

Group 22 – Information Centre Asylum and Migration

Briefing Notes

3 April 2017

Summarised edition due to reprioritisation of tasks

Egypt

Attack in Tanta

On 31 March 2017, an explosive device hidden in a motorbike was detonated in the centre of Tanta city in Egypt's Nile Delta. Apparently, one civil servant and 15 more people (12 policemen and three civilians) were wounded. A newly emerged group called 'the Revolution Brigade' is said to have claimed responsibility for the attack.

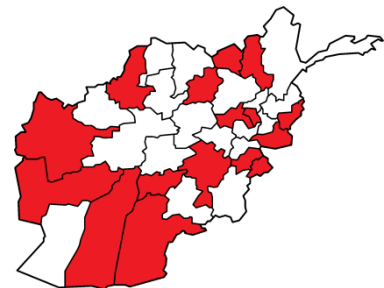
Islamist leader killed

Already on 18 March, Jihadist leader Salem Salma, also known as Abu Anas al-Ansari, was apparently killed together with 18 other terrorists in an attack launched on the Sinai peninsula by the Egyptian air force.

Afghanistan

Armed clashes

Fights are continuing, with cleansing campaigns and raids carried out by the security forces as well as attacks and assaults by the insurgents, in which civilians are being killed or wounded. According to press reports, the following provinces were affected last week: Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan (south), Kunar (which was hit by more than 70 rockets fired from Pakistan within 24 hours), Nangarhar (east), Ghazni, Paktia (southeast), Takhar, Kunduz (northeast), Herat, Farah (west), Kapisa (central), Faryab and Samangan (north).



Attacks and assaults

On 1 April 2017, a member of the provincial council in central Kapisa province was killed in a bomb attack. In central Parwan province, several people lost their lives in violent land disputes.

On 2 April, three Afghan soldiers and six pupils were killed in a car bomb attack in southeastern Khost.

Convictions and dismissals in corruption cases

On 27 March 2017, the chairman of the provincial council in western Herat was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for corruption. The ministry of defence said that during the last six months, a total of nearly 1,400 civil servants were dismissed from their jobs due to charges of corruption.

Distribution of electronic ID cards announced

The General Director of the 'Electronic National Identity Cards Distribution Department' has announced the distribution of electronic identity cards ('E-Tazkira') to start by mid-April in Kabul. After an initial six-months test phase, the electronic ID cards are scheduled to be distributed in all provinces.

Return programme for Afghan refugees from Pakistan

According to press reports, UNHCR resumed the voluntary repatriation programme of Afghan refugees from Pakistan on 1 April 2017. The cash grant was reduced from \$400 to \$200 per person. No support is given to

unregistered Afghan nationals. Both UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) expect that approx. 750,000 up to one million Afghan refugees will return from Pakistan in the year 2017. In the previous year, more than 620,000 Afghans had left Pakistan.

Iraq

High-rank ISIS members killed

On 1 April 2017, the Iraqi secret service informed that Ayad al-Jumaili, believed to be ISIS' second-in-command and war minister, was killed along with other members of the terror militia in an air raid in Anbar province.

In January, the Iraqi forces had started a major campaign in Anbar province in order to liberate several areas from ISIS control. Recently, the insurgents have suffered severe military defeats and have withdrawn from many areas.

According to information provided by the military coalition on 30 March 2017, an air raid in the western town of al-Qaim killed ISIS propaganda chief Ibrahim al-Ansari and several of his associates on 25 March. A US representative said that the airstrike also destroyed a multimedia operation team.

Attack in Baghdad

On 29 March 2017, a suicide bomber killed at least 17 people and wounded more than 60 during an attack in the south of Baghdad. Reports say that the perpetrator detonated his truck filled with explosives at a police checkpoint. In the past, ISIS generally claimed responsibility for similar attacks.

Battle for Mosul

On 27 March 2017, the Iraqi security forces stepped up their efforts to reclaim the old city of Mosul. They stated that due to the high numbers of civilian casualties, they had halted operations and revised their operational plans. Lieutenant General Raed Shakir Jawdat said that police and special units were advancing on the southwestern axis of the old city. One of the targets was Faruk Street near the Great Mosque of al-Nuri, he said. The mosque is of highly symbolic value to ISIS, since it was the place where, in July 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had proclaimed the new 'caliphate' in July 2014.

Syria

Tens of thousands displaced by fighting

The United Nations say that about 40,000 people, mostly women and children, were forced to leave their homes last week, when new fights erupted around the city of Hama. Many of them have sought refuge in surrounding districts and cities like Homs and Latakia. According to media reports, Syrian rebel troops have again advanced against government forces in the region, engaging in fierce battling in the suburbs of Hama. In the last months, the rebels had suffered significant losses when the Syrian army reclaimed vast areas with the support of Russian and Iranian air forces. With the new offensive, they are now trying to re-establish their power.

Turkey/Syria

Turkey ends military campaign in northern Syria

Following a meeting of the National Security Council, Prime Minister Yildirim declared on 29 March 2017 that the Turkish military has ended its military campaign in northern Syria (*Operation Euphrates Shield*) which had been launched in August 2016. The offensive was 'concluded successfully', he said. Together with allied Syrian rebels, the Turkish military had engaged in fighting against ISIS units and Kurdish militias, pushing them back from the Turkish border. Since then, the Turkish forces have succeeded in bringing under control an area of about 2,000 square kilometres, media reports say. However, it remains

unclear whether the Turkish forces will be withdrawn or redeployed in a different area. On 31 March 2017, the Turkish Army confirmed to continue activities in Syria for the protection of national security interests.

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Kurzausgabe