

## Information Centre Asylum and Migration

# Briefing Notes

9 September 2013

### Afghanistan

#### High losses among Afghan security forces

The Afghan interior ministry has informed that since March this year, a total of 1,792 police officers have lost their lives; this amounts to twice as many as in the same time period of the previous year. Most of the victims were killed by booby traps and by suicide attackers. The gradual withdrawal of ISAF forces and the takeover of security by the Afghan security forces have led the insurgents to concentrate their attacks on the Afghan forces. The interior ministry has decided to stop releasing monthly casualty figures of security forces in order not to damage morale.

For the time period 01.05. to 31.07.13, the American aid organisation USAID registered 6,198 security-related incidents, killing a total of 2,044 people (both civilians and security forces) and injuring another 3,071:

Targeted group	Individuals affected (dead and injured)
Afghan Border Police	145
Afghan National Army	322
Afghan National Directorate Security	15
Afghan National Police	1,513
Afghan National Security Force	958
Armed Opposition Groups	332
Business/Enterprise/Commercial	38
District Centre	60
Government of Afghanistan	205
International Military (IMF, IM, ISAF)	230
Local contractor	55
Local population	1,191
National NGO	21
Other	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,147</b>

#### Security situation

On 04.09.13, Indian novelist Sushmita Banerjee was shot dead in her home in eastern Paktika Province by unidentified gunmen. She had published a book about her escape from the Taliban.

On 05.09.13, Afghan policemen killed two armed men in a mosque in Kabul. Apparently, the two were Pakistani Islamists dressed in police uniforms. The authorities said that the men had planned an attack on Shia Muslims. Three bystanders were injured in the incident.

On 07.09.13, a NATO attack in northern Kunduz province ordered by the German troops killed three insurgents. The militants had threatened to attack an outpost of the Afghan security forces in Eisa Khel, roughly three kilometres away from the German field camp. Another NATO airstrike in eastern Kunar Province (Wattapur district) appears to have killed 16 civilians. In the western provincial capital of Herat, protests against the visa policy of the Iranian consulate turned violent, killing at least one person and injuring several others.

On 08.07.13, insurgents attacked the intelligence office in Maidan Shar, capital of central Wardak province. All insurgents were reportedly killed in the clash; at least 30 people were injured, among them many civilians.

## **Iraq**

### **Attacks**

On 03.09.13, a series of eleven co-ordinated attacks in Shia quarters of Baghdad killed at least 64 people. Most of the targets were markets and mosques.

On 04.09.13, a bomb attack on two houses of Shia families in Latifiyah killed at least 18 people. In Tarmiyah, five soldiers on patrol were killed by three bombs.

On 07.09.13, four people were killed in attacks in Baghdad, Mosul, Baquba and Tuz Khurmato.

UNAMI informs that in August 2013, a total of 804 Iraqis lost their lives in violent incidents, 2,030 more were injured. The most affected province was Baghdad, followed by Salahuddin, Nineveh, Diyala and Anbar. According to data of the Iraq Body Count group, the month of August claimed the lives of 915 civilians.

## **Syria**

### **Dispute over military strike**

The opponents of a military strike argue that so far, no good arguments have been presented as to why the chemical attack in Syria should have violated the national security of the U.S.. Also on the international level, President Obama has not yet succeeded in securing full support for a military strike. U.S. chief of staff Denis McDonough has admitted that there is no solid proof for the involvement of the Syrian government in the alleged poison gas attack launched on 21.08.13. President Obama plans a massive campaign for the military strike, which will be more intensive and take longer than originally planned, the LA Times reports. President Assad has again rejected any responsibility for the chemical attack.

## **Israel/Palestinian Autonomous Areas**

### **Israel grants work permits to 5,000 Palestinians**

To improve Israel's position in the peace negotiations, the government has approved to issue 5,000 more work permits to Palestinians from the West Bank. With this, a total of 40,000 Palestinians have received permits to work in Israel.

## **Iran**

### **More liberties under President Hassan Rouhani**

In the first month of President Rouhani's term, new newspapers have gone into print nearly every week. Circulation figures have been rising continuously. Also, reports on deficiencies during the past eight years under former President Ahmadinejad are published every day. The government has offered all journalists living abroad and all other Iranians living in exile to come back to Iran without having to fear arrest. In the previous years, there had been numerous restrictions on newspapers, for example orders to reduce the circulation figures to a minimum or to stop publishing altogether. Under the former regime, a total of 48 newspapers and magazines had been banned.

The demands of the social players for more freedom are becoming more strident. In a letter to President Rouhani, more than 100 scholars have asked for more academic freedom and more possibilities of conducting discussions for students at the universities. Also, many universities are demanding the annulment of forced retirements of professors during Ahmadinejad's term.

## **Turkey**

### **Troop deployment**

Last week, Turkey has reinforced its military presence including a tank contingent along its border with Syria near Yayladag and Kilis. During the last weeks, additional air defence systems had already been put

into place. Also, the Turkish government had agreed to join a possible future coalition for a military strike against the Syrian government.

## **Egypt**

### **Attack on interior minister**

On 05.09.13, a suicide attack on interior minister Ibrahim in the Nasr City district of Cairo killed 73 people, 13 more were injured. The minister himself remained unhurt. Apparently, the perpetrator was an extremist belonging to the Islamist militias on Sinai.

