



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Taliban government affairs / International recognition

The Taliban claim to have destroyed an ISKP hideout in police district 17 in Kabul on 04.10.21, killing three enemy combatants. On 30.09.21 it was reported that payment of civil servants' wages would soon be resumed. On 28.09.21 the Taliban declared that they would be temporarily reintroducing the constitution dating from 1964, in the era of king Zahir Shah. It noted that those articles which were counter to Islam, Sharia law and the principles of the emirate would be excluded. Under this constitution they would be accountable to neither the people nor parliament. They reject the democratic constitution of 2004. It was reported on 25.09.21 that Pakistan's prime minister, Imran Khan, had spoken out at the UN General Assembly in support of the Taliban being granted international recognition. On 27.09.21 Pakistan's new foreign minister, Qureshi, reportedly said that Afghanistan was more stable since the Taliban had seized power. He further criticised the fact that the Taliban government is not allowed to occupy Afghanistan's seat at the UN. On 27.09.21 the Taliban stated that regional restrictions, such as the ban on hairdressers shaving beards or on women using smartphones, were not measures which had been officially imposed by the Taliban leadership.

Violence against civilians

On 03.10.21 an explosion occurred near a mosque in Kabul, killing at least two civilians and injuring several others. The funeral ceremony for the mother of a member of the Taliban was in progress inside the mosque at the time. On 02.10.21 it was reported that two civilians (including a well-known journalist) and two Taliban had been killed in an attack by unknown armed assailants in Jalalabad/Nangarhar. On 01.10.21 it was reported that the Taliban were forcing interpreters who had worked for the Netherlands to appear in court by threatening their relatives. On 24.09.21 Hazara politician Mohammad Mohaqeq reported on his Facebook page that the Taliban were forcibly evacuating Hazaras from their homes in Daikundi province and handing over these homes to Pashtuns. He said some 800 families were affected in Zayn, Kandir, Naleh, Tagabdar and Shaguljeh within Kato District, Suf, Kariz, Lakhtoghi and Sulaimanabad Kajran District and Ghamqul in Khadir District.

Humanitarian situation

On 04.10.21 it was reported that the Afghan government was no longer able to pay for electricity imported from abroad and that a blackout threatened in the winter. The UN reported on 03.10.21 that two million children are at threat of malnutrition in Afghanistan. The EU announced on the same day that Afghanistan was facing socio-economic collapse and that it was increasing its aid money. It added that food prices had doubled since the middle of August. On 02.10.21 it was reported that the Turkish Red Crescent would be sending enough food to Kabul to feed 16,000 internally displaced persons for one month. The Taliban allegedly began measures to return internally displaced people to their homes on 02.10.21. On 28.09.21 it was reported that the Taliban government had resolved to issue 10,000 AFN (corresponding to approx. 100 euros), food and petrol to every internally displaced family in the near future, so as to enable them to return to their villages and provinces. On the same day it was reported that

people were coming to Kabul from all over the country in order to withdraw money from banks in Kabul. Some of them were allegedly queuing up for three days in order to withdraw 20,000 AFN (corresponding to approx. 200 euros).

Education / media

It was reported on 03.10.21 that 70 % of the media companies in the country have currently discontinued operations. On 02.10.21 it was reported that women who have been teaching at boys' schools to date will no longer be able to work there in future. As a consequence, there is now a shortage of teachers at many schools. On 30.09.21 it was reported that a photo journalist who had photographed a women's protest and had been arrested in Herat province three weeks ago was still the custody of the Taliban.

Bangladesh / Myanmar

Rohingya leader shot dead at refugee camp

The chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), Mohib Ullah, was shot dead by unknown attackers at a refugee camp in the Cox's Bazar district. Together with over 700,000 other Rohingya, Mohib Ullah fled neighbouring Myanmar and violent attacks by the country's military in 2017. In recent years he had become an important leader of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Over a number of years he documented attacks and human rights violations against the community in Myanmar, spoke out against violence by armed groups and drug cartels in the refugee camps and championed the refugees' rights on the international stage, calling for the Rohingya to be able to return to Myanmar with dignity and in safety. According to various reports, Mohib Ullah had received numerous death threats in the past.

Chad

Transitional parliament constituted by decree

Mahamat Déby, chairman of the Transitional Military Council (CMT), announced on 24.09.21 that a temporary parliament was to be constituted by decree. The so-called National Transitional Council (CNT), comprising 93 members from the political sphere, civil society, trade union federations and religious institutions, is to remain in office until the upcoming elections.

Wakit Tama, an association of various organisations from the realm of civil society which opposes the CMT's assumption of power following the death of long-serving president Idriss Déby in April 2021, is not represented on the National Transitional Council.

Demonstration against Transitional Military Council broken up by use of force

At a demonstration organised by Wakit Tamma in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, on 02.10.21 the protesters called for the end of the CMT and for national elections to be held. Shortly after it began, the officially approved demonstration was broken up by the local police through use of force. Clashes ensued between protesters and security forces; a number of people participating in the demonstration were injured and, according to information from the local police, a police officer was killed.

