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Group 62 – Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

17 June 2019

Afghanistan

Combat actions and military operations

In the last weeks, media have reported about combat actions mainly in eastern Nangarhar, southeastern Paktia, southern Farah, Helmand, Kandahar and Zabul as well as northeastern Kunduz provinces.

In northern Faryab province as well as in Baghlan, Kunduz and Paktia provinces, several dozen individuals were liberated from Taliban prisons. Two prominent Taliban leaders were killed, one in western Farah and one in northern Sar-e-Pul province. In Kunduz province, a Taliban headquarter was successfully destroyed.

IS claims responsibility for suicide attack in Jalalabad

On 13 June 2019, a suicide attack in Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar province, killed at least 11 people and severely injured another dozen individuals.

Responsibility for the attack was claimed by IS cells formerly operating in Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS or ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). After the IS group lost influence in the Middle Eastern region, former militants have joined the ISKP (Islamic State Khorasan Province) operating in Afghanistan. The number of active combatants who initially had been operating in the eastern parts of Nangarhar province has meanwhile risen to several thousand (see BN of 3 June 2019). Now, IS insurgents are active also in Nangarhar's neighbouring provinces of Nuristan, Kunar and Laghman.

Algeria

Arrests

Prominent members of former President Bouteflika's regime have been arrested on charges of corruption, among them the two former PM Abdelmalek Sellal and Ahmed Ouyahia and several former ministers including transport minister Abdelghania Zaalane and finance minister Karim Djoudi. After President Bouteflika's resignation, investigations were started following pressure from protesters and the military.

Protest marches

Mass rallies are continuing, with demonstrators demanding the arrest of prominent supporters of former President Bouteflika's regime and an end to interventions by political elites ('le pouvoir'). Last Friday, the protesters rallied for the 17th week in a row; so far, the marches have remained peaceful.

Protests against interim President Bensalah

Interim President Bensalah, whose term of office is scheduled to end on 9 July 2019, has stated that he would remain in power. After Algeria's constitutional council had cancelled the presidential elections planned for 4 July 2019, postponing them indefinitely, protest marches were continued on 7 June after Friday prayers.

Benin

Former President under virtual house arrest; unrest

Former President Boni Yayi (2006-2016) has been placed under virtual house arrest, with police controlling access to his house in Cotonou. He had supported protests against the exclusion of opposition parties in the parliamentary elections held on 28 April 2019.

On 10 June 2019, unrest broke out in Boni Yayi's hometown of Tchaourou (Département Borgou), when police officers arrested two individuals in connection with their leading role in the protests against the parliamentary elections. Also on 13 June, violent clashes occurred when police broke up a demonstration by people who had erected barricades. On the same day, protesters and police also clashed in Savé (Département Collines). Unconfirmed reports say that in both towns, dozens of people have been injured as of 15 June; in Savé, at least two individuals were reported to have been killed.

Cameroon

Severe Boko Haram attack on Lake Chad island

In the night to 10 June 2019, over 300 Boko Haram fighters attacked the island of Darak in Lake Chad. In the fights with the security forces, 16 soldiers of the multi-national Joint Task Force were killed, as well as 64 terrorists and 8 civilians. The attack by Boko Haram was one of the bloodiest in years.

China

Hong Kong: mass protests against extradition law

On 16 June 2019, nearly 2 million out of 7m Hong Kong inhabitants rallied against the planned changes to the extradition law. The 2m figure was given by the organizers; police put it at 338,000. The protesters demanded the complete withdrawal of the new bill and the resignation of the city's chief executive Carrie Lam.

The rally had been preceded by a protest march on 9 June with 240,000 participants (figure given by the police; the organisers put it at more than 1m). After the rally had ended peacefully, police used force against some protesters who tried to storm the parliamentary building.

On 12 June, thousands of protesters blocked access to the parliamentary building in the city's Admiralty area, thus preventing a debate on the extradition bill in the legislative council of Hong Kong. The protests escalated after the city's leadership rejected the demands of the protesters to withdraw the bill. Police dissolved the rally with tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets. Around 80 people were injured in the clashes. Subsequently, the debate on the extradition bill was postponed. Initially, the amendment had been expected to pass its final vote on 20 June. On 15 June, Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam temporarily suspended the amendments.

The proposed amendments would allow criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China upon request of the Chinese authorities. Observers fear that activists and government critics, who so far can operate in more freedom than in mainland China, may be subjected to extradition and to a violation of their human rights. The judiciary system in mainland China is neither independent nor does it meet international standards. Besides, politically motivated convictions of dissenters give rise to concern.

