

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1177
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Titel:	Information Centre Asylum and Migration Briefing Notes
Udgivet:	2. december 2019
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. januar 2020

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

2 December 2019

Afghanistan

Attacks

At least 15 civilians were killed when their vehicle drove over an explosive device in the district of Imam Saheb (Kunduz province) on 27.11.19. On 28.11.19 ten houses were destroyed and at least 13 civilians injured when a car loaded with explosives blew up in a residential area in the northern province of Sar-e Pul. The car bomb was originally intended to be ignited in the provincial capital of the same name, but the vehicle was stopped by security forces.

Study on situation of deported persons

A study by the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO) has found that people who have been deported from the country and returnees are particularly receptive to recruitment efforts by terrorist groups. The report notes that reintegration into Afghan society is difficult, because returnees are often seriously in debt and unemployed as a result of having fled the country.

Albania

Earthquake claims more than 50 lives

51 people died in a severe earthquake in the west of Albania on 26.11.19.

Government agencies have confirmed the number of fatalities and also stated that around 750 people were injured. Almost 2,000 buildings were damaged.

The earthquake had a strength of 6.4. The epicentre was ten kilometres north of Durres and 30 kilometres west of Tirana.

Aftershocks hampered the work by Albanian and international rescue forces, which continued until the weekend. Volunteers attended to the injured.

The most powerful earthquake in the region for decades occurred in the early morning hours and could be felt in neighbouring countries.

The most recent earthquake in Albania prior to this took place in September 2019, when more than 100 people were injured in a series of weaker earth tremors.

Algeria

Demonstrations against election date on 12.12.19

29.11.19 saw demonstrations held in the streets of Algiers and other cities in Algeria for the 41st time. The demonstrators are calling for the presidential election to be postponed until new candidates without links to the old elite are found. Army chief Gaid remains intent on holding the election on 12.12.19. The largest trade union in Algeria, the Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA), has also called for demonstrations in support of the election date. These rallies on 30.11.19 were attended by fewer people than the Friday demonstrations. The rallies expressed support for army chief Gaid and a rejection of foreign intervention. On

28.11.19, the European Parliament had criticised the use of force and arrests of activists and peaceful demonstrators, as well as restrictions on freedom of speech and the intimidation of journalists.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Protests against abuse in children's home

Hundreds of people demonstrated in Sarajevo on 21.11.19, calling for an investigation into the abuse of children with special needs in a care home 30 km west of the capital. Protests also took place in the city of Mostar.

The demonstrations were sparked by photographs which had been published on the previous day, showing children shackled to beds and other items of furniture in a care facility in the village of Pazaric.

The demonstrators blocked a main road in Sarajevo and handed over a petition to the federation's government calling for immediate investigations into the incidents.

Shortly after the photographs became known to the public, UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina stated: "No child should ever find themselves in the situation which we have witnessed in the media."

Burkina Faso

14 killed in attack on Protestant church

On the morning of 01.12.19, around a dozen heavily armed attackers stormed a Protestant church during worship in Hantoukoura, a village of some 500 people in the east of the country, on the border with the Republic of Niger. They killed 14 worshippers, including the church pastor. Several people were injured. Muslims make up roughly two thirds of the country's population and Christians one third. 21 people have been killed in various attacks on Christians since February 2019.

China

Tibet: Self-immolation

On 26.11.19 a former Tibetan monk set fire to himself in a village in the municipality of Meruma (district of Ngaba, Sichuan province). He died of his injuries on the same day. According to Radio Free Asia, this is the 156th case of self-immolation since 2009. Human rights organisation Free Tibet reports that there have been at least 42 cases of self-immolation in the Ngaba district alone.

Hong Kong: Protests

Following a slight calming of the situation in the wake of the local elections of 24.11.19, violence broke out again on 01.12.19. While two smaller demonstrations went off peacefully, a third which was attended by thousands of people escalated into violent clashes with the police. On the evening before, the police had already taken action against several dozen demonstrators who went on the rampage in an underground railway station. On 29.11.19 the police searched the surrounded Polytechnic University (cf. BN of 25.11.19), but did not find any students there. There had previously been rumours of around 20 students still hiding in the grounds. The police reported that they seized various materials, including around 4,000 incendiaries. The police subsequently restored control of the university to the university administration. According to the police, 1,377 people were arrested in connection with the operation in which the university was surrounded, and more than 5,800 people have been detained since the protests began in June 2019.