Colombia

Leading ELN commander dies after bomb attack

Colombian media reported on 28.09.21 on the death of a high-ranking leader of the National Liberation Army (ELN), Ogli Ángel Padilla Romero, alias "Fabián". Defence minister Diego Molano stated that Padilla had died of his injuries after a bomb attack by the military in Chocó Department (north-west) on 18.09.21. As a member of the ELN's central commando - the group's highest executive committee - Padilla led the so-called western front, with 450 fighters under his command. Chocó is known to be a strategic gateway for deliveries of cocaine to Middle America and the United States. Clashes regularly occur here between the ELN and the Clan del Golf, a crime syndicate which is believed to be responsible for almost half of all Colombian cocaine exports.

1,900 Colombian guerillas operating out of Venezuela

The commander of the Colombian armed forces, General Luis Fernando Navarro, stated on 01.10.21 that some 1,900 guerilla fighters were planning attacks from Venezuela and trafficking drugs. According to the general, around half of the 2,350 ELN fighters and roughly one third of the fighters belonging to dissident groups of former FARC guerillas are located in Venezuela. The Colombian government has been accusing the Venezuelan government for a long time of providing Colombian armed groups with a safe haven and permitting cocaine trafficking. This was the first time that the military announced any concrete figures, however.

Four killed in the Department of Antioquia

According to media reports, four people have been killed in an attack in the town of Anorí in the Department of Antioquia. Among the casualties is a former guerilla fighter of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). This marks the tenth massacre in Antioquia in 2021. According to the Colombian peace research institute Indepaz, 258 people have been killed in 72 incidents this year, with particularly high tolls in the Departments of Cauca, Antioquia, Valle del Cauca and Nariño.

DR Congo

Deterioration in human rights situation

According to media reports, a report published by the UN Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) in DR Congo indicates that the human rights situation in the country deteriorated severely in August 2021. The number of human rights violations was reportedly up by almost 50 % compared to July 2021. Once again, government forces were apparently responsible for more human rights violations (55 %) than non-state actors (45 %). Almost all the human rights violations (approx. 94 %) were documented in the provinces affected by armed conflict, and particularly in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, which are under siege. At least 293 have reportedly been killed, including 63 women and 24 children.

North Kivu and Ituri provinces: State of siege extended, ADF

For the ninth time in succession, the Congolese representative bodies have extended by a further 15 days the state of siege which has been in place since the beginning of May 2021 in the two provinces of Ituri and North Kivu. This means that the military and police forces continue to hold far-reaching powers of intervention (cf. BN of 17.05.21). UNJHRO's director, Aziz Thioye, stated on 29.09.21 that, while the security situation in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri had improved since the state of siege came into force, the human rights situation remained bad. He said that serious rises in human rights violations were to be observed in the province's Irumu and Djugu territories in particular, and that these were almost exclusively attributable to the Islamic fundamentalist group Forces démocratiques alliées (ADF). According to Aziz Thioye, the ADF is also exploiting long-standing and conflict-laden ethnic tensions and enmities among the various sections of the population. The Red Cross in Irumu territory has reported that an attack on the strategically important trading centre of Komanda, which is practically depopulated as a result of the various attacks of recent weeks (cf. BN of 27.09.21), was once again attributable to the ADF. Eight civilians were reportedly killed, dozens were abducted and a number of houses were set on fire. People who had returned to Komanda in the wake of the recent attacks have fled once again in the face of the latest attack.

Prison conditions

Citing a report presented by MONUSCO on 30.09.21, the UN radio station Okapi reported on 01.02.21 that some 12 % of all prisoners in DR Congo are suffering from severe malnutrition. In the prisons in the provinces of Kinshasa, Kongo-Central, North Kivu, Tanganyika, South Kivu, Ituri, Kasai-Central and Kasai alone, this is allegedly claiming the life of one person a day on average. On 02.10.21 Okapi reported that 760 inmates at the central prison of Kakwangura in Butembo (North Kivu province) had been without access to food for over a week, as the food supplied by the government had already been used up. A pastor claimed that time and again it was the religious institutions and their communities that ensured prisoners received something to eat. Prison conditions are repeatedly described as exceptionally tough and potentially life-threatening (cf. BN of 23.08.21).

Recruitment and deployment of child soldiers by armed groups

On 28.09.21 the UN radio station Okapi reported on a number of children who had escaped from captivity by the armed Islamic fundamentalist ADF group. The children aged between 11 and 13 said that they had been abducted during an attack by the ADF in Beni territory (North Kivu) in August 2021 and forcibly recruited. Citing undisclosed security sources, Okapi further stated that the ADF had been increasing its efforts to forcibly recruit children in Beni territory for a number of days. Non-state recruitment and the deployment of male and female child soldiers in armed conflicts are widespread in the conflict-ridden provinces. According to the UNJHRO report "Analysis of the human rights situation", in the year of 2020 which is covered by the report at least 2,101 children have been the victims of forced recruitment in the conflict-strewn provinces of North Kivu (1,306), Tanganyika (251), South Kivu (234), the Kasai region (179), Ituri (130) and Maniema (1).