Since 1997, Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China; according to the Chinese constitution, the city is under the authority of the Chinese central government, but enjoys a high degree of autonomy. For example, on 4 June 2019, a rally was staged in Hong Kong to mark 30 years since the bloody crackdown on students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square; police says that the rally was attended by more than 30,000 people, the organisers put the figure at around 180,000. Such rallies are banned in mainland China.

DR Congo

Clashes in Kinshasa between supporters of Kabila and Tshisekedi

On 12 June 2019, violent clashes erupted in Kinshasa between supporters of the UDPS, whose leader Felix Tshisekedi had been sworn in as President in January 2018, and supporters of the PPRD party founded by former President Joseph Kabila. The clashes were reported from 12th Avenue, from Boulevard Sendwe and from Boulevard Lumumba. For examples, fights erupted in front of the headquarters of PPRD's youth league in the 6th Street in Kinshasa's Limete district. Several party offices of the pro-Kabila 'Common Front for Congo' FCC were looted. Police dispersed the fighters with tear gas and warning shots.

The clashes had been preceded by a protest march of militant PPRD youths (the so-called ‘Red Berets’) in front of the people’s palace (seat of the national assembly) in the morning of 12 June 2019 in response to a rally by UDPS youths on the same location two days before. Apparently, some UDPS supporters attacked several parliamentary members of the Kabila faction, accusing them to have insulted President Tshisekedi. At present, the two factions of Tshisekedi and Kabila are joined by a government coalition. However, no agreement has yet been reached on the ministerial positions in the cabinet.

Iraq

Security situation

Attacks are continuing in Iraq, leaving many dead and wounded. For example, a village in Salahuddin province was attacked by IS insurgents on 6 June 2019; in the incident, two civilians were killed and two others injured. On the same day, a bomb attack northeast of Mosul left 4 firefighters wounded. On 8 June, three bomb explosions were launched in Anbar province; one police officer was wounded. In Diyala province, at least 2 civilians were killed and one individual was wounded following bomb explosions in the time period 8-12 June. On 11 June, a grenade attack northeast of Baghdad left one security officer dead and 4 others wounded. On 13 June, a suicide attack on a liquor store in Baghdad’s centre injured 2 civilians. On 15 June, two members of the Popular Mobilization Forces PMF were injured in a car bomb explosion northwest of Hilla city in Babil province.

On 16 June 2019 the Iraqi army, supported by the Federal Police and the Popular Mobilization Forces PMF, started a major military operation to detect IS fighters north of Baquba in Diyala province.

On 9 June 2019 the United Nations Mine Action Service stated that 70 percent of unexploded mines have not yet been cleared.

Farmland fires

On 9 June 2019, press reports said that around 700 families have fled to Mosul due to massive fires devastating wheat and barley fields near Sinjar in Ninive province. Apparently, two farmers lost their lives. Iraqi security forces blame IS insurgents for burning crop fields. In the previous week, there have been several large crop fires in the region.

Barzani sworn in as head of Kurdish region

On 10 June 2019 Nechirvan Barzani, nephew of long-standing President Massoud Barzani, was sworn in as President of northern Iraq’s Kurdish region. Two weeks before, the Kurdish regional parliament had elected him as President.

Death penalty for IS supporters in Iraq

In the beginning of June 2019, an Iraqi court sentenced two more French IS suspects to death. According to Iraqi judicial circles, this brings the number of French citizens convicted to death for joining the IS terror militia to more than 9. The verdicts can be appealed against.

Kazakhstan

Interim President wins elections

On 9 June 2019, the electoral commission announced that interim President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev won the early elections held in Kazakhstan with 70.8 percent of the votes. He had been appointed interim President in March 2019 after the resignation of former long-standing head of government Nursultan Nazarbayev. The opposition politician and former journalist Amirzhan Kosanov came second with 16 percent. However, the OSCE said that the elections had been neither free nor fair. Both ahead of and during the elections, numerous protest rallies were staged throughout the country. Hundreds of people protesting against social shortcomings and corruption were arrested by the security forces. In total, media report that 670 individuals were detained, of whom 311 have already been released again. Around 280 people received fines or warnings.

Kenya

Deadly attack on police vehicle

On 15 June 2019, al-Shabaab militants detonated an explosive device at a roadside and killed 8 police officers in Wajir county near the border to Somalia.

