

Peace processes in the third quarter of 2010

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- ❑ The President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, announced the launch of a peace plan for the country to be directed by a High Peace Council.
- ❑ In the Philippines, the MILF abandoned its request for independence for certain regions of Mindanao and instead agreed to create a sub-state or an autonomous republic.
- ❑ In Kosovo, the International Court of Justice handed down a non-binding ruling that the 2008 declaration of independence did not violate either international law or United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.
- ❑ Turkey launched a dialogue process with the PKK, which claimed that it was willing to disarm if certain conditions were met, and which expressed its support of setting up an autonomous regime.
- ❑ The talks between Israel and Palestine were questioned after Israel's decision not to renew the moratorium on settlement building in the West Bank.

In this section, we will analyse the armed or unresolved conflicts that have entered into a formal negotiation phase, that are immersed in a clear peace process, that are exploring the start of negotiations or that have broken off or frozen negotiations for some reason. We will also comment on the status of affairs in Angola (Cabinda), Senegal (Casamance), Somalia, Colombia and Israel-Syria, even though there are no negotiations underway in these countries right now, and on the state of affairs in the Central African Republic.

3.1. Evolution in the peace processes

Table 3.1. Evolution in the negotiations at the end of the third quarter of 2010

Good (2)	With difficulties (15)	Poor (7)	In exploration (4)
<i>Ethiopia (UWSLF)</i> <i>Myanmar (DKBA)</i>	Nigeria (MEND) Ethiopia (ONLF) Sudan (LJM) India (ULFA) <i>India (NSCM-IM)</i> India-Pakistan Philippines (MILF) <i>Philippines (MNLF)</i> <i>Cyprus</i> <i>Kosovo</i> <i>Moldova (Transnistria)</i> Turkey (PKK) <i>Armenia-Azerbaijan</i> <i>Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)</i> <i>Palestine</i>	Sudan (JEM) Chad <i>Morocco (Western Sahara)</i> <i>China (Tibet)</i> <i>Myanmar (NLD)</i> Israel-Palestine Yemen	Sudan (SLA al-Nur) Afghanistan India (CPI-M) India (NDFB)

(The italics indicate unresolved conflicts which are not in a phase of armed conflict or which cannot be categorised as "armed conflicts" right now. Only the processes which are starting this phase for the first time or after a long period without dialogues or rapprochements appear on the "Exploration" table.)

Of the 28 negotiations analysed, 15 are armed conflicts and 13 are unarmed. Four are in the exploratory stage. Of the remainder, 15 encountered difficulties, another seven went poorly and two proceeded well.

Africa

a) West Africa

In Angola (Cabinda), the President of the FLEC, N'Zita Tiago, described the communiqué in which several leaders of the organisation called for an end to the armed struggle in Cabinda as a "coup d'état", and he claimed that it was issued without his consent. This situation led the FLEC leader in exile (he now lives in Paris) to take charge once again. He dismissed the Vice President, Alexander Tati, the Chief of Staff, Estanislau Boma, the Head of National Security, Carlos Moises, and the Special Advisor to the President, Luis Veras Luemba. N'Tiza Tiago appealed to the population of Cabinda to keep up its struggle for sovereignty.

In Nigeria (Niger Delta), in the centre of the Obubra amnesty (state of Cross River), the reinsertion programme for former combatants got underway, which extended to more than 20,000 former members of MEND and other armed groups in the Delta area. The programme, which lasted four weeks, was led by European and US trainers.

In Senegal (Casamance), the local media reported that there had been clashes between different MFDC factions in July. The recent proclamation of Ousman Niatang Diatta as Chief of Staff, taking over for César Atoute Badiate, and of Nkrumah Sané as Secretary-General of the movement, replacing Jean Marie François Biagui, were the causes behind the heightened tensions among the factions.

b) Horn of Africa

In Ethiopia, the armed group ONLF confirmed in late August that they may end up signing a peace agreement with Ethiopia despite the declarations by a spokesman of the group in Doha, Hussein Nor, that had labelled the negotiations underway propaganda, as he claimed that they had taken place among renegade leaders of the ONLF. The newspaper Sudan Tribune had received confirmation from the armed group's Foreign Bureau of its willingness to work towards a political solution to the conflict. The ONLF labelled the information from the supposed spokesman, which was also published in the newspaper, as an attempt to sow confusion. Around 20 ONLF leaders had met with government representatives. The government, led by the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, confirmed the contacts to achieve a peace agreement with the ONLF. The negotiations between both parties started after an offer extended by the central government, after which the group consulted with its bases, traditional leaders and intellectuals in the region. In September, a group of Ogadeni activists in exile, Resolve Ogaden Coalition (ROC), announced that it did not recognise the peace negotiations that were taking place between the Ethiopian government and supposed representatives of the ONLF, such as Salah al-Din Macow, the purported leader of one faction of the ONLF. They stressed that these bilateral talks would not bring peace to the region.

The armed group UWSLF signed a peace agreement with the Ethiopian government in Addis Ababa on the 29th of July, which put an end to two decades of conflict. The agreement, which was signed by the leader of the group, Sheikh Abdurahim Mohammed Hussein, and senior government officials in the presence of the AU and the United Nations, entailed granting prior amnesty to the members of the group and the launch of development projects in the Ogaden region. The Sheikh issued a call encouraging other rebel groups to commit to peace initiatives. Both parties took part in several rounds of negotiations, although the important step came in April 2010 when the group agreed to give up violence. The UWSLF is a rival of the ONLF, the leading insurgency in the region. The armed group ONLF described the agreement as rubbish and stated that it had no impact on the ground and that it represented an attempt by the regime and its representatives to promote the idea that a nonexistent peace process was underway in Ogaden. The ONLF stated that the UWSLF had no grassroots support in Ogaden and reiterated that any rapprochement between the people of Ogaden and the Ethiopian government had to take place with international mediation and on neutral ground.

