



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

13 June 2022

Afghanistan

Security situation: Increased fighting between the National Resistance Front and the Taliban

Fighting is intensifying between the Taliban and the National Resistance Front (NRF) in Baghlan and Panjshir provinces, with deaths and injuries on both sides. In the contested areas, the Taliban have forced many residents out of their homes and are now using these buildings as bases. Some of the residents have been arrested, tortured, or even killed by the Taliban because of possible links to the NRF. Also, the Taliban appear to be using biometric devices to search for former soldiers among passers-by at checkpoints in Panjshir. On 06.06.22, a bomb attack was launched on a Taliban head of the city administration in Kabul's PD 4 district, injuring his bodyguard and several civilians. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Persecution situation: restrictions on freedom of the press and religion

On 01.06.22, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) called on the Taliban to end their harsh measures against journalists. Reporters Without Borders reported on 12.06.22 that twelve journalists were arbitrarily detained by the Taliban last month. Among them was the host of a popular satirical show on ToloTV. On 08.06.22, a well-known Youtuber was arrested with three other colleagues on the pretext of blasphemy. On 02.06.22, the US State Department presented its annual religious freedom report, highlighting the dramatic deterioration of religious freedom under the Taliban rule, especially because women are denied their rights to education and work on religious grounds, and also because the Taliban are not able to prevent the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKAP) from carrying out increasingly deadly attacks on Shia Hazaras.

Algeria

Another critical journalist convicted

On 07.06.22, the Sidi M'Hamed court in Algiers sentenced journalist Ihsane El-Kadi, director of the independent media Radio M and Maghreb Emergent, to six months' imprisonment without a warrant and a fine of DND 50,000 (approx. EUR 320, as of 13.06.22). He was charged for an analytical article published on 23.03.21 in which he advocated the inclusion of the Islamic conservative movement Rachad into the Hirak protest movement. The Rachad movement had been listed as a terrorist organisation about a year ago.

Whistleblower faces death sentence

An Algerian military court last week pronounced the death sentence on Algerian whistleblower and activist Mohamed Benhalima, who was wanted for involvement in the Hirak protests. After his asylum application was rejected in Spain, he now faces deportation to Algeria. Already in January and March 2021, Benhalima had been sentenced in absentia to 20 years in prison for allegedly "participating in a terrorist organisation" and "publishing fake news to undermine national unity", among other charges. On 21.03.22, the United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR) had written to the Spanish government arguing that the risk of torture was credible and that the Algerian regime's criminalisation of political opposition was well known.

Prosecution of members of the Ahmadiyya faith

Amnesty International reports that on 06.06.22, a total of 24 believers **of the Ahmadiyya faith** were charged in Bejaia on charges of participating in an unauthorised group as well as denigrating Islam. Three members were immediately arrested.

Armenia

Many people injured and arrested during demonstrations in Yerevan

In the night to 04.06.22 many people were injured, and several demonstrators were temporarily arrested in the capital Yerevan when government opponents clashed with the police during protests against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, which have been ongoing since mid-April 2022. Around 50 people were seriously injured, among them several police officers. The demonstrators also marched to the Prime Minister's residence, calling him a "traitor" and demanding his resignation. The protests are directed against Pashinyan's policy regarding the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is disputed between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia is now seeking a peace agreement with neighbouring Azerbaijan under international mediation, including Russia. So far, a ceasefire between the two states has been monitored by Russian soldiers. The opposition fears that Pashinyan intends to cede the entire Nagorno-Karabakh region to Azerbaijan (cf. BN of 09.05.22).

Bangladesh

Registration of leading human rights organisation revoked

On 05.06.22, the human rights organisation Odhikar informed that the Office for the Affairs of Non-Governmental Organisations has not renewed the licence of the group, which had been founded in 1994. Apparently, the government has justified its decision with the damage the organisation was causing to the country's image with its work. Odhikar had regularly documented human rights violations by Bangladeshi security forces and especially the police Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and worked closely with the United Nations.

Burkina Faso

New law allows government to take national defence measures by decree

On 06.06.22, the interim parliament passed a law empowering the government to "take action by decree in areas normally within the purview of the law to better organise the fight against terrorism and protect civilians". The new law, which is intended to enable the government to act more quickly on matters of national defence, is valid for one year.

Professional organisations of media workers criticised the law on 03.06.22. Among other things, they fear future restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

Leading jihadist killed

Reports of late May say that on 26.05.22, a military airstrike near Tongomayel (Sahel region) killed several jihadists, among them Tidiane Djibrilou Dicko, who led a combat unit of the al-Qaida-affiliated Group in Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), which is blamed for a number of attacks in the north of the country. He had previously belonged to the IS in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and is among 46 wanted suspected jihadists whose names were released by the government in early May 2022.

Chad

More than 100 people killed in gold mine violence

The defence ministry has informed that on 23.05 and 24.05.22, more than 100 people were killed and 40 others injured in a violent clash at a gold mine in Kouri Bougoudi, a north-western district of Tibesti Province on the Libyan border. Apparently, the reason for the outbreak of violence was a dispute between mine workers. The authorities subsequently stopped the operation of the informal mine. There are a number of informal gold mines in Tibesti province, where people from Chad and neighbouring countries such as Niger, Libya and Sudan work.

