

THE İMRALI POST

YOU HEARD HIS NAME. LEARN HIS STORY. DEMAND HIS FREEDOM.

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Kalkan: AKP-MHP fascism is being defeated and fighting for survival

KCK-Info | Behdinan | 21 June 2022

Duran Kalkan, member of the PKK Executive Council, spoke to Medya Haber TV about the isolation imposed on Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan, the struggle against isolation, latest developments in the Turkish state’s war, and the fascist aggression of the AKP-MHP government.

Highlights from Kalkan’s evaluations are as follows:

Political Struggle Against Isolation of Abdullah Öcalan

“Regarding the isolation [on İmralı], there are no changes, but regarding the struggle for Leader Apo’s [Abdullah Öcalan’s] physical freedom, there have been important developments recently. These include, for example, the ‘Great Gemlik Demonstration’ that took place on June 12 [2022]. In addition, June 11 was declared an International Day of Action [for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan]. All over the world, Kurds, their international friends and the revolutionary democratic forces took to the streets on that day against isolation and fascism and for [Abdullah Öcalan’s] freedom. There were many protests against AKP-MHP fascism and for the physical freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. The Gemlik demonstration was strong. Through it, the true face of AKP-MHP and the isolation and torture system on İmralı, as well as the fascist terror, tyranny, torture and oppression in Turkey and Kurdistan became very clear. On behalf of our party, I would like to salute all the youth, women, our people and our international friends who participated in these various protests. Through them, they have taken a clear stand and made it clear that they do not want to live with the torture and isolation system in İmralı and will tear down the walls of İmralı.”

Legal Struggle Against İmralı System

“The legal struggle also continues. Last week, 775 lawyers filed visitation requests for İmralı. They will probably continue to insist on this right. And they should. Actually, these requests should not be made only once in this way. Lawyers can take a wide variety of initiatives to do this, because they are exercising

their most democratic right. By doing so, they have clearly shown the practice that prevails on İmralı and what AKP-MHP fascism is doing there. It is very important to make the mask of fascism fall, to show everyone the reality and to denounce the given situation. Nobody should say that these are only simple or small steps. In the current phase, everything must be done, whether small or big.”

Great Importance of Freedom Vigil for Abdullah Öcalan in Strasbourg

“Then, of course, there is the Kurds’ longest-running protest action. The freedom vigil in Strasbourg is very important. It has been taking place for over ten years now. 520 weeks have passed since it began. It is an uninterrupted protest action. In Kurdish history, there has never been such a long protest action. With this protest, our Kurdish people in Europe, the workers, the working people, the women and the youth are really proving a historical attitude. They are standing up for Leader Apo in a historic way and they are doing this in a very orderly and disciplined way. That is very important. I would like to salute and congratulate all those who are participating and actively supporting the freedom vigil. On behalf of our party, I wish them all success.”

False Rumors About Talks with Abdullah Öcalan

“AKP-MHP fascism is attacking everything and everyone. Its aggressiveness is the result of our struggle. Because it is in complete panic today. Of course, this center of psychological warfare also spreads many different things. It claims all kinds of things, for example, that there have been talks [with Abdullah Öcalan]. They do this very deliberately because they are very afraid of the power of the struggle and want to weaken this enormous struggle. In this way, certain expectations are to be raised in people in order to weaken their determined fighting attitude and minimize their participation in the struggle. Our people must be very aware of all this. All this is done in the context of psychological warfare. All this must not be given any credence. On the contrary, all must be aware that it is our struggle that forces AKP-MHP fascism to spread such claims. This means that our struggle has a huge impact on the fascist, colonialist and genocidal mentality and policy. Therefore, we have to strengthen, deepen and spread our struggle even more.”

Use of ‘Tactical Nuclear Weapons’ by the Turkish Army

“Another issue we should pay attention to is the war crimes committed by AKP-MHP fascism. There is a discussion about this in our circles, but this discussion does not go beyond that. There is clear evidence of the use of chemical weapons. Yet there is absolute silence. In the case of Saddam Hussein’s government, no chemical weapons were found, despite claims to the contrary, and yet that regime was overthrown. After they had overthrown it, it was openly admitted that it was already clear before that there were no chemical weapons there. Today, there is a regime [AKP-MHP government] that uses chemical weapons on a massive scale. But not only is there dead silence, but this regime also receives boundless support. In the process, it is committing war crimes. According to the reports of friends who managed to escape from Tepê Sor [area in close proximity to the Iraqı-Turkish border], tactical nuclear weapons were most likely used there. A retired Turkish general recently said on a Turkish TV channel [retired General Erdoğan Karakuş on TV show ‘Tarafsız Bölge’; CNN Türk; 23.03.2022], “We have been using tactical nuclear weapons since the 1990s. In the Ukraine war, this weapon is also used. We also have these weapons and we use them.” At that point, the broadcast was directly interrupted. Those who used these weapons in the 1990s are using

tactical nuclear weapons today in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna. This is an even more serious war crime than the use of chemical weapons. Lawyers must follow up on this issue. Because this is an important admission.”

Intensity and Political Significance of Current War in South Kurdistan

“Since May 25, the Turkish state has expanded the war [in South Kurdistan] in order to be able to defend the Girê Rûbar and Çiyayê Reş areas. It has since been attacking the Cûdî, FM and Hakkari mountain peaks. We have already raised the question in the past how the Turkish soldiers plan to take a hold on Girê Cûdî. On June 15 and 16, we saw how 57 occupation soldiers were killed during the 'Revolutionary Retaliation Operation'. The Turkish state is shooting and dismembering its own corpses. Why is it doing this? Who are among those killed? People who used chemical weapons and tactical nuclear weapons and committed crimes accordingly. The Turkish state is massively using the most modern technology, destroying nature and displacing the civilian population. So it is committing crimes. In addition, it uses Islamist proxy forces, among which there are very likely criminals from IS and Al-Qaeda. To keep them out of the hands of the guerrillas and to keep this from being made public, the Turkish state shells their bodies and dismembers them. It also shells and destroys its own helicopters that have been shot down. So far, three helicopters have been shot down. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu also said that they would “flee.” With these words, he prevented exactly that. The action [by the guerrillas] on the Cûdî mountain peak has hit the Turkish state hard. It will try to flee from there, but it will not succeed. The Turkish state will be pushed even more in the corner there and will take heavy blows. The events on Girê Cûdî are only the beginning. The guerrillas will carry out much more creative and courageous actions. AKP-MHP fascism will be buried there. The reality in Turkey and Kurdistan today is determined by this war. Some talk about elections supposedly taking place soon in Baghdad, Hewlêr [Erbil] or Ankara and think that politics will be determined there. But this is not true. The war in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna determines politics. The struggle and resistance there are decisive. Everything will be determined by the outcome of this struggle. Current developments confirm this. More and more people are now becoming aware of this fact.”

Erdogan and Bahçeli's Fear of Being Held Accountable for Defeat in South Kurdistan

“They are being exposed, all their masks are falling and they are committing more and more crimes. In order to prevent the truth from coming out, their crimes from becoming known and their masks from falling, they keep attacking. Through political pressure and arrests, they want to stop these developments. They terrorize the media, shut it down and silence it. This is how they allegedly want elections to be held. They try to stay in power through repression and tyranny. We can see these domestic developments in foreign policy as well. AKP-MHP fascism is trying to increase its attacks in Şengal [Sinjar], South Kurdistan and Rojava. Greece is not spared from this either. All this shows that AKP-MHP fascism is being defeated today in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna and is fighting for survival. They are trying to distort the real political agenda and are looking for a way out. Thus, they hope to delay their collapse a little. But their time is running out. The day will come when they will be held accountable. The so-called generals who are running the war today, not so long ago, held each other accountable for what happened in Zap. When did that happen? It started in February 2008. Who held others accountable then? Tayyip Erdogan and Bahçeli. And who did they hold responsible? Yaşar Büyükanıt and İlker Başbuğ.... For what exactly? For the fact that they had lost in Zap and had fled from there. The very people who held others accountable then are in exactly the same situation today. Such a place is Zap. They will also be held accountable. AKP-MHP fascism will definitely collapse. No power in this world will be able to save it. We say this in all clarity. Various global powers, e.g. the USA, Europe and NATO, are supporting AKP-MHP fascism. The collaborat-

ing traitors are also doing this. Turkey's wealth is being sold and completely used for war. This may delay the collapse a little, but to save themselves from it will be impossible.”



Lawyer Sarıca: We can't receive news from Öcalan in any way

ANF | GENEVA | 15 JUNE 2022

The Swiss Kurdish Human Rights Association organized a two-day panel on “Kurdish Leader Abdullah Öcalan and the situation of political prisoners.”

On the first day, a presentation was made to members of the press at the Press Club in Geneva, Switzerland. Tomorrow, another presentation will be made to lawmakers in the Swiss Federal Parliament.

On the first day of the program, a press conference titled 'The Situation of Political Prisoners in Turkey' was held at the Geneva Press Club in Geneva. Rezan Sarıca, one of the lawyers of the Asrın Law Office and a lawyer of Öcalan, Renkin Ergül, one of the lawyers of the Libertarian Lawyers' Association, and Gianfranco Fattorini, the UN Permanent Representative from the American Association of Jurists attended the conference.

Fattorini spoke first at the press conference in a brief speech and stated that they would discuss the situation in Turkey with the lawyer of Öcalan who remains under strict isolation in İmralı Island Prison.

“There are many cases of suspicious deaths in Turkey's prisons. Some of the prisoners suffer from serious health issues such as cancer, which lead to deaths every year due to lack of access to health services. According to the data gathered by the Human Rights Association, Libertarian Lawyers' Association and Prisoners' Families Association, there are a total of 1605 ill political prisoners in Turkey, 604 of whom are seriously ill,” lawyer Sarıca said.

İmralı Isolation

After explaining the process of the international conspiracy against Öcalan, Sarıca addressed the isolation in İmralı prison where Öcalan has been held since his forced departure to Turkey in 1999.

“While inmates can stay in large groups and remain in contact with one another in all other prisons, Öcalan has been kept under absolute isolation in İmralı for ten years. In all other prisons, inmates have access to means of communication through newspaper, radio, and TV, while Öcalan was denied the right to watch TV and read newspapers for 14 years, and the radio was restricted to one channel (the official state channel TRT-1). Most of his letters were either not delivered or were censored. He was allowed to have a phone call with his brother only twice within 23 years, in 2020 and 2021, for extraordinary reasons.

While prisoner-lawyer meetings can be held confidentially during weekdays in other prisons, lawyer visitations at İmralı were restricted to one hour per week. The principle of confidentiality during lawyer-client

meetings was disregarded and all meetings were monitored and recorded. However, even this limited right has never been regularly respected. Lawyers and family visits were constantly prevented.

Statistical information on visits in 11 years reveals the seriousness of the situation. Despite the fact that more than a thousand official applications for a visit have been submitted in 11 years, from July 27, 2011 until today, only 5 lawyer meetings were allowed. However, these meetings took place within a short period of time from May 2 to August 7 in 2019, following the public backlash amid the massive hunger strike protests. Only 5 family meetings were allowed from October 6, 2014 to the present. The last lawyer visitation took place on August 7, 2019 and the last face-to-face family meeting was held on March 3, 2020.

Although 5 new prisoners were transferred to İmralı prison on November 17, 2009, they were kept in separate cells. Their meetings with Öcalan were allowed only for 4-5 hours a week. The length of cell stay was 168 hours and it continued for 164 hours per week. The new prisoners did not change the İmralı system, they were just included in this system.

Because of the dialogue and negotiations on the Kurdish question between 2013 and 2015, the 5 prisoners staying with Öcalan were transferred to other prisons. They were replaced by 5 new prisoners who were designated as 'secretariat for the resolution process'. However, 9 months later, two of them were taken from the island prison against their will. Currently, only Öcalan and three other inmates are staying in the island prison.

These 3 prisoners who were brought to the island in March 2015 were allowed to meet their families only 3 times in 7 years. Also, they have never been allowed to meet their lawyers.

