local al-Houthi leader in al-Bayda city, eponymous governorate. This was followed by an IED attack in Rada'a district, six days later, causing the deaths of six al-Houthi forces. On July 7, AQAP militants killed a local al-Houthi commander and four of his soldiers in the Tayyab area, al-Bayda governorate. One month later, on August 14, the militants attacked al-Houthi forces with artillery and medium-caliber weapons in southern al-Bayda. Between August and December, no further attacks by AQAP militants were reported.

Throughout the year, al-Houthi forces launched attacks against AQAP in several governorates. According to al-Houthi media, al-Houthi forces killed an AQAP explosives expert at a checkpoint in lbb governorate on April 3. On August 20, al-Houthi forces killed senior AQAP commander Ghalib al Zaidi, who fought alongside government troops of internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, in Ma'rib governorate. Further, al-Houthi forces killed several AQAP militants in an IED attack in Qifa district, al-Bayda on November 14.

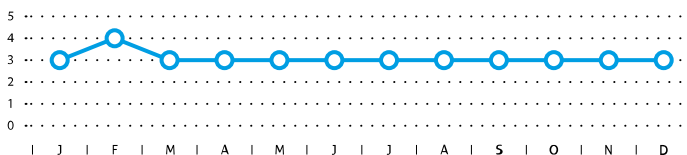
As in previous years, AQAP regularly released statements presenting itself as the sole guardian of Sunni interests in Yemen and publishing information about its fight against al-Houthi forces. For instance, on January 25, AQAP released a video showing its recent attacks on al-Houthi forces in al Bayda governorate. On June 25, AQAP announced to take action against the al-Houthi movement in response to alleged mistreatment of prisoners. A few days later, on June 29, AQAP-affiliated militants executed an al-Houthi captive. jmr

YEMEN (AQAP, ANSAR AL-SHARIA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. government, UAE-backed forces, USA

Conflict items: system/ideology



The limited war over ideology continued between al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its insurgent arm Ansar al-Sharia on the one hand, and the government of the internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, UAE-backed forces and the US, and al-Hirak, also known as Southern Movement on the other. Throughout the year a total of at least 219 people were killed.

During the first half of the year, AQAP frequently attacked government forces, local forces loyal to Hadi and UAE-backed forces in the governorates of Abyan, al-Bayda, Marib and Shabwah. For instance, on January 30, AQAP attacked a checkpoint of UAE-backed Shabwani Elite forces with a SVBIED and small arms fire in Ataq, Shabwah governorate, killing at least 11. Another SVBIED attack by AQAP militants against a checkpoint of UAE-backed security forces killed three and wounded seven, on June 14. In the second half of the year AQAP activities declined. However, sporadic attacks continued such as on December 21, when AQAP conducted an IED attack against a police headquarter in al-Shihr, Hadramawt governorate. Two people were killed and 45 injured. Furthermore, AQAP continued to use its media channels for propaganda purposes. For instance, on August 15, AQAP released a publication with the title 'Why are we fighting America?', threatening international attacks.

As in previous years, UAE-backed forces cracked down on AQAP in the southern Yemeni governorates. Between February 15 and 19, Hadhrami Elite forces launched operation 'al-Faysal' against AQAP positions in Amd district, Hadhramaut governorate. During the operation and subsequent retaliatory attacks by AQAP militants, at least 38 fighters on both sides were killed and many wounded. Between September 21 and 23, UAE-backed forces raided several AQAP camps in western Shabwah governorate. Three militiamen as well as nine militants were killed, including a AQAP commander.

Associated Press (AP) published an investigative report on August 7, questioning the methods of UAE-backed forces in their fight against AQAP. According to the report, measures against AQAP in the previous years included agreements with AQAP militants such as payments for their retreat and the recruitment of AQAP militants into the ranks of the anti-Houthi coalition [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)]. Furthermore, the report claimed that the US were aware of these practices. The UAE Armed Forces rejected the accusations, emphasizing their success in the military efforts against AQAP.

