

# Annex C. Chronology 2020

This chronology lists the significant events in 2020 related to armaments, disarmament and international security. Keywords are indicated in the right-hand column.

## January

1 Jan.	North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announces that North Korea will no longer be 'unilaterally bound' to the moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests.	North Korea; nuclear weapons
3 Jan.	China reports over 40 cases to the World Health Organization (WHO) of a viral pneumonia of unknown cause, first identified in Wuhan in Dec. 2019.	China; Covid-19; WHO
3 Jan.	A United States air strike kills General Qasem Soleimani, a senior commander in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.	Iran; USA
5 Jan.	Turkish troops are deployed to Libya on behalf of Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), which is backed by the United Nations.	GNA; Libya; Turkey
8 Jan.	Iran launches ballistic missiles at two Iraqi military bases hosting US soldiers, injuring at least 50 of the personnel.	Iran; Iraq; USA
8 Jan.	Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 is shot down by Iranian forces after taking off from Tehran airport, killing all 176 people on board. On 11 January, the Iranian Government admits that its military mistook the airliner for a cruise missile.	Iran; Ukraine
9 Jan.	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) attacks a Nigerien military base, killing at least 89 soldiers.	ISGS; Niger
9 Jan.	The WHO reports that China has determined the pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan was caused by a novel coronavirus. The first death from it is reported two days later.	China; Covid-19; WHO
13 Jan.	France and the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) countries launch the Coalition for the Sahel, a coordinating framework for counterterrorism, capacity building for Sahelian forces, restoration of state authority and development assistance.	France; G5 Sahel
15 Jan.	The USA and China sign an initial trade deal that seeks to ease their two-year trade dispute.	China; USA
18 Jan.	A missile strike by Houthi forces on a military camp near Marib, Yemen, kills over 100 Yemeni soldiers.	Yemen
23 Jan.	The Chinese city of Wuhan, the suspected epicentre of the initial coronavirus outbreak, is quarantined.	China; Covid-19
28 Jan.	The USA publishes its long-awaited plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but the plan is rejected by the Palestinian leadership (and by the Arab League on 1 February).	Israel; Palestine; US peace plan

29 Jan.	US President Donald J. Trump signs the US–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA), a trade deal that is set to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).	Canada; Mexico; NAFTA; USA; USMCA
30 Jan.	The WHO declares the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.	Covid-19; WHO
31 Jan.	The USA rescinds a 2014 directive banning production and acquisition of anti-personnel mines (APMs), as well as their use, other than in a future conflict on the Korean Peninsula, which allows the USA to again use landmines in exceptional circumstances in global conflicts.	APMs; USA
31 Jan.	The United Kingdom formally withdraws from the European Union (EU) and begins an 11-month transition period.	EU; UK
<i>February</i>		
4 Feb.	The USA announces that it has deployed a new submarine-launched low-yield nuclear warhead.	nuclear weapons; USA
5 Feb.	The US Senate votes to acquit President Trump of two impeachment charges relating to abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.	USA
9 Feb.	The African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government upgrades the AU Liaison Office in Libya to the level of a mission.	AU; Libya
10 Feb.	Chinese President Xi Jinping declares a ‘People’s War’ to contain the coronavirus outbreak.	China; Covid-19
11 Feb.	The WHO names the novel coronavirus strain ‘Covid-19’.	Covid-19; WHO
16 Feb.	A WHO–China joint mission is initiated to assess the seriousness of Covid-19.	China; Covid-19; WHO
17 Feb.	EU foreign ministers agree to establish a new naval mission in the Mediterranean to monitor the UN arms embargo on Libya. Operation Irini is launched on 31 Mar. 2020.	EU; Libya; UN arms embargo
18 Feb.	Incumbent Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is announced the winner of the 2019 presidential election, after five months of delayed results.	Afghanistan; presidential election
22 Feb.	President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar agree to form a long-awaited unity government in South Sudan.	South Sudan
23 Feb.	Following protests over India’s new Citizenship Amendment Act, 53 people are killed in Hindu–Muslim communal riots in north-east Delhi.	India
27 Feb.	An attack by Syrian Government forces in the opposition-controlled north-west of Syria kills at least 33 Turkish soldiers.	Syria; Turkey
29 Feb.	The USA and the Taliban sign a conditional peace agreement, which calls for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan within 14 months if the Taliban upholds the terms of the agreement.	Afghanistan; peace agreement; Taliban; USA
<i>March</i>		
1 Mar.	Turkey launches a major counteroffensive in northern Syria against Syrian Government forces, declaring war on the government of President Bashar al-Assad for the first time.	Syria; Turkey

