I. Tracking armed conflicts and peace processes

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In 2019, active armed conflicts occurred in at least 32 states: 2 in the Americas, 7 in Asia and Oceania, 1 in Europe, 7 in the Middle East and North Africa, and 15 in sub-Saharan Africa (see chapters 3–7, respectively).[1] As in preceding years most took place within a single country (intrastate), between government forces and one or more armed non-state groups. Only one was fought between states (the border clashes between India and Pakistan), and two were fought between state forces and armed groups that aspired to statehood, with the fighting sometimes spilling outside the recognized state's borders.

Of the intrastate conflicts, three were major armed conflicts (with more than 10 000 conflict-related deaths in the year)—Afghanistan (approximately 41 900 reported fatalities), Yemen (25 900) and Syria (15 300)—and 15 were high-intensity armed conflicts (with 1000–9999 conflict-related deaths in the year)—Mexico (9400), Nigeria (5400), Somalia (4000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, 3700), Iraq (3600), Burkina Faso (2200), Libya (2100), Mali (1900), South Sudan (1800), the Philippines (1700), India (1500), Myanmar (1500), Cameroon (1200), Pakistan (1100) and Egypt (1000)—see figure 2.1. The others were low-intensity armed conflicts (with fewer than 1000 conflict-related deaths). However, these categorizations should be considered tentative as fatality information is unreliable.[2] All three major armed conflicts and most of the high-intensity armed conflicts were internationalized; that is, they involved foreign elements that may have led to the conflict being prolonged or exacerbated.[3]

This section discusses the definitions of 'armed conflict' and related terms used in chapters 2–7, and then highlights salient (and largely continuing) features of the armed conflicts and some of their main consequences in 2019, as well as key developments in peace processes during the year.

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[1] For the definitions of 'armed conflict' and related terms used in chapters 2–7, see the subsection 'Defining armed conflict' and box 2.1 below.

[2] Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 'Data export tool', [n.d.]; and ACLED, 'FAQs: ACLED fatality methodology', 27 Jan. 2020. On casualty counting, see also Giger, A., 'Casualty recording in armed conflict: Methods and normative issues', *SIPRI Yearbook 2016*, pp. 247–61.

[3] See e.g. the conclusions in American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights & Rule of Law Initiative, *The Legal Framework Regulating Proxy Warfare* (American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights & Rule of Law Initiative: Dec. 2019), p. 1.
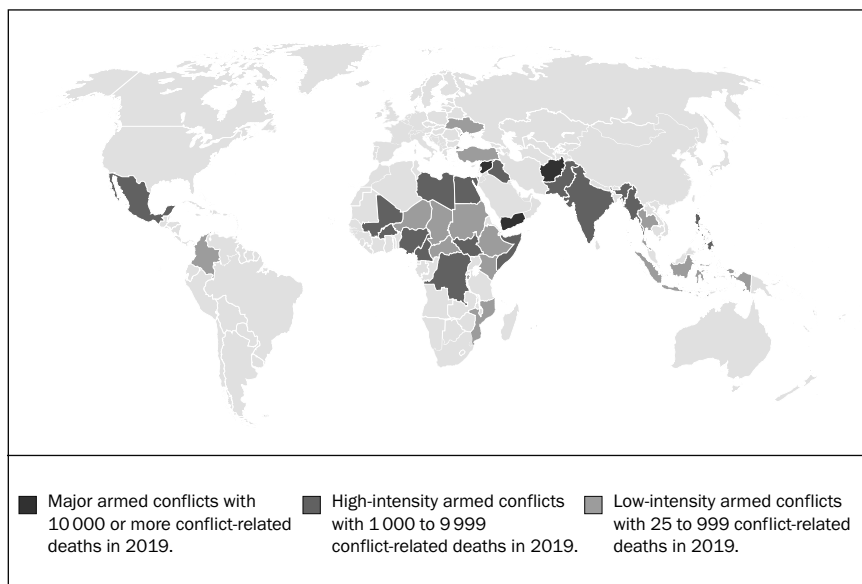
Figure 2.1. Armed conflicts by number of conflict-related deaths, 2019

Defining armed conflict

Armed conflicts are often complex and multifaceted, with multiple actors that have diverse and changeable objectives.[4] This complexity can be a major challenge for the conceptual and legal categorization of armed conflict, as well as thinking on peacebuilding and conflict prevention.[5] Determining the existence of an 'armed conflict' within the framework of international law, for example, differs according to whether the conflict occurs between states (interstate or international armed conflict) or between a state and one or more non-state groups or among two or more non-state groups (intrastate armed conflict, or 'non-international armed conflict' under international humanitarian law).[6] Qualifying the situation as an 'armed conflict' and further defining the nature of the armed conflict—international or non-international—is also crucial for determining the level of protection that

[4] See Davis, I., 'Tracking armed conflicts and peace processes in 2017', *SIPRI Yearbook 2018*, pp. 30–31.

