

Conclusions

Below we outline the main conclusions drawn from the eight chapters that make up the report. In **2007 30 armed conflicts were recorded, 28 of which were ongoing at the end of the year.** Most took place in Asia (12) and Africa (10), while the rest took place in the Middle East (5), Europe (2) and America (1). It should be highlighted that about **half of these conflicts were internal and the other half were internal but internationalised.** Although currently almost all armed conflicts are due to multiple causes, it is worth noting that **almost half of them refer mainly to aspirations about identity or demands for greater self-government.** As regards the 11 cases in which the incompatibility is linked to opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of a state, 8 of these refer to, among other issues, the creation of an Islamic state or are related to al-Qaeda –Algeria, Afghanistan, Philippines (Abu Sayyaf), Chechnya, Iraq, Pakistan (northwest) or the Lebanese refugee camp of Naher al-Bared– while in the other three cases –Colombia, Philippines (NPA) and India (CPI-M)– the armed groups are seeking to establish a socialist political and economic system. Finally in four cases, Nigeria (Niger Delta), DR Congo, Sudan (Darfur) and Iraq, control of resources was one of the most relevant causes of the dispute although, apart from those already mentioned, many other conflicts were sustained, or exacerbated by a struggle for the control of resources or territory.

As regards the intensity of these conflicts, in eight cases –Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, Iraq, DR Congo (Kivus), Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan (Darfur)– for most of the year there were extremely high levels of violence that led to a much higher number of deaths, 1,000 fatalities. As regards annual evolution, **by the end of the year an increase in hostilities had taken place in over half the active conflicts,** whereas in only four cases did we see a reduction in violence: in Jammu and Kashmir; between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine; in Iraq; and in Yemen. It should also be pointed out that hostilities ended in two cases: Côte d'Ivoire, as a result of the positive implementation of the peace agreement and the advance of the DDR process; and in the Lebanon, where the Lebanese armed forces defeated Fatah al Islam in the Palestinian refugee camp of Naher al-Bared at the beginning of September. Finally, it should be highlighted the validity in general terms of the ceasefires in Uganda between the government and the LRA and in the Philippines between the government and the MILF, which facilitated advances in the respective peace processes

At the end of 2007, there were **70 scenarios of tension** in the world, **most of them in Africa and Asia** (26 and 23, respectively). The rest of the tensions took place in Europe (nine) and also in America and the Middle East (six in each region). It is worth noting that **70% of these tensions were of a markedly internal character,** while the rest were, in the same proportion (15%), internationalised internal tensions and international tensions.

Most of the international tensions took place in Africa and in bordering states with territorial disputes (such as Eritrea and Ethiopia, or Cameroon and Nigeria) and in countries integrated in regional groupings (the area of Rio Mano and the Great Lakes).

As regards the causes of the incompatibilities that led to these we should highlight that, despite their multidimensional character, **practically half of these tensions (47%) was explained by the disagreements between sectors of the political and social opposition to government policies.** This was the case of 13 African countries (including Burundi, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Nigeria, DR Congo or Zimbabwe), and 10 Asian countries (Bangladesh, Philippines, Fiji, Pakistan, Thailand, Timor Leste, and most of the countries of Central Asia). In America, practically all the tensions were motivated by opposition to the policies of the governments of the region. This was the case of Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, where during 2007 there were demonstrations and generalised protests against the respective executives. Nevertheless, in regions such as Europe and the Middle East, the main motives of disagreement were others: **demands for self-government, mainly in Europe** (in cases such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, the Republic of Transdniestria in Moldova, and also in Kosovo, whose independence from Serbia seemed to be a fact at the end of the year), and **opposition to the political, economic, social or ideological system of the state in the Middle East** (in the case of Saudi Arabia with al-Qaeda, Egypt and the opposition led by the Muslim Brotherhood, and the inter-state disputes between Iran and the US on the one hand, and Israel, Lebanon and Syria, on the other). At the same time it is interesting to point out that those **disputes related to demands for self-government had a component related to identity in most cases,** and the combination of both factors was a very present element in the tensions existing on the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe.

In terms of the peace processes recorded during the year, this report notes 49 cases or attempts at negotiation, whether in a purely exploratory or tentative phase, consolidated or not. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the negotiations advanced sufficiently to bring an end to the fighting. In any case, in three out of four conflicts, there have been negotiation attempts; a percentage that has remained unchanged in recent years. As usual, **most of the peace negotiations experienced difficulties, and a significant number ended badly.** With regard to the previous year, nevertheless, the number of cases where attempts were made to open negotiations increased, whether with new armed groups, historical groups already existing in the country or more recent splinter groups.

