



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

15 November 2022

Afghanistan

Governance: Hudud punishment, exclusion of female students from universities

On 13.11.22 Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the Taliban, ordered judges throughout the country to apply the so-called “hudud” punishments (Islamic criminal law according to the sharia) to criminals throughout Afghanistan. Under Islamic law, hudud crimes (e.g. apostasy, rebellion against the ruler, theft, mugging, adultery, slander and the consumption of alcohol) are punishable by the amputation of hands and feet, whipping and death. According to reports on 09.11.22, the Taliban locked a large number of drug addicts in a gymnasium without any access to provisions or treatment in response to complaints about the increase in drug use since the Taliban assumed power.

The Taliban reportedly resolved on 11.11.22 that girls and women are no longer to be able to study at universities in future. Local sources at Kabul University confirmed to the Hasht-e Subh news portal that a Taliban official announced this resolution in a meeting at Kabul University last week. While the ministry of further education has yet to confirm this news, local sources allege that the resolution is to be implemented at the end of the current academic year. On 09.11.22 the Taliban banned women from visiting parks and public baths in the city of Kabul.

Persecution: Killings and arrests by the Taliban

According to a report in the media on 08.11.22, a Taliban shot dead a girl in Balkh province because she did not wish to marry him. On 07.11.22 a young man died as a result of torture by the Taliban. He was arrested on charges of collaborating with the National Resistance Front (NRF). On 07.11.22 the Taliban arrested a singer in the city of Kandahar and a former policeman in Charikar, the provincial capital of Parwan. It has come to light that the Taliban have been holding a writer and activist in Panjshir province for two months. The Taliban had forbidden the family from making the arrest public. On 11.11.22 the Taliban dispensed 30 lashes to each of seven girls for failing to wear a headscarf (hijab) at the market of the city of Toloqan (Takhar province). In all, 16 people received whippings.

Algeria

MAK members sentenced to prison terms

It has been reported in the media that the leader of the Kabylei movement (Mouvement pour l'autodétermination de la Kabylie, MAK), Ferhat Mehenni, who lives in France, was sentenced to life imprisonment on 14.11.22. He was charged with founding a terrorist organisation and with violating Algeria's territorial integrity and national unity. Other MAK members also received prison sentences in connection with this trial.

The MAK has been listed as a terrorist organisation since May 2021 on the grounds that it is detrimental to Algeria's interests.

Angola

Embezzlement of public funds: Long prison terms in the “Lussati case”

It has been reported in the media that 46 out of 49 defendants, including high-ranking military officials and civil servants, received prison sentences of several years on 10.11.22 in a trial concerning embezzlement, fraud in connection with the transfer of cash abroad and money laundering. The court acquitted all the defendants of further charges, however, including forming a criminal organisation, for lack of evidence. The principal defendant, major Pedro Lussati, was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment. The case named after Lussati stems from the discovery of funds to the sum of several million US dollars, euros and Angolan kwanza (AOA) which had been obtained from a system of inflated wage payments and “ghost staff” at the so-called “security house” of the country's president. In response to the disclosures, President Lourenço dismissed the minister of state and head of the security house, general Pedro Sebastião on 31.05.21, together with other officers of the security house and the defence ministry. Lussati's defence has appealed against the sentence. Lussati denies the accusations and has described the judgement as politically motivated.

Benin

Call for release of opposition politician

It was reported in the media on 09.11.22 that a United Nations working group specialised in wrongful imprisonment has described the imprisonment of opposition politician Reckya Madougou (Les Démocrates) as arbitrary and called for her immediate release and compensation. Madougou had been intending to run in the 2021 presidential election, but was arrested on 03.03.21 and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine on 11.12.21 for funding terrorism (cf. BN of 08.03.21 and 13.12.21).

Restriction of the right to strike

According to reports in the media, president Patrice Talon announced a law on 19.10.22 which abolishes the right to strike in the areas of air and rail transport, ports, oil companies and the water and power supply sectors. The law, which was adopted by parliament on 11.10.22, is reportedly linked to a strike by air traffic controllers which affected the airport in the capital, Cotonou, at the end of September 2022. The right to strike was restricted for employees in the area of the judiciary, security forces and hospitals back in 2018.

Central African Republic

MINUSCA mandate extended

On 14.11.22 the UN Security Council passed resolution S/RES/2659 (2022), extending the UN mission Multidimensionnelle Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République Centrafricaine (MINUSCA) by a further year. According to a report in the media, the Russian Federation and China abstained, as last year (cf. BN of 15.11.21), in addition to which Gabon also abstained this year. One contentious issue was the lifting of the ban on night-time flying for MINUSCA, for which the UN Secretary-General had argued in his report of 13.10.22 on the situation in the country. The report describes continuing difficult conditions for the civilian population with regard to security, human rights and the humanitarian situation.

