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Briefing Notes

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

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Afghanistan

Formation of government

On 07.09.21, the Taliban announced the formation of an interim government for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under the leadership of Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, who bears the title Amir ul-Momineen (roughly, Commander of the Faithful). He is one of the founding members of the Taliban and figures on the UN sanctions list. He said the government will start work immediately and is committed to Sharia law but also to human rights. Another prominent member is acting interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, leader of the Haqqani network, which is blamed for numerous attacks, especially in Kabul. Sirajuddin Haqqani has also been on the UN terror list since 2007. The FBI offered a bounty of ten million USD for his capture. The cabinet consists entirely of male Taliban members. No representatives of the former government or any non-Taliban were included. Many former cabinet members, now out of post, criticize the new government for being non-inclusive, saying that ethnic groups other than Pashtuns and women felt excluded. The Taliban responded by saying that this was initially a transitional government for six months and that China and Pakistan had recognised the new government as an interim government on 09.09.21. It was said that on the same day, the Taliban closed accounts of former government members who had fled abroad.

Violence against civilians / hostilities

On 09.09.21, it was reported that the Taliban had sealed off Panjshir province hermetically. Reportedly, there is no more access by road, no electricity, radio communication or internet. It is feared that civilians could starve to death. On 10.09.21, the Taliban declared that the province was under their control. The resistance fighters had fled to the mountains, but had not yet surrendered, they said. The NGO Reporters Without Borders reported on 09.09.21, that in the last two days at least 24 journalists had been arrested and, in some cases, beaten by the Taliban throughout the country. On 13.09.21, it was reported that a human rights activist in Kandahar had been threatened by the Taliban and members of her family had been beaten. A woman was reportedly shot dead by the Taliban in Kabul. On 08.09.21, a policeman was reportedly beaten by Taliban in his home in Kabul as they searched for weapons.

Women's rights / Education

On 13.09.21, the Ministry of Higher Education declared that women and men would have to attend lectures separately in future. Women would have to appear veiled and the curriculum would be modified. All subjects or topics that violated the Sharia would be removed from the curriculum. On 04.09.21 about 50 women had marched in protest in front of the parliament to demonstrate for their participation in the parliament. The Taliban had dispersed

the protest with tear gas and cordons. Women's protests for more participation were also held in Nangarhar province on 13.09.21, but the participants were closer to the Taliban and criticised the female protesters in Kabul.

Humanitarian situation

On 13.09.21, it was reported that hospitals are running out of many medicines, due to the worsening economic situation. On 12.09.21, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) stated that 97% of Afghans could fall below the poverty line by mid-2022 if the government did not halt the slumping economy.

Algeria

Arrests in connection with attacks and forest fires

On 06.09.21, police announced the arrest of suspected members of a separatist group following attacks in the towns of Kherrata and Beni Ourtilane in the north of the country. The 27 people are suspected of belonging to the Mouvement pour l'Autodétermination de le Kabylie (MAK), a group that seeks independence for the Berber-speaking Kabylia region and was declared a terrorist organisation last year. In addition, the MAK is blamed for the devastating forest fires in Kabylia. On 08.09.21, seven other alleged members were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the fires.

Angola

Economy faces sixth year of recession

According to media reports, a research centre of the Catholic University (Luanda) published a report on 31.08.21 saying that it expects a recession of about 2.0% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for 2021. For 2022, minor growth of about 1.5 % in real terms is forecast. If the forecast proves to be correct, the economy will grow for the first time in 2022, after six years of recession (starting in 2016).

The GDP's development depends strongly on crude oil, the second largest African exporter of which (after Nigeria) is Angola. According to a comparative survey, the value of crude oil exported in 2020 was USD 20.2 billion, around 35% less than in the previous year.

According to 2018/2019 surveys, nearly 52% of the population is living below the international poverty line (at purchasing power parity USD 1.90/day) with strong regional variations.

Bangladesh

Arrest of members of Jamaat e-Islami

According to various media reports, nine members of the Jamaat e-Islami (JI) party were remanded in the capital Dhaka on 06.09.21, initially for four days, on charges of subversive conspiracy. The party's general secretary Mia Golam Parwar is among those arrested. For him and four other leaders, the remand was extended for two days on 12.09.21. Due to its overtly Islamist agenda, the JI was barred from contesting the 2014 and 2018 elections. However, some of its members ran as independent candidates.

Arrest of leading member of Jama'atul Mojahedin

On 09.09.21, the anti-terror Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) arrested Emdadul Haque alias Uzzal Master, a senior leader of the banned terror organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), in a hideout in Dhaka. On 10.09.21, a court initially ordered a three-day remand, while law enforcement authorities had demanded a 10-day remand.

Belarus

Prominent opposition politician sentenced to eleven years in prison

Maria Kolesnikova is yet another key leader of the opposition movement that has since collapsed under political repression, receiving a long-term prison sentence. A court in Minsk found her and her lawyer Maxim Snak guilty of conspiracy to illegally seize power, endangering national security and founding an extremist organisation. On 06.09.21, the court sentenced Kolesnikova to eleven years in prison and her lawyer to ten years. Her lawyers announced an appeal to the Supreme Court. Both convicts were co-founders and members of the opposition Coordination Council, which was supposed to bring about a peaceful change of power after the mass protests against President Lukashenko of summer 2020. Kolesnikova was kidnapped by the KGB secret service in September 2020, but prevented her deportation to Ukraine by tearing up her passport at the border crossing, after which she was imprisoned. The trial and the verdict drew international criticism.

Brazil

Increase in violence against indigenous people

The Atlas Against Violence study prepared by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) in collaboration with the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP) and the Jones dos Santos Neves Institute (IJSN), indicates an increase in homicides of members of indigenous ethnic groups. While the total number of homicides in Brazil decreased by 20% between 2009 and 2019, 2,074 indigenous homicide victims were registered during the same period, an increase of 22%. This significant rise is related to the growing number of conflicts over natural resources and land ownership. In addition, a landmark ruling by Brazil's Supreme Court governing indigenous peoples' claims to their tribal lands is expected.

