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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

27 February 2023

Afghanistan

Security situation

On 23.02.23, a Taliban district governor and four other Taliban insurgents were killed in a bomb attack carried out in Taloqan city in Takhar province. Furthermore, one civilian was killed and 10 others were injured. On the same day, a Taliban commander was also killed in a bomb attack carried out in the city of Kabul. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks. On 26.02.23, the Taliban raided houses in the provincial capital of Zaranj (Nimruz). Another clash erupted between the Taliban and Pakistani border guards at the Torkham border crossing. Both sides closed the crossing temporarily.

Government leadership

On 22.02.23, the Pakistani Defence Minister and the head of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) travelled to Kabul for talks, prompted by the increase in the number of attacks carried out by the Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) (TTP) on the Pakistani government. It is hoped that the Afghan Taliban will bring the TTP back to the negotiating table. The TTP operates from Afghanistan with Taliban support (cf. BN of 20.02.23). According to reports issued on 20.02.23, the Taliban government is planning to convert some former foreign military bases into "economic zones" for commercial activities. According to a source quoted on 26.02.23, the Taliban have officially taken over the Afghan embassy in Tehran with the agreement of the Iranian government. The same is likely to happen in Istanbul, Türkiye, soon.

Persecution events

According to a media report issued on 25.02.23, the local Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in Balkh province has asked its staff to patrol more frequently. They have been told to remind women of the obligation to wear the veil, to encourage all citizens to pray and to put a stop to music at weddings.

There has been a series of unexplained killings of civilians in Bamiyan province, according to a report issued by the daily Etilaat-Roz on 26.02.23. The Taliban have made no comment on this. According to media reports, the Taliban have detained a total of around 36 former soldiers and civil servants in Helmand province. According to Hasht-e Subh, approximately 50 civilians, including minors and senior citizens, were arrested by the Taliban in Panjshir province on 22.02.23. Nothing is known about the background to the arrests or the detainees' whereabouts. The previous day, a man whose relatives were members of the National Resistance Front (NRF) and died fighting the Taliban was arrested in Kabul. On 21.02.23 and 23.02.23, the Taliban shot dead two men, accusing them of theft, and displayed their bodies in central squares in Herat city. In Sar-e Pul province, 14 men and nine women were publicly flogged. Also on 21.02.23, in Parwan province, two relatives of a former policeman, who is himself living in hiding, were arrested by the Taliban. On the same day, a former policeman was arrested in Kabul. On 21.02.23, the Taliban closed several educational institutions in Bamiyan province that were secretly teaching girls.