



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

10 February 2025

Afghanistan

Security situation

On 08.02.25, an attack was carried out on a Taliban intelligence vehicle convoy using a magnetic bomb in front of the Taliban-run Ministry of Agriculture in Taloqan, the capital of Takhar province. Three Taliban insurgents are said to have been killed and two others injured. The Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) has claimed responsibility for the attack; the Taliban have not commented on the incident.

On 05.02.25, the Taliban instructed residents in the border areas of Bahram Chah district in Helmand province to leave the area due to fighting with Pakistani border guards. The Taliban have deployed additional soldiers to the region.

A Nepalese UN security official was shot dead by a Taliban fighter outside a UN building on 03.02.25.

Explosive ordnance continues to be a major cause of child fatalities in Afghanistan. This is according to a new report released by the NGO Children and Armed Conflict, which is dedicated to the protection of children in war zones. According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 47 children (eight girls and 39 boys) were killed by explosive remnants of war between October and December 2024.

According to media reports released on 31.01.25, three children were killed in Laghman province on the same day when an explosive grenade detonated while they were playing.¹

Governance and persecution

An unknown hacker group has published hundreds of pages of Taliban documents from around 21 ministries and government agencies on the website "Talib leaks", some of which were classified information. The Taliban stated that the leaked documents were not confidential and were publicly accessible.

One of these leaked official letters from the Taliban reveals that around 8,000 people, mainly former government officials, have been banned from leaving the country. Overseas academic travel is also prohibited. According to the documents, Hibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the Taliban, has personally ordered that these people must not leave Afghanistan without his written authorisation. The Taliban Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has conducted extensive research on hijab enforcement and religious policing in 12 provinces (Helmand, Bamiyan, Kunar, Paktika, Sar-e Pol, Samangan, Maidan Wardak, Baghlan, Kapisa, Paktia, Jowzjan and Laghman). To this end, around 500 people were questioned in each of these provinces. It came to light that the province of Bamiyan, in which mainly Shia Hazara live, and the province of Kunar, in which many Salafists live who practise Islam differently from the Taliban's ideas, were particularly notable for violations. The published documents also show that the Taliban's morality police in the capital Kabul and the provinces are authorised to carry weapons and use armoured vehicles, although this has yet to be implemented. It is not clear from the documents why the morality police should be armed, as they were originally supposed to emphasise their role through "advice"; in exceptional cases through flogging.

Radio Begum, a Kabul-based station that focuses on women's rights and education, confirmed on 05.02.25 that its operation had been suspended following a raid by the Taliban in which two of its staff were arrested.

A member of the former National Security Directorate from Kapisa province has reportedly been arrested by Taliban intelligence agents in Kabul.

The Taliban-run Ministry of Information and Culture has set up a committee to regulate and standardise the phrases, terms and titles used in media broadcasts, the ministry announced on 10.02.25.²

Humanitarian situation

The humanitarian situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees (particularly from Pakistan) in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province remains critical, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has said. As of early 2024, Afghanistan had approximately 1.7 million internally displaced people, with Nangarhar among the most affected provinces, according to UNDP. Many returnees face homelessness, unemployment and extreme poverty.

Conditions in the refugee camp in Kandahar province are also deteriorating. Returnees report that they lack access to medical care and vital medicines there.³

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Law against domestic violence

On 05.02.25, the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) unanimously adopted a new law on protection against domestic violence and violence against women. This complies with the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the so-called Istanbul Convention) that was adopted in 2011. The law introduces additional protective measures, including the possibility of electronic surveillance of abusers against whom a court protection order has been issued. It also establishes the obligation of the police to go to the scene of any reported incident of violence immediately upon receipt of the report. Suspects can be held in police custody for 48 hours. Furthermore, the law establishes a 24-hour free SOS hotline covering the entire Federation that will give advice and support to victims of violence while preserving their anonymity. For the law to enter into force, it still needs to be adopted by the second chamber of parliament, the House of Peoples.⁴

India

Chhattisgarh: military operations against Maoist rebels

On 09.02.25, more than two dozen suspected Maoist rebels were killed in an operation carried out by Indian security forces in the Indravati region in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. Two police officials were also killed in the firefight. The rebels, who are also known as Naxalites, are inspired by Mao Zedong and have been waging a guerrilla war against the government for decades, particularly in central and eastern India, leading to regular clashes and casualties on both sides.⁵

Iran

Death penalty: 87 executions in January 2025

A Kurdish news portal based in Iraq reported on 01.02.25 that at least 87 prisoners were executed in Iran in the month of January 2025. That represents a 17 percent increase compared to the number of death sentences carried out in the same month last year

Several members of ethnic minorities were among the prisoners sentenced to death, including 17 Kurds, 10 Lors and four Baluchis. Human rights organisations consider the use of the death penalty to be one of the Iranian government's means of repressing members of ethnic minorities, such as people of Kurdish and Baluch descent.⁶

Reports of reprisals against environmental activists

According to a statement issued by a human rights organisation set up by Iranians living in exile in the USA on 03.02.20, an environmental activist in Darreh Shahr (Ilam province) was sentenced to two years in prison in January. The man was allegedly accused of spreading propaganda against the government and insulting the revolutionary

leader, among other things. A total of 11 environmental activists were reportedly arrested in 2024. The reasons for the arrests were not reported.

