

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	766
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. Group 62 - Information Centre for Asylum and Migration
Titel:	Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	9. marts 2020
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	3. september 2020

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

9 March 2020

Afghanistan

Hostilities

The Taliban resumed their fight against the Afghan government just a few days after the signing of the agreement between the Taliban and the U.S. on the withdrawal of international troops (cf. BN of 02.03.20). They attacked numerous bases of the Afghan military in at least half of the provinces. In some cases, the U.S. provided air support for threatened positions of the Afghan army. In addition, according to the government of Maidan Wardak province, 50 civilians were abducted in Chak district. They are said to have nothing to do with the Afghan government. It is suspected that they are to be exchanged for Taliban who are being detained (cf. BN of 02.03.20 regarding the exchange of prisoners as a condition for peace talks). However, according to press reports, the number of Taliban attacks had decreased significantly by the end of last week, although there are no official figures available.

Persons injured at commemorative event held in Kabul

On 06.03.20, the participants of an event commemorating the 25th anniversary of the death of Abdul Ali Mazari, the former leader of Hizb-e Wahdat, were attacked by unknown gunmen. According to the Afghan Interior Ministry, at least 32 civilians were killed and 81 people were injured. The participants included high-ranking politicians such as Chief Executive Officer of the Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Abdullah Abdullah, his deputy Mohammad Mohaqeq and the chairperson of the High Peace Council, Mohammad Karim Khalili. They managed to escape unharmed. Hizb-e Wahdat represents the ethnic minority of the Hazara, who are predominantly Shiite. Mohaqeq and Khalili also belong to the Hazaras. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Taliban claimed to have nothing to do with it. Commemorative ceremonies for Abdul Ali Mazari have already come under attack several times. This was the case last year when the ISKP claimed responsibility for the attack. (cf. BN of 18.03.19).

Presidential election/ government crisis

On 05.03.20, representatives of the two groups around President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer of the Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Abdullah Abdullah met for an initial discussion with the aim of settling the disputes regarding the outcome of the election. Abdullah declared after the election that he could not accept Ghani's victory (cf. BN of 02.03.20). But since no agreement has been reached so far, the two rivals are expected to be sworn in today (09.03.20). Ghani will take the oath of office at the presidential palace, Abdullah at another location.

Doctors without Borders: medical care remains very poor

In a report published on 04.03.20, the organisation "Doctors without Borders" stated that the situation has not improved since its last survey conducted in 2014. The report is based on interviews with patients, nurses and medical professionals in Herat and Helmand. It shows that the reality of those affected does not match the official reports on the Afghan health system. Reasons cited include the armed conflict, which has led to the closure of health facilities or has prevented them from being reached in time, or the effects of drought, which leads to poverty and malnutrition.

Albania

Special police law adopted

Despite protests, parliament passed a special law on 05.03.20 that strengthens the powers of the police to fight crime until the end of 2020, according to media reports. Critics describe the extended powers granted to the police as undemocratic and unconstitutional. Among other things, a special court is to be set up to speed up police applications for confiscation of property and other measures.

European Commission publishes positive progress report

On 02.03.20, the European Commission published its updated progress report on Albania with regard to opening EU accession negotiations. Together with the recently presented new method of EU enlargement (cf. BN of 25.11.19), the overall positive report is likely to increase Albania's chances of obtaining a start date for accession negotiations. The report says Albania has made progress in justice reform and in the re-evaluation of judges and prosecutors and is establishing a solid track record in the fight against corruption and organised crime.

Benin

Suspected coup plans foiled?

It emerged in early March 2020 that 20 people, including six military personnel, had been arrested in February 2020. Under the leadership of former military attaché Pascal Tawè of the Benin embassy in Washington, they are said to have been planning to overthrow President Patrice Talon.

China

Xinjiang: forced labour for Uighur

According to a report published by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) think tank on 01.03.20, tens of thousands of Uighur from Xinjiang are working in factories in other parts of China. Between 2017 and 2019, according to a conservative estimate, more than 80,000 people, some of them directly from re-education camps, were transferred to factories across China that are part of the supply chain for at least 83 international brands in the technology, clothing and automotive industries. 27 such factories have been identified in nine provinces. The circumstances suggest they are working under coercive conditions. Although those accommodated in special dormitories are being paid, they are subjected to constant surveillance and are banned from observing religious practices. The practice of religion is prohibited, and after work the workers have to attend ideological training and Mandarin lessons. Employment contracts are valid for one year or more. Those who do not comply with the requirements are threatened with imprisonment in Xinjiang camps.

