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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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13 April 2026

Afghanistan

Security situation: Fighting on the border, attack on Shias in Herat

Fighting between the Taliban and Pakistan continues despite negotiations. Peace talks between the two sides, mediated by China in Ürümqi (Xinjiang, China), ended on 8 April 2026 without a clear outcome. The Pakistani Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, stated on the same day that the military operation “Ghazab-Lil-Haq” would continue until the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)’s safe havens in Afghanistan had been eliminated. According to media reports, two civilians were killed in the province of Kunar on 9 April 2026 during the fighting. According to reports dated 10 April 2026, Taliban border forces withdrew from several posts following Pakistani attacks, including at least three positions in the Barg-e Matal district (Nuristan province), positions in the Kamdesh district of Nuristan and in the Nari district (Kunar province). According to the exiled human rights organisation Afghanistan Human Rights Center, at least 310 civilians were killed and 974 injured nationwide between March 2025 and March 2026, 90% of whom were casualties of fighting on the border between the Taliban and Pakistan and of air strikes by the Pakistani army. According to a report published by UN OCHA on 5 April 2026, the highest number of displaced persons due to the fighting was recorded in Khost Province at 26,200, followed by Kunar with 25,300. In Nangarhar province, 19,600 displaced persons were counted, in Paktia 18,200 and in Paktika 4,900. According to media reports, on 10 April 2026, unidentified armed men opened fire on civilians in the village of Deh Mehri in the district of Injil (Herat province), killing at least 20 people and injuring dozens. The victims, the majority of whom were Shia, including women and children, had gathered for a picnic near a shrine. The Taliban authorities have not commented on the incident, and no group has claimed responsibility. The victims are not believed to have been Shia Hazaras. According to the Taliban-led National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), at least 96 people were killed and 328 injured last year in accidents involving landmines and unexploded ordnance across Afghanistan.¹

Humanitarian situation

According to the Taliban-run ANDMA, the death toll from flooding and heavy rain since the end of March 2026 has risen to at least 189; more than 250 people have been injured. UN OCHA figures from 9 March 2026 put the death toll at 93. The floods, which began on 26 March 2026, have so far damaged more than 7,000

homes, infrastructure and farmland. According to UN OCHA, between 26 March and 6 April 2026, a total of 31 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces were affected by flooding, impacting 165 districts and more than 500 villages.

On 4 April 2026, a powerful earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale also shook parts of Afghanistan; at least eight people were killed in the east of Kabul Province (Gosfand Dara, Bagrami District).²

Algeria

Action taken against civil society activists who are relatives of missing persons

According to media reports, the Algerian authorities are taking action against Slimane Hamitouchi, the coordinator of the local branch of the human rights organisation SOS Disparus. The organisation campaigns to shed light on the fate of people who disappeared during the civil war of the 1990s and was closed down by the authorities on 16 March 2026 (see BN of 23 March 2026).

Hamitouchi, himself the son of a disappeared person, was reportedly arrested on 8 April 2026 during a weekly meeting with relatives of disappeared persons and sentenced the following day by a court to six months' imprisonment for "inciting an assembly". On 7 April 2026, security forces also temporarily detained 66-year-old Samia Bekouche, the mother of activist Faouzi Talaa, who had fled to France, as well as his brother, after her home was searched and documents relating to Faouzi Talaa were seized. Bekouche was reportedly pressured to contact her son and persuade him to cease his activism. After a few hours, the two were released. Furthermore, on 5 April 2026, the activist Rachid Ben Nakhla, also a relative of a disappeared person, had been arrested after he spoke in a social media post about his father's abduction in 1994 by the military security services.³

Angola

President pardons 310 prisoners

According to media reports, on 6 April 2026, on the occasion of the celebrations marking 4 April, the Day of Peace and National Reconciliation, President João Lourenço issued a decree granting pardons to a total of 310 individuals from various prisons, including at least five women. This measure is said to be aimed at giving those convicted an opportunity for social and family reintegration. The aim is to foster a climate of harmony and unity in the country.⁴

Azerbaijan

Bodyguard of the Chairman of the People's Front Party of Azerbaijan (PFPA) sentenced to prison

According to media reports, on 3 April 2026 the PFPA's bodyguard was sentenced by the Court for Serious Crimes in Baku under Article 178(3.2) of the Criminal Code (Criminal Code) "fraud causing substantial damage" and Article 320(1) of the Criminal Code "forgery or use of a forged document". Prior to the trial, he was reportedly offered release if he testified against PFPA Chairman Ali Karimli. The PFPA claims that the conviction was politically motivated.

According to reports, the PFPA chairman Ali Karimli and 19 other PFPA members are currently serving long-term prison sentences, including several individuals who have publicly acted as Karimli's drivers or bodyguards.⁵

Belarus

Situation at the Belarusian border

The authorities of neighbouring EU states have observed an increase in the number of attempted illegal border crossings in March and April 2026. This is according to media reports. After the authorities in Poland, Latvia and Lithuania had each reported a sharp decline in illegal border crossings from Belarus in January

and February 2026 (see BN of 16.02.26), the figures rose steadily again as more favourable weather conditions set in during March 2026. In March 2026, the three countries prevented a total of 538 attempts to cross the EU's external border – four times as many as in January and February 2026. Compared with the previous year, however, the figures have fallen sharply. According to the reports, it is also apparent that the focus of illegal migration activity at the Belarusian border has shifted from Poland to the two Baltic states. In March 2025, Polish border officials recorded 2,729 border violations, whereas in March 2026 there were only 94. Latvia and Lithuania, however, recorded an increase compared to March 2025, with 295 and 149 incidents respectively (Latvia: 118, Lithuania: 104).⁶

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Security in eastern Congo: rise in attacks by the ADF

The security situation in Ituri has deteriorated further due to an increase in attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The attacks have recently been concentrated primarily in the Mambasa territory. According to media reports, the Islamist militia attacked the village of Bafwakoa on the night of 2 April 2026, burning down houses and killing at least 43 people. Several people are also reported missing or believed to have been taken hostage.

