

## Group 41 - Information Centre Asylum and Migration

# Briefing Notes

25 November 2013

### Afghanistan

#### **Loya Jirga approves security deal with US**

The Grand Assembly (Loya Jirga) voted in favour of concluding a security agreement with the US on 24 November 2013 that will determine the presence of a limited number of US troops in Afghanistan. The security agreement on the presence of troops has now to be ratified by the parliament. President Karzai said he will leave the signing to his successor who will be elected in the spring of 2014. The USA is pressing for the agreement to be signed before the end of this year.

#### **Former interpreter of the Bundeswehr assassinated**

The body of a man who used to work as an interpreter for the Bundeswehr was found in Kunduz (northern Afghanistan) on 24 November 2013. The authorities assume he was assassinated by the Taliban. The man had been repeatedly threatened and was on a list of local employees who were to be granted a residence permit in Germany.

### Iraq

#### **Suicide bombings**

On 19 November 2013, up to twelve people were reportedly killed in suicide bombings. Mosul, Baghdad and Balad Ruz were the worst affected cities.

According to varying reports, up to 82 persons were killed and more than 140 were wounded on 20 November 2013. 60 persons were killed in Baghdad alone.

On 21 November 2013, between 58 and 79 persons were reportedly killed and more than 100 were wounded. The worst hit town was Saadiyah (Diyala province) where 32 persons were killed. The cities of Baghdad, Baquba und Mosul also reported fatalities.

On 22 November 2013, between 24 and 32 persons were killed and around 65 persons were wounded in suicide bombings. Baghdad was the city with the highest number of fatalities.

On 23 November 2014, at least 48 persons were killed and around 100 were wounded. Tuz Khurmatu (Salahaddin province) which had a death toll of 32 was the worst affected area.

On 24 November 2013, at least 14 people were killed in suicide bombings in Baghdad, Mosul and Ramadi.

According to Iraq Body Count, 647 civilians have been killed so far in the month of November 2013 (as at: 24 November 2013). They say around 8,000 persons have been killed so far this year. This is the highest death toll since 2008.

#### **Renewed executions**

According to Iraq's Ministry of Justice, 19 criminals were executed between 7 and 17 November 2013. This brings the number of executions carried out so far in 2013 to 144. 129 persons were executed in 2012.

#### **Chief bodyguard shot dead**

Sarvat Rashid, the chief bodyguard of Iraq's President Jalal Talabani, was shot dead by gunmen at his Sulaimani home on 20 November 2013 according to a press release.

### **Christian camera man assassinated**

According to a report by the dpa news agency, a Christian who was working as a cameraman was shot dead in Mosul on 24 November 2013. The motive remains unclear.

## **Syria**

### **Fighting continues**

According to state media, the Syrian army drove rebels out of the town of Kara (which lies on the border with Lebanon) on 19 November 2013, thereby achieving further success against the rebels.

On 22 November 2013, several hundred rebels succeeded in capturing almost fully the town of Deir Attiya in Kalamun region (cf. BN of 18 November 2013) which has a large Christian community.

According to activists, at least 29 persons were killed and many were wounded in an air strike carried out by the Syrian army on Aleppo and the surrounding area on 23 November 2013.

At least 75 persons were killed in heavy clashes between rebels and government troops east of Damascus on 24 November 2013. They reportedly included 28 militants of the al-Qaeda-linked organisation "The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" and the al-Nusra Front.

### **High-ranking rebel leader dies**

The Liwa-al Tawheed Brigade announced on 18 November 2013 that Abdul Kader Saleh who had been wounded in an air strike on the rebel headquarters in Aleppo on 14 November 2013 had died of his injuries. Saleh was considered to be a moderate Islamist who had good relations with many rebel groups.

### **Attack on Minister**

It has been reported that Ali Haidar, Syrian Minister of National Reconciliation Affairs was targeted in a shooting while driving on a highway. He survived the attack on his car on Saturday but his driver was killed.

### **Rebels seize oil field**

Al-Nusra Front and other groups brought Syria's largest oil field, the al-Omar oil field in the eastern Deir al-Zor province, under their control on 23 November 2013. According to members of the opposition, this move means Assad's government could be cut off from all local crude oil reserves. Government media also reported an attack on an oil refinery in Homs province.