2 Mar.	Armed forces from Somalia's federal government and the regional Jubaland administration, backed by Kenya, clash along the Somali–Kenyan border.	Jubaland conflict; Kenya; Somalia
3 Mar.	Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report that Iran has increased production of enriched uranium in the wake of the US decision to abandon the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).	IAEA; Iran; JCPOA; nuclear programme
5 Mar.	Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin agree a cessation of hostilities in Idlib, Syria, after weeks of military clashes between Syrian Government and Turkish forces.	ceasefire; Russia; Syria; Turkey
5 Mar.	The International Criminal Court (ICC) authorizes an inquiry into war crimes in Afghanistan, allowing US forces to be investigated for the first time.	Afghanistan; ICC; USA
6 Mar.	Two gunmen open fire on a crowded event in Kabul, Afghanistan, attended by the Afghan opposition leader Abdullah Abdullah, killing at least 32 people.	Afghanistan
7 Mar.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide surpasses 100 000. A day later Italy becomes the first country to place its citizens in lockdown.	Covid-19
11 Mar.	The WHO declares Covid-19 a pandemic.	Covid-19; WHO
12 Mar.	The USA launches airstrikes against the Iran-aligned Iraqi militia Kata'ib Hezbollah, after two US soldiers and a British soldier were killed in a rocket attack.	Iran; Iraq; USA
13 Mar.	The WHO, the UN Foundation and numerous partners launch the Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund to assist health workers, treat patients, and advance research for treatments and vaccines. It raises more than \$70 million in 10 days.	Covid-19; humanitarian response; UN; WHO
17 Mar.	The EU's external and Schengen borders are closed for at least 30 days in an attempt to curb the Covid-19 pandemic.	Covid-19; EU
20 Mar.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide reaches a quarter of a million and the death toll surpasses 10 000.	Covid-19
23 Mar.	UN Secretary-General António Guterres calls for an immediate global ceasefire and for conflict parties to address the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic.	Covid-19; global ceasefire; UN
23 Mar.	Approximately 100 soldiers are killed in an attack by Boko Haram in Boma, Chad.	Boko Haram; Chad
24 Mar.	Approximately 70 soldiers are killed in an attack by Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Niger.	ISWAP; Niger
25 Mar.	The UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan for Covid-19 is launched by the director-general of the WHO, the secretary-general of the UN, the under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs of the UN and the executive director of the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).	Covid-19; humanitarian response
25 Mar.	An attack by the Islamic State on a Sikh religious complex in Kabul, Afghanistan, kills 25 people.	Afghanistan; Islamic State
26 Mar.	The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) marks its 45th anniversary of entry into force.	BWC
27 Mar.	North Macedonia becomes the 30th country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).	NATO; North Macedonia

