

I. Key general developments in the region

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One armed conflict was active in Europe in 2019: in Ukraine (see section II). Although most of Europe has seemed peaceful for about two decades, various tensions remain, such as: (a) persistent tensions between Russia and most of the rest of Europe; (b) long-standing conflicts that have not yet been resolved, especially in the post-Soviet space, the Western Balkans and Cyprus; and (c) the security challenges in Europe's southern flank, including several European states' involvement in armed conflicts in Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and sub-Saharan Africa. These three issues are discussed briefly below.

There were 18 multilateral peace operations active in Europe in 2019, all of which had been active in the previous year. Many of these operations have been active for many years in former Soviet and Yugoslav republics that experienced conflict, often over disputed territory, following the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The only peace operations in Europe established more recently were deployed in response to the outbreak of conflict in Ukraine in 2014. Most of these missions are strictly civilian and relatively small. The number of personnel deployed in peace operations in Europe is therefore relatively small compared to the number of operations deployed and to most other regions. The number of personnel serving in multilateral peace operations in Europe fell by 3.8 per cent during 2019, from 8126 to 7819.

One peace process that had positive developments and also setbacks in 2019 was the North Macedonia integration issue. In June 2018 the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) reached agreement with Greece to change its name to the Republic of North Macedonia.¹ Following a referendum in FYROM in September 2018 the final steps to implement the agreement—ratification in the Greek and Macedonian parliaments—were taken in January 2019, thereby ending a 27-year dispute over the name of Macedonia.² While this has set North Macedonia on the path to eventual membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), anticipated European Union (EU) accession talks were subsequently blocked by a few EU member states, led by France.³

¹ Kitsantonis, N., 'Macedonia agrees to change its name to resolve dispute with Greece', *New York Times*, 12 June 2018. Also see Davis, I., 'Armed conflict and peace processes in Europe', *SIPRI Yearbook 2019*, p. 76.

² Pardew, J., 'Something remarkable just happened in the Balkans', *The Hill*, 31 Jan. 2019; and *The Economist*, 'Macedonia gets a new name and a new start', 17 Jan. 2019.

³ Rankin, J., 'EU failure to open membership talks with Albania and North Macedonia condemned', *The Guardian*, 18 Oct. 2019.

Tensions with Russia

Persistent tensions between Russia and large parts of the rest of Europe have led to several highly militarized and contested security contexts, such as those in the Black Sea region.⁴ One manifestation is growing military spending, especially among NATO countries bordering Russia in Eastern Europe.⁵ Moreover, measures intended to reduce the risk of the re-emergence of military confrontation in Europe are strained, with little prospect of new approaches to risk reduction being agreed.⁶ Allegations of Russian non-compliance with the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, for example, could not be resolved and led to the withdrawal of the United States from the treaty in August 2019.⁷

In the last decade Russia has been widely accused within Europe and North America of systematically undermining regional security.⁸ In 2019 for example, it was reported that security officials from several Western countries had concluded that a series of past Russian operations in Europe formed a coordinated and ongoing destabilization campaign from a dedicated unit within the Russian intelligence system known as Unit 29155.⁹ However, there were also a few signs and attempts at seeking a more pragmatic approach to Russia.¹⁰ For example, French President Emmanuel Macron talked about the need to ‘rebuild or build a new architecture of trust and security in Europe and clarify our relationship with Russia’.¹¹ In addition, despite Russian–US relations balancing on the edge of further deterioration throughout the

⁴ Melvin, N. J., ‘Rebuilding collective security in the Black Sea region’, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 50, Dec. 2018; and Åtland, K. and Kabanenko, I., ‘Russia and its western neighbours: A comparative study of the security situation in the Black, Baltic and Barents Sea regions’, *Europe–Asia Studies*, vol. 72, no. 2 (2019), pp. 286–313.

⁵ Tian, N. et al., ‘Trends in world military expenditure, 2018’, SIPRI Fact Sheet, Apr. 2019. On military spending in NATO, also see chapter 8, section II and III, in this volume.

⁶ On the evolving strategic environment in Europe and opportunities for risk reduction, see Anthony, I., ‘Reducing military risk in Europe’, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 51, June 2019.

