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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

18 November 2024

Afghanistan

Governance and persecution

In Paktia province on 13.11.24, the Taliban carried out their sixth public execution since they returned to power in August 2021. A convicted murderer was punished with death as a qisas punishment in accordance with the sharia. According to reports in the media on 18.11.24, the number of cases of corporal punishment administered in public for offences according to the Taliban's interpretation of the sharia has recent increased sharply, in particular since the morality law was passed. In October 2024 a total of 85 people, including 12 women, were flogged throughout the country for various offences. Staff of the Taliban's local ministry of vice and virtue in Logar province have arrested eight people, including one woman, for "moral corruption".

Journalists in Afghanistan are complaining that the ban on filming "living beings" under the morality law means to all intents and purposes that they are no longer able to go about their work. According to reports in the media, this ban is currently being enforced particularly rigidly in Nangarhar, Takhar, Badghis and Khost provinces.

In Herat, the Taliban have arrested Abdul Quddus Yasinzada, a well-known figure from the education sector and founder of the educational foundation Resalat.

After taking over control of the Afghan consulate in the city of Mumbai in India, the Taliban reportedly began issuing passports there on 11.11.24. This step took place only a matter of days after an Indian delegation visited Kabul.¹

Humanitarian situation

The WFP reports that food security has improved slightly in Afghanistan. Serious concerns nevertheless still apply, in view of the approaching winter. According to the report, almost one quarter of the population, corresponding to some 11.6 million people, are currently affected by food insecurity (IPC phase 3 or higher). This figure represents a drop compared to the total of 15.3 million in 2023. The coming winter months are likely to exacerbate the situation once again, however: The WFP estimates that between November 2024 and March 2025 14.8 million people – roughly 32 % of the population – are likely to be affected by food insecurity.²

Bangladesh

New human rights report on victims of political violence

According to a report published by the human rights organisation Odhikar on 15.11.24, a total of 254 people died nationwide from January to September 2024 as a result of political violence. 93 of these deaths occurred between 01.08. and 05.08.24, when violence by security forces and pro-government groups against the protest movement reached its peak, culminating in the overthrow of the Awami League government on 05.08.24 (cf. BN of 22.07., 29.07. and 26.08.24). A further 1,581 people, including children, died in July and August 2024 as a result of extra-judicial executions which were also carried out in response to the protests. In addition, 67 people lost their lives in

mass affrays between July and September 2024. In the period under review, 8,296 people were injured as a result of political violence, in addition to which more than 18,000 people incurred injuries during the unrest in July and August 2024.³

Burkina Faso

Coup attempt thwarted

On 08.11.24 Burkinabe security personnel arrested an individual in the capital, Ouagadougou, on suspicion of having planned a coup against captain Ibrahim Traoré's military government. According to reports in the media, the individual concerned is said to have handed over approx. 8 billion CFA francs (approx. EUR 7.7 million as per 18.11.24) to members of the Burkinabe army who were pretending to accept his plan for a coup. This was reportedly the sixth attempted coup against Ibrahim Traoré since he was declared head of the country as the leader of the military junta on 05.10.22 (cf. BN of 09.10.23 and 22.01.24).⁴

Military government aiming to introduce the death penalty

The justice minister announced on 08.11.24 that the military regime headed by captain Ibrahim Traoré intends to include the death penalty in the draft of a new Burkinabe criminal code. According to reports in the media, the death penalty was abolished under former president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré at the end of May 2018. The last recorded execution of the death sentence officially took place in 1988.⁵

Burkina Faso / Mali

Bamako: Arrest for criticising Burkino Faso's military junta

On 13.11.24 unknown actors arrested Malian opposition politician Issa Kaou N'Djim in Bamako under pressure from the Burkinabe authorities. He is accused of having expressed criticism of the military government in Burkina Faso in a television programme. According to reports in the media, he is said to have claimed that the alleged latest attempted coup against the head of the Burkinabe military government, Ibrahim Traoré, was a sham.⁶

Chad

Summary of operations against Boko Haram; reports of killed Nigerian fishermen

According to a report in the media on 11.11.24, the army general staff have published a communiqué documenting the results of the army's operations in the aftermath of the attack which is presumed to have been carried out by a Boko Haram faction on 27./28.10.24 (cf. BN of 04.11.24). It emerges from the communiqué that since then 96 terrorists were killed, while 15 soldiers died and 32 were injured.