In the days leading up to the massacre, various media reports had already mentioned ADF attacks in the Mambasa area. On the night of 18 March 2026, ten people were reportedly killed during an attack on the village of Babesua. Over the weekend of 28 and 29 March 2026, more than 300 civilians were reportedly abducted on the Mambasa-Komanda road in the Irumu area. In the villages of Makoko and Muchanga, two people were killed and others abducted during attacks on 30 March 2026.

On the night of 6 April 2026, the ADF also abducted several people during an attack on the capital of the same name, Mambasa; they were presumably needed to transport goods that had been looted earlier. The ADF's attack on the capital was the sixth within eight days.

Whilst the ADF's activities were concentrated in the Beni area until 2019, its attacks spread to Ituri province in the following years. On 19 March 2023, the militia attacked the Lubero area in North Kivu for the first time, where a new main front opened up in 2024 and 2025. Recently, the attacks are said to be increasingly driven by economic motives and to be directed more frequently against mining sites and convoys. The Congolese army (FARDC) is reportedly struggling to contain the ADF's attacks, as the militia avoids direct combat, attacks mainly at night and operates in small, mobile units. Furthermore, since 2024, the FARDC has been concentrating its resources primarily on combating the M23 militia, which is why its capacity to strike back at the ADF is insufficient.⁷

Security situation in southern Congo: New armed group

A new armed group has been operating in the province of Katanga in southern Congo since March 2026. According to a media report, the group, which calls itself "Debout Katanga pour la libération du Congo", has been sighted in the area around Mitwaba in Haut-Katanga. This area is known for the presence of the Bakata-Katanga militia, a secessionist group active in the region. The new group is, however, better organised and armed than the Bakata-Katanga.

The armed group first came to light during the attack on Upemba National Park on 3 March 2026. Around 100 fighters are said to have been involved in the attack, in which, according to media reports, at least seven park rangers were killed. The government in Kinshasa is taking the threat posed by the new group seriously and is mobilising the military in the region.⁸

Gambia

Demonstration against police abuse of power and subsequent release

According to official reports in the Gambian media, on 1 April 2026 several hundred Gambians gathered in the village of Brufut to demand the release of siblings Ousainou and Amie Bojang. During the protest, violence reportedly broke out between the police and the demonstrators, leaving several people injured. The

police reportedly used tear gas, causing panic among the demonstrators and bystanders in the immediate vicinity. In 2023, the pair were accused of murdering two police officers, but were acquitted by the court on 30 March 2026 due to a lack of witnesses and evidence. However, following their release, they were immediately re-arrested on the orders of the Inspector General of Police. The Attorney General described the release and subsequent re-arrest as unlawful.

Madi Jobarteh, a well-known Gambian human rights defender, described the police as “a pawn in the game of corruption, abuse and self-serving interests”. Following the demonstration, Ousainou and Amie Bojang were finally released again.⁹

Guinea-Bissau

Activist found dead, violence against demonstrators

In early April 2026, hundreds of people protested in the capital, Bissau, demanding justice following the murder of activist Vigário Luis Balantas. The police used tear gas and batons against the demonstrators. According to national press reports, the protests were triggered by the violent death of the well-known civil society activist and critic of the military junta at the end of March 2026, after he had been abducted two days earlier. For the demonstrators, the death was not an accident but politically motivated. Balanta had condemned the country’s ban on demonstrations and demanded the publication of the results of the presidential and parliamentary elections held in November 2025 (see BN of 1 and 8 December 2025). According to media reports, the military-led transitional government condemned Balanta’s violent death in a statement. The authorities described the crime as barbaric and called for an immediate investigation into the circumstances. Observers, however, view the military junta’s statements with scepticism.¹⁰

Iraq

KR-I: Overview of drone and missile attacks between the start of the war and the ceasefire

According to media reports, facilities in the KR-I were targeted by drone and missile strikes between 650 and over 700 times during the period of the war between the US and Iran, up until the two-week ceasefire announced on 8 April 2026. According to one source, there were 652 attacks, in which 16 people were killed and around 100 injured. Another source lists a total of 703 attacks in its statistics, with 17 killed and 92 injured. The Erbil Governorate accounted for around 80% of all attacks, followed by over 100 in Sulaimaniyya, around 25 in Dohuk and isolated attacks in Halabja. According to both sources, nearly 50% of all attacks were carried out by forces affiliated with Iran within Iraq. Detailed statistics for attacks, fatalities and injuries outside the KR-I are not available.

Citing a statement by the leadership of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) dated 10 April 2026, media reports indicate that 80 members of various PMF brigades were killed and more than 270 members were injured. According to this, PMF positions in the governorates of al-Anbar, Nineveh and Babil were the main targets of suspected Israeli and US retaliatory strikes. Previously, numerous Iraqi groups, some of which are also PMF brigades, had joined the Iran-aligned Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) and participated in the hostilities by carrying out drone and missile attacks against US facilities within Iraq, as well as in several Gulf states and Jordan.¹¹

Nizar Amedi elected as new Iraqi President

On 11 April 2026, Nizar Amedi, the candidate of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), was elected as the new Iraqi President by Parliament in the second round of voting. Following the parliamentary elections in early November 2025 and the appointment of a Speaker of Parliament in late December 2025, the process of electing the President had stalled due to disagreements between the PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) over a joint Kurdish candidate for the office. The KDP parliamentary group and other groups did not attend the parliamentary session to elect Amedi.