Lebanon

Attack on security forces in Tripoli

On 3 June 2019, a gunman shot dead four security officers and injured several more and then killed himself with an explosive belt. Apparently, he had been imprisoned between 2016 and 2017 for supporting the IS terror group. So far, no-one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Lebanese interior minister Raya al-Hassan said that the attacker had acted alone. On 4 June, the attacker's father and brother were arrested.

Lebanon/Syria

Restrictive measures against refugees from Syria

On 1 June 2019, the Lebanese labour ministry published a 13-point plan to address illegal foreign employment in the country. Starting from 10 June 2019, foreign workers are given one month to legalise their employment. The ministry noted that out of the estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees only 1,733 are holding valid work permits. The plan also provides for the implementation of existing legal rules such as the prohibition to exercise certain economic activities and renouncing work in case of registration with UNHCR.

Increasing pressure on Syrian refugees to return home

After a fire had broken out near a Syrian refugee settlement close to Deir al-Ahmar on 5 June 2019, tensions rose between Syrian refugees and local inhabitants. Apparently, at least one Lebanese firefighter was injured and over 30 Syrian refugees were arrested. Subsequently, the local authorities ordered the evacuation of the camp and imposed a curfew. Around 600 Syrian refugees left the settlement.

Until 9 June 2019, Syrian refugees in Aarsal had time to bring their homes in compliance with an order that all structures other than timber and plastic sheeting will be deconstructed. An estimated 5,682 hard structures made of concrete and 25,000 Syrian refugees including 15,000 children are affected by this measure. Activists regard such orders as 'push factors' intended to force Syrian refugees to return home and to prevent their permanent settlement in Lebanon.

On 12 June 2019, Amnesty International reported of restrictions in the renewals of residence permits and of an increasingly hostile environment.

Libya

Serraj proposes elections in 2019

On 16 June 2019, the leader of the Government of National Accord GNA proposed nationwide elections to be held in 2019 in order to end the ongoing civil war.

Fighting in Tripoli

On 13 June 2019, the WHO stated that since 4 April 2019, the fight for Tripoli has killed a total of 653 people, while 3,547 have been wounded.

Combat actions are still focused on Ain Zara and the international airport.

Mali

20 Jihadists killed

In a joint operation conducted by Malian and French soldiers in Akabar district (Ménaka sector), 20 Jihadists apparently lost their lives. The Malian military gave this information on 15 June 2016, but did not elaborate on further details.

Attack at a village in Mopti region claims scores of lives

In the night to 10 June 2019, an armed attack took place on a village of the Dogon ethnic group in Sangha municipality (Mopti region). First information says that at least 95 civilians were killed in the incident; 20 more individuals have been listed as missing since. The Malian government later corrected the number of victims giving a death toll of 35 including 24 children. No explanation was given for the large difference in figures. Local representatives of the municipality contradicted the adjusted figures and insisted on the original information of at least 95 dead. So far nothing has been known about the attackers. First, the government had talked of terrorists, but the incident could also have been a case of ethnically motivated violence. For several years, conflicts between herding Fulani/Pern and farming Dogon have been intensifying. This incident has already been the third heavy assault this year in Mali which hit only civilians (see also BN of 7 January and 25 March 2019).

Morocco

King grants Ramadan amnesty

In occasion of the end of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, King Mohammed VI pardoned 755 prisoners, among them 60 convicted for participating in the activities of the opposition Hirak movement. Now, Moroccan minister for human rights Moustapha Ramid hopes that also the leaders of the Hirak movement who were convicted to 20 years in prison, will be considered in future amnesties.

Nicaragua

Amnesty

On 8 June 2019, an amnesty law was passed by parliament governing the release of prisoners who have been arrested in relation to the internal conflict since April 2018. Last March, the government had announced to release all these prisoners by 18 June 2019. The amnesty will only be given if the released will not take part in demonstrations again. Also, the amnesty law provides for impunity for all acts of violence conducted by security forces and other supporters of the government. On 10 and 11 June 2019, a total of 106 prisoners were released under the amnesty; before, several hundreds of prisoners had been released from prison and put under house arrest since March 2019.

Nigeria

At least 34 villagers killed by armed attackers in Zamfara State

In the night to 14 June 2019, an armed gang attacked the remote villages of Gidan Wawo-Katuru, Tungar Kaho-Galadi and Kyalido-Katuru (Shinkafi Local Government Area) in northwestern Zamfara State. In the incident, at least 34 people were killed and several houses burned down. Zamfara has been at the centre of a wave of attacks by bandits targeting villages for several years.

