

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

‘Turkey will lose in every sense unless it implements the ECtHR judgements’

ANF | ISTANBUL | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

İbrahim Bilmez, one of the lawyers of Asrın Law Office representing Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, said that Turkey will lose in every sense unless it implements the ECtHR decisions. He noted that this issue concerns the opposition as well as the government.

Lawyer Bilmez spoke to ANF about the isolation of Öcalan in İmralı, the ban on family and lawyer visits, and the “right to hope”.

Bilmez underlined that the isolation system in İmralı prison was designed beforehand. The infrastructure of the prison was already prepared before Öcalan was brought to İmralı in 1999.

Enduring resistance in İmralı

Bilmez pointed out that the isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan was gradually systematized and aggravated. “The state is using the İmralı prison as a laboratory. It also employs different management techniques inside the prison. It tries, implements them there and then spreads them to the whole society of Turkey. There are numerous details and unlawful practices regarding the isolation system existing for the last 23 years. We have been trying to reveal these practices to the public for 23 years. Despite all the unlawfulness and isolation, there is an enduring resistance in İmralı, a spectacular one. In the 23-year period, Öcalan has continued his struggle against the state in a 10 square meter cell in İmralı, without compromising on his principles. What was his cause? It is about putting an end to the policies of denial and annihilation which have become structural since the establishment of the Republic and offering a solution to the Kurdish question through peaceful and democratic methods. Öcalan was already promoting these ideas before İmralı and he preserved them after his arrival at İmralı. He has sustained his struggle on the same course.”

Preventing his 'right to hope'

The lawyer pointed out that the disciplinary punishments given to Abdullah Öcalan are, in a way, a pretext to prevent Öcalan's right to meet his family during visitation days. “Disciplinary punishments will be cited against Öcalan if he happens to enjoy a possible 'right to hope' in the future. Likewise, the decisions of judges that prevent his lawyers' visits have no legal basis. They rely on a regulation that is contrary to the general principles of the law, contrary to Turkey's own relevant laws, has no legitimacy and is completely arbitrary. Let alone enjoy any right, we have not been able to hear from Öcalan and our other clients there for 18 months. I believe that this is a unique situation in the world. There is the example of Guantanamo, which busied the global public opinion previously, but the practices in İmralı have long surpassed the maltreatment in Guantanamo. The unlawfulness in Guantanamo could be reported to the public, and lawyers could visit it. However, there is an absolute isolation in place here in İmralı. We don't receive any news at all. We only have official information that our clients are there, and there is no other information. We are wanted to trust this information. Yet, we don't mean to believe in the official narration. We know that this state had officially lied to us almost every week from 1999 until the coup attempt in 2016. At that time, things like bad weather or coaster malfunction were always cited as a barrier to lawyer and family visits. Therefore, we do not trust this state. We continue our legal, diplomatic and political initiatives, and we will continue to do so. We observe that people are gradually starting to realize the outcomes of the isolation in İmralı and its effects on themselves. We think that these democratic reactions should be increased even more.”

Turkey is killing the clock

“When the democratic struggle and reactions equal Öcalan's resistance in İmralı, then we will be able to see a solution to the problem. Indeed, there has been tremendous resistance in İmralı for 23 years. Öcalan continues his resolute struggle against this system under difficult conditions in İmralı. The democratic society also needs to see this, and I think people should raise the struggle accordingly. As for the aggravated life sentence issue, there is a deadline given to Turkey on that matter as well, which is until the end of September. This time limit was given to Turkey following the '9/2' application submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. In fact, this process is not a one-year one. The European Court of

Human Rights issued a judgement of violation in 2014, ruling that aggravated life imprisonment was tantamount to torture. Turkey has been requested to take steps and make regulations on this issue for the last 8 years. It was supposed to remove an aggravated life sentence, this form of execution, from its own laws. Yet, Turkey has failed to do so. As Öcalan's lawyers, we have already made 9/1 applications many times. We made a further application last August. Our application on August 9 was responded to very quickly and we saw the usual stuff in that response. Turkey is doing what it has always done. It is doing what he does best in foreign policy and is killing the clock. Turkey is trying to spread it over time. This approach does not contribute to the solution to problems. The problems are only getting complicated. We hope that Turkey will take a step in this regard by the end of September. Last year, the Committee of Ministers gave a deadline until September 22 and asked Turkey to take steps, draft an action plan and inform the Committee on this issue, yet Turkey has made no strides so far. A very short and negative response was given to our application on August 9. They act as if there was no problem. The ECtHR keeps ruling that 'You cannot give a person an aggravated prison sentence'. Turkey responds mockingly and at the same time confesses that only Öcalan and other political prisoners are sentenced to penal servitude for life. We hope that Turkey will get rid of this mistake in a short time."

A prolonged death sentence

Bilmez recalled that the death penalty was in force in Turkey, but it was not implemented when Öcalan was handed over to Turkey. "Afterwards, a very fast and show trial was held in İmralı and he was given a death penalty. At that time, Turkey had to abolish the death penalty due to the public backlash, the reactions of the Kurdish people and the trial at the ECtHR. Instead, a sentence dubbed "aggravated life imprisonment" was introduced. It is a form of punishment and execution that did not exist within the Turkish law before. The problem is that this is a harsher punishment than the death penalty. In literature, this punishment is called the death penalty that is spread over time. A person is put in prison without any hope of parole and held there until death. It means to spread death over time, killing prisoners slowly."

Laws are by-passed

"Turkey has been bearing a grudge against Öcalan from the very beginning. It also informs the public that it is doing so. Öcalan has done everything he could to resolve the Kurdish question since 1994. He continued to adopt this attitude even after he was brought to İmralı. His attitude has been underrated. It was an attitude that served the whole of Turkey, the entire society of Turkey. The regulations and amendments requested by the ECtHR regarding aggravated prison sentence, that is, what we call the "right to hope" is something like this: After a certain period of time, after a reasonable period of time—the limit is not clear—the sentence in question needs to be reconsidered and evaluated after 15 or 20 years. A mechanism is supposed to be established by introducing legal arrangements. A committee created with this mechanism should re-examine the situation of the person sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment. The committee is asked to evaluate whether the person in question is harmful or beneficial to society. It may decide to release the person. Unfortunately, when it comes to Öcalan, big prejudices come into play. When it comes to Öcalan, the laws are by-passed. The aggravated life sentence was introduced for Öcalan. There was no such penalty within the Turkish law. Put into effect for Öcalan, this sentence later became a punishment given to hundreds, maybe even a few thousand other people. We don't even know the exact numbers yet. As we said, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe gave Turkey a deadline until the end of September. The Committee also wanted to know the number of people who were sentenced to life imprisonment in Turkey. Turkey has not even given an answer to this so far," Bilmez said.

Penalty should be reviewed

The situation of the person given such a sentence should be reassessed after a reasonable time. An evaluation is made by considering criteria such as the person's age, health status, and social position. Öcalan's case is well-known. From an objective point of view, despite the bad conditions and torture imposed on him since 99—which is confirmed by the ECtHR which ruled that a person sentenced to life imprisonment is tortured—he has worked and made efforts on behalf of the common good. When he was given the slightest opportunity, he immediately tried to use it for a solution to the Kurdish question. He was aware of his responsibility and power to resolve the Kurdish issue, and he still is. He did everything that needed to be done and took every step. Theoretically, he prepared road maps. He offered suggestions on how to achieve a solution. He came up with the idea of a committee of wisemen for the preparation of public opinion. He urged the PKK to declare a unilateral ceasefire and his call was heeded. Therefore, it makes no sense to consider Öcalan as a harmful person to Turkey's society. On the contrary, he is an extremely useful person to the society of Turkey. In this respect, the right to hope is a right of importance. Turkey is supposed to make amendments in this regard. Otherwise, Turkey would become a country that does not implement the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. Turkey has not fulfilled the requirements concerning the court's judgements since 2014. It is constantly spreading over time. Öcalan continues to resist and struggle despite a life sentence under torture conditions that get aggravated with each passing day. If Turkey does not comply with this decision, there is a possibility that the Council of Europe may impose sanctions. Turkey may even be excluded from the Council of Europe. If such a thing happened, it would be a great loss for Turkey in every sense. Human rights would be eroded further, and its already fragile economy may collapse. Turkey may completely be cut off from the Western world. The AKP is currently allying with the MHP. They have the power, but there is also an opposition that aims to take over this government within a year. This issue does not only concern the government, but also the opposition. If Turkey does not fulfil the requirements of the ECtHR decisions, it will lose in every sense. Not only the government, but also the opposition and the whole society will lose.”



Activists from Hannover take over Freedom for Öcalan Vigil

ANF | STRASBOURG | 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

The vigil that the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative started in Strasbourg, on 25 June 2012, demanding to end the isolation of the Kurdish people's leader and ensure his physical freedom, continues in its 11th year.

Every week, a group from a different part of Europe carries out the vigil, which is held where various European institutions are located.

Members of the Democratic Kurdistan Community Center (DKTM) in Hannover, took over the action in its 534th week.

The group includes Cuma Özdoğan, Ronahi Özdoğan, Deniz Bagok and Mehmet Zinar.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Cuma Özdoğan said that it is the duty of the Kurdish people to lift the isolation and ensure the freedom of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan.



European Court of Human Rights: Celebrating birthday of Abdullah Öcalan not a crime

ANF | NEWS DESK | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

According to JINNEWS, 9 members of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) and the Families of Convicts Association, who celebrated the birthday of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan on 4 April, 2006 in Siirt, were accused of “propaganda for an illegal organization, and praise of its crimes”.

Eight out of 9 people were arrested, while Fehime Ete, was not found. The eight people were later released. The court sentenced all 9 defendants to 10 months. Appeals against the sentence were dismissed.

Turkey asked to pay compensation

Ete's lawyer, Reyhan Yalçındağ Baydemir, applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) after the domestic remedies were exhausted.

The ECHR ruled on the application two days ago. In its decision, it stated that detention and punishment for celebrating Abdullah Öcalan's birthday and cutting a cake for him were a violation of freedom of expression as per Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR sentenced Turkey to pay 2,000 Euros of non-pecuniary damages to Ete as well as 1,500 Euros to cover legal expenses.



Lawyers of Öcalan: CPT must urgently visit İmralı

ANF | NEWS DESK | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

For 17 months, no information has come from the prison island of İmralı, where Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and political prisoners Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş are totally isolated.

The Asrin Law Office has now submitted an urgent request to the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), calling for an immediate visit to İmralı by a CPT delegation. The lawyers described the detention as “incommunicado” detention. This form of total information and contact block-

age is prohibited under international law. The lawyers speak of a systematic violation of the prohibition of torture on İmralı. The application focuses in particular on the violations of rights in the period between April and August of this year.

61 requests rejected in five months

The letter to the CPT reports that the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and the İmralı prison administration have rejected 40 requests for visits by lawyers and 21 requests for visits by families.

775 lawyers' requests ignored

On 10 June 2022, 775 lawyers applied to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and the İmralı Prison Management requesting to visit prisoners in İmralı in protest at the isolation. However, their requests were completely ignored.

The lawyers also criticised that telephone calls and visits on holidays were prevented and that it was not even known whether the letters to their clients sent between March and August had been received.

The lawyers also reported new visitation bans and disciplinary sanctions. The Asrin Law Office stated that although the six-month ban on visiting lawyers imposed on 12 October 2021 expired on 22 April 2022, a visitation request made immediately afterwards was simply ignored.

In the meantime, however, it has become known that the 2nd Bursa Enforcement Court issued a new six-month ban for lawyers on 13 April 2022, i.e. before the expiry of the ban. The lawyers pointed out that they only learned about this decision after the fact.

Disciplinary sanctions are imposed secretly

The lawyers report that although a sentence imposed by the İmralı Disciplinary Committee on 3 February 2022 expired in June, another request for a visit was rejected. The next higher court, the 1st Correctional Court in Bursa, again rejected the request. The lawyers were told that the "disciplinary sentence" was still in effect. However, the sentence referred to had already ended on 22 May. The lawyers learned that a new three-month disciplinary sentence had been imposed on 31 May 2022.

The lawyers' office criticised the "secret" imposition of this penalty, saying that it prevented any legal protection for their clients, defining it as a criminal offence.

The lawyers also stated that all contact between Öcalan and the other prisoners on İmralı and the outside world was being blocked without interruption and that the prisoners were being denied any legal protection.

The lawyers called on the CPT to visit İmralı immediately and stressed that it was the CPT's fundamental duty to prevent further harm to the detainees. Furthermore, they said, the CPT must ensure that continuous visits by lawyers are made possible and that the prevention of such visits by unlawful court decisions comes to an end.

“At the same time, while guaranteeing the right to visit, the right to regular telephone calls must also be made possible and all obstacles to letters and faxes removed. Restrictions on prisoners' access to magazines, newspapers and books must be lifted, said the lawyers.

The lawyers concluded: “It is urged that coercive measures be taken to eliminate conditions of torture, inhuman treatment and ill-treatment, as well as incommunicado detention, and that the procedures provided for in Article 10/2 of the Convention be followed.”



Freedom for Öcalan Campaign at the ICTU Global Solidarity Summer School in Ireland

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE | 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

At the 12th Global Solidarity Summer School organized by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in Sligo, Ireland, the International Initiative “Freedom for Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan” participated in the two-day conference of the ICTU on 8-9 September 2022. After a warm welcome and opening address by the President of Congress, Kevin Callinan, the floor was opened to discussions on a wide spectrum of topics, such as climate justice, social justice in Colombia, support for Palestine and support for the Kurdish struggle.

As part of the campaign Freedom for Öcalan, a workshop was organized to further stress the severity of the human rights crisis in Turkey and in particular the situation of Abdullah Öcalan. During the workshop, the spokesperson of the International Initiative emphasised how Öcalan's freedom is connected to the freedom of the Kurdish people but also to the freedom of “each and every one of you”. The workshop discussed Öcalan's paradigm not solely limited to finding a solution for the Kurdish problem in the Middle East, but also as a paradigm that should be considered in the conflicts and problems in the country of Ireland and around the world.

As a result of this workshop, the International Initiative is looking forward to a strengthened and continuously developing cooperation with the Irish trade unions in a joint struggle against oppression and colonization. The workshop underlined how, due to the histories of colonisation, both the Irish and Kurdish people are familiar with each other's struggle and how strength lies in unity.



Long March for Öcalan's freedom on its second day

ANF | DUISBURG | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

The long march of the Kurdish youth movement for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan started in the German city of Essen on Sunday.

Kurdish and internationalist activists from Germany, England, France, Switzerland, Colombia, Austria, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands are taking part in the six-day demonstration under the slogan “For the freedom of Rêber Apo—Come to the liberation struggle!” (ku.: Ji Bo Azadiya Rêber APO—Werin Cenga Azadiyê!).