Regarding Somalia, during a meeting in Addis Ababa in July the regional organisation in the Horn of Africa, IGAD, renewed its appeals to the United Nations to replace the AU mission in Somalia, AMISOM. Uganda asked for the mission's mandate to be extended so that the insurgent organisation Al-Shabab could be dealt with. The AU announced its decision to boost the military component of AMISOM at the closure of the summit that the organisation held in Kampala between the 23rd and 27th of July. The AU decided to send 2,000 additional soldiers to join the 6,300 that were already in the country, the new ones provided by Uganda and Burundi, in order to reach the maximum of 8,000 stipulated at the beginning. In September, the Somali Prime Minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Shamarke, resigned after being heavily pressured as a result of the loss of confidence from the president of the TFG, who had declared his government ineffective. In parallel, the Islamist

militia Al-Shabab waged an offensive on the capital, Mogadishu, which aimed to bring down the TFG. This attack was repelled by the AU mission in the country, AMISOM, and by the pro-government militias.

In Sudan (Darfur), the founding leader of the armed group SLA, Abdel Wahid al-Nur, met in July in Paris with the head of the joint AU/UN mediation team, Djibril Bassolé, and with Qatar's Foreign Minister, Ahmed Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmood. During this initial encounter, Al-Nur acknowledged the efforts being made by the government of Qatar to achieve peace in Darfur, and he expressed his willingness to continue negotiating with the mediation team on the conditions for his participation in the Doha peace talks. Al-Nur persisted in his demand for security for the people of Darfur and for allowing humanitarian organisations in the zone free access to care for the people affected by the conflict. These two conditions were non-negotiable for him to participate in any negotiation. Along the same lines, the presidential advisor in charge of the Darfur portfolio, Ghazi Salah Al-Deen, announced in the parliament that the government was trying to improve security in the region and thus facilitate the return of displaced persons, as well as to implement development projects. On another front, the Vice President of Sudan and President of the semi-autonomous region of the south, Salva Kiir, offered to serve as a new mediator between the Sudanese government and the leaders of the chief armed groups in Darfur, Khalil Ibrahim from the JEM and Abdel Wahid al-Nur from the SLA. The proposal was welcomed by the JEM; however, the Sudanese government refused to let Kiir play this role. In September, the mediation committee made up of the UN, the AU and Qatar submitted the beginnings of a peace agreement based on the agreements reached between the government and the armed groups JEM and LJM, the parties' positions, recommendations from civil society groups and consultations with the Joint Arab-African Ministerial Committee and with the international defenders of the process. Likewise, the leader of the most prominent faction of the SLA, Abdel Wahid al-Nur, met in Paris with the French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kouchner, and with the head of mediation, Djibril Bassolé, and asked that they pressure Khartoum more to stop the attacks against the civilian population and enable internally displaced people to return home, in addition to ensuring humanitarian assistance. Headway along these lines might lead Nur to finally agree to participate in the negotiating table in Doha (Qatar) after repeatedly refusing to do so. Finally, the leader of the AU panel for Darfur, the former South African President Thabo Mbeki, met in Libya with the leader of the JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, in an attempt to bring postures on the peace process in the region of western Sudan closer together. In turn, the Sudanese government unveiled a new strategy to put an end to the violence in Darfur which focused on local actors as a means to end the violence, establish security and enable displaced people to return home, in addition to launching development projects in the zone. The armed groups rejected the proposal. Furthermore, after a new attack in a displaced persons' camp in Western Darfur, the leader of the JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, asked the head of UNAMID, Ibrahim Gambari, to step down, alleging that the mission was incapable of fulfilling its mandate of protecting the civilian population. In turn, the leader of the SLA, Abdel Wahid al-Nur, threatened to start a large-scale war against the army and the militias if the attacks against the displaced persons' camps and the civilian population were not stopped.

The Doha peace process persisted with negotiations with the group Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), which is made up of an amalgam of leaders of low-profile factions with very little presence on the ground, but it was strained by Libya's pretensions to become the new site of the negotiations. The Libyan representative for the Doha negotiations, whose contribution to the formation of the LJM and other coalitions was definitive, left Qatar after the LJM accused him of trying to force them to integrate their positions within the JEM so that the negotiations could be moved to Libya, where the leader of the JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, has been staying after his expulsion from Chad. However, just a few days after this incident, the Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, asked Khalil Ibrahim to rejoin the peace negotiations in Doha, as his presence in Libya was raising tensions with Sudan (which threatened to close the two countries' shared border). Gaddafi stressed that he was not protecting the leader of the JEM, whom he banned him from giving his group orders or making declarations as long as he remained on Libyan soil. On another front, a total of 400 representatives of the different communities, opinion leaders, women, young people, intellectuals, displaced people and the diaspora met in Doha to try to unify their stance on the peace negotiations being held in the capital of Qatar. The head of UNAMID, Ibrahim Gambari, stressed the importance of its participation and of the coordination and coherence that its proposals could reach in order to accelerate the process and resolve the conflict. On another front, the armed group JEM and UNICEF signed an agreement in Geneva to protect minors from forced recruitment and to stop the use of minors as soldiers. The agreement was the outcome of one year of talks facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. After the agreement was signed, UNICEF would have free access to all the zones where the JEM is concentrated in order to verify compliance.

