

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	712
Land:	Den Demokratiske Republik Congo
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Titel:	Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	11. oktober 2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	17. januar 2022



Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

11 October 2021

Afghanistan

Formation of government, government affairs, international recognition

US envoys met with the Taliban government for the first time on 10.10.21. According to the Taliban, they gave assurances of humanitarian aid. The USA emphasized that these discussions were in no way to be seen as granting the Taliban international recognition. The Taliban held their first cabinet meeting on 05.10.21, announcing the names of 38 new members of the transitional government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They are all Pashtun male clerics. Their declared primary aim now is to build up a robust army which can protect the country effectively from invasions. It was reported on the same day that in response to complaints from Afghan citizens the passport issuing office had been reopened and that the passports of the old republic would be issued for the time being. On 05.10.21 French president Macron said that at the upcoming G20 summit international recognition must be tied to conditions, such as equality of men and women before the law. On the same day, in Herat province the Taliban reportedly hanged two robbers whom they had killed on cranes as a public deterrent. On 07.10.21 it was reported that civil servants from all provinces were going to Kabul to withdraw their wages from the bank. After waiting for several days, however, they were still not granted access to their money.

Violence against civilians, ISKP attacks

Around 50 civilians were killed and 140 injured in a suicide attack in a Shiite mosque in the city of Kunduz on 08.10.21. The victims belonged to the Hazara ethnic group and ISKP has claimed responsibility. According to a report by ToloNews on 10.10.21 there have been approx. 17 attacks by ISKP in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power, with civilians making up most of the casualties. The Taliban have rejected support from the USA in fighting ISKP. On 06.10.21 it was reported that armed men had forced their way into a Sikh temple in Kabul's Kart-e Parwan district, overpowered and tied up the guards and destroyed security cameras. It was not clear who was behind the attack. On 06.10.21 it was reported that two Taliban had been killed and several injured by unknown attackers in the provinces of Laghman and Nangarhar. The Taliban reportedly arrested four ISKP members in Laghman on the same day. Amnesty International (ai) reported on 05.10.21 that the Taliban had executed 13 ethnic Hazara in Daikundi province on 30.08.21. The majority were allegedly soldiers who had surrendered. On the same day ISKP acknowledged responsibility for the bomb attack which took place outside a mosque in Kabul, killing numerous Taliban and civilians.

Women's rights, education, media

On 10.10.21 it was reported that Afghanistan's only sports broadcaster, 3Sport, had shut down after ten years due to restrictions and on economic grounds. On 08.10.21 it was reported that girls were being allowed to attend school in years seven to twelve in Balkh, Sar-e Pul and Kunduz provinces. On 06.10.21 it was reported that universities in the northern provinces remained closed. On 04.10.21 the Taliban's education minister stated that those who had attended school in the Republic from 2000 to 2020 were lost for the Taliban. He said that their education would not live up to their standards, emphasizing that a religious education was more important.

Humanitarian situation

Hundreds of doctors demonstrated in Samangan and Nuristan provinces on 10.10.21 because they had not received their salaries for 14 months. On 07.10.21 the largest electricity supply company in Afghanistan (Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat) reported that it would be selling the buildings belonging to its biggest debtors in order to settle outstanding payments to foreign power suppliers. It was reported on 06.10.21 that the health system is in a very bad state in virtually all provinces. Doctors are not being paid, medicines are not being imported and there is hardly any food for patients in hospitals. On the same day, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that as winter approached the supply of food was becoming precarious for 14 million Afghans. It stated that three million children were currently suffering from malnutrition. On 05.10.21 it was reported that 2,000 households in the city of Faizabad no longer had access to clean drinking water.

Angola

Opposition coalition formed

With an eye to the next parliamentary and presidential elections in 2022, the largest opposition party, União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), has joined forces with the Bloco Democrático opposition party to form a coalition under the name of Frente Patriótica Unida (FPU). The coalition allegedly also includes Abel Chivukuvuku's political movement Partido do Renascimento Angola - Juntos por Angola - Servir Angola (PRA-JA Servir Angola), which the constitutional court failed to approve as a legal political party at the end of 2020. No further details are known. The leader of the UNITA party, Adalberto Costa Júnior, has been nominated as the joint presidential candidate and is expected to run against the incumbent, João Lourenço, who is seeking a second term in office. Lourenço's party, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), has ruled the country for 45 years.

Bangladesh

Sister of journalist Kanak Sarwar arrested

On 05.10.21 a sister of the journalist Kanak Sarwar, who is living in exile in the USA, was arrested in a Dhaka suburb by a unit of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). She is accused of having spread propaganda against the state via digital platforms and of having been in possession of drugs. She was reportedly remanded in custody for five days.

Burkina Faso

Attack claims lives

14 security personnel and an undisclosed number of attackers were killed in an attack by unknown assailants on a unit of the security forces near the village of Yirgou (Sanmatenga province) on 04.10.21.