Sunday’s leg of the demonstration ended at Duisburg Central Station. The second day of the march kicked off from Duisburg today, to be concluded in Krefeld, where the activists are expected to stage a torch march in the evening.



Prisons in Turkey

Ill prisoner Mehmet Emin Özkan, 83, taken to hospital again

ANF | AMED | 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Ill prisoner Mehmet Emin Özkan, 83, who is on the list of seriously ill detainees who need to be released from prisons, was taken to the hospital on 2 September after falling ill.

The family said that Özkan, who was detained in Diyarbakır D Type Prison, was taken to Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital and added that he was kept in the intensive care unit for a while before being taken to the ward on Sunday. The family said that they were not informed about their relatives falling ill.

Five heart attacks

Özkan is associated with the 1993 murder of Brigadier General Bahtiyar Aydın in the Lice district of Diyarbakır. Özkan, who has been in prison for 27 years, suffers from various health problems such as high blood pressure, osteoporosis, hearing and vision deficiency and memory loss. Özkan has suffered from 5 heart attacks in prison so far. However, he is not released because of the reports given by the Forensic Medicine Institute (ATK) stating that he could remain in prison, contrary to what the hospital's reports say.



Political prisoners in Turkey: “Hear our cries”

ANF | NEWS DESK | 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

Conditions in Turkish prisons are dramatic. Prisoners are mistreated, medical treatment is denied and those who are unfit to be imprisoned are not released. Political prisoners who should have been released

long ago due to the completion of their prison sentences remain in jail because they cling to their political identity. A cry for help from the prisoners is now coming from the T-type prison in Samsun-Bafra.

“Repression and rights violations every moment”

Prisoner Şirin Keskin said in a telephone conversation with his father, Aziz Keskin, about the conditions of detention: “We experience psychological repression and violations of rights every moment. But that's not all. There are cell raids, physical abuse and forced transfers. The guards confiscate our books, letters, notebooks, pens, daily notes, diaries and radios. An investigation has been opened against twenty prisoners on the basis of false facts. The prison management wants to prevent us from having visitors and receiving medical treatment. On the way to the visiting cells and to the hospital, we are subjected to degrading treatment every time.”

“The state is murdering the prisoners”

Caziye Duman, the sister of Metin Duman, who has been detained in Van Maximum Security Prison for seven months, said: “The prisoners who have died recently were murdered by the state. We know that most of the prisoners who died were killed by torture.”

Özlem Alkan, the daughter of Ibrahim Alkan, who has been in the same prison for five years and suffers from several chronic diseases, said, “Three months ago, my father had an operation. A month later, he should have gone for a check-up, but the prison administration has not taken him to the hospital until today. Our requests to the prison administration for hospitalisation have not been answered.”



Gökhan Yıldırım: Resisting means victory!

ANF | ISTANBUL | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Association for Solidarity with the Families of Detainees and Convicts (TAYAD) made a statement about Gökhan Yıldırım, who has been on death fast for 256 days in Tekirdağ No. 1 F Type Closed Prison, demanding a “fair trial”, in a house in the Güzeltepe District of Eyüp.

Gökhan Yıldırım, a lawyer with the Peoples' Law Office (HHB) attended the press statement.

The police carried out a General Information Scan (GBT) at the entrance of the house, checking the people who participated in the statement.

Gökhan Yıldırım said that the only thing to be done against injustice and lawlessness is to “resist”. He said that he decided to go on hunger strike after trying all kinds of ways to fight for a just trial and added: “our body is our evidence.”

Yıldırım said: “I have been on a hunger strike for 256 days and I continue to resist. We shouted our demands out loud for 256 days. We cried from the inside, our comrades and families supported us from the outside. At that time, there were many detentions and attacks.”

He added: “They did what they always do and said that I was eating. They said that I was taking 800 grams of calories. We have not forgotten this, we will never forget it. Because this is an attack. But we continued to resist with our heads held high, with our dignity, our minds and our ideas.”

“We want a fair trial, not to die”

Stating that he could die at any time, Yıldırım reminded that those who are on death fast do not want to die, they want a “fair trial”.

Yıldırım said: “Let's have a fair trial, let's not die. Mustafa, Ibo, Helin, Ebru are all martyrs. All of them were martyrs in this resistance. Currently, Sibel and Ileri continue their protest. Today, I am calling off my death fast on the 256th day. The reason I call it off is because we've achieved most of my demands. Because, we always said, dying is the easiest thing. If we die, we die, but we want to live. And we will implement our demands by living.”

'We can't win anything without resisting'

Stating that he would never give up the struggle, Yıldırım said that he would be the voice of his friends who are still on death fast and added: “I am outside today thanks to this resistance. I call on all our people: If you want to win, if you want to get something, resistance is the way. We can't gain anything without resistance.”

Naime Kara, who read the press release on behalf of the families from TAYAD, underlined that the death fasters resisted demanding a fair trial.

Stating that the right to a fair trial has turned into a national issue, Kara said: “This situation has become a struggle for rights. We call on all our people to unite around the struggle for the right to a fair trial led by Gökhan, Sibel and Ileri. We had Gökhan Yıldırım released after a 256-day-long struggle. As of 5 September, this struggle has been moved outside. Now it is on our shoulders to support Gökhan's resistance.”

Stating that the struggle for justice started with Mustafa Koçak in 2019-2020 for the right to a fair trial, Kara said: “Resisting for justice has become the tradition of the children of the revolutionaries. We are the ones who will defend this tradition and protect our rights at the cost of our lives.”

Political prisoner threatened with death is denied release

ANF | AMED | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

The crackdown on political prisoners in Turkey continues and inmates who have completed their sentences are not released, in line with the infamous measure of the Ministry of Justice to make the release of political prisoners dependent on a confession of remorse after they have served their prison sentence. There are many people in Turkish prisons whose regular prison term has long since expired and who are still not released because of their political views.

In recent years, the Administrative and Observation Board has been deciding whether to release prisoners or not. Prisoner Rojhat Bat, who received jail time after his arrest in 2017, is not released even though he has already served his prison term.

He was supposed to be released on August 26

Bat was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months in prison shortly after being arrested in January 2017. Sentenced for “membership in a terrorist organization”, he remains in prison although he was supposed to be released on August 26. The political prisoner was transferred from Diyarbakır D-Type Prison to L-Type Prison No. 2 in the Türkoğlu district of Maraş on May 18, 2022. Speaking to his family, Bat reacted to the denial of his release.

Not released due to the activities he participated in

The political prisoner stated that his lawyer's complaint about the obstruction of his release did not yield any results. “My lawyer's petition to the Maraş Judge of Execution was rejected. Another petition submitted to the Administrative and Observation Board was also rejected on the grounds that I had participated in activities that actually posed no problem for the prison administration. These activities generally included borrowing books from the library, participating in sports and social, cultural and artistic activities and getting certificates from workshops. My release is prevented on the grounds that I participated in these activities,” he said.

Bat called on the prison administration to put an end to the crackdown on prisoners and to release prisoners who have already served their sentences as soon as possible.

Threatened with death in 2021

Prisoner Bat was threatened with death by the chief guard in the prison in April 2021 when he was held in the Diyarbakır D Type Prison.

Bat's older sister, Ronda Bat, conveyed her brother's remarks in a phone call on April 29, 2021: “When I left the visiting room the previous day and went to the ward, there was an argument between my fellow prisoner and a guard. I intervened in the argument. Then the guards grabbed me and tried to cover my mouth with their hands to keep me quiet. Shortly after, the chief guard of the prison showed up and said

to me, 'I know that you are Rojhat Bat, and you are a provocateur. You will die here'. He threatened me with death, saying that 'I will kill you; you will not get out of here alive.'



Leyla Güven faces up to 43 years in prison for her speeches

ANF | AMED | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022 ANF | NEWS DESK | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

The hearing of the lawsuit against DTK Co-chair Leyla Güven on the charge of “conducting propaganda for a terrorist organization” was held at the Diyarbakır 9th High Criminal Court. Güven attended the hearing via sound and video information system (SEGBİS) from the Elazığ Women's Closed Prison, where she is held, while her lawyer Serdar Çelebi was present at the courtroom.

The prosecutor said that before her dismissal from the parliament, Güven had delivered a speech in Kurdish on a live broadcast on the social media account of the “HDP Amed Provincial Organization” on July 14, 2019. The prosecution argued that Güven conducted “propaganda for a terrorist organization” by remembering the torture of political prisoners in the Diyarbakır Prison after the 1980 military coup and commemorating those prisoners who lost their lives following a death fast.

The prosecutor also accused Güven of addressing the isolation of Öcalan, the Suruç Massacre, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women during her speeches.

The prosecutor demanded that Güven be sentenced to up to 43 years, 1 month and 15 days in prison. The hearing was adjourned to October 17.

16 journalists jailed in Turkey for three months without charge

ANF | NEWS DESK | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

In Amed (tr. Diyarbakır), 16 media workers were jailed in June. Those arrested are the director of the women's news agency JinNews, Safiye Alagaş, the co-chair of the Dicle Fırat Journalists' Association (DFG), Serdar Altan, the editor of the Mezopotamya news agency (MA), Aziz Oruç, the two editors of the Kurdish-language newspaper Xwebûn, Mehmet Ali Ertaş and Zeynel Abidin Bulut, presenter and former MA editor Ömer Çelik, presenters Neşe Toprak and Elif Üngür, cameramen Mazlum Doğan Güler, İbrahim Koyuncu, Abdurrahman Öncü, Suat Doğuhan, Ramazan Geciken, Lezgin Akdeniz and Mehmet Şahin, and Remziye Temel, an accountant at Piya Production. No indictment has been filed for 83 days.

Journalists demand solidarity

The journalists are being held in two high-security prisons in Amed. They are accused of “membership of a terrorist organisation”, meaning the PKK. As political prisoners, they are subject to particularly severe prison conditions.

Lawyer Ülkü Şahin from the Turkish Journalists' Union (TGS) visited the imprisoned journalists in prison. Şahin said they were in good health and called for greater solidarity. During the visit, the prisoners reported on the conditions of their detention and the violations of their rights.

Over 40 degrees in the cells

Among other things, it was brought up that the cells heat up to over 40 degrees due to metal plates on the ceiling. Aziz Oruç, Suat Dođuhan and Abdurrahman Öncü, who are detained in Diyarbakır High Security Prison No. 1, told Şahin that they have not been provided with refrigerators since they were transferred in July, they cannot drink cold water despite the high temperatures and the products they buy in the canteen spoil immediately. They report that the prison administration completely ignores their requests. They are also denied the rights to social activities, sports and exercise. Sick prisoners are not taken to hospital.

Everything monitored by cameras

The four journalists in the women's prison reported that every area of the ward, from the bathroom door to the welfare area, is monitored by cameras and they are double shackled during transport. They also said that the canteen prices are too high and their families cannot afford the costs. Furthermore, letters are confiscated and excessive postage is charged for items. Electricity bills are also being passed on to the prisoners. The newspapers Yeni Yaşam, Evrensel and BirGün are not handed out to the prisoners, and there is only limited access to TV channels.



80-year-old Makbule Özer released from prison

ANF | VAN | 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

Makbule Özer (80), who was arrested on 9 May after being sentenced to 2 years and one month in prison for “aiding a terrorist organization” in Edremit, in the province of Van, was released.

Özer was released after her sentence was postponed for one year.



Jailed politician Aysel Tuđluk hospitalized

ANF | NEWS DESK | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

Jailed politician Aysel Tuđluk was hospitalized this morning and taken under treatment in the emergency department.

Figen Yüksekdağ, former co-chair of the HDP, spoke during today's hearing in Kobanê Trial and said that Tuđluk was recently infected with Covid-19 and couldn't pull herself together afterwards. “She was taken

to the emergency department today. The adverse conditions of detention cause her health to get worse,” Yüksekdağ said.

According to reports, Tuğluk was referred to hospital where she was given serum and underwent examination. She is reported to have been taken back to prison and in a stable condition.

Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk has been in Kandıra prison in the western Turkish province of Kocaeli since December 2016, suffering from dementia while in custody. Last year, an expert opinion from the forensic department of Kocaeli University determined that the 57-year-old is no longer fit to be imprisoned due to chronic and progressive Alzheimer's dementia and should be released from prison immediately. The Forensic Medicine Institute (ATK) in Istanbul, an institution of the Ministry of Justice, has made a contrary finding and has so far seen no reason to suspend the execution of the sentence.

On August 5, the release of Aysel Tuğluk was decided by the court in the Kobanê trial in Ankara. 108 people are accused in the political show trial, including the former executive committee of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). 21 defendants are in prison. The defendants are accused of terrorist offences and murder in dozens of cases in connection with the protests during the ISIS attack on Kobanê in October 2014.

Aysel Tuğluk, who also represented Abdullah Öcalan as a lawyer, has already been sentenced in several cases, while other trials are still pending. In February 2020, the Turkish Court of Appeal confirmed Tuğluk's highest prison sentence to date, of ten years' imprisonment. She was convicted of “directing a terrorist organisation” due to her function as co-chair of the grassroots alliance “Democratic Society Congress” (DTK). In October 2021, a sentence of twenty months imprisonment followed against the former member of parliament for alleged terror propaganda in 2012 and 2013. In the so-called Kobanê trial in Ankara, she faces an aggravated life sentence.

In mid-August, the Constitutional Court (AYM) made an interim decision regarding the application for the postponement of the execution and release of Tuğluk, whose request to postpone the execution of her sentence and to be released was rejected.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice, the General Directorate of Security, the Gendarmerie General Command and the Intelligence Service (MIT) objected to the release of Aysel Tuğluk. The Ankara 22nd High Criminal Court rejected the objections and submitted the file to the Ankara 23rd High Criminal Court.



Mothers of prisoners and HDP members brutally detained in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

The crackdown on political prisoners in Turkey continues and inmates who have completed their sentences are not released, in line with the infamous measure of the Ministry of Justice to make the release of political prisoners dependent on a confession of remorse after they have served their prison sentence.

There are many people in Turkish prisons whose regular prison term has long since expired and who are still not released because of their political views.

Families of prisoners have long been taking to the streets across the country to demand justice for their children. The families repeatedly face police brutality in response to their demands.

Families of prisoners gathered in Istanbul's Kadıköy district today to protest against prisons being turned into death cells. They were joined by HDP deputies Züleyha Gülüm and Dilşat Canbaz Kaya, as well as several administrators and members of the party in the city.

Obstructed and besieged by the police, the group protested the denial of their right to assembly by chanting the slogan "Bijî berxwedana zindana" (Long live the prison resistance). During the ensuing crackdown by the police, who also forced journalists out of the area, several people were taken into custody, handcuffed behind their backs.