It has been reported elsewhere that president Mahamat Idriss Déby has stated that he is considering withdrawing his country from the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the light of the attack. The MNJTF brings together units from countries bordering on Lake Chad (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad) to combat armed groups in the region. Déby has reportedly criticised a lack of real joint efforts in this respect. Prior to this, the Chadian army was accused of having mistakenly killed dozens of Nigerian fishermen on the island of Tilma in the course of their operations. A representative of the general staff reportedly told a press agency that Boko Haram fighters often mingle with fishermen or farmers after carrying out their attacks.⁷

India

Manipur: Serious unrest once again

Serious unrest occurred again last week in Manipur State. The disturbances were sparked by the discovery of six bodies of persons belonging to the Meitei community who are believed to have been abducted. The discovered bodies included those of a woman and a child which were found in a river. In addition, the body of a man from the Kuki community has been recovered in unexplained circumstances. Tensions rose further after reports emerged

concerning a woman from the Kuki community who is believed to have been burned alive by Meitei rebels. Members of the security forces deployed tear gas and rubber bullets, killing one person and injuring several. Some two dozen people have been arrested on suspicion of having looted and set fire to MPs' houses in the regional capital, Imphal. The National People's Party, which had formed part of the state's governing coalition led by the Hindu nationalist BJP up to this point, withdrew its support for the government, citing the government's failure to restore normality in the state. To contain the violence, the authorities imposed an indefinite curfew and shut down the internet services. The conflicts which have been ongoing between the Hindu Meitei community and the Christian Kuki community in Maipur since May 2023 have claimed at least 250 lives to date and driven 60,000 people from their homes.⁸

Iran

Imprisoned female activist sentenced to death

It was reported in the media on 11.11.24 that a female activist imprisoned in Tehran who champions women's and environmental rights had been sentenced to death for armed rebellion against the Islamic Republic. Her lawyers have reportedly announced that they will be lodging an appeal based on material defects of the legal proceedings. The 40 year-old Iranian-Kurdish woman is said to have been accused of membership of the separatist opposition group Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK). The Iranian government has classified PJAK as a terrorist organisation. According to unconfirmed information from a Kurdish human rights organisation, the activist was abducted in Kordestan province by members of the secret service in August 2023. She was reportedly physically abused at a remand prison and spent five months in solitary confinement at Evin prison in Tehran before being transferred to the women's section of the prison. The convicted woman allegedly had no opportunity to speak in court in her own defence.⁹

Six death sentences imposed for men convicted of murdering a member of security services

According to reports in the media, six men were sentenced to death on 13.11.24 for allegedly participating in the killing of a Basij member. The Basij is a volunteer militia whose members are under the control of the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and who are deployed to fight uprisings, among other duties. The Basij member was reportedly attacked and killed in Tehran's western district of Shahrak e Ekbatan during the wave of nationwide protests in 2022.

Citing legal representatives of the six convicted men, it has been reported that the men were sentenced at first instance before a criminal court on the basis of a retaliatory verdict. Four of the convicted men had been in custody since their arrests in 2022, apart from a temporary period during which they were released on bail. Human rights organisations have expressed doubts as to whether the men received a fair trial. In all, 14 people were charged in connection with the case.¹⁰

Iraq

Türkiye attacks PKK

The Turkish defence ministry announced on 14.11.24 that 48 PKK members had died in attacks by the Turkish military in northern Iraq and Syria. The Turkish military has been carrying out attacks on PKK positions in northern Iraq for some years.¹¹

