



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

28 April 2025

Ethiopia

Clashes and drone attacks in Amhara

On 16. and 17.04.25, according to reports 150 persons were killed by drone attacks in Gedebe (Enarj Enawga, East Gojjam). The attacks took place as part of the Ethiopian government's offensive against the Fano militia. Whilst the affected population spoke of civilian casualties, official reports stressed the targeted attack on Fano members, and called other reports "enemy propaganda".

At least five more civilians were killed in Agona (Este, South Gondar) in clashes between Fano fighters and government forces on 15.04.25. Homes are also said to have been destroyed. According to eyewitnesses, government troops attacked civilians in the locality after the clash with the Fano, suspecting some of them of supporting the Fano. No more Fano members are said to have been present at the time, according to those affected. The government has not commented on the incident.¹

Afghanistan

Security situation

On 14.04.25 in Masar-e Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, an explosion took place close to the Shia Seh Dokan mosque in a predominantly Hazara-populated area located in the city's second security district, killing one woman and wounding three other people.

According to local sources, a teenage boy was killed in Jaghori district in Ghazni province, and at least 12 of his relatives including several school students were detained by the Taliban, in connection with an alleged attack on an administrative building.

Armed clashes took place near a checkpoint in the village of Dobandi in Chahardara district (Kunduz province) on 14.04.25 between Taliban and unidentified armed men.

According to Taliban information of 15.04.25, at least 50 people are killed or injured every month due to unexploded ordnance.²

Governance and persecution

Rashid Kashifi, a journalist living in Kabul, was detained by the Taliban on 23.04.25, according to media reports.

According to media reports of 14.04.25, the Taliban have ordered the closure of all offices of the Hezb-e-Islami party across the country, the arrest of its staff, and the confiscation of its office equipment.

In Baghlan province, according to local sources, three civilians were detained by the Taliban and mistreated for allegedly being out after dark.

On 27.04.25, the Taliban-run examination authority announced that women would be excluded from sitting university entrance exams being held in May for the fourth consecutive year.³

Returnees from Pakistan and Iran

In the period from 01.04. to 16.04.25, according to Pakistani sources, 84,869 Afghan migrants, including 50,000 minors, were expelled from Pakistan. Over 5,500 Afghan nationals returned from Pakistan and Iran on one single day on 17.04.25. This corresponds to 1,072 families entering the country via the border crossings in Nangarhar, Kandahar and Herat. On 20.04.25, 175 Afghan detainees were released in Pakistan and expelled to Afghanistan; on 21.04.25, a further 115 Afghans were freed from jails and expelled. On 22.04.25, the number of Afghan nationals expelled from Pakistan since 01.04.25 passed the 100,000 mark. According to UNHCR information, roughly 120,000 Afghan migrants had returned from Pakistan in the first three weeks of April. IOM stated that roughly 100,000 Afghan nationals had returned from Pakistan in the same period. The Pakistani government has since announced that registered Afghans holding Proof of Registration Cards are also to be deported after the 30.06.25 deadline. Several hundred families are continuing to arrive back from Pakistan and Iran every day. According to UNICEF information, two-thirds of persons expelled from Pakistan are children, and many of them are becoming separated from their families.⁴

Algeria

Diplomatic tensions escalate, new law governing general mobilisation

Algeria's government adopted a new law on 20.04.25 governing the general mobilisation of the population. The law is said to aim to facilitate the application of Article 99 of the constitution, which permits the rapid, coordinated mobilisation of all national forces in the event of a major crisis such as an armed conflict or a foreign aggression, a threat to national sovereignty, a domestic crisis, or a natural disaster.

According to critical media reports, the law would, in concrete terms, enable the government to mobilise reservists, but also to crack down on civil liberties, gear the economy to meet war ends, and allow the state to dispossess individuals. The step is thus said to aim above all to stoke fears of foreign threats among the Algerian people and block the road to the return of mass protests emulating the 2019 Hirak movement. The timing of the law's adoption, after its reading in Parliament back in October 2024, has sparked criticism in some quarters, since the government of head of state Abdelmadjid Tebboune is currently confronted by multiple diplomatic conflicts, particularly with Morocco and France, but also with the military government of neighbouring Mali to the south, and the latter's allies in the neighbouring Sahel zone.

For almost 50 years, Algeria and Morocco have been fighting over Western Sahara, an area in the south of Morocco over which both Rabat and the Algeria-backed pro-independence Polisario Front claim sovereignty. After US President Trump recognised Morocco's claim to sovereignty of the territory during his first presidency in return for the normalisation of the country's relations with Israel, Algeria regards itself as being increasingly isolated in the conflict at international level. The situation has remained tense since the ceasefire between the parties to the conflict was broken in November 2020, after Moroccan forces had been stationed in a buffer zone in the far south of Western Sahara in order to drive out Polisario fighters who were blocking the only road link to Mauretania, a route which is important for regional trade with western Africa. Algeria thereupon referred to Morocco as a "Zionist regime", closed its airspace for Moroccan flights, and started requiring visas from all Moroccan nationals.

The Western Sahara conflict has also overshadowed the country's relationship with France since July 2024, after Emmanuel Macron confirmed his support for Morocco's autonomy plan for Western Sahara in a letter to King Mohamed VI, and recognised the kingdom's sovereignty over the territory. The Algerian government thereupon recalled its ambassador from France, and accused the French government of spreading "lies" about the region's colonial history. The conviction of French-Algerian author Boualem Sansal (cf. BN of 17.03. and 31.03.) following his arrest last November, and the tit-for-tat expulsion of twelve diplomats, constitute the latest escalation in this diplomatic crisis after a number of other incidents.