Government declares food emergency

Due to a lack of grain supplies and the increase in world market prices for grain as a result of the Ukraine war, the chairman of the military government Mahamt Idriss Déby Itno has declared a food emergency for Chad and asked for international support. According to the UN, more than a third of Chad's population, or about 5.5 million people, will be dependent on humanitarian aid in 2022. According to estimates by the World Food Programme of March 2022, about 2.1 million people in Chad will be severely affected by food insecurity when the lean season starts in June 2022.

Colombia/ Venezuela

Gentil Duarte (FARC) killed in Venezuelan state of Zulia

According to numerous media reports, the Colombian defence minister Molano informed on 26.05.22 that Miguel Botache Santanilla, better known as Gentil Duarte, was killed on 04.05.22 in the Venezuelan state of Zulia. This was confirmed by FARC dissidents on 30.05.22. However, reports vary considerably on the exact course of events and on who was responsible for the killing: While FARC dissidents attribute the killing to the Colombian armed forces, other sources note clashes or an attack by members of the ELN or other competing criminal groups leading to the death of the influential leader of the 7th FARC Front.

DR Congo

North Kivu Province: Partial restoration of civilian criminal jurisdiction

Citing the Network for Human Rights (REDHO), the UN information radio Okapi reports an at least partial resumption of the civilian criminal justice system in North Kivu province, which had been temporarily completely replaced by military jurisdiction when the state of siege came into force at the beginning of May 2021 (cf. BN of 17.05.21). According to REDHO, trials in criminal cases are again taking place in civilian criminal courts, especially in the Beni and Butembo regions. Between 31.05 and 02.06.22, Radio Okapi indeed reported about several criminal trials held before the Beni peace court. REDHO mentioned that the President of the Republic, Félix Tshisekedi, had issued a decree authorizing the civilian courts to examine certain offences that are punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. In cases with a level of penalty beyond five years, civilians continue to be subject to the military justice system. REDHO has noted several abuses in the criminal justice system in North Kivu Province since the declaration of the state of siege, including cases of overstaying of sentences and detentions without trial. According to REDHO, the hope is that the resumption of criminal trials by civil courts will contribute to relieving the overcrowded prisons in North Kivu Province.

Human rights NGOs concerned about shrinking of civil and political space

The International Federation of Leagues for Human Rights (FIDH), the Association Africaine de Defense des Droits de L'Homme (ASADHO) and Groupe Lotus note "with concern" a reduction in civil and political freedom. According to the President of ASADHO Jean Claude Katende, this is epitomized by numerous instances of administrative and judicial authorities attacking political opponents' and human rights defenders' and journalists' freedom of movement and the right to personal liberty. Human rights defenders continue to be victims of threats and attacks, and a law to protect them has still not been passed, Katende stated.

Eastern Congo: security situation, ADF, continuation of military operation with Uganda, CODECO, peace declaration

In a statement of 11.06.22, the UN points to the deteriorating security situation in the areas of eastern Congo affected by rebel and militia violence, with increasing attacks on civilians by the Coopérative de développement du Congo (CODECO/URDPC) and Mouvement du 23-Mars (M23). Another worrying factor of instability was the continued presence of foreign armed groups, including the radical Islamic rebel group Forces démocratiques alliées (ADF), originally from Uganda, the Burundian rebel group Red Tabara and the Rwandan rebel group Forces Démocratique pour la libération de Rwanda (FDLR). Media report cite the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC (UNJHRO) that between January 2021 and January 2022, the ADF killed at least 1,311 civilians, mainly in the territories of Beni (North Kivu), Irumu as well as Mambasa (both Ituri). During this period, the UNJHRO recorded an increase of nearly 40 percent in human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law attributable to members of the ADF compared to the (unspecified) previous reporting period. Several local armed groups were acting in collusion with the ADF, especially in their areas of operation and influence in Beni and Irumu territories. The joint military operations of the DRC and Uganda against the ADF, limited to the state of emergency provinces of North Kivu and Ituri (cf. BN of 06.12.21) which were extended for a further two months on 01.06.22, have reportedly led to the dispersal and displacement of the ADF who have become a danger in other places in the territories of Beni and Mambasa. According to the UNJHRO, the ADF's area of operation in Beni territory has shifted from the north-east to the north-west.

UNHCR also reported that CODECO/URDPC, which is primarily recruited from the Lendu ethnic group, has killed more than 200 IDPs in Djugu Territory (Ituri) in 16 attacks within nine months. The CODECO, whose various factions have been reportedly responsible for massacres of civilians and other attacks on civilians in Djugu Territory in recent months, is suspected of having killed and injured several civilians in various villages in Djugu territory on 06.06. and 10.06.22. This is despite the fact that, according to consistent media reports, CODECO committed itself to join the peace process and to cease hostilities on 04.06.22 after several days of high-level negotiations with renowned representatives of the Lendu community and other ethnic groups. Without swift implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery and Stabilization Program (P-DDRCS), representatives of the ethnic communities fear that the CODECO will continue their attacks on the civilian population.

