

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1673
Land:	Afghanistan
Kilde:	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)
Titel:	Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	5. maj 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	23. juni 2025



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

5 May 2025

Afghanistan

Security situation

At least 34 civilians were killed and 74 injured in strikes and attacks in Afghanistan between January and March 2025. This emerges from the latest quarterly human rights report from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The report highlights that attacks carried out by armed groups – in particular Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) – continue to exact a high toll in terms of civilian victims, as do explosive remnants of war.¹

Governance and persecution

UNAMA documented six killings of former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) members in the first three months of 2025, highlighting ongoing violence and targeting of individuals linked to the former government. UNAMA furthermore found that local Taliban authorities had forced at least 50 Ismaili men to convert to Sunni Islam between January and February 2025 in northeastern Badakhshan province.

According to media reports, Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada is said to have issued a directive to cut 20 % of civil service posts. This is said to also include military personnel. A comprehensive plan to scale down government ministries was already being implemented, according to Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's spokesman. According to anonymous sources, approximately 90,000 positions in the Taliban-run Ministry of Education are slated for elimination. Another at least 6,400 posts in the Taliban's Ministry of Public Health and 908 positions in the police department in Farah province are expected to be cut. A further 222 positions are said to have been recently removed from the administrative office of the Taliban prime minister. The Taliban is also considering further cuts to government salaries. According to media reports, these plans have raised alarm among government employees and economic experts. They warn that mass layoffs – particularly without severance or job alternatives – could exacerbate poverty in an already fragile economy. The Taliban regime has been grappling with a financial shortfall, especially following the suspension of US humanitarian aid and reduced support from other international sources (cf. BN of 03.02.25, 17.02.25 and 24.03.25). Akhundzada's directive is said to have also further intensified tensions within the Taliban.

According to media reports, Taliban leader Akhundzada has indefinitely postponed a planned "Loya Jirga", a grand assembly, due to internal disagreements among the group's top leadership. The assembly was intended to lend legitimacy to Taliban rule and provide a platform for key decisions. Senior figures within the Taliban (including Sirajuddin Haqqani and Mullah Yaqub) however reportedly objected to the planned structure of the Jirga, particularly its non-inclusive composition (cf. BN of 10.03.25).²

Freedom of the press

Reporters Without Borders ranked Afghanistan 175th out of 180 countries in the recently-published World Press Freedom Index 2025. According to Amnesty International, the Taliban detained, tortured or threatened at least 336 journalists and media workers between August 2021 and September 2024.³

Returnees from Pakistan and Iran

According to information from the UNHCR, more than 250,000 Afghans returned from Iran and Pakistan in April 2025, compounding the already dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Of the total, approximately 96,000 individuals had been forcibly deported, while about 154,000 others returned voluntarily. 144,500 Afghan nationals had returned from Pakistan alone in April 2025, this being the highest monthly figure since the mass repatriation campaign began in September 2023.⁴

New UN roadmap for Afghanistan

The UN have drafted a proposal ('Mosaic Framework') aiming to bring about Afghanistan's reintegration into the international community. The plan outlines six key priorities for the country's future, with inclusive governance labelled as one of the most complex and time consuming. The Taliban have already rejected this demand in the UN-led consultations, and for their part have outlined three core demands: the lifting of international sanctions, the restoration of Afghanistan's diplomatic representation abroad, and access to frozen Afghan financial assets. According to media reports, UN diplomats are currently in consultations over a political framework that could lead to the handover of Afghanistan's UN seat to Suhail Shaheen, the Taliban's proposed representative. Women's rights organisations have sharply criticised the UN plan, and warn of a repeat of the failures of the USA's 2020 Doha peace talks with the Taliban.⁵

