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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Security situation

On 26.06.23, more clashes occurred between Taliban fighters and Pakistani border guards at the disputed border. Two Taliban fighters and five Pakistani soldiers were reportedly killed. The National Resistance Front (NRF) said on 28.06.23 that it had killed one Taliban fighter and injured two others in an attack on the Taliban in Baghlan province.

New UNAMA report on civilian casualties

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded 3,774 civilian casualties (1,095 killed, 2,679 injured), including 233 women (92 killed, 141 injured) and 866 children (287 killed, 579 injured) in the period between the Taliban takeover on 15.08.21 and 30.05.23. Most civilian casualties during this period were caused by improvised explosive device (IED) attacks (2,814 civilian casualties), explosive remnants of war (639 civilian casualties), and targeted killings (148 civilian casualties). Of the 3,774 civilian casualties, three-quarters were caused by explosive attacks in populated areas, including places of worship, schools, and markets. According to UNAMA, the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP), was responsible for most of the IED attacks, including suicide bombings. More than 1,700 Afghan civilian deaths and injuries were attributed to attacks claimed by ISKP.

Persecution situation

According to a report of 22.06.23, the Taliban in Parwan province (Bagram district) punished youths who trimmed or shortened their beards. In Baghlan province, three barbers were reportedly arrested for trimming beards on 27.06.23. On the same day, in Kabul province, the Taliban reportedly killed a farmer who had not paid taxes levied on agriculture. On 02.07.23, it was reported that the Emir had issued a decree that all beauty salons throughout the country must be closed by 24.07.23. As these salons are mainly run by women, this means that throughout the country more women who have been providing for their families with this income, will become unemployed.

Governance

The Taliban have released an audio tape attributed to Emir Hibatullah Akhundzada, who apparently held a sermon after the Eid al-Adha prayer in Kandahar on Wednesday. It includes the proclamation that the relevant ministries and the Taliban leadership are drafting a new legal system based on Sharia and Hanafi jurisdiction. It will replace the laws in force under the former constitution, including separate Shia jurisdiction. He said that Afghanistan now has a fully Islamic system, security is guaranteed and there is no disorder or insubordination in any part of the country. Most of the country's affairs are now governed on the basis of directives and decrees attributed to the Emir. He said, "under the rule of the Islamic Emirate, concrete measures have been taken to liberate women from many traditional oppressions." In the Persian and Pashto versions of the message, the top Taliban leader also welcomes the introduction of Sharia courts and practices, including qisas (e.g. floggings or executions) performed before a public audience.

According to the Washington Post of 28.06.23, almost two years after the Taliban took power, health care in rural Afghanistan has deteriorated rapidly as the full impact of the prolonged economic crisis is felt. Doctors, nurses, and local officials said they were facing an onslaught of patients who, until recently, had preferred to go to private doctors for a small fee but had run out of savings.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

High Representative overturns parliamentary decisions of Republika Srpska

At the end of June 2023, the parliament of the Republika Srpska (RS) entity had voted to no longer recognise decisions of the national constitutional court. In addition, the People's Assembly passed a law by which the instructions of the High Representative of the international community can be circumvented. The latter, the German politician Christian Schmidt, annulled both decisions on 01.07.23 as violations of the country's constitutional order and the Dayton Agreement. In addition, the High Representative issued a decree with the force of law, by which Bosnian officials who disregard his decisions are threatened with up to five years imprisonment. The RS government under President Milrad Dodik has been pursuing a separatist policy for some time, which has also been reflected in the above-mentioned parliamentary decisions (cf. BN of 25.04.22).

Chad

National Transitional Council adopts draft constitution of the transitional government

According to media reports, the vast majority of the members of the National Transitional Council (Conseil National de Transition, CNT) approved the draft of the new constitution proposed by the transitional government on 27.06.23. In November 2023, the population is to vote on the draft constitution in a referendum. The draft constitution, which provides for a unitary state, was criticised by the opposition and civil society. In their opinion, the decision on the future form of the state, i.e. federal or unitary state, should have been left to the people. The adoption of the new constitution aims to restore constitutional order in Chad, thus ending the transitional phase following the death of President Idriss Déby in April 2021.

Côte d'Ivoire

Electoral register: Gbagbo's objection rejected

Former President Laurent Gbagbo's appeal against his non-inclusion in the electoral roll (cf. BN of 05.06.23) was rejected by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). This is reported by the media citing a statement by his party Parti des peuple africains-Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI) of 30.06.23. The non-inclusion is considered a "political manoeuvre" aiming to exclude Gbagbo from political life, the statement added. Local and regional elections will be held on 02.09.23. According to the agency report, the political climate has become noticeably tense in recent weeks.

Equatorial Guinea

Opposition leaders and other defendants sentenced to long prison terms in mass trial

Citing Equatorial Guinea's state television, several media reported that a military court in Malabo sentenced opposition leader Gabriel Nse Obiang Obono to 29 years imprisonment in a mass trial along with 50 other civilian defendants on charges of murder, abuse of fundamental rights, insulting the security forces, and unauthorised possession of ammunition on 28.06.23. Some of the other defendants had been sentenced to prison terms of between nine and 29 years for identical charges. Military courts are composed exclusively of military personnel and military court proceedings are held in camera, i.e. excluding the public and the media.

Obiang Obono, leader of the opposition party Ciudadanos por la Innovación de Guinea Ecuatorial (CI), which was banned in 2018, had been arrested on 29.09.22 together with numerous supporters when state security forces stormed the CI party headquarters killing several people in the course (cf. BN of 10.10.22). A few days before his arrest, Obiang Obono had warned of demonstrations if he and his party were denied participation in the presidential