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Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

16 December 2019

Afghanistan

Attacks

On 11.12.19 Taliban attacked the US military headquarters in Bagram, some 50 km north of Kabul. According to NATO, all seven attackers were killed after a 14-hour battle. NATO reports that two civilians also died and 70 people were injured. The attackers barricaded themselves inside a hospital, which was severely damaged in the fighting. In the wake of this attack, the USA's only recently resumed peace negotiations with the Taliban were suspended once again.

UNAMA: Rise in number of security incidents

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that the number of security incidents between 09.08. and 07.11.19 was up by 13 % on the corresponding period last year. UNAMA documented 6,654 incidents. The provinces in the southern region were most frequently affected, followed by the east and the south-east. 60 % of all incidents occurred in these three regions. Helmand, Kandahar (South Afghanistan) and Nangarhar (East Afghanistan) were the provinces with the most incidents. More than half of the incidents took the form of armed clashes. The remaining incidents comprised attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide attacks and air raids.

Algeria

Presidential election goes ahead despite protests and boycott

The contentious presidential election in Algeria, which had been postponed several times, took place on 12.12.19. According to the information available to date, former prime minister Abdelmajid Tebboune won the election, taking 64 % of the vote. The official turnout figure stands at 41 %. Those opposed to the election cast doubt both on this figure and on the election result. On the day of the election, thousands of people took to the streets in the centre of Algiers and in many other cities, calling for an election boycott. In the Berber regions, the polling stations remained closed in many provinces - in Bejaia and Tizi Ouzou allegedly on security grounds. In the early morning, demonstrators allegedly stormed a polling station near Bejaia and found ballot boxes containing ballot papers which had already been filled in. The police and security forces moved against the protesters with increasing force, using tear gas and batons. Activists report that there were numerous arrests in the days before the election. The protest movements nevertheless remained largely peaceful.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Justice system under pressure following critical report

A recently published report by the European Commission on the rule of law concludes that Bosnia-Herzegovina's justice system is in urgent need of reform. The shortcomings in dealing with serious cases of crime and corruption are considered to be particularly glaring.

The report refers to a culture of passivity and obedience in the country's judicial system. Officials are found to commonly adhere to a formalistic approach, and rulings by the constitutional court fail to be enforced.

In the area of criminal justice, the report cites cases in which charges fail to be brought in the face of pertinent evidence.

The report calls for a new selection process in the justice system and a lessening of the political pressure on representatives of the judiciary.

A positive assessment by the European Commission of the situation regarding the rule of law is crucial to Bosnia and Herzegovina's hopes of acceding to the EU.

Constitution shows shortcomings on minority rights

Ten years after the first ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, which found that the constitution violated the rights of Jews, Romanians and other minorities, Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated in a press release on 12.12.2019 that the country is still resisting constitutional reform. The release criticises the fact that constitutional and electoral law do not guarantee all nationals of Bosnia-Herzegovina the same access to public office.

Under the constitution, persons who do not belong to the three largest groups – Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs – are not entitled to run for presidential office or for a seat in the House of Peoples, the upper house of parliament.

China

Xinjiang: alleged releases from re-education camps

The deputy secretary of the Communist Party of China in Xinjiang and governor of the autonomous region, Shohrat Zakir, stated on 09.12.19 that all the students had left the institutions referred to as centres for education and deradicalisation. State media claimed that they had found employment and were leading happy lives. No figures or evidence were presented. As in the case of a similar announcement in July 2019 (cf. BN of 05.08.19) to the effect that the majority of the inmates had left the camps and found employment, observers also doubt this depiction. An unknown number of inmates have reportedly been released not into freedom, but into strictly controlled forced labour, for example.

The authorities launched extensive national and international propaganda measures after internal documents were recently leaked which indicated that hundreds of thousand of Uighurs and members of other Muslim minorities were being held in re-education camps.

Hong Kong: Protests

Clashes between demonstrators and the police occurred at small-scale protests at various shopping centres on 15.12.19. Several people were injured.