According to a media report issued on 31.01.25, two Kurdish environmental activists were recently arrested in Saqqez (Kurdistan province). This is part of a wave of arrests of people from the Kurdish population in the provinces of Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan.

The respective reports cannot be independently verified.⁷

Increase in nationwide divorce rate

According to media reports released on 02.02.25, the latest figures from Iran's Civil Registration Organisation show an increase in the nationwide divorce rate. According to these figures, around 39 percent of all registered marriages ended in divorce in the first seven months of the Persian calendar year 1403 (as of 20.03.24, according to the Gregorian calendar). In the capital Tehran, divorce rates have reached 52 percent.

The number of marriages fell by 46 percent between 2010 and 2023. Economic factors, youth unemployment and a change in socio-cultural attitudes were cited as reasons for the decline in marriages.⁸

Iraq

Federal Supreme Court of Iraq suspends implementation of controversial bills

On 04.02.25, Iraq's highest judicial authority ordered the suspension of three recently passed laws (cf. BN of 27.02.25) until the federal judges have ruled on a complaint submitted by several members of parliament against the underlying voting process.

According to the plaintiffs, the bills should have been voted on individually but all three bills were voted on last month together in order to achieve the necessary majority in all three cases.⁹

Kosovo

Preliminary results of the parliamentary elections

According to media reports, the incumbent Prime Minister Albin Kurti and his left-wing nationalist party Vetevendosje (Self-Determination) have won the parliamentary elections in Kosovo. According to post-election surveys and forecasts, the ruling party has become the strongest force, having garnered 40 percent to 42 percent of the vote, but has lost its absolute majority and is likely to be dependent on coalition partners in future. In the election held four years ago, Vetevendosje won 50.3 percent of the vote and thus came to power for the first time. The opposition centre-right parties Democratic Party of Kosovo (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës - PDK) and Democratic League of Kosovo (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës - LDK) received around 21.4 percent and 19.3 percent of the vote, respectively; the national conservative Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës - AAK) received around 7.2 percent of the vote. In the parts of the country that are dominated by the Serbian minority, the Serbian List (Srpska Lista) party supported by Belgrade managed to win all 10 parliamentary seats to which the Serbian community is entitled under Kosovar legislation.¹⁰

Lebanon

Fighting along the border between Syria and Lebanon

On the border between the Lebanese district of Hermel and the Syrian district of Qusair, clashes have repeatedly erupted between fighters associated with the new Syrian government and members of various armed Shia clans in the region since 07.02.25. In particular, large numbers of the extended Jaafar and Zaiter clans and several other clans associated with Hezbollah, such as the Noun, Jamal and Rachini clans, inhabit several settlements along the border, which is partly disputed between the states. Along the border, there are villages inhabited mostly by Lebanese on Syrian territory and villages inhabited mostly by Syrians on Lebanese territory. Members of the above-mentioned clans have reportedly been involved in drug and arms smuggling in the region for many years, sometimes competing with each other despite their fundamental loyalty to Hezbollah.

On 06.02.25, clashes erupted with Lebanese nationals during a coordinated action carried out by the Syrian armed forces. Fighting took place around the small Syrian town of Hawik, which is predominantly inhabited by Lebanese. Fighters from the Syrian Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) allegedly demanded the handover of a Hezbollah observation post that was being used for drug smuggling. At least four people are said to have been killed and 10 wounded in the course of the fighting, and two HTS fighters are said to have been captured by armed Lebanese. Heavy weapons are also said to have been used in the clashes. Sixteen girls from the aforementioned Lebanese clans are said to have been captured by Syrian security forces. According to other reports, the village chief (mukhtar) and other dignitaries were arrested.

Fighting was also reported from the border village of Jirmash. Bullets are said to have hit the Lebanese side of the border near the village of al-Qasr. The Lebanese army announced that it would send reinforcements to the region. According to media reports, an exchange of prisoners took place on the morning of 07.02.25, in which all previously detained persons were released on both sides. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun spoke on the phone with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa to discuss the situation in the border region.

On 08.02.25, several Lebanese villages, including Yarmakh and Qanafez, were reportedly shelled by Syrian positions, with 50 artillery shells allegedly hitting Lebanese territory. Residents claimed to have shot down a Syrian "Shaheen" type drone. According to statements released by the clans involved, a Syrian tank tried to cross the border on the night of 08.02.25 and was destroyed by an anti-tank guided missile. The Lebanese army announced that it has now been instructed to return fire from the Syrian side using appropriate means.

On 09.02.25, two more Syrian drones were reportedly shot down by the Lebanese army, which now has substantial forces on the ground.¹¹

Mali

Ambush on convoy claims large number of casualties

According to media reports, dozens of people were killed and numerous others injured in an ambush on a convoy travelling from Gao to Ansongo by suspected Islamist terrorists on 07.02.25. While earlier reports say more than 50 people were killed, other reports put the number of civilians killed at at least 32. The army General Staff said 25 civilians had been killed and 19 bodies of terrorists had also been found. Most of the civilians killed were gold miners, many of them from abroad. The convoy, consisting of 22 minibuses, six large buses and eight lorries, was accompanied by 10 Malian army vehicles and the Wagner mercenary group. According to an eyewitness, police officers and soldiers were also killed; there is no official information about this in the report. So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) is considered to be particularly active in the region. There have been several attacks on the Gao-Ansongo route in recent months, which have been attributed either to Islamist terrorists or to criminal gangs.¹²