Under the informal system of power-sharing between the religious and ethnic groups in Iraq, the presidency is allocated to a Kurdish candidate, the office of Speaker of Parliament to a member of the Sunni parties, and

the office of Prime Minister is filled from the ranks of the Shia parties. Under the Iraqi constitution, the newly elected President must, within 15 days of being sworn in, task the designated Prime Minister of the largest parliamentary group with forming a government. The most likely candidate is former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. US President Trump had already publicly stated that he would withdraw all support from Iraq should al-Maliki indeed become Prime Minister of Iraq again in the near future.¹²

Opening of Iraqi airspace to civil aviation

Immediately following the announcement of the temporary ceasefire between the US and Iran, the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority announced on 8 April 2026 the reopening of Iraqi airspace to civil aviation. This had been closed for a total of 40 days since 28 February 2026, with the relevant directive being repeatedly extended. According to Kurdish media reports, the 40-day closure of Iraqi airspace represents a loss of around USD 400 million for the airports of Erbil and Sulaimaniyya in the KR-I region alone. According to the Ministry of Transport, the loss resulting solely from the loss of fees for flying through Iraqi airspace amounts to a cumulative total of 14.4 million USD.¹³

Kidnapped US journalist released

According to media reports, the American journalist Shelly Kittleson, who was abducted on 31 March 2026, has been free since 8 April 2026. The US State Department confirmed these reports. According to Iraqi authorities, Kittleson was abducted in broad daylight on the streets of Baghdad by members of the Kata'ib Hezbollah militia, which is believed to have close ties to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The militia stated that the aim of the abduction was to secure the release of imprisoned members of the organisation. In a statement following her release, the militia said it had released Kittleson in recognition of Prime Minister al-Sudani's patriotic stance and his efforts to negotiate. Back in 2023, the group had already abducted the Russian-Israeli PhD student Elizabeth Tsurkov, held her hostage for more than two years and allegedly tortured her. The US designated Kata'ib Hezbollah as a foreign terrorist organisation as early as 2009.¹⁴

Iran

Agreement on a two-week ceasefire; direct talks between Iran and the US yield no results

According to media reports dated 7 and 8 April 2026, the US, Iran and Israel agreed on 7 April 2026 to an immediate ceasefire, brokered by the Pakistani government, for a period of two weeks. According to a report by a US-based think tank dated 9 April 2026, there have been no further exchanges of fire between the parties to the conflict since 8 April 2026. Israel continued its air strikes on targets in Lebanon, even though a Pakistani statement on the ceasefire dated 7 April 2026 stipulated that this also included Israeli attacks on Hezbollah in Lebanon. According to media reports dated 13 April 2026, direct negotiations between Iran and the US took place in Islamabad on 11 April 2026, but these failed to produce a result. The US administration subsequently announced a partial blockade of shipping traffic in the Strait of Hormuz from 13 April 2026. This would apply to all ships calling at or departing from Iranian ports. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) had stated that it would regard the approach of US military vessels in the strait as a breach of the current ceasefire. Meanwhile, according to a US press report dated 12 April 2026, the US is considering resuming limited military strikes in Iran.

According to media reports of 10 April 2026, citing the Iranian Organisation for Forensic Medicine, a total of at least 3,000 people were killed in US-Israeli air strikes in Iran between 28 February 2026 and 8 April 2026. The figure given was not further specified in terms of the ratio of civilian to military casualties. According to a report by a US-based Iranian human rights organisation dated 7 April 2026, at least 1,701 civilians, including 254 minors and children, as well as 1,221 military personnel, have been killed since the start of the war. These figures cannot be independently verified. Due to the ongoing nationwide internet blackout, information from within the country remains available only to a limited extent.¹⁵

Execution of death sentences, arrests and economic uncertainty

According to media reports of 5 and 6 April 2026, four death sentences were carried out in connection with the wave of protests in January 2026. Citing information from the Iranian judiciary, it was reported that the

convicted men had attacked a site classified as military secret. They were also said to have attempted to gain access to an arms depot located there in order to steal weapons and ammunition. The death sentences against three of the men were confirmed by the Supreme Court. A fifth defendant in this case could also face the death penalty. A total of eleven death sentences in connection with the January protests have been carried out so far.

According to media reports on 7 April 2026, the head of the Iranian judiciary, Mohseni Ejei, had called on the country's courts on state television to hand down death sentences in expedited proceedings and to seize assets.

According to media reports dated 7 and 11 April 2026, security forces also arrested at least 102 people in several provinces, including Khuzestan, Mazandaran, Gilan, Lorestan and Hormozgan. The arrests were reportedly linked to the war between Iran, the US and Israel that has been ongoing since 28 February 2026. Citing statements by the Iranian police chief Radan, it was reported that the arrests were made, among other reasons, because the accused had disclosed the locations of military and security-related infrastructure to the hostile states involved in the war and to foreign media. During the arrests, a large quantity of specialist equipment and electronic devices, such as those used to receive Starlink satellites, as well as weapons and ammunition, were seized.

According to a report by a US-based news portal dated 11 April 2026, the existing economic crisis is becoming increasingly apparent alongside the tightened security measures, evidenced by rising prices, dwindling savings and job insecurity due to slumping turnover in companies. The digital economy is said to be particularly affected, ranging from small online businesses and freelancers to technology start-ups.¹⁶

Children's rights: campaign to recruit minors

According to an HRW report dated 30 March 2026, the IRGC launched a campaign to recruit minors on 26 March 2026 in the context of hostilities with the US and Israel. Under this campaign, civilians aged 12 and over are to be recruited as volunteers to serve as 'fighters in defence of the fatherland for Iran'. The campaign aims to recruit boys and girls for tasks such as kitchen duties, medical care, the distribution of relief supplies and the repair of damaged buildings, as well as for security duties such as manning checkpoints and conducting patrols.

According to HRW, the recruitment and use of children for military purposes constitutes a serious violation of children's rights and a war crime if the children are under 15 years of age.¹⁷

Lebanon

Fighting and humanitarian crisis

Hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah continue. The ground offensive by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) is currently concentrated around the Shiite-dominated town of Bint Jbeil in southern Lebanon, which is surrounded on several sides. Daily reports of fighting between Hezbollah fighters and the IDF are emerging. During these clashes, the local hospital was also damaged; according to Israeli sources, it is being used for military purposes by Hezbollah fighters. Daily air strikes against Hezbollah and other targets, particularly those associated with its allies such as the Amal Movement or the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, are met daily by a constant low to mid-double-digit number of rocket attacks on Israeli territory, predominantly involving unguided rockets.