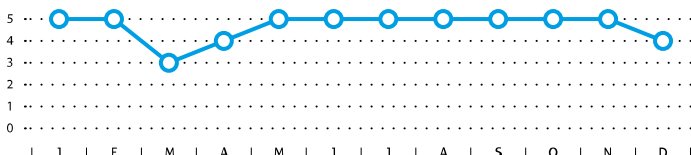
Over the course of the year, the US conducted at least 36 airstrikes against AQAP positions, militants and training fa-

cilities in Abyan, al-Bayda, Shabwah, Ma'rib and Hadramawt governorates, causing the death of at least 26 people. For example, on January 27, an US drone strike in Shabwah governorate killed at least seven militants. Another drone strike in al-Bayda governorate killed at least five militants on November 25. pmu

YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA (AL-HOUTHİ FORCES)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: al-Houthi forces vs. government
 Conflict items: national power



The war over national power between the government of the internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, supported by the Saudi Arabian-led coalition, anti-Houthi Popular Resistance forces, tribal forces, and the Islah party, on the one hand, and al-Houthi forces, supported by Popular Committees affiliated with al-Houthi forces, on the other, continued.

In 2014, the conflict had escalated to a war after Houthi forces had occupied the capital Sana'a in September and forced Hadi to resign and flee to Aden. In response, Hadi asked Saudi-Arabia to intervene militarily and restore his power as president. The Saudi-led coalition was comprised, inter alia, of Saudi Arabian, Emirati, and Sudanese forces.

Throughout 2018, the Saudi-led coalition continued to carry out airstrikes across Houthi controlled governorates. The Saudi-led coalition intensified its airstrikes in the capital Sana'a in April and May. For instance, the airstrike on Saleh Ali al-Samad's funeral on April 27 killed at least 38 Houthi soldiers. Samad, al-Houthi Supreme Political Council President, and six other Houthi soldiers had been killed several days earlier in a drone strike by the Saudi-led coalition in Hudaydah, eponymous governorate. On May 7, the coalition targeted the Houthi Presidential Office in Sana'a, killing six Houthi forces and injuring at least 30 civilians. As in previous years, several coalition airstrikes caused civilian casualties. For instance, on August 9, a bus was hit by an airstrike in the city of Dahyan, Sa'ada governorate, killing 54 civilians. Two weeks later, an airstrike killed at least 26 civilians in the district of al-Durayhimi, Hudaydah governorate.

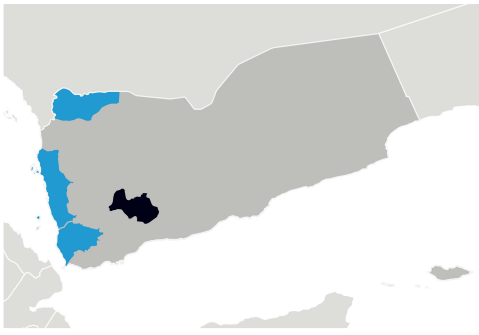
In the course of the year, Houthi forces attacked coalition forces, conducted cross-border raids, and launched ballistic missiles into Saudi territory, mostly in the southern provinces bordering Yemen's Houthi-controlled north. For instance, on March 25, Houthi forces fired seven Borkan-2H and Qaher-M2 ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia, targeting different locations. Saudi Arabia claimed to have intercepted all mis-

siles, nevertheless, its fragments killed a civilian and injured two in the Saudi capital Riyadh. In January, the UN published a report, suspecting Iran of delivering weapons to al-Houthi forces in violation of UNSC Resolution 2216. According to the report, missiles previously used included Iranian-manufactured parts. On April 6, Houthi forces ambushed a Sudanese military convoy, killing and wounding dozens in Midi, Hajjah governorate. On July 25, Houthi forces damaged a Saudi oil tanker near Yemen's west coast. In response, Saudi oil shipments through the Bab al-Mandeb strait were halted for nine days. At the end of August, UN experts accused all conflict parties of committing war crimes.

