



PA-X PEACE AGREEMENT DATABASE



## Ceasefire Arrangements

Robert Forster



This research draws on the PA-X Peace Agreement Database ([www.peaceagreements.org](http://www.peaceagreements.org)), a database of all peace agreements at any stage of the peace process from 1990 to 2016. The database is fully searchable and supports both qualitative and quantitative examination of peace agreements.

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## PA-X Spotlight Series

The PA-X Spotlight Series addresses questions regarding comparative peace processes asked by those seeking to influence peace and transition processes. Each Spotlight provides brief comparative material regarding a key issue, sometimes with reference to the specific context from which the question originated, and sometimes framed more generally.

This Spotlight asks:

**When and how are ceasefires negotiated, and what are their critical elements?**  
The Spotlight reviews core elements included in the 267 ceasefire agreements signed between 1990 and 2015 listed on the PA-X Peace Agreement Database ([www.peaceagreements.org](http://www.peaceagreements.org)).

# What is a Ceasefire?

A ceasefire is commitment by parties to end all acts of aggression on land, at sea, or in the air, as well as any other activities that undermine the spirit of a ceasefire or ongoing peace talks. Not all agreements define what a ceasefire constitutes, but some do (such as in [Georgia/ Abkhazia](#); [South Sudan/ Sudan](#)).

## Defining the scope of a Ceasefire Agreement

**Geographic scope:** is the ceasefire limited in scope or general?

Ceasefire arrangements can be country-wide but can also be geographically limited in scope. Some ceasefires have been limited to:

- ▶ Neighbourhoods/suburbs/checkpoints
- ▶ Towns ([Lebanon](#))
- ▶ Regions, districts and municipalities ([Libya](#); [Mindanao](#); [Sudan](#))
- ▶ Nationwide (general ceasefire) ([Guatemala](#); [Liberia](#))
- ▶ In unspecified areas with specified groups ([Myanmar](#))
- ▶ Between states ([Ecuador/Peru](#); [Ethiopia/Eritrea](#))

**Parties:** who should comply with the ceasefire arrangements, and who is responsible for implementing the arrangements and monitoring that implementation?

Signatories to ceasefires include:

- ▶ Conflict parties
- ▶ Witnesses
- ▶ Guarantors
- ▶ Non-listed parties, irregular forces, or civilians: some ceasefires set out obligations for all of these groups

**Date and time when arrangements come into force:** when does the ceasefire begin?

An agreement can come into force:

- ▶ On the time of signature
- ▶ Following a time delay, usually 24 to 72 hours after signature
- ▶ When commanders exchange the texts of ceasefire orders
- ▶ At another ritual chosen by conflict actors, for example when announcing a third party

**Period of ceasefire:** how long will the ceasefire last?

- ▶ Arrangements may be indefinite or temporary, implicit or explicit
- ▶ Temporal ceasefires usually list blocks of time ranging from a few hours to several months

**Sequencing considerations:** are modalities sequenced, timetabled or phased?

Modalities such as a separation or withdrawal of troops, handover of armaments, release of prisoners and so on, may occur in:

- ▶ loosely sequenced phases, for example: B takes place after A without set dates or times ([Burundi](#))
- ▶ in accordance with a strict timeline listed according to the number of days ([Burundi](#); [Guatemala](#); [South Sudan](#)), or by date ([Angola](#))
- ▶ Aspects of implementation may also take place simultaneously

## Modalities of a ceasefire

Ceasefire modalities depend on the scope of the ceasefire, the aims of conflict parties and mediators, as well as dealing with areas deemed necessary for peace talks or to build confidence between conflict parties. Ceasefire modalities most commonly include:

**A cessation or suspension of hostilities**

**Separation/withdrawal of forces:**

- ▶ Zones of separation vary from 400-600 meters ([Sri Lanka](#)), a few kilometres in urban areas ([Libya](#)), to 20-30 kilometres (artillery range) ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)).

**An exchange of information on weapons and combatants:**

- ▶ Statistics on personnel, armaments, artillery, vehicles, air defence, aircraft, ships, support vehicles, light weapons, engineering equipment, logistical information, prisoners including POWs, civilians, and political prisoners ([Angola](#)).
- ▶ Advance notice of personnel movements, movements/transfers of equipment ([Georgia/ Abkhazia](#)).
- ▶ Information on formations and units above a given strength and their command structures ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)).
- ▶ The exchange of information may involve observers ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)).