Furthermore, lawyer visits that were already denied arbitrarily, have recently been prevented by unlawful court decisions since 2016, and family visits have been banned by unlawful disciplinary board decisions since September 2018.

Reaction to international institutions

Sarıca emphasized that the international community and legal institutions have not fulfilled their duties properly.

“In its Öcalan No: 2 ruling of March 18, 2014, the ECtHR described the conditions of detention in İmralı Prison between February 16, 1999 and November 17, 2009 as a violation of the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. The court also ruled that the aggravated life imprisonment was a violation of the prohibition of torture and should be amended. Even though eight years have passed since the ruling, the Turkish government has not introduced any changes regarding imprisonment for life. The government has not presented a legal plan, which is a political and legal obligation, for making changes, including a declaration of intention.

Even though an application was submitted to the ECtHR against lawyer bans in 2011, the ECtHR requested a response from the government in 2019 and kept this urgent application pending for eight years. During those eight years, İmralı Prison was completely closed to lawyer visits. Although 11 years have passed since this application, dated 2011, the ECtHR has not announced a decision.

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) adopted a similar attitude. In its reports, the committee made sharp observations describing the conditions of isolation and ill-treatment at İmralı. However, it chose not to urge effective visits, inspections and procedural activities that would force the government to change its attitude. The findings in the CPT reports reflect an attitude that encourages the government to maintain its current isolation practice.

The last phone call with Öcalan on March 25, 2021 lasted only a few minutes, and we have received no news from him since. All our weekly applications to the prosecutor's office, the prison administration, the courts, the ministry and the Constitutional Court have all remained inconclusive. Moreover, no results have been obtained either from the applications submitted to different institutions, such as the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission, the Ombudsman, the Union of Bar Associations and the Medical Association.”

Lawyer Sarıca called on rights organizations to fulfil their responsibilities concerning Öcalan.

“Following the declaration of the State of Emergency (OHAL) in Turkey in 2016, the first measure was introduced in İmralı Prison on July 21, 2016, one day before the first statutory decree was issued and entered into force. Family and lawyer visits and all means of communication and contact with the outside world have been banned during the state of emergency,” he concluded.



Vigil for Öcalan in Strasbourg enters 11th year

ANF | STRASBOURG | 20 JUNE 2022

The vigil to demand the freedom of Kurdish leader Öcalan in Strasbourg, the longest action of the Kurds in Europe, is going to mark its 11th year on June 25.

Friends of the Kurdish people have today started to distribute leaflets outside the Council of Europe to mark the 10th anniversary of the vigil that started in 2012.

The leaflet stated that the Kurdish leader has been subjected to systematic isolation for more than 23 years and that all human rights which are norms within international law have been violated.

The leaflet included the following information:

“Prolonged isolation is defined as torture according to the UN as well as the European Convention on Human Rights. Even though the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) have been reporting for the last two years that the conditions at İmralı should not be accepted and be changed, the isolation of the Kurdish leader has been further aggravated. Last year's disciplinary punishments against him reveal the Turkish state's disregard for international law. However, the Council of Europe has the opportunity to stop violations of the Turkish state through penal sanctions, and it also has a responsibility to do so.”

The friends of the Kurdish people will distribute leaflets to lawmakers during the sessions of the PACE this week, calling for the Council of Europe to fulfil its responsibility.

On June 23, friends of the Kurdish people, together with the lawmakers of the Council of Europe, will hold a press conference for Kurdish leader Öcalan. A freedom vigil will also be carried out for Öcalan for a week.



Briefing at Council of Europe: Open the gates of Imrali

ANF | STRASBOURG | 23 JUNE 2022

At a session held at the Council of Europe, Icelandic Minister of Interior and Justice, Ögmundur Jonasson, former HDP Urfa MP Dilek Öcalan and one of the lawyers of Abdullah Öcalan, Raziye Öztürk spoke about the heavy isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Isolation violates EU law

Jonasson said: "There is a situation in Imrali that is against human rights and EU laws. The system in Imrali should not be accepted."

Pointing out that Abdullah Öcalan's freedom and peace in Kurdistan are not independent of each other, Jonasson added: "When the Imrali gates were open, the peace process and talks were going on in a positive atmosphere. Abdullah Öcalan's message at the 2013 Newroz was also very promising. Then the doors were closed."

Jonasson said that the Turkish state committed war crimes by turning to Kurdish cities after the negotiations were ended in Imrali, and continued: "You can see the war crimes committed in Kurdistan since 2014 by looking at the Kurds who were murdered in Sur, Nusaybin, Cizre and in Roboski in 2011. These are proof that war crimes have been carried out in Kurdistan. We say, help us to open those doors so that a lasting peace can be achieved in Turkey."

İmrali torture system

Abdullah Öcalan's lawyer Raziye Öztürk emphasized that Turkey is one of the member states of the Council of Europe and that it must comply with the international conventions it has signed in this context, and added: "Despite this, the torture system in İmrali Prison has existed for 23 years. This is something that has been documented by the ECtHR decision and the CPT reports."

Rights of prisoners violated

Emphasizing that Abdullah Öcalan and the other prisoners held in İmralı are deprived of their legal rights, Öztürk shared the following information regarding the violations of rights in the prison island: "From

2011 to 2019, lawyers visits were allowed in just 5 occasions. In the last 8 years, the prisoners were able to benefit of the right to family visit only 5 times. They were able to use their right to a phone call only 2 times in 23 years. Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, who were transferred to Imralı in 2015 and kept in isolation cells, were deprived of their right to a lawyer. These prisoners were only able to use their right to family visit 3 times.”

We can't get news

Reminding that they could not get any news from their client Abdullah Öcalan after the 3-4-minute phone call he made with his brother on 25 March 2021 under extraordinary conditions, Öztürk said: “Abdullah Öcalan's connection with the outside world has been systematically cut off for 14 months. We have no information about his and the other prisoner's health, conditions and legal status. The disciplinary punishment processes that our clients are subjected to in Imralı are kept confidential from us, and we are prevented from taking legal action in this regard.

Silence of the Council of Europe criticized

Emphasizing that the silence of the Council of Europe played a role in Turkey's perpetuation of these violations, Öztürk said: “We applied to the European Court of Human Rights in 2011 regarding the isolation in Imralı, but 8 years later, it asked Turkey for a defense. However, a decision on the application has not been made yet.”

Noting that the Council of Europe did not perform its duty of supervision, Öztürk said: “Since no decision was taken by the Council of Europe, this practice turned into a system of torture.”

Finally, referring to the CPT's visit in 2019, lawyer Öztürk said: “the CPT published the report of this visit in 2020. The report stated that the aggravated execution regime should be changed. It recommended that family and lawyer visits be made periodically. However, after this report, a more difficult process took place in Imralı. We call on the Council of Europe and all parliamentarians to fulfil the ECtHR decisions and CPT reports on Turkey.”

Abdullah Öcalan should be released

Former HDP Urfa MP Dilek Öcalan said: “We now demand the release of Abdullah Öcalan. The Kurdish people and their Leader are not 'terrorists', but the real terrorists are those who tortured these people, put them in prison and killed them.” She added that the European states remained silent against Turkey and were partners in this crime.

Dossier given to deputies

After the session, a dossier prepared by the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative on the isolation in Imralı was delivered to the parliamentarians of the Council of Europe.

Internationalists take over the ‘Freedom for Öcalan’ vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 24 JUNE 2022

Since 25 June 2012, a permanent vigil for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan has been held in Strasbourg in front of the Council of Europe. Every week, activists from a different part of Europe take over the vigil. The 25th of June this year marks the tenth anniversary of the vigil for Öcalan’s freedom. For this anniversary, there is an internationalist vigil to tell the public that Öcalan is the guarantor of peace, freedom and democracy in the Middle East.

The vigil in Strasbourg has been taken over by a group of internationalists on its 523rd week.

One of the activists, Matthias Camille, who comes from Paris, stated that he participated in the vigil in response to the torture faced by the Kurdish leader. Recalling the case of Nelson Mandela, the historic leader of South Africa, who had also been imprisoned and tortured like Öcalan and was later freed thanks to international pressure, Camille called on everyone to put pressure on Turkey for the liberation of Abdullah Öcalan as a political prisoner.

Another activist from France, Naomi Guihard, stated that she joined the vigil to support the people demanding the freedom of Öcalan. She expressed her support for the Kurdish people who are fighting against colonialism and capitalism for freedom, democracy, ecological feminism.

Background

For 23 years, Abdullah Öcalan, the Kurdish political leader, has been held under conditions of almost total isolation on the prison island of İmralı. Öcalan was abducted in 1999 through an international conspiracy and extradited to Turkey. The Turkish court declared a death sentence on 29 June 1999.

It is no coincidence that this was the date, 74 years earlier, of the execution of Kurdish resistance leader Şêx Said, who was sentenced to death in a similar trial. When Turkey dropped the death penalty, Öcalan’s sentence was converted to aggravated life imprisonment.

Since then, Öcalan has repeatedly campaigned for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and the democratization of Turkey, and has launched corresponding political initiatives. There had been direct talks between representatives of the Turkish state and Öcalan. However, since the AKP government sabotaged all Kurdish peace efforts in early 2015, and fanned a war against the Kurdish population inside and outside Turkey, Öcalan has hardly even been allowed contact with his family or his lawyers. There has been no contact with Öcalan since 25 March 2021.

Prisons in Turkey

Prisoners in Düzce denounce violations of rights

ANF | ADANA | 12 JUNE 2022

Vedat Gültekin, who is being held in Düzce T Type Prison, talked about the violations of rights and torture in jail during a phone call with his mother, Azize Gültekin.

He said that the guards raided the wards and scattered all their belongings, and added: “They scattered all our things, pens, notebooks, books, whatever and they insulted us.”

Azize Gültekin said that she was worried about the safety of her son and her friends and wanted the pressure and attacks to end.



Prisoners in Afyon on hunger strike for 22 days

ANF | AFYON | 16 JUNE 2022

In the T-Type prison in the western Anatolian city of Afyon, ten prisoners have been on hunger strike for 22 days. They are demanding an end to the confiscation of personal belongings, the requirement for a declaration of remorse for release, military roll call and other methods of arbitrary treatment. Commenting on the indefinite hunger strike, which began on 25 May, prisoner Mehmet Ali Kayan said in a telephone conversation with family members, “Our demands must be met. These practices must end. The torture must stop.”

The action first started with six prisoners, then four more joined. Kayan said: “We went on strike against the military roll call, inhumane treatment, confiscation of books, refusal to hand over incoming letters, refusal to accept transfer requests, solitary confinement punishments and refusal to release from prison. Make sure our voices are heard and our demands accepted.”



Disabled political prisoner dies after released

ANF | ANKARA | 17 JUNE 2022

Political prisoner Bekir Güven died on Thursday night after four months of treatment in intensive care.

Güven, who is 98 per cent disabled and severely ill with Huntingdon's chorea, was sentenced to 22 months' imprisonment on 20 September 2021 after his conviction for "terror propaganda" and "insulting the president" on social media was confirmed.

As his condition deteriorated and protests increased, the prosecutor decided that Güven should serve the rest of his sentence in hospital. However, the examination and the journey there was traumatic.

He was put in solitary confinement for three days, even though he could not look after himself and needed 24-hour care. Then, in the middle of the night, he was taken from the hospital to the Forensic Institute in one of the notorious ring vehicles in which prisoners are transported chained.

"In three days, the disease progressed by four years"

His wife Rukiye Güven told the Mezopotamya news agency at the time: "The few days he spent in detention caused his illness to progress by four years. He fell down twice and suffered brain haemorrhages. Doctors say he will not leave the hospital alive."

"The most terrifying three days of my life"

After his release, Güven tearfully declared, "I have experienced it, prisons are not for sick prisoners. All sick prisoners must be released immediately. When we went for the examination, a policeman tried to handcuff me. It was the three worst days of my life."



Military aggression and occupation

Mir Castle in Hakkari under occupation for 42 years

ANF | HAKKARI | 12 JUNE 2022

Many of the historical buildings in North Kurdistan, which are symbols of Kurdish history and culture, are under the occupation of Turkish soldiers and police. One of these structures is Mir Castle, located in the city center of Hakkari.