Pakistan

Former president Zardari arrested in Islamabad

On 17 June 2019, former Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari was arrested from his house in Islamabad, after the local High Court had rejected an application seeking extension of his pre-arrest bail. The lawmaker is accused of money laundering. Apparently, he removed considerable sums of money out of the country and

transferred them to fake bank accounts. Members of the Pakistani Peoples Party also seem to be involved in the case. Zardari had already been detained over accusations of corruption for several years; however, no final judgement has ever been delivered against him. Due of his alleged corruptibility, he has been nicknamed 'Mr 10 percent'. He had been married to former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto who was murdered in 2007, and served as Pakistan's President from 2008 to 2013. After the assassination of his wife, he took over the PPP.

Pakistan/Afghanistan

Situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan

On 17 June 2019, negotiations started in Pakistan's capital Islamabad between representatives of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and the UNHCR on the situation of Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries including possibilities for return to their home country. Official sources say that 1.4m registered refugees from Afghanistan are currently living Pakistan. Estimates suggest that as many unregistered people can be added to this figure. According to the UN, more than half of them are second and third-generation refugees who were born in Pakistan. Although Pakistan adheres to the 'ius soli' citizenship rights, these people are not granted Pakistani citizenship but receive so-called Proof of Registration (PoR) cards instead, allowing them a temporary stay in Pakistan and free movement in the country, but neither the acquisition of real estate or of certain sorts of movable property nor the attendance of public educational institutions. Also, these refugees face deportation to Afghanistan after the expiry of their PoR card. In general, this document ceases to be valid as soon as the individual concerned leaves the country. The document looks similar to an identity card and bears the heading 'Afghan Citizen - Proof of Registration'. Most of the Afghan refugees live together in certain quarters or in camps like the Muhajir Camp in Karachi, capital of Sindh province. Many Afghan refugees of the Shiite Hazara minority and have settled in a quarter of Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province; this quarter is called Hazara Town.

Russian Federation

Jehovah's witnesses arrested in Dagestan

Media reports say that 15 Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested on 6 June 2019 by the Russian security authorities in the northern Caucasian Republic of Dagestan. They are accused of having organised conspiratorial meetings with the aim to study extremist literature. However, a speaker of the group has not confirmed the number of the arrested. He said that according to information available to him, four members of the Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested on 1 June 2019 during house searches in four cities in Dagestan.

Hundreds of protesters arrested

On 12 June 2019, over 200 people were detained in Moscow by the Russian police during an unauthorised march in support of the journalist Ivan Golunov. Among those detained at the rally was well-known journalist and Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny.

Ivan Golunov had been arrested on 6 June for alleged drug trafficking. The investigative journalist had reported on corruption in Russia. Golunov said that he was mistreated in custody. His detention triggered a wave of public outrage, with three leading Russian newspapers and a large number of Russian and international journalists declaring solidarity with Golunov. He has also received support by the population, with vigils and petitions being organised for him. On 11 June, the Russian interior minister announced that all charges against Golunov have been dropped. On the same day, he released from house arrest.

Somalia

Attacks

On 15 June 2019, several people were killed or injured in two blasts aimed at checkpoints near the airport and the presidential palace in Mogadishu. Al Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Combat actions

On 3 June 2019, the Somali National Army SNA apparently captured the villages of Ali Hared and Jungle in Bardhere district (Gedo region). Several al-Shabaab militants were killed or injured in the incident.

On 8 June, al-Shabaab fighters took the town of Af-Urur near the Galgala Mountains in Puntland. Before, the Puntland Security Forces had retreated from the area. However, on 11 June, the security forces recaptured the town.

On 12 June, the Somali Special Forces unit Danab conducted an operation against al-Shabaab insurgents in the village of Arare near Kismayo. Apparently, several al-Shabaab militia men were killed in the incident.

Civilians executed

Reports say that on 14 June 2019, nine civilians were killed on the outskirts of Galkayo town (Mudug region) by a local militia as a revenge for the killing of a policeman by al Shabaab. The civilians who all belonged to the Rahanweyn clan were suspected of cooperating with al Shabaab.

Hunger and displacement

UNHCR says that 5.4 million people may be affected by food insecurity by July, 2.2 million of them would be in great need without humanitarian aid. The main reason for this situation are the below-average precipitations in the rainy seasons between April and June 2019 and in autumn 2018 (see BN of 20 May 2019). Most affected are the Sanaag, Sool, Awdal, Bari, Nugaal, Mudug, Galgadud and Hiraaan regions. The last drought in Somalia between 2016 and 2017 had caused the displacement of over 1m people. Many of them have not yet returned to their homes.

