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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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30 March 2026

Afghanistan

Security situation: Fighting between the Taliban and Pakistan continues following ceasefire

During the night of 23–24 March 2026, the previously agreed ceasefire between the Taliban and Pakistan came to an end (see BN of 23 March 2026). Clashes were reported in Zabul Province, along with an attack by the Pakistani Air Force on a military base in Balkh Province. In Kunar Province, Pakistani shelling is said to have caused civilian casualties over several days. Fighting has also been reported at the Turkham border crossing. Due to heavy censorship, the course of the fighting and the number of casualties are difficult to ascertain.¹

Humanitarian situation: Worsening due to war, migration and heavy rain

According to the IOM, more than 70,000 people entered Afghanistan from Iran in the first two weeks of March. Even people with residency status in Iran are leaving the country due to the war. In this context, reports from western Afghanistan indicate further strain on the labour market. In the east of the country, families who had fled the war between the Taliban and Pakistan (approx. 115,000 people) were living, in some cases, in makeshift camps without access to basic supplies. Furthermore, critical infrastructure (e.g. food supplies) has been disrupted in the areas affected by fighting. At the same time, several people died across the country between 26 March and 29 March 2026 due to heavy rainfall. Numerous houses were destroyed. In a report dated 22 March 2026, the International Red Cross highlights the deteriorating drinking water supply.²

Situation regarding persecution: Documentation of human rights violations by Rawadari

The human rights organisation Rawadari published its annual report on the human rights situation in Afghanistan on 25 March 2026. Among other things, the report documents civilian casualties resulting from military clashes, arbitrary and unlawful arrests, poor detention conditions, public executions and floggings, the systematic denial of human rights for women and girls, and the discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities by the Taliban. The report places particular emphasis on politically motivated acts of violence: in 2025, Rawadari documented attacks on 80 former government employees, who were killed or injured in the process. The organisation points out that the Taliban put pressure on victims and their

relatives not to press charges. The Taliban are alleged to have killed a further 40 people on the grounds that they supported an opposition group. 257 people are said to have been killed due to other political connections (civil society activism, journalism, support for the former government), 19 of whom were children who were not directly targeted but nevertheless became victims. Furthermore, there were 66 cases of enforced disappearance. Here too, the victims were mostly employees of the former government or were accused of supporting opposition groups.

According to media reports, the Taliban are said to have arrested two men after they criticised the Taliban on social media for excluding girls from secondary education.³

El Salvador

Tightening of criminal law: life imprisonment also for minors

On 17 March 2026, Congress passed a constitutional reform providing for the imposition of life imprisonment for murder, rape and terrorism. Previously, the maximum sentence was 60 years' imprisonment. In addition, changes were made to the juvenile justice system: Unlike the previous rules, under which children under 12 could be sentenced to up to 10 years' imprisonment in serious cases and young people over 16 to up to 15 years, the new legal framework provides for life imprisonment as the only possible sentence for offences such as murder, rape and gang membership for young people aged between 12 and 18. Courts carry out a 'mandatory review' of life imprisonment and may grant a 'suspended sentence' for offences committed by minors who have served 25 years of their sentence; for adults, the review is to take place after 30 to 40 years of imprisonment.

Until now, Article 27 of the Constitution has prohibited life imprisonment in order to ensure the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders and to prevent crime. In a joint statement, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Children's Fund criticised the reform of the juvenile justice system, as imprisonment has serious consequences for the physical and mental well-being of children and young people. Furthermore, sentencing children and young people to life imprisonment would contravene the standards set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to this, children in conflict with the law should be treated in a way that prioritises their rehabilitation and reintegration. Deprivation of liberty should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest possible period.⁴

Ethiopia

Situation of internally displaced persons in Tigray

Reports indicate that the situation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Tigray region is deteriorating rapidly. Food shortages, lack of access to drinking water, extreme heatwaves, cuts to aid, and the rising number of IDPs are said to be posing enormous challenges for those affected and those in charge. The current number of IDPs in Tigray is estimated at around 750,000, with approximately 1.1 million displaced persons having returned to Tigray (IDP returnees). In total, the number of IDPs in Ethiopia is estimated to be almost 2 million (as of December 2025). Over the past three years, 1,300 IDPs are reported to have died in Tigray due to malnutrition and inadequate medical care. Deliveries from international aid organisations and the government are said to be declining and may not reach all those affected. The background to this includes the tense security situation in Tigray, particularly in the west of the region (see BN of 02.02.26).⁵