Cameroon

Four suspected separatists sentenced to death

On 07.09.21, a military court in the town of Buea in the Anglophone South West Region sentenced four men to execution by firing squad in a public square. According to media reports, the court found the accused guilty of terrorism, assassination and attempted secession. The convicts allegedly killed seven children, aged between nine and 12, and injured another 12 during an attack on a school in Kumba village, also in South West Region, on 24.10.20 (cf. BN of 02.11.20). A defence council complained of irregularities in the trial, alleging, for example, insufficient evidence for the attackers' identification. According to media reports, it is unlikely, though, that the sentence will be executed. Since 1997, there have been no executions in Cameroon, although numerous death sentences have been handed down, including against separatists. The attack on the school occurred in one of Cameroon's two Anglophone regions, where clashes between English-speaking separatists and state security forces have been recurring since 2017. In autumn 2020, several schools were attacked in connection with this conflict (cf. BN of 09.11.20).

China

Pressure on LGBTQI community grows

According to media reports, Shanghai University has asked its faculty to compile lists of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. In addition to the student's matriculation number and biological sex, information on political views, lifestyle habits, personal contacts and mental health must also be surveyed. Screenshots and scans of relevant internal policies, some of which are dated January 2021, were posted on social media in late August 2021 and shared tens of thousands of times before state censors intervened. The university administration did not want to comment on the documents, but university members and staff confirmed their authenticity.

On 08.09.21, representatives of the authorities and online gaming companies met on the subject of two circulars on the prevention of online gaming addiction among minors and on the regulation of the entertainment sector. The

authorities stressed, among other things, that the reproduction of "harmful cultures" in online games must be resolutely opposed. The portrayal of "effeminate men" and romantic relationships between male characters were highlighted as examples of this.

Egypt

Accusations against security authorities - improvement of human rights situation announced

Human Rights Watch (HRW) levelled serious accusations against Egyptian security authorities in a report published on 07.09.21. The report said that hundreds of suspected terrorists were killed extrajudicially between January 2015 and December 2020 and afterwards the authorities said that there had been a "shoot-out". However, many of the alleged armed militants had already been in custody at the time of the killing. At least 755 people had been killed in 143 alleged exchanges of fire, but only one suspect had been arrested. 141 dead had been identified, so the report.

The Egyptian government subsequently promised improvements in respecting human rights. On 11.09.21, a national human rights strategy was announced. The strategy is to run for five years and will include improvements in the right to political participation and the establishment of political parties and non-governmental organisations.

Ethiopia

Tigray militia and Eritrean units accused of massacres of civilians

Authorities in the regional state of Amhara hold the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) responsible for a massacre of the local civilian population. A total of 123 bodies had been recovered so far in the village of Chena, near the town of Gondar in Debat district, they said. According to a statement issued on 08.09.21, most of the victims were members of Amharic farmer families, including elderly people, women and children. All of them were killed in early September when the TDF was forced to withdraw from the northern Amhara region after fighting with government forces. Allegedly, this was a revenge campaign by the TDF, which denies the allegations.

Also, the Eritrean armed forces are again accused of arbitrary killings of the civilian population. They are allegedly responsible for the deaths of numerous ethnic Tigray in Humera. The town in the border area with Eritrea and Sudan is located in the west of the Tigray regional state, but has been controlled by Amharic militias and the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) since the armed conflict between the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian military began in November 2020. No assessment by independent observers is possible as telephone and internet connections to the region remain disrupted.

Despite first aid deliveries, the supply situation in Tigray remains difficult

The supply situation for the population in Tigray remains precarious. According to the UN, around 5.2 million people, about 90 % of the population, are dependent on aid, 400,000 of whom are already affected by a situation resembling famine. There have also been reports of 150 deaths from starvation. The UN has repeatedly called for unhindered access to the region to allow aid deliveries. Meanwhile, the World Food Programme (WFP) said that the first aid convoy of more than 100 lorries with food and medicine reached the regional capital Mekelle on 05.09.21. The tense security situation, arbitrariness of the authorities, but also looting by all warring parties have exacerbated the supply shortages.

Ivory Coast

Revocation of protection status for Ivorian refugees imminent

On 07.09.21, host countries and the government of Ivory Coast signed a declaration which will result in most Ivorian refugees losing their protection status, as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Raouf Mazou, said. This was reported by several media outlets. He said the UNHCR will declare the application of the cessation clause in October 2021, which will then become effective on 30.06.22 after implementation by host states and a recommendation by the UNHCR. According to Raouf Mazou, the conditions that led to the flight from Ivory Coast no

longer exist. Refugees who feel that they are still at risk should be able to submit a special application to remain under the protection of the UNHCR.

About 50,000 people in Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, and Togo are affected. Most of them had fled violence in Ivory Coast after the 2010 presidential election. At the time they numbered more than 300,000, many of whom have already returned. More than 10,000 are also believed to have fled in the wake of the violence surrounding the re-election of President Ouattara in the autumn of 2020. The UNHCR is working with the Ivorian government to ensure that returnees are not disadvantaged as a result of their flight.

DR Congo

UNHCR: new level of violence in eastern Congo

On 10.09.21, the UNHCR announced that 25,000 human rights violations have been recorded in the DRC since the beginning of 2021. In 2021, more than 1,200 civilian deaths and 1,100 rapes had been documented in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri alone, which are under siege. Since the beginning of the year, new waves of internal displacement had been observed in the provinces of eastern Congo that are affected by militia violence, with an estimated one million people internally displaced, the UNHCR said. Internally displaced women and girls have been disproportionately affected by sexual and gender-based violence. Internally displaced persons were said to have been repeatedly displaced. The living conditions of internally displaced persons, which the press and supranational reports keep describing as extremely harsh, often caused them to return to their homes, where they are yet again subjected to violence and abuse. According to the UNHCR, around 65% of the human rights violations documented since the beginning of 2021 concern IDPs returning to their places of origin.

Similarly, the UNHCR reports that people in the state-of-emergency provinces face reprisals from armed groups, including when they are merely suspected of supporting the government.