The struggle against IS

According to information from the Iraqi police, three members of the Iraqi military travelling in an army vehicle died and two were seriously injured when an explosive device was detonated at the roadside near to the town of Tuz Khurmatu in Salah al-Din province on 17.11.24. IS has reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack. Also on 17.11.24, the Iraqi army announced that at least four suspected members of IS had died in an air strike in Kirkuk province. Although territorially defeated since 2017, IS remains active in Iraq above all in the territories which are disputed between Iraq's central government and the Kurdish regional government. These territories cover Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Nineva provinces.¹²

Lebanon

Armed conflict between Hezbollah and Israel

The Israeli armed forces (Israeli Defense Forces, IDF) continue to carry out daily military operations against targets in Lebanon. Key focuses of the attacks, the number of which is in the hundreds every day, continue to be southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley and the southern districts and suburbs of Beirut, although isolated attacks targeting individuals are also carried out in other regions. In response, Hezbollah launches daily counter-attacks, both on the ground and by firing missiles at targets in Israel.

The IDF continues to issue evacuation orders on a regular basis for regions in which ground operations are underway or in which large immobile targets are located.

On 12.11.24 an air strike was carried out on the village of Ain Yaaqoub in the north-eastern governorate of Akkar, close to the Syrian border. The target was allegedly a member of Hezbollah who had sought refuge in the village, whose population consists for the most part of Sunnis and members of the Greek Orthodox church. At least eight people died.

Six IDF soldiers were killed on 13.11.24 – the highest number of fatalities on any single day to date.

On 17.11.24 the head of Hezbollah's media department, Mohammad Afif, was killed in a targeted attack in Beirut.

On the evening of 17.11.24 an electronics shop in the Beirut district of Mar Elias was hit in an attack. The shop belonged to the brother of Mahmoud Madi, the Hezbollah commander on the south front, who appears to have been the actual target of the attack.

A new estimate by the World Bank puts the damage caused to Lebanon as a result of the war to date at US\$ 5.1 billion in economic damage and US\$ 3.5 billion in infrastructure damage. Around 100,000 homes have reportedly been damaged.

Residents of Lebanon continue to flee their homes in large numbers, heading for the country's interior or Syria. An estimated additional 1,300,000 people have become internally displaced in Lebanon as a result of the hostilities. As far as can be assessed at present, the overwhelming majority of these displaced people belong to the Shiite ethnic group.

The UNHCR estimates that at least 528,000 people (as per 13.11.24) have fled to Syria, although this figure is to be considered as a minimum estimate in view of the prevailing conditions in the border region.

The death toll on the Lebanese side since 08.10.23 is currently estimated at 3,400 or more and at least 15,000 wounded. No reliable figures are currently available with regard to the number of soldiers killed in the ongoing ground offensive, as both sides are largely maintaining silence about the course of events. In all, 76 Israelis are said to have been killed in the border region with Lebanon since the beginning of the conflict.¹³

Mali

RFI: Wager and Malian army suspected of killing civilians

Radio France Internationale (RFI) reported on 13.11.24 that the Wagner Group had carried out an operation in the town of Lerneb (Timbuktu region) near to the Mauretanian border together with members of the Malian army on 10.11. and 11.11.24. Working on information gathered from a number of local sources, RFI reportedly ascertained that seven civilians were executed in the course of this operation. Their bodies were apparently discovered in a mutilated state. Tuaregs are said to have been among the victims who, according to the local sources, had no links to armed groups.

RFI reports that the Malian army has neither made any public statements or responded to RFI inquiries about the operation. A Bamako-based source from security circles has reportedly told RFI that the operation was documented internally with a death toll of six "suspicious civilians", however.¹⁴

Montenegro

Violent attack on journalist

It was reported on 10.11.24 that Ana Raičković, journalist and editor of the "Pobjeda" daily newspaper, had been attacked in a restaurant in Podgorica, sustaining injuries, including to her head. National and international media

associations, the government and NGOs welcomed the fast response by the chief public prosecutor's office and the police, who identified four suspects in the wake of the incident and arrested them for "violent behaviour" on the same day. Those remanded in custody reportedly include businessman Zoran Ćoć Bećirović, who already has a record of repeatedly threatening journalists, together with his son and two of his security personnel.¹⁵

Morocco

Journalist sentenced to prison term

It has been reported in the press that journalist Hamid Mahdaoui was sentenced at first instance to an eighteen-month prison term on 11.11.24. He was found guilty of slander after accusing justice minister Abdellatif Ouahbi of corruption and fraud. A particularly notable aspect was the fact that charges were brought under the criminal code (code pénal), rather than on the basis of the code of conduct for journalists.

