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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

23 October 2023

Afghanistan

Earthquakes and humanitarian situation

Another earthquake (force 4.1) occurred in Herat province on 19.10.23. The UN estimates that over 21,500 houses have been destroyed and 17,000 severely damaged in the earthquakes in Herat province (cf. BN of 09.10. and 16.10.23). More than 154,000 people are believed to have been affected by the consequences of the earthquakes. Women account for a disproportionately large share of this total, because they were at home when the earthquakes occurred, while many men were at work outside. Both directly affected people and those whose homes have escaped damage are currently staying outside for fear of new earthquakes. In the city of Herat a woman is reported to have died because she had no protection from the cold of the night.

Security situation

On 21.10.23 the minister for energy and water appointed by the Taliban declared in a public speech in Kunduz province that Al Qaeda is not a terrorist organisation, but “brothers” of the Taliban.

Persecution

A man is reported to have died on 17.10.23 after being tortured by the Taliban. He was arrested by the Taliban some six months ago, after having shared a photograph of the National Resistance Front (NRF) on Facebook.

French-Afghan journalist Mortaza Behboudi was released from Taliban custody on 18.10.23. He was arrested in January, shortly after entering the country, and accused of spying.

On 22.10.23 women staged a demonstration in Kabul to demand the release of a number of women’s rights campaigners from Taliban custody.

A woman and a man were subjected to a public flogging in Bamiyan province after a Taliban court had found them guilty of adultery.

It is reported that several thousand Afghans are being deported from Pakistan to Afghanistan on a daily basis. All people who are illegally resident in Pakistan are to have left the country by 01.11.23 (cf. BN of 09.10. and 16.10.23). The Taliban are said to have set up camps at the border crossings. A number of aid organisations have repeatedly called on Pakistan not to deport these people, as many of them are waiting for an American visa and/or are subject to persecution by the Taliban.

Argentina

Presidential election goes to a run-off

After the majority of the ballot papers had been counted, it emerged that the incumbent minister for economic affairs, Sergio Massa of the centre-left governing coalition “Unión por la Patria”, had unexpectedly won around 36 % of the vote in the presidential election on 22.10.23. He will contest a run-off on 19.11.23 with Javier Milei, who