Increase in violence by the Islamic rebel group ADF

On 10.09.21, the UNHCR reported that targeted and particularly deadly attacks on civilians by the Islamic rebel group Forces démocratiques alliées (ADF), originally from Uganda, have been on the rise since late 2020 in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. According to the US monitoring group Kivu Security Tracker, the ADF has been responsible for the killing of over 642 people since January 2021. Citing a national expert, Radio France Internationale reported that the ADF has strong local roots and meanwhile collaborates with various national Mai-Mai militias.

The press coverage of the months of August and September 2021 included several reports of attacks for which the ADF was held responsible. As a result, there were a large number of civilian deaths, injuries and abductions, as well as looting and burning of houses and private vehicles, including in the immediate vicinity or during the presence of national and/or multinational troops.

The Gambia

Possible increase in child marriages

According to a report of a Gambian news portal of 06.09.21, child marriages could increase as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or such marriages have already increased. According to the report, most pre-school girls are at risk of child marriage. The deputy secretary-general of the Gambia Teachers Union, Essa Sowe, reported that child marriages were the reason why 25 % of girls had to drop out of school.

Child marriages are punishable in The Gambia. According to Fallu Sowe, coordinator of the Network against Gender-Based Violence (NGBV), several cases of child marriages were registered in 2020. Some of the cases were also brought to the attention of law enforcement agencies, where they were processed, he said. According to Fallu Sowe, not a single case had triggered prosecution, though.

Electoral alliance between NPP and APRC

In the run-up to the upcoming presidential elections in December 2021, the National People's Party (NPP) of President Adama Barrow and the former ruling party Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) of former President Yahya Jammeh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for an electoral alliance aimed at re-electing Barrow as president and forming a joint coalition government. The electoral alliance has been roundly

condemned by civil society, opposition, various human rights groups and the Gambian Victims' Centre, and has caused some outrage within the ranks of the NPP. It is feared that a national prosecution of Jammeh for possible crimes against humanity and various human rights violations will be undermined. There are conflicting party statements as to whether the MoU, which is not in the public domain, contains both a return and amnesty agreement in favour of the exiled former president. While the NPP denies this, citing national interests such as dealing with the past and the ongoing reconciliation and peace process as justification for the electoral alliance, the APRC deputy party leader stated on 08.09.21 that both a return and amnesty agreement in respect of Jammeh are included in the MoU.

The Minister of Justice Dawda Jallow stated on 06.09.21 that he did not consider the agreement between the political parties a matter of government or state. Victim justice would continue to be pursued. The final report of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), expected by the end of September 2021, with its recommendations on possible prosecutions, had to be awaited, he said. The TRRC was established in October 2018 with a mandate to address the crimes and offences of the Jammeh dictatorship.

Ghana

Arrests over suspected links to jihadists

According to reports on 09.09.21, 33 persons accused of links to jihadist groups in Burkina Faso and Mali were arrested in the village of Savelugu (Northern Region) on 03.09.21. Those arrested include a Muslim cleric and founder of a Muslim centre, as well as persons attending this centre. All belong to the Fulani ethnic group. As of 08.09.21, 27 of those arrested have been released on bail. Recently, there has been fear that activities of extremist groups from neighbouring countries to the north could spill over into Ghana.

Guinea

After the coup: release of numerous opposition members

After the coup d'état of 05.09.21 (cf. BN of 06.09.21) the three opposition politicians Oumar Sylla (known as Foniké Mengué), Étienne Soropogui and Abdoulaye Bah (cf. BN of 08.02.21, 12.07.21, 19.07.21 and 16.08.21), some of whom had previously been sentenced to prison terms, were released from prison on 07.09.21. They are said to be part of a group of 79 persons previously imprisoned for political reasons and now released.

According to media reports, the leading opposition politician Cellou Dalein Diallo has meanwhile welcomed the coup as a victory for the people. He said, he expected a timetable for a transition. The army should also respect Condé's rights; he should be held accountable [by the judiciary] for his actions.

Reports on victims of the coup

While first reports of the events of 05.09.21 did not mention any victims, some isolated reports of dead and injured have emerged by now. However, reports of civilian casualties are rare and do not provide a clear picture.

"Government of national unity" announced; further action of the rulers

During the meeting convened with the previous government around Prime Minister Ibrahima Kassory Fofana and presidents of other institutions (cf. BN of 06.09.21) on 06.09.21, the rulers of the self-proclaimed "National Committee for Reunification and Development" (CNRD) announced their intention to establish a new "government of national unity". The previous government's representatives were asked to hand in their passports. On 09.09.21, the CNRD ordered the freezing of state accounts and those of high-ranking political and administrative figures. According to media reports, the transfer of power in the regions from the civilian leadership to members of the army was non-violent; overall, the situation in the country appears tense, but calm. On 11.09.21, according to consistent media reports, the CNRD issued a ban on demonstrations in support of the new rulers, citing the overriding national interest.

Still on 06.09.21, the CNRD declared that the maritime borders would remain open for the export of mining products. In Guinea, the extraction of bauxite, in particular, is a central economic sector. The curfew was lifted in the mining areas on 06.09.21. On the same day, an army spokesman announced that land and air borders had also been reopened. There are no reports of any significant restrictions on private-sector activities.

Other reactions to the coup; Condé's whereabouts

After the general condemnation of the coup by international organisations and governments (cf. BN of 06.09.21), including the demand for the release of President Condé, the Economic Community of West African States (French CEDEAO/English ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) suspended Guinea's respective memberships on 08.09.21. However, no sanctions were imposed. An ECOWAS delegation travelled to the country on 10.09.21 intending to persuade the CNRD to quickly return to civilian rule. The delegation was allowed to meet Condé, who was said to be in good health. In addition to Condé, other high-ranking members of the government were reportedly arrested during the coup. No specific information is known in this regard (as of 10.09.21).

India

Kashmir: Journalists arrested

On 08.09.21, police in the Indian-administered part of Kashmir raided the homes of four journalists. They were subsequently arrested and taken to a police station in the capital Srinagar for questioning. No reasons for the raids were given. Three of the journalists worked for foreign media, while the fourth is an editor of a monthly news magazine. Journalists in Kashmir have long worked under pressure. In the past, they have been attacked by both the Indian state and armed groups, and some have been killed.

