

Section
9

Middle East, North Africa, and Other Regions

1 Overview

The Middle East and Africa has long been one of the world's centers of civilization, religion, and trade, as well as a geopolitical bastion connecting Asia and Europe. Today, the Middle East is a major source of energy supply for the world and contains major routes for international commerce. Japan is also dependent on the region for approximately 90% of its crude oil imports. Peace and stability in the Middle East region is extremely important for the peace and prosperity of the international community, including Japan.

On the other hand, the Middle East and Africa region has been experiencing constant conflicts and unrest throughout the 20th century. In recent years, tensions have risen due to the situation in the Gulf region and the Middle East peace process. In addition, the Arab Spring that occurred at the beginning of 2011 prompted regime change in some countries, but due to the turmoil that followed, almost a decade later, civil wars and the activities of terrorist organizations are ongoing in some of those countries.

2 Situation in the Gulf Region

With Hassan Rouhani winning the presidential election in Iran in June 2013, the discussions with the E3+3 (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the United States, China, and Russia) were advanced, resulting in the announcement of the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) towards the comprehensive resolution of nuclear issues in November 2013. The execution of the first step measures of the JPOA commenced in January 2014. On July 14, 2015, the final agreement concerning the nuclear issues of Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was announced. Following this, on July 20, 2015, UN Security Council Resolution 2231 approving the JCPOA was adopted. In the agreement, it was decided that Iran would reduce its enriched uranium stockpile and the number of centrifuges, ban the production of weapons grade plutonium, and accept IAEA inspections, among other measures, in exchange for ending the sanctions of previous UN Security Council resolutions and the U.S. and EU's nuclear-related sanctions.¹ On January 16, 2016, the IAEA released a report confirming Iran's completion of the necessary preparatory steps to start the implementation of

the JCPOA. Accordingly, the United States suspended its nuclear-related sanctions against Iran. In addition, the EU terminated some of its sanctions, and the provisions imposed by previous UN Security Council resolutions concerning the nuclear issues of Iran ended, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Subsequently, the IAEA has repeatedly confirmed that Iran is complying with the agreement. However, in May 2018, President Trump pointed out that with the current agreement, Iran can still be on the verge of a nuclear breakout in a short period of time even if Iran fully complies with the agreement, and also the agreement fails to address Iran's development of ballistic missiles. He then announced that the United States would withdraw from the agreement. In November 2018, the Trump administration resumed all sanctions that had been lifted under JCPOA² and emphasized its readiness to cut a more comprehensive deal with Iran, urging Iran to sit down on the negotiating table. Meanwhile, Iran opposed the resumption of sanctions by the United States and announced in May 2019 that it would not observe

¹ The major nuclear-related restrictions on Iran in the JCPOA include the following: with regard to uranium enrichment, limiting the number of centrifuges for uranium enrichment to 5,060 or less, keeping the level of uranium enrichment at up to 3.67%, and restricting Iran's enriched uranium stockpile to 300 kg; and with regard to plutonium production, redesigning and rebuilding the Arak heavy water reactor to not produce weapons grade plutonium, and shipping spent fuel out of Iran, and not engaging in reprocessing spent fuel including R&D and not constructing reprocessing facilities. According to then U.S. Secretary of State Kerry, with this agreement, Iran's breakout time (the time it takes to accumulate the amount of fissile material needed for a single nuclear weapon) will be extended from 90 days or less before the JCPOA to a year or more. Furthermore, the JCPOA is an agreement pertaining to nuclear issues and does not suspend or lift sanctions related to international terrorism, missiles, human rights, among other issues.

