



CONFLICT BAROMETER | 2019

Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research



disputes
non-violent crises
violent crises
limited wars
wars

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Printed in Heidelberg, Germany.

The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), associated with the Institute of Political Science of Heidelberg University, is a registered non-profit association. It is dedicated to the research, evaluation, and documentation of political conflicts worldwide.

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|2019

Analyzed Period: 01/01/19 – 12/31/19

PREFACE

With the 28th edition of the *Conflict Barometer*, the HIIK continues its annual series of reports covering political conflict dynamics and developments worldwide.

Despite a slight decrease compared to 2018, this year was marked by the continuation of many highly violent conflicts. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Maghreb (MENA) region, and the Americas, 15 conflicts were fought on a war level. Of these, two intrastate conflicts in the DR Congo's northeastern provinces, the drug trafficking conflict in Brazil, as well as the conflict spurred by Islamist groups in the Sahel zone escalated to full-scale wars. In total, 23 limited wars were observed worldwide. Six violent crises in Sudan, Mozambique, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Iraq escalated to limited wars. Meanwhile, the wars between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria, militias and the government of the DR Congo, as well as the inner-opposition conflict in Syria de-escalated to limited wars. The global trend towards an increase of non-violent conflicts continued in 2019. Overall, 162 of the 358 total observed conflicts played out on a non-violent level. Furthermore, international media coverage particularly shed light on this year's salient social and anti-government protests, notably in Chile, Hong Kong, and Iraq.

For the third consecutive year, the Spotlight section complements our descriptive approach to conflict dynamics with an emphasis on their internal and external influences. The Spotlights, for example, analyze the impact of progressive militarization of police forces on France's Gillet Jaunes protests, as well as the influence of international sanctions on the government's minority policies in Myanmar.

This year also marks our institute's 30th anniversary. In 1990, the HIIK emerged out of a project on conflict analysis financed by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) and the *Gesellschaft für Mathematik und Datenverarbeitung* (GMD) at Heidelberg University. For the last three decades, the continuous professionalization of systematic data collection and the development of a distinctive methodological approach has allowed researchers, policymakers, and the public to engage with conflicts on a five-level intensity scale, ranging from disputes to violent crises and wars. We are thrilled that our institute has provided and will continue to provide a framework for research on political conflicts worldwide, and that it has contributed to a better understanding of global conflict developments and dynamics.

The Board of Directors would like to thank all those who contributed to this report for their outstanding efforts, especially during the final stages of editing. It is your commitment that makes a publication like this possible, and enables the institute to grow.

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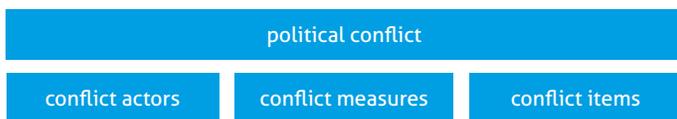
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Methodology

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 subnational 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

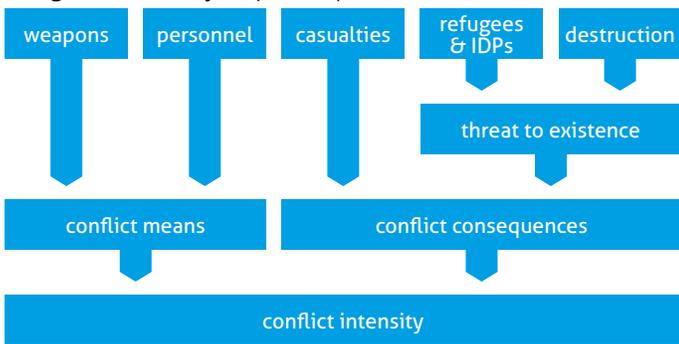
intensity Level	terminology	level of violence	intensity class
1	dispute	non-violent conflicts	low intensity
2	non-violent crisis		
3	violent crisis	violent conflicts	medium intensity
4	limited war		high intensity
5	war		

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.

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

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

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.

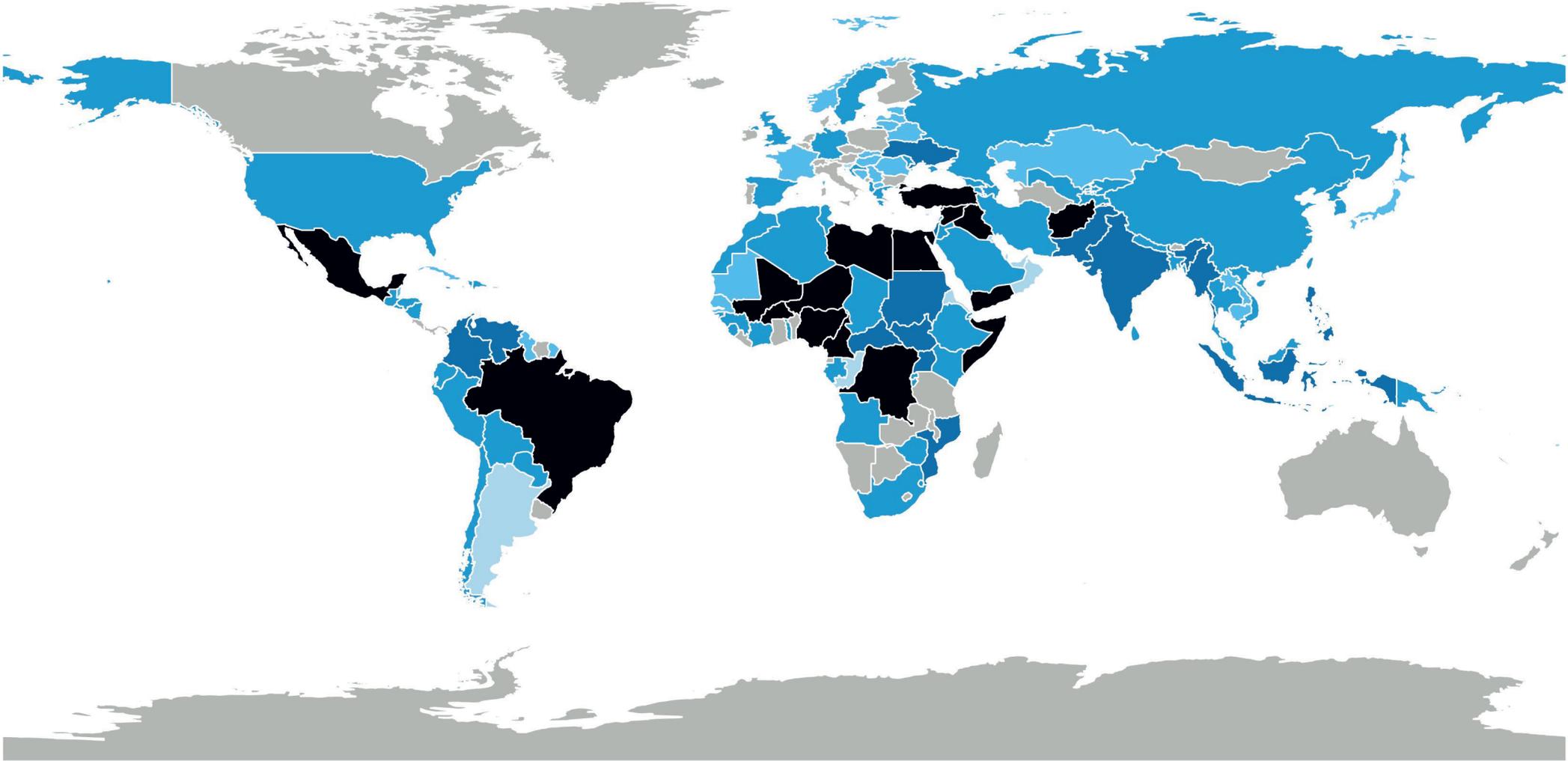
CONFLICT TYPES

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

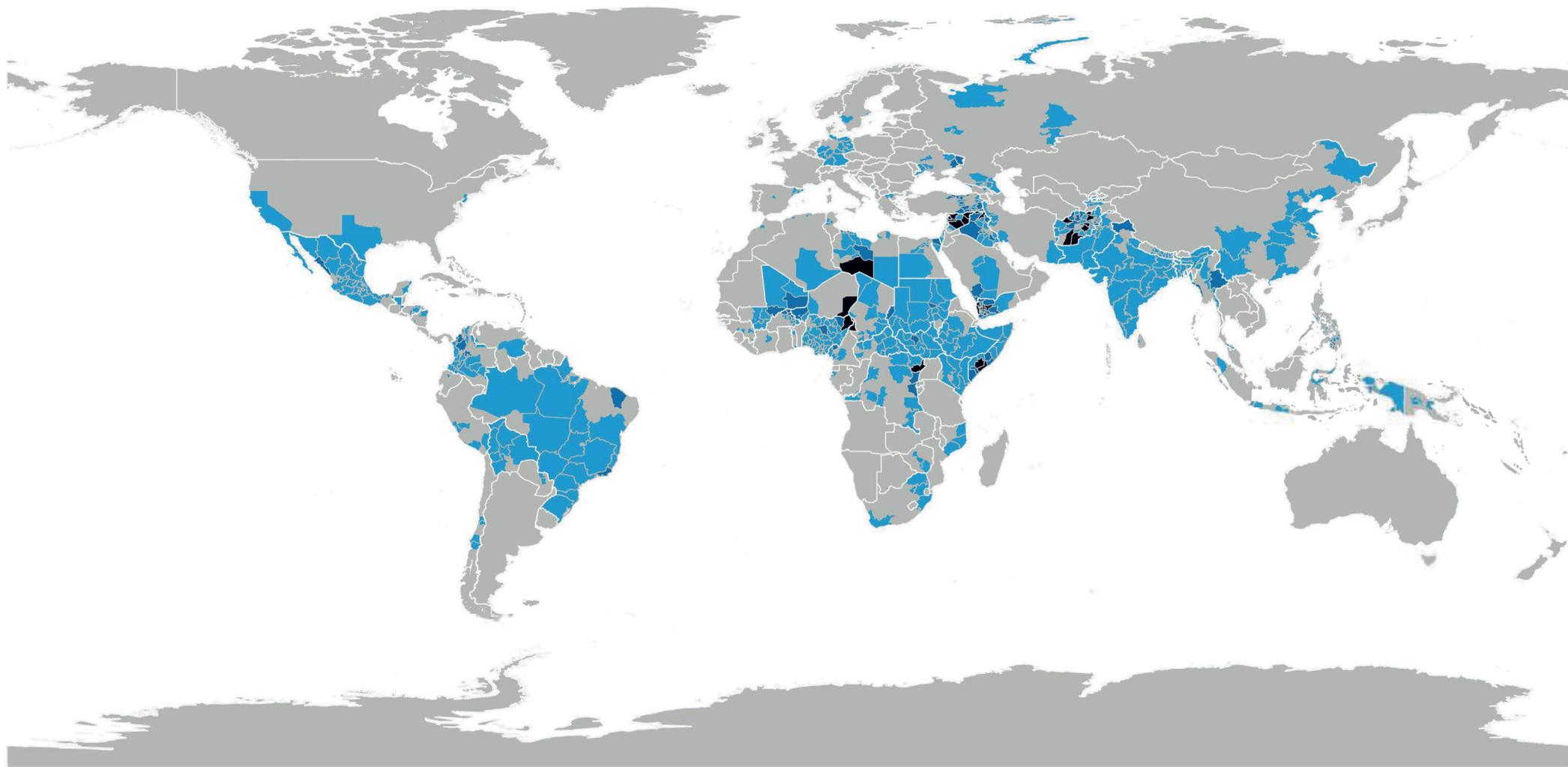
CONFLICTS IN 2019 (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

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

CONFLICTS IN 2019 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS

HIGHLY VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2019

LIMITED WARS (23)

WARS (15)

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Iraq (Opposition)
 Israel (Hamas et al.)
 Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)
 Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)

Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)
 Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)
 Libya (opposition)
 Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)
 Syria (opposition)
 Syria (Turkey – SDF / Northern Syria)
 Turkey (PKK / TAK)
 Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Cameroon (English-speaking minority)
 Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka)
 DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)
 Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)
 Mozambique (ASWJ)
 Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)
 South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)
 Sudan (opposition)

DR Congo (Ituri militias)
 DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)
 Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, ISGS et al.)
 Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)
 Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)

THE AMERICAS

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

Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)
 Mexico (drug cartels)

ASIA AND OCEANIA

India – Pakistan
 Indonesia (Papua)
 Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)
 Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)
 Philippines (Islamist militant groups)

EUROPE

Ukraine (Donbas)

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, HIIK observed a total of 358 conflicts worldwide. About 55 percent, 196, were fought violently, while 162 were on a non-violent level. Compared to 2018, the overall number of full-scale wars decreased from 16 to 15. The number of limited wars decreased from 25 to 23. HIIK ended the observation of two conflicts due to active settlement by the conflict parties and two conflicts due to two years of inactivity. Additionally, it stopped observing twelve conflicts that had been inactive for more than two years. Those twelve conflicts as well as 23 currently inactive conflicts are not reflected in the above figures and following statistics.

WARS

In 2019, four limited wars escalated to full-scale wars. Three of them were located in Sub-Saharan Africa and one in the Americas. Worldwide, five conflicts that were on war-level in 2018 de-escalated to either limited wars or violent crises, while eleven wars continued at the same intensity level as previous year. While the number of wars rose from one to two in the Americas, the number of wars either decreased, as in the Middle East and Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa, or remained constant, as in Asia and Oceania and Europe, where no wars were observed in 2019.

In 2019, the Middle East and Maghreb remained the region with the highest number of full-scale wars. Eight conflicts on war-level continued at the same intensity as in 2018, while Syria's inter-opposition conflict de-escalated to a limited war [→ Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)]. The war continued between the Afghan government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission and additional US forces, and the Taliban and various other Islamist militant groups such as the Haqqani Network. After an attack by Taliban militants, peace talks with the Taliban were temporary cancelled by US President Donald Trump, resuming in December. By the end of the year, Taliban militants controlled the most territory since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. The number of civilian casualties once again reached a record high, mostly caused by IEDs. The governments of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and others continued to fight the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In the night from October 26 to 27, US Special Forces raided the hideout of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Barisha, Idlib Governorate, who killed himself by detonating a suicide bomb. Four days later, IS named Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi his successor. In Egypt, the war between the government and militant groups at the Sinai Peninsula continued [→ Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. The rest of the country was also affected as the government continued to persecute militant opposition groups such as Hasm and Lewaa al-Thawra. In Libya, General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) launched its large-scale operation into southern parts of the country beyond its northeast operation headquarters in Benghazi. Tribal groups were also increasingly involved in ongoing fighting between national actors, such as LNA and the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, and international actors [→ Libya (opposition)], with tribal territory in southern Libya serving as a focal point for the

LNA. Turkey was involved in two wars: Clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces, the PKK, and the TAK mostly affected the southeastern Turkish provinces. In May, Turkey initiated 'Operation Claw', executing land and airstrikes in northern Iraq, resulting in the deaths of at least 1,000 [→ Turkey (PKK, TAK)]. After US troops began their withdrawal from northeastern Syria on October 7, Turkey declared it would implement a 30 km-deep "safe zone" along its border with Syria with the alleged aim of resettling one million Syrian refugees currently residing in Turkey, resulting in clashes with Kurdish forces [→ Syria (Turkey – SDF / Northern Syria)]. In Syria, government forces repeatedly clashed with the Free Syrian Army and Islamist umbrella groups, such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The fighting, which took primarily place in Idlib Governorate, left several thousands dead and approx. 230,000 people internally displaced [→ Syria (opposition)]. In Yemen, the war over national power continued between al-Houthi forces and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)]. 2019 was the conflict's second-deadliest year on record after 2018. In November, both parties agreed to reduce airstrikes as well as drone and missile attacks.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, three limited wars escalated to full-scale wars, two of them in the DR Congo, whereas the two wars involving Islamist Boko Haram factions in Nigeria and al-Shabaab in Somalia continued. Four wars in the Central African Republic, Sudan, Ethiopia and Nigeria, de-escalated to either limited wars or violent crises. In the DR Congo, partially unidentified militant groups, inter alia organized as Cooperative for Development for Congo (CODECO), attacked Hema and Lendu communities and repeatedly clashed with the military supported by MONUSCO, leading to the displacement of more than 300,000 people, and the destruction of numerous villages in northeastern Ituri province [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Furthermore, rivaling militant groups, such as the Mayi Mayi factions, the Nduma Defense of Congo-Renovated (NDC-R) and other militant groups originating from local communities, fought over territorial control in the country's northeastern provinces, particularly North and South Kivu, and repeatedly clashed with national and international security forces. This year, the conflict accounted for more than 750 casualties, left approx. 450,000 people displaced and led to large scale destruction of infrastructure, livestock and housing [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. In the Sahel zone, the transstate conflict between various Islamist militant groups and national and regional counter forces, internationally supported by inter alia French Operation Barkhane and MINUSMA, contributed to a deterioration of the region's political stability and sparked inter-communal conflicts in Mali and Burkina Faso. Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM) and the so-called Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) attacked national and international military posts, targeted civilians, and destroyed government facilities and rural social infrastructure such as schools. In Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, hundreds of thousands of people were displaced. The surge of attacks by armed Islamist groups in Burkina Faso's northern and, increasing since 2019, central regions, led to the highest record of conflict related deaths since Islamist activities spread from neighboring Mali to Burkina Faso in 2016 [→ Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, ISGS et al.)]. In the Lake Chad Basin, war continued for the ninth consecutive year be-

tween the two Boko Haram factions called 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 hand. For the first time since the beginning of the conflict, military fatalities outnumbered civilian deaths [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. 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 (AMISOM) and American military forces, continued [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. In January, an attack by al-Shabaab militants on a hotel in Nairobi which resulted in the death of 21 people, including the attackers, sparked global attention. As of this year, al-Shabaab controls roughly 20 percent of Somalia's territory. However, a full withdrawal of AMISOM forces is planned for December 2020.

In the Americas, the number of wars increased from one in 2018 to two this year.

In Mexico, the war continued between drug cartels, vigilante groups and the Mexican government [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Mexico's homicide rate hit a new high in 2019, making it the deadliest year on record. In Brazil, the conflict between several drug trafficking organizations (DTO), militias and the government escalated to a war due to the high number of casualties during the year. The homicide rates in the country have been falling since 2018, nevertheless the percentage of people killed by the military police increased. In the first six months of the year, the military police killed 2,286 persons allegedly linked to DTOs and militias [→ Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)].

LIMITED WARS

The total number of limited wars decreased by two from 25 in 2018 to 23 this year. 14 of these conflicts remained on the same level as in the previous year, three de-escalated from war-level and six escalated from violent crises.

In the Middle East and Maghreb region, four conflicts were fought on limited war level. Compared to 2018, two limited wars remained on the same level, while one violent crisis escalated and one war de-escalated to a limited war.

In the Gaza strip, the limited war continued between Israel on the one hand, and Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and other Islamist militants on the other hand [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. In May and November, tensions increased with Palestinian militant groups launching hundreds of projectiles towards Israel, while Israeli Forces struck targets in Gaza.

In Iraq, recurring protests over lack of basic public services escalated to widespread violent demonstrations against the sectarian system and the dominance of corrupt elites. The uprising, which began in October, and ensuing security response left hundreds dead and tens of thousands injured [→ Iraq (opposition)]. The war between the Free Syrian Army and various moderate and Islamist armed groups in Syria de-escalated to a limited war [→ Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)]. In Sub-Saharan Africa, ten conflicts were fought on limited war level, one more compared to 2018. While five limited wars continued on the same level, three violent crises escalated to limited wars and two wars de-escalated to limited wars. In the DR Congo, the rebel group Allied Democratic

Forces (ADF) continued to target civilians, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO forces, and humanitarian actors in North Kivu province. The groups' insurgency resulted in a significant number of civilian casualties and the displacement of around 81,000 people [→ DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)]. In Mali, the limited war over sub-national predominance and resources such as arable land continued between the Dogon and Bambara communities and their Dozo self-defense groups, the Fulani community, and Islamist groups [→ Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)]. In the Cameroonian northwest and southwest regions, the limited war continued between various groups of the English-speaking minority and the French-speaking government, accounting for at least 600 conflict-related deaths and more than 200,000 internally displaced people as a result of ongoing fighting [→ Cameroon (English-speaking minority)]. In South Sudan, the inter-communal conflict over resources and cattle continued on the level of a limited war [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)], as did the conflict between the government and the main opposition party Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)]. Even though SPLM/A-IO and the government had largely stopped to fight each other directly due to the 2018 peace agreement, both groups conducted violence against civilians throughout 2019.

The security situation in Sudan was mainly driven by country-wide mass protests against President Omar al-Bashir which began in late 2018. Before al-Bashir was ousted from office by the military in April, at least 260 people had been killed in these protests [→ Sudan (opposition)]. The substate conflict between various cattle herding groups in Darfur and Red Sea state escalated to a limited war, mostly due to an inter-communal clash between Maaliya herders and Masalit tribesmen in El Geneina, West Darfur, on December 31, which left at least 50 people dead and displaced at least 48,000 [→ Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)]. In Mozambique, the violent crisis between the Islamist militant group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jammaa (ASWJ), active in the northern gas-rich province of Cabo Delgado, and the government escalated to a limited war. In September, the deployment of Russian mercenaries to support Mozambican security forces provoked intensified clashes between ASWJ and security forces. The war over sub-national predominance and resources, mainly arable land, in Nigeria's Middle Belt decreased to a limited war between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads on the other hand. In 2019, the conflict accounted for approx. 400 deaths, a threefold decrease compared to 2018 [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. In the Central African Republic, anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka militias signed a peace agreement with the government on February 2, stipulating the formation of an inclusive government and transparency reforms. Although violations of the agreement's provisions by most of the signatories were reported throughout the year, the conflict de-escalated to a limited war since overall violence decreased [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka)].

The number of limited wars in the Americas decreased from five to three. While one limited war escalated to a full-scale war and one limited war de-escalated, three limited wars continued on the same level in 2019.

In Mexico, the government continued to deploy the army

to fight against drug cartels, contributing to increased fragmentation of cartels and heavy fights over local predominance [→ Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)]. In Colombia, violence remained high, as armed organizations, drug cartels, splinter groups of the demobilized FARC-EP, and other guerrillas, continued turf wars over subnational predominance and resources [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. Despite their efforts, the Colombian government continued to struggle to control the areas previously dominated by the FARC-EP. In attempts to cut the routes for drug trafficking, armed organizations such as Los Caparrapos, the National Liberation Army, and the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC) intensified their violent actions in the departments of Antioquia, Cauca, Chocó, Nariño, Córdoba, Magdalena, and Santander, often expanding its operations to the urban areas of the departmental capitals [→ Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)].

In Asia and Oceania, five limited wars were observed this year, two fewer than in 2018. Four limited wars de-escalated to violent crises, while one conflict in Indonesia and one in Myanmar escalated to limited wars. Three limited wars remained on the same level.

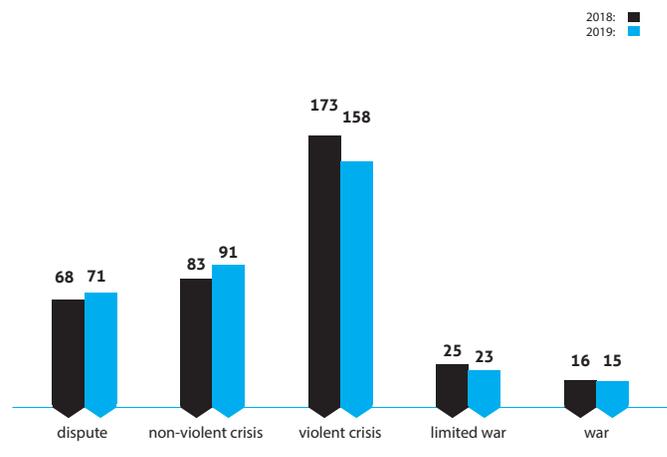
The limited war continued between India and Pakistan. On February 26, in response to a militant attack by Jaish-e-Mohammad in Pulwama, India, Indian forces conducted an airstrike in the vicinity of the town Balakot, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, the first since 1971. Throughout the year, the Indian and Pakistani military clashed frequently along the Line of Control. In the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, the conflict over secession and natural resources escalated to a limited war between indigenous Papuans and the government, leaving approx. 20,000 people internally displaced. Protests escalated in August and again in September, leading to violent clashes with security forces [→ Indonesia (Papua)]. In Myanmar's Rakhine State, the violent crisis between the Arakan Army (AA) and the government escalated to a limited war. The Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) clashed repeatedly with members of AA, resulting in dozens of casualties throughout the year and between 50,000 and 100,000 civilians internally displaced [→ Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)]. Tatmadaw used heavy weapons such as airstrikes with bombs and shots from helicopters, while AA kidnapped several politicians and groups of civilians, particularly in October and December. The limited war between the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), on the one hand, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippine government, on the other, continued. The conflict mainly affected the newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Soccsargen region, where 94 people were killed in clashes. The conflict additionally internally displaced more than 78,000 civilians, mainly because of the occasional use of airstrikes and artillery by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. The conflict between Islamist militant groups, including Abu Sayyaf and Maute, and the Philippine government also continued as a limited war, almost exclusively in BARMM. At least 120 people were killed throughout the year. The leader of Maute, Abu Dar, was killed in mid-March [→ Philippines (Islamist militant

groups)].

In Europe, the only limited war continued 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 hand [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Both sides repeatedly blamed each other for violating the 2015 Minsk II agreement. Several rounds of renewed ceasefire negotiations led only to short cessations of hostilities, though the parties withdrew from three towns. Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, around 13,000 people have been killed and almost 1.5 million people displaced. In 2019, fighting concentrated in four areas, with a higher number of fire exchanges in Donetsk Oblast.

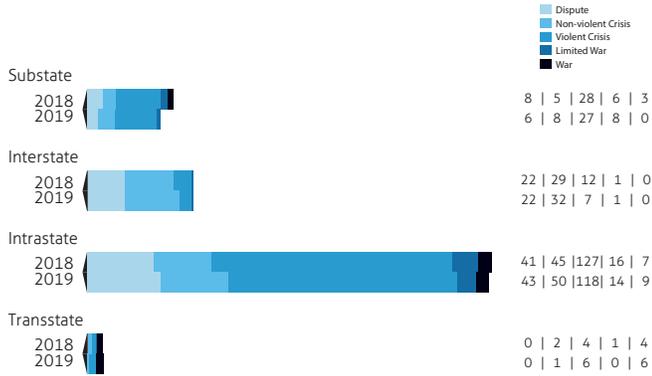
GLOBAL CONFLICT STATISTICS 2019

GLOBAL CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN 2019
COMPARED TO 2018

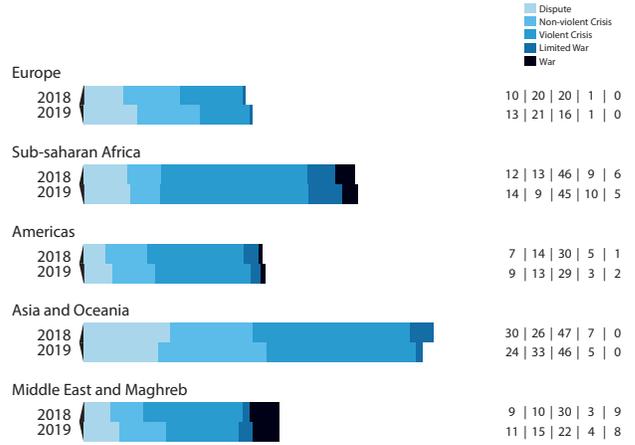


GLOBAL CONFLICT PANORAMA

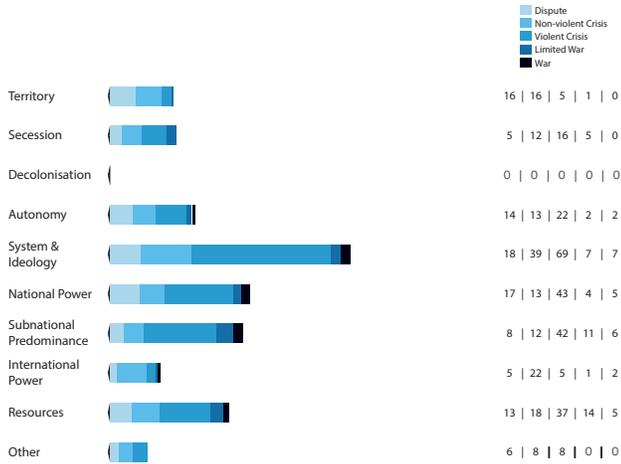
FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN 2018 AND 2019



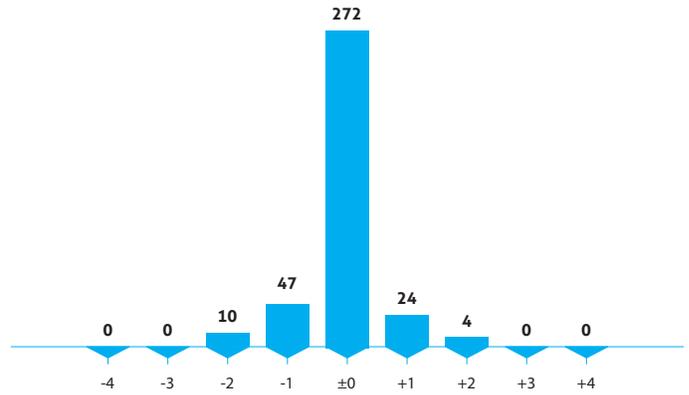
FREQUENCY OF REGIONAL CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN 2019 AND 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN 2019



GLOBAL CONFLICT INTENSITY CHANGES IN 2019



INTERSTATE CONFLICTS DYNAMICS IN 2019

In 2019, HIIK identified 64 incompatibilities between states that met the criteria of its basic concept of political conflict. They involved 118 direct conflict relationships among 93 actors, consisting of 89 sovereign states, the three state-like entities of Kosovo, Palestine, and the Republic of China (ROC), and the supranational actor of the EU. An additional ten states partook in interstate conflicts exclusively in their capacity as members of the EU, which prolonged its sanctions vis-à-vis Russia, imposed after the latter's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 [→ EU, USA et al. – Russia].

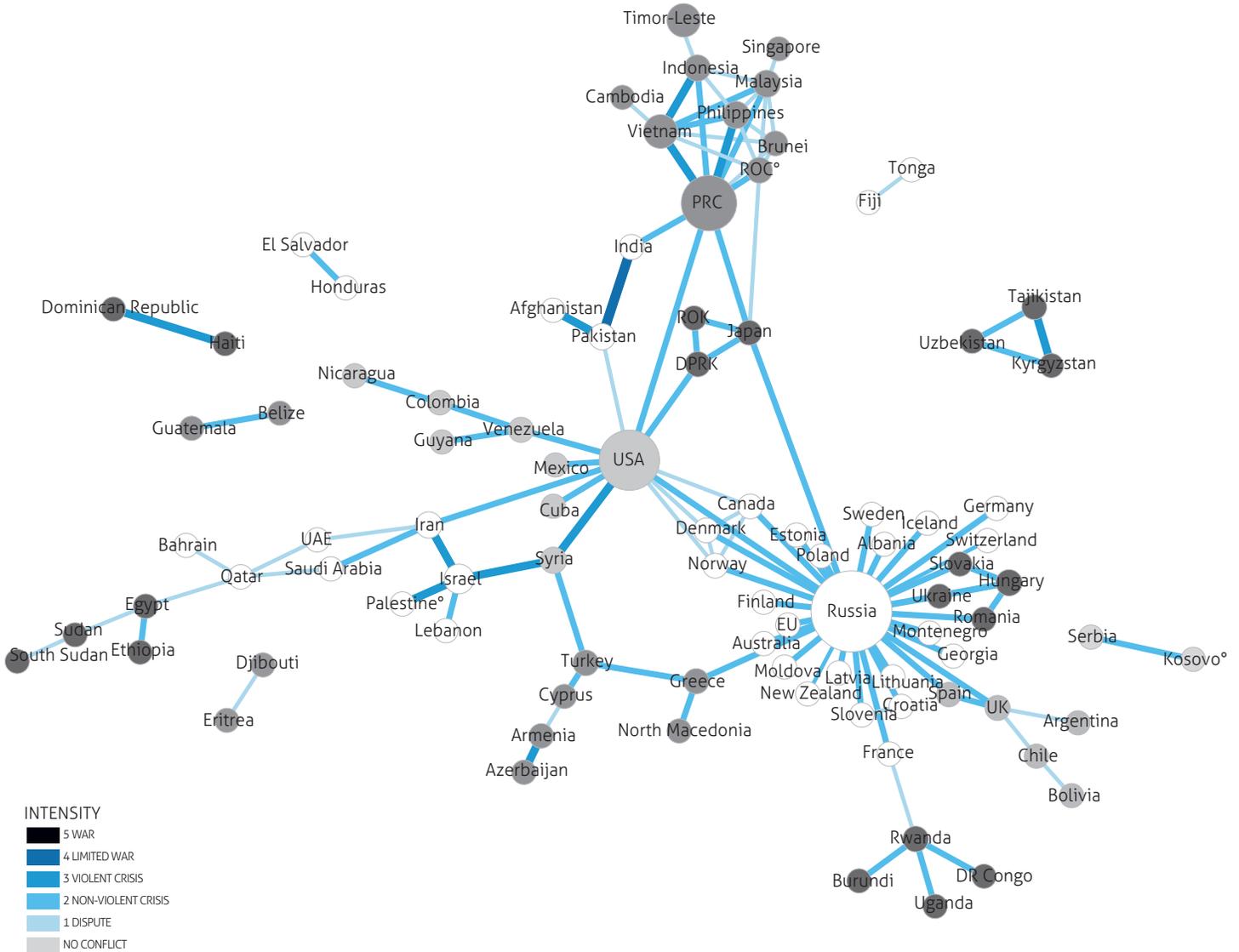
Mapped as a network with edges representing dyadic conflict relationships and nodes representing conflict actors, 78 nodes were connected in a single component, involving states from all regions. Next to a node's number of relationships (degree), its centrality in the overall network and its centrality between different clusters of the network is indicative of its importance. As in 2018, the states with the highest numbers of conflictive relationships and highest centrality continued to be Russia (30), the United States (12), and the People's Republic of China (9). This remained also true when ranked by weighted degree, i.e. by the number of relationships as weighted by conflict intensity. In general, conflict relationships between bigger and more centrally located nodes can be expected to have greater repercussions on the rest of the network. By contrast, the conflict relationships between the 15 nodes detached from the main component, forming seven independent components (six dyads and one triplet), are suggested to have a peripheral role in the global interstate conflict landscape. The network does not include the various indirect conflict relationships constituted by actors' supportive or intervening roles in conflicts, such as Russia in the conflict between the US and Syria. However, in many cases, these relationships are implicitly reflected in the direct conflict relationships. They can be read out of the triplet structure of the graphs, with neighbors of neighbors (or "enemies of enemies") are likely to be friends/ allies (e.g. the US and Japan, which are both neighbors of Russia). This principle is subverted if nodes form full triangles, indicating unbalanced relationships. In this context, the relative intensity of the relationships is indicative of the direction in which the triangle was balanced. For example, in the triangular relationships involving the People's Republic of China (PRC) and its Southeast Asian neighbors, the conflict relationships vis-à-vis the PRC were usually more intensive than the conflict relationships among the Southeast Asian nations themselves. In terms of density, the network of interstate conflict relations has an average clustering coefficient of 0.435 and displays 41 closed triplets. The density of a network is defined by the proportion of actual ties between the nodes relative to the number of possible ties. In this case, a higher density is indicative of a higher number of unbalanced conflict relationships and a less clear-cut alliance structure. Compared to 2018, the density of the global interstate conflict landscape markedly decreased, mainly due to the resolution of the five-party conflict over the Caspian. Among the ten persisting multi-party interstate conflicts, four saw actors dividing into more than two coalitions. Most prominent among them were the multi-party conflicts over international power, territory, and resources in the Arctic, marked by increased tensions

between Russia and Norway [→ Norway et al. – Russia (Arctic)], and in the South China Sea, escalating with violent encounters between maritime security forces and fishermen of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. Throughout the year, the US conducted eleven freedom of navigation operations in the area [→ China – USA]. Besides the entrenched conflicts, signs of an emerging multi-party conflict were observed in the Eastern Mediterranean, where tensions between various adjacent states coalesced over maritime boundary and gas issues, most importantly between Turkey and its neighbors Cyprus and Greece [→ Cyprus – Turkey; Greece – Turkey].

By far the largest conflict in terms of the number of actors remained the international power conflict between the EU/US-led coalition and Russia, involving 40 states. After tensions had further escalated in the aftermath of the November 2018 Kerch Strait incident, the conflict saw some signs of détente with Russia and Ukraine agreeing on prisoner exchanges and a new bilateral five-year gas transit deal in December, mediated by Germany and France. On the other hand, new diplomatic crises occurred over Russian passport grants to Ukrainians and its alleged commissioning of an assassination in Berlin. Militarily, the conflict was overshadowed by unresolved strategic distrust between Russia and the US, manifesting in the suspension of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in February.

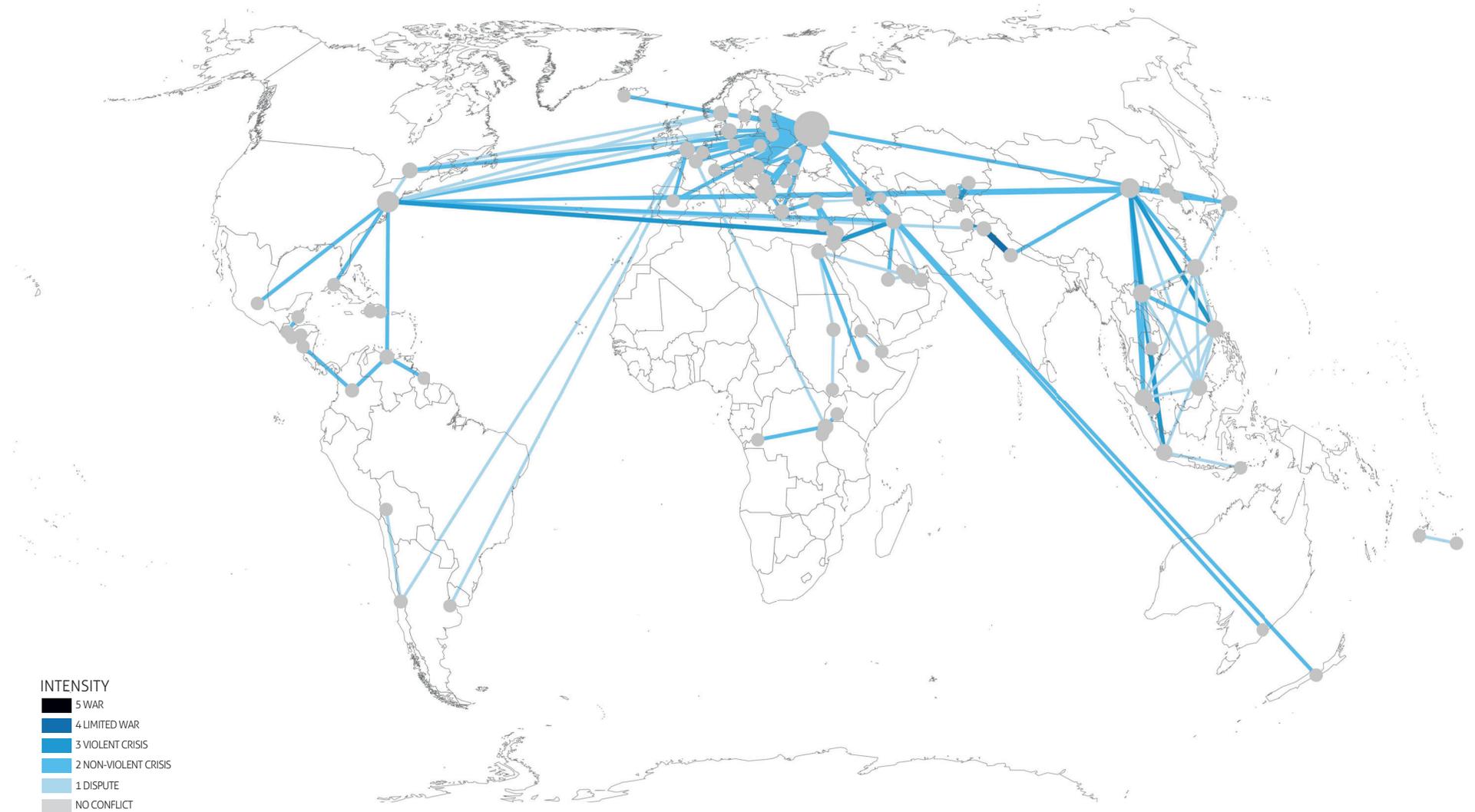
The great majority of interstate conflicts continued to be conducted non-violently. 37 of the bilateral conflict relationships remained on the level of a dispute, while 69 reached the level of a non-violent crisis. Twelve conflict relationships saw the use of violence, compared to 13 in 2018. As in previous years, the conflict between India and Pakistan again passed the threshold of a limited war, witnessing mass displacement, heavy use of heavy weapons, and at least 110 fatalities [→ India – Pakistan]. Half of the relationships entailing violence were observed in the Middle East, among them the relationships between Israel and its neighbors Iran and Syria [→ Iran – Israel; Syria – Israel]. While involving no direct use of violence, the conflict between Iran and the US remained the regional hotspot, with tensions over alleged Iranian attacks on international oil tankers and a Saudi oil facility accompanying the further unraveling of the 2015 nuclear agreement [→ Iran – USA]. In Central Asia and the Caribbean, interstate relationships saw violence occur in context of border-crossings by non-state actors [→ Afghanistan – Pakistan; Dominican Republic – Haiti; Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – Uzbekistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)]. In total, transboundary flows of people were a major issue in ten conflict relationships in 2019, most prominently among them the two non-violent crises between Venezuela and its neighbors [→ Colombia – Venezuela (border security); Guyana – Venezuela]. A shared characteristic of many interstate conflict dyads reaching violent or non-violent crisis level was their linkage to a major intrastate conflict, in which the states took opposing sides. Also the limited war between India and Pakistan continued to be linked to the dynamics of intrastate conflicts [→ India (Kashmir); India (Islamist militant groups)]. On average, the intensity of the 39 interstate dyads displaying such a linkage was by a third higher than the intensity of the dyads without intrastate conflict linkage.

INTERSTATE CONFLICT CONSTELLATIONS 2019



This network maps all conflictive bilateral relationships monitored in 2019. It comprises 93 nodes (representing state and state-like conflict actors) and 118 undirected edges (representing conflict relationships). Node size is determined by weighted degree, i.e. the number and intensity of the conflict relationships the actor was involved in. Edges are sized and colored by conflict intensity. The shading of the nodes indicates their group/ 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 a degree symbol (°). The EU is treated as an independent actor. EU member states who take part in conflicts to which the EU is not a party, or who take conflict positions that go significantly beyond the position of the EU, are depicted as independent nodes. Visualizations and statistics were created with Gephi.

INTERSTATE CONFLICTS 2019 (MAP PROJECTION)



This graphic shows the network of conflictive interstate relationships in 2019 on a world map in the Winkel tripel projection, with state actors being located at the coordinates of national capitals. Node size is determined by weighted degree, edges size and color is determined by conflict intensity. The graphic was created with Gephi, using the GeoLayout and Map of Countries plugins.

The generated network is ignorant of the number and types of conflict issues involved in the conflict relationships. The number of issues varied substantially among the 118 conflict relationships: 37 revolved around a single issue, 52 concerned two issues, 18 concerned three issues, and eleven involved even four issues. Interdependence between issues varies substantially (e.g. issues such as territory and resources are usually tightly linked together) and their number shows no correlation with the intensity level. By type of issue, 69 conflict dyads concerned international power interests, 65 involved claims over territory, and 23 concerned population issues. Apart from the ten dyads involving migration and refugee issues, twelve dyads saw conflict over cross-border national representation of ethno-linguistic minorities. Eleven of them were located in Europe, figuring most prominently in dyads involving Hungary or Russia, the two states voicing the strongest claims to ethno-linguistic affiliates in their neighbor countries [→ Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities); Russia – Ukraine; Russia – Estonia]. Ethno-linguistic linkages also underlay the violent interstate crisis over the Nagorno Karabakh issue [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan] and the non-violent crisis between Serbia and Kosovo, where major tensions erupted after Kosovar police had conducted a raid in the Serbian minority-held part of the divided city of Mitrovica [→ Kosovo^o – Serbia].

Among the major interstate issues were also system/ideology claims, figuring in 36 dyads. Except the religious conflict between Iran and Saudi-Arabia [→ Iran – Saudi-Arabia], all interstate dyads with system conflicts were related to democratization and/or to the maintenance of the liberal international order. Based on the Polity IV index, all of them constituted dyads between democracies and non-democracies. Comparing the 23 non-democratic dyads, the 31 democratic dyads, and the 64 mixed dyads in the network, all three dyad categories had largely the same intensity on average, with those of mixed dyads being slightly higher.

38 dyads involved conflicts over resources, most frequently

among them oil and/or gas (24), fish (16), and water (7). In six dyads, symbolic issues such as history conceptions and names were a central issue. Two of them witnessed major steps towards resolution in 2019, although they were accompanied by domestic contestation [→ Greece – North Macedonia (official name of North Macedonia); Rwanda – France].

While geographic variables were not considered in the generation of the network, its structure displays the predominantly regional character of most conflictive relationships. Among the few states engaging in cross-continental conflictive relationships, the United States figured most prominently, followed by Russia, the United Kingdom (UK), and France. More than two thirds of the conflict dyads occurred between countries that shared a land border (52) and/or a sea border (44). Only 32 dyads involved countries that were non-contiguous in neither sense, most of them being international power and/or system/ideology conflicts. Among the 88 dyads between countries sharing a land or sea border, 65 involved territorial conflicts. Maritime territorial conflicts (39) were on average slightly more intense than continental ones (26).

To locate the different dyads within their broader conflict systems, the Louvain modularity algorithm was used to group the nodes in the main component into nine communities, calculated on the basis of weighted degrees. Next to three greatest communities clustering around the major hubs of Russia, the US, and China, this identifies conflict subsystems in the Middle East, on the Korean Peninsula, the Eastern Mediterranean and Caucasus, and in South Asia, highlighting the roles of Iran, Japan, and Turkey. In the peripheries, conflict systems are identified in Eastern Europe, in the Horn of Africa, in the Great Lakes region, and in South America, the latter two linked to main component through the transcontinental conflicts with France and the United Kingdom [→ Argentina – United Kingdom (Falkland Islands / Islas Malvinas); Chile – United Kingdom (Antarctica)].

JASON FRANZ

AUTHORITATIVE DECISIONS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

In 2019, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rendered one judgment and one advisory opinion. 17 cases remain pending before the Court. On July 17, the ICJ issued its judgment in the Jadhav case, a case between India and Pakistan. In 2017, India had claimed that its rights under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) were violated by Pakistan through the arrest and death punishment against the Indian national Kulbushan Sudhir Jadhav. Pakistan arrested Jadhav in 2016 on accusations of espionage and terrorism. Subsequently, India sought consular access to Jadhav in terms of Article 36 VCCR, which was however denied by Pakistani authorities. Therefore, India invoked the jurisdiction of the ICJ under the Optional Protocol to the VCCR. In its judgment, the Court confirmed that Pakistan had breached India's rights under the VCCR by denying consular access. Furthermore, Pakistan had violated the rights of Jadhav under Article 36 VCCR by not informing him of his personal rights to consular assistance. With regards to remedies, the Court found that Pakistan must enable access for Indian consular officers to assist Jadhav and considers the appropriate remedy to be an effective review of the case against Jadhav before Pakistani courts with Jadhav now having access to consular assistance. This falls short of India's request to the ICJ to annul the decision of the Pakistani Supreme Court. The ICJ believes that compliance with the VCCR can be reached through different methods, the choice of which lies within the state ordered to comply with the judgment.

The ICJ thus confirmed its jurisprudence set up in the *LaGrand* case (Germany v. USA) and *Avena* case (Mexico v. USA) concerning Article 36 VCCR in affirming that Pakistan violated both the rights of India and Jadhav personally.

The Chagos Advisory Opinion touches upon a long standing juridical dispute between the UK and Mauritius. The UK is subject to the jurisdiction of the ICJ, but has excluded any dispute relating to members or former members of the Commonwealth of Nations from its declaration in terms of Article 36 Paragraph 2 of the ICJ Statute. In particular, the extension of this exclusion to former members of the Commonwealth of Nations was issued in reaction to the withdrawal of Mauritius from the Commonwealth. Mauritius sought to find an adjudication over the pertinence of the Chagos archipelago for years. However, multiple international fora, including the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) denied its jurisdiction. Mauritius hence sought the UN General Assembly to request an Advisory Opinion from the ICJ on the question whether the decolonization process of Mauritius had ended.

The Chagos archipelago formed part of the British Colonial Territories in the Indian Ocean. In the wake of the decolonization movement after World War II, Mauritius strove for independence. The UK however posed the condition that the Chagos archipelago remain in its possession as the US intended the construction of a military base at this site. After obtaining the permission to separate Chagos from Mauritius from the local authorities, the UK cleared the archipelago of all its inhabitants and allowed the US to construct the military base Diego Garcia, which remains functioning today. Due to the separation of Chagos the question arose whether the decol-

onization process regarding Mauritius had ended.

The proceedings began after the UN General Assembly request an Advisory Opinion on this matter from the ICJ. When the ICJ receives a request for an Advisory Opinion it can exercise its discretion and not issue an Advisory Opinion, if the Advisory Opinion would circumvent the principle of consent to international jurisdiction by judging upon an essentially bilateral dispute. The ICJ rejected the UK's claim on this matter, asserting that the questions of decolonization were essentially international questions that fall within the work of the UN General Assembly. Thus, the concerned questions do not relate to a purely bilateral conflict between the UK and Mauritius.

On the merits, the Court held that the decolonization process was not complete. The UK violated the right to self-determination of Mauritius by separating the Chagos archipelago and clearing its inhabitants. Therefore, the UK is obliged to make reparation for this violation of international law by enabling the Chagos archipelago to become a part of Mauritius.

The ICJ accepted its jurisdiction in the case *Ukraine v. Russian Federation* for allegations of violations of the Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (CSFT) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Ukraine claims that the right to freedom from discrimination of the Ukrainian population of Crimea is violated through the prohibition of Ukrainian education by the illegal Russian occupants. Moreover, the rights of the Crimean Tatars to forms of self-governance through Mejlis are alleged to be violated. The allegations under the CSFT concern the Russian support to insurgents in Eastern Ukraine.

Belize and Guatemala submitted their dispute concerning land territories, insular territories and maritime territories to the Court via Special Agreement on 7 June 2019. Both states had consulted their respective populations prior to submitting the Special Agreement through referenda. In both countries the public referenda approved the submission of the conflict to the ICJ.

Furthermore, the Gambia instituted proceedings against Myanmar under the Genocide Convention alleging crimes of Genocide by state organs of Myanmar against the Rohingya population and requesting provisional measures.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

The conflict in Myanmar regarding the alleged crimes against humanity and genocide against the Muslim minority Rohingya in Rakhine State was moreover submitted to the International Criminal Court (ICC) [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. The Gambia referred the situation in Myanmar to the Prosecutor of the ICC. The Prosecutor accordingly sought the authorization of Pre-Trial Chamber III to commence an investigation into the situation, which was granted on November 14. The Prosecutor will hence investigate whether crimes against humanity have been committed since October 2016 on the territory of Bangladesh or Myanmar against the Rohingya minority. Alongside Myanmar, incidents and situations from the Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Kenya, Libya, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Georgia, and Burundi are currently under investigation. Preliminary examinations are being conducted concerning

situations in Venezuela, Colombia, Guinea, Iraq/UK, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, and Ukraine.

In April, Pre-Trial Chamber II rejected the request of the Prosecutor to open an investigation into alleged crimes against humanity and war crimes in Afghanistan since 2003. The Chamber noted that all relevant requirements both with regard to jurisdiction and admissibility are met, but that the investigation is likely to have only limited success due to the lacking cooperation of the regional authorities and other parties involved, especially Afghanistan and the US. It is therefore not in the "interest of justice" to pursue an investigation sought by the victims of the alleged crimes committed. The Prosecutor appealed this decision and the Appeals Chamber will now decide upon the opening of an investigation.

In May 2019, the Appeals Chamber confirmed a judgment against Jordan for not arresting Omar Al-Bashir in 2017 whilst he visited the country. Jordan had argued that it could not cooperate with the Court and deliver Al-Bashir into its custody, as "general rules of international law" stood against this. The Appeals Chamber dismissed this argument stating that international law does not grant immunity to heads of states before international criminal courts.

In July, Bosco Ntagana was found guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ituri district, DR Congo. The Trial Chamber VI affirmed that the Union of Congolese Patriots and its military wing had engaged in a strategic campaign against the civilian population in Ituri district between 2002 and 2003, including murder, rape, intentional attacks against civilians, pillaging and forced conscription of minors. In September, the Appeals Chamber decided that the Prosecutor must reconsider whether she will open an investigation into the referral of the Comoros to the ICC from 2013 re-

garding an Israeli attack on a Humanitarian Aid Flotilla bound for the Gaza strip in May 2010 [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. The Prosecutor had originally denied to open an investigation, but was compelled to reconsider this decision by Pre-Trial Chamber I. This request was reaffirmed by the Appeal Chamber in its September judgment. The Prosecutor must therefore again reconsider whether there is a possibility that the actions taken by the Israeli Defense Force on 05/31/2010 against a flotilla of ships arriving from Turkey constitute crimes in terms of Article 5 of the Rome Statute.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION

In April, Ukraine instituted a proceeding before an arbitral tribunal against Russia under the auspices of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The Arbitral Tribunal under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is convened to decide upon the dispute between the two states concerning the detention of Ukrainian vessels and servicemen in 2018 near the Strait of Kerch [→ Russia – Ukraine]. In order to achieve the release of the detained ships and servicemen, Ukraine likewise filed an application before ITLOS. On May 25, ITLOS ordered that the three ships and 24 servicemen detained should be immediately released. Russia at first did not respond to the order by ITLOS challenging its jurisdiction. However, the servicemen were released in September after a bilateral agreement between Ukraine and Russia was reached on the exchange of prisoners. The proceedings before the Arbitral Tribunal continue and will decide on the legality of the detention of the naval ships through Russian authorities.

FLORIAN KRIENER

Spotlights

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CYBERATTACKS IN 2019

The increasing use of cyberattacks in connection with already violent or still non-violent political offline conflicts was demonstrated several times in 2019. In both situations, cyber tools are increasingly seen as a means either to stop the escalation of an analog, still non-violent offline conflict or to try to de-escalate an already violent offline conflict. The sometimes used term 'cyber war' does not meet the usually applied criteria for the differentiation of 'war' and 'peace': Not a single known cyberattack up to date directly caused the death or injury of human beings. Therefore, this kind of 'restraint' even by highly sophisticated state actors to fully exploit all their technological potential, serves as the main indicator for the deescalating focus of observed cyberattacks so far. The following Spotlight article attempts to shed light on the most outstanding political cyber conflict behavior in 2019. Cyberattacks are evaluated as 'political' if a) the attacker or the victim are part of the political system in their respective country, b) if the attacker can be assumed to have a political motivation or if he openly displays it or c) if the attack has been politicized by a political actor on the federal state level. As always in the so-called 'fifth domain', a current overview of cyberattacks can only be seen as provisional, since cyberattacks often become known only after a long delay. A cyberattack is defined as an action that is influencing the so called 'CIA-triad' of IT-security of the targeted system/network in a negative way (C stands for Confidentiality; I for integrity and A for availability), thus Fake News or disinformation campaigns without hacking are excluded here. One disruptive example for the undermining of the availability of a targeted network would be the so called 'distributed denial of service attacks' (DDoS). By using a botnet of hijacked computers in order to flood the targeted system/network with an unusual high amount of requests, the latter one is not able to perform its tasks anymore, which means in this case, that for example a webpage is no more available for the time period of the attack.

Two major observations regarding the already known cyberattacks in 2019 are emerging: First, the widely discussed strategic change in the US cyber doctrine away from the rather cautious and passive approach during the Obama administration towards the so-called 'defending forward' strategy under Donald Trump in 2019 has been reflected several times. Second, due to the significantly increased offline conflict interaction at the domestic level in many states, e.g. Hong Kong, autocratic states like China have continued and expanded their digital surveillance efforts to maintain control over domestic opposition movements, but also over ethnic minorities like the Uighurs in that specific case.

Apart from these temporal particularities, several other cyber conflict patterns endured also in 2019 and thus tied in with some developments from the years before: 1. The growing body of reported cyber espionage campaigns against think tanks as well as universities worldwide has been further enriched in 2019. 2. Moreover, strategic cyber espionage against political, defense-related as well as commercial entities allegedly on behalf of nation states by so called 'APT-groups' (Advanced Persistent Threat) once again shaped the offensive cyber activities. APTs are especially sophisticated and skilled hacker groups, which are often (but not

always) connected to certain regimes as their sponsors or masterminds. 3. More and more autocratic states seem to transform their cyber proxies from unsophisticated patriotic hackers to highly-skilled and increasingly professional state-sponsored cyber warriors. As in the traditional research landscape about proxies in conventional (violent) conflicts, cyber proxies are instructed, supported or at least sanctioned by a certain state. However, in contrast to traditional proxy-wars, cyber proxies are almost exclusively treated or conceptualized as non-state-actors. Additionally, they do not have to be located at the state territory of the regime, that is the target of the instructing/supporting state in order to fulfil their proxy-function. 4. Elections worldwide still face growing threats by digital interference techniques and thus raise threat perceptions not only in the wake of the US presidential elections in 2020. The two major observations as well as the patterns established here provide for the structure of the following essay.

The Change in US cyber policy

In September 2018, the Trump administration announced a fundamental shift in the US cyber policy: The new 'National Cyber Strategy' proclaimed that in the future, cyber space will not be treated as a genuinely different conflict domain anymore. Instead, cyber options should be integrated into every other element of national power. More specifically, this means the authorization of offensive cyber actions in order to deter or punish adversaries more effectively. The embedded presidential directive 'NSPM 13' allows the military cyber unit of the US, the so-called 'Cyber Command' to conduct cyber operations that fall under the legal threshold of UN Charter Article 2(4), which would constitute a 'use of force' even in cyberspace. By that it is referred to cyberattacks that cause physical damage, resembling the effects of military offline conflict measures. Apart from that, there are no further clarifications, what that 'red line' would mean more specifically in different scenarios, besides the forbidden intention of causing human deaths or significant economic damage.

For Barack Obama, the incomparably high vulnerability of US targets, due to its enormous interconnectedness, represented the most important obstacle for the US to engage in regular offensive cyber operations against its rivals. The 'defending forward'-maxim under Donald Trump now focuses on the expected value that the comprehensive offensive potential of US cyber warfare could bring with it. With the intention to signal potential attackers that the costs they would face in case of a cyber counterattack by the US would always exceed the associated gains from the initial action, this approach stands in contrast to many theoretical analyses from the last years regarding digital deterrence and especially the possibility of imposing costs in cyberspace.

Nevertheless, the US has already shown its willingness to act according to this doctrine: Even if it had already taken place in November 2018, the release of an US Cyber operation against the infamous Russian troll factory, the 'Internet Research Agency' (IRA) in St. Petersburg, can be seen as a direct response to Russian misinformation campaigning that continued after the US presidential election in 2016. Besides, it was probably intended to signal Russia that the US would not accept a similar election meddling during the midterm election

in November 2018. There is not much known about the technical or operational details of the campaign: according to media reporting, it successfully cut off the IRA's internet access on election day. Apart from the debatable long-term effect of such attacks, the incident raised some important issues: First of all, officially, the IRA is to be regarded as a civilian, non-state entity. A disruptive attack from the US government against such a target bears the potential to raise critical questions under international law, which strongly protects non-state actors from state-actions. Second, it is remarkable that Russia confirmed the attacks in a timely manner, since states are interested to keep such activity against their own networks secret, if possible. However, if one takes into account that this confirmation was connected with Russia's demand to create its own, sovereign internet, the move becomes a strategic note. Thus, the US attack might have played the Russian net regulators unintentionally into hands, at costs of liberal democratic values. The latter are increasingly undermined in Russia, at latest since the 'sovereign internet' law passed in October 2019.

Another example for the new US cyber-aggressiveness reportedly occurred in June 2019: After heightened tensions with the government in Teheran in which a US intelligence drone was destroyed by Iran, Trump pulled back from a conventional retaliatory strike and instead opted for a cyberattack as a response. Allegedly, the attack was aimed at a critical database, which is used by Iran's Revolutionary Guards to plot attacks against oil tankers in the region. As a result, this attack disrupted Tehran's ability to continue its asymmetric warfare strategy against shipping traffic in the Persian Gulf. Again, even if the long-term success is to be questioned, the attack bears the potential to signal not only the ability but also the new established political will to combat its rivals even in cyberspace. On the other hand, internal discussions within the US security branch reflect another particularity, when it comes to cyber space: Almost every time one state uses one of its complex attack vectors or exploits, the same tool renders useless for future attacks. In contrast to most conventional attack types, sophisticated cyber operations have to be tailor-made in order to infiltrate highly secured networks and fulfill their disruptive goals. If done so, it has to be assessed if the gains that have been created indeed outweigh the loss of a potential future attack.

The importance of cyber space for authoritarian regimes

The second outstanding cyberattack pattern refers to the digital surveillance and repression of domestic minorities or opposition movements by autocratic regimes: At the latest since the release of the so-called 'China cables' in November 2019, the destiny of the Muslim part of the Chinese population is under growing international observation. For many years, the Uighurs have been the target of comprehensive cyber espionage efforts by Beijing. In 2019, this conduct still expanded: IT companies registered a significant increase of the compromised websites of Uighur and East Turkestan actors. The aim was to track and spy on Uighurs around the globe by instrumentalizing these compromised websites. Since this move has been attributed to two China-related APT groups, one can state that especially autocratic states continue to mask their identities by using non-state hacker groups as

their proxies in cyberspace, at home, and abroad. However, the Chinese surveillance efforts do also include to gather data and information from non-involved third-party entities: In September 2019, reports have been published about cyberattacks against Indian and other Asian telecommunication companies in order to spy on their Uighur customers worldwide. The affected countries as India, Kazakhstan or Thailand are known to be popular transit routes for the ethnic group to travel between the territory they mostly inhabit in China, Xinjiang, and Turkey, in order to escape from state repression. The regime in Beijing claims that those travelers are fighting for terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq.

Another striking entanglement between offline and online suppression of protesting parts of the population is the case of Hong Kong in 2019: Again, the Chinese regime sought to undermine the activists' efforts by targeting them with digital means. One example is the espionage campaign against Amnesty International Hong Kong revealed in April this year. By targeting the NGO's networks, government-affiliated hackers could have achieved to steal information about domestic and foreign supporters of the protests in Hong Kong. This could lead to further targeted repression of those identified. Additionally, the increased surveillance of individuals by tracking their mobile phones has also been applied against Hong Kong activists: The messenger 'Telegram', a secure messaging app often used during protests in the last years, was digitally bombarded by a network of computers in China, allegedly orchestrated by Hong Kong authorities. It resulted in the disruption of service and thus undermined the protesters' ability to communicate and coordinate action. The app's founder, Pavel Durov, said the attack coincided with the Hong Kong protests, a phenomenon that Telegram had seen before. These examples demonstrate the ability and political will of autocratic regimes like China, but also Russia and Iran to disrupt communication processes during times of crisis or even to shut down the national internet almost entirely in order to stop the protests from spreading.

As already mentioned, apart from these larger developments, some more subtle or less salient trends in cyber conflict landscape endured or even extended their scope in 2019: In September, an IT-security company reported that the APT group 'Cobalt Dickens', allegedly sponsored by Iran, targeted more than 60 universities in multiple countries by conducting phishing attacks. Such activities reflect the great incentives for autocratic states like China, North Korea or Iran to conduct cyber espionage in order to obtain intellectual property and therefore circumvent economic sanctions against them. Thus, even civil universities increasingly become the focus of nation-state hackers. The same holds true for NGOs, as for instance in the case of an allegedly Russian-backed espionage campaign by the infamous group 'Fancy Bear' against US and European think tanks in order to steal credentials and related sensitive information.

Apart from universities and NGOs, also other typical targets of cyber espionage have constantly been under attack in 2019. Among them are political, defense-related as well as commercial actors. One example is the targeting of European and North American aerospace companies, publicly acknowledged in October, attributed to a China-affiliated hacking group. Worth mentioning here is the public reporting about Chinese-backed hackers that used malware stolen from the

US National Security Agency (NSA) against private companies in Europe and Asia. Reflecting the still ongoing debate about the needed disclosure of zero-day vulnerabilities, it also shows the various methods that are at the hackers' disposal in order to disguise their own identities, namely by using foreign-developed malware, which is not typically associated with the group itself.

In October 2019, the threat intelligence center of the Chinese IT-security company 'Qihoo 360' published an extensive article about an indicated transformation of the so-called 'Syrian Electronic Army' (SEA) since their earlier activity phases from 2011 to 2014, which was mostly characterized by DDoS- and defacement-attacks. Defacement-attacks modify the content of a website without authorization, most often, the attackers replace text-segments with their own political statements. The report shows how the SEA especially started to conduct surveillance cyber espionage operations against the so-called Islamic State and its communication platforms since 2015, as well as against Syrian opposition forces later on (→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)). This increasingly sophisticated approach to gather battlefield-relevant information did not only correlate in many times with conventional military strikes of the Assad regime, but also reflects some similarities when comparing it to Iran's support for hacking groups or even to the Chinese hacking community and its growing professionalization at the beginning of this century.

Finally, the case of the alleged manipulation and modification of Indonesia's voter database by Chinese and/or Russian hackers – according to the allegations by the Indonesian government – demonstrates that election meddling is not only restricted to liberal Western democracies, but represents a growing threat to nearly every regime, that uses digital applications during elections.

Nevertheless, it will be especially of importance in 2020, when the next US presidential election takes place and the course of the events will show if Russia is trying to repeat its 'success' from 2016. Equally, it will be an important test for safety of digital voting infrastructure under President Donald Trump and the integrity of general public decision making progress, expressed via social media.

KERSTIN ZETTL

THE ROLLERCOASTER OF SANCTIONS – THE MUDDY WAY TOWARDS JUSTICE IN RAKHINE

On January 21 2020, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) published a preliminary ruling in which it ordered the government of Myanmar to take protective measures for Rohingya, a Muslim minority group facing severe structural discrimination and violence since 2016, due to an imminent danger of genocide. This is the preliminary culmination of the dispute between the international community and the government of Myanmar over the infringements of human rights of the Rohingya. It was brought about by the formal accusations by The Gambia, acting on behalf of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, against the government of Myanmar led by Aung San Suu Kyi, of intentionally violating the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Due to the symbolic importance of this decision for international

criminal law, the handling of crimes such as those occurred in Rakhine, Myanmar, in August 2017 which led to the displacement of over 730,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh, will be closely watched.

The ICJ decision is a milestone in the legal debate on the causes and consequences of the violent mass exodus from Rakhine. In addition to the pending main proceedings at the ICJ, the International Criminal Court (ICC) is also investigating Myanmar in an unprecedented case of extending its jurisdiction to a non-signatory state of the Rome Statute. The government of Myanmar is also under indictment by a court in Argentina: Buenos Aires has a long history of trials under universal jurisdiction, dating back to the Franco dictatorship in Spain and Apartheid in South Africa.

A few days before the ICJ decision, the government of Myanmar issued a statement denying any intent to commit crimes against the Rohingya civilian population. The governmental discourse from Naypyidaw, the capital city of Myanmar, treats the clashes and refugee movements of 2017 as consequences of the terrorist attack by Islamist Rohingya militias on government bases and negates any intent to orchestrate the expulsion of the Muslim minority.

A few days ago, a special commission of inquiry set up by the NLD government and made up of hand-picked foreign ex-diplomats, also presented a different judgement. They found that isolated cases of violence occurred, but that these had to be attributed to specific soldiers and low-ranking field commanders, not the government in general. At the end of December, Aung San Suu Kyi travelled to The Hague, where the ICJ is situated, in a dramatic attempt to clear up "the misunderstandings about the incidents in Rakhine". Perhaps this was also an attempt by Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to win back the lost favour of the global public towards her own person.

But it was too late for this. In just five years, the favour of the international community has turned 180 degrees.

The landslide victory of the National League of Democracy in 2015, in the first free parliamentary elections since the coup of 1962, was celebrated as the apogee of opening up the junta. The daughter of the national übervater Aung San - no longer under house arrest, but in power; the former political prisoners - no longer in the notorious Insein Prison, but in public office; the Internet and the media accessible to everyone, tourism on the upswing, donor countries and international development agents beating the path to the door. At the time when the Arab spring seemed extinguished, the Ukrainian transformation appeared to get stuck in corruption and armed conflict, and the US-Cuban rapprochement rather unfruitful, the beacon of Myanmar's turn towards democracy and civil governance shone all the more brightly.

The US administration rewarded the opening of the country by lifting restrictions in the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) system of trade preferences. 2016 became a turning point in the recent history of relations between the West and Myanmar. Since 1989 – and the suppression of the student protests of 1988 - the sanctions imposed by the United States alone have added up to 17 different legal acts, flanked by similar measures by the EU as well as Canada, Switzerland, etc. The list of sanctions against Myanmar ranged from comprehensive arms embargoes and the cancellation of trade preferences to investment bans and the

termination of development aid, to entry bans and trade restrictions on specific goods, such as jade or teakwood. Nearly all of them were lifted swiftly.

The brief interlude of the almost complete lifting of punitive policies (the arms embargo remained in place throughout) by the West lasted only a few years - as early as 2018, the US and the EU put individual members of the military on black lists as a result of the violence in Rakhine. With the disputes at the already mentioned international courts, the trend is now pointing towards tougher sanctions. Even the otherwise dialogue-oriented diplomats of the European External Action Service in Naypyidaw, the capital of Myanmar, are talking about the prospect of withdrawing the 'everything-but-arms' trade preferences - DG Trade of the European Commission has already launched preparatory procedures.

The question of the effectiveness of sanctions is a field of research in its own right and with a lot of prominent cases - North Korea, Russia, Iran. In the case of Myanmar, however, the question is very blunt - Can the dynamics of sanctions cascades actually lead not only to a policy change but also enable justice in the sense of the international legal order and our values?

The increasing pressure on Myanmar is part of a confrontation between the victims - the Rohingya, the accusers - civil society organizations of the Rohingya, an international coalition of critical media (e.g. Reuters, whose investigative journalists spent more than 500 days in prison for their research on crimes in Rakhine) and many Western governments, as well as the accused - the Myanmar civilian government and the military.

The threat to exclude Myanmar from the GSP preferences by the European Union exemplifies why 'untargeted' sanctions are a double-edged sword. Myanmar is a least developed country and therefore has access to the 'everything-but-arms' trade regime of the EU, which allows duty-free import of all goods except armaments from Myanmar to Europe. This is particularly relevant for the rapidly growing garment sector, with Myanmar factories supplying brands such as H&M, Lidl, C&A, Adidas and others. But it is also relevant for growingly popular coffee, tea and ginger imports.

Firstly, the European GSP withdrawal would stand in contradiction with do-no-harm principles of international development cooperation. Several hundred thousand women currently working in the garment sector (this industry hardly employs men) would lose their jobs and thus also the source of income for domestic remittances to their families in rural areas. Moreover, the GSP retraction would affect people who are neither responsible for the crimes in Rakhine, nor are able to do anything to change the situation of the Rohingyas. Secondly, the ruling power in Myanmar remains in military hands when it comes to key areas. Despite initial progress on the road to civilian supremacy, the military is largely autonomous and has planned and carried 'clearance operations' in Rakhine independently. The inherent logic of broad economic sanctions, namely the basic assumption that the population passes on external pressure to their rulers and thus brings about a policy change, is not applicable: There is no societal 'transmission belt' in Myanmar yet, even in elections only the civilian part of the government is subject to change. The military still holds all power and is capable of returning to the forefront anytime - like in the neighboring

Thailand. Thirdly, the country's long history of isolation is also a significant factor - the threat of renewed isolation is not so effective for Myanmar with its political history of self-subsistence and economic reclusion. And lastly - the international environment is no longer that of 1990. China, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, India, Japan, Vietnam are strong partners and investors in the immediate neighborhood who neither want to join Western sanctions nor approve of trials in international courts. These countries also account for more than 80 percent of Myanmar's total trade volume - the relevance of the US and the EU on the balance sheet is minuscule.

Summing up, there is no realistic case for these sanctions to work. Surely, they are an instrument of political communication, they express a stance towards rules violations and unacceptable policies and reify a normative order. But there are also the heavy costs for the affected individuals - here specifically in the garment factories of Myanmar. The injustices of Rakhine, both the structural discrimination as well as the recent violence will not be rectified by the sanction approach. Sure, sanctions are often framed as a drastic and decisive foreign policy instrument, they provide satisfaction of action and integrity. In case of Rakhine, however, there is no way around accepting the complexity of Myanmar's transition and the extremely unclear and probably counter-productive effect the GSP retraction would have. The political attention must be focused above all on humanitarian aid for Rohingyas in Bangladesh and on development cooperation with Myanmar: Only if Myanmar's democratization can make progress will there be a chance for the return of the displaced persons, for reconciliation between former neighbours, and also for the guilty parties to be brought to justice. And it is going to take a very long time.

ALEXEY YUSUPOV

FRANCE'S WAVES OF SOCIAL PROTESTS AND THE GOVERNMENTAL COUNTERREVOLUTION

Since late 2018, France has seen the rise of demonstrations and, in some parts of the country, daily activities of the yellow vests movement, known in French as the *Mouvement des Gilets jaunes* (GJ). The latest peak of social protests not only shaped and determined its political discourse throughout the past year, but also set light to France's threefold crisis. First, the socio-economic turmoil, reflected i.e. in high rates of unemployment and poverty, the ongoing process of deindustrialization and the simultaneous emergence of the 'gig economy' (Colin Crouch 2019), as well as spillover effects from the dysfunctional system of the Eurozone. Apart from this, a deeper conflict concerning the political system of the Fifth Republic evolves, revolving around topics such as legislative procedures, the role and influence of institutions such as the National School of Administration, and the future of the presidential system itself. These issues are accompanied by a heterogenous set of other societal destabilizing developments, among them the series of terrorist attacks in recent years, for example the Nice and Paris attacks, the ecological crisis, represented i.e. by 2019's heat wave and the current societal discussion over climate change and pollution, as well

as specific national disasters like the Notre-Dame fire in April. As a consequence, France is currently confronted by social protests as an expression of these underlying ruptures. This article focuses on some aspects of GJ's genesis and development, as they marked an outstanding example of protest in France. Further on, it critically spots on governmental responses towards social protests, reading the reactions of the current French government and its predecessors as another problem added on top of others, rather than a remedy.

1. Bernard Harcourt's concept of Counterrevolution

In 2018, Columbia law professor Bernard Harcourt argued that a fundamental new way of governing unfurled in the United States over the past two decades (Harcourt 2018a). Gradually, counterinsurgency methods, originally developed for colonial warfare or the War on Terror abroad, confluent into a domestic policy model, which regards several groups of US society as potentially dangerous and turns them into internal enemies. Harcourt called the so targeted groups "active minorities" (AM). According to him, seemingly disconnected developments such as growing mass surveillance, increased militarization of police forces, or torture and indefinite detention in military bases like Bagram and Guantanamo are parts of one coherent process, which aims for the AM's political elimination, while keeping the remaining parts of the population under control. Harcourt named the underlying paradigm 'the counterrevolution' and differentiated it from historic counterrevolutions by stressing its unique feature - the absence of an actual insurgency in the US. While there are terrorist attacks and mass shootings in the country, and groups like Black Lives Matter or Occupy Wall Street have staged protests, the so-called AMs indeed lack the ability to contest or even endanger the system, let apart to build a revolutionary movement. In fact, the counter revolutionists would create a phantom insurgency to rally the passive majority of the population behind their flag. To achieve this, Harcourt identified the paradigm's three core elements, which are based on counterinsurgency warfare:

- Initially, a process of massive data collection to gain total information and map the entire Internet, as envisaged by NSA's Treasure Map program. This strategy aims to distinguish a possible AM from the passive majority of the population.

- An AMs identification is then followed by its political separation and eradication. Counter revolutionists regard a certain group as dangerous because of its ideology and its potential to gain mass support. So, the second strategy is to target the AM, using a bunch of techniques like infiltration, discreditation, or deterrence, to prevent its possible insurgency.

- At the same time, the counter revolutionists use some modernized form of 'panem et circenses', to acquire the passive majority's allegiance and distract it from societal problems and AM's allurements.

Further on, Harcourt analyzed the threats of the observed phenomenon. Not only would the counterinsurgency paradigm be a self-fulfilling prophecy, motivating individuals or groups to address radical measures, it would also represent

a process, which continuously undermines a democratic society's foundations. As an example, he points to the legalization of formally illegal practices, which would gradually culminate in the carve-out of certain groups from constitutionally given protections (Harcourt 2018b). However, Harcourt limited his study to the USA. Using his criteria, this article will look on comparable developments in France, highlighting controversial aspects of governmental reactions towards social protesters, especially the GJ.

2. Genesis, issues, and predecessors of the GJ movement

The second decade of the century saw a series of different social protests in France, addressing some of the introductory-mentioned issues. For instance, in late 2013, the Breton red cap movement, also known as the *Mouvement des Bonnets rouges*, united different parts of that region's society in rallies against a planned eco tax on road freight, leading on some occasions to the destruction of traffic cameras and tax gantries. In some ways, the red caps antedated the GJ's thematically and concerning the use of a certain kind of clothing as a distinctive mark. Finally, the French government succumbed and dropped the tax. Three years later, the wave of anti-neoliberal protests in Western countries, addressing topics such as austerity measures, rising inequality, and tax evasion, arrived in France in form of the *Up-all-night-protests*, also called *Nuit debout*. Then-president François Hollande envisaged a liberalization of the labor market by changing several regulations, as means to reduce unemployment. His attempt was met by countrywide demonstrations, with students and trade unions in the lead. Unlike the red caps, the protests did not lead to a withdrawal of the proposal. Minister of Economy and Finance at this time, and fierce supporter of the governmental plan, was a certain Emmanuel Macron. In the further course of 2016, the death of Adama Traoré in police custody and the abuse of Théo Luhakas, likewise by police officers, sparked rallies against police brutality and societal disregard towards the banlieues, accompanied by riots. In sum, the stage for further protest had been set before the presidential election of 2017 even took place.

The initial protests against newly elected Macron immediately began after the neoliberal centrist had won the second round of the presidential election against far-right candidate Marine Le Pen. While the election itself was marked by a record high in scratch votes, a rally, joined by several thousand demonstrators and organized by the left-wing alliance *Social Front*, took place the next day in Paris, accompanied by minor clashes. Throughout 2017, the new government initiated tax cuts for the wealthy, accompanied by public austerity measures, causing different groups to stage further protests. During the first half of 2018, especially trade worker unions continued protests against the new government's politics, peaking in a countrywide strike action on May 26 and clashes between activists and police in Paris.

Three days later, a new development ushered, when a saleswoman started an e-petition, demanding a drop in fuel taxes and the cancelation of a planned eco-tax on petrol and diesel. Until October several hundred thousand people signed the petition and two truckmen launched a Facebook event for November 17, calling for countrywide blockades and demonstrations. Participants chose yellow fluorescent

jackets, required by law to be carried in every vehicle, as identification mark. Following further mobilization via social media, on protest day, at least 282,000 demonstrators joined 2,000 rallies across Metropolitan France as well as French overseas territories, such as the department of Réunion, and the region of Corsica. Protesters erected barricades and blocked infrastructure, border crossings, and a number of fuel depots.

The yellow protest all over Mainland France then persisted, enframing countrywide so-called 'Actes' on Saturdays, which in peak times activated tens of thousands of participators. Gradually, it transformed into a thematically broader resistance movement against austerity measures, low living standards, working conditions, the current state of the political system, and the government itself (Chayet 2018). Overall, an amalgamation of previous protest topics, combined with specific new issues.

However, the GJs also indwelt some unique features, which distinguished them from some of their predecessors. Firstly, their heterogeneity: The demonstrations initially mobilized not common activists, but brought various societal groups together, such as ambulance and truck drivers, farmers, firefighters, jobless people, pensioners, students, and workers. Among them were many former politically uninterested or nonvoters. So, in sum, the high-visibility jackets often functioned as a means to bring the invisibles of the French society to light. Secondly, their protest venues: While many reports focused on rallies and clashes in Paris, the bulk of protests took place on roundabouts in rural or semi-urban areas of the country. Furthermore, their non-alignment: The GJs had no central leadership, did not participate as an electoral platform, refused to negotiate with the government, and simultaneously kept away from parties, worker unions, NGOs, obtaining some kind of independence.

However, violence accompanied parts of the GJ protests. There had been riots and vandalizations, especially in Paris, during several "Actes", even if most of the GJs disapproved violence. And while the movement in total was not racist, homophobic, or anti-Semitic, such incidents repeatedly accompanied its rallies.

3. Elements of governmental counterrevolution in France

In France, parallels to Harcourt's US observations can be found. As in the USA, the phenomenon did not arise under the current president, but similarly threatens some of the country's democratic core values.

Being confronted with the unexpected protests, which additionally received widespread support in the French society, the government turned to a carrot-stick-approach: concessions and repression. Offered carrots had been the preliminary cancellation of the eco-tax on December 5 and Macron's televised mea culpa five days later, in which he also announced a number of social measures. However, many GJs considered the carrots as insufficient and so the protest actions continued, again intensifying between January and March 2019. While demonstrations still took place at the end of 2019, a significant decrease in support and attendance occurred. This at least partly derives from the governmental sticks.

The first of these sticks arose from a comparable form of mass

surveillance. France certainly stood not at the rear in the global communications intelligence race despite not being part of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance. Since the 1970s and 80s, its governments stepwise established large-scale surveillance measures and build a formidable chain of intercept stations in its territories around the globe. This development even accelerated after the Wikileaks and Snowden files, when in 2015 the Hollande government passed a bill on further intrusive measures, such as tapping and keylogging without judicial permission. Additionally, former emergency powers were gradually normalized, being transferred into ordinary law. The UN and several human rights groups criticized the bills, referring to their vague definitions of threats and their potential to restrict several rights of freedom and to discriminate societal minorities. In sum, France was already in the European lead concerning mass surveillance and far-reaching executive rights. In the course of the GJ protests, the Macron government then initiated a controversial 'anti-rioter bill', which i.a. granted police extended search rights and introduced a mask ban. However, the French Constitutional Court eventually dismissed another crucial article, which would have given the police the power to pre-emptively ban any person presumed to be a rioter from demonstrating.

Secondly, the authorities' resort to repressive police tactics. Even if the GJ can hardly be regarded an insurgent movement, lacking organization, capacities, and other attributes, the French government identified them as a threat inhering AM, and answered with outstanding force. Repeatedly, clashes ensued, after police intervened to disperse protesters demonstrating in banned areas. On other occasions, police brutality sparked public outrage, for instance when police detained and allegedly humiliated 153 pupils in the commune of Mantes-la-Jolie in December 2018, blaming them of taking part in an armed gathering. The intensive first six months of GJ protests left eleven people dead and more than 4,000 injured. Security forces arrested about 12,000 people. Thousands more were frisked by the extensive stop-and-search-system, especially on protest days. A striking toll for a West European country, which alarmed international watchdogs. Especially controversial was the use of certain rubber bullet launchers that most of France's European neighbors had banned, and which injured or mutilated hundreds. For instance, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Dunja Mijatović called on the French government to suspend their use and urged it to show more respect for human rights (Council of Europe 2019). Meanwhile, governmental representatives justified or downplayed police violence, and tried to delegitimize the movement by framing it and his participants as inherently violent, politically extremist, or otherwise ominous.

Thirdly, the acquisition of crucial support. France is known for a specific, in parts militant, protest culture. However, the governmental techniques to cope with them, as mass surveillance and a certain amount of repressive force, are not out of the ordinary. Way more important was Macron's capability to sit out the demonstrations while at the same time addressing his supporters and the passive majority. While some observers regarded his December 2018 speech and announcements as concessions to the GJ, they were predominantly directed at his electorate in the middle and upper classes and fellows in the business and administrative sec-

tors. This was also the case in the 'Great National Debate' that started in early 2019. For the French government it became crucial to stop the GJ protests from spreading. As long as the bulk of protesters were non-voters or partisans of its left- and right-wing opponents, the situation remained unproblematic. But this would have changed if, like in the case of the Mouvement des Bonnets rouges, figures such as business leaders or mayors had joined their ranks. And so much of medial and political vigor was, successfully, spent to keep these groups in the government's field.

4. Perspectives

Since December 2019, we see the transition of political protest from yellow to red as many GJs join the ranks of strikers in their struggle against the Macron government's pension proposals. The ongoing protests bring France to the stage of its own Thatcherian moment. Having fought off the GJ wave, Macron entered an area from which every previous government ultimately retreated, after facing extensive popular resistance. Macron, however, has dedicated his presidency to the rearrangement of the French society. A failure would probably end his political career. But if he now succeeds, his victory will likely repeat Margaret Thatcher's triumph over Britain's coal miners in 1985, culminating in a further diminishment of social and unionist movements and a boost for neoliberal ideas, which opens the space for further transformative acts. In turn, this would pave the road to 'Retrotopia' (Zygmunt Bauman). As people see that their protests do not pay off, they may give up on hopes of a better future and turn to and vote for options of an idealized past. With rising polls for authoritarian right-wing party National Rally, the future may see the replacement of yellow vests by black shirts.

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SUDAN'S PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

Introduction

After months of widespread protests against the dire economic situation and limited political freedoms in Sudan, security forces staged a coup d'état against Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. However, protesters opposed the military takeover, continued to take to the streets and demanded a civilian government. Subsequently, in August 2019, a transitional civilian-military government was installed. Elections will be held after a 39-month transitional period.

The following article assesses the prospects for democratization in Sudan. We will first summarize the events that had led to the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir's 29-year rule. Secondly, we will inquire about the outlook of this transition. The arrival of a transitional, mostly civilian government was welcomed by Sudanese and international actors alike. Yet, the prospects for democratization, one of the critical demands of protesters, are still unclear. De Waal (2019) argues that neither a transition to an institutionalized and democratic state nor a strong military government that guarantees stability is likely to be put in place.

