

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	660
Land:	Afghanistan
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Titel:	Information Centre Asylum and Migration. Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	22. august 2016
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	22. december 2016

Group 22 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

22 August 2016

Afghanistan

Taliban offensive in Kunduz

Since July the Taliban have extended their attacks from their traditional strongholds in the country's south and east to the hitherto relatively peaceful northern provinces of Baghlan and Kunduz.

Four of the five districts of Kunduz province are currently contested or have already been taken by the Taliban. On 21 August 2016 Afghan troops succeeded in retaking Chan Abad district after the Taliban had raised their flag there on 20 August 2016. Heavy fighting is also raging in Aliabad district that had been peaceful up to now. Only recently the Taliban had conquered parts of the centres of the districts of Kala-e Sal and Dasht-e Archi. Kunduz has been without power for days. Relief workers are afraid that tens of thousands will face famine in the upcoming winter, because the fighting made sowing and harvesting almost impossible. In week 33 the Taliban conquered the district of Dahan-e Ghor in the northern province of Baghlan.

Although most of the Taliban's forays last only shortly, as security forces promptly drive them out again, they succeeded in extending their control over the provinces. A total of 182,000 people is estimated to have been driven from their villages by the fighting since the beginning of January. In the first half of the year the conflict caused over 1,600 civilian casualties and left more than 3,500 wounded.

Iraq

36 extremists executed

Iraq executed 36 extremists on 21 August 2016. In February 2016 a Baghdad court had sentenced them to death for kidnapping and subsequently killing hundreds of - mostly Shia - army recruits at Camp Speicher military base, near the northern city of Tikrit, on 11 June 2014. Up to 1,700 people fell victim to this IS massacre.

Turkey

Up to 38,000 prisoners to be released

On 17 August 2016 the Turkish government decreed the release of up to 38,000 convicts from prisons to make room for suspected putsch collaborators. The target group are prisoners who committed crimes prior to 01 July 2016, showed good conduct and have less than two years of their sentence to serve. Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag stated that this is not an amnesty, but a conditional release. Offenders sentenced for murder, domestic violence, sexual abuse or crimes against the state are excluded. The decree does not apply to anyone arrested after the mid-July putsch. Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim stated that since the coup attempt and until 17 August 2016 over 40,029 people had been arrested and arrest warrants had been issued for 20,355. 79,900 public servants have been dismissed so far and 4,262 companies and institutions have been closed down.

Attacks on police and military

At least 13 people are reported killed and more than 200 wounded as a result of several bomb explosions in front of police stations and near a military convoy in the east and south-east (in Ipekyolu, Elazig and in Bitlis province) on 17 and 18 August 2016. According to the authorities the PKK is responsible for these attacks.

Attack in Gaziantep

An attack on a wedding killed at least 51 people and injured 69 in Gaziantep (south-east) on 20 August 2016. The Turkish President said that a child aged between 12 and 14 had blown himself up. IS is suspected to be behind the bombing.

Protest for the protection of transgender people

About 200 people took to the streets in Istanbul on 21 August 2016 calling for the protection of transgender people and the prosecution of the murderers after the mutilated and burnt body of transgender activist Hande Kader had been found in an Istanbul district last weekend. Activists say that about 40 transgender persons have been murdered since 2008. Although homosexuality is legal, human rights groups say that time and again so-called hate crimes are committed against LGBT people.

Syria

Russian air raids flown from Iran

On 16 August 2016 Russia for the first time flew attacks on Aleppo, Idleb, and Deir es-Zor from Iran. Flight time is cut by more than 60 % by transferring the Russian long-range bombers from southern Russia to Hamedan in Iran. These jets had been operating from the Syrian air base Hmeimim near Lattakia before. The base is currently expanded to become a permanent Russian base.

Ceasefire in al-Hassakeh

After two days of Russian-mediated negotiations Syrian government troops and Kurdish militias agreed a ceasefire for the city of al-Hassakeh (Hassaka) in the north-east. The agreement calls for the cessation of all fighting and the withdrawal by Kurdish fighters from the positions they had taken from Syrian soldiers since the outbreak of the fighting on 17 August 2016. After Kurds and Syrian soldiers engaged in ground battles on 17 August 2016 the Syrian air force struck Kurdish militia in al-Hassakeh on 18 August 2016 for the first time since 2011. Previously the Kurdish militia and the Syrian soldiers had coexisted without getting violent, although the atmosphere had been very tense. The US-led military coalition intervened on 18 and 19 August 2016 to protect the US military advisers working with the Kurds.

