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Group 22 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

25 September 2017

Egypt

Mass trial ends with long prison sentences

In a mass trial a court sentenced almost 500 defendants to long prison terms on 18 September 2017; 43 of them received life sentences for crimes (murder, illegal possession of arms, storming a mosque) committed after the ousting of former Islamist president Mohamed Mursi (in 2013).

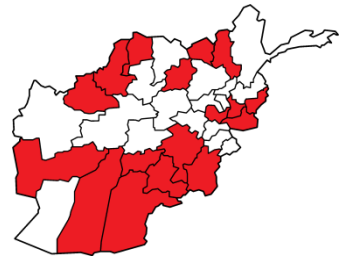
Long prison sentences for football stadium riots

A court sentenced 14 defendants for the riots in Cairo's football stadium in 2015: two received life sentences, 12 others terms between two and ten years. 19 people had lost their lives during those riots.

Afghanistan

Armed confrontations

The fighting, purges, raids, air and drone strikes by the security forces continue as well as the ambushes and attacks of the insurgents which sometimes also kill or injure civilians. Following media reports the following provinces were affected last week: Ghazni, Paktika (southeast), Faryab (north, three military posts and a market were taken by the Taliban in Kohistan district, reports say), Jawzjan (north, fighting between Taliban and IS), Kunduz (northeast), Farah, Badghis (Westen), Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Helmand (south), Nangarhar, Laghman und Kunar (east).



Assaults and attacks

The explosion of a roadside bomb killed six civilians in Daman district in Kandahar province (south).

On 20 September 2017 unknown gunmen shot the head of the secret service for Warsaj district in Takhar province (northeast). In Kunar province (east) IS fighters killed two brothers suspected of espionage for the government. The Taliban stormed the house of an officer of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) killing at least three people in Matta Khan district in Paktika province (southeast).

The head of police of Jaghato district in Ghazni province was killed in a bomb attack on 21 September 2017. In Kabul unknown gunmen attacked the vehicle of the head of the criminal unit in the interior ministry, no-one was injured. In Samangan province (north) the secret service succeeded in preventing a so-called complex Taliban attack (complex attack: targeted attacks involving in some way at least one suicide bomber, in which several attackers use different types of weapons).

Three civilians were injured when a suicide bomber targeted a NATO convoy in Kabul on 24 September 2017.

Taliban prohibit telecommunication at night in Kunduz

In Kunduz (northeast) the Taliban forced telecommunications companies to halt their services during the night.

Iraq

Kurdish referendum for independence

The referendum for the independence of the Kurdish area started in the morning of 25 September 2017. An electorate of over five million shall decide on a separation from Iraq. The Iraqi central government as well as Iran and Turkey are strictly against the referendum.

Offensive against the IS stronghold Hawija

On 21 September 2017 Iraqi security forces launched an offensive against the city of Hawija that is under IS control. The population of Hawija (near Kirkuk) consists mainly of Sunni Arabs.

Executions

According to official statements 42 death sentences for terrorist attacks and physical attacks on members of the security forces were executed on 24 September 2017.

Mali

UN soldiers killed

The UN peace mission MINUSMA in Mali (Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation au Mali) informed that at least three UN blue helmet soldiers were killed and five seriously injured in a bomb attack on a convoy escorted by UN soldiers on the road between the cities of Anéfis and Gao on 24 September 2017. The victims were soldiers from Bangladesh. It is still unclear who was responsible for the attack.

150,000 children prevented from attending school

Amnesty International informed on 22 September 2017 that 150,000 children cannot attend school because of the continued instability. Over 500 schools are closed due to the conflict in the country's north and centre. This also applies to the northeastern region around the city of Gao. Many schools were attacked by armed groups, AI said.

Myanmar

Aung San Suu Kyi condemns violence against Rohingya for the first time

In a TV address on 19 September 2017 Myanmar's de facto head of government, Aung San Suu Kyi, for the first time publicly condemned the violence against the Muslim minority of the Rohingya. She spoke out against the violations of the human rights of the Rohingya in Rakhine state. She did not touch upon the role of the military. She also said that those responsible would be held accountable irrespective of their religion and political standing and that the government was prepared to take back those that had fled to Bangladesh. The conflict in the western Rakhine state had escalated at the end of August when Rohingya rebels attacked soldiers and police, killing dozens of the members of the security forces to which the military responded with more violence. The military and lynching mobs killed hundreds of Rohingya and burnt down their houses. Over 420,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. The UN spoke of a possible ethnic cleansing.

Nigeria

IPOB banned

Upon the application of the attorney general the Federal High Court in Abuja on 20 September 2017 outlawed the organization IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) nationwide and declared its activities to be acts of terror. All individuals and groups are now prohibited from participating IPOB's activities. IPOB wants to file an appeal against this decision. After IPOB has been categorized as a terror organization there is a risk that it will radicalize. IPOB protests the marginalization of the ethnic group of the Igbos living in south-eastern Nigeria and demands to split off this region and to establish it as an independent state of Biafra.

Boko Haram: 16 casualties in a suicide attack

On 18 September 2017 three suicide bombers (two men and one woman), assumed to belong to the Boko Haram terror organization, at first arbitrarily fired at people around them and then exploded their bombs in three different places in Mashimari village (Konduga Local Government Area). 16 people were killed in the attack and at least 46 were wounded.

Saudi Arabia

Women allowed to attend the ceremony for the National Holiday

On 23 September 2017 women were for the first time allowed to attend the ceremony for the national holiday at King Fahd Stadion in Riad with their families. A dedicated area was reserved for these families. The extremely conservative Wahabite kingdom upholds a strict separation of the sexes with restrictions for women, who e.g. are not allowed to drive cars.

Turkey

Extension of the army missions in Syria and Iraq

On 23 September 2017 a large majority of the Turkish parliament authorized the army to continue its missions in the neighbouring countries of Iraq and Syria for another year.

Air strikes against PKK positions

Last week the Turkish air force flew air strikes against PKK positions in northern Iraq and in Van province in eastern Turkey. The media reported that ammunition depots were destroyed and two PKK fighters died.

Tunisia

Refugees rescued from boat

The Tunisian coast guard rescued 78 migrants on 22 September 2017. They said that their boat had been floating in the Mediterranean about 70 kilometres off the Tunisian coastal town of Chebba for three days and had already filled with water.

Uganda

48 protesters against Museveni's extension of term arrested

On 20 and 21 September 2017 police in Kampala arrested 48 people, including 25 students of Makerere University, who had protested against the planned constitutional amendment to abolish the maximum age of 75 for presidential candidates. Following large-scale protests the parliament delayed the vote on the constitutional amendment scheduled for 21 September to 26 September 2017. According to the current constitutional provisions 73-year-old President Yoweri Museveni may not stand again in the next elections in 2021.