



CONFLICT BAROMETER | 2016

Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research



disputes
non-violent crises
violent crises
limited wars
wars

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Heidelberg Institute for
International Conflict Research

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PREFACE

With the 25th edition of the Conflict Barometer, the HIIK continues its annual series of reports covering global conflict dynamics. 2016 was marked by a further increase of violence in Syria and Yemen, where two new intrastate wars developed in addition to the already existing six. By contrast, a decrease of violence was observed in the Philippines, the Central African Republic, and DR Congo, among others, although the countries continued to be affected by violent conflict. On the interstate level, the conflict between Pakistan and India intensified again after its temporary de-escalation in 2015. In total, 226 violent conflicts, of which 38 were highly violent, and 176 non-violent conflicts were observed.

This year, the HIIK officially introduces the new conflict type “transstate”, which refers to conflicts involving both state and non-state actors while meeting the criteria for a political conflict for at least two sovereign states. This methodological innovation comes as a response to the new empirical realities of the present decade, which could not be captured anymore by the existing state-centric typology.

The Conflict Barometer 2016 contains an extensive account of the activities of International and Regional Organizations aimed at conflict resolution. Furthermore, the report provides a detailed analysis of interstate conflicts.

The Board of Directors would like to thank all contributors of this report for their outstanding efforts and is especially grateful for all those who helped with the overall organization of the HIIK throughout the year.

The Board of Directors,
February 2017

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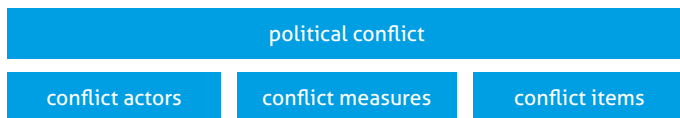
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Methodology

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

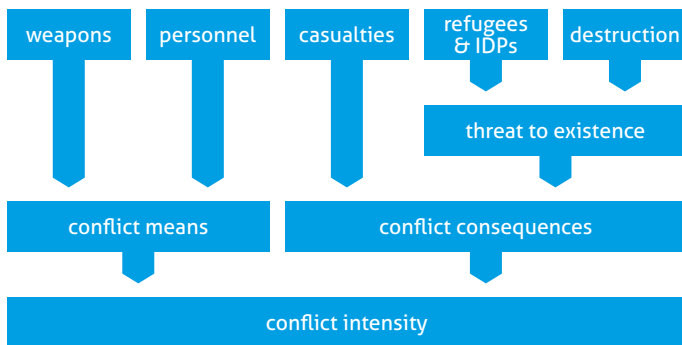
intensity level	terminology	level of violence	intensity class
1	dispute	non-violent conflicts	low intensity
2	non-violent crisis		
3	violent crisis	violent conflicts	medium intensity
4	limited war		high intensity
5	war		

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.

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

WEAPONS

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

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

PERSONNEL

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

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

CASUALTIES

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

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

REFUGEES & IDPs

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

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

DESTRUCTION

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

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

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

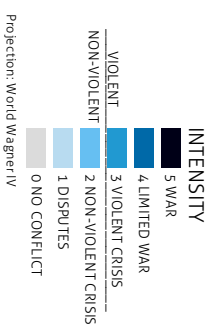
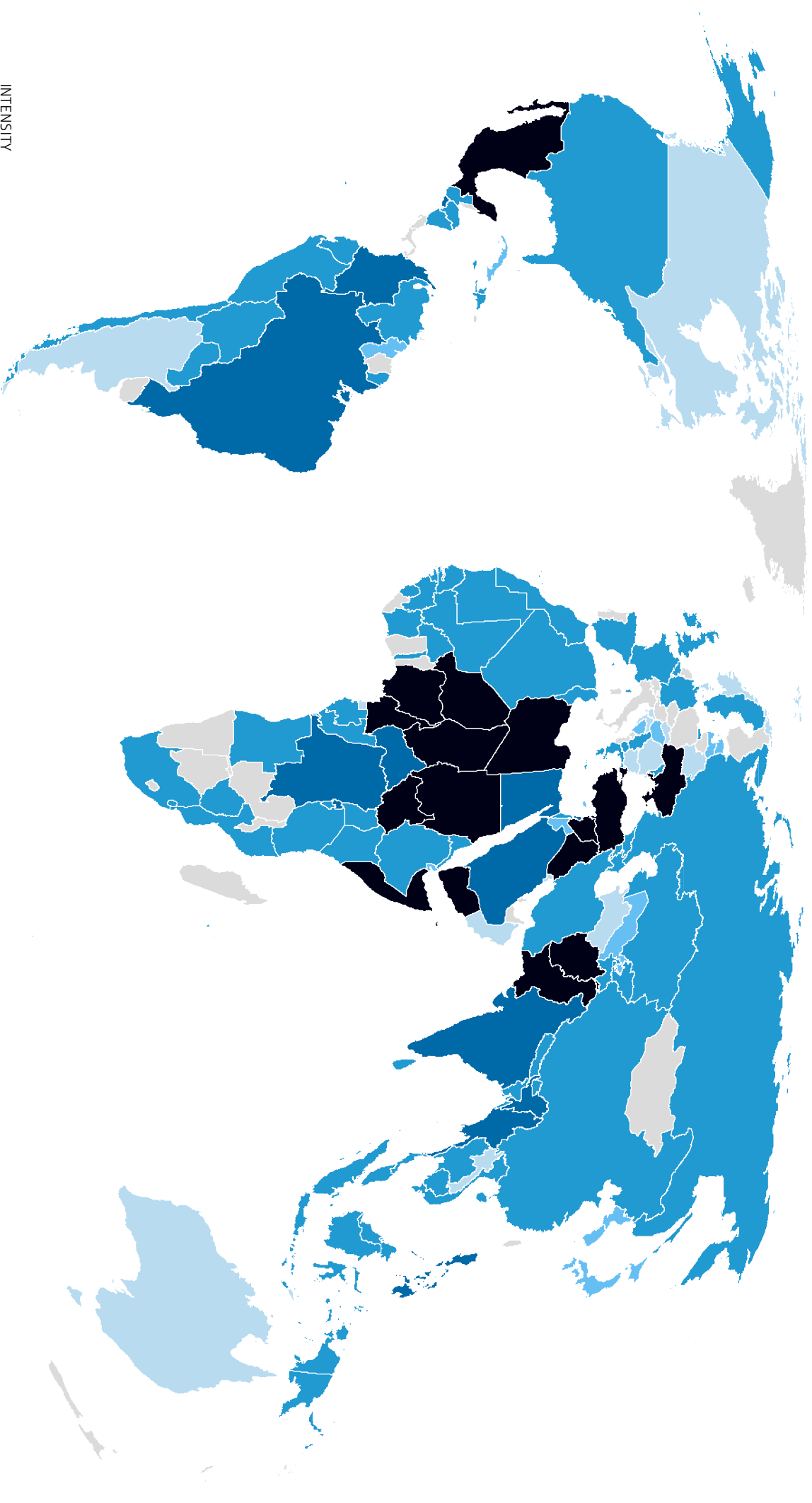
CONFLICT TYPES

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.

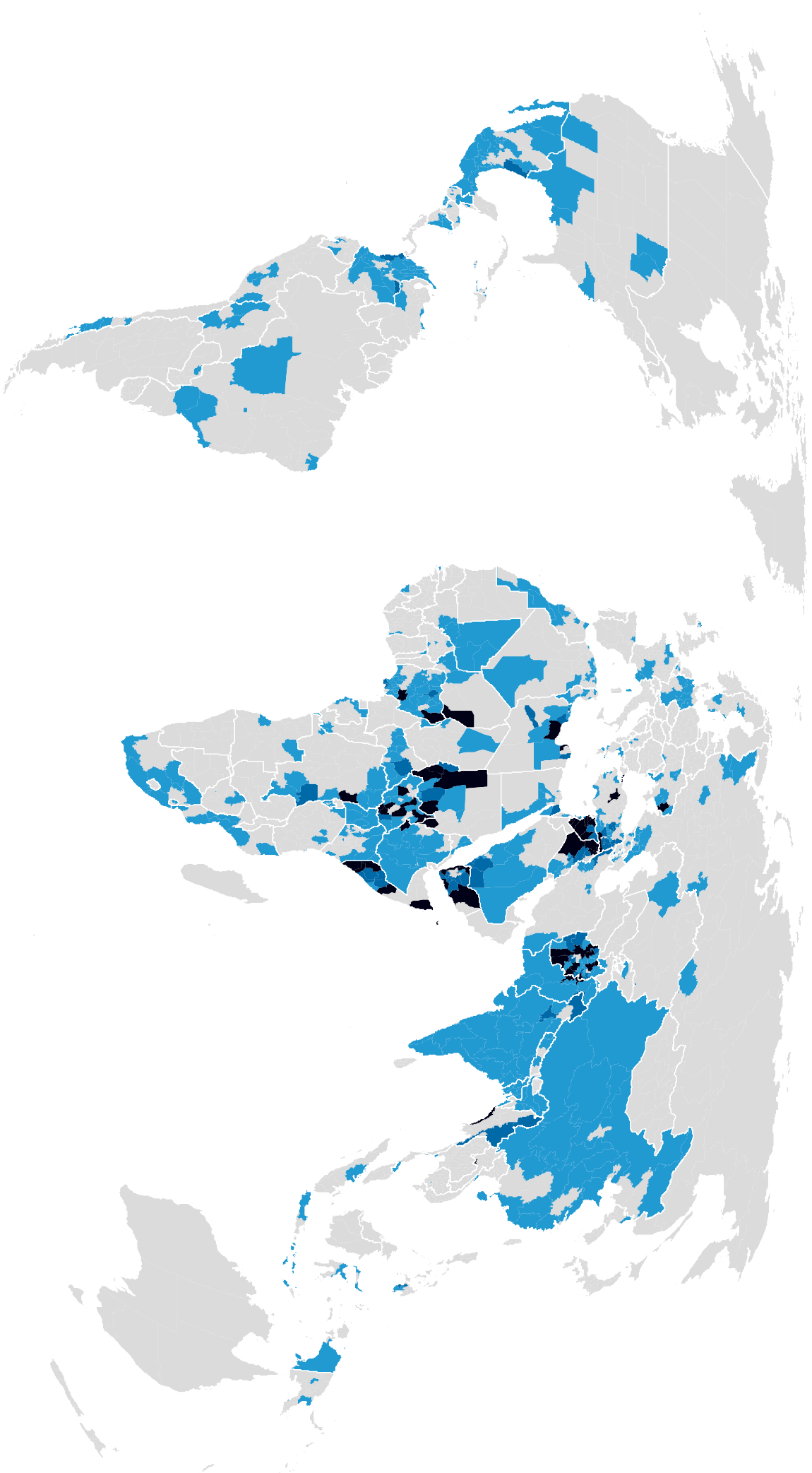
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Global Conflict Panorama

CONFLICTS IN 2016 (NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL)



VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2016 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

5 WAR

4 LIMITED WAR

3 VIOLENT CRISIS

NO VIOLENT CONFLICT

Projection: World Wagner IV

HIGHLY VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN 2016

LIMITED WARS (20)

WARS (18)

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)
 DR Congo (ADF)
 DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa)
 DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)
 DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)
 Nigeria (northerners – southerners)
 Sudan (inter-communal violence)

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

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)
 Turkey (opposition)

Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)
 Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)
 Libya (opposition)
 Syria (inter-opposition violence)
 Syria (opposition)
 Turkey (PKK, TAK)
 Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)
 Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)

ASIA AND OCEANIA

India (Naxalites)
 Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)
 Myanmar (Rohingya)
 Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)
 Pakistan – India
 Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)

Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)

THE AMERICAS

Brazil (drug-trafficking organizations)
 Colombia (ELN)
 Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)
 El Salvador (Maras)
 Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)

Mexico (drug cartels)

EUROPE

Ukraine (Donbas)

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2016, the HIIK observed 402 conflicts, among them 226 violent and 176 non-violent ones. The number of full-scale wars decreased from 19 to 18, while the number of limited wars decreased by four to 20 in total. Overall, 188 violent crises were observed, marking a decrease by four compared to 2015. The number of non-violent crises decreased by ten to 78, while the number of disputes increased by eight to 98.

WARS:

Throughout the year, two conflicts, both in the Middle East and Maghreb, escalated to a war. In Syria, violence between different opposition groups, such as the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces and their military wing, the Free Syrian Army, as well as various moderate and Islamist groups, intensified [→ Syria (inter-opposition violence)]. While the groups jointly fought against the Syrian government or the so-called Islamic State (IS) on occasion, they also repeatedly attacked each other. In Yemen, the conflict between al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Ansar al Sharia, on the one hand, and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, supported by the US, escalated to a war [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)]. AQAP increasingly attacked government and pro-government troops and achieved territorial gains in the first three months of the year. Government troops, supported by US and Saudi-Arabian airstrikes, pushed back AQAP in the following months.

Overall, the Middle East and Maghreb witnessed eight wars in 2016, more than any other region. In Syria, following UN Resolution 2254 from 12/18/15, a ceasefire between opposition groups and the government came into effect on February 27. However, by April, the ceasefire had collapsed entirely. From July onwards, the government started a siege of Aleppo, blocking supply-lines for opposition groups. In the following months, violence in and around Aleppo intensified significantly, with Russian and Syrian airstrikes repeatedly targeting the opposition-held parts of the city. On December 22, government forces took full control over eastern Aleppo, after 35,000 people had been evacuated to the opposition-held town of Idlib.

The war between between IS, on the one hand, and Syria, Iraq, as well as other governments and several militant groups, on the other, continued. In Syria, IS lost territories in the northern governorates of Aleppo, ar-Raqqa, and al-Hasakah, while it maintained control over its territories in Deir ez-Zor Governorate and extended its control in Homs Governorate. In Iraq, IS was pushed back from Nineveh Governorate and al-Anbar Governorate, but maintained control over areas in Kirkuk, Erbil, Diyala, and Salahuddin Governorates. According to the UN, more than 16,000 people were killed in the course of the conflict in Iraq, among them over 6,800 civilians. The number of IDPs decreased after almost one million people had returned to their homes in former IS-held areas. In Afghanistan, the nationwide war between Taliban and other Islamist militant groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. Taliban repeatedly attempted to take control over major cities like Kunduz and numerous districts in several provinces throughout the country [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. According to US Forces Afghanistan, by the end of November, 174 out of

407 districts in Afghanistan were insufficiently or not at all controlled by the government. Moreover, Taliban conducted attacks on government buildings, diplomatic missions, international targets as well as media outlets. The war in Libya between the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR), the Tripoli-based General National Congress (GNC), and the newly formed Government of National Accord (GNA), each supported by different armed groups, continued [→ Libya (opposition)]. The GNA was formed by former HoR and GNC members, but parts of HoR and GNC did not recognize GNA and resumed their respective governmental activities. Consequently, clashes between the Libyan National Army, supporting HoR, and Shura Councils, supporting GNC, continued and concentrated in eastern Libya. In Turkey, the war between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its splinter group Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. While the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and PKK repeatedly clashed in eastern provinces, TAK also conducted several bomb attacks in western provinces. Overall, at least 173 civilians, 540 security personnel, and 2,241 militants were killed. The war between al-Houthi and the government in Yemen continued, while the humanitarian situation in the country further deteriorated [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)].

As in the previous year, the only highly violent conflict in Europe took place in Ukraine, where the war in the Donbas region between the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government as well as Ukrainian nationalist volunteer battalions, on the other, continued in its third consecutive year. The number of civilian casualties increased and the conflict parties did not succeed in implementing several ceasefire agreements despite international mediation efforts [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. In Africa, seven wars were observed, marking a decrease by two. In Sudan, the war in Darfur between the Sudan Revolutionary Front and the government continued in its 14th consecutive year and was influenced by inter-communal fighting [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. Furthermore, the war between SPLM/A-North and the government in Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions continued [→ Sudan (opposition)]. Violence decreased in the second half of the year after both conflict parties had joined the "Roadmap Agreement." In South Sudan, the war between various ethnic groups over arable land and cattle continued [→ South Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. It was increasingly influenced by the war between Nuer-affiliated Sudan People Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) and the government of President Salva Kiir that intensified after a failed peace agreement in 2015 [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. While fighting subsided in the first half of the year due to attempts to implement the peace accord, violence intensified from July onwards, especially in and around the capital Juba. Ethnically motivated violence markedly increased, and in the end of November, the UN voiced concerns over ethnic cleansings allegedly committed by both sides. In Nigeria, the war between farmers and pastoralists over control of arable land and cattle continued in its fifth consecutive year with 1,135 conflict-related deaths in the course of the year [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)]. The war between Boko Haram and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger continued, although the number

of conflict-related deaths decreased by 75 percent to approx. 3,000 compared to 2015. Furthermore, the number of the group's attacks outside Nigeria significantly decreased. The war between al-Shabaab and the governments of Somalia and Kenya continued in its eleventh consecutive year [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. While the Somali army and AMISOM troops took control over several al-Shabaab strongholds, the group nonetheless achieved new territorial gains and carried out numerous attacks against governmental and international forces as well as civilian targets.

The only war in Asia and Oceania was fought between several Islamist militant groups and the government in Pakistan, leaving at least 897 people dead and 696 injured. In April, the government preliminarily finished its anti-terror campaign that had started in 2014, but continued to conduct airstrikes throughout the year. Militants targeted police and military forces as well as civilians, mostly using IEDs.

In Mexico, the war between drug cartels and the government continued, marking the only war within the Americas. Compared to previous years, cartels further militarized, while security forces conducted large-scale operations against cartels. On January 8, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera, head of the Sinaloa Cartel, was recaptured. In July, the highest number of homicides since 2011 was counted. Throughout the year, killings of judges, clerics, and journalists increased significantly.

LIMITED WARS:

Overall, 2016 saw 20 limited wars, of which eight escalated from a violent crisis and three de-escalated from war level. In the Middle East and Maghreb, two limited wars took place. On Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Islamist militants and the government frequently engaged in clashes [→ Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. At least 474 people were killed and 139 injured, mostly by attacks of Islamist groups targeting security forces, or raids and airstrikes conducted by the Egyptian military and police forces. In Turkey, violence escalated with the attempted coup by factions of the TAF on July 15 and 16 [→ Turkey (opposition)].

In Sub-Saharan Africa, four out of seven limited wars were fought in DR Congo (DRC). After last year's escalation, the conflict between the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, on the one hand and the governments of DRC, supported by MONUSCO, and Rwanda, on the other, continued, leaving at least 188 people dead and tens of thousands internally displaced [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. The limited war between the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the government continued only on DRC territory, with ADF no longer fighting in Uganda [→ DR Congo (ADF)]. In the course of the conflict between Bantu, Batwa, and the government, Bantu militias increasingly attacked personnel of MONUSCO, UNHCR, and the World Food Programme [→ DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa)]. The limited war between different ethnic groups, local and foreign armed groups as well as the government left at least 380 people dead and thousands internally displaced [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. Inter-communal violence between Arab pastoral tribes in Sudan decreased [→ Sudan (inter-communal-violence)]. In Nigeria, violence between supporters of the northern-based All Progressives Congress and the southern-based People's Democratic Party escalated in the context of gubernatorial elections [→ Nigeria (north-

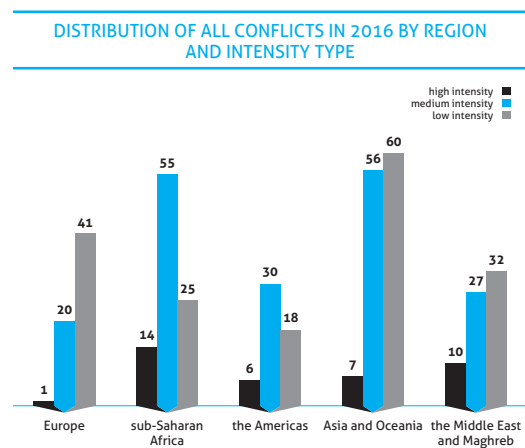
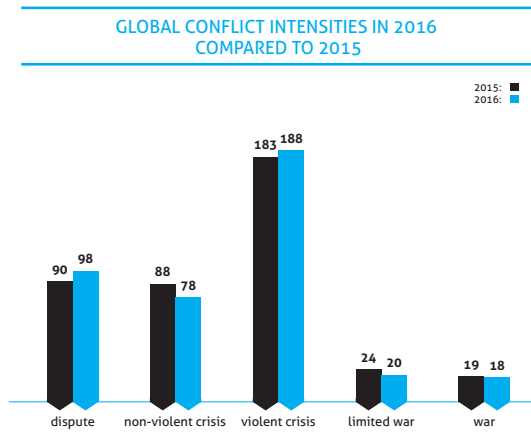
erners – southerners)]. In the Central African Republic, the war between ex-Séléka and Fulani militias, on the one hand, and Anti-Balaka groups, on the other, de-escalated, but left at least 310 people dead and tens of thousands displaced [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)].

Asia and Oceania witnessed six limited wars, including the only highly violent conflict on interstate level [→ Pakistan – India]. Pakistani and Indian forces violated the 2003 ceasefire agreement at least 45 times along the contested Line of Control, with both sides repeatedly employing heavy weapons. Overall, at least 83 people were killed and more than 210 people injured.

Three limited wars took place in Myanmar. Violence between Rohingya and the government escalated in Rakhine state and left at least 100 Rohingya and 32 soldiers dead, while approx. 50,000 Rohingya fled the area [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. In Kachin state, KIO and its armed wing KIA, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued their limited war over autonomy and resources, leaving at least 63 people dead and approx. 6,900 internally displaced [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. The conflict in the Palaung Self-Administered Zone, Shan State, between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the government intensified over the cultivation of poppy in the contested area [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)]. In India, fighting between Naxalites and the government escalated, leaving at least 361 people dead [→ India (Naxalites)]. Naxalites and security forces repeatedly clashed, with Naxalites often conducting IED attacks. After last year's escalation, the conflict between BIFM and BIFF, on the one hand, and the government and MILF, on the other, de-escalated, leaving at least 67 people dead [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)].

In the Americas, five limited wars were observed. In Brazil, violence over subnational predominance between drug trafficking organizations and the government intensified in the run-up to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and in the context of municipal elections in October [→ Brazil (drug-trafficking organizations)]. In Colombia, after the government increased its pressure on the ELN, fighting between the two sides intensified [→ Colombia (ELN)]. However, negotiation efforts aimed at establishing peace talks continued. The limited war between drug cartels, neo-paramilitary groups, and left-wing militant groups, such as ELN and FARC, continued [→ Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. In El Salvador, the limited war between criminal gangs and the government continued and saw an increasing militarization of gangs [→ El Salvador (Maras)]. Although the homicide rate dropped in comparison to last year, it remained the highest in Latin America. In Mexico, inter-cartel fighting continued on a highly violent level [→ Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)]. Various cartels increasingly attacked the Sinaloa Cartel after its leader, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera, had been arrested in January. twt

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT



INTRASTATE - INTERSTATE - SUBSTATE - TRANSSTATE

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asia and Oceania continued to be the region counting the highest number of conflicts with a total of 123. As in the previous year, the region thus accounted for about 30 percent of all recorded conflicts. Sub-Saharan Africa again ranked second with 94 conflicts, followed by 69 in the Middle East and Maghreb, 62 in Europe, and 54 in the Americas.

The total number of highly violent conflicts decreased from 43 to 38 worldwide. In Asia and Oceania, the number increased from six to seven, while it decreased from eleven to ten in the Middle East and Maghreb and from 19 to 14 in Africa. The number of highly violent conflicts in Europe and the Americas remained constant. While the war in Ukraine continued, five limited wars and one full-scale war were observed in the Americas. The Middle East and Maghreb was the only region which saw an increase in wars in comparison to 2015. Both the inter-opposition conflict in Syria and the AQAP and Ansar al-Sharia conflict in Yemen escalated to war level [→ Syria (inter-opposition violence); Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)]. Sub-Saharan Africa saw a decrease in the number of wars from nine to seven, while in Asia and Oceania the number dropped from two to one.

In the Middle East and Maghreb the number of limited wars dropped from five to two, while it increased from four to six in Asia and Oceania with two conflicts escalating in Myanmar [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State); Myanmar (Rohingya)]. With a total of seven, Sub-Saharan Africa counted three limited wars less than last year.

As in previous years, the region of Asia and Oceania displayed the highest number of violent crises. However, the number sharply decreased from 66 to 56. It was followed by Sub-Saharan Africa with 55, the Americas with 30, the Middle East and Maghreb with 27, and Europe with 20. With 66 percent, Europe saw the highest share of non-violent conflicts compared to its total number of conflicts. The highest absolute number was observed in Asia and Oceania with 60 non-violent conflicts, followed by 41 in Europe, 32 in the Middle East and Maghreb, 25 in Africa, and 18 in the Americas. chf

In 2016, the HIIK counted 401 conflicts, among them 265 intrastate, 69 interstate, 54 substate, and 13 transstate conflicts. Among the interstate conflicts, nine were fought on the level of a violent crisis, while the conflict between Pakistan and India escalated to a limited war. As in previous years, intrastate conflicts were the most common conflict type. Out of the total 265, 171 were fought on a violent level. Of all 54 observed substate conflicts, 33 were violent conflicts, among them four limited wars and three wars. Transstate conflicts were the least frequent conflict type, with only 13 out of 401 conflicts. However, as they included four wars, they displayed the highest relative share of wars of all conflict types.

In Europe, as in 2015, the only violent interstate conflict was fought between Armenia and Azerbaijan, where the violent crisis over Nagorno-Karabakh region continued. Out of the 45 European intrastate conflicts, only the war in the Donbas region was conducted on a highly violent level. The only transstate conflict in Europe was the dispute between Hungary, on the one side, and Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, on the other. This was also the only transstate dispute worldwide.

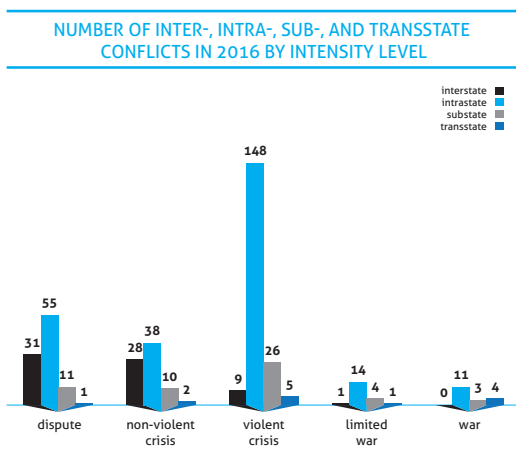
In Sub-Saharan Africa, two out of seven interstate conflicts were fought on a violent level, both revolving around territory [→ Ethiopia – Eritrea; Sudan – South Sudan]. In contrast, 73 percent of intrastate and 81 percent of substate conflicts were violent. However, the highest share of violent conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa was observed among transstate conflicts, where six out of seven were fought on a violent level.

As in the last years, the Americas witnessed the fewest conflicts in global comparison, with a total of 54. Among those, 36 were intrastate conflicts, with 30 being conducted on a violent level. Out of all 15 interstate conflicts, only three were fought violently. While the violent crisis between the USA and Mexico over border security continued, both the dispute between the Dominican Republic and Haiti and the non-violent crisis between Guatemala and Belize escalated to violent crises. Both substate conflicts, one between cartels, neo-paramilitary groups, as well as left-wing militants in Colombia and the other between cartels and paramilitary groups in Mexico, reached the level of a limited war.

In Asia and Oceania, two out of 19 interstate conflicts were conducted with violent means. Of those two, the limited war

between Pakistan and India constituted the only highly violent interstate conflict worldwide. 58 percent (45/77) of all intrastate and 48 percent (12/25) of all substate conflicts witnessed violence. Of two transstate conflicts, one was fought on a violent level.

In the Middle East and Maghreb, two out of twelve interstate conflicts involved violence. In comparison, 62 percent of all intrastate conflicts in the region witnessed violence, with seven conflicts reaching a highly violent level. Less than half (5/11) of the region's substate conflicts were violent. In contrast, all three transstate conflicts were fought on a violent level, namely the wars involving the al-Houthis on the Arabian Peninsula and the war against the so-called Islamic State as well as the conflict regarding al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. twt



INTERSTATE CONFLICTS

The global interstate conflict landscape in 2016 consisted of 69 interstate conflicts that involved 104 sovereign states as direct parties, with eleven EU member states being direct parties due to collective decision making. As in previous years, the vast majority of the conflicts revolved around territory (43) and international power (32). Other important issues included resources (19), transnational ethnic communities (19), alleged use of non-state actors in proxy conflicts (12), as well as questions of ideology and the domestic political system (9).

While the ratio of interstate to intrastate conflicts continued to decrease both in overall numbers as well as in terms of average intensity, 2016 saw interstate violence in at least ten cases. All violent interstate conflicts involved the issue of maritime or continental territorial claims. Following a temporary de-escalation to a violent crisis in 2015, the conflict between Pakistan and India reached the level of a limited war again, marking the only highly-violent interstate conflict in 2016 [→ Pakistan – India]. Tensions along the Line of Control resulted in the deaths of at least 83 soldiers and civilians, with heavy shelling forcing more than 35,000 people to flee. Confrontations between regular armed forces occurred also in the conflicts between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan and South-Sudan, as well as Syria and Israel. Following border skirmishes in June, tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea escalated by two levels to a violent crisis [→ Ethiopia – Eritrea]. As in previ-

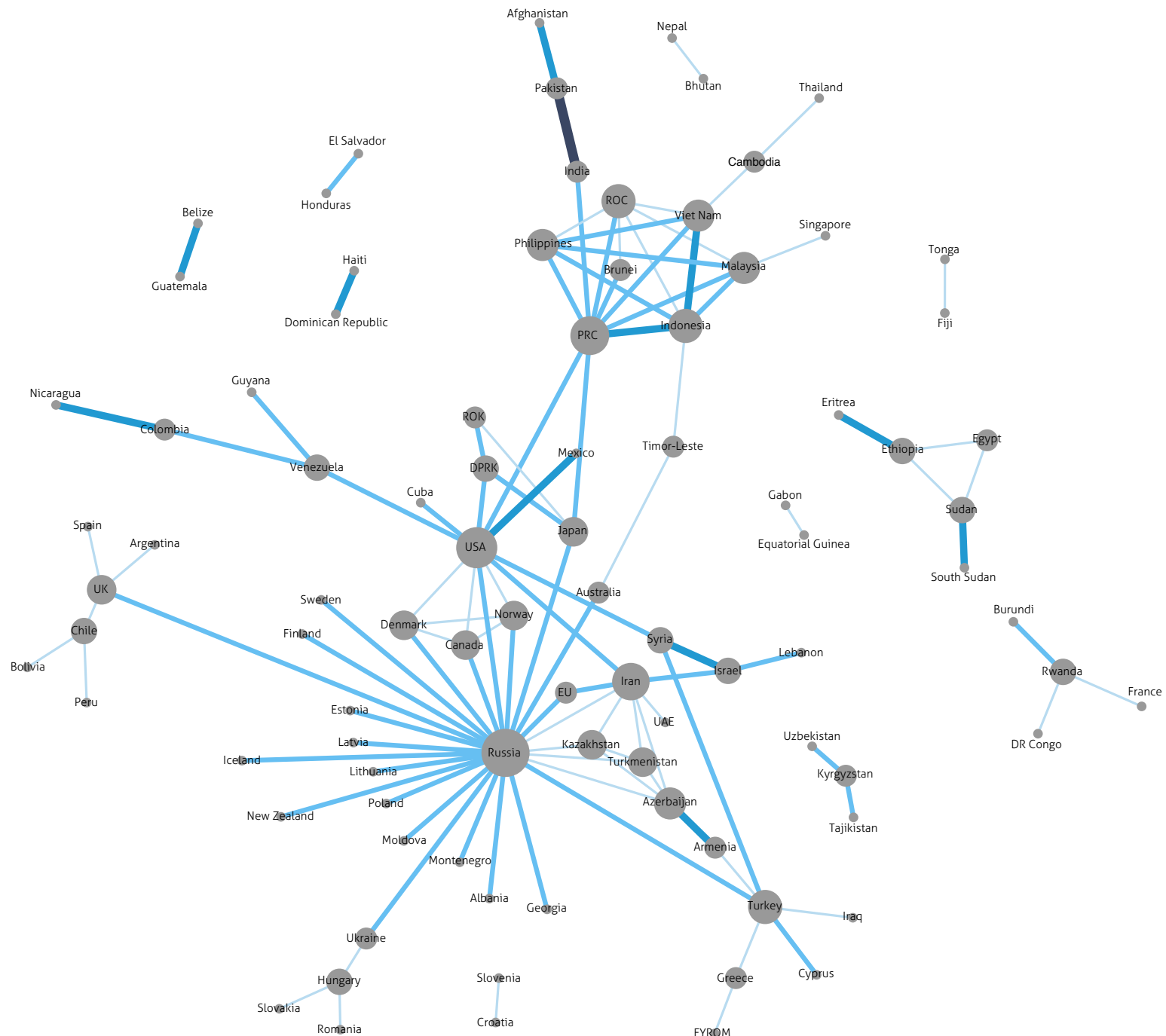
ous years, several interstate conflicts escalated due to violent encounters between regular forces and non-state actors operating near the border or in disputed waters. In the territorial conflict between Guatemala and Belize, non-fatal shootings occurred between Belizean soldiers and Guatemalan settlers. In the conflict over the delineation of exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and fishing grounds in the South China Sea, the Indonesian navy destroyed several foreign fishing vessels and arrested Chinese fishermen in disputed waters [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. From a regional perspective, most territorial conflicts occurred in Asia and Oceania (13), followed by the Americas and Europe, each counting ten conflicts. The Middle East and Maghreb as well as Sub-Saharan Africa saw six and four territorial conflicts, respectively. In many cases, territorial conflict co-occurred with conflict over resources (17 cases), or international power rivalry (16 cases). More than half of the territorial conflicts were fought over land borders (27), while 21 conflicts revolved also or exclusively around maritime claims, concerning islands, rocks, and/or the extension of EEZs.

Among the 19 resource conflicts, most were fought over fossil fuels (13), followed by fishing grounds (5), and water (5). Fossil resource conflicts revolved around oil (11), gas (8), or both (6), with many of the resources being stored in fields below the seabed. Examples included the nonviolent crisis between Japan, the PRC, and the ROC over the Shirakaba/Chunxiao gas field in the East China Sea, the dispute between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon over the oil-rich waters of the Corisco Bay, and the conflict over oil and gas deposits in the Arctic [→ Russia – Norway et al. (Arctic)]. Many maritime conflicts entailed fishing grounds as an important issue, occasionally leading to the involvement of fishermen in the conflict. By contrast, water conflicts were observed only in inland regions, usually revolving around water diversion and dam-building at transboundary rivers. In the Indo-Pakistani conflict, India's discussion of building new dams along the Chenab river aggravated the diplomatic crisis between the two states. Conflict over large-scale dam projects by the states at the upper reaches remained on dispute level in Northeast Africa [→ Ethiopia – Egypt, Sudan (GERD)], but escalated to a nonviolent crisis in Central Asia [→ Uzbekistan – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan].

Conceptions of historical guilt and victimhood were a major issue in ten conflicts. Prominent examples were the dispute between Turkey and Armenia over the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the dispute between France and Rwanda over the responsibility for the 1994 genocide, and the dispute between Indonesia and Timor-Leste over accountability for the 1999 violence. In East Asia, Japanese accounts of its history before 1945 continued to influence the territorial conflicts between Japan and its neighbors [→ Japan – China (East China Sea); Japan – South Korea].

Tensions over transnational ethnic communities were an issue in 19 conflicts, figuring prominently in the nonviolent crises between Russia and its Baltic neighbors over the status of Russian minorities. In the Americas, several conflicts revolved around immigrants, notably the violent crisis between Mexico and the USA, which became also a major issue in the 2016 US Presidential Elections. In Central America, the conflict over Haitian immigration between the Dominican Republic and Haiti escalated by two levels with several violent clashes between border patrols and Haitian immigrants. In

INTERSTATE CONFLICTS IN 2016



This network (N=92) shows all conflictive bilateral relationships monitored in 2016. Node size is determined by the number of bilateral conflicts the state was involved in. Edges are sized and coloured by the conflict intensity. The layout is force determined and independent components were placed adjacent to their regional affiliates. The EU is treated as an independent actor. Member states who take conflict positions that are not sufficiently covered by the position of the EU, or who take part in conflicts in which the EU is not a party, are depicted in independent nodes. jfr, los

Sub-Saharan Africa, alleged use of non-state proxies was a main source of tensions. In Eastern Africa, Burundi accused Rwanda of providing refugees with arms, while the latter denounced Burundi's support of the militant group FDLR. Allegations of state support for armed groups were also integral to the territorial conflicts between Rwanda and the DR Congo as well as between Sudan and South Sudan.

Political ideologies and norms of the international system were a major issue in nine conflicts, all on the level of a non-violent crisis. Most notable among them was the continuing crisis between Russia and the multi-state coalition that had formed in the aftermath of the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the outbreak of war in the Donbas in 2014. Comprising the EU member states, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and several other nations, the coalition continued to maintain sanctions on Russia in 2016 [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. After an agreement had been reached with Iran in 2015, another international system conflict concerning the nuclear program of the DPRK remained [→ North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan]. The Korean peninsula remained in a state of high tensions, with the DPRK conducting a fourth nuclear test in January and a fifth in September. In July, the ROK and the US announced the decision to deploy the anti-ballistic missile system THAAD, causing strong opposition from China and Russia. Apart from that, protracted nonviolent crises over political ideology continued between Israel and Iran and Syria, as well as between the US and Cuba, Iran, Russia, Syria, and Venezuela respectively. Despite the first visit by a US President in 90 years, the ideology conflict between Cuba and the US remained on the level of a nonviolent crisis, with the US Congress refusing to lift the embargo.

DYNAMICS WITHIN INDIVIDUAL CONFLICTS

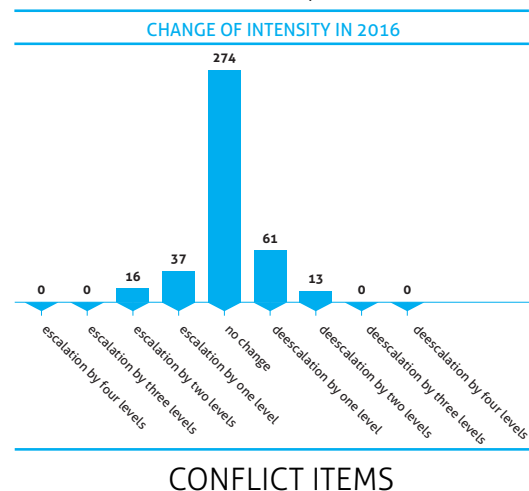
In 2016, 127 conflicts witnessed a change in intensity. However, no conflict escalated or de-escalated by more than two levels. With 61 conflicts de-escalating by one level, they accounted for almost half of all changes in intensity. A total of 53 conflicts escalated in this year. One new conflict emerged at the level of a violent crisis [→ Gambia (opposition)]. Additionally, several conflicts were introduced retroactively, among them the opposition-conflict in South Africa, the autonomy-conflict in Sri Lanka, as well as the conflicts in Germany and Sweden [→ South Africa (opposition); Sri Lanka (Northern Province, Eastern Province); Germany (xenophobes); Sweden (xenophobes)].

As in the previous year, 18 wars were observed in 2016. While 16 wars continued, two had a lower intensity in the year before, namely in Yemen between Islamist militant groups and the government as well as in inter-opposition violence in Syria [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-sharia), Syria (inter-opposition violence)]. While the former escalated from the level of a limited war, the latter escalated by two levels from a violent crisis. Another 20 conflicts were conducted at the level of a limited war, such as the interstate conflict between Pakistan and India, the conflict between the Brazilian government and drug-trafficking organizations, or between TNLA and the government in Myanmar. All these conflicts escalated by one level compared to the previous year.

An escalation by two levels was seen in 16 conflicts this year. For instance, former disputes in Saudi Arabia, Papua

New Guinea, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nigeria, and France escalated to violent crises in 2016 [→ Saudi Arabia (AQAP); Papua New Guinea (opposition); Kazakhstan (Islamist groups); Ethiopia – Eritrea; Nigeria (Christians – Muslims); France (FLNC / Corsica)].

All of the 13 conflicts de-escalating by two levels decreased from a violent crisis to the level of a dispute. For instance, the conflict between Kuchi Nomads and Hazara in Afghanistan, inter-militant rivalry in India, and the conflict between Christians and the government in Laos as well as three opposition conflicts in Myanmar, China, and Uzbekistan all turned non-violent [→ Afghanistan (Kuchi Nomads – Hazara); India (inter-militant rivalry / Meghalaya) and Laos (Christians)]. With six conflicts observing this dynamic and another 22 de-escalating by one level, Asia witnessed the most reductions in overall intensities. psc



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

A conflict may feature more than one item at a time or change its item(s) in its course.

As in previous years, a frequent combination of conflict items was System/Ideology paired with National Power, which occurred together in 56 of all 401 conflicts in 2016. Moreover, Subnational Predominance was often combined with Resources (in 32 conflicts), as was Territory with Resources (in 16).

System/Ideology was once again by far the most pursued conflict item, featuring more than a third of all cases (155/402). Within those conflicts, the perpetuation or change of the political or socioeconomic system, the regime type, or ideological and/or religious differences were the main concerns. Out of 18 wars observed in 2016, 12 included this item, distributed among the Middle East and Maghreb (6), Sub-Saharan Africa (3), Asia and Oceania (1), and Europe (1). In total, 97 of all 226 violent conflicts involved System/Ideology.

Overall, 98 conflicts revolved, among others, around resources such as arable land, raw materials, water, or the profits gained thereof. These conflicts tended to be more violent than those not involving resources. 67 percent were conducted on a violent level, among them nine wars, marking an increase by three compared to 2015. Of those, five were fought in Sub-Saharan Africa, two in the Middle East and Maghreb, and one in Europe and the Americas respectively. Seven of eight conflicts over this item were carried out violently in the Middle East and Maghreb. Furthermore, 21 of 27 conflicts regarding resources in Sub-Saharan Africa and two thirds of the conflicts in the Americas comprised violent means. In Europe, however, merely one out of seven conflicts over this item was violent.

Subnational Predominance, i.e. the aim to take de-facto control over an area or population, was the third most prevalent item this year, as it was observed in 90 conflicts. 67 Subnational Predominance conflicts were conducted violently, including five wars. In Asia and Oceania, violence occurred in 22 of the 34 conflicts regarding Subnational Predominance, while the share was more than 90 percent in the Americas, and two thirds (8/12) in the Middle East and Maghreb. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 25 of the 29 conflicts over this item were conducted violently, in contrast to Europe, where only one of the three conflicts reached a violent level.

National Power accounted for a total of 83 cases. Ten of these conflicts were observed in Europe, with 60 percent witnessing violence. 17 of the conflicts over national power took place in the Middle East and Maghreb, five in the Americas, all of which were violent, 34 in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 17 in Asia and Oceania.

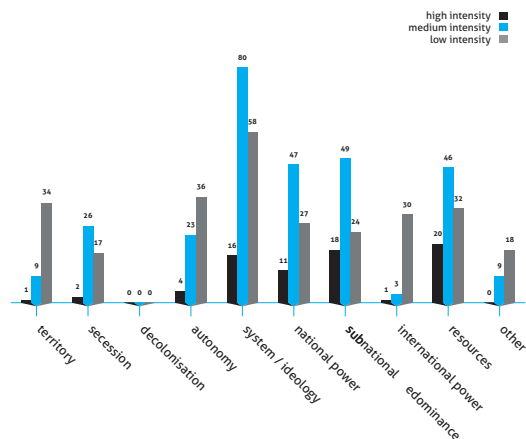
Conflicts regarding Autonomy amounted to 63 cases. There was no violent conflict on autonomy issues in Europe, whereas two out of five in the Americas and 12 out of 26 in Asia and Oceania reached a violent level. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 13 conflicts over autonomy took place, eight of which were fought on violent levels. Two thirds of the autonomy conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb were violent.

Territory was pursued in 45 conflicts. Ten of these took place in Europe, five in Sub-Saharan Africa, ten in the Americas, 13 in Asia and Oceania, and seven in the Middle East and Maghreb. In total, ten were fought on a violent level, only one of them being categorized as highly violent, while none reached the level of a war.

44 conflicts concerned Secession, which marks a slight decrease compared to last year. Among those, 28 were violent. In the Middle East and Maghreb all five secession conflicts were violent, as well as five out of eight in Sub-Saharan Africa, seven out of 15 in Europe, and almost three quarters of the conflicts in Asia and Oceania.

International Power accounted for 32 conflicts in total. Neither in Europe, nor Sub-Saharan Africa, nor in the Americas International Power conflicts turned violent. Only two out of ten in Asia and Oceania as well as one out of nine in the Middle East and Maghreb included violence means. This makes the item the least prone to violence, considering both its frequency and intensity in all regions. kv

GLOBAL FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS
IN 2016 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



COUPS D'ÉTAT

The unsuccessful coup by a faction of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) in July was the only observed coup attempt this year. Against the backdrop of the attempted coup and the subsequent crackdown on opposition, civil society, and independent media, the conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and the government escalated to a limited war [→ Turkey (opposition)].

In the night from July 15 to 16, TAF factions blocked two Bosphorus bridges and deployed tanks to Istanbul and the capital Ankara. The anti-government forces attacked the parliament building and the police special forces headquarters in Ankara with fighter jets and tanks, killing at least 42 and injuring 43. Moreover, the coup plotters took control of public squares and the national broadcaster TRT, claiming they had taken control over the country in order to secure democracy. Thereafter, hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied on the streets following a call from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In total, over 260 persons were killed and over 1,400 injured. Following the coup attempt, the government blamed the Gülen movement, led by the US-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen, for the coup. It then detained thousands of soldiers, dismissed thousands of judges, and imposed a travel ban on all academic staff. Furthermore, the government arrested or dismissed about 110,000 security forces, judges, prosecutors, mayors, civil servants, and business leaders and banned about 1,500 NGOs under the state of emergency which was upheld until the end of the year. President Erdogan also announced to discuss the reintroduction of the death penalty. Furthermore, the government increasingly repressed independent media, shutting down at least 150 media outlets and arresting several journalists.

Measures of Conflict Resolution

NEGOTIATIONS AND TREATIES

In 2016, negotiations in order to settle conflicts took place in numerous countries. For instance, the Colombian government reached an agreement with the country's largest rebel group, the FARC, which included comprehensive measures to end the over 50-year long lasting conflict. Additionally, agreements were reached inter alia on the Philippines, in Somalia, and in Sudan. However, various other attempts for negotiated conflict settlements failed, such as negotiations regarding the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, India, and DR Congo.

EUROPE

In Europe, peace negotiations were held in the context of the conflicts over the Donbas region and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (NKR). The negotiations resulted in temporary ceasefires, but did not lead to substantial agreements. After tensions along the the border between the NKR and Azerbaijan increased in April, negotiations were initiated [→ Armenia – Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. The Presidents of Armenia, Serzh Sargsyan, and Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, met in Vienna, Austria, with OSCE representatives on May 16. They reached an agreement that included the renewal of the ceasefire and an enlargement of the OSCE observer mission. However, the ceasefire was frequently violated. Consequently, the presidents reconvened in St. Petersburg, Russia, with Russian President Vladimir Putin mediating the talks on June 20. The negotiations eased tensions until December 29, when heavy fighting took place again.

During the war in Donbas region, the conflict parties agreed on several ceasefires, but violated them on an almost daily basis [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Throughout the year, officials of Western countries and the EU undertook measures in order to encourage the implementation of the Minsk II Agreement. For instance, US Secretary of State John Kerry emphasized the importance of the agreement's implementation, when he met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Zurich, Switzerland, on January 20. On May 11, the Normandy Quartet met in the German capital Berlin and agreed on demilitarized zones and additional security measures in Donbas. The Trilateral Contact Group agreed on the withdrawal of troops and weapons in order to facilitate the creation of security zones in Donetsk and Luhansk. While this was implemented in Donetsk, a withdrawal of troops was only partly enforced in Luhansk.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In Sub-Saharan Africa, three negotiation rounds took place regarding the conflict between the self-declared independent state of Somaliland, the self-declared Khatumo State, as well as the autonomous region of Puntland. Negotiations centred around the status of the contested provinces of Sool, Sanaag, and Taugher's Cayn section, but did not result in any agreements. In contrast, a ceasefire was reached between the Hawadle clan and the Dir sub-clan Surre in the Hiiraan region [→ Somalia (Hawadle – Surre / Hiiraan)]. A reconciliation meeting between both clans on April 13, government-led mediation attempts in May, as well as AU appeals did not lead to a ceasefire. However, clan elders agreed on a preliminary ceasefire on November 26, which was transformed into an unconditional ceasefire on December 14.

Furthermore, the Habr Gedir clan and the Biymal clan in Lower Shabelle state agreed on a withdrawal of their militias from the contested areas. Both clans participated in meetings hosted by AMISOM and the South Western Somalia Federal Authority in the capital Mogadishu between September 25 and 29. They agreed on the withdrawal of fighters and the subsequent deployment of police forces to the region.

Most treaties within one conflict were signed between Sudan and South Sudan. The conflict parties agreed on financial accords, several security measures, and advanced in talks over border demarcation. On February 3, both countries agreed on lowering oil transmission fees, which was followed by the resumption of oil trade and transport two days later, ending a four-year halt of cross-border trade. Regarding the tense security situation in the border region, the countries agreed on the re-deployment of joint military forces along the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, a stop of harboring and supporting armed groups, and the opening of several border crossings. Subsequently, in late June, the countries requested the AU to initiate a border demarcation process. Additionally, the governments decided to establish direct means of communication.

Within the scope of the war between various armed groups and the government in Sudan's Darfur region, the conflict parties agreed to sign a peace deal that envisioned peace talks for Darfur as well as for Blue Nile and South Kordofan on October 30. However, both sides could not agree on a bilateral ceasefire and declared unilateral ceasefires instead [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. Several Sudanese opposition groups and the government signed this so-called "Roadmap Agreement". After the Sudanese government had signed it on March 21, several opposition groups followed and signed it on August 8. However, despite having signed the agreement, SPLM/A-North, one of the largest armed groups in Sudan, revoked its approval in October, questioning the government's commitment to the agreement. In the conflict between several Sudanese pastoralist tribes and subtribes, Rizeigat and Ma'aliya clan representatives reached a reconciliation accord. They agreed on financial compensation after inter-clan fighting had left 20 people dead and 15 injured in East Darfur State on April 17.

In DRC, the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) and the Nyatura militias signed a peace deal with the government on August 23 [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. They committed themselves to handing over their weapons and surrendering to the Armed Forces of the DR Congo in return for amnesty. However, Nyatura militias continued to conduct violence against civilians during the following months. After President Joseph Kabila had refused to step down after the end of his second term, opposition groups and the government agreed that Kabila would remain in office until newly scheduled elections in 2017 [→ DR Congo (opposition)].

In Mozambique, talks between RENAMO and the government started in July, after RENAMO had requested international mediation in December 2015. RENAMO demanded autonomous governance in several northern and central provinces. Mediators from the EU, regional partners, as well as the Catholic Church tried to facilitate an agreement, but ultimately the conflict partners failed to reach a mutual understanding, which led to the retreat of the international mediators in December.

MEASURES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

THE AMERICAS

In the Americas, four accords were reached, whereas four negotiations did not result in an agreement. Within the region, Colombia was most successful in reaching agreements. Additionally, negotiations took place in Haiti, Honduras, and Mexico.

The peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) that had begun in September 2012 and were mainly held in Cuba's capital Havana, concluded with a final peace agreement. A first agreement was announced on August 24 and signed on September 26. However, the agreement was rejected by a plebiscite held on October 2. Consequently, the government initiated re-negotiations with the FARC and "No"-campaign representatives in order to agree on possible modifications of the peace deal, for instance concerning the impunity for fighters. On November 12, the government and the FARC announced their agreement on a modified peace treaty that included over 50 changes, such as amendments regarding the compensation of victims. The modified agreement was approved by Congress on December 1. The final peace deal included agreements on comprehensive rural development, political participation, illicit drugs, victims, end of the conflict, and implementation and verification of the peace treaty. In consequence, measures foreseen in the agreement were initiated, such as the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process of FARC members in 19 transitory demilitarization areas (ZVTN) and seven camps. A UN mission approved by the UNSC in January 2016 included the monitoring and verification of the DDR-process and the maintenance of security in the demobilization zones. While the vast majority of FARC members approved their participation in the peace process, other members deserted or split off. Additionally, the Colombian government and the country's second largest guerrilla group, the Army of National Liberation (ELN), agreed on the conditions for the public phase of peace negotiations to be started in Ecuador's capital Quito in February 2017 [→ Colombia (ELN)]. An agreement between several civil society organizations under the umbrella of the Agrarian, Campesino, Ethnic, and Popular Summit (Cumbre Agraria) and the Colombian government was reached in June [→ Colombia (Cumbre Agraria)]. The agreement addressed, among others, the right to social protest, the regulation of campesino reservations, the mining and energy sector, and the environmental agenda. Cumbre Agraria had been negotiating with the government since its foundation in March 2014. Cumbre Agraria halted further dialogues on October 21, criticizing the government for a lack of political will.

In the conflict over farmland between peasants of the Bajo Aguán Valley and regional landowners, supported by the Honduran government, an agreement concerning the repayment of debt for state-owned land was reached [→ Honduras (Bajo Aguán)]. On October 21, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights demanded measures of the government to guarantee the protection of all organizations and peasant leaders in the Bajo Aguán Valley.

In the conflict between the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) and the Mexican government over educational policies, negotiations were held without reaching an agreement [→ Mexico (CNTE et al.)]. The conflict remained

violent. Dialogue between the two conflict parties was re-established on June 21 and continued throughout July.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

In Asia and Oceania, India and the Philippines witnessed the most negotiations. In Tripura state, the National Liberation Front of Tripura and the All Tripura Tiger Force stated their willingness to engage in peace talks with the government, while the Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura upheld its claims for secession. Additionally, the government engaged in unsuccessful peace talks with Naga groups in the conflict over secession of Naga-inhabited territories in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh.

During the Japan-Russia Summit on December 15 and 16 in Japan, Japanese President Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the status of the disputed Kurile Islands/Northern Territories.

In Myanmar, the National Reconciliation and Peace Center mediated in talks between the Northern Alliance (NA), comprising several armed groups and the government [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)].

The Philippines witnessed an agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In July, MILF agreed to support the government's campaign against illegal drugs in the areas it controlled. In August, the conflict parties held talks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, renewing their commitment to a peace process. Furthermore, they continued talks regarding the possible autonomous governance of Bangsamoro region by MILF. Similarly, President Rodrigo Duterte and Nur Misuari, leader of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), held talks on a possible peace process in Mindanao [→ Philippines (MNLF)].

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

In the Middle East and Maghreb, negotiations were held in four countries. However, none of them resulted in a comprehensive peace agreement or a settlement regarding conflict items.

While the war between the Taliban and various other Islamist militant groups, on the one hand, and the government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission, on the other, continued, the Afghan government signed an agreement with Hezb-i-Islami on September 22 [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. The agreement between the parties included inter alia a ceasefire and amnesty for its leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Additionally, the government continued talks with Pakistan over the possible initiation of peace negotiations with the Taliban.

The implementation of the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Agreement from December 2015, which had foreseen a government unifying the different actors that had been claiming to represent the Libyan government, failed. It did not succeed in ending the coexistence of different governments within the country [→ Libya (opposition)].

In Syria, international peace negotiations regarding the termination of the ongoing civil war were held without yielding results. In several instances, however, agreements were reached regarding the evacuation of civilians and fighters and the allocation of humanitarian assistance. The nationwide ceasefire based on UNSC Resolution 2254 from December 2015 came into effect on February 27, but crum-

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bled shortly after until its total collapse in April. After residents and opposition fighters had agreed to surrender in Daraya on August 25, most of the fighters were transferred to opposition-dominated Idlib while civilians were transferred to government-held areas in Damascus. Also at the end of August, government officials and opposition forces in the opposition-held neighborhood al-Waer of Homs city agreed to end the government's siege and attacks on the area. In exchange, militants accepted to withdraw. On December 19, during the siege of Aleppo, Russian, Turkish, and Iranian officials agreed on the evacuation of about 4,000 people from Fu'ah and Kefraya, 35,000 people from eastern Aleppo, and 1,500 persons from Zabadani and Madaya.

In 2016, efforts to settle the conflict in Yemen between al-Houthi-forces and the government continued [→Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. Another round of UN-sponsored talks between the main conflict parties began in Kuwait on April 20. However, they were canceled after three months, when the al-Houthi claimed their political demands were not met and installed a ten-member governing body in Yemen. twt, vs

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Peacekeeping missions, observer missions, and peace enforcement are tools of conflict resolution, established within the UN system and considered to end conflict as well as to support democratic transition on a national and subnational level. Since 1947, a total of 71 operations have been conducted, with 16 being active in 2016. This year, all missions accounted for 117,306 deployed uniformed and other personnel. Throughout the year, 79 personnel died in ongoing missions (3,520 in total since 1948) due to combat, disease, or other mission-related causes. The overall budget is estimated at USD 7.87 billion from July 1 to 06/30/17, and is renewed and approved annually by the UNSC in mid-June. All operations are mandated by UNSC resolutions and supervised by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO). Apart from UN-led efforts, the UN recognizes regional measures for conflict resolution, such as by the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia in 2008, EULEX in Kosovo/Serbia, as well as the African Union's AMISOM in Somalia since 2007, and the UNAMID hybrid mission in Darfur/Sudan [→ Georgia – Russia; Serbia (Kosovo); Somalia, Kenya (Al-Shabab); Sudan (Darfur)]. Since the first mission in 1948 (UNTSO Middle East), the mandate of peacekeeping missions has gradually advanced to better respond to political changes [→ Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. Missions provide assistance in disarmament, demobilization of ex-combatants, mine action, security sector reform, rule of law-related activities, protection and promotion of human rights, electoral assistance, and economic and social development. By doing so, each mission is based on three principles: the consent of the parties, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. As of 2016, questions about lacking accountability mechanisms have risen due to reported allegations of sexual assault of peacekeepers against the local population. As a reaction to general criticism, the UNSC convened in April to discuss potential reforms of the current peacekeeping system.

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), an observer mission with an annual budget of USD 56 million [→ Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara)] continued in 2016. Since its establishment on 04/29/91 upon recommendation by the UN Secretary-General, 15 MINURSO personnel died. The mission is located in El Aaiun and employs 227 uniformed personnel, 241 civilian personnel, and nine UN volunteers. MINURSO was mandated to supervise the ceasefire between the Moroccan government and Frente POLISARIO over contentious territorial claims, involving resource-rich parts of Western Sahara. Originally established to ensure the disarmament of both parties and the peaceful exchange of POWs, the mission failed to accomplish the registration of voters in the run for a general referendum deemed at determining the status of Western Sahara as part of Morocco or an independent state. In 2016, the UNSC held six meetings and issued two Presidential statements regarding the political situation in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin. The statements highlighted political challenges arising from organized crime, corruption, poverty, and desertification. The Mission came under criticism due to concerns about transparency in consultations as well as language issues. On an organizational level, the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel and the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) were unified.

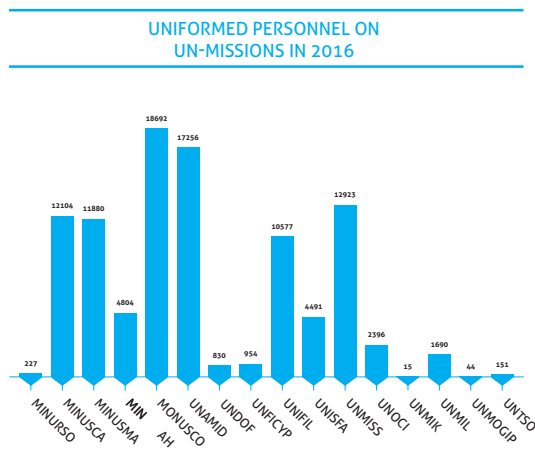
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a peacekeeping mission located in Naqoura, South Governorate, Lebanon, employing 11,389 personnel in total continued in 2016. The current annual budget is USD 488 million. Established on 03/19/78 to oversee the decampment of Israeli troops and to restore peace and state authority in Southern Lebanon, UNIFIL's mandate today is based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Following the Lebanon war in 2006, UNIFIL was also tasked to monitor the 225 km long coastline to prevent illicit arms trading [→ Israel – Lebanon; Israel (Hezbollah)]. On January 4, a Hezbollah unit destroyed two armored Israeli vehicles with a roadside bomb on the Israeli-Lebanese border near the Sheeba Farms. Following the incident, UNIFIL reinforced its presence in the area.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in Syria (UNDOF), a peacekeeping mission established on 05/31/74 continued in 2016. The Mission is located at Camp Faouar, Quneitra governorate, Syria, employing 970 personnel in total. The current annual budget is USD 48 million. Originally, UNDOF's mandate was the monitoring of the ceasefire between Israel and Syria on the Israeli occupied Golan Heights [→ Syria – Israel]. Due to the conflicts in Syria, the current area of UNDOF operations became contested. In March 2013 and August 2014, UNDOF peacekeepers had been kidnapped by Islamist militants and the UN staff had to operate from line Alpha and Israeli controlled ground. Following the advance of Syrian government forces in 2016, UNDOF members returned to their headquarters in Camp Faouar, east of line Bravo, in November.

United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), a peacekeeping mission established in the Middle East on 05/29/48, continued in 2016. Staffed with 153 military observers, 91 international civilian staff, and 153 national civilian staff, UNTSO operates from its headquarters in Jerusalem, from where it maintains liaison offices in Beirut, Lebanon as

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well as Damascus, Syria, and Ismailia, Egypt. UNTSO has a budget of USD 69 million per annum. During the Mission, its activities accounted for 50 peacekeeping fatalities. UNTSO is mandated to monitor and enforce the General Armistice Agreements of 1949 between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In 2016, the UNSC held 13 formal meetings on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On December 23, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2334 with 14 votes in favour, with the United States abstaining. The resolution condemned Israel's continuing construction of settlements on occupied Palestinian territory. It reaffirmed that the settlements lacked legal validity and constituted a major obstacle to the vision of two states within recognized international borders.



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) continued in 2016 [→ Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)]. The peacekeeping mission was established on 04/10/14 under Chapter VII authorization of the UNSC to account for the aggravated human rights situation. With an annual budget of USD 921 million, the mission employs 13,098 personnel in total. Since its onset, the Mission accounted for 25 fatalities. Originally established under AU supervision, the mission transformed into a UN mission as of 09/15/14. MINUSCA's mandate was renewed, including an "arms embargo, asset freeze, and travel ban on designated individuals" in the Central African Republic.

Regarding MINUSCA, 29 allegations of sexual assault by UN personnel were reported in 2016, of which 26 involved military personnel, two involved police personnel, and one involved civilian personnel. Three investigations have been concluded.

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), a Peacekeeping mission established on 04/25/13 after the Tuareg rebellion in 2012, continued in 2016 [→ Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali); Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad)]. With an annual budget of USD 933 million, the Mission employs 13,456 personnel in total. Since its onset, 110 MINUSMA personnel died. As of 06/25/14, the mandate's objective included tasks to support the political stabilization and reconciliation of conflict parties, the implementation of the security sector reform, the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as the protection and safety of civilians. In 2016, six meetings were held to

review efforts of the Mission and the implementation of the "Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation between the Government and armed groups." The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations expressed concerns over delays of the implementation process and ceasefire violations by both parties. As a result, MINUSMA troop force was augmented and French troops authorized to intervene in support of the Mission.

United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the MONUC follow-up mission, continued in 2016 [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.); DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR); DR Congo (ADF); Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA); DR Congo (ex-M23); DR Congo (Kata Katanga); DR Congo (Bantu - Batwa); DR Congo (Ituri militias)]. Acting under Chapter VII authorization, the Mission employs 22,016 personnel in total and operates on an annual budget of USD 1.2 billion. Acting from its headquarters in Kinshasa, the Mission was reinforced by the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade on 03/28/13, consisting of three infantry battalions, one artillery, one special force, and one reconnaissance company. The Brigade was authorized to use force against armed groups posing an imminent threat to state authority and civilian security. By the end of 2016, 102 MONUSCO personnel had during the course of the Mission. The current mandate includes inter alia the protection of civilians, the neutralizing of armed groups by the Intervention Brigade, the promotion of peace consolidation, the monitoring of the implementation of the arms embargo, and the provision of support to national and international judicial processes.

African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), a hybrid peacekeeping mission established on 07/31/07 continued in 2016 [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. It currently employs 19,248 uniformed personnel and works on an annual budget of USD 1.04 billion. Since its onset, 237 UNAMID personnel died. Acting from its headquarters in al-Faschir, UNAMID's mandate is to protect civilians from conflict, to provide humanitarian assistance, and to ensure compliance with agreements of the conflict parties. It is also tasked with supporting efforts for the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and to oversee the situation along the borders of Chad and CAR. United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), a peacekeeping mission established on 01/19/03 continued in 2016. It currently employs 434 personnel in total and acts on an annual budget of USD 187 million. Since its onset, the mission resulted in the death of 197 personnel. Acting from its headquarters in Monrovia, UNMIL's mandate encompassed the protection of civilians, humanitarian assistance, as well as the promotion of human rights. The mandate will be terminated by the end of March 2018. UNMIL was based on an ECOWAS mandate, which had overseen peace and reconciliation efforts between the former civil war parties. After the arrest of former President Charles Taylor in 2006, UNMIL's primary objective was the restoration of state power, the repatriation of refugees in Liberia, and the disarmament of armed groups. An estimated 14,541 UN-mandated personnel operated in Liberia in 2004. Since then, the UNSC has gradually adapted UNMIL's mandate and decreased the amount of personnel. In 2016, the UN adopted three resolutions on six meetings with regards to UNMIL, emphasizing the need to focus on anti-corruption,

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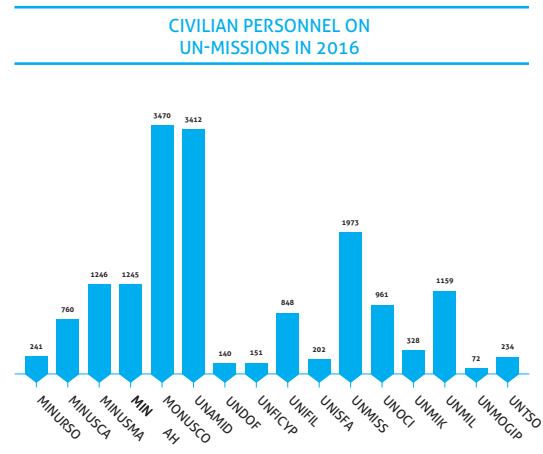
economic reconstruction, the prevention of gender-based violence, and the preparatory work for the 2017 presidential elections.

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), a peacekeeping mission established on 04/04/04, with its headquarters located in Abidjan, continued in 2016 [→ Côte d'Ivoire (militant groups); Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)]. The Mission employs 3,656 personnel and operates on an annual budget of USD 153 million. Since its onset, 144 personnel have died. Originally mandated to ensure the implementation of the 2003 peace accord, the Mission, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, is currently tasked to "protect civilians, provide good offices, support the Ivorian Government in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants as well as on security sector reform, and monitor and promote human rights." In 2016, the UNSC adopted three resolutions referring to UNOCI, lifting all sanctions on Côte d'Ivoire as well as deciding to withdraw all UNOCI's personnel by mid-2017, thus completing the Mission as a result of recent positive developments.

United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), a peacekeeping mission established on 07/08/11, continued in 2016 [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. It currently employs 15,171 personnel and runs on a USD 1.08 billion budget annually. Since its onset, the mission resulted in the death of 47 personnel. Headquartered in the capital Juba, the Mission's mandate is to restore peace and security in South Sudan and to help establish conditions for development. After the 2013 crisis, the UNSC reinforced the Mission's troop strength in order to better protect civilians, monitor human rights, and implement the ceasefire agreement. In 2016, the UNSC held 24 meetings concerning South Sudan, adopting eleven resolutions as a response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Following clashes in mid-June, causing several hundred fatalities and reported targeted sexual attacks against humanitarian aid workers in Juba, the UNSC adopted several resolutions calling upon the South Sudanese government to end hostilities. On December 16, the Mission was extended for another year and mandated to use "all necessary means" to protect civilians. The UNSC did not adopt a comprehensive arms embargo and sanctions on certain high-ranking South Sudanese government officials, with seven members being in favor and eight abstaining from the vote. United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), a peacekeeping mission established on 06/27/11 in order to de-escalate tensions along the Sudanese-South Sudanese border and to ensure the repatriation of IDPs continued in 2016 [→ Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei); Sudan – South Sudan]. Headquartered in Abyei Town and employing 4,719 personnel in total, UNISFA is run on a budget of USD 268 million annually. Since its onset, 21 personnel have died. In 2016, the UNSC twice extended UNISFA's mandate for six months each time.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), an AU-led regional mission established in 01/19/07, continued in 2016 [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. The Mission was later approved by UNSC resolution 1744. Currently, approx 22,000 personnel are employed to serve AMISOM's mandate to build up and strengthen Somali state authority. Headquartered in Mogadishu, the scope of tasks changed from peacekeeping to a robust enforcement mandate in order to fight al-Shabaab.

No official public record of fatalities was published so far. However, it is estimated that approx. 4,000 AMISOM personnel have died during their deployment since the onset of the Mission. In 2016, the UNSC discussed the political situation in Somalia during seven meetings, published four Secretary-General reports, and adopted five resolutions, regarding the confinement of piracy, extremist violence and assistance in the implementation of the 2016 National Electoral Process.



EUROPE

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), established on 06/10/99 and based in Pristina, continued in 2016 [→ Serbia (Kosovo)]. Currently, the Mission employs 364 personnel in total and operates on an annual budget of USD 36.5 million. Since its onset, the mission resulted in the death of 55 personnel. UNMIK was established to support self-government of Kosovo after the 1998-1999 Kosovo War. In contrast to other missions, UNMIK was authorized to use "all legislative and executive powers and administration of the judiciary" to fulfill its mandate until full independence is achieved. UNMIK's activities include promoting security, human rights as well as the monitoring of compliance with the 2013 Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Pristina and Belgrade.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continued in 2016 [→ Cyprus (TRNC / Northern Cyprus)]. It was established on 03/04/64 in order to "prevent the recurrence of fighting, contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order, as well as to contribute to return to normal conditions." After hostilities in 1974, UNFICYP's mandate was altered to include monitoring functions of the de-facto ceasefire and the buffer zone between the lines of the Cyprus National Guard and of the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot forces. Currently, 1,105 personnel are employed in Cyprus, operating on an annual budget of USD 55.5 million. Over the course of the Mission, 155 UNFICYP personnel died. In 2016, the UNSC unanimously adopted a resolution to foster the work of the Committee on Missing Persons. It also stressed the importance of confidence-building measures between the conflict parties.

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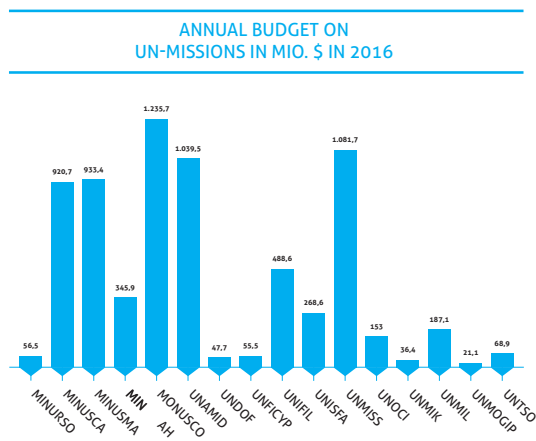
The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), a peacekeeping mission established in 06/01/04, continued in 2016 [→ Haiti (opposition)]. Headquartered in Port-au-13

MEASURES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Prince, MINUSTAH employs 4,971 personnel in total. With an annual budget of USD 346 million, the Mission assists the government to restore Haiti's economy after the severe earthquake in 2010. Since the onset, the mission resulted in the death of 185 personnel. In 2016, the UNSC extended MINUSTAH's mandate and laid out a road-map to assist the Haitian government with the implementation of presidential elections. Criticism of MINUSTAH concerning allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers arose in 2016, with two incidents being reported during the course of the year.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), a peacekeeping mission established in 01/20/49, employing 111 personnel in total, continued in 2016 [→ Pakistan – India]. The Mission operates on a USD 21 million budget biennially. Since its onset, 47 UNMOGIP personnel have died. UNMOGIP's mandate is to monitor the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. As determined by the Secretary-General, no official termination date of UNMOGIP is given. Moreover, the UN is adamant that UNMOGIP can only be terminated by a UNSC resolution.



POLITICAL MISSIONS

In 2016, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) operated 13 field-based political missions worldwide in order to support actions of conflict prevention, peace-making, and post-conflict peacebuilding. In the previous years, the mandate of political missions was supplemented by assistance in preventive diplomacy.

The majority of missions is located in Sub-Saharan Africa (Guinea-Bissau, Gabon, Ethiopia, Somalia, Senegal). Five missions operate within countries of the Middle East and Maghreb (Lebanon, Tunisia, Israel, Afghanistan, Iraq) and one mission each in Asia (Turkmenistan) and the Americas (Colombia). In 2015, the UN Fifth Committee approved the budget for all political missions and special envoys and allocated USD 5.4 billion for 2016 and 2017. In addition to the field-based missions currently under its supervision, UNDPA provides guidance and support to traveling envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General. These currently include UN envoys or special advisers for Cyprus, Yemen, Myanmar, Syria, Western Sahara, and the FYROM-Greece name dispute. Concerning the situation in Somalia, the UNSC held eight

meetings, adopted five resolutions, and issued two Presidential statements [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. Main field of activities was the support of security sector reform and the rule of law, development of a federal system, constitutional review, democratization, including preparations for the 2016 political transition, and coordination of international donor support.

With regards to UNAMA, the UNSC held four meetings and adopted one resolution and one Presidential statement in 2016 [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. UNAMA is tasked to assist the Afghan government in democratic transition and the establishment of the rule of law. The Mission's representative noted that in 2016, 11,000 civilians were killed in the course of conflicts in Afghanistan. In 2016, the UNSC held 13 meetings and adopted seven resolutions with respect to the situation in Libya [→ Libya (opposition)]. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) supported efforts by the ICJ to investigate crimes in violation of the arms embargo of 2011. Confronted with deepening political divisions, UNSMIL provided capacity assistance in the fight against militant groups.

With regards to the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA) located in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, the Mission is mandated to provide assistance and improve capacity in fighting international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized crime, and environmental destruction.

The UN Mission in Colombia was unanimously established by the UNSC resolution 2261 on January 25. The Mission is comprised of unarmed international observers, responsible for the monitoring and verification of the disarmament process. It is part of the tripartite mechanism that will monitor and verify the definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, consistent with the Joint Communiqué. On September 26, the peace treaty was signed. However, it was rejected in a plebiscite. Consequently, the government met with representatives of the FARC and opponents of the agreement in order to discuss changes. The modified agreement was approved on December 1 by the Colombian Congress. Shortly after, the UN Mission commenced monitoring and verification activities. The mission will operate a national headquarter in Bogotá, eight regional headquarters, the 19 transitory demilitarization areas (ZVTN) and seven camps run by 450 personnel primarily from CELAC countries.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

EUROPE

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) commits itself to political and military cooperation between its 57 members. During the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in June, member states adopted the Tbilisi Declaration regarding the improvement of security in Europe. This included anti-terrorist measures, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, multilateral disarmament as well as the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. The OSCE currently administers 16 operations, primarily in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in order to foster the development of democratic institutions and the rule of law. The largest mission was carried out in Kosovo, where the OSCE accompanied and supervised judicial institution building and national

MEASURES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

reconciliation processes [→ Serbia (Kosovo)]. Furthermore, the organization continued its Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine's Donbas region [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. In 2016, the EU conducted six military and nine civilian missions under its Common Defense and Security Policy (CSDP). In collaboration with NATO, the EU conducted military operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it deployed 7,000 troops for the purpose of capacity building and training. The EU carried out most of its civil and military activities in Africa, including missions in the CAR, Mali, and Somalia. Comprising 650 personnel, EUCAP Sahel Mali and EUTM Mali provided support to the government's security sector reform and its fight against Islamist militants and criminals. Civilian EU missions were present in Libya, Mali, Niger, and Somalia. EUPOL COPPS, the 114-strong EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories based in Ramallah, West Bank, continued its support to the Palestinian state building process. In July, the Council of the EU decided to extend the mission's mandate until June 2017.

THE AMERICAS

Although the Organization of American States (OAS) is considered the oldest international organization of regional cooperation, it lacks power to bind and sanction members not under the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR). Concerning the conflict about public security in Mexico, which was triggered, among others, by the abduction of 43 people on 09/26/14 in Iguala, Guerrero state, the Interdisciplinary Independent Group of Experts, designated by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), announced on March 30 that the government had not renewed its investigation mandate expiring at the end of April [→ Mexico (public security)]. Subsequently, demonstrators set up a camp outside the Ministry of the Interior in the capital Mexico City, Federal District, on April 15, demanding a prolongation. They voiced concern over the possible closure of all investigations, including those of the national general attorneyship. On July 8, however, the Subsecretary of Human Rights of the Interior Ministry, Roberto Campa Cifrián, announced that investigations and searches would resume in August.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 in order to promote economic and political cooperation in the region while guaranteeing full national sovereignty of its members. In May, members of ASEAN and Russia signed the Sochi Declaration expressing the will to extend cooperation in security-related matters. Following the July 12 ICJ ruling rejecting Chinese claims on the South China Sea, ASEAN failed to agree on a joint statement due to a blockade by Cambodia. This marked the first deadlock of the organization since 2012 [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)].

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The Commission of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as provided in Article 54 of the Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) commenced to evaluate the level of contribution of successful elections to democratic growth. Following the Presidential elections in the Gambia, outgoing President Yahya Jammeh refused to accept the vote and de-

manded re-elections. The UNSC and ECOWAS condemned his reaction, with the latter stating that standby forces could intervene if Jammeh would not resign at the end of his term. Subsequently, Jammeh denounced ECOWAS' statement as a "declaration of war." In 2016, ECOWAS deployed observer mission to Ghana, Liberia, Benin, Niger, and Cape Verde to assist in the run-up of national elections. Moreover, the UNSC debated the deteriorating situation in Burundi. Adopting Resolution 2279, it called upon all conflict parties to cooperate with the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, whom the East African Community appointed as mediator and facilitator for an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue.

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) held a meeting on January 21 in which it considered the outcome of the conduct of the African Standby Force AMANI AFRICA-II Field Training Exercise, within the framework of the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Report on the Implementation of the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL). The Council also published a series of communiques, press statements, and situation reports on Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Kenya, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Sudan, Western Sahara, Gabon, and Somalia. Topics discussed related to migration, small arms control, climate change, natural resources and conflict, and conflicts resulting from the activities of Boko Haram. Since 2015, the Multinational Joint Task Force with troops from Niger, Nigeria, Benin, Chad, and Cameroon is tasked to confine Boko Haram by using military force.

SANCTIONS

Article 41 of the UN Charter enables the UNSC to "establish measures to maintain and restore peace and security." The UNSC may issue sanctions against states, groups, or individuals in violation of UN resolutions or human rights. Sanctions may include arms or trade embargos, freezing of assets, cutting of communication and traffic lines as well as suspending diplomatic relations and imposing travel bans. UNSC sanctions in 2016 affected Afghanistan, DR Congo, DPRK, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Zimbabwe. Following DPRK's nuclear test on September 9, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2321 which strengthened the sanctions against DPRK [→ North Korea – South Korea; North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan]. The newly imposed sanctions included the export ban of copper, nickel, silver, zinc, new helicopters, and vessels, also limiting the export of coal, iron, and iron ore. Furthermore, bank accounts of North Korean diplomatic missions were limited and scientific and technical cooperation suspended.

Following UN resolution 2231 of the UNSC, on January 16 UN member states lifted several sanctions on Iran [→ Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program)]. As a reaction to political stabilization and administrative reform in the country, on April 28 the UNSC terminated all sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire. The sanctions had concerned arms trade and financial and travel measures. Furthermore, UN sanctions targeted several armed groups, such as al-Qaeda, the so-called Islamic State, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, M23, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the Abu Sayyaf Group. For instance, on March 7, the UNSC added the LRA and its leader Joseph Kony to the CAR sanctions list [→ Central African Republic, DR Congo, South

MEASURES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Sudan, Uganda (LRA)]. Based on Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the EU can adopt restrictive military and economic measures in order to bring about change in policy or activity by the targeted state, parts of a state, groups, and individuals. EU sanctions against

Russia in the context of the annexation of Crimea in 2014 remained in place and were extended for another six months until June 2017 [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia; Russia – Ukraine (Crimea)].
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Overview: Current UN Missions led or supported by DPKO

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

AUTHORITATIVE DECISIONS BY THE ICJ

In 2016, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) handed out five judgments and nine court orders. Eleven cases were still pending, of which the only case currently under deliberation concerned the dispute between Somalia and Kenya over maritime delimitation in the Indian Ocean.

Three new disputes were submitted to the Court. First, on June 6, Chile instituted proceedings against Bolivia, charging the latter for claiming exclusive utilization of the Silala waters [→ Bolivia – Chile (access to sea)]. The Silala, originating close to the Chilean-Bolivian border in the territory of Bolivia, soon thereafter crossed into Chilean territory. Chile claimed that the Silala was by its cross-boundary nature an international watercourse, which was governed by customary international law. This required the strict adherence to regulation concerning the fair and equitable utilization of the water between both countries. According to Chile, Bolivia denied Chile the right to utilize the Silala water by claiming exclusive use, thereby violating customary international law.

Second, on June 14, Equatorial Guinea handed in a complaint against France with regard to a dispute concerning "the immunity from criminal jurisdiction of the Second Vice-President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in charge of Defence and State Security [Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue],

and the legal status of the building which houses the Embassy of Equatorial Guinea in France." In 2007, various associations and private individuals charged Mangue, together with several other African heads of states and their families, before French courts. The applicants accused Mangue of "misappropriation of public funds in their country of origin, the proceeds of which have allegedly been invested in France." France issued an international arrest warrant for Mangue. Additionally, France ordered the seizure of a building, which Equatorial Guinea claimed to be using as its diplomatic mission in France. According to Equatorial Guinea, the French activities violated the sovereignty of Equatorial Guinea as well as the diplomatic immunity and protection of both Mangue and the building in question. Three months later, on September 30, Equatorial Guinea requested the ICJ to institute provisional measures against France as the ongoing trial of Mangue and the confiscation of the building "create a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the rights of Equatorial Guinea." The public hearings on that request were concluded on October 19 and the Court concluded on December 7 that France has to "take all measures at its disposal" to protect the premises.

Third, on June 15, the Islamic Republic of Iran filed an application against the US, claiming the latter's violation of the Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights [→ Iran –

USA]. According to Iran, the US "has adopted a number of legislative and executive acts that have the practical effect of subjecting the assets and interests of Iran and Iranian entities, including those of the Central Bank of Iran (also known as "Bank Markazi"), to enforcement proceedings in the United States," thereby disrespecting the bilateral contractual obligations entered in 1955.

Twice the court published judgments regarding procedural matters. On March 17, the Court found that it had jurisdiction over two cases between Nicaragua and Colombia [→ Nicaragua – Colombia (sea border)]. The first case related to the question of delimitation of the continental shelf between Nicaragua and Colombia beyond 200 nautical miles from the Nicaraguan coast, while the second dispute concerned alleged violations of Nicaragua's sovereign rights and maritime spaces in the Caribbean Sea.

On October 5, the court delivered three judgments concerning its jurisdiction and admissibility of three applications by the Marshall Islands against the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and India respectively. The Marshall Islands claimed that the three countries were "not fulfilling their obligations with respect to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament" when they conducted nuclear tests at Bikini and Enewetak Atolls from 1946 until 1958. In 2014, the Marshall Islands filed the same claims against China, North Korea, France, Israel, Russia, and the US, yet, only the UK, Pakistan, and India accepted the ICJ's compulsory jurisdiction under Article 36, Paragraph 2 of the Statute of the Court. While the Court recognized the massive suffering of the Marshall Islands and its people by the nuclear tests, it upheld the objections to its jurisdiction brought forward by each of the three countries, arguing that no dispute between the Marshall Islands and the three countries regarding the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty could be identified. However, the bench was split and the decision was only reached when President Ronny Abraham handed in a casting vote. sst

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

In 2016, the International Criminal Court (ICC) handed out verdicts in the cases of "The Prosecutor v. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo" and "The Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi" and dismissed the case against Kenya's Deputy President William Ruto due to lack of evidence. Furthermore, it started the trial against Laurent Gbagbo, Charles Blé Goudé, and Dominic Ongwen, and opened a new investigation into the situation of Georgia in 2008.

On January 26, the Pre-Trial Chamber approved the request by the prosecutor to open an investigation into alleged crimes occurring on the territory of Georgia between 1 July 2008 and

10 October 2008 [→ Russia – Georgia]. Authorization by the Pre-Trial Chamber was one of three possible options of how to open an investigation by the prosecutor (*proprio motu*), the other two being self-referral by the state party and referral by the UNSC. On April 25, the Prosecutor opened a preliminary examination into the situation in Burundi, based on massive instances of violence since April 2015, which resulted in 430 deaths, at least 3,400 arrests and 230,000 displaced persons [→ Burundi (opposition)]. On September 21, the government of Gabon referred the situation in Gabon since May to the Court, requesting the Prosecutor "to open an investigation without delay." Most prominently, the violent riots surrounding the presidential election on August 30 were included in the time period [→ Gabon (opposition groups)]. From October 16 to 20, the Office of the Prosecutor undertook a mission to the DRC in order to investigate recent violence in Kinshasa. The ICC investigated the situation in the DRC since 2004.

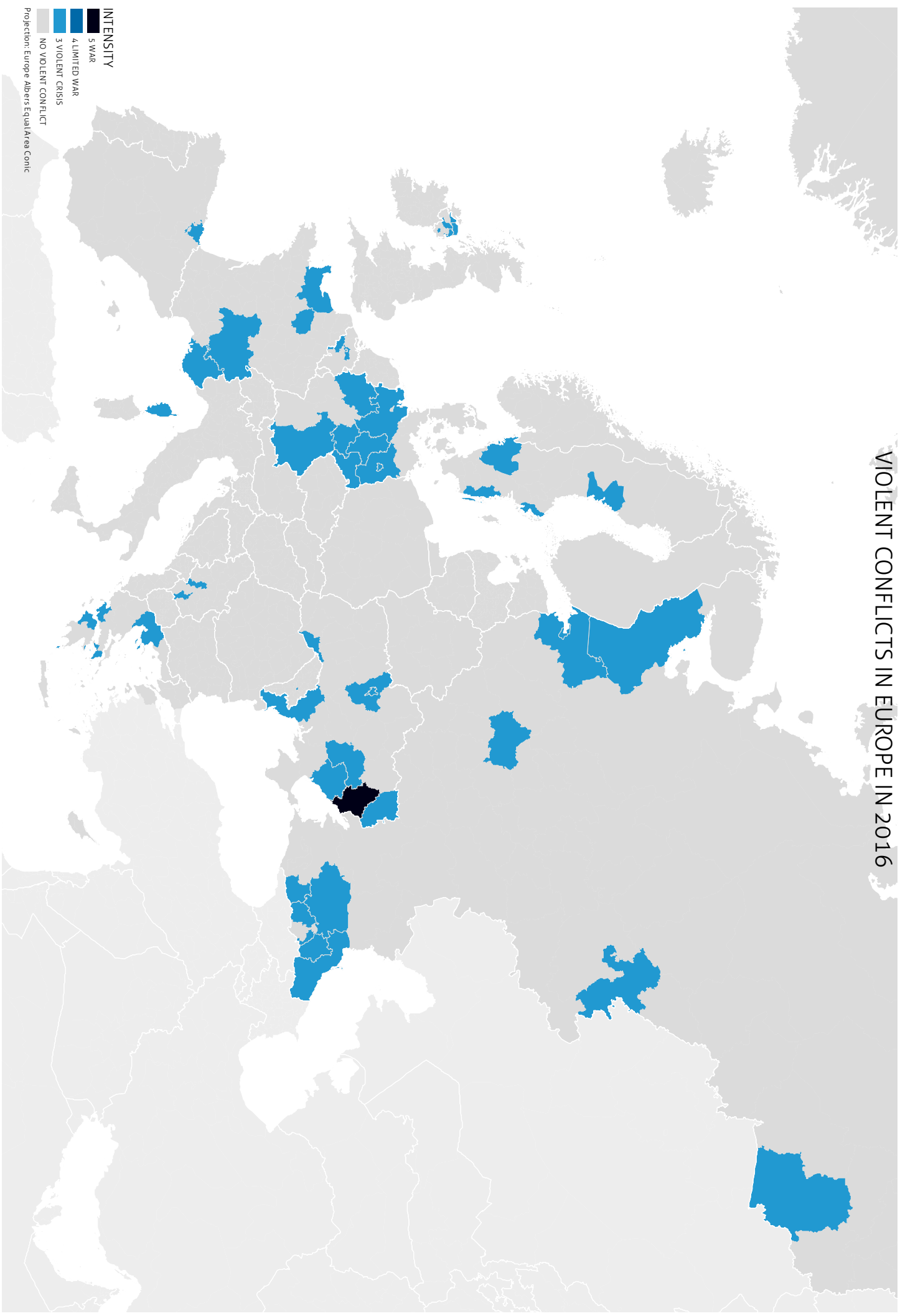
On March 21, Trial Chamber III found Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, former DRC presidential candidate, guilty of committing two counts of crimes against humanity (murder and rape) and three counts of war crimes (murder, rape, and pillaging). The verdict was an historic event in criminal justice as it was the first time the ICC considered sexual violence as a weapon of war and also included sexual violence against male persons. The ICC sentenced Bemba to 18 years of imprisonment on June 21.

On September 27, Trial Chamber VIII found Islamist militant Al Mahdi guilty of co-perpetrating the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against historic monuments and buildings dedicated to religion, including nine mausoleums and the Sidi Yahia mosque in Timbuktu, Mali [→ Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad); Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)]. Al Mahdi pled guilty to the charge of intentionally directing attacks on the cultural sites in June and July 2012, when Timbuktu was occupied by militant Islamist groups Ansar Dine and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. This verdict was the first time an international criminal court focused solely on the destruction of cultural heritage as a war crime. The ICC sentenced Al Mahdi to nine years imprisonment, deducting his time already spent under arrest in The Hague since September 2015.

Over the course of the year, several countries criticized the Court for being a political instrument of the West and biased against African countries. In October, Burundi, Gambia, and South Africa announced their withdrawal from the Court, while Russia withdrew its signature, which would have been the first step to an eventual ratification of the Rome Statute. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte announced that his country might follow Russia. At the end of the year, the ICC registered ten preliminary examinations and ten situations under investigation in total, while five cases were in the trial phase. sst

Europe

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN EUROPE IN 2016



EUROPE

In 2016, the number of conflicts in Europe increased by one to a total of 62. As in previous years, only one highly violent conflict was recorded. The overwhelming majority of conflicts in the region continued on a non-violent level. While most conflicts remained stable in their intensity, seven conflicts intensified and another seven de-escalated.

Although the overall number of casualties decreased compared to previous years, the war between the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government, supported by several volunteer battalions, on the other, continued [→ Ukraine (Donbas)]. Both sides repeatedly blamed each other for violating the 2015 Minsk II agreement and for committing war crimes such as torture and attacks against civilians. Several rounds of renewed ceasefire negotiations did not lead to a lasting cessation of hostilities. Since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, approx. 9,800 people were killed. Two further conflicts in Ukraine remained violent. Opposition groups repeatedly attacked public and private institutions, killing at least three people throughout the year [→ Ukraine (opposition)]. Moreover, right-wing militants launched attacks against officials, the police, and minorities [→ Ukraine (right-wing militants)]. At the border between mainland-Ukraine and Crimea, Russia and Ukraine increased their military capacities in the beginning of August after two alleged violent incidents in the border region [→ Russia – Ukraine (Crimea)]. A report of the ICC classifying the situation on the peninsula as an ongoing occupation by Russia led to Russia's withdrawal of its signature from the founding statute of the ICC in November.

In Russia, the violent crisis taking place in the Northern Caucasus between militant groups fighting under the umbrella of the Caucasian Emirate (CE) and the so-called Islamic State (IS), on the one hand, and the central as well as regional governments, on the other, continued [→ Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)]. However, the number of fatalities further decreased, leaving 166 people dead, among them 143 militants, 21 government officials, and two civilians as well as at least 74 people injured. In the Republic of Dagestan, the number of violent clashes remained on a high level with at least 112 casualties.

The intrastate conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and parties, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis [→ Russia (opposition)]. Throughout the year, opposition parties and groups organized protest campaigns and rallies. For example, on February 27, around 25,000 protesters commemorated the first anniversary of the death of opposition activist Boris Nemtsov in central Moscow. As in previous years, opposition leader Alexei Navalny was prosecuted by the Russian government as well as attacked by different individuals, among them also policemen. On September 18, in the State Duma elections, the ruling party United Russia achieved countrywide victories, obtaining a constitutional majority of 343 seats, while the opposition parties did not manage to secure seats.

Tensions between Russia and the Baltic states Latvia and Estonia continued on a non-violent level. Throughout the year, Russian officials repeatedly accused Estonia and Latvia of discriminating against Russian-speaking minorities and announced to defend the rights of Russians living abroad [→ Estonia (Russian-speaking minority); Latvia (Russian-speaking minority)]. The announced deployment of several multinational NATO battalions to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland further created tensions between Russia and the Baltic countries [→ Russia – Estonia; Russia – Latvia].

In Moldova, at least two anti-government protests turned violent, with 20 police officers being wounded [→ Moldova (opposition)]. Multilateral negotiations to settle the conflict over secession in the Transnistrian region were resumed for the first time since mid-2014 [→ Moldova (Transnistria)]. In Belarus, the dispute over the political system and national power between opposition movements and civil society activists, on the one hand, and President Alexander Lukashenko, on the other, continued [→ Belarus (opposition)]. However, the government released all political prisoners in February, which led to the lifting of nearly all EU sanctions imposed in 2011. In the parliamentary elections on September 11, two opposition candidates won seats in the parliament for the first time since 1996.

In the Balkans, the conflicts between the opposition and the government in FYROM and Kosovo remained violent. In FYROM, last year's EU-brokered agreement led to the resignation of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski in January [→ FYROM (opposition)]. However, a legislative change, which resulted in the pardoning of several high officials suspected of electoral fraud, including Gruevski, triggered countrywide protests from April onwards. In Kosovo, violent protests and tear gas attacks in the parliament by the opposition parties, most prominently Albanian nationalist party Vetevendosje, continued throughout the year [→ Serbia (Kosovo – opposition)]. Moreover, tensions rose in Bosnia and Herzegovina, when the Serbian entity decided to hold a referendum over its day of independence [→ Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian Serbs / Republic of Srpska)].

In 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)]. Throughout the year, crossborder fire between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces occurred on a daily basis. Talks between Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Vienna, Austria, resulted in an agreement on a renewal of the 1994 ceasefire agreement and an enlargement of the OSCE observer mission. Both presidents met for another peace talk in St. Petersburg, Russia, in June. However, ceasefire violations continued throughout the year.

Georgia officially exchanged prisoners with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, marking improvement in the conflict parties' relations [→ Georgia (Abkhazia); Georgia (South Ossetia)]. As a result of the Geneva Discussions, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), a bilateral forum in Gal'i, Abkhazia, was resumed after four years of suspension. In May, an Abkhaz border service guard shot dead a Georgian citizen, sparking tensions between the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides.

The non-violent conflict between Cyprus and TRNC/Northern Cyprus continued ([→ Cyprus (TRNC/Northern Cyprus)]). Nikos Anastasiadis, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and Mustafa Akinci, Turkish Cypriot leader, continued discussing the terms

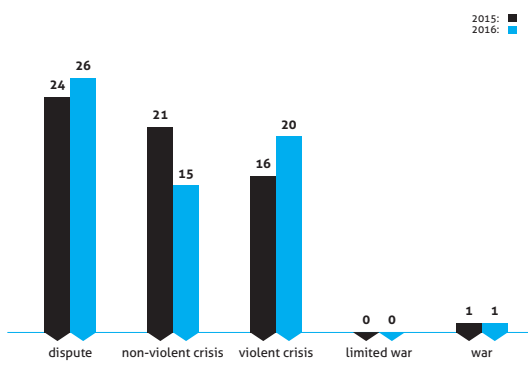
EUROPE

of a Cypriot reunification in UN-brokered peace talks. Significant progress was achieved in terms of internal cooperation, citizenship, and basic freedoms. However, no agreements were reached regarding Turkish guarantees, the borderlines within the future federal state, and the rights of return for Greek Cypriot refugees.

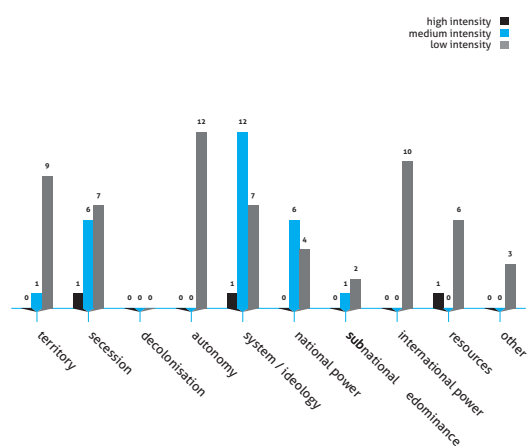
In Greece, the violent crisis between various left-wing groups as well as militant anarchists, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued [→ Greece (social protests, left-wing militants)]. Throughout the year, several workers' unions organized walkouts, which brought the country to a standstill. Militant anarchists repeatedly conducted attacks on government buildings and property.

In Western Europe, the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees as well as attacks by Islamist militants sparked waves of xenophobia and violent opposition against the government's asylum and immigration policy in Germany and Sweden [→ Germany (xenophobes); Sweden (xenophobes)]. In Germany, xenophobes and xenophobic groups as well as members of right-wing political parties conducted more than 2,000 attacks against refugees and refugee accommodations, injuring hundreds. Furthermore, the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany initiated criminal investigations on hate speech and incitement of the people against speakers of anti-asylum demonstrations. In Sweden, after a refugee from Somalia had killed a female social worker, xenophobic groups, among them Soldiers of Odin, patrolled through major cities, harassing refugees and foreigners, and injuring several persons. Furthermore, xenophobes conducted more than 20 arson attacks and other assaults on refugee accommodations. In Basque Country, Spain, an incident involving two Civil Guards and Basque citizens resulted in a violent clash, in which two people were injured. However, it was highly debated whether this incident was a result of renewed nationalistic views or other reasons. In Scotland, the so-called Brexit referendum and the surrounding events were the main points of contention. After the pro-Brexit decision, Scottish politicians announced that a new independence referendum regarding the secession of Scotland would be held within the next two years.

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN EUROPE
IN 2016 COMPARED TO 2015



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN EUROPE
IN 2016 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



EUROPE

Overview: Conflicts in Europe in 2016

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

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Latvia (Russian-speaking minority)	Russian-speaking minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Moldova (opposition)	opposition parties vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2009	↗	3
Moldova (Transnistria)	Transnistrian regional government vs. government	secession	1989	•	2
Romania (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2012	•	1
Russia (Islamist militants / Northern Caucasus)	CE vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1989	•	3
Russia (opposition)	POP, PARNAS, Yabloko, Democratic Choice, December 5th Party, Libertarian Party, Citizen Initiative, opposition movements vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	↗	3
Russia – Estonia	Russia vs. Estonia	territory, international power	1994	•	2
Russia – Georgia	Russia vs. Georgia	international power	1992	•	2
Russia – Kazakhstan et al. (Caspian Sea)*	Russia vs. Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iran	territory, international power, resources	1991	•	1
Russia – Latvia	Russia vs. Latvia	international power	1994	•	2
Russia – Norway et al. (Arctic)*	Russia vs. Norway, Denmark, Canada, USA	territory, resources	2001	•	1
Russia – Ukraine (Crimea)	Crimean regional government, Russia vs. Ukraine	territory	2014	•	2
Russia – Ukraine	Russia vs. Ukraine	territory, international power, resources	2003	•	2
Serbia (Albanian minority / Presevo Valley)*	Albanian minority vs. government	autonomy	2000	•	1
Serbia (Bosniak minority / Sandzak)*	Bosniak minority vs. government	autonomy	1991	•	1
Serbia (Islamist militant groups / Sandzak)*	Islamist militants vs. government	system/ideology	2007	•	1
Serbia (Kosovo – opposition)	Vetevendosje et al. vs. Kosovar government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2015	•	3
Serbia (Kosovo)*	Kosovar government vs. government	secession	1989	•	1
Serbia (Serbian minority – Kosovar government)*	Serbian minority vs. Kosovar government	autonomy, system/ideology	2012	•	1
Slovenia – Croatia (border)*	Slovenia vs. Croatia	territory	1991	•	1
Spain (Basque Provinces)	EH-Bildu, ETA, PNV vs. government	secession	1959	↑	3
Spain (Catalan nationalists / Catalonia)	Catalan regional government (Together for Yes), CUP, Civil Organizations (ANC, AMI, Omnium Cultural et al.) vs. government	secession	1979	↗	2
Spain – United Kingdom (Gibraltar)*	Spain vs. United Kingdom	territory	1954	↘	1
Sweden (xenophobes)	xenophobes, Soldiers of Odin, Swedish Resistance Movement, Nordic Resistance Movement et al. vs. government, pro-asylum activists	system/ideology	2015	•	3
Turkey – Armenia	Turkey vs. Armenia	international power, other	1991	•	1
Turkey – Greece (border)*	Turkey vs. Greece	territory, resources, other	1973	↘	1
Ukraine (Crimean Tatars)	Crimean Tatars vs. Crimean regional government, Russia, pro-Russian activists	autonomy	1988	•	2
Ukraine (Donbas)	DPR, LPR vs. government, Volunteer battalions	secession, system/ideology, resources	2014	•	5
Ukraine (opposition)	Opposition Bloc, Opposition groups et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2013	•	3
Ukraine (right-wing militants)	Svoboda, Right Sector, Azov Battalion, National Corps vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2014	•	3
United Kingdom (Nationalists / Northern Ireland)*	CIRA, ONH, RIRA, SDLP, SF vs. UUP, UDA, Orange Order, government, DUP, Alliance Party, UVF	secession	1968	•	3

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
United Kingdom (Scottish nationalists / Scotland)	SNP, Scottish regional government vs. government	secession	2007	↘	1
USA, EU et al. – Russia	USA, EU et al. vs. Russia	system/ideology, international power	2007	•	2

¹ Conflicts marked with * are without description

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

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

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

ARMENIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2003

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

The conflict over national power between the opposition and the government of President Serzh Sargsyan escalated to a violent crisis.

At the beginning of 2016, activists from the "New Armenia" Public Salvation Front movement rallied at the Liberty Square in the capital Yerevan. The protesters demanded the release of political prisoners. On February 21, the oppositional Heritage Party discussed proposals of the Armenian National Congress (ANC). The ANC agenda included the resignation of President Serzh Sargsyan and his administration. On March 3, the Heritage Party called for early elections. In March, "New Armenia" protested the socioeconomic situation and the alleged violation of human rights. The movement introduced a road map of power change.

On June 15, representatives of the government, the opposition as well as members of civil society started discussions in the 4+4+4 format in the Armenian National Assembly. Later, government authorities published a document, which included four out of five opposition proposals. It consisted of both economic and electoral reforms, such as an electronic voter identification system to be implemented by September 1. On July 17, 31 gunmen led by Varuzhan Avetisyan, belonging to the militant opposition group Sasna Tsrer, attacked a police compound in Yerebuni district, Yerevan, taking several police officers hostage. The group demanded the resignation of the government as well as the release of their leader Jirayr Sefilian, who had been arrested in June for gun possession. Hundreds of civilians took to the streets in support of the gunmen's demands. On July 30, security forces stormed the police compound and violently dispersed the protests. The militants as well as dozens of demonstrators were detained and numerous journalists and protesters injured. Subsequently, several opposition activists went on hunger strike. On September 11, the negotiators of the 4+4+4 format postponed the implementation of the voter identification system. After Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan had resigned, President Sargsyan appointed Karen Karapetyan as successor on September 13. The rest of the administration remained in office. On December 16, the parliament voted to allow lawmakers to switch political parties. jme

ARMENIA – AZERBAIJAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1987

Conflict parties: Armenia vs. Azerbaijan
Conflict items: territory

The violent crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in Azerbaijan mostly populated by ethnic Armenians, continued.

The conflict's dynamic was closely related to the conflict over secession between the self-proclaimed government of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), its armed forces Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army (NKDA), on the one side, and the government of Azerbaijan, on the other [→ Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh)]. Azerbaijan treated the NKDA as part of the Armenian forces although the Armenian Defense Ministry denied the presence of Armenian soldiers in NKR. The ministries of defense of Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of violating the ceasefire agreement of 1994. Throughout the year, both sides employed mortars, rifles and grenades in cross-border fire on a daily basis.

On January 29, Armenian soldiers killed one Azerbaijani soldier in Tovuz District, Azerbaijan. Five days later, Azerbaijani and Armenian soldiers clashed in the Districts of Qazakh, Aghdam, and Tovuz, Azerbaijan. While Armenian army forces killed one Azerbaijani soldier, Azerbaijan claimed to have killed three Armenian soldiers during the clashes. Two days later, Armenian soldiers allegedly crossed the border and killed two Azerbaijani soldiers in Qazakh.

