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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Security situation

Unknown persons are said to have shot at a Sufi shrine in Baghlan province on 21.11.24, killing at least ten people. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. The Taliban have reportedly arrested a number of people. The National Resistance Front claimed on 23.11.24 that it had carried out 41 attacks on the Taliban in eleven provinces in the space of one month, killing 72 Taliban and injuring 43. The Afghanistan Freedom Front also reports further attacks on the Taliban.¹

Persecution

A report substantiated by satellite images shows that the Taliban have destroyed settlements covering some 1.56 km² in Kabul since they assumed power, driving the residents from their homes. The settlements were inhabited primarily by internally displaced people and other poor segments of the population and the majority of those affected are said to have been ethnic Hazaras and Tajiks. The report cites victims claiming that in some instances people were still in the houses when they were destroyed by the Taliban. As no alternative accommodation was provided, the majority of the families concerned are now homeless.

Between 18.11. and 21.11.24 at least eight people were publicly flogged for "moral corruption" in Baghlan, Khost, Paktika and Samangan provinces.

On 18.11.24 the Taliban are said to have arrested a number of people in Panjshir province once again, including a former member of the security forces and two teachers. It is unclear what accusations they face.²

Humanitarian situation

According to information from the UN, one year after the series of earthquakes in Herat province more than 25,000 people are still living in inadequate accommodation and are unprepared for the winter. Adequate humanitarian aid is also lacking, due in part to a shortage of funds.³

Burkina Faso

Over a hundred people accused of involvement in terrorism

The government announced on 19.11.24 that it was freezing the assets of some 115 civilians and members of the judiciary for at least six months. The individuals concerned are accused of involvement in terrorist activities and/or funding terrorism. According to reports in the media, they include alleged members of jihadist groups as well as former president Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, former ministers, media representatives, members of the military, students, opposition figures, farmers and other civilians. Between 04.09. and 04.10.24 Burkinabe security forces arrested more than 350 people throughout the country on charges of spying and alleged conspiracy against the military government (cf. BN of 28.10.24).⁴

China

Hong Kong: Prison terms for 45 opposition figures

On 19.11.24 45 democracy activists received prison terms of varying lengths in Hong Kong's biggest national security trial to date on charges of conspiracy to subvert state power. The longest prison term of ten years was handed down to the legal scholar Benny Tai after the judges found that he had organised unofficial preliminary elections for the parliamentary election in 2020 as the "mastermind" behind the conspiracy (cf. BN of 01.03.21). The world-renowned democracy activist Joshua Wong is to serve four years and eight months in prison. 43 other individuals who were also involved in the preliminary elections, including three other election organisers, two former MPs, 16 former district councillors and twelve other activists, received custodial sentences ranging from four years and three months to seven years and nine months. Many of those convicted have already been in custody since charges were brought against them on 28.02.21. Two of the original total of 47 defendants were acquitted in May 2024.⁵

Colombia / United States of America

General Montoya banned from entering USA

On 22.11.24 the US State Department imposed bans on former Colombian general Mario Montoya Uribe and his closest family entering the country. According to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, these measures have been taken due to accusations that Montoya was involved in serious human rights violations during his time as commander-in-chief of the Colombian army between 2006 and 2008. In particular, he is alleged to have ordered extra-legal killings of civilians, which were subsequently wrongly depicted as cases of guerillas killed in combat. In the 2000s this practice, known as "falsos positivos", led to high death tolls during the internal armed conflict in Colombia when members of the armed forces received bounties for certain killing quotas. In August 2021 the Colombian chief public prosecutor's office announced that it intended to bring charges against Montoya because he was believed to be responsible for 104 murders between November 2007 and November 2008. This move was blocked by a court, however. In 2023 a special court charged Montoya with crimes against humanity in connection with the death or disappearance of 130 civilians.⁶