Thousands demonstrated on 28.11.19 to celebrate American president Donald Trump's signing of two bills supporting Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement.

Hong Kong: Results of the local elections

The pro-democracy movement's candidates won 389 out of 452 seats in the local elections on 24.11.19. As a result, the movement controls 17 of the 18 district councils and holds 117 seats in the 1,200-strong committee which chooses Hong Kong's chief executive.

Colombia

Protests continue

A series of demonstrations and strikes in Bogotá and other parts of the country which began on 21.11.19 is continuing. A schoolboy who was shot by a member of the Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios riot police (ESMAD) on 23.11.19 died of his injuries on 25.11.19. This sparked demonstrations in Bogotá and other cities on 27.11.19.

A national dialogue with the protests' organisers which had been announced by president Iván Duque began on 26.11.19. The organisers broke off the discussions after a number of hours, following disagreement regarding the composition of the side representing the government.

Côte d'Ivoire

New opposition alliance

On 29.11.19 a new opposition platform emerged under the auspices of the country's largest opposition party, the Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI). The Coalition de la Démocratie, la Réconciliation et la Paix (CDRP), made up of 17 parties from all political camps, sees itself as a political counterweight to the current ruling party of president Alassane Ouattara (RHDP), which holds 162 of 255 seats in parliament. This largest alliance of opposition parties to date aims in particular to consolidate the national electoral commission (CNE), to modernise the judicial system, which is heavily dependent on the government, and to advance the process of national reconciliation.

If the second-largest alliance, the Ensemble pour la Démocratie et la Souveraineté (EDS), were also to join the CDRP in the coming months, this could prevent the current president's re-election. Alassane Ouattara is in his second term of office. Observers criticise that the composition of the government is out of sync with the demographic situation (70 % of the population is aged under 30) and state that it is time to allow a new generation to rule the country.

DR Congo

ADF rebels kill 33 civilians

On 29.11.19 suspected rebels belonging to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) killed 14 people in the village of Kukumata, around 10 km from the city of Oicha (eastern province of North Kivu). Several days previously, on the night of 26.11.19, the rebels had killed at least 19 people in the village of Maleki, close to the city of Oicha.

Demonstrators storm UN base in Beni

In the wake of an attack on the night of 24.11.19 in which suspected ADF rebels killed eight civilians and abducted nine in the northern district of the city of Beni (eastern province of North Kivu), young people formed a demonstration procession on 25.11.19. They marched to the city hall and set it on fire. Security forces shot at the demonstrators. The demonstrators then moved on to the base of the MONUSCO UN peace-keeping force in the city district of Boykene, where the police who were guarding the entrance gate shot at them. The young people managed to enter the base, where they looted and ravaged offices. According to information from the Congolese army, four demonstrators were killed and ten injured in the course of the clashes, with three Congolese soldiers also suffering injuries. The demonstrators accuse the army and MONUSCO of failing to take action and protect them from attacks by the ADF. In response, MONUSCO has stated that it cannot take action without being requested to do so by the government.

More than 70 people have reportedly been killed by the rebels since the army offensive began on 30.10.19 with the aim of driving the ADF - an Islamist group originating from Uganda - out of the woodland close to the Ugandan border.

Ebola relief staff withdrawn following unrest

On 28.11.19 Mai-Mai militia fighters attacked treatment centres for the Ebola epidemic in Mangina (North Kivu province) and Byakoto (Ituri province). According to WHO, two drivers, one member of a vaccination

team and one policeman were killed. Five people, most of whom were employees of the Congolese health ministry, were injured. In response to the attacks, WHO has withdrawn staff from Byakoto. WHO and UNICEF have evacuated part of their staff from Beni in the face of the unrest which has broken out there (24./25.11.19). The fighting between the army and ADF fighters which has been ongoing since the beginning of November 2019 adds to the difficulties of combatting Ebola. The poor security situation means that the aid organisations are no longer able to reach the regions affected by the epidemic.