Chad

At least 621 people arrested; opposition figures in hiding

According to the judicial authorities, at least 621 people have been arrested and taken to a high-security prison in the north of Chad since the nationwide protests on 20.10.22. Thousands of people participated in the demonstrations in numerous large towns and cities on 20.10.22. The demonstrations were organised by the opposition and subsequently banned by the authorities. According to information in the media, at least 50 protesters were killed by security forces and 300 injured. The protesters were demonstrating against an extension to the transition phase in which the military influences the formation of the government and the composition of

parliament and has postponed the holding of elections for a further two years. The authorities view the demonstrators as having planned an insurrection to bring down the government.

The two leaders of the opposition party Les Transformateurs and Wakit Tamma, an association of civil society organisations, have reportedly gone into hiding in order to avoid arrest by the security services. Both have criticised the extension of the transition phase and called for corresponding protests.

DR Congo

Pledge of protection for Rwandan-speaking Congolese of Tutsi and Hutu origin

According to a report in the media, the Congolese president, Félix Tshisekedi, has provided notable Rwandan-speaking representatives of the Congolese Tutsi and Hutu community with guarantees of protection for these ethnic communities from violence and discrimination. The pledges of protection have been provided at a time of increased tensions with neighbouring Rwanda against the backdrop of the continuing fighting in parts of North Kivu province between the Congolese armed forces and the Mouvement 23 Mars rebel group (M23), whose members originate for the most part from the Tutsi people. The allegedly Rwanda-backed group is believed to have large areas of Rutshuru Territory under its control at present (cf. BN of 07.11.2022). There has been no further public knowledge since June 2022 of any pogrom-like and ethnically motivated attempted or actual killings and violence against Rwandans, Rwandan-language speakers and people of Tutsi descent, members of the Banyamulenge Tutsi community or people who are suspected of belonging to any of these groups solely on account of their physiognomy or speech (cf. BN of 20.06.22, 27.06.22 and 25.07.22).

Central Congo: Early marriages

In the period from January 2021 up to and including 14.11.2022, the NGO *Enfant Avenir* has documented more than 600 cases of early marriages in the central Congolese provinces of Kasai-Central and Sankuru alone which involve children born as a result of rape, with negative consequences for the lives and education of those concerned. The government recently condemned the problem of early marriages, which is particularly prevalent in rural areas, announcing education campaigns and the enforcement of criminal law to address the issue (cf. BN of 11.07.22).

Western Congo, Mai-Ndombe and Kwilu provinces: security situation remains tense

Various sources are unanimously agreed that the security situation remains tense and volatile in those parts of the western Congolese provinces of Mai-Ndombe and Kwilu which have been affected for a number of months by ongoing inter-ethnic hostilities between the Teke and Yaka ethnic groups (cf. BN of 05.09.22, 27.09.22 and 17.10.22). According to reports in the media, a number of killings have taken place, other human rights violations have occurred, houses and fields have been burned to the ground and new waves of displacements have been triggered in connection with further armed attacks in Bagata Territory (Kwilu) and in Kwamouth Territory (Mai-Ndombe) to the north-east of the capital, Kinshasa. Security and defence forces have reportedly arrested dozens of people in connection with attacks on various villages in recent weeks.

Egypt

Father of exiled anti-government blogger arrested

It has been reported in the media that the authorities arrested the father of Abdullah El-Sharif, a prominent anti-government blogger who is currently living abroad, on 06./07.11.22. The father had shared a video critical of president Al-Sisi on social media. Two of El-Sharif's brothers were arrested back in March 2020. The blogger had released a video at this time showing violations committed by the military on the Sinai Peninsular. Human rights organisations report that relatives of government critics living abroad are regularly subject to harassment by the Egyptian authorities, sometimes culminating in arrests.

