

## Information Centre Asylum and Migration

# Briefing Notes

13 May 2013

## **Afghanistan**

### **Internal refugees**

According to the UNHCR 535,936 internal refugees were registered at the end of April 2013. Most internal refugees come from Badghis province in western Afghanistan (69,614) and from Helmand province in southern Afghanistan (64,605). Furthermore a substantial number of people left their homes due to conflict-related events in the provinces of Ghor, Kandahar, Herat, Kunar, Faryab, Ghazni, Nangarhar, and Kapisa. Many refugees tried to find shelter within their home provinces. The western province of Herat is housing most refugees (106,685). As reasons for leaving their homes the refugees most frequently cite armed confrontations and a general deterioration of security. About 10% mentioned intimidation and threats by anti-government forces.

### **Voluntary returnees**

The UNHCR informed that in the first four months of 2013 a total of 10,710 Afghan nationals returned voluntarily from abroad, mostly from Pakistan (7,880) and Iran (2,800). Most of them said that they returned for economic reasons.

### **Deportations from Pakistan and Iran**

According to UNHCR information 3,255 persons were deported from Pakistan during the first four months of 2013 and 49,708 from Iran during the first three months. 98% of the deportees from Iran were single young men who had entered illegally looking for work.

### **Iranian border post kills illegal immigrants**

The Afghan Ministry of the Interior informed that Iranian border guards had killed ten and injured 20 Afghan migrants on 12 May 2013, when a group of about 200 Afghans attempted to cross the border.

### **Fatalities during protests against Pakistan**

On 8 May 2013 six persons were killed during a protest in the southern province of Kandahar. The protests were directed against alleged border violations by the Pakistani military. Further protests were held in Kabul and in Khost in eastern Afghanistan.

### **Higher opium production in 2012**

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) informed that the growing area for opium expanded by 18% from 2011 to 2012. Poppies are mainly grown in the country's south and west.

## **Pakistan**

### **Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz wins elections in Pakistan**

The former opposition party Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led by Nawaz Sharif, previous two-time Prime Minister, wins the elections to the National Assembly in Pakistan. According to the press the PML-N has a safe majority of up to 172 of the total of 342 seats. It will at any rate be able to form a coalition government. The previously governing Pakistan People's Party suffered significant losses, including in

its heartland of Sindh. The hitherto strongest party will fall back to third place according to the preliminary election results. The newcomer to the political arena, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), under the leadership of the former cricket star Imran Khan came in as the second strongest party. It is said that the participation in the elections was strong, but no reliable figures are available as yet. 86,162,639 voters registered for the elections, a significant number of them voting for the first time.

According to the constitution the National Assembly must be called within 21 days after the elections, however, the PML-N is working towards a faster process. The Election Commission must announce the official results no later than 14 days after the elections.

By-elections will have to be held in several constituencies, because voting was not possible for security reasons on election day, but the Election Commission stated that this will not significantly affect the overall results. The same is true for the constituencies and polling stations in which irregularities were found.

Elections to the provincial assemblies were held at the same time and their results show the same tendencies. The PTI surprisingly took the lead in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, leaving the incumbent Awami National Party (ANP), one of the PPP's coalition partners in the previous government at the provincial and national level, in a losing position. The PTI announced that it will form the opposition at national level and voiced its disappointment at its results in its home region of Punjab.

The violence on election day claimed 38 lives and 150 people were wounded nationwide. Most of the fatalities occurred in the provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh, mostly in Karachi. Trailing far behind are Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

In many places the Pakistani army provided security for the polling stations, because the Pakistani Taliban had announced suicide attacks.

### **Violence before the elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province**

On 10 May 2013 two bombs exploded in Miramshah (FATA-Agency of North Waziristan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province) near election offices of the parties Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam. Four people were killed and 21 were injured. The candidates were not injured.

On the same day about 1,000 families fled from the fighting between the security forces and the militants in the Parachamkani area in the FATA Agency Kurram. Three soldiers and nine militants died in the fighting. Also on 10 May 2013 several bombs detonated in the village MCB Chowk, Yar Hussain Bazar in PATA Agency Swabi (KPK) near a polling station and three campaign offices of the Awami National Party. Two party members were killed and three bystanders wounded.