Opening channels of communication between conflict parties ([Southern Sudan](#)), including commander-to-commander hotlines ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)).

#### Facilitation of humanitarian access:

- ▶ Guarantees of security and movement by parties to civilians, military personnel, aid workers, and international observers ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)).
- ▶ Provision of security escorts and transport for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and humanitarian organisations ([Liberia](#)).
- ▶ Either the removal of checkpoints ([Mindanao](#)), or establishing checkpoints to maintain flows of people and goods ([Liberia](#)). Alternatively, establishing checkpoints to allow for taxation of goods ([Myanmar](#)).
- ▶ Evacuation of wounded and evacuation of civilians ([Lebanon](#)). Exchange of dead ([Central African Republic](#)).
- ▶ Prisoner release potentially under ICRC auspices ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#); [Burundi](#); [DRC](#)).

Handover of public or strategic infrastructure, including ports, airports, roads, government buildings ([Liberia](#); [Sri Lanka](#)).

#### Full or partial demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) procedures:

- ▶ Merger of forces ([Angola](#); [Central African Republic](#); [South Sudan/ Sudan](#)).
- ▶ Cantonment of state and non-state combatants ([Burundi](#); [Mali](#)).
- ▶ Collection of weapons, ammunition and explosives; placement of heavy weapons under third party supervision ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)).
- ▶ Withdrawal of heavy weapons beyond firing range (25km) ([Eritrea/ Ethiopia](#)).
- ▶ Creation of de-militarised zones, humanitarian corridors, and 'safe areas' ([Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992, 1994](#); [Burundi](#); [DRC](#); [Guinea-Bissau](#)).
- ▶ De-militarization of political parties, movements, and associations ([Burundi](#); [Republic of Congo](#)).
- ▶ Re-deployment of security forces ([Ossetia](#)).
- ▶ Reintegration of combatants into society ([Republic of Congo](#)).

## Ceasefire Violations and Exceptions

Ceasefire violations usually fall into two overlapping categories: prohibition of human rights violations most commonly related to the protection of non-combatants; and prohibition of military activities including actions undertaken for the purpose of strategic or military gain. These two categories are important because state forces and non-state actors are in different positions regarding whether they will have an ongoing right to use force.

### Human rights violations:

- ▶ Kidnapping, abduction, disappearances, seizure of hostages, unlawful arrest and detention, torture, unreasonable search and seizure, inhumane treatment, harm of dignity, threatening, and harassment ([Burundi](#); [Myanmar](#)).
- ▶ Forceful relocation of civilians, forceful confiscation of land, extortion, attacks on IPDs and refugees, demanding food, labour, or services from civilians, enslavement, destruction of property, and arson ([Darfur](#); [Myanmar](#)).
- ▶ Sexual violence, gender-based violence, rape, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, and molestation ([Central African Republic](#); [Myanmar](#)).
- ▶ Summary executions, including of prisoners or on ethnic grounds, mutilation of bodies, massacres and genocides ([Central African Republic](#); [Democratic Republic of Congo](#); [Myanmar](#); [Sudan](#)).
- ▶ Limiting mobility and freedom of movement for civilians, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), humanitarian personnel, and international organisations; attacks on roads, railways, lines and pipelines, transport facilities, columns of persons, and any military or civilian convoy; unnecessary checkpoints; downing of civilian and military aircraft ([Chechnya](#); [DRC](#)).
- ▶ Actions that may impede or delay the provision of humanitarian assistance or protection to civilians and restrict free movement of people ([Darfur](#)). Acts of intimidation, hostility, violence or attacks against personnel, installations or equipment, members of local or international humanitarian agencies including UN agencies, international organisations and non-governmental organisations, and members of the media ([Darfur](#)).
- ▶ Disruption of interim government, elections, or local government ([Liberia](#)). Interference with right to education, destruction of academic facilities, religious infrastructure, and healthcare facilities and/or establishing camps in such locations ([Aceh](#); [Mindanao](#); [Myanmar](#)).



