

# THE İMRALI POST

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

Issue № 15 / 31 July 2022 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

## Contents

<b>Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Families of Öcalan and other prisoners in Imrali apply for a visit.....	2
Ten years ago, the Rojava Revolution.....	4
<b>Prisons in Turkey.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Prison guards threaten to kill the inmate they tortured in Erzurum.....	5
25-year-old political prisoner “found dead” in Diyarbakır Prison.....	6
Hunger strike of political prisoners in Adana continues.....	6
Leyla Güven’s letter to 84-year-old prisoner confiscated.....	7
Prisoner dies under suspicious circumstances in Urfa.....	8
80-year-old Kazım Kalbişen had his release delayed and died in prison.....	9
<b>Deaths in Turkish prisons are covered up.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Prisoner in Patnos L Type Closed on hunger strike for 12 days against violations.....	12
<b>Military Aggression and Occupation.....</b>	<b>12</b>
KCK: It is everyone’s duty to defend the Rojava Revolution against occupation.....	12
Children with down syndrome and autism in Maxmur cannot receive treatment due to the KDP embargo.....	15
Turkish attack against civilians results in casualties in Zakho countryside.....	18
Protests in Iraq after the massacre of 9 civilians by Turkish shelling.....	18
Turkey renews bombardment on Perex where it killed 9 civilians two days ago.....	21
The world remains silent, Turkey continues to kill civilians in South Kurdistan.....	22
Turkish State attacks on northern Syria continue.....	24
Eight YPJ fighters killed by Turkish drones in North-East Syria since April.....	27
Turkish army terrorises villagers in Yüksekova.....	28
<b>Femicide.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Women protest against court ruling on Istanbul Convention.....	29
<b>Ecocide.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Doctor Riha: Animals are killed and environment is destroyed by Turkish bombings.....	30
Soldiers cut down thousands of trees in Silopi to build military tower.....	30
<b>Human Rights Violations.....</b>	<b>31</b>
The government is seeking its future in silencing the media.....	31
Journalists working in South Kurdistan: We are threatened by the KDP and the Turkish state.....	35
Four parts of Kurdistan meet in Lausanne.....	37
7 members of HDP Youth Council detained in Antalya.....	37
Three people from Rojava imprisoned in Adana.....	38
The state encourages drug use in Van.....	38
Four young people detained in Antalya.....	39
<b>Interview.....</b>	<b>40</b>

Karayılan: The Treaty of Lausanne is against the Kurds and all the peoples of the region.....	40
<b>Opinion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Karayılan: We fight for a brighter future.....	43
The Kurds Aren't a "Security Threat" — They're the Ones Being Attacked.....	46
Film review: "Jiyan's Story".....	49
<b>Who Are We?.....</b>	<b>52</b>



## Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

### Families of Öcalan and other prisoners in Imrali apply for a visit

ANF | 22 JULY 2022

Families of the Kurdish political prisoners in Imrali Island Prison, Abdullah Öcalan, Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş have once again applied to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and the management of Imrali Island Prison to meet with their relatives.

Abdullah Öcalan's brother Mehmet Öcalan and his legal guardian Mazlum Dinç, Ömer Hayri Konar's brother Ali Konar, Hamili Yıldırım's brother Polat Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş's sister Melihe Çetin lodged an application to the Chief Public Prosecutor of Bursa and Imrali F Type High Security Prison Administration to meet their relatives.

Öcalan has been kept in aggravated isolation in Imrali High Security F-Type Prison near Istanbul since he was captured following an international conspiracy in 1999.

On March 14, 2021, rumours spread on social media claiming that Öcalan had died in prison. Immediately, protests were organised around the world demanding an urgent visit by the lawyers to Imrali.

On March 25, Öcalan was able to talk with his brother Mehmet Öcalan. The short phone conversation happened about a year after a previous call, on 27 April 2020, and it is the first time since then that Öcalan had actual contact with someone outside.

The phone conversation was held under the supervision of the Urfa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and was very short. The call was interrupted pretty soon. Likewise, the phone call by another prisoner on Imrali, Hamili Yıldırım, with his family was also abruptly interrupted. It was reported that the other two prisoners, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, did not make the phone call they were offered to protest isolation.

All applications for visit have been so far rejected or gone unanswered.

Lawyers of Öcalan were able to meet their client on May 2–22, June 12–18 and August 7, 2019, for the first time in 8 years. Since August 7, 2019, all applications have gone unanswered.

After Öcalan's lawyers applied to a Bursa court for an "urgent meeting" on November 22, it came out that two further bans had been issued against the Kurdish leader. The Bursa court rejected the application, citing a 6-month visitation dated October 12 as a reason.

The court also rejected the application of the families for a meeting with their relatives, citing a 3-month family visitation ban issued by the Disciplinary Board of the İmralı Penal Institution dated August 18, 2021.

The İmralı Delegation, which was able to hold talks with Öcalan within the framework of peace negotiations, has not been allowed to visit the prison island since April 2015. Since the last visit of the team of lawyers on August 7, 2019, the Turkish authorities have not responded to any of the continuous requests for visits.

The Turkish authorities use the "roadmap for negotiations" submitted to the European Court of Human Rights in 2009 as the justification for the ban on visits by Abdullah Öcalan's team of lawyers.

On the other hand, the investigation launched in 2012 against lawyers of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, Rezan Sarıca, Ali Maden, Baran Doğan, Cengiz Yürekli, İnan Akmeşe, Mahmut Taşçı and Mehmet Selim Okçuoğlu, was picked up again at the beginning of 2021.

The lawyers went to the prosecutor's office and gave a statement. After the statements were taken, the indictment prepared by the prosecutor's office was accepted by the Istanbul 33rd High Criminal Court. Lawyers are accused, among other things, of "membership of a terrorist organization", and they are expected to appear in court in September.

In the indictment, where lawyer meetings with Öcalan were shown as a criminal element, the lawyers' refusal to accept the accusations against them was also cited as a criminal element. In addition, while lawyer Cengiz Yürekli's use of his right to remain silent was shown as an element of crime, phone calls made by detainees with their families due to their profession were also considered a crime.

The most interesting subject of accusation in the indictment was that statements such as "isolation is being applied to Öcalan" and "lawyers have not been allowed to see him for 300 days" were cited as criminal elements. These were sentences contained in statements made by the lawyers to the press.

## Ten years ago, the Rojava Revolution

ANF | 19 JULY 2022

Ten years ago, on 19 July 2012, the Kurds found their own “Freedom Day” when the people of Kobane took control of their own destiny, repelling Assad’s Syrian forces and embarked on establishing their own self-government. On the following day, 20 July, the people in Afrin joined them in this endeavour, setting off a wave of successful resistance in the coming days and months across the region that emerged as Rojava. The heroic resistance of these embattled Kurdish men and women immediately inspired solidarity from onlookers around the world and peoples of all nations rallied to the defence of Kobane.

What has become known as the Rojava Revolution drew its direct inspiration from the leadership and writings of Abdullah Öcalan; it was a practical implementation of his core political ideas and unique contribution to the politics of Kurdistan and the broader Middle East region, with global implications and valuable lessons for the entire peoples of the world.”

The Rojava Revolution represents a total transformation in social organisation, one that introduces popular democracy and self-organisation from the grassroots into the foundations and entire structure of society, involving the direct participation of men and women of all creeds on the basis of full equality. In summary, the emergence of Rojava was to be a contemporary realisation of a long-held dream of peoples across the world and down the centuries of living in freedom and the possibility of controlling their own lives within a harmonious community of equals. In essence, Rojava meant hope and building a new life. On the 10th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution, Peace in Kurdistan honours its remarkable achievements and resilience. It remains a beacon of hope for the entire world.

Rojava was established in a situation of the most extreme adversity and born of necessity within the context of intense conflict that demanded urgent mobilisation to defend these predominantly Kurdish communities and repel the aggressive incursions of the Syrian regime and the so-called Islamic State ISIS terror gangs. Against the odds, Rojava united Kurds, Arabs and all other nationalities and ethnicities in a common cause of building a fairer society that would be run along democratic lines, a development unseen before within a region subjected to tyranny and oppressive dictatorships.

The ambitions of the Rojava Revolution did not stop at defensive measures to run a society under the difficulties posed by siege conditions. The Kurds and their allies who built the Rojava Revolution proceeded to implement a radical new model of political organisation defined as “democratic confederalism”, founded on libertarian principles involving autonomy, direct democracy and self-governance.

Furthermore, the Rojava Revolution also embedded the fundamentals of environmental politics, feminism, anti-racism, humanism and multiculturalism within a modern perspective that seeks to address the key challenges facing humanity and the planet at the present moment in history. For these reasons, as well as feelings of solidarity with the justice of the Kurdish cause, inspired the international solidarity for the Rojava Revolution. In this lies the full significance of Rojava for the future of humanity as a whole.

It is essential to acknowledge that the ideas that inspired the men and women who have fought for Rojava drew direct inspiration from the political ideas and leadership of Abdullah Öcalan. In this respect, Rojava

is a tangible manifestation of the democratic ideals of Öcalan and the Kurdish movement. These continue to make a vital contribution towards the transformation of the Middle East region and offer hope for people around the world. From the example of Rojava, the foundations of a new society are being laid that has implications for us all.

The Rojava Revolution is a revolution of all the peoples of the Middle East and indeed of all peoples around the world who seek justice and a better society.



## Prisons in Turkey

### Prison guards threaten to kill the inmate they tortured in Erzurum

ANF | ERZURUM | 18 JULY 2022

Emrah Yakut is jailed in Erzurum Dumlu No. 1 High Security Prison. Yakut told his family that he was subjected to violence during an open visit on July 13.

According to the prisoner's mother, Sebiha Yakut, who lives in Van province, her son told her that "The guards will kill me."

Yakut's mother stated that prison administration kept family members waiting in front of the prison for a long while and they could have an open visit only after they expressed their reaction to prison administration.

The mother added that about 50 guards were waiting in the corridor as she was on her way the visiting room. "When I reached the room, the guards waiting in the corridor dragged my son in. We asked him what had happened, and he told me that the guards were going to kill him."

The mother said that his son was subjected to severe violence and that he had bruises on his face and blood stains under his ears.

"When I asked the guards to bring water to my son, they brought only a sip of water in a glass. My son did not drink the water, saying that he didn't have the strength to raise his arm and drink the water. I helped him drink it. When we asked him why the guards beat him, he replied that 'they beat me because I don't accept their impositions.' My son also said that the guards gave him an injection after which he experienced a loss of memory," she remarked.

Mother Yakut also revealed that her son has not been given food for a few days. “When I asked the guards why they did not give him any food, they claimed that, ‘Our food is not good, so your son does not eat it,’” the mother said.

“I appeal to all mothers: Everyone should raise their voice against violations of rights in prisons. Do not let dead bodies come out of prisons. They are all our children; we demand our rights. They may have already killed my son in prison right now,” she concluded.



## 25-year-old political prisoner “found dead” in Diyarbakır Prison

ANF | AMED | 22 JULY 2022

25-year-old political prisoner Kadri Ekici was “found dead” in a cell in Diyarbakır No-2 High Security Closed Prison on Thursday evening.

The body of Ekici was taken to Diyarbakır Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital’s morgue yesterday evening and handed over to his family from the Forensic Medicine Institute this morning.

Reports say that Ekici, imprisoned for alleged “membership in a terrorist organization”, was being kept in a single cell for the past one year.

While the Ekici family was told that their son had committed suicide, family members stated that they had last talked to him three days ago and everything was normal as the 25-year-old said that he was well. The family has suspicions about the circumstances of his death.

Ekici was laid to rest in the Yeniköy Cemetery in the central Bağlar district.



## Hunger strike of political prisoners in Adana continues

ANF | ADANA | 24 JULY 2022

Hüseyin Aykol dedicated his column in the daily newspaper Yeni Yaşam to the hunger strike of political prisoners in the Kürkçüler F-type prison in Adana province. Founded in 2018, Yeni Yaşam (“New Life”) is a successor medium in the tradition of the free Kurdish press. Hüseyin Aykol, born in 1952 in Manisa in western Turkey, has been writing for opposition and socialist magazines since the 1970s and has been in prison himself several times.

Aykol quotes in his column a fax message from journalist Ibrahim Karakaş, who was sentenced to almost ten years imprisonment last August and is imprisoned in Kürkçüler: “The isolation and repression policies in İmralı Prison and the rights violations and arbitrary practices that are spreading in parallel in all prisons have reached an extreme level. In the prison we are in, these practices are gradually becoming psychological torture. Unfortunately, all our legal attempts and our insistence on resolving our legal claims through dialogue are ignored by the First Director of the prison and the prosecutor, and the scale of the problems and the torture used is increasing day by day. We are dealing with an approach that places itself above laws and circulars and acts in a hostile manner for purely political motives.”

The main demands of the prisoners are an end to the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan and an end to rights violations in prisons in general. Aykol’s article states that the hunger strike has been going on since 14 July in the form of five-day rotations. Karakaş warns that the action will turn into an indefinite hunger strike if their demands are not met.

The prisoners demand to “end isolation in İmralı Prison; ensure our constitutional right to access medical treatment, which is de facto prevented by the practice of mouth searches; leave the rooms locked with wire fences and in violation of the law; meet our demands for a change of room; participate in social activities recognised by law; end all pressure and isolation policies”.

Aykol also included messages from Dr Ayhan Kavak at Tarsus Type Prison No. 2, Kasım Karataş at Tekirdağ F Type Prison No. 2 and Elif Akkurt at Sincan Closed Women’s Prison. In addition to their health problems, the prisoners stated that Akkurt’s fellow prisoner Sibel Balaç is on a death fast and is demanding justice.



## Leyla Güven’s letter to 84-year-old prisoner confiscated

ANF | AMED | 24 JULY 2022

The case of Mehmet Emin Özkan is one of many tragic examples of the enemy criminal law practised in Turkey. The 84-year-old from Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) was sentenced to an aggravated life sentence in 1996 as an alleged PKK member for the murder of a Turkish general. Although since 2014 at the latest, the Turkish prosecution authorities have also been convinced of his innocence and even public prosecutors have demanded his release, Özkan remains in prison. The judiciary justifies the continuation of his imprisonment with the Lice trial, which is still pending before the Court of Cassation - despite severe illnesses such as Alzheimer’s dementia, hearing loss, respiratory weakness, a chronic inflammatory bowel disease and various heart attacks.

For tens of thousands of prisoners in Turkey, torture and ill-treatment are part of everyday prison life. Arbitrariness, brutality, lawlessness, physical and psychological torture prevail in Turkish jails. Kurdish prisoners who have been imprisoned or sentenced for political reasons are particularly affected by this regime of violence behind bars. Mehmet Emin Özkan is only one of many who have to experience this destruc-

tive and degrading reality day after day. They are denied a moment without worries, even if, as in the case of Özkan, he is a dementia patient.