Gabon

Referendum: Approval for new constitution

In a referendum held on 16.11.24, Gabon's voters approved the constitution proposed by the military junta which has been in power for over a year, with more than 90 % voting in favour of the proposal. According to reports in the media, the amended constitution includes a restriction on the presidential tenure and provisions which prevents a president from being directly succeeded by members of his or her family. The powers of the executive are strengthened. The turn-out reportedly stood at over 50 %. There have been no reports of any incidents in connection with the referendum. Critical voices warn that some of the new provisions adopted into the constitution could help military ruler Brice Oligui Nguema to retain power on a long-term basis. After the military coup of August 2023, Oligui announced that he would return power in the oil-rich country to the civilian population after a transition period. It is assumed that Oligui will himself run in the presidential elections planned for August 2025 (cf. BN of 20.11.23).⁷

Ghana

Election preparations; opposition leader ahead in polls

The opinion research institute Global Info Analytics in Accra published poll ratings on the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections on 11.11.24. The poll's findings indicate that Ghana's most important opposition leader, John Dramani Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), is set to claim a 52 % share of the vote, ahead of the vice-president and presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Muhamudu Bawumia, with a 41 % share. Mahama was formerly president of the country from 2012 to 2017.

The main issues in this year's elections will be the economy, employment, education and infrastructure. The population is concerned above all about the rising cost of living as a result of continuing inflation. The high unemployment among young people in particular is prompting many of the latter to seek opportunities abroad. Illegal mining and the resultant water contamination recently sparked demonstrations on the streets by thousands of people and this remains a central issue for the elections (cf. BN of 30.09. and 14.10.24).

The presidential and parliamentary elections are planned for 07.12.24. Twelve candidates will be running for the presidency. As in previous elections, only the candidates of the two largest parties, NPP and NDC, have any realistic prospects of winning, however. Ghana is well-known in the region for its firm democracy and its orderly transitions of power.⁸

Guinea-Bissau

Parliamentary election postponed indefinitely; ongoing political crisis

The early parliamentary election planned for 24.11.24 (cf. BN of 15.07.24) has not taken place. It has been reported that president Umaro Sissoco Embaló announced a postponement of the elections at the beginning of November 2024. "Technical shortcomings" were cited as the reason for this postponement. On 19.11.24 Embaló is said to have brought key parties together to discuss the further course of action. There have been no reports of a new date for the election as yet.

Embaló dissolved parliament by decree on 04.12.23 (cf. BN of 11.12.23) and subsequently constituted a "government on presidential initiative" (cf. BN of 18.12.23 and 08.01.24). The opposition coalition which was previously the strongest force in parliament (cf. BN of 11.12.23), PAI-Terra Ranka, has called off a major demonstration against "abuse of power and democratic deficit" which was planned for 24.11.24. Its leader, Domingos Simões Pereira, reportedly stated that it had been decided that the risk of confrontations was too high, adding that the security forces had become part of the political stratagem and were being deployed against PAI-Terra Ranka. According to reports in the media, at least six leading figures were arrested during a joint march by PAI-Terra Ranka and the Aliança Patriótica Inclusiva-Cabaz Garandi (API) on 20.11.24. While the individuals concerned were released on the following day, both PAI-Terra Ranka and API have raised accusations of torture. With regard to the march, president Embaló reportedly said that the demonstrations were senseless and that he would not tolerate "indiscipline and disorder".⁹

Iran

Man with previous conviction receives prison term after participating in ceremony commemorating killed protester

Citing information from a Kurdish human rights organisation, it was reported on 21.11.24 that a 21 year-old man had been sentenced to six months in prison on charges including propaganda activities against the Islamic Republic. The man was reportedly arrested during a ceremony commemorating a demonstrator who had died during the nationwide protests in 2022. It is reported that he had previously received a 13-month prison sentence in a different case, of which he had been required to serve three months.