⁷ On the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, see chapter 11, section I, in this volume.

⁸ On the deteriorating relationship between Russia and the USA, see Smith, D., ‘International tensions and shifting dynamics of power’, *SIPRI Yearbook 2018*, pp. 11–12; Smith, D., ‘International tensions and the dynamics of power’, *SIPRI Yearbook 2019*, pp. 18–19; and chapter 1 in this volume. For a comparative study of the official peace and war narratives of Russia and the USA as presented at the United Nations Security Council, see Bakalova, E. and Jüngling, K., ‘Conflict over peace? The United States’ and Russia’s diverging conceptual approaches to peace and conflict settlement’, *Europe–Asia Studies*, vol. 72, no. 2 (2019), pp. 155–79.

⁹ Schwirtz, M., ‘Top secret Russian unit seeks to destabilize Europe, security officials say’, *New York Times*, 8 Oct. 2019.

¹⁰ See e.g. Chazan, D., ‘France says “time has come” to ease tensions with Russia’, *The Telegraph*, 9 Sep. 2019; and Graham, T., ‘Let Russia be Russia: The case for a more pragmatic approach to Moscow’, *Foreign Affairs*, Nov./Dec. 2019.

¹¹ NATO, ‘Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of France Emmanuel Macron’, 28 Nov. 2019.

year, US President Donald J. Trump repeatedly mentioned his intention to improve dialogue with Russia.¹²

Developments in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

There have been growing intra-NATO political tensions in recent years, and some of these fissures deepened in 2019 over a range of issues, including trade, climate change, Iran and arms control. Internal divisions within NATO—especially those generated by the leaders of France, Turkey and the USA—led to a low-key leaders meeting in the United Kingdom in December.¹³ However, despite this backdrop of transatlantic political anxiety there were at least four significant developments in NATO in 2019: (a) the latest element of the NATO readiness initiative, the Four Thirties—under which 30 mechanized battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat ships are to be ready within 30 days—was achieved; (b) the ‘out of area’ discussion returned with the efforts of President Macron to focus NATO more on Africa, and several member states (most notably, Germany, Turkey and USA) suggesting a stronger focus on the Middle East; (c) finding a common approach to the rise of China became NATO business for the first time; and (d) NATO agreed to initiate a ‘forward-looking reflection process’ on how to strengthen its political dimension.¹⁴

Unresolved conflicts

Inactive armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space

In 2019 three armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space—Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia and Azerbaijan), South Ossetia and Abkhazia (Georgia) and Trans-Dniester (Moldova)—remained relatively inactive (i.e. with fewer than 25 conflict-related deaths in the year). However, the socio-economic and political dimensions of the conflicts continued to evolve, and the armed forces of the various parties largely remained in a heightened state of readiness.¹⁵ The conflicts are all tied to the wider European security framework because they represent a significant part of Russia’s leverage in that discourse.

¹² See e.g. Wadhams, N. and Arkhipov, I., ‘Secretary Pompeo to meet with Putin as President Trump seeks better Russia ties—again’, *Time*, 11 May 2019.

¹³ *The Economist*, ‘NATO’s Watford summit features a troublesome trio’, 1 Dec. 2019.

¹⁴ NATO, ‘London Declaration issued by the heads of state and government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3–4 December 2019’, 4 Dec. 2019; Fiorenza, N., ‘NATO improves force readiness’, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 4 Dec. 2019; and Mehta, A., ‘NATO struggles with its China conundrum’, *Defense News*, 3 Dec. 2019. On Turkish and US actions in Syria, see chapter 6, section II, in this volume. On Iranian–US tensions, see chapter 6, section I, in this volume. On France’s role in the Sahel, see chapter 7, section II, in this volume.