A letter addressed to Özkan by Leyla Güven, a Kurdish politician imprisoned in Elazığ, has been confiscated. The prison management of the D-Type high-security prison in Amed gave the reason for the confiscation, stating tersely that the letter could give courage and moral support. The incident was first made public by HDP MP Meral Daniş Beştaş. On Twitter, the Turkish authorities' treatment of Özkan again triggered a wave of indignation. Some users wrote that even a dementia disease in the case of a Kurd would go unnoticed to prevent even a moment without worries in the sad everyday life in prison.



## Prisoner dies under suspicious circumstances in Urfa

ANF | URFA | 25 JULY 2022

Yet another prisoner died under suspicious circumstances in a Turkish prison. 25-year-old Mehmet Yılmaz allegedly committed “suicide” on 24 July while alone in the bathroom at the E-type prison in Urfa-Eyyübiye. Yılmaz’s body was taken to the Institute of Forensic Medicine (ATK) in Urfa, notorious for its favouritism towards the state, after being examined at the scene.

### “Prisoners are killed or driven to their deaths”

Political prisoners die almost weekly in Turkish prisons. “Suicide” or “death by disease” are the diagnoses given by Turkish forensic medicine. But there are massive doubts about the causes of death. Family members and human rights organisations report that most of the deceased prisoners were either executed or driven to suicide by repression, torture and threats.

### Political prisoner died in Amed a week earlier

Just on 21 July, Kadri Ekici, another 25-year-old political prisoner, died under suspicious circumstances in his cell in Diyarbakır Prison No. 2. The prison management claimed that the PKK prisoner, who was imprisoned for “disturbing the unity of the state and the country”, committed suicide. His family reports violence and threats against the prisoner and assumes an extrajudicial execution.



## 80-year-old Kazım Kalbişen had his release delayed and died in prison

ANF | MUs | 27 JULY 2022

80-year-old Kazım Kalbişen, whose sentence of 4 years and 2 months was upheld by Patnos High Criminal Court, passed away two days ago. Kalbişen, whose corpse was taken from Gebze, was buried in the village of Tetergazi in Malazgirt (Muş).

Kalbişen, who was suffering from a severe heart disease, was kept in prison despite having a report of 100% disability due to his illness. A lawsuit was filed against Kalbişen on the allegation of “aiding and abetting a terrorist organization”. The man was sentenced to 4 years and 2 months in prison by the Patnos High Criminal Court in 2009. The sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2020.

After the sentence was upheld, Kalbişen, fell ill on 10 July 2020, and was taken to the hospital. The lawyers’ applications for the postponement of the sentence were rejected while he was in the hospital. Eventually, Kalbişen was discharged under police pressure and taken to prison.

### Medicines not given

Describing what happened, Beritan Kalbişen, Kalbişen’s lawyer and granddaughter, said: “My grandfather was taken to Gebze Hospital because he fell ill while in prison. My grandfather was given a 100 percent disability report in 2015. He was simply too ill to be held in prison. After he was discharged under pressure from law enforcement, they took him to Kandıra Prison No. 1 F Type Prison by ambulance, but the prison did not accept him then. Then they took them to Kandıra No. 2 T Type, which did not accept him either. Finally, Kandıra No. 1 T Type Closed Prison accepted him. After the prison entrance procedures, my grandfather was transferred to Seka State Hospital Prisoner’s Ward. He was not given his medicine for 17 hours.”

### ‘Being held in prison led him to death’

Lawyer Kalbişen said: “My grandfather was eventually released in September, exactly 3 months after he had actually ended his time in prison. Those three months were like a death sentence. After my grandfather was released, he was taken to intensive care and stayed there for a week. We applied for a postponement of execution again in February 2021 and again in March 2022. After entering prison, my grandfather’s illness progressed a lot and, unfortunately, this situation led to his death.”

# Deaths in Turkish prisons are covered up

ANF | ANKARA | 27 JULY 2022

Çiğdem Kozan, co-chair of the prison commission of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) in Ankara, spoke to ANF about the daily increase in rights violations and arbitrariness in Turkey's prisons.

Explaining that suspension of release is the main concern of prisoners' relatives, Kozan said: "Prisoners who have served their sentence and should be released on parole using the right provided by law are not released from prison. Unlawful decisions and procedures are resorted to in order to legitimise this. Disciplinary sanctions are imposed on prisoners on null and void grounds, which are then used to justify the unlawful suspension of release. For example, in Sincan Women's Prison, 50 female prisoners were given disciplinary sentences for halay dancing and folk songs. Releases are also suspended by decision of the so-called Administrative and Monitoring Committee. This committee does not consist of lawyers, but is made up of people such as the prison warden, his deputy, administrative officers, the prison doctor, the psychologist, the chief warden and technical staff, but it makes decisions about people's freedom as if it were a court."

## Repentance is only required of political prisoners

Emphasising that no institution other than a court can make decisions about the freedom of individuals, Kozan continued: "The message of the Turkish state to political prisoners is; your freedom is not even in the hands of the courts, but in the hands of the prison administration. The Administrative and Monitoring Committee makes its decisions based on unlawful assessments. The committee often cites tragicomic reasons such as hugging a friend in passing in the corridor, being compatible with fellow prisoners or, even more absurdly, not attending school for a prisoner who is already a teacher, as reasons for its decisions. In fact, this is to force political prisoners to repent. However, we are talking about people who do not consider their actions to be a crime anyway. How can such a person repent? These decisions unlawfully deprive individuals of their liberties. The state has made the suspension of release by prison administrations, resulting in double punishment, the norm. Prisoners protest and raise their voices against these unlawful decisions. For example, in some prisons, prisoners went on hunger strike. Again, prisoners' families are carrying out actions related to the suspension of releases. Apart from this, prisoners are prevented from exercising their social rights such as communication and participation in courses and events. Even transfers to another prison or cell are not made. All these violations are what turn the prison into a place of torture for prisoners."

## "Deaths must be investigated"

Deaths in prisons are not only consequences of suicide or health problems, Kozan explained, noting that the causes of death must be investigated. She recalled the traces of ill-treatment on the bodies of deceased prisoners, stating: "Specifically, we can say that there are no effective investigations. There are often reports of deaths in prisons, but the manner of these deaths is covered up and no concrete investigations are carried out. After the death of Ferhan Yılmaz, it was claimed by the prison management that he died of a

heart attack; but the pictures that also appeared in the press showed that he had been severely tortured, his nose was broken and he had severe injuries all over his body. Prisoner Halil Kasan said in the last telephone conversation with his family before he was transferred to the intensive care unit that they had been tortured and driven to suicide by the guards. At this point I would like to state the following: Even if these prisoners committed suicide as alleged, the question must be asked whether, in the particular case, members of the guards or other employees of the prison drove these prisoners to suicide. Even if these deaths were suicides, I believe that the impact of prison conditions, prison practices, rights violations and isolation on the prisoners' psyche are serious and need to be investigated. Even if Garibe Gezer's death was a suicide, the question must be asked what influence the isolation in a padded cell and the abuse by members of the guard staff had on this."

### **"Torture and oppression against Kurdish prisoners"**

Kozan drew attention to the situation of seriously ill prisoners and said: "Forensic medicine even certifies that seriously ill prisoners are fit for detention. These prisoners either die in the prisons or they are released shortly before they die. Pictures of Mehmet Emin Özkan have also been documented in the press. He can barely walk and cannot look after himself. It is impossible for him to survive in prison, but he is not released. The Diyarbakir Training and Research Hospital has certified that he is unfit to be imprisoned, but the competent court would not release him. Similarly, Aysel Tuğluk was certified by the University Hospital of Kocaeli Medical Faculty that she cannot stay in prison, but the Institute of Forensic Medicine claims that she is fit to be imprisoned. This is because forensic medicine does not decide according to medical science and ethics, but according to the political weather. The deaths are the result of prison conditions and practices, and the reports and decisions of health and judicial authorities, and cannot be considered independently. To see the deaths in prisons only as a result of suicide or health problems is to ignore the torture and oppression of Kurdish prisoners."

### **"Treatment of prisoners according to the law of the enemy must end"**

The Turkish state could solve these problems in part by abiding by its own domestic law and the international conventions it has ratified, Kozan explained. However, he said, there could only be a solution if the law of the enemy was abandoned. "The prisoners would at least serve the sentences imposed on them according to the principles of world law and international conventions. A period of detention without isolation and violation of prisoners' rights may be a solution to some problems in prisons. But it must be pointed out that there are too many arbitrary provisions in Turkish law that can be interpreted against prisoners. The recently introduced administrative and monitoring committees are a clear example of this. We are talking about a system that does not release prisoners even though they have served their sentence. For this reason, it is important that first of all there is a change of thinking on this issue and that the mentality that violates the rights of prisoners and also legitimises this in law is abandoned. To put it clearly: The enemy penal law that applies to political prisoners must be abandoned. Only then can the problems be solved."

## Prisoner in Patnos L Type Closed on hunger strike for 12 days against violations

ANF | AMED | 19 JULY 2022

Mahmut Turhallı, a prisoner in Patnos L Type Closed jail, said that he has been on a hunger strike for 12 days against harassment by the prison administration. He said he was on hunger strike in a phone call with his family and said that arbitrary practices in prison had reached their peak.

He told his mother, Zeynep Turhallı, about the violations and mistreatment he had been subjected to and said that violations have increased while psychological violence has reached unbearable levels.

Zeynep Turhallı said: “My son has been on a hunger strike for 12 days. He said that he will continue his protest until his demands are met, and that he will go on a death fast if necessary.”

Turhallı said that she applied to the Human Rights Association and exposed the violations going on in prison. She added that she filed a criminal complaint with the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office about the prison directors and guards for the violations.

Turhallı called for public awareness and said: “My son suffers from a heart disease. His blood pressure is constantly rising. I fear for my son’s health. I am calling out to all mothers here, they should protect the rights of their children in prisons.”



## Military Aggression and Occupation

### KCK: It is everyone’s duty to defend the Rojava Revolution against occupation

ANF | BEHDINAN | 18 JULY 2022

The Executive Council Co-Presidency of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) released a written statement to mark the 10th anniversary of the 19 July Rojava Revolution, stating the following:

“We celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 19 July Rojava Revolution, the greatest and most meaningful revolution of the 21st century, on behalf of all Rojava and North and East Syrian peoples, women, youth and all peoples of the world. Expressing our gratitude, we respectfully commemorate all martyrs of the

revolution and democracy in the persons of those who fell fighting to realize and protect the Rojava Revolution.

### **Revolution of people and women who achieved victory in 21st century**

The 19 July Rojava Revolution is the great revolution of the peoples and women who achieved victory in the 21st century, the freedom struggle of peoples against power holders throughout history. As in all the revolutions made by the oppressed in history, the 19 July Rojava Revolution was achieved through fighting against oppression, exploitation, inequality and injustice and paying heavy prices. In this respect, the 19 July Revolution represents the great heritage of humanity. A continuation of the revolutions of the oppressed against power holders, the 19 July Rojava Revolution has created unique features and made very important and historical contributions to the world revolutions of the peoples.

One of the most distinctive features of the 19 July Revolution is the construction of a democratic and free society that does not aspire to power and the state but rather relies on the common and free will of peoples and society instead of power and state sovereignty. This feature of the 19 July Revolution has helped to reach the utopia of an equal and free life through a complete abolishment of the system of exploitation. This success of the 19 July Revolution is a very important and historic development. Since the revolutions made by oppressed peoples throughout history aimed at the power and the state, they could not reach their true goals, and the hegemonic systems eventually prevailed again. This is because of the fact that resorting to the state and power apparatuses, which are the tools of the hegemonic system, has driven revolutions apart from their goals. Thus, despite the revolutions achieved in history with heavy prices, the system of exploitation could not be abolished. This stalemate in the history of the world revolutions was resolved by the 19 July Revolution without resorting to power and state apparatuses. This situation represents a very important development in the history of world revolutions. Undoubtedly, this idea was introduced by Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. He delivered a solution to the matter of revolution with his moral/political societal understanding and the Democratic Confederalism system, and the 19 July Revolution was based on these values. So, the July 19 Revolution was realized based on the idea and paradigm put forward by Öcalan.

### **Revolution based on the democratic nation concept**

One of the most important features of the 19 July Revolution is that it is based on the Democratic Nation concept. Founded on the equal and common life of peoples, the Democratic Nation system has made it possible for peoples, cultures and faith communities to live without conflict and to rule themselves, which has now become the most important problem of the Middle East. Nationalism and the nation-state system imposed on the Middle East, where peoples have lived together throughout history, led to the escalation of the issues and the massacres in the Middle East because of the civil wars among them. Nationalism and the nation-state system have undermined the understanding of co-existence and common life which is the most distinctive feature of the Middle East history. After all, the nation-state system is a tool developed by capitalist modernity and created inequality and exploitation. The 19 July Revolution, founded on the Democratic Nation system, presented a solution to this deep-rooted problem in the Middle East and enabled peoples to live together based on equality.

### **Most distinctive feature is women's freedom**

Undoubtedly, the most distinctive feature of the 19 July Revolution is that it is based on women and women's freedom. The July 19 Revolution is a women's revolution par excellence. The realization of a revolution based on women's freedom by overcoming male domination, which maintained exploitation and inequality in history, is the first of its kind in history. Undoubtedly, women played a role in every revolution. However, the 19 July Revolution is led by women and women's will. It is a very important and historic development that the revolution is based on the leadership and will of women. Grounded on the Democratic Nation and Democratic Confederalism system, the 19 July Revolution delivered solutions to the deadlocks historically faced by revolutions and paved the way to eliminate social problems once and for all by relying on women's leadership and freedom.

### **Defending Rojava revolution is the most urgent problem**

The 19 July Revolution is currently facing serious dangers and it is now very important to protect the revolution by eliminating these dangers. Defending the Rojava Revolution in the face of the invasion threats by the genocidal colonial Turkish state is the most fundamental and urgent problem. The most basic duty and responsibility of being a revolutionary and patriot is to protect the revolution against invasion attacks. The AKP-MHP fascism, which represents the anti-Kurdish mentality of the genocidal colonialist Turkish state, wants to destroy everything related to the Kurdish identity and seeks to eliminate the Rojava Revolution. It has already occupied some parts of Rojava and Syria, and with the inhumane practices it implements in these occupied areas, it commits the crime of genocide by changing the demographic structure. The Turkish state and AKP-MHP government are anti-Kurdish and ultimately want to wipe out Kurdish existence by carrying out a genocide. The occupation of Rojava and the elimination of the North and East Syria's Democratic System are also considered as one of the most important stages of their plans.