The traditionally conflict-laden relations not only with Morocco and France, but also with southern neighbour Mali, are at a historic low, following on from the downing of a Malian drone near Tin Zaouatine that had allegedly entered Algerian airspace there. After Algeria had accepted responsibility for the downing, the Malian military government reacted in a coordinated step with its close allies Niger and Burkina Faso in the sense that all three Sahel Alliance (AES) members recalled their ambassadors from Algeria. Algeria immediately reciprocated. A day later, both Mali and Algeria closed their airspace to one another's aircraft. Mali's governing junta furthermore

withdrew from the joint Sahel staff (Comité d'Etat Major Opérationnel Conjoint - CEMOC), which had been formed by Algeria, Mali, Niger and Mauritania in April 2010 to coordinate efforts against al Qaeda's affiliate AQIM.⁵

Belarus

Plans to receive Pakistani workers

According to media information of 11.04.25, President Lukashenko welcomed Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif for an official visit to Minsk. According to the report, several agreements were concluded between the two countries. Lukashenko is said to have offered to accept up to 150,000 Pakistani workers to help address Belarus' deepening labour shortage. The announcement is said to have been viewed with suspicion in Poland and the Baltic States. In particular in 2021/2022, Belarus was reportedly accused of weaponising migrants from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, including Pakistan, in retaliation for Western sanctions, and enabling them to cross the border to the EU, thus triggering a humanitarian and security crisis at the EU's external borders.⁶

Activities of Russian and Belarusian intelligence services against Belarusian exiles in Lithuania

According to media information of 23.04.25, the Lithuanian intelligence service has uncovered activities of Russian and Belarusian intelligence services aimed at inciting violence against Belarusian exiles living in Lithuania. According to these sources, it was attempted via staged provocations and disinformation campaigns to simulate armed clashes between so-called "Litvinist" Belarusians - followers of an ideology tying Belarusian identity to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania - and fabricated Lithuanian nationalist groups. In fact, no genuinely extremist "Litvinist" groups have been identified. Whilst the Belarusian diaspora in Lithuania is said to number around 57,000, roughly 30,000 Belarusians are said to live in Germany.⁷

Benin

Islamists kill dozens of members of the military

On 17.04.25, 54 died in attacks on military bases in the North. This emerges from media reports based on information provided by the government of 23.04.25. The attacks are said to have targeted two military positions in the border area towards Burkina Faso and Niger. The Islamist group Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) is said to have claimed responsibility for the attacks soon after they took place and to have published photographs of arms and ammunition that they had seized. JNIM is regarded as an al-Qaida offshoot or as being associated with al-Qaida. On 08.01.25, roughly 30 members of the military were killed in a similar attack in the north. The JNIM also claimed responsibility for this attack (cf. BN of 03.02.25).

JNIM and offshoots of Islamic State (IS) have been active for years in the Sahel countries Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, where they control several large areas. According to media reports, the groups exploit local conflicts between ethnic groups in situ over land and resources for their own purposes. The difficult security situation and the complexity of the conditions in the region are exacerbated by the interplay between extremist efforts, smuggling and other illegal activities in Benin's northern départements Alibori and Atakora (cf. BN of 25.09.23).⁸

Burkina Faso

Coup attempt foiled

According to information from the military government of 21.04.25, Burkinese security forces have thwarted a coup attempt planned for 16.04.25. Alleged Burkinese military deserters are said to have planned the coup from Côte d'Ivoire and to have previously contacted religious and traditional leaders in order to persuade officers to join the plans. Those alleged to be responsible, including officers, are said to have thereupon already been dismissed and replaced. An unknown number of members of the military are also said to have been detained. Others are said to have fled to Côte d'Ivoire. According to observers, differences of opinion are said to have occurred within the military leadership since the announcement of the attempted coup with regard to the implementation of anti-terror operations. Several officers invited to a meeting of the general staff on 22.04.25 are

said to have failed to attend. There have been several foiled coup attempts since Ibrahim Traoré was appointed president on 05.10.22, (cf. BN of 22.01.24). Traoré said in July 2024 that a centre of operations to destabilise Burkina Faso was located in Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire.⁹

Côte d'Ivoire

Main opposition candidate barred from presidential election

According to media reports, Tidjane Thiam, chairman of the strongest opposition party Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI, also PDCI-RDA) and presidential candidate, was struck off the electoral list on 22.04.25 after a ruling had been handed down by a court in Abidjan. The court is said to have stated as grounds for the ruling that Thiam had acquired French nationality in 1987, thereby foregoing Ivorian citizenship. The ruling could not be appealed. Thiam previously gave up his French citizenship in March 2025, as Art. 55 of the constitution bans presidential candidates from holding dual nationality.

According to further reporting, the PDCI regards the government as being behind the charge; the judiciary is said to have been politically instrumentalised, and the provision of nationality law underlining the court ruling had not been applied in other instances. According to PDCI, there was no alternative candidate. A call by the party for protests to be held outside courts on 24.04.25 was however said to have only drawn a few hundred people, also because police had blocked off access and the government had warned that it would not permit any unrest. Thiam himself is said to have announced that he would take legal and political action against his barring. There was however said to also be a court action pending in respect of Thiam's previously partially alleged loss of Ivorian nationality with regard to his election as PDCI leader in December 2023, brought by a supporter of Thiam's competitor within the party Jean-Louis Billon.

