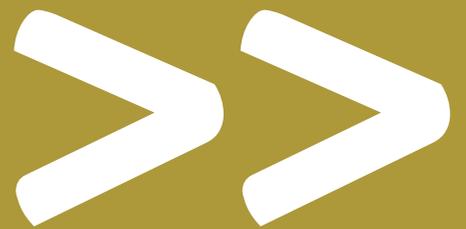




# WAR INDEX

2025

YEARBOOK



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# INTRODUCTION

The USSD (Ukrainian Studies of Strategic Disquisitions) continues its annual project monitoring global military activity. We present to you the «War Index 2025».

In 2025, the primary global event remained the Russian-Ukrainian war, which, in terms of the intensity of technical assets utilized, has become one of the largest since the Korean War and the most significant conflict in Europe since 1945. The Palestinian-Israeli war continues to have serious consequences for the world and the Middle East; having begun in 2023 with a Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, it escalated into Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. This led to a series of reciprocal airstrikes between Iran and Israel, culminating in June 2025 with US involvement. In Syria, a new Sunni government is consolidating control, squeezing out the remnants of both pro-Iranian and pro-American forces.

Tensions are rising in the Pacific region. The situation around Taiwan remains traditionally difficult in the context of regular Chinese naval exercises. Of particular concern is the military threat demonstrated by the DPRK, which simultaneously acts as an effective ally of the RF in the war against Ukraine. Another epicenter of instability is Southern Asia, where the permanent conflict between India and Pakistan carries the threat of nuclear weapon use.

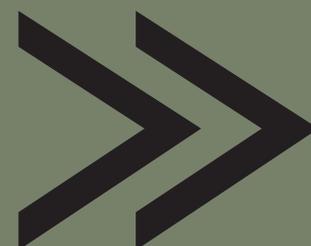
On the territories of less developed nations, long-standing conflicts persist, though a significant portion of them are decreasing in intensity within the framework of negotiation processes (e.g., in Ethiopia and the DR Congo). Tension is mounting in West Africa, where pro-Russian governments are unable to control their territories. A significant factor is also the diplomatic tension within NATO, caused by RF provocations and the diplomatic conflict surrounding Greenland.

Force remains the primary argument for resolving international disputes; its role is growing against the backdrop of the destruction of international order by

the world's leading player—the USA. A characteristic feature has been the restoration of conventional warfare methods, involving frontal clashes of numerous armies. Conversely, the importance of technical proficiency has become evident, primarily in the accuracy and speed of data transmission. The Russian-Ukrainian war is part of a global clash—a «silent Third World War» unfolding since 2011 across many theaters of military action. It is an undeclared war, involving all components of «fourth-generation warfare,» breaking out through open military conflicts. Alongside the proxy confrontation between the USA and the PRC, regional leaders—Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia—are actively intervening in power competition. The influence of networked paramilitary groups is growing, as is the emergence of the «quasi-state» tool. These quasi-states fill the «dead zones» that form beyond the influence of national states, regional leaders, and as a result of superpower strategic confrontations. Private armies are engaged at full capacity.

Direct military interventions, parallel with the broad use of non-military instruments of pressure and coercion, reinforce the trend of using force as a means to achieve political goals.

Overall, the level of global tension continues to increase. This year, we have indexed 47 conflicts (both hot conflicts and those caused by diplomatic confrontation and internal political tension). Among them are: 8 wars, 2 border clashes, 16 local conflicts, 3 military coups or attempts, 11 manifestations of internal political crisis, 7 points of diplomatic confrontation. For comparison, 36 episodes were indexed last year.



# Classification

## OF MILITARY CONFLICTS

Experts from the Non-Governmental Analytical Center «Ukrainian Studies of Strategic Disquisitions» propose a classification of military conflicts for analyzing global military activity:

### War:

- Global wars (mostly involving multiple coalitions)
- Regional wars
- Local wars
- Interstate wars (including lowintensity phases)
- Wars between a state and a coalition
- Foreign intervention
- Civil wars (varying intensity, including external interference)

### Border conflict

(limited armed incident)

### Local conflict

### Military coup

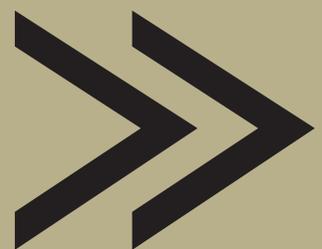
### Terrorism

(or guerrilla action from a different perspective)

### Internal political crisis – tension, political crisis

(with the possibility of escalation and external intervention)

### Diplomatic standoff – trade wars, diplomatic conflicts



# Military conflicts

# 2025



THE METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING THE WAR INDEX INVOLVES EXAMINING ACTIVELY MANIFESTING CONFLICTS WORLDWIDE DURING THE RESEARCH PERIOD THROUGH A SERIES OF INDICATORS DELINEATING THE CONFLICT'S ESSENCE, PROGRESSION, AND SIGNIFICANCE FOR REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY, AND CLASSIFYING THEM BY TENSION LEVEL, FROM THE HOTTEST TO MINIMAL CONFRONTATIONS.

# War Ukraine



The year 2025 marked an increase in the maneuverability of the war of survival for Ukraine, compared to the period of predominantly positional stagnation on the front from September 2023 to September 2024.

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS, INTENSITY

**While strategically Ukrainians continue to hold back Russian aggressors across the entire Ukrainian front, unfortunately, 2025 brought a series of successes for them and defeats for us:**

- In January 2025, important defensive points in the center of the Donetsk region were lost — Kurakhove (10.01) and Velyka Novosilka (25.01), after being held since 2022.

- As of 26.04.2025, the Defense Forces of Ukraine were largely pushed out of the Kursk region of the RF by the enemy. A repeated infiltration of the RF Armed Forces into the Sumy region began.

- On 19.07.2025, the RF Armed Forces broke into the territory of the Dnipropetrovsk region of Ukraine for the first time near the village of Dachne, Synelnykove district. Since then, the enemy has occupied approximately 8 villages and settlements in the Synelnykove district.

- On 23.12.2025, under enemy pressure, the Defense Forces of Ukraine lost control over the town of Siversk and the entire Siversk balcony — a sector of the front east of Slovyansk that loomed over the enemy's front from the south.

- The Defense Forces of Ukraine

successfully held Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad throughout the year, but by the end of 2025, the situation is critical — approximately 1/3 of Pokrovsk is already occupied by Russians, and all communication routes with Ukrainian soldiers in Myrnohrad are at risk of enemy fire.

- Since late November, a critical situation for the Defense Forces of Ukraine has also developed in the village of Yampil (Donetsk region) and the town of Hulyaypole (Zaporizhzhia region).

**Despite critical moments, the Defense Forces of Ukraine achieved a series of successes on the front:**

- By the end of July 2025, the failure of the RF Armed Forces' declared new offensive on the city of Sumy became obvious; Ukrainian soldiers held the enemy in border villages and, in some places, conducted counter-offensive actions.

- 15.08–17.11: The Defense Forces of Ukraine successfully eliminated a significant enemy wedge deep into our defenses east of the towns of Bilytske and Dobropillya, Donetsk region (The Dobropillya Counter-offensive).

- Starting from 24.09.2025, the

Defense Forces of Ukraine were able to eliminate the RF Armed Forces' breakthrough in the city of Kupyansk and surrounding villages. This appeared as an especially symbolic blow to the RF against the backdrop of Putin's repeated claims of capturing the city. Colonel General Kuzovlev, commander of the Moscow Military District, who received the «Hero of Russia» from Putin for the capture of Kupyansk, publicly disappeared as of 19.12.2025 during the AFU counter-offensive.

**Also, the Defense Forces of Ukraine increased their capacity for delivering long-range strategic strikes against the RF. Significant components of this include:**

- Operation «Web» (01.06.2025): During which the SBU used remote-controlled drones to destroy 34% of the RF's strategic aviation. Specifically at airports in Siberia — Belaya (4,849 km from Kyiv) and Ukrainka (6,330 km from Kyiv).

- 15.12.2025: SBU drones blew up a «Varshavyanka» class submarine of the RF Armed Forces, capable of carrying nuclear missiles, in Novorossiysk. Following this, the RF Black Sea Fleet effectively barricaded itself in the Novorossiysk bay.

- 19.12.2025: SBU drones hit a Russian shadow fleet tanker in the Mediterranean Sea near Greece. Major General

Averyanov of the GRU (RF Armed Forces), involved in RF terrorist attacks and sabotage from the UK to Bulgaria, likely died on board.

- Throughout 2025, the Defense Forces of Ukraine significantly expanded the geography and intensity of strikes on all types of targets in the RF. For example, from 19.12.2025, strikes began on RF facilities in the Caspian Sea. Defense enterprises and fuel-energy complex facilities are the primary targets.

- As a result of successful strikes by the Defense Forces of Ukraine on missile production facilities and their carriers in the RF, a significant decrease in missile strikes on Ukraine is observed by the end of 2025. Due to the destruction of most of the RF's armored vehicle stocks, production capacities, and sanctions, Russian military personnel since early 2025 have noticeably used inefficient means for movement, such as the Soviet auto industry and mopeds, as well as animals: horses, donkeys, and camels. This reduces the movement efficiency of Russian fighters and their protection against strikes by Ukrainian soldiers.

**Among the successes of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex (MIC) in 2025, the following are noteworthy:**

- Serial production launch in August of the FP-5 «Flamingo», a Ukrainian long-range cruise missile. The declared warhead of the missile, weighing 1,150 kg, is 2.5 times more powerful than the warhead of the American Tomahawk Block V cruise missile (450 kg), and its flight range exceeds it by nearly twofold. Such a range allows for strikes on military targets

in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and the RF rear as far as Yekaterinburg. Connections between the «Flamingo» developer «Fire Point» and the fugitive corrupt official Mindich sowed doubts about the use of funds for its production, including, unfortunately, from partners in Czechia. However, skeptical assessments regarding the «Flamingo's» combat capabilities are currently absent.

- Three modifications of domestic 12-gauge smoothbore pump-action shotguns received operational clearance. As auxiliary weapons, such shotguns are appropriate for infantry in close-quarters urban combat or narrow trenches.

- New ammunition for large-caliber machine guns, sniper and assault rifles, and grenade launchers—both NATO and Soviet calibers—appeared among codified models of Ukrainian armed products, along with a range of optical devices for infantry weaponry. Specifically, thermal imaging sights for small arms and large-caliber machine guns, and state-of-the-art demining equipment.

Technological successes of the Defense Forces of Ukraine in their own optimization should also be noted. Foremost is the deployment of «Impulse» — a digital system for personnel accounting in the AFU. It optimizes the work of personnel services in military units and other divisions, providing quick access to up-to-date information about people in the military. Alongside the deepening use of the «Army+» app with a range of functions, from transfers to surveys in the military, this allows servicemen to optimize their participation in the

defense of Ukraine, making it more mobile and less bureaucratized.

During 2025, organizational and structural changes also took place in the Defense Forces of Ukraine: the transition to a corps system, and the formation of Assault Troops and Cyber Forces. This process was not without questions from some military personnel, but it undoubtedly allowed a number of new commanders from civilian or volunteer backgrounds to reach influential positions for change in the military.

Although a series of tactical failures on the front brought sadness to Ukrainian society, a range of successes on the front, in long-range strikes against the RF, and in the defense sector provide grounds to evaluate our resilience against Russian aggressors positively. We continue to prevent the Russians from achieving the final liquidation of Ukrainian statehood and the subsequent catastrophic consequences for Ukrainians.

## Number of Casualties

As of 27.12.2025, the losses of the RF Armed Forces in killed and wounded are 1,203,310, according to data from the General Staff of the AFU. Regarding Ukraine's losses, there are the following statements: 12.08.2025: Zelenskyy stated that the number of Russian military losses is three times higher than Ukrainian ones. 16.02.2025: Zelenskyy announced 46,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed and 380,000 wounded.



## Negotiations Between the Parties. Impact on Global Processes

In 2025, the RF's war against Ukraine increasingly defined the global agenda, but this very duration and scale led to growing fatigue among the political elites of many countries and the spread of the idea of a negotiated end to the war. Most notably, the US's negotiating flirtation with the RF should be mentioned. Since Trump's inauguration on 20.01.2025, US policy did not move in an unequivocally pro-Russian direction but fluctuated between flirting with the RF and cooling down with greater support for Ukraine. The main components were:

- A series of visits by Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, to Moscow. On 23.11.2025, information appeared regarding Witkoff's support for a «peace plan» from Putin, which included demands for Ukraine's capitulation, such as the withdrawal of the Defense Forces of Ukraine from the Donetsk region, legal global recognition of Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk regions as part of the RF, reduction of the AFU, and restoration of the privileges of the Russian language and church in Ukraine.

- 28.02.2025: A conflict situation between Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Donald Trump, and JD Vance during a meeting at the White House.

- 15.08.2025: Putin's visit to Alaska and negotiations with Trump without a concrete result.

22.10.2025: Introduction of additional US sanctions against the RF regarding «Lukoil» and «Rosneft,» but by 05.12.2025 — a delay in their implementation until 2026.

23.11.2025 in Geneva, Switzerland, and 23.12.2025 in Florida — peace negotiations between Ukraine and the US regarding a peace plan; representatives of our delegations evaluated them positively. Information is also available regarding the lifting of several US sanctions against the dictator of Belarus, Lukashenko.

## Humanitarian Consequences

The RF continued attempts to undermine Ukraine internally, particularly through terror against the civilian population. Over the summer of 2025, the number of RF strikes on healthcare facilities continued to grow (91 attacks in June–July). 09.09.2025: The RF conducted an airstrike on the village of Yarova, Kramatorsk district, Donetsk region, during pension distribution; 25 Ukrainian civilians died. 29.07.2025: Two patients, including a pregnant woman, died as a result of an RF missile strike on a hospital in the city of Kamianske, Dnipropetrovsk region. In the Kherson region during 2025, 20 out of 35 attacks on humanitarian workers were carried out using FPV drones, which purposefully targeted vehicle missions.

The RF campaign against the TCC (Territorial Recruitment Centers) continued. Certain citizens of Ukraine, stirred up and deceived by RF propaganda to evade their duty to protect the Motherland, committed a series of critical violations of Ukrainian law and citizens' rights, including:

- The first killings of Ukrainian servicemen in the rear: 01.02.2025 — Oleksandr Sykalchuk in Pyriatyn, Poltava region, and 04.12.2025 — Yuriy Bondarenko in Lviv. Those responsible for the murders were detained and brought to trial.

30.10.2025: A crowd attacked a TCC vehicle in Odesa. The campaign against the TCC was intensified by the RF simultaneously with purposeful mass strikes on TCC and SP (Social Support) buildings starting in July 2025. Recruitment of Ukrainian citizens to blow up TCCs also continued. Calls against the TCC did not gain significant popularity, causing waves of indignation among Ukrainian military personnel from the front — who are truly popular in society. The most active in campaigns supporting mobilization and the TCC include servicemen of the Operational Command «North» and the 3rd Army Corps, specifically from the 63rd Separate Mechanized Brigade within it.

Number of Casualties. As of 27.12.2025, the losses of the RF Armed Forces in killed and wounded are 1,203,310, according to data from the General Staff of the AFU. Regarding Ukraine's losses, there are the following statements: 12.08.2025: Zelenskyy stated that the number of Russian military losses is three times higher than Ukrainian ones. 16.02.2025: Zelenskyy announced 46,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed and 380,000 wounded.

## Trends

Trends toward the RF's growing reliance on any external support alongside the accumulation of crisis phenomena within its borders should be highlighted. North Korea (DPRK) continued to provide active assistance to the RF. Until the Defense Forces of Ukraine left the Kursk region, DPRK military personnel participated in battles there. Afterward, the DPRK sent sappers and military builders to the Kursk region. The DPRK was noted for supplying the RF throughout 2024–2025 with artillery shells, KN-23 missiles, Bulsae-4 anti-tank missile systems, North Korean copies of missiles for the «Konkurs» ATGM, 7.62mm Type 73 machine guns, M1989 Koksan self-propelled guns, 240mm MLRS, D-74 guns, 122mm MLRS, trucks disguised as civilian cargo, and unknown SAM/radar systems.

The RF is conducting a massive campaign of agitation and recruitment of hundreds of foreigners through deception, pressure, and the use of local corrupt officials. Primarily in Iran, India, Nepal, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, PRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, and Botswana. In South Africa, since November, former MP Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, daughter of former President Jacob Zuma, has been accused of luring citizens to the war in the RF. She participated in dragging at least

20 men to the RF under the false pretext of security guard jobs or security training for her political party, who were then thrown onto the front. Due to public outcry, the politician resigned her mandate, and a criminal case was opened against her. 07.10.2025: An Indian citizen, lured into the RF army under pressure from a drug case, was captured by the AFU for the first time. This is one of hundreds of cases, according to a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs of India. People from at least 36 countries are known to be participating on the RF side in the war as of November 2025.

The social situation in the RF itself is tense. Most regions have a budget deficit planned for years due to the war and are creating a cycle of loans. Money for the war is also running out; since May, 10 regions of the RF have reduced payments to the military, such as first-contract bonuses, family assistance, and burial payments. Most notably, first-contract payments were slashed in the Samara region (from 3.6 million to 400,000 rubles) and Tatarstan (from 2.7 million to 400,000 rubles). Against the backdrop of decreasing financial incentives to fight, «cannon fodder» in the RF is decreasing to the point where Putin has brought Russians closer to the indefinite general mobilization he previously avoided. He signed a decree for year-round conscription, including via electronic summonses from

03.11.2025. From conscript service, many RF citizens end up in the war against Ukraine. Furthermore, a fuel crisis has been in full swing in the RF since July due to intensive strikes by the Defense Forces of Ukraine on fuel-energy facilities; gasoline and gas shortages have gripped 50 regions of the RF. This, combined with AFU strikes, undermines the RF's position from within and makes Putin's maximalist and uncompromising demands for Ukraine's demilitarization and full control over four Ukrainian regions look unrealistic even to his friends in the West.

# Conclusions and Projected Recommendations



The Russian enemy remains unable to destroy the Ukrainians and liquidate the independence of our state. The maximum RF achievements for 2025 on the front are a series of tactical successes (Kurakhove – Velyka Novosilka, Kursk region, Pokrovsk – Myrnohrad, Siversk, Hulyaypole), some of which were post-factum eliminated by the Defense Forces of Ukraine, as during the counter-offensives in the Dobropillya – Bilytske and Kupyansk areas.

The Defense Forces of Ukraine have deployed full-scale war across all of Russia to the Far East, so that every Russian feels responsibility for supporting the Putin regime in the war against Ukrainians. RF military and fuel-energy complex facilities are subject to strikes as far as the Amur region and the Caspian Sea. Because of this and isolation from the world, the RF is running out of missiles and transport for war; Russians are attacking on horses, and the RF has fuel shortages and total debt. Since the RF cannot destroy Ukraine with military force, it resorts to hybrid and terrorist actions in two directions:

**Internal Political:** The RF's subversive and propaganda campaign continues to spin in Ukraine. Its victims at the hands of paid and deceived Ukrainians have already included 2 TCC servicemen, and Ukrainian civilians like politician Andriy Parubiy continue to be targets. However, the military and the majority of Ukrainians are actively resisting this campaign. To strengthen this resistance, it is important for the authorities to take responsibility for ineffective moments of the mobilization campaign, eliminate them in time, and hold guilty officials—especially those involved in corruption—accountable. Then the spread of anti-mobilization sentiments among Ukrainians will take on a much smaller character.

**External Political:** The RF continues to use figures who have long been in the Russian orbit (DPRK, Orbán in Hungary) to pressure Ukraine and its allies worldwide, and is also trying to bring in new ones (unsuccessfully in Romania and Germany, partially successfully with Babiš and Okamura in Czechia). The RF is also trying to play on the course of Trump and his supporters in the current US administration to achieve a peace settlement at any cost, presenting Ukraine's sovereignty as that cost. This game sometimes overshadows Ukraine's successes in the war with the RF; peace proposals are put forward to us that negate all Russian defeats and their critical state in the war against us. It is appropriate for Ukraine and its authorities to unshakeably prove the national interests of Ukrainians, while simultaneously showing diplomatic respect for the positions of real and potential allies of Ukraine to avoid conflicts with them that are undesirable for us and desired by the enemy, such as on 28.02.2025 in the White House.



# War Israel — Hamas — Iran

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

After 15 months of conflict, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire that began on January 19, 2025. This agreement provides for a phased exchange of hostages and prisoners. While many Israelis support this deal, there is opposition within Prime Minister Netanyahu's coalition, particularly from far-right members who advocate for the re-occupation of Gaza. This internal disagreement poses a risk to the stability of the ceasefire regime. However, the conflict resumes sporadically; despite international condemnation, Israel conducts operations in the Gaza Strip, where a humanitarian catastrophe persists. During the year, relations between Israel and Iran escalated, resulting in a 12-day conflict in June. Israel carried out an airstrike on military

infrastructure, supported by the US, which attacked targets in Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Gulf Arab states were occasionally involved, specifically the UAE and Qatar during an Iranian attack on a US base, as well as Israel's elimination of part of the Hamas leadership during negotiations in Qatar. Additionally, Yemen's Houthis (Iranian proxies) launched unsuccessful missile strikes against Israel. Hezbollah, weakened by previous strikes, transitioned to limited actions. In October, representatives of Israel and Hamas supported Donald Trump's peace plan; however, ceasefire violations continued thereafter. Clashes were also recorded in the West Bank.

The difficult economic situation and external strikes led to large-scale anti-government

protests in Iran in January 2026, with protesters establishing control over quarters in major cities.

In January, Hamas released 25 living hostages and returned 8 bodies of the deceased, while Israel released about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. The IDF withdrew forces from the Netzarim Corridor in Gaza, and the delivery of humanitarian aid was permitted.

In March, Israel struck Hamas targets in Gaza, killing more than 400 people. Protests against Hamas took place in northern Gaza.

In April-May, the IDF resumed ground operations following a Hamas strike on Ben Gurion Airport.

June 13: Israel announced the start of Operation «Rising Lion» against Iran. Strikes were carried out on Iranian nuclear facilities (Natanz, Fordow), and a number of generals and scientists were killed. Iran responded

by attacking Israel with hundreds of missiles and drones.

June 21: The US carried out precision strikes on the underground nuclear facility at Fordow, though the actual consequences for the nuclear program remain unknown.

June 23: Iran launched a ballistic missile strike on the US base Al-Udeid in Qatar.

June 24: A ceasefire was implemented at Washington's initiative.

September 9: Israel launched an airstrike on the Lektayfiya district in the Qatari capital, Doha, killing 5 people. The target of the strike was the Hamas leadership, which was housed in a Qatari government residential complex during a US-mediated ceasefire meeting. This led to a diplomatic demarche by Qatar and outrage from other Arab states. The US President gave guarantees that such an incident would not recur. Following this, and IDF strikes

on a hospital in Gaza (20 killed, including journalists), European states demonstratively began recognizing the independence of Palestine, specifically France and Belgium.

October: Indirect negotiations in Egypt concluded with the approval of a 20-point peace plan involving Donald Trump, which provides for the disarmament of Hamas and international administration of Gaza. The IDF transitioned to defensive operations; from October 8–13, Hamas released 20 living hostages and returned 24 bodies. Israel released 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

## Number of Casualties

It is difficult to calculate the number of dead in Gaza because the figures are provided by the Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health. According to their data, more than 72,000 have died since October 2023, mostly civilians (about 59% being women, children, and the elderly), with more than 60,000 wounded. Up to 2 million have become internally displaced persons. In the West Bank, up to 700 have been killed and more than 10,000 wounded. On the Israeli side, up to 400 military personnel and up to 2,000 civilians have died since October 2023. More than 500,000 civilians are internally displaced. In Iran, 935 people died from attacks (40% of whom were civilians), with over 3,500 wounded. It is also known that more than 500 protesters were killed in January 2026.

## INTENSITY

The war is in a medium-intensity phase, an interstate conflict.

## Humanitarian Consequences

Due to hostilities, Hamas tyranny, and shelling, an extremely difficult humanitarian situation has developed in the Gaza Strip. There is a shortage of food, water, and medicine. No safe places exist within Gaza. Two million people live in a small area of 42 by 12 km. Additionally, Hamas uses civilian objects as dual-purpose sites, condemning them to destruction (often with civilians inside as human shields). This has led to mass casualties resulting from attacks by the Israeli army, which is also accused of genocide. More than 500 people died during the January protests in Iran.

## Trends

Overall, the year was marked by high civilian casualties, especially in Gaza, and shifts in the regional balance of power in Israel's favor. Iran's influence has weakened significantly; it was unable to withstand the attacks in June and, as of January 2026, is experiencing an internal political crisis.

## Impact on Global Processes

Iran's nuclear program and its regional influence remained Israel's main national security concerns. Israeli strikes likely managed to significantly delay Tehran's development of nuclear weapons. Iran has become a prominent arms supplier to the RF in recent years; however, the summer strikes on military infrastructure significantly weakened its capacity for direct military assistance, particularly in the field of drones.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Negotiations were difficult, with several breakdowns due to the parties' demands ( Hamas disarmament, IDF withdrawal from Gaza, hostage exchange). In March–April, negotiations collapsed after Israel rejected an Egyptian-Qatari proposal (a 50-day ceasefire, exchanging 5 hostages for 250 prisoners). In August–September, indirect negotiations began in Egypt to discuss the Trump plan, focusing on disarmament and international governance of Gaza. Arab states opposed Washington's idea of directly governing the Strip, and the points were adjusted. In October, the so-called «Trump Plan» of 20 points came into effect, having been announced on September 29, 2025, at a White House press conference alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is a multilateral agreement aimed at the final cessation of the war in Gaza, hostage/prisoner exchange, demilitarization, humanitarian aid, and transitional governance of Gaza without Hamas. The plan was developed with international mediators (Egypt, Qatar, USA, Arab countries) and received UN support (Security Council resolution in November 2025).

The first phase includes the release of hostages within 72 hours, partial IDF withdrawal from Gaza, prisoner exchange, Hamas disarmament, and international oversight (USA, Egypt, Qatar). It was accepted by both sides; implementation began in October. Negotiations for the second phase (permanent ceasefire) are ongoing. The third phase envisages long-term peace and reform of the Palestinian Authority.



## Forecast

In 2026, an increase in internal tension within Iran is expected. The suppression of protests is more likely; however, Tehran will continue to lose strength and the ability to support its allies. Regular airstrikes by the US and Israel are likely. A less probable regime change would affect the situation in the Middle East and on a global scale, significantly weakening the influence of the RF and China. At the same time, the prospects for a lasting peace in the Gaza Strip remain under threat due to the risks of new phases of escalation.

# Sudan

## War



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Sudan has been in a state of large-scale internal armed conflict since April 2023. The confrontation between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has escalated into a full-blown civil war covering a significant part of the country's territory.

Key centers of hostilities remain the capital region (Khartoum, Omdurman), the Darfur region, as well as specific areas in the East and South. Both sides actively use heavy weaponry, artillery, aviation, and drones, leading to an expanded strike zone and increased risks for the civilian population.

One of the most significant incidents was the capture of El Fasher in October 2025, the administrative center of North Darfur State, after more than 500 days of siege. The fall of El Fasher marked the loss of the government forces' last major stronghold in Darfur and significantly shifted the regional balance of power in favor of the RSF.



### Number of Casualties

The exact number of deaths resulting from the war remains unknown due to limited access to combat zones; however, various estimates suggest tens of thousands of civilian deaths. Individual incidents have been mass-casualty events: in February 2025, an attack on a market in Omdurman killed at least 56 people. Similar strikes on markets, residential quarters, and hospitals are recorded regularly.



### Humanitarian Consequences

The Sudanese war has triggered one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. The number of internally displaced persons is estimated at 8–11 million, with several million more fleeing to neighboring countries, primarily Chad, South Sudan, and Ethiopia.

According to UN estimates, over 30 million people require humanitarian aid. In many regions, there are signs of acute food insecurity and risks of famine. In Darfur, international human rights organizations report systematic violations, including ethnically motivated killings, sexual violence, and the destruction of infrastructure—actions some qualify as having signs of genocide.



### Impact on Global Processes

The conflict puts immense pressure on the Sahel and East Africa. It affects Red Sea security and regional trade routes. External actors like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE support different sides while officially participating in peace initiatives.

## INTENSITY

Civil war.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Diplomatic efforts to achieve a ceasefire continue with varying success. Mediated negotiations (including by Saudi Arabia and the US) have not led to a stable political settlement. Previous temporary ceasefire agreements were repeatedly violated as parties used pauses to regroup.

