



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Security situation

Taliban defence minister Mullah Yaqoob and Taliban deputy Prime Minister Abdulghani Baradar have travelled to the Panjshir Valley to coordinate the fight against the National Resistance Front (NRF). As the Taliban have banned reporting from the province and strictly control access to the valley, no independent information is available on the security situation there. According to the NRF, fighting continues.

On 23.05.22, an attack was launched at a Taliban gathering to mark the sixth anniversary of the death of their former leader Akhtar Mansour. Both the resistance group "Liberation Front" and the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) have claimed responsibility for the assault.

On 25.05.22, an explosion in a mosque in Kabul killed at least five people and injured 22 others. On the same day, there were three explosions in public transport in Mazar-e Sharif, killing at least nine people and injuring 15. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Governance and persecution situation

On 22.05.22, the Taliban issued a decree in Herat province banning images of "living beings" in pictures or as sculptures in public spaces. At the Faculty of Fine Arts at Kabul University, the Taliban destroyed works of art.

Between 25.05. and 27.05.22 the Taliban arrested at least six journalists. Four of them were released after a few hours (some on bail) and have reported being tortured. Two others are still in detention.

Women continue to protest against their exclusion from public life and in particular against the failure to reopen secondary schools for girls, the ban on work for many women and the face veiling decree. At demonstrations in Kabul on 29.05.22, they demanded "food, work and freedom". The rally was broken up by the Taliban who fired warning shots and apparently beat some women.

Burkina Faso

Protests from gold miners

On 24.05.22, two people were killed in clashes between self-employed gold miners and security forces in Houndé (Hauts-Bassins region). One of them apparently died in the course of a mass panic, the other one was killed by gunshots; the exact course of events is unclear. The protesters were demanding the release of twelve people arrested after violent protests at the industrial gold mine site in Houndé on 17.05.22. The protests were directed against the mining company officials' intention to evict gold miners who had settled on the concession area. Protesters rioted on the mine site and set fire to mining vehicles and other equipment.

Dead in attacks

On 25.05.22, armed assailants, suspectedly jihadists, attacked the locality of Madjoari (Est region) near the border with Benin and left at least 50 people dead as they were attempting to flee a blockade. On 22.05.22, attacks by

unidentified people on the towns of Tiékaledji and Demniol (Sahel region) killed 11 people, among them three members of the vigilante group Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP). On 21.05.22, five security forces and 35 attackers were killed in an assault on a military unit in Bourzanga (Centre-Nord region).

China

Xinjiang Police Files prove oppression of Muslim minorities

On 24.05.22, an international alliance of 14 media houses published the results of an examination of the Xinjiang Police Files. This dataset has been accessed by an anonymous source through the computer systems of the public security bureau of Ili and Kashgar counties in Xinjiang. The dataset includes thousands of photos as well as lists of names of people detained in camps, transcripts of speeches by senior party cadres on the treatment of Uyghurs and other secret documents. The documents prove once more that the camps established in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region since 2017 are not training centres as presented by the Chinese government, but rather internment and re-education facilities. The dataset also includes shoot-to-kill orders against fugitives and provides photographic evidence of abuse and torture methods already described in victims' accounts. Besides, the material provides new insights into the list of alleged offences used to arrest and convict members of Muslim minorities. By way of example, a two-week training session at a certain gym was punished with twelve years imprisonment on charges of preparing an act of terrorism. On 28.05.22, UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet called on the Chinese government to review its counter-terrorism approach in Xinjiang during her visit to China.

Colombia

Left-wing candidate Petro wins first round of elections

Official sources say that left-wing candidate Gustavo Petro has won the first round of the presidential elections. After 99 percent of the ballots were counted on 29.05.22, he received over 40 percent of the votes, while the independent businessman Rodolfo Hernández gained 28 percent. The conservative candidate and former mayor of Medellín Federico Gutiérrez, who had recently been second in the polls, was elected in third place with around 24 percent. President Iván Duque was not allowed to run again. The run-off election will take place on 19.06.22.