Egypt

Several political prisoners released

Between 30.05. and 03.06.22, the authorities released at least 11 civil society activists, media workers and political opposition members who had been imprisoned about three years ago, mostly on charges of spreading false news. The releases are based on the recommendation of the Presidential Pardon Committee, which was reactivated at the end of April 2022.

El Salvador

State of emergency extended

On 25.05.22, the state of emergency in force since the end of March 2022 was extended for another 30 days (cf. BN of 02.05.22, 28.03.22 and 04.04.22). 67 members of the 84-seat parliament voted in favour of the extension of the emergency powers which restrict the freedom of assembly and the secrecy of telecommunications, among other things. According to police reports, more than 34,500 suspected gang members have been arrested so far. However, Amnesty International (AI) speaks of thousands of arbitrary arrests and reports of torture and ill-treatment. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, CIDH) has called on the government to act according to the rule of law in the prosecution of crimes and to respect human rights.

The Gambia

Adversely mentioned civil servants threatened with suspension and termination of service

Media report that the Gambian government stated on the occasion of the publication of its White Paper on 25.05.22 (cf. BN of 30.05.22) that all public servants would be suspended from official duty who were negatively mentioned in the report of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC, cf. BN. v. 29.11.21). Justice minister Dawda Jallow mentioned on that day that several of these individuals were continuing to serve in various areas of the civil service, including the security sector (cf. BN of 17.01.22). Besides, the government intended to terminate the employment of these people, while taking into account all the circumstances of each individual case, Dawda Jallow said.

While the government was accepting the TRRC's recommendation to prosecute the Commander of the Crime Investigation Unit (PIU) Gorgi Mboob and disqualify him from holding office for a period of five years, the justice minister defended the government's controversial decision to disqualify from holding office for a period of ten years neither Ousman Sowe, the current director general of the Domestic Intelligence Service (SIS, formerly National Intelligence Agency, NIA), nor Yankuba Sonko, the former home minister under President Adama Barrow. The justice minister said that in the case of Yankuba Ousman Sowe, the government had noted that the charges of destruction and misappropriation of evidence at the NIA brought against him had taken place in May 2017 and thus fell outside the TRRC's investigation period (July 1994 to January 2017). Human rights activist and political commentator Pa Samba, however, stated that Ousman Sowe was no longer tenable as director general of the SIS, as he was not able to lead an impartial investigation into the crimes committed by NIA officials under former President Yahya Jammeh. In the case of Yankuba Sonko, who allegedly had played a role in covering up the murder of 67 West African immigrants in 2005, the government sees no reason to conduct further investigations.

Guinea

Police officers arrested after death of demonstrator

During a protest rally held in Conakry against the announced increase in fuel prices on 01.06.22, one participant was killed when police officers fired warning shots. Media report that riot police had previously dispersed the rally using tear gas before protests resumed in the Hamdallaye neighbourhood. Apparently, the protests against the fuel price increase were the first since the military coup of 05.09.21. The ruling military junta had banned rallies outside future election campaign periods (cf. BN of 16.05.22) and also rejected a UN appeal of 30.05.22 to restore the right to demonstrate. On 08.06.22 media cited the attorney general in charge Alphonse Charles Wright, that five people, among them four police officers, were arrested in connection with the death of the protester. Witnesses were reportedly assured of protection.

India

Reactions on Islamophobic statements; ongoing protests

In response to remarks by a spokesperson of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which members of the Muslim faith perceived as an insult to the Prophet Muhammad, protest rallies were staged in various Indian cities and in the neighbouring Muslim countries of Bangladesh and Pakistan. Reportedly, several Arab countries called for a boycott of Indian goods, and a regional offshoot of the al-Qaida terror network threatened suicide attacks in India because of the offensive remarks. The BJP distanced itself from the remarks and on 05.06.22 suspended the spokesperson and one of her colleagues who had made a similar Islamophobic comment on social media.

On 03.06.22, Hindus and Muslims clashed after Friday prayers in Kanpur the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Since 10.06.22, protests have continued in New Delhi and other major cities. In the northern and north-eastern provinces, two protesters were killed, ten others and 14 security forces were injured, and 270 people were arrested for alleged rioting and disturbing public order. Internet access was blocked for several hours in several regions.

Kashmir: Hindus assassinated

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the targeted killings of two Hindus have driven hundreds of members of the Hindu minority in the region to flee. On 31.05.22, suspected rebels shot dead a Hindu teacher near the entrance to a government school in Kulgam district. Two days later, on 02.06.22, another Hindu from the Indian state of Rajasthan was shot dead.

Kashmiri separatists see both Hindus living in Kashmir (locally known as Pandits), and local Muslims employed by the Indian government in police and other departments as collaborators of the Indian regime in country's only Muslim-majority region. At the end of May 2022, three Muslim policemen and a female Muslim media worker were killed by suspected rebels in three separate attacks (cf. BN of 30.05.22).

