



Briefing Notes

Group 62 - Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

22 August 2022

Afghanistan

Security situation: Bomb attack on Sufi mosque in Kabul, fighting in Panjshir and Takhar

On 17.08.22, a bomb exploded in the Siddiqiya Mosque in Kabul's Khairkhana district, killing about 21 people and injuring 30. The mosque was run by Sufi Maulvi Amir Muhammad Kabuli, who was among the victims. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but similar acts have previously been committed by the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP). Former Taliban commander Mehdi, who had led a resistance group against the Taliban in Balkhab district (Sar-e Pul province) (cf. BN of 11.07.22), was arrested by the Taliban in Herat province as he fled to Iran. There are conflicting reports on whether he is dead or still alive. Fighting between the National Resistance Front (NRF) and the Taliban in Panjshir province is intensifying. The Taliban are reported to have converted civilians' houses into military bases in the Abdullah Khel valley of the province and arrested at least 100 civilians from Panjshir, including in Kabul and Panjshir. Earlier, the NRF is reported to have killed about 58 Taliban in fighting. The NRF is also fighting the Taliban in Takhar province, the latter dispatched new troops to the province. In an interview with the Atlantic Council on 13.08.22, NRF leader Massoud said that there is no other option than war against the Taliban, as they are not interested in an inclusive government.

Governance: Second Taliban clerics' meeting held in Kandahar

The Taliban held a second gathering in Kandahar on 18.08.22 with 3,000 clerics following their line. A first such gathering had taken place in Kabul on 30.06.22 (cf. BN of 04.07.22). Again, only men were present. Mohammad Khaled Hanafi, the acting head of the Ministry of Virtue, said at the meeting that Western and European countries had negatively influenced the ideology of the people of Afghanistan over the past two decades. This must be corrected and Sharia law must be implemented strictly and consistently, he said.

Humanitarian situation: rains and flash floods

Various provinces, especially in the north and east, were hit by heavy rains and flash floods last week. In Ghazni, Paktika and Maidan Wardak provinces, about 30 houses each were destroyed, in Maidan Wardak 12 bridges and some roads were destroyed as well. Other affected provinces are Parwan, Panjshir, Laghman, Kunar, Kapisa, Nangarhar and Logar. In total, about 60 people were killed (some are still missing) and a lot of farmland was destroyed.

Burkina Faso

Extra-legal executions

Two Burkinabe human rights organisations separately reported extra-legal executions allegedly carried out by government forces on 14.08.22. The Collective against Impunity and the Stigmatisation of Communities (CISC) estimates that more than 40 people were abducted by members of the armed forces in early August 2022 in the

commune of Tougouri (Centre-Nord region) and in particular in the village of Taffogo. The bodies of the abducted persons were later found along the road between Taffogo and Bouroum with their hands tied and blindfolded, the report said. In a separate report, the Observatory for Human Dignity (ODH) estimates that more than 50 unarmed civilians were abducted and killed. Almost all victims belonged to the Fulani ethnic group. A government official denied the allegations and announced that the armed forces had launched an investigation.

In Burkina Faso, as in some neighbouring countries, there are repeated conflicts between nomadic, cattle-raising Fulani and sedentary farming populations over the use of land and water. The Fulani feel marginalised, while parts of society accuse them of being close to extremist groups. In fact, jihadist groups active in the country, recruit a significant proportion of their members from among other ethnic groups, including the Fulani. Recently, calls appeared on social media in the Sud-Ouest region for violent action against Fulani. The government condemned this hate speech in a statement on 18.08.22. About 9% of Burkina Faso's population of almost 22 million people are Fulani.

Cameroon

HRW accuses army of killings and disappearances in Northwest

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), soldiers were accused of killing at least ten people and committing a number of abuses during counter-insurgency operations in the northwestern region between 24.04.22 and 12.06.2022. Soldiers demolished houses, health facilities were looted and destroyed, at least 26 people were arbitrarily detained and probably up to 17 others forcibly disappeared. Armed separatist groups were also accused of serious human rights violations with limited or no consequences. The impunity of those responsible remains a major cause of the crisis.

