



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Security situation: resistance and two attacks

Clashes between the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Taliban are continuing in the country (including Panjshir, Baghlan, Kapisa, Takhar provinces). There are reports of arrests, displacement, and torture of civilians in and from these regions by the Taliban. In Kabul, more than 150 people from the Panjshir valley are reported to have been arrested during house searches.

In the Balkhab district of Sar-e Pul province, the Taliban have clashed with the resistance group led by Hazara Maulawi Mahdi. There are reports that the Taliban have joined forces with IS fighters in this region.

On 17.06.22, an explosion in a mosque during Friday prayers on 17.06.22 killed at least 12 people and injured another 30 in Kunduz. The background to the explosion is unclear, so is the exact and number of victims.

On 18.06.22, armed assailants stormed a temple of the Sikh and Hindu community in Kabul. At least one civilian and one Taliban member were killed. IS has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Persecution situation and protests

In Zabul province, the Taliban shot dead a mullah whom they accused of working for the IS on 17.06.22. On the same day in the same province, the Taliban shot dead an employee of the former government's intelligence service.

In Herat province, the Taliban are reportedly raiding the houses of former security force personnel.

In Takhar province, ten female students were arrested on 17.06.22 for attending a wedding where they did not comply with the dress code imposed by the Taliban. They were released after a few hours.

There have been protests by former state employees over unpaid pensions and by supreme court administrators who have been barred from their jobs. Protests by women are also continuing.

Burkina Faso

Many deaths in attack

In the night to 12.06.22, a total of 86 people were killed in an attack by unidentified individuals on the town of Seytenga (Sahel region). The town's gendarmerie post had already been attacked on 09.06.22, leaving 11 members of the gendarmerie dead. Residents report that the security forces then left Seytenga and retreated to the neighbouring town of Dori. After the attacks, more than 19,000 people from Seytenga and surrounding towns fled to Dori, and several hundred escaped to the neighbouring country of Niger. So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The latest attack is one of the most serious in recent years, putting further pressure on the military junta to achieve sustainable success in the fight against extremists. The military coup in January 2022 was mainly justified by the perceived insufficiency of the state leadership in this fight (cf. BN of 31.01.22).

Cambodia

More opposition members sentenced to several years in prison

On 14.06.22, a court in the capital Phnom Penh sentenced 31 opposition activists to prison terms between five and eight years for treason and sedition. Among the defendants was the well-known female Cambodian American lawyer and human rights activist Theary Seng, who was handed down a sentence of six years for treason. Dressed as a Statue of Liberty, she waited outside the courthouse for the verdict to be announced and was subsequently detained. Media reports say that all those convicted were linked to the dissolved opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). 27 of them were sentenced in absentia, among them several exiled CNRP leaders. 20 other defendants were found guilty, but their sentences were suspended. The trial related to the failed attempt by exiled CNRP politician Sam Rainsy to return to Cambodia in November 2019. Already in March 2022, a total of 20 people had been sentenced to several years in prison in a trial against CNRP opposition politicians (cf. BN of 21.03.22).

Colombia

Left-wing candidate Petro wins presidential election

According to official data, Gustavo Petro won the run-off election for president held on 19.06.22. A preliminary count showed Petro on top with 50.49 percent of the vote, while independent businessman Rodolfo Hernández secured 47.26 percent and acknowledged his defeat. In his youth, Petro had been a member of the former guerrilla group Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19); after he had abandoned the group, he was active as a diplomat in Belgium and mayor of the capital Bogotá. He is the first left-wing politician in the country to win a presidential election. In his election programme he promised to stop the great inequality in the country through free university education and pension reforms, to fully implement the peace agreement with the guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and to seek negotiations with the ELN rebels who are still active. Also, he plans to put the brakes on the exploitation of raw materials and to tax companies more heavily. His running mate Francia Márquez, a human rights activist and environmentalist, will become the country's first designated Afro-Colombian vice-president. She had fought against illegal mines in the Cauca region, which was particularly affected by the violence, and received the Goldman Prize in 2018.