27 Mar.	Several European governments agree to create a military task force to tackle terrorism in the Liptako region of the Sahel. The French-led Task Force Takuba achieves initial operational capacity by the end of 2020.	Sahel; Task Force Takuba
<i>April</i>		
4 Apr.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 1 million.	Covid-19
8 Apr.	The Saudi Arabian-led coalition declares a unilateral ceasefire in its operations against Houthi forces in Yemen.	ceasefire; Saudi Arabia; Yemen
10 Apr.	The death toll from Covid-19 worldwide exceeds 100 000, a tenfold increase from 20 Mar.	Covid-19
12 Apr.	Oil-producing nations agree the largest production cut ever negotiated in an effort to stabilize oil prices. The plan will cut production by close to 10 per cent of the world's output in May and June.	oil prices
14 Apr.	The USA suspends funding for the WHO, following criticism of its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.	Covid-19; USA; WHO
15 Apr.	The Group of Twenty (G20) nations agree to suspend debt service payments for the world's poorest states until 2021.	debt relief; G20
15 Apr.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 2 million.	Covid-19
17 Apr.	The separatist Arakan Army declares a one-month unilateral ceasefire to fight the pandemic, but the Myanmar military rejects the ceasefire.	Arakan Army; Myanmar
20 Apr.	A unity government is formed in Israel, ending more than a year of political deadlock.	Israel
23 Apr.	Two former high-ranking members of the Syrian Army go on trial in Germany for alleged war crimes. It is the first time that Syrian military officials are prosecuted for their roles in the conflict.	Germany; Syria; war crimes
25 Apr.	The Southern Transitional Council (STC) announces a self-rule administration in southern Yemen.	STC; Yemen
28 Apr.	An attack at a market in the northern town of Afrin, Syria, kills at least 40 people. No party claims responsibility, but Turkey, whose forces control the area, blames Kurdish militants.	Syria
<i>May</i>		
3–4 May	Venezuelan dissidents and a US-based private military company unsuccessfully attempt to remove President Nicolás Maduro from office by force.	Venezuela
9 May	Several Chinese and Indian soldiers are injured in a clash at the Nathu La border crossing between India and China.	border dispute; China; India
12 May	An attack on a maternity hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan, kills 24 people, including two newborn babies. In a separate incident in Kuz Kunar, 32 people are killed at a funeral by a suicide bomber. The USA blames the Islamic State for the attacks.	Afghanistan; Islamic State
14 May	The UN warns of a global mental health crisis caused by isolation, fear, uncertainty and economic turmoil due to the Covid-19 pandemic.	Covid-19; mental health; UN
17 May	Afghan President Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah sign a power-sharing deal, ending the long-running dispute about the outcome of the 2019 presidential elections.	Afghanistan

18–19 May	The 73rd World Health Assembly is held virtually and adopts by consensus a resolution to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. It is co-sponsored by more than 130 countries, the largest number on record.	Covid-19; World Health Assembly
19 May	Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announces the termination of all agreements with Israel and the USA, including security ones, in response to Israel's plans to annex the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.	Israel; Palestine; USA
21 May	The USA announces that it will withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty within six months, alleging continuous violations by Russia.	Open Skies Treaty; USA
21 May	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 5 million.	Covid-19
25 May	The killing of African-American George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis, USA, sparks national and international protests.	USA
25 May	US President Trump announces that the USA will leave the WHO.	USA; WHO
<i>June</i>		
2 June	Estimating that Yemen needs around \$2.4 billion in emergency aid, the UN and Saudi Arabia hold a virtual donors conference, but it only raises \$1.35 billion.	Yemen
4 June	Libya's GNA says it is in full control of Tripoli, after the Libyan National Army (LNA) retreats following months of intense fighting in the city.	GNA; Libya; LNA
10 June	A naval incident between French and Turkish ships leads to an investigation by NATO.	France; NATO; Turkey
15 June	A border clash between Chinese and Indian armed forces in the Galwan Valley, in the disputed Ladakh region, kills at least 20 Indian soldiers (the extent of Chinese casualties is unclear). These are the first fatalities along the line of actual control in 45 years.	border dispute; China; India
16 June	North Korea destroys the inter-Korean liaison office in the border town of Kaesong.	North Korea; South Korea
17 June	Turkey launches a major attack against Kurdish forces in Iraqi Kurdistan.	Iraq; Kurds; Turkey
22–23 June	Russian–US Strategic Security Dialogue Talks take place in Vienna, Austria. The USA's attempts to get China to join the talks are rebuffed.	nuclear arms control; Russia; USA
25 June–1 July	Russia holds a constitutional referendum, including a provision that would make it possible for President Putin to serve two further terms in office. According to official results, 79 per cent of voters supported the constitutional reforms.	Russia
29 June	China passes a controversial security law for Hong Kong, seemingly undermining the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. The law criminalizes acts of secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign or external forces.	China; Hong Kong
29 June	The killing of a popular ethnic Oromo musician and activist, Hachalu Hundessa, sparks unrest and ethnic violence in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, and the region of Oromia.	Ethiopia

