

Group 22 – Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

17 November 2014

Afghanistan

Security situation

Also last week saw numerous armed incidents and attacks against security forces and government representatives, with many civilians affected by the violence. On 11.11.14, one civilian was killed and nine others were wounded when two mortar shells hit Jalalabad (capital of eastern Nangarhar province). In Kandahar (capital of southern Kandahar province) unidentified gunmen shot dead a school principal. In northeastern Kunduz province (Khanabad district), three Afghan soldiers were abducted. According to official statements, at least 21 Taliban insurgents were killed in a 24-hour nationwide operation of the Afghan security forces covering the provinces of Kunduz (northeast), Logar (central) Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman (east), Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Ghazni (southeast), Zabul, Kandahar and Uruzgan (south). On 12.11.14, a staff member of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) and his parents were shot dead in Andar district (southeastern Ghazni province). In Haskamina district of eastern Nangarhar province, Taliban militants closed all schools and blocked several roads, demanding the release of their prisoners. Also in Nangarhar province (Spin Ghar district), a drone strike killed six Taliban insurgents. In western Herat province, a mortar shell explosion left two civilians dead. On 13.11.14, two suicide attacks on a NATO convoy in Nangarhar killed one civilian and injured another one. In western Herat, a Shia Muslim cleric was shot dead by unidentified gunmen. At least five civilians were killed and five wounded when two bombs exploded in southern Kandahar. In western Farah, a roadside bomb killed three police officers and wounded a journalist. On 14.11.14, violent clashes in Chapa Dara district (eastern Kunar province) claimed the lives of six insurgents and three security officers. In Shinkai district (southern Zabul province), Taliban militants shot dead a provincial council member. In Bagram district (central Parwan province), three NATO soldiers were killed in a suicide attack. In eastern Nangarhar province, two incidents claimed the lives of four civilians. On 15.11.14, Taliban insurgents killed two tribal elders in southeastern Paktia province whom they had taken hostage. Several incidents in eastern Laghman and Kunar provinces claimed the lives of 35 insurgents and 2 police officers. In northeastern Kunduz province, a total of 60 insurgents, among them also combatants from abroad, were killed and dozens detained in a series of military operations. On 16.11.14, a suicide bomber tried to assassinate a prominent female member of parliament, killing three people and wounding another 22 in the capital of Kabul. In northeastern Badakhshan province, the police chief was injured in a bomb attack, another police officer was killed.

Opium harvest reaches record levels

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reports that Afghanistan produces some 90 percent of the world's illicit opiates, reaching a new high in 2014. Apparently, only 15 out of 34 provinces are opium-free. The largest cultivation areas are located in southern Helmand province, where nearly half of the country's opium is produced, followed by southern Kandahar, western Farah and eastern Nangarhar provinces.

Pakistan

Security situation

On 11.11.14, at least 27 people were killed in a series of incidents, among them two bomb attacks and a raid on a military checkpoint in the tribal areas and a car bomb attack on a judge in the city of Quetta.

Since the beginning of the military offensive against Taliban insurgents five months ago, the Pakistani army has killed 1,200 Taliban militants, official sources reported.

Special court issues arrest warrant for opposition leader Imran Khan

On 13.11.14, a special anti-terrorism court issued arrest warrants for Imran Khan, leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI, 'Pakistani Movement for Justice'), for populist cleric Tahir-ul-Qadri and for 26 others over violence during anti-government protests against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif which started this summer. Police said that no arrests have been made so far. Already in October, Tahir-ul-Qadri had left the country for Canada.

Christian man arrested over blasphemy allegation

On 16.11.14, a Christian man was arrested over an act of alleged blasphemy in Lahore. The computer specialist is accused of having posted blasphemous messages on a Christian website that he was moderating in 2011. He went into hiding after the charges were filed against him.

Yemen

US blacklists ex-president Saleh and two Shia Muslim rebel leaders

As was reported by the US treasury on 09.11.14, the United States have imposed sanctions against former Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh and the two al-Houthi rebel leaders Abd al-Khalik al-Houthi and Abdullah Yahya al-Hakim, freezing any assets the three might have in US jurisdictions and forbidding Americans from doing business with them. Ex-president Saleh is accused of having tried to create chaos with the help of the al-Houthi rebels in order to return to the presidential office.