Contrary to this assessment, we posit in our final chapter that a transition to democracy is possible although it faces major challenges. If it is to be sustainable and lead to democracy that is not only reflected by elections but also by economic inclusion, the transitional government has to prioritize a strategy of economic transformation that puts the empowerment of marginals at the core. An economic strategy of tackling inequality and using rents for economic transformation is paramount to this. However, the prospects for democracy depend on a strategy of transformation that does not enrage the remaining old power elite.

From protests in late 2018 to a transitional government in mid-2019

In late 2018, people in the urban centers of Sudan took to the streets and vented their anger over high fuel and bread prices. With its first extraction in 1999, the Sudanese economy has become heavily dependent on oil revenues. Since the breakaway of South Sudan in 2011, Sudan has lost this source of national income as most of the oil fields are located in its newly founded neighbor state. In 2018, al-Bashir devalued the national currency and introduced new consumer taxes, making mainly imported goods more expensive. Prices for staple foods also increased considerably. Initially, al-Bashir's government tried to quell these protests resulting in several deaths.

Despite the state repression, protests spread quickly and occurred almost country-wide. The initial demands for better living conditions were expanded to include broad claims for political rights. Sudan's trade union, the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), mobilized people on an extensive basis. One of the critical demands of protesters was al-Bashir's resignation. Since the strategy of repression seemed to have little effect on protest mobilization, al-Bashir, in turn, promised economic reforms. However, protests did not ebb away. The armed forces removed al-Bashir from office and installed a transitional military council on April 11. But although

the militaries promised free elections within two years, the protests continued. Demonstrators did not see their key demands met. They perceived the military government as marginal progress as it still consisted mostly of principal figures of the old regime. Finally, the ongoing protests reached their tragic zenith in the Khartoum massacre on June 3, when reportedly, 100 people were killed, and numerous women were raped (CNN 2019).

As a result of these incidents, the security forces increasingly lost the symbolic backing of external supporters like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt. Foreign powers took their chance to chime in and had a mediating influence on the events in Sudan. The African Union suspended Sudan's membership since the Sudanese military refused to grant the critical demand of protesters to put power into civilian hands. Eventually, the Transitional Military Council (TMC), a merger of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), intelligence services and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), a coalition of opposition civilian groups, concluded a first vague power-sharing agreement presented on July 17 followed by the Draft Constitutional Charter for the 2019 Transitional Period which became effective one month later.

These documents stipulate that a mainly civilian government will rule for a transitional phase of 39 months after which the whole government shall step down. A Sovereignty Council, the official head of the state, consisting of five members chosen by the FFC and the TMC respectively and one civilian member selected from both factions, has already been established. The Sovereignty Council is currently chaired by the TMC for the first 21 months of the transition period, followed by 18 months led by the FFC. Besides, the Council of Ministers has been instated, which mostly comprises civilians except for the ministries of defense and the interior, which reflects the still prevalent influence of the security forces. Also, comprehensive reforms shall be developed and peace processes in conflictive regions Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan be introduced within six months after the enactment of the Charter.

But although the General Framework for the Programme of the Transitional Government (TG), published in December 2019, has constituted an "[i]mmediate declaration of ceasefire in all conflict zones' (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs 2019: 14), Darfur has already seen heavy fights again (New York Times 2020). If and how power should be distributed between Khartoum and rural areas has neither been addressed by the Constitutional Charter nor by the Framework of the TG. Hence, critics of the new government state that the agreements underpin the centralized power position of Khartoum. It is not stated how peripheral regions can be integrated (Arab Reform Initiative 2019). Nonetheless, first peace talks in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan point towards a more inclusive approach.

Set-up and Divisions within the Transitional Government

The provisions of the draft Charter strongly reflected the competition over power by the civilian and security factions and were only reached by international pressure. Thus, the progressive and ambitious yet hazy Transitional Constitution stands on feet of clay. A central issue in the drafting

process was whether TMC-individuals enjoy immunity, especially concerning possible lawsuits related to the Khartoum massacre in mid-2019. Eventually, the Charter specifies that 'members of the Sovereignty Council, Cabinet, Transitional Legislative Council or governors of provinces/heads' enjoy immunity. This immunity can be lifted by a 'simple majority of members of the Legislative Council' which mostly consist of civilians (TMC/FFC [transl. IDEA] 2019). Nonetheless, the Charter clearly states its commitment to the rule of law and explicitly expresses that this also applies to crimes committed by the al-Bashir government. These provisions have already been put into effect. Al-Bashir has been sentenced to two years in a corruption trial. Also, members of the security sector who tortured and killed protesters were convicted (BBC 2019; Al Jazeera 2019).

However, legal proceedings against representatives of the TMC elites appear unlikely since some of their members, including Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, chairman of the Sovereignty Council and former General Inspector of the SAF as well as Mohammed Hamdan Daglo (Hemedti) who is known as head of the RSF, infamous for its firm hand in the Darfur conflict and now also member of the Sovereign Council, were allegedly involved in the massacre.

Furthermore, quarrels within the respective government entities pose a threat to the democratization process. The prevailing division of the army and the RSF in the Constitutional Charter has been interpreted as a sign of tension between TMC members (ICG 2019: 2). Under al-Bashir's rule, the paramilitary RSF enjoyed extensive benefits and became the de facto most powerful security force in Sudan. Its leader Hemedti also transformed these political benefits into economic leverage. His company al-Junaid was awarded with the construction of highways in Darfur and has a strong grip on the gold mining sector (ibid.: 12f.). A further source of income has been the integration of RSF personnel in the Yemen war which underpinned its strong financial backing by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Hemedti wields considerable influence in the current governmental set-up of Sudan and might try to transform his economic power and military leverage into political strength (De Waal 2019). Moreover, it seems unlikely that he or other members of the security sector are willing to make any concessions that could possibly limit their access to rents notwithstanding that this undermines the Constitutional Charter which prohibits 'any profession or commercial or financial activity while occupying their positions' (TMC/FFC [transl. IDEA] 2019).

But also the FFC is afflicted by internal troubles. Especially its domination by elites from the Khartoum area and its allegedly too permissive negotiation strategy has led to criticism of some of its own and further non-member factions. In fact, the set-up facilitated Hemedti to form closer ties with rural leaders of armed groups who still mistrust the TG. Also, Islamist factions, namely the Popular Congress and Reform Now, who are still partly represented in the military and the state bureaucracy, were left out of the power-sharing agreements. Although they currently do not have popular backing, they could become a relevant force again by undermining the transition process. Standing outside of the current government and being sponsored by Qatar and Turkey, they could regain public support if the former erodes on its tremendous tasks (ICG 2019: 20 f.).

Democratization requires economic inclusion and hence the transformation of rents

If, despite the competition between TG factions, the current government manages to survive in its current set-up, another factor is crucial to enable a transition to sustainable, civilian-led democracy: economic transformation. As indicated, rent plays a prominent role in the Sudanese economy. It represents an income that is appropriated by non-market means and can be spent relatively freely as it has not to be reinvested into the production process. The typical example for rents is oil. Due to the unstable flow of oil from South Sudan since its independence, the main source of Sudanese rent has increasingly shifted to gold.

As countries such as Sudan are characterized by the dominance of rents (besides oil and gold, land is an important source for rent in Sudan), relations between state and society take different forms than in democracies. The supremacy of rents hinders political inclusion since the link between the state and citizens is structured in clientelistic ways. Economic inclusion then ensures institutional stability as citizen-state relations can no longer be organized in these clientelistic ways, but are solely channeled through institutions (Zinecker 2009). Economic inclusion requires overcoming the predominance of rents, which will be one of the significant tasks of Prime Minister Hamdok, a former economist at the African Development Bank and former Africa representative of the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

To tackle the numerous economic challenges, Hamdok currently pursues a dual strategy of stabilization and economic transformation (Lopez/Hamdok/Elhiraika 2017). In an effort to attract investments to Sudan, his government currently negotiates with the US administration to be removed from the list of terror-sponsoring countries. Furthermore, the USA and Sudan announced that both countries will officially resume diplomatic relations. The willingness to compensate former victims of the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 as well as launched investigations into the crimes in Darfur during al-Bashir's rule has underscored that Hamdok is eager to repair Sudan's international image.

Regarding his macroeconomic approach, Hamdok is a proponent of structural transformation, which 'is also inspired by the successful development experience of East Asian countries' (ibid.: 267) and African countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia. He is aware of the concept of rent (De Waal 2015: 219f.) and has argued for the creation of public goods, such as infrastructure, to boost development (ibid.: 271). He also endorsed a currency devaluation to gain competitiveness (ibid.: 275).

The short-term goal of the government is to bring down the overall costs of living and to subsidize goods that are essential for more impoverished strata of society. The priority in the second and third year of the transitional government will be the creation of value-adding industries and to increase manufacturing as finance minister Ibrahim al-Badawi announced in his 200 days action plan in September 2019 (Albawaba 2019). This approach goes in the right direction, but in order to foster democratization further issues of transformation have to be taken into account.

A strategy that aims at transformation would have to look at

egalitarian issues. All successful examples of Asian 'latecomers' in industrialization saw rapidly increasing real wages and continuously declining inequality (Elsenhans 2015). This distinguishes the Asian cases of successful development from African countries like Rwanda and Ethiopia.

Common to all Asian experiences, is the importance of equalizing incomes and the existence of food self-sufficiency. A transition from rent to profit-mechanisms requires rising real wages and income equality to facilitate the emergence of an industrial sector as rising incomes trigger investments. Traditionally, standardized and simple products are supplied by the informal sector which can expand once real wages increase and then enter a cycle of expansion and technological upshifting while the bargaining position of labor increases. Land redistribution plays a key role in combating inequality. Sudan's distribution of land is particular in a number of ways. The state in Sudan basically possesses all arable land in the country (Taha 2016). Furthermore, Sudan has vast agricultural lands and is said to remain one of the "hotspot" regions of land investments in the upcoming years. In line with this, De Juan and Schiess estimate that more than 8 million hectares of land concessions were granted between 2011-2017; not only to external investors such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE but also to Sudanese civil servants and military elites (de Juan/Schiess 2018: 3). However, these investments came with an accelerated mechanisation of the agricultural sector, forcing many small farmers and pastoralists to either work for the large-scale farmers or to seek their fortune in the informal sectors of the bigger cities. In addition, since new agricultural outputs are earmarked for export, this did not alleviate the food problems in Sudan. The access to food for large populations is still problematic. Subsequent conflicts are intensified by the fact that informal land rights cannot be claimed and that it is not possible to take legal action against the seizure of land by the government (ibid.: 2ff.).

A strategy that aims at transformation would suspend the leases to non-Sudanese investors and redistribute land to the population in the mid-term. This would tackle inequality and also bring down the living costs of the people. However, Saudi Arabia as well as the UAE have backed the rise of Hemedti. Addressing the question of land would also imply to go against the current influential military figures who will likely try to protect their interests.

In such circumstances, where land redistribution faces fundamental obstacles, short- and mid-term strategies of raising incomes without land redistribution is also conceivable. In short, real wages can be increased by creating an artificial industrial sector (resembling cash-for-work programmes) that channels development aid to transform the economy (Elsenhans 1996). Although respective apolitical approaches can not replace redistribution, they can foster basic economic inclusion by enabling marginals to increase their bargaining position.

Without food self-sufficiency, that is, if food constitutes an essential part of the imports, a strategy to devalue the currency, as Hamdok postulated himself (Lopes, Hamdok, Elhiraika 2017), will face tight restrictions as imports become more expensive once a currency depreciates. Countries become competitive through devaluation and create jobs through an export-driven industrialization strategy that ultimately raises

incomes and creates mass demand until labor is scarce and the country's currency revalues. Rents have to be invested in those sectors that are technologically still behind (Elsenhans 2015).

Conclusion: Sudan's prospects for democratization

Triggered by increasing fuel and bread prices, civilians staged protests against the long-time al-Bashir government in Sudan. After his overthrow in April 2019, the security forces and the civilian coalition FFC later agreed on a power-sharing deal and established a transitional government. After 39 months, this government shall resign to pave the way for a civilian-led democratic state.

The prospects for a de facto democratization in Sudan - by which we mean more than elections but also civil rights by economic inclusion - has two major intertwined obstacles. First, the TG reflects an assemblage of several partly competing civilian and non-civilian factions. Although the FFC has managed to engage in the political arena and form large parts of the current government, crucial figures of the TMC still have a secure grip on rents and the dominance over the means of violence. Both of these factors underpin their powerful position but also fuel competition within different factions of the security sectors itself. Besides, ongoing conflicts within and between peripheral regions such as Darfur and the centralized state entities in Khartoum remain virulent sources of division that need to be addressed. The fragile alliance represented in the TG has to be kept alive and to follow its ambitious goals expressed in the Constitutional Charter to evolve into a civilian government after the intended transition period.

The second major obstacle is to meet the demands of protesters through economic transformation. The current economic landscape of Sudan is highly rent-based and - like political power - channeled to elites in Khartoum. It will be a balancing act for the civilian members of the TG to implement economic reforms that trigger a transformation. Primarily, access to land for marginals could support economic empowerment.

The new government of Sudan is facing enormous challenges. On the one hand, it has to redirect rents to catch up in technologically backward sectors and to foster economic diversification. This would lead to an integration of marginals in economic participation. On the other hand, it has to carefully integrate members of the security forces in this process who still retain their access to gold-, oil- and land-based rents. A perceived loss of access to these sectors could eventually lead to an implosion of the current government. But if its factions are able to balance power and manage redistribution, a substantial democratization process is still conceivable.

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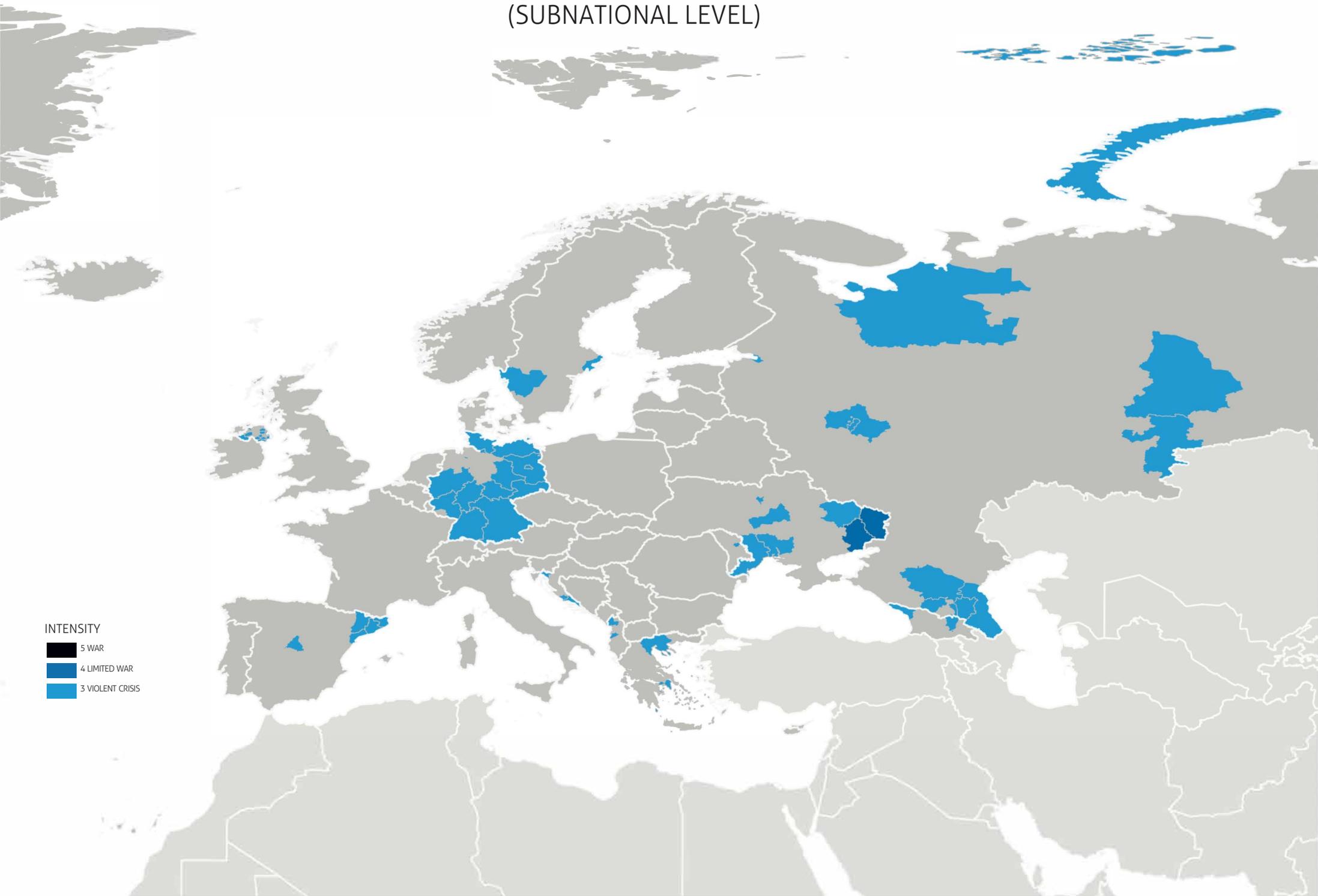
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Europe

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN EUROPE IN 2019 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, 51 conflicts were counted in Europe. As in previous years, only one highly violent conflict was observed. Almost 70 percent of the conflicts in Europe remained on a non-violent level. Moreover, Europe's only war in recent years in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region continued on the level of a limited war in 2019. Consequently, no conflict was fought on war-level in Europe this year.

Last year's limited 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, continued [→ 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, though the parties withdrew from three towns. Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, around 13,000 people have been killed. In 2019, fighting concentrated in four areas, with a higher number of fire exchanges in Donetsk Oblast. Russia and Ukraine exchanged prisoners on two occasions, including individuals captured in the Donbas and sailors from last year's Kerch Strait incident [→ Russia – Ukraine]. Political newcomer Volodymyr Zelensky was elected president and his party "Servant of the People" won a majority in the early parliamentary elections. The prospect of a political solution, and thus surging Russian influence in the whole of Ukraine, led to right-wing opposition protests [→ Ukraine (right-wing / opposition)]. Autocephaly of the newly created Orthodox Church of Ukraine was officially accepted by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

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 predominantly marked by the anti-Russian protests that erupted in June 2019. The protests launched after Sergei Gavrilov, a member of the Russian Duma, sat in a Chair reserved for the Head of the Georgian parliament and delivered a speech in Russian. The protesters accused Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia (GDDG) to collaborate with Russia and took the streets. Furthermore, the protesters demanded the resignation of responsible government officials, and the introduction of a fully proportional election system. The violent crackdown of protesters by the police led to more than 300 detentions and approx. 240 injured. After the head of the ruling Georgian Dream Party, Bidzina Ivanishvili, announced changes to the electoral system, the protests calmed down. However, minor protests continued until the end of the year, reaching another peak in November after the Georgian Dream failed the promised electoral reform. 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)].

In Cyprus, the presence of Turkish troops remained an obstacle to the reunification process [→ Cyprus (TRNC / Northern Cyprus)]. In Greece, social protests and violence between radical leftist groups and security forces remained at a high level [→ Greece (social protests, left-wing militants)].

In Spain the violent crisis over secession of Catalonia continued [→ Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia)]. A trial against Catalan political leaders led to huge protests by pro-independence and subsequently pro-unity supporters, and police action, taking place mainly in Catalonia damaging the regional economy. The non-violent crisis between Spain and the United Kingdom (UK) over territory of the peninsula Gibraltar continued [→ Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar)]. The legal status of Gibraltar post-Brexit, future international border management and artificial land enlargement projects on Gibraltar's side, and the intrusion of Spanish naval forces into British waters remained issues.

France saw huge protests of gilet jaune over questions of social justice. The non-violent crisis over the secession of Corsica from France continued [→ France (Corsican nationalists / Corsica)].

Two secession conflicts continued in the UK, firstly the non-violent crisis over the secession of Scotland [→ United Kingdom (Scottish Nationalists / Scotland)], and secondly the violent crisis over the secession of Northern Ireland [→ United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland)]. Scottish pro-independence protesters marched in solidarity with the pro-independence supporters in Catalonia [→ Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia)]. Xenophobia remained an issue in Europe.

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system regarding specifically refugee and migration policies of the federal government continued in Germany [→ Germany (xenophobes)], as well as the violent crisis over the orientation of the political system in Sweden [→ Sweden (xenophobes)].

The related conflicts continued between several Baltic states over international power, Norway over international power and resources [→ Norway et al. – Russia (Arctic)], and the European Union (EU), the United States (USA) and several other states over international power and ideology [→ EU, USA, et al. – Russia] on the one hand, and Russia on the other hand. According to German politicians, the non-violent crisis between the EU, USA, and several other states on the one hand and Russia on the other turned potentially more dangerous on a global scale due to alleged Russian violations of and the US's withdrawal from the intermediate nuclear forces treaty (INF) of 1987 in mid-2019.

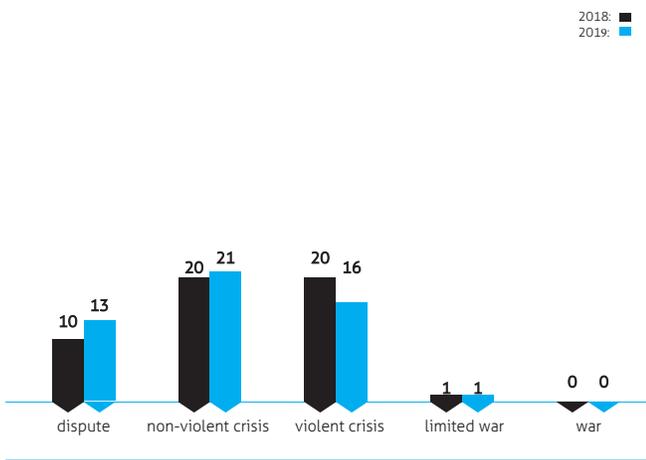
In Russia, the violent crisis continued between opposition movements and civil society activists and the government [→ Russia (opposition)]. The banning of opposition candidates from local elections in Moscow sparked weekly protests in summer with at times more than twenty thousand participants. At several occasions the Russian police violently dispersed protesters and arrested several thousand. The sovereign internet bill, which came into force on November 1 and allows the government to switch off internet connections in an emergency, was heavily criticized and protested by the opposition. Throughout the year, several protests also erupted over local political issues. In the ongoing violent crisis over ideology and secession be-

tween militant groups under the umbrella of the IS Caucasus Province and the Russian government in the Northern Caucasus 23 Islamist fighters were killed by Russian security forces [→ Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)]. IS claimed responsibility for two explosions in Magnitogorsk, which left 42 people dead. Russian security forces executed several counter terrorism operations, raiding alleged terrorist cells and arresting several fighters.

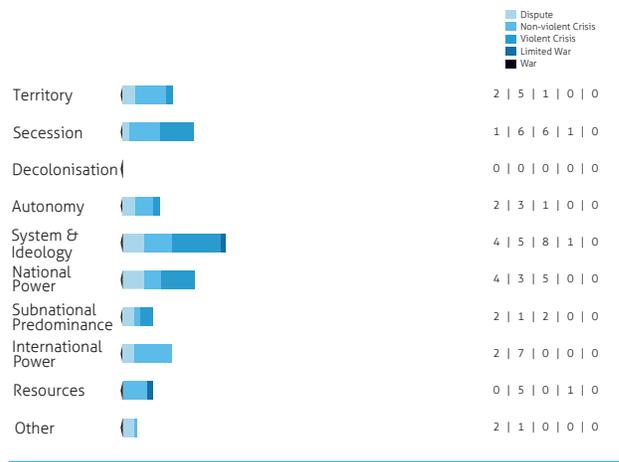
The conflict in Belarus continued on a non-violent level between different opposition parties and movements on the one hand, and the government on the other hand [→ Belarus (opposition)]. The early parliamentary elections on November 17 were described as unfair by the OSCE, citing several instances of denied registrations and restricted access to state media for opposition candidates. The opposition did not win any seats in parliament. On several occasions, authorities required organizers to pay for police presence at sanctioned rallies, which was strongly criticized by the opposition.

In the Balkans, conflicts continued between the opposition and the government. For instance, while the violent crisis in Romania de-escalated to a dispute [→ Romania (opposition)], the conflict in Albania remained on a violent level [→ Albania (opposition)]. Throughout the first half of the year thousands of opposition supporters protested in Tirana against the Socialist Party government, accusing it of corruption and links to criminal groups. Violent clashes between the protesters and police forces erupted on several occasions, with protesters throwing Molotov cocktails, flares, and stones, and the police deploying tear gas and water cannons. The opposition's demands for snap elections, however, remained unfulfilled. Tensions between Kosovo° and Serbia also continued [→ Kosovo° – Serbia]. While Serbia refused to acknowledge Kosovo as a sovereign state, Kosovo, despite international pressure, in turn refused to remove the 100 percent tax on Serbian goods, which had been introduced in 2018. The year was also marked by military threats by both sides and the deployment of Serbian troops along the line of conflict. As an exception in the region, the conflict between Greece and North Macedonia over the official name of the later, came to an end [→ Greece – North Macedonia (official name of North Macedonia)]. Despite protests by opponents of the name deal in both countries, the Greek parliament ratified the Prespa agreement on January 25. Subsequently, NATO signed the accession protocol with North Macedonia, using the country's new name.

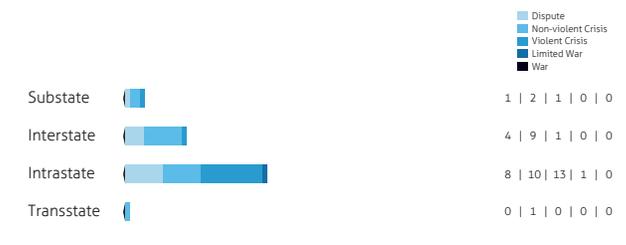
CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN EUROPE IN 2018 COMPARED TO 2019



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN EUROPE IN 2019



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN EUROPE IN 2019



Overview: Conflicts in Europe in 2019

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Albania (opposition)	PD, LSI, PDIU et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2017	•	3
Armenia (opposition)	Prosperous Armenia, Bright Armenia et. al vs. government	national power	2003	↓	1
Armenia – Azerbaijan	Armenia vs. Azerbaijan	territory	1987	•	3
Armenia – Turkey*	Turkey vs. Armenia	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 (Serb minority – ethnic Croatians)*	Serb minority vs. ethnic Croatians	subnational predominance	1991	↑	3
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, US, UK, Germany, France, Norway, Canada, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania vs. Russia	system/ideology, international power	2007	•	2
France (Corsican nationalists / Corsica)	CL, FC, FLNC et al. vs. government	secession, autonomy	1975	•	2
Georgia (Abkhazia)*	Abkhazian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	↗	3
Georgia (opposition)*	UNM, various opposition group 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	↘	2
Greece (right-wing militants)*	Golden Dawn, right-wing militants vs. government	system/ideology	1985	↘	2
Greece (social protests, left-wing militants)	left-wing militants, social groups, workers' unions vs. government	system/ideology	2010	•	3
Greece – North Macedonia (official name of North Macedonia)	Greece vs. North Macedonia	other	1991	END	1
Greece – Turkey*	Greece vs. Turkey	territory, resources, other	1973	•	2
Hungary (right-wings – minorities)*	Fidesz, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom, Magyar Önvédelmi Mozgalom vs. Jewish community, LGBT groups, refugees and Muslim community	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2008	•	1
Hungary – Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine (Hungarian minorities)*	Hungary, Hungarian minorities (Transylvania / southern Slovakia / Transcarpathia) vs. Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine	autonomy, international power	1989	•	2

EUROPE

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Kosovo ^o (opposition)*	Vetevendosje, LDK, Serbian List vs. government	system/ideology, national power, subnational predominance	2015	↓	1
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
Moldova (opposition)	opposition parties vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2009	•	3
Moldova (Transnistria)	Transnistrian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2
North Macedonia (Albanian minority – ethnic Macedonians)*	Albanian minority vs. ethnic Macedonians	subnational predominance	1991	•	2
North Macedonia (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2014	↓	1
Norway et al. – Russia (Arctic)	Norway, Canada, Denmark, United States, Sweden, Finland vs. Russia	territory, international power, resources	2001	•	2
Romania (opposition)	opposition movement vs. government	national power	2012	↓	1
Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)	IS Caucasus Province vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1991	•	3
Russia (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	•	3
Russia – Ukraine	Russia vs. Ukraine	territory, international power, resources	2003	↘	2
Spain (Basque Provinces)*	EH-Bildu, PNV, Gure Esku Dago vs. government	secession	1959	•	1
Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia)	Catalan regional government, Catalan civil society groups vs. government, Spanish civil society groups	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, NFU, RIRA, Soaradh, SDLP, SF vs. Alliance Party, DUP, government, RHC, UDA, UUP, UVF	secession	1968	•	3
United Kingdom (Scottish Nationalists / Scotland)	SNP, AUOB 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

ALBANIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2017

Conflict parties: PD, LSI, PDIU 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, led by the Democratic Party of Albania (PD), and the Socialist Party (PS) government. Throughout the year, the opposition organized protests against the government, accusing it of corruption and links to criminal groups. Opposition parties demanded snap elections and the formation of a transitional government that would ensure the electoral process was fair. After opposition parties accused the PS of electoral fraud in 2017, they began to boycott parliamentary sessions in 07/2018. They returned to parliament in January, only to announce anti-government protests, which then were staged on several occasions throughout the year, primarily in the capital Tirana. On February 16, a demonstration of several thousand opposition supporters led to clashes with the police. Protesters threw flares and other objects at the police, who responded with tear gas. A group of protesters penetrated police lines, attempting to storm Prime Minister Edi Rama's Office and resulting in 15 arrests. On February 21, thousands of opposition supporters rallied in Tirana again, led by leaders of the opposition parties. Subsequently, 58 of the 60 opposition MPs resigned from parliament. On March 16 and April 13, thousands of opposition supporters from across the country protested in Tirana, throwing flares, firecrackers, and other objects at police forces, and attempted to storm the parliament building. The police responded with tear gas and water cannons. At least five police officers were wounded in the April rally. On May 2, protesters blocked national roads in dozens of towns. Throughout May and June, clashes erupted again in protests in Tirana, with protesters throwing Molotov cocktails, flares and firecrackers, leaving dozens of police officers wounded and several protesters injured.

Due to the ongoing tensions, on June 8 President Ilir Meta of the Socialist Movement for Integration cancelled the local elections, which were scheduled for June 30, and postponed them to October 13. In reaction to this, MPs loyal to Rama adopted a resolution declaring Meta's decision invalid, pledging to hold the elections as previously planned, and initiated impeachment proceedings against Meta. Tensions intensified after the publication of wiretapped conversations between Rama, other PS officials and alleged members of criminal networks on June 17. The opposition claimed that the wiretaps proved the PS government's manipulation of the 2017 general elections, including votebuying. Over the following weeks, opposition supporters repeatedly tried to disrupt electoral preparations. For instance, PD supporters destroyed voting papers and ballot boxes in many towns and villages and reportedly threw Molotov cocktails at a regional local election office in Bushat, Shkoder county. Police arrested 14 people after the arson attack, including a PD deputy mayor.

Despite the boycott of the opposition, the local elections

were held on June 30, with a voter turnout of 21 percent. Both the opposition and Meta declared the results invalid, and Meta insisted on holding the elections on October 30, possibly combined with parliamentary elections. On July 8, thousands of protesters rallied peacefully in Tirana, again demanding Rama's resignation. chs

ARMENIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Prosperous Armenia, Bright Armenia et. al vs. government
 Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between opposition parties, such as Prosperous Armenia and Bright Armenia on the one hand, and the government of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the other, de-escalated to a dispute.

At the center of the conflicts stood controversies in regard of the judicial system, which erupted on February 16 when former president Robert Kocharyan was charged with bribery. On May 18, however, he was released on bail, triggering protests in the capital Yerevan. Around 1,100 of Pashinyan's supporters answered his call to block court buildings across the city. The same day, Pashinyan announced a reform of the judiciary and an investigation into the 2016 Nagorno-Karabakh clashes. On October 4, parliament appealed to the Constitutional Court to replace its chairman, which the Court rejected ten days later. Following these events, on December 11, the parliament passed a bill offering benefits to judges who voluntarily step down before 01/31/2020. In response, the opposition condemned these decisions as politically motivated and called Pashinyan a threat to the independence of the judiciary.

Further protests and threats against the government were reported. In a statement released on May 8, Kocharyan announced an anti-government rally. On July 10, the police detained six protesters who had allegedly blocked a street in Yerevan to prevent the passing of Pashinyan's motorcade. ctr

ARMENIA – AZERBAIJAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1987

Conflict parties: Armenia vs. Azerbaijan
 Conflict items: territory

The violent crisis continued between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan mostly populated by ethnic Armenians. 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 hand, and the government of Azerbaijan on the other [→ Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)].

Until May, the number of ceasefire violations reported by the OSCE was significantly lower than in previous years, which

was attributed to the change of government in Armenia in April 2018. High-profile political meetings between representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan took place in Paris on January 16, in Davos on January 25, and in Vienna on March 29. During the same time period, Azerbaijan signed a USD 13 million arms trade deal with Israel, while Armenia made a large-scale fighter jet purchase from Russia.

During a visit of the OSCE Minsk-Group from May 28 to 30, an Armenian soldier killed an Azeri military officer in Aghdam district, Armenia. On June 1, an Azeri soldier shot and killed an Armenian soldier in Martuni district, Armenia. An OSCE mission on July 11 found no further ceasefire violations, but Armenian and Azeri ministries continued to accuse each other of shootings along the Line of Contact of Troops, the de facto border between NKR and Azerbaijan.

In the second half of the year, tensions rose. On July 19, Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan blamed Azerbaijan for a lack of commitment to the negotiations and on August 6, he called for the unification of Armenia and NKR. Armenian military shot and killed an Azeri soldier in NKR on September 22, while NKR defense ministry stated that Azeri forces had tried to approach Armenian units. In an Armenian attack in Gushchu Ayrim, Gazakh district, Armenian forces killed an Azeri civilian on October 2.

On October 30, the Armenian Defense Ministry accused Azerbaijan of having conducted sniper fire and mortar attacks in Tavush province. At the UN General Assembly in September, the Azeri foreign minister stated that there had been no progress towards peace in the past twelve months. Amidst increasingly aggressive rhetoric from both sides, on November 13, Pashinyan declared that he intended to continue the negotiations. hla

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 non-violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between opposition parties and opposition movements on the one hand, and the government on the other.

Parliamentary elections were held on November 17, in which the opposition did not win any seats. OSCE criticized the elections as unfair. Reportedly, authorities denied the registration of several opposition candidates, and state media refused to broadcast election speeches. Additionally, election monitors reported several electoral violations, such as the removal of observers from polling stations.

Moreover, Belarusian authorities took action against civil society activists and government critics. On several occasions, authorities required organizers of sanctioned rallies to pay for police presence. On January 21, police detained Dzmitry Paliyenka and two other opposition activists for two days over anti-government graffiti. Paliyenka later accused the police

of cruel and inhumane treatment during his arrest and detention. On March 25, the anniversary of the first Belarusian Republic, the police prevented several hundred people from staging an unauthorized rally in the capital Minsk, and detained at least 15, including opposition politicians. On April 5, the police detained at least 15 activists protesting against the removal of wooden crosses in Kurapaty, Minsk region, commemorating victims of Soviet-era repression. Throughout December, several hundred people protested in the capital against deepening ties with Russia. eeb

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 of Republika Srpska (RS) continued between Bosnian Serbs and RS' government on the one hand, and the central government as well as the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) on the other.

The year was dominated by polarizing statements and actions on both sides. On January 9, the RS celebrated its Statehood Day, despite protests by representatives of the FB&H and Bosniak representatives from RS. On March 29, Bosnia's state-level constitutional court banned the celebration of the Day of Republika Srpska as unconstitutional for a second time, after its 2015 ruling. In reaction, on April 2, leaders of the main political parties of RS released a declaration defying the ban, claiming that the court's decision was a political act meant to weaken RS.

Another confrontation started on January 23, when the Bosniak Party of Democratic Action announced it would challenge the name 'Republika Srpska' in the constitutional court as discriminatory. In reaction, Milorad Dodik, the Serbian representative in Bosnia's tripartite Presidency, stated that if the court accepted the appeal, he would consider it as a violation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In this case, RS would add 'western Serbia' to its name and re-examine its territorial status.

In June, the RS government drafted new legislation aiming to build reservist police forces. Bosniaks and Croats strongly opposed the draft, comparing the planned units to Serbian reserve police from the Bosnian War from 1992-95, which they blame for attacks on civilians. Subsequently, FB&H announced to form its own auxiliary police forces. After diplomats from several EU states and USA pressured both entities, RS and FB&H withdrew from the plans. On September 24, RS introduced a new Gendarmerie police instead. While the RS government insisted on the necessity of the forces in order to ensure the territory's security, representatives of the FB&H and Bosniak representatives from RS criticized this development as destabilizing and creating an atmosphere of fear. jhb

CROATIA – SLOVENIA (BORDER)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Croatia vs. Slovenia

Conflict items: territory

The dispute over the maritime and land borders between Croatia and Slovenia continued.

On March 16, Slovenia submitted a letter to the European Commission, accusing Croatia of violating European law. The alleged violations stemmed from Croatia's refusal to follow the 2017 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. In April, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic again stated that Croatia considered the arbitration process had been irreversibly compromised by Slovenia. On June 17, in reaction to Slovenia's letter, the European Commission declared that it would keep a neutral position and it would not join Slovenia in its lawsuit against Croatia. On July 8, the ECJ held an oral hearing, in which Slovenia stressed that the rejection of the arbitration procedure violated EU rules and policies. However, Croatia claimed that the ECJ did not have jurisdiction in this case.

In October, Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Sarec threatened that his country could block Croatia's entry in the Schengen area until the latter implemented the arbitration ruling. mtr

CYPRUS (TRNC / NORTHERN CYPRUS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1963

Conflict parties: TRNC / Northern Cyprus vs. government

Conflict items: secession, national power, resources

The non-violent crisis over resources and secession between the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the government of Cyprus continued.

The mandate of the peacekeeping mission UNFICYP was extended twice, on January 30 and July 26. Turkey and TRNC criticized this on both occasions. Talks between TRNC and the Greek Cypriot side resumed this year. On February 26, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades informally met with TRNC leader Mustafa Akıncı to discuss resuming peace talks. On April 8, United Nations envoy Jane Holl Lute met with Anastasiades and Akıncı in an effort to revive the negotiations. On July 13, Akıncı reissued a proposal to establish a joint committee concerning the offshore gas drilling activities. The following day, the Turkish foreign minister urged the Greek-Cypriot government to accept a cooperation plan and emphasized that Turkey would not halt drilling operations until then. On November 25, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres met with Anastasiades and Akıncı in Berlin, Germany, for informal talks, and promised to continue efforts to revive formal peace negotiations. Three days later, TRNC authorities accused Greek-Cypriots for not using the talks to solve the problem but to single out Turkey and Turkish Cyprus. plo

CYPRUS – TURKEY

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: Cyprus vs. Turkey

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The non-violent crisis continued between Cyprus and Turkey over international power, the maritime border demarcation, and resources, such as gas in the Aegean Sea.

The dispute over suspected fossil resources dominated the interaction of the conflict parties over the course of the year. The repeated announcement and continued deployment of Turkish drilling activities to explore gas reserves in Cypriot waters sparked criticism from Cypriot, Greek, EU, and US representatives. On June 15, the Turkish government announced the deployment of a second drilling ship after the Cypriot government had issued international arrest warrants for the crew of the first ship. On July 15, in response to Turkey's gas exploration in Cypriot-claimed waters, EU foreign ministers decided to put cooperation and financial aid on hold. On November 11, EU foreign ministers agreed to issue economic sanctions in response to Turkey's drilling efforts by establishing the necessary legal framework for asset freezes and travel bans. In response, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan threatened to release Islamic State prisoners from EU member states in its custody and return them to their native countries.

Cyprus and Greece criticized a memorandum of understanding between Turkey and Libya signed on November 27 to delineate the maritime borders between the two countries, and disputed its legality. The Turkish-Libyan deal was also opposed by the US, Russia, EU, Egypt, and Israel, also on December 6 Greece expelled the Libyan ambassador.

On December 14, Turkish naval forces escorted an Israeli ship out of Cyprus' claimed territorial waters that had been conducting research in coordination with Cypriot officials. Two days later, Turkey deployed an armed military drone to Northern Cyprus to escort its drilling ships, responding to the acquisition of Israeli drones by Cyprus in October to monitor its exclusive economic zone. US Congress voted to lift the 1987 arms embargo on Cyprus, on December 17, sparking immediate criticism from Turkish officials.

Over the course of the year, both conflict parties conducted several military exercises in the disputed maritime territories off the coast of Cyprus. For instance, between February 27 and March 8, Turkey conducted the military exercise Blue Homeland, which included the deployment of navy personnel in the Black Sea, the Aegean and the Mediterranean.

On December 5, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades announced to petition the ICJ to protect Cyprian offshore mineral rights. plo

 EU, USA ET AL. – RUSSIA

 Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: EU, US, UK, Germany, France, Norway, Canada, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania vs. Russia

 Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

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

As in previous years, both sides accused each other of territorial violations. For instance, on September 24 Baltic NATO member Estonia summoned the Russian ambassador, after a Russian aircraft allegedly violated its airspace. In addition, both sides blamed each other for unprofessional conduct during aerial or marine encounters. For instance, on June 7, the US and Russia held each other responsible for a near of their warships in the Pacific.

Both sides held multiple maneuvers throughout the year. NATO, for example, conducted military exercises in Georgia from March 18 to 29 [→ Georgia – Russia] and in Estonia from April 29 to May 17 [→ Estonia – Russia], the latter comprising approx. 10,000 troops and several hundred combat vehicles and aircraft. 16 NATO members staged sea maneuvers in the Baltic from June 14 to 21, including approx. 8,600 soldiers, 50 vessels and 40 aircraft, while Russia held drills in the same region and in the Arctic [→ Norway et al. – Russia (Arctic)]. Furthermore, Russia held collaborative maneuvers with China, India, and several central-Asian countries, including approx. 128,000 troops, 20,000 weapons, 600 aircraft, and 15 warships on six different Russian locations and in the Caspian Sea from September 16 to 21.

Over the course of the year, both sides repeatedly accused each other of cyber attacks. For instance, on June 17, Russia claimed it thwarted an US attack on its infrastructural control systems. NATO, on the other hand, conducted several drills as a response to alleged Russian cyber attacks, for instance in Estonia from April 9 to 12.

On August 23, perpetrators shot and killed a Russian citizen of Georgian descent in Berlin, Germany. The next day, German authorities detained a Russian, allegedly linked to the Russian security apparatus. On December 4, Germany expelled two Russian diplomats. In return, Russia expelled two German diplomats on December 12, claiming they had killed a former militant from North Caucasus [→ Russia (Islamist militants/Caucasus)] allegedly involved in the 2010 Moscow metro bombings. Both sides prolonged their respective sanction regimes, referring to the ongoing conflicts over Crimea [→ Russia – Ukraine] and Donbas [→ Ukraine (Donbas)], Ukraine.

Moreover, both sides continued to accuse each other of violating the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The US claimed that Russia deployed a number of SSC-8 missiles, leading to US withdrawal from the treaty on February 1. The treaty was terminated on August 2, the deadline President Donald Trump had set for Russia to comply with the US's demand to remove the weapons. tcr

 FRANCE (CORSIKAN NATIONALISTS / CORSICA)

 Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: CL, FC, FLNC et al. vs. government

 Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The non-violent crisis over the secession of Corsica from France continued between the paramilitary organization National Liberation Front of Corsica (FLNC), its splinters such as FLNC du 22-October, 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 hand.

The political standoff between nationalists and the government continued. While PaC insisted, for example, on measures to restrict mainland French and foreign investors' access to the regional property market, expanded use of the Corsican language, and an amnesty for paramilitaries, detained on mainland France, the government ruled out substantial changes. In return, FC's Gilles Simeoni, President of the Executive Council, and CL's Jean-Guy Talamoni, President of the Corsican Assembly, alongside the majority of Corsican mayors, boycotted Macron's visit to the region on April 4.

The report period saw an increase in paramilitary activity, especially in bomb attacks on property, owned by wealthy mainland French and foreigners. Throughout March, perpetrators bombed a total of eight secondary homes in various parts of the region. On April 1, police defused two IEDs, found in front of government buildings in the regional capital Bastia. Five years after FLNC's cessation of its armed struggle, several armed activists announced the group's reorganization and further attacks on property in late September, demanding a ban on mainland French and foreign investment in land on the island. On December 23, FLNC du 22-October, which had announced decommission in 2017, claimed responsibility for a bombing in Bonifacio three days earlier, which left a businessman's villa partially destroyed. mcm

 GEORGIA (SOUTH OSSETIA)

 Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: South Ossetian regional government vs. government

 Conflict items: secession, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over the secession of South Ossetia from Georgia and subnational predominance continued between the self-proclaimed South Ossetian regional government, supported by Russia, on the one hand, and the Georgian government of Georgia, on the other hand.

On February 4, South Ossetian border guards detained a Georgian priest near the village of Nikozi, Shida Kartli Region. He was accused of illegally crossing the line of conflict to South Ossetia. Throughout the year, South Ossetian author-

ities detained more than 20 other Georgian citizens under similar circumstances while, according to the South Ossetian regional government, two Georgian police officers abducted a South Ossetian resident near the village of Zardiantkar, South Ossetia, on April 4.

On June 9, South Ossetia held so-called parliamentary elections in which the ruling party United Ossetia lost its majority. Georgia condemned the elections, stating they undermined Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Neither the EU nor the US recognized the elections.

After a Russian politician used the Georgian speaker's seat in parliament on June 20, protesters took to the streets in the capital Tbilisi, criticizing the government for allowing Russian influence in Georgia and demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Abkhazia and South Ossetia [→ Georgia (opposition); Georgia – Russia; Georgia (Abkhazia)].

The demarcation of the ceasefire line between Georgia and South Ossetia remained an issue of contention. Georgia and its allies repeatedly accused Russia of extending the line, violating the 2008 ceasefire treaty. For instance, Russian troops used a border fence to divide the Georgian village of Gugutiankari, Shida Kartli Region, on August 7. At the end of August, tensions rose following the installation of a Georgian checkpoint near the town of Chorchana, Shida Kartli. South Ossetia sent armored vehicles to the town of Tselisi, South Ossetia, and demanded the removal of the checkpoint. On August 30 and September 13, officials from both sides met without reaching an agreement. South Ossetia accused Georgian law enforcers of injuring two people in the village of Kobi, Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region, on November 5. Georgia denied the accusations. clp

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, between right-wing groups, various regional movements against the Islamization of the Occident (GIDA), as well as xenophobic individuals on the one hand, and the government and pro-asylum activists on the other, continued.

According to the government, at least 997 acts of violence against asylum seekers, their accommodation, or other refugee facilities, were reported before September 30. At least 146 people were injured.

On June 2, at least one perpetrator shot and killed the pro-refugee district President of Kassel, in Isth, Hesse. He had been the target of a hate campaign since 2015. On June 15, police arrested a man in relation to the killing, who had links to right-wing extremist circles, among them the militant group Combat 18. Two other suspects were arrested over the course of the year.

On October 9, a right-wing militant attacked a synagogue and a kebab shop in Halle (Saale), Saxony-Anhalt, with explosives

and firearms whilst ongoing Jom Kippur celebrations. After killing two and injuring two more in nearby Landsberg, police arrested him. As in the case of comparable attacks [→ USA (right-wing extremists)], the assailant had announced and streamed his attack online, posting an anti-Semitic manifesto. Throughout the year, right-wing militants repeatedly attacked refugees. For instance, on January 1, an assailant injured 14 people in the cities of Bottrop, Essen, and Oberhausen, North Rhine-Westphalia, by repeatedly steering his car into groups. On July 22, an attacker shot and wounded an Eritrean in Wächtersbach, Hesse, and then killed himself before he could be arrested by police forces. On September 3, a person fired metal bullets with a slingshot at a central bus station in Taunusstein, Hesse, injuring a Syrian.

Additionally, xenophobes conducted various attacks on infrastructure for refugees. For instance, on June 30, arsonists targeted an apartment building in Sangerhausen, Saxony-Anhalt. On October 17, days before refugees were moved in, xenophobes set alight an empty asylum accommodation in Kirchberg an der Murr, Baden-Württemberg. On October 20, unidentified perpetrators fired several shots at an asylum centre in Obermehler, Thuringia, from a car and shouted racist slogans.

Throughout the year, federal prosecutors and police forces continued crackdowns on right-wing extremist groups. For instance, on April 10, police searched 30 properties linked to right-wing extremists in four states, especially targeting a right-wing economic network in Cottbus, Brandenburg. In Dresden, Saxony, federal prosecutors opened trial against eight alleged members of right-wing extremist group Revolution Chemnitz on September 30, suspected of i.a. planning and conducting attacks against refugees, political opponents, and journalists. mel

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 over the orientation of the political system continued between various left-wing and anarchist groups and different workers' unions on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

The conflict was marked by left-wing militant attacks against official facilities, by clashes between militants and security forces and by large-scale protests staged by workers' unions. Attacks by left-wing militants and clashes with the police occurred throughout the year.

For instance, on January 11, a group of 50 militants attacked a police car with clubs and stones in the center of the capital Athens, Attica region, injuring one police officer. On three occasions in February, the anarchist group Rouvikonas targeted the facilities of foreign embassies in Athens with paint balloons. On two separate occasions, on April 10 and 11, militants attacked police units in the Exarchia district of Athens,

throwing IEDs and stones. One police officer was injured. Between May 13 and 16, left-wing militants targeted the Athens offices of the parties SYRIZA, PASOK, and Nea Dimokratia with IEDs. On July 11, rioters injured two police officers in a stone attack in the Acropolis neighborhood of Athens. Police forces raided the strongholds of left-wing militants in Athens' Exarchia district in late August, who reacted by throwing IEDs and stones. On August 30, police reportedly fired tear gas and stun grenades inside a street cafe allegedly used by Rouvikonas as their informal headquarters. A group of 25 militants threw IEDs and stones at a police unit in Athens' Exarchia district on November 7, injuring three police officers.

On several occasions throughout the year, such as on May 20, left-wing militants staged concerted actions at different locations in Athens, vandalizing public property.

On November 17, participants of the annual march to commemorate the Polytechnic uprising in 1973 clashed with security forces in Athens and Thessaloniki, leaving two police officers injured and several police vehicles torched.

On December 6, thousands of protesters participated in a nationwide commemoration march against police violence in Athens, Patras, Western Greece, and other cities, which was followed by violent clashes between militants and the police overnight.

Throughout the year, the most active unions were the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) and the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE). On January 17, ADEDY staged a 24-hour walkout in Athens in support of a teachers' protest against public education reforms. On May 1, both ADEDY and GSEE mobilized thousands of people in a countrywide anti-austerity protest. On October 2, ADEDY and GSEE called for protests against proposed changes to the regulation of unions, which concerned the manner in which strikes are called as well as collective wage agreements. jth

GREECE – NORTH MACEDONIA (OFFICIAL NAME OF NORTH MACEDONIA)

Intensity: 1 | Change: **END** | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Greece vs. North Macedonia

Conflict items: other

The non-violent crisis between North Macedonia and Greece over the official name of the former ended, after the agreement signed on 06/17/2018 was finally ratified.

On January 11, the Macedonian parliament altered the country's constitution in order for its name to be changed. As in the previous year, protests against the name deal were held, with several hundred people rallying in the capital Skopje during the parliament's session. On January 20, protests also erupted in the Greek capital of Athens. Tens of thousands rallied ahead of the parliament's vote on the name deal. Protesters threw rocks, flares, firebombs, and paint, and the police responded with tear gas. Dozens were injured and seven were arrested. Violent protests occurred on January 24, in Athens and other cities. In Katerini, Central Macedonia Region, three police officers were injured and eleven protesters were detained after a confrontation.

Despite the protests, the Greek parliament ratified the agreement on January 25. Subsequently, on February 6, NATO signed the accession protocol with North Macedonia, using the country's new name. In a symbolic act two days later, Greece became the first country to ratify the protocol. On April 2, the newly elected Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis visited North Macedonia, thus making the first official visit of a Greek PM to Skopje since 1991.

However, the public dissatisfaction with the deal remained high. On August 16, unknown perpetrators destroyed the plaques explaining the Hellenic character of certain monuments in Skopje. The plaques had been installed the day before as part of the agreement between the two countries.

At its October 17-18 Paris summit, the EU did not start accession talks with North Macedonia due to a veto from France. The prospect of joining the EU had been one of the main motives in changing the country's name. The EU's decision led Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev to call early elections on 4/12/2020 [→ North Macedonia (opposition)]. dve

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 continued between the Kosovar government on the one hand, and the Serbian government and the Serbian minority in Kosovo on the other hand. While Serbia refused to acknowledge Kosovo as a sovereign state, Kosovo in turn refused to remove the 100 percent tax on Serbian goods that had been introduced in 2018, despite international pressure. The EU regarded an agreement between both conflict parties as a condition for their eventual membership.

Throughout the year, threats of military intervention further worsened their relations. For instance, on March 1, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic stated that Serbian forces were ready to prevent any kind of attack against the Serbian state and the Serbian population living on either side of the border. In reaction, Kosovar President Hashim Thaci declared that Kosovo would respond to any threat made by Serbia, including through the deployment of its army and police.

On May 27, Vucic declared that Serbia had lost control over Kosovo and called for a compromise solution. On May 28, Kosovar police arrested 19 police officers, two UN employees and six ethnic Serbian civilians in ethnically divided Mitrovica. The raid, allegedly to combat criminals, left at least five officers and six civilians injured. Subsequently, Vucic ordered all army forces to be ready for full combat and claimed that the raids had aimed to scare Kosovo's Serb minority. Subsequently, Serbian troops were deployed along the line of conflict. On the following day, thousands of ethnic Serbs rallied in North Mitrovica to protest the arrests, waving Serbian flags. Meetings between both presidents in Berlin, Tirana, and Paris did not yield any results. Vucic reiterated that a continuation of the dialogue depended on Kosovo lifting the tax on Serbian

goods. met

MOLDOVA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: opposition parties vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between several opposition parties, mainly the pro-EU electoral bloc ACUM, consisting of Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) and Dignity and Truth Platform Party (DTPP) on the one hand, and the government under President Igor Dodon from the pro-Russian Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), supported in parliament by pro-EU Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) on the other hand.

Over the course of the year, the government changed twice. In June, a coalition between ACUM and PSRM replaced the PDM-led government. Following its collapse in November, a minority government, supported by PSRM and PDM, replaced it. As in previous years, repercussions from the situation in the breakaway region of Transnistria [→ Moldova (Transnistria)] exacerbated the political crisis in Moldova.

In the run-up to the election, ACUM accused governing PDM of spreading misinformation and of illegal use of public funds. Furthermore, on February 21, both ACUM-leaders accused the authorities of poisoning after a medical examination allegedly found unusual amounts of heavy metals in their blood. On February 24, parliamentary elections took place under a controversial new voting-system. With 35 out of 101, PSRM won the most seats, followed by PDM and ACUM. OSCE described the elections as free and fair, but criticized the misuse of state resources and several incidents of vote buying. On March 20, the Orhei District Court jailed two DTPP activists to three and eight years in prison, respectively. Both claimed the ruling was politically motivated. Following their conviction, several dozen DTPP supporters clashed with police. The latter resorted to tear gas, leaving six people injured.

On June 8, ACUM and PSRM formed a government. However, the next day, the Constitutional Court invalidated the proceedings, temporarily suspended Dodon from his duties to dissolve parliament, and scheduled snap elections. The old government resigned and accepted its successor on June 14. Three days later, PDM chairman Vlad Plahotniuc announced that he had left the country as he no longer felt safe. He subsequently resigned as MP.

Throughout the second half of the year, the new government reportedly took several actions to clear state institutions from old party allegiances. For instance, between June 20 and June 26, all constitutional judges and the general prosecutor resigned. The government also appointed a new head of the National Anti-Corruption Centre. On August 8, the new interim general prosecutor opened an investigation against PDM for usurping power. PDM dismissed the investigation as politically motivated.

On November 12, PSRM, now supported by PDM deputies, staged a successful vote of no confidence against the gov-

ernment over the appointment of the new prosecutor general. On November 14, a Dodon appointed a minority government, with Ion Chicu, an independent candidate and former Dodon advisor, as prime minister. vpa

MOLDOVA (TRANSNISTRIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Transnistrian regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession continued between the self-proclaimed Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR) supported by Russia on the one hand, and the government of the Republic of Moldova (RoM) on the other hand.

On January 25, PMR-leader Vadim Krasnoselsky issued a decree describing the control of the RoM over the border village of Varnița, Anenii Noi District, 'temporary' and stated that administration was exercised by a neighboring village controlled by Transnistria, effectively putting the village under its jurisdiction. On May 13, the PMR revoked this decree, a step welcomed by the OSCE and the RoM. On February 21, several days before the parliamentary elections in the RoM [→ Moldova (opposition)], Transnistrian authorities detained both the head and secretary of a polling station electoral bureau in Varnița. The Central Electoral Commission denounced this action as an attempt to destabilize the situation before the election.

The Moldovan foreign minister repeatedly demanded the withdrawal of Russian forces from the PMR. In late August, on the occasion of his visit to Moldova, the Russian minister of defense declared that Russia was willing to start disposing ammunition stored in Cobasna, Transnistria district. This step was welcomed by the Moldovan authorities as well as the OSCE.

Negotiations on the Transnistrian settlement process took place in the 5+2 format in Bratislava, Slovakia, from October 9-10. However, no agreement could be reached on a joint protocol. Talks continued at the Bavaria conference on November 4-5 on building confidence between the political leaders of both sides. vpa

NORWAY ET AL. – RUSSIA (ARCTIC)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2001

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

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The non-violent crisis between Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States over territory and resources in the Arctic continued. As in previous years, tensions between Western states and Russia on other stages affected the conflict [→ EU, USA, et al. – Russia].

The status of Arctic sea routes and the North Pole remained contested. On May 6, the US rejected Canadian claims to the Northwest Passage as illegitimate, regarding the sea route as international waters, which Canada rejected. On May 23, Canada formally delivered a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, claiming 1.2 million square kilometers of Arctic seabed, including the North Pole. Denmark and Russia had submitted competing claims in 2014 and 2015, respectively. On August 20, US President Donald Trump canceled a planned state visit to Denmark, after Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen ruled out the sale of Greenland to the United States. Despite the disagreement, both countries announced they would strengthen their cooperation in the Arctic.

Over the course of the year, the military build-up in the Arctic continued. The US repeatedly criticized Russia for installing new infrastructure and weaponry, such as bases, radars, and missile systems, for instance on May 6. Meanwhile, on February 7, Russia accused Norway of escalating tensions in the region by, for example, assisting NATO submarines with infrastructure and supplies. Russia threatened counteraction on May 23, after the installation of a US radar system in Vardø, Troms og Finnmark county, Norway.

In addition, the conflicting parties held a number of maneuvers in the Arctic and bordering waters. For instance, Canada carried out drills in its Northwest Territories, alongside several NATO members, deploying 500 personnel between March 17 and April 1. Russia staged several maneuvers, for instance in the Barents Sea from October 15 to 17, involving five submarines, 105 aircraft, 213 missile launchers, and 12,000 troops. tlu

ROMANIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent conflict over national power between the opposition movement, led by the National Liberal Party (PNL) and President Klaus Iohannis on the one hand, and the Social Democratic (PSD) government on the other, de-escalated to a dispute.

After the PSD suffered significant losses in the European elections on May 26, the government lost a non-confidence vote on October 10. PNL leader Ludovic Orban formed a new government and was elected as prime minister on November 4. In the presidential elections on November 10, Iohannis was re-elected with a significant majority over former PSD president Viorica Dancila.

The PSD government's disputed anti-graft legislation was central to a consultative referendum on May 26, called by Iohannis. More than 80 percent of the votes were in favor of a prohibition of amnesties for corruption offenses and the use of emergency ordinances for judicial reforms. On December 4, the new government repealed a controversial 2017 parole law by the PSD government, which had resulted in the early

release of more than 22,000 convicts.

In contrast to previous years, protests were limited. The most prominent occurrence took place on August 10, when about 20,000 people rallied in Bucharest to mark the anniversary of the violent anti-corruption protest of 2018. sst

RUSSIA (ISLAMIST MILITANTS / NORTHERN CAUCASUS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: IS Caucasus Province vs. government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The violent crisis over ideology and secession continued between several militant groups fighting under the umbrella of the IS Caucasus Province on the one hand, and the central and regional governments on the other hand. The IS Caucasus Province aimed to establish an independent Islamic Emirate in the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD), comprising the republics of Dagestan (RoD), Chechnya (RoC), Ingushetia (RoI), Kabardino-Balkaria (RoKB), Karachay-Cherkessia (RoKC), and North Ossetia Alania (RoNOA), and the Stavropol Krai (SK) region.

IS claimed responsibility for several attacks at the beginning of the year. For instance, on 12/31/2018, a bomb attack on an apartment killed 39, and on January 1 another bomb attack on a minibus killed three. Both attacks took place in the city of Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk region. Government officials stated that a gas leak caused the building's collapse. IS also claimed responsibility for an attack on a security checkpoint in Sernovodskoye, SK, on January 25, that left two security personnel injured.

Throughout the year, security forces killed 23 militants, primarily during counterterrorism operations in the RoD, RoC, and RoKB. For instance, police forces killed five suspected militants in RoKB, three on February 27 in Nalchik, and two on September 18 in Chegem. Additionally, on January 11, police forces shot and killed three suspected IS recruiters on a highway between Kizilyurt and Makhachkala, RoD. According to the authorities, the militants had refused to stop their car and had opened fire. Two further suspected militants were killed by security forces on March 14 near the village of Balki, SK, after opening fire on the latter.

On April 24, the Russian Federal Security (FSB) raided two suspected militant cells allegedly preparing terrorist attacks against police officers in Grozny, RoC, and Kaspiysk, RoD. On June 21, twelve members of the extremist organization Takfir wal-Hijra were arrested under FSB accusations of spreading propaganda and planning to instate a Sharia state in the North Caucasus.

Furthermore, military courts sentenced several alleged members of IS and other Islamist groups, including a former officer of the Russian defense ministry, who was sentenced to 19 years in a penal colony. eeb

RUSSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2001

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 continued between various opposition groups, on the one hand, and the Russian government on the other hand.

Throughout the year, authorities pursued legal action against government critics and human rights activists, which were allegedly politically motivated. For instance, on March 18, a court in Chechnya sentenced the local head of the human rights group Memorial to four years in a penal colony for drug possession. He was released on parole on June 10. On June 6, police arrested journalist Ivan Golunov for allegedly selling drugs. Following several days of protests in the capital Moscow, Golunov was released from house arrest on June 11. Furthermore, on July 16, four police officers were dismissed from service for allegedly violating Golunov's rights.

Over the course of the year, opposition leader Alexei Navalny was arrested and convicted several times for organizing unauthorized rallies. For instance, on July 24, a court sentenced him to 30 days imprisonment. Furthermore, on October 9, authorities declared Navalny's Anti-Corruption Fund to be a foreign agent, resulting in increased scrutiny.

After the electoral commission banned more than 50 opposition candidates from running in the local elections on September 8, opposition groups staged weekly mass demonstrations in Moscow. For instance, on July 20, around 20,000 protesters took to the streets. On July 24, authorities opened a criminal investigation into election interference against some of the excluded candidates. In the three weeks of protests that followed, authorities detained more than 2,500 people in Moscow and several other cities. The police reportedly beat protesters with batons, injuring more than 60. On September 29, more than 20,000 people protested against use of force by the police and political repression in Moscow. Following the protests, Russian authorities opened criminal investigations against several opposition figures for organizing unauthorized rallies.

According to observers, Russian authorities further tightened control over the media. On March 10, several thousand people took to the streets of Moscow, Voronezh, eponymous region, and Khabarovsk, Primor'ye Krai, to rally against the sovereign internet bill, which entered into force on November 1. On December 2, a law was adopted allowing authorities to declare individuals to be foreign agents, if they distribute information online, receive funding from abroad or spread information via foreign media.

On several occasions, protests also erupted over local political issues. For instance, between May 13 and 15, around 2,000 demonstrators protested against the construction of an Orthodox church in a popular park in Yekaterinburg, Sverdlovsk Oblast. Authorities detained 24 people, and three were hospitalized as a result of clashes. hgr

RUSSIA – UKRAINE

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Ukraine
 Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The violent crisis over territory, international power, and resources between Russia and Ukraine de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. As in previous years, the contested status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, repercussions from the limited war in Donbas [→ Ukraine (Donbas)] and controversies over the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine shaped the conflict's dynamics.

Ukraine and Western countries continued to demand the release of three Ukrainian vessels and 24 servicemen captured by Russia during the Kerch Strait incident on 2018/11/25. On May 25, ITLOS ruled that Russia must immediately release those captured. However, Russia rejected the ruling, stating its belief that the incident did not fall under the court's jurisdiction.

Following the election of Volodymyr Zelensky as Ukrainian president, relations between both countries slightly improved. On August 7, Russia and Ukraine agreed to intensify their efforts towards a prisoner exchange, which took place one month later. This was the first exchange since 2017. Russia finally released the captured servicemen as part of the exchange and also returned the seized vessels on November 18. On November 11, Ukraine blamed Russia of non-compliance and stated that it could withdraw from the Minsk agreements. On December 9, the Normandy Format, consisting of Germany, France, Russia, and Ukraine, met in Paris for the first time in three years and agreed to a further prisoner exchange. On February 7, OSCE criticized Ukraine's decision to ban Russian election observers from taking part in the upcoming presidential elections. On April 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree to simplify the procedure for residents of the non-government-controlled parts of Donbas wishing to apply for Russian citizenship. He later pledged to consider the extension to all Ukrainian citizens. Ukraine and Western countries criticized the decree.

The long-term transit contract between the state-affiliated gas companies Gazprom and Naftogaz expired at the end of 2019. During the year, the EU mediated negotiations between Russian and Ukrainian energy ministers in Brussels, Belgium. Both sides signed an agreement over a new five-year gas transit deal on December 19, which was finalised by representatives of Naftogaz and Gazprom on December 26. The deal included the sum of USD 2.9 billion that Gazprom should pay Naftogazy, as ruled by Stockholm Arbitration Court in 2017.

On January 6, Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, handed over the Tomos, a religious decree, officially accepting the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU). The Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa and the Church of Greece followed suit, also recognizing OCU's canonical independence. In response, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow ceased their liturgical commemoration. sov

SPAIN (CATALAN NATIONALISTS / CATALONIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Catalan regional government, Catalan civil society groups vs. government, Spanish civil society groups

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over the secession of Catalonia continued between the Catalan regional government, formed by the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) and Together for Catalonia (JuntsxCat), the Popular Unity Candidacy and various nationalist civic organizations such as Catalan National Assembly, the Committees for the Defense of the Republic, and Òmnium Cultural on the one hand, and the Spanish government under Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, and several pro-unity parties and groups, such as Citizens' Party (Ciudadanos), Popular Party (PP), and far-right Voice (VOX), on the other hand.

On February 10, Ciudadanos, PP, and VOX rallied 45,000 people in the capital Madrid against Sánchez' plans to hold negotiations with the Catalan regional government.

From February 12 to October 14, the Spanish Supreme Court (TS) held trials against twelve Catalan politicians, foremost on charges of disobedience, sedition, and rebellion, over the Catalan independence referendum on 01/10/2017, in Barcelona, Catalonia. Accused were i.a. Catalan regional president Joaquim Torra, in absence of former president Carles Puigdemont (JuntsxCat), who had fled to Belgium after the Spanish government removed its government and suspended Catalonia's autonomy on 30/10/2017, the former vice president Oriol Junqueras (ERC), and several MPs of the Spanish Parliament. However, after the parliamentary elections in April, the accused MPs attended the opening session of the Spanish Parliament in Madrid on May 21. There were several incidents during the trial. For instance, on June 30, the Spanish National Intelligence Center claimed to have repelled a cyber-attack by Catalan pro-independence hackers against TS, as well as the responsible judge. On September 11, approx. 600,000 people took part in the annual Catalan pro-independence marches in Barcelona. On October 14, TS sentenced nine of the twelve accused with nine to 13 years in prison, charged with sedition and disobedience. On December 19, ERC demanded Junqueras' immediate release from prison, following an ECJ ruling that he had immunity as MEP. Following the TS' verdict, thousands of pro-independence protesters set up roadblocks, which shut down public transport and cut off access to Barcelona's airport. Two days later, on October 16, protests spread further to Tarragona, Girona, as well as Lleida, regional capitals of the eponymous communities. During these incidents, the Spanish Police used batons, rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse larger groups of Catalan pro-independence protesters. Meanwhile, pro-independence protesters set up roadblocks, set tires and cars ablaze, and threw stones, jars filled with acid and other objects at officers. 30 people jailed, and over a hundred injured during the unrest, among them at least 43 police officers. Five marches joined together in Barcelona to protest against the political prisoners' sentences. On October 19,

Torra condemned the violence and called for talks with the Spanish government.

On October 26, approx. 350,000 Catalan pro-independence supporters rallied in Barcelona. The protests became violent again and at least 600 people were injured. Police also arrested seven people. The same day, Scottish Catalan pro-independence groups held a demonstration in Glasgow, United Kingdom, drawing over a hundred people to march in solidarity with the jailed Catalan separatist leaders [→ United Kingdom (Scottish Nationalists / Scotland)]. The next day, at least 80,000 Spanish pro-unity supporters marched in Barcelona. Protests continued into November. On November 12, for instance, approx. 2,000 pro-independence protesters blocked the Spanish-French northeastern border checkpoint on highway AP-7, between La Jonquera, Spain, and Le Perthus, France, leading the Spanish and French riot police to remove demonstrators forcefully. [tcr](#)

SPAIN – UNITED KINGDOM (GIBRALTAR)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: Spain vs. United Kingdom

Conflict items: territory

The non-violent crisis over territory of the peninsula of Gibraltar continued between the United Kingdom (UK) and Spain. On October 21, the British House of Commons and the European parliament agreed on a draft treaty on the UK's withdrawal from the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community (Brexite). The draft treaty retains the right to veto the status of Gibraltar for both Spain and the UK. On December 23, Spain and UK agreed on a summit in January 2020 to negotiate the status of Gibraltar after Brexit. Furthermore, on April 3, the EU passed legislation allowing British citizens visa-free travel in the EU in case of a so-called no-deal Brexit. Before the legislation was passed, the European Parliament replaced its rapporteur for visa-free travel, the British MEP Claude Moraes, after he had refused to accept the European Parliament's description of Gibraltar as a 'colony of the British Crown'. This legislation led to protest by the British government including an official note of complaint from the UK's deputy ambassador to the EU.

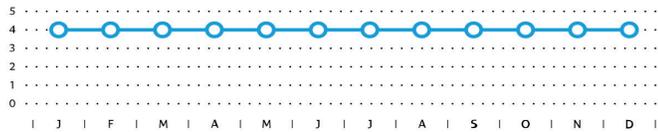
During February and March, Spanish warships repeatedly violated the sovereignty of British waters and were intercepted by British patrol boats. On May 6, a further naval violation of British waters was reported. Moreover, on February 26, the Spanish government passed a verbal note to the British government, condemning Gibraltar construction projects on artificially enlarged land, threatening legal action. [bal](#)

UKRAINE (DONBAS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: DPR, LPR vs. Ukraine

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources



The limited war over secession, the orientation of the political system, and resources in the Donbas region continued 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 hand. The affected regions comprised parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine. Both were formerly important coal and ore mining areas, as well as industrial centers.

The conflict left at least 110 Ukrainian soldiers and between 47 and 169 militants killed, while approx. 400 Ukrainian soldiers and between 68 and 224 militants were wounded this year. Over the course of the year, all conflict parties violated the Minsk agreements. For example, there was no progress to remove heavy weapons from agreed withdrawal lines. On April 3, UNHCR voiced concerns about the danger of landmines, calling the region one of the most landmine-contaminated areas in the world. Furthermore, both sides repeatedly denied the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) access to the disengagement zone.

Over the year, SMM recorded 299,633 ceasefire violations. Recorded explosions, most of them caused by artillery shells, were nearly constant in Donetsk oblast. There were around 5,000 recorded explosions per month, a number which dropped in January and August. They saw similar high levels in Luhansk oblast only in springtime. Clashes were concentrated near Avdiivka, Yasynuvata, around Donetsk airport, and in the vicinity of Pervomaisk and Zolote, Luhansk oblast. For instance, on January 17, DPR-militants fired an anti-tank missile on a supply truck in Troiyske, Luhansk oblast, wounding ten Ukrainian soldiers. On March 8, and on the days around Orthodox Easter on April 21, a short-lived ceasefire recommitment came into effect. The investigations by the Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team (JIT) into the 2014 downing of Malaysian Airline Flight MH17 continued. On June 19, Dutch prosecutors charged three Russians and a Ukrainian for shooting down the plane and scheduled their trial for March 2020. However, JIT-member Malaysia dismissed the move as politically motivated and urged for further investigations. In a commando operation on June 27, Ukrainian security agents captured Volodymyr Tsemakh, supposed commander of the anti-aircraft unit allegedly responsible for MH17's downing, inside DNR-controlled Snizhne, Donetsk oblast, and subsequently interrogated him alongside Dutch prosecutors in the Ukrainian capital Kiev. The operation reportedly left an agent dead and another wounded by mines. Following Tsemakh's

release during a prisoner exchange on September 7 [→ Russia – Ukraine], the Netherlands called for Russia to extradite him for further investigations. However, Tsemakh later returned to DNR. According to a DPR news outlet, on August 30, the Ukrainian army shelled positions near Grigorovka, Donetsk oblast, with 120mm artillery, killing three DPR-militants and injuring five. By September 11, three volunteer battalions had been officially incorporated into Ukrainian military and police forces.

According to the UN, average monthly civilian casualties were 50 percent lower than in 2018, totaling 162 civilian casualties overall, including 26 killed. Most casualties were caused by shelling, small arms, and mines. Furthermore, residential areas and infrastructure were damaged by heavy artillery, particularly in Chermalyk and Gorlovka, both Donetsk oblast, and in Zolote. According to UNHCR, nearly 1.5 million people remained internally displaced. As in previous years, civilians in the affected regions suffered restrictions of freedom of movement and speech, as well as a lack of food, energy, shelter, and basic social services. International organizations highlighted the serious humanitarian situation and held both sides accountable. For instance, on February 6, the electricity supply of Kruta Hora, Luhansk oblast, was cut for three days due to shelling. On March 1, a separatist news outlet stated that the gas supply of DPR-controlled Yasynuvata was cut by shelling, leaving 600 people without gas. As of October 28, the SMM had observed damage due to shelling and small-arms fire to eleven schools and three kindergartens. On November 27, UNOCHA reported that it had received USD 82 million – half of the total amount required for the humanitarian aid program for Donbas.

Throughout the year, efforts to resolve the conflict continued. The Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), consisting of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE, met several times. Additional talks in the Normandy Format, consisting of the heads of state of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine, commenced in Paris on December 9. Both formats subsequently led to two prisoner exchanges [→ Russia – Ukraine]. Additionally, the negotiations in Paris over the Minsk agreements resulted in an agreement to pull back from three frontline positions before the next meeting in 03/2020. Russian President Vladimir Putin underlined the importance of a special status for the separatist-held regions, which sparked protests by Ukrainians [→ Ukraine (right-wing / opposition)]. However, formal political autonomy was rejected by newly elected President Volodymyr Zelensky. He announced that this would only happen after Ukraine regained control over its border with Russia. Previously, Zelensky had provisionally agreed to hold local elections in the areas not controlled by the government in Donetsk and Luhansk, as foreseen in the 'Steinmeier formula' in accordance with the Minsk agreements on October 1. The TCG successfully established a new disengagement area near Stanytsia Luhanska, Luhansk oblast, in June. On November 21, a refurbished bridge for pedestrian traffic at the Stanytsia Luhanska disengagement area went operational, linking government- and separatist-controlled areas. Furthermore, on October 1, the parties reached an agreement to pull troops out of Petrivske village, Donetsk oblast, and Zolote town. This accomplishment came three years after their first attempts to withdraw, and sparked protests against the deal in the capital Kiev, Lviv, Kharkiv and Mariupol in early October. Neverthe-

UKRAINE (DONBAS)



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December



less, the withdrawal of forces and equipment in the Zolote and Petrivske disengagement areas was completed in the first half of November.

Discussion of a UN peacekeeping mission in Donbas continued. While then-Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko called for deployment of UN peacekeepers in the whole of Donbas on February 20, Zelensky supported a sequenced approach, which could be confined to the frontline. However, later in the year, he supported a UN-mission to the Ukrainian-Russian border area in the non-government controlled areas. Russia instead favored a mission confined to the frontline, to protect OSCE observers supporting a joint OSCE-UN peacekeeping mission.

On September 12, the USA released USD 250 million in military aid to Ukraine, which it had previously withheld [→ EU, USA et al. – Russia]. In late December, Ukraine declared it had signed contracts with the USA and NATO to buy 150 anti-tank Javelin missiles, totalling USD 39 million. On November 4, the UK announced the extension of its training mission to Ukraine until 03/2023. As occurred last year, SMM reported supply trucks crossing the separatist-controlled border between Ukraine and Russia in Luhansk oblast during the night of May 30 and June 2. The EU extended its economic sanctions against Russia on June 22 and again on December 13 until 07/2020. Additionally, the EU Parliament adopted a resolution recommending the appointment of an EU Special Representative to Ukraine in March. On November 8, the ICJ ruled that it had jurisdiction over accusations made by Ukraine against terrorism-financing by Russia in eastern Ukraine. cbi, jub

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 continued between the Ukrainian government, right-wing groups, and opposition parties, supported by civil-right groups. This year both presidential, and early parliamentary elections dominated the conflict, as did major changes to Ukrainian politics following the election of President Volodymyr Zelensky and his party Servant of the People (SN).

In the parliamentary election on July 21, SN outpolled its opponents, gaining a majority with 254 out of 450 seats, whereas far-right parties, such as Svoboda, National Corps (NC), and Right Sector failed to reach the vote threshold. According to international observers, the elections were free and fair with sporadic incidents of unrest among voters.

After taking office, Zelensky introduced a series of bills, especially regarding a peaceful solution of the Donbas conflict [→ Ukraine (Donbas)], criticized by the conservative opposition in parliament as concessions to Russia. For instance, the leaders of the parties European Solidarity, Fatherland, and Voice called on Zelensky not to concede during the negotiations in

Paris, France, on December 9 [→ Russia – Ukraine]. On October 14, in the run-up to the talks nationalists, far-right organizations, and veteran groups rallied about 20,000 in the capital Kiev, as well as in Mariupol, Lviv, and Kharkiv, opposing the government's agreement with Russia to grant Donbas special status.

Attacks on journalists continued. For instance, on May 4, perpetrators beat investigative journalist Vadym Komarov to death. Moreover, on July 13, assailants damaged the 112 TV channel building in Kiev, owned by Taras Kozak, member of the pro-Russian party Opposition Platform, with a grenade launcher.

Right-wing groups, such as NC and C14, continued their political activities and attacks on opposition activists, minorities, and civil-right groups. For example, on March 9, NC clashed with police forces during anti-corruption demonstrations in Kiev and Cherkasy, eponymous oblast, leaving 27 injured. Moreover, on March 23, over 1,000 NC demonstrators protested against the government, demanding the conviction of Oleh Gladkovsky, former First Deputy Chairman of the country's National Security and Defense Council. Furthermore, on March 28, NC representatives threw fireworks and flares at the home of MP Viktor Medvedchuk, leader of a pro-Russian NGO.

Additionally, violence continued against members of the LGBT community. For example, on September 15, the LGBT parade in Kharkiv, eponymous oblast, resulted in clashes between members of right-wing groups on the one hand, and police and participants on the other, leaving two police officers injured and 17 people detained. sdr

UNITED KINGDOM (NATIONALISTS / NORTHERN IRELAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1968

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

Conflict items: secession

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

Another round of power-sharing talks started on May 7, involving N-IRL's five main political parties as well as the British and Irish governments, which aimed to restore the 2017 collapsed N-IRL regional government, but remained inconclusive. Throughout the year, republican party Sinn Féin repeatedly called for a referendum on Irish reunification especially in the case of a so-called hard Brexit from the EU.

As in previous years, paramilitary activities by dissident republican and loyalist groups continued. Overall, according to the Police Service of N-IRL (PSNI), 15 bombing incidents and 85 attacks occurred. PSNI conducted a number of raids against dissident republicans and loyalists, arresting 147 people. 18 of them were later charged. On January 18, members of dissident republican paramilitary group Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) hijacked a van and detonated it in

front of Londonderry's courthouse, Derry and Strabane district. On March 12, RIRA claimed responsibility for five letter bombs, sent to major transport hubs in UK's capital London and Glasgow, Glasgow city council area, the week prior.

Unrest occurred in the lead up to the contentious annual Easter Rising commemorative parades. Rioting ensued on April 18, after British security forces conducted house raids in search of guns and explosives in the city's Creggan estate. From a crowd of up to 100 people, nationalist youths attacked PSNI with projectiles and approx. 50 petrol bombs, and blocked roads by setting cars on fire. An RIRA militant fired shots at officers, killing a journalist. In relation to the incident, PSNI conducted at least 18 searches and arrested eleven. While RIRA-aligned minor party Saoradh called off a planned commemoration march in Londonderry, paramilitaries marched in several other cities.

Over the course of the year, dissident republicans conducted further attacks on PSNI and army personnel, among them booby-traps by RIRA in east Belfast, on June 1, and Continuity IRA in Craigavon, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon district, on July 26. On August 27, Saoradh chairperson Brian Kenna claimed that violence was inevitable as long as the region was divided by a so-called force of arms. During a PSNI raid in Creggan on September 10, up to 100 nationalist youths attacked officers with over 40 petrol bombs and other projectiles, leaving at least two youths injured. On October 16, RIRA announced they would attack any kind of border patrols and infrastructure installed as a result of Brexit.

Sectarian tensions in N-IRL persisted, with a number of assaults reported. For instance, Protestants abused and beat up a Catholic in Kilkeel, Newry, Mourne and Down district, on July 14. Throughout the year, unauthorized erected bonfires, marking meaningful anniversaries of both communities, prompted standoffs. In the wake of the events, PSNI blamed republican and loyalist paramilitaries respectively of using human shields to thwart removal and orchestrate disorder. For instance, on August 8, approx. 150 riot officers withdrew from the site of a nationalist bonfire in the New Lodge estate of north Belfast after dozens of youths attacked their lines with fences, fireworks, and projectiles, leaving three officers and two bystanders injured. On August 11, PSNI arrested five people during the Protestant Apprentice Boys parade in Londonderry. Three days of unrest ensued, following nationalists repeated attacks on the fraternity's Memorial Hall and PSNI with petrol bombs and other projectiles.

Sectarian tensions also affected Scotland, where respective antagonistic communities live. Saoradh and aligned Irish Republican groups staged a number of rallies throughout the year, which led to confrontations and arrests. For instance, on September 8, in the Govan district of Glasgow, approx.

1,000 people took part in two republican marches and a loyalist counter protest. Demonstrators attacked mounted and riot police with fireworks and other projectiles, leaving an officer injured. Police arrested ten people. mcm

UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS / SCOTLAND)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2007

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

Conflict items: secession

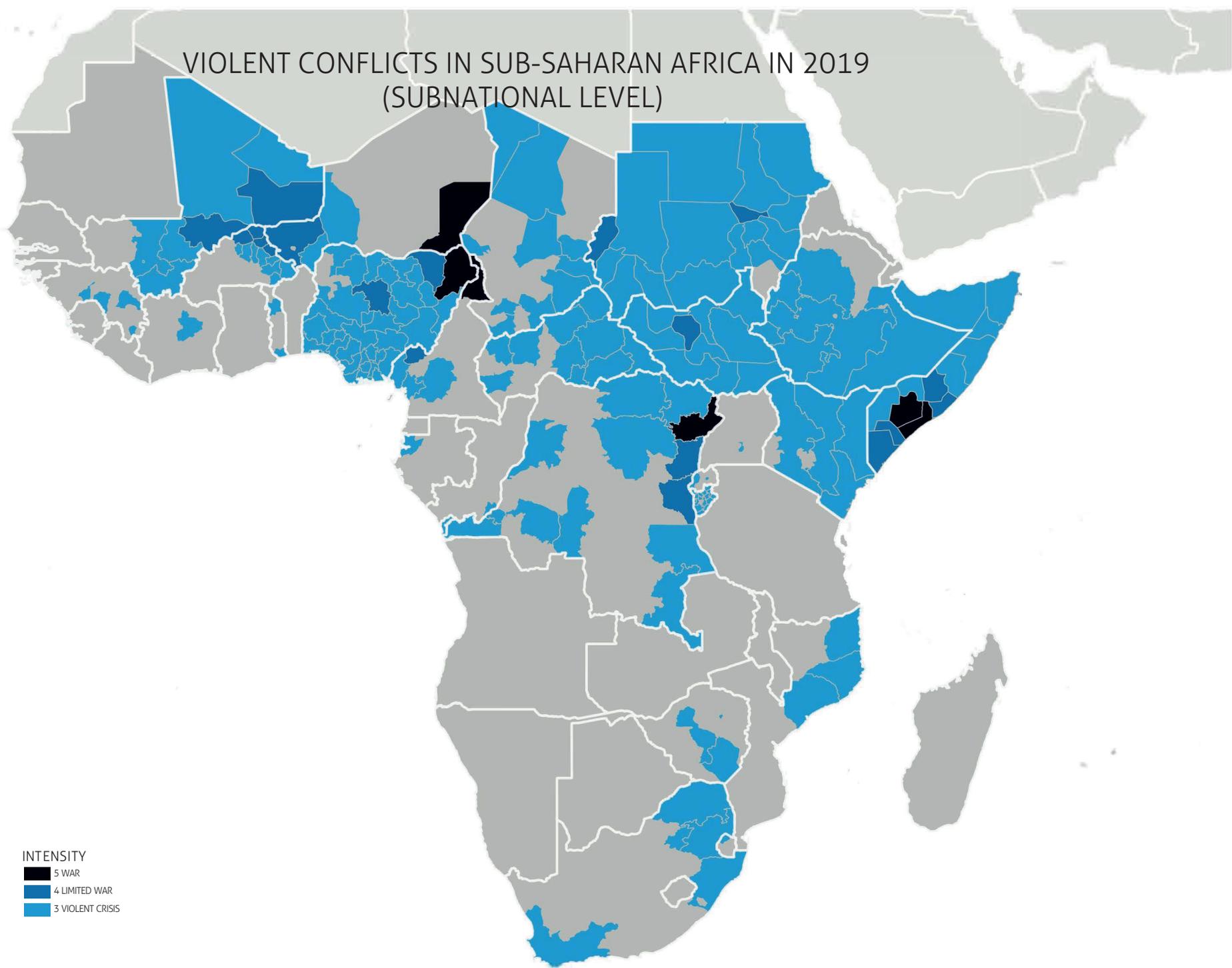
The non-violent crisis over the secession of Scotland from the United Kingdom (UK) continued, between the Scottish regional government, formed by the Scottish National Party (SNP), the Scottish Green Party (SGP) and the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), backed by nationalist civic organizations such as All Under One Banner (AUOB) on the one hand, and the British government under then-Prime Minister Theresa May and Prime Minister Boris Johnson (Conservatives) on the other hand.

