

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1182
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Titel:	Information Centre Asylum and Migration Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	09. december 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. januar 2020

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

9 December 2019

Afghanistan

Attack on Japanese NGO vehicle

A vehicle belonging to a Japanese non-governmental organisation (NGO) was attacked by unknown persons in Jalalabad in the eastern province of Nangarhar on 04.12.19. The driver, three guards and another member of staff were killed. The head of the NGO Peace Japan Medical Services, a well-known Japanese doctor and honorary citizen of Afghanistan, died of his injuries in the wake of the attack. The Taliban stated that they had nothing to do with the incident, and that the Japanese NGO was not a target in their holy war. Both the Taliban and IS fighters are active in Nangarhar. Directly before the incident, UNICEF had announced that Japan had donated seven million US dollars to a UNICEF programme to support women and children.

Attacks

Last week witnessed further hostilities and attacks. Security forces and representatives of the state were prominent among the casualties - the head of a district in Kunduz, a police commander in Faryab and a police officer in Helmand, for example. On 02.12.19 the Taliban destroyed 27 radio masts in Herat province.

USA – Taliban talks resume

Last week, the USA resumed the talks with the Taliban in Doha/Qatar which had been suspended since September 2019, in the hope that this will lead to negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government. While the Afghan government is insisting on a ceasefire as a precondition for negotiations, the Taliban are demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops, referring to the government in Kabul as a puppet regime.

Algeria

Army chief Gaid threatens to deploy military

On 04.12.19 army chief Gaid threatened to deploy the army and the security forces against protesters in order to safeguard the election process and polling on 12.12.19. He said in a speech that he had instructed members of the People's National Army and the security forces to thwart any malicious endeavours and prevent any scheming against due and proper election campaigning and polling.

People have been demonstrating on the streets of Algiers and other cities in Algeria since February 2019.

As postal voting began for Algerians living abroad, people also demonstrated against the forthcoming election outside the Algerian consulate in Paris.

Armenia

Investigation proceedings against ex-president Sargsyan

Official investigation proceedings into the embezzlement of government funds were initiated against former president Serzh Sargsyan on 04.12.19. Sargsyan was forced out of office in April 2018. According to the Armenian special investigative authority, the 65 year-old ex-president is accused of having organised the

misappropriation and embezzlement 489 million drams (corresponding to 913,000 euros) by government officials. Sargsyan has been banned from leaving the country.

Belarus

Protests against closer links with the Russian Federation

On 07.08. and 08.12.19 hundreds of people demonstrated in the capital, Minsk, against closer links with the Russian Federation. The protests were sparked by a meeting between the presidents of the two countries to discuss bilateral economic and social integration. The police did not intervene in the unauthorised demonstration on 07.12.19. Afterwards, the police did warn of possible arrests in the event of any further protests, however. Only minor skirmishes occurred at the protest on the following day. The Russian leadership had demanded stronger economic integration between the two countries, if Belarus wished to continue benefiting from low Russian energy prices. Belarus has been under president Lukashenko's authoritarian rule for a quarter of a century. Anti-government demonstrations are a rare occurrence there.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

New prime minister

On 05.12.2019 parliament elected Zoran Tegeltija as the joint nation's new prime minister. 14 months have passed since the parliamentary elections in the ethnically divided country.

Tegeltija is 58 years old and an ethnic Serb. He belongs to Milorad Dodik's Savez Nezavisnih Socijaldemokrata (SNSD) party, which dominates politics in the Serbian part of the country - Republika Srpska (RS).

The political parties, which are organised along ethnic lines, agreed on Tegeltija as a candidate for the office of prime minister a month ago.

Forming a government poses a major challenge. Since the end of the civil war (1992-1995), Bosnia-Herzegovina has been divided into two halves - one Muslim-Croat and one Serb. This set-up and the additional sub-division of the Muslim-Croat Federation into cantons frequently threaten to paralyse the joint nation. Most important decisions require to be made by reaching a consensus between the major parties.

