



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Security situation: Fighting in Panjshir, Takhar and Baghlan

The Taliban respond to the spring offensive and terrain gains made by the resistance movements in the north. On 10.05.22, fierce fighting was reportedly raging for about four days between the Taliban and the National Resistance Front (NRF) in Panjshir province. On 09.05.22, the NRF reported that 20 Taliban had been killed there. On 10.05.22, the NRF even spoke of 100 Taliban killed and injured in Dara Abdullah Khail district. These figures come from Twitter reports by the NRF and cannot be independently verified. In response, the Taliban have apparently deployed more troops in the region; in some cases, civilians have been detained (up to 200) and also been killed (about 40). Civilian deaths were also reported in the provinces of Takhar (Warsaj district) and Baghlan (Andarab district). The Taliban have denied the allegations. However, there are reports on social media showing that dead Taliban fighters have been transferred to their home locations. The EU Ambassador to Afghanistan has expressed concern at the reports of civilians killed in the provinces.

Persecution situation and governance

On 10.05. and 11.05.22 women protested in Kabul against the obligation to wear a full body covering (burqa) in public. They were stopped by the Taliban with weapons and the gatherings were dispersed. Journalists reporting on the protests were detained by the Taliban. The Taliban had issued a decree on 07.05.22 requiring all women nationwide to wear a burqa (cf. BN of 09.05.22).

According to reports of 15.05.22, the Taliban in Panjshir province are identifying and arresting former soldiers using biometric devices. In Ghazni province, male employees in the public administration are denied access to their office unless they wear a beard and turban. In Herat province, gender segregation has reportedly been officially introduced in parks and restaurants. On 15.05.22, it was reported that the Taliban army had now grown to 130,000 men, with a target number of 150,000.

Humanitarian situation

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) reported on 10.05.22 that about half of the population (19.7 million) is still at risk of food insecurity. Only about 7 percent of the population have enough food every day. By November, the numbers are expected to decrease slightly to 18.9 million thanks to humanitarian aid and harvests. On the same day, the organization Save the Children reported that about 9.6 million children were going hungry in the country, eating bread only once a day – and those were the lucky ones.

Algeria

Family of deceased in custody files charges against the state

The family of Hakim Debbazi, who had been found dead in prison under unclear circumstances on 24.04.22, filed charges against the state on 04.05.22. Debbazi had been arrested in February for expressing his views on the Hirak

movement on social media. The family accuses the prison management of failing to help a person in distress and the judiciary of failing both to provide an explanation of the circumstances of the death and to conduct an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

Burkina Faso

Army: Dozens of extremists killed

According to military reports, at least 50 members of unidentified armed groups were killed or incapacitated on 09.05.22 in two battles near Barakuy (Boucle du Mouhoun region) and Djigoué (Sud-Ouest region).

Chad

Anti-French demonstrations

Media report that on 14.05.22, hundreds of people protested in the capital N'Djamena and other cities against France's military presence in Chad and its support for the Military Transitional Council (Conseil militaire de transition CMT). The protesters shouted slogans against France, and some businesses linked to France were vandalised. Security forces used water cannons and tear gas to disperse the protests. The rallies had been initiated by Wakit Tama, a coalition of several civil society organisations.

The CMT had been formed in April 2021 after the death of long-term president Idriss Déby; it is headed by his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby. After the CMT had dissolved parliament and suspended the constitution, an inclusive national dialogue of government, opposition and rebel groups was scheduled to take place in early May 2022; however, the date for the national dialogue was postponed without setting a new date.

China

Hong Kong: Arrests under security law

On 10.05.22, academic scholar Hui Po Keung was arrested, and on 11.05.22, Cardinal and former Archbishop of Hong Kong Joseph Zen, singer Denise Ho and former opposition MP Margaret Ng were also detained, all of four them on charges of conspiring to collaborate with foreign forces to endanger national security. They had been running a fund to provide legal aid and medical treatment to pro-democracy protesters. All four were released on bail after their passports were confiscated.

Colombia

26 dead after series of attacks in the north

On 09.05.22, the Investigation and Prosecution Unit (UIA) of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) reported that 24 civilians and two members of the armed forces had been killed during the four-day series of attacks by members of the Clan del Golfo in northern Colombia (cf. BN of 09.05.22). In addition, there had been 26 road blockades, 138 trapped communities and 22 attacks on public authority. Contrary to above information, the defence ministry reported that three civilians, one policeman and two soldiers were killed in the attacks. The background to the series of assaults, which mainly targeted the provinces of Antioquia, Bolivar, Cordoba and Sucre, was the extradition of former clan leader, Dairo Antonio Usaga, alias Otoniel, to the USA on 04.05.22.