Cuba

Dissidents re-arrested

On 29.04.25, prominent dissidents José Daniel Ferrer and Felix Navarro, who had been released only this year as part of negotiations with the Vatican (cf. BN of 17.03.25), were re-arrested on orders from the highest court for failing to comply with the terms of their parole. Ferrer's wife and his son, as well as two more activists from his organisation UNPACU, which had most recently operated a soup kitchen in Santiago de Cuba, are also said to have been (briefly) detained.⁶

Egypt

Health condition of detained activist Alaa Abd al-Fattah deteriorating

According to his family, detained Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abd al-Fattah is suffering repeated bouts of vomiting and indications of an internal inflammation after approx. two months on hunger strike. He is said to be receiving medical assistance, but it is assumed that his internal organs have been damaged as a result of the minimal nutrition intake.

Abd el-Fattah, a key figure in the 2011 Egyptian revolution that ousted then-President Hosni Mubarak, has spent almost a decade behind bars in the ensuing period. He was most recently re-arrested on 29.09.19 and accused of spreading false news, and was sentenced in December 2021 to five years' imprisonment. When he had completed this term in September 2024, the authorities refused to release him, stating as grounds that the more than two years that he had spent in pre-trial remand detention were not to be counted towards his sentence.

Abdel Fattah went on hunger strike on 01.03.25, after learning that his mother Laila Soueif, who lives in the United Kingdom and had started her own hunger strike in September 2024 as part of her campaign to secure her son's release, had been hospitalised in London after months without solid food. Several human rights organisations have reiterated her demands for his immediate release.⁷

Ethiopia

Amendment to the Media Proclamation

In April 2025, parliament passed the amendment of Mass Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021. This constitutes a massive restructuring of the administration of the Ethiopian media supervisory authority. The bill shifts major responsibilities previously handled by the board of the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA), including the right to choose the Director-General, to the prime minister. It also holds media outlets directly responsible for the

content of live broadcasts. The amendment has come under criticism from media professionals and organisations. The International Press Institute also warns of the risk of restrictions on press freedoms. Especially media professionals covering crises and wars are subject to government pressure. More than 50 media workers are said to have gone into exile since 2020, and at least 200 to have been arrested since 2019. 12 journalists are said to be currently behind bars.⁸

Detentions in Oromia

According to reports, arbitrary detentions are said to have taken place in Adama (Misraq Shewa Zone, West Shewa) of mainly young male civilians. Regional security forces are said to be demanding large sums of money for the release of the detainees. Back in November 2024, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reported of arbitrary detentions and recruitment in conjunction with demands for money by security forces in Adama (cf. BN of 16.12.24).⁹

India / Pakistan

Tense bilateral relations

Bilateral relations between the two nuclear-armed powers India and Pakistan remain tense following the attack on 22.04.25 in Indian-administered Kashmir (cf. BN of 28.04.25). Both sides regularly exchanged fire along the demarcation line (Line of Control) running through Kashmir. The Pakistani government reported on 30.04.25 that it had received intelligence information regarding an immanent Indian military strike, and carried out a missile test. The international community is calling for de-escalation. India has imposed an import ban on goods from Pakistan. According to media reports, the tensions have also led to press censorship being stepped up. By exerting a targeted influence, authorities in both countries were trying to present the media reporting on the attack in such a way that it fits the respective government narrative. In a letter, India furthermore also criticised Western news agencies for the terms they used when characterising the attackers, and blocked Pakistani mainstream media and video channels in social media. According to Reporters without Frontiers, the situation with regard to the freedom of the press is already concerning in both countries, as emerges from the Global Press Freedom Index 2025 published on 02.05.25.¹⁰

Iraq

Situation in Iraqi prisons

On 03.05.25, Iraqi justice minister Khaled Shwani informed the press of the current situation in Iraqi prisons. Iraq's prisons are said to currently be at more than 200 % of their nominal capacity. This is said to be exerting a toll in terms of human rights, hygienic and health standards. The situation was serious, but had improved in comparison to the previous year, when prisons had still been at more than 300 % of their capacity. The newly-adopted amnesty law was said to have now led to roughly 2,000 prisoners being released, so that a total of roughly 65,000 remained behind bars. Four new prisons were currently being built. The government hoped that it would be able to largely resolve the problem of overcrowding over the next year.¹¹