Cameroon

Boko Haram abducts 17 youths

According to official information, Boko Haram fighters attacked the village of Mbrecche, situated in the Far North region some 30 km from the border with Nigeria, on 04.11.19. They abducted 21 girls and boys aged between 11 and 20. Four of the abducted youths managed to escape.

Colombia

Protests continue

A series of demonstrations and strikes which began on 21.11.19 is continuing. Talks between the National Strike Committee and president Iván Duque have failed to yield any results to date. This prompted tens of thousands of people to demonstrate in the capital, Bogotá, and other cities on 04.12.19. Isolated violent clashes with the police occurred in Cali and Medellín. Thousands demonstrated in Bogotá once again on 08.12.19.

The movement is opposed to corruption and economic reforms, and is calling for implementation of the peace agreement with the rebel organisation Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the dissolution of the Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios riot police (ESMAD), which it holds responsible for violence against protesters.

China

Hong Kong: Protests

According to official figures, 183,000 people demonstrated in the streets on 08.12.19, in the largest protest for weeks. The organisers from the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF) have put the number of participants at 800,000. Broad sections of the population are evidently still behind the protest movement. Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, has not made any new concessions since the democratic camp won a substantial victory in the recent local elections. While she had previously withdrawn contentious amendments to the legal provisions on extradition - which originally sparked the protests - further demands, such as democratic elections, the release of people who have been detained and investigations into suspected police violence against demonstrators, have been ignored to date. Observers expect the protests to continue.

The police seized various weapons in a raid on 08.12.19, including a pistol and ammunition. Several people were arrested. The police allege that the weapons were to be used to cause chaos during the demonstration.

DR Congo

ADF rebels kill 17 civilians

On the afternoon of 05.12.19 suspected rebels belonging to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed 14 people in the village of Mantumbi, around 17 km from the city of Oicha (eastern province of North Kivu). Earlier on the same day, the rebels had killed three people in the Oicha suburb of Kolokoko. The murders are seen as reprisals for the offensive launched by the army on 30.10.19 with the aim of driving the ADF - an Islamist group originating from Uganda - out of the woodland close to the Ugandan border. Over 100 people have reportedly been killed by the rebels to date.

India

Suspects shot dead in police custody

On 06.12.19 police officers shot dead four men suspected of having abused and killed a vet in Hyderabad (Telangana), southern India, and subsequently burning her body. Thousands of people took to the streets in New Delhi, Bangalore (Karnataka) and Hyderabad, demanding that politicians introduce measures to provide women with better protection.

According to the police, the suspects were shot when they attempted to escape during a visit to the scene of the crime in connection with the investigative process. Human rights organisations assume this to be a case of extra-judicial killing. The supreme court of the federal state of Telangana ordered autopsies to be carried out on those killed.

Draft bill to amend nationality act

A bill to amend the nationality act is to be tabled in the lower house of the Indian parliament (Lok Sabha) on 09.12.19. The amendment to the act provides for minorities living in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, such as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jains and Parsis, to be granted Indian citizenship. Before the amendment to the law can enter into force, the bill must be passed through not only by the first chamber of parliament, in which the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya-Janata Party (BJP) holds a majority, but also the second chamber - the upper house of the Indian parliament (Rajya Sabha).

Iran

Torture of detained protesters

An Iranian human rights website reported on 03.12.19 that detained demonstrators in the city of Shiraz are being tortured to force them to confess that they are in contact with addresses outside of Iran. The precise number of people detained in Shiraz and their condition are not known. Some detainees have reportedly been taken to the secret service ministry's detention camp and a similar camp in Shiraz. Iranian security services recently made threats to demonstrators, including the prospect of the death penalty for convicted leaders behind

the protests. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested in Shiraz above all after 19.11.19. The city was recently the scene of fierce clashes and protests.