DR Congo

AI: Deteriorating human and security situation in North Kivu and Ituri

In its briefing "Justice and freedoms under siege in North Kivu and Ituri" released on 10.05.22, Amnesty International (AI) notes a deterioration of the human rights situation in the eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri since the state of siege came into force in May 2021. The report covers the period August 2021 to April 2022 and is based on 44 interviews with lawyers, judges, human rights defenders and UN officials. The number of civilians

killed by non-state armed groups has doubled since the imposition of the state of siege which has been used to suppress protest and silent critical voices and also to restrict citizens' fundamental freedoms, especially the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and assembly. Several activists were arbitrarily arrested, and two human rights defenders were killed by the security forces, who have had executive (special) powers of intervention and act with impunity since the state of siege came into force.

When presenting the report, Deprose Muchena, AI's Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, stated among other things that the defence and security forces "silence anyone who demands accountability for the state's actions in the conflict-stricken provinces".

The AI report goes on to say that the military justice system, to which civilian criminal jurisdiction was transferred with the declaration of a state of siege, is overburdened and overworked, limiting access to justice and, above all, jeopardising the right for civilians to a fair trial under the rule of law in criminal cases. The backlog of cases and increasing numbers of people in pre-trial detention have led to severe overcrowding in prisons and deteriorating conditions in the two provinces.

Several non-governmental agencies, including Human Rights Watch (HRW), have recently unanimously pointed out that the human rights and security situation in the two provinces has deteriorated considerably since the state of siege came into force (see BN of 25.04. and 28.03.22).

Ecuador

43 dead in armed clashes in detention centre

On 09.05.22, at least 43 people were killed in armed clashes between rival gangs in Bellavista prison in Santo Domingo, as the interior ministry has reported. Apparently, the cause of the unrest was the transfer of a gang boss to this prison. This was the sixth prison riot in the last 15 months; more than 300 people had been killed in similar events in 2021.

Egypt

Sinai Peninsula: Five soldiers and seven IS insurgents killed

Egyptian army reports say that on 11.05.22, five soldiers and seven IS insurgents were killed in an IS attack on Egyptian security forces in the north of the Sinai Peninsula. This was the second attack within a few days; the authorities reported that on 07.05.22, several IS members had carried out an attack on a water pumping station east of the Suez Canal, killing 11 soldiers and injuring several others (cf. BN of 09.05.22).

Georgia

South Ossetia decides on referendum on joining the Russian Federation

On 13.05.22, the Georgian separatist region of South Ossetia announced a referendum on joining the Russian Federation to be held on 17.07.22. Acting President Anatoli Bibilov has signed a decree to this effect, stating that this was in line with the will of the people of South Ossetia. The recently elected new president of South Ossetia, Alan Glagoev, had also spoken out in favour of a referendum, but would have waited for Moscow's approval first. The Georgian government in Tbilisi has condemned the announced referendum as "unacceptable and contrary to international law".

The two former autonomous republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia have de facto seceded from Georgia, and the Georgian government no longer exercises state power there. In terms of international law, however, both territories are still considered to belong to Georgia, even if a reintegration of Abkhazia and South Ossetia into the Georgian state territory seems impossible at present. South Ossetia, with a population of approximately 40,000, borders on North Ossetia, which belongs to the Russian Federation. After a five-day war against Georgia in 2008, Moscow had recognised both Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states. Russia supports both regions financially and has also stationed thousands of soldiers there. Meanwhile, almost all the people living in South Ossetia and Abkhazia also hold Russian passports.

Ghana

Bawku: Deaths in conflict over succession to traditional office

On 10.05.22, unidentified gunmen killed three people (other sources put the number of victims at five) in Bawku (Upper East Region) in the latest outbreak of conflict over the traditional local leadership position (chief). The last time that an individual was killed in the conflict was in March 2022. These latest tensions date back to December 2021 when there were shootings after attempts to perform the final funeral rites for a chief who had died decades ago. The parties to the conflict are the Mamprusi and Kusasi ethnic groups, both of whom claim the office of chief in Bawku. The dispute dates back to colonial times. In a phase of escalation between 2007 and 2012, about 180 people lost their lives in the conflict. Since January 2022, a night curfew has been in place in Bawku. Police and military have increased their presence in the area.

Conflicts over succession in traditional offices are frequent, sometimes lasting years and decades, especially in northern Ghana. Occasionally, they escalate into violence.