## Trends

The intensity of fighting remains high and uneven. Alongside periods of relative calm, sudden outbreaks of mass violence occur in urban areas. The conflict is characterized by fragmented front lines and the lack of clearly defined control zones.

**Fragmentation:** Further weakening of central authority.

**Paramilitarization:** Increased role of local militias and alliances.

**Escalation in Darfur:** Intensified violence against civilians.

**Dependency:** Growing reliance on external humanitarian aid.

## Forecast

No quick end to the conflict is observed for 2026. A protracted war with periodic local truces is likely, risking the final collapse of state institutions.

# War Syria

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The Syrian civil war, which had been ongoing since 2011, reached its culmination at the end of 2024 with the fall of the Assad regime. Tensions are rising between the new government and the Kurds in the northeast, who rely on U.S. support and form the core of the pro-Western Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). After clashes between the SDF and the al-Sharaa government in Aleppo in January, prolonged negotiations began regarding the country's future structure.

In March, the new Syrian government conducted operations on the coast (Latakia region) against Alawite militias — a group that had supported the previous Assad regime. Since a Russian base and military presence remain in the area, pro-Russian media accused the al-Sharaa government of genocide. These accusations were supported in particular by Kuwait and Bahrain. The Syrian government launched investigations into extrajudicial executions, and a number of fighters were publicly held accountable.

Israel regularly carried out bombardments of key military infrastructure sites to reduce the new government's ability to pose a threat to Tel Aviv. In April, an uprising of the Druze began in southern Syria, supported by Israel. The first clashes broke out in the city of Jaramana on April 28 and quickly spread to neighboring areas in the Suwayda province. After de-escalation efforts, a ceasefire agreement was reached on May 1. Israel carried out airstrikes against Syrian government targets on April 30, and again on May 2–3, after which Turkey began attempts to jam Israeli communication systems. Sporadic fighting continued into May, with clashes resuming in July 2025.

ISIS, although territorially defeated in 2019, maintained

a presence in Syria, especially in desert regions. The group carried out guerrilla attacks against both military and civilian targets, exploiting governance gaps and security vacuums in central and eastern regions. On May 22, 2025, ISIS representatives detonated a vehicle belonging to Syrian government forces in the al-Safa area of Suwayda province.

On December 13, 2025, in the city of Palmyra in central Syria, two American soldiers and a civilian translator were killed by a suspected Islamic State militant. In eastern Syria, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), in coordination with Western countries, conducted 79 security operations, resulting in the arrest of 203 ISIS members in 2025.

In January 2026, the government managed to advance into SDF-controlled areas in the northeast thanks to several Arab communities allied with the Kurds switching allegiance to Damascus. As a result, agreements were adopted on integrating these territories into a unified political space of the country.

## Number of Casualties

Since 2011, more than 400,000 people have been killed, and millions have become refugees. In 2025 alone, several hundred military personnel and several thousand civilians were killed (primarily as a result of extrajudicial executions).

## INTENSITY

Civil war.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Throughout the year, the new government has been negotiating with other armed groups and confessional minorities. In particular, on March 10, 2025, the Syrian Democratic Forces signed an agreement with the Syrian interim government, which includes support in the fight against “remnants of the Assad regime.” In May, a settlement was reached with leaders of the Druze minority, but another escalation phase was recorded in July. Negotiations were also held with former supporters of Assad.

## Impact on Global Processes

Turkey acts as the main patron of the new Syrian government. At the same time, other Arab states are pursuing a more cautious policy, calling for moderation.

Israel supported the Druze uprising, but by the end of 2025 there were attempts to improve relations with Damascus.

The United States maintains a presence in northeastern Syria, cooperating with the Syrian Democratic Forces to counter ISIS and protect oil fields, while supporting the Kurds in the Rojava region.

Iran and Russia have lost their dominant influence in Syria, but retain the ability to destabilize the situation through support for minorities, especially the Alawites. The new government initially demanded the rapid withdrawal of troops from the Russian base in Tartus, but over the course of the year has tried to avoid direct confrontation with Russia, demonstrating diplomatic flexibility. However, Damascus’s main focus is on relations with the United States, European countries, and the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf.

## Humanitarian Consequences

Since 2011, Syria has experienced one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. As of 2025, there are more than 7 million internally displaced persons and over 6 million refugees, mostly located in neighboring countries. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of refugees expressing a desire to return home, especially from neighboring Turkey, following the fall of the Assad regime.

## Trends

The removal of Assad by Islamist rebels in December 2024 ended the 13-year civil war, leading to significant political changes. With Assad’s fall, Syria entered a phase of political fragmentation. Various groups and factions began establishing control over different territories, resulting in localized governance and continued instability.

The new leadership, headed by Ahmed al-Sharaa, has promised to respect religious freedoms and create an inclusive government, while basing governance on Sharia principles. However, skepticism remains due to al-Sharaa’s past ties to extremist groups.

## Forecast

The security situation in Syria in 2026 will remain complex and unstable, shaped by the последствия of the fall of the Assad regime, the continuation of armed conflicts, and geopolitical rivalry. New outbreaks of interconfessional tensions are possible, as well as intervention by external actors.

# War Ethiopia

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Ethiopia, which consists of more than 90 ethnic groups, has faced ethnic tensions typical for African countries. Factors such as population growth, unemployment, and the struggle for resources only intensify these tensions.

After the overthrow of the military regime in 1991, an ethnic federal system of government was introduced to try to resolve historical grievances by allowing various regions of Ethiopia the right to self-govern. This led to the rise of ethno-nationalist movements and weakened Ethiopia's national unity. Tensions grew in the relations between the capital and the Tigray State, turning into an armed conflict in November 2020, which lasted in a hot phase until November 2022 (the signing of the Pretoria agreement). A peace process has been underway since 2023, accompanied by episodes of war crimes by Eritrean allied forces. Instead, the main point of tension has become the Amhara State, where local militias (Fano militia) have rebelled against the central government since April 2023. The conflict began after the government tried to disband the Amhara special forces and other regional forces to «promote national unity.» During the 2025 monitoring period, representatives of the «Fano» Amhara people's militia are engaged in hostilities with the government. On May 9, 2025, four Fano factions—Gojjam Fano, Wollo Fano, (Gondar) Amhara Fano Unity, and Shewa Fano—announced a merger to create the Amhara Fano National Forces (AFNF) under the leadership of a 13-person Central Command. According to the AFNF, the goal of this merger was to create a single body for the protection of the Amhara people.

According to a report published in June 2025 by the American group The Sentry, the Eritrean army continues its occupation of half of the Irob district and

supports and trains representatives of the «Fano» militia in Amhara State. These actions were facilitated by the United Nations' unilateral lifting of sanctions against participants in the conflict.

Tensions remain with neighboring countries, specifically Sudan and Eritrea. On July 4, 2025, high-ranking officials of the Sudanese government accused Ethiopia of exploiting the ongoing civil war in Sudan by sending militias supported by the Ethiopian army into the disputed Al-Fashaga area, where they blocked local farmers from accessing their fields and began clearing land under military protection. Sudan reclaimed a significant part of Al-Fashaga in 2020 after two decades of occupation by Ethiopian settlers, but the recent withdrawal of Sudanese military positions allowed for new incursions. At another point on the border, an Ethiopian group crossed into Sudan, robbed a livestock market in the Al-Qallabat area, and then retreated back across the border.

Against this background, the situation on the Sudan-Ethiopia border is escalating. In the summer, media reports appeared regarding the concentration of Ethiopian troop units in the area of the disputed Al-Fashaga triangle. This is a vast area of fertile land of about 1.2 million hectares that has been a subject of dispute for decades and leads to periodic tensions. In 2020, at the height of the conflict in the Tigray region, the Sudanese army regained control over approximately 90% of the agricultural land in the Al-Fashaga area, a territory that Ethiopian farmers had occupied for over 25 years.

Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nebiat Getachew denied this, stating that Ethiopia reaffirms its commitment to a policy of good neighborliness and de-escalation. However, subsequently, Sudanese

# Negotiations Between the Parties

On February 2, 2025, the Ethiopian government created a temporary administration for Tigray from representatives of the state's leaders. Moges Tafere was appointed chairman, and Dejene Mezgebu (PhD), president of the Tigray Independence Party, was appointed deputy chairman. Over several months, delegations of civil society and religious leaders from Addis Ababa consistently visited the capital of Tigray, Mekelle, for „dialogue.“

representatives accused Ethiopian non-governmental militias, which gained influence during the Tigray War, of an attempted invasion. Local Sudanese farmers and volunteers reported on July 14 that three villages in southeastern Sudan were attacked and robbed by Ethiopian militias in Gedaref State, where, according to recent UN estimates, nearly a million people suffer from acute hunger. Residents say the attacks prevented them from cultivating their land during the key planting period, which coincides with the rainy season in the region from July to September.

Also, the Sudanese government, along with Egypt, reacted hostilely to the full launch of the «Renaissance» Dam on the Nile in September, which provides Ethiopia with the opportunity to blackmail downstream states with water shortages.

Although the war largely ceased after the signing of the peace agreement in Pretoria in 2024, Eritrea continues to occupy part of Tigray State, as it acted in support of the central government. However, in 2025, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali called Ethiopia's loss of access to the sea a «historical mistake.» President Isaias Afwerki perceived these statements as a threat that Addis Ababa might invade and seize the coastal areas it lost after Eritrea's war of independence in 1993.



## Trends

The main conflict with Tigray State remains in a regime of a shaky truce; the capital guarantees autonomy under the rule of the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The parties regularly accuse each other of violating peace principles. Back in March, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (which continues to control Tigray State) launched a political struggle against the compromise head of the state, Getachew Reda, who tried to begin the disarmament provided for by the peace agreement. Radical board members accused him of treason, and Reda was forced to flee to the capital, Addis Ababa. Instead, a radical group led by Debretsion Gebremichael is strengthening. Addis Ababa accused the TPLF of refusing to disarm, as well as establishing cooperation with neighboring Eritrea. In turn, the Tigrayans accuse the central government of obstructing the return of temporarily displaced persons (about 1.6 million people), as well as revoking permission to participate in elections. The activity of the «Fano» militia (Amhara people) and tension in relations with neighboring Eritrea and Sudan also remain problems.



## Number of Casualties

After the start of the armed conflict with Tigray State, according to government data, more than 3,000 Ethiopian army servicemen died, with more than 4,500 wounded. From the side of the «Tigray People's Liberation Front,» according to their data, more than 6,000 people died, up to 3,000 were wounded, and up to 2,000 are in captivity. In other clashes, tens of thousands of people have died. Independent estimate—more than 60,000 dead. Large losses among the civilian population—according to various data, between 600,000 and 800,000 civilians died from the consequences of hostilities.



## Impact on Global Processes

External players, primarily Russia and the USA, demonstrate interest in resolving the conflict.

The region acquires special significance as part of the coast of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal, through which key cargo transportation occurs, including petroleum products.

In previous years, sanctions by the USA for human rights violations and a more loyal policy increased the threat of Ethiopia drifting toward Russia and China. At the same time, Ethiopia is quite dependent on supplies of Ukrainian grain, so it actively advocated for the normalization of supply routes. The peace process created conditions for the restoration of contacts with the West. The importance of Turkey is also growing, which in December 2024 became a mediator in the diplomatic conflict with Somalia, which Ethiopia considered as a possible option for gaining access to the sea.

Russian influence remains significant but is decreasing. Specifically, at the end of July, a Russian attempt to agree with Ethiopia on the leasing of aircraft for the needs of Russian civil aviation, through the formal mediation of Ethiopian Airlines, failed. This

route was intended to help bypass sanctions to renew the Russian aviation fleet, which suffers from an aging fleet and a lack of parts. Ethiopian representatives reported that they do not have the authority to instruct the state air carrier to lease planes because Russian companies are under sanctions.

Therefore, Russia is losing influence in Ethiopia, which will provoke greater support for Eritrea and, likely, situationally for the Tigrayan autonomists in the event of a new conflict flaring up. Since Russia's positions in neighboring Sudan have weakened significantly in the last year, it is critically important for Moscow to ensure a stable presence on the Red Sea coast; therefore, Eritrea currently appears to be the only alternative.



## Humanitarian Consequences

According to international estimates, more than 5 million people became refugees, mostly to neighboring Sudan. More than 3 million people became internally displaced persons. The situation is particularly difficult for tens of thousands of refugees from Eritrea who have lived for years in camps in Tigray and in refugee camps on both sides of the Sudan-Ethiopia border.

### INTENSITY

Local conflict with the risk of a renewed civil war, internal political crisis with periodic clashes and growing inter-ethnic tension, diplomatic conflict. In the settlement phase.

## Forecast

Given the progress of peace negotiations, stabilization in Tigray can be expected in the coming years; a settlement in Amhara State is likely. However, the unresolved nature of ethnic contradictions and the involvement of external forces (Eritrea, Sudan, Chinese and Russian influences) require more attention from the international community. Also, the probability is growing that the authorities of neighboring Eritrea will change sides and begin to support the Tigrayan clan.

# War Yemen

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The war in Yemen has been ongoing since 2015. There is a confrontation between the northern part of the country (where the Houthis live — a Shia religious group) that supports former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, where the «Ansar Allah» movement was formed, and the southern part (Sunnis, supporting the government of Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi). The Houthis are supported by Iran and, to a lesser extent, Russia; the South is supported by Saudi Arabia and its allies from among the Arab states carrying out armed intervention in the country.

At the same time, terrorists have deployed activities in the desert outskirts, for example, «Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula» and «Islamic State.»

During 2025, the dynamics of the conflict shifted from a civil war on land to a high-intensity maritime confrontation in the Red Sea. After a relative lull at the beginning of the year caused by a US-Houthi ceasefire in May 2025, hostilities resumed sharply.

In January 2025, the Houthis released 25 crew members of the

vessel *Galaxy Leader*, captured in 2023, however already on March 15, the USA and the United Kingdom began a new phase of strikes under the code name «Operation Rough Rider.» By the end of April, over 1000 airstrikes had been delivered, which significantly exceeded the intensity of the 2024 campaign.

Despite this, in July 2025, the Houthis became active, carrying out a series of attacks. On July 6, they attacked the Greek vessel *MV Magic Seas* using drones, missiles, and maritime drones, which led to its sinking; the entire crew was rescued. On July 8–9, the vessel *Eternity C* was attacked and sunk, which became the first case of sailor deaths in 2025 (4 dead, 11 missing, 6 of whom likely ended up in Houthi captivity). In July, the Houthis also announced the expansion of attacks on any vessels associated with companies calling at Israeli ports.

In November 2025, the Houthis for the first time mass-deployed autonomous underwater vehicles (UUV) for attacks on coalition logistics vessels. On November 14, a container ship was seriously damaged in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, forcing the USA to transfer additional anti-submarine defense assets to the region. On December 10–12, coalition aviation delivered a series of massive strikes on deepened underground missile

storage facilities in the Saada and Amran provinces, using concrete-piercing munitions.

On land, the active combat actions of the civil war remained frozen. However, the confrontation between other players sharpened: in October 2025, militants of «Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula» attacked the headquarters of the Southern Transitional Council in Abyan province. Also in October, the Houthis carried out a raid on UN facilities in Sana'a, detaining at least 20 employees. As of the end of December 2025, the fate of 27 detained employees of the UN and international organizations remained unknown; the Houthis brought charges against them for «espionage for the benefit of the USA and Israel.»

On December 26, Saudi Arabia delivered an airstrike on the Yemeni militia of the Southern Transitional Council, supported by the UAE, against the background of growing tension between the two Gulf states over their rival positions in regional conflicts. 30 December Saudi Arabia called on the UAE to immediately withdraw all its troops and proxies from Yemen within 24 hours under the threat of a «military response,» to which the UAE agreed. This happened after the failure of reconciliation between pro-Saudi and pro-Emirati armed formations in Yemen.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Peace negotiations between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia, which had progressed in 2023–2024, reached a dead end. The crisis in the Red Sea became the main obstacle. In May 2025, a temporary ceasefire was reached between the USA and the Houthis mediated by Oman, but it was disrupted by the July attacks.

As of the end of December 2025, any dialogue has been terminated, and the Houthis officially rejected the last proposal for «humanitarian de-escalation» in exchange for the opening of ports, putting forward a demand for the full withdrawal of foreign troops from the region and the payment of reparations.



## Number of Casualties

During the monitoring period in the Red Sea at least 4 sailors died, 11 went missing. General Houthi losses for the year are estimated at over 200 persons dead. Also in October as a result of an Al-Qaeda attack on the forces of the Southern Transitional Council 8 soldiers died.

## INTENSITY

High intensity of the maritime conflict (attacks on vessels, coalition airstrikes) with low intensity of combat actions on land within the framework of the civil war.



## Trends

The main trend of 2025 is the cyclicity of escalation in the Red Sea. Massive Western strikes (as in March — April) are capable only of temporarily muffling Houthi capabilities, but not destroying them. The Houthis demonstrate an ability for rapid adaptation and restoration of attacks as soon as international pressure weakens. Parallely, a full collapse of the peace process regarding the civil war is occurring, since the Houthis effectively use the maritime blockade as a lever of pressure, making concessions on land impossible.

By the end of the year, the trend of a «technological arms race» took hold: the Houthis moved from mass launches of cheap drones to using more complex ballistic anti-ship missiles and underwater vehicles.



## Humanitarian Consequences

The humanitarian situation in Yemen in 2025 again reached a catastrophic level. According to UN data, 19.5 million persons require aid (1.3 million more than in 2024). 18 million people faced an acute shortage of food, which is the worst indicator since 2022. The detention by the Houthis of UN employees in October further complicated the supply of aid.

At the end of the year, the situation worsened due to an outbreak of cholera in Houthi-controlled areas of Hodeidah, where due to the maritime blockade and strikes on infrastructure, an acute shortage of clean water and medicines arose.



## Impact on Global Processes

The crisis in the Red Sea remained a key factor in the destabilization of global trade. The restoration of attacks in July 2025 again raised the cost of maritime transportation and insurance. This forced most large carriers to continue using the longer and more expensive route around the Cape of Good Hope, which reduced effective global container capacity by 9% and increased transit time by 30%.

Following the results of 2025, the revenues of the Suez Canal fell by a record 65%, which caused a critical financial crisis in Egypt and forced EU countries to seek alternative land routes through Central Asia.

The Houthis use the support of Iran, which renewed the supply of components of missiles and drones; in December 2025, evidence appeared of the direct participation of Iranian advisors in the program of improving Houthi underwater vehicles. International maritime coalitions continued to act, but with different mandates. Aspides, whose mandate was extended until February 2026, acted purely in a defensive mode, protecting vessels, while the USA and United Kingdom delivered strikes on Houthi military facilities on land.

## Forecast

The conflict in the Red Sea will continue in 2026 as well. The Houthis will try to expand the radius of attacks to the Indian Ocean, using new long-range drones. The Houthis will not abandon the attacks, since they have proven their effectiveness both on the global (pressure on trade) and internal (growth of regime popularity) levels. The Western coalition will be forced to continue a costly defensive operation and periodic punitive strikes, not having a clear strategy of superiority. The civil war on land will remain in a semi-frozen state, and the humanitarian crisis in Yemen will deepen.

# War

# South Sudan



## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The civil war in South Sudan has been ongoing since December 2013. The armed phase began with a failed coup attempt on December 16, 2013, carried out by military personnel affiliated with former vice president Riek Machar.

Parallel to the escalation of the armed conflict, peace initiatives also strengthened. Several rounds of negotiations were held, but the signed peace protocols were violated after a few days. The conflict is complicated by the different ethnic backgrounds of the leaders of the warring parties: President Salva Kiir belongs to the Dinka ethnicity, while Riek Machar belongs to the Nuer.

The main peace document was signed on September 12, 2018. The document established that Riek Machar becomes one of five vice presidents of South Sudan, a transitional government is formed, a new parliament is established, and presidential elections must take place. Since then, the implementation of the peace agreement has continued with periodic clashes between the parties to the conflict. It should be noted that the agreement was not signed by all armed groups; some of them remain in a state of military confrontation with government forces.

In August 2022, a decision was made to extend the transitional period for another 24 months to complete the reforms initiated, after which presidential elections were supposed to take place.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT STATE AND LATEST EVENTS FOR THE PERIOD UNDER STUDY

At the current stage, there are no large, intensive clashes, but skirmishes periodically occur in various regions of the country. An escalation of clashes between government troops and local militias was recorded in Upper Nile State; inter-communal conflicts flare up periodically.

## Humanitarian Consequences

In total during the conflict, 2.47 million people left South Sudan as refugees, 2 million became internally displaced persons. 7.5 million people required some type of humanitarian aid or protection, 7.7 million faced the threat of hunger.

According to data from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 9 million people require humanitarian aid — more than two-thirds of the population. It is estimated that 2 million people remain internally displaced persons, while 2.29 million fled to neighboring countries.

In October 2025, the UN reported that approximately 300,000 people during the year fled South Sudan to escape the escalation of combat actions, with approximately half of these refugees heading to Sudan.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Negotiations between the government of South Sudan and the National Salvation Front (NAS) continue, although progress is limited. NAS did not join the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict (R-ARCSS), which complicates reaching a broader consensus. Main difficulties with negotiations include a low level of trust between the parties, differences in goals and methods for solving the problem, as well as disputes over the participation of NAS in formal peace processes.

The main demand of NAS is the creation of a more inclusive system of government that accounts for the rights of different ethnic groups, which opposes the current power structure concentrated around President Salva Kiir.

The peace process weakened in March 2025, when the first vice president and NAS leader Riek Machar was placed under house arrest. Government forces as part of a column of heavily armed vehicles burst into Machar's residence in Juba, disarmed his guards, and arrested him for allegedly planning an uprising. The government of South Sudan initially confirmed and then denied the fact of his detention.

## Number of Casualties

Approximate estimates for the year — more than a thousand victims, mostly as a result of inter-communal confrontations. Total number of deaths since the beginning of the conflict: about 500,000.

## Forecast

Repeated inability to maintain numerous peace agreements, political competition, and the mobilization of armed groups indicate a lack of genuine support for a political solution from the leaders of South Sudan. In South Sudan, the holding of national elections was moved from December 2024 to December 2026. The reason was insufficient preparation and the need to complete a number of important tasks, including conducting a population census, developing a permanent constitution, and creating a National Election Commission. The disappearance of civil and political space reduces opportunities for civilians to participate in constitutional drafting, transitional justice, national elections, and other important democratic processes.

## INTENSITY

Civil war in the settlement phase with periodic outbreaks of violence.

# War Cambodia Thailand

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

During 2025 from May to October, as well as from November to December, an escalation of the situation occurred on the border between Cambodia and Thailand. In July and especially in December, the confrontation moved into an active phase with the use of aviation, tanks, artillery, and unmanned aerial vehicles. Skirmishes took place at three points: around the Ta Muen temple complex (Surin province, Thailand; Oddar Meanchey province, Cambodia), the Ta Khwai temple (Surin province, Thailand; Oddar Meanchey province, Cambodia), and the Preah Vihear temple (Sisaket province, Thailand; Preah Vihear province, Cambodia). Following the combat actions, Thailand seized several dominant heights near the aforementioned structures (specifically Phu Ma-Khuea and Chong An Ma), as well as a number of border territories.



## Number of Casualties

42 killed and 531 wounded Thai servicemen. 160 killed Cambodian security forces. 62 killed and 39 wounded Thai civilians. 47 killed and 90 wounded Cambodian civilians. 500 thousand internally displaced persons on both sides.



## Impact on Global Processes

The activation of a fairly old conflict is caused by China's desire to use Cambodia's hands to destabilize Thailand, which is a major non-NATO ally of the USA and an important element of the American security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region. Bangkok is one of the large extractors of rare earth metals. The annual volume of production should be estimated at about 13 thousand tons, which brings Thailand to the fourth position in the world by this indicator. The use of Cambodia is an element of a broader Chinese strategy regarding the containment of Thailand. Here it is also worth mentioning the conflict in the South of the state, the strengthening of Beijing's influence in Malaysia, as well as the exporting of danger from Myanmar.

## INTENSITY

Low-intensity war.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

During 2025, the parties reached a truce three times and even concluded a peace agreement mediated by the USA, which effectively did not work and existed for slightly more than two weeks. It is indicative that neither Bangkok nor Phnom Penh leaned toward settling the issue of the ownership of the aforementioned religious structures or organizing joint access to them. Negotiations concerned exclusively the exchange of prisoners of war, the withdrawal of weaponry, military equipment and personnel, and the establishment of temporary border posts. Currently, the parties have not even begun preparatory procedures for conducting the demarcation of the border.



## Trends

In 2025, militants of the National Revolutionary Front concentrated on terrorist acts mostly in Narathiwat province, 82% of the population of which is Muslim. Practically all of them are of Malay origin. As in the previous year, Islamists continued to commit attacks on Buddhists in Songkhla province as well, over 63% of the population of which is Thai. It is worth noting that representatives of the National

Revolutionary Front focused their attacks specifically on the peaceful population, using improvised explosive devices, grenades, and automatic weapons. At the same time, clashes with the police or government military units are a rarity. The shooting on July 28 at a food market in Bangkok once again confirms the worsening security situation in Thailand. A negative role is also played by the active phase of the military-political conflict with neighboring Cambodia.

## Forecast

After the second phase of clashes in December 2025, Bangkok and Phnom Penh concluded a third truce. This fact confirms the difficulty of achieving a stable settlement. The situation is complicated by the lack of permanent power in Thailand, and consequently — the unreadiness of the temporary government to take responsibility regarding negotiations with Cambodia. At the same time, a stable settlement is made impossible by the value-based nature of the conflict, as well as the use of Cambodia by China in the role of a proxy for destabilizing the socio-political situation in Thailand. Also, one should not exclude a next stage of activation of provocations and mutual shelling in connection with the parliamentary elections and constitutional referendum in Thailand, which are to take place on February 8, 2026.

# Border clash

## Pakistan – Afghanistan



### Events, Incidents

August 30, 2021, is considered the date of completion of the large-scale war in Afghanistan. It began on October 7, 2001, when the USA, with the support of allies in NATO, carried out an intervention in Afghanistan and destroyed the regime of the Islamist movement «Taliban.» However, the latter continued a guerrilla struggle, thanks to which they managed to return to power after twenty years of war. Currently, under the name Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), the country remains in partial international isolation, trying to obtain world recognition.

Since then, combat actions have had the character of clashes between the troops of the new government and the republican National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF). The Panjshir conflict began immediately after the Taliban seizure of Kabul in August 2021, however since that time the activity of the resistance movement has been reduced to the activities of guerrilla groups in the Northeast. Currently, the National Front has no control over territories, but carries out guerrilla attacks.

During 2025, the Taliban faced the most serious military escalation since 2021, while simultaneously fighting a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The key event was an acute border conflict with Pakistan in October 2025. Tension, which grew due to the inability of the IEA to control the «Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan» (TTP) group, which operates from Afghan territory, escalated into open combat actions. On October 9, Pakistan delivered airstrikes on targets in Kabul, Khost, Paktika, and Jalalabad, aiming, in particular, at the TTP leader Noor Wali Mehsud. On the night of October 11 to 12, Taliban forces conducted a massive retaliatory operation, attacking dozens of Pakistani military posts along the border. The ten-day conflict became the

deadliest since 2021 and stopped only after emergency negotiations in Qatar.

However, the fragile truce was effectively negated in November 2025. On November 11–12, a series of TTP terrorist attacks shook Pakistan, in particular an explosion occurred near a court in Islamabad (the first such attack in the capital in a decade), which led to the death of 15 people. Pakistan accused Afghan citizens of preparing the attacks. On November 25, the Taliban claimed new nightly airstrikes by Pakistan on Khost and Kunar provinces, as a result of which 10 civilians allegedly died, among them women and children. Islamabad officially denied the fact of the strikes, calling the reports propaganda.

### Impact on Global Processes

The most important diplomatic event was the change in the status of the Taliban regime by Russia. On July 3, 2025, the RF became the first country-member of the UN Security Council to officially recognize the Taliban government, having previously (in April) excluded it from its list of terrorist organizations. This stimulated further regional legitimization: during the year, the Taliban appointed new ambassadors to Turkey (June) and Pakistan (May, before the escalation).