Houthi rebels strengthen positions in southern Yemen

The Shia Muslim Houthi rebels have been strengthening their presence in the southern parts of the country. On 12.11.14, an administrative official in the city of Damat said that several rebel bases had been erected in al-Dalia province (southeast of Sanaa). Apparently, the rebels have announced to secure the region against attacks by members of al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). For weeks now, violent clashes have been ongoing between Sunni Muslim AQAP followers and Houthi rebels on a nearly daily basis.

Iraq

Strategic oil town of Baiji retaken

On 14.11.14, Iraqi forces recaptured Baiji town (Saladin province) and one day later broke the IS insurgents' cordon around the country's largest oil refinery north of Baiji. The town had come under IS control in the beginning of June. Apparently, the Iraqi forces were supported by militias and tribal fighters.

Refugees

On 11.11.14, UNHCR warned of a winter crisis for almost 1 million displaced people due to a significant funding shortfall and a sharp recent growth in internal displacement. There was a lack in basic items like blankets, winter clothing, extra plastic sheeting and heating devices, the organisation said.

Syria/Iraq

IS militia about to establish state structures

The IS militia is about to establish state structures in the territory under their control in Syria and Iraq (around one-third in each country), including health insurance, marriage benefits and support for the families of killed or arrested activists. There are also personnel records of suicide bombers. The militia's funding comes from oil revenues and money from businessmen (extortion), apparently with a financial equalisation mechanism between richer and poorer areas under their control.

Syria

Cooperation deal between IS and al-Qaeda?

As was reported by AP news agency, the two terror groups 'Islamic State' (IS) and al-Qaeda have agreed on a plan to stop fighting each other and work together against their opponents. So far, IS and the al-Nusra Front, which is affiliated to al-Qaeda, have used weapons against each other in order to enforce their leadership position in the rebellion against President Bashar al-Assad. However, the report was denied by Syrian activists.

Another US hostage beheaded by IS

On 16.11.14, IS claimed to have decapitated US citizen Peter Kassig, a former soldier who had founded an aid organisation for victims of the Syrian civil war in Turkey. He had been taken hostage in October 2013. The video showing the beheading was posted online on Islamist internet sites. Peter Kassig is the fifth hostage from Western countries whose decapitation was filmed and released by IS.

UN accuse IS group of war crimes

A new report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria gives evidence of the IS militia's acts of brutality against the Syrian population, such as executions performed in public, frequent display of the corpses on crosses for two to three days, amputations and lashings, acts of violence against women, children, activists and journalists. For example, hundreds of Yazidi women were abducted, sold on markets, used as sex slaves or raped after an attack launched in northern Iraq in August 2014.

Attack on nuclear engineers

Both the opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the pro-government newspaper al-Watan reported that five nuclear engineers, among them one Iranian, were killed on the outskirts of Damascus on 09.11.14. Apparently, they were travelling in a small convoy to a research centre in Barzeh near Damascus, when the attack was launched. In 2013, the UN atomic agency IAEA had said that Syria declared a small amount of nuclear material on the site. So far, no-one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

UN envoy proposes 'freeze' zones

UN Special Envoy on Syria Staffan de Mistura is trying to scale down violence with an action plan. He suggested that the conflicting parties agree on the setup of so-called freeze zones to suspend fighting in some areas. The city of Aleppo would be a good candidate to become the first freeze zone, he said. The intention is to initiate local ceasefires where a political process could be started at a local level, eventually extending it at the national level.

Iran

Supreme leader publishes plan to 'eliminate' Israel

On 09.11.14, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei put forward a detailed plan to eliminate Israel on his official Twitter account. In his message, he accuses Israel of having tried to realize its goals by means of infanticide, homicide, violence and iron fist. He also stated that this plan did not mean the massacre of the Jewish people in the region. A 'proper way' of eliminating Israel would be a public and organized referendum for all of the original people of Palestine, he stated.

UN report on social situation of women

According to the latest report of UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, Ahmad Shaheed, women account for only 16% of the labour force and for 17 % of all managers and high-rank civil servants. Only three percent of seats in parliament are held by women. Also, domestic repression in Iran remained unabated, the report said, with 66 percent of Iranian women having reportedly experienced domestic violence (Europe: 33%, Germany: 25%).