On 09 May 2013 a bomb exploded near the buses that were to take campaigners and a candidate named Maulvi Jamaluddin Mehsud from Mirali to Tank district (FATA Agency South Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, KPK). One of the campaigners was killed and six others wounded.

After a campaign event of the Awami National Party on 08 May 2013 three party members suffered bullet wounds from an unknown sniper in the area of the Durmai Mountains.

In Amankot in the FATA Agency Bajaur two ANP members were killed and one was wounded when a bomb exploded in front of a polling station. Allegedly the bomb was aimed at the ANP candidate of the constituency, Gul Afzal Khan. On 08 May 2013 a car bomb exploded in front of the Domail police station in Bannu, the administrative centre of PATA Agency Bannu (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province = KPK). Three people were killed, including one policeman and 27 were wounded. It is said that it was a suicide bombing.

Several attacks occurred on 07 May 2013. Among them was a suicide bombing at a campaign event of the Islamist party Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-i-Fazl (JUI-F) in Hangu near Kohat (PATA area, KPK) that killed eight and injured thirty-three people. A spokesman of the Pakistani Taliban in Hangu claimed responsibility for the attack, however, this was later denied by the spokesman of the supreme leadership of the Pakistani Taliban.

Five people were killed and sixteen wounded on the same day when a roadside bomb exploded as a campaign convoy of the Pakistan People's Party passed by in the sub-district of Maidan (Lower Dir, PATA Agency, KPK). The Pakistani Taliban confessed to be the perpetrators and announced that their attacks would now also be directed against the Islamist parties, because these were not seriously striving to establish an Islamist state in Pakistan. Two members of a small party including a candidate for the upcoming elections were killed in Baja Town (PATA Agency Swabi, KPK) and three people were injured by unknown killers. In the same place a motorcade of the chairman of the Awami Jamhoori Ittehad Pakistan party called Shahram Khan Tarakai came under fire and one person was shot, three were wounded.

A suicide bomber on a motorcycle exploded a bomb when the convoy of a JUI-F candidate called Mufti Janan Khan, who is considered to be pro-Taliban, passed by. Khan and two of his body guards were injured. On 6 May 2013 a bomb exploded during a campaign event of the Islamist Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-i-Fazl (JUI-F) party in the FATA Agency Kurram in the Sewak area about 14 km south of the administrative centre of Parachinar. 26 people died in the incident and 75 were wounded. Two National Assembly candidates of the JUI-F called Munir Khan Orakzai and Awin Din Shakir remained unscathed. Orakzai said that the Taliban could not be behind the attack, because he had no problems with them. The Pakistani Taliban, however, announced that the attack had been aimed against the politician Orakzai, because he had worked in the country's government for five years, the JUI-F party had not been the target.

#### **Pre-election violence in Sindh province**

Two activists of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) were shot by motorcyclists and three activists were injured on 07 May 2013 in front of the party office in Juma Himayati Goth, Korangi (Karachi).

#### **Pre-election violence in Punjab province**

On 09 May 2013 Ali Haider Gilani, son of former prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, was kidnapped on Matti Tal Road in Farrukh Town (Multan, Punjab province) by about 11 armed men, two of his guards were shot dead and another one wounded. The kidnapped politician is a candidate for the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the upcoming elections. His brother Ali Musa Gilani demanded his release on the same day otherwise no elections would take place in this area, the kidnapping victim's father contradicted this saying that the elections should by no means be delayed. There was no sign of life of the victim until 13 May 2013.

On 05 May 2013 three family members of a candidate of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party, that is chaired by Imran Khan, were shot by members of the Pakistan Muslim League-N over campaign arguments. This happened in the village Chak Jhumra near Faisalabad (Punjab province).

#### **Pre-election violence in Baluchistan province**

On 12 May 2013 the supreme police commander of Baluchistan, Mushtaq Sukhera, escaped a suicide attack that killed five and injured 68 people, among them 27 policemen. The residence of the police commander in Quetta was destroyed by the bomb that was estimated to consist of 2,000 kg of explosives.

On 09 May 2013 two candidates of the Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) were attacked when campaigning in Turbat und Dera Murad Jamali. In the first incident two members of the security forces died and five people were injured. The banned separatist Baloch Liberation Front claimed responsibility for the first incident. In the second incident a passer-by was killed who was not attending the rally. In both cases the politicians remained unharmed.