The political standoff continued between nationalists and the British government concerning a second referendum on Scottish independence. SNP demanded the scheduling of another vote, which both May and Johnson repeatedly ruled out. On March 1, SNP published economic proposals, which included its plan to introduce a new currency after Scotland gained independence. On April 24, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon (SNP) stated that she wanted a legally approved referendum to be held by May 2021, ruling out an unofficial poll like that in Catalonia [→ Spain (Catalan Nationalists / Catalonia)]. On May 29, the Scottish government published a bill, setting general rules for the envisaged referendum. The Scottish parliament (Holyrood) passed it on December 19.

Throughout the year, pro-independence groups, led by AUOB, rallied several times in various parts of the region, demanding a second independence referendum, with SGP, SNP, and SSP politicians taking part. For instance, on May 4, 30,000 - 100,000 people marched in Glasgow, Glasgow city council area. AUOB claimed 200,000 demonstrating in Edinburgh, Edinburgh city council area, on October 5. However, on November 3, Johnson again ruled out a second independence vote. The UK general election on December 12 resulted in a confirmation of Johnson's government, while SNP won 47 out of 59 Scottish seats. Referring to the Scottish results as a mandate, Sturgeon formally requested that the British government transfer powers to Holyrood on December 19, enabling it to stage another referendum on independence. mcm

Sub-Saharan Africa

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2019 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, HIIK observed 83 active conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the previous year, six wars and nine limited wars were counted in Sub-Saharan Africa. Only the Middle East and Maghreb region was more affected by highly violent conflicts. This year, four limited wars continued whereas three escalated to wars. One limited war de-escalated to a violent crisis. Two conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, which were fought at war-level in 2018, de-escalated to limited wars in 2019. Two wars decreased significantly to violent crises. No new wars emerged but two continued.

In the Nigerian presidential elections in February, incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected. Compared to previous election periods, so-called electoral violence decreased, however the conflict remained a violent crisis [→ Nigeria (northerners - southerners)]. The war over subnational predominance and resources, mainly arable land, in Nigeria's Middle Belt decreased to a limited war between the predominantly Christian farmers of the Berom and Tiv tribes on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads on the other hand [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. In 2019, the conflict accounted for approx. 400 deaths, three times fewer than in 2018.

While the situation in some parts of Nigeria became less violent, assassinations by gangs and rural bandits increased, leading to a tense situation in the north western state of Zamfara, which borders Niger. Reports suggested that the Boko Haram Faction Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) was establishing camps there to strengthen their connection to Islamic State Greater Sahara (ISGS). Since early 2019, ISGS and ISWAP have claimed responsibility for their attacks using the same branding in their media output. In the north eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the war continued for the ninth consecutive year 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 hand [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. This year, the conflict accounted for approx. 2,400 deaths. ISWAP primarily attacked military bases and convoys and, as a consequence, military fatalities outnumbered civilian deaths in 2019 for the first time since the beginning of the conflict. The two violent crises in the Niger Delta [→ Nigeria (Ijaw groups / Niger Delta); Nigeria (pro-Biafra Groups / Biafra)] also persisted.

This year, the security situation in many West African countries was continuously fraught due to the ongoing presence of Islamist groups and their struggle for international power [→ Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, ISGS et al.)]. Especially in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger Islamist groups targeted government facilities, military posts, and civilians, and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The groups' presence and attacks on villages also continued to spur inter-communal conflicts, as several ethnic groups accused the predominantly Muslim Fulani ethnic group of affiliation with the Islamists [→ Burkina Faso (inter-communal rivalry); Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali), (inter-ethnic rivalry / northern Mali)]. Furthermore, the run-up and holding of election, and the subsequent implementation of the results continued to be a main point of contention between opposition groups and the governments in several West African countries. For instance, Guinean opposition groups continued to protest against the contested electoral results of 2018 municipal elections and the apprehended extension of President Alpha Condé's terms of presidency [→ Guinea (opposition)]. Similarly, opposition protests against the results of 2018 elections in Côte d'Ivoire coincided with increasing demands for fair presidential elections in 2020. On several occasions, members of opposition groups and government supporters, as well as police forces clashed [→ Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)]. Subsequent to the contested elections, international and regional actors, such as the Economic Community of West African States, called for peaceful elections and adherence to the official terms of presidency in several states, among them Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, and Togo. The opposition conflict in Niger [→ Niger (opposition)] and the conflict over the secession of Casamance in Senegal [→ Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)] de-escalated to non-violent crises.

The Mozambican Islamist militant group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jammaa (ASWJ) steadily escalated attacks on civilian and military targets in the Northern province of Cabo Delgado [→ Mozambique (ASWJ)]. In September, the Russian mercenary Wagner group was deployed to support Mozambican security forces in the gas-rich region, provoking intensified clashes with ASWJ. Meanwhile, the peace process between the militant opposition party RENAMO and the government continued and led to the signing of a peace accord [→ Mozambique (RENAMO)].

In Burundi, government-affiliated armed groups continued to attack opposition figures and civilians in the face of the 2020 presidential elections [→ Burundi (opposition)]. Several armed Burundian opposition parties relocated to the country's border region with DR Congo and repeatedly clashed with the two governments' security forces this year [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL, RED-Tabara, Forebu)]. Diplomatic tensions between the governments of Burundi and Rwanda de-escalated, although the governments repeatedly made each other responsible for attacks by unidentified groups in the border regions [→ Burundi – Rwanda].

The diplomatic dispute over the reappraisal of France's role in the Rwandan genocide between the two countries' governments prompted French President Emmanuel Macron to summon a historical commission over the topic. In February, reports surfaced that the French government had had advance information over the assassination that sparked the genocide.

The South African conflict between xenophobes and South African national continued on a violent level, with several attacks on foreign-owned shops and presumed foreign truck drivers [→ South Africa (xenophobes)]. Protests and land occupation by residents of informal settlements also continued throughout the year, and one leader of a 2015 occupation was shot and killed [→ South Africa (socioeconomic protests)].

In the CAR the conflict over national power and resources de-escalated, between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka and the government following a peace agreement between the parties. However, violations of the agreement's provisions by most of the signatories were reported throughout the year [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka)].

In the DR Congo the election of F. Tshisekedi resulted in an increased demobilization of armed groups. However, the security environment, in particular in the eastern provinces of the DR Congo, remained precarious. The ADF targeted civilians, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC), MONUSCO forces, as well as humanitarian actors in North Kivu. The groups' insurgency resulted in a significant number of civilian casualties and the displacement of around 81,000 people [→ DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)].

In Ituri the conflict between Hema and Lendu communities escalated and led to the displacement of over 300,000 people, as well as the destruction of numerous villages in the affected areas [→ DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Furthermore, armed groups in the eastern DR Congo, fought over territorial control and repeatedly clashed with FARDC, MONUSCO, and each other, leading to more than 750 casualties and the displacement of 450,000 people. In South Kivu, conflict between armed groups recruited from Banyamulenge communities and Bafuliuro, Babembe and Banyindu communities led to large scale destruction of infrastructure, livestock and housing in the region [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)].

In the Cameroonian North West and South West regions, the security situation remained volatile following the 2017 declaration of independence by Anglophone secessionists [→ Cameroon (English-speaking minority)]. The limited war accounted for at least 600 conflict-related deaths and more than 200,000 internally displaced people as a result of ongoing fighting between secessionists and government forces. Furthermore, civilians increasingly became the targets of both conflict parties. The frequent appearance of ghost-towns in Anglophone regions underlined the secessionists' ability to impose restrictions such as lockdowns on the local population.

In August, the Chadian government declared the state of emergency for the regions of Sila, Ouaddai and Tibesti. The eastern regions of Sila and Ouaddai were especially affected by repeating clashes between farmers and pastoralists over the access to arable land and water [→ Chad (inter-communal rivalry)]. Although violent tensions were observed in previous years, the conflict escalated in 2019 with 177 conflict-related deaths. In the resource-rich north-western Tibesti region, militant groups, mainly the United Resistant Forces (UFR), the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), and the Committee of Self-Defence (CSD), continued to clash with government allies such as the Libyan National Army (LNA) and Sudanese mercenaries [→ Chad (militant groups)]. Additionally, French air force supported the government by launching airstrikes against militant convoys.

The violent crises between opposition parties and the government in Chad, Gabon, and Uganda continued [→ Chad (opposition), → Gabon (opposition), → Uganda (opposition)], whereas the non-violent crisis in Djibouti again escalated to a violent level [→ Djibouti (opposition)]. Presidential elections in Chad, Djibouti, and Uganda, are scheduled for 2021, and already dominated political discourse.

The security situation in the Sudan was mainly affected by countrywide mass protests against President Omar al-Bashir which had started in late 2018 [→ Sudan (opposition)]. Before al-Bashir was ousted from office by the military in April, at least 260 people were killed in these protests. While the opposition conflict intensified, the long-standing war in Darfur region de-escalated for the first time in 16 years [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. This conflict between the Arab-speaking government and the African Sudan Revolutionary Frontleft less than 200 people killed, which marked a significant decrease in comparison to the previous years. The sub-state conflict between various cattle herding groups escalated, however, mostly due to an inter-communal clash between Maaliya herders and Masalit tribesmen in El Geneina, West Darfur, on December 31, which left at least 50 people dead and displaced at least 48,000 [→ Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)]. In South Sudan, the equivalent inter-communal conflict over resources and cattle continued on the level of a limited war [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)], just as the conflict between the government and the main opposition party Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)]. While SPLM/A-IO and government largely ceased fighting each other directly after the 2018 peace agreement, both groups conducted violence against civilians throughout 2019. The South Sudan opposition conflict escalated to the level of a violent conflict following the emergence of a new group, the South Sudan United Front, which clashed with government forces in several instances over the summer.

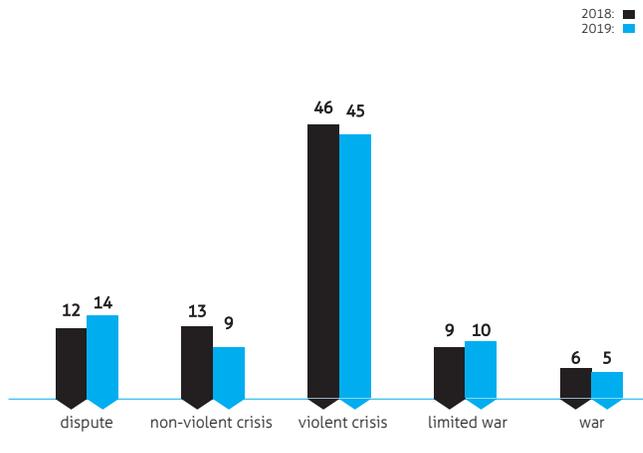
In the Horn of Africa, the war continued between the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab and the Somali and Kenyan governments, supported by, amongst others, the African Union Mission for Somalia as well as American military forces [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. In Somalia, the conflict over subnational predominance de-escalated from a limited war to a violent crisis 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). In addition, regional and international efforts towards peace between the two member states were observed [→ Somalia (Somaliland - Puntland)]. Further, the rivalry between various Somali subclans, such as Habar Gedir and Biyamal, continued on the level of a violent crisis [→ Somalia (subclan rivalry)].

In Kenya, last year's violent crisis de-escalated to a non-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 [→ Kenya (opposition)].

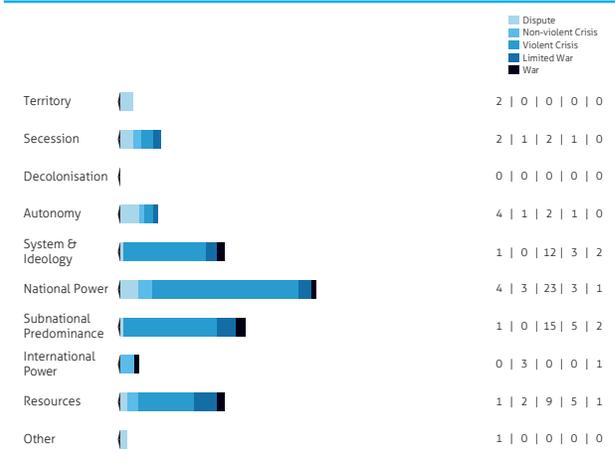
In Ethiopia, Abyi Ahmed continued to implement numerous political reforms and to ease the relationship between the government and some of the country's rebel groups, such as Ginbot 7, TPDM, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and the Ogaden Liberation Front. However, the government allegedly conducted airstrikes on OLF strongholds in western Ethiopia since parts of the group refused to participate in a DDR process [→ Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)]. Various ethnic groups, such as the Somali, Amhara, and Oromo, continued to fight over subnational predominance in Ethiopia. This year, more ethnic groups were involved and, compared to previous year, more regions in Ethiopia were affected by violence [→ Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)].

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

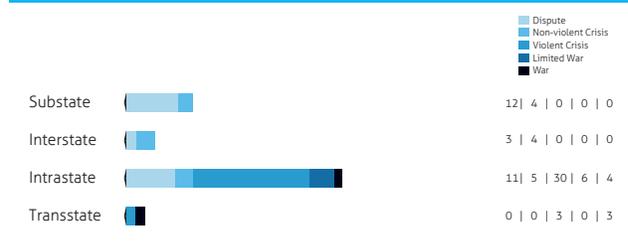
CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2019 COMPARED TO 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2019



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2019



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Overview: Conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Angola (FLEC et al. / Cabinda)	MIC, FLEC vs. government	secession	1975	•	3
Burkina Faso (inter-communal rivalry)	Mossi, Foulsé, Bella, Kogllewoogo vs. Fulani vs. Islamist groups	subnational predominance, resources	2016	•	3
Burkina Faso (opposition)*	CDP vs. government	national power	2014	•	2
Burundi (opposition)	ADC-Ikibiri, CNL, UPRONA, RED-Tabara vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	3
Burundi – Rwanda	Burundi vs. Rwanda	international power	2015	↘	2
Burundi, DR Congo (FNL, RED-Tabara, Forebu)	FNL, RED-Tabara, Forebu vs. Burundi, DR Congo	national power	2005	•	3
Cameroon (English-speaking-minority)	English-speaking-minority vs. government	secession, autonomy	2016	•	4
Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka, ex-Séléka)	Anti-Balaka vs. Ex-Séléka vs. government	national power, resources	2012	↘	4
Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA)*	LRA vs. CAR, DRC, South Sudan, Uganda	subnational predominance, resources	1987	•	3
Chad (inter-communal rivalry)	farmers vs. pastoralists	subnational predominance	1947	•	3
Chad (militant groups)	CCSMR, UFR, CSD 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	↓	1
Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1999	•	3
Djibouti (FRUD)*	FRUD vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	↘	1
Djibouti (opposition)*	MJO, USN vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↗	3
Djibouti – Eritrea*	Djibouti vs. Eritrea	territory	2008	↘	1
DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa)*	Bantu militias vs. Twa militias	subnational predominance	2013	•	3
DR Congo (Ituri militias)	Ituri militias vs. government	subnational predominance	1999	↗	5
DR Congo (Kata Katanga)*	Kata Katanga vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2011	↑	3
DR Congo (KN)	KN vs. BM, 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	↗	5
DR Congo (opposition)	Lamuka vs. FCC vs. government	national power	1997	•	3
DR Congo – Rwanda*	DR Congo vs. Rwanda	international power	1998	↘	2
DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR, CNRD)	FDLR vs. CNRD vs. DR Congo, Rwanda	subnational predominance, resources	1994	•	3
DR Congo, Uganda (ADF)	ADF vs. DR Congo, Uganda	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1995	•	4
Egypt – Ethiopia, Sudan (GERD)	Egypt vs. Ethiopia, Sudan	resources	2011	•	2
Eritrea (RSADO)*	RSADO vs. government	autonomy	1999	•	1
eSwatini (opposition)	SUDF, COSATU, PUDEMO vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	•	3
Ethiopia (ARDUF)*	ARDUF vs. government	autonomy	1995	↘	1
Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)	Oromo vs. Somali vs. Argoba vs. Kerayu vs. Qemant vs. Amhara vs. Oromo vs. Amhara vs. Amhara vs. Gumuz; Gumuz vs. Shinasa	subnational predominance, resources	2017	↓	3
Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)	OLF vs. government	subnational predominance	1992	•	3
Ethiopia (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2005	•	3
France – Rwanda	France vs. Rwanda	other	2004	•	1
Gabon (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2009	↗	3
Gambia (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2016	•	3

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Guinea (opposition)	FNDC vs. government	national power	2006	•	3
Guinea Bissau (opposition)*	PRS, Madem vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	↑	3
Kenya (inter-communal rivalry)	Turkana vs. Pokot vs. Ilchamus vs. Borana vs. Gabra vs. Turkana vs. Nyangatom vs. Degodia vs. Garre	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)	Dogon, Bambara, Dozo vs. Fulani vs. Islamist groups	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	4
Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)	CMA vs. Platform vs. Islamist groups	subnational predominance	2012	•	3
Mali (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2012	•	3
Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, ISGS et al.)	MLF, Ansaroul Islam, AQIM, OIC, JNIM, Al-Mourabitoun, ISGS, Ansar Dine vs. USA, France, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, Algeria, Chad, USA	international power	1998	↗	5
Mozambique (ASWJ)	ASWJ vs. government	system/ideology	2017	↗	4
Mozambique (RENAMO)	RENAMO, RENAMO Military Junta vs. government	national power	2012	•	3
Niger (opposition)*	Moden/FA Lumana vs. government	national power	2009	↘	2
Nigeria (Christians – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1960	•	3
Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)	farmers vs. pastoralists	subnational predominance, resources	1960	↘	4
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 (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2015	•	1
Rwanda (opposition)*	FDU-Inkingi vs. government	national power	2003	•	1
Rwanda – Uganda*	Rwanda vs. Uganda	international power	2018	↗	2
Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)*	MFDC vs. government	secession	1982	↘	2
Sierra Leone (opposition)*	APC vs. government	national power	2007	•	3
Somalia (ASWJ)*	ASWJ vs. government vs. Interim Galmudug Administration	subnational predominance	2014	END	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	↘	3
Somalia (Somaliland)*	regional government of Somaliland vs. government	secession	1991	•	1
Somalia (subclan rivalry)	Habar Gedir vs. Hawadle vs. Dulbahante 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)	DA, EFF, IFP, civil rights groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2015	•	3
South Africa (socioeconomic protests)	residents of informal settlements vs. government	system/ideology	2018	•	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

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
South Sudan (opposition)	SSOA, SSUF, PDM, NAS vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↗	3
South Sudan (SPLM/A-IO)	SPLM/A-IO vs. government	national power	2011	•	4
South Sudan – Sudan*	South Sudan vs. Sudan	territory, resources	2011	↘	1
Sudan (Darfur)	SRF vs. government, RSF	autonomy	2003	↓	3
Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)	Misseriya vs. Rizeigat vs. Maaliya vs. Nuba vs. Handandawa vs. Beni Amer vs. Beni Hussein vs. Masalit et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2007	↗	4
Sudan (opposition)	FFC vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↗	4
Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)	SPLM/A-North vs. government	autonomy, resources	2011	↘	2
Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei)	Ngok Dinka vs. Misseriya vs. Nuer	subnational predominance, resources	2011	•	3
Togo (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1963	•	3
Uganda (Bakonzo / Rwenzururu)*	Kingdom of Rwenzururu vs. government	autonomy	2014	↘	1
Uganda (opposition)	FDC, DP, UPC, Jeema vs. government	national power	2001	•	3
Zimbabwe (opposition)	MDC vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2000	•	3

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

ANGOLA (FLEC ET AL. / CABINDA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: MIC, FLEC vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of Cabinda province continued between the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC), supported by their armed wing FLEC-Armed Forces of Cabinda and the Movement for Independence of Cabinda (MIC) on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

Throughout the year, several peaceful protests were staged in Cabinda, demanding the region's secession. Between January 28 and February 1, police forces arrested 62 members of MIC during protests to commemorate the anniversary of the Treaty of Simulambuco. Following international pressure, the local government released 40 of them on April 24. On February 16, the police detained nine members of the church of priest João Paulo, who had publicly supported the secessionist claim. On December 10, police forces dispersed another demonstration by MIC members and arrested 16 people.

On February 28, FLEC announced to resume militant operations. They claimed to have clashed at least four times with the military between January 2 and April 12, and twice between June 30 and July 3. Allegedly, 34 fighters were killed in these clashes. However, in a statement on April 16, the government asserted the situation in Cabinda was calm, denying any casualties.

Civil society organizations in the DR Congo (DRC) claimed that more than 100 Angolan soldiers crossed the border on April 21 and 25, allegedly searching for FLEC members. In May, there were reports of the presence of approx. 300 Angolan soldiers in Kimpese, Satu Mbongo and Makanga forests, and Paindu village, Kongo-Central region, DRC, who allegedly killed one suspected FLEC member on May 11. In July and August, the Angolan military entered the Lundo-Matende Refugee Camp, Kongo-Central, DRC, resulting in another death of a FLEC member on August 15. Neither the Congolese nor the Angolan government confirmed Angolan military presence in the region. [who](#)

BURKINA FASO (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2016

Conflict parties: Mossi, Foulsé, Bella, Koglweogo vs. Fulani vs. Islamist groups

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources continued between various ethnic groups such as Mossi, Foulsé, Bella and their self-defense militias, the so-called Koglweogo, the Fulani ethnic group, and Islamist groups.

Since 2016, the security situation in the country had dete-

riorated, partly due to the uprising of Islamist groups, such as Ansaroul Islam, in the country [→ Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, ISGS et al.)]. In reaction to recurring Islamist attacks that predominantly targeted Mossi, Foulsé, and Bella ethnic groups, Koglweogo self-defense militias were activated. Founded by the Mossi in the 1990s, the Koglweogo initially served to protect land and agricultural goods from the Fulani ethnic group. However, with surging Islamist attacks in the region, increased banditry and a concomitant security vacuum, the Koglweogo exercised vigilante justice. Throughout the year, the Koglweogo clashed with muslim Fulani, who were often accused of being affiliated with and recruited by Islamist groups. The government tolerated Koglweogo activities.

On January 1, Koglweogo militias killed at least 46 Fulani in villages surrounding Yirgou, Centre Nord region. Reportedly, the attack was an act of retaliation against Fulani, who allegedly had been involved in the killing of six villagers in an attack linked to Islamist militants on Yirgou one day earlier. The reported death toll varied between several dozen and over 200 fatalities, and reportedly 6,000 people were displaced. On January 12, thousands of protesters took to the streets in the capital Ouagadougou, Centre region, and Dori, Sahel region, condemning the preceding violence. Furthermore, between March 31 and April 4, Koglweogo conducted similar reprisal attacks against Fulani camps in Arbinda, Sahel, leaving 30 dead.

Throughout the year, suspected Islamist militants targeted members of the Koglweogo. For instance, on July 29, presumed Islamist militants, comprised of approx. 40 persons, attacked three villages surrounding Dablo, Centre Nord, targeting Koglweogo militias and their families. The attacks reportedly left eleven people dead. In addition, three separate attacks on civilians were reported in Centre Nord, which resulted in 21 casualties. On September 9, suspected Islamist militants killed three Koglweogo militiamen in villages in Bam province, Centre Nord. On October 31, alleged Islamist militants attacked a Koglweogo patrol in Arbinda, Sahel, killing two and injuring one. On December 14, suspected Islamist militants killed seven people including five Koglweogo militiamen in the village of Kantari, Est region.

Human Rights Watch accused the military of human rights abuses against the Fulani and extrajudicial killings of the same, while operating against Islamist groups.

On December 26, hundreds of Koglweogo members protested in Sapaga city, Plateau Central, criticizing the arrest of their leader in the course of an investigation on the assassinations in Yirgou on January 1. On the next day, the protesters blocked the national road in Sapaga with a sit-in and were subsequently dispersed by police forces with tear gas. [lel](#)

BURUNDI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: ADC-Ikibiri, CNL, UPRONA, RED-Tabara vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between various members of the opposition coalition Democratic Alliance for Change-Ikibiri (ADC-Ikibiri), especially the National Freedom Council (CNL) and associated militant factions on the one hand, and the government led by President Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), supported by its militant youth wing Imbonerakure on the other hand.

Human rights organizations estimated that at least 1,200 people have been killed in clashes with security forces and more than 400,000 have been displaced since 2015. The security situation in Burundi had deteriorated following Nkurunziza's announcement to stand for re-election in 2015, despite his subsequent promise to conclude his presidency by 05/20/2020. Since the constitutional referendum in May 2018, Imbonerakure, police staff and the national intelligence service continued to target opposition members. Assassinations, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and detentions, as well as restrictions of political rights were increasingly reported in the run-up to the 2020 elections. Members of the Imbonerakure as well as local authorities continued to pressure the local population to join the ruling party and targeted presumed opponents. Attacks increased particularly after main opposition leader Agathon Rwasa registered the new opposition party CNL in February. In course of the year, at least eight people died and around 200 were injured.

For instance, between March and April, supporters of the ruling party vandalized more than 20 CNL offices and Imbonerakure specifically targeted CNL members, accusing them of holding illegal meetings or supporting rebel movements. For instance, on April 15, Imbonerakure members attacked five CNL members with electric cables, sticks, and barbed wire in Ngozi region for allegedly holding an illegal meeting. Furthermore, on April 21, a group of Imbonerakure assaulted at least nine CNL members with clubs and stones on Rukira Hill, Muyinga region. Two CNL members died and five others were arrested. On May 13, Imbonerakure members assaulted 25 civilian CNL supporters who refused to attend a CNDD-FDD election campaign meeting in Nyamurenza, Ngozi. A week later, Imbonerakure members injured a member of the opposition Union for National Progress with a machete on Buzirasazi Hill, Cibitoke region, allegedly for refusing to join the ruling party. In an ambush on August 18 in Rugari zone, Muyinga region, Imbonerakure and police forces killed a CNL member and injured eight CNL militants. On October 11, four Imbonerakure tortured a CNL supporter in Ngozi. The following day, two Imbonerakure injured a CNL member on Muzumure Hill, Ngozi, because he left the ruling party to join CNL. On November 11, a CNL member died of his injuries in Gashikanwa, Ngozi, having been tortured by Imbonerakure. abü

BURUNDI – RWANDA

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Burundi vs. Rwanda

Conflict items: international power

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

Relations remained strained after the Burundian government accused the Rwandan government of backing the attempted military coup in Burundi on 05/13/2015 and of fuelling Burundi's 2015 political crisis following President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to stand for a third term. The Rwandan government denied any involvement in Burundi's domestic affairs.

Tensions in the border areas between Burundi, the DR Congo, and Rwanda continued, as the countries' governments repeatedly accused each other of attacking their respective military posts. Most prominently, on November 16, an armed attack by an unidentified group on a post in Mabayi, Cibitoke province, Burundi, left 19 people killed and 20 injured. The Burundian government held the Rwandan army responsible without presenting any evidence, while the Rwandan government denied any involvement. Burundi pledged to retaliate by using "legitimate defense" if Rwanda should continue the hostilities. The Burundian government filed complaints against Rwanda in the East African Community, the UN, the African Union, and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, accusing it of armed aggression. The Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has acted as a mediator between both countries since tensions heightened. abü

BURUNDI, DR CONGO (FNL, RED-TABARA, FOREBU)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

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

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis in the border region continued between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) over national power in Burundi between a militant faction of the National Forces of Liberation (FNL), the Resistance for Rule of Law in Burundi (RED-Tabara), and the Popular Forces of Burundi (Forebu) on the one hand, and the countries' governments on the other hand. The FNL had been operating in the Uvira province, DRC, for more than two decades. Committed to removing Burundi President Nkurunziza from power, it increasingly entered Burundi from 2014 onwards. Similarly, the rebel movements RED-Tabara and Forebu declared war on the Burundian government. Throughout the year, violent confrontations predominantly occurred in South Kivu province, DRC.

On January 16, Forebu, RED-Tabara, and FNL clashed with Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the Burundian govern-

ment party National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) on Kabere plateau, Uvira. At least 17 fighters were killed and one was injured. On January 27, fighting between RED-Tabara and Burundian armed groups in Murambi, South Kivu, left eight fighters dead. Between April 6 and 8, the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) conducted a military operation in South Kivu to regain territory from FNL. 36 members of FNL and Forebu and three soldiers were killed. Furthermore, four soldiers were wounded, and Aloys Nzabampema, leader of the FNL, was injured. On October 22, RED-Tabara members crossed the border into Bubanza province, Burundi, and clashed with Burundi security forces, leaving 14 RED-Tabara members and one police officer dead. On October 23 and 24, clashes between RED-Tabara fighters and Burundian security forces as well as Imbonerakure in Musigati, Bubanza, left one soldier and four police officers dead as well as one RED-Tabara captured. In the same area two days later, four militants, two soldiers, one police officer, and six Imbonerakure died in a clash between RED-Tabara, Forebu, and Burundian security forces. In the same month, the Burundian, Rwandan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan armies officially pledged to support the FARDC in its fight against local and foreign armed groups, including FNL and RED-Tabara, through information exchange and the provision of special forces. abü

accounted for at least 600 conflict-related deaths and up to 400 people were injured. More than 200,000 persons were internally displaced in 2019, in addition to 437,500 in December 2018. Furthermore, the conflict started to spread to neighboring regions of Cameroon such as the Littoral region. In addition there was a fear of spillover to the capital Yaoundé in July when secessionists issued a threat warning to Bastos neighborhood where most of the embassies are located. The secessionists' capability to impose restrictions was demonstrated by frequent lockdowns across the Anglophone regions. Affected towns were often like ghost towns as residents were ordered to stay home.

Frequent clashes between secessionist fighters and the military, especially its Rapid Intervention Battalion (RIB), an elite military unit trained to combat armed groups, continued over the course of the year and also resulted in civilian casualties. Between January 4 and 28, the military reportedly killed 68 secessionists fighters, including some of their leaders, in NW and SW. In these clashes, reportedly ADF as well as SOCADEF members were killed, while secessionists claimed that some of the casualties were civilians. For instance, on January 25, eleven people were killed in a military operation in Mpundi-Balong, SW. Moreover, at least 15 civilians were killed in clashes in Bole Bakundu, SW, on February 6. Between April 14 and 15, seven soldiers and seven secessionist fighters were killed in clashes in Bali, NW. On October 5, Cameroonian troops attacked the secessionist-controlled village of Bali Nyonga, NW. Subsequent fighting resulted in the death of at least six secessionists and several others.

Generally outnumbered by military personnel, the secessionists mostly conducted ambush attacks against government forces in SW, NW, and Littoral region. For instance, on April 1, separatist fighters attacked a security checkpoint in Penda Mboko, Littoral region, injuring three security personnel. On July 3, a unit of 30 fighters attacked an army patrol boat in Ekpambiri, SW, killing ten soldiers and injuring three. On June 15, four police officers were killed and six injured in an IED explosion in Eyumojock, SW. This marked the first reported use of IEDs by the secessionists since the conflict started in 2016.

Both secessionist fighters and the military conducted violence against civilians. For instance, on February 11, secessionist fighters and government soldiers accused each other of torching a hospital in Kumba, SW, killing at least four civilians. On March 14, soldiers reportedly attacked several villages in Wum and Nkambe Central, NW, killing twelve civilians and burning down several houses. Further, on December 1, separatist fighters fired shots at a civilian aircraft. On December 19, suspected secessionists opened fire on a bus, killing three civilians in Ekona, SW. Violence against religious and traditional leaders also increased. For instance, on June 25, the archbishop of Bamenda, two priests, and a driver were abducted and held hostage for several hours by secessionist fighters near Njinikejem, NW.

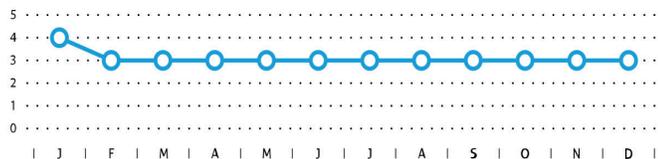
The government continued to detain suspected secessionists. On July 22, the majority of detainees rioted in a prison in the capital Yaoundé, resulting in the deaths of at least four prisoners. On August 20, the Yaoundé Military Tribunal sentenced IGA President Tabe and the other detained leaders to life imprisonment. After a Swiss-led mediation attempt had failed in June, the government initiated a national dialogue be-

CAMEROON (ENGLISH-SPEAKING-MINORITY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2016

Conflict parties: English-speaking-minority vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy



The limited war over secession and autonomy continued between various groups of the English-speaking minority on the one hand, and the French-speaking government, on the other hand.

The conflict started in October 2016 but did not escalate to a highly violent level until 2017, when English-speaking separatists declared independence of the Anglophone territories, naming them Ambazonia. Last year, more than 800 people were killed in clashes between secessionists and Cameroonian military and security forces.

The secessionist movement was heavily fragmented, comprising various political organizations as well as militias. Ten leaders of the Interim Government of Ambazonia (IGA) including its president, Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, had been detained in early January 2018 on charges of terrorism and secession. The most active militias were the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF) and Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF). Throughout the year, the situation in the affected North West (NW) and South West (SW) regions deteriorated with violent peaks in January, February, and September. In total, violence

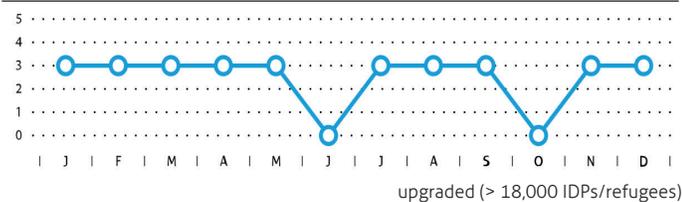
tween government officials, traditional and religious leaders, as well as Anglophone activists in Yaoundé, from September 30 to October 4. Secessionist leaders rejected the initiative, arguing that talks should be facilitated by a neutral party. On October 3, Cameroonian President Paul Biya ordered the release of 333 detainees, among them members of the opposition as well as secessionists, however none of their leaders. Violent attacks continued after the dialogue. mat, liw

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

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2012

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

Conflict items: national power, resources



The war over national power and resources de-escalated to a limited war between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka militias on the one hand, and the government, supported by MINUSCA on the other hand.

Between January 24 and February 5, the African Union led peace talks between 14 recognised armed groups and the government in Sudan's capital Khartoum. On February 6, the parties signed a peace accord in the capital Bangui, eponymous prefecture. The parties committed to the formation of an inclusive government by appointing armed group leaders to ministerial and advisory positions, forming special mixed security units, as well as implementing transparency reforms. Temporarily, the intensity of the armed conflict decreased but the implementation of the agreement remained fragile. Several signatory Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups, such as Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC), Central African Patriotic Movement (MPC), Patriotic Front for the Renaissance in the Central African Republic (FPRC), and Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (3R) violated provisions of the agreement by exercising violence against civilians, imposing illegal taxation, and obstructing state institutions and security forces. Overall, more than 300 formal violations of the treaty were reported by MINUSCA.

On April 5, UPC militants attacked several villages in Zangba, Basse-Kotto prefecture, allegedly killing 18 people and injuring 40. On September 6, the UPC besieged the Kolo mining site 25 km from Mingala, Basse-Kotto, leading to several deaths and the displacement of the local population. On September 27, clashes between the UPC and Anti-Balaka groups caused approx. 13 deaths, 50 injuries, the destruction of an estimated 40-60 buildings, including a mosque, in Bangao and Lihoto, Ouaka prefecture. Additionally, around 9,000 people were displaced.

Between June and October, FPRC committed at least 100 attacks against civilians. In cooperation with MPC, the group

continued to maintain a detention facility in Kaga Bandoro, Nana-Grébizi prefecture. On August 31, the FPRC assassinated the son of the sultan of Birao, Vakaga prefecture, which led to clashes that lasted for two days and resulted in 25 casualties and 13,000 IDPs. Two weeks later, the FPRC attacked bases of the ex-Séléka militia Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ), resulting in 39 deaths and the displacement of 11,000 people.

Among other violent acts, the 3R reportedly attacked villages in proximity of Paoua city, Ouham-Pendé prefecture, killing approx. 42 civilians on May 21. In September and October, 3R reportedly clashed with MINUSCA forces in western prefectures of the country.

In the first half of the year, approx. 58,000 new displacements were attributed to the conflict, resulting in a total population of 600,136 IDPs by September. In addition, UNHCR registered 593,733 refugees in neighboring countries. kda

CHAD (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: farmers vs. pastoralists

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between farmers and pastoralists. While the first eruption of violence was reported in 1947, violence between farmers and pastoralists escalated in 2019 with 177 deaths. Increased circulation of small arms and light weapons due to regional instability contributed to the escalation. In addition, increasing desertification, drought, and the loss of grazing land to expanding settlements intensified the competing claims over access to land and water. Furthermore, tensions between different groups of pastoralists over the exclusive access to wells resulted in clashes, especially in the arid season.

Eastern regions, such as Sila and Ouaddai, were especially affected by the fighting between farmers and pastoralists. On May 16, Arab-speaking pastoralists killed twelve people in an attack in the municipality of Marfa, Ouaddai. On May 19, following a dispute over the use of pastures, herders attacked farmers in Sila region. The attack in which the villages Am Chaloka, Am Sabarna, and Am Siriye were burned down left 25 people dead and 28 injured. Between August 5 and August 7, a total of 38 people were killed. For instance, clashes between Arab-speaking pastoralists and Ouaddaian farmers resulted in the death of 33 people in the area of Chokoyan, Ouaddai, on August 6 and 7. In clashes on August 15, 58 farmers and pastoralists were killed and 35 injured in the town of Arata, Sila.

In Southern Chad, clashes between farmers and pastoralists predominantly occurred in the regions of Tandjilé, Moyen-Chari, and Logone Oriental. On February 25 and 26, 47 people were killed and several buildings destroyed in Dadjé canton, Tandjilé. On May 21, following the destruction of a peanut field in Nala village, Logone Oriental, a clash left three people dead. After a herder had moved his livestock over a farmer's land, clashes erupted in the town of Tchire, Tandjilé on July 20, leaving six people dead and 15 injured.

The inter-communal violence raised concerns about domestic security and the effective control of state borders. On August 18, President Idriss Déby declared a state of emergency in Sila and Ouaddai regions and called on farmers and pastoralists to end the fighting. Troops were deployed to enforce the state of emergency. On September 10, Chadian parliament extended the state of emergency by four months. kab

CHAD (MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: CCSMR, UFR, CSD vs. government
Conflict items: national power, resources

The violent crisis over national power and resources, especially gold, continued between various militant groups, primarily the United Resistant Forces (UFR), the Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCSMR), and the Committee of Self-Defense (CSD) on the one hand, and the government of President Idriss Déby on the other hand. Déby received active support from the French air force, Sudanese mercenaries, as well as the Libyan National Army (LNA) under the control of Khalifa Haftar, leading to the spread of conflict activity from Tibesti region into Libyan territory.

On January 12, CCSMR clashed with Sudanese mercenaries from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Kouri Bougoudi, Tibesti region, leaving dozens of people dead and injured and several vehicles destroyed on both sides. In mid-January, the LNA launched a military operation against Chadian militant groups in the south of Libya. On February 1, LNA attacked CCSMR militants in the Libyan town of Ghodwa, Murzuq region, resulting in the death of three LNA soldiers and an unknown number of militants. On the same day, an UFR convoy of 40 vehicles entered Chad via the southern Libyan border heading south. The Chadian air force attacked the convoy on February 1 and 2, but failed to disperse it. Following a request by Déby, the French air force deployed seven Mirage 2000 jets and one reaper drone to conduct airstrikes against the UFR convoy between February 3 and 6. According to official French sources, the convoy was 400 km south of the Libyan border when the French attack stopped it. At least two UFR militants were reportedly killed and 20 vehicles destroyed. On February 9, the Chadian military detained 267 UFR militants following the military operation. In addition, on March 5, the Chadian government announced it would close its border to Libya in response to the convoy attack in February. On August 27, most of the 267 detained UFR militants were convicted.

The CSD's target was to keep gold revenues within the region while the Chadian army tried to seize control over the gold rich region. During the first two weeks of October, the CSD and Chadian military repeatedly clashed close to Miski and Yebbibou, Tibesti region, reportedly killing several Chadian soldiers. On October 26, government officials met with community leaders to discuss security issues in the region of Tibesti. On October 30, negotiations between the CSD and the government over a ceasefire and a peace agreement be-

gan. Four days later, CSD stated that they had reached an agreement with the government and surrendered its arms on November 11. dke

CHAD (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government
Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between opposition groups on the one hand, and the government led by President Idriss Déby and his party Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) on the other hand. The opposition comprised various political parties, civil society groups, trade unions, and loosely organized protesters which were mainly students.

In January, the government increased the salary of public servants by 15 percent as part of the October 2018 agreement between the government and trade unions. The trade unions welcomed this measure but reminded the government to fulfill the rest of the agreement as well. After French airstrikes against militant groups in Borkou region [→ Chad (militant groups)] in the beginning of February, opposition parties condemned the intervention into Chadian affairs.

The main point of contention was the formation of the independent election committee. On February 21, Déby nominated 30 members for the committee. The opposition criticized its composition as it comprised a fifty-fifty split between opposition members and government members. As a result, on March 30, parts of the opposition started to boycott the independent election committee.

On April 30, students protested against the raise of tuition fees by burning car tires in the street. Police forces violently dispersed the demonstration using tear gas. On June 1, police used tear gas to disperse an assembly of the unrecognized opposition party 'Les Transformateurs', injuring the party's chairman. dke

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government
Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between various opposition parties and the government of President Alassane Ouattara and his party, Rassemblement des Républicains de Côte d'Ivoire (RDR).

On 12/14/2018, Henri Konan Bédié, president of the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire- Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (PDCI-RDA) declared the end of the party's cooperation with the RDR. On July 30, Bédié met with opposition leader and former president Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivorian Popular Front in Brussels, Belgium, to decide on a new partnership between their parties. On September 14, the two parties held their first joint rally at the stadium in Treichville,

Abidjan, eponymous department.

On January 15, the International Criminal Court (ICC) acquitted Gbagbo and former minister Charles Blé Goudé due to lack of evidence. Both had been charged with crimes against humanity. In January, anti-Gbagbo protests were held throughout the country. For instance, on January 16, a demonstration was held against Gbagbo in Abidjan by government supporters. Police dispersed the crowd using tear gas. On February 2, Gbagbo was released on bail to Belgium, which the government of Côte d'Ivoire opposed, filing a complaint with the ICC. On October 30, the Ivorian Abidjan Court of Appeals opened a new case to revisit the charges for Goudé's crimes against the civilian population.

Throughout the year, several opposition politicians were arrested or convicted. For instance, on October 4, Jacques Mangoua, vice-president of the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) was sentenced to five years in prison for illegal weapon ownership. The judgement led to riots between his supporters and security forces in Bouaké, Vallée du Bandama department, leaving one PDCI member dead. Protests were also held in other cities in Vallée du Bandama. Furthermore, on December 23, presidential candidate and leader of the opposition party Générations et Peuples Solidaires Guillaume Soro's return flight from exile was diverted to Ghana upon its arrival in Abidjan under the presumption of a planned attack. On the same day, the government had issued an arrest warrant against Soro, accusing him of an 'attack on the authority of the state and the integrity of the national territory', and the misappropriation of public funds and money laundering. Subsequently, at least 100 of Soro's supporters protested outside his party's headquarters in Abidjan, accusing the government of preventing Soro from running for the 2020 presidential elections. Police used tear gas to disperse the protesters and arrested 15. The rising tensions between Soro and the government were already evident when Ouattara successfully pressured Soro to resign as president of the national assembly in February.

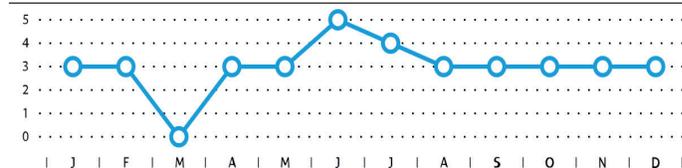
Furthermore, protests sparked by the municipal elections in October 2018 continued in January. Several protests occurred especially in Plateau department, where a candidate of the PDCI-RDA did not assume office due to charges of misappropriation of public funds. For instance, on January 7, PDCI-RDA supporters protested in Attécoubé, Abidjan, and barricaded roads. Police dispersed approx. 100 protesters with tear gas. On March 23, the candidate assumed office after the charges had been withdrawn. ^{jwi}

DR CONGO (ITURI MILITIAS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: Ituri militias vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The limited war over subnational predominance in Ituri province escalated to a war between militant groups, such as the Cooperative for Development for Congo (CODECO), the Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri (FRPI), and various unidentified armed groups on the one hand, and the government supported by MONUSCO on the other hand.

Violence followed similar patterns as in the previous year. Unidentified armed groups attacked civilians, often of Hema and Lendu descent, and positions of the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) in Djugu and Mahagi territory, Ituri province, northeastern DR Congo. Groups of militants attacked villages with firearms, machetes and arrows, destroying houses and looting livestock. As in 2017 and 2018, violence between Hema and Lendu surged and ebbed. While the first six months of 2019 remained relatively calm, violence escalated in June. Within one month at least 200 people were killed, approx. 300,000 internally displaced and numerous villages destroyed. Unlike the previous government, President Felix Tshisekedi's administration did not exclusively blame inter-communal rivalry for the surging violence but identified a militia, operating under the same name as the agro-religious organization Cooperative for the Development for Congo (CODECO), as being responsible for the recurring attacks.

Few attacks were reported between January and April. On January 17, a series of attacks on several villages in the Ngakpa and Uketa area, Djugu, resulted in the destruction of 1,500 houses and the displacement of 4,000 residents. On April 15, four civilians were killed in the village of Luko, Djugu. Six days later, FARDC and unidentified armed assailants clashed in the village of Jiro, Djugu. Four soldiers and six assailants were killed. In May, the number of attacks increased, resulting in the death of at least 37 people, mainly in villages at Lake Albert, Djugu. A sequence of attacks on fish markets in the villages of Tara, Songa, Moya 1 and Moya 2, on May 15 left 19 civilians dead, many decapitated.

During the first two weeks of June, recurring attacks predominantly targeted civilians and resulted in the death of at least 160 civilians and 300,000 displaced. For instance, on June 10, unidentified armed assailants killed four ethnic Lendu traders near the village of Zibiti, Djugu. The incident sparked violent protests and at least ten civilians were killed. On June 11, unidentified assailants looted Tche village and killed at least 38 residents.

To contain the violence, FARDC launched the so-called Ituri Storm operation on June 21. In the beginning, the military operation focused on combating the assailants near Wago

forest and the village of Nyolo, Djugu, later on extending the operation to the entire Djugu territory. Until the end of June, FARDC reportedly killed around 50 assailants and recaptured ten villages. At the same time, MONUSCO deployed additional military resources in order to support FARDC. Despite the proclaimed success of the military operation, violence continued in July and August. Several attacks on IDPs were attributed to presumed CODECO assailants, such as on July 2, when five IDPs were killed in Bule, Djugu, while returning to their village. In addition, attacks targeted members of the Alur community. For instance, on July 17, eight Alur were killed in the village of Mwanga, Irumu territory.

Between September and December, the frequency of attacks decreased with only few reported incidents. In the first week of September, approx. 1,000 refugees who had fled to Uganda returned to their villages in Djugu. In mid-September, presumed CODECO assailants killed at least 47 civilians in a series of attacks in the Bahema Bajdere and Bahema Nord localities, Djugu.

Despite the FRPI's conflict history in Ituri, so far there are no interconnections between FRPI and the security incidents in Djugu. Following the 2018 peace negotiations between the FRPI and the government of Ituri, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process started in January. However, sporadic FRPI activity was reported during the first half of 2019 in Irumu. Around April 12, FRPI reportedly occupied the villages of Nyasumbi, Palima, and Mbaba, Irumu, after FARDC withdrew from those areas. In May, the leadership of the FRPI reiterated its commitment to the DDR process.

liw

DR CONGO (KN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2016

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

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between the armed groups Kamuina Nsapu (KN), Bana Mura (BM) and the government in the southern Kasai region. The conflict started in August 2016 when a dispute over the right to appoint a local customary chief had turned violent, coinciding with popular discontent with the central government. KN attacked people and infrastructure associated with the government. BM later emerged in reaction to KN activity, but also holding claims against the government. The group was then instrumentalized by state authorities to serve as a proxy against KN.

Compared to previous years, the conflict between KN and the government became less intense, as various KN factions demobilized in support of the elected President Felix Tshisekedi, or significantly diminished their conflict activity. For instance, on January 19, 265 KN members demobilized in Kananga. On February 9, MONUSCO supported the regional government to draw up a disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) plan for former KN members. Subsequently, another 200 KN members committed to the DDR process mid-February.

The ethnic dimension of the conflict between KN, recruited

from Luba and Lulua communities, and BM recruited from Tshokwe, Pende, and Tetela communities continued. On February 19, 15 civilians of Luba decent were killed in an attack by BM in Tshiniota. KN members attacked civilians and abducted a Tetela chief on February 24, in the Kamako village, leaving 19 people dead. A subsequent intervention by the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) displaced up to 600 civilians. On the same day, members of Tetela and Tshokwe communities also killed six Luba civilians in Kamako. On March 30 and 31, a local protection committee was set up by MONUSCO in Kamako, aiming at facilitating inter-communal dialogue. On May 6, prosecuted KN members rioted in Kananga central prison and three prisoners, accused of having killed two members of the UN Group of Experts in March 2017, escaped. On May 13, hundreds of prisoners, mostly KN members, were released following a Presidential pardon fulfilling an electoral promise.

Throughout the year, MONUSCO and UNCHR initiated stabilization and reintegration missions. In response to the return of thousands of Congolese refugees, who had fled because of the KN conflict, the UNCHR as well as the governments of Angola and the DRC agreed to assist these returnees on August 23. UNCHR has since provided financial resources and transportation for 15,255 returnees to Kasai and Kasai central.

The trials regarding the murders of the UN experts continued throughout the year. In June, a FARDC colonel was charged for participating in the killing. ase

DR CONGO (MAYI-MAYI ET AL.)

Intensity: 5 | 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



The limited war over subnational predominance in the eastern provinces North and South Kivu, Maniema, Tanganyika, and Ituri escalated to a war. The conflict involved various local armed groups, and the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC), supported by MONUSCO.

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, increasing the 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 fewer than 100 fighters and recruiting among ethnic lines. Most of them were named after their commanders and relied

on the taxation of individuals and goods in areas under their control. Throughout the year, over 750 people were killed and 450,000 displaced.

The most active groups in North Kivu were the Nduma Defense of Congo-Renovated (NDC-R), Nyatura groups, Mayi Mayi Mazembe groups, Mayi Mayi Charles, and Union of Patriots for the Liberation of Congo (UPLC), whereas in South Kivu Raia Mutomboki factions and armed groups affiliated to the Banyamulenge community, on the one hand, and Bafuliuro, Babembe and Banyindi communities, on the other, dominated the conflict.

With regard to the ongoing Ebola Virus Disease epidemic in Eastern Congo, the work of humanitarian actors, especially in North Kivu's and Beni territories, was impaired, due to several attacks on health centers and humanitarian staff by alleged Mayi Mayi as well as other armed actors. More than 30 attacks on aid workers were recorded. For instance, on February 24, alleged Mayi Mayi attacked the Ebola health center in Katwa, Beni territory. The facility was partially burned down, resulting in the death of one person, as well as the temporal suspension of the center. On April 19, one WHO Ebola response team (ERT) member was killed and two were injured in an attack on a hospital in Butembo city. On May 29, three people were killed, as Mayi Mayi Mazembe attacked an ERT convoy escorted by police and FARDC in Kyambogho, Lubero territory. According to MONUSCO, the security environment for humanitarian actors improved significantly in most areas during the second half of the year, owing in part, to the additional deployment of MONUSCO force and police units to the affected regions.

NDC-R remained active and operated in North Kivu territories Rutshuru, Masisi, Walikale and Lubero, increasing the territory under its control and its troop strength, by co-opting fighters from other armed groups. Further, their operational area was estimated to cover an area of 12,000 km² in North Kivu, ranging over Masisi, Walikale and Lubero territories. The groups' activities targeted Nyatura groups, mainly Collective Movement for Change (CMC), Nzayi, Kavumbi, and Domi factions, the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS), Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), as well as civilians.

In Rutshuru, a coalition of FARDC and NDC-R operated against Nyatura groups, and FDLR [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR, CNRD)] between March and June. Until May 9, 30,000 people were displaced in Bwito chieftaincy. For instance, on May 20, FARDC supported NDC-R attacks against Nyatura Domi and their allies in Kitunda, Kanyangohe, and Kiyeye villages, killed 40 people. 14 people were killed and five injured in a clash between NDC-R and Nyatura FDP fighters, in Nyirabiroha, on October 1. FARDC intervened in support of NDC-R, expelling Nyatura FDP from the village. The next day, a coalition of Nyatura, APCLS, and FDLR attacked NDC-R positions in three villages within Bwito locality. At least seven died. On October 31, NDC-R dispersed Nyatura fighters from Katsiru, Kamodoka, Kinyatsi, Rurama, and Kiyeye villages, resulting in the death of twelve people. Fighting in the region continued throughout the rest of the year involving NDC-R and a coalition of APCLS, Nyatura groups and FDLR.

In Masisi, a coalition of NDC-R and APCLS-Renovated operated against a coalition of APCLS and various Nyatura groups, including Domi, Nzayi, Kavumbi and Jean Marie. For instance,

on January 21, NDC-R attacked Nyatura Nzayi positions in Kitshanga and Munongo. The clash left at least 16 people dead. By the end of March NDC-R had gained control over large parts of the territory. On April 5, clashes between a coalition of Nyatura groups and APCLS with NDC-R in Rukenge, Bashali Mokoto locality, caused the death of at least eleven people and injured ten. Subsequently, FARDC launched military operations against armed groups in the territory, on October 6. While APCLS, FDLR and Nyatura groups appeared to be the initial targets, some clashes were also reported with NDC-R later in the month.

The frequent fighting and large-scale destruction led to a severe deterioration of the security environment, the suspension of school operations, and the displacement of more than 140,000 people in Masisi and Rutshuru territories by the end of October. Masisi territory was particularly affected with a peak of 67,000 IDPs in June and July.

In Lubero and Walikale territories NDC-R's territorial expansion reportedly exceeded the size of territory controlled by the state. Despite the cooperation of NDC-R and FARDC in Rutshuru territory, NDC-R fighters occasionally clashed with FARDC. At least five people were killed, on May 9, as NDC-R occupied the village of Musindi, Lubero, thereby displacing residents of surrounding villages. Following a clash between Nyatura Domi and NDC-R, on October 18, the residents of Katobo village, Walikale, fled.

Various Nyatura factions, predominantly recruiting among Hutu communities, operated in Masisi and Rutshuru territories. Besides clashing with NDC-R and FARDC Nyatura also targeted civilians, mainly through abductions and lootings. For instance, on January 31, Nyatura FDP captured and tortured six civilians near Burambo, Rutshuru, who refused to pay a tax imposed by the militia. As a result, one died. On February 19, Nyatura Domi kidnapped a woman from Kishishe, Rutshuru, and raped her. Additionally, Nyatura Kavumbi members were accused of raping at least seven women in the Bashali Mokoto locality, Masisi, between January and April. On August 5, Nyatura Delta fighters killed one civilian in Kilambairo, Masisi.

The Mayi Mayi Mazembe consisted of loosely connected armed groups that recruited fighters predominantly from the local ethnic Nande population. In comparison to the previous year, the group reduced its activity and mainly operated in Lubero and Beni territories. They targeted civilians, and repeatedly clashed with FARDC. For instance, on February 20, four people were killed in clashes with FARDC in Vurondo, Beni. By August, the group controlled several villages in Lubero, including Kinyatsi, Miriki, and Kimaka, and imposed a taxation system. On August 7, Mayi Mayi Mazembe attacked a FARDC-escorted civilian convoy in Rwindi, Rutshuru, killing two soldiers and four civilians and injuring eight.

Mayi Mayi Charles operated in Rutshuru and Lubero territories. After the group's leader Charles Bokande was reportedly killed by unidentified assailants, in Kamuhororo, Rutshuru, on February 3, the activity of the group declined. However, the Mayi Mayi Charles continued to attack civilians, including armed park rangers of the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN). For instance, on March 7, Mayi Mayi Charles attacked an ICCN station in Kyanika, Lubero, killing one park ranger and injuring several others. Another two ICCN park rangers were injured near Vitshumbi locality, Rutshuru, on

September 9, when ICCN clashed with Mayi Mayi Charles fighters under the new commander 'Je t'aime'. On November 11, the group kidnapped eleven fishermen on Lake Edward near Bwira village, Rutshuru.

The Union of Patriots for the Liberation of Congo (UPLC) was active in Beni territory. The group targeted civilians, MONUSCO, FARDC, and other armed groups. For instance, on January 23, UPLC fighters ambushed a MONUSCO convoy near Kitahuha village, Beni, attaining weapons and uniforms. The same day, UPLC fighters abducted three MONUSCO soldiers in Kisalala, Butembo. In an ambush on FARDC in Mataba, Beni, on February 11, UPLC fighters killed three people. On April 7, two people were killed and 13 abducted, when UPLC fighters attacked Mbilali village, Beni. Following the announcement of their willingness to surrender, on July 4, the groups' activity declined.

In South Kivu, the violent conflict between armed groups recruited from the ethnic groups Banyamulenge, on the one hand, and Bafuliuro, Babembe and Banyindu, on the other, continued in the first half of 2019 in the highlands of Fizi territory, Itombwe in Mwenga territory, and Minembwe in Uvira territory. The main armed groups affiliated to the Banyamulenge community comprised Twiganeho and Ngumino. The latter was allegedly cooperating, g with Rwanda National Congress (RNC). The main armed Bafuliuro group, Mayi Mayi Biloze Bishambuke and the main Babembe armed group, Mayi Mayi Ebuela were allegedly cooperating with RED-Tabara and National Forces of Liberation (FNL) [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL, RED-Tabara)].

Pre-existing inter-communal tensions in the area escalated following the appointment of a Banyamulenge mayor of the newly created administrative entity of Minembwe. The accompanying increase in Ngumino activity raised mistrust among the Bafuliuro, Babembe and Banyindu communities. In March, a coalition of Mayi Mayi, including Ebuela and Biloze Bishambuke, mobilized and repeatedly clashed with Ngumino and Twiganeho. For instance, on March 6, a coalition of Ngumino and Twiganeho clashed with a coalition of Mayi Mayi in Magedu, Minembwe highlands of Uvira, displacing the residents of the surrounding villages. Inter-communal violence was fueled and spread to neighboring territories, when on May 4, Ngumino assassinated the Banyindu customary chief of Kinihura village, in Mikalati, Fizi. Subsequently, fighting between the armed groups intensified. On May 9, Banyamulenge militias clashed with Mayi Mayi Ebuela in Balala-North locality, Fizi, killing at least 20 people and burning down multiple villages. Intense fighting continued throughout the months of May and June, resulting in up to 211,000 IDPs and large-scale destruction of accommodation and infrastructure, including schools, health care and sanitation facilities. Between July 1 and 4, at least 20 people were killed and around 100 cattle stolen, as Ngumino clashed with a coalition of Mayi Mayi in the area of Basimunyaka-Northin Mwenga. Another 51 cattle were stolen on August 26, in Namara village, Fizi.

The security environment deteriorated following the killing of Ngumino leader Semahurungure. A coalition of Mayi Mayi, comprising Biloze Bishambuke and Ebuela among others, had attacked a Ngumino position in Tulambo, Mwenga, on September 7. Furthermore, 25 out of 28 villages in the Bijombo area, Uvira, were entirely burned down by the end of October. In addition, rustling of livestock continued, such as

on October 25, when 350 cattle were stolen by Mayi Mayi Yakutumba in Lucimu and Italie villages, Basikasilu locality, Fizi. MONUSCO initiated inter-communal dialogues in May and November, which did not lead to any results. On September 12, MONUSCO further established a temporary base in Mikenge, in addition to permanent deployments in Uvira and Fizi. MONUSCO also supported FARDC operations in the region. However, large-scale violence and targeted destruction continued throughout the rest of the year.

Various Raia Mutomboki (RM) factions continued to operate in Kalehe, Shabunda and Kabare territories. Attacks on civilians through extortion, rape, and abduction persisted, following low state authority in those territories. The groups also clashed with FARDC and targeted mining areas. For instance, four people were killed, when FARDC ambushed RM Kikwama at Mukutano village, Shabunda, on September 29. On October 20, RM Ndarumanga raided mining concessions at Parking and Wibingilila, Shabunda. The assailants killed one man, injured another, and looted shops and houses. Throughout the year some RM fighters surrendered to authorities. For instance, on September 9, 55 RM Mirage fighters, and in October another 105 RM fighters, previously active in Shabunda, surrendered to FARDC in Biruwe, Walikale territory.

Increased participation in the MONUSCO supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process and several arrests of militia leaders were reported. Between October 28 and November 3, 800 UPLC fighters surrendered to FARDC in Kalungata, Beni. However, uncertain conditions and lacking resources limited the success of the DDR process. For instance, on March 2, Mayi Mayi Ebuela surrendered to FARDC in Kafulo, Fizi. During the disarmament process, FARDC attacked the militia, resulting in their retreat. Further, on May 24, over 200 Nyatura fighters fled a DDR camp in Mubambiro, Masisi, following its mismanagement.

Nevertheless, developments in the DDR process, the expansion of NDC-R, and the formation of the Congolese Patriot Resistance Fighters Network, a coalition comprising NDC-R, five RM groups, and various other Mayi Mayi groups, which was announced on November 30, changed the fragmented landscape of armed groups in Eastern DRC.

lhu

DR CONGO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: Lamuka vs. FCC vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between opposition parties and the government.

On January 9, the results of the 2018 presidential elections were announced, declaring opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi the elected president. The election was criticized as fraudulent, both internationally and by the second opposition coalition called Lamuka, led by Martin Fayulu. Many considered Fayulu the winner of the election. Between January 10 and 12, protests against the electoral outcome were staged throughout the country. Demonstrations in Kikwit, Kwilu province, Kisangani, Tshopo province, Goma, North

Kivu province, Tshikapa, Kasai province, Mbandaka, Équateur province, and Kinshasa, city-province of Kinshasa, were dispersed by police and military using live ammunition, batons, and tear gas. At least twelve people were killed, 49 injured, and several more arrested but released shortly afterwards.

On January 20, the Constitutional Court rejected a Lamuka petition for the annulment of the election, thereby confirming Tshisekedi as the elected president. This decision again sparked protests against Tshisekedi across the country. In Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga province, four people were killed as police dispersed protesters, on January 27. On February 17, the Common Front for Congo (FCC), closely aligned to former President Joseph Kabila and Tshisekedi's coalition Heading for Change (CACH) declared the formation of a coalition government, which was criticized by the opposition as the FCC still had a 60 percent majority in the parliament.

On March 15, a new Senate was elected, resulting in only one seat for CACH and 91 out of 108 seats for the FCC, further fortifying FCC's influence over the government. The election triggered several protests in Kinshasa and at least one police officer was killed on March 17. On April 10, at least eleven people were injured as supporters of Kabila and Tshisekedi clashed in Lubumbashi.

Lamuka suspended its parliamentary activities, following the revocation of elected MPs and Senators on June 11. Moreover, on June 13, at least 100 Lamuka activists protested in front of the Constitutional Court in Kinshasa against the decision. In the protest, cars and barricades were burned, leaving at least one person injured. Though protests were banned by the governor of Kinshasa, Lamuka announced nationwide protests for June 30 and started rallies all over the country, which triggered violent responses by security forces. In Kinshasa, one protester died when police dispersed the protests using tear gas and batons.

On July 26, the government coalition of CACH and FCC agreed on the final composition of the government. The following investiture on September 6, was boycotted by Lamuka. On October 8, members of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) burned a portrait of Kabila in Kinshasa, which led to several arrests. Subsequently, members of the FCC burned a portrait of Tshisekedi in Kolwezi, Lualaba province, creating severe tensions among the government coalition. day

DR CONGO, RWANDA (FDLR, CNRD)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: FDLR vs. CNRD vs. DR Congo, Rwanda
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources continued between the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), mainly comprised of Rwandan nationals on the one hand, and the governments of the DR Congo, supported by MONUSCO, and Rwanda, on the other hand.

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-rank FDLR members had defected to form the National Council for Renewal and Democracy (CNRD).

In 2019, the CNRD was active in Rutshuru and Masisi territories, North Kivu, and Kalehe territory, South Kivu. According to the UN Group of Experts, CNRD had lost territorial control in North Kivu due to attacks by armed groups since December 2018. Following attacks by a group of approx. 300 fighters, among others consisting of Nduma Defense of Congo Renewed (NDC-R) and Nyatura CMC, the CNRD operational commander for North Kivu ordered his fighters to leave Faringa in Rutshuru for Kashuga, Masisi. NDC-R continued to pursue and attack CNRD, forcing the CNRD to retreat in the direction of South Kivu. The group reached Southern Kivu's Kalehe highlands in early February.

Many remaining CNRD members in North Kivu surrendered to the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC) or MONUSCO. According to UN sources, up to 5,000 CNRD fighters moved to South Kivu throughout the year.

Apart from clashing with armed groups, CNRD also clashed with FARDC. For instance, on April 1, FARDC attacked a CNRD position in the Rutare area, Kalehe. In late November, FARDC launched an operation targeting CNRD and FDLR in South Kivu, which resulted in the capture of at least 1,000 CNRD and FDLR fighters by November 26.

The factions FDLR-FOCA and RUD-Urunana continued their activities in North Kivu, and operated in Bwito and Bwisha, Rutshuru territory, respectively. The groups targeted civilians, FARDC, and other armed groups. Between January 9 and 23, FARDC announced gains in operations targeting FDLR and CNRD in Faringa, Rutshuru, and Rubaya, Masisi, resulting in the death of at least ten FDLR combatants. On February 8, FDLR-FOCA ambushed the FARDC in Itabi, east of Kabalakasha locality, Masisi, and killed two soldiers. On March 3, FARDC attacked FDLR-FOCA positions in the villages of Bishigiro and Maroba, Rutshuru. Four FDLR-FOCA fighters were injured and ten civilians killed in these attacks.

Alleged FARDC operations in late 2019, targeting the FDLR leadership, led to the death of three key FDLR leaders. An attack on a FDLR position in Bwito locality, Rutshuru, on September 18, by alleged FARDC, left 25 FDLR fighters dead, as well as the FDLR commander wanted by the ICC. On November 9, FARDC killed the FDLR-RUD commander alongside four of his men in Binza, Rutshuru. Further, a FDLR-FOCA colonel was killed in course of a FARDC operation in Runga, Rutshuru, on December 4.

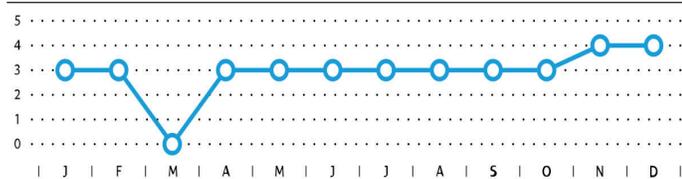
Clashes between FDLR and other armed groups continued throughout the year, frequently involving the NDC-R in Rutshuru but also Mayi Mayi Mazembe [→ DRC (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. For instance, on February 9, FDLR-RUD attacked a Mayi Mayi Mazembe position at Kayna village, Rutshuru, killing one and injuring six Mayi Mayi.

FDLR attacks on civilians continued, mostly in the form of abductions. For instance, on March 3, FDLR-RUD killed one civilian and kidnapped eight others from Kitimbo village, Rutshuru, demanding a ransom for the release of the hostages. FDLR-FOCA raided Bushiha village, Rutshuru, on September 30. The attackers killed one civilian, raped another, abducted two, and looted houses. fb

DR CONGO, UGANDA (ADF)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1995

Conflict parties: ADF vs. DR Congo, Uganda
 Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-
 dominance



The limited war over subnational predominance and the orientation of the political system continued between the Islamist armed group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) on the one hand, and the governments of Uganda, and the DR Congo (DRC), supported by MONUSCO on the other hand.

In the face of sustained pressure the ADF regrouped and rebuilt its capacity, to maintain a state of operability, after a DRC operation against the group in 2014 caused heavy losses. ADF members were mostly of Ugandan, but also of Burundian, Tanzanian and Congolese descent. As in previous years, the group continued to recruit members through an international recruiting network, often under false pretenses. In addition, recruiting of abducted civilians continued, including children.

The ADF operated in North Kivu's Beni territory and attacked civilians, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and MONUSCO forces, as well as humanitarian actors, severely affecting and challenging daily life in Beni.

With regard to the ongoing Ebola Virus Disease epidemic in northeastern Congo, the work of humanitarian actors in Beni was impaired, partly due to the precarious security environment, of which ADF is one element. Occasional attacks on health centers and their staff as well as general instability complicated the humanitarian response to the epidemic.

Even though ADF propaganda suggested a possible alliance with other Islamist groups, the UN Group of Experts found no evidence establishing a 'direct link of contact' between ADF and other Islamist groups. However, according to a UN Group of Experts report the ADF is financially supported by operatives of the so-called Islamic State (IS). Moreover, for the first time, IS claimed attacks committed by ADF on Congolese soil. For instance, on April 18, IS claimed responsibility for ADF targeting a FARDC position in Boyota village, Beni, which killed two soldiers and injured three civilians.

ADF's military capacity became clear following several seizures of ADF weapons by FARDC. For instance, on May 30, FARDC recovered one RPG rocket launcher, 15 AK-47 rifles and two PKM machine guns, after ADF had attacked a FARDC position in Mavivi, Beni. The attack resulted in the death of 23 ADF fighters and one injured FARDC soldier.

Throughout the year, the group repeatedly clashed with FARDC and MONUSCO. Between January and March, 53 soldiers were killed in clashes with ADF. For instance, on January 21, ADF attacked a military position near Mapobu, killing 25 FARDC soldiers. ADF further killed three FARDC soldiers in an ambush on July 9, in Nyaleke village, Beni, using an IED.

On October 30, 20,000 FARDC soldiers were deployed in the area north of Beni city and along key roads in an operation targeting the ADF in Beni territory. In the course of the operation intense fighting was reported. On November 12, MONUSCO launched an airstrike against ADF with a MI-24 helicopter near the Semliki river to support FARDC ground forces. Subsequently, FARDC reportedly occupied several strategic positions, including a key ADF base in Mapobu, on November 15.

ADF activity, in particular attacks against civilians, increased sharply in November despite medical and logistic support to the FARDC operation by MONUSCO. This surge triggered a series of violent protests against the deteriorating security situation, starting on November 20. The protests were largely directed at MONUSCO accusing them of inactivity. For instance, on November 22, MONUSCO premises in Boikene were breached, and the camp was partly destroyed. Nine protesters died in Beni and Butembo cities, with at least one reportedly killed by MONUSCO forces and the rest by national police.

Attacks on civilians in the form of assassinations, lootings, and abductions resulted in the displacement of around 81,000 people throughout the year. Instead of firearms, the ADF mostly used blunt weapons, knives and machetes, to target civilians. On January 7, ADF raided Mavivi town, causing in the death of eleven civilians. Another ten were killed with knives on May 16, as ADF raided Matiba village. Following the FARDC operation against the group, the frequency of ADF attacks targeting civilians increased in November, resulting in the death of around 123 in November. For instance, on November 5, ADF raided Kokola village, killed ten civilians, and abducted another 21. On November 19, ADF raided Mavete village, killing twelve and burning down nine houses. Frequent attacks on civilians also occurred in December, especially in the first two weeks, resulting in the death of at least 80 civilians. For instance, on December 3, ADF stabbed and killed 18 civilians in Horototo. Ihu

EGYPT – ETHIOPIA, SUDAN (GERD)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Egypt vs. Ethiopia, Sudan
 Conflict items: resources

The non-violent crisis over the construction and control of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) continued between Egypt, on the one hand, and Ethiopia and Sudan, on the other hand.

Last year's negotiations continued between the three countries over technical issues with building and filling the GERD. On February 10, on the sidelines of the African Union summit in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, the three heads of state reiterated their willingness to reach a consensus on outstanding technical issues, without harming their respective interests. On August 21, Egypt put forward a proposal on the filling of the dam, which was later rejected by Ethiopia. On September 12, Egypt released statements that they suspected Ethiopia of stalling the tripartite negotiations. Two days later, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi stated that the GERD would not

have been built if the 2011 revolution had not taken place and threatened to use military force to stop the construction of the dam [→ Egypt (opposition groups)]. In a statement on September 20, al-Sisi, aiming to put bilateral and trilateral talks behind, called for external international mediation. On October 17, Ethiopia rejected mediation efforts and reiterated it would only partake in tripartite meetings with Egypt and Sudan. Diplomatic rhetoric between Egypt and Ethiopia aggravated. Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed threatened not to hesitate using military force if provoked by Egypt. On November 6, the US hosted a meeting in Washington D.C. between the three countries in which they agreed to continue their tripartite talks, starting with four separate meetings between the countries' water ministers. Three of these meetings have been held this year. During the talks held on November 15 in Addis Ababa, on December 2 in Egypt's capital Cairo, and on December 21 in Sudan's capital Khartoum the three parties continuously discussed technical issues and jointly tried to remove remaining obstacles. The aim of these meetings is to reach an agreement regarding the GERD before 01/15/2020. jde

ESWATINI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: SUDF, COSATU, PUDEMO vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

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

Several nationwide anti-government protests were held throughout the year. The protesters demanded democratic reforms and higher wages, while condemning the extravagant lifestyle of the king. Hhohho region and Manzini region were particularly affected. For instance, on May 5, approx. 3,000 protesters from various opposition groups marched through Manzini, eponymous region. On September 23, approx. 3,500 people in total gathered in Mbabane, Hhohho, and Manzini to peacefully protest. Two days later, some of the 3,000 protesters threw stones on police officers. Police forces responded with tear gas, stun grenades and water cannons, leaving at least 15 injured. On December 20, the police arrested three pro-democracy demonstration leaders and confiscated laptops, phones and other electronic devices. vho

ETHIOPIA (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2017

Conflict parties: Oromo vs. Somali vs. Argoba vs. Kerayu vs. Qemant vs. Amhara vs. Oromo vs. Amhara vs. Amhara vs. Gumuz; Gumuz vs. Shinasa

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The war over subnational predominance and resources de-escalated to a violent crisis between various ethnic groups. However, ethnically motivated violence continued throughout the year between ethnic groups such as the Oromo, Amhara, Somali, and various others.

Compared to previous years, the level of violence decreased whilst the number of involved ethnic groups increased. Although the specific reasons for this year's violent encounters mostly remained unknown, clashes often evolved around opposing claims for access to resources such as water and grazing land and disagreements on the structure of ethnic federalism.

The areas most frequently affected by inter-communal violence were the Oromia, Amhara, Somali and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's (SNNPR) regions. While at the start of the conflict in 2017, the border region between Oromia and Somali was the only area affected by violence, in the last two years violence has increasingly spread to other regions of the country. This year, clashes also occurred in Harari, Dire Dawa and Benishangul-Gumuz region.

On January 1, a Somali militia attacked an Oromo community in East Hararghe Zone, Oromia, leaving four dead and ten injured. On the same day, two people died in ethnically motivated clashes between Argoba and Kerayu militias, presumably fighting over land claims in Fentale woreda, Oromia. On January 7, clashes between Qemant militia and Amhara militia in Metema town, Amhara Region, left eight people dead. On February 6 and 7, several people were killed in violent encounters between Amhara and Qemant in Gonder zone, Amhara. On April 8, violence between Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups recurred in Oromia zone, Amhara, and two people were killed. Further violent clashes occurred on January 14 in SNNPR, in which at least 37 people of the Kambata ethnic group living in the Keffa Zone were killed by unidentified ethnic militia. In Somali region, Oromo ethnic militias attacked unidentified civilians in Liben Zone, Somali Region, killing one person, injuring nine, and looting 200 camels on March 2. In March, Harari region was heavily affected by violent unrest. From March 7 onwards, ethnic Oromo youth, organised as Qeerroo, attacked ethnic Harari due to alleged disputes over land claims.

In Benishangul-Gumuz, large-scale violence erupted in April between the Gumuz and Amhara ethnic groups. A dispute between an Amharan truck driver and a Gumuz customer on April 26 and the subsequent assault of the latter by a police officer triggered intense fighting over the following days between Gumuz and Shinasha ethnic groups, on the one hand, and Amahara, on the other hand. Clashes were situ-

ated throughout Metekel Zone, leaving several dozens dead and multiple injured, according to local officials. Confrontations between Gumuz and Amhara again flared up in the beginning of June, when Gumuz attacked a group of Amhara people, killing seven in Metekel zone. On June 23, 57 people were killed, 17 injured, and several dozen houses burnt down in Metekel Zone by an unidentified ethnic militia. ^{bib}

ETHIOPIA (OLF / OROMIYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

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

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the government.

Following the 2018 peace agreement between the government and several other rebel groups such as Tigray People's Democratic Movement, Ogaden Liberation Front and OLF, the conflict parties accused each other of violating the agreement throughout the year. At the same time, efforts towards peace negotiations and disarmament have been made.

Unlike in previous years, OLF's militant faction Oromia Liberation Army (OLA), also known as OLF Shane, was the actor predominantly responsible for conducting violent measures. On January 13, the military allegedly launched airstrikes against the OLF, killing seven civilians and destroying several houses. The attack targeted areas in Qellem Welega and surrounding areas in Western Oromia, where OLA strongholds were suspected. Reportedly, the airstrikes were in response to two bank robberies in Western Oromia the day before. OLF members allegedly robbed the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and the Cooperative Bank of Oromia and took several hostages in course of the incident. The national government denied to have carried out airstrikes in Oromia.

However, a few days after the attack, OLF accepted a new peace offer, which was mediated by traditional Oromo leader Abba Gedas in the capital Addis Ababa, eponymous region. The agreement stipulated a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for all former OLF soldiers. In addition, it included the establishment of a technical committee to facilitate the disarmament process. Consequently, on January 16, several hundred OLF members checked into demilitarization camps and more than 800 OLF members were detained in Benishangul-Gumuz Region. This year, several thousand OLF soldiers have been disarmed.

Parts of the OLF, especially the OLA, remained armed, but signed a ceasefire agreement on January 22 and a peace agreement with the military on May 29 in Addis Ababa. Despite the agreements, OLA was continuously involved in clashes with other militias and targeted civilians. The death of at least 28 civilians was attributed to attacks of the OLA this year. On April 6, OLA and an Amhara ethnic militia clashed in Amahara district, Oromia, leaving at least six people dead and several religious buildings destroyed.

Over the course of the year, members of OLF allegedly targeted government officials. OLA was accused of shooting a

military commander on May 1 in the Horo Guduru Welega Zone. OLF members were accused of killing a Benishangul regional police officer on his way to the Oromia Region on October 18 and killing another four police officers and one civilian in an armed clash on November 1 in West Shewa Zone. One Oromo regional state official was reportedly killed in Kellam Welega on 21 November, OLF members were suspected to be responsible for this incident. In June and July protests against the remaining armed OLA soldiers were staged in Oromia, calling for their disarmament. ^{kfp}

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 continued between various opposition groups and the government.

Despite Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's attempts to meet the numerous ethnic groups' demands for greater political participation, justice, and social equality, ethnically motivated violence increased across the country [\rightarrow Ethiopia (inter-communal rivalry)]. Powerful anti-government groups within the military and the ruling coalition emerged.

On June 22, nationalist factions of the Amhara security forces assassinated the regional President Ambachew Mekonnen, his top advisor, and the region's attorney general. A few hours later, the Chief of the General Staff of the military and his advisor were killed in the capital Addis Ababa, Oromia region, by a bodyguard allegedly siding with the Amhara nationalist movement. General Asaminew Tsige of the Amharan security forces, who was accused of leading the plot, was shot and killed two days later in Bahir Dar, Amhara's capital. According to media reports, the Amhara nationalist movement intended greater regional autonomy for the Amhara people and claimed back "lost regions" in bordering Tigray region. Following the event, the internet was shut down across the country for two days.

In Oromia, Oromo and other ethnic groups continued to protest the government, condemning their political and economic marginalisation and calling for reforms regarding land use and salaries. For instance, on March 7, Oromo organised mass protests in Adama town, Oromia, demanding improved housing and land distribution policies. On October 23, nationwide solidarity protests began when activist and media owner Jawar Mohammed accused the national security forces to have plotted to attack him. Subsequently, violence broke out in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa district, eponymous region, as well as in Harari region between Oromo supporters of Mohammed and other ethnic groups. Approx. 70 people died in violent clashes as mobs targeted ethnic and religious minorities within Oromia.

In July, violent unrests flared up in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region, when the government failed to organize a referendum addressing the Sidama people's claim for regional autonomy set for July 18. The Sidama com-

munity leadership postponed the referendum to November which led to clashes between Sidama activists and national security forces. This resulted in the death of 50 to 60 people in the region's capital Hawassa, but also in towns such as Aleta Wendo, Hagere Selam, Melga and Yirgalem. On November 20, the referendum was passed with 98.5 percent of the votes.

Throughout the year, reports indicated that national security forces repeatedly attacked civilians. The causes remained mostly unknown. For instance, on January 8, military forces shot and killed eight protesters in Metema town, Amhara Region, who set up a roadblock, claiming that Qemant militias used vehicles of the nearby construction company in their fight against Amhara. [bib](#)

FRANCE – RWANDA

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: France vs. Rwanda

Conflict items: other

The dispute over the juridical reappraisal of the 1994 Rwandan genocide continued between the governments of Rwanda and France. In the past, the Rwandan government has accused France of complicity in the genocide by supporting the Hutu regime and training soldiers and militias who carried out the assassinations.

On 04/06/1994, Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira were assassinated, sparking the 1994 Rwandan genocide that had killed up to 800,000 Rwandans. Between June and August 1994, France had deployed 2,500 soldiers to Rwanda in the Operation Turtle to establish safe humanitarian areas under a UN Chapter VII mandate, between the two UN assistance missions to the country, UNAMIR I and UNAMIR II. Operation Turtle was later criticized for not intervening or arresting perpetrators. In an interview in February, Hubert Védrine, then the secretary-general of the French government, defended the decision, saying that the UN mandate was of humanitarian nature.

In 2006, Rwanda had suspended diplomatic ties to France, after a French court had issued arrest warrants for aides of then-President Paul Kagame on charges of involvement in the attack on Habyarimana's plane. In December 2018, the French judiciary had dropped the charges, decreasing diplomatic tensions.

In February, Radio France and Mediapart published excerpts of a 1994 memo of the French external intelligence agency, allegedly indicating that France had advance warning of Habyarimana's assassination. The document reportedly alleged that the former chief of staff of the Rwandan army, Laurent Serubuga, and Colonel Théoniste Bagosora, an aide to the defense minister, were the main instigators of the April 1994 attack. Serubuga had moved to France in the 1990s and French authorities had rejected a Rwandan request to extradite him in 2014.

The two governments have been fostering diplomatic relations since last year. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron was invited to the 25-year genocide com-

memoration on April 6 in the Rwandan capital Kigali, Nyarugenge District. It was attended on his behalf by Hervé Berville, a French MP of Rwandan descent and survivor of the genocide. On April 5, after meeting with survivors, Macron appointed a two-year commission to investigate France's role in the Rwandan genocide with the goal of releasing a public report. He also called for April 7 to become an official memorial date for the genocide. The commission was later criticized by Rwandan and French academics and intellectuals for not including any experts on the genocide or Kinyarwanda-speakers. [fb](#)

GAMBIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2016

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between various opposition groups and the government of President Barrow.

Throughout the year several protests were held, criticizing the president, his government and the police's use of force. For instance, on May 17, a demonstration by the opposition group Three Years Jotna was held in Serekunda, Banjul Region, calling on Barrow to respect the end of his term of presidency and to hold the elections in December 2019. The group had formed this year to criticize the president's extended tenure and demand his resignation in accordance with a coalition agreement that had been signed in 2016. The police arrested 15 protesters, accusing them of having held the demonstration illegally. Three Years Jotna staged another non-violent demonstration on December 16, in Banjul, Banjul Region, which was attended by thousands of protesters. Furthermore, on July 24, hundreds of protesters held a demonstration in Serekunda opposing police violence, commemorating a vendor, who had died in police custody. Protesters threw stones, burned cartons and plywood, and burned houses. In response security forces dispersed the crowd using tear gas, leaving three people injured and arresting several.

Moreover the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission continued its investigation of human rights violations during Yahya Jammeh presidency. [hil](#)

GUINEA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: FNDC vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between the opposition coalition National Front for Constitutional Defense (FNDC), led by the party Union of Guinea's Democratic Forces (UFDG) on the one hand, and the government of President Alpha Condé and his party Rally of the Guinean People (RPG), on the other hand.

On January 8, the accord between the government and the Free Syndicate of Teachers and Researchers of Guinea (SLECG) was signed, putting an end to the educational demonstrations of the last years.

Throughout the year, protests by various opposition groups regarding post-electoral disagreements continued throughout the country. For instance, on January 7 and 8, UFDG members protested in Matato, in the capital Conakry, eponymous region, to demand the installment of their mayor after the municipal elections on 02/04/2018. The police dispersed the protesters using tear gas, and arrested eight persons for public disorder. After further protests and clashes in Matato, mainly between UFDG and RPG members, re-elections took place and the mayor was appointed on February 22. Furthermore, clashes between different RPG factions, leading to two arrests and several injured protesters, occurred in Siguiri, Kankan region, after a new mayor was inaugurated on February 13. On April 26, clashes between opposition and government party members over the election of a new mayor in Koumana, Kankan, left two people dead.