After the 12 September 1980 military coup, the Turkish Ministry of National Defense declared the Mir Castle a military zone and banned entrance to the public for security reasons. The castle has been closed to everyone except the Turkish state forces for 42 years.

The castle is currently under the occupation of the special police teams. The entire architectural structure of the castle has been destroyed.

In 2014, HDP's Hakkari Municipality co-mayors filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of National Defense demanding to reopen it to the public. However, this case was not even processed by the Turkish Ministry of Justice.

Although the castle is located in the city center of Hakkari, it is not known to the people of Hakkari. Thousands of Hakkari people born since 1980 had to look at Mir Castle from afar. Those who want to take a closer look at the castle face the risk of being detained, tortured, imprisoned or even killed as soon as they are noticed.

A person living in the neighbourhood around Hakkari Mir Castle, who did not want to reveal his name for security reasons, said that the castle has been used by special police units for years. Saying that they could not see the inside of the castle despite living next to it, the man said: "We have lived in this neighbourhood for 30 years. There is a castle of historical importance right next to us, but we cannot go and see it. As soon as the police realize we're looking at the castle, we risk being detained. We, as the people of Hakkari, want our castle to be returned to the city."



HPG releases 2-month balance sheet of war

ANF | BEHDINAN -14 JUNE 2022

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) on Tuesday published a balance sheet of war for the past two months. The balance sheet, which covers the period between 14 April and 14 June, includes the following:

"Two months have passed since the beginning of the invasion in Zap, Avaşın and Metîna in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has resisted the invasion everywhere and has entered a phase of war of historic proportions. Despite the fact that the Turkish state is using the most advanced military technology, NATO support, the use of Kurdish traitors and collaborators and the shelling of the resistance areas thousands of times with howitzers, mortars and attack helicopters and bombing by fighter jets, it has not been able to achieve any results. The Turkish army is stuck in Zap and therefore extended its attacks to the areas west of the Zap River on the night of 25 May. This operation was confronted by our revolutionary offensive Cenga Xabûrê Şehîd Savaş Maraş. The Turkish army had tried to break up their muddled situation in the Zap region, but they were targeted more by the guerrillas and did not achieve their goal.

“The freedom guerrilla is determined to win”

The Freedom Guerrilla of Kurdistan, which has restructured itself into a guerrilla of democratic modernity on the basis of the People’s Revolutionary War strategy, has put the new guerrilla tactics into practice with the utmost professionalism and creativity. The terrain-based positional and tunnel warfare and the use of the mobile and semi-mobile units, through which every detail of the terrain is skilfully utilised, have proved in practice to be an effective form of modern-day guerrilla warfare. The two-month phase of the war represented a completely new stage in military terms. This is also expressed in the level of conviction of the combatants, their will, morale, motivation and determination to win.

Our forces are fighters who are ready to make sacrifices, who have made a firm decision for freedom with great Apoist consciousness and are ready to risk anything in the struggle for it. It became clear that neither the most modern technology nor the cruelest attacks of the Turkish state and its lackeys could ever be successful against the power of the guerrillas. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has proved once again, with its struggle under the most difficult conditions and great sacrifices, that it is the hope of freedom for all oppressed peoples and classes, especially the oppressed peoples of Kurdistan.

The Turkish army is helpless against our resistance in the war tunnels and positions. Therefore, it resorted to the dirtiest methods and used chemical weapons and explosives 779 times. These acts are war crimes. The guerrillas carried out many comprehensive and coordinated actions in the course of their revolutionary offensive. They combined the tactics of ambushes, infiltrations, raids and sabotage actions and hit the invading forces hard again and again. Our forces have come across the bodies of at least 30 soldiers during revolutionary retaliatory actions and identity cards, weapons and equipment have been confiscated even from high-ranking military officers. Despite these facts, the criminal Turkish state is, as always, trying to hide its losses and continue to spread false victory propaganda in its special war media.

“Heavy blows dealt to the occupants in Northern Kurdistan”

Although the Turkish state carried out hundreds of comprehensive operations against our forces, both in the Medya Defense Areas and in Northern Kurdistan, it could not achieve any results. Our forces let the vast majority of these operations come to nothing and developed creative actions in Botan, Serhed and Amed. With these, they dealt heavy blows to the occupants.

Our fallen comrades, who fought sacrificially, put up an epoch-making resistance to the Turkish state and stopped the comprehensive invasion operation. They have achieved important results. In this process of resistance, which developed thanks to the great effort and self-sacrificing resistance and attitude of our martyrs, a total of 58 of our comrades died, 13 of them in chemical weapons attacks. The successes that our martyrs have created with their blood are the guarantee of our freedom and dignity and an order for us to win.”

TWO-MONTHS OF BALANCE SHEET

The HPG balance sheet for the period between 14 April and 14 June includes the following:

Turkish attacks on the Medya Defense Zones: 2065 airstrikes; 1493 helicopter attacks; 779 attacks with chemical weapons and explosives on guerrilla positions

Guerrilla actions: One action by the Air-Defense Forces; Two revolutionary operations; 15 infiltrations; 11 raids on Turkish positions; 41 coordinated guerrilla actions; 101 sabotage actions; 132 assassinations; Two ambushes; 151 actions with heavy weapons; 288 clashes and actions by shelling; In total, the guerrillas carried out 744 actions.

Results of the guerrilla actions: 985 soldiers were killed, two of whom were high-ranking, and 166 soldiers were injured.

Confiscated weapons and equipment: 7 MPT-55 infantry rifles; 1 MPT-66 infantry rifle; 2 M-16 infantry rifles; 2 pistols; 1 BKC machine gun; 1 B-7 rocket launcher; 2 grenade launchers; 4 grenades; 2 assault (steel) vests; 2 cartridge belts; 5 magazines; 1 thermal camera; 1 thermal binocular; 6 night-vision devices; 4 mines; 1 remote mine detonator; 848 M-16 and BKC cartridges; 4 mobile phones; 3 helmet cameras; 1 pointer; 1 solar panel; 1 compass; 2 knives; 1 battery; 4 military rucksacks; 8 hand torches

Military equipment and vehicles destroyed by our forces: 1 attack helicopter; 2 Sikorsky transport helicopters; 1 tank; 2 armoured vehicles; 2 BKC machine guns; 2 A4 weapons; 1 jammer; 3 radar systems; 15 drones; 1 thermal camera; 1 telescope; 20 surveillance camera systems; 2 listening devices; 1 photo trap; 1 container; 2 motion detectors; 1 camouflage tent; 9 military tents; 29 military positions

Vehicles and equipment damaged by our forces: 20 attack helicopters; 26 Sikorsky transport helicopters; 5 drones; 11 military positions



Turkey killed 10 civilians, including 3 children, in a month in South Kurdistan

ANF | 16 JUNE 2022

The invasion attacks of the invading Turkish state on South Kurdistan seeking to destroy the Kurds continue uninterruptedly. The latest wave of Turkish attacks left 10 citizens, including 3 children, dead and 12 others injured.

On May 17, Mehmet Zeki Çelebi, a political refugee from North Kurdistan living in South Kurdistan, was assassinated by two MIT (Turkish intelligence) members outside the restaurant he ran in Sulaymaniyah city. Çelebi was martyred on May 18 in a hospital where he was taken after getting seriously injured.

On May 21, two locals, Aram Kake Xan and İsmail İbrahim, were killed in an air strike carried out by the invading Turkish state in the Tuteqel village of Axçalar town in the Chamchamal district of Sulaymaniyah.

On the same day, a citizen named Hacı Mirza was martyred in another attack carried out by the Turkish state on the Martyr Rustem Cudi (Maxmur) Refugee Camp.

On May 26, two children named Yusuf Hacı and Revend Hoşyar Muhsin were killed in a Turkish attack on the Zêwe picnic area in the Bamernê region in Duhok's Amadiya district.

On June 15, Turkish UCAVs attacked the People's Council office and a stationery shop in the Sinune town of Shengal. The Shengal Democratic Autonomous Assembly announced that a 12-year-old boy named Selah Nasir and his grandfather were killed and 6 other civilians were injured following the attack, including a journalist.

A father and his son were injured in another attack carried out on June 15 by the invading Turkish state on the Perex village in Derkar town of Zakho.

A parliamentarian from the Kurdistan Region, Zikri Zebari, said in a statement on June 4 that 150 civilians have been killed and 133 others injured due to the Turkish attacks in South Kurdistan since 2015.

According to the information available, the invading Turkish state has 37 great and 47 small military bases in South Kurdistan. 50 villages have been evacuated this year alone following the Turkish attacks. A total of 650 villages along the border regions were evacuated in the wake of the attacks carried out by the Turkish state.



SDF announces Turkish violations in North-East Syria in the first half of June

ANF | 17 JUNE 2022

The Media Center of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced the outcome of violations by the Turkish occupation during the first half of June.

The SDF stated that the Turkish occupation and its mercenaries continue violations against north and eastern Syria, targeting the villages and towns with heavy artillery, tanks, drones, in addition to failed infiltration attempts thwarted by SDF forces on the frontline posts. Most of these civilian areas are covered by the Ceasefire Agreements signed by the Turkish occupying power, the United States and Russia in October 2019.

During the first half of June, the following violations were recorded by the SDF:

1- The Turkish occupation drones violated the airspace of north and eastern Syria 35 times, targeting a civilian building in Qamishlo.

- 2- The Turkish occupation bombed the populated areas with 982 shells using heavy artillery, Opis, and internationally prohibited cluster bombs.
- 3- Targeted dozens of villages in the Tal Tamir such as (Zarkan, the Assyrian villages of Tal Shanan, and Tal Juma, Tal Taweel) using artillery and missiles, targeting the church of Marsawa al-Hakim.
- 4- The village of Um al-Kaif was targeted with 150 heavy artillery shells.
- 5- In the village of Qasir Deep, the crops were set on fire, threatening food security in the area.
- 6- Ain Issa and its eastern and western countryside were bombed with 324 shells of artillery, missile, howitzer and mortar fire. In addition to sniping civilians in the town's center, terrorizing them, and forcing them into displacement. And targeted civilian vehicles on the International Road (M4).
- 7 – The northwestern countryside of Manbij was targeted intensively and systematically with 365 shells, targeting the infrastructure such as the communication towers, the worship places, and civilian homes.
- 8- The Shahba areas (the northern countryside of Aleppo) and the areas of Shira/Sharran and Shirawa (the southern countryside of Afrin) were targeted with 141 artillery and missile shells. Targeting directly with a suicide drone a medical centre in the town of Tal Refat. Bombing civilians' homes, resulting in civilian casualties and causing material losses to their property (a shepherd and his livestock were targeted in the village of Tennab, in the Shirawa district.
- 9 – The settlement projects continue in several areas of the occupied Afrin for the settlement of mercenaries and their families, such as the settlement built in the western Shiah/Sheikh Al-Hadid district, funded by the Qatari “Sham” Association affiliated with the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood.

The SDF statement concluded, “These violations and terrorist practices (bombing populated areas, looting, robbery, kidnapping, and archaeological theft) by the Turkish occupation aim at forcing the original inhabitants into displacement to achieve the project of demographic change. Since its policy of Turkification in the occupied areas has not stopped for a moment, raising Turkish flags and photographs over formal institutions and buildings in the occupied areas, replacing the names of the towns, villages, and the public squares with Turkish ones that have nothing to do with the region's culture. The most heinous violations happened and are still in Afrin amid suspicious silence by international actors in the Syrian crisis, humanitarian organizations, and the United Nations.”



The occupied territories in northern Syria are being Turkified

ANF | 17 JUNE 2022

Three years ago, the Turkish state occupied the northern Syrian cities of Girê Spî (ar: Tal Abyad) and Serêkaniyê (ar: Ras al-Ain) after brutal attacks. Both towns were almost completely destroyed by the at-

tacks in October 2019. Since the occupation by the Turkish army and its Islamist proxies, multiple war crimes and human rights violations have been committed against the indigenous population in the occupied areas, including forced displacement with the aim of settling the families of Islamist militias there.