DR Congo

Ethnically motivated violence and crimes against rwandophone and Tutsi people

Against the background of fighting between the Tutsi rebel group Mouvement 23 (M23) and the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) in the province of North Kivu, which has been ongoing since November 2021 (cf. BN of 30.05.22) and in view of the new allegations made by the Congolese government on 14.06.22 that Rwanda is supporting the M23 rebel movement, partly ethnically motivated violence and hate crimes by primarily non-state actors have reportedly targeted Rwandan and/or Tutsi Congolese or Rwandan nationals. On 14.06.22, a Rwandophone lieutenant colonel of the FARDC was attacked by several civilians and members of the police forces in the north-eastern town of Kisangani. Following an anti-Rwanda mass protest in the provincial capital of Goma (North Kivu) on 15.06.22, pogrom-like attacks were carried out against Rwandophones or those identified as Tutsis by their physical appearance. There were reports of looting, vandalism and destruction of facilities and businesses belonging to Rwandan or Congolese nationals of Tutsi origin. Motor vehicles suspected of transporting Rwandophones or Rwandans have been searched. According to media reports, violent attacks against Tutsis are currently taking place throughout the country. Several videos and messages calling for the expulsion or killing of Tutsis or even sharing the home addresses of Tutsi families have been circulating on social media. Communications minister Patrick Muyaya has informed that on 15.06.22, the DRC High Defence Council, chaired by the President of the Republic, Felix Tshisekedi, instructed both the interior minister and the chief of police to take all "necessary measures to avoid stigmatisation and manhunts" during demonstrations against Rwanda and the M23 movement. Patrick Muyaya mentioned that the DRC had already experienced violence triggered by hate speech in its history, such as the ethnic cleansing in Katanga in the 1990s.

The Director of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) Abdoul Aziz Thiouye stated that in the months since M23 has resumed fighting, hate speech has increased not only against foreigners but also among Congolese of different ethnic backgrounds. In a tweet of 19.06.22, UNJHRO reported the existence of videos circulating on the internet in which clearly identified individuals called for attacks on people and their property based on their ethnicity. In a joint statement on 17.06.22, UN Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Alice Nderitu expressed their deep alarm that since the Congolese government's accusations against Rwanda, hate speech and "incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence" have escalated, especially against people speaking the Rwandan national language Kinyarwanda. The UN has so far documented eight cases of such hate speech, spread by political party representatives, community leaders, civil society actors and the Congolese diaspora.

Tensions are continuing on the border between DR Congo and Rwanda. Media report that on 15.06.22, Congolese police forces dispersed an estimated hundred people who tried to break through a nearby border post near Goma, chanting anti-Rwandan slogans and throwing stones at Rwandan defence forces. At least one person was injured in the incident. On 17.05.22, a Congolese soldier who, according to eyewitness accounts, crossed the neutral border zone and opened fire towards Rwanda was killed by Rwandan defence forces. Reports of four civilian deaths circulated in local media, but no official confirmation was given. Military sources say that the Congolese soldier fired at passers-by trying to cross the border into DR Congo and that two Rwandan soldiers were injured in the incident. On 17.06.22, Rwandan foreign minister Vincent Biruta dismissed fears in an interview that the current tensions might lead to the outbreak of war.

Cuba

Prison sentences imposed on protesters

On 13.06.22 Cuba's attorney general's office informed that it had sentenced 381 people in 76 trials in connection with the protests of 11.07.21. At that time thousands of people had taken to the streets in several cities in protest against the government (cf. BN of 19.07.21). A total of 297 defendants were sentenced to prison terms. For the crime of incitement of the people, 36 defendants were handed down prison terms between five and 25 years. In addition, 84 defendants, among them 15 of the 16 accused juveniles aged between 16 and 18, received alternative sentences such as correctional labour. The accused were charged mainly with sedition, sabotage, robbery, assault, contempt of court and public disorder. Human rights organisations, however, have stated that the defendants were political prisoners. According to the organisation Cuban Prisoners Defenders, there were a total of 1,046 people in prison for political reasons as of 30.05.22.