Iran

Alleged Israeli spy executed

According to media reports, Iran carried out the death sentence on a 34-year-old detainee on 30.04.25. According to a statement by the state news agency Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), the executed person had allegedly spied for Israel and assisted in the May 2022 assassination of a colonel in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC). He was furthermore said to have played a role in a January 2023 drone attack on an industrial centre linked to the defence ministry in Isfahan. He was also said to have been involved back in 2011, at the age of 20, in the murder of a Brigade general of the IRGC who had established the Iranian missile programme. He is furthermore said to have met twice with senior Mossad intelligence officers in Georgia and Nepal.

A foreign-based press agency focussing on human rights violations in Iran reported on 28.04.25 that the condemned man had made three separate requests for a retrial, all of which had however been rejected. According to the press agency, he had had a final visit in prison with his parents on 29.04.2025. His father subsequently stated that his son had not had a fair trial, and that the case had been riddled with inconsistencies and legal flaws. The executed person had furthermore been reportedly forced to make confessions during his detention, according to another source who it was said was close to him. According to press reports, the executed person had also been kept in solitary confinement for up to a solid 43 days. The UN definition regards solitary confinement in excess of 15 days as torture.

Amnesty International (AI) stated in its annual report on the state of human rights published on 29.04.25 that Iran had arbitrarily executed hundreds of people in the period examined. The authorities are furthermore said to have used the death penalty as a tool of political repression against protesters, dissidents and ethnic minorities.¹²

Lebanon

Situation in southern Lebanon

The Israeli Army continues to launch airstrikes on targets which Israel considers to be in breach of the ceasefire agreement. According to Lebanese sources, the Lebanese Army has now gained control of 85 % of positions in southern Lebanon. The ceasefire agreement provided for all Hezbollah positions to be handed over and the military infrastructure under its control to be destroyed. Israel continues to retain a military presence on five hills on Lebanese territory, stating that the Lebanese Army was still not in full control.¹³

First round of Lebanon's municipal elections launched

On 04.05.25, the first round of Lebanon's municipal elections began, the first such elections since 2016. They had previously been repeatedly postponed, amongst other reasons in connection with funding issues. The Mount Lebanon region will be voting first. The results are regarded as a test of the atmosphere in terms of how the war between Hezbollah and Israel has changed Lebanon's political landscape.¹⁴

Mahmoud Abbas calls for the disarming of Palestinian militias in Lebanon

According to a report of 04.05.25, the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, will be visiting Lebanon on 18.05.25. The aim is to discuss the disarming of the Palestinian militias in the refugee camps in Lebanon. According to this report, the militias of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) are to disarm themselves on orders from Abbas, and all other Palestinian militias are to be called on to disarm. Should they not comply with the demand, the Authority will endorse and support military action on the part of the Lebanese Army in order to disarm them.

The presence of armed militias, including of Hamas, in the Palestinian refugee camps has for decades placed a question mark over the Lebanese state's monopoly on the use of force, and has repeatedly caused considerable uncertainties in the region.¹⁵

Libya

UN: political divides and competition for economic resources plague transition process

Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Libya and Head of the UN Support Mission UNSMIL, reported to the UN Security Council on 17.04.25 about the situation in the country. The ongoing competition between rival forces for Libya's oil wealth is said to lie at the heart of the country's political and economic challenges. She warned that a continuation of the wasteful spending policy without an agreement being reached on the budget between the competing institutions could lead to an economic collapse, and called for this to be urgently addressed.