### **Iraq**

#### **Security situation**

In several bomb explosions in Baghdad at least ten people were killed and over 30 wounded on 06 May 2013. 17 people died in several attacks that occurred on 07 May 2013 including in Baghdad and the provinces Ninive, Salahaddin, Anbar, and Diyala. In the explosion of two car bombs in Kirkuk one person died and 51 others were wounded on 08 May 2013. At least 14 people were killed and about 14 wounded in attacks on 09 May 2013. 13 people died on 10 May 2013, particularly affected were Baghdad and the provinces of Babil, Salahaddin, and Ninive. A total of 30 people died and 50 were wounded in several attacks on 11 May 2013 including in Baghdad and the provinces Ninive and Salahaddin. 13 people died and seven were wounded in several attacks on 12 May 2013 including in Baghdad and Mosul (Ninive province).

#### **Execution of the death penalty**

On 10 May 2013 three men sentenced to death for acts of terrorism were executed.

### **Turkey**

#### **PKK retires to Northern Iraq**

The pro-Kurdish news agency "Firat" reports that on 08 May 2013 the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) started the withdrawal of its fighters from Turkey to the camps in Northern Iraq as agreed. The PKK shall not be

disarmed, however, until there is an overall agreement with the Turkish government. The withdrawal of all of the approximately 2,000 combatants shall take three to four months.

## **Syria/Turkey**

### **Turkey blames Syria for attacks**

Two car bombs exploded in the Turkish border town of Reyhanli on 11 May 2013, killing at least 46 people and wounding about 100. In recent years several thousand, mostly Sunni, civil war refugees settled in the area that is mainly populated by Alevite who are sympathetic to the Assad regime. Already three months ago another bombing that killed 17 had occurred in Reyhanli. At the time Turkey held the Syrian secret service responsible for the attack and this time, as well, Turkey sees Syria as the originator of the attacks. Syria rejected the accusations. Nine suspects of Turkish nationality were arrested, reportedly they confessed to have ties to "organisations that are supported by the Syrian regime and secret service".

## **Syria**

### **UN observers released**

The four Filipino UN soldiers belonging to the UN Observer Force of the Golan Heights (UNDOF) who had been kidnapped on 07 May 2013 by the rebels of the group „Martyrs of Yarmouk“ were released on 12 May 2013. A total of 1,000 soldiers have been deployed there by the UN to secure peace between Syria and Israel. The rebel group had announced that the four soldiers had been taken into custody for their own safety. In March they had already held 21 members of the UN force for three days.

### **Activists assume that over 80,000 people have died in the conflict in Syria**

The Syrian Human Rights Observatory reported on 12 May 2013 that by now the conflict in Syria has claimed over 80,000 lives, the United Nations had so far estimated over 70,000 fatalities.

### **Turkey is considering potentially granting nationality to Syrian Christians**

According to a Radio Vatikan news report of 08 May 2013 the Chairman of the Federation of Syrian Associations in Turkey, Evgil Türker, spoke of a potential 'plan' of the Turkish government to grant Turkish citizenship to Syrian Christians of the Patriarch of Antioch, if they are or were related to Turkish citizens and have come into a crisis situation because of the conflict. In Türker's view many Christians could find a new home in Turkey.

## **Israel/West Bank**

### **Construction of 300 new housing units on the West Bank/Still no freeze of housing construction**

The Israeli army announced that the military administration approved the construction of almost 300 new housing units in the occupied West Bank. An army spokesman said on 09 May 2013 that the 296 housing units were to be built in the settlement Beit El near Ramallah. This announcement comes only a few days after reports on orders by Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stop the controversial housing construction. Media and non-governmental organisations report that Netanyahu intended to show consideration for the efforts of the US administration to resume peace talks with the Palestinians by deciding to block all tenders for construction contracts related to those houses. The approval that has now been granted is related to an agreement with Jewish settlers who had settled there without Israeli government approval last June. The settlers had agreed to leave their houses without offering resistance, if 300 new housing units would be built in compensation.