Ethiopia

Ethiopian government sets up commission for peace negotiations with the TPLF

On 14.06.22, Prime Minister Abiy announced the setup of a committee to negotiate peace with the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) and end the conflict that had erupted in November 2020 in the regional state of Tigray. Information is contradictory on the location of the negotiations, which are to begin at the end of June. While the government says that initial talks will be held in Tanzania, a representative of the TPLF has stated that the peace talks must take place in Nairobi under the mediation of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Dozens of civilians killed in Oromia

On 18.06.22, armed men killed more than 100 civilians in the regional state of Oromia near the town of Gimbi (West Welega zone), according to eyewitnesses who said that the victims were mainly members of the Amhara ethnic group, the second largest population group in the country. Local authorities have confirmed the attack and held the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA-Shane) responsible, which, however, has denied the accusations. The OLA, which is classified as a terrorist group, demands more autonomy and self-determination for the Oromo people, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group with about 35 million people. The Prime Minister described the act as terror and said that restoring security and peace was the top priority.

Many deaths in Gambella

Several people were reportedly killed in clashes between local security forces and armed fighters of the OLA and the Gambella Liberation Front/Army (GLF/A) in the regional state of Gambella in the far west of Ethiopia. The human rights organisation Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRC) reported that civilians suspected of supporting the rebels were among the dead. OLA and GLF/A engaged in a protracted gun battle with security forces in Gambella City on 14.06.22.

Further aid deliveries to Tigray

Recently, more aid deliveries have reached Tigray. The International Committee of the Red Cross in Ethiopia reported that on 11.06.22 more than 300 trucks delivered relief supplies. According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), this was the largest food convoy delivered by the UN agency to date and met the needs of some 800,000 people. Nevertheless, the humanitarian situation in Tigray remained at a critical level, OCHA said. An estimated 4.8 million people in Tigray are dependent on humanitarian assistance. Basic services such as electricity, telecommunication and banking services are either not at all available or only to a very limited extent, and an extremely high inflation rate is burdening the local population.

The Gambia

UNICEF, NHRC: Prevalence of and fight against harmful traditional practices

In a press release of 16.06.22, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) pointed out that more than half of girls aged 0-14 have suffered some form of female genital mutilation (FGM), and one in four girls is married before her 18th birthday. Despite a gradual change in awareness and increasing rejection, FGM and early marriages are still widespread, UNICEF said. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) also stated on 16.06.22 that despite progress in child policy and legislation, children continued to be subjected to these and other practices that violate their human rights. Both organisations call for effective enforcement of child protection (criminal) laws.

Government orders suspension of incriminated public servants

The spokesperson of the justice ministry has confirmed to the French news agency AFP that the Gambian government has ordered the immediate suspension of state officials accused of crimes committed under the government of President Yahya Jammeh (cf. BN of 13.06.22 and 30.05.22). Among those concerned are the commander of the police crime investigation unit (PIU), Gorgi Mboob, the head of the drug law enforcement agency (DLEAG), Ebrima Jim Drammeh, other members of the armed forces, police, and intelligence services as well as members of the prison service.

Conviction for rape and kidnapping

In early June 2022, the Bakau high court reportedly sentenced a defendant to a total of 20 years imprisonment for raping and abducting a girl under 18. She stated that she concealed the rape from her family out of shame. Her father took her to the police station, where she reported the rapist for the first time during a victim interview. Sexualised as well as gender-based violence is often concealed and remains unpunished (cf. BN of 19.04.21).

Guinea-Bissau

Accusation of witchcraft

Citing the Human Rights League Guinea-Bissau (HRL), the US State Department's latest religious freedom report of 02.06.22 points to a growing trend of people being accused of witchcraft. The NGO had recorded 50 such cases in the time period 2019-2021, of which 20 had resulted in killings. Six killings were recorded in 2021.