Morocco has been criticised repeatedly in recent years for imprisoning journalists or activists who have expressed criticism of the government.¹⁶

Nigeria

Minor protesters released

119 people, including more than 30 minors, were released on 05.11.24 after around 90 days in custody. They were arrested during the anti-government protests in August 2024 (cf. BN of 05.08.24) and charged with various offences, including treason. According to reports in the media, president Bola Tinubu ordered the release of the minors on 04.11.24. The public indictment of the minors before a court in the capital, Abuja, on 01.11.24 sparked considerable outrage.¹⁷

North-west: Acts of violence by allegedly new terrorist group

Armed attackers on motorcycles raided the village of Mera in Kebbi state on 08.11.24 to steal cattle. In the attack they killed at least 15 people and injured many more. Citing military information, it was initially reported in the media that the attackers were members of a previously unknown new jihadist / terrorist group which operated under the name of Lakurawa and had links to Islamists in neighbouring Sahelian countries. Shortly afterwards, this information was qualified in consistent media reports: Lakurawa is actually an armed group which entered Nigeria from neighbouring Niger and became active in the country in 2018 at the latest. Originating from areas in Mali and Niger, the group's members initially supported Nigerians in fighting gangs operating in the region. Relations with the local population increasingly deteriorated when Lakurawa members began stealing cattle and attempted to enforce strict religious laws. Lakurawa subsequently withdrew to border regions in north-western Nigeria. The group's presence in Nigeria has grown again since the military coup in neighbouring Niger in July 2023. This re-emergence was made easier by the scaling down of military cooperation between Nigeria and Niger. Lakurawa is reportedly equipped with modern weapons and drones, and its ideas about co-existence differ to those of the native population, which continues to perceive the group as foreign. The group is said to have taken over the roles of traditional leaders in some communities. Observers fear that Lakurawa could extend its territorial influence to larger parts of the region on a permanent basis, thereby further destabilising the already fragile security situation in north-west Nigeria (cf. BN of 29.04., 13.05., 17.06., 01.07. and 29.07.24). According to reports in the media on 14.11.24, Nigerian troops have managed to drive Lakurawa out of the area of the village of Mera which was attacked on 08.11.24 and to return some of the stolen cattle to the local population.¹⁸

Successes in the fight against human trafficking

Two reports of success from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) at the beginning of November 2024 have attracted particular attention. Firstly, it has been reported in the media that NAPTIP personnel have managed to free an eight year-old boy who was abducted over a year ago in Akwa state in southern Nigeria. Secondly, NAPTIP is reported to have trained a total of 500 teachers in workshops on the subject of human trafficking. The workshops are said to have been organised in cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) at teacher training colleges in Benue, Delta and Enugu states. According to NAPTIP, these teachers will now be even better qualified to explain to children the risk of falling victim to human

trafficking. Reports of success from NAPTIP are no rare occurrence. The agency releases reports with a degree of regularity detailing the number of human trafficking victims freed or the number of people convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 04.10.21, 25.04. and 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23 and 15.07.24).¹⁹

Pakistan

Balochistan: BLA attacks checkpoint

Armed fighters attacked a checkpoint of the Frontier Corps in the Kalat district on 16.11.24. According to official information, seven paramilitary soldiers were killed and more than a dozen injured. The militant separatist group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁰

Palestinian territories / Israel

Gaza Strip: Current developments; humanitarian situation

According to information released by the Hamas-run health ministry on 12.11.24, at least 43,665 Palestinians have been killed and 103,076 injured in the Gaza Strip since the war began. The ministry does not officially differentiate between combatants and civilians. The figures cannot be independently verified. According to information released by the Israeli military on 12.11.24, a total of 373 members of the Israeli military have been killed and 2,425 injured since the ground offensives began.