Covid-19

According to official figures, the number of new infections is decreasing. However, it is suspected that there is a high number of unreported cases. More than 80,700 infections have been confirmed in China to date, and more than 58,000 patients are now considered to be cured. Over 3,000 people have succumbed to the disease.

Côte d'Ivoire

Compulsory health insurance

In January 2020, the West African country introduced enrolment for a universal healthcare scheme. To this end, the government of Côte d'Ivoire has introduced a universal health insurance scheme (Couverture Médicale Universelle, CMU) which officially entered the operational phase in January 2020. The CMU is to cover 70% of medical services, such as visits to the doctor, nursing care and medication. The personal contribution of the insured persons is 30%. The monthly contribution is currently 1,000 CFA (approximately €1.53) per insured person. There is free, low-threshold basic medical care (Régime d'Assistance Médicale, RAM) for people who are destitute. To date, 60% of civil servants and 25% of employees have enrolled with state health insurance scheme. The nationwide introduction of the CMU is to be completed by the end of March 2020.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Last Ebola patient discharged from treatment centre with a clean bill of health

According to the WHO Regional Director Matshidiso Moeti, the last Ebola patient in the Congo was released from a treatment centre in the city of Beni (eastern province of North Kivu) on 03.03.20 after being presented with paperwork showing a clean bill of health. The end of the outbreak can only be ascertained when no infections arise 42 days after the last reported case has tested negative. The two eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri were affected by the world's second-deadliest Ebola epidemic. Since the outbreak on 01.08.18, there were 3,444 confirmed and probable cases. A total of 2,264 people have died of Ebola, which means that the mortality rate is 66%.

Ethiopia

Hitsats refugee camp closes in Tigray Region

According to a report issued by the Ethiopian news agency Ezega, the Ethiopian government is planning to close the Hitsats refugee camp in the Tigray Region of northern Ethiopia. Around 18,000 Eritrean refugees would be affected. The background is still unclear; observers suspect that Ethiopia wants to comply with a demand by the Eritrean government. The refugees are said to have been ordered by the Ethiopian Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) to leave the camp within ten days and move to another camp.

Hitsats is one of six refugee camps housing Eritrean migrants and asylum seekers. Last year, the government announced plans to close all 27 refugee camps in the country over the next ten years and to integrate the refugees into local communities. Ethiopia hosts more than 850,000 refugees from Southern Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Eritrea.

Iran

Renewed wave of repression against journalists

A new wave of repression against journalists has apparently begun in Iran. A spokesperson for the Iran section of the International Federation of Journalists recently stated in an interview with the BBC that the new wave of repression is linked to the political atmosphere in Iran following the shooting down of a Ukrainian passenger plane in January, which, in view of the parliamentary elections, led the regime to show toughness and create an atmosphere of fear among journalists. The aim was to prevent critical coverage. At the beginning of February, the homes of at least four journalists were searched. Their computers, mobile phones and personal documents were confiscated. At the same time, news abounds about new sentences against journalists and the enforcement of prison sentences already served.

November riots 2019: children killed

Amnesty International (AI) reported on 04.03.20 that at least 23 children were killed by security forces during the nationwide protests against petrol price increases last November. Its report was based on evidence from videos and photographs, as well as death and burial certificates, accounts from eyewitnesses and victims' relatives as well as information gathered from human rights activists and journalists. According to the report, at least 23 children were shot dead by security forces during the protests in November 2019, 22 boys aged between 12 and 17 and one girl who was reportedly aged between 8 and 12 years old. Ten of the children are reported to have been killed by shots to the head or upper body.

Temporary release from prison as coronavirus spreads

The Iranian government has released 54,000 prisoners temporarily since last week. This measure is intended to contain the risk of mass infection by the coronavirus. In view of the massive spread of the virus in Iran, the relatives of political prisoners in particular had been concerned about their health in recent days. According to reports, the number of cases of suspected coronavirus infections in prisons in Tehran, Sanandaj, Urmia,

Khorramabad and Gorgan, among others, has increased. The sanitary conditions in Iranian prisons are considered to be very poor overall.

Iraq

Political crisis and further attacks on protestors

After the resignation of the prime minister-designate (cf. BN of 02.03.20), anti-government protests have regained momentum. The people demanded a candidate who was independent in domestic and foreign policy. The Iraqi President, Ibrahim Salih, has until 16.03.20 to nominate a new candidate for the office of Prime Minister.