¹⁵ On developments in the conflicts in the post-Soviet space in 2018, see *SIPRI Yearbook 2019* (note 1), pp. 73–75. Also see Klimenko, E., ‘Protracted armed conflicts in the post-Soviet space and their impact on Black Sea security’, *SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security* no. 2018/8, Dec. 2018.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict—an interstate confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan over disputed territory—remained relatively calm in 2019. Ceasefire violations continued to take place along the line of contact but were fewer than in previous years.¹⁶ There were also growing hopes for progress in the decades-long peace process being mediated by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group.¹⁷ In January 2019 the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on the ‘necessity of taking concrete measures to prepare the populations for peace’.¹⁸ Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev held their first official meeting about Nagorno-Karabakh in March, where they committed to strengthen the ceasefire, improve communications and implement humanitarian projects.¹⁹

However, the killing of four soldiers in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone between 30 May and 13 June was a major setback for diplomacy, and by the end of the year the political process to reach a settlement appeared to have faltered.²⁰

The Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflicts in Georgia remained unresolved in 2019, with little sign of a political breakthrough. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are recognized only by Russia and four other states (Nauru, Nicaragua, Syria and Venezuela), while the rest of the international community regards them as being parts of Georgia. There are regular calls (mainly by Western institutions) on Russia to fulfil the terms of the 2008 ceasefire agreement and withdraw its forces from the breakaway territories.²¹ However, throughout the year Russia continued to voice support for the two breakaway regions and also announced that it would finance the modernization of Abkhazia’s armed forces.²²

¹⁶ Shiriyev, Z., ‘A listening tour of the Azerbaijani front lines’, International Crisis Group, 17 Sep. 2019.

¹⁷ Shiriyev, Z., ‘Old conflict, new Armenia: The view from Baku’, International Crisis Group commentary, 8 Feb. 2019. For a brief description and list of members of the OSCE Minsk Group, see annex B, section II, in this volume. Other peace proposals have included the peace initiative of Kazakhstan and Russia, the mediation efforts of Iran and Turkey, and the resolutions of the UN Security Council. Also see Gasparyan, A., ‘Understanding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: Domestic politics and twenty-five years of fruitless negotiations 1994–2018’, *Caucasus Survey*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2019), pp. 235–50.

¹⁸ OSCE, Press statement by the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, Press release, 16 Jan. 2019.

¹⁹ OSCE, Joint statement by the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, Press statement, 29 Mar. 2019. On the humanitarian impact of the conflict, see Istrate, D., ‘Nagorno Karabakh: An ongoing humanitarian crisis’, *Emerging Europe*, 12 Sep. 2019.

²⁰ Kucera, J., ‘Fatal frontline shootings heighten tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan’, Eurasianet, 3 June 2019; and International Crisis Group, *Digging out of Deadlock in Nagorno-Karabakh*, Europe Report no. 255 (International Crisis Group: Brussels, 20 Dec. 2019).

²¹ See e.g. OSCE, ‘OSCE Permanent Council no. 1236, Vienna, 18 July 2019, EU statement in reply to the address of Mr Lasha Darsalia, Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia’, PC.DEL/943/19, 22 July 2019.

²² TASS Russian News Agency, ‘Russia to finance modernization of Abkhazia’s armed forces’, 23 Aug. 2019.

In both of the breakaway regions there appeared to be growing discontent among some of the isolated ethnic Georgian populations living along the separation lines with limited movement into Georgian-controlled territory. In August for example, renewed fence building by Russian and South Ossetian border guards along the line between Georgia and South Ossetia—to which Georgia responded by building police stations in contested areas—led to rising tensions.²³ Mediators representing the EU, OSCE and United Nations criticized the closure of border crossings and called for all parties to engage more constructively.²⁴

The main OSCE negotiation forum for tackling practical problems in the conflict zones is the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, which was created in 2009 and involves regular meetings of Abkhaz/South Ossetian, Georgian and Russian security officials, facilitated by international mediators. The EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia remains the only international presence on the ground, although it is unable to operate in contested areas. In September the foreign ministers of Georgia and Russia held talks for the first time since the outbreak of the 2008 war between the two countries.²⁵

The Western Balkans

Areas of instability remain in the Western Balkans. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the complex political arrangements established by the 1995 Dayton Accords have contributed towards political deadlock and economic stagnation. The situation in the country now resembles a frozen conflict, but one where ethnic nationalist sentiment is on the rise.²⁶ In March the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia increased former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić's sentence from 40 years to life in prison during appeal proceedings on his 2016 conviction for war crimes committed during the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.²⁷

Tensions between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians continued in 2019, particularly in the Serb-majority northern part of Kosovo.²⁸ In May for example, a police raid on organized crime suspects in the northern part of Kosovo prompted Serbia to put its military on full combat alert.²⁹ A

²³ Vartanyan, O., 'Easing travel between Georgia and breakaway Abkhazia', International Crisis Group commentary, 5 Sep. 2019.