The largest single wave of attacks last week took place on 8 April 2026, a day now referred to in Lebanon as 'Black Wednesday' due to its impact. Within approximately ten minutes, there were over 100 air strikes against targets, primarily in Beirut. Over 350 people were killed. According to Israeli sources, more than 180 Hezbollah fighters were killed in the attacks.

As of 9 April 2026, 1.059 million people had registered as internally displaced persons, according to official figures. Of these, around 140,000 are living in public emergency shelters. According to WFP figures, prices for several staple foods such as vegetables and bread have risen by around 20% since the start of the war. Even before the war, around 900,000 people in Lebanon were affected by food insecurity.

On 12 April 2026, the Ministry of Health published updated figures on the war's casualties to date. According to these figures, 2,055 people have been confirmed dead on the Lebanese side so far, including 165 people

under the age of 16 and 252 women. No distinction is made between civilians and combatants. On 10 April 2026, the Israeli military stated that it had killed 1,400 Hezbollah fighters to date.¹⁸

Libya

UN: 63 people killed by landmines in 2025

According to a statement published on 4 April 2026 by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to mark International Mine Awareness Day, a total of 63 people, including 21 children, were killed in landmine accidents in 2025. Contamination from explosive ordnance resulting from armed conflict, as well as the improper storage of ammunition, continued to pose a threat to the Libyan civilian population nationwide. In this context, UNSMIL highlighted the impact of the large-scale fighting in Tripoli in May 2025, as well as the four accidental explosions at ammunition depots over the past two years.

At the same time, in 2025, 92,295 items of unexploded ordnance were cleared in collaboration with NGOs, and more than 24,400 people were made aware of the risks they pose.¹⁹

Nigeria

Plateau State: Deadly retaliatory attacks

At least 33 people were killed in attacks by armed assailants on a bar in the northern district of Anguwan Rukuba in the town of Jos, in the northern state of Plateau, and in subsequent retaliatory attacks by a mob on 29 March 2026. According to media reports, the authorities had launched an investigation and imposed a two-day curfew in the district until 1 April 2026.²⁰

North-west: Deadly attacks by suspected Islamists

On 7 April 2026, armed men attacked the villages of Bagna and Erena in the Shiroro Local Government Area in the north-western Nigerian state of Niger, killing at least 20 people and abducting an unknown number of others. According to media reports, the violent assailants overpowered local security forces and also destroyed several houses in the village. Several people are reported to have fled to surrounding villages. In the north-west of the country, a total of over 60 people have been killed in at least ten villages in the states of Kebbi and Niger since 5 April 2026. According to statements from residents and police forces, the Islamist group Mahmuda is responsible for the attacks. Mahmuda, also known as the Mallam group, is a suspected splinter group of Boko Haram and is allied with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (). According to other reports, the attackers are so-called bandits.²¹

Mass convictions for links to Islamists

On 10 April 2026, following a four-day mass trial, several judges at a court in the capital, Abuja, sentenced nearly 400 people for links to the Islamist groups Boko Haram or Islamic State West Africa Province. According to media reports, those convicted received sentences ranging from five years to life imprisonment. Furthermore, rehabilitation and deradicalisation programmes were ordered for the convicted. They were alleged to have participated in armed attacks or to have supported the Islamist groups through financing, arms supplies or logistical support.²²

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

Gaza: Ongoing attacks and humanitarian consequences

In the Gaza Strip, fighting and attacks by the Israeli army continue to result in deaths and injuries on the Palestinian side on an almost daily basis. On 8 April 2026, according to media reports, an Al-Jazeera reporter from Gaza City was killed when an Israeli drone struck his car. The Israeli military stated that the reporter, as a senior member of Hamas, had been responsible for the production and distribution of weapons and had posed a concrete threat to Israeli troops. According to UN OCHA, the ongoing air strikes are also causing

damage to civilian infrastructure. Most recently, damage to a power line for seawater desalination in the south led to a drastic reduction in the drinking water supply for an estimated 500,000 people.²³

West Bank: Incident involving the ‘Netzah Yahuda’ reserve battalion

On 30 March 2026, the Israeli army command suspended a reserve battalion deployed in the West Bank following an incident involving a US reporting team. Members of the reserve battalion, consisting of ultra-Orthodox Jews, are said to have physically assaulted the reporting team and detained them for approximately two hours. According to the army command, the soldier primarily responsible has been dismissed and the entire battalion has been temporarily suspended from duty.

The “Netzah Yehuda” reserve battalion, deployed mainly in the West Bank, was originally established to integrate ultra-Orthodox Jews into the Israeli armed forces whilst observing religious precepts, but in recent years has increasingly attracted far-right settlers. In 2024, the US government under Joe Biden considered imposing sanctions on the battalion due to serious allegations of systematic human rights violations against Palestinians – including killings, abuse and other grave assaults. However, following the announcement of corrective measures by the Israeli military leadership, the US government decided against implementing them.²⁴

Israel: Ceasefire with Iran in force, war with Hezbollah continues

When a two-week ceasefire with Iran came into force on 8 April 2026, the full extent of the 40-day Israeli-US offensive against Iran became apparent in Israel. According to Israeli media, since the start of the war, 20 people have been killed in Israel and four Palestinian women in the West Bank by Iranian missiles. Over 7,000 people were injured. A total of around 650 ballistic missiles are said to have been fired at Israel.

According to the Israeli military, more than half of the missiles were equipped with cluster bombs.

The war between Israel and Hezbollah, however, continues. This involves regular shelling of northern Israel, which repeatedly results in civilian casualties and paralyses public life.

Meanwhile, according to media reports, the Israeli authorities have lifted access restrictions to the holy sites in Jerusalem’s Old City. Believers of all three monotheistic religions have been able to visit their central shrines again. During the war with Iran, controversial access restrictions to the holy sites were imposed in the Old City.²⁵

Knesset votes to reinstate the death penalty

In Israel, the Knesset decided on 30 March 2026 to reintroduce the death penalty, which had previously been suspended. According to media reports, the law stems from an initiative by Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. It provides that military courts shall, as a rule, impose the death penalty for intentional killing (murder) with a “terrorist motive”, from which exceptions may be made only in exceptional cases; in practice, this affects almost exclusively Palestinian defendants.