Hong Kong: Investigation into police misconduct during the protests

On 11.12.19 police experts from Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada continued their cooperation with a police commission in an advisory capacity with the aim of investigating police misconduct during the protests. They have taken up this involvement in view of a "crucial lack of powers, capacities and independent investigative capabilities" of the official Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC). The experts were appointed in September 2019 to lend the IPCC greater credibility. An independent investigation into alleged police brutality against demonstrators is one of the Hong Kong protest movement's central demands.

DR Congo

ADF rebels kill around 30 civilians

On the night of 14.12.19 suspected rebels belonging to the ADF (Allied Democratic Forces) killed at least 22 civilians, including 13 women, in the villages of Baoba and Ntombi (Beni territory, North Kivu province). The rebels had killed six people in Beni on the day before. The killings are seen as reprisals for the offensive launched by the army on 30.10.19 with the aim of driving the ADF - an Islamist group originating from Uganda - out of the woodland close to the Ugandan border. At least 179 people have reportedly been killed by the rebels to date. In his first speech on the state of the nation on 13.12.19, president Tshisekedi announced that the rebels had been driven out of almost all of their retreats and that he had assigned command of the army in Beni to army chief of staff Celestin Mbala at the end of November 2019.

Georgia

Leader of New Georgia party arrested in protest action

The police have arrested twelve people who were attempting to block the entrance to the parliament building in Tbilisi. Among them was Giorgi Vashadze, leader of the New Georgia opposition party. Dozens of people took part in the protest against the election of 19 judges for the supreme court whom the demonstrators criticise for being too close to the ruling Georgian Dream party. The Georgian interior ministry announced on 12.12.19 that those arrested faced charges of minor hooliganism and refusal to follow police instructions. Various demonstrations have taken place in Tbilisi in recent weeks, with protesters calling for a reform of the electoral system, which opposition parties consider to unfairly favour the ruling party.

India

Amendment to nationality act adopted

The amendment to the nationality act passed through the upper house of India's parliament on 11.12.19 (cf. BN of 09.12.19). President Ram Nath Kovind also gave his consent to the new act on 12.12.19. The amendment to the act entitles Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jains and Parsis who are subject to religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan to acquire Indian citizenship. Should the National Register of Citizens (NRC) be introduced as planned, the amended act will make it easier for these religious groups to furnish the necessary proof for the purposes of acquiring Indian nationality. The majority of the Indian population do not possess any formal documents to prove their Indian nationality. The amendment is discriminatory towards Muslims living in India, who cannot be included in the NRC without the relevant documents and are thus in danger of becoming stateless to all intents and purposes. The Tamils from Sri Lanka are also excluded from the new arrangements and thus feel similarly disadvantaged. In the north-eastern federal state of Punjab, Sukhbir Singh Badal, head of the Sikh Shiromani Akali Dal party (SAD-B) which is politically active in the region, criticised the fact that amendment to the law does not benefit members of the Ahmadiyya community who are subject to persecution in Pakistan.

Protests against amendment to nationality act

The adoption of the amendment to the nationality act sparked protests in many parts of India, most significantly in Assam, West Bengal and New Delhi.

Major disturbances have occurred in the north-eastern federal state of Assam. The population in this region fears an influx of Hindus from Bangladesh. Cars were demolished, tyres set on fire and roads blocked in various towns and cities in Assam. The Indian government dispatched thousands of soldiers to the region and shut down access to the internet on 11.12.19 for 48 hours. The military deployed tear gas and ammunition against the demonstrators. At least two people died in the capital, Guwahati.

On 14.12.19 students joined in protests at a Muslim university in the capital, New Delhi. The police stormed the university and used tear gas. More than 100 students were injured. On 15.12.19 buses were set on fire on a highway in West Bengal and several railway stations were ravaged.

The introduction of the first ever list of citizens in Assam has rendered almost two million Muslims who live there stateless (cf. BN of 02.09.19). At the end of December they are to be taken to facilities for the purpose of deportation. Ten such facilities are under construction in Assam, with additional facilities planned in the federal state of West Bengal, which borders on the west of Bangladesh.