Serious riots continue to occur between protesters and security forces. At least 160 people were injured during riots in Baghdad on 04.03.20. In addition, security forces have been cracking down on protestors. In Baghdad Hussein Rahm was stabbed by suspected al-Sadr supporters. In Nasriyah, the activist Rana Abd al-Halim was abducted after publicly criticising Muqtada al-Sadr. Another activist, Ali al-Hafli, was shot dead in Basra by unknown gunmen. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, once again criticised the government for not fulfilling its responsibility to protect the population against unknown third parties.

On 08.03.20, large rallies to mark International Women's Day took place in Baghdad and several cities in southern Iraq. Iraqi girls and women demanded women's rights and expressed their support for the anti-government demonstrations. The last women's marches (cf. BN of 17.02.20) were condemned by the clergyman, Muqtada al-Sadr who spoke of "promiscuity and immorality".

No agreement between Baghdad and Erbil regarding security in disputed areas

According to local media, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Peshmerga, Jabbar Yawar, has criticised that no effective agreement has been reached on security in the disputed areas between Baghdad and Erbil. Since January 2019, he said, efforts have been undertaken to reach an agreement in view of ongoing ISIS activities. Yawar accused the Iraqi central government of failing to protect the region and of not being willing to cooperate with the Peshmerga.

State of Iraq's healthcare system

According to a report issued by Reuters, Iraq's healthcare system is in crisis, mainly due to a shortage of drugs and the medical staff to administer them. Many trained practitioners are leaving the country because of working conditions and threats. According to a study conducted by the Iraqi Ministry of Health, the majority of the essential drugs are in short supply or are not available at all. Pharmacies are flush with smuggled drugs that could be past their expiry date or unsafe. Confronted with a lack of access to cancer treatment and drugs at home, many cancer patients are spending thousands of dollars to seek treatment abroad, in India for instance. After returning to Iraq, further treatment is often either too expensive or not available in the first place. There are 0.8 hospital beds and 1.2 doctors available per 1,000 people, which is below the regional average. The lack of space is having a negative impact on the quality of treatment in emergency rooms and hospital wards. On 15.09.19, the Minister of Health, Alaa Alwan, resigned from his office, citing insurmountable corruption and threats from people opposed to his healthcare reform efforts. Corruption and mismanagement are the main causes of the crisis. The improvement of the healthcare system, in turn, is one of the main demands of the anti-government protests that have been continuing in Baghdad and the southern provinces since October 2019.

Israel/ Palestinian Autonomous Territories

Elections for the 23rd Knesset

On 02.03.20, the Israeli population was called upon to elect a new parliament for the third time in a year, after failure to achieve a coalition majority in the two previous elections held in April and September 2019. Turnout was over 70%.

Although the Likud Party led by incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won four new seats this time, the block of right-wing national and religious parties failed to achieve the required parliamentary majority of 61 seats.

The proportion of seats held by the moderately large opposition party Kachol Lavan (“Blue and White”) remained unchanged. In addition to the ruling party, the so-called Joint List also emerged stronger from the elections after winning two more seats. The Joint List is a coalition of mainly Arab parties, which has recently been able to garner an increasing number of votes from the Jewish left-wing spectrum.

Statistically, every fifth Israeli can be assigned to the Arab population group. The Joint List comprises a broad spectrum ranging from secular leftists to conservative Islamists.

The election campaign of right-wing parties, which often relied on the division between Arab and Jewish Israelis, and the presentation of the peace plan recently presented by the U.S. government, according to which Arab settlements in Israel are to be transferred to a future Palestinian state, has also led, according to observers, to a sharp rise in the turnout of the Arab minority from 49.2 % (April 2019) and 59.2 % (September 2019) to 64.7 % (March 2020).

Kenya

Al-Shabaab issues warning to Christians

The radical Islamic terrorist organisation al-Shabaab has urged Christians to leave three districts in northeast Kenya and has threatened them with expulsion if they fail to do so. According to the church media, the districts in question are Garissa, Wajir and Mandera, inhabited predominantly by civil war refugees from Somalia. In an audio clip published on the Internet, al-Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Dhere justified the demand by saying that “local Muslims should be given the opportunity to keep all local jobs”. He said, for instance that Muslim teachers, doctors, engineers and young university graduates from the north-eastern province are currently unemployed. The region is considered unstable, and the level of education and infrastructure is low.

Lebanon

Lebanese government unable to pay debts

Lebanon’s Prime Minister Hasan Diab announced at a press conference held on 07.03.20 that Lebanon will default on its debt and will instead seek to restructure its massive debt. Lebanon was to repay debts worth USD 1.2 billion (Eurobond) by 09.03.20. The national debt reached a peak of 170%. Diab promised economic reforms and a plan to solve the debt crisis. Meanwhile, protests erupted in several cities. The protesters fear that further tax increases will be introduced instead of effective economic reforms. For months, Lebanese citizens have had only limited access to savings in foreign currency, especially US dollars. Anti-government demonstrations have been rife in Lebanon since mid-October 2019.