Guinea-Bissau

Run-off for presidency

There will be a run-off for the presidency between Domingos Simões Pereira and Umaro Sissoco Embaló on 29.12.19. In the first ballot, 56 year-old Pereira took 40.13% of the vote. He belongs to the PAIGC independence party, which won the parliamentary elections in March. Embaló won 27.65% of votes cast. The 47 year-old is a member of the Madem opposition party, which has split from PAIGC. The two candidates are both former prime ministers of Guinea-Bissau. The incumbent president, José Mario Vaz, came in fourth with a 12.41% share of the vote. Vaz is the first president in 25 years to complete a full term in office.

Iran

AI: 143 killed in recent unrest and protests

After analysing plausible reports on the latest unrest and protests in Iran, AI has put the death toll at 143, while stating that the estimated number of unreported fatalities is much higher. The numbers are based on on-the-spot video recordings and information from human rights activists. According to AI, it has also been ascertained that Iranian security forces have killed unarmed demonstrators. AI is currently examining further reports. No figures on the number of people killed have been forthcoming from the government to date. The government is also refusing to hand over the bodies of those killed to their families. Political activists have put the death toll at over 200. The government and the pasdaran began arresting people who had participated in the protests directly after the protests had been crushed by the security forces. They face harsh penalties.

Arrest of alleged ringleaders of the recent protests and unrest

In the wake of the nationwide protests, Iranian security forces have arrested 180 of the alleged ringleaders. A statement by the Supreme National Security Council on 24.11.19 claimed that those arrested were monarchists and members of the opposition People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (MEK) who had been hired by the USA, Israel and Saudi Arabia and had behaved like supporters of the IS terrorist militia. According to official information, eight CIA agents were allegedly also arrested in connection with the unrest. According to reports from the Fars news agency on 01.12.19, the judiciary intends to impose "maximum" punishment on the "mercenaries" arrested in connection with the protests.

Iranian journalists working abroad accused of terrorism

The Iranian secret service is accusing the Persian-language, London-based TV station Iran International and its staff of "collaborating with the enemies of the Islamic Republic for terrorist actions". In a statement on 30.11.19 it claimed that agitators had set fire to public and private property at the behest of the TV station. It stated that the Iranian judiciary would thus seize property in Iran belonging to employees of the TV station. The relevant ministry added that all business dealings with them were prohibited. There is a long tradition of Iranian authorities threatening Iranian journalists abroad. Growing numbers of journalists abroad report in social networks about their families coming under increasing pressure from the security agencies. The families are reportedly being called upon to persuade the journalists working abroad to stop their work.

Internet blackout largely lifted

The internet blackout in Iran was lifted again last weekend, after seven days. The non-governmental organisation Netblocks, which analyses such internet blackouts, has reported that data throughput is now back at over 90 % of the level which applied before the blackout. According to the Teheran association of IT organisations, the seven-day shutdown of the Iranian internet during the recent unrest cost the industry more than 185 million euros per day.

Prison terms for environmentalists

On 20.11.19 six environmentalists in custody in Iran were sentenced to a total of 48 years in prison. Two principal defendants each received a ten-year prison term, while two others were sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and one female and one male activist each received a six-year term. Political observers see mismanagement by the government and government projects as being responsible for many of the environmental problems in Iran, such as deforestation, water shortages and the extinction of various animal species.

Protests: Regime takes action against women

Seven days after the beginning of the nationwide protests, in which at least 100 people were killed by security forces, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has returned to the familiar practice of filming false or forced confessions and then broadcasting them on national television. A new aspect is a specific focus on accusing women of being leaders behind the unrest.

Iraq

Adel Abdel Mahdi's resignation accepted

On 01.12.19 the Iraqi parliament accepted Adel Abdel Mahdi's resignation. Mahdi is to continue in his official duties until a successor is appointed. Mahdi announced his resignation on 29.11.19, following an escalation of violence on 28.11.19.