Iran

November disturbances: Over 300 dead

According to the latest information from the Amnesty International human rights organisation, 304 people died in the serious unrest in Iran in November. The Amnesty report which has now been published also states that several thousand people were injured when the security forces crushed the nationwide protests "with lethal violence". According to eye witnesses, the protests were followed by broad-ranging "malicious practices" by the authorities to prevent people from talking about the events. According to figures which have yet to receive official confirmation, more than 1,000 people were arrested - including 180 who are being referred to as

“ringleaders”, and who now face the threat of the death penalty. During the unrest, the Iranian government largely prevented information, images and videos of the protests from being disseminated by temporarily shutting down the internet.

Consequences of the latest mass protests – Human rights violations and renewed unrest expected

The November disturbances in Iran following the increase in petrol prices were the fiercest since the revolution 40 years ago. The brutal and bloody manner in which they were crushed by the regime’s security forces was similarly unprecedented. All the causes behind the protests in November, as well as those back in 2017/2018, continue to exist. As the government is unwilling to meet people’s basic needs, or unable to do so as a result of the US sanctions, and shows no willingness to pursue any reforms, Iran is set for further turbulence and instability in the future.

Iraq

UNAMI report on protests

On 11.12.19 the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) published a further report on the anti-government protests which have been continuing in Iraq since 01.10.19. In the period under review from 05.11.19 to 08.12.19, UNAMI puts the death count at 170, with 2,264 people injured. UNAMI points out that the Iraqi government is prohibiting the hospitals from releasing official statistics to UNAMI. The protests have spread to 13 of the 18 Iraqi provinces. The Kurdish provinces have remained unaffected by the demonstrations to date. According to UNAMI, arrested demonstrators are charged under Iraqi criminal law, rather than anti-terrorism legislation. According to UNAMI’s findings, unknown third parties continue to take action against demonstrators in various ways, from the use of live ammunition, through threats and abductions to targeted killings. While a number of responsible persons within the security forces have been charged, security personnel continue to use live ammunition against demonstrators, for example. According to reports by various organisations, including Human Rights Watch, activists and demonstrators continue to be intimidated, attacked, abducted or killed.

Protests continue

The protests continued last week. On 16.12.19 demonstrators closed the entrance to a university in Babil province. On 15.12.19 an activist who also worked as a journalist was killed by unknown armed men. Also on 15.12.19, two activists were injured when a car bomb exploded in Diwaniyah, in Al-Qadisiyah province. On 14.12.19 Iraqi demonstrators set fire to the house of the candidate running for the prime minister’s office in the city of Amara, Missan province. A number of political parties have agreed to Al-Sudani running for the office. Al-Sudani has previously held cabinet posts and is supported by pro-Iranian groups. Iraqi demonstrators have repeatedly made it known that they do not want the future prime minister to have held official posts in previous cabinets. On 10.12.19 the violence escalated again in the centre of Baghdad when the security forces injured 31 demonstrators with tear gas in driving them away from Wathba Square, a central square in Baghdad. On 09.12.19 at least 15 demonstrators and security forces were injured in clashes in the port region of Umm Qasr in Basra province.

Security incidents unrelated to the protests

Security incidents unrelated to the protests also continue to occur. IS attacks are focused in particular on the provinces of Diyala, Ninive, Kirkuk and Baghdad.

Mass grave discovered

The bodies of 643 men and boys have been discovered near Fallujah, Anbar province. It is suspected that they are members of the Al-Muhammeda tribe who disappeared after the area was liberated from IS.

Operations by Iraqi security forces against IS

Security operations against IS fighters continue. On 15.12.19 three IS fighters were killed in an air raid near Albu Juma, between the provinces of Diyala and Salahaddin. Also on 15.12.19, eight IS fighters were killed in a security operation in Samarra, in Salahaddin province.

Iraq/USA/Iran

On 06.12.19 the US Department of the Treasury imposed economic sanctions on three pro-Iranian militia leaders in Iraq, among them Qais al-Khazali (Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq), and an Iraqi businessman. The Department cited the firing on and killing of demonstrators during the protests in Iraq as the reasons for the sanctions against the militia leaders. The businessman is accused of pursuing corrupt practices at the expense of the Iraqi population.