Ecuador

Violent clashes in prison on the outskirts of Guayaquil

According to information from the police, 118 prisoners were killed and almost 80 injured in violent clashes between two rival gangs (Choneros and Lobos) in a prison on the outskirts of Guayaquil on 28.09.21. The situation was reportedly only brought fully under control by special units of the national police force and the military on 30.09.21. In the wake of the disturbances, president Lasso has declared a state of emergency for all prisons in the country for a period of 60 days. According to interior minister Vela, 3,600 police and members of the military were also dispatched to the country's prisons on 01.10.21 to ensure security. According to information from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), more than 200 people have already been killed in 2021 in prison riots and violent clashes inside the country's prisons. Apart from overcrowding at the prisons, other contributory factors are the strong surge in the influence of gangs within prison walls, the smuggling of weapons into the prisons, which is made possible by corruption, the severe underfunding of the prison system and the shortage of prison guards. On 02.10.21 the director general of the national service for the supervision of adult criminals and juvenile offenders in Ecuador, Bolívar Garzón, announced that up to 2,000 prisoners are to be pardoned and released in order to reduce overcrowding in prisons.

Ethiopia

Several UN staff expelled from the country

The government has expelled seven high-ranking employees of humanitarian UN organisations from the country, including the head of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in Ethiopia, Adele Khodr, and the deputy UN coordinator for humanitarian aid in Ethiopia (OCHA), instructing them to leave Ethiopia within 72 hours. The foreign ministry stated that the measure had been taken because the individuals concerned had interfered in Ethiopia's internal affairs. It is not yet clear whether they have actually left the country.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the staff enjoyed his "complete trust" and called on them to be allowed to remain in the country and continue their important work. The US government also criticised the Ethiopian government's actions and threatened sanctions.

At the beginning of September the UN accused the Ethiopian government of blocking humanitarian aid for the population in the regional state of Tigray, noting that a severe food crisis was threatening. It stated that more than 5.2 million people were reliant on humanitarian aid and over 400,000 were at risk of starving to death.

Georgia

Local elections; arrest of ex-president Saakashvili

Mayors and local councils were elected in Georgia on 02.10.21. The ballot was regarded as an important indicator of public opinion with regard to the governing Georgian Dream party and the largest opposition party, the United National Movement. On the basis of the provisional results, Georgian Dream polled just under 47 % of the vote, while the United National Movement amassed around 31 %. A second ballot is necessary in many mayoral elections,

such as in the capital, Tiflis, as no candidate has achieved the required absolute majority. One day before the elections, on 01.10.21, Michail Saakashvili, the former president who has returned from exile and who leads the present opposition party United National Movement, was arrested. He was sentenced in absentia to several years' imprisonment in 2018 for abuse of office. The Georgian prime minister, Garibashvili, stressed on 03.10.21 that Saakashvili was under investigation and would have to serve his prison sentence. Georgia's president Surabishvili has made it clear that she does not intend to pardon Saakashvili. It remains to be seen how this matter may further exacerbate the strained relationship between the government and the opposition.

Guatemala

Femicides, gender-specific violence and disappearances of women

A report by the NGO Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM) states that a total of 396 women were killed between January and August 2021. This represents an increase of some 31 % over the figures for the corresponding period last year. GAM also reported 13,700 cases of violence against women and more than 5,700 rapes. The NGO attributed the high level of gender-specific violence in part to women's weak standing in society, which caused such offences to be played down. According to the organisation Alerta Isabel-Claudina, around five women additionally disappear in the country every day.

India

Deaths at farmers' protests in Uttar Pradesh

On 03.10.21 eight people were killed during farmers' protests against the controversial liberalisation of the agricultural sector in the Lakhimpur Kheri district in the federal state of Uttar Pradesh. Farmers' associations claim that vehicles of politicians belonging to the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya-Janata Party (BJP) ran into a group of demonstrators, killing two people. In the ensuing rampage, three members of the BJP, a driver and two further farmers were killed. The protests against the controversial reform of the agricultural sector have been going on in India for ten months now.

Iran

Kurdish political prisoner sentenced to death

According to Kurdistan Human Rights, a Kurdish political prisoner has been sentenced to death by the supreme court in Qom. Despite testimonies to the contrary by twelve witnesses, the supreme court considered it proven that the convicted man had murdered a member of the Revolutionary Guards. The defendant was reportedly arrested by the secret service for the first time following his return to Iran from the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Iraq in the autumn of 2018. Following two weeks of interrogation, he was subsequently released. At the beginning of 2019 he was arrested by the secret service of the Revolutionary Guards and charged with murder. He allegedly admitted to the murder under torture while in custody.

Directly ahead of the 19th World Day Against the Death Penalty, various human rights organisations, including the International Commission Against the Death Penalty, protested on 30.09.21 against the practice of executing people in Iran. In this context, reference was made once again to the execution of wrestler Navid Afkari on 12.09.20 (cf. BN of 27.09.21).

Environmental activists detained

According to reports from Kurdish human rights organisations on 29.09.21 and 01.10.21, four environmental activists were arrested in the space of a week and taken to an unknown location by security forces in Sanandaj and Baneh (Kurdistan province). Houses were reportedly searched and private items seized. The reason for the arrests is not yet known.

One of the men chaired the environmental committee of the Kurdish National Unity party in Sanandaj last year. Another man had already been detained when environmental activists and members of the Kurdish National Unity

party were arrested on 21.02.19. He was sentenced in March 2020 to a prison term of three months and one day on charges of activities against national security. He was released on bail two months later.