30 June	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 10 million and the death toll exceeds 500 000.	Covid-19
<i>July</i>		
1 July	The USMCA enters into force, replacing NAFTA.	Canada; Mexico; NAFTA; USA; USMCA
1 July	The UN Security Council passes a resolution supporting Secretary-General Guterres' call in March for a global ceasefire.	Global ceasefire; UN Security Council
2 July	The UN Security Council convenes a virtual, high-level open debate on 'Pandemics and Security'.	International health threats; UN Security Council
8 July	At least 180 bodies are found in mass graves in Djibo, Burkina Faso. Government forces are suspected of being involved in large-scale extrajudicial executions.	Burkina Faso
10 July	The AU Peace and Security Council establishes the AU Military Observers Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA).	CAR; MOUACA
14 July	Fighting breaks out between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in the northern section of the border between the two countries, leaving at least 16 people dead.	Armenia; Azerbaijan
21 July	EU leaders agree to create a €750 billion (\$858 billion) recovery fund to rebuild EU economies impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.	Covid-19; EU
22 July	Ukrainian, Russian and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) negotiators reach an agreement for a full ceasefire in eastern Ukraine between government forces and pro-Russian separatists from 27 July.	ceasefire; Ukraine
22 July	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 15 million.	Covid-19
29 July	The STC accepts a Saudi Arabian-brokered peace deal and abandons its aspirations of self-rule in southern Yemen.	STC; Yemen
<i>August</i>		
9 Aug.	The EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA) is launched, having been established by the Council of the EU in Dec. 2019.	CAR; EUAM RCA
9 Aug.	The presidential election victory of incumbent Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko sparks widespread protests in Belarus, which continue throughout the year. The EU, among others, subsequently declines to recognize the result.	Belarus; EU; protests; presidential election
10 Aug.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 20 million.	Covid-19
11 Aug.	Russia announces that it has approved the world's first Covid-19 vaccine.	Covid-19
12 Aug.	Militants linked to the Islamic State seize Mocímboa da Praia, a port in Mozambique, after days of fighting. The port is close to the Rovuma Basin, home to extensive natural gas reserves and Africa's largest-ever energy project.	Islamic State; Mozambique

12 Aug.	Amid increased tensions in the eastern Mediterranean, a Turkish frigate escorting a survey ship suffers a minor collision with a Greek frigate.	Greece; Turkey
13 Aug.	The USA announces it has brokered a deal in which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel agree to normalize relations.	Israel; UAE; USA
17–18 Aug.	Russian–US Strategic Security Dialogue Talks take place in Vienna, Austria, and discuss extending New START. However, underlying differences in points of view continue during the final round of talks on 5 October.	New START; Russia; USA
17–21 Aug.	The Sixth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is conducted through written procedure only. Among other decisions, it establishes the Diversion Information Exchange Forum, a new body for informal voluntary exchanges between states parties and signatory states on arms diversion.	arms diversion mechanism; ATT
18 Aug.	After months of mass protests, a military coup in Mali forces President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta to resign. Military leaders propose a three-year timeline to return to civilian rule.	Mali; military coup
20 Aug.	Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny is poisoned with what is subsequently confirmed to be a novichok nerve agent and hospitalized in a serious condition.	chemical weapons; Russia
21 Aug.	In separate statements, the GNA and the LNA call for a ceasefire across Libya, as well as other measures, including parliamentary and presidential elections in Mar. 2021.	ceasefire; Libya
22 Aug.	The death toll from Covid-19 worldwide exceeds 800 000.	Covid-19
25 Aug.	Africa is declared free of wild polio, the second virus to be eradicated from the continent after smallpox 40 years ago.	Africa; polio
30 Aug.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 25 million.	Covid-19
31 Aug.	The Sudanese transitional government and the Sudan Revolutionary Front sign a series of peace agreements, as a key part of Sudan's larger transition from military to civilian rule.	peace agreement; Sudan
<i>September</i>		
2 Sep.	UN Secretary-General Guterres notes 'with concern' the imposition by the USA of sanctions against the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC and another senior official.	ICC; USA
4 Sep.	Bahrain and Israel agree to normalize relations.	Bahrain; Israel
4 Sep.	Kosovo and Serbia sign economic normalization agreements, which also include commitments linked to US peace efforts in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.	Kosovo; Serbia
8 Sep.	Gunshots are fired along the line of actual control between China and India, for the first time in 45 years. Three days later, the Chinese and Indian foreign ministers meet in Moscow, Russia, and agree a joint statement calling for dialogue and disengagement.	border dispute; China; India
12 Sep.	Representatives from the Afghan Government and the Taliban meet in Doha, Qatar, to begin intra-Afghan peace talks. The talks were supposed to immediately follow the US–Taliban peace agreement in February.	Afghanistan; peace talks