Protests continue

The protests continued last week. Despite prime minister Adel Abdel Mahdi's announcement on 29.11.19 that he was resigning, demonstrations took place once again on 30.11.19 in Baghdad and the southern provinces. There were also expressions of solidarity from Mosul.

On 01.12.19 demonstrators set fire to the Iranian consulate in Najaf for the second time in the space of a few days. Iraqi demonstrators had previously stormed the Iranian consulate in Najaf on 27.11.19 and set the building on fire. The consular staff were evacuated shortly beforehand. On 27.11.19, security forces used tear gas and live ammunition against the protesters.

Demonstrations were also reported in the provinces of Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Karbala and Babil, for example.

To date, at least 420 people have been killed and some 15,000 injured in the protests since the beginning of October 2019.

Arrest warrant for general Jamil al-Shammari

On 01.12.19 the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq issued an arrest warrant for general Jamil al-Shammari. According to the Supreme Judicial Council, he was responsible for ordering the crackdown on demonstrators in Dhi Qar province in the south of the country in which at least 32 people died. He was relieved of his post on 28.11.19 and was reportedly also forbidden to travel.

Further restrictions on freedom of the press

On 21.11.19 the Iraqi media commission announced a three-month suspension for nine TV stations (Al-Arabiya, Al-Hadath, NRT TV, ANB TV, Dijlah, Al-Sharqiya TV, Al-Fallujah TV, Al-Rasheed, Hona Bagdad) and the permanent closure of four radio stations (Radio Al-Nass, Radio Sawa, Radio Al-Yawm, Radio Nawa). Four other TV stations (Rudaw TV, Asia TV, Al-Sumaria TV, Ur TV, Syk New Arabic) received warnings. Non-compliance with guidelines, broadcasts from abroad and incitement to hate were stated as reasons for closing the TV stations. Both local and international media outlets are affected.

According to Reporters Without Borders, a reporter and a cameraman (Dijlah TV) were beaten up by the riot police on 26.11.19 and their equipment was seized.

The freedom of the press has come in for severe restrictions and journalists have been the victims of attacks since the protests broke out at the beginning of October 2019 (cf. BN of 07.10.19).

Iraq/Iran

General Soleimani in Iraq

The Iranian general Qassim Soleimani has reportedly been back in Baghdad since 30.11.19. It is believed that Soleimani had previously visited leading pro-Iranian militia leaders, instructing them to support the incumbent government. Iran reportedly plays a decisive role behind the Iraqi government's violent response to the protests.

The protests are calling for an end to Iranian meddling in Iraqi politics, as well as a new political system in Iraq. On 18.11.19 The Intercept published a collection of intelligence communications from Iranian agents in Iraq which runs to 700 pages. The collection highlights the extent of Iranian influence since 2003.

Lebanon

Tense protest situation

A confrontation between supporters of different parties occurred in the Ain al-Rammneh district of Beirut on the evening of 26.11.19. The Lebanese army separated the rival groups to prevent an escalation. Ain al-Rammneh is the place where the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) began.

Minor clashes between supporters of different parties also occurred in Tripoli and other cities. The protests have been largely peaceful so far. Observers warn of a heightening of tensions between supporters of the different political parties, however, should a solution to the political and economic crisis fail to be found. No new government has been formed, neither has a new prime minister been appointed. Saad Hariri resigned on 29.10.19.

Economic crisis intensifying

On 29.11.19 drivers blocked the roads in Beirut and other Lebanese cities, disrupting traffic. The blockades followed a strike by owners of filling stations. The filling station owners demanded an increase in petrol prices in the face of the drop in the value of the Lebanese pound against the dollar.

The value of the Lebanese pound (LBP) has reportedly dropped by some 40 % since the beginning of the protests. The LBP is pegged to the US dollar. Payment in dollars alongside the Lebanese pound is common practice, e.g. when dealers buy imported goods. The drop in the value of the Lebanese currency is increasingly leading to insolvencies, forcing companies to close or making them unable to pay wages. On 19.11.19 Lebanese banks ended a one-week strike after measures were passed to impose restrictions on the payout of foreign currency. Many Lebanese are now no longer able to freely dispose of accounts which are kept in US dollars.