Hundreds in custody on suspicion of terrorism

At least 400 people are in custody on suspicion of terrorist offences. Some have been held for several years and a number of them are under 16 years of age. According to a representative of the NGO Collective Against Impunity and Stigmatization of Communities (CISC), some of those detained have been awaiting trial for five years. The only two convictions for terrorist activities to date took place in August 2021.

Central African Republic

Sentences passed on members of security forces

According to a report in the media, various military tribunals have sentenced an undisclosed number of members of the security forces to life sentences with forced labour for homicide.

Rebel attacks, Meeting for Peace

According to reports in various media, on 05.10.21 an attack on a stretch of road near to Bambari, capital of the prefecture of Ouaka, claimed the lives of a number of civilians and injured dozens. The attack is being blamed on

the rebel alliance Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC). On 06.10.21 the prefect of the region put the number of casualties at eleven civilians killed and six injured, with the relief organisation Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) spoke on the same day of more than 15 dead and seven injured. It was apparent from press reports at the end of September that the strategically important town of Bambari had repeatedly been the focus of rebel attacks targeting positions of the Central African armed forces. A number of soldiers were reportedly killed in these attacks. These rebel attacks occurred at a time when political, civil and religious stakeholders were coming together for a two-day Meeting for Peace in Rome. Representatives of the armed groups were not involved in the negotiations organised by the Catholic community of Sant' Egidio. The Meeting for Peace focused on the 'Republican Dialogue' announced by president Faustin-Archange Touadéra, which aims to achieve lasting peace and national reconciliation.

Colombia

Thousands in Colombia waiting to continue their journeys to Panama

Around 20,000 migrants are waiting in the port of Necoclí on Colombia's Caribbean coast for a chance to travel by boat in the direction of Panama, from where they intend to cross the "Tapón del Darién", a dense jungle region between Colombia and Panama. Up to 1,500 new people are arriving daily. They come for the most part from Haiti and are attempting to enter the USA. The Darién route is more than 200 miles long and is considered perilous due to criminal groups operating in the area, human traffickers and difficult stretches of terrain. It is the only land bridge between South and North America. Around 95,000 people have already attempted to negotiate the Darién route already this year.

Colombia / Venezuela

Border reopening

On 05.10.21 the Venezuelan government began the process of reopening the border with Colombia by removing containers which it placed on the Simon Bolívar bridge in 2019. Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro ordered the closure at the time when a humanitarian convoys supported by the USA was planning to cross the bridge. Diplomatic relations with Colombia were also broken off in 2019, after the Colombian government, together with other nations, recognised opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president. As the border opens, Colombia's president Iván Duque has stated his intention to resume consular duties in Venezuela as soon as all security guarantees have been provided. At the same time, 14,000 Colombian soldiers have been dispatched to the border region, Norte de Santander. In recent months there have been attacks here on the military infrastructure (cf. BN of 21.06.21 and 28.06.21) and increasing numbers of armed clashes between various illegal armed groups and criminal gangs which stem for the most part from rivalry over drug trafficking routes.

DR Congo

Human rights, security and humanitarian situation

The report presented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) indicates that the total number of human rights violations throughout the country documented in the period under review from 01.06.20 to 31.05.21 fell slightly compared with the comparable period covered by the last report. Over 90 % of the violations were reportedly perpetrated in the provinces in which militias operate, in particular the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, which are under siege, and also in the eastern provinces of South Kivu and Tanganyika. Despite the decline in human rights violations, the report states that the number of civilians killed in extra-legal or summary executions rose to over 600 in the period under review. These are attributed primarily to non-state actors, although state actors also play a role. With regard to fundamental freedoms and democratic liberty, while improvements are to be observed, the High Commissioner nevertheless refers to reports of attacks and threats against media representatives, defenders of human rights and members of civil society. Concerning efforts to combat impunity in the country, the report notes that various members of the armed forces (107), the police (55) and armed groups (134) have been convicted of human rights violations, including crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), stated before the UN Security Council on 05.10.21 that both state and non-state actors were continuing to commit serious human rights violations, above all in the Kivu provinces and in Ituri province. She said that in some regions, particularly in South Kivu province, ethnic and local conflicts were being further inflamed by “hate mongers”, including calls to kill members of the Banyamulenge minority (various tribes which have immigrated to DR Congo from central and eastern Africa, including Tutsi). In addition to the poor security situation in the various crisis provinces, which made the supply and accessibility of humanitarian aid more difficult, Keita said that recurrent epidemics and the continuing food insecurity represented further challenges in the country. She noted that almost 30 % of the total population are currently affected by acute food insecurity. In the crisis provinces, attacks on schools and hospitals are further exacerbating the humanitarian emergency. It is reported that Bintou Keita argued the case before the UN Security Council for a further extension of the MONUSCO peace mission, which is currently set to run until 20.12.21 and in connection with which some 16,000 police and military personnel are presently deployed.