## Military activities:

- ▶ Bearing, transporting or carrying arms or otherwise 'unlawful bearing of arms', defined by type of arms and the area ([Myanmar](#)).
- ▶ Expansion of territory or movement of frontlines, seizure or blockade of any inhabited communities, military facilities and roads ([Chechnya](#)).
- ▶ Attacks, raids, skirmishes, ambushes, laying landmines, bombings, use of grenades, assassinations, shelling, reconnoitring, acts of sabotage, suicide missions, activities by 'deep penetration units' ([Aceh](#); [Chechnya](#); [Mindanao](#); [Sri Lanka](#)).
- ▶ Manufacturing arms, purchasing, trading, smuggling in arms, ammunition, and critical materials including fuel, cement, batteries, remote controls, barbed wire, compasses, optics, and so on. ([Bougainville](#); [Sri Lanka](#)).
- ▶ Revenge attacks ([Serbia](#)).
- ▶ Undertaking patrols or reconnaissance beyond friendly positions, creating additional barriers or military infrastructure ([Abkhazia](#); [Liberia](#)).
- ▶ Recruitment and training of new recruits, forced conscription, use of child soldiers, arming the civilian population, training and use of terrorists ([CAR](#); [Darfur](#); [DRC](#); [Myanmar](#)). Recruitment or any other military activity in the proximity of refugee camps ([Myanmar](#); [Darfur](#)).
- ▶ Unjustified massing of troops. Re-supplying or relieving troops except under certain conditions, for example one-for-one, with prior notice, 'supply of food, clothing and medical support for military forces in the field', and so on. ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#); [Sudan](#)).
- ▶ Attempt by any party to disguise its equipment, personnel or activities as those of UN Agencies, the AU, the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (ICRC), or any other similar organisation ([Darfur](#)).
- ▶ Provocative propaganda acts, or 'activities that imply hostility' including:
  - ▶ displaying the flags of groups in areas not identified as being under that groups' control ([Mindanao](#));
  - ▶ inciting ethnic and tribal hatred ([DRC](#));
  - ▶ use of hostile propaganda, including defamatory, untruthful, or derogatory statements, both within and outside the country ([Guatemala](#); [Sudan](#));
  - ▶ failure to disarm and dissolve irregular forces ([Croatia](#)).

Ceasefire agreements may include definitions of violations listed by the terrain on/in which violations take place:

#### On land:

The firing of any form of armament, whether intentional or not, including firearms, rockets, artillery, and any other form of shelling ([Chechnya](#)). Further specifications include whether this is the case only when a party fire across its own forward line ([Croatia](#)).

#### In the air:

Any use of airspace for military activities, including aerial bombardment, transportation, re-supply, or reconnaissance ([Abkhazia](#)).

#### At sea:

Any attack or other activity that violates the principle of freedom of navigation at sea or on lakes, and any disruption of commercial activities, including fishing or the transportation of goods or people ([Angola](#); [Croatia](#)). Violations of prohibitions of commercial activities in certain defined areas, such as fishing in harbours ([Sri Lanka](#)).

## Exceptions to Ceasefire Violations

Some ceasefire arrangements explicitly mention which areas of activity do not construe ceasefire violations. Such activities include:

- ▶ Peacekeeping activities by designated forces ([Mindanao](#)).
- ▶ Police actions including, but not limited to: preventative patrols; investigations; arrests; search and seizures to deter criminality, piracy, robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping, smuggling, and terrorist attacks ([Liberia](#); [Mindanao](#)).
- ▶ Defensive acts by a party to ensure safety of its forces, facilities, installations, equipment and lines of communications, and the safety and tranquillity of the civil government and the population ([Mindanao](#)).
- ▶ The 'right to self-defence', for example "the use of necessary and proportionate force, to defend yourself or others, from an attack or from any possible attack. Each use of force should be reduced to the scale, intensity and necessary duration for self-defence and not more" ([Serbia](#)).

# Modalities of Monitoring and Verification

Monitoring, verification and implementation can take place through multiple avenues. One of the most common is through the creation of independent or cross-partisan bodies (commissions/committees) that are responsible for monitoring.

**Sequencing of monitoring bodies:** The mandate for establishing monitoring bodies may be before the ceasefire begins, in the early stages of the ceasefire ([Burundi](#)), or not placed on a time line. Alternatively, earlier committees may be re-established ([Aceh](#)).