Speaking under police blockade, HDP MP Dilşat Canbaz Kaya denounced the unlawful treatment of the relatives of prisoners who are suffering from ever-worsening detention conditions and more of them lose their lives behind bars every day. The deputy called for an end to this unlawfulness and called for solidarity with the families of prisoners.

Speaking after, HDP deputy Züleyha Gülüm said, "We are faced with a mentality that even tries to prevent members of the parliament from speaking. This very same mentality is committing a massacre in prisons. While thousands of inmates with health problems are not released, their mothers are detained here for raising their voice against deaths in prison. We have to say "stop" to this unlawfulness all together. What is going on in prisons is a concern to all of us. 49 prisoners have lost their lives this year alone."



Prisoners in Bafra jail expose violations of human rights

ANF | SAMSUN | 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

Violations of rights against political prisoners continue in Samsun Bafra T Type Prison. Enes Ilgen (23), who was arrested 6 years ago when he was still a child, talked about the rights violations he experienced on a weekly phone call with his family who lives in Adıyaman Kahta district. Ilgen said that the guards raided the cells of political prisoners on 5 and 6 September, and added that 6 people were kept in a solitary cell. Ilgen said that the guards told them that they had emptied the wards on the grounds that they would "paint the wards". Ilgen said that all basic and vital belongings of the detainees, especially their clothes, books, pens and notebooks, were confiscated during the raids, and that 4 detainees were transferred to other prisons against their will.

Call on civil society and human rights organisations

Ilgen told his family that violations of rights have become the norm recently and demanded that the Human Rights Association (IHD), the Lawyers' Association for Freedom (ÖHD) and bar associations send a

delegation to the prison. İlgen also called on the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission to take action against violations of rights.



Three more prisoners in Kırıklar Prison go on hunger strike

ANF | NEWS DESK | 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

In Kırıklar No. 2 F Type High Security Prison, violations of rights are increasing. Seriously ill prisoners named Zeki Bayhan, Ramazan Çelik and Yücel Kızmaz have been on an indefinite non-alternating hunger strike since 28 August.

Prisoner Veysi Şengil in the same prison announced that three more prisoners had joined the strike in a letter to the Human Rights Association (İHD) Izmir Branch.

He said that Behram Sağıdıkı, Mehmet Faruk Araz and ill prisoner İbrahim Tikan went on hunger strike on 5 September.

Şengil wrote: “I know very well that you are always subject to pressure in difficult conditions. I must say that you have put up a great struggle based on human rights and the indispensable principles of universal life. In line with these principles, I know that you have paid a price for this cause. We support and embrace your struggle for human rights.”

The letter listed the violations in prison as follows:

* Although we have the right to exercise and chat for 10 hours a week, we are only allowed 2 hours for each of these rights.

* While detainees and convicts held in the same case should be in the same ward for security purposes, as it was before, we stay in wards and blocks with different prisoners. Due to this completely arbitrary practice by the administration, we are not able to attend social events with our friends. This also causes a serious security problem for us.

* Our most basic human needs are not being met. Old, dirty and unusable beds and bedding sets are provided.

* Meals are given in very small portions and are very low in calories. We are not getting enough protein.

* Cleaning supplies are not provided.

* Strip searches which go against human dignity are imposed at prison entrances.

* Referrals made by the prison infirmary to an external hospital are either made too late or not at all. Our health is not protected.”

Şengil called on all relevant institutions to take steps and noted that the pressures and violations are getting heavier. “Since we could not see any goodwill in spite of all our well-intentioned efforts, our friends started an indefinite hunger strike for a week as a last resort. Now, three more of our friends have joined the hunger strike, bringing the total to 6. Our protest will continue until our demands are met. To resist is to live.”



Military Aggression and Occupation

Girl injured in Turkish attack on UN-sponsored school dies

ANF | HESEKE | 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

The invading Turkish state continues to target North and East Syria in every possible way. After the recent talks in Tehran on July 19 and in Sochi on August 5, Turkey has stepped up its attacks against the region, targeting civilian settlements in the first place in an attempt to displace the people as part of its genocidal plan to occupy the entire region and change its demography.

27 people, including 7 children, lost their lives as a result of the drone attacks of the invading Turkish state against North and East Syria during the month of August alone.

On August 18, a Turkish drone bombed an UN-sponsored girls' education centre in the village of Şemokê on the Heseke-Til Temir Road. The attack claimed the lives of 4 girls, while 11 others were injured as a result of the attack.

One of the injured girls, Silava Remedan, is reported to have lost her life on 1 September. Silava Remedan from Dirbêsiyê city was born in 2005.



HDP: 6–7 September 1955 Istanbul Pogrom must be addressed

ANF | ANKARA | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

On 6 and 7 September 1955, mobs attacked homes and businesses belonging to Istanbul's Greek minority, as well as Armenians and Jews, leaving more than a dozen dead.

The events were triggered by the fake news that a bomb attack took place against the house where Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was born in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Rights and Beliefs Commission issued a statement to mark the anniversary of the Istanbul Pogrom. “On 6 and 7 September 1955, when the attacks took place, homes and businesses of Christian and Jewish citizens were plundered. After the pogrom, tens of thousands of citizens had to leave the country because of threats against their lives,”

The statement added: “The 6 and 7 September Pogrom is one of the darkest pages of our history. We say ‘Never again’ and ask to confront this painful history. However, the Pogrom has not been officially condemned and no steps have been taken for compensation or apology. This massacre against the ancient peoples of this region should be faced.”

According to the press of the time, 11 people died in the riots. According to Greek sources, 15 people lost their lives. Officially, 30 people were injured; unofficial numbers amount to 300. The number of raped women is estimated to be above 200.

4,214 houses, 1,004 offices, 73 churches, one synagogue, one monastery, 26 schools and 5,317 other places such as hotels and bars were attacked.

The property damage is estimated between 150 million and 1 billion Turkish Liras as equivalent to the value of those days. The Democratic Party government paid about 60 million Turkish Liras in compensation.



Three and a half trillion dollars for the war in Kurdistan

ANF | NEWS DESK | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

Research shows that the Turkish state's bellicose response to the Kurdish question has cost the country more than \$3.5 trillion and deprived it of large amounts of international investment. This was reported by the Yeni Yasam newspaper on Monday.

The newspaper referred to a 2021 report by İzzet Akyol, published by the London-based Democratic Progress Institute. It states that Turkey's failure to resolve the Kurdish issue politically has come at a significant cost. In addition to the direct costs of financing four decades of armed conflict, the fighting has also inhibited productivity and domestic investment, slowed international investment and reduced tourism revenues, Akyol said.

“In other words, you can say that Turkey's annual growth rate would be one per cent higher without conflict,” Akyol said. “Turkey has been in a state of armed conflict for almost 40 years. The wasted resources have cost Turkey trillions of dollars.”

Akyol's findings are supported by a 2015 report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which estimated that Turkey is missing out on three-quarters of its potential international investment due to its involvement in conflict.

While international investment at the time was around \$370 billion, Yeni Yaşam quoted then Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek as saying that estimated spending on warfare was around \$350 billion. This increased to one trillion dollars when the loss of investment opportunities caused by conflicts was taken into account.

Şimşek was probably referring to Ankara's involvement in the civil war in Syria, where Turkey is one of the main supporters of the opposition against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. However, according to Akyol, the Kurdish issue is by far Turkey's longest running and costliest conflict.

“Turkey's failure to find a solution to the problem within the policy framework has come at a huge economic cost to the country. Turkish policies are neither pragmatic nor flexible or rational and are already clearly inhibiting economic growth. The circumstances created by 40 years of conflict have also created huge economic costs for Turkey,” said Izzet Akyol.

410 million dollars a month for howitzers

The article in the Yeni Yaşam calculates Turkey's costs for the war in Kurdistan. According to this, assault howitzers can fire 240 to 250 projectiles per hour. The howitzers are used for two hours a day in the invasion of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), which means that an average of 500 howitzer shells are used. Each of these shells is worth about \$1,000. 500 shells per day means 500,000 dollars. The annual cost of a single howitzer is about \$50 million. The monthly cost of a howitzer is \$4.1 million. Considering that 100 howitzers are used in an operation, the monthly cost is \$410 million.

65,000 dollars for a one-hour fighter jet flight

The cost for a one-hour flight of an F-16 fighter jet without ammunition is \$25,000 and with ammunition \$65,000. The most commonly used bomb is the MK-81 262 Libre, weighing 119 kilograms. Another model is the MK-82 500 Libre, which weighs 227 kilograms and costs \$26,000. The widely used MK-83 1000 Libre bomb weighs 460 kilograms and the MK-84 2000 Libre weighs 930 kilograms. The bombs used in the F-16s cost \$3,100 each. Laser-guided bombs cost \$28,500 each. Bunker buster bombs cost \$35,000 each.

Cost of helicopters

The cost of a one-hour flight of T-129 ATAK and Sikorsky helicopters is \$10,000, according to Yeni Yaşam. Every day, 15 to 20 helicopters fly over the war zone. The cost of ammunition for one day is between 150,000 and 300,000 dollars.

Til Temir and Shehba under Turkish artillery attack

ANF | SHEHBA | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

Turkey continues its attacks on civilian settlement areas in northern Syria, in violation of international law. In the canton of Shehba, the village of Um Hosh came under artillery fire on Wednesday afternoon. At the same time, artillery attacks are targeting the villages of Til Şenan, Micêrbe, Dirdara, Til Tewîl and Til Cuma near Til Temir. The electricity plant in the region was also bombed. No information is yet available on the consequences of the attacks.

The Assyrian village of Til Tewîl (Tall Tawil) has already come under massive attack in the past two days. According to Aram Hanna, spokesperson for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the region is being bombed indiscriminately. In addition to property damage to the civilian population, holy sites have also been damaged, such as the Mar Sawa church in Til Tewîl. Hanna stated that the Til Temir Military Council and the Syriac Military Council are exercising their right to self-defence and are responding to the attacks.



HPG calls for the clarification of Xelifan incident amidst reports of guerrilla casualties

ANF | BEHDINAN | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

In a written statement on Wednesday, the Press Centre of the People's Defense Forces (HPG-BIM) reported that a five-person guerrilla team was attacked by reconnaissance aircraft in the Balisan Valley. 3 guerrillas were martyred and 2 others were injured during the attack, said the HPG, calling for the incident to be clarified.

“On the evening of September 5, a guerrilla team of 5 fighters was attacked by reconnaissance aircraft while on the move near the Tarava Village in the Balisan Valley. This group consisted of our comrades Rêzan Botan, Armanc Zilan, Karo Kobanê, Aşîkar Colemêrg and Zanyar Tavê. According to the information we received, 3 of our comrades were martyred and 2 others were injured. We learned that KDP forces intervened on the scene shortly after the attack and took our injured friends away. At the moment, we don't know which of our friends were martyred and which ones were injured by the attack.

The fact that a reconnaissance plane suddenly showed up and struck a group of fighters moving in the field, a non-combat area, at night shows that our comrades were pursued by a highly organized intelligence system. Moreover, gunfire heard by the residents of the surrounding village as KDP forces moved into the area is attention-grabbing.

This incident should be investigated and clarified. The information provided by our injured comrades will also help to clarify how this incident took place.

On this basis, we demand the immediate return of our friends captured by KDP forces.”



Tevgera Azadî Executive Board says KDP wants to start civil war among Kurds

ANF | NEWS DESK | 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

Tevgera Azadî ya Civaka Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Community Freedom Movement) Executive Board issued a statement regarding the attacks of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) against the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas in partnership with the Turkish state.

The statement said that the KDP openly participated in the war against the guerrillas and helped the Turkish state and added: “What the KDP has done is a national betrayal. At the request of the invaders, it paves the way for Kurds to fight each other. We are against Kurds fighting each other. It is Turkey that benefited from an inter-Kurdish war. We should be working for national unity and for strengthening each other.”

The statement added: “The only thing the KDP does in the name of Kurdishness is to pave the way for the massacre and arrest of Kurds. The murder of tens of Kurdish children by the hands of the Kurds and the setting up of an ambush in and around Xelîfan is a big crime and there can be no excuse for it. Our people should condemn the KDP, which has cooperated with the invaders throughout history and played a major role in shedding Kurdish blood in all four parts of Kurdistan. The KDP is dangerously walking hand in hand with the invading Turkish fascism. On behalf of the Kurdistan Region government and the Peshmerga Ministry, they are making their way in the mountains of Kurdistan with dozers to facilitate the Turkish occupation and military work.”

At the end of the statement, a call was made to the Kurdish people and to all peoples who want freedom, to stop the war between Kurds and to condemn the KDP betrayal.



Four children injured when mine exploded in Ain Issa

ANF | AIN ISSA | 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

Four children named Casim Xalid El Hiwês (10), Fewaz Xalid (6), Fatma Xalid (8) and Zeyneb Xalid (3) were injured when a mine exploded in the village of Îdqî in Ain Issa.

The mine was one of the thousands abandoned by ISIS mercenaries.

Casim Xalid El Hiwês (10) had his leg and hand amputated. Fewaz Xalid's condition was stated to be serious.

The children were being treated in Kobanê.



Lawyers Benkhelifa, Callewaert and Beauthier on fact finding mission in Shengal and Maxmur

ANF | NEWS DESK | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

Lawyers Selma Benkhelifa, Joke Callewaert and Georges-Henri Beauthier issued a press statement after visiting Shengal and Maxmur. The lawyers went on a fact finding mission about the use of Turkish drones against civilians.

The statement said: “At the end of July 2022, Iraq filed a complaint with the United Nations about the death of 9 civilians killed by Turkish drones in Zakho, in Northern Iraq. These Turkish attacks on Iraqi territory are incessant and have caused dozens of civilian victims in the Kurdish region.

We went on a mission to listen to these victims or their families. Barely back, we learn with amazement that the refugee camp where we were received was the victim of a new drone attack, on 29 August.”

The statement continued: “First of all, we went to meet the Yazidi population, a religious minority persecuted and threatened with genocide by Daesh.

In the village of Khanesur in Shengal, near the Syrian border, we are immediately confronted with the reality of this permanent threat: a drone is flying overhead.

The inhabitants all express their terror in the face of these sky killers. Turkish drones fly over their village every day.

We meet the mother of a young student killed in a strike on the village hospital, where doctors were also killed. We also meet the mother of a Yazidi politician who was killed in a hit on his car. Then we saw a child seriously injured by a strike on the community center.”

The statement added: “For 275 years (1640–1915), Yazidis were massacred and subjected to attempted genocides in the Ottoman Empire. Daesh took over these massacres. We remember the young girls being kidnapped and sold. For the Yezidis, the Erdogan regime continues this genocidal policy. The people fought and repelled the Islamic State assassins. Today they face a new threat against which they feel helpless and defenseless.