UN: violations of children's rights by all parties to the conflict

According to the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, children in Mali are often exposed to severe violence. In the period from 01.04.22 to 31.03.24, more than 2,090 serious violations of children's rights against 1,780 children were verified, UN News announced, citing a corresponding report. The violence is allegedly perpetrated by all parties to the conflict. The withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) at the end of 2023, in line with the Malian government's request, has significantly reduced the protection options for children. The most common rights violations involve the recruitment, killing or maiming of children with firearms or explosive devices and the abduction of children. In addition, despite a decrease in the number of attacks carried out against schools, over 536,000 children have reportedly been denied access to education; 1,788 schools have been closed due to insecurity.¹³

Nicaragua

Withdrawal from FAO and office closure following publication of report

Following the publication of a recent report issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which shows a slight increase in the prevalence of undernourishment among the Nicaraguan population to 19.6 percent in 2023, the government of Daniel Ortega ordered the closure of the organisation's office in Managua and announced its withdrawal from the FAO on 04.02.25, accusing it of a lack of objectivity, among other things.¹⁴

Nigeria

Death penalty for murder of woman accused of witchcraft

A court in the northern Nigerian state of Kano sentenced five men to death by hanging on 03.02.25. According to media reports, the court found that the perpetrators murdered a woman on 15.11.23, whom they accused of witchcraft. The immediate trigger for the crime was a dream experienced by the sick wife of one of the convicts who then travelled to the victim's home with four friends to confront her. During the encounter, the men beat and eventually stabbed the woman, who was 67 years old at the time, to death. After her family contacted the authorities, the perpetrators were quickly identified and arrested.

According to media reports, the case attracted a great deal of attention across the country. The offence shed light on the phenomenon of stalking for alleged witchcraft, a phenomenon that persists in rural areas of Nigeria. It is the first case of its kind in which five people have been convicted of murder.

According to reports released in 2024, more than 3,400 people are on death row in Nigeria. The last execution took place in 2016 - according to other sources, in 2012 (cf. BN of 16.12.24).¹⁵

Pakistan

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: attacks and hostilities

On 06.02.25, a group of militants armed with assault rifles attacked a police post in the district of Karak along the border with Afghanistan, killing three police officers and wounding five. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Also on the night of 06.02.25, security forces conducted an operation in North Waziristan, a district bordering Afghanistan, triggering an intense shootout in which 12 militants and a soldier were killed, the military said in a statement. Weapons and ammunition were reportedly also recovered from the killed insurgents.¹⁶

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: demonstration by opposition parties

On 08.02.25, thousands of supporters of several opposition parties demonstrated in the Swabi district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to mark the first anniversary of the parliamentary elections held in 2024, which were suspected of being rigged. In the run-up to the demonstration, the federal government in Islamabad and the provincial authorities in Balochistan and Punjab had taken measures to restrict public gatherings, citing security concerns. There were also reports of arrests of PTI leaders. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and other opposition parties, including the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM-Haqiqi), accuse the Pakistani military of rigging the elections on 08.02.24 in favour of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The military, the PML-N and the Election Commission of Pakistan reject these accusations. Pakistan's Supreme Court has also rejected an application to cancel the parliamentary elections.¹⁷

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

Gaza Strip: exchange of hostages and prisoners; widespread destruction in Gaza

As part of the ceasefire, Hamas granted the release of a total of 16 hostages, including five Thai nationals, on 30.01.25 and 08.02.25. In return, several hundred Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli prisons. Since the cessation of hostilities on 19.01.25, a total of 21 hostages have been exchanged for 730 Palestinian prisoners.

In the Gaza Strip and on its borders, weapons have been used repeatedly in isolated cases, but the first phase of the ceasefire has basically held so far.

On 01.02.25, the Rafah border crossing was opened for the evacuation of medical patients. Since then, patient transports and the import of humanitarian aid have once again been possible via the border crossing. On 09.02.25, the Israeli military also withdrew from the so-called Netzarim Corridor, which divided the north and south of the Gaza Strip and therefore represents an important crossing point for the civilian population returning to northern Gaza.

In the north of the Gaza Strip, in particular, the infrastructure has been extensively destroyed. Although the need is high, the majority of healthcare facilities have been destroyed, and the medical care available is inadequate. According to the WHO, only half of the 36 hospitals in the Gaza Strip are currently partially operational and two thirds of the healthcare facilities are closed. However, after months of armed conflict, the need is significantly higher than before and affects an estimated 30,000 people who require longer-term rehabilitation measures due to life-changing injuries, such as amputations. Accordingly, 12,000 of these people reportedly require specialised treatment and would need to be evacuated for this purpose. In addition, there are hardly any clean water and sewage systems, which in turn heightens the risk of infectious diseases, similar to the polio outbreak last year. Remnants of war, but also toxic substances and human remains in ruins of houses, pose further challenges.