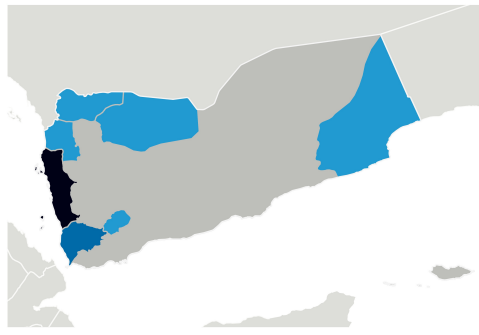
In 2018, the conflict was marked by the offensives of the coalition and Hadi-aligned forces in the Houthi-controlled Hudaydah governorate, which was justified by the Houthis allegedly using the port of Hudaydah city to smuggle weapons from Iran. Furthermore, since the the escalation of the conflict in 2014, the port of Hudaydah was considered an important lifeline for the majority of Yemen's population, constituting an entry point for humanitarian aid and medical supply. Between May 23 and 27, coalition forces made substantial advances in al-Tuhayat, Bayt al-Faqiah, and al-Darayhimi districts in southern Hudaydah governorate. During the fighting at least 150 people were killed. The offensive against Hudaydah city started on June 13, when Saudi-led coalition, Hadi-aligned forces, and United Arab Emirates (UAE)-backed tribal militias launched "Operation Golden Victory" to expel the Houthi forces. Subsequently, USA and UK rejected a motion by the Swedish government at the UNSC to end the fighting in Hudaydah and keep the port open. Until July 1, when the UAE temporarily halted the coalition's offensive to support UN efforts to reach a political solution, more than 300 people were killed due to the fighting over the city. However, intense fighting continued after the offensive was resumed in late July. In early September, peace talks between the Yemeni government and Houthi representatives organized by the UN in Geneva failed due to logistical issues regarding the latter's transport to Switzerland. Subsequently, clashes continued, such as on October 21, when fighting killed more than 150 people, respectively. During clashes between November 11 and 13, at least 140 people were killed. According to UN data, more than 450,000 people fled al-Hudaydah governorate in relation to "Operation Golden Victory". After multiple meetings with the conflict parties, UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, who had taken office on February 16, organized UN consultations in Sweden's capital Stockholm between December 6 and 12. As a result, the warring parties agreed upon a ceasefire in Hudaydah, including the city's demilitarisation under UN observation and the exchange of up to 16,000 prisoners.

This year, approx. 30,000 people were killed and 2 million people internally displaced. Furthermore, diseases such as diphtheria and cholera continued to be widespread throughout the country, with more than 300,000 suspected new cholera cases registered, according to UNOCHA. leg

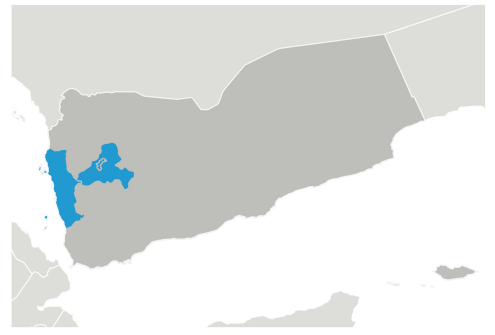
YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA (AL-HOUTHIS FORCES)