The information cannot be independently verified.¹⁰

Iraq

Census

Initial results of the census were announced on 25.11.24, according to which 45 million people now live in Iraq. The census has already come in for broad criticism, as it appears that it has consistently failed to cover Kurds in disputed territories.¹¹

The struggle against IS

A joint operation by various security services of the KR-I and Central Iraq against IS cells in Kirkuk and Sulaimaniyya ended on 22.11.24. In the course of the operation, five armed insurgents were killed and 14 suspects were detained.¹²

Lebanon

Armed conflict between Hezbollah and Israel

The Israeli armed forces continue to carry out daily military operations against targets in Lebanon. Key focuses of the attacks are southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley and the southern districts and suburbs of Beirut, although isolated attacks targeting individuals are also carried out in other regions. In response, Hezbollah launches daily counter-attacks, both on the ground and by firing rockets at targets in Israel.

According to reports in the media, at least 29 people died in an air strike on the centre of Beirut on 23.11.24. Israeli media report that the strike targeted Mohammed Haidar, a high-ranking member of Hezbollah. Since 23.11.24, intensive fighting has been reported around the small town of Khiam in southern Lebanon, approx. 6 km from the border with Israel.

On 24.11.24 Hezbollah fired at least 250 rockets at Israel, a number of which targeted the greater Tel Aviv area. This was the largest rocket attack on Israel for a number of months. The attack caused damage to property and injured an unknown number of people. Although the Lebanese army is largely staying out of the conflict, some 40 soldiers have been killed in attacks to date.

Many residents of Lebanon continue to flee their homes in large numbers, heading for other parts of the country or Syria.

According to the UNHCR, at least 557,000 people (as per 13.11.24) have fled to Syria, although this figure is to be considered as a minimum estimate in view of the prevailing conditions in the border region.

Due to the ongoing events, it is not possible to put an exact figure on the number of casualties at present. The death toll on the Lebanese side since 08.10.23 is currently estimated at 3,670 or more and at least 15,400 wounded. On the Israeli side, at least 90 soldiers and some 50 civilians have been killed to date.¹³

Nicaragua

Constitutional reform approved in first vote

On 22.11.24 the Sandinista-dominated parliament approved in principle a partial reform of the constitution proposed by president Ortega which, among other provisions, enhances the status of the current vice-president and wife of Ortega, Rosario Murillo, to that of co-president. The constitutional amendments additionally extend the head of state's terms in office from five to six years and further broaden the executive's power, giving it priority over the other powers of government in some instances. The right of nomination for posts at the supreme court, for example, is to be the co-president's prerogative alone in future, as is the right to veto laws. In addition, media are to be controlled more closely and the presidents are to be able to deploy the army within the country in support of the police, where this is necessary to ensure the stability of the state. Experts and NGOs fear that the reform will lead to greater repression and abolition of the separation of powers. It is considered certain that the reform will be finally adopted in a second reading in January 2025.¹⁴

Nigeria

Violent incidents in central Nigeria

It has been reported in the media that a series of acts of violence occurred in the period from 05.11. to 16.11.24 in the east of Nigeria's so-called Middle Belt, i.e. the zone of several hundred kilometres in width between the regions which are allocated to Nigeria's north and south respectively. On 05.11.24, for example, a number of people were killed in a gun fight between vigilantes and a gang of kidnappers in Nasarawa state. 14 kidnap victims were reportedly rescued, however. On 13.11.24 the army successfully repelled a retaliatory attack by suspected bandits on a community in Taraba state. In the same state, unknown armed persons killed one person and abducted at least

six people on 16.11.24. Back on 04.11.24, members of the Benue Motorcycle Association (BEMA) reportedly blocked a heavily used trunk road in Benue state, demanding more security personnel on the road in view of the fact that 37 of their colleagues had been murdered in the space of eight weeks.