Ethiopia

Peace process in Tigray: Agreement on humanitarian aid and demobilisation

Delegates representing the military leadership of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) have agreed further details relating to the implementation of the ceasefire accord which was concluded by the Ethiopian government and Tigray's regional government on 02.11.22 (cf. BN of 07.11.22). A declaration brokered by the African Union (AU) which was announced on 12.11.22 includes guarantees of unimpeded access for humanitarian aid and agreements on the course of the TDF's demobilisation process. Under the agreed arrangements, disarmament is to begin immediately, while at the same time all foreign forces and militias which do not belong to the ENDF are to withdraw from the region. This concerns the Eritrean army and Amharic militias, which fought on the side of the ENDF, but which were not involved in the negotiations. As such, it remains unclear whether they will adhere to the agreement. Observers consider it improbable that the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) will withdraw entirely from the region. Various sources report that targets in the north of Tigray (Zalambessa, Edaga Arbi, Adigrat) continue to be shelled by the EDF.

Hostilities in Oromia

According to reports in the media, fighting has broken out once again between government forces and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA-Shane) (cf. BN of 10.10.22). The militia, which is classified as a terrorist organisation, reportedly destroyed a number of military facilities in the town of Nekemte (East Wollega Zone) on 06.11.22 and claims to have freed more than 120 of its members. This operation reportedly involved civilian casualties. Following heavy fighting, the ENDF and regional security forces are said to have regained control of the town. Further air raids by the ENDF on OLA positions in the town of Mendi (woreda Mana Sibru, West Wollega Zone) on 09.11.22 reportedly caused dozens of civilian casualties. Mendi is believed to be under the control of the OLA. Communications in the region are down.

Clashes between militias in the Afar region claim a number of lives

It has been reported that at least 18 civilians were killed and a number injured in clashes between local militias in the woreda of Dheymeed (Sitti Zone), in the border region between the Ethiopian regional states of Afar and Somali. The regional governments have released no further statements on the incidents.

Violence has repeatedly flared up between armed groups and militias from the two regional states in the Sitti Zone. The hostilities stem from territorial disputes. Both Afar and the Somali region lay claim to the territory (cf. BN of 02.08.2021).

El Salvador

Investigative research: Attorney general with alleged links to MS-13

Investigative research has revealed that the country's current attorney general, Rodolfo Antonio Delgado Montes, who has been entrusted with the task of "fighting the gangs", allegedly has links to one of the most important gangs in the country, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). These are the findings of investigations carried out by the journalistic medium and think tank Insight Crime and the Salvadorian online newspaper El Faro, based in part on a number of interviews and legal documents. In 2018, for example, he defended a businessman, Vera Knight, who was charged with money laundering and membership of a terrorist organisation (M-13). Delgado Montes won this trial, despite substantive evidence against his client and a corresponding testimony by a key witness. After taking up the post of attorney general in May 2021, he dissolved a special investigative commission which had investigated numerous gang members, including his former client, between 2014 and 2019. The judge who was entrusted with the case of Vera Knight was appointed as deputy attorney general. The individuals accused in the article were unwilling to respond to the charges. The information could not be verified.

The Gambia

World Bank: Rise in national poverty rate primarily attributable to COVID-19

Citing the World Bank report “The Gambia Poverty and Gender Assessment 2022”, media sources state that the national poverty rate has risen to 53.4 %. The COVID-19 pandemic is reported to have caused a particular increase in poverty. A major urban-rural divide continues to be observed with regard to poverty levels. The report finds that almost 70 % of the rural population are living in poverty, while among the urban population 30 % are affected by poverty. The largest share of people affected by poverty are found to be living in rural areas in the more populous south-west, however, above all in Brikama. Prior to the breakout of the pandemic, the poverty rate fell between 2015 and 2019 from 48.6% to 45.8%.

Haiti

Indications of increase in gender-based violence by armed gangs

A report appeared in the media on 14.11.22 warning of increasing gender-based violence (GBV) and rape by armed gangs. It emerges that reporting and media coverage of these offences is becoming increasingly more difficult, as in the wake of the substantial increase in violence many police stations or hospitals where such offences could be reported or come to attention have been closed, in addition to which victims fear reprisals, should they report the offences. Nevertheless, several NGOs and the number of cases treated at a hospital of the MSF organisation which remains open in the capital, Port-au-Prince, which is dominated by more than 200 different gangs, point to an increase in rapes and GBV by these groups. According to the organisation Bureau des Avocats Internationaux (BAI), rapes of women and girls also occur at makeshift camps where people who have fled gang violence commonly seek shelter. The report refers to sexualised violence as a weapon against people who are suspected of being allied to rival gangs. Women fear that their children could be forcibly recruited or join gangs voluntarily due to their lack of prospects.