North Kivu: Violence in the Beni region

According to a report presented on 04.10.21 by the NGO La démocratie et les droits de l'homme (CEPADHO), at least 3,750 civilians have been killed and almost 1,800 people abducted in the past seven years in the Beni region of North Kivu province alone. In addition, at least 3,430 houses, 130 schools and several medical establishments have reportedly been destroyed. The Beni region is one of the main areas of operations of the foreign Islamic fundamentalist group Forces démocratiques alliées (ADF). According to reports in the national and international press this year, the ADF has committed serious crimes against human rights and international law time and again in the region, repeatedly triggering waves of internal displacement (cf. most recently BN of 02.08. and 16.08.21). The spokesman for the military operation Sokola-1 stated on 09.10.21 that the government had regained control in various areas which were formerly under ADF control since the state of siege was imposed at the beginning of May 2021. He added that 152 members of the ADF had been killed and more than 162 ADF collaborators had been arrested over the same period.

Ethiopia

Prime minister Abiy confirmed in office

On 04.10.21 the members of the Ethiopian parliament confirmed prime minister Abiy in office for the next five years by a large majority. Abiy has held the post since 2018. Abiy won a clear victory in the parliamentary election in June, which was boycotted by the largest opposition parties, however (cf. BN of 21.06. and 12.07.21).

In assembling the new cabinet, Abiy has appointed three opposition candidates to ministerial posts, in the guise of Berhanu Nega (Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party - EZEMA), Kerjela Merdasa (Oromo Liberation Front - OLF) and Belete Mola (National Movement of Amhara - NaMA). The new defence minister is to be Abraham Belay, an ethnic Tigrayan. After the conflict broke out in the regional state of Tigray, in November 2020 he was temporarily a member of the transitional government in Tigray which was set up by Abiy and which supports the fight against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

Reports of new offensive by the Ethiopian army

According to media reports, with the monsoon season now over the Ethiopian army has launched a new offensive against the TPLF. Air raids and ground assaults on TPLF units have reportedly been carried out in various areas in the north of the regional state of Amhara. There has been no official confirmation to date.

UN calls for action against humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia

In the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Ethiopia is facing an “immense humanitarian crisis”. According to information from the UN, there are reports of people having died from starvation and up to seven million people are dependent on relief supplies in the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions, with approx. 400,000 people already afflicted by famine. The UN stresses that immediate action is urgently required. Guterres criticised once again the expulsion of seven high-ranking UN staff, who have since left Ethiopia for security reasons.

Guinea

Interim president sworn in

General Mamady Doumbouya, the leader of the coup of 05.09.21, was sworn in as interim president on 01.10.21. Doumbouya stated that neither he nor any other members of the military would run in the next election. A transitional charter presented by the military government is intended to lead the country back to civilian government. This charter states that a new constitution is to be drawn up and free, democratic and transparent elections are to be held, although it does not specify any concrete dates.

On 06.10.21 the transitional government announced that Mohamed Beavogui, a former UN official and agriculture expert, had been appointed prime minister and charged with the task of leading the transition to democratic government.

India

Security assessment of the regime change in Afghanistan

In India, the assessment of the security ramifications of the Taliban's assumption of power in Afghanistan is determined by at least four factors. Firstly, the fear that under Taliban rule Afghanistan could serve as a training ground and safe haven for radical Islamic groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), local offshoots of Al Qaeda and Islamic State (IS). New Delhi is concerned that militant fighters from neighbouring Pakistan could be given a moral and logistical boost. This fear is reinforced by reports in the media that the Taliban have released various members of JeM and LeT from prison and that JeM fighters met with Taliban leaders in Kabul in August 2021. This is directly linked to the second factor - India's disquiet regarding the Kashmir conflict - as organisations such as Al Qaeda have congratulated the Taliban on seizing power, calling among other things for the liberation of Kashmir. Thirdly, India fears that radical Islamists may gain strength within India. A week after the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan, around 15 people were arrested in the federal state of Assam in north-eastern India on suspicion of having supported the Afghan Taliban on social media. Ultimately, India's scope of influence in Afghanistan is now limited. India's decades of infrastructure investments in schools, hospitals, power grids, roads and dams appear to have been lost. India completed more than 400 development projects in Afghanistan up to 2020. Following the change of government in Kabul, India's rivals China and Pakistan have pledged to provide the Taliban henceforth with financial and infrastructure assistance.

Kashmir: Series of murders

Seven people, including two Hindus and one Sikh, have been murdered in the space of a week in the part of Kashmir under Indian administration. On 07.10.21 two teachers - one Sikh and one Hindu - were shot dead at a school in Srinagar. On 05.10.21 a Hindu in his shop in Srinagar and two other people, including a Muslim taxi driver, were the victims of targeted killings in the northern town of Bandipore. This followed the killing of two people in Srinagar's old quarter. The murders are being blamed on militant separatists. According to police information, more than 300 people, for the most part young men, were arrested in subsequent raids throughout the region. According to media reports, 21 of the 28 civilians believed to have been killed by militant separatists this year in the Indian part of Kashmir were native Muslims. Some Hindus have reportedly left Kashmir, which has a majority Muslim population, in response to the latest incidents. In 1989, tens of thousands of Hindus were forced to flee the southern state of Jammu in particular, because they became targeted following the breakout of an armed rebellion. It is estimated that 800 families subsequently returned to the region, despite the precarious security situation.