²⁴ OSCE, 'Press communiqué of the co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions', Press release, 3 Apr. 2019.

²⁵ Istrate, D., 'EU, UN praise Georgia for first-high level talks with Russia since 2008', Emerging Europe, 27 Sep. 2019.

²⁶ Brezar, A., 'Bosnia is close to the edge. We need Europe's help', *The Guardian*, 29 May 2019.

²⁷ BBC, 'Radovan Karadzic sentence increased to life at UN tribunal', 20 Mar. 2019.

²⁸ On the lasting controversies, implications and legacy of NATO's intervention in 1999, see Brown, D. and Smith, M. A. et al., 'Twenty years after Kosovo and allied force: Controversies, implications and legacy', Special issue, *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 38, no. 5 (2019).

²⁹ Bytyci, F. and Vasovic, A., 'Serbia places forces on alert after Kosovo police operation in Serb-populated north', Reuters, 28 May 2019.

Table 5.1. Mediterranean refugee and migrant situation, 2014–19

Year	Arrivals	Dead and missing
2014	225 455	3 538
2015	1 032 408	3 771
2016	373 652	5 096
2017	185 139	3 139
2018	141 472	2 277
2019	125 472	1 327

Note: Arrivals include sea arrivals to Cyprus, Italy and Malta, and sea and land arrivals to Greece and Spain.

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Operational portal, Refugee situations, Mediterranean situation', [n.d.].

comprehensive agreement that was unofficially proposed in 2018 by Serbian President Aleksander Vučić and Kosovan President Hashim Thaçi—which included an ethnic element in proposed border adjustments—continued to be opposed by domestic constituencies and the EU.³⁰ In August five NATO states (France, Germany, Italy, UK and USA) urged Kosovo and Serbia to enter into dialogue to alleviate tensions in the region.³¹ Twenty years after NATO ground troops first entered Kosovo, around 3500 alliance troops remained in the country as part of the Kosovo Force.³²

Cyprus

UN diplomats have been trying to broker an agreement to reunify Cyprus for decades. The latest negotiations collapsed in 2017 due to a failure to reach agreement on security guarantees and power-sharing arrangements.³³ A political settlement to the Cyprus conflict remained elusive in 2019, with oil and gas discoveries, maritime border disputes and regional power rivalries—including in relation to armed conflicts in the MENA region—adding to tensions.³⁴ Turkey sent ships to drill for oil and gas in waters off the coast of Cyprus, effectively triggering a Turkish border dispute with the EU.³⁵ The EU subsequently imposed limited sanctions on Turkey.³⁶

³⁰ Santora, M., 'Talk of ethnic partition of Kosovo revives old Balkan ghosts', *New York Times*, 19 Sep. 2018; and Wintour, P., 'Deal with Serbia possible this year, says Kosovan president', *The Guardian*, 15 Apr. 2019.

³¹ Deutsche Welle, 'Serbia, Kosovo urged to ease tensions by NATO countries', 13 Aug. 2019.

³² Sabbagh, D., "'Still needed': NATO marks 20 years in Kosovo', *The Guardian*, 12 June 2019.

³³ See Davis, I. and Anthony, I., 'Armed conflict in Europe', *SIPRI Yearbook 2018*, p. 62.

³⁴ On the armed conflicts in the MENA region, see chapter 6 in this volume.

³⁵ Al Jazeera, 'Cyprus calls Turkey gas exploration "provocative and aggressive"', 4 Oct. 2019.

³⁶ Sengül, E., 'EC adopts sanction framework for Turkish E.Med drilling', Anadolu Agency, 11 Nov. 2019.