Colombia

Extradition and arrest warrants of ELN negotiators suspended

President Petro announced the suspension of detention and extradition orders against negotiators of the guerrilla group National Liberation Army (ELN) to allow for peace talks in Cuba. Earlier, Colombia's High Peace Commissioner Danilo Rueda travelled to Cuba with Foreign Minister Álvaro Leyva, Senator Ivan Cepeda as well as representatives of the UN Verification Mission and the Norwegian government to hold exploratory talks with a ten-member ELN delegation. Rueda said afterwards that the government would recognise the ELN delegation that remained in Cuba and take measures to ensure conditions for the resumption of talks that broke off in 2019. Peace talks with the ELN first began in Ecuador in 2017 under the Santos government and were later moved to Cuba. After a car bomb attack on a police school in Bogotá, the then government under Duque had the suspended arrest warrants renewed against the ten members of the peace delegation and the peace talks failed

DR Congo

François Beya and Jean-Marc Kabund: further developments

Former Special Adviser to the President on Security Affairs François Beya (aka François Beya Kasonga) was granted provisional release on health grounds by the High Court on 16.08.22 (cf. BN of 15.08.22, 21.04.22 and 14.02.22). Beya was ordered to attend all hearings in his trial, to refrain from making statements that may disturb public order and not to leave the country without the knowledge of the judges. Beya, his private secretary and three senior security officers are charged with conspiring and insulting the head of state, violating orders and inciting the military to commit acts in breach of duty and discipline respectively. Beya denies the charges. He considers himself a personal prisoner of the head of the National Intelligence Service (ANR). The provisional release was preceded by the transfer of the case to other judges; those previously in charge had repeatedly refused to grant such a release. On 19.08.22, Beya flew to Paris for several weeks of medical treatment. The flight had been permitted by the High Court and President Félix Tshisekedi, who is said to have not yet officially relieved Beya of his duties as special advisor.

Jean-Marc Kabund, once a close ally of Tshisekedi and now with his own party Alliance pour le Changement (A.CH), remains detained in Makala prison despite the Court of Cassation's decision on 12.08.22 to transfer Kabund to house arrest (cf. BN of 15.08.22), this follows from a media report on 21.08.22.

Western Congo: continuation of inter-ethnic clashes

According to media reports, 15 people were killed in inter-ethnic clashes between the Teke and Yaka communities in Mai-Ndombe province on 19.08.22 alone (cf. BN of 08.08.22). 31 others were reportedly injured in the attack in Masia-Kwa village (Kwamouth area), according to a report based on information provided by a member of parliament from the region. The central government, criticised for its lack of visible response to the conflict, announced on 19.08.22 that it would send a mission to the region.

EAC regional force: Burundi sends first contingent

Burundi has become the first East African Community (EAC) state to send a contingent as part of the regional stability and peacekeeping mission in eastern DR Congo (cf. BN of 04.07.22), which was due to start already at the end of July 2022. Burundi is said to be particularly interested in pursuing the Red Tabara rebel group (cf. BN of 13.06.22 and 07.02.22).

El Salvador

Fifth extension of the state of emergency

On 16.08.22, the state of emergency imposed since the end of March was extended until 19.09.22 (cf. BN of 27.06.22, 13.06.22, 02.05.22, 04.04.22 and 28.03.22). Once again, 66 members of the 84-seat parliament voted in favour of extending emergency powers. According to the Director General of the National Civil Police, Mauricio Arriaza, more than 50,000 suspected gang members have been arrested so far. El Salvador's Human Rights Ombudsman, Apolonio Tobar, reported that he is currently investigating 28 cases of people who have died in custody during the state of emergency. The Observatory for Human Rights (OUDH), on the other hand, spoke of 59 deaths in prisons from 27.03.22 to 04.07.22. Furthermore, human rights organisations complain of numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and torture.