The first of potentially two rounds of the presidential election will take place on 25.10.25. 83-year-old incumbent Alassane Ouattara has signalled his willingness to serve for a fourth five-year presidency. Other rivals of Ouattara had already been barred from standing in the election before Thiam as a result of being struck off the electoral list due to criminal convictions (cf. BN of 13.05.24).¹⁰

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Potential peace agreement with Rwanda; ceasefire between government and M23

The foreign ministers of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed a Declaration on 25.04.25 in Washington in which both countries vow to respect one other's sovereignty and refrain from providing state military support to armed groups. According to reports, they commit in the Declaration to resolve conflicts through diplomacy. On 26.04.25, the government and the rebel group Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), which has gained control of large parts of the eastern Congolese North and South Kivu provinces (cf. BN of 27.01., 03.02., 17.02. and 24.02.25), announced a mutual ceasefire. This surprising development was achieved with mediation from Qatar. President Félix Tshisekedi had previously rejected direct talks between his government and M23.

Even though Rwanda denies providing support to M23, it is regarded as certain that it does so. The group recruits primarily among members of the Tutsi ethnic group and from Kinyarwanda speakers. Rwanda considers its security to be actively threatened by the armed group Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which is active in Eastern Congo, the members of which include leaders linked to the 1994 genocide by the Hutu against the Tutsi in Rwanda. In common with many armed groups active in eastern Congo, M23 is however said to be also concerned to gain control of the rich mineral deposits there. Coltan from mining, which is said to be controlled by M23, is reported to be exported via Rwanda.¹¹

Kabila alleged to be in Goma; suspension of PPRD party; action against supporters

Former president and senator-for-life Joseph Kabila is said to have travelled on 18.04.25 from exile via Rwanda to the M23-controlled capital of North Kivu province, Goma. According to media reports, Kabila claimed to have come as an "ambassador of peace". The government however considers that there has been confirmation of the presumption that he is a supporter of the rebel Alliance Fleuve Congo (AFC), to which M23 also belongs, and that

he was the mastermind behind the re-emergence of M23. The government thereupon suspended the activities of Kabila's Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie (PPRD) across the country. This was said to be a provisional, preventive measure. The government was also said to be preparing to seize Kabila's property and bank accounts, as well as those of several of his close associates, who were also prevented from leaving the country. The PPRD denies that Kabila has been in Goma at all. These are said to be unsubstantiated rumours from social media. The suspension was said to constitute an attempt to muzzle the party.¹²

Ghana

Supreme Court chief justice suspended

On 22.04.25, President John Dramani Mahama suspended the Supreme Court chief justice, Gertrude Torkornoo, with immediate effect and launched an investigation. It is the first time in the country's history that a chief justice was suspended. Chief justices in Ghana enjoy security of tenure, and can only be removed from office on a few grounds, which include incompetence and misbehaviour.

A statement by the office of the President stated that three undisclosed petitions had been filed against Gertrude Torkornoo, and that these had presented plausible facts. A committee was now to address the case. The statement did not provide any details as to the allegations made in the petitions.

Voices in Ghana's opposition condemned the suspension, accusing President Mahama of trying to pack the courts with justices who are sympathetic to the government.

Torkornoo has held the office since June 2023. She is Ghana's third female chief justice, and was nominated by former President Nana Akufo-Addo. According to reports, Torkornoo already survived a removal request in early 2025.¹³

India

Reactions after attack on group of tourists in Kashmir

India is blaming Pakistan for the attack on a group of tourists in the Indian-administered part of Kashmir near Pahalgam in Anantnag district, 50 km southeast of the regional capital Srinagar, on 22.04.25. 26 people were killed in the attack, 24 of them Indian nationals, one from Nepal and a local tour guide. More than one dozen more were injured. It was the most serious attack on civilians for years in the region, which has been claimed by both countries. According to the Indian government, the attack had cross-border connections to Pakistan, but no proof of this has been presented. The historically-tense diplomatic relations between the two countries were further exacerbated by the incident. India suspended its participation in an important water-sharing agreement. Furthermore, diplomatic staff in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi have been called on to leave the country, whilst Indian High Commission staff have been pulled back from Pakistan. Both countries also revoked visas that had already been issued to one another's nationals and called on them to leave the country.

On 23.04.25, the Indian military launched a search for the alleged offenders. Tens of thousands of additional security forces spread throughout the region and set up checkpoints. They searched vehicles, used helicopters to search wooded mountains, and in some areas called in former militants for questioning in police stations. Large numbers of shops were closed.

The Indian investigation authorities called the attack a "terrorist attack", and blamed it on militant separatists who are fighting against Indian rule. In social media, the militant group "The Resistance Front", alleged to be an offshoot of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that the Indian authorities had settled more than 85,000 Indian nationals in the region. It went on to claim that the individuals attacked had not been ordinary tourists, but had links to Indian security authorities. This information could not be independently verified.

