

## Directorate 22 - Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

# Briefing Notes

13 April 2015

### **Afghanistan**

#### **Considerable increase in the number of civilian casualties in March**

According to the Afghan news station TOLONews, 108 civilians were killed in January, 84 in February and 158 in March. TOLONews reported that 715 security incidents took place in March, including attacks by insurgents, security force operations, bombings or kidnappings. Most events took place in the province of Helmand in southern Afghanistan (90), followed by Ghazni (south-east, 57), Herat (west, 47), Nangarhar (east, 46) and Kandahar (south, 43). 32 events were registered in Kabul.

#### **Security situation**

On 9 April 2015, at least eleven people were killed and 66 injured when the Taliban attacked a court building in Mazar-e Sharif (province of Balkh) in north Afghanistan.

On 10 April 2015, a suicide bomber attacked a NATO convoy in the Jalalabad, the capital of the province of Nangarhar in eastern Afghanistan, and killed at least four civilians. 13 were injured.

The bodies of five Afghan aid workers from the NGO Save the Children were found in the province of Uruzgan (southern Afghanistan) on 10 April 2015. They had been kidnapped 45 days before.

Other attacks and fighting took place in the provinces of Baghlan (north-east), Kunar, Laghman (east), Farah, Ghor (west), Faryab (north), Khost and Ghazni (south-east).

### **Pakistan**

#### **Security situation**

On 10 April 2015, separatists affiliated to the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF) attacked a construction workers' camp in the province of Balochistan (southern Pakistan) and killed 20 workers. They targeted those who did not come from Balochistan.

### **Iraq**

#### **IS release Yazidis**

Kurdish Peshmerga forces reported that IS released 216 members of the Yazidi religious community (mainly children and elderly) on 8 April 2015. They had been kidnapped in the Sinjar mountains in 2014. Many of the captives are reportedly in poor health and have probably been abused. They were brought to Erbil to receive medical treatment.

#### **Mass executions by IS**

Iraqi security forces reported that IS shot about 300 members of Sunni tribes in the province of al-Anbar in western Iraq last week. They were accused of having collaborated with the Iraqi security forces. According to the reports, the killings took place at al-Qaim, a town near the border to Syria. IS already killed about 200 members of the Al-Bu Nimr tribe in the region in 2014 for having fought on the side of the government.

#### **IS attacks biggest oil refinery**

On 11 April 2014, IS again tried to assault Iraq's biggest oil refinery in the city of Baiji. Two suicide bombers were killed by the security forces, one blew himself up. 20 jihadists are said to have been killed by air strikes. The refinery is still under the army's control. It used to produce 300,000 barrels of oil per day, i.e. half the country's demand. IS and the Iraqi army have been fighting for control over the refinery for months, and the army has had it under control since November 2014. Half a year ago, oil revenues were reported to be the most important revenue source for IS. A special report by the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) now says that the militia do not control any oil fields in Iraq any more and are finding it difficult to meet their own needs.

## **Turkey**

### **Clashes between army and PKK**

Despite PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's recent appeals to stop the armed struggle, the PKK and the Turkish army once again clashed near the village of Yukari Tutek (province of Agri) on 11 April 2015, where the PKK had organised a celebration to reforest the deforested region. Reportedly, more clashes took place later on, so helicopters, reconnaissance planes and a Turkish commando unit were sent into the area.

## **Syria**

### **Fights continue**

During the weekend, Syrian government troops and insurgents fought in the divided city of Aleppo, with at least 15 civilians killed by the fights on 11 April 2015 and at least nine others on 12 April 2015. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, military planes launched bombs on a school on 12 April 2015; five children were killed. The army denied the allegations and said that it had aimed only at military targets.

A rebel missile attack on a government building killed 17 people on 11 April; four others lost their lives in other clashes.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a rebel attack, probably by IS, on the military airport of Khalkhalah (in the south, near the road between Damascus and Suweida), claimed the lives of 20 soldiers and 15 insurgents on 11 April 2015. The area is mainly inhabited by Druze, who support President Assad in the civil war.

Fights in the Palestinian refugee camp Yarmouk in Damascus continued, too. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said the camp was beginning to resemble a "death camp".

## **Yemen**

### **Fights continue**

Saudi Arabia continued its air strikes against the Houthi rebels, particularly in Sanaa, the capital of the country. Saudi Arabia refused to consider Iran's calls for a ceasefire. The Shia Houthi rebels are advancing in the east of the country. There are still fights for Aden, a port in the south. According to the United Nations, at least 600 people were killed during the past 20 days.