Guinea

Ex-ministers in detention: one release, one death

Damantang Albert Camara, Minister of Security under ousted President Alpha Condé and one of two ex-ministers arrested on 21.04.22 on charges of embezzlement (cf. BN of 25.08.22), was provisionally released from prison on 10.08.22. His family had to post bail of GNF 1 billion (approx. EUR 114,000; as of 22.08.22). Contrary to the public prosecutor's position, the decision of provisional release from prison under the further condition of not leaving the country had already been made by the competent special court (Cour de répression des infractions économiques et financières, CRIEF) on 02.06.22, confirmed on 16.06.22 and finally confirmed again by the Supreme Court on 29.07.22.

According to further media reports, former minister and Chairman of the Electoral Commission (CENI) Loucény Camara died in hospital on 20.08.22 after having suffered a stroke in the Central Prison on the day before. Allegedly his health had seriously deteriorated even before that. Loucény Camara had been arrested on 28.04.22 as another member of the ousted government on charges of embezzlement.

Renewed deaths during protests

During protests on 17.08.22, which were called for by the civil society and political alliance Front national pour la défense de la Constitution (FNDC) (cf. BN of 15.08.22), two protesters were shot dead, according to media reports. The FNDC accused the bodyguard of interim President Mamadi Doumbouya of firing the fatal shots as his convoy drove past a rally in Conakry's Wanidara neighbourhood. The convoy's route was confirmed by the authorities, but the incidents were not.

During the many smaller protests at various locations within the capital Conakry, protesters and security forces, mobilised in great numbers, clashed. The former threw stones, the latter responded with tear gas. Protests are also

reported to have taken place in other parts of the country. Overall, however, the FNDC's call does not seem to have been strongly heeded. Several protesters were killed on 27.07. and 28.07.22 (cf. BN of 01.08.22).

Guinea-Bissau

PAIGC Congress prevented again

As on 18.03.22 (cf. BN of 21.03.22), security forces prevented members of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) from meeting for a conference at the party's headquarters on 19.08.22. According to media reports, the congress had been banned by the judiciary shortly before. PAIGC leader Domingos Simões Pereira accused President Umaro Sissoco Embaló of putting pressure on the judge. The judge himself is said to have told several people about Embaló's direct calls.

India

Kashmir: Electoral eligibility extended

On 17.08.22, the Indian government announced that Indian nationals temporarily residing in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are also eligible to vote in the region. These include, in particular, members of the Indian military, government employees and migrant workers. According to official figures, this means that about 2.5 million more people will be eligible to vote, in addition to the roughly 7.5 million permanent residents. Until about three years ago, the Muslim-majority area in northern India held a semi-autonomous special status.

Iran

Court of Appeal upholds penalties against critics of COVID crisis management

In Tehran, the first-instance criminal sentences against two lawyers, a journalist and two other persons were confirmed after appeal proceedings. In 2021, the defendants had sought legal action against inadequate government crisis management in the COVID-19 pandemic. In connection with the case several persons involved had been detained in August 2021 (cf. BN of 23.08.21 and 13.09.21). According to reports on 17.08.22, the Court of Appeal upheld the sentences imposed in each case, ranging from two to four years in prison, as well as the ban on all media and advocacy activities for a period of one and two years respectively. Prison sentences of three and six months were confirmed against two other participants. The charges included conspiracy and collusion to commit crimes against national security.

Inconsistent punishment for violations of the hijab requirement

With reference to an Iranian news agency, it was reported on 16.08.22 that a meeting of the national advisory body on "Ordering the Good and Forbidding the Evil" had announced new regulations regarding punishment for violations of the general hijab requirement and morality issues. According to the report the panel's chairman announced that future violations were to be primarily punished with fines. However, additional restrictions on social rights were also mentioned. For example, female government employees could be dismissed if their social media profiles did not conform to Muslim standards. Already last month, foreign media reported on possible measures such as a denial of state services and access to banks, as well as an increased presence of morality police in numerous cities (cf. BN of 11.07.22). In a high-profile case on 20.08.22, a female hijab opponent had been charged with allegations of propaganda against the system and other counts. The woman had reportedly been arrested in July 2022 following the release of a video of her confrontation with a hijab supporter on a Tehran city bus and was later allegedly forced to confess on state television. Several activists had demanded information on the whereabouts of the accused in smaller local protests on 15.08.22.