The government of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir stated in early April that 83,742 Indian nationals had been given the right to acquire land and property in Kashmir in the last two years. Only locals were permitted to do so until the Indian-administered part of the region was stripped of its special semi-autonomous status in 2019.¹⁴

Iraq

Yazidi return to Shingal (Sinjar)

On 21.04.25, a spokesperson for the migration ministry stated that another 92 Yazidi families had returned to Shingal (Ninawa province) from camps in Duhok province, but without specifying a period during which this return took place.

This meant that the number of Yazidi families living in refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region fell from January 2024 onwards from 34,000 to 21,000.¹⁵

Several young Yazidi men freed

It was announced according to reports of 15.04.25 and 27.04.25 that a total of three Yazidi men who had been abducted by ISIS in 2014 aged eight and eleven, respectively, had been freed in Syria by units of the SDF and reunited with their families in Iraq.

One of the men stated that he had been deployed by ISIS as a child soldier for four years, after receiving several years of religious indoctrination. Of the total of 6,417 Yazidis who were abducted in 2014, only 3,585 have so far been rescued alive, and the bodies of another 274 kidnapping victims, predominantly men, have been identified.¹⁶

Iran

Execution of a Kurdish detainee for alleged participation in the murder of security forces

According to media reports of 21.04.25, the death sentence has been carried out on a 40-year-old Kurdish detainee. The man is said to have shared responsibility for the killing of eight border forces in the Chaldoran border region in the northwest (West Azerbaijan province) in 2017. He had also been accused of being a member of the PKK and of engaging in armed rebellion.

The case is said to have involved some legal irregularities. Relatives of the accused stated that he had submitted a confession under torture, but had been innocent. According to information from the Persian edition of BBC News, the convict's lawyer had stated that there had been evidence rebutting the man's guilt.

According to a report by a Norway-based human rights organisation, the man had been sentenced to death and executed without observing minimum fair trial standards. Neither the family nor his lawyer had been notified of the time of the execution.¹⁷

Alleged testing of new surveillance technology in Isfahan

According to the recently-published report of a UK-based online portal which lobbies for Internet freedom in Iran and the Middle East, Iranian authorities in the city of Isfahan are said to be testing new technologies for telecommunications surveillance, presumably for the purpose of compliance with the compulsory hijab. Amongst other things so-called International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI)-Catchers, contactless card readers and municipal surveillance cameras are being used, according to the reports. IMSI-Catchers operate by impersonating telecom towers, and can track and intercept mobile phone communications. This is said to enable surveillance authorities to connect with mobile devices of targets, such as women who do not wear a hijab in public, and retrieve their mobile numbers. In connection with contactless card readers and surveillance cameras, according to the report, a multi-layered surveillance tool is said to be created – in conjunction with possible access to government databases and the cooperation of telecom operators – for monitoring hijab compliance, amongst other things. Testing of such measures appears so far to be limited to Isfahan, a city which is regarded as being predominantly conservative.

A new draft Chastity and Hijab law, which provided for a tightening up of punishments for violations of hijab compliance for women, was blocked in September 2024 by Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and never came into force.¹⁸

Yemen

More than 120 dead in US military attacks on Houthi positions

Large numbers of military strikes continue against targets in the sphere of control of the Houthi militia.

On 17.04.25, there were massive strikes on an oil terminal in Ras Isa, leading to 80 fatalities according to information from the Houthis.

An unknown target in Saada was attacked on 27.04.25. According to Houthi spokespersons, a detention centre for 115 African migrants was hit, and according to early reports at least 68 bodies had been recovered.

This means according to media reports that more than 250 people have been killed in Yemen since the beginning of the new campaign of airstrikes in mid-March. There is no information regarding how many of the victims are civilians or belong to the military.¹⁹

Jordan

Several individuals detained, Muslim Brotherhood banned

The Jordanian intelligence service announced on 15.04.25 the detention of 16 persons accused of having pursued plans which had posed a threat to national security. According to media reports, these included acquiring arms and explosives, as well as manufacturing drones. It was also alleged that there were plans to train fighters, both in Jordan and abroad. According to official statements, at least some of the 16 detainees were members of the Muslim Brotherhood and had been trained in Lebanon. The Muslim Brotherhood rejected the allegations.

On 23.04.25, the Jordanian government issued an official ban on the Islamic Action Front, which constitutes the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. According to media reports, offices of the group had been closed all over the country and property seized. All activities of and lobbying for the group had become subject to criminal punishment. It initially remained unclear what effect the ban might have on the political party.

The Islamic Action Front has been the largest opposition party since the parliamentary elections in September 2024, after it was able to win over considerable numbers of votes in a political campaign against Israeli actions in the Gaza Strip.²⁰

Colombia

FARC dissidents kill soldiers in Guaviare departamento

On 27.04.25, at least nine soldiers were killed in Charras, in the southeastern Guaviare departamento according to preliminary estimates. Military sources have so far confirmed six killings attributed to the Jorge Suárez Briceño association of armed groups. The group forms part of the Estado Mayor de Bloques (EMB) of FARC dissidents, which is led by a pseudonym by the name of “Calarcá”. Five other soldiers had previously been abducted but released a few hours later in Guanapalo, three of whom were however injured. One soldier is still missing according to information from the military. The soldiers were responsible for securing the former territorial training and reintegration areas (Antiguo Espacio Territorial de Capacitación y Reincorporación, AETCR) in Charras, which were being used by former FARC guerrillas who had accepted the 2016 peace agreement. The Colombian military sent a special commission to investigate the incident, as well as support troops, in order to enhance deployment capacities and security in the region. The attack was carried out against the background of a countrywide wave of violence, which according to defence minister Pedro Sánchez Suárez had so far claimed the lives of at least 18 members of the security forces between 15. and 25.04.25. Sánchez stated that contract killers working for illegally-armed groups were responsible for the violence, and that they were deliberately attacking members of the police and military (*plan pistola*). The attacks in Antioquia and Córdoba, and on the Atlantic coast, were reportedly carried out by the “Golf Clan”, those in Norte de Santander by the ELN, and those in Cauca by the FARC dissidents, under the leadership of Iván Mordisco.²¹