The reasons for the insecurity (cf. BN of 05.02., 04.03., 27.05. and 26.08.24) in Nigeria's Middle Belt are even more complex and intricate than in other regions of the multi-ethnic country. In some instances, acts of violence perpetrated in the Middle Belt are rooted in so-called intercommunal conflicts (also referred to as the "farmer-herder conflict") between settled farmers and vagrants, who often live from livestock farming. Intercommunal violence can stem from conflicts over land, grazing and water rights, from the desire to revenge violence previously suffered by the perpetrators and/or simmering ethnic rivalries. Equally, acts of violence may simply be perpetrated for monetary gain, in the form of kidnapping to extort ransom money or looting.¹⁵

Pakistan

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Attack on Shiite minority in Kurram; disturbances

On 21.11.24 armed attackers in the Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province opened fire on a convoy of vehicles carrying first and foremost Shiite Muslims from Parachinar to Peshawar. According to repeatedly updated reports in the media, at least 50 people were killed and more than 40 injured in one of the most lethal attacks in the region in recent years.

According to local sources, at least 25 people were killed in subsequent sectarian disturbances on 22.11.24. Citing official information, other news agencies have reported at least 32 people killed and 47 injured in the disturbances on 22.11.24. A crowd of several hundred Shiite tribespeople reportedly set fire to a number of shops and houses. Local residents in the area, which has a majority Sunni population, have stated that a number of people are missing. In response to the disturbances, curfews were imposed and mobile telephone connections were suspended on 22.11.24. Armed attackers additionally attacked a military checkpoint on 22.11.24. In Parachinar, facilities of the Pakistani army and the paramilitary border troops were attacked and destroyed.

On 24.11.24 the Pakistani government announced that its mediation team had brokered a seven-day ceasefire between the Sunni and Shiite parties to the conflict. According to official information, 82 people were killed and 156 injured in the attack on the convoy and the subsequent disturbances, which continued until 23.11.24. 16 Sunni and 66 Shiite believers were among the dead. In the recent past, dozens of people have been killed in sectarian clashes between the Sunni majority and the Shiite minority in Kurram district. The latter have been complaining for a long time about discrimination and increasing violence in Pakistan, which has a majority Sunni population.¹⁶

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Attacks in Bannu district

Seven police officers were abducted in Bannu district on 18.11.24. According to local sources, the attackers disarmed the police officers before abducting them. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

According to information from the military, at least eleven members of the security forces were killed and at least four injured in a further attack involving a car bomb and a subsequent hours-long fire battle on 19.11.24. A break-away faction of the Pakistani Taliban, the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, has released a statement claiming responsibility for the attack, in which it alleges to have killed 23 members of the security forces. No independent verification of this death toll has been possible, however. The attack took place as Pakistan's political and military leadership were convening in Islamabad to hold discussions on combating the increasing militant violence.¹⁷

Palestinian territories / Israel

Gaza Strip: Current developments; humanitarian situation

According to information released by the Hamas-run health ministry on 22.11.24, at least 44,056 Palestinians have been killed and 104,268 injured in the Gaza Strip since the war began on 07.10.23. The ministry does not officially differentiate between combatants and civilians. According to information released by the Israeli military on 19.11.24, a total of 376 members of the Israeli military have been killed and 2,440 injured since the ground offensives began.

Meanwhile, the war continues. According to reports in the media, around 66 people were killed and 100 injured in an air strike on targets in a residential district in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza, on 21.11.24. The Israeli military has stated that it had attacked Hamas targets and had warned the population beforehand.

It is reported that hardly any relief supplies have reached the north of the Gaza Strip since the beginning of a renewed ground offensive on 06.10.24, with particularly serious consequences for the population.

The UN reports that organised looting of relief supplies along the roads running from Kerem Shalom border crossing to the south of the Gaza Strip has recently increased markedly. On 16.11.24, for example, an aid convoy of 109 trucks was stopped by armed actors and the escorts were forced to unload the majority of the relief supplies. The head of the UN's refugee organisation for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, suspects that local gangs and family clans are behind the looting. Food prices subsequently soared once again. The price of a 25 kg bag of flour stood at the equivalent of EUR 140 to 190, for example, compared to EUR 7.50 to 9.50 before the incident in some areas.¹⁸

West Bank: Continuing tensions and armed clashes

The Israeli military carried out a number of air strikes on targets in Kafr Dan, near Jenin, on 20.11.24. Shortly afterwards, armed clashes occurred in the town between the military and armed Palestinians. In all, three people were reportedly killed in the fighting. So-called Palestinian Islamic Jihad later confirmed that the dead were members of the armed group.