Religious minorities: Arrest of two converts

On 17.08.22, foreign media reported the arrest of two converts to Christianity in Tehran after they appeared for a court hearing. Citing a Christian human rights organisation, the two were a couple who had already been temporarily detained in 2019 and sentenced to eight and two years in prison respectively in 2020 on charges of

leadership or membership of an illegal organisation. The accused had been set free for the duration of a bail agreement following a rejected appeal. The exact reasons for the re-arrest had not been disclosed.

Iraq

Several suspected terrorists killed in security operation

On 20.08.22, the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (ICTS) announced the killing of six suspected ISIS terrorists during a security operation in the Hamrin Mountains in the northern governorate of Salahaddin. According to the statement, one of the six killed was Abu Maryam Al-Qahtani, a senior IS leader in Salahaddin. According to the ICTS, Qahtani supervised the killing and abduction of civilians and security forces by setting up fictitious checkpoints near the Hamrin Mountains.

Libya

Call for protests and the closure of oil fields in southern Libya

After the explosion of a tanker lorry in Sabha on 01.08.22 that caused the death of 22 people and numerous injuries, the so-called Fezzan Anger Movement has called for protests and announced the closure of oil fields in the southern provinces, according to media reports. The movement, which was founded in 2018 mainly by young people from southern Libyan towns such as Sabha, Ubari, Murzuq, Ghat and Brak al-Shati, wants to draw attention to economic marginalisation, the lack of public infrastructure such as health facilities and the fuel crisis in the southern provinces, according to its spokesperson.

Mali

France ends military operation "Barkhane"

After more than nine years, France ended its military operation "Barkhane" on 15.08.22. The last remaining French soldiers stationed in Gao in northern Mali were transferred to the neighbouring country of Niger. The German deployment recently caused a dispute with the Malian government. The Bundeswehr was denied overflight rights and no exchange of personnel was possible. As a result, Germany temporarily suspended the mission. In the meantime, German soldiers could be brought to Mali with a civilian aircraft.

Montenegro

PM Abazovic's government toppled by vote of no confidence

According to a recent media report, the government of Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic was toppled on 19.08.22 by a vote of no confidence in the Montenegrin parliament. The parliament carried the motion of no confidence of the DPS (Democratic Party of Socialists) of President Milo Djukanovic and smaller parties in the incumbent government coalition, by 50 of 81 deputies' votes. The motion of no confidence, which was tabled not only by the DPS but also by the junior coalition partner SDP (Social Democratic Party), was prompted by the disapproval of the basic agreement Abazovic signed with the Serbian Orthodox Church of Montenegro, which, according to the critics, had come about without the necessary broad consensus.

Morocco

Prison sentence for insulting Islam

On 17.08.22, the blogger Fatema Karim, who was detained on 15.07.22, was sentenced to two years in prison for "undermining the Muslim religion". She had posted satirical comments on her Facebook page about a Quranic verse and the hadiths of the Prophet Mohammed.

She was sentenced under Article 267-5 of the Moroccan Penal Code, which provides for prison sentences of six months to two years for "anyone who violates the Muslim religion". She appealed the sentence.

Nicaragua

Repression against the Catholic Church: Bishop and others arrested

After besieging the Curia of Matagalpa for more than two weeks, special police units stormed it on 19.08.22 and arrested the dissident bishop Rolando Álvarez and the six priests and seminarians, as well as a cameraman, still in the Curia at that time and transferred them to Managua (cf. BN of 15.08.22). While Álvarez has since been held under house arrest, the other seven people have been handed over to the Directorate of Legal Assistance in Managua, according to police reports. Álvarez is still being investigated for "destabilising and provocative acts" and is accused of "organising violent groups" and "inciting hatred" (cf. BN of 08.08.22). According to the authorities, the police operation also served the "purpose of restoring normality for the citizens of Matagalpa". NGOs, numerous bishops' conferences as well as the Vatican and the UN criticised the events in Nicaragua and called for human rights to be respected. During the more than 14-days of siege, individuals were allowed to leave the Curia after negotiations, including a choir singer from El Salvador on 16.08.22. According to opposition media, he was subsequently deported to his home country on 18.08.22.