Since 2015 there have been reports that Iran is positioning short-range missiles in Iraq. US military bases in Iraq have come under fire on numerous occasions in recent weeks: on 08.11.19 in Mosul province; on 03.12.19 in Anbar province; on 05.12.19 in Salahaddin province; on 09.12.19 and 12.12.19 US targets came under fire near the international airport in Baghdad. In the attack on 09.12.19 at least five members of the Iraqi anti-terrorist units were injured. According to American security forces, Kata'ib Hezbollah and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq are suspected of being behind the attacks. Both militias belong to the Popular Mobilization Forces. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks to date. The Iraqi government has announced that it intends to launch investigations into the attacks on 09.12.19.

Kazakhstan

Human rights activists imprisoned ahead of planned demonstrations

Human rights activists Gulmira Khalyqova and Ghalia Tamambaeva have each received ten-day prison sentences for participating in an unapproved gathering. At an unapproved demonstration on 27.11.19 they called on the European Union to take a stronger stand for human and civil rights in Kazakhstan. Human rights activist Marat Musabaev was also imprisoned. He was found guilty of inciting people to participate in an unapproved gathering. All three prison sentences came ahead of opposition demonstrations which are planned for 16.12.19. The banned party Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan had announced that it would be organising anti-government demonstrations in various cities in the country to be held on this date.

Lebanon

Violent disturbances at protests

Violent clashes occurred in Beirut between anti-government demonstrators and Lebanese security forces on 14.12. and 15.12.19. The disturbances were sparked by a renewed attack by supporters of Hezbollah and the Amal movement on the anti-government protest camp in the centre of Beirut (cf. BN of 25.11.19). Security forces attempted to control the situation with the aid of tear gas, rubber bullets and batons. The disturbances spread from the protest camp into the government district. According to the Lebanese Red Cross, dozens of people were injured and some were admitted to hospital.

Possible re-appointment of Hariri as prime minister

Protests against the possible re-appointment of Saad Hariri as prime minister took place on 15.12.19. Hariri handed in his resignation on 29.10.19, in the wake of mass protests (cf. BN of 04.11.19). He has since remained in office in a caretaking role only. It is thought possible that he may be re-appointed prime minister on 16.12.19. Anti-government demonstrators would reportedly not accept the renewed appointment of Hariri.

Libya

Fighting in Tripoli appears to be intensifying/International complications grow more severe

On 12.12.19 general Khalifa Haftar, head of the Libyan National Army (LNA) announced a substantial intensification of the fighting over Tripoli. Fighting does indeed appear to be intensifying along all the main axes of the capital. At the same time, the international complications have grown more severe: It has been suspected for some months that Russian units, or at least mercenaries of the "Grupo Wagner", are supporting the LNA. After signing a military accord with the GNA government, Turkish president Erdoğan has now announced that he is responding to a request for assistance from the GNA and will also send troops, if

necessary. Russian arms, for the most part outdated, are in widespread use on all sides involved in the conflict; supporters of the GNA have posted pictures on various social media platforms of more state-of-the-art Russian weapons and equipment which have allegedly been captured. For its part, the LNA frequently shows images of shot-down drones of Turkish origin. Turkey has already provided vehicles and other materials. As the WHO has not presented any casualty figures relating to the fighting over Tripoli since July, the current toll largely remains a matter of conjecture. In July, there was evidence that some 1,000 people had been killed and 5,000 injured in the fighting over Tripoli, whereby these figures were no doubt highly conservative. Some 150,000 people have since become internally displaced in Tripoli or have fled the fighting.

Myanmar

IGH charged with genocide before ICJ

Proceedings against Myanmar on charges of genocide on the Rohingya, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority living in Rakhine State, began in The Hague on 10.12.19 with three days of hearings before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Gambia brought the action on 11.11.19, with the support of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In the proceedings ahead of the main hearing, Gambia is initially aiming to secure an injunction obliging Myanmar to undertake measures to protect the Rohingya. Gambia's line of argument is based, among other things, on reports by human rights organisations and a fact-finding mission conducted by the UN, whose concluding report of September 2018 accuses Myanmar's military of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, relating in part to its actions against the Rohingya. Myanmar's councillor of state, foreign minister and de facto head of government, Aung San Suu Kyi, represented Myanmar's position before the ICJ on 11.12.19. She presented the military's actions as a legitimate response to terrorist attacks. Her stance in support of the military enjoys widespread support among the Burmese who make up the majority of Myanmar's population. Aung San Suu Kyi, who received the Nobel Peace Prize for her long-standing resistance to the former military government, has received international criticism for her position on the issue. She faces accusations that Myanmar's civilian government is not doing enough to support the Rohingya. The military still holds key positions of power and effectively avoids control by the civilian government.