² The sanctions include a ban on the Iranian government's purchases of U.S. dollars, a prohibition on purchases of oil, petroleum products and petrochemical products from Iran, and a ban on transactions with Iranian financial institutions, including the central bank. In May 2019, Significant Reduction Exceptions, which relate to a ban on some countries and regions' purchase of Iranian oil, etc., were also abolished.

the restrictions on the storage of enriched uranium and heavy water prescribed under JCPOA, while denying an intention to withdraw from JCPOA. Iran announced the suspension of its commitment to the uranium enrichment limit in July as the second step of reducing compliance with JCPOA, the promotion of unrestricted research and development of advanced centrifuges in September as the third step, and the commencement of uranium enrichment activities at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP) in November as the fourth step. In January 2020, as the final step of reducing compliance with JCPOA, Iran announced that it would waive its commitment to the restrictions on enrichment capacity. In the same month, Britain, France and Germany referred the developments to the JCPOA Joint Commission under the JCPOA Dispute Resolution Mechanism and called for Iran to once again fully fulfill its obligations under JCPOA. In response, Iran said that it would consider withdrawing from the NPT if the nuclear agreement issue is referred to the UN Security Council, and that if Europe observes the agreement, Iran would return to compliance with the agreement.

In the meantime, since May 2019, the United States has announced the dispatch of carrier strike groups and bomber units in response to Iran's threats to its own troops and interests. In June, Iran announced that it had shot down a U.S. drone with a surface-to-air missile in its territorial waters in the Strait of Hormuz. The U.S. acknowledged the fact that it was shot down, but claimed it was in international airspace, and revealed that U.S. President Trump had called off the retaliatory attack at the brink of execution. In July 2019, the U.S. revealed that a U.S. amphibious assault ship had shot down an Iranian drone over the Strait of Hormuz as a defensive measure.

Furthermore, in May 2019, an oil pipeline facility in central Saudi Arabia was attacked by drones, temporarily halting the transportation of crude oil. In September, an oil facility in eastern Saudi Arabia was attacked, temporarily halving the country's oil production. The Houthis, a Yemeni anti-government armed group allegedly supported by Iran, initially issued a statement of responsibility for these attacks, but the United States and others have pointed to Iranian involvement in the September attacks. Iran has consistently denied this.



Damage to an Iraqi military base hosting U.S. military caused by a ballistic missile attack by Iran [AFP/Jiji]

In response to this situation, the United States has expanded the number of U.S. troops deployed to the Middle East since May 2019 to reinforce its stance against Iran. For example, in July, it stationed troops in Saudi Arabia for the first time in nearly 16 years since 2003. In September and October, it announced the deployment of additional troops, including air defense missile forces.

On the other hand, since October 2019, there have been multiple attacks on U.S. military bases in Iraq. In December, a rocket landed on a base in northern Iraq, killing one American. The U.S. claimed Iranian involvement in the attack and bombed the stronghold of Kata'ib Hezbollah, one of the four Shiite³ armed groups allegedly supported by Iran. In addition, in January 2020, the United States killed Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of [Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps \(IRGC\)](#), who was operating inside Iraq with the organization's leaders, as a deterrent to further attack plans. The United States has long viewed the activities of the Quds Force as problematic for supporting terrorist organizations abroad. In April 2019, it designated the IRGC as a terrorist organization. Iran carried out a ballistic missile attack on Iraqi bases hosting U.S. military in retaliation for the killing of Commander Soleimani. However, the attack reportedly did not result in any deaths, and Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif expressed that Iran had completed commensurate retaliatory measures and did not want further tensions or war. President Trump also said the same day that he did not want to use military force against Iran. Both the

³ One of the two major sects of Islam. The division with the Sunnis originated in differences in views on the successors (caliph) to the Prophet Muhammad (died in 632), the founder of Islam. At present, Shia Islam is the state religion in Iran, and Shiites make up about 60 percent of the population in Iraq. The largest sect, the Sunnis, have a majority in most of the Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.



Front Altair, an oil tanker, on fire after having been attacked in the Gulf of Oman in June 2019 [EPA/Jiji]

Chapter 2

United States and Iran made it clear that they wanted to avoid any further escalation.