Meanwhile, the war continues. In the north of the Gaza Strip in particular, where a ground offensive which has been ongoing since 06.10.24 has turned into fighting between Hamas fighters and the Israeli military, between 100,000 and 130,000 people have fled their homes as a result of the hostilities and renewed evacuation orders from the Israelis, according to UN estimates. Very little humanitarian aid has entered the north of Gaza since the beginning of the ground offensive. The IPC, a body which monitors food security, has warned once again that famine is imminent or already prevalent in parts of northern Gaza and that aid supplies are inadequate throughout the entire Gaza Strip.

According to the competent Israeli authority (COGAT) a daily average of 57 trucks loaded with food and other goods was able to enter the Gaza Strip in October 2024, while the corresponding figure for the first week of November rose to an average of 81. However, the UN has published figures according to which a daily average of only 37 trucks has been able to enter the Gaza Strip since the beginning of October 2024. The US government most recently demanded that a daily total of at least 350 trucks entering the Gaza Strip must be ensured. Figures released by UNRWA and COGAT alike show, however, that the quantity of aid supplies entering the Gaza Strip in October 2024 was at the lowest level for months. The Israeli government most recently opened an additional border crossing for aid supplies in central Gaza.

According to reports in the media, at least eleven people were killed in an air strike on a makeshift café in the humanitarian zone designated by the Israeli military in Al-Mawasi.²¹

Numerous buildings demolished

According to reports in the media, a total of 30 Palestinian-owned houses were demolished between 05.11. and 13.11.24 because they lacked the building permits required under Israeli law. Nine buildings, including a community centre, were demolished in the East Jerusalem district of Al-Bustan and 19 dwellings were reportedly demolished in the West Bank.

In the Negev desert, the mosque was demolished in the Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran, completing the clearance of the village by the Israeli authorities. The villagers had previously destroyed their homes themselves, to avoid having to pay charges for demolition by the Israeli government. This is the fifth Bedouin village to be destroyed this year. Those who have lost their homes accuse the Israeli government of planning to make way for Jewish settlements.²²

Senegal

Disturbances and arrests ahead of the parliamentary elections

On 11.11.24 the police detained some 81 people who had become violent in the city of Saint-Louis on 17.11.24, during campaigning ahead of the parliamentary elections. According to reports in the media, they were arrested for violent offences such as physical attacks, damage to public property and incitement to violence in connection with election campaigning. The majority of those arrested are said to belong to the security service of the opposition coalition "Samm Sa Kaddu". Arrest warrants were reportedly issued for the detained individuals on 14.11.24.²³

Provisional results of the parliamentary election: Victory for ruling party

With nearly all votes counted, the party of president Bassirou Diomaye Faye, Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l'éthique et la fraternité (PASTEF), claimed victory on 17.11.24. According to reports in the media, the opposition parties have conceded defeat. At the end of March 2024, Faye's party failed to obtain a majority in parliament, with less than one third of the seats (cf. BN of 08.04.24). On 12.09.24 Faye announced the dissolution of the opposition-dominated parliament (cf. BN of 30.09.24). With his party's latest victory in the parliamentary elections, Faye's camp now has the necessary majority in parliament to assert his political agenda. Former president Macky Sall of the opposition party Takku Wallu Senegal is claiming that the election was marred by ballot rigging. The first official results are to be announced on 19.11.24.²⁴

Syria

Israeli air strikes

According to Syrian state media, at least 15 people have been killed and 16 injured in Israeli air strikes on targets in the Damascus districts of Al Mezzeh and Sayyidah Zaynab, in the south of Homs and in the Damascus suburb of Qudsaya. Civilians, including at least two children, are said to be among those killed in the Al Mezzeh district. The Israeli military has stated that it targeted infrastructure and command centres of the Islamic Jihad group. The Associated Press news agency has quoted an anonymous member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group who has confirmed that an office of the group in Damascus was hit and several members were killed.²⁵