AI: 17,700 died in prisons since 2011

According to an Amnesty International report over 17,700 people are estimated to have died in Syrian prisons from torture, abuse and unbearable conditions since 2011. The report is based on the testimony of 65 former prisoners.

UN envoy breaks off meeting on humanitarian aid

According to reports of 18 August 2016 UN Special Envoy de Mistura broke off a meeting of the UN working group on humanitarian aid for Syria after only eight minutes to protest against the ongoing fighting. He said that no aid convoy has been able to reach any of the besieged areas for one month.

Libya

Militias conquer further districts of Sirte

The media reported on 16 August 2016 that Libyan troops conquered the entire so-called 2nd district west of Sirte's city centre which is one of the city's most densely populated districts. In their offensive to regain control they are supported by US fighter bombers which have flown 48 air strikes on IS targets in Sirte in August 2016 to date. IS recently tried to maintain its positions with a series of suicide bombings. More than 300 fighters of the troops of the internationally recognized government of Fayeze al-Serraj died in the battle and far more than 1,000 were wounded. There is no information on the losses suffered by IS.

Somalia

Double attack in Gaalkacyo

On 21 August 2016 at least 20 people died in several attacks in the north of the city of Gaalkacyo (also Galkayo, Mudug region). At first a lorry carrying explosives drove against the entrance of a government building and exploded. When people rushed to help the victims a second bomber blew up another vehicle. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Gaalkacyo's north belongs to Puntland, its southern part to the Galmudug Interim Administration. Both consider themselves federal states of a federally organized state of Somalia.

Has al-Shabaab's leader been killed?

According to unconfirmed reports of Somali English language media on 15 August 2016 more than 30 al-Shabaab fighters were killed in the Middle Juba region in attacks of Somali units and US special forces on 10 and 13 August 2016. These casualties also included Ahmad Umar „Abu Ubeida“, the Islamist's leader, the reports said.

South Sudan

UN: Number of child soldiers rising again

The United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, announced that more than 650 boys and girls have been forcibly recruited by armed groups in South Sudan this year. Since the conflict broke out in December 2013 over 16,000 children have been recruited by armed groups and the armed forces, it said. The risk of falling victim to forced recruitment is increasing for tens of thousands of children. Last year UNICEF had helped to broker the release of 1,775 child soldiers.

Riek Machar fled South Sudan

Former vice-president and leader of the rebel organization SPLM-IO (Sudan People's Liberation-in-Opposition), Riek Machar has fled South Sudan. Reportedly he contacted UN representatives and others after crossing the border into the Democratic Republic of Congo on 17 August 2016 with his wife and about 100 soldiers. Subsequently he was flown to the capital Kinshasa for medical treatment with the support of the UN mission MONUSCO (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo) that is deployed in the DRC. The flight had been personally authorized by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. Machar's current whereabouts are unknown. He might go to Ethiopia or possibly have arrived there already.

Nigeria

800 Boko Haram members surrendered

On 16 August 2016 Director of Defence Information, Brig.-Gen. Rabe Abubakar announced the voluntary surrender of about 800 Boko Haram members since August 2015. Since August 2016 they are housed in a camp in the north-eastern state of Gombe undergoing a programme for de-radicalization and rehabilitation.

Angola/Democratic Republic of Congo

Mass vaccinations against yellow fever epidemic

In what is one of Africa's most comprehensive vaccination drives about 14 million people are to be vaccinated in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo within ten days starting on 17 August 2016 to combat the yellow fever epidemic raging there. The main focus are the areas along the countries' common border (more than 2,600km) and Congo's capital Kinshasa. About 8,5 vulnerable inhabitants of the capital are to be vaccinated in Kinshasa to prevent the virus from spreading in the over-crowded metropolis of ten

million. As global vaccine reserves are insufficient, only one fifth of the normal dose, that can offer protection for at least one year, will be used in the emergency vaccinations in Kinshasa.