The European response to security challenges in the south

Changes in the security dynamic linking South Eastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, MENA and other parts of Africa are exacerbating some unresolved conflicts, such as the one in Cyprus, and are also shaping broader European security responses in the south. For example, the NATO reflection process initiated in December 2019 is at least partly a response to the French call for more balance in thinking about the east and the south, including the fight against non-state groups in the Sahel.³⁷ Two issues at the forefront of European security thinking in recent years—migration and terrorism—both have a strong south dimension.

Managing irregular migration

While the number of refugees and migrants arriving in southern Europe continued to fall in 2019, as did the deaths of people crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa (see table 5.1), both remained issues of concern. Greece continued to be the recipient of the highest number of new arrivals, with over 74 000 in 2019.³⁸

The EU has been at the forefront of managing irregular migration to Europe.³⁹ In 2019 the new president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, laid out political guidelines that ensure migration will continue to be among the EU top priorities in the future.⁴⁰ One specific EU policy response has been to expand the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, commonly known as Frontex, which is expected to increase from 1300 to some 10 000 border guards by 2021.⁴¹

One of the main tasks of the new EU leadership is to find a common approach to the EU internal policy framework on migration.⁴² However, this is likely to be challenging given that the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was a divisive topic within the EU:

³⁷ Wintour P. and McKernan, B., 'Macron defends "brain-dead NATO" remarks as summit approaches', *The Guardian*, 28 Nov. 2019.

³⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Operational portal', [n.d.]; and Smith, H., 'Greece says it's "reached limit" as arrivals of refugees show no sign of slowing', *The Guardian*, 16 Dec. 2019.

³⁹ Irregular migration is defined as 'Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination'; see International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Glossary on Migration* (IOM: Geneva, 2019). On the initial EU policy response to the refugee crisis, see Grip, L., 'The global refugee crisis and its impact in Europe', *SIPRI Yearbook 2016*, pp. 439–52; and Grip, L., 'United Nations and regional responses to displacement crises', *SIPRI Yearbook 2017*, pp. 280–82.

⁴⁰ European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council, Progress report on the implementation of the European agenda on migration', COM(2019) 481 final, 16 Oct. 2019; and von der Leyen, U., 'A union that strives for more, my agenda for Europe: Political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019–2024', 16 July 2019.

⁴¹ European Commission, 'EU delivers on stronger European Border and Coast Guard to support member states', Press release, 8 Nov. 2019.

⁴² On the EU internal dimension to migration, see Kadysheva, O. et al., *Common Home: Migration and Development in Europe and Beyond* (Caritas Europa: Brussels, Nov. 2019).

at the UN General Assembly, three EU member states voted against it, five abstained and one did not vote.⁴³ Going forward supporters of the GCM will want to see elements of it included in EU decisions, while opponents will scrutinize any such proposals critically.

Irregular migration fears have also been a prominent driver in EU engagement with Turkey and Libya. In July 2019 Turkey suspended its 2016 readmission agreement with the EU in which Turkey agreed to accept the return of irregular migrants and asylum seekers who crossed from its territory to Greece after 20 March 2016.⁴⁴ In the past three years, only 1884 people were returned to Turkey under the agreement, and its suspension largely reflected Turkey's broader grievances with the EU, including the lack of progress on visa liberalization and EU sanctions related to oil drilling near Cyprus (see above).⁴⁵

In October as a result of European criticism of Turkish military actions against Kurdish groups in Syria, Turkish President Recep Erdoğan threatened to 'open the gates' and send 3.6 million refugees to Europe.⁴⁶ While Turkey did not follow through with this threat, at the end of the year it warned of a potentially new wave of refugees from an escalation in the Syrian armed conflict.⁴⁷

In Libya the EU has also sought to prevent irregular migration to Europe through two Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions, including assistance to the Libyan border and coast guard and other support for local migration management.⁴⁸ A Tripartite Taskforce on the Situation of Stranded Migrant and Refugees in Libya (established by the African Union, the EU and the UN) has facilitated the repatriation of more than 50 000 African migrants from Libya since it was created in November 2017.⁴⁹ However, aid and human rights groups have criticized Europe's outsourcing of migration controls to 'buffer' countries like Libya, Niger and Turkey for

⁴³ On the creation of the GCM, see *SIPRI Yearbook 2019*, pp. 39–40. Czechia, Hungary and Poland voted against it; Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia and Romania abstained; and Slovakia did not vote.