The latest report on Libya from the UN's Panel of Experts, released in December 2024, highlighted the alarming situation more than a decade after the toppling of former ruler Muammar al-Qaddafi. According to the report, armed groups had further solidified their hold on politics, consistently weakening the already fragile public institutions, one key factor being the systematic smuggling of oil. The recent surprising devaluation of the Libyan dinar by the central bank in early April, which is most probably the result of excessive public expenditures by

Libya's two rival governments, has led to a tangible deterioration in purchasing power among the Libyan population.

Whilst the 2020 ceasefire agreement continues to hold, the general security situation remains precarious, according to Tetteh, amid regular tensions and outbreaks of violence at local level. The recent mobilisations by armed groups in Tripoli are said to have rekindled concerns about a renewed outbreak of the conflict in the capital. Arbitrary detention continued to be widespread, with legal professionals and political opponents among those targeted. Many of them continued to be held in unlawful detention without due process.

The broader human rights situation also remained deeply concerning, particularly regarding the treatment of migrants and humanitarian workers. Xenophobic comments were said to be further inflaming social divisions and jeopardising the safety of vulnerable communities. Women in particular faced threats from gender-based violence, and had virtually no access to protection.¹⁶

Republic of Moldova

Russian disinformation following arrest of Bashkan of Gagauzia

According to media sources? of 17.04.25, the Russian disinformation network Matryoshka has carried out a campaign targeting the Republic of Moldova for the first time. Bots are said to have been used to disseminate videos in social media, imitating the content of international media outlets or universities, and claiming that president Sandu had won the election in the autumn of 2024 through propaganda campaigns and that she was now engaged in repression against her opponents. The latter allegation is said to refer to the arrest of the Bashkan of Gagauzia Evgenia Guțul on 28.03.25, who is suspected of vote buying and illegal financing of the pro-Kremlin Shor party. After her arrest, Guțul is said to have asked president Putin to put pressure on the Republic of Moldova to release her (cf. BN of 31.03.25). Guțul is said to have been placed under house arrest in accordance with a court ruling handed down on 09.04.25.¹⁷

Nigeria

Oyo State: dozens of human trafficking victims rescued

Police in the southwestern Oyo State have rescued 83 human trafficking victims in Ibadan, the state capital. This emerges from media reports, referring to official police information of 26.04.25. The rescued individuals were both male and female, and there was at least one infant among them. The human trafficking victims had been held for an undisclosed period in a residential building in the city, which is home to millions. They may have been nationals of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Further police investigation was ongoing.

Reports of successes achieved in the fight against human trafficking are released with a certain regularity in Nigeria. In particular the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) informs the public of the number of human trafficking victims rescued, and of the number of persons convicted of human trafficking (cf. BN of 04.10.21, 25.04. and 25.07.22, 07.08. and 09.10.23, as well as 15.07. and 18.11.24).¹⁸

Peru

Restrictive NGO law comes into force

Congress passed an amendment on 12.03.25 giving the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI) more oversight of financial support for NGOs coming from abroad. Congress argued in favour of the reform that it boosts transparency over funding for organisations and helps prevent potential foreign interference. Human rights groups however criticise that the document, to which they refer as an anti-NGO law and which they declare to be unconstitutional, would prevent NGOs from supporting individuals in legal action against the state for human rights abuses in future. Such support for lawsuits in administrative or criminal proceedings may hence lead to high fines or to the (temporary) suspension of the organisations. Any projects funded by international cooperation would also have to obtain prior approval of the APCI from now on. Many NGOs consider this to constitute a further restriction on civil society rights and on the work of human rights defenders. The law came into effect after being signed by president Boluarte on 14.04.25 and by being published in the Official Gazette.