From April 2 to April 5, the situation along the Line of Contact of Troops (LoC), the de-facto border between NKR and Azerbaijan, escalated. Subsequently, tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border increased. Additionally, Azerbaijan accused Armenia of shelling the Azerbaijani exclave Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic on April 7. On May 15, Azerbaijani snipers killed an Armenian soldier in Vayots Dzor province, Armenia, near the exclave. The next day, the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and the Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met in Vienna, Austria, with representatives of the co-chair countries of the OSCE to discuss the conflict. They agreed on a renewal of the ceasefire agreement and on an enlargement of the OSCE-observer commission. Despite the agreement, ceasefire violations were reported during the following days. Aliyev and Sargsyan met for another peace talk in St. Petersburg, Russia, mediated by the Russian President Vladimir Putin on June 20. During the following months, tensions along the border significantly decreased. However, on December 29 intense fighting took place in Tovuz District.

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The Azerbaijani army allegedly killed three Armenian soldiers, while the Armenian defense ministry claimed to have killed up to seven Azerbaijani soldiers. The Azerbaijani army denied having suffered any casualties. tap

AZERBAIJAN (NAGORNO-KARABAKH)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: Nagorno-Karabakh regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The secession conflict between the government of the self-declared Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh (NKR) and Azerbaijan continued on a violent level and came to a head in April. Azerbaijan did not recognize NKR and viewed the Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army (NKDA) as part of the Armenian army, which linked the conflict's dynamic closely to Azerbaijani-Armenian relations [→ Armenia–Azerbaijan]. The adversaries accused each other of violating the ceasefire agreement of 1994 on a daily basis increasingly using heavy weapons.

Throughout the year, at least 75 fighters and civilians on both sides were killed in the districts of Fizuli, Khojavend, Jabrayil, Kohjali, Goranboy, Agdam, and Tarter. NKR as well as Azerbaijan each claimed to have killed several hundred soldiers of the adversary.

On January 9 and 23, Azerbaijani snipers allegedly killed four NKDA soldiers in NKR. Azerbaijani forces killed another NKDA soldier in Fizuli district on February 2. On February 11 and 12 in Agdam, both sides fired at enemy positions allegedly resulting in the death of one Azerbaijani, one NKDA soldier, and one NKR civilian.

In March fighting intensified especially in Agdam, Tarter, and Jabrayil districts. Between March 4 and March 17, the NKDA killed at least five Azerbaijani soldiers. Azerbaijan claimed to have killed more than 15 NKDA soldiers and to have destroyed military gear. The NKR contested the information confirming only two fatalities on their side. Between April 2 and 5, the conflict escalated along the Line of Contact (LoC), particularly in Agdam and Tarter, leaving at least 16 Azerbaijani and 18 NKR soldiers dead. Azerbaijani soldiers reportedly killed eight NKR civilians, while NKDA attacks resulted in two civilian fatalities on Azerbaijan's side. Both parties claimed to have killed several hundred soldiers. About 200 soldiers were injured. Troops of both sides damaged and destroyed several hundred houses forcing about 500 people to flee their homes. They destroyed dozens of power transmission line poles, substations, and public buildings. Whereas the unilaterally declared ceasefire by Azerbaijan on April 3, had failed, both sides agreed on a ceasefire two days later. Furthermore, the Armenian and Azerbaijani governments, the OSCE, and Russia launched diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis. Nonetheless, the opposing groups continued to clash along the LoC, mainly in Tarter and Agdam.

From April 7 to May 17, NKDA soldiers killed six Azerbaijani soldiers and two civilians and injured seven. Azerbaijani forces killed nine NKDA soldiers in the same period and wounded four. At the end of May, the situation stabilized al-

though clashes continued, especially in Tarter and Agdam. In the second half of the year, both the NKDA and the Azerbaijani army killed three opposing soldiers by firing at enemy positions. In December, ceasefire violations occurred on a low level but no soldiers were killed. However, on December 1, both sides reported combat injuries. tap

BELARUS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1994

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

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The dispute over the orientation of the political system and national power between opposition parties, such as the the United Civil Party (UCP), the Belarusian Social-Democratic Party People's Assembly (BSDPNG), oppositional movements, and civil society activists, on the one hand, and the government of President Alexander Lukashenko, on the other, continued.

In February, the government released all political prisoners, which led to the lifting of nearly all EU sanctions that had been imposed five years ago, after a crackdown on the opposition during the 2010 presidential elections. A first round of sanctions had been introduced in 2006. On March 25, about 1,000 opposition supporters marched in the center of the capital Minsk, commemorating the anniversary of the independent Belarusian People's Republic. On April 15, all but one opposition group established the Belarusian National Congress, aimed at coordinating future political campaigns and cooperation. On June 21, opposition parties such as the BSDP NG and the UCP agreed to coordinate in regard to the Belarusian parliamentary elections in September, for instance concerning fraud prevention. However, in July, some parts of the opposition announced

their refusal to participate in the election, fearing unfair proceedings. Some opposition politicians, particularly former presidential candidate and former political prisoner Mikalaj Statkievic, called for post-election protests to demand real elections. Consequently, the UCP, the BSDP as well as the Belarusian Left Party and "The Greens" took part in the elections, while other smaller groups refrained from doing so.

In the parliamentary elections on September 11, almost 200 of the 484 candidates represented the opposition. For the first time since 1996, two opposition candidates, Anna Konopatskaya (UCP) and Elena Anisim (independent), won seats in parliament. The following day, Belarusian election-monitoring groups and the OSCE stated that the elections had not been up to international standards and would not reflect the will of citizens. Furthermore, opposition activists in central Minsk rallied against unfair elections. On December 1, several opposition members, among them former presidential candidate Aleksandr Milinkievich, were arrested and sentenced to 15 days in jail for participating in an illegal demonstration. ako

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BOSNIAN SERBS / REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1995

Conflict parties: Republic of Srpska vs. Bosniak-Croat Federation, government
Conflict items: secession

The secession conflict between the Bosnian entity of the Republic of Srpska (RS) and the government continued as a dispute. In 2015, the RS had announced it would hold a referendum on independence in November 2018. Throughout the year, the Bosnian-Serb dominated entity repeatedly rejected any interference by the central government or foreign countries. On February 15, the central government applied for EU membership, while RS criticized that it had not been consulted on the implementation of the coordination mechanism. In late June, RS vetoed the EU Association Agreement with Bosnia. In mid-May, around 10,000 peaceful protesters, both in favor and in opposition of the government, attended rallies in the city of Banja Luka, in the eponymous canton. Both groups accused each other of being traitors and corrupt. In November 2015, the Bosnian Constitutional Court had ruled that the RS day of independence on January 9, also the Orthodox holiday of St. Stephan and the starting date of the Bosnian war in 1992, discriminated against non-Serbs in the RS. Subsequently, on September 29, the RS held a referendum on the question whether to keep the date as the national holiday with the majority of citizens voting in favor. Later on, the RS parliament declared the holiday a secular event. The referendum provoked several reactions. For instance, the Peace Implementation Council, observing the implementation of the Dayton Agreement and consisting of members from France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Turkey, the USA, and the EU, criticized the referendum, stating that it would violate the peace treaty. Russia distanced itself from this note.

On June 30, the central government published, with instruction from UNECE and Eurostat, the first census since the war, showing a more homogeneous ethnic distribution in RS and the Bosniak-Croat Federation.

eun

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: Islamist militants vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The conflict over ideology and subnational predominance between the government and various Islamist groups, supported by Bosnian fighters returning from abroad and several Islamist-dominated villages mostly from the cantons of Zenica-Doboj, Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Una-Sana, de-escalated to

a non-violent crisis.

In 2015, the Al-Hayyat Media Center, affiliated with the so-called Islamic State (IS), had called upon Muslims living in the Balkans to join their fight [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Until the end of 2016, 20 militants were apprehended, partly due to laws that had been adopted since 2014, which outlawed joining paramilitary forces and fighting abroad. Since 2012, more than 200 Bosnians had gone to fight in the Middle East, of which around 50 returned so far.

Throughout the year, the Bosnian State Police Agency (SIPA) continued Operation "Damask", aimed at combating Islamic violence. Nine people were detained in four operations. For example, on January 6, police arrested two men at the Hum-Scepan border crossing with Montenegro, Canton of Foča. SIPA seized hand grenades, land mines, and an IS flag. On January 11, SIPA detained three people and confiscated assault rifles along with ammunition near the city of Velika Kladusa, Una-Sana.

Tensions also continued between different Muslim denominations. On January 4, Islamists threatened to kill a Salafi cleric in Osve, Zenica-Doboj, for criticizing IS. In mid-February, Bosnian citizen Amir Selimovic, who had gone to Syria in 2014 to fight for IS, threatened to kill the Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Husein Kavazovic. As the leader of the official representation of Muslims in Bosnia, the Muslim Community of Bosnia (IZ), Kavazovic had repeatedly made statements against radical Islamism and radicalization of Muslims in Bosnia. The government considered the threat to be serious and provided additional security measures. In March, the IZ set an ultimatum for 64 allegedly unofficial Muslim communities to accept its authority.

eun

CROATIA (CROATIAN SERBS / KRAJINA, WEST AND EAST SLAVONIA)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Croatian Serbs vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

The autonomy dispute between Croatian Serbs in former Krajina, West and East Slavonia, and the government continued. On January 19, Damir Boras, chancellor of the University of Zagreb, proposed to reintroduce the Cyrillic alphabet into the school curriculum. The Serbo-Croat script had been banned for at least 20 years after violent clashes between Croats and the Serbian minority during the country's war of independence.

Tensions rose after the regulatory body for electronic media imposed a three-day broadcasting ban against the local TV channel Z1, labeling a TV broadcast as hate speech against Croatian Serbs. On January 26, around 5,000 Croats demonstrated in the capital Zagreb against the decision. On April 21, the Foreign Ministry of Serbia condemned nationalist attacks and Croatian hate speech against the Croat Serbian minority. In August, Croatia's interior minister Vlaho Orepic in turn accused Croatian Serbs of false residency registrations that illegitimately increased the Croat Serbian share of the

population of the city Vukovar, whose siege by the Yugoslav People's Army became symbolic for the war of independence. Orepic claimed that without false registrations, the Croat Serbian population would drop below 30 percent and consequently lose its right to official usage of the Cyrillic script. Serbia criticized the statement, which led to further deterioration of the Serbian-Croat relations. Throughout the year, the conviction, acquittal or rehabilitation of supposed war criminals from the 1991-1995 war by Croatian courts caused tensions. jra

CYPRUS (TRNC / NORTHERN CYPRUS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1963

Conflict parties: TRNC / Northern Cyprus vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources

The conflict between Cyprus and TRNC/Northern Cyprus over resources and TRNC's secession from Cyprus continued on a non-violent level.

Nikos Anastasiadis, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and Mustafa Akinci, Turkish Cypriot leader, continued discussing the terms of a Cypriot reunification in UN-brokered peace talks. On January 14 and 29, and March 11, April 18 and 25, and May 9 the two Cypriot leaders held deliberations on remaining issues and were optimistic about reaching a settlement by the end of the year. They intensified negotiations and started meeting twice a week from June 17 onwards. After meetings on July 1 and 8, Anastasiadis reported significant progress concerning internal cooperation in the future federal state with agreements reached on citizenship and basic freedoms. The Cypriot leaders started discussing difficult issues of territory, security, and guarantees on July 29, and in another seven sessions, from August 23 on, discussed matters of contention-security and Turkish troops on the island.

Various Greek Cypriot officials, including Anastasiades, had already demanded a withdrawal of Turkish troops from Northern Cyprus [→ Cyprus – Turkey], on January 18 and 31, and February 11.

On November 2, Akinci criticized the Greek Cypriot side for demanding a withdrawal of all Turkish soldiers and not accepting any Turkish guarantees. In turn, on November 4, Anastasiadis reiterated his refusal to maintain any Turkish interventions rights, whereas Akinci insisted that temporary Turkish guarantees were crucial to the security of Turkish Cypriots. From November 7 to 11 and on November 20, the two leaders discussed the course of borderlines within the future federal state. The talks however, ended without agreements, neither on the two communities' future shares of territory and coastline, nor upon rights of return for Greek Cypriot refugees. On December 2, the two parties announced the resumption of negotiations next year from January 9 to 11, before entering in multi-party talks with guarantor states on January 12. jra

FRANCE (FLNC / CORSICA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: FLNC, Corsican regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The conflict over secession between the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) and the regional government, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis.

On May 4, the "FLNC du 22 octobre", a splinter group of the FLNC, announced to lay down their weapons, assuring the new regional government to refrain from violence. After Prime Minister Manuel Valls had denounced Corsican independence in December 2015, President of the Executive Council of Corsica Gilles Simeoni and the President of the Corsican Assembly Jean-Guy Talamoni reiterated the rights of the Corsican nation on January 19.

On June 30, Simeoni claimed in a letter to Valls that Corsicans convicted for terrorism would be detained as political prisoners in France. One week later, Valls denied the existence of political prisoners.

On October 5, the Magistrat's Court of Paris sentenced Nicolas Battini, Joseph Verdi, and Stéphane Tomasi to eight, six, and five years of prison for terrorism, referring to a 2012 bomb attack in Corte, Haute-Corse district. Afterwards, several thousand people demonstrated peacefully in Bastia against the verdict, among them Talamoni. Subsequently, up to 20 masked rioters torched garbage cans and threw stones and Molotov cocktails at police forces, wounding four. csc

FYROM (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis concerning national power and the orientation of the political system between a broad opposition movement, on the one hand, and the VMRO-DPMNE-led government, on the other, continued.

On January 15, Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski resigned and Emil Dimitriev was appointed as head of the interim government, in accordance with last year's EU-brokered agreement. On February 24, several hundred people protested in the capital Skopje against the Constitutional Court's decision to enable pardoning former officials suspected of electoral fraud. On March 15, anti-government protesters rallied against the planned legislative change, while government supporters staged a counter-protest. The next day, the Constitutional Court approved the controversial law change. On April 12, President Gjorge Ivanov pardoned 56 politicians facing crime probes, most of whom were being investigated by the Special Prosecution, including Gruevski and members

of his cabinet. The pardons triggered a wave of protests which were dubbed "The Colorful Revolution" because demonstrators threw paint on government buildings and landmarks of the Skopje 2014 project, symbolizing state corruption. The opposition movement demanded Ivanov's resignation, revision of the pardons, and guarantees that the preconditions for fair and free elections would be met. Furthermore, the movement expressed support for the work of the Special Prosecution. The same day, after Ivanov had announced the amnesty, demonstrators threw eggs and stones at the president's office in Skopje. The following day, several thousand people demonstrated in Skopje and Bitola, Pelagonia region. Protesters in Skopje clashed with the police, threw eggs and flares at the President's office, stormed it and set its interior on fire. Twelve people were arrested and at least one was injured. The same night, several thousand people staged a counter-demonstration in support of the government. On April 14, anti-government and pro-government protests took place in Skopje with thousands of people on both sides. Five police officers were wounded in sporadic scuffles. One anti-government protester was arrested after a group of people started throwing stones and flares at the police, who in turn used water cannon. Students in the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje occupied the law faculty, demanding the president's resignation. Throughout April, anti-government rallies continued in Skopje and in all other regions of the country. The biggest rallies were staged on April 18 and April 21 in Skopje, where tens of thousands demonstrated both against and in favor of the government.

On May 9, around 20,000 ethnic Albanians gathered in Skopje for a rally organized by the Albanian opposition parties [→ FYROM (Albanian minority)]. On May 18, the Constitutional Court ruled to postpone the June elections and later, on June 6, Ivanov withdrew all pardons. However, anti-government rallies continued. Tens of thousands protested in the capital, after the government did not meet a deadline set by the opposition movement to meet their demands. On June 20, protesters threw paint at state buildings and broke windows of the Ministry of Justice. Amidst continuing occasional smaller protests, on August 31, the parties reached an agreement to hold parliamentary elections on December 11. On October 11, more than 10,000 opposition supporters rallied in Skopje. After the State Election Commission declared a tight VMRO DPMNE victory, both VMRO DPMNE and oppositional SDSM filed complaints for irregularities.

On December 15 and 16, up to a thousand VMRO supporters protested in front of the State Election Commission. After a re-run of the voting on December 25 in one polling station, the final results were announced. VMRO DPMNE won 51 out of 120 seats, SDSM gained 49 seats, and four smaller parties each between two and ten seats of the new parliament.

dve

GEORGIA (ABKHAZIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Abkhazian regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The conflict over secession between the breakaway region Abkhazia and the central government escalated to a violent crisis.

On March 10, Georgia officially exchanged prisoners with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which marked a significant improvement in the conflict parties' relations [→ Georgia (South Ossetia)]. As a result of the 35th round of Geneva Discussions on March 22 to 23, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) in Gal/i, a bilateral forum, was resumed after four years of suspension. However, Georgian and Abkhaz sides remained unable to reach an agreement on the return of IDPs and on the non-use of force.

On May 19, an Abkhaz border service guard shot Georgian citizen Giga Otkhazia dead beyond the Abkhaz administrative border line close to the Georgian-controlled Khurcha village. Subsequently, the Georgian government stated that Russia as the "occupational force" was fully responsible for the event [→ Georgia – Russia]. Georgia demanded the extradition of the suspect, whereas the Abkhaz authorities insisted on a trial in Abkhazia. On June 23, a military court in Abkhazia ordered the house arrest of the suspect.

On November 3, the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the Russian State Duma's ratification of a treaty with Abkhazia on establishing a Combined Group of Forces as "yet another unlawful episode of factual annexation process." Throughout the year, Abkhazian officials repeatedly voiced their concern about NATO's increased military cooperation with Georgia. msa

GEORGIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: UNM, various opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between various opposition groups, most prominently the United National Movement (UNM), on the one hand, and the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) coalition on the other, continued.

On October 8, parliamentary elections were held. GD secured 48.6% of votes in the first round, attaining 67 of 150 seats. In the second round on October 30, GD won further 48 seats gaining a constitutional majority with 115 seats in total. UNM came second with 27 seats. Several opposition parties, among them UNM, accused GD of electoral fraud. OSCE election observers called the elections as generally free and fair but also reported sporadic violent incidents during the election campaigns and the first round of voting.

While GD repeatedly accused UNM of stirring tensions at campaign events ahead of the elections, the latter dismissed the allegations as an attempt to distract public attention from actual problems. On May 22, during by-elections for a local council seat in a village near Zugdidi, eponymous district, GD supporters attacked UNM representatives, including several leading party figures, resulting in a fistfight. On October 1, two UNM members clashed with three members of the GD youth wing near Zugdidi. On October 2, an assailant shot and wounded two men during an election campaign event of UNM member and former defense minister Irakli Okruashvili. The latter blamed GD for the incident, a claim rejected by GD. On October 4, in the capital Tbilisi, a car bomb hit the car of UNM Member of Parliament Givi Targamadze. Five people including Targamadze were injured. On October 8, dozens of GD supporters tried to storm a polling station in the village of Kizilajlo, southern Georgia. Police was inside the polling station when the crowd began throwing stones and breaking windows. Police prevented them from entering the building and deployed special troops. On November 27, the parliament voted the new GD government into office, confirming Giorgi Kvirikashvili as prime minister.

In early December, a major split emerged in the UNM. One wing unequivocally supported its founder, former president Mikheil Saakashvili, while the other considered him a liability.

GERMANY (XENOPHOBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties:	xenophobes, various right-wing groups, GIDA movements 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, such as Gruppe Freital and supporters of the far-right National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), several GIDA movements, as well as various xenophobes, on the one hand, and the government and pro-asylum activists, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, xenophobes conducted up to 1,550 attacks on asylum centers, accommodations, residences, and further facilities related to refugees, whereby at least 102 of them were arson attacks. For instance, on May 23, xenophobes burned down a castle that served as a refugee accommodation in the city of Schloß Holte-Stukenbrock, North Rhine-Westphalia state, leaving three refugees injured. On October 2, xenophobes set fire to an apartment of a Syrian family in Neubrandenburg, Mecklenburg Pomerania state, leaving four injured. Police reported that the incidents were politically motivated by right-wing militants. While police detained several nationalists and right-wing-extremists, the majority of the incidents remained unsolved, with no one claiming responsibility. Due to the ongoing legal proceedings, authorities did not disclose the group affiliations of most suspects.

Apart from attacks on infrastructure, xenophobes conducted

at least 382 assaults targeting asylum-seekers. For instance, on June 10, a neo-Nazi shot at a refugee accommodation with an air gun from his apartment in Lingen, Lower Saxonian state. He injured two asylum-seekers, who had to be hospitalized. He fired another shot at the accommodation on June 12, injuring two other asylum-seekers.

In the course of the year, supporters of NPD and Alternative for Germany (AfD), the GIDA movements as well as other xenophobic groups held at least 64 demonstrations, resulting in charges against activists such as unauthorized gathering, incitement of the people, hate speech, or violent attack. For instance, on January 30, during a demonstration organized by right-wing extremist party Die Rechte in Bautzen, Saxonian state, two Pakistani refugees were attacked. On February 22, during a speech in front of more than 3,000 demonstrators in Dresden, Saxony, Tatjana Festerling, speaker of the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident (PEGIDA) movement, called asylum seekers "unscrupulous invaders" and expressed her support for the people who had attacked a refugee bus in Clausnitz, Saxony, on February 18. On April 9, hundreds of PEGIDA-activists, among them PEGIDA-initiator Lutz Bachmann, and activists from the Czech "Block proti Islamu" blocked a Czech-German border crossing. On May 3, the district court Dresden ordered Bachmann to pay a fine of up to USD 11,050 for incitement of the people. Bachmann had described refugees as animals and filth on his Facebook page.

The Federal Constitutional Court (BVerfG) repeatedly banned so-called Kameradschaften and other right-wing extremist groups. On November 7, the Attorney General charged eight members of Gruppe Freital, which had been rendered anti-constitutional by the BVerfG, with formation of a terrorist organization as well as attempted murder in four cases, referring to their attacks on asylum accommodations in Freital.

The federal domestic intelligence service announced that it had started to monitor the activist network Identitäre Bewegung and the so-called Reichsbürgerbewegung, citing their involvement in xenophobic attacks among other reasons. For instance, on October 20, a so-called "Reichsbürger" set fire to an apartment of refugees, injuring two persons.

The German parliament repeatedly suggested personal connections between right-wing militants and the political parties AfD and NPD. Regarding an arson attack on a refugee accommodation in 2015 in Nauen, Brandenburg state, five people, among them NPD official Maik Schneider, were convicted for formation of a terrorist organization and attempted assault by the district court Potsdam on November 24.

Several incidents fueled xenophobic sentiments throughout the year. For instance, following cases of systematic sexual harassment and assault, stealing, and violence on New Year's Eve 2016 in Cologne, North-Rhine Westphalia, several right-wing militants organized hunts on refugees via social networks in the beginning of January. Several refugees were injured. Furthermore, up to 25 right-wing militants chased a refugee through the city.

On January 24, at least ten demonstrations were staged throughout Germany, partly unauthorized, following appeals from social media and right-wing websites that claimed the supposed rape of Lisa F., an underage girl from Berlin, by an asylum-seeker. About 10,000 people participated in demonstrations, among them right-wing extremists. For in-

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stance, 700 Germans of Russian origin and BÄRGIDA-activists protested in front of the Federal Chancellery in Berlin. Following the rape investigations, police declared the allegations to be false. On September 17, following an alleged sexual assault on two underage girls by refugees, 50 people held an unauthorized demonstration in Thale, Saxony-Anhalt, attacking police officers with fireworks and damaging cars. Right-wing militants repeatedly threatened politicians and pro-asylum activists throughout the year. On December 13, Thomas Purwin resigned from his post as Chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in Bocholt, North Rhine Westphalia, after he and his family had received several death threats for his pro-asylum engagement. Federal Minister of Justice Heiko Maas stated that the number of death threats against him had increased after publicly criticizing the PEGIDA movement. jre, tfr

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 between various left-wing groups, among them the two largest workers' unions the Civil Servants Confederation (ADEDY) and the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), as well as militant anarchists, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, ADEDY and GSEE repeatedly organized walkouts across a large range of sectors, which brought the country to a standstill. For instance, on February 4, tens of thousands of ADEDY and GSEE members took to the streets across the country to protest proposed austerity measures. In the capital Athens, several protesters attacked the police with stones and Molotov cocktails, damaging bus stops and cars.

From February 12 to 14, as part of a months-long country-wide protest campaign, thousands of farmers rallied against planned tax and pension reforms in Athens. Violent clashes between protesters and approx. 800 police forces damaged windows of the Ministry of Agriculture. In March and April, the unions staged several cross-sectoral 24-hour strikes in the capital. For example, on April 7, Athens International Airport was shut down and all commercial flights were cancelled, state hospitals were on emergency mode and TV stations stopped broadcasting. A three-day general strike starting on May 6 led to a breakdown of public transport. On October 3, at least 1,000 pensioners, demonstrating against pension cuts in Athens, clashed with police forces, which used tear gas.

Amid US President Barack Obama's visit to Athens, large-scale demonstrations were held in the capital in mid-November. Riot police used stun grenades and tear gas against 3,000 protesters who tried to break a police cordon with wooden clubs and Molotov cocktails on November 15. At least six peo-

ple were injured in similar clashes over the next two days. After dozens of left-wing protesters occupied parts of Athens Polytechnic University, the group attacked police forces with Molotov cocktails and stones. The police responded with tear gas and stun grenades.

Throughout the year, militant anarchists attacked government buildings and property. On April 24, militant anarchists attacked a police station in the Exarcheia district of Athens with Molotov cocktails and stones, damaging the guard post and cars with sledgehammers. On June 5, around 30 anarchists damaged three cars and wounded one police officer, in an attack against the home of Minister of State Alekos Flam-bouraris in Exarcheia. On July 10 and October 19, anarchists in Exarcheia hurled Molotov cocktails and rocks at riot police forces, which responded with tear gas. jth

HUNGARY (RIGHT-WINGS – MINORITIES)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: Jobbik vs. Jewish community, Muslim community, Roma minority

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The subnational predominance conflict between various right-wing groups, most prominently "The Movement for a Better Hungary" (Jobbik), on the one hand, and the Jewish community, Muslim community, LGBT organizations, and the Roma minority, on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. On January 12, the Supreme Court of Hungary imposed a life sentence on three men for the murder of six Roma during 2008 and 2009.

On February 17, the mayor of Tiszavasvári, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Megye, established a paramilitary unit to enforce the "Erpataki model" of Jobbik politician Mihály Zoltán Orosz, which envisioned an order of total control. The unit's aim was to keep law and order in the village in addition to the police and to patrol mostly in the Roma neighborhood. In response, on April 8, Roma protested in the capital Budapest against the "Erpataki model", asking the President to forbid it. In June, János Volner, Vice President of Jobbik, defended the model. On May 26, the European Commission started an infringement procedure against the segregation of Roma children in Hungarian schools. On November 24, László Toroczkai, mayor of Ásotthalom, Csongrád Megye, made a legal statement forbidding manifestations of Muslim faith, such as burkini, muezzin, and chador.

On December 10, Jobbik sent a questionnaire on various matters to all Hungarian citizens, which included discriminating questions, such as "do you agree that pupils who do not fit in the class and are disturbing the teaching process are put in separate schools?." dbu

LATVIA (RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITY)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Russian-speaking minority vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The dispute between the government and the Russian-speaking minority over autonomy continued.

On several occasions, Russia criticized Latvia for discriminatory treatment of its Russian-speaking minority, in particular regarding citizenship and education [→ Russia – Latvia]. On July 27, the Latvian State Language Center fined Riga Mayor Nils Ušakovs for posting content of the Riga City Council on social media in Russian instead of Latvian, thereby violating the State Language Law.

On October 4, the government upheld amendments to a draft legislation which would enable the dismissal of teachers and school headmasters for disloyalty to the state or the constitution. The Russian community voiced concerns that the law stigmatized teachers at bilingual schools. On November 22, President Raimonds Vejonis announced that children of non-citizens born in Latvia should be given Latvian citizenship. vpa

MOLDOVA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: opposition parties vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between several opposition parties and the government, led by the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), escalated to a violent crisis. While most of the opposition parties opposed the perceived corrupt government, some of them, such as the pro-Russian Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), also criticized the latter for its pro-European orientation.

Throughout the year, mass protests took place, some of which turned violent. After President Nicolae Timofti had replaced Vladimir Plahotniuc, PDM candidate for prime minister, by Pavel Filip, more than 20,000 protesters joined rallies on January 16 organized by the oppositional parties PSRM and Dignity and Truth Platform Party (PPDA). They denounced Filip's close ties with Plahotniuc as well as the nontransparent nomination process and called for early elections. On January 20, just one week before the scheduled early elections, hundreds of protesters stormed the Parliament in the capital Chisinau after it had approved a pro-European government led by Filip earlier that day, thereby avoiding its dissolution and new elections. Protesters clashed with police officers, wounding six of them. The pro-Russian opposition boycotted the vote. Filip became the third prime minister in the course of a year. Further anti-government protests took place on April 24 and on August 27, staged by the PPDA, the Liberal Reformist Party (PLR), and the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM),

with thousands rallying in Chisinau. During the rally on April 24, some protesters clashed with the police near the parliament building, throwing sticks, stones, eggs, as well as bottles and wounding 14 police officers. Moreover, on May 8, several hundred activists of the PSRM rallied at the central square of the capital against joint military exercises of Moldovan and approx. 200 US troops.

After the Constitutional Court had ruled to restore direct presidential elections on March 4, pro-Russian candidate Igor Dodon (PSRM) and pro-EU candidate Maia Sandu (Action and Solidarity Party) received the highest numbers of votes during the first round of presidential elections on October 30. On November 13, Dodon was elected president in the second round of the elections. In reaction, several hundred protesters took to the streets of Chisinau, claiming electoral manipulation. Sandu announced to appeal against the results on November 28.

sli

MOLDOVA (TRANSNISTRIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: Transnistrian regional government vs. government

Conflict items: secession

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

On January 27, Transnistrian de-facto authorities accused the central government of threatening Transnistrian citizens possessing Russian or Ukrainian passports with deportation when crossing the border between the breakaway region and Moldova. According to the former, this constituted a violation of earlier bilateral agreements. In mid-July, Ukraine stopped the rail-bound transport of goods, especially fuels, through Transnistria, which the latter denounced as a politically motivated economic blockade by Moldova and Ukraine.

The conflict parties continued to disagree over the status of Transnistria within the Moldovan territory. On March 1, Moldova's Deputy Prime Minister for Integration, Gheorge Balan, refused a federalization of the Moldovan state territory, considering instead to grant Transnistria a special legal status. From June 2 to 3, a conference was held in the 5+2 format in Berlin, Germany. The participants, comprising Moldova, Transnistria, Russia, Ukraine, the OSCE, as well as the EU and the USA, signed a protocol with concrete obligations to settle contentious issues, such as the freedom of movement of people and goods. The Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, Adrian Candu, stated on August 1 that the special autonomous status within Moldova's territorial integrity would be provided if the region obeyed the sovereignty and unitary character of Moldova. Previously, the Transnistrian de-facto government had rejected the special status proposed by Moldova on June 29. On September 9, the de-facto President of Transnistria, Yevgeny Shevchuk, issued a decree to align Transnistria's legal system with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

The deployment of Russian troops to Transnistrian territory

remained a controversial topic. On March 1, Moldova's Defense Minister, Anatol Șalaru, suggested to replace the Russian troops deployed in the breakaway region with a UN mission. The Russian Federation rejected this proposal. On May 9, Transnistrian and Russian troops held a military parade in Tiraspol, Transnistria, for the first time jointly celebrating the 71st anniversary of victory in the "Great Patriotic War". Moldova condemned the participation of Russian troops in this parade, stating that they were deployed illicitly in the region. On August 17, for the second time this month, Transnistrian and Russian troops conducted joint military exercises in Transnistria. The Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the repeated military activities and demanded the unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from the Transnistrian region on September 9. ^{sli}

RUSSIA (ISLAMIST MILITANTS / NORTHERN CAUCASUS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: CE vs. government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The violent crisis over ideology and secession between militant groups fighting under the umbrella of the Caucasian Emirate (CE) and the so-called Islamic State (IS) on the one hand, and the central as well as regional governments on the other hand, continued.

The CE aimed at establishing an independent Islamic Emirate under Sharia law in the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD), comprising the republics of Dagestan (RoD), Chechnya (RoC), Ingushetia (RoI), Kabardino-Balkaria (RoKB), Karachay-Cherkessia (RoKC), and North Ossetia Alania (RoNOA), as well as the region Stavropol Krai (SK).

Compared to the previous years, the number of fatalities further decreased, leaving 166 people dead, among them 143 militants, 21 government officials, and two civilians, and at least 74 people injured. While a decline in death rates was observed for RoKB, the number of violent clashes in RoD remained on a high level. With at least 112 casualties, RoD experienced by far the highest number of violent incidents, which amounted to over two thirds of the conflict's total casualties.

In RoD, as a result of three special government operations conducted between June 16 and 17 in southern Dagestan, five officials and ten militants were killed. Among the killed was Gasan Abdullaev aka Abu Yasir, leader of the "Southern" militant group, who had allied with the IS. In the course of another operation on December 4, government forces killed the leader of the Northern Caucasus' IS branch, Rustam Asilderov alias Amir Abu Muhammad Kadarsky, as well as four other militants. On May 14, four Spetsnaz operatives and two militants were killed as well as 13 officials injured in a raid on an apartment in the city of Derbent, in connection with the murder of the father of former mayor Felix Kaziakhmedov five days earlier.

On February 15, an IS suicide car bomb killed two security forces and left at least 13 persons injured at a police check-

point near the village of Djemikent in Derbent district. On March 29, IS conducted an IED attack on a police convoy en route from Makhachkala to Kaspiysk, killing one police officer and injuring two. However, IS claimed to have killed ten officers.

In RoC, security forces killed Musa Zavgaev, the self-proclaimed Emir of the Nadterechny and Naur districts, and one accomplice, during a operation close to the village of Mekenskaya, Naur, on January 1. On May 9, two militants attacked a checkpoint in the outskirts of the village of Alkhan-Kala in the Grozny district. Security forces shot one dead, while the other militant committed a suicide attack that wounded six policemen. In IS attacks and operations by security forces on December 17 and 18 in different districts of Grozny, IS militants killed four policemen while government forces shot dead seven militants and detained four others.

In RoI, government forces killed 13 militants in security operations in the Nazran district on May 26, on October 7, and on November 24, and two policemen were killed. On June 5, militants attacked a military unit in the Sunzha district using a grenade launcher.

In RoKB, security forces killed twelve militants, who in turn shot dead two policemen. Additionally, government forces killed four militants from RoKB in St. Petersburg on August 17. Among the killed militants were Zelim Shebzukhov alias Amir Salim, who had led the Northern Sector of the Caucasus Emirate's Velayat Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay, and Vyacheslav Nyrov, who was the leader of the Northwestern Sector. ^{jkr}

RUSSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2001

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

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition parties and groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, opposition parties and groups organized protest campaigns and rallies. On February 27, around 25,000 demonstrators marched through the capital Moscow, commemorating the first anniversary of the death of prominent opposition activist Boris Nemtsov. During an illegal rally in support of Ukrainian army pilot, Nadiya Savchenko, on March 8, the police detained 35 protesters in central Moscow. On November 11, Moscow's city hall rejected requests filed by the liberal parties PARNAS and the December 5th Party, among others, to hold a demonstration against the Russian involvement in the Syrian war [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

Throughout the year, police repeatedly arrested LGBT-rights activists. On January 18, the Leninsky District Court in Murmansk convicted Sergei Alekseenko, leader of the Murmansk LGBT-rights group Maximum, to a USD 1,282 fine for violat-

ing the "gay propaganda" law. On May 1, police arrested around 20 LGBT-activists during the annual Labor Day Parade in St. Petersburg, after authorities had previously banned them from participating.

As in previous years, the government prosecuted opposition leader Alexei Navalny, his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK), and affiliates. On April 6, the attorney general started an investigation against FBK. On April 8, the Moscow City Court halted the proceedings against Navalny and Pyotr Ofitserov in the KirovLes timber company embezzlement case. This followed a European Court of Human Rights judgment from February, which found that the case violated the European Convention of Human Rights. On April 19, four FBK candidates withdrew from municipal elections in Barvikha, Moscow Oblast, protesting against cases of fraud during previous rounds of voting. On May 17, around 20 people, among them several alleged policemen, attacked Navalny and several FBK members at Anapa Airport, Krasnodar district, beating and injuring them. On November 16, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation repealed a lower court's ruling to give Navalny a five-year suspended sentence on corruption charges and ordered a retrial.

The government repeatedly prosecuted the opposition news agency Ekho Moskvyy. On July 5, federal security agents searched its Moscow offices. The investigation was linked to correspondence between the editorial staff and Kremlin critic Andrei Piontkovsky, who went into exile on February 19. Russian lawmakers accused Piontkovsky of inciting ethnic hatred after he had published a critical article about the North Caucasus on January 23. On November 2, the municipal authorities sealed Amnesty International's Moscow Office without prior notice.

On September 18, in the State Duma elections, the ruling party, United Russia (UR), achieved countrywide victories, obtaining a constitutional majority of 343 seats. The liberal opposition parties Yabloko, The Greens, PARNAS as well as the right-wing and nationalist opposition parties Party of Growth and Patriots of Russia did not manage to secure seats, while Rodina and the Civic Platform secured one seat each. On July 7, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the Yarovaya bill, amending existing counter-terror laws. The amendments enhanced surveillance capabilities, expanded authorities of law enforcement agencies, and increased the penalty for "extremism" from four to up to eight years of imprisonment.

The situation in the Chechen Republic, headed by President Ramzan Kadyrov, deteriorated. Prior to the September 18 elections, the persecution of Kadyrov's critics increased. On May 12, in the village of Kenkhi, Sharni district, Chechnya, a group of men set the house of government critic Ramazan Dzhalalidinov on fire. In April, Dzhalalidinov had uploaded a video on YouTube, urging Putin to take action against corrupt officials in Chechnya. On May 30, on his Instagram account, Kadyrov published a video of Dzhalalidinov apologizing for his allegations. On November 4, Dzhalalidinov disappeared after police temporarily detained him and his son the previous day. On September 18, Kadyrov was reelected as head of the Chechen Republic with 97 percent of votes. cbe

RUSSIA – ESTONIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Estonia

Conflict items: territory, international power

The non-violent crisis between Russia and Estonia over territory and international power continued. The contested territory comprised the borders between Estonia and the Russian oblasts Leningrad and Pskov. A border treaty that would acknowledge the current border demarcation was still pending Russian ratification.

Throughout the year, Russian officials repeatedly accused Estonia and Latvia of discriminating against their Russian-speaking minorities and announced to defend the rights of Russians living abroad [→ Estonia (Russian-speaking minority)] [→ Latvia (Russian-speaking minority)].

On several occasions, Estonia along with the other Baltic states and Poland advocated a continuation of sanctions against Russia and called on Russia to fulfill the Minsk Agreement [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia].

Throughout the first half of the year, Estonian officials repeatedly termed Russian behavior aggressive and called for increased NATO presence in the region. On June 13, NATO announced the deployment of several multinational battalions to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

On November 18, Russian and Estonian officials met in Moscow for political consultations. They discussed the announced NATO deployment, possible areas of cooperation, and the current state of the border treaty.

After several Russian congratulatory notes to newly elected Estonian government officials, on December 6, the Russian Ambassador to Estonia, Alexander Petrov, expressed Russia's willingness for cooperation with the new Estonian government and reaffirmed Russia's acceptance of Estonian membership in NATO and EU.

Estonia accused Russia of violating its airspace on six occasions throughout the year. However, the Russian Defense Ministry denied those allegations. vpa

RUSSIA – GEORGIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: Russia vs. Georgia

Conflict items: international power

The non-violent crisis over international power between Russia and Georgia continued. Georgia supported parts of the EU-led sanctions against Russia, which Russia condemned.

On January 13 and April 18, Russia conducted military exercises with up to 2,000 troops in the South Ossetian mountains, minor military drills on March 16 in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and large-scale KAVKAZ exercises in September [→ Georgia (Abkhazia); Georgia (South Ossetia)].

From May 11 until May 26 and again from November 10 until November 20, Georgia conducted military exercises with

NATO members, prompting criticism by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On May 26, the Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili declared that Russia was "fully responsible" for the "brutal and disgusting" death of a Georgian citizen on May 19, close to the Georgian-Abkhaz administrative boundary line in Khurcha village [→ Georgia (Abkhazia)]. Russia denied any responsibility. On November 3, the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the Russian State Duma's ratification of a treaty with Abkhazia on establishing a Combined Forces Group and remarked that this step would be "yet another unlawful episode of a factual annexation process."

Russian officials repeatedly criticized Georgian politicians of using anti-Russian rhetoric in the lead-up to the parliamentary elections. Both conflict parties upheld informal political dialog as the Georgian special representative for relations with Russia and Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister met twice in the first half of 2016. Subsequently, on July 22, Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, stated that Russian-Georgian relations had improved. msa

RUSSIA – LATVIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1994

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

The non-violent crisis between Russia and Latvia over international power continued.

Throughout the year, Russia accused Latvia of discriminating against the Russian language and the Russian-speaking minority [→ Latvia (Russian-speaking minority)].

On several occasions, Latvia alongside the other Baltic states and Poland called for a perpetuation of sanctions against Russia until it would fulfill the Minsk Agreement [→ USA, EU et al. – Russia]. On March 23, Latvian authorities shut down a Russian-owned news site and banned a Russian TV channel on April 4. Russia reacted by calling these actions an informational war and a violation of freedom of speech. On May 12, the Russian Ambassador to Latvia, Alexander Veshnyakov, accused Latvia and other Western countries of "deliberately demonizing Russia". Consequently, he was summoned to the Latvian Foreign Ministry. On June 13, NATO announced the deployment of multinational battalions to Latvia and other states in the region. On August 3, Russia filed a note of protest, criticizing the demolition of a Soviet monument by local officials in Limbazi, Vidzeme region, Latvia. On August 8, Russia announced its willingness for cooperation. Subsequently, experts from the Latvian and Russian Defense Ministries met for consultations on December 8. On this occasion, Latvia stated that Russian exercises and military build-up at the border raised concerns about Russian intentions and urged Russia to provide more transparency regarding its military activities. vpa

RUSSIA – UKRAINE

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2003

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

The non-violent crisis over territory, international power, and resources between Russia and Ukraine continued.

As in previous years, the bilateral relations between the two countries were negatively affected by the war in Donbas and the conflict in Crimea [→ Ukraine (Donbas); Russia – Ukraine (Crimea)]. The status of the Crimean peninsula remained contested. Both sides increased their military presence near the Crimean border after Russia had accused Ukraine of preparing attacks on Crimean territory and claimed that two Russian servicemen had been killed in firefights in the night of August 6 to 7 and on August 8. Moreover, Russia and Ukraine held various military exercises on or near the Crimean peninsula. Diplomatic efforts to end the war in Donbas continued. For instance, on October 19, Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany agreed on a roadmap to settle the conflict. However, fighting continued.

Throughout the year, protesters repeatedly attacked the Russian embassy in Kiev and consulates in several other Ukrainian cities [→ Ukraine (right-wing militants)]. Russia condemned these attacks and called on Ukraine to investigate the incidents.

On January 1, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) between Ukraine and the EU came into force. In reaction, Russia suspended its free trade agreement with Ukraine the same day. On March 23, the Donetsk city court in Russia's Rostov region sentenced Ukrainian servicewoman Nadiya Savchenko to 22 years in prison for the alleged assassination of two Russian journalists. She was pardoned by the Russian government and exchanged with two jailed Russian soldiers on May 25. On October 31, Ukraine renewed its sanctions against Russia for another year, adding sanctions on hundreds of companies and individuals. On December 4, both sides resumed talks in Brussels, Belgium, concerning the delivery of gas from Russia to Ukraine and its transit through Ukrainian territory. After Ukraine had suspended gas imports from Russia in November 2015, the latter increased the gas transmission through the Baltic Sea, thereby avoiding its transportation through Ukraine. On December 8, the Ukrainian parliament introduced a licensing procedure to restrict the import of perceived anti-Ukrainian literature from Russia. On December 29, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko blamed Russia for having carried out more than 6,500 cyber attacks against Ukrainian state institutions within the last two months. jme

RUSSIA – UKRAINE (CRIMEA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: Crimean regional government, Russia vs. Ukraine

Conflict items: territory

The non-violent crisis over the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea between Russia and the Crimean regional government, on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government, on the other, continued.

Following the overthrow of Ukrainian then-President Viktor Yanukovich and his government in February 2014, Russian soldiers had occupied strategic sites on the peninsula. Two days after a referendum on 03/17/14, Russia had declared Crimea Russian territory. Ukraine, the UN, and the majority of the international community condemned the annexation.

Throughout the year, several incidents were reported at or near the border crossings between mainland-Ukraine and the Crimean peninsula. According to Russian authorities, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) detained a group of Ukrainian and Russian citizens the night of August 6 to 7 near the city of Armyansk and confiscated 20 explosive devices at the site. FSB also reported that on August 8, unspecified Ukrainian groups tried to cross the border, accompanied by heavy shelling from the Ukrainian side. According to Russian authorities, the shootings on both days left two Russian officials dead and ten injured. Ukraine rejected these allegations and accused Russia of having staged the alleged incidents. The information could not be independently verified. In the following days, both sides increased their military presence near the border.

On November 20, Ukrainian officials arrested two Russian soldiers who tried to cross the border to mainland Ukraine at Chongar checkpoint. Russia accused Ukraine of abduction, whereas Ukraine declared that the soldiers had previously served as Ukrainian servicemen before the Russian annexation of Crimea, and were therefore put under criminal investigations.

Ukraine and Russia launched military exercises on or near the Crimean peninsula on various occasions. For instance, Russia held military drills from September 5 to September 10 in its Southern Military District, which includes Crimea. Ukraine, on December 1, carried out missile tests 30 km off the Crimean west coast. As a consequence, Russia put its air force on high alert and sent warships to the coastline.

On June 17, the EU extended its sanctions against Crimea for another year. On November 14, the ICC classified the situation in Crimea as an international armed conflict and an ongoing occupation by Russia. Two days later, Russia declared the withdrawal of its signature from the founding statute of the ICC. bew

SERBIA (KOSOVO – OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Vetevendosje et al. vs. Kosovar government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and subnational predominance between opposition parties and the government in the Republic of Kosovo, over which Serbia continued to claim authority, persisted [→ Serbia (Kosovo)]. Since the Kosovar government signed an accord with Serbia regarding Serb minority rights as well as a border agreement with Montenegro in August 2015, opposition parties led by Albanian nationalist party Vetevendosje repeatedly engaged in violent demonstrations and disrupted parliamentary sessions in the capital Pristina.

On January 9, several thousand anti-government protesters clashed with police at a demonstration in Pristina against the agreement with the Serb minority. Protesters threw petrol bombs as well as stones, and set fire to the seat of the government, resulting in 26 injured. The police arrested 40 protesters. On February 17, opposition parties organized a nonviolent protest in Pristina, demanding the government's resignation and snap elections. They issued an ultimatum to the government to resign by February 27. On February 19, opposition MPs disrupted the first parliamentary session of the year by releasing tear gas within the chamber. On February 23, members of the opposition coalition set up tents opposite of the government building in support of their on-going demand for early elections.

Three days later, amidst the presidential election, around 2,500 protesters threw Molotov cocktails, rocks, and bottles filled with paint on the parliament and police officers, reportedly leaving 21 police officers wounded. The police used tear gas and water cannons to dissolve the protest camps. During the election, oppositional MPs released tear gas inside the parliament. On March 10, opposition lawmakers disrupted a parliamentary session dealing with the agreement with Serbia and Montenegro, by directing laser light at a minister, throwing water at Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, and releasing tear gas. On April 7, Kosovo's former premier Hashim Thaci was sworn in as president. Opposition parties boycotted the ceremony, while their supporters wounded a police officer with tear gas in the capital. Police detained half a dozen opposition supporters. On May 14, hundreds of protesters rallied in Pristina, declaring the agreements with Serbia and Montenegro unconstitutional and demanding the government to resign.

On August 4, two unidentified motorcyclists fired a RPG at the government building when the parliament was due to vote on a border deal with neighboring Montenegro. Additionally, explosives were found on the roof of a house belonging to the head of the Ad Hoc Commission for Reviewing the Border Demarcation Between Kosovo and Montenegro. On August 9, an opposition MP used tear gas to disrupt the work of the Commission, while activists hurled stones at the govern-

ment building. On August 30, six members of Vetevendosje were arrested on suspicion of being behind the August 4 attack. On November 6, opposition activist Astrit Dehari died in the prison of Prizren. This caused a widespread public outcry. On November 8, thousands attended his funeral and hundreds marched through Pristina, blaming the government for his death. iti

SPAIN (BASQUE PROVINCES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1959

Conflict parties: EH-Bildu, ETA, PNV vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The dispute over secession between Basque parties, such as Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu), and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

After his release from a six-year prison term on March 1, the former leader of the illegal party Batasuna, Arnaldo Ortega, announced to fight for independence of Basque Country within the following 18 months by running in regional elections on September 23. However, Spanish law banned him from serving as a politician due to his former prison sentence.

On June 5, secessionist organization Gure Esku Dago held a non-official independence referendum in 34 municipalities, resulting in 94 percent votes in favor. However, the municipalities only host 20 percent of the Basque population.

In the regional parliamentary election on September 25, EH Bildu turned out second strongest receiving 21 percent of the votes. The results allowed them to pursue a parliamentary majority for another referendum in combination with other minor parties. In a response, the government ruled out any possibility to accept the result.

On October 15, at least 40 Basque people allegedly attacked and wounded two police officers off duty and their spouses in a bar in Alsasua, Navarre province. Immediately, Basque nationalist movement Ospa Mugimendua claimed that the police officers had started the fight. On November 14, civil guards arrested nine men in relation for the attack. On November 20, the criminal court of Spain, Audiencia Nacional, announced that the case will be investigated as a terrorist crime. On November 22, Basque President Uxue Barkos denied any possibility of terrorism, while his secretary added that the police officers should leave the province. On November 23, spokesperson of EH Bildu, Maddalen Iriarte, called again for a referendum in 2018. pme

SPAIN (CATALAN NATIONALISTS / CATALONIA)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Catalan regional government (Together for Yes), CUP, Civil Organizations (ANC, AMI, Omnium Cultural et al.) vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The dispute over secession between the Catalan regional government and the Spanish national government continued. On January 11, the Catalan regional parliament elected President Carles Puigdemont, who announced to continue with the political course of his predecessor, Artur Mas, to run for independence in the second half of 2017. Immediately, President of Spanish central government, Mariano Rajoy, denied any possibility of separation.

On July 27, Catalan parliament parties Together for Yes – a coalition of Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC), Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) and others -, and Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP) voted for unilateral secession from Spain. Subsequently, members of the opposition left the hall and abstained from the vote.

On August 1, the Spanish Constitutional Court abolished the resolution of an independence process in Catalonia. The judges issued a warning to impose sanctions in case of a insubordination of Catalan regional government. As a result of this decision, Spanish Central Government prosecuted Carme Forcadell, President of Catalan regional parliament, for not preventing the vote.

On September 11, hundreds of thousands of Catalans demonstrated for independence on the Catalan National Holiday in five cities with support of civil society and the organizations National Catalan Assembly (ANC) and Omnium Cultural.

On September 29, Puigdemont passed the vote of confidence in Catalan parliament and announced to hold a referendum in September 2017. Furthermore, he stated that Catalan regional government would form their own tax office, social insurance, and legal transitional provisions for a new constitution. On November 15, according to police reports, up to 80,000 people protested in Barcelona, Catalonia state, the legal charges being pressed against Catalan political authorities, such as mayor of the town of Berga, Montserrat Venturós, and Joan Coma, councillor of Vic.

On December 6, the Association of Municipalities for Independence (AMI) successfully called for mayors and councillors of 300 Catalan cities to work during Spain's Constitution Day, which is a national holiday. pme

SWEDEN (XENOPHOBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: xenophobes, Soldiers of Odin, Swedish Resistance Movement, Nordic Resistance Movement 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 Soldiers of Odin and several xenophobic actors, such as the Swedish Resistance Movement (SRM), on the one hand, and the Swedish government, supported by pro-asylum activists, on the other, continued.

Although the government took a sharp turn regarding the asylum policies by cutting financial and other assistance for immigrants, restricting visa issuances, and introducing border controls between Denmark and Sweden in January, xenophobes conducted more than 20 arson attacks and other assaults on refugee accommodations, mosques, schools, and further facilities, frequently visited by immigrants. For instance on January 17, right-wing activist Andreas Persson set fire to a mosque in Borås, Västra Götalands district. Describing the attack as racially motivated, the district court sentenced Persson to three years in prison. However, most of the incidents remained unsolved, with no one claiming responsibility.

Throughout the year, the far-right organization Soldiers of Odin, supported by SRM and other xenophobic actors, patrolled several times in major cities. On January 30, following the death of social worker Alexandra Mezher, who was killed by a 15-year-old immigrant from Somalia, a group of up to 100 masked xenophobes marched through the capital Stockholm. While handing out leaflets announcing further violence against refugees, the groups attacked immigrants and police officers, leaving several persons injured. Subsequently, members of SRM claimed that the city of Stockholm had been cleaned up. Police detained 14 suspects, accusing them of assault and hate speech. Moreover, a special police force was set up to stop violent marches by vigilante groups.

In the course of the year, right-wing organizations, such as the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement, held both authorized and unauthorized demonstrations in several districts, especially in Stockholm, protesting against the asylum policies. On November 12, approx. 600 right-wing demonstrators marched through the city of Stockholm, leaving five detained and at least two persons injured in clashes between demonstrators, left-wing and pro-asylum activists, and police forces. Xenophobia, and asylum and immigration policies were the objects of several debates on the national level. For instance on October 10, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven called the right-wing party Sweden Democrats Nazis and racists during a TV debate. During a conference in London, organized by the British UKIP party, on November 12, leader of the Sweden Democrats' youth wing, Tobias Andersson, stated that immigrants would steal and attack women. On December 20, Lotta Persson, spokesperson of the Swedish Agency for Youth

and Civil Society, announced that the state would withdraw its financial support for the Sweden Democrats' Youth group Young Swedes CDU for 2017. tfr

TURKEY – ARMENIA

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Turkey vs. Armenia

Conflict items: international power, other

The dispute between Turkey and Armenia over international power and Turkey's refusal to refer to the mass killings of Armenians during the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1917 as genocide continued.

On the commemoration of the 101st anniversary of the mass killings on April 24, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan declared that the country will not allow another "Armenian genocide." Moreover, Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan underlined that only through recognition of the genocide by the international community future genocides could be prevented. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan commemorated the killed Armenians as well. However, he stated that Armenians "politicize history through a bitter rhetoric of hate and enmity".

On June 2, German parliament voted to label the killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks as genocide and acknowledged Germany's accountability, prompting Turkey to recall its ambassador Hüseyin Avni Karslioglu. Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim called the German decision a mistake, while Armenia's Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian welcomed the resolution.

During a visit to Armenia in late June, Pope Francis repeated his statement from 2015, describing the mass killings as genocide. In response, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli accused the Pope of reproducing "the mentality of the Crusades".

On July 12, President Sargsyan said that Armenians had never blamed Turkish people and that he was positive about a future recognition by Turkey. Throughout the year, several countries discussed the recognition or prepared corresponding legislation. For instance, in late September, the Israeli government stated that they could not recognize the genocide. In contrast, Egypt as well as Syria prepared draft resolutions to condemn the mass killings as genocide. Ira

UKRAINE (CRIMEAN TATARS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: Crimean Tatars vs. Crimean regional government, Russia, pro-Russian activists

Conflict items: autonomy

The non-violent crisis over autonomy between the Muslim minority group Crimean Tatars, on the one hand, and the Crimean regional government, pro-Russian activists, and Rus-

sia, on the other, continued.

The UN and several human rights organizations criticized the human rights situation, particularly with regard to the situation of the Crimean Tatars, on various occasions. Their right of self-determination, for instance, was further restricted. On March 13, Crimean authorities declared the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, an executive and representative institution of the community, an extremist organization and banned its activity in Crimea and Russia. On May 26, Crimea's Supreme Court ratified this decision, which was confirmed by Russia's Supreme Court on September 29. On May 12, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) arrested Ilmi Umerov, a deputy chairman of the Mejlis, who was accused of making "public calls and actions aimed at undermining the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation." Moreover, at least eleven Crimean Tatars were arrested for their membership in the Hizb-ut-Tahrir organization, which is illegal under Russian, but not Ukrainian law.

On several occasions, groups of Crimean Tatars were subjected to temporary detentions. On April 1, armed and masked men stormed a café in Pionerske, destroyed furniture and temporarily detained 35 Crimean Tatars. In addition, security forces stormed a mosque in Molodizhne and arrested around 100 people on May 6. The police released them after a few hours of interrogation. On March 7, the Simferopol city administration prohibited all public rallies and events not organized by the authorities, thereby further restricting the freedom of assembly of minorities, including the Crimean Tatar community.

Abductions of Crimean Tatars allegedly due to political motivations continued in 2016. On May 24, a group of men abducted Crimean Tatar activist Ervin Ibragimov in front of his house in Bakhchysarai. The UN repeatedly called on Crimean authorities to investigate this and similar cases in previous years, but to date no one was held accountable. bew

Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine.

According to the UN, 9,758 people were killed and 22,779 injured since the beginning of the conflict in April 2014 until early December this year. This year, 83 civilians were killed and 305 injured as a result of shelling and mine explosions, marking a notable decrease compared to last year. The number of fatalities was significantly higher in LPR and DPR than in government-controlled territories. Unlike previous years, the Ukrainian Armed Forces (ZSU) did not lose territories to the militants and retook positions in the area of Svitlodarsk, Donetsk oblast, in December. The government reported that 211 soldiers were killed and approx. 1,300 injured in 2016, while at least 100 militants were killed. Reportedly, between 488 and 1,376 people went missing. Approx. 106,000 inhabitants were internally displaced, significantly less than in the two previous years. Furthermore, residential areas and infrastructure were heavily damaged. Civilians suffered from restrictions of freedom of movement and speech, as well as lack of food, water, energy, and shelter. International organizations highlighted that the humanitarian situation remained serious and held both sides accountable. In addition, eleven convoys, allegedly transporting humanitarian aid from Russia, arrived in Donbas. Like in earlier years, the government accused Russia of supplying DPR and LPR with weapons [→ Russia – Ukraine].

Throughout the year, both sides blamed each other for committing war crimes, breaking the ceasefires, and using weapons banned under the terms of the Minsk II Agreement. The parties agreed on several ceasefires, which both sides violated frequently. From the second half of January onward, ceasefire violations and fighting intensified until the end of March. For instance, on February 16, SMM counted 159 explosions, 37 bursts, and 127 single shots at the railway station in Donetsk, eponymous oblast. In Luhansk oblast, SMM reported 49 explosions. On February 22, SMM observed a total of 794 ceasefire violations in Donetsk oblast. Two days later, the monitoring mission recorded 91 undetermined explosions, 190 bursts of small arms, and machine gunfire on their position at the railway station in Donetsk. On March 1, three soldiers were killed and two wounded when their car hit an anti-personnel mine near the villages of Novotoshivske, Luhansk oblast. Despite regular ceasefire violations, the number of casualties remained relatively low in the first three months of the year.

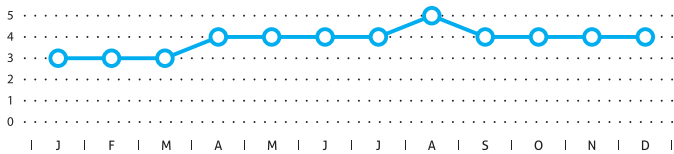
Violence, however, increased in April. On April 14, SMM recorded over 4,000 ceasefire violations, among them 500 explosions in the Avdiivka-Yasynuvata areas, Donetsk oblast. On April 27, four civilians were killed in shellings from 122 mm artillery at the DPR checkpoint near Olenivka, Donetsk oblast. Two days later, the Trilateral Contact Group consisting of representatives of Russia, Ukraine, and the OSCE agreed on a ceasefire during the Orthodox Easter weekend, starting from April 30. The same night, ZSU forces clashed with DPR and LPR militants in different locations in Donetsk oblast, which left two militants and one soldier dead as well as seven soldiers wounded. On May 23, seven soldiers were killed and nine wounded by shellings and IEDs, marking the highest number of fatalities since autumn 2015. Four days later, an SMM drone was shot down over DPR-controlled Ozerianivka, Donetsk oblast. At least eight soldiers were killed and twelve injured in clashes near Donetsk and Mariupol on May 29 and

UKRAINE (DONBAS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2014

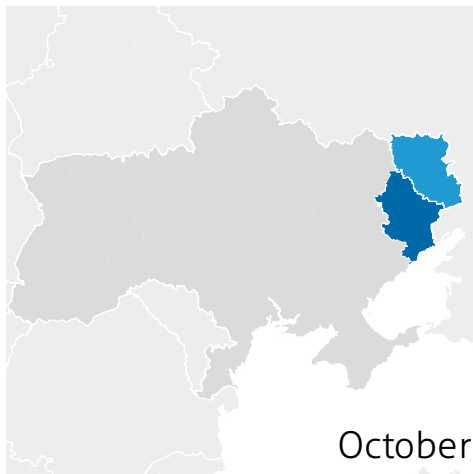
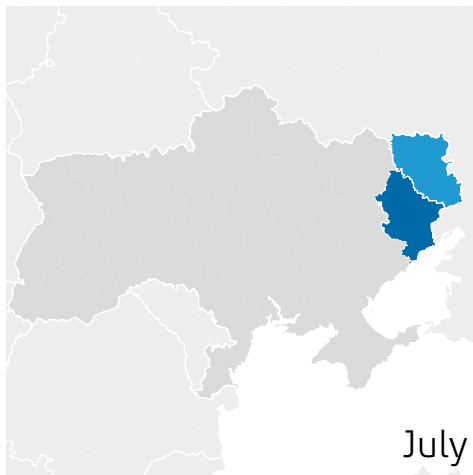
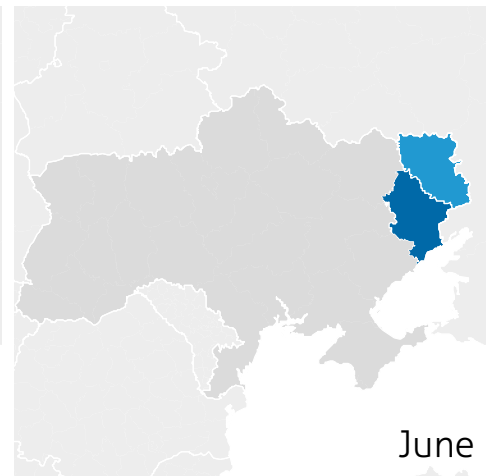
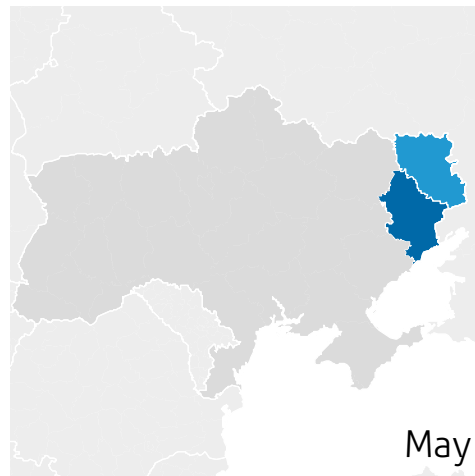
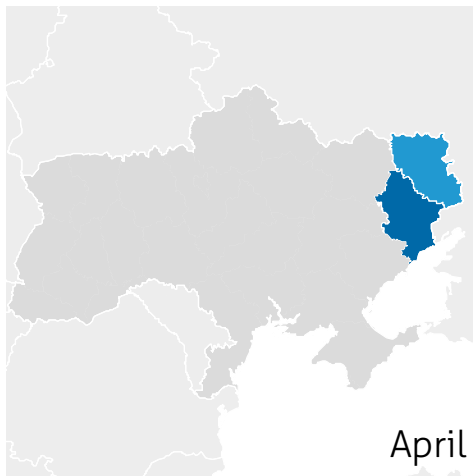
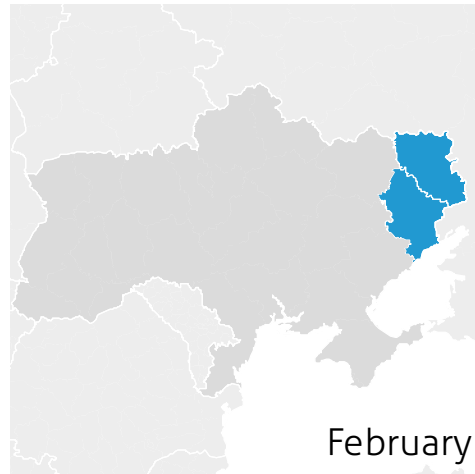
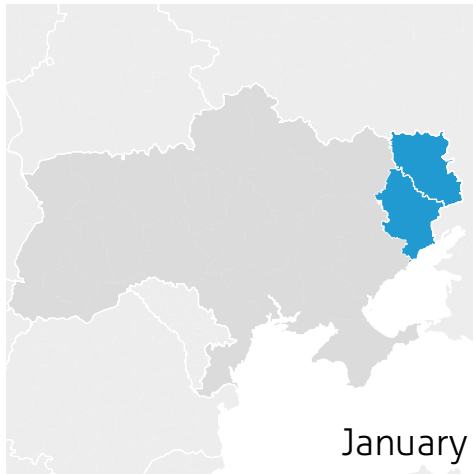
Conflict parties: DPR, LPR vs. government, Volunteer battalions

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources



The war over secession, the orientation of the political system, and resources in the Donbas region between several militant anti-government groups, including the self-proclaimed Donetsk (DPR) and Luhansk (LPR) People's Republics supported by Russia, on the one hand, and the Ukrainian government, supported by Western countries, as well as more than ten mostly nationalist volunteer battalions, on the other, continued. The affected region was comprised of Donetsk and

UKRAINE (DONBAS)



NO VIOLENT CONFLICT MEASURES VIOLENT CRISIS LIMITED WAR WAR

Projection: Europe Albers Equal Area Conic

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On May 29, clashes between ZSU and militants near Donetsk and Mariupol left three soldiers dead and eight wounded.

Hostilities further intensified from June onwards. For instance, on July 23, a mortar fire exchange killed six soldiers as well as at least seven militants and wounded 13 soldiers, according to government sources. On August 7, LPR leader Igor Plotnitsky was wounded by an IED attached to his car in the city of Luhansk, eponymous oblast. Plotnitsky accused the government of being responsible, while the latter denied any involvement. On August 26, the Trilateral Contact Group proposed a renewed ceasefire to be implemented from September 1. Despite ongoing ceasefire violations, the truce was widely respected and violence significantly decreased in the first two weeks of September. However, on September 12, the military accused LPR and DPR of repeatedly using heavy weapons and attacking Ukrainian positions in Luhansk oblast, which allegedly left two soldiers dead. In turn, militants blamed the ZSU for using heavy weaponry and shelling residential areas near the city of Donetsk.

Militant and government forces continued to clash near the government-controlled city of Avdiivka and militant-controlled Yasynuvata as well as north and east of Mariupol, which resulted in a renewed peak in hostilities by mid-November.

Starting from mid-December, the OSCE again recorded a sharp increase in ceasefire violations. Heavy fightings began on December 18, with SMM recording 2,900 explosions from 12 mm artillery, tanks, and Multiple Launch Rocket Systems near government-controlled Svitlodarsk and DPR-controlled Debaltseve, Donetsk oblast. The same day, the government reported a militant attempt to advance into Svitlodarsk. ZSU repelled the attacks, but later reported that seven soldiers were killed and 25 wounded. The militants, in turn, accused ZSU of attacking Debaltseve with heavy artillery. On December 22, militants reported an attempt by 50 soldiers to break through to the village of Kalinovka, located near Debaltseve, while ZSU reported that dozens of its soldiers were wounded in shellings. From December 18 to 23, fightings continued in this area, leaving eight soldiers dead and approx. 30 wounded. Militants reported four fighters killed and two wounded, whereas ZSU claimed it had killed 18 and wounded at least 38.

SMM visited bases of both sides almost daily throughout the year, monitoring the compliance with Minsk II concerning the withdrawal of heavy weapons. On several occasions, both sides hindered SMM from examining arsenals or delayed access. SMM repeatedly reported that the sites as well as the movements of weapons were not in compliance with the withdrawal lines.

Throughout the year, both conflict parties undertook diplomatic steps. On January 19, security advisor of the German chancellor, Christoph Heusgen, and diplomatic advisor of the French president, Jacques Audibert, visited the capital Kiev to discuss the implementation of the Minsk II Agreement. For the same reason, US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met in Zurich, Switzerland, one day later. On April 20, the first NATO-Russia Council since mid-2014 took place in Brussels, Belgium. Four days later, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and US President Barack Obama discussed the ceasefire in Donbas region

during a bilateral meeting in Hanover, Germany. On April 27, US Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland visited Ukraine. On May 11, the Normandy Format composed of the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany, met in the German capital Berlin to discuss solutions to the conflict. The parties agreed on the creation of demilitarized zones in militant-controlled areas and other security measures in Donbas. Local elections were discussed without reaching an agreement. On June 14, Andriy Parubiy, speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, stated that Ukraine pursued NATO membership and called upon NATO to respond to Russian aggression. One week later, the EU decided to extend economic sanctions against Russia until the end of January 2017.

Throughout the year, constitutional amendments and local elections in Donbas were discussed frequently. With regard to the status of the Donbas Region, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko stated on June 28 that increased decentralization could only be considered after a full and stable ceasefire, including disarmament of militant units. On August 4, the Speaker of the Parliament of DPR, Denis Pushilin, accused the Ukrainian government of not complying with the Minsk II Agreement and warned of further escalations.

On August 13, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, urged Ukraine and Russia to engage in the implementation of Minsk II and emphasized her support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Four days later, Poroshenko asked the EU and the OSCE for more international presence in Donbas. On September 1, the foreign ministers of the OSCE member countries met in Potsdam, Germany, to discuss, among other things, the settlement of the conflict in Ukraine. Obama and Putin debated the same topic during the G20 summit in Hangzhou, PRC, on September 4 and 5. Two days later, the so-called Weimar Triangle consisting of the foreign ministers of Poland, France, and Germany met in Weimar, Germany, and appealed to the international community to intensify efforts to de-escalate the situation. On September 14, the foreign ministers of Ukraine, France, and Germany met in Kiev in order to promote a peace deal. One week later, the Trilateral Contact Group agreed on the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the settlements of Petrovske in Donetsk as well as Zolote and Stanytsya Luhanska in Luhansk to create security zones. Whereas forces disengaged from Petrovske and Zolote in October and November, withdrawal of forces from Stanytsya Luhanska did not take place. On October 19 and November 29, the Normandy Format deliberated on the situation in eastern Ukraine.

The investigation concerning the MH17 flight shot down by a missile launcher on 7/17/2014 continued. On May 3, the journalist group Bellingcat published a report that linked the missile launcher to the Russian 53rd air defense brigade. The final report of an international investigation led by the Netherlands was published on September 28. It stated that a missile component had been found at the downing site on June 6, and that the corresponding missile system had been moved from Russia to Donbas and returned to Russia the same night. mso, okl

UKRAINE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

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

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political and socioeconomic system between the Opposition Bloc (OB) and various opposition groups, on the one hand, and the government of President Petro Poroshenko, on the other, continued. Throughout the year, militants conducted approx. 30 violent attacks, especially in the oblasts of Dnipropetrovsk and Kiev, killing three persons and leaving several injured. Attacks mostly targeted individuals, such as MPs, city councilors, and political activists, but also offices of government parties, banks, and private property. For instance, on February 16, Dnipropetrovsk City Council and member of OB, Oleh Hryhoruk, was injured by several people. However, most incidents remained unsolved, with no one claiming responsibility. While governmental representatives labelled the majority of attacks as acts of terrorism, allegedly conducted to jeopardise political stability, OB repeatedly blamed the government for repression, insufficient protection of freedom of speech, and failing the investigations.

Furthermore, alleged pro-government militants, including several right-wing nationalists [→ Ukraine (right-wing militants)], acted against oppositional and Russian media on several occasions. For instance, on February 25, a group of up to 50 persons from the social movement Azov Civil Corps protested in front of the Inter TV office in Kiev, blocking the entrance for two hours. On April 1, the OSCE reported an arson attack on the office of the TV channel Konotop in Sumy, in the eponymous oblast. On May 24, a journalist of the TV channel Hromadske, Anatoly Ostapenko, was injured in the city of Zaporizhzhya, in the eponymous oblast, when three men attacked him. On July 20, the independent journalist, Pavel Sheremet, known for his criticism of political authorities and anti-corruption investigations, was killed by an IED mounted to his car in the city of Kyiv. Moreover, on September 4, around 20 protesters gathered outside the Inter TV office in the city of Kyiv, demanding a change of the editorial policies as well as the dismissal of the Deputy Director Ihor Shuvalov. Moreover, they hurled smoke bombs into the office. Authorities of the Foreign Ministry of Russia condemned the attack, calling on Poroshenko to investigate the circumstances [→ Russia – Ukraine]. On several occasions, Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, expressed concern about the developments in Ukraine.

In the course of the year, the government continued to pursue judicial and executive action against oppositional groups, media, and parties as well as supporters of the former government of then-President Viktor Yanukovich, and alleged pro-Russian activists. On January 25, the Supreme Court of Ukraine overturned an appeal of the banned Communist Party of Ukraine to challenge the Decommunization Law, allowing the government to continue prohibiting Communist and National Socialist ideology and their symbols. Consequently,

on February 4, the Ukrainian parliament adopted a resolution to rename one district, five towns, including the fourth-largest city of Ukraine, Dnipropetrovsk, and 169 villages. On June 30, police arrested former Communist MP, Alla Aleksandrovska, on charges of terrorism, violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and attempted bribing of MPs. Furthermore, one month later, police detained Oleksandr Yefremov, ex-member of Yanukovich's former Party of Region, on similar charges. Subsequently, OB criticized the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and the General Prosecutor, demanding a thorough investigation.

Furthermore, the government enforced measures against oppositional and Russian media [→ Russia – Ukraine]. For instance, on February 24, authorities expelled and banned Russian journalist Maria Stolyarova from entering the country for up to three years due to alleged threats to national security. On April 20, Poroshenko signed the law on cinema, tightening restrictions on the distribution and broadcast of audio-visual material. Social groups as well as the OSCE criticized that the amendment would allow a ban of all Russian films produced or released since the beginning of 2014. On April 26, Ukrainian authorities revoked the work permit of Savik Shuster, host of a political TV show in which guests could rate the government.

A political reformation within the Ukrainian parliament occurred in the first half of the year, when former prime minister Arseny Yatseniuk had resigned after accusations of still being involved in corruption. For the same reason, several parties, including the Fatherland Party, left the governing coalition, led by Bloc Petro Poroshenko and the People's Front.

Concerning the 2014 Maidan killings, the 2014 Odessa clashes, and the overthrow of the Yanukovich government, international organizations repeatedly accused the government and national law enforcement agencies of investigation failure.

For instance, on May 2, EU ambassador to Ukraine, Jan Tombinski, urged the government to carry out an independent and transparent investigation. tfr

UKRAINE (RIGHT-WING MILITANTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: Svoboda, Right Sector, Azov Battalion, National Corps vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and ideology between right-wing political parties, including National Corps, Right Sector and Svoboda, and militant groups, such as Azov Battalion, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. While attacks against government institutions and the police decreased compared to last year, right-wing militants increasingly targeted the LGBT community and other minorities.

On June 24, the Prosecutor General charged four members of the Right Sector with terrorist activities. Azov Battalion, which is also involved in the war in Donbas [→ Ukraine (Donbas)], officially created a political party, called National Corps, on

October 14. On November 21, hundreds of nationalists, including Right Sector, Azov, and other militants, burned tires, smashed windows, and threw smoke pellets on the Independence Square of the capital Kiev, eponymous oblast, to commemorate the 2014 Maidan protests. Furthermore, more than 1,000 Azov members marched through the streets of Kharkiv, eponymous oblast, shouting "glory to Ukraine" and "death to enemies" on December 12.

Right-wing militants repeatedly attacked members of the LGBT community and refugees throughout the year. During the Equality Festival in Lviv, eponymous oblast, on March 19, around 200 far-right activists harassed 70 participants by shouting "kill, kill, kill" and throwing stones at the police bus that was sent to evacuate the latter. Subsequently, Human Rights First leader Shawn Gaylord criticized the government's lack of protection for the LGBT community. Also in mid-March, residents of Yahotyn, Kiev oblast, including Azov, Right Sector, and Svoboda militants, threw eggs at Ukrainian State Migration Service officers as well as UN representatives and human rights activists during the opening ceremony of a refugee centre. On June 12, Right Sector and other right-wing activists issued "bloodbath" threats to participants of the LGBT event KyivPride. On October 18, 50 nationalists, including Azov and Right Sector, injured two participants of an LGBT film event in Chernivtsi, Chernivtsi oblast. afo

UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS / SCOTLAND)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: SNP, Scottish regional government vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The non-violent crisis between the Scottish regional government, formed by the Scottish National Party (SNP), and the British government over the secession of Scotland from the United Kingdom (UK) de-escalated to a dispute. The conflict mainly revolved around the referendum regarding the leave of the UK from the EU, the so-called Brexit.

The SNP won the regional elections on May 4, gaining 63 of the 129 seats in the Scottish Parliament. After SNP chairwoman Nicola Sturgeon had rejected a coalition on May 6, the SNP formed a minority government. Concerning the Brexit Referendum in June, Sturgeon had stated repeatedly that a pro-Brexit vote would trigger a new Independence referendum.

After the pro-Brexit decision, Sturgeon spoke of a "democratic outrage" and raised the possibility of a second referendum. On July 15, newly elected PM Theresa May, leader of the Conservative Party, visited Scotland and called for unity in the Brexit talks. Sturgeon, however, stated that remaining in the European Single Market would be a crucial interest for Scotland. Consequently, Sturgeon announced a second referendum to be held in the next two years at the annual SNP meeting in the Scottish city of Glasgow on October 13, and introduced a draft bill for the referendum one week later. Both the UK Labour Party and the government criticized this

immediately.

In Scotland, secessionist and anti-Brexit groups staged several protests. Moreover, a dozen activists maintained the pro-Independence protest camp in front of the Scottish Parliament.

After the protesters had lost a court appeal in late October, court officers evicted the camp on November 5. On December 17, a panel of civil judges ordered the campers to pay a fine of approx. USD 130,500.

csc

USA, EU ET AL. – RUSSIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: USA, EU et al. vs. Russia
Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

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

In the course of the year, the US, the EU, especially the UK, France, and Germany, and Canada accused Russia of provoking a "new cold war" with rhetoric and deterring strategies, and vice versa. However, both sides repeatedly claimed that they did not want an escalation.

On several occasions, the Russian Armed Forces carried out military manoeuvres. For instance, on April 13, a Russian Su-24 fighter jet simulated attacks against the US Navy destroyer USS Donald Cook. Five days later, on April 18, a Russian fighter jet intercepted a US RC135U spy plane that operated in international airspace. Furthermore, Russia violated the airspace of NATO member states repeatedly over the course of the year, for example in Estonia on May 5 [→ Russia – Estonia]. Regarding the Russian intervention in Crimea, Ukraine, the EU continued sanctions against Russia, such as travel bans and financial account suspensions as well as on economic relations [→ Russia-Ukraine (Crimea)]. On July 1, the EU Council decided to prolong the economic sanctions until 2017, while Russia responded with a continuation of its ban on EU's agricultural products. Because of the unchanged situation in the Ukraine, the EU extended its sanctions again on December 15. Throughout the year, NATO positioned various defence systems in and deployed troops to Eastern Europe, further increasing the tensions between the two sides. On May 10, NATO stationed a SM-2 missile defence system at Deveselu military airport, Romania.

A few days later, NATO held a series of interlinked manoeuvres, "Dragoon Ride II" from May 31 to June 22, "Saber Strike 16" from May 22 to June 22, and "Anaconda 2016" from June 7 to 16. The NATO member states staged "Anaconda 2016," which involved 31,000 troops and numerous ground and air based weapon systems from 24 countries, as a reaction to a Russian maneuver in 2015 that had involved 95,000 troops. However, Dmitry Peskov, spokesperson of the Russian presi-

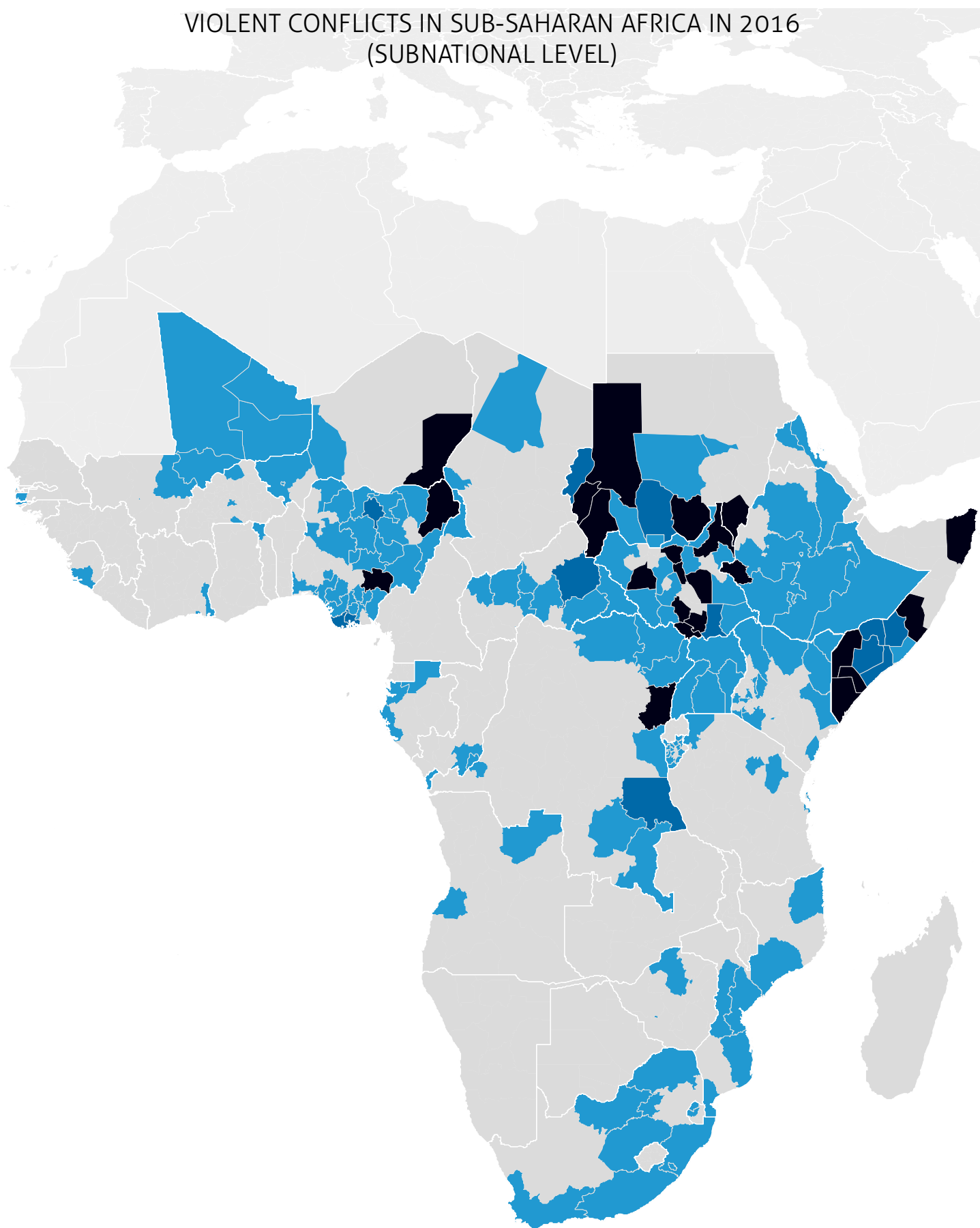
EUROPE

dent, declared that "Anaconda 2016" would pose a threat to Russian security and leading to a "deficit in trust regarding the relations with the west." Subsequently, Russia sent 30,000 troops to its western border and deployed S-400 surface-to-air missile defence system at Crimea on August 13. Amid heightened tensions, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the manoeuvres "unfriendly actions of the USA", and responded with suspending the nuclear disarmament of Russia

on October 3. Nine days later, Russia sent Iskander medium-range missiles with nuclear-warhead capacity to Kaliningrad, the Western Russian enclave, and conducted a test of submarine based ballistic missiles with nuclear-warhead capacity. In return, the US accused Russia of violating the "Treaty on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces" (INF) of 1987, and called for meeting the INF special verification commission. tcr

Sub-Saharan Africa

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IN 2016 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



INTENSITY

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

Projection: Africa Albers Equal Area Conic

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The number of conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa (94) increased by one in 2016, accounting for nearly a quarter of the world's political conflicts. More than one third of the world's highly violent conflicts took place in Sub-Saharan Africa. A new conflict erupted between opposition parties and the government of Gambia [→ Gambia (opposition)]. The number of limited wars decreased from ten to seven, while the number of full-scale wars decreased from nine to seven. The war between Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the inter-communal violence in Sudan de-escalated to the level of a limited war [→ Central African Republic (anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka); Sudan (inter-communal violence)].

The war between Boko Haram and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger continued for the sixth consecutive year, while compared to 2015, the number of conflict-related deaths declined by 75 percent to 3,000 [Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)]. Especially in Nigeria's neighboring countries, a significant decrease of the group's activities was observed. Although the Nigerian government under President Muhammadu Buhari repeatedly claimed to have defeated Boko Haram, the group continued to conduct large-scale attacks. Furthermore, the conflict between the ruling All Progressives Congress and the People's Democratic Party escalated to a limited war, when several elections on the gubernatorial and local level were accompanied by violent confrontations between supporters of both sides [→ Nigeria (northerners – southerners)]. The war over arable land in Nigeria's Middle Belt between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other, continued [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)].

In Mali, the autonomy conflict between the Coordination of Movements of Azawad and the government de-escalated to a non-violent crisis [→ Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad)]. Throughout the year, both sides repeatedly held talks, but the implementation of the June 2015 peace agreement advanced slowly due to inter-militant rivalries in the north [→ Mali (inter-militant rivalry)]. Moreover, compared to the previous year, the number of violent confrontations between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its affiliated groups, on the one hand, and Malian and international forces, on the other, decreased, accounting for at least 80 deaths [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)]. Nevertheless, in late June, the UNSC authorized the deployment of 2,500 additional troops to MINUSMA, thereby increasing its strength to more than 10,000. Furthermore, AQIM carried out attacks in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Côte d'Ivoire.

In Gambia, a new conflict between the opposition, led by the United Democratic Party (UDP), and the government under President Yahya Jammeh erupted when UDP-organized protests for electoral reforms were cracked down by the police in April and May [→ Gambia (opposition)]. Further violent opposition conflicts were observed in Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

In the Horn of Africa, the war between the Islamist group al-Shabaab and the Somali and Kenyan governments continued [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)]. As in previous years, al-Shabaab frequently attacked governmental and civilian targets in Somalia as well as neighboring Kenya, attempting to gain territory. This was countered by joint forces from Somalia and the African Union, with no conflict party making significant progress. In Galgaduud state, the militant group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a gained control over the towns of Dushamarreb and Gur'iel [→ Somalia (ASWJ)].

In the northern region of Somalia, the violent border conflict between the autonomous region of Puntland, the self-declared Republic of Somaliland, and Khatumo State continued [→ Somalia (Khatumo State – Puntland – Somaliland)]. Inter-clan violence in the central regions of Hiiraan and Lower Shabelle continued as violent crises, while the government and local clan elders undertook efforts to stop the fighting, reaching agreements in both conflicts [→ Somalia (Habr Gedir – Biymal/ Lower Shabelle); Somalia (Hawadle – Surre/ Hiiraan)]. In Kenya, inter-communal violence was less severe than in the previous years. At the same time, tensions between the opposition and the government turned violent [→ Kenya (opposition)].

In Ethiopia, anti-government protests increased, with hundreds of thousands of protesters nationwide [→ Ethiopia (opposition)]. Moreover, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) continued to attack government forces in Oromiya and Ogaden Regions, respectively [→ Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya); Ethiopia (ONLF / Ogaden)].

Sudan and South Sudan continued to be highly affected by violence. However, the number of wars in the area decreased by one to four. The war in South Sudan between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/A) and its opposition faction SPLM/A-In-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) continued, intensifying in the second half of the year after clashes had re-erupted in the capital Juba [→ South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. Fighting between the two groups took on an increasingly ethnic dimension, with the UN and other international organizations warning of the possibility of a genocide. In Sudan, the wars in Darfur and the so-called "Two Areas" of Blue Nile and South Kordofan continued [→ Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. As in previous years, the government under President Omar al-Bashir conducted large-scale operations against the armed groups in those peripheral regions, also targeting civilian areas. In the Nuba Mountains of Blue Nile State, government forces allegedly used chemical weapons. Meanwhile, the conflict concerning inter-communal violence in Sudan's conflict-affected regions de-escalated to a limited war in the context of attempts by the local administration to establish conflict solving mechanisms [→ Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. The Sudanese government continued to strictly control access to the conflict areas. In both Sudan and South Sudan, ongoing highly violent conflicts led to a severe food crisis. The three UN-led missions UNMISS, UNISFA, and UNAMID were extended and continued to operate in South Sudan, Abyei, and Darfur.

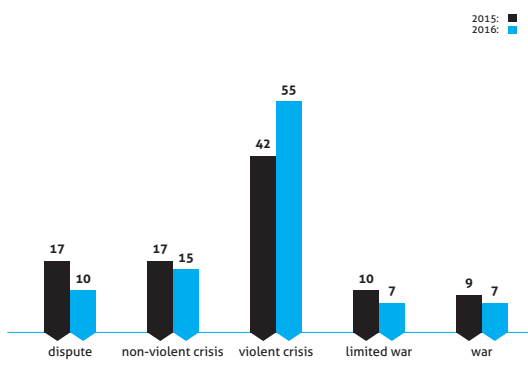
The war between Anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka groups in the CAR de-escalated to a limited war for the first time since 2012. Faustin Archange Touadera was elected as the new President in February and the last round of legislative elections were held in May. Throughout the country, violence decreased especially between January and May, increasing again in October and November. Four limited wars continued in the eastern Provinces of the DR Congo, while three de-escalated to violent crises. Kata Katanga rebel leader Gédeon Mutanga surrendered with about 100 of his fighters in October, while Congolese authorities arrested Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) deputy commander Léopold Muijambere in May [→ DR Congo (Kata Katanga); DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. Throughout the year, militant groups continued to attack civilians. Allied

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

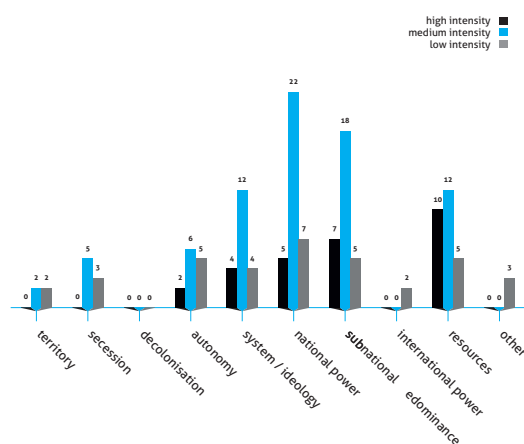
Democratic Forces (ADF) fighters were accused of being responsible for most of the killings of civilians in Beni Territory [→ DR Congo (ADF)]. Violent protests against President Joseph Kabila intensified [→ DR Congo (opposition)]. In October, presidential elections, scheduled for November 2016, were postponed to April 2018. However, in late December, the opposition and the government agreed on holding presidential elections in the following year. The conflict between various opposition groups and the government of President Pierre Nkurunziza in Burundi de-escalated to a violent crisis after the flare-up in 2015 [→ Burundi (opposition)]. Throughout the year, numerous mass graves were discovered that opposition members attributed to killings allegedly committed by the government in December 2015. However, the latter claimed that the dead were their own supporters who had been killed by armed opposition members. Moreover, grenade attacks, politically motivated killings, and abductions continued, leaving dozens dead. The AU and UN repeatedly suggested the deployment of a stabilizing mission, which was rejected by Nkurunziza. In Uganda, in the context of general elections that took place on February 18, the conflict between opposition groups and the government of President Yoweri Museveni intensified [→ Uganda (opposition)]. Furthermore, the conflicts in various local Kingdoms over subnational predominance, political autonomy, and resources continued [→ Uganda (Bakonzu / Rwenzururu); Uganda (Baganda / Buganda)]. In Rwenzururu Region, between February and April, ethnic groups clashed over local elections [→ Uganda (intercommunal rivalry / Rwenzururu)]. The conflict between the ethnic Bakonzu and the central government over the Bakonzu's Rwenzururu Kingdom's status of autonomy escalated to a violent crisis.

In South Africa, violent protests between the student movement #FeesMustFall and security forces continued and were rekindled in September [→ South Africa (opposition)]. Most of the country's universities were affected by the protests, with students initially demonstrating against a tuition fee increase and later for a change of the educational and political system. Moreover, violence against immigrants from mostly African countries continued, particularly lootings and destructions of immigrant-owned shops [→ South Africa (xenophobes)]. However, the anti-immigrant violence decreased in comparison to the previous year. In Angola, the conflict between the main opposition party National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the governing party Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) escalated from a dispute to a violent crisis [→ Angola (UNITA)]. Furthermore, the secession conflict over the province of Cabinda between the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave Cabinda (FLEC) and the government escalated to a violent crisis. In several clashes between FLEC members and the military, about 60 persons were killed [→ Angola (FLEC / Cabinda)]. In Tanzania, the violent crisis between the opposition parties Civic United Front (CUF) and Party for Democracy and Progress (Chadema), on the one hand, and the ruling Party of the Revolution (CCM), on the other, continued. The re-run of the nullified Zanzibar elections was accompanied by political killings [→ Tanzania (Chadema, CUF – CCM)]. In Mozambique, violence escalated between the largest opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), demanding the autonomy of the central and northern provinces of Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambezia, Nampula, and Niassa, and the government of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) [→ Mozambique (RENAMO)]. In numerous clashes between RENAMO members and security forces, 68 people were killed and approx. 6,000 civilians fled to neighboring Malawi and Zimbabwe.

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
IN 2016 COMPARED TO 2015



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
IN 2016 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Overview: Conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in 2016

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Angola (FLEC / Cabinda)*	FLEC vs. government	secession, resources	1975	↗	3
Angola (UNITA)	UNITA vs. MPLA	national power	1975	↑	3
Burkina Faso (opposition)	CDP vs. government	national power	2014	•	3
Burundi (opposition)	ADC-Ikibiri et al. vs. government	national power	2006	↘	3
Burundi – Rwanda*	Burundi vs. Rwanda	international power	2015	•	2
Burundi, DR Congo (FNL)*	FNL-Rwasa; FNL-Nzabampema vs. Burundi; DR Congo	national power, subnational predominance	2005	↘	3
Cameroon, Nigeria (militants / Bakassi)*	BSF vs. Cameroon, Nigeria	secession	2006	↑	3
Central African Republic (Anti-Balaka – ex-Séléka)	Anti-Balaka vs. ex-Séléka	national power, resources	2012	↘	4
Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda (LRA)	LRA vs. Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda	subnational predominance, resources	1987	↘	3
Chad (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1990	•	3
Chad (rebel groups)*	FPR, UFDD et al. vs. government	national power, resources	2005	↘	1
Côte d'Ivoire (militant groups)*	militant groups vs. government	national power	2012	↘	2
Côte d'Ivoire (opposition)	FPI vs. government	national power	1999	•	3
Djibouti (FRUD)*	FRUD vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	↘	2
Djibouti (opposition)*	MJO, USN vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	2
DR Congo (ADF)	ADF vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1995	•	4
DR Congo (Bantu – Batwa)	Batwa vs. Bantu vs. government	subnational predominance	2013	•	4
DR Congo (ex-M23)	ex-M23 vs. Government	subnational predominance	2004	•	3
DR Congo (Ituri militias)	FRPI vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1999	↘	3
DR Congo (Kata Katanga)*	Kata Katanga vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2011	↘	3
DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)	Mayi-Mayi groups vs. Nyatura groups vs. Raia Mutomboki vs. APCLS vs. FDLR vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2003	•	4
DR Congo (opposition)	MLC, FIS, UNC, UPDS et al. vs. government	national power	1997	•	3
DR Congo – Rwanda*	DR Congo vs. Rwanda	territory, international power	1998	•	2
DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)	FDLR vs. DR Congo, Rwanda	national power, subnational predominance, resources	1994	•	4
Equatorial Guinea – Gabon (Mbanié, Cocotier, Conga islands)*	Equatorial Guinea vs. Gabon	territory, resources	1970	•	1
Eritrea (RSADO)*	RSADO vs. government	autonomy	1999	↗	3
Ethiopia (ARDUF)*	ARDUF vs. government	autonomy	1995	↗	3
Ethiopia (OLF / Oromiya)	OLF vs. government	secession	1992	•	3
Ethiopia (ONLF / Ogaden)	ONLF vs. government	autonomy, resources	1984	•	3
Ethiopia (opposition)	Ethnic groups vs. government; government vs. Semayawi Party, MEDREK, Ginbot 7, Zone 9, OFC	system/ideology, national power	2005	•	3
Ethiopia (TPDM)	TPDM vs. government	system/ideology	2002	↗	3
Ethiopia – Egypt, Sudan (GERD)*	Ethiopia vs. Egypt, Sudan	resources	2011	•	1
Ethiopia – Eritrea*	Ethiopia vs. Eritrea	territory	1961	↑	3
Gabon (opposition)*	various opposition groups vs. government	national power	2009	•	3
Gambia (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2016	NEW	3
Guinea (opposition)	UFDG et al. vs. government	national power	2006	•	3

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Guinea-Bissau (opposition)*	PAIGC vs. PRS	system/ideology, national power	1998	↑	3
Kenya (inter-communal violence)	Pokot vs. Turkana; Samburu vs. Turkana; Degodia vs. Garre; Maasai vs. Kipsigis; Giriama vs. Orma; Pokot vs. Luhya; Maasai vs. Kisii; Ajuraan vs. Degodia et al.	subnational predominance, resources	1963	↘	3
Kenya (MRC / Coast)*	MRC vs. government	secession	2008	•	2
Kenya (Mungiki)*	Mungiki vs. government	subnational predominance	1997	↘	2
Kenya (opposition)	JP vs. ODM	national power	1999	↗	3
Mali (CMA et al. / Azawad)	CMA et al. vs. government	autonomy	1989	↘	2
Mali (inter-militant rivalry / northern Mali)	Ansar al-Din vs. HCUA, MAA, MNLA vs. GATIA vs. Ganda Izo	subnational predominance	2012	•	3
Mali (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	↗	3
Mozambique (RENAMO)	RENAMO vs. government	autonomy	2012	•	3
Niger (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	2009	•	3
Nigeria (Christians – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1960	↑	3
Nigeria (Eggon groups / Nasarawa State)*	Eggon militia (Ombatse) vs. Fulani, Alago, Agatu, Gwandara, Migili	subnational predominance	2012	↗	3
Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)	farmers vs. pastoralists	subnational predominance, resources	1960	•	5
Nigeria (Ijaw groups / Niger Delta)	Niger Delta Avengers, various Ijaw groups, MEND, IPOB vs. government, International Oil Companies in the Niger Delta	autonomy, resources	1997	•	3
Nigeria (IMN)*	IMN vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1991	•	3
Nigeria (MASSOB / Biafra)*	MASSOB vs. government	secession	1967	•	3
Nigeria (MOSOP, Ogoni / Niger Delta)*	MOSOP, Ogoni vs. government	autonomy, resources, other	1990	•	1
Nigeria (northerners – southerners)	northerners, APC supporters vs. southerners, PDP supporters	system/ideology, national power	1960	↗	4
Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger (Boko Haram)	Boko Haram vs. Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger	system/ideology	2003	•	5
Republic of Congo (Ninja militias)*	Ninja militias vs. government	subnational predominance	1993	↑	3
Republic of Congo (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. PCT	national power	2015	↘	2
Rwanda (opposition)*	DGPR, PS-Imberakuri, RDI, RDU, RNC, UDF et al. vs. government	national power	2003	•	2
Rwanda – France	Rwanda vs. France	other	2004	•	1
Senegal (MFDC / Casamance)*	MFDC vs. government	secession	1982	•	3
Sierra Leone (APC – SLPP)*	APC vs. SLPP	national power	2007	•	3
Somalia (ASWJ)*	ASWJ vs. government vs. Interim Galmudug Administration	subnational predominance	2014	•	3
Somalia (Habr Gedir – Biymal / Lower Shabelle)	Habr Gedir militias vs. Biymal militias	subnational predominance	2013	•	3
Somalia (Hawadle – Surre / Hiiraan)	Hawadle militias vs. Surre militias	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Somalia (inter-militia rivalry / Jubaland)	Hirale militias vs. Interim Jubaland Administration	subnational predominance	1991	↘	2
Somalia (Khatumo State – Puntland – Somaliland)	regional government of Somaliland vs. Khatumo State vs. autonomous region of Puntland	subnational predominance	1998	•	3
Somalia (Puntland)*	autonomous region of Puntland vs. government	autonomy	1998	•	1
Somalia (Somaliland)*	regional government of Somaliland vs. government	secession	1991	•	1

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab)	al-Shabaab vs. Somalia, Kenya	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	5
South Africa (KwaZulu – Natal)*	ANC vs. IFP, NFP	subnational predominance	1990	•	1
South Africa (opposition)	government vs. #FeesMustFall, #ZumaMustFall, township residents	system/ideology	2015	•	3
South Africa (xenophobes)	immigrants vs. xenophobes	system/ideology	1994	•	3
South Sudan (inter-communal violence)	Murle vs. Dinka vs. Nuer; Fertig; Shilluk; Karo sections et al., Toposa vs. Didinga, Gak Dinka vs. Manuer Dinka	subnational predominance, resources	2011	•	5
South Sudan (opposition)*	various opposition parties vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↘	2
South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)	SPLM/A-in-Opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	2013	•	5
South Sudan (various militias)*	Aguelek Force, Tiger Faction New Forces, Arrow Boys, South Sudan Armed Forces et al. vs.	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2011	•	3
South Sudan, Uganda (border communities)*	Kuku vs. Mandi	territory	2011	↘	2
Sudan (Darfur)	SRF, SLM-AW, SLM-MM, JEM vs. government	autonomy, resources	2003	•	5
Sudan (Eastern Front)*	Beja Congress vs. government	autonomy, resources	2005	↗	2
Sudan (inter-communal violence)	Habaniya vs. Salamat vs. Fellata vs. Massalit vs. Beni Halb, Rezeigat, vs. Ma'aliya; Awlad Raid Rezeigat vs. Zaghawa Rezeigat et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2007	↘	4
Sudan (opposition)	National Consensus Forum, student-led groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	3
Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)	SPLM/A-North vs. government	autonomy, resources	2011	•	5
Sudan – South Sudan	Sudan vs. South Sudan	territory, resources	2011	•	3
Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei)	Misseriya vs. Ngok Dinka; Misseriya Awlad Umran vs. Misseriya Awlad Saror	subnational predominance, resources	2011	•	3
Swaziland (opposition)	PODEMO, SNUS, TUCOSWA, SNAT et al. vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	•	3
Tanzania (Chadema, CUF – CCM)	CUF, Chadema vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1993	•	3
Tanzania (Christians – Muslims)*	Christians vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	2012	↘	2
Tanzania (Uamsho / Zanzibar)*	,	secession, system/ideology	2003	↘	1
Togo (opposition)*	ANC, CST vs. government	national power	1963	↗	3
Uganda (Baganda / Buganda)	Kingdom of Buganda vs. government	autonomy, other	1995	•	1
Uganda (Bakonzo / Rwenzururu)	Kingdom of Rwenzururu vs. government	autonomy, resources	2014	↗	3
Uganda (intercommunal rivalry / Rwenzururu)	Bakonzo vs. Bamba et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2012	↗	3
Uganda (opposition)	FDC, DP, UPC, Jeema vs. government	national power	2001	•	3
Zimbabwe (opposition)	MDC-T, MDC-R, NAVUZ, ZimPF vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2000	•	3

¹ ² ³ ⁴ cf. overview table for Europe

ANGOLA (UNITA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: UNITA vs. MPLA
Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the government of President José Eduardo dos Santos and the two major opposition parties, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and Broad Convergence for the Salvation of Angola-Coalition Electoral (CASA-CE), escalated to a violent crisis. The governing party, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and the main opposition party, UNITA, were the main adversaries in the Angolan civil war from 1975 to 2002. After a decline of violence in the last two years, the conflict turned violent again.

On September 8, during registration for the upcoming election in 2017, violent acts occurred in the Northeast of the province of Lunda Norte. A group of 20 men beat up an UNITA member in the village of Luremo, who was deployed to observe the registration procedure. Head of this group was the village chief of Luremo, a member of governing MPLA. The local administrative refused to investigate the case and told the UNITA member to leave the province. On September 22, unknown assailants burned down the secretariat of UNITA in the province of Cuando Cubango. hka

30 former RSP members. Reportedly, RSP had planned attacks on the presidential residence, army barracks, as well as a prison in Ouagadougou, where Diendéré was detained. Throughout the year, Kaboré's government undertook several legal steps to address the popular uprising of 2014 as well as the coup of mid-September 2015. On January 8, the government issued an international arrest warrant against Guillaume Soro, President of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, accusing him of having supported last year's coup.