c) Great Lakes and Central Africa

In Chad, the rebel leaders of Chad and Sudan, who had set up their bases in the border region between both countries, suffered the consequences of a rapprochement between Chad and Sudan and lost their support in July. In May, the leader of the Sudanese armed group JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, was declared a persona non grata by his Chadian hosts, while now the same happened to the leaders of the Chadian rebellion. The Sudanese authorities demanded that the Chadian rebel chiefs Timane Erdimi (RFC), Mahamat Nouri (UFDD) and Adouma Hassaballah (UFCD) leave Khartoum. In September, a second group of 150 insurgents from the former Chadian armed group Movement for Justice and Social Change (MJSC) returned to N'Djamena from the capital of Northern Darfur accompanied by the Chadian Minister of Security. These 150 rebels had deserted the army in February 2006. This coordinated return was one of both countries' efforts as part of the peace agreement reached early in the year to put an end to each country's support of the other's insurgency.

Regarding the Central African Republic, the government, opposition parties and former armed groups reached a consensus agreement on the 11th of August to re-launch the election process. According to the agreement, the presidential elections would be held on the 23rd of January 2011 (and the second round, if necessary, on the 20th of March), after they had been proposed twice this year.

d) Maghreb

Regarding Western Sahara, the UN Secretary General's personal envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, issued a negative assessment of the negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front and asked for the aid of several countries to overcome the impasse in the peace process. In July, before visiting the so-called Group of Friends of Western Sahara – the USA, France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia – Ross sent a secret document to the respective governments in which he recognised that neither he nor Ban Ki-moon was able to convince the parties to renounce their implacable attachment to their respective positions. As a result, he was asking for specific support from these countries and the Security Council. Likewise, he believed that neither party had the political will to initiate genuine negotiations or to prioritise trust-building measures. Along the same lines, Ross stated that Morocco was the party making the fewest efforts, and he further outlined that in the last informal round of contacts held in Westchester (New York), the Polisario Front made a draft negotiation in an attempt to explore several aspects of Morocco's proposal for autonomy. However, according to Ross, Rabat refused to consider its counterpart's ideas and in consequence, the Polisario Front refused to forge ahead. In his message, which was leaked to the press in August, Ross stressed the need for the parties to examine the adversary's proposals as a sign of respect because otherwise it made no sense to hold new rounds of negotiations. According to Ross, the status quo in the long term cast doubt on the UN's credibility, yet it also entailed risks, such as the Saharan sectors' inclination towards extremist activities. Ross also claimed that the issue of human rights in Western Sahara was crucial and that he had suggested to Morocco the need for it to behave indulgently towards Saharan activists instead of restricting their freedom of movement and expression.

In August, the King of Morocco, Mohamed VI, demanded that a clear, precise roadmap be drawn up in order to launch the advanced regionalisation of the country, a process that he wanted to start in the region of Western Sahara. In January, the monarch announced the creation of a Consultative Commission on Regionalisation (CCR) presided over by the former ambassador to Spain, Omar Azziman. Azziman was given a six-month deadline to lay the foundation of the decentralisation plan. However, the deadline was later extended by another six months. The King asked that the plan be publicised through a sweeping nationwide debate that would consolidate support for the project, and he called on the government to establish a charter of decentralisation on the transfer of resources and competences to the regions. In late July, in his speech to commemorate the 11th anniversary of his ascent to the throne, Mohamed VI stressed that Morocco would not give up even one inch of Western Sahara. The Polisario Front described the monarch's words as proof of Rabat's lack of desire to cooperate constructively in favour of a lasting, definitive peace in conformance with international law.

America

In Columbia, days before the new President took office, the FARC spread a video in July in which Alfonso Cano, the Central Chief of Staff, expressed his willingness to talk with the new government, specifically

on five points: the United States' military bases, human rights and International Humanitarian Law, land, the political regime and the economic model. Likewise, on the 4th of August, the ELN expressed its interest in working to construct an end to Colombia's internal conflict as part of a peace proposal for the continent, thus linking the efforts of the UNASUR countries and other assistance measures coming from the international community. He thus expressed the ELN's willingness to engage in exchanges with the Venezuelan and other governments on the continent to explore the possible pathways to peace in Colombia. In his investiture speech on the 7th of August, the new President of Colombia stated that "the doorway to dialogue is not locked", and he added: "During my government, I aspire to sow the bases of a true reconciliation among Colombians. To the illegal armed groups that invoke political reasons and are today once again talking about dialogue and negotiation, I say that my government will be open to any conversation that seeks to eradicate violence and build a more prosperous, equitable and fair society. However," he stressed, "it must be built upon inalterable premises: a renunciation of weapons, kidnapping, drug trafficking, extortion and intimidation. But as long as kidnapping victims are not released, as long as they keep committing terrorist acts, as long as they do not return children who were forcibly recruited, as long as they keep laying mines and polluting the Colombian countryside, we shall keep fighting against all violence, without exception, utilising all the means within our reach." President Santos also stated that for the time being, the figure of High Commissioner of Peace would not be activated.