As before in Afrin, the Turkish occupiers are also pushing the change of the demographic structure in Girê Spî. More than 100,000 people have been displaced since the occupation of Girê Spî Canton and live under extremely precarious living conditions as refugees in the regions of Raqqa, Tabqa, Ain Issa and the surrounding areas. More than 6,000 people have been accommodated in a reception camp set up by the Girê Spî Cantonal Council in Tell Samin north of Raqqa in 2019.

Land of the displaced confiscated by occupiers

After the Turkish occupiers and their Islamist mercenaries displaced the people, they confiscated the property and land. The entire population has been affected by the war crimes committed by the Turkish state. For example, many schools in the occupied areas have been closed and turned into military bases. As a result, thousands of children and young people cannot go to school.

Erased history: historical sites destroyed, cultural treasures looted

In order to erase the history of the occupied territories, the Turkish state deliberately destroys historical sites and monuments and gives grave robbers the opportunity to loot sites. Images of Ottoman regents and Turkish state presidents are painted on the hills surrounding Girê Spî, visible from afar. The occupiers loot people's belongings in order to drive them away. This is a crime under international law.

ISIS members are deliberately settled in the occupied zone

Since the occupation of Girê Spî Canton, ISIS members and their families who had previously resided in Turkey have been chosen for settlement in the areas whose residents were previously displaced by the Turkish military and Islamist gangs. Islamist militias had previously terrorised the population living in the occupied areas and committed crimes against humanity. After the attack by Turkey, ISIS members moved into the homes of people who had been displaced by the occupiers.

Radical Islamist groups from Pakistan and Shiite sects have set up schools in the occupied zone, run by the Turkish intelligence service MIT. In early June, a visit to these schools by the Mufti of the Muslim Brotherhood, Usama al-Rifai, was documented. The schools were set up to revive Islamist terror in the region and to train the children of ISIS members in this sense.

AANES official among those killed in Turkish drone attack in South Kurdistan

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 18 JUNE 2022

Four people were killed and another person injured in a drone attack on a car near the village of Berlut in the north of the Kelar town near Sulaymaniyah city of South Kurdistan (North Iraq) on Friday morning. It was not initially known who the victims were, and which state the drone belonged to. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) announced today that one of the four victims was Ferhad Şiblî, the deputy chairman of the AANES Executive Council. Turkey reportedly bombed a civilian vehicle from the air. No information is yet available on the identities of the other dead and injured.

Ferhad Şiblî was in Sulaymaniyah for medical treatment and talks, the AANES stated: “The attack aims to systematically destroy the Autonomous Administration and our people. The Turkish state is disregarding all international legal standards and is carrying out a genocide. The Autonomous Administration calls on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) government and Iraq to fulfil their responsibilities and take a clear stance on the Turkish terrorist attacks.”

Iraqi airspace is controlled by the USA. On Wednesday, a Turkish drone bombed the Sinune town in Shengal (Sinjar), killing one child and injuring seven people, some of them critically. Shengal is the last contiguous settlement area of the Yazidi people.



State terror in Van: “We were mistreated because we are Kurds”

ANF | VAN | 22 JUNE 2022

It is difficult to find a term other than state terror for the actions of the Turkish forces in their arrest operation in the village of Xaşkan near the Başkale district of Van. Turkish soldiers stormed the village on 20 June, abusing the inhabitants and firing hundreds of shots into the air. This is one of the few cases where the brutality of the security forces in rural Kurdish regions has been documented on video.

“They threatened us with death”

After the raid, villagers collected some of the bullet casings that had been fired. So far they have counted 400 of them. Relatives and neighbours of the arrested Mehmet Emin Atlı told the Mezopotamya news agency (MA) about the attack. Abdulhamit Atlı stated: “Soldiers raided the house after surrounding the village early in the morning. Atlı’s wife and daughter were beaten by the soldiers. We collected 400 cartridge cases in our village. They threatened to kill us.”

“Beatings with rifle butts, gunshots and insults”

Atlı reported that he asked the commander of the soldiers to act according to “law and order” and asked, “What kind of law are you applying by hitting with rifle butts, shooting and insulting? There is no army fighting here. Why are you firing so many shots here?” He continued, “At least a thousand bullets were fired here. We have collected only a part of them. There are laws in Turkey. Can these apply differently in the West and here? We were insulted in the worst way. They did this to us even though we had done nothing at all against the soldiers.”

Daughter pushed off stairs

Ayten Atlı, the daughter of the arrested man, reported that the police stormed their house around six in the morning. She said: “I saw hundreds of soldiers in front of our house. I asked the soldiers why they had come. They explained that they were going to search the house. When I asked them to show me the search warrant, they started pushing me. That is why I explained to them that I had just had an operation. Although I had told them that, they pushed me off the stairs. After the fall, I could not stand up. Because of that impact, I have pain and swelling in my lower back.”

“We are not sure of our lives”

Atlı reported that the soldiers kept shouting at her and shooting into the air for minutes. “It was such a hopeless situation, we couldn't find a place to flee to. The whole settlement was under permanent military control anyway.” Ayten Atlı, who sees the soldiers' actions as an expression of anti-Kurdish racism, said: “It was so obvious that they had not come for an arrest. It was as if they had come to take revenge. They beat me and my mother for minutes. It was sergeant Mehmet K. who beat us the hardest. We will file a complaint against this person. There is clearly racism here. If they continue to pressure us in this way, we will have to leave here. Because we are no longer sure of our lives. We are very afraid that anything could happen again at any moment.”

Call for solidarity

Ayten Atlı called for solidarity and protest: “We have been oppressed for years. We had no proof before, but now we have some. We were beaten by soldiers in front of our house. If this beating is not because we are Kurds, then what is it? We want justice. That's why everyone should get involved and stand by our side.”

Kicked on the ground by soldiers

Dilber Atlı, the wife of the arrested man, told how a soldier kicked her leg and she fell down. She stated: “When I fell to the ground, they continued to beat me. They hit my husband and tried to put him in the vehicle. They started shooting because I protested against it. I still have kick marks and bruises on my leg. Our children are psychologically destroyed. We were abused and insulted. How can a soldier of the state do such a thing? Is there no such thing as law and order anymore? Is it the job of soldiers to torture people? We do not accept this situation and will address the necessary authorities. We want those who committed these atrocities against us to be held accountable before the law.”



RIC: Turkish-backed militias arrested at least 1,095 people in Afrin and M4 Strip in 2021

ANF | 25 JUNE 2022

The Rojava Information Centre (RIC) released a new [report](#) called “State of the Occupation: Infighting Reaches All Time High During the Fall as War Looms” about the arrests carried out in 2021 by Turkish-backed militias. According to the report at least 1,095 people in Afrin and the M4 Strip were arrested by the militias. At least 114 of those arrested were subjected to torture. Additionally, the RIC recorded 107 cases of gender-based violence.

During the months of October-December 2021, RIC’s aggregate counts found that Turkey and the Turkish-backed Military Police were responsible for most crimes committed in Turkish-occupied areas.

In total, RIC finds that crime in most categories increased during October, when Turkey began making serious threats of a renewed invasion of NES. This follows a relative lull over the summer, when international attention forced Turkey to rein in the SNA militias.

The data RIC collects from the occupied territories is skewed towards the Afrin region, rather than Tel Abyad & Sere Kaniye, as data-gathering groups are not as present in the latter 2 cities. In total, crimes in Turkish-occupied NES are thus higher than reflected in the report.

The full report is available <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2022/06/state-of-the-occupation-infighting-reaches-all-time-high-during-the-fall-as-war-looms/>



Femicide

60 women committed suicide in South Kurdistan in six months

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 21 JUNE 2022

Holding a press conference in Sulaymaniyah on Tuesday, the Organization for Legal Solidarity With Women in South Kurdistan (North Iraq) announced its report on violence against women during the first six months of 2022.

Pointing to increasing violence against women in South Kurdistan, the organization stated that as many as 60 women have committed suicide in the first six months of this year while 22 women have been murdered.

According to the report, 29 women set their bodies on fire and 31 women were driven into suicide and ended their lives. 22 women were murdered on various grounds such as “honor issues”.

The organization called on competent authorities to take urgent action to end femicides.

According to the report, 40 women were murdered in Sulaymaniyah city alone in 2021 and 62 women ended their own lives, yet no legal process has been launched into the incidents.



Women for Istanbul Convention gather in front of Council of State despite police blockade

ANF | ANKARA | 23 JUNE 2022

Members of political parties, women’s organizations and several bar associations made a statement in front of the Council of State before the 4th hearing of the lawsuit launched to annul the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. The Peoples' Democratic Party’s (HDP) Women’s Assembly spokesperson Ayşe Acar Başaran, members of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and Halkevi, Head of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) Şebnem Korur Fincancı, the Women’s Platform for Equality (EŞİK) members, women members of the Confederation of Public Labourer’s Union (KESK), the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB), women’s organizations, trade unions and bar associations attended the press briefing.

One activist detained

The women made a press statement outside the Council of State after being obstructed by the police from entering its yard. During the press statement, an activist was detained for allegedly “insulting the police”. Women reacted to the police intervention.

'A Blow to women’s rights'

Tülin Eraslan spoke on behalf of the Women’s Platform for Equality (EŞİK). “We are here as people who want to continue to live. The President’s decision is a blow to women’s lives, equality, democracy, justice and the fight against male violence. We saw the negative pressure of the unlawful decision on the judiciary in Pınar Gültekin’s case. Once again, a perpetrator was given a 'male' abatement. We are here to announce that all women will fight to reverse the reduced sentence given to Cemal Metin Avcı and the acquittal of his family members who spoiled evidence and aided and abetted him in a higher court,” Eraslan said.

Nurhan Demirtan, who spoke on behalf of the Women's International Constitutional Law Research Association, touched upon the unlawfulness of the withdrawal decision.

İnci İnesöğüt made a speech on behalf of the Çanakkale Women's Initiative, saying that, "We have never renounced the struggle and we have collected thousands of signatures. This is women's will to live."

'The convention should be fully implemented'

Head of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) Şebnem Korur Fincancı also delivered a speech and said, "As doctors, we are involved in every stage of the prevention, protection and support mechanisms of this convention. Therefore, it is our duty to fight the most important threats to public health and sexism. The Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (ŞÖNİM) cannot protect women. We saw in Pınar Gültekin's case that they did not protect us. We will fight together for the full implementation of the convention."

Reaction to police intervention

"We have come to defend our rights, our lives, again. They are trying to whittle away at such a universal right. We condemn this. Do not think that you can trivialize the advocacy of the Istanbul Convention, and that you can drive us into a corner here," said Gülsüm Kav, Head of the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP), reacting to the police intervention.

'We do not recognize the withdrawal'

HDP Women's Assembly Spokesperson Ayşe Acar Başaran also said that they do not recognize the decision to withdraw from the convention. Başaran cited the reduced sentence given to Avcı who killed Pınar Gültekin, and stated, "We are talking about why the Istanbul Convention is so vital. Every day, at least one woman is murdered in this country, and the government, the state and the law enforcement prevent women everywhere instead of preventing the murderers. But here we announce once again, as the HDP, we will continue to resist in all areas of life and to promote the Istanbul Convention. Success and victory will be achieved through the struggle of women."

'500 more women murdered'

"The Istanbul Convention, which was introduced to protect women, was terminated by one man on March 21, 2021. After that, many institutions applied to the Council of State for the annulment of this unlawful decision. However, the Council of State did not halt this unlawfulness. Since then, 500 of our sisters have been murdered. Today, we expect the Council of State to put an end to this unlawfulness," CHP Women's Branch Chair Aylin Nazlıaka said.

After the statements, the women activists went to the courtroom at the Council of State.

Broad complaint against withdrawal

The lawsuit against the withdrawal from the convention ordered by presidential decree was filed by the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) Women's Council, the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS), the

Women's Platform for Equality (EŞİK), the Progressive Women's Association (IKK), the Public Employees' Trade Union Federation (KESK), the Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Livestock Trade Union (Tarım Orkam-Sen) and other associations, bar associations and personalities.