Civil courts may also impose the death penalty on Israeli citizens – both Jewish and Palestinian-Arab. The prerequisite is that the act is aimed at “negating the existence of the State of Israel”. Experts, however, consider it extremely unlikely that this penalty will be imposed on Jewish Israelis who attack Palestinians. According to reports, a dual legal system exists in the occupied West Bank. Which laws apply depends on nationality. Palestinians are subject to military jurisdiction. Israeli citizens (e.g. settlers), on the other hand, are tried under civil and criminal law in civilian courts in Israel.

This already leads to systematic unequal treatment for the same offences committed in the same place. The Israeli civil justice system, for instance, offers fundamental guarantees under the rule of law. Military courts, on the other hand, frequently rely on secret evidence that defendants cannot access or challenge. The conviction rate stands at around 99 per cent. Furthermore, confessions are reportedly often extracted under torture.

The law reintroducing the death penalty could still be overturned by the Israeli Supreme Court.²⁶

Russian Federation

“International Public Movement Memorial” classified as an extremist organisation

According to media reports, on 9 April 2026 the Supreme Court classified the “International Public Movement Memorial” as an extremist organisation and banned its activities in Russia. As no organisation by this name exists, civil society organisations warned that the classification would amount to “an extension of repression to everything associated with Memorial”. The vaguely defined term ‘public movement’ allows the authorities to prosecute any sub-organisations of the ‘Memorial’ Centre for the Protection of Human Rights, as well as associated projects, their participants and supporters.

As a result of the classification, staff of ‘Memorial’ and its sub-organisations face a prison sentence of up to ten years for organising the activities of an extremist organisation under Article 282.2(1) of the Criminal Code. Individuals participating in the activities of the ‘movement’ face a prison sentence of up to six years under Article 282.2(2) of the Criminal Code. The verdict is not yet final, and the organisation has one month to lodge an appeal. The reason for the classification is unknown, as the proceedings were reportedly classified as top secret and heard in camera. Memorial’s lawyer is said to have been denied access to the courtroom. Memorial subsequently announced that it would cease all activities in Russia and, to protect its supporters, would no longer accept donations from Russian bank accounts. Furthermore, Memorial points out that donations from other CIS states could also be potentially dangerous, as some countries share banking data with Russia.

As a result of its classification as an extremist organisation, individuals or organisations that donate money to ‘Memorial’ or an affiliated organisation, publish its publications or share its posts on social media, subscribe to its newsletters or social media channels, share its images (e.g.) logos on social networks or use them as profile pictures, or enter into economic relations with the organisation, such as financial or telecommunications services, be charged under anti-extremism laws (see BN of 04.08.25). The Russian authorities have long used the charge of “extremism” to crack down on undesirable civil, political, cultural and social initiatives. For example, on 30 November 2023, an organisation described as an “international public LGBT movement” – which was not defined in more detail by and does not exist in Russia – was declared extremist and its activities banned nationwide (see BN of 9 March 2026, 5 February 2024 and 4 December 2023).²⁷

Somalia

Security situation

According to media and government reports, state security forces, supported by international and local allies, continue to crack down on radical Islamist groups in Somalia (see BN of 23 March and 30 March 2026). For example, on 29 March 2026, an operation in Bay in the South West State was concluded, during which more than 20 al-Shabaab members were killed and ten injured. Around 30 March 2026, the Somali military raided several al-Shabaab hideouts in various areas of the same state, including Awdheegle and Jowhar. Around 3 April 2026, the Somali military killed several al-Shabaab members and destroyed the group’s equipment in the Hiraan region of the Hirshabelle State. Between 6 and 7 April 2026, the US AFRICOM carried out several air strikes against IS in northern Puntland.

In the Galmudug state, fighting broke out on 23 March 2026 between several clans and their militias. At least one civilian was injured and more than 1,500 fled the danger. Disputes over land and access to grazing land are believed to have triggered the fighting.²⁸

Domestic political tensions

According to media and government reports, the Somali Federal Government dismissed the regional government of South West State on 22 March 2026 and established a transitional government for the state with effect from 1 April 2026 (see BN of 23 March 2026). This was preceded by conflicts mainly concerning the federal government’s constitutional amendments, which were allegedly not approved and were therefore unlawful. The consequences included fighting between the security forces of the two governments in the state, particularly near its capital, Baidoa. At least two people were killed and approximately 25 injured.

This also led to the displacement of at least 45,000 people and the resignation of the former regional government under Abdiaziz Laftagreen on 30 March 2026. From 1 April 2026, the second Deputy Prime Minister of the federal government, Jibril Abdirashid, has been the interim head of the South West States administration.²⁹

Syria

Borders: Reopening of the al-Waleed/al-Tanf border crossing; Jdeidat-Yabous border crossing; Damascus Airport

According to media reports, the al-Waleed/al-Tanf border crossing (Anbar and Homs governorates) on the Syrian-Iraqi border was reopened on 31 March 2026 for commercial traffic, particularly in the energy sector, after the transitional government regained control of the facility the previous month. The crossing had remained closed since IS gained control of it in 2015. In al-Tanf, the US military established a military base, which it used in the fight against IS and vacated in February 2026 as part of a wider troop withdrawal from Syria (see BN of 16 February 2026). The al-Bukamal border crossing was reopened to commercial and passenger traffic as early as June 2025. According to reports, the reopening of the Rabia/al-Yaroubiyah border crossing (Nineveh and Hasaka governorates) is under consideration and is planned for the near future. Efforts are also being made to have the authorities of the transitional government take control of the Semalka/Faysh Khabour crossing (Dohuk and Hasaka governorates), which has been used in recent years. After the Jdeidat-Yabous border crossing to Lebanon remained closed for several days due to threats by the Israeli military that were ultimately not carried out, it was reopened on 9 April 2026 and, according to the relevant authority, is set to allow passenger traffic around the clock once again. Furthermore, following the announcement of a two-week ceasefire between the US, Israel and Iran, the Syrian Civil Aviation Authority announced the opening of Syrian airspace and the resumption of regular air traffic at Damascus International Airport. The first flight to Istanbul took place during the night.³⁰