Meanwhile, since May 2019, events affecting the navigation safety of civilian vessels have occurred sporadically in the waters of the Middle East. Specifically, in May 2019, four tankers (two Saudi Arabia-flagged and one each from the United Arab Emirates and Norway) were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. In June, two vessels, including the chemical tanker Kokuka Courageous operated by a Japanese shipping company, were attacked in the Gulf of Oman. With regard to the series of attacks, the United States and others have pointed out that they were committed by Iran, while Iran has consistently denied any involvement. Based on a comprehensive review of the information on the attack on the Kokuka Courageous, technical analysis of the damage to

the vessel, and testimony from the parties concerned, Japan believes that the damage to the vessel is highly likely to have been caused by limpet mines.⁴

Amidst rising tensions in the Middle East, countries launched efforts to safeguard maritime security in the region. The United States proposed the Maritime Security Initiative in July 2019 and established the IMSC with its command center opened in Bahrain in November. In addition to the United States, IMSC has been joined by seven countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Albania, and Lithuania (as of April 2020). In Europe, eight countries (France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Greece, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Portugal) issued a statement in January 2020 to politically support the creation of a European-led maritime surveillance mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH). France and the Netherlands have dispatched their assets so far.

On the other hand, in September 2019, Iran presented a plan named HOPE (Hormuz Peace Endeavor) as an independent effort to maintain security in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, and called on the countries concerned to join. In addition, in December, Iran conducted the Maritime Safety Belt, the first trilateral military exercise with the Chinese and Russian navies in the Gulf of Oman and other areas to ensure the safety of maritime traffic routes.

Japan needs to continue to pay close attention to the future developments surrounding the situation in the Gulf region.

KEY WORD

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is part of the Iranian national organization established on the occasion of the 1979 Iranian Revolution with the role of defending the Iranian Revolution and the achievements of the Revolution. Together with the regular army and the security forces under the Ministry of Interior, it constitutes the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Unlike regular forces that conduct

symmetric warfare, the IRGC is generally considered to have the primary mission of conducting asymmetric warfare and operating equipment such as small boats and ballistic missiles.

It is also noted that the IRGC has the Quds Force under its wing, which is responsible for overseas operations, and exerts influence in the region through support for pro-Iranian activities abroad and their leaders.

⁴ A type of underwater weapon. Generally, they are placed on the hull of a ship and denoted for the purpose of making it impossible for the ship to navigate.

3 The Situation Surrounding Middle East Peace

Since the foundation of Israel in 1948, there have been four wars between Israel and Arab countries. Subsequently, the Oslo Accords, signed between Israel and Palestine in 1993, initiated a full-fledged, negotiated peace process. In 2003, both Israel and Palestine accepted the Roadmap for Peace that laid out a path to the realization of the two-state peace initiative based on peaceful coexistence, but it has not been implemented. In the Palestinian territories, the moderate Fatah, which governs the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas, which effectively controls the Gaza district, are in conflict, splitting the area. Since October 2017, the Fatah and Hamas have continued direct negotiations on the transfer of the administrative control of the Gaza Strip to the Fatah under Egyptian auspices, but the talks have remained stalled.

In such circumstances, the U.S. Trump administration announced its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of

Israel in December 2017 and moved the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May 2018. In reaction, protests have been repeated mainly in Gaza, with protesters killed and injured through their clashes with Israeli forces. Tensions have increased intermittently as Israel carried out air strikes on Gaza to counter rocket attacks from Gaza. In addition, in March 2019, the Trump administration recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, drawing criticism from various Middle Eastern countries. In January 2020, the administration announced a new Middle East peace plan, but the Palestinian side has refused to negotiate, opposing the plan's descriptions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian border and the possession of Jerusalem. A close eye will be kept on future developments regarding the Middle East peace process, including the United States' engagement, as well as the direction of negotiations on the transfer of the administrative control of the Gaza Strip.

4 Situation in Syria

Violent clashes in Syria since March 2011 pit four parties, the Syrian government forces, opposition forces, Islamic extremist forces, and Kurdish forces against each other. However, the government forces have gained the upper hand overall with support from Russia, recapturing Aleppo, which was once the largest stronghold of rebel forces, the suburbs of the Syrian capital of Damascus and areas close to the Syria-Jordan border.