Iran

Arrests in new teacher protests

On 16.06.22, teachers protested again across the country. According to various reports in Iranian foreign media, between 40 and 100 people were arrested by the security forces. The protests were called by the coordinating council of the teachers' unions. Some rallies took place under a massive deployment of security forces. Apart from Tehran, Karaj, Isfahan and Bandar-e Abbas, cities and settlements in the province of Kurdistan were particularly affected. In the city of Marivan protesters clashed with the security forces who tried to disperse the local rally. Ahead of the new protest rallies, some 20 teachers were reportedly arrested in Kurdistan, among them a leading member of the local union. In addition to implementing a salary classification plan for teachers and bringing their salaries and pensions in line with the rising cost of living, the protesters are demanding the release of detained colleagues. In a report on the human rights situation in Iran published on 17.06.22, UN Secretary General António Guterres criticised state repression against peaceful demonstrators and other shortcomings.

Brother of jailed activist arrested during sit-in

Media report that on 13.06.22, several family members of a detained activist gathered in front of the parliament building in Tehran for a sit-in in protest against the authorities' inaction and inattention to the health condition of the prisoner, who is currently on hunger strike. The man had been forcibly arrested in 2019 together with other demonstrators in the course of the then nationwide November protests (cf. BN of 25.11.19) and sentenced to six years in prison for propaganda against the system and other offences. During the family's sit-in, one of the prisoner's brothers was arrested.

Iraq

Turkish intervention

On 12.06.22 four more Turkish soldiers were reportedly killed in fighting with the PKK in Dohuk province.

On 17.06.22, a Turkish drone attacked a vehicle with four passengers in Sulaymaniyah province and killed all the people inside who were allegedly PKK members. On the same day, a Turkish unit machine-gunned a village in Dohuk for about half an hour, injuring two villagers. The context of the incident is unclear.

Sinjar

On 14.06.22, the Iraqi cabinet decided to allocate an additional USD 1 million to federal-level security forces in the Sinjar region to stabilise the area. The region remains insecure due to the presence of many armed groups and the poor implementation of the regional security agreement; also, essential basic services are not guaranteed. The majority of residents have not returned after 2014. In early May 2022, new fighting triggered a new wave of displacement. In addition, the region is disputed between the Kurdistan Autonomous Region (KRG) and the Iraqi central government.

Jamaica

Supreme court ruling

On 17.06.22, Jamaica's supreme court ruled in favour of a man who had been detained for months without charge under a 2018 state of emergency. The court ruled that this had violated his right to freedom of movement and other rights and awarded him damages. As part of the fight against crime, in particular against gang violence and high murder rates, a state of emergency is regularly imposed in Jamaica, and fundamental rights are suspended. Experts say that many more people could now seek similar compensation.

Lebanon

Economic situation

The Lebanese pound has continued to weaken on the black market, with the U.S. Dollar exceeding 30,000 LBP overall. Before the elections, support purchases by the central bank had caused a temporary stabilisation, which however was not sustainable.

According to the Lebanon Office of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (a local OCHA sub-organisation), a total of 2.5 million Lebanese, Palestinians, and other inhabitants of Lebanon, as well as about 1.5 million Syrians living in Lebanon are currently in need of humanitarian aid. The Lebanon Humanitarian Fund, which is also part of OCHA, has provided a further USD 16 million in humanitarian aid.

Mali

New violence in the north

On 19.06.22, gunmen killed at least 20 civilians near Gao. One UN peacekeeper died in a mine explosion in Kidal. In the north of the country, the security situation continues to deteriorate. A representative of the Gao region described the situation in the town of Anchawadj as "very concerning", with many civilians fleeing the area fearing extortions by jihadists. Large parts of the Gao and Ménaka region are occupied by jihadists, he said. There is general panic, a local authority told AFP news agency.

Nicaragua

Freedom of the Press: Closure of Trinchera de la Noticia

On 10.06.22, the independent media outlet Trinchera de la Noticia was closed down for disturbing social peace, and its editorial office was occupied by the police. Assets and bank accounts were also confiscated. According to the NGO Nicaragua Nunca Más and the regional network Voces del Sur, more than 20 local media outlets have been closed since the protests of 2018, and at least 120 media workers have fled abroad.