Much of the agricultural land and equipment has also been destroyed. Analyses of satellite images from 31.12.24 revealed that around 75 percent of agricultural land and olive groves have been damaged or destroyed. The cattle population shrank by 96 percent, while there are still more than 25,000 sheep (43 percent of the livestock before October 2023) and 3,000 goats (37 percent) alive. The number of humanitarian aid deliveries has increased significantly and is possible via several border crossings. Although difficulties in distribution remain due to the destroyed infrastructure and the misuse of deliveries by middlemen, more supplies are reaching the people in the Gaza Strip than during the active fighting. In addition, the prices of many foodstuffs have started to decline, although they remain significantly higher than pre-October 2023 levels.¹⁸

East Jerusalem: new laws on UNRWA ban come into force

In October 2024, the Israeli parliament passed two laws banning the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) from operating on Israeli territory and prohibiting cooperation between UNRWA and Israeli authorities (cf. BN of 04.11.24). They came into force on 30.01.25.

Due to Israel's extensive security control over Palestinian territories and all land and air borders, including the issuing of visas for international employees, it was expected that UNRWA's work would be significantly more difficult. The Shuafat refugee camp in East Jerusalem is directly affected by the ban on activities due to its location. East Jerusalem was captured by the Israeli military in 1967, later annexed and has since been recognised by Israel as Israeli territory, although a large part of the international community considers the area to be disputed. In Shuafat, which like most large Palestinian refugee camps today resembles a very densely populated neighbourhood rather than temporary emergency accommodation, UNRWA provided the bulk of education and healthcare services as well as public services such as rubbish collection, etc.

So far, however, UNRWA schools and clinics in East Jerusalem have continued to operate as normal. The extent to which UNRWA's performance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be affected remains to be seen, as the new regulations will have a more indirect impact. According to UNRWA, around half of the humanitarian aid deliveries in the Gaza Strip are provided by the UN Refugee Agency.

On 04.02.25, US President Donald Trump announced his intention to continue the suspension of aid payments to UNRWA which had occurred back in January 2024. The then US government under President Joe Biden, along with numerous other countries, had stopped its payments due to accusations levelled by Israel that UNRWA employees were involved in the attacks of 07.10.24, and it has hitherto been the only country not to resume funding. Previously, the US had been the largest donor to the refugee aid organisation.¹⁹

West Bank: ongoing military operations in several locations

As part of the ongoing Israeli military offensive in Jenin, several buildings were blown up in the city on 02.02.25. The operation, which targets members of armed Palestinian groups, has been ongoing since 21.01.25 and has since been extended to the villages of Tulkarem, al-Faraa, Tamun and, most recently, Nur Shams. Thousands of residents are said to have fled the fighting. According to UN figures, a total of 39 Palestinians have reportedly been killed in the offensive between 21.01.25 and 06.02.25. News media reported on 09.02.25 that a pregnant woman had been

shot dead by the Israeli military in Nur Shams and that her husband had been seriously wounded. The military announced that an inquiry would be launched. Another woman is said to have been killed during a house search. According to the Israeli army, everyone was asked to leave the house. The woman refused to do so and was killed when access to the house was gained by force.

Israeli airstrikes using warplanes killed at least 10 people in the village of Tamoun, in the north of the West Bank, on 30.01.25. According to Israeli military sources, the target was an armed cell.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed and eight others were wounded, two seriously, when an armed Palestinian assailant opened fire on a checkpoint near the village of Tayasir on 04.02.25. The gunman was also killed in the subsequent exchange of fire.²⁰

Russian Federation

Prison sentences imposed after protests in Bashkortostan in 2024

On 07.02.25, a district court in the western region of Udmurtia found six people guilty of participating in mass riots and using violence against state officials under Articles 212 and 318 of the Russian Criminal Code and sentenced them to prison terms of four and a half to five years. The men had taken part in the anti-government protests in support of the Bashkir activist Fail Alsynov in the city of Baymak in January 2024 or, in some cases, were merely passers-by in the vicinity of the venue. The protest rally, one of the largest in Russia since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, was violently dispersed by the security forces, with the crowd defending themselves with snowballs against the authorities' crackdown (cf. BN of 22.01.24).

With around 80 defendants, the Baymak case is considered to be the largest politically motivated criminal trial in recent Russian history. According to media reports, since July 2024, the defendants have received lengthy prison sentences of between four and eight and a half years in at least 16 cases to date (including this one); further guilty verdicts are expected. Meanwhile, hundreds of other demonstration participants have been fined and even given administrative detention for several days for, among other things, violations of the severely restricted right of assembly in Russia. In addition to criminal and administrative sanctions, at least one defendant was subjected to severe physical violence by the security forces during his arrest and had to be hospitalised. A second suspect died in police custody under unexplained circumstances, and a third person committed suicide after police interrogation.²¹

Syria

Northwest: ongoing fighting between SDF and SNA in East Aleppo; integration of SNA into new security forces

Airstrikes carried out by the Turkish military and the Turkish-backed militia alliance, the so-called Syrian National Army (SNA), on targets of the Kurdish-dominated so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) near the Tishreen Dam and the Qaraquzak Bridge are continuing. Battles are continually being fought on the ground between the two sides. Turkish airstrikes are also targeting SDF positions in the governorates of Hasaka and Raqqqa. In a post on social media on 09.01.25, the leader of the Suleiman Shah Brigade, a faction within the SNA, who was recently appointed brigadier general as part of the integration into the new Syrian military and was given command of the Hama Brigade, stated that his fighters had captured the Tishreen Dam in the meantime. More detailed information on the background and the involvement of the new administration in the fighting was not available initially. The brigadier general announced that he would resume activities once further instructions had been received from decision-makers.