US air strikes

In response to attacks by various Iran-backed militias on members of the US military, US troops carried out air strikes on a total of nine targets at two of the groups' bases in Syria. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has reported that five pro-Iranian fighters were killed and others injured at one of the groups' bases in Albukamal.²⁶

Türkiye

Singer charged for performing Kurdish song

According to reports in the media on 14.11. and 15.11.24, the public prosecutor's office in Istanbul has charged a Kurdish folk singer with spreading propaganda for the PKK. The charge relates to a Kurdish song which the defendant sang at an event in Belgium in 2012. The song, entitled "Koçgiri Başladı Harba" (Koçgiri began the struggle), is about an uprising by Kurdish and Alevi groups against the emerging Turkish Republic in 1921. The present government is of the view that this song glorifies violence and implicates solidarity with the PKK.

At a hearing on 14.11.24 the defendant denied that he had any links with the PKK and any intention to propagate the organisation's message. He also asserted that the event in Belgium was a cultural event. The public prosecutor's office argued, however, that the song text in conjunction with the images shown during the performance propagated the ideology of the PKK. The public prosecutor found that the limits of the freedom of expression had been overstepped by promoting violence and terrorism. The process was adjourned until 18.02.25.²⁷

Journalist arrested

It was reported in the press on 08.11.24 that the journalist Furkan Karabay had been arrested in Istanbul. The reason for his arrest was a post on the social network X in which Karabay listed the names of the public prosecutors involved in investigations into Ahmet Özer, who represented the Republican People's Party (CHP) as the mayor of

the Istanbul borough of Esenyurt, and reported on the investigations. Özer was arrested on 30.10.24 (cf. BN of 04.11.24).

The court in Istanbul held that Karabay's post targeted public officials who are involved in fighting terrorism. It further found that he had slandered a civil servant and knowingly disseminated misleading information to the public.

In his testimony before the court, Karabay denied the accusations, stating that the public prosecutors' names had been published by various media and CHP leader Özgür Özel himself had mentioned the name of the chief public prosecutor.

Organisations championing the freedom of the press, including the Media and Law Studies Association and Freedom House, have denounced Karabay's arrest, as has the largest opposition party, CHP. The representative of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in Türkiye stated that Karabay's remand in custody was tantamount to anticipatory punishment.

Karabay was previously arrested on 28.12.23, after reporting about alleged corruption and bribery in the trial of a person from the Sarallar criminal organisation. On the basis of his reporting, Karabay was accused of having marked a counter-terrorism official as a target for terrorist groups. Karabay was released on 08.01.24, following a ruling by the 7th criminal court in Istanbul.²⁸

Ukraine

Civilian casualties

According to information from the authorities, a total of eight people were killed in Russian attacks on the Dnipropetrovsk region on 11.11.24. It was reported in the media on 14.11.24 that two people had died in Russian attacks in the Donetsk region and one person in the Kherson region. The authorities report that one person died in a drone attack on Odessa on 14.11.24. According to information released by the Russian occupying authorities on 14.11.24, two people died as a result of Ukrainian shelling in the Luhansk region. According to information from the authorities, heavy Russian air strikes on 17.11.24 claimed a number of lives (Odessa: 2, Lemberg: 1, Mykolaiv: 2, Sumy: 10).

It was reported on 12.11.24 that the Russian human rights group Memorial had stated that approx. 7,000 Ukrainian civilians are being held by the Russian authorities as political prisoners. This figure has apparently been confirmed by the Ukrainian NGO Center for Civil Liberties.

Almost 1,000 days after the launch of Russia's major offensive, the UNHCR reports that some eleven million people in total have fled their homes and are seeking or have found refuge inside or outside of Ukraine. Since August 2024, some 170,000 people have fled the fighting in the east of the country or have been evacuated.

