

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	668
Land:	Afghanistan
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Titel:	Information Centre Asylum and Migration. Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	26. september 2016
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	12. december 2016

Group 22 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

26 September 2016

Afghanistan

Government enters into peace deal with Hekmatyar

After many months of negotiations the Afghan government struck a peace agreement with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's radical Islamist group Hisb-e-Islami. Under the agreement Hisb-e-Islami will cease all military activities, prisoners will be released and its fighters are promised impunity. In future the group shall only be active politically. The agreement will enter into force as soon as President Ghani and Hekmatyar will have signed it personally. Hisb-e-Islami, established by Hekmatyar in 1977, is one of the country's largest rebel groups next to the Taliban and is considered to be extremely brutal. As mujahedin leader Hekmatyar received the largest financial support from the US in his fight against Soviet occupation in the 1980s. After the communists were ousted he briefly held the office of Afghan prime minister in 1993. In the civil war during the 1990s he switched camps and besieged Kabul. He is held responsible for the death of thousands of civilians.

Policemen die in US air strikes

On 18 September 2016 a neighbouring Afghan police control post was hit by mistake in a US air raid of a Taliban position in the southern province of Uruzgan, killing eight policemen.

Haqqani network commanders killed

The National Directorate of Security informed that at least six members of the Haqqani network were killed in a security operation in the central province of Maidan Wardak. Presumably including the commanders Mullah Mahmood and Azizullah, who are held responsible for the death of 30 police recruits in a suicide bombing in Kabul in June 2016.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

High-ranking TTP members killed

On 24 September 2016 the Afghan air force and NATO flew a joint air strike in the border province of Paktika in which Raeas Khan alias Azam Khan Tariq, a leader of Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was killed, as is reported by Pakistani and Afghan security sources. At least ten more Pakistani Taliban are said to have lost their lives, including Azam Tariq's son and two Taliban leaders from North Waziristan.

Iraq

Attacks in Iraq

18 people were killed north of Tikrit on 24 September 2016 when an assassin shot at a police control post and detonated two bombs. IS claimed responsibility for the attack. On 25 September 2016 there were seven casualties as a result of a suicide bomb explosion in the Baghdad Shia district of Iskan.

Is IS using chemical weapons?

IS might be using chemical weapons against US and Iraqi soldiers. The Kayyarah West airforce base was attacked on 20 September 2016 and a first test confirmed the use of mustard gas.

Jordan

Assassin shoots the author Nahed Hattar

On 25 September 2016 the Christian author Nahed Hattar, who is facing blasphemy charges in Jordan, was shot dead by an ultra-conservative Salafist, an imam in an Amman mosque, at the entrance of the judicial palace before his trial started. Hattar was charged for disseminating a caricature in social media that shows a smoking bearded man (supposed to be an IS fighter) lying in bed with several women in heaven, asking god to bring him wine and nuts. Conservative clerics considered the caricature to be an insult to god and Islam and the authorities saw it as an offence.

Elections in Jordan

The open list called National Alliance for Reform at the core of which is the Islamic Front Action party (IA), the political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, won 15 of the 130 seats in the parliamentary elections on 20 September 2016. IA had boycotted the elections in 2010 and 2013. The voter turnout in Jordan was 36%. Tribal representatives and businessmen close to the king received most votes. The new election law that is modelled after the proportional principle, but provides for a number of restrictions: the parliament must include at least 15 women and three Christians, Circassians, and Chechens each.

Syria

Attacks on Aleppo

Fighting in Syria has intensified since the attack on the UN aid convoy on 19 September 2016. The Syrian and Russian air forces and Syrian ground troops massively attacked in particular Aleppo, the last major Syrian city in which sizable areas are still under rebel control. It is said that also bunker-bursting bombs were used during these air raids. In recent days the death toll for Aleppo and surroundings is said to exceed 230, while at least 250,000 are enclosed in Aleppo's besieged eastern part. Two million people are said to be cut off from water supplies in all of Aleppo. After pro-government units had taken the Handarat Palestinian refugee camp north of Aleppo which had previously been under rebel control, on 24 September 2016, the insurgents succeeded in winning it back in the night of 25 September 2016. The rebels accused Russia and the Syrian regime of using white phosphorus bombs, the use of which is internationally outlawed in residential areas. They also claimed that cluster bombs, which are also banned, had been dropped as well. It is said that hospitals and three of the four bases of the civil defence organisation White Helmets - winner of the Right Livelihood Award - had been hit by bombs.

Emergency meeting of the UN Security Council

After the heavy bombardment of the Syrian city of Aleppo, Russia and the western states blamed each other for the escalation of violence at the emergency meeting of the UN Security Council on 25 September 2016.