The day after the new president was sworn in, the leader of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, stated that the Colombian guerrillas had to take a stand in favour of peace with clear demonstrations of their intentions, including releasing all the kidnapping victims. Chávez believed that "the Colombian guerrillas have no future along the pathway of weapons". He also expressed his satisfaction with the fact that Senator Piedad Córdoba had been appointed President of the Peace Commission in the Senate. Precisely the group that this senator leads, Colombians for Peace, had managed to get UNASUR to discuss an alternative which led to an eventual peace agreement with the guerrillas. In August, the FARC sent a communiqué to UNASUR expressing their willingness to share their vision of the Colombian conflict at a UNASUR assembly. Days earlier, in view of the initiatives that Senator Piedad Córdoba was taking, the Colombian government banned all parallel handling of peace issues, stating that "the government itself will advance the issue when it deems that the circumstances are suitable, since right now there are no signs of a true desire for peace". Furthermore, in late August, President Santos asked that the draft that was to amend Law 418 from 1997 state clearly that demilitarised zones would not be allowed in view of possible talks with the guerrillas, leaving a clear message that the experience of Caguán and the proposal to demilitarise towns like Pradera and Florida was not going to be repeated. Therefore, a possible negotiation had to take place using a different format. In September, through a communiqué, the FARC expressed their willingness to talk with the current government and find a political outlet to the social and armed conflict that the country is experiencing, albeit without any kind of conditions. The guerrillas stated that what the president was demanding in order to hold talks must be the outcome of a peace agreement, not a prior condition to talks. President Santos responded to the guerrillas' communiqué by stating that "in order for dialogue with the guerrillas to take place, they must stop committing terrorist acts". Shortly thereafter, the Colombian armed forces bombarded a FARC camp, killing Jorge Briceño, alias "Mono Jojoy", the military leader of the guerrilla organisation.

Asia and Pacific

a) Southern Asia

In Afghanistan, the international conference held in Kabul ended with the agreement that the transfer of control over the country's security from the international NATO forces to the Afghan government would begin in 2014. However, NATO Secretary General stated that the troops would remain in the country until the Afghan forces are capable of guaranteeing security. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Afghan executive would control 50% of the funds contributed by the international community within two years, whereas until now it only controlled 20% of these funds. The reintegration plan for 36,000 Taliban insurgents was also accepted, which will cost around 600 euros. In September, 40% of Afghans voted in the legislative elections, and the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, announced the launch of a peace plan for the country. This new strategy, which will be spearheaded by a High Peace Council, has a twofold purpose: first, to establish a dialogue with the Taliban leaders, and secondly, to remove the base combatants from the insurgency.

In India, the leader of the Naxalite armed opposition group CPI-M, Kishenji, offered the central government a three-month ceasefire in August in response to the government's appeal for them to put an end to violence and start peace negotiations; this appeal had been issued during the celebrations of India's independence. Kishenji stated that his group was willing to cooperate with the government in the fight against separatist organisations and the struggle against corruption. Other requests included the dismissal of the Interior Minister, P. Chidambaram, and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, K. Rosaiah, over the murder of the Maoist leader Cherukuri Rajkumar, and the creation of an independent mechanism for peace talks. Furthermore, the Naxalites asked that politician and activist Swami Agnivesh, writer Arundhati Roy and the Minister of Railways Mamata Banerjee be appointed the mediators in the peace process. The Interior Minister responded by stating that the government rejected any proposal that did not come with a real on-the-ground commitment. He further stated that he had received no credible response to the offer of negotiations and reiterated his request that the Naxalites give up violence. In September, the Indian government extended the illegal status of the CPI-M and the organisations linked to this armed opposition group for one more year.

In the state of Assam, in August the government reiterated its appeal to both the ULFA and the NDFB to hold peace negotiations, stressing the government's sincerity in its efforts to achieve peace in the state. Likewise, the leader of the ULFA, Paresh Baruah, responded to the declarations by Hiren Gohain, one of the leaders of the citizen forum that is seeking to reactivate the peace process in the state (Sanmilita Jatia Abhibartan), in which Gohain stated that Baruah could not decide the future of the state by himself, and that the negotiations should take place regardless of Baruah's opinion. Baruah, in turn, stated that he was not opposed to peace talks, but that he was indeed against a distancing from the armed group's ideology, adding that Gohain's statements only aggravated the situation. In September, at least 19 senior ULFA members turned themselves in to Indian authorities in order to join the peace process. On another front, the government extended the ceasefire agreement with the armed opposition group UPDS by six months; this agreement has been renewed every since months since it was signed in May 2002.

In the state of Manipur, the first tripartite meeting between the Indian government, the government of the state of Manipur and the United Naga Council (UNC) was held in September. The three representatives met in New Delhi to talk about the status of the Naga population in Manipur. At the meeting, the Indian government expressed its approval of the UNC's gesture to suspend the economic blockade, which in the government's opinion contributed to creating a propitious atmosphere for dialogue.

In Nagaland, the Secretary General of the armed opposition group, NSCN-IM, Thingaleng Muivah went to Delhi in July to hold a new round of negotiations with the government. Muivah expressed his desire to meet with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and the Interior Minister, P. Chidambaram, to convey to them the request for the interlocutor appointed by the government to dialogue with the group, R.S. Pandey, to be granted more extensive powers. The armed group stated that the lack of a broader mandate was hindering progress in the negotiations. Likewise, the armed opposition groups NSCN-K and NNC agreed to merge, and they signed a "Reconciliation Convention" after the meeting held between the leaders of both organisations.