Our visits to the families of the victims are heart breaking and leave us with more than a sense of outrage. Something has to be done.”

The lawyers continued: “We then leave for the refugee camp of Maxmur, further east, near the city of Mosul. Here, too, overflights by Turkish drones have been a daily occurrence for months.

We met the inhabitants of the camp. They explain to us that the camp was created in 1997 after the families were forced to leave their villages in Turkey, burned by the Turkish army. These villagers fled in 1994 and were pursued by the Turkish army in Iraq. Today, they have rebuilt their life and their home in Iraq, in the middle of a quasi-desert. They continue to be persecuted by Turkey.

Turkish drones target them on the grounds that they are PKK fighters. However, the victims are civilians, such as a 73-year-old woman whose daughter we met, three young women tending their cattle, a 16-year-old girl milking her sheep, etc.

The Maxmur camp is located 250 km from the Turkish border and cannot pose a threat to Turkey.”

The lawyers ended their statement with the following remarks: “We returned shocked and outraged by these illegal, illegitimate and unpunished murders. Legal action under international law must be taken, as well as initiatives to ban the use of drones as weapons of war in violation of international law.”



Invaders kidnap 13 people in Afrin

ANF | NEWS DESK | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

According to information obtained from local sources, soldiers affiliated with the invading Turkish state used violence against 3 young people from Cindirêê near the Syrian-Turkish border and kidnapped them along with another person.

The names of the kidnapped people, three of whom are minors, are as follows: Izedîn Reşid (17) from the Hemam village in Cindirêê, Silava Eyûb Îsa (27) from Afrin's Zêdiyê neighbourhood, Nûredîn Emin (16) and Mihemed El Îsa (17) from the Birc Ebdala village in Şêrawa.

The so-called 'Military Police', a paramilitary criminal organization established by the Turkish state in the occupation zone, kidnapped a person named Feysel Hesên El Mihemed (39) in Cindirêşê.

Moreover, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group kidnapped Mihemed Ehmed Ebdo and Xelîl Henîf from Sherawa's Kibêşîn and Fafirtînê villages.

The al-Hamzat, another mercenary group backed by the Turkish state, kidnapped locals named Mehmûd Ehmed, Mihemed Elî, Yûsif El Qasim, Xelîl Îbrahîm, Cuma Seydo and Merwan Seydo from the Basûtê village of Sherawa and took them to an unknown place.



Turkey asks Finland to review rejected extradition requests

ANF | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

Following Turkey's approval of Finland and Sweden's NATO accession, the Finnish Justice Ministry has refused to review already rejected Turkish extradition requests. Ankara is demanding that a new decision be made on six rejected extradition requests, ministry representative Sonja Varpasuo told AFP.

“According to the Turkish government, the request concerns various offences related to terrorism,” Varpasuo said. However, she said the decisions were final and could not be appealed. Turkey was therefore told that “the cases cannot be reassessed”.

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Finland and Sweden decided in May to join NATO after decades of alliance neutrality. Turkey was the only country of the 30 members to oppose the admission of the two Nordic countries.

The leadership in Ankara accuses Sweden and Finland of harbouring dozens of “terror suspects” from Turkey and demands their extradition. These are mainly Kurdish activists accused of being close to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and alleged members of the movement of Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen—the disgraced political mentor of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is said to be responsible for the coup attempt in 2016.

Quid pro quo for agreeing to join NATO

In a memorandum signed by Sweden and Finland at the NATO summit in Madrid at the end of June, the two countries promised Turkey that they would consider Turkish extradition requests “expeditiously and thoroughly”. Erdoğan then abandoned his opposition to the admission of Sweden and Finland to NATO. In August, the Swedish government announced a first deportation. However, Turkish Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ described this as “insufficient”—the person concerned is a Turkish citizen who was sentenced to a total of 14 years in Turkey in 2013 and 2016 for fraud offences.

Eleven extradition requests since 2019

Turkey has approached Finland with an extradition request eleven times since 2019. The latest request was made the previous month, according to the Finnish Ministry of Justice. The ministry did not disclose information on the background of the case.



Another military operation launched in Muş

ANF | MUS | 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Turkish army is once again conducting a military operation in the northern Kurdish province of Muş, this time in the district of Malazgirt. According to the Ministry of the Interior, almost forty operational units consisting of more than 500 members of the gendarmerie, paramilitary special units and village guard units are involved in the operation. The declared aim is to “remove the PKK from the country's agenda and neutralise terrorists”, as the Turkish government calls its fight against the Kurdish guerrillas.

The operation in Muş, launched on Saturday, is led by the regional command of the local gendarmerie. The area of operation includes rural areas in the Malazgirt district in the east of the province, bordering Ağrı province, and wide-area searches are currently being observed. Previous military operations in Muş, which had been ongoing since June, had focused on the high mountain area of Şenyayla.



Turkish drone attack targets YBŞ vehicle in Shengal

ANF | SHENGAL | 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

A Turkish drone attacked a car belonging to the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ) in the Shengal (Sinjar) region in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). The attack took place near an Iraqi army base in the village of Behreva near Xanesor. According to initial reports, the car was bombed twice. A YBŞ statement on the attack is expected later today.

Turkey conducts ongoing drone attacks in northern Iraq and northern Syria. The last drone attack in Shengal took place on 29 August, when, according to the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ), two fighters were injured. On the same day, Evizet Abdullah Abid, a civilian father of six children, was killed in a drone attack in the Maxmur refugee camp. The Turkish state makes no distinction between armed forces and civilians in its attacks.

In Shengal, air strikes have increasingly been carried out since 2017 under the pretext of “fighting the PKK”. The specific targets are mostly representatives and institutions of the Democratic Autonomous Assembly of Shengal (MXDŞ) and the defence units YBŞ/YJŞ. The casualties are mainly civilians—often survivors of the 2014 ISIS genocide. In June, three civilians were killed in a Turkish drone attack in Shengal, including a twelve-year-old child. In February, three civilian Arab workers died in multi-hour bombings on 22 targets. In December 2021, Merwan Bedel, co-chair of the MXDŞ Executive Commission, a long-time core personality of the autonomous administration, was assassinated in a Turkish drone strike. A doctor and nurses were among the eight people killed in an air strike on a hospital in Sikênîyê in August 2021.

In the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria, 27 people were killed in Turkish drone attacks in August, including eight minors.



HPG: Turkish army continues to use banned weapons

ANF | BEHDINAN | 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) reported continued use of chemical weapons by the Turkish army in their statement providing information about the war in Kurdistan. According to this, banned weapons were used in eleven cases against guerrilla positions in southern Kurdistan on Saturday. In two Turkish attacks at Girê Amêdî, a gas smelling of roses was used, which left red stains on contact with the ground. Further attacks by chemical agents took place at Girê FM and in Çemço. In the resistance area of Şehîd Fedakar, flammable material was set on fire at the Bahoz tunnel.

Qandil, Gare and Zap bombed by fighter jets

Further attacks were carried out by fighter jets, howitzers and heavy weapons. The guerrilla areas in southern Kurdistan were bombed ten times by fighter jets, affecting the area around Gundê Bukrîskan in the Qandil mountains and Girê Zengil in Gare as well as Sîda in the Zap region. The bombardments caused a fire in the area, which is still going on, according to HPG. In the area of Karker in Zap, the Turkish army continues to destroy guerrilla tunnels with construction equipment.

Guerrilla actions in Çemço and Girê Cûdî

Regarding the latest guerrilla actions, the HPG said that on Saturday, a Turkish army soldier was shot dead by a sniper at Girê Cûdî. Today at six o'clock in the morning, mobile guerrilla groups in the Zap struck a Turkish unit advancing in the resistance area of Şehîd Adil in Çemço in a coordinated action. Heavy weapons and snipers were used in the action, as a result of which two soldiers were killed and two others injured.



12 September 1980, a never ending military coup

ANF | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Turkey suffered various military coups: 27 May 1960, 12 March 1971, 12 September 1980, 17 April 1993, 28 February 1997, 27 April 2007. In the past years, this process of soft coups is continuing under Erdogan.

On 12 September 1980, a National Security Council which brought together the chief of General Staff, general Kenan Evren, and chiefs of staff of army and security forces took power by proclaiming a state of siege throughout the country. Politicians, from Ecevit to Demirel, Erbakan, Turkes are arrested, the National Assembly is dissolved and the activities of associations and trade unions are banned. The junta extends to a retired admiral, who becomes Prime Minister, Bulent Ulusu.

In the eight and a half months that followed the massacre of Maraş, in late December 1979, the dead were at least 3856. That of September 12, 1980 was the third coup in Turkey in thirty years. The first was that of May 27, 1960, the second that of March 12, 1971. Between 1971 and 1984 violence and repression against the Kurds and against the left reaches its peak. A generation is essentially destroyed.

The tragic outcome of the 12 September coup:

650,000 people were under arrest.

1,683,000 people were blacklisted.

230,000 people were tried in 210,000 lawsuits.

7,000 people were recommended for the death penalty.

517 people were sentenced to death.

50 of those given the death penalty were executed (26 political prisoners, 23 criminaloffenders and 1 Asala, Armenia militant).

The files of 259 people, which had been recommended for the death penalty, were sent to the National Assembly.

71,000 people were tried by articles 141, 142 and 163 of Turkish Penal Code.

98,404 people were tried on charges of being members of a leftist, a rightist, a nationalist, a conservative, etc. organization.

388,000 people were denied a passport.

30,000 people were dismissed from their firms because they were suspects.

14,000 people had their citizenship revoked.

30,000 people went abroad as political refugees.

300 people died in a suspicious manner.

171 people died by reason of torture.

937 films were banned because they were found objectionable.

23,677 associations had their activities stopped.

3,854 teachers, 120 lecturers and 47 judges were dismissed.

400 journalists were recommended a total of 4,000 years imprisonment.

Journalists were sentenced to 3,315 years and 6 months imprisonment.

31 journalists went to jail.

300 journalists were attacked.

3 journalists were shot dead.

300 days in which newspapers were not published.

303 cases were opened against 13 major newspapers.

39 tons of newspapers and magazines were destroyed.

299 people lost their lives in prison.

144 people died in a suspicious manner in prison.

14 people died in hunger strikes in prison.

16 people were shot while fleeing.

95 people were killed in combat.

2,000 pupils without classes in Ain Issa and Girê Spî

ANF | AIN ISSA | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Preparations for the new school year in Girê Spî Canton have begun. The materials for the new school year have been distributed and teachers have already received their classes. The ANHA news agency spoke with Cuman Îsa from the school administration of Girê Spî Canton. He explained that there are still 97 schools in the free areas of the canton that are being taken care of by the education administration.

No classes for four years

Îsa reported that five schools destroyed by Turkish attacks have been rebuilt. Referring to the schools near the battle front, he stated: “Unfortunately, the Turkish state has repeatedly targeted schools and settlements. Thousands of students, such as in the villages of Mestûr, Cedîde (al-Jadida), Siwêdiyê (Suwadiyah), Fatse, Xalidiyê (al-Khalidiya), Dibis and Sewan near the battle front, have not received education for four years. There are 23 schools in the region where 2,000 students are supposed to be taught. But the villages and schools in the region are bombed every day by the Turkish occupation army and its mercenaries before the eyes of the world. In this way, children's right to education according to international agreements and laws is being violated.”

Last year, the schools in Xazlî and Erîda were directly targeted by attacks. As a result, many parents stopped sending their children to school. The school administration has no solution for the approximately 2,000 pupils who no longer receive regular lessons. However, several parents have decided to send their children to schools kilometres away from the front.

According to the general school administration, the number of pupils in Girê Spî is expected to be 9,700 this year. 480 teachers have been assigned to teach. After the occupation of the area in 2019, the education situation has deteriorated massively. Îsa added, “Most of the villages, even those far from the battle front, have come under fire. Some of the active schools have also been closed as people are afraid to send their children to school due to the constant attacks. This is the case for the villages of Cirin, Bexdik, Ehmediyê and Hîşê (al-Hishah), for example.”



Femicide

Woman dies in suspicious circumstances in Van

ANF | VAN | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

Neslihan Arvas died in a suspicious way on Monday morning in the Alipaşa Mahallesi in Ipekyolu, in the province of Van. It was claimed that Neslihan Arvas fell while cleaning the window of her home on the 4th floor.

Neslihan suffered serious injuries and was taken to the hospital by her relatives, where she died shortly after her arrival.

STAR Women's Association members visited the family of the woman, who was buried after her autopsy at the hospital, to learn more about the circumstances surrounding her death.



Men killed 31 women and 7 children in Turkey in August

ANF | TURKEY | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

According to the news compiled by Bianet from local and national newspapers, news websites and news agencies, men killed at least 31 women and seven children in August.

In June, the deaths of at least 13 women (in the provinces of Aydın (1), Erzurum (1), İstanbul (2), İzmir (2), Samsun (1), Sinop (1), Tokat (1), Urfa (2), Zonguldak (2)) were reported in the press as “suspicious.”

Men inflicted violence on at least 79 women, abused at least 12 girls and boys, harassed at least 13 women, and forced six women to do sex work.

Femicide

Men killed at least 31 women in August. This figure was 34 in the same month last year. Men also killed seven men who were together with the women whom they killed.

At least six women were killed despite protection orders. One of the killed women was from Syria, and two were from Georgia.

Men's "excuses" for killing 18 women were not reported in the press. Men killed at least 10 women because they wanted to break up or did not want to make peace.

Men killed one woman because of "jealousy" and two women because of "debt" and "land dispute."

22 women were killed by their husbands, ex-husbands and boyfriends, three women by their sons, one woman by her neighbor, two women by their relatives, and one woman by her friend. The degree of acquaintance between two women and the men who killed them was not reported in the press. One of the men who killed women was a juvenile.

Men killed 19 women with firearms, 10 women with sharp objects, and two women by strangling them.

Violence against children and child murder

Men killed seven children in August. This number was six in the same month last year.

Two children were killed by their father, one was killed by their elder brother, one was killed by a relative, and one was killed by her boyfriend. The degree of acquaintance between the man and the two children whom he killed was not reported in the press.

Men killed five children with firearms and one child with sharp objects.

Sexual assault/rape

Men raped at least one woman in August. This figure was 11 in the same month last year.

The degree of acquaintance between the five men and the woman whom they raped was not reported in the press.

Harassment

Men harassed at least 13 women in August. This figure was 28 in the same month last year. One of the women who was raped by men was from Iraq.

Men harassed at least 12 women verbally and physically. Men harassed one woman by showing their sexual organ to her.

Men harassed 10 women in places outside of the house. Places where men harassed three women were not reported in the press.

One woman was harassed by a specialist sergeant, four women by couriers, and one woman by a relative. The degree of acquaintance between the men and the seven women whom he harassed was not reported in the press.