Protests against arrest of dissident poet

The protests against the arrest of dissident poet Sheyda-ye Hamadani on 15.09.21 continue, whereby the main focus of these protests is in the social media. According to media reports, the poet was arrested in the city of Mashhad in eastern Iran and taken to an unknown location. Hamadani is one of the country's the best-known dissident artists, and has attacked revolutionary leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in his work. The poet has strongly criticised the principle of the rule of jurists (velayat-e faqih) in video clips which have been shared widely on the social networks.

Booksellers arrested in Teheran

Foreign media report the arrest of eight booksellers in Teheran's Revolution Street (Enqelab) on 02.10.21. Security forces reportedly arrested the booksellers on accusation of selling illegal works. According to reports from the Iran Book News Agency (IBNA), a large number of unlicensed books, including works about monarchists, were seized in the course of the arrests. Booksellers have manning their stands on the pathways around the University of Teheran for decades. Revolution Street is one of the key centres for the sale of books, including editions which are not officially licensed.

Activist arrested

According to media reports on 27.09.21, the spokesman of the teachers' association in Gilan, northern Iraq has been arrested. The arrest took place on the day after a protest by salaried and retired teachers in various Iranian towns and cities. The protesters demanded higher salaries and laws on the introduction of a new pay system. In a speech, the arrested spokesman criticised management practices and embezzlement in particular in the education and healthcare systems and in the business sector.

Iraq

Operations against IS

The Popular Mobilisation Units engaged in combat with an IS cell in Tarmiyah district to the north of Baghdad in Salas ad-Din province on 27.09.21. At least one IS supporter was killed. The region frequently serves as a base for operations in Baghdad, and the pressure to track down the IS there is correspondingly high.

Anniversary of the protest movement

On 01.10.21 supporters of the protest movement demonstrated at Tahrir Square in Baghdad. Carrying pictures of killed protesters, they demanded better economic prospects and an end to corruption, and in particular justice for the more than 600 people who have been killed by the security forces and associated groups, such as militias and Popular Mobilisation forces, in connection with the protests since October 2019. The protest movement called for a greater presence ahead of the elections on 10.10.21. The protests toppled the al-Mahdi government and secured fresh elections and various minor reforms to electoral law. It is nevertheless expected that the elections will be largely boycotted.

Lebanon

Economic crisis

The country's various political factions and institutions continue to endeavour to organise aid on various levels. On 30.09.21 the Turkish company Karpowership discontinued its power supplies for the time being. The company operates two floating power stations off the coast of Lebanon which are positioned to the north and south of Beirut and at times supplied around one quarter of all power to Lebanon. The contract with the Lebanese government has expired. The government's debts with Karpowership reportedly run into hundreds of millions of euros. The Greek cargo ship Lesvos arrived at the port of Beirut on the same day. Its cargo consists primarily of supplies for the Lebanese army, from replacement parts through protective equipment to medicines and food rations. These are all

being donated by the Greek military and other Greek organisations. It has further become known that maintenance work on a gas pipeline which connects a Syrian gas field with one of the Lebanese power stations will soon be largely completed. Jordan has also announced that it intends to check power lines running in the direction of Lebanon, as they have been out of use since the break-out of the Syrian civil war a good ten years ago.

Mali

Deaths and injuries in attacks on troops

According to information from the UN, an Egyptian soldier belonging to the UN peace-keeping force was killed and four others were injured when their convoy triggered an explosive device near the town of Tessalit in the north of country on 02.10.2021. According to media reports, five Mali security personnel were killed on 28.09.21 in an attack on a convoy which was on its way to a gold mine in the south of Mali. Four personnel are reported to have been injured. The jihadist group Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), which is linked to Al Qaeda, has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Mozambique

Recruitment of child soldiers in Cabo Delgado

Human Rights Watch is reporting that Islamist insurgents are stepping up their efforts to forcibly recruit children in northern Mozambique. Boys are reportedly being abducted in their hundreds and forced to fight against government troops. In the past, humanitarian organisations have also reported on the abduction of dozens of girls in the region, who face the threat of forced marriage.

Various international forces from Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are currently in Mozambique to take action against the Islamist forces. A number of occupied territories have already been recaptured and dozens of insurgents killed (cf. BN of 09.08.21). Clashes in Chitama on 25.09.21 reportedly claimed the lives of 18 insurgents and one SADC member. It is reported in the media that those killed include Rajab Awadhi Ndanjili, a leading member of the Islamist terrorist group.

Myanmar

Fighting in numerous parts of the country, warnings of economic and food crises

On 27.09.21 junta forces shelled the village of Mang Kha in northern Shan State, killing a four year-old child. The military presence in the region has been increased substantially in recent weeks, in the face of continuing clashes with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), which is based in Kokang.

Further clashes also occurred on 27.09.21 in the largely deserted town of Thantlang in Chin State between the Chinland Defence Forces (CDF) and troops of the Myanmar army (Tatmadaw) on patrol. In the wake of the fighting on 18.09.21 (cf. BN of 20.09.21), all but around 30 of Thantlang's 8,000 residents left the town. At least six people were killed in fighting to the south of Kalay in the region of Sagaing on 26.09.21, including Tatmadaw soldiers, civilians and members of an association of the local people's defence force and the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF).