Cuba

US government eases sanctions

The USA announced on 16.05.22 to would partially lift existing sanctions against Cuba. In addition to the removal of a cap on family remittances to Cuba, currently set at USD 1,000 per quarter, more flights will be made available between the two countries, and a programme to reunite Cuban families in the USA, which has been suspended for several years, will be relaunched. After a rapprochement between the two countries from 2014 to 2016, the Trump administration had initiated new sanctions against the country. The current US administration has so far adhered to all sanctions imposed, but it is now attempting a cautious change of course. At the end of April 2022, both countries held direct talks at a high diplomatic level for the first time in four years.

DR Congo

Ituri, North Kivu: More than 15,000 civilian casualties in the last 15 years in three conflict territories, ADF

According to a media report, a parliamentary report presented on 23.05.22 indicates that more than 15,000 civilians have been killed over the past 15 years only in the eastern Congolese territories of Beni (North Kivu province), Irumu and Mambasa (both Ituri), all areas under the influence of the foreign radical Islamic armed group Forces démocratiques alliées (ADF). Attacks on civilians between the 2013 and 2018 had led to a tremendous increase in civilian casualties (over 8,000) compared to the time period 2008 to 2012 (150), the report said. In 2020 and 2021, the number of civilian casualties increased even further. While 2,695 civilians were killed in a total of 989

documented attacks in 2020, their number in 2021 amounted to 4,428 in a total of 1,019 assaults. The ADF attacked various locations several times within one year, the report informed.

According to press reports in recent months, the ADF alone has carried out massacres of civilians and other attacks on civilians in its current areas of influence and operation, especially in the territories of Beni (North Kivu) and Irumu (Ituri), but also in the territories of Djugu and Mambasa (both in Ituri), triggering waves of displacement following to abductions, sexual violence and the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts. Reports on the presence of the ADF in the province of South Kivu have not yet been published (cf. BN of 17.01.22). In the period January 2022 to 25.05.22, the US monitoring group Kivu Security Tracker has recorded more than 270 civilian deaths for which the ADF was responsible.

Fighting between M23 rebels and army; relations with Rwanda strained

On 27.05.22 UNHCR reported that since 19.05.22, numerous battles in the territories of Rutshuru and Nyiragongo (North Kivu) between militias claiming to belong to the rebel group Mouvement du 23-Mars (M23) and the army have displaced 72,000 people (other sources report at least 37,000 displaced). 7,000 people have reportedly fled to Uganda. According to UNHCR, displaced girls and women have been subjected to sexual violence. Many displaced people have difficulty finding shelter and access to food; and they are facing a greater risk of cholera, malaria, and other diseases. On 22.05.22, the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) accused M23 rebels of deliberately targeting MONUSCO peacekeepers after attacking several positions of the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC). Fighting was also reported around the FARDC base in Rumangabo and the town of Kibumba, 20 km north of Goma. In 2012, the M23 rebels had captured Goma, a city of over a million people, but were defeated by FARDC and UN forces in 2013. The resurgence of the M23, which recruits from the Tutsi ethnic group, has been a cause of concern for several months (cf. BN of 06.12.21 and 04.04.22). On 25.05.22 the government renewed accusations that Rwanda supports M23. On 27.05.22 flights of RwandAir were suspended and the Rwandan ambassador was summoned to the government. Rwanda has denied support and in turn accused both the FARDC and the Hutu militia Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR), who are also based in DR Congo, of shelling Rwandan territory, injured several civilians.

Egypt

Former presidential candidate sentenced to lengthy prison term

Media report that on 29.05.22, a Cairo court sentenced Abdelmoneim Aboul Fotouh to 15 years in prison, finding him guilty of spreading false news and sedition. Fotouh had been a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood until his expulsion in 2011; in the presidential elections of 2012, he had run an independent candidate. Apart from Fotouh, who had been arrested in February 2018 for criticising President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the court sentenced 24 other people to several years in prison, among them also members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Ethiopia

Thousands of opposition members arrested during crackdown launched by government

In the regional state of Amhara, more than 4,500 people have been arrested in a coordinated operation, among them journalists critical of the government, opposition members and military officers. The Amharic security forces apparently also detained 200 members of the paramilitary Fano militia who are accused of illegal activities and arbitrary killings. The militia supported the Ethiopian military in the conflict with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) that had started in November 2020; however, the militia criticised the ceasefire with the TPLF announced by Prime Minister Abiy in March 2022.