Quneitra: Syrian killed by Israeli military fire

According to media reports, on 3 April 2026, a Syrian minor was killed by a tank shell that struck his vehicle whilst, according to the Quneitra Media Directorate, he was going to check on his livestock near the village of al-Rafeed. The incident occurred near the informal border, which is marked by barbed wire demarcating the crossing into territory occupied by the Israeli military. There continue to be (in some cases temporary) arrests and roadblocks as part of Israeli military operations and raids on Syrian territory (see BN of 30 March 2026). These most recently took place, among other places, along the road to Beit Jinn (Rif Dimashq Governorate) and in the villages of Kudna, Tal al-Ahmar al-Sharqi, al-Ajraf and Jubata al-Khashab.³¹

WFP: 80% of the Syrian population affected by food insecurity

In an update of data for January 2026, the WFP reported that 80% of Syrians in the country still do not have secure access to sufficient daily meals. According to the report, only 18% of Syrian households were classified as 'food secure' in 2025. Although this represents an improvement on the 11% figure for 2024, food insecurity remains widespread. According to the WFP, those particularly affected include residents of displacement camps, internally displaced persons, returnees, people with disabilities and female-headed households. Furthermore, insecurity is particularly high in areas severely affected by the drought of recent years, such as Hasaka, Raqqa and Suweida, due to crop failures and fewer job opportunities. The figures do not yet include the potential impact of the outbreak of war in the region.³²

Abductions of Alawite women and girls

An international daily newspaper reported again in a detailed article on 3 April 2026 on the abductions of Alawite women and girls since the fall of the Assad government. In most cases, ransom was extorted from the families, but the victims were not always released after payment. According to the report, in many cases the victims were subjected to abuse and sexual violence.

In addition to Syrian activists, Amnesty International reported in July 2025 that credible reports of 36 such cases were available and that it had documented eight cases itself. The UN Commission on Syria had recorded six abductions in August 2025 and was investigating dozens of further cases for which credible

reports were available. A Syrian women's rights organisation has documented the disappearance of a total of 80 Alawite women since the beginning of 2025. Abductions were confirmed in 26 cases. Of these, ten victims have returned to their families, three remain missing, and in 13 cases the status of those abducted is unclear. The transitional government has previously rejected such reports, stating that, following a review of a total of 42 cases, it was only able to verify one instance of such an abduction. In the remaining cases, the report states that the women were involved in prostitution or other crimes, had run away with lovers, or had fled domestic violence. To avoid social stigma, the families subsequently claimed that the women had been abducted.³³

Maneen: Issuance of regulations on public morality

According to media reports dated 9 April 2026, the municipality of Maneen (Damascus Governorate) issued a decree purporting to ensure the preservation of decency and honour and to be in accordance with the teachings of Islamic law and the principles of public morality laid down in the applicable laws.

The regulations include, amongst other things, a ban on the sale and public consumption of alcoholic beverages, a ban on the licensing of nightclubs within the administrative boundaries of Maneen, and the requirement for men and women to dress modestly. Furthermore, the regulations include a ban on gatherings of men in front of other people's homes or in narrow streets, so as not to obstruct the freedom of movement of women and girls, as well as a ban on photographing people or private property without express permission.³⁴

Suweida: Unrest following the appointment of the Director of Education; dissolution of the Supreme Legal Committee

According to media reports, the Syrian Ministry of Education appointed a successor to the outgoing Director of Education on 1 April 2026. A few days later, an armed group reportedly stormed the Directorate of Education to prevent staff from carrying out their duties. The new Director of Education subsequently announced his resignation. A local media outlet reported that the armed group consisted of members of the militia alliance known as the National Guard, which exercises security control over most of the Suweida govern ment. The following day, numerous staff members of the directorate, including teachers, went on strike as a sign of protest against the chaotic conditions and the use of weapons in an educational institution. On 5 April 2026, numerous protesters gathered at al-Karama Square in Suweida city and demanded the resignation of the Supreme Judicial Committee due to deteriorating economic and living conditions. According to reports, residents of Suweida face major challenges in covering their living costs and are often dependent on humanitarian aid and funds from friends and family abroad.³⁵

Tajikistan

Mother of a protester extradited from Russia to Tajikistan

According to media reports, the mother of a Pamiri protester, Amchigul Amirshoeva, was arrested in Moscow on 6 April 2026 and extradited to Tajikistan that same night. Both Russian and Tajik police officers were reportedly involved in Amirshoeva's arrest. Her son, Tutisho Amirshoev, was reportedly killed by Tajik security forces during protests in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) in Khorog on 25 November 2021. The protests, which lasted from late 2021 to mid-2022, led to the arrest and killing of dozens of residents of the GBAO (see BN, 17 November 2025).

Amirshoeva is said to have been placed on Tajik, Russian and international wanted lists for posting videos and photos of her son on social media, as well as for comments in which she criticised the actions of the Tajik law enforcement agencies and the authorities in GBAO. According to relatives, Amirshoeva has reportedly been repeatedly pressured and threatened not to publish any further posts about her son on social media. In Tajikistan, it is prohibited to publish photos on social media of people killed during the suppression of protests in GBAO in 2021 and 2022, to publish information about them, to commemorate their birthdays or to hold memorial events in their honour.

According to statements by the Tajik Minister of the Interior on 22 September 2025, more than 2,600 wanted Tajik nationals were reportedly arrested abroad in 2025, 835 of whom were extradited to their home country.