Palestinian Autonomous Areas / Israel

Abbas and Netanyahu accuse each other of fuelling tensions

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are accusing each other of inciting tensions in the Middle East. Mahmoud Abbas accused Israel of inciting a religious war in the area. In response, Prime Minister Netanyahu said Mr Abbas was fanning the flames of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. Meanwhile, new clashes erupted on 11.11.14 in al-Aroub refugee camp north of Hebron, where, according to information from the military, a violent riot of approx. 200 Palestinians was taking place. In the clashes, a 21-year old Palestinian was shot dead by soldiers, it was reported.

Fatah leader Barghouti calls to arms

Jailed Palestinian Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti has fuelled fears of a new intifada with a call for uprising against Israel. "It is time to consider options of armed struggle which is the shortest way to end the occupation", he said in an open letter. He had been convicted on murder charges in 2002 for participation in the killing of five Israelis.

Egypt

Jihadist group joins Islamic State

With an audio message released on the internet in the night of 04.11.14, radical Egyptian group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis (JABM) pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Egyptian intelligence service estimates the strength of the Sinai-based group at around 2,000 combatants. Already before, Ansar Bait al-Maqdis had pledged support for IS.

Attacks and killings of security forces

On 13.11.14, unidentified individuals detonated a small bomb in a train carriage on Cairo's underground system, which led to 16 people being injured in the panic that followed.

On 12.11.15, gunmen in fishing boats attacked an Egyptian navy ship in the Mediterranean Sea, leaving eight soldiers missing at sea. The authorities stated that 32 terrorist were arrested. It remains unclear whether the attackers were indeed extremists or rather smugglers.

Libya

Allegiance to IS

In the eastern port city of Derna, around 50 youths pledged allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi on 31.10.14, on the initiative of the Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islam group. This faction was founded in spring 2014 by Libyan IS combatants who had returned to Derna and started recruiting other local Islamists. The group considers the territory under their control to be part of the IS caliphate.

Internally displaced people

On 14.11.14, UNHCR reported that intense fighting among rival militias forced about 400,000 people to flee their homes in eastern Libya in the past months, who are now scattered across 35 towns and cities. Due to the continuing fighting in Derna and Benghazi, the situation is expected to deteriorate.

Mali

Clashes resume despite ceasefire

The rebel coalition High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA) is accusing the Malian army of having attacked the Tuareg separatists southwest of the city of Gao on 02.11.14. One HCUA member was killed, around 20 people were detained. Presently, HCUA is conducting peace talks together with MNLA and MAA in Algiers.

Nigeria

Current situation in the country's northeast

Adamawa State: In the night of 12./13.11.14, a joint operation of army soldiers, local hunters and members of the Civilian Task Force (CTF) vigilante group was successfully launched to recapture the town of Mubi from the Islamist Boko Haram terror group. Mubi, the second town of Adamawa State, has been the largest town so far to be captured by the Islamists (end of October 2014). Also on 12./13.11.14, the town of Maiha (around 30km southeast of Mubi) was liberated, which Boko Haram had taken on 10.11.14. Apparently, around 75 Boko Haram members were killed in the fight. On 13.11.14, Boko Haram insurgents took the towns of Hong and Gombi (around 100km northeast of Adamawa's capital Yola).

Borno State: On 15.11.14., the military, again in coalition with members of the CTF vigilante militia, recaptured the town of Chibouk which had been taken by Boko Haram two days before. Here, the Islamist insurgents had abducted more than 200 schoolgirls in April 2014 whose whereabouts remain unknown.

Suicide attacks in four northern States claim dozens of lives

On 16.11.14, a female bomber, allegedly a member of Boko Haram, blew herself up at a market place in the town of Azare (Bauchi State). Local hospital staff said that at least ten people were killed and around 60 injured. The bomber had been accompanied by two men, one of whom was lynched to death immediately after the attack, while the other was taken into custody.

On 14.11.14, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a car at Magasirku petrol filling station in the city of Kano (Kano State). Six people died in the attack, among them the perpetrator and three policemen.

On 12.11.14, around noon, a female suicide bomber, apparently a Boko Haram member, detonated herself in front of the library entrance of the federal college of education in Kontagora town. Police said that only the bomber herself was left dead, whereas eyewitnesses said there were at least ten victims. Apparently, the attack was intended to hit the auditorium in the library where students were sitting their semester examinations.