Iran

Protests: Initial sentences, further indictments and arrests

According to reports in the media, the court of first instance has handed down sentences to a number of detained protesters in Tehran. At least five people have reportedly received custodial sentences of between five and ten years. One person is reported to have received a provisional death sentence on a number of charges, including endangering national security and arson. According to varying reports, between and eleven people have so far been charged with offences which are punishable by death. Citing information from a justice spokesman of Alborz province, it was reported on 13.11.22 that eleven people had been indicted on charges including depravity on earth, a broadly defined offence which is punishable by death in accordance with Art. 286 of the Iranian Criminal Code. The defendants are accused of having been involved in the murder of a Basij member (Basij: volunteer militia which is being deployed to fight the uprising) during clashes in Karaj on 03.11.22 (cf. BN of 07.11.22). According to reports in the media, nine detained female individuals have been accused in Lahijan (Gilan province) of complicity in the killing of a security officer. No charges have been preferred here as yet. There are also reports of arrests of activists, including students, lawyers, journalists, prominent figures and minors.

The protest actions continue nonetheless. According to reports in foreign media, protests and confrontations between protesters and security forces occurred once again in more than 30 towns and cities in various provinces between 10.11. and 13.11.22, including in Rasht (Gilan) on 10.11.22. Among other casualties, a young woman reportedly sustained bullet wounds when a gathering of young people was broken up by police and Basij. In addition, regular Friday protest actions to remember those killed in the demonstrations to date are budding particularly in towns and cities of Sistan and Baluchistan province. Meanwhile, activists have called in social media for further nationwide protests, rallies and strikes on 15.11. to 17.11.22. These are to take place on the third anniversary of the November protests of 2019, to remember those killed in these protests. In this connection there have reportedly been calls in social networks to block main traffic routes in Tehran, in order to make it difficult for the security forces to use the access roads.

Iraq

Iranian attacks on Kurdish groups

A number of Iranian rockets hit regional party headquarters of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan and the Komalah on 14.11.22. These attacks must be seen in the context of the unrest in Iran: both parties are active in Iran and are considered enemies by the Iranian government. At least two people were killed.

Unexplained death in police custody

A young man suspected of causing bodily harm was arrested by the police in Sulaimaniyya on 11.11.22. He died in unexplained circumstances in police custody on 12.11.22. According to the police, he slipped while attempting to escape and accidentally fell. According to his family, eye witnesses report that he was severely and jointly abused by five policemen when he tried to escape.

Kosovo

Row over vehicle number plates; Kosovo-Serbs withdraw from public institutions

Numerous Kosovo-Serbian officials and employees of public institutions have resigned in protest at a new regulation which entered into force on 01.11.22, requiring all members of the Serbian minority in Kosovo to use Kosovar rather than Serbian vehicle number plates in future. Those concerned include mayors, councillors and MPs of the Srpska Lista party, which is closely associated with the government in Belgrade, and approx. 300 police officers. Despite resignations by border police officers, checks at the Jarinje border crossing point between Kosovo and Serbia have continued as normal so far. According to reports in the media, the resignations of the ten Srpska Lista MPs in the Kosovar parliament could spark a constitutional crisis, as the elected representatives must be replaced by law and Srpska Lista's ticket only contains nine candidates who can be nominated as replacements. Early elections are to take place to fill the vacant mayoral posts in the affected municipalities. No date has been finalised as yet.

Lebanon

Economic situation

Samantha Power, president of USAID, arrived in Lebanon for a three-day visit on 08.11.22. Various pledges to provide aid became known against the backdrop of the visit. US\$ 72 million is to be allocated to particularly severely affected households, for example. US\$ 8.5 million is earmarked for the installation of 22 solar-powered water pump stations over the next two years, with the aim of making the country's water supply less dependent on fuel imports. The water supply department has revealed that the theft of electric cabling constituted the main problem behind various water supply failures in recent weeks.

The cholera epidemic is continuing to spread. Suspected cases now stand at more than 3,000, with 18 confirmed deaths. The EU is providing EUR 800,000 for water purification in severely affected areas.

Parliament remains incapable of electing a new president. The reforms which are necessary to secure a major loan from the IMF continue to be delayed.

The struggle against IS

On 09.11.22 the Lebanese armed forces announced that they had raided a total of eight IS cells with a total of 30 members over the summer. Those arrested are reportedly for the most part Lebanese, along with a number of Syrians and Palestinians and one Egyptian. The arrests were not initially disclosed. Those arrested were allegedly planning to carry out attacks in Lebanon.