In Idlib, a rebel stronghold even at present, Russia, which had been supporting Syrian government forces, and Turkey, which had been backing up rebels, agreed in September 2018 to establish a DMZ Idlib and withdraw heavy artillery and militant groups from the zone. However, there was no progress with regard to the withdrawal of the militant groups. Since April 2019, Syrian government forces and Russian forces had expanded air and ground operations into Idlib and besieged some of the Turkish military ceasefire monitoring stations set up around Idlib. In February 2020, the Turkish forces dispatched reinforcements to Idlib in response to the advance of the Syrian government forces, but the forces were shelled by the Syrian government forces, against which the Turkish forces retaliated, reportedly causing casualties on

both sides. Subsequently, the fighting between the Turkish forces and the Syrian government forces expanded. The Syrian government forces were faced with intensified resistance from the dissidents and the militants, who were reinforced by the Turkish forces. The forces and militants fought back and forth over the key points of traffic through Idlib. In March 2020, Turkey held a summit with Russia, which had been backing Syria, and agreed to a ceasefire in Idlib. Although the Syrian president has expressed his satisfaction with the agreement, Turkey has warned that it will resume operations if Syria violates the agreement, raising a concern about a possible resumption of the battle.

Meanwhile, the peace talks have so far made little progress. Since January 2016, there have been talks between the government and opposition forces under UN auspices. However, the fighting between both sides did not abate, disrupting the talks. Under the circumstances, peace talks led by Russia, Turkey, and Iran have continued in Astana (current Nur-Sultan), Kazakhstan, since January 2017. In January 2018, the Syrian National Dialogue Congress was held in Sochi, Russia, where an agreement was reached to establish a constitutional committee towards the enactment

of a new constitution. In December 2018, Russia, Iran and Turkey agreed to hold the first meeting of the committee as early as possible in 2019. The first meeting was held in October 2019 under the auspices of the UN, but to date there has been no substantive progress in the political process.

In addition, conflicts among the countries and forces involved over the Kurds inside Syria have surfaced. In October 2019, following a telephone summit with Turkey, the United States issued a statement that Turkey would soon begin an operation in the northern part of Syria and that U.S. forces would withdraw from the immediate area of operation. After the release of the statement, Turkey launched a military operation against Kurdish forces, which the country perceives as terrorist organizations, as well as ISIL, in order to eliminate the terrorist threat from the border zone with Syria and establish a “safe zone” that would enable the return of Syrian refugees inside Turkey, and took control of parts of the northeastern region of Syria. Subsequently, Turkey and the United States agreed on the suspension of military operations and the withdrawal of Kurdish forces from the “safe zone.” Turkey also held talks with Russia, and agreed on the withdrawal of Kurdish forces from the border zone and joint patrols by Russian military police and Turkish forces in northeastern Syria. Over these developments, Russia’s growing military presence has been noted, including the reported deployment of a helicopter unit at the airport in the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli as part of the patrol

operation. Furthermore, the Syrian government agreed with the Kurdish forces to send the Syrian government troops to the northeast, advancing into Manbij, one of the Kurdish forces’ strongholds, which indicates coordination between the Kurdish forces and the Syrian government to counter Turkey’s military operations. The agreement was allegedly mediated by Russia, suggesting that Russia’s influence is expanding. It has also been pointed out that in the wake of Turkey’s military operations, counterterrorism activities by Kurdish forces, which has played a central role in the fight against ISIL, were suspended, and some ISIL fighters and their families fled from camps controlled by Kurdish forces.

Moreover, concerning Iranian presence in Syria, confrontation between Iran and Israel has come to the surface. In January 2019, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu announced an attack on a weapon storage facility at Syria’s Damascus Airport, expressing his determination to take resolute actions against the Iranians in Syria. It is a concern that the escalation of confrontation between Israel and Iran would affect Syrian and regional stability.

