

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	706
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. Group 62 - Information Centre for Asylum and Migration
Titel:	Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	19. august 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	9. september 2019

Group 62 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

19 August 2019

Afghanistan

Suicide bombing at wedding celebrations in Kabul

On 17 August 2019 at least 63 people were killed and more than 180 wounded by a suicide attack on a Shia wedding celebration attended by 1,200 guests in the capital Kabul. Eyewitnesses reported that the explosion took place near the stage where musicians were playing. Afghanistan's interior ministry informed that the location was a wedding hall in the city's south-west which is mainly populated by the Shia Hazara minority. IS claimed responsibility for the attack. In a video message IS announced that a Pakistani IS fighter wanted to die as a martyr and attacked a large Shia assembly in Kabul. Earlier IS had repeatedly selected soft targets as well. The Taliban denounced the attack.

Chad

Suicide bombing leaves five dead

Military and government sources informed that on 14 August 2019 a female suicide bomber killed five people, including one soldier, when she blew herself up on the banks of Lake Chad. The bombing also left many people wounded and happened shortly after midnight in Kaiga-Kindjiria, a city in the northern part of Lake Chad.

China

Hundreds of thousands take to the streets in Hong Kong again

Once again hundreds of thousands demonstrated against the government on 18 August 2019. The organizers informed that with 1.7 million participants this was the second largest rally since the protest movement began. The protest group Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) organised the demonstration that was announced as the return to the peaceful beginnings of these protests. Braving a police ban, many went on in the direction of the Admiralty district to the west after the assembly at Victoria Park.

Although the protests have now entered their tenth week Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam has not softened on any of the movement's demands. The only move was the suspension of the controversial extradition law that also permitted the transfer of suspects to mainland China and that had triggered the crisis, however, it was not scrapped. The activists not only demand the abolition of the law, but also an investigation into police violence and remission for charged protesters. The Chinese government's threats against the protesters have become more massive lately. They linked the protesters to terrorism and deployed troops at the border. Fears of a Chinese military operation are growing.

Iran

Head of the state privatization organization arrested

The media reported the arrest of the managing director of the Iranian Privatization Organization Ali Ashraf Abdollah Pouri Hosseini on 14 August 2019. He resigned from his office shortly before his arrest, the report said. The privatization organization is in charge of the privatization of public assets. According to Iranian law 80% of the shares of public companies are to be sold to private investors. No official information is available about the charges against Pouri Hosseini. An Iranian news portal reported that he is accused of interfering with the country's economic system and large-scale neglect of public assets. According to this report, he did not resign, but was dismissed. For years the media and politicians have been reporting irregularities in the sale of public assets.

India/Pakistan

Special status of Jammu and Kashmir abolished

Observers say that the identity of the country that grants people of all faiths the same constitutional rights, is at risk because of the abolition of article 370 of the Indian constitution. For decades, article 370 had granted extensive autonomy to the dominantly Muslim federal state of Jammu and Kashmir. By depriving the state of its special status, the New Delhi government gained more control over the northernmost state of the federation. At the same time article 35A of the constitution was revoked. The article authorized the local government to decide who classifies as a state resident. The resident status was one condition for the entitlement to buy real property in Kashmir, in future this will also be possible for non-residents. The dominantly Muslim population now fears that more Hindus will enter the region and might ultimately expel the resident Muslims. In fact, the governing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya-Janata party (BJP) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, intends to grant a priority status to Hinduism in India in the future, although the constitution defines India as a pluralist state.

Just before the Muslim feast of sacrifice unrest erupted in the region. The government responded by imposing house arrest on opposition politicians and curfews on the population, internet and telephone services were interrupted and tens of thousands of soldiers were deployed to the region, barricades and checkpoints manned with armed soldiers were set up in the capital Srinagar. As a consequence, the constitutional rights of four million people were infringed.

Neighbouring Pakistan, which considers itself an advocate of the Muslim population of the whole of Kashmir, was outraged by the measures taken. The Pakistani government froze diplomatic relations and trade with India. Protests were held in major Pakistani cities. In an address on the occasion of Pakistan's independence day (14 August 2019) Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan announced in Muzzafarabad, capital of Pakistani administered Azad Kashmir, that he will take the matter to the UN Security Council.

On the Indian day of independence (15 August 2019) Modi reasserted his actions in the Indian part of Kashmir, reiterating that he would persist on the course he had taken. On the same day the government informed that the restrictions imposed on the region will be progressively relaxed.

Both India and Pakistan have claimed all of Kashmir for decades, but each only administers part of it. The two nuclear powers have fought two wars over Kashmir in 1947 and 1965. A heavily armed demarcation line separates the two parts of the country. Fire is regularly exchanged at this border, formally known as Line of Control (LoC) since 1972. On 15 August 2019 five Indian and one Pakistani soldier as well as two civilians were killed there. Kashmir's third and easternmost part is administered by China.