According to information from the UN, 2,134 Russian attacks on Ukrainian health facilities have been recorded during the Russian war of aggression to date. The WHO states that at least 197 people have died in these attacks.²⁹

Course of the war

According to information from the Ukrainian military, Russia's military leadership has redeployed troops to forward positions on the Ukrainian south front in the Zaporizhzhia region and is preparing for an attack which could place the Ukrainian forces under additional pressure. The defence lines have reportedly been reinforced in this section of the front. In addition, president Zelenskyy has announced that the positions at Pokrovsk and Kurakhove in eastern Ukraine are to be "substantially" reinforced. It has been reported in the media that in view of the deployment of North Korean forces in the neighbouring Russian region of Kursk, US president Biden has lifted the ban on Ukraine firing long-range missiles into Russian territory.

According to information from the competent governor, Russian attacks close to the front in the Donetsk region on 11.11.24 caused damage to the Kurakhove reservoir dam, as a result of which several towns and villages could be threatened by rising water levels. The Russian side is claiming that Ukraine is responsible for having caused the damage in an attempt to make it more difficult for Russian units to advance. According to the Ukrainian military channel Deep State, which is close to the government, Kurakhove is already surrounded by Russian units on three sides.

The Russian NGO Memorial reported on 12.11.24 that dozens of Ukrainian soldiers are being detained in the Russian Federation and are to be placed on trial, rather than being treated as prisoners of war.³⁰

Energy infrastructure, financial assistance

According to information from the mayor, the main pipeline for the city's heating supply was damaged in a Russian attack on Odessa on 14.11.24. A municipal heating boiler plant subsequently had to be shut down, leaving 40,000 people as well as medical and social facilities without heating. On 17.11.24 the Russian military carried out massive air strikes on targets including Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih and Odessa. According to the Ukrainian energy ministry, these attacks inflicted damage in particular on power generating and power transmission facilities. Grid operator Ukrenerho imposed hours-long blackouts on 18.11.24 in order to avoid grid overloads and to enable repair work to be carried out.

According to an assessment by the German Red Cross on 13.11.24, the greatest concern among the Ukrainian population is that intensified Russian attacks could make it impossible to restore operation of the energy infrastructure by means of emergency repairs. A collapse of the infrastructure would disrupt healthcare substantially, and the UN fears that it would give rise to a new wave of refugees from the country. President Zelenskyy has announced a ten point plan for internal security which is also said to address the energy supply issue. Having met requirements for reforms, Ukraine is set to receive the second regular payment from the new EU aid package shortly, amounting to billions of euros. This is intended to enable the payment of wages and pensions and the restoration of public infrastructure and the energy supply system.³¹

Venezuela

Over 100 political prisoners released

It has been reported in the media that the Venezuelan government released over 100 prisoners between 15.11. and 16.11.24. The individuals concerned were arrested during the protests relating to the disputed presidential elections in July 2024 (cf. BN of 05.08.24). The local human rights organisation Foro Penal has stated that it has been able to verify the release of 107 prisoners from a number of prisons up to 16.11.24. Prosecutor general Tarek Saab stated on 16.11.24 that 225 releases had been ordered, allegedly on the basis of new evidence which had been compiled by the public prosecutor's office. Saab had already announced in the previous week that he would be reviewing at least 225 arrests which took place in the aftermath of the violent protests.

The NGO Foro Penal has claimed that at least 1,800 people were arrested in connection with the protests in July 2024. HRW has stated that it has received credible reports of 24 killings during the protests. President Maduro himself reported at a rally on 03.08.24 that almost 2,000 arrests had been made, and according to prosecutor general Saab a total of 28 people were killed and almost 200 injured in the protests after 28.07.24.³²

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 - 2 AmuTV: WFP reports modest gains in Afghanistan food security, warns of severe winter challenges, 18.11.24.
 - 3 Dhaka Tribune: Odhikar: 254 killed in nine months of political violence, 15.11.24; Odhikar: Third Quarterly Human Rights Report, 14.11.24; Odhikar: Third Quarterly Human Rights Report, 14.11.24, S. 2, 5.
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