The next year's presidential election constituted another point of contention. Denouncing Condé's alleged intention to amend the constitution enabling him to run for a third term, several opposition groups formed the FNDC. The partaking parties, trade unions, and civil society organizations staged several protests throughout the year. For instance, on April 30, in course of a protest, FNDC members clashed with RPG members, leaving several injured. In a similar incident in N'zérékoré, eponymous region, on June 13, security forces dispersed protesters with tear gas and batons, injuring 28 and arresting eight. One of the protesters died of his injuries. Protests intensified in October, mainly in Conakry, Boké, Dubréka, Kindia, Mamou, and Kankan regions, resulting in around 70 injured, ten dead on both sides and the arrest of almost 200 people. On November 4, the FNDC combined its protests with a funeral march for the deceased in Bambeto, Conakry region. Subsequently, security forces intervened, using tear gas and opening fire on the protesters, leaving several injured and two dead.

Several leaders, including those of the US and France, declared to oppose a third mandate of Condé at a meeting between West African countries. Furthermore, diaspora supporters of FNDC protested in Washington DC and New York City, US, as well as in Brussels, Belgium, in September. afi

KENYA (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1963

Conflict parties: Turkana vs. Pokot vs. Ilchamus vs. Borana vs. Gabra vs. Turkana vs. Nyangatom vs. Degodia vs. Garre

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

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

The parties involved in the conflict predominantly fought

over access to resources, such as grazing land and water, and opposing territorial claims. This year, the areas most frequently affected by inter-communal violence were north-western Turkana and northern Marsabit County. As in previous years, frequent banditry attacks and disputes over land further aggravated rivalries between the communities. This year, inter-communal violence caused at least 85 fatalities.

In February, multiple clashes between Turkana and Pokot ethnic groups along the border of West Pokot and Turkana County, especially in the area of the border town Kainuk, left at least eight dead, four people injured and more than 800 cattle stolen. Transport and public services in the area were also disrupted. Peace efforts were impaired by an attack by unknown assailants on the convoy of West Pokot's governor, who was on his way to a peace meeting, on February 12.

Rivalry between the Nyangatom, an ethnic group originally from South Sudan, and the Turkana was carried out in Turkana County as well. On March 17, a clash between at least 200 Nyangatom and Turkana left seven people dead in Maisa village, close to the Ethiopian border.

In the course of the year, tensions in northern Kenya between the Borana, a subgroup of the Oromo ethnic group from Ethiopia, and the Gabra intensified. On March 13, the two pastoral communities clashed over administrative border disputes in Oronder village, Marsabit County, leaving three people dead and an unknown number of people injured. On May 6, attackers stormed a peace meeting between Gabra and Borana who were collaborating on a way forward to share existing water resources in Forole, Marsabit. Eleven people were killed and several injured in the incident. There were two possibly related attacks at the end of May, in which five people were killed. On July 3, unknown attackers killed a man and stole 250 cattle in Elle-Bor, Marsabit. Attacks on two villages near the Ethiopian border by alleged Borana left 13 killed, nine injured, and 1,000 goats and 500 cattle stolen on August 24 and 25. On November 5, attacks on two other villages in the county, Kukuto and Jaldesa, by more than 500 heavily armed bandits, left eleven people dead, including two police officers, and 800 animals stolen. Dozens of civilians had to flee their homes.

Unlike in the previous year, banditry attacks and inter-communal rivalry intensified in Baringo County. On February 21, five people were killed and about 100 displaced in Arabal, Baringo, when supposed Pokot cattle rustlers attacked the Ilchamus ethnic group.

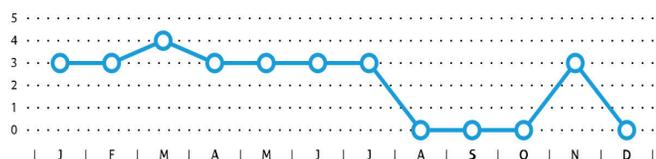
In the first week of March, six people were killed and at least two injured in different attacks in Meru County, as a result of tensions between the Borana and Somali livestock traders. From March 22 to 24, clashes between Borana and Somali herders in Janju area at the border between Garissa and Isiolo counties left three people dead, and another three injured. On October 1, alleged Degodia militiamen killed seven Garre people in Doomal, Mandera County, in an attack possibly related to land disputes. jwe

MALI (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY / CENTRAL MALI)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Dogon, Bambara, Dozo vs. Fulani vs. Islamist groups

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources such as arable land continued between the Dogon and Bambara communities and their Dozo self-defense groups, the Fulani community and Islamist groups.

Since 2015, Islamist groups, who have been active in conflicts in Northern Mali, especially Mali Liberation Front (MLF), have expanded their presence in central Mali and destabilized the region. Security forces and other ethnic groups, namely the Bambara and Dogon, have accused members of the predominantly Muslim Fulani ethnic group of complicity in attacks by Islamist groups. In response, Bambara and Dogon created so-called Dozo self-defense militias. The rising instability and availability of arms in the region have further spurred underlying grievances over arable land between Fulani herders and Bambara and Dogon farmers.

Throughout the year, Dogon self-defense groups and members of the Fulani attacked each other frequently in Mopti region. For instance, on January 1, at least 100 assailants, predominantly Dozo militiamen, supported by individuals from surrounding villages, attacked the village of Koulogon and killed 39 Fulani, injured seven civilians and torched 173 huts and 59 granaries. Moreover, on March 23, at least 100 persons, predominantly Dozo militiamen, armed with automatic rifles and grenades, killed at least 157 Fulani in the village of Ogossagou. The assailants also injured 65 persons and torched at least 220 huts. On June 9, between 30 and 40 alleged Fulanis armed with automatic rifles attacked the village of Sobane Da and killed at least 35 Dogon. The assailants injured nine villagers and torched 23 huts, 27 granaries and several enclosures.

Similar incidents in Mopti and Ségou regions could not be clearly attributed, but were allegedly perpetrated by members of Fulani and Dozo. Over the course of the year, at least 297 people were killed. Furthermore, according to estimates of the International Organization for Migration from June 14, at least 50,000 people have been displaced in central Mali since January.

Over the course of the year, various actors attempted to pacify the conflict. For instance, Fulani and Dogon groups signed a ceasefire agreement on July 1 with a spokesman of the Dozo militia Dan Na Ambassagou announcing the introduction of joint Dogon and Fulani patrols. Similarly, on August 16, leaders of the Fulani, Dogon, and Dafing communities of the municipality of Ouenkoro, Mopti region, signed a

peace agreement. Furthermore, at the beginning of October, MLF leader Amadou Koufa suggested a ceasefire between Dan Na Ambassagou, and his own organization. However, according to media reports, Dan Na Ambassagou's leadership was opposed to the cessation of hostilities. jus

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, the Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MSA), and the Islamist groups Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM), in northern Mali, comprising the regions of Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Taoudenni, and Timbuktu.

In 2013, the CMA had been formed by, amongst others, the pro-Azawad Ifoghas Tuareg group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) 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), together with other government-loyal armed groups, had founded the Platform [→ Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad); Mali, Burkina Faso et al. (JNIM, ISGS et al.)]. Despite the 2015 Bamako Agreement, CMA and Platform members had clashed repeatedly before signing a ceasefire agreement in September 2017.

Violence between different signatory groups of the Bamako agreement or affiliates was mainly limited to the first half of the year and left at least 29 people dead. Despite both being part of the Platform, GATIA attacked positions of the Coordination of Movements and Patriotic Front of Resistance 1 in Gao region on February 6 and March 28, resulting in the deaths of nine militants. The first attack was allegedly due to livestock theft. Compared to the previous year, the number of deaths in confrontations between members of CMA and the GATIA-affiliated MSA, a splinter group of MNLA, increased considerably. On May 5, MSA attacked a HCUA post near the contested village Talataye, Gao region, killing ten militants and seizing ammunition and arms. Both sides accused each other of having attacked first. On June 24, clashes between CMA and MSA in Agarnadamoss, Gao region, resulted in the deaths of at least ten people. On July 12, MSA announced to join the Platform and to respect the Bamako Agreement. However, on December 21, CMA militants shot and killed an MSA member in Inchinanan, Ménaka region. In the following shootout, three CMA militants were killed.

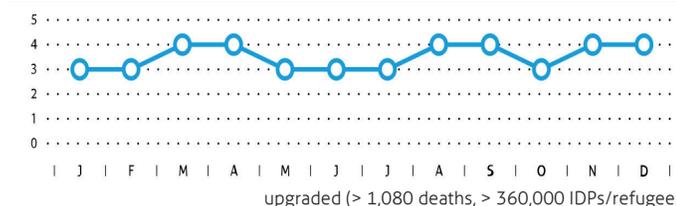
Meanwhile, the number of deaths in clashes between Islamist groups and signatory groups of the Bamako agreement or affiliates, especially GATIA and MSA, decreased significantly from at least 190 last year to at least 106. Most of the incidents occurred in the regions of Gao and Ménaka. For instance, the most fatal confrontation between ISGS and GATIA

on February 1 in Tidimbawen, Ménaka region, resulted in the death of 25 people, including one civilian. In an attack by JNIM members on joint GATIA and MSA posts in Inahar, Ménaka region, on February 13, two GATIA and two JNIM members were killed. Moreover, several cases were reported between January and March in which GATIA militants abducted Fulani men, accusing them of supporting or being part of Islamist groups, and executed at least six of them in the regions of Timbuktu and Mopti [→ Mali (inter-communal rivalry / central Mali)]. jas

MALI, BURKINA FASO ET AL. (JNIM, ISGS ET AL.)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1998

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



The limited war over the orientation of the international system escalated to a war 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 Islam, 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, and other governments on the other hand.

International, regional and national efforts to combat Islamist militants from the Sahel zone continued this year. Among international efforts to intervene in the region were MINUSMA with an 11,000 man strong contingent, French forces under Operation Barkhane with at least 4,500 soldiers, and European and US military contingents. In response to the Islamist attacks, the so-called G5 Sahel Joint Force was established by the G5 member states in 2017, which pool their resources to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime and human trafficking. Throughout the year, the international community, mainly members of the so-called Sahel Alliance, promised substantial financial contributions to maintain the G5 Joint Force. However the deployment of the force, with a full capacity of 5,000 soldiers was still in process.

Since 2016, the number of conflict related deaths has quintupled, accounting for approx. 4,000 deaths this year. The three main causes of violence in the Sahel, organized crime, inter-communal rivalries and Islamist attacks, are closely linked and cannot be examined separately. This year, the number of attacks by Islamist militants has increased, as has the number of deaths by ethnically motivated violence [→ Mali (inter-communal rivalry); Burkina (inter-communal rivalry)]. The rural Muslim population often turned to Islamist groups

to arm themselves in the increasing violence and to retake control of their inhabited territories in response to the continuing power vacuum in the Sahel zone.

Geographically, the Sahel stretch, in particular the border triangle between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, has been an important route for illicit trade for decades. In addition, the land in the border region is barely accessible desert or national park, of which the Islamists have taken advantage by building their refuges. While exact figures remained unknown, violence and armed assaults has forced hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee their homes.

An evident anti-foreigner and in particular anti-French sentiment was rising among the Sahel population. Minor, localised protests and civil unrest was observed in countries were foreign forces combatted Islamist groups. French President Emmanuel Macron called upon the G5 Sahel leaders in December to resolve this rift to ensure a legitimate basis for the presence and potential increase of French military personnel. In addition, Macron called the Sahel Alliance allies to reinforce their military presence. However, after fatal attacks on the Malian army this year, a new wave of support to the government was observed.

MALI

In Mali, JNIM, its supporting factions and ISGS continued to be highly active. French forces of Operation Barkhane, the US, and the Malian army jointly targeted Islamist militant camps, often combining air and ground forces. Most attacks occurred in central Mopti region, accounting for more than 500 fatalities this year. Compared to previous years, the number of fatal attacks by either JNIM or ISGS militants in northeastern Gao region and northwestern Timbuktu region decreased, totaling approx. 30 attacks. A similar development was observed in northern Kidal region and central Segou region.

In most cases, the Islamist militants did not claim responsibility for attacks. Hence, assaults could not clearly be identified as either JNIM or ISGS and the exact number of attacks and fatalities could not be determined. However, when Islamists claimed responsibility for attacks, they often labeled them reprisal attacks responding to previous attacks on the Fulani ethnic group. Attacks by Islamists took a similar style as in previous years. The Islamists carried out attacks using suicide bombings, attaching IEDs to target vehicles, and shelling army bases with mortars. In most cases, militants were able to seize vehicles, weapons, and ammunition thereby building their capacity. Furthermore, they sometimes resorted to kidnappings and destroyed infrastructure such as bridges. They also continued targeted attacks on teachers and students, schools and churches. A distinctive feature of ISGS was its mobility, frequently using motorcycles and cars in their attacks. This enhanced the group's ability to remain active across three different border areas.

In Mopti, JNIM fighters, locally supported by Katiba Macina and Katiba Serma militant groups, frequently targeted national military and police forces and to a lesser extent also MINUSMA forces. For instance, on March 17, Katiba Macina militants driving cars and motorcycles raided a military camp in Dioura, killing at least 23 soldiers and wounding several. Following the attack, the assailants burned down the camp, seized vehicles, weapons and ammunition. Reports indicated

that JNIM militants continued to target civilians, often members of the Dogon ethnic group. However, the Islamist group mostly refrained from targeting civilians to avoid losing public support. Approx. 100 Dogon died in clashes or attacks this year. For instance, on June 17, suspected Katiba Macina assailants attacked Yoro and Gangafani villages close to the border with Burkina Faso, killing at least 35 Dogon. Following the rise in violence since 2016, the Dogon ethnic group had set up self-defense militias, the Dozo, such as the so-called Dan Na Ambassagou, which engaged in several violent encounters with JNIM militants this year. In contrast to attacks on military bases or personnel, Islamists rarely claimed responsibility for attacks on civilians. Other ethnicities targeted this year were the Bambara ethnic group.

The most fatal attack in Mopti, either by suspected ISGS or JNIM militants, took place on September 30. In two separate attacks, assailants overran the G5 Joint Force military base in Boulikessi, hosting mostly Malian contingents, and the National Guard Camp in Mondoro, killing at least 38 soldiers and two civilians. 15 assailants were killed during the two incidents. French, Malian, and Burkinabe forces conducted several counter operations targeting suspected Islamists in Mopti throughout the year. More than 130 suspected militants were killed in these operations.

In Gao, French forces conducted operations against presumed JNIM and ISGS militants. During an air operation on November 15, 13 French soldiers were killed in a helicopter crash. ISGS later claimed to have shot down the helicopter, whereas the French chief of staff denied any militant involvement. ISGS further targeted civilians, among them members of the Tuareg and Dawsahak ethnic groups, and clashed with fighters of Movement Salvation Azawad (MSA) and Imghad Tuareg and Allies Self-Defense Group (GATIA). For instance, on February 1, ISGS clashed with GATIA in Tidimbawen, leaving 25 people dead. JNIM, locally supported by Al Mourabitoun fighters, was also active, conducting several attacks against civilians and security forces.

In Kidal, JNIM militants, locally supported by Ansar Dine, attacked the MINUSMA post in Aguelhok on January 20. The coordinated attack started with a suicide attack and was followed by an armed assault. 13 Chadian peacekeepers were killed and at least 25 wounded. JNIM later on claimed responsibility.

On February 24, JNIM militants conducted a coordinated attack including two suicide bombings targeting the EU Training Mission camp in Koulikoro.

BURKINA FASO

In Burkina Faso, the number of religiously motivated assaults by Islamist militants, the number of militants involved, and the number of casualties increased dramatically this year. While in 2016 the militant Islamist uprising had started in the northern provinces of Sahel region with only a few reported incidents, over the past two years JNIM affiliates and ISGS have expanded their actions to almost every region of the country, and are particularly active in the border regions with Mali and Niger. The activities of Ansaroul Islam, who were predominantly active in northern Soum province, declined. However, in response to the overall increasing violence, the Burkinabe military and its regional G5 affiliates and French

forces intensified their counter operations, including combined ground and air attacks. The death toll rose to approx. 1,000 this year, including civilians, national, regional, and international security personnel and militants. Militants increasingly targeted Christians and churches. Reportedly, Islamist militants occasionally wore Burkinabe uniforms during their assaults. In most of their raids on military bases, Islamist militants seized vehicles, weapons, and ammunition. As in Mali, Islamist militants repeatedly burnt schools and attacked teachers as well as students. In addition, the increasing Islamist threat and the insecurity associated with their activities led to the establishment of inter-communal self-defense groups, such as the Koglweogo, affiliated to the Mossi ethnic group and others [→ Burkina Faso (inter-communal rivalry)]. One of the most fatal incidents this year occurred on December 24, when approx. 200 ISGS militants killed seven soldiers in an attack on a military base and 35 civilians in the nearby village Abinda, Soum province. In the following air-supported counterattack by the Burkinabe military, 80 militants were allegedly killed.

In Boucle de Mouhon, Islamist militants continued their operations, targeting civilians, military and police. For instance, on December 3, suspected JNIM militants attacked a military outpost in Toeni, killing four soldiers and wounding at least two. In the subsequent counterattack an alleged 20 militants were killed. The Burkinabe military and French forces conducted several operations against suspected JNIM, ISGS or Ansaroul Islam camps. For instance, on December 9, an airstrike by French forces in northern Soum province targeted an Ansaroul Islam hideout and left at least 15 militants dead.

NIGER

In Niger, violent clashes and assaults mainly occurred in Tillaberi region, bordering Mali to the east and Burkina Faso to the north. Both JNIM and ISGS militants were active this year. The most fatal assault occurred on December 10 in Inates, when suspected ISGS militants instigated a complex attack on a Nigerien military base. Multiple militants, arriving aboard cars and motorcycles, used suicide bombs and mortars, and heavily shelled the army base. French forces subsequently supported the local forces from the air, shooting at militants from helicopters. Exact figures of death toll and personnel on both sides vary, however, an alleged 71 Nigerien soldiers and more than 50 militants were killed and dozens wounded in the attack. However, earlier reports indicated that the Nigerian-based militant group ISWAP, a faction of the Islamist militants Boko Haram [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)], possibly extended their operations from southeastern Diffa region bordering Lake Chad to other parts of Niger, including Tillaberi. Since both groups, ISGS as well as ISWAP, pledged allegiance to the so-called Islamic State, cooperation between the two groups cannot be entirely ruled out. However, none of the groups claimed responsibility. Earlier this year, at least 27 soldiers were killed in an ambush by ISGS militants near Tongo Tongo on May 14. The Tongo Tongo area had been affected by clashes or ambushes between militants and security forces in the past. However, this incident was the most fatal for several years. Unlike in previous years, suspected JNIM militants also launched at least one attack on a military base in Tahoua

region, west of Tillaberi. On December 9, suspected JNIM militants detonated a car bomb in front of the Nigerian military base in Agando to breach the perimeter of the camp. In the assault at least three soldiers were killed and four wounded. In subsequent counter operations 14 militants were allegedly killed, vehicles and weapons seized.

TUNISIA

In Tunisia, local authorities and the AQIM-affiliated Uqba ibn Nafi brigade (OIB) clashed violently on several occasions. OIB carried out targeted bombings close to the Algerian border. For instance, OIB claimed responsibility for two separate attacks on April 17 in the Mount Chaambi region, Kasserine Governorate. The militants claimed to have left casualties, which was disputed by Tunisian officials. On April 26, OIB militants staged a double bombing in Mount Chaambi, leaving one soldier dead and three others injured.

The Tunisian military, on the other hand, carried out anti-terror raids leading to clashes with OIB militants. For instance, on October 20, one militant was killed and another injured in a raid in Kasserine Governorate near the Algerian border.

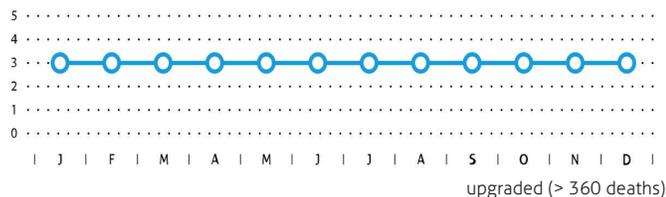
The national state of emergency was extended several times, including on December 30, until the end of January 2020. anf, wih

MOZAMBIQUE (ASWJ)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2017

Conflict parties: ASWJ vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology



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

Throughout the year, more than 450 people were killed and more than 800 houses destroyed. ASWJ militants targeted civilians, the Mozambique Defense Armed Forces and infrastructure, increasingly undermining the exploitation of the natural gas reserves off the coast. The intensity of fighting was further aggravated by the signing of security and energy agreements between President Filipe Nyusi and Russian President Vladimir Putin in August, and the subsequent arrival of Russian Wagner Group’s mercenaries.

On April 6, the military seized an ASWJ base and arrested several militants in Maculo village. On July 20, ASWJ attacked a military convoy between Macomia and Mucojo villages. Reportedly, ten militants and two soldiers were killed in the following clashes. On August 7, the military killed 15 suspected ASWJ militants in Ntulenii village. Ten days later, ASWJ attacked a military base in Mocimboa da Praia. 17 soldiers and

ten ASWJ fighters were killed. On August 23, nine soldiers were reportedly killed by ASWJ in Nangade village. In September, approx. 160 mercenaries and military equipment of the Wagner Group reportedly arrived at Nacala airport, Nampula province in two Russian military planes. Subsequently, Wagner Group often supported the military, while clashes with ASWJ increased in number and severity. For instance, on September 10, 15 soldiers were killed and a hospital destroyed in an ASWJ attack in Llala village. One day later, the military and ASWJ clashed in Quiterajo village, leaving another ten soldiers dead. On October 7, several militants were killed in an attack by the military and Wagner Group on an militants post in Mbau village. Three days later, another joint attack killed nine ASWJ members in Mitope village, while one Wagner Group fighter died. Similar attacks followed on October 16 and 22, leaving several militants dead. On October 27, ASWJ attacked a military convoy, claiming to have killed 20 soldiers and five members of Wagner Group.

Throughout the year, ASWJ continued to target civilians, looted and burnt villages in the region. For instance, on January 13, seven people were killed in an attack by suspected ASWJ militants on a bus in Ulumbi village. On March 15, suspected ASWJ fighters killed 13 people in attacks on Maculo and Nabajo villages. On February 23, ASWJ reportedly carried out three attacks against civilians on the road between Macomia and Mucojo villages. A total of 14 people died, approx. 20 were injured, and eleven houses and a transport vehicle were destroyed. On May 28, ASWJ militants killed 16 people in Quiterajo village in an attack on a truck. On June 26 and 27, suspected ASWJ militants destroyed several houses in Ntoli and Quissungule villages and killed 21 people, at least ten of whom were decapitated. On October 31, another eleven civilians were killed in a presumed ASWJ attack on Chinda village.

ASWJ’s activity also affected companies exploiting natural gas in Cabo Delgado. For example, on February 21 on a road from Mocimboa da Praia to Afungi village, ASWJ attacked employees of the US energy-company Anadarko Petroleum, running a natural gas project in the region. Six people were injured and at least one person was beheaded. On November 13, suspected ASWJ militants burnt several buildings and killed seven residents of Nsemo village, which lay close to a construction site for natural gas exploitation. ebe

MOZAMBIQUE (RENAMO)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: RENAMO, RENAMO Military Junta vs. government

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 the one hand, and the government under the ruling party Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) on the other hand. As a result of the negotiations between FRELIMO and RENAMO which started in 2016, a peace accord was signed on Au-

gust 1 at the RENAMO military base in the Gorongosa mountains, Sofala province. Both President Filipe Nyusi and RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade stressed the importance of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and inclusive general elections scheduled for October 15. The run-up to the elections was marked by increased violence between RENAMO and FRELIMO supporters, peaking in September. In the elections, Nyusi was re-elected with 73 percent of the official vote. RENAMO and MDM, a breakaway party of RENAMO established in 2009, denounced the results for suspected electoral fraud.

An emerging militant faction within RENAMO, the RENAMO Military Junta, denounced the peace deal and rejected RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade, whom they accused of persecuting, abducting and killing adherents of former RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama. It refused to disarm until Momade resigns and elected its own president, Mariano Nhungue Chissingue, in August. All incidents reported after the elections on October 15 are associated with suspected members of the Military Junta and not the main political party, which has repeatedly condemned the attacks and emphasized its commitment to the peace deal.

The Military Junta mainly targeted civilians and suspected FRELIMO supporters on the main roads in the center of the country. For example, on November 6, four RENAMO supporters ambushed and burnt a minibus in Pindanganga, Gondola district, Manica province, killing three and injuring three people. On November 28, suspected RENAMO members attacked a lorry on National Road Number 1, the most important road linking Southern and Northern Mozambique. Two people were injured. Furthermore, on December 2 and 5, suspected RENAMO supporters attacked busses and trucks on the same road, leaving two people injured and two dead respectively.

called Middle Belt during the dry season. States like Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa are arid and offer pastures for larger herds to graze. In addition, the tsetse fly is non-existent in these states during this time, which is vital for the survival of livestock. Factors causing the herdsmen to move further south are the desertification in the Sahel and insecurity and violent conflict in the northern states. [→ Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)] The Fulani clashed with farmers in the south, due to farming on areas formerly designated for herdsmen to drive and graze their cattle. The use of former so-called Grazing Reserves as farmland was often a result of political decisions and land reforms. Each of the groups rely economically on the use of arable land. Hence, destruction of crops by the large herds, the pollution of water caused by livestock excrement as well as reprisal actions by farmers, for example poisoning of cattle increased tensions between the groups. An increased influx of illicit firearms in the region and the formation of militias on both sides contributed to a violent escalation in recent years. Consequently, clashes between the groups resulted in thousands of deaths in the previous years. The conflict fueled and deepened ethnically motivated resentments towards the other group. On the one hand, the Fulani perceived land reforms to favor the Christian farmers from the south. On the other, farmers had complained about the lack of action taken against violence perpetrated by Fulani ethnic militias in recent years. Especially since President Muhammadu Buhari, an ethnic Fulani, has been in power, the rumor circulated that the government is planning an islamization of the southern regions.

In 2017 and 2018, in order to stop the destruction of farmland and violent clashes, the states of Benue, Taraba, Ekiti and Oyo introduced anti-open grazing laws, prohibiting herdsmen from driving and grazing livestock on their territories. The laws forced herdsmen to drive their cattle into neighboring states like Nasarawa and Adamawa, resulting in violent clashes with local farmers in 2018.

This year, reports indicate that approx. 340,000 people were displaced in various states affected by the conflict, namely, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna. The displacement of farmers contributed to growing food insecurity in the region.

To counter the increasing violence, the government in 2018 launched Operation Whirl Stroke deploying 1,200 soldiers to Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa. In 2019, the subsequent decrease in violence prompted the government to announce the redeployment of its forces to other regions.

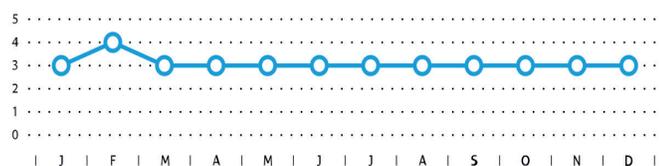
In 2018, the government had introduced plans to create so-called Ruga settlements, which are ranches with some basic infrastructure, aiming to create designated spaces for herdsmen to graze their livestock and form permanent settlements. This was met with strong resistance by the federal states' governments, for reasons such as land scarcity. They also cited the constitution under which it is illegal for the federal government to reappropriate land in the federal states. Subsequently, the government was forced to repeal the plan. This year, the government reintroduced the idea under the National Livestock Transformation Plan, relying on private investors to provide the land in participating states.

Nevertheless, violence was reported in 18 federal states this year. Kaduna, Benue, Delta, Adamawa and Taraba were primarily affected, with each of them accounting for more than ten violent incidents. These attacks were mostly attributed

NIGERIA (FARMERS – PASTORALISTS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1960

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



The war over subnational predominance and resources de-escalated to a limited war between farmers and pastoralists. While the conflict revolved primarily around the control of 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 hand. In total, violence between farmers and pastoralists accounted for approx. 400 conflict-related deaths, which is a threefold decrease when compared to 2018.

Clashes normally occurred during the seasonal migration, when Fulani herdsmen drove their cattle south into the so-

to Fulani ethnic militias.

For instance, on May 8, members of a Fulani ethnic militia attacked the four villages Murbai, Kisbap, Sembe, and Yawai, in Tarbara, killing eleven farmers and displacing hundreds. Violent attacks also continued repeatedly in other states in the Middle Belt.

For instance, on June 17, approx. 300 members of a Fulani ethnic militia raided the predominantly Christian village of Riyom, Plateau. Following a firefight, which left one soldier and three others dead, Fulani torched 54 houses and destroyed a clinic. As a result, hundreds of the villagers were displaced.

Violent attacks by Fulani ethnic militias often provoked reprisal attacks by farmers and their affiliated militias. One of the reprisal attacks led to the most fatal incident this year. On February 10, eleven farmers were killed by Fulani herdsmen in Kajuru Local Government Area, Kaduna. Subsequently, on February 11, farmers stormed various Fulani settlements in the region, killing up to 130 and destroying some houses. nre, cba

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 Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (RNDA), 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 hand.

Generally, evident militancy is in decline and blends with organized crime and insecurity in the Niger Delta. Former militants have become political activists, who often comment on political events such as the controversy around strategic changes within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) after the general elections. There have been continuing protests of former militants and oil-producing communities wanting to be considered for pipeline monitoring contracts. At the same time, crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism are on the rise. In two major incidents of tanker explosions, more than 72 people were killed while scooping up the leaking oil. At least another 33 were killed in similar situations in three pipeline explosions. The spillages caused huge environmental damage.

In total, 19 clashes with militant groups left at least 20 dead. The Koluama Seven Brothers bombed a Conoil facility on January 4 in Koluama community, Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa State. On January 9, the group occupied an offshore production platform of the same company in Sangana Community, Southern Ijaw LGA, Bayelsa state.

In course of the kidnapping of two Royal Dutch Shell oil workers, two police officers escorting them were killed on April 25 in Rumuji LGA, Rivers State.

A new militant group emerged, the Niger Delta Expendable

Group. They became known after the E.A. oil field of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) received a threat on July 18. Four days later, on July 22, suspected militants killed two soldiers protecting an SPDC facility in Azagbene community, Ekeremor LGA, Bayelsa state.

Kidnappings became frequent while gangs no longer focus solely on high-level personnel, expats and politicians but also made a business of kidnapping busloads of civilians on heavily-used transit lines. yme

NIGERIA (NORTHERNERS – SOUTHERNERS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: northerners, APC supporters vs. southerners, PDP supporters

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power continued between supporters of the northern-based ruling party All Progressives Congress (APC) and supporters of the southern-based main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Violence peaked in February, when the presidential and National Assembly elections were held. On February 16, five hours before polling stations were supposed to open, the Independent National Electoral Commission postponed the balloting to February 23. President Muhammadu Buhari (APC) was reelected with 56 percent of the votes.

As previous election periods, violence occurred at political rallies and at polling stations when supporters of both parties tried to disrupt these events. Compared to the violence prevailing the 2015 national election, violence had decreased this year. Between January and the national election day, approx. 36 people were killed. This accounts for nearly half of conflict related deaths reported in the run-up to the 2015 national elections. In addition, 18 of the 36 federal states were affected by violence where 22 states were affected in 2015. The majority of states where electoral violence occurred were in the south of the country, with only Kano and Kaduna states affected in the north. This was attributed to the fact that the two presidential candidates from northern states are Muslim leading to a decrease of ethnic and religious sentiments for voters in the predominantly Muslim north.

The state most affected by violence in the run up to the presidential election was Delta. On February 2, PDP and APC supporters clashed violently in Effurun town shooting up to three people dead and injuring approx. 20. Nine days later, suspected PDP supporters broke into apartments of APC members in the same area, killing six.

In the days following the elections, clashes and attacks became more frequent. For instance, on February 19, APC's senatorial candidate and convoy were attacked by supporters of the incumbent PDP senator for Kawara South, Local Government Area, killing two and leaving several injured.

Violence persisted in the aftermath of the presidential elections. Ahead of the nationwide gubernatorial elections scheduled for March 9, violent clashes between APC and PDP supporters led to the death of up to 16 people.

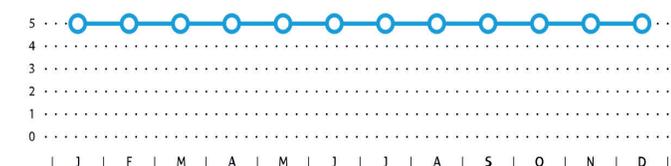
Violence ceased until November. However, violent clashes accompanied the governorship and senatorial elections in Kogi state and Bayelsa state and led to the death of approx. 15 supporters APC and PDP. For instance, on November 13, suspected APC supporters opened fire on a PDP campaign rally in Nembe, Bayelsa. Over the course of the attack, approx. eight people were killed and over 100 injured. nre, aco

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 the orientation of the political system continued for the ninth 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 hand. The groups opposed 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 intelligence and material support as well as military training from the US, the UK, France, Israel, and Russia.

In 2019, the conflict accounted for approx. 2,400 deaths, which marks an increase in comparison to the approx. 2,000 deaths in 2018. For the first time in the conflict, military casualties outnumbered civilian deaths. As a consequence of the violence, approx. two million people were displaced in 2019. The overall humanitarian situation continued to be severe in the Nigerian states affected by Boko Haram, namely Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. According to the World Food Programme, approx. 7.7 million people in the region are in need of humanitarian assistance, 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.

As in previous years, the Nigerian Government under President Muhammadu Buhari, who was re-elected in 2019, 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 accounted for more than 160 deaths in 2019. In Niger, at least eleven incidents accounted

for more than 150 deaths, which is a threefold increase compared to the previous year. At least nine incidents in Chad, lead to the death of approx. 170 people, marking a notable increase compared to the approx. 117 deaths in 2018.

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). 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 airstrikes on Boko Haram hideouts in the Sambisa Forest and 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. Airstrikes increased throughout the year. For instance, on December 14 and 15 the NAF bombed ISWAP camps on islands on Lake Chad, reportedly killing high ranking ISWAP commanders. Aircrafts 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.

The military canceled its former strategy of using small outposts to restrict the movement of the militants due to a surge of attacks since the beginning of August 2018, mostly conducted by ISWAP.

In August 2019 the government instead implemented a strategy to create so-called ‘super camps’, highly fortified bases, in order to create safe zones in strategically important cities. That also involved retreating from rural areas of northern Borno and Yobe, thus leaving large areas of the states without a permanent military presence. Reportedly the government also hindered IDPs from returning to their villages. This policy is allegedly a measurement to prevent ISWAP and JAS from gaining resources by taxing people living in areas controlled by the militant factions.

In May 2015, Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau had officially sworn 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 ISWAP. This and other internal disagreements led to a split of Boko Haram into two factions, one led by Shekau and the other by al-Barnawi and Mamman Nur. The latter faction was acknowledged by the IS. Nevertheless, Shekau renewed his pledge of allegiance to IS but also 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 and in the border region of Borno with Cameroon. The faction controls approx. 1,500 to 2,000 fighters. Reports of nearly starved fighters, raiding villages for food and medical supplies, surfaced throughout the year. In addition, reports from abducted persons who fled JAS and former fighters who surrendered point to the severe situation of the group. Nonetheless, JAS also attacks smaller military outposts and convoys, using similar tactics to ISWAP. During the year, the quantity and quality of the media output of JAS increased. Ex-

perts interpret this as a way for JAS to attract new recruits, especially in a time when IS, the core organization of ISWAP, suffered military defeats in its former strongholds Syria and Iraq. Of both factions, JAS has the most influence in Cameroon, being responsible for the great majority of all attacks over the course of the year. On June 11, JAS conducted an attack on Darak island, Far North region of Cameroon. The attack on a military base involved approx. 300 fighters and led to the death of more than 100 people. This indicated that JAS is on rare occasions capable of instigating high-profile attacks. The faction is also known for conducting suicide attacks, often carried out by children and women. Compared to last year, JAS conducted fewer suicide attacks, which amounted to four this year.

After the the split in 2016, ISWAP established its base on islands on Lake Chad near the border with Chad. Opposing the indiscriminate killings of Sunni Muslims, the faction had announced it would target western, military, and Christian institutions in particular. The faction has approx. 3,500 to 5,000 members, making it the largest IS-affiliate in the world. Since the retreat of the military from the rural areas, ISWAP has controlled large areas in northern Borno and the islands on Lake Chad. ISWAP mostly refrained from targeting civilians to gain public support.

Reportedly ISWAP has established a taxation system and a form of justice and police system and provides medical services, creating approx. USD 2 million per month in revenue for ISWAP.

Power struggles for ISWAP leadership, which led to the assassination of Mamman Nur in 2018, persisted into 2019. On March 4, ISWAP proclaimed in an audio message that al-Barnawi was replaced by Abu Abdullah ibn Umar al-Barnawi (not related). ISWAP remained highly capable, frequently attacking and raiding military bases and convoys throughout northern Borno and Yobe, as well as being responsible for all attacks in Niger and Chad. In those attacks ISWAP sometimes scouted their targets with small drones, shelled the positions with mortars, afterwards attacking them in large number while using high caliber weapons mounted on trucks as well as armored people carriers, which they had seized in raids on military positions. On February 23, the day of the general election, looted military equipment enabled the faction to conduct its first ever attack on Maiduguri, firing Grad rockets at military positions in the town. Since early 2019 the IS media claimed all attacks of Islamic State Greater Sahara (ISGS) under the name of ISWAP, indicating the importance of ISWAP for IS as well as establishing a hierarchy amongst the two IS-affiliates. Relations between ISGS and ISWAP was reportedly rather a branding decision than of an operative manner. ISWAP reportedly began to establish camps in Zamfara State this year, in the north-west of Nigeria, close to the border of western Niger. This is the region where ISGS operated.

As in previous years, ISWAP also abducted aid workers, Christians and security personnel. For instance, on December 4, militants abducted 14 people during an ambush, later releasing the videos of their execution, claiming it was revenge for the assassination of IS-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. On December 24, ISWAP released a video of the execution of eleven civilians which marked a new trend in ISWAP's propaganda strategy. nre

SOMALIA (SOMALILAND – PUNTLAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: regional government of Somaliland vs. regional government of Puntland

Conflict items: subnational predominance

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

Since the beginning of the conflict in 1998, the border region between Somaliland and Puntland comprising the provinces Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC), has been subject to recurring and opposing territorial claims by the two states as well as by different clans inhabiting the region. Former Colonel Saed Aarre of the Somaliland military, who had defected along with dozens of other soldiers to the Puntland military in Badhan district, Eastern Sanaag in May last year, clashed with the Somaliland military several times this year. On January 3, Somaliland and Puntland forces exchanged mortar fire resulting in an unknown number of casualties, after Puntland's attempt to establish a military base near the town of Tukaraq, Sanaag region.

During the months of March, April and May, clashes between the two forces allegedly continued in the border region. The number of casualties remained unknown except for one clash on March 15. During the firefight between the forces in Yube, Northern Sanaag, ten assailants were killed. The incident reportedly occurred after Somaliland deployed additional troops to the nearby district Hadaaftimo, Sanaag. On May 27, Somaliland and Puntland released 17 prisoners of war respectively, who had been captured by both parties during last year's clashes in Tukaraq. On July 27, Somaliland forces clashed with Colonel Aarre and his forces in Sanaag's capital Erigabo, leaving ten dead and ten injured. On December 2, troops led by Colonel Aarre again clashed with Somaliland forces in Erigabo, this time resulting in three deaths and dozens injured.

Throughout the year, rival clan militias continued to clash in SCC through the year [→ Somalia (subclan rivalry)]. For instance, on July 7 and 8, militias clashed in El-Afweyn, western Sanaag, killing 18 civilians, seven militiamen and injuring 30 more people. In addition, on August 12, clan violence killed five civilians and injured five more in El-Afweyn. On August 4 and 5, militants loyal to the Khatumo Emancipation Group, attacked a Somaliland military base near Las Anod, Sool region. It is possible that these form a breakaway faction of the former Khatumo State, which had previously tried to establish state-like structures in the disputed area. The number of casualties remained unknown. mmp

SOMALIA (SUBCLAN RIVALRY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Habar Gedir vs. Hawadle vs. Dulbahante 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, Abgal, and their subdivisions.

The major clans Darod, Dir, Hawiye, Isaaq, and Rahanweyn, are divided into different subclans with various respective subdivisions. Inter- and intra-clan violence mostly occurred on the subclan and subdivision level over access to land and resources as well as control of infrastructure and local cultural order. This year, violent clan incidents were primarily situated in the Hiraan, Mudug and Lower Shabelle regions.

In Hiraan, violence peaked during the second half of the year. Violent confrontations involved the Habar Gedir, Hawadle and Dir clan. For instance, on June 18, the Hawadle and Dir clans were involved in a clan revenge dispute in Beledweyne, eponymous district, Hiraan. At least one Dir clan member was killed. Between June 21 and June 27, Hawadle and Habar Gedir clan members repeatedly clashed in Matabaan district, Hiraan, which resulted in at least 35 casualties. Reports indicated that the reason for the clash was access to grazing land. On July 2, Hawadle clan members shot an Agoon member, a subclan of Hawadle, in Beledweyne. Furthermore, on September 25, Habar Gedir militiamen killed four members of the Hawadle clan over a land dispute in Beledweyne. Another dispute over land turned violent on November 4, when Dir clan members killed two Hawadle clan members in Beledweyne. Five days later, Hawadle and Habar Gedir members clashed again in Beledweyne. Two Hawadle members were reportedly killed.

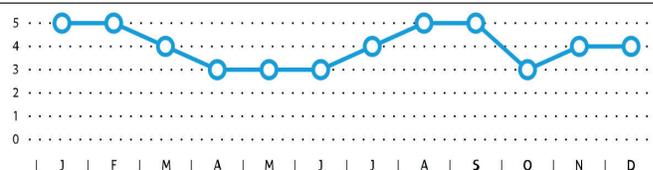
Further incidents occurred in Mudug and Lower Shabelle regions. On November 5, Dir clan members fought over land in Galkayo city, Mudug. One Dir was killed. On December 9, the Dir clan and Saab clan, a subclan of Habar Gedir, clashed over land in Tawfiq town, Mudug. Approx. 50 people were killed in heavy gunfire and up to 80 were injured. In Lower Shabelle, the Biyamal and Ayr clan, a subclan of Habar Gedir, fought on June 25 over land in El-Waregow town. Ten clan members were reportedly killed. Reports in August indicated that Ayr clan militias were taxing the Biyamal for access to water sources. On December 1, three clan members were killed in a firefight between the Dir clan and Hawadle clan in Ceelasha Biyaha town, Lower Shabelle. 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 the fourteenth 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 hand.

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, and South West State. It was further aided by the US and the EU, as well as the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) and the Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF).

In Somalia, al-Shabaab was mostly active in the capital Mogadishu, Banadir region, in South West State, specifically in Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Bakool regions, in Hirshabelle State, specifically in Middle Shabelle and Hiraan regions, in Jubaland, specifically in Middle and Lower Juba regions, and in Puntland, specifically in Bari and Mudug regions. Furthermore, the group conducted attacks in Kenya. Approx. 1,415 people were killed as a result of the fighting this year. According to reports cited by the UNSC, al-Shabaab is estimated to have between 5,000 and 10,000 members, controlling roughly 20 percent of Somalia's territory.

On March 27, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 2461, extending UNSOM's mandate for Somalia until 03/31/2020. In issuing the resolution, the Council strongly condemned ongoing attacks by al-Shabaab in the region, and emphasized the importance of cooperation between UN, FGS, its member states, and AMISOM in the fight against the Islamist group. On May 31, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 2472, extending AMISOM's mandate until 05/31/2020. In addition, the resolution authorized a reduction in AMISOM contingents by 1,000 troops, in line with the existing plan to gradually transfer peacekeeping responsibilities to Somali security forces. By 02/28/2020, a maximum level of 19,626 uniformed AMISOM personnel will be stationed in Somalia. A full withdrawal of AMISOM troops from Somalia is planned for December 2020.

There was a notable increase in mortar attacks on the part of al-Shabaab. On January 1, the group shelled the UN compound in Mogadishu with seven 81 mm mortars, injuring three UN personnel. On February 15, al-Shabaab fired mortar shells at the Balidoogle US military base in Lower Shabelle, claiming to have killed three US soldiers.

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 IEDs and mortar shelling, and

conducted targeted assassinations. For instance, on March 23, the group attacked the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Ministry of Labor in Mogadishu, killing 10 people, including a deputy minister. Furthermore, on July 24, a suicide bomber killed six government officials in the office of the mayor of Mogadishu, Abdirahman Omar Osman, who was injured in the attack. One week later, Osman died from his injuries.

The group also targeted popular restaurants and hotels, and busy roads in the capital. For instance, on February 28, al-Shabaab militants used a car to explode an IED outside a hotel and occupied it for 22 hours. This incident, considered the longest siege by al-Shabaab since it was forced out of Mogadishu in 2011, left at least 20 people dead and 60 more injured. On December 28, al-Shabaab militants detonated a car bomb at a busy security and taxation checkpoint in Mogadishu, killing at least 90 people and injuring at least 125. Throughout the year, another 260 people were killed in suicide bombings, mortar shelling and gunfire exchanges in Banadir region.

A majority of attacks outside Mogadishu were situated in Middle and Lower Shabelle in southern Somalia, where at least 681 people were killed throughout the year. Al-Shabaab repeatedly attacked SNA and AMISOM troops using IEDs, landmines, and guns. For instance, on January 9, a rocket-propelled grenade targeted an SNA base in Marka, Lower Shabelle. After the explosion, al-Shabaab militants engaged the SNA forces in a direct ambush attack with heavy machine gunfire, leading to the deaths of at least ten people, including civilians. On July 28, at least ten AMISOM Burundi troops were killed in Balcad, Middle Shabelle, after being ambushed by al-Shabaab militants.

Al-Shabaab was also active in Jubaland. At least 216 people were killed in Lower Juba, Middle Juba and Gedo regions as a result of the conflict. For instance, on April 16, al-Shabaab killed at least 15 Kenyan military forces in an IED attack in Badhaadhe, Lower Juba. On July 4, al-Shabaab militants killed five people in Saakow, Middle Juba, following accusations of spying for Jubaland authorities and foreign intelligence services.

Al-Shabaab also conducted various attacks in Puntland. For instance, on June 25, a civilian and four Somali soldiers were killed by a bomb blast in a shop in Iskushuban, Bari. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. On October 17, al-Shabaab militants attacked a vehicle carrying Somali soldiers in Bossaso, Bari, killing two soldiers onboard and the driver.

On the whole, the number of US airstrikes and subsequent casualties in Somalia has sharply increased since US President Donald Trump took office in January 2017. The total number of airstrikes against al-Shabaab carried out by AFRICOM in Somalia this year was at least 60, compared with 47 in 2018 and 35 in 2017. AMISOM, as well as the Ethiopian Air Force, also conducted airstrikes on Somali territory. Most airstrikes occurred in southern Somalia, especially in South West State, specifically in Lower Shabelle and Bay regions, in Hirshabelle State, specifically in Hiiraan region, as well as in Jubaland, specifically in Middle and Lower Juba regions.

During the year, at least 300 al-Shabaab militants were killed throughout Somalia as a result of airstrikes. For instance, on January 19, the US carried out an airstrike in Jilib, Middle Juba

region, killing at least 52 al-Shabaab militants. Four separate US airstrikes in February killed at least 36 al-Shabaab militants in Lower Shabelle region. The day after al-Shabaab's suicide bombing attack in Mogadishu on December 28, AFRICOM launched three airstrikes against the group in Lower Shabelle region, killing at least four militants.

Most attacks on Kenyan territory occurred in Lamu, Mandera, Garissa, and Nairobi counties. In total, at least 34 people were killed in Kenya throughout the year. For instance, from the afternoon of January 15 into the following day, al-Shabaab militants laid siege to the DusitD2 hotel in Westlands area in Kenya's capital Nairobi, using hand grenades, guns and bombs. Kenyan soldiers and police responded with gunfire. In total, 21 people, including the attackers, civilians, and one member of the security forces were killed, while 28 others were injured. ^{hss}

SOUTH AFRICA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: DA, EFF, IFP, civil rights groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political and societal systems continued between opposition parties, civil rights groups and opposing ANC factions on the one hand, and President Cyril Ramaphosa and his ruling party African National Congress (ANC), on the other hand.

Throughout the year, unknown armed groups killed dozens of ANC and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) members, presumably due to party infighting and inter-party rivalries. For instance, on July 24, two ANC leaders were shot and killed in Limpopo, eponymous province.

Various protests occurred in the run-up to the elections. On March 24, supporters of the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party clashed near Lindelani in KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal province. Five ANC members were injured. On May 8, the election day itself, several decentrally organized protests actions in opposition to the orientation of the political and economic system were held [→ South Africa (socioeconomic protests)], including roadblocks and looting of voting stations. In KwaZulu-Natal, more than 100 voting stations were unable to open until noon. The demonstrators called upon voters to boycott the elections.

In September, a new wave of protests emerged after a woman had been raped and killed in late August. On September 5, more than 10,000 demonstrators marched to the Parliament in Cape Town, Western Cape province and demanded Ramaphosa to take action against the excessive rape rate in South Africa. In several encounters with the protesters, police fired tear gas, stun grenades and water cannons. Subsequently, Ramaphosa left a World Economic Forum session to address the protests on the evening of September 6. ^{hek}

SOUTH AFRICA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2018

Conflict parties: residents of informal settlements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political and economic system continued between residents of informal settlements and the government. As in previous years, the conflict was marked by decentrally organized and spontaneous protests over the provision of basic public services such as housing, electricity, water, sanitation and infrastructure. In many cases, protesters blocked important roads to disrupt traffic and increase their visibility. Furthermore, the general elections in May spiked a temporary increase in protest activity [→ South Africa (opposition)].

The Alexandra township in Johannesburg, Gauteng province was most affected. On April 3, residents blocked all entrances into the area with burning tires and rubble, which resulted in clashes with the police. They demanded public investments and improved policing. The next day, Herman Mashaba, mayor of Johannesburg and member of the opposition party Democratic Alliance, addressed the protesters, claiming not to be responsible for the grievances. On May 31, after the demolition of 80 illegally built shacks in the area, protesters burned down two houses and threw stones at police and by-passing cars. The police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters. On June 20, protesters blocked roads in Alexandra, claiming that the government still failed to fulfill its promises.

Most other regions were also affected by frequent socioeconomic protests throughout the year. For instance, on January 3, more than 1,000 people protested for road renovations and social housing in Maboloka, North West province, setting alight several public buses. On March 15, one police officer was injured, and one police car damaged in a roadblock in Lenasia South township, Johannesburg. Between March 18 and 20, police dispersed a protest against water restrictions, power cuts and unemployment in Steynsburg, Eastern Cape, with tear gas and stun grenades. Between April 8 and 10, more than 1,000 demonstrated against poor public service provision in Blackheath, Cape Town, Western Cape province, leading to the arrest of 17 people who had allegedly thrown petrol bombs. Two days later, the demolition of illegally built shacks led to violent clashes between protesters and police in Somerset West, Western Cape. The highway N2 was temporarily closed and several shops in the area were looted. Between July 3 and 7, thousands of protesters demanded the resignation of their ward councilor, blocking roads and looting shops in Plettenberg Bay, Western Cape. Subsequently police arrested over 80 protesters. Similarly, on September 27, about 1,500 people protested in Darling, Western Cape, vandalizing several shops and blocking roads.

Finally, the occupation of privately owned land often sparked conflict. On January 13, one person was shot and killed and another was allegedly injured during an eviction in Johannesburg. On August 15, unknown attackers killed the leader of a

2018 land occupation in Stellenbosch, Western Cape. len, hek

SOUTH AFRICA (XENOPHOBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: immigrants vs. xenophobes

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over cultural hegemony, local labor market shares and access to the social security system continued between groups of immigrants and xenophobic South African nationals. The high unemployment rate and nationwide social inequality continued to negatively impact the living conditions of the non-white South African population and immigrants. This led to several clashes between South Africans and immigrants, with the latter accused of taking jobs and housing from locals and involvement in criminal activities. At least 14 people died in these clashes.

Throughout the year, South African nationals repeatedly attacked foreign truck drivers, claiming labor market disadvantages due to undocumented workers. For instance, on March 25, a group of truckers of South African nationality blocked the South Coast Road in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal province, forcing foreign drivers to abandon their vehicles, stabbing and injuring a Zimbabwean truck driver. On April 27, another truck driver suffered severe burns after his truck was torched with a petrol bomb in Durban, leaving him injured and permanently unfit for work. On June 23 in Ermelo, Mpumalanga province, a group of armed South Africans threatened to kill foreign truck drivers, claiming to be members of the nationalist All Truck Drivers Foundation.

Overall, xenophobic violence was most prominent in the province of Gauteng. On September 1, residents of Johannesburg, armed with sticks, bricks, petrol bombs and machetes protested and looted mainly foreign-owned shops, calling on foreigners to 'go back'. These clashes continued and spread to nearby Pretoria until September 5. A second wave of violence occurred on September 8 in Johannesburg, where South Africans used petrol bombs to damage several buildings, including a mosque. Twelve people were killed, ten of whom were South African nationals. Subsequently, 1,500 foreign nationals abandoned their homes, hundreds of protesters were arrested, and shops, buildings and vehicles were left looted and vandalized. In Cape Town, Western Cape province, xenophobic attacks led to two deaths, 30 arrests, and several shops were looted and damaged.

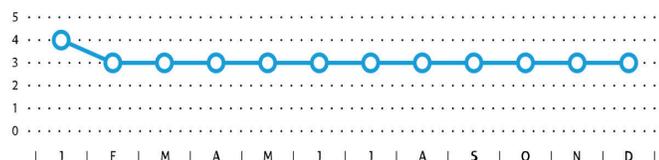
In response to the riots, immigrants and refugees staged sit-in protests at the UNHCR offices in Pretoria and Cape Town starting on October 8, asking to be resettled. In Cape Town, the police evicted about 300 protesters and arrested about 100 on October 30. In course of the eviction the police dragged children away from their mothers, which attracted international media attention. Subsequently, refugees took shelter in the Central Methodist Church in Cape Town, where the sit-in protest continued. In Pretoria, the protest lasted until November 15, when police removed protesters from the UN property, using water cannons and pepper spray, after they had thrown stones at police. On December 18, the Interna-

tional Migrants Day, hundreds of people peacefully protested in Cape Town to draw international attention to xenophobic violence in South Africa. cde

SOUTH SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2011

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



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources, especially cattle and arable land, continued between Murle, Nuer, and Dinka communities.

In 2019, the conflict was marked by an increasing involvement of the military and police deployed to solve inter-communal tensions, mostly following cattle raids. Moreover, as in previous years, rivaling communities, especially Murle, continued to abduct members of other communities such as on November 22, when an armed Murle militia abducted 15 girls and five boys near Panyok, Jonglei state. In total, at least 750 people died in 2019, with the former states of Warap, Lakes, and Jonglei most affected by the violence.

In Warap, in a series of attacks throughout January, raiders attacked Marial-Lou and Toch in the disputed Tonj state. In total, 146 people were reported to have been killed and 60 injured. Between late March and early April, at least one clash occurred between militias from Manyangok and Wahn Alal counties, killing nine people and injuring 22. The clashes were reportedly related to disputes over grazing and farmland areas.

Lakes was especially affected by Dinka in-fighting. For instance, a clash over the ownership of the Liet-Buoi swamp occurred between two Dinka tribes on March 18 in Malek county. Two people died and five were injured. Police presence was strengthened in the area. Eleven people were killed in another incident of Dinka infighting on July 22 in Western Naam county, which reportedly was a revenge attack. And on November 27, the Gak and Manuer sections of the Pakam Dinka clan clashed in Maper town, which left 23 people killed and 47 injured. On December 4, after a clash over the disputed island of Chuei-akuet between two Dinka clans, 86 people were reported to be missing.

In Jonglei, most violent incidents included abductions, such as on May 2, when Murle raiders attacked members of the Jie community in the area of Nachumajori in Jebel Boma county. 17 people were killed, ten injured and 104 women and children went missing. Murle from Boma state and Lou Nuer herders clashed in the area of Duachan between Akobo West and East counties on January 6. 35 people were killed, 78 injured, and 2,000 cattle were stolen. On April 9, raiders attacked Luwaacodou cattle camp in the southern area of Jebel Boma county, which left at least 50 people dead and 20 injured. Two children have reportedly been abducted by the

attackers.

Over the weekend of April 13 and 14, communities from Ajak and Kongdeer clashed in the vicinity of Wathmuok, Northern Bahr el Ghazal state. Five people were injured. Two officials in the disputed Aweil state government were dismissed due to alleged involvement in the violence, and security forces have been deployed to the area. In former Unity state on March 1, a cattle camp was raided in Abiemnhom county by raiders from Mayom county. Soldiers were reportedly involved in the incident, since four of them were injured and one civilian was killed. mag

SOUTH SUDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SSOA, SSUF, PDM, NAS vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system escalated to a violent crisis between various opposition groups and the government of President Salva Kiir, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

Multiple opposition groups formed the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) and signed The Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in 2018. SSOA comprised of, among others, the National Democratic Movement (NDM) and South Sudan United Movement (SSUM). The opposition parties that refused to sign the peace deal were, among others, Paul Malong's newly formed rebel movement South Sudan United Front (SSUF), the People's Democratic Movement (PDM), and the National Salvation Front (NAS).

The majority of the year was marked by a continuation of peace talks, conferences, and regional dialogue processes all over the country to follow up on The Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed in 2018 by Kiir, opposition leader Riek Machar, and several other opposition groups. Some groups still refused to take part in the regional dialogue processes. On February 24, the NAS vowed to continue their fight against the government. A few days later, on February 27, the coalition of non-signatory armed groups reiterated their refusal to join R-ARCSS, calling on the IGAD to open the pact for amendments. IGAD ruled out this possibility a week later. On March 15, the leader of PDM claimed his party was excluded from consultations conducted by the East African bloc of nations IGAD with non-signatory groups. On May 31, the UNSC approved a resolution extending an arms embargo and other sanctions against South Sudan until 05/31/2020. During October, the UN, civil society groups, religious leaders, and the EU urged the conflict parties to commit to the peace deal. On November 7, Kiir Machar agreed to postpone the implementation of unsolved issues such as the number and boundaries of sub-national states. The contested county names for instance led to a clash between civilian groups on December 13 in Tonj state, when nine people were killed and eleven injured.

According to international mediators of the peace deal, the

NAS launched a number of attacks in Yei River State in late March. On May 29 and at the end of August, NAS accused government forces of attacking its troops and positions between Wonduruba county of Jubek state and Lainya county of Yei River state as well as in Central Equatoria region. Government and NAS accused each other of instigating new clashes at the end of October close to Yei and two months later in the Lasu Payam and Mitika areas, both times in Yei River State. Between August 21 and 23, government forces killed four SSUF members and captured a SSUF senior commander in Wanh-achien, Lol State. A week later, government forces clashed again with SSUF, killed seven fighters and captured another 34 in Greater Raja County, Lol. On November 29, 14 people were killed and nine injured when the army and civilians clashed in Ngapagok County of Tonj State.

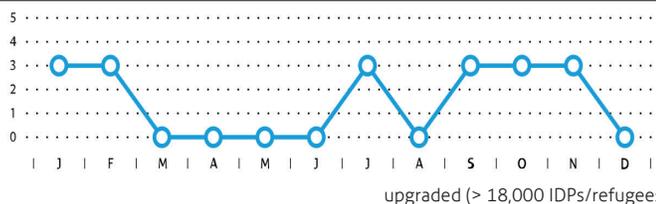
On several occasions throughout the year, authorities arrested civil society actors and detained them for prolonged periods of time. For instance, according to Amnesty International, the National Security Service (NSS) detained a youth activist on May 18 in the capital Juba, Jubek State, and held him for at least four months. Moreover, on November 20, the Union of Journalists of South Sudan declared an increase in cases of press freedom violations by the NSS. lvo

SOUTH SUDAN (SPLM/A-IO)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-IO vs. government

Conflict items: national power



The limited war over national power continued between the main opposition group 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 the army South Sudan's People Defense Forces (SSPDF) on the other hand.

The Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed in 2018 by President Salva Kiir and SPLM/A-IO leader Riek Machar and several other opposition parties [→ South Sudan (opposition)] was largely observed in 2019. Even though the implementation of certain aspects of the R-ARCSS was delayed, no direct clashes between the SPLM/A-IO and government forces were reported. Yet, the security situation remained strained as signatories and non-signatories of the peace deal continued to clash, and hostilities between various ethnic communities in rural areas of the country prevailed [→ South Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)]. Furthermore, the UN extended the South Sudan arms embargo and the UNMISS' mandate for another year.

Since several core aspects of the agreement were not implemented, the agreed formation of the Transitional Government

of National Unity was postponed. For instance, the unification of forces was delayed due to the lack of available cantonment sites, insufficient provision of resources and funding, and difficulties in accessing designated sites due to heavy floods. Moreover, the number of federal states remained a point of contestation. On November 7, during negotiations hosted in Entebbe, Uganda, Kiir and Machar agreed on a 100-day extension period to implement the remaining and contentious elements of the R-ARCSS. However, both sides violated parts of the agreement. According to the UN, government forces recruited more than 10,000 new fighters in the former War-rap State, whilst opposition forces were seen to conduct recruitment activities in protection sites near and across the Ugandan border.

As in previous years, the conflict was marked by defections. A SPLM/A-IO splinter group loyal to Taban Deng as well as the so-called SPLM/A-IO Former Detainees formally re-integrated into the SPLM at the beginning of the year. On September 26, one of SPLM/A-IO's top commanders defected to the ranks of the SSPDF, followed by defections of another twelve officials in the consecutive four days.

Despite shortcomings, several aspects of the R-ARCSS were implemented throughout the year after all. Concerning the unification of forces, the signatories agreed on February 3 on the location of cantonment sites and after months of inaction, the SPLM/A-IO forces arrived in the respective sites in Wau and Amadi State in late May and early June. On October 9, other SPLM/A-IO forces arrived in cantonment sites near Juba for the creation of the 3,000-men strong VIP force, composed of forces of all signatories and tasked with the protection of the state's top-officials.

As a further commitment to the peace agreement, the SPLM/A-IO released 15 government soldiers on June 28. Lastly, several states reported the return of refugees. Accordingly, between January 14 and 27, 14,000 civilians were reported to have returned to Fashoda State located at the border to Sudan. Moreover, the IOM announced that in the period from April to September, more than 27,000 refugees returned to Northern Liech State. However, these returns were partly due to tensions in Sudan [→ Sudan (opposition)]. While not directly fighting each other, government forces and the SPLM/A-IO continued to engage in clashes with other armed opposition groups. For instance, on January 9, SPLM/A-IO forces clashed with members of the National Salvation Front in the northern part of Maridi State, former Central Equatoria. Violence erupted again between the two groups in former Central Equatoria near Kajo Keji on February 2. Later in the month, on February 23, in-fighting occurred among SPLM/A-IO forces loyal to Taban Deng in Leer town, Southern Liech State, which left one person dead.

At the end of the year, on November 29, government forces fought with armed civilians in Nabagok county, former Tonj state, leaving twelve soldiers and two citizens dead and injuring nine.

The UN criticized frequent attacks on civilians in former Central Equatoria conducted by all groups, including government and SPLM/A-IO forces, resulting in the death of at least 104 individuals and the displacement of 56,000 between September 2018 and April 2019. In Maiwut state, another 10,000 individuals were displaced on July 31 in clashes between the SPLM/A-IO and community forces. fyk

SUDAN (DARFUR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: SRF vs. government, RSF

Conflict items: autonomy

The war over autonomy de-escalated significantly to a violent crisis between various ethnic African armed groups, organized under the alliance Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) on the one hand, and the Arab-affiliated Sudanese government and government-backed paramilitary groups, on the other hand.

In comparison to the previous years, the number of fatalities decreased significantly to fewer than 200. The Darfur conflict was affected by the political transition phase in the Sudan and its ensuing peace process [→ Sudan (opposition)].

The armed groups of SRF mainly come from ethnic African tribes, mainly from the Fur, Zaghawa, and Massalit, who constitute the majority of Darfur's population. The SRF has been fighting the government since 2003, accusing it of oppressing the Darfur population and of cooperating with Arab armed groups. The SRF comprises the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and its two main factions led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) and by Minni Minnawie (SLM-MM), the Sudan Liberation Movement-Transitional Council (SLM-TC), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), and 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)].

The government deployed the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary force called Rapid Support Forces (RSF). These paramilitary militiamen are, i.a. recruited among the Janjaweed, a group of nomadic Arab fighters who has been involved in the Darfur conflict since 2003. The AU's and UN's Hybrid Operation UNAMID, formally approved in 2007 to stabilize Darfur region, continued to operate in 2019, but with significantly reduced military and police personnel. On October 31, the UNSC decided to extend the mandate of UNAMID for another year.

In 2019, the conflict parties did not agree on a permanent ceasefire but regularly extended temporary cessations of hostilities. On January 29, then-President Omar Al-Bashir declared an open-ended cessation of hostilities for Darfur and for the conflict regions of Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Similarly, the armed groups JEM, SLM-MM, SLM-TC, and SPLM-N extended the unilateral cessation of hostilities several times, last time until 02/10/2020.

Compared to the previous year, the number of clashes between government forces, backed by RSF, and the SLM-AW, the only armed opposition group involved in recent fighting, as well as between different factions of the SLM-AW decreased in number. As in previous years, these clashes were focused on Jebel Marra, a mountain range spanning over the three states of Central, North, and South Darfur. However, government forces as well as paramilitaries continued to attack civilians, hindering IDPs from returning to their villages, as well as using sexual violence as means of warfare.

From January to March, fighting occurred repeatedly in Cen-

tral Darfur between SAF and SLM-AW, leaving at least 22 people dead on both sides. For instance, in attacks on a SAF outpost in Manabu, Central Darfur, on January 17 and 29, SLM-AW reportedly killed four soldiers. From February 9 to 11, clashes occurred in the same area, leaving three SLM-AW fighters and one SAF soldier dead.

Moreover, several clashes occurred from January 17 to March 26 between two subgroups of SLM-AW in Daya village, Central Darfur. In total, 44 fighters from both sides and five civilians were killed, as well as 24 fighters and five civilians injured. OCHA estimated that over 2,600 people from 13 villages fled due to the fighting.

On June 1 and July 23, RSF launched attacks on SLM-AW bases in the area of Rari and Barbara, Jebel Marra, which were reportedly pushed back by the military. The SLM-AW claimed to have seized military equipment and to have killed an unspecified number of RSF fighters. On July 25, government forces reportedly fired an artillery shell at the village of Koya in Jebel Marra. Reports of the SLM-AW stated that four students were killed, more than 20 injured, and several houses burned down. RSF allegedly attacked a SLM-AW position in Oro, Central Darfur, on October 2. The militants claimed to have fought off the attack, resulting in heavy casualties among the RSF.

In North Darfur, on January 4, the SLM-AW launched an attack on SAF in Boulay, resulting in an unknown number of deaths. On January 24, government forces allegedly shelled villages in Torong Tonga – Gur Lambung area, burning the village Saboun El Fabur, and causing an unknown number of deaths and injuries. On April 1, SLM-AW claimed to have forced back an attack by RSF on the same village, which forced citizens to leave their villages.

Despite the shift of political power in Sudan, the security situation in Darfur remained fragile. Throughout the year, the army and government-controlled militias, especially RSF, frequently attacked villagers and IDPs. The paramilitaries regularly raided IDP camps, robbed people of their belongings, injured and killed them, and systematically used sexual violence as a form of warfare. For instance, on January 23, militiamen attacked Kura village in West Darfur and killed two villagers, burned houses and harvest, and seized livestock. On February 2, militiamen attempted to rape a group of five women from Kassab camp near El Fasher, North Darfur, injuring four of them. On February 28, a group of soldiers raided a nomad settlement near Um Dukhun, South Darfur. Three civilians were killed and two injured. On March 15, militiamen raped three women in the area of Sananat, North Darfur. Between June 9 to 10, RSF militiamen attacked villages in Deleig area in Central Darfur, killing eleven residents and injuring at least 20. Approx. 100 houses were burned. Another incident took place on July 20, when paramilitary groups wearing uniforms of the RSF attacked villagers in Kabra village, North Darfur, killing six and injuring seven, claiming that the villagers had stolen camels. On September 15 and 16, IDPs in Mershing camp, South Darfur, protested against the killing of a student by the RSF at Zalingei University. Security forces killed four protesters and injured another four. In two different incidents on October 10 and 27, soldiers raped a girl near Sortony camp for IDPs in North Darfur and a woman from Turr camp for IDPs Central Darfur.

Moreover, several cases were reported in which militiamen

attacked IDPs intending to return to their home villages. For instance, on March 22, militiamen attacked IDPs in the area of Hijeir Tongo, South Darfur, killing one and injuring two. On October 20, militiamen reportedly belonging to the RSF prevented IDPs from harvesting their crops and forced them to flee again to IDP camps in Gereida locality, South Darfur.

In the first half of the year, the Darfur peace process, disrupted by the anti-government protests [→ Sudan (opposition)], made no significant progress. In solidarity with the people who were killed in the protests, JEM and SLM-MM rejected to continue talks with the government which had been scheduled for January.

However, the proposed agenda of the August 2019 Draft Constitutional Declaration included the conclusion of a peace agreement within the first six months of the 39-month transition period. On September 9, leaders of RSF and the transitional Sudanese government met on invitation of South Sudan's President Salva Kiir in Juba, capital of South Sudan. Following these talks, both parties signed the Juba Declaration of Principles on September 11 and thus agreed on resuming negotiations. On October 21, after a week of negotiations, SRF and the Sudanese transitional government signed an agreement in which they renewed the cessation of hostilities for humanitarian purposes and accepted the delivery of humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas.

On December 10, the third round of negotiations between the transitional government and the armed movements started. Concerning Darfur, the negotiation parties agreed on the importance to let IDPs and refugees as well as civil society organizations participate in the peace talks, and scheduled civil society conferences. However, on December 31, in response to alleged inter-communal fighting in El Geneina, West Darfur, in which between 48 and 80 people had been killed and up to 48,000 displaced [→ Sudan (inter-communal rivalry)], the SRF suspended the peace negotiations on Darfur, demanding an investigation into the clash. The Forces of Freedom and Change, a coalition of the main Sudanese opposition groups, claimed that the clash in El Geneina had not been tribal but fomented by forces of the former government. svb

Sea state. For instance, between January 15 and 17, members of Awlad Zaid and Misseriya clashed near El Geneina, Western Darfur state, leaving at least 14 dead. Several people were injured on January 28, when members of Beni Hussein and Beni Halba clashed. On February 8, unidentified pastoralists attacked civilians in North Darfur state, killing three people, injuring two, and stealing cattle.

Clashes between members of Beni Amer and Nuba in El Gedaref, eponymous state, on May 11 left at least eight people dead and 50 injured. The transitional government [→ Sudan (opposition)] deployed the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to El Gedaref on May 21 in order to broker a peace deal. However, members of the two communities continued to clash. For example, 38 people were killed and 126 injured in the city of Port Sudan, Red Sea state, on August 26. The RSF managed to broker a reconciliation agreement, which was signed by both tribes on September 8.

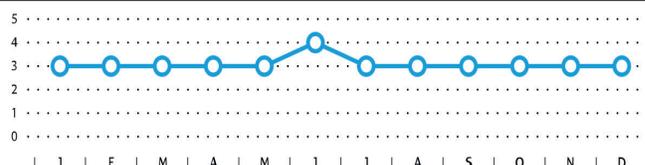
On November 20, Beni Amer and Handandawa members clashed, which left six people dead and 28 injured.

On December 31, an inter-communal fight between Maaliya herders and Masalit tribesmen escalated in El Geneina, West Darfur, and left at least 50 people dead and around 240 injured. According to the UN Migration Agency, 48,000 people were displaced due to this incident. The Forces of Freedom and Change, a coalition of the main Sudanese opposition groups, claimed that the clash in El Geneina had not been tribal but fomented by forces of the former government. Moreover, the opposition groups suspended the peace negotiations with the government due to this incident [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. mge

SUDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2011

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



The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between different opposition groups and the government, until April led by Omar al-Bashir from the National Congress Party (NCP), and led to a political transition in the Sudan.

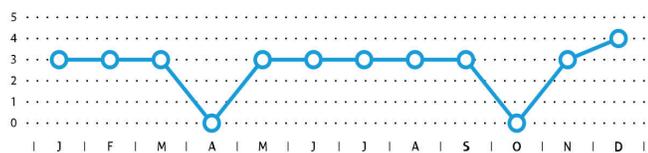
Mass protests that had broken out in major Sudanese cities in December 2018 continued throughout 2019. Initially triggered by austerity measures and sharp price increases, the protesters soon demanded al-Bashir step down. Main opposition groups, among them the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), the National Consensus Forces (NCF), and the Sudan Call Forces (SCF) joined forces in January as the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) and issued the Declaration of Freedom and Change, calling for an immediate end of al-Bashir's presidency and for the formation of a transitional civilian government. The SPA, a trade union association, mainly organized and coordinated the protests over the

SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2007

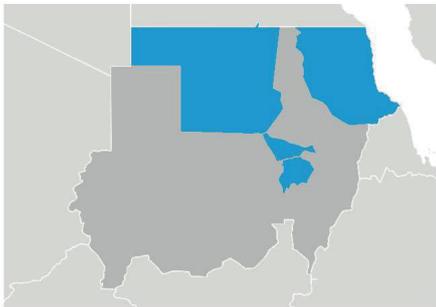
Conflict parties: Misseriya vs. Rizeigat vs. Maaliya vs. Nuba vs. Handandawa vs. Beni Amer vs. Beni Hussein vs. Masalit et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The violent crisis over subnational predominance and scarce resources such as cattle and pastureland escalated to a limited war between various cattle-herding communities. Violence mostly occurred in the region of Darfur and in Red

SUDAN (OPPOSITION)



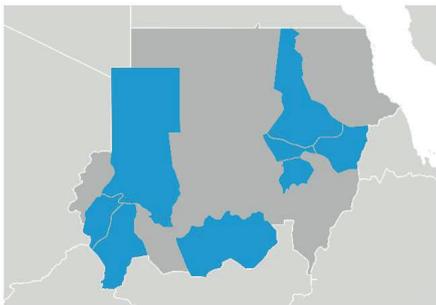
January



February



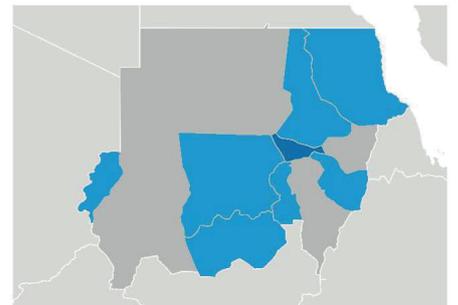
March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December



year. The protests were broadly supported by various parts of society, with increasing involvement of women and students. Police, National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and the paramilitary force Rapid Support Forces (RSF), primarily active in the Darfur conflict [→ Sudan (Darfur)], frequently used violence to disperse protesters. According to the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors (CCSD), killed up to 260 people and injured up to 1500 people between the beginning of the protests and the end of 2019.

For instance, on January 9, security forces used tear gas and live ammunition at a anti-government protest by tens of thousands of people in Omdurman, Khartoum state. Three people were killed and twelve injured. On January 24 and 25, more than 50 protests were staged in several cities across Sudan. One student was shot and killed, and the body of another student was reportedly found in the capital Khartoum bearing torture marks.

On February 22, al-Bashir declared a one-year state of emergency. Subsequently, protests were staged in the states of Khartoum, Omdurman, Gezira, Sennar, Gedarif, River Nile, Red Sea, and Northern. Security forces used violence and injured several protesters.

Between April 6 and 9, the largest protests since December 2018 were staged, with hundreds of thousands of people in all states. Security forces dispersed the demonstrations and sit-ins using tear gas and live ammunition, killing 21 and injuring more than 150 people. Protests of tens of thousands of people continued the following days in Khartoum, River Nile, and Zalingei. 16 protesters were killed, and hundreds injured when security forces used tear gas and opened fire on April 11.

On the same day, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) ousted al-Bashir from office, abolished the Sudanese Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly and established the Transitional Military Council (TMC). The former defense minister Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf declared himself interim president of the Sudan. He stepped down the next day, following criticism by the opposition, and was succeeded by Abdelfattah Burhan. Despite the overthrow of al-Bashir, the FFC continued their protests, demanding the TMC to hand power to a civilian-led transitional government. Security forces, then regularly supported by the RSF, continued to violently disperse these protests.

For instance, on May 13, security forces and militiamen, reportedly belonging to the RSF, used live ammunition against the protesters in front of the General Command of the SAF in Khartoum. They killed six people and injured more than 200. Similarly, militiamen injured at least 14 people in an attack on a sit-in protest on May 15 in Khartoum.

On May 19, FFC and TMC agreed on a three-year transitional period for transferring power to a civilian administration but disagreed on the composition of the leadership council.

On June 3, security forces, headed by RSF, dispersed the sit-ins and protests in Khartoum and Omdurman using tear gas and live ammunition, and burnt protesters' tents. While the government claimed that 87 had been killed and 168 injured, reports by the CCSD stated that 128 people were killed and more than 700 injured, of which more than 70 people were reportedly raped. Holding the TMC responsible, the FFC suspended all political negotiations.

During the following weeks, protests against violence by se-

curity forces and for the implementation of a civilian-led government erupted in several cities, often turning violent. For instance, during the "March of Millions" on June 30, security forces killed 13 protesters and injured more than 30 in Khartoum, Omdurman, Kassala and Atbara.

On July 29, RSF opened fire in El Obeid, North Kordofan, when more than 500 school students demonstrated against deteriorating living conditions, such as the shortage of drinking water and the lack of public transport. RSF killed six protesters and injured at least 62. On August 1, protests subsequently erupted all over the country calling for an investigation into the killing. Security forces violently dispersed these protests as well, killing four protesters in Omdurman.

Following a resumption of negotiations between members of TMC and FFC under the presence of AU and Ethiopian mediators from July 4 to 5, both parties signed an initial agreement on the formation of a transitional civilian government on July 17. They agreed upon the composition of an eleven-person Sovereign Council. One month later, on August 17, TMC and FFC signed the Constitutional Declaration and thus started a 39-month transition phase resulting in a civilian government for the Sudan. On August 21, the members of the Sovereign Council were sworn in and Abdallah Hamdok was appointed prime minister. Abdell-Fattah al-Burhan took over the leadership of the Sovereign Council for the first 21 months. He will be replaced by a civilian member for the following 18 months. On September 8, the new 18-member Cabinet of the Sudan was sworn in.

Notwithstanding, the protests continued in mid-September, with people demanding the establishment of an independent judiciary and justice for those killed and injured during protests. For instance on September 19, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets in Khartoum, Red Sea, and Gezira.

On November 28, a clash occurred between members of NCP and supporters of FFC in En Nahud, West Kordofan, which was reportedly contained by the police.

At the end of November, Sudan's Sovereign Council and Cabinet decided to disband the former ruling NCP and to repeal a law which had granted security forces extensive powers for regulating mainly women's behaviour in public. On December 14, a court sentenced al-Bashir to two years in prison on charges of corruption and currency irregularities.

On December 19, thousands of people took to the streets in various cities across Sudan to commemorate the so-called "Sudanese Revolution" which started one year ago. svb

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

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-North vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The conflict over autonomy and resources between the banned political party and armed group Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-North (SPLM/A-N) and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. The government was led

by Omar al-Bashir until he was overturned by the military in April [→ Sudan (opposition)]. 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 by Abdelaziz al-Hilu. In 2019, the SPLM/A-N was majorly involved in the Sudan opposition conflict.

On February 8, SPLM/A-N-Agar extended a unilateral ceasefire for three months. On April 17, SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu declared a unilateral cessation of hostilities until July 31, which was then extended again to December 31.

On January 1, the Declaration of Freedom and Change, demanding the immediate end of al-Bashir's presidency, was signed by several opposition parties, including the Sudan Call Forces of which SPLM/A-N-Agar is a member faction. On April 10, SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu stated their refusal to join this Declaration as it did not mean the demands for a secular state and the right of self-determination.

Following mass opposition protests all over the country, SPLM/A-N-Agar declared on March 14 to stop their talks with the government. During a meeting in Paris on March 20, the Sudan Call Forces withdrew from their 2016 Roadmap Agreement with the government to increase pressure on the latter. After the coup against al-Bashir on April 11, SPLM/A-N-Agar refused to deal with Transitional Military Council (TMC), the new military government, criticizing them for holding meetings with several members of the old government.

On May 30, a SPLM/A-N-Agar delegation met with the representatives of the government in the capital Khartoum, stressing the need to reach an agreement between the government and the Freedom and Change forces to achieve peace. On June 10, the government deported three detained high-rank SPLM/A-N-Agar members to Juba, South Sudan, without further explanation. On August 8, the government pardoned two convicted leaders, Agar among them. On August 17, the Freedom and Change forces, among them SPLM/A-N-Agar, and the TMC signed both a political and a constitutional declaration instituting for a transitional period in Sudan.

On September 9, 17 members of SPLM/A-N-Agar were released by the government and on September 11, the government and both SPLM/A-N factions agreed on starting peace negotiations from October 14 on. The negotiations needed to be held separate with both SPLM/A-N factions due to SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu's unwillingness for a joint delegation. On October 16, SPLM/A-N-al-Hilu suspended these negotiations as government troops attacked civilians in the Nuba Mountains and detained 13 people. The faction returned to the negotiations two days later. The same day, 26 POWs were released, including three members of SPLM/A-N-Agar.

On November 13, SPLM/A-N-Agar called for greater regional autonomy in the Two Areas. On December 19, they agreed to cease hostilities and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Two Areas. coc

SUDAN, SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Ngok Dinka vs. Misseriya vs. Nuer

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources in the border region Abyei continued between members of the Ngok Dinka community and members of the pastoralist Arab-speaking Misseriya community. Due to significant oil reserves, the region has also been of strategic interest to the governments of both Sudan and South Sudan [→ South Sudan – Sudan].

Since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, UNISFA has been administering the area. The UNSC decided to extend UNISFA's mandate until November 15, pressing South Sudan and Sudan to show distinct efforts towards the proper demarcation of their common border and the clarification of the final status of Abyei.

The political developments in Sudan [→ Sudan (opposition)] impacted the Abyei conflict. Meetings of joint committees and the implementation of measurements regarding the demarcation of the border were halted during the transformation phase of the Sudanese government. However, the relationship between both countries' governments continued to ameliorate. As such, Sudan's new Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok visited Juba on September 12 and emphasized his willingness to pacify the Abyei people and to resolute the border disputes.

The continuous presence of troops and armed civil groups led to repeated outbreaks of violence, especially at the Amiet common market. For instance, on February 20, a fight broke out between Ngok Dinka members and members of the Nuer community at the Amiet common market. The clash resulted in the death of one Ngok Dinka member and 23 injured people from both sides. On July 16, an armed group opened fire at the Amiet common market, killing six civilians and one UN peacekeeper. On November 7, unknown assailants carried out two consecutive attacks on Ngok Dinka villages, killing nine.

Overall, the relationship between the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka communities improved over the year, as both were willing to participate in meetings of the joint committees. The migration season from October to April, as well as the reverse migration season from May to December, when 37,000 Misseriya nomads and their cattle roamed through Abyei, was predominantly peaceful. mta

TOGO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1963

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power continued between

several opposition groups on the one hand, and the government of Faure Gnassingbé and his party Union for the Republic (UNIR) on the other hand.

In response to opposition calls for a limitation of presidential terms, on May 8, parliament voted for a constitutional amendment, limiting the number of presidential terms to two and allowing President Gnassingbé to run again in the next two elections 2020 and 2025. This reform sparked various protests, mostly by young supporters of the opposition party Parti National Panafricain (PNP) in Agoé, a suburb of the capital Lomé. For instance, on April 13, PNP activists protested against the constitutional reform and for the release of political prisoners despite a protest ban in Bafilo, Kara region, and other areas. Police intervened to disperse protesters, killing one PNP member. On the same day, protesters assaulted two members of the security forces in Agoé-Demakpoé, Lomé. Security forces subsequently dispersed the protesters using tear gas. On April 30, the police arrested two PNP leaders in Lomé.

In light of the scheduled elections for 02/22/2020 and concomitant calls for the suspension of the electoral process, several opposition parties and representatives of civil society, among them the abolished C14, built a platform for dialogue in the beginning of February. After the two-day consultation, the participants called for the reopening of a dialogue with the government, the restoration of the constitutional court and the reorganization of the independent national electoral commission. In December, the restoration of the constitutional court was announced and subsequently, the new constitutional judges were sworn in on December 30, in Lomé.

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 government of President Yoweri Museveni of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) on the other hand.

The first half of the year was marked by police action against opposition politicians such as former opposition leaders Kizza Besigye (FDC) and Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as 'Bobi Wine'. For instance, on April 13, police forces prevented Besigye from addressing his supporters and local leaders in the city of Jinja, Eastern Region, by cutting the signal to Kiira Fm radio station and raiding its studios. Furthermore, police forces prevented Bobi Wine from giving a concert in the capital Kampala on April 22. Subsequently, riots erupted between Bobi Wine's supporters and the police. Authorities placed him under house arrest.

On July 24, Bobi Wine announced his candidacy in the 2021

presidential elections, wearing his trademark, a red beret. On August 29, two assailants attacked a NRM supporter in Kalerwe, Central Region, nailing his NRM beret to his hands. At the beginning of October, the red berets were banned by the government.

On November 8, the FDC affiliated group 'People's Government' launched a petition to prosecute Museveni before the ICC for alleged crimes against humanity. Two weeks later, police forces raided FDC facilities in Kampala as well as Kasese, Western Region, confiscating petition-related documents.

On December 13, police forces violently dispersed protests of Bobi Wine supporters in Kampala, Central Region, using tear gas and arrested two. jos

ZIMBABWE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: MDC vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power continued between the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) on the one hand, and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on the other hand.

Two major events marked the conflict this year. Firstly, the government raised petrol prices by 150 percent in mid-January, sparking countrywide protests and riots. The government claimed MDC responsible for the riots and started to intimidate and arrest several MDC members. For instance, on January 17, ZANU-PF youth activists patrolled suburbs and attacked MDC supporters in the capital Harare, eponymous region. One week later, a Harare MDC official stated that most of the party's leadership was in hiding and five members of parliament were detained.