Displacements because of economic projects

According to a report released on 09.09.21 by the New Delhi-based NGO Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), 257,000 people have been permanently evicted from their homes or land against their will across India due to official action on account of construction projects for faster economic growth, such as widening of roads, laying of railway tracks, construction of airports and power plants, and other infrastructure projects, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic between March 2020 and July 2021. Further actions of this kind are to be expected in the future, the report said. Authorities often failed to follow proper eviction procedures, did not give notice of eviction dates, and most evictees did not receive any government compensation. According to a government spokesperson, illegal settlements in public spaces in Delhi had been cleared following due process.

Iran

Protests against Taliban in Iranian cities and arrests

Protests and rallies against the Taliban and Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan were held. On 08.09.21, Iranian media abroad reported protests by Afghan refugees and large numbers of Iranians in front of the Pakistani embassy in Tehran. The Iranian protesters expressed their solidarity with Afghanistan, Afghan women and the National Resistance Front fighting in the Panjshir Valley with slogans such as "Taliban commit crimes, the world supports them". In addition, slogans such as "Death to the Islamic Emirate" and "Stop the humiliation" were chanted. Violent clashes with the police ensued. There were reports of attacks on the protesters and brawls. Several people, including some human rights activists, were arrested in the course of the protests. On 09.09.21 further protests took place in Tehran and Mashhad.

According to media reports on 08.09.21, the well-known photographer Majid Saidi and a reporter for the daily Sharq were arrested in the city of Khuy in the north-west of the country and taken to an unknown location. The two men had an official permit to report on Afghan refugees on the Iranian-Turkish border.

Kurdish political prisoner on hunger strike

A Kurdish political prisoner sentenced to a 20-year prison term 16 years ago, has been on hunger strike for 40 days. The man, who is being held in the central prison in Yazd, is protesting the decision of the public prosecutor in Mahabad (Kurdistan province) to deny him a home leave, despite having been in prison for many years. The decision was justified by citing his criminal record related to national security. The man had been arrested in 2005 on charges of membership in the Komalah organisation and the murder of a military official, and after 18 months in pre-trial detention he was sentenced to 20 years in prison for Moharebeh (war against God).

Arrest of Kurdish youth

On 08.09.21 Iranian foreign media, citing the Kurdish human rights organisation Hengaw, reported the arrest of a 15-year-old youth in Sardasht (West Azerbaijan province). The security authorities accuse the youth of membership in a Kurdish opposition party. The arrest had taken place without a judicial warrant. According to Hengaw, at least eleven under-age youths have been arrested on charges of opposition party membership in the past eight months.

Three activists remain in custody for criticizing Corona crisis management

According to a report by the human rights organisation Iran Human Rights (IHR) of 09.09.21, two lawyers and a civil rights activist are in solitary confinement in Evin Prison after their arrest on 14.08.21 (cf. BN of 23.08.21), without permission to make phone calls or contact their legal representation. The three men, along with others, had sought legal action against the government's inadequate crisis management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Four individuals were released shortly after the arrest. Foreign media, citing a Twitter message from the wife of one of the activists who remained in custody, report that he was granted one-time telephone contact.

Iraq

Iranian attacks on targets inside Iraq

Since 09.09.21, Iran has attacked positions of Kurdish-Iranian opposition groups on KRG territory in the form of air strikes and artillery fire. The motive behind these attacks is that the Kurdish regions of Iraq are used as a retreat by Iranian opposition groups such as Komala, KDPI and KDP-I, who have repeatedly sent armed commandos into Iranian territory from there in recent years. The Kurdistan Regional Government, which is interested in maintaining good relations with Tehran, has called on Iranian opposition groups not to launch armed attacks from its territory. The Iraqi central government also relies on good relations with Iran and protested diplomatically against the military actions against Iraqi territory.

IS attack in Makhmour

On 11.09.21, IS carried out attacks in Makhmour district with improvised explosive devices. An IED hidden on the border between two villages killed two people when it exploded; another IED blew up when neighbours rushed to the scene to help. In total, four people died and nine others were injured, some seriously.

Attack on Erbil airport

On 11.09.21, drones attacked Erbil Airport. Two drones loaded with explosives blew up outside the airport without causing any damage, according to current reports.

Jordan

Jordanian court upholds verdict against alleged conspirators

On 09.09.21, a Jordanian court upheld the sentence against Bassem Awadallah and Sherif Hassan bin Zaid, who had received 15-year prison sentences for their alleged involvement in a conspiracy to destabilize the kingdom (cf. BN of 19.07.21). The lawyer for Awadallah, a U.S. citizen, criticized the observance of international standards of justice and human rights in his client's trial, as well as Awadallah's treatment in detention.

Latin America

Assassinations of environmental rights defenders in 2020, according to Global Witness

On 12.09.21, the NGO Global Witness announced in a press release that a total of 227 environmental rights defenders had been killed worldwide in 2020, 165 of them in Latin America alone, the number of unreported cases being high. In terms of absolute numbers, the deadliest country globally for this group of activists was once again Colombia with 65 deaths, followed by Mexico with 30 deaths. Brazil (20), Honduras (17), Guatemala (13), Nicaragua (12) and Peru (6) also ranked in the top ten. Nicaragua's death toll was more than double that of 2019.

Lebanon

New government formed

After thirteen months, a new government under Prime Minister Miqati was successfully formed on 10.09.21. Miqati will assume this office for the third time, together with his brother, he is considered the richest Lebanese citizen. One of the central points of the agreement to form a government is that government decisions can no longer be blocked by a third of the votes. The members of the government are mainly technocrats or newcomers to politics. However, commentators largely agreed that the government primarily serves the interests of the established elite; each member has been nominated by at least one of the dominant parties and is himself or herself a member of the very elite to which the current situation is attributed. Moreover, the cabinet includes only one woman. Internationally, the formation of the government was welcomed with relief, but observers think that it will be extremely difficult for Miqati to live up to his announcement to implement the reforms required for aid commitments.