A total of nine people were reportedly killed in a two-day military operation in Jenin itself on 20.11. and 21.11.24. According to the Israeli military, those killed were members of armed groups. Also in the course of the operation, wanted persons were reportedly arrested, weapons were seized and four explosives laboratories were uncovered. In all, 750 Palestinians are said to have been killed in the West Bank since October 2023. A large proportion of these were killed by members of armed groups.

In certain areas of the West Bank, pupils are not attending school due to the continuing restricted access. In the H2 area of Hebron, some 13,065 pupils were reportedly affected between October 2023 and May 2024. Since the so-called Hebron Protocol took effect in 1997, Hebron has been divided into one area under Palestinian security control (H1) and another area under Israeli security control (H2). Both areas come under the civil administration of the Palestinian National Authority, however.

Since 01.10.24 the UN has recorded a total of 225 violent incidents involving Israeli settlers in the West Bank during the olive harvest, which is an important event for the Palestinian population. In eleven incidents, Palestinians were reportedly injured by violent settlers, while 55 incidents concerned injuries caused by Israeli troops.¹⁹

Russian Federation

Putin signs bill on debt relief for new recruits into law

On 23.11.24 president Putin signed a bill into law on debt relief for new army recruits who volunteer to fight in Ukraine. Under the new law, as of 01.12.24 anyone signing up for at least one year of military service in the Ukraine conflict will benefit from debt relief to the sum of up to 10 million roubles (equivalent to approx. EUR 92,000 as per 23.11.24). The new arrangement is said to be directed primarily at younger Russians of a suitable age for military service, as such people are commonly in debt. Interest on loans is reportedly extremely high in Russia and many Russians are said to have virtually no savings. Most of these people apparently run into debt in order to buy homes. According to a report by the Russian central bank, more than 13 million Russians have taken out three or more loans.

After almost three years of war in Ukraine, the Russian army is having difficulties recruiting new soldiers, in view of which the new law could represent a great incentive for future fighters. Russian soldiers serving at the front already receive well above average pay. This has enabled the army to increase the size of its forces in the war zone for the time being, while at the same time avoiding a new general mobilisation. The mobilisation in the autumn of 2022 prompted many people belonging to the age group for mandatory military service to leave Russia. The situation is exacerbated by the Russian army's high losses in the war against Ukraine. It is estimated that some 600,000 soldiers have been killed or injured to date.²⁰

This would explain why the Russian leadership is attempting to recruit soldiers from abroad to fight in Ukraine. Around 10,000 North Korean soldiers have reportedly already arrived in Russia and the Russian military is said to have enlisted several hundred Houthi mercenaries from Yemen.²¹

Senegal

Results of the parliamentary elections: Victory for ruling party

With all votes counted, the party of president Bassirou Diomaye Faye, Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l'éthique et la fraternité (PASTEF), claimed victory in the parliamentary elections on 17.11.24, taking around 80 % of the vote. According to reports in the media, it will hold 130 of the total of 165 seats in future. The parliamentary majority will reportedly enable president Bassirou Diomaye Faye and prime minister Ousmane Sonko to carry through their announced reforms, which are said to include provisions to fight corruption and to revive the fishing industry. In the presidential and parliamentary elections at the end of March 2024, Faye's party failed to obtain a majority in parliament, winning less than one third of the seats (cf. BN of 08.04. and 18.11.24). Faye dissolved the parliament in September 2024. International election monitors report that the election was largely peaceful. Turnout stood is said to have been just under 50 %. On the basis of the election results, the front runner of opposition party Takku Wallu, former president Macky Sall, won only 16 seats in parliament. The other opposition parties reportedly won only a particularly small number votes.²²