Having tried and failed to eliminate the revolution by standing behind the curtain and setting loose Islamist groups, specifically ISIS, the AKP-MHP fascism now wants to dissolve the revolution by leading the mercenary groups on the ground. For this very reason, the real ISIS is the AKP-MHP, and thus everyone, especially the North and East Syrian forces and peoples, should take a stand against the occupation of AKP-MHP fascism. Being Kurdish, patriotic, revolutionary and democratic means to take a clear stance against the AKP-MHP occupation. Those who do not defy the AKP-MHP fascism will be defied by history and society. The Rojava revolutionary forces fought and stopped ISIS, the enemy of humanity, at the cost of thousands of martyrs.

By defeating ISIS, the Rojava revolutionary forces protected not only Rojava and Syria, but the whole world from a major danger, because ISIS is a threat not only to Rojava, but to all humanity. However, the United States, NATO and European states which have tried to take credit for themselves in the fight against ISIS are now engaged in great hypocrisy by openly endorsing the anti-Kurdish genocidal policies of the AKP-MHP that promotes ISIS mentality and supports the group. The claim that the Turkish state is supported for its security concerns is a complete distortion. The USA, NATO and European states already know that so-called 'security concerns' is a distortion and that not the security of the Turkish state, but the AKP-MHP government itself is a threat and security problem for Rojava, Syria and the entire region. However, they support the anti-Kurdish genocidal policies of the AKP-MHP fascism for the sake of economic and political interests, thus becoming partners in the anti-Kurdish genocidal policies of the AKP-

MHP fascism and the crimes committed by the AKP-MHP. These states are contributing to these crimes on behalf of the countries and peoples they represent. The peoples and democratic public opinion of these countries should take a stand against this and confront the Western support to the anti-Kurdish genocidal policies and Rojava's invasion plan.

Just as the forces and peoples of North and East Syria defeated ISIS and saved humanity from a huge trouble by challenging ISIS fascism, they will defeat the AKP-MHP by challenging the occupation of the AKP-MHP fascism which promotes ISIS mentality and will save the world from a bigger and more dangerous trouble than ISIS. Our people and the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla are already carrying out a struggle and resistance everywhere against the anti-Kurdish genocidal attacks of the AKP-MHP fascism. The Kurdish Freedom Movement calls on all the peoples of the world, as well as all revolutionary and democratic groups to stand by the peoples of Rojava, North and East Syria and defend the Rojava Revolution, as they did in the past. The Rojava Revolution is the common revolution of all peoples, women, the oppressed and humanity. It is a duty for everyone to defend the Rojava Revolution against occupation. The AKP-MHP fascism will be defeated and the 19 July Revolution, the joint revolution of the peoples and women, will maintain its existence thanks to the joint struggle of the forces and peoples of North and East Syria and the support of the peoples of the world and women. We once again celebrate the 10th anniversary of the 19 July Revolution on behalf of all peoples of Syria and the Middle East, and especially the peoples of North and East Syria, women and the peoples of the world.”



## Children with down syndrome and autism in Maxmur cannot receive treatment due to the KDP embargo

ANF | MAXMUR | 18 JULY 2022

The Martyr Rüstem Cudi Refugee Camp is located on the skirts of Qereçok Mountain in the Maxmur district of Mosul. Nearly 12 thousand citizens from North Kurdistan, who had to migrate to South Kurdistan in 1994 due to the brutal destruction campaign of the Turkish state, reside in the camp. Apart from the attacks of the Turkish state, the KDP has been imposing an embargo on the Maxmur Camp for the last three years.

On 17 July 2019, the KDP administration imposed an embargo on the camp and did not allow anyone in the camp to enter Hewler (Erbil). Dozens of patients with serious health problems are still denied access to Hewler due to the embargo. One day after the embargo, on 18 July 2019, Turkish fighter jets bombed the camp, injuring two residents.

The 'Hope Centre' (ku. Navenda Hêvî) inside the Maxmur Camp was established as a special school for children with down syndrome and autism with special needs. The school is one of the rare examples among refugee camps and very few in the world.

The 'Hêvî Centre' Director Salih Babat spoke to Rojnews agency about the impact of the embargo on the Maxmur Camp and especially on children with down syndrome and autism.

Babat stated that the Hêvî Centre was established in September 2018 under the leadership of Maxmur Health Management: "Friends who graduated from the psychology department undertook the Hêvî Centre project. Under regular conditions, 25-28 children are educated within the centre. However, families cannot bring their children due to their circumstances. Education is provided five days a week with 5 teachers and 25 students."

### **'Not a disease, but a difference'**

Babat told that apart from the special education, physical therapy is provided for some children in the centre, accompanied by group activities on some days. "Some children are given special education. This training is provided for children with down syndrome and autism, as well as for those with disabilities. Children with down syndrome have one more chromosome than normal children. The cause of autism is not yet known worldwide. According to the theories, the reason may be the environment, or something derived from the mother and father. We can't call it a disease, but a difference. Autism is dealt with through special education."

### **'There is awareness, but mostly just talk'**

Babat pointed out that there was awareness throughout the region, but this was mostly just talk. "Neither the regional government nor the Iraqi government has provided proper assistance to the centre. Only in Europe, associations such as the Freedom for Kurdistan and the Hope Initiative delivered material and financial aid to the centre in 2018 and they introduced us through catalogues and exhibitions in Germany. Between 2019-2020, the Kurdistan Red Crescent in Switzerland helped with the construction of the centre. Moreover, an Italian group helps the centre from time to time, but not on a regular basis," he noted.

Babat stressed that they are not recognized officially in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq, as they are only regarded as a camp institution. "Centres like ours provide services in cooperation with both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. On this basis, we contacted the Ministry of Education and submitted the relevant documents. A delegation from the Iraqi government came here and examined the centre. They said that they would visit the centre again in the future and grant official status to it. But that was just talk," he continued.

### **'They need to go out so that they don't feel alone'**

Babat spoke about the embargo imposed on the camp for the past 3 years: "We wanted to contact the families about the psychological problems of the children. We wanted to show the children that there are others like them, so they do not feel alone here. It would make them happier to know that there are special children like them. If there was no embargo, we would have organized outdoor activities. With these activities, communication could be established between the children in question. However, unfortunately, this is not possible. The Kurdistan Regional Government has been subjecting the camp to an illegal embargo for 3 years."

### **‘They haven’t seen their doctors for three years’**

Babat emphasized that they could not take the children out because of the embargo. “A few days ago, we went to Sulaymaniyah for the diagnosis and treatment of the children. It took us 7 hours from here to get there. Long journeys could be very annoying for children. Some of them can’t even handle that much time. If there was no embargo, we could have gone to Hewler in an hour. Medicines are crucial for children. When they do not take their meds, they cannot progress. They have private doctors, but they have not been able to see them for three years, which negatively affects their health.”

### **‘If the embargo continues, the children’s development will fall back’**

Babat underlined that if the embargo continues, the children’s educational development will fall back. “We want to improve ourselves and progress. Those who want to contribute to our activities can contact us through our social media accounts. We cannot provide a service outside the centre. Continuing education should be secured, but we do not have the opportunity to do so. We cannot halt their education. Since there are pauses, the children’s development also falls back,” he noted.

Babat appealed to the political parties and human rights institutions in Kurdistan and abroad, saying: “This embargo has no legal basis. The Regional Government, especially the KDP, imposes an embargo on the camp at the request of some people. People should raise their voice in order to break the embargo.”

### **Turkish attacks on the camp**

*On December 6, 2017;* Turkish fighter jets bombed the Maxmur Camp. 5 members of the Self-Defence Forces, Bager Boran, Botan Amed, Çekdar Mawa, Dewran Mardin and Baz Dijwar, were martyred in the attack.

*On 13 December 2018;* Turkish fighter jets bombed the camp, killing 73-year-old Asya Eli Mihemed, her 26-year-old daughter Nariñ Farhan Qasim, her 14-year-old grandson Evin Kawa Mehmud and 23-year-old Eylem Mihemed Emer.

### **Attacks on the camp during the embargo**

*On July 18, 2019;* Turkish fighter jets bombed the camp once again and two camp residents were injured.

*On April 15, 2020;* Turkish drone bombed the camp, leaving three young women in the camp dead.

*On June 15, 2020;* Turkish fighter jets heavily bombed the vicinity of the Maxmur Camp and Qereçox Mountain. No casualties were reported.

*On May 5, 2021;* Turkish drones attacked the Maxmur camp.

*On June 5, 2021;* armed reconnaissance planes of the Turkish army dropped bombs on the camp area where schools and parks are located, but no casualties were reported.

*On September 3, 2021;* Turkish drones bombed the Maxmur Camp, injuring a mother and a child.

*On February 1, 2022;* Turkish fighter jets once again bombed the Makhmur Camp, targeting the Self-Defence Forces. 2 members of the Self-Defence Forces were martyred and dozens of citizens who wanted to help their relatives were injured.

*On May 21, 2022;* Turkish drone bombed a vehicle in the Maxmur Camp. A shepherd named Hacı Mirza Eli was martyred.

*On July 5, 2022;* during the visit of the Iraqi Army General Commander, the Joint Operations Commander and several high-ranking commanders to the camp, a Turkish drone targeted a civilian house, leaving a woman injured.



## Turkish attack against civilians results in casualties in Zakho countryside

ANF | ZAKHO | 20 JULY 2022

The invading Turkish state forces attacked civilians in a village in the countryside of Zakho city in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on Wednesday.

According to initial reports, an artillery attack by the Turkish army targeted a group of Arab tourists on a picnic in the village of Perex, in Derkare town.

Speaking to RojNews agency, the district governor of Zakho, Mushir Bashir, stated that 8 Arab tourists were confirmed killed, while 17 people were wounded as a result of the attack.



## Protests in Iraq after the massacre of 9 civilians by Turkish shelling

ANF | BAGHDAD | 21 JULY 2022

On Wednesday, nine Arab tourists were killed by the Turkish army during the shelling of a picnic site in the countryside of the Zakho district in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). While the victims include small children, 23 people with injuries are still being treated in hospital.

Duhok provincial health director Efrasyab Musa reported on Thursday that 5 of those wounded in the attack are in critical condition.

On Thursday, national mourning was declared in the country for one day. The bodies of the victims have been taken to the Erbil Airport to be transferred to the capital Baghdad today.

The massacre has triggered massive protests among the Iraqi population. On Wednesday evening, countless people gathered in front of the Turkish embassy in Baghdad and tried to storm it. Activists entered the building, tore down the Turkish flag and burnt it. They demanded the closure of the embassy.

Hundreds of people have continued their protests in front of the Turkish embassy since the early morning hours, demanding its closure.

### **Call for mass protests**

People took to the streets in several other cities, including Karbala, where masses protested in front of the visa application center and burnt the Turkish flag.

While demonstrations in Baghdad continue, human rights activists, deputies and artists are calling for mass protests on the social media in response to the massacre. Reports say that people have also taken to the streets in Diyala today in protest at the killing of civilians.

On the other hand, the Diyala Chamber of Commerce has decided to boycott Turkish goods. A member of the Chamber, Musa Temimi, stated that they had announced their decision to boycott Turkish goods to the people of Diyala governorate. He added that they were against tour agencies advertising trips to Turkey.

In the meantime, all the Turkish Visa Application Centers in Iraq and South Kurdistan have halted working in the face of growing protests. No applications will be received for the time being.

The people of Kirkuk stormed the Turkish Visa Application Center in protest at the massacre, stating that they would not allow Turkey to operate on their land.

### **Protest by members of parliament**

At the same time, 91 members of the Iraqi parliament issued a joint statement on the massacre. The statement they signed calls for a special session of parliament with the participation of the Chairman of the General Staff.

According to the latest reports, the Iraqi parliament will hold an extraordinary meeting on Saturday with the participation of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. Serious decisions against Turkey are expected to be taken during the session.

## **Iraq withdraws its ambassador**

Iraq summoned the Turkish ambassador in Baghdad to demand an apology and withdrew its ambassador from Ankara. “Once again, the Turkish Forces committed an explicit and blatant violation of the sovereignty of Iraq and the lives and security of Iraqi citizens,” Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi tweeted on Wednesday. The PM continued: “Iraq reserves its full right to respond to these attacks and will take all necessary measures to protect its people and hold the aggressors accountable for the ongoing escalation.”

The Iraqi Foreign Minister, Fuad Hussein, told the press that as a result of the investigations carried out by military experts, it was determined that the attack on Zakho was carried out by Turkey. The minister reiterated that “it is our legal right to defend ourselves. The relations between Iraq and Turkey are historical. Problems should be resolved through dialogue. We have internal political problems, but there is a common attitude among us about this attack.”

## **Iraqi security council calls for the withdrawal of turkish troops**

Iraq’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohammad Hussein Bahr al-Ulum, told a Security Council meeting on the situation in Iraq on Wednesday that the “attacks by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party [PKK] can no longer serve as a pretext for Turkish troops to remain on Iraqi soil from now on”. In his speech at a UN Security Council meeting, the Iraqi envoy called for the withdrawal of all Turkish troops from the country. Baghdad has reportedly lodged a formal complaint with the UN Security Council against Ankara to protest Turkish military action in Iraq.

On the other hand, the Iraqi National Security Council convened urgently after the massacre and announced new decisions about Turkey. The Council has instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare a file on Turkey’s attacks on Iraq’s sovereignty and security. It was also requested that the file be urgently sent to the United Nations Security Council.

## **Ankara tries to put the blame on the PKK**

Ankara responded by denying involvement in the attack, calling on Baghdad to refrain from “terror propaganda” and trying to put the blame on the PKK.

## **“Turkey kills civilians under the auspices of the ‘claw-lock’ operation”**

The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) launched a new military campaign codenamed ‘*Claw-Lock*’ within Iraqi Kurdistan on 17 April 2022, with the aim of attaining total military control over the mountainous border region spanning roughly 180kms from east to west and up to 15kms south of the Iraq-Turkey borderline.

The Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Iraqi Kurdistan stated on July 2 that within the last month, 21 May to 21 June 2022, Turkish military operations have claimed the lives of 3 children and 2 adult civilians, as well as caused physical harm to 15 civilians in northern Iraq.

Since 2018, Turkish forces have been building bases on mountain peaks and ranges from the Sidakan area on the Iraq-Iran border to Haftanin in Zakho. Between the beginning of 'Claw-Lock' on 17 April and 25 April, the TAF constructed four new bases - two in Avashin and two in Zap. On 16 June, construction began on a new base on Kurazharo mountain above Shiladze.