It was reported on 28.09.21 that fighting also occurred in Demoso (federal state of Kayah) on 25.09. and 26.09.21 between Tatmadaw troops and the Karenni National Defence Force (KNDF), supported by the Progressive Karenni People's Force (PKPF) and the Karenni Generation Z Army (KGZA). At least 14 people died and some 30 houses were burnt to the ground. In the Magwe region, Tatmadaw soldiers shelled the village of Hnan Khar on 29.09.21 and burnt several houses to the ground in raids. On 30.09.21 a bomb exploded at a military establishment in the capital, Naypyitaw. The Naypyitaw People's Defence Force (PDF) claimed responsibility for the attack. There were apparently no casualties.

According to the UN, three million people are currently in need of humanitarian aid in the conflict regions in the south-east and west of the country. In all, 20 million people are reportedly affected by poverty. Of the 220,000 people displaced by conflicts, the UN states that many are living in the jungle and in makeshift shelters which they have built themselves in areas that are difficult to reach. Food is short in many regions. Meanwhile, the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) has forecast an 18.4 % drop in Myanmar's gross domestic product compared to 2020. Myanmar's currency (the kyat) has lost around 60 % in value since the beginning of September, driving up food and fuel prices.

Nigeria

End of Twitter shutdown

According to media reports, president Muhammadu Buhari has ordered the lifting of the nationwide shutdown of the Twitter microblogging service, which has been in force since June 2021 (cf. BN of 07.06.21). However, in his television address to mark Nigeria's Independence Day on 01.10.21, Buhari stated that the lifting of the shutdown was linked to conditions allowing Nigerian nationals to use the platform for social and positive purposes. It remained unclear precisely when and with what restrictions the service will be available again. The civil rights organisation Socio-economic Rights Accountability Project (SERAP) called for the shutdown to be lifted unconditionally. In 2020 Nigerians routinely used Twitter to organise protests against police violence.

Arrests during IMN procession

On 28.09.21 the police arrested 57 people participating in a procession by the banned Shiite organisation Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) in the capital, Abuja. According to media reports, IMN members stated that a team of police and soldiers had deployed tear gas and live ammunition to break up the event. Eight people were allegedly killed as a consequence. The police claim that the security forces' priority was on maintaining public order. They denied that anyone had been killed. Clashes between members of the Shiite group and security forces have been regular occurrences in recent years (cf. BN of 02.08.21). Around half of Nigeria's population is Muslim, primarily of a Sunni orientation.

Success in the fight against human trafficking in the south-west

According to media reports on 28.09.21, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has rescued 43 victims of human trafficking in the south-western federal state of Osun since the beginning of the year and arrested 15 people suspected of human trafficking. A NAPTIP representative stated that there would be no let-up in efforts to curb human trafficking in the state of Osun.

Yoruba representatives underline right of self-determination

At an event held on 23.09.21, the Yoruba Assembly affirmed the right of members of the Yoruba ethnic group to self-determination. The Yoruba Assembly is an association of various factions belonging to the Yoruba ethnic group, which makes up the majority of the population in the south-west of Nigeria. Yoruba also live in countries bordering on Nigeria, first and foremost Benin, where Sunday Adeyemo, a Yoruba activist known throughout the country who also goes by the name of Sunday Igboho, has been held in custody since 19.07.21 (cf. BN of 26.07.21). Prior to his arrest, fierce clashes with security forces occurred at a demonstration by supporters of the Yoruba independence movement in the key trade centre of Lagos on 03.07.21 (cf. BN of 05.07.21).

Dozens killed in armed attacks

According to official information from the government of Kaduna, armed assailants killed at least 34 people and injured seven in an attack on people living in the village of Madamai in the north-western federal state of Kaduna on 27.09.21. The identity of the attackers has not been established.

According to information from the government of the federal state of Niger, which borders with Kaduna, armed attacks on towns and villages in the region for which the Munya local government is responsible have also claimed the lives of more than 30 people. The attack was allegedly perpetrated by so-called bandits from Kaduna. According to a media report, at least 123 people throughout Nigeria were killed by non-state actors between 24.09. and 02.10.21.

Pakistan

Military operations and attacks by the TTP in the north-west

According to government information on 29.09.21, a commander of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was killed during a military operation in the north-west of Pakistan, in the Tank district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. An army officer was also killed and two soldiers were injured.

According to information from the military, ten suspected TTP fighters were killed in an exchange of fire in the former tribal area of South Waziristan on the border with Afghanistan on 28.09.21. The TTP refutes this version, claiming that the military carried out a drone attack in which a woman and two children were killed. The precise facts remain unclear.

On 02.10.21 four soldiers of the Frontier Corps and a police officer were killed in an attack by the TTP on a patrol vehicle in North Waziristan.

The TTP has stepped up its activities in Pakistan since the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan. Counter-terrorism operations conducted in the former tribal areas have been weakening and fragmenting the TTP since 2014. Since the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan in August 2021, individual fighters and splinter groups have rejoined the TTP, however.

Prime minister Imran Khan has since spoken about ongoing ceasefire agreements in Turkish media. The TTP swiftly denied the existence of any such agreements. Only one faction of Gul Bahadar held out the prospect of a ceasefire by 20.10.21, stating that the leader of the Haqqani network, Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is also the interior minister of the self-proclaimed Taliban government in Afghanistan, had organised talks on this matter with the Pakistani government. A commander of the Gul Bahadar faction reportedly visited Peshawar and Islamabad in August 2021 to meet high-ranking Pakistani security officials. Several members of the faction were allegedly released after the talks.