Montenegro

Government crisis: Vacant seats in constitutional court holding up domestic politics

According to reporting in the media, the government crisis which has paralysed the country for weeks can only be ended when the quorum of the constitutional court, which has been lacking for almost two months now as a result of retirements, is restored. In view of the two-thirds majority which is required for this purpose, the EU has again called on the governing and opposition parties represented in parliament to agree on candidates and to appoint the three lacking constitutional judges at the next session of parliament on 22.11.22. The government crisis was further escalated at the beginning of November, when a paper-thin majority of the conservative and pro-Serbian parties which have been in power since 2020 passed a law amending the constitutional powers of the country's president. The new law curtails the president's previous rights and obliges him to nominate a designated prime minister when the latter has the support of 41 MPs, corresponding to a parliamentary majority (cf. BN of 07.11.22). President Milo Djukanovic, who belongs to the opposition DPS party, refused to ratify the law on 07.11.22, however, on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. The speaker of parliament, Danijela Djurovic, consequently called on all party leaders to engage in dialogue to overcome the deep domestic political crisis. On 08.11.22, thousands of Djukanovic supporters demonstrated outside the parliament building in Podgorica, calling for the law to be repealed and for new elections. According to reports in the media, the constitutionality of the disputed law cannot be clarified without a quorate constitutional court, which means that the deadlock in the political process relating to the outstanding formation of a government or fresh elections will continue.

Nicaragua

Results of the local elections

According to information from the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE), the governing FSLN party won all the seats in the country's 153 municipalities in the local government elections on 06.11.22. While the CSE's president spoke of a turnout of over 57 %, reports in the media describe empty polling stations and the independent election monitoring organisation Urnas Abiertas claims that almost 83 % of the electorate abstained from voting. NGOs have recorded numerous irregularities and acts of political violence in connection with the elections. Reports in the media claim that civil servants and their dependants were pressurized into voting and required to present evidence that they had taken part in the vote. According to Urnas Abiertas, individuals who had never offered themselves as candidates were included in the electoral lists in a number of municipalities and their identities were misused in order to simulate competition. A number of arrests also took place in the run-up to the elections and on election day, with 21 of those arrested still in custody. Experts note that the elections lack any form of guarantees, in addition to which the results essentially serve to consolidate a one-party system.

Nigeria

TikTokers sentenced to flogging

On 07.11.22 a court in Kano State in northern Nigeria sentenced two prominent TikTokers to 20 lashes each. According to reports in the media, their sentences further include a fine of NGN 10,000 each (approx. EUR 22 as at 15.11.22) and the requirement to sweep the court grounds for a month. The two were found guilty of having slandered the governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Ganduje, in a comedy video which was propagated on TikTok and Facebook. Specifically, the governor was accused in the video of land grabbing, corruption and falling asleep at public gatherings. The lawyer representing the two young men stated that they would not be appealing against the sentence, as it did not provide for imprisonment. Kano State is one of the states in the predominantly Muslim north of Nigeria in which sharia law can be applied to Muslims.

North-east: Military kills high-ranking Islamists

Two reports relating to Islamist groups in the north-east of Nigeria have caused a nationwide stir in the first half of November 2022: Firstly, the Nigerian military has announced that two leading figures of the Islamist group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) were killed in air strikes near to Lake Chad on 05.11.22. The air strikes are

believed to have been carried out in part in response to recent security warnings from the USA and other states (cf. BN of 07.11.22). The second major incident, which also took place at the beginning of November, involved Ali Guyile, who is described in the media as a jihadist leader. Following the sudden deaths of several of his children, he had some 40 women arrested near to the town of Gwoza in Borno State on charges of witchcraft and subsequently had around half of these executed a number of days later. Corresponding reports cite eye witnesses of the incidents and information from victims' relatives.

Pakistan

PTI continues protest march to Islamabad

Supporters of ex-prime minister Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party resumed their protest march from the city of Wazirabad in Punjab province to Islamabad on 10.11.22 (cf. BN of 07.11.22).

Suicide attack on security forces in North Waziristan

A number of soldiers were injured in a suicide attack on an army vehicle near the town of Mir Ali in North Waziristan on 10.11.22. No group has claimed responsibility for the incident to date. According to reports in the media, this was the seventh attack targeting the security forces in North Waziristan this year.

Pakistani border soldier shot dead by Taliban fighters

Afghan Taliban fighters shot dead a Pakistani soldier at the Spin Boldak-Chaman border crossing point on 13.11.22. Other soldiers suffered injuries. The border crossing point, which is used by thousands of people every day, was briefly closed after the incident.