Boluarte initially also put forward transparency and accountability arguments, but stated at the same time that the law targeted organisations which acted “against the interests of the state” and implemented “their own ideological agenda” at the expense of the state and in favour of dividing society. Civil society players are now examining the possibility of lodging a constitutional complaint.¹⁹

Russian Federation

Prison sentences for Crimean Tatars

On 29.04.25, the military court of the southern district in Rostov on the Don sentenced six Crimean Tatars to imprisonment of between eleven and 14 years for participation in activities of a terrorist organisation in accordance with Art. 205.5 of the Criminal Code and for preparation of a violent coup in accordance with Art. 30.1 in conjunction with Art. 278 of the Criminal Code. Five of the men are said to have been sentenced to 14 years’ imprisonment, the first four years having to be spent in prison, and the remainder of the sentence in a high-security colony. The sixth accused is said to have been sentenced to eleven years’ imprisonment, the first three years of which in prison and the remainder of the sentence in a punishment colony. The court claims that the men, who were arrested on 24.01.23 in Crimea’s Dzhankoi raion, were involved in activities of the banned Islamist organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir, which has been regarded as a terrorist association in Russia since 2003. Human rights organisations consider the convictions to be politically motivated. According to OVD-Info, 127 Crimean Tatars have been the target of state persecution since the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014, accused of membership of a terrorist organisation (cf. BN of 23.01.23, 21.03.22 and 14.02.22).²⁰

South Sudan

Attack on hospital and market

According to recent reports, on 03.05.25 a hospital of the organisation Doctors Without Borders in Old Fangak is said to have been bombed by helicopter gunships. One patient and two staff members are said to have been injured in the attack. According to Doctors Without Borders, the pharmacy, and therefore all the medical supplies, were destroyed in the attack. The hospital, which is said to have provided medical care to more than 40,000 people, had been the only functional hospital in the Fangak area. Drone strikes are said to have then been carried out on a nearby market, killing at least seven people and injuring 20 more. It is currently not clear who was responsible for the attack.²¹

Sudan

At least 542 civilians killed

According to the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 542 civilians have been killed in Sudan in the past three weeks. This emerges from reports of 01.05.25. The paramilitary militia Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is said amongst other things to have carried out coordinated attacks in al-Fashir, as well as on the Abu Shuk refugee camp. This is said to have involved the killing of at least 40 civilians. It is furthermore said that there have been multiple reports from Khartoum state of extrajudicial executions. A total of at least 24,000 people are said to have been killed since the beginning of the civil war.²²

RSF flies drone strikes on Port Sudan

According to reports of 04.05.25, the RSF is said to have flown drone strikes on the airport in Port Sudan. According to media reports, the strikes had not caused any casualties. Port Sudan had served since the beginning of the war not only as provisional government headquarters, but also as the headquarters of all facilities of the UN and other international institutions in Sudan.²³

Syria

Fighting in Damascus suburbs and Suwayda

Subsequent to the online posting of a recording alleged to have insulted the Prophet Mohammed that was initially attributed to a Druze cleric, fighting broke out in the night of 27.-28.04.25 in Jaramana, which borders on the capital Damascus, in the course of which several people were killed. The recording triggered protests in other cities.

Attacks by extremist Sunni groups on Jaramana were followed by local fighting with Druze militias. On the morning after the fighting broke out, troops of the transitional government set up a security cordon around the town in order to prevent further fighting and stop other groups becoming involved. According to official sources, the attackers had primarily been groups not connected with the government, but media reports stated that they were groups sympathising with the government. In the subsequent days, fighting broke out in the Damascus suburbs of Jaramana and Sahnaya and Ashrafiyat Sahnaya between security forces of the transitional government and groups said to sympathise with the government, and local Druze militias. The neighbourhoods have a large Druze population. There were however also individual media reports of the security forces and Druze militias fighting together against extremist Sunni groups.

Attacks were also carried out by fighters from Bedouin tribes along the highway which leads to Damascus from the Druze-majority Suwayda governorate, as well as in the southwest of Suwayda governorate. The transitional government stepped up its presence along the highway in order to pacify the situation.

According to reports, the transitional government is said to have taken individual steps to protect the Druze population and to stop the violence broadening, including for example by accompanying Druze students from Latakia, Tartous and Homs to Jaramana and Suwayda. There were however voices within the Druze community accusing the transitional government of not having taken adequate measures for their protection.