Aid convoys reach four besieged cities

After an interruption of 48 hours the UN resumed its aid deliveries to the Syrian population on 22 September 2016. A total of 70 lorries shipped aid to Madaya and Sabdani near the capital Damascus as well as to Fua and Kefraya in the north-western province of Idlib. Madaya's population of about 40,000 has been encircled by allies of the Syrian army for about half a year. About 1,000 people are left in Sabdani. The approx. 20,000 people in Kefraya and Fua have been under siege from the insurgents since April 2005.

Yemen

Air strike causes numerous casualties and wounded

According to reports of 22 September 2016 at least 25 civilians died and 90 were wounded in an air strike, probably by the Saudi-Arabian military alliance, on a settlement in the Shia Houthi rebel-controlled western province of Hudajda.

Egypt

More than 160 bodies recovered from capsized boat

After a refugee boat capsized off the Egyptian port of Rosetta on 21 September 2016 rescue workers had recovered 162 bodies by 23 September 2016, the Egyptian health ministry informed. 163 of the boat's passengers could be rescued. Survivors said that about 450 people had been staying aboard.

Gabon

Court confirms Bongo's election victory

In the night of 24 September 2016 the constitutional court ruled that the presidential elections of 27 August 2016 are valid. The incumbent Ali Bongo Ondimba had won the elections by a margin of only a few thousands of votes ahead of his challenger Jean Ping (see BN of 05 September 2016). Ping accused Bongo of election fraud and demanded a recount of the ballots in Bongo's home province of Haut-Ogooué, this was rejected by the court. Allegedly about 95% of the voters of which almost 100% turned out, voted for Bongo in Haut-Ogooué. The average voter turnout in the other provinces amounted to 48%. There was a strong security presence after the pronouncement of the ruling to stifle any potential protest in the capital Libreville. On 24 September 2016 Bongo announced his intention to involve the opposition in the new government. Reports said that six people died when violence broke out after the announcement of the election results on 31 August 2016. The opposition assumes that dozens were killed.

Uganda

Police takes action against pride parade

On 24 September 2016 police stopped a pride parade that LGBTI people planned to hold in Entebbe on Lake Victoria. Several people were taken into custody. The Minister of Ethics and Integrity, Simon Lokodo, had threatened police action, if the event were to go ahead.

Burundi

UN Report: serious human rights violations by state actors

In its report published on 20 September 2016 the special investigator of the UN and the African Union dispatched by the UN Human Rights Council accused the security forces of Burundi and their allies of serious human rights violations. The report said that the violations were systematic and went largely unpunished. The report also said that the crisis caused by the controversial re-election of President Pierre Nkurunziza continues, although open violence had decreased, general repression and control of the society had increased, however. There is a significant amount of arbitrary killings, disappearances, torture, abuse, and arbitrary arrests. At least 564 extrajudicial executions had occurred between 26 April 2015 and 30 August 2016. Freedom of opinion and of assembly are practically non-existent. The report concludes that the region's security would be at risk, if the Burundian government and the international community failed to intervene.

UNHCR: 300,000 refugees

The UNHCR announced on 23 September 2016 that so far over 300,000 people had fled from the violence in Burundi to the neighbouring countries Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia.

Somalia

Attacks

On 18 September 2016 an al-Shabaab suicide bomber killed a general of the Somali National Army (SNA) with a car bomb outside the ministry of defence in Mogadishu. Also seven security officers died in the blast. On 18 September 2016 another SNA officer was killed in the Hodan district of Mogadishu and a traditional leader in Yaqshid district, probably also by al-Shabaab fighters. Unknown assassins detonated a car bomb in Mogadishu's Shibis district on 21 September 2016, killing one person and injuring another.

Fighting

On 16 September 2016 al-Shabaab fighters drove Somali forces from the city of El Wak (Gedo region), but withdrew again on 17 September 2016. Ten SNA soldiers lost their lives during the assault. On 19 September 2016 al-Shabaab fighters booby trapped a convoy of Ethiopian AMISOM units in the city of Elbur (Galgaduud region). The ensuing gunfire claimed at least ten lives.

Al-Shabaab warns against participation in the elections

An al-Shabaab spokesman warned clan elders of attacks against polling stations in the advent of the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. He said that al-Shabaab would undermine the elections, because they served a foreign agenda.

Impending famine

On 20 September 2016 the UN announced that the number of Somalians threatened by famine had increased to five million (about 40% of the total population). More than 300,000 children below the age of five are seriously malnourished and more than 50,000 extremely malnourished, it said. The supply shortage is due to the lack of rain in southern and central Somalia and the al-Shabaab attacks that drive the population out, according to the UN.