Regarding the conflict between India and Pakistan over the region of Kashmir, the meeting between the Foreign Ministers of both countries, Shah Mehmood Qureshi on behalf of Pakistan and S.M. Krishna on behalf of India, concluded in July. However, no progress was made in the negotiation process and the only agreement reached was to continue talking. Despite the fact that the goal of the meeting was to discuss different proposals aimed at overcoming the dearth of trust between the two governments, the touchy postures of both parties hindered any headway. Both parties accused the other of being to blame for the lack of progress. In September, Pakistan called on India to clearly state its position on Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen and peace and security as conditions for refloating the rapprochement process with its neighbouring country.

b) Eastern Asia

In Tibet (China), the Dalai Lama, on a visit to Hungary in September, asked the Chinese government to spearhead a liberalisation policy in Tibet, and he warned Beijing that it could lose the trust of the international community if it did not resume talks on the future of Tibet with the Tibetan government in exile.

c) Southeast Asia

In **The Philippines**, the government confirmed that Malaysia would remain the facilitator of the talks with the MILF, as this group had requested. The new head of the governmental negotiating panel, Marvic Leonen, declared that trust levels between both parties was very high, and he stated that the government's intention was to permanently resolve the conflict in Mindanao within the next six years, during Benigno Aquino's mandate as President. Leonen stated that even though the former governments had stressed issues like disarmament and development, the new executive intended to focus chiefly on the political dimension of the conflict. Along these lines, Leonen stated that the government did not discard the possibility of reforming the constitution, one of the MILF's longstanding demands, although this depended on winning the sufficient parliamentary majorities. Leonen also stated that other alternative resolution proposals to resume the talks were being studied, and he praised the fact that the MILF had abandoned its requests for independence in order to channel its efforts towards achieving a high degree of autonomy for Mindanao. In turn, the leader of the MILF negotiating panel, Mohaqher Iqbal, celebrated the possibility that the government might agree to spearhead a constitutional reform and expressed his optimism at the resumption of the peace talks, although he also expressed his reservations at the fact that the governmental panel was still incomplete (two of its members had yet to be appointed). Iqbal, who did not reveal whether he would continue to lead the MILF panel, declared that the main goal of the peace talks should be revisiting and perhaps reformulating the consensus points that both parties had reached before the Supreme Court suspended the signing of an agreement on the ancestral lands of the Moro people in August 2008.

In September, the leader of the MILF negotiating panel, Mohaqher Iqbal, declared that his group had formally abandoned its request for independence for certain regions on Mindanao and that it had submitted to the government a proposal to create a sub-state or autonomous republic which would hold all the competences except foreign affairs, national defence, currency and the postal service. This entity would not have its own army, but it would have its own internal security forces. Mohaqher Iqbal also declared that a global peace agreement might be signed within two years at most, and that should this sub-state be established, the MILF would only play a dominant role in the transitional phase. In turn, the MNLF opposed the signing of such an agreement as it believed that the government had to wholly comply with the 1996 peace agreement before signing a peace agreement with the MILF. The MILF rejected the government's proposal that representatives of the private sector and civil society attend the forthcoming rounds of negotiations as observers, because it deemed that a dialogue of this kind should be held with discretion.

Regarding the MNLF, to commemorate the 14th anniversary of the signing of the peace agreement between the government and the armed opposition group, the Presidential Councillor for the Peace Process, Teresita Deles, asked the MNLF to continue to dialogue on full implementation of that agreement, and she expressed her conviction that this would be achieved before 2016. Deles also particularly thanked the Indonesian government, which currently holds the presidency of the South-Philippines Peace Committee within the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, for its role in mediating in and supervising the agreement. Likewise, both the MNLF and numerous organisations from civil society lamented the government's lack of political will to fulfil the pledges made in 1996, and they condemned the fact that the standard of living of the people in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao is currently worse than it was back in 1996.

In **Myanmar**, sources close to the armed opposition group KNU stated in July that the group had held secret peace negotiations with the pro-governmental armed group DKBA in Thailand. However, the group denied that this encounter had taken place. The government's pressure on the DKBA to become a border security force might have led this organisation to try to overcome its differences with the KNU, from which it split off in 1995 when the KNU reached a ceasefire agreement with the government. In August, the DKBA visited Naypidaw, the country's administrative capital, for ten days to sign an agreement turning it into a border guard, in exchange for which it received 500,000 dollars from the Myanmar authorities. The result of this was the emergence of a faction against the agreement. The DKBA members came to be under the command of Myanmar's armed forces. The faction that did not agree to join the Myanmar security forces held a meeting with the armed opposition group KNLA – from which the DKBA split off in 1994 – to agree to joint actions in the event of attacks by the armed forces. In September, the Electoral Commission of Myanmar announced the dissolution of ten political parties in preparation for the general elections scheduled for November, including the leading opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