Afghan nationals able to pass through Torkham border crossing point with visas

Since 30.09.21, Afghan nationals no longer require a permit from the interior ministry in order to cross the border at Torkham. Pakistani border officials introduced the controversial requirement following the Taliban's assumption of power in Afghanistan in August 2021, in order to prevent militant Islamists from entering the country. Hundreds of Afghan nationals were subsequently held up at the Torkham border crossing point, despite holding valid visas for entry into Pakistan. No such permit was required for the Chaman border crossing point or for entering Pakistan by air.

Attacks in Balochistan

On 26.09.21 a statue of the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which went up in the port of Gwadar in June 2021, was blown up. The separatist groups Baloch Republican Army (BRA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) have claimed responsibility.

On 26.09.21 a soldier of the Frontier Corps was killed and two others were injured in an attack on a checkpoint by militant separatists of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).

Baloch separatist groups have stepped up their attacks on Pakistani security forces in recent months. In Balochistan province, active separatists and politically active ethnic Balochs accuse the Pakistani state of exploiting their province, which is rich in natural resources.

On 28.09.21 a soldier of the Frontier Corps was killed and another was injured in an attack on a border post which is believed to have been carried out from Iranian territory. No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack. The border re-opened on 20.09.21, after having been closed for four months.

Palestinian territories / Israel

West Bank: Attack on Palestinian village

According to media reports, numerous settlers attacked a village in the West Bank on 29.09.21, throwing stones at cars and houses. Several people were injured, including a four year-old boy, who was treated in hospital. An Israeli human rights organisation accused the Israeli military of having failed to prevent the attack and deliberately not intervening. In videos, Israeli soldiers were to be seen among the settlers.

According to reports from the Palestinian news agency, a Palestinian was killed in a further incident in the West Bank on 30.09.21. The Israeli military reported that the man had opened fire in the course of an arrest in the town of Burqin, in the north of the West Bank, whereupon the Israeli military had opened fire in response.

East Jerusalem: Attempted attack on Israeli soldiers

According to information from the Israeli military, a Palestinian woman from the West Bank attempted to attack a member of the Israeli military with a knife in East Jerusalem on 30.09.21, whereupon she was shot dead.

Gaza Strip: Palestinian killed near the border installations

On 30.09.21 the Israeli military shot dead a Palestinian in the Gaza Strip, close to the border installations. His family claim he was there to set bird traps. According to media reports, there are no indications of any militant activities on his part. The Israeli military explained in a statement that three persons had approached the border, one of whom was carrying a suspicious package and was digging in the ground. The border forces subsequently fired in their direction. The military announced that investigations would be undertaken to clarify the circumstances of the case.

Republic of the Congo

Conditions at police detention centres in the capital

Citing a report from the national NGO Centre d'actions pour le développement (CAD), on 27.09.21 the broadcaster Radio France International reported on the exceptionally poor conditions for prisoners in the police detention centres in the capital, Brazzaville. In order to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus at an undisclosed prison, prison inmates have reportedly been transferred to these police detention centres. The prison conditions examined by CAD in the first half of 2021 revealed particularly bad hygiene and sanitary conditions, inadequate light conditions and oppressive heat. According to CAD, male prisoners are completely unclothed at all times for the duration of their custody. All prisoners allegedly have to sleep on the bare floor. Citing CAD's executive director, Trésor Nzila Hitze, the news page of Les Dépêches de Brazzaville reported on 25.09.21 on a number of cases of police violence which have led to the death of several prisoners. It stated that the police detention centres which were being used to relieve the strain at the prison were furthermore overcrowded.

Rwanda

Growing restrictions on freedom of speech

On 30.09.21 YouTuber Yvonne Idamange was sentenced to 15 years in prison and fined US\$ 2,000. The court found her guilty on six charges, including incitement to violence and public uprisings, vilification of genocide memorials and spreading rumours. On her YouTube channel, Idamange accused the president of having established a dictatorship, of exploiting the genocide of 1994 for his own ends, of failing to provide the victims with adequate help and of turning the corresponding memorials into tourist attractions. Human rights organisations have repeatedly criticised the government's approach to internet users and their critical or controversial comments with regard to the government. Human Rights Watch most recently criticised the government's renewed attacks on the freedom of speech in March 2021.

Somalia

Explosion

According to official information, at least two people died in an explosion outside a busy restaurant in Kismayo (Lower Juba region) on 27.09.21. At least seven people were injured. Civilians were among the casualties. The explosion was reportedly caused by a bomb placed at the side of the road. No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack to date.

Somaliland: Raids and expulsions of people from southern and central Somalia

The Somaliland police has carried out raids over several days on civilians originating from southern and central Somalia in the city of Las Anod, capital of the Sool region, to which both Somaliland and the autonomous federal state of Puntland lay claim. Property was seized and, according to observers and local media representatives, more than 750 people were arrested and expelled to Puntland, including business people, women and children. The Somali federal government criticised these actions in a statement published on 03.10.21.