15 Sep.	The USA hosts a signing ceremony for the Abraham Accords, in which the UAE and Bahrain recognize Israel.	Bahrain; Israel; UAE; USA
17 Sep.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 30 million.	Covid-19
21 Sep.	The UN General Assembly marks its 75th anniversary. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, world leaders address the Assembly via video link.	UN General Assembly
22 Sep.	UN Secretary-General Guterres renews his call for a global ceasefire during his opening speech at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly.	global ceasefire; UN
23 Sep.	The WHO, the UN, UNICEF, the UN Development Programme, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and others issue a joint statement on 'Managing the Covid-19 infodemic'. It highlights the need to mitigate harm from misinformation and disinformation.	Covid-19; UN; WHO
27 Sep.	Deadly clashes erupt in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Artsakh introduce martial law and mobilize forces.	Armenia; Azerbaijan; Nagorno-Karabakh
30 Sep. October	The death toll from Covid-19 worldwide exceeds 1 million.	Covid-19
1 Oct.	Following a series of technical meetings held by NATO between the military representatives of Greece and Turkey, a bilateral military de-confliction mechanism is established to reduce the risk of incidents and accidents in the eastern Mediterranean.	Greece; NATO; Turkey
3 Oct.	The Sudanese transitional government and various armed opposition groups sign the comprehensive Juba Peace Agreement.	Juba Peace Agreement; Sudan
4 Oct.	China becomes a state party of the ATT.	ATT; China
5 Oct.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 35 million, but the WHO estimates that there may be as many as 760 million cases—roughly one tenth of the global population.	Covid-19; WHO
10 Oct.	Armenia and Azerbaijan agree on a ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but fighting continues. Two further ceasefires on 17 and 25 October are also broken almost immediately.	Armenia; Azerbaijan; Nagorno-Karabakh
18 Oct.	UN restrictions on arms transfers to Iran are lifted in line with a timetable set out in the JCPOA.	Iran; JCPOA
19 Oct.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 40 million.	Covid-19
23 Oct.	Representatives from Libya's GNA and LNA sign a permanent ceasefire agreement during UN-mediated talks in Geneva, Switzerland.	ceasefire; Libya
23 Oct.	At the end of an 11-year demining process, the Falkland Islands/Malvinas are declared free of APMs, 38 years after the 1982 war.	APMs; Falklands/Malvinas
23 Oct.	Israel and Sudan agree to normalize relations, in a deal brokered by the USA in exchange for Sudan paying \$335 million to victims of a 1998 terrorist attack.	Israel; Sudan



24 Oct.	The UN announces that Honduras is the 50th country to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), triggering its entry into force in 90 days.	Honduras; TPNW
26 Oct.	At least 56 members of a Turkish-backed armed opposition group are killed in a suspected Russian airstrike in Idlib province in the north-west of Syria.	Russia; Syria; Turkey
29 Oct.	Belarus closes its borders with all neighbouring countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine) except Russia, amid continuing protests within the country.	Belarus
30 Oct.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 45 million.	Covid-19
<i>November</i>		
3–7 Nov.	Joe Biden is elected as the 46th president of the USA.	presidential election; USA
3–4 Nov.	The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) take control of some of the federal forces in Tigray, Ethiopia. The next day, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launches a military offensive in the region against the TPLF.	Ethiopia; Tigray conflict
4 Nov.	The USA formally exits the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change.	Paris Agreement; USA
5 Nov.	The terms of reference for the WHO Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2 are published.	Covid-19; WHO
6 Nov.	The UN warns that Burkina Faso, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen are at risk of famine, due to conflict, mass displacement, economic crisis, and climate and agricultural problems, as well as Covid-19 related restrictions.	Burkina Faso; famine; Nigeria; South Sudan; UN; Yemen
8 Nov.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 50 million.	Covid-19
9 Nov.	Armenia and Azerbaijan sign a Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement, which requires Armenia to return much of the Azeri territory surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. Russian peacekeepers will be deployed along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and the corridor linking the enclave to Armenia.	Armenia; Azerbaijan; ceasefire; Nagorno- Karabakh; Russia
9 Nov.	The first successful phase III trial of a Covid-19 vaccine is announced by the drug companies Pfizer and BioNTech.	Covid-19; vaccine
9 Nov.	The Council of the EU and the EU Parliament reach a provisional political agreement on a revised version of the Dual-use Regulation, drawing to a close a process of review that began in 2011.	EU Dual-use Regulation
11 Nov.	Russia and Turkey sign a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a joint ceasefire monitoring centre in Azerbaijan to monitor the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh.	Armenia; Azerbaijan; ceasefire; Russia; Turkey
12 Nov.	A Japanese-brokered ceasefire between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military opens up new opportunities for dialogue.	Arakan Army; ceasefire; Myanmar
13 Nov.	At least 15 people are killed in cross-border shelling between India and Pakistan, along the line of control in northern Kashmir.	India; Kashmir; Pakistan