The Turkish military has also developed a network of roads connecting the military bases and Turkish territory to facilitate resupply and reinforcement and strengthen their matrix of control over the occupied areas. From the mountain emplacements, Turkish artillery began firing on civilians living in and working on the agricultural lands in the valleys. On 15 and 17 June, in the border regions, Turkish soldiers wounded five civilians in two villages by firing at them from their bases.

### “Turkey has killed 129 civilians since 2015”

Since 2015, the Turkish Armed Forces have killed up to 129 civilians and wounded up to 180 civilians in northern Iraq. 'Claw-Lock' is another in a succession of Turkish military operations which has imposed death and displacement upon the people of this region.



## Turkey renews bombardment on Perex where it killed 9 civilians two days ago

ANF | ZAKHO | 22 JULY 2022

Nine people were killed and at least 23 injured when the Turkish state bombed a picnic site in the village of Perex in the southern Kurdish district of Zakho on 20 July. The victims include one-year-old Zahra and twelve-year-old Sara. Seven of them had come to Zakho from Baghdad for holidays, two men came from Karbala.

The South Kurdistan-based RojNews agency reports that the Turkish army has once again bombed the village of Perex on Friday. According to the report, the village was targeted by artillery fire at least 21 times in the past 24 hours.

While Turkey denied involvement in the deadly attack which has triggered strong reactions from many states, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Fuad Hussein, told the press that as a result of the investigations carried out by military experts, it was determined that the attack on Zakho was carried out by Turkey.

According to the Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT), the artillery fire came from the Turkish military base Xamtir in Xatîrê. CPT representative Kamaran Osman told the Mezopotamya Agency (MA) that they went to the village after the bombing: “We talked to witnesses and wounded people and learned from them that four shots were fired. They confirmed to us that all these four shots were fired from the Turkish military base Xamtir.”



## The world remains silent, Turkey continues to kill civilians in South Kurdistan

ANF | 23 JULY 2022

The Turkish army, which started the invasion attack on South Kurdistan on 25 May 1983, has made similar attempts many times in the last 39 years. Although these invasion operations were aimed at destroying the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla's base areas, South Kurdistan civilians were also targeted, bombed, murdered, even taken prisoner and shot in the attacks by the Turkish army.

The Turkish army expanded the scope of invasion attacks against this part of Kurdistan in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the guerrilla movement spread to the whole of Kurdistan. In the second half of the 1990s, the civilian population in the region paid the price for these attacks, in which tens of thousands of Turkish soldiers were used.

Zakho district of Dihok, located near the Northern Kurdistan border, where 9 civilians were killed on 20 July 2022, was the most exposed to the attacks and massacres of the Turkish state. Zakho, which has been the target of the Turkish state since the mid-1990s due to its strategic location, experienced a great massacre in 1995.

While the "Bloody Monday" in Zakho has acquired an unforgettable place in the history of South Kurdistan and the Behdinan region, the Turkish state has started bombing villages and civilian settlements since the late 1990s and early 2000s. Here is the list of the war crimes committed by Turkey against civilians in South Kurdistan:

*Massacre of Zakho, 27 February 1995:* The Turkish army hit Zakho during the "Steel Operation" in 1995, which was the most comprehensive invasion operation up to that time. On 27 February 1995, JITEM members, the counter unit of the Turkish state, carried out a bomb attack in the center of Zakho in order to create chaos and prepare the environment for the invasion attack, whose button would be pressed on 21 March 1995.

As a result of the explosion of a bomb placed in a taxi near a crowded market in the city center of Zakho, 76 civilians lost their lives and more than 100 were injured.

*Massacre of 9 Shepherds:* On Newroz 1995, the Turkish army, with its 35 thousand soldiers, launched the invasion attack, which it named the "Steel Operation", by occupying the lands of South Kurdistan from four sides. They met strong resistance from the Kurdistan guerrillas. The invading army, which could not get the desired result against the ARGK guerrillas, turned to civilians.

During this invasion attack, 11 villages on the border line were bombed by the invading army, and many civilian vehicles were targeted. In the first days of April, the Turkish army carried out one of the most bru-

tal massacres. On 2 April 1995, Turkish soldiers shot 9 shepherds in the area between the villages of Bawerkê and Bênatâ, within the provincial borders of Dihok. The names of the 7 shepherds who were killed for allegedly helping the guerrillas were as follows: Abdülkadir İzzetxan, İsmail Hasan Şerif, Özgür Ebdulkadir, Ebdillah Kerim Huseyin, Abdurrahman Muhammed, Şerif Guli Zikri and Ehmed Fettah.

*Massacre of Kendakol, 15 August 2000:* In 2000, the Turkish army committed another massacre on the territory of South Kurdistan. On 15 August 2000, warplanes hit about 100 coach tents set up on the Kendakolê plain between Xinêre and Lolan, overlooking the Qaşmukê and Avxwar valleys. In this attack, 30 people, including young children and old people, were killed and dozens were injured.

*Massacre of Kortek, 21 August 2011:* After Kendakolê, the Turkish state again carried out an attack targeting civilians in South Kurdistan on 21 August. Turkish state warplanes targeted the vehicle in motion near the village of Bolê on the Kortek-Ranya road in the Kandil region. The 7 civilians, including 4 children, who were in the vehicle were killed: Hüseyin Mustafa, Mêr Mam Kak, 34-year-old Rêzan Hüseyin, 11-year-old Zana Hüseyin, 10-year-old Oskar Hüseyin, 4-year-old Sonya Şemal and 7-month-old baby Solin.

*Massacre of Zergele, 1 August 2015:* The Turkish state, which restarted the concept of war against Kurdistan with a comprehensive air attack against Medya Defense Areas on the night of 24 July 2015, did not hesitate to hit civilian settlements in this wave of attacks. In the early hours of the morning on 1 August 2015, the village of Zergelê was bombed by Turkish warplanes. 8 civilians were killed and 10 people were injured.

*Massacre of Dêralok, 23 January 2019:* Since 2017, the Turkish army has started targeting more civilians in South Kurdistan. Between 2017 and 2018 alone, at least 30 civilians were killed in total on different dates and places. The airstrike on Amediyê and the town of Dêralok on 23 January 2019, killed 4 civilians, and constituted a turning point in the history of resistance in South Kurdistan.

The people of Dêralok, who gathered after this massacre, started to organize protests against the Turkish state. After the demonstrations that lasted for a several days, the people of the region entered the military base of the Turkish army in Sheladize and set the military vehicles on fire. Turkish soldiers killed 2 more civilians, including a child.

*Massacre of Kortek, 27 May 2019:* Like other invasion attacks, the invasion attack launched on 27 May 2019 too targeted civilians. One of the two brothers in a vehicle hit on 25 June in the Goşîn region of Hewler's Soran, lost his life and the other was seriously injured.

*27 June 2019:* Two vehicles were bombed by warplanes, this time in the area of Kortek in the Ranya district of Sulaymaniyah. Those in the targeted vehicles were returning to their homes after vineyard and garden work. In this attack, Abdullah Ali Mîne and his children Kurdistan Abdula and Heryad Abdula were killed.

*Massacres in 2020 and 2021:* Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), one of the non-governmental organizations in South Kurdistan, published a detailed report on the Turkish state massacres of civilians in the region last May. Noting that 109 civilians from South Kurdistan were killed in the attacks of the Turkish state between 2015 and 2021, the CPT reported the following civilian massacres in 2020 and 2021:

*18 June 2020:* Ebas Mexdît was killed in an airstrike on Turkey's Sidekan region.

*19 June 2020:* Turkish warplanes bombed the residential areas in the Sheladize town rural area of Duhok's Amediyê district. 5 civilians lost their lives.

*24 June 2020:* 2 civilians lost their lives in the bombardment of the picnic area in the Sarbajêr district of the city of Sulaymaniyah.

*27 July 2020:* Dilovan Şahîn, Omer Keşanî and Ebdullah Ehmed lost their lives in the bombardment of the Amediyê countryside.

*25 May 2021:* 20-year-old Bawer Ahmed was injured while watering his field in the village of Deşişe as a result of artillery fire by the invading Turkish state. Other farmers in the area were also injured by shrapnel fragments.

*26 May 2021:* 16-year-old Ali Muhsin and 20-year-old Hasan Muhsin brothers were injured when the Turkish state bombed the village of Bihêrê while they were grazing their animals.

*1 June 2021:* 70-year-old Ramazan Ali was injured by artillery fire by the soldiers of the invading Turkish state while watering his fields in Hiror.

*8 July 2021:* A civilian was injured in the village of Hiror as a result of the invading Turkish state's fire on agricultural lands from the base areas.

*13 August 2021:* Ibrahim Hassan Mohamad (51) was shot by the invading Turkish state soldiers while irrigating his fields in the village of Deşişê in Kanîmasî. Villagers had to leave their houses due to attacks by the Turkish army. Mohamad had briefly returned to the village with 12 others to irrigate the fields to support their families.

*20 August 2021:* Ahmed Şakir (40) and Yousif Amir (26) were killed by Turkish soldiers' artillery fire in the Batufa district of Zakho. The families of Şakir and Amir, who came to the region as tourists from Mosul, learned that their relatives lost their lives when the bodies were found 2 days after the incident.



## Turkish State attacks on northern Syria continue

Turkey continues its attacks on the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria.

ANF | 23 JULY 2022

On Saturday morning, the village of Um Kêf in the west of Til Temir was attacked with heavy weapons. According to ANHA, the electricity plant was hit in the bombardment, and the power supply in the re-

gion has been interrupted. At the same time, artillery attacks by the Turkish occupation forces and their jihadist proxies are targeting the villages of Um Qura and Hesaçık in Shehba Canton.

On Friday, the village of Kefîr Garês and the town of Til Rifat in Shehba, as well as the village of Aqiba and the surroundings of Veger camp in Afrin's Sherawa district were bombarded with artillery shells. Information on the consequences of the attacks is not yet available.

In parallel to the permanent artillery attacks, Turkey has intensified its drone attacks. According to the Rojava Information Centre, six drone attacks have taken place within five days, for a total of 56 this year, 18 of them on cars. Most recently, a vehicle was bombed by a Turkish killer drone in Qamishlo. The drone strike occurred late on Friday afternoon on the road connecting Qamishlo and the town of Tirbespiyê (al-Qahtaniyya) further east. The Nimetli checkpoint, operated by security forces of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, is located near the site of the attack. On Wednesday, two fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were killed in such an attack in Kobanê, and on Thursday, a car was attacked from the air in Amûdê.

*Two SDF commanders and a fighter killed by Turkish drone attack in Qamishlo:* The Media Centre of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a statement announcing the death of three of their female fighters as a result of a Turkish UCAV (Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle) strike.

The statement released by SDF Media Centre on Saturday includes the following:

“The recalcitrant Turkish occupying State is trying to eliminate our struggle and revolution for freedom within the framework of the all-out war against our people and their presence on their land. The recalcitrant Turkish occupying State is launching brutal attacks on a daily basis with all kinds of weapons against our Democratic Nation and Coexistence Project that was achieved by the revolution of women and the sacrifices of our martyrs in North-East Syria.

The International Coalition against ISIS may have responsibility for these brutal attacks on our regions.

We will not remain silent in the face of any threat to our people and our land, and our response will be by defeating the occupation and achieving the freedom of Rojava, north and eastern Syria. On July 22 the Turkish occupation's drones targeted a car on the Qamishlo road, resulting in the martyrdom of our YAT commander Jiyan Tolhildan, YPJ commander Roj Xabûr, and our comrade Barin Botan, while they were on duty.

*24 July 2022* - This morning, the Turkish occupation army and its mercenaries targeted the center of Zirgan district and its northern countryside, in conjunction with the northern and western countryside of Til Temir (Tal Tamr) district of Heseke canton, resulting in human losses and material damage.

The co-chair of the Til Temir district council of Heseke Canton, Ciwan Mela Eyûb, said that “the attacks of the Turkish occupation army are continuing, having targeted the Til Temir district and its countryside, as well as Zirgan district this morning.”

According to Eyûb, the violent attacks carried out by the Turkish army and allied mercenaries against the people of the region for the past two months, and the wave of today's attacks reveal the barbarity of the Turkish state.

Eyûb stated that the Assyrian villages in Til Temir were randomly targeted, leading to the martyrdom of a citizen and serious injury of 5 others.

He pointed out that the Turkish occupation army and its mercenaries targeted the power lines, which led to a power outage in the area.

Eyûb criticized the Russian guarantor forces, saying: "The Russian forces came to Til Temir as a guarantor of the ceasefire, but they do not show any reaction to these attacks, even though the vicinity of their points are being bombed by the Turkish occupation and its mercenaries."

*25 July 2022* - As reported by the ANHA news agency, the Turkish army began shelling the villages of Esediyê, Xidrawî, Til Werd, Um Hermela and Khirbet al-Shair near Zirgan (Abu Rasen) with artillery shells on Monday morning. So far, there are only reports of material damage in the canton of Heseke. The Assyrian village of Tawila to the west of Til Temir is also under attack. There is still no information about any damage or casualties.

The canton of Shehba, which lies further west and borders on occupied Afrin, is also under fire. Among other things, the Turkish army fired on a Syrian military base in Til Mediq (ar. Tall Madiq). At the same time, the towns of Til Mediq and Herbel were also shelled with artillery shells. According to information received so far, property damage was caused.

*27 July 2022* - The invading Turkish state and its mercenaries continue to bomb the surroundings of Til Rifet district of Shehba, the villages of Bêlûniyê, Eyn Deqnê, Minix and Şêx Îsa, and the villages of Tat Meraş, Şêwarxa and Merenaz in Shera district.

During the bombardment, on Tuesday evening, 100 howitzer shells fell on the villages and four Arab women were injured in the attacks on Şêx Îsa and Til Rifet.

The four injured were named as Rovaş Reşo (50), Lemya Hesên (41), Kewser Mistefa (17), and Fewziye Reşo (20).

The Turkish state and its mercenaries bombarded the villages of Bene in Sherawa and Kawliki in Bab with mortars and howitzers.

For years, the NATO state Turkey has been using drones for the extralegal killing of "enemies" in northern and eastern Syria, but also in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and in the Yazidi town of Shengal. The attacks are aimed specifically at representatives of the self-governing structures, members of combat units and the civilian population. The international community ignores Turkey's anti-Kurdish war.

## Eight YPJ fighters killed by Turkish drones in North-East Syria since April

ANF | QAMISHLO | 27 JULY 2022

In its constant attacks on the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria, the Turkish state specifically targets women, especially those fighting against the terrorist organisation “Islamic State” (ISIS). At the same time, it aims to weaken the fight against ISIS and prevent a democratic society led by women. Women’s organisations protested in front of the UN mission in Qamishlo on Tuesday against Turkey’s recent drone attack on YPJ commanders. The attack on 22 July killed Jiyan Tolhildan, a female commander of the YPJ and YAT counter-terrorism units and a member of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) military council, YPJ commander Roj Xabûr and and YAT fighter Barîn Botan.