Islamic State in Somalia

On 3 June 2019, the United States Africa Command US AFRICOM said that the Islamic State in Somalia ISS is continuing to recruit new fighters and has currently about 300 combatants. Most of them are active in Puntland. Since April 2019, AFRICOM has conducted several air raids against the ISS.

Sudan

Violent crackdown on protesters claims scores of lives

In the morning of 3 June 2019, the situation escalated in Sudan's capital Khartoum when security forces cracked down on the mass sit-in of demonstrators on the square outside the military headquarters, breaking up the blockade. Current information of the Sudanese health ministry on the fatalities give a number of 61 dead, while opposition sources put the figure at 108. Apparently, more than 300 people were injured in the incident. Security forces were also reported to have attacked hospitals and hospital staff. The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces RSF were held responsible for the violence against the demonstrators. The opposition speaks of a 'bloody massacre'. Following the incident, the military transitional council has withdrawn from all agreements with the opposition and announced that new elections would be held in 9 months.

A special session the UN Security Council was convened to discuss the Sudan crisis. On 6 June 2019, the African Union AU communicated that Sudan was to be excluded from the AU with immediate effect. The country would not be allowed to take part in AU activities until a civilian transitional government is installed.

After the violent suppression of the protest, the opposition called for a general strike and for civil disobedience. The strike began on 9 June 2019 and was terminated two days later by the opposition who described it as a successful action of resistance against the military transitional council. Also, the opposition announced its willingness to start new negotiations with the military with the help of a mediator.

Syria

Situation in the northwest of the country

Civilian helpers and other civilians have reported that on 10 June 2019, at least 25 people, most of them civilians, were killed in air strikes conducted by the Russian military on several villages in the south of Idlib province. UN reports say that more than 300,000 people have left the affected areas, taking refuge in Syria's northern border area with Turkey. Also on 10 June, the UN Special Envoy to Syria for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs warned that up to 2 million refugees from Syria may seek refuge in Turkey if the situation in Syria's northwestern part deteriorates any further.

On 12 June, Russian media reported that after six weeks of heavy fighting, a ceasefire was successfully negotiated between the Syrian government and the rebel groups in Idlib. The negotiations apparently involved Russia, which is supporting President Assad's regime, and Turkey, which is supporting the rebels. The armistice was due to enter in force in the night to 13 June, but neither Russia nor Turkey have disclosed any information regarding the conditions or the duration of the agreement.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, 26 pro-government fighters and 8 rebels were killed in fights on 15 June. The number of civilians killed since 30 April 2019 has increased to a total of over 300.

Rebel territories: Outpost of Turkish military under fire

Already in the morning of 13 June 2019, the Turkish defence minister accused the Syrian government of having heavily attacked an outpost of the Turkish army in Sheir Maghar. Three Turkish soldiers received minor injuries in the incident. In turn, the Russian military accused rebel militias to be responsible for the attack and conducted several air strikes in the area. On 16 June the village of Morek on the border between Hama and Idlib provinces, which is another Turkish outpost, was shelled, suspectedly with intention. For the first time, the Turkish military responded to the attack by shelling Syrian positions with heavy artillery.

Food supply chain interrupted by fights

On 11 June 2019, the UN World Food Program stated that the aid organisations and their partners have been forced to stop their activities in the south of Idlib. Since May 2019, approx. 7,000 people in the area around Qalaat al-Madiq have been left without UN assistance.

Kurdish fighters killed by Turkish military

On 11 June 2019, the Turkish defence ministry stated that the army had killed 10 Kurdish fighters in the Tel Rifaat region. The offensive was conducted in revenge for the killing of a Turkish soldier.

Turkey

EU progress report

In its annual progress report for the accession candidate countries, the European Commission notes regress in the areas of rule of law and basic laws for Turkey. The country has moved further away from the EU, the Commission says. In its report of 29 May 2019, the Commission voices serious concerns regarding the dismissals, arrests and detentions during the state of emergency imposed after the attempted coup in 2016. Another point of concern was the recent annulment of the mayoral elections in Istanbul, after the opposition candidate had won the first round of voting, and the appointment of second ranking candidates in several cities in the country's south-east. The lifting of the state of emergency in July 2018 has not led to a comprehensive repeal of the laws which are drastically curtailing the rights of activists, human rights campaigners, journalists and academics. The EU Commission sees grave setbacks in the field of basic rights, e.g. regarding the rights to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

Additionally, the introduction of a presidential system has weakened the monitoring role of parliament and has led to more politicisation of the public administration. Besides, the new system has given the President the power to nominate the heads of the majority of the public authorities. The Commission also notes setbacks in the fight against widespread corruption.