Economic crisis

On 09.09.21 the project to issue voucher cards for the needy started. A means test is to exclude wealthy Lebanese from obtaining a card. Monthly payments on the card are planned in the amount of USD 25 (for families up to USD 126), either directly in dollars or, if the government is unable to provide this amount of foreign currency, the equivalent in Lebanese pounds according to the black-market price. The black-market price recovered after the news of the government formation broke and currently stands at about 1:16000. The card is seen as a first step to transition from extensive subsidies for various essential goods for all inhabitants of Lebanon to more targeted assistance, which is expected to be more efficient overall. In the past, these subsidies on food and fuel triggered extensive smuggling of these very goods, e.g. to Syria or Jordan, where they commanded considerably higher prices.

Mali

Fighting causes deaths and injuries

On 12.09.21, five soldiers and three attackers were killed in an ambush on a Malian military convoy in the central region of Ségou. The army stated that the attack was carried out by an "unknown armed terrorist group". On 11.09.21, according to the French press agency AFP, three forces of the UN mission MINUSMA were injured by an IED near their camp in Kidal, in the country's north-east.

Mali / Burkina Faso

Military cooperation in the fight against terrorism

Mali and Burkina Faso are planning to start joint military operations to fight jihadist groups. This was stated by Mali's Defence Minister Sadio Camara on 07.09.21 after visiting the President of Burkina Faso, Marc Christian Kabore, in Ouagadougou on 07.09.21. The two countries are already working together with Niger, Mauritania and Chad to combat terrorism. After jihadist groups first appeared in northern Mali in 2012, the attacks attributed to these groups subsequently spread southwards and into neighbouring countries.

Mexico

Dispersal of migrant caravans; humanitarian situation of migrants; development programmes planned

According to media reports, the Mexican police (Guardia Nacional), together with employees of the Instituto Nacional de Migración (INM), used unjustified and sometimes excessive violence when dispersing and dissolving several migrant caravans that had set off from the province of Chiapas in southern Mexico heading towards the US, in recent weeks. They also arrested several people. In addition, the humanitarian situation of migrants, especially near the border with Guatemala, such as in the city of Tapachula, is particularly precarious and tense, according to Doctors Without Borders (MSF). Some 35,000 people, the majority from Central America, Haiti and Venezuela, have arrived there since January, most are stuck, waiting for their asylum claims to be processed or for an opportunity to move on to the United States. According to media reports, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (Comar)

is overwhelmed by the rapidly growing number of refugees, lacking both financial and human resources, and thus the processing of applications sometimes takes very long.

Supreme Court decriminalizes abortions, trans rights boosted in Mexico City

On 07.09.21 the Supreme Court (Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación), hearing a constitutional complaint of the state of Coahuila, where according to the penal code abortion can be punished by prison sentences of one to three years, unanimously held that such general criminalisation of abortion was unconstitutional. In the early stages of pregnancy, as well as after rape, danger to the health of the woman and the inability of the foetus to survive, an abortion without punishment should not be forbidden in principle. While this does not automatically make abortion legal throughout the country, it is possible to challenge abortion laws in the individual states on the basis of this ruling and to file applications for release from prison and compensation for abortion convictions. The state of Coahuila has announced that it will amend its laws accordingly and release women imprisoned for this offence.

Already on 27.08.21 a decree was issued in Mexico City, which also allows minor trans persons from the age of twelve to have their gender identity changed on their birth certificate by means of an administrative procedure. After Jalisco, Mexico City is the second state in which this is possible.

Montenegro

Government coalition at risk after Cetinje riots

According to the latest media reports, on 09.09.21, Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic threatened on TV channel Vijesti to let the governing coalition fail if Interior Minister Sergej Sekulovic and Police Chief Zoran Brdjanin were dismissed, as demanded by the larger coalition partners. With four seats in parliament, Abramovic's civic Black on the White coalition is the smallest member of the 41-member ruling coalition, which has a one-seat majority in the 81-seat chamber. According to the report, the current government crisis is a consequence of the events in the city of Cetinje on 05.09.21, where protesting opposition supporters as well as self-declared patriotic groups and police forces had violently clashed during the inauguration of the new regional Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church of Montenegro (cf. BN of 30.08.21 and 06.09.21). Prime Minister Krivokapic, who had led the For the Future of Montenegro alliance, that was united with the pro-Serbian Democratic Front in the 2020 election campaign, on 07.09.21 announced a thorough internal investigation into police management after the two large coalition partners had accused the interior minister and the police chief of having been too hesitant in breaking up the protests against the inauguration of the new Serbian metropolitan.

Morocco

Parliamentary election - clear victory for the liberal forces

A new parliament was elected on 08.09.21. The Independent National Assembly (RNI) party garnered 102 seats and thus was the clear election winner. The liberal Party for Honesty and Modernity (PAM) has 87 deputies, ahead of the centre-right Istiqlal party with 81 seats. On the morning of 09.09.21, Interior Minister Abdelouafi Laftit informed that the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD), which has been at the helm since 2011, could only secure 13 of its former 125 seats. In response to the election defeat, the members of the PJD General Secretariat as well as the previous party chairman and head of government resigned.

The voter turnout was around 50 %. The Collectif Associatif pour l'Observation des Élections (CAOE) announced on 12.09.21 that irregularities had occurred during the elections.

On 10.09.21, Aziz Akhennouch, formerly Minister of Agriculture and chairman of the RNI, was appointed Prime Minister and tasked with forming the government.

Myanmar

National Unity Government calls for war against the military

On 07.09.21, the acting president of the underground National Unity Government (NUG) Duwa Lashi La announced via Facebook livestream that the NUG had launched "a people's defensive war against the military junta". He called on the People's Defence Forces (PDF), which have been formed in many places since the military coup on 01.02.21, to protect the people in their areas. He called on the armed ethnic organisations (EOs) to immediately attack the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) and "secure control over their territories". He addressed a third demand to militias allied with the military urging them to join the people. Whether the NUG's appeals, which itself does not have an operational army, will be followed by coordinated attacks throughout the country seems doubtful at present.

Thus, the attacks and fighting in the days following the declaration of war were no different from the violence of previous months. Myanmar media reported numerous explosive attacks, some of them fatal, from Yangon (Rangoon), Bago, Mandalay and the regions of Sagaing and Magwe. In Tanintharyi Region, clashes occurred between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Tatmadaw on 07.09.21; on the Kachin State-Sagaing border, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) attacked a Tatmadaw base; and in Kayah State, civil resistance forces and the Karenni Army attacked a police station, also on 07.09.21. Further clashes between People's Defence Forces and the Tatmadaw, with dozens killed on both sides, occurred in Sagaing, Magwe, Tanintharyi, Chin and Kayah between 08.09.21 and 10.09.21.