Shoot-to-kill orders officially confirmed

Various officials have openly confirmed shoot-to-kill orders against protesters. Hundreds of demonstrators have reportedly been killed and thousands arrested in the latest protests. Iran Human Rights Watch puts the figure at 900 dead, over 6,000 injured and more than 13,000 arrested. The death toll allegedly totals at least 250 in Teheran, at least 200 in Alborz province, at least 200 in Chuzestan province, at least 100 in Fars, 60 in Isfahan, 60 in Kordestan, 40 in Hermanshah and at least 15 in other provinces. On 02.12.19 Amnesty International spoke of at least 208 people killed.

UN: Iranian security forces killing intentionally

Speaking in Geneva on 06.12.19, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, criticised the violent action against demonstrators in Iran. According to Bachelet, more than 7,000 people have been arrested in the protests triggered by petrol price increases. She said that the UN Office for Human Rights had also received reports of maltreatment. The commissioner put the number of protesters killed at at least 208, including 12 children.

Capital punishment

Iran Human Rights has reported the eleventh documented execution of a woman in Iran in 2019. Not all executions are officially confirmed. Much of the organisation's information originates from its own sources, according to which at least 110 death sentences were executed in Iranian prisons or in public in the first six months of the year. 83 of these cases related to premeditated murder. The organisation's website states that only 37 executions have been officially confirmed. Most death sentences in Iran are handed down for premeditated murder or drug offences. According to the report, offenders who were minors at the time of committing their offences are also executed. According to Amnesty's 2018 report on the death penalty, at least 253 people were executed in Iran last year.

Iraq

Protests continue

According to eye-witness accounts, unidentified persons shot at demonstrators in Baghdad on 06.12.19. At least 16 people were reportedly killed and around 100 injured. According to the Iraqi interior ministry, four civilians were killed and 80 injured.

Protests nevertheless took place again on 08.12.19 in Baghdad and various towns and cities in the south of the country, including Hilla (Babil province), Amara (Maysan province), Diwaniya (Qadissiyah province), Kut (Wasit province) and Najaf (Najaf province).

In Nasiriyah (Dhi Qar province), a hotspot of the protests, demonstrators assembled together with representatives of powerful tribes in the city centre on 08.12.19. More than 25 people were killed in protests here on 05.12.19. This prompted the local tribes to take over security and administrative matters. The checkpoints are now manned by volunteers.

According to figures released by the Iraqi Commission for Human Rights, at least 460 people have been killed in the anti-government protests to date and more than 20,000 injured.

Security incidents

Security incidents unrelated to the protests also continue to occur. Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninive and Salahaddin continue to be the main focuses of attacks by IS.

Lebanon

March in solidarity with survivors of sexualised violence

On 07.12.19 a march against all forms of gender-based violence and for women's rights in Lebanon took place in Beirut. It is reported that women are actively involved in the protests which have been going on since 17.10.19, and that they are using the protests to give voice to legal issues (e.g. the right to pass on nationality).

Appointment of new prime minister postponed

The parliamentary session to appoint a new prime minister, which was planned for 08.12.19, has been postponed in response to requests from various political parties. Following the withdrawal of one candidacy for the post, former prime minister Saad Hariri re-emerged as a potential contender. Hariri handed in his resignation on 29.10.19, following weeks of protests. The protests outside the government buildings continue. Security forces have set up road blocks to reinforce existing security measures.

The economic situation in the country is worsening in the face of the continuing political crisis. On 06.12.19 and 07.12.19 Saad Hariri, who is currently in office only in a caretaking role, reportedly requested various countries, including Germany, for assistance in financing imports. The economic crisis has led to a currency deficit, as a result of which many goods can no longer be imported (cf. BN of 02.12.19).

Libya

Fighting continues over El-Feel oil field

Production was interrupted again on 05.12.19. Since 27.11.19 there have been reports of an attack by troops associated with the Government of National Accord (GNA), who are operating here far from GNA-controlled territory, and of retaliatory attacks by the Libyan National Army (LNA). It is unclear at present who has control of the oil field.