Iran

COVID-19 pandemic

It has been reported in the media that deputy health minister Heydari has warned of a further wave of coronavirus infections, noting that the situation was fragile, despite a gradual decline in the fifth wave in recent weeks. Heydari warned in particular of additional risks of infection from travel within the country and urged prudence. Referring to information from a research group at the Pasteur Institute, foreign media have reported that a vaccine developed by Iran and Cuba has been tested on children aged between two and 18 in Cuba, with no side effects. In Iran the

vaccine is reportedly only being administered to children aged from six to 18 at present, so as to enable schools to reopen. Almost 120,000 deaths from coronavirus and over 5.5 million infections have been reported since the breakout of the pandemic in Iran last February. The situation has eased slightly in recent weeks, however. According to the health ministry, over 40 % of the more than 83 million Iranians have now been vaccinated at least once and almost 20 % have received two jabs.

Increase in executions, particularly of women

According to a report by the organisation Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRANA), at least 266 cases of executions in various prisons in Iran were documented between 08.10.20 and 09.10.21. This represents a rise of 10 % compared to the previous corresponding one-year period. A further 90 people were sentenced to death over the same period, including four women. The 266 executed people include nine women and three people who were minors at the time of the offences of which they were accused. Over half of the executions were carried out for murder, while drug offences accounted for one third. The other cases concerned death sentences for, among other things, endangering national security, depravity on earth, sexual offences and enmity towards God (moharebeh). Almost 18 % of all executions took place in Khorasan-e razavi province. Alborz (13 %) and Sistan and Baluchistan (approx. 10 %) follow up in second and third places. Foreign media refer to 162 Iranian women who have been executed in the past twelve years. Nine of the 16 women executed worldwide last year were Iranians.

Protests after honour killing in Sanandaj (Kurdistan)

On 07.10.21 Iranian foreign media reported rallies protesting at violence against women and in particular femicide outside the judicial authority in the city of Sanandaj in western Iran. Prior to the protests, the murder of a 22 year-old woman by her own father had provoked corresponding reactions in the social networks. The young woman had separated from her husband and met a new man. No autopsy was carried out on the murder victim and the local police failed to arrest the father. It appears that criminal proceedings have since been instituted against a local doctor who revealed the murder on Instagram, however. This was the second honour killing in the space of just three weeks. On 20.09.21 foreign media reported the murder of a 14 year-old girl by her husband, a Shiite cleric, in Khorramabad (Lorestan). The journalist who reported the crime in the Hamdeli daily newspaper was subsequently arrested and remanded in custody for eleven days by order of the local public prosecutor.

Women allowed into football stadiums for the first time since 2019

According to media reports, women are to be allowed to attend a football match for the first time since 2019. The Iranian football association has announced that female spectators will be permitted at the World Cup qualifying match against South Korea in Tehran on 12.10.21. The last time this was possible was in October 2019, when some 4,000 women were allowed into Azadi Stadium in Tehran for the first time with tickets which were freely available on the market. The number of women will be limited once again this time, however. A corresponding ban on attending such events was imposed after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, officially in order to protect women from inappropriate behaviour and to avoid them being looked at by men.

Lebanon

Jordan announces electricity supplies

Following a meeting of the energy ministers from Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, Jordan announced on 07.10.21 that it intended to supply Lebanon with electric power up to the end of the year. The power lines between Jordan and Syria, which have been out of use since 2012, are to be overhauled for this purpose. The electricity is then to be transported via Syria to Lebanon, where cross-border power lines are also in place. Egypt's energy minister, El Molla, additionally announced on 05.10.21 that the preparations for Egyptian gas deliveries to Lebanon should be completed in the coming weeks. El Molla also held out the prospect of additional volumes of gas. Egypt agreed in September to deliver liquid gas to Lebanon via Jordan and Syria. The Lebanese power grid collapsed completely on 09.10.21 due to a lack of fuel. Following fuel deliveries by the Lebanese army, two large power stations were put back into operation on 10.10.21 and now supply electricity for several hours a day. This was the second total blackout in October to date.

Libya

More than 5,000 migrants arrested

According to information from international organisations, more than 5,000 migrants have been arrested - in some instances violently - by Libyan security forces since 01.10.21 in the west Libyan town of Gargaresh and the surrounding area. They have subsequently been taken to detention centres in Tripoli. More than 200 children and at least 500 women are believed to be among those arrested. The Libyan government claims that measures are part of an operation to combat illegal migration and drug trafficking.

Six people were killed by prison staff and at least 20 injured during a mass breakout from a detention centre in Tripoli on 08.10.21. According to international and human rights organisations, conditions at the detention centres are inhumane and the detainees are at risk of torture, enslavement and inhumane treatment by prison staff.