On 30.04.25, the Israeli military bombed security forces in Sahnaya which it accused of having been involved in the attacks, and threatened to carry out further strikes on government targets should the attacks on the Druze population continue. According to the governor, one member of the security forces and a civilian were killed in the airstrikes. Two days later, jet fighters attacked targets near the presidential palace in Damascus as a warning to the transitional government. Four people were killed in another airstrike in Suwayda while attempting to shoot down an Israeli drone.

According to media reports, an agreement was reached on the evening of 01.05.25 between the transitional government and Druze leaders in order to resolve the violence. This is said to have involved direct cooperation between the security forces of the transitional government and Druze militias, and the integration of 700 local fighters into the transitional government's General Security Services. The transitional government promised in return to investigate and punish rights violations committed in the context of the fighting, and to release 32 Druze who had been detained.

According to information from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the violence had led to the killings of more than 100 persons, including at least 20 members of the security forces and ten fighters affiliated with them, as well as of 15 Druze fighters and a civilian. 27 Druze are said to have been killed in Suwayda governorate, 23 of them in an ambush on the road to Damascus.²⁴

Saudi Arabia and Qatar pay off Syria's debt to the World Bank

Saudi Arabia stated on 14.04.25 that it was willing to pay off Syria's debt to the World Bank amounting to 15 million USD. The Qatar government joined in the scheme. Making the outstanding repayments makes it possible to access millions in renewed support from the World Bank which can help rebuild the public sector and the economy. The Syrian government has been denied access to funding and technical support from the World Bank for more than 14 years.²⁵

Togo

Government resigned, Gnassingbé sworn in as President of the Council of Ministers

Togolese president Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé was sworn in as chair of the Council of Ministers in Lomé on 03.05.25, and therefore has a new post, the highest office in the executive.

After the new constitution came into force in May 2024, having been adopted in April 2024, Togo shifted from a presidential to a parliamentary system (cf. BN of 22.04.24). The office of the President of the Council of Ministers was introduced as part of this constitutional reform. This office is responsible for tasks of government, whilst the powers of the president have been reduced to a representative role. According to the new constitution, the person is appointed President of the Council of Ministers who chairs the majority party in the National Assembly. The prime minister and her government resigned on the evening of 02.05.25, since the new constitution makes no provision for the office of head of government.

The office of the President of the Council of Ministers has no official term limits. Critics and opposition figures have labelled the early 2024 amendments to the constitution as an “institutional coup d’état”, alleging that they were made in order to allow Gnassingbé to stay in power indefinitely.²⁶

Türkiye

Demonstrations and detentions on Labour Day

According to media reports, more than 400 people were detained in Istanbul on 01.05.25 when they tried to march to Taksim Square on International Labour Day. In the days leading up to May Day, trade unions and NGOs had called for protests and marches to be held all over Istanbul. The government had previously banned gatherings in the area around Taksim Square and closed several metro stations and tram stops.

While the demonstrators had attempted to get to Taksim Square, violent clashes broke out with the police, as a result of which demonstrators were detained, accused of violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations. According to press reports of 02.05.25, 372 of the 419 people who had been detained based on the documents submitted had been released after one day, while 36 of them remained in police custody. Among the detainees were ten minors and eleven lawyers. Another eight persons were handed over to the anti-terror department. 286,584 persons in 78 provinces took part in May Day protests across the country.²⁷

159th place in world press freedom index

According to the international 2025 World Press Freedom Index published on 02.05.25 by NGO Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Türkiye ranks 159th out of 180 countries. RSF particularly cites the increasing pressure being exerted on media workers, for instance via censorship, police violence and arbitrary detentions, since the detention on 19.03.25 of the former mayor of the metropolitan municipality of Istanbul, Ekrem İmamoğlu of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) (cf. BN of 24.03., 31.03., 07.04., 14.04. and 28.04.25).