Nigeria

Northwest: 30 wedding guests abducted

On 11.06.22, unidentified individuals abducted 30 people in Zamfara State who were on their way home from a wedding celebration and travelled in convoy. This is according to media reports citing official police information. The perpetrators set up a roadblock and then shot at the vehicles. Nigerian authorities face increasing criticism for failing to prosecute and prevent acts of violence such as robberies and kidnappings, which regularly claim high numbers of victims.

Southeast: Teenagers freed from baby factory

Media reports of 16.06.22 say that Nigerian police forces have freed at least 35 teenage girls from a building declared as a hotel in Nkpor town, Anambra State. Apparently, the teenagers were sexually exploited there and four of them were pregnant at the time of the police raid. Despite efforts by the authorities, criminals continue to operate facilities of this kind. According to official police reports, three people have since been arrested; they are now accused of kidnapping the teenagers and forcing them into sexual slavery, prostitution, and the operation of a baby factory. The term 'baby factory' used by the media is attributed to the fact that the perpetrators offer the children born in captivity by their victims for sale.

Southwest: Kidnapped Anglican Bishop released

Media report that on 12.06.22, unidentified individuals abducted Oluwaseun Aderogba, the Anglican Bishop of Jebba Diocese, his wife, and a driver during a car journey through remote areas in Oyo State. Two days later, all three were released. According to official statements, the kidnappers had been put under pressure by massive police search operations and therefore released the victims. It was only at the end of May 2022 that the prelate of the

Methodist Church of Nigeria and two clergymen accompanying him were kidnapped in Abia State and released two days later for ransom (cf. BN of 13.06.22).

Northeast: Chibok kidnap victim back in freedom after eight years

One of the schoolgirls abducted by the Islamist Boko Haram group in Chibok, Borno State, in April 2014 was picked up by a military patrol in the same state on 14.06.22. Media report that the young woman was accompanied by her son who was born during the captivity. The mass abduction of Chibok had caused international outrage. Of the 276 schoolgirls abducted at that time, more than 100 are still considered missing (cf. BN of 23.08.21).

Presidential election 2023: Ruling party nominates candidate

On 08.06.22, the delegates of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party elected Bola Ahmed Adekunle Tinubu, a former long-time governor of Lagos State, as their candidate for the presidential election scheduled to be held on 25.02.23. In the poll, the 70-year-old Tinubu beat incumbent vice president Yemi Osinbajo and other aspirants. Shortly before the vote, seven aspirants had withdrawn their candidacies and asked their supporters to back Tinubu. Also, the electoral chances of opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Atiku Abubakar are considered to be high (cf. BN of 30.05.22). The deadline for political parties to nominate their candidates was 17.06.22. Having served two terms, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari (APC) will not run again in 2023.

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

West Bank: Several deaths in clashes with Israeli military

On 17.06.22, three Palestinians died in clashes with the military in Jenin in the north of the West Bank. The Israeli military stated that their soldiers were on a mission to confiscate weapons when they came under fire and explosive devices were thrown at them. The military confirmed that three militants were killed in the process. Eight others were wounded, as was reported by the Palestinian health ministry.

On 19.06.22, Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian who, according to the military, was trying to illegally cross into Israeli territory from the West Bank.

Gaza / Israel: Rocket fire

On 18.06.22, the Israeli air defence intercepted a rocket fired from Gaza towards Israel. The military usually attributes such attacks to Hamas in the Gaza Strip. However, media report that in this case the military is investigating whether the Islamic Jihad group carried out the firing in retaliation for the three killed in Jenin (see above). Irrespective of this, the military shelled Hamas targets in Gaza a few hours later. In addition, the Erez border crossing, which is used by many Palestinian workers to cross into Israeli territory for work, was closed for two days. This was the first rocket from Gaza after two months of relative calm in the region.