Guinea

Period for transition phase slightly shortened

On 11.05.22 the current legislative body Conseil National de Transition (CNT) decided on a 36-month transition phase for the return to a civilian government, which is three months shorter than the last proposal put forward by the head of the ruling military junta (cf. BN of 09.05.22). A media report says that some CNT members criticised the very short notice in which the CNT was convened to discuss the decision on the timetable and the duration of the transition phase. However, the resolution was adopted by 73 of 80 CNT members present.

Ban on demonstrations

The CNT decision on the transition phase was met with rejection by the political parties belonging to the G58 group and also by the party of ex-President Alpha Condé, Rassemblement du Peuple de Guinée (RPG). In their view, the CNT is not competent to decide on this issue according to the Charter of the Transition (cf. BN of 11.10.21). This was the first time that both the former ruling party and major opposition parties acted unanimously against the current rulers. According to a media report, the Front national pour la défense de la Constitution (FNDC), which includes civil society organisations and political parties, announced demonstrations on 11.05.22.

In a notice published on 13.05.22, the military junta (Comité national du rassemblement pour le développement, CNDR) banned all demonstrations in public spaces until the start of official election campaign periods, justifying the move with the preservation of social calm and the correct execution of the timetable for the transition period.

Guinea-Bissau

ECOWAS stabilisation mission to arrive

The first contingent of the stabilisation mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, CEDEAO in Portuguese and French) is expected to arrive in the country on 17.05.22, as has been reported by the news agency Lusa. The mission is being sent in the wake of the alleged failed coup d'état on 01.02.22 (cf. BN of 07.02.22). According to media reports, some of the mission's forces have been present in the country since the end of April 2022, apparently comprising a total of 631 military personnel. The stabilisation mission is controversial, since it has not been referred to parliament (National People's Assembly ANP); besides, opposition parties reject it as unconstitutional, and last not least, ECOWAS has little credibility among the population, partly because of previous missions (the last one ended in 2020). The stabilisation mission is seen as personal support for President Umaro Sissoco Embaló who pushes for a constitutional reform and is currently trying to dissolve parliament.

Opposition politician shot

The leader of the party União para a Mudança (UM) and its only member of parliament Agnelo Regala was the victim of an alleged assassination attempt by unknown gunmen near his house on 07.05.2022. He stated that the assailants fired several shots at him from a car, one of which hit him in the leg and injured him. The government

reportedly ordered serious and swift investigations. The UM is one of a number of parties that have described the ECOWAS stabilisation mission as an "invasion".

Iran

Arrests of cultural workers, trade unionists and teachers

Foreign media report a new wave of detentions targeting cultural workers, with no information given on the reasons for the arrests. On 09.05.22, a photographer and civil activist was arrested in the course of a raid by members of the secret service in her flat in Tehran. She had signed a protest against violence against women in the Iranian film and theatre scene. On 10.05.22, a well-known documentary filmmaker was also arrested in a raid by security forces at her home and taken to an unknown location; her mobile phone, laptop and other personal belongings were confiscated. She had been working on film projects on violence against women. Citing information from the Iranian Writers' Association, the arrest of a well-known author and his wife on 09.05.22 has been reported. Apparently, the two had been detained several times in the past for their trade union activities; the wife had also been sentenced to one year in prison for participating in a workers' demonstration. The Writers' Union considers the arrest a part of a campaign against cultural workers.

On 12.05.22, a leading trade union member of the Tehran bus company was arrested at his home by police using violence. In the early hours of the same day, another female labour activist was arrested in Tehran; the security forces also searched her house and confiscated her personal belongings. On 12.05. and 13.05.22, arrests were made in the course of protest demonstrations by the teachers' union in Tehran and other cities. Between 20 and 50 teachers were arrested in Yasuj (Kohgiluyeh va Boyer-Ahmad province). Arrests were also made in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Ahvaz. The protesters are demanding a halt to the prosecution of teachers and the release of eleven teachers currently in detention who have been arrested during protests in recent months. The teachers' union and Human Rights Watch have stated that between 38 and 70 teachers were arrested in the first half of May 2022 alone. In the meantime, many detainees have apparently been released again.