Libya

Fighting south of Sabha

Serious fighting has been in progress since at least 27.11.19 around the El-Feel oil field south of Sabha and in the surrounding area. A militia allied with the Government of National Accord (GNA) appears to have taken over control from the Libyan National Army (LNA). In view of the localisation in the south, this indicates that the presence of Khalifa Haftar's troops (LNA) is now very thin. Production was resumed on 01.12.19 at the latest. There appears to have been no casualties among the personnel.

Fighting for Tripoli

Fighting continues on all fronts in Tripoli, with a clear emphasis on the suburb of Ain Zara. There have been numerous air raids, which have also claimed an unknown number of civilian lives.

Actions against Toubou

There have been deep rifts between the Toubou and Khalifa Haftar's forces for some months now. Following the death of a mother and her six children in an LNA air raid on the town of Umm al Aranib, which has a predominantly Toubou population, on 28.11.19, the Toubou Congress has released a statement alleging ethnic

cleansing. While the validity of this allegation is unclear, the conflict is costing a relatively high number of lives, particularly in consideration of the fact that the Toubou as a whole make up a small minority in Libya.

Mali

French military helicopters crash

13 soldiers have died in a collision between two French military helicopters. The accident occurred on the evening of 25.11.19, during an operation against suspected jihadists. The terrorist militia IS has claimed responsibility for the incident. The French chief of general staff refuted this claim, stating that the two helicopters had collided during a complex mission. This is one of the most serious incidents for the French military in recent decades.

Morocco

Musician arrested

Rapper Mohamed Mounir, alias Gnawi, was arrested for releasing a video in which he criticises the police and authorities. On 25.11.19 he was sentenced to one year in prison and fined 1,000 Moroccan dirham for insulting public officials. In the video he criticises corruption, high unemployment, the drug trade, and in one line the king as spiritual leader. The video has been clicked on 13 million times on YouTube. Many young people support what Mounir has to say.

Myanmar

Rakhine State: Internally displaced persons

According to a statement by the organisation Rakhine Ethnic Congress (REC) on 27.11.19, more than 92,500 people have been internally displaced in 2019 as a result of an armed conflict in Rakhine State between the Arakan Army rebel organisation and the military. REC reports that tens of thousands of people have fled the towns of Rathedaung, Buthidaung and Myebon since the end of November 2019 in the wake of intensified fighting in the north of Rakhine State, with 30,000 people having left their homes in Rathedaung alone. Tens of thousands also reportedly fled their homes in other towns in the months before.

Russian Federation

Women demand stricter laws against domestic violence

Several hundred women gathered in Moscow on 26.11.19 to demonstrate for stricter laws against domestic violence. In 2017 president Putin signed off a bill which reduced the penalties for most first-time offenders. Critics see this as having strengthened a culture of impunity around domestic violence. Between 9,000 and 14,000 women reportedly die every year in Russia as a result of violence inflicted by their husbands or other family members.

Election monitoring activist convicted

On 28.11.19 a Russian court announced a sentence of 320 hours' reformatory work for Roman Udot, an activist of the prominent independent election monitoring group Golos ('Voice'). The court found him guilty of having threatened the lives of two journalists of a state TV station. Udot sees this as an act of retaliation for his investigations into electoral fraud in past elections. Human Rights Watch (HRW) is treating this as a case of politically motivated prosecution.

Serbia

Security accord with Turkey on the horizon

Human rights activists fear that an impending bilateral agreement on common terrorist and security threats could facilitate the return of supporters of the Gülen movement from Serbia to Turkey.

The planned agreement is already passing through the parliamentary process. It aims to oblige both countries to prevent activities by members and supporters of terrorist organisations which they consider to represent a threat to national security.

The two countries also intend to cooperate more closely in fighting human trafficking, organised crime and drug smuggling.

The planned agreement highlights Turkey's increasingly important role in the Balkans. The past ten years have witnessed a continual increase in Turkish cultural projects and business investments in the region.

Human rights activists point out that terrorism is defined in such sweeping terms in Turkish criminal law that political dissidents can also fall within its purview.