Director of aid organisation found guilty after six years in prison

After six years in detention, Mohammed el-Halabi, the director of the international aid organisation World Vision in Gaza, was found guilty by an Israeli court on 15.06.22 of membership in a terrorist organisation, passing on information to a terrorist organisation, participation in armed exercises and carrying weapons. He was also charged with diverting several million USD of donations to Hamas. The decision was based on secret information and a confession by el-Halabi which, according to his lawyer, was coerced and should not have been admitted as evidence. Due to the classification of much of the information as secret, the reasoning of the court decision will not be made public.

The verdict itself is still pending; el-Halabi's legal advisers have already announced their intention to take legal action against the decision.

Following el-Halabi's arrest in 2016, World Vision had suspended all activities in Gaza and initiated an investigation into the case which was conducted by independent actors. The Australian government, the largest donor to World Vision, also conducted investigations and found no evidence of irregularities or infringements by el-Halabi.

Russian Federation

Dozens of government critics arrested on bank holiday

The civil rights portal OWD-Info reports that at least 67 people were arrested across the country on 12.06.22 on the fringes of the national Russia Day celebrations, 43 of them via digital facial recognition in the Moscow metro. According to press reports, the activists and journalists concerned either took part in sporadic anti-war rallies on the bank holiday or had been preventively put on the wanted list due to earlier critical statements they had made. While the majority of them were released by late evening, there were reports of subsequent prosecution in some cases for denigrating the armed forces and/or disobeying police orders. The independent Russian news site Mediazona said that two of the activists were sentenced to 15 days of administrative detention for raising a flag saying "Today is not my day" in front of the defence ministry.

Senegal

Demonstrations and violent riots ahead of parliamentary elections

On 17.06.22, demonstrations were staged, and violent riots broke out in Dakar and Ziguinchor after the Senegalese authorities had banned a large rally for which the opposition had called because the national candidate list of the Yewwi Askan Wi (YAW) coalition supporting Ousmane Sonko in the parliamentary elections scheduled for 31.07.22 was dismissed on technical grounds. More than 200 demonstrators were arrested, two people were killed. Three opposition members, Déthié Fall, Ahmet Aidara and Mame Diarra Fame, were arrested, a spokesperson for Sonko's party said. Sonko himself had been prevented by the police from leaving his house and thus defying the ban on demonstrations, so that he could not attend Friday prayers either. Police platoons in riot gear, backed by armoured vehicles, prevented anyone from approaching the Place de la Nation, where the rally was to take place away from the political and economic centre of the capital. In addition to anger over the rejection of the list of candidates, the demonstrators also denounced President Macky Sall's apparent plans to run for a third term in 2024.

Somalia

Hamza Abdi Barre appointed Prime Minister

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud appointed Hamza Abdi Barre, former chairman of the Jubaland State Election Commission, as Prime Minister on 15.06.22. The new PM will thus succeed Mohamed Hussein Roble, who was in office until the presidential election in May 2022 (cf. BN of 16.05.22).

Dozens killed in fighting in Galmudug

Reports say that on 17.06.22 a coalition of armed residents of Bahdo town (Galgudud region), Ahlu Sunna wa al-Jama'a (ASWJ) militia fighters and regional armed forces repelled an al-Shabaab attack on their town following a car bomb explosion. Two other car bombs were defused. One suicide bomber was arrested. At least 67 al-Shabaab fighters were reported killed and at least 33 others wounded in the fierce fighting, which was the heaviest in the region in recent years. Civilians, militia, and police forces are also reported to have been killed.

South Sudan

Precarious humanitarian and supply situation

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) informed on 14.06.22 that food aid to South Sudan had to be reduced due to critical funding shortages, heightening the risk of imminent starvation for 1.6 million people. In addition to reduced donations, soaring food prices and natural events such as floods and droughts, which are intensifying due to the climate change, are also factors influencing the tense supply situation. According to the WFP, food rations had been already halved last year in order to be able to continue supporting the same number of people in need. Currently, the country is in the tightest supply situation since independence. WFP requires USD 426 million to fully meet the country's food needs for the next six months.