### “The airspace must be closed”

At the protest in Qamishlo, an open letter to the United Nations High Committee for Syria, the International Coalition against ISIS and the Central Command of the Syrian-Russian Armed Forces was read out and then handed over to the UN representation. The letter, signed by numerous Syrian political parties, reads in the introduction: “Although the Turkish state is not currently carrying out its threats to launch a new military offensive to occupy our territories, it has recently carried out brutal attacks on northern and eastern Syria. Every day, reconnaissance and fighter planes penetrate the airspace over northern and eastern Syria, which is controlled by the international coalition and Russia. These attacks by the Turkish state on our territory are war crimes under international human rights and legal standards.”

The Turkish state is targeting women who have taken a leading role in the fight against ISIS. This weakens the fight against terrorism. Jiyan Tolhildan, as a YAT commander, was part of the joint operational command of the SDF and the international coalition in the fight against ISIS, the women wrote: “Therefore, we call on the international coalition to take serious steps against the war crimes committed by the Turkish state using its airspace and to close the airspace in northern and eastern Syria.”

### Deadly drone attacks on women in north-east Syria

In the space of two years, twelve women leaders have died in Turkish drone attacks in north-eastern Syria. Since the crushing of ISIS’ territorial rule in Syria in spring 2019, Turkey has been targeting women who are taking a leading role in Rojava’s revolution and in fighting Islamist structures.

*On 23 June 2020;* Zehra Berkel and Hebûn Mela Xelîl, both members of the Kongra Star coordination, and their host Emine Weysi were killed by a Turkish killer drone in the village of Helinç near Kobanê.

*On 19 August 2021;* Sosin Birhat (Sosin Muhammed), a member of the YPJ and SDF command, was killed in a drone attack on the Til Temir military council.

*On 21 April 2022;* YPJ commander Dilar Heleb and fighters Ronahî Kobanê and Kobanê (Cihan Nîdal Êlî) were killed in a drone attack on their car in Kobanê.

*On 30 May 2022;* a car was bombed by a Turkish drone in Qamişlo. The YPJ fighter Mizgîn Botan and the civilian Kesra Milek were killed, while fighters Dîcle Cûdî and Hêvîdar Dirbesiyê survived with injuries.

*On 2 July 2022;* a deadly drone attack took place on Mizgîn Kobanê, commander of the SDF and YPJ, in Raqqa.



## Turkish army terrorises villagers in Yüksekova

ANF | HAKKARI | 28 JULY 2022

The Turkish army has launched a military operation in Yüksekova district in Hakkari province. In the run-up to the operation, the village of Zêvkan was besieged by military forces. The soldiers entered the village early on Wednesday morning, stormed several houses and detained six people from one family. Those detained were taken to the gendarmerie (military police) command centre in Yüksekova. The file is under secrecy, and legal assistance has been banned for 24 hours.

The siege of the village continued into the night. Then the soldiers withdrew from the village and a military operation was launched on the high mountain pastures in the surrounding areas of Gola Qaza, Bin Çiya and Kaniya Xwînê. The operation is still ongoing.

Yüksekova is located in the extreme south-east of Turkish territory and is known as a Kurdish resistance stronghold. The Turkish army operates a large base area in the mountainous region of Yüksekova. To the south, the district borders the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and thus the Medya Defence Areas. In June, the Turkish army invaded the villages of Şîşemzîn, Xurekana Temo and Xurekana Seyîda. The villagers were insulted and abused by soldiers. At least twenty people were abducted in the area of a military operation that started at the same time, among them four shepherds with Iranian citizenship, several elderly women and an eight-year-old child. Apparently, they were to be abused as “human shields”.



# Femicide

## Women protest against court ruling on Istanbul Convention

ANF | ISTANBUL | 20 JULY 2022

The State Council (tr. Danıştay) in Ankara on Tuesday rejected the complaint against the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention on the Protection of Women against Violence. After the cancellation of the convention was decided by Tayyip Erdoğan's presidential decree in March 2021, women's organisations, political parties and civil society organisations filed a lawsuit. According to the ruling of the Council of State, the withdrawal is constitutional. The case will now be heard at the next higher instance. As a last step in Turkey, an appeal to the Constitutional Court is possible. If the Turkish judicial system is exhausted, legal action can also be taken before the European Court of Human Rights.

There is great indignation in Turkey over the verdict of the Council of State. In the Istanbul district of Kadıköy, the women's association "We Will Stop Femicides" and the women's councils protested shortly after the verdict was announced. "We do not recognise the lawless verdict and do not give up the Istanbul Convention" was written on a banner that the activists unfurled on the ferry pier in Kadıköy.

The general secretary of the Women's Association, Fidan Ataselim, said at the rally that the ruling forces women to continue their resistance: "We would have liked it not to be like this and for the Council of State to make a ruling in accordance with the law, stating that the state president is not above the constitution. We would have liked a finding that a single person, a single man, cannot do everything he pleases. That did not happen because a political decision was taken." Ataselim, however, pointed out that the ruling was not unanimous and that alone showed the questionable nature of the decision.

There is no reason for hopelessness, Ataselim continued: "We will win with our own strength and our equal and free struggle, which is becoming increasingly social."



# Ecocide

## Doctor Riha: Animals are killed and environment is destroyed by Turkish bombings

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 JULY 2022

Many animal species live in the mountains of Kurdistan. One of these animals is the *pezkovi* (mountain goat). The Turkish state is bombing the mountains of Kurdistan, especially the Medya Defense Areas. As a result, many living species are killed, including many *pezkovi*.

Firat Riha, who worked as a doctor in the guerrilla forces, had treated many *pezkovi* injured in the bombardments.

He said that the Turkish state is plundering the countryside of Kurdistan and added: “The Turkish state’s attacks on Medya Defense Areas are not only directed against the guerrillas or the civilian population, but also against animals and the environment. We can see this in the killings by the Turkish state of people’s animals. All living beings in the mountains of Kurdistan are exposed to these brutal attacks. The *pezkovi* sitting on my lap – he said, showing the little capricorn - was also injured as a result of the bombardment by the Turkish state. After the bombardment, some of our comrades found this wounded *pezkovi* and brought it to us. We treat all living beings, not just humans. The *pezkovi* had wounds on its head and its paws were broken. After treating and healing, we will release her where it belongs.”

Drawing attention to the Turkish state’s attacks on the nature of Kurdistan, Firat Riha made a call: “Animals and nature lovers should stand up against the attacks by the Turkish state. The Turkish state cuts down trees, kills animals and ultimately destroys the environment and nature of Kurdistan as well. Those who love nature and protect animals should not remain silent and oppose this savagery.”



## Soldiers cut down thousands of trees in Silopi to build military tower

ANF | 27 JULY 2022

According to Mesopotamia News Agency, trees began to be cut down on Tuesday, 26 July in the village of Hesana, located on an area overlooking the Silopi slope of Mount Cudi. This village was forcibly evacuated in the 90s for “security” reasons.

The villagers, mostly Assyrians, were forced to migrate to Europe due to oppression, and were only able to return to their lands in the 2000s.

However, they found that a police station was built at the entrance of the village, keeping it constantly under control.

Now, a tower is being built for soldiers and village guards.

The first thing the Turkish forces did was cut down trees to make way for the building of roads to the tower.

It has been reported that the soldiers cut the trees on the lands belonging to the villagers, threatening them.

It is stated that thousands of trees have already been cut down in two days.



## Human Rights Violations

### The government is seeking its future in silencing the media

ANF | 19 JULY 2022

The government prefers to be a mere spectator in the face of the illegal and discriminatory practices of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the Communications Directorate and the Press Advertisement Institution, which threaten with penalties and discriminatory press card and public ad procedures in order to weaken the pluralistic media and independent reporting.

Upon a request by RTÜK, which on February 9 gave 72 hours to international news sites to apply for a license, the Ankara Judgeship imposed an access block on Deutsche Welle and Voice of America (VOA), which hadn't applied for a license on the grounds that it would pave the way for censorship. The practice brought the common problem of licensing procedures and access blocking in Turkey to the international level.

### Arbitrariness of the police and the period of impunity

The BIA Media Monitoring Report regarding April, May and June also showed that arbitrary interferences of the Security forces with media representatives in order to silence the critical community were tolerated. In the last three months, nine of the 17 journalists lost their freedom while reporting on social protests. Also, 12 of the 19 journalists who were attacked in the same period were the target of the security forces.

In the last three months, Turkey had one of its darkest and tragic periods in terms of seeking justice in murders of journalists: Turkey transferred the file of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed at Saudi Arabia's Consulate General in İstanbul in 2018, to this country, which it accuses of instigating the murder.

In the file of the journalist Musa Anter, who was killed in 1992, no progress was made in the trial even though it was confessed in the Susurluk Report that he had been killed by the state. The case concerning the murder, which will mark its 30th year in September, is under the threat of statute of limitations. Lawyers of the Dink family brought the case concerning the killing of Agos newspaper Editor-in-Chief Hrant Dink in 2007 in Şişli, İstanbul, to the Court of Cassation on the grounds that "not all aspects of the murder were the subject of the case."

### **17 journalists were arrested, 1 was released**

In April, May and June, at least 17 journalists were arrested. Among those people, İbrahim Haskoloğlu, who was arrested for "obtaining personal information with illegal methods," was released after a week. The 16 journalists in Diyarbakır were sent to prison on the suspicion of "being a member of an illegal organization" and "propagandizing for a terrorist organization."

In the same period, at least 17 journalists were detained on the job. Nine of the journalists were detained while covering public protests where Security officers act in an increasingly arbitrary manner (Gezi commemoration, Pride March, Gemlik March etc.). Among these reporters, AFP photojournalist Bülent Kılıç was detained by being battered two years in a row.

### **Attacks on 19 journalists, online attacks and threats on five women journalists**

In the last three months, at least 19 media representatives were attacked: Illustrator Hicabi Demirci and Cumhuriyet newspaper columnist Barış Pehlivan were threatened. Also, five women journalists (Çiğdem Toker, Nevşin Mengü, Burcu Karakaş, Hale Gönültaş and Seyhan Avşar), were subjected to threats and verbal attacks online.

### **12 of the 19 attacked journalists were targeted by the police**

Despite the recent Constitutional Court judgments convicting the administration regarding the journalists Beyza Kural, Erdal İmrek and Gökhan Biçici being subjected to police violence and the annulment of the General Directorate of Security's circular dated April 27, 2021, by the Council of State, widespread violence and unlawful interventions against journalists continue.

In this period, 12 of the 19 attacked journalists were on the target of the police: AFP photojournalist Bülent Kılıç, just like in the same period last year, was detained while performing his duty of covering the Pride March in İstanbul on June 26. In the investigation regarding the first incident of detention, which resulted in journalism organizations holding a protest in front of the İstanbul Governor's Office with the slogan "We Can't Breathe," there has been no result for a year. On the other hand, organizations such as the TGS and DİSK Basın-İş, continue filing criminal complaints, with the latest ones being about the Gezi Commemoration.

### Three journalists were sentenced for “propaganda” and “Berkin”

In April, May and June, three journalists (Abdurrahman Gök, Eren Keskin and Reyhan Çapan) were sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days in prison for “propagandizing for a terrorist organization” and to pay a fine of 25 thousand Turkish lira for “disclosing the identity of Berkin Elvan.”

In this period, the journalists who faced five years in prison in the BDDK case on the allegation of “economic coup,” Kerim Karayaka, Fercan Yalınkılıç, Mustafa Sönmez, Merdan Yanardağ, Sedef Kabaş and freelance journalist Orhan Kalkan were acquitted. The Diyarbakır appeals court overturned a prison sentence of 6 years and 3 months for İMC TV Program Coordinator Ayşegül Doğan for “being a member of an illegal organization.” While the decision of acquittal for “Mehmet Aslan” for “being a member of an illegal organization” became final, convictions of Eren Erdem, Emre Erciş and Turan Atabay for “aiding the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization” were overturned by the court unanimously.

### “Insulting the president”: 13 journalist defendants, one acquitted

In the period of April, May and June, at least 13 journalists and cartoonists (Julien Serignac, Gerard Biard, Laurent Sourisseau, “Alice”, Hasan Cemal, Deniz Yücel, Rüstem Batum, Mehmet Emin Kurnaz, Erk Acarer, Burak Şahin, Ender İmrek, Engin Korkmaz and Ahmet Sever) faced a total of 60 years and 8 months in prison on the allegation of “insulting the president” because of their views and criticism about President Erdoğan. In this period where no verdict of conviction was given, journalist Hasan Cemal was acquitted. The case opened against Evrensel newspaper columnist Ender İmrek was new.

Local courts in Turkey continue trials regarding article 299 of the Penal Code (TCK) despite a Venice Commission recommendation and the ECtHR’s Vedat Şorli conviction in October 2021. Between when Eroğan was elected the president in August 2014 and June 1, 2022, at least 70 journalists were given a prison sentence, a deferred prison sentence or a monetary fine on the basis of TCK article 299 titled “insulting the President.”

### “Insult” sentences for Saymaz and Dündar

In April, May and June, at least 21 journalists stood trial in cases filed against them for “insult.” While journalists İsmail Saymaz and Uğur Dündar, for whom complaints were filed by Büreyde Önel of the Kadiri Order and former Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, respectively, were sentenced to pay a total of 13 thousand 980 lira of monetary fines, ETHA Agency responsible manager Derya Okatan and Saymaz, in another case, were acquitted.

Among those who requested prison sentences for journalists were President Erdoğan’s son Bilal Erdoğan, Presidency Communications Director Fahrettin Altun, Judge Bekir Altun, MHP Leader Devlet Bahçeli, the last Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, Mustafa Şentop and Mustafa Varank, Kadiri Cult leader Büreyde Öncel, the then-Chief Prosecutor of The Court of Cassation Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, and Turkish Wushu Federation (TWF) Deputy Chair Abdurrahman Akyüz.

One of the pleasing news of this period came from the Van Prosecutor's Office: AKP Van deputy Osman Nuri Gülaçar's complaint against journalist Yasin İpek ended in non-prosecution with the message "public figures should be more tolerant of criticism."

### **Erdoğan's sons-in-law seeks compensation**

In April, May and June, five reporters, one columnist (Sedat Yılmaz, Hazal Ocak, İsmail Arı, Yusuf Karadaş and Ceren Sözeri) and four newspapers faced to pay 825 thousand lira in compensation as part of lawsuits filed by President Erdoğan's sons-in-law, Selçuk Bayraktar and Berat Albayrak, and Selçuk Bayraktar's brother, Haluk Bayraktar.