Protests against rising food prices

According to foreign media, massive price increases following the removal of state subsidies especially for flour, eggs, milk, chicken meat and oil, have led to protests spreading to several cities in the central northern and eastern regions of the country including Tehran, Neyshabur and Isfahan. A strong presence of special counter-insurgency units is reported from many cities. Initially, several towns of Khuzestan province had been the scene of protests and subsequent tightened security measures since 06.05.22 (cf. BN of 09.05.22). Since 12.05.22, rallies have also taken place in Shahrekord (Charmahal va Bakhtiari province), Daroud and Boroujerd (Lorestan) and Rasht (Gilan), with slogans being chanted against both President Ebrahim Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as was circulated on social media. There were also reports of ongoing mobile phone and internet disruptions in several provinces. An unknown number of arrests were made following clashes between protesters and security forces. According to unconfirmed reports, shots were fired during protests in the cities of Rasht and Ardabil. Foreign media could not ascertain whether these were warning shots or targeted attacks by security forces. Various media report that between one and three people were killed in the course of the protests, one of them in connection with an attack by protesters on a Basij base in Hafeshjan (Charmahal va Bakhtiari).

Iraq

Iranian Revolutionary Guards: Attack on Erbil

On 11.05.22, the Revolutionary Guards from neighbouring Iran carried out airstrikes on areas in Erbil, with no casualties reported. The Revolutionary Guards have claimed that this was an anti-terrorist operation. Already in March and April, Iran had attacked the private residence of a Kurdish businessman and an oil refinery in Erbil, claiming that the sites were "strategic centres" of Israel (cf. BN of 11.04.22).

Sinjar: Return of around 300 families

After the fighting that broke out in Sinjar at the beginning of May and displaced more than 700 families (approx. 10,200 people, see BN 09.05.22), about 300 of these families have returned to Sinjar. The remaining families are still staying in refugee camps in Dohuk.

Lebanon

UN Special Rapporteur: Human rights violations through political mismanagement

In his report published on 11.05.22, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Olivier De Schutter accused the Lebanese government and the Lebanese Central Bank of having driven large parts of the population into poverty through years of mismanagement and corruption. He described the current economic and financial crisis and its effects on the supply situation as "man-made" and called on the future government to fulfil its human rights obligations.

Elections in Lebanon

Parliamentary elections in Lebanon ended on 15.05.22. With a few exceptions, voting itself was largely peaceful, but there was no electricity in the polling stations. According to initial estimates, voter turnout in Lebanon was around 41 percent, with several groups boycotting the election. This is the first election since the beginning of the current economic and financial crisis and the explosion in the port of Beirut. Not all votes have been counted yet.

Mali

Mali withdraws from the G5 Sahel regional organisation

The military government announced on 15.05.22 that Mali would withdraw from all organs and bodies of the regional organisation G5 Sahel. The other member states of the G5 Sahel are Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. The organisation had been founded in 2014. In 2017, the G5 Sahel Joint Force was established with the aim of fighting jihadists. The military government cited Mali's denied chairmanship of the G5 Sahel as the reason for their withdrawal from the group. It had originally been planned that Mali would take over the presidency from February 2022.

Montenegro

Head of the commercial court arrested on suspicion of corruption

Media report that the President of the Montenegrin commercial court Blaz Jovanic and other officials were arrested in Podgorica on 09.05.22. Apparently, the police directorate unofficially confirmed that the arrest was made on the order of chief special prosecutor Vladimir Novovic. According to news portal Vijesti.me, Jovanic is suspected of having coordinated a criminal organisation and defrauded the state of millions of dollars. Opposition and NGOs have also accused him of aiding and abetting a cover-up of alleged corrupt activities by President Milo Djukanovic and his inner circle. The newly elected Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic (cf. BN of 02.05.22) welcomed the arrest, saying it was the result of Novovic's election in March 2022 to head the special prosecutor's office. The arrest, as well as that of the former president of the supreme court of Montenegro, Vesna Medenica, on suspicion of abuse of office in April 2022, are the latest in a series of measures to curb corruption and abuse of office at the highest level.

Nigeria

North West: Student killed by fellow students for alleged blasphemy

Media report that on 12.05.22, students of the Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto, Zamfara State, killed a 25-year old fellow student and burnt her body because she had posted statements on social media that were interpreted by other students as criticism of the Prophet Mohammed. The victim herself was a Christian. In the

meantime, two people have been arrested for suspected involvement in the crime. After numerous protesters demanded the release of the two suspects shortly after their arrest, the governor of Sokoto imposed a 24-hour curfew on 14.05.22. Security authorities, politicians, and religious leaders, among them the Sultan of Sokoto and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, called on the population to remain calm, saying that the act should not be judged as religiously motivated, but as a criminal offence. The Sultan of Sokoto is the spiritual leader of Nigerian Muslims. In northern Nigeria, a large part of the population is Muslim.