### **Israeli civil rights activists criticize the impoverishment of East Jerusalem**

According to data of Israeli human rights activists eight of ten Palestinians in East Jerusalem are living below the poverty line. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) criticized in a social report published on 07 May 2013 that this is the "worst poverty rate ever". The non-governmental agency published the study on the day prior to Jerusalem Day on which Israel commemorates the "reunification" of the city when it was

conquered during the Six-Day War in 1967. The subsequent annexation of the city's eastern part has never been recognized under international law. According to UN statistics all of Jerusalem has a total population of about 800,000, of which 293,000 are Palestinians. The ACRI report is particularly critical of the consequences of the security barriers that are separating Eastern Jerusalem from the West Bank. Especially hospitals and schools were affected by the fences and walls, it says. Furthermore the infrastructure in Eastern Jerusalem is drastically neglected. For instance "50 km of sewer pipes are missing, therefore many residential areas must use absorbing wells that always pose a health risk when there is a flooding."

## **Iran/Syria / Israel**

### **After Israeli air raids on Syria: Iran is looking for volunteers to fight Israel**

To continue to support the Assad regime Iran is responding to the Israeli air raids on Syria and seems intent on strengthening its involvement in Syria. A Syria campaign was propagated on several Iranian websites. Volunteers shall contact a mobile phone number to register for going to war in Syria. The public appeal was launched at a website that is close to the revolutionary leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The war in Syria is no Sunni-Shiite conflict, but a battle between the "opponents and the supporters of the Zionists", the appeal says. Syria has become a hotly contested front in the Israeli-Iranian shadow war. Previously a high-ranking Israeli defence official had stated that the attack had actually not been directed against Syria, but against Iran and its ally, the Lebanese Hezbollah. The Iranian appeal to fight for Syria also shows the Hezbollah logo. The Hezbollah fighters have been active in Syria for a long time already and recently stepped up their presence.

### **Rafsanjani will stand for election**

Just before the registration term expired former president Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani surprisingly registered as a candidate for the presidential elections. Rafsanjani is one of the architects of the Islamic Republic and was president from 1989 to 1997. He will probably unite the votes of the reformer camp that has lost much of its influence since 2009. In the last four years Rafsanjani had virtually become the leader of the opposition, mainly because of his harsh criticism of the policies of out-going president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who may not stand for election again after serving for two consecutive terms.

## **Russian Federation/Northern Caucasus**

### **Review of the development in Chechnya during the years of war**

The two wars in Chechnya represent the worst acts of violence on former Soviet territory. In Russia's view the first war from 1994-1996 was directed against militant separatists. This Chechen secession was mainly based on nationalist motives, not on religious ones. But already during the first war Mujahedin from Arab countries participated and proclaimed their Islamic solidarity with the separatist movement. After the ceasefire and a short period of chaos with de facto independence of Chechnya, an ideological transformation was initiated in the armed underground movement that went as far as seeking religious Jihad in Northern Caucasus. The then incoming Russian president Putin declared the second war from end of 1999 to the beginning of 2000 to be a war against international Islamist terrorism. The last Chechen underground president Doku Umarov completed the ideological change and the geographical extension in 2007 by proclaiming a Caucasus Emirate to extend far beyond Chechnya.<sup>1</sup>

### **The political situation in Chechnya under Ramzan Kadyrov**

The main reason for leaving the Russian Federation is the tense situation in the crisis region of Northern Caucasus where violations of human rights are still common. Almost every day there are fighting and attacks. In addition, the Russian security forces are pursuing all wanted persons persistently and relentlessly. In recent years the main conflict area has shifted from Chechnya to the neighbouring republics Dagestan and Ingushetia, therefore Chechnya is not perceived as the epicentre of violence and insurgency in the region anymore. The flight from the country is probably to a great extent due to the precarious economic and social

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<sup>1</sup> see paper by Uwe Halbach for the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Science and Policy Foundation) of 26 April 2013.

situation in Northern Caucasus that is considered by far the poorest Russian region, despite considerable subsidies from Moscow.

Under the leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov a "deadly silence" has spread over Chechnya in recent years. Although there are some attacks every now and then, security has become relatively robust compared to the "years of war" 1994 to 1996 and 1999 to about 2003. Former Russian president Medvedev had officially declared the end of the counter-terrorism war in Chechnya on 16 April 2009, thus terminating the special status of the republic as a zone of counter-terrorism that had been imposed almost ten years before.