Pakistan / Kenya

RSF calls for independent investigation into case of Pakistani journalist killed in Kenya

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is calling for the UN to carry out an independent investigation into the case of the prominent Pakistani journalist, Arshad Sharif, who was shot dead in Kenya. According to Nairobi police, Sharif was killed by a shot to the head on 23.10.22 after the car in which he was travelling together with his brother, Khurram Ahmed, broke through a road block which had been set up for the purpose of vehicle checks on the Nairobi-Magadi motorway. The police opened fire and gave chase, in the course of which the car overturned. Pakistan's interior minister, Rana Sanaullah, rejected this version in a statement on 08.11.22, claiming that there was evidence of a targeted killing. Sharif was a fierce critic of Pakistan's powerful military apparatus. He was living in Kenya to avoid arrest for sedition in Pakistan. He was also known as a supporter of ex-prime minister Imran Khan.

Palestinian territories / Israel

West Bank: Clashes with the military claim a number of lives

09.11.22 witnessed renewed violent clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli military during a visit by a number of Israeli politicians and other Jewish believers to a place of pilgrimage which is believed to be the site of Joseph's grave, near the city of Nablus in the West Bank. The Israeli military has stated that it opened fire on a suspicious person who was positioning an explosive device, which detonated. A 15 year-old Palestinian was shot dead. The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades have claimed that the minor was a member of its organisation.

Another Palestinian was shot by the Israeli military on the same day. According to the military, he was damaging the border barrier to Israel in Anin, near the city of Jenin in the north of the West Bank. He died in hospital shortly afterwards.

On 14.11.22 members of the Israeli military shot dead a 15 year-old Palestinian girl in the town of Beitunia, north of Jerusalem. According to information from the military, soldiers who were operating in the town opened fire on a vehicle which was approaching them and which failed to respond to signals instructing the vehicle to stop. A passenger was arrested.

Numerous night-time arrest raids continue to take place.

Somalia

Somaliland: Political crisis

The opposition has called for president Muse Bihi Abdi to resign from office. This follows in the wake of the resolution by the upper house of parliament (Guurti) in September 2022 to postpone the presidential election, which was scheduled under the constitution for 13.11.22, by two years, thereby extending the president's term in office by two years, contrary to the opposition's demands (cf. BN of 26.09.22). It has also released a written statement in which it denies the legitimacy of Bihi Abdi and his government and accuses him of abusing the constitution to his own personal advantage. The opposition is calling for the elections to be held without delay, in order to avoid a political crisis. Experts warn of an increase in social unrest.

UN: Increase in civilian casualties

The latest UN figures, released on 14.11.22, show an increase in civilian casualties, primarily as a result of Al-Shabaab. At least 613 civilians have been killed and 948 injured since the beginning of the year. This is the highest level since 2017 and almost one third more than in 2021.

Somalia / Kenya

Rising numbers of Somali refugees in Dadaab

The International Refugee Committee (IRC) and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) report a continual rise in the number of people fleeing from Somalia to the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya in recent months, in the face of the impending famine (cf. BN of 12.09.22). Some 20,000 refugees are reported to have arrived at the camp, with 120,000 refugees expected up to the beginning of 2023. Dadaab already holds three times more people than was originally planned, as a result of which basic services and provisions cannot be guaranteed. The IRC and other aid organisations have called on the international community to increase funding to combat the drought in the region.

Sudan

Further demonstrations

Further demonstrations were held throughout the country on 08.11.22 under the well-known banner of "March of the millions". According to reports in the media, the security forces used tear gas against the demonstrators in all towns and cities in which demonstrations took place. In the capital, a demonstrator was once again hit by a vehicle of the security forces and seriously injured. The central committee of Sudanese doctors has reported that a total of 56 people were injured.

A wave of arrests is also said to have taken place in the capital on 07.11.22, in the course of which several members of the resistance committee were detained.

It has been reported in the media that thousands of people demonstrated in Khartoum on 12.11.22 against the involvement of the UN and civilian actors in Sudan. The reports described the demonstrators as "Islamists", who allegedly criticised the proposal by the Sudanese bar association to ban the National Congress Party of former president Al-Bashir in a new transitional constitution. The initiation of talks between the military and pro-democratic civilian groups was also criticised. In response to these protests, on 13.11.22 general Al-Burhan warned against any interference in military matters. Talks are currently in progress between the military and a number of civilian groups on the possibilities of forming a non-partisan government.