The Ivorian government refused the execution of the warrant and instead expressed its willingness for a diplomatic solution. On January 23, Eddie Komboigo, former CDP president, was arrested on the same charges one day after returning from Côte d'Ivoire to Ouagadougou. One month later, Ivorian authorities extradited Moussa Nebié, close affiliate of Diendéré, and two other former members of the RSP to Burkina Faso. Also in February, Compaoré was naturalized as an Ivorian citizen to allegedly evade extradition to Burkina Faso that had issued an international arrest warrant against him on 12/04/15. On September 16, Luc-Adolphe Tiao, former prime minister under Compaoré, was arrested after returning from Côte d'Ivoire and charged with murder committed during the October 2014 uprising.

The CDP condemned the government's measures against CDP members as acts of intimidation. Furthermore, on October 1, thousands took to the streets in Réo, Sanguié Province, denouncing the detainment of former Foreign Affairs Ministers Djibril Bassolé as politically motivated, and demanded his release or a fair trial. Throughout the year, some of the arrested were released on bail, among them Komboigo. lgu

BURKINA FASO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

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

The violent crisis over national power between the Congress of Democracy and Progress (CDP), supported by former members of the dissolved Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP), and the government led by President Roch Kaboré continued. In late October 2014, CDP leader and then-president Blaise Compaoré had resigned after days of anti-government protests and had fled to Côte d'Ivoire. Subsequently, an interim government headed by then-prime minister Isaac Yacouba Zida and then-interim president Michel Kafando had been installed. On 09/16/2015, the RSP under the leadership of Compaoré affiliate General Gilbert Diendéré had staged an unsuccessful coup, which led to the dissolution of RSP.

Violent confrontations between the former RSP and the government continued. On January 22, around 15 ex-RSP soldiers attacked an arms depot, situated close to the capital Ouagadougou, reportedly injuring one person and stealing weapons as well as ammunition. However, at least ten attackers were arrested. On October 8, four unknown gunmen tried to disarm policemen in the town of Pô, Nahouri Province. In the ensuing fighting, two attackers were killed and one policeman wounded. In the following days, authorities arrested 19 persons allegedly involved. On October 21, the government claimed to have prevented a coup on October 8, and blamed

BURUNDI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↓ | Start: 2006

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

The conflict over national power between the opposition platform Democratic Alliance for Change-Ikibiri (ADC-Ikibiri) and the government led by President Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) and supported by its militant youth wing Imbonerakure as well as the National Intelligence Service (SNR), de-escalated to a violent crisis. ADC-Ikibiri comprised the National Liberation Forces (FNL), the Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD), The Front For Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), the Union for Peace and Democracy (UPD), and the ruling party's splinter faction National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD). ADC-Ikibiri was formed when most opposition parties had boycotted the 2010 election. On the opposition side, the MSD's military arm Resistance for a State of Law in Burundi (RED-Tabara) and the Republican Forces of Burundi (FOREBU) were also involved in conflict related action. Both are former factions of the National Defence Forces (NDF) that had gone into opposition following the December 2015 unrest.

Throughout the year, several members of opposition groups were found dead while many others were imprisoned, with

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Human Rights groups suggesting systematic physical abuses committed by SNR and Imbonerakure members. Armed opposition groups frequently conducted grenade attacks. Furthermore, up to 30 mass graves were discovered, which the government linked to opposition forces' killing of CNDD-FDD supporters, while other reports suggested government involvement. Since the start of the conflict in April 2015, when Nkurunziza had announced to change the constitution in order to serve a third term as president, the death toll reached up to 1,000, while approx. 300,000 refugees fled into neighboring Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and DRC. Moreover, hundreds have been reported missing.

In total, violence left about 100 people dead this year. On January 3, the FNL's youth league president William Nimubona was found dead in Kinama village, Bubanze Province [→ Burundi, DR Congo (FNL)]. Ten days later, five police officers were killed by grenade attacks in Mutakura, Bujumbura Mairie Province. On January 25, seven were killed in clashes between RED-Tabara and government forces. On February 5, during an attack on a police station in Cibitoke City, four Imbonerakure members were killed by FOREBU members. The following day, both FOREBU and RED-Tabara claimed responsibility for two grenade attacks in Cibitoke City, Cibitoke Province. On February 29, a mass grave in Mutakura was shown to journalists. The police publicly accused opposition forces of having killed Nkurunziza supporters.

In the first half of March, several clashes and grenade attacks took place in Bujumbura city, Bujumbura Mairie, killing three and injuring at least 17, including both government officials and civilians. In response to the attacks, SNR arrested 35 suspects. In April, several persons from both the government and opposition were allegedly killed by the respective other.

On April 11, a MSD activist was strangled in Kayanza Province. Two weeks later, another was found dead in Gitega Province. The same day, a FRODEBU activist was assassinated in Kirundo Province. On April 20, an army official and his driver were killed by gunmen in Kinama. Five days later, military adviser General Athanase Kararuzza was killed in Bujumbura. The same day, the ICC announced a preliminary investigation of the conflict. During protests in Muramvya on June 4 over the arrest of eleven pupils for defacing a Nkurunziza photograph, police shot two dead. On July 13, two assailants shot Hafsi Mossi, CNDD-FDD member and Burundian representative of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), dead in Bujumbura. On October 12, a government official and two others were killed in a bar in Matana, Bururi. On November 29, Willy Nyamwite, senior advisor to the president, survived an assassination attempt in Bujumbura city, whilst his bodyguard was killed.

Throughout the year, UN and AU pressed for solutions, with the UNSC repeatedly calling for UN presence to monitor the crisis. On August 3, however, the government rejected a UN mission. On February 1, FOREBU and RED-Tabara called upon all Burundians to join the "armed resistance" in order to protest the AU's decision not to endorse the deployment of a peace mission suggested by the AUPSC. The African heads of state decided not to deploy the mission as it would need the approval of President Nkurunziza. On February 13, thousands of CNDD-FDD supporters in seven provinces protested the possible deployment of AU troops, as well as alleged Rwandan involvement in Burundian politics [→ Rwanda – Burundi].

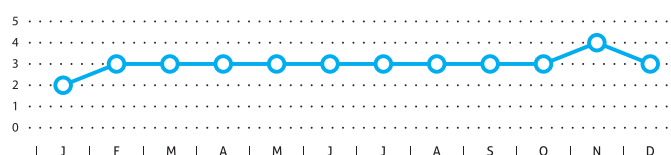
Between March 16 and 18, the government released 859 detainees, as part of an agreement with the UN. On October 11, the government barred three UN investigators from entering the country, after they published a report in September stating that thousands had been tortured, sexually abused or disappeared. The next day, parliament voted to withdraw from their ICC-membership, with the president signing the official decree on October 19. mam

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

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Anti-Balaka vs. ex-Séléka

Conflict items: national power, resources



The war over national power and resources between ex-Séléka and Fulani militias, on the one hand, and Anti-Balaka groups, on the other hand, de-escalated to a limited war for the first time since 2012.

Séléka militias, an alliance consisting of predominantly Muslim armed groups, mainly the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central Africa (FPRC), the Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC), and Patriotic Rally for the Rebirth of the Central African Republic (RPRC), had been created in 2012 aiming to overthrow then-president François Bozizé. In December 2012, Séléka, led by Michel Djotodia, had seized major towns and took Bangui, CAR's capital, in March 2013. Subsequently, Djotodia declared himself president and officially dissolved the Séléka rebel group in September 2013. However, many fighters remained active as ex-Séléka. Many members of the former Armed Forces (FACA) had joined the the newly formed and predominantly Christian Anti-Balaka militia to counter Séléka activities. In January 2014, Djotodia resigned, making space for independent Catherine Samba-Panza as interim president. Nevertheless, violence between the two groups continued.

Throughout the year, at least 310 people were killed and tens of thousands displaced. Especially from January to May, violence decreased significantly, before escalating again in October and November. Apart from fighting between and within the groups, attacks against civilians, MINUSCA peacekeepers and humanitarian workers continued.

The second round of the presidential elections took place on February 14. Faustin Archange Touadera, former prime minister under the Bozizé administration, was elected President with nearly 63 percent of the vote. On May 15, the last round of the delayed legislative elections was held. In January, the constitutional court had ruled the results of the election from 30/12/15 as invalid due to irregularities. Touadera announced his new cabinet in April, including six of Bozize's former ministers as well as members of the Muslim minority.

Nevertheless, ex-Séléka faction leaders also demanded posts in the new government and claimed that the new administration was not representing the interests of all citizens.

On March 6, armed men attacked several villages near Bambari, Ouaka prefecture, killing twelve people. The attacks were attributed to tensions between members of the mostly Muslim ethnic Fulani pastoralists and Christian farmers, belonging to Anti-Balaka factions. On April 17, unidentified gunmen killed a MINUSCA peace-keeper in Rafai, Mbomou prefecture. Furthermore, clashes in April between armed groups displaced more than 10,000 people around Kouï and Bocarang, Ouham-Pende prefecture. At least four people were killed and nine injured. In May, at least eight people were killed by unidentified gunmen in Ouham prefecture. On June 11, a coalition of ex-Séléka of Mouvement Patriotique Centrafrique (MPC) elements and Revolution Justice (RJ) clashed with Anti-Balaka fighters in Ngaoundaye, Ouham Pende prefecture, leaving 15 people killed. The ex-Séléka fighters were escorting a group of herders that were taking about 700 cows to neighboring Cameroon. Between June 19 and 20, 16 people were killed and more than 20 injured in clashes between Fulani herdsmen and ex-Séléka in the town of Kaga Badoro, Nana-Grébizi prefecture. On June 20, fighting between ex-Séléka factions was reported in Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, displacing over 3,000 IDPs. At least 14 people were killed between June 12 and 18 in the PK5 district of CAR's capital Bangui during sectarian violence as well as clashes between armed groups and MINUSCA. One peace-keeper was injured by a grenade. On June 24, at least one peace-keeper was killed in Bangui. The same month, one foreign aid worker was killed between Sibut and Grimari in Kemo prefecture by unidentified armed men. In early July, at least twelve people were killed during fighting between ex-Séléka involving UPC, in Bambari, Ouaka prefecture. On September 3, ex-Séléka fighters killed three people during an attack on the village Nangayan, Kémo prefecture. MINUSCA forces intervened, killing one attacker. At least 26 people were killed and several injured, among them one UN worker, in Ndomete, Nana-Grébizi, during an attack by ex-Séléka fighters. The same day, a clash between ex-Séléka fighters and Anti-Balaka fighters in Kaga Badoro, Nana-Grébizi, left at least six people dead. On October 4, Commander Marcel Mombeka, a former aide to ex-president Samba-Panza, was shot dead in Bangui's PK5 district. In subsequent clashes, at least eleven people were killed and 14 injured. On October 30, renewed fighting in PK5 left at least eight people dead.

On October 13, ex-Séléka fighters attacked Kaga-Badoro, Nana-Grébizi. MINUSCA peace-keepers repelled the attack and at least 30 people, among them twelve ex-Séléka fighters, were killed and another 57 injured. At least 15 people were killed during clashes between ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka fighters in Bambari, Ouaka, on October 27. In late November, fighting between FPRC and UPC near Bria, Haute Kotto prefecture, left 85 civilians killed, 76 injured, and nearly 11,000 displaced. Between December 5 and 18, fighting between armed groups resulted in the death of at least 18 people around Attongo-Bakari, Ouaka. On December 27, three people were killed, over 50 injured, around 900 displaced, and more than 100 huts burned during an attack on an IDP camp in Batafango, Ouham. According to the Humanitarian Coordinator for CAR Fabrizio Hochschild, tens of thousands were

displaced since September. While almost half of the one million displaced in 2014 had returned home, nearly half of the population in CAR remained in need of humanitarian assistance. On October 31, France ended its military operation Sangaris, withdrawing its troops from the country. However, 350 French soldiers remained in CAR in order to support MINUSCA forces. Imp, emh

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

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1987

Conflict parties:	LRA vs. Central African Republic, DR Congo, South Sudan, Uganda
Conflict items:	subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), on the one hand, and the governments of the Central African Republic (CAR), DR Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and Uganda, on the other, de-escalated to a violent crisis. After being pushed out of northern Uganda in 2006, LRA operations concentrated on the border triangle of the DRC, CAR and South Sudan. A 5,000-strong African Union Regional Task Force supported by 100 US Special Forces continued to fight the LRA. The start of the year saw increased LRA activities, especially in south eastern CAR. According to an NGO, LRA abducted more than 700 people in CAR, DRC and South Sudan in the course of the year. The group was further held responsible for the killings of 22 civilians. According to a report by the UN Group of Experts on the DRC, LRA relied on ivory as its main source of income. Especially in the DRC, the group reportedly focused on the poaching of elephants and the trafficking of ivory to its main base in the Sudanese controlled areas of Kafia Kingi, South Sudan. Further, the report suggested Kafia Kingi as most likely hiding place for LRA leader Joseph Kony.

Violent LRA activities concentrated on eastern CAR and northern DRC with the exception of two attacks in South Sudan. In January, LRA fighters armed with machine guns looted several villages in CAR and abducted 67 in Haute-Kotto Province alone. In February and March, attacks on villages and abductions continued in CAR and DRC. Two civilians were killed during an attack conducted by 30 LRA forces on the community of Tabane, Haut-Mbomou prefecture, CAR on February 5. In addition, LRA militants set up roadblocks to systematically loot travellers and sustain its poaching operations in DRC. On April 17, alleged LRA assailants killed a MINUSCA peace-keeper, after he had been deployed to Rafai, Haute-Kotto, CAR, in response to a suspected LRA attack on a village. LRA was also active in Haut-Uele Province, DRC, where one hunter was killed by LRA members on April 24. From May until July, attacks, lootings, abductions, and ambushes by LRA fighters continued. On May 10, eleven LRA members armed with AK-47s attacked the community of Zemio, Haut-Mbomou, CAR and abducted 7 villagers as porters. In DRC, around 100 civilians were abducted by LRA fighters in Bas Uele Province on June 4. On September 1, 18 armed LRA forces attacked the

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community of Digba, Bas Uele, DRC, and abducted 18 civilians. Throughout the year, a LRA splinter group led by commander Achaye Doctor carried out abductions, lootings, and killings of civilians in DRC and CAR. For instance, on October 22, Achaye's group attacked a mining town in Mbomou, CAR, and abducted 10 civilians.

On the international level, the UNSC put Joseph Kony and his LRA on a CAR Sanctions Committee list on March 7. The US also imposed financial sanctions against LRA in March. On June 28, Uganda announced its withdrawal from the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of LRA by the end of the year. On March 26, the ICC confirmed charges against former LRA commander Dominic Ongwen for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. The trial began on December 6. In February, senior LRA commander and Kony's bodyguard Okot Odek defected in eastern CAR and was taken into custody by Ugandan security forces. In the same month, senior LRA commander "Sam" was handed over to US forces by Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FPRC) militants in Haute-Kotto, CAR. *ens*

CHAD (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1990

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

The violent crisis over national power between the opposition and the government led by President Idriss Déby Itno and his Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) continued.

The opposition consisted of various political parties, such as the main opposition party National Union for Development and Renewal (UNDR), civil society groups, and loosely organized protesters, mainly students. Although Déby had faced immense public dissent, he won the presidential elections on April 10 with approx. 60 percent of the votes, which enabled his 5th term. The same day, the Constitutional Council invalidated the presidential candidacy of several persons, among them Ngarlejy Yorongar, leader of the opposition party Federation, Action for the Republic, due to irregularities in their application documents. Yorongar denounced this act as politically motivated. Eight of the 13 opposition candidates refused to accept the results, accusing the government of electoral fraud. However, on May 3, the Constitutional Council confirmed the result. During the months before the presidential elections, a series of anti-government protests broke out across the country, especially after the daughter of an opposition politician had been kidnapped and raped on February 8, by at least five men, among them the sons of political and military leaders. Even though President Déby condemned this act of sexual violence, opposition groups criticized him for not rigorously punishing the suspects. On February 15, hundreds of students took to the streets in the capital N'Djamena, demanding the government to detain the suspects. In following clashes, police forces used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Moreover, they opened fire, leaving one demonstrator dead. In reaction to these incidents, the government declared a ban on unauthorized demonstrations three days later, which did not prevent further protests ahead of the elections. For in-

stance, on February 22, clashes between anti-rape protesters and military personnel in Faya Largeau, department of Borkou, left one protester dead and several injured. Two days later, an alliance of civil society groups called "That's Enough" organized a series of strikes throughout the country in order to protest against Déby's intention to run for another term. Between March 21 and April 4, authorities arrested five civil society activists, accusing them of preparing further anti-government demonstrations and thereby undermining public order.

After the reelection of Déby on April 10, the relation between opposition groups and the government remained tense. For instance, on April 18, Saleh Kebzabo, the leader of UNDR, suspected the MPS of being responsible for the disappearance of around 60 soldiers who allegedly did not vote for Déby. In addition, a series of further protests and strikes were reported in the second half of the year, most of them taking place in the capital. For instance, on August 7, one day before the inauguration of Déby, opposition activists protested in N'Djamena against the reelection of the president, thereby violating the government's ban on demonstrations. Police forces dispersed them by using tear gas. Furthermore, they shot one activist dead after he allegedly had set an MPS flag on fire. On November 17, security forces arrested around 30 opposition activists during a protest in N'Djamena in which the latter complained about the country's economic situation. *das*

CÔTE D'IVOIRE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1999

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

The violent crisis over national power between the Alliance of Democratic Forces (AFD), a coalition of several opposition parties led by the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), on the one hand, and the Rally of the Republicans (RDR) of President Alassane Ouattara, on the other, continued. This year, the main controversial issues constituted the preparations of and the referendum on the new constitution.

On May 31, Ouattara appointed a panel of legal experts in order to draft a new constitution. On June 7, the president scheduled the holding of the constitutional referendum for either September or October. The same day, FPI leader Pascal Affi N'Guessan criticized Ouattara's endeavor for a new constitution, demanding to prioritize the continuation of the reconciliation process concerning the 2011/2012 post-electoral crisis. However, on July 22, the majority of the parliament voted in favor of the referendum. On October 5, a proposal for the new constitution was presented to the parliament and approved a few days later. Among other things, the newly drafted constitution provided for the abolition of the nationality clause and a raising of the upper age limit for presidential candidates to 75.

Ahead of the constitutional referendum, on October 14, the AFD announced to boycott the vote, which had been scheduled for October 30 two days earlier. The AFD stated that the draft was created in a non-transparent way and only intended

to strengthen Ouattara's power. Six days later, the police used teargas to disperse 50 people protesting against the draft in the capital Abidjan and allegedly beat up several. On October 30, according to the Independent Electoral Commission, approx. 93 percent voted in favor of the new constitution with an electoral turnout of about 42 percent. N'Guessan rejected the announced results, claiming that the voter turnout had been less than ten percent. On the day of the referendum, supposed opposition supporters attacked several polling stations in Abidjan as well as in the districts of Gôh-Djiboua, Lagunes and Montagnes, where they stole voting materials, allegedly trying to prevent people from voting.

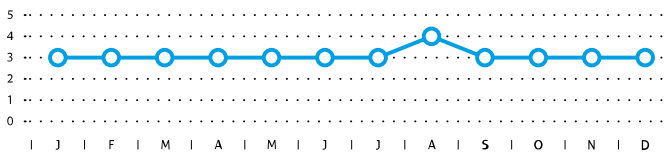
On January 28, the trial against former president Laurent Gbagbo and his ex-minister Charles Blé Goudé started at the ICC in The Hague, Netherlands, where they were charged with crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the post-electoral violence from 12/16/10 until 04/12/11 in Abidjan. Moreover, for the same charges, a trial against Simone Gbagbo, former FPI chairman, at the Assize Court in Abidjan began, on May 30. jwi

DR CONGO (ADF)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1995

Conflict parties: ADF vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources



The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the government, supported by MONUSCO, continued as a limited war. Having originated in Uganda, the armed group now solely operated on DR Congo's (DRC) territory. ADF activities concentrated in the northern Beni territory, North Kivu province, and Irumu territory, Ituri province, close to the Congolese border with Uganda. ADF continued to kill civilians and extort goods from the population. The UN Group of Experts for the DRC and other analysts found no evidence for sustained links between ADF and international jihadist groups. Due to military offensive by the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC), the estimated number of about 800 to 1,500 armed fighters in early 2014 was substantially reduced to a few hundred in 2016. After the arrest of long-time leader Jamil Mukuli in April 2015, the group had lost its central leadership and reorganized its remaining fighters in small, decentralised groups in Beni and Irumu Territories.

Throughout the year, ADF repeatedly attacked FARDC and MONUSCO positions in Beni Territory, while the latter continued their offensive against the group. Especially the so-called "death triangle" between Eringeti, Kamongo and Mbau was affected by the fighting. At least 91 alleged ADF fighters and 22 FARDC soldiers were killed. Moreover, approx. 80 alleged ADF fighters were arrested. At least four soldiers and four

ADF fighters were killed in several ADF attacks in January. On February 6, around 20 ADF fighters attacked a FARDC position in Mayimoya region, Beni. FARDC repulsed the attack killing three assailants. MONUSCO and FARDC resumed joint actions against the group in February, after MONUSCO had ceased the cooperation in 2015 due to allegations of human rights abuses by FARDC members. In March, MONUSCO repeatedly supported FARDC forces with combat helicopters. At least six alleged militants and three FARDC soldiers were killed the same month. On May 14, FARDC and MONUSCO announced the start of operation "Usalama" against ADF. In the course of the operation, at least 37 ADF fighters, including deputy commander Hood Lukwago, and five FARDC soldiers were killed in Beni and Irumu Territories by the end of June. On July 5, alleged ADF fighters killed nine civilians in the towns of Tenambo, Nzanza and Mamiki near Oicha, Beni. Subsequently, FARDC and MONUSCO deployed troops to the villages and killed eight attackers. Eight days later, FARDC forces, in collaboration with MONUSCO, killed six alleged ADF rebels in Kokola, Beni. On July 31, alleged ADF fighters killed two civilians, two Congolese soldiers and injured one MONUSCO soldier in Oicha, Beni. FARDC, supported by MONUSCO, repulsed the attack and killed three alleged ADF members. The same day, FARDC took over control of the ADF stronghold in Mwalika, near Beni town, without fighting. On August 8, alleged ADF fighters attacked a MONUSCO helicopter wounding six soldiers in Beni Territory. Two civilians, two FARDC soldiers and two ADF militants were killed on the road between Beni and Kasindi on September 27. On October 9, alleged ADF fighters killed seven civilians and a FARDC officer in an attack on an army post near Beni town. Two ADF fighters were killed during the attack. Nine alleged ADF fighters and one FARDC soldier were killed in November during various ADF attacks in Beni Territory. On December 16, FARDC and MONUSCO repulsed two simultaneous attacks by alleged ADF fighters at Nadwi village and a former ADF stronghold in Beni Territory leaving four FARDC soldiers injured and seven alleged ADF militants killed. On December 24, FARDC killed four alleged ADF fighters in Mayimoya, Beni.

As in the previous two years, alleged ADF fighters attacked villages and killed civilians in Beni Territory. At least 157 civilians were killed, 37 injured and 32,000 displaced. In addition, more than 100 houses were burned down and several health centers looted. However, a report was published in March suggesting that in addition to ADF, local militias, including Mayi-Mayi and members of the former "Rally for Congolese Democracy" were also responsible for some of the killings [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. The report further stated that members of FARDC were also involved in killings in Beni. On February 14, alleged ADF fighters killed at least 16 civilians in Kambi Ya Chui village. During a similar attack on February 29, 14 people were killed, 23 houses burnt down and four people kidnapped in Mambabio-Ntombi village. On May 3, alleged ADF fighters attacked Luna village with machetes and axes killing at least 16 people and injuring seven. Following the attack, around 1,500 people fled the area towards Ituri Province. The deadliest attack occurred on August 13, when alleged ADF fighters killed between 36 and 64 civilians in Beni town's Rwangoma district. Following the latest killings of civilians in Beni, locals protested in Beni town demanding the end of violence. Police dispersed the demonstration

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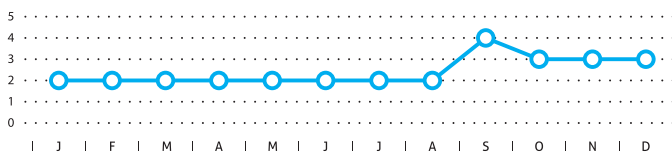
killing three people. However, throughout September, twelve civilians were killed in Beni. On September 24, a mass panic broke out due to rumors of an ADF incursion in Beni, leaving 17 people dead. At least 20 civilians were killed during attacks on villages in October and November by alleged ADF fighters. On December 24, at least nine people were killed in Mapiki village. One day later, twelve civilians were killed in the surrounding villages of Eringeti.

Furthermore, alleged ADF fighters attacked civilians in Irumu Territory, Ituri Province. On May 6, the group killed at least nine people during raids on the villages Biane and Ndalia, leading to more than 2,000 people fleeing the area. On May 14, alleged ADF rebels killed seven civilians during an attack on Katabeyi. bbr

DR CONGO (BANTU – BATWA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2013

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



The conflict over subnational predominance in the Provinces of Tanganyika and Haut-Lomami between militias of the ethnic groups Bantu and Batwa as well as between Batwa and the government, supported by MONUSCO, continued as a limited war. Notably, Batwa and Bantu militias also attacked MONUSCO, UNHCR, as well as World Food Program personnel. On November 15, ten Bantu militia members armed with machetes threatened MONUSCO military observers during a patrol close to Kalemie city, Tanganyika. They accused the observers of supporting Batwa militia groups and tried to extort money. The same month, Bantu militiamen attacked a UNHCR convoy and MONUSCO forces with arrows in Nyemba, Tanganyika leaving two MONUSCO soldiers wounded and one vehicle damaged. On December 16, Batwa militia members ambushed two World Food Program vehicles on the road from Kalemie city to Manono city.

The conflict escalated in July and throughout the second half of the year, at least 57 people were killed, 178 injured and more than 118,000 internally displaced. Violence concentrated on Tanganyika, with only one attack occurring in Haut-Lomami. Batwa and Bantu militia members were arrested and faced trial in Haut-Katanga during the year. In early February, around 380 Bantu families fled to Kyambi, Mbayo and Kintentu villages, Manono, Tanganyika, after Batwa militia leader Nyumba Isha had threatened to attack villages in the area. Fighting between a Batwa militia and the Congolese army (FARDC) started on July 12, which led to the displacement of 6,000 people between Nyunzu and Kiambi. Between July 27 and August 2, the Batwa militia group led by Nyumba Isha burned down 140 Bantu homes in Nyunzu. On September 1, alleged Batwa militias attacked and took control over the

villages Lwizi and Nyunzu. Four days later, about 20 Bantu villages between Nyunzu and Mukebo were targeted. Six Bantus were injured by poisoned arrows. In response, Bantu militias reportedly killed four Batwas with machetes in the same area. Attacks on villages continued the following week. Between 12 and 50 people were reportedly killed and more than 15 injured between September 5 and 14. The attacks displaced more than 25,000 people in Nyunzu and Kongolo. Following the incidents, MONUSCO deployed troops to the region on September 7. Nevertheless, clashes between Bantu and Batwa on September 15 left two people dead and five heavily injured in Tchanga-Tchanga, Nyunzu. After fleeing Nyunzu, 349 families arrived in Kalemie on October 7. Between October 15 and 18, at least 16 people were killed in clashes between Bantu and Batwa in Kabalo. On October 17, several houses and a refugee camp in Kabalo city were set on fire. Violence in Kabalo further escalated and spread to neighboring Manono between October 24 and 31. At least 1,400 houses were burned down in Kabalo and three civilians were killed in Kizika, Manono. The fighting in Kabalo led to the displacement of more than 23,000 people. On November 3, the government deployed 500 policemen and soldiers to Kabalo, Nyunzu and Manono to prevent further violence. The same month, Mamadou Diallo, Special Deputy Representative of the UN Secretary General to the DRC, announced that more than 75,000 people in Nyunzu were affected by the conflict between Batwa and Bantu. Despite increased MONUSCO and FARDC presence and the announcement of the creation of a reconciliation forum by the Minister for Interior of Tanganyika province, Dieudonné Kamona, fighting and attacks on villages continued until the end of the year. Between November 19 and 22, at least 21 people were killed in attacks by Batwa militia groups on the villages Kisala, Manono and Miswaki. On December 16, Batwa militia members killed a woman during an attack on Mukuna village. Batwa militia members launched a major attack on Manono city on December 20, killing at least six people and injuring 150 people with arrows. On December 26, Bantu militia members killed a woman in Kanunka village, Malemba Nkulu, Haut-Lomami. few, emh

DR CONGO (EX-M23)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2004

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

The Conflict over subnational predominance in North Kivu province between members of the demobilized armed group M23 and the government continued as a violent crisis. M23, mainly consisting of ethnic Tutsis, had been formed in 2012 by a group of deserters from the Armed Forces of the of DR Congo (FARDC). In November 2012, M23 had seized North Kivu's capital Goma and had gained control of parts of Rutshuru Territory. The group had been defeated by FARDC and MONUSCO forces in 2013.

As last year, violent incidents were limited to reintegration camps for former militia members. On February 26, former M23 leader Seraphin Mirindi was arrested by Rwandan au-

thorities. Following the arrest, the governor of North Kivu province, Julien Paluku, reportedly requested his extradition. On March 15, a military tribunal in Kamina, Haut-Lomami province, sentenced three soldiers and four M23 members to prison charges between five and 18 years for raping civilians. On May 27, a delegation of M23 met with the government of DR Congo (DRC), Special Representative of the UN's Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, and representatives of MONUSCO, AU, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) as well as the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in Kinshasa to evaluate the implementation of the Nairobi Agreement. The deal had been signed by the government and M23 on 12/12/13 to end the fighting. Both parties had agreed on amnesty for M23 members and the implementation of a demobilization program without clarifying details. Following the meeting, former M23 leader Jean Marie Runiga announced the creation of a political party named "Alliance pour le salut du peuple" (ASP) on May 30. Bertrand Bisimwa, current M23 leader, claimed that M23 had not transformed into a political party and that ASP was not representing all former M23 fighters. On June 15, between nine and 27 people were reportedly killed in clashes between FARDC and inmates of a camp for demobilized armed groups, in Kamina, Haut-Lomami, where M23 members and other former militants were detained [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi)]. Following the incident, M23 leader Bertrand Bisimwa demanded a new demobilization program for M23 members in the DRC. On June 18, 53 former militia members were transferred from Kamina to Goma, while another 2,300 demobilized fighters remained in the camp. On November 11, the governor of North Kivu province Julien Paluku tweeted that former M23 commander Sultani Makenga had disappeared from his whereabouts in a camp for demobilized fighters in Uganda and suggested Sultani's involvement with militants seen in the Sarambwe Nature Reserve, North Kivu, near to the Ugandan border. Two days later, Ugandan military spokesman Paddy Ankunda denied Sultani's disappearance and claimed that no former M23 fighters had escaped demobilisation camps in Western Uganda. vba

DR CONGO (ITURI MILITIAS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: FRPI vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over subnational predominance and resources such as gold in Ituri Province between the Front for Patriotic Resistance (FRPI) and the government, supported by MONUSCO, de-escalated to a violent crisis. In 2002, the conflict between armed groups belonging to the two rival ethnic groups Hema and Lendu had escalated in the context of the Ugandan and Rwandan occupation. Since 2007, after the main Hema group Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) had integrated into the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC), the predominantly Lendu armed group FRPI directed its fight against the government. At the end of 2014, disarmament

negotiations between the government and the group failed and FRPI leader Justin Banaloki alias Cobra Matata was arrested. Subsequently, Mbadu Adirodu succeeded Banaloki as FRPI leader. This year, FRPI solely operated in Irumu Territory, Ituri. Apart from FRPI, other armed militias continued to operate in Ituri [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.); DR Congo (ADF)]. On January 16, Mbadu Adirodu declared the group's willingness to leave its hideout in order to participate in the DDR program by the government. Nevertheless, fighting between FRPI and FARDC, supported by MONUSCO, continued. Throughout the year, confrontations between both sides left at least 38 FRPI fighters and five FARDC soldiers dead. For instance, between February 11 and 16, at least seven FRPI fighters were killed and another nine captured during FARDC operations in Arava and Alimo. On April 13, FRPI members armed with AK-47s killed two FARDC soldiers during an ambush in Kolu. On June 27, FARDC attacked FRPI positions, aiming to prevent the reorganisation of the group in Kienge. Ten FRPI fighters were killed and three AK-47s seized while two FARDC soldiers were wounded. Due to enduring insecurity in the region, FARDC and MONUSCO conducted a joint operation on July 26, deploying MONUSCO combat helicopters around Kigo and Tchekela. On August 6, FARDC and MONUSCO led a further operation against the FRPI in the area around Koni, using combat helicopters and ground forces to stop the ongoing attacks on civilians. In December, at least 1,200 people were displaced in Nyankunde due to fighting between FRPI and FARDC.

Moreover, FARDC reinforced patrols and intervened in at least 35 FRPI attacks on villages this year, killing at least eight FRPI fighters and capturing four. Nevertheless, frequent FRPI attacks on villages left at least 26 civilians dead and more than 79 injured. In addition, at least 15,000 people were displaced and 49 civilians were abducted. On April 5, FRPI fighters killed two civilians and injured three during a raid in Avenyuma village. In March and April, around 7,000 people fled the villages Mambesu, Mungambo, Mandongo, Holu and Tengude due to FRPI incursions. Between August 29 and 31, around 50 FRPI militants attacked five villages in Irumu Territory, pillaging household items and raping numerous women. In a large-scale attack between July 10 and 11, about 100 FRPI fighters raided the village Mandibe, stealing small cattle, household items, food, and money. While most inhabitants fled to Komanda, FRPI fighters abducted 17, injured one, and raped four women. Attacks against civilians continued until the end of the year. Moreover, FRPI fighters repeatedly set up roadblocks in order to rob passersby.

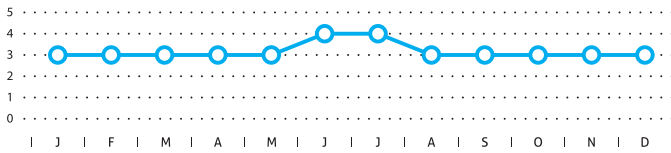
Although the prison term of former FRPI leader Germain Katanga alias Simba ended on January 18, Congolese authorities refused to release him due to alleged involvement in the murder of nine UN peacekeepers in 2005. On April 17, the ICC approved a request by Congolese authorities to persecute Katanga before a national court. In 2014, the ICC had sentenced Katanga to 12 years imprisonment. However, after having served the statutory two-thirds of his sentence in September last year, the prison term was reduced. On July 12, 248 ex-FRPI members joined the DDR program in Bunia. eml

DR CONGO (MAYI-MAYI ET AL.)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2003

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

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over subnational predominance and resources in the Provinces of North and South Kivu, Ituri and Haut-Katanga, between local armed groups, on the one side, and foreign armed groups, the Armed Forces of the DR Congo (FARDC), supported by MONUSCO, on the other, continued as a limited war. Most local militias had originally emerged as armed resistance against Rwandan-supported armed groups, such as the Rally for Congolese Democracy, or Rwandan-originated armed groups and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) [→ DR Congo, Rwanda (FDLR)]. After more than 20 years of fighting, the groups had split into numerous, sometimes opposing factions of varying size and strength, predominantly named after their commanders. Apart from clashing with other armed actors, the groups continued to attack civilians, engaged in pillaging and illegal taxation, and benefited from the control over gold mines. By the end of the year, the conflict left at least 380 people dead and tens of thousands displaced.

Different factions of Raia Mutomboki (RM) continued operating in South Kivu's Territories Kabare, Kalehe, Walungu, and Shabunda. On January 9, FARDC thwarted an RM attack on the village Kambali in Kalehe. In early February, more than 12,000 people fled their villages in northern Shabunda after warnings of upcoming RM operations. Another 10,000 were displaced from Kaligila, Kamango et Mintoko in Shabunda on February 9 due to violent encounters between FARDC and RM militants. During the fighting four civilians were abducted, goods pillaged and two ferries destroyed. In mid-April, RM led by Kokodikoko and Dembi Kaboyi took another 55 civilians hostage in Kifuko and Kamituga, Shabunda. Reportedly, the militants raped several and plundered goods. Between July 10 and 12, 7,400 civilians were displaced in Kahele Territory due to fighting between two rival RM factions. On July 20, RM Makombo and FARDC clashed in Bamuguba, Shabunda, leaving two militants dead. More than 27 people were raped by RM fighters in Penekusu et Nyalukungu, Shabunda, on October 28. Around 3,000 people fled the area. On December 5, FARDC killed three RM fighters in Byangama, Shabunda. Different RM factions were also active in the North Kivu Territories of Walikale and Lubero. On June 2, Congolese soldiers clashed with RM Bunyakiri fighters in Kangoroma, Walikale, killing one militant. On September 6, RM fighters killed a FARDC soldier during fighting in Mayuna, Walikale. In Lubero,

a coalition of RM, Mayi-Mayi Mazembe and Mayi-Mayi Guidon attacked a FARDC position on September 4, killing several soldiers and civilians.

The ethnic Hutu Nyatura militias mainly operated in Walikale, Masisi, Lubero and Rutshuru Territories, North Kivu. Throughout the year, Nyatura groups sporadically conducted joint operations with FDLR and the predominantly ethnic Hunde group Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) against civilians, other armed groups and FARDC. On February 25, a coalition of FDLR and Nyatura clashed with the mainly ethnic Kobo and Nande group Patriots for the Defense of Innocents (UPDI) in Mirangi, Lubero.

On July 1, a coalition of Nyatura and APCLS simultaneously attacked different FARDC positions in Lukweti, Lwibo and Kinyumba, Masisi. The fighting left at least six soldiers and up to eight militants dead. Six days later, Nyatura and FDLR fighters clashed with NDC-R in Kikuku, Rutshuru, forcing around 50,000 people to leave their homes. On August 23, APCLS and Nyatura signed a peace accord in Muhanga, Masisi, committing themselves to handing over their guns and surrendering to FARDC if they were granted amnesty. Nevertheless, Nyatura fighters killed an ethnic Hunde village chief in Mukerberwa, Masisi, in November, leading to renewed ethnic tensions in the region. In Rutshuru, FARDC continued operations against Nyatura in September. On December 21, Nyatura killed between 13 and 20 people in Bwalanda, Rutshuru, using guns and machetes.

Nyatura was also active in South Kivu. On January 5, FARDC units killed six Nyatura fighters in Kalehe. Several attacks on FARDC by a coalition of RM and Nyatura fighters between May 22 and 25 in the North of Kalehe left two soldiers and two civilians dead. Over the following days, FARDC regained control over Mule, Butale, Chaminunu and Chifunzi, all in Kalehe. On July 7, government troops repulsed an attack on their position by around 30 Nyatura and Mayi-Mayi Kiricho fighters in the North of Bukavu in Kalehe, killing three. On September 6, Nyatura killed one villager and looted property during an attack on Lumbishi village, Kalehe. FARDC intervened and killed five attackers.

The ethnic Nande militia Mayi-Mayi Mazemba was active in Walikale, Lubero and Rutshuru, North Kivu. Throughout the year, around 100 people were killed, 40 injured and more than 9,600 displaced during Mazemba attacks on villages and fighting with FARDC. On June 16, a joint attack by Mazemba and Mayi-Mayi Guidon on MONUSCO troops carrying aid for refugees in Buleusa, Walikale, left at least seven people dead and eleven injured. On August 22, FARDC started an offensive against Mazembe positions in Mutanda and Kikuku, Rutshuru, killing 13 militants. Between November 6 and 14, alleged Mazemba fighters killed around 14 people and burned down 161 houses in the South of Lubero, forcing more than 5,900 people to leave the area. On November 27, a group of around 50 Mazembe fighters armed with guns and machetes attacked more than 1,000 Hutu families in an IDP camp in Luhanga, Lubero. At least 29 people were killed and 15 others injured. MONUSCO intervened, killing one attacker.

Mayi-Mayi Manu were solely active in Ituri's Mambasa Territory, where they attacked villages and fought with rival armed groups over the control of gold mines. On March 4, Manu fighters attacked a Chinese miner community in Talisalokel. In June, Manu fighters sided with Mayi-Mayi Simba forces

against Mayi-Mayi Sumbadede fighters who had controlled a mining site in Muchacha. The fighting caused 3,000 miners to flee. The following month, Manu fighters took control of several other mining sites in Muchacha. On September 2, FARDC attacked the Manu-controlled mine in Basiri. In November, 800 civilians fled Mambasa Territory to Avakubi and Bafanduo, Bawasende Territory, Tshopo Province, in fear of Manu attacks.

The Simba group continued to operate in Butembo Territory, North Kivu and Mambasa Territory, Ituri. At least 44 people were killed and ten injured throughout the year. On April 19, Simba militants attacked FARDC and the Congolese National Police (PNC) near Biakato, Ituri. FARDC and PNC repulsed the attack, killing fourteen militia fighters and capturing another six. On July 16, eight Simba fighters were killed during fighting with FARDC in Biasika, Ituri. In August, Simba fighters attacked a mining site in Muchacha, Ituri. Three people were killed, several abducted and four raped. On December 19, a coalition of Simba, Mayi-Mayi Kilalo and Mayi-Mayi Corps du Christ attacked several villages in Butembo, North Kivu. One MONUSCO soldier and nine Simba fighters died in subsequent clashes.

Corps du Christ fighters were active in Butembo and Beni Territories, North Kivu. At least 22 people were killed in confrontations between the group and FARDC. During fighting on October 15, a school was hit by a rocket in Butembo city, killing two students and two teachers.

The Nduma Defense of Congo (NDC), also known as Mayi-Mayi Cheka and its splinter group, NDC-Renewed, also known as Mayi-Mayi Guidon, remained active in Walikale, Rutshuru and Masisi, North Kivu. At least 51 people were killed in NDC attacks against civilians, clashes with FARDC and during infighting. On February 7, NDC fighters attacked a Hutu community around Luhanga, Masisi, killing 21 and injuring 40 civilians. On April 22, 13 people were killed in fighting between two rival NDC factions in Ihana, Walikale. Furthermore, at least twelve people were killed in both, NDC-R clashes with the FDLR-Nyatara coalition and NDC-R attacks on civilians. For instance, on February 10, NDC-R killed FDLR-RUD commander Jean Damascène Ndibabaje aka Musare during a raid on the group's headquarters in Mashuta, Walikale. On July 7, Nyatara and FDLR fighters clashed with NDC-R in Kikuku, Rutshuru, forcing around 50,000 people to leave their homes. jli, hsp, emh

DR CONGO (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

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

Conflict items: national power

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

As per the Congolese constitution, Kabila was barred from

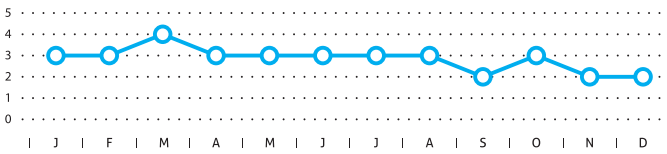
running for a third term in the presidential elections scheduled for November 2016. Tensions over Kabila's refusal to step down as president and over delays in the election date increasingly turned violent. Opposition groups, human rights advocates and journalists continued to face pronounced repression by the government. The international community and human rights groups called for free elections and a more inclusive political dialogue with the opposition. The government's crackdown on protest resulted in the death of at least 99 people and left at least 370 wounded.

On January 28, the communication ministry shut down two radio stations based in Lubumbashi, Haut-Katanga Province owned by presidential opponent Moïse Katumbi. On February 16, opposition groups called for a national strike. Subsequently, at least four people were injured in clashes with the police and 36 people arrested. On May 26 and 27, opposition demonstrations turned violent in the capital Kinshasa and Goma, North Kivu, leaving two dead and at least 81 injured. On June 9, the opposition parties formed the umbrella group "Rassemblement" to urge Kabila to step down. On June 22, Katumbi was sentenced in absentia to three years imprisonment for illegally acquiring a building. Between September 19 and 21, heavy clashes between protesters and security forces occurred in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Goma. The UN Joint Human Rights Office counted at least 53 deaths, 143 injured persons, over 422 victims of human rights violations and more than 299 unlawfully arrested and detained people. The next day, the government banned all protests in Kinshasa. On October 17, the constitutional court approved the request by the electoral commission to postpone the elections until April 2018 in order to update the voter's registration lists. Two days later, the streets of Kinshasa and other major cities remained empty after the opposition had called for a strike, warning that a third term by President Kabila would not be accepted. On November 4 and 5, the government blocked the signal of Radio France Internationale and Radio Okapi after reports on planned protests. On November 5, police used tear gas to disperse UDPS protesters in Kinshasa. The following week, the government imposed new restrictions on foreign-owned media. As a result of negotiations between opposition parties and the government, Kabila appointed UPDS member Samy Badibanga Prime Minister three days later. On November 19, police blocked access to venues in the main cities where "Rassemblement" had planned protests. In December, the European Union announced sanctions against nine senior Congolese officials, accusing them of oppressive measures targeting government critics during the past two years. The United States had already imposed sanctions in September. On December 19, Badibanga announced the members of a new interim government five minutes before the official end of Kabila's last term. Nevertheless, clashes between protesters and police erupted throughout the country leaving at least 40 people dead, 107 protesters injured and 460 arrested. On December 31, the opposition and the government agreed on a deal allowing Kabila to remain president until elections in 2017, after the Congolese Catholic Church had facilitated the talks. ceb

DR CONGO, RWANDA (FDLR)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1994

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



The conflict over national power in Rwanda, subnational predominance, and resources in the DR Congo between the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), on the one hand, and the governments of the DR Congo (DRC), supported by MONUSCO, and Rwanda, on the other, continued as a limited war. FDLR was formed in 2000 after parts of the former Rwandan army and the Interahamwe militia entered the DR Congo following the Rwandan Genocide. In the DRC, the group was solely active in North Kivu province fighting with the government over the control of Walikale, Masisi, Lubero, Nyiragongo, and Rutshuru Territories. Apart from government forces, FDLR frequently clashed with other armed groups [→ DR Congo (Mayi-Mayi et al.)]. The group remained the largest active militia in the DRC, counting about 1400-1600 fighters in early March. In the course of the year, at least 188 people, mainly civilians, were killed and tens of thousands internally displaced.

By the end of January, the spokesperson of the operation "Sukola 2", launched in 2015, claimed that Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) had regained control over numerous localities in Lubero and Walikale. On January 28, MONUSCO and the government of the DRC agreed to resume joint operations in the east of the country. On June 23, the UNSC unanimously passed a Resolution demanding the termination of violence by FDLR.

Several high ranking FDLR personnel were arrested during the year. On April 5, Ugandan police arrested FDLR commander Major Barrack Anan in Kampala, Uganda, and on May 1, Léopold Mujiyambere, the deputy leader of the FDLR, was arrested by authorities in Goma, North Kivu. In August, FARDC captured FDLR commander Sabimana Iraguha in Katiru, Rutshuru. Two months later, Habyarimana Mucebo, suspected FDLR intelligence chief, was arrested in Rutshuru.

Throughout the year, FDLR repeatedly attacked civilians. On January 6, alleged FDLR militants armed with guns and machetes attacked Miriki village, Lobero, killing at least 17 inhabitants. On January 26, FDLR fighters looted houses in Bushalingwa, Lubero/Walikale, and abducted about 50 families. FDLR fighters continued to attack villages in February and killed at least five people in several incidents. The following month, FDLR and allied Mayi-Mayi Nyatura fighters killed at least 31 civilians. Throughout April, FDLR and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura continued to attack civilians in Masisi, Walikale, and Rutshuru. In June, civilians fled numerous villages in Walikale, Rutshuru, and Lubero, in fear of attacks by FDLR fighters. At least two civilians were killed during attacks on

villages in Walikale on June 11 and 15. On July 18, FDLR and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura attacked Kibrizi, Rutshuru, killing seven and injuring five people. Four days later, FDLR and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura looted about 30 houses and killed four civilians with machetes in Bwalanda, Rutshuru. On August 8, eight people were killed and several houses looted during a similar attack in Kibrizi. As a response, FARDC launched a six-day operation in Bwito district, Rutshuru, resulting in six FDLR fighters and one FARDC soldiers killed.

FDLR repeatedly clashed with FARDC forces. Between March 27 and 29, more than twelve people were killed in fights between FARDC and FDLR around the village Mpati, Masisi. Due to the fighting, FARDC shut down several refugee camps in Mpati, Kivuye, Nyange and Bweru, Masisi, internally displacing about 36,000 people. At the beginning of May, FDLR attacked FARDC positions in Kisege, Rutshuru, leaving one FDLR fighter dead and five trucks looted. FDLR attacked FARDC on May 29, leaving five people dead and one injured, coming from the forests of Virunga National Park, Nyiragongo. The following month, FDLR and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura killed two FARDC personnel and looted a camp in Tongo-Rusheshe, Rutshuru. From September until the end of the year, FDLR activity decreased and only one direct confrontation between FARDC and FDLR resulted in fatalities. On October 23, FARDC killed four FDLR rebels in Kiwanja, Rutshuru, and arrested two others.

Following disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs, 153 ex-FDLR fighters returned to Rwanda. According to the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF), alleged FDLR fighters attacked a Rwandan military base in March and crossed the border to attack a police station in Bugeshi, Rubavu District, Western Province, Rwanda, on April 15. FARDC accused Rwandan forces of crossing the border in reaction to the attack, which was denied by a RDF spokesman [→ DR Congo – Rwanda]. iro

ETHIOPIA (OLF / OROMIYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: OLF vs. government
 Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of Oromiya region between the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), its armed wing, the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), and the government, led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) continued.

Protests across Oromiya State against the so-called Master Plan to expand the capital Addis Ababa into the region intensified, due to concerns about further displacements of local farmers [→ Ethiopia (opposition)]. The OLA continuously led guerilla-style attacks on the military, accusing them of harassing the people in Oromiya. The majority of fighting occurred in Eastern and Western Hararghe Zones.

On February 22, after demonstrations, the Agazi, a special squad of the army shot dead two protesters and allegedly injured several others in Nekemte, western Oromiya. On February 25, the OLF claimed that the military had transferred troops to eastern Oromiya and had relocated its paramilitary

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force, known as Liyu Police, into the region. According to the OLA, its forces had killed 253 government soldiers and wounded another 215 in fightings between January 5 and September 10. The OLA seized light weaponry on numerous occasions and destroyed two vehicles in shootings in West and East Hararghe Zones on February 25 and September 10. Additionally, military presence in Moyale district at the Ethiopian-Kenyan border continued.

On July 28, the OLA allegedly shot at soldiers in two separate attacks in Moyale, killing twelve and wounding eight. On October 16, 100 soldiers reportedly entered Kenya in pursuit of OLF militants, who they suspected of having killed an Ethiopian police officer. In the process the soldiers shot dead a Kenyan herder. The UN-supported implementation of the "Marsabit County of Kenya-Borana zone of Ethiopia integrated Cross Border and Area-based Program" last year allowed soldiers to enter into Kenya in order to pursue OLF members.

jar

ETHIOPIA (ONLF / OGADEN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1984

Conflict parties: ONLF vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over the autonomy of Ogaden region in Somali state and the control of oil fields between the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the government continued. Throughout the year, violent confrontations between the ONLF and government troops, supported by the government-affiliated paramilitary group Liyu Police, took place all over Ogaden, especially in the Jarar and Nogob zones.

On February 8, ONLF reportedly attacked two vehicles in Dagahbur district, Jarar, killing seven people, among them a member of the regional parliament, and injuring another seven. On February 18, ONLF attacked a military base, killing five and wounding eight soldiers in Gunagado district, Jarar. On March 1, ONLF attacked military troops in Fiiq district, Nogob, killing five and injuring three. On March 20, ONLF reportedly clashed with government forces in three different villages in Jarar, Korahe, and Nogob zones, killing nine soldiers and wounding twelve. Between May 20 and 22, ONLF conducted a series of attacks in Nogob and Jarar, as well as Shabelle zone. Reportedly, ONLF killed about 50 soldiers and wounded 65. During the attacks, two military camps in Awaare district, Jarar, were destroyed. On June 5, Liyu Police killed more than 40 civilians in Gashamo district, Jarar, and destroyed all property, including food and water supplies, in the village of Jama Dubad. This aggravated the situation of the civilian population as Gashamo district suffered a severe drought period. Liyu Police's actions were criticized by the ONLF. According to Human Rights Watch, this had not been the first incident of that kind in the region. On August 11, soldiers reportedly detained and injured up to 30 civilians in the town of Kebri Dehar, Korahe zone. One day later, ONLF killed 15 soldiers and wounded 18 in clashes with armed forces in Barbarad locality, Doolo zone. On August 20, ONLF reportedly killed seven soldiers and wounded six during fighting in

Donan district, Shabelle. Throughout September, ONLF proclaimed that they had conducted several attacks on government troops in Gunagado and Dagahbur, as well as in East Ime and Danan districts, Shabelle, killing 23 soldiers and wounding 31. The government did not comment on the incidents.

In 2015, Ethiopia had signed a bilateral agreement with Djibouti to build a natural gas transit pipeline. The line would run 700 km from Ogaden to the port town Damerjog, Djibouti. In the beginning of March, the Ethiopian army began to clear the land for oil exploration, preventing civilians from returning to their ancestral lands by confiscating their livestock. ONLF warned all involved participants of being part of the illegal attempts of the Ethiopian regime and threatened them with consequences. According to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, up to 400,000 people from Ogaden were internally displaced.

tsm

ETHIOPIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: Ethnic groups vs. government; government vs. Semayawi Party, MEDREK, Ginbot 7, Zone 9, OFC

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition parties and the government led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) continued. Throughout the year, the government continued to repress the opposition and arrested journalists, opposition members, and bloggers, and put them on trial. In addition, this year, various civil society and student-led groups joined protests all over the country. In Oromiya State, protesters raised concerns that the government would continue to displace Oromo farmers for the implementation of the so-called Master Plan. The plan aimed at expanding the capital Addis Ababa into Oromiya. Student protests that had initially targeted the Master Plan at the end of last year in different locations in the region, intensified this year. In mid-January, the government cancelled the plan due to the growing number of protestors. However, protests still grew in number, in reaction to the alleged killing of 140 protesters by security forces between late December 2015 and mid-January. On March 16, 20 university students were charged under the criminal code for protesting without approval against the government in front of the US Embassy in Addis Ababa. In July, protests took place in at least ten towns across Oromiya, where 33 protesters were shot dead by security forces and 26 protesters were injured during clashes. A new wave of protests occurred after at least 52 people were killed in a stampede during an anti-government protest at a religious festival in the town of Bishoftu, Oromiya, on October 2. The mass panic was followed by heavy use of tear gas and rubber bullets by security forces. Six days later, the EPRDF announced a six-month state of emergency. In early November, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn reorganized the cabinet by replacing 15 of 30 ministers.

In the city of Gondar, Amhara State, protests began after the

Federal Anti-Terrorism Task Force conducted a number of arrests on July 12. Security forces had been in that region since December 2015 because of unrests between local Amhara people and the ethnic group of Qemant. On August 5, security forces reportedly killed between ten and 25 people in Bahir Dar city, Amhara, after clashing with protesters. One security officer was killed.

In Konso, SNNPR State, on March 13, the arrest of Kala Gezahegn, the traditional leader of the Konso, was followed by clashes between protesters and police, which left three people dead. He was charged under the suspicion of maladministration and corruption.

The Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (MEDREK) was allegedly banned from demonstrating in Addis Ababa earlier this year. On April 16, Bekele Gerba, deputy chairman of the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), and 21 other members were charged under the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP). In early May, the head of public relations of the oppositional Semayawi Party, was charged with planning a terrorist act. In mid-May, opposition militant group Ginbot 7 claimed to have killed 20 government soldiers in south Ethiopia. In the beginning of October, three Zone 9 bloggers were arrested for publicly blaming the government for being responsible for the stampede in Bishoftu. On November 11, another Zone 9 blogger was arrested in Addis Ababa under the ATP. In late November, OFC leader Merera Gudina was arrested at Bole International airport on similar charges. jar

ETHIOPIA (TPDM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2002

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

The conflict over subnational predominance between the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM) and the government escalated to violent crisis. However, almost all violent incidents remained underreported. Allegedly, TPDM operated from Eritrean ground.

Following several attacks carried out by TPDM against the military along the Eritrean border, the government responded on February 26 by reinforcing its personnel and weaponry near the Humera and Badme frontlines [→ Ethiopia – Eritrea].

According to several reports, up to hundreds of soldiers peacefully joined the TPDM movement in the capital Addis Ababa in mid-May. Reportedly, the deserters demanded democratic change, criticizing the regime's continuation of power. On September 29, when a monitoring group interviewed Mola Asgeodm, former TPDM Chairman and leader of TPDM, he showed video material and photographs of training on IED manufacturing, suggesting involvement of the Eritrean military. vic

GAMBIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: NEW | Start: 2016

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

A new conflict over national power between the opposition, led by the United Democratic Party (UDP), and the government under President Yahya Jammeh, head of the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), erupted ahead of the presidential elections scheduled for December 1.

On April 14, demonstrators staged nonviolent protests in Serrekunda, Banjul Division, demanding electoral reforms. The police dispersed the protesters and arrested several, among them members of the UDP. One of them was Solo Sandeng, who shortly after died in custody of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA). Two days later, in a UDP-organized rally, 150 protesters called for the release of opposition activists and for information concerning Sandeng's death, accusing the authorities of having tortured him to death. The police used tear gas against the demonstrators and allegedly detained a total of 55 persons, including UDP leader Ousainou Darboe as well as at least five other party members. On April 21, around 20 of the detained protesters, among them Darboe, were charged by the High Court with different offenses such as unauthorized assembly and the incitement of violence. One week later, the court added the charge of "conspiracy to commit a felony".

In late April and early May, further anti-government protests were staged, especially in front of the High Court building in the capital, denouncing the mid-April arrests and calling for freedom of speech. For instance, on May 9, violent confrontations allegedly took place between demonstrators and paramilitary groups during a rally in front of the court. Around 40 persons were arrested by the police, some of whom were reportedly tortured in custody. Eight days later, Jammeh threatened to kill anti-government protesters on an APRC meeting. On July 20 and 21, Darboe and more than 20 other persons, who had been arrested in April, were sentenced to three years in prison. In the run-up to the presidential elections, the NIA arrested three journalists between November 8 and 10, which was harshly criticized by UDP presidential candidate Adama Barrow, among others. With 43.3 percent of the votes, Barrow won the presidential elections on December 1. Jammeh received 39.6 percent. While Jammeh allegedly congratulated Barrow on his victory the following day, he announced on December 9 that he refused to accept the results, citing irregularities in the voting process and demanding new elections. One day later, the UNSC unanimously condemned this reaction, calling on Jammeh to respect the outcome. Ensuing demands by an ECOWAS delegation for Jammeh's resignation did not succeed. On December 22, Marcel de Souza, President of the Commission of ECOWAS, stated that the ECOWAS standby forces would intervene militarily if Jammeh did not resign as president until 01/19/17. On December 31, Jammeh reiterated his demand for new elections and denounced ECOWAS's threat as "a declaration of war." jas

GUINEA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: UFDG et al. vs. government
 Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between the opposition coalition, led by the party Union of Guinea's Democratic Forces (UFDG), on the one hand, and the government of President Alpha Condé, on the other, continued.

On January 2, Condé appointed Sidya Touré, leader of the opposition party Union of Republican Forces (UFR) and candidate in the 2015 presidential elections, as his high representative, which was condemned by the UFDG as an attempt of co-optation. Throughout the year, the preparations for local elections scheduled for October and anti-government protests, mainly organized by the UFDG, dominated the political landscape.

On February 21, the Independent National Election Commission (CENI) postponed the local elections to an undefined date. Six days later, UFDG's leader Cellou Dalein Diallo denounced this move as a violation of an earlier agreement, which scheduled the elections for the first trimester of 2016. On March 21, the UFDG announced nationwide general strikes for March 30 and 31, criticizing the postponement of local elections, among others. During these days, authorities arrested eight suspected UFDG supporters in the capital Conakry for allegedly being involved in destabilizing activities.

On July 9, in a speech in front of his followers, Diallo demanded Condé to resign, accusing him of not respecting the constitution as well as previous agreements concerning the electoral calendar. Four days later, the government blamed Diallo for preparing a coup. In early August, Ousmane Gaoual Diallo, member of the UFDG, was arrested for having insulted Condé and for having threatened three other ruling party members during a speech at the UFDG headquarters in Conakry. On August 16, more than 500,000 people, among them numerous members of the UFDG, took to the streets of the capital, protesting the government's alleged economic mismanagement and corruption. The mass demonstration was accompanied by clashes between protesters and security forces using tear gas and live ammunition, leaving at least two persons injured. Moreover, one alleged bystander was shot dead.

On September 1, Condé and Cellou Dalein Diallo met for talks, discussing the country's socioeconomic situation, and both subsequently stated to have overcome differences. Six days later, the CENI announced that local elections would be held on December 18. Further talks between the government and the opposition about the organisation of local elections started on September 22, but were suspended a few days later. After the resumption of the talks in early October, both sides signed an agreement on October 12, according to which the current voter lists could be used for the local elections. Moreover, the latter were rescheduled for February 2017. afi

KENYA (INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1963

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

The limited war over resources and subnational predominance between various ethnic groups de-escalated to a violent crisis.

Clashes erupted over cattle rustling, land use, grazing and water rights, as well as competition over regional representation and control of oil-rich areas, both between different ethnic groups and among sub-clans within ethnic groups. Most affected counties were Isiolo and Laikipia in central Kenya, Marsabit and Wajir in northern Kenya and Elegeyo-Marakwet in western Kenya.

On January 7, communal violence over cattle theft and grazing grounds that started last December continued at the border of Kisumu and Nandi counties in Western Kenya, resulting in at least five fatalities and several burned down houses.

Pokot and Marakwet communities clashed between March 22 to 24 in Elegeyo-Marakwet, leaving at least four people dead, and dozens of livestock taken. In response to the fighting, Marakwet fighters killed three Pokot people on April 14. On September 16, another clash between the groups left two dead. In October, the communities clashed several times along the border of Baringo and Elegeyo-Marakwet counties, where Marakwet members had attacked Pokot herders near Kerio River, leaving three dead and stealing over 170 cattle. When hundreds of livestock were driven away by suspected Pokot raiders, three people were killed and two others injured during a series of retaliation attacks in gun fighting in the Kerio Valley.

In total, clashes between the two communities left at least 20 people dead this year.

The Degodia community attacked Gabra herders in Marsabit on March 26, killing two. Three days later, fighters from the Gabra community killed three Degodia people in a counter-attack. On April 25, Degodia clan militias raided Ajuraan clan homestead in Korondile, Wajir, killing three civilians and injuring three others. On November 5, six people were killed and two others were injured in fightings between Jibrail and Matan clans, sub-clans of Degodia, in Wajir, in the context of rising tension ahead of next year's elections.

Kipsigis, a Kalenjin sub-group, and the Kisii community clashed on the border of Narok and Kisii counties on October 21, leaving eight injured and two houses torched. The two communities engaged in a border demarcation conflict over grazing grounds. On November 6, after Kipsigis raiders had stolen three cows from Kisii farmers, clashes between the communities erupted at Olmelil along the Narok-Kisii border, leaving one dead and eight injured.

Aulihan and Abudwak communities clashed in Garissa county

between March 25 and 27, leaving at least one dead. In Mandera county at least 14 people have been killed in renewed clashes between local communities on June 18, when heavily armed assailants raided a village. Overall reported inter-communal fatalities counted up to at least 48. sdi

KENYA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1999

Conflict parties: JP vs. ODM
Conflict items: national power

The conflict over national power between the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and government escalated to a violent crisis. Ahead of next year's general elections, President Uhuru Kenyatta and his ruling coalition, Jubilee Alliance, formed the umbrella party Jubilee Party (JP) on September 8, incorporating a total of twelve parties including The National Alliance (TNA) and Deputy President William Ruto's United Republican Party.

Small protests erupted due to allegations of intimidating and bribing voters from both government and opposition during the by-elections in Malindi, Kilifi county, and Kericho county, on March 7, and in the counties of Kisii, Tana River, Turkana, and Kajiado, on October 26. Subsequently, ODM defeated its competitor JP in four of six counties.

In March, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) rejected the opposition's demand for a referendum named Okoa Kenya due to a lack of signatures. Its aim was to reform the Constitution regarding electoral and institutional issues before the upcoming general elections. Hence, in May and June, ODM supporters accused the IEBC of being biased towards the government. Calls for a reformation of the IEBC increased and provoked nationwide protests, later known as "Tear Gas Mondays." On May 16, May 23, and June 6, police forces used live ammunition, tear gas, and batons against protesters, killing at least five in Kisumu town, Kisumu county, and injuring at least 44. The police violence led to an international outcry.

On August 3, due to public pressure, officers of the IEBC secretariat agreed to resign. On November 10, experts of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan condemned the police's excessive use of force against protesters and journalists. On April 5, following the acquittal of Kenyatta in 2014, the International Criminal Court abandoned the trial against Ruto due to lack of evidence. He had been charged with mass murder and crimes against humanity that occurred in the aftermath of the general elections in 2007. anf

MALI (CMA ET AL. / AZAWAD)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: CMA et al. vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

The conflict over autonomy between the Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. The CMA, comprising the two Tuareg groups Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA) as well as other groups demanded a far-reaching autonomy of the northern regions Kidal, Timbuktu, and Gao, which they called Azawad. The Platform, another major coalition of armed groups, consisting among others of the Self Defense Group of Imrad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) and Ganda Izo, also called for enhanced autonomy rights but considered itself pro-governmental [→Mali (inter-militant rivalry)]. In June 2015, CMA, Platform, and the government signed a peace agreement after three years of negotiations. While numerous clashes between CMA fighters and military personnel had been reported until May 2015, no violent confrontations could be confirmed this year.

The CMA accused the government of having conducted an attack against a Tuareg camp situated between Timbuktu and Gao in the eponymous regions on January 15, in revenge for an attack against a Malian military convoy launched by unknown gunmen the same day, which had resulted in two dead soldiers. The army denied the accusations, stating that it had only launched an investigation at the Tuareg camp.

Until the end of October, efforts to resolve the conflict continued. Between March and October, six meetings of the follow-up committee (CSA) were held, discussing the disarmament and reintegration of militants in the regular army, joint patrols, as well as the installment of interim authorities in the northern regions. Nevertheless, the implementation of the peace agreement advanced slowly due to inter-militant rivalries in the north, especially in Kidal, eponymous region, where troops of GATIA and the CMA reportedly clashed several times this year. On September 17, Bilal Ag Acherif, Secretary General of CMA, accused GATIA and the government of putting the advancements of the peace process at stake by continuing the fights against CMA in Kidal region. However, in the twelfth meeting of the CSA on October 23, the parties agreed to implement interim authorities by the beginning of November. On October 28, soldiers of the French "Operation Barkhane", CMA members, and Malian military personnel conducted a joint patrol in Kidal.

Tensions rose again in the run-up to the communal elections on November 20. After the installation of the interim authorities had been postponed indefinitely, the CMA boycotted the elections and reportedly prevented others from casting their votes in Kidal region. According to the CMA, the non-installation of the interim authorities at the time of the election was a violation of the peace agreement. In response, the government accused the CMA of endangering the state's legitimacy. However, peace talks continued on November 28 with the 13th round of the CSA. lgu

MALI (INTER-MILITANT RIVALRY / NORTHERN MALI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Ansar al-Din vs. HCUA, MAA, MNLA vs. GATIA vs. Ganda Izo
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between various militant groups in northern Mali continued.

While the Ifoghas Tuareg group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and various Islamist groups, among them Ansar al-Din, had intended to establish their own state in the three northern regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu in early 2012, the alliance had broken in May 2012 [→ Mali (HCUA, MNLA et al. / Azawad); Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)]. In 2013, MNLA, the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA), and the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) had formed the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA). The Self-Defense Group of Imghad Tuareg and Allies (GATIA) had formed the so-called Platform with, among others, a splinter faction of MAA. Both CMA and the Platform had taken part in the peace negotiations with the government, which had resulted in a peace agreement on 06/20/15. Despite the agreement, CMA and Platform members had clashed repeatedly.

This year, tensions between CMA and the Platform arose over the control of the CMA-stronghold Kidal town, eponymous region, while combats were limited to the second half of the year. On February 2, around 50 vehicles with GATIA fighters entered the town of Kidal, which CMA considered as a provocation. The following day, Alghabass Ag Intalla, leader of CMA, demanded GATIA's retreat. On February 6, both parties reached an agreement assuring their mutual interest in dialogue and peace, and GATIA agreed to reduce its forces in Kidal. On July 19, violence between CMA and GATIA erupted for the first time since September 2015, when a shooting broke out in the town of Kidal, leaving one fighter on each side dead and one injured. This incident took place only two days after GATIA and CMA had signed an agreement in Niamey, Niger, over shared control of the city. In the following weeks, violence between the two groups intensified. Between July 21 and 22, GATIA and CMA clashed again in Kidal, leaving at least 15 fighters dead and approx. 40 injured. According to MINUSMA, the fighting involved the use of heavy weapons such as mortars. Eight days later, GATIA stated to have killed six CMA fighters during clashes the same day in Edjerer, Kidal. According to GATIA, 44 persons died and 58 were injured when CMA and GATIA fought again on August 9 in Edjerer. Further clashes between the two groups in Inachdayte, Kidal, on September 16 and between Tessit and N'Tillit, Gao region, on December 1 resulted in the killing of at least five fighters.

Moreover, GATIA attacked the self-defense group Ganda Izo in May and in June in order to disarm their members and to prevent them from installing their own military camp. Both groups were part of the Platform. On May 14, fighting between the two groups in Ndaki, Timbuktu region, left three militants dead, while on June 11, up to ten fighters died and at least one was injured in confrontations in Douentza, Mopti

region.

Furthermore, on November 16, the Islamist group Ansar al-Din clashed with GATIA, attacking their positions in Tisawached, Kidal, and killing three of their fighters. maw

MOZAMBIQUE (RENAMO)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: RENAMO vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

The violent crisis over autonomy between the main opposition party Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) and the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) continued. Compared to 2015, tensions between RENAMO and FRELIMO increased significantly.

Despite the 2014 peace agreement, members of RENAMO repeatedly used violence against both civilians and security forces, mainly in the provinces of Sofala, Zambezia and Manica's Bárue district, killing at least 68 people and injuring at least 103. Security forces targeting RENAMO attacked members and buildings, and seized weapons and ammunition. As a consequence, 6,000 civilians fled to neighboring Malawi and Zimbabwe. The continuing violence left 9,000 primary school pupils in Zambesia unable to continue their education, especially in the town of Sabe, where RENAMO announced the establishment of a new military base.

Throughout the year, RENAMO repeatedly conducted attacks on infrastructural targets, especially private and commercial vehicles. On April 18, police forces killed two members of RENAMO who attempted to sabotage a bridge in Honde, Bárue. For instance, gunmen injured three people in an attack on a bus in Longoze, Mopeia district, Zambezia, on May 19. On June 8, members of RENAMO burned down five trucks in Bárue, killing one person and injuring several more. In response, the police reintroduced armed escorts for vehicles on the 100 km stretch of the main highway between the Save River and Muxungue, Chibabava district, Sofala. On July 22, members of RENAMO attacked an escorted convoy on the N7 Vanduzi-Changara road in Sofala. In a subsequent fire exchange with the police, 16 people were injured. Furthermore, RENAMO gunmen attacked two coal trains of the Brazil-based mining company Vale on June 4 and 6 in Sofala, injuring at least three people. On July 25, members of RENAMO attacked another train of the company as it passed Inhamintanga, Cheringoma district, Sofala, killing the conductor. Vale later suspended coal trains along the Sena railway line. Furthermore, members of RENAMO frequently attacked local politicians and officials as well as their families. On July 24, members of RENAMO allegedly killed the wife of the village secretary of Tsana, Funhalouro district, Inhambane province. On October 14, members of RENAMO torched the house of a local state official in Muxungue. They injured him, killed his son, and shot at people trying to leave the building. RENAMO also repeatedly attacked governmental buildings. For instance, on July 26, members of RENAMO attacked the Cheringoma administrative post. They killed a policeman, burnt down a vehicle belonging to the National Institute for

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Social Action, and stole pension payments. On September 8, ten members of RENAMO attacked a police station in Lulute, Nangade district, Cabo Delgado province, killing the local police chief.

In the first half of 2016, the government reintroduced measures targeting RENAMO in Sofala, Zambezia, Nampula and Niassa. On March 27, police raided the party's headquarters as well as two of its leaders' houses in the capital Maputo and seized 47 guns. Throughout April, 15 members of RENAMO as well as one soldier were killed in clashes, while another three soldiers were wounded. On September 9, military forces took over a major RENAMO base in Sabe, reportedly killing eight people. Mozambican refugees in Malawi reported that soldiers had tortured and sexually abused alleged RENAMO supporters. Many of them also claimed that FRELIMO members had set fire to their houses and killed members of their families on suspicion of hosting members of RENAMO. Tete provincial police denied those claims.

In July, talks started between RENAMO and FRELIMO, assisted by mediators from the EU, regional partners, and the Catholic Church. RENAMO demanded autonomous governance in the central and northern provinces of Manica, Sofala, Tete, Zambezia, Nampula and Niassa, where it claimed to have won the 2014 elections. After the talks were temporarily put on hold in July, both sides informally agreed that governors should be chosen locally in late October. There was, however, no further progress and the international mediators left the country during the first week of December. Mario Raffaelli, their coordinator, made clear that they would only return in answer to a formal invitation from both FRELIMO and RENAMO. [joh](#)

NIGER (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

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

The violent crisis over national power between opposition groups, such as the main opposition party Nigerien Democratic Movement (MODEN), and the government led by President Mahamadou Issoufou and his Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS) continued.

Ahead of the presidential elections, on January 11, the appeals court rejected the demand for the release of Hama Amadou, the leader of MODEN and second-time presidential candidate. He had been in prison since November 2015 on charges of baby trafficking.

On February 2 and 3, Amadou supporters clashed with security forces, the latter using tear gas during rallies in the capital Niamey. No casualties were reported. Two weeks later, the Independent National Electoral Commission authorized the vote by witness, which the opposition denounced as a way to enable fraud.

Presidential elections that took place in stages between late February and late March were carried out peacefully. On February 21, Issoufou won the first round of the elections with 48.41 percent of the votes, while Amadou gained 17.41 percent. Two days later, the Coalition for Political Change in Niger (COPA), comprising the main opposition parties, rejected the

results, accusing the government of vote manipulation, and proclaimed a boycott of the second round on March 8. On March 15, authorities arrested Doudou Rahama, a member of the opposition party Democratic and Social Convention-Rahama (CDS), for calling his supporters not to vote for Issoufou.

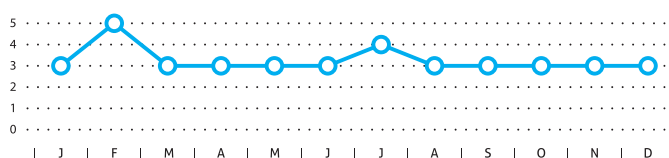
In the second round of election on March 20, Issoufou was reelected with 92.51 percent of the vote. Nine days later, Amadou was provisionally released from prison. On March 30, the COPA reaffirmed their denial of Issoufou's second presidency, demanding new elections and the clarification of the judicial situation of Amadou. Three days later, opposition groups started a two-week boycott of state institutions. Despite Issoufou's proposal for a government of national unity in late March, he formed his new government mainly with members of the ruling PNDS on April 11. On August 13, the National Movement for the Development of Society (MNSD), one of the two main opposition parties, quit the opposition to join a government of national unity. In reaction, on August 31, ten opposition parties established a new political platform, demanding democratic reforms and criticizing Issoufou's perceived dictatorial rule. On October 4, the local elections, originally scheduled for January 2017, were postponed by the National Council for Political Dialogue, which opposition members denounced as illegal.

Moreover, authorities arrested and convicted several journalists, anti-government protesters, and opposition politicians throughout the year. For instance, on June 4, three journalists were arrested for publishing documents about a fraud in the public health ministry's hiring process involving the president's wife. On July 12, seven MODEN members, who had been detained in November 2015, were sentenced to ten months in prison on charges of "armed gathering" and were released in mid-September. [mme](#)

NIGERIA (FARMERS – PASTORALISTS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: farmers vs. pastoralists
Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources



The conflict over resources and subnational predominance between farmers and pastoralists continued at war level for the fifth consecutive year.

While the conflict mainly revolved around issues of the control over arable land and cattle, it was further fuelled by differences concerning political, ethnic, and religious issues between the predominantly Christian farmers of Berom and Tiv tribes, on the one hand, and the mainly Muslim Fulani nomads, on the other. In total, violence between farmers and pastoralists accounted for 1,135 conflict-related deaths. As

in years before, violence between pastoralists and farmers concentrated in the Nigerian middle-belt, in particular in Benue, Taraba, Kaduna, Adamawa and Plateau, but also affected several southern states such as Ekiti, Enugu, Ondo, Rivers, Anambra and Abia. Desertification in the Sahel reduced fertile ground, and farmers appealed to their right to use their ancestor's farmland, while Fulani nomads claimed the areas as grazing land for their cattle.

Due to increasing violence between farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria's Middle Belt since 2009, government established a Special Task Force (STF) in Plateau State to observe the situation and interfere if necessary. Furthermore, in previous years, many communities had formed vigilante groups to defend their farmland or livestock, but also conducted retaliatory attacks, which exacerbated hostilities.

Throughout January, approx. 39 farmers and other villagers were killed by herdsmen in attacks on villages in the states Nasarawa, Enugu, Adamawa, and Benue, while three Fulani herdsmen were killed by cattle rustlers in Taraba state. On February 6, more than 30 Fulani gunmen attacked communities in Buruku Local Government Area (LGA), Benue, thereby killing ten farmers. Approx. 300 fled the area as the villages were seized and houses, food, and farmland were burnt down. In the following weeks, Fulani herdsmen attacked communities in the states Benue, Enugu, Anambra, and Taraba with guns and machetes, killing approx. 15 farmers and destroying several houses.

In the most fatal attacks, Fulani herdsmen raided several communities in Agatu LGA, Benue, from February 22 to 27. Approx. 300 inhabitants were killed in the coordinated attacks and 7,000 fled the area as the villages were destroyed.

Between March 8 and 17, Fulani herdsmen launched three attacks on communities in Benue and killed 29 farmers with guns and machetes. Moreover, on March 23, Tiv farmers killed a Hausa and a Fulani man in Ibi LGA, Taraba. In the following week, Fulani herdsmen attacked Tiv farmers in Butu village, Taraba, injuring one. Three days later, herdsmen killed twelve in a reprisal attack for the theft of their cattle in Ohali-Elu, Rivers State.

On April 2, Fulani herdsmen attacked a farm in the town of Akure, Ondo State, killing one security guard. On April 13, the farmers retaliated by killing a Fulani man in Irala-Mokin, Ondo. In a series of attacks throughout April, Fulani herdsmen raided villages in Benue, Delta, and Taraba, killing up to 56 farmers. For instance, on April 12, approx. 20 Fulani herdsmen attacked Gashaka and Bali LGAs in Taraba, killing up to 45 and destroying several houses. Furthermore, 24 farmers and herdsmen died in clashes between several communities in Obubra LGA, Cross River State, on April 24, after Fulani herdsmen had uprooted seedlings planted by Ukpe farmers. More than 500 Fulani herdsmen killed approx. 40 farmers in seven attacks in Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani LGA, Enugu, on April 25. Inhabitants fled the area and ten houses as well as a church were destroyed.

On May 1, Agatu farmers killed 20 Fulani herdsmen and 83 cows in Adayi and Loko areas in Nasarawa State. Throughout May, Fulani gunmen attacked communities in Taraba, Benue, Ekiti, and Kaduna. 28 farmers were killed and hundreds fled. On May 30, more than 100 herdsmen attacked Logo LGA, Benue, killing at least ten farmers and burning down several houses.

Throughout June, in a series of four attacks, Fulani herdsmen killed over 44 Tiv farmers in Benue, using guns and AK-47 rifles. On June 26, herdsmen attacked Hwak-Kwata, Jos South LGA and Hoss, Riyom LGA, Plateau, killing 22 and injuring six. In the first two weeks of July, herdsmen attacked approx. ten LGAs in Benue, killing a total of 81 people. On July 8, a clash between Fulani pastoralists and Gbagyi farmers in Bara-Kuta, Bosso LGA, Niger State, led to the death of four people and the displacement of 250. In the following weeks, Fulani herdsmen attacked two communities in Logo LGA, Benue, killing 19 farmers and burning down houses and farmland. A traditional ruler and three others were killed by Fulani herdsmen in Mangu, Bokkos LGA, Plateau State, on July 18.

In August, the community Godogodo in Jema LGA, Kaduna, was attacked by Fulani herdsmen three times. They killed 20 farmers and burned down farms. On August 1, Fulani clashed with farmers in Kodomun, Adamawa, killing 30 people. Approx. 50 Fulani herdsmen raided a community in Nikanu-West LGA, Enugu, killing one and injuring four others with machetes on August 25. Moreover, they raped women, pillaged property, and took over farms. Two days later, the community of Dinya in Gassol LGA, Taraba, was attacked by Fulani pastoralists and seven people were injured.

Fulani herders attacked Godogodo another two times in September, killing six farmers, injuring six others, and burning down several houses. In reprisal for the theft of 300 cows by Aku farmers, herdsmen killed one villager and kidnapped two others on September 8, in Aku, Igbo-Etiti LGA, Enugu.

On October 15 and 16, Fulani pastoralists launched another attack on Godogodo, killing 40 farmers. In response, several farmers attacked a bus in Jema, killing 14 Fulani herdsmen, the next day.

In November, pastoralists raided several communities in Adamawa, Abia, and Katsina, killing nine farmers, injuring eleven others, and destroying their farms. Hundreds of herdsmen attacked Kauru LGA, Kaduna, on November 13, killing 43 farmers and setting four villages ablaze.

In early December, Fulani herders attacked communities in Abia and in the capital Abuja, killing one farmer, injuring scores of others, and destroying crops. After Fulani herders had found two of their own dead on December 17, they attacked Tiv farmers in Dan-Anacha, Gassol LGA, Taraba, killing 42 and displacing 10,000.

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NIGERIA (IJAW GROUPS / NIGER DELTA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: Niger Delta Avengers, various Ijaw groups, MEND, IPOB vs. government, International Oil Companies in the Niger Delta

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent conflict over resources and the autonomy of the Niger Delta between numerous militias including the newly emerged Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) as well as several ethnic Ijaw groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. Throughout the year, several mili-

tias, especially the NDA, perpetrated over 1,400 attacks and acts of sabotage against pipelines belonging to international companies, causing significant damage to the oil production in the Niger Delta region. They also attacked civilians and clashed with military forces in the southern states Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Edo, Ogun, and Imo.

Between February and July, NDA attacked a large number of oil and gas pipelines. At least ten people were killed and many facilities shut down. In response, security forces executed several missions in the region to stop the activities of NDA and other Niger Delta militias. This caused residents to flee and prevented the remaining inhabitants from access to food. The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) criticized the excessive use of force by security personnel. On July 27, government forces launched air strikes, partially destroying a base of militants in Fatola, Ogun state, and killing several fighters. Following the assassination of four soldiers by unidentified gunmen one week earlier, government forces attacked an NDA camp on August 13, resulting in the death of two militants. On August 26, government forces launched an offensive against militants in Rivers State, killing five, arresting 23 and recovering large amounts of weaponry and ammunition. Four days later, the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Movement (NDGJM) attacked a governmental pipeline in Ogor-Oteri, Delta state, as a reaction to the operation. On August 20, NDA signaled readiness for a ceasefire and negotiations with the government. Throughout the year, the IYC repeatedly criticized operations by government forces, claiming that particularly Ijaw communities were affected by the operations.

The NDA also supported the pro-secession Biafra movement, which comprised the Niger Delta among others [→ Nigeria (MASSOB / Biafra)]. On June 27, NDA called for a referendum on the status of the Niger Delta as a region, demanding greater self-determination and a higher share of revenues from the oil production. Although claiming to support Biafran and Ijaw causes, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), as well as the IYC criticized and disavowed the NDA. Some militant groups like the Red Egbesu Water Lions, who were mainly comprised of Ijaw, and the Isoko Liberation Movement stated their support for the NDA. Moreover, throughout the year, further smaller militant groups emerged in the region, claiming more autonomy for the Niger Delta and the reallocation of oil revenues to the southern part of the country.

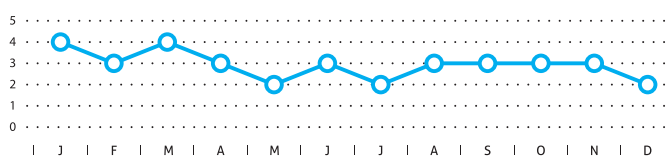
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NIGERIA (NORTHERNERS – SOUTHERNERS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1960

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

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between supporters of the two main political parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), escalated to a limited war. While the APC's strongholds were mostly in the northern states, most PDP supporters were based in the southern states. After tensions had intensified around the 2015 presidential elections, several elections on the gubernatorial and local level were accompanied by violence in 2016. Moreover, both sides raised concerns about harassment, intimidation at polling units as well as electoral fraud after several elections. Throughout the year, at least 124 people were killed.

In the run-up to gubernatorial elections in Bayelsa state, clashes between supporters of the APC and the PDP at the residence of the governor in Ekeremor Local Government Area (LGA) injured six on January 8. Violence continued around the re-run of gubernatorial elections in Bayelsa the following day. 17 people were killed in clashes and shootings occurred in several communities, leading to more than 600 IDPs. On February 16, clashes between supporters of the PDP and the APC resulted in the death of three in Ugbogbo, Benue state.

Supporters of both parties caused sporadic violence around Rivers state prior to the legislative re-run elections in March. On February 22, the state liaison office of a senatorial candidate was destroyed in Khana LGA, Rivers. The same day, an APC party chief and two family members were killed in Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni LGA, Rivers. On March 6, alleged PDP gunmen killed four APC members in Obibi, Etche LGA. The same day, four PDP members were killed by gunmen in Akuku Toru LGA, Rivers. In two separate incidents, members of the PDP-affiliated youth gang Icelander Cult Boys respectively killed one APC member in Opobo, Opobo-Nkoro LGA and an APC party chief in Asari-Toru, Asari-Toru LGA, Rivers, on March 7. On March 9, one man was shot dead in an alleged reprisal attack for the killing of the APC chief. Three days later, another APC chief was killed by gunmen in Yeghe, Khana LGA. On March 13, at least 42 deaths resulted from gun battles, infrastructure damage, and assassinations of supporters from both parties around the Rivers re-run election. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) the election in Rivers was disturbed by kidnappings and killings of INEC officials. Due to the high number of fatalities and kidnappings, as well as electoral fraud, the INEC annulled electoral results in eight LGAs. On March 20, an aide to a Rivers State Chief of Staff was killed by suspected members

of the PDP in Port-Harcourt, Rivers.

Clashes between supporters of the APC and the PDP erupted on April 25 in Dutse, Jigawa state, killing one and injuring three. The next day, gunmen killed a PDP chief in Okposi, Ebonyi. Moreover, clashes between supporters of the APC and the PDP in Nembe, Bayelsa State, as well as Minijibir, Kano state, resulted in two deaths. On June 20, an APC chief was killed by gunmen in Abua-Odual LGA, Rivers.

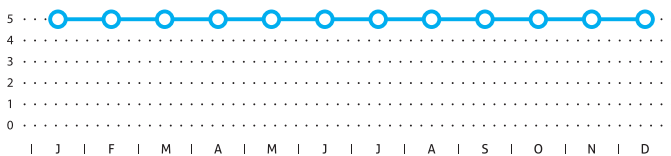
In the second half of the year, gunmen, allegedly related to both parties, killed several people. For instance, on August 29, an APC-affiliated human rights lawyer was killed by gunmen in Aluu, Ikwerre LGA, Rivers State. Three days later, gunmen killed a former PDP chairman in Ilutitun, Okitipupa LGA, Ondo State. Following the postponement of gubernatorial elections in Edo state, clashes between PDP and APC supporters resulted in the destruction of property across the state. Gunmen killed an APC chief and three others in Yeghe, Tai LGA, Rivers, on October 4. The following day, gunmen abducted another APC chief in Alakahia, Rivers. On October 10, APC's chief police aid was killed by gunmen in Mberi, Mbaitoli LGA, Imo State. On November 24, ahead of the gubernatorial elections, one APC chief was killed during clashes between PDP and APC supporters in Owo, Owo LGA, Ondo. ras

NIGERIA, CAMEROON, CHAD, NIGER (BOKO HARAM)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2003

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

Conflict items: system/ideology



The conflict over system and ideology between the Islamist group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) and the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger continued for the sixth consecutive year on war level. The group was radically opposed to secular and liberal values, in particular Western education, seeking to establish an Islamic caliphate in the region. The Nigerian government received different types of intelligence, military training, and development support from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel.

This year, the conflict accounted for more than 3,000 deaths, marking a 75 percent decrease compared to 2015. As a consequence of the violence, 1.8 million people fled the affected areas, compared to 2.4 million displaced in the last year. According to the UN, about 65,000 people in the conflict areas were living in famine-like conditions. While the Nigerian government under President Muhammadu Buhari repeatedly claimed to have defeated Boko Haram, the group continued to conduct large-scale attacks. Alongside troops from the affected countries in the Lake Chad Basin, comprising Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, forces from Benin contributed to

an AU-mandated Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Furthermore, throughout the last years, the Nigerian government had authorized the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), consisting of 26,000 local vigilantes to counter Boko Haram. Reportedly, the government strives to integrate members of the militias into the armed forces.

In May 2015, Boko Haram led by Abubakar Shekau had officially joined the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. On August 3 this year, IS proclaimed Abu Musab al-Barnawi, son of Boko Haram founder Mohammed Yusuf, as the new leader of the Islamic State's West African Province. Internal disagreements resulted in a split of Boko Haram into two factions, one led by Shekau, the other by al-Barnawi, which was acknowledged by the IS. The same day, Shekau renewed his pledge of allegiance to IS and stated four days later that his group would not follow al-Barnawi's leadership. The faction led by al-Barnawi opposed the indiscriminate killing of Sunni Muslim civilians and stated that they were going to concentrate their attacks on Western, military, and Christian targets such as churches.

Boko Haram's tactics included hit-and-run attacks on military bases, small towns, and remote villages as well as suicide bombings on civilian targets like bus stations and markets. Attacks on villages often followed the same pattern: a larger group of militants entered a village, overpowered the security forces, killed inhabitants, and raided the village. Suicide bombings were often carried out by women and girls and mostly targeted public places in larger cities as well as military convoys, involving up to four suicide bombers in one attack. Moreover, Boko Haram held a large number of people hostage of whom the Nigerian army freed thousands this year. Due to government offensives since the end of 2015, Boko Haram could not maintain its earlier tactics to conquer and control large territories and was mainly pushed back to the region of Sambisa Forest in Borno State, Nigeria. The Nigerian Air Force regularly used various types of fighter planes and helicopters to attack Boko Haram camps. In February, the Nigerian Armed Forces established a motorcycle battalion to respond more rapidly to attacks on remote villages. The group's activities in neighboring Niger, Chad, and Cameroon decreased significantly. While in 2015, the militants had carried out more than 100 attacks in these countries, causing more than 2,000 fatalities, Boko Haram conducted only 31 attacks outside Nigeria in 2016. Boko Haram attacks accounted for a total of 170 deaths in Cameroon and approx. 270 in Niger, while four attacks in Chad caused up to 17 fatalities. The attacks in Niger mainly focused on border posts and military infrastructure near the border to Nigeria.

In January, the conflict between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government claimed 348 lives. The most fatal attack took place in Dalori, Borno State, on January 30, where at least 65 civilians were killed. Boko Haram militants entered Dalori and opened fire on residents. When the residents tried to flee, three suicide bombers detonated their explosives in the crowd.

In February, violence peaked with 658 conflict-related deaths. On February 2, for the first time Nigerian Air Force launched a drone strike to destroy a Boko Haram base in the Sambisa forest. Twelve days later, a joint force of Nigerian and Cameroonian troops attacked a Boko Haram base in Ngoshe, Borno, killing 164 militants.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In March, a total of 259 Boko Haram militants were killed in military attacks. For instance, during a clearance operation, military forces killed 58 fleeing fighters in Baga, Borno, on March 23. Furthermore, suicide bombings and raids by Boko Haram resulted in 63 deaths leading to a total of 324 fatalities in this month.

On April 4, Nigerian troops claimed to have captured Khalid al-Barnawi, the leader of the Boko Haram splinter group Ansaru, but did not provide proof. The same day, Chadian troops stopped a convoy delivering weapons from IS-controlled territory in Libya to the Lake Chad region. On April 30, clashes between Fulani herdsman and Boko Haram left 30 Fulani dead in Alau, Borno [→ Nigeria (farmers – pastoralists)].

In May, the death toll decreased to 79 and marked the least violent month of the year. Most of these incidents took place in the area of the Sambisa Forest. On May 9, for instance, the Nigerian troops recaptured four villages from Boko Haram, Bala, Karege, Harda and Marka 3, Borno, killing 16 militants. In the village of Puchi, Borno, the inhabitants lynched two Boko Haram militants when the militants tried to collect taxes from them.

In June, violence increased again and led to approx. 300 deaths, many caused by intense fighting over the town of Bosso near the Nigerien border. On June 3, hundreds of Boko Haram militants attacked a military post in Bosso, Niger, killing 30 Nigerien and two Nigerian soldiers and taking control over the city of Bosso. Reportedly, Nigerien troops recaptured the town by the next day but Boko Haram seized control again two days later. On June 9, joint forces from Niger and Chad managed to take back control over Bosso. In the assault on the city the troops killed approx. 130 Boko Haram militants. In July, all 140 conflict-related deaths were confined to Borno. On July 9, two suicide attackers struck two mosques in Damboa, Borno, killing nine people.

In August, the Nigerian Army intensified their air strikes in the Sambisa Forest, which led to the majority of the 383 deaths in this month. On August 20, the Nigerian Air Force deployed a helicopter to attack a Boko Haram camp in Malam Fatori and Kangawa, Borno, killing approx. 300 militants. The Nigerian Army claimed that in one of these air strikes Shekau was fatally wounded. However, Boko Haram released a video on September 25 that showed Shekau.

In September, the conflict caused 187 deaths. The Nigerian Army recaptured the town of Mallam Fatori in Borno, which was held by Boko Haram since 2015. This operation led to an unidentified number of deaths on both sides. Furthermore, the Shekau faction and the al-Barnawi faction reportedly clashed in the Monguno area of Borno.

The month of October accounted for 90 conflict-related deaths. On October 17, Boko Haram militants struck a military base in the town of Gashigar, Borno, leaving 13 soldiers wounded and an unknown number missing. Boko Haram claimed to have killed 20 soldiers. Furthermore, recently deployed naval units of the Nigerian Army attacked Boko Haram camps at Lake Chad on October 28, killing 37 Boko Haram militants, while one vigilante died. Throughout October, three suicide bombings in Maiduguri, Borno, caused ten deaths. In one incident, the suicide bomber was shot by a Nigerian army sniper before he was able to detonate his explosive belt.

In November, violence increased again to 158 conflict-related

deaths. On November 28, Boko Haram militants ambushed a military convoy, guarding local government officials on the Bama road in Borno. The fighters detonated an IED and shot at the convoy. According to military sources, the attack was repelled and led to the death of 30 militants.

In total, the conflict accounted for 126 deaths in December. As last year, the Nigerian government claimed to have technically defeated Boko Haram. Buhari announced that the Nigerian army destroyed the so-called Camp Zero in Sambisa Forest, a former military training ground, that allegedly served as Boko Haram's headquarters. The army first bombarded the area around the camp with aircrafts and helicopters and then deployed ground forces. In contrast to the claims of Boko Haram's defeat, the group carried out several suicide bombings throughout December. On December 9, two female suicide bombers killed 58 civilians on a market in Maiduguri. On December 18 and 26, three female suicide bombers died in the attempt to detonate explosive belts as they were stopped by Nigerian military forces. Two days later, Nigerian government claimed to have captured al-Barnawi three months earlier. nre

RWANDA – FRANCE

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: Rwanda vs. France

Conflict items: other

The dispute over the juridical reappraisal of the 1994 Rwandan genocide between Rwanda and its former colonial power France continued.

On January 12 and 14, General Jean-Claude Lafourcade, who had headed France's UN-mandated Operation Turquoise during the Rwandan genocide, appeared as an assisted witness before the High Court of Paris. He was questioned over the allegations of leaving Tutsi to be attacked by Hutu in the western Bisesero hills in June 1994. Lafourcade refuted the accusations during the hearings, saying that at the time there had been a general underestimation on the international side concerning the scope of the killings and local authorities' involvement. In 2005, genocide survivors had filed a complaint in France, stating the French troops had been promising to return to Bisesero on 06/27/94, but when they came back three days later, hundreds of Tutsis had already been killed.

On July 6, Octavien Ngenzi, a former Rwandan mayor, and his predecessor, Tito Barahira, were convicted of crimes against humanity and genocide over the 1994 massacres before the Paris Court of Assizes. They were found guilty of crimes against humanity, massive and systematic summary executions and genocide in their village of Kabarondo, Eastern Province, where around 2,000 people seeking refuge in a church had been killed. It was the second trial by the court unit created in 2012 to deal with war crimes. They had already been sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment by the Rwandan people's courts, known as gacaca, in 2009.

On October 8, France reopened its inquiry into the 1994 assassination of then-president of Rwanda Juvénal Habyarimana. Rwanda's former chief of staff Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, living in exile in South Africa, accused Rwan-

dan President Paul Kagame of being linked to the shooting down of the plane carrying Habyarimana. Kagame claimed the plane had been shot down by Habyarimana's own supporters who disapproved of a peace deal Juvenal had negotiated with Kagame's fighters. A 2012 report by France had previously cleared Kagame of the charges. The investigation was first opened in 1998 and closed twice before, but now reopened after Nyamwasa requested to be heard by French officials. On October 11, Kagame stated that the judicial system of Rwanda was not subordinate to France or France's interests.

On October 31, the Rwandan National Commission for the Fight against Genocide released a document naming 22 French military officers claiming they had acted as perpetrators and accomplices during the genocide. In late November, Rwanda opened a formal investigation into the case of 20 French officials claiming they were suspected of involvement in the genocide of 1994. fb

SOMALIA (HABR GEDIR – BIYMAL / LOWER SHABELLE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Habr Gedir militias vs. Biymal militias
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between the Habr Gedir clan and the Biymal clan in the Lower Shabelle state continued. Tensions rose when the Habr Gedir settled in the region after the Somali civil war, which was the ancestral homeland of the Biymal.

In recent years, Lower Shabelle was increasingly affected by fighting between al-Shabaab and Somali government troops, impacting the ongoing clan conflict in the region [→ Somalia (al-Shabaab)]. Reports early this year stated that clans had provided large sums of money and fighters to al-Shabaab to fight against AMISOM forces stationed in the region. In late February, the al-Shabaab governor of Lower Shabelle, Ibrahim Aden Ali alias Najah, held reconciliation meetings with clan elders from both sides over clashes in Marka town.

On January 3, factions of government troops engaged in internal clashes along clan lines in Baraawe district, leaving at least four people dead and more than ten injured. On April 16, fighting broke out between the two clans in and around Marka. In the following days, ensuing clashes and retaliation attacks resulted in the death of at least 13 people and the burning of several houses on both sides. Clan elders from both sides and regional administrators held a reconciliation conference on April 25 in Marka in order to settle the ongoing fighting. Heavy fighting broke out again on June 18 in Marka, leaving at least five militants dead and several more injured. Stray bullets also injured many civilians. Five days later, clashes erupted near Afgove village, resulting in one death and another injured. Local elders intervened to reduce the tension in the area. In September, fighting reportedly occurred on September 7, 10, and 14. However, no casualties were reported. On September 29, fighting over control of Markab town resumed, causing many residents to flee their

homes temporarily. Between September 25 and 29, a meeting hosted by AMISOM and the South Western Somalia Federal Authority attended by representatives of both clans took place in the capital Mogadishu. The clans agreed to remove their clan militias and to deploy police forces in the region to limit any violence. Officials attending the conference urged the federal government and the international community to help end clan violence. Subsequently, on October 3, the AU deployed peacekeepers to the region. loc

SOMALIA (HAWADLE – SURRE / HIIRAAN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Hawadle militias vs. Surre militias
Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and grazing grounds between the Hawadle clan and the Dir sub-clan Surre in the Hiiraan region continued. Fighting between the al-Shabaab militia and government forces in Hiiraan further affected clan relationships in the region, with clans supporting both sides of the fighting [→ Somalia (al-Shabaab)]. Throughout the year, isolated incidents of clan violence occurred. On January 1, clan militias clashed in Bu'qowsar village. At least three people were killed and more than ten injured. At the end of March, fighting broke out between the two clans in and around Beledweyne town, leaving one injured. On March 31, the federal government gave the clans a 48-hour ultimatum to lay down their weapons. On April 13, the two warring clans held a reconciliation meeting in Beledweyne. However, fighting between the two clans erupted the next day on the town's outskirts over grazing land, leaving ten dead and dozens wounded. Fighting over grazing grounds between May 17 and 25 left at least 17 people dead and many more injured in Beledweyne. Hundreds of civilians were forced to flee the area as floods aggravated the situation. The AU sent troops into the region and clan elders urged both sides to come together and agree on an immediate ceasefire. On May 27, members of the federal government led mediation efforts between the two clans in Beledweyne. In October and November, three deadly attacks on individuals were committed in Beledweyne area. Clan leaders stated that they were linked to clan rivalries. On November 22, fighting broke out again between the two parties. The federal government immediately attempted to initiate mediation talks. During the ongoing clashes, several militants sustained injuries on November 25, while clan members wounded two AU peace-keepers one day later. On the same day, both sides signed a preliminary ceasefire, which was transformed into an unconditional ceasefire on December 14.

Another important point of contention for clan elders was the federal government's plan for unifying the regions of Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle into one federal state. In mid-October, representatives of both regions created the new state HirShabelle, elected Jowhar town, Middle Shabelle, as capital, and elected Ali Abdullahi Osoble, member of Hawadle clan, as regional president. loc

SOMALIA (INTER-MILITIA RIVALRY / JUBALAND)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1991

Conflict parties: Hirale militias vs. Interim Jubaland Administration

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance in Jubaland region between militias loyal to Colonel Barre Hirale and the militant Ras Kamboni Movement led by Sheikh Mohamed "Madobe" Islam continued. In 2013, clan representatives had elected Madobe as president of the Interim Jubaland Administration (IJA).

Throughout the year, militias loyal to Hirale signaled their willingness to negotiate with Madobe's government and thus negotiations took place to resolve the conflict. On February 20, Madobe opened a reconciliation conference in Kismayo, Lower Juba region, in order to end clan hostilities in the Gedo region. Two days later, tensions between the clans and the IJA arose, when IJA security forces detained two elders for publicly denouncing members of its cabinet. On April 12, an estimated 45 fighters were taken into custody by AMISOM forces after they had been brought to Kismayo to hand over their weapons and uniforms to the Jubaland administration. This was approved by Hirale. However, 16 of Hirale's fighters rejected the agreement and defected to al-Shabaab [→ Somalia (al-Shabaab)]. On June 14, Madobe appointed 18 new cabinet members, after reaching a deal with rival political groups in Jubaland to form a more inclusive government. On August 29, IJA soldiers stormed a house in Beled Hawo, Gedo, in which a meeting of a militia planning attacks on the administration allegedly had taken place. Subsequent fighting left four civilians dead and injured eight others. On November 20, the Somali federal election commission and IJA temporarily postponed elections in Kismayo after disagreements arose between the election commission and Jubaland communities. Security forces closed the polling stations for a second day after rumors emerged that election commissioners had been attempting to replace delegates representing a candidate from a certain clan. In early December, after the alleged murder of two IJA soldiers, an armed militia group loyal to Madobe was accused of harassing Kismayo residents in retaliation. Kismayo inhabitants fled their houses after Ras Kamboni militiamen had arrested several people and taken them to undisclosed locations. hss

SOMALIA (KHATUMO STATE – PUNTLAND – SOMALILAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

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

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between the self-declared independent state of Somaliland, the self-declared Khatumo State, and the autonomous region of Puntland continued. The area of contention comprised the provinces of Sool, Sanaag, and Taughher's Cayn section (SSC). On January 15, Somaliland troops seized a Khatumo headquarter in Balli Cad town, Togdheer, to disrupt a meeting of clan elders. Clashes between Somaliland and Puntland forces in northwestern Somalia were reported on the next day. On February 9, regional authorities of Khatumo State accused Somaliland to mount a campaign against the Khatumo-affiliated regional leader in Buhoodle district, Cayn province. Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Puntland leaders, and Somaliland's foreign affairs minister attended the Tana Security Forum on April 17 in Bahar Dar, Ethiopia. In mid-June, tensions between clans in the disputed Sool region, which were allegedly fuelled by Somaliland, led to several clashes, leaving twelve people dead. Khatumo forces allegedly attacked Somaliland troops in the city of Las'anod, Sool, and Buhoodle town, Cayn, on July 11. One week later, Somaliland and Puntland forces clashed in Boodacadde area, Sanaag province, leaving five dead, allegedly using light and heavy weapons. The fighting erupted while Somaliland authorities undertook voter registration in this area for the upcoming Somaliland presidential election.