As regards the negative aspects, and especially in Africa, we should point out the great number of splinter groups that broke away from many armed groups which

were involved in negotiation processes. As opposed to prior years, we should mention the intense **diplomatic activity on the part of Libya, which has become one of the main facilitating countries in the continent**, as well as the beginning of conversations between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front to resolve the conflict in the Western Sahara. On the continent of Asia the most important events were the agreement between the Philippine government and the MILF on the ancestral territories of the Moro people on the subject of the block in negotiations (the issue of ancestral lands), which may allow the signing of a peace agreement soon; the changes in the scenario in Myanmar after the demonstrations led by Buddhist monks, and the surfacing of tensions in the south of Nepal, and their corresponding negotiations.

For the fourth year in a row, the most commonly-cited reasons for failure or crisis in negotiation processes were repeated almost mechanically, with very few differences between one year and another. The mechanisms of mediation, splits in armed groups, mistrust or insecurity between the parties, political crises in certain negotiations and differences on substantive issues on the agenda, especially when trying to seek forms of self-government, are the most frequent crisis factors.

As regards those countries in post-war rehabilitation, an analysis of their evolution during 2007 highlights some of the factors that hinder advances in these processes, among which we can point to the especially negative element of a **lack of political willingness** by the parties to put into practice the most controversial points of the peace agreements in those countries which are still awaiting elections. This political obstruction **considerably reduces the likelihood of success in these transition processes**, as could be seen over the year in the southern Sudan where, two years after the signing of a peace agreement, the demarcation of the frontier between the oil rich zone of Abyei or the withdrawal of the Sudanese armed forces from this area of Sudan had still not been achieved, which conditioned the future development of the next steps established in the agreement, such as for example the holding of local elections in 2011. Similarly, the situation in Côte d'Ivoire remained suspended for four years in an almost never-ending cycle of the calling of and cancellation of general elections. In March 2007, the signing of a new agreement in Ouagadougou seemed to augur a breakthrough in this situation, although in the end President Laurent Gbagbo once again succeeded in postponing the elections and the year ended with no new election date being fixed. **Greater international pressure may help to compensate for this lack of political will**, but during 2007 the international community opted to continue acting more in line with their particular strategic interests than with common aims of political stabilization. Other factors which conditioned the advance of countries in post-war rehabilitation where there were elected governments were endemic poverty, unemployment, corruption and democratic fragility, all aspects that especially affect the welfare of the popula-

tion. An improvement in the living conditions of the population should be the main focus of all countries in a phase of rehabilitation, but especially so for the governments of Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the provincial government of Aceh during 2008.

Finally, we should emphasize the **inability to achieve advances in the processes of post-war rehabilitation** when these take place **amid a situation of open armed conflict**, as is the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, especially. International involvement during 2007, which was mainly in the form of major international conferences and large financial contributions, mainly for security issues, did not manage to end the violence that ravages these two countries, and thus the model of intervention adopted should be rethought.

As regards the humanitarian situation, **during the year 43 countries suffered the effects of humanitarian crises**, which represents a slight drop with respect to 2006, in which 45 cases were recorded. The fall in the number of crises however, did not affect the response from donors who allocated funds of a similar amount to those of the previous year, around 6,500 million dollars. It is significant that in **2007 a total of 15 flash appeals linked to the incidence of natural disasters were made**, which meant a clear increase in the use of this mechanism for raising funds, although it was also a **clear reflection of the higher impact of climate change** on humanitarian crises in the world. Moreover, for the first time in the last five years there was an increase in the **number of refugees aided by UNHCR, 14% up on 2005**, mainly due to the effect of the armed conflicts in Iraq and that of Lebanon with Israel during 2006.¹ On the other hand, despite a greater involvement on the part of UNHCR in the protection of internally displaced persons, **governments, which have the responsibility to protect those affected by such displacement, continued to fail in this role in almost all countries**. Thus, the number of countries where the situation of internal displacement was very serious increased from 22 to 24, emphasising the trend of the forcibly displaced population in armed conflicts remaining within their national borders, while their governments have not created sufficiently effective mechanisms to respond to this situation.