Child abuse

Men abused at least 12 boys and girls in August. This figure was 13 in the same month last year.

The degree of acquaintance between the seven men who abused at least eight children was not reported in the press. Two children were harassed by an imam, one child by a sports instructor, and one by a shop-keeper.

Violence/injury

Men inflicted violence on at least 79 women in August. This figure was 61 in the same month last year.

At least nine women who were subjected to violence from men were hospitalized in “serious” condition. Men inflicted violence on at least 11 women by violating “protection orders.”

One of the women who was subjected to violence by men was from Syria, and one was from Tanzania. Men had been systematically violent towards at least two women.

At least 55 women were subjected to violence from their husbands and boyfriends. 11 women were subjected to violence from family members such as their brothers and fathers. The degree of acquaintance between 10 women and the men who inflicted violence on them was not reported in the press.

Men's excuses for inflicting violence on 67 women were not reported in the press. Men inflicted violence on 12 women because they wanted to break up or did not want to make peace.

Men injured 54 women by battering them, 13 women with sharp objects and nine women with firearms. Men injured one woman by hitting them with a car, and two women by burning them.

Men injured 23 women in places outside of the house, such as workplaces, buses, and forests, and 46 women at home. The places where men inflicted violence on 10 women were not reported in the press.

Forced sex work

In August, men forced at least six women to do sex work. This figure was 20 in the same month last year. The women who were forced to do sex work were not citizens of Türkiye. There were children among those who were forced to do sex work.

Man arrested for threatening his wife comes out of prison and kills her

ANF | BARTIN | 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

Arzu Ar, 33, was murdered by her husband Metin Ar (39) from whom she was in the process of divorce.

Metin Ar, who was arrested 8 months ago in Bartın for threatening Arzu Ar with death, was released two days ago.

As soon as he was released, the man went to see his former wife, and attacked her with a cutting tool. Arzu Ar died, leaving her two children.



How women are driven into prostitution in Amed

DENİZ İKE | AMED | 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

B.Y., a young Kurdish woman from Amed (tr. Diyarbakır), told ANF how women are exploited as waitresses in cafés and bars and driven into prostitution because of the prevailing unemployment and financial problems. It is her own story and she has found a way out. Many other women in Amed have not managed to do so.

“The education system and unemployment present many young people with the alternative of either taking their own lives or working in a bar as a last hope. For the all-day work in the bars and cafés, there is a wage of 2000 to 3000 TL, which is not even enough for electricity and water. I agreed to work for an even lower wage. To avoid being fired, I constantly worked overtime. I knew that it would take a lot of time to find a new job. Therefore, I worked with all my might and at the expense of my health and myself. At work you are always confronted with nasty looks or words and with coercion, from the boss and the customers. Over time, this becomes a habit, you feel it is normal. When someone comes and is nice to you, you think they love you. But this changes after a few days. The man changes his behaviour and suddenly determines when you see each other and what you have to do. Because you don't want others to know, you distance yourself first from your family and then from your circle of friends. And then you suddenly find yourself in the swamp of prostitution. I got out again, but there are many women who don't manage to do that,” reports B.Y.

Meeting places for pimps

The bars are meeting places for pimps, B.Y. continues: “On the first days of work, you think they are just normal customers. As time goes by, their behaviour and conversations make you realise that it's about something else. You see that they negotiate about prostitutes in the bar, and when they can't agree, it

comes to an argument. Under the influence of alcohol, there are sometimes very violent arguments. In such moments you are afraid, you fear for your life. In the bars, not only are women driven into prostitution, they are also the meeting places of the gangs. The men bring women to the bar, they drink for hours and reach an agreement, then the women leave with the men. The bar owners don't care because they consider everyone a customer and don't want to lose them.”

The police cooperate with the pimps

B.Y. says that many bar-goers are army personnel and policemen: “The policemen and soldiers stationed here go to the bars every night. They know what is going on there, but they overlook it. Often it is these men who verbally and physically harass the waitresses.” In the central district of Ofis there are many “houses”, reports B.Y., referring to flats used for prostitution: “There are always policemen in front of a house I know. When the people from the neighbourhood and the business people complain, the police are forced to go to these houses, but they don't do anything. They themselves are part of the pimp gangs.”

Lastly, B.Y. names Cafés and bars where women are driven into prostitution and procured to clients: “There are very many of them. I know of Tren, Hayal Kahvesi, Babel Teras, Maşiri, Curcuna and Penguen. The danger for women is great.”



Ecocide

Parties and organizations in Van call for participation in protest march to Mount Cudi

ANF | VAN | 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

A press conference was held at the headquarters of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Van Provincial Organization to protest the ecological destruction in Kurdish territories. Numerous people attended the press conference, displaying banners reading “Defend nature against war and plunder” in Kurdish.

Mesut Bor, spokesperson of the Ecology Commission established in the city for the protest march to Mount Cudi in Şırnak on September 17, read out the press statement.

“Attacks on our history, culture and nature have reached the most brutal levels, and the Kurdish people have been made a target through policies designed to destroy the memory. As a result of the war policies, the ecosystem is being destroyed by forest fires that have been going on systematically for years. Aside from the official indifference to the forest fires, citizens who want to fight them are prevented,” Bor said.

Natural life in danger

Pointing to the deforestation carried out in Şırnak for many years now, Bor said that the ecological destruction in the region was not covered because of “racist motives”. Remarking that the state was plundering nature due to its security policies, he continued, “The deforestation work carried out by village guards to build military outposts on Mount Cudi has reached the suburbs in the city. This approach towards the forests leads to major concerns. Deforestation shatters ecological balance and destroys natural life. The destruction of trees that have grown over hundreds of years also endangers the habitat of the people of the region.”

Bor called on the public to participate in the protest march from Cizre to Cudi on September 17 in protest at deforestation and ecological plunder.

Signatories

The parties, associations and non-governmental organizations that have endorsed the statement are as follows: DBP, HDP, TJA, ÇEVDER, TUHAYDER, BASKDER, MEBYADER, SERHAT GÖÇDER, ARYEN Sanat, Şanoya Mencil, ARSİSA, ÖHD, TMMOB, KESK, Peace Mothers Assembly and Chamber of Restaurants and Drivers.



Deforestation and plunder increase in Şırnak

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

The deforestation and plundering carried out by the Turkish state forces in Şırnak province has increased significantly.

Deforestation is being carried out under the supervision of state officials, in particular by village guards.

It is reported that hundreds of trees are cut down each day in the regions of Mount Cudi, Besta and the Navyan village located on the road to Siirt province.

The trees cut down in the countryside of Navyan village are transported to the roadside by tractors. New images reveal that wood is sold in cities such as Urfa and Antep.

The images show the extent of deforestation. Along with the vehicles belonging to the village guards, tons of wood gathered on both sides of the road can be seen.



‘Turkish destruction of nature in Afrin is part of the demographic change plan’

ANF | SHEHBA | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Funded and supported by the Muslim Brotherhood and Palestinian associations, the invading Turkish state continues to change the demographic structure of the Afrin Canton by building colonial houses and destroying nature in the occupied regions in North-East Syria.

According to the Afrin Human Rights Organization, mercenaries of the invading Turkish state have cut down 345 thousand olive trees after they occupied Afrin. They also burned more than 11 thousand hectares of agricultural land, rendering it unproductive. Moreover, all the trees in a forest near the Meydankê Lake in the Shera district were cut down by the Turkish state.

The Environmental Agency of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) said in a statement on September 8 that approximately 2 million trees have been uprooted since 2018.

İbrahim Şêxo, spokesperson of the Afrin Human Rights Organization, spoke to ANHA about the destruction, violations and demographic change in the occupied Afrin region.

“Afrin, which was occupied as part of a plan in March 2018, is witnessing the Turkish state's violations against the population and nature. Turkey is changing its demographic structure and destroying its nature,” Şêxo said.

“The invading Turkish state continues to build colonial houses for foreign families in the occupied regions under the pretext of charitable activities with finance and support from the associations and institutions in the Gulf states and Palestine,” he added.

More than four thousand trees cut down near lake Meydanke

Noting that the Afrin Human Rights Organization documented the crimes of the invading Turkish state in Afrin, Şêxo continued, “According to the documents we have, and the images disseminated by the media, more than 4,000 trees were cut down in the vicinity of Lake Meydankê by the organization called Hayat El Sairîn which includes mercenaries of Sultan Murad, especially Abu Bilal and his group. Within a couple of hours, thousands of trees were cut down by chainsaws and bulldozers.”

They keep lying to public

Refuting a statement released by local councils affiliated with the invading Turkish state, Şêxo said, “They claim to have planted trees in the region to justify their crimes to the public. We know well that the planting of the trees begins in February or March. Not in August or September, when the temperature reaches 40 degrees. They are doing this only to cover their crimes. The images are not only from Meydankê alone. The 'El Weqas' Brigade cut down 4,000 trees in Aska village in the west of the Jindires district. Moreover, mercenaries cut down more than 2,000 trees in the villages of Shera district and the village of Çema.”

Villagers are threatened

Şêxo revealed that according to the information obtained from the residents in the villages of the Şiyê and Mabeta districts, mercenaries of the Semerqend Brigade threatened to kidnap locals and cut more than 10 thousand trees for over a month around the Cihenem mountain and valley between the villages of Rûta, Delo and Hec Qasimo.

‘Solidarity with Afrin IDP’s’

Şêxo continued, “They burned the forest area in Hec Hesna and around Qaziqlî mountain and built colonial houses. The same thing might well be done in Meydankê. The Ehlam Mountain and the vicinity of the lake are strategic locations as well as Kiwêt El Rehmê, Damascus El Xeyriyê.”

“Cutting down trees and building colonial houses take place simultaneously. They cut down trees and burn them, and then level the soil again. They build these colonial houses after receiving money from Gulf and Palestinian organizations. By Palestinian organizations, we refer to the organizations that work under the supervision of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as 'Honourable Life', 'Wefa El Muhsinîn' and 'Xeyr Umme',” Şêxo said.

Şêxo warned the organizations and associations that attempt to change the demographic structure of Afrin, saying, “This is not the right thing to do. They should rather support the IDPs from Afrin living under difficult conditions in the camps in Shehba Canton, subjected to constant bombardments from the invading Turkish state and its mercenaries.”



Human Rights Violations

Police threaten HDP Youth Assembly member Hüsamettin Tanrıkulu with death while in custody

ANF | ISTANBUL | 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly member Hüsamettin Tanrıkulu, who was detained after a police raid on two houses in Esenyurt on Saturday as part of the investigation carried out by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, said that he was threatened with death at the Istanbul Security Directorate on Vatan Street.

'We will kill you even if you go out of here'

Lawyer Nagehan Avçıl, a member of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), who met with her client Tanrikulu, stated that he had been systematically followed by the police for the last 10 days and then taken into custody.

Sharing her client's statements, Avçıl noted that Tanrikulu was threatened with death by the police during his detention.

Stating that she was able to meet with her client on Sunday Avçıl said: "During his detention, he was told that he would have a visit with his lawyer. My client did not accept to go to the supposed visit room because he realized there was something strange. He was threatened with death on the grounds that he did not 'cooperate'. My client wants this situation to be made public. Because there is a very serious concern for his life safety. The police threatened him saying: 'Even if you go out, we will kill you'."

Noting that there was a restriction decision in the file, Avçıl stated that the reason for his client's detention was not available and called for public awareness, adding that his client's security procedures have not yet been completed.



Inflation in Turkey: Officially 80 percent, unofficially 181 percent

ANF | ISTANBUL | 5 SEPTEMBER 2022

The galloping inflation in Turkey continues unabated. According to the National Statistics Office (TÜİK) in Ankara on Monday, annual inflation in August was 80.21 per cent. Food prices rose by an average of more than 90 per cent year-on-year. A month earlier, the inflation rate had been around 79 per cent.

Opposition parties accuse the government of embellishing the inflation figures and suspect a much higher rate. Independent economic institutes also assume much higher figures. The Istanbul-based inflation research group ENAG even put the year-on-year inflation rate for August at 181.37 per cent. According to the institute, prices for various goods and services alone rose by 23.78 per cent in the previous month. Clothing is also significantly more expensive. For winter coats, for example, men had to pay almost 31 per cent more compared to the previous month.

Turkish lira too weak

The inflation rate in Turkey is driven by several factors. For some time now, the weak national currency, the lira, has been driving up prices considerably, as it makes goods imported into Turkey more expensive. The prices of many raw materials are also rising, not least because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Low interest rates to counteract

In the opinion of many experts, the Turkish central bank is not doing enough to counteract the high inflation. On the contrary, the monetary authorities have been loosening their monetary policy since last summer. According to standard economic doctrine, an increase in interest rates can counteract inflation. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the other hand, argues that high interest rates cause inflation. The central bank is following Erdogan's line and has so far refrained from raising interest rates. In August, the central bank even lowered the key interest rate from 14 to 13 per cent instead.



Police blacklist and bring journalist Müftüoğlu to trial

ANF | AMED | 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

The General Directorate of Security blacklisted 20 journalists, including DFG Co-Chair Dicle Müftüoğlu and TGS Chair Gökhan Durmuş.

Journalist Aziz Oruç, who was extradited to Iran without a court order on the grounds that he attempted to cross to Europe via Armenia with a fake passport after living abroad for a while due to lawsuits against him, was arrested in Doğubayazıt district of Ağrı on December 11, 2019.

The blacklisting of journalists by the General Directorate of Security for intelligence purposes are also included in the case file of Oruç who is accused of being a “member in a terrorist organization”. In the same file, 20 journalists who are accused of helping Oruç are seen blacklisted in a classified document along with Dicle Fırat Journalists' Association (DFG) Co-Chair and Mesopotamia News Agency (MA) editor Dicle Müftüoğlu, who is tried for “knowingly and willingly aiding the organization”. The document is titled as “classified” by the General Directorate of Security.

Based on the intelligence information gathered against the Gülen Community, the document said that the journalists' articles were published in a magazine called “Journalist Post”. The blacklisting document which claimed that the magazine in question is related to the Gülen organization included the names of the journalists, their TR identity numbers, their positions in the magazine and whether they were registered with the National Judiciary Informatics System (UYAP).

TGS head also blacklisted

Journalists Engin Sağ, Şemsi Açıkgöz, Mustafa Kılıç, Yüksek Durgut, Ramiz Kılıçarşlan, Necdet Çelik, Hasan Cücük, İsmail Muhammet Sağıroğlu, Enes Cansever, Basri Doğan, Türkmen Terzi, Vedat Demir, Rabia Yavuz Türe, Yunus Erdoğan, Naciye Nur Kılıç, Erkan Pehlivan, Dicle Müftüoğlu, Mustafa Kuleli, Ergkin Emet and head of the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS) Gökhan Durmuş, were also blacklisted in the classified document that included the names of those who were in the management of the magazine and sent articles to it. The document which claimed that journalists Durmuş and Müftüoğlu sent articles

to the magazine was signed by the police officers at the Anti-Terror Branch with registration number 174774 and registration number 356021 dated May 24, 2022.