The military responded to attacks on police and border posts by a Rohingya rebel organisation, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), in August 2017 with widespread countermeasures involving serious human rights violations, causing more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh. Around 600,000 Rohingya are still living in Myanmar, some under difficult conditions in camps, with restrictions on their rights and their freedom of movement. Although many have been living in Myanmar for generations, Rohingya are officially classified as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and for the most part do not hold Myanmar citizenship.

Meanwhile, preliminary proceedings against Myanmar have been in progress before the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague since November 2019. The proceedings centre on the alleged expulsion of the Rohingya in the above-stated context. The proceedings have been initiated by the court's chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda.

Niger

Attack on military camp – 71 soldiers killed

According to information from the defence ministry, 71 soldiers were killed and 12 injured in an attack by suspected Islamists on a military camp on 10.12.19. 57 of the attackers were also reportedly killed. According to media reports, several hundred fighters attacked the camp over a number of hours. The attack took place in Inatès, in the west of the country, not far from the border with Mali. The military camp had previously been attacked as recently as in July 2019 (cf. BN of 08.07.19).

Nigeria

ISWAP kills four hostages

The humanitarian relief organisation Action Against Hunger (AAH) reported on 13.12.19 that the jihadist terrorist organisation Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) has announced that it has killed four hostages. The hostages belonged to a group originally comprising six hostages (two drivers, three employees of the Nigerian health ministry and an employee of AAH) whom the terrorists seized in an attack on a car convoy in the federal state of Borno on 18.07.19. One of the hostages had already been killed in September 2019. AAH called for its employee - the last of the hostages still alive - to be released immediately.

26 young men in women's clothing arrested in federal state of Kano

According to information from the sharia police in the federal state of Kano, young men in women's clothing were arrested at a birthday celebration on 08.12.19. The police reported that they had been cautioned about the consequences of their behaviour, following which they were to be handed over to their parents. Kano is one of the twelve northern federal states of Nigeria in which full sharia law was re-introduced in 2000/2001.

Pakistan

Attack on hospital

More than 100 lawyers stormed a hospital in Lahore (Punjab) on 12.12.19. This was in response to an incident in November, when doctors at the hospital allegedly hit lawyers. An enraged crowd of protesters smashed windows at the hospital, damaged its facilities, set fire to parked vehicles and blocked the entrances to the hospital. Hospital staff and patients fled the scene. Three people died due to lack of treatment. The police deployed tear gas and truncheons. Several dozen lawyers were arrested.

It is not rare for lawyers to use violence in Pakistan as a means of taking the law into their own hands. Attacks on judges and clashes with the police occasionally occur. Pakistani lawyers first came to prominence in street fighting against police forces in 2007, at protests against military dictator general Pervez Musharraf, after he had removed the chief justice. Musharraf stepped down in 2008.

Russian Federation

Long prison terms for two activists

A court of appeal has affirmed the convictions by the court of first instance of activists Yan Sidorov and Vladislav Mordasov to six and a half and six years and seven months respectively in a penal colony. They were found guilty on 07.10.19 of "attempting to organise mass unrest" in connection with protests in Rostov-on-Don in 2017. Amnesty International sees this as a case of "absurd" politically motivated criminal proceedings, as the two convicted persons had actually sought to organise a peaceful rally for the benefit of people who had lost their homes as a result of a major fire. Other activists were investigated on suspicion of "organising mass unrest" in the wake of the protests for free elections in the summer of 2019. Dozens of people have already received fines or custodial sentences in connection with these protests.

Somalia

At least six people killed in Somalia

Suspected fighters of the Islamist terrorist group Al-Shabaab attacked a military base 25 km north of the capital, Mogadishu, on 12.12.19, killing at least six people. According to government information, the dead comprise two soldiers and four civilians. Soldiers reportedly forced the attackers to retreat. It was not immediately clear how many of the extremists were killed. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack via the Al-Andalus radio station. Only two days earlier, at least eleven people died when fighters from the militia attacked a hotel in Mogadishu.