Israel/Palestinian Autonomous Areas

Police takes action against LGBTQ organisation

The Palestinian Authority announced that it will not tolerate any future LGBTQ events, because these run counter to the values of Palestinian society. This comes after the human rights organisation al-Qaws held an event in Nablus discussing gender diversity in the city on 04 August 2019. A police spokesman said on 17 August 2019 that al-Qaws would not be allowed to hold any more events and threatened to arrest its members.

Al-Qaws informed that the police announcement was made shortly after members of the group received a large number of insults and death threats on social media.

Shelling

On 16 and 17 August 2019 four missiles were fired on Israel from the Gaza Strip. Three of them were intercepted by the Israeli missile defence system, no damage has been reported. The Israeli military stated that it responded on 17 August 2019 by shelling two underground Hamas bases in the Gaza Strip.

Lebanon

Government standstill ended

The government stopped working after a shoot-out between the minister for refugee affairs Saleh Gharib (Lebanese Democratic Party, LDP) and followers of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) in the city of Aley on 30 June 2019. Two of Gharib's body guards were killed in the shooting and at least one other guard was injured. Four people were arrested related to the incident.

It is said that the shooting was caused by a road block set up by PSP followers trying to prevent foreign minister Jebran Bassil (Free Patriotic Movement, FPM) from passing. Bassil is considered a Gharib ally and critic of PSP party leader Jumblatt. Tensions between the FPM and the PSP had escalated and led to the shooting, sources said.

Local media reported that a reconciliation meeting was held between the Druze parties LDP and PSP on 09 August 2019 which then ended the government standstill.

Libya

Fighting

Fighting resumed after the ceasefire in Tripoli for Aid al-Adha ran out. There are reports about air strikes, particularly in the Ain Zara region and some on Misrata.

Myanmar

Series of attacks in the north

State media reported that at least five people were killed in a series of attacks by three rebel groups on five military and government installations in Shan state and the region around Mandalay (north) on 15 August 2019. A rebel spokesman said that these attacks were the response to a military offensive against one of these groups in Rakhine state. More than 30,000 persons have been displaced, he said.

Pakistan

Explosion claims several lives

A bomb exploded during Friday prayers in a mosque in the west of Baluchistan's provincial capital Quetta on 15 August 2019. Four people died and at least 20 were wounded. It is reported that the dead included the mosque's imam, the brother of a well-known Taliban leader. No-one claimed responsibility for the attack.

Russian Federation

Vigil for the release of political prisoners

Members of the opposition demonstrated for the release of political prisoners by holding vigils in Moscow on 17 August 2019. Under the watchful eye of the police individuals positioned themselves near down-town monuments in silent protest against arbitrary justice in Russia. Moscow's authorities had denied permission for an opposition protest march and a mass rally in the down-town area. In response the organisers, including jailed opposition leader Alexey Navalny, called for these vigils. The police did not intervene.

For weeks the Russian capital has been the scene of protests against the exclusion of dozens of opposition candidates from the upcoming local elections of 08 September 2019. On 10 August 2019 up to 60,000 people had assembled on Sakharov Prospect to demand the admission of the opposition candidates and denounce

police violence. In recent weeks thousands had been temporarily taken into custody during unauthorized protests. Human rights advocates spoke of a disproportionate use of violence by the police against peaceful demonstrators. They also demanded that the charges for incitement for mass riots be dropped.

Somalia

Fighting in Awdheegle

On 14 August 2019 al-Shabaab attacked a government military base in the city of Awdheegle (Lower Shabelle region), about 70 km south of Mogadishu. Several people were killed during the attack and the ensuing fighting. On 06 August 2019 Awdheegle was reconquered from al-Shabaab by Somali government and AMISOM troops (see BN of 12 August 2019 2019).

South Sudan

Village assaulted by cattle thieves

Cattle thieves attacked a village killing at least 13 people in South Sudan. A representative of the regional government said on 13 August 2019 that at least another seven people had been injured in the attack in Rumbek East in Western Lakes state. Members of a community in the neighbouring state of Tonj are held responsible for this assault.

Such incidents are not rare. At the beginning of the year cattle thieves caused a massacre in Tonj, killing 105 people - mostly women and children - and stealing 5,000 heads of cattle. Earlier 28 people had been killed and 3,000 heads of cattle had been stolen in Liech state. Quite frequently these are acts of revenge committed by hostile ethnic groups.

Sudan

Agreement on interim government signed

On 17 August 2019 representatives of the governing military council and the pro-democracy opposition signed an agreement for the formation of an interim government for Sudan. This constitutional declaration provides for the sharing of power for three years and three months. The future interim government will be controlled by a joint council consisting of five members of the military, five civilians and one member appointed by both parties. The agreement also provides for a cabinet and a legislative assembly. The announcement of the agreement immediately led to celebrations all over the country.

In April the military had deposed long-standing President Omar al-Bashir under the pressure of mass protests. He had governed the country in north-eastern Africa for 30 years country with an iron fist. Bashir is to stand trial soon.