On 10.11.14, a suicide bomber had blown himself up on the school yard of the Government Comprehensive Senior Science Secondary School, where around 2,000 students gathered for morning assembly. At least 49 pupils were killed, another 85 wounded. The attacker, a suspected Boko Haram Member, had entered the premises in school uniform, with the bomb in his rucksack.

President Jonathan announces bid for second term

On 11.11.14, Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan announced to thousands of supporters on Eagle Square in the capital of Abuja that he would be seeking second term in office. Parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled for 14.02.15.

Refugees from Boko Haram violence

The UN refugee agency reported on 11.11.2014 that, since May 2013, Boko Haram attacks in northeastern Nigeria have forced more than 100,000 people (from both Nigeria and Niger) to escape to the Republic of Niger, while 2,700 refugees fled to Chad. Over 43,000 Nigerians have sought refuge in Cameroon. The number of internally displaced people in the six northeastern states of Nigeria has risen to more than 650,000.

Uganda

New anti-homosexuality bill

Uganda is preparing a new anti-gay law (Prohibition of Promotion of Unnatural Sexual Offences Bill). Reports say that the draft relies on the penal code which prohibits 'unnatural acts', focussing on the punishment of the promotion of such acts. Observers expect the new legislation to have impact on organisations supporting LGBT rights; also, media reporting on homosexuality may be met with sanctions. In August, the constitutional court had annulled a law enacted in February on procedural grounds. This law had been met with sharp international criticism for its strict provisions.

Burkina Faso

Agreement on transitional president

On 16.11.14, representatives of the military, opposition, civil society and religious leaders signed a transitional agreement setting out the terms of a one-year transitional period leading up to the parliamentary and presidential elections due to be held by November 2015 at the latest. As a first step, 72-year old diplomat Michel Kafando was elected as transitional president by a committee on the same day. He had been ambassador of Burkina Faso at the United Nations since 1998. He will choose a prime minister to select a new cabinet. A 90-member transitional council, which will serve as a temporary legislative body, will also be created. It will be made up of 30 members from the opposition parties, 25 members each from the civil society organisations and from the army and 10 members from the ex-majority faction of ousted President Compaoré. The members of the interim leadership will not be able to run in the parliamentary and presidential elections next year.

South Sudan

New clashes

There are unconfirmed reports that government soldiers and 24 rebels lost their lives in recent clashes on 10.11.14. It was only on 08.11.14 that South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar signed a ceasefire agreement. Apparently, both sides have accused each other for having started the violence.

Ethiopia

Highest number of refugees in Africa

With nearly 650,000, Ethiopia is hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa and ranks among the top ten reception countries worldwide. Most refugees come from South Sudan, many also from Eritrea and Somalia. The UNHCR reports that since the beginning of the armed conflict in South Sudan in mid-December 2013, approx. 193,000 people have fled to the neighbouring country. For this reason, the EU has committed to increase humanitarian funding to 31 million Euros. The fund is intended to help Ethiopia meet the basic needs of refugees.

Somalia

Trade despite UN ban

A press release reports that despite a UN export ban, the charcoal trade between al-Shabaab and the Arab States has increased considerably since 2012. Apparently, the illegal trade is a key source of funding for the terror organisation.

Majority of cabinet urges Prime Minister to step down

14 of 22 cabinet members called Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed to step down in a letter dated 16.11.14; otherwise, they would resign from office themselves. The signatories are deemed to be loyal to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Before, two attempts by lawmakers to push a vote of no-confidence against the Prime Minister had failed because the parliamentary debates were disrupted by the Prime

Minister's supporters. The tensions arose after a political dispute between the President and the Prime Minister over a cabinet reshuffle.

Somaliland: Violence ahead of elections

On 15.11.14, UN Special Representative for Somalia Nicholas Kay expressed concern over violence in the run-up to the parliamentary elections scheduled for 2015. The clashes claimed the life of one civilian and injured several members of the security forces. Several members of parliament were reportedly arrested. President Ahmed Mohammed called for calm and respect for law and order.

West Africa/Ebola

Latest developments

On 05.11.14, the WHO revised the numbers of Ebola infections and fatalities downwards.