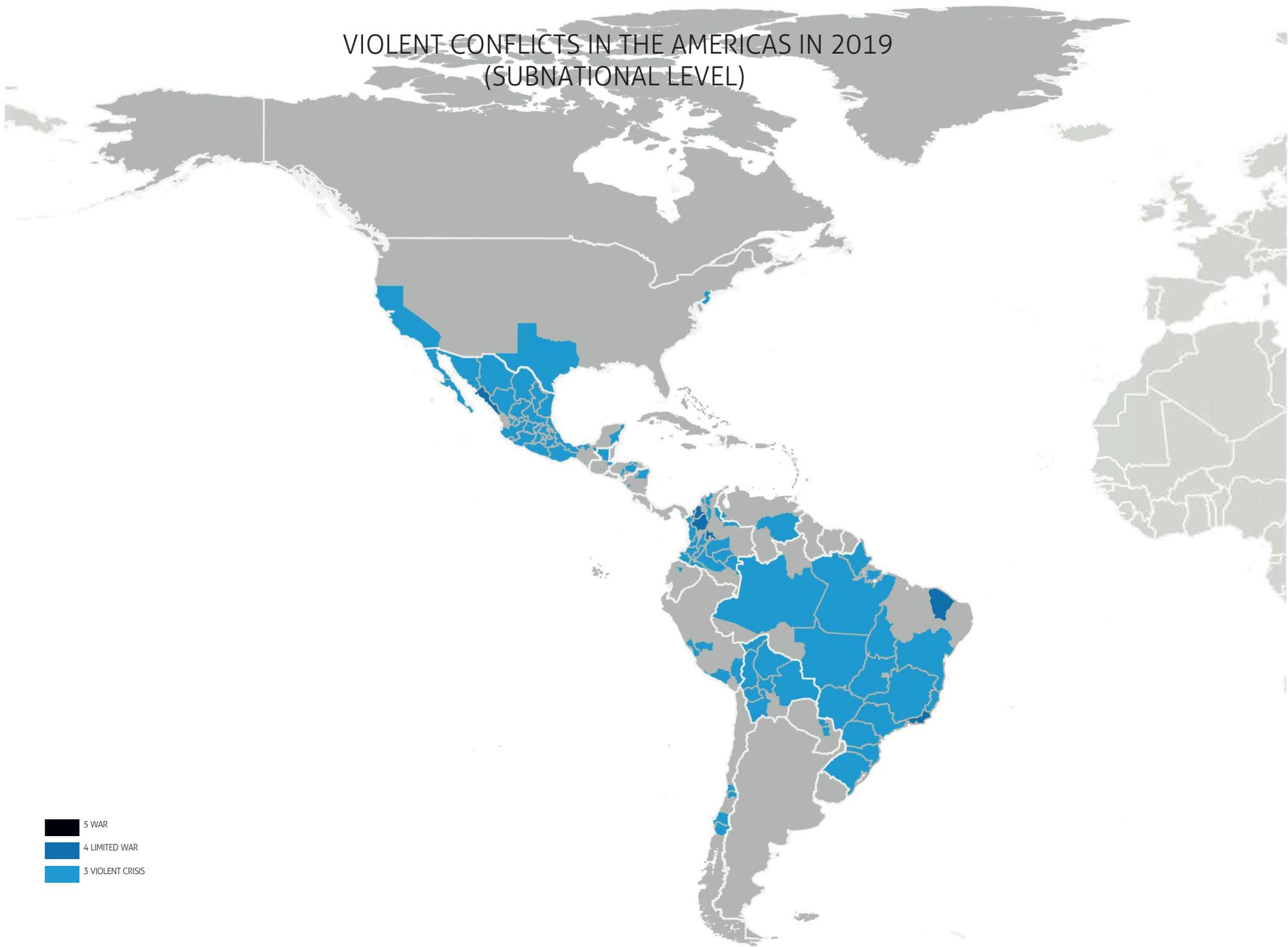
Secondly, the high court prohibited a MDC demonstration scheduled for August 16 in Harare. Three MDC activists were allegedly abducted and assaulted by forces of the Central Intelligence Organization ahead of the protest, which were still held on the scheduled date. Protesters accused the government of firing live ammunition, killing one and injuring seven. Further, police forces arrested 91 people.

Irregular protests continued until the end of the year. For instance, on November 20, police forces used tear gas and batons against MDC protesters in Harare, leading to five injuries. Apart from the protests, ZANU-PF and MDC continued to be involved in sporadic violent confrontations. For example, on February 19, three MDC officials were abducted in Mutare, Manicaland region, and on June 6, two further MDC activists were abducted in Gokwe South, Midlands region. On October 20, eleven vendors linked to the MDC were arrested in Harare, leading to the death of one while imprisoned.

Besides the conflict between ZANU-PF and MDC, rivalries within MDC partly affected their local elections. For instance, a local MDC election in Marondera, Mashonaland East region, was interrupted by a fight between two rivaling MDC factions on April 2 and 9. who

the Americas

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE AMERICAS IN 2019 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Numbering 56, the number of conflicts in Americas region decreased by one in comparison to 2018. However, in 2019, 34 conflicts were fought violently, which marks a decrease of two compared to 2018. Overall, HIIK observed two wars and three limited wars.

In Mexico, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador declared the official end to the war on drugs in a press conference. Furthermore, he announced that the government would no longer follow the strategy of targeting leading figures of drug cartels, known as the 'Kingpin strategy'. Despite these statements, the government continued to deploy the army to fight drug cartels, contributing to increased fragmentation of cartels and heavy fights over local predominance [→ Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)]. Thus, the war continued between drug cartels, vigilante groups and the Mexican government [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. On February 28, the government passed a law to establish a new federal police unit, called the National Guard. Mexico's homicide rate hit a new high in 2019, making it the deadliest year on record.

In Brazil, the conflict between several drug trafficking organizations (DTO), militias and the government escalated to a war because of the high number of casualties this year. The homicide rates in the country have been falling since 2018, nevertheless the percentage of people killed by the military police (PM) increased. In the first six months of the year, PM killed 2,286 persons linked to DTOs and militias [→ Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)].

In Colombia, violence remained high, as armed organizations, drug cartels, splinter groups of the demobilized FARC-EP and other guerrillas continued turf wars over subnational predominance and resources [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. Despite their efforts, the Colombian government continued to struggle to control the areas previously dominated by the FARC-EP. In attempts to cop the routes for drug trafficking, armed organizations such as Los Caparrapos, the ELN, and the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC) intensified their violent actions in the departments of Antioquia, Cauca, Chocó, Nariño, Córdoba, Magdalena, and Santander, often expanding its operations to the urban areas of the departmental capitals [→ Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels); → Colombia (ELN)]. Moreover, the end of the peace negotiations with the ELN intensified the violent actions of the guerrilla group which on several occasions targeted local infrastructure and military facilities across the country.

Following a series of airstrikes against FARC dissidents, a group of high commanders and former negotiators in Cuba released a public statement to proclaim their return to the war, stating that the government of President Iván Duque was unwilling to comply with the agreements reached in Havana in 2016 [→ Colombia (FARC dissidents, left-wing militants)]. The conflict in Colombia continued to have a devastating impact on the lives of the civilian population. In the wake of the regional elections, violence against political activists and community leaders continued to be a contentious problem in the country with at least 250 people killed in 2019 according to the Institute for Peace and Development (INDEPAZ).

In El Salvador, the violent crisis involving the country's main gangs, namely the Barrio 18 and the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) continued. However, El Salvador's homicide rate was the lowest in six years [→ El Salvador (Maras)].

In several American countries, opposition conflicts were conducted violently. For instance, in Honduras, on June 24, military personnel entered the campus of the National Autonomous University in Tegucigalpa, using rifles and tear gas on students who protested government reforms and allegedly threw Molotov cocktails, stones and other objects. Subsequently, five students were injured [→ Honduras (opposition)].

In Chile, rises in the rates of public services prompted a series of protests led by student organizations. The alleged poor response of the government towards the initial demonstrations caused outrage across all sectors, with citizens taking to the streets to express their discontent with government policies under President Sebastián Piñera. The political unrest registered at least 27 people killed and more than 2,300 injured by the end of the year [→ Chile (social movements)]. Moreover, anarchist groups in the country conducted bombing attacks in the capital city of Santiago de Chile, targeting political figures, state forces, and civilians equally [→ Chile (anarchist groups)]. In Bolivia, opposition to socio-economic policies sparked protests throughout the year. The presidential elections in the country led to violent demonstrations as accusations of electoral fraud were lodged by the opposition and international organizations. Supporters and detractors of former President Evo Morales took the streets to demonstrate over the political elections. The electoral crisis culminated with the resignation and exile of Morales, and the declaration of senator Jeanine Añez as interim president of the country [→ Bolivia (socioeconomic protest)]. In Guatemala, the mandate of the United Nations International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) expired on September 3, triggering protests [→ Guatemala (opposition)]. In Haiti, a report by the Haitian Court of Accounts confirmed irregularities in the government's handling of the PetroCaribe fund, leading to country-wide protests. Further, on March 18, the lower Chamber of the National Assembly dismissed Prime Minister Céant and his cabinet in a no-confidence vote after a six-month period in office. Three days later, President Jovenel Moïse appointed Jean-Michel Lapin, who resigned from his designated position on July 22. Haiti was still without government at the end of the year [→ Haiti (opposition)].

Conflicts remained active in the region between indigenous groups and environmental activists on the one hand and security forces on the other hand. In Brazil, an estimated 4,000 indigenous people from many different tribes gathered for three days in Brasilia to protest for their rights and lands. The mobilization, called Free Land Camp, took place over four days in April [→ Brazil (indigenous groups)]. In Colombia, members of several indigenous groups continued to demand land reforms and autonomy in their territories. Indigenous communities staged protests and blockages across the country, often resulting in clashes against state forces [→ Colombia (indigenous groups)]. In Chile, Mapuche activists carried out several arson attacks targeting forest and corporate farming companies. Furthermore, the recalling of the death of a Mapuche activist killed by police forces in 2018 triggered nationwide protests [→ Chile (Mapuche/Araucania)].

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In Peru, several local communities protested against alleged environmental pollution by oil companies, further fearing that they would cause water shortages and the lack of basic public services [→ Peru (opposition)].

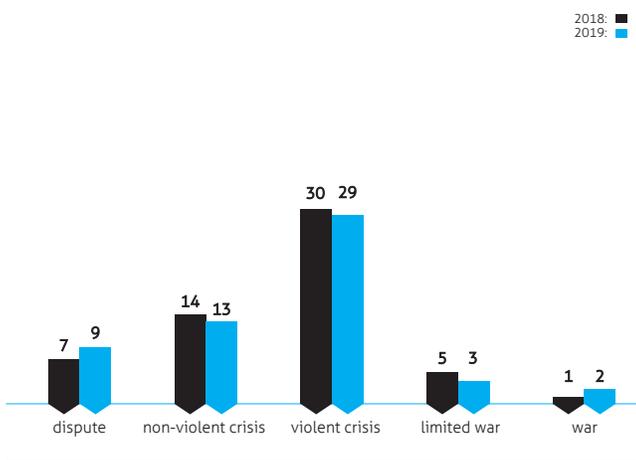
The conflict between Belize and Guatemala over more than half of the Belizean territory continued as a non-violent crisis. On May 8, Belizean voters approved in a referendum to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In Guatemala, the referendum was answered positively on 04/15/2018. Subsequently, the ICJ was seized of the dispute on June 7. The court proceedings were expected to require years [→ 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/Islands Malvinas)].

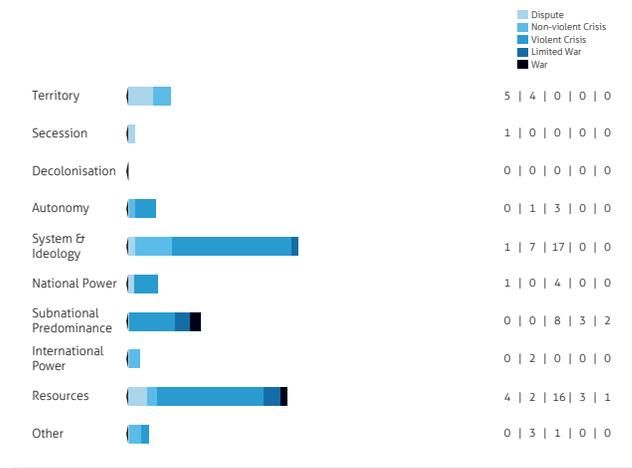
In the United States of America, the violent conflict between various right-wing extremist groups and the government continued as members or affiliates of right-wing groups carried out mass shootings and attacks in 2019, leading to several casualties [→ USA (right-wing extremists)].

In Paraguay, the violent crisis over resources and the orientation of the political system continued for the 31th consecutive year between the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP), the Armed Peasant Association (ACA), several farmer organizations, indigenous groups and landless people on the one hand, and the government on the other hand [→ Paraguay (EPP, agrarian movements)].

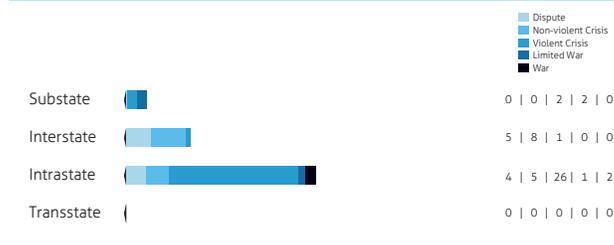
CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN THE AMERICAS IN 2019 COMPARED TO 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN THE AMERICAS IN 2019



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN THE AMERICAS IN 2019



Overview: Conflicts in the Americas in 2019

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	↗	5
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 (Mapuche / Araucania)	Mapuche, CAM, WAM vs. government	autonomy	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	↘	1
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 vs. Los Rastrojos	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	↗	3
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, criminals organizations vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Honduras (opposition)	opposition movement 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)	CNTE vs. government	system/ideology	2006	↘	2
Mexico (drug cartels)	drug cartels vs. vigilante groups vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2006	•	5
Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)	CJNG et al. vs. CDS et al. vs. CDN et al. vs. CDG et al. vs. LNFN et al. vs. CSRL et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2005	•	4
Mexico (opposition)	opposition vs. government	national power	2006	↓	1
Mexico (public security)	normalistas et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	3
Mexico – USA (border security)*	Mexico vs. USA	other	2005	↘	2
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	↘	3
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	Venezuela vs. USA	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

BELIZE – GUATEMALA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Belize vs. Guatemala
 Conflict items: territory

The non-violent crisis continued between Belize and Guatemala over more than half of the Belizean mainland territory, the area south of the Sibun river to the Sarstoon border river. Since Belize's independence in 1981, Guatemala has held up claims dating back to 1859, referring to the colonial territory of former British Honduras.

Following a 2008 agreement to hold referenda in both countries on the submission of the territorial dispute to the ICJ, on 04/15/2018, Guatemalan voters approved the proposition with more than 95 percent of the vote and a turnout of 25 percent. The referendum in Belize, on May 8 this year, resulted in 55.4 percent of the vote in favor of the proposition. The ICJ was seized with the dispute on June 7. The court proceedings were expected to require years.

Furthermore, tensions between Guatemala and Belize over access to the Sarstoon border river continued throughout the year. The Belizean government repeatedly issued protest notes to the Guatemalan government claiming that patrol boats of the Guatemalan Armed Forces (GAF) impaired or blocked Belizean civilian vessels, as well as patrol boats of the Belizean Defence Forces (BDF), going upstream. For instance, on April 15, a boat carrying Belizean civilians and an escorting BDF patrol boat were prevented from going further upstream by three GAF patrol boats. mbr

BOLIVIA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1983

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

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and resources, such as coca farmland, continued between various social groups and the government of then-President Evo Morales and his party Movement for Socialism (MAS), supported by the Central Bolivian Union. In comparison to last year, the number of people killed and injured in the conflict increased, with at least 33 reported deaths and over 100 wounded.

The conflict was primarily marked by the presidential election in October. Both the fact that Morales ran for office for the fourth time and alleged electoral fraud triggered, partly violent, mass protests all over the country. Other controversial issues which sparked demonstrations throughout the year were policy implementations in the health sector and the organizations of the coca industry.

Organizations such as the Medical College of Bolivia (CMB), the Departmental Association of Coca Producers (Adepcoca), National Committee for Democracy Defense (Conade), opposition parties, and the Civil Committees of several regions

were involved in protests.

The medical sector, led by the CMB, demonstrated mainly in urban regions like La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz, all in their eponymous departments, installing roadblocks and organizing several strikes, one lasting from August 19 until October 16. Demands were major investments and the restructuring of the health sector. Clashes between the coca farmer organizations Adepcoca, and the government-affiliated Council of Farmers' Federations of the Yungas of La Paz (Confecay) resulted in at least two people killed and several more injured in Trinidad Pampa, La Paz department. On June 13, an attacker killed a leading member of Confecay. Subsequently, a suspect arrested by local authorities connected members of Adepcoca to this crime. Later in June, a local Adepcoca board member was killed by a group of people with alleged connections to the government. The event triggered heavy protests and roadblocks with protesters demanding justice for the murders.

As in previous years, mass protests against Morales' government occurred on February 21. This marked the anniversary of the 2016 referendum, the outcome of which ruled out another term in office for Morales. However, in November 2017, the Constitutional Court had allowed Morales to run for president again.

Thus, before the election on October 20, protests and roadblocks by both supporters and opponents of Morales occurred, as well as clashes between both sides and security forces. For instance, on October 4, one million people, both anti- and pro-Morales, demonstrated in Cochabamba.

After Morales was declared winner of the election, protests continued due to alleged electoral fraud. On November 9, the OAS published a report supporting these allegations. After almost three weeks of intense protests, leaving at least three people dead and many injured, police and military joined the protests against Morales. Subsequently, Morales along with several officials resigned from office on November 10, seeking political asylum in Mexico. This led to further escalation with different groups roaming through various parts of the country, destroying public and private property.

Several clashes between supporters and opponents of Morales as well as security forces left around 30 people killed and several hundred injured between October 21 and November 10. Protesters used bats, stones, firecrackers, IEDs, and firearms, while police mainly used tear gas.

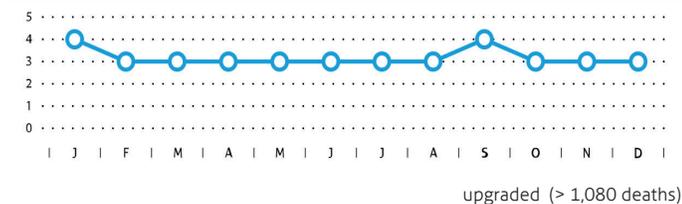
Moreover, the proclamation of deputy Senate leader Jeanine Añez as interim president, which was backed by both the Bolivian constitution and the Constitutional Court, on November 12 sparked new protests. No date for new presidential elections had been declared before the end of the year. fgo

BRAZIL (DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: drug trafficking organizations, militias vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The limited war over subnational predominance escalated to a war between the main drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) Comando Vermelho (CV), Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), Guardiões do Estado (GDE), and various militias on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

The favelas of Rio de Janeiro, eponymous state, remained a hotspot for violence as military police (PM) conducted intensive operations in order to combat drug trafficking. For instance, on February 8, a military operation in the favela Morro do Fallet triggered a violent clash with shootings among PM agents and armed DTO members. In total, PM agents killed 13 DTO members during the confrontation. On March 27, the Civil Police and PM carried out operations in various favelas, such as Vila Cruzeiro, Parque União, Vila Aliança, Morro dos Prazeres, Parada de Lucas, and Cajueiro e Congonha. The shootings between PM and DTO members left five dead and at least one policeman injured. From May 4 to May 7, police officers conducted an operation against DTO and militias in the favela Angra dos Reis. Police forces used helicopters to shoot at alleged DTO members. One day earlier, on May 6, during an operation in the favela Maré, police officers shot and killed eight persons from a helicopter, injuring two more. On June 12, PM agents injured and captured Paulo Roberto Silva Taveira, alias Cara Preta, one of the heads of the DTO Terceiro Comando Puro in the Chapéu Mangueira favela, Rio de Janeiro. During the operation, a 12-gauge rifle, cocaine, two ballistic panels, ammunition and a GPS signal blocker were seized.

According to authorities, the first five months of the year saw a record of deaths caused by confrontations between PM agents and DTO members in Rio de Janeiro. From January to October, Military and Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro killed at least 1,546 alleged DTO members. In the same period, 21 PM agents were killed during anti-narcotics operations. In comparison to the previous year, there was an increase of 16.2 percent in deaths caused by military interventions in communities in Rio de Janeiro State.

Confrontations between DTO members and state forces were also recurrent in Ceará, state. On January 2, presumed CV and GDE members led continuous attacks in 40 towns in Ceará showing their rejection of new security measures in Brazilian prisons. On January 18, DTO members set off explosives on the highway BR-116 bridge in the city of Fortaleza. Furthermore, in other attacks they used petrol bombs and explosives to destroy vehicles, public equipment, banks,

government buildings, police stations, and viaducts. Overall, 283 attacks until the beginning of February, left at least ten persons killed and 466 DTO members arrested. As a result, President Jair Bolsonaro agreed to reinforce criminal law against DTO attacks, classifying them as terrorist attacks.

Confrontations between DTO members and PM forces were also situated in some states in the Amazonas region. For instance, on July 2, shootings between PCC members and PM agents left two PCC members dead and two arrested. On October 30, during a police operation in Manaus, Amazonas state, PM agents killed 17 alleged DTO members.

In course of the year, police agents carried out 71 so-called chacinas, illegal mass assassinations of alleged DTO members, 20 more than last year. jpi

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 continued between various indigenous groups and the government.

Several indigenous groups, such as the Guajajara, Jurunas, Kinikinau, Krenak, Pataxó, Potyguará, Tembé, Timbira, Yawalapiti, and others, continued to urge the government to delimitate the lands and rights they claim. For instance, between April 23 and 26, more than 4,000 indigenous people from 305 tribes and ethnic groups demonstrated and camped in Brasília, Federal District (DF), demanding a halt on violence against indigenous peoples. From August 9 to 14, about 1,500 women from more than 130 indigenous peoples protested in Brasília, DF, in the First Indigenous Women's March, warning of the environmental threat posed by the government's policies. Hundreds occupied a building of the health ministry. They demanded President Jair Bolsonaro comply with the 1988 Constitution, which orders the state to demarcate and protect traditionally occupied areas necessary for the physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples. Bolsonaro announced on January 2 that the government would integrate all indigenous people forcefully and refused to demarcate more indigenous territories.

Tensions arose on June 4, when about 300 indigenous and so-called quilombola peoples protested in Brasília, DF, to demand cuts in the Permanent Scholarship, which helps indigenous and quilombola students at federal universities. Police forces used pepper spray and shot rubber bullets to disperse the protesters, injuring at least one.

On several occasions, clashes between Military Police (PM) and indigenous people occurred in Mato Grosso do Sul state. For instance, on March 26, a PM tactical force team used tear gas and rubber bullets against a group of indigenous people in order to contain them on a farm near Aldeia Bororó, Dourados municipality. PM arrested two indigenous people. Later in the year, on August 1, about 200 indigenous Kinikinau people gathered at the Água Branca farm, Aquidauana municipality, to demand the demarcation of the area. In response, 130

PM officers evicted them, using rubber bullets and tear gas, injuring several persons.

In the first nine months of the year, according to the annual report of the national Indigenous Missionary Council, 160 cases of land invasion, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and damage to heritage were recorded in 153 of the indigenous territories, as counted by the Brazilian government – twice as many areas as last year. On November 1, illegal loggers ambushed Paulino, a so-called Guardian of the Forest of the Guajajara indigenous people, killing him in the Arariboia indigenous territory, Maranhão state. One month later, on December 7, two Guajajara indigenous persons were shot and killed in the same territory. Subsequently, Guajajara indigenous people set up roadblocks on BR-226 highway, demanding justice and protection for their territories. cpn

BRAZIL (MST, MTST)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1996

Conflict parties: MST, MTST vs. government

Conflict items: resources

The violent crisis over land and housing continued between various leftist landless organizations, headed by the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) and the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST) on the one hand, and the government under President Jair Bolsonaro, on the other hand.

Already during his campaign, Bolsonaro had declared that activists of MST and MTST who perform land occupations would be treated as terrorists. On November 2, he declared his intention to implement the Guarantee of Law and Order in repossession suits. This law allows the government to deploy military forces to evict people occupying private lands.

Several protests and strikes were staged throughout the year. For instance, on January 29, MTST mobilized about 10,000 people to demonstrate in São Paulo, eponymous state, under the topic 'Less Hatred, More Housing'. On April 17, the International Day of Peasants' Struggle, non-violent protests as well as occupations of the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform occurred in various cities such as Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre state, and Salvador, Bahia state. On June 14, MST and MTST members held protests against pension reforms, blocking various highways and avenues, occasionally lighting fires. The military police used tear gas, water cannons, and cavalry to disperse the protesters, injuring six MST members. On July 18, a truck crashed into a demonstration by landless families in Valinhos, São Paulo, killing one MST member and injuring five others.

Throughout the year, MST members occupied lands while the government tried to recover them. For instance, on July 2, an armed group of MST members occupied a property in Eunápolis, Bahia, setting six cars on fire and injuring one person. On October 17, about 200 MST members occupied an abandoned area in Taquari, Rio Grande do Sul. After the government filed a repossession suit, MST members left the area.

On October 31, police agents, court officials, and fire brigades evicted 80 families living in the MST's Beleza camp, municipality of Aliança, Pernambuco state, destroying their houses

and crops. On November 25, the federal police filed a repossession suit in the cities of Juazeiro and Casa Nova, northern Bahia, to evict and resettle about 700 families living in the area since 2007. The police used tear gas and destroyed the families' houses and crops. At least one person suffered a bullet wound. In response to the violent eviction MST members blocked highways throughout Bahia the next day. ero

CHILE (ANARCHIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: anarchist groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system continued between various anarchist groups such as Individualistas Tendiendo a lo Salvaje (ITS), Cómplices Sediciosos/ Fracción por la Venganza, and the government.

On January 4, ITS conducted an attack with explosives at the public transport stop Vicuña Mackenna in Santiago de Chile, leaving five civilians injured. ITS claimed responsibility for the attack on their website and announced new attacks against businessmen, politicians, students and other citizens. According to an ITS public statement, its self-proclaimed goal is to fight human and technological progress by creating an urban war, killing as many civilized humans as possible to save the earth.

ITS was also suspected of sending a mail bomb to the home of the chairman of the state-owned Metro, Louis de Grange, in the Comuna de las Condes Santiago de Chile, on May 8. However Police forces intercepted the explosive before it reached de Grange's house. The attempted attack was later described as a terrorist act by interior minister Andrés Chadwick. In August, police arrested an alleged ITS member suspected of having built the bomb used in the de Grange attack, as well as another bomb used in an attack in 2017.

On July 25, another group called Cómplices sediciosos/ Fracción por la Venganza sent a mail bomb to a police station in Huechuraba in Santiago de Chile and to the office of former interior minister Rodrigo Hinzpeter. While the mail bomb to Hinzpeter's office was intercepted and deactivated by police, the one sent to the police station reached its destination and wounded 8 police officers. The group later proclaimed full responsibility for the attacks, designating every police station to be a valid target for their fight against the political system. The incidents were classified as a terrorist attack by President Sebastián Piñera.

Consequently, the Senate approved changes to the anti-terror law on August 7, allowing the use of special investigation techniques such as the interception of phone calls and the deployment of undercover agents when an incident is considered to be a terrorist attack. Media and human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, criticized the decision. fgo

CHILE (MAPUCHE / ARAUCANIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: Mapuche, CAM, WAM vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis between the government and the Mapuche indigenous people over autonomy continued. The main Mapuche groups, the armed Weichan Auka Mapu (WAM) and the social movement Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco (CAM), continued to express their demands, especially concerning ancestral territories, in various ways.

Throughout the year several arson attacks on foresting companies and private business owners took place. Between January and April, the main active foresting companies, Arauco and Mininco, reported the destruction of about a dozen forestry machines. Several arson attacks occurred in the Araucanía region, for instance on January 26, when a fire was set to a warehouse near the district of Collipulli, and on September 29, when two buildings were torched in Padre Las Casas. Allegedly, the attacks were carried out by Mapuche activists, as in some cases pamphlets supporting the Mapuche cause were found near the scene.

Following the murder of Mapuche farmer and activist Camilo Catrillanca on 11/14/2018, Mapuche groups took to the streets in various cities across the country on March 20, demanding judicial consequences as well as self-determination and the demilitarization of the Araucanía. Police arrested 20 protesters and injured several. New protests erupted in Temuco, Araucanía, on April 3, with police dispersing the crowds with water cannons and tear gas. On November 14, Mapuche activists took to the streets in a nationwide commemoration of Catrillanca, taking down symbols of colonialism, such as statues of Pedro Valdivia.

In other instances throughout the year, authorities used force against Mapuche people. For example, on April 30, in the rural area of Traiguén, Araucanía, two Mapuche villagers were shot and injured by police. In Victoria, Araucanía, on May 28, after a confrontation between the police and the Antonio Calbún Mapuche community, police entered the community and shot, resulting in one Mapuche severely injured. cae

CHILE (SOCIAL MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: CONFECH, ACES, CONES vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and resources continued between various social groups, such as the Confederation Of Chilean Students (CONFECH), High School Student Coordinating Assembly (ACES), and National Coordinator of High School Students (CONES), and the government of President Sebastian Piñera.

The conflict was marked by a wave of mass protests, which

started in October and were the biggest since the end of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in 1990. By the end of the year, the Chilean government estimated that at least 27 people had been killed, and more than 3,400 civilians and 2,000 police officers injured in either fires or clashes between groups of protesters, or between groups of civilians and the police. By November 30, at least 241 Chileans had sustained eye injuries from bullets made of metal and rubber and tear gas used by state forces. Moreover, accusations of sexual violence and torture were reported by protesters. More than 8,000 people were arrested. According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, state forces violated human rights with more than 10,000 allegations of excessive use of force against protesters. Furthermore, economic losses were estimated at USD 1.5 billion, while the Latin American Entrepreneurs Association claimed that the crisis had resulted in nearly 70,000 job losses by mid-November.

On October 6, the government raised the prices of public transport tickets, which provoked students in the capital Santiago de Chile to enter stations without paying. By October 18, the majority of the metro stations in Santiago were blocked due to escalating clashes between protesters and the police. The minister of the interior attempted to sue the protesters for damaging public property, which in turn sparked a wave of mass protests and riots all across the country. The protesters broadened their demands, requested a new constitution and criticized the overall living conditions in the country. The protests mobilized large parts of Chilean society including students, and social and feminist organizations.

By October 23, a state of emergency had been declared for 15 of the country's 16 regions, as well as a mandatory curfew. For the first time since Pinochet's dictatorship, the military was deployed to patrol the streets of the main urban areas in the country. Protests continued until the end of the year, with the government replacing half of its cabinet, including the minister of the interior.

On December 11, Congress barred the former interior minister from participating in politics for five years due to his failure to re-establish order at the beginning of the protests, as well as his lack of effort in preventing human rights violations by state forces. smo

COLOMBIA (ELN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1964

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

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources continued between the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the government. The Marxist-Leninist ELN financed itself predominantly through involvement in the production and commercialization of narcotics, extortion, illegal mining, and kidnapping.

Although the number of airstrikes remained low in comparison to the previous year, the conflict continued to be violent with at least 53 people reportedly killed. According to the

government, the number of civilians displaced by the conflict in Colombia was over 15,140, mostly in Nariño, Chocó, and Antioquia departments. While being particularly active in the border departments Arauca and Norte de Santander, the government and local NGOs reported that ELN continued to expand its operations to neighboring Venezuela. Following the trend of the previous year, the group increased in number and broadened its operations further, in part due to the lack of state presence in Venezuela and the difficulties for the Colombian government to restrict illegal operations in the border regions. According to the Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation (Pares), the number of ELN combatants is estimated to amount to 3,000.

On January 17, members of ELN detonated a car bomb inside a police academy in the capital Bogotá, Capital District, killing 22 people and injuring 68. The attack put an end to yearlong peace talks between the government and ELN. Subsequently, President Iván Duque released a public statement to resume negotiations with the condition of a unilateral ceasefire by the armed group.

In the following months, targeted attacks increased on both sides. ELN intensified its operations, repeatedly attacking pipelines and police stations as well as ambushing military forces. For instance, on February 12, the group attacked a petrol pipeline in the rural Toledo area, Norte de Santander department, causing a water shortage in several municipalities and environmental damages due to an oil leak. Two days later, an ELN ambush on two military patrols in the rural area of Tame, Arauca department, resulted in six soldiers wounded. On November 22, three police officers were killed and three more wounded in a bomb cylinder attack against the police station in Santander de Quilichao, Cauca department.

The military also continued targeted attacks and carried out airstrikes against ELN. On May 20, military forces bombed an ELN compound in the rural area of Jurado municipality, Chocó department. Military sources reported two ELN members killed and multiple firearms and explosives seized in the operation.

In the middle of the year, multiple clashes between ELN and the military took place. On June 30, military forces and ELN clashed in the rural area of Tarazá, Antioquia department, killing one ELN commander.

Furthermore, incidents involving landmines and attacks against civilians were reported throughout the year. For instance, on December 4, eight soldiers were reportedly wounded by a landmine explosion during an operation against illegal crops in Montecristo, Bolívar. In addition, ELN was involved in a conflict with other armed groups, which continued to affect the civilian population [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)].

In October, the government announced that it had filed a formal request to Cuba to extradite members of the ELN delegation that remained on the island after the peace talks failed.

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 over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources continued between several dissident groups of the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and other left-wing guerrillas, such as the EPL on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

Central issues of the conflict were disagreements over the political system, illegal mining, drug trafficking, and territorial disputes. This year, according to the Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation (Pares), 1,800 dissidents and 300 to 400 new recruits were operating in 15 of the country's 32 departments, mainly in Cauca, Arauca, Antioquia, Nariño, Putumayo, and Meta. However, most media sources estimate the number at around 3,000 dissidents.

Throughout the year, several FARC dissidents groups claimed responsibility for violent attacks against military forces. On June 1, an armed confrontation between members of a dissident group and militaries left at least seven people dead in La Macarena, Meta department. On July 11, two soldiers were killed and another four went missing in an ambush on eleven security forces with explosives and rifles, by dissidents of the FARC in Cumbitara, Nariño department.

Military forces continued to target FAR dissidents and other left-wing militants by launching military operations, including airstrikes. For instance, on February 3, President Iván Duque reported in a press conference that a former FARC-EP delegate and leader of a dissident group "Rodrigo Cadete", and nine more dissidents, were killed in an airstrike in San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá department.

In another incident in the same department, on August 30, at least 18 dissidents died in the course of a military operation. Two months after the operation, the media reported that some of the victims were children, apparently forcibly recruited from nearby towns according to interviews with local residents. This incident triggered the resignation of the defense minister under allegations of covering details of the operations from lawmakers.

The civilian population was severely affected by the conflict, with dissident groups repeatedly attacking indigenous people, Afro-Colombian leaders, and political candidates. On September 2, the FARC dissident group Jaime Martínez ambushed a political candidate and her bodyguards with grenades and AK-47 rifles in Suárez, Cauca department, killing six people and injuring one. Consequently, the government deployed additional troops in Cauca, resulting in further clashes between dissidents and military forces. In several departments, the security situation deteriorated due to intense fighting over regional control related to drug trafficking between FARC dissidents and other armed groups [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing mili-

tants)].

With reportedly more than 10,000 ex-combatants laying down their arms in 2017, the efforts to reincorporated former FARC-EP fighters to the civil society continued. However, accusing the Colombian government of not complying with the peace deal, former FARC lead negotiator Iván Márquez and other former commanders, and members of the then peace delegation, announced their return to armed struggle on August 29. tmu

COLOMBIA (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

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

The violent crisis over resources continued between several indigenous groups including Nasa, Zenú, Embera on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

Over the course of the year, indigenous communities protested by blocking roads and occupying lands to demand a land restitution reforms and the recognition of their rights, predominantly in the departments of Cauca, Huila, Tolima, Norte de Santander, Nariño, and Putumayo.

For instance, in March, indigenous organizations called for nationwide protests, demanding the right to autonomously decide on mining projects in their territories. More than 15,000 indigenous from several communities blocked roads across the country for over 22 consecutive days. The tension between indigenous representatives and the government increased when President Iván Duque made the end of the demonstrations a condition for negotiations. Subsequently, on April 2, one indigenous was shot and killed during clashes with the Mobile Anti-disturbance Squadron (ESMAD) in Caijibío, Cauca. Ultimately, a negotiation between indigenous representatives and Duque was arranged for April 9, but aluding security reasons, he failed to attend the meeting.

Violence used against indigenous communities remained a contentious issue. On September 5, in Jamundí, Valle del Cauca department, military forces opened fire against two members of the Nasa indigenous community, killing one of them. Although the soldiers initially declared the victims to be members of an armed organization, local witnesses and human rights advocates refuted this claim. Days later, further evidence backed the communities statement, suggesting that military forces staged an armed confrontation. In another incident, on October 29, indigenous groups and a Colombian congressman reported the murder of a young activist in the municipality of Corinto, Cauca, alleging that previous to the attack the victim discussed with a military unit. Medical examinations showed signs of torture on the victim's body. No official statement was provided by military representatives.

In November, amid a series of general protests in the country, hundreds of indigenous marched in Bogota, Capital District, over the increase of violence against indigenous groups and political leaders of their communities. According to the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca, by October 31, at least 56 indigenous were killed by armed groups in this de-

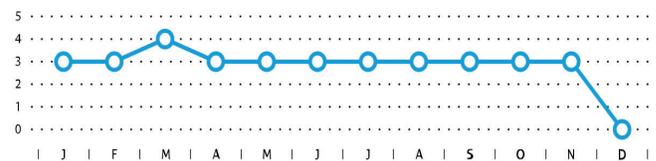
partment [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. The indigenous claimed the government neglected the protection of their communities. ago

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 vs. Los Rastrojos

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources continued between several neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels, including the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), Los Caparrapos, Los Rastrojos, as well as the National Liberation Army (ELN), dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL).

Throughout the year, armed groups clashed, attempting to control lucrative regions and illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, resource exploitation and extortion. The ELN expanded its operations intending to build a corridor between the Venezuelan border and the Pacific coast [→ Colombia (ELN)]. This led to further confrontations in the departments of Arauca, Norte de Santander, Chocó, Antioquia, and Córdoba, where clashes between Los Caparrapos, the ELN, ACG, and FARC-dissidents were regularly reported. The UN Office on Drugs and Crimes, however, reported a reduction of 1.2 percent of illegal crops cultivation in comparison with the previous year.

The civilian population was specifically affected by armed clashes. The conflict resulted in forced displacements, intimidation, and extortion, among other human rights violations. For instance, on June 4, a group of at least 15 assailants raided in the rural area of Cáceres, Antioquia, killing four people. Reportedly, the perpetrators attacked using machine guns and hand-grenades. Investigations indicated that the event was related to a turf war between the AGC and Los Caparrapos. In another incident in Antioquia, between August 26 and 31, clashes between two unidentified armed groups resulted in at least 4,000 persons trapped in the crossfire in the rural areas of Murindó, Frontino, Urrao, and Dabeiba. On December 3, reportedly the AGC and the ELN clashed for over 20 consecutive days in the area of Alto Baudó, Chocó, resulting in the displacement of nearly 3,200 farmers and indigenous. In the wake of the regional elections held on October 27, neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels, and guerrilla organizations were involved in the killing of community leaders and political candidates. On September 2, a FARC dissident group

ambushed the caravan of indigenous and political leader Karina Garcia, killing her and five other persons in Suárez, Cauca department. The event triggered the deployment of additional Colombian Army units in the area and the expulsion of several people from the transitional justice tribunal [→ Colombia (FARC dissidents, left-wing militants)]. The groups also targeted demobilized FARC-EP fighters killing at least 77. The political crisis in Venezuela and the increasing flow of migrants into the country, generated new sources of illegal economies for the armed groups, such as contraband and human-trafficking. Most violence was reported in the rural areas in the sub-region of Catatumbo, Norte de Santander, where armed groups took advantage of the lack of state control on both sides of the border. For example, on June 18, a battle between rival fractions of Los Rastrojos neo-paramilitary group left twelve members dead and 20 wounded in Táchira, Venezuela. Later, on October 22, clashes between the EPL and the ELN were reported in Ábrego, Norte de Santander.

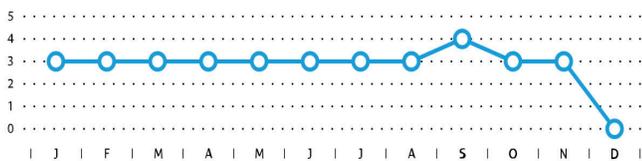
The confrontations between the armed groups extended to metropolitan areas in the country. In the municipality of Bello, Antioquia, homicide rates rose during the first months of the year. Fundación Corporación Jurídica Libertad accounts that nearly 70 percent of homicides in the area were related to inter-cartel rivalries. The port cities of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca department, and Tumaco, Nariño department, were strategic locations for cultivation, production, and subsequent trading of cocaine to other countries. Night patrols by members of illegal armed groups in urban areas of these cities were reported frequently. rbo

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 continued between various neo-paramilitary groups, including the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), Los Caparrapos, Los Pachenca, and Los Rastrojos on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. Across the country armed groups financed their operations with cultivation of the coca-leaf, illegal mining, and deforestation. Therefore, the environmental consequences of the conflict were severe. For example, on January 23, in a joint operation with Colombian Air Force, the armed forces seized an illegal mining site of Los Caparrapos in Tarazá, Antioquia department. The mine produced up to 20 kg of gold a month and contaminated an area of 430 hectares with chemicals,

such as mercury. The government continued to target the leaders of cartels and neo-paramilitary groups. For instance, in a government operation on June 17, a leading member of paramilitary group Los Pachenca and his bodyguard were shot and killed in Santa Marta, Magdalena department. The conflict intensified especially along drug-trafficking routes and in areas that have been abandoned by the FARC-EP after the 2016 peace agreements. As these areas lack state-control, neo-paramilitary groups and drug cartels pursued control over them and regularly clashed with each other [→ Colombia (inter-cartel rivalry, neo-paramilitary groups, left wing militants)] as well as with the Colombian Armed Forces. For example, in the lower Cauca region, on September 3, a military operation including airstrikes, against the AGC and Los Caparrapos, left at least four soldiers dead and a further two wounded.

The lack of government presence in regions previously influenced by the now demobilized FARC-EP, increased the number of civilian population affected by the action of drug-cartels and neo-paramilitary organizations. Human rights violations were reported, such as forced recruitment of minors and migrants, the placement of landmines, and a general reduction of safety. According to UNOCHA a total of 225 people belonging to indigenous and farmers communities fled their ancestral territory due to threats by Los Caparrapos, allied with a FARC-EP dissident group, in San José de Uré, Córdoba department, between November 12 and 15. On May 16, members of Los Caparrapos attacked the village El Doce, Antioquia department, using machine guns and throwing grenades. Subsequently, a community leader was killed, and seven persons wounded.

A high number of human rights activists and community leaders were targeted and attacked. In the wake of the 2019 regional elections, political candidates faced threats and violence. The government estimated that nearly 84 communal leaders were killed by armed groups in 2019. In contrast with this number, social organizations and NGOs, such as the Institute for Peace and Development (INDEPAZ), estimated the number to be 250. rbo

COLOMBIA – VENEZUELA (BORDER SECURITY)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Colombia vs. Venezuela

Conflict items: other

The non-violent crisis over border security continued between the governments of Colombia and Venezuela, amidst the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela [→ Venezuela (opposition)].

While the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela intensified, the flow of refugees trying to enter neighboring Colombia grew. This resulted in tensions between Venezuelan and Colombian IDPs, both in need of the limited supply of humanitarian aid. In the meantime, the relationship between Venezuela and Colombia deteriorated.

In September, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro accused Colombian President Iván Duque of conspiring to overthrow him, while he in return accused Maduro of providing a retreat

area to leftist Colombian rebel groups and of providing arms to the leadership of the Colombian guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army [→ Colombia (ELN)]. This rhetoric was accompanied by Venezuela holding military exercises on the Colombian border. For instance, on September 10, Venezuelan government forces carried out military drills in Tachira state, Venezuela, allegedly preparing them to intercept a foreign invasion. gro

ECUADOR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | 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 and land escalated to a violent crisis between various opposition groups such as the Shuar indigenous people, the environmental organisation Acción Ecológica, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), and supporters of former President Rafael Correa, on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

In the first half of the year no violence occurred. In February, Shuar people took the government to court over mining projects in the rainforest, which resulted in an update of the mining policy in June to fight illegal mining.

In September, protests arose in Carchi province when thousands protested against the federal government and its economic policies. The province-wide protests lasted for one week, blocking the main roads and bridges to Carchi. Over the course of this week, several people were injured. Protests ended on September 30, when the federal government agreed to comply with protesters' demands.

Tensions between protesters and the government arose on October 1, when President Lenín Moreno decreed the end of the fuel price subsidies – a measure imposed as part of an IMF loan conditionality. Subsequently, protests led by CONAIE erupted in numerous cities and lasted for two weeks. As thousands of people from all over the country marched into the capital Quito on October 8, Moreno moved his government to Guayaquil and deployed the army to restore order. According to the public ombudsman, seven people died in the violent clashes between protesters and security forces, while 1,340 were injured and 1,152 arrested. Amongst others, groups of protesters targeted and vandalized several buildings in Quito such as the Office of the Comptroller General, the National Assembly building, and the headquarters of the Teleamazonas television station and the newspaper El Comercio. Protests ended on October 14, after Moreno agreed not to adopt the IMF loan conditionality. cae

EL SALVADOR (MARAS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: Barrio 18, MS-13 vs. government
 Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued 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 hand.

Compared to the previous year, the country's overall homicide rate dropped significantly. By the end of the year, the National Police (PNC) recorded 2,383 homicides, marking the lowest figure since 2013. The number of clashes between gang members and security forces also declined, with 35 gang members, 21 police officers and twelve soldiers killed in violent encounters. By the middle of the year, the PNC announced that confrontations between gangs and the police would no longer be included in the country's 2019 homicide statistics.

On April 17, gang members shot and killed a soldier on patrol in the department San Miguel. One month later, on May 23, police forces arrested 35 gang members during a raid in Soyapango and Ilopango, department of San Salvador. Authorities accused them of 18 homicides, including the murders of four soldiers in October 2016, whose bodies were found in clandestine graves in 2019.

In 2019, the government continued to implement strict 'Mano Dura' policies and anti-gang measures. On February 3, Nayib Bukele, candidate of the center-right conservative party Grand Alliance for National Unity, won the presidential election and announced his intention to extend existing hard-line measures. Previously, a spokesman of the MS-13 had stated that the gang would be open for dialogue with the new government and that repressive measures would not improve the country's security situation.

On June 20, President Bukele presented the government's new security strategy, the Territorial Control Plan, to regain de facto control of several cities with high gang activity. The next day, the president ordered the deployment of additional 2,500 police officers and 3,000 military troops to the streets of the capital San Salvador and other cities. On December 12, a court in San Salvador specialized in gang crime sentenced 373 Maras to four to 74 years in prison for homicide, extortion, money laundering, and drug trafficking.

On September 30, the Attorney General's office issued 39 arrest warrants for members of paramilitary vigilant groups, the so-called death squads. Among them, 14 police officers were accused of having killed 48 gang members in the departments San Miguel and Usulután between 2016 and 2017. 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 continued between opposition groups and the government. Various farmers' associations, such as the Peasant Development Committee (CODECA) and various indigenous groups and other protesters called upon the government to protect indigenous rights and to tackle the corruption in the country.

On January 15, civilians protested in many Guatemalan cities against the ban of the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), after President Jimmy Morales had issued a 24 hour ultimatum for CICIG employees to leave the country. The constitutional court of Guatemala sided with the UN agency and stopped the immediate expulsion, leading the government to not prolong the agency's mission. Subsequently, CICIG's mandate ended on September 3, which again provoked demonstrations both in favour and against the agency. CICIG had been created in 2006 in order to dismantle powerful criminal networks and fight corruption and was involved in the prosecution of several high-profile politicians.

On July 26, President Morales signed a migration treaty with the US, declaring Guatemala as a safe third country. The treaty was heavily criticised by various Guatemalan politicians for intransparent negotiation and caused protests with hundreds of attendees all across the country.

On June 16, parliamentary elections and the first round of presidential elections were held. Election results were annulled in several villages due to a climate of intimidation, among them San Jorge, Zacapa region. The indigenous presidential candidate of the Movement for the Liberation of Peoples (MLP) party rejected the results and criticized the absence of the MLP symbol on many ballots.

Tensions escalated on August 6, when CODECA called for a nationwide general strike, blocking the traffic in many parts of the country. Protests were primarily due to perceived electoral fraud in the first round of the presidential election and the migration treaty with the US.

On August 11, Alejandro Giammattei was elected in the second round of presidential elections. During the election, violent protests erupted in a few villages across the country, leading to several injured protesters.

On September 7, the government imposed a state of emergency in various provinces after three soldiers in El Estor, Izabal province, had allegedly been killed by drug cartels [→ Guatemala (drug cartels)]. On October 17, CODECA organized countrywide protests criticizing arbitrary police actions and massive identity checks. The state of emergency ended on November 4.

During the year, many CODECA activists received death threats and a minimum of eight were killed, including MLP candidates. lvd

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 continued between several opposition parties, including Fanmi Lavalas and Pitit Dessalines on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

In February, a report by the Haitian Court of Accounts confirmed irregularities in the handling of the PetroCaribe fund - a programme initiated by Venezuela offering caribbean member states oil supplies based on a concessionary financial agreement. Between February 7 and February 18, protests in the capital Port-au-Prince, Western department, escalated into violence, with protesters burning tires, blocking roads, and looting shops. At least nine people were found dead and dozens injured. Subsequently, Prime Minister Jean-Henry Céant promised to extend investigations into the alleged corruption and sought to meet protesters' demands on government expenses and minimum wage. On February 22, police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse mourners of a protester shot in the riots, injuring one.

On March 18, the Lower Chamber of the National Assembly dismissed Prime Minister Céant and his cabinet after a six months period in office in a no-confidence vote. Three days later, President Jovenel Moïse appointed Jean-Michel Lapin, former culture minister, as interim prime minister. On May 9, his new cabinet of 16 ministers was announced, seven of them former ministers of Céant's cabinet. In May, the Upper Chamber could not approve Lapin and his cabinet, as senators repeatedly ransacked the parliament.

On May 31, a report of the Superior Court of Accounts accused Moïse of diversion of funds. Nine days later, thousands of protesters took to the streets in various cities, demanding the immediate resignation of the president. At least two people were killed in violent clashes between protesters and police.

On July 22, Lapin resigned from his designated position. Haiti remained without a government to the end of the year, and without a budget for 2020. A motion of impeachment in the National Assembly against Moïse was rejected on August 21. Shortages in food, fuel and medicine, power blackouts, and an inflation rate of around 20 percent led tens of thousands to protest for Moïse's resignation between September and November, uniting more than 60 different social movements and political parties. Public offices, schools and businesses closed. Protesters burned tires, blocked roads and looted several businesses. Until mid-November, at least 42 people died during the protests and 86 were injured. Due to the uprisings, the planned elections in October for one third of the Upper Chamber and the whole Lower Chamber of the National Assembly were not held. lju

HONDURAS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources

The violent crisis over national power and ideology continued between the opposition movement and the government of President Juan Orlando Hernandez.

After the allegedly fraudulent presidential elections of 2017, the opposition had repeatedly demanded new elections in violent protests. This year, anti-government protests intensified after Hernandez sought to implement reforms that would allow more privatization.

Throughout April and May, protests resulted in clashes between citizens and anti-riot police in Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán department. On April 30, people protested against health and education reforms, anti-riot police clashed with protesters, who used stones, sticks, and Molotov cocktails. In course of the protests three people were injured and three buildings were burned down. Later on, the Congress decided not to pass the reforms, which would allow more privatization. On June 3, in the village Guadalupe Carney, Trujillo department, citizens torched 30 Dole Food Company fruit trucks to protest against US American influence on domestic affairs.

Protests intensified in June. For instance, on June 20, anti-riot police went on strike to demand a higher salary. Between June 20 and June 22, truck drivers protested in Tegucigalpa against the proposed privatization reforms, blocking roads, burning cars and tires. In course of the protests Hernandez deployed military personnel, killing three protesters and injuring 17 more on June 21. On June 24, military personnel entered the campus of the National Autonomous University in Tegucigalpa, using rifles and tear gas on students who protested the reforms and allegedly threw molotov cocktails, stones and other objects. Five students were injured.

On November 16, hundreds of activists from the LIBRE and PINU-SD opposition parties marched in San Pedro Sula, Cortés department, and demanded Hernandez' resignation from office. gro

MEXICO (CNTE)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: CNTE vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of education policies between the teachers' union National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

Throughout the year, CNTE continued to protest the 2012 education reform and demanded job guarantees for teachers by blocking roads and entries to government buildings and stag-

ing demonstrations. The reform had mandated the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education to conduct an exam that teachers must pass to retain their job. Many teachers refused to take the exam in protest.

On January 25, CNTE members blocked train tracks in Michoacán state. On March 27, CNTE members protested against President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's planned education reform and physically assaulted security personnel at the legislative palace of San Lázaro, Mexico City. On April 10, around 1,000 CNTE members marched through the center of the City of Mexico, demanding the full repeal of the 2012 education reform.

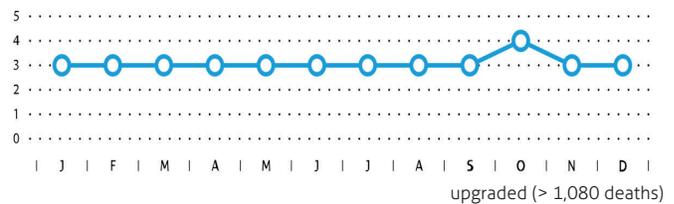
Despite CNTE's numerous strikes, Obrador's education reform passed on May 14, while the 2012 education reform was repealed the next day. CNTE announced new protests and blocked the entry to the legislative palace of San Lázaro on September 18. Obrador declared in a speech on September 24 that CNTE has every right to protest and that no violent measures would be taken against them. On October 24, CNTE members protested in demand of the payment of retained wages by blocking roads in Oaxaca de Juárez city, Oaxaca state. CNTE held another march in Tuxtla Gutiérrez city, Chiapas state, on December 12, calling for the abrogation of the educational reform. bho

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, and other illicit activities, continued between various drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the government.

The most active and comprehensive drug cartels were the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), Sinaloa Cartel (CDS), Northeastern Cartel (CDN), and Gulf Cartel (CDG), as well as their respective splinter groups. At least 20 of Mexico's 32 states were affected by violence. Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz were the most affected states. On January 30, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador declared in a press conference that the war on drugs was officially over. Furthermore, he announced that the government would no longer follow the strategy of targeting leading figures of drug cartels, known as the 'Kingpin strategy'. Despite these statements, the government continued to deploy the army to fight against drug cartels. Furthermore, on February 28, the government passed a law to establish a new federal police unit, called the National Guard. Heavy fighting over local predominance between drug cartels con-

MEXICO (DRUG CARTELS)



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December



tinued [→ Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)]. The country's homicide rate hit a record high in 2019, making it the deadliest year on record. More than 5,000 people disappeared.

Throughout the year, Tamaulipas remained a hotspot of violence as CDG, CDN, and their respective splinter groups, violently contested public security. In January, the government deployed 600 soldiers to the city of Reynosa in order to increase public security. On January 10, members of CDN clashed with soldiers in Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, leaving five cartel members as well as one soldier dead. On October 8, alleged cartel members attacked a military patrol in Río Bravo, leading to a shootout which left eight people dead.

In Coahuila state, on November 30, a convoy of reportedly about 25 vehicles and more than 100 armed members of CDN entered the municipality Villa Unión and attacked the town hall, police station, and various other buildings. The local police officers confronted the aggressors for more than an hour until eventually, with the arrival of reinforcements, the attack was repelled. Another confrontation between cartel members and security forces occurred in the morning hours of the next day. The clashes left 19 cartel members, four police officers and two civilians dead. Six police officers were injured. In the aftermath, authorities seized 25 vehicles and detained 36 alleged cartel members.

In Guanajuato, the government cracked down on the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel, which mainly operates in oil theft. From March on, the government froze bank accounts connected to the cartel with more than USD 1.8 million, arrested or shot and killed 62 cartel members and associates and seized 14 properties, 129 vehicles, and a wide array of weapons and ammunitions. A spokesperson of the government claimed the cartel had been dismantled by 50 percent.

In Guerrero, on January 27, the communitarian police repelled members of the cartel Los Ardillos attempting to enter various municipalities of Chilapa de Álvarez. Reportedly, ten cartel members and two communitarians were killed in the confrontations. On June 15, in Jilguero, a military patrol of about 20 soldiers was attacked by alleged cartel members. In the clash four soldiers were killed and ten injured, five attackers were shot and killed. On October 15, assailants attacked a military convoy in Iguala. In the shootout, 14 civilians and one soldier were killed.

In Jalisco, on July 26, unknown assailants attacked and killed the state attorney. High-profile assassinations continued throughout the year, with a commissioner from Tepatitlán killed on August 2, the director of the municipal police in Lagos de Moreno killed on September 7, and a commander of the municipal police in Ojuelos killed on September 14.

In Michoacán, on February 21, security forces clashed with members of the Los Viagras Cartel armed with AR-15 and AK-47 rifles in Buenavista Tomatlán. The confrontation resulted in eight dead and twelve arrested cartel members as well as three injured security forces. On August 30, dozens of members of CJNG attacked the municipality of Tepalcatepec, armed with Barret 50 and AK-47 rifles as well as machine guns installed on pick-up trucks and grenade launchers. CJNG had threatened to do so in a video published on August 13, claiming to fight only a rival cartel leader. The municipal police and armed civilians repelled the attack in a shootout over several hours, leaving nine dead and eleven injured. One week later,

the government deployed 200 soldiers to Tepalcatepec. On October 14, a convoy of 41 police officers was ambushed by at least 30 cartel members in El Aguaje, on the road between Aguililla and Apatzingán. The attack left 13 police officers dead and nine injured. CJNG claimed responsibility for the attack.

In Culiacán, Sinaloa, on October 17, a commando of about 30 soldiers and National Guard members raided a house and arrested four people, among them Ovidio Guzmán López, son of the ex-leader of the CDS, Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán. Hereupon dozens of members of the CDS surrounded the house, outnumbering the security forces reportedly by two to one, and finally forcing them to release Ovidio Guzmán and retreat. Simultaneously, hundreds of cartel members at various points in the city attacked security forces and civilians with assault rifles, sniper rifles, grenades, machine guns on pickup trucks, and grenade launchers, and blocked the streets in at least 19 locations with burning vehicles. Also, the cartel members reportedly took soldiers hostage in order to free Ovidio Guzmán. The official death toll was reported as 14 dead and 21 injured. The president approved of the security forces' decision to release Ovidio Guzmán and claimed it would have saved citizens' lives. However, he and the Mexican security forces were criticized heavily for folding to the cartel and letting it take a city of one million inhabitants as hostage.

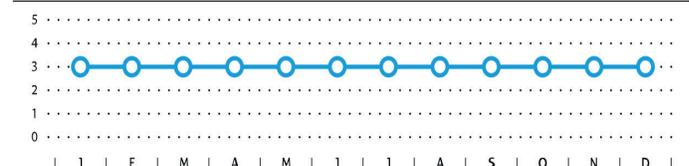
As in the previous year, Mexico remained one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists. According to Reporters Without Borders, ten journalists were killed in 2019.

MEXICO (INTER-CARTEL RIVALRY, PARAMILITARY GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: CJNG et al. vs. CDS et al. vs. CDN et al. vs. CDG et al. vs. LNFM et al. vs. CSRL et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war over subnational predominance and the production, trade, trafficking of illegal drugs, gasoline theft, and other illicit activities continued between various drug cartels such as the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), Sinaloa Cartel (CDS), Northeastern Cartel (CDN), Gulf Cartel (CDG), La Nueva Familia Michoacana (LNFM), Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel (CSRL), as well as their respective splinter groups.

At the beginning of the year, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador officially abandoned the so-called 'Kingpin strategy' of previous governments targeting drug cartels' leading figures. However, security forces continued to target cartels'

leading figures [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. As in previous years, this led to internal fights over succession and increased fragmentation of the criminal groups. At least 25 of 32 states in Mexico were reportedly affected by the conflict, with at least 1,064 deaths related to inter-cartel rivalry violence confirmed.

CJNG continued to be the most powerful cartel controlling the largest territory. The fight between CJNG and CSRL over oil theft in the states of Guanajuato and Jalisco increased over the course of the year. For instance, on March 10, CSRL members killed 15 CJNG members and injured at least five in a bar in Salamanca city, Guanajuato state.

Furthermore, CJNG fought with LNFM and its subgroup Los Viagras in the states of Michoacán and Guerrero. The conflict between the two groups intensified in the middle of the year. For instance, on August 8, members of CJNG tortured and mutilated 19 alleged members of Los Viagras in Uruapan city, Michoacán. In November, about 1,000 families fled from the violence in Zirandaro municipality, Guerrero.

CJNG was also engaged in turf wars with CDS in the states of Baja California, Chihuahua, Puebla, Aguascalientes, Sinaloa, and Quintana Roo. For example, on March 12, members of CDS and CJNG clashed in the city of Puebla, eponymous state. During the shootout seven alleged gang members were killed. Furthermore, CJNG was involved in clashes with smaller criminal groups in the states of Veracruz, Puebla, Mexico City, Morelos, Guerrero, Guanajuato, and Oaxaca.

CDS continued to be one of the most influential cartels in the country despite the rapid expansion of CJNG over the past years and the conviction of its former leader in the US this year, Joaquín Guzmán, also known as El Chapo. Besides CDS' fights against CJNG, the group waged turf wars against smaller and less influential cartels in the states of Baja California, Morelos, Sinaloa, Puebla, Aguascalientes, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, where they were allied to the Cartel Gente de Aquiles, and in Chihuahua, where they were allied to the group Gente Nueva. For instance, on August 29, the decapitated bodies of three women were found in Madera town, Chihuahua, along with a message of the Nuevo Cartel de Juárez, claiming they were informers of the Gente Nueva. CDN and CDG continued their fight for local predominance in the states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo León. On January 10, in the town Miguel Alemán, Tamaulipas, more than 50 members of both groups violently clashed, leaving 24 alleged gang members dead. On August 4, another shooting between two factions of armed groups happened in Barrancón del Tío Blas, Tamaulipas, where about 40 persons were killed. The fight over control in Tamaulipas continued throughout the year, making the northern state and especially the municipality of Miguel Alemán one of the most violent regions in Mexico. Fights between factions of CDG were reported in the state of Tamaulipas, where members of Los Metros fought among each other and with alleged members of Los Escorpiones. For example, on July 20, a member of Los Metros was executed by other Los Metros members. CDN also fought against Los Zetas Vieja Escuela in Tamaulipas. On November 19, the dismembered bodies of three alleged members of the latter were found in plastic bags in Monterrey, Nuevo León, accompanied by a 'narco message' by the CDN.

Throughout the year, extraordinary displays of violence happened, for instance when a video appeared on August 14

showing members of the group La Barredora burning an alleged member of the rivaling Los Altar cartel alive in Sonora state. Similarly, on September 9, a video was published of LNFM members torturing, beating, and slashing to death 53 alleged members of a rivaling organization in Guerrero. hst

MEXICO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between opposition parties, such as the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the National Action Party (PAN), and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) on the one hand, and the government on the other, de-escalated to a dispute.

After violent demonstrations during the electoral campaign in 2018, this year's opposition protests remained peaceful. Obrador acknowledged this year's absence of violence between the conflict parties in a speech on August 10. As President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's election in December 2018 constituted a change in power, the new opposition struggled to act unitedly.

Obrador's first year in office concluded on December 1 with a non-violent protest march in Mexico City in which approx. 20,000 opposition members from PRD and PAN as well as non-party-affiliated participants demonstrated against the high violence and crime rates [→ Mexico (drug cartels), Mexico (inter-cartel rivalry, paramilitary groups)] and Obrador's style of governance. bho

MEXICO (PUBLIC SECURITY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: normalistas et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the political system and the handling of public security continued between teacher trainees, so-called Normalistas on the one hand, and the government led by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on the other hand.

The conflict had been triggered by the abduction of 43 Normalistas traveling in three buses as well as the killing of six and the injuring of 25 on 09/26/14 in Iguala, Guerrero state, with the alleged involvement of municipal police forces and a local cartel offshoot. The case remained largely unsolved by the government.

On September 26, five years after the disappearance of the 43 Normalistas, several thousand people participated in a march in the City of Mexico. In course of the march participants vandalized several shops and other buildings as well as the northern door of the National Palace, the seat of the federal government. bho

NICARAGUA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: opposition groups, anti-government protesters vs. paramilitary groups, government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The limited war over national power and the orientation of the political system de-escalated to a violent crisis between various opposition groups and anti-government protesters on the one hand, and the government of President Daniel Ortega's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) on the other hand. Throughout the year, the government continued to restrict the right of assembly. In March, violence erupted in the capital Managua. For instance, on March 16, over 40 organizations led by the National Unity Blue and White, organized an anti-government protest. Police forces detained more than 100 protesters for non-authorized demonstrations and injured at least six protesters with rubber bullets. On March 30, police officers injured four protesters demanding the release of prisoners from 2018 protests. One year after the outbreak of the 2018 protests, on April 18, major junctions and roads of the city were blocked by police in the morning, followed by subsequent widespread protests of several opposition groups.

In September, unauthorized protests continued throughout the country. For instance, in the capital, at least three people were injured by stunning bombs used by police to disperse a demonstration on September 21. Furthermore, on December 12, police officers injured at least six people during an opposition protest march in Managua.

The opposition and the government started negotiations on social and institutional reforms in February. Further, the US government and the EU imposed sanctions on government officials from March onwards. Following demands from the opposition, the government released over 100 political prisoners on June 2 and 3. After several rounds of negotiations between the government and the opposition, the government cancelled and did not reopen negotiations on August 8. tk

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 resources and the orientation of the political system continued for the 31th consecutive year between the Paraguayan People's Army (EPP), the Armed Peasant Association (ACA), several farmer organizations, indigenous groups, and landless people on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. Although the non-government groups continued to demand integral agrarian, social, and political reforms, the number of violent and disruptive acts diminished as the EPP presumably focused their

activities on the collection of protection money.

Throughout the year, EPP and ACA attacked agricultural sites and kidnapped civilians. On April 21, a group of five vandalized a farm located in Arroyito, Concepción department. The group destroyed several agricultural machines and cars as well as barns and shacks. The attack occurred just a few km away from the government's Joint Task Force (FTC) base, a special unit to counter the EPP's activities. A few days later, on May 7, the ACA, a prominent Paraguayan militant group which the FTC presumed to be defeated in 2015, claimed the attack. On May 9, men camouflaged in military uniforms abducted a nurse close to the Zanja Moroti village, Concepción department, a stronghold of the EPP.

On July 8, a group of 20 combatants attacked and vandalized a farm, Amambay department, killing one farmer. This was reportedly the first violent attack in which indigenous people were actively involved.

Later that month, on July 25, the EPP attacked another farm near the village Yby Yau, Concepción department. The fighters, equipped with semi-automatic rifles, killed three farmers and burned sheds, houses, and machinery.

On October 10, near Horqueta city, Concepción department, a remote-controlled car bomb was detonated in a pickup truck occupied by four farmers, leaving no casualties. In the following days, the ACA claimed the attack in a video and announced they would continue their actions until big landowners would stop mistreating local farmers and end their soy production. lvd

PERU (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: opposition movements vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis continued between various opposition movements and the government over the orientation of the political system as well as resources. As in previous years, miners, members of indigenous communities, trade unions, wildcat miners, coca farmers, and various social movements staged numerous strikes and protests throughout the country.

Several local communities protested against alleged environmental pollution by oil companies, further fearing that they would cause water shortages and the lack of basic public services. On January 15, in Loreto region, Prime Minister César Villanueva cancelled on short notice a meeting with members of the Chapis community to discuss environmental degradation caused by oil extraction. Subsequently, protesters took about 30 state officials hostage, among them two prosecutors and five police officers, demanding immediate negotiations with the prime minister. One day later, the hostages were released and both parties agreed to further meetings.

On March 24, 70 residents of the village of Brena, Loreto, seized an oil installation operated by a foreign energy company and demanded to be supplied with electricity and other public services.

As in previous years, tensions remained high in the mining

sector. In February, indigenous communities started protests and road blocks against the Las Bambas copper mine in Apurímac region. The community of Fuerabamba accused the company of illegally building a road on their farmland as well as the government of illegally granting it the status of a national highway. Protesters blocked the company's main route to the port of Matarani and demanded compensation for the use of their land. On March 27, protesters rejected a government-initiated mediation and hurled rocks at the ministers' arriving helicopter. Two days later, Peruvian authorities declared a state of emergency. Negotiations only started after Peruvian police released the leader of the indigenous community. In a mediation, indigenous leaders and the company agreed to lift the road blockade in exchange for commitment from the company to pay for transit.

Similar protests erupted on July 15, after the government's decision to authorize the construction of the Tía María mining project in Arequipa region. On August 4, Peruvian President Martín Vizcarra authorized the army to contain the protests. On August 10, the recently issued construction permit was temporarily suspended while protests continued. The conflict turned violent again in late October, after the national government had finally approved the project. Police injured several protesters, who again blocked transportation routes. In March, authorities launched Operation Mercurio, the biggest ever raid against illegal gold mining, which causes deforestation and heavy environmental contamination, in La Pampa, Madre de Dios region. The state of emergency was declared for further six months and about 1,500 police and military officers by air, land and river destroyed illegal mines, expelled 6,000 miners and captured suspected criminals. On April 12, in the district of San Gaban, Puno region, a coca eradication team killed two farmers and injured another in clashes. The year was also marked by several general strikes by labor unions to protest the government's economic policies and corruption. On September 30, the president dissolved the opposition-controlled Congress and called for new parliamentary elections in January 2020. In response, the Congress suspended the president for one year. In November, the constitutional court confirmed the legality of new elections. mgm

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 continued between various right-wing extremist groups and the government.

The extremists were mainly comprised of white supremacist groups and individuals with strong links to groups promoting right-wing ideology. Throughout 2019, members or affiliates of right-wing extremist groups carried out attacks leading to at least 29 dead and 32 injured.

The incident with the highest number of fatalities occurred on August 3, when an assailant opened fire at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, using an AK-47 style assault rifle. The attack

killed 22 individuals and injured 26 others. Investigators assumed that the perpetrator would be the author of a racist, anti-immigrant document that was posted on a far-right online message board before the attack.

Earlier in the year, on April 27, an assailant attacked the Chabad synagogue in Poway, California, killing one and injuring three others. Previously, the suspect had published a document on a far-right online message board, revealing that he was inspired by the New Zealand mosque shooting.

On December 10, two perpetrators opened fire on a kosher grocery store in Jersey City, New Jersey, killing six, including one police officer, and injuring three.

Throughout the year authorities managed to prevent several other incidents. On February 14, the FBI arrested a Coast Guard lieutenant who had created a hit list of high-profile Democratic politicians and media figures. The FBI found that he identified himself as a white nationalist and an admirer of Anders Breivik and labeled him a domestic terrorist. On August 8, a FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force arrested a suspect who planned on attacking a Las Vegas synagogue and an LGBTQ bar using Molotov cocktails and IEDs. The following day, in Winter Park, Florida, agents of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement arrested a suspect who was associated with the international neo-Nazi group Feuerkrieg Division. ssa

USA – VENEZUELA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2001

Conflict parties: Venezuela vs. USA
 Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis over international power and ideology continued between the USA and Venezuela amid the humanitarian, political, social, and economic crisis in Venezuela [→ Venezuela (opposition)].

After the last year's presidential elections, the US government refused to recognize President Nicolás Maduro's second term on January 23. In response, the Venezuelan government unilaterally cut all diplomatic ties. On the same day, Juan Guaidó, leader of the Venezuelan National Assembly (AN), declared himself interim president of Venezuela. The AN was considered the only legitimate entity in the country by a large part of the international community. Five days later, on January 28, the US government recognized Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president.

The delivery of foreign humanitarian aid was a contentious issue throughout the year [→ Venezuela (opposition)]. For instance, on February 9, the Venezuelan Army blocked the Tienditas border bridge in Cúcuta, Santander state, which links the country with Colombia, stopping a convoy with US-humanitarian aid from entering the country, claiming this could be the beginning of a US military intervention.

Over the course of the year, the US repeatedly imposed economic sanctions against Venezuela and against individuals. For instance, on February 25, the US government called for member states of the Lima Group to freeze the payments of Venezuelan oil and imposed sanctions against members of the Venezuelan government. Several countries in the Americas, excluding the US, had created the Lima Group in order

to find a peaceful solution to the Venezuelan crisis. On May 11, the US government imposed further sanctions against the Venezuelan secret intelligence and military service. The financial assets of further members of the Venezuelan government were frozen on August 6.

On several occasions, the US government expressed concerns over the continued relationship between Venezuela and Russia. For instance, on March 27, Russian soldiers and military gear arrived in Venezuela. As a reaction, the US government demanded their immediate departure from the country. During a meeting of the UNSC on April 11, US officials threatened to intervene in Venezuela militarily.

On July 23, the AN, dominated by opposition parties, unanimously approved Venezuela's reincorporation into the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), from which it had withdrawn in 2013. On September 26, US President Donald Trump met with a coalition of Latin American states (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru), discussing measures to put pressure on the Maduro government.

mwo

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 continued between the opposition, led by the multi-party alliance Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), and the government under President Nicolás Maduro.

The humanitarian, political, and economic crisis persisted, leading to more Venezuelans migrating to neighboring countries due to shortages of food and medicine. Therefore, since 2015 the estimated number of Venezuelans who left their home country rose to 4.5 million by the end of 2019.

On January 10, despite the opposition's accusations of electoral fraud in the 2018 presidential election, Maduro began his second presidential term. On the same day, hundreds of

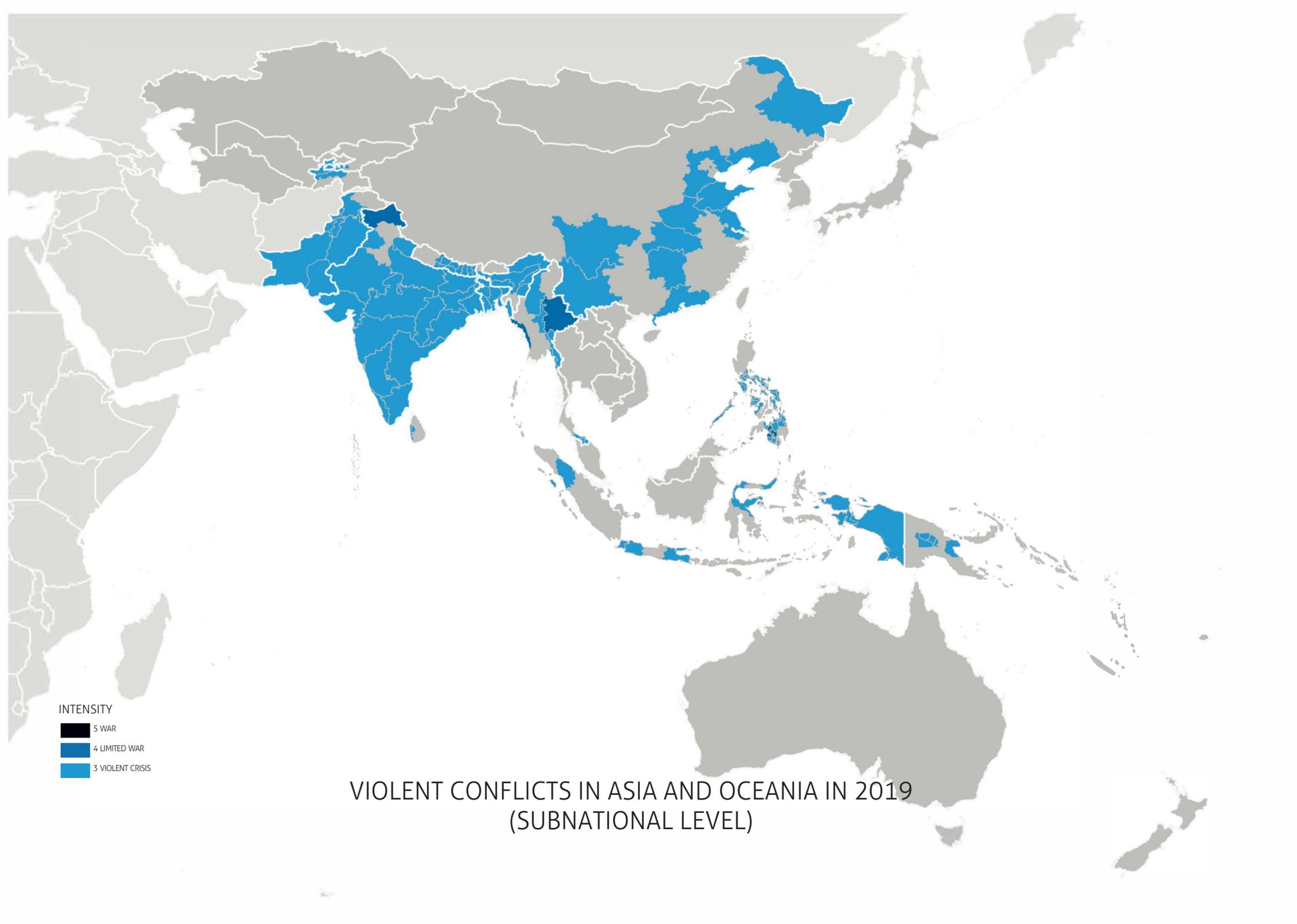
people protested against the government in at least eight of the 23 states. For instance, in Barquisimeto, Lara state, when teachers marched in opposition to Maduro, the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB) used tear gas to disperse the crowds, injuring one person. On January 22, security forces prevented an attempted mutiny by GNB forces, arresting 27 persons. One day later, the former speaker of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, declared himself official interim president of Venezuela. Shortly thereafter, several states recognized him as the legitimate head of state. At the same time, frequent mass protests were held in Caracas, Miranda state, and other cities, leaving at least 26 persons dead due to police violence. In February, a coalition of states led by the US sent several convoys packed with humanitarian aid goods to Venezuela's border, which was closed by the government by deploying military forces. As a reaction, opposition leaders around Guaidó called for mass protests along the border. On February 22, thousands of Venezuelans followed the call. In the following, mass protests in cities along the Colombian and Brazilian border of the country turned violent, leaving at least four protesters killed and 370 individuals injured. For instance, on February 22, a group of indigenous people stopped a military convoy heading to the border in the village of Kumarakapay, Bolívar state, Venezuela, to prevent it from blocking more humanitarian aid.

On April 30, several deserted soldiers freed former opposition leader Leopoldo López. On the same day, hundreds of protesters marched in Caracas carrying molotov-cocktails and throwing stones at GNB forces, who used tear gas and handguns, killing four opponents.

In May, government and opposition representatives met for unsuccessful negotiation in Oslo, mediated by Norway. On July 11, negotiations were reopened on Barbados, breaking off again on September 16. During the last months of the year, support for the opposition protest marches declined as Guaidó's leadership was criticized due to the failed negotiations, corruption accusations, and his ties to US-government officials.

According to UNHCR, armed pro-government groups, so-called colectivos, were responsible for at least 52 of the 66 deaths registered between January and May. mwo

Asia and Oceania



INTENSITY

- 5 WAR
- 4 LIMITED WAR
- 3 VIOLENT CRISIS

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2019
(SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With 108 active conflicts, Asia & Oceania remained the region with the highest number of conflicts. As in the previous year, no conflict was fought on war-level in 2019. Four limited wars de-escalated to violent crises, while one conflict in Indonesia and one in Myanmar escalated to limited wars respectively [→ Indonesia (Papua); Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)]. Overall, five limited wars were observed this year, two fewer than in 2018.

In China, the government intensified its overall policy of surveillance and repression of religious and ethnic minorities. While continuing to target unregistered Catholic and Protestant house and underground churches, arresting practitioners in several provinces, authorities increasingly interfered with the activities of officially licensed churches as well [→ China (Christians)]. Moreover, in line with the 2018 Regulation on Religious Affairs, the government continued to pursue the “Sinicization” of the Hui and other Islamic minorities. For instance, officials banned the public display of Arabic scripture and Islamic symbols in several provinces [→ China (Hui)]. As part of this broader crackdown on religious and ethnic minorities, particularly the treatment of Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in Xinjiang garnered international condemnation. According to international estimates, approx. one million ethnic Uyghurs were interned in so-called re-education camps [→ China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)]. Throughout the year, reports of alleged torture, forced labor and deaths in internment camps emerged. The PRC’s international standing was further affected by the large-scale protest movement which emerged in Hong Kong in response to a controversial extradition bill. After broad, cross-cutting mass protests in June, the conflict gradually escalated to a violent crisis as clashes predominantly between young protesters and police forces increased, resulting in approx. 2,600 injured and the death of two [→ China (Hong Kong)]. While Sino-American relations were continually marked by human rights issues and the ongoing trade dispute, a preliminary trade deal was struck in December [→ China – USA]. For the first time since 1992, however, the US government authorized the sale of fighter jets to Taiwan [→ China (Taiwan°)]. In the South China Sea, maritime conflicts between the PRC and other neighboring countries escalated to a violent crisis as several fishing vessels were sunk throughout the year [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. The non-violent crisis between the PRC and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Tiaoyutai islands continued, with both sides deploying troops near the contested territory [→ Japan – China (East China Sea)]. The conflict over ideology and the North Korean citizens’ right to emigration from North Korea between the governments of PRC and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on the one hand, and defectors and their supporter groups on the other hand saw a violent attack by a defector-associated group on February 22, pressuring a DPRK diplomat at the Spanish embassy to defect [→ North Korea, China (defectors)].

In India, protests again the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), passed on December 11, took place in several states. The CAA aims to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants of Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Afghan origin. The protests began in Assam, where several ethnic groups protested against the act as it enables non-indigenous people to acquire citizenship. In the capital New Delhi and other parts of the country, people opposed the act for its exclusion of Muslims, claiming it violates India’s secular constitution. In total, at least 27 people were killed and hundreds injured in protests, most of them in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Assam. Police further arrested several thousand more [→ India (inter-ethnic violence / Assam); India (Manipur)]. Section 144 of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, prohibiting the assembly of five or more people and curfews were imposed in New Delhi and several parts of the country. Various ethnic groups in the regions of Nagaland and Assam continued to pursue autonomy and secession. Nagas were mainly organized in fractions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) [→ India (Nagalim)]. Peace talks initiated in 2015 between the NSCN and the government continued without yielding a result. Throughout the year, the Indian and Burmese governments carried out multiple joint operations against militant groups, mainly targeting NSCN and United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA-I) headquarters along the Indo-Myanmar border. In Assam, ULFA-I remained the most active actor demanding secession from the government. In total, violence by militants against security forces decreased [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. The conflict between left-wing extremist Naxalites and the government de-escalated to a violent crisis as the number of casualties dropped compared to the previous year. Beside security personnel, Naxalites targeted people being suspected of collaborating with the police, as well as infrastructure such as construction vehicles [→ India (Naxalites)]. Incidents of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, and Hindus and Christians, respectively, continued [→ India (Hindus – Muslims); India (Hindus – Christians)]. Throughout the year, members of different caste and tribe communities staged protests to emphasize their demands for socio-economic benefits under the reservation system [→ India (Patels et al.)]. The conflict continued between the government and the sand and timber mafias, respectively, over natural resources [→ India (Mafia Raj)]. In 2019, the violent crisis between Sikh groups fighting for an independent Khalistan and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. At least 37 members of pro-Khalistan groups were arrested, while foreign advocacy groups continued to campaign for an independence referendum. On August 5, the Indian government revoked article 370 of the Indian constitution, which had granted a special autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir state (J&K). The government further deployed tens of thousands additional security personnel to J&K and shut down all communication services for several weeks. In subsequent protests, dozens of people were injured. Violent clashes between security forces, Islamist militants, and local protesters in J&K continued throughout the year [→ India (Kashmir)]. The limited war between India and Pakistan continued. On February 26, in response to a militant attack by Jaish-e-Mohammad in Pulwama, India, Indian forces conducted an airstrike in the vicinity of the town Balakot, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, the first one since 1971. It was claimed to be a preemptive strike against an alleged JeM training camp [→ India – Pakistan; India (Kashmir)]. Throughout the year, the Indian and Pakistani military clashed frequently along the Line of Control. In Pakistan, the limited war between Islamist militant groups and the government de-escalated to a violent crisis [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)]. The same militant groups continued to target religious minorities [→ Pakistan (Sunni militants – re-

ligious groups)]. In Balochistan, militant attacks especially on projects and institutions related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor continued [→ Pakistan (Balochistan)]. Pashtuns organized in the Pakistan Tahafuz Movement continued to protest against security force brutality and ethnic discrimination [→ Pakistan (Pashtuns/PTM)].

In Bangladesh, at least 46 people were killed and more than 1,150 injured in conflicts across the country throughout the year. The opposition, human right organizations, and journalists criticized the government for authoritarian practices. Like in previous years, clashes between and among the parties over local supremacy occurred [→ Bangladesh (opposition)]. The violent crisis between Islamist militant groups, the government, and religious minorities, such as Buddhists and Hindus, continued [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)]. Readymade garment (RMG) workers continued to protest working conditions, social security and pending payments, which led to two country-wide protests in the course of the year [→ Bangladesh (RMG workers)]. In Nepal, Hindu Nationalist political parties continued their struggle for reinstalling a Hindu Kingdom. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) with the support of various right-wing Hindu groups conducted a nationwide campaign across the country's 77 districts from February to April in an effort to restore Nepal as a Hindu state [→ Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups)]. The violent conflict in Sri Lanka between Muslim militant groups, Christians and Hindus continued [→ Sri Lanka (inter-religious tensions)]. At least 253 people were killed in nine coordinated suicide bombings in North Western Province by alleged militants, leading to a nationwide curfew. Moreover, hundreds of anti-Muslim and anti-Christian attacks against civilians and buildings were reported.