Opening of first public oxygen production facility for the treatment of COVID-19

Somalia put the first public oxygen production facility in the country into operation on 30.09.21. It was purchased by the “Hormuud Salaam Foundation”. The facility was installed at the “Banadir Maternity and Children Hospital” in Mogadishu and is intended to produce 1,000 oxygen cylinders a week. There had previously been a shortage of oxygen cylinders for the treatment of patients infected with COVID-19. According to WHO, Somalia has reported almost 20,000 COVID-19 cases to date and more than 1,100 deaths. In view of the insufficient supply of tests and the failure to register deaths, it may be assumed that the actual figure is higher. So far, only one per cent of the population is fully vaccinated.

Sudan

Protests against the military part of the transitional government

In protests in Khartoum on 30.09.21 around 20,000 people, some of whom had travelled from other provinces, called for an entirely civilian transitional government. They accuse the civilian-military transitional government which has ruled the country since 2019 of impeding the transition to democracy. Security forces fired tear gas to break up the demonstration. The recent failed coup attempt (cf. BN of 27.09.21) has further heightened tensions between the generals and the civilians in the transitional government. On 30.09.21 prime minister Abdalla Hamdok expressed his determination to tackle the problems of democratic transition and stressed that democracy and inclusion were his top priorities.

Suspected terrorists arrested

Eleven people were detained in raids on buildings in Jabra and El Azhari in the south of Khartoum on 28.09.21. Five members of the “General Intelligence Service” (GIS) and one officer were killed. Four suspected IS supporters were initially able to escape. On 29.09.21 these four suspects killed a car driver in Khartoum and fled in his car, before being arrested. None of the 15 arrested members of the suspected IS cell come from Sudan. Citing the US State Department, media have also reported that small IS cells have been forming and consolidating in Sudan since 2019. To date, terrorism-related incidents have been linked to Al Qaeda or the Muslim Brotherhood.

Syria

International relief organisation reduces food aid

According to media reports from 01.10.21, the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) reduced the extent of the monthly aid packages for families who have been forced to flee their homes several times last year, particularly in the north-west of Syria. Following the latest reduction, the contents of the aid packages are reportedly no longer adequate to cover the needs of a larger family. Bulgur has been reduced from 15 kg to 7.5 kg, sugar from 6 kg to 5 kg and vegetable oil from 6 l to 4 l, for example. Families in need receive such a package once a month, irrespective of their size.

The reductions are apparently attributable to the lack of international financial aid, the COVID-19 pandemic and reallocation to other humanitarian hotspots, such as Yemen or Afghanistan. According to figures released by the World Food Programme, more than 12.4 million people lack a secure supply of food, while access to the same is highly precarious for 1.3 million people.

Minor killed by Turkish border police

According to reports from the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights on 29.09.21, a Syrian child died from the consequences of torture by Turkish soldiers after attempting to enter Turkish territory. The report does

not provide any further information with regard to the child's age or any other circumstances. According to the organisation's statistics, approximately 487 Syrians have been killed by the Turkish border police since the beginning of the conflict. 89 of those killed were reportedly minors.

Opening of Nasib-Jaber crossing point with Jordan, improvement in relations between Syria and Jordan

Jordan has announced the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions for the Nasib-Jaber border crossing point, which was officially re-opened in 2018 but has seen little use due to restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 29.10.21 the border crossing point is to be fully opened for goods traffic and passenger transport in the direction of Syria.

As of 03.10.21 direct flights to Damascus are to be resumed by Jordan's national airline. The Jordanian state news agency announced this decision following a two-day meeting between high-ranking representatives of the two governments, at which measures to increase cooperation in the areas of trade, transport, energy and agriculture were discussed.

Togo

Protests against the economic situation

On 28.09.21 representatives of the so-called "Pyramid Women" (Femmes Pyramide) called on the population to take part in a protest campaign by the name of Black Togo (Togo Noir) in October 2021. Participants are to dress entirely in black each Friday, in order to lend expression to the seven demands raised by the women's initiative. Femmes Pyramide is opposed to the rising cost of living and growing poverty in recent years, which have been exacerbated by measures imposed by the government to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Their demands include the revocation of price increases, e.g. for fuel and electricity, reductions for basic foods, an increase to the minimum wage and the release of political prisoners.

The population had previously been called on to participate in such campaigns from 12.07. to 18.07.21 and from 26.07. to 01.08.21. On 23.09.21 two activists from the movement were temporarily detained while promoting the movement's aims at the Hédzranawoé market in Lomé.

Turkey

Medical care for Syrian refugees suspended

Turkish authorities have suspended issuance of the document granting temporary protection (Kimlik) for refugees from the border region with Syria who are in need of medical treatment. To date, the document has provided Syrian refugees with access to various state benefits, including free medical treatment in state hospitals. Refugees are now required to cover the costs of medical treatment themselves. In a circular issued on 11.09.21, the coordination office for healthcare in Bab al-Hawa, at the border crossing point between Idlib and Hatay, stated that referrals of Syrian patients to Turkish state hospitals would be suspended until a new health system was introduced. The document granting temporary protection has been replaced by a "Document for medical tourism" which obliges the holder to return to Syria on expiry of the one-month validity period.

Ruling by constitutional court in femicide case

The constitutional court ruled on 29.09.21 that several officials who had failed to undertake any adequate preventive and protection measures in order to prevent a woman's murder are to face criminal prosecution. The academic Serpil Erfindik was murdered in Konak in 2013, one day after an injunction against her former husband had expired. Prior to her murder she had received death threats and had repeatedly applied for an extension to the injunction and protective measures, but her requests were rejected by the authorities. The constitutional court found that the murder was attributable to negligence on the part of the officials and their failure to take appropriate action.