### **Islamist rebel groups merge**

Seven major rebel groups (other sources say six) announced a merger to form an "Islamic Front" on 22 November 2013. The new organisation refers to itself as Islamist Front and perceives itself as "an independent military and social force". The aim is to overthrow Assad and to build a just Islamic state. The organisation reportedly has over 50,000 rebels, including around 8,000 from the Liwa-al Tawheed Brigade. The factions joining the merger are Ahrar al-Sham, Jaysh-al-Islam and the Kurdish Islamic Front. By contrast, ISIS and al-Nusra Front have not joined the merger.

### **More than 11,000 children killed**

According to research conducted by the London non-governmental organisation Oxford Research Group, more than 11,000 children have been killed since fighting broke out in Syria.

## **Iran**

### **Unrest in border province/16 persons executed**

According to the news agency Isna, fighting broke out with "armed gangsters" near the town of Saravan on 23 November 2013. Twenty border guards were killed and several were wounded. Saravan is located in the Iranian border province of Sistan-Belochistan. The region is a key transit route for cartels smuggling drugs into Iran and a stomping ground for Sunni rebels. The Sunni minority feels disadvantaged and is demanding more rights. Acts of violence have been repeatedly reported. Thousands of Iranian troops have been killed in

recent years in fighting against these groups. Mohammed Marsieh, Iranian prosecutor said in an interview with the news agency Isna that in reprisal for the nocturnal attack, Iran executed 16 "terrorists".

## **Lebanon**

### **Suicide bombing kills more than 20 people**

Iran's Ambassador Ghadhanfar Roknabadi narrowly escaped death in a double bombing that killed 24 persons and wounded 146 in the al-Janah district south of Beirut on 19 November 2013. Observers say they think the bombings are linked to the civil war in Syria. Several Lebanese media reported that the Abdullah-Azzam Brigades were responsible for the suicide bombings. In a letter claiming responsibility for the bombings, the groups said they carried out the attack as payback for Hezbollah's backing of Assad forces against the mainly Sunni rebels in the Syrian civil war. Threats of further attacks unless the Hezbollah pull out of Syria immediately have spread across Twitter.

## **Turkey**

### **No agreement reached on new Constitution**

A government representative announced on 19 November 2013 that the parliamentary negotiations on a new constitution had reached a stalemate. The relevant committee will disband after almost two years' of negotiations as there was currently little or no hope of reaching a compromise.

The current constitution dates back, by and large, to the military government of the 1980s. Although many items have been amended, all parties want a thorough review. Members of the opposition fear that the amendments proposed by his AKP party would give Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan too much power. The AKP had promised a new, more liberal constitution in its election campaign. The EU also considers the new constitution to be one of the most important tasks to be accomplished by the accession candidate. It is keen to see more rights for minorities and greater political freedom.

## **Libya**

### **Militia withdraw partially from Tripoli**

Almost 7 days after the bloody clashes between militiamen and protestors in Tripoli, several militiamen have begun withdrawing from the capital. The Al-Kaaka Brigade surrendered all weapons to the authorities and left the city, leaving all arms and vehicles behind them, according to their leader Othman Mligta. The Sa-waek Brigade which originates from the west Libyan city of Zintan began the withdrawal, handing its bases in Tripoli over to units of the regular army. The Misrata Brigade which was at the heart of the bloodshed (cf. BN of 18 November 2013) began pulling out of the city on 19 November 2013. The city council of Tripoli had urged the militiamen to leave the city in accordance with decisions by Parliament.

## **Egypt**

### **New law banning demonstrations**

According to state media reports, interim-President Adli Mansour signed a controversial law banning demonstrations on 24 November 2013. In future, protest organisers are obliged to give at least three days' notice to the police. They are only required to give 24 hours' notice prior to demonstrations at public campaigning events. In a joint statement issued by 19 human rights organisations, it said the law was criminalising peaceful gatherings and was giving the state the right to use force to disperse them.