Ecocide

MP Jiburi: Turkey holds waters in dams, causing water scarcity in Iraq

ANF | 17 JUNE, 2022

Iraqi lawmaker and Chair of the Agriculture and Water Resources Committee, Tahir Miheb al-Jiburi, warned that people in the province of Babel are most likely to migrate due to the shortage of clean water.

Jiburi addressed the water policies of Turkey and Iran during a latest parliamentary speech and said, "The main water resources of Iraq are the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which provide 98% of the country's surface water. Both rivers originate in Turkey's territories. The Euphrates flows down through Syria, and some of its tributaries pass through Iran. Turkey and Iran hold water inside the dams they have built in the past years, preventing waterflow. They use the water as a political blackmail against Iraq. This is a serious issue that requires the government to respond to the failure in enabling sufficient water flow to Iraq.

On Thursday, First Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Hakim al-Zamili, announced that Iraq would boycott products from Iran and Turkey if they continued to reduce the water flow to Iraqi soil.

Iraq has been suffering from dramatic water shortages. In some provinces, access to clean water remains a major issue, and authorities are unable to respond effectively to the threats caused by climate change.

Faced with extreme drought for the third year in a row due to low rainfall, the country is designated as one of the top five countries which remain vulnerable to climate change and desertification.

Despite local people's concerns about environmental issues and drought, the government has not faced the climate crisis, and political instability within the country has worsened the situation.



Turkey continues to seize Syria's share of Euphrates water

ANF | 20 JUNE 2022

As the Turkish government continues to block the flow of Syria's water share in the Euphrates river for a second consecutive year, giving Syria only 200 cubic metres or less of water in some days and months instead of releasing 500 cubic metres as agreed between Syria and Turkey, and in light of the decline in water level, the Raqqa Agriculture Authority has called on farmers to resort to a new agricultural plan, which is to cultivate 25% of the land area of yellow maize.

Blocking of the flow of Syria's water share in the Euphrates River, which is the major source of water for drinking, irrigation and generating electricity, has also caused the degradation of livestock and agriculture on the banks of the Euphrates River.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) renewed their warning of an environmental catastrophe threatening food security in the Cizire region and humanitarian crises which pose a threat to nearly two million and a half people in different areas in Raqqa, Heseke, Deir ez-Zor and Kobanê.

The Turkish water seizure and subsequent drought of Euphrates River water in Deir Ezzor and other areas in north and east Syria have led to water pollution and the spread of rubbish on large spaces of the river, while the residents living in areas near the river are concerned about a looming disaster.

The decreased level of Euphrates River water threatens the summer crops which are irrigated with the river's water in north-east Syria region, particularly in Deir ez-Zor.

In this context, the official responsible for water affairs in Deir ez-Zor commented on the issue of the decreased water level in the Euphrates River, warning against a looming disaster. The official told SOHR, "Problems have been detected in water stations and other problems which have affected farmlands and livestock. Four water stations on the western line have been put out of service. These are Al-Kebar station, a grand station providing five villages with water supplies, Al-Saghir station and Al-Sa'wa station. People in these areas are struggling with the recent low level of water, as they need to buy water tanks for high prices, let alone the increasing pollution of the river's water."

The official also pointed out that the drought has badly impacted crops, especially summer crops such as vegetables and cotton, as they need water at this time of the season in order to ripen. The official has also appealed to the United Nations and humanitarian organisations to put an end to violations by Turkey which have deliberately blocked the flow of Syria's water share in the Euphrates River and to exert diligent efforts to solve this social, humanitarian and economic issue.

On the other hand, a 54-year-old farmer known as Taha Al-Ahmed from Deir Ezzor countryside told SOHR, “the decreased water level affects us greatly, as we live on farming, and we rely on the Euphrates river water for irrigation. If there was no water, we would not have settled in this region for ages. This season, wheat did not grow as we could not provide it with the needed amounts of water in the wake of the current crisis.”



Human Rights Violations

16 GÖÇİZDER members remanded in custody in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 11 JUNE 2022

In the political police operation carried out by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, 22 people, including the Immigration Monitoring Association (GÖÇİZDER) co-chairs Kamile Kandal and Mehmet Boğatekin, were detained on 3 June.

The 22 people, who had been in custody in the police station for 8 days, were transferred to the Istanbul Courthouse to give their statements to the prosecutor’s office.

The prosecutor remanded 16 people in custody, Makkbule Altıntaş, Veysi Yıldız, Bilal Yıldız, İlyas Erdem, Halit Karahan, Zelal Coşkun, Ramazan Kırkpınar, Cihan Kartal, Songül Köse, İrfan Hülakü, Kamile Kendal, Mehmet Boğakan, Demgül Athan, Kıyasettin Cüheylan, Erhan Örs, Mehmet Baran, while released Pınar Konak, Süleyman Yıldız, İskan Teker, Ali Koçyiğit, Şeref Kaya and Nurhayat Koçyiğit under judiciary control.



Ten more HDP politicians imprisoned in Tekirdağ

ANF | TEKIRDAG | 11 JUNE 2022

The Turkish judiciary continues to turn up the repression screw against the democratic opposition. In connection with the HDK (Peoples' Democratic Congress), ten more HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) politicians were arrested in the western Turkish port city of Tekirdağ on Friday evening. Nine of those arrested are Kenan Yıldız, Arif İsmet Yılmaz, Yakup Aslan, Kerem Tosun, Fisun İşçan, Melahat Çelik, Ercan Ogeday, Alev Ateş and Ceren Karaca. They are accused of membership in a “terrorist organisation”. If convicted, they face long prison sentences.

The arrest warrants issued by the Tekirdağ Criminal Court are based on a preliminary investigation by the chief public prosecutor's office which declared the HDK to be the "western structure of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) and is criminalising the organising body of hundreds of groups and political actors from which the HDP emerged.

The chief public prosecutor's office in Tekirdağ accused those affected by the wave of repression of acting "in the spirit of the PKK's goals", arguing that the HDK was established as a parliament-like structure to "realize democratic autonomy" and to act as an "alternative" to the Turkish National Assembly. This structure is claimed to be "clearly identical in content and organization" to the paradigm of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union), the umbrella organization of the Kurdish liberation movement to which the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) also belongs.

The criminalisation of the HDK, which is considered a legal organisation even by the Turkish judiciary, goes hand in hand with the political campaign of destruction against Kurdish society that has been going on since 2015.

With the latest arrests, the number of those remanded in custody in connection with the HDK trial has risen to 29. Ten leading members of the HDP are still in police custody. They were detained the Friday before last as part of a nationwide arrest operation in eleven provinces. Among the politicians already arrested is Sadi Özdemir, a severely disabled person who is dependent on a respirator. 55-year-old Saadet Firat is a cancer patient and was arrested during a therapy session in a hospital. She, too, is now in pre-trial detention.



Police attack Pride march at ODTÜ with tear gas and rubber bullets

ANF | ANKARA | 11 JUNE 2022

Turkish authorities have prevented a Pride march at the Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) in Ankara with a large contingent on Friday. Following a previously issued ban on the tenth edition of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) Equality Parade, security forces prevented students and LGBTQIA movement activists from gathering on campus. At various places on the university campus, police cracked down on larger groups and used tear gas. Rubber bullets were also fired by security forces at students and activists.

At least ten people who chanted slogans and took part in a short march despite the ban were taken into police custody under the use of partly massive force.

"Contrary to the homophobic, fascist and polarising attitude of the trustee administration, we say: Get used to us! We are here to say we will not leave," read a statement that a group of students were still able to

make on the sidelines of the police terror. At the centre of the protests at ODTÜ for LGBTQIA+ rights is also the trustee administration of universities by the regime of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Reason for ban: damage to the prestige of the university

On Tuesday, the ODTÜ rectorate had sent an email to the university's students, calling the Pride parade "categorically banned". Any participants in the peaceful event were also threatened with police intervention. The university is a peaceful, productive and creative academic environment. Demonstrating students would damage the prestige of ODTÜ, the email said, justifying the Pride ban.

Last Pride march also met with violence

At the last Pride march on 10 May 2019, when students and employees of ODTÜ wanted to hold a peaceful parade on campus, they were met with disproportionate police force and banned from participation. The reason given was "participation in an unauthorised assembly" and "failure to comply with the order to disperse the event". At least 21 students and employees were arrested at the time, nineteen of whom had to stand trial before a criminal court in Ankara. The trial dragged on for two years. In October 2021, all the accused were acquitted.

Turkey is considered an anti-LGBTQIA+ country

According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Rainbow Index 2021, Turkey is one of the most LGBTQIA+ hostile countries in Europe. For the past four years, the Erdogan-led country has been ranked 48th out of 49 European countries. Only Azerbaijan did worse. Every year, ILGA keeps a record of positive as well as negative changes in legislation, policy and social climate that affect the LGBTI community. Based on 69 criteria, the association ranks the friendliest countries where LGBTQIA+ couples and individuals can feel safe. Where zero per cent means gross human rights violations and discrimination and one hundred per cent means that rights are respected and equality prevails. Turkey implemented only three criteria set by the group and scored only four percentage points in the index.



People detained during Gemlik March in Kadıköy give statement to police without lawyers

ANF | ISTANBUL | 13 JUNE 2022

Some 70 people from the Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK), Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Tevgerê Jinên Azad (TJA), Democratic Regions Party (DBP), Peoples' Democratic Party and MED Federation of Detainees and Convict Families Legal and Solidarity Associations (MED TUHAD-FED) were taken into custody during the Gemlik March in Kadıköy against the isolation imposed upon Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan. The arrested people were battered and taken to the Istanbul Security Direc-

torate on Vatan Street. Many were kept in police vehicles and were not given water or food for about 7 hours. It was also learned that many people in the police vehicle were subjected to violence.

Lawyers organised sit-in

The lawyers who went to meet with their clients were not allowed to see them. Many lawyers from the Lawyers' Association for Freedom (ÖHD), waited at the police station to meet with their clients. The police wanted to let the lawyers in in groups of seven. However, the lawyers reacted and said that this was an arbitrary practice. Therefore, they organized a sit-in in front of the police station.

Names of people taken into custody

In the morning, the statements of those detained were taken without a presence of a lawyer. 25 people are still in custody and are expected to be brought to the courthouse within the next day to give their statements at the prosecutor's office.

The names of those in custody are as follows:

HDP Istanbul Provincial Organization co-chair Ferhat Encu, Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) co-chair Özlem Gümüştas, Revolutionary Party Deputy chair Burcugül Çubuk, Eylem Çelik, Onal Yusufoglu, Rıdvan Karataş, Adem Gözöngü, Elif Bulut, Erhan Bayrak, Yaşar Gül, Mürüvet Küçük, Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, Koray Turkan, Sedat Şenoğlu, Nevzat Yeziz, Pınar Türk, Ezgi Gürbüz, Hatice Deniz Aktaş, Ali İpekli, Halis Bingöl, Reşat Ayata, Mehmet Masyon, Ali Emre Ecer, Roni Gören, İsmail Temel.

Kurdish writer imprisoned again eight months after her release

ANF | İZMİR | 15 JUNE 2022

There is no end to the repression against Kurdish personalities in Turkey. Kurdish writer Leyla Saraç, who was released from prison on 25 October 2021, has been detained again eight months after her release for nine pending "solitary confinement punishments". Saraç was arrested at Izmir airport and taken to the women's prison in Şakran.

Saraç had been sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for "membership of a terrorist organisation" and was released after five years and eight months. Now she must spend at least another year and seven months in prison. However, since the Turkish state always stipulates a "declaration of remorse" for release from prison, the period of imprisonment may extend further. Among other things, Leyla Saraç participated in the hunger strike in 2020 for the lifting of the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Saraç had spoken at a literary event in Amed (tr. Diyarbakır) on 6 February 2022 and said about her biography that she had first got to know her art, culture and language through the Kurdish cultural movement: "I was involved in theatre, dance, politics, and then I went to prison. You know that if you speak your mind and you are Kurdish, you go to prison. Today, writers and intellectuals are in prison. And they experience great difficulties there, especially if they write and speak in their mother tongue. The situation is getting worse and worse. I myself had great difficulties. In prison I wanted to write an article for a newspa-

per, but it was banned because it was in Kurdish. I'm sure the commission banned the article without reading it.”