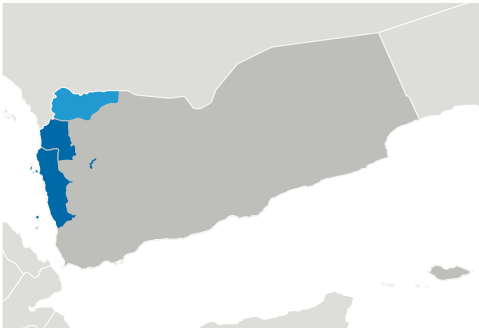
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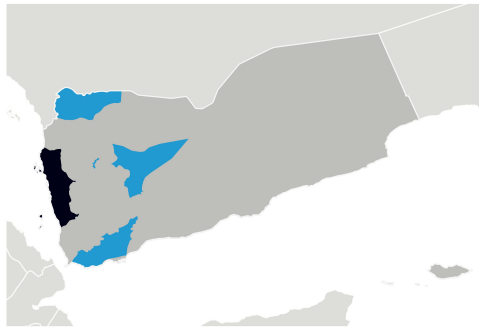
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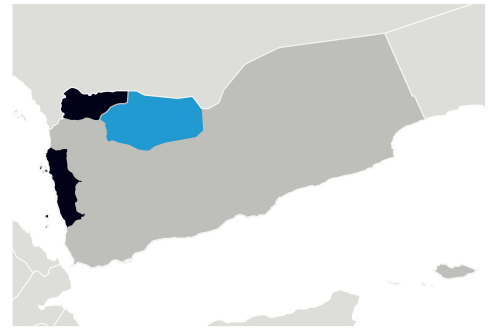
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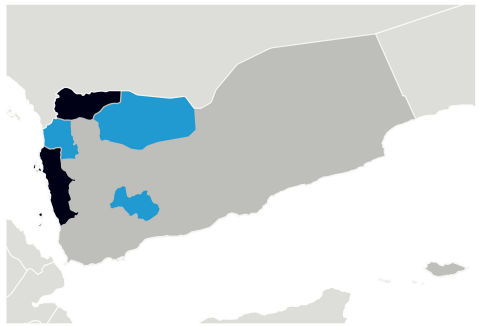
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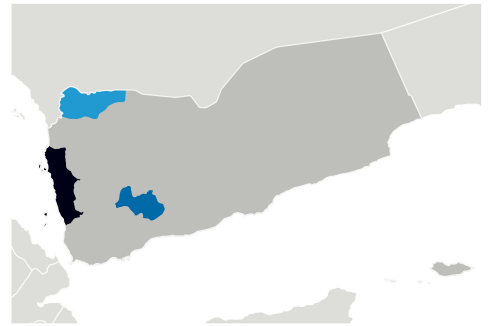
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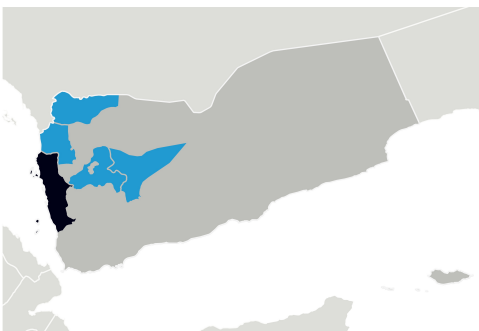
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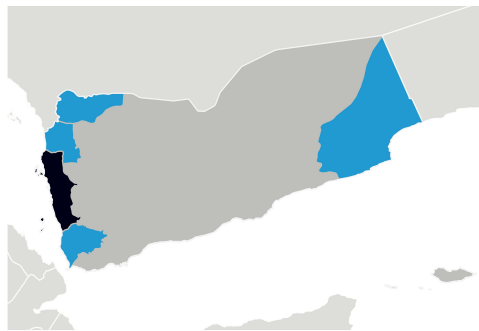
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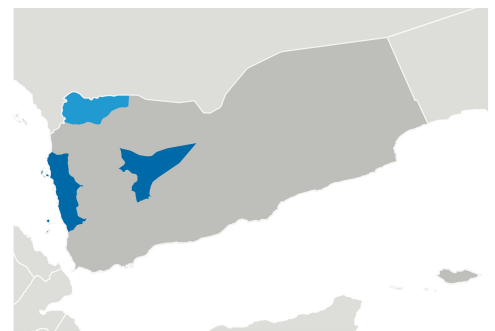
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October



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