While presidential elections were scheduled for March 2017, the parliamentary elections were again postponed for an unspecified period by Somaliland's President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo on September 16. This was instantly criticized by the British government on behalf of international donor countries. The next parliamentary election had been originally scheduled for September 2010, but had since been postponed twice because of unpreparedness of the National Electoral Commission. On August 9, Somaliland and Khatumo officials held talks in the city of Aynabo, Sool, concerning the status of Sool state. Somaliland and Khatumo officials set up another round of talks in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on November 1. During November and December, the northern parts of Somalia, comprising Somaliland, Khatumo state, and Puntland, were beset with a prolonged drought, becoming the major issue in domestic politics.

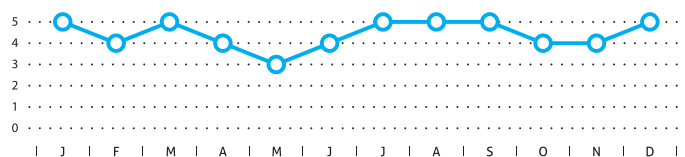
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SOMALIA, KENYA (AL-SHABAAB)

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 between the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) as well as the

Kenyan government continued for the 11th consecutive year. The Somali National Army (SNA) was supported by local government forces from the states of Galgaduud and Jubaland as well as the autonomous region of Puntland. It received further international support from the USA and the EU as well as troops sent by the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM), and additional Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF).

Both the UNSOM and the AMISOM mandate were extended until 03/31/17 and 05/31/17 respectively. Furthermore, Somalia and Kenya signed a cooperation agreement on various issues such as trade, border security, and infrastructure on February 2. On May 23, Kenya asked the international community for support in closing the Dadaab refugee camp, Garissa County, which Kenya suspected to harbor several al-Shabaab fighters and facilitate arms trafficking. According to Interpol, al-Shabaab tried to control the illicit trade of wildlife products after it had lost control over the main charcoal traffic routes. Thus, al-Shabaab reportedly established relations with Boko Haram in order to enhance the trade market [→ Nigeria (Boko Haram)]. As in the previous year, the so-called Islamic State (IS) called upon al-Shabaab several times to pledge allegiance to the group [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Several violent incidents were connected to activities of an IS-affiliated group, which formerly belonged to al-Shabaab. On May 5, SNA killed twelve alleged IS militants in Janale, Lower Shabelle state. On October 26, the IS-affiliated group took control over the port city of Qandala, Bari state. SNA recaptured the town on December 7, leaving 30 fighters dead and wounding 35.

Throughout the year, SNA and AMISOM forces managed to push back al-Shabaab from several major strongholds in Somalia. In the Bakool region, security operations left at least 46 people dead and led to the withdrawal of the group from key villages near Wajid town. Furthermore, SNA raided several al-Shabaab bases in Bulajadiid village and Hudur town. In the Bay region, SNA offensives in the cities of Ja'eemo, Baidoa, Gofgadud, and Dinsor as well as Qansan Dheere district led to the death of at least 36 people and the recapture of several villages. In the Gedo region, AMISOM and KDF killed at least 44 militants during airstrikes in the cities of El Adde and Tulo Barwaqo in the first half of the year. Joint forces captured the five al-Shabaab strongholds in the towns of Matano, Anole, Tubako, and Qutaley, on August 15 as well as Jungal village on October 27, killing at least five people. Clashes between joint forces and al-Shabaab in Surayo location, resulted in the death of seven militants on August 19. SNA, AMISOM, and local government forces advanced in Galgaduud, including operations in the el-Bur district between January 28 and September 7, killing at least 38 and injuring 30. During a major operation on March 27, Galgaduud forces killed at least 115 militants and arrested 110. Moreover, Galgaduud and SNA forces killed 27 al-Shabaab in anti-terror operations between March and September in central Galgaduud, and the villages Bud-bud, el-Abdi and Aad. Middle and Lower Shabelle continued to be affected by violence. From February until the end of May, joint forces took back control of the towns of Marka, Biya-Adde, Qoordhere, Runirgod, Barire, and Toratorow. From April 2 until November 16, joint forces raids on al-Shabaab camps led to the killing of at least 50 militants in the towns of Janale, Afgoye, Beled Amin, Adan Yabal, K50, and Mir-tugo. Joint US-Somali air operations in Toratorow led

to the killing of at least ten, including three high ranking militants on May 11 and September 5. Joint forces backed by Jubaland troops advanced in the Lower Juba region, resulting in a high number of casualties. During ground assaults, raids, and clearing operations of SNA, AMISOM, KDF, and Jubaland forces, at least 144 people were killed. Backed by US air forces, SNA and AMISOM further attacked al-Shabaab bases in the town of Bulo Gadud, Gedo, on July 21, killing a large number of people. In Puntland, local forces killed up to 200 al-Shabaab and captured 46 during "Operation Danab" in Suuj valley between March 14 and 24. 20 Puntland forces were killed. On March 24, they rounded up 156 suspected al-Shabaab in the city Bosasso, Bari. Between February 24 and July 10, joint forces repelled the militants from the towns el-Baraf, Halgan and Gobole, Hiiraan region, leaving at least 110 militants dead.

Throughout the year, several US air strikes killed hundreds of al-Shabaab. For example, a combined aircraft and drone strike near the capital Mogadishu on March 5, killed more than 150 militants, including five top commanders. US forces further killed senior al-Shabaab military commander Abdulahi Haji Da'ud in an airstrike on May 27. The same day, the Pentagon announced a Somali army ground operation on May 31 had killed Mohamed Dulyadayn, who was believed to be the responsible planner of the 2015 Garissa University attack. In Lower and Middle Juba, US Special Forces killed more than 30 militants, including senior commanders and the group's spokesperson Abu Mus'ab in Sakow town between August 10 and 14 as well as four militants in Kanjaron district on September 26. Two days later, the US reportedly misdirected an airstrike, killing 22 local government forces and civilians in Galkayo, Galgaduud. However, the US claimed it had killed al-Shabaab fighters. Galgaduud accused Puntland of having deliberately provided false information to the US [→ Somalia (Puntland)].

Despite government offensives, al-Shabaab regained control of considerable parts of the country and continuously attacked the joint forces, civilians, several MPs, and other officials. The militants mostly conducted IED, gun, and suicide bomb attacks. Most attacks took place in Mogadishu. Militants attacked a hotel and restaurant on Lido Beach on January 21 and August 25, killing more than 50 civilians. Also, the SYL Hotel was attacked on February 26 and August 30, leaving 51 people dead, at least 60 injured, and huge parts of the hotel and surrounding buildings destroyed. More attacks on civilians included car bomb attacks on markets, ports, restaurants, and further public places, leaving at least 84 people dead and 58 injured. Throughout the year, militants killed at least 33 MPs, higher officials, and their security personnel with car bomb and mortar shell attacks in the capital. For instance, Somalia's former defense minister Muhidin Mohamed Haji was assassinated with a car bomb on February 15. On July 26, al-Shabaab conducted twin car bomb attacks on the UN compound and the entrance of the Mogadishu International Airport, killing more than 20 people. Five days later, militants killed at least ten people and injured 15 in an assault on the Criminal Investigation Department. A car bomb on November 2 killed two SNA and wounded five. More attacks on SNA and AMISOM forces took place in Middle and Lower Shabelle. Militants repeatedly engaged in gun battles with security forces and attacked military bases with

grenades and car bombs, resulting in at least 97 deaths. On November 27, armed villagers resisted an al-Shabaab assault on Dumaaye. During the clashes, 26 people were killed. Furthermore, SNA and AMISOM suffered heavy casualties in the Bay region. Al-Shabaab raids left at least 117 people killed and 100 injured, mostly SNA and AMISOM forces. Most attacks took place in the city of Baidoa, further assaults were conducted in the villages Gof Gadud, Awdinle, and Burhakabo. In Galgaduud, an al-Shabaab attack on el-Bur airport on January 14 left 20 people dead. On June 29, more than 20 people were killed, after militants attacked an SNA base in el-Hareri village. They further captured the towns of Galaad and Budh on September 15, resulting in thousands of IDPs. On December 7 and 17, militants killed two electoral delegates in Haradheere town. In the Gedo region, militants took control of an AMISOM base in el-Adde town on January 15, killing at least 60 KDF soldiers and kidnapping several. On November 2, militants killed four and wounded a dozen KDF soldiers with IEDs near the city el-Wak. In Puntland, al-Shabaab seized a small port and several smaller towns, including Garad, during the first weeks of March. On March 31, they killed a local official with a suicide bomb. On May 31, al-Shabaab killed four Puntland soldiers with a roadside bomb in Galgala town, which was the only area in Puntland mainly controlled by the militants. More than 20 people were killed in twin suicide car bombings in the city Galkayo on August 21. On December 14 and 20, al-Shabaab shot regional deputy police commander Jamac Sahardiid and senior official Aden Huruse dead. Further attacks took place in the Middle and Lower Juba region. On March 17, al-Shabaab killed at least five Jubaland soldiers in Kulbiyow village. Clashes between local militias and al-Shabaab over charcoal trade resulted in five people killed and four wounded on August 17. In mid-December, militants killed nine livestock farmers and stole over 2,000 camels near the city Kismayo. Villagers, supported by SNA, fought back and killed three militants. In the Bakool region, clashes between local government forces and al-Shabaab in the village Moragabey between August 22 and November 15 left 33 people dead. In Hiiraan, al-Shabaab beheaded five people and took 59 hostages in el-Ali town on October 12. One week later, al-Shabaab killed at least two AMISOM soldiers in the city Beledweyne. Throughout the year, al-Shabaab executed more than 20 men in public, accusing them of cutting charcoal, spying, or witchcraft.

On Kenyan territory, KDF and Kenyan police forces targeted al-Shabaab mostly in Mandera county. For instance, police operations during January and February led to the arrest of 16 militants. On August 3, they further repulsed a militant attack on a security camp in Lafey town. In order to enhance security on the Kenyan-Somali border, the Kenyan government sent more police officers, KDF forces, and Rapid Deployment Units to Mandera on January 13. On February 2, KDF killed four al-Shabaab in Boni Forest, Garissa county and seized several weapons and vehicles. Al-Shabaab also launched several assaults in Mandera, killing at least 24 people in total. jtr

SOUTH AFRICA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: government vs. #FeesMustFall, #ZumaMustFall, township residents

Conflict items: system/ideology

The conflict over the orientation of the political and educational system between different opposition groups, led by the student movement #FeesMustFall, on the one hand, and the government of President Jacob Zuma and the university administrations, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis.

The groups protested for different policies, but shared their discontent with the living conditions and the overall situation in South Africa, characterizing the latter as one of inequality, unemployment and structural racism. The protests were above all directed at Zuma and had their base mainly among the black population. Emerging from protests against an increase of tuition fees in October 2015, the #FeesMustFall movement soon broadened its demands to racial equality in higher education and the decolonization of the university system.

On September 22, more than 500 protesting students threw stones and clashed with police at a campus of North West University in Mahikeng, North West province. Police used rubber bullets and tear gas. On October 10, police used tear gas, rubber bullets, stun grenades, and a water cannon to disperse protesters at University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Gauteng province. The next day, police arrested 19 students of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology after violent clashes.

Overall, students of at least 20 universities all over the country as well as the Congress of South African Students engaged in partly violent protests. In the course of this, university infrastructure was destroyed and set alight, lectures were disrupted, and examinations called off, leading to the shutting down of whole campuses. In total, more than 100 students were arrested. Several organizations endorsed the student protest and urged Zuma to act, such as the South African Council of Churches and the allied protest movement #ZumaMustFall.

Protest demands were also directed at other sectors of the South African education system. In late August, a group of black pupils demonstrated against the allegedly racist hair policy of the Pretoria Girls' High School. This triggered a public debate about racism in general at South African schools, with several institutions joining the protest.

Besides education issues, township residents rallied in several instances against poor basic municipal services, such as soiled water and electricity blackouts. For example, in Zandspruit, a township of Johannesburg, residents protested from March 15 to 17, blocking the road, burning tires, and destroying a gas station. mag, len

SOUTH AFRICA (XENOPHOBES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1994

Conflict parties: immigrants vs. xenophobes
 Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over local labor market shares and cultural hegemony between xenophobes and immigrants continued. As in previous years, the difficult job situation and social inequality in the whole country, which had a severe impact on the living conditions of the black South African population, led to several violent clashes between South Africans and various groups of immigrants, especially foreign-born shop owners.

Particularly affected by anti-immigrant violence was the densely populated and poor industrial belt around Johannesburg and the capital Pretoria, Gauteng province.

In January, a Nigerian man arrested for drug possession died while in police custody in a police vehicle in the city of Kempton Park, Gauteng. Around 500 protesters, Nigerian nationals among them, surrounded the car with the dead body, accusing the police of having killed the man. The police responded with firing stun grenades and rubber bullets, injuring at least three people.

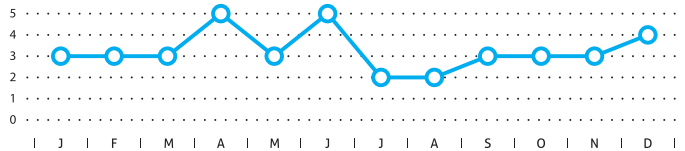
Throughout the year, several incidents involving violence against foreign shop owners were reported, three of them in Gauteng. In March, an Ethiopian national was shot inside a shop close to Johannesburg, Gauteng. In Katlehong, also Gauteng, four people were injured, one killed and several shops looted and destroyed in a fight over expired meat. Earlier that month, all fourteen Nigerians living in the small town of Wolseley, Western Cape province, had fled the area after a crowd of residents forced them out of their homes and looted their shops, accusing them of murder and drug dealing. On June 22, a political protest following the appointment of a local African National Congress candidate in Tshwane [→ South Africa (opposition)] escalated into a wave of shop lootings. Several towns in Gauteng, including the Ga-Rankuwa and Atteridgeville, were affected, about 20 buses and several trucks were torched, and foreign-owned shops and a shopping complex were looted. 54 people were arrested on charges of public violence and theft.

In July, residents set vehicles and foreign-owned shops alight in a protest over housing in Mbekweni area, Western Cape. In two different incidents in June, gunmen attacked two buses with Zimbabwean nationals, robbing their valuables. In September, two men attempted to abduct an Arabic-looking man on busy Pine Street, Durban. However, a group of by-passers prevented this by assaulting the kidnappers. mag

SOUTH SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Murle vs. Dinka vs. Nuer; Fertig; Shilluk; Karo sections et al., Toposa vs. Didinga, Gak Dinka vs. Manuer Dinka
 Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources



The war between various ethnic groups over subnational predominance, arable land, and cattle continued. This year, inter-communal violence mostly comprised ambushes, cattle raids, looting, and large-scale abductions, often targeting children, between rival ethnic groups and sub-groups, most frequently involving the Dinka and Murle tribes. Furthermore, the conflict gained a transnational dimension when Murle tribesmen, allegedly supported by Dinka members, attacked Nuer people on Ethiopian territory.

Inter-communal violence increasingly occurred in the context of the Nuer-affiliated Sudan People Liberation Movement-in-Opposition's (SPLM/A-IO), fight against the SPLM/A-led government under Dinka leader and President Salva Kiir, leading to more army and armed movement involvement than in previous years [→South Sudan (SPLM/A-in-Opposition)]. After renewed heavy clashes had erupted between the armed opposition of the SPLM/A-IO and the government in Juba in July, fighting largely shifted to Equatoria, which had been comparatively unaffected by conflict-related action in the previous years. Reportedly both SPLM/A and its opposition faction targeted civilians based on ethnic lines in the region, where Dinka and the numerous other ethnic groups had historically fought each other over land, cattle, and other resources. Reportedly Dinka soldiers targeted Kakwa, a Karo sub-tribe, and Pojulu for allegedly supporting Machar and killed Pojulu people while sparing those who could speak Dinka.

On January 1, a clash between rival tribes in Jur River County, Wau State, left two people dead and several displaced. In early January, a cattle raid by Dinka Bor members in Labanak Paya, Jubek State, on a camp of the Bari tribe, left five people dead, dozens injured and thousands displaced. On January 17, a clash between Murle and unknown tribesmen in Pator, Jonglei State, allegedly left one person dead and four injured, while 250 to 300 heads of cattle were reported missing.

On January 28, alleged Murle killed 24 in a cattle raid in Latjoor State, while two children were abducted and 800 heads of cattle stolen. In a fight between members of the Shilluk and the Dinka tribes at a UN base in Malakal, Upper Nile State, 18 people died and at least 90 were injured on February 17. Fighting continued when members of the Dinka involved in the clash attacked Nuer. In subsequent clashes, Dinka youths were reportedly supported by SPLM/A soldiers. Tents were burned down and dozens fled their homes. On

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

February 23, a clash between unspecified rival tribes in Tonj town, Warrap State, killed two and injured three. In February, Lou Nuer attacked Murle in a five-day long raid, reportedly killing many civilians and stealing thousands of heads of cattle. On March 29, armed Murle fighters reportedly attempted to raid cattle belonging to Lou Nuer, but the latter repelled them. Two days later, two passengers and 52 cows were killed, while scores were injured during an attack on a boat traveling the Nile River north of Juba.

Heavy clashes between members of the Murle tribe, supported by some Dinka members, and Ethiopian Nuer occurred on April 15, when hundreds of armed Murle and Dinka attacked a number of villages in western Gambela Region, Ethiopia. In the cattle raid, about 170 Nuer and 50 Murle were killed, while more than 75 were injured. Moreover, the attackers looted about 2,000 heads of cattle and abducted 108 Ethiopian children. The Ethiopian government launched a military operation afterwards to return the children to Ethiopia. In another incident on Ethiopian territory, on April 21, unspecified South-Sudanese tribes clashed in the Jewi Refugee Camp in Gambela, leaving 21 people dead and seven heavily injured. On April 28, violence erupted after an alleged abduction carried out by Murle in Bor, Jonglei. While the attackers shot one man dead during the abduction, two Murle members were killed in the rescue operation carried out by SPLM/a members and police forces the same night. Another attack alongside the Juba-Bor road in Mongalla, Central Equatoria State, by Mundari members killed three people, while 20 were injured and 3,000 displaced. On May 18, during clashes over stolen cattle between the Toposa and Didinga tribes at least 13 people were killed, while seven more were wounded in Nauru area, Equatoria State. Two days later, at least 26 people were killed and four injured in renewed clashes. After a resolution had been signed in May, government officials seized approx. 200 firearms from the Gelweng militia, a Dinka force, in Aguok centre in July. The move was in response to last year's heavy fighting between the Abuok and Thony sections of the Dinkain Warrap State, as well as to the latest clashes between the two groups from January 27 and 28 of this year that had left more than 40 dead.

Between June 24 and 28, in Wau, eponymous state, members of the Dinka tribe, allegedly supported by SPLM/A soldiers, attacked Fertit members, killing at least 43 people, looting houses and leaving up to 120,000 people displaced. The Gak and Manuer sections of the Dinka tribe clashed on November 9 in Pakam, Rumbek North County, Western Lakes State, leaving 22 people dead and 41 injured. On December 14, at least 17 were killed, nine more injured and 12,000 heads of cattle stolen in a raid by alleged Murle on Jalle members in Jalle area, north of Bor, Jonglei. Jalle youths reportedly killed eleven of the attackers. Mid-December clashes between Murle and Dinka left 21 dead, shortly after the two tribes had signed a peace deal to prevent cattle raiding and the abduction of children on December 4. The attack displaced hundreds of people and was followed by a petition of the Jalle community to local administration asking for effective protection, the recapturing of their cattle as well as for compensation for the dead. Regardless of the peace deal, fighting went on throughout December, with an attack on December 24 in Twic North county, Jonglei, leaving over a dozen

people dead and several injured.

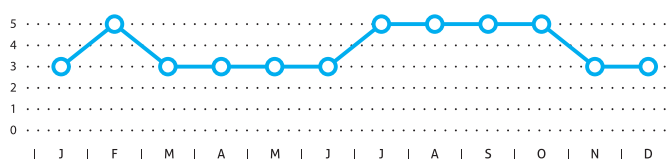
At the end of December, refugees from Sudan's Blue Nile region, allegedly supported by Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLM/A-North), clashed twice with alleged local Maban people, reportedly fighting together with government soldiers, in Maban county, Eastern Nile State [→Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile); Sudan – South-Sudan]. Fighting had erupted after the killing of a refugee and left more than 20 people dead. Throughout the year, several incidents of bus hijackings and attacks on civilians, particularly targeting Dinka and therefore being attributed to SPLM/A-IO members by government officials, occurred alongside the country's major roads. These attacks accumulated in the months of September and October, leaving approx. 100 civilians dead. lib

SOUTH SUDAN (SPLM/A-IN-OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-in-Opposition vs. government

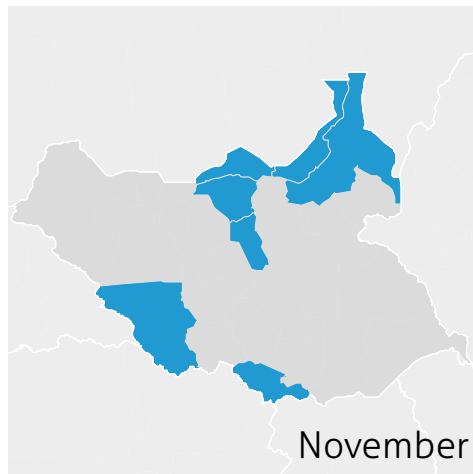
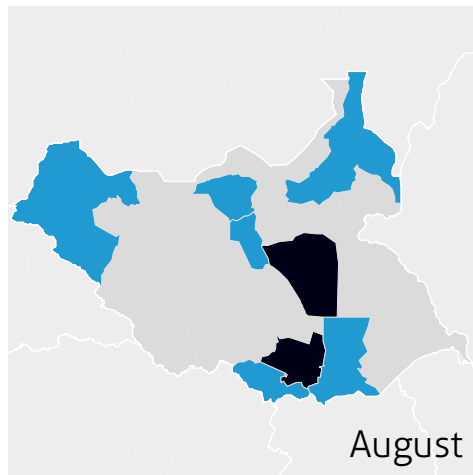
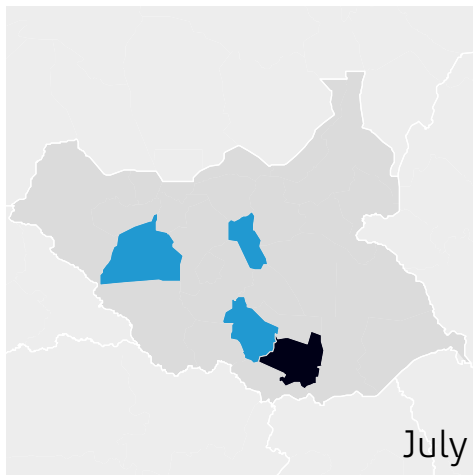
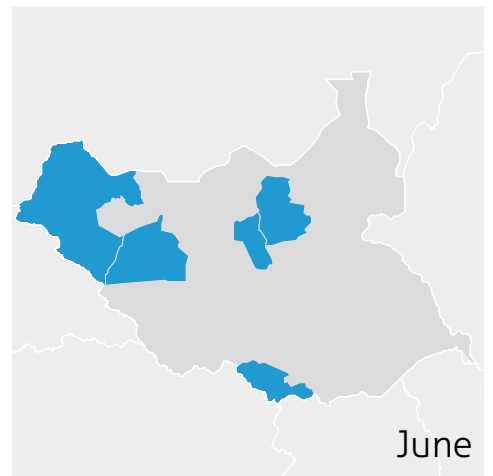
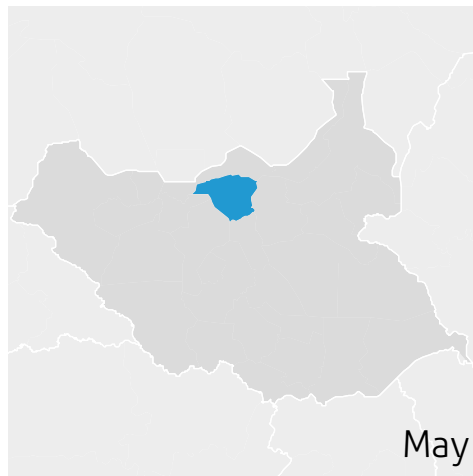
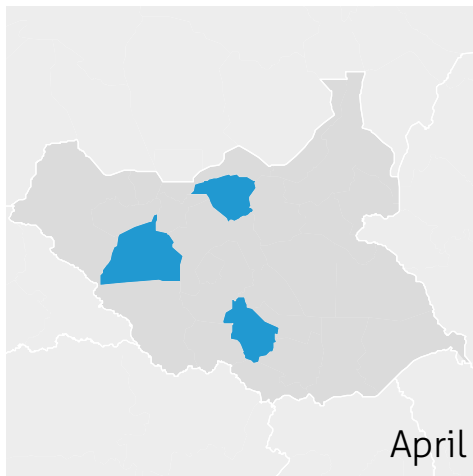
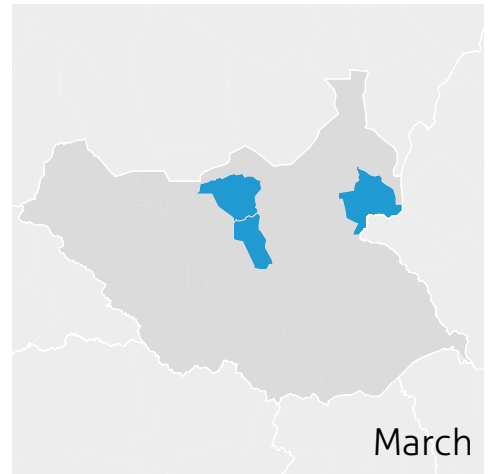
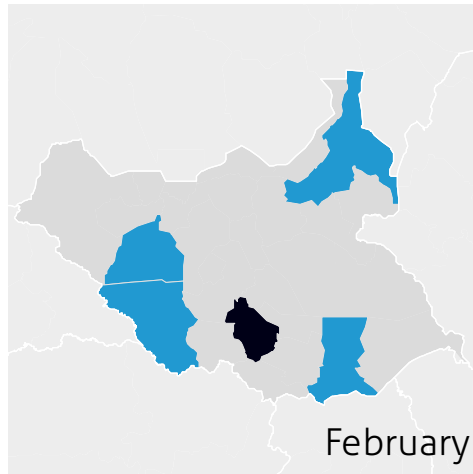
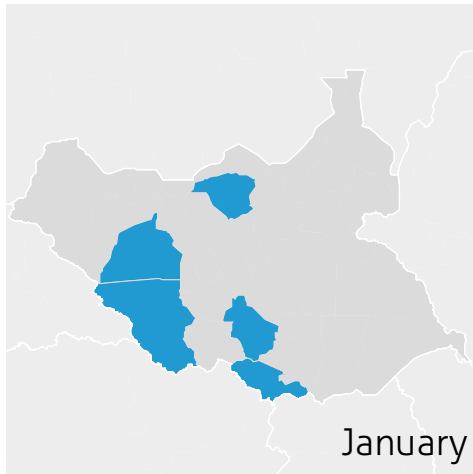
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources



The war over national power, the orientation of the political system, and resources, particularly the control over oil fields, between the armed opposition faction SPLM/A-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), on the one hand, and the government, led by SPLM/A, on the other, continued in its third consecutive year and intensified over a failed peace deal and warnings of a possible genocide. While SPLM/A was led by President Salva Kiir belonging to the Dinka tribe, SPLM/A-IO's leader Riek Machar was an ethnic Nuer. Ethnic affiliation had led to the outbreak of conflict in December 2013, when intra-SPLM/A clashes led to the formation of SPLM/A-IO.

Prior to a renewed escalation in July, both parties continuously disagreed on the terms of implementation of the Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) signed in August 2015. President Kiir had created 28 states in December 2015, an act SPLM/A-IO leader Machar called a violation of the peace agreement. The relocation of SPLM/A-IO forces to the capital Juba, a requirement for the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), was delayed after the deadline of January 22. On February 11, Kiir appointed Machar as First Vice President, with Machar returning to Juba on April 26. Two days later, the government, SPLM/A-IO, and other political parties formed the TGoNU, which took actions aimed at resolving the conflict but left the implementation of ARCSS unresolved. When fighting erupted in Juba in July, Machar left the capital and was subsequently replaced as First Vice President by former SPLM/A-IO chief negotiator Taban Deng Gai, creating two SPLM/A-IO factions. At the end of November, a UN commission reiterated claims

SOUTH SUDAN (SPLM/A - IN - OPPOSITION)



of ongoing ethnic cleansing by both sides, including systematic rape, the destruction of infrastructure, and the escalation of the national food crisis. On December 16, the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was extended for another year, increasing the number of deployed soldiers by 4,000. This year, the region of former Equatoria States, especially Juba, which now belongs to the newly formed Jubek State, was most affected by violence.

During the first half of the year, fighting subsided due to the ongoing attempts of implementing ARCSS, however, both parties frequently accused each other of ceasefire violations. For instance, on January 31 and February 1, government forces reportedly attacked areas under SPLM/A-IO control in Mundri East County, Amadi State, allegedly using chemical weaponry, leaving at least ten from both sides, as well as several civilians dead. Two weeks later, government forces shelled SPLM/A-IO's Medewu base in Amadi and burned down several villages under SPLM/A-IO control, killing many civilians and displacing hundreds. On March 12, government forces attacked SPLM/A-IO's positions in Aweil North County, Lol State, with heavy artillery causing many fatalities. Four days later, SPLM/A-IO allegedly attacked people on Koch county road, Northern Liech State, with RPGs and machine guns, killing twelve and injuring more than 50.

On April 3, an armed group allied to SPLM/A-IO allegedly attacked the village Juach, Northern Liech, killing two and forcing many civilians to flee to Bentiu town. Government and SPLM/A-IO accused each other of having launched attacks on civilians with heavy weapons in Northern Liech on May 6. After government forces attacked SPLM/A-IO forces at Matjang and Tuarkiel, Northern Liech, on May 15, SPLM/A-IO seized heavy weapons. On June 11 and 12, renewed clashes between SPLM/A-IO and the government in Kajo-Keji county, Yei River State, left at least 42 dead. Three days later, clashes between government forces and an unknown armed group in Raja town, capital of Lol, left several killed and wounded, displacing more than 400. The governor of Lol accused the SPLM/A-IO of being responsible for the attack, which rejected the accusations.

In the second half of the year, violence escalated again.

On July 7, heavy fighting erupted in Juba between government forces and SPLM/A-IO, continuing until July 10. At least 272 people were killed, including 33 civilians, and approx. 42,000 people were displaced. More than 200 cases of sexual violence were reported, including the rape of civilians and foreign aid workers, with violence being increasingly ethnically targeted. Machar, who went into hiding, claimed that the clashes were calculated to kill him. Kiir gave Machar an ultimatum to return to Juba and resume his duties as First Vice President. When the deadline expired on July 30, Machar was replaced by Gai. Machar, parts of the SPLM/A-IO, and the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), a body of African and international actors, criticized Gai's nomination.

At the end of July, heavy fighting with tanks and attack helicopters took place around Juba, leaving hundreds of soldiers dead and wounded on both sides. On August 12, both parties clashed southeast of Juba, leaving 15 soldiers dead and four military trucks destroyed. Three days later, SPLM/A-IO announced that they had killed 25 soldiers between Torit, Imatong State, and Kapoeta, Namorunyang State. Mean-

while, United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) provided Machar an airlift to neighboring DR Congo and later on to Sudan. By the end of the year, he resided in South Africa.

On August 20, at least ten soldiers were killed and several wounded in clashes between SPLM/A-IO and government forces in Leer county, Southern Liech State. On August 20 and 21, at least 275 people were killed and hundreds of civilians were displaced when suspected SPLM/A-IO forces affiliated with the White Army, a traditional ethnic Nuer militia, attacked the administrative building in Duk county, Jonglei State.

Throughout the beginning of September, both groups clashed sporadically in Imatong, Yei River, and Jubek, resulting in several deaths as well as the destruction of weaponry and infrastructure. On September 13, further fighting took place along Yei-Lau road, including the looting of several houses, which forced thousands of people to flee to Yei, capital of Yei River. On September 25, heavy fighting erupted between the government and SPLM/A-IO in Rubkona county, Northern Liech, causing a high number of fatalities. Many locals reportedly fled to neighboring Uganda and DRC. Between September 28 and 30, fighting in Morobo county, Yei River, reportedly resulted in the capture of Morobo town by SPLM/A-IO. A week later, on October 4, the government clashed with SPLM/A-IO in the towns of Yei, Morobo, and Kaya, all in Yei River, leading to the withdrawal of opposition forces from these areas.

In Juba tensions reportedly increased in early October amongst rumours of Kiir's death, which Information Minister Michael Makuei denied in a press conference on October 12. According to government forces, armed opposition fighters had attacked trucks carrying civilians from Yei to Juba the day before, killing 21 and injuring 20 [→ South Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. SPLM/A-IO denied these allegations. Heavy clashes in the city of Malakal, Eastern Nile State, on October 19, resulted in several deaths, including two high-ranking generals. Furthermore, hundreds of people were internally displaced. On October 22, heavy clashes between the government and the SPLM/A-IO occurred in Leer, Southern Liech, displacing hundreds of people with reportedly 600 fleeing to a nearby UNMISS base. The following day, the Shilluk militia known as Aguelek force, fighting under the control of SPLM/A-IO, announced to have lost two areas near Malakal, Eastern Nile, to the government. Reportedly, scores were killed. Perieno Oyet, the SPLM/A-IO-appointed governor of Imatong, claimed that its forces had repelled a government attack in Jerusalem, near Torit town, Imatong, on October 25, leaving many dead. On October 30, Kadibe military base, Wau State, was seized for two days by SPLM/A-IO, which allegedly abducted 500 children and 100 soldiers, and forced many civilians to flee.

Throughout November, fighting continued, displacing thousands. On November 6, alleged SPLM/A-IO fighters killed ten civilians when attacking government forces in Bentiu town, Northern Liech. SPLM/A-IO said it had killed 21 soldiers, when the latter tried to recapture areas near Wadekona town, Western Nile State, on November 9. One day later, at least four were killed and hundreds displaced during an attack by fighters allegedly belonging to SPLM/A-IO in Yambio, capital of Gbudwe State. Between November 5 and 11, at least 21 civilians were killed by government troops on Yei-Lasu road

near Yei town. On November 16, SPLM/A-IO gained control over Bazi, a border town to DRC, Morobo in Yei River, and Kaljak in Northern Liech. The same day, opposition and government forces clashed in Adaab el Bahr, Unity State, killing at least 15.

At the beginning of December, Ethiopia and Sudan agreed to close all offices held by SPLM/A-IO on their territories. On December 4, SPLM/A-IO claimed to have gained full control of Lasu in Yei River, killing at least 16 soldiers and capturing heavy arms. Three days later, SPLM/A-IO announced they had seized Ombachi town in Yei River. Kiir and Machar rejected a peace meeting proposed by South African President Jacob Zuma the same day.

On December 8, Kiir ordered the deployment of further troops to oil producing regions. The UN Human Rights Council held a special session on December 14, discussing the increasingly ethnically motivated violence. The same day, Kiir initiated the so-called National Dialogue, aiming at the integration of all political forces, a move rejected by Machar but welcomed by JMEC. On December 19, renewed clashes erupted in Renk and Mundri counties, Wau, leaving several dead. On December 23, the UNSC dismissed a resolution drafted by the US, proposing an arms embargo and further sanctions. This was welcomed by the government and criticized by Machar.

In mid-December, at least 15 people, including four soldiers, were killed in separate incidents around Torit town, Imatong. Also, SPLM/A soldiers carried out massive lootings of churches, schools, and residential areas in Morobo County, Yei River. During clashes between government and opposition fighters in Daplual and Male villages, Southern Liech, over 20 civilians were killed and thousands displaced on December 28. On December 30, three SPLM/A-IO generals reportedly defected to the SPLM/A-IO faction led by Gai. One day later, SPLM/A carried out a disarmament operation in Juba. Both the UN and the regional body Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) repeatedly condemned the systematic killing of civilians committed by both conflict parties, calling for an arms embargo on December 16.

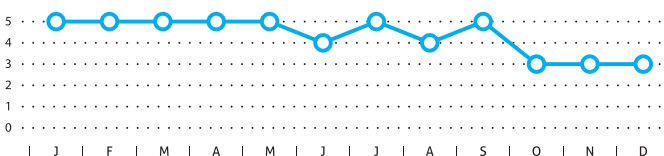
In the course of the year, more than 320,000 fled to neighboring countries, particularly Sudan and Uganda, while at least 200,000 were internally displaced. Throughout the year, reportedly at least 1,200 people were killed. While many deaths remained unregistered, the estimated death toll since the outbreak of the conflict in December 2013 varied between 50,000 and 300,000. This year, SPLM/A soldiers carried out repeated attacks against foreign aid workers. In December, SPLA chief of staff, General Paul Malong Awan, urged troops to refrain from violence against aid workers. As in previous years, the food and health situation further deteriorated, leaving millions at risk. According to UNICEF, 1,300 children were recruited by government forces as well as armed groups in this year. ves, nbm, jaw

SUDAN (DARFUR)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2003

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

Conflict items: autonomy, resources



The war over autonomy and resources, such as water and land rights, as well as control over gold mines, between various armed groups and the government continued. As in the last 13 years, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) contested ethnic Arab domination over African tribes in the country's peripheral regions with conflict-related actions intensifying as compared to last year. SRF is an armed opposition's platform comprising the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), including its factions led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) and Minni Minawi (SLM-MM), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Gibril Ibrahim, as well as the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), which mostly operated in the states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. The government employed its regular armed forces, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudanese Air Force, as well as the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), mostly comprising the so-called Janjaweed and the Popular Defence Forces (PDF). The African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UN-AMID) also continued to operate.

In recent years, the conflict developed a new dimension, thereby increasingly overlapping with inter-communal fighting, since Arab tribes that had been armed by the government to fight insurgency groups as part of the RSF, started to compete over precious metals with the government as well as amongst each other. Former Janjaweed leader Musa Hilal, for instance, reportedly controlled Darfur's biggest gold mines and increasingly contested the central government. When the UNSC issued a resolution to extend a panel of experts monitoring violations of the UN arms embargo for Darfur in April of this year, Russia, who had signed an agreement on gold extraction rights with the government in 2014, put on hold the publication of a panel report describing militia and government involvement in unregulated gold mines in Darfur [→ Sudan (inter-communal violence)].

At the end of December 2015, the government under President Omar al-Bashir had extended the latest ceasefire for the Darfur region for one additional month. In early January, both the government and the SLM-AW accused the other side of breaking the ceasefire in the region of Jebel Marra, a mountain range located in the states of South, North and Central Darfur. This year, SLM-AW was involved in most of the fighting, while the other armed groups reduced their armed activities in the context of peace negotiations.

Beginning on January 15, SAF, supported by RSF, conducted

a large-scale military offensive in the Jebel Marra region with the goal of clearing the area of SLM-AW holdouts. The Sudanese Air Force supported the ground offensive through daily air raids in the area. By the end of January, 44,700 people were newly displaced to refugee camps throughout Darfur, with some entering neighboring Chad. Government and military officials frequently called the military campaign a success and guaranteed the safety for all IDPs to return home, while denying systematic attacks on civilians in the affected areas.

Throughout the first half of the year, heavy fighting reportedly took place on an almost daily basis, with both sides offering conflicting statements on the number of casualties. Due to the government preventing UNAMID and aid organizations from entering conflict-affected regions, including this year's hot spot of Jebel Marra region, battle reports were difficult to verify. From February 15 to 17, heavy fighting occurred in the area of Kutum, Central Darfur, with the SLM-AW claiming to have killed 47 government troops and wounded 19 others. On March 9, the SLM-AW supposedly killed 47 military troops in an attack on a military convoy of heavily armored vehicles accompanied by paramilitary tribal fighters, allegedly belonging to RSF. A week later, on March 16, the SLM-N and SLM-AW reportedly killed 71 government troops in a battle southeast of Guldo in Central Darfur. On the same day, the government reinforced its military presence in Jebel Marra by sending hundreds of additional military vehicles into the region. From April 4 to 10, a six-day battle between government and SLM-AW forces took place south of Golo, Central Darfur, with government and militia troops reportedly numbering 5,000 men. According to SLM-AW reports, up to 1,000 government troops died, while other media reports spoke of approx. 100. The government denied all reports of this battle. A few days later, on April 13, the SLM-AW confirmed statements by the government that they controlled the Sarong area in Central Darfur.

As of June, various aid organizations suggested that the escalation in Darfur since January had caused 150,000 new IDPs, with the possibility of 30,000 more people hiding out in caves in the mountains. The IDPs mainly fled Sudanese Air Force raids, which were flown with Antonov aircrafts and, as in previous years, reportedly also targeted civilians and infrastructure. Following the air raids, RSF frequently looted and burned down villages. In late June, al-Bashir declared a unilateral ceasefire in Darfur, after having already announced a four-month ceasefire in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. By July and August, the Sudanese Air Force reduced the number of bombardments conducted, with government troops and allies controlling much of Jebel Marra. Nevertheless, the SLM-AW occasionally reported military victories. On July 22, SRF proclaimed to have killed over 100 SAF and RSF troops during fighting in western Jebel Marra. In a similar incident two months later, on September 17 and 18, the SLM-AW supposedly killed at least 71 government troops, after being attacked in western Jebel Marra. On September 29, a Human Rights group released a report on the fighting in Jebel Marra, stating that the government had used chemical weapons in at least 30 attacks, killing between 200 and 250 people. Furthermore, the air raids destroyed at least 171 villages and much livestock since the beginning of the year. SRF claimed that up to 1,500 people died in the chemical weapon attacks.

The government denied all allegations.

After months of negotiations, SRF agreed to sign a ceasefire agreement with the government on October 30 that promised coordinated peace talks in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, areas in which all three rebel groups had been involved in fighting. The SLM-AW leadership split on the issue of whether to join the peace talks with the government. On November 6, a group of SLM-AW defectors led by El Amin El Tahir and Abu Jamal Bakr signed a peace agreement with the Central Darfur government in Zalingei.

Similar to past years, the Sudanese government made it difficult for UNAMID peace-keepers to enter any battle-torn areas and pushed for UNAMID's departure from Darfur altogether. However, at the end of June, the UNSC extended the mission's mandate for one more year. As in previous years, UNAMID peacekeepers faced violent attacks. On January 7, for instance, armed groups ambushed a UNAMID patrol, injuring one peace-keeper. Later, on January 31, tribal gunmen hijacked two UNAMID vehicles near El Daein, East Darfur, and on March 9, gunmen on five Land Cruisers attacked a UN convoy in North Darfur, killing one and injuring another UN peacekeeper.

Between April 13 and 15, the citizens of Darfur voted in a referendum over whether to unify the five existing states into one state of Darfur. According to the official election results, 97.72 percent voted against unification. However, various opposition parties, armed groups, and IDPs criticized the referendum process for causing more division between the Arab and African population in Darfur [→Sudan (opposition)]. Additionally, the security situation in Darfur prevented many people from voting.

Towards the end of the year, tens of thousands of IDPs returned home to their villages in Jebel Marra. Throughout the year, the displaced were affected by a severe food and health crisis in overfilled camps or in caves, especially during the rainy season starting in June. Armed groups and government troops alike raped civilians and IDPs.

As in the past, unexploded ordnances, spread out through Darfur ever since the fighting began in 2003, remained a constant threat, killing livestock and people on a weekly basis.

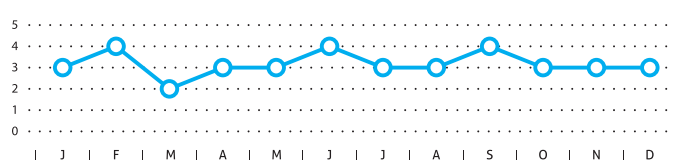
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SUDAN (INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↘ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: Habaniya vs. Salamat vs. Fellata vs. Massalit vs. Beni Halb, Rezeigat, vs. Ma'aliya; Awlad Raid Rezeigat vs. Zaghawa Rezeigat et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over subnational predominance and resources,

such as cattle, arable land, water rights and access to gold mines, between various predominantly Arab pastoral tribes and subtribes de-escalated to a limited war. In the context of a more effective involvement of local administration as well as the establishment of buffer zones, inter-communal violence caused less fatalities as compared to previous years. Throughout the year, inter- and intra-tribal fighting took place involving members of Ma'aliya, Rizeigat, its sections, Zaghawa and Awlad Zaid, Beni Halba, Massalit, Misseriya, its sections, al-Ziyoud and Awlad Umran, Salamat, Fellata, Habaniya, Awlad Rashid, El Borno, Awlad Sibeh, El Jamaniya, and Awlad Saror. As in previous years, most incidents of inter-communal violence took place in Darfur, fewer in Kordofan, both regions where armed groups were fighting the government [→Sudan (Darfur); Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. Reportedly fighting increasingly erupted over gold mines in the Jebel Amer region, North Darfur, where tribal groups competed for extraction rights with government representatives as well as foreign nationals.

After clashes between Ma'aliya and Rizeigat tribes had caused many victims in 2015, clashes once more erupted over livestock theft in Yassin locality, East Darfur State, on April 17, leaving 20 dead, 15 injured and two vehicles destroyed. When the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) attempted to arrest involved Rizeigat on May 9, other Rizeigat attacked soldiers, wounding three. On June 6, Rizeigat and Ma'aliya representatives signed a reconciliation accord in Bielel locality, South Darfur State, agreeing on financial compensation for fatalities of the April 17 clashes. The same day, the state government formed a commission to resolve further frictions between local herders and farmers. Since fighting continued on August 24 in West Kordofan, and on October 14 and 15 in East Darfur, leaving seven dead in total, two further peace deals were mediated, with the last being signed on October 19 in East Darfur. The deal was supported by the The African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

Attacks frequently occurred in the context of cattle rustling and competition over grazing-lands and often involved blood vengeance. For instance, when camel herders destroyed three villages on June 22 in an attack on a farmer community in Um Tajok, Kereinik locality, West Darfur, 23 people died and twelve were injured. The next day, government forces intervened and one soldier was reportedly killed in crossfire. Violence concentrated in North Darfur this year. During a cattle raid in Ba'ashion on August 14, for instance, Arab militias attacked Zaghawa herders, killing three, injuring two and abducting five. After gunmen had killed three people and stolen 1,000 cows from farmers in Tawila locality, North Darfur, on August 24, about 900 herders riding camels, horses, and motorcycles gathered in the area. In the following days, the herders killed one farmer, abducted another, and gang-raped two, while their livestock destroyed at least 150 acres of farmland. On November 21, herders killed three people in three different attacks in Baronga, Kass, and Nyala, North Darfur, when local farmers tried to hinder herders from entering their farms with cattle. The continuing violence in North Darfur resulted in approx. 400 damaged farms and caused many residents to flee. As a consequence of the clashes, large areas of farmland and also crops were destroyed.

In retaliation for the killing of one of their own, a group of Beni Halba raided the Massalit villages of Mouli and Mouli Kodomi,

West Darfur on January 9, killing 13, and injuring 27, while approx. 7,000 people were internally displaced. On February 14, 25 people died in revenge attacks between Fellata und Salamat members in Al-Nadhef area, South Darfur, following mutual accusations of cattle theft. On March 3, SAF, supported by police, forcefully disarmed members of the Salamat and Fellata in Tullus and Buram localities, South Darfur. Subsequently, 84 members of both tribes were detained. On May 16, Fellata and Salamat members held a conference discussing the violations of the September 2015 peace agreement, signing a renewed reconciliation agreement committed to disarmament as well as financial compensation for those killed. On May 27, state governors, native administrations, nomadic leaders and civil society organizations participated in a peace conference in Nyala, South Darfur, with the aim of finding a solution to all tribal conflicts among Darfuri communities.

After Fellata and Massalit leaders had signed a peace agreement on July 20, fighting broke out again on August 22 and 27 in Towiel and Nabbagay, South Darfur. Members of Fellata, aided by Rizeigat, attacked Massalit farmers, killing nine Massalit and two police personnel. Ten people were killed in fights over cattle-rustling between Fellata and Salamat on October 9 and November 5 in Buram locality, South Darfur. When members of the Habaniya, supported by Fellata, and Salamat clashed on November 11 in Buram locality, South Darfur, six Habaniya and four Salamat were killed. The violence was triggered by reprisal attacks and robberies from both sides. On October 30 and 31, tribesmen of the Zaghawa and Awlad Zaid, Rizeigat subclans, clashed in Mara area, West Darfur, leaving 16 people dead. As a consequence, troops from the joint Sudanese-Chadian border force were deployed, and, on November 17, leaders of both tribes, supported by the local authorities from Chad, agreed on a reconciliation accord. Irrespective of this accord, intertribal violence flared up again in Birak, Chad, when Awlad Zaid tribesmen attacked Zaghawa tribesmen on November 25, killing four.

Tension rose between the Rizeigat and the Massalit, with clashes throughout November leaving twelve Massalit and 27 Rizeigat dead in South Darfur. Both parties agreed on holding a reconciliation conference on December 10 in Bielel. In Ri-haid Al-Birdi, South Darfur, members of Awlad Rashid, a clan of Ta'aisha tribe, led cattle onto farmland of El Borno tribe on December 23. In a subsequent clash between the tribes, 16 were killed and 27 injured. In West Kordofan, intra-tribal clashes between the Awlad Sibeh and El Jamaniya clans of the Hamar tribe flared up on May 17, leaving 38 dead and many more injured. The violence erupted after eight members from both clans had been killed in disputes over cattle the previous week. On February 15, the leaders of the Misseriya subgroups al-Ziyoud and Awlad Umran signed a final reconciliation accord in Ed Daein, East Darfur, in response to heavy clashes over land in 2014. In the Lagawa locality, West Kordofan, two groups of armed Misseriya clashed on July 13, leaving four dead. svb;jow

SUDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: National Consensus Forum, student-led groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between various opposition groups and the government of the National Congress Party (NCP) led by President Omar al-Bashir continued. While the government acted mostly through the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), the opposition comprised the National Consensus Forum (NCF), which included the National Umma Party (NUP), the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) and the Popular Congress Party (PCP) as well as the Sudanese Congress Party (SCoP). The Sudan Call Forces, another oppositional umbrella, included the NUP, SCoP and six other oppositional organizations. As in previous years, both the government and its opposition were supported by student-led groups.

This year, protests focused on the Darfur referendum and energy price hikes [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. On February 12, NUP demanded the suspension of the construction of three dams in Northern State, as no agreement with local residents had been reached. Five days later, protests against the project were dispersed by security forces, allegedly using batons and tear gas. On March 5, the PCP founder and leader Hassan al-Turabi died at the age of 84. The NCF declared their rejection of the upcoming Darfur referendum on February 12, stating that it was failing to restore peace, misleading expectations, and not representative of the population's interest. On April 11, ten students of al-Fashir University were arrested for protesting the referendum. When the referendum took place twelve days later, an overwhelming majority voted for keeping the previous administrative division. Oppositional groups boycotted the referendum due to their criticism of the procedures and the reportedly high number of voters who had not been able to register.

During clashes between opposition- and government-affiliated students at the University of Kordofan, North Kordofan State, on April 19, one student was shot dead, while 22 others were injured. On April 27, another violent clash between opposing student groups in Khartoum, in the eponymous state, led to a police intervention during which one oppositional student was reportedly killed. On April 29, NISS demanded all newspapers to refrain from covering student protests, allegedly to prevent further violence. On May 16, violence erupted between NCP and PCP loyal students over university elections at the Holy Quran University in Khartoum, injuring 25.

Delegations of the government, armed groups and the NUP came together for the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) mediation talks in Addis Abeba on March 18, resulting in the so-called "Roadmap Agreement", which was signed by the government, but not all opposition groups. The Sudan Call Forces signed the agreement on August 8. During further peace talks between August 9 and 14 on ceasefire agreements in Darfur, Blue Nile

and South Kordofan, no agreement was achieved [→ (Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile))]. The signing of the National Dialogue document was officially closed on October 11, however, the government extended the possibility to sign the document, as major opposition parties like the NUP had not yet signed.

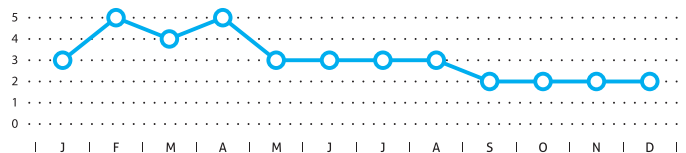
Between November 4 and 11, seven leading figures of the SCoP, including its deputy chief Khaled Omar, were arrested for inciting protests against the rise in fuel and electricity prices. On November 24, approx. 300 people protested against the high prices and were dispersed by police forces. Between November 27 and 29, people in Khartoum went on strike, following the call from the political opposition. The government seized the print copies of four independent newspapers on November 29 for reporting about the strike. On November 30, the police used tear gas to disperse approx. 300 protesters. Overall, the government arrested 40 people, who had protested the recent price hikes. After calls for a general strike on December 19 and 20 had been posted on social media, the government announced a strict policy against protesters on December 12. Nevertheless, general strikes against the austerity measures and the restriction of civil liberties began on December 19. coc

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

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: SPLM/A-North vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources



The war over autonomy and resources such as land, water energy and oil between the SPLM/A-North (SPLM/A-N) and the government under President Omar al-Bashir continued. In the first half of the year, fighting escalated in the context of a yearly flare-up during dry season.

As in previous years, a large-scale government offensive in the peripheral areas of Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur resulted in a high number of ground assaults and aerial bombardments. Government troops comprised Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), Sudanese Air Force, and the paramilitary units of the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with the latter increasingly recruiting locals over tribal militias from Darfur [→ Sudan (Darfur)]. The employment of paramilitary troops to support ground offensives was relatively new to the area, but had previously been used in Darfur and increasingly in South Kordofan State. RSF also operated in Blue Nile State, reportedly for the first time since their creation in 2014.

Fighting subsided in the second half of the year, for both conflict parties joined the Roadmap Agreement that had been proposed by the African Union High-Level Implementation

Panel on Sudan end of last year [→ Sudan (opposition)]. The government signed the agreement on March 23, while the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an alliance of armed groups including SPLM/A-N, signed on August 8. On June 19, the SPLM/A-N had already accepted a four-month ceasefire for South Kordofan and Blue Nile, the so-called Two Areas. As in previous years, clashes between both conflict parties as well as systematic shelling of infrastructure and civilian areas with Antonov aircraft by the Sudanese Air Forces, concentrated in South Kordofan.

Although in the middle of the dry season, clashes decreased significantly in the first three months of the year. In January, SAF reportedly moved southwards from bases in Bout and Damazin into Kurmuk town, Blue Nile, an area that had long been controlled by SPLM/A-N. On January 2, SPLM/A-N attacked an army garrison in Mazlagan, South Kordofan. While the government spoke of 13 SPLM/A-N fighters killed and several injured, 30 government troops were killed according to SPLM/A-N. In the context of ongoing peace talks, a round of informal negotiations between SRF and government representatives were held in Berlin, Germany, between January 22 and 24, not advancing on issues concerning the National Dialogue. While negotiations were held in Berlin, SAF allegedly attacked the SPLM/A-N base in Aroum, but were pushed back after two days of clashes, that left many dead on both sides. On January 23, SPLM/A-N officials publicly questioned the government's commitment to establishing peace.

Throughout February and March, violence concentrated in Jebel Kolgo, close to Ed-Damazin, state capital of Blue Nile, where SAF repeatedly attacked SPLM/A-N strongholds, reportedly leaving hundreds dead on both sides. Dozens were allegedly killed in a clash between SAF and SPLM/A-N at a military base in Abray, South Kordofan, on February 13. Four days later, an attack by SPLM/A-N on a SAF unit in Blue Nile left 16 soldiers dead according to SPLM/A-N. On February 20, SPLM/A-N attacked a military convoy in the Kilo area of Blue Nile, killing up to 200 people, while few of the attackers were reportedly killed. In two separate attacks on army convoys in South Kordofan on February 25, SPLM/A-N allegedly killed dozens of soldiers and destroyed heavy weaponry. According to a SPLM/A-N statement from February 28, government troops were being deployed to Talodi town, South Kordofan. Clashes intensified in March. By the end of the month, both parties claimed that the respective other side had suffered heavy losses. For instance, SPLM/A-N reportedly repelled a large-scale government attack on areas under SPLM/A-N control near El Firshay, South Kordofan, on March 8. No fatalities were reported. In addition, heavy shelling by Sudanese Air Forces, in both South Kordofan and Blue Nile, killed dozens of civilians. On March 27, two civilians were killed by missiles launched by government troops on Um Serdiba, South Kordofan.

Approx. 20,000 were displaced and many killed in series of aerial bombardment in the vicinities of Heiban and Um Dorein in the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan, throughout April and May. In the same period, violence in the Two Areas killed about 2,000 people. While violence had previously been restricted to the Two Areas, SPLM/A-N allegedly killed 32 and wounded 100 soldiers in fighting in the Angarto area north-east of Talodi, North Kordofan, on May 10, thus spreading the violence to surrounding territory. From March to June,

SAF dropped at least 227 bombs on the Two Areas. Furthermore, they launched ground attacks on Al Azarak, Mustaraq and Mardes, Nuba Mountains. SAF looted stores and burned down fields and crops. The operation displaced 75,000 people, mostly from Al Azarak area in Heiban County. Due to the beginning of the rainy season as well as the aforementioned ceasefire agreements, violence subsided from June on, with approx. 40 conflict-related deaths. In October, SPLM/A-N reiterated concerns regarding the government's commitment to the ongoing peace negotiations and thus revoked the Roadmap Agreement. In December, government representatives announced the continuation of large-scale military offensives, if SPLM/A-N further restrained from negotiations. Furthermore, government forces reportedly set up bases in the Two Areas throughout the rainy season in anticipation of the yearly resumption of clashes in November. Nevertheless, al-Bashir had issued an extension of a unilateral ceasefire on October 10, while SPLM/A-N, together with two armed groups from Darfur, also declared a unilateral cessation of hostilities at the end of the month.

As in previous years, both the government and SPLM/A-N committed systematic attacks on civilian-populated areas and were accused of war crimes such as the alleged recruitment of children by SPLM/A-N and the shelling of humanitarian infrastructure by government soldiers who allegedly used cluster and barrel bombs. Furthermore, the government continued to strictly restrict access to the conflict-affected areas, also blocking humanitarian aid. The areas most affected by government airstrikes were Kurmuk county and Blue Nile with 14 aerial bombardments, including at least 96 bombs, and Heiban und Dalami counties in South Kordofan with 30 attacks, including 146 bombs, respectively. Throughout the year, hundreds of people were killed, but no exact numbers were recorded. Furthermore, fighting had displaced approx. 600,000 since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. Due to the severe destruction of crops and farming lands, the already severe food situation further deteriorated, leaving as many as 200,000 IDPs at risk. lmp, nbm

SUDAN – SOUTH SUDAN

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Sudan vs. South Sudan

Conflict items: territory, resources

The violent crisis between Sudan and South Sudan concerning the disputed oil-rich border region of Abyei and the so-called "14-mile area" alongside the border continued. Abyei remained under temporary United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) control, as the secession of South Sudan in 2011 had left Abyei's status undecided. Both Sudan and South Sudan were vying for long-term control. However, the region was yet to conduct a referendum. The indigenous Ngok Dinka wanted Abyei to join South Sudan, whilst the nomadic Misseriya favored Sudanese control. After heavy clashes between Ngok Dinka and Misseriya groups last year, the situation remained tense but de-escalated [→ Sudan, South Sudan (Abyei)].

Stating that the situation along the border remained a threat

to international security, the UNSC extended UNISFA's mandate in May and November and urged the Sudans to resume peaceful negotiations on the final status of Abyei. Subsequently, both sides worked on normalizing their bilateral relations.

On January 25, the South Sudanese President Salva Kiir ordered the withdrawal of the army from the border. He also agreed on reviving the joint committees between the two countries to implement the cooperation agreement signed between the Sudans on 09/27/12. It had previously failed due to indifferences concerning the cutting of oil transmission fees to be paid to Sudan for transporting crude oil through its pipelines. Two days later, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir ordered the opening of the border for the first time since the South's secession.

On February 5, transport and trade through Nile waters between the Sudanese border city of Kosti and the South's capital Juba resumed, following four years of closure, two days after the negotiations on lowering oil transmission fees had succeeded.

On March 17, the North warned the South against providing military support to armed groups, thus continuing last year's policy of trading accusations concerning the respective support of each other's armed opposition [→ Sudan (SPLM/A-North / South Kordofan, Blue Nile)]. Subsequently, the Sudanese government threatened to close its border with South Sudan again. It also decided to treat South Sudanese nationals residing in Sudan as foreigners.

South Sudan accused Sudan of dropping twelve and 24 bombs respectively from warplanes on its defensive positions in Babaneis, east of Renk town, Eastern Nile State, on March 24 and March 26. Reportedly, they destroyed weapons, shelters, and killed some livestock. While no fatalities were reported, the attacks resulted in 1,500 people being displaced. The Sudanese Army denied the accusations. On March 29, Sudan re-closed its border. On June 5, Sudan and South Sudan signed a package of security agreements related to the re-deployment of joint military forces along the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ), which had been established in a 2012 agreement. They also approved a plan to stop supporting and harboring armed groups and to open border crossing points.

At the end of the month, the two governments requested the AU to launch the demarcation process of their common border. On August 22, Sudan and South Sudan reached agreements on security and border issues as well as extending one on oil transit fees. They decided on reopening their common border within 21 days.

Both in mid-September and on October 24, al-Bashir threatened to close the border with South Sudan again as well as cutting off food aid, much needed in the context of its neighbor's worsening food situation, unless the South expelled the armed groups allegedly acting from its territory. On September 29, the Sudans' Joint Border Commission endorsed documents regulating the border demarcation process. On November 24, Kiir directed all his country's security organs and armed forces to ensure that no groups resided or operated inside the South's territory. On the sidelines of the 4th Africa-Arab Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the Sudans' presidents also agreed to establish direct means of communication to solve problems the joint committees en-

countered. anh

SUDAN, SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: Misseriya vs. Ngok Dinka; Misseriya Awlad Umran vs. Misseriya Awlad Saror

Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources between the indigenous Ngok Dinka and the pastoralist Misseriya as well as various sub sections in the contested border region of Abyei continued. Since the secession of South Sudan in 2011, when the status of Abyei had been left undefined and subject to a future referendum, the area remained under interim administration by the UNISFA mission [→ Sudan – South Sudan]. While Ngok Dinka, inhabiting Abyei, aimed for the region to join South Sudan and had conducted a unilateral referendum in 2013, the nomadic Misseriya, roaming between Abyei and Darfur, preferred Sudanese administration. While inter-communal violence, including clashes over cattle raids and land as well as blood vengeance had been endemic to the region, the situation intensified in the post-secession period [→ Sudan (inter-communal violence)]. Fighting had escalated in 2014 with up to 400 fatalities, but decreased the following year leaving dozens dead. Both groups had met on 07/10/15. This had been their first meeting after the Ngok Dinka paramount chief Kuol Deng Kuol had been assassinated by a Misseriya in 2013. This year, while inter-ethnic tensions further decreased admits a "line of disengagement" that had been set up by UNISFA last year, fighting was mostly intra-ethnic. Throughout the year, UNISFA continued operations to maintain stability and promote reconciliation. The Misseriyas' traditional journey northward, beginning with the start of the rainy season in June, remained largely peaceful this year. While Misseriya presence in Ngok Dinka inhabited areas led to incidents of cattle rustling, UNISFA often successfully mediated the return of cattle. On May 26, leaders of the Ngok Dinka and the Misseriya held their first official meeting in Sudan's capital Khartoum to discuss preconditions for peaceful coexistence.

In June, UNISFA established a joint market in Amiet, north of Abyei intending to foster trade between the rival groups. The market, however, was temporarily closed due to renewed incidents of violence. In July and August, UNISFA helped organize three meetings between Ngok Dinka and Misseriya leaders to discuss the market's security situation. An agreement was reached including the reopening of the market, compensation payments for prior cases of killings and lootings as well as the establishment of a joint traditional court.

On April 27, a Ngok Dinka shot dead another Ngok Dinka in Abyei town. A Misseriya cattle herder stabbed another Misseriya cattle herder to death close to Tajalei village, on May 10. Another incident of intra-ethnic violence left three Ngok Dinka dead and one injured on June 10. On September 7, the rival Misseriya branches Awlad Umran and Awlad Saror

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clashed. The fighting lasted for two days and killed 43 people with both sides using heavy weaponry. On November 15, the UNSC extended the mandate of UNISFA until 05/15/17 in reaction to the ongoing violence in Abyei as well as the disagreement over the border demarcation between Sudan and South Sudan. The lack of local administration structures deteriorated the food situation, forcing many thousands into Sudan. nbm

SWAZILAND (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: PODEMO, SNUS, TUCOSWA, SNAT et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The system and national power conflict between the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO), the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT), the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS), the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA) and several other opposition groups on the one hand, and King Mswati III on the other, continued on a violent level. Major issues were corruption, the higher education system, and wage policy.

The king had banned parties and unions in 1973. The 2006 constitution further guaranteed his absolute rights. In the past years, several demonstrations and clashes between opposition groups and the police took place. On February 3, 300 SNAT protesters blocked roads, demanding the government to publish the salary review report on civil servants in the capital Mbabane, Hhohho district. Police arrested two protesters. 1,500 trade union members staged protests for the same purpose on February 25, also in Mbabane. The demanded review report was published the following week.

SNUS members boycotted lectures and allegedly vandalized the University of Swaziland on February 22. Policemen drove a Casspir troop transporter into a group of students, heavily injuring one but taking her to the hospital immediately. On October 12, police fired at least six shots on 200 demonstrating students of Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Mbabane and injured four.

On August 28, police shot in the air outside the Plantation Forestry Company in Hhohho to disperse striking farm workers who demanded a wage increase. On September 9, police assaulted six farm workers, allegedly while forcing them to write statements that they had fired the shots in August. len

TANZANIA (CHADEMA, CUF – CCM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1993

Conflict parties: CUF, Chadema vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the political system and national power between the opposition parties Civic United Front (CUF) and Party for Democracy and Progress (Chadema), on the one

hand, and the ruling Party of the Revolution (CCM), on the other, continued. While CUF challenged the national power of CCM in the semi-autonomous region of Zanzibar, Chadema did so on the mainland.

The first major issue was the re-run of the general elections in Zanzibar on March 20 after the Zanzibar Electoral Committee had nullified the results of the Zanzibar elections on 10/25/15. The second issue was Chadema declaring to challenge the alleged suppression of democracy by the government of the new President John Magufuli.

On January 28, CUF called the nullification of the Zanzibar election results of 2015 unconstitutional and declared to boycott the re-run of the election. The CUF's presidential candidate had claimed to have won the elections. On February 2, a district councillor of the CUF was murdered by assassins using traditional weapons including swords. The opposition linked the killing to the councillor's local human rights engagement. On March 4, an IED went off in Kisonge, Zanzibar Central/South, destroying a CCM office. In the following eleven days, five CUF offices, meeting places, and private houses throughout Zanzibar were torched. On March 14, the house of the Zanzibar police commissioner was attacked with an IED, after CUF had claimed that CCM would use security organs to safeguard its interests and intimidate CUF supporters. CCM was declared the clear winner of the re-election in Zanzibar on March 20. This declaration was rejected by CUF on April 4. The opposition party called for passive resistance against the new government.

On May 22, CUF announced to take legal action against the Inspector General of Police and the Minister of Home Affairs at the High Court for atrocities committed by police and other security organs against CUF supporters during last year's election. In the beginning of June, Chadema announced rallies against President Magufuli. On June 7, an anti-government protest was dispersed by police using tear gas and arresting several opposition politicians in the largest city Dar es Salaam. Subsequently, further opposition protests were banned. On July 28, Chadema called for countrywide demonstrations against the government on September 1. President Magufuli responded immediately by threatening to use force against "troublemakers". However, two days later, he ended his ban on political rallies by the opposition while still holding on to his prohibition of the September 1 protest, which was ignored by Chadema. On August 24, four police officers were shot dead in Dar es Salaam. CCM accused Chadema of the killings, who denied this and in return accused CCM of using the case to justify raids against the opposition party. Chadema cancelled the countrywide demonstrations scheduled for September 1. jsp

UGANDA (BAGANDA / BUGANDA)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 1995

Conflict parties: Kingdom of Buganda vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, other

The dispute over autonomy between the Kingdom of Buganda of the Baganda people and the government continued. As in

previous years, most tensions between the kingdom and the government derived from land issues, while land registration processes also led to internal disagreements between locals and the king.

On January 31, President Yoweri Museveni promised to introduce an amendment to the land law to improve land tenure security. The Buganda Land Board, a local land management body, started to register all land titles on King Ronald Mutebi's land on March 1. Subsequently, Bugandan citizen Male Mabirizi Kiwanuka sued the king in July saying that the land registration process of his land had been illegal. In October, a group of youth occupied the kingdom's headquarters in Kampala, Central Region, demanding for Buganda's Prime Minister Charles Peter Maygia to act against the obligatory land registration. In September, a disagreement between the Banyala ethnic group and the Kingdom of Buganda arose when the latter accused Banyala officials of taking over Buganda's Bbaale sub-county headquarters in Bugerere, Central Region. On November 21, Buganda officials blocked Baganda youths from storming Bugerere to reclaim the headquarters. A month earlier, Buganda leaders had called for calm and asked the government to intervene to settle the disagreement. *ceb*

UGANDA (BAKONZO / RWENZURURU)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: Kingdom of Rwenzururu vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The conflict over political autonomy and resources between the Kingdom of Rwenzururu, representing the region's ethnic majority of the Bakonzo, and the government once more escalated to a violent crisis. After clashes had erupted between Bakonzo members and the government in 2014, following the government's decision to grant recognition to the Bamba Kingdom in Bundibugyo district, one of the three districts that had previously been assigned to the Bakonzo kingdom in 2009, the latter used violence against police and Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) members. The attacks had triggered reprisal killings of Bakonzo.

Tensions between the Rwenzururu region's ethnic groups and the government date back to 1962 when the Ugandan State was formed. By 2009, the government had met the demands of the Bakonzo for independence from the regionally dominant kingdom of Toro, when officially recognizing the Kingdom of Rwenzururu as a cultural institution. However, as its territory was also inhabited by several minority groups, such as the Bamba, Basongora, and Banyawindi, who did not feel represented, rivalries emerged over political power, the region's scarce land as well as government recognition [→Uganda (inter-communal rivalry / Rwenzururu)]. In addition, King Charles Mumbere had repeatedly called for political representation and autonomy going beyond the current status of cultural independence.

In the context of this year's renewed inter-communal violence between Bakonzo and Bamba in the aftermath of local coun-

cil elections, the government deployed police forces and, in an operation code-named "Peace in Rwenzururu," troops of the UPDF to both Bundibugyo and Kasese districts in March. In Kasese, the police deployed a unit called "Flying Squad", whose officers typically operate disguised as civilians in response to alleged armed gangs. Security measures came against the backdrop of partly contested national and presidential elections. Moreover, the government accused the Rwenzururu Kingdom of supporting a secessionist movement and aiming at creating its own Yiira Republic in combining the region with neighboring districts in eastern DR Congo. Furthermore, they linked the king and his royal guards to an alleged Bakonzo militia. However, King Mumbere consistently claimed that the kingdom neither had secessionist intention nor links to militant groups. Conversely, legislators from Kasese blamed the governmental security agencies to fabricate these accusations to target the kingdom and local opposition politicians [→Uganda (opposition)].

Following the post-election violence between Bamba and Bakonzo starting end of February, 17 people were reportedly killed by security forces. On March 10, in Hima town, in Kasese, at least 60 alleged Bakonzo armed with spears, machetes and guns attacked three UPDF soldiers and wounded them, before the soldiers fired at their assailants and killed two of them. On March 11, one police officer was wounded, and another killed on March 24 in the same district, both by unknown gunmen. Conversely, the police shot and injured a person on March 23, after he had reportedly thrown stones at security officers. On April 3, the official palace guards from the UPDF and the traditional Rwenzururu royal guards exchanged fire at the Rwenzururu Palace in Kasese town. Two soldiers, a bypassing motorcycle driver and at least one royal guard were killed.

Throughout the second half of the year, tensions rose in Kasese and Bundibugyo districts between Bakonzo, particularly the traditional royal guards of the Rwenzururu king, and government forces. On June 4, a royal guard was shot dead by police as he allegedly resisted arrest in Hima town, Kasese. On November 26, there were attacks on several police stations using grenades, guns, and spears that killed at least 14 police officers. In reaction to this, on November 27, police and military forces raided the Rwenzururu Kingdom's palace for suspected militia members among the royal guards and arrested king Mumbere. The operation destroyed several palace buildings through fire and killed at least 46 royal guards, while at least 139 more were arrested. Fighting continued for two days, reportedly leaving up to 126 people dead in total. Museveni stated he had called the king before the offensive, demanding the extortion of all militant members from his guard, but launched the operation, when Mumbere denied the allegations. *rrb*

UGANDA (INTERCOMMUNAL RIVALRY / RWENZURURU)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Bakonzo vs. Bamba et al.
Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources

The conflict over subnational predominance and resources in the Rwenzururu region between the ethnic majority of the Bakonzo, on the one hand, and other ethnic groups, such as the Bamba, Basongora, and Banyawindi, on the other, escalated to the level of a violent crisis. Inter-communal violence had subsided last year, but resumed when members of the Bakonzo and Bamba clashed between February and April, following contested local elections. The fighting resulted in the death of at least 30 people, and left dozens of houses burnt, while thousands were reportedly displaced.

Rwenzururu's ethnic groups had competed over the region's scarce land and government support since the country's independence, with the recent discovery of oil intensifying the conflict. In 2009 and 2014 respectively, the government had given the Bakonzo and the region's second-largest group, the Bambas, the cultural and administrative status of a kingdom. However, it did not manage to end inter-communal competition, but in fact, exacerbated the rivalry and set the stage for renewed violence between the two ethnic groups.

Violence broke out over local council elections taking place in the broader scope of this year's national elections [→ Uganda (opposition)]. When returning officer Daniel Nayebele announced the results for Hima town district on February 27, he first had declared independent candidate Jolly Tibemanya the winner, but later reversed the results in favour of Ronald Mutegeki, an ethnic Bakonzo and member of the ruling party National Resistance Movement (NRM). This angered Tibemanya supporters who were predominantly of the Bamba group. The volatile situation increased tensions that had already prevailed in the district during campaigning season, for the Bamba accused the Bakonzo of supporting Mutegeki and the NRM, instead of the independent candidate, thereby weakening their position.

The same day, a group of mainly Bamba, reportedly comprising approx. 30 members armed with spears, machetes, knives, bows and arrows attacked the homes of Bakonzo in Bukundu village, Bundibugyo District, killing at least six people. In a separate attack in Mukudungu village one person was killed. Moreover, ten to 15 houses were burnt and at least 8,000 Bakonzo fled from predominantly Bamba-inhabited areas. Clashes in Bundibugyo continued on March 23, when a group of approx. 25 Bakonzo youths killed six people in Ntotoro Sub-county. In reaction, police shot dead two Bakonzo in a shootout the same day. Also, two people were attacked and stabbed to death by unknown assailants in Kikalizo village, also burning a house and looting properties. On March 24, two more people were killed in Bundibugyo, while at least three more were killed in a shooting at a local trading centre. As violence escalated in the region, Bakonzo increasingly clashed with police and army forces deployed to settle the

conflict. Hence, whereas the violence between Bakonzo and Bamba abated, the number of incidents between government forces and Bakonzo increased, peaking at the end of the year. The government blamed the Bakonzo, especially the traditional Rwenzururu royal guards, for the violence in the region, alleging a secessionist movement [→ Uganda (Bakonzo / Rwenzururu)]. rrb

UGANDA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2001

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

The conflict over national power 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) and the government continued as a violent crisis.

Tensions arose between opposition members and journalists, on the one hand, and the police, on the other, over the legitimacy of the presidential elections of February 18. Police regularly hindered opposition leaders from participating in political rallies, especially the FDC's leader Kizza Besigye and former prime minister Amama Mbabazi, both presidential candidates. From February until April, Besigye was arrested nine times and was continuously confined to his home under "preventive arrest" until December.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and various Human Rights organizations repeatedly called for electoral reforms and condemned police brutality as well as arbitrary arrests by the police before and after the elections. Government crackdown on demonstrations resulted in the death of three people and at least 26 injured until the end of the year. For instance, on January 5, police kept Mbabazi from speaking on a radio show in Kotido district, Northern Region.

On February 15, the police clashed with FDC supporters in the capital Kampala, Central Region, leaving at least one person dead, several injured and Besigye briefly detained. On election day, police detained Besigye again and fired tear gas to disperse groups of people in Kampala, while the Uganda Communication Commission temporarily blocked social media access across the country. The next day, police surrounded the FDC headquarters in Kampala and used tear gas and allegedly water cannons on FDC supporters, killing one person. On February 20, the EU and AU criticized Museveni's oppressive tactics, claiming he won the elections by detaining his opponents.

On March 31, the Supreme Court dismissed Mbabazi's petition of March 1, which intended to challenge the election results. In May, the government banned all live television coverage of opposition protest. On May 13, Besigye was charged with treason and imprisoned until granted bail on July 12. On July 21, two civilians sued Inspector General of Police Kale Kayihura and other policemen for beatings.

In August, the ruling party issued a petition to lift the president's age limit in order to allow Museveni to run for another term. On October 3, police arrested Besigye and around 50

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

FDC supporters at Entebbe Airport in Kampala. On December 9, the Magistrate's Court in Kasangati, Central Region, declared the continued police blockade at Besigye's home to be illegal and ordered its removal. [ceb](#)

ZIMBABWE (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: MDC-T, MDC-R, NAVUZ, ZimPF vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis between opposition groups and the government of President Robert Mugabe over national power and political, economic and social matters continued. Throughout the year, security forces as well as supporters of the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), on the one hand, and supporters of opposition parties like Movement of Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Zimbabwean People First (ZimPF), on the other hand, clashed frequently.

For instance, on February 28, during a clash between ZANU-PF and MDC-T youths, several members from both parties were injured in the capital Harare's suburb Mbare. On March 12, ZANU-PF supporters attacked a ZimPF rally in Glen View, another suburb of Harare. They reportedly smashed car windows and injured people by throwing stones. On August 2, ZANU-PF supporters injured three ZimPF youths who were engaged in a door-to-door outreach program at Shackleton Mine outside Chinhoyi, Mashonaland West province. On November 23, ZANU-PF supporters attacked a MDC-T supporter in Epworth, Harare, for wearing a MDC-T t-shirt.

Also throughout the year, several clashes between anti-government protesters and the police took place. Members of the Zimbabwe Activists Alliance, Zimbabwe Women in Pol-

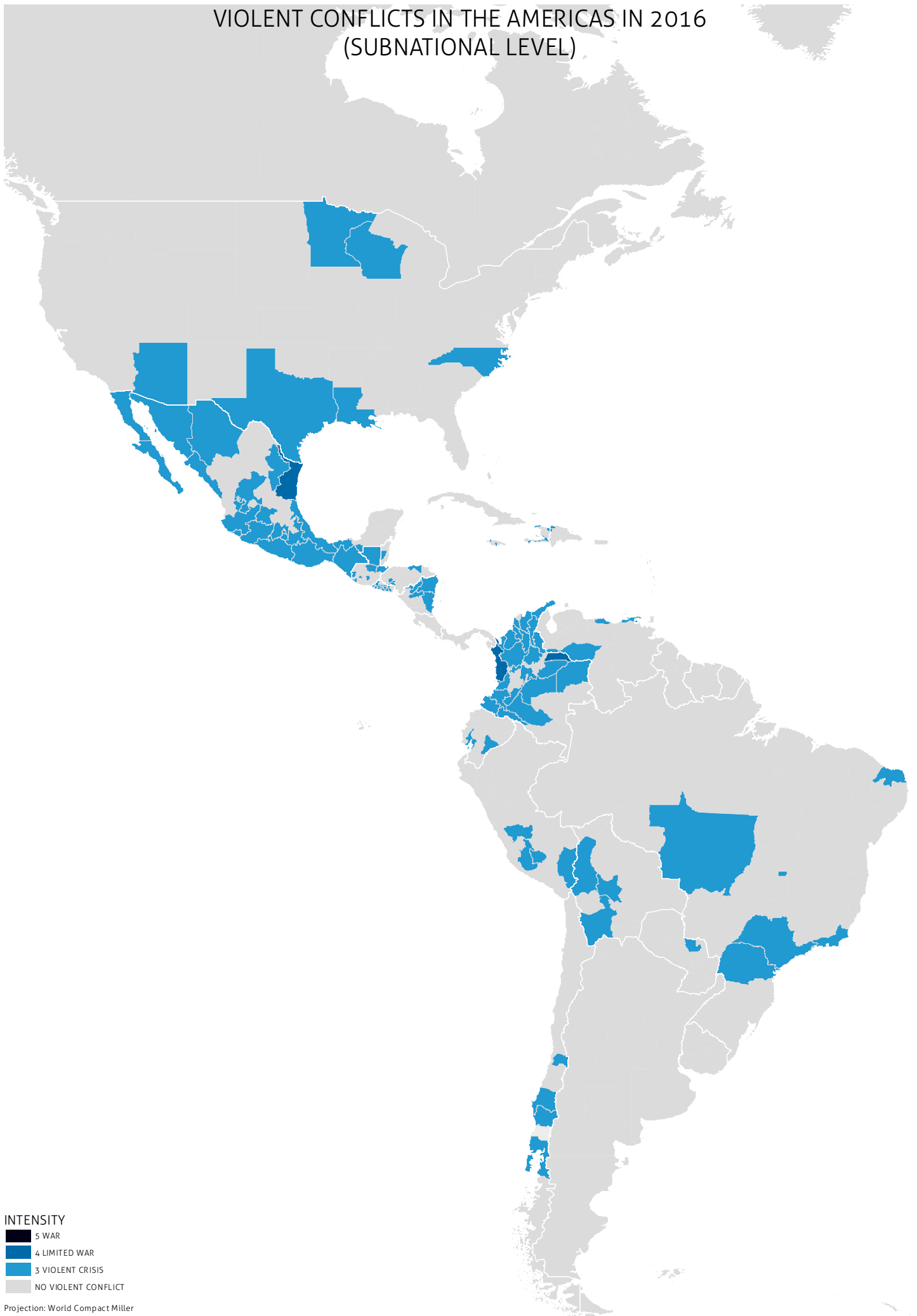
itics Alliance and the Zimbabwe National Students Union held a sit-in demonstration against Mugabe on Africa Unity Square in Harare. This was planned to last from June 1 to June 16, but ended early when 15 protesters were arrested on June 9. The demonstration resumed later but ultimately ended on June 20 when police dispersed the protesters. Many of the them claimed that police officers injured them during the raid.

In response to sporadic attacks during demonstrations against President Mugabe carried out by a group of young people in late June, police used tear gas inside a housing block in Bulawayo, in the eponymous region, on July 6. More than 40 people were injured by inhaling the gas. The same day, police arrested 36 people for staging illegal demonstrations in various parts of the country. In Harare's suburb Mufakose, for instance, they arrested 13 people who had been blocking roads and burning tires. In the wake of violent protests in Harare, the police randomly arrested over 70 people on August 26. Because of the increasing number of violent as well as peaceful anti-government demonstrations Harare police announced a two-week ban on protests from September 2 onward. On September 7, the country's high court overturned the ban.

On September 17, opposition parties calling for electoral reform held numerous demonstrations throughout the country. Police fired shots to disperse protesters in Kuwadzana suburb, Harare city and dispersed a group of protesters in Chinhoyi and in Mutare, Manicaland Province. In Sunningdale, Harare they used tear gas to break the protest. In Bindura, Mashonaland Central Province, riot police used teargas and injured 30 people. In Gwanda, Matabeleland South Province, 200 members of the riot police were deployed to stop a demonstration. They arrested 20 people, as well as further protesters in Zvishavane, Midlands Province, and Harare suburbs Waterfalls and Hatfield. Riot police tried to stop demonstrations in Mvurwi and Mazowe, Mashonaland Central Province. Further demonstrations were held in Bulawayo, Harare suburb Highfield, Epworth and Karoi, Mashonaland West Province. [joh](#)

the Americas

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE AMERICAS IN 2016 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



THE AMERICAS

The overall number of conflicts in the Americas decreased by one to a total of 54. Of those conflicts, 30 were violent crises, while six were highly violent. One conflict ended in 2016, with Peru and Chile settling the dispute over their maritime and land borders [→ Peru - Chile (border)]. The final ruling by the ICJ in 2014 had already set the stage for improved relations. In the first meeting of newly inaugurated Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski and his Chilean counterpart Michelle Bachelet, both sides expressed their willingness to deepen cooperation and to reinstate several fora for bilateral communication.

In Brazil, confrontations between drug trafficking organizations and security forces escalated during the run-up to the 2016 Summer Olympic Games to a limited war, which especially took place in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro [→ Brazil (drug trafficking organizations)]. The conflict over land reform escalated to a violent crisis as Military Police and members of the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) as well as the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST) clashed several times [→ Brazil (MST/MTST)]. The interstate conflict between Guatemala and Belize over more than half of the Belizean territory escalated to a violent crisis. After a Guatemalan minor had been shot dead on Belizean territory close to the border in April, Guatemala deployed 3,000 troops to the border region.

In Colombia, the conflict between Cumbre Agraria, an umbrella organization uniting several civil society groups, and the government escalated to a violent crisis, when Cumbre Agraria staged a national strike [→ Colombia (Cumbre Agraria)].

America's only war involved drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the Mexican government [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. Drug cartels further militarized, with Los Caballeros Templarios shooting down a government helicopter in September. 2016 marked the tenth anniversary of former Mexican President Felipe Calderón's decision to deploy armed forces domestically to fight the drug cartels. On December 8, Defence Minister Salvador Cienfuegos voiced support for the withdrawal of the military to its constitutionally assigned role. In the limited war concerning cartel infighting, drug cartels increasingly tried to challenge the Sinaloa cartel after the arrest of its leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera in January [→ Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)]. By the end of 2016, an estimated 170,000 people have been killed, while more than USD 80 billion have been spent by the Mexican government in the course of drug-related conflicts.

In Central America, the limited war over subnational predominance between the government of El Salvador and the country's largest gangs, the Barrio 18 and the Mara Salvatrucha, remained the most violent conflict in the region [→ El Salvador (Maras)]. Throughout the year, the government expanded its anti-gang efforts by nationwide raids and joint military and police operations. Although the overall number of homicides committed in the country declined from its peak in 2015, confrontations between gang members and security personnel further intensified. In April and December, spokesmen of both gangs expressed their willingness to resume negotiations with the government, but President Sanchez Cerén rejected any option of cooperation. The fight against gang criminality, organized crime, and drug trafficking in the federal departments of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador as well as in their border regions, also led to increased cross-border cooperation in 2016 [→ El Salvador (Maras); Honduras (drug trafficking organizations, organized crime); Guatemala (drug cartels)]. A first joint military operation of the Northern Triangle countries was launched in mid-November in the Honduran border department of Ocotepeque.

In Colombia, the conflict between the FARC and the government de-escalated as both parties worked towards a peaceful conflict resolution. The first peace agreement, signed on September 26, was rejected by a plebiscite, while the revised agreement was approved by the Congress on December 1. President Juan Manuel Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to resolve the armed conflict in Colombia. Throughout the year, the bilateral ceasefire was largely upheld and significantly reduced violence between the conflict parties. However, the imminent demobilization of the FARC fueled turf wars between different illegal armed groups over the territory controlled by the FARC [→ Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)]. Meanwhile, the conflict between the ELN and the government escalated to a limited war, with the latter increasing airstrikes against ELN camps [→ Colombia (ELN)]. While the conflict parties continued preliminary negotiations, the formal initiation of peace talks failed and was postponed to 2017. Despite the de-escalation of the FARC conflict, the government's Victims' Unit had registered more than 52,000 people newly displaced in 2016, indicating a drop compared to 2015. Worldwide, Colombia remains one of the countries with the highest numbers of internally displaced persons with over 7 million registered cases.

All over the Americas, indigenous groups demanded autonomy rights and environmental justice, and confronted the respective governments on policy issues. In Nicaragua, the conflict over the autonomous status of the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN) between the indigenous Miskito and the government continued [→ Nicaragua (indigenous groups)]. As in the previous year, the Miskito and the opposition party YATAMA further accused the government of not sufficiently supporting indigenous rights and not protecting the communities against the assaults of illegal settlers. In 2016, abductions of and violent attacks against Miskito also spread to the southern regions of the country.

In Ecuador, protests of the indigenous Shuar community against mining activities in Nankints, Morona Santiago province, led to violent clashes with the police [→ Ecuador (opposition)]. Members of the community accused the government of violating their land rights and damaging the region's ecosystem through mining operations. After Shuar had killed one policeman, the government declared a state of exception and deployed military personnel to the mining zone of Nankints.

In Southern Chile, the situation in the heartland of the indigenous Mapuche community remained tense as Mapuche protested against police violence, the application of an anti-terror law, and demanded the devolution of ancestral land [→ Chile (Mapuche / Araucanía)]. Hundreds of cases of arson and land occupations were reported.

Demonstrations against environmental pollution and the exploitation of resources continued in several countries in the Americas. In Honduras, protesters against hydroelectric plants accused the government of not protecting them against severe threats and attacks during demonstrations [→ Honduras (opposition)]. In neighboring Nicaragua, demonstrations against the

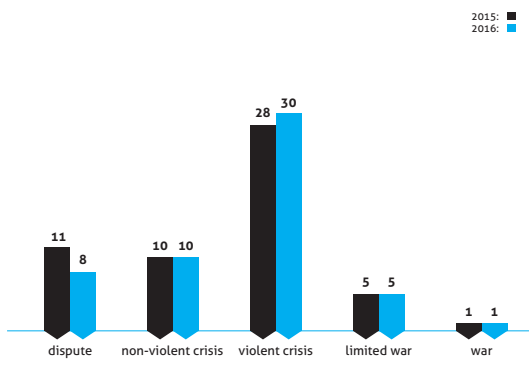
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planned Interoceanic Canal continued [→ Nicaragua (opposition)]. Opponents of the canal project called for the government to stop the dredging in the Lake Nicaragua and to protect the region's water resources. The ELN conducted various attacks on the Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline in East Colombia, which led to oil spills and water shortages on various occasions [→ Colombia (ELN)].

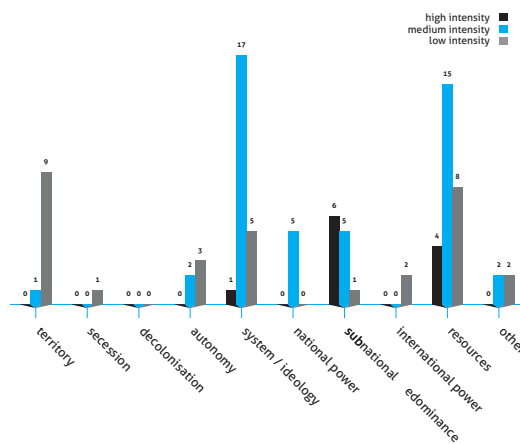
In Paraguay, protests against the distribution of land and environmental damages continued. Activists and farmers' organizations took to the streets in several cities, protesting against the large-scale usage of chemical products by companies such as Monsanto. The EPP continued its armed attacks against security forces as well as landowners, often destroying forestry equipment and attacking the intensive farming industry [→ Paraguay (EPP, agrarian movements)].

Further protests concerning mining activities took place in Peru. Members of indigenous groups and local communities violently protested against the Las Bambas copper mine in Apurímac region and the Poderosa mine in Puno region [→ Peru (opposition)]. Protesters frequently clashed with police, demanding compensation for oil spills, the protection of water sources, and the cessation of exploitation of land and resources.

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN THE AMERICAS
IN 2016 COMPARED TO 2015



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN THE AMERICAS
IN 2016 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



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Overview: Conflicts in the Americas in 2016

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
Bolivia (socioeconomic protests)	societal 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	2010	↗	4
Brazil (indigenous groups)*	indigenous groups vs. government	autonomy, resources	1985	↗	2
Brazil (MST, MTST)	MST, MTST vs. government	resources	1996	↗	3
Brazil (social protests)	MPL et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2013	•	3
Chile (anarchist groups)*	Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, other anarchist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	2
Chile (Mapuche / Araucanía)	Mapuche vs. government	autonomy, resources	2008	•	3
Chile (Rapa Nui / Easter Island)*	Rapa Nui vs. government	secession	2010	•	1
Chile (social movements)	CONFECH, ACES vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
Colombia (ASCAMCAT / Catatumbo)*	ASCAMCAT vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	2013	•	1
Colombia (Cumbre Agraria)	Cumbre Agraria vs. government	system/ideology	2013	↑	3
Colombia (ELN)	ELN vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1964	↗	4
Colombia (FARC)	FARC vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	1964	↘	3
Colombia (indigenous groups)*	indigenous groups vs. government	resources	2005	•	3
Colombia (inter-cartel violence, neo-paramilitary groups, left-wing militants)	Los Urabeños vs. Los Rastrojos vs. Bloque Meta vs. Libertadores del Vichada vs. FARC vs. ELN	subnational predominance, resources	2013	•	4
Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)	drug cartels, neo-paramilitary groups vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1983	↘	3
Dominican Republic – Haiti	Dominican Republic vs. Haiti	other	2009	↑	3
Ecuador (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1980	•	3
El Salvador (Maras)	Barrio 18, Mara Salvatrucha vs. government	subnational predominance	2012	•	4
Guatemala (drug cartels)*	drug cartels vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2009	↘	2
Guatemala (opposition)*	CNOC, CODECA, indigenous groups et al. vs. government	system/ideology, resources	1985	•	3
Guatemala – Belize (territory)	Guatemala vs. Belize	territory	1981	↗	3
Haiti (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	national power	1986	•	3
Honduras (Bajo Aguán)*	MUCA, farmers of Bajo Aguán Valley, MARCA vs. landowner, government	resources	2012	•	3
Honduras (drug trafficking organizations, organized crime)	drug trafficking organizations, organized crime vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Honduras (opposition)	FNRP, LIBRE, anti-government activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power, resources	2009	•	3
Honduras – El Salvador (Isla Conejo)*	Honduras vs. El Salvador	territory	2013	•	2
Jamaica (drug gangs)	drug gangs vs. government	subnational predominance	2010	•	3
Mexico (CNTE et al.)	CNTE et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
Mexico (drug cartels)	drug cartels vs. vigilante groups vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2006	•	5
Mexico (EZLN / Chiapas)*	EZLN vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources, other	1994	↘	2

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)	CJNG et al. vs. Sinaloa et al. vs. CDG et al. vs. Los Zetas et al. vs. LFM et al. vs. LCT et al.	subnational predominance, resources	2005	•	4
Mexico (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	national power	2006	•	3
Mexico (public security)	normalistas et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	3
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	•	3
Nicaragua (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2008	•	3
Nicaragua – Colombia (sea border)*	Nicaragua vs. Colombia	territory, resources	1825	•	2
Paraguay (EPP, agrarian movements)	EPP, ACA, 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
Peru – Chile (border)	Peru vs. Chile	territory	1883	END	1
United Kingdom – Chile (Antarctica)*	United Kingdom vs. Chile	territory	2007	•	1
USA (racial tensions)*	BLM, NBPP, local protesters vs. government	system/ideology	2014	•	3
USA – Cuba (Guantanamo)*	USA vs. Cuba	territory	1959	•	1
USA – Cuba (system)	USA vs. Cuba	system/ideology, international power	1960	•	2
USA – Mexico (border security)	USA vs. Mexico	other	2005	•	3
USA – Venezuela*	USA vs. Venezuela	system/ideology, international power	2001	•	2
Venezuela (opposition)	opposition (MUD) vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1992	•	3
Venezuela – Colombia (border security)*	Venezuela vs. Colombia	other	2015	•	2
Venezuela – Colombia (Monjes Islands)*	Venezuela vs. Colombia	territory, resources	1871	•	1
Venezuela – Guyana*	Venezuela vs. Guyana	territory	2015	•	2

¹ ² ³ ⁴ cf. overview table for Europe

ARGENTINA – UNITED KINGDOM (FALKLAND ISLANDS / ISLAS MALVINAS)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1833

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

The conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom (UK) over the territory and off-shore oil reserves of the Falkland Islands/Islands Malvinas de-escalated to a dispute. After the election of center-right candidate Mauricio Macri as Argentinean president on 11/22/15, relations between the two countries improved.

On January 21, UK's then-Prime Minister David Cameron and Macri held their first personal meeting at the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Macri continued to demand a dialog on the sovereignty of the islands but stated his will to "initiate a new type of relationship."

Since 2009 Argentina has been making a case to the United

Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to extend its maritime sovereignty beyond the 200-mile coastal limit. On March 11, the CLCS ruled in favor of the Argentinean position, effectively expanding the range of its territorial waters in the South Atlantic. In response, Argentina's foreign minister Susana Malcorra claimed sovereignty rights over the resources of the continental shelf but made no mention of the country's longstanding dispute with the UK. However, Malcorra's deputy Carlos Foradori stated that Argentina's sovereignty rights had been clearly strengthened by the CLCS resolution and that the decision had been an important advance for Argentina in the South Atlantic.

On April 3, the anniversary of the 1982 invasion of the islands, Macri reiterated his country's claim to the islands, stating "we'll be back there, using the power of dialog, truth and justice." The UK government noted in response that in 2013, the Falkland islanders had clearly voted to remain an overseas territory of the UK and that it would continue to support their right of self-determination.

On September 14, Argentina pledged to lift trade restrictions with the UK. In response, UK's Foreign Office Minister Sir

Alan Duncan stated a "positive relationship" between the two countries.

On September 20, in his first speech at the UN General Assembly, Macri called on the UK to accept an open and amicable new dialog to resolve the sovereignty dispute over the islands. Along the sidelines of the assembly, Macri and newly-appointed UK Prime Minister Theresa May informally discussed the topic and May agreed to revise the issue. The following day, Duncan and Malcorra published a joint communiqué stating their will to increase cooperation in numerous areas such as defense, trade and development of the South Atlantic islands. Moreover, they agreed on the extension of flights between the Falklands/Malvinas and Argentina and announced to increase efforts to speed up the DNA identification process for unknown Argentinean soldiers killed during the 1982 Falklands War. she

BOLIVIA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1983

Conflict parties: societal groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The socioeconomic conflict over the orientation of the political system and resources continued on the level of a violent crisis. Involved parties consisted of the National Mining Cooperatives Federation (FENCOMIN) and the Bolivian Workers' Center (COB), on the one hand, and the government, on the other.

In June and August, the parliament discussed a law permitting the formation of labor unions within cooperatives. FENCOMIN, a close ally of the president, opposed these plans fearing to lose influence.

On August 10, miners blocked the highway between the cities Oruro and Cochabamba, in the eponymous departments, calling on the government to include FENCOMIN's ten demands in the law. In violent encounters, protesters used dynamite while security forces employed firearms and tear gas. In Mantecani, La Paz department, more than 1,000 miners blocked roads, which led to clashes in which protesters took 47 police officers hostage, and approx. 90 protesters were detained. After days of nationwide violent confrontations, media reported a total of 66 injured police officers as well as 252 injured members of cooperatives on August 12. One day later, protesters stopped the blockades and entered negotiations with the government. These bore no results. President Evo Morales promulgated the disputed Law 149/16 on August 19, after which FENCOMIN intensified their protests.

Between August 23 and 25, clashes escalated. Police shot dead two miners in Sayari, Cochabamba, and another two miners in Panduro, La Paz. One miner accidentally killed himself while manipulating dynamites. On August 25, protesters took Deputy Interior Minister Rodolfo Illanes hostage in Panduro. The next day, his body was found on a highway in Panduro. He had been tortured and beaten to death by protesters. National Ombudsman David Tezano blamed the police for inciting violence with their use of weapons. However, the government claimed that the miners had provoked the police on purpose. On September 1, Morales issued five

new decrees, including stricter rules for cooperatives. The government identified and imprisoned Angel Arapaya as the perpetrator of the murder of Illanes on October 15. They also imprisoned at least twelve members of cooperatives, whereas the killing of five miners did not lead to prosecution. On October 26, the president and FENCOMIN resumed dialog.

The country's main umbrella workers' union COB confronted the government on socioeconomic issues as well. In June, COB supported the protests of former employees from the state-owned textile company Enatex which had been closed due to losses on May 17. On June 20, more than 1,000 protesters started nationwide protests and roadblocks. After days of clashes, leaving at least four police officers wounded in Cochabamba, Morales announced two decrees on July 6, protecting Enatex employees, which calmed down the protests.

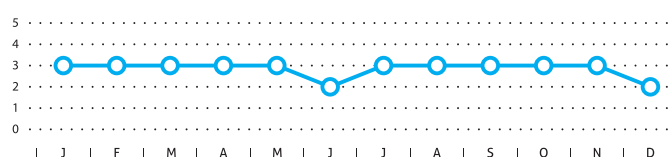
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BRAZIL (DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: drug trafficking organizations, militias vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The conflict over subnational predominance between the main drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) Amigos dos Amigos (ADA), Comando Vermelho (CV), and Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), and militias, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, escalated to a limited war.

The number of confrontations between DTOs and security forces in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, capital of the eponymous state, increased, especially in the run-up to the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games. In the first half of the year, 43 police officers were killed and 192 wounded in clashes. Between January and November, around 400 DTO members were killed in confrontations with police in the state. During several operations in the favela Complexo de Chapadão between January 1 and April 29, Military Police (PM) allegedly killed ten ADA and CV members and arrested 27. On January 7, following a shootout, PM arrested six ADA members in the favela Complexo da Pedreira. On February 4, police killed four DTO members when they entered the favela São Gonçalo to conduct an APC-supported anti-drug operation. Between May 6 and 8, PM arrested seven alleged CV members and confiscated 224 bags of cocaine and money in the towns of Barroso, Meudon, and São Pedro, Rio de Janeiro state. On October 10, a shootout with DTO members in the Pavão-Pavãozinho favela left three police officers dead. On November 20, alleged CV members and PM clashed in the favela Cidade de Deus, leaving seven DTO members and five police officers dead. The next day, four CV members were killed in shootouts involving 150 police officers in the favela

Maré. Police seized machine guns, grenades, and 300 kg of marijuana and cocaine. Subsequently, the government deployed 500 additional PM forces to the favela to reinforce security.

A wave of violent attacks by the PCC-offshoot Sindicato do Crime (SDC) swept the state of Rio Grande do Norte between July 29 and August 2. A GSM-inhibiting security system had been installed in a prison in the state capital Natal on July 28. Subsequently, more than 70 reported explosions and shootouts, the destruction of 30 public buses, and the closure of schools and universities in more than 30 municipalities prompted the assistance of 1,200 soldiers on July 31. A total of 82 SDC members were arrested.

From June 13 to 22, 12,000 police and military forces conducted "Operation Ágata XI" in the border regions with Argentina and Paraguay against human, drug, and weapon trafficking. In the course of the operation, security forces arrested 71 DTO members and seized six tons of explosives, 168 rifles, 22,865 pieces of ammunition, eleven tons of marijuana, 123 kg of cocaine, and 122 kg of other drugs.

In the context of the municipal elections in October, the government deployed 20,000 soldiers to 307 municipalities to strengthen public security. In the run-up to the elections, various militias had reportedly killed more than 20 officials and candidates for office who had refused to pay extortion fees.

Turf wars between the Rio de Janeiro-based CV and the São Paulo-based PCC were on the rise in various states, attributed mainly to lucrative drug sales periods surrounding the Olympic Games and a seven billion USD cut of the national security budget succeeding the event. On October 15 and 16, for instance, two prison riots in the states of Rondônia and Roraima left 18 CV and PCC inmates dead.

Violent encounters between CV and PCC also affected neighboring Paraguay. On June 15, around 100 gunmen ambushed and killed local drug lord Jorge Rafaat Tourmani with a .50 caliber machine gun in Pedro Juan Caballero town, Amambay department. The incident led to increased violence between criminal groups over the control of drug trafficking routes and territories in the border area. *cpn*

BRAZIL (MST, MTST)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1996

Conflict parties: MST, MTST vs. government
Conflict items: resources

The conflict over land reform 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 Michel Temer, on the other, escalated to a violent crisis. Fearing the end of social policies introduced in 13 years of rule by former Presidents Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff from the leftist Workers' Party, MST and MTST threatened to take more direct action against the new right-wing Temer administration ahead of Rousseff's impeachment in August.

Several land occupations took place during the year. On January 16, about 200 MST members occupied the farm Pontal

do Paranapanema, São Paulo state, as a measure to pressure the government to facilitate access to property. On March 12, about 600 MST members occupied a farm in Pirajui, São Paulo, and destroyed several sugar plantations. The occupation ended non-violently. The following week, about 2,000 MST families occupied the farm Santa Maria in Santa Terezinha de Itaipu, Paraná state, demanding the allocation of the farm to them through land reform. On May 18, 650 Military Police (PM) attempted to end the two-month occupation of the farm and resorted to tear gas to disperse about 450 MST members when these blocked part of the highway BR-277, hurled stones, and set tires and vehicles on fire. On April 7, a confrontation between PM and MST members in an MST camp in Quedas do Iguaçu municipality, Paraná, housing more than 7,000 people, left at least two MST members dead and six injured. On September 8, MST members occupied a farm of the politician Ana Amélia Lemos from the co-governing Progressive Party in Goiás state, claiming that the land was not in use. Both MST and MTST continued to stage protests to reinforce their demands and also joined anti-impeachment protests on several occasions [→ Brazil (social protests)]. On May 4, for instance, during an anti-corruption rally in the municipality of Itapeverica da Serra, São Paulo, a PM officer shot at a MTST member and injured her. On June 1, during a MTST protest against the then-Interim President Michel Temer in the city of São Paulo, PM officers fired tear gas bombs to disperse the crowd. On November 11, MTST members marched in the city of Guarulhos, São Paulo, and set tires and wood on fire in protest against the government's proposed constitutional amendment 55 (PEC 55) which would freeze public spending and thereby slash social expenditure for the next two decades. *cpn*

BRAZIL (SOCIAL PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2013

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

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between different social groups such as the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) and the government continued.