The operation mainly targeted nationalist forces in Amhara. Some days earlier, Abiy had announced that the operation was necessary to protect citizens and ensure the survival of the nation. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has criticised the arrests as arbitrary. Arrests were also reported from the capital Addis Ababa.

The Gambia

Government announces prosecution of former president

Justice minister Dawda Jallow announced on 25.05.22 that the government intends to prosecute former President Yahya Jammeh and about 70 of his accomplices accused of serious crimes in the report of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) published on 25.11.21 (cf. BN of 29.11.21 and 17.01.22). According to media reports, the government wants to implement the recommendations of the TRRC as far as possible and to take action against impunity serving as an incentive to commit crimes. While the government is acting against a background of international pressure, it has also been criticised internally for the lack of implementation (cf. BN of 23.05.22). Special courts are to be set up for criminal prosecution. There are differing indications as to whether these courts will only sit in The Gambia itself or also in other countries. Jammeh is in exile in Equatorial Guinea, with which The Gambia has no extradition treaty.

India

Kashmir: fighting, protests, and unrest

Following the life sentence handed down to the former leader of the separatist Liberation Front of Jammu and Kashmir (cf. BN 23.05.22), unrest broke out in the region. Police have informed that on 26.05.22, three militants from the armed Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and three others from Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were killed in two independent firefights with Indian security forces. The militants killed a woman journalist and a policeman. At least ten people were provisionally arrested during anti-Indian protests. On 27.05.22, four more suspected rebels were killed by security forces in two incidents.

Iran

NGO dissolution upheld by second instance court ruling

On 24.05.22, a second-instance court ruling confirmed the controversial dissolution of the Imam Ali Society (Jam'iat-e Imam Ali). Early in 2021, a first-instance court had disbanded the NGO following a complaint and upon request of the interior ministry, basing its ruling on deviations from the association's statutes and lack of transparency in financial matters. The Imam Ali Society is Iran's leading charity with over 10,000 members who mainly care for children and poor families. In recent years, media close to the Revolutionary Guards have accused the NGO of anti-system activities in the guise of offering aid. Iranian foreign media see the ban as an attack on civil society.

Death penalty: AI report on at least 314 death sentences carried out in the year

On 24.05.22, Amnesty International (AI) reported that the number of executions increased by about 20 percent in 2021. Among the death sentences executed in 18 countries, Iran was in second place behind China with 314 executions (2020: 246, cf. BN v. 26.04.21). According to AI, this increase was mainly due to executions of people convicted of drug-related offences. Also, AI noted with concern that three of the people sentenced to death were juveniles at the time of their offences. Already on 28.04.22, other human rights organisations had published a report on the increase in executions in Iran for the year 2021, counting 333 executions (cf. BN of 02.05.22).

Protests after high-rise building collapse in Abadan

New protests have broken out after the collapse of a high-rise building in the south-western Iranian city of Abadan (Khuzestan Province) when an estimated 80 people were trapped in the rubble on 23.05.22. By 30.05.22, the bodies of 31 dead were recovered. Immediately after the accident, protests broke out in the city, whereupon the authorities took additional security measures near the accident site. At times, the mobile internet connection was interrupted. On 27.05.22, protests spread to Khorramshahr and Behbahan (both in Khuzestan), Bandar Abbas (Hormozgan) and Shahinshahr (Isfahan). On 29.05.22, rallies were also staged in the cities of Rey and Qom. In Abadan, police officers fired warning shots to disperse the demonstrators. On 28.05.22, the international organisation Net Blocks reported a nationwide internet outage.

Confirmation of prison sentence by court of appeal

Media report that the 26th branch of the Revolutionary Court has upheld the one-year prison sentence against a female student of Alameh Tabatabai University in an appeal case. The young woman had been arrested on 08.03.22 in the context of rallies for International Women's Day and was subsequently charged with propaganda against the system. She had held a poster against the death penalty at the rally. A first-instance court sentenced her to one year in prison and a temporary ban on participation both in student meetings and political groups on the internet. She was also banned from leaving the country (cf. BN of 21.03.22).