## Types of monitoring bodies:

Joint Verification Committee (3-9 persons):

- ▶ An interim or permanent committee that may be interim measure before the arrival of international observers ([Abkhazia](#)).
- ▶ Structure of a joint verification body is usually between 3-9 persons representing the belligerent parties in addition to one or more international observers from organisations including: regional organisations, state governments, religious groups, non-governmental organisations and academia ([Liberia 1991, 2003](#); [Mindanao](#); [Nicaragua](#)).
- ▶ Committees may observe geographical areas on the local, regional and national levels ([Abkhazia](#); [CAR](#)), or personnel may be integrated into multiple levels of military command ([Croatia](#)).
- ▶ Allocation of seats on the verification body may reflect power-sharing arrangements ([Mindanao](#)).
- ▶ Example structure of a verification committee includes a chairperson, 1-3 vice chairpersons, an unspecified number of members, and 1-2 secretaries ([Myanmar](#)).

Other modalities may include:

- ▶ Independent Fact Finding Committees undertake short-notice inspection of sites in the event of a ceasefire violation ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#); [Mindanao](#)).
- ▶ Creation of jointly staffed border posts ([Angola](#)).
- ▶ Joint patrols along ceasefire line with international involvement ([Abkhazia](#)).
- ▶ Monitoring through embedded liaison officers ([Guatemala](#)).
- ▶ Monitoring by peacekeepers.
- ▶ Technical verification of 'security zones' to determine compliance ([Eritrea/Ethiopia](#)).

International involvement in the monitoring, verification or implementation of ceasefire arrangements include:

- ▶ Observers ([Ecuador/Peru](#)).
- ▶ Use of mediator/facilitator in case of violations.
- ▶ Guarantor countries.
- ▶ Peacekeepers from regional organisations or the United Nations.

Examples of monitoring and verification body mandates include:

- ▶ To inspect ships, vehicles and aircraft entering the conflict zone ([Liberia](#)).
- ▶ To investigate any ceasefire violations ([Ossetia](#)) and note violations including:
  - ▶ Time of violation
  - ▶ Parties involved
  - ▶ Location
  - ▶ Description of form of violation
  - ▶ Number and type of weapons used
  - ▶ Effect of violation, casualties and physical damage ([Liberia](#)).
  - ▶ Consider appeals from general population ([Abkhazia](#)).
- ▶ Established guarantees of safety from all parties. Right to access any area of interest to them after notifying the parties ([Abkhazia](#)).
- ▶ Other tasks include: release of public update reports; release of financial and activities reports every two, three or six months; provision of ceasefire violation information to negotiation committees and international organisations ([Myanmar](#)).

## Appendix: Peace Agreements Mentioned

Angola, Ceasefire Agreement (Bicesse Accords), 31 May 1991.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1316>

Bosnia and Herzegovina / Yugoslavia (former), Ceasefire Agreement, 5 May 1992.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1588>

Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Yugoslavia (former), Text of the agreement signed at London on 17 July 1992 by Mr. Boban, Dr. Karadzic and Dr. Silajdzic, 17 July 1992.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1477>

Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Yugoslavia (former), Confidence, Security-building and Verification (The London Conference), 27 August 1992. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1165>

Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Yugoslavia (former), Agreement on the Separation of Forces in the area of Sarajevo Airport, 22 December 1992. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1616>

Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Yugoslavia (former), Final agreement reached between SRSG, Mr Akashi and the Bosnian Serb civilian and military authorities, 23 April 1994.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1499>

Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Yugoslavia (former), Agreement on the Demilitarization of the 3km Total Exclusion Zone East of the River Drina, 21 May 1994.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1637>

Burundi, Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government of Burundi and the Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie-Forces pour la Defense de la Democratie, 2 December 2002. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/321>

Burundi, Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Burundi and the Palipehutu – FNL, 7 September 2006.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/336>

Central African Republic, Accord de Paix de Birao, 1 April 2007.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/760>

Central African Republic, Accord de cessez-le-feu entre le Gouvernement de la République Centrafricaine et la Coalition Séléka, 11 January 2013.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/811>

Central African Republic, Brazzaville Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, 23 July 2014.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/818>

Croatia/ Yugoslavia (former), Cease-fire Agreement, 1 September 1991.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1448>

Croatia/ Yugoslavia (former), Implementing Accord, 2 January 1992.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1019>

Croatia/ Yugoslavia (former), Ceasefire Agreement of 29 March 1994, 29 March 1994.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/324>

