

### 3. Armed conflict and peace processes in the Americas

#### Overview

*In 2019 non-international armed conflicts, as defined under international humanitarian law, were present in two countries in the Americas: Colombia and Mexico. Implementation of the 2016 Colombian peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People’s Army continued throughout 2019. At the same time the Government of Colombia was involved in several non-international armed conflicts with non-signatory non-state armed groups, while there were additional conflicts among such groups. The fragmentation and growing presence of these groups threaten to destabilize the fragile peace that has sustained since ratification of the peace agreement. In Mexico amid record levels of homicides, a non-international armed conflict has also emerged between the state and the criminal syndicate Jalisco New Generation Cartel. Beyond the strict definitions of international humanitarian law, various forms of armed violence affected these and other countries across the region.*

*There were four multilateral peace operations active in the Americas in 2019: the new United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti; the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti; the UN Verification Mission in Colombia; and the Organization of American States (OAS) Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia. Additionally, the OAS established a special commission on Nicaragua. However, the OAS Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras failed to reach agreement on renewal of its mandate with the Government of Honduras.*

*According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, global deaths caused by criminal activity far exceeded those caused by conflicts and terrorism combined. By the metric of homicides, in which organized crime has a significant role, the Americas remained the world’s most violent region in 2019. Armed criminal violence continued to affect key parts of the region from Mexico to Brazil. In 2019 Mexico experienced the highest number of homicides in a century.*

*Dubbed the ‘year of rage’, 2019 saw marked political unrest in which waves of mass demonstrations swept across many of the region’s countries. While triggered by differing issues or events, many of the protests had similar underlying causes, including economic pressures from slow rates of economic growth since 2015, persistently high levels of inequality, discontent with the functioning of democratic institutions and processes, and enduring problems of corruption and abuse of power by political and economic elites.*

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