Corruption scandals affecting politicians across the entire political spectrum and the impeachment proceedings against then-President Dilma Rousseff triggered protests for and against the government. On the one side, on March 13, 3.5 million people took to the streets in over 300 cities against Rousseff. In São Paulo, capital of the eponymous state, the largest anti-government protests in the history of the country united about 500,000 demonstrators. On the other side, five days later, hundreds of thousands rallied in 45 cities supporting the government and calling for the preservation of democratic order. Several social movements and trade unions marched against an alleged coup against Rousseff in 25 of 27 states on March 31, the anniversary of the military takeover in 1964, gathering around 175,000 protesters nationwide.

On May 12, Vice President Michel Temer assumed the interim presidency after the senate had temporarily suspended

Rousseff until a final impeachment verdict. Ten days later, in Rio de Janeiro, capital of the eponymous state, hundreds of Rousseff supporters, united by social movements such as the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST) [→ Brazil (MST, MTST)] and the Socialist Youth Union, protested against her suspension. Meanwhile, in São Paulo, people protested against Rousseff and her Workers' Party. During the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games from August 5 to 21, several protests, both in favor and against the interim government and the sport event were staged throughout the country. The police cracked down on these protests, using tear gas bombs, injuring several persons, and arresting around 35 protesters. On August 31, the senate impeached Rousseff on account of having breached constitutional fiscal rules. On September 4, the 7th consecutive day of anti-Temer protests organized by trade unions and MTST, anti-riot police deployed tear gas and stun grenades in São Paulo. Protests against the interim government under the banner "Fora Temer" continued throughout the rest of the year.

Different socioeconomic government policies were met by mass protests across the country. On January 8, between 3,000 and 10,000 protesters participated in a MPL-led march against increasing public transport fees in São Paulo. While protesters hurled stones, Military Police (PM) threw tear gas bombs. Three police officers were injured and 17 protesters arrested. During another MPL protest in the city on January 13, PM wielded tear gas bombs and rubber bullets, injuring 20 protesters.

After the senate approved the government's proposed constitutional amendment 55 (PEC 55) meant to cap government spending, in the first round, over 10,000 people staged protests against cuts in education and health care outside the senate building in the capital Brasília, Federal District, on November 30. When the protesters set up barricades, burnt vehicles, and spray-painted buildings with anti-government slogans, police resorted to rubber bullets and tear gas. Against the backdrop of the final approval of the austerity bill on December 13, trade unionists, students, and other social movements set fire to buses, burnt tires, and smashed shop windows in various cities, while police used rubber bullets and detained at least 72 people. *cpn*

CHILE (MAPUCHE / ARAUCANÍA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: Mapuche vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis over autonomy and resources between members and organizations of the indigenous Mapuche and the government continued. The Mapuche mainly demanded the devolution of ancestral land and rejected police violence as well as the application of the anti-terror law. Throughout the year, the regions La Araucanía, Bío Bío, and Los Ríos were affected by hundreds of cases of arson and land occupation. Perpetrators of violent actions were not identified in all cases, but banners and pamphlets, alluding to the Mapuche cause, were often found at the scenes. In addition to the main radical

Mapuche organization, Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM), another group called Weichan Auka Mapu (WAM) claimed responsibility for different attacks.

One of the attacks took place on January 28, when about 20 hooded persons set alight machinery and vehicles on a farm in Lanco, Los Ríos. They injured two members of the police special forces, called Carabineros, with pellets. Following several violent incidents in Lanco, Interior Minister Jorge Burgos announced the installation of a new police unit in the commune. On February 10, eight Mapuche were detained stealing wood on land claimed by them near Tirúa, Bío Bío. The Mapuche reported insults, harassment, and humiliation by a group of about a dozen Carabineros. The National Institute of Human Rights accused the Carabineros of having tortured the detainees. On March 30, the prosecutor's office of La Araucanía pronounced eleven perpetrators guilty of the deadly 2013 arson attack on the Luchsinger-McKay landowner couple. The anti-terror law applied in this case facilitated arrests without bail before trial and higher penalties for crimes.

In Concepción, Bío Bío, approx. 80 Mapuche protested against the detentions of various Mapuche, in particular of Francisca Linconao, as well as against the anti-terror law on April 6. Carabineros employed water cannon to block the protesters from entering the regional court.

In the following months, violence intensified after further detentions and pamphlets calling for the release of the prisoners were found on the scenes. On May 10, Mapuche and police clashed in Cañete, Bío Bío, using shotguns and tear gas. Three persons were injured and three Mapuche detained. On October 10, about 5,000 people participated in a demonstration in support of the Mapuche in the capital Santiago. In ensuing clashes, the police used water cannon and tear gas. Four police officers were wounded and 36 people arrested.

In order to curtail the violence, on January 7, Deputy Interior Minister Mahmud Aleuy Peña y Lillo visited La Araucanía and announced the implementation of a working table, better training of police officials, and an improved inter-institutional coordination. President Michelle Bachelet launched the new dialog on July 7.

The conflict affected lorry drivers and forestry workers due to damages to their equipment and vehicles. On March 15, forestry workers blocked roads with 700 trucks in the three affected regions. On September 7, a national lorry drivers' confederation threatened to stage countrywide demonstrations, demanding a dialog with the government. *cgu*

CHILE (SOCIAL MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

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

The violent crisis over system and ideology between social movement organizations, such as the Confederation of Chilean Students (CONFECH) and the Coordinated Assembly of Secondary Students (ACES), and the government continued. Among the main demands of these groups was the implementation of education system reforms.

Activists staged several protests throughout the year. On May 24, security personnel arrested 20 students after they had broken into the presidential palace in the capital Santiago to protest the planned educational reform. The protesters led by CONFECH and the ACES demanded an increase of public spending for education and to be consulted regarding the execution of the reform.

On May 26, 31 police officers were wounded and 117 people arrested during clashes between security forces and students in Santiago. CONFECH and ACES had called for the unauthorized protest in order to pressure the government to fulfill President Michelle Bachelet's electoral pledge to provide universal free education. On June 9, security forces and students clashed during a protest in the capital with around 150,000 participants. During the mass protests, a Catholic church was vandalized. CONFECH leaders distanced themselves from the desecration of the church, calling the act inappropriate and blaming a small group of protesters. The new interior minister Mario Fernández stated that the government would take legal action against the vandals.

Education Minister Adriana Delpiano met CONFECH representatives on June 10 to discuss the new education bill. CONFECH accused Delpiano of failing to provide details and expressed their disappointment with the results of the meeting. On July 3, Bachelet's announcement that the new education bill had been sent to Congress spurred new protests. Two days later, the police arrested 140 students during unauthorized violent protests in Santiago and other cities, with hundreds of participants demanding the resignation of Delpiano. On July 6, an "anti-masked individuals law" was submitted to Congress to facilitate sanctions against masked protesters.

In an address to the nation on September 29, Bachelet presented the 2017 national budget, stating that over 80 percent was to be spent on education, health, and security. These resources would allow for the implementation of a new teacher training system and would provide free education to over two million primary and secondary students and 140,000 higher education students. Bachelet and her coalition government suffered a major setback in municipal elections on October 23. she

resources.

Arguing a lack of serious commitment on the government's side, the Cumbre Agraria convoked another national strike for May 30. In the course of the strike, protesters blocked the Panamerican Highway at several points between Cauca and Valle del Cauca departments, the Ruta del Sol between Barrancabermeja, Santander department, and La Gloria, Cesar department, as well as several other main traffic arteries. During protests and roadblocks in at least 13 departments, activists and the government's Mobile Anti-Destabilization Squadron (ESMAD) clashed on several occasions. On May 30, an indigenous protester died during a demonstration in La Delfina, Valle del Cauca, after jumping off a bridge under unclear circumstances. While the police argued his death was an accident, Cumbre Agraria spokespersons claimed he jumped to avoid being rammed by an ESMAD light tank. Three days later, two members of the Indigenous Guard were shot dead during confrontations in Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. While protesters blamed ESMAD for their deaths, a forensic report concluded they were both killed by handcrafted guns, which were allegedly not part of ESMAD's arsenal.

By June 7, the Cumbre Agraria had reported 149 injured activists and 160 arbitrary arrests to the Inter-American Human Rights Court. In contrast, the Minister of Defense, Luis Carlos Villegas, gave account of 47 injured protesters, 54 injured ESMAD officers, most of them in Cauca, as well as 34 vehicles demolished by protesters. Additionally, Villegas attributed the protests' violent escalation to infiltrates from the left-wing militant group National Liberation Army [→ Colombia (ELN)], which Cumbre Agraria denied.

Several non-violent demonstrations took place nationwide. On June 2, around 100 people peacefully took over the first floor of Ecopetrol's administrative building in the capital Bogotá. The next day, 500 activists from the Ríos Vivos movement occupied the town hall in Valdivia, Antioquia, in order to manifest their support for Cumbre Agraria's petitions. Cumbre Agraria resumed the blockades after declaring an independent agreement between the government and the Cauca Regional Indigenous Council (CRIC) to unblock the Panamerican Highway, reached on June 8, illegitimate [→ Colombia (indigenous groups)]. Two days later, however, the organization agreed to unblock the Panamerican Highway for 36 hours as "a sign of good faith."

On June 12, Cumbre Agraria reached an agreement with the government on several issues including the right to social protest, the regulation of campesino reservations, the law on Afro-Colombian communities, the mining and energy sector, and the environmental agenda. Subsequently, the general strike was suspended. On October 21, however, Cumbre Agraria halted the dialog with the government, accusing the latter of showing a lack of political will.

OSV

COLOMBIA (CUMBRE AGRARIA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Cumbre Agraria vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology

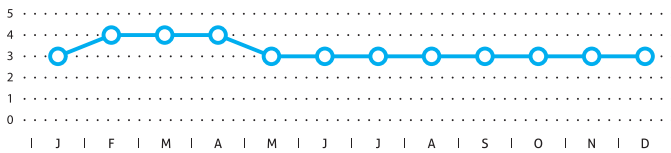
The conflict over the economic and development model in rural areas between several civil society organizations under the umbrella of the Agrarian, Campesino, Ethnic, and Popular Summit (Cumbre Agraria) and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

Unifying 14 indigenous, Afro-American and campesino organizations, Cumbre Agraria had been conducting direct negotiations with the government since its foundation in 03/14, as well as monitoring the implementation of the agreement following the 2013 National Agrarian Strike. The organization aimed to change the government's extractive policies and achieve an equal distribution of land, water, and energy

COLOMBIA (ELN)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1964

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



The conflict over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources between the Army of National Liberation (ELN) and the government escalated to a limited war as the government stepped up military pressure on the group.

The Marxist-Leninist ELN, estimated to count about 2,500 armed members, concentrated its activities in the Norte de Santander, Arauca, Chocó, Antioquia, and Nariño departments, among others. The group financed itself mainly through involvement in the production and commercialization of narcotics, extortion, illegal mining, and kidnapping. At least 97 combatants and civilians were killed throughout the year. The government stated that 49 ELN members were killed and 434 captured in security operations until December.

On February 8, after an ELN attack on a military base in Arauca, President Juan Manuel Santos ordered the security forces to concentrate efforts on combating the ELN and intensify actions against the group. The Colombian Air Force (FAC) repeatedly targeted ELN camps with Tucano aircrafts, in particular in Chocó and Arauca. For instance, in Litoral de San Juan, Chocó, on March 13, military and police conducted a joint operation which included airstrikes and the deployment of ground troops, killing seven militants. In the same municipality, FAC killed three ELN members and injured another in airstrikes on April 10. Due to the military operation, more than 450 indigenous people were displaced. In Arauca, an airstrike left at least six ELN members dead in Puerto Rendón on February 20. On September 3, airstrikes against an ELN camp in Fortul affected an indigenous reserve. While no one was injured, a school building and a health center were reportedly damaged. The conflict also spilled over into neighboring Venezuela. On August 8, Venezuelan security forces clashed with the ELN in Apure state, killing at least two ELN fighters. In a joint operation between Colombian and Venezuelan security forces on September 6, one ELN member was killed and six were captured in Las Palmas, Apure.

Throughout the year, the ELN targeted members and facilities of the security forces, often in drive-by shootings and with hit-and-run tactics. For instance, on July 3, the ELN allegedly killed four marines and one soldier on the Orinoco river at the Venezuelan border in Puerto Carreño, Vichada. On December 13, the ELN killed two police officers with explosives and machine guns in Saravena, Arauca.

The ELN caused significant disruptions to the economy, secu-

city, and public services during two "armed strikes". The first one, from February 14 to 17, commemorated the anniversary of the death of ELN leader Camilo Torres Restrepo in 1966. It included mobility restrictions and the closing down of businesses and schools, affecting 2.2 million people according to UNOCHA. During the strike, the ELN killed two policemen in Olaya Herrera, Nariño, and another in Ocaña, Norte de Santander. Three municipalities were left without power after an ELN attack on a power pylon in Aguachica, Cesar. During a second "armed strike" from September 12 to 15, schools, businesses, and public transport in six departments were affected.

The ELN also targeted the country's infrastructure. The Caño Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline was attacked 31 times up to September. For instance, on April 28, the ELN caused an explosion at the pipeline in Saravena, Arauca, leaving Arauquita municipality without water.

The ELN presence as well as combats with security forces caused displacement, particularly in Chocó. In April, in Bajo Baudó, confrontations between the ELN and the military led to the displacement of more than 600 indigenous people. In March and April, more than 3,000 persons were displaced in Litoral de San Juan due to the presence of the ELN as well as confrontations between the military and armed groups [→ Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)]. In December, the ELN forcibly displaced approx. 2,000 people in the same municipality.

Efforts to settle the conflict continued. While the conflict parties engaged in pre-negotiations, formal peace talks were not held. On March 31, the ELN and the government announced to begin official negotiations. The peace talks were supposed to be initiated in Quito, Ecuador, on October 27. However, Santos had previously conditioned the initiation upon the ELN stopping its practice of kidnapping. The government canceled the start of the talks last-minute as the ELN had not released a high-profile hostage, Odín Sánchez. *kgf*

COLOMBIA (FARC)

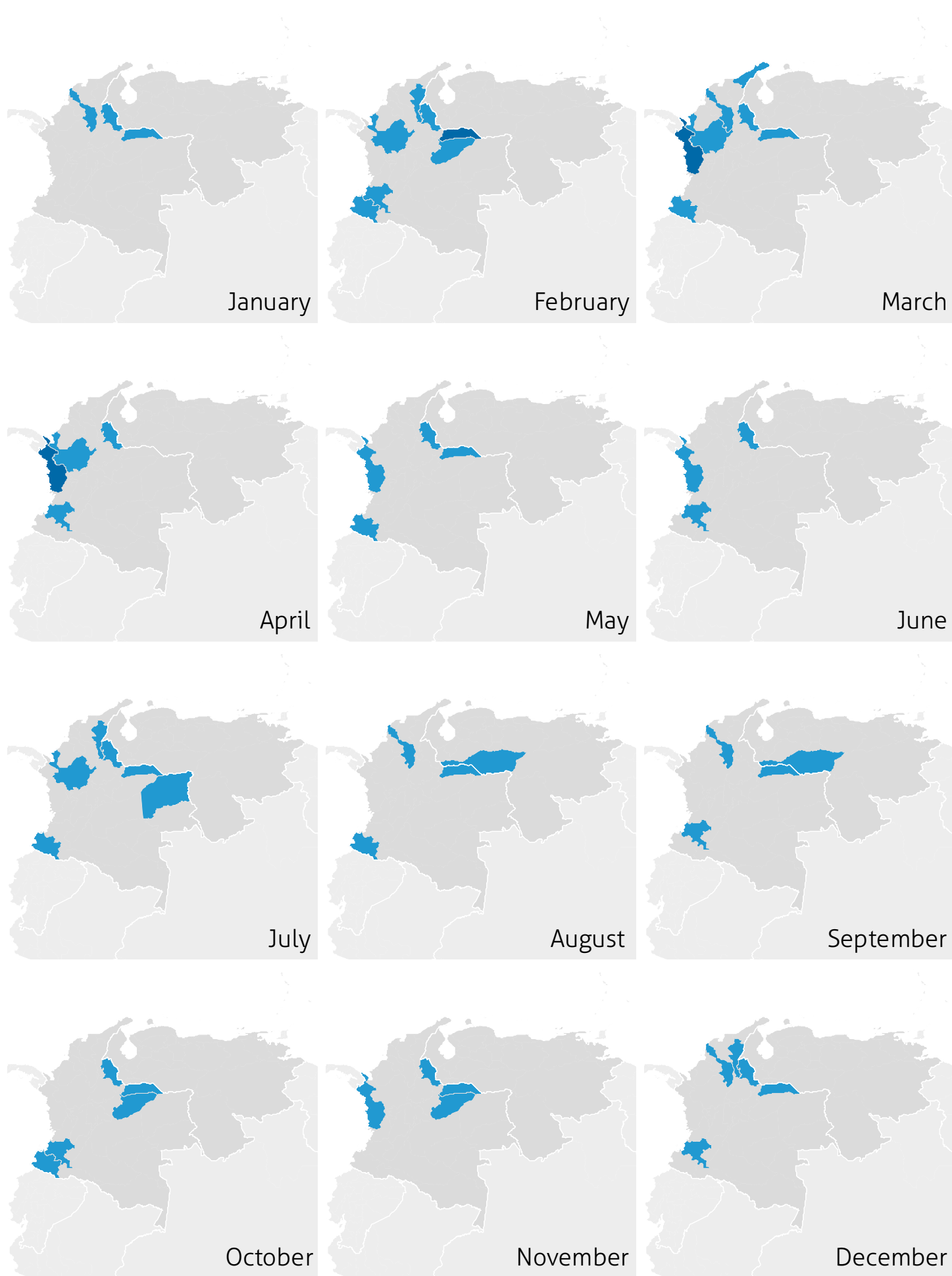
Intensity: 3 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1964

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

The conflict over the orientation of the political system, subnational predominance, and resources between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the government de-escalated to a violent crisis. The Marxist-Leninist FARC, which according to their recent figures comprised 5,765 armed members, financed their activities through involvement in drug production and trafficking, extortion, and illegal mining.

The peace negotiations initiated in 2012 continued in Havana, Cuba, resulting in the signing of an amended peace agreement on November 24 and its approval by Congress on December 1. The first peace deal had been signed in September and was rejected in a plebiscite in October. Beside a bilateral ceasefire, the agreement included the establishment of

COLOMBIA (ELN)



20 transitory demilitarization areas (ZVTN) and seven camps, with the FARC being granted one week to arrive in these areas and an additional six months after the ratification of the peace deal to relinquish their weapons. Additionally, each area was to be surrounded by a one-kilometer security zone in which neither FARC members nor military forces were allowed to be present. A UN mission requested by both parties was to supervise the process and to collect the weapons as well as to guarantee the safety of disarmed FARC members. Furthermore, the agreement included amnesty for FARC members accused of political and related crimes. FARC members who committed war crimes would participate in a transitional justice mechanism and face reduced prison sentences or community service of up to eight years if they confessed. Between January and May, both conflict parties granted a series of concessions. For instance, the government released 16 of 30 imprisoned FARC members pardoned by President Juan Manuel Santos the previous year, whereas the FARC refrained from recruiting minors and released 170 members under the age of 14 from their ranks. On June 2, Congress passed a law shielding the future peace agreement from alterations by subsequent administrations. Santos and FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño alias Timochenko announced a bilateral ceasefire in an event in Havana on June 23, which was attended by UNSG Ban Ki-moon as well as several high-level state representatives.

The Constitutional Court approved the plebiscite to validate the peace agreement on July 18. On September 26, Santos and Londoño formally signed the peace deal in Cartagena. In the run-up to the plebiscite, opponents of the peace deal launched a 'No'-campaign spearheaded by former president and leader of the Democratic Center party, Álvaro Uribe. Among their main criticisms were alleged impunity for FARC members, the possibility for FARC members to run for political office, and insufficient measures for victim reparations.

In the plebiscite on October 2, voters rejected the peace deal by a 50.2 percent to 49.8 percent margin with an electoral turnout of about 38 percent. In reaction to the plebiscite results, tens of thousands of people in different cities took to the streets, demonstrating their support for the proposed peace deal. Santos held several rounds of negotiations with the FARC and 'No'-campaign representatives to discuss possible amendments. On October 15, Santos extended the ceasefire until the end of the year. On November 12, the government and the FARC agreed on a modified accord incorporating over 50 changes, such as the FARC's obligation to proclaim their assets to the government in order to use them for compensating victims. Opponents criticized the new agreement as insufficient and too lenient with the FARC. On November 24, Santos and Londoño signed the revised peace deal in the capital Bogotá, which was approved by Congress on December 1. The Constitutional Court approved the peace deal on December 13. On December 28, Congress passed the law granting amnesty to FARC members. One day later, the UN Mission to Colombia announced it would extend the deadline of the FARC's demobilization until January 2017, stating that the government had failed to set up the demobilization camps as agreed.

Following the FARC's unilateral ceasefire in July 2015, as well as the bilateral ceasefire in June, violence between both parties significantly decreased compared to last year. However,

several violent encounters in the departments of Meta, Caquetá, and Bolívar resulted in at least six fatalities. For instance, on April 20, an alleged FARC sniper killed a soldier in Florencia, Caquetá. On July 12, three FARC members were injured in a confrontation with government troops in La Uribe, Meta, constituting the first incident after the bilateral ceasefire had taken effect. On November 17, security forces killed two FARC members outside the ZVTN during an operation in Santa Rosa, Bolívar, claiming that they had mistaken them for members of the National Liberation Army [→ Colombia (ELN)]. Throughout the year, several FARC members deserted or split off from the organization in disapproval of the peace process. For example, on July 7, members of the FARC's First Front, mainly operating in the departments of Guaviare and Vaupés, announced they would refuse to demobilize and take part in the peace process.

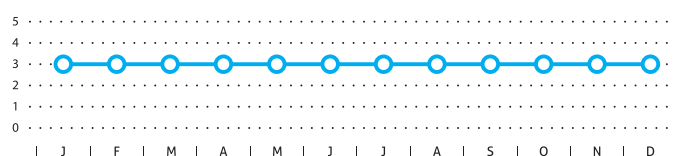
In response, the FARC expelled the unit. Authorities blamed the First Front for a series of attacks throughout the second half of the year, such as the launching of a motorcycle bomb in El Retorno, Guaviare, on August 11, which left two policemen and three civilians injured. On plebiscite day, the First Front reportedly set off an explosive device at a polling station in Barranquillita, Guaviare. On December 13, the FARC announced the removal of five of its commanders, among them aliases Gentil Duarte and John 40, for their refusal to disarm. "Gentil Duarte" became leader of the First Front, whereas "John 40" reportedly aligned himself with Los Urabeños [→ Colombia (neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels)]. Overall, up to 300 FARC members reportedly deserted after the rejection of the first peace deal in the plebiscite. okl

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

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2013

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

Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-resources



The limited war over subnational predominance and resources between several neo-paramilitary groups, drug cartels as well as the left-wing guerrillas National Liberation Army (ELN) and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), continued.

The groups fought for control over territory, drug production and trafficking routes as well as the illegal exploitation of resources such as gold. Another point of contention was the control over local populations for extortion purposes.

As the peace negotiations between the FARC and the gov-

ernment advanced, the group significantly reduced violent actions and prepared to withdraw from its strongholds [→ Colombia (FARC)]. Other armed groups entered these territories, fueling turf wars. According to Insight Crime, the largest neo-paramilitary group Los Urabeños, also called Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, Clan Úsuga, and Clan del Golfo, expanded its presence in Chocó, Nariño, Putumayo, Guaviare, and Norte de Santander departments.

The Support Mission to the Peace Process in Colombia of the Organization of American States reported that the ELN was moving into regions where it previously had a limited presence, such as in Nariño and Vichada departments. In El Bagre, Antioquia department, Los Urabeños pushed into territory controlled by the FARC, with the latter allying with the ELN on several occasions to confront Los Urabeños. For instance, in mid-January, the groups clashed, leading to the displacement of more than 500 people. On April 12, confrontations between the ELN and Los Urabeños in the same municipality left two alleged Los Urabeños members dead and three civilians injured. Four days later, at least ten families were displaced in Briceño, Antioquia, due to four homicides attributed to Los Urabeños competing with the FARC for their territory. According to UNHCR, clashes between armed groups in Chocó left more than 6,000 people displaced between April and May, while an additional 7,000 people were confined to their homes. Previously, in February, more than 600 people from various parts of the department had been displaced to Alto Baudó, Chocó, due to clashes between the ELN and Los Urabeños.

In the Eastern Plains, the September 2015 killing of Martín Farfán Díaz alias Pijarbey, leader of the neo-paramilitary group Libertadores del Vichada, exacerbated the turf war between various groups. Los Urabeños, allied with Libertadores del Vichada, reportedly expanded their presence in Meta department. They fought Bloque Meta for control over the lucrative region for drug production and trafficking. In Granada, Meta, police attributed five killings in January and February to the competing groups.

In Nariño, 219 persons were displaced to the departmental capital Tumaco in February due to confrontations between the FARC and another armed group. Authorities blamed rivalry between Los Urabeños and the criminal group Los Botalones for seven murders in May and June in Cimitarra, Santander department.

Turf wars accounted for high homicide rates in the major cities as well. In Medellín, Antioquia, smaller gangs aligned with the major neo-paramilitary groups fought a turf war, to which police attributed 48 percent of the 497 murders registered up to December. In the border city of Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, where Los Urabeños were fighting Los Rastrojos, police attributed 33 percent of the city's 276 homicides this year to inter-gang violence. Until October, police registered 181 murders related to the ongoing turf war between armed groups in Cali, Valle del Cauca. *afo*

COLOMBIA (NEO-PARAMILITARY GROUPS, DRUG CARTELS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1983

Conflict parties: drug cartels, neo-paramilitary groups vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The conflict over subnational predominance and resources between several neo-paramilitary groups and drug cartels, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, de-escalated to a violent crisis.

The neo-paramilitary groups in large parts consisted of remnants of drug cartels dismantled in the 1990s and ex-paramilitary members who had demobilized in the mid-2000s. The largest group was Los Urabeños, who also referred to themselves as Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia, called Clan Úsuga and Clan del Golfo by the government. Los Urabeños counted with approx. 2,700 members, a presence in 17 departments of Colombia, and links to Mexican drug cartels [→ Mexico (drug cartels)]. The government classified major groups as "criminal gangs" (BACRIM). Los Urabeños, Los Pelusos, and Los Puntilleros were additionally classified as Armed Organized Groups (GAOs). Los Pelusos was an alternative name for the Army of National Liberation (EPL), while Los Puntilleros referred to Bloque Meta and Libertadores del Vichada. On April 22, a government directive permitted "the use of full force" to combat GAOs. In contrast, the research institute INDEPAZ classified them as neo-paramilitary groups, and also included others such as Los Rastrojos and Águilas Negras. The main objective of these groups was to control strategically important areas and secure the exploitation of resources such as gold, and the production and transportation of drugs.

In contrast to last year, no major government airstrikes were reported, while numbers of conflict-related deaths and displacements remained high throughout the year. The government continued "Operation Agamemnon" against Los Urabeños with the aim of capturing its leader, Dairo Antonio Úsuga alias Otoniel. On March 23, police killed Jairo de Jesús Durango alias Guagua, one of the five most powerful Urabeños leaders, in Chocó department. In operations against "Los Puntilleros", police killed their leader Álvaro Enciso Arias alias El Venado on May 13 in Cumaribo, Vichada department, and captured his successor José Manuel Capera alias Nube Negra on July 14 in Guadualito, Meta department. In a joint military and police operation, two EPL members were killed in Sardinata, Norte de Santander department, on December 12. In 100 operations against organized crime across the country, concluding on March 18 after 25 days, police detained 3,723 people, including members of Los Urabeños and Los Rastrojos. Authorities also seized 37.5 tons of drugs and destroyed 22 labs. In the beginning of September, government forces conducted "Operation Nemesis V", capturing 109 members of neo-paramilitary groups, including 84 members of Los Urabeños, and seizing various weapons, including 40 grenades. According to the govern-

ment, 3,517 alleged members of criminal gangs were captured or killed. On April 13, Defense Minister Luis Villegas stated that no political deals would be offered to organized crime groups.

Neo-paramilitary groups continued to target government forces. For instance, on May 2, two Los Pelusos members killed a patrol officer in Ábrego, Norte de Santander. From November 17 to 21, Los Urabeños killed five policemen in Antioquia and Bolívar departments in retaliation for the police raid of the hideout of one of their leaders on November 12.

Throughout the year, neo-paramilitary groups threatened, assassinated, and confined civilians. On March 31, Los Urabeños declared a 24-hour "armed strike" affecting six departments. Public services and transport in 36 municipalities were shut down, as were several airports in Urabá and Bajo Cauca, Antioquia. In Antioquia and Chocó, grenade attacks killed four policemen, one civilian, injured ten people, and set eight vehicles on fire. Community leaders and human rights defenders were targeted in particular. According to IN-DEPAZ, neo-paramilitary groups killed at least 36 social leaders throughout the year. By March 31, the UN Human Rights Council had documented the murder of at least twelve human rights defenders by neo-paramilitary groups. The Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission reported the assassination of eight people between March 1 and 3 in Putumayo department, where threatening pamphlets by Los Urabeños and Águilas Negras had appeared.

In various parts of the country, people were displaced by clashes between neo-paramilitary groups and government forces as well as the presence of neo-paramilitary groups. For instance, in January, 152 persons were displaced due to confrontations between Los Urabeños and the military in Puerto Libertador, Córdoba department. On November 16, fighting between EPL and the military and EPL presence displaced 180 persons in San Calixto, Norte de Santander.

afo

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – HAITI

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: Dominican Republic vs. Haiti
Conflict items: other

The conflict between the Dominican Republic (DR) and Haiti over the issue of illegal immigration escalated to a violent crisis when Haitian civilians attacked Dominican border patrols and vice versa.

The Dominican government continued to deport alleged illegal Haitian migrants. According to the International Organization for Migration, at least 58,000 people were sent back between 2013 and November 2016. Another 91,000 returned voluntarily. However, both countries resumed diplomatic relations and cooperated in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew in October.

Throughout the year, two persons died and four were injured in encounters between Dominican border patrols and Haitian civilians. On January 18, Dominican soldiers killed one Haitian and injured another in Guayubín, Montecristi

province, DR, when they shot at a truck allegedly transporting Haitians without valid documents into DR. On June 24, a group of Haitians attacked and injured two Dominican soldiers patrolling the border in Palo Blanco, Dajabón province, DR. Dominican security forces arrested four of the Haitians involved. In a similar incident on November 4, a group of Haitians killed a soldier of the Dominican border patrol and injured another in Montecristi. The following night, the Dominican border guards arrested six Haitians suspected of being involved in the killing.

From March on, the two countries increased reconciliation measures. Several bilateral meetings took place, including talks between both ministers of foreign affairs on April 13 and August 30. DR lifted its visa ban for Haitians at the beginning of March and prolonged temporary resident permits of over 140,000 Haitians for one year on July 12 after Haitian authorities had faced technical difficulties to issue the required documents in time. On August 30, Haiti agreed to lift its ban on 23 Dominican goods imposed in 2015. A bilateral commission was re-established in October to improve the economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries. On December 7, the two countries signed a US-mediated agreement in Laredo, Texas, US, to improve trade and infrastructure in the border regions.

Hurricane Matthew hit the island on October 4 and left approx. 1,000 people dead in Haiti and four people dead in DR. Although DR increased its border controls to prevent Haitians from entering the country, it sent 500 trucks with humanitarian goods to Haiti. Dominican military accompanying the trucks spurred criticism in Haitian media. However, Haitian Interim President Jocelerme Privert expressed his support for the military presence in a press conference on October 15.

cwl

ECUADOR (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1980

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

The violent crisis concerning the orientation of the political system and resources between various opposition groups and the government continued.

While protests against planned reforms remained largely non-violent, the number of clashes between security forces and the indigenous Shuar community about mining activities increased in the Morona Santiago province.

After the parliament, dominated by the ruling left-wing Alianza PAÍS (AP) of President Rafael Correa, had approved a labor reform on March 17, a series of protests started in various cities. Thousands, mainly workers supported by students, indigenous organizations as well as by the trade union umbrella organization Unitary Worker's Front (FUT), protested against the reform. Parts of the reform, such as the promotion of youth labor, had raised concerns about a rise of unemployment. During the protests, the demonstrators also called for Correa's withdrawal.

In early April, the party Creating Opportunities (CREO) and other right-wing opposition groups as well as former mili-

tary members mobilized for protests in various cities against a planned reform aiming at the increase of taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and soft drinks.

In Guayaquil, Guayas province, people demonstrating against the reform clashed with the police. At the same time, more than 1,000 people attended the president's address in favor of the reform in front of the presidential palace in the capital Quito, Pichincha province.

The number of protests decreased after a severe earthquake on April 16 in the northern coastal provinces, which had left over 600 people dead and 16,000 injured.

On June 6, hundreds protested in Quito against a planned reform raising inheritance taxes to up to 77 percent. Riot police impeded direct confrontations between protesters and supporters of Correa.

On August 11, approx. 20 security forces evicted eight families of the indigenous Shuar community in Nankints, Morona Santiago province, to secure mining activities of the Chinese company Explorcobres. On November 21, Interior Minister Diego Fuentes stated that Shuar activists had wounded seven policemen in a shooting in Nankints.

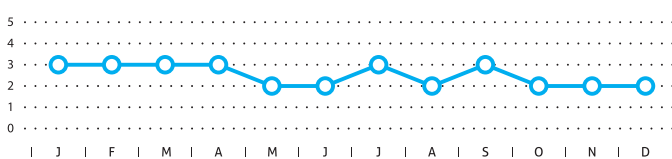
One month later, the Coordinating Minister for Security, César Navas, declared a state of exception for 30 days in Morona Santiago and deployed 700 elite soldiers and policemen, military tanks, trucks, and helicopters to the mining zone after approx. 80 armed Shuar activists had entered the mine on December 14 and killed one policeman and wounded seven. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), the country's largest indigenous organization, defended the Shuar's actions as "legitimate to protect their holy land", and claimed there had been no previous consultation of the indigenous community about the mining activities. Correa later denounced the activists as criminals. mkr

EL SALVADOR (MARAS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Barrio 18, Mara Salvatrucha vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The limited war over subnational predominance between the country's major criminal gangs, mainly the Barrio 18 and the Mara Salvatrucha, and the government continued.

While the homicide rate declined from its all-time peak in 2015, the conflict between the gang members and security forces intensified as the government extended its security strategies by joint military and police operations. The increase in possession and use of automatic weapons by the gangs also added to the growing militarization of the conflict. By the end of December, 5,278 people had been murdered, among them 424 gang members, 44 police officers, and 20 military members. The most affected departments were San

Salvador, La Libertad, La Paz, and Usulután. Although showing a slight reduction to the previous year, El Salvador was the country with the highest homicide rate in Latin America for the second time in succession. A rising number of clashes between gang members, police and security forces also resulted in at least 459 confrontations throughout the year. By the end of October, police and special forces had arrested approx. 1,500 individuals, including 44 gang leaders, and seized 350 kg of cocaine as well as 349 automatic weapons and assault rifles, such as M-16s and AK-47s.

Between January and March, the government outlined additional measures to its hardline policies of 2015, and proposed new initiatives to Congress to decrease the overall homicide rate and to break up criminal structures by dismantling the gangs' leadership and confiscating their financial assets.

On March 8, President Salvador Sanchez Cerén stated that "war" was the only option to fight the Mara Salvatrucha and the Barrio 18. His spokesman later reiterated that the government would not negotiate with the gangs. On April 20, the new Special Reaction Force (FERES) was launched, combining 600 soldiers and 400 police officers equipped with helicopters, armored vehicles, and assault weapons. One day later, the Legislative Assembly passed anti-gang reforms, classifying the gangs as terrorist organizations and prohibiting negotiations with gang members. Another joint task force, the Intervention and Territorial Recuperation Force (FIRT), was deployed to the Barrio 18 stronghold municipality Soyapango, San Salvador department, on April 27.

Throughout April, the homicide rate dropped significantly after representatives of the gangs had ordered their members to stop killing. The government later claimed these developments to be a result of their newly-implemented security measures. On July 7, four alleged gang members died in an ambush on a police station in Ilobasco, San Salvador department. Police seized one 12-gauge shotgun and several pistols from the scene. Three weeks later, prosecutors stated that since the start of "Operation Jaque" in 2015, one of the largest operations ever launched against the Mara gangs, 120 gang members were arrested and 157 properties raided.

Since August, gang attacks on police officers and security forces rose again. On September 1, gang members assassinated Sub Commissioner Alberto Marroquín and a policeman in Ahuachapán, in the eponymous department. Marroquín was the first high-ranking officer being killed by gangs since the beginning of the conflict. After eight police officers and three soldiers had been killed between November 6 and 16, Security and Justice Minister Mauricio Ramírez Landaverde declared these homicides as a direct gang response to "Operation Jaque".

Two days later, the government announced the launch of another anti-gang offensive called "Operation Nemesis". According to Vice President Oscar Ortiz, the operation should "punish the gangs" for the latest killings and would include further military support for police patrols as well as integrated coordination and intelligence sharing between state agencies. In late December, spokesmen of the Mara Salvatrucha announced to work on a new proposal to resume dialog with the government, society, and with leaders of the Barrio 18.

As in 2015, police members and soldiers were accused of being involved in extrajudicial executions of gang members. On April 25, the Inspector General for Human Rights, David

Morales, declared that his office would examine the involvement of security forces in 30 murder cases of so-called death squads. One month later, General Attorney Douglas Meléndez testified the existence of a murder-for-hire network, including at least six police officers. Between 2014 and 2015, the network had allegedly killed eleven gang members.

In order to fight the cross-border gang activities, the government also intensified its cooperation with Honduran and Guatemalan authorities during the year. On August 23, President Cerén, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández and Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales signed the "Regional Plan Against Transnational Organized Crime" after the attorney generals of the Northern Triangle countries had met two weeks before to discuss possibilities of cooperation [→ Honduras (drug trafficking organizations, organized crime); Guatemala (drug cartels)].

Combined military and police forces of all three countries conducted the first multilateral operation on November 15 in the Honduran border region Ocotepeque. sen

GUATEMALA – BELIZE (TERRITORY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1981

Conflict parties: Guatemala vs. Belize
Conflict items: territory

The conflict between Guatemala and Belize over more than half of the Belizean mainland territory, covering the area from the Sibun River south to the Sarstoon border river, escalated to a violent crisis. Since Belize's independence in 1981, Guatemala had upheld claims referring to the colonial territory of former British Honduras.

On March 12, a standoff between two vessels of the Guatemalan Armed Forces (GAF) approaching a Belizean Forward Operating Base on the Sarstoon River, and a boat of the Belize Defense Force (BDF) ended non-violently. Following the incident, the Belizean government referred to the conflict as being "at an all-time high".

During a bilateral meeting on April 8, Guatemala rejected an eleven-point-proposal presented by Belize. It aimed at reducing tensions by permitting both countries to ship on the Sarstoon River and called upon both sides to refrain from "threatening, abusive, or unfriendly actions".

On April 20, a Guatemalan minor was shot dead and another two people were injured in the Belizean Chiquibul National Park, Cayo district, which borders Guatemala. In response to the killing, Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales deployed 3,000 troops to the border the following day. According to an OAS report released on August 26, not BDF officers but members of a Belizean conservation group had killed the minor in an alleged act of self-defense. Morales rejected the findings on September 5. On May 14, BDF shot and injured a Guatemalan citizen and arrested two as they presumably carried out illegal gold mining activities in the Chiquibul National Park.

Nine days later, Belize and Guatemala held a first round of talks about the border dispute during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey. The two parties agreed on launch-

ing negotiations starting in June in order to elaborate the terms of a possible cooperation mechanism for the Sarstoon River area. Reconciliation efforts were hampered when two days later, eight Belizean nationals were arrested on the peninsula Punta Manabique, Itzabal department, close to the border, on charges of having illegally entered Guatemala. On June 16, nine GAF soldiers stopped a Belizean boat navigating on the Sarstoon River and requested them to leave supposed Guatemalan waters.

A BDF patrol came under fire on September 3, while it approached an illegal camp of Guatemalan settlers in the Chiquibul National Park approx. 260 meters from the border. The BDF officers returned fire. The incident, however, did not cause fatalities. On October 17, a GAF patrol arrested six Belizean nationals fishing in the adjacent Gulf of Honduras. According to Guatemalan sources the Belizeans had illegally entered Guatemalan waters, while Belizean sources claimed that GAF officers had towed the fishermen into Guatemalan territory to arrest them.

Following a 2008 agreement to hold referenda in both countries on whether the territorial dispute should be submitted to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Belizean congress on December 29 passed the legislation necessary for implementation. tle

HAITI (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

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

The violent crisis over national power between several opposition parties, including Fanmi Lavalas, the Haitian Party Tèt Kale (PHTK), Pitit Dessalines, and the Alternative League for Haitian Progress and Empowerment (LAPEH), and the government continued. Throughout January, the G8 Mobilization Table, a coalition of eight prominent opposition parties, held several demonstrations in the capital Port-au-Prince. They demanded President Michel Martelly's resignation and protested against holding the second round of presidential elections, scheduled for January 24, due to alleged widespread corruption in the electoral process. Six demonstrations escalated in January, with protesters throwing rocks and setting up barricades and police answering with tear gas and water cannon. The clashes left at least two injured. Additionally, unidentified armed men torched three electoral offices and an office of the Repons Peyizan pro-government party on January 17 and January 26, respectively.

After the cancellation of the second round of presidential elections due to alleged security concerns, the executive and legislative branches of power reached a political agreement on February 6. The agreement foresaw the termination of Martelly's term the following day and the appointment of a provisional president by the National Assembly. Six days later, Jocelerme Privert of Fanmi Lavalas was elected provisional president.

Under Privert's administration, supporters of Martelly's PHTK clashed with the police on at least five occasions. On May 14,

in PHTK's largest demonstration, thousands of activists gathered in Port-au-Prince. Clashes ensued, leaving one dead. Activists demanded the prompt organization of the presidential elections, which had been delayed past Privert's 90-day-term, and were finally set for November 20.

PHTK's Jovenel Moïse won the elections, reportedly receiving 55.67 percent of the popular vote. LAPEH, Fanmi Lavalas, and Pitit Dessalines demanded a recount, accusing the Provisional Electoral Council of electoral fraud. In consequence, the National Electoral Litigation Office ordered a reevaluation of 12 percent of the protocols from all electoral offices. Fanmi Lavalas organized almost daily protests in Port-au-Prince throughout late November and December. On November 30, Fanmi Lavalas activists damaged several private cars, while hurling stones at the police, which responded with tear gas and water cannon.

In early January, Guy Philippe, prominent figure in the coup d'état against former president Jean Bertrand Aristide and former Martelly supporter, launched an appeal to combat the "anarchists" of the anti-establishment opposition movements. On February 5, several dozens of armed individuals wearing military attire marched through the streets of Port-au-Prince, allegedly in response to Philippe's appeal. A group of bystanders attacked the protesters, lynching one of them. On May 16, armed men attacked a police station in Cayes, Sud department. The incident left at least five people dead and three injured. Although no one took responsibility for the attack, one of the arrested attackers accused Philippe of instigating it. Philippe denied the allegations. osv

HONDURAS (DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS, ORGANIZED CRIME)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: drug trafficking organizations, organized crime vs. government
Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources

The violent crisis over subnational predominance and resources between drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and organized crime groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

According to the Attorney General's Office, 5,154 people were killed in 2016. With a rate of 59 per 100,000 inhabitants, Honduras had the third-highest murder rate in Latin America. As in the years before, violence committed by DTOs, organized crime groups, and national security forces had a major impact on the country's security situation.

An analysis published by a national newspaper on April 4 revealed the involvement of many high-ranking police officers in the killing of former drug lord Julián Aristides González in 2009 and one of his former advisers two years later. The same day, military police raided the National Police's (PNH) station Casamata in the capital Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán department, in search of evidence for the killings, while President Juan Orlando Hernández demanded the dismissals of the officers involved in the cases. On April 6, Hernández sent

an emergency decree with a validity of one year to Congress that would authorize the removal of up to 1,500 police officers. Legislators passed the proposal the next day. One week later, the new special commission for police reform was constituted and issued a first statement. Until the end of September, the investigations resulted in the removal of over 600 police officers. Furthermore, according to an internal police investigation, 81 police officers had allegedly worked for organized crime groups, such as the Mara Salvatrucha.

Throughout the year, police and security forces continued to fight drug trafficking and organized crime by arresting suspects and conducting operations. On January 30, forces of the Directorate for Combating Drug Trafficking (DLCN) raided ten houses in Morazán, Yoro department, and detained, among others, José Héctor Ardón Sarmiento and his son, Olvin Adonay Ardón Rivera, alleged leaders of the AA Brothers Cartel. On July 9, police officers dismantled a drug laboratory and arrested six suspects in Siguatepeque, Comayagua department. Two weeks later, the joint police and military unit FUSINA blew up a landing strip supposedly used for drug trafficking in an unpopulated area near Ibans, Baltimore, Gracias a Dios department. On August 16, security forces found 545.5 kg of marijuana hidden in a truck in La Ceiba, Atlántida department, and arrested both drivers.

On December 2, several security agencies conducted "Operation Tifón III" in a joint effort to dismantle illicit structures and organizations involved in smuggling arms and drugs. The operation consisted of raids in over 70 cities throughout the country, including private properties, enterprises as well as administrative institutions such as hospitals. Over 30 suspects were arrested.

To fight DTOs and organized crime groups more effectively, Honduran authorities also engaged in joint cross-border operations throughout 2016. On August 23, the presidents of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala signed the "Regional Plan Against Transnational Organized Crime" in San Salvador, El Salvador [→ El Salvador (Maras); Guatemala (drug cartels)]. The first joint police and military force was launched to combat gang crime in the Honduran border department Ocotepeque on November 15. The multinational unit would also include members of the intelligence agencies, the migration agency, as well as the customs authorities. One week later, a Costa Rican operation captured Wilter Neptalí Blanco Ruiz, alleged drug lord and leader of the Atlantic Cartel, in cooperation with Honduran and US authorities. rma

HONDURAS (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: FNRP, LIBRE, anti-government activists vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power, resources

The conflict over the orientation of the political system, national power, and resources between oppositional parties, such as LIBRE, and anti-government groups, on the one hand, and the government of the National Party (PN), on the other, remained violent. While opposition parties were primar-

ily concerned with high-level corruption, anti-government groups demonstrated against hydroelectric projects.

Following the 2015 negotiations regarding the establishment of a new commission, President Juan Orlando Hernández and the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, signed an agreement on January 19 to set up the Mission for Support against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras (MACCIH). The agreement provided MACCIH officials with unrestricted access to state documents and the authority to investigate cases of corruption. On June 6, a former member of the Honduran Social Security Institute (IHSS) directorate was arrested on charges of money laundering and passive bribery. Two weeks later, the President of Honduras' Supreme Court (CSJ), Rolando Argueta Pérez, announced that MACCIH would be also responsible for the selection of judges to head special anti-corruption tribunals. On November 9, MACCIH criticized the selection process of three magistrates of the High Court of Auditors (TSE) for lack of transparency.

Throughout the year, protests against hydroelectric plants turned violent and human rights activists were attacked and killed. On March 3, unknown assailants shot dead Berta Cáceres, the renowned president of the human rights organization COPINH, in her apartment in La Esperanza, Intibucá department. Cáceres had been involved in the protests against the Agua Zarca dam near San Francisco de Ojuera, Santa Bárbara department. In reaction, over 120 NGOs in Europe and the US declared their solidarity. Six months later, the judge in the Cáceres case was attacked on her way home and robbed of the case file. On April 15, several unidentified men attacked participants of an international solidarity meeting near the construction site of Agua Zarca with machetes, sticks, and stones, injuring seven people, some of them gravely. The participants accused the police of not providing protection and identified some of the attackers as associates of the hydroelectric company Desarrollos Energéticos S.A. On May 9, security forces dissolved a demonstration of 150 COPINH-affiliated protesters in the capital Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán department, using batons and injuring several protesters. On July 5, unknown assailants tortured and killed the COPINH activist Lesbia Yaneth Urquía, whose corpse was found the next day at a waste dump in Marcala, La Paz department. She had been involved in protesting the hydroelectric plant Aurora I in the district San José, La Paz.

rma

JAMAICA (DRUG GANGS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: drug gangs vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between various drug gangs and the government continued. Gang-related violence affected especially the parishes of St. James, St. Catherine, Kingston, Clarendon, and St. Andrew. According to the police, around 700 people were killed in gang-related violence between January and mid-November. In addition, security forces killed 61 people between January and June, as reported by the Independent Commission of Investigations.

Throughout the year, police seized small arms and tons of drugs, mainly marijuana.

On April 13, around 200 members of the Jamaican Constabulary Force and the army launched an operation in Harbour View, St. Andrew, in order to arrest Marlon Perry, leader of the Duppy Flames Gang. While Perry escaped, one gang member was shot dead and another was injured. On June 9, police killed two members of the West Bank Gang in Maberley, Kingston, St. Andrew. While police said they were hit during a shoot-out, residents claimed that they had been killed while sleeping. In a similar incident on July 15, police killed one alleged gang member in Tivoli Gardens, Kingston. Subsequently residents protested the killing by putting up road blockades and throwing stones at police, injuring one. The Jamaican Defense Force was called in to provide support and patrolled Tivoli Gardens the following day. On August 10, police in Clarendon killed Rohan "Virus" Stevens, leader of the Web Lane Gang. Steve "Frenchie" Allen of Tivoli Gang was shot dead in an encounter with a police patrol in Kingston on September 12.

The probe of the 2010 Dudas Coke affair continued. On June 15, the official Tivoli Enquiry Report was presented to parliament, recommending compensation for the victims and an official apology by the government.

Incidents of inter-gang violence and violence against civilians continued in 2016. In the run-up to the general elections in February, three people were killed at events of the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP) in St. James, which the police attributed it to a rivalry between Sparta and Rebel gangs.

After tensions between Tivoli Garden and Denham Town gangs had arisen in March and April, police and military forces increased their operations in the respective areas of West Kingston, St. Andrew. Violence in the area flared up again in November, after the son of Christopher "Dudas" Coke was shot and injured. In September, inter-gang violence escalated in St. James, especially Montego Bay and adjacent neighborhoods. Over 200 people were killed in the parish between January and the end of September.

After the return of Tesha Miller, imprisoned in the US for two years, intra-gang violence escalated in Spanish Town, St. Catherine, over the leadership of the Clansman Gang. Additional security forces were deployed and the police imposed various curfews.

cwl

MEXICO (CNTE ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: CNTE et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The violent crisis over the orientation of education policies between the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) and the government led by Enrique Peña Nieto continued.

In the course of the year, CNTE staged disruptive and often violent protests preponderantly taking place in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Michoacán, and in the capital Mexico City, Federal District, to oppose the implementation of the

2012/13 education reform promoted by the federal government. Sporadically, smaller unions and teacher trainees, so-called normalistas, joined them. Roadblocks and protest marches represented major instruments of contention and grew in frequency from May on.

On May 15, for instance, around 15,000 CNTE-affiliated teachers in Chiapas, Estado de México, the Federal District, and Oaxaca organized strikes, blockades, and marches calling upon the government to revoke the education reform. In response, the government deployed 15,000 soldiers to Chiapas one week later, intending to reestablish order. On May 25 and 26, three policemen and nine unionists were wounded during demonstrations in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas. While protesters hurled stones and used clubs, police responded with tear gas. Clearances of roadblocks triggered violent clashes, as on June 10, for example, near Tamulté de las Sabanas, Tabasco state, when some 25 protesters and policemen were injured. Police used rubber bullets and tear gas, while protesters threw Molotov cocktails. Protests in Nochixtlán, Oaxaca, on June 19, escalated when police killed eight teachers, six of them by gunfire. Moreover, around 155 protesters and 43 policemen were left injured in the most violent encounter since the launch of the CNTE's anti-reform protest in 2013.

The latter used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the crowd, whereas protesters threw stones and incendiary devices. On July 26, the human rights ombudsman for Oaxaca, Arturo Peimbert Calvo, confirmed infringements of human rights by federal police during the Nochixtlán protests.

During their protests, CNTE members repeatedly hijacked and torched buses. Over the year, CNTE had hijacked 200 buses for more than four months. On December 1, the National Chamber of Bus Transportation, Passenger Services and Tourism reported considerable financial losses. In reaction to the increase in roadblocking in Oaxaca and Guerrero the government established an air bridge for food supplies to both states on June 30.

CNTE showed solidarity with normalistas, as on September 25, when they joined a march commemorating the second anniversary of the forced disappearance of 43 normalistas [→ Mexico (public security)].

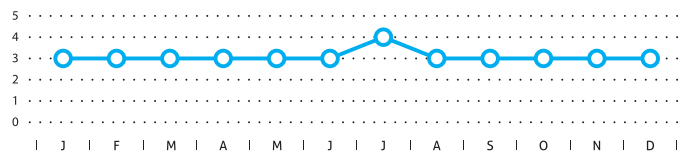
Following the Nochixtlán protest, the government agreed to reestablish dialogue on June 21 which, however, failed six days later. Throughout July, several round tables for mediating between CNTE and government representatives took place, all of which finished without formal agreements. Despite ongoing protests, Peña Nieto stated on July 15 that the reform would remain unaltered. *jok*

MEXICO (DRUG CARTELS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2006

Conflict parties: drug cartels vs. vigilante groups vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The war over subnational predominance, illegal drugs, and natural resources between various drug cartels, vigilante groups, and the government under President Enrique Peña Nieto continued. The most active drug cartels were the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Zetas, Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT), and the Gulf Cartel (CDG). Guerrero, Tamaulipas, and Michoacán were the most affected states. July was the month with the highest number of homicides since mid-2011. Additionally, cartel infighting remained highly violent [→ Mexico (inter-cartel violence, paramilitary groups)].

Guerrero remained a hotspot of violence. On January 27, 3,500 members of the military and 200 federal police (PF) officers started the third and largest federal security intervention in the state since the beginning of the conflict, named "Operation Chilapa." On August 23, between 100 and 150 heavily armed cartel members opened fire on 15 PF officers entering General Heliodoro Castillo town. The four-hour shootout left three police officers and three criminals dead as well as two officers wounded.

Levels of violence in the north-eastern border state of Tamaulipas stayed high. On March 13, CDG and Los Zetas members attacked a navy patrol in the city of Reynosa. The marines killed ten cartel members while the latter injured four navy forces. Between April 25 and 27, marines killed ten CDG members in Reynosa. On August 25, in the municipality of Miguel Alemán, five PF officers were left with burns and two with gunshot wounds when suspected CDG members in a pickup truck threw a spike strip at a police patrol vehicle and fired at the petrol tank. On September 3, ten Los Zetas members were killed in several shootouts with the military in the city of Nuevo Laredo.

Between April 11 and 12, PF arrested 22 suspected members of the local Los Viagras Cartel as part of operations launched in the municipalities of Apatzingán, Parácuaro, Uruapan, and Zamora, Michoacán state. Subsequently, cartel supporters blocked highways, burned vehicles, and set three service stations and stores on fire in 14 towns. On September 6, LCT shot down a helicopter of the Public Security Ministry in the municipality of La Huacana, which had assisted federal and state security forces on the ground pursuing a LCT vehicle convoy of local cartel leader Ignacio "El Cenizo" Rentería Andrade. Four crew members died and one was injured. The previous week, PF had seized two rocket launchers and three anti-tank missiles during a raid in a nearby LCT hideout. De-

spite renewed federal security interventions in the past two years, several vigilante groups began to resurface in Guerrero and Michoacán over the year and threatened to take up arms again, complaining that local security forces and the Rural Defense Corps failed to fight local drug cartels.

The coastal state of Sinaloa experienced a rise in violence by the Sinaloa cartel. On September 30, 60 Sinaloa cartel members ambushed a military convoy transporting a suspected drug trafficker near the state capital Culiacán by using grenades, Barretts M82 as well as AR-15 and AK-47 assault rifles. The military killed five and injured 17.

On August 19 and 20, shootouts between the army and Los Zetas in the municipality of Alto Lucero, Veracruz state, left a total of 17 people dead. Marines killed 20 cartel members in Jesús Carranza town between December 3 to 5 and confiscated 28 heavy firearms.

As of mid-July, security forces claimed to have arrested or killed 100 of the country's 122 most wanted criminals. On January 8, a joint navy-army operation recaptured Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera, head of the Sinaloa Cartel, in Los Mochis, Sinaloa, after he had escaped from a maximum security prison on 07/11/15. During the apprehension, soldiers killed five cartel members. PF and army elements arrested Francisco "El 2000" Hernández García, leader of the Beltrán Leyva cartel during an operation on January 30 in the municipality of Guasave, Sinaloa.

Drug cartels continued to show a strong presence in illegal businesses apart from drug trafficking such as human trafficking and oil theft. Killings of judges and clerics rose sharply. This year was the deadliest for journalists reporting on drug-related violence since 2010, turning Mexico into the third most dangerous country for journalists worldwide according to Reporters Without Borders. tk

ingly tried to challenge the Sinaloa cartel and penetrate its territory.

CJNG, the cartel with the largest territory under its control, engaged in turf wars with Los Caballeros Templarios (LCT), Los Zetas, and the Sinaloa Cartel. In the state of Colima, fights between CJNG and the Sinaloa Cartel led to a total of 41 fatalities in February. In Puerto Vallarta town, Jalisco state, CJNG gunmen kidnapped Sinaloa Cartel operator and the son of its imprisoned leader, Jesús Alfredo Guzmán Salazar, along with five others on August 15. Two days later, 300 members of the army, navy, and federal police launched special operations to locate the six abductees. On August 22, all six were released unharmed. In the state of Veracruz, authorities recovered the bodies of seven Los Zetas members next to messages signed by CJNG near the municipality of Amatlán de los Reyes, on May 24. In the state of Michoacán, authorities discovered six decapitated bodies in an abandoned taxi near the community of San Gregorio on May 26. Reportedly, this was related to a presumed turf war between CJNG and LCT.

In the Pacific neighbor states of Guerrero and Michoacán, power struggles between CJNG, the Beltrán Leyva factions Los Ardillos, and Los Rojos as well as Guerreros Unidos remained violent. On January 28, fights between Los Ardillos and Los Rojos left seven dead in the state capital Chilpancingo, Guerrero. Another nine people were shot during a birthday party in the municipality of Coyuca de Catalán the same day. Between November 19 and 21, 13 people were killed in Guerrero in turf wars between La Familia Michoacana, Los Ardillos and Los Rojos. The Beltrán Leyva and the Sinaloa cartels vied for control of Sinaloa. From February 17 to 24, confrontations between both caused at least 17 deaths. On June 16, 150 heavily armed gunmen, allegedly related to Beltrán Leyva, attacked the house of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán's mother in La Tuna village and killed at least three people. In the second half of August, turf wars left 53 dead. Due to continuous violence at least 350 families had left their homes in the municipality of Huixiopa by October 12. Inter-cartel violence also spread to the neighboring state of Chihuahua. In its capital Ciudad Juárez 25 cartel members were killed in multiple shootouts on October 30.

The long-running rivalry between CDG and Los Zetas led to many violent confrontations in the north-eastern states. On February 10, an inmate riot in the Topo Chico state prison in Monterrey city, Nuevo León state, erupted when hostile CDG and Los Zetas prisoners attacked each other with makeshift knives, bottles, and baseball bats, leaving 49 dead and twelve injured. On September 28, a series of shootouts in the state capital Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas state, left seven cartel members dead and one injured.

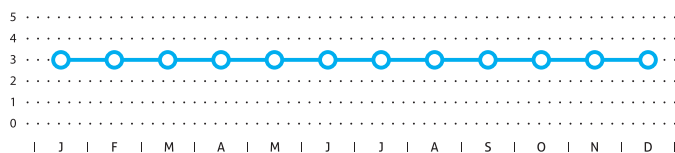
Additional violent encounters in Tamaulipas resulted from an alleged split of Los Zetas into the Cártel del Noreste and Los Zetas de la Vieja Escuela. Between February 28 and July 5, the fight over spheres of influence between the splinter groups left 30 people dead. A total of 14 cartel members were killed in shootouts in Ciudad Victoria on September 28 and 29. tk

MEXICO (INTER-CARTEL VIOLENCE, PARAMILITARY GROUPS)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: CJNG et al. vs. Sinaloa et al. vs. CDG et al. vs. Los Zetas et al. vs. LFM et al. vs. LCT et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The limited war over subnational predominance, illegal drugs, and natural resources between various drug cartels continued. The most involved groups were those of the Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), the Sinaloa Cartel, the Gulf Cartel (CDG), and Los Zetas. Guerrero, Sinaloa, and Tamaulipas were the most contested states. Sparked by the arrest of the Sinaloa cartel's leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera in January [→ Mexico (drug cartels)], other cartels increas-

MEXICO (PUBLIC SECURITY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2014

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

The violent crisis concerning the political system and the handling of public security between teacher trainees, so-called normalistas, and several teachers' unions, on the one hand, and the government under President Enrique Peña Nieto, on the other hand, continued. The incident triggering the conflict, the abduction of 43, the killing of six, and the injuring of 25 normalistas and bystanders on 09/26/14 in Iguala, Guerrero state, remained largely unsolved.

On March 30, the Interdisciplinary Independent Group of Experts, designated by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, announced that the government had not renewed its investigation mandate expiring at the end of April. Subsequently, demonstrators set up a camp outside the Ministry of the Interior in the capital Mexico City, Federal District, on April 15, demanding a prolongation. They voiced concern over the possible closure of all investigations, including those of the national general attorneyship. On July 8, however, the Subsecretary of Human Rights of the Interior Ministry, Roberto Campa Cifrián, announced that investigations and searches would be taken up again in August.

Marches and roadblocks continued to be frequent acts of protest against the government. Public transport unions criticized the government's approach to public security during a 10,000-strong highway blockade in solidarity with normalistas in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, on April 28. When federal police cleared the blockade using tear gas and batons, protesters fired gunshots, hurled stones, and wounded four policemen. 58 demonstrators were arrested.

Over the year, parents and solidary groups regularly protested to commemorate the Iguala case. On its second anniversary, for instance, normalistas, partly supported by teacher unions [→ Mexico (CNTE et al.)] and Zapatistas [→ Mexico (EZLN/Chiapas)], staged protests against the government's handling of public security in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán, Yucatán, and Mexico City. While the march in the capital accounted for about 8,000 protesters, the other states registered several hundred demonstrators respectively. The protest in Chilpancingo turned violent when normalistas started to throw Molotov cocktails at the state government palace. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd, injuring seven normalistas.

Throughout the year, three normalistas were killed by unknown gunmen. While those supporting the normalistas blamed the government for being at least indirectly involved, the government accused common criminals.

International solidarity, even though more sporadic than in the previous year, endured. In the Argentine capital Buenos Aires, for instance, demonstrators voiced their disapproval of Peña Nieto's visit to the country on July 29 and criticized his security policies. *jok*

NICARAGUA (INDIGENOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: Miskito groups, YATAMA vs. government
 Conflict items: autonomy, resources

The violent crisis in the coastal regions of the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCN) over autonomy and resources between members of the Miskito indigenous and the party Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Aslatakanka (YATAMA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, illegal settlers, so-called colonos, carried out several abductions and violent attacks in an effort to threaten Miskito indigenous. YATAMA and the Miskito indigenous continued to express their dissent with policies of the government concerning the enforcement of indigenous rights as well as the insufficient provision of protection for their community.

Between December 2015 and January 2016, colonos allegedly had taken ten Miskito indigenous hostages. While six of them were later released under severe threats, one was found dead and three remained missing. On March 16, eight armed colonos ambushed and injured a Miskito park ranger in Wawa, Francia Sirpi municipality. A further abduction took place on August 18, as alleged colonos kidnapped and beheaded two Miskitos in Li Aubra, Waspam municipality.

On February 27, Miskito indigenous reaffirmed to defend their autonomy at the 9th Extraordinary Assembly of Indigenous People in the municipality of Bilwi. They accused the government of neglecting issues such as the clear-cutting of tropical forests and the exploitation of hardwoods as well as violent attacks by colonos. They urged the authorities to ensure their rights. On November 26, the government, in turn, stated that it had not received any criminal charge this year. On August 7, the Centre for Justice and Human Rights of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua claimed that approx. 500 Miskito indigenous from the RACCN had fled to the Honduran border area due to permanent threats and violence carried out by colonos.

Further tensions between indigenous people and colonos arose in the national park of Indio Maíz, located in the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (RACCS) and the southern department Río San Juan. On June 16, colonos armed with AK-47 assault rifles threatened a park ranger and his family, demanding him to give up his forest patrols. Authorities did not undertake any countermeasures. One month later, indigenous groups reported at least 195 illegal activities in the national park, including the clear-cutting of tropical forests and the exploitation of hardwoods by colonos.

In the elections on November 7, YATAMA leader Brooklyn Rivera returned to parliament after he had been ousted last year by the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) over allegations of land grabbing. The same day, a clash between members of YATAMA and the FSLN left four people injured in Bilwi. *mah*

NICARAGUA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

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

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system, national power, and resources between various opposition groups and the government of President Daniel Ortega's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) continued.

On November 6, Ortega was reelected in the general elections for a 3rd consecutive term. Opposition parties, such as the coalition Broad Front for Democracy (FAD) as well as election observers, civil society organizations, and international organizations deemed the elections to be neither free nor fair. However, most opposition parties accepted the results. The same day, three civilians were killed by FSLN supporters in Ciudad Antigua, Nueva Segovia department. The following day, clashes between supporters of the FSLN and of the oppositional, pro-indigenous YATAMA party occurred in Bilwi, Autonomous Region of Northern Atlantic. YATAMA supporters were celebrating the election of their leader Brooklyn Rivera into the national parliament, but also protested against the election process. When encountering celebrating FSLN supporters, clashes began [→ Nicaragua (indigenous groups)]. At least 20 people were injured. Government buildings, cars, and shops were also demolished and ransacked.

Throughout the year, protests against the planned construction of the interoceanic canal, which would connect the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean, continued. Opposition groups and organizations perceived the construction of the Chinese-funded canal project and the dredging in the Lake Nicaragua as a threat to the country's main reserve for freshwater and biodiversity. On November 30, clashes between the police and demonstrators occurred after thousands of people took to the streets in several departments to march against the planned canal. In Nueva Guinea, Autonomous Region of Southern Atlantic, six policemen and five protesters were injured. In the capital Managua, in the eponymous department, several protesters were injured, twelve arrested and 20 disappeared. In early December, several anti-government groups held marches in the capital, demanding the government to repeal the canal construction plans and calling for fair and transparent elections. hzi

PARAGUAY (EPP, AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1989

Conflict parties: EPP, ACA, agrarian movements vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over land reform between the left-leaning People's Army of Paraguay (EPP), their splinter cell Armed Peasant Association (ACA), several farmer organizations, indigenous groups, and landless people, on the one hand, and

the government, on the other, continued for the 28th consecutive year. These groups continued to demand integral agrarian, social, and political reform.

On January 28, the Joint Task Force (FTC), a military unit deployed to counter EPP's activities, arrested six people in Agüerito, San Pedro department. Two out of those six individuals were found to be members of the EPP, and to be allegedly involved in the July 2015 killing of five police officers. On May 17, the FTC killed ACA leader Idilio Morínigo during a shootout in Azotey, Concepción department. Lacking substantial leadership after the incident, ACA did not undertake any further activities for the rest of the year. On July 27, the EPP kidnapped the son of a landowner in Río Verde, San Pedro, demanding a ransom of 700,000 USD. One day later, alleged EPP members detonated an IED targeting a police patrol near Río Verde, causing only material damage.

Tensions escalated on August 27 when several members of the EPP ambushed and killed eight military personnel of the FTC in Horqueta, Concepción. This was the most fatal attack of the group since the conflict had started. Subsequently, in November, amid the perceived rise of insecurity over the past few months, President Horacio Cartes replaced for the second time this year the head of the FTC, now led by Julio Brugada. Furthermore, in the same month, interior minister Francisco de Vargas was ousted during an impeachment request and replaced by Miguel Tadeo Rojas.

Several farmers' and workers' organizations staged protests throughout the year, demanding a fair distribution of land and furthermore criticizing the usage of chemical products by companies such as Monsanto. For instance, in March and April various cooperative, farmer and activist groups led by the Federación Nacional Campesina and the Partido Paraguayo Pyahura marched towards the government district in the capital Asunción. Participants demanded a fair taxation of cooperative groups, a sustainable development model, and the retirement of Cartes. After an informal agreement between the protestors and the government was not implemented, farmers' organizations carried out peaceful protests with about 5,000 participants in at least 13 departments and in Asunción on September 20. mah

PERU (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2008

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

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and resources between various opposition groups and the government remained violent. At the centre of contention were socio-environmental issues such as water pollution, water shortages, land rights, and the lack of consultation with local communities, predominantly in the mining sector.

On March 6, the Wampis community in the Amazon province of Marañon, Loreto region, seized a grounded military helicopter and took the crew members and several other officials hostage to force the government to withdraw the national oil

company Petroperú, which had polluted their land by a series of oil spills. Two days later, the indigenous tribe released the hostages after the government agreed to the tribe's inclusion in an emergency cleanup aid plan.

In September, the conflict flared up again after several additional oil spills. Communities from seven indigenous federations blocked the main transportation route, the Marañón River, and demanded further measures to protect the environment as well as an independent monitoring system.

Also, demonstrations against the Las Bambas copper mine in Apurímac region took place in the second half of the year. The Chinese-owned mine is one of the largest copper mine projects in the world and the extraction of ore made Peru one of the leading producers of silver, gold, zinc, and copper worldwide. Due to the exploration of mineral deposits and the increase of waste material, protesters and the local community frequently accused the government and company-owners of environmental pollution. In October, around 200 protesters blocked a road near the mine. They demanded a compensation for the environmental damage and the inconveniences caused by noise and the amount of dust close to the road used for truck transport of the mine's copper concentrates instead of the promised transport by a pipeline.

On October 14, police killed a protester and injured about 30 further demonstrators, while trying to clear a road. During the clashes protesters wounded about 20 policemen. The incident marked the first fatality since the June 2016 election of the new government led by Pedro Pablo Kuczynski. One week later, 100 police officers and about 200 protesters clashed in the district Orurillo, Puno region, near the Poderosa lead mine, owned by Canadian miner Caracara Silver. Protesters expressed their fear that the mining would contaminate local water resources. After police had fired tear gas, protesters raided the exploration camp, setting fire to five dormitories and destroying equipment. mgm

PERU (SHINING PATH)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1980

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

The conflict over subnational predominance, resources, and the orientation of the political system between the Maoist rebel group Shining Path (SL) and the government remained violent.

SL had split up into Huallaga Regional Committee (CRH) and Center Regional Committee (CRC) years before, with only the latter remaining the fighting force. As in previous years, CRC's activities remained confined to the river valley of Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro (VRAEM), the country's main coca growing area, covering parts of the regions Ayacucho, Cusco, and Junín. The government accused SL of protecting coca growers and collaborating with drug traffickers.

On April 9, the eve of the presidential election, SL guerrillas armed with rifles and grenades killed eight soldiers and two civilians in an ambush in Santo Domingo de Acobamba dis-

trict in Huancayo, Junín. The same day, SL wounded two navy sailors operating on a military ship on the Apurímac River near the town Quisto Valle in Ayacucho.

On May 20, in the joint operation "Tornado 2016" by the National Police and the armed forces, SL commander Abel Auqui alias "Comrade Alejandro", the leader of SL military operations, was killed in a crop field in Llochegua in Huanta province, Ayacucho. At the end of the month, special commando agents allegedly killed a SL member in a shootout in the district of Santo Domingo of Acobamba in Huancayo, Junín. On September 11, the newly-elected government led by President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski declared a 30-day state of emergency in three districts within Ayacucho, Cusco and Huancavelica. It further extended the existing state of emergency in 42 other districts in Ayacucho, Cusco, Huancavelica, and Junín regions.

At the end of September, the national electoral council rejected a registration request filed by Frente de Unidad de Defensa del Pueblo Peruano, the presumed political wing of SL. On November 22, the US government added three SL leaders to the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists, an indication for entities or individuals who have committed or pose a high risk for acts of terrorism and would face serious sanctions if caught. mgm

PERU – CHILE (BORDER)

Intensity: 1 | Change: END | Start: 1883

Conflict parties: Peru vs. Chile
Conflict items: territory

The dispute over the maritime and land boundaries between Chile and Peru ended after the heads of both states declared past differences to be over and agreed on closer political and economic cooperation.

On November 29, in his first official visit to Chile, newly elected Peruvian president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski and his Chilean counterpart, Michelle Bachelet, announced that a "new era" of bilateral relations was about to start and that both countries were willing to overcome grievances. Regarding international trade, Kuczynski later stated his country's will to "join forces" with Chile to counter "protectionist challenges". The two countries further agreed on holding binational cabinet meetings and to reactivate cooperation between the respective secretaries of defense and foreign affairs to discuss various policies, including joint measures against drug trafficking. This forum had been suspended after the border dispute had been brought to the ICJ in 2008. The ICJ's final ruling on the sea border on 01/27/14 had been accepted by both sides. peh

USA – CUBA (SYSTEM)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1960

Conflict parties: USA vs. Cuba
 Conflict items: system/ideology, international power

The non-violent crisis between the United States and Cuba over ideology and international power continued. Despite the reestablishment and gradual normalization of diplomatic relations initiated by US President Barack Obama and his Cuban counterpart Raúl Castro in 2015, the US Congress continued to uphold commercial, economic, and financial sanctions against Cuba by renewing the Trading with the Enemy Act on September 13.

President Obama's visit to Cuba in March, which marked the first visit of an US president to Cuba in 90 years, was preceded by a third round of easing of trade and travel restrictions. In a speech during his trip, Obama repeated his bid to lift the embargo but also pointed out that Cuba needed to open its political system and improve its human rights record, emphasizing that "even if we lifted the embargo tomorrow, Cubans would not realize their potential without continued change here in Cuba." Fidel Castro countered by writing an open letter to Obama in which he stated that Cuba remained "in the grip of a US blockade" and did not "need the empire to give us any presents." In addition, his brother Raúl used the visit to urge the US to return the Guantanamo Bay area to Cuba [→ USA – Cuba (Guantanamo)].

The US and Cuba further engaged in bilateral talks, working towards enhanced cooperation in the areas of education, health, science, agriculture, migration, environmental protection, and law enforcement. Mail transportation between the US and Cuba resumed in March and commercial airlines offered service since August. In September, the US named its first Ambassador to Cuba in 50 years, and the inaugural Economic Dialog on issues such as trade, investment, labor, and employment was held in Washington, D.C. This reconciliation process was furthered by the first abstention of the US in 25 years in the annual UN General Assembly vote condemning the embargo against Cuba.

After the US presidential elections on November 8, Raúl Castro formally extended his congratulations to President-elect Donald Trump and simultaneously announced to launch a military exercise called "The Bastion". While Trump did not provide a clear policy stance towards Cuba, he appointed a group of politicians openly advocating for the reversal of Obama's rapprochement policies to his transition team.

The passing of Fidel Castro on November 26 provoked varying reactions in the US, with Trump publicly condemning human rights violations by the Cuban regime, and the Obama administration "extending a hand of friendship to the Cuban people." In a speech held at a public ceremony for Fidel Castro on December 3, Raúl Castro "vow[ed] to defend the homeland and socialism" and emphasized that the revolution was not over. kah

USA – MEXICO (BORDER SECURITY)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: USA vs. Mexico
 Conflict items: other

The violent crisis between the United States and Mexico over border security continued. Strategies to curb migration to the US and cross-border drug and weapon trafficking as well as the use of lethal force by the US Border Patrol (USBP) remained disputed. Official figures by the US Department of Homeland Security indicated that since 1994 the number of USBP agents guarding the border increased from 4,287 to more than 20,000 in 2016.

On January 25, USBP agents encountered two alleged smugglers in Apache, Arizona, 30 miles from the Mexican border. One of the Mexican nationals was shot and injured by the USBP after he had attacked the patrol. The other one was arrested. On June 9, a USBP agent shot and killed a Mexican national in Yuma, Arizona, who had attacked and injured him. Two other men who tried to cross the border were arrested. In a subsequent statement, the Mexican Foreign Relations Department expressed regret about the incident, further stressing that the use of lethal force in immigration control and border security should be used as a last resort. On September 8, a Mexican truck driver who tried to run over USBP agents with his vehicle was shot and injured at the border in Nogales, Arizona.

In his electoral campaign, US President-elect Donald Trump promised to build a wall along the Mexican border, further stating that he would pressure Mexico to pay for it, and to deport up to three million Mexicans who were living in the US illegally. He further announced that the US would retreat from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). His Mexican counterpart Enrique Peña Nieto rejected the idea to pay for a border wall and stated his country's will to merely "modernise" NAFTA without providing further specification. sas

VENEZUELA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: opposition (MUD) vs. government
 Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the opposition and the government continued. As the economic and financial situation of the country further deteriorated, the opposition, mainly consisting of the Mesa de la Unidad Democrática (MUD), resorted to both legal measures and street protests, which repeatedly led to violent encounters with police and supporters of President Nicolás Maduro's United Socialist Party (PSUV). The Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict reported more than 3,500 protests and riots during the first semester, marking an increase of almost 25 percent compared to the first half of 2015.

Throughout the year, controversies about the repeatedly delayed scheduling of a recall referendum against Maduro dominated the political and legal struggle. On January 5, the newly-elected National Assembly with its MUD majority took over, urging a change of government within six months. On January 11, the Supreme Court (TSJ) invalidated all decisions by the Assembly as three opposition deputies took up their seats despite the TSJ's ruling to hold re-elections in their localities. The decision was later approved by the Assembly in order to restore its legislative competences. On January 15, Maduro issued an initial 60-day economic emergency decree allowing the executive to undertake extraordinary measures. The Assembly rejected the decree on January 22, whereas the TSJ validated it on February 12. This dynamic occurred repeatedly throughout the year.

On March 29, the Assembly passed an amnesty bill demanding the release of alleged political prisoners. The government vetoed the bill, alleging unfair and fraudulent legal terms, and the TSJ declared the bill unconstitutional. During demonstrations on the same day, protesters hijacked a bus and steered it into a police cordon, killing two police officers and wounding four others in San Cristóbal, Táchira state.

After the MUD had collected 1.8 million signatures for the first phase of the recall referendum, the National Electoral Council (CNE) stated on June 7 that around 600,000 signatures did not meet the necessary standards. Protests and looting due to the lack of basic goods escalated in the following days. In Petare, Miranda state, police forces used live ammunition against protesters, killing one and injuring several others on June 9. Three days later, in a demonstration in Cereza, Sucre state, police shot and killed one and injured another ten protesters.

On August 9, the CNE released a schedule for the second phase of the process which included the collection 20 percent of voter turnout in every state, translating into about four million signatures by the end of October, followed by a 90-day period to hold the referendum. If recalled after this date, the president would be replaced by the vice-president and new elections would not be convoked. On September 1, more than one million people, constituting approx. three percent of the entire population, participated in nation-wide MUD-

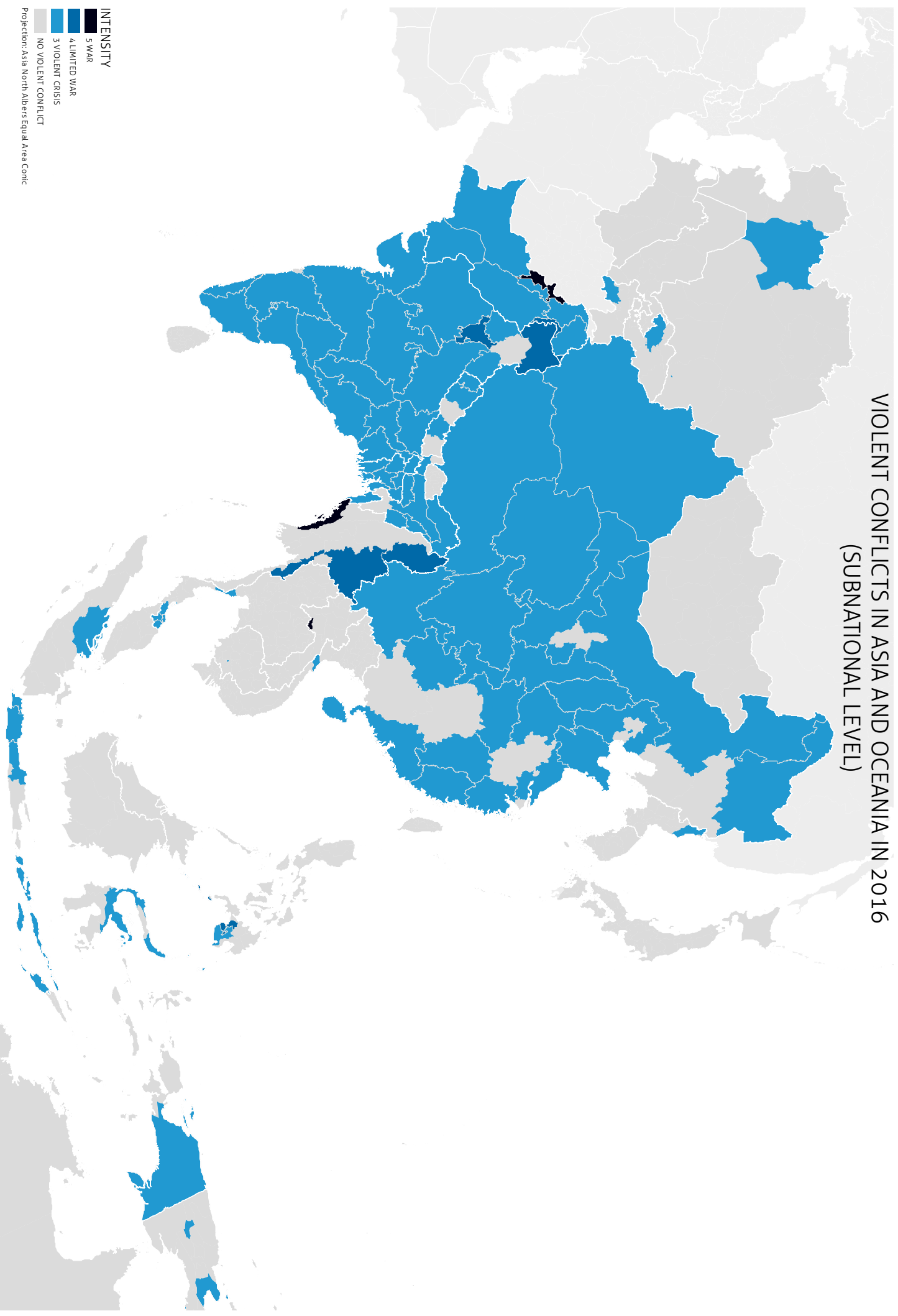
organized protests and demanded the referendum to be held. After the CNE had suspended the referendum several times, another 1.2 million protested on October 26. While protests in the capital Caracas remained non-violent, more than 120 people were injured in clashes in other cities and a policeman was shot and killed in Miranda. On October 21, the CNE declared the suspension of the MUD's planned second signature collection to be held between October 26 and 28. The Assembly reacted on October 23 by approving an agreement "for the restitution of constitutional order and democracy" and scheduling a political trial against Maduro. The agreement included the replacement of TSJ and CNE magistrates, the submission of a complaint before the ICJ against the TSJ and CNE, and a request to the military not to follow government orders. PSUV members stated the Assembly was promoting a coup d'état, and PSUV supporters interrupted the session, causing material damage.

Mediated by the Vatican and sponsored by UNASUR, talks between MUD and PSUV started on October 30 in Caracas. MUD had conditioned the dialog on scheduling a recall referendum in 2016, the liberation of alleged political prisoners, the acknowledgement of the MUD-led legislative authority, and the allowance of humanitarian assistance. Three imprisoned opposition politicians were released hours after the first meeting. In the second round of talks on November 13, representatives of the government and the MUD announced their commitment to peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution within the constitutional framework. Furthermore, both parties agreed to support the supply of basic goods and the joint election of two new CNE officials. On November 17, another MUD deputy was released. On December 6, the MUD announced it would pause its involvement in the dialog, alleging lack of concessions from the government.

The government's decision to withdraw the country's largest banknote from circulation led to widespread protests and renewed violence and looting in mid-December. In clashes with the police, at least one person was killed in El Callao, Bolívar state and dozens injured. In reaction, opposition leader Julio Borges called the government "utterly stupid and destructive in economic management." cb, peh

Asia and Oceania

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA IN 2016 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



ASIA AND OCEANIA

With 123 conflicts in total, Asia and Oceania continued to be the region with the highest number of conflicts, accounting for more than a quarter of conflicts worldwide. The number of violent crises declined from 66 to 56, whereas the number of disputes and non-violent crises increased by nine to 60 conflicts in total.

While more than 90 percent of the conflicts featured non or only a low level of violence, the number of highly violent conflicts increased by one to seven. Highly violent conflicts were observed in Pakistan, India, the Philippines, and Myanmar with the latter witnessing three intrastate conflicts on the level of a limited war. Pakistan's intrastate war against the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) and other Islamist militant groups continued unabatedly for the 10th consecutive year, thereby representing the region's only full-scale war. Intrastate conflicts in Myanmar and India as well as the interstate conflict between Pakistan and India escalated to limited wars [→ Myanmar (Rohingya); Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State); India (Naxalites); Pakistan – India]. The region saw a de-escalation of the war over secession on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao [→ Philippines (BIFF, BIFM – MILF, government)] as well as the de-escalation of three limited wars to violent crises [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State); Philippines (MILF); Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)].

Moreover, with 20 interstate conflicts respectively, Asia and Oceania was the region with the highest number of interstate conflicts along with Europe.

Out of the 14 observed conflicts in China, the number of violent conflicts decreased by one to eight. While violent conflicts revolving around ethnic groups in China were carried out less intensely, the conflict regarding democratic and independent movements in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region escalated to a violent level [→ China (Hongkong)]. On the Eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year, violent clashes between Hongkong police and over 300 demonstrators left almost one hundred people injured. In Taiwan, the opposition conflict de-escalated with the power transition from the Kuomintang to the Democratic Progressive Party. However, this increased tensions between China and Taiwan as well as between China and the US [→ China (Taiwan – opposition); China (Taiwan); China – USA]. In the South China Sea, frictions between China and the Philippines diminished with the political rapprochement between both sides [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. However, a new violent conflict dynamic regarding maritime rights between Indonesia, China, Vietnam, and Malaysia evolved. On the Korean Peninsula, the human rights situation in the DPRK continued to deteriorate. The newly observed conflict indicated that up to 30,000 people defected from the DPRK since 1962 [→ North Korea, China (defectors)].

In Southeast Asia, Myanmar remained the country with the most violent conflicts. Throughout the year, several ethnic armed groups continued fighting amongst each other. In early 2016 in Shan State, Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) forces clashed with members of the Restoration Council of Shan State [→ Myanmar (TNLA, RCSS)]. Fighters of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) resumed the limited war against the government over the autonomy of Kachin State [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO)]. The heavy fighting left at least 63 dead and 6,900 internally displaced. At the end of the year, violence peaked when TNLA, KIA, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and Arakan Army forces jointly attacked several government outposts in Shan State, referring to themselves as "Northern Alliance". The subsequent clashes left at least 14 dead, 50 injured, 2,000 internally displaced, and 3,000 fled to China [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)]. In October, the conflict between radical Buddhists, government, and members of the Rohingya minority in Rakhine State escalated to a limited war. After two months of heavy clashes, leaving over 100 Rohingya dead, approx. 50,000 internally displaced, and 1,500 Rohingya homes destroyed, UN officials considered the Burmese operations to be a potential ethnic cleansing [→ Myanmar (Rohingya)]. Despite this development, efforts to establish a nationwide peace agreement continued [→ Myanmar (UNFC)].

In Thailand, the violent conflict between Islamist separatists and the government over autonomy of several Southern Border Provinces such as Pattani and Yala continued, leaving at least 200 people dead and over 400 injured. This year, violent encounters also affected provinces located closer to the north [→ Thailand (Islamist separatists / Southern Border Provinces)].

The situation in the Philippines was influenced by the inauguration of the new President Rodrigo Duterte in June 2016. President Duterte vowed to advance the peace process in the southern region of Bangsamoro, meeting with leaders of several Islamist insurgent groups as well as the communist NPA. However, the war between the BIFM and BIFF groups, on the one hand, and the government in cooperation with MILF, on the other, continued as a limited war [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]. The conflicts between the government and the MILF as well as the MNLF group each de-escalated by one level, with the MNLF conflict turning non-violent [→ Philippines (MILF); Philippines (MILF – MNLF); Philippines (MNLF)]. Several negotiation talks between the government and the group leaders took place throughout the year. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which pledged allegiance to IS in 2014, took civilians, soldiers, and foreign travellers hostage and beheaded at least four of them [→ Philippines (Abu Sayyaf); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In response, President Duterte increased the number of troops deployed to fight ASG.

In Indonesia, civilians as well as government troops were killed in attacks by Islamist militant groups, with the most severe attack taking place in the capital Jakarta in January, leaving four militants and four civilians dead and injuring another 24 [→ Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)]. Following the attack, the government strengthened anti-terrorism legislation, which was criticized by human rights organizations. Tribal fighting in Papua New Guinea turned violent on several occasions, leading to the launch of a joint police and military operation in Hela province [→ Papua New Guinea (tribal violence)]. The opposition conflict turned violent this year, when police shot at groups of students protesting against the government, injuring at least 17 [→ Papua New Guinea (opposition)].

In Nepal, several ethnic groups, among them Madhesis and Kiratis, had blocked the border to India in protest against the new constitution from September 2015 onwards [→ Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai)]. While the blockade ended on February 8, violent protests and clashes over the constitution and boundaries of the new states continued [→ Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups), Nepal (opposition)].

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As in the last years, the government and the opposition in Bangladesh clashed over elections, which together with intra-opposition clashes, left more than 63 dead and at least 1,144 injured [→ Bangladesh (opposition)]. Furthermore, Islamist violence continued, mainly targeting secular bloggers, Hindus, Shiites, and non-Muslim foreigners [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)]. On July 1, IS claimed to have carried out its most fatal attack so far in Bangladesh when they took hostages in a café, resulting in 29 deaths, among them 20 civilians, most of them foreigners, while over 30 were injured.

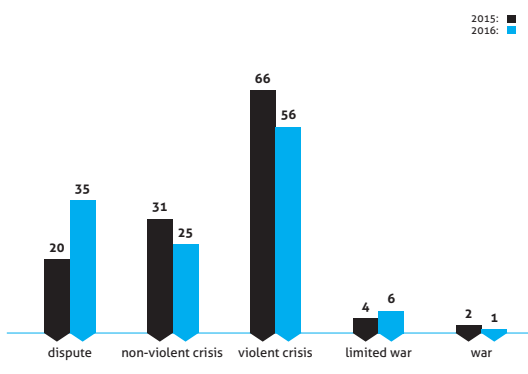
In India, the conflict over ideology and the political system between the Naxalites and the government escalated to a limited war, thereby becoming one of the most violent conflicts in the South Asia region [→ India (Naxalites)]. Naxalites increasingly targeted civilians, often accusing them of being police informers. In this year, more than 360 conflict-related deaths occurred, which marked a significant rise compared to last year. Moreover, various militant groups continued their violent struggle for secession [→ India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya); India (Manipur); India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland); India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)]. Furthermore, three autonomy conflicts de-escalated to a non-violent level [→ India (HPC-D factions / Mizoram, Manipur, Assam); India (PULF); India (TJAC / Telangana)].

Incidents of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims took place throughout the year [→ India (Hindus – Muslims)]. Several cases of violence against Muslims in connection to cattle trade or the consumption of beef were reported. In November, a proposal for a uniform civil code caused tensions. Demands for socio-economic benefits under the Indian reservation system were raised by several communities, leading to protests, which often turned violent [→ India (Patels et al.)]. In February, demands by the Jat community sparked a week-long violent protest, which spread to multiple states. Clashes between security forces and local protesters in Kashmir Valley over the killing of militants in security operations continued for months, leaving several thousand civilians injured [→ India (Kashmir)]. Relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated with the halt of bilateral talks in connection to two Islamist militant attacks on Indian army bases [→ India (JeM et al.–Kashmir); India (Islamist militant groups)]. Army skirmishes in the contested border area of Jammu and Kashmir state continued, causing thousands of civilians on both sides to flee their homes. Additionally, tension over water distribution between both states increased [→ Pakistan – India].

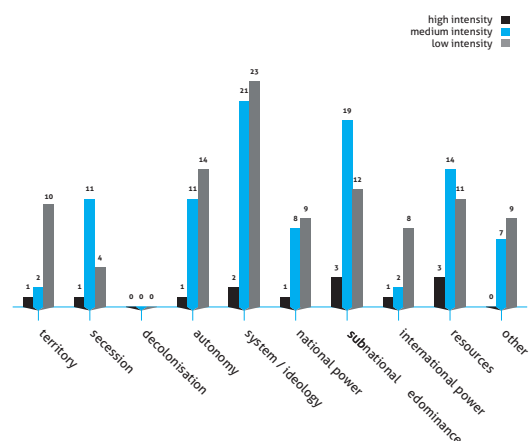
In Pakistan, Islamist militants continued to target religious minorities, security forces, and educational institutions [→ Pakistan (Sunni militants – religious groups)]. Pakistani officials warned about IS' alleged influence among members of other militant groups, while IS claimed responsibility for several attacks. The counter-terrorism campaign "Zarb-e-Azb" launched in 2014 was preliminarily completed in April. However, security operations continued in several provinces and airstrikes resumed in the second half of the year [→ Pakistan (Islamist militants)]. The conflict over secession in Balochistan province de-escalated to a violent crisis [→ Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)].

In Central Asia, two violent crises between various Islamist groups and the respective governments of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan were observed. In June, 25 Islamist militants attacked two gun shops and a military facility in the Kazakh city of Aqtobe, leaving three security forces, five civilians, and 18 suspected Islamist militants dead. This was the most fatal Islamist attack since the country's independence [→ Kazakhstan (Islamist groups)]. In Tajikistan, Islamist militants crossing the porous border to Afghanistan continued to be perceived as a security threat by the government. This prompted the Tajik government to seek international cooperation, target alleged followers of extremist groups, and restrict practice of Islam in everyday life [→ Tajikistan (Islamist groups)]. Moreover, the conflict between the opposition and the Kazakh government escalated to a non-violent crisis against the backdrop of protests against a planned land privatization reform and the subsequent crackdown on opposition activists [→ Kazakhstan (opposition)]. The non-violent crisis between various opposition groups and the Kyrgyz government was marked by alleged attempts to overthrow the government and subsequent detention of several opposition leaders [→ Kyrgyzstan (opposition)]. The conflict over international power, water resources, and territory between Uzbekistan, on the one hand, and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other, escalated to a non-violent crisis [→ Uzbekistan – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan].

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN ASIA AND OCEANIA
IN 2016 COMPARED TO 2015



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA
IN 2016 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



ASIA AND OCEANIA

Overview: Conflicts in Asia and Oceania in 2016

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Bangladesh (Chittagong Hill Tracts)	Bengali settlers vs. PCJSS, UDPF, Jummas vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance, resources	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (inter-militant rivalry / Chittagong Hill Tracts)*	PCJSS-SL vs. UDPF	subnational predominance	1997	•	3
Bangladesh (Islamist groups)	Hindus, Christians, Buddhists vs. et al., IS, HuJI-B, HuT, JMB, AAI, ABT vs. government	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1971	•	3
Bangladesh (opposition)	BNP, Jel vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	•	3
Bangladesh (RMG workers)*	RMG workers vs. government	other	2006	•	3
Cambodia (opposition)*	CNRP, civil society groups vs. CPP	system/ideology, national power, resources	1997	•	3
Cambodia – Vietnam*	Cambodia vs. Vietnam	territory	1969	↘	1
China (Christians)*	Government vs. Christians	system/ideology	1949	•	3
China (Falun Gong et al.)*	Falun Gong vs. government	system/ideology	1999	•	3
China (Han – Hui – Tibetans)*	Tibetans vs. Hui vs. Han	subnational predominance	1949	↓	1
China (Hong Kong)	pro-democracy groups, pro-independence groups vs. government, SAR government	autonomy, system/ideology	1997	↗	3
China (Inner Mongolia)*	Mongolian ethnic minorities vs. government, Han Chinese	autonomy, subnational predominance, resources	1981	•	3
China (opposition)*	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	1978	↓	1
China (socioeconomic protests)	environmentalists, factory workers, peasants et al. vs. government	resources, other	1978	•	3
China (Taiwan – opposition)*	opposition, ROC government	system/ideology	2014	↘	1
China (Taiwan)	ROC vs. PRC	secession, system/ideology	1949	•	2
China (Tibet)	CTA, Tibetans, TYC vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1950	•	3
China (Uyghurs / Xinjiang)	ETIM, WUC, Uyghurs vs. government, Han	secession, resources	1949	•	3
China – India	PRC vs. India	territory, international power, resources	1954	•	2
China – USA	PRC vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1949	↗	2
China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)	PRC vs. Vietnam vs. Brunei vs. Malaysia vs. ROC vs. Philippines vs. Indonesia	territory, international power, resources	1949	↗	3
Fiji (Indo-Fijians – indigenous Fijian ethnonationalists)*	Indo-Fijians vs. indigenous Fijians	subnational predominance	1970	•	1
Fiji (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1987	•	2
Fiji – Tonga (Minerva Reefs)*	Fiji vs. Tonga	territory	2005	•	1
India (GJM et al. / West Bengal)	GJM, GNLF, JAP, AIGL vs. government	autonomy	1907	•	2
India (GNLA et al. / Meghalaya)	GNLA, HNLC, UALA, AMEF, ASAK, ARA, LAEF, ANVC-B, ANVC vs. government	secession	1992	•	3
India (Hindus – Christians)*	Hindus, RSS, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, ABHM, VHP vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1999	•	3
India (Hindus – Muslims)	Hindus vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1947	•	3
India (HPC-D factions / Mizoram, Manipur, Assam)*	HPC-D Zosangbera faction, HPC-D Sanate faction vs. government	autonomy	1986	↓	1
India (inter-ethnic rivalry / Assam)	Bangladeshi immigrants vs. Assamese, Indigenous groups, AASU, PVM vs. MTF vs. Adivasi vs. Dimasa, Karbi vs. Bodo vs. ULFA-I vs. Hindi-speaking population	subnational predominance	1979	•	3
India (inter-factional rivalry / Nagaland)*	NSCN-K vs. NSCN-IM vs. NSCN-KK vs. NSCN-R	subnational predominance	1988	↘	2

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
India (inter-militant rivalry / Meghalaya)*	GNLA vs. ASAK	subnational predominance	1992	↓	1
India (Islamist militant groups)*	SIMI, JeM, LeT, HM, TuM vs. government	system/ideology	2000	•	3
India (Kashmir)	HM, HuM, JeM, LeT, TuM, local protesters vs. government	secession, autonomy	1947	•	3
India (Mafia Raj)*	sand mafia, timber mafia vs. civil society actors vs. government	subnational predominance, resources, other	1986	•	3
India (Manipur)	Meiteis, KNF, Kukis, JCLIPS, KYKL, KCP, PREPAK-Pro, PLA, UNLF et al vs. government	secession, autonomy, subnational predominance	1988	•	3
India (Nagas – Assamese Adivasis)*	Nagas, NSF vs. Assamese Adivasis, AANLA, AASU et al	subnational predominance	1988	•	3
India (Nagas – Kukis)	NSCN-IM, Nagas vs. KIM, Kukis	subnational predominance	1992	↗	3
India (Naxalites)	CPI-M, PLFI, TPC, et al. vs. government	system/ideology	1967	↗	4
India (NLFT, ATTF / Tripura)*	NLFT, ATTF, IPFT vs. government	secession	1978	↘	1
India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland)	NSCN-K, et al., ZUF, NNC-NA, NNC, NSCN-U, NSCN-R, NSCN-KK, NSCN-IM vs. government	secession	1947	•	3
India (Patels et al.)	Patel community, Jat community, Kapu community, Rajput community, Maratha community vs. government	other	1980	•	3
India (PULF)*	PULF vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1993	↘	1
India (Sikhs – DSS)*	Sikhs vs. DSS	subnational predominance	2007	↗	3
India (Sikhs)	SAD, KLF, KTF, KZF, BKI vs. government	secession, autonomy, other	1947	•	3
India (TJAC / Telangana)*	TJAC, bar associations vs. government	autonomy	1969	•	2
India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)	UNLFW, ULFA-I, ULFA-PTF, NDFB-S, NDFB-P, NSCN-K, KNLA, KPLT, KLO, UPLA, JMB, NSLA, GNLA, HTF, AANLA, UDLA, PDCK vs. government	secession	1979	•	3
Indonesia (Aceh regional government – opposition / Aceh)*	Aceh regional government vs. opposition	subnational predominance, resources	2006	•	2
Indonesia (Aceh)*	Aceh regional government, PA, KPA vs. government	autonomy, resources	1953	•	1
Indonesia (Ahmadi)	Ahmadi vs. Muslims	subnational predominance	1980	•	2
Indonesia (Islamist militant groups)	MIT et al. vs. government,	system/ideology	1981	•	3
Indonesia (Muslims – Christians)	Muslims vs. Christians	subnational predominance	1998	•	3
Indonesia (Papua)	OPM, ULMWP, KNPB, FRI-West Papua, PRPPB vs. government	secession	1961	•	3
Indonesia – Timor-Leste*	Indonesia vs. Timor-Leste	territory, other	2002	•	1
Japan – China (East China Sea)	Japan vs. PRC vs. ROC	territory, international power, resources, other	1971	•	2
Japan – Russia*	Japan vs. Russia	territory, international power	1945	•	2
Japan – South Korea*	Japan vs. ROK	territory, other	1951	•	1
Kazakhstan (Islamist groups)	various Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↑	3
Kazakhstan (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	•	2
Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyz – Uzbeks)*	ethnic Kyrgyz vs. ethnic Uzbek	subnational predominance, resources	1990	•	1
Kyrgyzstan (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2005	•	2
Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan – Tajikistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)*	Kyrgyzstan vs. Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan	territory, other	2000	•	3
Laos (Christians)*	Christians vs. government	system/ideology	1975	↓	1

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Laos (Hmong royalists)*	Hmong, Royalists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1975	↘	1
Malaysia (Malay-Chinese, Indian, indigineous Malaysians)*	Malay Malaysians vs. Chinese Malaysians, Indian Malaysians, Indigenous Malaysians	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1946	↓	1
Malaysia (opposition)	Bersih, various opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1969	↘	1
Malaysia (Sulu Sultanate supporters / Lahad Datu District)*	Royal Security Forces of the Sultanate of Sulu and North Borneo vs. government	secession	2013	•	2
Malaysia – Indonesia, Philippines (immigrants)*	Malaysia vs. Indonesia, Philippines	other	1998	↘	1
Maldives (opposition)	MDP, AP, MUO vs. government	national power	2003	•	3
Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)	KIA, KIO vs. government	autonomy, resources	1961	•	4
Myanmar (KNU, KNLA, DKBA et al. / Karen State, Kayah State)	KNU, KNLA, DKBA, DKBA-splinter group vs. government	autonomy	1948	•	3
Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)*	MNDAA vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	1989	↘	3
Myanmar (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1962	↓	1
Myanmar (Rohingya)	Rohingya vs. Buddhists vs. government	subnational predominance	2012	↗	4
Myanmar (socioeconomic protests)	local protesters vs. resource companies, government	resources	2012	•	3
Myanmar (SSA / Shan State)*	SSA-N, SSA-S vs. government	autonomy	1952	↘	2
Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)	TNLA vs. government	subnational predominance, resources	2013	↗	4
Myanmar (TNLA, RCSS / Shan State)	TNLA vs. RCSS et al.	subnational predominance	2015	•	3
Myanmar (UNFC)	TNLA, MNDAA, NMSP, KNPP, KIA et al. vs. government	autonomy	2011	•	1
Myanmar (UWSA, NDAA / Shan State)*	NDAA, UWSA vs. government	autonomy	1988	•	2
Nepal (Kiris / Kosi, Mechi, Sagarmatha)*	FLP, KNF vs. FSF-N, government	autonomy	1992	↓	1
Nepal (Madhesis, Tharus / Terai)*	UDMF, SLMM, MJF-L, TJSC vs. government	autonomy	2004	•	3
Nepal (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2008	•	3
Nepal (right-wing Hindu groups)*	RPP-N, RPP, Hindu Morcha et al. vs. government	system/ideology	2006	•	3
Nepal – Bhutan*	Nepal vs. Bhutan	other	1985	•	1
North Korea – South Korea	DPRK vs. ROK	territory, system/ideology, international power	1948	↘	2
North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan*	DPRK vs. Japan, South Korea, USA	system/ideology, international power, other	1990	•	2
North Korea, China (defectors)	DPRK government vs. Christian aid groups, defector support networks	system/ideology, other	2000	•	2
Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)	BLA, BLF, BRA, UBA, BRP, BNP, LeB, BNF vs. government	secession, resources	1948	↘	3
Pakistan (inter-ethnic rivalry / Sindh)*	MQM, Mohajirs vs. PPP, Balochs, Sindhis vs. ANP, Pakhtuns	subnational predominance, resources	1947	↘	2
Pakistan (inter-islamist rivalry)*	TTP vs. LI vs. TNSM vs. AMNAM	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2010	↘	2
Pakistan (Islamist militant groups)	TTP, LeJ, AQIS vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2001	•	5
Pakistan (opposition)	PAT, PTI vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1998	•	3
Pakistan (Sunni militants – religious groups)	TTP vs. religious groups	subnational predominance	1985	•	3

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Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Pakistan (Taliban – tribes)*	TTP vs. tribal militias, various tribes	system/ideology, subnational predominance	2001	•	3
Pakistan – India	Pakistan vs. India	territory, international power, resources	1947	↗	4
Papua New Guinea (Bougainville)*	civil society groups, MDF, Bougainville Hardliners vs. Meekamui Tribal Government, PMALA, MGU vs. ABG, BCL, government	autonomy, resources, other	1964	↘	1
Papua New Guinea (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	↑	3
Papua New Guinea (socioeconomic protests)*	customary landowners vs. government, resource companies	autonomy, resources	1995	•	2
Papua New Guinea (tribal violence)	vs. Amari vs. Atzera; et al.	subnational predominance, resources	1975	•	3
Papua New Guinea (urban tensions)*	highlanders vs. lowlanders vs. ethnic Chinese	subnational predominance	1975	↘	2
Philippines (Abu Sayyaf)*	Abu Sayyaf Group vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1991	•	3
Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)	BIFM, BIFF vs. MILF, government	secession, subnational predominance	2008	↘	4
Philippines (CPP, NPA)*	CPP, NPA vs. government	system/ideology	1968	•	3
Philippines (MILF – MNLF)*	MNLF vs. MILF	subnational predominance	2009	↑	3
Philippines (MILF)	MILF vs. Government	autonomy, system/ideology, resources	1977	↘	3
Philippines (MNLF)*	MNLF vs. government	secession, system/ideology, resources	1969	↘	2
Samoa (landowner protests)*	customary landowners vs. government	autonomy	1946	↘	1
Singapore – Malaysia*	Singapore vs. Malaysia	territory	1963	•	1
Sri Lanka (Buddhists, Sinhalese nationalists – Muslims, Christians)*	Sinhalese Buddhists, BBS, JHU, JVP vs. Muslims, SLMC, Christians	system/ideology	1948	•	1
Sri Lanka (Northern Province, Eastern Province)	Sinhalese Nationalists, JHU, BBS, JVP vs. Tamils, TNA vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	2009	•	3
Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan)*	drug traffickers, Pamiri people vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	2012	•	1
Tajikistan (Islamist groups)	various Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	•	3
Tajikistan (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1997	↘	1
Thailand (Islamist separatists / Southern Border Provinces)	BRN, PULO vs. government	secession, system/ideology	1902	•	3
Thailand (opposition)*	PTP, UDD vs. PAD vs. RTAF	system/ideology, national power	2006	•	1
Thailand – Cambodia (border)*	Thailand vs. Cambodia	territory, international power	1954	↘	1
Timor-Leste – Australia*	Timor-Leste vs. Australia	resources	2002	•	1
USA – Pakistan*	USA vs. Pakistan	other	2003	•	1
Uzbekistan (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1991	↓	1
Uzbekistan – Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan	international power, resources	2010	↗	2
Vietnam (Montagnards)*	Montagnards vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1958	•	1
Vietnam (socioeconomic protests)	factory workers, peasants, other civilians vs. manufacturing companies, government	resources, other	1986	•	3

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

BANGLADESH (CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Bengali settlers vs. PCJSS, UDPF, Jummas vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over autonomy, subnational predominance and arable land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) between indigenous Jumma militant groups, on the one hand, and the government and Bengali settlers, on the other, continued.