As part of the integration of armed groups into a new unified Syrian army, troops from the transitional government in Damascus were reportedly deployed to areas in Afrin and Jinderes that were previously controlled by the SNA. The so-called Syrian Interim Government, which carried out the administrative tasks in the areas controlled by the SNA and Türkiye, announced in an internal letter on 30.01.25 that it was transferring its own areas, authorities and armed groups to the transitional government in Damascus.

However, it is not yet clear at what pace the dissolution of the factions will progress or has already progressed and how the members of the SNA militias will actually be integrated into the new military. The SDF and other armed groups, particularly from the south, have not yet been integrated into the new military.

Troops of the transitional government are also reported to have been positioned further east, near Manbij, where the seventh bomb attack since the fall of Assad took place last week. The perpetrators and the exact target are still unknown (cf. BN of 03.02.25).²²

Humanitarian aid: far-reaching consequences after US aid is frozen

According to media reports, the already precarious humanitarian situation in Syria has been further exacerbated by the freezing of aid funding. Numerous organisations in Syria have been affected by US President Donald Trump's freeze on US foreign aid and are reported to have already had to stop or reduce their work. In 2024, the US provided a total of 25.3 percent of humanitarian aid for Syria, followed by Germany with 12.5 percent and the EU Commission with 11.4 percent. Due to the loss of these sums, numerous organisations have now been forced to discontinue services and lay off staff. For example, the Turkish NGO Doctors of the World Turkey, which operates in northern Syria, has had to close 12 field hospitals and lay off more than 300 employees in Syria.

The al-Hol camp in northeast Syria is also reported to have been affected by such cuts. According to media reports, food aid was briefly halted in the largely sealed-off camp, which is mainly home to people who are believed to have links to ISIS. Following a two-week postponement of the payment freeze, the organisation responsible received funding from the US again to continue its work in the short term. However, follow-up funding remains uncertain, and the camp management is warning of possible uprisings and the instrumentalisation of the situation by ISIS.²³

Ukraine

Civilian casualties

In Izium (Kharkiv Oblast), which had been occupied by Russian forces at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, at least five people died in a Russian missile strike carried out on 04.02.25, according to media reports; numerous others were injured. On the same day, local authorities reported one death each from Russian shelling in the Dnipropetrovsk region and in the city of Kherson. According to rescue services, two people were killed by Russian shelling that took place in the Donetsk region on 05.02.25. On the same day, according to the local governor, one person died in a Russian missile strike on the port of Odesa.²⁴

War events; execution of Ukrainian prisoners of war; attacks on recruitment centres

According to media reports, after months of heavy fighting, the Russian side is claiming the capture of the mining town of Toretsk and the village of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (both in Donetsk Oblast), which is located near Chasiv Yar and on a road leading to the city of Sloviansk, which is also Ukrainian-controlled. Toretsk is reportedly the largest settlement that Russian forces have succeeded in capturing since the capture of Avdiivka (cf. BN of 19.02.24). In general, the fighting in eastern Ukraine had intensified again on 08.02.25 after days of low intensity, it was reported. The city of Pokrovsk and its surroundings (Donetsk Oblast) were the focus of Russian assaults.

Ukraine is also said to have succeeded in intercepting Russian glide bombs for the first time. However, this reportedly requires complex means. Glide bombs are dropped beyond the range of air defences.

In an interview given on 04.02.25, which was picked up by other media, President Volodymyr Zelensky declared that he was prepared to negotiate directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin under certain conditions. He qualified his own decree from September 2022, which had declared direct talks with Putin impossible. He said the condition was that the US and Europe also be involved in the negotiations.

In the same interview, Zelensky provided updated information on Ukraine's own losses. He stated that the Ukrainian armed forces had now suffered 45,100 casualties since 24.02.22, and that 390,000 soldiers had been injured. Reference is made to the widespread assumption that both sides in the war are exaggerating the enemy's losses and downplaying their own. Western intelligence services reportedly estimate that around 100,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and that more than twice that number have been killed on the Russian side.

According to media reports, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine declared on 03.02.25 that it had recorded the executions of a total of 79 Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russian troops since August 2024. It had reportedly also documented the execution of an injured Russian soldier by Ukrainian forces in 2024. To establish its findings, it had reportedly analysed videos from Ukrainian and Russian sources and had also interviewed witnesses. It said there had been an "alarming increase" in executions carried out by Russia, although no

comparative figures were provided. The mission reportedly also attributes the increase to impunity enshrined in law and encouragement by well-known personalities.

In an exchange of prisoners of war, 150 soldiers on each side were able to return to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it was reported on 06.02.25 with reference to both sides.

On 05.02.25, one person died when they triggered an explosion at an army recruitment centre in the Chernivtsi region. Four other people were injured. There had already been several previous attacks on recruitment infrastructure and personnel (cf. BN of 03.02.25). According to the police, the number of such attacks across the country in 2025 has totalled nine so far.²⁵

US foreign aid freeze, demand for access to natural resources

An agency report names the areas in Ukraine affected by the freeze on US foreign aid. According to the report, USAID-funded development projects in the area of electricity supply and other critical infrastructure as well as the expansion of border crossings to the EU are affected. Since 24.02.22, American development aid has totalled EUR 4.8 billion to date, with humanitarian aid amounting to EUR 2.5 billion. In addition, the US has so far provided EUR 29 billion in budget aid to Ukraine. In response to US President Trump's freeze order, President Zelensky announced a review of the humanitarian programmes that had previously been financed by the US (cf. BN of 03.02.25). However, the US administration had resumed arms deliveries after pausing them for several days the previous week, it was reported on 04.02.25.