House of Representatives resolves to postpone parliamentary election

On 04.10.21 the speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR) of the parliament based in Tobruk in eastern Libya announced the adoption of an electoral law. This would have resulted in a postponement of the parliamentary election until the end of January 2022; the election is to take place as planned on 24.12.21. One day after the announcement, the High Council of State rejected the HoR's resolution. The rejection followed weeks of quarrelling between the two rival parliaments over the general framework for the planned parliamentary and presidential elections.

Mali

Soldiers killed in attack

At least 16 soldiers were reportedly killed and more than ten injured when an explosive device blew up in an attack near the village of Bodio in the Mopti region on 06.10.21. No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack to date.

Montenegro

Protests against authorities' shortcomings on the issue of domestic violence

According to a recent report in the media, a violent crime committed against a 19-year-old Albanian woman sparked public protests in the town of Tuzi, which has a majority Albanian population, on 03.10.21. The demonstrators reportedly accused the authorities of shortcomings in the case of this woman, who was allegedly murdered by her husband, as well as a generally lax attitude towards curbing violence against women. It is reported that the mayor of Tuzi, Nik Gjelošhaj, accused the public prosecutor's office of failing to take any preventive protection measures, although the woman had reported her husband to the police several days before the murder for threatening to kill her. In response to the protests, the public prosecutor's office, which initially failed to infer any indications of domestic violence from the complaint which the woman filed with the police, announced that it would re-examine the case on this point. In a tweet on 04.11.21, the EU ambassador to Montenegro, Oriana Christina Popa, called for greater efforts to combat femicide, referring to a website of the EU and the Council of Europe (CoE) in this connection. The website forms part of the public awareness campaign "#TellTheWholeStory (#IspričajPričuDoKraja)", which has been jointly launched by the EU, Montenegrin courts and authorities and NGOs and offers contacts and free legal aid to victims of gender-specific violence in Montenegro, especially women.

Russian billionaire in detention pending extradition has applied for asylum in Montenegro

According to a recent media report, the lawyer representing Russian billionaire Telman Ismailov, who was arrested by virtue of an international arrest warrant in Podgorica on 01.10.21, has told the BIRN (= Balkan Investigative Reporting Network) news platform that his client applied to the Montenegrin interior ministry for political asylum on 08.09.21 and thus cannot be extradited to Russia while the decision on his current asylum process is pending. The Montenegrin Supreme Court, which ordered Ismailov to be placed in detention pending extradition, reportedly explained that it had taken this measure due to the danger of Ismailov absconding, as the arrest warrant issued against Ismailov in Russia was based on the suspected criminal offence of involvement in a double murder and

Ismailov had numerous international business contacts. Under Montenegrin law, Ismailov can be detained pending extradition for up to eight months.

Morocco

New government sworn in

King Mohammed VI presented the new members of the government at the royal palace in Fes on 07.10.21. Most of the members of the government belong to the three parties which polled the most votes in the election on 08.09.21 (cf. BN of 13.09.21) and they are for the most part experts in their respective fields. The independent diplomat Nasser Bourita remains foreign minister. The number of female ministers has risen from four to seven. Women were elected as mayors in the capital, Rabat, and in Casablanca and Marrakesh in September 2021.

Mozambique

Journalists arrested in Nampula

According to reports in the media, seven journalists were attacked by police and arrested while they were reporting on protests against the government's delays in providing COVID-19-related support in the east of the country on 09.09.21. The police confiscated equipment and accused the journalists of acting without written permission. The detained journalists were reportedly released without charges after an hour in custody. A police spokesperson claimed that the journalists had been mistakenly taken for demonstrators. There have been repeated attacks on journalists in recent months.

Myanmar

Deaths on the side of the military, explosions in Naypyitaw, attacks and fighting in various parts of the country

According to a report released on 08.10.21 by the National Unity Government (NUG), which is operating underground, ethnic armies and resistance groups killed over 1,500 members of the Myanmar army (Tatmadaw) between 07.09. and 06.10.21. Most of the explosions concerned reportedly occurred in Yangon and Mandalay, while most of the violent clashes took place in the Sagaing region, followed by the Magwe region and the federal states of Kachin and Kayah. Around 100 soldiers were allegedly killed on 03.10.21 alone, in 37 attacks targeting the Tatmadaw in the Sagaing, Magwe and Taninthary regions.

According to reports from the Yaw Defence Force (QDF), 40 soldiers of the Tatmadaw were killed and 30 injured in an ambush by civil defence forces in Gangwa township (Magwe region) on 05.10.21. Two explosions also occurred in the capital, Naypyitaw, on 05.10.21. Four police officers were injured in a bomb explosion at the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Departments (CID). No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack as yet. Prior to this, a bomb attack was carried out on a vehicle belonging to the ministry of immigration and population. The People's Defence Forces (PDF) have claimed responsibility for this attack. No details are available with regard to casualties and damage.

Local People's Defence Forces (PDF) in Mandalay claim to have bombed a military supply train which was on its way to Yangon on 05.10.21. The train was allegedly severely damaged, but no casualties were incurred.