Europe

a) Southeast Europe

In Cyprus, the negotiations between the Greek-Cypriot leader Dimitris Christofias and the Turkish-Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu continued, with several meetings held about the issue of property between late July and early August, which later resumed in late August. The meetings were held in a positive atmosphere, according to UN sources. After the meeting on the 10th of August, both leaders resumed their encounters on the 31st of August, although in the interim representatives of both leaders continued to meet. Furthermore, two informal dinners were held with the leaders and their wives. The first one was held in late July in Eroglu's house at his invitation, and the second at Christofias' residence in late August. According to both leaders, informal social encounters like these are crucial for forging a friendship and facilitating headway in the formal negotiation process. The dinners were held in a pleasant atmosphere, according to both leaders. The Greek-Cypriot President, Dimitris Christofias, reiterated the three proposals on the negotiating process that he had offered in mid-June. First, he proposed a parallel discussion that links three chapters of the negotiation process in order to speed up the process and facilitate a solution to the complex issue of property, one of the thorniest issues in the negotiations. According to Christofias, the chapter on property could be linked to the discussions on the chapters on territorial adjustments and immigration, nationality, foreigners and asylum. The Greek-Cypriot leader stated that two years had elapsed since the start of direct negotiations, meaning that each party should reveal its intentions to the other. Secondly, he also issued an appeal to Turkey to implement UN Security Council Resolution 550, dating from 1984, which involves turning over the city of Famagusta, which has been walled since the Turkish invasion of 1974, to the UN. According to Christofias, this would enable the city to be restored and would return it to its "legal" inhabitants. In turn, he stated that his government would be willing to shoulder the responsibility of restoring the old quarter of the city, which is shared cultural heritage. According to Christofias, his government was also willing to open the port of Famagusta to trade for the Turkish-Cypriot community under EU supervision. Thirdly, the Greek-Cypriot leader proposed that an international conference be held, to be convened by the UN and with participation by the permanent members of the Security Council, the EU, the guarantors, Cyprus and both Cypriot communities. The conference would be called when the conflicting parties are poised to reach an agreement on internal aspects of the conflict. He also sent a message to the Turkish-Cypriot entity, ensuring that he would continue to work to find a solution. However, the Greek-Cypriot proposal was criticised by the Turkish-Cypriot actors. The special representative of the Turkish-Cypriot leader in the negotiation process, Kudret Ozersay, accused Christofias of putting on the table proposals that he already knows have been rejected by the Turkish-Cypriots. According to Ozersay, the proposals were not new.

Regarding the offer of direct trade with the EU in the Varosha neighbourhood in the city of Famagusta, Ozersay alleged that this was an EU proposal, not a Greek-Cypriot one, which did not justify Turkish-Cypriot concessions. Regarding the international conference, Ozersay criticised the fact that it entailed double representation of the Greek-Cypriot side, yet just a single presence for the Turkish Cypriots. Regarding the chapter on property, he held that it should not be linked to other chapters because the issue of property was overly complicated in itself. He also criticised the fact that the triple proposal was announced in a public speech on the day commemorating the July 1974 coup that spurred the Turkish invasion. In September, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, encouraged the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot leaders to step up their efforts to reach an agreement on the issues linked to property, one of the most delicate issues in the negotiation process.

In Kosovo, the International Court of Justice, the UN's legal wing, handed down a non-binding ruling in August that Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence did not violate either international law or the UN Security Council's Resolution 1244. With this ruling, the court thus answered the question that Serbia submitted to the General Assembly; the ruling was approved with ten votes in favour and four against. According to the court, neither general international law nor Resolution 1244 includes bans on declarations of independence. The court also denied that the declaration of independence violates the provisional constitutional framework of Kosovo, as in the judges' opinion it does not bind the authors of independence. However, the text did not judge whether the right to secession exists. In September, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution that called for dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and that recognised the International Court of Justice's non-binding decision. The UN also offered to participate in organising the direct talks between Serbia and Kosovo.

Regarding Moldova (Transnistria), the Moldovan government ordered the withdrawal of the Russian peacekeeping troops in the region of Transnistria in July. The interim Moldovan President, Mihai Ghimpu, demanded this in a decree in which he called on Russia to withdraw its 1,500 troops unconditionally, urgently and transparently. Russia had already pledged to withdraw them as part of the 1999 agreement promoted by the OSCE, which set the withdrawal date for 2002, although the withdrawal has never actually taken place. Likewise, Vienna hosted informal consultations in the 5+2 format, a meeting aimed at promoting the formal resumption of the negotiation process, which had been suspended since February 2006. In late August, the Moldovan Prime Minister, Vlad Filat, and the leader of Transnistria, Igor Smirnov, held an informal meeting at a football match in the capital of Transnistria, Tiraspol. In September, the Moldovan government warned that the authorities of Transnistria were clinging to their demand for independence, and that this was placing the efforts to resolve the conflict at risk. In turn, the authorities of Transnistria welcomed Moldova's decision to allow direct exports of products manufactured in this region.

Regarding Turkey and Kurdistan, in July the leader of the armed group PKK, Murat Karayilan, proposed the disarmament of the PKK in exchange for political and cultural rights for the Kurdish people. Karayilan stated that he was willing to disarm under the supervision of the United Nations if Turkey accepted a ceasefire and fulfilled certain conditions. The PKK demanded that the attacks against Kurdish civilians and arrests of Kurdish politicians be ended. However, the PKK also warned that if the Turkish government did not accept this proposal, the group would announce its independence. The leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, called for a peaceful solution to the conflict and suggested specific steps to achieve this. First of all, he asked the parties for a bilateral ceasefire. Secondly, he suggested that a truth and reconciliation commission be set up, similar to the one in South Africa, made up of experts. He stated that it could also be a parliamentary commission. This mission of this body would be to listen to all the parties involved, including himself, to establish the truth and to share it with the public at large, giving rise to a reconciliation process. In parallel, he suggested that the PKK ranks could be transferred to a zone under the supervision of an international organisation like the UN, where they would wait until a solution was found. Later, the PKK combatants could return to Turkey en masse as part of a solution to the conflict that would include constitutional guarantees and a legal framework. According to Öcalan, negotiations were needed in order for a peace process to get underway, and if there were no negotiations, an uncontrollable revolution might be unleashed.

The PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire between the 13th of August and the 20th of September, dovetailing with Ramadan. This came in response to a call issued by its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, and as a result of the initiative of a dialogue process between Öcalan and the competent bodies acting on behalf of the state with the acknowledgement of the government, according to the Firat news agency. According to the main opposition party, the CHP, the Deputy Secretary of Intelligence Services, Hakan Fidan, appointed in May, accompanied by two other people, met with Öcalan on the 20th of July at İmarali Prison, which they reached by sea. In order for the process to be permanent and to become a peace process, the KCK demanded the Turkish state and the government of the AKP cease military and political operations against Kurds, start a bilateral ceasefire, immediately release around 1,700 Kurdish politicians and members of peace groups, begin a negotiating process based on a framework for resolving the three items presented by the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, create the conditions for Öcalan to participate actively in this peace process, and reduce the threshold for participating in elections, which currently stands at 10%. The leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, reiterated his defence of "democratic autonomy" as a plan for resolving the Kurdish issue. According to Öcalan, the Catalan model was worth studying, and he added that the Kurds could learn from it.

In September, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, promised that his party would draw up a new constitution after the 2011 elections. He announced this before the referendum on constitutional reforms held on the 12th of September. Likewise, the government and the pro-Kurdish party BDP met, in an encounter that had been postponed due to violence; the meeting was deemed positive by both sides. It brought together the Vice Prime Minister, Cemil Çiçek, and the Minister of Justice, Sadullah Ergin, on behalf of the government and the co-Presidents of the BDP, Selahattin Demirtaş and Gültan Kışanak, as well as the MP for the DTP in Şırnak, Hasip Kaplan. According to Demirtaş, the changes had to include recognition of autonomy and greater linguistic rights for the Kurds. Demirtaş also stated that some contact had been forged with the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, although he gave no further details. The rapprochement between the government and the BDP took place within a context of intensification of the measures aimed at resolving the Kurdish conflict on the part of both the government and the Kurdish political and social actors. In late September, the Turkish Interior Minister, Beşir Atalay, travelled to Erbil, the capital of the autonomous region of

Kurdistan (Iraq) to hold several meetings, including one with the President of the region, Massoud Barzani. According to Hürriyet, Turkey was working on three steps: first, extending the PKK's ceasefire; secondly, achieving a permanent ceasefire; and thirdly, adopting political measures in Turkey that resolve the problem. Likewise, the PKK extended its ceasefire declared on the 13th of August, which was supposed to end of the 20th of September, until the forthcoming publication of its final decision on its truce. According to Karayilan, the armed group would be willing to negotiate, and the model that the PKK would seek was that of the autonomous regions in Spain. The leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, predicted the future adoption of two protocols between the government and the Kurds as a result of the encounters with government representatives. According to Öcalan, one protocol would address the security dimensions while the other would cover democratic rights. Both would be submitted to the Parliament after the 2011 elections, and two commissions could also be set up. One of them would be a preparatory commission for a new constitution, while the other would be an investigative commission on illegal murders and other human rights violations. Furthermore, the BDP party was preparing a new political project on "democratic self-government" which would include new definitions of self-government and would resemble models of decentralisation like the Kurdish region in northern Iraq and the Basque Country in Spain.

On another front, a 23-person committee known as the Elders Committee for Peace issued a call for dialogue to resolve the Kurdish conflict. In the meantime, the former President of Finland and Noble Peace Prize winner, Martti Ahtisaari, met with several Kurdish representatives in Diyarbakir as part of a visit to Turkey by the Independent Commission on Turkey. This commission evaluated and promoted Turkey's perspectives on membership in the EU and was made up of a number of European political personalities. He also stated that Turkey should negotiate with Öcalan and the PKK in order to reach a solution. The trip to Turkey also included meetings with the Turkish President, Abdullah Gul, and the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip. Finally, a Kurdish delegation met with the President of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, to address the ceasefire declared by the PKK as well as issues related to the plan to hold an international Kurdish conference in the Autonomous Region of Kurdistan (Iraq).

b) Caucasus

Regarding the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, in August Armenia expressed its support of Russia's proposal to fix the conflict in Upper Karabakh presented at the meeting held in Saint Petersburg in June. Azerbaijan confirmed the Armenian allegations that Russia had presented the parties with a new plan with working proposals in order to seek a solution to the conflict. In late June, Elxan Poluxov, the spokesman of the Azerbaijani government's Foreign Ministry, stated that the working proposals that were embraced by Armenia were unacceptable for Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Poluxov criticised the fact that Russia's plan had been drawn up unilaterally, without following the format of the OSCE Minsk Group. According to Poluxov, the new proposals aired by Russia on the 17th of June in Saint Petersburg changed the entire philosophy of the negotiation process. The President of Armenia, Serzh Sarkisian, had described the new proposals as a new version of the Basic Principles, also known as the Madrid Principles. In late July, Sarkisian also stated that the peace process would remain at a stalemate unless Azerbaijan followed Armenia's example and accepted the Saint Petersburg principles as the cornerstone for negotiations. Likewise, Armenia was planning to reinforce its military alliance with Russia through an agreement that would extend Russia's military presence on the Gyumri military base until 2044, which also extended the troops' mandate; their mission would no longer be solely to protect Russian interests but also to guarantee Armenia's security. In September, the high tensions near the control line continued, and there were violations the ceasefire.