[5] The complexity is captured in United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank: Washington, DC, 2018).

[6] For a primary source on the definition of armed conflicts, see the 1949 Geneva Conventions common Article 2 and 1977 Additional Protocol I, Article 1 (international), and 1949 Geneva Conventions common Article 3 and Additional Protocol II, Article 1 (non-international). Also see e.g. International Committee of the Red Cross, 'How is the term "armed conflict" defined in international humanitarian law?', Opinion Paper, Mar. 2008; and International Committee of the Red Cross, *International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts* (International Committee of the Red Cross: Oct. 2019), pp. 50–52, 58–59, 75–76.

should be granted to non-combatants, for defining the status of a combatant and for determining the level of obligations towards captured adversaries.

Not every situation of armed violence amounts to an armed conflict. For example, although criminal violence can threaten the authority and capability of a state as much as an armed conflict, law enforcement activities unconnected to an armed conflict fall outside the scope of international humanitarian law (even if a state's military is involved). If, however, the criminal violence meets the threshold of a non-international armed conflict—as was the case in 2019 for the armed conflict between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, an organized crime group, and the Mexican Government (see chapter 3, section III)—then international humanitarian law applies.

In 2019 most armed conflicts occurred within states. While there can be complications in grading an international armed conflict—for example, intervention of foreign or multinational forces in armed conflicts not otherwise of an international character or extraterritorial uses of force by a state—classifying non-international armed conflicts is usually more complex. There is often no clear dividing line between intrastate armed conflicts and usually smaller-scale incidents of internal violence, such as riots and organized crime gangs. The threshold for an intrastate armed conflict must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by weighing a range of indicative data. The two key thresholds relevant to the classification of a non-international armed conflict are: (*a*) protracted armed violence and (*b*) one or more organized armed groups. This evaluation might include whether explicit political goals are stated by the actors, the duration of the conflict, the frequency and intensity of the acts of violence and military operations and the degree of continuity between them, the nature of the weapons used, displacement of civilians, territorial control by opposition forces and the number of victims (including the dead, wounded and displaced people).[7] In the Americas in 2019 it was particularly difficult to distinguish between high levels of political violence and armed conflict (see chapter 3).

This complexity in defining an armed conflict also contributes in part to the differences among the main data sets on violence and conflict—including the one that is predominantly used in chapters 2–7 of this Yearbook, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)—each of which has its own definitions and methodology.[8] This part of the Yearbook offers a primarily descriptive (rather than quantitative) synopsis of trends and events in 2019

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[7] Vité, S., 'Typology of armed conflicts in international humanitarian law: Legal concepts and actual situations', *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 91, no. 873 (Mar. 2009), pp. 69–94.

[8] For an overview of the major advances in the collection and availability of armed conflict data, see Brzoska, M., 'Progress in the collection of quantitative data on collective violence', *SIPRI Yearbook 2016*, pp. 191–200.

Box 2.1. Definitions and types of armed conflict

Armed conflict involves the use of armed force between two or more states or non-state organized armed groups. For the purpose of Part I of this Yearbook, there is a threshold of violence causing 25 or more deaths in a given year. With the caveat that data on conflict deaths is often imprecise and tentative, the chapters categorize such conflicts, based on the number of conflict-related deaths in the current year, as *major* (10 000 or more deaths), *high-intensity* (1000–9999 deaths) or *low-intensity* (25–999 deaths).

Armed conflict can be further categorized as follows:

Interstate armed conflict, the use of armed force by one or more states against another state or states, is now rare and mostly occurs at lower intensities or shorter durations. While territorial, border and other disputes persist among states, they are unlikely to escalate to armed conflict.

Intrastate armed conflict, the most common form of armed conflict today, usually involves sustained violence between a state and one or more non-state groups fighting with explicitly political goals (e.g. taking control of the state or part of the territory of the state)—although the question of goals is not relevant to the legal classification. It can also be classified as follows:

- *Subnational armed conflict* is typically confined to particular areas within a sovereign state, with economic and social activities in the rest of the country proceeding relatively normally. This kind of conflict often takes place in stable, middle-income countries with relatively strong state institutions and capable security forces. Sometimes it takes place in a troubled border region in a large country that expanded geographically in the past or has arbitrarily drawn borders.

- *Civil war* involves most of the country and results in at least 1000 conflict-related deaths in a given year.

- Either type of conflict is considered **internationalized** if there is significant involvement of a foreign entity (excluding United Nations peace operations) that is clearly prolonging or exacerbating the conflict—such as armed intervention in support of, or provision of significant levels of weapons or military training to, one or more of the conflict parties by a foreign government or foreign non-state actor.

Extrastate armed conflict occurs between a state and a political entity that is not widely recognized as a state but has long-standing aspirations of statehood (e.g. the Israeli–Palestinian conflict). Such conflicts, which are rare, may take place inside and outside of the state boundaries recognized by the international community.