Iran

Religious minorities: 26 Baha'i sentenced to prison terms and exit bans

On 13.06.22, foreign media cite a Persian-language human rights portal reporting that 26 members of the Baha'i religious community have been sentenced by a court in Shiraz (Fars province) to prison terms ranging from two to five years as well a ban from leaving the country for two years and being sent to exile. According to the reports, the convicted had already been arrested and charged in 2016. After their release on bail, their criminal cases were reviewed and reopened in May 2022 (cf. BN of 23.05.22). The charges included conspiracy against the internal and external security of the country. The present verdict was reportedly justified on the evidence that the accused had assembled in slums and at religious sites and that they had been involved in protests against environmental damage in the course of the water crisis. The reports do not indicate that the convictions were based purely on their religious affiliation.

Twelve detainees executed in Zahedan (Sistan and Baluchistan Province)

Foreign media and human rights organisations report that on 06.06.22, a total of 12 people were executed in the central prison of Zahedan in the south-east of the country. According to the reports, the 11 men and one woman were from the Baluch region, six of whom were charged with murder and another six were imprisoned for drug offences. On 24.06.22, Amnesty International (AI) reported that the number of death sentences carried out worldwide in 2021 increased by 20 percent compared to the previous year. In Iran, executions in connection with drug offences have increased (cf. BN 30.05.22). On 08.06.22, the organisation Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) reported that at least 168 death sentences were carried out in the period from 01.01.22 to 31.05.22 (compared to 110 executions in the same period last year).

Iraq

Repatriations from Al-Hol

On 01.06.22, another 50 Iraqi prisoners were handed over to the Iraqi authorities from the al-Hol camp in Syria. Iraqis are the largest group of prisoners in this camp. Repatriations are very slow and highly controversial in Iraq.

Drone attack in Erbil

On 08.06.22, a drone carrying explosives attacked Erbil Pirmam Street in Erbil, injuring three people and damaging several vehicles and a restaurant. Kurdish security forces blame an Iranian-allied militia; the drone was apparently launched from Kirkuk province. Pro-Iranian internet sources claim that the drone targeted a Mossad agent; both Israeli and the Kurdish authorities have rejected the allegations as unfounded.

IS

On 06.06.22, several members of the IS command were arrested. In the corresponding raids, the KRG and the federal security forces had collaborated. This cooperation was strongly highlighted in the media coverage.

Missile attack on the Turkish Zilkan base

On 09.06.22, two rockets, apparently fired from near Mosul, hit near the Turkish base of Zilkan. The base has been used by Turkish units in Nineveh province for several years; it is located near the village of Baashiqa and has been the target of similar attacks several times in the past.

Cameroon

Five gendarmes killed by rebels in western region; nine civilians killed by soldiers

The regional governor has informed that five Cameroonian military police officers were killed and three others injured in an attack in the western region on 07.06.22. The attack was launched in Njitapon in the Kouoptamo district, in the western French-speaking region bordering the two Anglophone regions. Rebels have been fighting against the French-speaking majority state since 2016.

Cameroon's military deployed about a hundred soldiers to the French-speaking village of Njitapon after 35 English-speaking separatists attacked the outpost with guns, bombs, and rocket launchers. 12 villagers were abducted, and weapons were stolen.

On 07.06.22, government personnel informed that in early June 2022, four soldiers killed nine civilians, among them a baby, in the north-western region (Missong village). Apparently, the soldiers had received no help from the locals in their search for a missing colleague in the area threatened by the rebels. The army acknowledged a "disproportionate" and "hasty response". A military spokesperson said that the four soldiers were arrested.

Kazakhstan

Referendum on the partial revision of the Kazakh constitution adopted

A referendum held on 05.05.22 on the partial revision of the Kazakh constitution was accepted with 77.18 percent votes. The amendments aim in particular to abolish the personal privileges of former president Nursultan Nazarbayev and to introduce restrictions on the presidential powers. No-one will be able to be elected president more than twice in a row, he or she must resign from his or her party while in office, and his or her relatives will no longer be allowed to hold leading positions in state and quasi-state structures. Likewise, the establishment of a constitutional court is envisaged. The amendments also aim to strengthen parliament and introduce a mixed electoral system. The incumbent President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and others see the referendum as part of a transition process from a super-presidential form of government to a presidential republic with a strong parliament. However, a number of political analysts describe the reforms as cosmetic, noting that the changes do not democratise the society and leave the president with considerable powers to influence all branches of government and the political institutions.

Kosovo

Protesters and police clash over minimum wage law

During a demonstration of about 2,000 veterans of the Kosovo war, there were clashes with the police in Pristina on 06.06.22. Media report that at least three people were injured. The protesters had tried to force their way into the parliament building but were prevented by security forces from doing so. The background to the protests is a bill to raise the minimum wage from EUR 130 (for people under 35) and EUR 170 (for people over 35) to the general gross amount of EUR 264. However, war veterans are not included in this scheme; rather, they will continue to receive a special pension equal to the previous minimum wage, according to the government's plan. The vote on the law, scheduled for the protest day, did not take place because the parliament did not meet the quorum.