According to reports on 04.10.21, soldiers of the Tatmadaw attacked the village of Pyin Jtaung (Sagaing region) on 01.10.21, shooting five civilians dead, including a six year-old girl. On 06.10.21 clashes occurred between civil resistance groups and soldiers of the Tatmadaw in Mingin township (Sagaing region) after the latter had attacked five villages in Mingin on 05.10.21, according to information from the local PDF. More than 3,000 residents are reported to have fled.

According to a report on 06.10.21, one civilian was killed and three people were injured in a clash between two rival armed groups in southern Shan State. The Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) and the Shan State Progressive Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) have been involved in fighting over territory in Mong Kung township since September 2021. Both have denied any responsibility for the casualties.

Nicaragua

Indigenous population: Fatal attack

According to information from the NGO Fundación del Río, an attack by settlers on members of the indigenous Mayangna community in the Sauna As region of the Bosawás biosphere reserve on 04.10.21 left one person dead and at least three others have since disappeared. According to the NGO, an analysis of reports on attacks on indigenous groups has revealed an increase in attacks by settlers in connection with territorial disputes and the exploitation of natural resources between April 2018 and August 2021. 26 indigenous Mayangna and Miskito were killed in the stated period. No arrests or convictions have been reported in these cases to date. The NGO states that the Mayangna Sauna As region has one of the highest conflict rates in connection with invasion processes, with two attacks already having claimed several lives in this region in 2021 so far.

Nigeria

Fatal attacks in the north-west

Bandits killed at least 19 people in an attack on the village of Kuryar Madaro in the federal state of Zamfara on 05.10.21. According to media reports, children are among the casualties. The attackers reportedly also went on the rampage, plundering shops and stealing food from supply depots and animals. The village is situated in a region in the north-west in which attacks by bandits have recently become common (cf. BN of 13.09.21). According to media reports, a nurse employed by the relief organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and two other people died when unknown attackers fired on their vehicle between the towns of Shinkafi and Kaura Namoda on 02.10.21. According to media reports, there have also been renewed attacks in the neighbouring federal state of Sokoto which have claimed several lives. On 07.10.21, for example, eleven members of the Fulani people were killed while visiting a weekly market in the town of Mammande in the region administered by the local government in Gwadabawa. In addition, a number of people were injured. The attack was allegedly carried out by members of the banned vigilante group Yan Sakai. Two days later, on 09.10.21, a market in Sokoto was reportedly once again the target of an attack, in which at least 20 people were shot dead by so-called bandits on motorbikes. In parts of Sokoto, as in other federal states in the north-west (e.g. in Zamfara, cf. BN of 06.09.21), telecommunications lines have been blocked to disrupt the armed groups' operations.

Kidnap victims freed

According to media reports of 08.10.21 citing official information, police forces have rescued 187 villagers in the north-west who had been kidnapped by criminal gangs. The kidnap victims had reportedly been held captive for several weeks in the Tsibiri forest in the federal state of Zamfara. They comprised people of various ages from a number of kidnap cases, including schoolchildren and mothers with babies. Heavily armed gangs are behind a wave of violence in which many people have been killed or kidnapped in the north-west of Nigeria (cf. most recently BN of 04.10.21).

Pakistan

Bilateral talks between Iran and Pakistan

On 04.10.21 Iranian and Pakistani government representatives convened in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, for bilateral talks on security and economic issues. The two countries held out the prospect of close coordination regarding the situation in Afghanistan. The statement by the Pakistani delegation noted that the current situation in Afghanistan called for the involvement of the international community, the provision of humanitarian aid and measures to build up a sustainable economy.

Earthquake in Balochistan

At least 20 people were killed and hundreds injured by collapsing buildings when an earthquake occurred in the south-western province of Balochistan on 07.10.21. The remote district of Harnai was most seriously affected. Hundreds of people have been made homeless. At least 300 people had to be treated for injuries at local hospitals.

Republic of the Congo

Malnutrition on the increase

According to articles on the Congolese news page of Les Dépêches de Brazzaville on 05.10.21, the advisor to the country's president and head of the health ministry, Dr. Yoland Mvoumbo Matoumona, has stated that the results of studies show the level of malnutrition in the country to have risen substantially in the past five years, particularly in the departments of Pointe-Noire, Lékoumou, Plateau and Pool.

Controversial return to prison

According to information from his lawyer, the former opposition candidate for the presidency (in 2016), Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, who was transferred to a military hospital a year ago following medical treatment abroad, has been returned to prison without any reasons being given. The 74 year-old, who has been in custody for five years and was sentenced to 20 years' forced labour in 2018 for endangering the state's internal security, is still in need of treatment, his lawyer argues: Neither has a doctor confirmed any improvement in his state of health, nor has a corresponding discharge report been issued by the military hospital. Civil society organisations and the opposition repeatedly call on the government to release political prisoners, including the former opposition presidential candidates Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko and André Okombi Salissa (cf. BN of 19.07. and 30.08.21).