Note: These definitions apply to chapters 2 to 7 of this volume. They are not legal definitions, so conclusions based on them can be political only; it is not possible to draw legal conclusions from such definitions, including on the applicability or otherwise of international humanitarian law to the armed violence in question.

affecting key armed conflicts.[9] It uses a loose framework to characterize and distinguish armed conflicts within the three major categories: interstate, intrastate and extrastate (see box 2.1). It also differentiates them from other kinds of organized group violence (such as criminal violence). To define a series of violent events as an armed conflict, a threshold of 25 conflict-related deaths in a year is used.

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[9] For more on events in 2019 related to armaments, disarmament and international security, see annex C in this volume.

Significant features of armed conflicts in 2019

Most armed conflicts since the cold war are fought by regular armies and also militias and armed civilians. Fighting is often intermittent with a wide range of intensities and brief ceasefires, and rarely occurs on well-defined battlefields. The nature of most armed conflicts is context specific; this subsection highlights some of the most significant features of several armed conflicts in 2019.

While evidence suggests that violence is becoming increasingly concentrated in urban areas, this largely relates to political and criminal violence (issues that are largely outside the scope of the Yearbook).[10] The picture regarding armed conflicts is mixed. While many post-cold war armed conflicts tend to be fought primarily in urban areas, others retain a strong rural dimension. Civilians are at great risk from urban and rural armed conflicts, but the risks multiply in urban settings: when explosive weapons were used in populated areas, for the ninth consecutive year over 90 per cent of the casualties in 2019 were civilians.[11] The use of explosive weapons in urban areas—especially explosive weapons with a large destructive radius, inaccurate delivery system or capacity to deliver multiple munitions over a wide area—is a growing concern and the focus of some humanitarian arms control efforts.[12]

The number of armed groups involved in conflict has increased over the past 70 years, from an average of 8 per intrastate conflict in 1950 to 14 in 2010, according to a joint United Nations–World Bank study.[13] Despite the growing numbers of non-state armed groups, state forces remained the most powerful and violent actors in 2019, and were responsible for the largest number of civilian fatalities according to ACLED.[14]

As was the case in 2018, organized violence, as measured by ACLED, decreased overall in 2019 but spread to more places. Five armed conflicts—in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Mexico and Nigeria—had the highest fatality estimates, with a combined total of nearly 98 000 fatalities in 2019 (about 78 per cent of the total conflict-related fatalities).[15] Although battle-related events decreased by 15 per cent in 2019 compared with 2018, all other ACLED categories of political violence events increased: explosions/remote violence

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[10] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: Paris, 2016); Anthony, I., 'International humanitarian law: ICRC guidance and its application in urban warfare', *SIPRI Yearbook 2017*, pp. 545–53; and International Committee of the Red Cross, 'War in cities', [n.d.].

[11] Action on Armed Violence, 'Explosive violence in 2019', 7 Jan. 2020.

[12] See chapter 13, section I, in this volume. See also Overton, I. et al., *Wide-Area Impact: Investigating the Wide-Area Effect of Explosive Weapons* (Action on Armed Violence: Feb. 2016).

[13] UN and World Bank (note 5), p. 15.

[14] Kishi, R. et al., *Year in Review* (ACLED: Mar. 2020), pp. 31–34.

[15] Kishi et al. (note 14), pp. 18–23.

by 5 per cent, violence against civilians by 7 per cent and mob violence by 47 per cent.[16]

Conflict-affected populations often play a role in attempting to secure their own protection via 'avoidance' (escaping or moving away from the threat), 'containment' (managing the threat locally, such as by paying taxes or engaging in direct negotiations with local power holders) or 'confrontation' (aligning with one of the conflict parties or by forming local armed self-defence groups).[17] For example, in the Sahel region in 2019, ethnic and village 'self-defence' militias were increasingly widespread.[18]

The forced recruitment and use of child soldiers and sexual violence are widely perpetrated in armed conflict. In 2018 (the last year for which data is available) Somalia remained the country with the highest number of cases of the recruitment and use of children (2300) followed by Nigeria (1947).[19] In an annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, the UN secretary-general described 19 countries of concern and an updated list of 50 parties to conflict that were credibly suspected of having committed or instigated sexual violence in 2018 (the year covered by the report), as well as a 'disturbing trend' of sexual violence perpetrated against very young girls and boys in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), the DRC, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Yemen.[20] ACLED found there were twice as many targeted political violence events—a broader category than just armed conflicts—against women in the first quarter of 2019 compared with the first quarter of 2018.[21]

In February 2019 the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross pledged to strengthen efforts to combat sexual violence in conflict settings, while UN Security Council Resolution 2467 (2019), adopted on 23 April 2019, called for a survivor-centred approach in the prevention and response to the problem.[22]

During many of the armed conflicts, especially the major and high-intensity conflicts, other international humanitarian law violations were also committed, including the use of starvation to achieve military ends, the denial of humanitarian aid, forced displacement, and attacks on aid and