Security directorate requested blacklisting

It is reported that the blacklisting document, which was prepared by the Ministry of Interior following the request of the General Directorate of Security to create a name list and information notes based on open-source search on the Gülen organization, has been sent to be evaluated in the works of the Provincial Security Directorate. The blacklist dubbed classified was also sent to the anti-terror branches of the Ağrı, Ankara, Antalya, Diyarbakır, Giresun, İstanbul, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kocaeli, Sivas and Trabzon provincial security directorates.

'The list should not be shared with other institutions'

The classified document requested provincial security directorates to collect information on the persons who were blacklisted. "The information notes and the list of names which were attached to the document we sent should be not shared with other state institutions," the classified document said.

Smear of journalists

DFG Co-Chair Dicle Müftüoğlu spoke about her blacklisting: "My journalist friend Aziz Oruç was deported from Iran to Turkey. His family contacted me because Aziz was left near the border. Since my family lives in Doğubayazıt, I asked them to host Aziz in their home. Just because my family wanted to help him based on humanitarian needs, my father was imprisoned for 8 months. A lawsuit was filed against me with the allegation of "aiding an illegal organization". When we look at the file, there is no evidence that contains a crime other than my statement. However, a classified document was sent by the police in order to smear me. With this document, they are trying to convince the court that I am guilty or 'related to terrorism'. However, it should be emphasized that the main crime here is to blacklist journalists. I was blacklisted for writing an article for a magazine, which is my job. Moreover, I am a member of a professional organization and the article I wrote was written to explain the struggle of our association and the difficulties faced by Kurdish journalists. I am being judged for doing my job. TGS Chair Gökhan Durmuş is also blacklisted. This was revealed in my case file since our articles were published in the same issue of the magazine. I emphasize once again that blacklisting journalists is a crime, and we will continue to say that journalism is not a crime, and we will continue to do our job."

IHD files complaint about violence suffered by Semra Güzel while in police custody

ANF | AMED | 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

HDP MP Semra Güzel was arrested in Istanbul on Friday after her immunity was lifted. The deputy was arrested on fabricated charges of “treason” and “membership of a terrorist organization” and was beaten and mistreated while being sent to prison. The human rights association IHD has now announced that it will file a lawsuit to expose the attacks on the MP.

The criminal complaint filed by IHD to the Diyarbakır Prosecutor General's Office demands that those responsible for torture, ill-treatment, abuse of office, insults and degrading acts during the arrest and transfer of Semra Güzel to the court, as well as for disseminating the images of the transfer are identified and appropriately investigated for “inciting public hatred and hostility.”

“Torture and Abuse”

The IHD's criminal complaint said: “ Semra Güzel was tortured, ill-treated, insulted and humiliated during detention. The confidentiality of the investigation was violated and footage of her arrest and transfer to court was made available to the public in a manner which fuels hatred and hostility. The footage shows that the security forces harassed Semra Güzel, abused their status, tortured and insulted her. The dissemination of these images, which contain numerous criminal offences, also constitutes an offense of incitement to hatred and hostility. Article 17 of the Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right to see their physical and psychological existence protected. The first paragraph of the said article aims to protect human dignity. According to paragraph 3, no one may be tortured or persecuted, and no one may be subjected to punishment or treatment incompatible with human dignity.”

“It is worrying that such crimes are actually filmed”

The Human Rights Association also noted that Güzel is still a member of parliament. “Torture is a crime against humanity and is prohibited under all circumstances under national and international law. Here, being filmed is a woman being harassed. She is still a Member of Parliament and has campaigned for women's rights for many years. The fact that these images of this crime are being freely distributed worries us all the more as human rights defenders. The publication of such images seeks to normalize acts of torture and ill-treatment and provides impunity for the officials who committed the crime. It is well known that the driving factor behind the continuation of gross human rights abuses is impunity. The perpetrators can be confident that they will not be brought to justice and punished.”

The case against Semra Güzel

Semra Güzel was taken into custody in Istanbul on Friday and sent to prison a day later by order of a court in Ankara. The basis is criminal proceedings on suspicion of “membership in a terrorist organization” and “treason”. Accusations based on photos showing Güzel with her former fiancé, a guerrilla fighter who died in a Turkish air attack in 2017. To clear the way for the indictment, the MP's parliamentary im-

munity was withdrawn in March. While in custody, she was mistreated by the police, as shown by video footage distributed by the Turkish Ministry of the Interior. She has been transferred to Silivri Prison.



Worker Savaş: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality is illegally dismissing us

ZEYNEP KURAY | ISTANBUL | 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

Despite all the reactions, the sacking of workers by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) administration continues. A new one was added to the workers who were unlawfully dismissed by the IMM administration, which started a witch hunt within its own body after the Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu declared that there were “557 terrorists in IMM”.

Durmuş Savaş, who works as a cleaning worker in an affiliate of the IMM, said that he was fired without compensation under Code 49 on 18 August 2022, on the grounds of a Security Investigation and Archive Research conducted and concluded by the Istanbul Governor's Office.

Savaş spoke to ANF and said that a lawsuit that resulted in non-prosecution in 1997 was cited as the reason for dismissal.

Fired for an old lawsuit resulting in non-prosecution

Explaining that he has been working as a cleaning worker at Boğaziçi Facility Management Service Company affiliated to the IBB for 5 and a half months, Savaş said that he was fired on the grounds of a lawsuit filed against him 25 years ago and resulted in non-prosecution. According to the temporary 35th article added to Decree Law No. 375 with Law No. 7145, he was dismissed on 18 August 2022 by order of the Istanbul Governor's Office.

Learning on the phone that he was fired, Savaş said: “When I went to talk to the personnel manager to understand the situation, he told me that I was fired on the grounds of a lawsuit filed in 1995. Although I told him that I was in the military in 1995, he said that the governor's office sent them a letter. He dismissed me, humiliating me, saying that my job was in their hands.”

Stating that a file opened against him when he was in the Revolutionary Communist League of Turkey (TİKB) in 1997, Savaş said: “After my military service, I was detained by the police while I was sitting in a cafe in Gazi Mahallesi. At the TEM branch of the Vatan Istanbul Security Directorate, where I was taken at that time, I was forced to sign a statement about actions I did not commit. I was tortured for hours, with the worst forms of torture. I was sent to prison even though I declared that I gave a statement under torture in the court where I was brought out in slippers because I couldn't wear my shoes, so swollen were my feet. I remained in prison for nine months and then I was released.”

Stating that the case resulted in non-prosecution and expired, Savaş pointed out that he was dismissed on the grounds of a lawsuit that no longer exists.

Moreover, pointing out that the lawsuit was filed in 1997, not 1995, Savaş noted that a lawsuit that does not exist today cannot be taken as an excuse for dismissal, and, moreover, without compensation under Code 49.

We slept on ballot boxes to ensure there was no fraud in the election

Emphasizing that the administration is openly sacrificing the workers, Savaş said: “We slept on the ballot boxes so that President Ekrem could win. At that time of the elections, I could not go to my house for 15 days so that the votes would not be stolen. In other words, we don’t deserve to be treated like this.”

Underlining that his wife suffers from sclerosis and was punished by him unnecessarily, Savaş said that he will fight until he gets his rights recognised.



Court bans book of jailed politician Figen Yüksekdağ

ANF | 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

A court in the southern province of Antalya issued a ban on the distribution and sale of the book titled 'Walls to Destroy' written by the former Co-Chair of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Figen Yüksekdağ. The court claimed that the politician conducted propaganda for a “terrorist” organization in her book. Copies of the book will also be confiscated and destroyed.

The court defined the lines in a chapter of the book, titled “My Cloudy Head”, in which Yüksekdağ depicted the self-government resistance in Kurdistan as a crime. The lines said: “Humanity is in pain on the edge of nothingness, while the basements are burning, set on fire by darkness, and the babies in deserted houses are being shot in the head.”

The Antalya 6th Criminal Court of Peace claimed that members of the “terrorist organization”, meaning the PKK, were praised with the line “babies in deserted houses.”

Figen Yüksekdağ is the co-founder of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (Ezilenlerin Sosyalist Partisi, ESP) and was its chair until September 2014. After resigning from office, she joined the HDP. In the same year, the ESP joined the HDP, which acts as an umbrella party for several small parties. At the second HDP congress, Figen Yüksekdağ was elected HDP's co-chair on 22 June 2014.

Together with the other co-chair, Selahattin Demirtaş, and numerous other HDP deputies, she was arrested on 4 November 2016 at the instigation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Since then, she has been held in custody in the Kandıra Maximum Security Prison.



Court sentences MA journalists Eser and Topaloğlu to 6 years and 3 months in prison

ANF | ISTANBUL | 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

Two former journalists for Mezopotamya Agency (MA), Sadiye Eser and Sadık Topaloğlu, have been sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison for “being a member of an illegal organization.”

The ninth hearing of the case was held on Thursday at the Istanbul 22nd Heavy Penal Court.

The sentence was based on the statements by an anonymous witness who didn't attend any of the hearings. The journalists did not attend Thursday's hearing while their lawyers, Ayşe Acinikli and Özcan Kılıç, did.

Lawyer Kılıç said that the Court of Cassation ruled that the allegations of a witness who was not heard face to face should not be taken into account.

He also said that a Kurdish song on Eser's phone was cited as evidence in the case.



Attack on Kurdish workers leaves one dead

ANF | KASTAMONU | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Abdurrahman Birgün (47) and Hamit Oran (33) from Batman, who were painting the 3-storey building in the Cide district of Kastamonu, were attacked by a gunman, identified as Serhat O.

The workers were attacked when they were changing their clothes in the basement of the building to start work. The attacker has been identified as the home owner Serhat O.

Abdurrahman Birgün, one of the workers who was taken to Cide State Hospital by ambulance, died in the hospital. It was stated that Hamit Oran's life was not in danger.

Serhat O., who was taken into custody, was transferred to the courthouse after his procedures at the police station.



Zakho University removes map of Kurdistan at Turkish request

ANF | ZAKHO | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

A large map of Kurdistan was hung on the Faculty of Social Sciences of Zakho University on 20 August, but was removed on Sunday by the decision of the university administration. Only a map of the lands remaining under the Kurdish Regional administration was drawn.

Kurdistan Region Minister for Minorities Affairs, Aydın Maruf, who is known for his closeness with the Turkish state and who is also Turkmen, visited the Turkish Language Department of Zaxo University and saw this map.

According to the information received, the Turkish state pressed the South Kurdistan government officials to remove this map through Aydın Maruf. After this request was forwarded to the rector of the university, the map was removed.

No statement has been made by the Rectorate regarding the removal of the Kurdistan map, but this event once again gives an indication of the servile attitude of the KDP.



‘Disrespect for the dead should be stopped’

ANF | AMED | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Turkish state's attacks on the dead of the Kurdish people continue as part of its dirty war methods. The bodies of guerrillas who were martyred in recent years have been delivered to their families in cargo packages by couriers. The body of Hakan Arslan, who was killed during the self-government resistance in Sur district of Amed in 2016, was recently delivered to his father, Ali Riza Arslan, in a cardboard box at Diyarbakır Courthouse. The incident led to a public backlash when it was covered by media outlets.

Adnan Orhan from the ‘Respect for the Dead and Justice Initiative’ spoke to ANF concerning the Turkish state's attacks on the dead and cemeteries.

Orhan remarked that there have been cruel policies against the dead of ancient peoples, in particular the Kurds, who have been ethnically marginalized throughout history because of their identity. He stated that

different identities and faiths have been subjected to more pain and cruelty after the republic was established and recalled the massacres of Ağrı, Zilan, Dersim and Koçgiri.

All governments did it

Orhan stressed that the official attitude towards the Kurds has not changed in the country for nearly a century. “The dominant mentality has persisted through racist and fascist rhetoric and actions. When we consider the last 40 years, what has been experienced is just unnamable.

We know that during the notorious 90s, they burned villages, carried out extrajudicial executions, unidentified murders, pushed people out of helicopters or threw the corpses away into streams and acid wells. Moreover, we saw how the bodies of those murdered were dragged through the streets tied behind armoured police vehicles. During the curfews, they did not bury the bodies for days, they delivered bones to the families by cargo or in a box at the courthouse. They devastated cemeteries... On the other hand, sick prisoners are left to die. Unfortunately, no government has ever taken care of these problems. The current government has also ignored these issues,” he said.

Monist mentality

Orhan said that when he saw Arslan's body given to his father in a bag, he remembered his relatives who had been killed in the 90s. “My father, uncle and cousins were buried in a mass grave in the Bağcılar village of Kulp. Their bones were delivered to our family in a bag. Then, following a court decision, they were buried in a cemetery of the nameless in a single bag. I was deeply saddened when I saw Uncle Ali Rıza receiving bones in a box. This shows that the state mentality of the 90s, unfortunately, still persists. There is no excuse for this. It is neither humane, moral, nor conscientious. The situation is very clear and not much has changed. These policies are the outcome of a monist mentality which does not grant the right to life to others.”

People should be allowed to bury their dead

Orhan underlined that there is a respect for the dead in every society and culture as “a person's life is over. Relatives do their last duty with a funeral ceremony. Burials are also a final farewell to the dead. Maltreatment of the dead damages the conscience of society. It bolsters hate. Everyone has the right to bury their dead in a manner befitting human dignity. Therefore, as the ‘Respect for the Dead and Justice Initiative’, we strive to stop the disrespect towards the dead and cemeteries, and to ensure that people of all faiths have the right to bury their dead in a manner befitting human dignity. Our aim is to expose these disrespectful approaches to the dead and to emphasize that everyone needs a democratic and dignified life.”

Emine Şenyaşar to stand trial again

ANF | URFA | 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Kurdish woman Emine Şenyaşar is to stand trial again in Turkey. The 71-year-old is accused of repeatedly insulting an AKP MP with derogatory remarks. The accusation is related to a vigil by means of which the elderly woman hopes for justice for her husband and two sons. The three men were victims of lynchings four years ago in the district of Suruç in Urfa province. The legal dispute with the perpetrators has dragged on ever since. In contrast, the judiciary is working at full speed on the harassment of Emine Şenyaşar.