Iraq

Twelve dead in IS attacks

Two separate attacks in Sami Asi (Kirkuk) and Gulala (Diyala) on 23.05.22 killed a total of 12 civilians and three Iraqi police officers. The civilians were local farmers working in their fields. Both assaults are attributed to IS militants who have publicly claimed responsibility for the attack in Kirkuk.

Turkey-PKK conflict: Several dead

The Turkish defence ministry has informed that on 24.05.22, five Turkish soldiers were killed and two others injured in an anti-PKK military operation in the north-western border area with Turkey. On the same day, Turkish warplanes apparently carried out airstrikes on the village of Shinye in Dohuk; no personal injuries were reported. Shinye is one of the many abandoned villages in the region, but the local population still farms there. In further fighting between the Turkish military and the PKK on 26.05.22, two children were killed in the village of Zewa (Dohuk).

Criminalisation of relations with Israel

On 26.05.22, the Iraqi parliament passed a law that makes it a crime to normalize ties with Israel; violations can be punishable by a death sentence or life imprisonment. The bill was introduced by Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, presumably to curb claims that he was making coalitions with Sunni and Kurdish groups who may have ties with Israel.

Lebanon

Economic situation

On 24.05.22, the Lebanese Central Bank rejected government plans for financial reforms that are a basic condition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to release financial assistance needed badly. Meanwhile, the LBP has dropped to an all-time low, with a black-market rate at LBP 37,900 to the US dollar on 27.05.22. A government formation is still not in sight; after the elections, the parliament is effectively divided into supporters and opponents of Hezbollah. On 26.05. and 27.05.22, several hundred doctors and nurses went on strike in Beirut to draw attention to the effects of the economic crisis in the medical sector; water and electricity supplies are not guaranteed even in hospitals, and salaries cannot be paid regularly.

Nigeria

Southeast: Separatists killed by security forces

Security forces in the south-eastern state of Imo have reported that on 16.05.22 they killed a total of ten suspected members of the banned independence movement Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The operation was reportedly coordinated between the military and the police. According to media reports, the details of the operation cannot be independently verified. Recently, police stations in the region have frequently been targeted by attacks (cf. BN of 28.03.22). State authorities regularly associate these and similar attacks with IPOB supporters and/or members of their militant wing Eastern Security Network (ESN). IPOB and ESN have denied responsibility for the incidents.

Military strikes against Islamists

On 19.05.22, the Nigerian Defence Headquarters (DHQ) informed that between the end of April 2022 and mid-May 2022, the military neutralised 42 fighters of jihadist groups in the north-east of the country, among them two high-ranking Boko Haram members. 40 Islamists were arrested, 63 detained civilians were freed, and numerous rifles were seized, DHQ stated. Also, 1,627 people affiliated to Islamist groups or their family members surrendered to the troops in the first two weeks of May 2022, with the total number of defectors thus amounting to 53,262. In the past, the DHQ has published similar reports (cf. BN of 24.01.22). It is especially in the north-east of Nigeria that Islamists are held responsible for numerous attacks, assaults, and kidnappings.

Islamist violence in border areas

Media report that Islamists killed at least 80 civilians in two attacks in different locations in north-eastern Borno State within two days. On 21.05.22, a total of 30 people were killed in a village near the border with Chad, apparently in a revenge attack for military strikes in the recent past. On 22.05.22, Islamists killed at least 50 people near the town of Rann near the border with Cameroon. For years, the two large Boko Haram factions Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) have been carrying out attacks and other acts of violence both against the military and the civilian population, especially in the north-eastern part of the country.

Former vice-president to run for president

On 28.05.22, the delegates of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chose Atiku Abubakar as their candidate for the presidential elections scheduled to be held on 25.02.23. In the 2019 elections, the 75-year-old had been defeated by incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari who will not run again in 2023 after serving two four-year terms. A native of the north-eastern state of Adamawa, Abubakar had been vice president from 1999 to 2007 in the government of Olusegun Obasanjo (PDP), who was the first Nigerian leader after the end of decades of military rule. The PDP had dominated Nigeria's federal politics for 16 years until it was replaced by Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) party in 2015. In last week's delegate vote, Abubakar beat numerous rivals within the PDP, among them the governor of Rivers State in southern Nigeria, which is important for its rich oil reserves. In his acceptance speech, Abubakar reiterated his promises to end insecurity in the country and revive its fragile economy, and he promised to cooperate with political opponents. Abubakar's main opponent is expected to be from the ruling APC party, which will choose its candidate in June 2022.