Lebanon

Lebanese Army takes over positions from Hezbollah

The question of disarming Hezbollah in Lebanon, as was agreed in the ceasefire reached between Israel and Lebanon, remains contentious. The leaders of the two biggest Christian parties have now clearly and publicly called for them to be disarmed.

Israeli airstrikes on targets of the Hezbollah and militias allied with them are ongoing. A further attack was carried out on 27.04.25 in Dahiyeh, a predominantly Shia suburb of Beirut, for the third time since the beginning of the ceasefire. According to Israeli information, a warehouse containing missiles of the Hezbollah was attacked. Israeli forces had warned of the attack in advance, thus permitting the surrounding area to be evacuated.

A video broadcast on the al-Jadeed media platform on 23.04.25 is alleged to show the Lebanese Army seizing an Al-Jamaa al-Islamiya post and weapons warehouse in the south of Lebanon. Al-Jamaa al-Islamiya, which also lost a senior commander on 22.04.25 as the result of an Israeli airstrike, however publicly denies this. More than 500 positions, weapons warehouses and bases of Hezbollah and other militias in Southern Lebanon have now been taken over by the Army. Suspects were also arrested who are accused of firing rockets towards Israel on 22.03. and 28.03.25. According to its own information, the Lebanese Army has also been able to foil a further rocket attack from southern Lebanon.

On 23.04.25, Israeli media, quoting sources in the Israeli Army, reported that the Lebanese Army was doing much more than had been originally expected in order to implement the cease-fire agreement, which provides for Hezbollah to be disarmed and an end to be put to its presence south of the Litani.

There are different counts and estimates regarding the number of fatalities since the beginning of the ceasefire. According to Israeli information, 140 fighters belonging to Hezbollah and its allies had been killed since it was implemented.²²

Nigeria

Middle Belt: More than 100 dead in attacks on civilians

A total of at least 144 people were killed in attacks against civilians in the states of Plateau and Benue in the period from 03.04. to 17.04.25 and many others injured. Media reports refer to the presumption frequently made in such cases (cf. BN of 05.02, 06.05 and 27.05.24) that the incidents are connected with conflicts between migrant herders and settled farmers. Marauding herdsman are responsible for the latest crimes, according to a prevalent assessment. The identity of those committing the attacks, which take place in the region with a certain regularity (cf. BN of 13.01.25), is unknown. The number of individuals killed in recent years runs into the thousands, according to reports.²³

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

Gaza Strip: humanitarian situation after 60-day blockade

Fighting and bombardments continue in the Gaza Strip. According to information from the Hamas-run health ministry of 27.04.25, a total of 52,243 persons are said to have been killed in the Gaza Strip since October 2023. Israel claims to have killed roughly 20,000 fighters. None of the figures can be independently verified.

Imports of humanitarian and commercial goods to the Gaza Strip, including fuel, food, medicines and medical equipment, have been blocked by Israeli authorities for 60 days. The UN presumes that the Gaza Strip is faced by the worst humanitarian crisis of the 18 months that have passed since the start of the war in October 2023. Doctors are warning of a marked increase in malnutrition among children. According to WFP figures, food prices have gone up by 700 % in comparison to before the war, and are virtually unaffordable for many. According to a report, tomatoes for instance cost roughly 50 NIS per kilo (roughly 12.14 EUR) in Khan Younis. Large-scale destruction of agricultural infrastructure and land, as well as a lack of equipment and water, mean that capacities for the cultivation of vegetables within the Gaza Strip are highly limited. The WFP, one of the largest aid organisations operating in the Gaza Strip, stated on 25.04.2025 that the community kitchens' food supplies had run out. The kitchens, which were providing food to roughly 80 % of the population of the Gaza Strip, would therefore have to close in the coming days. The extensive destruction and lack of equipment also mean that the medical sector continues to be overwhelmed. According to the Hamas-run health ministry, more than 400 dialysis patients had so far died due to the reduced facilities to treat them.

Hamas furthermore states that the remaining 59 hostages, 24 of whom are presumed to be alive, would only be handed over under the conditions set out under the ceasefire agreement reached in January 2025. This agreement provided for additional Palestinian prisoners to be released, for a permanent ceasefire, and for the complete

withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip. Leaders in the Israeli government, including defence minister Katz, recently threatened to further step up the attacks in the absence of any progress in releasing the hostages. This could also involve permanently occupying parts of the Gaza Strip.²⁴

West Bank: ongoing military operations, settler attacks, checkpoints

The ongoing military operations in the Jenin, al-Far'a, Nur Shams and Tulkarem refugee camps have triggered the displacement of another roughly 40,000 Palestinians. Official Israeli sources stated that most of the displaced would not be able to return to their homes within the next year. According to media reports, many of the displaced had been housed by families, and others in schools and emergency accommodation which were however needed for school operations and other things. Both the Palestinian Authority, which is badly funded, and UNRWA are having a hard time providing alternative accommodation. The Israeli military claims to be operating against armed groups in the localities.