The Jumma militants, mainly organized in two wings, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), reinforced their demand for the implementation of the 1997 CHT Peace Accord that granted autonomy to the districts Khagrachari, Rangamati, and Bandarban in Chittagong division. Throughout the year, they repeatedly clashed with Bengali settlers. On April 15, for instance, two Jummas kidnapped and killed three cattle businessmen. After their dead bodies had been found by police on April 18, Bengali settlers took out for protest and beat up two Jummas in Alikadam, Bandarban district. Violence related to the countywide conducted municipal elections erupted also in Chittagong [→ Bangladesh (opposition)]. UDPF, for instance, rejected the election results of Kobakhali Union after voting irregularities, intimidation, blocking of voting centers, and alleged attacks against Jumma people by Bengali settlers and army soldiers on April 23 in Khagrachari district. During the attacks, several Jumma had been injured.

In the course of the year, Jumma groups demanded the full implementation of the Peace Accord. On May 8, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced to reduce military presence in the region to four brigades. However, this was not implemented by the end of the year.

On May 31, an unknown assailant killed the Information and Publicity Secretary of the PCJSS. The police detained a friend of the deceased as a murder suspect. PCJSS, however, alleged that the killing was supported by the ruling Awami League. On August 1, the government approved the draft for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Dispute Resolution Commission (Amendment) Act, which obliges the chairman of the commission to make decisions based on the majority vote of members in a meeting. Bengali settlers opposed the amendment, stating that it would evict them from their land. Subsequently, Bengali groups organized general strikes on September 4 and October 12 in all three CHT districts, demanding the withdrawal of the act. In a written statement, Santu Larma, leader of the PCJSS, criticized the government for inhibiting a full implementation of the Peace Accord on December 1, one day before its 19th anniversary. pso

BANGLADESH (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1971

Conflict parties: Hindus, Christians, Buddhists vs. ABT, AAI, JMB, HuT, HuJI-B, IS, et al. vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over ideology and the orientation of the political system as well as religious predominance between radical Muslims, mainly organized in Islamist groups, the government, and religious minorities, such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, continued on a violent level.

Since the so-called Islamic State (IS) had claimed to start operating in Bangladesh in September 2015, the number of attacks against individuals belonging to minority groups increased. In the course of the year, IS claimed responsibility for killing at least 42 people, among them 21 foreigners, eight Hindus, four security forces, three Christians, three Shias, two Buddhists, one Sufi, and one professor for his secular remarks in the Divisions Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Sylhet [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

The government and the police, however, continued to deny any activity of international terrorist organisations, such as IS or al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in Bangladesh. Instead, it blamed local Islamist groups, like the Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JMB), and Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT) as well as the opposition for the violence [→ Bangladesh (opposition)].

Representatives of minority groups and several civil society organizations continued to criticize the attacks against minority members and their religious sites by staging protests throughout the year.

For instance, Ansar al-Islam (AAI), an alleged of AQIS, claimed responsibility for killing a student who expressed secular opinions in the capital Dhaka, eponymous division, on April 6, and for assassinating a LGBT activist and his friend in the capital on April 25. On July 1, IS claimed to have carried out its so far most fatal attack in Bangladesh. Five assailants, equipped with crude bombs, firearms, and a sword stormed a restaurant in Dhaka and took the foreign guests as hostages. In an ensuing gunfight with police, two policemen were killed. Hours later, security forces stormed the cafe. In total, 29 people died, among them 20 hostages, most of them foreigners, five attackers, two policemen, and two café staff members while over 30 were injured. The government denied any involvement of IS and arrested JMB members in relation with the attack instead.

In response to the ongoing violence, security forces launched several nationwide operations in the course of which more than 40 militants, mainly of JMB, were killed. On June 10, for instance, police started a nationwide crackdown arresting around 166 suspected militants and around 1,100 others in connection with the recent killings in the course of a week. On July 26, police killed nine and wounded one JMB militant in a gunfight in Kalyanpur, Dhaka. The militants were suspected to plot another major attack.

In the course of the year, incidences of attacks on Hindu com-

munity members and vandalism of their temples and property were reported. On October 30, about 15 temples and 100 houses were torched in Nasirnagar district, Chittagong division, allegedly over a contentious social media post. Five days after the attack which was understated by officials, five homes were again vandalized. Civil society and minority organisations such as the Hindu Buddhist Christian Union Council (HBCUC) continued to express their concern over the perceived security threat and staged demonstrations to condemn the recent attacks. They also claimed that government would not do enough to protect minorities from attacks on their members and religious sites.

mwf

BANGLADESH (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1991

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

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between the opposition parties Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel), on the one hand, and the government led by the Awami League (AL), on the other, continued as a violent crisis. BNP and Jel were supported by their student organizations Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal (BJC) and Islami Chatra Shibir (ICS), whereas the ruling Awami League was supported by its student wing Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL).

Local union parishad elections were held in six phases in 4,275 union parishads from March 22 to July 4. Like in previous years, election-related violence erupted all over the country leaving at least 63 dead and more than 1,144 injured. While Jel had been banned from taking part in local elections since 2013, BNP, AL, and independent candidates, often non-nominated AL and BNP members, contested in the polls. In the run up to the elections, clashes between the different parties as well as clashes within each party over nominations of candidates started in February. For instance, on February 20, supporters of rivaling AL candidates clashed in Mahishkur, Satkhira district, Khulna division. At least twelve people were injured.

During the six days of the election, reported irregularities such as vote rigging, ballot stuffing, and ballot snatching, resulted in clashes between AL candidates and their supporters, as well as between AL and BNP members and the police. For example on May 28, the fifth election phase, armed supporters of AL candidate Shakiruzzaman Rakhel and independent AL candidate Sajahan Mia clashed over alleged false votes casting at Khutirchar Ebtadaye Madrasa polling center, Jamalpur district, Dhaka division. Police intervened and opened fire. In total, four people were killed and more than 50 injured including policemen. During the election process, several candidates withdrew their candidacy in response to alleged threats by AL and government officials, and in protest against voting irregularities. Subsequently, AL won numerous posts uncontested.

As in previous years, several high ranking members of BNP and Jel were prosecuted for crimes allegedly committed dur-

ing the independence war of 1971. For example, Motiur Rahman Nizami and Mir Quasem Ali, two previous Jel leaders, were executed after the AL-initiated International Crimes Tribunal had sentenced them to death in 2014. In response, Jel called for protests and nationwide strikes. On March 8, members of the Jel and Jel-ICS clashed with the police in Dhaka city, eponymous division, throwing brickbats while the latter fired into the crowd, leaving at least two Jel supporters injured.

The national government continued to deny the so-called Islamic State's presence in the country and instead held the opposition responsible for most of the assaults [→ Bangladesh (Islamist groups)]. In the course of year, the government launched several security operations to crackdown on militants. However, opposition parties, among them BNP and Jel, accused the government of arresting their members instead. Furthermore, the opposition repeatedly criticized the government for a lack of democracy and freedom of the press, as well as the growing violence in the country.

After the AL-led government had abolished the caretaker government, an interim government during elections, BNP had boycotted the national elections in 2014. On December 18, President Abul Hamid invited several parties, including BNP, to begin a dialogue over the formation of a new Election Commission. igi

CHINA (HONG KONG)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: pro-democracy groups, pro-independence groups vs. pro-government, SAR government
Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology

The conflict between various Hong Kong (HK) pro-democracy groups, on the one hand, the governments of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), on the other, regarding autonomy and the political system in HK, escalated to a violent crisis.

On January 1, around 1,600 democracy advocates marched with yellow umbrellas in the central business district, calling for internet freedom and demanding the resignation of the Chief Executive of HK, Leung Chun-ying. In early January, after another bookseller critical of the PRC had disappeared, the HK Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China organized a march with thousands heading towards the Beijing Liaison Office (BLO), demanding explanations for the disappearances and calling for freedom of speech. On February 8, during the Chinese New Year celebration, violent clashes erupted between HK police and more than 300 demonstrators after the police had cracked down street food vendors in the Mong Kok District. While protesters attacked the police with bottles, bricks, and ignited garbage cans, the latter responded with pepper spray and fired warning shots. 90 police forces and four journalists were injured and at least 60 people arrested. Subsequently, head of the BLO Zhang Xiaoming condemned the rioters as "radical separatists" who showed "tendencies of terrorism".

On March 28, students and pro-independence activists

founded the Hong Kong National Party, whose registration was later denied by the HKSAR Companies Registry. On April 10, the student activist group Scholarism reorganized into a new political party, Demosistō, to effectuate political reform and push for self-determination. On May 17 and 19, during the visit of Zhang Dejiang, head of the PRC's legislature, police arrested twelve of the hundred protesters advocating universal suffrage and self-determination.

On June 4, tens of thousands of HK residents gathered in the annual commemoration of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. On June 15, bookseller Lam Wing-kei, who went missing in October 2015, confirmed his detainment in mainland China during a press conference in HK and stated that he would not return to the mainland, despite instructions from the Chinese police. On July 1, the Civil Human Rights Front organized their annual protest with hundreds of thousands of pro-democracy protesters en route from Victoria Park to the Central Government Complex, calling for universal suffrage, self-determination, and the resignation of Leung Chun-ying. HK police used pepper spray on a small group of protesters, which had tried to breach the cordon. On July 6, the HK police refused requests of Chinese authorities to extradite Lam to the mainland, citing the absence of an extradition agreement. In early August, the HK Electoral Affairs Commission barred several pro-independence candidates from participating in the Legislative Council elections, sparking protests during the press conference. HK police removed the protesters from the building, injuring one. On October 12, during the swearing-in ceremony at HK's Legislative Council, two members-elect rewrote the oath, held up a "HK is not China" banner, and insulted the PRC. Legislative Council Secretary-General Kenneth Chen declared their oaths invalid. On November 7, stating its interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law, the PRC's legislature declared that council members had to "bear allegiance to the HKSAR of the PRC" while being in office. Subsequently, around 10,000 protesters gathered in front of the BLO. Authorities deployed 700 police forces. As some protesters tried to breach a police barricade, police used pepper spray and batons, injuring two. kol

CHINA (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1978

Conflict parties:	environmentalists, factory workers, peasants et al. vs. government
Conflict items:	resources, other

The violent crisis over social and economic resources between rural and urban landowners, workers, environmentalists, and other civilians, on the one hand, and government authorities, on the other, continued. People engaged in illegal strikes and protests against pollution, corruption, land grabs, substandard working conditions, and outstanding pensions and wages, thereby contesting the government's economic growth and social stability maintenance policies. Strikes remained most common in the manufacturing and construction sectors, while taxi drivers protested high fees and unfair competition from ride-hailing services, and teachers went on

strikes over low or retained wages. The government's eco-reconstruction policies and attempts to streamline inefficient state-owned enterprises triggered protests in the mining sector against planned layoffs and retained wages.

In January, thousands of taxi drivers protested in the cities of Nanchang in Jiangxi Province, Nanjing, Suzhou, and Zhanjiang in Jiangsu Province, Shenzhen and Dongguan in Guangdong Province, as well as Xinyang in Henan Province. In Yuanjiang and Hengyang, Hunan Province, over one thousand teachers staged demonstrations in late April and early May, respectively, to protest embezzlement of wages. On July 25, over one thousand teachers from various provinces, who protested in front of the State Bureau for Letters and Calls in Beijing, were dispersed and deported in 18 busses. In Chongqing, market employees clashed with security personnel during protests against obligatory use of market-owned vehicles on August 5. Authorities deployed a reinforcement of 1,000 policemen. The clashes left 20 workers injured, 20 arrested, and two police cars overturned. From September 9 to 12, up to 10,000 miners went on strike in Shuangyashan, Heilongjiang Province, due to outstanding payments. On November 8, thousands of villagers gathered to protect the local elementary school in Peijiaying, near Jinan, Shandong, against demolition. In subsequent clashes with 900 police forces and construction workers, several were injured. On December 7, a sit-in against retained compensation for land grabs in Dayawan near Huizhou, Guangdong, turned violent. Police forces injured at least five protesters and arrested ten.

Clashes resumed also in Wukan, Guangdong. After the village had expelled its local party officials over corruption in 2011 and was sieged by police, authorities allowed the residents to independently and secretly elect its representatives in 2012. On June 18, 2,000 villagers protested the arrest of their elected representative Lin Zulian. Subsequently, thousands of police forces blocked the entrance to the village. When Lin was sentenced for corruption on September 13, protests turned violent, with villagers throwing stones and police using rubber bullets and tear gas. Several were injured and 13 people arrested. In December, nine of them were sentenced for illegal assembly, blocking traffic, and disrupting public order.

Despite the government's declaration of a "war on pollution" in 2014, air, water, and soil pollution continued to be a major causes of social unrest. In June and October, large-scale protests against chemical plants and waste incinerators took place in Xiantao and Qianjiang, Hubei Province, as well as in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, leading to clashes with riot police. In early August, thousands of protesters pressured local authorities in Lianyungang, Jiangsu, to halt plans for a nuclear fuel reprocessing facility. In December, police launched a crackdown to preempt an anti-smog protest in the center of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, after activists had placed breathing masks on statues. los, jfr

CHINA (TAIWAN)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: ROC vs. PRC
Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The non-violent crisis between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) over the political status of Taiwan continued.

On January 16, Tsai Ing-Wen, chairwoman of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was elected as the new president of the ROC. On the same day, the PRC stated that the result of the election would not change the "one China fact" and continued to oppose Taiwanese independence. On March 6, PRC President Xi Jinping stated during the annual session of the National People's Congress that the PRC would never again allow the separation of Taiwan. In her inauguration speech on May 20, Tsai stated that she respected the "fact" of the "various joint acknowledgments and understandings in 1992." PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) responded by criticizing Tsai's "murky attitude" towards the "1992 Consensus." At the end of June, TAO's spokesperson An Fengshan stated that regular cross-strait communication had been suspended since Tsai's inauguration. On July 1, a Taiwanese patrol ship off Kaohsiung mistakenly launched a short-range missile in the direction of China, destroying a Taiwanese fishing boat off the Penghu Islands, leaving its captain dead and three others injured. Right after the incident, TAO Director Zhang Zhijun demanded a "responsible explanation." On July 3, spokesman of ROC's Ministry of National Defense, General Chen Chung-Chi, apologized on behalf of the military and stated that the incident was not politically motivated. On August 17, Zhang stated during a business meeting with Taiwanese delegation that it was impossible for the "doors for future cross-strait agreements to be open" without the "1992 Consensus" as foundation. After tourism from the mainland to Taiwan had sharply decreased, 10,000 tourism operators protested in the ROC's capital Taipei on September 12. Six days later, a delegation of ROC's opposition party Kuomintang met with Zhang and Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, in the PRC's capital Beijing to discuss the promotion of tourism. On September 21, after Chen Deming, Chairman of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, had effectively declared the 1992 consensus to be the basis of its negotiations with the Strait Exchange Foundation, ROC's Mainland Affairs Council urged Beijing not to set political preconditions for cross-strait interaction. On October 10, Tsai called on the PRC to restart talks after official communication had stopped for nearly five months. On December 2, Tsai called the president-elect of the US, Donald Trump, congratulating him on his election win. In response to the call, while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called it as a "small trick", the PRC lodged a diplomatic protest with the US [→ China – USA]. Throughout the year, as part of its anti-corruption campaign, the PRC requested Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Kenya to extradite Taiwanese suspects of telecom fraud to the mainland, leading to several protests of the Taiwanese government.

On the international level, the ROC suffered a new decline of political status vis-à-vis the PRC. Following the PRC's insistence on the one-China principle, the International Aviation Organization excluded Taiwan from attending its assemblies, while the World Health Organization downgraded its membership. On March 17, the PRC reestablished diplomatic ties with Gambia, which broke diplomatic relations with the ROC in 2013. On December 20, Sao Tomé and Príncipe ended diplomatic ties with the ROC. lja

CHINA (TIBET)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1950

Conflict parties: CTA, Tibetans, TYC vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis between the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC), and local Tibetan communities, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, over the status of the greater region of Tibet and its resources, continued. While local Tibetans staged several protests against mining projects, forced land expropriation, and ethno-religious discrimination, CTA and TYC continued their opposition from their exile in India. On March 28, around 200 Tibetans protested against a mining project at a mountain regarded as sacred in Akhore Town, Chuchen/Jinchuang County, Sichuan Province. Around 80 policemen dispersed the protest, injuring about 20 and detaining several protesters. Two months later, Chinese authorities suspended mining operations and related construction work in the area. On May 31, clashes between police and around 80 Tibetans at a mining project in Amchok Town, Sangchu/Xiahe County, Gansu Province, left six people injured. On April 8, the Chinese police detained 29 Tibetan graduates as they protested against discrimination in local government employment in Machu/Maqu County, Gansu Province. On June 1, state authorities deployed police forces and used heavy machinery to tear down 600 unauthorized buildings near the Qinghai Lake in Tanakma Town, Chabcha/Gonghe County, Qinghai Province. Twelve days later, over 100 Tibetan women staged a protest in front of the local government office in Gaochoe Village, Lhundrub/Lin Zhou County, Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), after the government had confiscated farmland for construction projects. On June 23, hundreds of Tibetans protested at the Qinghai Lake near Trelnak Town, Chabcha/Gonghe, after local authorities had threatened to tear down their homes. Around 30 police officers injured eight protesters in violent clashes.

As in previous years, authorities enforced tight religious control. On January 25, police detained two monks at the Chokri

monastery in Draggo/Luhuo County, Sichuan Province, after they had organized a prayer ceremony for the wellbeing of the Dalai Lama. In June, local authorities ordered to reduce the number of residents at the Buddhist academy in Larung Gar town, Sichuan Province, to 5,000. After they had started to demolish buildings in Larung Gar on July 20, three Tibetan nuns committed suicide in July and August. Until the end of the year, authorities evicted around 1,000 nuns and monks from Larung Gar and forced many of them to take patriotic reeducation courses. Throughout the year, at least three Tibetans immolated themselves in protest for freedom of expression and association.

The Tibetan exile community remained split between advocates for autonomy and those for secession. On April 27, Lob-sang Sangay was officially declared the winner of the 2016 Sikyong elections and reinstated as head of the CTA, the self-proclaimed Tibetan government in exile. Sangay adhered to the "Middle Way Approach" (MWA), seeking a genuine autonomy for the greater region of Tibet. On June 15, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan Buddhist school of Gelug and advocate of the MWA, the Dalai Lama, met privately with US President Barack Obama in Washington, prompting sharp criticism from the Chinese government [→ China – USA]. lja

CHINA (UYGHURS / XINJIANG)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: ETIM, WUC, Uyghurs vs. government, Han

Conflict items: secession, resources

The conflict over secession and resources, such as oil, gas, and coal, between ethnic Uyghurs in China and Uyghur separatist organizations based abroad, on the one hand, and the Chinese government and the Han Chinese majority, on the other, remained violent. Compared to 2015, the number of violent incidents decreased, while authorities considerably expanded the surveillance infrastructure in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) along with new facilities, WiFi spots, and newsstands.

On January 1, China's first national Anti-Terrorism Law came into effect, serving as a legal framework for counter-terrorism activities and offering more precise definitions of "terrorism" and "extremism." On February 1, the Xinjiang Higher People's Court reduced the prison sentences of eleven Uyghurs who had previously been convicted for endangering state security. In late March, at least 40 Uyghurs were arrested for religious extremism in Gulja County, Ili Prefecture, XUAR. From April 11 onward, Xinjiang authorities offered reward money for information on suspected terrorists and religious extremists. In late May, a violent clash between Uyghur inmates and prison guards erupted in a juvenile detention camp in XUAR's capital Urumqi. Ten prisoners escaped, while two guards and three prisoners were killed. At the end of August, Chen Guoquan became the new Party Secretary of XUAR, who declared to implement more proactive policies against the so-called "three evils", namely, terrorism, extremism and separatism. Ahead of the G20 Summit in early September in Hangzhou, Zhejiang

Province, local authorities reportedly imposed stricter controls on Uyghurs in the city. On September 10, a bomb explosion in XUAR killed a deputy police chief and wounded three officers during a house raid in the Kokterek Township in Guma County, Hotan Prefecture. Subsequently, police detained at least 17 suspects. In November, local authorities reportedly requested Uyghur residents of Aksu Prefecture, northwestern XUAR, to hand over their passports. The World Uyghur Congress, based in Munich, Germany, condemned this as an infringement on mobility rights of the Uyghur community. On December 28, three Uyghurs drove a car into the yard of a local party office in Moyu County, Hotan Prefecture, and attacked several persons with knives before detonating a bomb, leaving five dead and three injured.

China intensified regional anti-terrorism cooperation with the Central Asian countries and also called on other countries to deport Uyghur terrorist suspects. In late April, Turkey and China agreed to improve anti-terrorism cooperation and constrain illegal immigration during a forum on security issues in Asia in the Chinese capital Beijing. On April 28, Indonesia stated that it had rejected a Chinese request to extradite four Uyghur detainees suspected of terrorism. On May 31, 70 Uyghurs, held at a Thai detention facility, announced a hunger strike, protesting against deportation to China. On August 23, a Thai military court opened trial against two Uyghurs charged with carrying out the 2015 bomb attack in Bangkok that had targeted Chinese tourists. On August 30, an Uyghur member of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement carried out a suicide attack on the Chinese Embassy in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, leaving three injured. abc

CHINA – INDIA

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: PRC vs. India

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The non-violent crisis between China and India over territory, water, and international power continued.

On March 31, China opposed an Indian proposal in the UNSC to list the head of the Pakistani jihadist group Jaish-e-Mohammad, Masood Azhar, as a terrorist.

Furthermore, China rejected India's application to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) during the NSG plenary in Seoul on June 23 and 24, as well as on November 11 in Vienna, setting the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a precondition for the membership.

Throughout the year, Chinese troops crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the demarcation line between China and India. For instance, on March 8, eleven Chinese soldiers of the People's Liberation Army crossed the LAC in four vehicles and approached the "Finger VIII" Sirjap-I area near Pangong lake in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, India. This led to an hours-long standoff with a patrol of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. During his visit to China from April 18 to 23, India's Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar agreed with Chinese military officials on setting up a military hotline and improving military cooperation. On April 20, the 19th Special Representatives'

Meeting on the China-India Boundary Question was held in the Chinese capital Beijing. On June 10, India carried out joint military exercises with the US and Japan in the vicinity of the South China Sea [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. In mid-July, India deployed 100 T-72 tanks in eastern Ladakh near the LAC. Subsequently, the Chinese government stressed that the two countries should be committed to resolve territorial disputes peacefully through negotiations. On August 2, India's Cabinet Committee on Security approved the deployment of short-range supersonic cruise missiles, BrahMos Block III, in an area near the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. On October 21, the US ambassador to India, Richard Verma, visited the disputed area in Arunachal Pradesh bordering the region of southern Tibet, which was criticized by China [→ (China – USA)]. On December 2, Indian authorities granted the visit of the 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje, a Tibetan spiritual leader to the disputed area of West Kameng in Arunachal Pradesh. Three days later, the Chinese Foreign Ministry urged India not to complicate the boundary dispute. 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 system/ideology between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States of America (US) continued.

While the US and the PRC reached a consensus on the issue of climate change with the signing of the Paris Agreement on September 3, topics like human rights, cyber security, and maritime rights remained disputed. On January 30, a US Navy destroyer that patrolled within twelve nautical miles of Triton Island in the Paracel Islands was condemned by the PRC as provocative and in violation of international law [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. At the end of April, the PRC denied a US warship, which had patrolled in the South China Sea to run into the Hong Kong port. On May 10, in reaction to the presence of a US navy destroyer close to Fiery Cross Reef located in the disputed Spratly Islands, the PRC scrambled two fighter jets and three warships. A week later, the Pentagon criticized the interception of a US navy E-P3 reconnaissance aircraft by two Chinese J-11 fighters east of Hainan Island as an "unsafe maneuver." On May 18, the US and the Philippines announced an agreement allowing US military presence at Philippines bases, which the PRC viewed as an act of "cold war mentality." On December 15, the PRC seized a US naval drone in the South China Sea under diplomatic protest for four days. Whereas the PRC regarded the so-called US Freedom of Navigation Operations as a threat to peace and stability, the US repeatedly criticized the PRC's increased buildup of military infrastructure in the South China Sea. The US demanded the PRC to abide by the award of the Permanent Court of Arbitration issued on July 12. Previously, on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit from March 31 to April 1 in the US capital Washington D.C., Chinese President Xi Jinping called for respecting each other's core interests while solving disputes. On October 24, the PRC admon-

ished the US to stop interfering in the China-India territorial dispute, as the US ambassador to India visited the contested region in the eastern sector of the Himalayas [→ China – India].

On July 7, the US Defense Department announced the agreement with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to install a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-missile system in the ROK. In response, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi criticized the plan as a threat to the PRC's strategic security [→ North Korea – South Korea, Japan, USA].

On December 2, US President-elect Donald Trump spoke with the President of the Republic of China (RoC), Tsai Ing-wen, which led to a diplomatic protest by the PRC [→ China (Taiwan)]. Tensions also continued regarding the issue of human rights. On several occasions throughout the year, such as in a joint statement on March 13 and at a press conference on August 8, the US criticized the detainment of human rights lawyers and activists as a violation of the principle of rule of law. The PRC, on the other hand, criticized the US in mid-April for its human rights record including, for instance, excessive use of force by police and the violation of human rights abroad. On June 15, US President Barack Obama met with the Dalai Lama, which the PRC criticized as an encouragement for separatist forces [→ China (Tibet)]. Regarding the PRC's advocacy for internet sovereignty, in April the US labeled the PRC's internet censorship a "trade barrier." rth

CHINA – VIETNAM ET AL. (SOUTH CHINA SEA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1949

Conflict parties: PRC vs. Vietnam vs. Brunei vs. Malaysia vs. ROC vs. Philippines vs. Indonesia

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The conflict over territory, resources, and international power in the South China Sea (SCS) between Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, as well as Indonesia escalated to a violent level.

On January 2 and 6, the PRC conducted flight tests of civilian aircrafts on the contested Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratly Islands, leading to strong criticism by the Vietnamese and Philippine governments. In the middle of February, satellite images from ImageSat International showed that the PRC had deployed eight surface-to-air missile launchers and a radar system to Woody Island. From the mid-July, the PRC started regular combat patrols around the contested Scarborough Shoal and reportedly sent H-6 bombers and Su-30 fighter jets to the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal on August 6.

The PRC held several maritime military drills throughout the year, including a military exercise from July 5 to 11 off the coast of China's Hainan Island as well as in the area of Paracel Islands. Between August 22 and 24, China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) conducted a live-fire exercise in the Gulf of Tonkin, off the coast of northern Vietnam. (Between September 12 and 19, China held joint naval drills with Rus-

sia off the coast of Zhanjiang in Guangdong Province. On October 27, PLAN carried out another military drill off the coast of Hainan Island and in the contested waters northeast of the Paracel Islands.

In the beginning of March, the PRC sent several coast guard vessels to the disputed Jackson Atoll and denied Philippine fishermen access to the fishing grounds near the atoll. On March 18, the United States and the Philippines announced an agreement permitting the presence of US military at five Philippine bases in and near the SCS. On July 12, the SCS Arbitration of the Permanent Court of Arbitration lodged by the Philippines ruled that the PRC's claims to historic rights within the "nine-dash line" are contrary to UNCLOS and "without lawful effect". Both the ROC and PRC refused to accept the results of the arbitration. On September 5, the Philippine government summoned the Chinese ambassador, protesting against the presence of a Chinese fleet of ten ships transporting dredgers and barges to the contested Scarborough Shoal. On September 6 and 10, Chinese coast guard ships reportedly chased away Philippine fishing boats near the same shoal. However, the situation between both countries de-escalated dramatically at the end of October, with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's four-day visit to Beijing, beginning on October 18. On October 20, Duterte agreed with Chinese President Xi Jinping on a "new stage of maritime cooperation" and announced the Philippines's "separation" from the United States. At the beginning of November, the Chinese coast guard allowed Philippine fishermen to access Scarborough Shoal after four years of denial. At the end of the month, Chinese ships reportedly left the shoal. On December 19, Duterte proposed to share oil resources in the disputed Scarborough Shoal with China.

The conflict between China and other claimants in the SCS continued and escalated to a violent level with the involvement of Indonesia. On January 18 and April 9, Vietnam protested twice against the oil drillings of the China National Offshore Oil Corporation near the Gulf of Tonkin. In the end of March, Malaysia complained about the operations of over one hundred Chinese fishing boats accompanied by Chinese coast guard in its waters near the Luconia Shoals. On November 1, China and Malaysia signed an agreement on intensifying their naval cooperation in the South China Sea.

Beginning in March, Indonesian authorities repeatedly captured Chinese fishing boats, vessels, and trawlers, accusing them of illegal fishing in Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone near the Natuna Islands. On May 27, Indonesian authorities fired shots at a Chinese fishing vessel near the Natuna Islands, reportedly injuring one and detaining seven. In response to the incidents, China claimed that while both countries did not have territorial disputes, there were some overlapping claims on "maritime rights and interests". Indonesia rejected this. On April 5, Indonesia destroyed ten Malaysian and 13 Vietnamese fishing boats that were seized earlier on seven locations of Indonesian archipelago. At the beginning of October, the Indonesian air force conducted a two-week military exercise at the Natuna Islands.

On the China-ASEAN Commemorative Summit on September 7, all parties agreed on the effective implementation of the Declaration on Conduct of Parties in the SCS as well as on the quick adoption of a Code of Conduct. Throughout the year, the US maintained its presence in the South China Sea [→

China – USA]. mme

INDIA (GJM ET AL. / WEST BENGAL)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1907

Conflict parties: GJM, GNLF, JAP, AIGL vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy

The autonomy conflict in the Indian Dooars region between different Nepalese-origin Gorkha groups and the government continued on a non-violent level. Gorkhas were mainly organized in political parties such as Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), All India Gorkha League (AIGL) and the Jan Andolan Party (JAP). Previous GJM Legislative Assembly member Harka Bahadur Chettri had left GJM in 2015 and founded the JAP on January 27. Throughout the year, all parties voiced their demands for an autonomous Gorkhaland while the conflict mainly concentrated on the semi-autonomous Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) that comprises the districts Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong. GNLF reiterated its demand of reestablishing the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC), and dissolve the GJM-led GTA whereas JAP held autonomy claims through GTA. In April, GJM, GNLF, JAP and AIGL ran in West Bengal's state elections for the GTA constituencies. GJM won all three constituencies, while Mamata Banerjee of All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) was re-elected as West Bengal's Chief Minister.

On July 15, the state government announced a development board for specific Nepali ethnic groups in the GTA districts. Gorkhaland supporters criticized the move stating it would divide the Nepali community. On July 28, GJM leader Bimal Gurung warned of a renewal of Gorkhaland agitation. During August, his party staged rallies and on September 4, members of its youth wing went on hunger strike. Meanwhile, the state government condemned the agitation, accused GJM of provocative speech, and restricted their permission of holding rallies on August 30. On September 26, a twelve-hour general strike was called by GJM for September 28, to protest against Banerjee's claim of GTA money allocation by GJM. A day before the strike, Banerjee had threatened a three-day salary cut to striking employees. During the strike, police detained at least 300 people across GTA and one car was damaged. Furthermore, GJM submitted a memorandum to the federal government on December 2, demanding the setup of a committee to examine the status of Gorkhaland. jla

INDIA (GNLA ET AL. / MEGHALAYA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: GNLA, ANVC, ANVC-B, LAEF, ARA, ASAK, AMEF, UALA, HNLC vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis between militant groups seeking seces-

sion of various parts of Meghalaya state and the government continued. Militant groups associated with the Garo ethnicity, such as Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA), Achik National Volunteer Council (ANVC), Liberation of Achik Elite Force (LAEF), newly formed Achik Revolutionary Army (ARA), and Achik Songna Anpachakgipa Kotok (ASAK), Achik National Liberation Army (ANLA) aimed for an independent Garo state, whereas the Khasi-associated militant group Hynniewtre National Liberation Council (HNLC) pursued a sovereign state in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. In the course of the year, violent encounters between security forces and militants of GNLA, ANLA, ASAK and LAEF left 15 militants dead. Eleven people, among them two policemen, were injured in three IED blasts detonated by GNLA in East and South Garo Hills over the year. On January 25, GNLA stated that it joined the 2015-formed United National Liberation Front of Western South East Asia alliance, operating in Northeast India and Myanmar.

On January 9, alleged GNLA militants detonated an IED in William Nagar, East Garo Hills district, injuring nine people. In the course of the first two months, GNLA, ANLA and ASAK militants encountered security forces in six separate incidents, leaving six dead and at least five injured. On February 5, GNLA militants launched an IED attack in Baghmara, South Garo Hill district, wounding two policemen. Following the attacks, Meghalaya's police Special Weapons and Tactics team, assisted by Border Security Forces and Central Reserve Police Forces, launched "Operation Hill Storm III" on February 25. The operation was prolonged on April 19 for another six months due to the discovery of four GNLA camps as well as several arms and explosive materials. Violence continued with shootouts, raids of camps, and militant attacks until the end of the year. For instance, on November 25, police killed a top GNLA cadre in Songmagre village, East Garo Hills.

As in previous years, militant outfits financed their activities with extortions and abductions. On June 24, five HNLC cadres were arrested after abducting and killing a civilian. Throughout the year, around 165 militants surrendered to the police, most of them were GNLA but also ANLA, and ASAK members. Apart from the operations of security forces, militants faced increasing pressure by the enactment of the national demonetization policy from November 8 onwards. After the United Achik Liberation Army had signed a peace agreement with the government in December 2015, the group held its disbanding ceremony with around 68 members on June 9. Members of disbanded ANVC factions continued to voice their discontent with the document of settlement and demanded the release of the promised financial packages to their members, for instance on June 10. lge

INDIA (HINDUS – MUSLIMS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: Hindus vs. Muslims
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis regarding subnational predominance between Indian Hindus and Muslims continued. Overall, 12 people died and approx. 150 were injured. Throughout the year, several violent clashes between mem-

bers of Hindu and Muslim communities occurred. For example, on January 3, Hindu and Muslim protesters clashed in the district of Malda, West Bengal state, when the Muslim organization Anjuman Ahle Sunnatul Jamat organized protests against the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha group in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly blasphemous remarks against the Muslim prophet Mohammed. The protesters set a local police station on fire, injuring two people. On January 20, Hindu protesters assaulted two Muslim police officers in Latur, Maharashtra state, who had prevented the hoisting of a Hindu saffron flag the day before. On June 22, a dispute over a graveyard in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh state escalated when a group of Hindus attacked the burial procession of a Muslim woman. They killed one Muslim and several people were injured. Members of the local Muslim community reacted with a violent protest. On August 5, clashes erupted between Hindu and Muslim groups in Saran District, Bihar state over a video which was considered offensive to Hindu deities. Subsequently, authorities temporarily shut down the Internet and deployed more than 2000 security personnel in the area. Intercommunal tensions rose following the introduction of a ban on beef in several Indian states last year, on grounds of cows being considered holy in Hindu religion. Multiple incidents of lynching and vigilantism in connection to the ban were reported. For example, on March 18, a group of Hindus hanged two Muslim cattle traders in the district of Latehar, Jharkhand state. The police arrested five suspects, including a person associated with a local cow protection vigilante group. Protests erupted in the area demanding the protection of minority rights.

In November, the introduction of a uniform civil code was proposed. It would replace the current code which allows the application of various customary and religious rules. Muslim groups opposed the proposal fearing the imposition of Hindu law and the limitation of their freedom of worship. Protests took place in various locations, for example on November 4 in Malappuram, Kerala.

abo

INDIA (INTER-ETHNIC RIVALRY / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: Bangladeshi immigrants vs. Assamese, Indigenous groups, AASU, PVM vs. MTF vs. Adivasi vs. Dimasa, Karbi vs. Bodo vs. ULFA-I vs. Hindi-speaking population

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance concerning political and socio-cultural issues in Assam state between various ethnic groups continued. While the conflict focused on the issues of Bangladeshi migration and alleged domination by perceived outsiders, it was further fuelled by rivalries over the state's recognition of ethnicities as Scheduled Tribes (ST) who were granted governmental reservations. Violent attacks of the separatist militant organization United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) against the Hindi-speaking population continued.

Militant Bodos, mainly the National Democratic Front of Bodoland I.K. Songbijit faction (NDFB-S), did not conduct violent attacks on other communities but continued their armed fight for an independent Bodoland [→ India (ULFA-I et al. / Assam)].

On February 3, members of the newly formed Moran Tiger Force (MTF) fired at an Adivasi politician's house in Tinsukia district, Assam, urging the so-called tea tribe Adivasi population to leave the state and to refrain from contesting in the regional assembly elections in April. In response, more than 200 Adivasi staged a protest march against the MTF the following day. On August 5, a suspected member of NDFB-S shot 14 people dead at a market at Balajan in Kokrajhar, eponymous district, Assam, injuring at least 15. NDFB-S denied any involvement in the attack, while the nationalist student union Hindu Yuva Chatra Parishad suggested an Islamist background. Consequently, the state government deployed 900 soldiers and paramilitary forces to protect the region.

Throughout the year, self-proclaimed representatives of mainly Adivasi, Assamese and Bodos, carried out non-violent protests against Bangladeshi immigrants.

All Assam Students' Union (AASU), All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and over 25 other Assamese organizations staged protests, hunger-strikes and torch rallies against immigration and the Indian government's notification from September 2015 to regularize the status of non-Muslim illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who had experienced religious persecution.

The right-wing organization Prabajan Virodhi Manch (PVM) organized a signature campaign, demanding the deportation of Bangladeshi immigrants. ULFA-I called for the Assamese people to unite against immigration in a declaration in November. Also local newspapers published various articles using agitative language.

As in previous years, ethnic groups of Koch-Rajbongshi, Santhal, Tai Ahom, Bodo, and Tiwa continuously staged several demonstrations for the enhancement of their rights, more autonomy or the acknowledgement as ST.

Organizations representing groups who already had ST status opposed these protests in multiple declarations. For instance, All Dimas Students' Union, Karbi Students' Union and other Karbi organizations opposed the government's move to grant ST status to ethnic Bodos in two hill districts in Assam on January 23. juh

Overall, 104 alleged HM, LeT, and JeM militants, 70 security personnel, and at least 51 civilians were killed in the conflict, the latter mostly during violent protests. Several violent encounters took place between alleged militants and security forces throughout the year. All violent incidents occurred in J&K state. For instance, on February 22, after a 48-hour armed encounter in Pampore, Pulwama district, soldiers killed three LeT militants that had taken over an official building and killed five security personnel and one civilian. In a joint operation on May 21, army forces and J&K police killed five JeM militants in Drugmulla village, Kupwara district, while the militants injured two soldiers. On June 25, LeT militants killed eight Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officers and wounded 20 in an attack on a convoy in Pulwama district. Additionally, CRPF killed two militants in a retaliatory fire.

The killings of militants during violent encounters with security forces repeatedly led to clashes between the latter and local protesters. Clashes increased significantly after security forces killed HM commander Burhan Wani and two associates in the Kokernag area, Anantnag district on July 8. The next day, up to 30,000 people, mostly local youths, joined Wani's funeral procession in Tral, Pulwama district. On the same day, violent clashes between security forces and local protesters erupted across Kashmir Valley. The former mostly used sticks, tear gas shells, and pellet guns against the stone-pelting protesters. Protests and clashes continued for at least three months, in which reportedly at least 46 and up to 78 civilians were killed, while several thousand were injured.

In July, the Indian government deployed at least 2,800 additional army troops to J&K while curfews were imposed repeatedly in large parts of Kashmir Valley from July to September. On July 13, over 200 government employees belonging to the local Hindu minority of the Kashmiri Pandits, fled to Jammu district, alleging attacks by protesters and failure of security forces to protect them [→ India (Hindu – Muslims)]. On September 18, JeM militants attacked an army base in Uri, Baramulla district, killing 19 soldiers. Several hours later, army personnel killed four militants in a nearby shootout. Subsequent to the Uri attack, which the Indian government blamed on militants allegedly supported by Pakistan, Indian soldiers reportedly crossed the LoC into Pakistan-administered J&K on September 28, conducting targeted strikes against border-crossing militants [→ Pakistan – India]. On November 29, suspected LeT militants disguised as policemen stormed an army base in Nagrota, Jammu district, and killed seven soldiers. The militants took security personnel and civilians hostage for several hours until soldiers stormed the buildings, rescuing the hostages and killing three militants.

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INDIA (KASHMIR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: HM, HuM, JeM, LeT, TuM, local protesters vs. government
Conflict items: secession, autonomy

The secession conflict in the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) between Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM), Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), and local protesters, on the one hand, and the Indian government, on the other hand, continued as a violent crisis.

INDIA (MANIPUR)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties:	Meiteis, KNF, Kukis, JCILPS, KYKL, KCP, PREPAK-Pro, PLA, UNLF et al vs. government
Conflict items:	secession, autonomy, subnational predominance

The violent crisis over autonomy and secession of Manipur state between both militant and activist groups, composed of Kuki, Meitei, Naga and other ethnicities, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. Apart from their fight against the government, Kuki and Naga militants also engaged in violent encounters with each other [→ India (Nagas – Kukis)]. Furthermore, the Nagas' strive for more independence was not confined to Manipur [→ India (NSCN factions et al. / Nagaland)].

Throughout the year, violence between armed groups and the government left around 30 persons dead. On March 14, the Meitei-based United National Liberation Front (UNLF) killed one soldier and wounded three others with an IED in Manipur's capital Imphal. On May 22, at least six soldiers were killed and seven others injured when unidentified militants ambushed a patrol at Hengshi village, Chandel district. The state government suspected the umbrella group Coordination Committee (CorCom) or the Naga-based National Socialist Council of Nagaland Khaplang (NSCN-K) behind the attack. In a search operation for the attackers in neighboring Myanmar on May 27, Indian soldiers killed at least eight militants and handed over 18 others to the Burmese authorities. On December 15, alleged NSCN Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) fighters killed four police officers and injured at least eleven others in two ambushes in Lokchao and Bongyang, Chandel district. Two days later, 70 NSCN-IM militants raided a police post in Tamenglong district, robbing nine automatic weapons and ammunition.

Throughout the year, activists of the Meitei-based Joint Committee on ILPS (JCILPS) staged various demonstrations. The Meitei-based Joint Committee on ILPS (JCILPS) organized various demonstrations, demanding the implementation of an Inner Line Permit System (ILPS) in Manipur in order to protect the state from perceived "outsiders." On May 8, supporters of the ILPS stormed the party offices of Congress and BJP in Imphal. The same night, torch-wielding JCILPS activists rallied in different parts of Bishnupur district. In at least four instances in late May, police used tear gas and smoke grenades to disperse JCILPS protesters in Imphal. During the clashes, at least 27 people sustained injuries and more than 30 student protesters were arrested.

On June 8, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh rejected the state government's draft of three bills which would effectively implement an ILPS in Manipur. On the same day, violent clashes between pro-ILPS demonstrators and police forces in the capital New Delhi left at least 25 persons injured, including several police officers. On August 17, police arrested JCILPS convenor Khomdram Ratan in Imphal. In the first half of September, dozens of students were injured, when police

used tear gas to disperse several pro-ILPS demonstrations. Throughout the year, JCILPS associates detained several hundred non-Manipuri workers and handed them over to the police. The organization also forced several travel agencies in Imphal to close down, alleging that they had transported non-locals into the state.

On November 1, the United Naga Council (UNC) started an indefinite economic blockade of the Imphal-Dimapur and the Imphal-Jiribam highways. The UNC and other Naga organizations opposed the state government's decision to upgrade the Naga- and Kuki-inhabited Sadar Hills and Jiribam area to full-fledged districts. On November 26, UNC supporters burned tires and put up road blockades in Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel districts, after the organization had called for a "total shutdown" in protest of the arrest of its president Gaidon Kamei and its information secretary Sankhui Stephan. The blockade led to significant shortages of commodities in the state. On December 23, three government buildings, including the office of the newly-created Kamjong district, were burned down by unidentified attackers. When its mediation attempts did not succeed, the central government dispatched around 4,000 paramilitary forces personnel to Manipur in mid-December. jii

INDIA (NAGAS – KUKIS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1992

Conflict parties:	NSCN-IM, Nagas vs. KIM, Kukis
Conflict items:	subnational predominance

The conflict over subnational predominance between indigenous Naga groups, such as the militant National Socialist Council Nagaland faction led by Isaak Muivah (NSCN-IM), on the one hand, and indigenous Kukis organized for example in the Kuki Inpi Manipur administration (KIM) on the other, escalated to a violent crisis.

On February 3, NSCN-IM militants allegedly shot at three Kukis in Molnor village, Manipur state, killing one. On February 29, alleged NSCN-IM members abducted and killed a teacher in Aimol village, Manipur. Various Kuki organisations strongly condemned the violence while NSCN-IM officials denied any involvement in the attack. On March 2, the Kuki Students Organisation in Kangpokpi, Manipur, accused the central government of not protecting Kukis against the attacks of NSCN-IM.

Throughout the year, KIM repeatedly called on the government to initiate legal proceedings against NSCN-IM for alleged violence against Kukis during the 1990s. On July 14, KIM stated in an open memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that they did not accept the potential outcome of the peace talks between the central government and NSCN-IM as long as the latter did not confess the murder and displacement of more than 102,000 Kukis [→ India (NSCN et al. / Nagaland)].

Controversies over the administration of the planned "homelands" from each group intensified. On October 22, the Kuki National Organization and the United People's Front, two separate umbrella bodies of various Kuki militant groups, de-

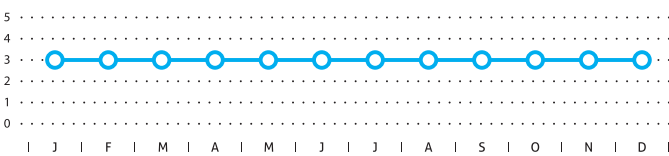
manded the establishment of an autonomous Kuki state from the state of Manipur. Eight days later, the government announced the creation of new districts, namely Jiribam, Kangpokpi in Sadar Hills, Kamjong, Tengnoupal, Noney, Pherzawl, and Kakching. On October 31, the NSCN-IM and the Naga Students Federation declared their opposition towards the establishment of new districts allegedly because this would subvert their state demand of Nagalim. They announced to impose an indefinite blockade on two national highways on November 1, which continued until the end of the year [→India (Manipur)]. On December 12, the United Naga Council, Manipur's apex Naga organisation, held a meeting at Senapati district emphasizing their rejection of the seven new districts. Furthermore, they decided to put pressure on the central government to expedite the peace talks with NSCN-IM, based on the Framework Agreement signed the year before.

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INDIA (NAXALITES)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1967

Conflict parties: CPI-M, PLFI, TPC, et al. vs. government
Conflict items: system/ideology



The violent crisis between the Naxalites and the government over the orientation of the political system and ideology escalated to a limited war. Maoists known as Naxalites were primarily organized in the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) and in smaller groups such as the People's Liberation Front India (PLFI) and the Triptiya Prastuti Committee (TPC). The factions operated mainly in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra as well as in Bihar, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh. Throughout the year, at least 361 people, including 51 Security Force (SF) personnel, 215 militants and 95 civilians were killed during gunfights, IED explosions, and attacks against civilians. For instance, on March 1, police forces killed eight Naxalites in a fire exchange in Gottepadu forest area, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh. Moreover, in the course of the year, Naxalites detonated IEDs targeting security forces. On March 30, militants killed seven Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) personnel were killed by a landmine in Melawada village, Dantewada district, Chhattisgarh. In another encounter on July 18, members of the CPI-M killed ten CRPF personnel by reportedly detonating 352 IEDs in Dumari Nara forest, Aurangabad district, Bihar. CRPF killed six Maoists. On October 24, a combined group of several police forces, among them the GreyHound team, Andhra Pradesh police forces, Odisha police forces, and Visakha Armed Police Reserve, attacked a CPI-M meeting, killing 28 militants. Non-government organizations criticized the attack and claimed that ten civilians were also killed. In several incidents, Naxalite groups also attacked each other. For instance, on May 7, a group of armed Naxalites shot a

member of TPC dead at his home in Ghasidag village, Palamau district, Jharkhand. During the year, Naxalites also killed 73 civilians, often accusing them of being police informers. On January 7, about 30 Naxalites first abducted and later shot dead a civilian in Dandabadi village in Dantewada. The militants left behind a pamphlet accusing the man of being a police informer. In two incidents, Naxalites in Chhattisgarh accused whole villages of working together with the police and forced the villagers to leave their homes. On March 14, groups of Naxalites evicted 21 families from different villages in Narayanpur district. On April 4, after having been threatened by Naxalites, 23 civilians left Padeli village in Kondagaon district. On March 22, Naxalites abducted 23 children from Jamti village, Gumla district, Jharkhand. Police forces later freed the children, stating that the militants had recruited them as child soldiers.

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INDIA (NSCN FACTIONS ET AL. / NAGALAND)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, NSCN-KK, NSCN-R, NSCN-U, NNC, NNC-NA, ZUF, et al. vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The conflict between militant Naga groups and the government over the secession of Naga-inhabited territories in the states of Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh as well as bordering areas in Myanmar, continued as a violent crisis. Main actors of the conflict were the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) factions, namely the NSCN Isaak-Muivah (NSCN-IM), NSCN Khaplang (NSCN-K), NSCN Khole-Kitovi (NSCN-KK), NSCN Reformation (NSCN-R), and the NSCN Unification (NSCN-U). Other active organizations were the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF), the Naga National Council (NNC), and the Naga National Council – Non Accordist (NNC-NA). Except for the ZUF, all groups aimed at creating what they called "Nagalim", an independent greater Nagaland.

As the only group, NSCN-K had withdrawn from the 2001 ceasefire agreement last year and constituted the most active group in 2016. For instance, on September 2, NSCN-K attacked an army convoy in Zunheboto district, Nagaland, leaving four soldiers wounded. United National Liberation Front of West South East Asia (UNLFW), under the leadership of NSCN-K, killed three and wounded four soldiers in an ambush in Tinsukia district, Assam, on November 19 [→ India (ULFA et al. / Assam)]. On December 3, along with ULFA and Manipuri militants, NSCN-K killed two and wounded eight soldiers in an attack in Wakka, Longding district, Arunachal Pradesh, 20 km from Myanmar's border.

On October 23, security forces killed one NSCN-U militant during an operation in Wokha district. NSCN-U condemned the killing and threatened to take measures if security forces continued to violate the ceasefire. Apart from security operations, the government undertook further measures to stabilize the area over the course of the year. They engaged in peace talks with NSCN-IM, enhanced border cooperation with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar, and launched several op-

erations to combat Naga groups' illegal detentions, tax collection and extortions. For example, throughout January, security forces arrested three NSCN-K, two NSCN-IM and three NSCN-R members for extortion as well as one NSCN-KK and NSCN-IM member for the illegal possession of arms. While on April 28, NSCN-KK and NSCN-R extended the ceasefire with the government for another year, the latter stated on May 2 that there were no plans for a renewal of peace talks with NSCN-K. On June 30, the government extended the Disturbed Area Act in Nagaland, vesting police forces with the authority to conduct raids and arrests without warrants. On July 27, the government asked their Myanmar counterpart to act against NSCN-K top leaders supposedly hiding in Myanmar. A month later, the Burmese President assured not to allow any "anti-India activities" on its soil.

Peace talks between NSCN-IM and the government continued after the group had signed a peace framework agreement on 08/03/15. Both parties urged the Naga people to join the peace process and reiterated their aim to reach a final settlement soon. However, the issue of a unified trans-regional administration of all Naga-inhabited areas remained. On October 31, NSCN-IM strongly condemned the decision of the Manipur state government to create seven new districts in Naga-inhabited areas [→ India (Manipur)]. Furthermore, on December 12, the group criticized the government's decision to renew the Disturbed Areas Act in Manipur a week earlier.

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INDIA (PATELS ET AL.)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1980

Conflict parties: Patel community, Jat community, Kapu community, Rajput community, Maratha community vs. government

Conflict items: other

The violent crisis between various communities, most prominently the Patels, Jats, and Kapus, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, over benefits under the reservation system continued. The reservation system, allocating government jobs and access to education based on a community's status as either Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST), had been implemented under British colonial rule and was expanded by adding the Other Backward Class (OBC) category after Indian independence. Overall, at least 30 people died and 222 people were injured in the different agitations throughout the year.

After having given the government an ultimatum to release Hardik Patel, leader of the Patel reservation movement, from prison, members of the Patel community on January 28 prevented Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel from entering Varacha area of Surat, Gujarat state. On April 17, around 5,000 protesters demanded Hardik Patel's release at a rally in Mehsana, Gujarat. At least two dozen people were injured when protesters clashed with the police, which arrested at least 500 of them. The protesters set several buildings on fire and damaged civilian and police vehicles, as well as the offices of two Gujarat state ministers. Additionally, authorities imposed a curfew in Mehsana and suspended mobile internet

services in the Gujarati cities of Ahmedabad, Mehsana, Surat, and Rajkot. On July 15, the Gujarat high court granted bail to Hardik Patel with the condition of him not entering Gujarat state for the next six months. During December, talks regarding reservations between the Patel organization Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti and the Gujarat government took place but ended inconclusive.

On February 17, protesters from the Jat community gathered in Rohtak, Jhajjar, Sonapat and Jind districts, Haryana state, demanding reservations under the OBC category. The next day, protesters and police clashed in Rohtak, leaving several people injured. Within five days, the protests spread to Gurgaon in the National Capital Region, to Uttar Pradesh state, and to Rajasthan state. Clashes between Jat and non-Jat protesters, police and the army lasted until February 24.. In the clashes, at least 30 people were killed and more than 200 injured. Protesters cut down around 17,000 trees and numerous civilian and police vehicles, petrol pumps, shops, and a Haryana state minister's house were destroyed. Highways, rail tracks, and a railway station were damaged as well. On January 31, several thousand protesters of the Kapu community gathered in East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, demanding reservations under the OBC category. During the protest, 19 people were injured and police stations, vehicles, trains and a railway station were damaged. On February 5 and June 9, the Kapu leader Mudragada Padmanabham started hunger strikes to reinforce the Kapu's demands.

Members of the Rajput and Maratha communities demanded reservations under the OBC category as well, staging protests in April in Uttar Pradesh state, and from September to November in Maharashtra state, respectively. aho

INDIA (SIKHS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: SAD, KLF, KTF, KZF, BKI vs. government

Conflict items: secession, autonomy, other

The conflict over autonomy and secession, between the political party Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), its subgroup SAD (Amritsar), and other Sikh groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued as a violent crisis. The conflict was mainly carried out in the state of Punjab.

On February 12, SAD (Amritsar) organized a celebration in Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab to mark radical Sikh preacher Bhindranwale's 69th birthday, where speakers reiterated the demand for an independent Sikh state Khalistan on the territory of today's Punjab state and surrounding areas. Furthermore, they demanded the release of arrested organizers of last year's Sikh assembly called Sarbat Khalsa, as well as justice for the victims of clashes with police, which had taken place during protests following the alleged desecration of a copy of the holy Sikh book in 2015. On May 24, Punjab Police arrested a member of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), and a member of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) for allegedly preparing attacks against police officers, activists of right-wing Hindu organizations, and several leaders of Sikh group Dera Sacha

Sauda (DSS) [→ India (Sikh – DSS)]. On June 6, multiple Sikh organizations held a protest parade and a memorial at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab, commemorating the 32nd anniversary of the army's 1984 storming of the holiest Sikh shrine. 15 Sikh separatists also raised pro-Khalistan slogans during the memorial. On August 10, security forces arrested three suspected members of the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) in Hoshiarpur district, Punjab. The group was reportedly linked to Indians living abroad and to Pakistan's agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). One day later, police arrested four alleged members of KLF and three alleged members of Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) in Jalandhar, Punjab. On November 27, ten armed men attacked the prison in Nabha, Patiala, Punjab and freed Harminder Singh Minto, chief of KLF, and another Sikh militant as well as four criminals. Three police officers were injured. Subsequently, Indian police arrested one of the attackers as well as KLF chief Minto. On April 13, leaders of SAD (Amritsar) and other Sikh organizations announced to hold a Sarbat Khalsa in Bathinda, Punjab on November 10. However, after permission was withheld by the state government, the Sarbat Khalsa was postponed on November 9. Nevertheless, the Sarbat Khalsa was held on December 8, when around 2,500 Sikhs reached the venue, some of them forcing their way through barriers put up by police. cch

INDIA (ULFA-I ET AL. / ASSAM)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1979

Conflict parties:	UNLFW, PDCK, UDLA, AANLA, HTF, GNLA, NSLA, JMB, UPLA, KLO, KPLT, KNLA, NSCN-K, NDFB-P, NDFB-S, ULFA-PTF, ULFA-I vs. government
Conflict items:	secession

The violent crisis over secession of various areas of Assam state between different Assamese, Bodo, Karbi, and Koch-Rajbanshi groups on the one side and the government on the other, continued. While the United Liberation Front of Assam Independent faction (ULFA-I) strove for an independent socialist Assam, other groups like the militant Bodo organization National Democratic Front of Bodoland I.K. Songbijit faction (NDFB-S) or the Karbi People's Liberation Tigers (KPLT) and other ethnic groups claimed areas inhabited by their respective people. Most of the groups continued to operate from hideouts in the neighboring states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

Enforced military operations against militant groups which had not signed ceasefire agreements, among them NDFB-S, ULFA-I and KPLT, who mainly hid in the borderland of Assam, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar, continued throughout the year. Violence between the conflict parties resulted in more than 69 fatalities throughout the year, including 45 militants, 4 security forces and several civilians. Though at least 362 militants were arrested during the course of the year, a rise in criminal activities such as abduction and extortion as well as new recruiting efforts were reported, especially after the demonetization measure of the government, which banned Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in November. For instance, on

February 14, two NDFB-S militants, who had allegedly been involved in the mass-killing of December 2014, were killed by security forces in Kokrajhar district, Assam. On April 29, the government started joint border patrolling with Myanmar. In June, the government ordered complete sealing of the Indo-Bangladesh border. In August, members of NDFB-S and ULFA-I carried out three separate attacks against civilians, killing 18 and injuring 23 in total. On August 5, a suspected NDFB-S militant opened fire on a market in Kokrajhar, which killed 14 and left 15 injured. In response to the attack, security forces killed the allegedly responsible NDFB-S militant. NDFB-S denied any involvement.

On October 27, a new organization named the People's Democratic Council of Karbilongri (PDCK) was formed with the support of NDFB-S leader Songbijit to fight for secession of Karbi people inhabited areas. It expressed its solidarity with the militant umbrella organization United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNLFW). On November 19, three soldiers died and four were wounded by an IED ambush by ULFA-I in Tinsukia district.

cbo

INDONESIA (AHMADI)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 1980

Conflict parties:	Ahmadi vs. Muslims
Conflict items:	subnational predominance

The non-violent crisis over subnational predominance in various provinces between members of the Ahmadiyya community and radical Muslims continued.

Violence against religious buildings, such as Ahmadi mosques as well as open discrimination were predominantly carried out by Muslims, viewing Ahmadis as heretics.

On January 5, the Bangka regency government, Bangka-Belitung Islands province, published a letter ordering the local 29 Ahmadis to convert to Sunni Islam, lest they be expelled from the province. On May 23, unknown attackers destroyed the Ahmadiyya al-Kautsar mosque in Gemuh, Central Java. Religious freedom advocacy group Sentara Institute and the country's second-largest Islamic organization Muhammadiyah condemned the attack. In accord with the 2008 ministerial decree against proselytizing by Ahmadi Muslims, police detained eight Ahmadis for four days in East Lombok regency, West Nusa Tenggara province, on 21 June. After being released, police and village officials urged them to sign statements promising not to disseminate Ahmadiyya beliefs, threatening them with expulsion if they did not change their beliefs. On June 30, the National Commission on Human Rights called on the government to assist displaced Ahmadi to return to their hometown of Ketapang in West Kalimantan province. They had been expelled in February 2006 due to accusations of blasphemy and relocated to a shelter in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara. On July 26, 160 police personnel and one village official closed the Ahmadiyya al-Furqan mosque in Sukabumi regency, West Java province. Police stated the mosque had to be closed as it endangered public order and social peace. At an International Peace Symposium in Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta Special Region province, on October 29,

a leader of the Indonesian Ahmadiyya community, Jamaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia, appealed to the government to protect Ahmadi rights.

twe

INDONESIA (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1981

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

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system between Islamist militant groups fighting for an Islamic state and the government continued. Throughout the year, violent encounters between militants and security forces resulted in at least 32 fatalities and 31 injured.

On January 9, the government replaced "Operation Camar Maleo IV" with "Operation Tinombala", aiming to kill "Santoso", head of the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT). The operation included 3,500 police and military personnel and was repeatedly extended, also after the military killed Santoso in Poso, Central Sulawesi province, on July 18. In the course of the operation, police and military forces killed 15 MIT members and arrested six.

On January 14, the so-called Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for an attack in the capital Jakarta, which included two suicide bombings, the detonation of several bombs in a café, and a shooting (→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)). The attack left the four militants and four civilians dead and injured another 24.

On July 5, an alleged militant committed a suicide attack on a police station in Surakarta, Central Java province, killing himself and injuring a police officer. On October 20, an alleged IS-supporter attacked police with knives and pipe bombs in Tangerang, Banten province, wounding three police officers before being shot. On December 10 and 25, five militants were killed and eight arrested in police operations in connection with planned attacks on Christmas and New Year's Eve. Police seized explosives and weapons. As in the previous year, the government installed the 155,000-strong "Operation Candle" to secure churches and sites of celebration during the holidays.

Throughout the year, police seized small weapons, ammunition, and IEDs as well as arrested several people accused of planning terrorist attacks in the country and abroad. For instance, on November 23, police forces seized a large amount of IEDs in Majalengka, West Java province, and detained four men who were suspected to plan attacks and sell weapons to other militant groups.

In the course of the year, the government arrested more than 100 people for alleged membership of an Islamist militant group, at least 17 were linked to the Jakarta attacks. After the January attack, the government debated to amend the Anti Terrorism Law, giving police and military more competences, such as preventively detaining suspects for up to six months. Indonesian human rights organizations criticized these amendments, especially after a man detained by police forces died in custody on March 9. On October 20, the House of Representatives approved a law, which strengthened the military's competences in counterterrorism measures. tgu

INDONESIA (MUSLIMS – CHRISTIANS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: Muslims vs. Christians
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational religious predominance between Muslims and Christians continued.

In previous years, violent clashes had occurred repeatedly, especially in the mainly Christian western provinces, as well as Aceh, a province under Sharia law with a higher level of autonomy from the central government. In 2016, tensions between Muslims and Christians manifested mostly in church closures, the denial of building permits and other related administrative matters, sometimes accompanied by protests.

In early January, Sharia police in Aceh Singkil regency, Aceh, reportedly removed two church tents, built as temporary replacements for churches torn down the year before. Local authorities claimed they had only allowed the construction of tents for Christmas celebrations, while Church leaders denied the existence of such an agreement.

On January 17, at least 100 people armed with machetes and clubs attacked a church in Kampar, Riau province, destroying the church's equipment.

In North Bekasi, West Java province, around 1,000 protesters, referring to themselves as the Bekasi Islamic Forum, blocked the construction of Santa Clara church on March 7. The following day, the mayor confirmed the validity of the construction permit. Protests resurfaced on August 8, when around 2,000 demonstrators from various Islamic groups rallied in front of the Bekasi administration office. The office decided to halt the church's construction and to reassess the validity of its building permit, but did not revoke it.

On March 16, local authorities announced that they would tear down 13 of the 14 remaining churches in Aceh Singkil if the Christian community did not fulfill the requirements for building licences until March 23. Christian community leaders argued that obtaining the licenses would be impossible due to lack of cooperation of local authorities, while the latter denied these accusations.

In April, representatives of Christians in Aceh Singkil filed a report with the National Commission on Human Rights, in which they accused the local government of discrimination concerning church construction permits, schools and courts.

The National Commission on Human Rights reported in June that Islamic organizations in Bandung, West Java, had extorted money from local churches for building permits. The allegations were denied by several Islamic organizations. On June 18, the Aceh administration and the Aceh Provincial Legislative Council announced they would issue a sharia-based bylaw on places of worship and guidance for interreligious harmony until the end of the year.

A Muslim migrant from Bekasi, West Java, attacked an elementary school in West Sabu, East Nusa Tenggara province, on December 13, injuring seven children with a knife. Locals captured the perpetrator and handed him over to a West Sabu police station. Two hours later, thousands of people attacked the police station and beat the attacker to death. Local re-

ligious leaders called on residents to remain calm after the incident. mhe

INDONESIA (PAPUA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: OPM, ULMWP, KNPB, FRI-West Papua, PRPPB vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of the provinces of Papua and West Papua and resources, such as timber, gold and copper, between mainly indigenous Papuans and the government continued. The Papuans were represented by the Free West Papua Movement (OPM), the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), and the National Committee for West Papua (KNPB). Additionally, on November 29, the Indonesian People's Front for West Papua (FRI-West Papua) was founded.

Throughout the year, Papuan and non-Papuan activists conducted several protests in the two provinces. There were several reports of maltreatment by the police, as well as vandalism and violence by the protestors. For instance, secession supporters rallied for the elevation of ULMWP's observer status to full membership in the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) as well as for West Papua's independence. Between April and December, police arrested a total of 4,078 activists during protests linked to MSG meetings. Other protests were held in connection with the anniversary of the 1962 New York Agreement that incorporated West Papua into Indonesia on August 15. Rallies were held throughout September, demanding the Pacific Islands Forum to address human rights abuses in West Papua at the UN General Assembly. On July 15, in Yogyakarta, eponymous Special Region province, police confined Papuan students in their dormitory to prevent them from participating in an event of the People's Union for West Papua Freedom (PRPPB). On December 10, several thousands protested to commemorate the international human rights day. Police arrested nine protesters.

Suspected OPM leader Kelenak Telenggen was injured while being arrested by the police on May 31. On January 3, police killed two men while searching the attackers of a police station in Sinak, Papua, on 12/27/15. At the end of March, 20 armed members of the West Papuan National Liberation Army (WPNLA) attacked eleven road construction workers in Puncak Regency, Papua, killing four. Between April and August, one activist died in police custody and others were injured in police operations. Moreover, two indigenous Papuans died in incidents with police involvement in Papua. On October 17, a Papuan separatist injured one military officer in a shootout in Gurage, Papua. After indigenous Papuan demonstrators had erected a street blockade in Manokwari, West Papua, on October 26, police killed one and injured six.

The same month, President Joko Widodo introduced a policy to lower the fuel prices in Papua and West Papua to the same level as in other provinces. mbe

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 and resources, such as fish, oil, gas, and territory between the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC), and Japan continued. All parties repeatedly claimed sovereignty over the contested Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. The PRC and Japan sent patrol vessels into the area and increased their military presence, while criticizing the intrusions of the other party. While Japan doubled its amount of F-15 fighter jets in Okinawa Prefecture in February and installed a radar facility on Yonaguni Island in late March, the PRC built a new armed coast guard vessel.

On January 17, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called upon the international community to protest the PRC's extraction of resources and the construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea. Subsequently, the PRC criticized Abe and urged Japan to reflect upon its wartime aggression in China. In mid-February, Japan and US criticized the PRC's deployment of surface-to-air missiles in the South China Sea and reiterated their right to freely navigate international waters. On March 23, the PRC and ROC opposed Japan's publication of revised textbooks, which claimed the disputed islands to be inherently Japanese, and, according to the PRC, misrepresented the Nanjing massacre during World War II. On April 4, twelve armed Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) vessels began permanent patrolling of the waters surrounding the disputed islands. On April 15, the ROC protested Japan's Diplomatic Paper, which claimed that the disputed islands were Japanese. Subsequently, the ROC urged all involved parties to solve the dispute peacefully. On April 29, the PRC demanded the US and Japan stay neutral in the South China Sea dispute and not to include the islands in a bilateral security treaty [→ China – Vietnam et al. (South China Sea)]. In the first half of June, Chinese vessels entered the waters of the disputed islands twice, which was criticized by Japan. On August 3, the PRC protested the Japanese White Paper, accusing the contents of "stirring up trouble between China and its neighbours and deceiving the international community". Three days later, a fleet of 230 PRC vessels sailed close to the disputed islands, for which the JCG released video proof. In response, Japan objected the PRC's actions and demanded the withdrawal of the fleet. In early September, the Japanese Prime Minister Abe called Chinese President Xi Jinping a friend while both agreed to talks regarding the establishment of a communications hotline between their defense ministries. In late September, Japan criticized Chinese fighter jets flying over the disputed islands. Subsequently, the PRC called upon the ROC to protect the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. ROC's president responded that the islands were not Japanese and called for a peaceful resolution. On December 22, Japan announced the allocation of USD 1.8 billion to the JCG in order to increase its patrols. Three days later, a PRC aircraft carrier and its fleet passed

through the Miyako Strait close to the disputed islands and circumvented the ROC. kol

KAZAKHSTAN (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: various Islamist groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between various Islamist militant groups and the government escalated to a violent crisis.

According to authorities, on June 5, around 25 Islamist militants attacked two gun shops and a military facility in the northwestern town of Aqtobe, Aqtobe Region, killing three security forces and five civilians. As a response, security forces killed 18 of the gunmen during the attack and arrested the remaining seven. Following the incident, which was the most fatal Islamist attack since the country's independence, the Aqtobe region was put on high alert. Security forces conducted counterterrorism operations and Internet access was shut down for two days. Interior Minister Qalmukhanbet Qasymov stated that the attack had been instructed or inspired by a Syrian Islamist leader, but no credible claim of responsibility was made. On November 28, a court in Aqtobe sentenced 29 men, suspected members of the banned Salafi confession, to jail terms ranging between two years and life in prison. They were charged for involvement in the June attacks. On June 29, security forces detained six suspected Salafists in Karaganda Region that had allegedly planned an attack with IEDs. One suspect blew himself up when security forces tried to arrest him. The Kazakh National Security Committee (KNB) claimed there was no link between the six arrested suspected Salafists and the Aqtobe attack. On July 18, suspected Islamist militants reportedly attacked a police station and a KNB office in Almaty, Almaty Region, killing at least four police officers as well as one civilian and injuring several.

Throughout the year, security forces detained several people on terrorism charges. For instance, on February 18, the Sary Arqa District Court in Astana imprisoned five men for membership of the banned Islamist group Tabligh-i-Jamaat. On May 13, the Qaraghandy Region's Specialized Inter-District Court jailed two alleged recruiters of the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. On July 12, an Aqtobe court imprisoned twelve men for attempting to travel to Syria and join IS. On August 11, an Aqtobe court jailed three men for "spreading terrorist ideas". On August 22, security forces detained four members of an Islamist group for planning an attack with IEDs against the KNB. On August 31, officials declared that ten suspected Islamists had been detained in the West Kazakhstan Region and eleven in the Aqtobe Region after security forces had found guns, explosives, and ammunition in their homes. Furthermore, on September 5, KNB stated that eight radical Islamist groups had been apprehended between January and September. On December 21, the KNB detained 16 suspected members of Tabligh-i-Jamaat in a counterterrorist operation in the regions of Almaty, Aqtobe, and

Atyrau. afo

KYRGYZSTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2005

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between various opposition groups, such as the People's Parliament movement, and the government continued. On March 22, authorities confirmed that they were investigating the authenticity of audio recordings, in which several opposition politicians talked about plans to overthrow the government. In response, several opposition members were detained or placed under house arrest on coup charges. On March 24, opposition leaders Bektur Asanov and Kubanychbek Kadyrov were reportedly detained in the course of the investigation of the audio recordings. On May 12, the State Committee for National Security (GKNB) arrested three alleged leaders of the People's Parliament movement, among them former agriculture minister Bekbolot Talgarbekov and former presidential candidate Torobay Kolubayev, accusing them of preparing a violent seizure of power. The group had planned to hold a rally in the capital Bishkek and had demanded President Almazbek Atambayev to step down.

After a parliamentary commission, investigating the involvement of several cabinet members in a corruption case, had demanded Prime Minister Temir Sariyev's resignation on April 7, he resigned four days later. On April 13, the parliament elected Sooronbai Jeenbekov as his successor. Moreover, on April 12 and May 11, human rights activists protested against a government bill, labeling foreign funded NGOs as foreign agents, in the capital Bishkek. On May 12, parliament rejected the bill. On November 22, the party chairman Omurbek Tekebayev of the oppositional Ata-Meken party announced that his party was preparing an impeachment proceeding against President Atambayev. ama

MALAYSIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1969

Conflict parties: Bersih, various opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over the orientation of the political system and national power between Bersih and other opposition groups, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, de-escalated to a dispute.

The crisis was dominated by the opposition's claim that Prime Minister Najib Razak, his stepson Riza Aziz, and a friend of Aziz, were involved in the disappearance of USD 3.5 billion from the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) development fund. The allegations that also concerned the involve-

ment of financial institutes in Switzerland and the USA, had arisen in 2015. In July, the United States Department of Justice filed an official lawsuit against the accused.

In 2015, the opposition group Bersih had organized mass demonstrations demanding Najib's resignation, which involved ten thousands of participants wearing yellow T-shirts with the word "Bersih". On February 19, the Malaysian High Court upheld a ruling that considered the wearing of yellow T-shirts bearing the word "Bersih" as a threat to national security.

In April, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem introduced an immigration ban to Sarawak State on opposition leaders and activists, declaring the State had to be protected from "unsavoury elements" until after the state elections in May.

On November 19, police raided Bersih offices in the capital Kuala Lumpur, arresting several Bersih organizers and oppositional government officials. Alicia Edwards, spokesperson of the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur, noted the US' uneasiness regarding these arrests. Despite the prohibition of demonstrations, in late November, thousands protested against Najib in Kuala Lumpur, demanding his resignation. They were met by pro-government protesters and 7,000 members of the Royal Malaysia Police. In total, rallies involved 15,000 to 80,000 participants. Najib refused to resign and instead accused Bersih of trying to illegally overturn a democratically-elected government. nro

MALDIVES (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2003

Conflict parties: MDP, AP, MUO vs. government
Conflict items: national power

The violent crisis over national power between opposition parties, primarily the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and the Justice Party (AP), and the government led by Abdulla Yameen continued.

Throughout the year, the government took measures to oppress opposition groups and independent media, particularly by means of widespread judicial actions.

Police dissolved several anti-government demonstrations, injuring protesters with pepper spray.

In January, Mohamed Nasheed, MDP leader and former president, who had been convicted to 13 years in prison under the "Anti Terrorism Law" on 03/16/15, was granted temporary medical leave to the United Kingdom. During a meeting in London on June 1, members of several opposition parties, among them leaders of MDP and AP, announced to unite in the Maldives United Opposition (MUO) in order to form a shadow cabinet.

In the course of the year, several controversial laws were adopted by the government holding the majority in parliament. In reaction, the opposition accused the government of autocratic rule. For instance, the parliament decided to make the list of declared terrorist organizations confidential on March 16. Furthermore, on April 11, a new Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs was set up, which was granted the

authority to issue fatawa by amending the Religious Unity Act. On August 11, the parliament adopted a defamation law, which would criminalize alleged blasphemy.

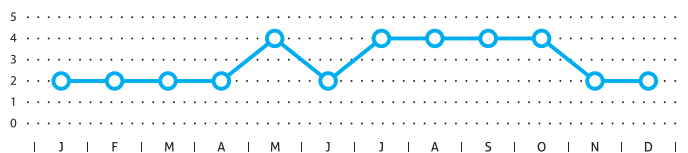
Throughout the year, the government upheld the suppression of government-critical activists as well as certain media outlets. For instance, a local court ordered to halt the print publishing of the newspaper Haveeru Daily on April 1. Two days later, journalists and activists demonstrated against media oppression and the recently passed law to criminalize so-called defamation. Police used pepper spray to disperse the protesters and arrested 17 journalists. Furthermore, police repeatedly dispersed the opposition's Friday prayer gatherings from mid-April onwards. This happened for example on July 8, when police used pepper spray against opposition members and detained two. On September 7, the media outlet Maldives Independent showed Al Jazeera's documentary "Stealing Paradise", in which the government was accused of large scale corruption. This triggered anti-government protests in the capital Malé. Subsequently, police raided Maldives Independent's media offices and detained three MDP members of the party's national council. Ahmed Adeeb, former vice president, was convicted on June 9 to 15 years of prison for masterminding last year's alleged attempted assassination of the president. On February 12, AP's Sheikh Imran Abdullah was sentenced to a 12-year imprisonment by a criminal court, while arrest warrants were issued against MOU leaders Mohamed Nasheen, Mohamed Jameel Ahmed, and Akram Kamaldeen. In the course of the year, the UN, USA, India, and several European countries continued to criticize the developments in the Maldives and undertook efforts for multi-party talks between the government and the opposition. On September 23, the Commonwealth threatened to suspend the Maldives from the organization in case the multi-party talks did not take place. In protest against the Commonwealth accusing the Maldives of abusing human rights, the Maldives left the Commonwealth on October 13.

two

MYANMAR (KIA, KIO / KACHIN STATE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1961

Conflict parties: KIA, KIO vs. government
Conflict items: autonomy, resources



The limited war over autonomy and resources such as jade, ruby, farmland, and timber between the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and its military wing Kachin Independence Army (KIA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

Throughout the year, numerous clashes between both sides took place in Kachin State, intensifying in October, leaving at least 63 people dead, hundreds injured, and more than 6,900 civilians internally displaced.

For example, on July 1, six landmines exploded around Lazia, targeting two Tatmadaw supply battalions. Subsequently, Tatmadaw forces attacked the KIA headquarters in Lazia with artillery fire. On July 28, KIA and Tatmadaw forces clashed twice at Hopong Mountain in northern Shan State with the Tatmadaw using artillery, leaving several dead on both sides. After the Tatmadaw crackdown on illegal mining in Hpakant in early August, KIA and Tatmadaw clashed for one week, leaving approx. 1,000 villagers displaced. On August 7, KIA attacked Tatmadaw forces in a village close to Lazia, leaving several soldiers dead. The day after, KIA troops ambushed an army convoy in Kachin, killing several soldiers as well as at least two KIA troops, wounding eight policemen, and destroying two vehicles.

In the meantime, peace negotiations between the New League for Democracy-led government and non-signatory groups continued. From August 31 to September 3, the 21st Century Panglong Conference was held in the capital Naypyidaw, constituting an attempt to include and engage all ethnic-based armed groups into ongoing negotiations and political dialog, including the non-signatories KIA/KIO [→ Myanmar (UNFC)].

After the conference, Tatmadaw operations against KIA brigades in Kachin and Shan States intensified. On September 16, Tatmadaw launched artillery and airstrikes in a week-long offensive against KIA around the town of Lazia, leaving several civilians dead. On October 1, KIA and Tatmadaw forces clashed in Muse township, Shan State. Two days later, approx. 10,000 protesters in the Kachin capital Myitkyina demanded an end to the conflict. From October 7 to 10, Tatmadaw launched air strikes on several KIA outposts in Kachin. The KIO called on the government to end the offensive.

On November 20, the four ethnic-based armed groups KIA, Ta'ang National Liberation Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and Arakan Army formed the Northern Alliance (NA), operating in Kachin and Shan States. The NA launched a joint offensive against Tatmadaw troops in northern Shan State attacking several police and military posts, leaving at least 14 people dead, 50 injured, and more than 5,400 displaced [→ Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)].

nwu

MYANMAR (KNU, KNLA, DKBA ET AL. / KAREN STATE, KAYAH STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: KNU, KNLA, DKBA, DKBA-splinter group vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The violent conflict over autonomy between the Karen National Union (KNU), its armed wing the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), and the newly-founded Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, on the one hand, and the government with its supporters, the Border Guard Forces (BGF), on the other, continued. KNU, KNLA, and DKBA had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on 15/10/15. In late 2015, a group of mili-

tants had split from the DKBA, refusing to acknowledge the DKBA's signature to the NCA. They aimed to continue the armed fight for the Karen people's autonomy. After DKBA had expelled the group's leaders, the splinter group declared themselves independent under the name Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (splinter group) on January 16.

Ten days later, approx. 100 splinter group fighters fired artillery shells on an army base near Kaw Moo village, Kawkaik township, wounding two BGF soldiers. Later that day, a joint force of the BGF and the army, called Tatmadaw, allegedly burned down at least ten houses in Pyar Pin village, Kawkaik township, targeting the homes of splinter group leaders and leaving hundreds internally displaced. After a failed, joint attack of the BGF and Tatmadaw on the house of one of the splinter group's leaders in Pyabin village, Kawkaik, on May 11, the DKBA confirmed his death on August 30. One of the five elephant mahouts he had allegedly held ransom, stabbed him with a machete. On September 2, the splinter group reportedly clashed four times at several BGF bases in Mae Tha Wor area, Karen State. The BGF used heavy artillery and the splinter group planted landmines. Subsequently, the BGF moved towards one DKBA base in Mae Ta Wor and another one outside of Myaing Gyi Ngo village, Karen, commencing joint operations with the Tatmadaw. Between September 11 and 15, BGF and splinter group forces clashed 13 times, mostly using heavy artillery. Between September 12 and 19, the BGF reportedly killed at least three splinter group members and injured one, then seized four main splinter group bases around Myaing Gyi Ngo.

Until September 15, about 3,800 civilians fled to Thailand, public buildings, or monasteries due to the repeated skirmishes. On October 4, the KNU and KNLA offered the splinter group to join them. However, on October 10, the splinter group reportedly ambushed the vehicle of a KNU officer and wounded three KNLA soldiers in Mae Tha Wor.

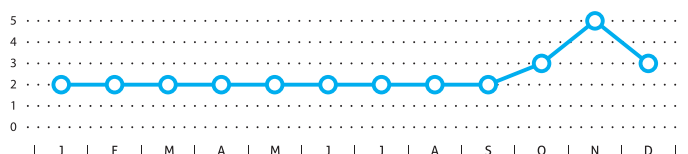
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MYANMAR (ROHINGYA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: Rohingya vs. Buddhists vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance



The violent crisis over subnational predominance between the Muslim Rohingya minority, the Buddhists, encompassing the Buddhist majority and the radical Buddhist organization Ma Ba Tha, and the government escalated to a limited war. In the first half of the year, the government implemented political means to ease Rohingya-related tensions. In March, the number of Rohingya refugees reportedly declined for the first time in several years. On March 28, the state of emergency in Rakhine State, imposed by the former Union Solidarity and

Development Party (USDP) government in 2012, was lifted by the New League for Democracy (NLD) government. On June 7, the NLD government relaunched the citizenship verification program in several Rakhine townships, enabling Rohingya to apply for citizenship without noting their ethnicity or faith. However, only few applied. At the end of August, the NLD government formed the State Advisory Commission to seek a lasting solution to the tensions between Muslims and Buddhists. The commission headed by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan consisted of foreign advisors, Rakhine Buddhists, Muslims, and government representatives.

Despite this development, anti-Muslim sentiment remained widespread throughout Myanmar, for instance in Yangon and Bago Regions as well as Kachin State. In early April, hundreds of demonstrators, including members of Ma Ba Tha, gathered in front of the embassy of the USA in Yangon, Yangon Region, protesting the use of the term "Rohingya" in an official statement. On June 16, the Information Ministry banned officials from using the term "Rohingya" and instead suggested the term "people who believe in Islam in Rakhine State". However, the demonstrations continued. On June 23, Buddhists and Muslims clashed in Thuye Thamein village, Bago Region. An armed group of approx. 200 Buddhists damaged a mosque and desecrated a Muslim cemetery. Reportedly, the Buddhist group also attacked the local Muslim population, causing approx. 80 Rohingya to flee. One week later, approx. 500 Buddhists burned down a mosque and injured one Rohingya after a dispute over the construction of a Muslim school in Hpakant township, Kachin State.

However, most violent incidents took place in Rakhine State. On October 9, the conflict escalated when around 300 Rohingya attacked three police border posts in Maungdaw township, Rakhine, leaving nine guards dead and stealing guns, rifles, and ammunition. During October and November, fighting between approx. 500 armed Rohingya, on the one hand, and the armed forces, called Tatmadaw, and the People's Police Forces, on the other, continued. By declaring Maungdaw an operation zone, government shut down the area to search for the attackers. While Rohingya fighters ambushed the security forces in several incidents using rifles, handguns, knives, and swords, killing at least 32 soldiers, the Tatmadaw and police forces used artillery and two helicopters with machine guns, leaving over 100 Rohingya dead by the end of November. From October 9 to November 23, Tatmadaw fired on three villages in northern Rakhine with attack helicopters, causing approx. 1,500 Rohingya homes to burn down. The fighting and tremendous destruction forced approx. 50,000 people in Rakhine to flee. Shortly after the first attacks, the armed group "Faith Movement" called for jihad to free the Rohingya. However, a statement by the office of President Htin Kyaw blamed the "Aqa mul Mujahidin" for the attacks, a Muslim organization from Maungdaw township, which had been inactive since the 1990s.

The conflict also drew international attention. For example, in late November, the head of UNHCR in Bangladesh accused the government of ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya in Maungdaw. In late December, the Malaysian government sent a ship with food and medical supplies to Myanmar for the Rohingya. However, Myanmar denied the ship to enter the harbor. ^{nro}

MYANMAR (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2012

Conflict parties: local protesters vs. resource companies, government

Conflict items: resources

The conflict over resources, including copper, water, and land, between local protesters, such as students and farmers, on the one hand, and resource companies and the government, on the other, continued.

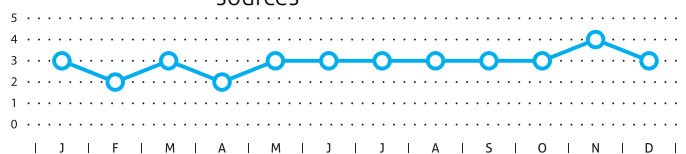
Throughout the year, activists staged protests against resource projects in several parts of the country, demanding a halt to environmental destruction, damages to religious sites, and expropriation of farmland. As in previous years, the Letpadaung Copper Mine in Sagaing region, and the hydropower projects along the Irrawaddy river and its tributaries, such as the Myitsone Dam, were most controversial. On May 4, approx. 200 farmers protested at the Letpadaung mine against the resumption of production that the Chinese company Wanbao Mining and the semi-state owned Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. had announced in mid-February. Farmers claimed that the company had not implemented governmental recommendations. Police arrested two of their leaders for unlawful assembly. On September 5, protesters met with Sagaing officials to discuss the situation and compensation issues. On June 4, about 40 activists staged a protest in Myitkina township, Kachin State, against renewed talks between Kachin state officials, the Chinese ambassador, and a representative of the China Power Investment Company, regarding the resumption of the dam construction activities at the Irrawaddy river. The demonstrators demanded the abandonment of the project, which would require the resettlement of approx. 18,000 persons. On August 12, President Htin Kyaw formed a new commission to review these hydropower projects. ^{nro, kra}

MYANMAR (TNLA / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: TNLA vs. government

Conflict items: subnational predominance, resources



The violent conflict between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the government over subnational predominance and the production and trade of poppy in the Palaung Self-Administered Zone escalated to a limited war.

The TNLA continued to fight the widespread cultivation of poppy and the distribution of its derivatives throughout the Palaung Self-Administered Zone, Shan State, stating that it was harming the ethnic group of the Palaung, also known as

Ta'ang. Furthermore, the TNLA demanded the end of military operations in areas it controlled and an all inclusive political dialog over peace negotiations.

However, clashes between the TNLA and government forces, the Tatmadaw, intensified throughout the year, resulting in at least 55 fatalities and 110 injured. At least 12,000 people were internally displaced and further 3,000 fled to China.

On February 16, TNLA forces started clearing poppy fields in Namhsan and Kutkai townships. Two days later, the Tatmadaw launched several airstrikes against this operation in Namkhan and Namhsan townships, using two helicopters and allegedly one fighter jet. One TNLA fighter was left injured.

During the following months, TNLA and Tatmadaw forces engaged in confrontations in various locations. For example, on August 25, TNLA clashed with the military in Namkham township, after Tatmadaw forces had allegedly attacked patrolling TNLA members. One combatant and two civilians were injured in the subsequent clash.

The number of clashes decreased in August before the 21st Century Panglong Conference, a preliminary conference for future peace negotiations between certain ethnic armed groups and the government [→ Myanmar (UNFC)].

However, only two months later, the conflict reignited. Starting on November 22, TNLA supported by the Kachin Independence Army, Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army, and the Arakan Army launched a coordinated attack against at least ten police and military posts and infrastructure in Muse and Kutkai townships. At least 14 people were killed, 50 injured, 2,000 internally displaced, and 3,000 fled to China [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO), Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State)]. The allies, referring to themselves as Northern Alliance (NA), demanded an end to Tatmadaw operations in areas controlled by the NA. Despite considerations to classify the NA a "terrorist organization", the National Reconciliation and Peace Center mediated talks between the government and NA representatives throughout December in order to explore options to stop the fighting.

On March 14 and 21, Tatmadaw forces arrested over 120 civilians for allegedly supporting the TNLA in Kutkai township. The detained, of whom eight were supposedly tortured, were released a few days later.

Throughout the year, several allegations emerged, accusing Tatmadaw forces of using civilians as human shields. On June 25, the Rangoon Division Government banned a report by the Ta'ang Women's Organization regarding these allegations. nro

MYANMAR (TNLA, RCSS / SHAN STATE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

Conflict parties: TNLA vs. RCSS et al.

Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent conflict over subnational predominance between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) continued.

The conflict had erupted in November 2015 when RCSS forces had allegedly entered TNLA-controlled territory, the Palaung Self-Administered Zone, Shan State, without warning, shortly

after signing the nationwide ceasefire agreement with the government [→ Myanmar (UNFC)]. However, RCSS claimed that it was in control of the disputed territory since 2008.

In the course of the year, numerous clashes between TNLA and RCSS left at least 20 dead and 4,650 internally displaced. On February 7, RCSS forces attacked a TNLA base in Lotnaw village, Namhkam township. Heavy shelling between both groups left at least one combatant dead, one civilian injured, and the 1,500 inhabitants internally displaced. Meanwhile, TNLA and RCSS forces clashed in Kyaukme and Namhsan townships, leaving at least three civilians injured, approx. 300 civilians internally displaced, and one house destroyed. In early May, TNLA and RCSS forces clashed in Namkham, Kyaukme, and Manton townships, leaving 2,500 internally displaced. After forces of the army, also known as Tatmadaw, had launched artillery strikes against TNLA areas, the latter accused the Tatmadaw of assisting the RCSS. However, RCSS denied these allegations.

Despite the ongoing clashes, both parties reiterated their willingness to enter peace negotiations. Several other ethnic-based armed groups tried to facilitate these talks. Following a TNLA request, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) held a meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from February 18 to 21, to appoint a negotiating team to end the conflict. In March, the largest armed group and UNFC member, United Wa State Army, called on the conflict parties to stop the fighting. In September, the Ta'ang National Party, acting as a mediator between both conflict parties, met with RCSS leaders in Chiang Mai to discuss peaceful solutions to the conflict. However, TNLA and RCSS held no official peace negotiations. nro

MYANMAR (UNFC)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: TNLA, MNDAA, NMSP, KNPP, KIA et al. vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy

The dispute over regional autonomy between members of the umbrella organization United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) and the government continued.

The UNFC had been founded on 02/16/11 by twelve ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) with the aim to federalize Myanmar and equip its ethnic minorities with more rights and autonomy. Since it had become one of the major actors in the nationwide peace process, representing its members in official negotiations. In 2016, the UNFC consisted of seven members, including Kachin Independence Organization and Wa National Organization [→ Myanmar (KIA, KIO / Kachin State)]. The Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army de facto pulled out of the alliance but remained official members [→ Myanmar (MNDAA / Shan State), Myanmar (TNLA / Shan State)]. All members were non-signatories of the 2015 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), demanding the inclusion of all armed groups in the peace process.

Despite the UNFC's refusal to attend the Union Peace Conference in January, organized by the outgoing government, the

group held various meetings with the new National League for Democracy government. During a meeting at its headquarters in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in mid-February, the UNFC created the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) to negotiate with the government and other EAOs. On May 16, State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi declared the formation of the National Reconciliation and Peace Center, a new organization for peace negotiations with EAOs, including a subcommittee for the UNFC. From August 31 to September 2, UNFC delegates attended the 21st Century Panglong Conference in the capital Naypyidaw, a major peace conference led by Aung San Suu Kyi. In mid-October, DPN and government representatives discussed the DPN's eight-point proposal for the NCA in Naypyidaw, including suggestions for participants in the political dialog over the NCA, issues of local autonomy, and a new military Code of Conduct. Both parties agreed on key points, such as more inclusive peace talks and the consultation of the local population in major projects. One month later, they discussed the NCA non-signatories' participation in the peace process in Yangon. jgi

itary drill and fired artillery rounds off its southern coast near the Northern Limit Line. On the same day, DPRK expelled all ROK staff from the joint Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC) and froze the assets of ROK companies. One week later, DPRK issued a statement, announcing all economic agreements in the KIC to be "null and void".

On March 18 and 21, it fired a medium-range Rodong missile and five short-range missiles, respectively, into the Sea of Japan off the coast of Hamhung, South Hamyang Province. On March 23, DPRK's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland threatened an attack on ROK and to kill its President Park Geun-hye. The next day, DPRK conducted a drill in Wonsan, Gangwon Province, practicing a massive artillery strike against Seoul. Since April, DPRK had reportedly planted around 4000 land mines in the DMZ. In 2015, three land mines had severely injured two South Korean soldiers. On July 9, one day after ROK and US had announced to install the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, DPRK fired another submarine-launched ballistic missile off the coast of Sinpo, South Hamyang Province. On August 22, ROK held the Ulchi Freedom Guardian joint exercise with 25,000 US troops. Two days later, DPRK launched another missile from a submarine in the Sea of Japan. On December 2, ROK announced unilateral sanctions against 40 officials and 30 entities of DPRK. lxl

NORTH KOREA – SOUTH KOREA

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↘ | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: DPRK vs. ROK

Conflict items: territory, system/ideology, international power

The conflict between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) over territory, the orientation of the political system, and international power de-escalated to a non-violent crisis.

Throughout the year, DPRK conducted two nuclear tests, launched four submarine-missiles, a long-range rocket and fired over 20 land-based short- and medium-range missiles. In his new year speech, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un mentioned the possibility of high-level talks with the South, calling for improved bilateral relations but also warned of war in case of "invasive outsiders". On January 6, DPRK announced a successful hydrogen bomb test. ROK summoned an urgent security meeting, while Japan strongly condemned the test [→ North Korea – USA, South Korea, Japan]. Two days later, ROK resumed propaganda broadcasts in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In response, from mid-January onwards, North Korea sent large balloons across the border, scattering at least one million propaganda flyers. On February 15, the National Police Agency of ROK accused DPRK of hacking state agencies in mid-January. On February 18, ROK announced its annual joint military drills with the US, Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, for the next month. With 315,000 troops, they marked their largest joint exercises so far. Two days later, DPRK held a mil-

NORTH KOREA, CHINA (DEFECTORS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2000

Conflict parties: DPRK government vs. Christian aid groups, defector support networks

Conflict items: system/ideology, other

The nonviolent crisis over ideology and freedom to leave between Christian aid groups and support networks of North Korean defectors, on the one hand, and the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), on the other, continued. As in previous years, most defectors left the DPRK by crossing the Chinese-Korean border to neighboring Jilin and Liaoning Province. As they continued to face the threat of forced repatriation in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the majority went to countries like Mongolia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, from where they could leave for the Republic of Korea (ROK). China- and ROK-based refugee rescue and human rights organizations assisted them on their flight, with many activists being former defectors themselves. At the end of January, the Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, an NGO based in Seoul, reported it had saved 112 defectors in 2015.

On April 5, DPRK announced stronger surveillance of border regions ahead of the seventh Congress of the Worker's Party of Korea. Reportedly, it also changed its border guards' rules of engagement with possible defectors, giving them a shoot-to-kill order. On April 8, 13 North Korean restaurant workers who had worked in Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province, China, left for ROK. Three days later, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang confirmed their legal leave, citing their valid passports and China's set policy to comply with international laws and humanitarian principles. On April 13, DPRK claimed

the defectors were "lured and abducted" by ROK, demanding their repatriation [→ North Korea – South Korea]. ROK denied this and warned its embassies of possible abductions by DPRK. On April 11, a DPRK intelligence colonel defected to ROK, being one of the most high-ranking military defectors thus far. In late April, Han Choong-ryeol, an ethnic Korean pastor known for his support to defectors, was found dead in Changbai Korean Autonomous County, close to the border. Korean activists claimed that he was murdered by DPRK agents. The DPRK denied the claims, accusing ROK of having killed the pastor. Chinese authorities launched an investigation of the murder.

In early July, a secretary at the North Korean embassy in Moscow defected with his family and arrived in ROK one month later. On July 8, following the US-ROK announcement to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system on the Korean Peninsula [→ North Korea – Japan, South Korea, USA], Chinese authorities announced reward money for citizens reporting North Korean defectors. Afterwards, reports indicated an increase in deportations, among them the repatriation of two women in early August, who had left from Musan County, North Hamgyong Province. On August 16, DPRK's Deputy Ambassador in London, Thae Yong-ho, defected to ROK. Subsequently, the DPRK accused him of various crimes. Thae claimed that many cases of defecting diplomats remained unreported since his defection. On September 29, a DPRK soldier defected to ROK by crossing the Demilitarized Zone, where he had been stationed. On November 14, ROK Ministry of Unification announced that the number of defectors from DPRK had reached 30,000 since 1962. In early November, Chinese authorities arrested more than 30 defectors at its borders with DPRK and Vietnam and announced to repatriate them. In mid-November, border guards shot two suspected defectors dead that were crossing the border in Namyang City, North Hamgyong. msc, lei

PAKISTAN (BALOCH NATIONALISTS / BALOCHISTAN)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: BLA, BLF, BRA, UBA, BRP, BNP, LeB, BNF vs. government

Conflict items: secession, resources

The conflict between several Baloch militant groups and political parties, on the one hand, and the government on the other, regarding the secession of Balochistan province and the control over gas, oil, coal, and minerals de-escalated to a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, at least 116 alleged militants, 26 security personnel, and 22 civilians were killed and at least 28 alleged militants, nine security personnel, and more than 48 civilians were injured. At least 54 militants were arrested. The majority of casualties reportedly occurred during search operations by security forces and subsequent exchanges of fire with alleged militants. All violent incidents took place in Balochistan province.

Security forces frequently conducted search operations

against alleged militants, killing, injuring or arresting suspects in the process. For instance, on April 6 security forces reportedly killed at least 34 alleged members of the United Balochistan Army (UBA) during a search operation and subsequent exchange of fire in Kalat district. One soldier was killed and two more wounded.

Militants mainly utilized IEDs. For instance, the BLA claimed responsibility for two explosions on October 7 targeting the Jaffar Express, a passenger train that had been targeted before, near Mach village, which left seven people dead and 20 injured.

The Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) also claimed responsibility for an IED attack targeting Balochistan Home Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti's convoy on January 22 in Dera Bugti district, which injured at least three security personnel. Throughout the year, Baloch leaders like Akhtar Mengal of Balochistan National Party (BNP) protested the on-going construction of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for allegedly exploiting the Baloch province and people. CPEC was inaugurated on November 13 and links Gwadar port in Balochistan with Kashgar in China through a network of highways, railways and pipelines. On November 26, two security guards of an oil and gas exploration company linked to CPEC were killed in Gwadar. Both the Baloch National Front (BNF) and the BLA claimed responsibility for the attack.

On March 24, security forces reportedly arrested an Indian affiliated with India's intelligence agency in Balochistan who was allegedly linked to the separatist movement, and tensions between Pakistan and India rose [→ Pakistan – India].

Furthermore, after remarks by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 12 and 15 in which he accused Pakistan of human rights abuses in Balochistan and thanked the Baloch people for allegedly supporting him, on August 18 treason charges were brought against three Baloch leaders who had thanked Modi for raising the Balochistan issue.