Amid the still unstable situation in Syria, the United States said it would leave some of its troops to mop up ISIL. Relations between various forces over the Syrian situation have been complicated, with peace talks being stalled. Further initiatives from the international community towards the stabilization of Syria are required.

5 Situation in Yemen

In Yemen, following anti-government protests that occurred from February 2011 and international pressure afterward, the then President Ali Abdullah Saleh agreed to resign in accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative. Through the election held in February 2012, the then Vice President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi was elected new President.

Meanwhile, the confrontation intensified between the government and the opposition insurgent group Houthis, based in northern Yemen. As the Houthis invaded the Yemeni capital of Sana and the southern Yemeni city of Aden to which President Hadi evacuated, the president requested support from Arab countries. In response, in March 2015, coalition forces led by Saudi Arabia began air strikes against

the Houthis. In response, the Houthis also launched attacks on the mainland of Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles and other weapons.

A series of peace talks mediated by the UN took place between April and August of the same year, but no final peace agreement was reached, with the talks suspended. Peace talks were planned for September 2018 but failed to be implemented with the Houthis refusing to participate. In December 2018, however, peace talks were held in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, leading to the signing of an agreement on a ceasefire in Hodeidah, which has the biggest port in the country, and the exchange of prisoners. In January 2019, the UN Security Council decided to send a ceasefire monitoring group to Hodeidah.

Despite the progress in the peace talks, negotiations on specific measures toward the ceasefire did not go smoothly, with the terms of the agreement, including the ceasefire in Hodeidah, failing to be implemented. On the other hand, the Houthis, stating that they had carried out attacks against Saudi Arabia, including an attack on an oil facility in Saudi Aramco in September 2019, declared in September 2019 that they would cease attacks on the country on the condition that the coalition forces ceased its air strikes. Also, in November 2019, as there were reports that Saudi Arabia and the Houthis were engaged in negotiations behind the scenes, Saudi Arabia announced that it had released 200 Houthi prisoners of war. In addition, in the same month, the UN Special Envoy for Yemen reported that airstrikes by the coalition forces had decreased significantly. Despite the momentum for a ceasefire, Saudi Arabia carried out air strikes against the Houthis after a missile launched by the Houthis landed on a Yemeni government's military base and killed more than 100 soldiers in January 2020. In retaliation, the Houthis announced that they had carried out drone and missile strikes against oil facilities in southern Saudi Arabia. Since then, there have been sporadic attacks on Saudi Arabia by the Houthis, and the Saudi-led coalition has also continued to

bomb the Houthis. As such, there is no prospect of a ceasefire or eventual peace agreement across Yemen.

In addition, it has been pointed out that the Houthis receive weapons supplies from Iran.⁵ In fact, in February 2020, the U.S. forces announced that it had boarded and inspected a small vessel in the Arabian Sea and seized a large amount of weapons from the vessel. The U.S. forces affirmed that the seized weapons were made in Iran, concluding that they were intended to be supplied to the Houthis in Yemen, and pointing to them as a violation of the UN Security Council resolution prohibiting the supply, sale and transfer of weapons to the Houthis.

While the situation surrounding the Houthis was changing, in August 2019, fighting broke out between the Yemeni government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist group in southern Yemen, which led to the STC's occupation of Aden (Yemen's interim capital). However, after mediation efforts by Saudi Arabia and others, the Yemeni government and STC signed the Riyadh Agreement in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, in November 2019. The agreement established a new government with the participation of both sides.

6

Situation in Libya

In Libya, following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, elections for a General National Congress were held in July 2012, establishing a congress consisting mainly of Islamists. In June 2014, elections for a Council of Representatives were held to establish a new congress to replace the General National Congress. However, since secularists became the majority, the confrontation between Islamic and secular groups over the transfer of power to the Council of Representatives intensified, and consequently, Libya became fragmented between east and west, with two assemblies existing in parallel – the Islamic groups' General National Congress based in the capital city of Tripoli and the secular groups' Council of Representatives based in Tobruk in eastern Libya. In December 2015, the UN mediated a political agreement for Libya, and the Government of National Accord (GNA) was established as a national

consensus government under the agreement. However, as Islamic groups took control of the new government, secular groups turned their back and refused to join the GNA. As a result, Libya remains divided between the east and the west. Furthermore, militias supporting either the east or the west have continued sporadic military clashes. In September 2018, militias active in the west clashed, leading to an emergency declaration. In April 2019, Commander Haftar's LNA, the largest forces in eastern Libya, advanced into a suburb of the capital city of Tripoli and clashed with militias subordinate to the GNA in western Libya, leading to an exchange of air strikes.