Morocco

Raid on suspected IS terror cell

On 04.12.19 Moroccan security forces from the special unit of the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations (BCIJ) arrested three men aged between 24 and 39 near the city of Nador. They are alleged to be IS sympathisers. One of them is said to be the brother of a fighter living in the Syria/Iraq region. The leader of the terror cell was arrested by the Spanish security forces in a Madrid suburb at the same time.

Nigeria

Opposition activists released and re-arrested

On 05.12.19 Omolyele Sowore (human rights activist, founder of the Nigerian online news portal Sahara Reporters, and presidential candidate of the African Action Congress party (AAC) in the election in February 2019) and co defendant Olowale Bakare were released from custody by the DSS state security service in Abuja. A Federal High Court in Abuja had ordered their release within 24 hours after the DSS failed to comply with a court order of 06.11.19 to release the two accused men on bail. Sowore's trial was continued before the Federal High Court in Abuja on 06.11.19. In the course of the proceedings, DSS members forced their way into the courtroom and arrested Sowore. A statement from the office of president Buhari on 08.12.19 essentially conveyed that it was no surprise that Sowore was a person of special interest to the DSS, as he had called for a revolution and for the overthrow of a democratically elected government.

Sowore was arrested by the DSS on 03.08.19 after calling for nationwide protests against the government on 05.08.19 under the hashtag #RevolutionNow and describing the presidential election of February 2019 as implausible. On 20.09.19 the public prosecutor's office brought charges against Sowore on seven points, including treason, embezzlement and cyber-stalking of president Buhari. The student Bakare was arrested on 05.08.19 at a #RevolutionNow protest rally in the federal state of Osun and was put on trial together with Sowore on 30.09.19.

Ifeanyi Ejiofor wanted by the police

On the morning of 02.12.19 the police went to the home of lawyer Ifeanyi Ejiofor in Oraifite (federal state of Anambra). Ejiofor is representing the wanted leader of the banned pro-Biafra organisation IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu, in his trial. According to the police, they were investigating a case of abduction and intended to arrest suspects in Ejiofor's house. According to IPOB, the police allegedly attacked the house, shooting at people who were inside. At least two police officers and two people in the house are believed to have been killed in the course of a violent altercation between IPOB supporters and the police. The police burned the house down. In connection with the outbreak of violence John Abang, chief of police in the federal state of Anambra, declared IPOB member Ejiofor and his supporters to be wanted persons. The whereabouts of Ejiofor, who was not at home during the clash, is since unknown.

Pakistan

Protest over article about London Bridge attacker

On 02.12.19 several dozen people congregated outside the editorial offices of the Pakistani daily newspaper Dawn, in response to its coverage of the London Bridge attack on 29.11.19. In an article on 01.12.19, Dawn reported in detail on the attacker, who was buried in the Pakistani part of Kashmir on 07.12.19, and on his Pakistani background.

Freedom of the press is not fully guaranteed in Pakistan. Media are monitored by the state and journalists are commonly coerced into practicing self-censorship for fear of negative consequences.

Russian Federation

Classification of journalists as foreign agents

Journalists who work for an organisation which is registered as a foreign agent can now themselves be classified as foreign agents by the authorities. President Putin has signed off a corresponding law. This supplements the law of 2012 obliging organisations which receive support from abroad to have themselves registered as foreign agents.

Suspended sentence for prominent blogger

A court in Moscow announced on 06.12.19 that the prominent dissident YouTube blogger Yegor Zhukov had received a suspended three-year prison sentence. The court found him guilty of incitement to extremism for having called on people to engage in extremist activities on the internet. The public prosecutor's office had advocated tough punishment for the student. He was arrested in August 2019 in connection with the protests for free elections, following which he received broad public support demanding his release. Other activists critical of the regime have also received suspended sentences in connection with the protests, while some have been sent to prison.

Syria

Air raids in Idlib

According to reports by the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, at least 11 civilians were killed and 18 injured in an air raid on Maaret al-Numan on 02.12.19.