Pakistan

Protest march on Islamabad

On 25.05.22, ousted prime minister Imran Khan led the march toward Islamabad that he had announced in order to demand the dismissal of the government and immediate new parliamentary elections (cf. BN of 23.05.22). On 24.05.22, the government had banned the protest march and blocked the roads leading to the capital with shipping containers, barbed wire, and other things. In addition, police forces were reinforced and supported by paramilitary units. In several districts of Punjab, which is the most densely populated province, security forces used tear gas against supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party when they tried to break through the roadblocks on the highways leading to Islamabad. According to the PTI, more than 1,000 of its members had been arrested in Punjab province during overnight raids before the march started. The march began in the north-western PTI-ruled Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. On 26.05.22, Imran Khan called on young people in particular to remove the barricades and reach Islamabad at all costs to hold a sit-in until the demand for new elections will be met.

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

West Bank: Juvenile killed in clashes with military

During a visit by Jewish people to a shrine near the town of Nablus, clashes broke out on 25.05.22 between the Israeli military accompanying the group and Palestinian protesters. According to Wafa news agency, at least 15 Palestinians were wounded by live ammunition. The Palestinian health ministry said that one juvenile died from a gunshot wound to his head.

Russian Federation

Sanctions against members of the security organs after refusal to participate in the Ukraine war

On 25.05.22, a military court in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria declared lawful the dismissal of 115 national guardsmen, a paramilitary body separate from the army set up to act against demonstrators at domestic gatherings, among other things. According to press reports, the men had refused to (continue to) take part in combat operations in Ukraine, whereupon their employment was terminated. International observers say that this has been the most notable incident of its kind in a unit since the beginning of the war.

The human rights organisation Agora has stated that as of April 2022, a total of more than 1,000 military personnel and national guardsmen in at least seven regions of Russia have refused their deployment to the war zone. In this context, both various media and NGOs report dismissals and, in some cases, the entry "prone to betrayal, lies and deceit" in the military service record book, which makes it more difficult for dismissed soldiers to search for follow-up employment. Also, there are reports of preceding humiliation and general pressure by superiors, as well as threats by the military prosecutor's office with unspecified criminal consequences. However, since Russia has not imposed martial law, there is hardly any justification for criminal proceedings (e.g., for insubordination) at present.

Senegal

Arrests after alleged homophobic group attack, situation of LGBTIQ people

Consistent media reports say that on 17.05.22, three men were arrested after an alleged homophobic group attack in the capital Dakar and handed over to the public prosecutor's office on general criminal charges (cf. BN of 23.05.22). According to eyewitness and media reports, the male foreign victim, apparently an American musician attending the Dakar Biennale art event, had been accused by an angry mob of homosexuality solely because of his style and clothing.

The assault occurred amid a controversy surrounding Senegalese professional footballer Idrissa Gueye of the Paris Saint-Germain football club, who most recently opted not to play on the day of action against homophobia, for which he received widespread public support from Senegal, including from political circles and Senegalese President Macky Sall. Le Monde reported on 20.05.22 that the president's solidarity tweet, which was immediately shared tens of thousands of times on social media channels, was widely backed across Senegal. President Sall publicly ruled out the decriminalization of homosexuality several times (cf. BN of 07.02.22).

The chair of the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) committee in France, Alexandre Marcel, told media representatives that members of the LGBTIQ community in Senegal are at risk of becoming victims of vigilante justice. LGBTIQ people were forced to flee and "not a day goes by without the IDAHO Committee receiving a call for help or distress from Senegal," Alexandre Marcel said. Also, the LGBTIQ community in Senegal has recently deplored that the situation has been deteriorating in the last years (cf. BN of 23.05.22).

Somalia

Increase in executions

The latest Amnesty International report shows a significant increase in executions. In 2021, at least 21 executions were carried out, almost the double the number compared to the previous year.