Emine Şenyaşar is the widow of Hacı Esvet Şenyaşar and mother of their sons Celal and Adil. The three men were brutally killed by armed bodyguards and relatives of then MP candidate Ibrahim Halil Yıldız on the sidelines of a campaign tour just days before the parliamentary and presidential elections in June 2018. Yıldız led the lynch mob at the time. He was also the one who reported Emine Şenyaşar again for allegedly insulting a public official, thus setting the new trial in motion. In return, Yıldız had a lament by the elderly woman about the loss of her husband and sons reclassified as an insult. In the first case brought by the AKP MP last February, Şenyaşar was sentenced to a fine for “defamation”.

Emine Şenyaşar is not letting it get her down. She continued her “justice vigil”, which she started 553 days ago in front of the Palace of Justice in the province of Urfa, on Monday. She was again joined by her son Ferit, who survived the massacre of his family. He criticised the fact that his mother was once again being dragged before the courts, while Ibrahim Halil Yıldız and most of the perpetrators and those involved were still enjoying “a carefree life in freedom” and the trial for the murders was being delayed. Fifteen investigations have already been initiated against Emine Şenyaşar since her vigil began, and charges have been brought in five cases. “Any person who claims to be human must not remain silent in the face of this great injustice to my mother,” stated Ferit Şenyaşar. Instead of trying to heal the victims' wounds and punish the murders, he said, the court is a prime example of who is entitled to justice and who is not, according to the Turkish judiciary. “The victims, at least, have not received it so far. That is why we call on the public to watch the trial and witness the injustices against our family,” Şenyaşar said.

The trial against Emine Şenyaşar will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, at the Criminal Chamber of the Urfa District Court.



Interview

Cemil Bayik: Standing up for Öcalan means protecting freedom

ANF | NEWS DESK | 3 SEPTEMBER 2022

Cemil Bayik, KCK co-Chair, spoke about the latest developments in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the world, including the importance of Abdullah Öcalan for politics in Turkey, NATO's direct assistance for Turkey's use of banned weapons in South Kurdistan/North Iraq, the success of modern guerrilla tactics against the Turkish army, the results of the last NATO summit and the deepening crisis in Iraq

The Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, continues to be under heavy isolation on the Turkish prison island Imrali. Despite this, the agenda in Turkey revolves around him. How do you evaluate this situation?

The vigil in Strasbourg for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo continues, just like the campaign that was launched by trade unions in the UK. Recently, hundreds of intellectuals and writers have made statements. I would like to take this opportunity to greet and pay my respects to all those who stand against the genocidal politics of the Turkish state and fight for the physical freedom of Önderlik [Abdullah Öcalan]. They are waging a very important struggle. Because defending Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] means defending freedom, democracy, the peoples of the world and human values. There are many reasons why the isolation against Önderlik has become so severe. First of all, they are afraid of Rêber Apo. They do not want his voice to reach the peoples. Because they know very well how much this affects peoples.

Another reason for the increasing isolation is that the leadership has been in prison for 24 years and the 25th year is about to begin. According to European law, the Turkish state needs to reconsider the sentence imposed on Önderlik. In fact, Rêber Apo needs to be released from prison. But Turkey wants to keep him in prison until the end and destroy him. That is why they are making false allegations from a legal point of view. For example, they say "he committed a disciplinary offense". The Turkish state has to submit an official answer to Europe by September. The Turkish state wants to prevent the release of Rêber Apo with these false disciplinary penalties. Our people, especially the lawyers, need to understand this very well and take it seriously. They must defeat the legal frauds of the Turkish state.

No matter what the Turkish state does, it cannot sever the connection of Önderlik with the Kurdish people, the PKK, the peoples of the world and humanity. This is not possible. Today, Rêber Apo has a place in the hearts of all peoples, especially women. It is not possible for the Turkish state to change this. Therefore, it is only fooling itself. Rêber Apo's ideas and philosophy are spreading day by day. Those who struggle for freedom, democracy and socialism are embracing Rêber Apo more and more every day. Rêber Apo said, "I am wherever my Defense Writings are." Rêber Apo's Defense Writings are everywhere now. Everyone who reads and understands Rêber Apo embraces him. That is why the cadres of this movement, more than anyone else, should ensure that Rêber Apo's ideas spread even more. Supporting Rêber Apo means supporting the Kurdish people and standing against AKP-MHP fascism and genocide.

The genocidal Turkish army's attacks on the areas Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna in South Kurdistan/North Iraq continue. The guerrillas are putting up an epic resistance against these attacks. Recent statements by the HPG [People's Defense Forces] show that the Turkish army has more than 1500 chemical weapons in South Kurdistan this year alone. The Turkish state also recently published a video proving that it uses chemical weapons. Despite this, they cannot break the guerrilla resistance. At what stage are the guerrilla resistance and the war now?

Rêber Apo has said that the greatest of all technology is the human itself. Because it is the human who is capable of using technology. Today, we can see this very clearly in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna. The Turkish state uses all kinds of nuclear, phosphorus, thermobaric and chemical weapons. Reconnaissance planes fly over the areas dozens of times every day. They use tanks, artillery, missiles, simply everything they have. NATO supports them, Barzani helps them in every way and they also use gangs [Islamist proxy-forces]. But they have still not been able to achieve any results. This shows that the guerrillas has prepared itself against all the techniques of the Turkish state. That's why it deals heavy blows to the Turkish state. The enemy had aimed to occupy these areas in a few weeks and eliminate the guerrillas.

Today, more than 4 months after the start of this year's attacks, they still cannot take a step forward, they are stuck against the guerrillas. They have many problems. They even bomb the corpses of their own soldiers so that no one can find them. At the same time, they spread all kinds of propaganda among the people. They say that they are striking a blow against the guerrillas and are thus waging a special war. Many of their soldiers die here, but they don't publish most of their identities. They announce just a few of them. In this way, the Turkish state wants to keep the people's faith alive. And they use this to pursue their own politics. The guerrillas are in possession of the bodies of numerous soldiers and have published their names. The guerrillas have even announced the soldier's dog tags for everyone to believe them. They have also called on the families to come and take the bodies. So the reason why the Turkish state uses so many banned weapons and chemical weapons is because it is losing against the guerrillas.

I congratulate the HPG and YJA Star guerrillas. They defend the honor of the Kurdish people and humanity. They sacrifice their lives for this. They are loyal to Rêber Apo, the guerrillas and the şehits [martyrs], they are based on Rêber Apo's philosophy and ideology, they love the people, freedom, democracy and their land. They put up a heroic resistance. That is why they are heroes not only of the Kurdish people but also of humanity. Because they are fighting against fascism and genocide and are giving their lives for this. That is why everyone should unite around the guerrillas and increase their protests. All the burden should not be left on the shoulders of the guerrillas who are already fulfilling their duties. Everyone should fight everywhere with the same spirit as the guerrilla resistance. Recently, there have been some protests, but they are not enough. There need to be more protests.

Our friends in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna are struggling under great difficulties. Maybe they don't eat for days, maybe they can't take a bath for months, they have a weapon in their hands and they resist against the enemy's technique day and night. They are dealing great blows to the Turkish state. Everyone needs to see this. The following attitude would be wrong: 'Let the guerrilla wage a struggle under these conditions and let us just say, 'We are their comrades, we are loyal to them', but let us not fulfill our duties.'

The tactic the guerrillas are using is a new tactic. That's why they are dealing big blows to the Turkish state. This is not only said by us, but also by those who used to be members of the Turkish state's special forces. They admit that the guerrilla has renewed itself, that it has become very strong. And they admit that they

are unable to achieve any results against the guerrilla. Maybe some may consider what we say as an exaggeration, but the enemy himself admits that this is the case. So there is no exaggeration here, we are simply stating the truth. Everyone needs to see this and do their part. Once again, I would like to congratulate the HPG and YJA Star guerrillas. They are doing great heroic deeds. They are setting an example for the whole world. Everyone gains strength from this.

The guerrilla is currently using tunnel and team tactics. Since these complement each other, the Turkish state is receiving heavy blows and does not get any results despite its modern technology and tactics. That's why they are stuck. They don't know how to get out of their current situation. That's why they want to escalate the war in some places. But they cannot get results from this either. Wherever they try to get out, they simply get stuck even more. They are receiving more and more heavy blows. That is why a big war is being waged. This war will bring about the end of AKP-MHP. The forces fighting against fascism need to take these developments very seriously. They need to consider the guerrilla's struggle as their own struggle and fulfill their duties.

You talked about how heavy the war in South Kurdistan/North Iraq. Recently, the guerrilla also published the balance sheet of this year's war that has been going on for 4 months now. According to the balance sheet, 1871 invaders have been killed and 84 guerrillas were martyred. Tactical nuclear and chemical weapons have been used 1532 times by the Turkish state. How do you evaluate the most recent phase of the war?

Our headquarters regularly published balance sheets. These balance sheets clearly show the scale of the war. The Turkish state has suffered huge blows in this war. The guerrilla also has martyrs. But when we compare, the guerrilla's losses are not so much compared to the scale of the war being waged. This is the result of the guerrilla's struggle against the enemy's technology. The guerrilla not only suffers few casualties, but also strikes great blows against the enemy and defeats its technology. The peoples struggling for freedom all over the world can draw many conclusions from today's resistance in Zap, Avaşın and Metîna. They should not fight like they used to, because they cannot get results that way. But if they draw conclusions from the resistance in Zap, Avaşın and Metîna, if they train themselves accordingly, they can easily continue their struggles for democracy and freedom.

The situation is not the same as before. The capitalist system has changed its technology and tactics, especially against the guerrillas. So that the guerrilla ceases to be a force for freedom. The HPG and YJA Star guerrillas are also fighting against the enemy with new tactics. This is why the Turkish state cannot achieve results despite the help of NATO, Barzani and the use of chemical weapons. The friends fighting in the Medya Defense Zones [areas in South Kurdistan controlled by the guerrilla] are an example not only for our movement or the Kurdish people, but for all humanity. Maybe the guerrillas are waging this struggle under very difficult conditions, but they are waging their struggle consciously. In other words, they know what they are doing for the PKK, for the people, for humanity. If they weren't conscious, if there wasn't a strong will, strong comradeship, there wouldn't be a strong struggle. No one would be able to live in those areas even for a single day.

The guerrillas have been waging a relentless resistance [against the Turkish state's attacks on South Kurdistan] for more than 4 months now. Rêber Apo's philosophy and ideology are the basis for this epic resistance under such difficult circumstances. The guerrilla is heroically fulfilling its duty. What is required of everyone is to understand the guerrilla's struggle under those conditions and fulfill their duty on this basis.

We know what kind of difficult circumstances the guerrillas are fighting under. That's why we constantly think about how we can be worthy of those friends, how we can increase the struggle. We have no other goal than that. No matter what we do for those friends, we cannot repay our debt. Because they fulfill a historical duty for us, for our people, for humanity.

If the guerrillas resist heroically under those conditions, we need to fight more with that spirit and will outside [of the mountains]. We need to be worthy of those friends. The friends [in the guerrilla] need to know that no matter what happens, we will pay our debt to them and we will fight on this basis. The friends should also know that no matter how much propaganda the enemy makes, the Turkish state has lost against the guerrilla and will lose even more. On this basis, I would like to once again congratulate the YJA Star and HPG guerrillas and express my gratitude.

After the recent NATO meeting in Madrid, a meeting between Erdogan and Putin took place. Immediately afterwards, the attacks against the Kurds increased. How do you evaluate these meetings and the plans and policies of the hegemonic powers?

At the NATO meeting in Spain, new NATO members were accepted. In order to accept these members, they fulfilled the demands of the Turkish state. What are the demands of the Turkish state? It says that NATO should help Turkey, that it should support and not oppose the war against the PKK, and that it should deliver weapons. In other words, the Turkish state demands that nobody should oppose it, no matter what it does. The Turkish state does not have the power to fight against the PKK and to commit genocide. This policy of genocide was developed in Lausanne and the Turkish state is simply carrying out this policy. NATO stands behind the Turkish state's insistence on the politics of genocide and liquidation. Therefore, I would like to make the following call on NATO: Do not be a partner in the Turkish state's politics of genocide. They should not conduct politics with Turkey against the Kurds. Kurds are not like they used to be, they have made the decision to achieve freedom and have paid a price for this. Therefore, no one will be able to benefit from the genocide against the Kurds.

Recently, a meeting took place in Tehran. There, Turkey asked both Russia and Iran to accept its demands. What are Turkey's demands? The liquidation of the PKK, the genocide of the Kurdish people. Especially the occupation of new territories in Rojava. They want to completely eliminate the status of Rojava. AKP-MHP demanded this in Tehran, but their demands were not accepted. But this does not mean that nothing was accepted at this meeting. In fact, some decisions were taken in terms of Turkey re-establishing relations with Syria, the Syrian regime coming to power in Rojava, and regarding the exchange of intelligence. But these are not Erdogan's demands. That's why shortly after he went to Sochi and met with Putin. There he demanded more from Putin. On his return to Turkey, Erdoğan said, "We will focus on North and East Syria with Putin, we will work together." This statement shows everything.

In Sochi, Russia obviously made some promises. They promised not to close the airspace [in North and East Syria]. This can clearly be seen in practice. Because they do not raise their voice against the air strikes of the Turkish state. There is also intelligence sharing. That is why the Turkish state has increased its attacks on North and East Syria after the meeting in Sochi. The occupation and attacks against North and East Syria have continued uninterruptedly. If Russia had not paved the way for these attacks, the Turkish state would not have been able to attack. The Turkish state massacres children, women and the elderly every day.

Both America and Russia are responsible for these massacres. Our people in Rojava also say this, so they do not back down in the face of attacks. They say, “Whatever the cost, we will not give up our lands, we will resist until the end.” This is the right thing to do. There is no other way for our people except resistance. They can only live by resisting. These powers have given nothing to our people except massacre, exile, migration and demographic change. As long as there is no change in the genocide policy these powers developed in Lausanne, the massacres against the Kurds will continue. Our people need to know this well. First and foremost, our people need to believe in themselves. They should not expect anything from anyone.

Turkey wants to establish relations with the Syrian regime, but this won't be easy. There are huge problems. In Idlib, there is a government supported by the Turkish state, and the Turkish state has occupied many places and created a fake army consisting of thousands of gang members [Islamist proxies]. How will this work? Another important point is that recently a female minister of Erdogan publicly said, “We deliberately lured the Syrian people to Turkey. We had a purpose. That's why we brought millions of people here to fulfill our goal. We took advantage of them, we received money from the EU, we made huge profits by employing them cheaply in Turkey, we brought all the factories in Syria to Turkey, we formed an army from the gangs among them and we used them everywhere. And now we want to resettle them in Syria and in the Kurdish areas.” She said all this openly. For years, the EU and the US have been paying the Turkish state for these refugees. In other words, they have supported Turkey's genocide policy.