## **Libya**

### **Attacks on South Korean and Moroccan embassies**

On 12 April 2015, gunmen fired shots from a passing car at the South Korean embassy in Tripoli. The government in Seoul claimed that two guards were killed and one injured.

In the night between 12 and 13 April 2015, a bomb exploded at the gates of the Moroccan embassy in Tripoli. The embassy was not open at that time, and there were no victims.

The Libyan branch of IS claimed responsibility for both attacks in social media. It has repeatedly attacked foreign embassies in Tripoli and Benghazi.

## **Egypt**

### **Death sentences against Muslim Brotherhood members confirmed**

A court confirmed the March 2015 death sentence on Mohammed Badie, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood (see BN of 2 March 2015), and death sentences against eleven other leaders of the organisation. The defendants were found guilty of having planned attacks against the state after President Mursi's removal from office. More than 20 defendants were sentenced to life in prison. The defendants may appeal to the Court of Cassation, which has already lifted numerous death sentences.

### **Numerous casualties on Sinai**

According to security force reports, eleven people, among them six children, died on 8 April 2015 when a missile hit a house near the village of Sheikh Zuweid at the border to the Gaza Strip. It is unclear where the missile came from.

On 12 April 2015, two attacks in the north of the peninsula killed at least twelve policemen and soldiers. In El-Arish, the provincial capital, a suicide attacker killed himself and five policemen by exploding a car bomb; 37 persons were injured. Seven soldiers and their car were blown up in a suburb of El-Arish.

The group "Wilayat Sinai" (Sinai Province) claimed responsibility for the attacks of 12 April 2015. This group used to be known as "Ansar Bait al-Makdis", a terrorist organisation which pledged allegiance to IS in 2014.

## **Gabon**

### **Violence after death of opposition leader**

After André Mba Obame's death in Cameroon on 12 April 2015, his supporters caused riots on the streets of Gabon's capital Libreville. They burned government cars and set fire to the embassy of Benin. Obame's party Union Nationale initially did not give a cause of death; some of his supporters suspected that the government had him killed. However, Obame had repeatedly spent time abroad for medical reasons in recent years.

## **Kenya**

### **Refugee camp Dadaab to be closed**

After the attack in Garissa on 2 April 2015, which killed about 150 people (see BN of 7 April 2015), Deputy President William Ruto announced on 11 April 2015 that the world's biggest refugee camp Dadaab was to be closed. He called on UNHCR to close the camp, which shelters at least 350,000 people, mainly from neighbouring Somalia, within three months and relocate the refugees to Somali territory. Otherwise, the Kenyan government would close the camp. In addition, 700 km along the border to Somalia were to be fortified. The government believes that the Somali organisation al-Shabaab uses the Dadaab camp as a base.

## **Nigeria**

### **Buhari's APC in the lead in governor elections**

On 11 April 2015, all 36 state parliaments and 29 state governors were newly elected. According to the results, the APC (All Progressives Congress, the party of Muhammadu Buhari, the newly elected President on 29 March 2015) won 19 state governorships. The PDP (People's Democratic Party) of former President Goodluck Jonathan won four governor posts.

## **DR of the Congo**

### **FDLR kill ten soldiers**

On 6 April 2015, fighters of the Rwandan Hutu rebel group FDLR (Front Démocratique pour la Libération du Rwanda) killed about ten soldiers in the region of Masisi in the province of North Kivu in north-eastern

Congo. This is the most serious attack by the rebels since the army started its offensive against FDLR at the end of January 2015. General Mushale claimed on 7 February 2015 that 237 FDLF rebels had been “neutralised” (13 of them killed) during this offensive.

## **Somalia**

### **Bounty on al-Shabaab leaders**

The Somalian government has promised an aggregate USD 1.3 million in rewards for the capture of eleven high-ranking al-Shabaab officials. The bounty on Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaida, the leader of the Islamist militia, alone amounts to USD 250,000.

## **China**

### **Self-incineration in Tibet**

On 8 April 2015, a Buddhist nun set herself on fire in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) in the province of Sichuan; it is unclear whether she died from her injuries. This was the 138th self-incineration of a Tibetan since 2009.

## **India**

### **Rebels kill police officers**

On 11 April 2015, Maoist rebels killed seven police officers and injured ten security officers, some of them seriously, in the district of Sukma in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh (about 380 km south of the district capital Raipur).

The authorities regard the Maoists as the biggest threat to domestic security. The insurgents have been active for more than three decades. They are against parliamentary democracy and claim that they are fighting for the rights of the poor and suppressed rural population; however, they are also responsible for many human rights transgressions. Their strongholds are in the poor regions of eastern and central India.