⁴⁴ On the 2016 EU–Turkey deal, see *SIPRI Yearbook 2017*, pp. 157, 158, 280, 281.

⁴⁵ *Daily Sabah*, 'Readmission agreement with EU no longer functional, Ankara says', 23 July 2019; and Euractiv, 'Turkey suspends deal with the EU on migrant readmission', 24 July 2019.

⁴⁶ Safi, M. and McKernan, B., 'US warns Turkey of red lines as Syria offensive death toll mounts', *The Guardian*, 11 Oct. 2019. On Turkey's role in the armed conflict in Syria, see chapter 6, section II, in this volume.

⁴⁷ Squires, N., 'Turkey warns refugee crisis could return with a vengeance in 2020 as Greece struggles with overcrowded camps', *The Telegraph*, 24 Dec. 2019.

⁴⁸ The two CSDP missions in Libya are EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and EUBAM Libya. See EU External Action Service, 'EU–Libya relations', 25 Sep. 2019. On the armed conflict in Libya, see chapter 6, section IV, in this volume.

⁴⁹ EU External Action Service, 'Joint press release—Meeting of the Joint AU–EU–UN Taskforce to address the migrant and refugee situation in Libya', 25 Sep. 2019.

contributing to conflict dynamics and abuses in detention centres.⁵⁰ These criticisms extend to the broader trend of increased securitization of different aspects of migration policy.⁵¹

Counterterrorism

In recent years, some European states (including Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden and UK) have been directly involved in conducting or assisting military action against non-state armed groups operating in Afghanistan (chapter 4), the MENA region (chapter 6) and parts of Africa (chapter 7). Several other European states have been involved in missions to train local security forces or assist countries in those regions to strengthen their counterterror capacity, often in close coordination with the USA.

Terrorism continued to constitute a significant threat to security in Europe in 2019, although the latest trend reports (covering periods to the end of 2018 only) indicate a declining risk. For example, the *Global Terrorism Index 2019* showed that the number of deaths from terrorism in Europe fell for the second successive year, from over 200 in 2017 to 62 in 2018.⁵² Similarly, Europol (covering EU member states only) recorded a decline in militant Islamist attacks (as compared to 2017), and for the third year in a row an increase in arrests linked to right-wing terrorism. Overall however, the number of failed, foiled or completed terrorist attacks in the EU in 2018 remained low (129 in total), with ethnonationalist and separatist terrorist attacks (83 in total) greatly outnumbering other types of terrorist attacks.⁵³ How to deal with returning foreign fighters (individuals that have joined an armed conflict abroad) remained one of Europe's main counterterrorism challenges.⁵⁴ At least 450 suspected European foreign fighters were estimated to be detained in Iraq and Syria, together with about 700–750 European children.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ See e.g. de Bellis, M., 'Europe's shameful failure to end the torture and abuse of refugees and migrants in Libya', Amnesty International, 7 Mar. 2019; Andersson, R. and Keen, D., *Partners in Crime? The Impacts of Europe's Outsourced Migration Controls on Peace Stability and Rights* (Saferworld: July 2019); and Medecins Sans Frontieres, 'Trading in suffering: Detention, exploitation and abuse in Libya', 23 Dec. 2019.

⁵¹ See e.g. Mixed Migration Centre, 'The ever-rising securitisation of mixed migration', 17 Dec. 2019.

⁵² Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism* (Institute for Economics & Peace: Sydney, Nov. 2019), p. 3.

⁵³ Europol, *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019* (Europol: June 2019).

⁵⁴ See e.g. Renard, T. and Coolsaet, R., 'Losing control over returnees?', *Lawfare*, 13 Oct. 2019; and Metodjeva, A., 'Europe's state of denial about Islamic State returnees', German Marshall Fund, 7 Nov. 2019.

⁵⁵ Coolsaet, R. and Renard, T., 'New figures on European nationals detained in Syria and Iraq', Egmont Institute Research Note, 15 Oct. 2019.