At the same time, attacks by Israeli settlers are continuing to increase. 80 new outposts had also been set up by the Israeli settler movement since the beginning of the war in Gaza in October 2023. These are unofficial, unauthorised settlements which are frequently established by extremist activists. Many of these outposts are illegal under Israeli law, but they are frequently tolerated, and it is not unusual for them to be retroactively legalised.

According to information from the UN, checkpoints within the West Bank have increased considerably in number since October 2023, and now total as many as 793. It is said that there is currently almost one checkpoint per kilometre. These considerably restrict freedom of movement, and in some cases cause considerable delays when travelling from one place to another.²⁵

Pakistan

Security situation

On 23.04.25, armed offenders riding a motorbike shot and killed two security officials escorting a polio vaccination team in a residential area in Mastung district in Balochistan province. The medical staff were uninjured.

After the deadly attack on tourists on 22.04.25 in the Indian-administered part of Kashmir, for which India partially blames Pakistan, Pakistani and Indian security forces exchanged fire across the demarcation line known as the Line of Control.

According to Pakistani military sources, 54 armed fighters were killed who had crossed into the country from Afghanistan in the period from 25.04.-27.04.25 in general area Hassan Khel in the North Waziristan district, which is part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The fighters are alleged to belong to the Pakistani Taliban. In a statement of 27.04.25, the Pakistani government indirectly blamed India for the infiltration of these fighters.²⁶

Russian Federation

Prison sentences imposed on media workers connected with Navalny

On 15.04.25, a Moscow district court found three male and one female journalists guilty of participation in an extremist association in the shape of the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) of the late opposition figure Alexei Navalny, and sentenced them to five-and-a-half years in prison each, and to a subsequent working ban of three years, in accordance with Art. 282.1 of the Criminal Code. According to press reports, Antonina Favorskaja and Artjom Krieger, who work for the independent Russian news medium Sotavision, reported on Navalny's trial and detention conditions purely as journalists and observers, but did not work with his organisations. Also the connections between the co-accused freelance media workers Konstantin Gabov and Sergei Karelin and Navalny were hence rudimentary. For instance, the video of a street survey carried out by Gabov is said to have been posted in social media, including on Navalny's YouTube channel "Navalny LIVE".

In January 2025, several-year prison sentences had also been imposed on three former lawyers of Navalny for allegedly belonging to the FBK (cf. BN of 20.01.25).²⁷

Syria

Retaliatory murders committed on the Alawite population

Deadly attacks are still being carried out on Alawites, who have been alleged for decades of sympathising with the former Assad government merely as a result of their religion, and who sections of Syrian society regard as supporters or beneficiaries of corruption and human rights violations.

Latakia, Tartous and Homs governorates, which have a larger share of Alawites among the population, are particularly affected. Large numbers of individuals who were critical of the Assad government or who are said to have suffered repression at their hands have also been victims of killings, according to anecdotal reports. Between 30.03. and 15.04.25, according to information from the Director of the Syrian Observatory For Human Rights (SOHR), at least 42 persons are said to have been killed because of their religion. According to a press article of 27.04.25, 14 Alawites were abducted and killed in Homs city in the space of three days. An activist stated that security forces of the transitional government had attempted to seal off the Alawite neighbourhoods, but that the attackers had nonetheless managed to abduct Alawites whose bodies were found later.

The UNHCR estimates that some 30,000 Alawites have fled to Lebanon since the Assad government was toppled and the massacres among the Alawite population took place in early March 2025 (cf. BN of 17.04.25).

Individual offenders have been detained, but there are as yet no results in the criminal proceedings.²⁸

Continuing clashes between security forces and militias sympathetic to Assad

Especially in the coastal region, isolated incidents of fighting continue between the security forces of the transitional government and militias sympathetic to Assad. Most recently on 21.04.2025, militias attacked security forces of the transitional government in al-Muntar in Tartous governorate. This was the first such attack in Tartous in three weeks.

Ramy Makhoul, a cousin of toppled President Bashar al-Assad, announced via social media that he would be forming troops with former senior commander Suhail al-Hasan in order to provide protection against the rights violations which the transitional government was unable to deliver. Several days later, on 27.04.25, it was alleged via one of his social media profiles that 15 military divisions had been founded in Syria's coastal region alleged to number a total of 150,000 fighters. It was not initially possible to verify the information.²⁹

USA announce partial withdrawal of their troops

According to media reports, the USA will be withdrawing some of their troops from Syria. According to an article from an international newspaper, the partial withdrawal is said to have already begun on 17.04.2025 and to include a total of 600 members of the military. 1,400 troops would remain in Syria, according to the report. This is said to primarily affect three out of eight smaller military bases in Deir ez-Zor, in the northeast of Syria.

International observers fear that a smaller US presence will enable ISIS, which was initially less active after the toppling of the Assad government, but according to one expert was now however carrying out several attacks per month, to regain strength.³⁰

Tunisia

Anti-government demonstrations after three die in school building collapse

On 14.04.25, a dilapidated wall in a school building collapsed, killing three students in the central town of Mazouna. Civil defence authorities stated that two more individuals had been seriously injured in the incident.

