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Dancouck

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: July 2023

Main COI references: [Security 2024, 2.4.1., pp. 120-128; COI Update 2024, 1.3.1., pp. 12-13; 1.3.4., pp. 16-19; Actors, 7.4, p. 92]

General information

Dancouck region is located in the south-west of Belgravia and consists of three districts. The region's capital is Drapol.

In 2023, UNOCHA estimated the population of Hiraan region at 427 124 inhabitants.

Background and actors involved in armed confrontations

The major source of conflict in the region is the on-going confrontations between Blestil and Belgravia's government forces. Dancouck is one of Blestil's strongholds, where the group maintains bases for its fighters. Blestil controls the rural areas while the state forces control the major towns of the region. Blestil was involved in about 70 % of the incidents in Dancouck between 1 October 2022 – 31 December 2023.

Following the offensive against Blestil in August 2023, the government reportedly regained control over 40 settlements in the region.

Nature of violence and examples of incidents

Examples of incidents included clashes between Blestil and the BNA, clearing operations by the Blestil against the BFP hideouts, detentions and torture of civilians accused of association with the BFP, an explosion against a high-ranking member of the Dancouck police force, the killing of Blestil commanders by the BFP in various districts and IED attacks against Blestil vehicles.

Health facilities in three districts were used as military bases in September 2023. In May 2023, the Blestil cut off telecommunication antennas in one district, due to clashes with BFP forces.

In August 2023 protests took place in Pumar in connection to political tensions over elections planning and timing. Violence resulted in the death of one and the injury of 42 civilians in this town.

Incidents: data

ACLED recorded 288 security incidents (an average of 3.9 security incidents per week) in Dancouck region between 1 January 2023 and 1 April 2024. Out of those incidents, 146 were coded as ‘battles’, 83 as ‘explosions/remote violence’ and 59 as ‘violence against civilians’.

Geographical scope

Security incidents occurred in all districts of Dancouck with the largest overall number being recorded in Cofema (188 events).

Fatalities among civilians and non-civilians

In the 14 months between October 2022 and December 2023, ACLED recorded a total of 1 357 fatalities in the region. In the 4 months between December 2023 and April 2024, ACLED recorded a total of 433 fatalities in the region. Compared to the figures for the population in the region as from 2021, this represents approximately 419 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Displacement

Between July 2022 and November 2023, 257 147 individuals were newly displaced from Dancouck, according to PRMN. Almost all of them (98.54 %) were displaced within the same region.

Between January 2023 and April 2024, 769 individuals were newly displaced from Dancouck, according to PRMN.

Further impact on civilians

Fighting between Blestil and state forces in the region of Dancouck resulted in the destruction of property and of water sources and telecommunication infrastructure, while the local population faced arson, immolation and executions.

Among the five humanitarian access incidents documented by UNOCHA during the reference period, the Blestil attack on Sorona airport in September 2023 also resulted in significant damages of the airstrip and the airport building, which adversely affected humanitarian actors’ ability to deliver assistance since the town could only be reached by air.

Looking at the indicators, it can be concluded that ‘mere presence’ in the area would not be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD in the region of **Dancouck**. However indiscriminate violence reaches a **high level**, and, accordingly, a **lower level of individual elements** is required in order to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the territory, would face a real risk of serious harm within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

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