Groom and family members jailed over yellow, red, and green colors at the wedding

BIANET | 16 JUNE 2022

The groom and the guests who were detained for wearing traditional Kurdish shawls in the colors red, yellow, and green during the wedding in the Esenyurt district of İstanbul were arrested yesterday (June 15). They were also accused of spreading terrorist propaganda by singing strans (Kurdish folk songs).

The groom Mesut Karçık, the wedding owner Tahsin Karçık, Savaş Karçık, Aydın Kaplan, İbrahim Kaplan, Umut Kaplan, İbrahim Baran, Cahit Karçık and Burhan Topçu were arrested on charges of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” and sent to Silivri Closed Prison.

During the police interrogation, the detainees were accused of “propagandizing for a terrorist organization” on the grounds of the colors of their clothes, the music at the wedding, and the shouting of “Biji Serok Apo” (Long Life Apo) slogans.

In their defense at the police station, they denied the accusation, stating that the yellow, red, and green were their national colors and did not represent any “organization”, but they were referred to the Büyükçekmece Public Prosecutor’s Office and brought before the Criminal Court of Peace with a request for arrest. Then 10 people were arrested for propagandizing for an organisation.

Musicians also detained

After the arrest of the groom, and guests, musicians Celadet Döner, Orhan İdiz, Senar Ok, and Hakan İdiz who performed at the wedding were also detained at Kıraç Police Station. They will be transferred to the Büyükçekmece Court house today (June 16).

HDP MP Beştaş took the arrest warrant to the parliament

People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Deputy Meral Daniş Beştaş took the arrest of the 10 people to the parliament.

“This is the court report of hostility against Kurds,” said Beştaş during her speech at TBMM General Assembly.

“This is the question that was asked them during the interrogation. 'Who brought the yellow, red, and green colored piece of cloth representing the terrorist organization inside the wedding hall that you had your pictures taken with?' ”

MP Beştaş said, “We have a ruling power that is afraid of colors, is hostile to colors, and is hostile to all values of the Kurds.”

“If they could, they would even remove yellow, red, and green from the traffic lights, shame on them. Won't people be able to wear the color they want at a wedding? Won't people be able to listen to music in the language they want? What is the explanation for the arrest of a groom and his family of nine? On what basis do the prosecutor and judge give this decision? This is what the AKP-MHP government does.”

These three colors, red yellow, and green are known as “kesk u sor u zer” in Kurdish and are associated with Kurdish culture. Many Kurds living in different countries wear these “Kurdish colors” as part of their traditional clothing.



Many including HDP members detained in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 16 JUNE 2022,

On Thursday morning, Turkish police carried out a series of raids and detentions in Istanbul. Among others, the journalist Saliha Aras, who works for the Democratic Modernity magazine, and several board members of the district and provincial associations of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) were detained during the raids. So far, the reason for the detentions is unknown, and the number of those taken into custody has also not yet been definitively determined.

Those detained today include the spokesperson of the HDP's provincial association, Besra İşsever, the co-chairperson of the HDP's Üsküdar district association, Aysel Özbey, as well as Erkan Tarım, Mümin Odabaş, Harun Bağatur, Enes Özdaş, Ercan Özer and journalist Saliha Aras.



Dokuz Eylül University Rectorate launches investigation against students dancing *halay*

ANF | DERSİM | 21 JUNE 2022

Dokuz Eylül University opened an investigation regarding a group of students dancing *halay* accompanied by Kurdish music on 24 May at the Tinaztepe Campus.

The same attacks took place at an event held to protest the private security and fascist attacks on Kurdish students who were dancing halay in Antalya on May 23.

While the students were performing the *halay* (Kurdish folk dancing), the private security and plainclothes policemen stopped them saying that dancing “posed a security problem”.

Then, a report was sent to the rectorate saying that the dance represented a provocative action. After reading the report, the rectorate opened an investigation against 3 students.



8 young people sent to prison in Mersin

ANF | MERSIN | 22 JUNE 2022

The statements of 28 young people who were detained in the political police operations centred in Mersin and carried out on 11 June in Adana, Kütahya, Amed and Bingöl, have been taken.

Eight of the young people who were transferred to Mersin Courthouse were sent to the Criminal Judge of Peace.

The judge ruled to send 8 young people to prison on the allegation of “being members of a terrorist organization”, and to release 20 others on judicial control.



Police take 20 people into custody in Tarsus

ANF | MERSIN | 22 JUNE 2022

20 people were taken into custody during house raids carried out by the police in the Tarsus district of Mersin in the morning.

The 20 people were detained on the allegation of “being members of a terrorist organization” and were taken to the District Police Department.

The names of those who have been detained are as follows: HDP former Tarsus District co-chair Ahmet Kızmaz, Mahide Çiçekdağ, Gülistan Çiçekdağ, Mustafa Yıldırım, Diyar Şeker, Fuat Yaman, Murat Polat and Ahmet Amutgan.



PKK hearing resumes at European Court of Justice

ANF | LUXEMBOURG | 22 JUNE 2022

The latest hearing of the case against the PKK's inclusion on the "terrorist organizations list" by the Council of Europe was held at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

There are three cases in total that deal with the PKK at the Court of Justice. The Court rescinded the lists between 2014 and 2017, and the Council of Europe objected to the ruling. After the PKK filed a lawsuit against the lists between 2018 and 2020, the court joined both cases. The first hearing was held on March 31.

Council's arguments not changed

The hearing of the case against the PKK's re-inclusion on the list for the same reasons was held this Wednesday. The case concerns the lists in 2021 and 2022. The lists are updated every six months.

Dutch lawyer Tamara Buruma, who represents the PKK, recalled the numerous bombardments by the Turkish state in Kurdistan and remarked that the PKK does not target civilians and retaliates against Turkish soldiers proportionately. Buruma reacted to the Council of Europe, which deemed the PKK's activities as "terrorist acts".

The Dutch lawyer noted that most of the arguments presented by the Council of Europe dated back to more than five years and are not valid for the new lists. The lawyer also rejected the accusation that the PKK "committed terrorist acts" within the European Union. Buruma emphasized that the PKK used legal means.

'Terror list has impact on individuals'

Buruma pointed out that the PKK's inclusion on the list is also used as a means to put pressure on Kurdish political refugees. "Listing the PKK also provides a kind of impunity for the Turkish state," she added.

Buruma criticized that the Council of Europe did not mention the consequences of listing the PKK.

Council cited actions against military targets

The Council of Europe cited some of the actions carried out by the PKK in the past years. Almost all of the evidence consists of actions against military targets. The Council of Europe also cited a PKK drone attack against a military target as evidence.

After the pleas of the PKK and the Council, the court committee asked questions to the plaintiffs. S. Gervasoni, the French head of the tribunal, asked why the Council of Europe targeted other organizational structures such as KADEK and KONGRA-GEL, citing the PKK as its justification.

While the Council of Europe argued that the PKK and KONGRA-GEL are the same organizations, lawyer Buruma said that KADEK no longer existed, and that KONGRA-GEL could not be considered as the PKK. She stated that the whole Kurdish movement could not be considered as constituting the PKK since it is an organization from the bottom up.

Britain's attitude

In their plea, the lawyers also stated that the PKK's inclusion on the list was based on Britain's stance in 2001 and, since the UK is no longer an EU member, the situation should now be dealt with in more depth. In other words, it was pointed out that the ruling in 2021 was not taken by a competent authority, because the UK ceased to be a member of the EU.

The judge asked the representative of the Council of Europe about a PKK drone attack against a Turkish military base in South Kurdistan. The judge asked for clarification on why the drone attack was sufficient for the PKK to remain on the list. The European Council remarked that it did not matter where this information had come from, and the council made their own decisions. It added that it would be more careful in the future.

Buruma: Council relies on previous rulings instead of new ones

Buruma stated that it is perhaps more difficult to remove an organization from the list than to add it. The PKK lawyer said that although a Belgian court has recently ruled that the PKK is not a terrorist organization, the Council of Europe continues to rely on previous rulings.

When the Council of Europe did not utter anything as final words, the court committee concluded the hearing. It is not known when the ruling will be announced.

Cases at court of justice

There are many cases before the European Court of Justice concerning the PKK. Towards the end of 2018, the Court of Justice found the reasons put forward for keeping the PKK on the "terrorist organizations list" insufficient and rescinded the lists between 2014 and 2017.

The court thus found the arguments presented for listing the PKK as "insufficient" and ruled that it could not be included in the list on these grounds.

However, the EU appealed to a higher court to object to the ruling. Immediately after, the UK applied again in 2018 to keep the PKK on the list, and the PKK was automatically relisted on January 9, 2018, based on the same arguments. The Kurdish claimants also filed a lawsuit against the new list on March 7 the same year.

The objection of the Council of Europe to the previous ruling and the case against the new lists were combined and the first hearing was held on March 31, 2022.

During the hearing on March 31, the Court of Justice criticized the Council of Europe and reacted to the "copy-paste" defence method based on the same arguments despite the cancellation of the previous lists.

One of the judges called on the Council of Europe to respect the rulings, saying that “it is surprising that the Council made a copy-paste objection to a ruling that was annulled by the Court.”

PKK included in EU’s blacklist in 2002

After the German government put the PKK on its banned organizations list on November 26, 1993, a new security concept was introduced across the world following the attack on the Twin Towers in the USA in 2001. The European Union created a list in December of the same year, as part of the “war on terrorism” imposed by the USA. Thus, the PKK was included in the list in 2002.



MSLA co-director Veysel Ok says ‘censorship law’ will affect everyone

RONI ARAM | ISTANBUL | 24 JUNE 2022

MSLA Co-director and lawyer Veysel Ok said: “The government is aware of the fact that journalists continue to do their work despite everything, and with this censorship law wants to further strengthen this control mechanism and monopolize information.”

The General Assembly discussion of the 'Draft Law Amending the Press Law and Some other Laws', signed by AKP-MHP deputies to “fight disinformation”, has been postponed for the time being. For a while, journalists organized “no to the censorship law” actions in the field at the call of professional press organizations. Both the coming of this new law to the Parliament and the arrest of 16 Kurdish journalists in Amed while this law was being discussed in the Justice Committee showed how much freedom of the press is at risk. Media and Legal Studies Association (MSLA) co-director and lawyer Veysel Ok spoke to ANF about the law and why the government needs it.

They want to monopolize information

Lawyer Veysel Ok said: “The AKP government has been trying to contain the media since the 15 July coup attempt. It has changed the capital structure of the mainstream media; now more than 90 percent belongs to pro-government capital. Some opposition media and the Kurdish press were closed at that time. Moreover, internet law has changed several times before. The new law forced media companies to open offices in Turkey and to share the personal information of Turkish users with the state, but these were not enough. The government still hasn't been able to control social media, and despite everything, it is social media and journalism here that set the agenda in Turkey. The government is aware of this, and with this censorship law, it wants to further strengthen this control mechanism and monopolize information.”

Not only journalists

Even before the law was passed, the Directorate of Communications made a statement rejecting the news in the media about the fire in Marmaris. The fire was said to be under control, but local sources confirmed that in fact it was not.

Veysel Ok, recalled that the debate on this law had emerged last year during the fires, and added: “The discussion of this news and information law started with the Bodrum fires last year. At that time, a concept such as “spreading misleading information” was discussed, and it is the same now. The important thing here is this: this situation concerns not only journalists, but also politicians and citizens. In other words, “the crime of spreading misleading information to the public” is not a crime that only journalists will commit. It is a crime that citizens, journalists, politicians, in short, anyone can commit. If this law is enacted, no one in Turkey will be able to publish information that the government does not want or approve, and if they do, they will be subject to judicial harassment.”

Noting that journalism is already under a lot of pressure, Ok listed other possible targets should the law be passed. “If you spread information that the government does not want, from forest fires to the price of the dollar exchange rate, from the Kurdish issue to Syria policy, both your social media account can be closed and you can face up to three years in prison. For example, CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu made a corruption claim on social media, but with the new law he will no longer be able to do so. Journalists are also doing their job on social media. Citizens will not even be able to put forward an opinion other than the official statement of the government on any issue from hazelnut prices to the forest fire in Marmaris.”