The October conflict of Afghanistan with Pakistan demonstrated a change in regional alliances. The USA, which at the beginning of the year strengthened relations with Islamabad, supported its «right to self-defense.» By the end of the year, Pakistan effectively downgraded the status of diplomatic relations with Kabul, officially calling the Taliban the «regime in Afghanistan» instead of the government. Parallel to this, a strengthening of Indian influence in Kabul was observed, which Islamabad regarded as the formation of a «second front» on its borders.

## Trends

The main trend of the year is the splitting of the international attitude toward the IEA. On one hand, the «non-Western world» (RF, China, regional players) is moving toward the gradual legitimization of the regime to satisfy its geopolitical and economic interests. On the other — Western countries are strengthening its isolation. Against this background, the main security trend was not an internal guerrilla war (NRF activity was minimal), but an external conflict with Pakistan over the TTP problem.

At the end of 2025, a trend toward a «Pakistani-Afghan split» clearly emerged: Islamabad abandoned its many-year strategy of supporting the Taliban, moving to a policy of open containment and forced deportation of millions of Afghan refugees as an instrument of pressure.

## Intensity

Local conflict of high intensity, which in November — December 2025 transitioned into a phase of «hybrid war» (cross-border TTP terrorist attacks and retaliatory airstrikes).

## Negotiations Between the Parties

After the military escalation on October 18–19, 2025, emergency negotiations took place in Doha (Qatar) between delegations of Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the mediation of Qatar, the parties agreed on an immediate and full cessation of fire.

However, the third round of negotiations in Istanbul (November 6–7) with the mediation of Turkey and Qatar completely failed. The parties were unable to agree on a border monitoring mechanism. The dialogue organized in December with the assistance of Saudi Arabia also did not bring results due to Kabul's refusal to extradite TTP leaders.

## Number of Casualties

During the border conflict in October, the parties provided different data. Pakistan admitted the loss of 29 military personnel, while the Taliban claimed the destruction of nearly 200. The Taliban admitted the death of about 45 of their fighters, while Pakistan claimed over 200 killed Taliban and TTP militants.

In November, as a result of TTP terrorist attacks in Pakistan, over 30 people died. Taliban statements about victims from Pakistani shelling at the end of November speak of at least 10 civilians.

## Humanitarian Consequences

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has reached a critical point. According to UN data, over 22 million Afghans (nearly half the population) require aid in 2025. The situation worsened due to the decision of the USA (the largest donor) to suspend almost all humanitarian aid in January 2025, which led to an urgent reduction of UN programs. Over 500 thousand children are under the threat of death from malnutrition.

The crisis is intensified by the mass forced return of refugees: by July over 1.6 million people were returned to the country (mostly from Iran and Pakistan).

## Forecast

The Minister of Defense of Pakistan has already stated the possibility of «open war» in 2026 if Kabul does not change its policy regarding the TTP. However, we evaluate such a scenario as unlikely. More probable is the continuation of periodic exchanges of airstrikes and clashes on the border.

A further deepening of the split is expected between the RF/China, which will continue the diplomatic integration of the IEA, and the West, which will increase pressure. The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan will inevitably deepen with the onset of the winter of 2025–2026 against the background of a deficit of international financing.

# Border clash

## India – Pakistan

### Events, Incidents

On May 7–10, a series of exchanges involving missile strikes and drone attacks took place between New Delhi and Islamabad. On the eve of the escalation, April 22, the Pakistani Salafi terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba carried out an attack on Hindu and Christian tourists in the town of Pahalgam, in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In response, India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, expelled Pakistani diplomats, and closed the border. Pakistan, in turn, suspended the Simla Agreement, restricted trade with India, and closed its airspace to Indian aircraft. Ultimately, New Delhi launched a series of missile strikes (Operation Sindoor) on terrorist bases within Pakistani territory, to which the latter responded with strikes on India's missile bases and airfields.

### Intensity

Border Clash.

### Number of Casualties

- 47 Indian civilians killed and 20 wounded.
- 8 Indian military personnel killed.
- 40 [Pakistani] civilians killed.
- 13 Pakistani military personnel killed.

### Impact on Global Processes

The geopolitical result of this clash was the demonstration of India's effective isolation in the world, as it faced a lack of not only allies but actual partners. This contributed to the strengthening of cooperation with the Russian Federation, as well as the establishment of contacts with Israel. Parallel to this, Pakistan continued to strengthen military-technical cooperation with Saudi Arabia, effectively initiating probable blocking processes along the Ankara-Riyadh-Baku-Islamabad line.

### Negotiations Between the Parties

With the mediation of the United States, the active phase of the conflict was terminated, and the communication hotline between the top military leadership was restored. The same applies to the status of the previously mentioned agreements and the residency status of diplomats.

### Trends

The brief clash demonstrated how far both states have advanced in the development of weaponry and military equipment. The main combat operations were conducted in the air, while the precision and depth of the strikes were ensured by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and satellites. However, despite the expanded range of engagement, India demonstrated that Pakistan was able to inflict losses on its Air Force—something that had not happened for a considerable time—and revealed a series of geopolitical problems. Among them is the effective isolation of New Delhi, which is being actively fueled by Beijing against the backdrop of Islamabad's foreign policy successes in its communication with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Azerbaijan.

### Forecast

Currently, there are no serious prerequisites for the deepening of the conflict, as India proved to be unprepared for a significant rebuff from Pakistan, as well as for the emergence of major geopolitical problems for itself. Therefore, New Delhi is unlikely to move to more active forms of confrontation, limiting itself—as is Islamabad—to hybrid forms of conflict. However, rather aggressive calls toward each other continue to resonate within the information space of both states.



# Local conflict

## D R Congo R w a n d a



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The current armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been ongoing since November 2021, when the rebel group «March 23 Movement» (M23) launched lightning attacks on the positions of the DRC Armed Forces in North Kivu province — a strategic region in the East of the country bordering Rwanda. This marked the beginning of a new acute phase of the conflict, which is concentrated in the eastern provinces and has both an internal and a distinct regional dimension.

The M23 group emerged back in 2012 as a rebel movement against the central authority of the DRC. At that time, its attempt to displace the government suffered defeat: some militants were arrested, and the rest fled to neighboring Rwanda. Over the following years, the movement tried to restore its activity, which ultimately resulted in the large-scale return of M23 to combat actions at the end of 2021, with a gradual buildup of military potential and territorial ambitions.

According to UN expert assessments, M23 effectively acts as a proxy force for Rwanda. It is reported that the Rwandan

army de facto controls the group's operations, provides training for recruits, and supplies modern weaponry. According to confirmed data, between 3,000 and 4,000 servicemen of the Rwanda Defence Force are present on the territory of the DRC. This exacerbates interstate tension, as Rwanda simultaneously possesses a well-organized army and actively cooperates with international partners and peacekeeping missions.

In 2024, the situation in the DRC deteriorated sharply. The M23 group expanded its control in North Kivu, capturing strategic settlements, including the town of Masisi near the provincial capital, Goma. The escalation of violence in North and South Kivu and Ituri led to mass violations of human rights, attacks on the civilian population, and camps for internally displaced persons. From January to March 2024 alone, over 738,000 people were forced to leave their homes, and in total over 25 million residents of the country require humanitarian aid, which emphasizes the fragility of the security and humanitarian situation in the region.

### ПОДІЇ ЗА ОПИСУВАНИЙ ПЕРІОД

The escalation of the conflict in the East of the DRC in 2025, caused by the resumption of activity by the «March 23 Movement» (M23) and the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF), reached a critical point with the capture of Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, in January, and Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu, in February. Although as of late January 2025, M23 control over the entirety of Goma was disputed, the group controlled most of the city, and the final capture of Bukavu took place on February 16, 2025. These actions, which continued after the breakdown of peace agreements, allowed M23 to establish administrative and economic control over key border territories, reorienting economic flows and creating a security buffer for Rwanda. According to ACLED, violence involving M23 in January 2025 was the highest since the resumption of the offensive in 2021. M23 launched an offensive southward into South Kivu province, reaching areas north of Kalehe by the end of January.

From March, following the conclusion of a ceasefire agreement brokered by Qatar

(Doha) between the presidents of the DRC and Rwanda, direct RDF participation ceased, and the role of the Congolese army (FARDC) in combat actions significantly decreased. The main burden of the confrontation with M23 was taken on by the Wazalendo militia coalition, whose activity increased sharply. In July, the ADF/ISCAP group carried out a massacre in Komanda (Ituri province), killing about 43 civilians in and around a church on July 27, 2025. Throughout the summer, specifically in July and August, despite peace processes, M23 changed tactics, focusing on a campaign of mass violence against the civilian population in North and South Kivu provinces. Regional sources reported the killing of over 400 civilians (more than 413 according to the government of South Kivu) since July 2025, which exceeded the total number of civilian victims from M23 over the previous three years (2021–2024). In September, ISCAP intensified its activity and clashes, recording one of the battles far to the west, in the Bafwasende territory of Tshopo province (in Kokoto on September 20), which underscored the expansion of the geography of their operations.

In October, the situation remained tense: M23 and allied groups, including Twirwaneho and Ngumino, continued to fight against the Wazalendo coalition and forces loyal to the FARDC, especially on the high-altitude plateau of South Kivu, while the FARDC maintained a low level of direct participation in clashes. In November, a further increase in tension and prolonged clashes were recorded on key lines of separation north of Bukavu and in North Kivu. Wazalendo faced significant problems in effectively containing M23, allowing the latter to strengthen its positions. Intensity High-intensity international conflict.

## INTENSITY

High-intensity international conflict



## Number of Casualties

According to international sources, the conflict in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which intensified from 2021 due to the revival of the M23 insurgent movement and support from Rwanda, has led to significant human losses. Estimates show that from 2021 to 2025, thousands of people died as a result of combat actions, attacks on the civilian population, and mass killings in the eastern provinces, particularly North and South Kivu and Ituri. 2025 proved to be the bloodiest: in the first two months alone, about 7,000 people died, and throughout the year, confirmed cases of mass civilian killings reached hundreds in individual incidents, including over 400 dead in December 2025 in South Kivu and dozens of victims in Komanda, Ntoyo, and Kasanga.



## Humanitarian Consequences

In addition to direct combat actions, numerous deaths are caused by the humanitarian crisis, including hunger and a lack of medical assistance, which complicates an accurate assessment of losses. Overall, the conflict in 2021–2025 remains one of the deadliest humanitarian crises in the world, and the escalation of 2025 underscores critical instability in the region and the need for immediate international intervention to stop the violence.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

In 2025, the negotiation process regarding the settlement of the conflict in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo unfolded on two main tracks: between the government of the DRC and Rwanda, and between the government of the DRC and the «March 23 Movement» (M23) rebel group. After several failed attempts by regional mediators in March, Presidents Félix Tshisekedi (DRC) and Paul Kagame (Rwanda) held negotiations in Qatar, which initiated diplomatic activity under the auspices of Qatar and the United States. In April in Washington, the parties agreed on a Declaration of Principles, which was to become the basis for a broader peace process, and on June 27, 2025, the DRC and Rwanda signed the Agreements on Peace and Prosperity, which include the cessation of military actions, respect for territorial integrity, and economic cooperation, as well as call for the withdrawal of foreign forces and the disarmament of armed groups. M23 was not a party to this agreement and conducted separate negotiations with the government in Doha, which from the beginning limited the potential for a full resolution of the conflict.

In the second half of 2025, negotiations between the government of the DRC and M23 in Doha led to the signing of a framework agreement on oversight for a possible ceasefire and arrangements for further negotiations, but key differences, particularly regarding the withdrawal of militants and reintegration of territories, remained.

The culmination of the negotiation process was the signing of the Washington Peace and Prosperity Accords on December 4, 2025, between Presidents Tshisekedi and Kagame in the presence of US President Donald Trump, which formally established the framework for a peace settlement between the DRC and Rwanda. However, the accords effectively did not stop the conflict: combat actions and violations of ceasefire regimes continued, and the UN Security Council in its decision on December 19 extended the mandate of the MONUSCO peacekeeping mission until December 2026, calling on Rwanda to withdraw its troops and stop supporting the rebels, and also emphasizing the need to protect the civilian population and facilitate the implementation of the arrangements.



## Trends

Despite diplomatic activity, combat actions periodically continued, including outbreaks of violence in December when M23 took the town of Uvira, which

threatened to expand the conflict to the border with Burundi. Efforts to deploy neutral ceasefire observation forces and create «buffer zones» were part of these parallel negotiations.

## Forecast

DESPITE THE HIGH-PROFILE PUBLICITY OF THE US-MEDIATED PEACE PROCESS, THE CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN RWANDA AND DR CONGO ARE NOT RESOLVED, AS ARE THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS IN THE EAST OF DR CONGO. THEREFORE, THERE IS A HIGH PROBABILITY OF A RENEWAL OF THE CONFLICT.

# Local conflict

# Libya

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The conflict has been ongoing since 2011, after the killing of Muammar Gaddafi. In the west of Libya, the Government of National Accord led by Fayez al-Sarraj established itself. It is opposed in the East by General Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan National Army.

The rest of the territory is occupied by tribes and smaller groups. Haftar is supported by Russia, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. The Government of National Accord is supported by the UN, Turkey, and Qatar.

During the monitoring period, despite the formal end of the civil war since the end of 2020, tension and instability remain. Gunfights, clashes, and the struggle for oil fields and deposits break out sporadically, but they are on the decline. On May 12, 2025, in Tripoli, Abdel Ghani al-Kikli, widely known as «Gheniwa,» an influential militia leader of the Tripoli government, was killed.

## Number of Casualties

Due to the negotiation process, the number of victims has significantly decreased; however, in local clashes, there are dozens of dead.



## Impact on Global Processes

Russia, after the loss of positions in Syria, is trying to create a new base in Libya for contact with dependent African countries, however these attempts run into resistance from Turkey and other players.

## INTENSITY

Civil war in a phase of low intensity, settlement process.



## Trends

Libya has still not overcome the consequences of the war and is for the most part a chaotic and weakly unified state without effective command and control over the security apparatus.

## Negotiations Between the Parties

Negotiations began back in January 2021 and continue to this day, based on the ceasefire agreement reached in October 2020. Preparation for general elections is underway, and consultative groups are working. On August 16, elections for municipal government bodies were held across the country, which were welcomed at the UN level.

THERE IS STILL NO TRUST BETWEEN THE UN-RECOGNIZED WESTERN GOVERNMENT AND THE EASTERN ONE IN TOBRUK. A GRADUAL SETTLEMENT AND FADING OF THE CONFLICT WILL LIKELY CONTINUE, HOWEVER THERE IS A PROBABILITY OF A REGULAR ESCALATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CYRENAICA (UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF KHALIFA HAFTAR, WITH RUSSIAN SUPPORT) AND THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED GOVERNMENT IN TRIPOLI, THE CATALYST FOR WHICH MAY BE THE INTERVENTION OF EXTERNAL ACTORS FOR WHOM THE RETURN OF LARGE RESERVES OF LIBYAN OIL TO WORLD MARKETS IS DISADVANTAGEOUS.

# Local conflict

# Myanmar



## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

During 2025, active fighting continued across practically the entire territory of Myanmar between the troops of the ruling junta and diverse ethnic opposition formations, among which the most influential are the People's Defense Forces, the Arakan Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, the Kachin Independence Army, the Karen National Liberation Army, and others. Important internal political alliances are the Northern Alliance (a union of Kachins with Karens, Rakhine, Ta'ang, and Kokang), the Three Brotherhood Alliance (formations of ethnic Rakhine (Arakan), Palaung (Ta'ang), and Kokang (Chinese of Myanmar origin)), and the 4K Coalition (four formations of ethnic

Karens). The main events of 2025 were the expansion of the rebels' control zone in Rakhine, Shan, and Kachin states, and the Tanintharyi, Sagaing, and Mandalay regions. The junta continues to maintain control over about 35% of the state. This is the city of Naypyidaw, Yangon, Mandalay with the regions of Bago, Ayeyarwady, Yangon, Magway, and Mandalay. Presence in Mon State and the Tanintharyi region is limited; the same applies to Rakhine, Kachin, and Chin states. In Shan State, the army continues to hold a number of important communications. Units holding sections of the border with India and China are effectively cut off from the main forces in the center.



## Trends

As in 2024, in 2025 the activity of combat actions did not decrease. The opposition and ethnic formations concentrated on attacks on important communication routes and bases of the Myanmar Armed Forces in Rakhine State (pushing out from the sole bridgehead), Kachin State (capture of Bhamo airport), Tanintharyi region (capture of strategic bases and roads in the south of Myanmar), Mandalay region (capture of three bases — Htan Pin Kon, Mya Kan Thar, and Thayet Kyi), etc. The rebels were able to achieve the greatest success in the South, in the Tanintharyi region. At the same time, junta troops were able to retake the town of Kyaukme, Shan State, in October, as well as the settlements of Lay Kay Kaw, Ingyin Myaing, and Min Let Pan in Kachin State. In the following year, most likely, the struggle will unfold for important communications and strongpoints with the continuation of the bombardment of civilian targets and the use of drone technologies.



## Number of Casualties

1.1 thousand killed and 300 wounded Myanmar servicemen. 550 killed and 150 wounded representatives of ethnic separatist formations and the opposition. 1500 killed and 2000 wounded civilians. 60 thousand displaced persons. Estimates are approximate given the difficulty of verifying a number of reports.

## INTENSITY

Prolonged local conflict.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

From July 31, the junta significantly updated the vertical of state management. A Commission on State Security and Peace was formed headed by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who yielded the post of prime minister to his associate General Nyo Saw. Such a transformation is caused by the junta's preparation for general elections, which began at the end of December and will take place in several stages including January 2026. However, in general, the peace process is complicated by both the number of opposing sides and the difficulty of monitoring real compliance with the ceasefire regime. For example, in January during the ASEAN summit in Malaysia, member states pressured the junta regarding the start of a peace dialogue. It is worth noting that Kuala Lumpur positions itself as a mediator in this conflict. At the end of March, a regular round of negotiations took place within the framework of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee. However, the meeting brought no results. For a short time, combat actions in Sagaing State stopped in connection with a powerful earthquake. In October, with the mediation of China, the junta concluded a truce with the Ta'ang National Liberation Army. Currently, there is still no effective and universal ceasefire regime in Myanmar.



## Impact on Global Processes

Beijing, using its own proxies, namely the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and a number of other groups, continues to play a significant role in the conflict in the northern territories of the state, where the main centers for extracting rare earth metals are concentrated. It is worth noting that Naypyidaw is the second in the world (after China) producer of these resources, satisfying 16% of Beijing's needs. This involves about

42 thousand tons of metals. That is why China is extremely interested in the destabilization of the situation in the state with an increase in presence in Shan and Kachin states. Russia also plays a noticeable role in Myanmar. The latter agreed on the creation of a free economic zone in large ports under the junta's control, and also actively sells it weaponry. The conflict in Myanmar plays an important role in the formation of challenges and risks for neighboring states within ASEAN, as well as for India and Bangladesh.

## Forecast

Given the pressure of the Arakan Army on junta positions in the city of Sittwe, Rakhine State, in 2026 a worsening of the situation for the Myanmar Armed Forces should be expected in this territory. Isolated junta units on the border with India and China could become a potentially problematic direction. However, here the activity of pro-Chinese formations and insurgents from Indian territory should be taken into account. The effectiveness of the use of UAVs by all parties to the conflict indicates a further growth of their share in the conduct of combat actions in 2026. At the same time, despite the worsening situation for junta troops in the south of the country, their collapse is unlikely. This is confirmed by successful counterattacks of the Myanmar Armed Forces in Shan and Kachin states. A fairly frequent phenomenon is clashes between different ethnic groups on the ground, since they are situational allies and often have a common material interest, which becomes the source of minor skirmishes and conflicts.

# Central African Republic

## Local conflict

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The war in the country has been ongoing with interruptions since 2012. The main confrontation is between the Muslim North (Séléka rebel alliance) and the Christian South, which maintains control over the capital Bangui and supports the central government. However, not only representatives of the North, but also a number of previously pro-government groups have united into the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) and are currently conducting a low-intensity conflict with the government. From 2026, the capital and the central government are almost completely dependent on Russia. Russian mercenaries — representatives of the Africa Corps (into which former fighters of the «Wagner» PMC merged) remain the main security for President Faustin-Archange Touadéra and the most combat-capable unit of the government. Confrontations of religious communities are sharpening; facts of genocide have been recorded. Small contingents of peacekeepers are present, in particular from Rwanda and Kenya (the African Union mission MINUSCA).

During the monitoring period, a low-intensity war of government forces supported by the RF with several opposition groups, in particular the CPC, continues for control over important points, specifically mines. In January, rebels set an ambush for fighters of the former «Wagner» PMC near the village of Bogali; four Russians were killed. In March, rebels attacked a mining facility in the Vakaga area. On March 29, an unknown armed group set an ambush for MINUSCA patrols in the Haut-Mbomou area; a peacekeeper from Kenya was killed. In May, rebels of the Azande people captured the village of Mboki; besides government soldiers, several Russians were killed. The attack forced hundreds of residents of the city to flee to the MINUSCA camp. Clashes with Russian patrols were recorded in August, September, and November.

On December 28, for the first time in 37 years, relatively full-fledged elections were held in the country, which were welcomed at the UN. In them, the incumbent president Faustin-Archange Touadéra won with 74% of the vote. The opposition boycotted the elections and accused the authorities of mass falsifications.



### Humanitarian Consequences

Over 300 thousand refugees to neighboring countries, over 700 thousand internal displaced persons.



### Number of Casualties

In total during the conflict, more than 10 thousand combatants and tens of thousands of civilians have died (exact data are unknown).



### Impact on Global Processes

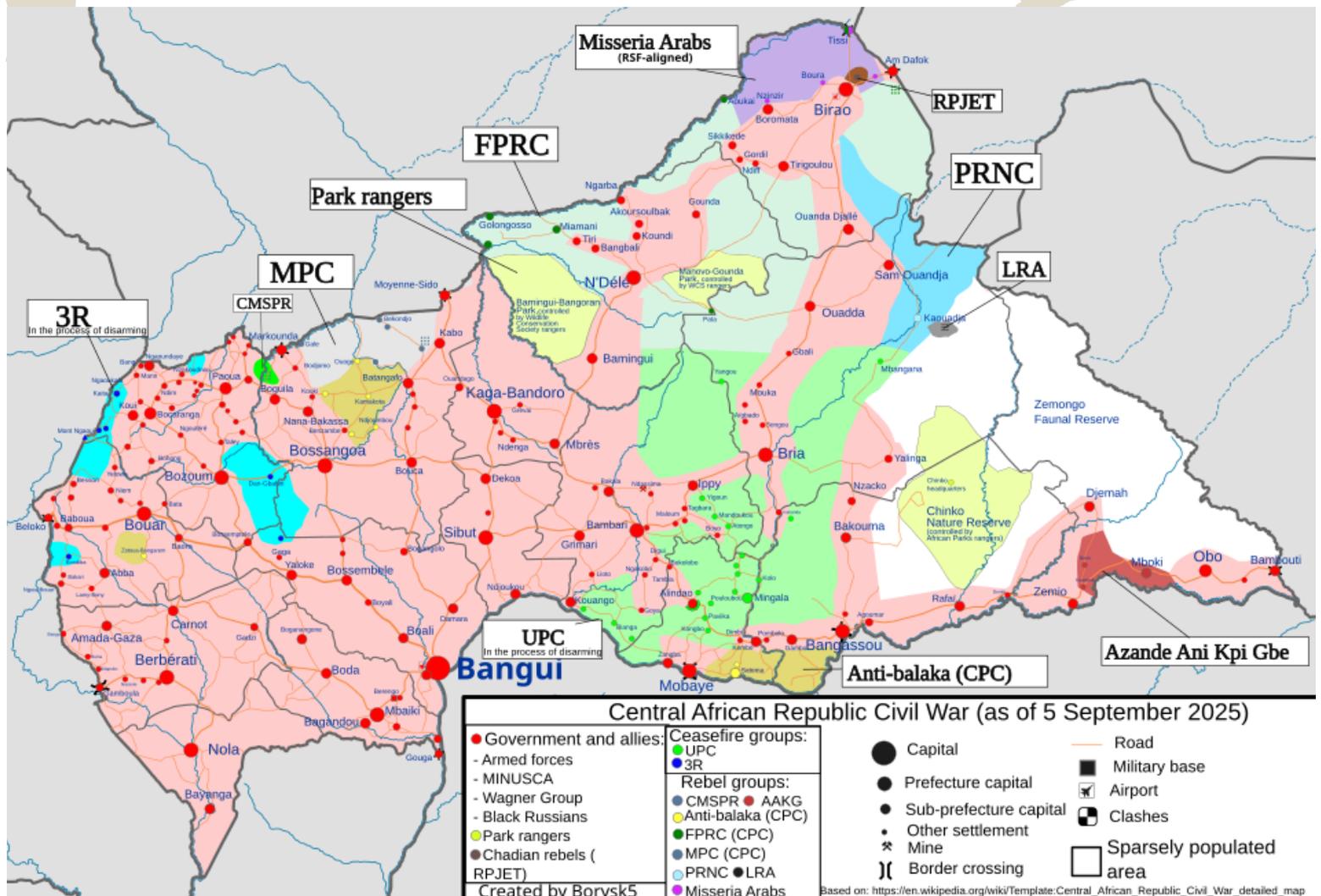
Russia is trying to strengthen influence in individual states of Africa, demonstrating the possibilities of cooperation to other dictatorial regimes. Russian instructors train the government army and actively supply weapons and armored vehicles. Precious metals and other easily accessible resources are taken out of the CAR, mostly through the Cameroonian port of Douala. The CAR has become one of the main bases for forming the Africa Corps of the RF. There is data about the storage of valuables and currency reserves of the Russian elite in the country. Also, local residents are recruited in the country for the war in Ukraine.

## INTENSITY

Civil conflict in a phase of low intensity.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Negotiations on a ceasefire continue, which Russia supports in every way (it has established relations with the capital's authorities — up to financing and the presence of security — Russian mercenaries).



## Forecast

The intensification of Russian activity in the region has reached its maximum, because of which Russia increasingly receives resistance from other players, in particular France and Turkey. However, today the opponents of the RF are forced to react in new points, specifically Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The CAR is in the center of the Russian zone, and anti-government forces have decreased in intensity compared to the previous year. Therefore, significant changes in the following year are unlikely.

# Somalia

## Local conflict

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The internationally recognized government continues to control the capital and limited territories. The division of territory between the internationally recognized government, the authorities of Somaliland and Jubaland, as well as Islamist groups (primarily Al-Shabaab and ISIS) remains a problem. During the monitoring period, the conflict between the government and Islamists continues. On January 11, with the help of local militias, Somaliland forces captured Jiidali, a town east of Erigavo. On January 15, several ISIS militants were killed, and five, including foreign militants, were captured during an offensive by Puntland security forces in the Cal Miskaad mountains in the Bari region. The operation also led to the destruction of eight militant bases that used drones. On February 2, as a result of a US airstrike in the Golis Mountains, in the territory of Puntland, many ISIS militants were destroyed, including high-ranking leaders. Also in February, restrictions were introduced in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, after several mortar shells were fired in the direction of Aden Adde International Airport during a visit by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

On March 15, militants of the Al-Shabaab group took control of the Sumadeyle area near the town of Adale, killing 20 Somali soldiers and wounding 10 others after forces from Mogadishu tried to retake the area. Al-Shabaab also captured the town of Awdheegle after clashes with Somali forces. At least 31 Somali army soldiers died in the clashes.

In June, militants of the Al-Shabaab group took control of the village of Hawadli, located 91 kilometers northeast of

Mogadishu, after Burundian troops under the command of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) withdrew from a strategic military base.

In October, the Al-Shabaab group blew up the Damaanyo military base in Mogadishu, killing 20 people and wounding 15. Most of the victims were recruits who had come to enlist in the ranks of the Somali National Army.



### Number of Casualties

Up to ten thousand people have died, thousands wounded. Several hundred thousand forced displaced persons in recent years (especially during the conflict in the Las Anod region).



### Impact on Global Processes

The central government is supported by the USA, which provides air support in the confrontation with Islamist groups. Negotiations took place on recognizing the independence of Somaliland separatists. An agreement reached at the end of 2024 between Somalia and Ethiopia led to the normalization of relations, which reduces Addis Ababa's interference in Somali affairs (previously, Ethiopia supported the authorities of unrecognized Somaliland and Jubaland). Israel is beginning to conduct a separate policy in the region, having recognized the independence of the separatist government in the Somaliland region on December 27.