Northeast: UN Secretary-General praises reintegration of Islamists

On the occasion of a several-day stay in Nigeria, UN Secretary-General António Guterres also visited Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in the north-east, in early May 2022. He praised Nigeria's efforts to deradicalise and reintegrate jihadists. Projects for the reintegration of repentant terrorists (cf. BN of 21.03.22) are the best possible step towards peace in the region, he stated. According to the Nigerian military, more than 1,600 former jihadist fighters have already undergone such programmes. However, media reports also indicate that a total of 23 violent incidents were counted in the north-east in the first quarter of 2022, resulting in 172 deaths and 23 abductions.

ISWAP atrocities

For years, Islamists have been attacking the military and also civilians in Nigeria's northeast with raids and assaults. Most recently, two deadly incidents caused a lot of anxiety. Media report that on 03.05.22, fighters of the jihadist group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) killed three people (other reports provide the number of at least eight) in an attack on the village of Kautikari in Chibok Local Government Area (LGA) in Borno State. The attack coincided with the visit of the UN Secretary-General to the capital Borno. The locality appears to have been the target of several attacks in the past. According to media reports of 11.05.22, a video was circulated online allegedly showing the execution of around 20 Nigerian civilians of the Christian faith by ISWAP militants. One of the perpetrators stated in the video that the assault was in retaliation for the killing of IS leaders in the Middle East in early 2022. State officials have not commented on the issue. An NGO specialised in monitoring the online activities of extremists has confirmed that the video is authentic.

Middle Belt: Seven soldiers killed

The Nigerian military has informed that on 10.05.22, unidentified gunmen killed at least seven soldiers on patrol in the south of Taraba State; two other military personnel are missing. The ambush was launched in Takum Local Government Area (LGA). Before, two deadly explosive attacks on pubs were last reported from Taraba in April 2022 (cf. BN of 25.04.22). According to media reports, ISWAP has claimed responsibility for these two attacks.

Deficits in press freedom

In the ranking of this year's World Press Freedom Index published on 03.05.22, Nigeria has fallen from position 120 to 129 compared to the previous year. In the index of two years ago, Nigeria had ranked 115 out of 180 (cf. BN of 16.11.20). According to media reports on the day of the publication of the index, the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) pointed out that independent media were indispensable for democracy in the country. Apart from attacks on journalists, politicians have attempted to criminalise journalism practice in the country through legislative proposals, the guild said. In order to strengthen the freedom of the press, the NGE demands a tax exemption for newsprint and other consumables in the media sector.

Pakistan

Attacks in Karachi and North Waziristan

On 12.05.22, one person was killed and at least another dozen injured in an explosion at a busy market in the metropolis of Karachi (Sindh). No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On 14.05.22, at least six people, among them three security personnel and three children, were killed in a suicide attack on a police vehicle in North Waziristan, which is part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), with whom the Pakistani government has recently agreed to a ceasefire in principle, are active in the region. Social media report that some rebel groups in North Waziristan have joined the TTP earlier this month.

Two Sikhs shot dead in Peshawar

On 14.05.22, unidentified assailants shot dead two Sikhs at a market in Peshawar. Sikhs are a very small minority in Pakistan's north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Their members have occasionally been the target of attacks in recent years.

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

West Bank: Journalist killed; two dead in clashes

On 11.05.22, well-known Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh died from gunshot wounds when reporting on a military raid in the town of Jenin which was met with resistance.

In initial statements, the Israeli military and the Palestinians present blamed each other for her killing. Later, the military conceded that the journalist may have been killed by military fire. An official review by the Israeli authorities has not yet been completed. Independent investigations by various NGOs, based mainly on social media analysis, point more to the military as the responsible party. Palestinian voices have called for an independent, international investigation.

In the following Palestinian funeral procession, one of the largest in years, mourners and the military clashed again in East Jerusalem on 13.05.22. According to the military, the mourners chanted nationalist slogans, ignored requests to stop and threw stones at security forces. Members of the security forces used batons against the mourners, including those who were carrying the coffin. The UN and numerous other international actors have condemned the actions of the security forces. The military leadership has announced an investigation into the incidents.

On 13.05.22, an officer of the Israeli military was killed in clashes with armed Palestinians near Jenin.

On 15.05.22, a Palestinian who was involved in armed clashes with the military died from gunshot wounds in Jenin.

Russian Federation

Arrest of war critics on the occasion of 9 May celebrations

According to international press reports citing OWD-Info, a total of 125 protesters against the war in Ukraine were arrested nationwide on 09.05.22, the anniversary of the Soviet victory over National Socialist Germany. During the victory and commemoration events, 82 of the arrested had apparently criticised the current military operation by showing peace posters and pictures of Holocaust survivors killed in Ukraine. In the remaining 43 cases, the arrests were based on previous participation in anti-war rallies and/or were preventive. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reports in this context of several charges under the new criminal offence of denigration of the armed forces introduced on 04.03.22, which provides for fines of up to RUB 100,000 (approx. EUR 1,445) and in repeated cases prison sentences of up to three years. According to reports by various media and NGOs, the number of house searches and arrests of peace activists and journalists had already increased in the previous days; several of those detained were still in custody.