Sri Lanka

Higher fuel prices, Wickremesinghe also takes on finance ministry

With fuel shortages continuing, the government increased the price of diesel by 35-38 percent and that of petrol by 20-24 percent on 24.05.22. This move also affects the cost of the transport of goods and public transport services. Official sources indicate that on 25.05.22, the newly appointed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe (cf. BN of 16.05.22) also took over the finance portfolio which had been left vacant, and he will lead talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The country is currently experiencing the worst economic crisis since independence in 1948, with shortages of fuel, gas, and medicines.

Sudan

State of emergency lifted

The Sovereign Transitional Council has informed that on 29.05.22, military leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan issued a decree lifting the state of emergency imposed after the coup of 25.10.21. The decision came after a meeting with senior military officials who recommended as a basis for dialogue the removal of the state of emergency and the release of people detained under an emergency law.

Protests

The Sudanese Journalists Network has reported that on 26.05.22, two media workers were injured during protests in Khartoum where thousands of people renewed their calls for a civilian government, when security forces used tear gas to disperse the demonstrators. Dozens of protesters were injured by live ammunition, shotguns, and stun grenades, as well as being hit by security force vehicles.

On 28.05.22, two protesters were killed by security forces through live ammunition and tear gas suffocation during rallies in the suburb of Al-Kalakla south of Khartoum.

Syria

Turkey threatens new military offensive

On 29.05.22, Turkish President Erdoğan repeated his statement that Turkey is still intending to expel the Kurdish People's Defence Units (YPG) from northern Syria. Turkey considers the YPG to be the Syrian offshoot of the terrorist organisation PKK which since 1984 has been in a permanent conflict with Turkey, claiming tens of thousands of lives. At the same time, the YPG is also the driving force behind the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) who have successfully fought IS in north-eastern Syria and receive support from the US and Europe.

Syria / Jordan

Drug smuggling on the Syrian-Jordanian border

A spokesperson for the Jordanian military said on 23.05.22 that they were bracing for an escalation along the border with Syria, where pro-Iranian units of the Syrian army and militias were stepping up their efforts to smuggle large quantities of amphetamines into Jordan and beyond. On 22.05.22, four smugglers were killed, bringing to 40 the number of people killed in connection with the fight against drug smuggling since the beginning of the year, the spokesperson said. According to Jordanian sources, those killed were mainly nomads hired by militias in southern Syria loyal to Iran.

Jordan is both a destination and transit country for the amphetamine Captagon, which is produced cheaply in Syria and has large markets in the Gulf States and Europe. In the last five months alone, more than 20 million tablets were reportedly seized, compared to 14 million tablets in the same period last year.

The Jordanian spokesperson explained that the Syrian security forces were no genuine partner who could reliably control the borders. The Syrian government denies being involved in the drug business.

Togo

JNIM takes responsibility for attack

Reports of 26.05.22 say that the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) has taken responsibility for the attack on a military post in Kpékpakandi (Savanes region) in the night of 11.05.22 (cf. BN of 16.05.22 and 23.05.22). JNIM has close links to al-Qaida.

Turkey

HRW report on domestic violence in Turkey

On 26.05.22 Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report on domestic violence in Turkey, saying that the Turkish government does not provide adequate protection to the victims. While the number of restraining orders issued by police and courts increased between 2019 and 2022, the failure to enforce court orders leaves women open to continuing abuse from current or former husbands and partners; in some cases, women have been killed despite having obtained restraining orders intended to protect them, the report said.

Suspected IS leader arrested

Media report that on 26.05.22, suspected IS leader Abu Hasan al-Hashemi al-Qurashi was arrested in a raid in Istanbul. He is reportedly being interrogated by Turkish intelligence and police. His arrest followed surveillance by the Turkish authorities. There was no immediate confirmation from official sources. Al-Qurashi has apparently taken over the leadership of the militant group after his predecessor was killed in a US operation in Syria near the Turkish border in March 2022.

Gülen movement: arrests

On 27.05.22, security forces in 23 provinces arrested 32 former state officials as part of an investigation into the Gülen movement. The suspects were described as former administrators, a term that refers to governors of provinces and districts, according to Turkish media reports; however, the security sources disclosed neither the names of the suspects nor their positions. The Ankara prosecutor general's office stated that the suspects apparently had contact with "civilian imams" of the organisation.