Alleged members of the Gülen movement arrested

At least seven people were arrested on charges of having links with the Gülen movement in several police operations in the provinces of Edirne and Kayseri on 29.09.21. According to media reports, three of the accused are fugitives who had been sentenced to prison terms of at least six years.

Suspected PKK members arrested

On 01.10.21 at least 11 people were arrested in raids conducted in several provinces. They are accused of belonging to the PKK. The arrests were part of an operation targeting the PKK network in the Bismil region of Diyarbakir province. According to media reports weapons, ammunition and explosives were seized in the raids.

Suspected PKK attack

Two men were killed on 02.10.21 when a remote controlled explosive device which had been placed in a road was detonated near their vehicle in the Genc district of Bingol province. According to media reports, the Turkish government is blaming the attack on the PKK. The victims - two employees of an electricity supply company - were reportedly on their way to a village when the device exploded. The interior ministry has announced that security forces have begun a large-scale manhunt for the perpetrators.

Tunisia

Prime minister appointed

On 29.09.21 the president, Kais Saied, announced that the country will be governed in future by Najla Bouden Romdhan, who has been employed to date at the education ministry, and entrusted her with the task of forming a government. She is the first woman to become prime minister in Tunisia and anywhere in the Arab world. In view of the manner in which power is presently concentrated in the hands of the country's president, the role of prime minister will carry less weight than in former governments.

MP and journalist arrested for criticising the president

The arrests of the MP Abdellatif Aloui and the journalist Ameer Ayad by the security services were reported on 03.10.21, against the backdrop of debates on the freedom of expression and criticism of Saied's course of action. They stated on the Zitouna TV station, which is close to the Ennahdha and Al-Karama parties, that Saied had staged a coup and his appointment of a female prime minister was an attempt to veil women's standing in society.

Demonstrations in support of the country's president

Thousands of the president's supporters took to the streets once again on 03.10.21. Their demands included the dissolution of parliament and they voiced criticism of the Ennahdha party, which has long formed part of the government and whose leader called for parliament to return to work on 01.10.21.

Venezuela

Border region between Venezuela and Colombia: Extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances

According to a press release from the NGO Fundaredes on 28.09.21, a total of 268 violent clashes occurred in the Venezuelan border region from January to September 2021, claiming the lives of 742 people. In addition, 248 cases of enforced disappearances were documented from January to September 2021 in the federal states covering the border territories - Amazonas, Apure, Bolívar, Falcón, Táchira and Zulia. On the basis of these figures, the NGO spotlights an increase in criminality in the border region and the involvement of government security forces in over 90 % of the clashes.

Economic situation: Currency reform, extreme poverty

The second currency reform in the space of three years entered into force on 01.10.21. Venezuela's central bank (BKV) has once again removed six zeroes from the currency in response to the prevailing hyperinflation. Apart from simplifying accounting, experts do not expect this to have any significant positive effects on Venezuela's economic crisis.

The national survey of living conditions in 2020-2021 (ENCOVI), which was published by the Catholic University of Andres Bello (UCAB) on 29.09.21 and was initiated in 2014 in response to a lack of official data, shows that around three quarters of the Venezuelan population are currently living in extreme poverty. According to the study, the percentage of people who have less than US\$ 1.90 a day to live on has risen since last year from 67.7 % to 76.6 %. This increase is attributed first and foremost to the continuing shortage of fuel and also the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, particularly on those in informal employment. The survey was conducted by means of questionnaires which were distributed to 14,000 households in 21 federal states between February and April.

EU dispatching monitoring mission to regional elections

The EU's high representative for foreign affairs, Josep Borrell, announced on 29.08.21 that an election monitoring mission would be dispatched to the regional elections in November 2021. A team of 11 election experts is to arrive in Caracas in October. They will be supported by 62 long-term observers up to the end of the same month and bolstered by 34 additional short-term EU observers and 20 local observers on election day. At the end of the elections a final report is to be published, which will include recommendations for future elections.

Yemen

Fighting in Marib claims lives

At least 100 combatants were killed in fighting near the embattled city of Marib between 27.09.21 and 29.09.21, including 32 soldiers of the Yemeni military. Houthi rebels fired three rockets at the city on 02.10.21, killing two children and injuring at least 30 people. Marib is the last town under the control of the government in northern Yemen.

Clashes in anti-Houthi camp claim lives

At least four people were killed (or at least ten according to other reports) in violent clashes between the Southern Transitional Council (STC) and a group which formerly belonged to the STC in Aden on 02.10.21. It is not yet known what triggered the clashes. The members of the anti-Houthi coalition are fighting the Houthi rebels together, but otherwise pursue divergent aims. This regularly gives rise to clashes, which are sometimes of a violent nature, within the coalition.

Saudi Arabia intercepts Houthi drones

The Saudi military has reported that it has intercepted several drones loaded with explosives which were directed at the Saudi cities of Jazan and Khamis Mushait. The attacks took place on 28.09.21, 01.10.21, 02.10.21 and 03.10.21. No-one was injured. Debris from the shot-down drones caused some damage to property, however. The Houthis have intensified their attacks on Saudi territory in recent weeks.