Overall, 4,818 people have died in the three countries most affected by Ebola (Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia); a total of 13,042 cases have been registered. In Liberia, a decline in the number of new infections was observed; in Sierra Leone and Guinea, numbers have remained stable. However, the WHO assumes a high number of unreported cases.

In Liberia, the state of emergency put in place in August will not be extended due to the progress in the fight against Ebola. The night-time curfew, however, will be maintained. On 16.11.14, President Sirleaf dismissed Minister of Health Gwenigale after criticism regarding the government's crisis management arrangements.

In Mali, health controls were increased at the border with Guinea (858 km) following specific instructions issued by President Keita on 12.11.14. Before, a second Ebola fatality was recorded with a nurse dying in Bamako on 11.11.14. Her hospital, the Pasteur Clinic, was placed in quarantine.

In Sierra Leone, the health personnel of the clinic in the southern town of Bandajuma went on strike on 12.11.14. This clinic is the only one in the region to treat Ebola patients. The approx. 400 employees are protesting because the government has not yet paid the agreed hazard bonus of USD 100 per week.

On 16.11.14, the Democratic Republic of Congo declared the country Ebola-free, after no new case had been registered since 04.10.14.

In Singapore, people arriving from West African countries affected by Ebola (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) require a visa since 05.11.14. The health ministry said that this would allow for better oversight and tracing. Due to its importance for international air traffic with many transit and connecting flights, the island city-state is particularly vulnerable to epidemics. In 2003, Singapore had been hit by a massive wave of SARS infection.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Nationalist Parties wins elections

Again, nationalist parties won the parliamentary and presidential elections held on 12.10.14 (see BN of 13.10.14). On 30.10.14, the three members of the joint presidency were nominated; the seats went again to the candidates of the three major ethnic groups (Bosnians, Serbs and Croats). The Party of Democratic Action – SDA (Bosnians) gained most seats in the federal parliament. In the constituent Bosnian Serb republic Republika Srpska (RS), Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, who is known for his separatist statements, continues to execute the office of president. Also in the Bosnian Croat Federation (FBuH), there were only marginal changes in majority relations. The formation of a government at federal and entity level is yet to be accomplished.

Many observers share the opinion that the situation will remain difficult, with little hope for improvement. Twenty years after the end of the war, the country is still split along ethnic lines, which has caused political paralysis and impeded urgent reforms.

Western Balkans Conference: UK-German initiative on Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 06.11.14, in occasion of a new Western Balkans Conference held in Berlin (see BN of 01.09.14), the German foreign minister and the British foreign secretary urged the yet-to-be-formed new Bosnian government to implement reforms, create jobs, strengthen the rule of law and take decisive action against corruption. Also, the government was invited to commit itself to prepare a broad reform agenda together with the EU, thus moving the country closer to EU membership. In turn, the EU might mobilise financial resources. The US and the EU both support the UK-German initiative.

UN Security Council extends mandate of EUFOR mission – Russia abstains

On 11.11.14, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the peacekeeping force EUFOR ALTHEA by one year. The military mission had been set up in 2004 to monitor the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the implementation of the Dayton peace treaty (1995).

For the first time, Russia did not vote in favour of an extension of the EU-led mission in Bosnia in the Security Council. The country should not be pushed towards Europe, Moscow said. Currently, Russia is trying to strengthen its influence in the Western Balkan region by pursuing an anti-Western policy.

Ukraine

President Poroshenko: Prepared for war with Russia

On 15.11./16.11.14, a meeting of several heads of state took place in the Slovak capital Bratislava, where President Poroshenko gave a description of his country's current situation. He was not afraid of a war with Russia because of the conflict with the pro-Moscow separatists, he said. Although he wanted nothing more than peace, it was necessary to face up to the worst-case scenario, he added. In his opinion, a precondition for a resolution of the conflict would be to end the supply of Russian weapons and fighters to the separatists.

Public services to rebel areas discontinued

On 15.11.14, President Poroshenko ordered to stop financing of state-owned enterprises and administrative bodies in the civil war region and to transfer members of staff to other parts of the country. In his speech on the G 20 summit in Australia, Russian President Vladimir Putin called this setting an 'economic blockade' of the region.