## Forecast

The population of Somalia is growing weary of the activities of Islamist groups, but the government also lacks resources to quickly restore control over the territory. This process will continue slowly. The strengthening of the central government may increase the influence of its external patron — Kenya, especially against the background of the passivity of Ethiopia, which is forced to solve internal problems and settle relations with Sudan and Egypt.

### INTENSITY

Local conflict, terrorist attacks.

# Nigeria

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In the Lake Chad area, in the borderlands of Cameroon, Niger, Chad, and Nigeria, active activities of Islamists from Boko Haram continue. At the same time, the latter enter into conflicts with competitors — the Islamist group «Islamic State West Africa Province» (ISWAP). Smaller groups, specifically «Ansaru» and «Mahmuda,» are also splitting off from Boko Haram. Against the background of an increasing number of attacks on Christian churches, this strengthens distrust in the authorities and undermines the prospects for stability in Nigeria. At the same time, an increase in tension in the Sahel region should be expected, which will form regular waves of refugees. The activities of insurgent movements in the Niger Delta («Biafra» separatists), the Yoruba in the Southwest, and various semi-bandit groups are also activating. Conflicts continue in the North between settled farmers and Fulani herders over access to pastures and water resources.

During the monitoring period, Islamist attacks in the North of the country continue, as well as an increase in inter-communal tension.

In January, at least 40 civilians died as a result of an ISWAP attack in Dumba on the shores of Lake Chad. On January 26, at least 27 Nigerian soldiers died after a suicide bomber detonated a vehicle charged with explosives following a Nigerian army offensive in ISWAP-controlled territory on the border of Borno and Yobe states.

On February 15, ISWAP militants burned a Christian village in Borno state. On March 25, 20 Cameroonian soldiers died as a result of a Boko Haram attack on the border town of Wulgo on the Niger River.

In April, 52 civilians died as a result of inter-communal violence in the villages of Zike and Kimakpa in the Bassa region.

On May 4, 11 Nigerian soldiers died after ISWAP carried out a raid on a military base in the town of Buni Gari, Yobe state. On May 30, the Nigerian army reported an attack on the positions of Boko Haram representatives in Biti, Borno state, and claimed the killing of 60 terrorists.

On June 2, at least 20 civilians died as a result of a Nigerian army airstrike in Zamfara state, where terrorists were allegedly located.

At least 45 people died as a result of a raid by armed men on the town of Yelewata, in Benue state.

On August 19, at least 50 civilians died as a result of an attack by armed men on a mosque in the village of Unguwan Mantau, in the Malumfashi district in Northwest Nigeria.

In September, at least 63 people died as a result of a jihadist attack on the town of Darul-Jamal, where a Nigerian military base is located on the border between Nigeria and Cameroon.

On December 26, the USA delivered a missile strike on Islamist positions. The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) stated that the strikes were delivered «at the request of the Nigerian authorities.» Previously, US President Donald Trump repeatedly threatened intervention if Islamist groups did not stop the killings of Christians.

The growth of instability and the strengthening of religious contradictions in the 200-million-strong state threatens a large-scale conflict in the medium term. Support for the ideas of „Biafra“ separatism (the oil-bearing states of the Niger Delta) is growing in the Southeast, and Yoruba separatism in the Southwest. The government is unable to stop banditry and coastal piracy. However, the possibility for stabilization remains under conditions of consensus between the elites of the Christian South and the Muslim North. At the same time, given the growing attention of the USA, the probability of aid to the Nigerian government from Washington is increasing.

## INTENSITY

Local conflict, terrorist attacks.

## Number of Casualties

During the crisis with Boko Haram, more than 30,000 have been killed and over 25,000 are considered missing. During the monitoring period, at least several hundred people died.

## Humanitarian Consequences

Over the entire time of the conflict, more than 2 million people have left their homes. The practice of regular kidnappings of children by the Boko Haram group during attacks on schools remains a problem. In 2025, mass killings in Benue state took at least 218 lives and led to the displacement of nearly 4,800 people, most of whom were women and girls. At the same time, flash floods in Niger state destroyed over 265 settlements and led to the deaths of over 200 people, disrupting access to basic needs.

In Borno province, a tense situation remains that does not allow refugees to return to their homes.

## Trends

According to estimates, up to 25 million Nigerians face a crisis or intensified hunger, specifically 1.1 million in an emergency state. Rains are irregular in the country. This led to a decrease in wheat crops in the North of the country.

# Cameroon

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS



## INTENSITY

Low-intensity local conflict with casualties as a result of clashes and terrorist attacks.

### The conflict in Cameroon

continues between the government and the English-speaking minority; its roots go back to the colonial period. The country's territory was once divided between Great Britain and France. After gaining independence, Cameroon had a federal structure, but in 1972 it was replaced with a unitary one, which led to a wave of resistance. Since then, dissatisfaction has been growing in the region, which spilled over into an armed conflict in 2016. Since October 1, 2017, the independence of Ambazonia was

declared on the territory of the former Southern Cameroons; the movement was led by the paramilitary formation ADF (Ambazonia Defence Forces). However, the central government managed to maintain control over the cities and gradually pushed the separatists out of most settlements.

During the monitoring period, the activity of Anglophone separatists continued, but overall it is on the decline; noticeable clashes occur on a local level with minimal casualties. On March 19, at least two Cameroonian

soldiers died as a result of an alleged separatist ambush in Magba, West Region. On March 22, as a result of a separatist attack near Mbingo, Boyo, a Cameroonian soldier died and three others were kidnapped. On April 12, at least four separatists died as a result of a failed attack on a military base.

On June 18, separatists attacked a military post in Maloun-le-Petit, killing three soldiers and wounding two others. The groups «Bui Unity Warriors» and «Donga Mantung Unity Warriors» took responsibility for

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Attempts at negotiations between the government and Ambazonia separatists began in late 2020 — early 2021, however they have still not achieved clear results. In the autumn of 2025, the separatists announced they would not conduct combat actions during the elections, giving a chance to change the government.

the attack. On September 5, seven Cameroonian soldiers died as a result of a separatist attack using an improvised explosive device in Malende.

In September, ADF commanders Benedict Nwana Kuah and Pascal Kikishy Wongbi were arrested in Minnesota, USA, and charged with conspiracy to commit murder, kidnapping, maiming, and wounding people in Cameroon, as well as conspiracy to commit money laundering. Benedict Nwana Kuah was issued additional charges of conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction in Cameroon.

On November 13, separatists attacked a mosque in Sabga, Tubah and Mezam, killing four worshippers. The attackers also kidnapped several other people before retreating into a forested area.

On October 12, presidential elections were held, which ended with the victory of the incumbent president Paul Biya (54% of the vote). Opposition candidate Issa Tchiroma took second place with 35% of the vote. The opposition claimed fraud. On November 3, a three-day strike began in a number of cities in protest against the election results.



## Number of Casualties

In total during the conflict, more than 2,000 soldiers of the government army and more than 3,000 rebels have died.



## Impact on Global Processes

President Paul Biya tries to maneuver between Western and Russian influences, as in previous years information was heard about the possibility of involving Russian mercenaries to support the rebels. Cameroon, alongside the neighboring Central African Republic, has become a center of economic activity for Russian PMCs. Specifically, this refers to the Ndassima gold mine in the CAR, from which gold bars are secretly sent to Russia through the Cameroonian port of Douala.



## Humanitarian Consequences

Over the past years, more than 700,000 people have become refugees, tens of thousands of Anglophones fled to neighboring Nigeria. Several thousand people have died.

# Forecast

A prolonged conflict weakens the country, which has already created conditions for the activation of activities of both Islamists and Russian mercenaries. However, recently government forces are obviously winning, which forms the conditions for stable control of the territory. At the same time, the fall in the legitimacy of President Paul Biya against the background of accusations of fraud in the last elections is becoming a problem.

# Mali

# Local conflict

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Mali is part of the unstable Sahel region, where a high level of terrorist threat from jihadists constantly persists. Since 2020, political tension in the country has critically increased after a military coup that removed President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. In May 2021, a second military coup occurred, which displaced the transitional government. The military junta, having come to power, postponed the elections, allowing themselves to remain in power for up to five years, which provoked significant criticism from the international community. In 2024, elections were postponed again until the security situation improved.

After these events, Mali moved away from Western partners, demanding the cessation of the activities of the UN Mission and European contingents, and instead began to cooperate more closely with Russia. Since 2022, Russian mercenaries, previously associated with the «Wagner» PMC, have been active in the country. In 2024, two key confrontations continue in Mali: between the junta and jihadist groups such as JNIM and the Islamic State of the Sahel, and between the Malian army and the Tuareg alliance CMA. The geography of terrorist attacks has expanded from the North to the central regions and the outskirts of the capital Bamako, as evidenced by a large-scale Islamist attack on Bamako in September 2024.

The confrontation with the Tuaregs sharpened after the withdrawal of MINUSMA peacekeepers in 2023, as the Tuaregs accuse the Mali army and Russian mercenaries of violating the 2015 ceasefire agreement through attempts to take control of abandoned bases. The culmination of this confrontation was an ambush on the Mali army and mercenaries near Tinzaouaten in July 2024. After this defeat, the Mali junta in August 2024 severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine, accusing it of supporting insurgent groups in the Sahel, which led to further international tension.

## CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT FOR THE PERIOD UNDER STUDY

The year 2025 became a period of critical escalation and consolidation for the group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), which caused an unprecedented threat to the economic and political stability of Mali. During the year, the conflict was characterized by two main directions: military struggle with jihadists (JNIM and ISIS) and a prolonged confrontation with Tuareg rebels.

After several months of public threats, JNIM in January began coordinated attacks on administrative centers in Mali, carrying out two attacks on military positions in the administrative centers of Nioro du Sahel and Diangassagou (Kayes and Bandiagara regions). These events underscored a new regional trend: jihadists, who previously operated mainly in rural areas, are now actively expanding their presence in large cities with the goal of maximizing destabilization.

Although the main pressure on the junta was exerted by JNIM, in February internal clashes continued between rival factions of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISSP). Battles were recorded between ISSP factions southeast of In-Delimane, as a result of which 12 militants died, including a local commander.

In July, JNIM sharply intensified violence in the southern regions of Ségou and Kayes, causing an increase in the number of violent

incidents by 44% in Ségou and by 175% in Kayes. JNIM carried out complex operations against the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) and the Russian «Africa Corps» (former «Wagnerites»), attacking border areas near Senegal and Mauritania, as well as large urban centers.

Most significant was JNIM's transition to economic war. After repelling attacks on the cities of Kayes and Niono (Ségou), JNIM established blockades against these cities, seized weapons, and declared civilians who do not follow their rules as legitimate targets. This included the destruction of key industrial facilities (sugar factories, mines) and the kidnapping of foreign workers. The consequence was the suspension by China of gold mining operations in August, which put Mali's main sources of income at risk.

After a five-year siege, on August 19, JNIM militants captured a key Malian army base in the village of Farabougou (Ségou region), killing about 10 soldiers and capturing five prisoners. After capturing the base, JNIM began a punitive expedition against the Dozo self-defense militias. This was a central element of a broader, coordinated JNIM offensive in central Mali, which also included attacks on Biriki-Wéré and the shelling of the Goma-Coura camp. The capture

of Farabougou became the most serious failure of the junta's security and demonstrated JNIM's ability to coordinate operations on several fronts.

In early September, JNIM introduced a full blockade of Kayes and Nioro du Sahel, declaring an embargo on fuel and commercial transportation. Political violence in Kayes reached its highest level since 1997. A key element of the blockade was a campaign of coordinated attacks on the main transport corridors connecting Kayes, Sikasso, and the capital Bamako. On September 14, militants attacked a convoy of over 100 fuel tankers, destroying 51 vehicles. This led to an acute fuel shortage and a sharp increase in prices in Central and Southern Mali, including Bamako. In response, the government used airstrikes and helicopter raids, but without result.

In October, violence in Ségou and Sikasso reached record levels. FAMA and Dozo militias conducted joint operations to counter the blockade, but these operations were marked by mass atrocities, including the killing of at least

28 civilians in Kamona. The junta relied on aerial and drone strikes, however the blockade remained in effect.

JNIM continued attacks on military escorts and burned fuel convoys. Due to the unpredictable and dangerous environment, about a dozen countries, including the USA, Germany, and Great Britain, called on their citizens to leave Mali. As a result of the critical fuel crisis that threatened the government, the junta was forced to go into local negotiations with JNIM in October/November 2025 to ease the blockade and restore vital supplies to Bamako.

During 2025, the conflict between the Malian junta (FAMA, supported by the «Africa Corps») and the Tuareg alliance CSP-PSD took on the character of a brutal positional struggle focused in North Mali.

At the beginning of the year, in January and February, the junta's efforts were directed at consolidating control over strategically important territories, especially around Timbuktu and Gao, which became key after the withdrawal of MINUSMA peacekeepers at the end of 2024.

## INTENSITY

Internal conflict, terrorist attacks.

During this period, significant clashes occurred, but an increase in atrocities was also recorded. Specifically, in February, Tuareg movements accused FAMA and Russian mercenaries of killing 24 civilians near Gao, which significantly intensified enmity and humanitarian tension.

During March and April, the junta used its advantage in the air, applying strike drones (mostly of Turkish and Russian origin) for strikes on command posts and force concentrations of the CSP-PSD in the Ménaka and Gao regions. This tactic caused the Tuaregs noticeable losses. In response, during May and June, the CSP-PSD focused on asymmetric warfare, setting ambushes and actively using improvised explosive devices (IED) on main supply routes.

A key turning point occurred in July when JNIM began a large-scale offensive in the South and center of Mali. This change of focus forced the junta to redeploy a significant part of its forces and mercenaries to protect southern cities and transport routes. Taking advantage of this weakening of pressure, in August and September the CSP-PSD restored limited but effective offensive operations in the North, trying to restore control over some key areas and exhaust the remaining FAMA garrisons.

Finally, in October and November, the Tuareg rebels joined the general economic crisis, maintaining pressure on northern transport routes. Although the main blockade of Bamako was carried out by JNIM, the actions of CSP-PSD contributed to the general economic instability and the growth of pressure on the junta, which proved unable to effectively fight on two main fronts simultaneously.

## Impact on Global Processes

In 2025, Russia continued to remain the main military partner of the Malian junta, providing military equipment, training, and personnel, who became a key element of combat actions.

After the liquidation of the leadership of the «Wagner» PMC in 2023, in June 2025 a full replacement of the «Wagner» PMC and the «Africa Corps» occurred, which was actively involved in combat actions against JNIM and the Tuaregs. Regular supplies of weaponry from Russia were recorded. This included transport helicopters (for example, Mi-17) and assault aviation (primarily L-39), as well as light armored vehicles (armored cars, armored personnel carriers). These supplies were critically important for supporting FAMA and mercenary operations.

The «Africa Corps» continued to figure in reports of international human rights organizations (specifically the UN and HRW) regarding extrajudicial executions and human rights violations during counter-terrorist operations in the central regions (for example, incidents in January and April 2025). Russia provided the junta with political support on the international stage, specifically in the UN Security Council, blocking critical Western resolutions regarding Mali.

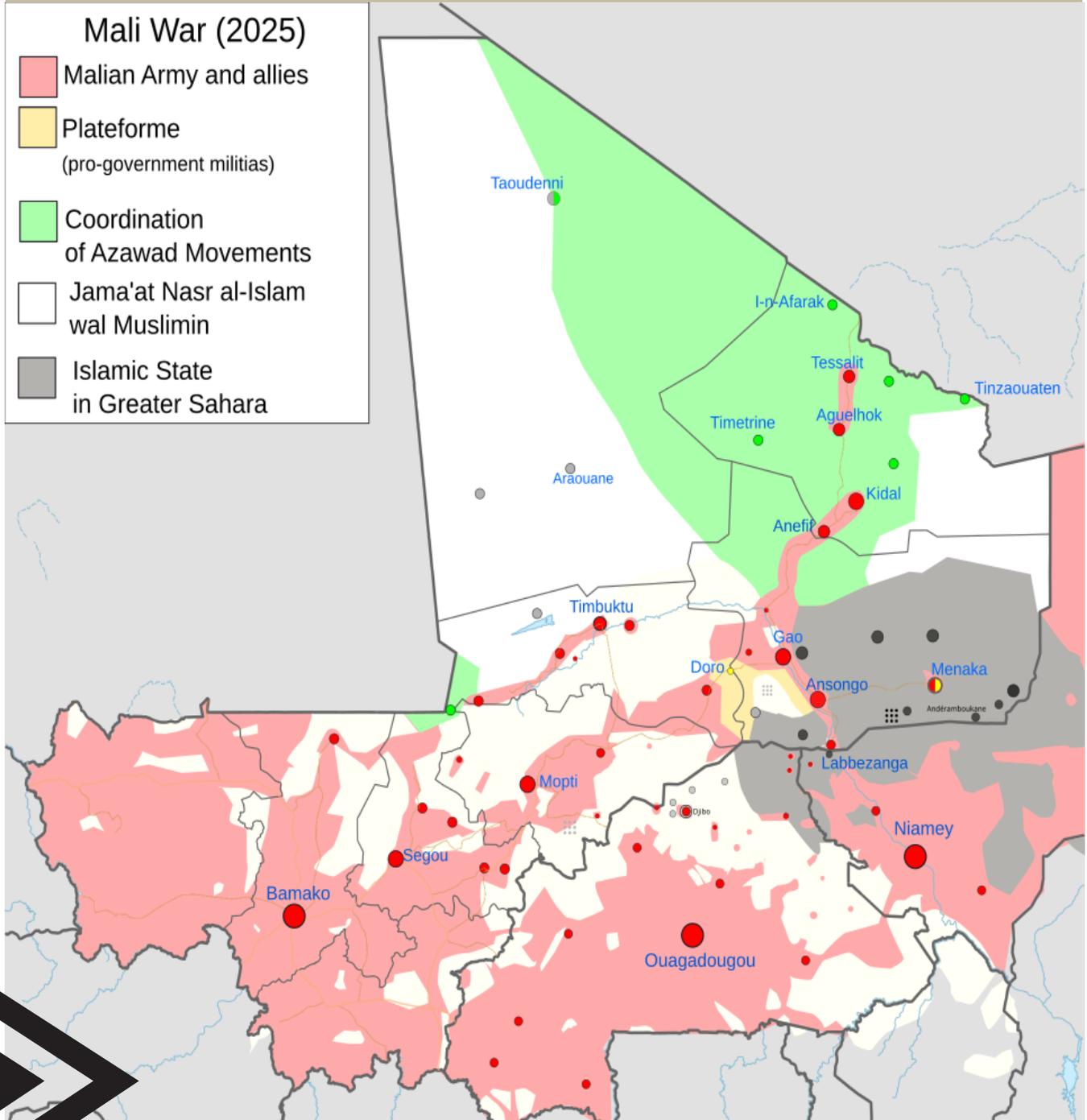
Turkey strengthened its position as the main supplier of high-tech military equipment for the junta, remaining while doing so in a more neutral political position than Russia. A key element of Turkish influence was the supply of strike unmanned aerial vehicles, specifically Bayraktar TB2. During 2025, the junta actively used Turkish UAVs for delivering strikes on the positions of the Tuaregs (CSP-PSD) in the North (Ménaka, Gao), as well as for reconnaissance and the liquidation of jihadist leaders. The growth of Mali's dependence on aerial strikes underscored the strategic importance of Turkish supplies.

## Number of Casualties

Statistical data from ACLED and the UN indicate that the total mortality from political violence (including terrorist attacks and actions of counter-terrorist forces) significantly exceeded 1000 persons as of the autumn of 2025.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

On May 7, 2025, the junta ordered an indefinite suspension of the activities of political parties, and subsequently — their full liquidation. These steps, as well as proposals regarding the extension of the term of presidential powers, provoked the first protests in support of democracy in four years of military rule.



Forecast

Mali has finally broken cooperation with the USA, France, and the UN and relies on Russia for solving security problems. Besides the strengthening of Russia's influence in the Sahel and the expansion of channels for propaganda, the work of Russian mercenaries in Mali has an impact directly on the Russian-Ukrainian war as well. The country will continue to be the core of the Russian Alliance of Sahel States. At the same time, an increase in Turkish influence should be expected.

# Burkina Faso

## Local conflict



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Since the beginning of 2022, a military junta led by Ibrahim Traoré, relying on assistance from the RF, has been in power. Together with neighboring Mali, they achieved the gradual withdrawal of French contingents from the country. However, the situation has not stabilized; Islamist groups are active in the provinces.

Faso security forces (FDS) and VDP militias themselves. Reports from human rights organizations covering February and October confirmed numerous cases of arbitrary killings and extrajudicial executions of civilians suspected of cooperating with jihadists, which only deepened the population's distrust of the authorities.

### ПОДІЇ ЗА ОПИСУВАНИЙ ПЕРІОД

The security situation reached a critical point as early as January, when the JNIM group (linked to Al-Qaeda) carried out a large-scale campaign of attacks on administrative capitals in the Sahel, Nord-Centre, and Est regions, including the towns of Sebba and Pama, where the total number of dead military personnel and civilians reached about 80 people. These attacks confirmed the successful expansion of jihadist activities from rural areas into urbanized centers. Throughout the entire year, JNIM and the rival ISSP (ISIS) continued blockades and sieges of dozens of towns, such as Djibo. In February, deadly inter-factional fighting was recorded when ISSP attacked a JNIM position near Titabé, killing 16 militants. In August, ISSP also carried out a deadly attack on a civilian convoy, killing about 20 miners.

As of 2025, estimates of the territory of Burkina Faso not controlled by the state vary significantly depending on the methodology, but they all indicate a critical level of loss of sovereignty. On one hand, military monitoring organizations, such as ACLED and the International Crisis Group (ICG), conservatively estimate that 40 to 50% of the country's territory is under direct military control or significant influence of jihadist groups (JNIM and ISSP), where they can freely collect taxes and operate. On the other hand, humanitarian and human rights reports, particularly from UN OCHA, use a broader definition of «uncontrolled» territory, according to which 70 to 80% of the country's territory is a zone where state administration is completely absent — schools, medical facilities, and civil services do not function due to danger. This latter figure reflects the catastrophic failure of the government to provide security and basic functions across most of its territory.

During the first half of 2025, militant Islamist groups (primarily the Macina Liberation Front, Ansarul Islam, and Katiba Hanifa) carried out at least 42 attacks in which 10 or more soldiers died. Eight out of the ten deadliest militant Islamist attacks on the military occurred after Traoré's coup d'état.

Parallel to the terrorist attacks, a significant portion of civilian deaths was linked to the actions of the Burkina

# Negotiations Between the Parties

In the political dimension, 2025 was marked by the full consolidation of military power. In May, the junta officially canceled any promises regarding holding elections in the near future, extending the term of its stay in power until «full victory» over terrorism. This policy was accompanied by the strengthening of censorship and the expulsion of foreign journalists, which led to a sharp drop in press freedom.

## 📍 Number of Casualties

Since Traoré came to power at the end of September 2022, instability in Burkina Faso has effectively become more deadly and widespread. The number of deaths linked to violence by militant Islamist groups has nearly tripled in the last three years, reaching 17,775 deaths.

Over 2,500 people — the total number of victims from all forms of political violence for the period up to December 2025.

## 🗨️ Impact on Global Processes

Burkina Faso, together with Mali and Niger (members of the Alliance of Sahel States), turned to the UN Security Council with a complaint against Ukraine, accusing it of supporting insurgent groups in the Sahel region. The joint statement of the Alliance of Sahel States and the appeal to the UN Security Council in August 2025 were widely covered by international media and diplomatic sources.



## Forecast

The government will continue to remain in the orbit of the RF, however the security situation and the level of government control over the territory will deteriorate.

# Niger

## Local conflict

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

2025 in Niger became a year of escalation of military conflicts and a full reformatting of international alliances, taking place against the background of a growing security crisis. All key events should be viewed as a consequence of decisions made by the military junta after the coup of July 2023.

On March 21, 2025, terrorist groups carried out a major ambush in the Tillabéri region, as a result of which 23 government soldiers died. The situation was repeated on June 21, 2025, when militants near the border with Burkina Faso killed 21 government soldiers.

The second half of 2025 demonstrated a coordinated expansion of the two main jihadist groups — the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISSP) and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) — in strategically important regions.

In July 2025, ISSP began a large-scale offensive in the commune of Dioundiou on the border with Nigeria. The attacks were directed not only against the military but also against the civilian population. This activity caused a nearly fourfold increase in the number of victims compared to the previous month. In addition, ISSP targeted the Niger-Benin pipeline passing through Dioundiou, highlighting the economic motivation of the conflict.

In October 2025, jihadists expanded their activities to urbanized areas. On October 18, ISSP militants attacked security force posts and administrative buildings in Bagaroua (Tahoua region), killing at least two security personnel.

On October 21, suspected ISSP militants kidnapped a US citizen working as a missionary directly from his residence in the capital, Niamey. This incident demonstrated the growing ability of ISSP to operate in the center of the country.

In October 2025, JNIM focused on the Southwest, along the border with Benin (Dosso region). In Tanda commune, militants carried out small-scale attacks, used improvised explosive devices (IED), killed farmers, and burned houses. The group also destroyed telecommunications installations and municipal buildings in Fabadji and Belande.

The key event was the first officially claimed attack on the territory of neighboring Nigeria on October 28 (in Kwara State), where JNIM killed one soldier. This highlighted the growing strategic importance of the Benin-Niger-Nigeria borderlands for both jihadist groups.

### Number of Casualties

More than a thousand dead military personnel and civilians.

### INTENSITY

Internal conflict, terrorist attacks.



## Trends

By the beginning of 2025, the military regime had already formed a new security doctrine: a full break with Western partners and consolidation with regional military regimes. The decision to cancel the military agreement with the USA (which was made in March 2024) led to the planned withdrawal of about 1,100 US military personnel from Air Base 201 and other facilities. In the spring of 2024, a strengthening of military-technical cooperation with the RF was recorded. The arrival of Russian military instructors and equipment was presented by the junta as a direct

replacement for the American and French contingents in the struggle against jihadism in the Sahel.

In January 2025, Niger, together with Mali and Burkina Faso, officially announced its withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This decision, motivated by accusations that ECOWAS abandoned Pan-Africanism, finally removed any threat of military intervention but also deprived Niger of regional cooperation mechanisms.

Despite claims of stabilization, government forces suffered significant losses, highlighting the vulnerability of the state after the change of alliances.



## Forecast

2025 confirmed the growing inability of the military government to effectively control the territory despite the change of international partners, which led to the spread of violence and casualties among the military and civilian population. This process will intensify in the following year.