Thus Ramzan Kadyrov effectively succeeded over the years in achieving a more far-reaching de facto separation of Chechnya from Russian supremacy than the militant separatists could have ever achieved. While regularly pathetically ensuring the Kremlin of his loyalty the tyrant is in reality following his own agenda. This includes a strange cultural policy aimed at stealing the thunder from his Islamist underground opponents. While in other parts of the Russian Federation and the CIS area veiling is banned, Kadyrov dictates Islamist clothing for women in public under the motto "return to traditional values". In reality, such measures correspond rather to the strict Salafist moral customs of the opponents than to Caucasian or Chechen traditions with which he intends to counter the ideological positions of these opponents.<sup>2</sup>

### **Number attacks and general situation in Northern Caucasus**

Regarding the number of registered acts of violence Chechnya has meanwhile been overtaken by other Caucasian republics. There were 700 fatalities from fighting in Northern Caucasus in 2012, more than half of these in Dagestan, the largest Caucasian Russian republic. Almost 300 crimes related to terrorism were noted there, while the remainder of Northern Caucasus only accounted for 180. After violence in Chechnya has gradually subsided, the whole of Northern Caucasus is now considered as the area in Europe's eastern neighbourhood in which the most serious conflict is raging.

Most of the attacks are aimed at local and federal security forces and against the official representatives of non-violent Islam. As regards Russia, Doku Umarov, the ideological head of the Caucasus Emirate, has called upon his fighters to abstain from violence against civilians in February last year. However, it is expected that the Caucasus Emirate or other Jihad networks will commit acts of terrorism in connection with the Winter Olympics in Sotshi in February next year.<sup>3</sup>

### **Russian Federation**

Russian special forces arrested about 140 suspects in a large-scale raid against alleged Islamist extremists at the end of April 2013. According to a report of the agency Interfax the national secret service FSB informed that among these suspects are at least 30 foreigners who are probably staying illegally in Russia. The suspects are being interrogated. The report goes on to say that there are indications that the men were involved "terrorist attacks" in the Northern Caucasus conflict area or that they had prepared such attacks. Shortly before this raid a total of 700 alleged Islamists had been temporarily arrested in two police operations in St. Petersburg.

### **Libya**

#### **Political Isolation Law adopted on 05 May 2013**

The General National Congress of Libya adopted the Political Isolation Law on 05 May 2013. The law permits to exclude anybody from public office who held a position under the Gaddafi regime from 1969 to 2011, the date of reference is 17 February 2011. It also covers persons who showed a hostile attitude towards the revolution. The following fields are listed: public service, diplomatic service, military, banks, university, judiciary, and oil industry. Already prior to the law's adoption Human Rights Watch had criticized it because of the blurry definition of terms and the far-reaching consequences it will have. The NGO had urged the General National Congress to reject the law.

Also the current government could be affected by the law. During the period in question prime minister Ali Zidan and the president of the General National Congress Mohamed Magharief had held diplomatic posts for

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<sup>2</sup> see further details on the recent developments in Chechnya in an article in the next Entscheiderbrief (newsletter for decision-making officers).

<sup>3</sup> see paper by Uwe Halbach for the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Science and Policy Foundation) of 26 April 2013.

the regime, although they turned against it while it was still in power and joined the opposition already in 1980. Thus it is not yet clear, whether the rule will also apply to them - as diplomats are also included -, although Zidan and Magharief supported the revolution. Several militias have already demanded the removal from office of prime minister Zidan. Prime minister Zidan informed that the cabinet would need to be changed as a consequence of the law. And many ministries would be affected in the same way.

According to a report from 12 May 2013, the siege of the ministries of justice and of external affairs have been lifted and the militias withdrew.

The latest information was that after the adoption of the Political Isolation Law most of the 1,500 militia men withdrew and only 200 remained.

There also was a statement by other militias from various parts of the country that condemned the actions of the militias besieging the ministries, demanding their withdrawal and declaring their solidarity with the government and the General National Congress.