Somalia

Public execution by Al-Shabaab

It has been reported that two men accused of collaborating with the Somali National Army were executed by Al-Shabaab members near to Janale on 15.11.24. Al-Shabaab frequently carries out executions based on accusations of spying.²³

Somalia / Somaliland

Presidential election in Somaliland

The presidential election took place in the regional state of Somaliland on 13.11.24. Opposition politician Abdirahman "Irro" Mohamed Abdullahi (Somaliland National Party/Waddani) took 64 % of the vote to beat the incumbent president, Muse Bihi Abdi (Peace, Unity, and Development Party/Kulmiye), who has been head of state since 2017. The election was originally intended to take place in 2022. However, an amendment to the law extended Bihi's fixed five-year term in office by an additional two years. International election monitors report that the election was transparent and proceeded peacefully. Some polling stations were unable to open due to the precarious security situation, however. Abdullahi announced that he intended to work towards gaining international recognition of Somaliland. Somaliland announced its independence from Somalia in 1991, but its independence is not officially recognised. The regional state is considered to be more peaceful and more democratic as a whole than the rest of Somalia.²⁴

Sudan

Violations of children's rights in Sudan war

According to the latest reports in the press, Sudan is experiencing the worst hunger crisis for 20 years as a result of the war which has been ongoing for more than one and a half years. UNICEF reports that the civil war in Sudan threatens millions of children. It estimates that 730,000 children are suffering from malnutrition, putting their lives in immediate danger. UNICEF further observes that "the health system and basic care and services for children are at the point of collapse on account of the violence." More children have lost their homes in Sudan than in any other country in the world.²⁵

Syria

Israeli air strikes

The Israeli military continues to carry out recurring air strikes on positions of pro-Iranian militias. According to initial reports by Syrian state media, more than 36 people were killed and 50 injured in attacks close to the town of Palmyra on 20.11.24.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claims that more than 105 people were killed (as per 24.11.24). 70 of these were reportedly Syrians linked to pro-Iranian militias, in addition to which two civilians were among the dead. An additional 15 people are reported to have been injured, including five civilians. The targeted locations reportedly included arms caches as well as accommodation for families of pro-Iranian fighters.

The Observatory has recorded more than 150 air strikes on targets in Syria since the beginning of the year, in the course of which 405 fighters have been killed and 286 injured. Civilian casualties totalling 64 dead and 67 injured have also been recorded.²⁶

North-west: Deaths and injuries in attacks from government-held territories

In a report published on 18.11.24, the Syrian Civil Defence organisation, which is also known as the White Helmets, states that at least 15 civilians were killed in Russian and Syrian air strikes on targets in north-west Syria in October 2024. At least 90 people were injured in the attacks. A strong increase in the frequency of the air strikes in the middle of October 2024 prompted people to flee their homes (cf. BN of 21.10.24). On 14.10.24 alone, a total of 25 Russian air strikes were recorded on various areas in rural Aleppo, Idlib and Latakia.²⁷

Türkiye

Suspected Gülen supporters arrested

According to reports in the media, a total of 459 people who are accused of having links to the late cleric Fethullah Gülen were arrested in a large-scale police operation spanning 66 provinces on 19.11.24. The Turkish interior minister, Ali Yerlikaya, has stated that the suspects have been charged with various offences, including propaganda for the Gülen movement on social media, contact with persons within the movement and accommodating refugees. The arrests represent one of the largest operations against suspected Gülen supporters since the failed coup attempt in 2016, for which the Turkish government holds the cleric and his network responsible.²⁸