Republic of Moldova

Chief public prosecutor arrested

The chief public prosecutor of the Republic of Moldova, Alexandru Stoianoglo, was remanded in custody on 05.10.21 and suspended from his post. According to media reports, he is accused of abuse of office, exceeding his powers and corruption. Referring to Stoianoglo's dismissal, president Sandu said that all of the country's citizens were equally accountable before the law for any criminal offences. The opposition bloc of communists and socialists condemned the step and organised a demonstration on 10.10.21 outside the parliament building in Chişinău. President Sandu and the new pro-Western government which entered into office in August intend to take action against corruption and force through reforms to reinforce the rule of law (cf. BN of 07.12.20 and 16.08.21).

Russian Federation

Videos reveal violence in prisons

According to press reports, the Russian human rights group Gulagu.net, which champions the rights of prisoners, has received over 1,000 video recordings from a whistleblower which allegedly show prisoners being abused, in particular sexually, and tortured by members of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the prison service (FSIN) and fellow prisoners - the latter presumably at the behest of the stated services. The reports state that the incidents took place between 2018 and 2020 at various penal institutions in the Saratov, Irkutsk and Vladimir regions. Gulagu.net published initial video clips on 04.10.21, assessing the material as proof of "the systematic character of torture" in Russian prisons.

As recently as September 2021, the inmates of Irkutsk penal colony no. 2 went on hunger strike in protest at alleged routine beatings by guards and the death of two prisoners.

Sierra Leone

Abolition of capital punishment

On 08.10.21 president Julius Maada Bio announced the abolition of capital punishment in accordance with the vote on the abolishment act in the national assembly on 23.07.21 (cf. BN of 26.07.21). The death penalty is to be replaced by a life prison term or a prison term of at least thirty years. This makes Sierra Leone the 23rd African country to abolish capital punishment.

Somalia

Executions by Al-Shabaab

On 05.10.21 two men were executed by a firing squad of Al-Shabaab fighters in front of at least 100 local inhabitants in the Jamaame district of Lower Juba, which is controlled by Al-Shabaab. The two persons were reportedly accused of being sorcerers or serving in the government. Neither of these claims was provable. This is no isolated case. A number of people have been executed in regions under Al-Shabaab control in the past (cf. most recently BN of 28.06. and 09.08.21).

South Sudan

Renewed fighting

Intercommunal fighting broke out again over the weekend from 01.10. to 03.10.21. The affected regions were Tonj East and parts of Tonj North in Warrap State. The fighting lasted for at least two days and occurred in two to three different communities. The local authorities report more than 30 deaths and up to 80 people injured. The fighting reportedly stemmed from the theft of cattle and subsequent reprisals. The possession of firearms, both legal and illegal, is widespread in South Sudanese society. It is estimated that 1.2 million weapons were in circulation in 2017. This represents far more weapons than the country's security forces have at their disposal. The security forces are unable to purchase arms on the international market on account of the UN Security Council's arms embargo, which was extended by a further year in May 2021. The local authorities in both of the affected regions are calling for large-scale disarming of the population in order to gain control of the situation. At the same time, a conference has been convened between the parties involved, in order to establish peace and organise appropriate compensation.

Syria

Numerous military personnel killed and injured in Israeli air strike

According to Syrian state media, six soldiers were wounded in an Israeli air raid on a Syrian army base in the administrative district of Homs late in the evening of 08.10.21. The majority of the rockets were reportedly intercepted by the Syrian air defence system. According to various reports in the media, the attack took place in the vicinity of the T4 base, where Iranian-backed militias possess arms depots and a drone base. The pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights later announced that two foreign soldiers had been killed and numerous others injured.

Tanzania

Cartoonist released on bail

Optatus Fwema was arrested in Dar es Salaam at the end of September 2021, after publishing a cartoon of president Suluhu Hassan on social media. On 08.10.21 Fwema was reportedly released on bail, on charges of disseminating false information. Human rights organisations criticised the incident as disproportionate and despotic.

Tunisia

Demonstrations against president Saied

Thousands of people took to the streets in Tunis once again on 10.10.21. The police put the number of demonstrators at 6,000 to 8,000, making this the largest demonstration against Kais Saied to date. Riot police blocked off the protest march's route to the interior ministry.

Formation of new government announced

Following a meeting with the head of the interior ministry, president Saied stated on 09.10.21 that the composition of the new government would be announced in the coming hours.

Journalist arrested for criticising the president

Following the arrest of a journalist who had criticised Saied, on 06.10.21 the Tunisian police confiscated the equipment of a private TV station which is closely linked to the moderate Islamist Ennahdha party, claiming that it had been broadcasting illegally for a number of years.