In general terms, the ongoing censorship, politically-motivated arrests, and state control of the media, are cited as key factors for the continuing decline in the freedom of the press in Türkiye. In 2024, Türkiye ranked 158th out of 180 countries. According to RSF, 90 percent of Turkey’s national media is under direct or indirect government control. It can also be observed that authorities scaled up their activities against critical journalism following the 2023 presidential elections. Police violence and mass arrests were used against media professionals covering political rallies and street protests. Online censorship, politically-charged trials and criminal court judgments have become tools of the state, according to the report. Journalists may find themselves stripped of their press credentials, particularly those working for opposition or independent media outlets. Media professionals who criticise government officials, judges or religious figures often also face charges of “insult”.²⁸

Tunisia

Demonstrations in Tunis

Opponents of president Kais Saied protested on the streets of Tunis on 01.05.25 in response to a call from the UGTT trade union and relatives of detained opposition figures, accusing Saied of using the judiciary and police to suppress critics. The rally was attended by members of different political factions. Supporters of president Saied held a counter-rally. Riot police are said to have deployed in large numbers to separate the groups, according to media reports. No clashes were reported.

The Tunisian government has faced large numbers of protests in recent months, focussing on the worsening general economic and social situation, as well as the persecution and detention of opposition figures, media professionals and other persons making critical comments about president Saied (cf. BN of 14.04. and 28.04.25).²⁹

Ukraine

Efforts to reach a ceasefire and conclusion of a minerals deal with the USA

According to reports of 29.04.25, president Zelenskyy called for an immediate month-long ceasefire, which the Kremlin however rejected, after president Putin unilaterally announced a three-day truce (08.05.-10.05.25) to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union in the second world war, and stated that said Kyiv should follow his example. President Trump was said to be calling for not only a temporary truce, but a “permanent” ceasefire. According to media reports, US secretary of state Marco Rubio has called on both sides to put forward “concrete proposals”, as the USA would otherwise give up on mediation. According to media sources of 30.04.25, the Kremlin for its part dampened expectations of a quick peace due to the complex nature of the conflict. A readiness had been signalled to enter into direct talks with Ukraine, but no response had yet been forthcoming from Kyiv. According to media sources of 02.05.25, foreign minister Andriy Sybiha clearly indicated his government’s red lines, stating that Ukraine would not accept “peace at any price”, or “any restriction of sovereignty of any kind” when it came to plans to join NATO.

According to media reports of 01.05.25, the USA and Ukraine have concluded a raw materials deal for mining Ukrainian minerals. According to Ukrainian deputy prime minister and economics minister Yulia Svyrydenko, the agreement contained a joint investment fund for reconstruction in the country. The fund would be divided equally between the two countries, and give both sides equal voting rights. Ukraine would pay in 50 percent of the income from future licenses or raw materials sales, and the USA could make their contribution to the fund with military aid. There would be no changes to the ownership of state-owned companies. According to prime minister Denys Shmyhal, Ukraine would retain “full control of its mineral, infrastructural and natural resources”. In contradistinction to Trump’s original demands, Ukraine would also not have to pay back any debt for previous arms or financial aid from the USA. Whilst Kyiv was hoping for a transfer and development of technologies, it remained unclear where the investment was to come from, as Trump would have to offer investors attractive conditions. What is more, 40 % of the resources are said to be located in areas under Russian control. The agreement also did not contain the robust security guarantees for which Ukraine had called. The USA was instead merely “supporting Ukraine’s efforts to obtain security guarantees needed to build lasting peace”. The agreement was to be ratified in the coming weeks, and then further technical details clarified, before the fund could start its work.