### **Military operation on Sinai**

On 08.09.13, the Egyptian army continued operations on Sinai, attacking suspected hideouts of Islamist militants. According to military reports, 9 extremists lost their lives, 15 suspects were arrested. A counter-attack launched by the rebels appears to have killed two soldiers.

### **Former foreign minister under Mubarak chairs Constitutional Committee**

In its first meeting, the members of the constitutional committee installed by interim President Adly Mansour (see BN of 02.07.13) elected former foreign minister Amr Mussa as its head with 30 out of 50 votes. The Muslim Brotherhood has rejected participation in the committee, as they continue to recognise ousted President Morsi to be the legitimate head of state.

### **Muslim Brotherhood fears loss of NGO status**

Some media have reported that the transitional government has decided to cancel the Muslim Brotherhood's NGO status. The stated reason is that the organisation used its headquarters to store weapons and explosives. It was only in March 2013 that the Brotherhood registered as NGO under the then government led by its political wing, Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). At the time, the Brotherhood's opponents had questioned the legality of this move. There appear to be no plans for a ban of the FJP.

## **Russian Federation**

### **Moscow mayoral election**

Incumbent mayor Sergei Sobyanin has won the Moscow mayoral election. According to the official preliminary results, the 55-year old companion of Russian President Vladimir Putin secured 51.4 percent of votes. The 37-year-old Kremlin critic and leading opposition figure Alexei Navalny performed astonishingly well, gaining 27.2 percent of the votes, which was nearly twice as much as forecasts had estimated. Navalny himself has refused to recognise the results and demands a second-round runoff. Independent observers deplored irregularities, e.g. that army members were forced to cast their vote. Also, several cameras installed to document possible electoral fraud apparently did not work. However, there were no indications of massive electoral manipulations.

### **North Caucasus: Assassination in Ingushetia**

On 27.08.13, the head of the Ingush Security Council, Akhmed Kotiyev was assassinated in a car attack by unknown gunmen who opened fire on his vehicle when he was on his way to work. Also his driver was killed in the incident.

Kotiyev had headed a commission tasked to foster the reintegration of extremists, which had prompted 60 people, among them 50 former active fighters, to voluntarily surrender, the Ingush government stated on its website. These people had received legal and psychological support as well as job-search assistance.

The leader of Russia's republic of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, is considered to be one of the few honest and prudent leaders in the North Caucasian region. He is actively seeking the observance of human rights in his territory and endeavours to strike a balance with extremist groups.

## **Somalia**

### **Bomb attack in Mogadishu claims 18 lives**

On 07.09.2013, two bomb explosions at a popular restaurant near the parliament building frequented by journalists and politicians killed at least 18 people and injured another 20. The al-Shabaab militia has claimed responsibility for the attack.

### **Attack on Presidential convoy**

On 02.09.13, the convoy of Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades near the port city Merka, the militant al-Shabaab group reported. Somali state radio reported that the President and those accompanying him remained unhurt.

### **Campaign to send 1 million children to school**

The Somali authorities have launched a three-year campaign named 'Go 2 School' aimed at getting one million children to school, i.e. a quarter of the young people currently excluded from the educational system. An estimated \$117 million will be invested for the construction and renovation of schools, teacher recruitment and training and special programmes for pastoralist communities.

## **Nigeria**

### **50 Islamists killed by military**

On 07.09.13, the Nigerian army killed around 50 Boko Haram Islamists during a raid. A military spokesman said that the troops pursued the rebels to their camp in the northeastern part of the country where the fights then took place. No information was provided on the number of civilian casualties.

## **Kenya**

### **Withdrawal from the International Criminal Court**

On 05.09.13, the Kenyan parliament held a special session and voted in favour of a motion calling for Kenya to terminate the Rome Statute which established the International Criminal Court (ICC). Now, the government has 30 days to submit a bill to parliament; final approval of the bill is almost certain. Kenya will be the first state to withdraw from the ICC. Legal experts estimate that the withdrawal procedure will take at least one year.

The main reason for the endeavour to terminate the Rome Statute are proceedings pending before the ICC against the two highest-ranking politicians of the country, Deputy President William Ruto and President Uhuru Kenyatta. They are charged with crimes in connection with the presidential elections held in 2007. At the time, more than 1,000 people had been killed and hundreds of thousands more displaced. The proceedings against Deputy President Ruto are scheduled to begin on 10.09.13, those against President Kenyatta on 12.11.13. An ICC spokesperson said that Kenya's withdrawal from the Rome Statute will be of no influence on the proceedings which have already been formally opened.

## **India**

### **Violence between Hindus and Muslims leaves 19 dead**

On 08.09.13, a violent clash between Muslims and Hindus in northern Muzaffarnagar district claimed the lives of at least 28 people and injured more than 40, official reports said. Hundreds of soldiers have been deployed to the area located in Uttar Pradesh State; also, curfews were imposed. More than 50 people were arrested. In Uttar Pradesh, where Muslims are a small minority community, tensions between different religions groups are not unusual.

Predominantly Hindi India has recently seen growing violence between different religious groups. In the first eight months of 2013 alone, 451 incidents were registered, compared to a total of 410 incidents throughout the year 2012.