As part of another operation against the Gülen movement, authorities have issued arrest warrants for 31 suspects in Istanbul, 27 of whom have been arrested so far. They were discovered during an inspection of the "Gaybubet" houses (safe houses of the movement).

Uganda

Opposition politician arrested

On 23.05.22, police arrested former opposition leader Kizza Besigye as he tried to leave his home in order to protest against the rising cost of living, although he was placed under house arrest (cf. BN of 23.05.22). He has been arrested several times in the past.

Suspension of NGO lifted

Uganda's supreme court overturned the suspension of the legal aid organisation Chapter Four, calling the decision to suspend the organisation irregular. Together with 53 other NGOs, the organisation had to stop activities in August 2021 at the insistence of the government (cf. BN of 23.08.21).

Ukraine

Development of the situation in Ukraine

Last week, Russian army units continued their offensive in eastern Ukraine, trying to gain control over the entire Donbass region. The Russian army has captured the town of Lyman in Donetsk oblast and intensified attempts to encircle Ukrainian troops defending Severodonetsk, the administrative centre of the Ukrainian-controlled part of the Luhansk region. Russian forces are continuing to attack Severodonetsk, with fighting taking place in the city area. In Donetsk oblast, Russian forces are also advancing closer to the town of Sloviansk, where there are isolated water and power cuts. The members of the Ukrainian battalion "Azov", who fell into Russian captivity after their deployment at the Azovstal plant near Mariupol, are expected to be tried in court by the Russian side. Russian deputy foreign minister Andrei Rudenko stated that negotiations of prisoner swaps would be premature before the fighters are tried. Russia has eased the requirements for the naturalisation of residents of the occupied territories in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya oblasts, thus extending a scheme available since 2019 to residents of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DNR/LNR). Up to and including 27.05.22, a total of 4,031

civilians have been killed and 4,735 injured in connection with the conflict, according to UN figures. Besides, 6,737,208 people have fled Ukraine (as of 27.05.22) and an estimated eight million people have been displaced inside Ukraine (as of 23.05.22), the UN stated.

Venezuela

Defamation suit against human rights defenders after report on extrajudicial killings in Carabobo

On 16.05.22, human rights defenders Marino Alvarado (Provea) and Alfredo Infante (Centro Gumilla) made public a notification of a defamation lawsuit filed against them by the governor of Carabobo state, Rafael Lacava. The lawsuit comes as a response to the annual report of 2021 published in March by the NGOs Alvarado and Infante belong to (cf. BN v. 21.03.22). According to the report, the police of the state of Carabobo is one of the deadliest security force units and is responsible for more than 220 alleged extrajudicial killings in 2021. The two human rights defenders had called for an independent investigation into such acts, including an investigation into possible co-responsibility of the governor. On 23.05.22, Amnesty International called for the case to be dropped and condemned the legal action against the work of the two activists.

Vietnam

AI report: number of executions estimated to be high

According to Amnesty International (AI), Vietnam is the country in Southeast Asia where most executions are carried out. However, there are only estimates available on the actual numbers of death sentences enforced, as these are classified as state secrets by the government. Human rights organisations estimate that Vietnam is one of the countries in the world that carry out the most death sentences. AI estimates that hundreds of people are sentenced to death in the country every year. For 2021, the organisation has documented the imposition of at least 119 death sentences (2020: at least 54). 78 percent of the sentences were related to drug offences. At least 1,200 prisoners were on death row at the end of 2021. Executions in Vietnam are carried out with an injection of poison.

Yemen

Sanaa: Civilians killed by downed drone

On 23.04.22, a drone was downed in a busy neighbourhood of the capital Sanaa, killing three people. According to the Houthi authorities, it was a Saudi spy drone that had entered the airspace over Sanaa without permission, thus violating the ceasefire agreement. The ceasefire expires on 02.06.22, and the UN Special Envoy for Yemen has called on all parties to the conflict to extend the agreement.

Aden: Explosion at fish market

On 26.05.22, a bin filled with explosives was detonated at a fish market in Aden, killing at least five people and injuring dozens more. Aden is the temporary seat of the international government, and explosive attacks are a regular occurrence there. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, and the background is unclear.