Most of the extraditions are said to have taken place from CIS states, particularly the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. According to the Russian Minister of the Interior, there were 260 arrests in Russia in 2024 of individuals wanted in Tajikistan. In the first eight months of 2025, the number of arrests rose to around 400. Whilst a total of 3,493 individuals were listed as wanted by Tajikistan in September 2024, the number of wanted persons rose to 6,700 in February 2026. 3,500 of these individuals were subject to an Interpol 'Red Notice' for international arrest. According to reports, Tajikistan abuses international arrest warrants to persecute political opponents in exile worldwide. According to Freedom House, Tajikistan was among the three most active states globally in terms of transnational repression between 2014 and 2024. Examples of such repression include assassinations, illegal deportations, abductions, digital threats, the misuse of Interpol, and the intimidation of family members.³⁶

Türkiye

Further arrests in CHP-run local authorities

The Mayor of Bursa, Mustafa Bozbey (CHP), was arrested on 31 March 2026 on charges of founding a criminal organisation, bribery, money laundering and environmental pollution, and was removed from office on 4 April 2026. Following protests by CHP members, which led to clashes with the police outside and inside the city council building, a deputy from the ranks of the AKP, Şahin Biba, was elected on 9 April 2026 by a narrow majority. Observers expect that, in the coming weeks and months, a number of other local councils with currently narrow majorities could pass to the AKP as a result of arrests and defections.

On 9 April 2026, the CHP chairman of the Ankara provincial association, Ümit Erkol, was arrested on the orders of the Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. This took place in the course of a preliminary investigation in which the former mayor of Izmir is already in pre-trial detention.

On 9 April 2026, the incumbent mayor of the Bornova district of Izmir, Ömer Eşki, was arrested on charges of making unlawful salary payments for work not performed and was released from custody on 10 April 2026, subject to judicial supervision.

On 10 April 2026, the deputy mayor – who had been acting as mayor of the CHP-run city of Bolu since Tanju Özcan's arrest on 2 March 2026 – and two other individuals were arrested, as were 31 staff members of the CHP-led Mersin city council.³⁷

Proceedings opened against LGBTIQ activists

On 8 April 2026, the first day of the trial against the eleven board members of the Genc-LGBT+ association in Izmir took place. The defendants are accused of disseminating obscene imagery that is said to be contrary to Türkiye's family values. The charges are based on posts made by the association on social media between 2019 and 2021. Among those accused is the former chair of Amnesty International Türkiye, Kerem Dikmen.³⁸

Arrests following an attack near the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul

On 8 April 2026, an attempted attack took place near the Israeli consulate in Istanbul. During a firefight with Turkish police forces stationed there, two police officers were injured and one of the three attackers was killed. According to media reports, the attackers were carrying explosives in a travel bag. Various media outlets also report that one of the perpetrators had previously been under investigation for supporting IS. Official sources merely suggested that the perpetrators had a radical background.

According to Justice Minister Gürlek, a total of 16 suspects directly linked to the attack and 198 suspects with links to IS were arrested in the wake of the attack. Furthermore, investigations were launched against several individuals who had filmed parts of the police operation from business premises and could be heard in the video shared on social media mocking the police officers on the scene.³⁹

Arrest of a comedian

Comedian Tuba Ulu was arrested on 9 April 2026 for insulting historical, national and moral values. After she made a joke about Sultan Suleiman during a performance, a video of which was widely shared on social media, the Istanbul Public Prosecutor's Office opened a preliminary investigation against her. Several

organisations defending freedom of expression expressed solidarity with Ulu. She was released from custody on 11 April 2026, subject to judicial supervision.⁴⁰

Tunisia

Journalist sentenced to two years' imprisonment

According to media reports, the journalist and editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper 'Inhiyez', Ghassen Ben Khelifa, stated in a statement published on 30 March 2026 that he had been sentenced by a court to two years' imprisonment for 'using networks and information systems to create and disseminate false information that endangers public security', with reference to the controversial Decree-Law 54 on cybercrime (see BN of 14 July 2025). He stated that he had subsequently left the country and did not envisage returning any time soon. However, he intended to continue his journalistic work and activism from abroad. Ben Khelifa therefore rejected the charges brought against him, including alleged membership of a terrorist organisation and incitement to terrorism, and described the case – which dates back three years and relates to the alleged management of a Facebook account – as “purely fabricated”. He also mentioned an initial six-month prison sentence handed down in another trial in 2024 relating to the same case, bringing his total sentence to two and a half years.⁴¹

President of the Tunisian Judges' Association sentenced to one year in prison

Anas Hmaidi, the president of the Tunisian Magistrates' Association (AMT), was reportedly sentenced by a Tunisian court on 6 April 2026 to one year's imprisonment on charges of “obstructing the freedom to work”. The charges against Hmaidi stem from a judges' strike organised by the AMT in 2022, which took place in response to the enactment of Decree-Law No. 35-2022 and the related dismissal of 57 judges and prosecutors. The decree authorised President Saied to dismiss judges without prior investigation. Since the 2022 Constitution came into force, judges, who are treated as members of the internal security forces, have been prohibited from striking (Art. 41.2). Furthermore, further proceedings are still ongoing against Hmaidi: at the end of 2025, reports indicated that at least three complaints had been filed against him, all based on public statements made in his capacity as Chair of the AMT.

The AMT responded to the verdict with a statement on 7 April 2026, denouncing an “unjust” decision and “blatant harassment” in connection with his trade union activities.⁴²

Trial of former head of the anti-corruption authority

Chawki Tabib, former president of the National Anti-Corruption Authority (INLUCC) and former president of the Bar Association, was, according to media reports, summoned to a hearing before the Criminal Court of Tunis on 6 April 2026. He is reportedly charged in a case dating back several years (2020) involving alleged forgery of documents, which is linked to his former role at the head of the agency. The complaint is said to have been filed by a representative of a company linked to former Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh. Tabib had at the time launched an investigation into suspected conflicts of interest and influence-peddling, following which he was removed from his post by Fakhfakh on 20 August 2020, shortly after the latter had tendered his resignation over the affair.

