



**REPORT - JUNE 2021**

## **Historical Resistance Against Turkish Annihilation Campaign**

### **in Turkish Part of Kurdistan**

Since the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1920s, Turkey has been pursuing a broad and strategic denial and annihilation policy against the Kurdish population within its borders. This policy has been implemented with the help of all military, educational, judicial, economic and cultural institutions and means. The aim has always been to annihilate the Kurdish existence, to destroy any resistance against this policy and – if not successful – to assimilate the Kurds under the slogan 'One flag, one nation, one language, one state' and the motto 'Be proud to be a Turk'. There has also been resistance by the Kurds since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in Kocgiri (1925), Dersim (1937/38), Botan, Agiri, Diyarbakir and in many more Kurdish regions. Unfortunately, all of them were crushed by the Turkish military. In the 1970s, when the Turkish annihilation policy became even stricter towards the Kurds, the PKK was created under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan as a reaction to this policy. The foundation of the PKK was a necessary response to the nationalist, fascist and genocidal policy of the Turkish state. No matter which government took over power in Turkey, the policy towards the Kurds never changed. As a continuation of the many Kurdish uprisings and as a last appeal for the recognition of the fundamental democratic and national rights of the Kurdish population, the PKK's insurgency has gained the support of nearly 80% of the Kurdish population. The PKK's resistance has been continuing for the last 40 years.

The brutal methods the Turkish state used to destroy thousands of Kurdish villages and kill tens of thousands of Kurds are too extensive to be detailed in this report. Therefore, we will focus only on the resistance of the Kurdish guerrilla, population and political organizations in the last months. This report will show the intensity of the ongoing struggle for democracy which is unfortunately not being reported in the national and international media. This report can also be understood as a critique towards the the international media which has so far only reported on the official press releases issued by the Turkish state.



The HPG guerrilla continues to deal heavy blows to the Turkish army in South-East Turkey.



## 1. Guerrilla Actions Continue: Attacks and Military Operations Show Intensity of Conflict

While the focus of the military conflict between the HPG (People's Defense Forces) and the Turkish military has currently shifted to North Iraq (South Kurdistan), regular guerrilla attacks, military operations and clashes in South-East Turkey show clearly that guerrilla activity remains high. Since March 21, heavy clashes have taken place in the region and the Turkish army has continued its efforts to curb the resistance – without success. A short overview of the major events in the last months shows clearly that the Turkish army is facing a serious resistance not only in South Kurdistan but also in south-eastern Turkey:

- Guerrilla attacks: March 28, three Turkish soldiers killed in Gabar area; April 8, guerrilla air attack on Girê military station in Colemerg region (Çelê area); April 9, two Turkish soldiers killed in Serhat region (Glîdax area); April 23, guerrilla air attack on military station in Colemerg region (Çelê area); April 26, five Turkish soldiers killed and three more wounded in Serhat region (Glîdax area); April 30, attack with heavy weapons on Girê military station in Colemerg region (Çelê area); May 1, one Turkish soldier killed in sniper attack in Cudi region (Deriyê Wara area); May 3, guerrilla air attack on governor's building in Colemerg region (Çelê area); May 9, two Turkish soldiers killed and three more wounded in Dersim region (Hozat area); May 13, attack on Gürcübulak border gate in Serhat region; May 19 guerrilla air attack on military air base in city of Diyarbakir; May 20, guerrilla air attack on drone control center in city of Batman; May 20, guerrilla air attack on military station in Şırnak region from where attacks on South Kurdistan are being coordinated; May 24, five Turkish soldiers killed and one more wounded in Botan region (Kêla Memê and Deriyê Qaçê areas); June 1, 12 Turkish soldiers killed in Colemerg region (Gever area); June 1, eight Turkish soldiers killed in Bitlis region (Tatwan area); June 9, two Turkish soldiers killed in Colemerg region (Gever area); June 9, six Turkish soldiers killed in Sirt region (Besta area); June 10, two Turkish soldiers killed in Colemerg region (Gever area); June 11, one Turkish soldier killed in Şîrnex region close to Navyana Şêxan village

- Clashes between Turkish army and guerrilla: March 29 and 30 in Mardin region Bagok area; April 5 and 6 in Besta region (Mewîjkê area); April 14 in Amed region (Şehit Kendal area); April 29 in Amed region close to Kurtê village; May 24 in Cudi region (Navsera Cudi area); June 3 in Bitlis region (Tatwan area); June 7 in Cudi region (Navsera Cudi area)



Air attacks by the guerrilla have caused huge damage to Turkish air bases in Diyarbakir and Batman.