On 06.09.21, the military pardoned Buddhist monk Ashin Wirathu, known for his anti-Muslim and particularly anti-Rohingya rhetoric, who had been detained for sedition in November 2020.

Nicaragua

More arrests, arrest warrants and indictments; disappearances as a strategy of repression

On 07.09.21, the Public Prosecutor's Office announced that dissident Yader de los Ángeles Parajón Gutiérrez, whose disappearance was publicly denounced on 04.09.21 by the association Madres de Abril (AMA), is being held in pre-trial detention for 90 days and for the duration of the investigation, for violation of Law N°1055. In a report dated 02.08.21, Amnesty International (ai) had already denounced temporary disappearances following arbitrary detention of political prisoners in at least ten cases, including those of Félix Maradiaga, Víctor Hugo Tinoco and Miguel Mendoza. Despite repeated petitions and requests from lawyers, international organisations and relatives, no official information on the exact whereabouts or state of health of these persons had been made public for up to two months, only that their arrest had taken place, the report said. On 08.09.21, an arrest warrant was also issued for the writer and former Vice President Sergio Ramírez Mercado for conspiracy to undermine national integrity and money laundering. However, he is currently not staying in Nicaragua. On the same day, charges were filed against environmental activist Amaru Ruíz Alemán under the Cybercrime Act for spreading false news, and an arrest warrant for him was applied for for criticizing the lack of police investigations in the Caribbean regions for environmental crimes or crimes against the indigenous population.

In addition, on 11.09.21, according to the Nicaraguan Exile Organisation (UEN), its member, dissident Joao Maldonado, was shot with four bullets by two men on a motorcycle (so-called motorizados) in San José, Costa Rica. His condition is critical and the Costa Rican Justice Department (OIJ) is investigating.

Femicides from January to August 2021

According to a report recently published by the NGO Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, a total of 42 femicides were committed in the country in the first eight months of 2021, as well as nine against Nicaraguan women abroad (Costa Rica (6), Ecuador, Mexico and Spain (1 each)). About a quarter of the murders in Nicaragua occurred in the autonomous northern Caribbean region (RAACN) and another quarter in the capital Managua, mostly committed by the partners or acquaintances of the victims. In addition, 86 femicides were attempted during the same period.

Nigeria

Dead in attack on military base

On 11.09.21, nine air force personnel, two police personnel and one army personnel were killed in an attack on Forward Operating military base in Mutumji locality in the north-western state of Zamfara. The media reported, the attack came in response to the security forces' stepping up their military operations in the north-west. In order to pursue the so-called bandits more effectively, the shut-down of the mobile phone network in Zamfara was ordered after renewed kidnappings of schoolchildren (cf. BN of 06.09.21). According to media reports, notwithstanding the military offensive, at least 20 people were abducted on 20.09.21 in the territory of Dange Shuni local government in Sokoto state, which borders Zamfara.

Boko Haram commander arrested

On 09.09.21, a Nigerian Army spokesman announced the arrest of the senior commander of the jihadist Boko Haram group by the name of Yawi Modu. He also said the army had conducted raids on booby-trapped materials depots in the north-eastern states of Borno and Yobe. The arrest came after numerous Boko Haram members surrendered to government forces in recent weeks (cf. BN of 23.08.21).

Pakistan

Ahmadi shot dead in Punjab

According to the press release of the Ahmadiyya Community in Germany, an Ahmadi was shot dead by unknown assailants in Nankana Sahib district of Punjab province on 02.09.21. The man, who was a resident of England and formerly served in the Pakistani army, had returned to his hometown to cultivate land belonging to him.

Protests against nomination of a female judge to the Supreme Court

On 09.09.21, hundreds of lawyers protested against the nomination of a woman judge to the Supreme Court in the capital Islamabad. The lawyers claim that the seniority principle, according to which the most senior judge of a High Court moves up to the Supreme Court, has been violated. The potential candidate, currently a judge of the Lahore High Court, is ranked fourth in this order.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has welcomed the nomination of the female candidate, pointing out that Pakistan is the only nation in South Asia that never had a female Supreme Court judge. This, ai said, reflected the country's unwillingness to address gender inequality in the legal profession and in society in general. The quota of women in Pakistan's high courts is only about 4% and overall, including the courts of first instance, about 17%.

Palestinian Territories / Israel

Breakout from maximum security prison

On 06.09.21, six Palestinian prisoners escaped from Gilboa Prison, a maximum-security penitentiary in northern Israel, via a tunnel. The six Palestinians were originally from Jenin and aged between 26 and 49. According to the Palestinian Prisoner Club, one of the escapees was a senior member of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades while the remaining five belonged to the Islamic Jihad militant group. Four of them were serving life sentences.

As a sign of support for the escapees, incendiary balloons were sent from the Gaza Strip towards Israel on 07.09.21. In response, the Israeli military shelled Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip. Between 10.09.21 and 12.09.21, rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip, which Israel's missile-defence system repelled. Subsequently the Israeli military announced that it had fired on Hamas positions again.

Protests were held at Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem, which the Israeli military dispersed. Also, on 08.09.21, protesters and the Israeli military clashed in the towns of Beita and Huwara, resulting in several injuries.

Several checkpoints between Israel and the West Bank remained closed until the following weekend while the search for the escapees continued. Palestinian media reported various rights violations by the Israeli search teams, such as unlawful arrests or disproportionate force against suspects. As a precaution hundreds of inmates of Israeli prisons were transferred to other facilities. During these transfers the inmates caused several incidents of arson in protest or as a form of resistance.

On 10.09.21 and 11.09.21, the Israeli military caught four of the six escapees.

Gaza Strip: Qatari financial aid payments to Gaza families

The approved payments of Qatari financial aid to Gaza families (cf. BN of 23.08.21) are not forthcoming as yet. Israeli authorities insist on a guarantee by Hamas that the funds will go to civilians in the Gaza Strip and will not be diverted to Hamas.