Iraq

KR-I: Drone attack on the President's official residence

On 29 March 2026, the residence of the President of the KR-I, Nechirvan Barzani, in Dohuk was the target of several drone attacks. To date, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. According to media reports, however, Barzani believes this represents a new level of escalation in violence and, at the same time, a major

threat to the whole of Iraq. The central government in Baghdad must take more decisive action against pro-Iranian militias within Iraq to prevent attacks on state institutions in Erbil, as well as in Baghdad and other locations in Iraq, and to bring the perpetrators to justice. Immediately after the attack, Iraq's current interim Prime Minister al-Sudani expressed his solidarity with the President of the KR-I and announced a swift investigation into the incident.⁶

KR-I: Rocket attack on Peshmerga; ongoing drone and rocket attacks; suspension of in-person teaching in schools

On 24 March 2026, six people were killed and 30 injured in an Iranian attack on a Peshmerga base in the Soran district (Erbil Governorate). According to media reports citing the KR-I Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, the base was struck by a ballistic missile fired from the neighbouring country.

According to media reports, since the start of the war in Iran at the end of February 2026, the KR-I has been the target of more than 460 drone and missile attacks to date, with the majority of attacks concentrated in the governorates of Erbil and Sulaimaniyya.

On 29 March 2026, the Ministry of Information of the KR-I Regional Government announced that in-person teaching at all educational institutions in the KR-I would continue to be suspended due to the security situation. The relevant ministries have been instructed to take the necessary steps to continue providing education online. Immediately after the war began in Iran, face-to-face teaching had been suspended in the KR-I from 1 March 2026 due to the ongoing drone and missile attacks.⁷

Air strikes against PMF in several governorates

Last week, several positions and military facilities belonging to various brigades of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) were targeted in suspected US air strikes in the governorates of al-Anbar, Babil, Nineveh and Salah al-Din.

According to media reports, on 24 March 2026, 14 PMF members were killed and 15 injured in an attack on a base in al-Habbaniyah (al-Anbar Governorate). In a further attack on 25 March 2026 on the same base, which is also used by the Iraqi Army, seven Iraqi soldiers were reportedly killed and more than a dozen injured, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence.⁸

Iran

War situation: Reports of sporadic power cuts and an overview of war damage in the first month

US and Israeli attacks on targets in Iran continue at the start of the second month of the war. According to a report by a US think tank dated 29 March 2026, both countries are continuing to carry out waves of attacks against Iranian ballistic missile production facilities, missile launch bases, military complexes and facilities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in various cities, including Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd. The attacks reportedly caused power cuts on 29 March 2026 in several districts of Karaj and some eastern districts of Tehran, as a power transmission network east of Tehran and a power distribution station in Karaj were damaged. On 27 March 2026, the US military also attacked a border post in Siranband in the province of Kurdistan on the Iran-Iraq border, and other high-ranking military officials, such as the commander of the IRGC Navy, who was responsible for the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, were killed. Similarly, on 29 March 2026, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that the heavy water production plant in Khondab, which had been attacked on 27 March 2026, had been damaged and was no longer operational.

According to a report dated 29 March 2026, the internet outage is still ongoing, with connectivity at only around one per cent of normal levels.

According to a statement by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) dated 27 March 2026, more than 1,900 people have been killed and at least 20,000 injured since the attacks began. According to a US-based human rights organisation, however, as of 29 March 2026, there have been 1,568 civilian deaths and 1,211 military deaths since the start of the war. 707 deaths have not yet been classified.

According to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, 24,742 injured people have been treated and discharged to date.

According to a report by a Norway-based non-governmental organisation dated 27 March 2026, which cites figures from the Iranian government, over 81,000 buildings have been damaged after one month of war, including 61,000 homes, 19,000 commercial premises, 275 medical facilities and nearly 500 schools. UN OCHA confirmed damage to civilian infrastructure in at least 20 provinces. According to a media report dated 26 March 2026, in Tehran alone nearly 14,000 residential units were affected by damage and at least 6,000 people had been temporarily accommodated in municipal shelters.