### **Tripoli: 56 buildings cleared of irregular militias**

56 public buildings were cleared of irregular militias from Tripoli, Zintan, Gharyan, and Kikla. They had been given an ultimatum to leave the buildings and then cleared out without offering any resistance when the Joint Security Force (JSF) arrived. The JSF commander informed that another 15 buildings could be cleared, but that the Ministry of the Interior had not yet given instructions to do so. These buildings are occupied by militias from Misrata.

### **Background information**

The Misrata militia has emerged from the revolution as one of the strongest militias and had subsequently acted on government instructions several times, however, there are no indications that it is acting on behalf of the government in Tripoli. Already the previous government had instructed the non-local militias to leave Tripoli, but only some of them followed suit. The population of Tripoli often blames the bad security situation in the city on the presence of irregular militias. There have been several protests against them demanding their disarmament and withdrawal.

### **Benghazi**

Another member of the security forces was shot near his house in the neighbourhood of Sabri by unknown assassins on 06 May 2013. The victim was naval lieutenant Fadil al-Kikli, a former revolutionary with no or only minimal contacts to the former regime.

### **Darna**

A former member of the security service under Gaddafi was shot by unknown assassins in Darna (eastern Libya) on 10 May 2013.

### **Protests in several cities against militias**

On 10 May 2013 protests against the lawless behaviour of the militias took place in several Libyan cities. The reports mention the cities of Tripoli, Benghazi, and Tobruk. In Benghazi militia members used violence against the protesters. They tried to disperse the crowd by beating people and also violently abducted some young men to unknown places.

## **Somalia**

### **International conference in London**

On 07 May 2013 an international conference was held in London for the reconstruction of Somalia that was attended by representatives of over 50 states. In their final resolution the participants noted that progress had been made regarding security, democracy, and development. The EU committed €44m for the reconstruction of the judiciary and the police.

## **Ethiopia**

### **Christian groups demand death penalty for homosexuals**

A number of Christian groups in Ethiopia demanded the introduction of the death penalty for homosexuals from the government. The demand is especially voiced by evangelical groups such as „United for Life Ethiopia“. The demand for the death penalty was raised after the police had informed a religious meeting in Addis Ababa last week that homosexuals and their relatives had sexually abused 117 young boys last year.

## **Democratic Republic of Congo**

### **UN report confirms war crimes**

According to a report of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) published on 08 May 2013, human rights were gravely violated at the time the city of Goma was occupied by the M23 rebels and the government army FARDC fled the city in the period from 15 November to 02 December 2012. The report accuses both sides of killings, arbitrary executions, mass rapes and looting. In particular the FARDC soldiers had acted systematically and extremely brutally, mostly when withdrawing from the front and regrouping near the city of Minova (south Kivu). At least 102 women and girls had become victims of sexual violence. The report goes on to accuse the members of M23 of at least 59 cases of sexual violence, including 58 rapes in and around Goma. At least eleven civilians had been arbitrarily executed.

## **Nigeria**

### **Ombatse sect kills dozens of policemen**

According to different sources members of the Ombatse sect killed up to 50 policemen, or even more, in the village of Elakyo near Lafia, the capital of Nasarawa state. The policemen had attempted to arrest the Ombatse leader, after the sect had allegedly tried to recruit members in the village. This sect of the ethnicity of the Eggon whose name means „The time has come" is forcefully recruiting members among Christians and Muslims. According to their own statements they are fighting against vices such as alcohol consumption and adultery.

### **Dozens die in Islamist assault**

On 07 May 2013 about 200 heavily armed Boko Haram fighters attacked the village of Bama in Borno state in the northeast of Nigeria. During the assault at least 55 people died, including policemen, prison wardens, and four civilians. A military spokesman said that the armed men directly targeted military barracks and police stations and set fire to them. They also stormed a prison and freed 105 inmates. Bama has been attacked by Boko Haram several times already.

## **India**

### **German government pleads for clemency for Indian death candidate**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Federal President Joachim Gauck, and Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle urged India to commute the death sentence for Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar to life imprisonment. The Indian authorities charged him with the involvement in two terrorist attacks in India in 1991 and 1993. Bhullar was sentenced to death for the second attack that killed nine people and injured 17. On his flight to Canada Bhullar had been arrested at Frankfurt Airport with a forged passport in 1994 and had subsequently been deported to India, where he was arrested upon his arrival. After no death sentences had been executed in India for many years, two executions have been performed in recent months.