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[16] Kishi et al. (note 14), p. 2.
[17] Bonwick, A., 'Who really protects civilians?' *Development in Practice*, vol. 16, no. 3–4 (2006), pp. 270–77; and Metcalfe-Hough, V., *Localising Protection Responses in Conflicts: Challenges and Opportunities*, Humanitarian Policy Group Report (Overseas Development Institute: Nov. 2019).
[18] See chapter 7, section II, in this volume.
[19] UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, 'Children and armed conflict', Report of the Secretary-General, A/73/907–S/2019/509, 20 June 2019.
[20] UN Security Council, 'Conflict related sexual violence', Report of the UN Secretary-General, S/2019/280, 29 Mar. 2019, p. 6.
[21] Kishi, R. et al., *'Terribly and Terrifyingly Normal': Political Violence Targeting Women* (ACLED: May 2019).
[22] Schlein, L., 'UN, ICRC address sexual, gender-based violence in conflict situations', Voice of America, 25 Feb. 2019; and UN Security Council Resolution 2467, 23 Apr. 2019.

health workers, hospitals and schools. Such violations appear to be on the increase—the rules that are meant to protect civilians in war are being broken regularly and systematically, while in remarks to the UN Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the UN secretary-general said compliance with international humanitarian law had 'deteriorated'.[23]

Consequences of armed conflicts in 2019

Armed conflicts result in loss of life and life-changing injuries, displacement of civilian populations and destruction of infrastructure and institutions. They also have long-term economic, developmental, political, environmental, health and social consequences.

The reduction in the severity of several armed conflicts in 2019 led to a further reduction in conflict fatalities in 2019, continuing a recent downward trend since 2014. Total deaths from organized violence, as measured by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), reached a 15-year high in 2014 with about 103 000 deaths. UCDP's most recent data, for 2018, showed almost 76 000 deaths, a decrease for the fourth successive year to a level 43 per cent lower than the latest peak in 2014.[24] More limited in its geographic coverage (for 2019 it covered all regions except Latin America and parts of Europe) but broader in scope in the forms of violence and conflict events covered, ACLED reported a 17 per cent reduction in fatalities from political violence from about 152 000 fatalities in 2018 to 126 000 in 2019, confirming a continuation in the downward trend. According to ACLED, reported fatalities decreased most substantially in the Middle East in 2019 (by 34 per cent), particularly in Iraq and Syria. However, significant increases in conflict-related fatalities were recorded in Burkina Faso (an increase of 625 per cent), Myanmar (582 per cent), Mozambique (197 per cent), Libya (74 per cent) and the DRC (18 per cent).[25]

Armed conflict is also a major driver of displacement.[26] The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2018 was 70.8 million (including 25.9 million refugees), up from 68.5 million in 2017 and twice as many people as 20 years ago.[27] It seems likely that these record numbers

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[23] See e.g. UN Security Council, 'Women and peace and security', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/800, 9 Oct. 2019; UN Secretary-General, 'Secretary-general's remarks to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict', 23 May 2019; and Safeguarding Health in Conflict, *Impunity Remains: 2018 Attacks on Health Care in 23 Countries in Conflict* (Safeguarding Health in Conflict: May 2019).

[24] Pettersson, T. et al., 'Organized violence, 1989–2018 and peace agreements', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 56, no. 4 (2019), pp. 589–603.

[25] Kishi et al. (note 14), pp. 13–14, 26–29.

[26] See Grip, L., 'Coping with crises: Forced displacement in fragile contexts', *SIPRI Yearbook 2017*, pp. 253–83.

[27] UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* (UN High Commissioner for Refugees: Geneva, 2019).

continued into 2019 (for which global figures were not yet available at the time of publication). In 2019, for example, the armed conflict in Syria continued to drive the world's largest refugee crisis, with 6.7 million refugees (up from 5.6 million in 2018) and more than 6 million Syrians internally displaced at the beginning of 2019—out of a total estimated population of 22 million people at the start of the civil war in 2011.[28] Displacement also dramatically increased in the Sahel region, and protracted displacement crises continued in many other places, including Afghanistan, the CAR, the DRC, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Venezuela and Yemen. Many displaced people crossed international borders in search of protection and assistance as refugees, although most were displaced within their own countries.[29]

In 2019 almost 30 million people in five countries (Afghanistan, the CAR, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan) and two regions (the Lake Chad Basin and central Sahel) were experiencing protracted conflict (or other forms of instability) and insecurity, and needed urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance. The DRC, Sudan, Syria and Yemen were almost certainly food insecure as well, but there was no updated acute food insecurity data for late 2019 available for them.[30] At the beginning of 2019, for example, more than half the population of Yemen (15.9 million people) were in urgent need of food and livelihood assistance.[31]

Large numbers of children suffer the consequences of armed conflicts: in 2018 (the latest year for which figures are available), 415 million children, almost one fifth of children worldwide, were living in areas affected by armed conflict (3 per cent fewer children than in 2017)—149 million in high-intensity or major armed conflict zones (i.e. those with 1000 or more conflict-related deaths in a year).[32] Hundreds of thousands of children die every year as a result of the indirect effects of conflict, including malnutrition, disease and the breakdown of healthcare, water supply and sanitation. The UN secretary-general's annual report on children and armed conflict documented more than 25 000 incidents of 'grave violations' against children in conflicts around the world in 2018—1000 less than in 2017 (which had been the highest ever recorded). The six categories of grave violations covered in the report are: killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children as soldiers,

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[28] On the armed conflict in Syria, see chapter 6, section II, in this volume.