No access to news

Ok said, “While the Kurdish journalist or Mezopotamya Agency employee who published the image of a police officer shooting in the air during an arrest in Başkale was put on trial for 'making propaganda and membership in a terrorist organization', with the new law he will also be accused of 'misleading the public opinion'. He will also be prosecuted for 'disseminating false information'. The social media account he posted the news on will be blocked instantly. It seems that our access to such news will disappear completely.”

A law which will undermine elections

Underlining that this law is an election-oriented regulation, Veysel Ok added: “This is the problem of all citizens. Today there is an opposition candidate who could change the government, assuming that he will win the election. If this law passes, the opposition candidate will not be able to make his discourse. This has been tried before in countries like Russia and China. It was partially successful. Of course, there is no possibility of success in the long run. No one can monopolize information, but passing this law before the election affects election security. Tomorrow, the HDP or the CHP will no longer be able to freely express their opinions on social media. It also affects non-governmental organizations. For example, MSLA publishes freedom of expression reports, HRFT reports on torture, and IHD publishes reports on prisons. Even these reports may fall within the scope of misleading the public. That’s why I think we will face a serious problem in Turkey in every respect.”



Şenyaşar family reaches day 461 of their Justice Vigil

ANF | URFA | 12 JUNE 2022

The Justice Vigil carried out by the Şenyaşar family has reached day 461. The vigil was launched on 9 March 2021 by Emine Şenyaşar, who lost her husband and two sons as a result of the attack carried out by AKP Deputy Ibrahim Halil Yıldız's bodyguards and relatives, in Suruç, province of Urfa, on 14 June 2018.

The family, as every weekend was carrying out the vigil at their home in Suruç. The family posted a message on Twitter, to draw attention to the independence of the judiciary and said: "Prosecutors who take an oath of honour saying 'I will uphold the law' forget their oath when the judges and those who are powerful in position demand that they make unjust decisions. Fighting against unlawfulness is the duty of every citizen with a conscience."



Opinion

Turkish reason of state

DINO BEROJ | 13 JUNE 2022

Last Wednesday, three bodies were found during restoration work in the former central prison of Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) in the Sur district, which was almost completely destroyed by the Turkish army in the 2016 urban war. In the 1990s, the Turkish military intelligence service JITEM, responsible for thousands of murders of civilians, used the prison as an interrogation centre. At the time, this centre was referred to as the address of the "disappeared". In January 2012, body parts were discovered during construction work, whereupon the Diyarbakir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office took over the matter, but after that, never a word was spoken publicly about the discovery. Every time a pickaxe is driven into the ground, bodies are discovered under former state offices in Kurdistan. The Diyarbakir prison had a twofold notorious reputation in the 1980s; one as one of the worst torture prisons in the world, the other as the symbol of resistance.

Threats against Greece

Last Wednesday, the Turkish military conducted a military exercise called "Efes 2022" over the Greek Aegean islands. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan personally took part in the military exercise and again threatened with hypocritical arguments such as the militarisation of the islands by Greece, which is why Turkey no

longer recognises Greek sovereignty there. Yet it was NATO countries like the US and France that moved their military bases to the islands and made a pact with Greece. Erdoğan threatened on Twitter in Greek: “Greece will regret it like a hundred years ago if it doesn't watch its approach, words and deeds.” Again on the same day, Erdoğan announced his candidacy for the 2023 presidential election, in which the AKP will again run in alliance with the fascist MHP.

Attack against Rojava

Even as Erdoğan flexes his muscles in the Aegean, he is actually eyeing democratic self-rule in northern and eastern Syria. On Wednesday, the US president's security adviser, Jack Sullivan, spoke on the phone with the Turkish president's adviser, Ibrahim Kalin. During the phone call, Sullivan made it clear that the US does not think much of a military operation in Rojava. Assistant Secretary of State at the US State Department Barbara Leaf also told the Foreign Affairs Committee that the US has made it clear to Turkey that it is opposed to a Turkish military operation in northeast Syria. However, she certainly does not expect Turkey to refrain from a military operation because of US objections. Whether Erdoğan will see this statement as a green light for his so often invoked military operation remains to be seen. In his speech on Thursday, he underlined: “Along our border, we will establish a security zone 30 kilometres deep. In doing so, we will not only banish terrorist organisations from our borders, but also ensure the security of our neighbours. We will not accept any corridor of terror and I want to emphasise that we will fill in the missing parts of the security zone.”

Erdoğan went on to say that he hoped that “Turkey's allies and friends” would understand Turkey's security concerns and that no one would make a choice in favour of the “terrorists”. This seems to be his message to the US. While the Biden administration publicly opposes an attack on Rojava, what is being negotiated behind closed doors is not yet clear. Especially since the Turkish military operation is staking out as targets the towns of Tel Rifat and Manbij, which are under the jurisdiction of the Russian military. Furthermore, a not insignificant number of Iranian troops are stationed in Tel Rifat. On Thursday, Russia also publicly spoke out against a military operation by Turkey in the areas mentioned. Now it depends on how Turkey will act.

While Erdoğan accuses the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria of terrorism, Turkish drones and artillery regularly bomb them, killing civilians. Southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) is also bombed daily by the Turkish air force in violation of international law. Turkish ground forces are trying to make progress in the liberated areas in Southern Kurdistan, such as Avaşîn, Metîna, Heftanîn, Xarkurke and Zap, despite heavy losses. The Turkish war of aggression extends over 100 kilometres deep into Southern Kurdistan territory.

Raids and arrests in Turkey

Inside Turkey, too, hardly a week goes by without raids and arrests. Arrests of politically active women, the detention of 20 Kurdish journalists and the repression of other activists are part of this now normalised regularity and everyday life of Kurds in Turkey.

And what is the attitude of the opposition in Turkey? Like the rulers, the so-called opposition around the CHP, the Table of Six, understands politics as a means by Turks for Turks. They try to solve all their problems by force. When it comes to Turkey's neighbours and minorities, they all line up behind the regime.

That is why there is hardly anyone with whom they are not in a twist and no minority with whom they have made peace. Whether secular or religious, Turkish politics is militaristic and domineering; it will not hesitate to embark on adventures that will end in disaster. Therefore, Erdoğan will direct his anger against the Kurds and establish a state of war in order to win the elections under these conditions. The so-called six-party round does not have any other alternative, because it does not leave the framework of Turkey's reason of state. It is quite possible that Erdoğan will wait until the next NATO summit, but his election calendar will be decisive. With a military operation in Rojava, a state of war and emergency will be declared, muzzling any opposition and putting it behind bars. And since there is no real opposition in Turkey, Erdoğan will also win the next elections with his war and nationalist-militarist rhetoric.

To return to the beginning, the discovery of bodies in the former JITEM interrogation centre; no matter who was in power in Turkey, everyone always agreed that any injustice would be buried once Turkish interests were at stake. That is the Turkish reason of state. It was like that in the 1920s, the 1990s, the 2000s; and it will remain like that until a somehow characterised end.



Interviews

Mustafa Karasu: The status quo of the 20th century cannot be maintained

ANF | BEHDINAN | 14 JUNE 2022

Mustafa Karasu from the Executive Council of the KCK (Community of Kurdistan Societies) assessed the current situation against the background of the current escalation of the war by the Turkish state. In this ANF interview, he addressed the regional and geopolitical context of the attacks.

The chaos in Iraq caused by a political vacuum have deepened. How does this relate to the attacks on Shengal and the Medya Defense Areas?

The chaos and political vacuum in Iraq have deepened. Due to the weakness of democratic consciousness in Iraq, political stability based on a democratic political mind-set cannot develop. The nationalist and sectarian approaches deepen the political fragmentation. The fact that Iraq has become a battleground for many foreign powers is an important factor at the origin of this situation. With no determined and effective democratic political force emerging, people have lost faith in politics. In fact, almost 80 percent of people do not vote. This is not only the case in Iraq, but also in South Kurdistan. The KDP, which won the most seats in parliament in South Kurdistan, actually received only 15 percent of the votes of the population of South Kurdistan. The current government in Iraq does not represent the will of the people, so it is very weak.

The Turkish state uses the weakness experienced by Iraq. It used the KDP and the KDP used it as leverage in Iraq. Iraq is conducting its current policies under threats and blackmail from the Turkish state and the KDP. For this reason, Iraq does not raise its voice against the Turkish invasion of the Medya Defense Areas and takes steps in Shengal to please Turkey and the KDP.

Turkey and the KDP also benefit from US concerns about Iran, gaining support for their Iraq policy. Under the influence of the US, Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi remains silent about the Turkish attacks and, at the request of the KDP and Turkey, is sending its forces to Shengal to eliminate the self-government. In short, the situation in Iraq provides an environment favourable to Turkish occupation and KDP collaboration. In any case, the KDP does not conduct its policy on the basis of relations with Iraq, but with Turkey.

Some promises may have been made to the KDP, but the KDP's hostility towards the PKK runs as deep as the Turkish state's hostility towards the PKK. Like the AKP-MHP government, the KDP sees its future linked to the elimination of the Kurdish freedom struggle. The KDP is now a formation that only acts in the interests of one family. There is no Kurdish thing for them; it has become a force that sees the Kurds only as a means to its own advantage. For them, Kurdish identity has become a political bargaining chip. Colonial Turkey has been in contact with the KDP since the 1960s to keep the Kurds under control.

The more the Turkish state comes under pressure, the more the KDP takes part in the war. It prevents the flow of ammunition and food to guerrilla areas. It cuts off the paths between the guerrilla forces, restricts freedom of movement and prevents aid. The KDP is now going even further and is trying to tighten the siege ring and conquer some guerrilla areas for Turkey.

The current situation is one of world reconfiguration and energy wars. So what is this about?

The US, Great Britain and NATO are supporting the Turkish state in the elimination of the PKK. The fact that a bounty was put on our friends Cemil Bayık, Murat Karayılan and Duran Kalkan shows that somehow these murders were intended to be the next step of the international conspiracy. Those who issued the assassination order against these three friends will, of course, give their full support to the Turkish state. The Turkish army uses all NATO resources. In that sense, our war is, in a way, a war against NATO. The Turkish state's criticism of the US and NATO from time to time is intended solely to convey the impression that the war is being waged under its own steam. The Turkish state actually wants these forces to take part in the war against the Kurdish people, the PKK and the guerrillas. If the Turkish state did not receive NATO and US support, it would not be able to continue this war and would be defeated in a short time. Without this support, the Turkish regime will collapse. The regime could not stand up to the democratic forces and the freedom struggle of the Kurdish people.

In short, Turkey continues to be of great importance to international powers, albeit not as it did during the Cold War. Although the US, NATO and UK interests in the Middle East are not as strong as they used to be, relations with Turkey are still considered important and the Turkish state is supported. Capitalist modernity should not be expected to be correct, conscientious and just in its politics. We shouldn't complain about this behaviour, instead we should fight hard and let these dirty alliances fail. Since the conditions of World War III do not correspond to the Cold War era, the Kurds will be successful in their struggle. This will happen regardless of the support the Turkish state receives. The Kurds can create a free Kurdistan and a democratic Middle East. It is also clear that the Kurds have made significant progress and

won the support of the peoples of Europe and the world. This support makes it difficult for the Turkish state and it has great problems getting all its wishes from Europe and NATO.

Turkey wants to use a mutual agreement to crush the freedom struggle of the Kurdish people. Europe is making concessions to Turkey to get its demands for a pipeline. A concession would give Turkey even more influence. We also follow this process; we need to uncover these dirty deals. Everyone should know that it is clear that such a pipeline directed against the Kurdish people's freedom struggle will not be safe.

Erdoğan repeated his threats to invade Rojava. Why does the AKP-MHP government want to launch a new invasion attack?