A Kurdish human rights organisation based in Norway reported on 26 March 2026 that Iranian security forces had arrested at least 1,700 people nationwide between 28 February and 26 March 2026, including civilian activists. The detainees are said to include at least 300 Kurds from various provinces. These figures cannot be independently verified. Furthermore, according to a media report dated 26 March 2026, the police in Yazd stated that they had frozen 61 bank accounts belonging to Starlink users, seized six Starlink devices and arrested six people. The authorities accused the suspects of selling access to Starlink, passing on information to foreign media and engaging in activities classified as hostile. Furthermore, on 28 March 2026, the Ministry of Intelligence reported the arrest of 19 people in the provinces of Khuzestan, Ardabil and Kerman for alleged links to US-Israeli networks. According to the Ministry, security forces also killed five “separatist militants” who were allegedly attacking civilian facilities at an unspecified location. These claims cannot be independently verified.

According to a media report dated 28 March 2026, at least 845 public demonstrations have taken place since the start of the war, 99.2% of which are said to have been pro-government. There was reportedly only a single anti-government protest on 25 March 2026 in Tehran. This was reportedly crushed by the IRGC, with ten people killed. Prior to this, on 17 March 2026, there had been isolated demonstrations in the town of Fardis and in four districts of Tehran, against which the security forces had also taken action. Furthermore, on 27 March 2026, state media explicitly reported for the first time since the start of the war the arrest of five people for ‘organising street riots’. In addition, 15 people were reportedly arrested in Ilam province for disrupting pro-government gatherings.⁹

Kosovo

Implementation of the Aliens Act

According to media reports, the full implementation of Kosovo’s Aliens Act – which has been in force since 2013 – began on 15 March 2026. Under the new rules, all persons living in the country without Kosovar documents will require a residence permit in future. Foreign nationals may stay in Kosovo for up to 90 days; for longer stays, a corresponding application is required. According to reports, representatives of the Serbian minority warned of negative consequences for Serbs living in Kosovo who hold only Serbian identity documents. Following consultations with the EU Special Representatives for the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue, Peter Sörensen, and for Kosovo, Aivo Orav, the Kosovar government agreed to amendments to the implementation of the Aliens Act. Accordingly, members of the Serbian community in the country without Kosovar documents are to be granted a 12-month residence permit. To issue such permits, Kosovo will also temporarily recognise documents issued by Serbian authorities. The US, as well as representatives and member states of the EU, welcomed the implementation of the law and the agreement reached.¹⁰

Presidential election fails

An unsuccessful parliamentary attempt to elect a new president on 5 March 2026 led to a renewed escalation of the political crisis. As no parliamentary majority was formed – requiring the presence of at least two-thirds of MPs – to elect a new president, President Vjosa Osmani dissolved parliament by decree and called for early elections. At the initiative of the ruling party, the Constitutional Court reviewed the dissolution of

parliament. On 26 March 2026, the court rejected the President's decree and gave MPs a further 34 days to fill the presidential post. Otherwise, new elections will be held 45 days later. These would be the third parliamentary elections in just over a year (see BN of 30 June and 22 September 2025).¹¹

Lebanon

Fighting and humanitarian crisis

Hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah continue. There are still extensive Israeli air strikes and Hezbollah rocket fire on a daily basis. Hezbollah reports double-digit numbers of attacks on Israeli positions in southern Lebanon every day. In response, Israel has confirmed that it has advanced up to eight kilometres into Lebanese territory along various axes.

Various statements by Israeli politicians regarding a possible redrawing of the border with Lebanon are causing concern both nationally and internationally. On 23 March 2026, for instance, Israeli Finance Minister Smotrich proposed that the Litani River should serve as the border river in future, which would amount to a demand for the annexation of over 10% of Lebanese territory.

On the Lebanese side, the expulsion of the Iranian ambassador on 24 March 2026 marked a new step against Iran's influence in the country. Politicians from the Shia parties Amal and Hezbollah boycotted the cabinet vote in protest. The Iranian ambassador, Mohammad Reza Shibani, was declared *persona non grata*; he was given until 29 March 2026 to leave the country. So far, the ambassador has refused to comply. As of 30 March 2026, he has not left the country, citing the will of Hezbollah and Amal as his reason.