Uganda

Violation of freedom of speech

On 18.11.24 Emmanuel Nabugodi was sentenced to two and a half years in prison after posting a video critical of the government on the TikTok platform. The charges included hate speech and the propagation of malicious information about president Yoweri Museveni and were preferred under the Computer Misuse Act, which was amended in 2022. Art. 26 A (hate speech) prohibits, among other acts, creating, sending and sharing online content which ridicules or demeans people. In July 2024, Edward Awebwa was handed down a six-year prison term on similar charges. Human rights organisations have expressed concern at such treatment of people voicing criticism of the government, which they see as a violation of freedom of speech. The government frequently uses intimidation and arrests as a means of suppressing critics.²⁹

Opposition figure arrested

Following his arrest in Nairobi, opposition politician Kizza Besigye of the Forum for Democratic Change has been held at a military prison in Kampala since 20.11.24 at least. It has been reported that he is to remain in custody until 02.12.24. He has been charged with owning illegal firearms, among other offences. Besigye, a strong critic of president Museveni who has previously been detained or placed under house arrest on numerous occasions (cf. BN of 22.01.24), denies the allegations.³⁰

Ukraine

Civilian casualties

The competent governor has reported that ten people died in a Russian missile attack on Odessa on 18.11.24. According to information from the authorities, a Russian drone attack on 19.11.24 claimed eight lives in the city of Hlukhiv (Sumy region). According to official information, at least two people died in Russian attacks on the city of Sumy on 22.11.24.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released a statement on 19.11.24 asserting that at least 12,162 civilians, including 659 children, had been killed since 24.02.22. At least 26,919 civilians are reported to have been injured over the same period. In a statement released on 18.11.24, Amnesty International (AI) accuses Moscow of war crimes against children in Ukraine. On the basis of 120 videos, AI claims to have verified 17 incidents in which children have come to harm in 2024 alone. AI further asserts that research in the field has shown the Russian side to have intentionally attacked civilians and civilian infrastructure.³¹

Course of the war

On 19.11.24 president Zelenskyy presented his plan to strengthen Ukraine's resilience before parliament. The plan provides for massive investment in armaments for Ukraine. According to information in the media, details of the new stability plan are to follow in December 2024. Meanwhile, mandatory evacuation in the Donetsk region has continued in the face of the Russian advance. According to information from the regional military administration, almost 324,000 civilians currently remain in the Ukraine-controlled part of the region.

Ukrainian authorities have disclosed new cases of possible executions of Ukrainian prisoners of war by the Russian side in the Donetsk region. The Ukrainian chief public prosecutor's office accuses Russian troops of having executed five Ukrainian prisoners of war near the city of Vuhledar in October 2024.

President Zelenskyy has said in a TV interview that the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsular can only be regained by diplomatic means, as retaking the territory by military means would entail an unacceptable loss of human life. At the same time, he pointed out that Ukraine will not legally cede any occupied territories to Moscow. Alluding to the Russian president in a speech before the Ukrainian parliament on 19.11.24, Zelenskyy stated: "Perhaps Ukraine will have to outlive someone in Moscow in order to achieve its aims and restore the entire national territory."

After Moscow deployed its new medium-range missile "Oreshnik", which flies at eleven times the speed of sound and can be fitted with nuclear warheads, against the city of Dnipro on 21.11.24, president Putin announced that the missile would continue to be tested in combat conditions. President Zelenskyy expressed the fear that Ukraine could become a "testing ground" for Russian munitions.³²

Venezuela

Prison conditions for people imprisoned on political grounds; death of an electoral witness

Reports in the media and NGO communiqués have furnished information in recent weeks about inadequate food and the delay or withholding of medical care for people imprisoned on political grounds. Hygiene conditions are also reported to be problematic. Minors are not accommodated separately from adults, as is required by law.

Electoral witness Jesús Martínez Medina, who was arrested in the aftermath of the presidential elections and was subsequently held in custody, died at a hospital in Anzoátegui on 14.11.24. NGOs and parts of the opposition are accusing the authorities of having refused to provide medical care for Martínez, who was already ill at the time of his arrest, or of having withheld such care for too long. The chief public prosecutor's office denies such accusations.³³

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