Syria

Fighting in Idlib: Territorial gains for the government

Syrian government troops conquered the villages of Tel Aas, Khirbet Morshed, Kfar Eyn, Urn Zeitoun and Mantar on 14 August 2019. They could secure their territorial gains successfully by 18 August 2019. This means that Assad's forces have now advanced to about 1 km from Khan Sheikhoun, one of the largest towns in the south of Idlib province. A Syrian human rights organisation informed that almost 100,000 people were driven from the embattled localities in only four days.

Reportedly Hai'at Tahrir ash-Sham succeeded in shooting down a Sukhoi-22 Syrian war plane and taking its pilot prisoner during an advance on 14 August 2019.

On 15 August 2019 the insurgents launched a counter offensive in nearby Sukeik in which dozens of fighters were killed, it is said. On the same day Syrian state media reported the successful interception of a missile coming from Lebanese airspace.

The pro-opposition Syrian Human Rights Observatory reported that on 16 and 17 August 2019 dozens of civilians were killed by air strikes in the south of Idlib. One strike had targeted a camp for displaced persons.

Turkish drones

The Turkish defence ministry announced on 14 August 2019 that it had decided to use drones in northern Syria. The drones are to be deployed in the security zone that has been agreed with the US (see BN of 12 August 2019).

IS attack on Kurdish security forces

On 18 August 2019 at least one person was killed by a car bomb in the city of Qamishli in the country's north-east. Reportedly two others were wounded. The victims were security forces of the Kurdish autonomous government who were at a training area for Asayîş (para-military Kurdish police; not to be confused with the Kurdish domestic secret service in northern Iraq). IS claimed the attack.

Turkey

Mayors dismissed

The government dismissed the pro-Kurdish mayors of the south-eastern cities of Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van. They were members of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Party of the People (HDP). Investigations have been initiated against the mayors for disseminating terrorist propaganda or for membership in a terrorist organization. The opposition voiced its criticism.

Furthermore over 400 people are said to have been arrested for alleged links to the PKK.

Ukraine/Russian Federation

Russian passports issued to Ukrainians

More than 60,000 Ukrainians from the separatist controlled Donbass areas have applied for Russian citizenship, Moscow announced. It was said that over 25,000 had already received Russian passports. About three million Ukrainians are eligible for this simplified procedure. President Putin had signed a corresponding decree in April 2019 (see BN of 29 April 2019).

Venezuela

New parliamentary elections?

On 14 August 2019 the chairman of the Venezuelan constitutional assembly, Diosdado Cabello, announced the establishment of a commission to set a date for new elections to parliament after a process of public consultations. This assembly consists exclusively of Maduro followers and its legitimacy is highly controversial inside and outside of Venezuela; normally the next parliament would not have to be elected until the end of 2020. The opposition won a clear majority in the 2015 elections. It is feared that any new parliamentary elections would be neither free nor fair.

Yemen

The situation in Aden

On 15 August 2019 thousands of people from southern Yemen gathered in Aden in support of the Southern Transitional Council (STC) that took control of the city on 10 August 2019 (see BN of 12 August 2019). The STC published a statement demanding more autonomy and the end of the deployment of soldiers from the north in southern Yemen. The STC also demanded that all politicians linked to the al-Islah party as well as all politicians from the north resign from their offices. On the same day a delegation of Saudi Arabian and UAE officials arrived in Aden to call for talks between the Southern Transitional Council (STC)

and President Hadi. The Hadi government makes talks conditional on the withdrawal from the military bases in Aden that STC took control of.

Houthi rebels attack Saudi oil field

On 17 August 2019 the Houthi rebels attacked an outlying oil field in Saudi Arabia with a drone. The Shaybah oil field is about 1,200 km away from the Houthi-controlled areas. The attack demonstrates the rebels' capability to strike also at long distances.

Iran announced its support of the Houthi rebel movement

On 13 August 2019 a Houthi rebel representative met Iran's supreme leader Ayathollah Khamenei in Tehran. Khamenei assured the rebel movement of Tehran's support and called for a dialogue to end the conflict. However, the precise dimensions of such support remain unclear. A few days after the meeting the Houthi rebels appointed their first ambassador to Iran.

Fighting

It is reported that dozens of people, including civilians, were killed and wounded in recent days in fighting between pro-government soldiers and security forces in Taizz governorate.

Soldiers of the Hadi government said that they killed 36 fighters of the Houthi rebels at the front in Nihm, east of the capital Sanaa, on 13 and 14 August 2019.

Zimbabwe

Demonstrations

Despite the ban on public assemblies pronounced by the Supreme Court hundreds of protesters came together on centrally located Africa Unity Square in Harare on 16 August 2019. Zimbabwe's largest opposition party MDC had called the protest. The police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd. Several protesters were arrested by the police.

The people were protesting against the country's continued economic crisis. They want President Mnangagwa to hand over power to an interim government that will tackle the economic problems and organize credible new elections.

Zimbabwe is currently experiencing its most severe economic crisis in ten years. The inflation rate reached 175%. There is a petrol shortage, daily power cuts for up to 19 hours and restrictions in water supplies are common.