Situation in eastern Ukraine

Last week, Russia sent another aid convoy with more than 70 trucks and about 450 tons of relief goods to Donetsk and Luhansk without prior consent of the Kiev government. On 16.11.14, the first trucks returned to Russia. This has been the seventh aid convoy since August 2014. The Ukraine criticised these unauthorised deliveries as yet another violation of the country's sovereignty.

The population of Luhansk has sharply decreased because of the conflict. The city, whose pre-conflict population had been 400,000, dropped to 170,000, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) stated citing local authorities. Ten thousands of people have fled from the fighting. According to statements from Kiev, new armed disputes claimed at least ten lives during the weekend of 15.11./16.11.14.

Armenia/Azerbaijan

Helicopter shot down in the Nagorno-Karabakh border region

In the evening of 12.11.14, the Azerbaijan military shot down a combat helicopter in Agdam region close to the border with Nagorno-Karabakh. All three crew members lost their lives. Azerbaijan claims that the helicopter was on its way to attack one of the country's military bases. For three days, there had been long provocative flight manoeuvres, it was stated. The Armenian side claims that the helicopter was on a training flight and did not carry any weapons.

The incident marks a climax of increasing violations of the 1994 ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan that started at the end of July. The border between Azerbaijan and the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh has regularly seen fatal incidents, with the conflict parties blaming each other.

Between 31.07.14 and 03.08.14 15, a total of 15 soldiers were reportedly killed, other sources put the number of victims at 20, most of them Azeri soldiers. The talks between Armenian President Serge Sarkisian and Azerbaijan's head of state Ilham Aliyev, brokered by Russia in August, and those mediated by France at the end of October in Paris, ended with both parties expressing their will to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Likewise, the negotiations of the OSCE Minsk Group, which have been taking place on a regular basis after the ceasefire agreement and are co-chaired by France, Russia and the US, have always ended with promises and mutual demands to engage in compromise.

Bangladesh

Another death sentence in war crimes trials

On 13.11.14, the mayor of the city of Nagarkanda, Zahid Hossain Khokon, was condemned to death by a special court for having committed mass murder, rape and forced conversions from Hinduism to Islam during the war of independence in 1971. The court has already imposed death sentences against several people including some politicians. Most of the convicted were members of the Islamic Jamaat-e-Islami party. Zahid Hossain Khokon was also a member of this party during the war of independence. Meanwhile, he has joined the main opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP). Apparently, he went to Sweden after being indicted.

Professor killed by suspected Islamists

On 15.11.14, a professor of Rajshahi University in western Bangladesh was killed allegedly for having prohibited his female students to wear face veils in the lecture hall. A previously unknown group named 'Ansar al Islam Bangladesh-2' assumed responsibility for the attack.

India

Mass sterilisation leaves women dead

The regional government reported that 14 women have died so far as a result of a mass sterilisation in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. Several of them are still in critical condition. The deaths may have been caused by poisoned drugs administered to the women after surgery. According to media reports, a total of 80 women were sterilised by one doctor and his assistant in state-owned Nemi Chand hospital in the city of Bilaspur within five hours on 08.11.14. Both the doctor and the owner of the medicine factory were taken in police custody for interrogation. The regional government announced to pay the victims' families compensations equivalent of 5,200 euro each.

Campaign against population growth – free programme including incentives

As part of its family planning programme, the Indian government is offering women free sterilization for birth control. Regional governments often use material incentives to encourage couples to undergo sterilization in an attempt to control population growth, as the country's number of inhabitants has meanwhile reached 1.2 billion. Women in Bilaspur, for example, have received an equivalent of 18 euro each. In January 2012, a similar case had caused a nation-wide stir. At the time, three men were arrested who had sterilized 53 women without anaesthetics and left them unconscious in a field. For several decades now, India has been trying to convince people of targeted family planning. In the 1970ies, the measures included forced sterilization of people from lower castes. Following protests, this practice was abolished.

China

Xinjiang: Verdicts

On 10.11.14, the People's Court in Kashgar publicly sentenced 22 people, most of them Uighurs, to prison terms ranging from five to 16 years. Among others, they were accused of non-authorised preaching and incitement to ethnic hatred. Since May 2014, authorities in Xinjiang have been conducting a campaign against religious extremism.