Lebanon

Economic situation

On 10.06.22, the General Security announced that the passport electronic platform would open again on 13.06.22 onwards. Appointments for passport applications had been stopped in April 2022. The General Security called on people to only apply for a passport if it was really needed urgently.

Morocco

Rededication of the Jewish cemetery in Meknes

Jews of Moroccan origin from all over the world participated in the rededication of the historic Jewish cemetery in Meknes. Morocco had recognised the country's Jewish culture as a fundamental element in the 2011 constitution and concluded the Abraham Accord with Israel in 2020.

Myanmar

Dozens killed in fighting and attacks

Media report that between 25.05. and 08.06.22, the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) and local resistance forces (People's Defence Forces, PDF) or ethnic armies clashed in Magway and Sagaing regions as well as in Chin, Rakhine and Shan states. In Sagaing, at least 27 civilians and four PDF members died as a result of artillery fire or targeted killings by military personnel. In addition, junta forces in the region burnt down over 500 houses and destroyed dozens of motorbikes and motorboats used for food supplies. In Magway, Rakhine and Shan, nine civilians were killed in fighting or by landmines. Seven people were seriously injured in Tatmadaw attacks on IDP camps in Rakhine and Sagaing. Another five people were injured in Yangon on 30.05.22 when a military vehicle rammed into a group of protesters. On 31.05.22, the explosion of a bomb planted by unidentified individuals killed one person and injured nine others in Yangon. Reporters suspect opposition members and PDF members behind the murders of nine people who worked for the military administration or the police or who had relatives working there in Magway, Mandalay, and Kachin.

Military junta plans first executions in three decades

On 03.06.22, junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun announced the execution by hanging of four people, among them Phyo Zeya Thaw, former parliamentary member of the National League of Democracy (NLD), and prominent democracy activist Kyaw Min Yu, who had both been sentenced to death for treason and terrorism in January 2021. Two others are to be executed for the murder of a suspected female junta informant. Since the military coup of 01.02.21, military courts have sentenced at least 114 people to death, 41 of them in absentia. The planned executions would be the first executions based on judicial verdicts since 1988.

Nicaragua

Further NGOs deprived of legal personality

El Confidencial reports that on 31.05. and 02.06.22, the Sandinista-dominated National Assembly (AN) stripped a total of 179 more NGOs of their legal personality, thus bringing the total number to 378 in 2022. The organisations concerned are accused among other things of violating the law on the regulation and control of NGOs (Ley General de Regulación y Control de Organismos Sin Fines de Lucro), which entered into force on 06.05.22. A motion to vote on the deprivation of the legal personality of another 93 NGOs is on the agenda for 14.06.22; its adoption is considered a formality.

Trial of political prisoner begins

On 31.05.22, the trial for conspiracy against national integrity began against Yubrank Suazo, opposition leader in Masaya and member of the Alianza Cívica por la Justicia y la Democracia, who was arrested by police using violence

on 18.05.22. Suazo, who had been detained for the first time in 2018 in connection with the protests staged at the time, is counted by the monitoring mechanism for political prisoners as the 183rd political prisoner in the country.

Nigeria

Southwest: Dozens killed in attack on church

Consistent media reports say that on 05.06.22, unidentified individuals attacked a Catholic church in Owo town, Ondo State, during worship and killed at least 40 people, among them many children and pregnant women; many more people were injured. In recent years, various violent groups have carried out numerous attacks, robberies, and kidnappings, especially in the north of Nigeria, with high numbers of victims in some cases. In comparison, the south has been less affected so far.

Southeast: Kidnapped spiritual leader released for ransom

According to media reports, unidentified individuals kidnapped the prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria (MCN), Samuel Kanu-Uche, and two other clergymen accompanying him on 29.05.22 in Abia State and demanded a high ransom the following day. Two days after the abduction, the three men were released on payment of a total of NGN 100 million (approx. EUR 225,000, as of 13.06.22).

More than 800 Islamists killed by military

According to official military information, the multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to fight Islamist terror in the vicinity of Lake Chad killed a total of 805 Islamists in the period 28.03.22 to 04.06.22. In addition, a large number of vehicles and weapons were destroyed or confiscated in the Lake Chad region. The operation known as Lac Sanity was conducted by armed forces from Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. A total of around 3,000 military personnel were involved in the air, land, and sea operations.

Pakistan

Ceasefire between TTP and Pakistani government extended

The ceasefire between the radical Islamic Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Pakistani government, which was agreed until 30.05.22, has been extended indefinitely (cf. BN of 23.05.22). According to a spokesman for the TTP, the decision on the ceasefire was taken after considerable progress in talks in Kabul with a delegation of 50 Pakistani tribal elders mediated by the interior minister of Afghanistan's Taliban government, who is also the leader of the Haqqani network and has been placed on international terror lists. The progress has been confirmed by a Pakistani government spokesperson. Apparently, the former head of the powerful ISI military intelligence agency, who now leads the army in Pakistan's troubled north-western region and has good relations with the Taliban on both sides of the border, is the informal negotiator on the Pakistani side. On 31.05.22, a new delegation of elders from Pakistan arrived in the Afghan capital for a new round of negotiations.