Among these cases, the one that President Erdoğan's son-in-law Selçuk Bayraktar filed requesting 150 thousand lira was rejected while the case that Selçuk Bayraktar and his brother Haluk Bayraktar filed against BirGün newspaper and its reporter İsmail Arı requesting 250 thousand lira ended in a heavy conviction of 200 thousand lira.

### **Access to DW and VOA blocked, 45 online news articles censored**

Upon a request by the RTÜK, which on February 9 gave 72 hours to international news sites to apply for a license, the Ankara 1st Penal Judgeship of Peace imposed an access block on Deutsche Welle and Voice of America (VOA), which hadn't applied for a license on the grounds that it would pave the way for censorship. The practice brought the common problem of licensing procedures and access blocking in Turkey to the international level.

In the last three months, Penal Judgeships of Peace or the Access Providers Union, imposed access blocks on at least 45 online news and journalism articles that brought up or criticized allegations of corruption, bribery and favoritism.

### **Constitutional Court president requested a law from the parliament**

In the April-June 2022 period, the Constitutional Court concluded that the Kayseri Yeni Haber newspaper's conviction after a lawsuit by former CHP deputy Haluk Pekşen was a violation of freedom of expression and the press, and ruled that the newspaper should be paid 13 thousand 500 lira for immaterial damages and 4 thousand 865 lira for court costs.

The Constitutional Court ruled that journalist and author Can Dündar's spouse Dilek Dündar's right to privacy and family life was violated because of the revocation of her passport and Dilek Dündar should be paid 22 thousand lira for immaterial damages. Constitutional Court President Zühtü Aslan, at a ceremony for the 60th anniversary of the Constitutional Court where President Erdoğan also attended, addressed Parliamentary Speaker Mustafa Şentop: "If we want individual applications to continue to be an effective and efficient way of seeking rights, we, as the legislative organ, must make the legal arrangements regarding this issue without delay."

## The ECtHR doesn't work, but it is popular

In the April-June 2022 period, no decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) regarding press freedom could be found. In the same period, the ECtHR turned down appeals against Turkey's convictions in the files of Deniz Yücel, a Die Welt reporter who had been arrested in Turkey for a year, and journalist Nazlı Ilıcak, who spent over four years behind bars. Journalist Müyesser Yıldız, whose lawsuit because of her arbitrary arrest in 2020, was rejected by the Constitutional Court, stated that she would apply to the ECtHR.

The MEdia and Law Studies Association (MLSA) applied to the ECtHR in the name of the Mezopotamya Agency (MA) reporter Cemil Uğur, who was arrested after reporting on two villagers who were tortured after being taken to a helicopter in Çatak, Van, and was later acquitted of "being a member of an illegal organization." MLSA filed another application for Nedim Türfent, who was sentenced to 8 years and 9 months in prison in Hakkari in 2017 because of "being a member of the PKK."

## RTÜK fined TV outlets 1 million 430 thousand 85 lira

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), issued a total of 37 administrative monetary fines on TV outlets in the three-month period. The council fined TV outlets a total of 1 million 430 thousand 85 lira. In the same period last year, the council issued 46 monetary fines and 20 days of broadcast suspension fines on TV outlets and 1 administrative monetary fines on radio outlets. It has fined TV outlets a total of 11,300,517 lira and radio outlets 6,372 lira.

## "Becoming a mother" now makes journalists lose their jobs

In the April-June period, at least three media representatives were dismissed or had to quit their jobs because of disagreements arising from the outlet's editorial line. Journalist Emin Çapa returned to Halk TV, which he had previously left. The reason for the dismissal of journalist Zeynep Irmak Öcal, who was working for the Demirören News Agency (DHA) in Samsun, was that "she became a mother."



## Journalists working in South Kurdistan: We are threatened by the KDP and the Turkish state

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 21 JULY 2022

Free press workers operating in South Kurdistan for Rojnews and CHATR Media Group held a press conference with the Kurdistan Journalists Union and Metro Journalists Center to expose the threats they are subjected to by the Turkish intelligence organization MIT and KDP intelligence organization Parastin.

The press release was read by Sinur Rahman: “As free press workers living in South Kurdistan, we carry out journalistic activities within the framework of journalistic ethics and laws. The duty of journalists is to expose corruption, social service deficiencies, contradictions and conflicts affecting society, and to raise awareness by informing about the current [Turkish army] occupation.

More than 70 journalists work for Rojnews News Agency and CAHTR Media Group. They are permission documents obtained from the relevant ministries in both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. No journalist has an official problem. All legal requirements for journalism have been met. Journalists face major obstacles in the Kurdistan Region, especially in areas under the control of the KDP. This is against human rights and Article 35 of the journalism law, which was drafted in the Kurdistan Region Parliament in 2007.”

### **Threats and attacks against those who don't accept betrayal**

The statement continued: “So far, 80 journalists and activists have been arrested in the Behdinan Region. Freedom of the press is being narrowed down in the Kurdistan Region. Journalists such as Vedat Hüseyin and Kawa Germiyani have been killed.

Parastin, the intelligence agency of the KDP, together with MIT (Turkish intelligence service) demand free press workers to sell their journalistic ethics in exchange for some money and material things. If they refuse, they are exposed to psychological violence. Free press workers do not accept betrayal. Just as the invading Turkish state threatens, kills and arrests journalists, today the government in South Kurdistan acts in the same way.

The main reason for the attacks and pressure against free journalists is that they expose the Turkish invasion attacks and the collaboration of the KDP in these attacks.”

The statement added: “All public and media organizations should know that the pressure on journalists working for Rojnews and CHATR Media Group is an attack and threat against all of them. We inform the Iraqi government, the Kurdistan Region government, international organizations, and human rights institutions here: KDP, Turkish MIT, Kurdistan Region security forces and the Iraqi government are responsible for every threat to the lives of free press workers. KDP sources also targeted us.”

The statement ended with the following words: “As free journalists, we say once again that no threat or attack can deter us from our path. The attacks will actually prompt us to expose more corruption, occupation and betrayal. The truth will never be hidden!”

## Four parts of Kurdistan meet in Lausanne

ANF | LAUSANNE | 24 JULY 2022

The treaty signed 99 years ago in Lausanne, Switzerland, divided Kurdistan into four parts. Since then, the Kurds have been subjected to genocide, assimilation and massacres under the sovereignty of another state in each part of Kurdistan. Under the leadership of the KNK (National Congress of Kurdistan), 57 political parties and organisations are jointly organising a conference to take a stand against the Treaty of Lausanne from a Kurdish perspective. The conference kicked off in the building where the Treaty of Lausanne was signed.

Numerous politicians, artists and academics from the four parts of Kurdistan and the diaspora are participating in the conference at Rumine Palace in Ripponne Square.

The conference began with a minute's silence, after which KNK Co-chair Ahmet Karamus greeted the participants. The council was made up of Zübeyir Aydar, Aziz Memli, Dilşah Osman and Blase Jabbar Ferman.

Karamus stated that all the institutions and personalities attending the conference would manifest their stance against the Treaty of Lausanne.

Following a cinevision screening detailing the treaty, Abdulkadir Omar from the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) made the first speech.



## 7 members of HDP Youth Council detained in Antalya

ANF | ANTALYA | 25 JULY 2022

Members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Council in the southern Turkish province of Antalya were set to stage a demonstration last night in protest at the detention of 11 people who had unfurled a banner in Istanbul on July 23 in response to the Turkish massacre of civilians in Zakho, southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

The HDP group were blocked by the police as they took action to protest during a football match.

While the HDP group responded to the police obstruction by unfurling a banner that read "Repression will not intimidate us", 7 activists were taken into custody.

The detainees are held at Antalya provincial security directorate and they are expected to be referred to the courthouse.



## Three people from Rojava imprisoned in Adana

ANF | ADANA | 25 JULY 2022

Three Syrian citizens have been jailed in the province of Adana in the south of Turkey. The men, aged between 22 and 34, are originally from Rojava and are accused of “membership in a terrorist organisation” - meaning the People’s Defense Units (YPG). A 45-year-old man detained on the same charge was released on registration charges. He has to report regularly to the police and is not allowed to leave the city without permission.

H.E.F. (22), S.A. (26), H.A. (34) and I.H. (45) were taken into custody last Wednesday. So-called anti-terror units stormed the flats of the four Kurds and brought them to Adana police headquarters. After several days of questioning at the police station, they were handed over to the public prosecutor’s office on Sunday evening. The prosecution accuses the men of having “received an order from the terrorist organisation PYD/YPG” to “go to Turkey as a member of a sleeper cell and to participate in attacks there according to more detailed instructions from the organisation”.

The criminal division of the Adana district court complied with the request for an arrest warrant in three cases. The decision was based on “incriminating statements” against the persons concerned. In addition, two of them were allegedly recognised in “clear photos” which showed them wearing camouflage and carrying weapons. The defendants denied all accusations and stated in their defence that they had fled to Turkey in 2015 and 2016 respectively from the occupation of northern Syria by the terrorist militia ISIS and had since been working as day labourers in construction or in the countryside. It is still uncertain when the case will be brought to trial.

In Turkey, accusations of terrorism in such cases are often based on tips from informers. It is well known that no evidence is needed in Turkey when it comes to accusations related to Kurdish structures that are criminalised as “terrorist organisations”. Hundreds of Kurds from Rojava are in custody in Turkish prisons. Most have been illegally deported and given life sentences in Turkey for alleged crimes committed in Syria.



## The state encourages drug use in Van

ANF | VAN | 26 JULY 2022

The city of Van has a population of almost 1 million 500 thousand. Although the city has young population with an average age of 22, 85 percent of the young people are unemployed. The economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, anxiety about the future and hopelessness in Turkey lead young people to use drugs.

According to official data, there are approximately 15 thousand drug addicts in the city, which keeps increasing. However, the real numbers are much higher. It is predicted that the number of drug addicts in the city is over 30 thousand.

### **The state tolerate dealers**

Another reason for the increase in drug addiction is the tolerance of state officials. There are dozens of military and police stations in almost every village, neighbourhood and city centres in Van and its surrounding provinces. However, drug dealing and use is increasing in the city where there are a large number of military and police forces. The only reason for this is the state forces' encouragement or connivance to drug selling. Currently, drug dealers and some state forces are jointly selling drugs in the city. These forces specifically target young people.

### **Patriotic and poor neighborhoods are targeted**

Drug selling and its use is increasing in poor districts and neighbourhoods. Apart from Çaldıran and Başkale districts, drug use is increasing in Erciş district, in the neighbourhoods where earthquake housing are located, and Yeşilova (Suli) which is known for their patriotic stance. It is also reported that drug use is increasing in the centre and neighbourhoods of Van and in places where earthquake housings are located. Drugs are sold openly, especially on the streets and in the neighbourhoods and the state forces remain silent towards it.

### **Families are worried**

Families, especially those living in earthquake housings and poor and patriotic neighbourhoods are worried. Families reveal that young people buy and use drugs, especially in the evening hours and at night. Families say that all the people in the neighbourhood knew about this situation, and it was not possible for state officials not to know, adding that they tolerate drug selling and its use by young people.

On January 5, 2022, 2 young people died of overdose in a hotel in the İpekyolu district of Van.



## **Four young people detained in Antalya**

ANF | ANTALYA | 28 JULY 2022

Turkish police stormed several houses in the southern province of Antalya early this morning.

Six young people were taken into custody in the scope of an investigation over “spreading propaganda for a terrorist organization”.

The number of detainees is expected to increase.



# Interview

## Karayılan: The Treaty of Lausanne is against the Kurds and all the peoples of the region

ANF | BEHDINAN | 28 JULY 2022

The PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) Executive Committee Member Murat Karayılan remarked that, "The process of the past seven years has once again shown that they cannot succeed if they insist on the policy of death and genocide, and that the only solution is to recognize the existence of the Kurdish people and to introduce a political solution. There is no other way; this reality has prevailed during this 7-year war."

PKK Executive Committee Member Karayılan answered the questions of Dengê Welat Radio about the latest developments in Kurdistan territory.

*July 24 was the anniversary of both the Treaty of Lausanne and the Turkish state's re-launch of the war after ending the peace process. This concept of total war has been going on for 7 years. Has the Turkish state achieved its goal?*

First, it is necessary to say something about the Treaty of Lausanne. Our struggle aims at eliminating the Treaty of Lausanne and the destruction it caused. The Treaty of Lausanne denied the Kurdish people and divided Kurdistan into four parts, but it is at the same time a plan of the imperialist powers against all the peoples of the region. In other words, it is not only an evil plan against the Kurds, but actually against all the peoples of the region. For example, this treaty rendered the Arabs a second-class people. They designed maps on the table and divided the Arabs into 22 parts and Kurdistan into four parts. They denied all minority rights. They took the nation-state mentality as a basis, which resulted in constant deaths and massacres in the region. Kurdistan has been subjected to bloody wars for the last 99 years. So, the Treaty of Lausanne is such an agreement that needs to be known. It has paved the way for this genocidal system in Kurdistan and caused so many massacres.

The Turkish state picks up such important days whenever it attempts to strike us. For this reason, they started their attacks against us on July 24, 2015. In fact, there were negotiations for two and a half years; the Dolmabahçe Agreement was hammered out. The Kurdish problem was about to be resolved and an ultimate ceasefire was about to be agreed upon. However, the Turkish state and Erdogan wanted to implement the Sri Lanka model. Sri Lanka also launched a peace process with Tamil guerrillas, and after a while, the Tamil guerrillas relaxed and believed that a solution would be introduced. In fact, they made a mistake. Sri Lanka carried out a massive massacre and eliminated the group. That's what Turkey wanted to do.

However, Turkey failed to eliminate us. The Ministry of Interior officially claimed that the PKK would be ultimately defeated in April 2017. They wanted to eliminate us. It has been 5 years since April 2017. Now, the most comprehensive war is taking place, and the AKP-MHP has failed to accomplish the mission received from the state. The elections will be held in a year, and this is its last chance. It is attacking with all its means to reach a conclusion. Yet, they are doomed to failure. For the last 100 days, a very fierce battle has been going on in the Zap, Avaşın and Metına regions. The Turkish state has never suffered so many casualties in South Kurdistan throughout its history. Despite Turkey's use of advanced technology and prohibited weapons such as chemical weapons, tactical nuclear bombs and thermobaric weapons, such great resistance and war has never been experienced for 100 days without interruption. Turkey has not gotten any results so far. This shows that the Turkish state has not been successful in the face of the guerrilla reality for the last 7 years, despite the military aid it received and its advanced war technology.