According to figures from the Ministry of Health dated 29 March 2026, the number of recorded deaths in Lebanon has now risen to 1,238, including 124 minors. The Ministry does not provide any details distinguishing between civilians and combatants. According to the WHO, 83% of all victims are male.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the widespread evacuations is escalating. NGOs report being severely overstretched, particularly following cuts to humanitarian aid funding. The aid currently being provided falls well short of the needs triggered by the internal refugee crisis. As of 26 March 2026, 1.049 million people have registered online as internally displaced persons, around 130,000 of whom are housed in over 600 public emergency shelters. Around 190,000 people, predominantly Syrian nationals, have left Lebanon for Syria since the start of the fighting.¹²

Liberia

Prominent political activist released after more than ten days in detention

According to media reports, the political activist Al-Mahdi Abdulati was arrested by the Internal Security Agency (ISA) in the western Libyan city of Misrata on 18 March 2026 and released on 29 March 2026. No official reason was given for his detention. The ISA reports directly to the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU). Abdulati is known for critically examining the GNU's approach to public spending and security issues in social media posts as well as in interviews with local television stations.

In a statement dated 25 March 2026, the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) called for the release of the political activist and further stated that his detention was not an isolated incident but part of a recurring pattern by security and law enforcement agencies in Libya.¹³

Human rights organisation warns of water crisis

A local human rights organisation warned of rapidly deteriorating water security on the occasion of World Water Day on 22 March 2026. A statement issued by the organisation noted that Libya relies on artificial river systems and groundwater for over 97% of its water supply. This structural dependence makes the country highly vulnerable to supply disruptions. At the same time, a lack of maintenance, repeated acts of sabotage against the water network and illegal connections are further exacerbating the situation. In addition to restrictions on private households, water supply shortages are massively exacerbating the situation in

schools, hospitals and prisons. In some of these facilities, water has already been sold illegally to inmates. The organisation called on the authorities not only to improve the protection of existing infrastructure but also to invest in alternative water sources such as desalination plants.¹⁴

Mali

Kayes region: Several lorry drivers murdered in attack on tanker convoy

According to a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW), the al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) is said to have executed ten lorry drivers and two underage apprentices in the south-west of the country on 29 January 2026. The report states that a military-escorted convoy of around 40 tankers, travelling from Diboli (near the border with the n Senegal) to Kayes, was attacked near the village of Ambidédi. According to witness accounts, the jihadists on motorbikes opened fire on the convoy. This led to a deadly exchange of fire, and at least twelve tankers were set alight. The twelve victims are said to have initially attempted to flee during the attack but were captured by the jihadists. Their bodies were reportedly found later, blindfolded, with their hands bound and their throats slit. HRW describes the killings as "obvious war crimes". Following the massacre, a nationwide strike by the lorry drivers' union is said to have taken place to put pressure on the Malian military to recover the bodies. This reportedly happened in mid-February 2026.

In early March, over 100 suspected jihadists are said to have been released as part of an agreement. They are said to have been released in exchange for a secure corridor through which the tankers could pass again. Since September 2025, JNIM has been carrying out attacks on fuel supplies in Mali, repeatedly leading to acute fuel shortages, particularly in the capital Bamako (see BN, 3 November 2026).¹⁵

Mozambique

Humanitarian situation

According to media reports, many areas are once again affected by flooding, which has developed since the onset of the latest rainy season in mid-March 2026, mainly in the provinces of Niassa and Tete in the north and Inhambane and Sofala in central Mozambique. At least 18 people are reported to have drowned so far, and probably over 10,000 have taken refuge in emergency shelters. The flood threat is not expected to subside until the end of the current rainy season in April (see BN of 26 January and 2 February 2026).¹⁶

Niger

German Embassy relocates staff

Due to the tense security situation, the German Embassy in Niamey has temporarily withdrawn its staff from Niger. This is according to media reports dated 21 March 2026, which cite official information from the Federal Foreign Office. According to these reports, consular assistance can no longer be guaranteed in Niger at present. Until further notice, the German Embassy in neighbouring Burkina Faso is responsible for consular matters. The Foreign Office has emphatically reiterated the long-standing travel warning and the call for German nationals to leave Niger. According to media reports, Islamist militants have been threatening security in Niger for years, particularly in the west and south-east of the country. At the end of January 2026, one of the Islamist groups active in Niger carried out a terrorist attack on the international airport in the capital, Niamey.¹⁷

Palestinian Autonomous Territories / Israel

Further escalation of violence by Israeli settlers in the West Bank

Since the start of the Israeli-US war against Iran, UN OCHA has documented more than 150 attacks by

settlers, which have resulted in injuries and damage in around 90 Palestinian communities in the West Bank; on average, there have been more than six attacks per day. According to Israeli media, citing an Israeli human rights organisation, there have been 257 incidents since 28 March 2026, averaging around ten attacks per day.