[29] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Global Humanitarian Overview 2020* (UNOCHA: Geneva, Dec. 2019), p. 13.

[30] Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN and World Food Programme, 'Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations: A joint FAO/WFP update for the members of the United Nations Security Council', issue no. 7, Jan. 2020. See the relevant conflict chapters in this volume for the situations in the DRC, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

[31] UNOCHA (note 29), p. 12.

[32] Østby, G. et al., 'Children affected by armed conflict, 1990–2018', Conflict Trends no. 1, Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2020. For an overview of the literature on the use of children in armed conflict, see Haer, R., 'Children and armed conflict: Looking at the future and learning from the past', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2019), pp. 74–91.

sexual violence against children, abduction of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access.[33]

New data in 2019 from the World Health Organization suggested that one in five people living in conflict zones have mental health conditions. This is a figure substantially higher than previously thought—data it published in 2016 suggested that 1 in 16 people suffered from such problems in conflict zones.[34]

Armed conflict also imposes substantial economic costs on society. While calculating the economic costs of violence is extremely difficult, one study estimated the global cost to be $14.1 trillion in 2018, or 11.2 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP). This was a slight improvement on the 2017 calculation, mainly due to significant reductions in the economic impact of armed conflict and terrorism in 2018. The economic impact of violence in the 10 most affected countries was equivalent to 35 per cent of their GDP; the economic costs of violence in Syria, Afghanistan and the CAR in 2018 were equivalent to 67, 47 and 42 per cent of GDP, respectively.[35]

Finally, armed conflict also contributes to the deteriorating condition of the global environment, with consequences for sustainable development, human security and ecosystems—vulnerabilities that are being amplified by increasingly unpredictable climate patterns.[36] In South Sudan, for example, efforts to rebuild globally important protected areas in 2019 were hampered by insecurity and small arms proliferation.[37] States and armed groups also used the environment as a weapon to target vulnerable populations. In Syria, for example, crop fields were deliberately set on fire, resulting in wildfires that affected food security.[38] In July 2019 the International Law Commission (ILC)—a body of experts established in 1947 by the UN General Assembly to help develop and codify international law—adopted 28 legal principles intended to enhance the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts.[39] The ILC has been working on this initiative since 2013, and many other independent experts have called for a Fifth Geneva Convention relative

[33] UN General Assembly and UN Security Council, A/73/907–S/2019/509 (note 19), p. 2.

[34] Charlson, F. et al., 'New WHO prevalence estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings: A systematic review and meta-analysis', *The Lancet*, vol. 394, no. 10194 (2019), pp. 240–48.

[35] Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index 2019: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (Institute for Economics and Peace: Sydney, June 2019), p. 3. Also see Iqbal, M. et al., 'Estimating the global economic cost of violence: Methodology improvement and estimate updates', *Defence and Peace Economics* (2019).

[36] Schaar, J., 'A confluence of crises: On water, climate and security in the Middle East and North Africa', SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security, no. 2019/4, July 2019; and *The Economist*, 'How climate change can fuel wars', 23 May 2019.

[37] Mednick, S., 'South Sudan tries to protect wildlife after long conflict', Associated Press, 27 July 2019.

[38] Parker, B., 'As crops burn in Syria conflict zone, hunger warnings for civilians', New Humanitarian, 7 June 2019.

[39] Pantazopoulos, S., 'UN lawyers approve 28 legal principles to reduce the environmental impact of war', Conflict and Environment Observatory, 16 July 2019; and UN General Assembly, 'Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts', International Law Commission, 6 June 2019.

Table 2.1. Number of peace agreements, 2010–19

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
33	51	62	42	79	69	75	74	69	21[a]

[a] At the time of writing, the PA-X database contained 19 peace agreements and excluded the two peace accords in Mozambique because the texts were not publicly available (see table 2.2).

Source: PA-X, 'Peace agreements database and access tool, version 3', Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh, [n.d.], <https://www.peaceagreements.org>.

to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War on the environment.[40] States debated the draft principles during the UN General Assembly Sixth Committee meeting in November 2019, and a final version of the principles is expected to be adopted in 2021.[41]

Peace processes in 2019

Like the conflicts they attempt to address, peace processes are also increasingly complex, multidimensional and highly internationalized, with a wide range of actors, activities and outcomes.[42] There is also a growing number of peace agreement databases and collections, although the evidence suggests that there have been fewer peace agreements, despite increasing numbers of armed conflicts in recent years.[43] According to the UCDP, for example, in the period 1991–94 the peak in the number of armed conflicts corresponded with a similar peak in peace agreements (82 peace agreements

[40] See e.g. an open letter from a group of conservation biologists who witnessed the impact on wildlife in the Sahel from arms proliferation: Durant, S. M. and Brito, J. C., 'Stop military conflicts from trashing environment', *Nature*, vol. 571 (25 July 2019); and Gleick, P., 'Protecting the environment in times of war', Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 20 Sep. 2019.