Democratic Republic of Congo, Ceasefire Agreement (Lusaka Agreement), 10 July 1999.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/319>

Ecuador/ Peru, Declaracion de Itamaraty, 17 February 1995.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/352>

Eritrea/ Ethiopia, Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea, 18 June 2000.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/261>

Georgia/ Abkhazia, Agreement on a Ceasefire in Abkhazia and Arrangements to Monitor its Observance (Sochi Agreement), 27 July 1993.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/249>

Georgia/ Abkhazia, Agreement on Ceasefire and the mechanisms of its implementation in Abkhazia, 27 September 1993.

<https://peaceagreements.org/view/1693>

Georgia/ Abkhazia, Protocol of the Meeting of Georgian and Abkhaz Sides,

21 December 1998. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/25>

Georgia/ Ossetia, Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict (Sochi Agreement), 24 June 1992. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1699>

Guatemala, Agreement on a Definitive Ceasefire, 4 December 1996. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/253>

Guinea-Bissau, Ceasefire Agreement in Guinea-Bissau, 26 August 1998. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/323>

Indonesia/ Aceh, Cessation of Hostilities Framework Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, 9 December 2002. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/325>

Lebanon, Arsal 24-hour Ceasefire Agreement, 5 August 2014. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1840>

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Liberia, Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and Peaceful Settlement of Conflict between the Armed Forces of Liberia, and The National Patriotic Front of Liberia, and the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (Lomé Ceasefire Agreement), 13 February 1991. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1041>

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Libya, Minutes of the Disengagement Agreement and Truce between the areas of Warshafānah and al-Zāwīyyah, 12 November 2015. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1512>

Mali, Accord sur la cessation des hostilités entre le Gouvernement de la République du Mali d'une part, et le Mouvement Populaire de l'Azaouad et le Front Islamique Arabe d'autre part (Accords de Tamanrasset), 6 January 1991. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/206>

Myanmar, National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) Agreed Terms, 7 September 2011. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1582>

Myanmar, State-level Ceasefire Agreement between Pa-Oh National Organization (PNLO) and Government, 25 August 2012. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1579>

Myanmar, Joint Monitoring Committee guideline for Each Level (Draft), 15 October 2015. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1545>

Myanmar, Military Code of Conduct between the Government of Burma and Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAO) in Accordance with the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), 18 November 2015. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1544>

Nicaragua, Definitive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua and the YATAMA Atlantic Front of the Nicaraguan Resistance under the Auspices of his Eminence Miguel Cardinal Obando y Bravo, 18 April 1990. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/366>

Papua New Guinea/Bougainville, Agreement covering Implementation of the Ceasefire (Arawa Agreement), 30 April 1998. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/557>

Philippines/ Mindanao, Interim Cessation of Hostilities in Buldon, Maguindanao, 27 January 1997. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/406>

Philippines/ Mindanao, Resolution No. 1 Composition of the Interim Ceasefire Monitoring Committee and Assigned Tasks and Functions, 25 March 1997. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/946>

Philippines/Mindanao, Implementing Operational Guidelines of the GRP-MILF Agreement on the General Cessation of Hostilities, 14 November 1997. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/403>



Philippines/Mindanao, Agreement Creating a Quick Response Team, 11 March 1998.  
<https://peaceagreements.org/view/654>

Republic of Congo, Ceasefire and ending hostilities agreement between the High Command of the Security Forces and the High Command of the Self-defence Forces of Resistance (FADR), 29 December 1999. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/201>

Russia/ Chechnya, Protocol of the Meeting of the Commissions on the Negotiations Regarding a Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities and on Measures to Settle the Armed Conflict on the Territory of the Chechen Republic, 10 June 1996.  
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Serbia/ Yugoslavia (former)/ Presevo Valley, Teksti integral i Marrëveshjes së nënshkruar në Konçul, 12 March 2001. <https://peaceagreements.org/view/1428>

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[http://www.peaceagreements.org/files/PA\\_X\\_codebook\\_Version1\\_Feb\\_20\\_20.pdf](http://www.peaceagreements.org/files/PA_X_codebook_Version1_Feb_20_20.pdf)

For the complete list of 267 ceasefire agreements, see PA-X (2018).

<https://edin.ac/2FOOB3y>

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