15 Nov.	The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is signed by 15 Asia-Pacific countries to form the world's largest free-trade bloc, covering one third of the world's population.	RCEP
17 Nov.	The USA announces plans to reduce the number of US troops in Afghanistan from 4500 to about 2500 by mid January 2021.	Afghanistan; troop withdrawal; USA
17 Nov.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 55 million, with around 1 million cases recorded on average every two days.	Covid-19
18 Nov.	Iraq and Saudi Arabia open the Arar border crossing for trade, for the first time in three decades.	Iran; Saudi Arabia
19 Nov.	The Brereton Report into Australian war crimes in Afghanistan is released.	Afghanistan; Australia; war crimes
22 Nov.	The USA withdraws from the Open Skies Treaty.	Open Skies Treaty; USA
25 Nov.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 60 million.	Covid-19
27 Nov.	A senior Iranian nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, is assassinated near Tehran.	Iran; nuclear programme
28 Nov.	Ethiopia's federal forces capture Tigray's capital, Mekelle, and declare victory over the TPLF, which vows to carry on a guerrilla-style resistance.	Ethiopia; Tigray conflict
28 Nov.	Boko Haram militants attack a farm in Jere, Nigeria, killing at least 70 people.	Boko Haram; Nigeria
<i>December</i>		
2 Dec.	The Afghan Government and the Taliban reach a preliminary agreement to move forward with more detailed negotiations and peace talks. It is their first written agreement during 19 years of war.	Afghanistan; Taliban
2 Dec.	The UK approves Pfizer-BioNTech's BNT162b2 vaccine, being the first country in the world to do so.	Covid-19; UK; vaccine
4 Dec.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 65 million and the death toll exceeds 1.5 million.	Covid-19
4 Dec.	President Trump announces the withdrawal of all US troops from Somalia (about 700), although many are likely to be repositioned in neighbouring countries.	Somalia; troop withdrawal; USA
10 Dec.	Israel and Morocco normalize diplomatic relations. Simultaneously, the USA reaffirms its previous recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.	Israel; Morocco; USA; Western Sahara
12 Dec.	At the Climate Ambition Summit, marking the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, some states commit to further actions to achieve net zero carbon emissions at a future date.	Climate Ambition Summit
12 Dec.	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 70 million.	Covid-19
12 Dec.	Bhutan and Israel normalize diplomatic relations.	Bhutan; Israel
14 Dec.	The USA removes Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.	Sudan; USA

<i>14 Dec.</i>	The USA applies sanctions on Turkey in retaliation for its purchase of a S-400 missile system from Russia. It is the first time the USA has sanctioned a NATO ally.	sanctions; Turkey; USA
<i>15 Dec.</i>	The ICC accuses the Philippines of crimes against humanity in its war on drugs.	ICC; Philippines
<i>16 Dec.</i>	The UN General Assembly adopts a new initiative proposed by the UK regarding norms for responsible behaviour in space.	space security; UK; UN General Assembly
<i>20 Dec.</i>	A new, highly infectious strain of SARS-CoV-2, which is spreading in Europe and Australia, provokes international border closures.	Covid-19
<i>21 Dec.</i>	In the Chilean Antarctic Territory, 36 cases of Covid-19 are reported, marking the first infections in Antarctica and the last continent to report infections.	Antarctica; Covid-19
<i>24 Dec.</i>	The EU and UK agree a comprehensive free trade agreement, prior to the end of the Brexit transition period.	Brexit; EU; UK
<i>30 Dec.</i>	An attack on Yemen's Aden airport causes multiple casualties and appears to target a plane carrying members of the newly formed unity government.	Yemen
<i>31 Dec.</i>	The joint UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) officially ends its mission in Sudan.	UNAMID
<i>31 Dec.</i>	The number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 worldwide passes 82 million, with an estimated 1.8 million recorded deaths.	Covid-19