According to media sources of 01.05.25, once the raw materials agreement had been concluded, the US administration informed Congress of its intention to certify a licence for the export of defence articles to Ukraine to the tune of 50 million USD or more.³⁰

Civilian victims

According to information from the responsible regional governor, one person was killed in a Russian drone strike on 29.04.25 in Dnipro. According to reports, two people died in Odessa in the night of 30.04-01.05.25, also as the result of a Russian drone strike. According to the governor appointed by Moscow, seven people were killed in a Ukrainian drone strike in the town of Oleshki in the Russian-occupied part of Kherson oblast. According to official Ukrainian sources, on 03.05.25 two people were killed by Russian artillery fire in Donetsk oblast. On the same day, one person was apparently killed in Kherson by a Russian drone strike. According to media sources of 03.05.25, two civilians died in a Russian attack near to Pokrovsk (Donetsk oblast). Furthermore, one fatality was reported after a Russian airstrike in Kupiansk (Kharkiv oblast). On 04.05.25, media reported further Russian attacks in which two persons were killed in the village of Komar and one in the town of Myrnohrad (both Donetsk oblast).³¹

War events

After president Putin had previously congratulated Russian forces on driving out all Ukrainian troops from the Kursk border region in western Russia, he stated on 29.04.25 according to media reports that Ukrainian soldiers still remained there. According to Ukrainian military sources, their own troops were still in the Russian border

regions of Kursk and Belgorod. According to information from the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces of 01.05.25, Russian forces have since considerably intensified the fighting in the Pokrovsk area (Donezk oblast). This strategically-important town has been the scene of intensive fighting for months. According to information from the Ukrainian military of 01.05.25, Russian forces have attempted to establish a bridgehead in the estuary of the Dnipro (Kherson oblast). It had however been possible to prevent them landing.³²

Energy infrastructure

According to a media report of 30.04.25, Russian state-owned company Rosatom is not ruling out cooperation with the USA in the occupied Ukrainian nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia, were the country's leadership to take such a decision. US president Trump had previously proposed that the USA take over operation of the plant and generate electricity both for the Ukrainian-controlled and the Russian-occupied areas.³³

Financial aid

According to media reports of 30.04.25, the cuts in international aid by the Trump administration, but also by other governments, were also impeding UN humanitarian aid for people in Ukraine. Operations in Ukraine were therefore to be reprioritised, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), thus attaching key importance to people near the frontline, evacuations, emergency response after strikes, and aid to the most vulnerable among the internally displaced people. In January, the UN had appealed for \$2.63bn in funding to assist 6 million people who need aid in Ukraine. Under the new conditions, it was now a matter of reaching 4.8 million people with \$1.75bn.³⁴

Venezuela

Economic situation: bonuses increased instead of minimum wage

On 30.04.25, president Maduro announced an increase in the "bonus" against the economic war for people working in the civil service, which is to be increased from its most recent maximum of 90 USD to a maximum of 120 USD. This is referred to as the integral minimum wage, together with the unchanged actual minimum wage of 130 Bolívares (currently much less than 2 USD) and a food voucher ("Cestaticket" (40 USD)). Trade unions called for protests to be held against this measure too for 01.05.25, criticised the "starvation wages", and instead called for earnings to be increased in real terms, since the increased bonuses had no influence whatever on social benefits, etc.³⁵

Freedom of the press

According to the RSF's annual freedom of the press ranking, published on 02.05.25, Venezuela currently ranks 160th out of 180 countries. This means that it ranks third-worst in Latin America, after Cuba (165) and Nicaragua (172). (Self-)censorship and criminalisation of media professionals is said to play a major role in Venezuela, there having also been several arrests among reporters, particularly in the period around the 2024 presidential elections. Financial restrictions also had a major influence on independent reporting. The NGO Espacio Público furthermore speaks of a significant increase in the number of arrests because of free expression of opinion (online) regarding the presidential elections, intimidation, increased supervision of the public debate, and 23 closures of communication media.³⁶

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Imprint

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,
90461 Nürnberg

ISSN

2943-0690

Valid as of

CW 19/2025

Printed by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Design

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Reference source

Publikationsstelle Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
www.bamf.de/publikationen

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