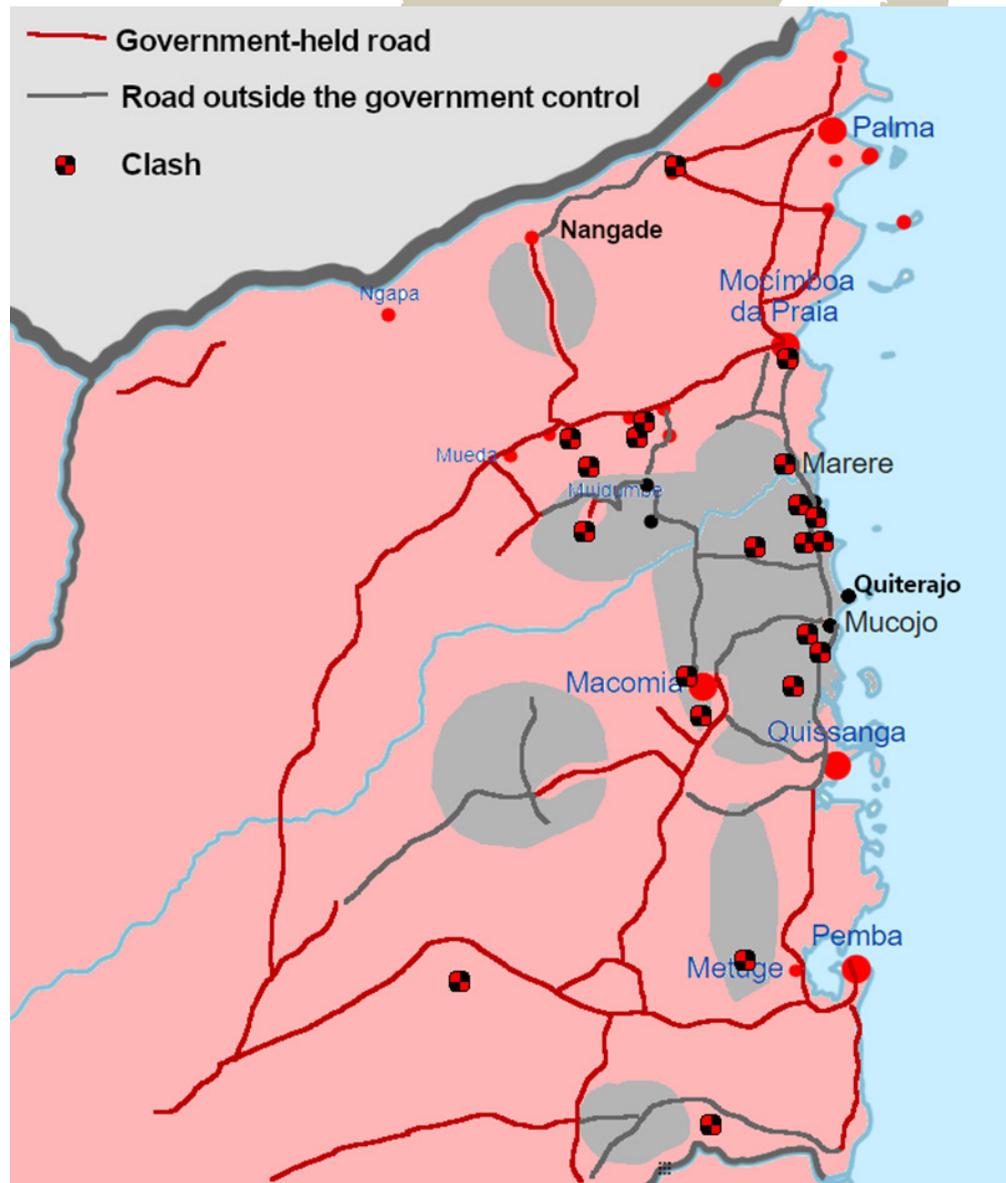
# Local conflict Mozambique

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Since 2017, the gas-rich northern province of Cabo Delgado has suffered from attacks by terrorists of the Islamist group «Islamic State Central Africa Province.» Their goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate in the region. All this is reinforced by popular anger over the unfair distribution of income from the exploitation of the region and the marginalization of the local Muslim population.

A significant increase in the number of attacks began in 2020. During 2021, in Cabo Delgado province, the main clashes occurred in the districts of Palma, Nangade, Mocímboa, and Macomia. In the summer, the armed forces of partner countries — Rwanda and members of the Southern African Development Community — began a joint operation in Mozambique, during which part of the towns was liberated.

In 2022, a significant intensification of the confrontation was observed with the expansion of geography and an increase in the number



of victims. At the beginning of the year, the main arena of confrontation remained the center of Cabo Delgado province. However, from June 2022, a new offensive by terrorist forces began, during which the conflict

## INTENSITY

Local conflict, terrorist acts.

zone expanded to neighboring districts — Ancuabe, Chiúre, and Mecúfi, in which the situation had previously been calm. Thanks to cooperation with partners, Mozambique managed to significantly weaken terrorist activity in 2023. In 2024, the government of Mozambique conducted a new large-scale operation against the militants, involving support from regional partners such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Specifically, contingents from Rwanda participate in battles on the side of the Mozambique army. However, clashes continued with losses among government forces.

During the monitoring period, local clashes with Islamists continue, primarily in the North of the country.

On February 20, Islamists killed at least two servicemen during an attack on a military outpost near the town of Quissanga, however they subsequently retreated without entering residential areas.

On May 10, «Islamic State Central Africa Province» claimed an attack on government force positions near the village of Miangalewa in the Muidumbe district of Cabo Delgado province, killing 11 soldiers (according to other data, the number of dead reached 18). Also in May, Islamists killed three Rwandan soldiers.

On June 15, in Niassa province in the Montepuez district, 12 Islamists died as a result of a clash with the Mozambique army.

On July 27, as a result of a clash between Islamists and local militias, 14 militiamen died.

## Humanitarian Consequences

During five years of the conflict, 1.5 million people required humanitarian aid of a certain type. More than 1.1 million people were internally displaced. Noticeable problems exist in the refugee camps: due to the overcrowding of the camps, a deficit of food, water, medicines, and sanitation facilities is observed.



## Number of Casualties

During five years of the conflict, more than 6,000 people have been killed. The number of civilian victims is more than several thousand, however the information is inaccurate due to difficult access to remote regions of Cabo Delgado.

# Forecast

Although compared to previous years the intensity of the conflict has decreased, the country's authorities are not yet able to ensure a stable peace in the North of the country. Armed terrorist groups will likely continue attacks, spreading violence not only in Cabo Delgado but also in adjacent provinces, which is driven by the possibility of obtaining resources from abroad. The intervention of external players interested in influencing the government of Mozambique and participating in the development of gas fields on the country's offshore shelf is possible (specifically China and Russia, given the presence until 2019 of Russian mercenaries on the side of the government).

# Balochistan (Pakistan and Iran)

## Local conflict

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

During 2025, the activities of various ethnic Baloch separatist groups increased significantly in the provinces of Balochistan (Pakistan) and Sistan and Baluchestan (Iran). In March, militants from the Balochistan Liberation Army seized a passenger train traveling from Quetta to Peshawar along with 400 people. In July, an attack took place on a courthouse in Sistan and Baluchestan province.



### Intensity

Local conflict.

### Number of Casualties

347 killed and 982 wounded civilians. 751 killed and 1025 wounded security forces. 436 killed and 228 wounded militants.

### Negotiations Between the Parties

Islamabad and Tehran continue the course of refusing any official negotiations with Baloch separatist organizations.

### Forecast

Baloch terrorist groups both on Pakistani territory and on Iranian territory will continue to gain strength and increase the number and scale of attacks. At the same time, the probability of Baloch activation on Afghan territory is increasing. Meanwhile, despite the strengthening of individual organizations and the fortification of managerial verticals within them, the probability of their rivalry at the factional level remains, as seen, for example, in the Balochistan Liberation Army. It is worth noting that Pakistan's Balochs are increasingly directing their attacks toward disrupting the security of Chinese investments in the region, including attacks on Chinese citizens.

### Impact on Global Processes

The conflict in Balochistan continues to facilitate the rapprochement of Iran and Pakistan. The active actions of the Balochistan Liberation Army — Jiand militants against Chinese investments and the killings of Chinese citizens are prompting Beijing to get involved in regional security at the junction of the Middle East and South Asia. It is indicative that Iran, against the background of internal political problems and the increasing intensity of Baloch organization actions in Sistan and Baluchestan province, is looking for ways to engage in military-political cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. However, cooperation between Islamabad and Tehran continues to be spotty without prospects for establishing a stable system of transborder security. Balochistan province is an important territory for Pakistan, making up 44% of its total territory, providing significant access to the Indian Ocean, and possessing significant deposits of natural gas, coal, and copper. The latter makes it an object of interest for China, including the logistical corridor to the port of Gwadar.



### Trends

Traditionally, the intensity of combat actions on Pakistani territory with armed Balochs, unlike on Iranian territory, is significantly greater. The same applies to the number of terrorist attacks. However, 2025 demonstrated a trend toward an increasing level of violence on Iranian territory as well. In total during this period, 482 attacks (bomb explosions, armed assaults, suicide bombings, etc.) took place in Balochistan province. Meanwhile, similar information regarding Iran occurs significantly less frequently. It is important to note that at the end of 2025, against the background of protests in Iran, a new Baloch group was formed — the People's Front of Fighters. The organization included Jaish al-Adl and a number of other militant groups. Parallel to this, a strengthening of two factions of the Balochistan Liberation Army — Jiand and Azad — is observed in Pakistan.

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In 2025, Chad is in a state of complex security and humanitarian crisis formed under the influence of a combination of internal and external factors. The key sources of instability remain the war in neighboring Sudan, the activity of jihadist groups in the Lake Chad basin region, as well as structural socio-economic and climate problems.

One of the most important events of 2024–2025 was the mass influx of Sudanese refugees escaping the civil war. Hundreds of thousands of people crossed the border and settled primarily in the eastern provinces of Chad, which created a significant burden on the local infrastructure, water supply systems, healthcare, and security.

Parallel to this, the Lake Chad basin region remains a zone of regular attacks by the groups «Boko Haram» and «Islamic State — West Africa Province» (ISWAP), which carry out attacks on the civilian population, security forces, and infrastructure objects, contributing to further internal displacement of the population.

## Intensity

Local conflict. The intensity of violence in Chad in 2025 is moderate but chronic. This is not about full-scale combat actions at the national level, but about a constant series of local incidents concentrated in the border and peripheral regions.

## Number of Casualties

According to the assessments of humanitarian organizations, over 7 million people in Chad in 2025 require humanitarian aid, which testifies to the scale of the social and security consequences of the crisis.

The number of direct victims of violence remains difficult to estimate accurately, however regular attacks by jihadist groups in the Lake Chad basin and intercommunal conflicts lead to the deaths of civilians and security forces, as well as to mass internal displacement of the population.

A separate factor of humanitarian pressure is the hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees who are in a vulnerable position and depend on international aid.

# Chad

## Trends

The most tense remain: eastern regions of the country, experiencing pressure due to refugees from Sudan; the Lake Chad basin region, where jihadist group activity persists.

The limited resources of the state and complex logistics in remote areas complicate effective control over territories and rapid response by security forces.

The main trends of the security situation in Chad are:

- the persistence of chronic instability in the border regions;
- the growth of the humanitarian burden due to regional conflicts;
- the strengthening influence of climate factors (droughts, land degradation), which sharpen competition for resources;
- the dependence of the country's stability on external financial and humanitarian support.

At the same time, the active participation of the UN and international partners, specifically the assessment of the anti-terrorist situation by the UN Security Council, testifies to the recognition of Chad as a key element of regional security in Central and West Africa.

## Forecast

In the short- and medium-term perspective, the security situation in Chad will remain vulnerable. Further escalation of the war in Sudan, the activity of jihadist groups in the Lake Chad basin region, as well as climate and economic challenges may strengthen both internal and transborder threats.

Without stable growth of international support in the field of security, humanitarian aid, and development, the risks of destabilization will persist, which could negatively affect not only Chad but also the security of the broader Central Africa and Sahel region.

# Western Sahara

# Local

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The conflict in the region, the hot phase of which resumed on November 13, 2020 around the border crossing and the road near the village of Guerguerat, continues in 2025 at the level of the use of rocket-artillery weaponry and unmanned aerial vehicles by both sides.

### Intensity

Low-intensity local conflict.

### Number of Casualties

For the year 2025, 3 killed Algerians and 2 killed gold miners have been recorded.

### Negotiations Between the Parties

On October 31, the UN Security Council supported Resolution 2797 with 11 out of 15 votes «in favor» (China, Russia, and Pakistan abstained, while Algeria did not vote), which not only extended the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara but also recognized that Morocco's plan for creating national-territorial autonomy should be the basis of a peace settlement. Effectively, this became a significant diplomatic defeat for Algeria, which, as already noted, did not express a position at all during the UN Security Council meeting. Rabat, like the POLISARIO representatives, continues to refrain from negotiations. Attempts by the USA to establish communication between Morocco and Algeria have so far yielded no results. At the end of December, Rabat rejected Algeria's proposals, which consisted of stopping informational discredit by Morocco, the struggle against Moroccan drug trafficking, and an immediate resolution of the Western Sahara issue.

### Trends

During 2025, Morocco's plan for creating national-territorial autonomy for Western Sahara received the support of Kenya, the United Kingdom, Ghana, and Portugal. In 2025, the state's defense budget grew by \$0.52 billion (by

7.8%) compared to the previous year. This testifies to the persistence of the course toward strengthening the Royal Armed Forces and readiness for the option of a forceful resolution of the Western Saharan issue. At the same time, Rabat allows for an active phase of military-political conflict with Algeria, which currently remains the only reliable ally for POLISARIO. In May, the new government in Syria closed the POLISARIO representative office in Damascus, symbolically breaking multi-year ties with the organization. The issue of recognizing the latter as a terrorist organization is also being discussed.

### Impact on Global Processes

Given the processes of peaceful settlement of the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the activation of the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a number of other challenges to global security, the issue of Western Sahara has acquired even greater secondary status. Attempts by the USA to establish communication between Algeria and Morocco were not effective or efficient. Washington demonstrated a low level of interest in mediation between the parties to the conflict, limiting itself to support for the Moroccan plan for the autonomization of Western Sahara. At the same time, both the EU and its individual states, primarily France and Spain, continued the course toward economic cooperation with Morocco. For example, in September — October, the EU was forced to make amendments to the trade agreement with Morocco to avoid its full cancellation in accordance with the decision of the EU Court of Justice. Thus, as in the previous year, Morocco's positions continue to strengthen, while Algeria, deprived of the support of Syria and Iran, has significantly lost political positions in this conflict. It is also important that Rabat, by controlling Guerguerat, de facto influences migration flows into the EU through Western Sahara.

### Forecast

The conflict will remain relevant in the short-term and medium-term perspective.

# conflict

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Throughout 2025, the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) continued its series of attacks on Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) facilities, National Police (Polri) posts, and settlements of Indonesian migrants across six regional provinces: Southwest Papua, West Papua, Central Papua, Papua, Highland Papua, and South Papua.

### Intensity

Local conflict.

### Number of Casualties

6 Indonesian police officers killed.

5 Indonesian military personnel killed.

44 civilians killed and 16 wounded.

14 militants detained and 39 killed.

### Negotiations Between the Parties

Throughout 2025, as in previous years, Jakarta refused to hold negotiations with the militants, who are classified as terrorists under Indonesian law. However, it is noteworthy that Indonesia is consulting with neighboring Papua New Guinea and Australia on this matter within the context of security agreements. In December, Port Moresby even announced the creation of a 10-kilometer buffer zone along the border with Indonesia.

### Trends

In 2025, various TPNPB factions and local criminal groups supporting them focused on attacking gold mines, continued assaults on police and army posts, and carried out a series of successful ambushes on regional Indonesian security officials, while purposefully targeting migrants from other Indonesian regions. Simultaneously, Jakarta strengthened its military presence and conducted several successful operations to eliminate or capture field

# West Papua (Indonesia)

commanders of several TPNPB factions. Special attention should be given to the Indonesian Armed Forces' use of aviation and unmanned aerial vehicles in the fight against the TPNPB.

### Impact on Global Processes

The TPNPB traditionally attempts to internationalize the conflict by seeking diplomatic and resource support abroad. In 2025, the United Kingdom continued to support Benny Wenda, the leader of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) — the de facto political wing of the aforementioned TPNPB. For instance, London continues to insist on visits by UN officials to West Papua to exert pressure on Jakarta. In March, Vanuatu, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Samoa issued a joint statement at the UN level regarding the situation of human rights defenders in West Papua. Meanwhile, at the end of 2025, a significant warming of relations occurred between Jakarta and Port Vila, which sparked several protests in the latter. Overall, Indonesia avoids internationalizing the conflict, maintaining its course of treating it as an exclusively internal matter.

### Forecast

The conflict will maintain a low level of intensity. The TPNPB and its allied groups will avoid significant direct clashes with the Indonesian army and police. Militants will focus on intimidating Indonesian migrants to reduce the attractiveness of the government's resettlement program to the West Papua regions. At the same time, given the centralizing fiscal policy of the Prabowo Subianto government, an increase in Jakarta's influence over local processes is expected, thus rejecting any possibilities for regional autonomy.

# Local conflict

## Southern Thailand

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

Throughout 2025, militants of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (National Revolutionary Front) continued a series of terrorist attacks in Thailand's southern provinces: Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, and Songkhla. These included: March 5 (bomb explosion in Yala), March 8 (two explosions in Pattani and Narathiwat), April 21 (two explosions in Narathiwat), April 22 (killing of a Buddhist novice in Songkhla), May 2 (killing of three people in a shooting in Narathiwat), August 20 (bomb explosion in Narathiwat), October 16 (bomb explosion near a teahouse in Narathiwat), November 1 (killing of a Malay man in Narathiwat), etc.



### Trends

In 2025, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional militants focused on terrorist acts mostly in Narathiwat province, where 82% of the population is Muslim, almost all of whom are of Malay origin. As in the previous year, Islamists continued to carry out attacks on Buddhists in Songkhla province, where over 63% of the population is Thai. It is worth noting that BRN representatives focused their attacks specifically on the civilian population, using improvised explosive devices, grenades, and automatic weapons. Meanwhile, clashes with the police or government military units are rare. A shooting on July 28 at a food market in Bangkok once again testifies to the worsening security situation in Thailand. The active phase of the military-political conflict with neighboring Cambodia also plays a negative role.



### Impact on Global Processes

The conflict in Thailand's southern provinces primarily affects its relations with neighboring Malaysia. This is due to the fact that the local separatists are ethnic Malays and Muslims, highlighting the ethno-religious nature of the conflict. For a long time, Kuala Lumpur, while not officially supporting the BRN militants, sympathized with them, as did Malaysian subjects in general. The same applies to Indonesia, home to a significant number of ethnic Malays. However, since Anwar Ibrahim came to power in Malaysia, a course has been set to support the resolution of the conflict. Kuala Lumpur continued this line in 2025. Simultaneously, the logic of Anwar Ibrahim's policy is dictated by Malaysia's own security problems with pro-Indonesian Islamic groups. Therefore, Kuala Lumpur does not seek to intervene directly in the conflict in southern Thailand. Meanwhile, under Anwar Ibrahim's rule, a political drift of Malaysia toward China is observed, which could potentially create threats for Thailand, a major non-NATO ally of the United States.

# Negotiations Between the Parties

Back in December 2024, after another breakdown in peace talks, the BRN militants released a statement announcing an increase in terrorist attacks, which was reflected in the aforementioned events. In January 2025, then-Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Phumtham Wechayachai spoke of the prospects for forming a new government team for negotiations with the BRN. In February, the official even traveled to the southern provinces. However, these attempts yielded no results, and the confrontation continued even during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Later, due to the intensification of the conflict with Cambodia and the removal of Paetongtarn Shinawatra from power, negotiations with the BRN were sidelined. In December 2025, the National Security Council of Malaysia, acting as a mediator in Bangkok's talks with the militants, issued a statement regarding the resumption of negotiations. However, as previously noted, the main issue currently is the lack of a permanent, rather than temporary, government in Thailand.



## Number of Casualties

3 killed and 1 wounded among pro-Thai paramilitary structures.

10 killed and 56 wounded civilians.

## INTENSITY

Local conflict.

## Forecast

The parties will not abandon negotiations. At the same time, the position of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional formed in December 2024, as well as the internal political crisis in Thailand that led to the resignation of the Paetongtarn Shinawatra government, have complicated the already difficult peace process. Therefore, despite the renewed attention to the conflict resolution issue in December, achieving effective and stable agreements is unlikely, especially in the context of the parliamentary elections and constitutional referendum scheduled for February 8, 2026.

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In September 2025, mass protests broke out in Madagascar due to chronic problems with electricity and water supply, especially in the capital, Antananarivo. Initial attempts by the authorities to arrest the leaders of opposition movements only escalated the situation, triggering the activation of the Gen Z Mada online youth movement. Public organizations, trade unions, and individual politicians joined the protests. President  Andry Rajoelina attempted to calm the public by dissolving the government, but this proved insufficient, and the protesters' demands shifted to his resignation.

On October 12, 2025, the CAPSAT elite unit of the Madagascar Armed Forces came out in support of the protests and effectively seized control of the capital. CAPSAT called on other army units to join them, leading to an almost bloodless takeover of Antananarivo. Immediately after, the military removed the President of the Senate and appointed their own candidate to the position of head of the Armed Forces, and the following day, President Rajoelina left the country. At the demand of CAPSAT, a number of political institutions were dissolved, including the Constitutional Court and the Central Election Commission, leaving only the National Assembly.

On October 13, the National Gendarmerie, which supported the protest movement, fully seized control of its own structures, and CAPSAT announced the formation of a Council of the Presidency for the Re-foundation of the Republic and the appointment of a Prime Minister for the rapid formation of a civilian government. Colonel Michael Randrianirina, commander of CAPSAT, was appointed interim president and assured the public that elections would be held within 18–24 months,

# Military coup Madagascar

emphasizing that the military only «responded to the calls of the people.»

On October 17, Randrianirina was officially inaugurated as President of Madagascar during a session of the High Constitutional Court. He announced an ambition to «break with the past» and «open a new chapter in the life of the nation,» thanking the Gen Z protesters for their active civic stance. Among the first priorities of the new administration are the investigation of the national company Jirama's activities, the development of rice farming, and the formation of a new government. On October 20, Randrianirina appointed Herintsalama Rajaonarivelo as Prime Minister, and on October 25, the new government revoked Rajoelina's citizenship due to laws against dual citizenship.

The new government team consisted of 29 members, among whom were several experienced politicians and former government officials, as well as new figures who

### INTENSITY

Military coup.

had a reputation as opponents of the former president. For example, Christine Razanamahasoa was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Fanirisoa Ernaivo — Minister of Justice. The new appointments took into

account the demands of various political parties, the business community, the military, and the youth movement, highlighting the complexity of compromises in the formation of the government of «re-founders.»

## Negotiations Between the Parties

The international community reacted with concern. The African Union called for restraint and temporarily suspended Madagascar's membership, while the Southern African Development Community expressed concern over the unconstitutional change of power. The UN and the EU called for the restoration of democratic processes through national dialogue. France declared «deep concern» but denied involvement in the events, while the USA advised its citizens to remain in safe places due to the «high unpredictability of the situation.»

# Benin

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

On December 7, 2025, a military coup attempt occurred in Benin. A group of military personnel attempted to remove President Patrice Talon and dissolve the government, forming a Military Committee for Refoundation (CMR). They managed to seize the television station and proclaimed the removal of President Patrice Talon from office and the seizure of power in the country. However, the putsch was suppressed by loyal forces; the legitimate government was supported by ECOWAS countries and, specifically, Nigeria. More than 30 people were arrested; the organizer — Lieutenant Colonel Pascal Tigri — and his accomplices are being sought.



## Trends

Benin acts as one of France's main allies in the region. The coup attempt is most advantageous to Russia, which seeks to gain access to the sea coast for its controlled Sahel states and to weaken the influence of Paris.

## INTENSITY

Failed military coup attempt.

## Forecast

The population of Benin is dissatisfied with economic problems; the state does not fully control the coast, which has become a base for pirate groups. Therefore, further attempts to destabilize the regime are possible.

# Guinea-Bissau

## Military coup



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In 2023, internal political tension grew against the background of a conflict between the president and the government, as well as a confrontation with parliament. The president dissolved the legislative body, citing security threats and conspiracies against state power. The decision deepened the crisis of legitimacy and strengthened the role of the army as a key political actor.

In February 2024, an unsuccessful coup attempt took place, accompanied by armed clashes between security forces and units connected to the plotters.

On November 26, 2025, the President of Guinea-Bissau, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, was arrested as a result of a coup d'état carried out by the head of the President's Military Office, Brigadier General Dinis N'Tchama. The military announced the establishment of «total control» over the country and created the High Military Command for the Restoration of National Security and Public Order. The coup took place a day before the expected announcement of the results of the general elections in Guinea-Bissau, which were held on November 23 and in which Embaló ran for a second term.



### Trends

Guinea-Bissau traditionally remains one of the most politically unstable states in West Africa. Military coups, mutinies, and attempts at a forceful seizure of power are a recurring element of its political history, creating chronic institutional weakness for the state.

In 2023–2025, a trend of cyclical political-military instability took hold in Guinea-Bissau, where the army acts as the key arbiter in the struggle for power. The lack of deep institutional reforms and the weakness of civilian control over security structures create conditions for repeated coup attempts.



### Impact on Global Processes

Deposed president Umaro Sissoco Embaló acted as a reliable partner for Moscow; a threat existed of the country joining the Alliance of Sahel States. The new government is seeking external support; a decrease in the Kremlin's influence is likely.

### INTENSITY

Military coup.

## Forecast

In the absence of institutional reforms and real civilian control over the army, political stability will remain fragile, and a forceful scenario remains a likely tool for the power struggle, making repeated coup attempts possible.

# Internal political crisis

## Nepal



### Trends

The primary achievement of the protests is not only the resignation of the Prime Minister, who represented the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist), but also the start of a process to reboot the state power system. Prior to the conclusion of the protests, President Ram Chandra Poudel issued a decree early terminating the powers of the House of Representatives—the lower house of Nepal’s parliament. Elections are scheduled for March 5, 2026. Notably, a landmark event occurred in early November: nine communist forces merged into a single Nepal Communist Party led by the Maoist Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known as «Comrade Prachanda.»

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

On September 8–13, mass protests took place in Nepal related to the authorities’ attempts to effectively ban the activities of several social networks through the introduction of digital taxation. Peaceful demonstrations quickly escalated into bloody clashes with security forces, accompanied by attacks on officials, arsons (including the iconic Singha Durbar palace), and riots. As a result of the protests, Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli resigned, and the government was temporarily headed by the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nepal, Sushila Karki.



### Impact on Global Processes

Firstly, the protests continued the trend of «Generation Z» entering political life, a phenomenon previously seen in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, as well as on other continents. Secondly, Nepal has long been a zone of confrontation between India and China. The recent transformations have significantly undermined Beijing’s influence. The unification of nearly all of Nepal’s communists around the Maoist Prachanda proves how crucial it is for China to increase its influence over Kathmandu and further form a belt of hostile states around India.

### Number of Casualties

76 killed. 2,113 wounded.

### INTENSITY

### Internal Political Crisis.

## Forecast

It is evident that the formation of a single communist party body is both an attempt by Prachanda to seek revenge for the 2022 election loss and the loss of the premiership in 2024, and a move to significantly increase capabilities for confronting the Nepali Congress. The unification served as a political maneuver to minimize the negative image of the former ruling Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist), which was tarnished by the actions leading to the protests. In the short term, all political life in Nepal will be structured around the general elections. Given that the electoral system has not undergone significant changes, a fierce struggle is expected, likely resulting in a de facto two-block system in the House of Representatives.

# Internal political

# Tanzania

# Togo

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

During the presidential and parliamentary elections on October 29, mass protests unfolded due to allegations of election fraud. The protests were triggered by the imprisonment for high treason of opposition leader Tundu Lissu (Chadema party) and the disqualification from the elections of Luchama Mpina (ACT-Wazalendo party). After the announcement of the results regarding the victory of incumbent President Samia Suluhu Hassan with 97% of the vote, the protests radicalized, with the city of Dar es Salaam becoming the center

of the demonstrations. Clashes with the police began, authorities used tear gas, and beatings and deaths of protesters were recorded. The government shut down the internet and imposed a curfew. In November 2025, a CNN investigation showed that the police and Armed Forces shot at protesters, many of whom were unarmed or carried only stones and sticks, and victims were buried in mass graves.

In the border town of Namanga, some protesters crossed the Kenyan border when Tanzanian security forces used tear gas near the border.



### Number of Casualties

More than 500 dead, according to opposition parties and international media.

### INTENSITY

Internal political crisis.

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In 2025, Togo remains a relatively stable state compared to other countries in the region; however, the country faced a combination of internal political crises and external security challenges. Political tension increased significantly after the 2024 constitutional reform, which changed the balance of power and triggered a wave of protests against President Faure Gnassingbé, who has been in power for over two decades.

Additionally, in 2025, mass anti-government demonstrations took place in the country, especially in the capital, Lomé. Repressive actions by security forces, including the use of tear gas and mass detentions, led to civilian deaths and sharpened the confrontation between the authorities and the opposition. According to reports from the media and human rights organizations, at least seven people died during clashes in Lomé in June 2025.

Togo also maintains a state of emergency regarding security in the northern Savannah region, introduced due to the threat from jihadist groups operating in the Sahel zone. In 2025, an increase in the number of attacks in border areas was recorded, although radical Islamist groups do not control significant territories of the country.

# Forecast

By the end of the year, the protests are subsiding; however, mass dissatisfaction against the backdrop of economic problems creates the ground for the destabilization of the internal political situation.

# crisis



## Number of Casualties

According to official and media data, at least 7 people died as a result of political protests in 2025, with dozens injured or detained. At the same time, authorities admit that at least 62 people died as a result of jihadist attacks in the northern regions of Togo in 2025, which is more than double the figures for 2023.

A separate factor of pressure on the social sphere remains the influx of refugees from neighboring Sahel countries. According to estimates by humanitarian organizations, Togo has accepted tens of thousands of refugees, which negatively affects access to basic services in the communities that received the newcomers.



## Trends

Although the level of violence is significantly lower than in the Sahel states, the trend toward its increase in the border regions causes concern, especially given the cross-border nature of the threats.