At least 20 people were reportedly killed when several villages came under fire from Russian jets and Syrian army helicopters on 07.12.19. The villages concerned were Balyoun (nine dead), Abdita (five dead), al-Bara (four dead), Jebghas and Tal Menes (two dead).

Violence in north-eastern Syria

At least nine civilians reportedly died under Turkish artillery fire in Tal Rifaat, north of Aleppo province, on 02.12.19. On the same day, two Russian military police officers were reportedly injured in an explosion while on patrol in the Syrian/Iraqi border region along the security corridor agreed with Turkey.

Returnees from Lebanon and currency erosion

The UNHCR has reported that up to 225 Syrian refugees reached Syria from Lebanon on 03.12.19. In all, 27,000 Syrians are believed to have returned from Lebanon in the past two years. The neighbouring country continues to be home to around one million Syrians who have crossed the border since the Syrian conflict broke out some eight years ago.

The Syrian economy is traditionally closely linked to the Lebanese economy, as Lebanon's market-based system and more liberal banking sector provide many businesspeople from Syria with a means of participating in the economy. The current political and economic crisis in Lebanon is having a particularly severe impact on many Syrians on either side of the border (cf. BN of 02.12.19).

The Syrian pound reached an all-time low on 02.12.19, at an exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 920 SYP.

Ukraine

Summit in Paris

German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Emmanuel Macron are to meet with Russian president Putin and Ukraine's president Zelenskyy in Paris on 09.12.19. This is the first meeting in the so-called 'Normandy format' for three years. The summit between the four leaders represents a renewed push for peace in East Ukraine. The conflict between Ukraine and pro-Russian rebels in East Ukraine has cost some 13,000 lives since 2014. In the run-up to the meeting, an exchange of prisoners between Ukraine and Russia took place in September. In October 2019 the pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian army began a troop withdrawal along the conflict line.

Uzbekistan

Protests against power and gas shortages

At the end of November and the beginning of December 2019, small groups of people came together in parts of the country to protest against substantial restrictions to the supply of gas and electricity which have affected both households and businesses. They blocked roads and demanded a political solution to the electricity and gas supply crisis. Protest actions occurred back in November 2019, after households and businesses in many regions had been cut off from the gas supply. Political demonstrations against the government are extremely rare in the republic, with its strict authoritarian leadership.

Venezuela

Parliamentarians accused of corruption

On 02.12.19 accusations were aired against nine opposition parliamentarians, claiming that they had acted on repeated occasions in the interests of a businessman with close links to a sanctioned Colombian businessman, including intervening with the US government. The accusations concern the distribution of CLAP supplies. As such, it is being intimated that these parliamentarians have made money out of urgently needed supplies of food in a supporting role, at least. The disclosure comes as a heavy blow to Guaidó, as it seriously undermines the opposition's credibility.

Yemen

US Navy seizes arms shipment

The US military reports that it has seized a shipment of arms for rebels in Yemen which allegedly originates from Iran. A US Navy warship discovered the weapons and rocket parts on a routine inspection of a stateless freighter in the Arabian Sea on 04.12.19.

This is the first time that such weapons have been intercepted on their way to Yemen. The USA has long accused Iran of illegally supplying weapons to the Houthi rebels.

Zimbabwe

Hunger crisis

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) reported on 03.12.19 that 7.7 million people (2.2 million in urban areas and 5.5 million in rural villages) are acutely affected by hunger in Zimbabwe at present, corresponding to more than half of the total population. To help those most severely in need, the WFP intends to more than double the number of people receiving food aid to 4.1 million by January 2020 - the height of the dry season. WFP reports that the hunger crisis is the worst for a decade, and forms part of an unprecedented climate disaster in southern Africa. Temperatures in the region are rising at more than twice the global average, and increasingly irregular rainy seasons are hitting the subsistence farmers in Zimbabwe particularly severely. The WFP notes that the crisis is being compounded by a severe lack of foreign currency, hyperinflation, rising unemployment, a lack of fuel, sustained power failures and losses of cattle on a vast scale.