The current epidemic is the most serious in the region in 30 years. It started in Angola at the end of 2015 and according to information from the WHO it had caused 365 deaths there and 95 in the DR Congo by 27 July 2016. Local authorities reported about 6,000 probable infections in all of Angola's 18 provinces and in five of 26 provinces in Congo. It is to be expected that the number of unreported cases is much higher. More than 16 million people have been vaccinated in both countries. Yellow fever is spread by the Aedes mosquito and causes fever, muscle pain, nausea and vomiting, but may also lead to kidney failure and death.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Calls for a general strike

On 21 August 2016 Congo's largest opposition alliance Rassemblement under the leadership of Etienne Tshisekedi, president of the largest opposition party UDPS, rejected an invitation to join a dialogue with the government on how to proceed until the actual date of the presidential elections in Congo, originally scheduled for November 2016. He argued that the government had not met any of the four conditions for attendance spelled out by the opposition (e.g. the government had only released four of 112 prisoners on a list that had been submitted). At the same time Rassemblement called for a general strike on 23 August 2016; this is the day set by the African Union-appointed mediator Edem Kodjo as the starting date for the dialogue between government and opposition. Also on 21 August 2016 the official election committee CENI announced that the registration of about 30 million voters required for the presidential elections could not be completed before July 2017 at the earliest for reasons of logistics and finance. It proposed to delay the planned elections set for 27 November 2016.

The opposition accuses President Kabila of delaying the presidential elections to extend his term in office. According to the constitution, Kabila whose second term of office ends on 19 December 2016, cannot stand as presidential candidate again. On 11 May 2016 the Supreme Court had ruled that if the elections are postponed Kabila may stay in office until they will actually be held.

Cameroon

Suicide bombings in Mora

On 22 August 2016 a suicide bomber sped onto a market in the city of Mora, Extrême-Nord region, on a motorcycle and blew himself up. The terrorist organization Boko Haram is suspected of being behind the attack in which three people died in addition to the assassin, 24 were wounded.

Guinea

Man dies during opposition protests

Security forces opened fire during a manifestation of several hundred thousand dissidents in Conakry killing at least one protester and reportedly injuring twelve others. The protesters had responded to the calls of several opposition parties to protest against President Alpha Condé's government. They demanded an end to corruption and unemployment and the observation of democratic freedoms. The opposition says that 700,000 people turned out, while security forces say there were about half a million.

Mauretania

Prison sentences for anti-slavery activists

A court in Nouakchott sentenced 13 members of the NGO IRA (Initiative de Resurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste en Mauretanie), dedicated to eradicating slavery, to prison sentences ranging between three and 15 years. The activists were charged for attending a protest on 29 June 2016 which resulted in clashes with the police. The protest had been directed against the clearance of a slum in the capital of Nouakchott. Many of the inhabitants of this slum are so-called Haratin, a population group in which the slave status is

passed on by birth. The court convicted the activists for attacking the government, holding an armed meeting and membership in an unregistered organization, among other things. All of the 13 convicts stated that they had been tortured before the trial.

FYR Macedonia

Flood disaster

On 04 August 2016 torrential rains in the north caused floods that killed at least 22 people and wounded 70 (see BN of 15 August 2016). Entire villages have been washed away. The full scale of the destruction is not yet known and some people are still missing. At least 3,500 houses have been flooded and over 200 were destroyed, reports say. The total number of people affected exceeds 50,000, predominantly in the following areas Hasanbeg, Haracinovo, Stracince, Stajkovc, Indshikovo, Belimbeg, and Smlikovce, where the population is mostly Albanian. Large-scale relief efforts have been started.

Azerbaijan

Investigations against Gülen organizations

Azerbaijan is examining organizations regarding any potential support from Fethullah Gülen. The investigations are directed against illegal terrorist activities. On charges of being followers of Fethulla Gülen 50 Turkish lecturers of Qafaz private university were dismissed. Already in July a private TV station lost its licence, because its reporting about the coup attempt in Turkey and its intention to broadcast an interview with Gülen had caused displeasure. The Turkic country of Azerbaijan is a close ally of Turkey.

Myanmar

Proceedings against hundreds of activists stayed

On 16 August 2016 the Interior Ministry informed that President Htin Kyaw and state advisor Aung San Suu Kyi stayed 274 proceedings against 457 activists during the first 100 days the new government has been in office (since 30 March 2016).

On the same day the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) informed that at the end of July 2016 83 political prisoners, most of them members of ethnic minorities, remained in detention for contacts to rebel groups.