The key trends of the security situation in Togo are: growth of internal political tension and polarization of society; more active involvement of security forces in internal control and the suppression of protests; gradual spread of the jihadist threat from the Sahel region to the north of the country; strengthening of regional security coordination with neighboring states of West Africa.

The adoption of a new law on intelligence in 2025 indicates the authorities' intentions to strengthen national capabilities in the field of combating terrorism, violent extremism, and cyber threats, but simultaneously raises fears regarding possible abuses and the restriction of civil liberties.

## INTENSITY

**Internal political crisis. The intensity of violence in Togo in 2025 remains limited but unstable. The bulk of the incidents are related not to full-scale combat actions, but to local clashes between protesters and security forces, as well as targeted attacks by jihadist groups in the northern provinces.**

## Forecast

In the short term, tension in Togo is likely to persist. In the absence of significant political dialogue and compromise between the authorities and the opposition, the risk of further protests and forceful responses from the state remains high.

External security challenges related to the activity of jihadist groups in the Sahel may gradually intensify, especially in the northern regions of the country. In the event of a worsening situation, this could have broader consequences for the security of the coastal states of West Africa.

# Latin America

## Internal political crisis

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In 2025, Latin America remained an arena of deep socio-economic polarization, a struggle against organized crime that took on the features of internal armed conflicts, and the strengthening of geopolitical rivalry between the US and China.

In **Argentina**, the «shock therapy» of President Javier Milei yielded contradictory results. During the year, the government managed to achieve a budget surplus and sharply reduce monthly inflation rates. However, the price was a recession, a drop in GDP, and an increase in the poverty level, which covered over 50% of the population. The country experienced several nationwide strikes and mass protests against austerity and the reduction of state funding (specifically for universities).

**Ecuador** spent the year in a state of «internal armed conflict» declared by President Daniel Noboa. Despite large-scale military operations, especially in Guayaquil, powerful drug cartels

(«Los Choneros», «Los Lobos») maintained significant influence. The level of violence remained extremely high, with regular murders of politicians, judges, and prosecutors, highlighting the fragility of state institutions.

In **Mexico**, the first year of Claudia Sheinbaum's presidency (Morena party) was characterized by attempts to continue the social policies of her predecessor, but against a backdrop of escalating violence from cartels. The deep reform of the judicial system she proposed, which involved the election of judges, caused a collapse of the peso, market panic, and mass protests. Critics accused the government of attempting to subjugate the judiciary, which

would strengthen authoritarianism and the impunity of the cartels.

**Colombia** faced the effective failure of President Gustavo Petro's «total peace» policy. Negotiations with the key dissident group FARC repeatedly broke down. In response, militants carried out a series of audacious attacks on military and civilian targets in Cauca province, demonstrating a lack of real intention to lay down arms.

In **Bolivia**, a conservative politician was elected president — 58-year-old senator Rodrigo Paz, who advocates for market reforms. His victory put an end to the twenty-year rule of the socialists, initiated by Evo Morales.

### INTENSITY

High intensity of internal armed conflicts (Ecuador, Mexico). Medium intensity of guerrilla war (Colombia). High intensity of social protests (Argentina, Brazil).



## Impact on Global Processes

The region remained a key arena of confrontation between the US and China. The new US administration led by Donald Trump increased pressure on Latin American countries, demanding they limit cooperation with Beijing, especially in the field of technology and strategic infrastructure.

China strengthened its positions by launching the Chancay megaport in Peru at full capacity, which became the main Chinese logistical center in South America. The free trade agreement between Mercosur and the EU, despite the optimism of 2024, remained blocked due to opposition from European farmers.



## Humanitarian Consequences

The migration crisis remained one of the most acute. The number of migrants who crossed the dangerous Darien Gap (between Colombia and Panama) again broke records, exceeding 750,000 people for 2025. The powerful flow of migrants from Venezuela, Haiti, Ecuador, and countries of Africa and Asia creates an extraordinary burden on healthcare systems and social services in countries from Colombia to Mexico and the southern border of the US.



## Number of Casualties

Hundreds of people died as a result of criminal violence in Mexico and Ecuador. Hundreds of military personnel and civilians suffered as a result of the resumption of combat actions in Colombia. Hundreds were injured during the suppression of mass protests in Argentina and Peru.



## Trends

The main trend became the militarization of the struggle against organized crime. The experience of Ecuador (and earlier El Salvador) pushed other countries toward involving the army in performing police functions, which carries risks of further escalation. Another trend is the deep ideological split between the «Argentine model» (radical libertarian capitalism) and leftist governments (Mexico, Colombia, Brazil), which effectively paralyzed regional integration.

# Forecast

The economic experiment in Argentina will enter a decisive phase in 2026: either an economic recovery will begin, or the country will face a social explosion. US-Mexico relations in 2026 could reach a trade war, which would force Mexico City to move even closer to China. Further militarization of the region is expected in response to the inability of civilian governments to overcome the power of the cartels. The strengthening of US protectionist policies will deepen the region's economic dependence on China.

# Internal political crisis

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The year 2025 was marked for Bosnia and Herzegovina by a crisis that intensified at the end of the previous year and led to early elections in Republika Srpska and a change in political leadership from Milorad Dodik to a person from his inner circle — Siniša Karan.

The peak of the political and institutional crisis in BiH was the sentencing by the Court of BiH of the then-President of the entity Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, to one year of imprisonment and a six-year ban from holding state and political positions in the RS. Dodik and his party, the «Alliance of Independent Social Democrats,» refused to recognize the verdict, so Milorad Dodik continued to hold the position of President of Republika Srpska. In response, Dodik initiated the adoption of a series of laws that prohibited the activities and jurisdiction of Bosnian institutions in Republika Srpska. Dodik also intensified rhetoric regarding the necessity of returning to the original version of the Dayton Peace Accords, which provided for much broader autonomy for the entity Republika Srpska and the existence of its own armed forces, which had become part of the AFBiH following reforms in the early 2000s. Dodik demanded the

abolition of the position of International High Representative Christian Schmidt, the legality of whose appointment he — as well as Serbia, Hungary, Russia, and China — does not recognize.

In addition to Dodik, the court handed down sentences to his associates — the Speaker of the Parliament of Republika Srpska, Nenad Stevandić, and the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, Radovan Višković. All three were to be arrested and delivered to the Court of BiH to serve their sentences; however, they avoided this. Furthermore, Dodik and his associates continued to move freely across Republika Srpska because local police did not dare to arrest them. Personnel of the EU Althea mission did not interfere in this process, nor did BiH police or special forces attempt to enter the territory of Republika Srpska. Dodik was not stopped when he crossed the entity's border for trips to Hungary, Russia, Israel, and Serbia.

The political-institutional crisis escalated when, in the summer of 2025, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina stripped Milorad Dodik of his mandate as President of Republika Srpska, which Dodik himself did not recognize, nor did his party, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, or the leadership of the RF. In response to these actions

by the BiH CEC, Milorad Dodik began to destabilize the situation in Republika Srpska, promising to hold referendums — one regarding the recognition of the legitimacy of his sentence, and a second regarding the proclamation of the independence of Republika Srpska and Bosnian Serbs. The adoption of relevant documents and conclusions in the Parliament of Republika Srpska indicated Dodik's preparation for at least the referendum on the legality of the Court of BiH's verdict against him. Regarding the proclamation of the independence of Republika Srpska, he sought support in Serbia, Hungary, and Russia. Notably, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić never openly declared support for the independence of Republika Srpska but constantly demonstrated comprehensive support for Milorad Dodik. For the latter, it was important to secure maximum support in Moscow, where Dodik made several visits this year. The goal of all the trips and meetings with Putin, Lavrov, and other Kremlin officials was to obtain clear promises regarding a return to the original 1995 version of the Dayton Peace Accords, the elimination of the mandate of the High Representative in BiH, and the non-extension of the mandate of the EU mission in BiH «Althea.» Dodik

had every reason to ask for this, as Russia chaired the UN Security Council throughout October and considered the issue of the «crisis» in BiH.

Evidently, Moscow was interested in destabilizing the situation in BiH to the maximum, but the proclamation of Republika Srpska's independence was not part of its plans. Since the autumn, Milorad Dodik's rhetoric and behavior changed somewhat — he paid a monetary fine to avoid serving the one-year prison term (such an exchange is permitted by BiH law) and stopped talking about the separation of the entity from the rest of BiH.

There was also a regular entanglement of institutional procedures in Republika Srpska — Milorad Dodik, in an unclear manner, authorized Vice President Davor Pranjić (a representative of the Bosnian Croats) to lead Republika Srpska for a certain period. Dodik did not provide relevant documents regarding this, which caused even greater confusion in the work of the state institutions of Republika Srpska. The next step was the announcement of the election of an Acting President of Republika Srpska. Ana Trišić-Babić, one of Dodik's closest associates, took the position. For this step, the US lifted sanctions on Dodik, his family members, many political figures of Republika Srpska, and a number of companies owned by Dodik,

his son and daughter, and members of the «Alliance of Independent Social Democrats» party. Amidst such chaos, Dodik announced the start of the election campaign and the nomination of a candidate from his party for the post of President of Republika Srpska. The early presidential election in Republika Srpska took place on November 24, 2025, and the victory was won by Dodik's protégé — Siniša Karan, who should be viewed as a ceremonial figure, as real power remains in the hands of the entity's former president.

The elections showed that among Bosnian Serbs, the candidate from Dodik's party does not inspire 100% trust. Karan won by a small margin over another candidate from the Serbian Democratic Party, Branko Blanuša (the difference between them was slightly more than 2%).



## Trends

The policy of the leadership of Republika Srpska has for many years been aimed at making the state institutions of BiH dysfunctional. At the end of 2024, a stable trend toward the worsening of the situation and the deepening of the political-institutional crisis emerged. With his actions, Milorad Dodik purposefully blocked the work of a number of institutions and government bodies, prohibited the activities of the Court and Prosecutor's Office of BiH, the State Investigation and Protection Agency, and the Intelligence and Security Agency on the territory of the

RS entity at the legislative level, and also introduced a law amending the Criminal Code of Republika Srpska, which provides for punishment for activities or facilitating the activities of state security bodies and judicial institutions of BiH on RS territory. This caused chaos in the work of BiH state bodies, which were denied access to the RS. Effectively, Dodik and the Parliament of Republika Srpska, where his party «Alliance of Independent Social Democrats» is leading, created a «state within a state» situation. And this state of affairs persisted until the end of October 2025, when Milorad Dodik — not publicly, but through the nomination of his candidate in the early presidential election — recognized that his mandate as President of the RS was canceled. During this same period, the RS Parliament canceled the aforementioned law and a number of other decisions adopted in 2024, which the High Representative from the international community, Christian Schmidt, had qualified as anti-Dayton.

Furthermore, representatives of Dodik's party in the BiH Parliament resisted the adoption of important decisions regarding European integration and the work of the Parliament itself. Simultaneously, Milorad Dodik intensified aggressive rhetoric against Bosniaks in BiH and the RS, openly accusing them of persecuting Bosnian Serbs, usurping power, and sidelining Bosnian Croats from power. Naturally, this once again brought to the fore the problems of election legislation in BiH, the goal of

## INTENSITY

Internal political crisis with external influence.

which is to expand the rights and representation of Bosnian Croats. Dodik supported this idea and even spoke openly that Bosnian Croats have the right to their own entity in BiH, which directly contradicts the provisions of the Dayton Peace Accords that the former RS president so defends.

Among Bosnian Croats throughout 2025, a now-familiar political fracture was observed — some politicians advocated for strengthening the centralized structure of BiH, while others favored expanding powers within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The latter, under the leadership of Dragan Čović, have significant support from Dodik, Viktor Orbán, and the government of Croatia, which closely monitors events in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina. The RS leadership uses the split between Bosnian Croats to promote populist ideas regarding a third entity and creates a dangerous situation along ethnic lines in the country.

Russia took advantage of the constant crisis phenomena with the support of the RS, increasing its presence in Republika Srpska this year and opening a Rossotrudnichestvo representative office in BiH, appointing a permanent representative there. From the areas of work this organization carries out, it becomes clear that the Kremlin is using a familiar hybrid scheme — support for the Russian language and culture, fueling separatist tendencies (working along the line of Croats and Serbs who allegedly have a historical right to their own statehood rather than being part of BiH), strengthening media presence, and deepening economic, cultural, educational, and political ties not only with Republika Srpska but also with individual municipalities where Croats form the vast majority. It is worth noting here that Russia, like Dodik, is also driving inter-ethnic hysteria, forming a negative image of Bosniaks.



## Impact on Global Processes

BiH continues to be in a difficult internal and external position, which negatively affects the state of the country, its development, and its aspirations toward European integration. The country continues, compared to previous years, to experience a crisis in the economy, a constant outflow of the working-age population, and an inability of the authorities to carry out the necessary reforms and stabilize the situation. At the same time, the presence of other countries — Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar — which are interested in the economic, trade, cultural, educational, and tourism spheres, has significantly increased in the country. These countries try not to interfere in political disputes.

Republika Srpska remains a problematic entity whose leadership acts in the wake of Russian hybrid policy in the Western Balkans. At the same time, Milorad Dodik tries to defend his own interests — remaining in power, the desire to be «admitted» to the world's top leaders, among whom he includes Trump, Putin, Orbán, and Vučić. The latter acts as a balancer for all of Dodik's crazy steps and effectively restrains him from final steps regarding the proclamation of RS independence, because Vučić, like Putin, Orbán, and Trump, clearly will not know what to do with an independent Republika Srpska.

## Forecast

Bosnia and Herzegovina is stuck in a permanent crisis, which is most likely to last until October 2026, when elections at all levels of government are due to take place. Hopes for them are minimal, as they will do little to change the political landscape in the country.

The situation with Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration will also remain quite uncertain, as the government and parliament cannot adopt the necessary laws and reforms. One reason is the destructive actions of the Bosnian Serbs and the ability of their leadership to exploit internal problems in BiH to constantly fuel disputes within the country, create crisis phenomena, and involve external actors in these processes. BiH will continue to remain a platform for the clash of interests of different states, which has an ambiguous impact on the country itself and society. Russia especially takes advantage of this, but the Kremlin is no longer just trying to distract the attention of the EU and NATO toward BiH by fueling conflict potential; instead, it has moved to applying soft power and more active promotion of the „Russian world“ in BiH. Precisely for this purpose, the expansion of Russia's institutional network in BiH is taking place, especially in the RS, which is one of the key centers for the work of Russian agents, scientists, diplomats, and entrepreneurs in BiH.

# Internal political crisis

## Serbia



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In Serbia throughout 2025, the authorities continued their policy of strengthening authoritarianism by combating freedom of speech, the media, and public discontent. Simultaneously, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić resorted to the well-known and long-tested policy of balancing between Russia, the EU, and the USA, which yielded poor results for Belgrade and for Vučić himself. He struggled to sit on three chairs at once and dictate his desires to each party while attempting to secure a long-term gas supply contract from the RF, the opening of a new cluster in the negotiation process from the EU, and support regarding Kosovo and infrastructure investment from the USA.

Internally, anti-government protests that began on November 1, 2024, and continue to this day exerted a decisive influence on domestic processes. During this time, no one has been held accountable, so anti-government demonstrations persist. Vučić has also failed to meet other key demands of the protesters—to hold early parliamentary elections and to fight corruption.

The escalation of protests occurs in waves, often as a situational reaction to government actions against protesters, including police brutality, the beating of street activists, and groundless arrests of Serbian citizens under various pretexts.

The social base of the protesters expanded throughout the year, indicating growing dissatisfaction and a desire for change. However, after more than a year of constant demonstrations against Vučić, the «Serbian Progressive Party,» and the government, the movement has failed to achieve significant results. Faculties that had been blockaded since November 2024 resumed work in early autumn 2025, with only one university in Novi Pazar continuing the blockade. The blockade of faculties led to the emergence of a tent city in central Belgrade occupied by students; the media dubbed this camp «Čacilend.» Its participants are not only students who support Vučić and the government; military veterans and individuals with criminal records have also been noted among the «residents» of Čacilend. Anti-government demonstrators

demand the liquidation of the tent city, but these calls remain unanswered.

Vučić and the «Serbian Progressive Party» used Čacilend as a first attempt to split the anti-government protest movement. Subsequent steps included replacing heads of educational institutions who supported the protesters, non-renewal of contracts for teachers and professors, and the creation of parallel higher education institutions controlled by the government.

Attacks on journalists intensified both during protests and in pro-government media controlled by Vučić's circle. There is a large-scale discredit campaign against opposition media that cover the protests and investigate Vučić's activities. Thus, encroachment on freedom of speech and increased censorship became another sphere of purposeful government policy. The Serbian president did not change his approach toward opposition media even after the European Parliament resolution (October 2025), which explicitly

stated that the country faces a difficult situation regarding human rights and media freedom.

The president refuses to hold early elections, although during the second half of 2025, Vučić increasingly spoke about the possibility of declaring early parliamentary elections. To relieve social tension, the Serbian president sacrificed Prime Minister Miloš Vučević, leader of the «Serbian Progressive Party.» He resigned in mid-April, after which Vučić announced the election of a «man of the people» as Prime Minister. This was endocrinologist Đuro Macut, who simultaneously headed the political movement «We are the Voice from the People.» This is a new political force that Vučić presented in the spring after actively traveling across the country, particularly to remote regions.

The opposition has failed to develop tools of pressure against the ruling party and the government; thus, attempts to oppose Vučić remain ineffective. Opposition politicians failed to openly join and lead the protests, which could have moved the demonstrations to a new level of confrontation. Opposition forces in Serbia remain fragmented, characterized by hollow statements of support for protesters and condemnation of government actions.



## Impact on Global Processes

Russia continues to exert the greatest influence on Serbia, acting directly (pressure via the gas contract, accusations of arms supplies to Ukraine) and indirectly (opening a branch of the «Russian Historical Society» headed by former Serbian intelligence chief Aleksandar Vulin; narratives that European integration is stalled because Serbia has not joined sanctions against the RF; and hybrid influence via RT Balkan, Sputnik Srbija, and the «Pravda» propaganda network). Furthermore, Russia seeks to control Vučić's actions, preventing him from feeling the full freedom of action he constantly claims. This prompted his trip to Moscow for «Victory Day» and the meeting between Putin and Vučić in Beijing.

Ultimately, the Kremlin uses its special services to demonstrate to Vučić that he is «under the thumb.» This was evident when the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service accused Serbia of supplying weapons to Ukraine. Immediately following this, Vučić announced that Serbia would stop selling weapons abroad until the situation becomes more favorable. Conversely, Russia demonstrates its favor toward Belgrade by assisting in the investigation of the use of a «sonic cannon» during the March 2025 protests. This investigation was conducted at the request of Serbian institutions—another maneuver by

Vučić to show his electorate and the Kremlin that relations with the RF remain normal. Despite all this, Serbia never received the long-term gas deal it expected because Vučić agreed with China on the development of numerous infrastructure objects.

For Belgrade, relations with Beijing are as important as relations with Russia and the USA. Serbia and China declare a strategic partnership, within which cooperation in various fields is increasing. Beijing seeks to return to the lithium mining project, but Belgrade prevents this due to an agreement with the EU regarding the start of work at the mines of the British-Australian company Rio Tinto. France and Germany are already tied to this project, seeking to develop their own production of lithium batteries and electric cars.

Hungary occupies an important place in Serbia's foreign policy, supporting Vučić and Serbia's course toward EU integration while expanding cooperation, particularly in the military-political sphere. For Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Serbia is needed as an energy hub through which Russian gas and fuel from other countries can reach Hungary.

## INTENSITY

Internal political crisis,  
external interference.

Orbán is interested in receiving other energy carriers through Serbia, including oil and LNG. This is a strategic issue for the Hungarian premier, as he does not want to give up Russian energy carriers and switch to alternatives that would have to pass through Croatia. A priority for both countries in 2025 was military-political cooperation based on a 2023 agreement. Vučić pays significant attention to this because he believes NATO countries are arming themselves against Serbia and playing behind-the-scenes games to weaken Belgrade. In Vučić's view, the deepening military cooperation between Croatia, Albania, Kosovo, and Slovenia (with Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Romania as potential additions) poses direct threats to Serbia's existence.



## Trends

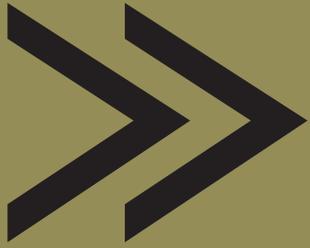
Relations between Serbia and the EU in 2025 were ambiguous, which prevented Belgrade from opening a new cluster in the negotiation process. Vučić and government representatives met with EU leadership and attended various summits. Vučić even attended the Ukraine-Southeast Europe summit in Odesa in June 2025. Such steps were taken to confirm that Serbia remains on the European path. The government adopted the necessary reform agenda, so Serbia received funds from the EU Reform Facility and

Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Against this background, criticism of Serbia's leadership grew louder within the EU, specifically among MEPs, regarding presidential interference in the judiciary, the transformation of law enforcement into a tool of social pressure, and attacks on opposition media. By December 2025, no Serbian representative attended the EU-Western Balkans summit—a fact Vučić announced on a pro-government channel beforehand. While he did not explicitly state the reasons, he noted it was the first time in 13–14 years that a representative of such a level would be absent. This demarche underscores Serbia's «special status» among candidate countries—Belgrade claims it wants EU membership but insists that member states must respect the «peculiarities» of its foreign policy (relations with China and the RF, refusal to join sanctions, etc.).

The final declaration of the EU-Western Balkans summit on December 17, 2025, noted that European integration for Serbia and potentially partially recognized Kosovo is complicated by the lack of dialogue on normalization and the failure to implement agreements signed under Brussels' auspices in 2013 and 2022–2023. Given that normalization is tied to the European track for both Belgrade and Pristina, integration will be a difficult process. Serbia has not opened a new negotiation cluster since 2021, which fuels Euroskepticism and provides a convenient tool for Russian narratives. The Kremlin targets social expectations and heats up

internal political disputes, assisted by Euroskeptics and by Hungary, which lobbies for the rapid accession of Serbia to the EU.

In 2025, relations between Serbia and the USA became more active, primarily due to the personal interests of Donald Trump, Jared Kushner, and Donald Trump Jr. They have business interests in Serbia and neighboring Albania; accordingly, Vučić hoped for a more favorable US attitude so that Washington would pressure Kosovo regarding the protection of Kosovo Serbs and the creation of the Association of Serb Municipalities. Vučić partially achieved his goal—the US suspended the Strategic Dialogue with Pristina and promised to start one with Serbia. However, Kushner's project to build a hotel and office complex in Belgrade on the site of the former Yugoslav Army General Staff will not be implemented. Vučić announced this decision by Trump's son-in-law and promised to hold accountable those who prevented Serbia from receiving millions in investment. The General Staff building issue became another theme of anti-government protests, with participants accusing leadership of corruption in the tender and illegal removal of the building from the national monument register. The prosecutor's office investigating the case has reported pressure from the president and government. This indicates significant pressure from Vučić on the country's judicial system and the strengthening of authoritarian control.



# Forecast

It has become habitual for Serbia to exist in a state of constant political crisis that the leadership finds difficult to control, though the crisis is not deep enough to threaten the ruling president or his party. Anti-government protests have taken on various dimensions but have not become part of a broad political movement that could lead to the fall of the government or a full reset of the political system.

The problem remains a relatively inert and divided opposition and a lack of leaders ready to take responsibility for organizing protesters into more radical actions against Vučić's authoritarianism. Consequently, a presidential-governmental monopoly persists, reinforced by a parliamentary monopoly. Vučić is not overly concerned by the protests because they lack organization. In the event of escalation, the most active participants are neutralized by the police, or the government applies the practice of „dividing society“ by creating parallel structures: the Čacilend camp acts as an antipode to the students and professors who blockaded universities; „loyal“ people are appointed to leadership in media and education; and the practice of creating parallel higher education institutions continues in Niš and Belgrade. Vučić demonstratively called on protesters to start an open public dialogue so that he would have arguments for the EU and human rights organizations, claiming he did everything possible to normalize the situation. Simultaneously, the president continues measures to marginalize the protests, claiming they are managed from abroad as part of a „Western plan“ for a coup. Anti-government protesters, seeking support from the EU for months, receive only declarative statements. Although the European Parliament adopted a sharp resolution, it

remained a „empty sound“ for the leadership. The president and government continue to play in several directions, promising European integration but doing nothing on that path: they develop relations with China, which contradicts the EU's desire to reduce Chinese influence in the Western Balkans, and they maintain relations with the RF for cheap gas. Vučić continues to convince society that it is the EU that does not want to see Serbia as a full member. To maintain the support of the pro-Russian electorate, the president and his supporters facilitate Russophilia and maintain high-level relations with the RF.

Early parliamentary elections are possible in 2026, provided the anti-government protesters are fully discredited, the new „We are the Voice from the People“ movement is strengthened, and Vučić understands that after 2027 he will remain in power as Prime Minister or in another key post. European integration is unlikely to move beyond declarative statements, which provides a favorable background for the Kremlin's hybrid influence and „Russian world“ promotion. Relations with the USA and China will likely develop in the current context. If Donald Trump and his associates see business opportunities in Serbia, sporadic interest may turn into long-term projects, which would raise Vučić's authority among voters. Militarization of the country will continue, and military-technical cooperation with Hungary and China will expand, possibly with increased arms sales to Israel.

# Internal political crisis

## Crisis Phenomena in Slovenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

In Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Slovenia, acute internal political crises were not recorded, but there were isolated escalations over unresolved problems from previous years—corruption, underfunding or insufficient support for the agricultural sector, and the migrant problem (especially relevant for Greece and Slovenia). These problems were complicated by external factors—protests against Israel over Gaza, the growth of pro-Palestinian sentiments, and disputes over increasing defense spending as NATO member states. This issue became quite acute, particularly in Slovenia, where left-wing forces intended to hold a referendum on withdrawing from the alliance.

In Albania and Bulgaria, local anti-government protests were observed throughout the year, which intensified at the end of 2025. The reasons are corruption, abuse of power (by the government of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama), and a lack of transparency in the work of judicial bodies. In Bulgaria, the protests also acquired an economic dimension—due to the introduction

of the euro as of January 1, 2026.

Among the largest opponents of this decision are pro-Russian political forces «Vazrazhdane» (Revival), «Velichie», «MECH», and Bulgarian President Rumen Radev (currently without his own party). Protests in Bulgaria led to the resignation of the government on December 12, 2025, and placed the country before new early elections in 2026, as the president delays the process of granting a mandate to form a new government to political parties. The two largest political forces in the Bulgarian parliament, GERB and «We Continue the Change — Democratic Bulgaria,» have already openly stated their unwillingness to form a government within the current parliament.

In Albania, Edi Rama's government, which is praised in the EU for opening all negotiation clusters but constantly criticized by opposition forces, faced constant opposition from other parties. The strongest competitor, who continues to bring people into the streets, is the Democratic Party of former Prime Minister and President of Albania Sali Berisha. In November–December, a new wave of protests against the government began under his leadership; these are becoming regular and are accompanied by

some escalation due to clashes with the police. Other political forces in opposition to Edi Rama's Socialist Party are also among the organizers and participants of the protests.

In Greece, strikes and mass demonstrations have already become a common occurrence and are nationwide in character when it comes to labor legislation, wages, the agricultural sector, and subsidies from European funds. This usually does not lead to an internal sharpening of the situation or escalation into prolonged protests; however, it harms the Greek economy and political system.



### Impact on Global Processes

Difficulties in each of the countries that have a clear pro-Ukrainian position and help Ukraine have long been a bridgehead for the activation of Russian hybrid influences. In Bulgaria and Greece, these are the church, culture, and history, although in 2026 an increase in the role of pro-Russian media and greater activity among «Russian compatriots» in these states should be expected. After all, Moscow declared 2026 the «Year of the Compatriot» and further

support for the Russian language in the world; therefore, the stake is placed on working with RF citizens abroad and on Russophilia. Slovenia should also be highlighted here, where Russophilia is rooted in society and tends to develop through cooperation with «compatriots» from Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Switzerland, and Austria. Furthermore, Russia will use

politicians, public organizations, and historical-cultural ties to undermine the countries' stability as much as possible and gradually change their position regarding Ukraine. It seems that Albania may remain outside of this, but Moscow is working here too—through the Orthodox Church, «Russian compatriots,» educational institutions, and the information and

media space. Given that Albania, like Montenegro, has come quite close to EU accession, hybrid influences will grow. This also applies to other Western Balkan countries, among which Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are considered and already used as bridgeheads for constant Russian activity in this region.