Since the repressive action of the security authorities against protesters in the first weeks of the war (cf. BN of 28.02. to 21.03.22), rallies followed by arrests have decreased significantly, according to OWD-Info. However, reports are continuing of arrests, especially of people holding one-person protests on the street, and of subsequent sentences of fines or administrative detention of up to several days.

Somalia

Presidential election held

In the presidential election held on 15.05.22, former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was re-elected as the head of state in an indirect voting by the members of parliament and senate. He won against 35 candidates, among them incumbent President Abdullahi Farmajo who had taken over office from Mohamud in February 2017. Farmajo's term had expired in February 2021, which he extended despite heavy criticism following disagreement over the modalities of the presidential election (cf. BN of 03.05. and 31.05.21). For security reasons, a night-time curfew was imposed in Mogadishu from the evening of 14.05.22 to the morning of 16.05.22.

Attacks by al-Shabaab

In the days leading up to the election, al-Shabaab insurgents increased attacks on security forces. Besides several attacks and fights between al-Shabaab and security forces in Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle, which resulted in casualties on both sides, there were also clashes that harmed civilians. On 11.05.22, a suicide attack on a checkpoint in Mogadishu killed at least four civilians and wounded several others. The target was a vehicle carrying General Garabey, a Somali national army officer who was at the scene at the time. He survived the explosion. On 12.05.22, the village of Biyo Adde (Middle Shabelle) was attacked with mortar shells. Apparently, the shells hit both armed forces bases and residential buildings, killing at least two civilians and injuring others.

Sri Lanka

Several deaths, evacuation of Mahinda Rajapaksa, Wickremesinghe new prime minister

After the violent escalation and the resignation of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on 09.05.22 (cf. BN of 09.05.22), rioting escalated during the day and the night of 10.05.22. In several parts of the country, protesters from the anti-government camp reportedly set fire to dozens of houses belonging to the Rajapaksa family, former cabinet members and members of parliament. Also, numerous vehicles were damaged. In the course of the violence, at least nine people reportedly died and the number of injured rose to over 300. Some 230 people were reportedly arrested. Later that night, the resigned prime minister was evacuated along with his family from his Colombo residence by helicopter when protesters tried to storm the building. According to local media, he was taken to a naval base in Trincomalee (Eastern Province). Protesters accuse him of having initiated the attacks on anti-government demonstrators (cf. BN of 09.05.22) and demand his arrest. On 10.05.22, the defence ministry ordered security forces to shoot at anyone who destroys public property or endangers human life.

With the resignation of the Prime Minister, the entire cabinet was dissolved. On 12.05.22, the opposition politician Ranil Wickremesinghe (United National Party UNP) was sworn in as the new PM. He is taking office for the sixth time and belongs to the political establishment. According to observers, he does not enjoy broad support within the opposition and among the population and is said to be close to the Rajapaksa family. So far, he has appointed four cabinet members from the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP).

South Sudan

UN: Increase in sexual violence

According to a report published on 10.05.22 by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), cases of conflict-related sexual violence have increased in the first quarter of 2022. Compared to the same period last year, the figure has more than doubled with over 60 documented cases, although violence against civilians has decreased overall.

Persistent violence

On 11.05.22, at least 20 people were reportedly killed and a livestock of 3,000 to 10,000 animals stolen in a night raid on a livestock farm near Mugali Payam village in Magwi County, with details varying in the reports. In addition, 11 people were reportedly injured and more than 50 animals killed. Several people are considered missing, and many people left the region due to the fighting. Police said they had the situation under control, but no further details were given on the perpetrators or the exact circumstances of the attack. The government has stated that investigations and appropriate measures were being taken to curb the ongoing violence in the region.