Finally, the **work of humanitarian agents continues to be hindered by** the lack of security and limits on access imposed by the Governments of countries in conflict, which undoubtedly contributed to aggravating crises such as those of Somalia, Yemen (north), Sudan (Darfur) or Myanmar. At the same time, **political decisions** such as those taken against the Government of Hamas in Gaza, led to serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Therefore the effect that these measures had on the Palestinian population was classified as a collective punishment by the United Nations and therefore contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

As regards the **arms race**, the trend, which has been stable or growing over recent years, was confirmed in

1. The UNHCR report corresponding to 2007 reflects data recorded by the agency during 2006.

2007, and this led to similarities being drawn between the current situation and the period of the Cold War. At the same time, the most recent situation and also the most worrying, is the phenomenon of **nuclear rearmament**, especially in the region of the Middle East. The controversy caused by **Iran's** nuclear programme was accompanied by various reactions at an international level: rearmament of the countries in the region, the proposal by **the USA** to install a missile defence system in Europe and Russia's departure from the Conventional Arms Treaty. Faced with this panorama, it should be pointed out that the emerging powers were not the only ones responsible for the aforementioned nuclear rearmament, but also those countries with a large arsenal, the US at the head. At the same time, new studies continued to show breaches in the sanctions imposed in the form of arms embargoes. Faced with this situation we should point to the role of governments, the primary source of almost all illegal transfers of arms.

As is often the case, advances in the **control of armaments** are always several steps behind the proliferation of the same. Nevertheless, in the field of disarmament in 2007 we could identify initiatives that modified this trend, such as the process initiated at the beginning of the year to eradicate **cluster bombs**. This fact should be taken as a very positive reference, to which can be added all the work that has been done since 2004 for the adoption of an **international treaty on arms traffic**. Regarding this treaty, 2008 will not be the year it is approved, but it should be a year which will advance the drafting process. Finally, after the deployment of a complete strategic and regulatory body to face the challenge of the **DDR programmes**, it was also necessary to address new types of armed violence. In the same way, we saw the importance of linking DDR programmes with more general processes of **reform in the security sector**.

As has been the case in recent years, the balance of 2007 with respect to the situation of **human rights** is clearly ambivalent on a global scale. On the one hand significant advances in areas such as the development of regulations on international law on human rights have been achieved by means of the approval by the General Assembly of the UN of the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** after over 20 years of intense debate, or that of international Justice, with the beginning of the trial of Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, for crimes against humanity, and that of Alberto Fujimori, former president of Peru extradited to Peru from Chile.

Nevertheless, various negative points should be highlighted such as the intense persecution of media pro-

fessionals on various continents, and abuses of power by state security bodies and forces in Europe and on the African continent, and especially towards the end of the year, in Asia. **For yet another year the antiterrorist struggle was instrumentalised by various governments to criminalize political dissent or thought**. Finally, in the field of justice the ruling of the International Court regarding the events in Srebrenica is to be lamented. This ruling discharged Serbia of any responsibility. Also regrettable are the difficulties faced by international judicial bodies to detain and judge suspects of crimes against humanity due to the lack of collaboration, especially on the part of the authorities in Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, this report highlights the serious violations of human rights in 57 countries and reiterates the everyday difficulties faced by many people on a global scale to exercise their rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, regarding the **gender dimension in peacebuilding**, 2007 was characterised by a continuation of the trends that had been seen in recent years since the passing, in 2000, of Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security by the Security Council of the UN. The situation of women in armed conflicts was particularly serious and worrying in a year that saw **alarming levels of sexual violence in various armed conflicts** which are currently ongoing (DR Congo and Myanmar among others). These figures show the **inability and lack of willingness on the part of the international community to guarantee the protection of women in these conflicts**, as well as the enormous importance of patriarchal ideologies and practices in the genesis and development of wars.

As regards the **international agenda**, appeals made for the **creation of a United Nations agency in charge of fostering the organisation's work from a gender perspective** and which would bring together the different efforts that are currently underway in the organization should be highlighted. Additionally once again a major difference between formal and real advances was seen, since on paper there were some advances in the field of gender and peacebuilding while in practice, the **absence of women in peace processes** (Uganda, Kosovo, Philippines), and the aforementioned difficulties in terms of their protection in the face of violence cast a shadow over this progress. Hence another year ended without the gender dimension being incorporated on the international agenda for peacebuilding at the political level that it deserves and in which the formal progress outweighed the real political commitment.