Kurdistan represents a great reality; it is a social fact. Kurdish leader Öcalan's ideology and ideas inspired Kurdish youth, women, and the Kurdish society as a whole, and created a spirit. The mentality shaped by Öcalan's ideas enables human creativity to develop, bravery to be experienced and a self-sacrificing spirit to emerge. Moreover, a consciousness develops. Today, this war is being carried out with great awareness in terms of tactical methods and strategy. The strategy adopted by the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla and our Movement is successful against the strategy adopted by Turkish colonialism. For this reason, the AKP-MHP government, which has waged and is leading this war, is on the verge of its collapse today. In other words, what happened to the President of Sri Lanka will also happen to the head of the AKP-MHP government. They, too, will suffer the same fate. Because they do not take the social reality into account, and they want to achieve results with massacres. We wanted to resolve the problem through dialogue, but they wanted to get results with deaths. The process of the past seven years has once again shown that they cannot succeed if they insist on the policy of death and genocide, and that the only solution is to recognize the existence of the Kurdish people and to introduce a political solution. There is no other way; this reality has prevailed during this 7-year war.

*There are repeated attacks against Rojava each day. The Turkish state carries out assassinations and bombings with drones. Recently, there are reports that the Turkish state has not gotten the green light from other forces in the area, but when we look at these attacks, a contradiction emerges. Has the Turkish state received approval from the relevant powers?*

As you know, a trilateral summit was held in Tehran last week. It seems that the Turkish state has not received approval from international powers through an official method. We do not know if they have made some deals in secret, but it seems that they haven't received any official approval. The Turkish state has declared war on Rojava and North-East Syria. Just as it has declared war in South Kurdistan, the Turkish state is now at war in Rojava and North-East Syria. War does not necessarily mean that soldiers launch aggression on the land. No, Turkey is now waging a political-diplomatic war, attacking with drones, conducting intelligence operations and pounding with artillery. Howitzers and artillery are now almost as effective as air forces. They drop bombs with pinpoint accuracy. Turkey hits villages every day in Shehba, Cizîre, Kobanê, Ain Issa and everywhere else. This is a real war; no one should have any doubts about it.

The Turkish state wants to change the situation by waging a war on the borderline in this way. Of course, if it attacks ferociously, the forces there will also respond. In this way, it wants to make a change in the current situation. This is a game. Against this, the Autonomous Administration, the SDF and other north-eastern Syrian forces should be under no illusion. Nobody should think that the Turkish state will first

mount a major attack and then designate it as a war. What is currently taking place is a war, anyway. It should be handled as such and should be well explained to both its partners and the public. The Turkish state attacks civilians including the commanders who have fought ISIS. Just as it martyred some friends who fought against ISIS in Shengal, it is mounting attacks in the same way in Rojava. Recently, they martyred Jiyan Tohildan and her two companions. In the person of the esteemed commander Jiyan Tolhildan, I commemorate all our martyrs who were martyred in such attacks of the enemy, and I bow respectfully before their memories. They are also the martyrs of all Kurdistan.

Who was Jiyan Tolhildan? She was a commander who had been fighting ISIS for 10 years. Recently, she was a commander of the YAT forces. The YAT forces are a special force organized to fight ISIS terrorism and act together with the International Coalition. A commander of this force was targeted. In other words, if the forces that call themselves the Coalition remain silent in the face of this fact, it means that they are also partners. To put it another way, their fellow fighter was martyred. So, how did this happen? This requires an explanation. In this regard, the Rojava Revolution needs to engage in more fruitful diplomacy. This should be well explained to both the public and foreign partners. They also have the right to retaliate, but if it is done directly, it can be considered as if a border war waged against the Turkish state. No, the public and those forces should be first informed, then either these attacks should be stopped or has to be retaliated. Turkey is killing civilians and commanders. Two groups are the targets; the commanders who fought ISIS and the civilian population.

The Turkish state, especially the AKP-MHP government, wants to maintain its power by shedding blood. By waging a war against the Kurds and North-East Syria before the elections in Turkey, means that they want to manipulate nationalist feelings and to achieve results during coming general elections. It has such a dirty and bloodsucking mentality. They are so sadistic. Turkey targets and kills civilians in Shehba, Cizîre and everywhere. The Turkish forces suddenly attack and kill the commanders who fought ISIS while they are on the road or in the preparation phase. The Turkish forces fight so cowardly.

Everyone should have an attitude towards it. First, of course, North-East Syrian politicians and leading figures should carry out the political-diplomatic-military struggle together and strongly. In this regard, both internal and external forces should be informed, and they already have the right to respond. This is what our people in Rojava and North-East Syria should do. They should know that the Turkish state is currently waging such a special and covert war against them, and they should be cautious. They should not make themselves targets; they should be able to protect themselves. They should know that this is an extraordinary war situation.

*There are reports that the forests of Kurdistan were plundered, and huge damage was done to nature. As a movement, you criticized some of the tendencies that targeted the forests of Turkey in the past. What would you like to say about this at the current stage?*

Currently, Turkey is cutting down all the forests of Garzan, Dersim, Amed and everywhere wherever it can reach in Kurdistan, especially in Botan, but also, there are so many helicopters, planes and firefighters to fight forest fires in the western part of the country. It destroys forests in Kurdistan and protects forests in Turkey. There is huge discrimination.

Environmentalists from Turkey have failed in this regard. They react when it comes to the forests of Turkey, but they remain silent about the destruction of forests in Kurdistan. Therefore, intellectuals, environ-

mentalists, those who watch and do nothing against the destruction of Kurdistan's forests should undertake activities to prevent the destruction of nature.



## Opinion

### Karayilan: We fight for a brighter future

ANF | BEHDINAN | 20 JULY 2022

PKK Executive Council member, Murat Karayilan spoke to ANF about the war in Kurdistan. The guerilla commander explained that the battles with the Turkish army in the Medya Defense Areas in South Kurdistan have developed into a battle that is far more violent than is portrayed in the media and in which many are the dead to be mourned.

Here are some excerpts from the interview.

“The Turkish state has wanted to occupy South Kurdistan for four years as part of its new concept. It first attacked Xakurke, then Heftanin and Gare, and as is well known, a large-scale operation has been taking place in Metina, Zap and Avasin since last year. Since April 14 this year, technical methods have been used even more intensively. Initially, the attack was widely covered in the Turkish media. When it became clear after a few days that the calculations weren't working out and that the army was suffering heavy casualties, the invasion slowly disappeared from the papers. At the moment there are only short explanations consisting of a few sentences. So, the real events have been kept secret. It must be said that we are also not able to make the war in the Metina, Zap and Avaşin regions completely public. It may even be only twenty percent of what is actually taking place. Many things remain secret and cannot be represented. We also have shortcomings on this subject.

There's a full-scale war raging out there. A war in a 60 km wide combat zone between Avasin and Metina. Our fighters are in constant contact with enemy troops at least 50 points, the distance is no more than 100 meters. It's a very intense fight. We are pursuing a new tactic there at the moment. We are not withdrawing. Our units are also behind the enemy positions. For example, fighting continues at Kurojahro, but there is also fighting at the nearby Nêrwe Pass. There is also fighting in Werxelê and Şûkê Bûrê. They are all intertwined. There are constant clashes in an area 15 to 20 kilometers wide. I must add that all of this is accompanied by constant, heavy bombardment.

It looks like the enemy is making preparations and intends to achieve a clear victory this time. It has made political, diplomatic and military preparations to silence the parties in Southern Kurdistan and even to secure their cooperation in order to pacify Iraq and gain the approval of foreign powers.

According to the plan, the Turkish state wanted to achieve results in a short time. MHP leader Bahçeli had already said in one of his speeches: 'We will eliminate the PKK between the two holidays.' In other words, according to their calculations, they wanted to achieve results in a very short time. They mean this in general, not only in Zap, Metîna and Avaşîn. But our friends' resistance to this is truly historic. In the three months that have passed so far, Turkey has not been able to succeed, despite all the state's resources and outside support and despite the use of forbidden weapons.

Since the beginning of July, they have deployed their supposedly most elite special forces, which are attached to the General Staff. The troops currently fighting in Çemço and at Girê Amêdî are the latest special forces deployed. Turkey uses many types of chemical weapons, which is something we keep talking about. But more recently he's apparently also been using tactical nuclear weapons, as other friends have said. In fact, we spent eleven months researching on this topic. In other words, we're trying to understand what weapons are used. It is not a normal explosive. As a HPG, our investigation is ongoing.

At the moment, we see that they use two different types of bombs. First, they use tactical nuclear bombs, they mix various explosives with nuclear materials to create a very powerful explosive and poison. They also use thermo-baric bombs. Both types are used. In short, the fascist regime uses all forbidden weapons against us. The F-16s are already in constant use: around 2,500 airstrikes were carried out in these three months. They are currently waging such a war. Such a war can only be waged between two great states.

After three months, the following can be said: The Turkish state has not achieved any results and is basically being defeated. In order to cover up this defeat, it mobilized the last of its forces. But these, too, suffered a severe blow. They were hit everywhere they went and therefore couldn't get any results. The war has been going on for three months now. The AKP-MHP regime, despite all its means, has not achieved results, but it does not admit this. Because if Tayyip Erdoğan and Hulusi Akar admit this situation, the regime that is already in decline will be destroyed. In order not to collapse, they now exercise great censorship over the war. No one can share information on this subject. All information is provided solely by Hulusi Akar. Nobody else can comment on this.

There are many dead. But they took precautions. When these soldiers join the army, they have their families sign a document stating that if the interests of the state require it, they must keep their death secret, that it must not be publicized, and that they will pay compensation. Because if you die in a war, your family will receive big money. And because there is a risk that this money will be cut, nobody talks about it. The families of the soldiers don't talk either, only a few of them do. Some corpses are in the hands of our forces, their names have been announced, but their relatives do not speak about this. A soldier who died in the presence of our forces was said to have been taken to the hospital and died there. However, his body is in the mountains. In other words, everything is based on lies. Due to the failure of the Turkish army, civilian areas in South Kurdistan such as Maxmur and Shengal as well as Rojava are being attacked, the population and the democratic political forces in North Kurdistan are also being massively attacked.

Of course, our fight can only be waged with a great willingness to make sacrifices. Undoubtedly, our forces have reached a level based on the ideas and thoughts of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] and the spirit of July 14th. They are determined and are willing to sacrifice themselves. There is that aspect, but it's not the only one. At the same time, there is also a tactical method. A certain level of tactical depth has been achieved. If the forces are not specialized and do not know the methods of warfare, they cannot respond to such all-out attacks. In other words, they are prepared as professional fighters, they are a small force in

numbers, they have the tactical depth and level of warfare to leave the enemy stranded. In this way, they can achieve this result.

Now we are using a new tactical method. We want to defeat the enemy with the strategy of revolutionary people's war. The goal of our new tactical method is to neutralize the weapons that strengthen the enemy. That is, the purpose of using the surface and underground terrain in depth and in width is to render meaningless the enemy air force, to render ineffective the reconnaissance aircraft, and in this way to face the enemy. That was the goal, and it was largely achieved.

There are mistakes and imperfections in some places. That's true, but most of it is implemented and that's why the enemy is blocked.

They said, "We will get results with the Air Force." That didn't happen, they couldn't do it; now they say, "We will get results with prohibited weapons." Our friends are taking precautions and thwarting the attacks. Of course, had we not taken the necessary precautions against these chemical weapons, they would have done us great harm. If it doesn't do us much harm, it's because we're taking precautions. We can overturn them with technical measures and methods that our friends know in practice.

In other words, the enemy can not achieve results, but he persists and cannot admit defeat. That's why the war will be prolonged. That's what it looks like. This war is of course, also important for us. We want to block enemy occupation and fascism and defeat the enemy. At the moment, the war is going on in this framework.

The losses of the Turkish state in this war are very high. This is also included in the quarterly balance sheet. Casualties total over 1,500 but the state has announced 30 to 40 people so far. As I said before, there is a lot of censorship. Facts are hidden from Turkish society. Tayyip Erdoğan and Hulusi Akar are responsible for this. I mean, they send soldiers, but they don't think about whether that person is going to die or not. They say, "Go and get them." And the soldier comes and either falls into a trap or gets killed somehow. So the government is responsible for it. They are killers. This is how they want to maintain their power. They are waging this war for their own interests and to prevent the collapse of their regime; they are anti-Kurds. What is a Turkish soldier doing in Amêdî? Why is he coming? They tell the people of Turkey that their survival depends on it. In other words, they portray the Kurdish people and their achievements as a threat to Turkey; in this way, they want to revive chauvinist feelings in the Turkish population. They want to incite people and get them to pay attention to Kurdistan. What are you doing in South Kurdistan?

Hulusi Akar boasts that more than 27,000 Kurds have been killed in the past seven years. Of course he's lying; he manipulates the numbers. Erdogan and Akar have the blood of Kurdish and Turkish youth on their hands. They have Turkish and Kurdish youths killed in order to retain their power. On this basis, they send their soldiers everywhere. Perhaps this is the time when the Turkish state has suffered the most casualties. Major operations have taken place in South Kurdistan before, especially in the 1990s, but the army has never suffered such heavy casualties as today. At the same time, none of the attacks lasted as long as now. Previous operations lasted a month at most, but now, in this four-year war against the South, there have been constant attacks, non-stop day and night, for the past three months.

So the losses of the Turkish state in this war are very high, but we don't want to count the dead. Rather, what we want to say is this: You can't get results by killing! You cannot liquidate the PKK, destroy the

Kurds and stop the freedom movement in Kurdistan by killing them. This people is a reality; this party is a reality; the guerrillas of Kurdistan are a reality! We want to expose Turkey's chauvinistic mentality. The freedom guerrillas of Kurdistan are invincible. We want to prove that. Otherwise, we take no pleasure in killing. No! We want to stop dying and prevent more deaths. What we are waging is an honourable revolutionary defensive war. We defend the honour and achievements of our people. We defend the future of our people and all democratic forces. That's why we're fighting this war. Today we are fighting self-sacrificingly for democracy, both for the Kurdish people and the peoples of the region, and we are taking every risk. We know that this is the way to a free life. We are fighting for a beautiful future, freedom, democracy and equality, for the freedom of women, of society, of peoples."

— ★ —

## The Kurds Aren't a "Security Threat" — They're the Ones Being Attacked

JACOBIN | 13 JULY 2022 | BY DEVRIŞ ÇİMEN

*Devris Çimen is the European representative of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)*

Finland and Sweden are moving closer to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership — but only thanks to Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan giving up his veto to their joining the military alliance. This came with conditions: citing "security concerns," he extracted a string of concessions from the Nordic countries, the United States, and NATO — accepting them only after signing a memorandum that would again turn the Kurds into victims.