Sudan

Charter for the Establishment of the People's Authority endorsed

On 11.05.22, a total of 15 resistance committees who are leading the protests against the military coup of 25.10.21 adopted the Charter for the Establishment of People's Authority in Khartoum State. The charter provides for an end to military rule and sets out the main structures for a two-year transition period. Also, the charter stipulates the repeal of the 2019 constitutional document, according to which the transitional government will consist of

military and civilian components. The charter also emphasises the need for security and military sector reform. The resistance committees refused to participate in the first round of negotiations held in calendar week 19 that aimed to provide a platform for all political actors and was initiated by the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (UNITAMS). As the political leadership is participating in this dialogue, the resistance committees fear that this would legitimise the coup. However, other opposition parties and actors did attend the meeting, among them the Forces for Freedom and Change - National Accord Group (FFC-NA). According to the organisers of the negotiations, the main issues to be discussed include the membership of the national sovereignty council, the legislative council, judicial matters, a new government programme and the causes and effects of the political and economic crisis.

Ongoing protest rallies

On 12.05.22, thousands protested against the Sudanese military government in Khartoum in the first large demonstration since the end of Ramadan. Security forces fired tear gas and stun grenades at the demonstrators. At times, some shops in the city were closed and parts of the city centre were evacuated. Protest rallies were also staged in other cities, with the use of live ammunition reported in Port Sudan. Throughout the country, several people were injured during the rallies.

Sudan / South Sudan

UNISFA mandate extended

On 12.05.22, the UN Security Council (UNSC) extended until 15.11.22 the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), a peacekeeping mission established in 2011 for the region of Abyei which is disputed between Sudan and South Sudan. The UNSC called on both the Sudanese and South Sudanese governments to support UNISFA in implementing its mandate and reiterated that Abyei should be demilitarised from all armed forces and armed social groups except UNISFA and the Abyei Police Service.

Syria

Northwest: Ten killed in attack on military transport

According to media reports, a military bus carrying pro-government paramilitaries was hit by a rocket on 13.05.22. The state news agency SANA and the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) unanimously reported ten people killed who were on board the bus. Nine others were reportedly injured. The incident took place in the west of Aleppo governorate, in the area bordering the rebel-controlled Idlib province.

It was one of the deadliest single incidents since the ceasefire agreement of March 2020 came into force. A few hours later, Russian warplanes shelled rebel positions.

State media: Five people killed in Israeli air strike in Hama

On 13.05.22, the state news agency SANA reported about an Israeli airstrike in Masyaf, a village in Hama governorate. Apparently, one civilian was among the five people killed. SOHR reported that at least eight rockets were fired at ammunition depots and Iranian militia positions. The attack also resulted in several fires.

According to SOHR, this was the twelfth Israeli airstrike this year. The Israeli military has not commented on the events.

USA approves investments in areas outside President Assad's control

On 12.05.22, the US treasury department announced that it would permit limited investments in and trade with areas in northern Syria despite sanctions in place. The activities permitted concern a total of 12 economic sectors, among them agriculture, construction, and finance. The purchase of petrol from the concerned areas by neighbouring states is also to be permitted. Imports into the USA will not be allowed.

The reason given for this step was that the danger of a resurgent IS needed to be countered with economic stabilisation. However, trade with and investments in areas under government control, will expressly not be permitted. On 13.05.22, the Syrian foreign ministry reacted with a statement calling the US measure a new conspiracy against Syria and vowed to "defeat" the move.

Togo

Security forces killed by unidentified gunmen

On 11.05.22, eight army personnel were killed and 13 wounded in an attack on an army post in Kpékpakandi (also: Kpinkankandi; Kpendjal prefecture, Savanes region) near the border with Burkina Faso. Initially, no one claimed responsibility for the attack, which was reportedly carried out by about 60 people on motorbikes. Some observers say that this might be the first deadly attack perpetrated by extremist groups in Togo.

In November 2021, the military had repelled an attack in the area by unknown attackers who had presumably entered Togo from Burkina Faso (cf. BN of 15.11.21). There were no victims in the incident. In Togo, as in the neighbouring coastal states of Benin and Ghana, it is feared that extremist groups active in the northern neighbouring states of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger might extend their activities to their national territories.

Tunisia

Thousands rally against President Saied

Media report that on 15.05.22, more than 2,000 people protested in Tunis against the policies of President Kais Saied and demanded a return to democratic order; furthermore, the protesters rejected the electoral commission appointed by Saied on 09.05.22. The rally was organised by the opposition alliance Front de salut national, which was founded at the end of April 2022. The alliance consists of five parties, including the Islamic Ennahda Party and the Al-Amal Party, as well as five civil society organisations and independent deputies.

Turkey

Soldiers wounded in attack on border post

The Turkish defence ministry has informed that on 12.05.22, suspected Kurdish fighters fired rockets and mortar shells from Syria at a military border post in south-eastern Turkey. In the incident, four Turkish soldiers and one civilian were wounded in the Karkamis district of Gaziantep province. The ministry said that the Turkish military conducted "retaliatory fire" against targets in the northern Syrian region of Kobani, from where the attack was allegedly launched. The injured soldiers were taken to hospital for treatment.