According to the UN, food prices in the capital Juba alone have risen by an average of 17 percent compared to the previous month. Based on current developments, the UN estimates that in total, some 7.7 million people will be directly affected by severe food insecurity in the course of the year.

Sudan

Ongoing demonstrations

The central committee of Sudanese doctors has informed that 15 people were injured during new rallies staged on 13.06.22. Protests in Khartoum were crushed by security forces using tear gas and other equipment. According to the committee, some of the injuries were caused by security forces deliberately using their vehicles to hit protesters. During further rallies on 16.06.22, one person was killed by the use of live ammunition in the capital Khartoum, dozens of others were injured. Although the state of emergency had been lifted on 26.05.22 (cf. BN of 30.05.22), the security forces have continued to crack down on protesters. A lawyers' association stated that 30 people were arrested during the rallies.

Ongoing difficult situation in West Darfur, Kassala, South and West Kordofan

Media report that the number of people killed in the armed clashes in West Darfur's Kulbus region has risen to over 100 (cf. BN of 13.06.22). In addition, more than 100 people were injured in the incidents. In total, several thousand people have been forced to leave their homes, with figures varying between 15,600 and 50,000 displaced people. During the fighting, which lasted from 06.06. to 11.06.22, a total of 25 to 30 villages were attacked, looted, and burnt down. At present, the situation is calm but remains tense.

In eastern Kassala state violence erupted on 14.06.22 following inter-communal disputes and has been ongoing since. At least five people have lost their lives so far. In addition, people were evacuated from the areas concerned and were taken to a nearby army base. Since the outbreak of fighting on 14.06.22, local markets are closed. Local politicians have called on the government to increase security in the region and take measures against the widespread possession of weapons.

In Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan State, five people were killed and four others injured in inter-communal disputes on 16.06.22. The violence also led to the temporary closure of the city's wholesale market. The clashes erupted following the abduction of a mine worker belonging to the Nuba ethnic group. He had been kidnapped on 15.06.22 by members of the Arab Baggara tribe.

In West Kordofan, at least two people were killed and three others injured in an attack on a village south of the town of El Nehoud. According to reports, the attackers looted the village and set fire to parts of it. Apparently, the attack followed inter-communal disputes, with the permanent absence of state security forces encouraging a recurring flare-up of violence.

Syria

Ceasefire ends clashes among SNA

Rebel representatives from the Turkish-occupied areas of northern Syria have reported clashes between various armed groups belonging to the same umbrella organisation, the Syrian National Army (SNA) on 19.06.22. At least eight people were apparently killed and scores injured in fighting among the factions near the Syrian-Turkish border town of al-Bab in Aleppo governorate. Among the conflict groups were reportedly the Failaq al-Sham, the Levant Front, Jaish al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham. The SNA harbours different ideological currents, from Islamists to Syrian Arab nationalists, and is supported by the protecting power Turkey.

The dominant faction in neighbouring Idlib, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), has responded to the unrest by briefly deploying their own fighters to the region under SNA control. Eventually, however, the fighting was settled after Turkey was able to mediate a truce among the conflicting factions.

Anti-IS coalition: High-ranking IS member arrested in Aleppo

In a statement on 16.07.22, the US-led anti-IS coalition informed that Hani Ahmed al-Kurdi, also known as Salim, was taken into custody during a special operation in northern Syria. He is said to be an experienced explosives expert and coordinator of attacks. Apparently, no civilians were harmed in the operation. According to the

opposition-affiliated Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the arrest was preceded by exchanges of fire with armed fighters in the village of al-Humaira, about four kilometres from the Turkish border.

A Syrian National Army (SNA) spokesperson said that this was the first military operation of its kind carried out in the areas under SNA control.

Togo

State of security emergency declared; attack

On 13.06.22, the Togolese government declared a state of security emergency in the Savanes region in the north of the country bordering Burkina Faso. The measure will last for three months and can be extended by parliament. The region was the scene of attacks by extremists in November 2021 and May 2022 (cf. BN of 15.11.21 and 16.05.22). On 16.06.22, another attack was launched between Gnoaga and Gouloungoussi in the Savanes region. Security forces repelled the attack. Military sources say that there were no casualties among security forces and civilians.