Regarding Georgia, on the 3rd of July the Georgian government approved an action plan to implement the objectives contained in the "State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement through Cooperation", which set the government's guidelines regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The action plan was developed and will be supervised by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration, and it revolves around seven instruments that the government aims to launch. These include neutral contact mechanisms with respect to the status, and it will consist of officials appointed with the consent of both parties and a small team of people based in Sokhumi, Tskhinvali and Tbilisi. Secondly, there will be identification cards and neutral travelling documents for residents of both pro-independence regions, which will enable them to travel abroad as well as gain access to social and educational services in Georgia. Likewise, an economic fund will be created, to be managed to an international organisation, which will grant aid to organisations in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. What is more, an investment fund will be set up with funds from donor

organisations and businesses; this fund will be privately managed and it will be earmarked for projects on both sides of the administrative divide. The plan also calls for the creation of a public cooperation agency as part of the State Minister of Georgia for Reintegration which will promote programmes financed by public funds. The other two instruments include the establishment of a financial institution in both pro-independence regions in order to facilitate monetary transfers and other transactions, as well as the creation of an integrated economic and social zone in the areas near the administrative borders in order to facilitate the development of economic and social services. The government of Georgia's strategy was rejected several times by the authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Abkhaz President, Sergey Bagapsh, announced Abkhazia's withdrawal from the Geneva Process due to the stalemate in the negotiations on the non-use of force. The Abkhaz leader, Sergey Bagapsh, made this announcement in early July in his annual speech to the Parliament. Bagapsh reiterated that signing an agreement with Georgia on the non-use of force would eliminate the threat of a new conflict, but he accused Georgia of being unwilling to discuss the possibility of such an agreement. In turn, Georgia has always insisted that it was willing to sign a non-use of force treaty, but with Russia, which it regards as the main actor in the conflict. In any event, Bagapsh acknowledged that the Geneva Process was an important space for keeping up contacts with the international actors. The United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, asked Abkhazia to participate constructively in the talks.

Middle East

Regarding Israel and Syria, the latter reiterated its willingness to resume peace talks with Israel if the Israeli government pledged to put an end to the occupation of some areas of the Golan Heights. The Syrian Foreign Minister, Walid al-Muallim, made these statements after meeting with his US counterpart, Hillary Clinton, in New York. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, declared that he would not engage in talks with Damascus under any preconditions.

Regarding Israel and Palestine, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, met in Washington on the 2nd of September in a new round of direct talks between the parties, the first in 20 months. Abbas had demanded a total halt to new settlements, including Jerusalem, as a step prior to dialogue, but he ended up caving in to intense international pressures and, at least officially, Washington announced that the talks had been resumed "with no conditions". According to his statements to the press, the Israeli Prime Minister accepted a Palestinian state, but he would not agree to negotiate on the borders prior to the 1967 war. He claimed that Jerusalem was the eternal, indivisible capital of Israel, and he demanded control of the airspace over a future Palestinian state, which from his perspective should be demilitarised and should accept the installation of Israeli bases in the Jordan Valley. Nor could a future Palestinian state engage in defensive pacts with countries regarded as the enemies of Israel. Within this context, Netanyahu's priorities would be security, recognition of Israel as a Jewish state (refugees could only be returned to a Palestinian state) and the end of the conflict, with the admission of no further claims in the future. After the resumption of the direct talks between Palestinians and Israelis in early September, there was still uncertainty as to the future of the talks after Israel's decision not to renew the moratorium on settlement building in the West bank.

Regarding Palestine, representatives of Hamas and Fatah met in Damascus in late September in an attempt to overcome the obstacles to reconciliation between these two Palestinian groups. The points of agreement referred to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the Elections Commission and the Electoral Tribunal.

In Yemen, at least 52 people died in July over the course of five days of clashes between pro-government tribes and the insurgents in the north of the country known as Houthis, in the most violent confrontations in the zone since the ceasefire agreement was signed by the insurgents and the government in February. Just a few days later, the Houthis had confirmed their backing of an agreement signed between the official party, the General People's Congress, and a coalition of opposition parties which aimed to create a platform of national dialogue among the different rival political sectors in the country. The Houthis had also approved Qatar's offer to consolidate the truce with the Yemeni government and thus consolidate a sustainable peace. As part of the agreement with the opposition, the government called for the release from prison of 400 combatants linked to the insurgency in the northern province of Saada and another 27 members of the separatist movement in the south of the country. Early in the month, government officials had denounced the fact that the Houthis were not fulfilling the six points set forth in the ceasefire agreement. Later, they warned that the insurgents had murdered eight members of a tribe and three police officers in an attack on a convoy in the province of Saada.

However, in mid-July President Saleh himself confirmed that the rebels would begin to implement the terms of the truce, and that there were no indications foretelling a “seventh war”, in allusion to the six armed conflicts between the government and the Houthis since 2004. On the 26th of August in Doha (Qatar), the government and the Houthist rebels signed an agreement that set a calendar for the implementation of the previous agreements. Yemeni diplomatic sources stated that this was not a new agreement, rather the establishment of mechanisms to implement the agreements reached previously. One of the rebel representatives, Mohammed Abdel Salam, stated that the rebels’ main demand was the release of prisoners. There are calculated to be 1,000 insurgent followers in prison. According to Abdel Salam, other demands included the development and reconstruction of the northern provinces of Yemen, which were discriminated against and lack water, roads and schools. According to Reuters, the agreement called for the end of the war and the start of political dialogue, and it included 22 points, including the requirement to turn in the weapons stolen from the Yemeni army to the mediators, as well as the authorities’ release of imprisoned insurgents. Other points cited by Reuters included the withdrawal of mines from the region, the guarantee of free movement in order to allow the displaced people to return home, and the liberation of schools, government buildings or residences seized by the rebels. In September, the insurgents reinforced their positions.

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