In Indonesia, Islamist militant groups like Jamaah Ansharut Daulah and allegedly Mujahidin Indonesia Timur, continued to carry out violent attacks against security forces and civilians [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. Consequently, the Indonesian government deployed troops at larger gatherings, and at least 227 alleged militants were arrested throughout the year. The conflict over the secession of the provinces of Papua and West Papua and natural resources between indigenous Papuans and the government escalated to a limited war, leaving approx. 20,000 people internally displaced. Protests escalated in August and again in September, leading to violent clashes with security forces [→ Indonesia (Papua)]. In Cambodia, the non-violent crisis between the opposition movement and the government continued [→ Cambodia (opposition)]. In Laos, the government continued its operations against the Hmong minority in the Phou Bia jungle, but in contrast to the previous year, no casualties were observed [→ Laos (Hmong)]. Christians in Laos also faced persecution, leading to threats and detentions allegedly based on personal beliefs [→ Laos (Christians)]. In Thailand, Islamist separatist groups repeatedly conducted violent attacks mainly against security forces and in public spaces, affecting Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala and Songkhla provinces [→ Thailand (Islamist separatists / Southern Border Provinces)]. In Vietnam, activists addressing issues of resources and the socioeconomic system were detained [→ Vietnam (socioeconomic protests)]. As opposed to the previous year, no violent protests or crackdowns by security forces were reported in the country.

Nine of eleven conflicts in Myanmar were conducted on a violent level, one more than in 2018. In Rakhine State, the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) clashed repeatedly with members of the Arakan Army (AA), resulting in dozens of casualties throughout the year and between 50,000 and 100,000 civilians internally displaced [→ Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)]. The Tatmadaw used heavy weapons such as airstrikes with bombs and shots from helicopters, while AA kidnapped several politicians and groups of civilians, particularly in October and December. In contrast, the conflict between the Rohingya ethnic minority and Buddhist majority as well as the government in Rakhine State de-escalated to a violent crisis despite two more Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. The Gambian government initiated a trial at the ICJ to prosecute Myanmar's alleged systematic violence and genocide against Rohingya in Rakhine State. The limited war over timber and autonomy between the Kachin Independence Army with its political wing the Kachin Independence Organisation and the government also de-escalated [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. KIA, its allies AA, Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Myanmar Democratic National Alliance Army (MNDAA) held several joint peace talks with the government [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State); Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)]. MNDAA had standoffs with the Tatmadaw but no casualties were reported. The Tatmadaw, moreover, clashed violently with the Shan State Army-South, and respectively with the two allied groups TNLA and Shan State Army-North [→ Myanmar (SSA / Shan State)]. Ethnic armed groups as well as the Tatmadaw were accused of human rights violations against civilians, such as forced recruitment. The nationwide opposition conflict was marked by protests for and against a constitutional reform proposed by the ruling National League for Democracy [→ Myanmar (opposition)]. Violence escalated when police dispersed a protest in Kayah State on February 12, and in a prison riot in Sagaing Region on May 9.

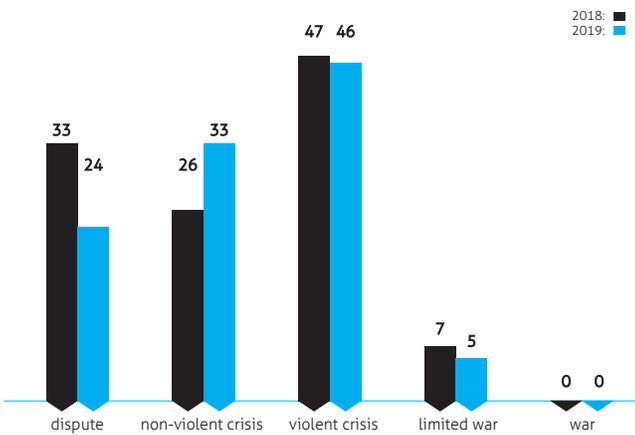
In the Philippines, a total of four violent conflicts were observed in 2019. The limited war between the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), on the one hand, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippine government, on the other, continued. The conflict mainly affected the newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Soccsksargen region, where 94 people were killed in clashes. The conflict additionally internally displaced more than 78,000 civilians, mainly because of the occasional use of airstrikes and artillery by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. The conflict between Islamist militant groups, including Abu Sayyaf and Maute, and the Philippine government also continued as a limited war. The fighting took place almost exclusively in BARMM. At least 120 people were killed throughout the year. A major suicide attack with 23 fatalities was conducted by Abu Sayyaf in cooperation with militants of the Indonesian Jamaah Ansharut Daulah at the beginning of the year, which prompted intensified military operations by the AFP as a response. In their operations, the AFP also used heavy weapons such as howitzers and airstrikes. The leader of Maute, Abu Dar, was killed in mid-March [→ Philippines (Islamist militant groups)]. The violent crisis over autonomy of the Bangsamoro republic, the orientation of the political system and resources between MILF and the government continued but only counted one vio-

lent incident, in which MILF members resisted arrest, leaving four dead in the ensuing fight [→ Philippines (MILF)]. On the political side, significant progress towards de-escalation was made with the ratification of the so-called Bangsamoro Organic Law, introduced in 2018, in two separate referendums in January and February in the former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, now BARMM. The violent crisis continued between the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army on the one hand, and the government on the other hand [→ Philippines (CPP, NPA)]. As in 2018, frequent violent clashes occurred in almost all regions, resulting in low numbers of casualties. During the year, the government on several occasions intensified the deployment of military personnel and operations.

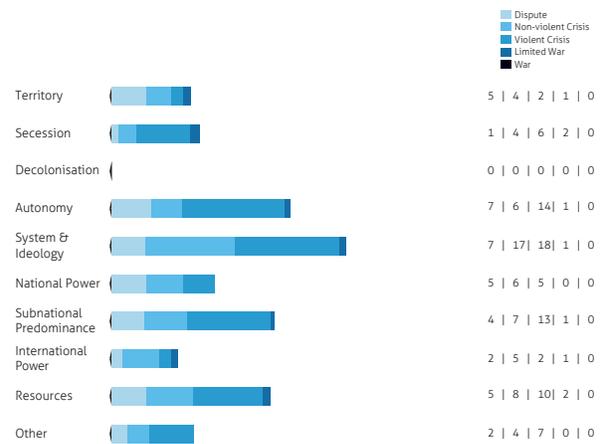
The opposition conflict in the Maldives de-escalated to a non-violent crisis [→ Maldives (opposition)]. Trials regarding former president Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom and several of his supporters continued but charges for terrorism were partly withdrawn. In Papua New Guinea, the violent crisis between various tribes over resources and subnational predominance continued, particularly in the highland provinces [→ Papua New Guinea (tribal tensions)]. The dispute in Bougainville continued, with a non-binding referendum was held at the end of the year, showing the population's strong support for independence. The Me'ekamui Government of Unity declared the containment of weapons of former combatants to be completed in September [→ Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)].

In Kazakhstan, President Nursultan Nazarbaev resigned from office, leading to a series of protests, especially against the subsequent election results, the renaming of the capital in honor of the former president, the continued influence of Nazarbaev, and for the freedom of political prisoners [→ Kazakhstan (opposition)]. Moreover, government action against opposition groups was reported from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan [→ Uzbekistan (opposition); Kyrgyzstan (opposition)]. In Fergana Valley, clashes between residents of Tajik and Kyrgyz grounds resulted in the death of six people and partial closing of the border. However, further decisions and agreements concerning the exchange of land and the delimitation of the borders were reached [→ Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – Uzbekistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)]. In Tajikistan, 20 IS militants attacked a border post, leaving at least 22 border guards and militants dead. Furthermore, a prison riot initiated by approx. 30 alleged Islamist militants left 32 people dead [→ Tajikistan (Islamist groups)].

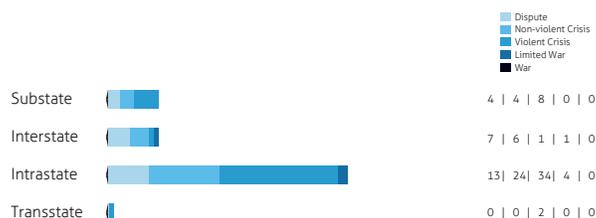
CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2019 COMPARED TO 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2019



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2019



Overview: Conflicts in Asia and Oceania in 2019

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts)*	PCJSS, UPDF, PCJSS-MN Larma, UPDF-Democratic vs. Bengali settlers vs. government (AL, BGB, RAB)	autonomy, subnational predominance	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (Islamist groups)	Hindus, Buddhists vs. JMB, ABT, HuT, AAI vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (opposition)	AL vs. BNP, Jel	system/ideology, national power	1991	•	3
Bangladesh (RMG workers)	RMG workers vs. factory owners, BGMEA, government	other	2006	•	3
Cambodia (opposition)	CNRM vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	•	2
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 (Hong Kong)	pro-democracy groups, pro-independence groups vs. PRC government, HKSAR government	autonomy, system/ideology	1997	↗	3
China (Hui)	Hui vs. government	system/ideology	1949	↘	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	END	1
China (socioeconomic protests)	environmentalists, factory workers, peasants, civilians vs. government	resources, other	1978	•	3
China (Taiwan ^o)	ROC vs. PRC	secession, system/ideology	1949	•	2
China (Tibet)	Tibetans, CTA, TYC vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1950	↘	2
China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)	Uyghurs, TIP/ETIM, WUC vs. government	secession, system/ideology	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	↗	3
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, ARA vs. government	autonomy	1992	•	3
India (Hindus – Christians)	Hindus, BD, BJP, RSS, VHP, Hindu Munani vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1999	•	3
India (Hindus – Muslims)	Hindus, BJP, RSS, VHP, BD vs. Muslims, JIH, PFI	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, AASU, ULFA-I vs. Bangladeshi immigrants, AAMSU vs. Adivasis, AASAA et al. vs. government	subnational predominance, other	1979	•	3
India (Islamist militant groups)*	SIMI, LeT, JeM, FIF, JMB, IS vs. government	system/ideology	2000	•	2
India (Kashmir)	HM, LeT, JeM, TuM, HuM, IS, APHC, local protesters vs. government	secession, autonomy	1947	•	3
India (Mafia Raj)	sand mafia, timber mafia vs. government, civil society actors	subnational predominance, resources, other	1986	•	3

ASIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
India (Manipur)	KRA, KYKL, UNLF, KCP, PREPAK, PLA, KNF vs. government	secession, autonomy	1964	•	3
India (Nagalim)	NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-NK, NSCN-R, NSCN-U vs. government	secession, autonomy	1947	•	3
India (Nagas – Assamese Adivasis)*	Nagas, NSF vs. Assamese Adivasis, AANLA, AASU et al.	subnational predominance	1988	↘	1
India (Nagas – Kukis)*	NSCN-IM, Nagas, KIM, KNA, KNO, Kukis	subnational predominance	1992	↗	2
India (Naxalites)	Naxalites vs. government	system/ideology	1967	↘	3
India (NLFT factions et al. / Tripura)*	NLFT, ATTF, ATP, NFNS, IPFT vs. government	secession, autonomy	1978	↘	1
India (Patels et al.)	Patel community, Jat community, Kapu community, Rajput community, Maratha community vs. Gujjar community, government	other	1981	•	3
India (Sikhs)	SLF, AISSF, Dal Khalsa, KLF, SAD (Amritsar), BKI, SFJ vs. government	secession	1947	↘	2
India (TJAC / Telangana)*	TJAC, TJS vs. government	autonomy	1969	↗	2
India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)	ULFA-I, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-S, NSCN-K, NSCN-R vs. government	secession, autonomy	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)*	Christians vs. Muslims	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	↗	4
Indonesia – Timor-Leste*	Indonesia vs. Timor-Leste	territory, other	2002	•	1
Japan – China (East China Sea)	Japan vs. PRC vs. ROC	territory, international power, resources, other	1971	•	2
Japan – Russia*	Japan vs. Russia	territory, international power	1945	•	2
Japan – South Korea*	Japan vs. ROK	territory, other	1951	•	2
Japan, South Korea, USA – North Korea*	Japan, ROK, USA vs. DPRK	system/ideology, international power, other	1990	•	2
Kazakhstan (Islamist groups)*	Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, al-Jihad al-Islami, Jamaat Takfir, Jund al-Kilafah vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1
Kazakhstan (opposition)	Independent Trade Unions, Journalists, Civil Rights Activists, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK), Oyan, Qazaqstan 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*	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan vs. Uzbekistan	international power, resources	2010	•	1
Laos (Christians)*	Christians vs. government	system/ideology	1975	↗	2
Laos (Hmong)	Hmong vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1975	↘	2
Malaysia (Malay – Chinese, Indian, indigenous Malaysians)*	Malay Malaysians vs. Chinese Malaysians, Indian Malaysians, indigenous Malaysians	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1946	•	1
Malaysia – Singapore*	Malaysia vs. Singapore	territory	1963	↘	1

ASIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Maldives (opposition)	opposition vs. government	national power	2003	↘	2
Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)	Arakan Army vs. government	autonomy	2015	↗	4
Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)	KIA, KIO vs. government	autonomy, resources	1961	↘	3
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	↘	2
Myanmar (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1962	•	3
Myanmar (Rohingya)	Rohingya, ARSA vs. government, Buddhists	subnational predominance, other	2012	↘	3
Myanmar (socioeconomic protests)*	local protesters vs. resource companies, government	resources	2012	↑	3
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 (UWSA, NDAA / Shan State)	UWSA, NDAA vs. government	autonomy	1988	↗	2
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, 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, PRC vs. defectors (networks), ROK	system/ideology, other	2000	↗	3
Pakistan (Balochistan)	BLA, BLT, BRAS, BRA, BNP-M vs. government	secession, resources	1948	•	3
Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)	TTP, JuA, LeJ, al-Qaeda, IS vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	↘	3
Pakistan (opposition)*	PML-N, JUI-F, TLP vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1973	↘	2
Pakistan (Pashtuns / PTM)	Pashtuns, PTM vs. government	autonomy	2018	•	3
Pakistan (Sindh)*	MQM, Mohajirs vs. PPP, Balochs, Sindhis vs. ANP, Pashtuns vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1947	↘	2
Pakistan (Sunni militants – religious groups)	TTP, JuA, LeJ, IS vs. Shiites, Ahmadis, Hindus, Christians, Sufis	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
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)	Riarepa vs. Kambiya vs. Koyari vs. Ya'ala vs. various other 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

ASIA

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. 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	1991	•	4
Philippines (MILF – MNLF)*	MILF vs. MNLF	subnational predominance	2009	↘	2
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, BSS, Mahason Balakaya, Sinhala Ravaya vs. Muslims, National Thowheed Jamaath, SLMC vs. 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	↗	3
Tajikistan (Islamist groups)	Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	•	3
Tajikistan (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	END	1
Thailand (Islamist separatists / Southern Border Provinces)*	BRN, PULO vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1902	•	3
Thailand (opposition)*	PTP, UDD vs. PAD vs. Royal Thai Army 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	↘	2

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

BANGLADESH (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Hindus, Buddhists vs. JMB, ABT, HuT, AAI vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The violent crisis over ideology and the orientation of the political system, and religious predominance continued between Islamist militant groups, the government and religious minorities, such as Buddhists and Hindus.

Throughout the year, security forces, such as the paramilitary Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), continued countrywide operations against Islamist militant groups such as Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB) or its faction Neo-JMB, Ansar al-Islam, Ansurallah Bangla Team (ABT), and Hizbut-Tahrir (HuT). Operations were mainly carried out in the divisions of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Rangpur, in which security forces killed six militants and injured about one hundred. As in 2018, no militant attacks on government institutions or civilians were reported.

Security forces sized explosives, firearms, and propaganda material. In addition, they arrested at least 100 alleged militants. For instance, on September 1, RAB arrested suspected members of Allahr Dal and ABT in the capital Dhaka's Narayanganj district.

On April 29, two alleged JMB members were killed conducting a suicide bombing during a security forces raid in the capital Dhaka. On August 28, RAB arrested four suspected Allahr Dal militants in a raid in Dhaka's Dakshinkhan area. RAB seized explosives and firearms. The government banned Allahr Dal as the ninth Islamist group on November 26, accusing it of extremism and militant actions.

Throughout the year, six trials were held in the lower courts of Faridpur, Dhaka Division, and Chapainawabaganj, Rajshahi Division. The accused were sentenced for being members of JMB, HuT, and ABT respectively. For instance, on April 18, a court in Faridpur convicted two ABT members to 14 years in prison and fined them USD 236 each. kks

BANGLADESH (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: AL vs. BNP, Jel

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between the opposition parties Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel) on the one hand, and the government led by the Awami League (AL) on the other hand. While the student organizations Bangladesh Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal (BJC) and the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) supported BNP and Jel, AL received support from its student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

Throughout the year, clashes between and among the parties left at least 37 people dead and 981 injured. For instance, on August 9, at least 50 people were injured, at least 20 houses vandalized and 100 families fled the area, as two factions of AL attacked each other over establishing supremacy in Jhenaidah. On November 21, at least 130 people were injured when supporters of two AL factions clashed in Noakhali in a dispute over the position of district council secretary following elections held the previous day.

Clashes within student organizations and with the police continued. In March, the first elections of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union since 1991 resulted in clashes between BCL and BJC that left at least 20 students injured. A student of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology was beaten to death, presumably for his involvement with ICS. Consequently, authorities arrested at least 13 BCL members. The incident sparked countrywide protests by thousands of Muslims, especially students, leading to clashes with the police. For instance, during a rally in Bhola District of Barisal Division on October 20, police killed four protesters and injured 50 using rubber bullet shots.

In the course of the year, hundreds of protesters in the capital Dhaka demanded the release of former BNP and opposition leader Khaleda Zia, imprisoned on corruption charges since February 8. On November 26, for example, hundreds of protesters clashed with the police in front of Dhaka's High Court, leaving at least 20 protesters injured.

Furthermore, on August 9, the UN Committee against Torture for the first time published a review concerning the situation in the country, specifically addressing extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances by law enforcement officials. AL denied the allegations put forward by the committee. nsc

BANGLADESH (RMG WORKERS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: RMG workers vs. factory owners, BGMEA, government

Conflict items: other

The violent crisis continued between ready-made garment (RMG) workers and the government and factory owners over working conditions, social security, and pending payments. Violent protests, often including road blockages and demands for the payment of arrears and improved workplace safety, frequently occurred throughout the year.

In January and September, the two large protests took place in the district of Dhaka. On January 6, a week-long protest of about 50,000 RMG workers commenced in the capital Dhaka. The striking RMG workers were protesting factory owners who did not follow a 2018 law that fixed a higher minimum wage for RMG workers. Police used batons, rubber bullets and tear gas against the crowds, while protesters threw bricks. The protests reportedly left about 50 people injured and one person dead. On January 8, police raided a neighborhood close to Dhaka, looking for protesters. Police fired guns and injured several of the residents. Police arrested more than 50 workers, while others reportedly fled their homes to avoid being

arrested. In February, about 5,000 to 11,000 RMG workers were fired by factory officials in response to further protests. On April 3, about 2,000 RMG workers of RMG brand Talisman Apparels took to the streets in Dhaka demanding pending payments and protesting the alleged sexual misconduct of a senior official towards a female colleague. On April 21, RMG workers blockaded a road in Dhaka, calling for the payment of their overdue wages. On May 9, about 1,200 RMG workers protested in front of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) building in Dhaka, demanding arrears and other benefits. On May 13, RMG workers blockaded a road and impaired several vehicles to protest the closure of a factory in Gazipur, Dhaka.

From September 12 to September 15, a number of protests took place in Dhaka after about 70 RMG workers were discharged without prior notice. In response to that, more than 1,000 RMG workers took to the streets, demanding the payment of arrears and protesting the layoffs as well as the denial of maternity leave and health care. Protesters threw bricks at the police, while the police fired rubber bullets and employed batons and tear gas. The protests left 30 to 40 RMG workers and police officers injured. *nsk*

CAMBODIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1997

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

The conflict over national power and ideology continued as a non-violent crisis between the Cambodia National Rescue Movement (CNRM), including newly formed opposition parties on the one hand, and the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) on the other hand. The CNRM succeeded the banned Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP).

In the municipal, provincial, town, and district council elections on May 26, the CPP obtained 11,123 out of 11,565 councillor seats, even though seven parties participated. In late March, nine former members of the CNRP accepted an offer by Prime Minister Hun Sen to seek a royal pardon and return to politics in exchange for an admission of guilt.

In January, Sam Rainsy, former leader of the CNRP, announced his possible return to Cambodia despite facing a prison sentence and death threats. On November 9, the planned date of Rainsy's return, hundreds of security personnel guarded a Cambodian border crossing, while the military secured Phnom Penh's airport. On the same day, Rainsy was prevented from crossing the border to Cambodia from Thailand, allegedly on orders from the Thai and Cambodian governments. Throughout the year, Hun Sen repeatedly threatened members of the opposition. Reportedly, several opposition activists fled to Thailand to avoid surveillance. At least 52 former CNRP members were imprisoned and at least another 40 charged with plotting a coup against the government, including, in absentia, Rainsy. Eight leading members reportedly fled the country after arrest warrants were issued on June 6. On April 15, police arrested former CNRP coordinator Tith Rorn, who died in prison three days later. International hu-

man rights organizations criticized the government for not investigating the unclear circumstances.

On January 14, Hun Sen claimed that if Western countries imposed economic sanctions on Cambodia, the political opposition would be destroyed, and announced that the government would not discuss human rights with the sanctioning parties. The EU and US had begun to change trade deals with Cambodia in the previous year, such as the Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme that ensured Cambodia's preferential market access. On February 11, the EU set a one-year deadline for the government to establish democratic reforms before it would be expelled from the scheme. On December 11, Hun Sen dismissed the EU sanctions. Following a European Commission human rights monitoring starting in August, Kem Sokha was released from house arrest in mid-November, and 74 other imprisoned former CNRP members were released on bail. On December 9, Phnom Penh Municipal Court set Sokha's trial date for treason to 01/15/20. *sov*

CHINA (CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1949

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

The violent crisis over ideology continued between the government and unregistered Christian groups, such as Catholic underground churches and Protestant house churches.

Due to the New Regulation on Religious Affairs passed in 2018, government interference increasingly targeted officially registered churches. For example, on January 10, the government revoked the preaching permits of 57 Three-Self Church pastors from Sanmenxia, Henan province. In August, authorities pressured the management of a Three-Self Church in Liaoning province to suspend one of its preachers, a graduate from a seminary in Hong Kong, for speaking about the Taiwan issue [→ China (Taiwan^o)]. In the same month, a member of the Two-National Christian Council in Xinxiang, Henan province, was dismissed after refusing to include traditional Chinese culture into his sermons.

Throughout the year, government authorities continued to crack down on unregistered house and underground churches, forcibly dissolving those unwilling to register officially. On January 15, approx. 150 members of a special police unit stormed a meeting of the China Gospel Fellowship at a hotel in Nanyang, Henan province, allegedly injuring several attendees. About 150 pastors and other members were arrested and forced to register. On February 24, police arrested approx. 44 members of the Early Rain Covenant Church, closed by authorities in 12/2018, at home services in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Police arrested two more members of the church on March 2. Seven to eight police personnel allegedly violently beat the detainees during the interrogation. The local government of Guangzhou, Guangdong province, implemented a measure offering rewards for reports of illegal religious activities such as house church meetings on March 20. Authorities in Guiyang, Guizhou province, followed suit in June. On March 23, more than 30 police officers raided a bible school class in the capital Beijing, as part

of a continued effort to dissolve the Protestant Shouwang Church, which has repeatedly refused to join the official Three-Self Protestant Association. Before Christmas, the local bureaus of religious affairs in Shandong, Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Henan, and Guangdong provinces warned local unregistered churches not to organize celebrations.

The government continued to demolish churches across the country. Authorities allegedly ordered the demolition of a Catholic shrine in the Fengxiang diocese, Shaanxi province, on April 4. Approx. 200 diocese members staged a protest to prevent around 600 police officers and government officials from enforcing the demolition. On July 26, around 1,000 government personnel, including police officers, gathered to storm Caiduzhen True Jesus Three-Self Church in Zhumadian, Henan province. The police forcibly removed the practitioners present, reportedly injuring two of them, before looting and demolishing the building. Furthermore, authorities continued to remove crosses with particular visibility from church buildings, for instance on April 21 in Linyi, Shandong province and on May 6 in the Handan diocese, Hebei province. csu

CHINA (HONG KONG)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: pro-democracy groups, pro-independence groups vs. PRC government, HKSAR government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology

The non-violent crisis over autonomy and the orientation of the political system escalated to a violent crisis between various Hong Kong (HK) pro-democracy and pro-independence groups, such as Demosistō 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 hand. According to CNN, at least 1,000 protests took place between June 9 and December. During the clashes between protesters and police, two people died, at least 2,600 people were injured and around 6,105 people were arrested.

Throughout the year, the conflict was dominated by the HKSAR government's proposal of a disputed amendment to the city's Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, which would enable, among others, the extradition of Chinese fugitives back to the mainland. Critics claimed the bill could also be used as a pretext to extradite HK citizens to the mainland, for politically motivated reasons. While various established activist groups continued to be involved, this year's large scale protest movement was driven by the Hong Kong youth, taking on a more decentralised and spontaneous form.

Between 5,200 and 12,000 pro-democratic protesters demonstrated against the extradition bill in the city center on March 31. When chief executive (CE) Carrie Lam introduced the draft bill at the Legislative Council of Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region (LegCo) three days later, 22 pro-democratic legislators left the plenary session in protest. On May 26 and June 4, in total more than 100,000 people gathered at different locations across the city in commemoration of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. Between

240,000 and 1,000,000 protested against the extradition bill on June 9. In response to the bill's second reading on June 12, protests intensified. The police resorted to rubber bullets and tear gas, resulting in about 72 injured, including 21 police officers.

On July 9, CE Lam officially announced that the controversial extradition bill 'was dead'. As masked protesters vandalized the PRC's liaison office in HK by throwing eggs on July 21, HK riot police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets. Despite these concessions, protesters' demands broadened. Among others, demonstrators started calling for political reforms and tackling the issue of police brutality. On the same day, unidentified assailants attacked supposed pro-democracy protesters in the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) station Yuen Long, injuring 45. HK police arrested six aggressors, suspecting them to be members of organized crime. Pro-democracy activists accused the Chinese government of being involved in the attack.

On August 5, pro-democratic protesters occupied several key MTR stations, which disrupted MTR services. On August 25, a large-scale protest turned violent, as some protesters built barricades and threw petrol bombs and bricks at the police, injuring 21 officers. In response, the police used tear gas, water cannons (for the first time) and fired a live bullet into the air. Despite a protest ban, demonstrations continued with similar intensity throughout September.

On October 1, for the first time since the start of the protests against the extradition bill, police officers shot and killed a protester with live ammunition. CE Lam enacted the Emergency Regulations Ordinance act granting the HKSAR government sweeping executive powers and enabling the implementation of a mask ban on October 4. In response, protests erupted with thousands of protesters wearing face masks. On October 23, HK Security Minister, John Lee, announced the formal withdrawal of the extradition bill. Nevertheless, protests continued violently.

On November 8, a student protester died after falling from the edge of a car park four days earlier, as riot police fired tear gas at the building. Tensions and protests further escalated as police officers shot and critically injured a protester on the same day. On November 13, a bystander reportedly died after being hit by a brick to the head in clashes between rivaling groups of protesters. On November 16, soldiers from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) helped pro-Beijing supporters to clean the streets outside of the soldiers' barracks, raising widespread concerns of Chinese interference. Moreover, in mid-November, as students occupied the campuses of HK's Chinese University and Polytechnic University, violence between student protesters and police forces further escalated. As security forces sought to clear the universities, protesters responded with petrol bombs, improvised catapults as well as bows and arrows.

On November 24, in a high-turnout district election, pro-democratic parties won a majority in all 18 Districts Councils. CE Lam responded to the results by acknowledging her government's "deficiencies", but continued to refuse the demands of the pro-democracy movement. Following the elections, protests continued in December both violently and non-violently. For instance, on December 8, between 183,000 and 800,000 pro-democratic protesters staged a non-violent rally at Victoria Park. On the same day, violent

clashes erupted at the HK High Court and Court of Final Appeals. kol

CHINA (HUI)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1949

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

The violent crisis over ideology between the Hui minority and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. While clashes between the Han Chinese-dominated government and the predominantly Muslim Hui minority increased as part of a broader government crackdown on religious activities, inter-ethnic tensions continued to decrease. These had previously marked the conflict.

In line with the New Regulation on Religious Affairs passed in 2018, the government continued to pursue the ‘Sinicization’ of Islamic culture. On January 5, representatives of local Islamic associations from eight provinces discussed a five-year plan for the ‘Sinicization’ of Islam, proposed by the government-backed China Islamic Association. This plan, primarily targeting the Hui and other Muslim minorities outside Xinjiang, proposed measures with the aim of increasing Islam’s compatibility with Chinese socialism, such as vocational training on core values of Chinese socialism.

Government officials also prohibited the public use of Arabic script in the capital Beijing and in other provinces. For instance, in July, authorities in Guangzhou and Qingyuan, Guangdong province, directed Islamic businesses to remove the word ‘halal’ or other Islamic symbols. Moreover, authorities in the Gansu and Ningxia provinces banned the traditional Islamic call to prayer, while in Henan province, the Bureau of Religious Affairs called on imams to submit their sermons to government reviews. The Henan provincial government also issued a general investigation of all imams serving in mosques, ordering those from other provinces to be removed.

Furthermore, the government targeted religious buildings. Local officials ordered the partial demolition of a mosque in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province, on April 11, and arrested several residents who had recorded the demolition. Provincial governments in the Henan and Ningxia provinces carried out similar demolitions and removals of domes and minarets, such as in Suiping and Xiping county, Henan province, in July. In November, the local authorities of Jining, Shandong province and Xilinhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, ordered the removal of Islamic symbols and the demolition of the domes of two mosques. csu

CHINA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1978

Conflict parties: environmentalists, factory workers, peasants, civilians vs. government
 Conflict items: resources, other

The violent crisis over social and economic resources continued between socioeconomic protesters, such as workers, environmentalists and other social groups on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

People across China engaged in protests primarily against pollution and for better working conditions, as well as the payment of outstanding pensions and wages. While strikes remained most common in the manufacturing and construction sectors, taxi drivers, teachers, and food delivery workers also turned out repeatedly in locations across China. Moreover, the jailing of labor activists remained an issue throughout the year, with protesters frequently demanding their release. Nevertheless, the reported number of strikes fell from 2935 in 2018 to 1385 incidents in 2019.

The most noteworthy protests were related to environmental issues. In early July, due to concerns around pollution, an estimated 10,000 residents of Wuhan, Hubei province, staged mass protests against construction plans for a new waste incineration plant in a neighboring city. After several days of protesting, on July 4, the local government dispatched around 1,000 riot police forces to disperse the crowd. 20 were arrested and a large number injured. On November 28, several hundred residents of Wenlou, Guangdong province, protested against plans for a large crematorium in an area that officials had previously designated an ecological park. Riot police dispersed the crowd using tear gas and detained about 50 protesters.

On several occasions, workers protested against the relocation of factories and the lack of adequate compensation for laid-off workers. For instance, on January 6, workers staged a strike in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. The strike continued for two days, until the government employed a large number of police officers to crack down on the strike, leaving many workers injured.

In February, hundreds of food delivery workers in the provinces of Shandong, Guangdong, and Zhejiang staged protests against arbitrary pay rate reductions in at least five cities. Similar strikes continued to occur at a smaller scale throughout the year.

On April 3, between 100 and 1,000 taxi drivers, who demanded operating and ownership rights, went on strike, blocking several streets in Xinye, Henan province. Competition caused by online ride apps also resulted in hundreds of taxi drivers protesting in Shuozhou, Shanxi province, in November.

As in the previous year, former teachers repeatedly staged protests across the country. In January, hundreds of retired community teachers organized protests, demanding pension payments in Hunan and Jiangsu provinces. In both instances, police forces disrupted the protests, dispersing the crowd and arresting several protesters. In July, hundreds of workers de-

manded the payment of outstanding wages and social insurance benefits in Taizhou, Jiangsu province. Police forces intervened, dispersing the protesters and arresting several participants.

The government also continued to target outspoken labour activists. For instance, on December 17, authorities arrested the prominent activist Chen Weixiang in Guangzhou. Chen had co-founded the social media platform Heart Sanitation in the previous year to facilitate the organization of sanitation workers. [hiik](#)

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 the orientation of the political system continued between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC).

After three former diplomatic allies officially recognized the PRC in 2018, the Taiwanese government increased its efforts to strengthen relations with its remaining allies this year. Between March 21 and March 28, ROC President Tsai Ing-wen visited Palau, Nauru, and the Marshall Islands to bolster diplomatic relations. Another visit to Honolulu, US, was criticized by the PRC's Foreign Ministry as an attempt to undermine Washington's compliance with the One-China Principle. Despite Taiwan's sustained efforts, however, the governments of the Solomon Islands and Kiribati broke off ties with the Taiwanese government in September. On the other hand, the Taiwanese government managed to improve its relations with Japan. After three years of exclusion from the World Health Assembly due to PRC pressure, the Foreign Ministry of Japan backed Taiwan's first renewed but unsuccessful bid for participation on May 8. While tensions rose between the US and the PRC, Taiwanese-US cooperation tightened throughout the year [→ China – USA]. On April 15, the US State Department approved the sale of a USD 500 million training program in Arizona for Taiwanese F-16 pilots and maintenance crews. On July 8, the US State Department further approved the sale of 108 tanks and 250 Stinger missiles. In response, on July 12, the PRC government announced sanctions on the US arms companies involved. Lastly, the PRC also condemned the approved sale of 66 US F-16 fighter jets on August 21, announcing further sanctions. This constituted the first US sale of fighter jets to Taiwan since 1992.

In addition, both the PRC and the US continued to hold military drills in the vicinity of Taiwan. Most notably, on February 25, a US destroyer and ammunition ship sailed through the Taiwan Strait. On April 15, an unidentified number of PRC attack and reconnaissance aircrafts conducted a military drill over the Bashi Channel. Moreover, on December 26, a Chinese aircraft carrier battle group crossed the Taiwan Strait.

Finally, in an attempt to exert pressure in relation to the upcoming Taiwanese elections, the PRC halted individual tourism permits for Taiwan from August 1 onwards. Moreover, in an effort to curb potential Chinese influence on Taiwan's presidential elections, the Taiwanese government passed the

Anti-Infiltration Act on December 31. [lja](#)

CHINA (TIBET)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1950

Conflict parties: Tibetans, CTA, TYC vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over autonomy, ideology and resources de-escalated to a non-violent crisis between Tibetans, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. The CTA and TYC continued to be funded by the US Congress.

The government continued to restrict Tibetans' right to express their cultural and religious identity. In January, China's oldest university for Tibetans and other ethnic minority students, Xizang Minzu University in Xianyang, Shaanxi province, ceased to provide lectures in Tibetan. Moreover, from May to October, the government evicted about 5,000 to 6,000 monks, nuns and other practitioners from the Yachen Gar Buddhist Center, Sichuan Province, one of the Tibetan religious centres, and demolished their accommodation. In the run-up to the People's Republic of China's National Day, authorities further tightened restrictions on movement and political activities in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Throughout the year, Tibetans continued to call for greater political and religious autonomy. On April 29, local authorities arrested four Tibetans who called for the release of the Panchen Lama in Kardze (Ganzi), Sichuan. Around July 6, police forces conducted a search operation in Palyul (Baiyu) and Kardze (Ganzi), Sichuan, beating and detaining several Tibetans for possession of images of the Dalai Lama and publicly celebrating his birthday. On November 7, police forces arrested four Tibetan monks, who had distributed leaflets, calling for Tibet's independence, in Sershul (Sêrxü), Sichuan. Another Tibetan monk staged a self-immolation in Ngaba (Aba), Sichuan on November 28.

Furthermore, Tibetans continued to seek asylum in neighboring countries. For instance, on September 5, the Nepali police deported six Tibetan asylum seekers back to China.

Shortly ahead of President Xi Jinping's visit to India on October 11 and 12, the Indian government arrested 15 Tibetans in exile, including Gonpo Dhundup, the head of the TYC, protesting against the visit in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. [fyn](#)

CHINA (UYGHURS / XINJIANG)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: Uyghurs, TIP/ETIM, WUC vs. government
 Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The non-violent crisis over secession and ideology continued. between the Uyghur minority, the Turkistan Islamic Party

(TIP) / East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) on the one hand, and the People's Republic of China (PRC), on the other hand

Chinese authorities expanded a comprehensive policing, surveillance and incarceration program in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), which further constrained civil liberties of ethnic Uyghurs, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs. Using advanced surveillance technologies and a tight network of police stations and checkpoints, the government controlled the flow of people and information in the region, and retained rapid response capability. Suspects were identified by machine learning algorithms, drawing on real-time data from compulsory spy apps for smartphones, GPS tracking devices for vehicles, and facial recognition systems fed by closed-circuit cameras. Police officers were equipped with a mobile application, granting them access to extensive biometric information and private data on individuals, such as unusual levels of electricity usage. This database was supplemented by mandatory health check-ups. In addition, the Chinese border police installed surveillance applications on the mobile devices of those entering the XUAR from the neighboring country of Kyrgyzstan. The app extracts emails, texts, and contacts. Considering the government's policy of repression, no organized Uyghur activity was observed on PRC territory. While Chinese authorities still identified ETIM as a major threat to stability in the region, international observers cast doubts on the organization's existence. Nevertheless, al-Qaeda-affiliated TIP militants still appeared to be active in Syria [→ Syria (opposition)].

A key target of these policies was the crackdown on alleged "backward" and "extremist" beliefs and practices. Authorities enforced restrictions on language, worship, Islamic diets and clothing, as well as traditional funeral rites. In line with a nationwide policy of religious and cultural repression, Chinese authorities have forced Uyghurs to remove religious ornaments from their homes in several XUAR districts, such as Ghulja/Yining in Ili Kazal Autonomous Prefecture. Furthermore, according to CNN, satellite images have shown that over 100 Uyghur graveyards have been demolished, most of which, authorities stated, have been "relocated" during the last two years. Han Chinese "rapporteurs" were assigned to Uyghur families to document their familiarity with Chinese culture and language and to signal alleged "problematic" and "extremist" cases. However, in an attempt to address minority grievances, university entrance exam rules were adapted, halving the number of required points for students with ethnic minority family backgrounds.

Suspected individuals were detained in so-called "re-education camps". The number of arrests of ethnic Uyghurs remained unchanged to 2018, with scholars and NGOs estimating that at least one million are currently interned, including leading Uyghur intellectuals and officials. Although the central government stated in July that over 90 percent of the camps' alleged "students" had returned to society, evidence of mass releases is missing. Moreover, the BBC reported on the alleged existence of state-run boarding schools for Uyghur children whose parents are detained in a internment camp.

According to several NGOs, the reason for detention could be minimal, as even small signs of religiosity were interpreted as early stages of religious extremism. Several reports stated

that growing a long beard, owning a compass and refusing to consume alcohol and pork publicly were all considered to be symptoms of extremist tendencies and could lead to detention. Inside these camps, any manifestations of religious affiliation were forbidden, as was speaking the Uyghur language. Former detainees reported that they underwent physical and psychological torture, as well as indoctrination. Additionally, there were reports alleging the deaths of detainees due to mistreatment and improper access to medical facilities in the camps. For instance, prominent Uyghur writer Nurmuhemmet Tohti allegedly died in an internment camp in May, after being deprived of proper treatment for his diseases. Moreover, a person supposedly died after an interrogation by officials in early June.

Chinese authorities also pressured several Uyghur activists abroad not to criticize the PRC's policies in XUAR by threatening to detain remaining family members in XUAR. International media have reported similar cases throughout Europe, such as in Germany, the Netherlands and France.

Western governments have stayed somewhat attentive towards the issue. In September, the US Senate passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, calling on US government bodies to report on the treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang [→ China – USA]. Moreover, the topic was discussed at the UN. In October, 23 members backed a British statement condemning the PRC's policy of mass detention and surveillance of minorities in XUAR. This statement was countered by a Belarus initiative, signed by 54 other states, commending China's alleged "remarkable achievements in the field of human rights". Towards the end of the year, the topic revived in western media. Two sizeable leaks of internal documents published by the New York Times and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists shed further light on the PRC's management of the internment camps. The potential use of forced labor in XUAR was discussed as well, resulting in US sanctions against members of the Chinese government. In October, the European Parliament awarded its 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Ilham Tohti, a jailed Uyghur scholar. hiik

CHINA – INDIA

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: India vs. PRC

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The dispute over territory and international power continued between China and India.

After India's decision on August 5 to revoke a constitutional provision granting Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir a considerable degree of autonomy, the Kashmir conflict continued to mark the dispute between China and India [→ India (Kashmir)]. On August 6, the PRC criticized the Indian government for violating Chinese territorial sovereignty in the PRC-controlled Aksai Chin area, which India claims as part of the now union territory of Ladakh.

Furthermore, on March 13, the Chinese government vetoed a UN Security Council attempt to blacklist Masood Azhar,

founder of the Islamist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed, which India held responsible for attacks on Indian paramilitary forces in Pulwama, Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir on February 14 [→ India (Kashmir)]. However, the PRC ultimately consented to Azhar's blacklisting in early May. On the other hand, China and India experienced an economic rapprochement. In the context of the growing trade dispute between China and the US [→ China – USA], Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi agreed to decrease India's trade deficit with China on October 12 in Mamallapuram, India. Nevertheless, India chose to withdraw from the Chinese-endorsed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on November 1. lja

CHINA – USA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: PRC vs. USA

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis over international power and ideology continued between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States of America (US). Economic tensions remained the primary issue of contention.

While negotiations from January to April resulted in mutual de-escalating measures, in May trade tensions flared up again. On May 10, the US government raised tariffs on USD 200 billion of Chinese imports from 10 to 25 percent, while the PRC retaliated by raising tariffs on USD 60 billion of US imports from 10 to 25 percent. Moreover, on May 16, the US government issued an executive order barring US companies from using the telecom equipment of specific companies, which allegedly posed a threat to national security. The measure was widely considered to target Huawei, primarily. After the Osaka G20 summit from June 28 to 29, US President Donald Trump and PRC President Xi Jinping, agreed to reopen negotiations, which had broken down on May 16. On August 1, Trump threatened to apply additional tariffs on Chinese goods leading the PRC's Commerce Ministry to threaten "necessary counter measures". On August 6, the US Treasury labelled the PRC as a currency manipulator after the Chinese Yuan fell below the key 7-per-dollar level for the first time in a decade. From mid-September onwards, tensions eased again, resulting in multiple rounds of mutual tariff exemptions and negotiations. On December 13, the PRC and the US governments agreed on the parameters of a broader trade agreement, whose details have yet to be outlined. On December 31, Trump announced that a "Phase One" of said trade agreement was to be signed on 01/15/20 and further negotiations would take place on "Phase Two" in Beijing.

Human rights were another point of dispute. On July 18, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo criticized the PRC's treatment of the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, speaking of the 'stain of the century' [→ China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)]. On September 11, the US Senate passed a bill urging the White House to counter China's repressive policies in Xinjiang. On October 7 and 8, the US government announced a series of sanctions and travel restrictions for several Chinese organizations and officials. Regarding Hong Kong, in August, the Trump administra-

tion began to link prospects of a future trade deal to a peaceful resolution of the protests in Hong Kong [→ China (Hong Kong)]. In November, both chambers of Congress passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, a bill linking the US' preferential trading relationship with Hong Kong to the preservation of its political status. Despite threats from the PRC's Foreign Office, Trump signed the act into law on November 27, including a second act, prohibiting US firms from selling US-made ammunition to Hong Kong city authorities. Consequently, on December 2, the PRC denied US military ships access to the port of Hong Kong and sanctioned several US non-government organizations.

The PRC's policies regarding the South China Sea (SCS) also remained an issue. According to The Diplomat, the US conducted at least eight "Freedom of Navigation" operations in the SCS. Additionally, two American B52-bombers overflew the SCS twice in March [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)].

Throughout the year, the US government also approved four arms sales to Taiwan worth more than USD 10.7 billion. Both countries conducted missile tests in the area [→ China (Taiwan°)]. jkl

CHINA – VIETNAM ET AL. (SOUTH CHINA SEA)

Intensity: 3 | 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 non-violent crisis in the South China Sea (SCS) over territory, international power, and resources escalated to a violent crisis between Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Control over the SCS's extensive fossil fuel reserves remained a major issue. Chinese vessels were repeatedly spotted in oil-rich waters. From May 10 to May 25, a Chinese coast guard vessel patrolled near Luconia Breakers at the southern end of the Spratly Islands, performing provocative maneuvers, according to the Malaysian Navy. The same Chinese vessel allegedly threatened two Vietnamese vessels servicing a Japanese oil rig off the southern coast of Vietnam on July 2. Between July and August, a Chinese geological survey vessel operated in waters claimed by Vietnam near the Spratly Islands and close to Vietnam's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Moreover, on September 3, a Chinese crane vessel was spotted inside Vietnam's EEZ.

Furthermore, control over the SCS's fishing grounds led to repeated clashes between neighboring states. On February 24 and April 27, Indonesia's Navy confronted Vietnamese fishing vessels for alleged illegal fishing north of the Natuna Islands, arresting several Vietnamese fishermen on both occasions. In the first case, Indonesian navy personnel allegedly opened fire on intervening Vietnamese security forces. In the latter, a Vietnamese surveillance ship allegedly rammed an Indonesian coast guard ship in an attempt to prevent the seizure of a

Vietnamese fishing vessel. The Vietnamese fishing vessel involved sank for unknown reasons. On March 6, a Chinese vessel chased a Vietnamese fishing vessel, operating near Discovery Reef in the Paracel Islands. Chinese law enforcement fired water cannons at the Vietnamese vessel, which eventually crashed and sank. Two Vietnamese surveillance vessels fired water cannons at several Chinese fishing vessels operating in the Gulf of Tonkin near Bach Long Vy Island on April 7. A private Chinese vessel rammed and sank a Philippine fishing vessel on June 9. On June 13, Philippine fishermen accused unspecified Chinese vessels of regularly firing warning shots in contested waters. Furthermore, on September 30, an unspecified Chinese 'warship' allegedly harassed a Filipino crewed vessel near Scarborough Shoal.

Tensions also rose due to Chinese military behavior in the SCS. Both the PRC and the US conducted several naval operations in the SCS throughout the year [→ China – USA]. The PRC's People's Liberation Army (PLA) held a military drill from the end of June until July 3 near Macclesfield Bank and Spratly Bank. On July 22, the PLA allegedly tested the sea warfare capabilities of its new Su-35 fighter jets over the SCS. Moreover, on November 5, the Philippine military accused the PRC of having repeatedly fired warning flares at Philippine aircraft surveilling contested islands in the West Philippine Sea throughout the year. jkl

upper caste members assaulted four Adivasi people from the same village for allegedly carving a dead ox. One of the injured Adivasis later died in hospital. Two of the perpetrators were arrested but not charged under the Scheduled Caste and Tribes Act while two Adivasis were charged under the Bovine Animal Prohibition of Slaughter Act.

Upper caste members also continued to target Dalits for asserting their rights. For instance, on April 12, in Santhebenur town, Karnataka state, a group of at least 150 members of the upper castes entered the Dalit community and attacked its members using sticks, stones, and bicycle chains, leaving eight Dalits injured. The attack was allegedly in retaliation for a Dalit reporting an attack by eight upper caste men to the police earlier the same day. He had been assaulted for swimming in the Bhadra river, which the upper castes in the area claim Dalits do not have the right to enter. On September 25, in Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh state, two upper caste members killed two Dalits for defecating in public. stv

INDIA (DALITS / ADIVASIS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1950

Conflict parties: Dalits (Scheduled Castes), Adivasis (Schedules Tribes) vs. Upper caste members

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The violent crisis over the Hindu caste system and subnational predominance continued between Dalits and Adivasis, recognized by the government as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the one hand, and upper caste members on the other hand.

Throughout the year, incidents of caste violence occurred in all Indian states, with members of the upper caste in rural areas adhering to stricter practices of untouchability (the ostracization of a minority group by way of social segregation). Reportedly, Gujarat state had the highest rate of caste violence. Typical characteristics of caste violence included honor killings, retaliation to rights assertion, and structural violence such as the prohibition of access to public spaces and services.

Upper caste members continued to oppress Adivasi tribal people, especially their traditional cultural practices. On September 11, the Wildlife Trust of India withdrew its Supreme Court vindication against Adivasi rights to traditional claims to land under the 2006 Forest Rights Act. The original vindication had been filed in February 2015. A ruling in favor of the vindicator would have resulted in the mass displacement of Adivasi tribal families.

On April 10, in Dumri village, Jharkhand state, at least seven

INDIA (GJM ET AL. / WEST BENGAL)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1907

Conflict parties: GJM, GNLF vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The dispute over autonomy continued between different Gorkha groups of Nepalese origin and the government of West Bengal in the Darjeeling district.

After the Jammu and Kashmir state was reorganized into two Union Territories under direct rule of the central government [→ India (Kashmir)], the Bimal Gurung-led faction of Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) pursued Union Territory status with a separate legislature for Darjeeling. The Binay Tamang-led GJM faction, however, opposed the demand.

In the Lok Sabha general elections from April 11 to May 19, Raju Bista, as a member of the Gorkha community, won the Darjeeling seat in the Indian parliament. Subsequently, on November 18, Bista raised the demand for an autonomous status for Gorkhaland as a "Matter of Urgent Public Importance" in the Indian parliament.

Another contentious issue was the prospected implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Fearing not to be recognized as citizens, Gorkhas continued to call for a "Scheduled Tribe" and "Original inhabitants" status. Several rallies and protests related to this issue were reported in December. At the same time, on December 10, Binay Tamang called for Inner-Line Permit (ILP) status of the Darjeeling district to prevent the settlement of non-Gorkhas in the area, since the CAA does not apply to ILP regulated areas [→ India (Manipur)]. jno

INDIA (HINDUS – CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: Hindus, BD, BJP, RSS, VHP, Hindu Munani vs. Christians

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between various Hindu groups, such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu Munani, and Christians.

Conversion remained a contested issue. In August, for instance, Himachal Pradesh joined other states in passing an anti-conversion law, which obliges anyone seeking to convert to give one month's prior notice to the district magistrate.

Various Hindu militant groups targeted Christians on several occasions throughout the year, often during religious gatherings. On February 7, approx. 25 Bajrang Dal militants assaulted a group of Christians in Chapar village, Uttar Pradesh state, at a prayer meeting, leaving at least six injured. On March 19, Hindu radicals interrupted a prayer meeting and injured four Christians in Hosur, Tamil Nadu state. One day later, 20 Hindu radicals attacked Christians attending a prayer meeting in Panch Gachia village, West Bengal state. The anti-Christian assault left eleven attendees injured, one of them severely. Around 200 Hindu nationalists from the RSS group raided a Catholic school in Chinnasalem, Tamil Nadu, and assaulted the nuns teaching there on March 26. On April 13, 25 Hindu radicals killed one and injured three Christians for skinning an ox in Jhurmu, Gumla district, Jharkhand state. About one month later, on May 3, six men belonging to the Hindu nationalist group Hindu Munani assaulted Christians during a prayer meeting, injuring two in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. On July 28, members of the Bajrang Dal disrupted a prayer meeting and beat up the pastor in Kanshiram Colony, Uttar Pradesh.

Violence continued into September. More than 500 armed Hindus attacked a Jesuit school in Mundli, Jharkhand, on September 3, leaving two students injured. On September 15, 20 Hindu radicals attacked a prayer service in Lakhimpur Khere district, Anushkabad village, Uttar Pradesh, and hit two pastors, who were then arrested and charged with blasphemy. Hindu nationalists killed one and injured two Christians on September 22 in Khunti district, Jharkhand, for slaughtering cows and selling beef. On November 12, several RSS members attacked the family of a pastor in Parihara village, Garhwa district, Jharkhand. 20 Hindu radicals, affiliated with the governing Bharatiya Janata Party, attacked an inauguration ceremony for a Christian community hall in Uttar Shibrampur village, West Bengal, on December 29, leaving four people injured. mki

INDIA (HINDUS – MUSLIMS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: Hindus, BJP, RSS, VHP, BD vs. Muslims, JIH, PFI

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between Hindus and Muslims. Throughout the year, several inter-communal clashes left fifteen people injured, two of them police officers.

Cow vigilantism constituted a major conflict line in the dynamic between the two communities, in which members of the Hindu community threatened or assaulted Muslim cattle owners or sellers. For instance, on April 7, several members of the Hindu community injured a Muslim in Chariali, Biswanath District, Assam State, for allegedly selling beef. On April 13, members of Hindu and Muslim communities clashed in the Soorsagar area, Jodhpur, Rajasthan state, after members of the Muslim community had pelted stones at a Hindu procession that had entered the area of a Muslim community. Protesters set vehicles on fire and threw stones at houses, leaving two police officers injured. Following the assassination of Kamlesh Tiwari, president of the Hindu Samaj Party, members of the Hindu community staged protests in Lucknow and Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh state, on October 19, accusing the Muslim community of the killing. The protesters shut down several markets in Lucknow.

Apart from inter-communal clashes, the conflict between the Hindu and Muslim communities also manifested itself in the explicit rhetoric used by politicians. On February 2, Mohan Bhagwat, chief of the right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), gave a speech at an event organized by the Hindu political movement Vishva Hindu Parishad, labelling Muslims as "jihadis" and warning against their "nefarious designs". On April 15, the Election Commission of India issued a 72-hour campaigning ban against the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh for delivering provocative statements against the Muslim community, such as labeling Muslims as "terrorists" in a public speech. On July 22, a Samajwadi Party politician asked the Muslim community of Kairana, Uttar Pradesh, to boycott shops belonging to supporters of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), thus causing a political controversy with the leaders of the BJP.

Two main legislative rulings regarding the Muslim and Hindu communities took place. On July 30, the Indian Parliament declared the Triple Talaq, a form of Islamic divorce practiced in India, illegal. Furthermore, on November 9, the Supreme Court of India announced its verdict in the long-time Ayodhya dispute over the control of a contested religious site in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, ruling that the site should be given to Hindus. Security forces were employed to inhibit both celebrations in favor and protests against the verdict as well as possible violent clashes. The Babri Mosque, built at the contested site in the 16th century, had been torn down by Hindu nationalists in 1992, sparking communal riots that left at least 2,000 people dead. The Supreme Court now ruled that the

mosque had not been built on “vacant land” and belonged to Hindus, who consider it the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram. asa

INDIA (INTER-ETHNIC RIVALRY / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Assamese, AASU, ULFA-I vs. Bangladeshi immigrants, AAMSU vs. Adivasis, AASAA et al. vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, other

The violent conflict over subnational predominance and the issue of Bangladeshi immigration in Assam State continued between various ethnic groups, notably those identifying as indigenous versus perceived outsiders, and the government. Incidents of inter-ethnic violence increased as the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was finally published on August 31, and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) proposed in 2016 was passed on schedule. The NRC required citizens to provide exhaustive identification documents as proof of their citizenship, which led to the exclusion of 1.9 million people of mostly Bengali origin. The CAA subsequently aimed to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, living in India for at least six years. Several ethnic groups felt threatened by the CAA as it sought to provide citizen rights to non-indigenous people.

Throughout the year, protests against the NRC and CAA continued. In January, the All Assam Student Union (AASU) and indigenous groups repeatedly called for protests and economic blockades, which were further fueled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s statement on January 4 that the CAA was only correcting past mistakes. On September 20, the All Koch Rajbongshi Students’ Union (AKRSU) staged a 12-hour rally against the NRC, demanding its revision. On November 21, thousands of members of the AASU and 30 other indigenous groups carried out torchlight processions against the CAA across the state.

Protests intensified with the passing of the CAA in parliament on December 11, as well as with the ending of the revision period of the NRC later that month. On December 11, protesters torched shops in Hijuguri locality, Tinsukia town, eponymous district. One civilian died in one of the fires, while police forces used batons and tear gas against protesters, killing at least four. Assamese police detained two AASU leaders and over 1,000 protesters in Assam’s capital Guwahati during protests on December 16.

Moreover, ethnically affiliated armed groups such as United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) continued to clash with Assamese police who alleged ULFA-I’s involvement in the escalation of the December protests [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. On December 9, ULFA-I chairman Paresh Baruah warned the police not to attack students protesting against the CAA.

Various groups continued to demand scheduled tribe (ST) status, a political category granting priority treatment by the government, while communities that had already obtained

the status opposed any changes. On January 9, Modi introduced the ST Order Bill in the upper house of parliament with the goal of expanding the list of STs in Assam. This fueled disagreements between the tribal groups involved and existing ST communities, leading to further protests. For instance, on January 11, a conglomerate of tribal organisations called for a 12-hour statewide strike to protest the decision to grant ST status to six communities, namely Chutia, Motok, Moran, Koch-Rajbongshi, Tai-Ahom and Tea Tribes/Adivasis. The protesters blocked a national highway and several roads in Bodoland Territorial Area District with tree trunks and burning tires. hiik

INDIA (KASHMIR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: HM, LeT, JeM, TuM, HuM, IS, APHC, local protesters vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over secession and autonomy in Indian-administered 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.

At least 138 alleged HM, LeT and JeM militants and 65 security personnel were killed in violent encounters over the course of the year. Moreover, at least 19 civilians were killed and several hundred injured, mostly in clashes with security personnel or grenade attacks by militants. For instance, two LeT militants, five security forces and one civilian were killed during a 56-hour operation between March 1 and March 3, in Babagund area, Kupwara district. On May 3, police killed three HM militants in Shopian district and injured around 20 protesters in ensuing clashes.

On February 14, a JeM attacker drove a car loaded with explosives into a convoy transporting more than 2,500 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel at Lethpora, Pulwama district on the National Highway 44, killing at least 41 and injuring at least 35 in the most fatal attack in the history of the state. In response, on February 26, the Indian government conducted an airstrike and allegedly destroyed a militant training camp near Balakot area in Pakistan. The following day, the Pakistani government retaliated and shot down an Indian warplane, taking the pilot prisoner. On March 1, the pilot was returned to India [→ India – Pakistan].

On August 5, the government revoked Article 370 of the Constitution of India, which granted a special autonomous status to J&K. At the same time, a Reorganization Bill divided J&K into two Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, putting them under direct control of the central government. Following the announcement by the government, protesters clashed with security forces on several occasions, leaving dozens of people injured. The Pakistani government condemned the Indian government’s decision and stated it would consider all possible options to counter it [→ India – Pakistan].

Accompanying the revocation of Article 370, the government deployed tens of thousands of additional security personnel to J&K and cut off cable TV, landlines, mobile phone networks and the internet. By September 12, more than 3,800 Kashmiri politicians, activists and protesters were arrested. Landline services were reactivated in most of the affected region by August 25. As of October 14, mobile phone services were fully restored.

On October 29, a day before the unofficial visit of a delegation of 23 European Union MPs to J&K, alleged militants injured 20 civilians in a grenade attack at a hotel in Sopore, Baramulla district. On the same day, alleged militants abducted and shot and killed six Bengali laborers in Katrusa area, Kulgam district. During a protest on October 29 in Srinagar, eponymous district, security forces used tear gas on the crowd, injuring at least eight civilians. nrö

INDIA (MAFIA RAJ)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: sand mafia, timber mafia vs. government, civil society actors

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources, other

The violent crisis over natural resources, the protection of the environment and subnational predominance in various states continued between the sand and timber mafia on one hand, and the government and civil society actors on the other hand.

Over the course of the year, members of the sand and timber mafia conducted a series of attacks on government officials. On May 15, sand mafia members injured two Village Revenue Officers in Naira village, Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh state. One month later, on June 17, approx. 30 members of the sand mafia attacked and injured two forest officers in Mohali district near Chandigarh, Punjab state. On June 22, in response to an attempt by the forest guard to prevent illegal tree logging in Kumaon, Uttarakhand state, members of the timber mafia shot and killed one forest guard and injured another. A shootout on August 30 between members of the sand mafia and police officers in Dholpur, Rajasthan state, left two sand mafia members dead, five injured, and two police officers wounded. On October 22, a member of the sand mafia attacked and wounded seven police officers and killed one civilian in Banka district, Bihar state.

Authorities conducted raids and arrested members of the sand mafia and its supporters. For instance, the Central Bureau of Investigation conducted raids related to illegal sand mining on January 5 and October 1 in several locations in the Uttar Pradesh state and in Delhi, and in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, respectively. On March 10, police forces arrested a District Magistrate in Shamli district, Uttar Pradesh, for aiding the sand mafia. On October 17, a special operations team arrested 15 people involved in illegal sand extraction, also seizing illicitly mined sand in Kandukur, Andhra Pradesh. On December 23, police arrested 14 sand mafia members and seized 37 vehicles in Udaipur, Rajasthan, and surrounding ar-

eas.

Furthermore, members of the sand mafia targeted journalists and individuals opposing the illegal extraction of resources. On May 30, sand mafia members injured a journalist in Bala-sore district, Odisha state, for reporting on illegal mining. On June 2, sand miners killed a person and injured four others in Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu state, for opposing illegal sand mining in the area. On September 28, in Bhind district, Madhya Pradesh state, three sand mafia members allegedly attacked a journalist, investigating alleged affiliations between at least one member of the Indian National Congress (INC) and the sand mafia.

This year also saw clashes between sand mafias. On January 1 in Chhota Udepur, Gujarat state, a mafia member was shot and killed in a dispute over mining areas between two sand mafias. On November 3, in Salodi, Rajasthan, one sand mafia member was killed and another injured when two sand mafia groups clashed over a mining lease. mki

INDIA (MANIPUR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: KRA, KYKL, UNLF, KCP, PREPAK, PLA, KNF vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy and secession of Manipur state continued between both militant and activist groups, mainly of Meitei and Kuki ethnicity on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. Militants were primarily organized in the Kuki National Front (KNF), Kuki National Organisation (KNO), People's Liberation Army (PLA), United National Liberation Front (UNLF), and United People's Front (UPF). Overall, twelve people were killed and 49 injured in violent protests and in attacks by militants.

The 2011 census had shown that around 53 percent of the population in Manipur is of Meitei ethnicity, 24 percent are Naga tribes and around 16 percent are of Kuki and Zomi origin. The dynamics between the ethnic groups intensified, as the negotiations between the government and any group had significant influence on the demands of the others.

Most of the groups demanded the administration of their respective reasons through a separate territorial council, an autonomous body. For instance, the final round of Indo-Naga peace talks, which began on October 30, led to more administrative autonomy for Naga-inhabited areas [→ India (Nagalim); India (Nagas – Kukis)]. Kukis and Zomi tribes, whose areas intersect with those of the Nagas, called for territorial integrity and autonomy. On November 25, at least five Zomi tribes organized a peaceful rally to raise the demand for a Zoland Territorial Council (ZTC) in Churachandpur, eponymous district. Several hundred people participated in solidarity with the UPF and KNO. The same day, Zomi student organisations also protested in the capital New Delhi, demanding a ZTC and political talks with the government.

While attacks by armed groups decreased in comparison to the previous years, this year was mainly marked by protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The CAA, ul-

timately passed by the parliament on December 11, seeks to provide a path to Indian citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, who have lived in India for at least six years. Several non-state groups regarded the CAA as further policy imposition, threatening the region's fragile ethnic balance and demography. In a student protest against the CAA in Khwairamband Keithel, Imphal West district, on January 11, protesters clashed with the police, leaving at least two students and one police officer injured. Three days later, ten people were injured in a clash at a rally against the CAA at Khwairamband Keithel, Imphal West, organized by Muslim activists who criticized the discriminatory aspects of the CAA. Certain protected states, such as Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, which are regulated by the Inner Line Permit (ILP), requiring Indian citizens to obtain a special permit when entering, were exempted from the CAA. After continued heavy protests throughout the year, Manipur was included in the ILP on December 10, a move that had already been proposed in 2018.

Furthermore, several militant groups continued their attacks against the government. For instance, on February 7, a civilian and three Assam Rifles personnel were injured in two grenade explosions at Mapal Kangjeibung, Imphal West. The UNLF claimed responsibility for the attack. On November 5, PLA members carried out an IED attack in Imphal, Imphal West, injuring at least four police officers and one civilian. Later that month, five PLA members linked to the attack were arrested.

INDIA (NAGALIM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: NSCN-IM, NSCN-K, NSCN-NK, NSCN-R, NSCN-U vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis continued between militant Naga groups and the government supported by Myanmar over either secession or autonomy of the Naga inhabited area, which includes parts of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh, and bordering territories in Myanmar.

Naga militants were predominantly organized in various factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), for instance NSCN Isaak-Muivah (NSCN-IM), NSCN-Khaplang (NSCN-K), NSCN-Neopak Kitovi (NSCN-NK), and NSCN-Reformation (NSCN-R). The various groups differed in their pursuit of either secession or autonomy for the Naga region.

India and Myanmar carried out multiple joint operations against militant groups throughout the year. On January 29, over 400 soldiers of the Myanmar Army took control of the NSCN-K headquarters in Ta Ga, Nanyun township, Sagaing region, Myanmar, killing one militant and arresting six. Indian and Myanmar forces launched an operation targeting the NSCN-K during the second phase of Operation Sunrise at the Indo-Myanmar border, starting on May 16. The three-week operation targeted militants in Assam [→ India (ULFA-I at al. / Assam)], Manipur and Nagaland. The governments of India and Myanmar signed a Memorandum of Understanding on

Defense Cooperation in the Indian capital of New Delhi on July 29 to strengthen military ties and to provide training to the Myanmar Army. On November 5, Burmese armed forces drove around 300 NSCN-IM militants out of a forest in Lesi Township, Sagaing region, Myanmar.

On May 22, a militant group attacked an Assam Rifles (AR) patrol, a paramilitary police force in Assam, in Mons district, Nagaland. An IED explosion and a gunfight left two dead and injured four AR personnel. AR held NSCN-K responsible for the attack who neither confirmed nor denied their involvement. Throughout the year, AR and the Indian armed forces arrested members of militant groups in the areas of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland. For instance, AR arrested Yanghang, a leader of the Yung Aung faction of NSCN-K, on June 21. On July 5, Indian armed forces attacked an NSCN-IM camp near Kekru Naga village, Manipur, without casualties being reported. On November 21, a joint army and AR team raided an NSCN-IM recruitment camp in Mon district, Nagaland, arresting two militants and releasing 32 allegedly forced workers. Since the 2015 framework agreement between the government and the NSCN-IM, the group's members are restricted to certain earmarked areas, all other camps being considered illegal.

As in previous years, peace talks between various factions of the NSCN and the Indian government continued. In April, NSCN-K entered into a ceasefire agreement with the government. NSCN-IM and the Indian government held peace talks on October 31 without yielding any results. The government extended ceasefire agreements with NSCN-NK and NSCN-R until 04/2020. However, on November 30, a member of NSCN-R was killed in a shooting between the militant group and the Indian armed forces.

On August 16, an unidentified assailant shot Major Toishe Yeptho of NSCN-IM in Dimapur, Nagaland, which led to an exchange of fire between NSCN-IM and NSCN-R, injuring one militant, as NSCN-IM had blamed the other faction for the killing. iha

INDIA (NAXALITES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1967

Conflict parties: Naxalites vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The limited war over the orientation of the political system between the left-wing extremist Naxalites and the government de-escalated to a violent crisis. The Naxalites were primarily organized in the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) and various splinter groups.

Throughout the year, at least 299 people were killed and at least 142 people injured, predominantly in IED explosions. Compared to 2018, casualties decreased by approx. 25 percent, with most fatalities reported in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

The Naxalites' heavy use of IEDs continued. For instance, on April 9, a member of the State Legislative Assembly from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), his driver, and three security personnel were killed in an attack in Dantewada district, Chhat-

tisgarh. On May 1, an IED attack in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, killed 16 security forces.

Naxalites targeted both civilians and their former members, often on suspicion of collaboration with police forces. For instance, on March 12, Naxalites killed a civilian in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, and later released an apology letter, claiming the murder had been a mistake. On September 12, a former Naxalite and current BJP politician, suspected of being a police informant and mishandling money, was killed in Munger district, Bihar state.

Furthermore, several cases of attacks on infrastructure, especially on construction vehicles, were reported. On May 1, 27 construction vehicles were set on fire in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra. On July 11, a Naxalite splinter group, the Jharkhand Jan-Mukti Parishad (JJMP), burned 16 heavy vehicles and injured four civilians in Latehar district, Jharkhand. On October 25, bus traffic around the town of Rayagada, eponymous district, Odisha state, was shut down for 24 hours in fear of Naxalite attacks.

In several regions, security forces carried out patrols leading to violent encounters with Naxalites. For example, on February 7, ten Naxalites were killed in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh. On July 31, security forces and Naxalites clashed near Devallagudem, Khammam district, Telangana state, with one Naxalite killed and a further five arrested. Throughout the year, large numbers of Naxalites surrendered to the police in order to be rehabilitated. For instance, on October 20, 28 Naxalites surrendered in Katekalyan, Dantewada district, Chhattisgarh.

On November 12, an estimated 1,000 civilians protested against a new police camp in the village of Potaali, Buldana district, Maharashtra, fearing the camp would lead to more police action against the Naxalites. The protest was dispersed by hundreds of police officers, using tear gas and batons and firing warning shots. hen

INDIA (PATELS ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Patel community, Jat community, Kapu community, Rajput community, Maratha community vs. Gujjar community, government

Conflict items: other

The violent crisis over access to benefits under the reservation system continued between various communities on the one hand, and the central government of India and the governments of the respective federal states on the other hand. The reservation system allocates jobs in the public sector and access to public education based on a community's status as either Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) or Other Backward Castes (OBC). Throughout the year, members of the communities staged protests to highlight their demands.

On February 10, members of the Gujjar community protested in Dholpur district, Rajasthan state, demanding five percent reservation in government jobs and public education. The protesters torched several vehicles and pelted stones at po-

lice forces, leaving six police officers injured. In response, police forces used tear gas to disperse the protesters. The state assembly of Rajasthan passed a bill on February 13, granting five percent reservation to several communities, including the Gujjars.

Following an order of the Indian Supreme Court on February 13 to clear ST families from forest lands, members of the SC and ST communities, including members of the Dalit community, protested on March 5 against alleged anti-reservation policies of the Indian central government amidst other demands in several states, most prominently Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The protesters blocked several main roads and railway tracks.

On May 13, members of the Maratha community protested in Mumbai, Maharashtra state, after the decision of the Supreme Court of Maharashtra on May 9 to cancel the 16 percent reservation granted to Maratha students.

On December 12, the Indian Parliament passed a constitution amendment bill to extend the reservation for STs and SCs in the Indian Parliament and in the Indian state assemblies for another ten years. This would have expired in January 2020. asa

INDIA (SIKHS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: SLF, AISSF, Dal Khalsa, KLF, SAD (Amritsar), BKI, SFJ vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over secession between Sikh groups demanding a so-called independent Khalistan and the Indian government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

Throughout the year, at least 37 people linked to various pro-Khalistan groups were arrested. On February 5, three men were jailed in Nawanshahr, Shahid Bhaga Singh Nagar district, Punjab state, on charges of waging war against the state through the possession of pro-Khalistan literature. Dal Khalsa as well as left-wing civil society groups protested against the sentence. On the 35th anniversary of Operation Blue Star on June 6 in Amritsar, Punjab, a non-violent stand-off between pro-Khalistan activists and moderate Sikhs and police took place. The same day, Sikhs clashed with members of the Hindu-nationalist organisation Shiv Sena in Ludhiana and Jalandhar, Punjab, over Operation Blue Star and Khalistan posters. An accidental blast in Tarn Taran district, Punjab, on September 5 led to the discovery of an alleged pro-Khalistan group hiding explosives. On September 22, police arrested four Khalistan Zindabad Force members in Tarn Taran, Punjab, who had allegedly smuggled weapons from Pakistan by drone.

The Pakistani and Indian government have granted Indian pilgrims visa-free access to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, a holy site of Sikhism in Pakistan [→ India – Pakistan], since November 9. Before this, the Indian government issued concerns over a possible increase in cross-border support of pro-Khalistan activism.

Sikh diaspora groups in the US, UK and Canada continued pro-Khalistan activism. The advocacy group Sikhs for Justice,

which was banned in India in July, continued to campaign for an independence referendum in 2020 and promoted the issue on various occasions, such as Indian Republic Day and during cricket world cup matches in England in June and July. Various Sikh groups in Canada successfully campaigned against the mention of Sikh extremism in Canada's 2018 report on terror, provoking criticism by the Indian government. [evs](#)

INDIA (ULFA-I ET AL. / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: ULFA-I, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-S, NSCN-K, NSCN-R vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The violent crisis over secession and autonomy in various areas of Assam state continued between militant Assamese, Bodo, Karbi and Muslim groups on the one hand, and the Indian government supported by Myanmar on the other hand. The most active groups throughout the year remained the United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland I.K. Songbijit faction (NDFB-S). The goal of the ULFA-I is a sovereign socialist Assam, while the NDFB-S maintained their goal of an independent, sovereign state of Bodoland in Northern Assam.

In comparison to last year, there was a decrease in violence between militants and security forces. The Myanmar army launched two broad operations coordinated with the India army alongside their respective borders. 'Operation Sunrise' had started before the end of January. A Myanmar army division undertook operations in the Myanmar Taga area, along the Myanmar-Indian border, targeting the headquarters and camps of Indian militant groups, such as ULFA-I, NDFB-S and NSCN-K [→ India (Nagalim)]. Several camps were vacated and the militants were dispersed from the area. Consequently, at least nine ULFA-I militants surrendered to Indian forces. Reportedly, the Myanmar army caused a high number of militant casualties. However, the ULFA-I only targeted Indian forces. The second offensive by the Myanmar army, 'Operation Sunrise 2', was launched on May 16 in the area of Lahe and Nayun townships near the Indo-Myanmar border. Subsequently, the arrest of 81 and the surrender of 32 militants to Indian security forces between January and July in Assam was reported by the Union's home ministry.

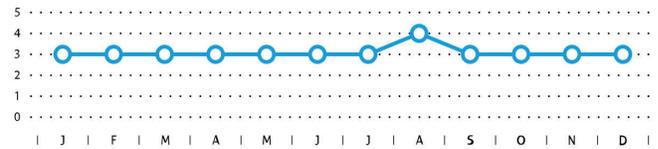
On May 15, ULFA-I militants injured eleven persons, two security personnel and nine civilians, in a grenade attack in front of a shopping mall in Guwahati city, Assam. The militant group later emphasized that the intended targets were security forces. On October 31, security forces killed two suspected NDFB-S militants in Bosabil area, Assam. On November 27, the central government released an official notification declaring the ULFA-I an unlawful association due to its violent activities. [ila](#)

INDIA – PAKISTAN

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: India vs. Pakistan

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources



The limited war over regional power, water distribution, and the status of the Kashmir region continued between India and Pakistan.

UNMOGIP continued its presence in the border region. The conflict was concentrated along the Line of Control (LoC), dividing Indian-administered and Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Throughout the year, Indian and Pakistani soldiers violated the 2003 ceasefire agreement multiple times. However, reports of the exact number of violations varied from several hundred to several thousand. Frequent clashes between the Pakistani and the Indian army left at least 110 persons dead and 175 injured. Both countries' military forces used small arms as well as heavy weapons like artillery guns and mortars. Overall, more than 20,000 people were displaced.

On February 26, in response to an attack by Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militants in Pulwama district, Indian-administered J&K, twelve days earlier [→ India (Kashmir)], Indian forces conducted an airstrike in the vicinity of the town Balakot, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, initially claiming to have killed several hundred. While India declared it a preemptive strike targeting a suspected JeM militant training camp at the Madrassa Taleem al-Quran, Pakistan denied that the madrassa was a militant training camp and further denied any casualties. Although international journalists and diplomats were allowed access to the site to investigate six weeks after the incident, no casualties could be confirmed. In response to the Indian airstrike on Balakot on February 26, the Pakistani military conducted a retaliatory airstrike the next day. In the subsequent short aerial battle, the fighter plane of an Indian airforce pilot was shot down at the LoC, and the pilot was captured by Pakistani authorities. India summoned Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner and demanded the immediate release of the pilot, who was subsequently handed over to Indian officials on March 1 at Wagah, the only open border crossing between India and Pakistan. Additionally, Pakistan temporarily closed its airspace from February 27 to July 15, except for flights from major airports.

The Indian and Pakistani military clashed frequently along the LoC. For instance, on April 1, three Pakistani soldiers were killed and one wounded when the Indian army reportedly retaliated against prior shelling from Pakistani troops in several districts along the LoC. About 20 more persons were injured, including six Indian soldiers and four Border Security Force personnel. Three days later, six civilians were injured in Haveli and Poonch district, Pakistan-administered J&K, after

Indian troops resorted to shelling from across the LoC. Subsequent retaliatory fire by the Pakistani army left five Indian soldiers dead and several others wounded.

The conflict further intensified on August 5, when the Indian government officially revoked Article 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution, which had granted Indian-administered J&K a special semi-autonomous status within the Indian Union [→ India (Kashmir)]. In the following, the Indian government deployed tens of thousands additional troops to the disputed area. At the same time, about 20,000 civilians fled the heavily militarized zone. On September 14, 21 and 28, Indian and Pakistani border forces shelled 40 to 50 villages in a stretch of 50 km along the LoC, using heavy weapons like mortars and small arms.

Thousands of Pakistanis protested against the Indian government's decision in cities across Pakistan. On August 8, the Pakistani government halted trade with India and canceled the last remaining public transport route between Lahore, Pakistan, and New Delhi, India, on August 10. On September 27, during the 74th session of the UNGA, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan urged the international community to intervene in Indian-administered J&K, condemning the revocation of Article 370 and the subsequent curfew and shutdown of all communication services [→ India (Kashmir)]. While the international community mostly continued its stance of a bilateral solution, the US and Chinese governments repeatedly offered the two governments support to mediate the conflict. On November 9, in an act of cooperation, India and Pakistan approved and opened the Kartarpur Corridor, which connects both countries, and allowed Indian Sikh pilgrims to cross the border and visit their sacred shrine Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan [→ India (Sikhs)]. tre, sen

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 continued between Islamist militant groups, such as Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT) and the government.

Throughout the year, clashes over the arrests and attacks on security forces, as well as those on civilians, left six people dead and at least twelve injured. At least 227 people were arrested on suspicion of belonging to an Islamist militant group. The year was marked most notably by the general elections, which were held on April 17. Waves of arrests and deployments of troops were systematically timed to avoid attacks on protests. For example, for the announcements of the results of the election on May 13, the government deployed 32,000 troops to the capital Jakarta.

On January 27, two JAD militants, supported by Philippine Abu Sayyaf militants, attacked a church in a suicide bombing in Jolo, Sulu province, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines, killing 23 and injuring 95 [→ Philippines (Islamist militant groups)]. In the first two weeks

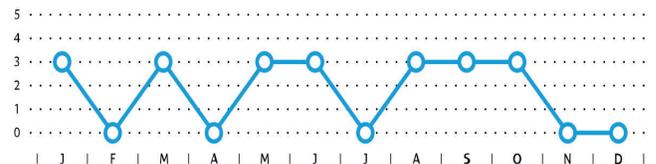
of March, police arrested seven suspected JAD militants in Sibolga, North Sumatra province. During a house raid in Sibolga on March 12, a JAD member detonated a bomb, wounding one police officer. Throughout May, Densus 88, the counter-terrorism police force, shot and killed one alleged JAD member and arrested a total of 29 in Bekasi, Jawa Barat province, of which eleven were suspected of having returned from fighting in Syria. In the first half of June, Densus 88 arrested 34 JAD members in raids in Kalimantan Tengah province. On June 29, Densus 88 arrested five Jemaah Islamiyah members, including Para Wijayanto, who had been wanted since 2003. On October 10, two JAD members attacked national chief security advisor Wiranto in Pandeglang, Banten province, wounding him and three police officers. On November 13, a JAD member carried out a suicide bombing at a police station in Medan, Sumatera Utara province, wounding four police officers and injuring two civilians. In the following week, police arrested 74 alleged JAD members in six provinces and killed two on November 16 in Hamparan Perak, Sumatera Utara province. Operation Tinombala, first introduced in 2016 to track down MIT militants in Sulawesi Tengah province, was active throughout the year and further extended on December 31. During the year, Operation Tinombala forces arrested 14 alleged MIT members. On March 5, Operation Tinombala forces killed one alleged MIT militant. On December 13, five alleged MIT members attacked civilians and police after the Friday prayers in the village of Salubanga, Sulawesi Tengah province, killing one police officer. tgu

INDONESIA (PAPUA)

Intensity: 4 | 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 of Papua and West Papua and natural resources between indigenous Papuans and the government escalated to a limited war. This year saw some of the most serious protests in years, in which between 51 and 62 people were killed. After a large military operation by the Indonesian military (TNI) in Nduga regency, Papua province, at least 20,000 people fled to adjacent regions.

Since the attack by armed Papuan separatists on Indonesian construction workers on 12/01/18 in Nduga, TNI increased its military presence and launched Operation Nemangkawi to gain control over the region and secure work on infrastructure projects. Consequently, violent clashes between TNI and local militias increased. On January 28, an armed group attacked Mapenduma airfield, Nduga regency, shooting one soldier and wounding two. In reaction, on March 9, TNI in-

creased its military presence in Nduga regency by deploying an additional 600 military personnel. Furthermore, on May 13, a group of about 20 fighters associated with the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) attacked Mugi district airfield, Nduga, killing one TNI soldier.

The construction of the Trans-Papua Highway, criticized for enhancing the resource exploitation in Papua, remained a key issue. On March 7, a group of TPNBP fighters attacked a group of TNI soldiers guarding works on the Trans-Papua Highway in Mugi district, Nduga regency. Three soldiers and at least seven militants were killed. On August 16, militant separatists ambushed a TNI convoy transporting logistics on the Trans-Papua Highway between Wamena and Habema, Papua, killing one soldier and wounding two.

On August 15, the anniversary of the 1962 New York Agreement, 56 protesters of the Alliance of Papuan Students clashed with counter-protesters in Malang, Jawa Timur province. The counter-protesters, members of a civil militia, injured 23 students. A day later, Papuan students allegedly defaced the Indonesian flag in Surabaya, Jawa Timur. A mob consisting of Indonesian nationalists and members of Islamist groups such as the Islamic Defenders Front and Pancasila Youth gathered at a Surabaya University dormitory and chanted racist slogans. The next day, police dispersed the crowd using tear gas, allegedly injuring several, and arrested 43 students.

This incident led to a series of protests and riots in Papua and West Papua provinces. On August 19, protesters set the parliament building in Manokwari, West Papua, on fire whilst in Sorong, West Papua, protesters torched a prison which led to the escape of 258 inmates. Two days later, at least 4,000 Papuans protested in Timika, Papua. On the same day, protesters in Fakfak, West Papua, set a local market and office building on fire. Furthermore, in Waghete, Papua, approx. 1,000 militant Papuan separatists interrupted peaceful protests and clashed with police forces. In the following, police opened fire on a group of protesters, killing at least three and injuring seven. Protests resumed on September 23 in Wamena, Papua, after an alleged racist insult of a teacher towards Papuan students. The Papuan protesters were joined by others from outside Wamena and burnt down about 80 buildings, including the Jayawijaya regency office, killing at least 28 residents and injuring 66. On the same day, in Jayapura, Papua, clashes between students and police forces left three students and one police officer dead. hbe

JAPAN – CHINA (EAST CHINA SEA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Japan vs. PRC vs. ROC
 Conflict items: territory, international power, resources, other

The non-violent crisis over international power, territory and resources continued between the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC) and Japan. Each party continued to assert authority over the Senkaku/Diaoyu/Tiaoyutai islands.

In March, Japan conducted joint military exercises with the US near the disputed area. On March 23, a PRC Y-8Q patrol plane flying close the islands was intercepted by Japanese fighter jets. On March 26, Japan deployed 380 troops alongside missile batteries to Miyakojima island, 200 km from the disputed islands, and 560 troops to Amami Oshima island, which is further away. In early and late March, the Japan-Taiwan Fishery Committee convened to discuss fishing activities near the disputed islands but no new deal was struck.

On April 7, Japan's Defense Minister, Takeshi Iwaya, pledged to defend the 'Senkaku' islands and visited a newly established military base at Miyakojima Island. On April 19, during their two-plus-two security talks, the US and Japan ratified that article five of their security treaty, which provides for mutual assistance in case of an attack, also applies to cyberattacks. Moreover, they reaffirmed that article five also covers the disputed islands.

In June, the PRC sent its aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, along with five other ships through the Miyako Strait but outside of Japanese waters for an exercise in the Pacific Ocean. In July, Japan's newly established Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade practiced together with the US and Australian marines to defend remote islands. On July 23, Japan's Air Self-Defense Forces (SDF) jets were scrambled as both PRC and Russian bombers flew near the disputed islands but did not violate Japanese airspace. On September 4, Japan's National Police Agency requested Japan's parliament to approve a budget for 159 police officers to guard the remote islands from illegal landings.

On December 3, the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper reported that in the previous eleven months, 998 PRC government vessels were identified sailing in the contiguous zone of the disputed islands as opposed to 615 incursions in the first eleven months of 2018. On December 18, the PRC's and Japan's defense ministers met and emphasized the need for mutual trust and bolstered communication while also conveying their respective concerns. kol

KAZAKHSTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: Independent Trade Unions, Journalists, Civil Rights Activists, Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK), Oyan, Qazaqstan 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 activists on one hand, and the government on the other hand.

On March 19, President Nursultan Nazarbaev announced his resignation after 29 years in office. His successor, former Prime Minister and Chairman of the Kazakh Senate, Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev, was inaugurated on June 12 after he received 71 percent of the ballots in a presidential election on June 9. During the months leading to the election, multiple opposition protests were held in several cities, such

as in the newly renamed capital Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Aqtobe, Shymkent, and Mangystau region. On June 13, the interior minister said that in the five days after the election alone, approx. 4,000 people were detained and sentenced to between six and 15 days in jail.

Furthermore, repression continued against members of the declared illegal party Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DVK). Throughout the year, different courts across the country sentenced several activists for supporting the movement in Kazakhstan. For instance, on November 11, four activists were sentenced by a court in Almaty, eponymous region, to one year of freedom limitation. On January 31, a court in Aqtau, Mangystau region, acquitted an activist accused of using the movement's social media accounts. Subsequently, the chief judge of the court was dismissed. On several occasions, members of the opposition movement protested in several cities against the renaming of the capital, the continued influence of Nazarbaev, and for the freedom of political prisoners. This led to the detention of hundreds of people. mor

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 in the border region Fergana Valley continued between residents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, backed by their respective governments.