A total of four criminal complaints, all relating to his role as head of the anti-corruption agency, are reportedly pending against Tabib. Human rights organisations and Tabib's defence team have criticised, among other things, the disregard for his legal immunity in respect of his official duties as head of the INLUCC, as well as further procedural irregularities and disproportionately restrictive measures (house arrest, travel ban).⁴³

Prison sentence for MP for insulting the President upheld

On 8 April 2026, the Criminal Division of the Tunis Court of Appeal upheld the first-instance verdict sentencing MP Ahmed Saidani to eight months' imprisonment in February 2026, after he had sharply criticised President Saied in a social media post and mockingly referred to him as the “commander-in-chief

of the sewers and rainwater drainage” in the context of the severe flooding in January 2026 (see BN of 9 February and 23 February 2026).⁴⁴

Ukraine

Civilian casualties

According to media reports, Russian attacks between 29 March and 12 April 2026 claimed several civilian lives in the following Ukrainian regions: 29 March (Kherson: 1), 30 March (Poltava: 1, Dnipropetrovsk: 1), 31 March (Kherson: 2, Sumy: 1), 1 April (Cherkasy: 4), 3 April (Donetsk: 6, Kherson: 3, Kharkiv: 2, Kyiv region: 1, Zhytomyr: 1, Sumy: 1), 4 April (Dnipropetrovsk: 5, Kharkiv: 2, Kherson: 2, Donetsk: 1, Chernihiv: 1), 5 April (Dnipropetrovsk: 1, Donetsk: 1), 6 April (Odessa: 3), 7 April (Dnipropetrovsk: 5, Kherson: 4, Zaporizhzhia: 2, Donetsk: 2, Sumy: 1), 8 April (Kharkiv: 1, Zaporizhzhia: 1), 9 April (Dnipropetrovsk: 2, Kharkiv: 1, Zaporizhzhia: 1), 10 April (Odessa: 2, Poltava: 1, Donetsk: 1), 11 April (Kherson: 3, Sumy: 1). According to media reports dated 5 April 2026, three deaths were reported in the Russian-occupied part of the Luhansk region as a result of Ukrainian attacks.

According to the UN, the number of civilian casualties in Ukraine rose by 49% in March 2026 compared with the previous month and by 70% compared with March 2025, largely due to short-range drones. Furthermore, in 2025, the death toll more than doubled compared to 2024, with 580 deaths and 3,295 injuries.⁴⁵

War developments, Easter ceasefire, prisoner exchange, sabotage

According to data from the Institute for the Study of War, in March 2026 the Russian armed forces made virtually no territorial gains in Ukraine for the first time in two and a half years (January (319 km²), February (123 km²), March (23 km²)). The slowdown, particularly on the southern front, is attributed to Ukrainian counter-offensives, the disruption of Russian use of Starlink terminals, and the Kremlin’s efforts to restrict access to the messaging service Telegram, which is frequently used by Russian frontline troops, among others.

According to media reports on 10 April 2026, both warring parties had agreed to a 32-hour ceasefire to mark Orthodox Easter, beginning at 16:00 on 11 April 2026 and ending at 24:00 on 12 April 2026. According to further reports, both sides reported numerous violations of the agreed ceasefire.

On 11 April 2026, the media reported on a prisoner exchange, during which, among others, seven civilians returned from Russian captivity. According to media reports on 12 April 2026, the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) has identified over 800 Ukrainian nationals, including at least 240 minors, who were recruited by the Russian Federation (RF) over the past two years to carry out acts of sabotage against targets such as critical infrastructure and recruitment centres.⁴⁶

Energy and railway infrastructure

According to media reports, Russian attacks between 30 March and 12 April 2026 caused damage and temporary disruptions in the following Ukrainian regions: 1 April (energy facility in Ivano-Frankivsk, 11,000 households without electricity), 2 April (energy facilities in Kharkiv, Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Cherkasy and Odesa, numerous households without power), 6 April (energy facility in Odesa, hundreds of thousands without power; energy facility in Chernihiv, 340,000 people without power; power cuts in Sumy, Kharkiv and Kherson), 10 April (power stations in Odessa, 11,000 households without power), 12 April (power station in Chernihiv, 12,000 households without power). According to media reports dated 6 April 2026, power cuts occurred in the Russian-occupied areas of the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions following Ukrainian attacks.

According to reports dated 3 April 2026, a total of 129 Russian attacks were carried out on Ukrainian gas and heating infrastructure (pipelines, gas production facilities, underground storage facilities and heating systems) during the winter of 2025/26. According to Energy Minister Shmyhal, 4 gigawatts (GW) of the 9 GW of power generation capacity destroyed last winter have already been restored. Since autumn 2025, 85% of the thermal power stations and 66% of the hydroelectric power stations have been restored, and damaged transformers have been repaired.

According to a statement from the Ukrainian railway company Ukrzaliznytsia, the number of Russian attacks on the Ukrainian railway network rose from 134 in January to 166 in February and 206 in March 2026. Unlike fixed infrastructure, moving trains are more difficult to protect. The regions of Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Sumy were among the high-risk areas.⁴⁷

Occupied territories: Recruitment at universities and military settlement projects

According to media reports dated 6 April 2026, university administrations in the Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine have been obliged to send at least two per cent of students to serve in the Russian armed forces. Through the propaganda campaign already underway and the promise of academic benefits, students are to be persuaded to sign contracts.

In the parts of the occupied territory of the Kherson region near the border, the Russian Federation reportedly plans, according to reports dated 4 April 2026, to distribute land and housing to war veterans in order to build up a Russian reserve. Human rights activists speak of a “hybrid military settlement strategy”.⁴⁸

Venezuela

Minimum wage increase announced

According to media reports, interim President Delcy Rodríguez announced in a televised address on 8 April 2026 an increase in the minimum wage for workers from 1 May 2026. Rodríguez did not specify a figure, but stated that the increase to the minimum wage of 130 bolívares (equivalent to approx. €0.23), which has remained unchanged since 2022, would be “responsible” and would take the effects of inflation into account.⁴⁹

Protests broken up by national police

According to further reports, on 9 April 2026, around 2,000 workers, trade union representatives and students gathered in Caracas to demonstrate for higher wages and pensions. Among other things, they demanded a pay rise that would ensure adequate purchasing power in view of the high cost of living. There were also calls for free elections and the release of political prisoners. The National Police forcibly dispersed the demonstration using tear gas as the participants approached the Miraflores Presidential Palace. Four people arrested during the protest were released on 10 April 2026, but are due to appear in court on 13 April 2026.⁵⁰

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