Some have pointed out that the fact that both Eastern and Western forces are receiving military support from the countries involved, including UAVs, has also led to the escalation of the war, and the struggle between the two

⁵ According to Iran Military Power, a report released by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in November 2019

parties has been described as a “drone war.”⁶ It has also been pointed out that mercenaries from a Russian private military company have been dispatched to Libya to support the LNA, while Turkey has dispatched Turkish forces and the Syrian fighters it has been supporting to Libya at the request of the GNA.

Amid this situation, an international conference on Libya was held in Berlin in January 2020. The conference was attended by Western countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, and Turkey, as well as the UAE and Egypt, which are said to be supporting the LNA. The countries agreed to strengthen cooperation toward a

ceasefire, stop military intervention in Libya, and enforce an arms embargo. However, the agreement has not yet been implemented, and Libya continues to be unable to establish governance and domestic security.

Furthermore, ISIL, Al Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations are taking advantage of the unstable situation to expand into Libya, clashing with militias across the country. In particular, ISIL is believed to have been divided into small groups and hiding mainly in the southern desert areas, conducting suicide bombing and other terrorist attacks in such cities as Tripoli, the capital, indicating that terrorist attacks may continue in the future.

7 Situation in Egypt

In Egypt, where then President Mubarak, who had been serving as the president for approximately three decades, resigned in 2011, and then President Mursi, who had been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni political organization founded in 1928 as a mass organization working for the “revival of Islam,” took office. However, in June 2013, large-scale public protests occurred amidst the poor economic situation and the deterioration of security. The military intervened in response and dismissed the president. In May 2014, then Defense Minister Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi was inaugurated as president. Since its inauguration, the el-Sisi administration has undertaken economic reforms including a shift to a floating exchange rate system and

the abolition of subsidies. However, enhancing domestic security measures is still a major challenge. In particular, the country’s mainland was subject to sporadic large-scale terrorist attacks from 2013, when political turmoil took place, to 2017, and in November 2018, a terrorist attack occurred in the central part of the country, targeting Egypt’s minority Coptic Christians. Moreover, in the Sinai Peninsula, terrorist attacks on military and police forces have occurred sporadically mainly in the northern part, while the southern part is overall peaceful. Since February 2018, Sinai 2018, a counter-terrorism operation conducted by the Egyptian Armed Forces, has been underway in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

8 Situation in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the Taliban intensified its offensive as the NATO-led RSM launched education, training and advice for the ANDSF in the wake of ISAF’s withdrawal in December 2014. Meanwhile, the ANDSF faces challenges regarding logistics, morale, air capabilities, and troop-commander leadership, allowing the Taliban to expand its control in Afghanistan. Furthermore, ISIL–KP (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province) has sustained terrorist attacks mainly in the capital city of Kabul and eastern Afghanistan since 2015. As a result, suicide bombing and

assaults in which the Taliban or ISIL is believed to be involved have occurred one after another across the country, leaving Afghanistan in an unstable security situation. According to a report released by the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in October 2018, the areas controlled or influenced by the Afghan Government accounted for approximately 55.5% of Afghan territory, the lowest since December 2015, when the survey started.