### **Clashes**

Two young men were killed at rallies on Tahrir Square in Cairo on 19/20 November 2013.

Twelve Egyptian troops were killed in a suicide bombing in the North of the Sinai peninsula on 20 November 2013. 35 troops were seriously wounded in a bombing close to the city of al-Arish security sources say.

A bomb also exploded at a checkpoint in Cairo on 20 November 2013, according to reports by Egyptian TV stations. Three persons were killed.

## **Mauritania**

### **Elections**

Around 1.2 million people were eligible to vote in the parliamentary elections held on 23 November 2013. Around 74 parties representing the administration were registered to vie for 147 seats in parliament, some members of the opposition boycotted the election. These were the first parliamentary elections to be held since President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz came to power in a coup in 2008. Turnout was reportedly 60 percent. The exact result of the election is yet to be announced.

## **Sudan**

### **Army facilities come under fire**

Rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) opened fire on army facilities in the provincial capital of South Kordofan, Kadugli, on 18 November 2013. So far, two people have been killed. SPLM-N spokesperson Arno Ngotolo said the attack was retaliation for air strikes carried out by the South Sudanese Army in which several civilians were killed.

### **More people killed in chashes in Darfur**

At least 30 persons were killed in clashes that broke out between rival tribes in the troubled region of Darfur, Sudan. This was reported by the sem-official news agency Sudan Media Centre on 19 November 2013. The state-owned radio station Omdurman had announced on 16 November 2013 that around 100 persons had been killed in fighting between the rival tribes Misseriya and Salamat.

## **Chad**

### **New Prime Minister**

Chad' President Idriss Deby appointed economist Kalzeubet Pahimi Deubet as the nation's next prime minister on 21 November 2013 following the resignation of former Prime Minister Joseph Djimrangar Dadnadji and his cabinet. Dadnadji had to face a vote of no confidence by his own party MPS on 22 November 2013. Dadnadji is accused of failing to create stability owing to several cabinet reshuffles.

## **Angola**

### **Opposition activist killed/multiple arrests**

On 23 November 2013, eight members of the opposition party Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola (CASA-CE) were arrested in Luanda when they were putting up anti-government posters on a wall. One of the persons detained was shot dead by the presidential guards, the others are said to have since been released. On the same day, the Interior Ministry banned a National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) protest in Luanda, 292 persons were arrested. UNITA is one of the country's largest opposition parties. The protest was organized to call for justice for two protest organisers who had been abducted in May 2012. A recently leaked internal government report said that Angolan security forces had tortured and killed them.

## **Central African Republic**

### **Escalating violence**

There has been a sharp rise in the number of attacks and murders carried out and more and more local militia are taking up arms. France is therefore pressing for a UN resolution for intervention. A spokesperson of the President confirmed that the Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony (Lord's Resistance Army - LRA) is negotiating a ceasefire in talks with President Michel Djotodia. Kony is rumoured to be seriously ill.

## **Somalia**

### **Deadly suicide attack**

20 people, including 16 troops, civilians and four militants, were reportedly killed when militants stormed a police station in the garrison town of Beledweyne in central Somalia on 19 November 2013. Al Shabaab has claimed the responsibility for the deadly assault.

## **Mali**

### **Parliamentary elections**

On 24 November 2013, the first parliamentary elections were held in Mali since the military coup of March 2012. Election observers of the European Union and African Union were on site. Turnout was reportedly 50 percent. The elections went off peacefully with the exception of a few incidents, for instance, in the North-East where around 2,000 people took part in a demonstration, smashing ballot boxes. More than 1,000 candidates including 135 women were competing for the 147 seats in the national assembly. The results will be available in five days' time at the earliest.

## **Democratic Republic of Congo**

### **Trial against troops accused of rape**

Forty government soldiers, including twelve officers, have gone on trial at a military court near Goma (capital of the North Kivu eastern province) in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The troops have been accused of raping, committing other acts of violence against and murdering young girls and women in and around Minova (which is located around 50 km west of Goma) in November 2012. The officers are accused of failing to prevent their forces from committing the offences.