On the next day, hundreds of the town's residents gathered for protests near the National Guard headquarters, and to demand that those responsible be called to account. They also decried the general neglect and the country's crumbling, ageing infrastructure. Witnesses reported that the demonstrators had burnt car tyres, blocked roads and demolished a government vehicle. All shops and schools in the area remained closed according to media reports. Demonstrations in Tunis were also attended by hundreds of people, with demonstrators chanting anti-government slogans and calling for the government to step down. The UGTT trade union confederation called for schools nationwide to go on strike in protest at "the authorities' failure to find real and serious solutions to save public schools".

A steep increase in anti-government protests has been observed across the board in recent months, which analysts attribute to 'explosive' discontent, in particular among young people, as a result of an economic and social crisis which is getting worse. There have already been several incidents since the beginning of the year in which Tunisians set fire to themselves in public and died. This is reminiscent of the self-immolation of vegetable seller Mohamed Bouazizi on 17.12.10 in Sidi Bouzid, an event which is regarded as having directly triggered the revolution in Tunisia and the Arab Spring.³¹

Sentences handed down in the “conspiracy trial”, long prison sentences for opposition figures

After another day of hearings on 18.04.2025, on 19.04.25 a court in Tunis handed down the sentences in the mass trial of 40 detained opposition figures, as well as anti-government media figures and business people whom prosecutors are accusing of “conspiracy against state security” and “terrorism” (cf. BN of 10.03.25 and 14.04.25).

Referring to a report of the state news agency TAP, media initially stated that the accused, some of whom had already been in prison for more than two years whilst some had been able to flee abroad, were sentenced to between 13 and 66 years' imprisonment. Later reports speak of sentences of between four and 66 years.

Furthermore, Ahmed Souab, one of the most prominent defence lawyers in the case, was arrested in the early morning of 21.04.25 after police searched his home. Local media report that he was accused of “threatening to commit terrorist crimes” in a statement made after the sentencing criticising political influence exerted on the judiciary.

President Kais Saied is accused of having undermined judicial independence since he dissolved parliament in 2021 and began ruling by decree. He also abolished the independent Supreme Judicial Council in 2022. According to a report recently published by HRW, Tunisia's government is increasingly relying on arbitrary detention and politically-motivated prosecutions to intimidate, punish and silence its critics.

According to media reports, the defendants' lawyers and relatives have already said that they will appeal against the judgment. Anti-government demonstrations took place once more in the capital Tunis in the days following the sentencing.³²

Türkiye

Human rights violations report from Istanbul Bar Association

The Centres for Human, Children's, Women's and Lawyers' Rights, which form part of the Istanbul Bar Association, published on 22.04.25 reports on rights violations committed after the apprehension of the mayor of the metropolitan municipality of Istanbul Ekrem İmamoğlu (cf. BN of 24.03.25).

The total of 66 pages documented incidents targeting demonstrators in the period from 19.03. to 29.03.25. It was claimed amongst other things that there had been excessive police force, arbitrary detentions, sexual assaults and denial of a legal hearing. There were allegations of serious irregularities in the police, judiciary and prisons. These are said not to be individual cases, but systematic, multi-layered breaches of the law in violation of international human rights standards and Turkish constitutional law.³³

Regulation partially banning caesarean deliveries

On 19.04.25, a new regulation was published in the Official Gazette banning planned caesarean deliveries at specific medical centres. At a meeting held on the same day, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed his concern regarding the falling birth rate. He stated that the declining population was a greater threat to the country than a war. Both young people who did not marry, as well as the construction industry which was reacting to this by building smaller homes, were said to deserve criticism.

In a television interview of 24.04.25, health minister Kemal Memişoğlu confirmed the government's regulation. Spouses should have several children in order to be a proper family.

On 15.04.25, players ran onto the field during a Süper Lig football game with a banner of the health ministry propagating vaginal birth and condemning medically-unnecessary caesarean deliveries. Women's rights organisations consider the moves to be particularly an encroachment on women's rights of self-determination.³⁴

Ukraine

Conditions for a ceasefire

According to media reports of 19.04.25, US President Trump, without naming a specific timeline, has threatened to cease his attempts to mediate between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (RF) if no agreement is reached “very shortly”. According to media information of 22.04.25, in the face of increasing impatience on the part of the US administration, President Putin suddenly appears to be open to engaging in bilateral talks with Ukraine for the first time since Russia’s full-scale invasion, after having previously once more called for presidential elections to be held in Ukraine and repeatedly referred to President Zelenskyy as holding office illegitimately. According to reports, the talks about a possible ceasefire that had been scheduled to be held in London with foreign ministers on 23.04.25 were downgraded to a meeting with lower-level officials after US Secretary of State Rubio pulled out at short notice. The cancellation was reportedly prompted by Zelenskyy’s rejection of a US proposal that the USA might formally recognise Russian control over the peninsula of Crimea, which the Ukrainian President referred to as a breach of both the Ukrainian constitution and of the Trump administration’s 2018 Crimea statement calling on the RF to end its occupation of Crimea. According to media sources, the US proposals would mean freezing the current frontline, tolerating de facto Russian control of almost all occupied Ukrainian territories, and renunciation of the Ukrainian goal of NATO membership. In return, the USA would take back the sanctions imposed on the RF.