- Turkish army operations: April 3 in Muş region; April 14 in Amed region (Lice area); April 28 in Dersim region (Ovacık area); April 29 in Amed region (Lice area); May 6 in Ağrı, Iğdır, Kars and Ardahan; May 7 in Mardin region (Bagok area); May 9 in Dersim region (Hozat area); May 16 in Amed region (Kulp area); May 20 in Dersim region (Ovacık, Hozat and Çemişgezek areas); May 29 in Bitlis region (Hizan area); June 5 in Amed region (Lice area); June 2 in Bitlis region (Hizan area); June 6 in Amed region (Dicle area) and in Elazığ region (Aricak area); June 12 in center of Bitlis region

This list of guerrilla attacks and Turkish military operations since March 21 shows that a heavy war is continuing in the South-East of Turkey. Thus, it becomes clear that regular claims by Turkish government officials or state-controlled media outlets that the war against the PKK has shifted completely to South Kurdistan are not correct. Today, Turkey is waging an active, daily war against the Kurdish people and the Kurdish Freedom Movement in three parts of Kurdistan: Rojava, South Kurdistan and the South-East of Turkey.

## 2. Armed Resistance in the Cities: Increasing Pressure on Government Sympathizers

The increasing difficulty to participate in democratic protests has led to a growing number of groups operating in cities all over Turkey that carry out targeted attacks on government officials and sympathizers of the AKP and MHP. Although the Turkish government and its affiliated media outlets are very careful not to mention these politically motivated actions, the damage caused by them has very likely reached hundreds of millions of Dollars already. A list of the attacks carried out since March 21 gives an impression of the scale these attacks have reached:

destroyed factories: 38  
attacks on police: 18  
attacks on soldiers: 3  
destroyed work places, e.g. shops, depots: 66  
destroyed boats: 16  
attacks on MHP or AKP buildings: 3  
attacks on persons or places involved in selling drugs or prostitution: 9  
burned cars: 116  
burned trucks: 19  
attacks on AKP or MHP sympathizers: 16  
destroyed infrastructure, e.g. electricity, gas: 15

These developments show that small groups in urban settings are capable of causing significant economic damage and of carrying out targeted attacks all over Turkey against people they identify as active supporters of the government policy.



Armed groups in cities all over Turkey have been intensifying their attacks in recent months.



### 3. A Society on its Feet: Daily Protests Address Social Injustice

Daily protests in the Kurdish provinces of South-East Turkey continue to address the most pressing issues the population is currently facing. Despite the heavy state pressure on democratic activists – demonstration bans, arrests and threats are commonly used by state authorities – the last months have seen thousands of people participating in a variety of protests:

- As the total isolation of the Kurdish politician and people's leader Abdullah Öcalan continues, people in different cities of South-East Turkey have taken to the streets in the last months to voice their criticism and demand the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. In cities like Amed (Diyarbakir), Mardin and Îdilî sit-ins were repeatedly staged in public places despite a huge police presence. Members of the HDP (People's Democratic Party) and the TJA (Free Women's Movement) were among the many protesters who also showed their support for the ongoing hunger strikes in Turkish prisons that were started to achieve the release of Abdullah Öcalan from prison.

- Protests against the Turkish occupation of South Kurdistan have also taken place in the South-East of the country. On June 12, hundreds of people defied the police attacks and took part in a demonstration to the Habur border gate in Şırnak province. The demonstration was organized by several parties and civil organizations, including the HDP, DTK (Democratic Society Congress), TJA and DBP (Democratic Regions Party).

- As a response to the policy of assimilation and genocide that the Turkish state pursues against the Kurdish population of the country protests were organized in several major mostly-Kurdish populated cities. On June 3, hundreds of people gathered in front of the local HDP center to protest against the cultural assimilation caused by the state policy. Only a day later, hundreds of protesters met in front of the HDP building in the city of Van. On June 7, dozens of protesters in Amed demanded that education be given in Kurdish and Kurdish receive the status of an official language in Turkey.

- As the Turkish state continues its policy of deliberate ecological destruction on the South-East of the country, criticism and resistance against the devastating effects of this policy has been uninterrupted. On June 11, hundreds of people – including the HDP MP Saliha Aydeniz and the DTK co-Chair Berdan Öztürk – joined a demonstration on the Cudi mountain in Şırnak province where the Turkish army has repeatedly set forest fires.



Regular protests all over Turkey expose the failed government policy.

- For more than 100 days Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit Şenyaşar have been protesting daily in front of the court house of the province Urfa. What initially started as a protest demanding justice for the murder of Emine Şenyaşar's husband and two sons by a mob affiliated with AKP MPs, has been met with huge public solidarity ever since its start. Daily visits by representatives of political parties, workers unions, women's organizations and youth organizations have turned Emine Şenyaşar's sit-in for the arrest of her husband's murderers into a protest for social justice in Turkey.