Since the fall of 2018, the United States has conducted peace talks with the Taliban after appointing Khalilzad as

⁶ According to the final report of the Panel of Experts on Libya under UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (December 9, 2019)

the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation. The talks had some twists and turns, including a three-month suspension from September 2019, but in February 2020, an agreement was signed between the United States and the Taliban that included the conditional phase-out of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and the start of negotiations among Afghans. In March 2020, the United States announced that it had begun the withdrawal of its forces. Also in the same month, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution in support of the agreement. However, the Taliban

have continued their attacks on Afghan security forces after the agreement. President Ghani, who was re-elected in the September 2019 presidential election in Afghanistan, held a presidential inauguration ceremony in March 2020. However, another candidate accused Ghani of fraud in the election and held his own presidential inauguration ceremony, causing political turmoil. Under these circumstances, a close eye will be kept on the future progress of the agreement between the United States and the Taliban and the commencement of negotiations between the Afghans.

9 Situation in South Sudan

The second North-South civil war in Sudan, which had continued since 1983, came to an end in 2005 with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan was separated and gained independence from the Republic of the Sudan. At the same time, the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was established.

However, after the independence, a political confrontation emerged between a mainstream faction led by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, a Dinka, and a nonmainstream faction including Vice President Riek Machar, a Nuer.

The “Intergovernmental Authority on Development” (IGAD) assisted by the UN and the AU initiated efforts to start dialogues among South Sudanese leaders and enable their reconciliation. In January 2014, the government and the pro-Machar faction signed an agreement on ceasing hostile activities.

In August 2015, the government, the pro-Machar faction and others reached the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), the key elements of which include the establishment of a transitional government. In April 2016, the Transitional Government of National Unity was established, in which Mr. Kiir serves as president and Mr. Machar as first vice president.

In July 2016, a shooting occurred in Juba between the security forces of President Kiir and First Vice President Machar. After First Vice President Machar fled the country, and President Kiir dismissed First Vice President Machar, clashes started to occur again between the government and the Machar faction.

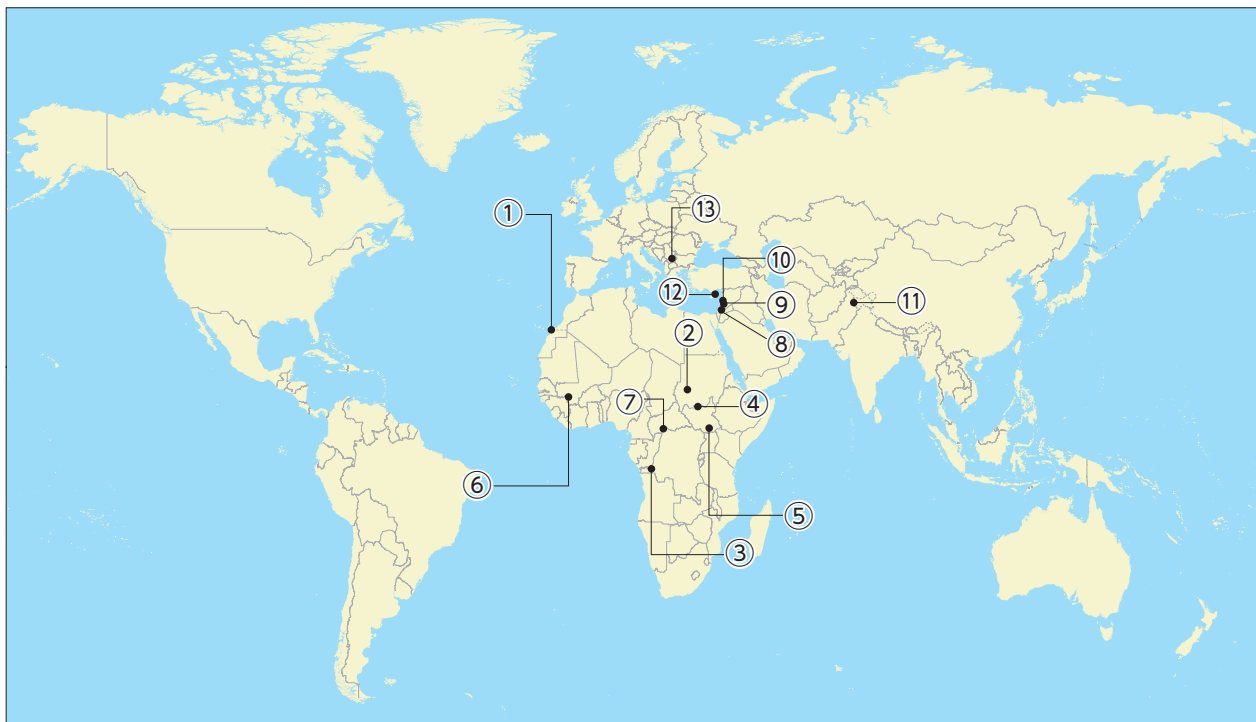
In response to the situation, in August 2016, the UN Security Council created the Regional Protection Force (RPF) for the purpose of maintaining security in Juba and surrounding areas. The RPF launched its operations in April 2017. In December 2017 and February and May 2018, the High-Level Revitalization Forum was held under the leadership of IGAD, where the government agreed with the pro-Machar faction and others on the cessation of hostilities.