Whilst according to reports of 23.04.25, the EU reacted to this with astonishment, and the Ukrainian government is seen as being willing to negotiate, but not to capitulate, US Vice President Vance is said to have unequivocally reaffirmed Washington’s expectations once more: Either both sides accept the US proposals, or the USA will withdraw from the negotiation process. According to media assessments and political analyses, the US proposals brought Washington into line with the Kremlin’s ideas, whilst Kyiv would only receive promises, such as a “robust security guarantee” provided by European countries, evidently with no US participation, and reconstruction aid, without any indication as to who was to foot the bill. Kyiv is said, by contrast, to be continuing to call for strong US security guarantees, and according to media information of 26.04.25 is working on a counterproposal to the US plans which no longer mentions that the entire territory occupied by the RF is to be restored to Ukraine in full, and also no longer insists on the country joining NATO. After talks that took place between Trump and Zelenskyy on the sidelines of Pope Francis’ funeral in the Vatican on 26.04.25, and in view of ongoing Russian airstrikes, President Trump is said to have expressed doubts as to whether Putin is seeking peace, and to have threatened to impose fresh sanctions on the RF. The Kremlin was said to have then indicated its willingness to engage in direct and unconditional negotiations with Ukraine.³⁵

Civilian victims

According to media information of 14.04.25, at least four persons were killed as a result of Russian shelling in and around the city of Kupiansk (Kharkiv oblast). On 15.04.25, media reported two civilian fatalities in Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk oblasts. According to media sources, at least five people were killed in a Russian drone attack in Dnipro on 16.04.25. On the same day, a Russian attack in Kherson had claimed the life of one person. According to information from the governor of 17.04.25, two people died in Nikopol (Dnipropetrowsk oblast) as a result of Russian shelling. According to reports, one person each was killed by Russian attacks in Kharkiv and Sumy in the night of 17.-18.04.25. According to information from the government, a Russian missile attack on 18.04.25 caused one fatality and injured 112 people. On the same day, one person also apparently died in a Russian drone attack in Sumy. According to official sources of 18.04.25, two persons were killed in a Russian drone attack in Kherson oblast. According to reports from the responsible mayor, a Russian missile attack on Kharkiv on the same day caused one fatality and injured 54. According to media reports, at least three were killed in Russian attacks in Kherson oblast on 21.04.25. According to information from the governor, nine people were killed in a Russian drone attack in the city of Marhanets (Dnipropetrowsk oblast) in the night of 22.-23.04.25. According to information from the governor, three persons had previously died on 22.04.25 in a drone attack on the city of Myrnohrad (Donetsk oblast) and one person in a missile attack in Zaporizhzhia. On 23.04.25, the responsible governor reported one death caused by Russian bombing in Sloviansk (Donetsk oblast). According to media reports, a Russian missile strike on 24.04.25 led to at least twelve fatalities and injured 90. According to official sources, three persons died in Russian airstrikes in the night from 24.-25.04.25 in the city of Pavlohrad (Dnipropetrowsk oblast). Russian drone attacks killed one person each in Kamianske and Nikopol

(Dnipropetrowsk oblast) in the night of 25.-26.04.25, according to media reports. According to reports, Russian airstrikes on 27.04.25 caused three fatalities in Kostiantynivka (Donezk oblast) and one in Pavlohrad.³⁶

War events, arms, prisoner exchange, dismissal of a governor, sabotage

According to media information of 16.04.25, Ukraine has extended martial law for another three months up to 06.08.25. According to a statement by President Zelenskyy, Ukraine manufactures 40 percent of the arms used in support of its defensive war itself. The Ukrainian arms industry is said to be currently employing around 300,000 people. At the same time, citing reporting by Ukrainian security and intelligence agencies, Zelenskyy accused China of supplying arms and of Chinese nationals being involved in weapons production on Russian territory. The Chinese foreign ministry had dismissed the accusations as “groundless”.

According to reports, on 19.04.25 President Putin ordered at short notice and bilaterally a temporary halt to the fighting for Easter (19.04.25, 6 p.m. – 20.04.25, 12 p.m.) out of “humanitarian considerations”. President Zelenskyy also stated his willingness. Russia was said not to have commented on Zelenskyy’s proposal to halt strikes on civilian infrastructure for 30 days. Both sides had subsequently accused one another of violating the “Easter truce”. On 19.04.25, a total of 500 prisoners of war had been swapped in a further prisoner exchange.

On 15.04.25, according to reports, the governor of Sumy oblast, Volodymyr Artyukh, was dismissed after he made comments implying that the Russian attack on 13.04.25 in which 34 people died, most of them civilians (cf. BN of 14.04.25), had targeted a military gathering. The governor had previously confirmed such a gathering in honour of soldiers in the city at the time of the attack.

According to media reports, the Security Service of Ukraine SBU stated on 16.04.25 that it had detained nine people, including five juveniles, accused of sabotage on behalf of Russia. It was said that the explosives seized were intended to be used in attacks on residential and railway infrastructure, amongst other targets.³⁷

Energy infrastructure

According to media reports, the Kremlin stated on 18.04.25 that the 30-day moratorium on attacks on energy infrastructure had expired. Both warring parties had accused one another of breaches of the agreement up to the end. President Zelenskyy is said to have accused the RF of reducing the number of strikes on Ukrainian energy facilities during this period, whilst stepping up attacks on civilian infrastructure instead.³⁸

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