Meanwhile, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 militants are fighting in the alliance of various Taliban groups in the former Pakistani tribal areas along the Afghan border, which today belong to the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Organisationally, the TTP is a separate entity from the Afghan Taliban. However, both groups share the same ideology and cooperate with each other logistically. In addition, the security in the Afghan border region is threatened by networks operating separately who do not officially belong to the TTP. Also, the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) has resumed activities in the former tribal areas, and separatist groups in Balochistan Province have also gained strength.

Ahmadi Muslims killed

On 17.05.22, an Ahmadi Muslim was stabbed to death for reasons of faith by an orthodox Islamic religious student in Okara district of Punjab province. Also, the Ahmadiyya community press release of 28.05.22 reports two more murders of community members near Faisalabad. Violence against Ahmadis is not only promoted with hostile rhetoric by Islamic fundamentalists, but also visible in everyday life with anti-Ahmadi stickers and posters in public places and educational institutions.

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

Palestinian authorities accuse Israel of killing journalist

On 26.05.22, the Palestinian authorities published the results of their investigation on the death of the Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh concluding that the Israeli military shot her intentionally when she tried to get out of the shooting zone (cf. BN of 16.05.22). The Israeli military's conclusion was that its members did not deliberately target media workers. A weapon was identified that might have fired the shot, and the Israeli military asked the Palestinian authorities to hand over the bullet to determine whether the journalist was killed by the military or by armed Palestinians. The Palestinian authorities have refused to do so.

Meanwhile, the Qatar-based media network for which Abu Akleh was working has announced its intention to take the case to the International Criminal Court.

West Bank: Several dead in clashes with Israeli military

The Palestinian health ministry has informed that on 27.05.22, a 15-year-old Palestinian was killed by gunfire during an Israeli military operation in Bethlehem. The military claimed to have fired at a Palestinian who was throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at army personnel.

The Israeli military stated that on 01.06.22, a Palestinian woman was shot dead in the south of the West Bank after approaching a patrol with a knife. Anonymous sources say that the woman had been detained for three months for a failed knife attack on Israeli military personnel.

According to the Palestinian health ministry, another person was killed on the same day in the village of Ya'bad, near the West Bank town of Jenin, when armed individuals attacked Israeli forces demolishing the house of a Palestinian who had killed five people in the Israeli town of Bnei Brak in March 2022 (see BN of 04.04.22). Hamas has confirmed that the man killed was one of their fighters.

On 02.06.22, a Palestinian was killed when military personnel were reportedly attacked with stones and homemade bombs during an arrest mission in Dheisheh refugee camp and answered the attack with live ammunition.

On the same day, a 17-year-old Palestinian was killed near the border compound in western Ramallah, both the health ministry and the Palestinian news agency Wafa report. The Israeli military stated to have shot at three people who threw firebombs at them.

On 09.06.22, another Palestinian was shot dead by the Israeli military during protests in response to a raid by the military in the village of Halhul in the south of the West Bank, during which, according to the military, stones and firebombs were thrown at the soldiers.

Jerusalem: Numerous injured during Jerusalem Day march

During a march through parts of East Jerusalem on the occasion of Jerusalem Day on 29.05.22, clashes and confrontations occurred between Israeli participants and Palestinians. Israeli police and military had made efforts to clear the march route in advance. The Palestinian Red Crescent recorded 62 people injured. Among the more than 70,000 participants were people chanting racist slogans and threats. Numerous people were arrested. Having reviewed many court records, an Israeli daily newspaper criticised that nearly all of those arrested were Palestinians.

Russian Federation

Prison sentences against Jehovah's Witnesses

On 06.06.22, a court in the Siberian city of Chita sentenced three Jehovah's Witnesses to prison terms of six years each, finding them guilty of organising and participating in activities of an extremist organisation. In addition, one Jehovah's Witness received a five-year prison sentence for membership in an extremist group and recruiting new members, while another one received a six-year suspended sentence. The Russian supreme court had classified the Jehovah's Witness organisation as extremist and banned it in April 2017.

Somalia

Looming famine

According to a UN statement published on 06.06.22, around 231,000 Somalis are facing starvation. This is almost three times more than the UN had expected. The reasons are the drought (cf. BN of 28.03.22), which has developed into the worst in 40 years since a fourth consecutive rainy season has failed, and the sharp increase in food prices following the Ukraine crisis. Currently, some 7.1 million people, almost half the population, are apparently facing acute food insecurity. The UN estimates that thousands of people have died of hunger since the beginning of the year. There are also reports of increasing deaths of children fleeing from al-Shabaab-controlled areas and other hard-to-reach places in the Bay and Bakool regions.

Inauguration of President Mohamud

On 09.06.22, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who was elected in May (see BN of 16.05.22), was sworn in as president. Hundreds of people attended the ceremony at Mogadishu airport, among them the heads of state of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. In his speech, the president promised to tackle corruption, poverty, and the volatile security situation and to promote political unity between the federal government and the constituent states. Also, he appealed to the international community to assist in averting famine. For security reasons, a curfew was imposed in Mogadishu.