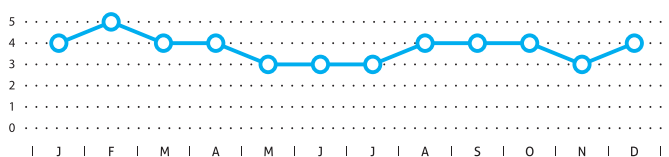
The government reportedly considered ending the "Pur-aman Balochistan" program implemented in 2015, which aims to reintegrate Baloch militants into the Pakistani society, following the separatist movement's reaction to Modi's remarks. However, at least 280 militants reportedly surrendered their weapons throughout the year. eko

PAKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2001

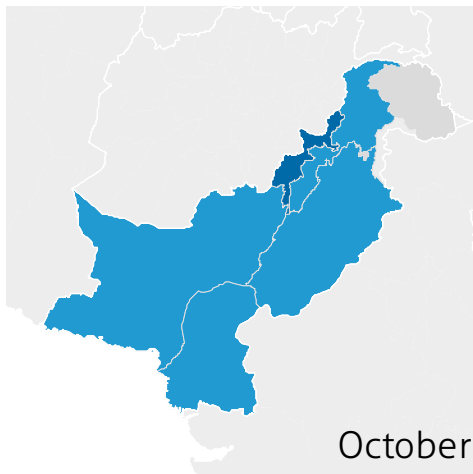
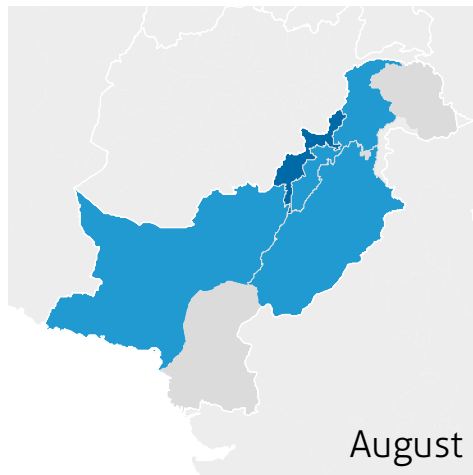
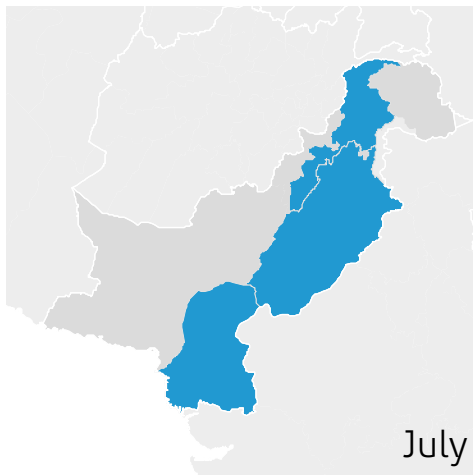
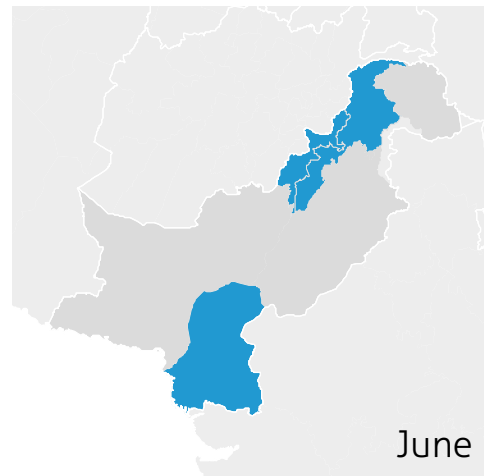
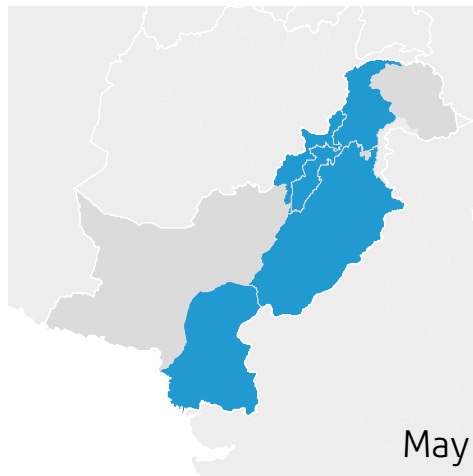
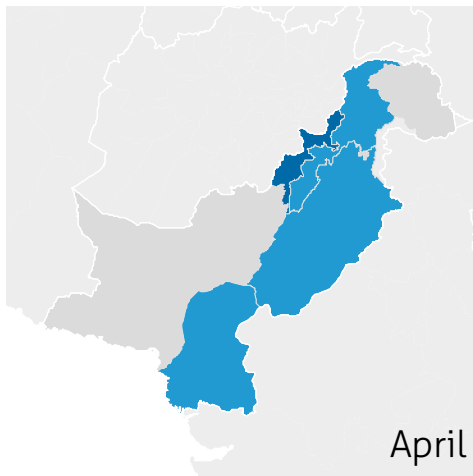
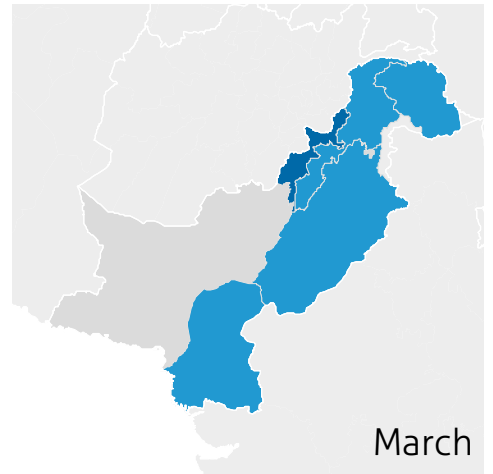
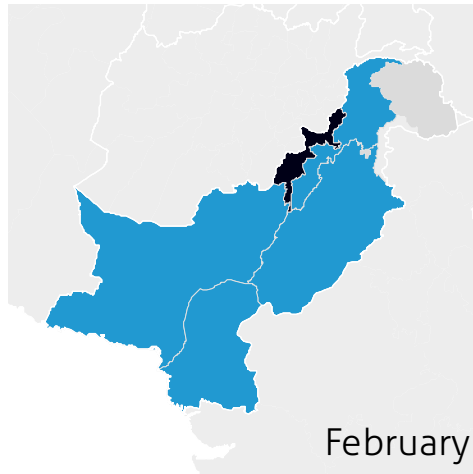
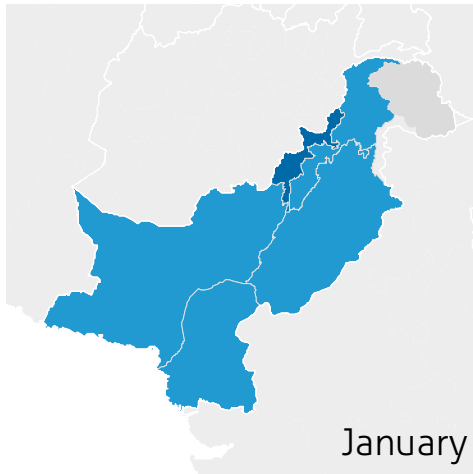
Conflict parties: TTP, LeJ, AQIS vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between various Islamist groups, most prominently the Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP), its splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), al-Qaeda on the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), and affiliates of the so-called Islamic

PAKISTAN (ISLAMIST MILITANT GROUPS)



State (IS), on the one hand, and the government, supported by the USA, on the other, continued unabatedly for the tenth consecutive year. In total, at least 879 people were killed and at least 696 injured.

On February 10, the Intelligence Bureau warned about IS gaining influence among members of other militant groups, demanding better control mechanisms along the Afghan border [→ Afghanistan – Pakistan]. On June 20, National Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz called Afghan refugee camps safe havens for terrorists. Consequently, nine days later, Pakistan turned down UNHCR's request to extend the stay of the almost 1.6 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan by another three years.

The counter-terrorism campaign "Zarb-e-Azb" launched in 2014 continued in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), entering its last phase in February. Until mid-March, airstrikes were conducted almost on a weekly basis, killing a total of at least 118 alleged militants. By April 19, the operation was preliminarily completed with only combat and search operations continuing in FATA as well as the provinces Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, and Punjab. Airstrikes resumed in August until October and again from November onwards in Khyber Agency, FATA, killing 36 militants and destroying at least 18 hideouts. US-operated drone strikes killed 32 militants in both Pakistan and Afghanistan with the last strike on Pakistani territory in May in Balochistan province intensifying inter-state tensions [→ USA – Pakistan].

In at least 39 cases, militants attacked police forces and army personnel with IEDs or bombs and at least another eleven employed suicide vests. At least seven cross-border firings from Afghan territory targeted Pakistani security forces in FATA, however, only one attack on September 23 was explicitly claimed by a militant group, namely JuA. Throughout the year, attacks on polio vaccination teams continued. Seven workers and seven guards were shot dead in six attacks. Educational institutions were targeted at least five times. For example, on November 25, JuA destroyed a governmental primary school in Mohmand Agency, FATA, with an explosion. In FATA, a total of over 320 people died, of whom at least 154 were militants killed in airstrikes. For example, in January three airstrikes in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) and Khyber Agency killed 64 militants and also destroyed five hideouts and explosive-laden vehicles. On the other hand, TTP and JuA militants launched numerous IED attacks throughout the year. On January 19, a TTP suicide bombing near a military checkpoint killed twelve people and injured 39 in Kharkano, Khyber Agency. JuA claimed responsibility for three IED attacks in Mohmand Agency on March 1, April 24, and September 4, leaving five security forces dead.

In Balochistan, at least 172 people were killed with security forces and civilians accounting for the majority of fatalities. However, there were far less attacks directly attributable to militant groups than in other provinces [→ Pakistan (Baloch nationalists / Balochistan)]. On January 13, a TTP suicide bomber killed at least 15 people, among them 14 security personnel, while injuring 25 in the provincial capital Quetta. In the night of October 24, militants killed 61 security forces and injured 164 in an attack on a police training college near Quetta, using suicide vests and guns. Both a TTP faction and IS claimed responsibility for the attack.

In Punjab, at least 23 clashes between militants and secu-

rity forces caused the majority of the overall 134 deaths. For example, on January 22, police killed three AQIS militants in Layyah district in a fire exchange, as well as seven TTP and LeJ militants in Sheikhpura district on February 17. Furthermore, four combat operations by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in April and May left 24 TTP and AQIS militants dead. On November 18, CTD forces killed an alleged IS militant in an encounter in Rawalpindi.

In KP, at least 128 people were killed in targeted attacks, bomb blasts, or clashes between security forces and militants. For example, on March 7, a JuA suicide bomber killed at least 17 people and injured 23 others in an attack on a court complex in Charsadda district. Eight days later, a bomb planted in a bus carrying government employees killed 15 people and injured 25 in Peshawar. On April 12, TTP militants shot the Deputy Superintendent of Police dead and injured two police guards in Swat district. On July 21, security forces killed three TTP militants in Upper Dir district during an encounter. On its official website, IS claimed responsibility for assassinating a security official in Peshawar on August 29 and the Intelligence Sub-Inspector in Charsadda on October 24. On September 2, a JuA suicide bomber killed 13 people and injured 41, when he triggered the bomb at the entrance of the District and Sessions Court in Mardan.

In Sindh, at least 85 people were killed throughout the year, a majority of fatalities being militants. All encounters with security forces took place in the provincial capital Karachi. On March 5, police forces killed four AQIS and LeJ militants. On April 6, CTD killed two IS militants in a fire exchange. iro

PAKISTAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1998

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

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between the opposition parties Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) and Pakistan Awami Tehrik (PAT), on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand, headed by Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), continued.

On February 10, legal authorities issued arrest warrants against PAT-leader Tahir-ul-Qadri, PTI-leader Imran Khan and other opposition leaders for not appearing to a court hearing regarding their alleged unlawful assembly with deadly weapons, referring to their 2014 protests in Islamabad against the alleged fraud of the 2013 elections.

After a by-election for the National Assembly in the constituency NA-101 Wazirabad, Punjab state, on March 22, clashes erupted when PTI-supporters protested the alleged rigging of the election. In the clashes between PTI-supporters and police, as well as PML-N-workers, two PTI-supporters were killed and nine people injured, including three police officers. On April 7, after the leak of the so-called Panama Papers, the opposition parties in the National Assembly accused Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his family of tax evasion with PTI-leader Khan threatening to organize protests if the government would not investigate the accusations properly. In

June, PTI and PAT filed References of Disqualification against Sharif over his alleged hidden assets, while PML-N reciprocated against PTI-members over the same issue in August. On October 6, PTI-leader Khan announced the "lockdown" of Islamabad for October 30, changing the date to November 2 later. On October 24, PAT announced their participation in the protest. On October 27, police in Islamabad Capital Territory used batons against PTI-protesters and arrested over 200. The same day, police also arrested at least 38 PTI-supporters in Islamabad at a youth convention. On October 28, police intervened when supporters of PTI and PML-N clashed in Kohat, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, during a protest against a visit by Prime Minister Sharif. On the same day, police used tear gas against PTI-supporters in Rawalpindi, Punjab state, who were throwing stones and defied a ban on public gatherings. On October 31, thousands of PTI-supporters tried to destroy police barricades on the motorway between Peshawar and Islamabad in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In response, police used tear gas and rubber bullets, injuring dozens of PTI-supporters. On November 1, the Supreme Court in Lahore, Punjab state, announced an investigation of the corruption charges against Sharif. Consequently, Khan and PTI canceled the "lockdown" of Islamabad planned for the following day. plo

PAKISTAN (SUNNI MILITANTS – RELIGIOUS GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1985

Conflict parties: TTP vs. religious groups
Conflict items: subnational predominance

The violent crisis over subnational predominance between Sunni militant organizations and various religious groups continued. Most of the attacks were targeted drive-by shootings against individuals belonging to religious minorities carried out by gunmen on motorcycles. The affiliation of the attackers could not always be verified. Overall, at least 149 people were killed and at least 412 injured throughout the year.

Jamaat-ul-Ahhaar (JuA), a sub-group of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for two attacks against Christians. On March 27, a suicide bombing in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore, Punjab province, killed at least 72 people, mostly Muslims, and injured more than 300. The JuA stated that the attack was supposed to specifically target Christians celebrating Easter in the park. On September 2, four alleged members of JuA attacked a Christian colony in Warsak Dam near Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In a subsequent clash with security forces, the attackers and two other people were killed and five security personnel injured.

Two attacks targeted members of the Sufi community. On June 22, two gunmen killed Amjad Sabri, a famous Sufi singer, and injured another person in Karachi, Sindh province. A sub-group of the TTP called Hakeemullah claimed responsibility for the attack. On November 11, a suicide bombing in the Sufi Shah Noorani shrine in Hub district, Balochistan province, for which the IS claimed responsibility, killed 52 people and in-

jured at least 105 more.

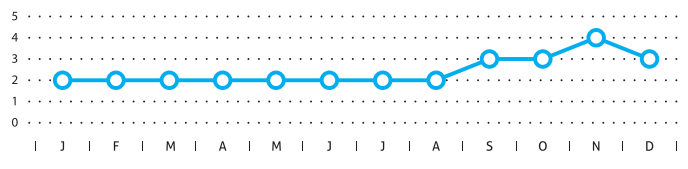
Various attacks against members of the Shiite, Shiite Hazara, and Ahmadi communities were reported. For instance, on August 1, JuA gunmen on a motorcycle killed two men belonging to the Shiite Hazara community in the provincial capital Quetta, Balochistan. On October 5, militants stopped a bus in Quetta and killed four Shiite Hazara women and injured another, leaving the other passengers unharmed. Furthermore, numerous attacks against members of religious minorities took place, which were not claimed by specific militant groups.

sad, eko

PAKISTAN – INDIA

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1947

Conflict parties: Pakistan vs. India
Conflict items: territory, international power, resources



The conflict between Pakistan and India over international power, water distribution, and the status of the Kashmir region escalated to a limited war.

Starting from April 9, Indian and Pakistani soldiers violated the 2003 ceasefire agreement at least 45 times along the contested Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) of Jammu and Kashmir state (J&K). In 35 of these skirmishes both armies used heavy weapons such as mortars, killing at least 83 people, among them 13 Indian soldiers, twelve Indian civilians, as well as twelve Pakistani soldiers and 46 Pakistani civilians. At least 210 people from both sides were injured. Pakistan claimed to have killed another 31 Indian soldiers, whereas India claimed to have killed an additional seven Pakistani soldiers. Both sides denied those fatalities. Except for two, all casualties occurred after September 28, when Indian soldiers crossed the LoC into Pakistan-administered J&K, conducting targeted strikes in response to a militant attack on an army base in the city of Uri, Indian-administered J&K, on September 18 [→ India (Kashmir)]. Pakistan denied that those strikes had happened, while Pakistan media reports only spoke of ceasefire violations. According to Indian media reports approx. 27,500 civilians fled the contested border area on the Indian side, while according to CNN at least 8,000 residents on the Pakistani side left their homes due to heavy shelling along the LoC and IB in the months of October and November.

The series of bilateral talks at the end of 2015 came to a halt after a militant attack on January 2 on an Indian Air Force base in Pathankot, Punjab province [→ India (Islamist militant groups)]. The first secretary level meeting took place on March 17, when Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and

her Pakistani counterpart Sartaj Aziz met during the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Pokhara, Nepal, discussing their cooperation regarding further investigations of the Pathankot militant attack. On April 26, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry and his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met in New Delhi during the Heart of Asia conference, trying to revive the bilateral talks between the two states. Following the attack in Uri on September 18, bilateral talks stopped. On September 27, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that he would not attend the 19th SAARC summit in Pakistan's capital Islamabad in November. Furthermore, on October 27, both governments expelled diplomats from the other state under accusation of espionage and terrorism. Although both states sent delegations to the Heart of Asia conference in Amritsar, Punjab, India, on December 4, Indian Minister of External Affairs Vikas Swarup stated on December 2 that India would not engage in bilateral talks with Pakistan in a climate of continued terrorism.

On September 26, in the course of the heightened tensions along the contested border area, Modi began to openly discuss the building of new dams along Chenab river and its tributary Marusadar river. Pakistan opposed the plans and stated that the revocation of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) could be interpreted as a hostile act against Pakistan. Both states initiated separate proceedings in the World Bank (WB) under the IWT, which regulates the distribution of water in that region since 1960: While India requested the appointment of a Neutral Expert, Pakistan called for a Court of Arbitration. On December 12, Jim Yong Kim, President of the WB, announced to pause the latter to find alternative approaches to resolve the issue.

jam

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (TRIBAL VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: vs. Amari vs. Atzera; et al.
Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources

The violent crisis between various tribes over subnational predominance and resources, such as gas, oil, copper, and gold, continued.

Throughout the year, tribe members clashed in various locations. For instance, on April 27, an argument between a vendor and a student at Mutzing Market, Markham Valley in Morobe Province resulted in a clash between the Amari and the Atzera tribes. The fighting left three Amari members dead. During the following three months, four people were arrested due to a suspected involvement in the clash.

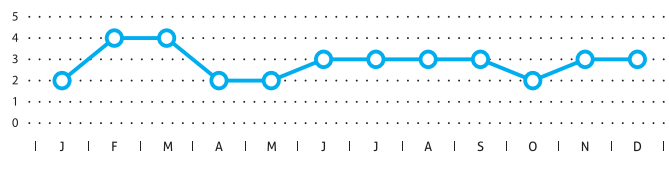
However, violent encounters concentrated in Hela Province, hosting one of the most profitable Exxon-Mobil Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) projects of the country. Throughout the year, spontaneous violent incidents between alleged warring tribe members were carried out around the provincial capital Tari, reportedly leaving several dead and injured. For instance, after the convoy of the provincial governor was stopped and shot at in an alleged case of tribal violence in Komo, on

November 28, the attackers and security personnel engaged in a firefight, leaving two people dead and one injured. Subsequently, police burnt down around 200 houses in the area in search for the attackers. On December 10, one member of a Kikita clan faction was allegedly shot by a hostile Kikita faction member. The next day, members of the faction of the one killed arrived with two vehicles at a market in Tari and started shooting into the crowd, as well as into the nearby police station, killing at least two people. Moreover, the armed tribesmen tried to seize a supermarket, after stating that the owner allegedly supported the rivalling faction. Police forces were reportedly outnumbered and held at gunpoint. As police reinforcement approached, the attackers left the scene. On December 28, a joint police and military operation was launched in order to address the recent outbreak of tribal violence in Hela as well as to protect the LNG project and in regard to the general elections taking place in 2017. wih, nro

PHILIPPINES (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, GOVERNMENT)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2008

Conflict parties: BIFM, BIFF vs. MILF, government
Conflict items: secession, subnational predominance



The conflict over secession and subnational predominance between the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), on the one hand, and the government, partly supported by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), on the other hand, escalated to a limited war.

The conflict concentrated on the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and SOCCSKSARGEN region. Fighting left 58 BIFF fighters, eight AFP soldiers and one civilian dead, while 50 AFP soldiers were wounded and more than 8,000 people displaced.

On February 25, MILF offered further help to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to fight BIFF, and claimed to mobilize more than 1,000 fighters for this purpose [→ Philippines (MILF)]. At the end of July, BIFF split into the Karialan and Bongos factions over the issue of the group's allegiance to IS [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Another split occurred on October 1, when five preachers and their followers, all of them former BIFF members, founded the faction "Moassesseen" and allied with the Islamist Maute Group [→ Philippines (Abu Sayyaf)]. As in previous years, BIFF frequently clashed with AFP soldiers in Maguindanao and Cotabato provinces, killing BIFF fighters, as well as security personnel. The militants targeted government forces using heavy weapons. Violence conducted by militants repeatedly affected civilians. For instance, from February 5 to 6, clashes in Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi and Datu

Piang, all in Maguindanao, killed four and wounded seven BIFF fighters as well as two soldiers, causing around 100 people to flee the area. In February and March, various clashes between AFP soldiers and BIFF members occurred in Datu Salibo region, with BIFF using IEDs and anti-tank missiles. For example, on February 10, a clash between AFP and BIFF members left one soldier and four BIFF fighters dead while a BIFF bomb killed five civilians on the same day. Six days later six BIFF members were killed and two soldiers wounded in a similar incident. Power transmission towers were frequent targets of BIFF attacks. For instance, on March 13, a BIFF member bombed a power transmission tower in Aleosan, Cotabato. In the second half of the year, BIFF fighters continued to detonate IEDs and clashed with AFP forces multiple times, again in Maguindanao and Cotabato, resulting in casualties and displacement of local residents. In mid-July, a clash between BIFF and AFP lasting two days left one civilian and eight BIFF members dead, while seven soldiers and ten BIFF members were wounded. The incident displaced 500 families in the area. On August 14, two soldiers, one policeman, and five BIFF fighters were killed in a confrontation in Midsayap with the army using artillery fire. Eight soldiers and five BIFF members were wounded while several hundred villagers fled the area. On December 24, the group blocked a highway in Guindulungan, Maguindanao which resulted in a standoff with the army.

On December 30, BIFF members attacked an army detachment in Salibo with automatic guns and shoulder-fired grenades to avenge the killing of one of its executive members a few days earlier. Seven BIFF members were killed and 500 families displaced.

One day later, the group attacked a military base in Midsayap, injuring one civilian.

prü

PHILIPPINES (MILF)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1977

Conflict parties: MILF vs. Government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology, re-sources

The conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government over autonomy of the Bangsamoro republic, encompassing the Philippine islands of Basilan, Mindanao, Palawan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, as well as over the orientation of the political system and resources such as gold, copper, and rubber de-escalated to a violent crisis.

In January, the government resumed its investigations into the Mamasapano incident from January 2015. MILF criticized this step, claiming it would hinder the reconciliation process. The government and MILF held a series of meetings in August in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, renewing their commitment to the peace process despite the non-passing of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

In July, in the cause of the government's campaign against il-

legal drugs, MILF and the government signed an agreement of cooperation and coordination regarding MILF-controlled areas. Subsequently, MILF supported the army in anti-narcotic campaigns. On July 21, an initial meeting between MILF and the newly inaugurated Duterte administration took place at Camp Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao province. A day later, Duterte offered autonomous administration of the proposed Bangsamoro Region to the MILF if all parts the government deemed unconstitutional were removed from the BBL. In the course of the year, government and MILF worked together in the Bangsamoro Transition Commission.

In August, clashes between government forces and MILF fighters, who at that point had joined the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), raised questions about the government-MILF anti-crime cooperation pact. [→ Philippines (BIFM, BIFF – MILF, government)]

On December 8, MILF detained seven of its members who were suspected of killing the Vice Mayor of Datu Saudi Ampatuan town on November 27. The next day, MILF soldiers, assisted by the army, clashed with members of the Maute Group at the border of Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao. [→ Philippines (Abu Sayyaf)] prü

SRI LANKA (NORTHERN PROVINCE, EASTERN PROVINCE)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2009

Conflict parties: Sinhalese Nationalists, JHU, BBS, JVP vs. Tamils, TNA vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy, system/ideology

The violent crisis between Sinhalese nationalists, Tamils and the government over the degree of autonomy in Tamil inhabited areas of Northern and Eastern province as well as issues related to the Tamil minority continued.

After the country's civil war had ended in May 2009, reconciliation measures such as the investigation in war crimes, resettlement of displaced persons, release of military allocated land, Tamil prisoners, and the process to a new constitution remained disputed.

On January 26, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leader Sumanthiran reiterated their demand for a devolution of power in the new constitution which was still negotiated. On 10/01/15, the OHCHR adopted a resolution to ensure the credibility of the justice process in the war crimes investigations by calling for international judges, defence lawyers, prosecutors, and investigators. However, on January 21, President Maithripala Sirisena rejected international involvement in war crimes investigations. On February 6, more than 100 Sinhalese nationalists protested against the establishment of an international criminal court in front of the UN representative office in the capital Colombo. Furthermore, Sinhalese nationalists protested again, when UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon's visited the country in early September.

Throughout the year, numerous protests were staged by Tamils, some of which turned violent. For instance, on September 5, several organizations and relatives of Tamil political prisoners demonstrated in Kilinochchi, Northern

Province, calling upon the government to free the prisoners. On September 24, thousands of Tamils led by Northern Province Chief Minister C. V. Wigneswaran protested in Jaffna, Northern Province, to highlight issues faced by their community. On October 25, protesters clashed with police forces, denouncing the killing of two Tamil students by police four days earlier. mmu

TAJIKISTAN (ISLAMIST GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1997

Conflict parties: various Islamist groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between various Islamist groups and the government continued. Following the alleged coup attempt of Islamist militants led by then-deputy defense minister Abduhalim Nazarzoda on 10/04/15 and the subsequent ban of the oppositional Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), two deputy heads of the party were sentenced to life in prison along with eleven top party officials being sentenced to prison terms between 14 and 28 years. In total, according to officials, 170 people had been sentenced to prison terms between one and 30 years for their alleged involvement. Furthermore, the government continued to restrict the practice of religion in everyday life, including the ban of Arabic-sounding names and marriages between first cousins as well as demanding mosques to install security cameras [→ Tajikistan (opposition)].

Throughout the year, several people were arrested for allegedly supporting Islamist militant groups. For instance, on February 18, a court in Norak, Khatlon Region, sentenced thirteen men to prison terms between ten and 27 years, after they allegedly had raised a flag of the so-called Islamic State (IS) in public [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. On May 9, four suspected IS supporters were detained for allegedly planning to carry out attacks.

Moreover, on February 22, a regional military court announced that an army border guard had been sentenced to 17 years in jail for deserting his post and illegally crossing the Afghan border trying to join the Taliban militant group [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. On March 5, a suspected Islamist and a border guard were killed in a shootout, after nine armed militants had crossed the border from Afghanistan. According to Afghan officials, they were members of the Afghan Taliban controlling parts of the Afghan Kunduz Province bordering Tajikistan.

Furthermore, several imams and citizens were jailed for being members of extremist groups or for being followers of a banned branch of Islam. For example, on April 19, officials stated that an Imam and four citizens had been sentenced to prison terms for propagating the banned Salafi branch of Islam. On May 19, officials announced that five imams had been arrested for recruiting young people to join Islamist militant groups abroad. On August 30, the US State Department offered a USD 3 million reward for information about the US-

trained former commander of the Tajik special forces OMON, Gumurod Halimov, who had joined IS in Syria in 2015 and was reportedly a leading IS member.

On January 30, a senior Russian general announced plans to downsize troops in the military base in Tajikistan from a division to a brigade, although in 2015 Russia had emphasized the importance of securing the Tajik-Afghan border and had announced to increase its troops from 7,000 to 9,000. From April 18 to April 22, about 1,500 troops from Tajikistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia took part in military exercises organized by the Collective Security Treaty Organization against possible threats by IS militants. Furthermore, on September 26, the Tajik government announced plans to sign an agreement with the People's Republic of China to have the latter finance the construction of eleven military outposts at the Tajik-Afghan border and a training center for border guards. From October 20 to 24, Tajik-Chinese anti-terror drills, involving at least 10,000 troops, took place near the border with Afghanistan.

fsc

THAILAND (ISLAMIST SEPARATISTS / SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1902

Conflict parties: BRN, PULO vs. government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology

The violent conflict over secession and ideology between various Islamist separatists, such as Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) and Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. The Islamist separatists sought the separation of the predominantly Muslim southern border provinces Narathiwat, Pattani, Songkhla, and Yala. Mara Patani, an umbrella organization of separatist groups formed in 2015, and the government held peace talks on ceasefire zones and development projects, reaching no agreement.

Throughout the year, separatists carried out numerous attacks primarily targeting security personnel and civil servants. According to NGO Deep South Watch, the conflict resulted in approx. 244 people killed and 454 injured. On February 27, separatists placed an IED in front of a police station in Muang district, Pattani, injuring at least six policemen and one civilian. On March 13, about 40 separatists seized the district hospital in Cho Ai Rang district, Narathiwat, using it to attack a nearby military post, which left seven soldiers injured. One day later, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha ordered an increase in security personnel in the southern border provinces due to the latest violence. On March 16, the UN Human Rights Office for South-East Asia condemned the seizing of the hospital. On June 1, police officers clashed with allegedly BRN-linked separatists in Chanae district, Narathiwat, leaving four separatists and one police man dead, as well as several separatists injured. Between August 10 and 12, BRN members placed 16 IEDs in the more northern provinces of Trang, Krabi, Phuket, Phang-nga, Nokhon Si Thammarat, Surat Thani and Hua Hin, leaving four dead and 35 injured. On August 23,

separatists planted IEDs near a hotel and a restaurant in Pattani city in the eponymous province, killing two civilians, injuring 35, and damaging 68 buildings. On September 2, BRN members planted an IED outside a school in Tak Bai district, Narathiwat, killing three civilians and injuring at least seven. On November 27, approx. 200 people protested in Panare district, Pattani, calling for an end of violence.

In the beginning of the year, various human rights groups accused the military of torture and mistreatment. On July 26, a court charged three human rights activist with criminal defamation, following a complaint by the military's Internal Security Operations Command. On October 20, the Thai Academic Network for Civil Rights condemned arbitrary arrests of students from the southern border provinces. ^{ceb}

UZBEKISTAN – TAJIKISTAN, KYRGYZSTAN

Intensity: 2 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2010

Conflict parties: Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan
Conflict items: international power, resources

The conflict over international power and water resources between Uzbekistan, on the one hand, and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, on the other, escalated to a non-violent crisis.

The conflict revolved around the construction of the controversial Rogun Dam hydropower plant (HPP) on the Vakhsh River in southern Tajikistan, and the Kambarata-1 Dam on the Naryn River in Jalal-Abad province, southwestern Kyrgyzstan. The Tajik and Kyrgyz governments claimed that hydropower projects were essential for their countries to overcome energy shortages, while the Uzbek government raised concerns that dam projects would reduce flows from the two major transnational rivers, threatening its water supply and cotton industry. Furthermore, the contested Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, also prompted tensions between the respective governments, reportedly related to the access to water resources. In January, the Kyrgyz parliament canceled deals with the Russian companies, which were leading the hydropower projects, citing lack of progress. On April 6, Kyrgyzstan Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Pankratov met with representatives of the People's Republic of China's State Power Investment Corporation to discuss building a cascade of four hydropower stations on the Naryn River. On July 1, Tajik officials announced that an Italian company won the USD 3.9 billion contract for the Rogun Dam construction. On July 19, Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Mirziyoyev warned Tajikistan's Prime Minister Rasulgoda that the Rogun Dam could threaten the entire region. Nevertheless, on October 29, Tajikistan officially started the construction of the 335-metre dam.

In March, Uzbek and Kyrgyz security forces engaged in a stand-off near the Ungar-Tepa / Unkur-Too mountain, located on the 300 km long disputed part of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border, about 10 km from the western Kyrgyz town of Kerben, Jalal-Abad Region. On March 18, two Uzbek APCs and some 40 soldiers were deployed to the border crossing near Ungar-Too, establishing border controls on the road linking the Kyrgyz towns of Kerben and Ala Buka. Kyrgyz authorities responded by sending dozens of border guards and special forces to the area. On March 26, after days of talks, Uzbek authorities

withdrew their troops from the area, while Kyrgyz forces remained. Reportedly, that deployment was linked to Kyrgyzstan's refusal to allow an Uzbek delegation to visit the Kasan-Sai / Orto-Tokoy water reservoir in Kyrgyz territory, whose water was used to irrigate fields in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan claimed it should be granted access to the reservoir since it had been built by the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in the Soviet era. On August 13, Kyrgyz forces reportedly arrested several Uzbek police officers near Kasan-Sai. On August 22, Uzbekistan deployed police forces by helicopter to Ungar-Too and detained four Kyrgyz citizens working at a telecommunications tower, claiming they had been on Uzbek territory. After the Kyrgyz and Uzbek governments had held talks, the four Kyrgyz citizens were released on September 8 and the Uzbek forces left Ungar-Too on September 18.

Following the Uzbek's military actions, a few hundred Kyrgyz opposition members rallied in Kerben, denouncing the government's policy towards Uzbekistan as weak. This prompted Kyrgyz Prime Minister Temir Sariev to travel to the remote area, demanding the border issue to be solved through talks and negotiations. In November, meetings of working groups for the demarcation of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border took place [→ Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan – Tajikistan (border communities / Fergana Valley)]. ^{fb}

VIETNAM (SOCIOECONOMIC PROTESTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1986

Conflict parties: factory workers, peasants, other civilians vs. manufacturing companies, government
Conflict items: resources, other

The conflict over the socioeconomic system and resources, especially over working conditions, corruption, and land grabbing, between peasants, factory workers, activists, and other civilians, on the one hand, and the government and manufacturing companies, on the other, continued as a violent crisis. As in the previous year, protests over land-related issues were most common. On January 12, approx. 100 peasants marched against land confiscations in the capital Hanoi. Around 200 to 300 police officers dispersed protesters and arrested at least 30 people. In another incident on September 20, a court in Hanoi sentenced a peasant from Duong Noi, Ha Dong district, to 20 months in prison, for having participated in a protest at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Hanoi, against the acquisition of her land on June 10. On July 5, the World Bank approved a \$150 million credit to improve land governance in Vietnam, simplifying land registration procedures and information transparency on the sub-national level. Throughout the year, workers engaged in unauthorized strikes against foreign-owned companies in the industrialized South. To improve worker rights, the government enacted Circular 59/2015/TT-BLDTBXH on January 1, which expanded social insurance schemes and increased health-related leave compensation for employees. From February 25 to 26, 17,000 workers of the Taiwanese shoe company Pou Chen in Bien Hoa, Dong Nai Province, went on strike over a new company

ASIA AND OCEANIA

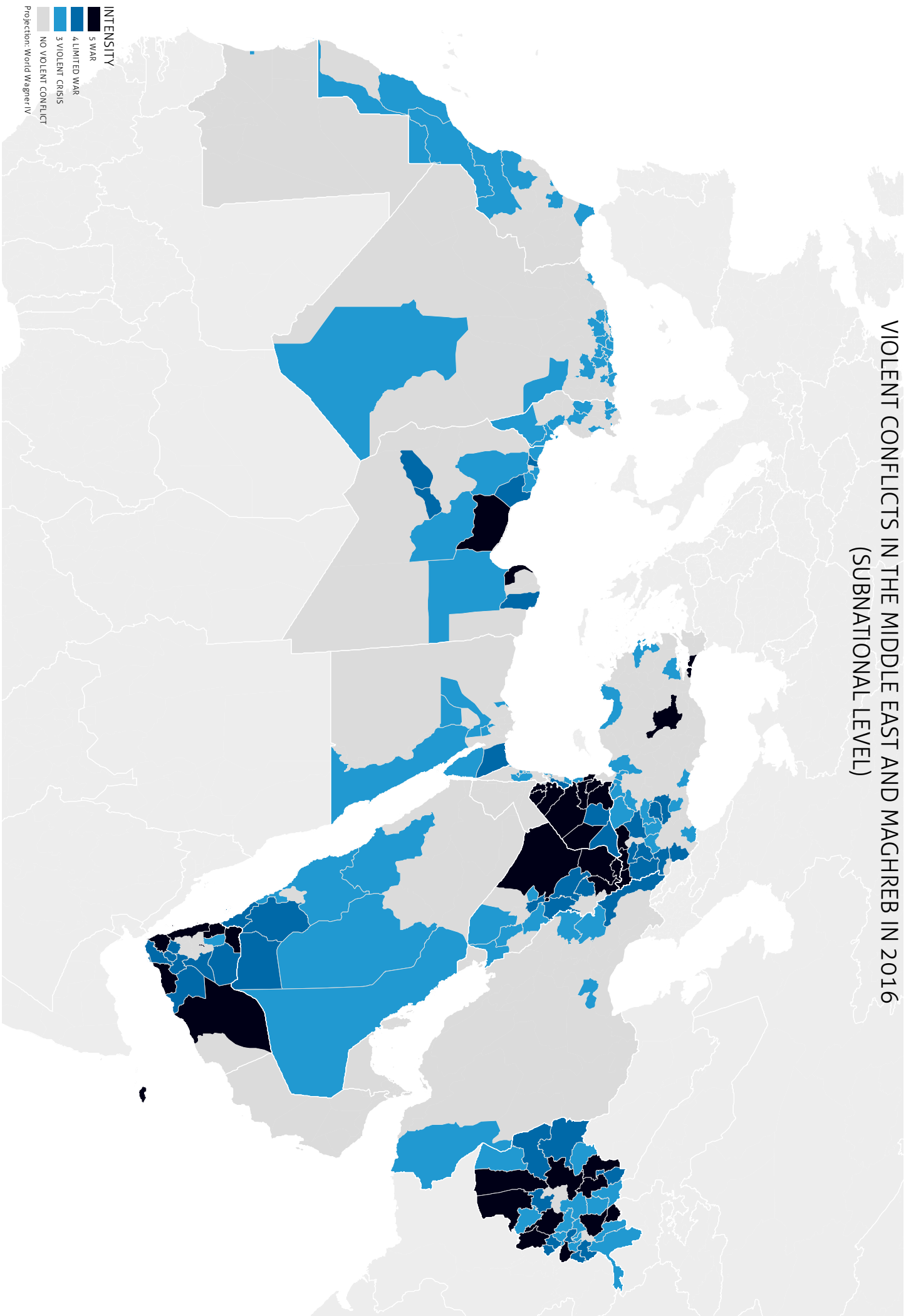
policy that withheld the year-end bonuses of workers. On June 30, the National Assembly decided to postpone the passage of the updated Penal Code for further revisions. The new code envisioned an enlargement of penalties on employers for forced and underage labor, as well as the illegal dismissal of workers and pension frauds. On August 2, the 2013-established National Wage Council decided to increase the minimum wage by roughly seven percent.

Starting from early April and continuing throughout the rest of the year, thousands of people, among them peasants, fishermen, and environmental activists, repeatedly staged major protests over the government's mishandling of a mass fish

poisoning incident, which was caused by a Taiwanese-owned steel plant in Ky Anh, Ha Tinh Province. For instance, on August 15, more than 4,000 fishermen and Catholic parishioners marched to the local government in Ky Anh to demonstrate for higher compensation. Approx. 200 police officers blocked their access to the highway and attacked them with batons, leaving one person injured. Addressing the ongoing protests, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Hong Ha Tran acceded to higher compensations and tougher security standards during a meeting with representatives of affected fishermen on December 7. ^{vn}

Middle East and Maghreb

VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB IN 2016 (SUBNATIONAL LEVEL)



Overall, 69 conflicts were observed in the Middle East and Maghreb. In total, ten highly violent conflicts took place in the region, accounting for more than one quarter of all highly violent conflicts worldwide. Two conflicts escalated to wars. With eight wars in total, the region accounted for almost half of all globally observed wars. As in previous years, most of the region's conflicts were violent crises. Similarly, system/ideology continued to be the most pursued conflict item in total. Five out of nine wars were fought over national power, while conflicts concerning international power and territory continued to be less violent. Due to a methodological revision, the conflicts involving al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia as well as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, were transformed into a transstate conflict [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)].

In Afghanistan, the war between the Taliban, on one side, and the government, the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM) as well as US-troops, on the other, continued. While the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces continued to conduct military operations on their own authority, the Taliban repeatedly took control over several districts and major cities. For instance, as in 2015, the Taliban attempted to capture Kunduz City in April and October. Furthermore, the group continued to conduct numerous suicide and IED attacks against governmental, international as well as civilian targets, many of them in the capital Kabul. The so-called Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) continued to engage in fighting against both the government and the Taliban, mostly in the eastern province of Nangarhar. ISKP also conducted the deadliest attack in Kabul since 2001, when on July 23 two suicide bombers killed 80 people and injured at least 230 during a protest of mostly Hazara people in Kabul. According to the UN, the number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan increased by three percent compared to last year, with a total of 3,498 civilian fatalities and 7,920 injured in the course of the conflicts.

Syria remained the country with the most fatalities in all its conflicts combined. The government of President Bashar al-Assad, backed by Russia, Iran and Shiite militias, made major territorial gains in the conflict with various opposition groups [→ Syria (opposition)]. After heavy fighting, the government retook Syria's second largest city and economical center Aleppo in December. The opposition conflict also had an impact on the territorial conflict between Syria and Israel, due to cross-border shelling [→ Syria – Israel]. The violence between the opposition groups escalated to a war. Especially Jabhat al-Nusra was involved in inter-opposition fighting, mainly affecting the governorates of Damascus and Idlib [→ Syria (inter-opposition violence)].

The war with the so-called Islamic State (IS) had the biggest impact on the conflict landscape in the Middle East and Maghreb [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. IS had to face significant territorial losses within its core in Syria and Iraq. Throughout the year, they lost ground against Kurdish groups in the northern Syrian governorates Raqqqa and Aleppo, and lost their last connection to the Turkish border, due to the advance of the Turkish backed oppositional Free Syrian Army offensive "Euphrates Shield." However, IS could retake Palmyra, Homs governorate, from government troops. In Iraq, the territorial losses of IS were even more significant than in Syria. The group was driven out of almost all of al-Anbar Governorate and Diyala Governorate, but remained in control of parts of Nineveh, Kirkuk, and Salahuddin governorates. In October, the government started to retake the country's second largest city Mosul, backed by Kurdish Peshmerga, Shiite militias and US-coalition airstrikes.

In Israel, the two violent crises regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state continued [→ Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian territories); Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. Violence between Hamas as well as other militant groups, on the one hand, and the Israeli government, on the other, mostly consisted of rockets being fired from Gaza towards Israeli territory that prompted Israeli airstrikes in reaction, and violent clashes in proximity to Gaza's border fence. The conflict between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the government as well as Israeli settlement movements mostly took place in the West Bank, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the Central District. Attacks of Palestinian "lone wolfs" on Israeli civilians and security forces, and Israeli raids in the West Bank accounted for the majority of violent incidents. On December 23, UNSC passed a resolution regarding the ongoing building of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian West Bank, declaring the process a violation of international law and a major obstacle to a two-state-solution. In Lebanon, the limited war between Sunni militants, mainly Jabhat al-Nusra, on the one hand, and the government and Shiite militia Hezbollah, on the other, decreased to a violent crisis [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. Furthermore, Lebanon was affected by the conflicts in Syria. Violence concentrated in the border region with Syria, especially around the cities of Arsal, Baalbek, and Ras Baalbek in Beqaa governorate, where IS and Jabhat al-Nusra frequently clashed about establishing footholds. Meanwhile, a wide coalition, including members of the March 8 and the March 14 alliances, elected Michel Aoun for president, ending a two-year power vacuum [→ Lebanon (March 14 Alliance – March 8 Alliance)]. In Egypt, violence mainly occurred on the Sinai Peninsula. The conflict between IS' Sinai Province and the government continued [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Also, the limited war between Islamist groups such as Aynad Misr and the government maintained its intensity [→ Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)]. While the government extended the region's state of emergency and conducted intensive operations in order to weaken Islamist militants' presence, both Islamist groups and IS mainly attacked security checkpoints and maintained their strongholds in the region. IS claimed responsibility for a bombing of the Coptic church Botroseya in the capital Cairo on December 11 that killed at least 25 civilians. Two new militant groups emerged in the opposition conflict, Hasm Movement and Lewaa al-Thawra, which conducted attacks against government affiliates and security personnel [→ Egypt (opposition)].

In Turkey, the conflict between opposition groups and the government escalated from a violent crisis to a limited war. During the coup-attempt by parts of the Turkish Armed Forces in mid-July, at least 241 persons were killed and over 1,400 injured. Subsequently, the government accused the US-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen of being responsible for the coup and announced a three-month state of emergency, which was extended until 01/19/17. The war between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the government continued. By the end of the year, at least 540 security personnel, 2,241 militants as well as 173 civilians were killed. Furthermore, the conflict was exacerbated by several bomb attacks from PKK's splinter group the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, which in contrast to PKK mainly conducted attacks in urban areas. Also, IS members conducted

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

several bomb attacks.

In Yemen, the war between the al-Houthi and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi continued. Former president Ali Abdullah Saleh and troops loyal to him, as well as Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah continued to provide support for al-Houthi. The internationally recognized Hadi government was mainly supported by an Arab coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and Sunni militias, most notably Popular Resistance Fighters and members of the Southern Mobility Movement (SMM). Prior to the Saudi Arabian intervention in 2015, the SMM fought against the central government for an independent South Yemen. In the course of the al-Houthi conflict, the SMM sided with the Hadi government. However, in 2016, calls for a Southern Yemeni independence reemerged. Aden, the temporary seat of the Hadi government and stronghold of the SMM, witnessed a wave of assassinations and bomb attacks throughout the year. Furthermore, the conflicts with Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Yemeni branch of IS continued [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia); Yemen (AQAP – al-Houthi)]. AQAP fought both the government and al-Houthi forces and tried to position itself as a third alternative. The United States continued its drone strikes against AQAP and also for the first time directly intervened against al-Houthi, after the latter had allegedly targeted a US warship with missiles in October.

The opposition conflicts in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia continued on a violent level with violent demonstrations and police interventions taking place throughout the year [→ Algeria (opposition); Morocco (opposition); Tunisia (opposition)].

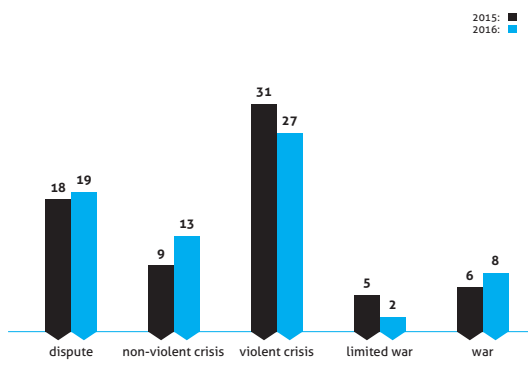
In Libya, the war between rival state institutions backed by their armed forces, loyal or loosely affiliated militias, and armed groups continued [→ Libya (opposition)]. On January 1, the Government of National Accord, backed by factions of both the internationally-recognized Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) and the rival Tripoli-based General National Congress (GNC), began to operate as part of the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Agreement signed in 2015. However, the remaining parts of GNC as well as HoR continued to operate as separate governments. Fighting concentrated in the country's East in and around the cities of Benghazi, Derna, and Ajdabiya, mainly involving HoR-backing Libyan National Army (LNA) forces and the GNC-linked Shura Councils. While the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) remained in control of Derna, LNA pushed back the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC) in Benghazi and drove the Ajdabiya Revolutionaries Shura Council (ARSC) out of Ajdabiya. With the Benghazi Defense Brigades, a new group emerged at the beginning of the year to support ARSC and BRSC.

In central Libya, the central branch of the Petroleum Facility Guard forces failed to regain the oil ports of al-Sidra, Ras Lanuf, and Zueitina, of which LNA had taken control in September.

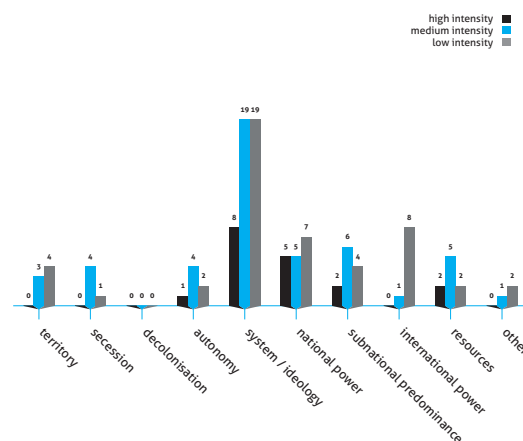
IS was pushed back in the course of the year by armed forces of the opposition conflict parties and their affiliates, as well as international forces [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Most violence occurred in and around the cities of Sabratha, Sirte, Benghazi and Derna.

The conflict among tribes in southern Libya de-escalated to a violent crisis, with occasional but heavy fighting taking place in January and November [→ Libya (inter-tribal)].

CONFLICT INTENSITIES IN MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB
IN 2016 COMPARED TO 2015



FREQUENCY OF CONFLICT ITEMS IN MIDDLE EAST
AND MAGHREB IN 2016 BY INTENSITY GROUPS



Overview: Conflicts in the Middle East and Maghreb in 2016

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	1994	•	5
Afghanistan – Pakistan*	Afghanistan vs. Pakistan	territory, other	1947	•	3
Algeria (Berbers / Kabylia)*	Berbers vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	1963	↗	3
Algeria (Malekites-Mozabites / Ghardaia)*	Malekites vs. Mozabites	subnational predominance	2013	↓	1
Algeria (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	3
Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)	AQIM, Ansar al-Sharia, Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade, al-Mourabitoun, MUJAO, Blood Signatories, Ansar al-Din, MLF vs. Niger, Morocco, Mauritania, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Tunisia	system/ideology	1998	↘	3
Bahrain (opposition)	opposition groups, government	system/ideology, national power	1975	•	3
Egypt (Bedouin activists)*	Bedouin activists vs. government	system/ideology	2004	•	1
Egypt (Islamist groups / Sinai Peninsula)	Ajnad Misr et al. vs. government	system/ideology	1992	•	4
Egypt (Muslims – Christians)*	Muslims vs. Christians	system/ideology	1952	•	3
Egypt (opposition)	MB, HM, Lewaa al-Thawra, Popular Resistance Movement, civil rights activists vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1954	•	3
Egypt – Sudan*	Egypt vs. Sudan	territory	1958	•	1
Iran (opposition)	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1993	•	3
Iran (PDKI, PAK)	PDKI, PAK vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1979	↑	3
Iran (People's Mujahideen)*	PMOI vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1965	•	2
Iran (PJAK / Kurdish areas)*	PJAK vs. government	autonomy	1979	•	3
Iran (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	•	2
Iran – UAE*	Iran vs. UAE	territory	1971	•	1
Iran – USA, EU (nuclear program)*	Iran vs. USA, EU	international power, other	2002	↘	1
Iran – USA*	Iran vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	1979	•	2
Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government)*	KRG vs. government	autonomy, resources	1971	•	1
Iraq (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	1
Iraq (Shiite militant groups)	Al-Mukhtar Army, Asaib Ahl al-Haqq, Mahdi Army, Shiite militias vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2004	•	2
Iraq (Sunni opposition)*	Sunni opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	•	1
Israel (al-Fatah – Hamas)*	al-Fatah vs. Hamas	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1994	•	1
Israel (Hamas et al. / Palestinian Territories)	Hamas et al. vs. government	secession, system/ideology, resources	1988	•	3
Israel (Hamas – Salafist groups)*	Hamas vs. Salafist groups	system/ideology	2007	↘	2
Israel (Hezbollah)	Hezbollah vs. government	territory, system/ideology	1982	•	3
Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)	PNA vs. government, Israeli settlement movements	secession, system/ideology, resources	1948	•	3
Israel – Lebanon*	Israel vs. Lebanon	territory, international power	1948	•	2

MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Jordan (Hamas)*	Hamas vs. government	system/ideology	1994	•	1
Jordan (opposition)	MBG vs. MB (Zamzam) vs. MBS vs. opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	2
Kuwait (Bedouns)*	Bedouns vs. government	other	1960	•	1
Kuwait (opposition)*	opposition vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2012	•	1
Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al. – Fatah)*	Fatah al-Islam vs. Palestinian Islamist groups vs. al-Fatah	subnational predominance	2007	•	3
Lebanon (Fatah al-Islam et al.)*	Fatah al-Islam, Palestinian Islamist groups vs. government	system/ideology	2006	↗	2
Lebanon (March 14 Alliance – March 8 Alliance)*	March 14 Alliance vs. March 8 Alliance	system/ideology, national power	2005	•	1
Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)	Jabhat al-Nusra / Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, Sunni militant groups vs. Hezbollah, government	secession, system/ideology, subnational predominance	2014	↘	3
Lebanon (Sunni – Alawite)*	Sunnis vs. Alawites	subnational predominance	1975	↘	2
Libya (Federalist / Cyrenaica)*	Congress of the People of Cyrenaica, Council of Cyrenaica in Libya, Cyrenaica Federalists, Cyrenaica Transitional Council, Political Bureau of Cyrenaica vs. government	autonomy, system/ideology	2012	•	1
Libya (inter-tribal)	Tibu vs. Awlad Suleiman tribe vs. Qaddadfa tribe vs. Tuareg vs. Zuwayya	subnational predominance, resources	2012	↘	3
Libya (opposition)	HoR, LNA vs. GNC, DMSC, ARSC, BRSC, BDB vs. PC, PFG	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	5
Mauritania (anti-slavery activists)	IRA vs. government	system/ideology	2015	•	3
Morocco (opposition)*	20 February Movement, AMDH, Justice and Spirituality, labor rights activists vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	3
Morocco (POLISARIO / Western Sahara)	POLISARIO vs. government	secession	1975	•	3
Oman (opposition)	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology	2011	•	1
Saudi Arabia (AQAP)*	AQAP vs. government	system/ideology, national power	1990	↑	3
Saudi Arabia (opposition)*	opposition movement vs. government	system/ideology	1990	•	1
Saudi Arabia (Shiites)*	Shiites vs. government	system/ideology	1979	•	3
Syria (inter-opposition violence)	Jabhat al-Nusra vs. Ahrar al-Sham vs. Islamist groups vs. NC	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2013	↑	5
Syria (Kurdish groups)*	KDPS, PYD vs. government	autonomy, subnational predominance	1962	•	3
Syria (NC, Islamist groups – KSC / Kurdish regions)*	NC, Islamist groups vs. KSC	system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources	2012	•	3
Syria (opposition)	NC, FSA, Jaish al-Fatah vs. Jaish al-Islam, government	system/ideology, national power	2011	•	5
Syria – Israel	Syria vs. Israel	territory, international power, resources	1948	•	3
Syria – Turkey	Syria vs. Turkey	territory, international power	1946	↘	2
Syria – USA*	Syria vs. USA	system/ideology, international power	2003	•	2
Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)	IS, Sunni tribes vs. Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Turkey, Saudi-Arabia, Yemen, US-led coalition, al-Houthis, al-Sham Front, FSA, GNC, Hezbollah, Jabhat al-Nusra, KRG, PFG, SDF, Shiite militants, Sunni tribesmen, Taliban	system/ideology, resources	2014	•	5
Tunisia (opposition)*	labor unions, Popular Front vs. government	system/ideology	2010	•	3
Turkey (Huda Par – PKK / Kurdish Regions)*	Kurdish Nationalists vs. PKK	system/ideology	1992	↓	1

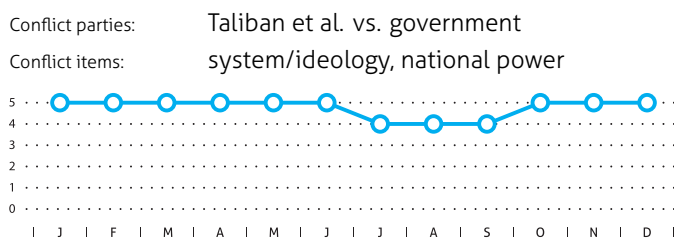
MIDDLE EAST AND MAGHREB

Name of conflict ¹	Conflict parties ²	Conflict items	Start	Change ³	Int. ⁴
Turkey (opposition)	opposition groups vs. government	system/ideology, national power	2013	↗	4
Turkey (PKK, TAK)	PKK, TAK vs. government	autonomy	1974	•	5
Turkey – Iraq*	Turkey vs. Iraq vs. Kurdistan Regional Government (Iraq)	international power	1979	•	1
Turkey – Russia*	Turkey vs. Russia	international power	2015	↘	2
Yemen (AQAP – al-Houthi)	AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. al-Houthi, forces loyal to former president Saleh	system/ideology, subnational predominance	1992	•	3
Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)	Ansar al-Sharia vs. government, Southern Mobility Movement	system/ideology	1992	↗	5
Yemen (SMM / South Yemen)	SMM vs. government	secession	2007	↘	2
Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)	al-Houthi, troops loyal to former president Saleh vs. government, Saudi Arabian led coalition, popular resistance forces, tribal forces	national power, subnational predominance	2004	•	5

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

AFGHANISTAN (TALIBAN ET AL.)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1994



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between the Taliban and various other Islamist militant groups, on the one hand, and the government supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM), and US forces, on the other, continued.

On March 15, the UNSC extended UNAMA's mandate until March 2017. On July 6, US President Barack Obama announced that 8,400 US forces would remain deployed until the end of his presidency. In the "Warsaw Summit Declaration on Afghanistan" from July 9, the states contributing to RSM agreed to sustain their presence beyond 2016. This commitment was strengthened on October 5, when RSM-contributing and several other states and organizations additionally pledged USD 15.2 billion financial aid to the Afghan government until 2020 to promote political stability, state-building, and economical development. According to UNAMA, fighting in Afghanistan led to 11,418 civilian casualties. While the civilian death-toll decreased by two percent compared to 2015, the total number of injured civilians increased by six percent, marking an overall increase by three percent. These numbers include casualties from violence related to the so-called Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Ground operations, suicide attacks, and IEDs caused the majority of civilian casualties. Furthermore, over 636,500 people were internally displaced nationwide by the end of the year. Throughout the year, according to the Afghan government at least 6,785 Afghan National Defence Security Forces (ANDSF) were killed and at least 11,777 wounded. On September 22, the government agreed on a

draft peace deal with Hezb-i-Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, which called for a ceasefire, judicial amnesty for Hekmatyar, release of prisoners, governmental recognition of the group, and support for the lifting of international sanctions. Throughout the year, the government continued to hold talks with Pakistan over the possible establishment of a peace process with the Taliban.

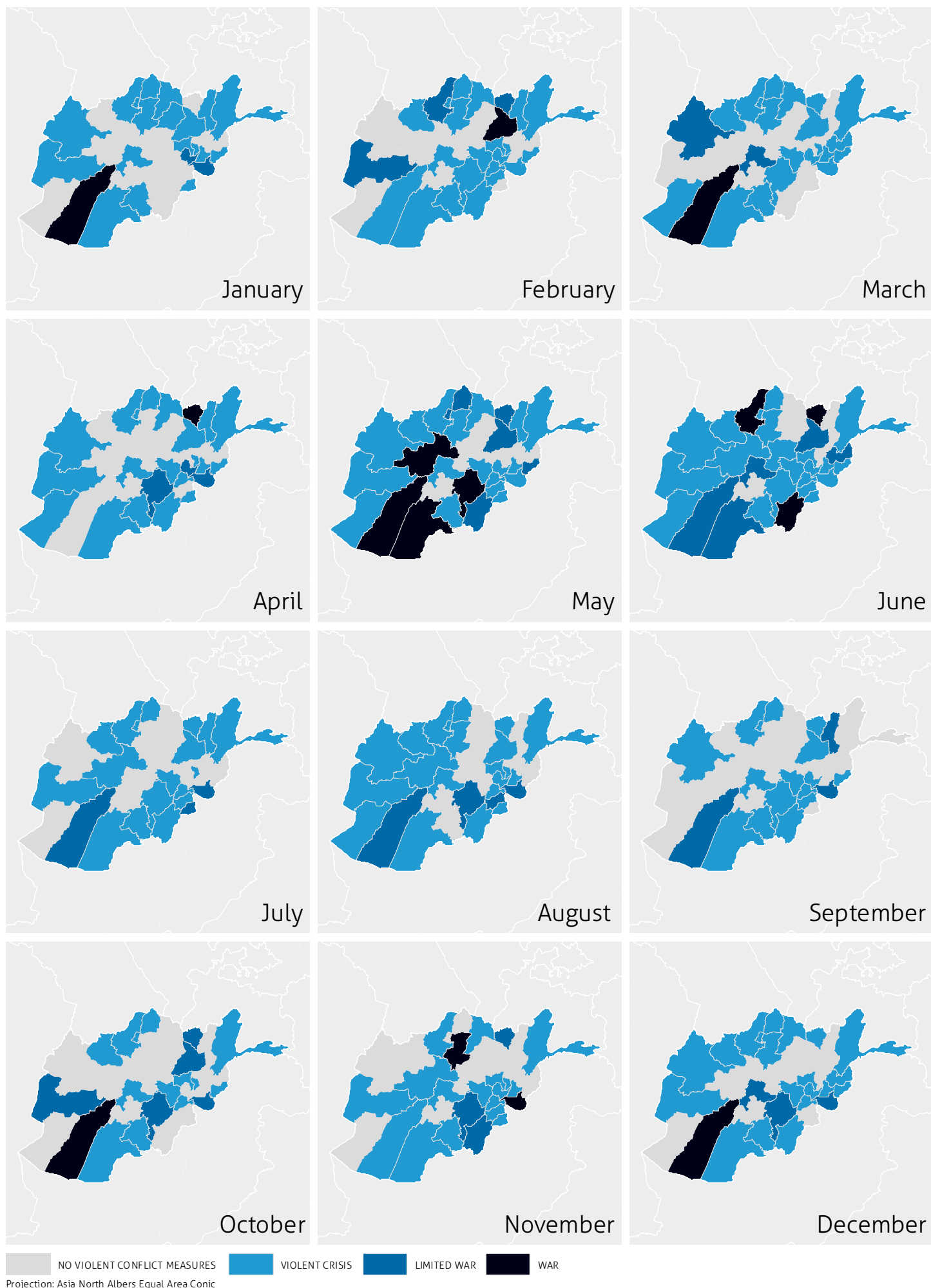
Both Afghan and international security forces continued to conduct operations targeting Islamist militant groups throughout the country. In accordance with the aims of RSM, the (ANDSF) increasingly conducted military operations on their own authority in 2016. Countering the Taliban's annual spring offensive, ANDSF launched the countrywide "Operation Shafaq" on March 22, which left at least 690 people dead in April alone. During a highway clearance operation that started on May 9 and lasted several days, military units led by Vice President Rashid Dostum killed at least 35 militants and wounded 40 in Jawzjan province. The operation was conducted on the Sar-i-Pul-Jawzjan highway between the provincial capital Shiberghan and the city of Sar-i-Pul, eponymous province. "Operation Shafaq II" followed in November and was carried out in 13 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. This was the first large-scale ANDSF offensive in the winter months.

Throughout the year, several local Taliban groups surrendered to the authorities. For instance, on June 22, at least 115 Taliban handed over their weapons following a government operation in Astana area of Sherin Tagab district, Faryab province.

Moreover, RSM and additional US forces continued to provide military support to ANDSF. On January 2, Afghan special forces, with intelligence support by RSM units, freed 59 prisoners held by the Taliban in Nahr-i-Saraj district, Helmand province. A US airstrike on March 26 killed 73 Taliban near Nad Ali district, Helmand. On June 6, a night raid in Pyarokhel village on the outskirts of Pul-i-Alam, Logar province, conducted by Afghan and US forces, left 13 Taliban dead and four wounded. On November 4, a US airstrike killed at least 33 people, injured 29, most of them civilians, and destroyed several houses near Kunduz city, eponymous province. The strike was requested by US and Afghan forces during clashes with Taliban in a residential area.

As in previous years, militants frequently attacked Afghan security forces. On January 19, Taliban attacked an Afghan

AFGHANISTAN (TALIBAN ET AL.)



National Army (ANA) convoy with RPGs near Kunjak, Ghor-mach district, Faryab. According to an ANA spokesman, ANA forces killed 14 Taliban and wounded twelve. In an attack targeting a National Police compound in the capital Kabul on February 1, a Taliban suicide bomber killed 20 policemen and wounded another 29 people, among them nine civilians. On April 19, at least two Taliban attacked a security forces' building in Kabul, killing 64 people and injuring at least 340. One attacker detonated a truck bomb, thereby clearing the entrance for a gunman. In Paktika province, Taliban temporarily took control over Omna district after ANDSF troops had retreated from their bases on September 4. Furthermore, on October 7, at least 60 Afghan Border Police surrendered to Taliban fighters in Marchaq area of Bala Murghab district, Badghis province, following a two-day siege of the area.

Taliban repeatedly succeeded in gaining control over large and strategically important areas. After days of fighting in Sangin and Marja districts of Helmand province that left at least 200 people dead and hundreds injured, the province's police chief stated on January 10 that 40 percent of southern Helmand districts were under Taliban control. Later this year, on October 10, the group attacked a police station in provincial capital Lashkargah as part of a wider offensive to extend their strongholds in Helmand, killing 14 policemen. Between October 11 and 27, more than 270 Taliban were killed in counter-operations conducted by ANDSF. According to US Forces Afghanistan, the government controlled 233 districts by the end of November, while insurgents controlled 41 districts. 133 districts remained contested.

As in 2015, Taliban tried to capture Kunduz city in April and October. After several days of fighting, the mid-April attack was repelled by ANDSF, leaving at least 400 people dead, 600 injured, and about 2,000 families internally displaced. Another major attack on Kunduz was launched on October 3. Taliban from strongholds in surrounding areas advanced to the city center from different directions, infiltrated residential areas, and conducted coordinated attacks using IEDs. One day later, Afghan forces claimed to have regained control. However, fighting in the city continued for another six days. According to UNHCR, a total of 24,000 people were internally displaced. In addition, Taliban temporarily seized control over several districts in other provinces. On March 6, ANA announced to have regained control over Dand-e-Ghori district, Baghlan province, after 50 days of fighting. Over 330 people were killed and more than 250 wounded. However, residents reported later in March that Taliban had returned to the villages. In Tirinkot, capital of Uruzgan province, 180 Taliban and eleven ANDSF were killed, while 75 Taliban and 17 ANDSF were wounded during clashes between September 8 and September 10. Taliban tried to capture the city but were pushed back by ANDSF on the ground, supported by airstrikes.

Throughout the year, Taliban repeatedly targeted governmental buildings and diplomatic personnel. For instance, two security guards were injured on January 17, when a Taliban rocket hit close to the Italian embassy's compound in Kabul. On February 27, a Taliban suicide bomber killed twelve people and wounded eight in an attack at the entrance area of the Defense Ministry in the capital. In a similar attack on September 5, a twin suicide bombing and an ensuing shootout between Taliban and security forces killed 24

people and injured 91. On June 20, a suicide bomber killed 14 Nepalese security guards and injured nine others in the center of Kabul. Both Taliban and ISKP claimed the attack. On November 11, Taliban attacked the German consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh province. Four people, including the two attackers, were killed in the ensuing fighting and about 120 persons injured. Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, stating it was in retaliation for US airstrikes on November 4. On August 1, Taliban attacked the Northgate Hotel in Kabul, which was mostly frequented by foreigners. The explosion of a lorry bomb in front of the gate was followed by an hours-long gun battle on hotel premises, which left two attackers and one police officer dead. Three days later, Taliban attacked a convoy of European and American tourists in Cheft-e-Sharif district, Herat province, injuring seven. After the Taliban had threatened to attack news outlets on 10/14/15, they carried out a suicide attack against a minibus transporting personnel of the media group Tolo News on January 20 in central Kabul. The attacker killed eight people and injured at least 24. One civilian was killed and seven injured in a mortar attack conducted by Taliban in Mehtarlam Baba, Laghman province, on June 14.

Taliban repeatedly kidnapped security forces and civilians, the latter often while traveling by bus on national highways. For instance, on March 24, three policemen were kidnapped in Noor Gram district, Nuristan province. In another instance on May 31, Taliban kidnapped approx. 230 passengers on a highway near Kunduz city, killing at least ten of them.

In areas controlled by Taliban, the group continued to try to implement its own legal system. On January 4, Taliban hanged a man in Kori, Tagab district, Badakhshan province, for murdering his uncle, after a Taliban court had sentenced him to death. On June 19, Taliban executed at least six civilians in Tagab Yari area, Herat province, for breaking Ramadan fast. On December 18, Taliban killed a woman for marital misconduct in Ab Kamari district, Badghis. Furthermore, Taliban demanded taxes from residents, for example in 17 villages in Baharak district, Badakhshan, in August.

Throughout the year, Taliban frequently attacked infrastructure. In late January and early February, Taliban destroyed electricity pylons in Baghlan, Faryab, and Kunduz, disrupting power lines from the neighboring countries Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Kabul. On June 26, Taliban attacked a security post guarding a hydropower and irrigation dam in Ahmadabad district, Paktia province. In the ensuing firefight, ten people were killed and 15 wounded. On August 22, Taliban destroyed the only transit bridge between Afghanistan and Tajikistan in Kunduz province.

Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor was killed in a US drone strike in Balochistan province, Pakistan, on May 21. Three days later, Mullah Haibatullah Akhunzada, a conservative hardliner and former deputy to Mansoor, was appointed his successor. After last year's announcement of the death of Mullah Omar, internal power struggles exacerbated in 2016. For example, on May 8, clashes between two rival Taliban groups in Nawar locality, Helmand, left at least 30 fighters dead. dgl, ssd, chf, ivo, twt

ALGERIA (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 between various opposition groups and the government continued. On January 1, tens of thousands of protesters attended the funeral of Hocine Ait Ahmed, founder of the opposition party Socialist Forces Front (FFS, in the town of Ait Yahia, Tizi Ouzou province. The protesters demanded reforms and threw stones at Prime Minister Abdelmalek Selal, forcing him to leave the site. Throughout the year, violent protests against corruption in politics and the socio-economic conditions were reported. For instance on January 16, clashes broke out in Oued El Ma municipality, Batna province. Protesters closed several roads with burning barricades, and set a municipality building on fire. The riots were triggered by the construction of a solar energy plant on private agricultural land, and lasted several days.

On March 21 and 22 in the capital Algiers, police violently dispersed a demonstration of teachers who were demanding an improvement of job security. Reportedly, the police assaulted protesters, injured at least two, and arrested several others. After the so-called Panama Papers revealed crimes committed by politicians, hundreds of workers participated in a demonstration of the Socialist Workers Party (PST and the National Autonomous Union of Public Administration Personnel (SNAPAP in the city of Bejaia, Bejaia province, on May 1, demanding an investigation.

On May 25, the court of Laghouat city, Laghouat province, sentenced labor rights lawyer Bekacem Khencha to six months in prison for publicly criticizing the imprisonment of a colleague. The same month, the director of the television channel KBC, Mehdi Benaissa, his producer Ryad Hartouf, and Mounia Nedjai from the Ministry of Culture were arrested for broadcasting a satirical television show. On July 8, more than 100 people gathered in Oran city, Oran province, protesting against state repression and calling for the immediate release of Benaissa.

Police violently dispersed a protest against pension reforms in Algiers on November 27, injuring several trade unionists.

sgc

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

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1998

Conflict parties: AQIM, MLF, Ansar al-Din, Blood Signatories, MUJAO, al-Mourabitoun, Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade, Ansar al-Sharia vs. Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia
 Conflict items: system/ideology

INTRODUCTION

The conflict over the orientation of the international system between al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its affiliates, such as the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), al-Mourabitoun as well as various other Islamist militant groups, on the one hand, and Algeria, Mali as well as other governments, on the other, de-escalated to a violent crisis.

In 1998, AQIM had emerged in Algeria under its previous name Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The group had officially joined the transnational al-Qaeda network in 2006. A fierce counter-terrorism strategy applied by the Algerian government had forced AQIM to gradually withdraw to neighboring countries in the Sahel. Although AQIM and its affiliates had still been present in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania, they had shifted their operational focus to Mali.

From the early 2000s onwards, AQIM members had reportedly married into communities in northern Mali, thereby gaining a foothold in the region and facilitating the recruitment of local personnel. In early 2012, AQIM, MUJAO, and the Malian-based Islamist group Ansar al-Din together with the Tuareg group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) had attempted to establish an independent state of Azawad comprising the three northern Malian regions of Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu. This had been followed by clashes between MNLA and the Islamist groups in May 2012 after the latter had proclaimed the region an Islamic caliphate. In 2013, international forces had intervened, strongly curtailing the Islamist groups' power in the country. Furthermore, AQIM activities had spread to neighboring Niger in 2008, when the group had started a series of abductions in the country.

The expansion of the so-called Islamic State (IS) to Algeria in 2014 and Tunisia in 2015 had posed a further threat to AQIM in its region of origin [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. In the last two years, IS had increasingly succeeded to recruit AQIM fighters and had challenged its regional hold. (chf, jas)

ALGERIA

Government forces frequently targeted Islamist fighters in the northern and central provinces where both AQIM and IS fighters were present [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. According to a military source, approx. 300 insurgents were active during May this year. About 230 of them belonged to AQIM who, like IS, was mainly present in the Kabylia region and in the provinces of Tipaza, Médéa, and Ain Defla. AQIM's capacity to conduct attacks against the Algerian People's National Army

(ANP) remained limited. Military operations against the insurgents accounted for most of the violent measures this year. ANP soldiers claimed to have killed at least 21 Islamist militants between January and March, mainly in the provinces of Ain Defla, Tizi Ouzou, and Tipaza. On March 18, AQIM members launched a rocket attack on the gas plantation in Kherichba, Tamanrasset province. No damage or casualties were reported. The group declared that the attack was a response to Algeria's military cooperation with France in northern Mali. On May 7, one ANP soldier was killed and a dozen wounded by the explosions of three roadside bombs in the surroundings of the city of Jijel, eponymous province. In the previous week, ANP had conducted several operations targeting AQIM fighters in the neighboring province of Skikda. During a ten-day long military operation in June, ANP killed 23 AQIM militants in the provinces of Médéa and Jijel. In the following months until December, the APNA killed at least 16 more insurgents in seven different provinces in the north, while no deaths were reported on ANP's side. (ala)

TUNISIA

Throughout the year, Tunisia remained under the state of emergency that had first been declared on 11/24/15 and was extended several times, most recently on October 18. Several violent clashes between Islamist militants and security forces resulted in deaths and injuries on both sides. For instance, on February 1, police conducted a counter-terrorism operation near the city of Tounine, southern Gabes region. At least two militants and one policeman were injured in the erupting firefight. A month later, security forces carried out another operation in Ain Jaffel area between the cities of Sbeitla, Kasserine Governorate, and Jelma, Sidi Bouzid Governorate, killing four suspected militants and seizing light weapons, including AK-47 rifles and ammunition. On July 22, the Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade claimed to be responsible for an attack, which resulted in the death of a soldier at Mount Samama, Kasserine. On August 29, in the same area, members of the Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade opened fire with rifles and RPGs on soldiers, after their patrol had hit a landmine. Three soldiers were killed and seven wounded. Two days later, police conducted a raid in Karma town, Kasserine, and clashed with alleged militants, which resulted in the death of two militants and one civilian. In addition, police seized arms and an explosive belt. On December 29, security forces stated that they broke up another AQIM-linked cell consisting of ten people in Sousse, eponymous governorate. (wih)

MALI

In late June, the UNSC authorized the deployment of 2,500 additional troops to MINUSMA, increasing its total strength to more than 10,000 personnel [→ CMA et al. (Azawad)]. In an interview on January 9, AQIM emir Yahya Abou Houmam stated that AQIM coordinated its operations with Macina Liberation Front (MLF) and Ansar al-Din. Moreover, he claimed that relations with al-Mourabitoun's Abou Walid Sahraoui branch were "normal," despite the latter having vowed allegiance to the so-called Islamic State (IS) in May 2015. Compared to the previous year, the death toll decreased significantly, accounting for at least 80 people. On January 21, suspected MLF fighters killed at least three Malian gendarmes near the town of Mopti, eponymous re-

gion. On February 5, AQIM militants occupied a UN police base in Timbuktu, Timbuktu region, for several hours after they had detonated a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) close to the base. Malian soldiers supported by UN helicopters recaptured the facility, whereby one Malian soldier and three jihadist fighters were killed while another one blew himself up. One week later, Ansar al-Din attacked a UN camp in Kidal, eponymous region, using rocket launchers and VBIEDs, killing at least six peace-keepers as well as three Malian soldiers and wounding another 30.

On March 1, forces of the French "Operation Barkhane" killed AQIM commander Abu al-Nur al-Andalusi 180 km north of Timbuktu. On March 28, Ansar al-Din targeted an armored vehicle of the army traveling from Idouinza to Timbuktu with a landmine explosion, killing four soldiers. On April 13, five MLF forces were killed when they attacked a Malian army post in Boni, Mopti region. Also in April, in a joint military operation, Malian soldiers and French forces killed an unspecified number of alleged Islamist fighters, arrested another five, and seized arms as well as ammunition in Gao region close to the Mauritanian border. Ansar al-Din claimed responsibility for a landmine explosion and subsequent heavy gunfire targeting a UN convoy in Aguelhok, Kidal region, on May 18, which left five peace-keepers dead and three injured. On May 31, AQIM undertook two separate attacks against UN personnel in Gao, eponymous region, killing one peace-keeper as well as an international expert and injuring two security guards.

On July 19, MLF as well as a new group called National Alliance for the Safeguarding of Peul Identity and the Restoration of Justice (ANSIPRJ) claimed responsibility for a large-scale attack against a Malian military base near Nampala, Ségou region, close to the border with Mauritania, which left 17 soldiers dead and 35 wounded. Later this year, ANSIPRJ announced to abandon the armed struggle and join the national peace process. On August 7, Ansar al-Din conducted three attacks in the regions of Kidal and Mopti, leaving two persons dead. On September 2, supposed Ansar al-Din fighters took control of Boni for several hours, shooting at administrative buildings and setting fire on the mayor's office. The army supported by MINUSMA subsequently recaptured the town, while the Islamists escaped. On October 3, Ansar al-Din attacked the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok, using mortars as well as IEDs, killing two peace-keepers, and injuring seven. A mine blast claimed by Ansar al-Din killed one French soldier traveling in a convoy 60 km from Kidal on November 5. The group also claimed responsibility for an attack in Banamba, Koulikoro region, two days later, in which 21 inmates were freed from the local prison. Another jailbreak occurred on December 5 in Niono, Ségou, in which around 100 prisoners were liberated. MLF later claimed responsibility and said it had killed two guards.

Throughout the year, several high-ranking members of Islamist groups were arrested. (bkm)

BURKINA FASO, NIGER, AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Further attacks in Western Africa were staged in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Côte d'Ivoire, while the latter two countries were confronted with Islamist violence for the first time.

In Burkina Faso, AQIM and al-Mourabitoun gunmen jointly attacked two hotels as well as a restaurant in the capital Ouagadougou on January 15. The attackers took more than 170

hostages in the Splendid hotel which was retaken by Burkina Faso and French forces the following day. In total, at least 28 people were killed and 56 injured. Also on January 16, AQIM claimed responsibility for the kidnapping of two foreigners in Baraboulé, Soum Province, close to the Malian border. Furthermore, on December 16, around 40 militants of Ansaroul Islam, a newly emerged AQIM-affiliated group, attacked a military post in Nassoumbou, Soum, killing at least twelve soldiers and wounding four, while two attackers were killed. In Niger, alleged members of AQIM attacked a market in Dolbel, Tillabéry region, close to the border with Burkina Faso on March 17, killing three policemen. Moreover, suspected AQIM militants conducted several attacks on refugee camps throughout the year. In the most fatal incident on October 6, 40 attackers raided a refugee camp in Tazalit, Tahoua region, leaving 22 security forces dead. In Côte d'Ivoire, on March 13, three AQIM militants attacked a beach resort in Grand-Bassam, Sud-Comoé Region, leaving 15 civilians and three security forces dead as well as 33 people injured. However, the government stated that the police had killed at least six attackers. (jas) chf, wih, ala, bkm, jas

BAHRAIN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: opposition groups, government
Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

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

The opposition, mainly represented by the parliamentary groups al-Wefaq National Islamic Society and the Coalition of February 14 Youth, called for a reform of the political system, for democracy, demanded measures against corruption and called for the release of arrested opposition leaders.

After Saudi Arabia had executed the Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr, a prominent religious figure, on New Year's day, protests erupted throughout Bahrain and other countries, lasting several days [→ Saudi Arabia (Shiites)]. The Bahraini police used tear gas to disperse protests in Abu Saiba, Northern Governorate. An attack on the Saudi Embassy in Iran caused the Bahraini government to end diplomatic relations with Iran on January 4.

To mark the 5th anniversary of the 2011 uprising, opposition protesters took to the streets from February 11 to 16, demanding freedom and democracy. Police used tear gas and birdshot to disperse the crowds and furthermore arrested at least 89 people.

On April 11, the government released a list of 68 organizations, marking them as terrorist groups. Among them were a number of Shiite opposition groups, such as the February 14 Coalition, which had previously organized anti-government protests. The list also named groups like the al-Ashtar Brigades and the Resistance Brigades which previously engaged in violent attacks against the government.

On May 16, the government passed an amendment to the Political Society Law from 2005. The original law regulated political and civil activities in the public sphere and had al-

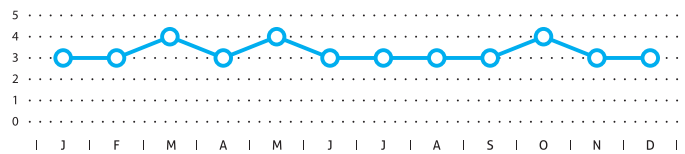
ready restricted the activities of influential societal actors in politics, such as judges, diplomats and military actors. The amendment now extended the regulations to religious figures, such as clerics and imams, and criminalized the inclusion of political speech in sermons. On June 12, the King ratified the amendment. On July 17, authorities dissolved the main Shiite opposition group al-Wefaq Islamic Society on charges of contributing to instigation of terrorism and violence.

Over the year, the government arrested several opposition leaders and Human Rights activists. In May, Sheikh Ali Salman, Secretary General of the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, was sentenced to nine years in prison. Opposition leader Ebrahim Karimi was sentenced to two years and one month, as well as to a fine, on charges of, among others, publicly insulting the king. The authorities furthermore revoked his citizenship. ivo

EGYPT (ISLAMIST GROUPS / SINAI PENINSULA)

Intensity: 4 | Change: • | Start: 1992

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



The limited war over ideology between Ajnad Misr (AM) and several other Islamist groups, on the hand, and the government, on the other, continued. In 2016, at least 474 people were killed and at least 139 injured. Among those killed were at least 60 Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) and Egyptian National Police (ENP) forces, five civilians and 409 alleged Islamist militants. The conflict was affected by the transnational war against the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The Egyptian branch of IS, Sinai Province, evolved from the Islamist militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, which had pledged allegiance to IS on 14/10/11.

Throughout the year, the parliament approved presidential orders to extend the state of emergency in North Sinai, the area most hit by violence. On January 2 and January 4, EAF killed 58 militants and destroyed several vehicles in raids in the cities of al-Arish, Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah, North Sinai Governorate. On January 20, militants shot five policemen dead and wounded three in an attack on a security checkpoint in the centre of al-Arish. Using Apache helicopters in al-Arish, Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah on February 6, EAF killed ten militants and injured 13. Two days later, ENP forces shot four members of AM dead in Cairo, Cairo Governorate, and destroyed their weapons and vehicles. In an attack on a security checkpoint in al-Badrashin, Giza Governorate, militants killed one policeman and wounded two others on February 16. In response to an attack of IS' Sinai Province on a security checkpoint on March 19, EAF killed 60 militants and injured 40 during fighter aircraft-supported raids in the cities

of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid on March 25. On April 25, EAF killed 30 militants, conducting airstrikes in Sheikh Zuweid and al-Toma village, North Sinai Governorate. Militants killed eight police officers in an attack on their minibus with automatic rifles near the city of Helwan, Cairo Governorate, on May 8. Continuing the "Operation Martyr's Right", EAF killed 85 militants between May 22 and May 25 in the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid. Additionally, EAF destroyed 73 hideouts, 57 homes, and 15 vehicles. The operation had been launched on 09/07/15 in order to weaken militant Islamist presence on the Sinai Peninsula. On June 2, EAF continued the operation, killing 22 militants in raids in Abu Zamat, al-Shallaq, Khat al-Gouz, and Qabr Emeir, North Sinai Governorate. One day later, militants attacked the Masa'ed-Sheikh Zuweid power line in North Sinai, causing a blackout in the areas of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid. On July 11, militants killed two policemen and wounded three by using a roadside bomb in al-Arish. During shootings in al-Arish on September 22 and 28, militants killed one civilian and four policemen, and wounded four. After another attack of IS members on a security checkpoint in Bir al-Abd city, North Sinai Governorate, on October 14, EAF resumed "Operation Martyr's Right" between October 16 and November 13, killing at least 68 militants in air and ground operations in North Sinai. On November 24, militants attacked a checkpoint in al-Arish by using RPGs and killed at least three policemen and wounded seven. During raids in al-Arish, Rafah, and Sheikh Zuweid on December 6, EAF killed eight militants and destroyed IEDs planted on frequently used highways. ppr

EGYPT (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1954

Conflict parties: MB, HM, Lewaa al-Thawra, Popular Resistance Movement, civil rights activists vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and civil rights activists, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued. In the course of the year, 24 people were killed in gun battles or bomb attacks, while at least 18 got injured and hundreds arrested.

Throughout the year, the government continued judicial prosecution of opposition members. On February 3, a court of appeal in the capital Cairo, Cairo Governorate, temporarily suspended the mass death sentences handed down to 149 MB supporters, who were accused of killing eleven police officers during riots in July 2013, and reopened the proceedings. In another case, a military court sentenced eight persons to death and another 18 to longtime prison terms for being affiliated with the MB on May 29. The head of the National Union of Journalists, Yehia Qallash, and two board members were sentenced to two years in prison on November 19 for harboring two wanted journalists and inciting protests against President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. On November 22, the Cassation

Court overturned the life sentence handed down to ousted president Mohamed Morsi and 26 other MB members, and a retrial was ordered.

As in previous years, violence erupted between opposition groups and security forces. When security forces raided a suspected militants' hideout in Cairo on January 21, a bomb exploded, killing at least six and injuring more than 13. The MB was held responsible for the attack. Protests on January 25, commemorating the fifth anniversary of the uprisings in January 2011, were mostly headed by the MB. Thousands of policemen dispersed numerous unapproved protests across the country, especially in Cairo. On April 15 and 25, security forces dissolved further protests against al-Sisi in Cairo, Alexandria Governorate and Aswan Governorate, using tear gas and rubber bullets, and additionally arrested 238 protesters. On May 8, four members of the Popular Resistance Movement, which had allegedly evolved from the MB in 2014, killed eight policemen, using machine guns in Helwan, Cairo Governorate. On October 3, forces subordinated to the Egyptian Interior Ministry killed Mohamed Kamal, member of the MB's top leadership council, and another MB member, while raiding an apartment in Cairo.

In the second half of the year, two groups allegedly associated with the MB, namely Hasm Movement (HM) and Lewaa al-Thawra, emerged, conducting attacks against government officials and public figures. On August 5, four HM gunmen attempted to kill former grand mufti Ali Gomaa in Cairo. However, Gomaa remained unharmed, while a security guard was injured. On October 22, Lewaa al-Thawra fighters killed Army Brigade General Adel Ragaie and his driver in Obour City, Al-Qalyubia Governorate. The group issued a statement declaring the attack to be a retaliatory act for the death of former MB senior leader Mohamed Kamal who had been killed by security forces on October 3. HM members killed six policemen and wounded another three in Giza, Al-Jizah Governorate, using a roadside bomb on December 9.

On January 10, the new parliament assembled for the first time after the parliamentary elections, which were held at the end of 2015. swe

IRAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1993

Conflict parties: opposition vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between opposition groups and the government continued. As in previous years, opposition activists as well as journalists faced arrest and imprisonment. For the fifth year in a row, leaders of the oppositional Green Movement, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hussein Moussavi, both candidates in the presidential elections of 2009, remained under house arrest in the capital Tehran without being charged.

Ahead of the national elections for Parliament and for the Assembly of Experts on February 26, the Council of Guardians (CoG) disqualified approx. 40 percent of the 12,123 applicants that had registered for running for the parliamentary election. Also, it only qualified 161 of 794 candidates run-

ning for the election of the Assembly of Experts. Throughout the year, the government targeted opposition activists, using primarily judicial means. In February, the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced the president of the Iranian Teachers Trade Association, Ismail Abdi, who had been arrested in June 2015, to six years in prison, accusing him of organizing and participating in illegal gatherings. Journalist and researcher Said Madani was exiled to Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, in southern Iran on March 17, after he had served a four-year prison sentence for "propaganda against the state" and "acting against national security".

Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe, a dual citizen of Iran and the UK, was detained at Tehran International Airport on April 3 when trying to return to the UK. Authorities accused her of operating a foreign network allegedly aiming to overthrow the Islamic Republic.

On April 20, Narges Mohammadi, a journalist and spokesperson for Iran's Centre for Human Rights Defenders, was sentenced to a total of 16 years in prison based on three different charges, including activism against death penalty. On August 23, an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) unit responsible for internet surveillance, reportedly arrested 450 individuals for their social network activities. On October 15, the Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced labor rights activists Jafar Azimzadeh and Shapour Ehsani-Rad to eleven years in prison, based on different charges, such as organizing and operating the Free Workers Union of Iran, an illegal group. Similarly, journalist Farzad Pourmoradi, working for media outlets in Kermanshah province, was arrested for "anti-government publicity" and insulting government officials, on November 2. 13 days later, the UN General Assembly's Third Committee adopted a resolution expressing serious concern over numerous human rights violations in Iran and called on Iran to allow the UN special rapporteur to visit the country. On December 4, members of the Tehran Bus Driver's Union protested for pending housing payments in front of Tehran's city hall. Police forces dispersed the protests, injuring several people.

jko, krk

IRAN (PDKI, PAK)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ↑ | Start: 1979

Conflict parties: PDKI, PAK vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict over national power and the orientation of the political system between the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) and the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, re-emerged as a violent crisis.

Throughout the year, PDKI and PAK repeatedly deployed Peshmerga fighters to Kurdish areas in western Iranian provinces.

On February 25, the PDKI announced it would resume its armed resistance against the government, claiming that the government had failed to improve the living conditions and political participation of Kurds in Iran. The statement ended a 20 year-long ceasefire. The announcement was followed by the party's boycott of parliamentary elections on February 26.

First minor clashes between the PDKI and Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) took place in late February and early March in the West Azerbaijan province. PAK's armed wing, the Kurdistan Freedom Eagles for East Kurdistan (HAKR), claimed responsibility for the attack on IRGC forces in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, on April 19, which allegedly killed two. On May 4, PDKI and IRGC clashed in Sardasht, West Azerbaijan, leaving at least eight soldiers dead and dozens wounded.

In June, tensions between the PDKI and the government peaked. On June 6, PDKI fighters killed six IRGC soldiers near Mount Shaho, Kermanshah province. Heavy clashes on June 16 and 17 near the city of Oshnavieh, West Azerbaijan, resulted in the death of six PDKI fighters and three IRGC soldiers. In a series of heavy fights along the border to Iraq in the Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan provinces between June 26 and 28, up to 35 combatants, mostly PDKI fighters, were killed and approx. 200 were wounded. IRGC deployed ground troops and shelled PDKI positions using airstrikes and artillery.

PDKI also mobilized non-violent support in the Kurdish areas. For instance, on July 13, the group initiated peaceful general strikes in the cities of Sanandaj, Piranshahr, and Nagahdeh in West Azerbaijan and Kurdistan provinces, to commemorate the former PDKI chairman Abdulrahman Ghassem-lou, who had been assassinated in Vienna, Austria, in 1989. On September 7, Iranian border guards killed at least two PDKI members while they were crossing the border from Iraq near Sardasht. eth

IRAQ (SHIITE MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: Al-Mukhtar Army, Asaib Ahl al-Haqq, Mahdi Army, Shiite militias vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The non-violent crisis over the orientation of the political system and national power between Shiite militants such as al-Mukhtar Army, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Hashid al-Shaabi, which are organized in the People Mobilization Force (PMF), and Mahdi Army, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, continued.

After the so-called Islamic State (IS) had launched its offensive in June 2014, the Iraqi government turned to Shiite militias to support the security forces [→ Iraq, Syria et al. (IS)]. While the relationship between the parties remained non-violent, fatal incidents occurred in the fight against IS. The militias were backed by Iran and had been crucial in reinforcing Iraqi troops to retake areas in Iraq. Furthermore, the distinction between state security forces and militiamen often remained unclear. Several sources reported that fighters using vehicles flagged with Shiite militia banners also sported government uniforms and patches. The legal status of the 140,000 man-strong PMF within the Iraqi Army was debated throughout the year.

In January, the government started forming three brigades of Shiite militias under the official directive of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Kirkuk Governorate. Since then, IS fre-

quently attacked Shiite areas across the country as well as military checkpoints and government buildings. According to Iraqi officials, IS destroyed two Sunni mosques on January 3, in a predominantly Shiite area in the city of Hillah, Babil Governorate, to incite sectarian tensions. On January 10, the Iraqi Army killed nine Shiite militia fighters with an aviation drone on PMF near Tikrit, Salahuddin Governorate, due to mistaken coordinates. On June 1, fighters of the PMF group Kataeb Hezbollah kidnapped 900 civilians and executed at least 50 in the village of Saqlawiyah near the city of Fallujah, al-Anbar Governorate. After the Iraqi army and Shiite militias forced IS out of Fallujah on June 26, fears of sectarian violence rose in the city. On July 31, Human Rights Watch urged the Iraqi government to exclude Shiite militias from the planned recapture of Mosul, Ninawa Governorate, from IS, due to earlier human right abuses against the Sunni population. On November 26, the Iraqi parliament approved a bill formalizing the status of Shiite military groups such as the PMF as regular members of the Iraqi Army. Subsequently, the government claimed to effectively control the groups. mas

ISRAEL (HAMAS ET AL. / PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1988

Conflict parties: Hamas et al. vs. government
Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over secession and resources between Hamas and other Islamist and Salafist militant groups operating from the Gaza Strip, on the one hand, and the Israeli government, on the other, continued. Conflict-related deaths decreased. According to OCHA, ten Gazans and two West Bank Palestinians were killed in the course of the conflict compared to at least 53 fatalities in 2015.

Throughout the year, clashes between Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and Gazan protesters near the Israeli border left five dead and 156 Gazans wounded. Both in the Access Restricted Areas (ARA) near the border fence and on the Gaza Sea, IDF regularly fired warning shots at farmers, fishermen and other Palestinians. On January 13, IDF killed one Palestinian and injured three others, who they accused of planning an attack on Israel, in a targeted attack with artillery fire near Beit Lahia, Gaza. In the first half of September, a Palestinian youth died after being hit by a tear gas canister shot by IDF during confrontations near the Gaza border fence.

Different militant groups fired rockets from Gaza towards Israeli territory on various occasions. While Hamas denied responsibility for the attacks, as in previous years IDF declared that Hamas was responsible for all attacks against Israel from Gaza. Unlike Hamas, Salafist groups claimed responsibility for rocket attacks aimed at Sderot and other locations in Israel's Southern District in the course of the year. Consequently, in 16 similar events, Israeli Air Force (IAF) reacted to rocket attacks with airstrikes against training facilities of the al-Qassam-Brigades, Hamas' military wing, and other Hamas structures. According to Salafist representatives, their rock-

ets were intended to prompt Israeli retaliation against Hamas in order to reduce Hamas' repression against Salafist groups in Gaza [->Israel (Hamas – Salafist groups)]. For instance, on March 12, four rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel's Southern District by unknown attackers. Shortly after, IAF conducted airstrikes against Hamas structures, killing two civilians and injuring another in Beit Lahia. Between May 3 and May 8, IAF carried out airstrikes in Gaza, after militant groups had fired mortar rounds at IDF units searching for tunnels near the border fence in northern Gaza. The airstrikes killed one civilian, injured four others, and damaged several vehicles and buildings. The Gaza-based Salafist militant group Ajnad Bait al-Maqdis fired rockets towards southern Israel, targeting the Israeli military base close to Nahal Oz, on May 25.

Violence between Hamas as well as Palestinians and IDF also took place outside of Gaza. The Hamas member Abdul-Hamid Abu Srouer carried out a bus bombing in Jerusalem's Talpiot neighborhood that injured 21 people on April 18. He died from his injuries two days later. On May 18, IDF detained 24 Palestinians during raids in the city of Jenin, West Bank, among them senior Hamas official and former Palestinian minister Wasfi Qabaha as well as two suspected Hamas militants. On July 27, IDF shot a Hamas fighter dead during a raid near Hebron, West Bank [->Israel (PNA / Palestinian Territories)]. On December 15, In the Tunisian city of Sfax, Sfax Governorate, Mossad allegedly assassinated the aeronautical engineer and al-Qassam member Mohammed Alzoari, who manufactured drones for the militant arm.

As in previous years, Hamas continued building new tunnel systems below the border fence, attempting to bypass Israel and Egypt's blockade of Gaza and using it for smuggling weapons. Since Israel accused Hamas of redirecting cement deliveries for tunnel-building, Israel halted private cement deliveries into the Gaza Strip between April 3 and May 24. On September 8, Israel declared that it had begun building an underground wall in order to prevent the construction of further Hamas tunnels. Israel resumed diplomatic relations with Turkey on June 26 that had been strained following the Gaza flotilla raid in 2010. Hamas officially thanked Turkey for easing the Israeli blockade of Gaza on June 27, since the agreement allowed Turkey to resume aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip where it continued to support Hamas as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. hna

ISRAEL (HEZBOLLAH)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1982

Conflict parties: Hezbollah vs. government
Conflict items: territory, system/ideology

The violent crisis over ideology and territorial sovereignty over the Shebaa farms between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah continued. Due to Hezbollah's ongoing involvement in the Syrian civil war in support of President Bashar al-Assad [->Syria (opposition)], the conflict's territorial focal point shifted to Syria.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated on February 28 that Israel would not tolerate the supply of advanced

weaponry to Hezbollah from Syria and Lebanon. During a visit to troops in the Golan Heights on April 11, Netanyahu confirmed that Israel had conducted dozens of strikes to prevent weapon transfers, without specifying single attacks.

On January 4, a Hezbollah unit named after former Hezbollah commander Samir Kuntar destroyed two armored Israeli vehicles with a roadside bomb on the Israeli-Lebanese border. The attack was in retaliation for Kuntar's killing in an airstrike in Syria on 19/12/15, for which Hezbollah accused Israel. Kuntar had been sentenced to a 542-year prison term for murder by an Israeli court in 1980, but had been released as part of a prisoner exchange between Israel and Hezbollah in 2008. In response, Israeli artillery shelled the Lebanese village Al Wazzani, Nabatieh Governorate, causing damage to buildings. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) allegedly attacked a weapons convoy heading to Hezbollah fighters on the Syrian-Lebanese border on May 10. On November 30, Israeli fighter jets supposedly targeted a weapon arsenal of the Syrian Army's Fourth Division in the Syrian city of As'saboura, Rif Dimashq Governorate, and an alleged arms convoy on the Damascus-Beirut highway transferring weapons to Hezbollah. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) spokespersons neither denied nor confirmed Israel's responsibility. On December 7, alleged Israeli surface-to-surface missiles targeted Hezbollah missile sites in Rif Dimashq Governorate close to Syria's capital Damascus, which reportedly killed several Hezbollah members. After the attack, Israel's Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said to ambassadors of the EU that Israel was trying to prevent the smuggling of advanced weapons, military equipment, or weapons of mass destruction from Syria to Hezbollah.

In some incidents over the year, for example on January 20 and August 16, IDF and Israel's internal security service Shin Bet declared that they had dissolved Hezbollah cells and arrested its members in Gaza and in the cities of Tulkarem and Qalqilya in the West Bank. The dissolved cells had allegedly planned attacks on Israel. hl, vs

ISRAEL (PNA / PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: PNA vs. government, Israeli settlement movements

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, resources

The violent crisis over the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), led by President Mahmoud Abbas of the Fatah, on the one hand, and the government as well as Israeli settlement movements, on the other, continued.

In February, France launched a peace initiative. On June 3, an international conference was held in Paris, France, without Israeli or Palestinian representatives being invited. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to a two-state solution. While Palestinian officials welcomed the initiative, the Israeli government criticized the conference, stating that only direct negotiations without preconditions could lead to a conflict resolution. The ongoing building of settlements in the

West Bank continued to impact a possible realization of a two-state-solution. On December 23, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2334, which condemned the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The resolution stated that the Israeli settlement activity "has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of a two-state solution." This led to diplomatic tensions between Israel and the US due to the latter's abstention from its vote.

According to OCHA, at least 97 Palestinians and 13 Israelis, mostly civilians, were killed in the West Bank and on Israeli territory. Throughout the year, Palestinian "lone wolves" repeatedly attacked civilians, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), and Israeli police forces, using guns, knives, and cars, in the districts of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Central District, and in the West Bank. While Israeli officials accused Abbas of inciting Palestinians to carry out these attacks, Palestinian officials accused the IDF and Israeli police of using excessive force. For instance on January 7, four Palestinians launched two separate stabbing attacks at the Gush Etzion junction and at an Israeli checkpoint near Hebron, West Bank. All attackers were shot dead by IDF. In a knife attack on January 25, two Palestinians injured two people in Beit Horon, West Bank, before they were shot dead by the Israeli police. Furthermore, on February 3, three Palestinians killed a border policewoman, using guns, knives, and explosives and wounded another at the Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem. A police officer killed all attackers shortly after. On June 8, two Palestinians killed four Israeli civilians and injured six others in an attack on a food market in Tel Aviv. Police arrested both attackers, injuring one of them. A Palestinian teenager stabbed and killed an Israeli youth in her home in the settlement of Kiryat Arba, West Bank, on June 30. Israeli security guards killed the attacker shortly after. The same day in Netanya, Central District, a Palestinian stabbed and wounded two Israelis. The attacker was killed by an armed civilian nearby.

Throughout the year, IDF conducted raids and arrests in the West Bank, often destroying homes of Palestinians charged with having conducted attacks against Israelis. For instance, on July 4, in Qalandiya and Dura, West Bank, Israeli soldiers destroyed the homes of two Palestinians convicted of a stabbing attack at the Jaffa Gate in East Jerusalem on 12/23/15. Subsequently, riots erupted and IDF injured four Palestinians. On August 16, IDF was attacked by Palestinians with rocks and explosives during raids in the Fawwar refugee camp, West Bank. IDF responded using live ammunition and tear gas, killing one Palestinian and injuring dozens. Between November 18 and 27, more than 1,700 fires broke out on Israeli territory, of which dozens were alleged arson attacks. The Israeli government detained 35 alleged Israeli Arab arsonists. So far, no evidence was found that the arsonists' actions were politically motivated.

ari

JORDAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 2 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: MBG vs. MB (Zamzam) vs. MBS vs. opposition groups vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power

The conflict between oppositions groups, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood Group (MBG), its breakaway factions MB (Zamzam) and Muslim Brotherhood Society (MBS), and the Jordanian government over national power and the orientation of the political system continued as a non-violent crisis.

The fractionalization and polarization within the opposition, especially within the movements previously associated with the MB, further increased. For instance on October 31, the "Elders Group", former leaders of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), and the political arm of the MBG, announced the foundation of the "Partnership and Rescue Party". The different groups disagreed on the status of religion as well as on the prioritization either of Palestinian or Jordanian issues. In March last year, the authorities had recognized the MBS with their more secularist and moderate orientation as the sole legal representative of the MB in Jordan.

On March 29, the governor of the capital Amman informed the MBG that the government would ban the internal elections of the group's advisory board as well as a successor to leader Hammam Saeed. On April 13, police and security forces searched and evacuated the headquarters of the MBG in Amman. Amman's governor ordered to seal the entrance with wax due to the MB's illegal status and being unlicensed by law, since the MBS had been the only MB representation recognized by Jordan authorities. More closures of MBG quarters followed the same day in Madaba, Mafraq, Keraq, and Ramtha, Irbid Governorate. Unknown attackers committed an arson attack on the MB's main office in al-Mafraq, Mafraq Governorate, on the evening of June 26, without causing major damage.

After having boycotted the last two legislative elections due to the electoral system, the IAF participated in the elections on September 20 with the "National Coalition for Reform" alliance. The elections were the first to take place under a newly introduced electoral system with proportional elements aimed at a higher degree of representation, and were internationally regarded as fair and transparent. While the alliance won 16 and the MB (Zamzam) won three seats, the MBS did not obtain a seat. On the night after preliminary electoral results had been published, protests erupted throughout several regions of the country. In the southern city of Ma'an, Ma'an Governorate, residents blocked roads, burned tires and threw bricks. In Madaba, Madaba Governorate, special forces used tear gas to disperse crowds burning tires in front of the local electoral commission headquarters. anm

LEBANON (SUNNI MILITANT GROUPS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: Jabhat al-Nusra / Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, Sunni militant groups vs. Hezbollah, government

Conflict items: secession, system/ideology, subnational predominance

The conflict over ideology and subnational predominance between Sunni militant groups, on the one hand, and the government and Shiite militia Hezbollah, on the other, decreased to a violent crisis.

On July 28, Abu Muhammad al-Julani, leader of the main militant group Jabhat al-Nusra, declared the group's split from al-Qaeda and renamed it Jabhat Fatah al-Sham.

As in 2015, the conflict was affected by the Syrian civil war and the transnational war against the so-called Islamic State [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et. al (IS)]. The clashes in Lebanon were mainly situated in and around the cities Aarsal, Baalbek, and Ras Baalbek, Beqaa Governorate, and in Tripoli and Akkar districts, North Governorate. Furthermore, violence took place in the border region to Syria and in Syria's Rif Dimashq Governorate.

Throughout the year, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) targeted suspected members of Sunni militant groups, as Jabhat al-Nusra/Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, by conducting raids and arrests as well as enhancing border security measures. On March 23, LAF killed a soldier who had earlier defected to Jabhat al-Nusra in Dankeh village, Akkar District, in a shootout. On June 5, LAF raided houses in the Wadi Humayid Refugee Camp in Aarsal, arresting dozens of alleged Syrian Jabhat al-Nusra militants. Eleven days later, LAF attacked Jabhat al-Nusra positions near the Jaroud-Rankous border crossing in the Aarsal region, killing several militants. On August 2, LAF targeted Fatah al-Sham positions in the town of Dahr al-Safa, Beqaa Governorate. During the attack, LAF used Multiple Rocket Launcher Systems (MRLS), killed at least six militants and destroyed two armored vehicles. Three days later, LAF conducted raids against suspected militant hideouts inside Syrian refugee camps in and around al-Qaa, Beqaa Governorate. On December 5, LAF launched raids in the Miniyeh-Danniyeh and Akkar Districts, North Governorate, searching for alleged militants who had killed one soldier and wounded another in an attack on an army post in the city of Bqaa Sifrin the day before.