## Forecast

### ІНТЕНСИВНІСТЬ

Internal political crisis with external influence.

The unstable political situation will persist in Bulgaria throughout the first half of 2026, as the country expects early parliamentary elections—most likely at the end of March—and regular presidential elections, in which the current president Rumen Radev will no longer be able to run (his second term as president is ending). However, Radev may remain in politics and enter parliament with his own party, which does not exist yet but may be formed.

The political landscape of Bulgaria after the early elections will not change significantly, nor will the situation inside the country. A number of problems remain unresolved—corruption, clannishness in power, problems in the functioning of the judicial system and prosecutor's office, and a lack of economic reforms. Because of this, pro-Russian parties that advocate for the cessation of aid to Ukraine and the restoration of relations with the RF are gaining popularity. Slovenia is also expecting regular parliamentary elections, which are to take place at the end of March 2026. The Slovenian Democratic Party, led by former Prime Minister Janez Janša, may return to power. The presence in parliament of pro-Russian forces advocating for the restoration of closer contacts with the RF cannot be avoided. They are few in number, but in coalition with other parties that actively use Slovenia's internal and external problems, they can somewhat destabilize the country.

In Albania, protests against the government are not excluded in the future, with possible radicalization and the undermining of the positions of Edi Rama's Socialist Party. But he will hold on to power to lead the country into the EU and close technical negotiations by the end of 2027.

Greece may demonstrate stable political chaos, which can already be called the country's „calling card.“ As in Bulgaria and Albania, economic problems will remain unresolved, posing many tasks for the government. Simultaneously, politicians will try to do something, as regular parliamentary elections are to take place in the country in 2027. Thus, a season of regular promises and some fulfilled obligations can be observed.

# Internal political crisis

## Montenegro



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

For Montenegro, 2025 was marked by key processes such as the acceleration of the negotiation process with the EU (the country's government plans to close all chapters by the end of 2026, with the final goal of Montenegro joining the EU in 2028), the further development of contradictions within the ranks of the diverse ruling coalition around Prime Minister Miloško Spajić's centrist «Europe Now» Movement, and a sharp increase in the relevance of the migration issue. The government represents centrist pro-European forces («Europe Now,» Democrats), pro-Russian parties (New Serb Democracy, Democratic People's Party), and, quite unusually, traditionally pro-Western national minority parties (Bosniak Party and Albanian Forum).

Against this background, high activity of the Russian embassy and associated pro-Serbian structures, among which the Serbian Orthodox Church plays a key role, persisted. The security and crime situation

deteriorated (staff shortages in security structures and the judicial system). The year began with a mass murder in Cetinje, which caused regular protests against the Ministry of Internal Affairs leadership throughout 2025, though without political consequences.

Despite the challenges, Montenegro made significant progress on its path to the EU: in October it became part of SEPA, in November it received the best European Commission report in years, and Ursula von der Leyen confirmed the realism of accession in the coming years. All 32 negotiating chapters have been opened and 7 preliminarily closed, with another 5 expected to be closed at the end of 2025. The main obstacle remains Chapter 31, blocked by Croatia amid deteriorating bilateral relations and unresolved issues (Prevlaka, war crimes of 1991–1992, the ship «Jadran,» and in 2025, at the initiative of the Croatian MFA, the «restoration of justice» regarding the property rights of the Croatian minority in the Boka Kotorska Bay area was added to the list of topics). For Montenegro's further

advancement to the EU, these issues will have to be closed, and Croatia's position (as Montenegro's only land neighbor from the EU) is significantly stronger—Zagreb is strategically interested in Montenegro gaining EU membership but is concerned by the presence in the ruling majority and government of pro-Serbian and pro-Russian parties, which in June 2024 initiated the adoption by the Parliament of Montenegro of a resolution—quite sensitive for the Croatian side—condemning the genocide in the Jasenovac concentration camp during WWII (notably, such a resolution has not yet been adopted in Serbia). Because of this, back in 2024, the Speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro A. Mandić, Deputy Prime Minister A. Bečić, and the leader of the coalition Democratic People's Party were declared persona non grata by Croatia.

### INTENSITY

Internal political crisis with external influence.



## Impact on Global Processes

Thanks, in part, to the efforts of European partners, by the end of 2025 Montenegro somewhat intensified its counteraction to Russian influence (the detention of several persons suspected of participating on the Russian side in the war against Ukraine, the summoning of the Russian ambassador to the MFA, and most importantly—the government announcement on the introduction of a visa regime for RF citizens in 2026 in the context of requirements stipulated by European integration). Currently, a significant review of migration legislation is underway in Montenegro; the parliament is expected to adopt amendments to the Law on Foreigners, which will significantly increase requirements for obtaining a temporary residence permit (property census regarding real estate value, requirements for conducting business, etc.). These changes will hit the Russian community hardest, which in November began an active information campaign together with some other groups of foreigners (Ukrainians are not mentioned) against such government intentions, emphasizing that the outflow of foreigners will harm Montenegro's GDP. Meanwhile, the immediate pretext for the country's review of migration policy was a controversial incident involving Turkish citizens at the end of October in Podgorica (the country was covered for several days by a wave of anti-Turkish sentiment and overt xenophobia), almost immediately after which the government temporarily suspended visa-free travel with Turkey.



## Trends

Public support for Montenegro's entry into the EU, according to the latest polls, is steadily high (over 70%), while support for NATO has decreased to about 40%. Serbia's influence remains significant; part of the elite sympathizes with President Vučić. The interests of Belgrade and Moscow intersect, particularly in the desire to slow down Montenegro's European integration. The Russian ambassador openly declared the «harm» of the country's entry into the EU for Moscow.



## Humanitarian Consequences

Montenegro continues to occupy a friendly position toward Ukraine, but its practical capabilities for providing aid (especially military-technical) are extremely limited. However, at the political level in the field of humanitarian projects, support was felt (voting on international platforms, children's recovery, etc.).

Thus, over the last year, Montenegro has achieved solid progress on the European path and maintained full alignment of its foreign policy with the EU's general course. Consensus of the ruling political elites regarding the country's acquisition of EU membership in the coming years persists. However, numerous divisions and contradictions remain in the government coalition and in society as a whole, as do open sensitive issues with Croatia, a key neighbor in the context of negotiations regarding the EU.

# Forecast

The Russian factor, which has its sympathizers and serious agents of influence in Montenegro, will obviously apply increasing efforts to destabilize the country, using existing socio-political contradictions within. In the coming year, a sharp review of the country's established Euro-Atlantic oriented foreign policy, particularly regarding support for Ukraine, is still not to be expected. Also, 2026 is likely to become key and fateful in the context of Montenegro's movement toward the EU, although the ambitious intention to close all negotiating chapters during the next year will require extraordinary efforts and the consolidation of all the country's key political players.

# Internal political crisis

## Croatia

### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

The year 2025 in Croatia was marked by a distinct political contrast: despite a painful defeat for the center-right HDZ in the presidential elections, the country demonstrated continued governmental stability. Key themes included the open confrontation between re-elected President Zoran Milanović (SDP) and Prime Minister Andrej Plenković (HDZ), progress in implementing economic reforms following the introduction of the euro, the deepening of Croatia's role as a central regional player in the EU and NATO, and an intense sharpening of the confrontation between right-wing, far-right, and left-wing forces.

The main domestic political event was the presidential election on January 12, 2025, in which Milanović won a record 74% of the vote, confidently securing a second term. His competitor, independent Dragan Primorac, supported by the HDZ and personally by PM Plenković, suffered a significant defeat. Milanović's triumph was not only a confirmation of his personal popularity but also a clear indication of the protest mood of a large part of the electorate regarding the ruling party. Despite limited constitutional powers, Milanović

remained one of the government's loudest critics, focusing on issues of corruption, the rule of law, foreign policy, and the actions of the government coalition. The election results served as a warning to the HDZ, pointing to its vulnerability at the personal and image levels.

In the second half of the year, internal socio-political tension escalated: conflicts intensified between right-wing (including far-right) and left-wing forces, as well as between part of the right-wing camp and the Serbian national minority. Center-left parties spoke of a noticeable rise in «neo-Ustaše» and «neo-fascist» sentiments. Mass anti-Serb demonstrations took place in Zagreb and Split, often organized with the participation of football ultras. Large-scale concerts by Marko Perković Thompson played an important role in mobilizing the right-wing camp, notably his record performance on July 5 in Zagreb. In response, left-wing forces held «United Against Fascism» actions on November 30, which government officials, including PM Plenković and Defense Minister Anušić, criticized as anti-state.



### Trends

Despite political pressure and opposition criticism, Plenković's government (a coalition of HDZ and Domovinski pokret) demonstrated resilience throughout the year, adhering to a course of gradual socio-economic strengthening. The cabinet paid special attention to curbing inflation, protecting the purchasing power of citizens, and regulating energy tariffs. Croatia completed most technical procedures on the path to joining the OECD, expected in 2026, consolidating the country's status among developed economies. In the security sphere, an important step was the restoration of military conscription and increased defense spending.

In foreign policy, Croatia maintained its reputation as one of the most consistent and stable partners of the EU and NATO. Zagreb actively supported EU expansion into the Western Balkans, advocating for the faster accession of Montenegro and North Macedonia, but simultaneously insisting on reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily regarding the rights of the Croatian community. Relations with Serbia remained restrainedly conflictual, focusing



on unresolved issues of war crimes, missing persons, and property claims. In the spring, a new military alliance was concluded between Croatia, Albania, and Kosovo. In July, the country hosted the Dubrovnik Forum, dedicated to European security, energy challenges, and support for Ukraine.

In the energy sector, Croatia strengthened its position as a vital element of European infrastructure: the expanded LNG terminal on the island of Krk allowed for a significant increase in the possibilities for diversifying gas supplies to Central and Eastern Europe, strengthening the country's role in European energy security.

Croatian-Ukrainian relations in 2025 remained strategic: Zagreb continued consistent political, humanitarian, and military support for Kyiv, while simultaneously strengthening its positions in the Balkans and highlighting its role as a reliable partner of Ukraine in the EU and NATO.

Despite the institutional conflict between the president and the government, ideological polarization, and inter-ethnic tensions, Croatia maintained macroeconomic stability and positive development rates.

## INTENSITY

**Internal political crisis with external influence.**

# Romania

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS

For Romania, 2025 was a period of maximum social polarization and a crisis of the old political-party system: the public demand for «fresh» faces reached an all-time high, while Bucharest's strategic role turned it into a desired target for Moscow. The turning point was the presidential election, where the pro-European candidate Nicușor Dan won in the second round.

### Crisis of the Old Political System

For decades, Romania's political landscape was dominated by «traditional» heavyweights—the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL). These were the parties that formed the last government leading the country before the 2024–2025 crisis. However, regular corruption scandals, slowing economic growth, and internal confrontations within the coalition—followed by public, harsh mutual criticism—led to a decline in public satisfaction and a corresponding fall in popularity. Other political players, such as the «Save Romania Union» (USR), were viewed by voters as an alternative not as deeply involved in the old system, offering prospects

for more progressive, results-oriented governance. However, the most popular political project became the right-wing party AUR—not necessarily because of its ideology of restoring Romania's «historical greatness» and returning «lost territories» (including Moldova and parts of Hungary and Ukraine), but because of the novelty of its faces.

### Interference in the 2024–2025 Presidential Elections

Romania holds strategic importance in Europe as one of the most stable and economically developed players on the Balkan Peninsula and as a key eastern outpost for NATO—a role that became especially vital following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The country serves as an important hub for the logistics of military aid to Ukraine, including its storage and repair, as well as for training the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In return, the state receives economic incentives and bonuses, including EU funding for additional infrastructure projects.

Given this role, the Kremlin was and remains directly interested in destabilizing Romania's internal political

situation, similar to what occurred in neighboring Bulgaria. In 2024, interference took place in favor of the «independent» candidate Călin Georgescu, which resulted in the annulment of the first-round results and the rescheduling of the election to the spring of 2025.

The period leading up to the rerun was characterized by extreme polarization and instability. Georgescu's supporters and his campaign staff organized mass protests against the current government and for the cancellation of the election results, where pro-European forces had achieved a relative majority. There were numerous reports of protesters being bussed in and paid to participate. Conversely, supporters of pro-European forces held counter-demonstrations against Georgescu and the far-right. Internationally, Bucharest faced criticism from both the EU (Venice Commission) and the US, traditional allies, yet the decision was not reversed.

In March, as the registration deadline for the election rerun approached, the Central Electoral Bureau (BEC) of Romania annulled Călin Georgescu's candidacy. Furthermore, several law enforcement investigations revealed that his closest associates had repeatedly visited Moscow, receiving cash and weapons to organize nationwide

protests. His removal sparked an explosion of public discontent, the scale of which was artificially inflated by a Russian information campaign. Another far-right candidate, Diana Șoșoacă, was also barred from the election, though this did not provoke a significant public reaction as it was not the first time she had been disqualified. However, these actions led to a consolidation of far-right supporters and undecided voters around AUR leader George Simion, who softened his rhetoric just in time to attract «centrist» voters. Another, albeit less popular, favorite was former Prime Minister Victor Ponta, who ran as an independent.

Meanwhile, the pro-European camp suffered a significant split. The ruling coalition nominated a joint candidate, Crin Antonescu, but USR leader Elena Lasconi, who took second place in the annulled elections, refused to withdraw. Additionally, the independent mayor of Bucharest, Nicușor Dan, entered the race. This split led to low results for the candidates, particularly for Lasconi, who resigned as party leader after her defeat. Ultimately, despite the obstacles, Nicușor Dan secured victory—largely thanks to the support of the diaspora living in Moldova, a mobilization assisted by Maia Sandu.

Finally, Dan's victory did not

resolve the fundamental problems in Romanian politics. Parliament has survived several crises where the Social Democrats left the government or threatened to withdraw if reforms unpopular with their electorate were passed. Right-wing parties also maintain steady popularity: in the Bucharest mayoral elections held in December 2025, an AUR representative took second place. She called the result «a consequence of the stolen presidential elections,» indicating that this event has become a central theme in the far-right's renewed rhetoric.



## Trends

As of early 2026, the most dangerous factor for Romanian politics is a potential crisis within parliament. This could be triggered by two factors: the Social Democratic Party's refusal to cooperate except on its own terms, and the potential «subversive activity» of the party representing the Romanian Hungarian minority, which is suspected of ties to Viktor Orbán's government in Hungary.

## INTENSITY

Internal political crisis,  
external interference.

The first scenario is more critical; after the loss of their joint candidate in the spring 2025 presidential race, the party has already exited the coalition once. Additionally, their opposition to necessary financial and tax reforms slows Romania's economic growth, threatening stable development. Over the last six months, theories have repeatedly surfaced in Romanian media that the Social Democrats might be preparing a potential coalition with AUR, though no clear confirmation exists.

Despite relative stability, this behavior and the rift within pro-European parties negatively affect public perception. The demand for new faces has not vanished; without tangible changes in party policy, public representation, and economic or anti-corruption measures, there is a risk of failure in the next parliamentary elections. Such a turn could shift Romania's political course toward the Kremlin, threatening both the state and regional security.

The 2024–2025 presidential elections were a watershed moment for Romania, making it clear that the old political system requires innovative change. Voter fatigue has translated into rising popularity for new faces regardless of ideology. While the rapid growth of right-wing parties has plateaued, their support remains at approximately one-third of the electorate, as shown in the Bucharest mayoral race. The pro-European camp remains fractured despite a surface-level show of cooperation within the government.

To overcome or mitigate these threats, pro-European parties must set aside contradictions and personal biases for the sake of the country's stability and improve their information policy to bolster their image. While canceling elections or barring candidates proved effective against external interference, it cannot be a permanent solution as it undermines democratic principles.

## Forecast

The Romanian government will continue its consistent, pragmatic policy, including support for Ukraine and the efforts of the EU and NATO to resolve the war, particularly through logistical aid. With EU funding, large-scale infrastructure projects are expected to proceed, improving transport links and expanding seaport capacities.

Politically, there is a possibility of another government crisis provoked by the Social Democratic Party; however, based on past experience, it is highly likely this will be minimized. The government will continue its steady work, though the implementation of all necessary reforms remains in question due to internal contradictions.

Overall, the internal situation will be characterized by polarization and a significant degree of public uncertainty until a new, high-quality information policy is established. This will be a critical factor in the context of the state's next elections.

# Internal political crisis

## Moldova



### EVENTS, INCIDENTS

2025 was an extremely difficult year for the Republic of Moldova in the context of hybrid elections and the preservation of democracy. The split in public opinion, which manifested clearly during the presidential elections and the European integration referendum in 2024, only intensified ahead of the parliamentary elections, while Russian propaganda and political projects further exacerbated the situation. The state of affairs can be characterized by several overlapping crises.

#### **Crisis of Public Trust in European Integration**

The course toward EU membership remains perhaps the most controversial topic in Moldovan politics and society due to several factors, primarily the erosion of trust in the process following political and financial manipulations by the former Democratic Party and its satellites, funded by the country's wealthiest oligarch, Vlad Plahotniuc. After the «billion-dollar scheme,» the largest corruption scandal in Moldova's history, faith in real change

faltered, allowing manipulative claims and disinformation to alter public perception more easily. This was vividly demonstrated in Russian disinformation campaigns conducted throughout 2024–2025 aimed at removing President Maia Sandu and the pro-European PAS party from power.

Another problem remains the lack of tangible results for average citizens from the reforms proposed by the authorities, especially in the economic sphere. Prices, particularly for energy and electricity, are rising faster than wages; the standard of living remains below expectations; and the war in neighboring Ukraine, along with a large number of displaced persons, creates additional strain on the economy. Corruption persists at many levels of government and the judiciary, lowering trust in the state apparatus. Conversely, proposals from opposition forces—primarily Socialists and Communists—are aimed at instilling nostalgia for more «stable» times with cheap gas and social benefits. These economic benefits, though short-term, appear more attractive, especially to residents of less-

developed regions.

As a result, in the parliamentary elections of September 2025, citizens who voted for PAS did so not out of a belief in rapid EU integration or immediate economic improvements, but for the security of their state. This distinguishes the party from others: its leadership clearly understands that Moscow's policy is aimed at returning Chisinau to its geopolitical orbit and potentially using it as a bridgehead for further aggression against Ukraine, which poses an existential threat to the Republic of Moldova.

#### **Crisis of Information Security**

The last year was characterized by an unprecedented volume of information attacks, manipulations, and disinformation messages funded by Russian and pro-Russian influence networks in Moldova. According to various statistics, every resident of the country encounters disinformation at least twice a day. Despite restrictions on Russian channels like Russia Today and Sputnik, access to other information sources, particularly Telegram channels, remains open.

Additionally, individual players like the fugitive oligarch Ilan Shor have funded their own influence networks, including television and radio stations, to spread Kremlin-friendly narratives. Ilan Shor's figure is a phenomenon in this context: despite being implicated in the billion-dollar theft, he maintains popularity, especially in Gagauzia. Since 2022, his funding has fueled regular protests in Chisinau and other major cities calling for the government's overthrow and the restoration of ties with the RF.

The biggest scandal was the election victory of the previously unknown Evghenia Guțul as the Bashkan of Gagauzia, whose campaign started just three weeks before the vote. She represented the now-banned «Shor» party. In 2025, Guțul was charged with illegal political party financing, subsequently sentenced to 7 years in prison, and incarcerated. Other «Shor»-linked projects included Victoria Furtună's «Greater Moldova» party, which positioned itself as ultra-right with territorial claims against neighbors, primarily

Ukraine.

Despite effective counteraction by the Information and Security Service and the Moldovan police in coordination with Romania and the EU, significant problems remain in information security, primarily rooted in the economically disadvantaged position of most citizens. The method of applying laws on political party financing proved effective against pro-Kremlin projects in the 2025 parliamentary elections, but its frequent use could lead to structural problems in maintaining democracy and political pluralism.



## Trends

2025 was a turning point for Moldova; the PAS party managed to retain power and secure a mono-majority in parliament (55 out of 101 seats) for the next four years. Despite this, the crisis of trust in European integration, the identity crisis, and the information security crisis remain significant, as does the lack of tangible economic results. Going forward, the party should consider compromises and expanded cooperation with other political forces to ensure a potential coalition majority in future parliaments and maintain consistent policy. Steps are needed to strengthen citizen trust in state

power to build a firmer foundation for state-building. The Russian information campaign continues, albeit to a lesser extent, making systematic counter-efforts a top priority.

Another problem is the lack of a concrete ideology among political parties. PAS is focused on EU integration, progressivism, and reform, but it does not regularly articulate a long-term vision for state-building. It can be loosely categorized under «Moldovenism»—the preservation of independent and sovereign statehood. Opposition forces, including the «Alternative» bloc, «Our Party,» Socialists, and Communists, also avoid clear formulations, though the latter often appeal to Soviet heritage, characterizing their vision as a «post-Soviet state.» On the other hand, the «Democracy at Home» party promotes Unionism with Romania, one of the three dominant versions of Chisinau's future. This discourse was relevant at the start of independence in 1991 but was suppressed following the Transnistria conflict.

The lack of a concrete vision agreed upon with society will inevitably lead to further polarization and potential political crises, providing fertile ground for manipulation by the Kremlin and its loyalists.

## INTENSITY

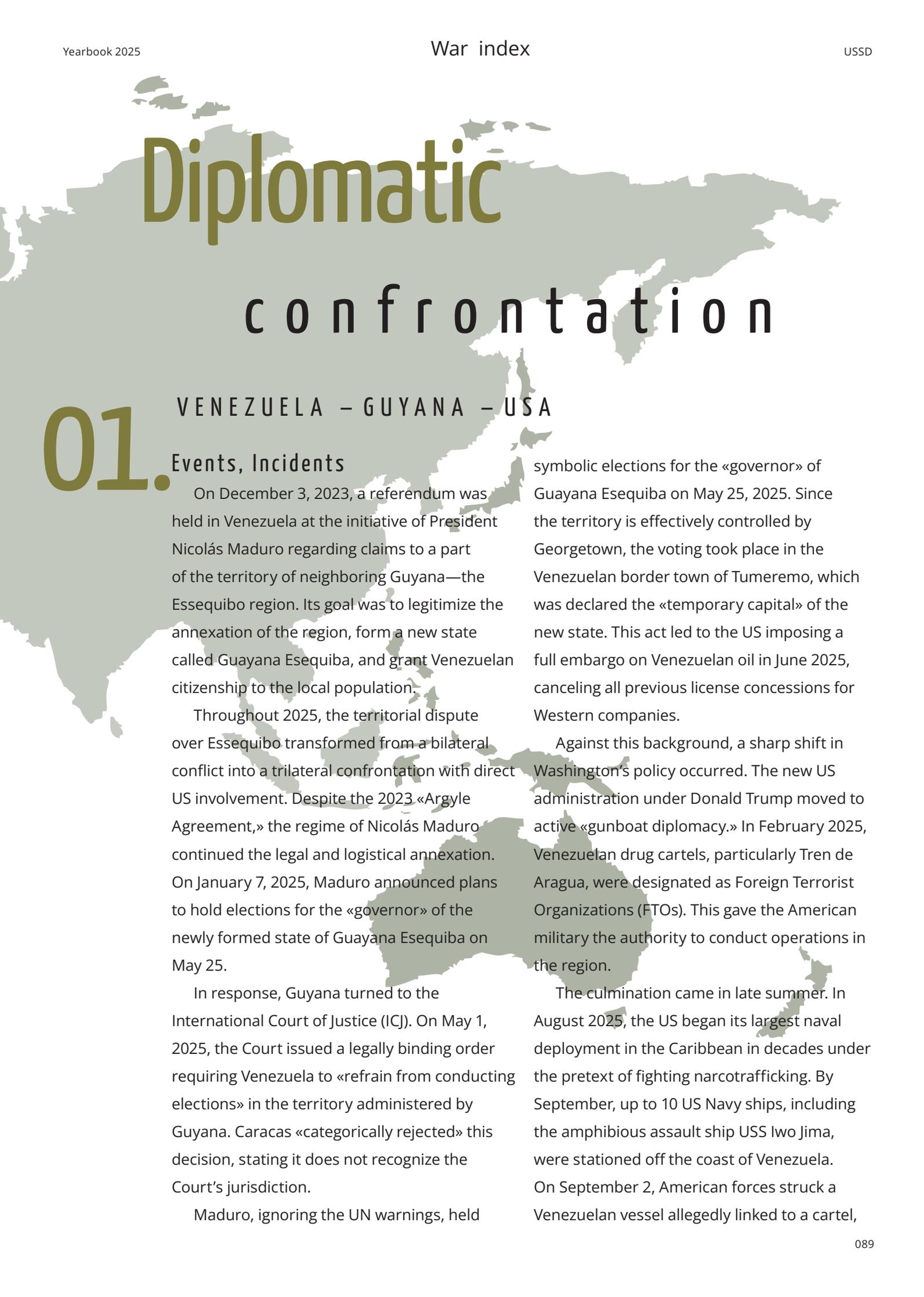
Internal political crisis,  
external interference.



## Forecast

PAS will continue Chisinau's pro-Western and pro-European course. New Prime Minister Alexandru Munteanu (appointed November 1, 2025) has pledged to lead the state into the EU by the end of his mandate, which may be possible with accelerated reforms and political will in Brussels. A major challenge remains Hungary's potential blocking of Moldova and Ukraine, which were in a single accession „block“ as of late 2025. Opposition parties will continue their usual rhetoric of accusing the ruling party, organizing periodic protests (often involving paid participants), and ignoring calls for dialogue.

Russian influence through propaganda and disinformation will remain significantly present, posing a serious security threat. It is unlikely the government can block all access channels, so it will likely attempt to change state information policy. Given the low level of trust in state institutions, the high success of such initiatives is improbable. There is no reason to believe the identity crisis will be resolved soon, as it requires significant investment of time, financial, and human resources to develop and integrate a national plan into the country's political life.



# Diplomatic

## confrontation

# 01.

### VENEZUELA – GUYANA – USA

#### Events, Incidents

On December 3, 2023, a referendum was held in Venezuela at the initiative of President Nicolás Maduro regarding claims to a part of the territory of neighboring Guyana—the Essequibo region. Its goal was to legitimize the annexation of the region, form a new state called Guayana Esequiba, and grant Venezuelan citizenship to the local population.

Throughout 2025, the territorial dispute over Essequibo transformed from a bilateral conflict into a trilateral confrontation with direct US involvement. Despite the 2023 «Argyle Agreement,» the regime of Nicolás Maduro continued the legal and logistical annexation. On January 7, 2025, Maduro announced plans to hold elections for the «governor» of the newly formed state of Guayana Esequiba on May 25.

In response, Guyana turned to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). On May 1, 2025, the Court issued a legally binding order requiring Venezuela to «refrain from conducting elections» in the territory administered by Guyana. Caracas «categorically rejected» this decision, stating it does not recognize the Court's jurisdiction.

Maduro, ignoring the UN warnings, held

symbolic elections for the «governor» of Guayana Esequiba on May 25, 2025. Since the territory is effectively controlled by Georgetown, the voting took place in the Venezuelan border town of Tumeremo, which was declared the «temporary capital» of the new state. This act led to the US imposing a full embargo on Venezuelan oil in June 2025, canceling all previous license concessions for Western companies.

Against this background, a sharp shift in Washington's policy occurred. The new US administration under Donald Trump moved to active «gunboat diplomacy.» In February 2025, Venezuelan drug cartels, particularly Tren de Aragua, were designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). This gave the American military the authority to conduct operations in the region.

The culmination came in late summer. In August 2025, the US began its largest naval deployment in the Caribbean in decades under the pretext of fighting narco trafficking. By September, up to 10 US Navy ships, including the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima, were stationed off the coast of Venezuela. On September 2, American forces struck a Venezuelan vessel allegedly linked to a cartel,

killing 11 people. On September 4, Venezuelan F-16s conducted a provocative flyby of the destroyer USS Jason Dunham.

In November 2025, maritime tension peaked: a Venezuelan patrol ship performed dangerous maneuvers near an ExxonMobil oil platform in the waters of Essequibo. The situation was resolved only after US carrier-based aircraft conducted demonstration flights over the Venezuelan vessel. In December 2025, the US officially opened a «Defense Cooperation Office» directly in Georgetown, which de facto signifies the creation of a permanent military base.