Throughout the year, various clashes between residents of the Tajik exclave Vorukh, Sughd province and the Kyrgyz village Aksai, Batken province, resulted in approx. six fatalities. For example, on March 13, dozens of local residents clashed over the recommencement of construction work on a controversial road in the area. They threw stones at each other and a gunshot was fired after a storage shed of a Kyrgyz villager and a flour mill belonging to a Tajik villager were set ablaze. As a result, one Tajik villager was shot and killed, eleven Tajiks and one Kyrgyz were hospitalized and the border was closed. The following day, violence continued and one villager from Vorukh was killed by gunfire and two other Tajik villagers and one Kyrgyz police officer were hospitalized. Subsequently, Kyrgyz authorities evacuated residents from Aksai and Kok-Tash, Batken province, and Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov and Tajik President Emomalij Rahmon agreed during a phone conversation to accelerate the delineation their disputed borders. On March 18, following bilateral talks, the border was reopened.

On September 15, a dispute over border construction at a non-demarcated section of the border between residents from Kyrgyzstan's Leylek district, Batken region, and Tajikistan's Ghafurov district, Sughd, resulted in a shooting that left one Kyrgyz border guard dead and 19 other people wounded. The next day, both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan handed each other a note of protest over the incident.

On September 18, the Kyrgyz and Tajik Prime Ministers Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev and Kokhir Rasulzoda agreed to refrain from building surveillance towers in the disputed area until further notice and to demolish the existing ones.

On August 30, four new border crossings were opened on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border. A few days later, on September 12, government representatives from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan agreed to exchange land in Uzbekistan's Fergana region and Kyrgyzstan's Osh region, respectively. The Kyrgyz government consented to relinquish an area that included the Kerki-dan water reservoir where altercations between Kyrgyz villagers and Uzbek border guards had occurred on 10 September. In return, Kyrgyzstan received an equivalent parcel of land near its village of Gulbaar, Aravan district, Osh.

On November 5, as a result of checkpoints reopening at the Tajik-Uzbek border and several meetings throughout the year, Tajik and Uzbek government officials reached an agreement about the delimitation of their shared 1312-kilometer border, which they expect to sign in early 2020. ama

LAOS (HMONG)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: Hmong vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and autonomy de-escalated to a non-violent crisis between the Hmong indigenous people and their remaining members of the resistance group ChaoFa on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

Throughout January and February, Brigade 101 from Southern Laos and Brigade 103 from Northern Laos of the Royal Lao Army frequently launched bombs and shootings from Mi17 helicopters and set up patrols in the Phou Bia jungle in Xiangkhouang and Xaysomboun Provinces, targeting Hmong people. The attacks in the area led to the destruction of their accommodation and food resources, and to internal displacement of Hmong people. According to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), on April 28, the Royal Lao Army carried out a bomb and shooting attack on two Hmong in Phou Bia jungle, Xaysomboun, north of Vang Viang, Vientiane Province.

On March 28, after a visit to Laos, UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston, criticized government policies disfavoring ethnic minorities and indigenous people. Furthermore, the UNPO and the Congress of World Hmong People addressed the OHCHR in a speech on the situation of the Hmong and other minorities in Laos on July 15 in Washington D.C., USA, condemning the continuous military actions against the ChaoFa. hbr

MALDIVES (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2003

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

The violent crisis over national power between the opposition parties Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) as well as the Junhooree Party (JP), led by former president Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom on the one hand, and government parties, primarily the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), led by President Ibrahim Solih, the Adhaalath Party (AP), and the Maumoon Reform Movement (MRM) on the other hand, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. On April 6, the MDP won more than two thirds of seats in the new parliament, changing the composition of the government.

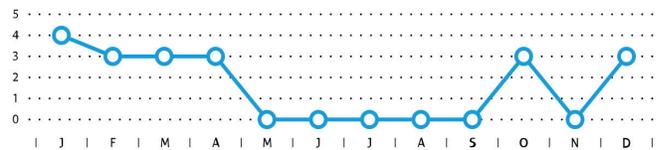
Throughout the year, the judiciary continued to withdraw charges against politicians conducted under Yameen's presidency. For instance, the Prosecutor General's Office withdrew terrorism charges against Yameen, his son and son-in-law, the former Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and several MPs on January 28 and 30. On May 20 and 27, both the Supreme Court and the High Court reduced jailed ex-vice-president Ahmed Adeb's sentence on terrorism and corruption. Adeb was handed over by Indian authorities who had arrested him on August 1 after he had tried to avoid sentencing by leaving the Maldives.

By contrast, the High Court filed a case against Yameen. The Prosecutor General's Office pressed charges against Yameen for money laundering on February 13. Five days later, the police detained him. Yet, the High Court was forced to overturn Yameen's detention sentence on procedural grounds following a judge's replacement a few days earlier. On November 19, the parliament dismissed two Supreme Court judges involved in Yameen's trial. In response, Yameen heavily criticized the government for interfering with judicial independence.

In October, a 2016 report on Islamic radicalization from the NGO Maldivian Democratic Network (MDN) was leaked to the public. As a consequence, religious scholars and citizens protested against the allegedly anti-Islamic report. On November 2, approx. 200 people took part in a protest against both the authorities' refusal of a PPM rally and the report, leading to short-term arrests of PPM members and other protesters. On November 5, the government dissolved the MDN. jhk

MYANMAR (AA / RAKHINE STATE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Arakan Army vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over the autonomy of Rakhine State escalated to a limited war between the Arakan Army (AA) and the government. AA aims to represent the Rakhine ethnic group, which is mostly Buddhist. Throughout the year, AA frequently clashed with the Myanmar Army, also known as the Tatmadaw, resulting in at least 56 killed, 24 injured and between 50,000 and 100,000 civilians displaced within Rakhine State.

According to a report by the UN Fact-Finding Mission to Myanmar released on September 19, nine townships in Rakhine State and Paletwa township, Chin State, were affected by clashes between the conflict parties. For instance, on January 4, at least 100 AA members attacked four police outposts in Buthidaung township, killing 13 security personnel and wounding nine. In turn, between January 5 and 16, the Tatmadaw launched eight attacks in the same township, killing 13 AA members. Five landmine explosions and at least two Tatmadaw casualties were reported and thousands of civilians were displaced. Following the clashes, on January 18, the government declared AA a terrorist group and consequently arrested dozens of people throughout the year for their alleged links to AA.

The Tatmadaw allegedly deployed helicopters several times this year starting in March, as well as naval and ground forces. For instance, in clashes in Ponnagyun township between October 11 and 16, it launched airstrikes on AA, killing several AA members.

Both conflict parties repeatedly involved civilians in fights, which was condemned by international human rights organizations. On May 2, the Tatmadaw interrogated around 275 civilians in Kyauktan village, Rathedaung township, and shot at them, killing at least six and injuring eight. Throughout the year, allegedly 14 other suspects died in detention after being accused of helping AA. Furthermore, AA kidnapped both soldiers and civilians more frequently throughout the year. For instance, on October 26 in Rathedaung township, approx. 20 AA members took 58 passengers of a ferry hostage, including security personnel. Ten security personnel and five civilians were freed in a Tatmadaw helicopter operation the following days and AA released 25 others, while several hostages were killed and two boats destroyed. On November 3, AA members abducted an Upper House lawmaker representing Chin State and nine civilians near Kyaunt Tan village between Paletwa and Kyauktaw. He was kept hostage for being an alleged Tatmadaw spy. A detained local politician from Buthidaung whom AA had captured on December 11 was reported dead two weeks later. AA stated that he had been shot and killed in a Tatmadaw attack.

On April 2, the Rakhine State government imposed a curfew on the northern townships of Ponnagyun, Rathedaung, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U and Minbyar, and another in Paletwa on November 9. On June 21, an internet and mobile service shutdown was imposed in Rakhine and Chin States, supposedly to prevent coordinated activities of AA. Internet access was restored in several of the townships on September 1 but continued to be cut off in Kyauktaw, Ponnagyun, Minbyar and Mrauk-U.

AA was supported by other ethnic political and armed groups. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization and the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army expressed solidarity with the Rakhine people and condemned the Tatmadaw's violent actions especially towards civilians on May 23 and on September 28, respectively [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. As in previous years, AA conducted joint operations with its allies, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State); Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)]. Moreover, the three armed groups issued a statement on November 28, welcoming the international lawsuits against the government for alleged war crimes in Rakhine State against the Rohingya. kv

MYANMAR (KIA, KIO / KACHIN STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: KIA, KIO vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The limited war over regional autonomy and resources, such as timber, de-escalated to a violent crisis between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), politically represented by the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) on the one hand, and the government, supported by the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) on the other hand.

The unilateral ceasefire, introduced by the Tatmadaw on 12/21/18, was extended three times before September 21. Furthermore, the Northern Alliance, consisting of four armed groups, including KIA, and the Tatmadaw continued their peace efforts in February [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State); Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State); Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)]. Unlike last year, KIA did not actively participate in most of the reported joint operations. The other Alliance members predominantly fought together as the so-called Brotherhood Alliance, being most active outside Kachin State. During informal peace talks between the Northern Alliance and the government in Kunming city, People's Republic of China, on February 24 and 25, the former proposed respective bilateral pacts for each group. Peace talks held in Kengtung, eponymous district, Shan State, on September 17, and in Kunming on December 15, did not come to an agreement. On August 18 and 30, representatives of KIO negotiated bilaterally with the government in Kengtung, discussing possible ceasefires and the IDP situation. The government's Peace Commission demanded to see an inventory of KIA's weapons until July 15, which KIO declined.

As in the previous year, KIA and Tatmadaw engaged in clashes throughout Kachin and northern Shan State. For instance, on

October 14, the two conflict parties clashed close to Hsinbo city, Myitkyina township, Kachin State. Five KIA members used light weapons against a Tatmadaw military column. No casualties were reported. On November 29, after a clash between the two parties in Waimaw township, Kachin State, the Tatmadaw seized a temporary camp of KIA and recovered heavy and light weaponry, including rockets and mortars. Throughout the year, both KIA and Tatmadaw detained and questioned Kachin civilians on suspicion of involvement with the other party. For instance, Tatmadaw reportedly tortured detained Kachin people on January 20 in Muse township, Shan State, and on March 11 in Kutkai township, Muse. Furthermore, KIA detained 57 workers near Man Phang village, northern Shan State, to interrogate them about the Tatmadaw but released them four days later.

In Shan State, KIA ambushed two Tatmadaw convoys respectively on July 24 near Mongkoe and on July 26 in Pangsai, Muse, with landmines. Three Tatmadaw soldiers were killed and 17 wounded. In another attack on August 27, three KIA members fired shots at approx. 60 Tatmadaw soldiers in Mungji on the road to Namhu village, Kutkai. On October 24, approx. 50 Tatmadaw soldiers clashed with a KIA battalion at Nam Yi village, Kutkai, leaving two Tatmadaw soldiers dead. eku

MYANMAR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1962

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between opposition groups on the one hand, and the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) and the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) on the other hand.

A constitutional reform proposed by the NLD to reduce the number of parliamentary seats for the Tatmadaw was met with both support and protest after the parliament appointed a charter amendment committee on February 19 to discuss the reform. On July 17, thousands gathered in favor of the reform in Yangon, eponymous region, and three other cities. Counter-protests by pro-military nationalists were held the same day in Yangon and Mandalay, eponymous region.

Throughout the year, authorities continued to impede freedom of expression, often based on charges of defamation brought against journalists, activists and other civilians. In the first half of the year, the Tatmadaw reportedly filed 40 charges, marking an increase from 13 charges filed throughout the previous year. For instance, in April, Mayangone Township Court, Yangon Region, sentenced five members of the satirical Peacock Generation thangyat group to one year in prison for defaming the military in a performance. In October, their detention was prolonged for another year. On October 31, a former Tatmadaw captain, a poet, and an activist lawyer were charged by Kawthaung Township Court, Taninthayi Region, for criticizing the constitution at a public gathering. In a joint statement on November 15, 130 civil society groups called upon the court to withdraw the case. In a nationwide

mass amnesty, President Win Myint freed more than 9,000 prisoners on April 17 and another 6,500 starting on April 26. Among the released were several activists and two journalists who had investigated the Tatmadaw's clearance operations in Rakhine State in 2017 and whose arrest had been internationally criticized.

Violence escalated on February 12 in Loikaw, Kayah State, where approx. 3,000 people protested the installation of a statue of General Aung San. Ethnic rights activists criticized the statue as a symbol of the central government's assimilation policies. Police used tear gas, rubber bullets, and water cannons to disperse the crowd and injured at least eleven protesters. On May 9, in a prison riot over selective presidential pardons in Shwe Bo, Sagaing Region, the police shot and killed at least four inmates and injured several others.

In its concluding report published on September 17, the UN Fact-Finding-Mission on Myanmar urged the Tatmadaw to stop using rape and sexual violence as part of a deliberate strategy to intimidate, terrorise or punish the civilian population and as a tactic of war.

Preparing the general elections in 2020, the Union Election Commission's (UEC) new tender system for international technical support was condemned by 20 parties on November 2 for lack of transparency and potential foreign influence. In response, the UEC threatened in mid-November to take legal action against any kind of alleged defamation. [est](#)

MYANMAR (ROHINGYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change:  | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Rohingya, ARSA vs. government, Buddhists

Conflict items: subnational predominance, other

The limited war over subnational predominance and Rohingya citizenship de-escalated to a violent crisis between the mainly Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority on the one hand, and the Buddhist majority as well as the government on the other hand.

On January 16, approx. ten members of the militant Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) fired AK-47 rifles at a border police van near a guard post in Wat Kyein village, Maungdaw township, Rakhine State, injuring six. In another ambush, ARSA detonated an IED and shot rifles at a police truck in Maungdaw in April, injuring one police officer.

After preliminary investigations by the ICJ into the 2017 clearance operations in Rakhine State, The Gambia, supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, moved to prosecute the Myanmar government at an ICJ tribunal on November 11. The Gambia's accusations of systematic violence and genocide were based on the UN Fact-Finding Mission in the previous year. ARSA and the Arakan Rohingya National Organization, as well as human rights groups, welcomed the prosecution. In public hearings in The Hague, Netherlands, between December 10 and 12, Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi denied any genocidal intent and defended the military's actions as part of its sovereign justice system.

The seven soldiers who had been the only convicts in the previous year for extrajudicial killings in Inn Din village, Maungdaw, in August 2017 were released in early May this year. The US condemned the Myanmar government's lack of accountability.

Subsequently, they imposed sanctions on four military leaders involved in ordering the operations on July 16 and again on December 10, freezing their US assets and prohibiting Americans from doing business with them. On April 29, the Council of the EU prolonged sanctions against 14 Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) soldiers and border guard police officers for a year. The individuals had been accused of human rights violations against the Rohingya. Moreover, the Council extended its weapons embargo and prohibition of military training and cooperation with the Tatmadaw.

Throughout the year, the Bangladeshi government and UNHCR registered at least 500,000 Rohingya into Cox's Bazar refugee camps, Bangladesh, to evaluate their situation, issuing biometric ID cards and documents to those above the age of twelve. On May 28, the Myanmar government, UNDP and UNHCR extended their tripartite MoU from 06/06/18 on creating the conditions for the repatriation of the Rohingya. On August 22, about 3,000 Rohingya refugees who had been approved to return to Myanmar by the government, refused to voluntarily enter the country. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accused the Myanmar government of being insincere about the repatriation at a UNGA meeting in late September in New York, US, and again on October 25 at the 18th Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Azerbaijan's capital Baku. The Myanmar government dismissed the criticism and reiterated its willingness to repatriate verified refugees. [kv](#)

MYANMAR (SSA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1953

Conflict parties: SSA-N, SSA-S vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy of Shan State continued between the northern and southern wings of the Shan State Army (SSA-N and SSA-S) on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

In the first months of the year, SSA-N, aided by the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and SSA-S clashed repeatedly due to territorial disputes in Hsipaw township, Kyaukme district. A ceasefire agreement between their respective political wings, the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP) and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), was announced in a joint statement on May 11.

On March 7, the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) started a four-day offense in Shan State, breaking a ceasefire they had unilaterally declared on 12/21/18 for military operation areas in Shan and Kachin States [[→ Myanmar \(MNDAA / Shan State\); Myanmar \(TNLA / Shan State\); Myanmar \(KIA, KIO / Kachin State\)](#)]. Clashes occurred on March 7 and 8 near Pang Kha mountain, Hsipaw township, and continued on the two following days. Over 400 Tatmadaw soldiers were involved, also firing from two attack helicopters on SSA-N's Loi Pan Hkar military camp.

Consequently, at least one civilian was killed, two injured and around 700 civilians displaced as they fled to the nearby town of Ke See, eponymous township, Loilee district. On August 6, two Tatmadaw infantry battalions attacked SSA-N forces near Nar Pang village, Tangyan township, Lashio district, resulting in at least 200 civilians fleeing to nearby monasteries. While the Tatmadaw claimed to target SSA-N's recruitment practice, SSPP stated the attack was directed against its drug eradication campaign in the area.

Furthermore, SSA-N and TNLA engaged in coordinated actions against the Tatmadaw [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)]. In addition, civilians were repeatedly detained and questioned by both SSA and the Tatmadaw. For instance, in March, SSA-S allegedly beat several detainees from Man Li village, Namtu village, and forced them to be porters.

Clashes also occurred between the Tatmadaw and SSA-S, despite the prevailing 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. On November 9, 40 Tatmadaw soldiers clashed with SSA-S members near Ho-hkai village tract, Mongkung township, Loilem district, after the Tatmadaw had entered territory claimed by SSA-S. Another clash between both sides occurred on November 28 near Man Wah village in Namtu township, Kyaukme. RCSS claimed that the clash took place due to miscommunication regarding the movement of military columns in the area. Subsequently, about 60 villagers fled to Pobber Yone monastery in Namtu town. The following day, an artillery shell exploded in Man Wah village, leaving one civilian dead and two injured. tsi

MYANMAR (TNLA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: TNLA vs. government
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and re-sources, such as poppy, continued between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the government.

TNLA continued to be a member of the so-called Northern Alliance, alongside the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and the Arakan Army (AA). This year, TNLA, AA and MNDAA, as the so-called Brotherhood Alliance, frequently clashed with the military, also known as the Tatmadaw. Allegedly, TNLA also operated separately with KIA [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)].

The Tatmadaw extended its 12/21/18 unilateral ceasefire for five of its commands in Shan and Kachin States three times before September 21, and the Brotherhood Alliance announced its own ceasefire regarding the Tatmadaw from September 9 until the end of the year. However, violence continued, peaking in October. More than 130 clashes between TNLA and the Tatmadaw occurred, resulting in at least 25 people killed, nine injured and over 430 civilians internally displaced. For instance, on October 9, TNLA attacked a Tatmadaw convoy near Theinni township, Lashio District, killing three and wounding three Tatmadaw soldiers, injuring seven civilians, and damaging at least five residential houses

and three vehicles. This was the first time in 30 years that a violent confrontation took place in Theinni although surrounding townships had been affected in previous years. On October 24, fighting between at least 60 Tatmadaw soldiers and 30 TNLA members took place between Maw Hand and Nam Mwi Nawng San villages, Kutkai township, Muse District. In the fight, TNLA used mortars and two civilians were injured. Two days later, the Tatmadaw fired from helicopters on a TNLA outpost in Maru Hpaga Bum, Kutkai. As a consequence, 231 civilians fled from three villages to the neighboring Maw Han village.

On August 15, the Brotherhood Alliance attacked a bridge and a police station in Nawngkhio township, Kyaukme District, as well as the Defense Services Technological Academy and a nearby checkpoint in Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Region, using guns and heavy artillery shells such as 107mm rockets. The Alliance stated to have launched the attacks because the Tatmadaw had ignored repeated warnings to stop attacking AA. At least 14 people were killed and two injured. Fighting between the Alliance and the Tatmadaw continued two days later in Lashio, resulting in one rescue worker killed and four injured. In further clashes on August 30 and 31, five more civilians were killed and three injured in a shelling in Mawhik village, Kutkai. Both sides blamed each other for the civilian casualties. Reportedly, 7,500 civilians were displaced in August.

TNLA met for negotiations with the government alongside its three allied groups in Muse, eponymous township and district, on April 30, and in Kengtung town, eponymous township and district, on August 31 [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State); Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State); Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. On October 29, the Brotherhood Alliance called the Tatmadaw to end military offensives and stated it would be open to peace talks. mpi

MYANMAR (UWSA, NDAA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: UWSA, NDAA vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy

The dispute over autonomy escalated to a non-violent crisis between the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

There was no official meeting regarding the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) this year, although UWSA and NDAA attended peace talks between other ethnic groups and the government as observers at the end of February in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State); Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State); Myanmar (AA / Rakhine State)]. Both groups continued to discuss approaches to negotiate with the government among fellow members of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee, for instance at an internal meeting on June 18 in Pangkham, eponymous township, Matman District.

On April 17, UWSA reiterated its demand for autonomy in a meeting with government officials in Pangkham during festiv-

ities of the Wa 30th peace anniversary, which included UWSA military parades. The Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) commented that they only tolerated this in order to continue peace talks. In another meeting, held on May 18 in Kunming, Wa leaders discussed a proposal on the future political dialogue with a government delegation. Government officials such as State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who urged NDAA to sign the NCA, attended the Mongla 30th peace anniversary on June 30 in Mongla, eponymous township, Kengtung District. NDAA reiterated its commitment to the peace process.

In early November, there was a stand-off between UWSA battalions and a Tatmadaw battalion in Kengtung to gain control over the bridge between Mongyang and Mongkhet townships that the Tatmadaw set up as a checkpoint. UWSA soldiers occupied it for two days and there was a further stand-off with an NDAA division over their area. 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 ideology continued between right-wing Hindu groups and the government.

Political groups such as the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Shiva Sena Nepal, both prominent Hindu Nationalist political parties, continued their struggle to reinstall a Hindu Kingdom. At least four protests resulted in violence between the police and right-wing Hindu groups, and several were injured.

In the first part of the year, a number political statements were issued by RPP calling for the establishment of a Hindu state with constitutional monarchy. For instance, on February 20, RPP sent a 22-point memorandum to the Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli demanding the government to revoke the provision of secularism in the constitution and to declare Nepal a Hindu state with constitutional monarchy. Kamal Thapa, chairman of RPP, threatened to conduct nationwide protests if the government refused to follow the 22-point memorandum. Subsequently, Thapa led the RPP with the support of various right-wing Hindu groups to conduct a nationwide campaign across the country's 77 districts from February 27 to March 15 in an effort to restore Nepal as a Hindu state. The campaign concluded in the capital Kathmandu on March 15, where additional protests on four separate occasions from April 8 to 23 disrupted businesses in parts of the city.

Protests linked to the RPP's national campaign led to several clashes between protesters and police forces, resulting in over 14 arrests. In April, a series of violent protests took place in Kathmandu. For instance, on April 8, police fired tear gas shells and baton charge into crowds of protesters at a Thapa-led RPP rally, injuring several. Thapa was detained by the police. On April 19, riot police intervened in a protest in Kathmandu organized by the RPP after protesters had burnt posters and banners reading "secularism", resulting in the arrest of 14 of its leaders and cadres. aer

NORTH KOREA, CHINA (DEFECTORS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: DPRK, PRC vs. defectors (networks), ROK

Conflict items: system/ideology, other

The non-violent crisis over ideology and the North Korean citizens' right to emigration escalated to a violent crisis between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China (PRC) on the one hand, and DPRK defectors and defector supporter groups, which include militants, NGOs, and aid groups, based mostly in the Republic of Korea (ROK) on the other hand.

On February 22, ten members of Free Joseon, a group founded in 2017 as a provisional government of the DPRK with the aim of toppling the Kim family regime, stormed the DPRK embassy in Madrid, Spain. The attackers, among them allegedly former defectors, used knives, machetes, and fake guns to force themselves into the building. Inside, they tied up DPRK diplomats and pressured the embassy's head of business affairs to defect. Another staff member was injured when he jumped out of the building trying to escape. The group seized technical devices with classified material, shortly before fleeing to New York City, US. The devices later were received in parts by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. DPRK denounced the incident as a terrorist attack.

Throughout the year, DPRK defectors and defector supporter groups used propaganda such as leaflets, DVDs and USB drives to incite opposition to the DPRK government. For instance, Fighters for a Free North Korea (FFNK), a group of defectors based in the ROK, managed to distribute leaflets criticizing the DPRK's policies to DPRK embassies, in April and May, while previous efforts focused on informing citizens within North Korea. Other groups continued to support defectors in the PRC among other places.

This year also witnessed several instances of DPRK officials defecting. For instance, on January 3, the then-acting DPRK ambassador to Italy defected to an unidentified Western country, while a senior member of the General Political Bureau of the DPRK People's Army fled with his family on September 22. Despite efforts by DPRK, aided by the PRC, no reports indicate that these officials have been captured. Throughout the year, ROK President Moon Jae-in continued his reconciliation approach towards the DPRK, affecting the government's treatment of defectors and their supporters [→ North Korea – South Korea].

For instance, the ROK government urged FFKK to abstain from sending balloons across the border denouncing the Kim family on April 14 and October 21. Moreover, the ROK government was criticized for its lack of response towards an appeal for help made in late November by defector groups for approx. ten defectors detained in Vietnam en route to the ROK, who were eventually released with the help of European institutions. In November, the ROK also rejected the call to co-sponsor a UN resolution denouncing DPRK human rights violations, including its policy towards defectors. ile

PAKISTAN (BALOCHISTAN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: BLA, BLT, BRAS, BRA, BNP-M vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources

The violent crisis over the secession of Balochistan province as well as over the control of its gas, oil, coal, and mineral resources continued between several Baloch militant groups and political parties, on the one hand, and the government supported by China on the other hand.

Throughout the year, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), the Balochistan Liberation Tigers (BLT), the Baloch Raji Ajoie Sangar (BRAS), and the Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) conducted attacks and clashed with security forces. Overall, at least 34 people were killed, among them six members of the BLA. At least twelve civilians were injured.

On March 24, the Balochistan National Party (Mengal) (BNP-M) announced its support for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects in Balochistan province in a joint statement with other Baloch parties. Despite that, other Baloch militant groups continued to attack CPEC-related projects, such as on March 8, when BLT claimed responsibility for blasting a gas pipeline in Dera Bugti district, Balochistan. On March 17, the same group claimed responsibility for an attack using a remote-controlled IED on a train in Nasirabad district, Balochistan. In the explosion that derailed several carriages, four passengers were killed and at least six others injured. On March 23, BRA claimed responsibility for blasting a gas pipeline in Dera Bugti district, Balochistan. On April 18, more than a dozen BRAS militants shot and killed 14 travelers of non-Baloch origin on the route between Karachi, Sindh province, and Gwadar, Balochistan, after checking their IDs. On May 9, BLA militants attacked a coal mine in Harnai district, Balochistan, with guns and IEDs, killing two miners, two security personnel and a driver. Two days later, BLA militants attacked a hotel belonging to a Chinese infrastructure project in Gwadar, killing three civilians, a navy soldier and a security guard, and injuring at least six people. Security forces killed at least three of the attackers. On May 17, security forces shot and killed three BLA militants in a raid in Kalat district, Balochistan. On May 18, in response to these persisting attacks, the Pakistan Army announced the creation of a division-sized special force to guarantee the security of CPEC-related projects.

On July 4, the Punjab Counter Terrorism Department foiled a BRA bomb plot on a train in Rajanpur, Punjab province.

On April 3, 50 BRA militants surrendered to the government in Quetta, Balochistan. On July 2, the US State Department designated the BLA as Specially Designated Global Terrorists. The Pakistani government welcomed the move. plo

PAKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | 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 (TTP) and its splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), as well as the so-called Islamic State (IS), al-Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand, de-escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, at least 219 people were killed and 395 were injured. All reports of casualties were made in the provinces of Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The number of attacks conducted by Islamist militant groups declined, resulting in fewer fatalities compared to the previous year. As part of the National Action Plan against terrorism, the joint operation Radd-ul-Fasaad launched in 2017 conducted over 40 intelligence-based operations (IBO) throughout the year.

In Balochistan, at least 110 people were killed in clashes, suicide bombings, or IED explosions. For example, a suicide attack by TTP militants on a police station in Loralai on January 29 killed twelve people and injured at least 21. On May 14, an IED explosion killed four police officers and wounded several others, who were standing guard in front of a mosque in Quetta. In an IBO by various law enforcement agencies in Mastung district on May 16, security forces killed nine alleged IS militants. On September 4, six suspected IS militants and a police officer were killed in an IBO in Quetta.

In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, at least 109 people were killed and 93 injured throughout the year. A high number of violent incidents occurred in the tribal districts of North Waziristan and Dera Ismail Khan. For instance, during an IBO on April 16, five suspected TTP militants and a police officer were killed. In a coordinated attack in Dera Ismail Khan on July 21, TTP militants killed two police officers and injured at least eight at a police checkpoint. When the bodies were brought to the hospital, a suicide bomber killed two police officers and four civilians, and injured 30.

In 2019, Pakistani health workers started an anti-polio campaign in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The vaccination program was disrupted by several militant attacks against the health workers. For instance, on May 5, a suspected militant killed a WHO polio officer in Bajaur district.

In the second half of year, the government was met with criticism concerning the financing of terrorism. The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering demanded Pakistan to complete its action plan until 02/2020 to avoid sanctions and being blacklisted. lva

PAKISTAN (PASHTUNS / PTM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2018

Conflict parties: Pashtuns, PTM vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy continued between Pashtuns, organized in the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), and the government. On 01/13/18, Senior Superintendent of Police Rao Anwar killed the Pashtun Naqeebullah Mehsud, sparking protests by Pashtuns that continued this year.

On January 19, police forces shot and killed four Pashtun family members and injured one in Qadirabad, Punjab province, in an operation by the Counter Terrorism Department. Later, media reports challenged the security forces' account, who claimed that the family was involved in terrorist activities. In response, on January 20, government forces arrested more than a dozen counterterrorism officers stationed in Lahore who had been involved in the operation. One day later, several protests against the extrajudicial killings of Pashtuns occurred throughout the country. In Sindh province, police arrested 250 to 300 protesters, including PTM leader Alamzaib Mehsud.

After eight people were killed in a militant attack in Quetta, Balochistan province, protesters started a four-day sit-in protest on January 30 in Loralai district, Balochistan. On February 2, a police officer killed senior PTM member Arman Luni during the sit-in. Protesters claimed that militant attacks were a reason for police brutality and ethnic discrimination against all Pashtuns, especially in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province where attacks by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan were frequent [→ Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)].

While Prime Minister Imran Khan acknowledged Pashtun grievances, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa warned PTM and its members on April 29 not to meddle in militant areas in Waziristan, KP. PTM followers continued to protest and were repeatedly charged with sedition. On May 26, at least three members of PTM were killed in a protest against extrajudicial killings of Pashtuns at an army post in Miranshah, North Waziristan, KP. At least 15 people were injured, including five army personnel, and PTM MP Ali Wazir was arrested and jailed. A few days later, police arrested PTM MP Mohsin Dawar on incitement and violence charges. The government rejected bail pleas of Dawar and Wazir until September 21, when both were released. On October 17, several other PTM leaders were also released. mam

PAKISTAN (SUNNI MILITANTS – RELIGIOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: TTP, JuA, LeJ, IS vs. Shiites, Ahmadis, Hindus, Christians, Sufis
 Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued

between Sunni militant groups and various religious minority groups.

In the course of the year, at least 35 people were killed and 90 injured, mostly in violent attacks, IED detonations, and suicide bombings against religious minorities such as the Shiite Hazara community. Most attacks were conducted by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its sub-group, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA).

In a major attack against the Hazara community at a market in Quetta, Balochistan province, on April 12, at least 21 people were killed, and 50 others injured. TTP claimed responsibility for the attack. On May 30, security forces shot and killed a suspected suicide bomber at a Shia place of worship in Quetta. On June 7, an IED explosion killed two members of the Hazara community and injured seven in Ziarat District, Balochistan. In another explosion at a market in Quetta on August 6, a member of the Hazara community was killed and 13 others injured.

On May 8, in a suicide bombing by JuA militants in Lahore, Punjab province, ten people were killed and 20 others injured. The attack was conducted directly at a Sufi shrine, a major destination of pilgrimage for the Sufi community. lva

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (BOUGAINVILLE)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1964

Conflict parties: civil society groups, MDF, Bougainville Hardliners vs. Meekamui Tribal Government, PMALA, MGU vs. ABG, BCL, government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The dispute over resources, such as gold and copper, and autonomy continued between the Bougainville Veterans, the Me'ekamui Government of Unity and the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the national government.

After a ten-year civil war starting in 1988 over numerous issues primarily around the Panguna copper mine, which resulted in several thousand deaths, the conflict parties signed the Bougainville Peace Agreement in 2001. The accord provided a roadmap along the three pillars of autonomy, disarmament, and a non-binding referendum on the island's future political status towards Papua New Guinea.

On September 1, in the run-up to the referendum, the Me'ekamui Unity Government announced the disarmament program to contain its members' weapons in Panguna, Autonomous Region of Bougainville, to be completed. Additionally, former combatants committed themselves to peace and stability before and after the referendum.

After repeated delays throughout the year, the independence referendum was conducted by the Bougainville Referendum Commission (BRC) between November 23 and December 7. On December 12, the BRC declared the results to be 97.7 percent in favor of independence rather than autonomy from Papua New Guinea. nro

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (TRIBAL TENSIONS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: Riarepa vs. Kambiya vs. Koyari vs. Ya'ala vs. various other tribes

Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources

The violent conflict continued between various tribes, such as the Riarepa and the Wambea, over subnational predominance and resources, such as arable land.

Over the course of the year, skirmishes involving different tribes in the provinces Chimbu, Enga, Hela, Morobe, Southern Highlands, and Western Highlands left at least 71 people dead and thousands internally displaced.

The most intense fighting took place in the highland provinces. For instance, on February 9, after a meeting between the Riarepa and Wambea tribes on an alleged sorcery-related death of a tribesman the previous year, Wambea members raided Marili village, Kagua district, Southern Highlands, killing one Riarepa member and torching four buildings. Although the police contained the violence for two weeks, the conflict erupted again. It then involved six tribes and took place in the Sugu Valley, connecting Southern Highlands Kagua and Erave districts. Reportedly, at least 13 people were killed and thousands internally displaced, seeking refuge in the mountain ranges of Popa-Naguri, Tema-Pablato and Ilimikusu. Furthermore, several schools and health care centers were raided or shut down.

In early June, fighting between the Libe and Okiru tribes in Tari Pori district, Hela, targeting women and children, sparked national attention. A few days later, after having killed a fellow Libe tribesman in Munima village after a personal dispute, the surviving Libe member fled to the neighboring, yet adversary Okiru tribe. Although he was granted refuge along with several Libe members, the Libe tribesman attacked the Okiru tribe, leaving six of them dead. Following the attack, the Libe tribesmen returned to Munima village, threatening nearby Karita village must pay protection money to avoid a similar attack. On July 7, while Karita and Munima villages held a peace ceremony, Okiru tribe members attacked Peta village, which was affiliated with the Libe tribe, and killed six people. The next morning, Peta villagers attacked Karita village in retaliation, leaving 16 people dead. After additional security forces were deployed to Tari district, the attacks subsided.

In response to the high number of assassinations, politicians such as Prime Minister and MP of the affected Tari-Pori electorate James Marape and an UN official condemned the tribal warfare. On October 21, Marape announced a halt to compensation killings in Hela.

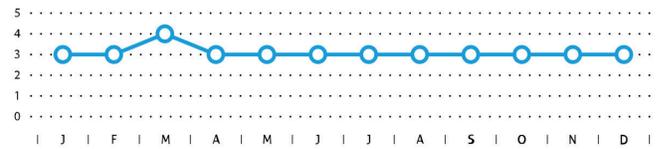
Despite these violent episodes, appeals for peace have been made repeatedly, especially in the highland provinces. In February, in order to prevent killings in retaliation, Malowan tribe members handed over a relative who had allegedly murdered another tribesman in Laiagam, Lagaip Porgera district, Enga, to the police. 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 continued between the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) on the one hand, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government on the other hand.

Throughout the year, the fighting concentrated on the newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Soccsksargen. In total, frequent clashes left dead 77 BIFF members, seven members of the military, seven MILF members and three civilians. 23 BIFF members, 29 soldiers, seven MILF members and 42 civilians were injured. More than 78,000 civilians were displaced by the fighting. Seven BIFF members were arrested and at least 26 surrendered to the armed forces.

On January 15, four BIFF members were killed and two injured in a clash with security forces in Shariff Saydona Mustapha in Maguindanao province, BARMM. On February 2, the army launched airstrikes carried out by two OV-10 planes with 250 pound bombs and two FA-50 planes, in Sultan sa Barongis, Maguindanao and Liguasan Marsh in Soccsksargen after 40 BIFF members were seen in the area. Eight BIFF members were killed and ten injured. On February 28, BIFF members killed one soldier and wounded another in Cotabato City in BARMM and killed a further two soldiers in Datu Salibo, Maguindanao, BARMM, in response to the killing of a BIFF member earlier that week. Three days later, BIFF members killed another soldier in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, BARMM. From March 9 to 11, the armed forces launched an offensive using MG-520 helicopter airstrikes and howitzer artillery fire against 300 BIFF members in Shariff Saydona Mustapha and Datu Saudi-Ampatuan, Maguindanao, BARMM. Twelve BIFF members and one soldier were killed, four BIFF members, eleven soldiers and two civilians injured. 30,295 people were displaced. On April 3, BIFF members conducted a bomb attack injuring 18 people in Isulan in Sultan Kudarat, Soccsksargen. On the same day, security personnel killed one BIFF member in a clash in Shariff Saydona Mustapha. On April 6 and 7, clashes in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, BARMM, killed one BIFF member, and injured five others and two soldiers. On April 16 and 20, clashes in Midsayap in Cotabato, Soccsksargen, left three BIFF members dead and one injured. On May 25, BIFF members killed two civilians in Sultan Kudarat, Soccsksargen. On June 10, another BIFF member was killed in Olandang in Midsayap in Cotabato, Soccsksargen. From July 25 to 29, the army launched another air and ground offensive in Pikit in Cotabato, Soccsksargen and Shariff Say-

dona Mustapha. The clashes killed 15 BIFF members, one soldier and one civilian. Two civilians and two soldiers were injured. More than 1,600 people were displaced. On August 20, a BIFF bomb injured one soldier in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, BARMM. On September 7, another BIFF bomb injured eight people in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, Soccsksargen. On October 3, BIFF members killed seven MILF members in Shariff Saydona Mustapha. On October 23, a gunfight with the military in Midsayap, Cotabato, Soccsksargen, left seven BIFF members dead. The next day, a BIFF bomb in Maguindanao injured seven MILF members.

On November 9, a clash in Mamasapano, Maguindanao, Soccsksargen, left two BIFF members and one soldier dead, and injured three further BIFF members. Five days later, howitzer artillery fire killed three BIFF members in Shariff Saydona Mustapha. Another air and ground offensive by the army killed three BIFF members in the same municipality between November 24 and 26 and displaced 38,235 people.

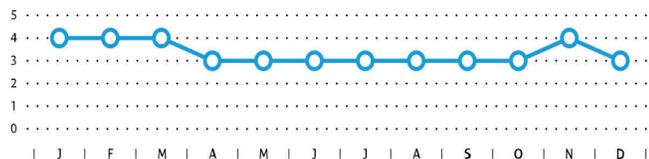
In the first week of December, the army seized dozens of BIFF camps in Mamasapano, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Shariff Aguak and Datu Saudi-Ampatuan. Seven BIFF members were killed. On December 22, a series of explosions by the BIFF injured nine soldiers and twelve civilians in Cotabato City, BARMM. prü

PHILIPPINES (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Abu Sayyaf, Maute et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology



The limited war over ideology and the political system continued between various Islamist militant groups, such as Abu Sayyaf and Maute on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

Over the course of the year, at least 120 people were killed and 224 injured. Police and military forces arrested more than 31 people for presumed membership of an Islamist militant group, while at least 66 surrendered to authorities. Abu Sayyaf abducted a total of 14 people during the year intending to demand ransom. 17 were later on either freed or released from captivity. Martial Law, which was introduced in May 2017 due to the occupation of Marawi city, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), ended on December 31 and was not extended. On May 30, the government redeployed 1,500 military personnel and a marine battalion on June 15 to Sulu province, BARMM, to fight Abu Sayyaf.

On January 27, two days after the election results for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) were announced [→ Philippines (MILF)], two Indonesian Jamaah Ansharut Daulah militants, allegedly supported by Abu Sayyaf militants, killed at least 23 and injured at least 95 in a suicide bombing at a

church and its surroundings in Jolo, Sulu, BARMM [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. In response, the government intensified its military operations, including airstrikes against Abu Sayyaf in the provinces of Sulu and Basilan, BARMM. Between January and April, at least 30 combatants on both sides were killed. For example, on February 2, exchange of fire between approx. 150 Abu Sayyaf militants and army forces in Sulu killed at least three militants, five soldiers and injured a total of 33 on both sides in Patikul municipality, Sulu. Fighting between the military and Abu Sayyaf in February displaced at least 5,600 people. From May to October, the conflict was marked by militant attacks on villages and security forces. For example, on May 25, alleged Abu Sayyaf members attacked a village in Patikul municipality, killing two civilians and injuring 15 people in total. On June 28, alleged Abu Sayyaf suicide bombers killed two civilians and three military personnel at the military base in Indanan municipality, Sulu. Concurrently, twelve military forces and ten civilians were injured while 1,050 people were internally displaced. In two ambushes in August, alleged Abu Sayyaf militants killed three and injured one in Talipao, Sulu, and killed one police officer in Patikul. During the successful rescue mission for a British national and his wife, abducted by Abu Sayyaf on October 4, army forces killed seven alleged Abu Sayyaf militants in Parang, Sulu. On November 23 and 24, in two separate events, clashes between members of Abu Sayyaf and military forces left six dead and eleven injured in Patikul and Indanan.

The Islamist group Maute continued to be active this year, particularly in Lanao del Sur, BARMM. For instance, in exchange of fire between alleged Maute members and security forces in Lanao del Sur on January 24, three alleged militants were killed and three security personnel injured. On February 7, security forces killed three Maute members who were resisting arrest in Lanao del Norte, North Mindanao province. On March 11, a firefight in Maguindanao, BARMM, between security forces on the one side, and joint Maute and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) members [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF–MILF, government)] on the other side, left at least three security personnel, one Maute member and eight BIFF members dead. Fire between government forces and the Maute group on March 11 and March 14 in Lanao del Sur left at least six Maute members, including their leader Abu Dar, and four soldiers dead. Reportedly, at least 8,900 people were displaced as a result. tgu

PHILIPPINES (MILF)

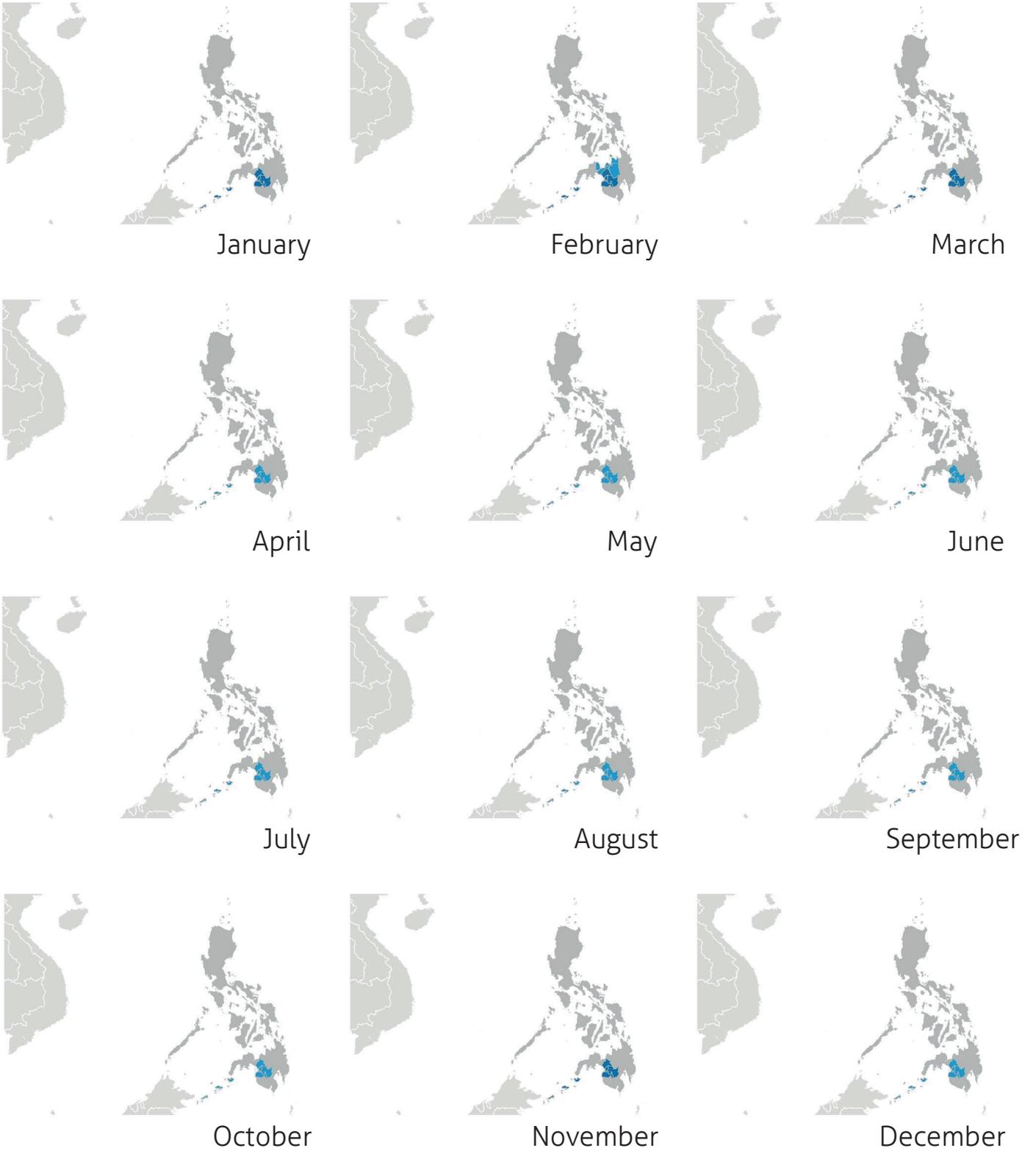
Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1977

Conflict parties: MILF vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over autonomy of the Bangsamoro republic, encompassing the islands of Basilan, Mindanao, Palawan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, and over the orientation of the political system and resources, such as gold, copper, and rubber, continued between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government.

PHILIPPINES (ISLAMIST GROUPS)



NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

The so-called Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), introduced in 2018, was ratified in two separate votes in January and February by the population of the former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). BOL foresaw the replacement of ARMM by Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). It entailed amnesty as well as demobilization of MILF and the establishment of a parliament and a more autonomous administration and jurisdiction. In addition, it determined a share of revenues and taxation from the extraction of resources between the national and local government. With the second plebiscite on February 7, Cotabato province, not formerly part of ARMM, was allocated to BARMM.

In March, MILF leader Murad Ibrahim and President Rodrigo Duterte inaugurated the interim regional government Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA). The BTA is said to replace the ARMM until the regional election in 2022. On March 29, Ibrahim was appointed interim chief minister of BTA, comprising 80 members, nominated by MILF and the government. On April 4, an attempted arrest of members of the MILF's militant Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) escalated, when the suspects resisted the arrest and their relatives attacked the police convoy with assault rifles and a grenade launcher in Ilian, BARMM. Police forces killed four people, while BIAF injured eight security personnel and two civilians in the ensuing gunfight. BIAF stated that the location of the encounter was inside a MILF camp that is part of the ceasefire agreement and that MILF was not informed about the operation beforehand. The local police denied this allegation.

In September, the decommissioning of BIAF combatants continued. In the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, both conflict parties had agreed on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the BIAF. The process consists of four phases, of which the second commenced in September. Subsequently, 1,060 MILF-BIAF combatants handed over 920 weapons, 20 of them heavy weapons.

The conflict parties agreed to create various institutions such as the Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB) to accompany the peace process. The IGRB, which held its first meeting in December, is an institutional mechanism that aims to facilitate and coordinate the peace process by resolving issues between the conflict parties. aya

SRI LANKA (INTER-RELIGIOUS TENSIONS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: Sinhalese Buddhists, BSS, Mahason Balakaya, Sinhala Ravaya vs. Muslims, National Thowheed Jamaath, SLMC vs. Christians

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system continued between religious groups, in particular between Muslim militant groups, such as the National Thowheed Jamaath (NTJ), Christians, and Buddhists.

The most violent attacks this year were the Easter Sunday attacks. On April 21, NTJ conducted nine coordinated suicide bombings at Christian churches and luxury hotels in Min-

uwangoda, Western Province, and Kurunegala, North Western Province, killing at least 253 people, including themselves, and injuring 450. Following the attacks that day, the government declared a national curfew to relieve the situation. Police arrested over 100 suspects in connection with the bombings and eventually identified all nine suicide bombers. They were all said to be associated with NTJ and as a consequence of the attacks, the government declared NTJ and Jammiyathul Millathu Ibrahim, another allegedly involved militant group, terrorist organizations.

Inter-religious tensions remained high and the government reinstated the nationwide curfew for a second time after anti-Muslim riots erupted on May 13, in which rioters torched and vandalized hundreds of Muslim-owned shops and homes. At least five towns in the North Western Province were particularly affected. One case of vandalism of a mosque allegedly involved around 2,000 people. The next day, rioters including people armed with swords stabbed a Muslim man to death in the town of Chilaw, Puttalam district, North Western Province. In response, the government extended the curfew and the police arrested more than 70 people in response to the attacks. On November 16, armed assailants opened fire on a convoy of Muslim civilians, who were traveling to the northern district of Mannar, Northern Province, in order to vote in the presidential election. The unknown attackers also pelted stones at the bus and set fire to the vehicle tires. There were no reports of injuries. Despite reports of minor election law violations elsewhere, the Elections Commission chairman Mahinda Deshapriya stated that there had been no serious incident of violence.

Throughout the year, Christians continued to face threats and attacks. For instance, in September, a series of incidents targeted Christians. On September 11 in Passara, Uva Province, three villagers petitioned against the construction of a church. On a separate occasion, around 100 villagers accompanied by six Buddhist monks and 15 police officers assembled at a church in Iddagolla, Western Province, on September 14. Police threatened to arrest the pastor if worship continued. Subsequently, he was questioned at the police station and ordered not to return to the village. On September 21, ten villagers from Kalkudah, Eastern Province, attacked six Christians on route to church with sticks, severely injuring five. Police arrested two of the attackers, who appeared before court the following day. ewo, ede

TAJIKISTAN (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: Islamist groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

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

On May 19, a prison riot initiated by approx. 30 alleged Islamist militants in a high-security facility in the Vahdat District, Regions of Republican Subordination, left 32 people dead, of whom 17 were alleged members of the mili-

tant group Islamic State (IS). According to authorities, rioters torched the prison hospital and killed three prison guards and five prisoners, while security forces killed 24 inmates. Two of those killed by the rioters were reportedly former senior members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), a major opposition party that had been declared extremist and banned in 2015. In a statement on May 20, the IRPT leadership in exile contested the accuracy of the death toll, suggesting higher numbers. On June 14, IS claimed responsibility for the prison riot.

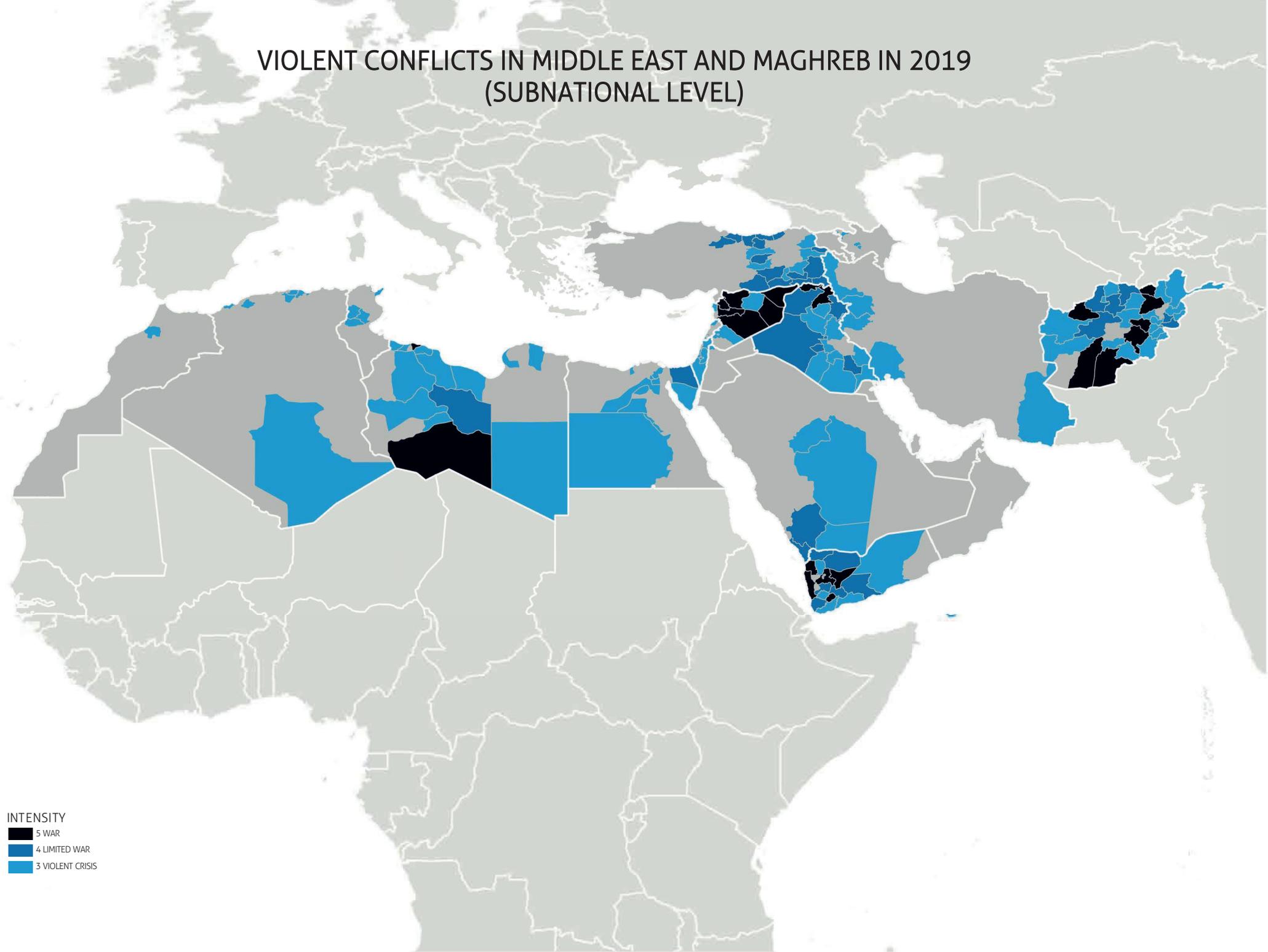
On October 22, the Tajik Supreme Court sentenced two of Amriddin Tabarov's sons, the founder of the Islamist militant group Jamaat Ansarullah, to 23 and 16 years in prison, respec-

tively, after having been extradited from Afghanistan.

According to officials, 20 IS militants attacked a border post in Rudaki District, Regions of Republican Subordination, on November 6. The militants had allegedly crossed the border from Kunduz Province, Afghanistan, to Qabodiyon district, Khatlon Region, Tajikistan, and killed two security officers in an attempt to capture weapons. Subsequently, government forces killed 15 militants, detained another five and destroyed four vehicles. Other reports suggested that the militants killed seven security forces. On November 8, IS claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that ten border guards had been killed in the attack. fsc

Middle East and Maghreb

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2019 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the Middle East and Maghreb region, HIIK observed a total of 60 conflicts in 2019, two fewer than the year before. Eight full-scale wars continued at the same level, while Syria's inner-opposition violence de-escalated to a limited war [→ Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)]. Altogether, four limited wars were observed, two more than in 2018.

Presidential elections were held in Afghanistan on September 28. Throughout the month, the Taliban [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)] disrupted the elections by discouraging Afghans from entering polling stations, increasing the number IED attacks, kidnapping officials and attempting to assassinate politicians. 68 attacks were carried out on election day alone. However, according to the preliminary results published at the end of December, incumbent President Ashraf Ghani won the election with 50.64 percent of the votes. Meanwhile, the war between the Afghan government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and additional US forces, continued. The ongoing peace negotiations between the Taliban and representatives of the US government were close to achieving finalization in September. Instead, due to another attack by Taliban militants, the talks were cancelled by US President Donald Trump. Resuming in December, the Taliban agreed to a ten-day ceasefire without announcing its beginning. By the end of the year, Taliban militants controlled the most territory since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. The number of civilian casualties once again reached a record high, mostly caused by IEDs. Additionally, aerial operations carried out by pro-government air force lead to the most civilian casualties ever recorded in this segment, killing more than 300 people and injuring around 600. According to UNAMA, July, August, and September were the deadliest months for civilians since records started in 2009.

In the Maghreb, the most striking development was the eruption of large-scale popular protests in Algeria [→ Algeria (opposition)], resulting in the resignation of long-term President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Nationwide pro-democratic protests continued throughout the year, with the so-called Hirak protesters demanding an overhaul of the military rule and contesting the subsequently held elections.

In Tunisia, protests by civil society actors around socioeconomic issues continued [→ Tunisia (opposition)]. Amidst a continuing state of emergency, Islamist militants carried out multiple attacks and were met with raids by the army [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

In Western Sahara, the POLISARIO continued to contest Moroccan rule, renewed negotiation attempts by the UN again came to a standstill [→ Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara°)].

In Egypt, the war continued between the government and militant groups at the Sinai Peninsula [→ Egypt (militant groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. Moreover, IS' Sinai Province, operating in the same area, frequently attacked civilians and clashed with Egyptian Armed Forces, backed by local Bedouin tribes [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In the rest of the country, the government continued to persecute militant opposition groups such as Hasm and Lewaa al-Thawra, making them responsible for attacks on civilians, police and armed forces. In late September, countrywide anti-government protests erupted. In response, the government cracked down on protests and arrested thousands of civilians [→ Egypt (opposition)].

In the Gaza strip, the limited war continued between Israel on the one hand, and Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and other Islamist militants on the other hand [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)]. In May and November, tensions increased with Palestinian militant groups launching hundreds of projectiles towards Israel and Israeli Forces striking targets in Gaza. Palestinians continued their Great March of Return protests along the border fence, leading to clashes with Israeli forces throughout the year. Moreover, the violent conflict continued between Hamas and Salafi groups. In August, a suicide attack hit a Hamas checkpoint in Gaza city [→ State of Palestine° (Hamas – Salafi Groups)]. In the West Bank, the crisis over the creation of a Palestinian state continued on a violent level [→ Israel – State of Palestine° (PNA)]. Throughout the year, Hamas and Fatah blamed each other of conducting arbitrary arrests and abuse of their respective members [→ State of Palestine° (Hamas – al-Fatah)].

Tensions between Iran and the USA intensified throughout the year in terms of rhetoric, economic sanctions, and physical incidents [→ Iran – USA]. Following its maximum pressure campaign, the US government imposed additional sanctions throughout the year while also designating the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) as a terrorist organization. In May, the US deployed a carrier strike group to the Middle East and sent another 1,500 soldiers to the region. One month later, in June, several oil tankers were attacked in the Gulf of Oman, allegedly by IRGC forces. The military confrontation between the two parties peaked in July, when IRGC shot down a US military drone and US President Trump called off an initiated retaliation strike against Iran. In December, tensions between Iran and the USA intensified over their support for opposing parties in Iraqi domestic conflicts, involving the Kata'ib Hezbollah [→ Iraq (Shiite militant groups)]. In May, Iran started to violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by stockpiling excess enriched plutonium. It repeatedly violated the JCPOA throughout the year subsequently causing talks between Germany, France, and the UK about reinstating sanctions against Iran. Moreover, the violent crisis between Iran and Israel intensified and expanded to Iraq. While more openly carrying out airstrikes against Iranian and Iranian-backed targets in Syria [→ Syria (opposition); Syria (inter-opposition rivalry); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)], Israel neither confirmed nor denied airstrikes carried out in Iraq. There, weapon depots from the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), an Iranian linked militia, were destroyed by a foreign air force. Finally, in November, protests erupted in several cities nationwide after the Iranian government increased gas prices to address economic challenges [→ Iran (opposition)]. For 5 days, mobile services and internet were shut down after the government announced the riots were over. According to Amnesty International more than 300 people died during the protests.

In Iraq, recurring protests over a lack of basic public services escalated to widespread violent demonstrations against the sectarian system and the dominance of corrupt elites. The uprising, which began in October, and ensuing security response left hundreds dead and tens of thousands injured. As a result, Ayatollah al-Sistani, Iraq's highest religious authority, called

for the formation of a new government. On November 29, Prime Minister Adil Abdul al-Mahdi resigned. Meanwhile, tensions between Shiite militias and the government, supported by the USA, escalated in December over a US airstrike against an Iran-backed Shiite militia group, which the foreign ministry condemned as an alleged violation of Iraq's sovereignty.

In Jordan, the violent crisis continued between various opposition groups, comprising trade unions, and civil society organizations on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. However, most protests remained small-scale, with only several hundred participants [→ Jordan (opposition)].

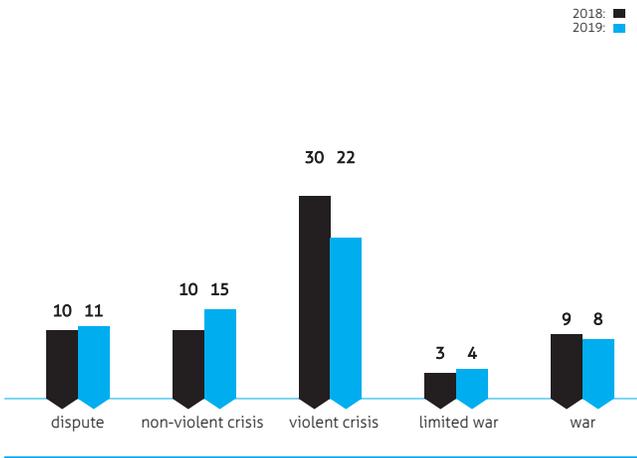
In Lebanon, the conflict between the government and Sunni militant groups de-escalated to a non-violent crisis [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. In June IS claimed a suicide attack in Tripoli, North Governorate, resulting in five casualties [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Moreover, the violent crisis over subnational predominance in Palestinian refugee camps between various Palestinian Islamist groups continued. Clashes concentrated in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camps, South Governorate [→ Lebanon (inner-Palestinian tensions)]. In August, an alleged Israeli drone attack in Lebanon led to increased tensions between Israel on the one hand, and Lebanon and Hezbollah on the other hand. In September, Hezbollah fired anti-tank missiles into Israel, targeting Israeli Defense. In response Israeli forces shelled targets in Lebanon. No casualties were confirmed [→ Israel – Lebanon; Israel (Hezbollah)].

In Libya, the Libyan National Army (LNA) under General Khalifa Haftar launched its first large-scale mobilization into southern parts of the country beyond its northeast operation headquarters in Benghazi. There, various tribal and ethnic groups clashed over control of trafficking routes and resources, such as oil, specifically in Murzuq district, Fezzan region [→ Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)]. Tribal groups became increasingly involved in ongoing fighting between national and international actors [→ Libya (opposition)], with tribal territory in southern Libya serving as a focal point for the LNA. Despite attempts at power-sharing arrangements between Haftar and Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj of the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), the beginning advancement of LNA forces on the capital Tripoli on April 4 led the opposition conflict to escalate.

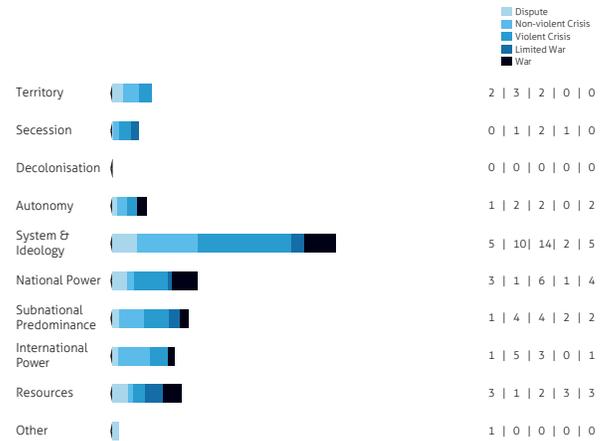
In Syria, three wars continued and one war decreased to a limited-war. The government of President Bashar al-Assad, backed by Russia, Iran, and Shiite militias, continued to make territorial gains in the conflict with various opposition groups [→ Syria (opposition)]. Pro-government troops retook parts of Hama, Idlib and Aleppo governorates. The territorial gains left the opposition groups only in control of parts of Idlib Governorate, western Aleppo Governorate, the Turkish-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, as well as the Hezbollah involvement in Syria [→ Syria – Israel; Israel – Iran; Israel (Hezbollah)]. The fight against IS continued throughout the year, with Kurdish-led SDF forces regaining the last pockets of IS-controlled areas east of the river Euphrates [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The war between Turkish troops, allied with Syrian opposition groups, against the Kurdish-led SDF in the Afrin region in northern Aleppo Governorate spread to the border regions in northern ar-Raqqa and al-Hassakah governorates, due to an invasion by Turkey [→ Syria (Turkey – SDF / northern Syria)]. The limited-war between opposition groups, such as the al-Nusra Front successor Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, mainly affected Idlib Governorate in January [→ Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)]. The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) initiated 'Operation Claw' in May, executing land and airstrikes in northern Iraq. The three-stage operation resulted in the deaths of at least 1,000 people, including senior members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). After US troops began their withdrawal from northeastern Syria on October 7, Turkey declared it would implement a 30 km-deep "safe zone" along its border with Syria with the alleged aim of resettling one million Syrian refugees currently residing in Turkey.

In Yemen, the war over national power continued between al-Houthi forces on the one hand, and the government of internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi on the other hand [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)]. This year was the second-deadliest year of the conflict on record after 2018. The conflict was marked by tensions concerning the ceasefire agreement of December 2018 in the port city Hudaydah, eponymous governorate. The violent crisis between al-Hirak and the government over the secession of southern Yemen continued [→ Yemen (al-Hirak / Southern Yemen)]. On August 7, following an al-Houthi missile attack on a southern military camp on August 1, clashes between Southern Resistance Forces (SRF) and Hadi-aligned forces erupted. The clashes continued until August 10 and left at least 40 dead and more than 260 injured. After a further escalation on August 28, including multiple airstrikes by the UAE killing at least 24 people, diplomatic efforts resulted in the signing of a power-sharing deal, the so-called Riyadh Agreement between STC and Hadi on November 5. As in the second half of 2018, the activities of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) further declined in 2019. Throughout the year AQAP sporadically attacked Yemeni government forces, and UAE-backed forces [→ Saudi Arabia, Yemen (AQAP)], and al-Houthi forces [→ Yemen (AQAP – al-Houthi forces)]. This year IS and AQAP militants fought each other regularly in northwestern Bayda governorate [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

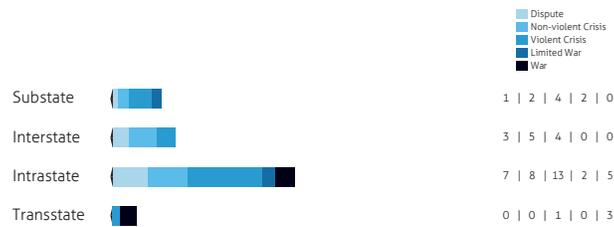
CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2019 COMPARED TO 2018



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT ITEM IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2019



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT INTENSITIES BY CONFLICT TYPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2019



Overview: Conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb in 2019

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	1949	•	3
Algeria (Berbers / Kabylia)*	Berbers vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1963	•	2
Algeria (opposition)	opposition groups, labour unions, Hirak movement vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	3
Bahrain (opposition)	oppositions 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)	militant opposition groups, political opposition and activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1954	•	3
Egypt – Sudan*	Egypt vs. Sudan	territory, resources	1958	•	1
Iran (opposition)	intra-systemic opposition, non-systemic 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 vs. Saudi-Arabia	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iran – UAE*	Iran vs. UAE	territory	1971	•	1
Iran – USA	Iran vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)*	Kurdistan Regional Government vs. government	autonomy, resources	1971	•	1
Iraq (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↗	4
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
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*	Israel vs. Lebanon	territory, international power	1948	↘	2
Israel – State of Palestine ^o (PNA)	PNA, Palestinian protesters 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	2011	•	3
Kuwait (Bedouns)*	Bedouns vs. government	other	1959	•	1
Kuwait (opposition)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1
Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al.)*	Palestinian Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	2
Lebanon (inner-Palestinian tensions)	Ansar Allah vs. al-Fatah vs. Osbat al-Ansar vs. 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	↓	1

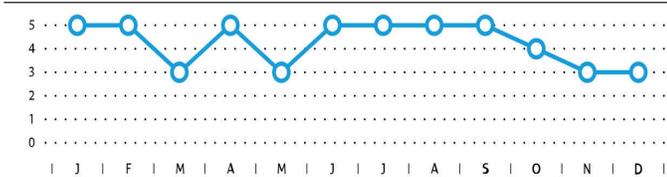
MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)*	Sunni militant groups vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2014	↘	2
Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)	Tebu vs. Awlad Suleiman vs. Zway vs. Ahali vs. Touareg	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	4
Libya (opposition)	GNA, HSC vs. LNA, HoR,	system/ideology, national power, resources	2011	•	5
Mauritania (anti-slavery activists)*	IRA, opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	2015	↘	2
Morocco (opposition)	Justice and Spirituality, M20F, AMDH, labor rights activists, Hirak movement vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	3
Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara ^o)	POLISARIO vs. government	secession	1975	•	2
Oman (opposition)*	oppositions 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	↓	1
Saudi Arabia (Shiites)	Shiites vs. government	system/ideology	1979	•	3
Saudia Arabia, Yemen (AQAP)	AQAP vs. Saudi Arabia, Yemen, USA	system/ideology	1990	NEW	3
State of Palestine ^o (Hamas – al-Fatah)*	al-Fatah vs. Hamas	subnational predominance	1994	•	2
State of Palestine ^o (Hamas – Salafi Groups)*	Hamas vs. Salafist groups	subnational predominance	2007	•	3
Syria (FSA, Islamist groups – KSC / Kurdish regions)*	FSA, Islamist groups vs. KSC	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2012	↘	2
Syria (inter-opposition rivalry)	HTS vs. FSA	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2013	↘	4
Syria (Kurdish groups)*	KDPS, PYD vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	1962	↘	2
Syria (opposition)	NC, FSA, HTS vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	5
Syria (Turkey – SDF / Northern Syria)	Turkey, FSA vs. SDF, YPG	autonomy, subnational predominance	2018	•	5
Syria – Turkey*	Syria vs. Turkey	territory, international power	1946	•	2
Syria – USA*	Syria vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	2003	↘	2
Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)	IS vs. SDF, Syrian opposition groups, Iran, Russia, United Kingdom, France, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, al-Houthi, Taliban, Hezbollah et al., USA, Yemen, Turkey, Tunesia, Saudi Arabia, Lybia	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	↘	1
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, 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 continued 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 hand.

Following talks in the previous year, peace negotiations between the Taliban and representatives of the US government continued while the Taliban still refused to negotiate with the Afghan government directly. According to the aspired peace agreement, foreign forces should withdraw and the Taliban should guarantee not to shelter terrorists. Subsequently, an additional dialogue should result in nationwide ceasefire including all militant groups. The parties were in the final steps of reaching an agreement by September. However, on September 9, US President Donald Trump canceled further talks, as a reaction to a Taliban suicide attack at a checkpoint close to the NATO headquarters and US embassy in the capital Kabul, on September 5, which killed twelve people including one US soldier. Despite the tensions, on November 19, the Taliban and the Afghan government exchanged five prisoners. Ten days later, Trump visited US troops in Afghanistan and showed his willingness to continue the peace talks. On December 7, the peace negotiations between the US and Taliban resumed. Eventually, on December 30, Taliban's ruling council agreed to a ten-day ceasefire but without announcing when it would commence.

Meanwhile, violence continued between Afghan and pro-government forces on the one hand, and Taliban militants on the other hand. For instance, on January 21, the Taliban launched a major attack on a compound of the Afghanistan's intelligence agency National Directorate of Security (NDS) in central Maidan Shar, Wardak province. The militants used a captured US-Humvee to infiltrate the base and detonate an VBIED, killing at least 45 NDS-officials and two Taliban militants, while another 70 NDS-personnel were wounded. Despite ongoing peace talks the Taliban announced their annual spring offensive in April. On March 1, Taliban fighters attacked a strategically important military compound of the Afghan National Army (ANA) with eight suicide bombers and additional forces, killing at least 23 soldiers and wounding 16. On March 17, the Taliban captured 150 Afghan soldiers in the province of Badghis.

The government and US-forces repelled a Taliban attack on the central city of Kunduz, eponymous province, on August 31, in which 56 Taliban fighters and three civilians were killed,

and over 41 injured. However, as of September 2019 the Taliban reportedly controlled the most territory since the US-led intervention overthrew the Taliban in 2001.

Afghan military backed by US forces carried out combined ground and air operations throughout the year, increasing the pressure in the months of September and October. For instance, on September 15, two airstrikes by the Afghan and US Air Force killed two of Taliban's shadow governors together with 38 of their fighters in Anar Dar, Farah Province and Dara-e-Soof, Samangan Province. More airstrikes took place on October 27, in Faryab Province and Kandahar Province, killing 88 Taliban and injuring 19. Over the course of the year the US Air Forces dropped a total of 7,432 bombs and missiles, leading to the highest number since recordings started in 2006.

According to UNAMA, the number of civil casualties reached a record high level. Between January and December 10,392 civilian casualties were recorded of which 3,403 were killed and 6,989 injured. UNHCR documented almost 380,000 people as internally displaced in 2019. While the number of civilian fatalities declined in the first six months compared to recent years, their death toll increased by 42 percent between July 1 and September 30, in comparison to the same time period in the previous year, making these the deadliest months for civilians since UNAMA records began in 2009. Afghan and US-led RSM forces were responsible for most of the civil casualties in the first half of the year. Most of the civilian casualties, were hit by airstrikes targeting Taliban and opium production facilities as their main source of income. For instance, on May 5, multiple airstrikes destroyed more than 60 drug laboratories related to the Taliban in Bakwa district, Farah Province, killing at least 39 civilians. Non-government forces, primarily Taliban, caused most civilian casualties in the second half. Especially, IED attacks continued to be the main reason for civilian casualties. For instance, on September 19, Taliban detonated a truck carrying explosives in front of a hospital in Qalat city, Zabol Province, killing at least 30 people and injuring 95 let to the destruction of the most important health facility in the region.

The violence against foreign civilians and international organizations continued throughout the year and intensified towards its end. For instance, on September 2, Taliban fighters tried to attack Green Village compound, a residential area used by international organizations in the capital Kabul. The attack began when a VBIED exploded near the western wall of the compound, destroying numerous houses. At least 16 civilians were killed and more than 116 injured as a result of the incident. On November 24, a UN vehicle was attacked with a grenade in the outskirts of Kabul, killing one international UN employee and injuring five others.

The fourth presidential election since 2001 was held on September 28. The Taliban disrupted the election by increasing the number of IED attacks and discouraging Afghans from entering polling stations. For instance, on July 28, the office of vice-presidential candidate Amrullah Saleh was attacked by Taliban using VBIED and firearms in the capital Kabul, killing 16 people and injuring at least 50. On September 17, militants detonated an IED close to an election rally in Charikar, Parwan province, where President Ashraf Ghani was supposed to give a speech, killing 26 people. Another IED exploded shortly after on Massoud Square, Kabul, close to government ministries, injuring 38 people. Solely on election

day Taliban carried out 68 attacks concentrating on polling stations and schools. A day later, eight members of the election staff were kidnapped by the Taliban in Shinwari district, Parwan Province. According to the preliminary results published on December 22, 1.8 million of the 9.5 million registered voters participated in the election of which a majority of 50.64 percent voted for incumbent Ashraf Ghani. *dst, mwe*

AFGHANISTAN – PAKISTAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: Afghanistan vs. Pakistan
 Conflict items: territory, international power

The violent crisis over territory and international power continued between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The porous border and the deteriorating security situation in both countries remained the primary issue of contention.

In January, Pakistan finalized the fencing of another 900 km along the Durand line border. Officials stated that about 4,000 families would be resettled in the area.

Despite the Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), finalized in 2018, tensions between the negotiating countries continued into 2019. For instance, on March 26, Afghanistan recalled its ambassador to Pakistan for a few days after the Pakistani government had prompted Afghanistan to establish an interim government.

On June 10 and August 8, meetings between Afghan and Pakistani officials were held to review the APAPPS. The negotiating parties decided to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

However, violent incidents continued. For instance, Pakistani military forces carried out an operation leading to the deaths of three civilians and the destruction of a mosque in Dangam District, Kunar Province, Afghanistan, on September 26. Violence arose again on October 29, when a clash between Afghan and Pakistani military forces injured six soldiers and five civilians, most likely on the Afghan side in Nari District, Kunar Province.

Furthermore, both governments held talks on the repatriation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. In June, both countries and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees agreed on a twelve-point declaration to improve the situation of Afghan refugees. Over the course of the year, more than 1,528 registered and 19,140 undocumented Afghan refugees returned from Pakistan. However, 1.4 million Afghan refugees remained in Pakistan. *pfr*

ALGERIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition groups, labour unions, Hirak movement vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system continued between various opposition groups and the Hirak

movement on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

This year's protests were mostly centered around the end of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's presidency and the following electoral process. After the government announced that Bouteflika would seek a fifth term in office on February 2, nationwide protests erupted on February 22 with reportedly hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets. The so-called Hirak movement continued to stage protests in the cities of Algiers, Bouira, Constantine, Oran, and Tizi Ouzou, eponymous provinces, and various other cities every Friday throughout the year. Similarly, students protested every Tuesday. The protesters demanded the resignation of various government and army officials, as well as the overhaul of the military rule through democratic reforms.

Subsequent week-long protests and repeated demands by army chief of staff Ahmed Gaid Salah, Bouteflika announced his resignation on April 2, two weeks before the scheduled presidential election. Presidential elections were rescheduled for July 4 and then postponed to December 12 amidst boycotts by political forces and large popular protests.

Whilst the protests remained largely peaceful, police forces and protesters clashed on several occasions, and hundreds of protesters were arrested. For instance, on March 1, protesters vandalized buildings on a shopping street and set fire to a bank in Algiers, whilst police used tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets and sound bombs to disperse the crowds. The clashes left reportedly 56 police officers and at least seven civilians injured, one protester died under contested circumstances. On June 21, 42 protesters were arrested and later convicted for carrying the Amazigh flag during a demonstration in Algiers [→ Algeria (Berbers/Kabylia)].

The protests intensified in the weeks leading up to the election. On November 19, protesters constructed a brick wall to block the entrance of the local office of the newly created electoral authority (ANIE) in Tichy, Bejaia province. Police forces used tear gas and rubber bullets, injuring three. On November 28, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning human rights violations by security forces during the Hirak protests. Government officials criticized the resolution and the pro-government General Union of Algerian Workers organized a march attended by a few hundred people on November 30 in order to protest against 'foreign interference' as well as to support the upcoming elections.

On election day, December 12, tens of thousands of people protested all over the country. In Bejaia city, eponymous province, protesters closed polling stations and destroyed ballots. In Tizi Ouzou, police dispersed a protest using tear gas and rubber bullets, injuring several protesters. At least 400 protesters were arrested in Oran. ANIE announced the army's favored candidate Abdelmadjid Tebboune as elected president with a turnout of 40 percent. Opposition parties called a boycott and contested the results. The weekly Tuesday and Friday Hirak protests continued. *aht*

BAHRAIN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: oppositions groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

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

As in previous years, the government limited opposition activities. On January 21, Bahrain's Court of Cassation ordered the dissolution of the opposition party National Democratic Action Society. On January 28, Bahrain's highest court upheld the life sentences of the opposition leaders Sheikh Ali Salman, Sheikh Hassan Sultan, and Ali al-Aswad. OHCHR issued a statement on February 1, in which it raised concerns about the fairness of the trial against the three opposition leaders. On February 26, the Bahraini Top Court of Appeals sentenced another opposition member, Sheikh Hassan Issa, to ten years in prison.

Ahead of the anniversary of the 2011 uprising on February 14, the government increased arrests of protesters and suspected opposition members. On February 27, 167 people were sentenced to jail in a single proceeding for participation in sit-ins. Additionally, on April 16, 138 people were sentenced to jail, and their citizenship were revoked for allegedly planning to form a terror group. This act was widely criticized by opposition groups and international human rights organizations. Consequently, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa restored the citizenship of 550 people. However, many of the major opposition figures reportedly did not regain citizenship.

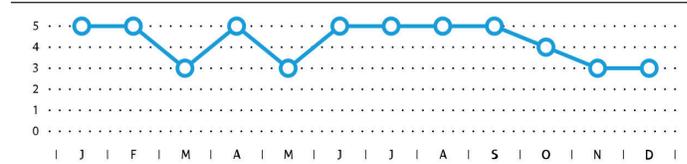
On July 27, 19 people were sentenced to life and 37 people to up to 15 years in prison for allegedly forming a terrorist group. Further, authorities executed three people for their alleged involvement in the killing of a police officer and an imam. Two of those executed were identified as Shiite activists. Beginning on July 29, the executions sparked protests in Bilad al-Qadeem, Northern Governorate, which government forces tried to disperse with tear gas, leaving one protester dead. Additional protests occurred in September and October throughout the Northern and Capital Governorates. For instance, on September 9 and 10 in Manama and Nuwaidrat, Capital and Northern Governorates respectively, as well as on October 9 and 11 in Sanabis, Capital Governorate. yad

EGYPT (MILITANT GROUPS / SINAI PENINSULA)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: militant groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance



The war over ideology and subnational predominance in the Sinai Peninsula continued between militant groups on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. As in the previous years, most clashes occurred in North Sinai Governorate. The conflict overlapped with fighting against the Islamic State's (IS) local affiliate, called Sinai Province, operating in the same area [→ Iraq, Syria, et al. (IS)].

On January 5, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi acknowledged Egypt's close security cooperation with Israel with regard to the situation in Sinai in an interview with CBS News. According to al-Sisi, this included the exchange of intelligence information and the allowance of the Israeli Air Force to enter Egyptian airspace. His statement was in accordance with reports of Israeli airstrikes in Sinai, targeting weapon shipments to militant groups in Gaza [→ Israel (Hamas et al.)].

Throughout the year, Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) and Egyptian National Police (ENP) continued to fight against militant groups, resulting in the death of at least 330 militants. Furthermore, militant groups attacked ENP and EAF, as well as civilians. For instance, on February 19, ENP raided two militant hideouts in the Abu Eita and Obeidat neighborhood of al-Arish city, North Sinai Governorate. ENP killed 16 militants in the following clashes and seized weapons, IEDs, and ammunition.

On May 16, EAF reported the assassination of 47 militants and arrest of another 158 in course of recent military operations in Sinai. According to the statement, militants killed five EAF members. On July 19, EAF airstrikes targeted hideouts of militants near the cities al-Arish and Bir al-Abd, North Sinai, reportedly killing 20 militants. On September 3, an armed group killed at least one civilian and abducted another ten on a road near the city of Bir al-Abd. On September 14, militants attacked a military checkpoint in al-Arish, resulting in the death of three militants, three soldiers and the wounding of another two. On November 4, army sources announced the assassination of 83 militants in Sinai, prior to the end of September. For example, on October 29, ENP shot and killed 13 militants in al-Arish, allegedly planning attacks. Moreover, on December 8, militants attacked an ENP checkpoint in the city of Rafah, North Sinai, killing one police conscript and wounding two others.

On May 28, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report accusing Egyptian forces of committing violence against civilians, including war crimes, in course of operations against militants in Sinai. Allegedly, Egyptian forces conducted arbitrary

arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings and forced displacement.
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EGYPT (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: militant opposition groups, political opposition and activists vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power continued between the opposition and the government. As in previous years, the opposition was composed of Islamist militant groups such as Hasm Movement and Lewaa al-Thawra, on the one hand, and the civilian opposition and activists, on the other hand. The crisis was influenced by the government's fight against the so-called Islamic State and other militant groups on the Sinai Peninsula [→ Egypt (militants / Sinai Peninsula); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Throughout the year, Egyptian National Police (ENP) and Egyptian Armed Forces continued to pursue militant opposition groups, which, in turn, frequently attacked ENP forces and civilians. As in past years, attacks by Islamist groups also targeted key economic sectors largely controlled by the military such as tourism and construction. On January 29, the Interior Ministry announced the arrest of 54 people allegedly belonging to a newly formed Muslim Brotherhood (MB) affiliate called Allahom Thawra. The Ministry accused the group of planning terrorist actions on the anniversary of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. On May 19, a roadside bomb injured 17 tourists in a bus near Giza Pyramids, Giza Governorate. The next day, ENP conducted raids and killed twelve suspected militants in the city 6th of October, Giza Governorate, and al-Shorouk city, Cairo Governorate. On August 5, a car bomb exploded next to the National Cancer Institute in the capital of Cairo, killing 20 and injuring 47 others. During search operations the following day, ENP shot and killed eight alleged Hasm Movement militants in the city of Atsa, Fayoum Governorate, and seven more in al-Shorouk city. On September 18, ENP killed seven Lewaa al-Thawra militants, including the group's leader, in shootouts in Obour city, Qalyubia Governorate, and Helwan city, Cairo Governorate. Throughout the year, ENP killed at least 84 militants during search operations and clashes, while seven ENP officers were killed.

The conflict was marked by nationwide civilian anti-government protests in late September. Protests were triggered by videos on social media released by Ali Mohamed, a Spain-based Egyptian building contractor formally involved in government construction projects. Mohamed blamed President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the military for nepotism and corruption, and called for protests. On September 20, hundreds protested throughout the country, demanding the president's resignation. One day later, protesters clashed with ENP forces in the city of Suez, eponymous governorate, when the latter reportedly used tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition. In the following days, ENP arrested thousands of people and locked down public places ahead of planned protests. For instance, on September 24, ENP arrested eleven

members of the Istiklal party for their support of the protests. On September 27, ENP cracked down on new protests in Cairo and other cities, whereas thousands of supporters of al-Sisi held countrywide rallies. Until the end of October, ENP detained approx. 4,300 persons for their alleged involvement in the protests. On December 10, the Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Mohamed to five years in absentia due to tax evasion.

