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Group 22 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

3 July 2017

Afghanistan

Fighting

Two policemen were killed in an attack on a checkpoint in Zabul province (south) on 29 June 2017. Six policemen and nine Taliban died when Taliban attacked a police station in Sheb Koh district, Farah province in western Afghanistan on 30 June 2017. Also on 30 June 2017 five Taliban lost their lives in a clash with security forces in Poshte Koh district, Farah province. On 02 July 2017 Taliban ambushed and killed 13 members of a local pro-government militia controlled by the Interior Ministry in Balkh province (north). Heavy fighting resulted when the Taliban attacked the city of Kunduz (northeast) on 02 July 2017. The security forces succeeded in driving them back.

Attacks

In Badakhshan province (northeast) unknown gunmen shot two policewomen on their way to work on 29 June 2017.

IS behead Taliban

Local media report that IS fighters beheaded ten captured Taliban in the village of Aqbalaq in Darzab district in Jowzjan province (south-west) on 30 June 2017.

China

Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo seriously ill

On 26 June 2017 it became known that the imprisoned Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo had been conditionally released from prison and transferred to a hospital already in May 2017. He is suffering from terminal liver cancer in a late stage and is not allowed to leave the country. Observers criticize the late diagnosis in May 2017 which indicated lack of medical care for Liu in prison.

Time and again political prisoners have died soon after their release, because they were abused in prison or lacked adequate medical care. Apparently such prisoners are also released early, because the authorities want to avoid that they die in detention.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Ebola outbreak ended

Two weeks after the beginning of an Ebola epidemic in Bas-Uele province (north) the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the outbreak has terminated. Four people died of the disease, another four survived.

Iraq

Mosul

IS has been confined to a few districts within the city's old town. It is estimated that about 200 fighters remain that are still holding tens of thousands of civilians hostage. Only on 02 July 2017 at least 28 civilians, including 13 children, were shot or killed by booby traps. The final fall of Mosul is imminent.

Anbar

A suicide bomber killed at least 14 people in a refugee camp in **Anbar** province on 02 July 2017.

Supply situation

On 02 July 2017 the UN estimated that the food supply for about 3.5 million internal refugees is currently not guaranteed.

War crimes committed by Iraqi soldiers

The Swedish news site Expressen published several videos of an Iraqi soldier named Falah Aziz who is among other things shown holding a bloody knife and severed heads. Allegedly his comrades call him the butcher and he maintains to have killed more than 50 IS members in this way after they were taken prisoner. Since this report coincides with other news there is strong evidence that it is the truth. It seems that particularly Sunni men from the IS areas frequently fall victim to abuse by Iraqi security forces.

Kenya

Casualties during attack

Four policemen and four children died in an attack attributed to al-Shabaab on a vehicle of the Rapid Border Patrol Unit on the road between Mararani and Kiunga (Lamu district, near the Somalian border) on 27 June 2017. After the bomb explosion the attackers fired at the vehicle.

Columbia

FARC's return of weapons complete

The UN informs that the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) officially completed the return of their weapons on 27 June 2017. 6,803 fighters had turned in 7,132 arms. In future the FARC intends to work politically as a party it will establish. This is not the end of the armed conflict. The leftist rebel organisation Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) continues its activities. On 23 June 2017 it announced the release of two Dutch journalists that had been abducted in the border area near Venezuela several days earlier. The organisation has been holding peace talks with the government since February 2017. The areas abandoned by the FARC are now taken by successor organisations of rightist paramilitary groups that were disarmed years ago and by criminal gangs who among other things want to control drug trafficking.

Libya

Renewed tribal fighting broke out in the oasis city of Sabha (south) on 25 June 2017. This time it was a confrontation between the black Tebu minority and members of the Qaddhafa tribe to which also the former potentate Gaddafi had belonged. There were at least one casualty and five wounded. The settlement areas of six major groups come together in Sabha: Tuareg, Tebu, Awlad Suleiman, Awlad Sahil, Magharha, and Qaddhadfa.

Cameroon/Nigeria

UNHCR criticizes return of many Nigerians

On 29 June 2017 the UN Refugee Organisation voiced its concern about the forceful return of more than 887 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon to northeastern Nigeria; more than half of them were children. In the evening of 27 June 2017 they had been taken from the Kolofata area (High Northern region) across the border to the Nigerian border town of Banki which is already struggling to house and care for 45,000 internal refugees. A government spokesman of Cameroon said that the refugees were repatriated with their consent. There have been repeated deportations, although the UNHCR and government representatives of Cameroon

and Nigeria signed an agreement in early March 2017 saying that Nigerian refugees should only return to their home country voluntarily.

Mongolia

Presidential elections: run-off election required

In the presidential elections of 26 June 2017 Khaltmaa Batulgaa of the Democratic Party (DP) received about 38 % of the vote, Miyegombo Enkhbold of the incumbent Mongolian People's Party (MPP) 30.3 %, and Sainkhuu Ganbaatar (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party – MPRP) 30.2 %. Batulgaa and Enkhbold will enter run-off elections on 07 July 2017, because neither of the candidates achieved an absolute majority. As provided for in the constitution the current President Tsakhia Elbegdorj will not stand for election again after serving two terms of office.

All three candidates were accused of corruption during the election campaign. The export-dependent country is facing major economic problems due to falling prices and lower demand for its natural resources like iron ore, oil and copper. While the elite is prosperous, less income than expected a few years ago during times of strong economic growth, is trickling down to the sometimes poor population.