Turkey

Journalists arrested

On 16.06.22, 16 of the 20 Kurdish journalists who had been arrested in Diyarbakir on 08.06.22 were taken to prison after their hearing in court, while four others were released from pre-trial detention under conditions (cf. BN of 13.06.22). The media workers were arrested on charges of membership of the banned Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK) and terrorist propaganda. They are accused of producing programmes for Kurdish TV stations abroad as well as using interviews with the KCK leadership to disseminate their instructions.

Uganda

Political activists arrested again

On 14.06.22, opposition activist Kizza Besigye and political activist Samuel Lubega Makaku were arrested again and charged with inciting violence after participating in protests against rising living costs. The court denied them bail.

Ukraine

Development of the situation

The fighting continues to concentrate mainly on the area around the city of Severodonetsk in the eastern Ukrainian Donbass region (cf. BN of 13.06.22). In addition, Ukrainian sources reported on 19.06.22 missile attacks by Russian forces on other localities in the Donbass, in the southern Ukrainian frontline area between Kherson and Mykolaiv as well as in the area around the north-eastern city of Kharkiv. A Russian airstrike was also reported from the capital Kiev on the morning of 19.06.22. According to Ukrainian agency sources, Ukraine plans to resume peace talks with the Russian Federation from the end of August 2022; previously, President Zelenskyy stated on 16.06.22 that the negotiations could not be continued at present due to Russia's position. Media report that Russian forces in Ukraine have so far used at least 210 types of ammunition which may pose a threat to civilians and are banned under international treaties. Up to and including 16.06.22, a total of 4,509 civilians have been killed and 5,585 injured in connection with the war, UN figures say. In the context of Ukraine's application for EU membership which will be discussed at the next European Council on 23.06. and 24.06.22, President Zelenskyy said that he expected an intensification of Russian attacks.

Venezuela

Health: protests, criminalisation of health workers

For several weeks, workers in the health sector have been demonstrating against the situation in hospitals, poor pay, and outstanding bonuses. Labour minister Torrealba said that a meeting with union representatives took place on 15.06.22, but no results were made public.

According to the NGO Medicos Unidos de Venezuela (MUV), medical staff have been publicly denounced and arrested repeatedly in recent weeks for stealing medical material and medicines and selling them outside the hospitals. Already in April 2022, President Maduro had announced his intention to take stronger action against so-called hospital mafias and those involved, for example by deploying inspectors. Medical organisations reject these accusations and instead criticise the criminalisation of health workers and the lack of many medicines in public health facilities, forcing relatives of patients to purchase medication on the market.

Vietnam

Prison sentence for environmental activist

A court in Hanoi sentenced prominent environmental activist Nguy Thi Khanh to two years in prison for tax evasion on 17.06.22. She is the executive director of the Green Innovation and Development Centre (Green ID), an organisation promoting sustainable development in the country. She had been arrested in January 2022 (cf. BN of 14.02.22). Her supporters say that the charges against her are trumped up and must be considered a punishment for her activities against the government's coal policy.

Yemen

Video of child soldiers on social media

A video has been circulating on social media showing a Houthi member instructing a school class of boys aged around ten in detail how to use an AK-47. The practice was confirmed by various members of the Houthi administration; some considered boys aged ten to twelve to be men, although this is highly controversial within the Houthi community. Apparently, several hundred child soldiers are part of reinforcement efforts of frontline troops being built up during the ceasefire. Since 2014, about 2,000 underage soldiers are known to have lost their lives in the Yemen war.

Direct talks between Saudis and Houthis

On 14.06.22 information was received that direct talks between representatives of the Houthi movement and Saudi Arabia were taking place under Oman's mediation. At present, these negotiations are virtual, but meetings in person are planned in Muscat. The talks are about confidence building and future arrangements along the 1,300 km long common border.