In a report published in May 2013, the joint investigation by UN peacekeeping force MONUSCO and the UN human rights agency also identified at least 97 cases of rape of women and 33 girls and five cases of attempted rape in the period between 20 and 30 November 2013 in and around Mova.

## **Nigeria**

### **Boko Haram raid in Borno**

In the early hours of 21 November 2013, around 30 armed militants suspected of belonging to the radical Islamist Boko Haram group, raided the village Sandiya (which is located around 85 km south of Maiduguri, the capital of the Borno State in the North East of Nigeria). They killed at least twelve villagers, set many homes on fire and stole several vehicles. It is thought to be an act of retaliation by Boko Haram who have accused villagers of collaborating with the security forces to track them down.

## **Kosovo**

### **Re-elections successful**

The re-elections in Mitrovica have been rated as a success and an important milestone by both the UN and the EU. On 1 December 2013, voters will head to the polls again when two Serbian candidates will run against each other for the office of mayor in Mitrovica. This will rule out the possibility of a candidate of the local Albanian minority becoming mayor owing to the widespread boycott by Serbs.

The outcome of the elections will create the prerequisites for the formation of the "Association of Serbian communities in Kosovo". Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic said at a meeting of the UN Security Council on 19 November 2013 on Kosovo that the Serbs in Kosovo would now be accorded legitimate administrative structures. Many of the Serbs living in North Kosovo are, however, sceptical about any changes to the status quo and continue to oppose integration into Kosovo. To date, Serbia and the majority of Serbs in North Kosovo refuse to recognise the country's independence.

## **Georgia**

### **Irakli Garibaschwili new Prime Minister**

The 31-year-old former Minister of the Interior Irakli Garibaschwili has been elected new Prime Minister of Georgia. The Parliament of Georgia confirmed his nomination on 21 November 2012. He won the vote 93 to 19. The head of government has had greater power since a recent constitutional amendment, numerous powers of the President have been transferred to him. Garibashvili has announced that will carry on the political course charted by his predecessor and will press ahead with his predecessor's policy of seeking membership of the EU and NATO, while also trying to improve ties with Russia that were shattered by a brief 2008 military conflict between the countries.

The new head of government is a loyalist of the billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili just like the newly-elected President Giorgi Margvelashvili who was inaugurated on 17 November 2013. Ivanishvili was President for one year. He now intends to retire from politics. Ivanishvili denies rumours he will continue to influence the political scenario. Experts do not share this view.

## **Nepal**

### **Constituent Assembly elections**

Constituent Assembly elections were held in Nepal on 19 November 2013. According to initial results, the social democratic Nepali Congress party is leading the polls. They are followed by the Marxist-Leninists of the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) and the Maoists. Candidates of 112 parties vied for the 601 seats. According to international election observers, the elections were conducted in a by and large peaceful, free and fair atmosphere. Several riots erupted in the run-up to the elections. Bombs exploded at campaigning events, vehicles belonging to party members were set on fire, election offices were raided and stones were thrown at politicians. One candidate was shot dead.

### **Background:**

The general public has little hope of their difficult living conditions improving. Many of the 27 million Nepalese are living in poverty. At least six million are forced to earn a living for their families in India, the Gulf States and in South-East Asia. The Himalaja state is one of the least developed countries in the world despite receiving significant international aid.

A ten-year war between Maoist guerilla and the King's Army which claimed the lives of 13,000 people was followed by a peace agreement in 2006, the abolition of the monarchy, the proclamation of the Republic and the first democratic elections in 2008. Endeavours to reach agreement on a new constitution failed. The future form of government and the structure of the federal state are the main bones of contention. As every article of the Constitution requires the approval of two-thirds of the parliamentarians, it proved impossible to reach agreement given that there are more than 100 ethnic groups and language groups in Nepal, not to mention the political fragmentation.

## **China**

### **Supreme People's Court bans torture and confessions extracted through torture**

China's Supreme People's Court issued a ruling on 21 November 2013 banning the use of forced confessions extracted through torture. Torture illegal but it has been repeatedly reported that persons detained by the state have been the victims of torture. In 2011, defendants were found guilty in 99.9 percent of all criminal proceedings conducted in courts of the first and second instance.