Niger

Suicide bombing of refugee camp

Two female suicide bombers killed two people and wounded eleven in a UN refugee camp. A UNHCR spokesman said that the two women had entered Kabelawa camp (about 50 km north of the border to Nigeria) and joined a group of young people before detonating their explosives belts just before midnight on 28 June 2017. This had been the first suicide bombing in one year. Thousands of people who fled from the terror of Islamist Boko Haram are living in the camp.

Nigeria

Boko Haram: Coordinated suicide bombings in Maiduguri

The police reports that a suicide bomber exploded his bomb near the office of the security forces of Maiduguri university (capital of the northeastern state of Borno) on 25 June 2017; wounding three security officers. At the same time four female suicide bombers entered the suburb of Zannari that borders on the university. One attacker each blew herself up in two different residential houses; eight civilians were killed and 13 were wounded. The third attacker exploded her bomb without causing any victims and the fourth was hit by a police shot and died shortly thereafter. On the next morning two more female attackers blew themselves up on the university premises without causing any damage to people.

Somalia

Attacks

According to police reports two people were killed and six civilians were injured by a booby trap in Mogadishu's north on 01 July 2017. Two civilians were wounded in another attack on a convoy of the Somali secret service in Mogadishu on 29 June 2017.

Fighting

Puntland security forces started an offensive against an al-Shabaab base in the village of El Madow near Boosaaso (Bari region) on 26 June 2017. Reportedly about twelve of the extremists were killed.

Four AMISOM-soldiers lost their lives in an attack by al-Shabaab fighters on a convoy of Kenyan AMISOM units with a booby trap and an ensuing firefight in El Wak (Gedo region) on 27 June 2017.

It is said that Somali government soldiers took control of the town of Mahday (Middle Shabelle region) on 27 June 2017. Al-Shabaab maintains that the attack had been repelled.

Al-Shabaab claims to have killed three soldiers and injured seven in an exchange of fire with Somali government soldiers in the village of Ali Foolheere near the town of Mahaday (Middle Shabelle) on 29 June 2017.

When Somali units and al-Shabaab clashed in the villages of Jungal and Laheley (Gedo region) Somali soldiers killed two al-Shabaab fighters on 28/29 June 2017.

Al-Shabaab informed that they killed ten soldiers in an attack on Kenyan AMISOM and government units in Bardhere (Gedo region) on 28 June 2017.

AMISOM units conquered an al-Shabaab base in Janale village (Lower Shabelle region) on 30 June 2017, but retreated again shortly afterwards, allowing al-Shabaab to retake Janale.

Al-Shabaab-members executed in Puntland

A spokesman of the Boosaaso military court announced that seven men convicted of al-Shabaab membership and conspiracy for attacks had been executed by a firing squad on 30 June 2017.

Somaliland accused of supporting extremists

The Puntland security minister accused the government of Somaliland of supporting al-Shabaab in the Galgala mountains in Puntland's north and to tolerate extremist training camps in Somaliland. Somaliland's information minister denied the accusations.

Possible change of camps of high-ranking extremist

Allegedly al-Shabaab transferred fighters to Abal village (Bakool region) on 28 June 2017 to intimidate its former deputy leader and spokesman Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (Abu Mansur). Robow is said to have protected renegade al-Shabaab fighters in the region and to have planned to defect to the government side.

Syria

Attack in Damascus

The media report that up to twenty people lost their lives and many were wounded when a car bomb exploded in the Syrian capital on 02 July 2017. A suicide bomber seems to have blown his car up after being surrounded by security forces. During their search for further attackers the law enforcement officers could intercept two more explosive-loaded cars which were subsequently detonated in a controlled way outside the city limits.

Al-Raqqa surrounded

According to the Syrian Human Rights Observatory and Kurdish sources the anti IS alliance has fully surrounded the IS stronghold Al-Raqqa in northern Syria on 29 June 2017. Thus all escape routes have been cut for the approximately 4,000 IS fighters still remaining in Al-Raqqa.

Chad/Nigeria

170 casualties on Lake Chad islands

Eight Chadian soldiers and 162 Boko Haram fighters were left dead in fighting against the Boko-Haram Islamists. The Chadian army informed that its soldiers attacked the terror group on five Nigerian islands in Lake Chad already on 24/25 June 2017 and succeeded in expelling the remaining Islamists from the islands. They also destroyed vehicles and motorcycles and seized arms.

Turkey

AKP politician assassinated

The media reported that two officials of the Islamic conservative governing party AKP had been assassinated in Turkey's southeast. They are named as the vice chairman of the AKP association for Diyarbakir province, Orhan Mercan and the deputy party head of Van province, Aydin Ahi. The reports say that they were abducted and shot. It is assumed that the PKK is responsible for these acts. No-one has claimed responsibility so far.

Protest march

The protest march initiated by opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu in Ankara on 14 June 2017 is gaining increasing support, several ten thousand people have meanwhile joined the "Justice March" to Istanbul. The protest had been triggered by the detention of the CHP MP Enis Berberoglu. It has meanwhile evolved into a general show of force of Erdogan's opponents. Many opposition politicians, journalists, lawyers, athletes, victims of police brutality, and citizens have joined the march that has now covered about 300 of the 420 kilometres from Ankara to Istanbul; it is scheduled to arrive there on 09 July 2017. The march's goal is Maltepe prison where Berberoglu is held. He was given a 25-year prison sentence for writing an article on secret Turkish arms supplies to the Syrian rebels. Although the government has criticized the march it has not intervened.

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ivs-anfragen@bamf.bund.de