Al-Shabaab fighters sentenced in Puntland

A military court in Puntland sentenced 54 al-Shabaab members for their involvement in fighting with Puntland security forces in March 2016. About half of those sentenced are children and young people aged ten to 15 years. They were sent to a public rehabilitation centre to attend a de-radicalization programme. Fighters aged 15 to 20 years received prison sentences from ten to 15 years. Already in June 2016 the court had sentenced 43 of the captured fighters, who were above the age of 18, to death.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Referendum Serbian parts of the country

Although banned by the constitutional court, Bosnian Serbs in the Republika Srpska went ahead with their referendum on 25 September 2016 and voted, apparently unanimously, to maintain their controversial national holiday on 09 January, (also see BN of 19 September 2016). The referendum is seen as yet another step towards the separation of the Serbian part from the rest of the country.

Nigeria

New video of Boko Haram leader Shekau

In a 40-minute video published on YouTube on 24 September 2016 the leader of one of the two major factions of the Boko Haram terror organization, Abubakar Shekau, declared that he is safe and in good

health. On 23 August 2016 the military had announced that Shekau had been seriously or even fatally wounded in an air strike.

Niger Delta Avengers strike again

In the night of 23 September 2016 the largest of the rebel groups active in the Niger Delta, the Niger Delta Avengers, attacked and damaged the Bonny crude oil pipeline that is destined for exports. It was the rebels' first attack after their unilateral proclamation of a ceasefire on 20 August 2016 to initiate negotiations with the government. The rebels stated that the attack was meant as a wake-up call, because the government had been neglecting the needs of the delta since the ceasefire began. The group reaffirmed its willingness to negotiate with the government.

Since February 2016 oil production in the oil-rich delta of the Niger in Nigeria's south at times dropped to 1.4 million barrels per day mainly due to the attacks of the recently established rebel group Niger Delta Avengers on oil and gas production facilities.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Many casualties in anti-Kabila protests

On 19 and 20 September 2016 violent clashes erupted in Kinshasa between protesters and security forces during street protests called by the main opposition alliance Rassemblement for 19 September 2016. A police spokesman said on 21 September 2016 that 32 people, including four policemen, had been killed. The opposition and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights put the death toll of protesters at 50 at least. Citing reliable sources Human Rights Watch reported that 44 people were killed in the riots, including 37 protesters, six policemen and one follower of the party of President Kabila. In the night of 20 September 2016 the headquarters of the three opposition parties Union for Democracy and Social Progress - UDPS (largest opposition party), Forces of Union and Solidarity - FUS -, and Lumumbist Progressive Movement - MLP - were set on fire in Kinshasa. Two people burnt in the UDPS office. The government announced on 21 September 2016 that it will punish those responsible for the rioting.

The protests were directed against President Kabila whom the opposition accuses of delaying the presidential elections in violation of the constitution to extend his term in office that runs out on 20 December 2016. His successor's election had originally been scheduled for 27 November 2016. According to the official election committee CENI the date is not viable anymore, because the registration of voters cannot be completed before July 2017. The Supreme Court had ruled already on 11 May 2016 that Kabila may stay in office, if the elections were to be delayed.

Kosovo

Existence of IS training centres not confirmed

After a KFOR reconnaissance mission was completed on location in Kosovo it was stated that reports on an IS training camp in Kosovo could not be confirmed (see BN of 05 September 2016). The German embassy maintains that none of the international organizations involved with security issues assumes that there are any IS training camps.

It is said that an Islamist community has formed especially in the country's south where about 230 IS fighters were recorded. After the arrest of several leading Salafist figures the community's activities had lapsed. There is currently no realistic threat, but Kosovo was considered to be a "waiting room", reports say.

Ukraine

Framework agreement on disentanglement of troops signed

At a meeting of the Ukraine contact group, a negotiating forum of representatives of Ukraine, Russia, the OSCE, and the self-styled peoples republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, a framework agreement was signed in Minsk on 21 September 2016 for a limited disentanglement of troops in the Donbass area of conflict in eastern Ukraine. The agreement provides that the troops will be pulled apart up to four square kilometres to prevent the direct exchange of gunfire in places where Ukrainian road blocks and rebels are particularly

close along three very clearly defined sections of the front (Stanyzja Luhanska, Solote, and Petrivske). This means that both parties will have to withdraw by one kilometre each. If this proves to work out the atmosphere along the entire front line is to be defused in this way. The agreement must be complied with within one month, once it is signed by the separatist leaders in Donetsk and Luhansk. Implementation shall not take longer than three days and will be surveyed by the OSCE.

China

Civil rights lawyer sentenced

On 22 September 2016 a Beijing court sentenced the civil rights lawyer Xia Lin to twelve years in prison for fraud. Critics think that the sentence is politically motivated. Xia had represented the artist Ai Weiwei, the advocate of earthquake victims Tan Zuoren, and the civil rights lawyers Pu Zhiqiang and Deng Yujiao in court.