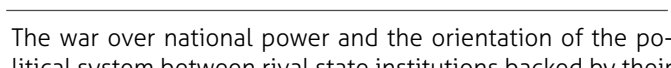
In the course of the year, Hezbollah and Jabhat al-Nusra/Fatah al-Sham repeatedly clashed in Beqaa Governorate and the neighboring Rif Dimashq Governorate in Syria. On February 2, Hezbollah killed at least four Jabhat al-Nusra members in Aarsal. On April 25, Hezbollah fighters attacked a Jabhat al-Nusra arms convoy, killing ten militants and destroying two of their armored vehicles near the Syrian border village Jarajir, Rif Dimashq Governorate. The next day, Jabhat al-Nusra militants failed to take over the Hezbollah-controlled Jarajir heights. Dozens of militants were killed and wounded in the attack. On May 25, Hezbollah launched an anti-tank missile on a Jabhat al-Nusra tank in the Qalamoun area, Beqaa Gov-

Conflict items: subnational predominance, re-sources

Despite the signing of a peace agreement in Doha, Qatar, on 2015/11/23, clashes erupted on January 10 between Tuareg and Tibu in the town Awbari, Wadi al-Hayat district. In the following five days, both sides used heavy weaponry, leaving at least 14 dead and about 20 wounded in repeated confrontations. While Tuareg said they were attacked by Tibus, sources affiliated with the latter stated Tibus responded to Tuareg sniper fire on civilians. The outbreak of violence coincided with the meeting of elders and notables from both tribes in the neighboring town Sebha concerning the implementation of the Doha agreement.

The incident sparked almost a week of violent clashes in which tribal forces used tanks, heavy mortars, RPGs, and heavy machine guns, leaving at least 21 people dead and up to 100 wounded, and causing damage in residential areas. It also led to shops, government institutions, as well as banks being closed.

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



Following the signing of the UN-facilitated Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) 2015/12/17 by members of the internationally recognized Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) and the rival Tripoli-based General National Congress (GNC), the Presidency Council (PC) was created as part of an envisaged Government of National Accord (GNA). The LPA provided for the further existence of the HoR as a legislative authority and the creation of a State Council comprised of GNC members as an advisory second chamber. PC held its first meeting on January 1, in Tunis, due to the security situation in the capital Tripoli. Despite PC's formation, GNC, and HoR's governments continued to be in place.

HoR rejected the proposed GNA ministers on January 25 as well as on August 22 and had not adopted the LPA by the end of this year, after having failed to reach the quorum several times. Concerned about the future role of Khalifa Haftar, Commander-in-Chief of its Libyan National Army (LNA), the eastern parliament opposed the transfer of authority over the military to the PC.

and April 19 respectively.

Few skirmishes erupted over the year in the west of Libya between forces aligned to one of the governments. For example, on January 1, LNA-affiliated tribal forces clashed with local then-GNC aligned fighters near Sabratah, Nuqat al-Khams. On May 22, confrontations allegedly involving local pro- and anti-PC militias, left one dead and two injured in Sorman, al-Zawiya district.

Starting on December 1, in two days of encounters in Tripoli, featuring the use of heavy weapons, between several militias loosely affiliated with PC and others linked to the camp of Ghowell and al-Sadiq Abd-Alrahman Ali al-Ghariani, at least seven people were killed. Al-Ghariani, a senior cleric who had officially been dismissed by HoR as Grand Mufti in November 2014, called for fighting Haftar and his LNA.

Armed Islamist groups and coalitions fiercely opposed to Haftar and ideologically-linked to al-Ghariani, clashed with LNA and affiliated forces especially in the eastern cities of Derna, Ajdabiya, and Benghazi in the course of the year.

The Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) in control of Derna, eponymous district, engaged in fighting Haftar's LNA. The latter laid siege to the city, and its recurrent air raids killed a number of DMSC fighters and civilians. For instance, airstrikes between June 9 and 15 left seven civilians dead. Ground forces occasionally engaged in skirmishes, especially after LNA announced "Operation Volcano." For example, between June 4 and 5, DMSC killed six LNA fighters, who employed fighter jets and helicopters. Between August 4 and 5, DMSC killed at least twelve pro-HoR personnel and wounded 19. Clashes ensued after DMSC had attacked a 20-vehicle-strong LNA convoy around 20 km outside of Derna. LNA stated it had sent reinforcement troops in 40 vehicles and targeted DMSC positions with airstrikes.

In January and February, pro-Haftar forces confronted the Ajdabiya Revolutionaries Shura Council (ARSC) in and around Ajdabiya, al-Wahat district. LNA repeatedly conducted air raids on ARSC positions and aligned ground forces attacked the group. For instance, clashes on January 12 left one person of the LNA-affiliated 21st Border Guard Battalion and at least two ARSC fighters dead. Violence erupted on February 18 between ARSC on the one hand and Tawhid al-Salafiya Battalion as well as neighborhood defense groups supported by LNA, on the other, leaving several fighters dead. The latter had driven out ARSC of its two strongholds al-Qalouz Street and the industrial area before February 21, gaining full control of the city.

In Benghazi, the offensive by LNA and affiliated forces against the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC) continued throughout the year. Warplanes and military helicopters frequently hit BRSC controlled neighborhoods while pro-HoR ground forces gradually advanced, employing heavy artillery and leaving BRSC forces encircled in few areas at the end of the year. On January 4, a warplane crashed on Benghazi. While both BRSC and IS claimed to have shot it down, LNA attributed the incident to a technical failure. Similar claims were raised by LNA and BRSC when planes crashed on February 12, and July 6. On February 20, LNA launched "Operation Martyr's Blood" and attacked Islamist-controlled neighborhoods with T-55 tanks and vehicles mounted with heavy machine guns and mortar launchers. Three days later, according to LNA, their forces killed 15 fighters and captured the neigh-

borhoods of Buatni and al-Laithi, major BRSC strongholds as well as Marisa port. The offensive left at least 20 LNA personnel dead and 45 wounded. In early April, LNA aircraft targeted at least six vessels suspected of carrying weapons and ammunition supplies for BRSC from Misrata to Benghazi. On May 26, LNA declared to have killed 25 Islamist fighters in the course of "Operation Blue Whale" in Sabri and Souq al-Hout areas. While LNA claimed to have killed an IS figure, BRSC stated that the latter was their local leader. More than 27 pro-HoR forces were killed and more than 40 wounded in two days of fighting following the start of LNA's "Operation Badr al-Kubri" on June 22. BRSC admitted the death of ten fighters as a result of airstrikes and clashes. On August 2, BRSC claimed responsibility for a suicide car bomb attack on Gwarsha Gate, that killed at least 22 members of the LNA Special Forces and left another 20 wounded. An LNA airstrike on BRSC in Ganfouda neighborhood killed a group of BRSC commanders on October 6. Fighting again intensified in November. While LNA warplanes shelled Ganfouda, BRSC launched Grad rockets at Benina airport. Pro-HoR forces started a new offensive on November 14, attacking BRSC positions in Ganfouda and Gwarsha neighborhoods with aircraft, heavy artillery, and tanks. LNA claimed to have seized Gwarsha, killing at least seven militants. Until November 17, more than 40 pro-Haftar forces were killed in clashes and by the explosion of mines as well as booby traps. Further combat action concentrated on the areas of Bosneeb and Ganfouda. LNA attacked the latter area with more than 20 tanks on November 30 while vessels struck the area from the sea. Pro-HoR forces also claimed to have destroyed the only BRSC tank with an RPG that day. On December 17, LNA stated to have killed dozens of militants and gained control over Ganfouda. With both BRSC and IS present in Benghazi, it often remained unclear whether IS or BRSC or both engaged in combat action [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

An armed group under the command of Ziyad Belaam clashed with LNA-aligned forces west of Zilla al-Jufra district on May 3. In support of Belaam's militia, aircraft from Misrata targeted LNA fighters. In the beginning of June, Belaam – previously commanding BRSC's Omar al-Mukhtar Brigade – emerged as the leader of the newly formed Benghazi Defense Brigades (BDB) to support BRSC and ARSC. NSG said the BDB was part of its Libyan Army and BDB stated to be operating under the authority of al-Ghariani. On June 18, BDB clashed with pro-HoR forces on the outskirts of Ajdabiya. The fighting that continued the following day left several people dead and injured. Reportedly, after an initial BDB advance, pro-HoR troops backed by warplanes repelled the assault and forced BDB to retreat. On July 10, LNA and BDB clashed between Ajdabiya and Benghazi. A week later, BDB claimed to have shot down an army helicopter, using an SA-7 shoulder-fired missile and heavy machine guns 70 km south of Benghazi, in the eponymous district. At least six people were killed in the crash, among them three French intelligence personnel. Designated GNA Prime Minister Fayez Mustafa al-Serraj claimed that France had not informed the government about the presence of French personnel. On July 19 and 20, aerial bombardment on a BDB position in the same area caused the death of at least 13. Whereas BDB claimed it had been targeted by foreign aircraft, France denied any involvement. LNA forced BDB to retreat, saying they found the bodies of

eight executed soldiers and of more than a dozen civilians. On December 7, BDB started an offensive in the Sirte basin and temporarily took control over the cities Ben Jawad and Nawfaliya. They were pushed back by LNA forces with air support. Whereas BDB killed at least four LNA personnel and wounded eight, LNA said it killed eight BDB members. The central branch of the Petroleum Facility Guard forces (PFG), led by Ibrahim Jadhnan, which had not been permanently aligned with any of the major conflict parties, declared support for the UN-backed PC this year. LNA seized the oil ports of al-Sidra, Ras Lanuf, and Zueitina in September from Jadhnan, with whom the UN-backed PC had previously reached an agreement to reopen the ports. A failed attempt by the group to recapture its former strongholds on September 12 resulted in the death of five PFG-Central fighters and four LNA forces. Earlier, on June 20, a LNA aircraft had bombed a PFG training camp in Wahat district. While LNA accused Jadhnan's forces of supporting BDB, PFG's central forces claimed to be fighting BDB on behalf of the PC. [sul](#)

MAURITANIA (ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVISTS)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 2015

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

The violent crisis between anti-slavery activists, mainly the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA), on the one hand, and the government, on the other, over the abolition of modern slavery and resulting issues of land rights and civil rights, continued.

On March 14, Mauritania became the second African country to ratify the 2014 UN Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention which prescribed measures to effectively prosecute slavery and compensate victims. However, activists continued to criticize the insufficient implementation of anti-slavery laws. Throughout the year, IRA-associated campaigners protested against the ongoing disenfranchisement of former slaves and the government's crackdown on abolitionist activism.

As in 2015, the police repeatedly arrested anti-slavery activists. Both sides accused each other of using violence. For instance on January 11, seven IRA activists were detained while rallying for the release of IRA-founder Biram Dah Abeid in the capital Nouakchott. Biram Dah Abeid was convicted in January 2015 for "inciting trouble" and "belonging to an unrecognized organization." He was released from prison on May 18, after the Supreme Court had decided on the reduction of his sentence.

On May 24, a court in Nema, Hodh Ech Chargui Region, sentenced two slave owners to two years in prison, which activists considered as a major success in the prosecution of slavery.

Following protests against forced relocation, clashes erupted in an informal settlement called Gazra Bouamatou on the outskirts of Nouakchott on June 29, leaving ten police officers wounded. Subsequently, police reportedly arrested 13 anti-slavery activists on charges of attacking security forces. On October 25, police allegedly used tear gas and batons against

IRA-activists holding a sit-in protest outside the Palace of Justice in Nouakchott in support of the 13 prisoners. [chf](#)

MOROCCO (POLISARIO / WESTERN SAHARA)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1975

Conflict parties: POLISARIO vs. government
Conflict items: secession

The violent crisis over the secession of Western Sahara between the Popular Front of the Liberation of Saguia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO), representing the Sahrawi people who are the inhabitants of Western Sahara, and the government continued.

Throughout the year, protesters in several cities of Western Sahara repeatedly denounced the deprivation of the Sahrawi people's civil rights by the government. For instance, on January 20, Sahrawis protested in the city Boujdour, Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra region, demanding the right to work. Security forces reportedly injured several protesters and arrested four Sahrawis. On December 10, the police dispersed protests commemorating the International Day of Human Rights in El Aaiun, Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra region, allegedly injuring many.

After POLISARIO leader Mohmaed Abdelaziz, died from illness on May 31, Brahim Gali was sworn in as the new Secretary General of POLISARIO on June 7.

According to a statement made by authorities on August 15, ten security personnel were sent to Guerguerat, Oued ed Dahab-Lagouira region in Western Sahara to prevent alleged drug trafficking at the Moroccan-Mauritanian border. In response, POLISARIO stationed armed troops in the same area, accusing the government of violating the ceasefire enacted in 1991.

On the international level, the conflict intensified. The government suspended contacts with all European institutions on February 25 in reaction to the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) decision that Western Sahara could opt out of a trade agreement with the EU which the Moroccan government negotiated for Western Sahara. However, on December 21, the ECJ ruled that the agreement did not include the Western Sahara and could thus be implemented. The decision was welcomed by POLISARIO and the government.

On a visit to the Western Sahara at the beginning of March, UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon described the Moroccan takeover of Western Sahara from Spain in 1975 as an occupation. Consequently, the government expelled 84 UN civilian staff on March 20. The next day, the UN closed its military liaison office in Western Sahara. Nonetheless, on April 29, the UNSC extended the MINURSO mission for another year. On June 17, the government allowed around 25 civilian staff members to return to the UN peacekeeping mission. In August, the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, resumed his diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. [sge](#)

OMAN (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 1 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: opposition movement vs. government

Conflict items: system/ideology

The dispute between opposition groups and the government over the orientation of the political system continued. In 2016, at least 15 oppositional activists were arrested and held in custody for timespans between two days and several months.

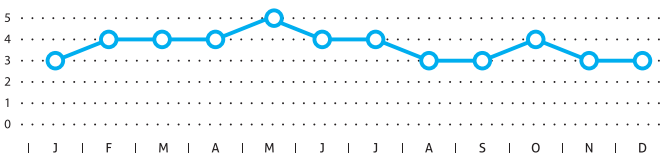
Throughout the year, the government continued to take legal action and imprison opposition activists and critics, among them many who had participated in the 2011 "Arab Spring" protests. Frequently, prisoners were denied legal representation as well as seeing their families. On February 8, the Primary Court of Soha sentenced former diplomat and activist Hassan al-Basham to three years in prison for blasphemy and insulting Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said online. The independent newspaper "Azam" was closed by the authorities on August 9 for publishing an article on corruption allegations against the judiciary. Subsequently, on September 26, a court found its editor Ibrahim al-Maamarias as well as his deputy guilty of the charges of undermining the prestige of the state, disturbing public order and misusing the internet. They were sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of approx. USD 8,000 each. In another incident, a third employee, Zaher al-Abri, was sentenced to one year in prison and a fine of USD 2,500. Two independent newspapers stopped publishing, both citing "current circumstances" as a reason. On November 8, intellectual and human rights activist Abdullah Habib was sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of approx. USD 5,000 for spreading information that would prejudice the state public order. son

SYRIA (INTER-OPPOSITION VIOLENCE)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↑ | Start: 2013

Conflict parties: Jabhat al-Nusra vs. Ahrar al-Sham vs. Islamist groups vs. NC

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational predominance, resources



The conflict over resources, subnational predominance, and the orientation of the political system between the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NC) and their military wing Free Syrian Army (FSA), various moderate and Islamist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham escalated to a war. While the groups fought jointly

against the Syrian government or the so-called Islamic State (IS) on several occasions, tensions between Islamist and moderate groups as well as between different Islamist militias persisted [→ Syria (opposition); Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. For instance, in January several opposition leaders in Dar'a Governorate were assassinated and kidnapped. The FSA-affiliated Jaish al-Yarmouk and Jaish Ahrar al-Ashair accused the Islamist group Harakat al-Muthanna al-Islamiya, which rejected the accusations.

During February, several militias joined larger rebel groups in the capital Damascus. In the beginning of February, twelve leaders of Jund al-Aqsa defected to al-Qaida affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra after the former had called on the group to merge. On February 18, the militia Jaish al-Islam in East Ghouta called on opposition fighters to join it. Four days later, Islamist groups Ansar al-Sharia'a and al-Muntasir Billa joined Jabhat al-Nusra. Violent clashes erupted between Ajnad al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam when the former joined FSA-affiliated Failaq al-Rahman.

Jabhat al-Nusra expanded its regional domination in different governorates during January. For instance, on January 10, Jabhat al-Nusra raided a civil radio station and detained several activists in Kafranabel, Idlib Governorate. On March 13, Jabhat al-Nusra fighters looted several storages of militia Division 13 in Maarat al-Numan, Idlib, and surrounding villages. During the raid and the subsequent clashes eleven fighters were killed and 20 injured. Several Division 13 fighters were detained by Jabhat al-Nusra. Division 13 abandoned its positions and left the town; its leadership fled to Turkey. In the aftermath, local residents demonstrated against Jabhat al-Nusra, burnt down their headquarter, and freed several detainees. The following month, local residents repeatedly protested for the release of the remaining detainees until Jabhat al-Nusra fulfilled this demand on April 11 and May 27. From January to May, Jabhat al-Nusra clashed repeatedly with Ahrar al-Sham, the second-largest rebel group, in Idlib. On March 17, violence erupted between Ahrar al-Sham and Jabhat al-Nusra when the former violently interrupted a mourning ceremony of Jabhat al-Nusra in Sarmin, Idlib. In the aftermath, a Jabhat al-Nusra commander was assassinated at a checkpoint of Ahrar al-Sham near to Salqin city, Idlib.

In the East Ghouta region, Damascus Governorate, the clashes between Jaish al-Islam, a union of Islamist groups, and the FSA-affiliated Failaq al-Rahman Legion led to the death of at least 500 people and major territorial gains for the government between April and May. On April 18, Jaish al-Islam fighters raided the military headquarters of Failaq al-Rahman. On April 19, Failaq al-Rahman fighters raided Jaish al-Islam-affiliated homes and headquarters in the towns of Misraba, Zamalka, and Kafr Batna, Damascus, leaving 13 dead. The clashes continued until May 24, when a ceasefire was negotiated with the support of the opposition-affiliated High Negotiations Committee. On June 14, Failaq al-Rahman fighters broke the ceasefire by attacking and capturing important strategic positions of Jaish al-Islam.

During July, Jabhat al-Nusra succeeded to increase its influence in Idlib by attacking different opposition groups. For instance, on July 3, the group raided several Jaish al-Tahir positions in Idlib and detained 40 persons, among them the group's leader. In the aftermath, several Jabhat al-Nusra fighter were killed, however, no group claimed responsibility

for the assassinations. On July 18, Jabhat al-Nusra detained several fighters of Division 13, among them the group's commander in Ma'rat al-Numan, Idlib. On July 28, Jabhat al-Nusra announced its split from al-Qaida and the reformation under the name Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, while keeping their ideology and the goal to unify all jihadist groups in Syria. Groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Syria, Ahrar al-Sham, and the High Negotiation Committee, which had demanded the step before, welcomed this decision, while e.g. Jaish al-Islam remained sceptical. On September 4, clashes erupted between Jund al-Aqsa and Ahrar al-Sham in the city of Ariha, Idlib, after the first attempt to assassinate the latter's leader. Later on, a suicide bomber attacked the Ahrar al-Sham headquarter, killing three and injuring several militants.

On October 7, Ahrar al-Sham accused Jund al-Aqsa of kidnapping one of its members and shooting his relatives, demanding his release. In the next two days, clashes erupted between both groups in Hama Governorate and Idlib until a ceasefire was negotiated. Consequently, Jund al-Aqsa released 57 Ahrar al-Sham fighters and joined Jabhat Fatah al-Sham.

On October 21, multiple simultaneous demonstrations of 5,000 participants took place all over East Ghouta, demanding the merger of Jaish al-Islam and Failaq al-Rahman.

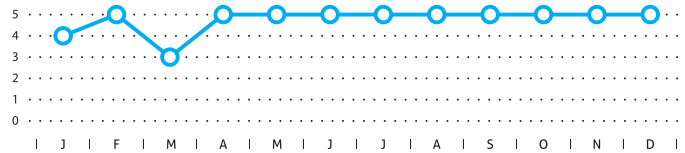
From November 13 until 16, the FSA-affiliated Levant Front clashed with Ahrar al-Sham near Azaz, Aleppo Governorate. Ahrar al-Sham seized several headquarters and checkpoints of the Levant Front. The confrontations ended when both groups published a joint statement, apologizing to the population. On December 4, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham fighters raided the headquarters of Jaish al-Islam and Failaq al-Sham in the city of Aleppo, in the eponymous governorate, arresting several fighters and seizing weapons and ammunition. On December 25, allegedly, Jund al-Aqsa fighters shot dead two commanders of the rebel coalition Free Idlib Army in Idlib. One day later, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham detained 16 Free Idlib Army fighters throughout Idlib after they returned from a joint military operation with the Turkish Army (TAF) in Aleppo Governorate. Earlier, the group had issued a fatwa prohibiting any cooperation with the TAF. At the end of December, several major militias published a joint statement, declaring the aim to establish a unified military bloc. The initiative affected about 18,000 fighters and included rival groups such as Failaq al-Sham and Jaish al-Islam. ^{mhb}

SYRIA (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2011

Conflict parties: NC, FSA, Jaish al-Fatah vs. Jaish al-Islam, government

Conflict items: system/ideology, national power



The war over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups and the government of President Bashar al-Assad continued for the sixth consecutive year.

The opposition mainly consisted of the National Coalition for the Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NC), its military wing Free Syrian Army (FSA), and Islamist umbrella groups, such as the Jaish al-Fatah and Jaish al-Islam. Another opposition group, Jabhat al-Nusra, renamed itself Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and officially split from al-Qaeda, following the announcement of its emir Abu Mohammed al-Jolani on July 28.

The government was supported on the ground by Iran and various Shiite militias from Syria and neighbouring countries, most prominently the Lebanon-based Hezbollah. Russia has been supporting the government with airstrikes as well as ground forces since September 2015. Furthermore, the government, its allies, and also opposition groups fought against the so-called Islamic State (IS) [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)].

In April, 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, at least 4.8 million sought refuge in neighbouring countries and 6.3 million were internally displaced since 2011. Based on UNSC Resolution 2254, passed in December 2015, a nationwide ceasefire came into effect on February 27, excluding Jabhat al-Nusra and IS. By April, the ceasefire had completely collapsed. On December 23, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, announced that al-Assad, Iran, and Turkey had agreed on peace talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana. On December 29, Turkey and Russia declared a countrywide ceasefire for Syria except for "terrorist organizations."

In Aleppo governorate, the government started an offensive against opposition groups in northern Aleppo in February. For instance, between February 1 and 3, government forces, backed by Iranian ground forces and Russian aerial support, lifted a three-year opposition siege of the Shiite towns of Nubul and Zahraa in Aleppo, expelling Jabhat al-Nusra from the area. Reportedly, hundreds of airstrikes were carried out and about 170 people, including at least 18 civilians, were killed. Moreover, beginning in April, government forces and Jaish al-Fatah, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, repeatedly clashed in southern Aleppo. Throughout the year, heavy clashes occurred between opposition groups controlling the eastern neighborhoods and government forces controlling the

western neighborhoods of Aleppo city. On July 7, government forces laid siege to eastern Aleppo city and blocked the Castello road, the only supply line to opposition-held parts of the city. On July 9 and 10, opposition fighters attacked government forces in an attempt to reopen the road, whereby 32 fighters were killed. Between August 1 and 2, opposition groups advanced into government-held parts of the city. Subsequently, the government announced a large counter-attack to recapture the positions. By August 8, the government had reinforced its troops with 8,000 fighters, while militants received additional fighters from the Aleppo region and Idlib governorate. Heavy clashes as well as Russian and Syrian airstrikes reportedly left at least 500 people dead by the end of the month. Between September 12 and 18, a US-Russian brokered truce was in effect. Following the government's announcement to retake the whole city on September 22, ensuing heavy airstrikes on the city and clashes reportedly led to 400 persons killed and 1,700 injured by the end of the month. De Mistura stated that Russian bombardment of civilian areas with bunker busting bombs could amount to war crimes. Starting on October 4, government and allied forces advanced into opposition-held areas of the city. Towards the end of the month, opposition forces launched a counter-offensive, building a 15 km front line with 1,500 fighters and using car bombs, rockets, and mortar shells. Reportedly, at least 40 civilians, 55 pro-government fighters, and 64 opposition fighters were killed between October 29 and 31. By November 19, all hospitals in the eastern city were destroyed. Between mid-November and November 26, another 200 civilians and 134 opposition fighters were killed, while the opposition killed 19 persons by attacking government-held parts of the city. At the end of November, 20,000 people fled eastern Aleppo city, while 50 were killed during the attempt. Government forces successively advanced until capturing the whole city on December 22.

In Idlib, government and Russian warplanes, attacked positions of Jaish al-Fatah, throughout the year. For instance, between January 9 and 10, air raids on the opposition held town of Maarat al-Numan and surrounding areas left at least 96 killed and dozens injured. An attack on the Kamouna refugee camp killed 28 and injured 50 on May 5. Russian and Syrian officials denied being involved in the attack, accusing Jabhat al-Nusra of having used multiple rocket launchers against the camp. On May 12, an airstrike killed 16 Jabhat al-Nusra leaders during a meeting at the Abu al-Duhur airbase. Towards the end of the month, government and Russian warplanes heavily bombarded Idlib city, killing 23 persons and forcing thousands to flee. Subsequently, Jaish al-Fatah announced to withdraw their military headquarters from the city. On June 11, Iranian officials made a ceasefire deal with Jaish al-Fatah for the opposition-controlled towns of Zabadani and Madaya, Rif Dimashq governorate, as well as the pro-government towns of Fu'ah and Kefraya. On December 19, during the siege of Aleppo, Russian, Turkish, and Iranian officials agreed on evacuating about 4,000 people with buses from Fu'ah and Kefraya in exchange with the evacuation of 35,000 people, among them 4,000 fighters, from eastern Aleppo to Idlib. Moreover, 1,500 persons were evacuated from Zabadani and Madaya.

In the coastal areas, government forces mainly clashed with Jaish al-Fatah in Latakia governorate. Throughout the

year, government forces with Russian air support repeatedly targeted opposition positions in the mountains Jabhal al-Turkmen and Jabhal al-Akrad. In the first half of the year they advanced in areas where militants had been in control for at least two years.

For instance, government forces captured the town of Salma from Jabhat al-Nusra and other groups after three months of heavy clashes. In the following days, the government encircled the town and killed dozens of militants in airstrikes. Backed by intensive Russian airstrikes, the government had recaptured another 35 villages by the beginning of February and regained control over the M4 Highway connecting the Jabhal al-Turkmen and the opposition-held town of Jisr al-Shugur in Idlib. On February 16, government forces started an offensive to retake the town of Kinsabba, Latakia, seizing it two days later. Jaish al-Fatah recaptured the town between June 27 and July 1, despite heavy airstrikes, forcing government forces to withdraw. By mid-August, pro-government forces had expelled them again, while clashes in the area continued. Moreover, fighting and airstrikes in Jabhal al-Turkmen forced the remaining 800 villagers in the area to flee to the Turkish border in April.

In Rif Dimashq, government forces supported by Russian warplanes repeatedly clashed with opposition fighters, mostly Jaish al-Islam, and advanced in Eastern as well as Western Ghouta governorate.

Increased fighting between opposition groups in Eastern Ghouta enabled the government to recapture large swaths of territory from April onwards [→Syria (inter-opposition violence)].

Since August, at least seven opposition-controlled towns surrendered after heavy clashes and government sieges.

Thousands of residents and fighters were evacuated and bussed mostly to Idlib in the aftermath. On August 25 in the town of Daraya, after a four-year long government siege and weeks of continuous bombardments as well as clashes, residents and opposition fighters agreed to surrender. As a consequence, most of the fighters were transferred to Idlib governorate, while civilians were transferred to government-held areas in Damascus city.

In Damascus governorate, government forces repeatedly conducted airstrikes and clashed with opposition forces in areas such as the village of al-Nashabiyah and the Damascus neighbourhood of Jobar. For instance, in the first week of April, government forces heavily attacked Jobar, after groups such as Jaysh al-Islam had reportedly violated a ceasefire and attacked government-held areas.

In Homs governorate, clashes mainly occurred between government forces and IS. At the end of August, government officials and opposition forces in the opposition-held neighbourhood al-Waer of Homs city signed a deal to end the government siege as well as attacks on the area, while militants agreed to withdraw in return.

In Hama governorate, government forces and opposition groups such as Ahrar al-Sham, al-Nusra and FSA clashed repeatedly. Between May 2 and 6, hundreds of prisoners captured the Hama Central Prison as well as several guards, to prevent the transfer of five inmates to a military prison near Damascus. During negotiations over the release of 500 out of 1,400 prisoners, security forces entered the prison on May 6. Reportedly, a tribal leader negotiated the release of 800

prisoners on May 9.

On August 29, Jund al-Aqsa and allied groups started an offensive against government forces in northern Hama. Until the end of the month, opposition fighters seized several villages under heavy fighting, leaving dozens of fighters killed on both sides. According to OCHA, about 100,000 people were forced to flee northern Hama by the beginning of September. After further advances by the opposition, the government intensified its attacks in the first week of October, partially reversing previous gains of the militants. Clashes continued until the end of November.

In Dara'a governorate, clashes repeatedly occurred between government forces, on the one hand, and mainly Jabhat al-Nusra and FSA, on the other hand. In November 2015, government air and ground forces had started to attack the town of Sheik Miskin. In January, both sides repeatedly attempted to expel the other group from the area. On January 24, dozens of airstrikes were conducted, killing 20 militants. The next day, government forces took full control of the town.

Moreover, clashes also occurred in and around Dara'a city. For instance, on October 11, militants fired mortars at the government-held part of the city, killing five civilians.

In Quneitra governorate, government forces and Islamist groups repeatedly clashed over strategic towns. On September 10, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sham and Jami'at Bei al-Maqdis announced a joint offensive to push government forces from the Golan Heights, as well as the area of Khan "Arnabeh, aiming at capturing the Druze town of al-Hader. Until September 12, the groups advanced by seizing the Humriyah checkpoint and several hilltops, while clashing with pro-government forces. Subsequently, the government started a counterattack, killing over 30 militants and partly recapturing previously lost territory. Clashes continued until the end of the year. Throughout the year, Israeli Defense Forces answered cross-border shelling towards the Israeli occupied Golan Heights with attacks on pro-government positions [→ Syria – Israel].

In Suwayda governorate, government forces were repeatedly involved in clashes with groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and local FSA-affiliates. Moreover, opposition groups attempted to attack military airports or a government supply route to Damascus several times. For instance, on March 16, Jabhat al-Nusra attacked government fortifications at al-Lajat Plateau, aiming at reaching the al-Khalkhala military airport from where the government reportedly conducted airstrikes on Dara'a. The attack was repelled. After a meeting between Syrian and Iranian officials, an Iranian commander was appointed to lead the pro-government militia National Defense Forces in Suwayda, on August 13.

As in previous years, violence continued to affect Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups); Turkey – Syria; Jordan (opposition)]. yal

SYRIA – ISRAEL

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1948

Conflict parties: Syria vs. Israel

Conflict items: territory, international power, resources

The violent conflict over territory, international power, and resources between Syria and Israel continued. The main conflict issues concerned the status of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and the water resources situated in the disputed area. On April 17, the Israeli government held a cabinet meeting in the Israeli-controlled part of the Golan Heights. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the Golan Heights an integral part of Israel, refused any foreign territorial claim, and demanded international recognition. On April 26, the UNSC rejected Israel's claim on the Golan Heights, referring to the 1981 Resolution 497, which had urged Israel to rescind the annexation. On June 29, Resolution 2294 renewed the mandate of the Golan-based UNDOF peacekeepers for a period of six months and condemned the ongoing fighting in the demilitarized zone.

The Israeli government continued its policy of holding the Syrian government responsible for all attacks from Syrian territory regardless of the actual aggressor. From Quneitra governorate, which borders the Golan Heights on the Syrian side, errant mortar fire by the Syrian army struck on the Israeli side of the border on July 4. In response, the Israeli army attacked a Syrian military position with artillery, destroying two cannons. On July 25, the Israeli army accused Syria once again of striking a mortar attack from Quneitra city and subsequently attacked two Syrian military positions. On September 4, mortar fire struck on the Israeli side. According to the Syrian government, the Israeli Air Force attacked military positions in the Mashati Hadar area, Quneitra governorate, causing material damage. During September 7 and 13, rockets and mortar shells fired from the Syrian territory hit the Israeli side.

The Israeli Air Force attacked several military targets of the Syrian army in the aftermath. On November 30, jets of the Israeli Air Force attacked a military arsenal and a weapon convoy near the Syrian capital Damascus. On December 7, Israeli surface-to-surface rockets struck the Mezzeh airbase near Damascus, where the Syrian army's 4th division operations center is located. mhb

SYRIA – TURKEY

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 1946

Conflict parties: Syria vs. Turkey

Conflict items: territory, international power

The conflict between Syria and Turkey over international power and territory de-escalated to a non-violent crisis. Throughout the year, Turkey and Syria continued to exert diplomatic pressure on each other.

In early February, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

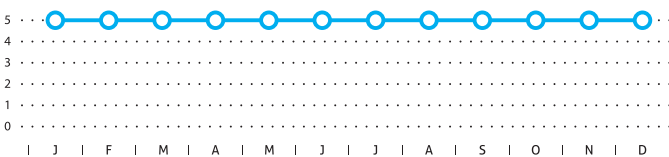
publicly reiterated his demand for a "safe zone" in northern Syria and called for an international ground operation on February 20. The Syrian government accused Turkey of conducting operations on the ground inside Syrian territory on February 16. Throughout the first half of the year, Turkish government officials denied any intention for such activities. On June 17, the new appointed Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım stated that Turkey could not be enemies with Syria forever and that there was a need to normalize the relationship between the two states. He reaffirmed this statement on July 13. On August 24, Turkish artillery and fighter jets shelled the Syrian city of Jarabulus, Aleppo governorate, held by the so-called Islamic State (IS), while Turkish ground forces and tanks crossed the border. The Turkish Foreign Minister declared that the operation "Euphrates Shield" was aimed at clearing the southern Turkish border region from IS [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. The same day, the Syrian government condemned the Turkish intervention as a flagrant violation of Syrian sovereignty. On October 13, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad expressed hopes that Russian President Vladimir Putin could change Turkey's position towards Syria. On the next day, he accused Turkey of supporting armed opposition forces in Aleppo. On November 26, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus renewed the Turkish demand for the resignation of al-Assad. *aje*

SYRIA, IRAQ ET AL. (IS)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2014

Conflict parties: IS, Sunni tribes vs. al-Sham Front, FSA, GNC, Hezbollah, Jabhat al-Nusra, KRG, PFG, SDF, Shiite militants, Sunni tribesmen, al-Houthis, US-led coalition, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia, Turkey, Saudi-Arabia, Taliban

Conflict items: system/ideology, resources



The war over the orientation of the international system and the control of resources such as oil between the so-called Islamic State (IS), on the one hand, and Syria and Iraq as well as other governments and several militant groups, on the other, continued.

Following its founding on 06/29/14 by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, IS had brought a large territory in Syria and Iraq under its control, implemented sharia law, and set up state-like administration as well as social services. Due to large-scale mobilization on social media, many foreign fighters from over a hundred countries had joined the group. IS had 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 had pledged allegiance to IS, including an al-Shabaab faction, a Boko Haram faction, the Caucasus Emirate, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan as well as Taliban splinter groups, Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyaf, and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters [→ Somalia, Kenya (al-Shabaab); 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 advances of IS, a US-led coalition had started to launch air strikes in Iraq in August 2014, expanding operations to Syria under the name "Operation Inherent Resolve" one month later. Russia had justified its military intervention in Syria starting in September 2015 with the fight against radical Islamist militants, referring to IS and Jabhat al-Nusra [→ Syria (opposition)]. This year, IS claimed responsibility for attacks in Indonesia, Belgium, Bangladesh, Jordan, and Germany. (*ska*)

SYRIA

In Syria, IS fought against the government of Bashar al-Assad, the Free Syrian Army (FSA), other Islamist militants, and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). IS lost previously gained territory in the northern parts of Aleppo, ar-Raqqa, and al-Hasakah Governorates. Most of Deir ez-Zor Governorate remained under IS control. Moreover, IS advanced significantly in Homs Governorate. The US-led air strikes continued throughout the year, mostly targeting IS sites in Aleppo and ar-Raqqa.

In Aleppo Governorate, IS was mainly involved in clashes with government forces, FSA fighters, and SDF fighters. Moreover, Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) launched the military operation "Euphrates Shield" in cooperation with FSA fighters and the US-led coalition in northern Aleppo beginning on August 24. The aim of the operation was to clear the border region from IS militants and to prevent the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which were part of the SDF, from forming an area under Kurdish control in northern Syria.

Between March 9 and 10, pro-government forces recaptured 13 villages from IS in southeastern Aleppo, forcing IS to partly withdraw. On April 7, FSA fighters, allied with Turkey, attacked IS at the border town of al-Rai, seizing it the same day. IS recaptured al-Rai as well as at least ten other villages during a counteroffensive between April 9 and 15. However, clashes continued until the US-backed FSA-affiliates Hawar Kilis Operations Room fully seized the town with support of Turkish cross-border artillery fire on August 17. On April 16, IS took control of refugee camps in northern Aleppo and forced at least 30,000 civilians to flee to the Turkish border. In southern Aleppo, IS conducted an offensive against government forces and captured ten villages near the government-held town of Khanasser after heavy clashes on April 16. On May 5, Turkey deployed at least 15 special operation forces in northern Syria to locate IS rocket launchers. The same day, Turkish and US cross-border air strikes as well as artillery fire killed 50 IS fighters. End of May, IS cut off the main road linking the opposition-strongholds Mare'a and Azaz town. As IS advanced in the area, at least 100,000 civilians fled and were trapped near the Turkish border. Subsequently, opposition groups in Mare'a unified to combat IS and lifted the IS siege on Mare'a and Azaz by June 8.

Starting August 24, dozens of Turkish tanks and about 5,000 Syrian opposition fighters massed in northern Syria, seizing the border-town Jarabulus and 17 villages from IS, while IS fighters fled towards al-Bab town without showing resistance. By September 4, the area between Azaz and Jarabulus was completely cleared from IS. Starting in the beginning of October, at least 2,000 opposition forces in cooperation with TAF encircled the IS-held town Dabiq and seized it on October 16. Dozens of IS fighters were killed until the recapture of Dabiq, while there were also several deaths among the opposition forces. Until the end of the year, Turkey, Russia and opposition forces repeatedly attacked the IS-held town al-Bab and were involved in heavy clashes. For instance, on December 21, IS used several suicide car bombs against ground forces near al-Bab. According to Turkish officials, clashes left 16 Turkish soldiers as well as 138 IS members dead and 33 soldiers wounded. The same day, 67 IS targets were destroyed by Turkish warplanes. The next day, IS released a Video showing the burning of two Turkish soldiers.

Throughout the year, IS and SDF clashed in the cities of Tall Rifat and Manbij as well as surrounding areas. On May 31, SDF backed by the US-led coalition launched an offensive on IS-held Manbij. SDF captured Manbij on August 13, thereby cutting off the only direct supply route from the Turkish border to the IS stronghold of Raqqa city. The more than two-month long fighting left at least 260 SDF fighters and 400 IS militants dead. The civilian fatalities amounted to approx. 440 and about 75,000 people were displaced.

In Hama Governorate, on February 10, government and paramilitary forces conducted an operation to re seize the Ithriyah-Raqqa Road, which leads to the al-Tabqa military airport in Raqqa Governorate. Three days later, government forces advanced along the Hama-Raqqa border, seizing several IS positions. Between June 2 and 10, government and allied forces entered Raqqa Governorate, seizing the Thawrah and Sfeiyah oil fields as well as the crossroad leading to the military airport and Raqqa city. On June 19, IS fighters launched a counteroffensive against government forces, recapturing the oil fields as well as reversing government gains. Air raids against IS positions continued until the end of the year. Furthermore, IS conducted several suicide attacks in Hama as well as Raqqa in government-held areas throughout the year.

In Homs Governorate, government and paramilitary forces supported by Russian warplanes repeatedly clashed with IS throughout the year. On March 3, government forces launched an offensive to recapture the Assyrian town of al-Qaryatayn, which IS had seized in August 2015. After one month of heavy clashes, government forces seized the town and surrounding areas on April 3. Beginning in March, government forces supported by Russian warplanes conducted an operation to recapture Palmyra as well as the road linking the city to Deir ez Zor Governorate. On March 26, government and allied forces recaptured Palmyra. Reportedly, about 400 IS fighters were killed during clashes and air raids. Between May 5 and 12, IS seized the Sha'er Gas Field and several checkpoints near the Tiyas military airbase and advanced near the Maher Gas Field. The militants blew up several pumping stations at the Sha'er Gas Field on May 16. Furthermore, IS fighters captured the Jazal Oil Field from government forces the following day. On July 8, IS downed a Russian attack he-

licopter in eastern Homs, whereby two pilots were killed. On July 25, over 1,000 pro-government Afghan and Iraqi Shiite fighters were deployed to Palmyra. Between December 7 and 8, IS fighters started an offensive close to Palmyra, capturing the Huwaysis and Jazal Gas Fields as well as several checkpoints near Sha'er Gas Fields. In response, government warplanes conducted airstrikes. Reportedly, at least 26 soldiers were killed at the Sha'er Gas Field checkpoints during clashes. After IS had attacked a military post near al-Mahr Oil Field and had shelled their headquarters with mortars as well as artillery fire, government forces withdrew from the area on December 10. The next day, the Homs governor announced that IS seized Palmyra and that clashes were ongoing.

In Deir ez-Zor Governorate, government forces and IS repeatedly clashed in Deir ez-Zor city, in the vicinity of the government-held military airport as well as in the al-Tharda mountain. Moreover, airstrikes by the International Coalition, Russia, and Syria targeted IS positions across the governorate. On January 16, IS attacked the government-held towns of Begayliya and Ayash with six suicide bombers, killing at least 60 soldiers and civilians. The same day, IS militants captured Begayliya as well as the weapons depot in Ayash. According to state media, about 300 people were killed between January 16 and 18. Furthermore, it was reported that 400 people were allegedly abducted. On April 4, IS militants advanced near the government-held military air base and conducted several suicide bomb attacks, killing at least 30 soldiers. The militants captured several military posts near the airport. Clashes over the airport continued until the end of the year. Between May 14 and 15, IS heavily attacked government positions in Deir ez-Zor city, reportedly killing dozens of soldiers. Furthermore, the militants temporarily seized a hospital and a military base before they were repelled by government forces.

On June 25, Russian warplanes targeting IS positions hit a mosque during morning prayers in the town of al-Qurayyah, killing at least 47 people and injuring dozens. On September 17, US warplanes hit Syrian military positions in the al-Tharda mountain, killing at least 60 soldiers and wounding over 100. After warnings by Russia, the US stopped the strikes and stated that they had mistaken the target for IS positions. Syrian officials accused the US of having staged the attack on purpose.

In Rif Dimashq Governorate, heavy clashes occurred between government forces and IS as well as between the Islamist umbrella group Jaish al-Islam, FSA-affiliated groups and IS. In the first week of April, IS attacked the government-held Dumair military airport with five bomb-laden vehicles, killing 12 soldiers. Furthermore, both parties heavily clashed in the nearby Dumair town. On April 4, IS abducted at least 170 cement workers near Dumair, which were released on April 9, after government media had stated that IS had executed 170 of them. IS stated that the four Druze hostages were killed and 20 pro-government workers kept hostage. Reportedly, government forces allowed Jaish al-Islam fighters to travel to Dumair to support the government in the fight against IS on April 7. Government forces with support of Jaish al-Islam started an offensive against IS around the Dumair airport and recaptured several hilltops on April 14. Jaish al-Islam continued fighting against IS in Dumair town. On June 11, IS detonated two suicide bombs in the Zeinab District of Damascus, where a Shiite Shrine is located. The attack killed at least

20 civilians and injured 55. Furthermore, fighting between IS and groups such as Jaish al-Islam and FSA intensified in Eastern Qalamoun, after IS had started an offensive in September. Clashes were ongoing until the end of the year.

In Damascus Governorate, IS extended control over the Palestinian Yarmouk Camp, after heavy clashes with Jabhat al-Nusra between April 8 and 9. Furthermore, Palestinian militant groups cooperating with the government and Jabhat al-Nusra were also involved in clashes and in control of entrances and checkpoints. Until April 14, at least 10 al-Nusra fighters, 50 IS fighters and four civilians were killed during clashes. In July, the government and fighting groups negotiated a deal that would allow the Islamist fighters to leave the camp to northern Syria and hand over the control to Palestinian and government forces.

In Dara'a Governorate, heavy clashes broke out between the IS-affiliates Liwa Shuhada al-Yarmouk and Harakat al-Muthanna, on the one hand, and Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham, on the other, in the western countryside in March. In the second half of the year, clashes also intensified with IS-affiliate Jaish Khalid ibn al-Walid. On March 21, al-Yarmouk and al-Muthanna fighters seized several villages in the Wadi Yarmouk basin, executing several residents. On March 24, the IS-affiliated groups advanced into southwestern Dara'a and seized the town of Saham al-Jawlan. Reportedly, a dozen of Ahrar al-Sham fighters in the town surrendered, while the rest either withdrew or was killed. The same day, several groups of the FSA-affiliated umbrella group South Front declared to jointly fight against the al-Yarmouk militants and expel them from the area. Until the end of the month, the IS-affiliates further advanced and seized more villages, while other villages remained contested. A counter-offensive by al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham and the South Front against IS reversed many of the latter's gains on April 3. Until April 15, about 2,000 families were forced to flee to the nearby Jordanian border due to heavy clashes between the two sides. By end of May, the groups reached a stalemate but continued fighting. In August, further clashes erupted in the al-Dhahr barrier in northwestern Dara'a, between Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and the South Front and al-Yarmouk, as the latter attacked the groups. After Jaish Khalid ibn al-Walid attempted to attack a military post in the Golan Heights, the Israeli Defense Forces conducted airstrikes at villages in control of the group, killing four of the militants end of November [→ Syria – Israel].

In Suwayda Governorate, government forces repeatedly clashed with IS. In March and April, heavy fighting occurred over the Druze village of al-Qasr in northeastern Suwayda and the Khalkhala airport. The government stated to have killed at least 15 IS fighters with anti-aircraft machineguns on April 8 and a further twenty on April 16 in the al-Qasr village. On April 14, a Syrian fighter jet was downed by IS near Khalkhala airport, while the pilot was rescued. On April 27, about 300 IS fighters attacked government positions in northern Suwayda, whereby at least 30 of their fighters were killed. IS later retreated. Until July, government forces continued attacks against IS and partly advanced in northern Suwayda, while IS continued to control some areas in northern and eastern Suwayda. Clashes were going on until the end of the year.

In ar-Raqqa Governorate, SDF extended its control over areas north and west of ar-Raqqa city. Following the successful operation in Manbij, SDF concentrated its actions on a new

offensive in ar-Raqqa starting on November 6. By November 21, SDF had captured 48 villages from IS. A further advance was temporarily stopped by IS south of Tal Saman. Three days later, an US soldier accompanying SDF was killed by an IED near Ayn Issa. The second phase of the SDF offensive began on December 10, with the aim of gaining control over the western areas of ar-Raqqa and the Tabqa Dam. The US announced to send 200 additional troops to assist SDF. Until December 26, SDF captured 106 villages from IS and advanced up to five kilometers to Tabqa Dam. During the offensive at least 60 SDF fighters and hundreds of IS militants were killed. (yal)

IRAQ

In Iraq, IS lost significant parts of its former territory, especially in Nineveh Governorate and al-Anbar Governorate, but still controlled exclaves in Kirkuk, Erbil, Salahuddin, Diyala, and Salahuddin Governorates. IS, supported by several Sunni tribes, fought against the government, backed by Shiite militias known as People's Mobilization Front (PMF), Sunni tribesmen, Iran, and the US-led coalition as well as Peshmerga forces of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). While losing territory, IS intensified attacks in areas that were not under their control. The US-led air strikes continued throughout the year, mostly targeting IS positions in Nineveh. According to the UN, the violence caused at least 16,834 fatalities, including at least 6,878 civilians, and left 2,996,004 internally displaced by the end of the year. Compared to June 2015, the number of IDPs declined by almost one million, with most people returning to al-Anbar, Salahuddin, Diyala, and Nineveh.

In Nineveh Governorate, IS lost a significant part of its territory, especially after the government started its offensive to recapture the regional capital Mosul, which IS had seized in 2014. The offense was postponed several times. On February 8, IS executed at least 300 security personnel in Mosul. The government started its first offensive to advance on to Mosul in March. After seven months, the offensive was successful and led to the isolation of the IS in Erbil and Tikrit as well as an encirclement of Mosul city from the south by the government and from the north and west by Peshmerga forces.

On October 17, the battle of Mosul began, being the largest deployment in Iraq since the 2003 US invasion. One day later, Iraqi troops retook several villages of al-Hamdaniya district southeast of Mosul. Throughout the recapturing process of Bartella on October 20, IS fighters detonated nine truck bombs. According to Iraqi army officials, 200 IS fighters were killed during the recapturing. In the battle of Sinjar on October 23, 15 IS fighters were killed and two Peshmerga wounded. On October 31, IS executed at least 350 people for collaboration with the government. The operation to advance into the center of Mosul began on November 1, with artillery, tank and machine-gun fire, and additional airstrikes by the US-led coalition on IS positions. One week later, IS executed at least 300 civilians, which had refused to join them. On November 16, PMF retook the strategically important Tal Afar military air base, west of Mosul and thereby cut off IS supply lines to Syria. The clashes left dozens of IS fighters dead. In the battle of Mosul, all five bridges that connected the east and west bank of Tigris river were damaged by coalition airstrikes to trap IS militants. Furthermore, three car bomb

manufacturing plants and three arsenals were destroyed by Iraqi airstrikes on December 9. According to Iraqi officials, government forces controlled 44 percent of Nineveh on December 24. The second phase of the battle was launched on December 29, by closing in from three directions into the eastern parts of Mosul. On December 31, an army officer from the southeast front claimed that their advances were slowed down because of the difficulty in differentiating between civilians and militants. Throughout the year, at least 1,701 civilians were killed and 977 injured in the governorate.

Al-Anbar, Iraq's geographically largest governorate predominantly populated by Sunnis, had mainly been controlled by IS in 2015. The government undertook an offensive from July 2015 to June 2016 to recapture the governorate. On January 3, the Iraqi army held 80 percent of the provincial capital Ramadi, completely expelling IS from the city on February 4. This was the first major combat success by the Iraqi army against IS since the fall of Mosul in 2014. On February 15, the government started its siege on the city of Fallujah. IS cracked down on a three-day long revolt by Sunni tribesmen in the city on February 18. From February 19 to April 14, the government successfully completed its offensive on Hit town and the eponymous district. On May 23, army and PMF captured important positions around Fallujah. One week later, they entered the city and faced strong resistance from IS.

On June 5, security forces discovered a mass grave of 400 soldiers, which had been executed on an unknown date in Saqlawiyah. Fallujah was declared fully recaptured from IS on June 26. Airstrikes by Iraqi Air Force and the US-led coalition on convoys of fleeing IS militants killed at least 360 militants and destroyed approx. 150 vehicles on June 29 and 30. In the aftermath of the offensive, IS kept 20 percent of the governorate under its control. The conflict caused at least 883 civilian fatalities and 1,232 injured in al-Anbar, but due to a lack of valid data of the highly violent months the numbers were supposedly much higher.

Throughout the year, IS fighters carried out daily bomb attacks in the capital Baghdad, Baghdad Governorate, concentrating on predominantly Shiite neighborhoods such as Sadr City or Karrada. The attacks resulted in approx. 3,132 civilian fatalities and 8,829 injured. On May 17, a series of bombings hit the capital. Three suicide bombers, car bombs, two IEDs, and a following shoot out with the police killed 101 and injured 194. On July 3, during late night shopping for Ramadan, a suicide truck bomb inside of a refrigerator truck detonated in the middle of a shopping area in Karrada, killing 342 and injuring 246. This attack was the deadliest single attack in Iraqi history. The same day, a roadside bomb in Sha'ab killed at least five and injured 16.

In January 2015, IS had been expelled from the predominantly Shiite Diyala Governorate, bordering Iran. However, the group continued to carry out several suicide bombings in Diyala. On January 11, a twin suicide bomb attack at a cafe in Muqdadiyah killed 23 and injured 44. Throughout the year, at least 233 civilians were killed and 297 injured.

In Salahuddin Governorate, including the city of Tikrit and the country's biggest oil refinery in the town of Baiji, security forces and IS repeatedly clashed. On July 8, IS attacked a Shiite shrine in Balad with RPGs and three suicide bombers, killing 36. In the course of the year, at least 264 civilians were killed and 305 injured.

In Kirkuk Governorate, IS and Peshmerga controlled different areas, with the latter holding the city of Kirkuk and most of the surrounding oil fields. On October 21, IS militants attacked a power station and police stations in Kirkuk city, killing 18 security personnel and workers. During the recapture of the buildings, security forces killed 20 IS militants. Subsequently, they undertook a three-day long manhunt for the remaining fugitives. Throughout the year, at least 317 civilians were killed and 362 injured.

In Babil Governorate, south of Baghdad, IS detonated a truck bomb at a petrol station on November 24, killing at least 125 and injuring 95, among them Shiite pilgrims from Iran. In Karbala Governorate, a IS suicide car bomber killed seven and injured 20 in the Shiite holy city of Karbala. IS later stated that the attack was targeted at the PMF. In Iraq's southern Muthanna Governorate, IS conducted a twin car bomb attack in Samawah city on May 1, killing 41 and injuring 75. (ska, lru)

AFGHANISTAN

As in the previous year, the branch of IS in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the so-called Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), mainly operated in Nangarhar Province, where the group had established a strong foothold.

ISKP militants frequently clashed with members of the Afghan National Defence Security Forces (ANDSF). Afghan as well as international forces targeted ISKP militants in air and ground operations. For instance, in a major joint operation in January, which lasted ten days, 144 ISKP fighters were killed and 58 wounded in Nangarhar. In late February, Afghan security forces declared that 70 percent of Achin district, Nangarhar, was no longer under ISKP control. On June 4, ANDSF launched an offensive targeting ISKP fighters in Kot district, Nangarhar, lasting several days, killing at least 27 militants and wounding 18. On June 23, ISKP launched a major offensive in Kot, attacking several security posts. The following day, ISKP members abducted at least 30 civilians in Kot. In subsequent clashes, at least twelve security personnel were killed and eight wounded, while more than 131 militants were killed in airstrikes and firefights.

In mid-January, the US declared ISKP a global terrorist organization and increased airstrikes against the group. In November alone, more than 100 ISKP militants were killed in US airstrikes. Additionally, NATO forces continued to back up ANSF and conducted drone strikes. For instance, on May 25, at least a dozen ISKP fighters were killed during a series of NATO drone strikes in Nangarhar.

ISKP fighters continued to clash with the Taliban, mainly in various Nangarhar districts contested by both groups. For instance, 18 militants were killed and eleven wounded when fights erupted in Achin on May 18. On October 21, 26 militants and two civilians were killed and another 17 wounded in clashes between ISKP and Taliban fighters following ANDSF airstrikes in Pachiragam district, Nangarhar. During the clashes, ISKP militants allegedly torched several buildings in the surrounding villages.

Besides Nangarhar, ISKP presence was also reported in several other provinces. Alleged members of the group were killed in airstrikes in the provinces of Wardak, Kunar, and Paktia throughout the year. On October 25, ISKP members reportedly kidnapped and killed 38 civilians in Hagcharan district, Ghor Province. One ISKP militant was killed in the

ensuing fighting with ANDSF.

While the group was unable to establish permanent strongholds beyond Nangarhar throughout the first half of the year, from June onwards, ISKP increasingly claimed attacks in the capital Kabul targeting civilians, particularly Shia Muslims. On June 20, ISKP claimed a suicide bombing, which targeted a minibus carrying security guards working for the Canadian embassy in Kabul, killing 14 and wounding 9. However, the Taliban also claimed responsibility for the attack [→ Afghanistan (Taliban et al.)]. On July 23, two ISKP suicide bombers attacked a protest march of the Shiite Hazara minority, killing 80 and injuring at least 230. This was the deadliest attack in Kabul since 2001. On October 11, Shiite pilgrims were targeted at a shrine in the capital while celebrating the day of Ashoura, one of their highest holidays. At least 18 people, including policemen, were killed and more than 62 injured. Furthermore, on November 21, a suicide bomber attacked a Shia mosque in Kabul. According to UN, at least 32 were killed and dozens wounded. ISKP claimed responsibility for all incidents. (chf, dgl, ssd, twt)

ALGERIA

Clashes between the IS branch in Algeria, Jund al-Khilafa, and the government continued. According to an Algerian military source, there were approx. 300 Islamist militants active in Algeria by May of this year. While the majority belonged to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, about 70 were affiliated with IS, mainly present in Kabylia region and southeastern Bouira Province [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)]. Contrary to last year, no information was available on whether additional fighters defected from AQIM to join the ranks of IS.

Overall, IS conducted few attacks against the Algerian People's National Army (ANP). On February 19, IS claimed to have killed three soldiers during a combat operation by ANP on Mount Shakshut, Bouira. On March 1, an army unit killed two Islamist militants and captured another two during an operation in Bouira. On April 15, IS militants killed four soldiers in Constantine Province in a roadside attack using grenade launchers. During a one-week-long military operation in May, units of ANP killed twelve IS members, while three soldiers were left dead in the forest of Errich, Bouira. No further violence was reported until October 9, when IS detonated an IED adjacent to an army convoy in the city of Tamalous, Skikda Province. No casualties were reported. ANP conducted an operation in the same area four days later, killing two militants. On October 28, several IS members shot one police officer dead in a restaurant in the city of Constantine, eponymous province, in retaliation. By the end of the year, ANP claimed to have dismantled the group by arresting or killing most of its commanders. (ala)

EGYPT

The Egyptian branch of the IS' Sinai Province and the Egyptian government, supported by Bedouin activists, repeatedly clashed [→ Egypt (Bedouin activists)]. Sinai Province evolved from the Islamist militant group "Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis," which had pledged allegiance to IS at the end of 2014 [→ Egypt (Islamist groups)]. Throughout the year, clashes between security forces and IS militants as well as attacks on civilians conducted by IS left at least 190 people dead, including dozens of civilians.

Most attacks of Sinai Province were targeted at Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) and Egyptian National Police (ENP forces). On January 9 and 21, Sinai Province attacked ENP forces in Giza, Giza Governorate, killing eleven and leaving 13 wounded. On February 28, IS fighters shot a high-ranking ENP officer dead in front of his house in al-Arish. Sinai Province militants fired mortar rounds at a security checkpoint in al-Arish on March 19, killing at least 13 and wounding 15. Using several IEDs along a highway in Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid, Sinai Province killed at least six and injured twelve on April 7. On June 15, IS militants tried to launch an attack on two security checkpoints close to Sheikh Zuweid. EAF opened artillery fire at the approaching militants leaving at least 20 dead. On July 24, a Sinai Province militant shot another high-ranking ENP officer dead near a police station in al-Arish. On August 4, EAF killed Abu Duaa al-Ansari, the leader of Sinai Province, and further 45 members in airstrikes in the south of al-Arish, using Apache helicopters. On October 14, IS militants attacked a checkpoint close to Bir al-Abd city, North Sinai, leaving at least twelve soldiers dead and wounding six others. In response, EAF fighter jets attacked Sinai Province hideouts, killing 15, leaving numerous wounded, and destroying weapons depots and vehicles. The following days, EAF continued "Operation Martyr's Right" targeting both IS and other Islamist groups in Sinai [→ Egypt (Islamist militants)]. The operation had been launched on 09/07/15 in order to weaken Islamist presence on the Sinai Peninsula. In an attack on November 24, IS militants used a vehicle loaded with explosives in Sabeel village close to al-Arish, killing at least eleven soldiers. In ensuing clashes, EAF shot dead three militants while the remaining attackers fled. On December 3, Sinai Province militants wounded two EAF conscripts on a security checkpoint on the international road close to Sheikh Zuweid. Shortly after, EAF backed by fighter jets killed three Sinai Province militants and destroyed several hideouts.

Moreover, Sinai Province repeatedly targeted civilians, among them foreigners and people of other religious beliefs. On January 7, two IS militants attacked an Israeli tourist group in Cairo, Cairo Governorate, without causing harm. One day later, two IS militants injured three tourists with knives in a hotel at Egypt's Red Sea resort in Hurghada, Red Sea Governorate. On June 30, Sinai Province shot a Christian priest dead in al-Arish, North Sinai [→ Egypt (Muslims – Christians)]. On June 11, Sinai Province shot dead two civilians in Rafah, North Sinai Governorate, and another in al-Arish for their refusal to cooperate. Sinai Province beheaded two men close to Sheikh Zuweid, North Sinai, who they believed to be informants for EAF and ENP on October 2. On December 11, a Sinai Province suicide bomber killed at least 25 civilians and injured further 49 in a Coptic church in the capital Cairo. (ppr)

LEBANON

In Lebanon, IS continued to clash with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), Hezbollah, and Fatah al-Sham. The latter operated under the name Jabhat al-Nusra until July 28 and also repeatedly clashed with LAF and Hezbollah [→ Lebanon (Sunni militant groups)]. Violence concentrated in Lebanese Beqaa Governorate.

Throughout the year, LAF shelled IS and Jabhat al-Nusra/Fatah al-Sham positions on the outskirts of Aarsal, Beqaa Governorate, on a nearly daily basis in order to prevent the militants

from strengthening already established footholds in the area. Fighting mainly took place on the eastern border with Syria, especially near Aarsal.

In consecutive skirmishes between January 27 and January 30, Jabhat al-Nusra clashed with IS in the eastern surroundings of Aarsal, leaving at least 34 militants dead. On February 3, LAF killed six IS militants, arrested another 16, and confiscated weapons and vehicles during an operation with aerial support in Aarsal. On February 23, the brother of one of the nine soldiers who had been kidnapped by IS on 08/02/14 called for peaceful demonstrations three days later against the lack of government support for the soldiers.

In an attack on IS positions between Ras Balbeek and Qaa, Beqaa Governorate, on March 10, LAF killed nine IS members, using helicopters and ground troops, while IS killed one soldier and wounded another eight. On March 27 and 28, clashes erupted between Jabhat al-Nusra and IS over positions in the Lebanese-Syrian border region in the Qalamoun mountains as well as in Ras Balbeek and Aarsal, resulting in the death of 18 Jabhat al-Nusra and 14 IS fighters. Hezbollah attacked IS positions with artillery in Ras Balbeek and in the Qalamoun mountains on April 4 and 9, destroying arms and ammunition depots and killing several militants. On May 18 and 19, LAF killed at least 24 IS fighters in the Balbeek highlands, Beqaa Governorate, by shelling artillery and firing missiles. In another operation in the same region on May 25, LAF killed 15 IS members.

In two waves of each four suicide bombings on June 27, alleged IS members killed at least six civilians and injured another 28, including four soldiers, in Qaa, a predominantly Christian village. In reaction, LAF arrested over 100 alleged militants in raids on Syrian refugee camps in Qaa and Ras Balbeek. On July 2, Hezbollah killed several IS militants near Aarsal and Ras Balbeek. On August 12, Lebanese authorities detained three Saudi women in Lebanon's capital Beirut, who were reportedly en route to Syria with their seven children to join IS, and deported them back to Saudi Arabia. During an operation in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh, South Lebanon, military intelligence units arrested Imad Yassine, emir of IS in Lebanon, on September 22. Continuing its legal prosecution of militants, Yassine and 17 other alleged IS members were charged with belonging to a terrorist organization by a military court on October 17. Nine days later, IS militants attacked Fatah al-Sham positions near the Sirj al-Nammoura checkpoint close to the Jaroud crossing on the Syrian border. During ensuing clashes, several militants from both groups were killed. On December 4, an IS fighter attacked an army checkpoint, killed one soldier, and wounded another in Bqaa Sifrin, Dinnieh region, North Governorate. Three days later, LAF arrested several militants in Dinnieh. (twf, vs, mhb, svp)

LIBYA

In Libya, confrontations involving IS and armed forces of competing state institutions and its affiliates were concentrated around the western city of Sabratha, the central city of Sirte, as well as the cities of Benghazi and Derna in the east (→ Libya (opposition)).

In the course of the year, IS retreated from its remaining positions in Derna's eastern Neighborhood 400 and nearby al-Fata'h area after it had largely been driven out by the Derna

Mujahideen Shoura Council (DMSC) in June 2015.

The group was also pushed back in Benghazi by the Libyan National Army (LNA) under the leadership of Khalifa Haftar. Moreover, in a UN-backed government operation led by Misratan brigades Sirte was seized from IS. The city had been IS' most significant stronghold outside of Iraq and Syria.

Sabratha, al-Zawiya district, was heavily affected by combat action between mid-February and the beginning of March. On February 19, US F-15 fighter jets bombarded a suspected IS camp, killing approx. 50 people, including two abducted Serbian diplomats. The strike targeted Tunisian national Nouredine "Sabir" Chouchane, believed to have been involved in the IS attacks on the Bardo National Museum and a beach resort in Sousse, Tunisia, last year. On February 23, when local brigades from Sabratha attacked suspected IS positions outside the city, 150 to 200 IS militants raided its center, entered the local security directorate and beheaded eleven policemen. IS forces retreated after clashes with the Sabrathan forces that left six of the latter dead. In the following days, the brigades and armed residents supported by fighters from neighboring towns attacked IS hideouts. In ensuing encounters, about 50 IS opponents were killed by February 27. On March 2, security forces raided an IS position south of Sabratha, killing eight IS members. Reportedly, shortly before the raid IS had shot two abducted Italians dead. The next day, an aircraft targeted IS militants in the area, killing seven.

South of the capital Tripoli, in al-Jabal al-Gharbi district, four-day lasting clashes erupted on March 9 between IS and LNA-aligned mainly Zintan and Warshefana tribal forces, after IS fighters had erected a roadblock south of the town of Mizdah. Five LNA-affiliated fighters were killed in the battle by IS militants who were forced to retreat. East of the capital, in the town of Zliten, Murqub district, an IS suicide attacker detonated a truck bomb at a police training center, killing at least 47 people and wounding more than a hundred, on January 7. In neighboring Misrata district, IS forces conducted several raids. On May 5, for instance, IS attacked the strategically important village of Abu Qurayn with two car bombs and forced Misratan militiamen to retreat. In the following week, confrontations also erupted in the town of al-Sadah. IS killed more than a dozen security forces and wounded over a hundred. The militant group also took control of several villages in Misrata and Sirte districts near Abu Qurayn.

In the beginning of May, the UN-backed Presidency Council (PC) of the Government of National Accord (GNA) declared a large scale-operation against IS in Sirte. Several thousand fighters, largely composed of Misratan former Libya Dawn brigades, were involved in the UN-backed government's campaign named "al-Bunyan al-Marsous" (BM) against an estimated number of 2,000 to 5,000 IS militants in Sirte. Prior to the operation, around 5,500 families fled Sirte. The competing eastern government's LNA had also announced their own military operation against IS. The force had not joined the UN-backed initiative and its operation remained limited to the deployment of troops (→ Libya (Opposition)).

In mid-May, Misratan brigades, also employing airstrikes, retook Abu Qurayn and advanced into Sirte district, causing the death of more than 30 BM personnel and the wounding of 50 on May 18 alone. BM forces successively gained control over the city of Sirte, engaging in a seven-months long bat-

tle with IS. For instance, on June 21, IS killed 36 BM troops and wounded 150. IS militants employed IEDs and landmines and targeted BM forces with sniper fire and suicide car bombs, killing about 20 and wounding more than a hundred, on July 15. On July 21, BM attacked IS positions using tanks and artillery and carried out 16 airstrikes against an estimated several hundred militants besieged in parts of the city. BM stated to have killed almost 50 IS members in fights that also left about 30 BM members dead and approx. 200 wounded. Between late April and July 35,000 people fled the town.

The US launched "Operation Odyssey Lightning" on August 1, providing BM with air support. On the first day of the operation, they struck two IS tanks. By December 5, jets, drones, and helicopters, according to the US, targeted IS' fighting positions over 1,000 times and hit 40 car bombs, eight vehicles mounted with recoilless rifles and heavy artillery, as well as three rocket launchers.

BM's continuing advance using warplanes, tanks, anti-aircraft guns, and RPGs was countered by IS employing car bombs, planting explosives, and sniper fire and resulted in high death tolls on both sides. For example, on August 28, IS killed at least 35 and wounded around 200 BM personnel using twelve car bombs. BM claimed to have killed at least 80 IS militants on October 2.

On December 5, BM forces seized full control over Sirte and on December 17, GNA's Prime Minister-designate Fayez al-Serraj declared the end of the Sirte operation. In total, more than 700 BM combatants were killed and more than 3,200 wounded during the campaign.

Until May, IS repeatedly conducted assaults on oil facilities, clashing with the central Libya branch of Petroleum Facilities Guard forces (PFG-Central). For instance, on January 4, after having fully taken control of the town of Ben Jawad, IS attacked nearby al-Sidr and Ras Lanuf oil ports with car bombers, engaged in fighting, and set an oil storage tank on fire with a rocket. Two days of confrontations left at least nine PFG-Central personnel and 30 IS militants dead, according to PFG-Central. The guards stated that they were supported by aircraft from forces affiliated with the General National Congress (GNC).

While BM forces attacked IS in Sirte from the west, PFG-Central now allied with the UN-backed BM, took over Ben Jawad and neighboring Nawfiliyah from IS on May 30 and May 31. The latter had been controlled by IS since February 2015.

In Derna, eponymous district, fights between IS and DMSC, most prominently including the Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade, concentrated in Neighborhood 400 and al-Fata'h area between January and April. For example, on January 20, IS attempted to retake Derna using anti-aircraft guns and RPGs but was repelled by DMSC supported by armed locals. On February 18, DMSC reportedly killed five IS militants, while an IS assault caused the death of six DMSC fighters on February 22. DMSC repelled the attack, allegedly killing a local IS leader, and destroying three tanks and an armored vehicle. The same day, an IED planted by IS killed Tamim Klafah, Ansar al-Sharia (AAS) member and brother of the group's leader. AAS in Derna was also part of DMSC. On April 17, confrontations that included the shelling of IS positions with artillery and tanks by DMSC reportedly caused the death of dozens of IS members.

Three days later, IS retreated from the last positions in and around Derna. While DMSC stated to have attacked the group the same day, LNA claimed the retreat came due to its blockade and shelling of the city [→ Libya (opposition)].

Following IS' pullout, more than 30 people were killed by IS mines and booby traps. Moreover, LNA claimed to have killed a high number of retreating IS militants during a strike on a convoy of about 30 vehicles near al-Mekhili town, south of Derna. In al-Wahat district, an IS convoy of approx. 70 vehicles clashed with PFG-Central supported by a local brigade and armed locals around 50 km south of Brega, on April 23. While IS claimed to have killed one PFG-Central guard and wounded several, PFG-Central allegedly killed a number of IS militants and seized six vehicles. The same day, LNA stated their forces intercepted an IS convoy of 45 vehicles in the area, killing IS fighters and destroying 15 vehicles.

Throughout the year, IS clashed with the House of Representatives' (HoR) LNA and affiliated forces in Benghazi. LNA gradually advanced and closed in on the Islamist forces remaining in a few areas. The group frequently conducted airstrikes and used tanks and heavy artillery.

For instance, on April 15, IS targeted LNA with three car bombs, killing four troops and wounding about ten, near a cement factory in the city's Hawari district. Two days later, the site was taken by LNA, which subsequently advanced into the neighboring Gwarsha area. IS claimed to have attacked a LNA convoy there using IEDs before engaging in fighting, killing five soldiers in total on May 25. An IS car bombing left seven LNA personnel dead on December 18.

With both Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC), a major militia involved in the opposition conflict, and IS present in Benghazi, it often remained unclear whether IS or BRSC or both engaged in combat action. (sul)

SAUDI-ARABIA

In Saudi-Arabia, the IS conducted several bombings, targeting religious and public buildings. On January 2, Saudi-Arabia executed 47 prisoners on terrorism charges. In reaction, the IS threatened to attack prisons holding IS-members. On January 29, two suicide bombers targeted the Imam-Rida-Mosque in the city of Hofuf, Eastern Province, killing four and injuring 18 civilians. On February 8, a bomb attached to a car exploded in the capital Riyadh in the eponymous region. No one was injured. During a police raid outside the city of Mecca, on May 6, two IS-members were shot dead while another two IS suicide bombers blew themselves up. On July 4, suicide bombers targeted the US-consulate in the city of Jeddah, Hijaz Tihamah region, injuring two security guards. The same day, suicide bombers targeted a mosque in al-Qatif, Eastern Province, and the al-Masjid-an-Nabawi-Mosque in Medina. The second attack killed four security guards and wounded five more. On October 30, security forces arrested eight IS-members who reportedly planned an attack on a Football World Cup Qualification game in Jeddah and another attack on security officials in Riyadh. (son)

TUNISIA

In Tunisia, IS fighters carried out several attacks throughout the year, while Tunisian forces conducted numerous raids. In addition, the government, with international support, continued to secure its border to Libya, to prevent IS fighters from

entering the country. Throughout the year, the country was under a state of emergency. It had first been imposed on 11/24/15 and was extended six times, lastly on October 18. On January 21, IS released a video, calling for action in Tunisia and Morocco similar to the 2015 Paris attack. Six days later, authorities broke up an IS-affiliated cell in the capital Tunis, which recruited members for the IS in Libya and Syria in Bizerte, eponymous governorate. On February 19, Nouredine Chouchane, suspected of having carried out the attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis on 18/03/15, was allegedly killed in a US airstrike on an IS training camp in Libya. On March 2, clashes near the Libyan border in Ben Guerdane, Médenine Governorate, killed five Islamist militants and one soldier. Five days later, IS and Ansar al-Sharia militants seized a mosque and attacked military barracks and police posts in Ben Guerdane, attempting to take over the town and establish an Emirate. According to the National Defense Ministry, fighting between militants and security forces left 45 militants, 13 security forces, as well as seven civilians dead and another six people injured. IS-affiliated websites stated that members of the group had been engaged in the attack. In reaction to the attack, which was the most fatal of the year, the Interior Ministry announced a night-time curfew. Additionally, authorities closed the border to Libya. The same day, the military responded with a series of raids in Ben Guerdane that left at least thirteen militants and one soldier dead. On March 22, police forces broke up another IS-linked cell in Ben Guerdane, which reportedly recruited militants for fighting in Libya. In two separate raids on May 11, at least two suspects and four policemen were killed and sixteen suspected militants arrested in Ettadamen, north of Tunis, and in Tatouine, eponymous governorate. On May 19, the National Defense Ministry announced that the military had killed Abou al-Qaaqaa, head figure of the Tunisian IS-branch Jund al-Khilafa, in an operation in the region of Mount Mghilla located between the governorates of Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid. The government claimed they had dismantled a cell on July 20, which was linked to the IS and planned an attack in Sousse. One week later, clashes between the conflict parties left two militants and one soldier dead in Om Al-Hani village, Jendouba Province. On November 5, Jund al-Khilafa militants killed a soldier in his house in Kasserine, eponymous governorate. Three days later, the military killed one suspect in the area of Mount Mghilla.

Between November 12 and 14, the military seized arms and ammunition caches linked to Jund al-Khilafa in Ben Guerdane. On December 23, security forces arrested three men, suspected to be linked to the Berlin Christmas market attack, for which IS had claimed responsibility. In December, the Interior Ministry stated that they had dismantled 160 militant cells and arrested around 860 terrorists during the first ten months of the year, including those belonging to AQIM [→ Algeria, Mali et al. (AQIM et al.)].

In their fight against IS, the government completed the building of a 200 km barrier along the Libyan border on February 6. Furthermore, they received international support for fighting IS. On November 23, President Beji Caid Essebsi confirmed that US drones were monitoring IS activities at the Tunisian-Libyan border. On December 23, the government reported that about 800 jihadist fighters had returned to Tunisia from foreign battlefields since 2007, while approx. 3,000 had

joined ranks in Libya, Syria, and Iraq. (wih, maw)

TURKEY

In Turkey, IS conducted several suicide bomb attacks in the provinces Ankara, Istanbul and Gaziantep. Throughout the year, police and gendarmerie forces arrested hundreds of suspected IS militants across the country during police raids and counter-terrorism operations. On August 24, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) supported by Free Syrian Army (FSA) militants started the cross-border operation "Euphrates Shield" with the aim to clear the border region from IS militants and to prevent the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from forming an area under Kurdish control in northern Syria.

On January 12, an IS suicide bomber killed twelve people, including ten German tourists, while injuring 15 at Sultanahmet Square of Istanbul city, Istanbul Province. On March 19, another IS suicide bomber killed four people and injured 36 more, on one of the most prominent shopping promenades of Istanbul, the Istiklal Street. Among the killed were three Israeli citizens as well as one Iranian national. On May 1, three IS militants shot at police officers guarding the main police headquarters in Gaziantep, eponymous province, and fled the scene when police shot back. When a second car with an IS suicide bomber exploded, two police officers were killed and 22 injured, including four civilians. During a police raid in Gaziantep on March 20, an IS member blew himself up. He was suspected of being involved in the May 1 attack as well as the 2015 Suruc and Ankara attacks that had killed 134 people. On June 28, three IS suicide bombers attacked Istanbul's Ataturk airport, shooting with automatic weapons at security personnel and passengers before detonating their explosive devices. At least 41 people were killed and 230 injured. Another IS suicide attack occurred during a wedding ceremony in the Sahinbey district of Gaziantep on August 20, killing 57 civilians and injuring over 80. On October 16, police officers conducted several raids against IS militants in Gaziantep. During the raids, two IS suicide bombers detonated their explosives in Besyuzevler and Gazikent suburbs. The first explosion killed three police officers and injured at least nine. During another raid in Ankara Province, police officers shot an IS member dead, suspected of planning attacks in the capital Ankara on October 19. Furthermore, IS militants repeatedly attacked the border-province Kilis in Turkey from Aleppo Governorate, Syria, with Grad rockets, killing at least 20 people throughout the year. In April, about 30,000 residents were displaced due to rockets attacks. In retaliation, TAF conducted cross-border artillery fire, killing at least 35 IS fighters in Aleppo. (yal)

YEMEN

In Yemen, IS concentrated its attacks on the southern city of Aden, in the eponymous governorate, while there were also incidents in the city of al-Mukalla, Hadramawt Governorate and al-Khalf, Lahij Governorate. Suicide bombings mainly targeted security staff and officials of the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

On January 28 and 29, two suicide car bombers attacked security checkpoints in Aden's northern Crater district. The first attack near the presidential palace killed at least eight people and injured 15. The second explosion killed at least two and injured five people. IS Wilayat Hadramawt released a video

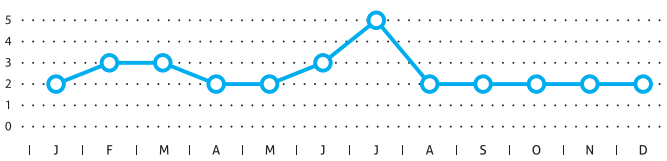
on February 3, showing operations near the Saudi-Yemeni border against troops loyal to the Hadi government as well as the execution of an opposition fighter and four Yemeni soldiers. On February 17, an IS militant used a military uniform to enter a training camp where he detonated an explosive vest, killing 13 recruits and wounding 60 more. On March 4, four IS militants shot seven civilians and nine security guards dead in a nursing home in Aden. Between March and September, IS militants reportedly killed at least 198 and injured 140 in eight attacks against government security forces in al-Khalf, al-Mukalla and Aden. On October 26, IS Wilayat al-Bayda claimed in a statement to have repelled several al-Houthi-Saleh attacks in Qifa village, al-Bayda Governorate, killing at least 35 al-Houthi-Saleh fighters. Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Houthi-Saleh forces were fighting over influence in the region [→Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)]. According to a statement of CIA Director John Brennan, AQAP and IS were cooperating on a tactical level in southern Yemen. (sbr)

ska; lru; sbr

TURKEY (OPPOSITION)

Intensity: 4 | Change: ↗ | Start: 2013

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



The violent crisis over national power and the orientation of the political system between opposition groups, mainly protesters related to the Gezi protests of 2013, as well as the Islamic Gülen movement, on the one hand, and the government as well as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the other hand, escalated to a severe crisis.

Initially, the conflict started in May 2013, after environmentalists and different groups of civil society started protesting against the demolition of the Gezi Park in Istanbul city, Istanbul province, which was dispersed by police force violently, triggering subsequent demands for more democracy by hundreds of thousands of protesters. In the following years, the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan restricted the free media and dismissed thousands of staff in the judiciary, in the education system, in the military as well as other public institutions. A large amount of these were accused of being members of the Gülen movement led by the USA-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen. The group was designated as a terrorist organization by Turkey end of May 2016. Due to an attempted military coup in July this year, the conflict intensity increased to the level of a severe crisis.

On February 22, an Izmir Criminal Court sentenced Republican People's Party (CHP) politician Omer Yener from Bornova district, Izmir province, to eleven months and 20 days of suspended jail for insulting Erdogan in a rally speech.

As in previous years, the government continued crackdowns

against independent media organizations. For instance, police forces raided the offices of the largest Turkish daily newspaper Zaman, which is accused of having links to the Gülen movement, in Istanbul, and dispersed hundreds of protesters in front of the building with tear gas, water cannons, and plastic bullets on March 4. Shortly before, an Istanbul court had placed the newspaper under the management of trustees. After the Cumhuriyet newspaper journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül had been arrested on 11/26/15, the Istanbul 14th Court of Serious Crimes convicted the two of leaking state secrets, sentencing Gül to five years and Dündar to five years and ten months in prison on May 6. After Dündar made an appeal to the court for cassation, he left Turkey in June and announced that he will not apply for political asylum and return when the time is right.

On June 5, the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors decreed the replacement of about 3,750 judges and prosecutors nationwide. Two days later, Erdogan approved a bill which enabled the lifting of the parliamentary immunity from judicial prosecution. Subsequently, 799 cases were opened against lawmakers. The oppositional People's Democratic Party (HDP) reacted by announcing to apply to the European Court of Human Rights.

On June 17, the Istanbul Governor's office announced to ban LGBT marches for the month, after a ultra-nationalist youth group had previously threatened the march. Two days later, 150 LGBT activists gathered in the city despite the ban. In reaction, several hundred riot policemen dispersed the group with tear gas and rubber bullets. On June 26, 300 protesters staged another LGBT march in Istanbul, which was also dispersed by riot police.

In the night from July 15 to 16, a faction of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) blocked two Bosphorus bridges in Istanbul and deployed tanks to Istanbul as well as the capital Ankara. At the Incirlik military air base in Adana province electricity was shut down. Moreover, the access to social media was reportedly blocked. Shortly after, Prime minister Binali Yildirim announced that parts of TAF were attempting to topple the government. TAF immediately announced that the coup plotters represented a small faction of TAF and that TAF opposed the coup. The anti-government faction of TAF attacked the police special forces headquarters in Ankara with a fighter jet, killing 42 and injuring 43. They also occupied Taksim square in Istanbul as well as the national broadcaster TRT. Subsequently, TRT was forced to broadcast that TAF had taken control over the country in order to secure democracy. CNN Turk, in turn, broadcasted a live-message from President Erdogan, encouraging citizens to leave their houses and protest against the coup. Hundreds of thousands followed this call. Tanks and fighter jets also attacked the Parliament Building in the capital. A helicopter with eight military personnel illegally landed in Alexandroupoli, Greece, requesting political asylum. During the coup, at least 241 persons were killed and over 1,400 injured. One day later, the government detained thousands of soldiers and dismissed thousands of judges. President Erdogan accused Gülen and his supporters to be responsible for the coup attempt. Gülen as well as all opposition parties condemned the coup attempt. On July 20, all academic staff were banned from leaving the country and the ones abroad were demanded to return. The same day, the government declared a three-month-long state of emergency, extending

it for another three months on October 3.

In the scope of the state of emergency, about 110,000 soldiers, policemen, gendarmes, judges, prosecutors, mayors, civil servants and business leaders were dismissed or arrested by the beginning of November. Arrest warrants had been obtained against at least 31,048 persons by the beginning of October. Over 22,000 remained under judicial control. Until the end of the year, the government continued to dismiss or arrest persons allegedly linked to the Gülen movement or the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) [→ Turkey (PKK, TAK)]. Human Rights organisations reported torture and mistreatment of some of the detainees. On October 29, President Erdogan announced to discuss the reintroduction of the death penalty for coup plotters in parliament. Meanwhile, about 1,500 NGOs had been banned. The government also continued to shut down news agencies, television and radio stations as well as Universities. Between the July coup attempt and November, at least 150 media outlets were shut down.

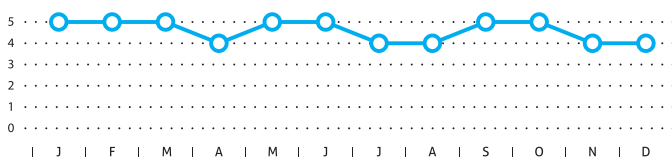
On November 5, nine journalists of the oppositional Cumhuriyet were arrested for alleged links to the Gülen Movement and the PKK. About 1,000 protesters attempted to enter the Cumhuriyet building in Istanbul city and were dispersed by police with tear gas and water cannons. The board chairman, Akin Atalay, was also arrested on November 11. pal

TURKEY (PKK, TAK)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 1974

Conflict parties: PKK, TAK vs. government

Conflict items: autonomy



The war over autonomy between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the PKK's alleged offshoot, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), on the one hand, and the government, on the other hand, continued.

The two and a half year long peace process, which was supported by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the PKK, had collapsed in mid-2015. In the context of the 2015 elections, tensions between the AKP and the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) intensified in the aftermath. The government repeatedly accused the HDP of being linked to PKK. On April 4, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that PKK militants had no other option than surrendering and dismissed the possibility for further negotiations. On June 16, HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtas condemned terror acts against civilians, demanding TAK's disbandment. Following the attempted coup in mid-July, the government declared a state of emergency. Subsequently, 24 mayors accused of links to PKK were dismissed and replaced by state-appointed trustees in August and September. Twelve of the mayors were

arrested by mid-September. They were either members of the HDP or of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP). A bill that enabled the lifting of parliamentary immunity from judicial prosecution was approved by Erdogan already on June 7. Furthermore, 11,285 teachers allegedly linked to the PKK were suspended in September [→ Turkey (opposition groups)].

Clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and PKK mostly affected the provinces of Hakkari, Sirnak, Diyarbakir, and Mardin, Turkey, as well as the governorates Dahuk and Arbil in northern Iraq. Sporadic clashes also occurred in several other provinces in eastern Turkey. In contrast, TAK claimed responsibility for several suicide bombing attacks against security personnel in the provinces of Adana, Ankara, Diyarbakir, as well as the western provinces Bursa and Istanbul. During clashes and in bomb attacks, PKK and TAK killed at least 540 security personnel, while TAF killed 2,241 militants in ground and aerial supported operations, including 402 PKK militants in Dahuk and Arbil. Fighting and bomb attacks also left at least 173 civilians dead and over 1,000 injured. Moreover, at least 192,000 residents were displaced. The government frequently imposed curfews on several provinces and districts while conducting military operations.

Military operations in Diyarbakir and Sirnak had started in 2015 and continued throughout this year. At least 110 PKK militants and 115 security personnel were killed during operations in Diyarbakir. For instance, in January, 18 security personnel and 27 PKK militants were killed, as well as 2,000 residents displaced, due to clashes in Sur district. In Sirnak, TAF reportedly killed 576 militants throughout the year, using heavy aerial support, while militants killed 73 security personnel in clashes. For example, in February, fights between security personnel and PKK left 96 militants and eleven security personnel dead as well as around 100,000 residents displaced in Cizre district.

Throughout the year, TAK conducted bomb attacks in several cities. For instance, TAK targeted several military buses with a car bomb in the capital Ankara, killing 28 and injuring 61, on February 17. Subsequently, TAK stated that the attack was in retaliation for the military operations in eastern Turkey and announced further attacks. On March 13, TAK conducted another car bomb attack at Kizilay Square in the capital, killing 36 and injuring 100, mostly civilians.

From March 13 onwards, TAF conducted operations against PKK militants in the city of Nusaybin, Mardin. In March, 142 militants and 22 security personnel were killed as well as 50,000 residents displaced. The same month, clashes between security personnel and PKK left 37 dead and around 40,000 residents displaced in Yuksekova district, Hakkari.

On August 18, PKK militants detonated a suicide car bomb, killing three policemen and injuring 112 people in the city of Elazig, eponymous province. The same day, President Erdogan accused followers of the Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen, leader of the Gulen Movement, of sharing information and intelligence with PKK militants and being complicit in PKK attacks. After PKK militants had conducted another car bomb attack in Cizre district on August 26, killing eleven policemen and wounding 78, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim declared an all-out war against terrorism.

Throughout the year, TAF killed at least 720 PKK militants in ongoing operations in Hakkari, over 500 of them between

August 30 and the end of the year. Militants killed 92 security personnel during clashes. On September 12, PKK militants injured about 50 persons with a car bomb near the AKP provincial headquarters in the city of Van, eponymous province. Two days later, PKK militants shot dead the AKP's former Hakkari candidate in the 2015 parliamentary elections in Semdinli district, Hakkari. In retaliation, TAF killed five PKK militants in an aerial operation in Hakkari, on September 16. In another attack against AKP politicians, PKK militants killed the AKP deputy leader in Ozalp district, Van, on October 9. On October 20, Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly announced that the government would recruit 5,000 additional village guards to combat PKK.

On November 4, Demirtas and his HDP co-leader, Figen Yuksedag, as well as several other HDP lawmakers were arrested due to alleged PKK-links. Hours later, a Diyarbakir police station, where the detainees were reportedly held, was attacked with a bomb-laden mini-bus, killing two police officers and nine civilians, among them two DBP politicians, while injuring at least 100. As in several previous incidents, the government subsequently restricted social media access and ordered a news embargo on the incident. The same day, the so-called Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack on its "Amaq News Agency" [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)]. Two days later, TAK also claimed the attack, further condemning repressive AKP measures against democrats, leftists, and socialists as well as expressing condolences for killed DBP politicians during the attack.

On December 10, TAK killed 37 police officers, as well as seven civilians, and injured over 150 people in a double suicide bombing outside the stadium in Istanbul's Besiktas neighborhood. Furthermore, TAK conducted another suicide bomb attack in Kayseri city, killing 14 soldiers and injuring over 55 people on December 17. Throughout December, TAF killed at least 110 PKK militants and arrested 42 in nationwide anti-terror operations. Moreover, 55 security personnel and ten civilians were killed during these operations. In total, about 1,140 alleged PKK supporters were detained in December. pko, yal

YEMEN (AQAP – AL-HOUTHI)

Intensity: 3 | Change: • | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia vs. al-Houthi, forces loyal to former president Saleh

Conflict items: system/ideology, subnational pre-dominance

The violent crisis over ideology and subnational predominance between al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its insurgent arm Ansar al-Sharia, on the one hand, and the al-Houthi militants and Yemeni military forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, on the other hand continued. As in previous years, AQAP fought alongside various Sunni tribal militias against the presence of al-Houthi-Saleh forces in the Taiz, Ibb, and al-Bayda governorates in the southwest of Yemen. Furthermore, AQAP tried to improve their relationship with local Sunni militias, many of which have tribal affiliation. For example, Ansar al-Sharia published videos showing

its forces fighting alongside Sunni militias against al-Houthi forces [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)] in Taiz City, Taiz governorate, and destroying "polytheist shrines" in the city.

On January 15, AQAP militants killed a member of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee, the interim ruling body of the al-Houthis, in Sana'a. On January 23, AQAP militants killed an al-Houthi commander during several attacks against al-Houthi positions in al-Bayda. On the night of April 19 to 20, AQAP and al-Houthis conducted the largest prisoner exchange between the two militias in al-Bayda. The exchange included 47 al-Houthi members and 49 AQAP members. On June 12, al-Houthi forces killed an AQAP commander during clashes in al-Bayda.

On June 22, al-Houthi forces attacked the home of an alleged AQAP affiliate in Nadirah, Ibb, using explosives and killing eight AQAP militants, injuring seven and arresting 15. They abducted his family, looted and destroyed the house. Furthermore, they killed seven and injured three civilians working on a nearby farm. Beginning in October, AQAP intensified its attacks against al-Houthi forces in al-Bayda and Ibb, leading to nearly daily attacks in December. For instance, between October 10 and 23, AQAP claimed to have killed six al-Houthi-Saleh commanders in Ibb. On December 2, AQAP militants killed seven al-Houthis in the southwest of Ibb.

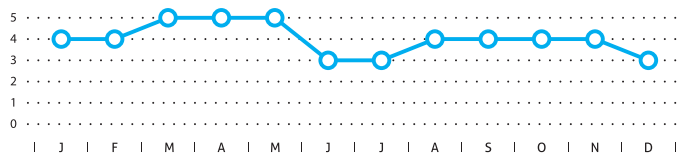
Between December 5 and 12, AQAP militants conducted six attacks against positions of al-Houthi forces in al-Bayda City, al-Bayda. In another attack on the same day, AQAP seized Mount Kasad, southwest of al-Bayda City, after al-Houthi forces had taken it under their control the day before. The following days, AQAP militants advanced further to the northwest of al-Bayda City and killed three al-Houthi forces on December 15. On December 16, AQAP militants detonated an IED in Yarim, Ibb, killing six and injuring four al-Houthis. pmu

YEMEN (AQAP, ANSAR AL-SHARIA)

Intensity: 5 | Change: ↗ | Start: 1992

Conflict parties: Ansar al-Sharia vs. government, Southern Mobility Movement

Conflict items: system/ideology



The conflict between Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Ansar al Sharia, on the one hand, and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, supported by the US, on the other, escalated to a war.

Throughout the year, weekly US and Saudi-led coalition airstrikes hit militants in Hadramawt, Ma'rib, Al Bayda, Shabwah, Aden and Lahij governorates. AQAP expanded its attacks on government troops, the Popular Resistance, the Southern Movement and the UAE-backed Security Belt forces in the governorates of Al Jawf, and Sana'a. Over the year, AQAP publicly executed twelve people for adultery, sorcery, spying, and the distribution of alcohol. The US Treasury imposed

sanctions on eight Yemeni individuals, a charity, and a company who were all accused of supporting AQAP. In 2016, at least 616 people were killed and at least 420 injured.

During the first three months of 2016 AQAP increased its control in Shabwah, Abyan, and Hadramawt governorates. On February 1 and 3, AQAP militants took control over the cities of Azzan and Habban in Shabwah governorate. On February 4, militants moved into Mahfad city, Abyan governorate. On the same day, a US drone killed senior AQAP leader Jalal Belaidi and his two guards in Abyan governorate. Between March 12 and 30, a government operation backed by the Saudi-led coalition forced AQAP militants out of Aden's al-Mansura district. At least 18 people were killed, at least 26 injured and 21 militants were arrested. On March 22 and 26, US airstrikes hit an AQAP training camp in Hajr, Hadramawt, and another camp in Mahfad. The strikes killed between 58 and 79 people and wounded at least 28.

In the second and third quarter, the government took back control over the cities al-Mukalla, Ja'ar and Zinjibar in Abyan governorate. On April 15, forces of the government and the Popular Resistance, supported coalition airstrikes, liberated al-Houta city in Lahij. Several people were killed and injured and 48 AQAP militants were arrested. Between April 23 and May 4, the government forces took back Zinjibar and Ja'ar, resulting in at least 28 dead and 44 wounded. On April 24, 2,000 Yemeni and Emirati forces, supported by coalition airstrikes, recaptured al-Mukalla. Between 29 and 50 soldiers and militants were killed and more than 90 were wounded on both sides during the fighting. The same day, government forces recaptured the Mina al-Dhaba oil terminal in Ash Shihr, Hadramawt, which AQAP had seized a week earlier. On June 15, a US drone killed at least two militants and wounded one in Habban. On July 8, security forces raided an AQAP weapons cache in al-Hamra, Lahij. Ten days later, two SVBIEDs killed eleven soldiers and wounded 18 at checkpoints west of al-Mukalla and in Haji, Hadramawt. On August 9, AQAP withdrew from Azzan, following coalition airstrikes on the city. On August 17, government forces and the Popular Resistance drove AQAP militants out of Lawder and Ahwar in Abyan governorate. On September 11, AQAP detonated a SVBIED at a police station in al-Wuday district, Abyan, killing six soldiers and wounding 15. A week later, they detonated an IED, which destroyed the al-Wuday courthouse. On September 22, a US drone strike killed senior AQAP leader Abdallah al-Sanaani and his bodyguard in Swamaa district, al-Bayda.

Between October and December, AQAP increased its attacks on the Security Belt forces and the Southern Movement. On October 5 and 18, AQAP militants attacked two Southern Movement checkpoints in al-Hawta and Azzan, Shabwah, killing at least one soldier and wounding three others. On November 8, pro-government forces, backed by US airstrikes, attacked militants outside of al-Mukalla, killing at least 30 people and injuring twelve others. On November 11, AQAP attacked Security Belt forces in Mahfad, seized their weapons, and wounded two soldiers. During the attack, several militants were killed. The same day, Security Belt forces arrested two militants in Halma village in Abyan. On December 5, AQAP militants blew up an oil pipeline in al-Uqla, Shabwah.

ceb

YEMEN (SMM / SOUTH YEMEN)

Intensity: 2 | Change: ▼ | Start: 2007

Conflict parties: SMM vs. government

Conflict items: secession

The conflict between the Southern Mobility Movement (SMM) and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi over the secession of South Yemen reemerged as a non-violent crisis.

In the beginning of 2015, hostilities between the two camps ceased after fighters of the Southern Movement and other southern militias had joined the fight against the al-Houthis alongside government forces [→ Yemen, Saudi Arabia (al-Houthi)]. In the course of the ongoing civil war, SMM leaders and protesters in southern cities renewed their claims for an independent South Yemen and protested against shortages of electricity and water, unpaid salaries for government and military employees, as well as alleged government corruption. For instance, demonstrations took place in al-Dhaleh city, al-Dhaleh governorate, and in Ahwar, Abyan governorate, on April 7, as well as in Aden on April 17. Other demonstrations were dissolved by government security forces, for example a rally in al-Mukalla city, Hadramawt governorate, on October 11.

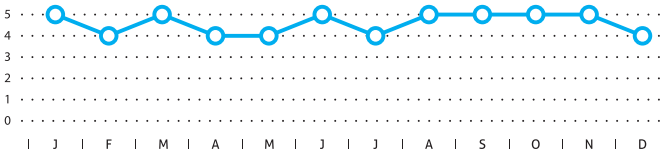
Despite threatening to escalate protests if the government continued not to pay wages, protesters on several occasions reiterated their full support for the government of President Hadi in its fight against the al-Houthi forces. They furthermore rejected the UN Special Envoy for Yemen's revised peace proposal, which would have transferred executive power to a new consensus vice president. Tensions rose on May 8 when rogue security forces aligned with the Southern Movement started to raid homes of northern Yemeni citizens in southern Yemeni cities, arresting and deporting the inhabitants to the North. This reportedly occurred on a daily basis despite the government's calls to stop deportations immediately. Allegedly, security forces made deported citizens leave their property behind. kpb

YEMEN, SAUDI ARABIA (AL-HOUTHI)

Intensity: 5 | Change: • | Start: 2004

Conflict parties: al-Houthi, troops loyal to former president Saleh vs. government, Saudi Arabian led coalition, popular resistance forces, tribal forces

Conflict items: national power, subnational predominance



The war between the al-Houthi-forces, supported by military units loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, on the one hand, and the government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, supported by the coalition led by Saudi Arabia, fighters of the Southern Mobility Movement (SMM), and popular resistance forces, on the other hand, continued throughout 2016. The Saudi-led coalition comprised most notably the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar.

The UN reported more than 10,000 fatalities since the start of the Saudi-led intervention in March 2015. On February 16, the UN Security Council called the humanitarian crisis the worst world-wide in terms of people in need. More than 3.2 million people remained internally displaced, approximately 180,000 fled the country, while slightly more than 100,000 fled from the Horn of Africa into Yemen. 14.1 million people are classified as food insecure while another 7 million are considered to be severely food insecure. On November 30, Fahem Group, Yemen's largest importer of wheat, reported that it will be unable to complete any new contracts due to insufficient funding. On October 6, the WHO reported a cholera outbreak in the governorates Sana'a and Taiz, which subsequently spread to other governorates and reached more than 12,500 cases by the end of December. The situation was aggravated by the fact that more than 45% of Yemen's medical facilities have been destroyed during the war.

Throughout the year, fighting between al-Houthi forces and government troops, supported by local popular resistance forces and the Saudi coalition, continued in various governorates. Taiz city, which remained under Houthi control since late 2014, and the eponymous governorate, remained one of the focal points of fighting. After the government had launched an offensive on Taiz on March 11, an al-Houthi counter-attack in western Taiz left 35 people dead on March 19. Al-Houthi fighters also attacked a market in Taiz on June 3 with snipers and rockets, killing at least nine civilians and wounding another 24.

Throughout the year, Midi port in Hajjah governorate was repeatedly embattled. On January 6, pro-Hadi forces landed in the port-city of Midi and reportedly pushed back Houthi-Saleh forces, supported by coalition airstrikes. Fighting between Houthis and pro-Hadi forces for the port on March 27, reportedly left 378 dead. Clashes and airstrikes around Midi

city and the port continued throughout the year.

Two government brigades took control over two districts in southern Ma'rib and northwestern Shabwah governorates in March. Clashes between al-Houthis and pro-government troops continued in April in the governorates Sana'a, Ma'rib, al-Jawf, and Taiz. During clashes at the border between the contested governorates Shabwah and Ma'rib on May 29, at least 19 government fighters and 28 Houthi fighters were killed. Heavy clashes also erupted in al-Bayda governorate on June 7, with the al-Houthis using tanks and heavy artillery. Airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition inflicted the highest number of casualties in the conflict throughout the year. For instance, in Hajjah governorate on March 15, airstrikes resulted in 90 dead and more than 40 injured. An assessment by the UN human rights office from August attributed roughly 60 percent of the civilian fatalities in the conflict to coalition airstrikes. On October 8, a coalition airstrike hit the funeral of al-Houthi Major General Jalal Ali al Rowaishan in Sana'a. The attack killed about 155 civilians and injured more than 500, being the highest number of civilian losses in a single action since the beginning of the Saudi-Arabian intervention. Criticizing the coalition airstrikes for their high civilian casualties, several European arms exporters like Great Britain and the Netherlands canceled arms deals with the Saudi kingdom. Nevertheless, several countries continued to provide weapons to all actors in the conflict. Iran was blamed for supplying weapons to the al-Houthi forces. While on December 13 US President Barack Obama blocked a sale of guided ammunition kits and cluster bombs, the United States continued to deliver other weaponry to Saudi Arabia.

Despite direct negotiations, prisoner exchanges, and several small ceasefires, fights between al-Houthis and Saudi Arabian forces continued along the Saudi-Yemeni border with the former frequently launching missiles into Saudi territory, targeting military, economic and civilian sites. The majority of the missiles was intercepted by Saudi Arabian air defence, while some caused casualties and damages. Al-Houthi forces also engaged in ground attacks, such as on January 6. The coalition deployed Kuwaiti, Emirati and Bahraini troops as well as Kuwaiti artillery to the southern governorates.

Tensions on sea also increased significantly, especially in the strategically important Bab al Mandeb strait.

Enforcing the UN arms embargo, US, French, and Australian naval ships intercepted several vessels transporting weapons, supposedly meant for al-Houthi forces, containing among others AK-47 assault rifles, sniper rifles, machine guns, RPGs, and anti-tank rockets. After two failed missile attacks on the USS Mason in the Red Sea on October 9 and 12, allegedly by al-Houthi forces, the US Navy destroyed three al-Houthi radar sites in al-Hudaydah governorate with cruise missiles on October 13. This marked the first direct US-action against al-Houthi forces.

The UN-sponsored negotiations between the two sides continued in 2016. Starting on April 20, the talks between the main conflict parties held in Kuwait were canceled after three months when the al-Houthi installed a ten-member governing body in Yemen. The body was formed after an agreement between former president Saleh's General People's Congress (GPC) and the political arm of the Houthis, Ansar Allah on July 28.

The Hadi government was unable to gain full control over its

temporary capital Aden. In July 2015, the military had depended on the help of the SMM and affiliated groups to drive the al-Houthis out of Aden.

Since then, several militant groups, among them the so-called Islamic State [→ Syria, Iraq et al. (IS)], al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula [→ Yemen (AQAP, Ansar al-Sharia)] and Salafi groups, repeatedly carried out assassinations and IED-attacks against civilians, government and security personnel as well as against SMM fighters. Leaders of the SMM, despite supporting the government of President Hadi against the al-Houthis, continued to demand an independent South Yemen [→ Yemen (SMM / South Yemen)].

Throughout the year, Hadi government and military employees did not receive wages for months. Several demonstrations sparked all over the country, some of which turned violent. People gathered in several cities to protest unpaid wages, corruption, and ongoing shortages of electricity, oil and water. On May 22, police forces killed one civilian and wounded several others when trying to disperse dozens of protesters in Aden city.

Both journalists and humanitarian workers were among the casualties of the conflict. According to Reporters without Borders, the al-Houthis were responsible for the most abductions of journalists worldwide, second only to the Islamic State. A coalition airstrike hit an MSF hospital in Hajjah governorate on August 15, killing 19 people and wounding another 24.

mkp, kpb

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