All in all, the European Commission report holds out little hope for EU accession. The Turkish vice minister of foreign affairs Faruk Kaymakci described the report as unjust and not giving evidence of the current situation in Turkey.

Ukraine

Crimean Tatars arrested on charges of extremism

On the Crimean Peninsula which had been annexed by the Russian Federation, a court in Simferopol has convicted 8 Crimean Tatars to two months custody on charges of extremism. On 10 June 2019, the men had been arrested by officers of the Russian Federal Security Service FSB and of the police who conducted house

searches. The FSB states that the defendants are members of the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir which is banned in Russia but not in Ukraine. Already in March and April 2019, the Russian security service had detained 24 Crimean Tatars on suspicion of membership in the Islamist group. For human rights organisations, these arrests are part of a campaign against members of the Turkic-speaking Crimean Tatars and others who have objected to the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

Uzbekistan

Presidential pardon for prisoners

Apparently, a total of 361 prisoners were pardoned by a decree signed by Uzbek President on 4 June 2019, marking the end of the month of Ramadan. The prison terms of 214 inmates will be shortened.

Venezuela

Border to Columbia re-opened

On 8 June 2019, the border crossings to Columbia were reopened; they had been closed for roughly four months. There were long queues and frequent cross-border transits. In the previous months, activities had sharply increased at several irregular border crossing points; the closure had not led to an effective prevention of either smuggling or emigration.

Staggering exodus

On 14 June 2019, UNHCR released the latest figures on refugee and migrant movements out of Venezuela. While in 2015, the number of refugees had been slightly below 700.000, it has risen to over 4 million by the middle of 2019, signalling a drastic increase of the exodus. The country has a population of roughly 31 million.

Vietnam

Activist sentenced to jail

On 6 June 2019, a court in Ben Tre province sentenced environmental activist Nguyen Ngoc Anh to six years imprisonment for disseminating criticism against the government.

Yemen

Air attacks

In the time period 2-14 June 2019, the Saudi-led coalition conducted a series of attacks on positions of the Houthi rebels:

on 2 June in Sabra district, Ibb governorate, and in Sanhan district, Sanaa governorate;

on 7 June on the Nahdeen military camp near Sanaa and on bases in Kitaf and Mounabih, Saadah governorate;

on 11 June in Abs and Haradah districts, Hajjah governorate;

on 13 June in Sanaa, Dhamar and Saadah governorates;

on 14 June near the capital Sanaa and on the towns of Dhamar (Dhamar governorate) and al-Matama (al-Jawf governorate).

Combat actions

On 6 June 2019, pro-government forces apparently captured several Houthi positions in al-Azariq district, al-Dhali governorate.

On 9 June, several Houthi rebels appear to have been killed when government forces attacked their site in Sadaah governorate.

On 7 June, the Security Belt Forces (supported by the UAE) apparently killed 5 people and abducted 3 others during Friday prayers in a mosque in Azrak district, al-Dhali governorate. The Security Belt Forces claimed that those killed were Houthi rebels.

On 7, 10 and 11 June, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) attacked the Shabwani Elite Forces (who are also supported by the UAE) in al-Bayda and Abyan governorates. Two days before the first attack, AQAP had released a statement warning the Shabwani forces of the imminent attack.

Houthi attack on Saudi Arabia

Last week, Houthi rebels conducted several attacks on Saudi Arabia's Abha International Airport and the southern city of Khamis Mushait. In one of the attacks on the airport, 26 people were injured. The Houthi rebels are increasingly launching attacks on the southern parts of Saudi Arabia with drones and rockets (see BN of 27 May 2019). Apparently, the attack on the airport is the first in which civilians were hurt.

Arrests in connection with Eid al-Fitr celebration

On 4 June 2019, Houthi rebels arrested 25 people in a mosque near the capital Sanaa who were celebrating Eid al-Fitr marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Before, the religious authorities of the Houthis had issued a decree that Eid al-Fitr would start on 5 June in contrast to a decree from President Hadi's government that it would start on 4 June.

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