In the meantime, Trump has stated that Ukraine must grant the US access rights to natural resources, particularly rare earth minerals, in return for the extensive aid. It should be noted that a significant proportion of Ukraine's mineral resources are located in Russian-controlled or frontline areas. According to experts, this is a potential incentive for Russia to continue the war, not only because of the geo-economic potential for Russia itself but also to prevent investment in Ukrainian deposits and thus in the Ukrainian economy.²⁶

Venezuela

Suspicion of kin detention, release of election-related detainees and Americans

According to Vente Venezuela (Come Venezuela), following a previous unsuccessful attempt to arrest the party coordinator in Bolívar, Douglas Rodríguez, his 80-year-old mother-in-law and her carer were arrested without a search warrant by officers from the domestic intelligence service, SEBIN, during a raid carried out on his house in Puerto Ordaz on 31.01.25. Their whereabouts are currently unknown.

As of 03.02.25, the NGO Foro Penal (Penal Forum) put the number of people detained for political reasons at 1,196, including four minors. In recent weeks, numerous releases of people arrested in connection with the 2024 elections have been recorded. Six US citizens imprisoned in Venezuela were also recently released during a visit by US special envoy Richard Grenell.²⁷

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration
Briefing Notes
BN-Redaktion@bamf.bund.de

1 AFG Int, Taliban-Pakistan Border Tensions Escalate As Group Orders Evacuation Of Residents, last update 05.02.2025; AmuTV, At least one killed in shooting at UN compound in Kabul, last update 03.02.2025; KabulNow, Three Children Killed in Unexploded Shell Blast in Eastern Afghanistan, last update 31.01.2025; AmuTV, Explosive ordnance remains leading cause of child casualties in Afghanistan, Watchdog says, last update 03.02.2025; AFG Int, AFF Claims Responsibility For Attack On Taliban Convoy In Takhar, last update 09.02.2025; AmuTV, Blast targets Taliban vehicle in Takhar: Sources, last update 09.02.2025.