Execution

On 07.06.22, a court in the town of Baidoa (Bay Region) sentenced to death a man who had killed a businesswoman a few days earlier. After the verdict was pronounced, the man was executed by a firing squad.

US drone attack

Official reports say that five al-Shabaab fighters were killed by US drones near Beer Haani (Lower Juba) on 03.06.22. The attack followed an assault by al-Shabaab on the national security forces and was the first drone strike after the USA announced to redeploy troops in Somalia (cf. BN of 23.05.22).

South Sudan

Execution after finding a dead soldier

On 25.06.22, a 16-year-old boy found a dead soldier tied to a tree in the village of Kiri Boma in Kajokeji (Central Equatoria). The family reported the find to the local authorities. The following day, soldiers arrived in the village and shot dead the 16-year-old, his brother, and a neighbour. The authorities had not questioned the three people or others about the alleged crime. Other family members were temporarily detained without charge.

Sudan

Inter-communal clashes in West Darfur and South Kordofan

In Kulbus, north of Jebel Moon (West Darfur), armed clashes broke out between 05.06 and 09.06.22 following a dispute over agricultural land. In the fighting, at least 49 people were killed and dozens more were injured. Police forces and army personnel deployed to the region are apparently also among the victims.

In South Kordofan, at least 11 people died after a dispute between two individuals escalated and rival Arab groups started fighting.

Ongoing protests / First meeting between government and FFC

Using tear gas and live ammunition, the security forces again squashed protests in Khartoum and El Gezira, where participants demanded the overthrow of military rule and the establishment of a civilian government. The UN is calling for accelerated investigations into the killings of protesters and other violence. The death toll since the military coup in October 2021 has risen to nearly 100.

For the first time since the coup, the pro-democratic alliance Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC), the military government and representatives of various political met on 09.06.22, with the aim of ending the ongoing political

impasse. The talks had begun a day earlier. The FFC and other civil groups initially refused to participate in the negotiations due to the use of violence against protesters.

UNITAMS mission extended

On 03.06.22, the UN Security Council voted unanimously for a one-year extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission Sudan (UNITAMS). The mission is striving to resolve the political crisis triggered by the military coup. Earlier, hundreds of demonstrators gathered in front of the UNITAMS headquarters in Khartoum and demanded the resignation of the mission's head Volker Perthes, accusing him, among other things, of interfering in internal affairs.

Syria

Northern Syria: Drone attack in Tal Abyad leaves several people dead

Media report that on 01.06.22, a rocket was fired at the Turkish-occupied city of Tal Abyad in northern Syria, killing at least three people and injuring ten others. The attack occurred a few hours after Turkish President Erdoğan announced in a speech that the Turkish army would soon eliminate all "terrorists" from the towns of Manbij and Tal Rifaat, which are currently still controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). For several weeks, the Turkish government has been announcing a new military offensive in northern Syria (cf. BN of 30.05.22).

The SDF has denied responsibility for the attack on Tal Abyad. On 07.06.22, they also announced that in the event of another Turkish offensive, they would turn to the Syrian government in Damascus for military support.

Deir ez-Zor: Three people killed in attack on civilian transport bus

According to a state news report, militants attacked a bus near a remote locality in Deir ez-Zor governorate on 02.06.22. Three people were reportedly killed and 21 injured. No further details were released about the course of events or about claimants of responsibility for the attack.

Damascus: Airport operations completely suspended after Israeli air strikes

Syrian media reported that Damascus International Airport had to suspend all flights on 10.06.22 after the runway had suffered major damage. The private airline Sham Wings informed that all flights from Damascus would be diverted via Aleppo International Airport and that a free shuttle bus service would be provided to passengers between Damascus and Aleppo.

The pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that both the northern runway of the airport and the air traffic control tower were damaged after an Israeli air strike destroyed three weapons depots on the airport grounds. The weapons depots were reportedly run by Iranian or Iranian-sponsored militia groups.

The airport's northern runway was the only one still in operation after the one located further south had been damaged by a similar incident last year.

Tunisia

Numerous judges dismissed - protest against interference in judiciary

On 01.06.22, President Saïed announced by decree the dismissal of a total of 57 members of the judiciary, whom he accused of corruption, protection of terrorist organisations and sexual violence. Since the weekend that followed, courtrooms throughout the country have been closed due to the strike by judges; numerous protesters, among them lawyers and activists, have gathered in front of the Palace of Justice in Tunis. On 04.06.22, trade unions condemned the president's continued interference in the judiciary.

Demonstrations against the President - new constitution without reference to Islam?

On 04.06.22, police blocked protests against the President's plan to hold a referendum on the new constitution on 25.07.22. According to the responsible commission, the reference to Islam as the state religion is no longer included in Article 1. The influential workers' union UGTT, which had been invited to participate in the "National Dialogue" on the redrafting of the constitution (cf. BN of 23.05.22), has come under increased pressure since its refusal to participate in what it terms an illegitimate exchange of opinions. A general strike has been called for 16.06.22.