Republic of the Congo

Violent crime in the most populous cities

The Congolese news site Les Dépêches de Brazzaville, which refers to the statistics of counselling centres specialising in various forms of violence, reported on 06.09.21 that during the reporting period from January to the end of August 2021, more than 350 people fell victim to violent crimes in the largest cities of Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Nkayi. Of the 58 cases of violence documented in Brazzaville (Département Brazzaville) 20 concerned women, all of whom had suffered sexual violence. Of the 236 cases of violence documented in Point-Noire (Département Point-Noire) 14 concerned women, 116 girls and three boys. In Nkayi (Département Bouenza) 13 minors, 12 of whom had suffered sexual violence, had been placed in care facilities. The reports said that all of the cases of violence cited had been reported to gendarmerie and police stations. While no criminal convictions had been handed down in any of the cases, victims had at least been able to avail themselves of services and care provided by various authorities.

Somalia

Tensions within the government; elections delayed

After the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) failed to comply with a request to submit a report on the disappearance of NISA employee Ikran Tahlil Farah by 06.09.21 (cf. BN of 06.09.21), Prime Minister Mohamed Roble suspended NISA Director Fahad Yasin, a confidant of President Farmajo. Shortly thereafter, Farmajo declared this move unconstitutional and appointed Yasin Abdullahi Mohamed as NISA director and at the same time made Fahad Yasin his personal security adviser. Roble then accused Farmajo of obstructing the investigation, all of which caused further tensions within the government. On 08.09.21, Roble announced the dismissal of Security Minister Hassan Hundubey Jimale and appointed Abdullahi Mohamed Nur, a critic of Farmajo. Farmajo rejected this appointment on 09.09.21. Security experts fear further tensions within the government and divisions within the security services. Opposition and pro-government security forces had already clashed in April, when Farmajo unilaterally extended his four-year term by two years (cf. BN of 26.04.21). Roble was then made responsible for organizing the parliamentary and presidential elections and their security. These should have been completed in October 2021, but on 06.09.21 they were yet again postponed, now to November 2021.

South Sudan

Demand to declare a state of emergency

Due to ongoing fighting in Western Equatoria State (last fire exchanges reported on 05.09.21), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) called on all local and national leaders to help ease the situation. Meanwhile, more than 40,000 people have been displaced by the fighting, it said. Aid workers are increasingly caught in the crossfire between the warring factions. UNMISS set up a temporary base in Tambura a few weeks ago to facilitate and make patrols of the region more consistent. In view of the persistently tense security situation President Salva Kiir Maardit advocated the declaration of a state of emergency to bring the situation back under control. This would entail sweeping powers for security forces, such as arrests without prior warrants or house searches without prior orders. For former opposition groups, now part of the government, these powers entail the risk of abuse and they withheld their agreement. The fighting first began between members of the Zande (also known as Azande) and Balanda, in the Tombura region. It quickly spread to the entire state, leading to displacement, flight and a massive restriction of trade with Uganda (cf. BN of 30.08.21). According to unconfirmed reports, also soldiers of the Sudan

People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) and the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) were significantly involved in the fighting.

Sudan

Heavy rains claim lives

Heavy rains caused floods in the state of White Nile, resulting in the deaths of 79 people so far. The UNHCR reported that the floods forced more than 60,000 people, including 35,000 refugees from the El Gana camp, to leave their homes. UNOCHA reported that more than 102,000 people across the country have been affected by the impact of the heavy rains since the rainy season began in July. As many as 15,000 homes had been damaged and more than 5,500 houses destroyed. According to further reports, the level of the White Nile has been rising steadily since 06.09.21, but is currently still about one metre below last year's level.

Syria

Dar'a al-Balad under government control

After renewed fighting (cf. BN of 06.09.21) with the remaining rebels, government troops were finally able to take over the southern part of the governorate's capital Dar'a on 08.09.21. According to the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, more than 900 rebels have handed in their weapons and accepted the government's offer of amnesty. Those unwilling to surrender were provided with bus transport to retreat to the rebel-held country's north-west. Reportedly, this deal was the result of Russian mediation. On 12.09.21, the Syrian army finally invited several journalists to gain an impression of the recaptured area. The total of nine checkpoints set up by government forces are supported by the presence of Russian military police.

Idlib: At least four killed by artillery fire

According to the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, at least four people were killed in the capital of the Idlib governorate on 07.09.21, when they came under artillery fire from the Syrian army. Fifteen people were also reportedly injured. Despite the March 2020 ceasefire agreement, sporadic gunfire continues to plague the region.

Two soldiers killed in attack

According to Turkish government officials, two Turkish soldiers were killed and three others injured on 11.09.21 when a roadside booby trap went off. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the incident occurred on a road between the governorate's capital of Idlib and the village of Binnish. A group calling itself the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Company is said to have claimed responsibility for the attack. Their followers had already claimed past attacks on the Turkish military present in Syria.

ai: Human rights violations are imminent upon return

On 07.09.21, the international human rights organisation published a new report in which it presents the results of its research on returnees to Syria. It describes the fates of a total of 66 people who returned to Syria between mid-2017 and the spring of 2021 and suffered human rights violations at the hands of the Syrian central government's security authorities. According to ai, one must assume that all returnees face persecution in Syria.

Of the 66 cases considered, including men, women and children, 39 came back from Lebanon, 14 from Rukban (in the Syrian-Jordanian-Iraqi border area), two from Turkey, two from Jordan, one from the United Arab Emirates, five from France and one from Germany.

Turkey

Arrests of suspected Gülen supporters

Between 06.09.21 and 10.09.21, Turkish authorities ordered the detention of a total of 279 people for alleged links to the Gülen movement. On 08.09.21, prosecutors issued 65 arrest warrants against military officers, judges and

prosecutors, as well as lawyers and teachers in several cities in the provinces of Adana, Ankara, Istanbul, and Konya. Some of the suspects are accused of using payphones to communicate with their contacts in the Gülen movement, while others are suspected of using the mobile phone application ByLock. On 10.09.21, another nine people accused of links to the Gülen movement were arrested while trying to cross the border with Greece in Edirne province.