Turkey

Verdict on participation in LGBTIQ Pride march

On 01.10.21 a court in Ankara acquitted all 19 defendants, including 18 students and a faculty member, who had been charged in May 2019 with having participated in a LGBTIQ Pride march on the campus of the Middle East Technical University (METU). The defendants were accused of having taken part in a prohibited public gathering and of having resisted attempts to break up the gathering. The university's management had attempted to prevent the annual event, citing the general ban on all LGBTIQ events in Ankara which was imposed under the state of emergency. The court ruled that the defendants had not committed any criminal offences, as the court of appeal in Ankara had lifted the general ban back in February 2019.

Motion to withdraw parliamentary immunity

On 06.10.21 president Erdogan brought forward a motion to withdraw the immunity of four opposition MPs. The MPs concerned Meral Daniş Beştaş, Hüda Kaya and Garo Paylan, who belong to the HDP, and Saliha Aydeniz, a member of the DBP. A vote must be held on the motion in parliament before the MPs' immunity can be withdrawn.

Government actions against suspected Gülen supporters

Judges and prosecutors removed from office

Ten public prosecutors and three members of the judiciary were discharged from office by the council of Turkish judges and public prosecutors (HSK) on 05.10.21. The HSK found the accused to be incapable of practising their professions due to their suspected links to the Gülen movement, citing Article 26 of statutory act. no. 7145 and provisional Article 35(A) of statutory decree no. 375. According to media reports, more than 4,500 judges and public prosecutors have been discharged from office since 2016 on grounds of links to the Gülen movement.

Arrests

At least 102 people were arrested on charges of having links with the Gülen movement in raids carried out nationwide on 05.10.21. The public prosecutors' offices in 31 provinces and the cities of Istanbul and Izmir issued arrest warrants against a total of 189 people. The suspects are for the most part civil servants, including employees of the military and the air force, as well as present and former employees of the "Petkim" petrochemical company. The latter are alleged to have kept accounts at the Asya Bank, which has since closed.

Venezuela

Medical situation, arrests of four officials in the health sector

According to information released by NGO Monitor Salud on 04.10.21, 15 COVID-19 patients have died in the intensive care unit of the Simon Bolivar hospital in Ocumare del Tuy, federal state of Miranda, due to the oxygen supply failing as a result of renewed large-scale blackouts in several states in the country. According to reports in the media, similar problems had previously led to ten deaths in the coronavirus unit at a hospital in the city of Maracay.

In its latest report, NGO Prepara Familia notes that 49 children with chronic kidney diseases died between 2017 and 2020 because they did not receive organ transplantations. The organ procurement programme in Venezuela was suspended in 2017 due to the shortage of immunosuppressives in the country.

Chief public prosecutor Saab stated on 07.10.21 that four officials of Corposalud in the federal state of Táchira had been arrested and brought before the public prosecutor on charges of allegedly diverting medical relief supplies. Táchira's governor described the arrests as political reprisals against her administration and comments she had made which were critical of the government.

Vietnam

Facebook user arrested for criticising government's management of COVID-19

A Facebook user was arrested in the city of Can Tho in southern Vietnam on 04.10.21. According to reports in the media, he is accused of having criticised the government's efforts to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. The state media claim that his posts vilify the country's leadership. The arrest took place on the basis of Article 331 of the country's penal code (Abuse of democratic liberties).

Yemen

Attack on governor: six dead

On 10.10.21 the car convoy of Aden's governor, Ahmed Lamlas, was hit by a car bomb, killing six people and injuring at least seven. Lamlas himself survived the attack, as did agriculture minister Salem al-Suqatri, who was also travelling with the convoy. Both politicians belong to the Southern Transitional Council (STC). No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack so far.

Separatists abduct security staff

On 04.10.21 militia affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council (STC) detained and imprisoned the entire security staff of the central bank in Aden, comprising around 60 men. The militias also took possession of the guards' military vehicles. The city of Aden is largely under the control of the separatist STC, leading to regular conflicts with the Yemeni government which has its seat there. Tensions between the government and the STC have increased in recent weeks, giving rise to violent escalations on several occasions.

No further extension to UN Human Rights Council mandate

On 07.10.21 the 47 members of the UN Human Rights Council voted against extending the mandate of the fact-finding mission to document human rights violations (Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, GEE). Since 2018, the expert commission has established numerous breaches of international humanitarian law and war crimes, on the part of both the Houthis and the Saudi-led anti-Houthi coalition. Saudi Arabia has strongly criticised the expert group's investigations, describing them as unobjective. The mandate has been extended annually since 2017. The failure to extend a mandate represents a first in the history of the Human Rights Council, which has been in existence since 2006. According to Amnesty International, Saudi Arabia applied pressure to the members of the Human Rights Council ahead of the vote so as to persuade them to vote against an extension of the mandate.

Drone hits Saudi airport

On 08.10.21 a drone loaded with explosives hit the airport in Jazan, Saudi Arabia, injuring ten people and damaging the airport building. The Saudi military claims to have intercepted a further drone. Drone and rocket attacks are a common occurrence in Saudi Arabia, and are blamed on the Yemeni Houthis. On 06.10.21 the anti-Houthi coalition destroyed three boats packed with explosives off the coast of Hodeida and claims to have averted an imminent attack in the process.