Darfur and Kordofan: Continuing violence

On 13.11.22 the security committee of the Central Darfur region resolved to declare a state of emergency for the entire region for a period of one month. This measure comes in response to an attack by unknown armed individuals on mediators who were to arbitrate between the rival Wadi Saleh and Bendasi ethnic groups. 24 people were killed and 41 injured in the attack. Reports in the media cite witnesses who have stated that the mediators were accused of being biased, which led to the attack. It has not been disclosed who precisely was responsible for the attack.

Three farmers were killed and one injured by unknown attackers near the capital of South Kordofan, Kadugli, on 07.11.22. Also on 07.11.22, a soldier was shot dead by unknown attackers in Lagawa, West Kordofan. According to reports in the media, he belonged to a unit which was deployed to evacuate people resident in Lagawa in the wake of the latest outbreaks of violence. Prior to the killing, armed people dressed in military uniforms had attacked Lagawa and villages in the surrounding area. Witnesses cited in the reports have stated that the uniforms worn by the attackers identified them as members of the Rapid Support Forces. These statements have yet to be confirmed or refuted.

Syria

HRW: Türkiye contributing to water shortages; cholera

In a statement released on 07.11.22, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accuses the Turkish authorities of failing to allow sufficient water to flow into the Euphrates. The statement further claims that the supply is also inadequate from the Allouk water station, which is located in the territories occupied by Türkiye and which represents an important source of water for hundreds of thousands of people in the region.

HRW states that the territories under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the north-east are already being disadvantaged in the distribution of relief supplies by the central government in Damascus.

The UN and the Syrian health ministry attribute the current outbreak of cholera in the country to people drinking dirty water from the Euphrates and using such water for agricultural purposes. Some 17,000 cases of cholera and at least 49 deaths have been recorded in the territories under government and SDF control. The number of documented cases of cholera in the territories under rebel control in and around Idlib stands at around 3,000.

UN Special Rapporteur calls for end to sanctions

On 10.11.22 Alena Douhan, UN Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures, called on the USA, the EU and a number of involved Arab countries to lift the sanctions which have been imposed on Syria “unilaterally” (i.e. without a UN mandate). She said the measures had further worsened the destruction and the trauma suffered by Syrian civilians, adding that the sanctions were affecting all areas of life in Syria and posed an obstacle to the reconstruction of the country in particular.

Douhan’s statement came at the end of her twelve-day visit to Syria. According to information from the UN, 12 million people in Syria are currently affected by food shortages. 90 % of the population is living in poverty. Once an oil exporter, today Syria is dependent on imports from abroad. The Syrian pound trades on the black market at 5,000 to 1 US dollar. Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, the rate stood at 47 : 1.

Some human rights organisations operating in Syria nevertheless rejected the UN Special Rapporteur’s assessment, instead calling for additional sanctions. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) complained that Douhan should have called on the Syrian government to first of all cease its human rights violations towards its own people. The SNHR alleges that tens of thousands of Syrians have been killed or have disappeared, without the Syrian government ordering a single investigation.

Tanzania

Person with albinism dies after being attacked

It has been reported that a 50 year-old man with albinism died as a result of a serious injury in Mwanza on 02.11.22. One of his arms had been severed. Human rights organisations assume that the attack was carried out on account of the man’s albinism and have called on the government to strengthen the rights of people with albinism. According to information from the UN, 75 killings of people with albinism were recorded between 2000 and 2016. In certain regions, body parts of people affected by albinism are believed to have healing powers.

Tunisia

Violence against women – call for comprehensive measures

The minister for women, the family, children and the elderly, Amal Belhaj Moussam, has stated that 77 % of the 769 acts of violence against women recorded since the beginning of 2022 were committed by the victims' husbands. She notes that this represents an increase in cases of domestic violence. The minister is calling for a collective mobilisation of state, civil-society and media institutions to protect women and has announced the opening of three new centres in November 2022 at which women who are victims of violence can receive protection.

Türkiye

Bomb attack in Istanbul

A bomb attack occurred in a busy pedestrian zone in the Beyoglu district of central Istanbul on 13.11.22. At least six people were killed and 81 injured in the attack. No extremist group has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. A government spokesperson stated that the explosion was assumed to have been caused by a terrorist attack carried out by a woman. According to justice minister Bozdogan, security footage shows a woman moving away from a bench on which she had left a bag only minutes before the explosion. On 14.11.22 interior minister Soyulu announced that the police had arrested a female Syrian national during a night-time raid in an Istanbul suburb who is suspected of having planted the bomb. 46 people were temporarily detained prior to her arrest. According to reports in the media, the Istanbul police have stated that the arrested Syrian woman has admitted having links to the PKK and the associated Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