Violence escalated further after a Palestinian rammed a settler's vehicle with his car in the northern West Bank on 21 March 2026, killing the settler; the authorities classified the incident as a suspected terrorist attack. According to media reports, during the nights of 21–22 March 2026 and 25–26 March 2026, there were coordinated settler attacks involving physical violence, arson attacks on houses and vehicles, and serious vandalism. More than a dozen Palestinians were reportedly injured, some seriously. According to media reports, Israeli military and police were present at some of the scenes but did not intervene and are even said to have protected the attackers in some cases. When asked, the Israeli military stated that the incidents were under investigation. A video circulating on social media is said to show a 75-year-old Palestinian, covered in blood, being left behind in his home in Tayasir in the Tubas Governorate after settlers raided the village and fired on young men who confronted them.

In recent days, there has also been an increase in the establishment of new settler outposts, some even in the so-called Area A territories under the sole control of the Palestinian Authority. According to media reports, on 26 March, another Palestinian was shot dead by settlers near Bethlehem after they had established an outpost on his land. This brings the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli settlers since the start of the war in the Gulf to seven. Although Israeli politicians have condemned the settler violence, there have been no arrests of settlers in connection with the attacks or killings to date.¹⁸

Forced evictions and displacement of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem

According to UN and media reports, between 20 and 25 March, Israeli security forces forcibly evicted 15 Palestinian families comprising a total of 70 people, including 29 children, in the Jabbal Batn al-Hawa neighbourhood to facilitate the takeover of the land by the right-wing settler organisation Ateret Cohanim. The organisation is campaigning for the establishment of a Jewish-Israeli presence in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem. Now that the settler organisation's property claims have been upheld by Israeli courts, further evictions are imminent.

Ateret Cohanim bases its claim on a 1970 law concerning legal and administrative regulations, which allows Jews to assert property rights in East Jerusalem. Palestinians, however, who left extensive property behind in West Jerusalem, are not granted this opportunity. Following the forced evictions, an Israeli human rights organisation stated that the Israeli government was pursuing "ethnic cleansing" in East Jerusalem. This, it said, was an expression of institutional and systemic violence aimed at altering the demographic balance and "Judaizing" the predominantly Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan through discriminatory laws.¹⁹

Further casualties from ongoing rocket attacks in Israel and the West Bank

In the course of the war in the Gulf against Iran led by Israel and the US, Iranian rocket attacks have once again claimed lives and caused injuries in Israel. According to media reports of 27 March 2026, at least 19 people have been killed and just under 5,500 injured in Israel since the start of the war. The number of Palestinians killed by falling debris in the West Bank on 18 March 2026 has risen to four (see BN, 23 March 2026).

In the week of 23 March 2026, local media reported on falling debris ranging from large pieces to entire rockets. Unlike Israeli flats and houses, Palestinian residential buildings generally do not have shelters into which residents can take refuge when a rocket alarm sounds.²⁰

Russian Federation

Cooperation between law enforcement agencies in the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence in the North Caucasus

According to media reports of 27 March 2026, the Chechen woman Aishat Baimuradova, who fled to

Armenia due to domestic violence and was the victim of an honour killing there, is said to have been buried in Yerevan. According to media investigations, state actors from Chechnya are said to have been involved in Baimuradova's murder on 15 October 2025 in Yerevan (see BN of 24 November 2025).

According to a report in Novaya Gazeta dated 17 March 2026, fabricated criminal complaints – which trigger a nationwide manhunt by federal law enforcement agencies – are increasingly being used to repatriate fugitive victims of domestic violence from the North Caucasus. According to the report, the federal law enforcement system is increasingly being used as a tool for controlling and persecuting women from the North Caucasus who have fled. A study by the NGO 'Ad Rem' cited in the report, which analysed a total of 75 cases of domestic violence from the North Caucasus between 2018 and 2025, concludes that in all the cases examined, law enforcement, judicial and administrative authorities supported the perpetrators in some way. In doing so, the authorities not only refused to support the victims but actively participated in the search (e.g. by passing on information about the women's whereabouts), arrest and repatriation of the women. Federal law enforcement agencies, particularly in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia, are regularly used to apprehend relatives living in other regions of Russia through manhunts, often on the basis of unfounded accusations such as the theft of jewellery. As the alleged offences are said to have taken place in the women's home republics, federal law enforcement agencies are obliged to hand the women over to the investigating authorities in their home regions. These authorities, in turn, hand the women over to their families without conducting any further investigation into the alleged crime. Numerous women have reportedly disappeared without trace after being handed over to their families, which is why MROs assume that they have fallen victim to honour killings and that the authorities are allowing the perpetrators to go unpunished.²¹