Political prisoners: hunger strikes, visits by children, transfer to house arrest

After a hunger strike that began on 15.08.22, political prisoner Tamara Dávila was allowed a visit by her six-year-old daughter on 20.08.22, it was the first time since her arrest and after more than a year in detention. Numerous initiatives and legal remedies to obtain such permission earlier had failed. On the same day, Miguel Mora who had been on hunger strike for a long time due to the prohibition of a visit by his son, was also able to see him for the first time after the authorities gave permission. Related thereto, NGOs and relatives again criticised the only sporadically authorised visits of relatives as well as the detention conditions.

According to information from his relatives, the opposition leader and former president of the Supreme Council of the Private Sector (COSEP), José Adán Aguerri Chamorro, was transferred to house arrest on 18.08.22. According to NGOs, the transfer came in response to the serious deterioration in his health, but official sources have not yet commented on the reasons. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison in March 2022 for conspiracy and undermining national sovereignty.

Nigeria

Court of Appeal: Sharia jurisprudence not unconstitutional

According to media reports, a Court of Appeal in the northern Nigerian metropolis of Kano ruled on 17.08.22 that Sharia jurisprudence does not violate the Nigerian constitution. At the same time, the court confirmed the order for a retrial of the 24-year-old singer Yahaya Aminu Sharif (also known as Yahaya Sharif-Aminu or Aminu Yahaya-Sharif), who was sentenced to death for blasphemy by a Sharia court in August 2020 (cf. BN of 05.10.20). On 21.01.21, the death sentence had been set aside due to formal irregularities in the criminal proceedings (cf. BN of 01.02.21). The singer disagreed with a retrial before the Sharia court, which had already sentenced him to death in 2020, and questioned the constitutionality of Sharia jurisprudence. One of the three judges hearing the appeal voted in favour of a decision in his favour, two were against.

Edo State: Suspected victims of ritual killings discovered

According to the statement of a spokesperson for the authorities of 17.08.22, security forces have found 20 mummified bodies in a residential building in Benin City. The bodies were of 15 men, three women and two children. Numerous objects used in rituals of traditional religions and cults, as well as for traditional healing purposes, were also discovered at the site. The police had started an investigation and arrested three young men, the statement said. Other persons suspected of being involved in the events are still being searched for. As many things are still unclear in the case, the police have also deployed a medical team. Belief in the powers of traditional medicine and rituals is still quite widespread in Nigeria. Cases have been reported in which human body parts were also used for such rituals.

Pakistan

Protests against resurgence of the TTP in the Northwest

In recent weeks, protests against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the increasingly tense security situation, especially in North Waziristan and Swat, have taken place in northwest Pakistan. In the ongoing peace negotiations with the Pakistani government, the TTP is demanding the return of its fighters together with their arms to their former home districts, which now belong to the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Regional political leaders spoke out against negotiations with the Pakistani Taliban. The TTP's prime targets used to be moderate Pashtun members of the Awami National Party (ANP); over 1,000 ANP members have died in TTP attacks since 2008. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), critical of the TTP and the Pakistani military, has pointed out that at least 80,000 Pashtun civilians have been killed and more than six million people displaced since 2003.

Attack on security forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On 19.08.22, two security personnel were killed in a bomb attack in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district. Initially, no one claimed responsibility for the attack. Bajaur is considered a retreat for TTP fighters.

Palestinian Territories / Israel

West Bank: Israeli military kills two Palestinians

On 18.08.22, a Palestinian was killed in violent clashes by the Israeli military in the northern West Bank city of Nablus. According to the Palestinian Red Crescent, 35 other people were wounded.