Verdict in the case of CHP politician Kaftancıoğlu

On 12.05.22, Turkey's court of cassation ruled in the case of Istanbul CHP leader Canan Kaftancıoğlu who in 2019 had been sentenced to almost ten years in prison and banned from politics for terrorist propaganda and insulting the president and the state on the basis of several Twitter messages she had posted from 2012 to 2017. The supreme court upheld the conviction on three counts, resulting in a prison sentence of four years, 11 months, and 20 days. Also, the court banned her from politics. The charges of terror propaganda and incitement of the people were dropped.

DEVA politician Gürçan arrested again

On 13.05.22, one day after his release, Turkish opposition politician Metin Gürçan was arrested again on espionage charges. A court had ordered the release of the co-founder of the opposition Democracy and Progressive Party (DEVA) on 12.05.22, four months after he had been imprisoned. He faces up to 35 years in prison. Gürçan, who had spoken out about developments in the military, had been arrested on 29.11.21 on charges of "political and military espionage". The politician and defence analyst is accused of allegedly selling secret information to foreign diplomats. On 12.05.22, the 27th high criminal court of Ankara issued a new arrest warrant for the DEVA party official only hours after his release.

Ukraine

Development of the fighting

Over the weekend, Russian forces continued their withdrawal from the northern part of Kharkiv oblast. The Russian side is expected to try to hold the front line near Vovchansk, through which communication to Isyum passes. The new front lines have allowed the Ukrainian side to shell the settlement of Sereda in the Russian oblast of Belgorod. Russian forces are expected to try to organise an attack on Sloviansk from the east and west of the Kharkiv-Rostov highway. Russia is also forming forces for the battle for Severodonetsk and is trying to advance from Popasna towards Bakhmut. The leadership of the Russian-appointed "military-civilian administrations" of Kherson oblast publicly indicated that the aim is to integrate the occupied oblast into the Russian Federation.

Humanitarian situation

The Ukrainian economy continues to be severely affected by the conflict. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is now forecasting negative growth of 30 percent for 2022, a downward revision of ten percentage points compared to the Bank's projections released at the end of March. However, according to the Bank, the actual GDP growth rate will largely depend on the duration of hostilities, the terms of a peace agreement, the shape of any post-war settlement, the extent of reconstruction and the number of refugees who will return home. Up to and including 12.05.22, at least 3,573 civilians have been killed and 3,816 injured in connection with the conflict, according to UN figures; a total of 6,111,172 people have fled Ukraine so far (as of 13.05.22).

Venezuela

Economic situation: Offer of shares in state-owned enterprises, expansion of oil cooperation with Iran

On 11.05.22, President Maduro announced his intention to offer up to 10 percent of the shares of selected state-owned companies, among them oil, telecommunications and gas companies, to national and also to international investors on the national stock exchange from 16.05.22 onwards.

Media report that cooperation with Iran in the energy sector, which has existed since 2020, is also to be expanded. Within the framework of this cooperation, oil swaps have repeatedly taken place in recent years, in particular Iranian condensate was imported for the dilution and processing of Venezuelan heavy oil for export. In addition, Iran has also supplied equipment for the repair and modernisation of oil refineries of the state oil company PDVSA. On 13.05.22, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported that after talks in early May, the two countries signed a contract to repair and restart the El Palito production facility, Carabobo state, as part of the plan to reactivate oil production. Having already imported some 600,000 barrels of Iranian oil since mid-April to supplement oil supplies to PDVSA refineries, a further 2 million barrels of oil and 1 million barrels of Iranian condensate are scheduled to be imported this month in return for Venezuelan heavy crude and fuel oil.

Special prosecutor's office for LGBTIQ rights established

On 11.05.22, attorney general Saab reported on the establishment of a special prosecutor's office for the rights of LGBTIQ people. This office was officially assigned to the directorate general for human rights and will investigate offences against LGBTIQ people in the future.

Yemen

Sanaa Airport: Agreement on passports issued in Houthi-controlled areas

On 12.05.22, the internationally recognised government of Yemen announced that it would allow travel for holders of passports issued by the Houthi authorities. The first flight out of the city of Sanaa since 2015 had been scheduled for 24.04.22, but it could not take off as the Yemeni government did not accept Houthi-issued passports and denied permission to depart (cf. BN of 25.04.22). Reportedly, the first flight bound for Amman may now take off on 16.05.22, with a second destination to Cairo to follow soon.