Sudan

Party of ex-president Omar al-Baschir dissolved

The National Congress Party (NCP) of former ruler Omar al-Baschir is to be dissolved. The interim Sudanese government approved a corresponding law entitled "Dismantling of the regime of 30 June 1989" on 28.11.19. The law provides for the dissolution and expropriation of the NCP, in addition to which members of the party are to be banned from taking up any political activities for ten years. Prime minister Abdalla Hamdok justified this decision on the grounds that the NCP had plundered the country and impeded its development. The government can now seize the party's assets.

Syria

Fighting in Idlib claims many lives

According to information from the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, at least 70 people have been killed in recent days in heavy fighting between Syrian government troops and rebels in the rebel stronghold of Idlib. The two days of fighting were reportedly the most violent since the ceasefire in the region at the end of August. According to the Observatory, the fighting was triggered by several attacks by the Islamist Hajat Tahrir al-Scham on government troop positions, to which the Syrian forces responded with air raids on the Islamist rebels, with the support of Russian troops. The death toll reportedly includes at least 36 government troops.

Attack claims lives

According to information from the Turkish defence ministry on 26.11.19, at least 17 people were killed and more than 20 injured when a car bomb exploded in the village of Tel Halef, west of Ras al-Ayn, on 26.11.19. The village is situated in the area in the north-east of Syria which has been under the control of the Turkish army and allied Syrian militias since the Turkish military offensive in October. Turkey is blaming the bomb explosion on fighters of the Kurdish YPG militia.

Tunisia

Protests in wake of self-immolation

On 29.11.19 a 25 year-old Tunisian set fire to himself in the town of Jilma in southern Tunisia, in order to draw attention to the poverty and general circumstances in which many Tunisians are forced to live. The man died of his injuries in hospital on the same day. According to eye witness reports, on the following day dozens of people blocked roads in Jilma and set fire to tyres. The police deployed tear gas. The demonstrators nevertheless continued their protest into the late evening. Since the self-immolation of Bouazizi in December 2010, which sparked the Arab Spring, numerous young men have followed his example and set fire to themselves in protest at Tunisia's economic problems.

Venezuela

Ongoing dollarisation

Despite its strong ideological opposition to the USA, the Maduro government has repeatedly spoken in favour of using the dollar in the country, most recently in an interview on the Televen TV channel. According to the latest data, in October around 54 % of all transactions in the country were concluded in foreign currencies, above all the dollar, which represents a three-fold increase over the corresponding period last year. In the face of inflation and the general loss of confidence in the bolivar, Venezuelans are switching to other currencies in order to have reasonably stable means of payment at their disposal. In addition to savings, the sources are often private imports of cash by travellers, payees of bills and a continual influx of dollars, reals and pesos in the border regions. Euros are also accepted in many transactions.

Vietnam

Prison terms for activists

On 28.11.19 a court in the province of Thanh Hoa sentenced the blogger Pham Van Diep to nine years in prison. He had criticised the government online for its handling of a case in which a Taiwanese company caused severe pollution of Vietnam's coastal waters in 2016.

A court in the province of Bac Lieu sentenced the activist Nguyen Chi Vung to six years in prison on 28.11.19. He was charged with publishing subversive content on the internet and calling for protests.

A court in the province of Dong Nai sentenced four men to prison terms of between two and a half and three years on 28.11.19. They had allegedly planned bomb attacks. They had viewed subversive content on the internet and called for protests.

Yemen

Prisoners released

On 26.11.19 the Saudi-led coalition announced the release of 200 captured Houthi held in Saudi Arabian prisons. 128 were received at the airport in Sanaa with the support of the Red Cross on 28.11.19. The Houthi rebels similarly released several hundred prisoners in September 2019.

US staff detained

The Houthi rebels disclosed on 25.11.19 that they had arrested several humanitarian UN staff. The staff concerned are being accused of spying. Prior to the arrests, the UN had accused the Houthi rebels of tampering with humanitarian relief supplies.

Civilians killed

At least ten civilians were reportedly killed and 22 injured in an attack on the Al-Raqw market in the district of Monabbih, governorate of Saadah, on 27.11.19. Four of the dead and injured were Ethiopian refugees or migrants.