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## Group 22 – Information Centre first Asylum and Migration

# Briefing Notes

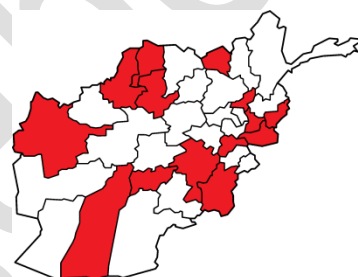
27 February 2017

Summarised edition owing to reprioritisation of tasks

### Afghanistan

#### Armed conflicts

Armed conflicts, cleansing campaigns and raids by security forces continue unabated; the same applies to suicide bombings and attacks by rebels in which civilians are being killed or wounded. According to press reports, the following provinces were affected last week: Logar (central Afghanistan), Uruzgan, Helmand (southern Afghanistan), Kunar, Laghman (eastern Afghanistan), Nangarhar (south-eastern Afghanistan), Herat (western Afghanistan), Kunduz (north-eastern Afghanistan) and Jawzjan (northern Afghanistan).



#### Suicide bombings and attacks

On 20 February 2017, unidentified gunmen attacked a dwelling in Laghman (eastern Afghanistan), killing ten members of a family, including women and children, and wounding four persons.

On 21 February 2017, insurgents shot dead the son of a district chief of police and a police officer in Faryab (northern Afghanistan). In Ghazni (south-eastern Afghanistan), a car bombing was foiled. A suicide bomber was arrested in Sar-e-Pul before he was able to kill the governor of the province.

On 22 February 2017, four persons were killed and 20 persons were wounded in a suicide bombing in the Janikhel district of Paktika province (in south-eastern Afghanistan).

On 25 February 2017, five workers of a road construction company were kidnapped in Logar (central Afghanistan). In Laghman province, a missile hit a school, killing at least two pupils and wounding eight.

#### ISIS recruits militants

According to reports issued by sources in Logar province in central Afghanistan on 22 February 2017, ISIS have begun recruiting militants there whom they plan to deploy in the Achin district of the neighbouring province of Nangarhar (south-eastern Afghanistan).

#### Several persons killed in disputes over land possession

Armed conflicts erupted between families fighting over land possession in at least three cases in the provinces of Nangarhar and Kapisa, killing at least three persons and wounding 17 persons.

### Pakistan

#### Suicide bombing in Charsadda and Lahore

On 21 February 2017, three suicide bombers attacked a court in Charsadda (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), killing eight persons including five civilians and wounding at least ten persons. The group Jamaat ul-Ahrar (JuA), a splinter group of the Taliban, has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

In the past two weeks, at least eight suicide bombings have been carried out in Pakistan, killing more than 110 civilians and security forces and wounding hundreds of persons.

## **Iraq**

### **Battle for Mosul**

Iraqi troops claimed on 26 February 2017 that they had freed Al-Maamun, an area in the south-western suburbs of Mosul, from the grip of ISIS. Additional fighting reportedly took place in the residential district of Wadi Hajar, where the jihadists put up violent resistance. Iraqi troops had announced on 23 February 2017 that they had recaptured the airport.

## **Turkey**

### **Prison sentences for Chairperson of the HDP**

According to a report by the official news agency Anadolu, the co-Chairperson of the pro-Kurdish HDP party (Peoples' Democratic Party), Selahattin Demirtas, was sentenced to five months in prison on 21 February 2017 for insulting the Turkish nation. The co-leader of the HDP, Figen Yuksekdog, also lost her seat in the Turkish parliament after her conviction on terrorism charges. The Supreme Court of Appeals approved a lower court decision finding her guilty of making "terror propaganda", sentencing her to 10 months in prison. According to Parliament, the Court of Appeals had issued the judgment in September 2016; however, the prime minister did not notify the general assembly until now.

### **Trial launched against Erdogan assassin suspects**

On 20 February 2017, the trial began in the city of Mugla (in southern Turkey) against 47 persons charged with trying to assassinate President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the attempted coup in July 2016. They are accused of raiding the hotel in the coastal town Marmaris where they thought the President was staying with his family, where they reportedly killed two police officers. Erdogan had left the hotel shortly before the raid took place. The defendants, including 37 military personnel face sentences of life imprisonment.

## **Syria**

### **Peace talks overshadowed by attacks**

New peace talks were launched in Geneva last week, ten months after the last peace talks brokered by the UN failed. According to media reports, at least 32 persons were killed in suicide bombings in Homs. The jihadist militia Fatah al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front) has claimed responsibility for the attacks. Five suicide bombers reportedly attacked the building of the Syrian state security and the military intelligence service in Homs where fighting broke out with security forces; at least two of the suicide bombers then detonated their explosive belts.

According to the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, territories held by rebels in the western and central provinces of Daraa and Hama were hit by airstrikes. Rebels reportedly fired missiles at government targets.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, at least 42 persons, the majority of them rebel fighters, were killed when a car bomb exploded close to the city of al-Bab (in northern Syria) on 24 February 2017. The day before, rebels supported by Turkey announced that they had seized al-Bab and had managed to drive out ISIS.