Somalia

Security situation

According to media and government reports, local security forces, supported by international allies, continue to crack down on radical Islamist groups in Somalia (see BN of 23 February and 23 March 2026). In the Lower Shabelle region of South West State, al-Shabaab has been pushed back to such an extent that the vital transport link between Mubarak and Awdhegale was restored in the week of 23 March 2026. Prior to this, government security forces, together with units from the African Union Support Mission (AUSSOM), had been engaged in fighting against al-Shabaab in this area, as well as in Middle Shabelle and Hirshabelle, since 15 March 2026. More than 40 al-Shabaab members, as well as approximately six civilians, were reported to have been killed, and at least 8,000 fled.

In view of the situation regarding the fight against extremist groups, the Somali Federal Government announced on 24 March 2026 an amnesty for all those who leave these groups. The amnesty period lasts 90 days. The offer is aimed at both young and senior members of both al-Shabaab and IS. It is targeted in particular at those who were recruited under duress.

In Puntland, five soldiers were killed in an explosion on 13 March 2026. It is believed that this was an IS attack on the soldiers' vehicle. The incident took place in the Al-Miskaad mountains in the north of the region, where regional security forces and the US-led AFRICOM have been conducting military operations against the group for some time.²²

Syria

Suweida: UN Commission of Inquiry publishes findings on July 2025 massacres

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, published its report on 27 March 2026 on the massacres and several days of fighting that took place in July 2025 between Druze and Bedouin militias and the security forces of the Syrian transitional government (see BN of 14 July, 21 July and 28 July 2025).

According to the report, a total of over 1,700 people were killed and almost 200,000 displaced in this context: the majority of those killed were civilians or people who were no longer involved in the fighting;

furthermore, the vast majority of the fatalities were from the Druze minority. However, members of Bedouin communities and around 225 members of the Syrian security forces are also said to have been killed, the latter predominantly in Israeli air strikes.

The Commission documented widespread executions, torture, gender-based violence, looting, the destruction of residential buildings and predominantly Druze places of worship, as well as other human rights violations committed mainly by government forces and Druze militias, which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, there may have been systematic attacks on the civilian population of Suweida by some of the commanders of the government forces, although the UN Commission did not conclusively confirm this. The report also states that the armed Bedouins, who had mobilised from other parts of the country and fought in Suweida on the side of government forces, operated under the latter's effective control, meaning their actions were attributable to the state. According to the report, parts of the state security agencies were unwilling or unable to take action against this.

Many people were also abducted or unlawfully detained during the riots. The majority have since been found and released, but around 100 members of the Druze minority, 20 members of Bedouin communities and 30 government officials, as well as a volunteer from the Syrian Civil Defence, are still missing. Although initial reports of a large number of missing women could not be confirmed, the whereabouts of at least three Bedouin and three Druze women remain unclear.

Overall, the acts of violence committed also had a strong gender-specific dimension, with men and boys reportedly being particularly affected.

For around 155,000 of the total of almost 200,000 displaced persons, mainly from burnt-out Druze villages, a return is still not possible. A large proportion of the Bedouin population from Suweida also remains displaced.

The findings of the investigation also indicate that the escalation of violence was preceded by increasing incitement to hatred and violence on both sides, which was exacerbated in particular by misinformation: fake videos and claims, including allegations of the mistreatment of foetuses and infants, were widely circulated. None of these claims could be substantiated.

The report is based on 409 eyewitness accounts from survivors and witnesses in the affected communities, as well as on several visits by the commission of inquiry to the worst-affected areas, particularly in predominantly Druze villages.