In the course of the year, the government of al-Sisi took several steps to consolidate its power. On February 14, the Parliament agreed on proposed constitutional amendments that included extended presidential terms. A referendum in April confirmed the changes with an approval rate of 89 percent and a turnout of 44 percent, allowing al-Sisi to extend his presidency until 2030 in case of reelection. On June 17, al-Sisi's predecessor Mohamed Morsi died in a courtroom, after he allegedly had been denied access to a doctor. dal, jhe

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 continued between intra-systemic opposition groups such as reformist parties and non-systemic oppositions on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. While intra-systemic opposition groups remained marginalized and the US 'maximum pressure campaign' continued, domestic protest groups', connected by economic deprivation, as well as exiled opposition groups' activities, intensified.

The re-imposition of US sanctions in 11/2018 exacerbated the economic situation and increased public dissent. Low-income employees, such as workers and teachers, reacted with protests and strikes. For instance, Haft Tappeh Sugar Cane Mill Labour Syndicate organized several rounds of strikes throughout the year, leading to the arrests and imprisonment of the organizers. Numerous opposition groups and activists inside and outside the country, as well as the UN special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, condemned long-term imprisonment verdicts against civil rights activists, and called upon the government to respect opposition rights. While the government introduced some measures to address the economic challenges, the decision to significantly increase gas prices sparked nationwide protests in November. After the official announcement on November 15, protests erupted and quickly expanded to more than 100 cities across the country. Within the next days, hundreds of government buildings, police stations, banks, stores, and petrol stations were severely damaged. From November 16 to 21, the government shut down all mobile services and cut internet service. On November 17, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei claimed counter-revolutionaries and foreign enemies of the country to be responsible for the violence and called for an end of the protests. On November 21, the gov-

ernment announced that the riots had ended. Amnesty International estimated that at least 304 protesters were killed in more than 21 cities and 7,000 were arrested across the country, while the officially confirmed number of deaths did not exceed twelve. [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 continued 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 hand.

After the heavy cross-border operation carried out by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in September 2018, during which seven short-range ballistic missiles were fired at the PDKI headquarters in Koy Sanjaq, Erbil Governorate, Iraq, the clashes between PDKI and IRGC declined significantly. By June 2019, five reported incidents occurred between IRGC and Kurdish Peshmerga, of which only one was reportedly linked PDKI. In this one particular incident, the Peshmerga clashed with IRGC forces at the border area near the city of Choman, Erbil Governorate, Iraq, on June 30. Later that day, IRGC forces shelled the area.

In July, violence escalated after an unidentified armed group fired on an IRGC vehicle on July 9, killing three IRGC fighters and injuring one. On the following day, after an IRGC commander stated that IRGC 'will attack the PDKI everywhere in the world', IRGC began an offensive against the strongholds and training centers of Kurdish Peshmerga across the border in the Iraqi region of Kurdistan, as well as Kermanshah Province, Iran, using missiles, drones, and artillery units. The offensive lasted for three days, leaving two civilians dead and two more injured in Sidakan, Kurdistan Region, Iraq. Moreover, one IRGC fighter was killed in a clash with Peshmerga in Kermanshah, eponymous Governorate, on July 11.

Later on November 15, a fuel price hike sparked largely peaceful protests across several cities across Iran [→ Iran (Opposition)]. On November 21, the government announced that the riots had ended. The PDKI publicly expressed its support for the protests. [mwe](#)

IRAN – ISRAEL

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Iran vs. Israel

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The violent crisis over international power continued between Iran and Israel in 2019. While the 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. Throughout the year, Israel attacked Iranian and Iranian-backed targets in Syria, confirmed its involvement more openly and expanded its operations to Iraq, targeting the Iranian-linked Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

On January 13, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed in a statement that Israel had attacked weapon depots containing Iranian weapons in Damascus International Airport, Syria. Similar airstrikes took place throughout the year in cities such as Masyaf, Hama Governorate, Quneitra, Damascus Governorate and Sheikh Najjar area, Aleppo Governorate. Israel neither confirmed nor denied its involvement in most of the supposed incidents.

According to the New York Times, Israeli airstrikes also took place in Iraq. Netanyahu also hinted that Israel might have conducted the attacks. In July and August, PMF depots in Iraq were hit several times, after they were allegedly used by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps to transfer weapons to Syria. On July 19, an attack destroyed a cargo of guided short-range missiles near Balad Air Base, north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, killing three people in the strike, including an Iranian. On July 30, another base, Camp Ashraf, in Diyala Governorate, was targeted. Similar attacks were reported in August at Camp Falcon in Baghdad and Balad Air Base. [hiik](#)

IRAN – USA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Iran vs. USA

Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis over international power, ideology, and the Iranian nuclear program continued between Iran and the USA. Following US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, Iran and the remaining contract members Germany, UK, France, China, Russia, and the EU declared their continuous commitment to the agreement.

On May 5, the US government deployed a carrier strike group to the Middle East in response to alleged warnings from Iran. Three days later, Iran announced its first violation of the JCPOA by stockpiling excess enriched uranium instead of selling it internationally. Iran further set a 60-day ultimatum for the EU to protect Iran's economy from US sanctions. Subsequently, US President Donald Trump imposed new sanctions targeting the Iranian metal industry.

On May 12, four oil tankers – two Saudi Arabian, one Norwegian and one Emirati – were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz. Eleven days later, the US publicly blamed Iran for the incident and sent 1,500 additional troops to the region. On June 13, two additional oil tankers were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. The US accused Iran, releasing a video which allegedly showed Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) vessels and a crew removing an unexploded limpet mine from one of the attacked oil tankers.

The IRGC shot down an US military RQ-4 drone on June 20,

claiming it had violated Iranian airspace, which the US denied. This marked the preliminary peak of the conflict with Trump calling off a planned retaliation strike against Iran one day later.

On June 24, the US government imposed new sanctions against Iranian leaders, directly targeting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. On July 8, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran started to enrich uranium to a denser degree than 3.67 percent, the limit imposed by the JCPOA. Ten days later, a US warship shot down an approaching Iranian military drone in the Strait of Hormuz. In July, both parties reiterated their willingness to enter into dialogue, although Iranian President Hassan Rouhani imposed the condition that the sanctions had to be lifted first.

On September 7, Iran claimed to be able to enrich uranium to more than 20 percent. On September 15, a Saudi Arabian oil facility was damaged in an attack by military drones and surface-to-surface missiles, which the Yemeni al-Houthi forces claimed responsibility for [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)]. Two days later, US officials blamed Iran for the attack and announced they should be prepared for a potential retaliation strike. On September 24, Germany, France, and the UK also accused Iran of responsibility for the attack. The same day, Rouhani declared he was open to small changes concerning the JCPOA. A day later, the Iranian president publicly ruled out any negotiations with the US until all sanctions against Iran were lifted on October 31, the US imposed new sanctions against the Iranian construction and trade sector. On November 4, Iran launched a new array of 30 IR-6 centrifuges, which further extended the country's ability to enrich uranium. Seven days later, the German foreign minister stated that Germany, the UK, and France should consider to reinstate international sanctions against Iran.

Tensions between the US and Iran continued over their support of opposing parties in Iraq, intensifying with the killing of a US defense contractor on December 27. The US reacted with an airstrike on Iranian-backed militias, which in turn prompted violent demonstrations in front of the US embassy in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad [→ Iraq (Shiite militant groups)]. rkr

October 3. According to the UN, since October over 400 people have been killed and over 19,000 injured in the protests. On May 16, anti-corruption protests erupted and four people were killed in clashes with security personnel. On June 20, demonstrators took to the streets in southern governorates and Basra, eponymous governorate, demanding better jobs and public services, such as a reliable electricity supply, less corruption and improved public health provisions.

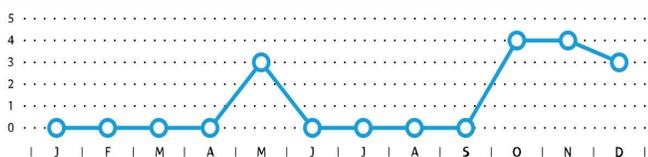
Additionally, demonstrations against the alleged sectarian system and the dominance of corrupt elites escalated at the beginning of October. Clashes between security forces and protesters began on October 3 in the capital of Baghdad, killing 44 protesters and injuring 440. On October 4, Iraq's highest religious authority, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, openly backed the anti-government protests. The same day, security forces killed seven protesters and injured 64 in Dhi Qar Governorate. Later, on October 25, security forces and protesters clashed in Baghdad, leaving 30 dead and hundreds injured. The next day, security forces and members of the Shiite militia Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq [→ Iraq (Shiite militant groups)] killed 14 demonstrators in Maysan Governorate. Protesters and supporters of the Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr retaliated, killing two leading members of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq. On October 29, security forces killed at least 14 people and injured approx. 550 in Kerbela, eponymous governorate.

On November 3, protesters attacked the Iranian consulate in Kerbela, six of whom were killed by security forces. On November 9, clashes erupted in Basra, resulting in the deaths of 21 protesters and injuring 350. On November 24, security forces killed seven demonstrators and injured 150 in Basra, using tear gas and live ammunition. On November 27, protesters set the Iranian consulate on fire in Najaf, eponymous province, killing one and injuring approx. 45. The next day, security forces clashed with protesters in Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar Governorate, killing at least 16 protesters and injuring over 100. On November 29, protests continued in Nasiriyah, leaving 24 protesters dead and 210 injured. In response, Ayatollah al-Sistani called for the formation of a new government, accusing the authorities of failing to address the demands of protesters. On November 29, Prime Minister Adil Abdul al-Mahdi resigned over the protests, however these continued through December. jmr, cgl

IRAQ (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2011

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



The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power escalated to a limited war between the opposition and the government.

The conflict was marked by protests during the summer over the lack of basic public services. These have been recurring since 2003. Demonstrations became increasingly violent on

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 violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and its ideology, as well as national power continued 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 Front (PMF) on the one hand, and the government supported by the USA on the other hand.

After the so-called Islamic State (IS) formally declared the establishment of a caliphate in June 2014, the Iraqi government turned to Shiite militias to support the Iraqi Armed Forces (IAF) in order to retake territory previously lost to IS [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Although parliament formally recognized PMF as a state-affiliated institution, it operated largely outside government control. PMF comprised approx. 50 predominantly Shiite militias affiliated with either Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, Iraqi Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, or Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

On March 5, the US declared Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba to be a Specially Designated Global Terrorist group. As a result, several PMF leaders called for an end to US presence in Iraq and threatened US troops. Furthermore, lawmakers affiliated with Shiite militias tried to pass a law expelling all foreign troops, in particular US forces, from Iraq. On May 19, a rocket was launched in the direction of the US embassy in the capital Baghdad. Several different Shiite militias claimed responsibility for the attack.

On July 1, Prime Minister Adil Abdul al-Mahdi issued a decree ordering militias within the PMF to integrate into the IAF. Subsequently, al-Sadr closed the offices of Saraya al-Salam and formally placed its members under the IAF. The next day, the leader of Badr Organization rejected the prime minister's authority to dissolve the PMF.

On April 13, police forces and Kata'ib Imam Ali militia clashed in Mosul, Niniveh Governorate, injuring four. Six days later, a police colonel was assassinated in Basra, eponymous governorate, after Kata'ib Hezbollah had threatened to attack officials of the Ministry of the Interior. On May 15, clashes erupted between Shiite militias affiliated with al-Sadr and former members of his Sadrist Movement, killing two and injuring 15 in Najaf Governorate. On September 11, PMF attacked security personnel guarding the Deputy Governor of Niniveh and a member of parliament in Mosul, Niniveh Governorate, leaving four injured.

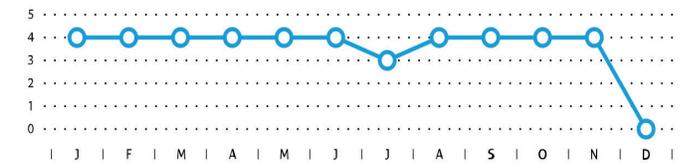
On December 27, a US defense contractor was killed and several other US service members and Iraqi personnel were injured in a rocket attack on an Iraqi military base in Kirkuk, eponymous governorate. US intelligence officials held Iran-backed Shiite militia groups responsible [→ Iran – USA]. Two days later, the US conducted an airstrike on the Iran-backed Kata'ib Hezbollah in al-Qaim, al-Anbar Governorate, killing 25 and injuring 51. On December 31, dozens of Iraqi Shiite militia members and their supporters protested the US airstrike and breached the outer wall of the US embassy compound in Baghdad. Protesters smashed the main gate, hurled water and rocks over the embassy walls, set fire to security trailers in the outer perimeter of the compound and demanded the US withdraw its forces from Iraq. In response, US guards fired tear gas to disperse the crowds. About 1,000 militia members remained camped in front of the embassy overnight. At the same time, the Iraqi foreign ministry condemned the US airstrike as a 'violation of Iraq's sovereignty'. 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 limited war over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state and over resources continued 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 hand. At least 109 Palestinians and four Israelis were killed this year.

Throughout the year, Palestinians continued the 'Great March of Return' (GMR) protests along the border fence, demanding the return of Palestinians to Israeli territory and the end of the Gaza Strip blockade. Weekly protests, organized by Palestinian activists, were backed by Hamas and other Islamist militant groups. In 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 Gaza Strip blockade. Palestinians protested throwing stones, Molotov cocktails and IEDs at Israel Defense Forces (IDF) who used live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas. For example, on February 8, approx. 7,000 Palestinians protested, some of them trying to breach the border. In subsequent clashes, the IDF shot and killed two protesters and injured others, one of whom died four days later. On March 30, as more than 40,000 Palestinians attended the first anniversary of the GMR, thousands of IDF soldiers were deployed at the Israeli side of the border. As protests turned violent, the IDF killed three Palestinians and injured approx. 300 others, of whom one died three days later. In late December, the GMR organizing committee announced that protests would take place less frequently in 2020. Overall GMR related clashes left at least 33 protesters dead, which was a significant decline compared to 2018.

Palestinians continued to launch incendiary balloons, causing forest fires and burning agricultural land in southern Israel. Israel frequently carried out airstrikes and announced restrictions of the fishing zone at Gaza coast. As the number of fires caused by incendiary balloons peaked in June, Israel imposed a temporary naval closure and cut fuel transfers to Gaza.

In August, IDF increasingly clashed with Palestinian militants trying to infiltrate Israeli territory. For example, on August 1, three IDF personnel were wounded and an alleged Hamas member killed in a shooting after the latter had crossed the border to Israel. Nine days later, IDF shot and killed four militants armed with hand grenades and RPGs in course of an infiltration attempt. On August 7, an Israeli helicopter opened fire on militants trying to breach the border, killing three and injuring two others.

Over the course of the year, Palestinian militant groups fre-

quently launched rockets and mortars towards Israel with peaks in May and November. The IDF responded with air raids and tank fire. On March 14, for the first time since 2014, militants fired two long-range rockets towards the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, eponymous district, hitting an open area. Neither Hamas nor PIJ claimed the rocket attack. In response, the IDF conducted airstrikes on more than 100 Hamas targets in Gaza.

Tensions escalated on May 3, after militants wounded two Israeli soldiers and a subsequent IDF airstrike killed two alleged Hamas members. In the following two days, militants fired more than 600 rockets and mortars, killing four Israeli citizens and injuring approx. another 123. For example on May 4, a rocket hit a house in Ashkelon, Southern District, and killed one resident. During the two day confrontation the IDF struck hundreds of targets in Gaza, destroying infrastructure of militant groups, as well as 41 housing units, and damaging 13 education facilities. 25 Palestinians were killed and 154 others were injured overall, including a Hamas commander whose vehicle was targeted by an airstrike on May 5.

On November 12, an IDF airstrike killed a PIJ commander and his wife in Gaza city. On the same day, the IDF allegedly launched a missile, targeting a PIJ official in Syria's capital Damascus, killing two of his relatives. In the aftermath, PIJ and other militants in Gaza fired more than 300 rockets and mortars towards south Israel, leaving 78 Israelis injured. IDF killed 35 with airstrikes, injured 106, and left 130 internally displaced. Due to ongoing tensions, GMR organizers suspended their protests in November. Both violent confrontations in May and November were followed by Egyptian brokered ceasefire agreements, which both conflict parties, however, sporadically breached.

Throughout the year, Qatar continued its cash transfers to Gaza for humanitarian purposes and the payment of employee salaries as part of an informal agreement with Israel reached in November 2018. On September 1, Qatar announced it would halve its funding of fuel transports to Gaza, primarily used for electricity production, by 2020. jhe

ISRAEL – STATE OF PALESTINE° (PNA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: PNA, Palestinian protesters vs. government, Israeli settlement movements

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state and resources continued between Palestinian protesters and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on the one hand, and the Israeli government and Israeli settler movements on the other hand. At least five Israelis and 27 Palestinians were killed this year.

Throughout the year, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) frequently clashed with Palestinian protesters on the West Bank, mainly resulting from IDF raids in Palestinian refugee camps. For instance, on March 27, IDF raided the Dheisha refugee camp

near Bethlehem. In violent confrontations, IDF used live ammunition, killing one protester. On the same day, approx. 150 students of the Birzeit University demonstrated against the arrest of three of their fellow students. During the clashes, protesters attacked IDF forces with stones and firebombs, while IDF injured three with gas and rubber bullets. On September 11, after Palestinians allegedly threw stones and fire bombs at Israeli vehicles on a nearby road, IDF entered al-Aroub refugee camp near Hebron. Subsequently, IDF clashed with protesters in the camp and shot and killed one civilian. Furthermore, the access to religious sites remained a contested issue. From February 17 to 22, thousands of Palestinians clashed with Israeli security forces (ISF) when the latter took measures to reinforce the closure of Bab al-Rahma, a gate leading to a prayer area within the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. On February 22, Palestinian protesters broke the seal and entered the gate, which Israel had closed in 2003. In the aftermath, ISF arrested more than 100 Palestinians for their involvement in the clashes. Despite efforts of Israeli authorities to close Bab al-Rahma, the gate remained open. On October 17, hundreds of Israelis visited the Joseph's Tomb in the city of Nablus, leading to violent confrontations between IDF and Palestinian protesters, leaving 51 protesters injured. Throughout the year, Palestinians frequently carried out stabbings and vehicular attacks, often targeting Israeli security personnel at military checkpoints and civilians. In response, ISF conducted raids and demolished homes of Palestinian attackers. For example, on March 4, an alleged car ramming attack wounded three Israeli soldiers close to the village of N'ima. ISF shot and killed two of the assailants and injured another. According to reports, the three Palestinians had thrown firebombs at a highway prior to the incident. On March 17, a Palestinian stabbed an Israeli soldier with a knife and took his gun at a military checkpoint close to the settlement Ariel. The assailant then shot and killed the soldier and injured two Israeli citizens, one of whom died later. Subsequent raids in search of the perpetrator resulted in clashes, which left 22 Palestinians injured. ISF killed the assailant in Abwein village on March 19.

Israeli settlers continued to attack Palestinians and damage their property, such as buildings, vehicles and olive trees. For instance, on January 26, Israeli settlers entered the village of al-Mughayyir, shooting dead one Palestinian and injuring nine others. According to reports Palestinians had attacked a settler before. From October 20 to November 11, settlers reportedly caused damage to approx. 1,000 olive trees and illegally harvested tonnes of olives owned by Palestinian farmers.

Throughout the year, Israeli authorities ordered the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure and buildings, predominantly in East Jerusalem. For instance, on April 29, Israeli authorities destroyed 31 structures owned by Palestinians due to a lack of building permits, the highest number recorded by OCHA on a single day. On July 22, nine buildings were destroyed in the Palestinian neighborhood Sur Baher in East Jerusalem due to the construction of a security buffer zone, leading to the displacement of 24 people. The destruction of buildings caused the displacement of 914 Palestinians. Furthermore, the Israeli government continued its settlement policy and approved plans for at least 8,337 housing units in the West Bank, compared to 5,618 in 2018.

Israel held two legislative elections in April and September,

respectively. During the election campaign, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised to annex parts of the West Bank. On November 18, the US Secretary of State stated that settlements in the West Bank were not per se inconsistent with international law. Eight months prior to this, the US had officially recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel. On November 26, thousands of Palestinians protested in the West Bank against the US stance on Israeli settlements. In course of the clashes, IDF injured 77 Palestinian protesters. In February, Israel announced it would cut monthly tax revenues to PNA by 5 percent, accusing PNA of paying the money to relatives of detained Palestinians in Israel. In response, PNA refused any tax transfers from Israel. Subsequently, the Palestinian Financial Minister cut the salaries of civil servants. Both sides agreed to resume tax transfers on October 4. wih

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 continued between Israel and Syria. As in previous years, Israel stuck to its policy of holding the Syrian government responsible for all attacks originating from Syrian territory. Throughout the year, Israel targeted Syrian army positions, Hezbollah outposts and Iranian infrastructure in Syria [→ Israel (Hezbollah); Iran – Israel]. In most instances, Israel did not comment on its military operations.

For example, on January 20, Israel launched a rocket attack on Iranian sites in Syria, who responded with a missile attack on Israel. The latter was intercepted by Israeli air defense at Mount Hermon, Northern District, Israel. One day later, an Israeli air raid against 38 sites in the Syrian capital of Damascus, eponymous governorate, and Damascus International Airport, reportedly left 21 people dead, twelve of them suspected members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Several Israeli missile attacks were also intercepted by Syrian air defense, for instance on April 13 in Hama, Hama Governorate, Syria, and on May 17 in Damascus. On May 27, Syrian air defense attempted to shoot down an Israeli fighter jet in Israeli airspace. In response, Israel attacked the anti-aircraft position in question, reportedly killing one Syrian soldier and injuring another in Golan Heights, Quneitra Governorate, Syria. On June 2, Israel struck several military targets on the Syrian side of Golan Heights after two rockets were launched into the Israeli-occupied part of Golan Heights from Syria. Approx. 13 people were killed, among them five Syrian soldiers and reportedly seven Iranian and one Hezbollah militant. On July 1, Israeli fighter jets struck the IRGC headquarters in the south of Damascus, as well as a scientific research center outside of the capital, and positions held by Hezbollah, in the mountains near the Syrian border with Lebanon, both in the Rif Dimashq Governorate. 16 people were reportedly killed, among them ten civilians, five Syrian soldiers, and one Iranian militant. On August 25, Israel confirmed an attack on IRGC sites in Damascus in retaliation of an attempted drone

attack on northern Israel, reportedly killing one Iranian and two Hezbollah militants. On November 19, four rockets were fired from Syria into the Israeli-occupied part of the Golan Heights, but were intercepted by Israeli air defense. One day later, Israel attacked several targets in Damascus and Rif Dimashq, killing two civilians. On December 22, Israeli fighter jets attacked several Syrian and Iranian military positions in Damascus, reportedly from within Lebanese air space. No casualties were reported. ska

JORDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system continued between various opposition groups, comprising trade unions, and civil society organizations on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. Compared to 2018, most protests remained small in scale, with several hundred participants only. Occasionally, prominent figures of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood and the influential Bani Hassan tribe attended demonstrations and issued statements of support. Protests erupted over, i.a unemployment, low wages and border restrictions. They usually evolved into system-related demands such as increased political participation and changes to the economic system.

On February 14, in the city of Aqaba, eponymous governorate, unemployed people protested in demand of jobs and started to march towards the capital Amman. Throughout February and March, they were joined by protesters from six governorates. Gathering in Amman, they rallied in front of the Royal Court Office. In response, the government announced a plan to create 30,000 new jobs. On April 8, public school teachers demonstrated in front of education ministries in Jerash and Zarqa Governorates, demanding wage increases. On September 8, the Jordan Teacher Association (JTA) launched a nationwide strike in which more than 100,000 teachers participated. In the following days, police forces used tear gas and detained approx. 50 teachers. The strike ended on October 6 with an agreement between the government and JTA over wage increases.

From August 23 to 25, protests against increased restrictions of the flow of goods at border crossings to Syria turned violent. In the city of al-Ramtha, Irbid Governorate, protesters blocked roads, burned tires, and threw stones as well as fireworks at police forces. The latter used tear gas to disperse the protests. According to state sources, two police officers were injured and 17 protesters were arrested.

In reaction to ongoing protests and in order to facilitate economic reforms, Jordan's Prime Minister Omar Razzaz reshuffled his cabinet in November for the fourth time since his appointment in June 2018. sap

LEBANON (INNER-PALESTINIAN TENSIONS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: Ansar Allah vs. al-Fatah vs. Osbat al-Ansar vs. other Palestinian factions

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance continued between various Palestinian Islamist groups, such as Ansar Allah, Osbat al-Ansar and the Palestinian political party al-Fatah. Throughout the year, at least four people were killed and four others injured. As in the previous year, most incidents occurred in the Palestinian refugee camps Ain al-Hilweh and Mieh Mieh, South Governorate.

In Ain al-Hilweh, tensions between rivaling Palestinian groups escalated. On March 14, four people were injured in a shooting between Osbat al-Ansar members and followers of the Islamist leader Bilal al-Arqoub. On August 2, an alleged relative of al-Arqoub shot the brother of an Osbat al-Ansar member, who later died of his injuries. After the incident, both parties clashed using guns and RPGs. Two days later, al-Arqoub was killed in a shootout with Osbat al-Ansar members. After unknown assailants had killed an Osbat al-Ansar militant on August 15, representatives of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Osbat al-Ansar, and Shabab al-Muslim held a meeting on August 27, resulting in an agreement.

In Mieh Mieh, fewer conflict measures were reported in comparison to the previous year, when al-Fatah and Ansar Allah had clashed in the camp, prompting Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to intervene. Between May 10 and 22, al-Fatah and Ansar Allah transferred their weapons, including heavy weapons, from Mieh Mieh to Ain al-Hilweh as part of an agreement between LAF and Palestinian factions. Residents of Ain al-Hilweh raised concerns due to the increased number of weapons within their camp.

In November and December, various members of Palestinian Islamist groups, among them a son of Bilal al-Arqoub, fled to Syria to avoid LAF prosecution [→ Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al.)]. ebi

inter-tribal conflict concentrated in southwestern Libya, specifically in Murzuq district, Fezzan region, and revolved mainly around the control of trafficking routes and resources, such as oil. Tribal groups were increasingly involved in ongoing fighting between national and international actors [→ Libya (opposition)], with tribal territory in southern Libya becoming a focal point for the Libyan National Army (LNA), especially in the Fezzan region.

On January 16, General Khalifa Haftar, head of the LNA, began a large-scale offensive, Operation Karama, towards Touareg and Tebu territory in Fezzan region. The LNA's advance toward southern Libya was supported by the Arab Awlad Suleiman and parts of the Zuwaya tribes. By early February, the Tebu and a majority of the Touareg had formed an alliance under the Touareg commander Ali Kana, himself aligned with the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in the capital Tripoli, ending their four-year feud. Furthermore, in early February, the Tebu created the South Protection Force (SPF) in response to the LNA offensive.

Clashes between LNA and GNA-aligned Touareg began on February 5 in Sebha district, Fezzan region. By February 11, LNA-aligned Touareg soldiers had taken control of the al-Sharara oil field in the Murzuq desert from GNA-aligned Touareg, in line with a mediation agreement drawn up by Touareg elders. On February 21, the LNA peacefully took al-Feel oil field in Murzuq district, Fezzan region, from the Zintani, themselves aligned with Touareg militias under the GNA.

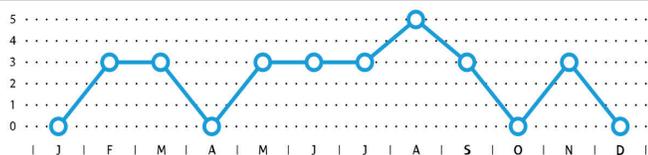
On February 20, the LNA entered the city of Murzuq, which is essential to securing both al-Sharara and al-Feel oil fields, with vehicles and tanks. Within four days, the LNA had seized the city from Tebu control, resulting in the deaths of 17 civilians. From March to July, tensions between the Tebu and the Arab Ahali tribe in Murzuq city increased, leading to smaller clashes that left at least 21 people dead. International actors, such as the EU, US, UNICEF, and UNSMIL voiced concerns over potential war crimes committed in the course of these clashes. On August 4, a heavy LNA airstrike, supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), killed 43 civilians, injured 50 more and caused at least 6,425 people to flee, most of them from the Ahali and Tebu tribes. Intense fighting between Tebu's SPF and Ahali continued, with 47 civilians killed and 150 injured between August 17 and 18. By the end of August, 17,000 inhabitants had fled the city. Following four US airstrikes officially targeting IS fighters in Murzuq in September [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)], this number rose to 25,000 IDPs. jol

LIBYA (INTER-TRIBAL RIVALRY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Tebu vs. Awlad Suleiman vs. Zway vs. Ahali vs. Touareg

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

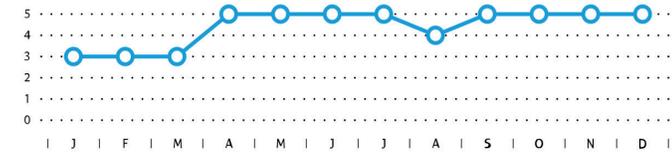


downgraded (< 360 deaths, < 120,000 IDPs/refugees)

The limited war over subnational predominance and resources continued between tribes in southern Libya. The

LIBYA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: GNA, HSC vs. LNA, HoR,
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, re-
sources

The war over national power, resources, and the orientation of the political system continued between the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), headed by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and recognized by the UN Security Council as the legal government of Libya on the one hand, and the Benghazi-headquartered Libyan National Army (LNA) under General Khalifa Haftar on the other hand.

The GNA and the High State Council (HSC), the legislative body allied with the GNA, as well as the LNA and the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR), the legislative body allied with the LNA, were backed by loyal or loosely affiliated militias and autonomous armed groups. The GNA was supported, among others, by the Tripoli Protection Force (TPF), a merger of four Tripoli militias created on 12/18/2018, as well as militias from the city of Misrata, eponymous district, Tripolitania region. The GNA was further aided by Turkey and Qatar. The LNA, on the other hand, was among others supported by the Islamist Khalid Bin Walid Brigade, as well as by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Russia, and France.

According to the UN, at least 284 civilians were killed and nearly 400 more were injured during the year, an increase of more than 25 percent compared to 2018. Additionally, more than 340,000 people were displaced. In the course of the year, the LNA conducted more than 800 drone strikes, and the GNA more than 240. These airstrikes accounted for at least 182 civilian deaths and 212 civilian injuries. Total losses for both factions amounted to at least 2,000 combatants.

At the beginning of the year, the LNA continued to counter Islamist militias in the eastern part of the country, as well as armed groups from Chad and Sudan, and militants from the so-called Islamic State in Libya (ISL) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)] in the center, south, and southwest [→ Libya (inter-tribal rivalry)]. On January 15, the LNA, together with its affiliated Khalid Bin Walid Brigade, launched an operation into southern parts of the country, allegedly in order to liberate the region from Islamic extremists. This was the LNA's first large-scale mobilization into the south to secure key strategic oil and gas supply lines beyond its northeast operation headquarters in Benghazi. For instance, on February 6, LNA forces captured the closed al-Sharara oil field without resistance. Moreover, the LNA increased its presence in the country's eastern coastal regions. On February 12, LNA captured the coastal city of Derna, Cyrenaica region, from the Derna Protection Force (DPF). As of April, most LNA activity focused on

attempting to remove the GNA government in Tripoli.

On February 27, al-Sarraj and Haftar met in Abu Dhabi, UAE, for UN-sponsored talks. During the meeting, they discussed a power-sharing arrangement and agreed to hold presidential and parliamentary elections. However the arrangement, which was to be ratified at the UNSMIL-organized Libyan National Conference between April 14 and 16 in Ghadames, Nalut district, Tripolitania region, was invalidated due to the advancement of LNA forces on the capital Tripoli beginning on April 4.

That day, the LNA launched Operation "Flood of Dignity" in western Libya to take control of Tripoli. Between April 3 and 5, General Haftar seized various towns on the southern, southeastern and eastern outskirts of the capital, in part by making deals with local authorities. As a result, al-Sarraj mobilized militias under the banner of the TPF, as well as armed groups from the city of Misrata. The GNA counteroffensive to defend the capital, Operation "Volcano of Rage", was then launched on April 7. By April 19, the TPF had pushed LNA forces out of the western and southeastern outskirts of Tripoli. Although the GNA and HSC supported UNSMIL's call for an extendable one-week humanitarian truce in early May, neither faction ceased its operations.

Fighting continued into December, predominantly in and around Tripoli. The clashes heightened the humanitarian crisis in the region, with multiple airstrikes and ongoing shelling of residential areas in Tripoli. At the same time, the UN led efforts to organize an international conference with foreign stakeholders to discuss a de-escalation strategy. However, UN-backed talks to implement a ceasefire and halt the supply of weapons by foreign allies failed due to ongoing hostilities between the two factions. On December 19, the GNA approved a military deal with Turkey, allowing the deployment of Turkish troops into the country. ksh, hss

MOROCCO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Justice and Spirituality, M20F, AMDH,
labor rights activists, Hirak movement
vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system continued between opposition groups and the government. Between February and April, tensions increased due to demonstrations in the capital Rabat, Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region, by tens of thousands of contractual teachers and union members, who demanded permanent contracts and better working conditions. When teachers protested in solidarity with the February 20 Movement on its 8th anniversary, police forces used water cannons to disperse the demonstrations, injuring approx. ten. On April 24, police used water cannons and batons against protesters, injuring around 65 and leading to one death.

On April 21, thousands of activists marched through downtown Rabat, demanding the release of 42 imprisoned Hirak Rif activists after their appeals had been denied. The activists

LIBYA (OPPOSITION)



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



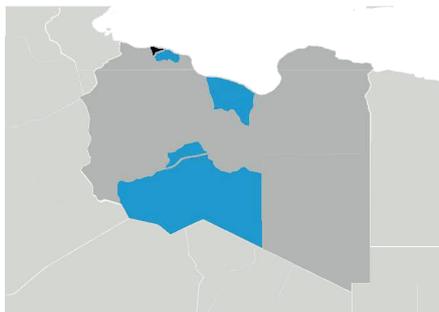
August



September



October



November



December



were convicted of 'threatening state security' following their involvement in the 2016 and 2017 Hirak Rif protests, when tens of thousand took to the streets to demand political reform. mfr

MOROCCO (POLISARIO / WESTERN SAHARA°)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: POLISARIO vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis over secession of Western Sahara° continued 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, and Sahrawi people living in the Moroccan-controlled parts of the disputed territories on the one hand, and the government on the other hand. The government continued to claim Western Sahara as part of the kingdom, while POLISARIO demanded the right for self-determination of the Sahrawis in the proclaimed Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).

Between January 4 and 7, tensions rose on occasion of the annual Africa Eco Race crossing through Western Sahara, which POLISARIO criticized as a violation of the ceasefire agreement of 1991. On January 6, POLISARIO conducted military maneuvers in the UN-monitored buffer zone in the region of Mehri, which was condemned by Moroccan authorities.

Throughout the year, civilians regularly staged protests and roadblocks at the border crossing between Western Sahara and Mauritania at Guerguerat to oppose lacking socio-economic opportunities and customs policies. As a result, Morocco complained to the UN about the obstruction of civilian and commercial traffic on July 23, while POLISARIO denounced the presence of 'Moroccan agents' in the buffer strip at Guerguerat on August 12.

After initial roundtable talks in December 2018, UN Envoy for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, hosted a second round of talks with both parties, and with Mauritania and Algeria, on March 21 and 22 in Geneva, Switzerland. However, UN envoy Köhler resigned on May 22 on health grounds, with POLISARIO making the appointment of a new envoy a precondition for reentering any diplomatic negotiations.

Throughout the year, representatives of the SADR strengthened diplomatic ties with various governments, for instance during visits to Iceland, Panama, and Zimbabwe.

The European Parliament voted to extend Western Sahara territory into the EU-Morocco trade agreement on January 16, despite the 2018 European Court of Justice decision, stipulating that no trade agreement could cover Western Sahara without its inhabitants first consenting to it. On February 12, the European Parliament also voted in favor of an EU-Morocco fisheries partnership including waters off the coast of Western Sahara. mfr

SAUDI ARABIA (SHIITES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

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

The violent crisis continued between Saudi citizens of Shiite belief and the Sunni government. Since the Arab Spring in 2011, Saudi police forces have continued to crackdown on the Shiite minority, which continue to challenge the government, mostly in the Eastern Province.

This year, the government executed death sentences against Shiites on various occasions. For instance, on April 23, 37 people were executed, of whom 33 were of Shiite belief. According to Human Rights Watch, 14 of the executed Shiites were sentenced for participation in protests in 2012, whereas eleven were convicted for spying for Iran [→ Iran – Saudi Arabia].

On May 5, the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh opened a legal case against Shiite cleric Sheikh Mohammad bin Hassan al-Habib, for supporting protests and illegally leaving the country. On September 14, the trial resulted in a five-year sentence, in addition to a prior sentence of seven years.

Another legal trial causing international attention, was the case of Murtaja Qureiris, who had been arrested for alleged terrorist acts, in 2014, when still being a minor. After the public prosecutor had reportedly sought the death penalty for Qureiris, various human rights groups and international governments protested. Subsequently, on June 16, Qureiris was sentenced to twelve years in prison.

Throughout the year, Saudi officials accused Iran of being responsible for alleged subversive acts by Shiite citizens. lme

SAUDIA ARABIA, YEMEN (AQAP)

Intensity: 3 | Change: NEW | Start: 1990

Conflict parties: AQAP vs. Saudi Arabia, Yemen, USA
Conflict items: system/ideology

YEMEN

The limited war over the orientation of the political system and ideology de-escalated to a violent crisis between al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its insurgent arm Ansar al-Sharia on the one hand, and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, UAE-backed forces and the USA, supported by al-Hirak, also known as Southern Movement, on the other hand.

In 2009, AQAP had emerged as the al-Qaeda branch on the Arabian Peninsula. In May 2011 and April 2015 AQAP, through its local affiliate Ansar al-Sharia, had captured and held territory for one year in the southern governorates of Abyan and Hadramawt.

As in the second half of 2018, AQAP activities further declined in 2019. However, throughout the year, AQAP sporadically attacked government forces, Hadi-aligned forces and

UAE-backed forces in the governorates of Abyan, al-Bayda, Shabwah and Hadramawt. For instance, on February 13, AQAP claimed to have killed at least three al-Hizam Security Forces, a UAE-backed militia, and injured five in an IED attack in Mahfad district, Abyan. Another IED attack by AQAP against Hadi-aligned soldiers in Qahtan, Hadramawt, killed at least seven and wounded seven others, on June 21. On August 2, AQAP militants attacked an al-Hizam Security Forces military base in Mahfad district, Abyan. In course of the attack, AQAP infiltrated the base, killing 19 security forces and wounding seven. After several hours of fighting, al-Hizam Security Forces regained control of the base. On September 19, AQAP conducted two IED attacks in western Hadramawt governorate. The first IED attack in Shibam district killed three Saudi soldiers and wounded at least six. The second IED attack in al-Abr district targeted a bus and killed two Saudi soldiers and three civilians.

As in previous years, UAE-backed forces attacked AQAP positions in the southern Yemeni governorates. On January 16, al-Hizam Security Forces raided an AQAP position in Mahfad district, killing at least eight militants. Between March 26 and April 3, UAE-backed Shabwani Elite Forces launched an operation against AQAP positions in the western districts of Shabwah governorate, no casualties were reported.

The US conducted at least 13 airstrikes during the year against AQAP positions, militants and training facilities in al-Bayda, Ma'rib and Hadramawt governorates, causing the death of at least 17 people. For instance, on June 24, three US drone strikes killed five AQAP militants in Dhi Na'im, al-Bayda. Furthermore, on October 10, US President Donald Trump ultimately confirmed that Ibrahim al-Asiri, AQAP's senior bomb maker, had been killed in a US counterterrorism operation in 2017.

SAUDI ARABIA

In Saudi Arabia, a Yemeni citizen was sentenced to death, on December 29, for a knife attack on performers of a festival in the capital Riyadh, eponymous region. The attacker injured three members of a Spanish theatre group. A second man was convicted for 12 years for his complicity. At the start of the trial on December 19, Saudi state television and authorities claimed that the perpetrator had links to AQAP without providing further information. AQAP did not claim responsibility for the attack. pmu

SYRIA (INTER-OPPOSITION RIVALRY)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: HTS vs. FSA

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources

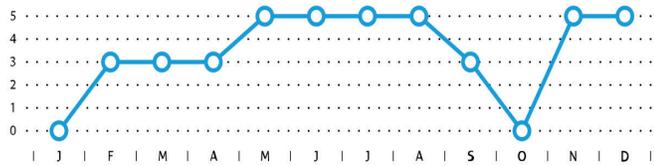


The war over subnational predominance, the orientation of the political system and resources de-escalated to a limited war between the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and various moderate and Islamist armed groups such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). While the groups fought jointly against the Syrian government and the so-called Islamic State (IS) on several occasions, tensions between Islamist and moderate groups, and among different Islamist militias persisted [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

On January 1, HTS attacked the FSA group Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement in Darat Izza, as well as Kafr Tin, Urum al-Kubra, Khan al-Assal, and Maklabis, all in western Aleppo Governorate, in response to alleged targeted killings of HTS members by al-Zenki militants. One day later, HTS seized those positions, leaving approx. 50 people dead. On the same day, several FSA groups announced a full mobilization against HTS. Subsequently, clashes between the two parties spread to Idlib Governorate and Hama Governorate. On January 3, al-Zenki captured several villages in Maarrat al-Nu'man District close to the Aleppo-Damascus highway in Idlib, while HTS captured four towns in northern Hama. One day later, HTS captured the 111th Regiment military base close to Darat Izza from al-Zenki, with subsequent Russian airstrikes on the base. On January 5, HTS sent a large military convoy to southern Idlib while negotiating with al-Zenki over the withdrawal of the latter to Turkish-controlled Afrin, Aleppo Governorate. The next day, approx. 400 al-Zenki fighters retreated to Turkish-controlled areas of Aleppo while HTS took control over the town Atarib, Idlib after negotiations with local groups. On January 7, FSA-aligned groups and HTS reinforced their positions throughout the area. One day later, HTS advanced into al-Ghab Plain in southwestern Idlib, seizing the headquarters of FSA-aligned Ahrar al-Sham. On January 9, the FSA-aligned groups agreed on a truce with HTS, retreating and handing over their territory in southwestern Idlib. In the nine days of clashes, HTS gained control over about 80 percent of opposition-held territories in Idlib, Hama, and Aleppo, leaving at least 130 people dead. One day later, on January 10, HTS took over all remaining territories from retreating FSA groups, with the exception of some villages in Hama and eastern Idlib, leading to the cessation of inter-opposition fighting. From April onwards, the various groups joined forces again to repel an offensive by the Syrian government [→ Syria (opposition)]. ska

SYRIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: NC, FSA, HTS vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

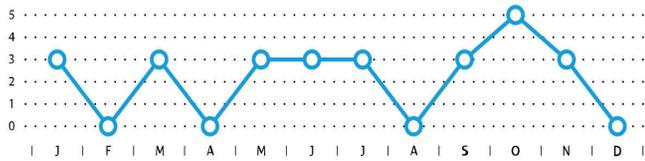
The war over national power and the orientation of the political system continued between opposition groups and the government of President Bashar al-Assad for the ninth consecutive year. The opposition was primarily comprised of the National Coalition for the Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NC), its military wing Free Syrian Army (FSA), and Islamist umbrella groups, such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). The latter was formed in a January 2017 merger between Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, formerly al-Nusra Front, the Ansar al-Din Front, and other Islamist militant groups. 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 supported the government with airstrikes and ground forces. Furthermore, the government, its allies and opposition groups fought against the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Depending on the source, the overall death toll varies from 370,000 to 600,000. In April 2016, then-UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura estimated the death toll to be up to 400,000 since the outbreak of war in Syria. As of December 2019, at least 5.6 million people have sought refuge in neighboring countries and 6.6 million have been internally displaced since the beginning of the conflict. The government's territorial gains were limited in 2019, due to international involvement, especially from Russia and Turkey. Nevertheless, al-Assad was able to consolidate his power in the government-controlled areas, while fighting was concentrated on opposition-held northwestern Syria.

Despite a demilitarization and safe zone implementation for the opposition-held parts of Idlib, Hama, and Aleppo governorates, opposition groups and government forces exchanged fire on several occasions. For instance, on February 16, SAA shelled HTS positions in Maarrat al-Nu'man District, Idlib, killing 18 people. On March 13, Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) and SAA conducted airstrikes on Idlib city, killing at least four civilians. Mortar attacks by HTS and SAA killed at least 15 people in Nerab and Saraqeb, Idlib, as well as Masyaf, Hama, on April 7. After six days of air raids against opposition-held areas of northwestern Syria, SAA began a ground offensive in northern Hama and southern Idlib on May 6, claiming that the demilitarization had not been fully implemented by Turkey and opposition groups. One day later, SAA seized the villages of Tel Othman, al-Bani, and al-Janabara in Hama and several FSA and HTS positions in the region, leaving eleven soldiers and 15 militants dead. Also on May 7, VKS conducted several airstrikes on opposition positions in Idlib, in response to missile and mortar attacks on its Khmeimim Air Base in

Latakia Governorate. The first days of the offensive left at least 65 civilians and 40 opposition fighters dead. On May 29, Syrian and Russian air raids on Sarja, Bara, and Hbeit in Idlib left at least 14 people dead. Opposition forces shelled the government-controlled village of Wadehi, Aleppo Governorate, killing at least 14 people, on June 16. From June 18 to 20, SAA and opposition groups clashed heavily in northern Hama, resulting in the death of at least 80 opposition fighters and 40 SAA soldiers. On June 26, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs asked Russia to explain how it used data on the location of Syrian hospitals and clinics, after 23 medical facilities had been hit by airstrikes since the beginning of the offensive. Russia denied the allegations that the facilities were hit on purpose. On July 12, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah announced a reduction of the group's presence in Syria, due to the recovery of the SAA. The Syrian government announced a ceasefire starting August 1, in case a Russian-Turkish demilitarization deal were to be implemented. HTS rejected a truce, leading to SAA resuming its operations on August 5. On August 19, the SAA launched an airstrike on a Turkish military convoy heading to the opposition-held town of Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib. Three people were killed in the attack and another twelve injured. The Syrian government stated that the convoy would supply opposition groups with weapons, while according to Turkey it was resupplying one of its outposts in the region. By August 23, SAA had captured the entire opposition-held pocket in northern Hama and southern Idlib, after the opposition forces had retreated from their final positions in the area. On August 30, the Syrian government announced a unilateral ceasefire starting on August 31. The fighting between May and August left at least 4,500 people dead. Clashes were reported again on September 24, when SAA captured a hill close to Khan Sheikhoun, killing six HTS militants. A new SAA offensive on opposition-held parts in Idlib started on November 24. SAA quickly advanced into the Maarrat al-Nu'man District, Idlib, moving closer to the Aleppo-Damascus highway. On December 4, SAA recaptured a military base in the village of Umm al-Tinah, Idlib. Clashes again intensified after the Astana negotiations in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, between Russia, Turkey, Syria, and opposition groups had failed on December 18. On the same day, 300 fighters of the Turkish-backed FSA reportedly entered into Idlib from Afrin. From December 20 to 22, SAA advanced further into southwestern Idlib, capturing 15 villages and towns and reportedly killing 70 militants. From December 26 to the end of the year, clashes stopped due to bad weather conditions, as the Syrian air force was grounded due to bad visibility. Between November and December, at least 120 civilians, 250 pro-government troops and 300 opposition fighters were killed, and 230,000 people were internally displaced. ska

SYRIA (TURKEY – SDF / NORTHERN SYRIA)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2018

Conflict parties: Turkey, FSA vs. SDF, YPG
Conflict items: autonomy, subnational predominance

The war over subnational predominance and autonomy continued between Turkey and the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) on the one hand, and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), militarily led by the People's Protection Units (YPG), a mostly Kurdish militia, on the other hand.

After 'Operation Euphrates Shield' in 2016 [→ Syria – Turkey; Syria, Iraq (IS)] and 'Operation Olive Branch' in 2018 [→ Syria (Afrin Governorate)], the conflict in Kurdish-controlled areas on the border between Syria and Turkey spread across the area between Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad.

After the SDF had withdrawn from the Afrin region in Aleppo province in March 2018, retaliatory attacks in the Afrin region continued throughout early 2019. On January 10, the SDF attacked an FSA convoy in Azaz, Aleppo province, killing two FSA fighters. Two weeks later, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) shelled SDF positions in Tal Rif'at, Aleppo province, on January 23, with no casualties reported. On March 2, the Kurdish Afrin Liberation Forces (HRE), formerly known as the Afrin Falcons (HRE), claimed to have killed twelve fighters of the FSA-linked Furqat al-Mutashim forces in Azaz. Russia and Turkey started joint patrols in the areas north of Tal Rif'at on March 26. Attacks by the HRE continued on April 3 in Azaz, leaving one FSA fighter dead. HRE forces launched an attack on a TAF base in Afrin on May 1, killing nine TAF soldiers and wounding 14. In a ground offensive, FSA forces were later able to advance into SDF territory, taking over the villages of Mara-naz and al-Malikiyah north of Azaz on May 4. On May 18, clashes continued in the bordering areas between FSA and SDF-controlled territories north of Azaz, leaving five FSA fighters dead. After a TAF soldier was killed by an SDF anti-tank missile in early June, a TAF attack killed ten SDF fighters in Tal Rif'at on June 11. On June 9, HRE attacked a joint TAF and FSA convoy, killing one Turkish soldier and seven FSA fighters in Tal Rif'at.

Throughout the year, Turkey repeatedly proposed a 30 km-deep safe zone along its border with Syria, planning to resettle around one million Syrian refugees currently residing in Turkey. Negotiations on the safe zone were led by the US, but ended on October 7, when US President Donald Trump, after a phone call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, announced that US troops would withdraw from the region. Shortly after, on October 9, the Turkish air force started shelling 22 positions from the northwestern town of Ain al-Arab, Aleppo province, to the northeastern town of al-Malikiyah, al-Hasakah province. Following the airstrikes, FSA troops reportedly crossed the border to the cities Ras

al-Ain, al-Hasakah Governorate and Tal Abyad, al-Raqqa Governorate.

On October 13, the Syrian Arab Army (SAA), part of the Syrian Armed Forces, and SDF agreed to support each other's border security efforts against Turkey. Subsequently, SAA forces entered the border area. The same day, Kurdish politician Hevrin Khelef and eight others in her convoy were tortured and killed on the M4 highway by the FSA-allied Ahrar al-Sharqiya militia. By October 17, clashes in the safe zone had left around 200 people dead and displaced at least 100,000. In response, Turkey agreed to pause fighting in the safe zone for five days. On October 22, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Erdoğan met in Sochi, Russia, and agreed on the implementation of the safe zone, giving the SDF an ultimatum to withdraw within 150 hours and agreeing on joint border patrols together with the SAA. On October 24, SDF forces pulled back from the border area.

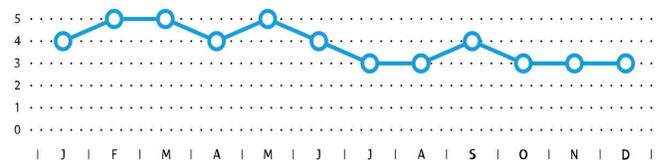
According to the IOM, by October 29, around 13,000 individuals, mostly from al-Hasakah and al-Raqqa governorates, had crossed the border to enter Bardarash camp in northern Iraq. On November 2, following its withdrawal from the border region, SDF announced that Christian militias would take over control of cities in the Khabur region, al-Hasakah Governorate. TAF forces opened fire on protesting civilians in Ain al-Arab on November 12, leaving ten dead and 25 injured, and attacked the town of Ain Issa in al-Raqqa Governorate on November 24. *daj*

SYRIA, IRAQ ET AL. (IS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: IS vs. Egypt, Lybia, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, USA, Hezbollah et al., Taliban, al-Houthi, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, France, United Kingdom, Russia, Iran, Syrian opposition groups, SDF

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 took control of large territories in Syria and Iraq. 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 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 and Taliban splinter groups, namely Jamaah 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 commenced 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 started in 2016, continued this year. IS claimed responsibility for attacks in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, France, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Yemen, carried out this year. (ska)

SYRIA

In Syria, IS was pushed out of its last remaining territories east of the Euphrates river by March, ending IS territorial control in Syria. On January 15, IS claimed a suicide bombing in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate, killing 19 people, among them four US soldiers. Six days later, another suicide bombing at a checkpoint near Shadadi, al-Hasakah Governorate, left five personnel of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) dead. On January 22, SDF captured the villages of Mozan and as-Safafinah in Deir ez-Zor Governorate, reducing IS territorial control to only two villages in the Euphrates valley. In early February, IS requested safe passage from its final territory to Turkey but this was denied by the SDF. On February 9, SDF launched its final attack on the last IS-controlled pocket around Baghuz Fawqani, Deir ez-Zor Governorate. SDF deployed 15,000 fighters, supported by airstrikes of the US-led coalition, to battle an estimated 5,000 IS militants. On February 22, 30 IS militants ambushed a Russian-Syrian military convoy in western Deir ez-Zor Governorate and killed three Russian and seven Syrian soldiers. Russia later announced that they killed the attackers in airstrikes. In course of its advances on IS positions in the Euphrates valley SDF discovered a mass grave with decapitated bodies of mostly Yazidi people, on February 28. By March 20, IS only controlled small pockets at the Euphrates river bank operating in tunnels. Three days later, SDF announced the full capture of the last IS pocket ending the latter’s control over territory in Syria. The battle for Baghuz Fawqani left at least 60 SDF personnel, 220 IS militants and 210 civilians dead. More than 4,000 IS militants were taken into custody. After losing all their territory, IS repeatedly activated sleeper cells in Syria for targeted attacks. For instance, on March 26, IS attacked an SDF checkpoint in Manbij killing seven SDF fighters and seizing their

weapons. IS also operated in the desert close to Palmyra, Homs Governorate, repeatedly attacking convoys of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and its allies on the Palmyra-Deir ez-Zor highway. Between March 24 and June 23 these targeted ambushes and retaliatory attacks by the SAA left at least 160 pro-government fighters and 50 IS militants dead. On June 1, IS carried out an attack at the central square in Raqqa, Raqqa Governorate, with two suicide bombers killing at least ten people and injuring at least 20. The US-led Coalition killed five IS militants in airstrikes on Busayrah, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, on July 29. SDF raided a compound in the village of al-Ruz, Deir ez-Zor Governorate, killing a senior IS commander who organized the sleeper cells, on September 27. During the Turkish invasion of northeastern Syria, the Turkish air force hit a prison with IS detainees in al-Qamishli city, al-Hasakah Governorate, leading to the escape of dozens of IS militants on October 9 [→ Syria (Turkey - SDF / Northern Syria)]. The ‘Operation Kayla Mueller’ took place in the night from October 26 to 27 in Barisha, Idlib Governorate, where US Special Forces raided the hideout of IS leader al-Baghdadi. The latter detonated a suicide bomb, killing himself and two others. The raid left also five other IS members and at least ten other militiamen dead. Two hours later the compound was destroyed by US airstrikes. Four days later, IS confirmed the death of al-Baghdadi and named Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi his predecessor. (ska)

IRAQ

According to the UN and Kurdish intelligence officials, by the end of the year, the so-called Islamic State (IS) had around 4,000 to 5,000 active militants and a similar number of sleeper cells and sympathizers in its ranks. IS did not hold strategically important territory, and remained concentrated in the northeastern Hamrin mountains, largely staying underground in hideouts and caves. Nevertheless, the group was active in the governorates of al-Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Salah ad-Din. During the year, IS militants carried out approx. 90 attacks against civilians, killing at least 225. For instance, between February 18 and 21, IS kidnapped at least 19 civilians on the cross-border road between the Saudi Arabian city of Arar and the Iraqi town of Nukhaib, Anbar Governorate, at least six of whom were found dead in the ensuing days. On May 26, a truck bomb exploded in a crowded marketplace near Rabia, Nineveh Governorate, a town on the border with Syria. At least five civilians were killed in the blast. On September 20, a bomb planted by IS targeted a minibus outside the city of Karbala, eponymous governorate, killing twelve people and injuring five others. On December 30, five students were killed after an IED planted by IS exploded in a village near Fallujah, Anbar Governorate. IS also frequently attacked police officers, soldiers, as well as paramilitaries organized under the state-sponsored Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). On April 9, an explosion claimed by IS killed a military intelligence commander in al-Qaim town, Anbar Governorate. On June 1, a bomb planted by IS militants destroyed a PMF vehicle, killing at least ten paramilitaries. On August 14, IS militants ambushed a joint security checkpoint manned by police and PMF forces, killing two police officers and one PMF fighter in the town of Daquq, Kirkuk Gover-

norate. On September 2, IS militants attacked a PMF security checkpoint in the city of Samarra, Salah al-Din Governorate. In the ensuing clash, eight militants and two PMF forces were killed, and two were wounded.

Security forces responded with around 300 operations against the militant group throughout the year, and were aided by the Global Coalition Against Daesh (GCAD). For example, between July 7 and October 8, state forces executed the six-stage Operation Will of Victory, which targeted IS in the remote areas between Salah al-Din, Niniveh, and Anbar governorates, using airstrikes and surprise military operations to destroy IS hideouts and caves. Around 50 militants were killed, and at least 18 hideouts and five vehicles were destroyed. GCAD supported the efforts of police, military, and PMF forces with 35 airstrikes against IS, predominantly in the governorates of Salah al-Din, Niniveh, Anbar, Kirkuk, and Diyala, killing nearly 210 militants. (hss), (vba), (ksh)

AFGHANISTAN

The activities of the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) were centered in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar and the capital Kabul.

In the first half of the year, ISKP targeted primarily civilians, government organizations and officials in suicide bombings and other attacks. For example, on January 4, eleven police forces were killed and 30 civilians injured in a suicide attack during a public protest in Jalalabad Road, eastern Kabul. On March 6, ISKP conducted a suicide attack with explosive vests and assault rifles on a construction company in Jalalabad, that injured nine and killed 21 people including the five attackers. Furthermore, on April 26, ISKP members clashed with Taliban in Khogyani District, resulting in the death of five Taliban fighters. On July 6, ISKP detonated an IED at a Shi'ite shrine in Ghazni province, killing two people.

At the same time, Afghan police and army forces, together with US led coalition forces, conducted various operations, mainly airstrikes, against the ISKP. For example, the US coalition killed two ISKP militants with an airstrike in Khogyani District, on February 2. Also, the Afghan National Army (ANA) conducted drone strikes killing three ISKP members in Haska Mina District on March 25. Moreover, the ANA conducted three airstrikes killing 13 ISKP members on March 27 and 29. In the second half of the year there have been numerous instances of violent clashes between the ISKP, ANA, and the US led coalition as well as attacks on civilians. Most notable was a suicide bombing on August 18 at a wedding in Kabul, which killed 63 civilians and injured 182. From August to October, the Afghan government and its allies increased their operations such as airstrikes, raids and arrests, killing at least 133 ISKP members. Subsequently ISKP militants increasingly surrendered to Afghan Security Forces in Nangarhar province in November and December. For instance, on December 5, 94 ISKP fighters together with 74 relatives surrendered in Jalalabad city. (aml)

ALGERIA

IS claimed to have carried out one attack on the Algerian People's National Armed Forces (ANP) on November 18, in Tamanrasset Province close to the border to Mali, killing eight

soldiers. The ANP, on the other hand, claimed the death of two alleged IS militants in the same area. According to the Ministry of National Defense ANP killed 13 Islamist militants and arrested 25 over the course of the year, while 44 surrendered. (aht)

EGYPT

In Egypt, clashes continued between the Egyptian government, supported by local Bedouin tribes on the one hand, and the Egyptian branch of IS, Sinai Province, on the other hand. Most violent confrontations were situated in the North Sinai Governorate, particularly in the cities of al-Arish, Rafah, Sheikh Zuweid, Bir al-Abd, and the respective surroundings. Throughout the year, IS claimed attacks on Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) and Egyptian National Police (ENP) forces via social media and their news outlet Amaq. Furthermore, IS continued to attack civilians for their alleged links to EAF. ENP and EAF, in turn, continued to attack IS militants and members of other militant groups operating in the same area [→ Egypt (militant groups/Sinai Peninsula)].

For instance, on January 27, EAF claimed the killing of two high ranked IS members in an airstrike in North Sinai. On February 16, IS militants raided a military checkpoint close to al-Arish airport, killing and wounding several EAF personnel. Subsequently, EAF shot and killed seven assailants. On April 9, IS claimed a suicide bombing near a market in Sheikh Zuweid. The assailant detonated the bomb close to a police patrol, killing four ENP personnel, three civilians, and injuring another 26. On June 5, militants attacked a security checkpoint near al-Arish, killing at least eight police officers and wounding several. During exchange of fire, ENP forces killed five militants. In the following three days, ENP forces killed approx. 26 suspected IS militants. For instance, on June 7, ENP killed eight alleged IS militants in a shootout on an olive farm south of al-Arish. In the operation, ENP seized five automatic rifles, two explosive belts and a bomb. On July 17, militants beheaded four civilians and kidnapped another in the city Bir al-Abd, accusing them of cooperating with EAF. On the following day, an IS suicide bomber killed an EAF soldier at a parking place close to Sheikh Zuweid. On August 6, IS executed two civilians south of Rafah allegedly belonging to the Tarabin Bedouin tribe known to support the EAF. On November 17, a roadside bomb hit an armored EAF vehicle in Sheikh Zuweid, killing at least three soldiers and wounding four others. IS claimed the attack four days later.

IS claimed at least two attacks outside North Sinai Governorate during the year. For instance on February 5, IS militants wounded four ENP forces in an ambush on a checkpoint close to the city of al-Kharjah, al-Wadi al-Gedid Governorate. Moreover, on April 12, ENP killed two IS militants who attacked their checkpoint in Oyun Musa, South Sinai Governorate. (imh)

LEBANON

Throughout the year, Lebanese security forces continued to persecute suspected IS members. For instance, on January 8, General Security Forces detained three IS members in Arsal, Baalbek-Hermel Governorate. On February 17, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) arrested two IS members in eponymous

governorate after they had crossed the border from Syria to Lebanon. On June 1, Internal Security Forces (ISF) arrested two IS suspects in Nabatieh Governorate who were accused of planning attacks on religious sites. The conflict was marked by an IS-claimed attack in Tripoli, North Governorate, on June 3, when a suicide attacker shot and killed four ISF and LAF members before blowing himself up. In the aftermath, LAF arrested 13 suspects. (sap)

LIBYA

The so-called Islamic State in Libya (ISL), once considered the group's strongest branch, continued to lose power and influence throughout the year. Due to frequent US airstrikes on its camps and a lack of funding from its parent organization in Iraq and Syria, ISL did not control any permanent territory, and its ability to reorganize and carry out attacks was significantly reduced. According to the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), around 100 ISL militants remained active in Libya by the end of September. Both the Libyan National Army (LNA) and militias aligned with the Government of National Accord (GNA) [→ Libya (opposition)], continued to clash with ISL militants on several occasions.

After not conducting significant operations until April, the militant group executed eleven attacks within two months, predominantly in central and southwestern Libya. For instance, on April 9, alleged ISL militants entered the village of Fuqaha, Jufra District, Fezzan Region, shot and killed at least three inhabitants, including a local official, and subsequently set fire to several homes. Two days later, ISL announced it had executed six LNA soldiers, who the militant group had abducted in Ghadduwah, Sebha District, Fezzan Region. On June 2, ISL injured 19 LNA fighters when two car bombs were detonated at an LNA gathering in the city of Derna, eponymous district, Cyrenaica Region.

This series of attacks ended on June 14, when LNA forces clashed with militants on ISL's most recent base of operations near Fuqaha. Twelve ISL militants were killed, and six vehicles were destroyed. Additionally, AFRICOM carried out four airstrikes between September 19 and 29 in southern and southwestern Libya, killing 43 militants. Following the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on October 26, 25 militants pledged allegiance to the new leader of IS, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, in a video message. (hss)

SAUDI ARABIA

One attack by IS militants was reported in Saudi Arabia in 2019. On April 21, IS attacked a police station in al-Zulfi, Riyadh Province. Security forces managed to repel the attack and killed four of the attackers. Three members of the police force were injured. (sbr)

TUNISIA

The conflict between the IS and the government continued in Tunisia. Several attacks, as well as retaliatory measures by security forces, were conducted over the course of the year. For instance, IS-affiliated militants carried out three suicide attacks within a week in June and July. On June 27, two militants blew themselves up in the capital Tunis, eponymous

governorate, on Charles de Gaulle street and in al-Qarjani district, respectively, leaving one person dead and eight injured. In response, the Tunisian National Guard carried out raids and arrested 25 people between June 27 and 28. On July 2, another militant blew himself up in Tunis, without causing further casualties. All three attacks were claimed by IS.

IS militants also carried out two beheadings. For instance, on February 20, militants beheaded a man in Mount Mghila, between Sidi Bouzid and Kasserine Governorates. The body was then used to lure security forces into a trap. IS stated that senior security personnel were injured in this incident, while official media did not report any injuries. Security forces conducted numerous raids in search of IS-affiliated militants throughout the year. For instance, on January 3, three militants were killed and two more blew themselves up after security forces had stormed their hideout in al-Shimali city, Sidi Bouzid Governorate. Similar raids resulted in the deaths of at least another eight suspected militants throughout the year. Local authorities prosecuted several people for terror-related offenses. For instance, on January 9, the anti-terror court convicted a total of 49 people for the killing of a shepherd in Mount Mghilla in 2015.

The nationwide state of emergency was extended several times, including on December 30, until the end of January 2020. (wih)

YEMEN

In Yemen, IS continued its fight against AQAP in al-Bayda Governorate. As in 2018, the number of attacks targeting al-Houthi forces and security forces of the government of the internationally recognized President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi further decreased. This year, IS and AQAP militants fought each other regularly, with a gap in November when neither conducted any attacks. The fighting mainly occurred in the Quyfa area, northwestern al-Bayda. Both parties conducted sniper attacks and used IEDs and rockets to target opposing militants. For instance, on March 24, two IS militants carried out a suicide attack on the AQAP operational headquarters in Dhi Khalib al-Asfa area. Further, the IS claimed to have injured or killed ten AQAP militants, in the same area on April 1. Sources affiliated with AQAP stated that the group had killed eight IS fighters between June 12 and 19. In the following, both, IS and AQAP published statements denying each others claims, stating that the attacks instead caused civilian casualties. On April 17, AQAP offered an exchange of prisoners. In course of the second half of the year, the number of attacks decreased.

IS carried out a total of five attacks on al-Houthi forces, three at the beginning of the year and two in August. For instance, on January 24, IS militants detonated an IED in Sha'ir district, Ibb Governorate, and claimed to have either killed or injured at least five al-Houthi fighters.

IS targeted security forces twice this year. The first attack occurred on August 1 at a police station in the temporary capital Aden, eponymous governorate. The attackers used multiple SVBIEDs, killing eleven and injuring 29. On December 7, IS claimed to have killed a commander of the UAE-backed al-Hizam Security Forces in Aden. (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 continued between various opposition groups, various civil movements and workers' unions on the one hand, and the government on the other hand.

The conflict was marked primarily by small socioeconomic protests all over the country, revolving around issues such as access to education and health services and unemployment. For example, the Tunisian General Workers Union (UGTT) organized a nationwide one-day strike on January 16, the biggest strike since 2013, demanding higher wages after collective bargaining with the government had failed. On February 7, the government agreed to a wage raise.

On February 16, protesters took to the streets after a young man died inside a police station close to Hammamet, Nabeul Governorate. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd and arrested seven people for throwing Molotov cocktails and stones at security forces.

After twelve agricultural workers were killed in a car accident in rural Sidi Bouzid Governorate, protests erupted in the city center of Sidi Bouzid, on April 29, with 5,000 people protesting economic and working conditions. Tunisian fuel distribution workers launched another nationwide three-day strike on May 2, demanding higher wages.

The self-immolation of a young man due to poverty and abject living conditions led to protests in Jemla, Sidi Bouzid Governorate, on November 30. During the three-day protests, clashes between protesters and police forces erupted, with protesters burning tires and throwing stones at police officers. 20 police officers were injured, and police used tear gas to disperse the crowds.

After a young girl accused a politician of sexual harassment, thousands of women shared their experiences of sexual harassment online under the hashtag #EnaZeda. Protests occurred on October 11 and November 30, demanding, among other things, the stricter implementation of the law against violence established in 2017.

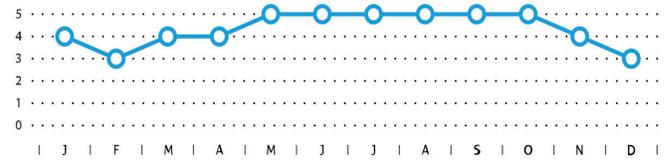
After the death of President Beji Caid Essebsi on July 25, presidential elections were held on September 15. Independent Kais Saied was elected in a run-off on October 13. The presidential and parliamentary elections marked the second democratic transition of power after the Tunisian revolution in 2011. The ongoing state of emergency was extended into 2020. mls

TURKEY (PKK, TAK)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1978

Conflict parties: PKK, TAK vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy



The war over autonomy continued between the Turkish government on the one hand, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its alleged offshoot, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), on the other hand. Throughout the year, at least 1,280 people were killed in the conflict.

Clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), the PKK, and the TAK mostly affected the southeastern Turkish provinces of Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, and Sirnak. Occasionally, clashes also occurred in the eastern Turkish provinces of Agri and Igdır. In northern Iraq, clashes mainly occurred in the governorates of Dohuk, Kirkuk, and Erbil, especially in the regions of Avasin-Basyan, Gara, the Qandil mountains, and Zab. On May 27, the Turkish government started an air-supported land operation called Operation Claw in northern Iraq.

Protests in support of at least 250 members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), who had gone on hunger strike across Turkey to demand an improvement to the detention conditions of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, increased at the beginning of the year. For instance, on February 3, thousands joined a protest in Istanbul in support of the hunger strikes.

At the same time, Turkish authorities lifted Öcalan's visitation restrictions. On May 2, Öcalan's lawyers were allowed to visit him for the first time since 2011. The visitation ban was lifted completely on May 16, after Öcalan released a political statement calling for an end to the hunger strikes of the detained HDP deputies.

Throughout the year, Turkish authorities arrested at least 1,273 people for alleged links to PKK. Prior to the municipal elections on March 31, at least 776 people were arrested. Moreover, the police detained another 418 people in 29 provinces following the replacement of three mayors of the southeastern cities of Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Van, eponymous provinces, with state-appointed trustees on August 19. On August 22, another 44 people were arrested in Izmir and Ankara, eponymous provinces, for protesting against these replacements.

On January 20, TAF conducted an airstrike in northern Iraq, claiming to have killed six TAK militants. Subsequently, hundreds of protesters stormed a Turkish military base in the Iraqi province of Dohuk on January 26, where at least one protester was killed and ten more were injured. On April 19, TAK militants attacked a military base in Hakkari, eponymous province, resulting in the deaths of four TAF members and at least 20 militants.

On May 27, TAF initiated 'Operation Claw', carrying out land and airstrikes in the Kirkuk and Dohuk governorates of north-

ern Iraq. The three-stage operation resulted in the deaths of at least 1,000 people, including senior members of the PKK, as well as the destruction of hideouts and the evacuation of several villages. In May and June, TAF claimed to have killed 58 militants in the course of the operation in Kirkuk Governorate and 15 militants through airstrikes in Dohuk Governorate. In July, TAF increased the intensity of 'Operation Claw' in Dohuk Governorate, while land and air operations in Kirkuk Governorate continued, leading to the deaths of senior members of the PKK. On July 17, alleged PKK members killed a Turkish diplomat and a civilian in the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, Erbil, which was followed by retaliatory TAF airstrikes in northern Iraq. On August 8, TAF claimed to have killed two PKK militants allegedly responsible for the attack on the Turkish diplomat. On August 19, TAF initiated the military Operation Kiran in the southeastern Turkish provinces of Hakkari, Sirnak, and Van, and in Batman, Mardin, and Sirnak provinces on August 29. In September, TAF increased air and land operations in northern Iraq, especially in Gara, Dohuk Governorate. Moreover, TAF started several military operations in the southeastern Turkish provinces Sirnak and Siirt on September 21, as well as in Kars, Agri, and Igdir provinces on September 24.

Throughout the year, the PKK conducted several attacks. For instance, on September 12, an IED killed seven villagers and injured at least ten in the province of Diyarbakir. While Turkish authorities accused PKK of killing civilians, PKK claimed they had been state informants. The attack triggered local protests against the PKK in the southeastern provinces of Turkey, especially in Diyarbakir. kar

YEMEN (AL-HIRAK / SOUTHERN YEMEN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: al-Hirak vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of southern Yemen continued between al-Hirak, also known as the Southern Movement, and the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

In January, the UN Panel of Experts on Yemen highlighted the continued erosion of the government's authority due to actors such as the secessionist Southern Transitional Council (STC). Furthermore, on April 4, the advisor to the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Matthew Waldman, met with a delegation from the STC in Aden, eponymous governorate, and emphasized that the southern issue is key to addressing the conflict in Yemen.

On February 16 and 17, the Southern National Assembly, the parliament proclaimed by the STC decided to resume contact with Hadi. At the same time, however, it called for the UAE-backed Hadrami Elite Forces to take over security in the southern governorates. Between April 13 and 16, the government held its first parliamentary session since the outbreak of the war in Yemen (→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)) in Sayoun, Hadramawt Governorate. The meeting was attended by just 118 of 301 MPs, leading the STC to declare that the

session was unconstitutional.

Violence intensified after an al-Houthi missile strike hit a military camp in Aden on August 1 and killed at least 40 security forces, among them southern commander Muni Mahmoud al-Yafa'i. The Houthi missile attack was not connected to the conflict over secession. Following his funeral on August 7, clashes between STC-aligned Southern Resistance Forces (SRF) and the government's Presidential Brigade erupted and continued until August 10. The heavy fighting left at least 40 people dead and more than 260 injured, and resulted in the de facto control of Aden by the STC. On August 28, government forces tried to recapture Aden, but withdrew on the next day, after heavy clashes. The clashes included multiple airstrikes by the UAE and led to the death of at least 24, with more than 150 injured. Previously the UAE had proclaimed the partial withdrawal of its forces. Diplomatic efforts by Saudi Arabia and the UAE resulted in the signing of the Riyadh Agreement between STC and Hadi on November 5. The accord included a newly formed Yemeni government with several STC-aligned ministers, STC participation in future peace talks (→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi forces)), and the integration of STC-aligned forces into the government's Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. leg

YEMEN (AQAP – AL-HOUSHI FORCES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. al-Houthi forces
Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over ideology and subnational predominance continued 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 hand.

As in previous years, AQAP conducted several IED attacks against al-Houthi forces in al-Bayda Governorate. At the beginning of the year, AQAP launched two attacks within three weeks targeting al-Houthi forces in Dhi Na'im district, al-Bayda Governorate. On January 22, AQAP killed several al-Houthi fighters with IEDs. In the second attack, on February 12, AQAP militants used two roadside bombs targeting al-Houthi vehicles and claimed to have killed several al-Houthi forces while trying to recover the injured and dead. On March 10, AQAP militants detonated an IED in al-Zahir district, al-Bayda, causing the death of two al-Houthi fighters and injuring another. On May 3, AQAP attacked al-Houthi fighters in al-Bayda, killing one and injuring another with a roadside bomb. In July, AQAP ambushed al-Houthi fighters twice, killing one on July 7, in Shukan village, al-Bayda and one in al-Qayfa on July 14. Throughout the year, no attacks by the al-Houthi forces against AQAP were reported.

As in recent years, AQAP released an online statement presenting itself as the sole guardian of Sunni interest in Yemen and accusing the al-Houthi forces of allegiance to the USA. Furthermore, they pledged to continue fighting against al-Houthi forces. However, on September 13, AQAP agreed to

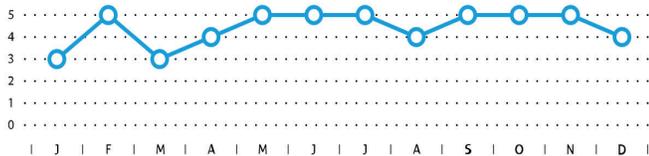
a prisoner swap with the al-Houthi movement, according to AQAP media channels. Three days later, AQAP claimed to have attacked al-Houthi forces with IEDs in al-Bayda, killing two. jmr

YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA (AL-HOUSHI FORCES)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: al-Houthi forces vs. government

Conflict items: national power



The war over national power continued between al-Houthi forces, supported by al-Houthi-aligned Popular Committees, and tribal forces on the one hand, and the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, supported by the Saudi Arabian-led coalition, anti-Houthi Popular Resistance forces, tribal forces, and the Islah party on the other hand.

The conflict escalated into a war in 2014 after al-Houthi forces occupied the Yemeni capital Sana'a and forced Hadi to flee to Aden, and later to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Saudi-led coalition, which began to intervene in the conflict in March 2015 on request by Hadi, was mainly comprised of Saudi Arabian, Emirati, and Sudanese forces. In December 2018, the government and al-Houthi movement agreed on a cease-fire for Hudaydah city, eponymous governorate, and its port which is important for basic supplies for the Yemeni population.

In 2019, approx. 20,000 people died in the conflict, making it the second-deadliest year on record. The death toll increased to over 100,000 since the start of the conflict in 2015.

On September 3, HRW published a report accusing the conflict parties' international partners of complicity with war crimes conducted in Yemen. Primarily, the report mentioned the US, UK and France on the one hand, and Iran on the other hand.

In 2019, the Saudi-led coalition continued to conduct airstrikes on al-Houthi strongholds in Yemen. Airstrikes mainly targeted al-Houthi weapon caches and storage sites. For instance, on March 23, Saudi-led coalition forces destroyed two UAV storage sites and several camps in Yemen's capital Sana'a. On June 11, several coalition airstrikes in Hajjah Governorate killed multiple al-Houthi fighters and destroyed two vehicles. The airstrikes regularly caused civilian casualties. On March 10 and 11, at least 22 civilians were killed and 30 injured in several airstrikes in Kushar district, Hajjah Governorate. Another airstrike on September 1, which, according to the coalition, was supposed to hit an al-Houthi weapon storage site, struck an al-Houthi-run prison instead. ICRC reported approx. 100 deaths.

Al-Houthi forces regularly launched missiles against targets on Saudi territory. Saudi officials rarely confirmed these attacks. For instance, on January 14, al-Houthi forces launched a ballistic missile targeting Saudi troops in Bir Askar City,

Najran Region, Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government did not confirm the attack but claimed the interception of a ballistic missile. Al-Houthi forces also used UAVs with explosives to attack targets. For instance, on January 10, an al-Houthi UAV attacked the Yemeni airbase Anad, Lahij Governorate, killing at least five Yemeni and coalition soldiers. Starting in April, al-Houthi forces increased their use of UAVs, attacking targets outside Yemen. For example, on April 2, Saudi air defense shot down two al-Houthi UAVs whose shrapnel injured five Saudi citizens close to Khamis Mushait, Asir region, Saudi Arabia. On April 30, Saudi-led coalition spokesperson Turki al-Maliki stated that Saudi coalition forces intercepted 13 al-Houthi UAVs targeting the Yemeni parliamentary session in Sayun City, Hadramawt Governorate. Al-Houthi forces regularly targeted civil airports, using ballistic missiles or drones. For example, from May 21 to 23, al-Houthi forces used UAVs to attack Najran regional airport in Saudi Arabia three times. On June 12, a missile attack against Abha International Airport, Asir, injured 26 civilians. On September 15, al-Houthi movement claimed responsibility for missile and UAV attacks on the Saudi-stated owned company Saudi Aramco's oil fields in Abqaiq and Khurais, Eastern Province, the day before. The attacks caused the reduction of Saudi Arabia's daily oil production by more than 50 percent and the global oil price to rise. Contrary to al-Houthis' statement, US intelligence officials accused Iran of having conducted the attacks due to its high logistic efforts [→ Iran – Saudi Arabia]. The UK, France, and Germany followed this interpretation. On December 8, the al-Houthi minister of defense stated that al-Houthi forces had developed new anti-aircraft systems. Correspondingly, al-Houthi forces claimed to have shot down two Saudi spy drones on December 4, as well as a Saudi spy plane on December 10.

Throughout the year, fighting continued between government forces and al-Houthi. On February 1, the Yemeni military captured several important al-Houthi positions in Saada governorate and killed two al-Houthi commanders. On February 18, government forces seized control over al-Husha district, Dhale Governorate, after clashes between tribal fighters and al-Houthi militants. On April 24, government-aligned forces claimed to have seized the strategically important position Jabal Aznab, Sa'ada Governorate. On May 3, al-Houthi fighters captured Qatabah city, Dhale Governorate. In response, the government sent reinforcements to Qatabah district and the Saudi-led coalition bombed the area on May 3 and 9. On May 17, the coalition claimed to have cleared the area of al-Houthi influence on May 17. However, five days later, al-Houthi forces again recaptured Qatabah. On June 7, al-Houthi forces allegedly advanced into Saudi territory towards Najran city, which Yemeni forces denied. The Saudi-led coalition conducted several airstrikes on Yemeni territory in Sana'a, Saada, and Dhamar governorates in response.

In central and southern Yemen, Yemeni tribes regularly rejected al-Houthi rule and resisted al-Houthi forces. After clashes erupted between al-Houthi militants and Hajoori tribal fighters at the end of January in Hajjah Governorate, the Saudi-led coalition supported the tribal forces by conducting several airstrikes on al-Houthi positions, for example between January 26 and 30. On February 7, the Hajoori tribe claimed to have killed 75 al-Houthi forces while injuring another 150. Fightings erupted again between al-

Houthi and Hajoori tribal militants on February 10. On March 10, al-Houthi forces conducted a raid killing Hajoori tribal leader Abu Musalim al-Zakri. Furthermore, clashes erupted on February 9 between al-Houthi forces and a tribal faction in al-Husha district, Dhale, after al-Houthi forces had blown up a local tribal leader's house. The following day, the clashes escalated further, with reinforcements arriving to support both sides. On February 11, Emirati-backed troops launched a surprise attack on al-Houthi militants, killing at least five people. Aside from the military developments, the UN-brokered peace process faltered. Ultimately the conflicting parties did not implement the so-called Stockholm Agreement, to which they had agreed in December 2018, although several mitigating measures were announced throughout the year. The agreement had included a ceasefire and the withdrawal of military forces from Hudaydah as well as the deployment of a UN monitoring team to screen its implementation. On January 28, the UN monitoring team leader Patrick Cammaert resigned following a discussion over his impartiality. Cammaert's successor, Michael Lollesgaard, took office on February 5. Lollesgaard resigned on July 31, with his successor Abhijit Guha taking office on September 13. Talks mediated by the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, between the government and al-Houthi representatives about the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement continued until May. A prisoner exchange, which was not part of the UN-brokered peace process, took place on January 29 and 30. On February 17, a UN spokesperson announced an agreement on a two-phased withdrawal of both parties. Initially, on April 15, the conflict parties agreed on implementing the first phase of the withdrawal. Al-Houthi fighters withdrew from Ras Issa and Salif ports in Hudaydah on May 11, however, they continued to clash with government forces. Additionally, the Minister of Information accused al-Houthi of handing over control of the ports to Houthi-aligned forces. On May 13, representatives of government and the al-Houthi movement met in Amman, Jordan, to conduct another round of talks concerning the distribution of revenues from Hudaydah port and humanitarian issues. On October 23, the new UN monitoring team leader Guha confirmed the implementation of joint observation posts run by both the Hadi government and the al-Houthi movement in order to de-escalate the situation in the city. Despite the talks on a ceasefire in and a withdrawal from Hudaydah, the city remained a hotspot of heavy fighting. On March 24 and 25, government forces and al-Houthi militants exchanged heavy artillery and rockets were fired on July 7 in district of Hudaydah. The next day, al-Houthi fighters shelled

the Red Sea Mills near the al-Hudaydah port, which are important for grain supplies for the Yemeni population. Clashes between government forces and al-Houthi continued on March 28. Al-Houthi militants prevented then-UN monitoring team leader Lollesgaard from meeting with government representatives the following day and denied UN and WFP access to the Red Sea Mills on April 2. On July 28, al-Houthi fighters attacked a dairy processing farm, killing one civilian. On September 19, Saudi-led coalition intercepted and destroyed an unmanned al-Houthi explosive boat near al-Hudaydah port, and attacked several al-Houthi boat sites one day later. Throughout November, al-Houthi militants clashed several times with the Giant Brigade, a pro-government militia. For instance on November 13, the Giant Brigade claimed to have killed an al-Houthi commander. Supposedly al-Houthi forces lost 13 fighters and 67 militants were injured, during the two-day offensive against Yemeni army positions in Hudaydah on December 21 and 22.

In July, the Saudi-led coalition became fractious when disputes between government forces and militants aligned to the secessionist Southern Transitional Council (STC) intensified [→ Yemen (al-Hirak / Southern Yemen)]. While Saudi Arabia backed the government, the UAE supported the STC's separation movement, deploying al-Hizam Security Forces to Socotra Island, eponymous governorate, and decreasing its military commitment to the Saudi-led coalition. Subsequently, on July 11, Saudi forces replaced UAE forces which had withdrawn from Hudaydah. Similarly, on July 23, a Saudi brigade was deployed to Aden City in order to overtake a military site formerly run by UAE forces. On August 1, al-Houthi forces attacked a STC military camp in Aden City during a graduation ceremony, killing at least 40 people. Following this attack, violent clashes between Hadi-aligned forces and STC forces erupted in Aden city. The signing of the Riyadh Agreement on November 5, which was brokered by Saudi Arabia and UAE, calmed tensions between STC and Hadi.

After a meeting between al-Houthi spokesman Mohamed Abdul Salam and senior Iranian officials, among them Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, from August 11 to 13 in Tehran, Iran, the al-Houthi movement sent their first ambassador to Iran on August 18. On November 13, Saudi Arabia and the al-Houthi movement held indirect talks over possible solutions for the Yemen conflict in Muscat, Oman. In these talks, both sides agreed to reduce the number of airstrikes (Saudi-led coalition) and missile or drone attacks (al-Houthi forces). Furthermore, both sides released POWs, such as on December 19, when a total of 135 POWs were exchanged. nar

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February 28, 2019

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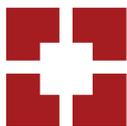
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ISSN 1616-31X