As a result of the efforts, in June 2018, President Kiir, former First Vice President Machar and others signed the “Khartoum Declaration of Agreement on South Sudan,” which includes a permanent ceasefire. They agreed on security arrangements in July and on provisional government arrangements in August, before signing the “Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS)” in September 2018. Initially, a new provisional government was scheduled to be established by May 2019. However, the preparations for its establishment were not completed by that time. In May 2019, the government and representatives of the pro-Machar faction agreed on the extension of the pre-transitional period by six months. In November, they further agreed to extend the period for another 100 days. On February 22, 2020, the last day of the pre-transitional period, a provisional government was established.

 **See** Fig. I-2-9-1 (Ongoing UN Peacekeeping Operations)
Part III, Chapter 3, Section 5-2-3 (UNMISS)

Fig. I-2-9-1

Current Peacekeeping Operations



Note: According to the United Nations (as of the end of March 2020).

Africa

	Mission	Date Established
①	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	Apr 1991
②	African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)	Jul 2007
③	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	Jul 2010
④	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)	Jun 2011
⑤	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	Jul 2011
⑥	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	Apr 2013
⑦	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	Apr 2014

Middle East

	Mission	Date Established
⑧	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)	May 1948
⑨	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)	Jun 1974
⑩	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	Mar 1978

Asia

	Mission	Date Established
⑪	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)	Jan 1949

Europe/CIS

	Mission	Date Established
⑫	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)	Mar 1964
⑬	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	Jun 1999

10 Situation in Somalia

Somalia plunged into anarchy on the collapse of its government in 1991, facing a serious humanitarian crisis with massive refugees generated. In 2005, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was inaugurated through the intermediation of the neighboring countries. In 2012, a unified government was established for the first time in 21

years.

Even after the establishment of the unified government, Somalia has faced two major issues—terrorism and piracy. Al-Shabaab, a Sunni extremist organization based in the central south, has repeatedly conducted terrorist attacks against the government and other targets. In 2007, the African

Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was established with the approval of the UN Security Council. As a result of attacks by the AMISOM forces and mop-up operations by the Somali government forces under reconstruction with support from Western countries, Al-Shabaab lost its control on major cities and weakened to some extent. However, its threat has still existed. Al-Shabaab frequently stages attacks against the bases of the Somali and AMISOM forces and terrorist attacks within Somalia and in AMISOM member countries. It has been pointed out that ISIL fighters have been flowing into Somalia in recent years.

In Somalia, especially in its northeastern part, there are

believed to be outposts of pirates who are active off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. The international community has continued anti-piracy operations and implemented a series of initiatives to enhance the security capabilities of Somalia based on the perception that instability of Somalia has caused the piracy issue. As a result, the number of reported pirate attacks has remained low.

With a presidential election anticipated around the end of 2020 or later, we should keep paying close attention to whether the situation in Somalia will start to stabilize, while also looking at the international community's response.

 **See** Part III, Chapter 3, Section -2-2 (Counter-Piracy Operations)