To the detriment of Kurds, the memorandum promises a lot for Turkey. After the NATO summit in Madrid on 29 and 30 June, the British paper "The Economist" wrote: "Recep Tayyip Erdogan returns home triumphant". The ultra-nationalist Devlet Bahçeli, who is Erdogan's unofficial coalition partner, said in this context: "It is a strategic gain for our country and at the same time a national success." He is right to a certain extent when he says that it is a "national success" because the Turkish government is in a war against the Kurds and therefore needs "national successes".

Instead of listening to the voices of the Kurds, space has been given to Erdogan's threats and blackmail policy. Once again, people are talking about the Kurds, but not with them. It is therefore all the more necessary to look at the current discussions from the Kurdish perspective. Therefore, as the European representative of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), in which the Kurds play an important role, I would like to do just that in order to contribute to this important debate.

If we understand Kurdistan as the geographical area where the majority of Kurds live, we see that it has been under colonial rule since the partition of Kurdistan and thus, the founding of Turkey almost 100 years ago. The nationalism of the new, powerful military leaders in these countries has led to discriminatory and systematic bloody repression of the Kurds and their political movements for almost 100 years. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that Kurdistan is an international colony where everyone but the Kurds

are enriching themselves. Therefore, in order to understand Kurdistan, it is necessary to look at it in the context of decolonisation.

The Kurds have been and are being patronised by the respective colonial states such as Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. Deprived of their freedom, their culture is being assimilated and those who resist have been/are being massacred and criminalised. Thousands of depopulated Kurdish villages and unsolved murders, tens of thousands of political prisoners and bans on political parties, organisations and associations are just a few examples from a long list that can be attributed to the Turkish state in order to impose systematic repression against the Kurds,

This is precisely where security concerns arise for the more than 40 million Kurds. There is no official body representing Kurdish interests and rights internationally. They are patronised by the colonial states, as Erdogan's Turkey has done in the recent discussions about Sweden and Finland joining NATO. It is the colonial powers that present the Kurdish resistance against the prevailing exploitation and exclusion as a security threat. If the Kurds could be accused of anything today, its that they did not resist enough in the past to prevent colonialism. This does not mean that they should necessarily build a nationstate, but rather that they should fight for freedom and recognise democratic rights with autonomous self-governing structures in the respective states.

Thus, the threat or the security concerns do not result from the legitimate struggle of the Kurds, but from the policy of denial and assimilation of the colonial states, especially of the Turkish state, which tries to suppress them illegitimately in a hostile way. In this context, the attacks and occupations in northern Syria and northern Iraq are a direct expression of this policy.

In short, oppressors cannot have legitimate security concerns. On the contrary, the oppressed have security concerns that should be morally, politically and legally supported by everyone else.

Therefore, the judgement of various international bodies that Turkey has "valid security concerns and the right to fight terrorism" is a manipulation and thus an instrument arbitrarily used by Erdogan's Turkey to undermine the legitimate rights of the Kurds and other peoples.

We can not forget that, historically, the existence of the Turkish state is based on the genocides of the Armenians and Assyrians and the denial of other peoples' existence, especially the Kurds. Consequently, all those who question the Turkish state doctrine are fought.

This is the reason why the Kurds in Turkey have such an existential problem. So, the 100-year problem and the 40-year conflict are a result of Turkish state ideology. It is not the Kurds but the Turkish state's ideology that is the problem. The ideology has an anti-Kurdish character, which is also reflected in the constitution. In order to survive under these circumstances, resistance is practically a necessity for the Kurds. All forces that stand up for the legitimate security concerns of the Kurds, make policy and offer resistance, naturally receive the justified support of the Kurdish people. But how can one resist in a region where every colonial state is this brutal? From a Kurdish point of view, it is therefore understandable to say that Saddam Hussein and Erdogan are two different bodies, but one mind.

The preamble to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: *“Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, human rights should be protected by the rule of law.”*

Tyranny and oppression were and are arbitrary acts by the occupiers of Kurdistan. Therefore, according to international law, the Kurds are forced to revolt and their actions are therefore legitimate.

But those who declare in their preamble that insurrection and resistance against tyranny and oppression are a necessity, protect the tyrants and oppressors when it comes to the Kurds. This is not a blame game, but a painful reality.

Sacrificing the freedom and lives of one group for the sake of another group’s security is more than brutal and illegitimate. But this brutality always finds its place in the present state constellation, because of the states’ need to consolidate their positions. What is the role of the United Nations in allowing hundreds of nations to be exploited by some 200 nation states?

Kurds constantly have to justify themselves when they resist their oppressors. Why is there no international point for the Kurds where they can hold their oppressors accountable? What is the point of international law if it cannot protect the rights of a people like the Kurds?

What do Sweden and Finland have to do with the Kurds? Why do you promise compliance at the expense of the Kurds?

The security concerns expressed by Turkey during its opposition to Sweden’s and Finland’s NATO membership applications are “valid”, said Alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg in the run-up to the Madrid summit. Why is no one questioning this illegitimate statement by Stoltenberg, who is giving Erdogan a free hand for further oppression and attacks on the Kurds? Sweden’s Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson also showed understanding for Erdogan’s concerns and said; *“We take the Turkish concerns very seriously, not least the security concerns in the context of the fight against terrorism”*.

Where do the security concerns of a state that wages war equipped with all kinds of modern weapons begin and end? How can the security threat posed by Turkey to the Kurds be turned on its head? Whether inside Turkey or outside its borders in northern Iraq or northern Syria, Turkey is attacking the Kurds to prevent them from succeeding.

For geostrategic and geopolitical considerations/calculations, international bodies such as NATO, the EU and the EP attribute security concerns to Turkey that endanger the security of others, especially the Kurds. Let us briefly look at a concrete example. The European Parliament [resolution](#) of 7 June 2022 in the Commission’s report on Turkey 2021 states: *“[the EP] recognises that Turkey has legitimate security concerns and the right to fight terrorism”*.

The same Parliament passed a resolution on 11 March 2021 on “The conflict in Syria: 10 years after the uprising” with the following interesting resolution: *“[...] calls on Turkey to withdraw its troops from Northern Syria which it is illegally occupying outside of any UN mandate; condemns Turkey’s illegal transfers of Kurdish Syrians from occupied Northern Syria to Turkey for detention and prosecution in violation of Turkey’s international obligations under the Geneva Conventions; urges that all Syrian detainees who have been transferred to*

*Turkey be immediately repatriated to the occupied territories in Syria; is worried that Turkey's ongoing displacements could amount to ethnic cleansing against the Syrian Kurdish population; stresses that Turkey's illegal invasion and occupation has jeopardised peace in Syria, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean; firmly condemns Turkey's use of Syrian mercenaries in conflicts in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh, in violation of international law”.*

The resolution also speaks of “*illegal invasion and occupation by Turkey*” and “*ethnic cleansing of the Syrian Kurdish population*”. Before Turkey is allowed any “security concerns” again, Turkey should be held accountable for what it has done in Syria. Therefore, the public and politicians must not allow the new memorandum under the auspices of the NATO between Sweden, Finland and Turkey, which was adopted due to geostrategic and geopolitical interests, to endanger the security of the Kurds once again.

The Kurds are not part of a decision-making body when it comes to the question of whether NATO should be expanded, reduced or even dissolved. But they are right to demand a clear commitment to international law, democracy and freedom, which should also apply to the Kurds. No other body has the right to abuse them for its own benefit and profit, neither Turkey nor NATO.

The signed agreement means the following for the Kurds: The hostility of the Erdogan regime towards the Kurds and its hostility towards democracy are unmistakably documented. With the help of blackmail, Erdogan is trying to export his Kurdish hostility and war policy to Sweden and Finland. In this case, the applicable standards for democracy, freedoms and human rights are not formulated by Sweden and Finland, but by Erdogan himself. If there is no reversal, this agreement will go down in history as an official document of hostility towards the Kurds. It is therefore a disgrace to universal human values, which Sweden and Finland consider themselves to be, or would like to be, the vanguard of. Moreover, Erdogan is trying to criminalise solidarity with the Kurdish freedom struggle. No one should accommodate Erdogan with such compromises. On the contrary, the Kurds' demand for freedom and democracy must be decriminalised.

M. Draghi had said the following on the subject of Erdogan last year: “With these dictators, let's call them by name, but we need them, you have to be direct and make it clear to them that you have a different view of society,” Draghi said. “But you also have to work with them to ensure the interests of your own country. You have to find the right balance.” But one must not forget that such balances have painful consequences. Hannah Arendt said that no one has the right to obey. We, the HDP, the people and especially the Kurds represented in the HDP do not obey Erdogan and his authoritarian regime. Others should not either. It is not Erdogan but our universal values that should determine the future.

## Film review: “Jiyan's Story”

ANF | 28 JULY 2022 | BY REIMAR HEIDER

*Reimar Heider, one of the spokespersons of the International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan” reviewed the movie “Jiyan's Story: Women's Revolution” by A. Halûk Ünal.*

## A Monument for Jiyan

The murder of three YPJ fighters in Syria has pushed a film that was released already in 2017 into the spotlight: “Jiyan’s Story: Women’s Revolution”. The eponymous Jiyan is Jiyan Tolhildan (Salwa Yusuf) who was slaughtered by a Turkish drone in the vicinity of Qamişlo (North-East Syria) on 22 July 2022, on her way back from a women’s conference celebrating 10 years of the women’s revolution. Together with her Roj Xabûr and Barîn Botan were killed.

The murder of three women, one of them very prominent, reminds of the murder of Sakine Cansız (Sara), Fidan Doğan (Rojbîn) and Leyla Şaylemez (Ronahî) in Paris almost a decade ago, in 2013, by the Turkish secret service MİT. In the wake of that massacre, several documentaries featuring the murder victims have been shot, like “Hêvî” (2014), “Sara – My Whole Life Was a Struggle” (2015) and “Autopsy of a Triple Murder: Sakine, Fidan, Leyla, Kurdish Militants” (2020).

In this case, the film was made before the crime: “Jiyan’s Story: Women’s Revolution” was already published in 2017. It tells the life story of Jiyan Tolhildan from her childhood in a village close to Efrîn until the women’s revolution that has been taking place in Rojava/North-East Syria from 2012 on. Unlike many other films about the revolution and the struggle against ISIS, this one does focus on neither the military struggle nor on the political struggle alone. It tells the whole story of where the different struggles are rooted, how they are integrated and why women are the vanguard of the revolution.

By focusing on one protagonist, director A. Halûk Ünal is able to highlight many different aspects of a life of resistance: Jiyan grows up in Efrîn close to the border fence that separates Kurdistan and tears her family apart. In school, she is subjected to the racism of the Syrian Arab education system. She rebels against the separation of boys and girls in the village and refuses to be married out against her own will. Running away from her family and joining the freedom movement, she widens her horizon and gets to know the other ethnic and religious groups of her region. Knowing first hand how Christian and Muslim women, educated and uneducated women share the experience of patriarchal oppression, Jiyan realizes how central women’s oppression is for all power structures in the Middle East. In the mountains she learns the strength of women who have been forming autonomous guerrilla units since the mid-1990s.

When the Arab Spring starts in 2011, she returns to the cities to help organize the peaceful uprising against the Syrian state while at the same time secretly organizing the women in a way that the men wouldn’t notice: “They were deceiving us for 5000 years. Our deceiving didn’t even last a year”.

As she states, without weapons you can’t get far if the enemy is determined to use force. So the YPG/YPJ is built up, pushes the Syrian state forces out without firing a shot and later plays a decisive part in defeating ISIS first in Kobanê and later everywhere.

The film shows all of this, but the real focus is the political struggle to change the structures of society and the minds of women—and men. The Kurdish women’s movement takes the next step towards abolishing patriarchy by providing anti-patriarchal education for men. In the movie we see some young men boasting about how much they have changed, while others are shyly lowering their eyes.

“Jiyan’s Story” shows better than other movies the contradictions in the society. We hear heartbreaking stories of women who were married when they were 12. Then we see the same women empowering themselves and each other in an all-female environment in the YPJ.

The movie finds great pictures for every aspect of the story. According to the filmmakers, 110 hours of footage were filmed and 40 hours of archive material used. “Jiyan’s Story” is more complex and looks better than all comparable films about the Rojava revolution I know of. Also, it explains better than any other the background of the women’s movement in Rojava that is admired throughout the world today.

The final minutes of the movie deal with death. Death is omnipresent in the life of Jiyan Tolhildan, and she explains how it is not sad because it helps to build a new life. As the director puts it in a tweet: “Those women have death on one shoulder and joy on the other. Just learning this will change your philosophy of life.” Death has now found Jiyan in the form of a Turkish drone strike, one of many against prominent figures of the Autonomous Administration of North-East Syria. The illegal murderous attacks by Turkey far beyond their borders have become almost a daily routine by now, apparently approved or at least tolerated by all fellow NATO countries.

But “Jiyan’s Story” sends a positive message. The revolution has deep foundations and won’t be uprooted easily. The enthusiasm of the women shown in all their struggles is pervasive and contagious. The joy in their faces bears witness to a strength that will overcome all nefarious attempts to silence and kill them.

“Jiyan’s Story” is a monument for Jiyan Tolhildan, an iconic fighter for women’s freedom and against all forms of oppression. It is an absolute must-watch for everybody interested in the women’s revolution. We are very fortunate to have this film, even though the occasion to (re-)watch it now is very unfortunate and enraging.

The 80-minutes documentary was shortened into a 51-minutes TV format and shown on several TV channels including ORF (Austria), ZDF (Germany), RTF (Portugal) and the Turkish language Kurdish channel Medya Haber. On the British YouTube channel Real Stories, the shorter English version has proven very popular with more than 800,000 views so far.

However, I warmly recommend watching the longer version that is now available on Vimeo.

The short TV version is available under several names, including “Jiyan: Story of a Female Guerilla Fighter”, “Inside the Women’s Army” and “Syrien - Die Frauen-Armee der Kurden”.

You can watch Jiyan Tolhildan’s last speech, delivered merely a few hours before she was murdered, with English subtitles on Women Defend Rojava’s channel.

Ünal’s previous films, “Little Black Fishes” (2014) about the Children of War in the ‘Southeast’ and “Hidden Lives” (2011) about the Çorum massacre in 1980 and its consequences for Alevis are also available with English subtitles on Drama İstanbul’s Vimeo channel.

# 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.

Contact e-mail: [imralipost@freecocalan.org](mailto:imralipost@freecocalan.org)

Websites: [freecocalan.org](http://freecocalan.org) | [ocalanbooks.com](http://ocalanbooks.com) || Videos: [vimeo.com/freecocalan](https://vimeo.com/freecocalan)