Sudan

Ex-president Omar al-Bashir sentenced for corruption

On 14.12.19 a court in Khartoum sentenced Omar al-Bashir to two years' detention under house arrest for corruption and money laundering. He escaped a custodial sentence under Sudanese law solely on account of his age - al-Bashir is 75 years old. Al-Bashir had faced a prison sentence of more than ten years. His sentence will not begin until the verdicts have been passed in the other actions which have been brought against him. He also faces trial in connection with the deaths of demonstrators.

Syria

Russian military in Raqqa

On 09.12.19 the Russian defence ministry released video footage which allegedly shows Russian military personnel in the former capital of the self-proclaimed IS caliphate for the first time. Two years after Raqqa was captured by the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) with decisive support from the USA, the Russian military presence in the city reflects the new power alliance in north-eastern Syria: Now that the US military has withdrawn to only a small number of bases, the SDF is dependent on an alliance with the Assad government and its protecting power, Russia, to protect itself against possible further Turkish military offensives in the north. The Russian military has reported that it has distributed relief aid among the Syrian population and offered medical care.

Turkey

Billions in assistance

The EU Commission stated on 10.12.19 that the six billion euros which have been promised for taking care of refugees in Turkey are now available in full. According to the Commission, 4.3 billion euros have already been contractually allocated to specific projects and 2.7 billion have already been paid out. A sum of 4 billion euros is to be attained by the end of 2020. The Commission reports that the money is currently being used to fund 95 projects in Turkey, with 25 more contracts to be signed in the coming months.

The undertaking to provide six billion euros is a key element of the EU-Turkey accord of 2016, which allows the EU to send back all migrants who reach the Greek islands illegally via Turkey. In return, EU states take over from Turkey Syrian refugees who are in need of protection and finance support benefits for the refugees living in Turkey.

European Court calls for release of Osman Kavala

On 10.12.19 the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) called on Turkey to release Osman Kavala, an entrepreneur and patron of the arts, from custody (ruling of 10.12.2019, reference 28749/18). Kavala has been held in custody since October 2017, charged with attempting to overthrow the government. He is alleged to have been involved in organising the violent unrest around Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013 and of having participated in the attempted military coup in 2016. Turkish courts have so far rejected his requests for release. Kavala is on trial in Istanbul together with 15 other defendants as part of the so-called "Gezi trial", which is set to continue on 24 and 25 December.

The judges at the ECHR found that Kavala and other human rights activists have been detained with the aim of silencing them. All necessary measures are thus to be taken to end the petitioner's incarceration and to ensure his immediate release. The ECHR has accused the Turkish authorities of failing to present any adequate evidence of any criminal offences. There are no indications in the records, for example, that Kavala has been involved in any violent actions, either as a participant, an instigator or a leader. The ECHR asserts that his criticism of the government and establishing non-governmental organisations are not punishable offences, but rather an expression of the right to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

Ukraine

Outcome of the Ukraine summit in Paris

At the Ukraine summit in Paris in 09.12.19, which was attended by the Ukrainian and Russian heads of state, the French president and the German chancellor, both sides undertook to implement the ceasefire in full by the end of 2019. The parties involved had already agreed to a ceasefire in the Minsk Protocol back in 2015. Despite repeated declarations of intent, it has not proved possible to achieve a lasting end to the fighting in East Ukraine, however. Troop withdrawals recently took place on both sides of the front line in East Ukraine. This disengagement is now to be continued at three further locations. A further withdrawal of heavy weaponry from the buffer zone is also planned. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which already has a monitoring mission in East Ukraine, is to make even better use of its mandate in future, monitoring the situation on the front line 24/7. It was further agreed that 250 prisoners from Kiev are to be exchanged for 100 from Luhansk and Donetsk by the end of the year. As already agreed in the Minsk Protocol, the territories controlled by the separatists and their Russian supporters are to be granted special status. It was agreed that a further meeting should be held in four months' time.

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