On 19.08.22, a Palestinian was killed near violent clashes between armed Palestinians and Israeli military in the village of Tubas, in the north of the West Bank. According to witnesses, he did not take part in the clashes and was shot on his way home in front of a bakery where he had gone to seek shelter. His family and the Palestinian Ministry of Health accused the Israeli military of the killing. The Israeli military pointed out that Palestinian gunmen could also be responsible for his death and announced further investigations. During an operation to arrest several people, the Israeli military said it had encountered resistance from armed individuals. For several months, raids by the Israeli military have been taking place in the West Bank almost daily, resulting in violent clashes.

West Bank: Unannounced investigations and closure of several NGO offices

On 18.08.22, the Israeli military entered the offices of several Palestinian human rights organisations which it accuses of supporting the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), that had been declared a terrorist organisation by Israel already last year (cf. BN of 25.10.21).

According to its own information, the Israeli military searched and closed seven organisations that day. This would exceed by one the number of groups declared terrorist organisations in October 2021. According to media reports, the extra organisation is the Union of Committees in Health, which Israel already banned from working in the West Bank in 2020. Other organisations affected were Addameer, Defence for Children International - Palestine, the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, the Union of Committees for Agricultural Labour and the Bisan Centre for Research and Development and al-Haq, according to media reports.

Despite the confiscation of the organisation's computers and other property, as well as the official closure and sealing of the premises by the Israeli authorities, the al-Haq organisation announced that it would continue its work.

Several European countries that provide funds to the organisations in question rejected the allegations made by Israeli authorities. They said there was insufficient convincing evidence against the groups. Shortly after the raids, a delegation of mostly European diplomats visited al-Haq, one of the organisations concerned, in a gesture of support.

Sierra Leone

Tense calm

After the protests over the high cost of living (cf. BN of 15.08.22), in which police and security officers cracked down on protesters and at least 21 civilians and six officers were killed, police and army convoys initially patrolled the busy commercial streets in Rokupa, Makeni and Kamakwie districts. Gradually, the situation returned to normal. The government held the opposition partly responsible for the protests, which were considered an attempted coup. An investigation was launched against suspected organisers.

Somalia

Attack on Mogadishu hotel

At least 21 people were reportedly killed and over a hundred more injured in several attacks on a hotel and the Aden Adde airport on 19.08.22 and 20.08.22. Two suicide attacks in the entrance area were followed by a hotel siege lasting almost 30 hours accompanied by exchanges of fire between Somali security forces and the attackers. According to Somali security forces they ended the attack. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack as well as for an attack at the airport in which five people died.

Several dead protesters in Somaliland

At least five people were killed and many others injured by police forces during protests in the context of the regional presidential election due in November, in Hargeisa, Burao and Erigavo on 11.08.22. Hundreds took part in the protests after talks between the government and the opposition broke down and the opposition accused the government of trying to delay the elections. Reportedly, also numerous protesters and media workers were arrested during the protests and there was an internet blackout.

South Sudan

Security situation and humanitarian aid

The Humanitarian Snapshot published on 15.08.22 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports a persistently dismal security situation. In July 2022 alone, at least 80 people were killed in ethnic clashes in Eastern Equatoria State. However, it is not known what exactly triggered the fighting. UNOCHA also reported that more than 17,500 people were currently displaced by fighting in Eastern Equatoria.

In addition, the country is currently struggling with heavy rainfall, increasingly worsening food security and health situations. UNOCHA describes the overall humanitarian situation in South Sudan as disastrous.

On the occasion of World Humanitarian Day on 19.08.22, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan also expressed massive criticism and concern about the current situation in the country. According to her, the work in the field of humanitarian aid is sometimes life-threatening. Since the beginning of the year, five aid workers have been killed in the course of their work. Furthermore, the coordinator stated that in the period from 01.01.22 to 30.06.22, 232 incidents of restrictions of humanitarian access were recorded. 40% of these are said to be in the two states of Jonglei and Central Equatoria. According to the report, South Sudan is the country where the aid workers are facing most violence, ahead of Afghanistan and Syria.