Montenegro

Violence against journalists poses an ever-growing threat to freedom on the press

According to recent media reports, freedom of the press in Montenegro has deteriorated significantly since 2012 (when accession negotiations with the EU began). The so-called fourth pillar is still threatened by the lack of separation of powers. According to independent journalists, elementary and democratic standards for the rule of law only exist on paper. According to the current ranking of the non-governmental organisation Reporters without Borders, Montenegro, which has also been a NATO member since 2017, lags far behind (104th place out of 180). Journalists not working for pro-government media quickly face difficulties, especially when investigating sensitive topics such as corruption, illegal privatisation, organised crime, drug and arms trafficking or environmental protection, especially when these touched on the environment of top politicians and their circles. In addition to verbal violence against journalists, such as overt threats, defamation and intimidation, the media say that physical violence, such as arson attacks and car bombings, raids on editorial offices and dwellings, as well as beatings are also part of the everyday life of independent journalists. They say there has been a series of repeated and obviously politically motivated arrests, charges and trials (cf. BN of 20.01.20). Amnesty International and the EU Commission have repeatedly expressed their concern that most of the cases in which journalists have been injured remain unsolved.

Nigeria

51 inhabitants of several villages killed by bandits in Kaduna State

Around 100 armed bandits stormed a large number of villages in the Igabi and Giwa Local Government Areas in the northwestern state of Kaduna at around the same time in the early hours of 01.03.20. 51 people were killed, others were injured and many houses were set ablaze. According to Garba Shehu, the spokesperson of President Muhammadu Buhari, the attacks are said to have been a response to recent military and police operations aimed at the bandits in Kaduna. These bandits have been carrying out a growing number of raids on villages since 2019, ransacking homes and stealing livestock in the northwestern states. More and more villagers are being killed or kidnapped to extort ransoms. On 04.03.20, Nigeria's police chief Mohammed Adamu claimed that the bandits operating in the northwest were members of the Islamist terrorist organisation Boko Haram and its branch ISWAP (Islamic State in the Western Sahara Province).

North Macedonia

North Macedonia moves closer to EU accession

On the basis of a recent EU report on the ongoing reform processes, the EU Commission has reaffirmed its recommendation to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia. The EU progress report on North Macedonia published on 02.03.20 focuses primarily on the results achieved so far in judicial reforms and proactive investigations, prosecutions and final convictions in corruption and organised crime cases. Neighbourhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi announced on 02.03.20 that North Macedonia (as well as Albania) have stepped up their efforts to implement reforms and have delivered further tangible and sustainable results and made clear progress in strengthening an independent judicial system. This assessment, together with the fundamental changes in the accession process also initiated by the EU Commission in February 2020 and requested by France in October 2019 (cf. BN of 25.11.19 and 03.02.20), should increase North Macedonia's chances of accession negotiations being launched soon.

Pakistan

Journalist killed in Swat Valley

On 24.02.20, a politically active journalist from the Urdu-language daily newspaper Ausaf was killed in the Swat district south of Matta (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) by unknown perpetrators.

PTM leader released on bail

Manzoor Pashteen, the leader of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), who had been arrested at the end of January (cf. BN of 27.01.20 and 03.02.20), was released on bail from a prison in Dera Ismail Khan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province at the end of February. He is accused of sedition and criminal conspiracy, among other things. In an address to members of the movement after his release, he announced that he would continue his efforts for Pashtun rights in the region undiminished.

Attacks on Ahmadi community centres

In a press release, the Ahmadiyya community said that it had been deprived of one of its mission houses in Multan (Punjab) on 04.02.20 and that another house of prayer near Multan had been destroyed in October 2019.

Measures due to the coronavirus outbreak

The provincial government of Balochistan has closed its borders with Iran after a number of coronavirus deaths were reported there. A screening and emergency centre has been set up in Taftan, where businesspeople and pilgrims who have crossed the border are being tested for the virus and quarantined.

Nationwide marches to mark International Women's Day

On 08.03.20, women's freedom (Aurat Azadi) rallies and marches to mark International Women's Day took place under high security in major cities in Pakistan. An incident occurred in the capital Islamabad, where fundamentalist opponents threw stones at participants, injuring a number of people.

Terrorist cell dismantled

On 09.03.20, two terrorists and one military officer were killed during an operation by the Pakistani military on a terrorist hideout in the Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. According to military sources, a large cache of weapons and ammunition was recovered.