Arrest of suspected IS supporter

During raids in the provinces of Istanbul, Manisa, and Hatay, Turkish security forces arrested eight people suspected of having ties to the IS terrorist group, including a suspect for whom an arrest warrant had been issued. According to media reports, seven suspects had been involved in various activities for the terror group and had also provided it with financial support. Independently of the raids, four people were arrested at the southern border of Hatay while trying to enter Turkey.

Arrest of suspected MLCP members

Turkish police units arrested 17 people on 10.09.21 for alleged links to the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLCP). The suspects were arrested in the capital Ankara as part of an investigation launched by the Terror Crimes Investigation Bureau, a statement from the prosecutor's office said. The group, listed as a leftist terrorist organisation in Turkey, is blamed for numerous attacks in Turkey, including the 2004 bombing of a public bus in Istanbul that killed three civilians. A search is on for six more suspects.

Decision of the Constitutional Court against demonstration ban

The Turkish Constitutional Court ruled on 08.09.21 that the ban of all protests in the south-eastern city of Kahramanmaraş imposed by the governor's office, violated the plaintiffs' constitutional rights of assembly and demonstration. The Constitutional Court ordered the payment of 10,000 liras in damages to each of the four plaintiffs. İsmail Sarıkabadayı, Songül Dağhan, Zafer Kaçmaz and Mehmet Deliter filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court in 2016 after other legal remedies failed to overturn the decision of the Kahramanmaraş Governor's Office to ban all protests in the city for one month which was subsequently extended four times. The ban was intended to suppress protests by residents against the construction of an emergency shelter for refugees in Kahramanmaraş.

Ukraine / Russian Federation

Arrest of Crimean Tatar activists

On 03.09.21 and 04.09.21, Russian security forces arrested five Crimean Tatar activists, including the deputy chairman of the central Crimean Tatar self-governing body Mejlis, in the course of house searches on the Crimean Peninsula annexed by Russia. According to various media reports, also between 40 to over 50 Crimean Tatar protesters were detained who had gathered in front of the Russian domestic intelligence agency FSB building in the city of Simferopol in response to the arrests. The FSB accused the five arrested activists of sabotaging a gas pipeline in Crimea on behalf of Ukraine on 07.09.21. A conviction for sabotage can carry a prison sentence of up to 15 years under Russian criminal law. Since April 2016, the Crimean Tatar Mejlis has been classified as an extremist organisation in the Russian Federation and is subject to a ban on activities.

Venezuela

Results of the second round of dialogue in Mexico

On 06.09.21 the Norwegian Foreign Ministry announced the agreements reached at the second round of dialogue (cf. BN of 06.09.21) between representatives of the government and the opposition in Mexico City. On the one hand, this is an agreement that both parties intent to work together for Venezuelan sovereignty over the region of Guayana Esequiba as well as an agreement that they want to resume the corresponding negotiations with Guyana (Acuerdo para la Ratificación y Defensa de la Soberanía de Venezuela sobre la Guayana Esequiba). On the other hand, government and opposition agree to cooperate to secure the release of assets frozen abroad to mitigate the economic and social consequences of the pandemic (Acuerdo Parcial para la Protección Social de Pueblo Venezolano). Negotiations are to continue from 24.09.21 to 27.09.21 raising the issue of respect for the constitutional rule of law, especially in relation to the judiciary, as well as political rights for all.

Extradition of Alex Saab to the US granted; former head of intelligence service arrested in Spain

On 07.09.21, the Constitutional Court of Cape Verde upheld a ruling on the extradition of Colombian businessman Alex Saab to the US. He is wanted there for money laundering offences in connection with the initiation of commercial transactions for the Venezuelan government by circumventing US sanctions. He was arrested in Cape Verde during a stopover on his way to Iran in June 2020, where he wanted to negotiate fuel and humanitarian aid shipments to Venezuela, according to media reports.

On 09.09.21, also former Venezuelan intelligence chief Hugo Carvajal was arrested by authorities in Madrid after hiding there for two years. He is expected to be extradited promptly to the US, which accuse him of drug terrorism and trafficking. However, according to his lawyer, he has applied for asylum in Spain.

Vietnam

Imprisonment for spreading the Covid virus; COVID-19 pandemic

A court in Ca Mau province sentenced a man to five years imprisonment on 06.09.21. He is accused of not following quarantine orders and infecting several people with Covid. One person had died as a result of the illness. In recent months, two other people were sentenced to prison terms of two years and 18 months respectively for the same offences.

While the number of infections in Vietnam was very low until the end of April 2021, the country is currently experiencing the most severe outbreak with a total of over 550,000 infections and over 13,700 deaths (as of 08.09.21). Public life continues to be significantly restricted in many parts of the country. Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is in a lockdown, and compliance is strictly monitored by the authorities.

Yemen

Attack on port in Mocha

Several missiles and drones were fired at the port of Mocha in south-western Yemen on 11.09.21. A warehouse holding goods from aid organisations was burnt down and other parts of the port were severely damaged. No personal injuries were reported. The Red Sea port is important for the import of relief shipments and also is the regional headquarters of government forces. The government holds the Houthi rebels responsible for the attack, but they have not yet commented.

Air strikes caused 18,000 civilian casualties since 2015

An expert report presented to the UN Human Rights Council on 08.09.21, blames the Saudi-led anti-Houthi coalition for over 23,000 air strikes since 2015 - an average of ten per day. According to the experts, 18,000 civilians have been killed or injured. The report accuses the Houthi rebels of shelling targets including residential areas, refugee camps and markets. According to the report, both warring parties breached international law.

78 killed in fighting in Marib

Between 06.09.21 and 08.09.21, fighting in Marib governorate reportedly killed 60 Houthi rebels and 18 anti-Houthi coalition soldiers. The Houthis had launched an offensive towards Marib city on 07.09.21, and the anti-Houthi coalition countered with increased air strikes. Nevertheless, the Houthis were able to make minor territorial gains.

Saudi Arabia intercepts Houthi drones

On 09.09.21 and 11.09.21, Saudi Arabia intercepted several drones loaded with explosives, all of which targeted the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait. The Houthi rebels stepped up their drone attacks against Saudi territory in recent weeks.