[41] UN General Assembly, Sixth Committee, 'Sixth Committee speakers debate scope for draft texts on Protection of Environment in Armed Conflict, as International Law Commission review continues', GA/L/3610, 5 Nov. 2019; and Conflict and Environment Observatory, 'Report: 2019's UN General Assembly debate on the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts', Dec. 2019.

[42] Wolff, S., 'The making of peace: Processes and agreements', *Armed Conflict Survey*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2018), pp. 65–80. On the role of donor support, see Ross, N. and Schomerus, M., 'Donor support to peace processes: A lessons for peace literature review', Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 571, Feb. 2020. On implementation measures for peace agreements, see Molloy, S. and Bell, C., *How Peace Agreements Provide for Implementation* (Political Settlements Research Programme: 2019). On the role of human rights in peace agreements, see Lacatus, C. and Nash, K., 'Peace agreements and the institutionalisation of human rights: A multi-level analysis', *International Journal of Human Rights* (2019).

[43] Examples include: UN Peacemaker, 'Peace agreements database', [n.d.], <https://peacemaker.un.org/document-search>; UN Peacemaker and University of Cambridge, 'Language of peace database', [n.d.], <https://www.languageofpeace.org/#/>; University of Edinburgh, Political Settlements Research Programme, 'PA-X peace agreements database', [n.d.], <https://www.peaceagreements.org/search>; University of Notre Dame, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 'Peace accords matrix', [n.d.], <https://peaceaccords.nd.edu>; and UCDP, 'UCDP peace agreement dataset', [n.d.], <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/>.

in 192 active 'conflict years'). However, in the 207 conflict years recorded in the period 2015–18, only 23 peace agreements were concluded.[44]

The PA-X database, which contains 1832 peace agreements found in more than 150 peace processes in the period 1990–2019 (including agreements from a wider variety of negotiation practices than covered by the UCDP), shows a particularly strong decrease in 2019 compared to the previous nine years (see table 2.1). A less effective and less influential UN Security Council may be partly to blame for the lower number of peace agreements in 2019. For example, the International Crisis Group cited three geopolitical trends affecting the UN Security Council in 2019: worsening Western tensions with China, diverging United States and European strategies, and tensions over how to deal with crises in Africa, including between the UN and the African Union.[45]

The 21 new peace agreements in 2019 are listed in table 2.2. Ten relate to local agreements and 11 to intrastate (national agreements), although most of the latter were renewal or implementation accords. Two new substantive national peace agreements were signed in sub-Saharan Africa: in the CAR and in Mozambique. In the latter, former armed opposition group, the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), signed a ceasefire and a separate peace deal with the government, formally ending an armed conflict that first began in the late 1970s. In addition, relatively peaceful transitions of power in Ethiopia (in 2018) and Sudan (in 2019) and the implementation of a 2018 peace agreement in South Sudan led to significant decreases in armed violence in those three states.[46] Political change in Ukraine in 2019 also brought new vitality to efforts to end the six-year conflict with Russian-backed separatists in the country's eastern Donbas region.[47] Peace processes in two of the most protracted and complex armed conflicts had mixed results in 2019: in Afghanistan the Taliban–US peace talks collapsed in September 2019, before resuming in November 2019; and in Yemen the 2018 Stockholm Agreement was supplemented by a new peace accord, the November 2019 Riyadh Agreement, although much work was still needed to implement the two agreements.[48] On the Korean peninsula, discussions between the

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[44] Pettersson et al. (note 24), pp. 594–95.

[45] Gowan, R., 'Three troubling trends at the UN Security Council', International Crisis Group commentary, 6 Nov. 2019; and International Crisis Group, 'Council of despair? The fragmentation of UN diplomacy', Special Briefing no. 1, 30 Apr. 2019. On the lack of cooperation in the international system, and specifically Western tensions with China, also see chapter 1 and chapter 4, section I, in this volume.

[46] On the peace processes in sub-Saharan Africa, see chapter 7 in this volume.

[47] On the peace process in Ukraine, see chapter 5, section II, in this volume.

[48] On the peace process in Afghanistan, see chapter 4, section II, in this volume; on the peace process in Yemen, see chapter 6, section V, in this volume.