According to the UN coordinator, deficits in the rule of law and little access to justice encouraged crime and violence. She called for an end to attacks on civilians, humanitarian personnel and their facilities.

Sudan

Renewed protests

On 18.08.22, more protests against the military government erupted, including in the capital. In addition to demanding the withdrawal of the military leadership from the government and a handover to a purely civilian government, the protesters also commemorated the people killed in the protests so far.

Repeatedly riots broke out in Khartoum. The protesters threw stones at the police and set tyres on fire. The security forces used tear gas. The protests on 18.08.22 had been announced as part of the preparations for a planned general strike on 24.08.22.

Persistent rainfall and flooding

Rainfall intensified in the course of August. Some regions have been cut off, especially in the country's north and east. The states of North and South Kordofan, South Darfur and River Nile have been most affected so far. In the region of El Managil, in the state of El Gezira, a state of emergency has been declared after more than 3,000 families were directly affected by the floods and had to leave their homes.

In River Nile State, the Director of the Berber Region called for urgent relief assistance in the form of food and emergency shelter. At least 25 villages in the region are currently affected by floods and 3,000 houses have been destroyed or damaged.

In Kassala, eight people have died so far due to the rains and floods. The region of the El Gash river is particularly affected. Villages close to the river are currently only accessible by helicopter.

On 14.08.22, the Sudan National Council for Civil Defence stated that 136,000 people from twelve states have been affected by the current rains and floods. In addition, it is estimated that up to 14,500 houses have been destroyed and 20,600 damaged across the country.

On 17.08.22, referring to statements by the spokesperson of the National Council for Civil Defence, media reported that 77 people had died so far due to the floods.

Local authorities are providing tents and food to the affected people but are asking the state government and international organisations for help in dealing with contaminated water and preventing diseases caused thereby.

Security situation in Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan

On 15. and 16.08.22, several villages in the region around the town of Kutum, in the north of the state of North Darfur, were attacked. In total, at least seven people were killed and dozens injured. Several people are missing. The starting point was the killing of two members of an Arab tribe. In revenge, members of the tribe attacked neighbouring villages, causing the situation to escalate considerably. During the fighting, at least four villages were set on fire and several people fled the region. According to reports from residents, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were present in the affected region but did not intervene in the fighting. The civilian organisation Sudan Liberation Movement Transitional Council (SLM-TC), on the other hand, accused RSF forces of participating in the fighting, in some cases, in line with their own tribal affiliation. The state government of North Darfur announced that it would send security forces to the affected region and prosecute those responsible.

In the Habila region of South Kordofan, at least one person was killed and an unknown number of others were injured on 14.08.22 as a result of disputes over stolen cattle. According to reports, security forces seized the cattle because of a personal feud.

Near the village of Abu Janouk, in West Kordofan, a man was killed by unknown persons on 14.08.22. It is suspected that this act is linked to several previous acts of violence. According to reports from local residents, "infiltrators" from the south were responsible. They have been blocking important roads into the region for some time. Requests for help from government agencies have so far remained unanswered.

Syria

Northeast Syria: Turkish army attacks leave dozens dead

The Turkish military attacked the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) controlled northeast of Syria several times.

On 16.08.22, the Turkish military launched an air strike in Ayn al-Arab (Kurdish Kobani), killing at least eleven people and injuring eight others, according to local media and the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR). Reportedly, the victims included several members of the Syrian armed forces.

Also, on 16.08.22, the Turkish Ministry of Defence declared that 13 suspected members of Kurdish militias had been killed in an artillery attack after they assaulted the border post of Çiçekalan near the Turkish border town of Birecik. One Turkish soldier was killed.

On 18.08.22, a drone fired a missile at a volleyball court in Hasakah, killing at least four women and injuring several others. The US military condemned the attack without identifying a perpetrator. According to the statement, a group of teenage girls were allegedly meeting there to play sports under a UN education programme. SOHR blamed Türkiye for the attack and stated that a Kurdish Syrian commander was there at the same time.