Although large-scale fighting in the Suweida Governorate has subsided since the ceasefire of 19 July 2015, sporadic violent clashes between the transitional government's security forces and Druze militias continue to occur regularly, with the latter still controlling the majority of the governorate.²³

Hama: Violent clashes in a predominantly Christian town

On 27 March 2026, violent clashes broke out between local armed groups in the town of al-Suqaylabiyah (Hama Governorate), which is predominantly inhabited by the Christian minority. According to media reports, the trigger was a dispute between two men, although there are conflicting accounts of the incident. Subsequently, dozens of men on motorbikes are said to have entered al-Suqaylabiyah from the nearby Sunni-dominated town of Qalaat al-Madiq and carried out attacks on residential buildings and shops, reportedly resulting in several injuries and damage to property. To calm the situation, government troops were subsequently deployed to al-Suqaylabiyah, where they imposed a temporary curfew. The following day, large-scale protests broke out in the town, directed against the still widespread uncontrolled use of firearms, repeated attacks on the civilian population by armed groups, and the failure of state security authorities to maintain a monopoly on the use of force. According to government sources, several suspects were arrested.²⁴

Quneitra: Arrest of civilians by Israeli forces

On 24 March 2026, Israeli forces arrested two Syrian civilians near al-Rafeed (Quneitra Governorate) after an Israeli military convoy had entered the area. The whereabouts of those affected are currently unknown. Furthermore, Israeli forces advanced as far as the region around Ofania in the north of the governorate, where they set up a checkpoint at the entrance to the quarry area in the village of Ain al-Bayda. According to

a media report, there were also several temporary arrests in the governorates of Quneitra and Daraa by Israeli troops the previous day, preceded by several house searches.

Since the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, Israeli troops have continued to advance into southern Syria: the Israeli army carries out raids and arrests on an almost daily basis. Israeli forces release some detainees after several hours, whilst others are held in custody and their whereabouts remain unclear.²⁵

Freedom House: Syria remains ‘not free’ despite isolated progress; ban on media platforms

Whilst Syria continues to be classified as “not free” according to Freedom House’s annual report published at the end of March 2026, the country simultaneously recorded the greatest improvement worldwide in 2025 compared to the same period the previous year. Under the new transitional government, the report states, sporadic progress has been made in rebuilding political institutions and easing restrictions on fundamental rights, leading to a rise of five index points (a total of 10/100 compared to 5/100 index points in the same period the previous year).

The report also states that international and independent local media were largely able to carry out critical reporting from within Syria, that civil society organisations were able to register and operate more freely, and that the legal repressions from the Assad era are gradually being dismantled. Despite this progress, there were instances of ethnically and religiously motivated violence by the transitional government’s armed forces and other armed groups during 2025.

According to a media report dated 27 March 2026, the transitional government banned three media platforms from operating within Syria. This followed a decision by the Syrian Ministry of Information, which had accused the media platforms of unethical and unprofessional conduct, sparking criticism from media professionals and human rights organisations. Two of the affected media platforms announced that they would continue their work from abroad in future. According to the state news agency SANA, the Ministry of Information is taking action against platforms that violate licensing regulations on the basis of applicable legislation. The Ministry emphasised that any person or organisation collaborating in any way with the banned platforms will face criminal prosecution.²⁶

Türkiye

Raids following Newroz celebrations over suspected links to the PKK

On 24 and 25 March 2026, security forces carried out simultaneous raids in various Turkish cities in connection with Newroz events. According to official sources, a total of 209 people were temporarily detained. Nine of them were subsequently remanded in custody. Those affected are accused of violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911 and of engaging in so-called terrorist propaganda for the banned PKK. According to the General Directorate of Public Security (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü), the latter included singing songs, chanting slogans and the use of banners and photos allegedly linked to the PKK. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Interior Minister Mustafa Çiftçi stated that such actions would not be tolerated on the path to a “terror-free Turkey”.

The PKK had announced its dissolution and the end of armed struggle in May 2025 (see BN of 12 May 2025). Subsequently, a parliamentary commission was established in August 2025 to oversee the peace process (see BN of 4 August 2025).²⁷

Ukraine

Civilian casualties

According to media reports, Russian attacks between 22 March and 29 March 2026 claimed several civilian lives in the following Ukrainian regions: 22 March (Zaporizhzhia: 3, Kherson: 1), 24 March (Poltava: 2, Ivano-Frankivsk: 2, Zaporizhzhia: 1, Kharkiv: 1, Kherson: 1, Donetsk: 1), 25 March (Kharkiv: 2), 26 March (Kherson: 2,

Donetsk: 1), 28 March (Dnipropetrovsk: 2, Sumy: 2, Odessa: 2, Poltava: 1, Kherson: 1, Mykolaiv: 1, Zaporizhzhia: 1, Donetsk: 1), 29 March (Donetsk: 3).