Table 2.2. Peace agreements in 2019

Country	Date of agreement	Agreement	Conflict level	Stage
Afghanistan	8 July 2019	Resolution of Intra Afghan Peace Conference in Doha, Qatar (Doha Roadmap for Peace)	Intrastate	Pre-negotiation/process
Central African Republic	6 March 2019	Compte Rendu des Activities du Comite de Suivi de L'Accord de Paix a Bangassou	Local	Implementation/renegotiation (addresses new or outstanding issues)
	5 February 2019	Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (Khartoum Accord)	Intrastate	Framework/substantive—comprehensive (agreement)
	21 January 2019	Proces verbal de gestion de conflit	Local	Framework/substantive—partial (core issue)
	9 January 2019	Accord Entre Les Groupes Armes de Batangafo	Local	Framework/substantive—partial (multiple issues)
Libya	22 January 2019	Statement from the Sheikhs and Dignitaries of the Tribes of Tarhunah Regarding the Events Taking Place in Southern Tripoli	Local	Framework/substantive—partial (multiple issues)
Mali	1 August 2019	Humanitarian agreement between Bambara and Bozo farmers, Fulani herders as well as hunters from the area ('circle') of Djenné	Local	Framework/substantive—partial (core issue)
	25 July 2019	Agreement between the Dafing, Samogo, Fulani, Dogon and Bozo communities of the Baye municipality, located in the area ('circle') of Bankass and the region of Mopti (Baye agreement)	Local	Framework/substantive—partial (core issue)
Mozambique[a]	6 August 2019	Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement, between the Government of Mozambique and Renamo, signed at Praça da Paz in Maputo	Intrastate	Unknown

Country	Date of agreement	Agreement	Conflict level	Stage
Mozambique *continued*	1 August 2019	Agreement between the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO to definitively cease military hostilities, signed in Chitengo, Gorongosa National Park	Intrastate	Ceasefire
Philippines	22 December 2019	Context and premises of the CPP declaration of ceasefire (December 23, 2019 to January 7, 2020)	Intrastate	Ceasefire/related (ceasefire)
South Sudan	7 November 2019	Communique on the occasion of the tripartite summit on the Revitalised Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in Republic of South Sudan	Intrastate	Renewal (renewal implementation)
Sudan	17 July 2019	Political agreement on establishing the structures and institutions of the transitional period between the Transitional Military Council and the Declaration of Freedom and Change Forces	Intrastate	Framework/ substantive—partial (multiple issues)
Syria	8 February 2019	Agreement of reconciliation between Hurras al-Din and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in the countryside of Aleppo	Local	Other
	10 January 2019	Agreement for a ceasefire and exchange of prisoners between Tahrir al-Sham and the National Liberation Front (NLF) in Idlib	Local	Ceasefire/related (ceasefire)
Ukraine	9 December 2019	Paris 'Normandie' Summit Common agreed conclusions	Intrastate	Implementation/ renegotiation (addresses new or outstanding issues)
	17 July 2019	Statement of the Trilateral Contact Group as of 17 July 2019	Intrastate	Renewal (renewal implementation)
Yemen	5 November 2019	Riyadh agreement between the legitimate Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council (STC)	Intrastate	Framework/ substantive—partial (multiple issues)

Country	Date of agreement	Agreement	Conflict level	Stage
Yemen *continued*	26 April 2019	Document of Reconciliation between areas of al-Mahariq and al-Saliyah, Sheikh Othman, Aden	Local	Ceasefire/related (ceasefire)
	7 April 2019	Document of Reconciliation and Forgiveness Between the Families of the Al Ali bin Ahmad Al Awlaqi Clan	Local	Framework/ substantive— comprehensive (agreement)
	16 January 2019	United Nations Security Council Resolution 2452	Intrastate	Ceasefire/related (related)

a The two peace agreements in Mozambique were not publicly available at the time of writing.

Notes: Pre-negotiation/process: Agreements that aim to get parties to the point of negotiating over the incompatibilities at the heart of the conflict.

Framework/substantive—partial: Agreements that concern parties that are engaged in discussion and agreeing to substantive issues to resolve the conflict, but only deal with some of the issues in ways that appear to contemplate future agreements to complete.

Framework/substantive—comprehensive: Agreements that concern parties that are engaged in discussion and agreeing to substantive issues to resolve the conflict, and appear to be set out as a comprehensive attempt to resolve the conflict.

Implementation/renegotiation: Aiming to implement an earlier agreement.

Renewal: These are short agreements (typically of just one page), which do nothing other than 'renew' previous commitments.

Ceasefire/related: This category contains agreements which provide in their entirety for a ceasefire, or association demobilization, or an agreement that is purely providing a monitoring arrangement for, or extension, of a ceasefire.

Other: This is a residual category, capturing all agreements that do not fit the definitions above.

Sources: PA-X, 'Peace agreements database and access tool, version 3', Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh, [n.d.], <https://www.peaceagreements.org>; Bell, C. et al., 'Peace agreement database and dataset v3, codebook', 31 Jan. 2020, <https://www.peaceagreements.org/files/PA-X%20codebook%20Version3.pdf>; Government of Mozambique, 'Presidente da República e Presidente da Renamo assinam acordo' [President of the Republic and President of Renamo sign agreement], [n.d.]; and Government of Mozambique, '"Hoje é dia da celebração da paz e da concórdia entre os moçambicanos"—PR' ["Today is the day for the celebration of peace and harmony between Mozambicans"—PR], [n.d.].