Ukraine

Russian withdrawal from Kherson, planned extension of martial law

Following the withdrawal of Russian troops from parts of the embattled territory of Kherson, Ukrainian forces have advanced to the west bank of the Dnipro river and retaken the regional capital of Kherson. The Russian defence ministry stated on 11.11.22 that it had completed the withdrawal of its forces to the east bank of the Dnipro, which it had announced on 09.11.22. According to Ukrainian sources, numerous items of civilian infrastructure were destroyed in the course of the Russian withdrawal and the power supply is largely inoperative, in addition to which ammunition and mines which have been left behind by the Russians pose a danger to the civilian population. Some 2,000 mines were reportedly defused in the first few days after the Russian troops' withdrawal. President Zelenskyy has stated that around 170,000 square kilometres of Ukraine territory are currently mined as a result of the war and that it could take decades to clear all the mines. The planned renewed extension of martial law, which currently applies until 21.11.22, and a further extension of the general mobilisation by 90 days until 19.02.23 were announced on president Zelenskyy's initiative on 08.11.22. The corresponding bills can enter into force at short notice following parliamentary approval. According to a statement from the Ukrainian defence ministry on 09.11.22, no additional mobilisation measures are planned at present, as adequate reserves are available. Martial law and the general mobilisation were last extended in August 2022 (cf. BN of 22.08.22). According to the Ukrainian general staff, the main focus of the war currently continues to be the embattled eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. According to information from local authorities, six civilians were killed in a Russian rocket strike on a residential building in the city of Mykolaiv in southern Ukraine on 11.11.22.

Venezuela

Study shows slight fall in poverty rate, substantial inequality persists

The results of the 2022 National Survey of Living Conditions for Venezuelans (ENCOVI), which has been conducted regularly since 2014 by the Economic and Social Research Institute of the Catholic University Andrés Bello (IIES-UCAB), show the multidimensional poverty rate in the country to be falling for the first time. The sample size of the survey comprised 2,300 randomly selected households nationwide. The figures have thus fallen back to the level ascertained in the 2018 survey, prior to the pandemic and the worst phase of hyperinflation. This slight

recovery is attributable in particular to improvements in the areas of income and employment, however. The average income in public employment rose to around US\$ 113 per month, while the corresponding figure in the private sector stood at almost US\$ 150 and formal employment also rose by more than 7.5 % compared to the figure in last year's survey. While poverty due to economic factors fell from 69 % to 57 % between 2019 and 2022, poverty resulting from social factors rose over the same period from 31 % to 42 %, however. This indicates an increase in the impact of structural factors, such as access to education, housing or public services. In addition, the growth of the economy benefits different segments of the population to varying extents. Substantial inequality persists in the country. The upper 10 % of the population earn 70 times that of the bottom 10 %; almost 40 % of the households with the highest income are located in the capital, Caracas. Some reports in the media refer in this connection to so-called "recovery bubbles".

According to the survey, the most important social programmes in the period under review were, in particular, monetary payments (regular and irregular bonuses) through the Patria system and also the distribution of so-called CLAP boxes containing subsidised food. However, only 35 % of people receive these boxes on a regular basis at the standard monthly intervals, while almost 10 % never receive any at all. The number of adults who received bonuses has dropped from over 60 % in the last survey to 48.4 %. The share of return transfers of money to Venezuela from emigrants abroad has fallen by 10 % in comparison to the last survey. The number of households without food insecurity has risen from 11.8 % in 2020 to 21.9 % in 2022.

Yemen

Drone attack on port in Shabwa

The Yemeni foreign ministry has announced that the Houthis carried out a drone strike on the port of Qena in the southern governorate of Shabwa on 09.11.22. The Houthis have confirmed the attack, which they claim was carried out in order to prevent a tanker from docking and "plundering" Yemenite resources. The Yemenite government and a number of western ambassadors subsequently accused the Houthis of worsening the humanitarian situation by attacking the export economy. Back in October, the Houthis carried out an attack on an oil freighter, allegedly for the same reasons (cf. BN of 24.10.22).

70 tonnes of rocket fuel seized

The UN navy has reported that around 70 t of ammonium perchlorate was seized on board a fishing boat in the Gulf of Oman on 15.11.22. This substance is the main constituent of rocket fuel and is also used in the production of explosives. The US navy assumes that the consignment was on its way from Iran to Yemen. Iran has faced accusations since 2015 that it supplies the Houthis with weapons and other combat equipment. This is denied by both parties. Neither representatives of Iran nor the Houthis have commented on the latest incident so far.

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