Somalia

Fighting in the border area with Kenya

Since 02.03.20, units of the Somali National Army (SNA) and regional Jubbaland forces have been fighting each other in the Gedo region. The fighting initially took place around the border town of Bula Hawo in Somalia but has also spread to the town of Mandera on the Kenyan side of the border. Thousands of families were forced to flee the area. The SNA allegedly wants to capture the former security minister of Jubbaland, Abdirashid Hassan Abdinur. Abdirashid was arrested by the Somali government in August 2019 but escaped from a prison in Mogadishu on 28.01.20. He returned to Jubbaland on 04.02.20 (cf. BN of 10.02.20).

Court official killed by car bomb

On 03.03.20, a regional court official was killed by a car bomb in the capital of the Sool region in Somaliland, Las Anod. It is not clear who was behind the attack. Such attacks occur relatively rarely in the region.

Bomb attack kills four people

According to reports, four government soldiers were killed and many more injured by the explosion of a bomb on 01.03.20. The soldiers were travelling in a military convoy on the road between Wanlaweyn and Afgoye. Al-Shabaab is reportedly responsible for the attack.

Al-Shabaab attacks the "Green Zone" in Mogadishu

On 01.03.20, al-Shabaab fired mortars into the heavily fortified so-called "Green Zone" in Mogadishu. The attack was aimed at an area where the UN and African Union (AU) compounds and several Western embassies are located. The "Green Zone" is considered to be one of the few safe areas in the city and includes the offices of humanitarian and diplomatic organisations as well as Mogadishu International Airport. No fatalities have been reported. Recently, the Somali-Canadian human rights activist Almaas Elman was shot dead in the "Green Zone" in November 2019.

Syria

Idlib: ceasefire in effect

On 05.03.20, Turkey and Russia negotiated an agreement, according to which a ceasefire is to be maintained for the time being and a security corridor is to be established in the medium term, covering an area that runs 6 km north and south along the M4 highway. The M4 link runs through the region from east to west and is to be patrolled jointly by Russian-Turkish military forces from 15.03.20. The agreement does not contain any provisions on the airspace in the region or the fate of the approximately one million war refugees.

According to reports from sources closely linked to the opposition, fighting broke out near Jabal az-Zawiya in the south of the province on 06.03.20, killing 15 people. It was reported that for the moment, however, the ceasefire was largely holding.

The Turkish military still maintains a dozen observation posts in the region. Most of them are now surrounded by Syrian Government forces. According to Turkey, their status remains unchanged for the moment.

Tajikistan

Parliamentary elections

Parliamentary elections

The ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as the winner of the parliamentary elections held on 01.03.20 with more than 50% of the second-round votes. The only opposition party allowed to stand in the elections failed to reach the five-percent hurdle. In addition to the People's Democratic Party, the Economic Reform Party (16.6 %), the Agrarian Party (16.5 %), the Socialist Party (5.15 %) and the Democratic Party (5.1 %) are also represented in parliament.

Tunisia

Attack on U.S. Embassy

According to the Interior Ministry, one policeman was killed and four policemen and one civilian were injured when two suicide bombers blew themselves up near the U.S. Embassy in Tunis on 06.03.20. Eyewitnesses reported to local media that the attackers approached the police officers posted at the embassy on motor scooters before detonating a bomb. Only a few hours after the attack, the Interior Ministry confirmed the identity of the two suicide bombers: both had been convicted in 2014 for membership of a terrorist organisation but had already served their sentences, according to the Tunisian radio station Mosaïque FM. Nothing is known about the background of the attack.

The U.S. embassy has been fortified by high walls and concrete blocks after demonstrators stormed the embassy grounds in 2012.

Turkey

Police officers at the border

The situation on the Turkish-Greek border remains tense, with several thousand refugees still waiting there for the opportunity to enter the EU. According to media reports, on 05.03.20, Turkey deployed around 1,000 police officers to the border with Greece to halt the pushback of migrants into Turkey if Greek border guards do not let them into Greece. Owing to this tense situation, the European Union (EU) and its Member States have shown solidarity with Greece and reaffirmed their determination to protect the external borders in accordance with EU and international law. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan travels to Brussels today for talks with the EU on defusing the migration dispute.

Ukraine

New Prime Minister

Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk tendered his resignation on 04.03.20. He had previously offered to resign in January 2020 because of negative remarks he had made about President Volodymyr Zelensky, however, at the time, President Zelensky had rejected the offer. The same day, on 04.03.20, 44-year-old Denys Schmygal was appointed the new Prime Minister.