According to UN figures from 23 March 2026, a total of 15,364 civilians, including 775 children, have been killed in Ukraine since the start of the war. Due to increased Russian drone attacks, particularly from short-range drones, the number of Ukrainian casualties has almost doubled compared to the previous year. In 2025, the UN recorded at least 580 civilians killed and just under 3,000 injured. In the first two months of 2026, 107 civilians had already been killed and 430 injured, with 60% of the victims being near the front line, half of whom were elderly people.²⁸

War situation, air defence

According to reports, massive Russian air strikes during the night of 24 March 2026 and throughout the day caused damage in eleven regions, including western and central Ukraine, and resulted in numerous injuries (see above for fatalities). According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, this was the largest single-day air strike since the start of the war. 94% of the enemy missiles were reportedly destroyed. Russian air strikes often commence before dawn or in the early morning hours. Daytime attacks away from the frontline areas are rather rare. As part of the establishment of a layered air defence system, the Ministry is currently working on a new line of defence designed to make attacks on western Ukraine impossible.²⁹

Energy infrastructure

According to media reports, Russian attacks between 22 March and 29 March 2026 caused damage and temporary disruptions in the following Ukrainian regions: 24 March (energy facility in Ternopil, 70,000 households without power), 25 March (energy facility in Chernihiv, 150,000 households without power). Overall, the number of attacks on energy infrastructure, which rose sharply over the winter of 2025/26, is declining again in the spring.³⁰

Abducted children

According to a report by Yale University, the Russian state-owned companies Gazprom and Rosneft were directly involved in the forced relocation and re-education of at least 2,158 Ukrainian children between 2022 and 2025. Six camps have been identified in the Russian Federation and in the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine, some of which are owned by the energy companies or their subsidiaries. According to a Ukrainian NGO report dated 25 March 2026, a total of 15 abducted children were recovered in the week of 16 March 2026. Following a meeting with the Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenska on 26 March 2026, the US State Department announced that USD 25 million in aid would be provided for the identification, repatriation and rehabilitation of Ukrainian minors.³¹

Yemen

Missile attacks on Israel

On 28 March 2026, for the first time since the start of the war in Iran, a missile was fired from Yemen towards Israel. According to media reports, the missile was intercepted by Israeli air defences. The missile launch was confirmed by a spokesperson for the Houthis, who are allied with Iran. On 29 March 2026, according to media reports, another missile was fired towards Israel. At present, there is no information available as to whether Israel carried out retaliatory strikes on Yemeni territory.

The Houthis are allied with the Iranian government but belong to a different sub-group within Shia Islam. Together with the Lebanese Hezbollah, the Palestinian Hamas and Shia militias in Iraq, they form the so-called 'Axis of Resistance', which primarily pursues an anti-American and anti-Israeli agenda.³²

Attack on camp for internally displaced persons

According to media reports, Houthi forces fired three mortar shells at a camp for internally displaced persons in the district of at-Tuhayta (Hodeida Governorate). One person was reportedly seriously injured in

the attack. A mass panic broke out among the camp's residents. No information is currently available regarding further casualties or the exact time of the attack.³³

Deaths in severe flooding

Following heavy rainfall, severe flooding occurred on 27 March 2026 in the Taizz Governorate in south-western Yemen, killing 15 people and leaving many seriously injured. According to media reports, the districts of al-Mocha, Mawza, al-Wazi'yah, Jabal Habashi and Maqbanah were particularly affected. According to the Administration for Displaced Persons' Camps in Taizz, the effects of the flooding are affecting around 5,800 families, including both residents of the host communities and internally displaced persons themselves. Furthermore, the Administration's Executive Department highlighted the lack of emergency shelter, blankets and rain protection materials, and urged the urgent provision of food aid. Many of those affected have lost not only their homes but also their grazing livestock, all their supplies and thus their livelihoods. Flooding and dysfunctional water and sewage systems pose a risk of significant health hazards.³⁴

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