The fascist AKP-MHP government sees the freedom of the Kurds in Rojava as a threat to their colonial system. The regime fears that if the Kurds achieve a free and democratic life in Syria, it could set an example for North Kurdistan. This is the only reason for the attack. There is no such thing as a security issue. Rojava does not threaten Turkey's security. Turkey threatens the security of Rojava and Syria, not the other way around. It is also responsible for the fact that the problems in Syria have still not been solved. The AKP-MHP regime threatens political stability not only in Syria and Rojava but throughout the Middle East. Rojava is a threat to fascism, not Turkey's security.

It is shameful to hear NATO, the US and Europe say they understand Turkey's security concerns. The whole world sees that Turkey is destroying the security and life of entire peoples by attacking Rojava and Syria. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their country due to Turkey's attacks. Turkey is changing the demographic structure; it is committing genocide. Instead of seeing these things and opposing Turkey, the US, NATO, Europe and Russia legitimize and encourage the invasion by saying that they understand Turkey's security problem. They only do this because they are out for their own political advantage. The accomplices of these attacks were primarily the US, Europe and NATO. When Afrin was occupied, it was mainly the Russians. The US and Russia are aware of Turkey's weakness in relation to Rojava and Kurdistan, so they try to carry out their interest in politics on the backs of the Kurdish people.

Erdoğan's political style is considered the style of a jackal. He acts opportunistically and in the short term. That might work sometimes. But such forms of politics, which are not based on a general policy and strategy, always harbour the danger of turning into the opposite, and this often happens.

The AKP-MHP regime is trying to keep itself on its feet by creating a success abroad that will influence Turkish society and politics in its favour. In 2021, the Turkish state attacked the Medya Defense Areas, without success. In view of the daily heavy blows from the guerrillas, this occupation operation is now also being questioned in Turkey. When Erdoğan realized he could not succeed, he decided to use the Ukraine crisis to invade Rojava. He intends to eliminate the Kurdish achievements in Rojava and to use this domestically. The AKP wants to go into the new elections with an occupation of Rojava. However, the peoples of Northeast Syria will resist to the utmost based on the lessons learned from the occupations of Afrin, Serêkaniyê and Girê Spî. A new offensive means a permanent, long-lasting war. The AKP-MHP government will lose as a result of such a war and the peoples of Northeast Syria, but also the peoples of Turkey and the Middle East, will see gains. The Turkish occupation will also be swept away from the areas already occupied. A new attack will certainly lead to such a result.

How would you rate the developments in NATO after the start of the Ukraine crisis and Turkey's attempts to blackmail Finland and Sweden?

The NATO accession of Sweden and Finland during this period serves to put pressure on Russia. Russia is not a threat to Sweden and Finland. Although Russia is currently under pressure, the entry of these two countries into NATO has been put on the agenda as a result of the policy of bringing all of Europe under the NATO umbrella. In a way, NATO is being turned into a European security alliance. It seems that these questions have already been discussed in advance. When Russia's intervention in Ukraine took place, these two countries' accession to NATO was accelerated. Since the admission of a member to NATO must be by consensus of all countries, Erdoğan, as a political jackal, tries to take advantage of the situation. Although there are rules such as consensus by all members, there is no tradition of rejecting and blocking majority approval. In such a situation, it would only be natural for that member to be expelled from the alliance. No alliance can be left to the discretion of a country.

But Turkey, believing it is indispensable, can resort to such blackmail. It wants to enforce a few things here. But the main issue is the arms embargo in some European countries, including Sweden. Some military equipment is not sold to Turkey. On the other hand, the Turkish state wants to get better cameras and other sensitive equipment for its drones, which it boasts so much about. This is the main reason why the Turkish government wants to make Sweden and Finland the subject of a deal. It does not want to force Sweden and Finland, but also the European countries, the US and Canada, to lift the arms embargo. It's also about the F-16. It turns out that people are willing to make compromises in this regard. Actually, dirty deals are happening. This fact must be exposed and the democratic forces in Europe, the US and other countries must be mobilized. European countries and other states should not support the AKP/MHP regime's attack on democracy and genocide against the Kurdish people by supplying arms to Turkey.

Turkey's war policy is leading to an economic, political and social crisis at home. How do you view the attitude of the opposition in Turkey?

Turkey is experiencing a crisis in all areas. The reason for this is the war against the freedom struggle carried out by the Kurdish people. Whatever crisis and problem is examined, the Kurdish question and the dirty special war against the Kurdish people is shown as the cause. Without acknowledging this reality, there can be no real opposition. When prices rose and the economic crisis hit people hard, the fascist leader Erdoğan asked if people knew the price of a bullet. Can there be a clearer definition of the causes of the economic crisis than this? If the cause of the crisis and this issue are not exposed, the opposition will not be fully effective. The opposition must face the question of what policy it will pursue on the Kurdish question once it is in power. If there is no attitude towards a democratic solution and such an approach to the Kurdish question, the new rulers will pursue similar policies as today. If the AKP/MHP government collapses, however, it will no doubt become difficult for the new rulers to fully resume old policies. Because those who overthrow this government are not the official opposition. This government will be destroyed by the struggle of the people and the revolutionary democratic forces; the Kurdish freedom movement and the radical democratic political structures play the greatest role in this.

You cannot be a genuine opposition based solely on voicing economic problems. Of course, the economic crisis is deep and people are affected by it. From this point of view, economic problems can be addressed in order to expose the regime. However, it should be made clear that the economic problems cannot be solved until Turkey is democratized and the Kurdish and Alevi questions as well as many other problems

are democratically solved. In other words, it is important to present a democratization program. In a real sense, democratic government means that the decisions and the initiative lie with the people. It should aim to establish democratic social self-government.

What is the connection between the occupation policies of the international powers in the Middle East and the attacks on the PKK?

First of all, we must underline the following. There is a direct connection between the liquidation of the PKK and the genocide of the Kurdish people. Those who do not understand the truth about the enemy, Kurdistan and the PKK may take this as our subjective opinion and exaggeration. But the character of the present enemy, the attacks they carry out and our resistance to them are the greatest evidence of this fact. The level of hostility of the Turkish state towards the PKK; the support given to the Turkish state and the sell-out of Turkey are evident. That is why even the word Kurd and the Kurdish existence are not tolerated. If it weren't for leaders like Rêber Apo, who understood the reality of the enemy, the Kurdish reality and the reality of the Middle East, no struggle could have emerged that would have saved the Kurdish people from genocide. Rêber Apo and the PKK know the enemy very well. In this way, the PKK differs from all Kurdish organizations. From day one, the Turkish state wants to assimilate Kurdistan and expand territory of the Turkish nation. Coming to this conclusion depends on having a deep knowledge of the enemy's reality.

“The regime relies on the genocidal tradition of the Turkish state”

The fact that the AKP-MHP coalition is attacking the PKK on such a massive scale in order to survive is related to the fact that genocide is the basis of Turkish politics. Otherwise the regime would not have been able to pour all the country's resources into this war just to keep itself in power. Strong opposition would have arisen. But the regime is drawing on the Turkish state's tradition of genocide in carrying out these attacks. Although the opposition knows that these attacks serve to keep the AKP/MHP government in power, they answered yes to Erdoğan's question about supporting the cross-border attacks.

“The essence of Turkey policy has not changed since Lausanne”

The support of the international powers for the Turkish state is related to the power balances established in the 20th century and the status quo based on them. This status quo is linked to the anti-Kurdish genocide. The international powers have still not made a fundamental political shift in relation to this 20th-century anti-Kurdish status quo. Led by Britain, the international powers have given the green light to Turkey's genocide of the Kurds within the country's borders in exchange for Mosul and Kirkuk to Iraq. This is the essence of the Lausanne Agreement. To date, this policy has not changed. The support of the genocide in North Kurdistan is a local expression of this policy. It is put into practice by the fact that the KDP supports the genocide in North Kurdistan in order to preserve its own existence. In return for dominating a city or two, the KDP becomes the biggest supporter and defender of the genocidal policies of the Turkish state.

“Support for the genocide has deeply shaped international politics”

Support for the Turkish state's genocidal policies has had a profound impact on Turkey and Middle East politics since the 20th century. This policy has not changed. But the struggle of the PKK poses obstacles

and problems in the way of these forces and their policies. For this reason, the international powers are troubled by our struggle. Because as long as we continue the struggle, they cannot carry out their regional policy, especially in Turkey, as they wish. They are trying to pressure us with their support for Turkey and make us give up the fight.

Undoubtedly, the international powers are convinced that the ideology developed by Rêber Apo is an obstacle to their regional policies. They don't want the Middle East to be truly democratized. Because in a real democracy they cannot find collaborators to the desired extent. A democratizing Middle East requires more egalitarian political relations. They cannot easily impose what they want on democratic countries and societies. For this reason, they also fight the apoistic paradigm of a free, ecologically democratic and women-free society. Democratic Confederalism, based on an egalitarian-organized democratic society, is a system that is shaking international political and social systems and provides an alternative. Therefore, the international powers support Turkey against Rêber Apo and the PKK. They side with undemocratic forces like the KDP in order to prevent apoist thinking from gaining ground among the Kurds.

But today they cannot maintain the status quo of the 20th century, nor the current regime in Turkey, nor the KDP in this way. If we make great sacrifices, our struggle will disrupt the attacks and plans of these forces and create a free Kurdistan and a democratic Middle East.



Who Are We?

The International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan” was founded in March 1999, a month after Öcalan’s abduction from Kenya and his imprisonment by Turkey. Since its initial foundation, the International Initiative struggled for Abdullah Öcalan’s release from prison so that he can play his rightful role in the establishment of a just peace between the Turkish state and Kurdistan’s Workers Party (PKK). The International Initiative also aimed at contributing to the repairing of the ties between the Kurdish and Turkish peoples, as well as all other peoples of the Middle Eastern regions.

In order to achieve its aims, the International Initiative followed several related paths. Influencing international and national audiences through international campaigns to interfere with Turkish state’s policies towards Abdullah Öcalan has been one of these paths. A second area of work the International Initiative committed itself is the dissemination of Öcalan’s views through art, publications and conferences. Finally, the International Initiative has also been active in raising awareness for Öcalan’s conditions and the human rights violations he faces through reports, fact-finding delegations and lobbying.

Campaigns

The International Initiative organizes signature campaigns to influence the policies towards Öcalan. One such campaign which was launched in 2012 by one thousand preliminary signatories including Gerry Adams, Prof. Antonio Negri, Prof. Immanuel Wallerstein, Prof. Achin Vanaik, and other intellectuals, politicians, MPs, and NGOs from South America, Europe, Asia, Russia, and the Middle East. The campaign reached 10,328,623 signatures and may be the biggest signature campaign for the freedom of a political prisoner that the world has ever seen. It significantly challenged the isolation that was enforced on Öcalan and possibly paved the ways for the peace talks that the Turkish state and Öcalan led between 2013 and 2015.

The International Initiative also organizes video campaigns that educate the public on Öcalan’s life-story, his prison conditions and the demands for his freedom.

Publications

The International Initiative translates, edits and publishes books written by Öcalan in different languages including in English, German, French, Spanish and Arabic.

It compiles brochures from his works on specific topics, such as democratic confederalism or women’s freedom.

It edits books on Öcalan that discuss his main ideas.

The International Initiative also publishes regular reports on Öcalan’s prison conditions and his isolation.

Conferences

The International Initiative organizes biannual conferences and invites scholars, activists, students and politicians to discuss Öcalan’s ideas in order to initiate a conversation between different Movements around the world.

Delegations

Every year on February 15th, which is the date of the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan, the International Initiative organizes a group of internationally acclaimed people to take a trip to Turkey for a fact finding mission and publicizes their findings.

Lobbying

The International Initiative lobbies in the European Council, CPT and other international organizations against the human rights violations against Abdullah Öcalan and his total isolation in İmralı prison.

Art for Öcalan

This campaign aims to express the relationship between Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish people, freedom and women’s freedom and to educate the wider public on the past and present of the Kurdish people. The International Initiative has already collected art from Brazil, South Africa, USA, South America, Italy, Germany as well as Kurds from different parts of Kurdistan. These works have been printed in postcards, t-shirts and canvas and made available for solidarity sale.

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