Turkey

Arrests during demonstration

On 31.05.22, police and demonstrators clashed in Istanbul during a rally marking the anniversary of the 2013 Gezi Park protests. Police reportedly used tear gas and excessive force against the protesters. 170 demonstrators were arrested, among them several media workers.

Journalists arrested

On 08.06.22, at least 19 media workers were arrested in Diyarbakir during simultaneous raids on private residences and editorial offices. The defendants are accused of spreading terrorist propaganda. Among those arrested are the co-chairman of the Dicle Fırat Journalists' Association (DFG) and Serdar Altan, the editor of the Mesopotamia News Agency (MA).

Afghan refugees deported

On 08.06.22, the Turkish interior ministry stated that at least 18,256 Afghan refugees have been deported to Afghanistan since January 2022. In addition, a total of 24,344 refugees and migrants are held in custody in Turkey. Among those detained are 14,255 Afghan nationals, 3,681 Pakistani nationals, 1,823 Syrian nationals and 4,585 persons of other nationalities, the ministry informed. As of 08.06.22, a total of 34,112 refugees and migrants have been deported since the beginning of the year, according to the ministry.

Uganda

Six activists arrested / Besigye released from custody

On 30.05.22, six demonstrators protesting against the arrest of opposition activist Kizza Besigye and also against the high cost of living in the country were arrested in Kampala and charged with inciting violence and unlawful assembly. After almost two weeks, Besigye was released on bail.

Arrest of opposition members in Omoro district

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that armed military personnel raided several offices of the opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) on 25.05./26.05.22. About 50 opposition members were present there, preparing for a by-election. There were reports of insults, violence, theft, and confiscation of documents by the security forces. On the eve and also on the day of the election, at least 13 people were reportedly arrested, among them members of the FDC and National Unity Platform (NUP). The candidate of the ruling party (National Resistance Movement) was declared the official winner of the election.

Ukraine

Development of the situation in Ukraine

The offensive by Russian forces in the Donbass region is continuing in eastern Ukraine (cf. BN of 23.05.22 and 30.05.22). Media report that heavy fighting is still taking place in the city of Severodonetsk in the Luhansk region, which has been in the military focus for weeks, and individual parts of the city are still held by Ukrainian forces. Ukrainian sources say that hundreds of civilians seeking refuge are still on the site of a chemical factory in the city. On 12.06.22, rocket attacks on several villages by Russian forces were reported from the southern Ukrainian frontline between the Russian-captured Kherson region and the neighbouring Mykolaiv region. Media report that on 09.06.22, the supreme court of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic sentenced two British and one Moroccan national to death who had participated in the war on the Ukrainian side and were taken prisoner in the process. One day later, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov stated that the Russian Federation would not interfere with the work of the DPR judiciary. The separatist Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics had been recognised by Russia as independent states immediately before the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. According to UN figures up to and including 10.06.22, at least 4,339 civilians have been killed and 5,246 injured in connection with the war. The UNHCR has registered 7,363,623 people who have fled Ukraine since 24.02.22 (as of 09.06.22).

Venezuela

Two killed in prison riot, relatives denounce violence against detainees

The Venezuelan Prison Observatory (OVP) has informed that on 31.05.22, two men were killed and six others injured in a riot at the Centro Penitenciario de Oriente prison (better known as La Pica) in the state of Monagas.

On 08.06.22, the OVP published allegations made by the relatives of six detainees in the police station of the Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas, Penales y Criminalísticas (CICPC) unit in El Vigía in the state of Mérida. The relatives reported that the detainees were severely beaten on 31.05.22, one of them was admitted to a local hospital with corresponding injuries. The authorities, on the other hand, speak of quarrels between the prison inmates.

Attacks on Juan Guaidó at local meeting

Media report that on 11.06.22, opposition leader Juan Guaidó was verbally and physically assaulted during an appointment in San Carlos in the state of Cojedes. The opposition blames militants close to the ruling party and armed colectivos for the incidents. Guaidó stated on social media that he did not suffer any serious injuries.

Vietnam

Facebook user sentenced to several years in prison

For publishing posts critical of the government, a Facebook user was sentenced to five years imprisonment and another five years probation on 09.06.22. He is the fifth person to be sentenced this year for disseminating anti-state material (Art. 117 of the criminal code) or propaganda against the state (Art. 88 of the criminal code).

Yemen

Extension of ceasefire

On 02.06.22, the ceasefire agreement, which had come into force on 02.04.22 and was initially scheduled to last for two months, was extended for another two months. Although the ceasefire is being largely observed, fighting has not ceased completely; at least 19 civilians, among them children, were killed in fighting in Taizz and al-Dhali governorates. The ceasefire includes further agreements (cf. BN of 04.04.22), most of which have been implemented. One exception is the siege of the city of Taiz, which has not been ended, contrary to the agreements made. The city of Taiz in the governorate of the same name is divided into two parts: One part is under the control of the anti-Houthi coalition, while the other part has been besieged by the Houthis since 2016 and is largely cut off from the rest of the country. Negotiations to end the siege are ongoing between the Yemeni government, the Houthis and the UN.