-
- 2 AFG Int, Taliban Imposes Travel Ban On Over 8,000 Former Government Officials, last update 06.02.2025; AmuTV, Leaked Taliban documents reveal 1,400 jailed women, 16,000 men, last update 06.02.2025; AFG Int, Taliban Conducts Nationwide Survey On Religious Compliance Across 12 Provinces, last update 06.02.2025; AmuTV, Taliban deny cybersecurity breach, claim leaked documents were not confidential, last update 06.02.2025; AmuTV, Hackers target Taliban databases, last update 06.02.2025; AmuTV, Taliban form committee to 'standardize national phrases and expressions' in media, last update 03.02.2025; KabulNow, Taliban Detains Former ANDSF Member in Kabul, Sources Report, last update 04.02.2025; AmuTV, Radio Begum confirms shutdown, says Taliban arrested two employees, last update 05.02.2025; AFG Int, Taliban Authorises Weapons & Armoured Vehicles For Morality Police, last update 07.02.2025.
 - 3 AmuTV, Situation of displaced persons in Nangarhar remains critical, UN agency says, last update 02.02.2025; AmuTV, In Kandahar's returnee camp, medical crisis worsens amid lack of aid, last update 03.02.2025.
 - 4 Balkan Insight: Bosnia's Federation Parliament Adopts Law Protecting Domestic Violence Victims, last update 05.02.2025; Sarajevo Times: House of Representatives Passes New Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, last update 05.02.2025.
 - 5 Al Jazeera, Indian forces kill 31 suspected Maoist rebels in Chhattisgarh state, last update 09.02.2025; BBC, Indian security forces kill 31 Maoist rebels, last update 09.02.2025; Deutsche Welle, India kills dozens of Maoist rebels in Chhattisgarh battle, last update 09.02.2025.
 - 6 Rudaw: Iran executed 87 prisoners in January, a 17% increase: Watchdog, last update 01.02.2025.
 - 7 Human Rights Activists News Agency: Environmental Activist Arman Shadivand Sentenced to Two Years in Prison, last update 03.02.2025. Iranwire: Kurdish Environmentalists Arrested in Western Iran Amid Regional Crackdown, last update 31.01.2025.
 - 8 BBC News Farsi: انجاستمى طلاق به يکى تهران در ازدواج دو هر از ايران؛ در طلاق افزايش [Divorce on the rise in Iran; one in two marriages in Tehran ends in divorce, last update 02.02.2025.
 - 9 Associated Press, Iraq's top court suspends new legislation that activists say undermines women's rights, last update 05.02.2025.
 - 10 Balkan Insight, Kosovo's Ruling Vetevendosje Party Claims Victory in Parliamentary Elections, last update 10.02.2025; Die Presse: Premier Kurti nach Parlamentswahlen im Kosovo wohl auf Partner angewiesen, last update 10.02.2025; Euronews: Parlamentswahlen im Kosovo: Erste Ergebnisse zeigen Kurtis Partei vorn, last update 10.02.2025.
 - 11 Naharnet: Army says began responding to gunfire from Syria at Aoun's orders, last update: 09.02.2025; Al-Monitor: Four killed in Syria-Lebanon border clashes between HTS and clans: What to know, last update: 07.02.2025; L'Orient today: Third day of fighting between Lebanese clans and Syrian forces along the border, last update: 08.02.2025; Al Mayadeen: Lebanese Army expands presence along Syria border as tensions escalate, last update: 09.02.2025; Naharnet: Lebanese clans kill and capture HTS members as Lebanese homes blown up in Syria, last update: 07.02.2025; This is Beirut: Four Dead, Ten Wounded in Border Clashes Between HTS and Hezbollah-Linked Drug Traffickers, last update: 06.02.2025.
 - 12 Reuters, Over 50 people killed in convoy ambush in northeast Mali, sources say, last update 08.02.2025; Le Monde, Au Mali, une attaque djihadiste sur un convoi civil fait une trentaine de morts, last update 09.02.2025; RFI, Mali: plusieurs dizaines de morts dans l'attaque d'un convoi entre Gao et Ansongo, last update 09.02.2025.
 - 13 UN News, Au Mali, toutes les parties au conflit commettent des violations à l'encontre des enfants, last update 07.02.2025.
 - 14 El País, Ortega ordena el "cierre inmediato" de la FAO en Nicaragua por publicar "información falsa", last update 06.02.2025; DW, Ortega retira a Nicaragua de la FAO y exige cierre oficinas, last update 05.02.2025.
 - 15 Punch Newspapers, Five sentenced to death for killing woman accused of witchcraft, last update 03.02.2025; BBC News, Five sentenced to death in Nigeria over 'witchcraft' murder, last update 04.02.2025; Legit.ng, Man Sentenced to Death for Killing 'Witch' Who Allegedly Chased His Wife in Dream, last update 05.02.2025.
 - 16 Associated Press: 3 police officers killed in an attack by militants in northwestern Pakistan, last update 06.02.2025.
 - 17 Rferl's Radio Mashaal, Pakistan's Opposition Takes To Streets On Anniversary Of Disputed Elections, (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), last update 08.02.2025; The Indian Express, Imran Khan's party to hold rally in Swabi instead of Lahore on Feb 8, marking year of general election, last update 08.02.2025; Deccan Herald, Imran Khan's party observes 'Black Day', several leaders arrested, last update 08.02.2025; Dawn, Section 144 imposed in Islamabad, Punjab, Balochistan as PTI holds rally in KP's Swabi, last update 08.02.2025.
 - 18 Associated Press, Huge health challenges face Gaza residents returning to their homes, letzte Aktualisierung 27.01.2025; Associated Press, Israeli doctors say five released Thai hostages in 'fair' health after 15 months of captivity, last update 31.01.2025; The New York Times, Israeli Troops Withdraw From Key Zone Bisecting Gaza, last update 09.02.2025; Associated Press, Sick and wounded children begin crossing into Egypt as Rafah crossing opens after several months, last update 01.02.2025; Associated Press, Aid is surging into Gaza under the ceasefire. Is it helping?, last update 03.02.2025; Reuters, Israeli delegation in Qatar for Gaza ceasefire talks, last update 09.02.2025; Associated Press, Gaza is in ruins, and it's unclear how it will be rebuilt, last update 05.02.2025; Associated Press, A look at the hostages taken to Gaza by Hamas, by the numbers, last update 08.02.2025; Associated Press, Who are the Palestinian prisoners released in exchange for Israeli hostages?, last update 08.02.2025; UN OCHA oPt, Humanitarian Situation Update #261 | Gaza Strip, last update 05.02.2025; UN OCHA oPt, Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip (4 February 2025), last update 04.02.2025.