- For over 200 days, thousands of mostly Kurdish political prisoners all over Turkey have been participating in a hunger strike demanding freedom for Abdullah Öcalan. The hunger strike started on November 27, 2020. Despite the refusal of the Turkish government to listen to the demands of the hunger strikers, they have pledged to continue their protest until their demands are met.

- The decision of the Turkish president Erdogan to leave the Istanbul Convention was met with protests all over the country, including the South-East. On March 27, TJA and HDP members met in front of the HDP center in the city of Batman to protest against Erdogan's decision. On March 28, women protested on the Dağkapı square in Amed and the Abidin Dino Park in Adana. On April 6, protests took place in front of the HDP center in Mardin. A demonstration with dozens of women was organized on April 10 in the city of Van demanding Turkey not leave the Istanbul Convention. On the same day a meeting with the same demands was held in Amed.

#### 4. Pressure in the Parliament: HDP MPs Continue to Expose Government Policy

Despite the enormous pressure on all democratic activities in the Turkish parliament, especially the members of the HDP parliamentary group have voiced their criticism of government policies repeatedly over the last months. Additionally, they continue to meet with civil organizations, talk to citizens and take part in protests thus showing their support for the legitimate demands of the people:

- The arrest of the HDP MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu on April 2 was also extensively reported on by the international media. Before his arrest, Gergerlioğlu had been known as an outspoken critic of the Turkish government's policy. As a reaction to the lifting of his immunity he and his party colleagues had staged a days-long protest in the Turkish parliament.



The HDP is the most active advocate of democracy in the Turkish parliament.



- During the last months, HDP MPs have organized dozens of meetings with workers all over the South-East of the country. The aim is to give a voice to the millions of people in the country who suffer heavily under the economic turmoil that has been continuing for years. Most recently, the HDP co-Chair Pervin Buldan met agricultural workers in the surrounding villages of Adana on June 15.

- As part of its efforts to build a united alliance of all democratic parties, organizations and individuals in the country, the HDP has been making calls and holding talks with a variety of representatives. During a speech in front of the HDP parliamentary group on April 6, the HDP co-Chair Mithat Sancar had called for the formation of 'the broadest democratic block possible'.

- As part of the so-called 'Kobane trial' against 108 politicians – among them former HDP co-Chair Selahattin Demirtaş and former DBP co-Chair Sebahat Tuncel – the HDP has organized huge international attention for the lack of justice, transparency and legitimacy of the ongoing trial. HDP MPs continue to be present at the hearings and expose the political motivation of the Turkish government behind this trial.

### 5. Turkey's War on the Kurds: A Holistic Strategy With the War in the South-East as its Center

The Kurdish issue is a social and political issue with a long history. Today, more than ever, the Kurdish people have developed a strong sense of unity while at the same time maintaining their appreciation for social diversity. Therefore, it is now coincidence that the Turkish state's strategy for its war on the Kurdish people and the Kurdish Freedom Movement is holistic. Turkey is using political, economic and military pressure in Turkey, Syria and Iraq to curb any achievements the Kurds have made in the last decades. As a result, Turkish troops together with their Islamist mercenaries today occupy Afrin, Gire Spi and Serekaniye in Rojava and are currently trying to expand their occupation zone along the Iraqi-Turkish border all the way to the Iranian border. Yet, one would fail to grasp the holistic nature of the Turkish war strategy if one ignored the ongoing heavy conflict in Turkey itself. From the parliament in Ankara, to the cities in Turkey's West and the mostly-Kurdish population in the South-East a strong political, social and armed struggle is continuing. Its goal has been and still is the democratization of Turkey and the granting of the most fundamental democratic rights of the Kurds living in the country. Only by acknowledging the ongoing resistance by the Kurdish population in Turkey will one be able to grasp the seriousness of the situation and the unwillingness of Erdogan's government to find a lasting solution to the Kurdish issue. By claiming that the Kurdish resistance in South-East Turkey has been curbed, Erdogan seeks to create the impression that a military solution to the problem would be possible. On this basis, he will continue to ask for more support and opportunities to spread his occupation campaign in Syria and North Iraq. But if one faces the truth that the Kurdish population of South-East Turkey is defying the immense state pressure and is keeping up and even diversifying its struggle for democracy and freedom, one will realize how dangerous it would be to fall for Erdogan's plan. Everybody who opts for a peaceful, democratic and long-lasting solution to the Kurdish issue will therefore need to first and foremost support the legitimate demands of the Kurds living in south-eastern Turkey. The first step in this direction is to work towards an immediate end of the military escalation by Erdogan's government in Turkey itself, but also beyond its own borders.



The struggle of the guerrilla will bring an end to the fascist rule of Erdogan.