

## Group 22 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

# Briefing Notes

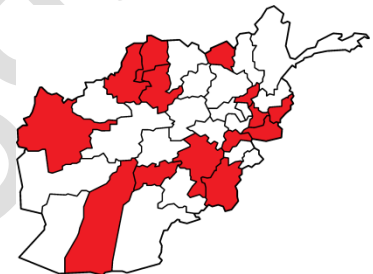
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Summarised edition owing to reprioritisation of tasks

## Afghanistan

### Armed conflicts

Armed conflicts, cleansing campaigns and raids by security forces continue unabated; the same applies to suicide bombings and attacks by rebels in which civilians are being killed or wounded. According to press reports, the following provinces were affected last week: Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman (eastern Afghanistan), Kunduz, Baghlan (north-eastern Afghanistan), Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgan, Helmand (southern Afghanistan), Ghazni, Paktia, Paktika, Khost (south-eastern Afghanistan), Balkh (northern Afghanistan), Kabul, Kapisa, Wardak (central Afghanistan), Badghis and Herat (western Afghanistan).



### Suicide bombings and attacks

According to a press release issued on 7 March 2017, four tribal elders have been held captive by members of the Taliban in Logar (central Afghanistan) for the past 40 days.

On 8 March 2017, at least 49 persons were killed and at least 63 were wounded in a bombing carried out by ISIS on a military hospital in Kabul.

On 9 March 2017, the Afghan police reported that the Taliban were controlling the Kunduz-Takhar Highway at night time as police do not have the necessary resources to guarantee safety.

According to a press release issued on 10 March 2017, the residents of Wormami, Terwa and Waza Khwa districts in Paktika province (south-eastern Afghanistan) fear they might run out of food since the Taliban are blocking the roads.

On 10 March 2017, ISIS militants destroyed at least two shrines and cemeteries in Jawzjan province (northern Afghanistan). In Bala Murghab district of Badghis province (western Afghanistan), five police officers defected to the Taliban with their weapons.

On 11 March 2017, ISIS militants beheaded three civilians who had been abducted in Nangarhar (Achin district, eastern Afghanistan). In Zabul (southern Afghanistan), eight police officers were shot dead by one of their colleagues in a so-called insider attack. On 12 March 2017, members of the Taliban killed a high-ranking financial officer in Farah (western Afghanistan).

### Another women stoned to death

On 8 March 2017, a woman was stoned to death in Badakhshan province (north-eastern Afghanistan, Warduj district) for allegedly committing adultery and her lover was whipped. The judgment was handed down by a Taliban court.

At least five women have been stoned to death in the province over the past two years for committing a number of different offences.

## **Iraq**

### **Ongoing battle for Mosul**

Iraqi troops reported on 12 March 2017 that around one-third of the western part of Mosul had been recaptured by ISIS, including the main railway station. An elite unit of the army had managed to seize the most important government buildings in the early hours of 7 March 2017. The difficult battle for the Old City of Mosul is about to take place.

### **Mass grave near Mosul**

According to a statement issued by Shia militia of the Haschd al-Schaabi (People's Mobilization Forces (PMF)) on 11 March 2017, a mass grave was discovered containing around 500 corpses north-west of Mosul dating back to the Badush prison massacre perpetrated by Islamic State forces in June 2014. The majority of the persons killed were reportedly Shia, others were Yezidi and Kurds.

### **Suicide bombing at wedding**

At least 30 persons were killed in a suicide bombing carried out at a wedding in the village of Hajaj around 20 kilometres north of Tikrit on 9 March 2017 when several suicide bombers blew themselves up. 26 persons were reportedly wounded.

## **Syria**

### **Suicide bombings in Damascus**

A group that has close ties with al-Qaeda has claimed responsibility for a double suicide bombing in Damascus on 11 March 2017 in which 70 persons were killed and over 100 were wounded. The majority of persons killed in the suicide bombings close to Shia shrines in the old part of the city were Shia pilgrims from Iraq. These have been some of the deadliest attacks to be carried out in Damascus. Attacks in the capital tend to be rare as it is well protected by Assad's troops.

### **Supply route cut between ar-Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor**

Syrian militia claim to have encircled ISIS in ar-Raqqa. The last large city leading out of the city has been closed off according to a representative of a Kurdish militia on 6 March 2017. The city can now only be reached via the Eurphrates River. Ar-Raqqa is considered to be the capital of the caliphate declared by ISIS.

### **Airstrikes claim fatalities**

The pro-Opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that at least 30 civilians were reportedly killed in airstrikes on ISIS in the locations Al-Matab (east Raqqa) and Al-Mayadin (north of Deir ez-Zor).

## **Turkey**

### **UN: serious violations of human rights vis-a-vis militant Kurds**

The United Nations accused Turkey of systematic violations of human rights in the fighting against units of the Kurdistan workers party (PKK) in south-eastern Turkey. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights spoke on 10 March 2017 of massive destruction, killings and other grave human rights violations committed by Turkish security forces in the period between July 2015 and December 2016, also claiming that there were 355,000 to 500,000 internally displaced persons from the region. Around 2,000 persons were reportedly killed in operations by government forces, including 800 members of the security forces..

In the summer of 2015, a ceasefire that agreed in the region had been broken.

Kurzausgabe