Al-Bab: At least 15 dead after rocket attack by government troops

On 20.08.22, according to media reports, a rocket was fired at a busy market in the Turkish-occupied northern part of Syria. The Syrian Civil Defence (also known as the White Helmets) stated that 15 people were killed and at least 28 were injured.

While the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) issued a statement denying involvement in the attack, the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) blamed the attack on Syrian government forces and considered it retaliation for the Turkish air strike on 16.08.22.

According to SOHR, this was the deadliest attack in the region since a fragile ceasefire took effect in March 2020.

Syria / Lebanon

Syrian Minister: Syria ready for return of refugees from Lebanon

On 15.08.22, Hussein Makhoul, a cabinet member of the Syrian government, stated that Syrian refugees in Lebanon could return to Syria and count on support from the authorities. Makhoul made the statement during a meeting with Lebanese (Transitional) Minister for Displaced Persons Issam Charafeddine in Damascus. Charafeddine had told an international news agency already a month ago that Lebanon hoped to repatriate about 15,000 Syrians every month in the near future.

UNHCR and various human rights organisations speak out against (involuntary) returns to Syria and warn of the dangers that those concerned may face in Syria. Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (ai) have documented human rights violations, some of them severe, that have befallen returnees from neighbouring countries.

Türkiye

Alleged assassination plot against MPs uncovered

On 17.08.22, HDP MP Garo Paylan filed a criminal complaint after a former lawyer of the ultra-nationalist Alaattin Çakıcı published that he had uncovered an assassination plot against the Armenian MP. Paylan said on Twitter that although two weeks had passed since the assassination plot against him was uncovered, neither the government nor the prosecutor's office had investigated. According to media reports, Paylan has been receiving threats since the end of April 2022, after he introduced a bill recognising the genocide of the Armenian people.

Tunisia

Police unions under pressure

According to foreign media, on 10.08.22 President Kais Saied proposed to introduce a unified police union structure. This followed demands by human rights activists for the dissolution of police unions after the police threatened not to provide security at artistic performances, for example. The reason given was that the events contained words and gestures that would offend morality.

Uganda

Ban on an LGBTIQ organisation

In early August, the NGO Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), which has been advocating for LGBTIQ rights since 2004, was banned by the government for not being properly registered. Human rights organisations criticised the ban and fear repercussions for the treatment of LGBTIQ persons.

Ukraine

Civilian deaths after air strikes on Kharkiv and the Donetsk region

The war in Ukraine has intensified, especially in the northeastern city of Kharkiv. According to local authorities, at least 21 people were killed by Russian missile attacks on civilian buildings in Kharkiv on 17.08. and 18.08.22, another 42 people were injured. An all-day curfew is to be imposed in Kharkiv on 24.08.22, Ukrainian Independence Day. According to President Zelensky, Russian attacks are expected to intensify on the occasion of Ukrainian Independence Day. In the capital Kiev, public gatherings between 22.08. and 25.08.22 were banned due to the dangerous situation. In the Donetsk region, at least five civilians were killed in air strikes on 18.08.22, according to the local Ukrainian military administration and two more people were killed by missile strikes on 21.08.22. Ukrainian authorities estimate the total number of civilians killed in the Donetsk region since the start of the Russian attack on 24.02.22 to be at least 757 and the number of injured at least 1,943. According to the Ukrainian Military General Staff, Russian ground attacks were reported on the front lines of Mykolayiv and Donetsk regions on 21.08.22. The security situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, which has been captured by Russian forces, remains critical, according to media reports. On 18.08.22, President Zelensky called on the UN to find a solution to demilitarise the plant and ensure its security. The parties to the conflict report continued military action on the territory of the nuclear power plant. Meanwhile, on 15.08.22, the Ukrainian parliament confirmed the bills submitted by President Zelensky to extend martial law and general mobilisation for another 90 days after 23.08.22 (cf. BN of 15.08.22). According to Ukrainian authorities and human rights organisations, there are still numerous cases of forced recruitment by the de facto authorities in the areas of the Donbass controlled by Russia and the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.

Group 62 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration
Briefing Notes
BN-Redaktion@bamf.bund.de