On January 3, 2026, a sudden escalation occurred: the US launched Operation Absolute Resolve, a lightning-fast airborne and naval operation. As a result, Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured in Caracas and flown to the United States to face trial on narco-terrorism charges.

## Impact on Global Processes

The conflict became a vivid manifestation of the new US doctrine in Latin America—»Monroe 2.0.« Direct US military presence in the Caribbean aims not only to protect Guyana (where American ExxonMobil conducts oil extraction) and combat drugs but also to pressure the Maduro regime for its removal.

The removal of Maduro from power in Venezuela could trigger a series of radical changes on the global geopolitical map. If pro-Western forces take power in Caracas, the country will shift toward US influence, weakening the positions of Russia and China in Latin America. Significant changes can be expected in the oil market, as Venezuela possesses the world's largest proven oil reserves.

## Trends

The conflict shifted from a legal plane to a military-political one. Venezuela used the threat of annexation for internal mobilization amid an economic crisis. The US used this threat as a pretext for increasing military pressure on Caracas, which has been its long-standing strategic goal. Guyana, despite the risks, benefits from American support, which cements its control over offshore oil fields.

A new trend at the end of 2025 was the use of the fight against drug cartels as a legitimate reason for American strikes on Venezuelan military infrastructure at the border, allowing the US to weaken the Maduro regime without a formal declaration of war.

However, the events of January 3, 2026, have completely changed the dynamics. Everything now depends on who assumes power in Caracas. It is likely that a confrontation between fragmented groups will occur for some time: Maduro supporters fighting against pro-American circles.

## Intensity

High intensity of diplomatic and military confrontation, which reached its peak on January 3, 2026. The likely consequence of these events will be a deepening of the internal political crisis in Venezuela.

## Negotiations Between the Parties

Formal negotiations between Venezuela and Guyana have completely ceased. Caracas rejected the UN process, insisting on direct negotiations, which Guyana has refused. Meanwhile, regional mediators (CARICOM, Brazil) effectively lost influence after direct US intervention. Any contacts now occur along the Washington-Caracas line, primarily in the form

of ultimatums and threats.

At the end of the year, any contacts were carried out exclusively through closed communication channels between the US and Venezuelan military leadership (Hotline) to avoid accidental clashes in the air or at sea. Brazil officially withdrew from its role as a mediator in December, citing the «impossibility of dialogue with Caracas.»

The resumption of negotiations in 2026 will be possible only after the establishment of a new government in Caracas.

## Forecast

A power struggle is expected in Venezuela following Maduro's removal, which will deepen the already catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The US will attempt to install a loyal government in Caracas, but the possibility of fierce resistance from Maduro supporters should not be ignored.

# 02. PRESSURE OF RUSSIA ON NATO COUNTRIES

## Events, Incidents

In 2025, a series of incursions by Russian drones and aircraft were recorded over the territories of Poland, Romania, and Estonia. Approximately 20 drones penetrated deep into Poland on September 9, 2025, forcing the closure of airports. On December 17, 2025, three Russian military personnel crossed into Estonian territory for 20 minutes.

Germany and Denmark have officially accused the RF of a series of cyberattacks on municipal structures. These attacks caused accidents at water pipelines in Denmark and problems in Germany's air traffic control system. EU intelligence agencies report a spike in arson and acts of sabotage (notably at warehouses containing aid for Ukraine), organized by Russian intelligence through criminal intermediaries.

In 2025, the RF intensified electronic warfare over the Baltic Sea, primarily from

the Kaliningrad region, leading to massive disruptions in civil aviation navigation.

Specifically, as of January 2025, Poland recorded over 2,700 instances of interference.

RF interference in elections during 2025 within NATO countries was identified as follows:

- Germany: Elections to the lower house of parliament on February 23, 2025. Interference may have influenced a significant surge in support for the pro-Russian «Alternative for Germany» party (from 10.4% to 20.8% of the vote).

- Denmark: Municipal elections, ahead of which the RF staged a series of DDoS attacks on government and electoral resources.

- Romania: The rise to power of a pro-Russian candidate in the May 2025 presidential elections was prevented. Following the annulment of the 2024 first round, the Ukrainophobe Călin Georgescu—who had achieved a fictitious victory through

Russian influence—was barred from further participation. The presidential elections on May 4 and May 18, 2025, were won by the pro-European candidate Nicușor Dan.

- Czech Republic: Elections to the lower house of parliament on April 3, 2025, brought a narrow victory to pro-Russian forces. On October 4, 2025, the pro-Ukrainian government led by Petr Fiala was replaced by a government led by the pro-Russian Andrej Babiš. Tomio Okamura became the speaker of the lower house and conspicuously removed Ukrainian flags that had been displayed in the parliament by Czech citizens in support of the country.

NATO countries responded to the Russian threat. In January 2025, Operation Baltic Sentry was launched for the enhanced protection of underwater communications (pipelines and cables) in the Baltic Sea. At the June 2025 summit, NATO countries agreed to gradually increase defense spending to 5% of GDP by 2035. Throughout the year, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte made repeated statements in support of Ukraine and emphasized that Russian aggression could escalate to a direct attack on NATO—primarily on Estonia—within the next three years. However, against the backdrop of the actual level of Russian pressure on NATO countries and their allies, these defensive measures are often viewed as insufficient. A significant positive note: a record increase in arms supplies and sales to Ukraine from European NATO members in May–June 2025 followed a decrease in aid from the US.

## Trends

The role of US President Donald Trump remains a risk factor for NATO amid rising Russian aggression. His only positive initiative from this perspective is the push to increase

NATO defense spending to 5% for each member. Trump's other positions regarding the future of NATO are vague. In the new US National Security Strategy from December 2025, Trump affirmed that his state's role in the defense of Europe will decrease, and European countries must assume primary responsibility for it. Trump also made ambiguous statements regarding US participation in the defense of other NATO states in the event of an external attack, making it conditional on the fulfillment of financial obligations.

## Intensity

Diplomatic confrontation, hybrid pressure.

## Forecast

Russian aggression is on the doorstep of NATO countries in Europe. Amid the skeptical sentiments of the current US leadership and its supporters, Ukraine appears to be a more realistic factor in deterring the RF from attacking NATO in Europe. As long as Ukrainians are tying up nearly all of the RF's forces, the aggressor lacks the additional resources to strike NATO. Certain NATO countries—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Denmark, and France—are providing the bulk of their defense budgets and weaponry to Ukraine, strengthening their own defenses, and stopping Russian agents on their territory. However, a number of other nations should act pre-emptively before the RF strikes. This applies to both Alliance leaders (Germany and the UK, whose support for Ukraine has declined since 2024) and countries bordering the RF (Finland, Bulgaria via the Black Sea, and especially Poland). NATO also needs to establish a response mechanism for member states that have fallen under the influence of pro-Russian forces, such as Hungary and Slovakia.

# 03. KOREAN PENINSULA

## Events, Incidents

Throughout 2025, tension on the Korean Peninsula was defined by two processes: the full integration of the DPRK into Russia's military machine and an internal political crisis in South Korea.

Pyongyang continued to fulfill its obligations under the «Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty» with the RF. During the year, South Korean and Western intelligence services repeatedly confirmed the deployment of new North Korean military units (totaling over 20,000 personnel) to participate in the war against Ukraine, specifically in the Kursk region of the RF. On October 23, Kim Jong Un personally participated in the laying of a memorial in Pyongyang in honor of DPRK soldiers killed in battles in Russia. In November–December 2025, the first cases of direct participation of North Korean special forces in assault operations on the line of contact were recorded.

At the same time, the DPRK continued the development of its missile program. Instead of the expected «diplomatic warming» during US President Donald Trump's visit to the APEC summit in Gyeongju (November 2025), Pyongyang conducted a demonstrative test of the modernized «Hwasong-19» ICBM, capable of reaching any point in the USA.

The Republic of Korea was paralyzed for most of the year by a constitutional crisis. Following the failed attempt to introduce martial law in December 2024, President Yoon Suk Yeol was arrested on charges of insurrection, and on April 4, 2025, the Constitutional Court unanimously upheld his impeachment. In the early elections on June 3, the leader of the liberal opposition, Lee Jae-myung, emerged victorious.

## Trends

The main trend is the strengthening of the Pyongyang-Moscow axis, which has transitioned from a situational alliance to a full-fledged military alliance. This increases Kim Jong Un's confidence and reduces the effectiveness of any diplomatic pressure from the West. The DPRK officially completed the demarcation of the border with the South, erecting concrete walls in place of former transportation routes, symbolizing the final abandonment of the idea of unification. In South Korea, after the stabilization of power, the new government is trying to balance between a tough response to the DPRK and attempts to avoid escalation, while simultaneously navigating complex trade relations with the Trump administration.

## Impact on Global Processes

The DPRK has finally transformed into a key military satellite of Russia, providing it with significant amounts of ammunition and manpower in exchange for technology, fuel, and food. This negated decades of international sanctions. Pyongyang openly uses the war in Ukraine as a proving ground for its military and to gain combat experience.

The internal crisis in Seoul temporarily weakened the positions of American allies in the region. Despite the rise to power of the liberal President Lee, military cooperation in the US-Japan-South Korea triangle continued. In June and September 2025, large-scale trilateral naval and air exercises, «Freedom Edge,» took place. The US confirmed the expansion of the «nuclear umbrella» for Seoul in response to Russia's transfer of missile technologies to Pyongyang.

## Intensity

High-intensity diplomatic confrontation. Periodic military provocations (missile launches) by the DPRK. Increasing frequency of cyberattacks on the South Korean financial system.

## Negotiations Between the Parties

Any inter-Korean contacts are frozen. Pyongyang ignores Seoul, conducting direct dialogue only with Moscow and Beijing. The start of the new administration's work in South Korea did not lead to a resumption of dialogue. Speculations regarding a possible meeting between Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump during the APEC summit remain only rumors.

The APEC summit did not become a platform for negotiations: Pyongyang rejected

Washington's proposal for a meeting at the level of heads of state, demanding the prior lifting of sanctions and recognition of the DPRK as a nuclear power.

## Forecast

In 2026, the DPRK will continue its integration with Russia and will likely conduct new, more significant weapons tests (specifically ICBMs). The new South Korean government will be forced to continue the policy of containment in alliance with the US, despite possible ideological differences with Washington. The risk of escalation at the border remains high. It is expected that Seoul may return to the discussion of creating its own nuclear weapons if the technological gap with the DPRK becomes critical due to the help of the RF.

# 04. CHINA – TAIWAN

## Events, Incidents

During 2025, Beijing changed its tactics of pressure on Taiwan, moving from periodic large-scale exercises in response to political events to a permanent high-intensity military presence. Instead of new «Joint Sword» type exercises, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) established a «new normal» of daily «grey zone» operations.

Throughout the monitoring period, the PLA regularly sent dozens of aircraft, drones, and naval ships into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) and across the median line of the strait. The pressure reached its peak in September and October 2025, when the

Taiwanese Ministry of Defense recorded over 100 aircraft and dozens of PLA ships operating around the island simultaneously, effectively practicing elements of a sea and air blockade.

In December 2025, Beijing for the first time involved a group of civilian «ro-ro» ships (roll-on/roll-off) in joint exercises with the PLA Navy off the coast of Fujian province, which was interpreted by intelligence as practicing a mass landing scenario.

In response, the administration of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te continued the policy of strengthening asymmetric defense. In 2025, the production of domestic

anti-ship missiles and drones was accelerated. Taiwan also officially announced the creation of an Unmanned Systems Corps within the Armed Forces, integrating the experience of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

The new US administration led by Donald Trump, while refraining from a direct change to the «One China» policy, strengthened military support. In July 2025, the sale of weapons to Taiwan worth \$5 billion was approved, including MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones and Harpoon coastal defense missiles. During the November APEC summit, President Trump confirmed commitment to the «Taiwan Relations Act,» but demanded that Taipei increase defense spending to 5% of GDP in exchange for further expansion of military guarantees.

## Impact on Global Processes

Constant tension in the Taiwan Strait remained a major risk for the global economy. The threat of even an accidental incident fueled the global trend of «de-risking» supply chains.

American, European, and Japanese technology companies (specifically Apple, Nvidia, ASML) accelerated investments in 2025 in the construction of new semiconductor manufacturing plants in the USA (Arizona, Texas) and Europe. This is being done to reduce critical dependence on the Taiwanese company TSMC, which could find itself at the epicenter of a conflict. In December 2025, TSMC officially launched trial operations of its first plant in Arizona, marking a milestone in the «geographical diversification» of the industry.

## Trends

The main trend is the normalization of Chinese military operations in the immediate vicinity of Taiwan. Beijing's goal

is the exhaustion of Taiwan's Armed Forces, constant testing of air defense reaction times, psychological pressure on the population, and creating conditions under which any foreign ship or aircraft in the strait operates with the permission of the PRC. A separate trend has been regular patrolling by the Chinese Coast Guard in the waters around the Kinmen and Matsu islands, which effectively negates Taiwanese jurisdiction in these zones.

Washington's policy has become more transactional: the Trump administration uses the Taiwan issue as leverage in large-scale trade negotiations with the PRC, creating a degree of strategic uncertainty for both sides.

## Intensity

High-intensity diplomatic confrontation with permanent «grey zone» military provocations by the PRC. The risk of escalation due to a collision of aircraft or ships is the highest in the last decade.

## Forecast

In 2026, a full-scale invasion by the PRC remains unlikely due to enormous economic risks for China itself. However, Beijing will continue to strengthen blockade actions, attempting to isolate Taiwan. It is likely that Beijing will introduce «quarantine measures»: selective inspection of commercial vessels heading to Taiwan under the pretext of combating arms smuggling. In response, the US and its allies (Japan, Australia) will strengthen their own military presence in the region and accelerate the rearmament of Taiwan, trying to maintain the balance of power and prevent the realization of the Chinese annexation plan.

# 05. GREENLAND

## Events, Incidents

The conflict began on August 19, 2019, and is associated with Donald Trump as President of the United States. At that time, Trump first expressed his intention to «purchase» the island from Denmark as part of a «large deal.» Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen rejected the deal as «absurd,» and Trump's scheduled visit to Denmark was subsequently canceled.

In 2019, the USA and Greenland signed a memorandum of understanding in the mining sector. The agreement became the regulatory framework for cooperation with the USA in exploring metal deposits in Greenland, including rare earth elements, and investing in their extraction. One of the investors who received support through the agreement was Howard Lutnick, the US Secretary of Commerce since 2025.

The PRC has repeatedly attempted to invest in metal mining and airport construction in Greenland, but the governments of the latter and Denmark blocked these attempts with restrictions starting in 2021. Increased Chinese activity regarding Greenland is one of the factors Trump and his supporters cite regarding the «need» for the USA to have the island.

After Trump's inauguration in 2025 for a second term, he and his supporters returned to actions regarding Greenland more aggressively.

In January 2025, Donald Trump Jr. visited Greenland. At the same time, a video appeared showing an unknown resident of Greenland in a T-shirt with Trump's slogan «Make America Great Again!» calling on

Trump to buy Greenland and free it from «colonization» by Denmark.

On March 5, 2025, Trump stated that he supports the right of the people of Greenland to determine their own future and would welcome them into the USA if they so decided. Trump said that the USA would obtain Greenland one way or another, as it is necessary for their national and international security. Prime Minister Frederiksen again contradicted Trump.

Mute Egede, the Premier of Greenland from 2021 to 2025, emphasized that the island's residents desire independence more than citizenship of Denmark or the USA and welcomed only the strengthening of US business interests in Greenland.

On September 28, 2025, Greenland was visited by US Vice President J.D. Vance and his wife, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, and Secretary of Energy Chris Wright. At the US airbase on the island, Vance stated that Denmark is unable to guarantee security in the Arctic and does not invest enough in the welfare of Greenland's residents, as the USA can. He said the USA would be happy to take Greenland under its control. Furthermore, Vance asserted that this would be achieved through negotiations with Greenland, which would obtain independence from Denmark, without military force. The Danish Prime Minister called the visit unacceptable pressure, and Danish officials refused visits of the US delegation outside the base. Jens-Frederik Nielsen, the Premier of Greenland since April 7, 2025, stated that the USA is not showing sufficient respect to a NATO ally and that his government would rectify this foreign policy

situation.

Against this background, support for Greenland from the EU also grew. In September 2025, a delegation of MEPs visited Greenland. In October 2025, Jens-Frederik Nielsen visited the European Parliament, where he thanked the EU for its foreign policy support. The EU has been strengthening support measures for Greenland since 2019, including through increased financial aid and the opening of a European Commission office in Greenland's capital, Nuuk, in 2024.

On December 10, 2025, the Danish Defense Intelligence Service, in its annual report, characterized the USA as a potential threat to Denmark's security for the first time due to the policies of the Donald Trump administration.

On December 22, 2025, Trump appointed Jeff Landry, the Governor of Louisiana, as special envoy for Greenland. Landry stated that the goal of his appointment is to conduct a dialogue with the island's residents regarding its development. Representatives of Denmark and Greenland expressed outrage at this.

## Intensity

Diplomatic conflict.

## Trends

Greenland has been an autonomous country within the Kingdom of Denmark since 1978. Since 2003, it has held powers in foreign policy on matters of importance to Greenland, according to the Itilleq Declaration. Since 2009, it has enjoyed expanded autonomy; specifically, the Parliament of Greenland has jurisdiction over internal affairs, including the development

of mineral and marine resources and the profits from them, the judicial system and law enforcement, healthcare, and education. Positions regarding independence are common among the island's population; for example, since 2009, the Danish language was abolished as the second official language, leaving only Greenlandic. International and defense policy regarding the island remain under Danish jurisdiction, although Greenland is not part of the EU. The US presence on the island began in 1941, during World War II. Since 1951, Denmark and the USA have had an agreement on the joint defense of Greenland within NATO. Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Air Base), the northernmost US airbase, has been located in Greenland since 1953. In 2014-2024, the base was serviced by a US company rather than a Greenlandic one. This caused local dissatisfaction due to the loss of a source of income; however, in 2020, a new agreement was signed between Greenland, the USA, and Denmark for base maintenance by Greenland starting in 2024. In 1946, the USA unsuccessfully offered Denmark 100 million dollars to sell the island. Significant movements or actions in support of Greenland joining the USA are absent among its population.

## Forecast

The nature of the conflict between the USA and Denmark regarding Greenland at the end of 2025 is diplomatic. Official representatives of the USA, Denmark, and Greenland firmly state their intentions to decide the island's future without military force, through negotiations and diplomatic means of protest. The cause of the conflict is

the intention of certain US officials regarding direct control of their state over the island. Aside from these individuals within the administration of Donald Trump, no influential US politicians have publicly promoted intentions to annex Greenland to the USA since the 1940s. Despite its diplomatic nature and the short duration of the conflict so far, it creates risks for NATO and the world due to

the conflict situation between two members of the NATO bloc, which is allied with Ukraine, and the disrespectful attitude toward the sovereign will of a people, as seen in the case of the population of autonomous Greenland, which expresses intentions to either remain within the Kingdom of Denmark or obtain independence, rather than joining the USA.

## 06. GREECE – TURKEY

### Events, Incidents

Turkey and Greece, despite attempts in previous years to initiate a «thaw,» returned in 2025 to constant conflicts in the region and mutual threats.

«Cartographic wars» have resumed between the countries, aimed at claiming disputed territories of the neighboring state. A mandatory part of these conflicts continues to be mutual accusations before the European Commission and the condemnation of each other's actions. A similar situation arose in November 2025, when Turkey condemned Greece's desire to once again claim disputed territories and extend exclusive Greek control over them.

Illegal migrants remain an unresolved issue, with the countries blaming each other for migrant deaths, sharply deteriorating their relations. Examples include the death of seven migrants on April 3, 2025, on the way from Turkey to the Greek island of Lesbos,

or the seizure of an illegal migrant boat near Rhodes on October 14 of the same year, which resulted in two deaths. In both scenarios, the governments in Athens and Ankara accused each other of incompetence and a lack of capacity to counter illegal migration.

The issue of the boundaries of national marine parks also remains problematic. On July 21, Prime Minister Mitsotakis announced the final settlement of the boundaries of two parks in favor of Greece, stating that one would be among the largest in Europe. However, Ankara strongly opposed these actions, and on August 2, also announced the settlement of the boundaries of its own marine parks in the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas, condemning Athens for excluding Turkey from discussions.

A notable event in bilateral relations was the crisis over Greek energy exploration south of Crete. Chevron, along with Greek researchers, decided to conduct studies in the

«South Crete I» and «South Crete II» maritime areas. However, Libya and Turkey protested Athens' plans, emphasizing adherence to a 2019 agreement defining maritime borders between them. The Greek government ignored the protests and gave Chevron the green light on March 26, emphasizing the invalidity of the 2019 deal due to its failure to account for other countries' borders.

Equally controversial is the «Great Sea Interconnector» project, which aims to lay an underwater power cable between Israel, the Greek part of Cyprus, and Greece. This has actualized many old and new problems. While the project remains relevant and attracted even more attention in 2025 from Israel and the EU, its implementation is hindered by unresolved maritime borders, the Cyprus crisis, the presence of terrorists from Libya, Gaza, and Lebanon, and Turkey's hostility toward Israel in response to the Gaza crisis. Ankara actively attempted to obstruct the project due to claims over the maritime borders where the cable is being laid, repeatedly sending warships to block the work.

## Intensity

Diplomatic confrontation in the region with constant threats.

## Trends

In the renewed relations between Greece and Turkey, as opposed to 2024, there is a slight trend toward attempts at normalization. However, Ankara and Athens cannot find solutions that satisfy both parties, leading to constant clashes over old problems.

## Impact on Global Processes

Despite both countries belonging to NATO, their threats toward each other have only intensified with Donald Trump's return to power in the US. A major topic since the beginning of the year has been the race to acquire F-35 Lightning II fighters. Both countries have expected these jets for a long time, leading to the Turkish «TAI TF Kaan» project, which aims to create a modern fighter capable of rivaling American aircraft. However, Ankara faces issues due to its possession of Russian S-400 systems, complicating its access to Western technology and allowing Greece the opportunity to receive the F-35 first.

The Gaza crisis remains a global issue affecting their relations. Ankara primarily supports Palestinian independence and Hamas's actions, while Athens continues cooperation with Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mitsotakis visited Tel Aviv several times this year to discuss friendly relations, focusing on the purchase of Israeli weaponry and the joint subsea cable project.

Greece and Turkey accuse each other of supporting terrorism, further deepening the diplomatic crisis between the Turkish and Greek governments.

The issue of illegal migration to Europe from Turkey to Greece has intensified, while EU countries remain unable to implement clear mechanisms for regulating border crossings. In addition, monitoring of sea crossings from Africa and the Middle East to European countries remains insufficient, serving primarily as a source of disputes between states as well as leading political parties in Greece and Turkey.

## Forecast

Taking into account trends of previous years and the complex development of relations between Athens and Ankara in 2025, it is appropriate to speak of a “pendulum swing” dynamic.

The two countries periodically experience phases of “thaw” until they encounter another crisis, after which they revert to rivalry or even hostility, as they consistently maintain differing positions on long-standing unresolved issues and disputes.

Naturally, the fact that both states are members of NATO acts as a deterrent against full-scale escalation. However, no significant

improvement or deterioration in relations should be expected. This is partly due to the policies of President Erdoğan, who positions himself as a supporter of Muslim communities and maintains a neutral-to-negative stance toward European countries. He also frequently appeals to historical legacy, which negatively affects relations with Greece.

Therefore, as long as the current President of the Republic of Turkey remains in power, relations between Greece and Turkey are likely to be characterized by ongoing regional diplomatic tensions without escalation into large-scale armed confrontation.

# 07. PHILIPPINES

## Events, Incidents

Under the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the Philippines remains committed to its primary goal: developing an effective and diversified security policy capable of protecting the island nation from increasingly aggressive actions by the PRC. With Donald Trump back in the White House, there is a growing understanding in Manila that relying exclusively on Washington is potentially flawed due to shifting American priorities.

### **The Chinese Threat: Oppose, Impossible to Stop**

In 2025, the number of clashes between the PRC and the Philippines in the South China Sea reached unprecedented levels. By mid-

October, Manila had filed up to 50 diplomatic protests regarding Chinese provocations. In April, the Chinese Coast Guard landed on the uninhabited Sandy Cay reef, raising the Chinese flag just 1.5 nautical miles from the Philippine outpost on Thitu Island. Although the Philippines responded with its own landing on April 27, Beijing is considered to have effectively annexed the territory.

A resonant incident occurred on August 11, when the Chinese coast guard ship CCG 3104 collided with the Chinese Type 052D destroyer «Guilin» while attempting to intercept the Philippine vessel BRP Suluan. The Philippine ship successfully evaded them, resulting in a collision and critical damage to the Chinese

coast guard vessel. Most recently, on December 13, the Chinese Coast Guard used water cannons against 20 Philippine fishing boats near Sabina Shoal, injuring three fishermen and damaging two vessels.

## Intensity

Diplomatic confrontation; conflict over the distribution of maritime areas.

## Trends

Despite the decisive role of foreign policy in ensuring the Philippines' security, the country continues to face a number of serious domestic challenges. Foremost among them is the rift between President Marcos and Vice President Sara Duterte, which poses a significant risk to future political stability. The impeachment procedure against the Vice President was annulled by the Supreme Court of the Philippines, creating a precedent that blurs the separation of powers, as the case should have been handled by the Senate. In addition, despite the existence of a bicameral parliament, the system of governance remains presidential in nature. Sara Duterte is gradually laying the groundwork for a potential future bid for the presidency, actively leveraging divisions within the Marcos family—most notably, the president's sister publicly accused him of drug use. A potential return of the Duterte clan to power could result in a strategic shift in Manila's foreign policy toward Beijing. In the long term, such policy inconsistency carries potentially severe consequences.

Other persistent challenges include dependence on food imports and natural disasters, particularly typhoons. Government efforts to reduce rice prices have largely been

achieved artificially through price controls in the state retail network. Of the 21 typhoons recorded over the year, two (Typhoon Tino and Super Typhoon Uwan) affected more than 13 million people, resulting in up to 300 deaths and 120 missing persons. Over 500,000 homes were damaged, including more than 42,000 that were completely destroyed.

## Impact on Global Processes

The Philippines is a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has demonstrated considerable success in socio-economic development, with some of the highest economic growth rates globally. However, a major shortcoming remains the lack of a shared understanding of collective security and mechanisms for its implementation. As a result, Manila effectively lacks reliable allies within the bloc, prompting it to seek alternative partnerships.

Cooperation with Japan appears particularly promising. As of 2025, especially following the rise to power of Prime Minister Takaichi and changes within the ruling coalition, Tokyo has been actively revising its security policy. This may include amendments to constitutional provisions restricting the development of the defense industry, arms exports, and the deployment of the Japan Self-Defense Forces. Additionally, Japan has adopted a more assertive and confident foreign policy stance, which aligns closely with the Philippines' strategic objectives.

On September 11, 2025, the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) entered into force, allowing the armed forces of both countries to be deployed on each other's territory.

Furthermore, as part of naval modernization efforts, Tokyo has transferred at least six destroyers to Manila, significantly strengthening the Philippine Navy, which previously operated only three combat vessels.

Other important partners include Australia and South Korea. In 2025, Korea Aerospace Industries signed a \$712.8 million contract with the Philippines for the production of 12 fighter aircraft, while HD Hyundai Heavy Industries is completing the construction of two warships to enhance the fleet. This year, bilateral relations were elevated to a strategic level.

With Australia, Manila is also planning to sign a new security agreement предусматриває (fix translation) access to each other's military bases and the potential permanent deployment of Australian troops on Philippine territory. The agreement is expected to be finalized in early 2026. In addition, the Philippines signed a Visiting Forces Agreement with Canada in November.

Manila also considers cooperation with Ukraine—particularly in drone production—as a priority for strengthening its capabilities to counter China's navy, which remains the largest in the world by number of vessels. As of late 2025, work is ongoing on an agreement covering both cooperation and the establishment of production facilities within the archipelago.

## Forecast

The Philippines remains a strategically important state facing a wide range of both external and internal challenges. At the same time, Manila's role in both regional and global security is significant, and traditional partners should increase their engagement.

In 2026, the Philippines is expected to continue rearmament and modernization of its armed forces, particularly the navy and air force, in order to enhance its capacity to counter China in the event of direct maritime confrontation. Additionally, the policy of diversification is likely to continue, with agreements under preparation with at least Australia and Ukraine.

Domestically, the most likely scenario is the consolidation of the political split between President Marcos and Vice



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