-
- 19 Associated Press, Fear hits east Jerusalem as Israel moves to close UN Palestinian refugee agency, last update 29.01.2025; Associated Press, UN Palestinian refugee agency HQ in east Jerusalem deserted as Israeli ban takes effect, last update 30.01.2025; Associated Press, Israel's ban on UN's Palestinian aid agency has come into effect. Here's what that looks like, last update 30.01.2025; Reuters, Trump to target UN rights body and Palestinian relief agency, last update 04.02.2025; UN OCHA oPt, Humanitarian Situation Update #262 | West Bank, last update 06.02.2025.
- 20 Associated Press, Middle East latest: Israeli strike kills at least 10 people in the West Bank, officials say, last update 29.01.2025; Associated Press, Large explosions in West Bank as Israeli army says it detonated buildings used by militants, last update 02.02.2025; Reuters, Two Palestinian women killed in Israeli West Bank raid, last update 09.02.2025; Associated Press, Explosions rock West Bank refugee camp amid ongoing Israeli operation, last update 09.02.2025; Reuters, Two Israeli soldiers killed in West Bank shooting, last update 04.02.2025; Reuters, Israeli military operation turns Jenin refugee camp into 'ghost town', last update 04.02.2025; UN OCHA oPt, Humanitarian Situation Update #262 | West Bank, last update 06.02.2025.
- 21 OVD-Info, Шесть человек, преследуемых по следам народного схода в Баймаке, приговорили к срокам до пяти лет [Six people prosecuted in the wake of the people's gathering in Baimak were sentenced to terms of up to five years], last update 07.02.2025; OVD-Info, Repression in Russia in 2024: OVD-Info Overview, last update 12.01.2025; Idel.Realii, 28 лет на шестерых: суд в Ижевске огласил приговор фигурантам "Баймакского дела" [28 years for six: the court in Izhevsk announced the verdict for the defendants in the "Baimak case"], last update 07.02.2025; Idel Realii, "Может поддержать детей словом и примером". История фигуранта "Баймакского дела" Вилюра Карачурина ["He can support children with words and example." The story of the defendant Vilyur Karachurin in the "Baimak case"], last update 22.08.2024; The Insider, "They painted us all as traitors": Environmental protests in Bashkortostan morph into Russia's largest political trial, last update 03.10.2024.
- 22 ISW, Iran Update, February 4, 2025, last update 04.02.2025; ISW, Iran Update, February 5, 2025, last update 05.02.2025; ISW, Iran Update, February 6, 2025, last update 06.02.2025; ISW, Iran Update, February 7, 2025, last update 07.02.2025; ISW, Iran Update, February 8, 2025, last update 08.02.2025; ISW, Iran Update, February 9, 2025, last update 09.02.2025; NPA, Syrian Government Forces Enter Afrin, Take Control from Turkey-Backed Factions, last update 06.02.2025; Enab Baladi, Syrian Defense Ministry appoints "Abu Amsha" as Hama Brigade commander, last update 03.02.2025; Enab Baladi, "الموقتة" تصرف تحت كواذرها تضع 'Interim' puts its cadres at the disposal of the Damascus government], last update 04.02.2025; Syria Direct, Can Suwayda's factions enforce security and stop the spread of weapons?, last update 06.02.2025.
- 23 UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic 2024, o.D.; NYT, Trump's Foreign Aid Freeze Has Created Chaos. Here Is What to Know, last update 09.02.2025; Associated Press, Head of Turkish NGO: future uncertain as USAID cuts support to humanitarian projects, last update 06.02.2025; Associated Press, Life deteriorates for displaced in camp in northeastern Syria after Trump's foreign aid freeze, last update 03.02.2025; Associated Press, Trump's aid freeze shocks a Syria camp holding families linked to the Islamic State group, last update 04.02.2025.
- 24 dpa: Selenskyj: Würde mit Putin reden - «Betrachte ihn als Feind», 05.02.2025; The Guardian, Ukraine war briefing: I will sit down with US, Europe and Putin, says Zelenskyy, last update 05.02.2025; The Guardian, Ukraine war briefing: Bomber dies in attack on army recruitment centre, last update 06.02.2025.
- 25 The Guardian, Ukraine war briefing: Trump plan to end war must include security guarantees, Zelenskyy says, last update 10.02.2025; dpa: Russland will Stadt in der Ostukraine erobern, 07.02.2025; The Guardian, Ukraine war briefing: North Korean troops back on frontline in Kursk, says Zelenskyy, last update 08.02.2025; dpa: Gefechte in der Ostukraine werden wieder heftiger, 09.02.2025; dpa: Ukraine fängt russische Gleitbombe ab, 07.02.2025; dpa: Selenskyj: Würde mit Putin reden - «Betrachte ihn als Feind», 05.02.2025; dpa: Selenskyj gibt eigene Verluste mit 45.000 Toten an, 05.02.2025; RFE/RL: Russia Executing Ukrainian Soldiers On The Spot, Says UN, (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) last update 06.02.2025; The Guardian, Ukraine war briefing: Bomber dies in attack on army recruitment centre, last update 06.02.2025.
- 26 dpa: Stopp der US-Auslandshilfen: Wer ist betroffen? Trumps Vorgehen gegen USAID, 05.02.2025, dpa: Trump will US-Hilfen für Ukraine an Rohstoffe knüpfen, 03.02.2025; The Guardian, Ukraine war briefing: Trump demands rare earths from Kyiv in exchange for aid, last update 04.02.2025; Blum, Ulrich u.a.: Die Rohstoffe der Ukraine und ihre strategische Bedeutung, Ukraine-Analysen 296, 15.03.2024: 6-12.
- 27 Efecto Cocuyo, Sebin allana casa de coordinador de Vente Venezuela en Bolívar y se llevan presa a su suegra de 80 años, last update 31.01.2025; Crónica Uno, Allanan casa del coordinador de Vente en Bolívar y se llevan a la suegra y su cuidadora, last update 31.01.2025; Tal Cual, Denuncian allanamiento de vivienda de coordinador de Vente Venezuela en Bolívar, last update 31.01.2025; Efecto Cocuyo, ONG reporta 174 excarcelaciones de presos políticos, last update 26.01.2025; El Nacional, ¿Cuántos extranjeros permanecen detenidos por razones políticas en Venezuela?, last update 05.02.2025; Tagesschau, Venezuela lässt sechs US-Bürger frei, last update 01.02.2025.

Imprint

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,
90461 Nürnberg

ISSN

2943-0682

Valid as of

CW 07/2025

Printed by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Design

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Reference source

Publikationsstelle Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
www.bamf.de/publikationen

You can also download this publication as an accessible PDF document.

This publication is issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees as part of its public relations work. The publication is distributed free of charge and is not intended for sale. It may not be used by political parties or by election campaigners or election workers during an election campaign for the purpose of election advertising. This applies to federal, state and local elections as well as to elections to the European Parliament.

www.bamf.de