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) and the USA that had seemed promising in 2018 stalled in 2019.[49]

Peacebuilding efforts typically include: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants; ceasefire negotiations; signing of peace agreements; multilateral peace operations; power-sharing arrangements; and state-building measures. These are all designed to

[49] On the North Korean–US talks, see chapter 1, chapter 4, section I, and chapter 11, section II, in this volume.

bring about sustainable peace among parties to a conflict.[50] Many of the DDR programmes are supported as part of UN peace operations.[51] There has also been more effort in recent years to make peace processes more inclusive, especially by promoting increased representation of women. However, women continue to be under-represented in the political–military hierarchies at the centre of peace negotiations.[52] Efforts at increasing women's participation in peace operations and in improving gender training for peacekeepers have had similarly limited results.[53]

Not all peace processes lead to sustainable peace. Inconclusive political settlements, failure to address the root causes of a conflict, and ongoing insecurity and tensions have often led to non-compliance, violations and a recurrence of armed conflict.[54] Many contemporary peace processes are long, drawn-out affairs that 'institutionalise forms of disagreement' to contain rather than resolve the conflict.[55] Indeed, this may be the best option where resolution of the conflict is not possible. Some peace agreements break down and hostilities resume, whereas others achieve a relatively stable ceasefire but not a sustainable conflict settlement (such as the unresolved armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space, see chapter 5). Even relatively successful peace agreements, such as the 2016 agreement in Colombia, face continuing challenges (see chapter 3).

Since the mid-1990s most armed conflicts have been new outbreaks of old conflicts rather than conflicts over new issues. One study of 216 peace agreements signed during 1975–2011 revealed that 91 were followed by a resumption of violence within five years. This indicates that peace processes

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[50] On multilateral peace operations, see section II in this chapter. On various interpretations of the term 'peace' as well as other tools for realizing peace, see Caparini, M. and Milante, G., 'Sustaining peace and sustainable development in dangerous places', *SIPRI Yearbook 2017*, pp. 211–52; and Caplan, R., *Measuring Peace: Principles, Practices and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[51] UN Peacekeeping, 'Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration', [n.d.]. Also see Bussmann, M., 'Military integration, demobilization, and the recurrence of civil war', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2019), pp. 95–111.

[52] Bell, C. and McNicholl, K., 'Principled pragmatism and the "Inclusion Project": Implementing a gender perspective in peace agreements', *feminists@law*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2019). Also see Wise, L. et al., 'Local peace processes: Opportunities and challenges for women's engagement', PA-X Spotlight, University of Edinburgh, 2019; Bell, C. and Forster, R., 'Women and the renegotiation of transitional governance arrangements', PA-X Spotlight, University of Edinburgh, 2019; and Forster, R. and Bell, C., 'Gender mainstreaming in ceasefires: Comparative data and examples', PA-X Spotlight, University of Edinburgh, 2019.

[53] Smit, T. and Tidblad-Lundholm, K., *Trends in Women's Participation in UN, EU and OSCE Peace Operations*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 47 (SIPRI: Stockholm, Oct. 2018); Ferrari, S. S., 'Is the United Nations Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy on track to reach its goals', SIPRI Commentary, 12 Dec. 2019; and Caparini, M., 'Gender training for police peacekeepers: Approaching two decades of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325', SIPRI Commentary, 31 Oct. 2019.

[54] Bell, C. and Pospisil, J., 'Navigating inclusion in transitions from conflict: The formalised political unsettlement', *Journal of International Development*, vol. 29, no. 5 (2017), pp. 576–93.

[55] See e.g. Pospisil, J., *Peace in Political Unsettlement: Beyond Solving Conflict* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2019); and Wittke, C., 'The Minsk Agreements—more than "scraps of paper"?', *East European Politics*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2019), pp. 264–90.

are difficult, complex and multifaceted, but that more peace agreements succeed than fail.[56] It may also indicate that root causes of conflicts are not being sufficiently addressed. Finally, this blurred boundary between war and peace also makes it difficult to identify and conceptualize the end of an armed conflict.[57]

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[56] Högbladh, S., 'Peace agreements 1975–2011—Updating the UCDP peace agreement dataset', eds T. Pettersson and L. Themnér, *States in Armed Conflict 2011*, Department of Peace and Conflict Research Report no. 99 (Uppsala University: Uppsala, 2012), pp. 39–56.

[57] De Franco, C. et al., 'How do wars end? A multidisciplinary enquiry', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 42, no. 7 (2019), pp. 889–900. Also see Krause, J., 'How do wars end? A strategic perspective', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 42, no. 7 (2019), pp. 920–45.