The people and fighters of Rojava have fought against ISIS and have dealt a major blow to these gangs. They have saved humanity from a great scourge. Therefore, humanity is indebted to Rojava and the Kurdish people. But the Turkish state massacres these people every day. Most recently, in a school, they martyred children of those who fought against ISIS. The EU and the USA need to recognize this. In this sense, they should not give material and moral support to the Turkish state and should not be its partner in this genocide policy. Our people need to know that a very dirty policy is being carried out against them. The Turkish state wants to evacuate the villages [in Rojava/North and East Syria] and force the people to flee. That is why they are attacking villages. No matter what the cost, no one should leave their villages. If the people leave, the Turkish state will achieve its goal.

The Turkish state also aims to weaken the movement by eliminating the cadres and the leadership. This is the kind of tactic they are pursuing right now. In other words, they want to weaken both the people and the military forces. The Turkish state wants Erdogan to stay in power by massacring Kurds. Our people must remember this and prepare themselves in every possible way. They must fight against whoever is hostile against them.

As we enter the election process, the role of the Kurds can no longer be ignored. Those who did not see the will and demand of millions of Kurds—including the press that calls itself oppositional—during this year's Newroz celebrations, now organize rallies in Kurdistan, supposedly to listen to the demands of the people. HDP, on the other hand, has taken a clear stance by saying 'we are the force of solutions'. What can you say about this contradictory situation?

HDP's stance is appropriate, it needs to understand itself as the force of solutions. It needs to say 'We are the ones who must solve all the problems that exist in Turkey'. With this aim, they need to announce their program and do politics accordingly. This will strengthen both the HDP and the socialist forces of democracy and freedom, as well as Turkey as a whole. This is the right thing to do. Despite the spectacular

Newroz celebrations that took place this year, politicians and the press in Turkey ignored them. This does not mean that they did not see it, in fact, they saw this very well. That is the reason for their fear. Because they had claimed, 'We have put an end to the PKK, the HDP can no longer take to the streets, the Kurdish people will now be at our service'. This is what they thought. But during this year's Newroz, they saw that this was not the case and that in fact the opposite was true. Therefore, they tried to hide this fact. But by doing this, they will not achieve anything. This will only bring about their end.

Everyone says that the Kurds are playing the key role in the upcoming elections. This is true. However, the main parties are not acting according to the correct things they are saying. They are again approaching with the old mind, the old politics; they are calculating on how to deceive the Kurds. They want to win Kurdish votes in the election to complete the massacre of Kurds. But today, the Kurdish people are aware of this. The Kurds have been struggling and paying the price for years. No one can deceive the Kurds like that. That era is over. Therefore, everyone must approach the Kurds correctly. Kurds want answers to their questions from everyone: What will be your approach to Rêber Apo? Do you accept the injustice Rêber Apo has suffered or not? What do you want to do about the Kurdish problem? Will you continue the Kurdish genocide, or will you abandon this policy and accept Kurds as a people and give them their rights? What will you do about democracy? The Kurdish people are waiting for answers to these questions. No one can treat the Kurds like they used to. The Kurds have their own principles, goals and values. No one can get support from the Kurds with the help of money, deception, tactics and lies.

Certain circles in Turkey have realized that the AKP-MHP era is over and they want to replace them with someone from the 'Table of Six'. Some people from the 'Table of Six' hope that they will come to power. Therefore, they say 'we will make peace'. However, they do not explain how they are going to do this. They cannot fool the Kurds with this. You have committed so many massacres and atrocities, and you are still continuing this on Rêber Apo and the Kurdish people. You stand behind the decision of war, you support isolation, you support the extermination of the Kurds, how can you deceive the Kurds in this situation? They are saying, 'Forget what happened, let's make peace and just serve us'. Such a reconciliation is not possible. They think they can deceive the Kurds by going to Roboski again and by pretending that they are friends of the Kurds. Those who are friends of the Kurds should stand against isolation, oppose the war, accept the Kurdish people and give the Kurds their rights. When they say, 'The politics we have been doing until now was wrong, we have been hostile to the Kurdish people, we want to accept the Kurdish people and give them their rights' then they can make peace. Otherwise, they are just deceiving themselves, but they cannot deceive the Kurds. Kurds should openly say to those who make such propaganda: 'Are you against the politics of genocide? How do you want to solve the Kurdish problem? How do you want to end the isolation? How will you open the door to the prisons? Have you decided to do all this or not? Say these things openly.' This is how pressure should be created. Either they need to take steps or they will continue to carry out the politics of genocide. We think it is important that everybody understands this.

Lately, another development that truly hurts has been the politics of destruction and plunder against the nature of Kurdistan. This issue has been on the agenda, especially on social media. What can you say about the reaction against ecological destruction and the hypocrisy displayed against the nature of Kurdistan?

The Turkish state is anti-Kurdish, it wants to eliminate everything that is called Kurdistan or Kurdish. It does not hide this but says openly that this is its goal. It is completely focussed on this goal and has tied its fate to it. The Turkish state says, 'Either I maintain my power by destroying the Kurds or I will disappear'. Those who have come to power in Turkey in the past remained in power on this basis. Those who were in

favor of the continuation of the Kurdish genocide came to power and stayed in power on this basis. Otherwise, it would not have been possible for them to stay in power. The AKP-MHP promised to continue the genocide. But despite using all the means at their disposal, they failed to achieve results. That is why their power is now coming to an end. This is the reason for the limitless enmity the AKP-MHP exhibits. It is cutting down trees, bombing everywhere, building dams, forcing people to flee their homes, arresting and torturing, killing people in prisons and doing everything it can to eliminate the possibility of Kurdish life.

Cutting down trees in Dersim and Botan [regions in North Kurdistan/East Turkey] cannot be explained simply by the fact that these trees are being sold and money is being made with them. This is the result of the politics of genocide. It is important for everyone to understand this. The reason why they attack the environment of Kurdistan is because they want to commit genocide. Because the Kurdish people can survive based on their natural resources. Nature is the source of life. If you dry up this source, there is no such thing as life. This is one of the reasons why the Kurdish people live in a difficult situation and face obstacles today. Because there is destruction, death and elimination everywhere in Kurdistan. A people living in such a situation will, of course, experience difficulties. Our people need to overcome these difficulties, and the way to do this is to reject the policy of the Turkish state in Kurdistan and to stand courageously against it. The Turkish state can kill, but it already does this every day. It is destroying the basis of life of the Kurdish people. Thus, it wants to kill the entire Kurdish people. To stand against their politics and pay the price means to prevent genocide. This will give you your homeland, your land, your values, your freedom and your identity. There is silence when women are killed, silence when forests are cut down, silence when everywhere is bombed, silence when dams are built, silence when people are executed in prisons. But this is unacceptable. This silence needs to end, our people need to say "enough". Cutting down all the trees is a justification for an uprising, killing women is a justification for an uprising, attempting to plunder a place with the excuse of building mines is a justification for an uprising. The plundering of land should not be allowed. If everyone comes together and joins forces, the Turkish state will not be able to do any of these things. If it is doing these things, it is doing them because of the silence. Everyone is waiting for each other. But this is wrong. No one should wait for each other. Everyone should see what is being plundered as their own property and oppose it. They should see the murdered women as their own daughters and wives and stand up for them. They should make all these events a reason for an uprising. If they do this, the enemy will not be able to continue its politics.

There is chaos in Iraq. Of course, one of the reasons for this chaos was the protests that emerged after the massacre committed by the Turkish state in the South Kurdish village of Perex in the Zaxo area. How do you evaluate the latest situation in Iraq?

When the massacre in Perex happened, there was a strong reaction among the Iraqi people, and it seems that this reaction will only get stronger. This will affect the Kurdish people, the Arab people in other regions and will create a very strong movement against Turkey. Certain forces saw that the Kurdish people would benefit from this situation and that the concept against the Kurds and the PKK would be dealt a serious blow. Therefore, they intervened and changed the agenda. They turned the reaction against the Turkish state into a reaction against Iran, and took Turkey and the Perex massacre off the agenda. They created a completely different agenda in Iraq and the Middle East. However, the Perex massacre is not an issue that can be removed from the agenda just like that. This massacre needs to be kept on the agenda constantly. This was not an accidental massacre. With this, they wanted to scare the people of South Kurdistan, those who stand against Turkey, to ensure that no one stands against Turkey. But Turkey has clear

goals: It wants to take over Mosul, Kirkuk and all of South Kurdistan. If they seize these places, it means becoming very powerful in the politics of Iraq, so that the whole of Iraq will be at the service of the Turkish state. In order to achieve this, they seek to force the local population to flee. Because in order to develop the occupation and take power in Iraq, there they want to have no one left who is against them. The Turkish state sees that Iraq is weak and that it does not have the power to stand against them. Barzani is also on their side, and even some parts of Iraq are acting together with the Turkish state. Since Turkey is a NATO member, NATO does not oppose this policy, in fact, it supports it.

After the elections, they wanted to form a government with Barzani, Sadır and others. They thought that they would take over the presidency as well as the government of Iraq, and they were planning to take new steps on this basis. Even Erdogan himself said, 'A new situation will emerge in Iraq after the elections'. Turkey, Barzani and the new government, with the support of NATO, were going to eradicate the PKK and then complete the Kurdish genocide. But this plan has failed. Those who are friends with Iran and who wanted to take over the government thwarted their plan. In short, the US-related contradictions continue in Iraq. After the elections, the process did not go as they had planned. Since this plan did not materialize, Iraq has been increasingly pushed towards a civil war. It is not yet clear whether a civil war will break out or not. Those who are not in favor of civil war are trying to form a government, and they are planning to go to elections after a period with this government. However, this will not work either. Because in the last election we saw that 80 percent of the people did not vote. This shows the dissatisfaction of the people with the current parties and these kinds of politics.

The people of Iraq want fundamental changes, and they have expressed this many times. Therefore, renewing the elections will not solve the problems Iraq is facing today. There is also the possibility of civil war. If such a situation occurs in Iraq, it will lead to the disintegration of the country and lead to great dangers. Turkey is in favor of Iraq's instability. The most important reason for the lack of stability in Iraq is Turkey. It uses its relations with Barzani and some Sunni groups. Iraq is already weak and Turkey puts Iraq under pressure and prevents a solution to the current problems. Turkey is trying to realize its goal, that is to seize Mosul and Kirkuk, by keeping Iraq weak. They are already working to achieve these goals in Iraq.

In fact, if Iraq is dragged into a spiral of civil war, they may attack Şengal and Maxmur together with Barzani, and launch more comprehensive attacks against the Medya Defense Zones. All of this is a possibility, and everyone should take precautions accordingly. If a civil war does not take place, this does not mean that this danger has disappeared and the problems have been resolved. The new government to be formed will continue the policies of Turkey, the KDP and the Barzanis. This will create new problems. Therefore, Iraq is an important field for everyone. Everyone has their hands in it. This causes new dangers for both Iraq and the Middle East. Preventing the disintegration of the country and developing a democratic Iraq will also affect the Middle East. It cannot be known exactly how either of these situations will evolve. Undoubtedly, we want the forces of democracy to prevent the disintegration of Iraq and to lead Iraq towards democratization. This can only be realized with Rêber Apo's paradigm. What has been put in place so far has not solved Iraq's problems, but it is making the problems worse, deepening the contradictions and dragging Iraq towards disintegration. It is important that we make everyone understand this reality.

In addition to Iraq, there have been important developments with regards to Syria in recent days. The Turkish state announced that it would start talks with the regime in Damascus, which was sharply criticized by the Islamist proxy forces allied with Turkey. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria also declared a state of emergency against the Turkish attacks. How do you see this new situation in Syria?

Yes, the Rojava administration has declared a state of emergency. They have not taken such a decision without a reason. Because everybody knows under which conditions a state of emergency is generally declared in a country. They saw that there was a great danger and declared a state of emergency to prevent it, to defend their territory and their gains. This was a good decision. Because they saw that a policy and a plan were being carried out. They took such a decision to prevent this plan from being realized and to protect their freedoms. But as far as we can see, they are not acting according to the decision they themselves have taken. There is, for example, the recent martyrdom of Jiyan and other friends. They have declared a state of emergency, but are organizing meetings and conferences as if nothing has happened, as if they are in a normal phase. That friend had attended a meeting open to everyone, had made a speech there, and after leaving the meeting, she was attacked by an armed drone of the Turkish state.

Since they have declared a state of emergency, they need to live accordingly and take precautions. In such a process, there is no need for a public meeting with broad participation. If they have to hold meetings, they should do it in a different way. This is what leads to paying a big price. I believe they have learned a lesson from these recent events. They should act and work in complete secrecy. Because a death sentence has been passed against the executives and cadres there. And the Turkish state is carrying out this sentence and will continue to do so. Therefore, executives, cadres and patriots who are popular among the people should not live and act as before. They need to go completely underground, they must work underground and in secrecy. They must also make the revolutionary people's war well-known among the people and carry out this strategy in practice. For this, they must constantly review all their preparations, thus eliminating mistakes and shortcomings. They must make themselves ready for the revolutionary people's war in every way possible. The Turkish state is using its technology very effectively against them and will continue to do so. Therefore, they must protect themselves against this technology. Underground preparations must be made. In cities and villages, defense and underground preparations need to be made. They must reach a level where they can establish connections among themselves underground. The Turkish state cuts off their water. They should take measures for this, e.g. dig wells. They should store supplies and medicine. They should train the people in the use of weapons and make them ready for war. The people should be able to defend themselves, for this they should undergo trainings and drills. They must act with a single coordination. I guess they have learned lessons from the experiences in Efrîn. Those mistakes should not be repeated. As far as we can understand from the statements, they are making preparations for the revolutionary people's war. This is a good development, but they also need to quickly complete the missing aspects. Have full confidence in yourselves, fight with your own means, don't pay attention to the outside. All the different powers are part of the plans against them, they are all calculating on how to deceive them and take control of them. They may be in contact with these powers, but they should not act according to their wishes. Always listen to your self, predicate yourself on how you can defeat the plans to maintain your freedom and on how you can protect your revolution.

Now Russia and Iran are trying to dominate the whole of Syria. Turkey wants to eliminate the Kurds and is trying to develop relations with Syria on this basis. These attempts are being carried out openly and are already openly discussed in the press. However, the relations between Turkey and Syria cannot be devel-

oped so easily, the problems are not easy and cannot be solved quickly. There are very big problems. The Turkish state has pulled millions of people out of Syria, brought them to Turkey and organized among them. Now it is trying to settle them in Syria and take over the whole of Syria. They built gang [Islamist proxy forces] organizations within them, created fake armies and used them everywhere. They are also using them against Syria. Again, an Islamic government was established in Idlib by the Turkish state. They have occupied many parts of Syria and changed the demography there. These are big problems and they cannot be solved easily. Maybe Russia has put something in front of both Turkey and Syria and wants some steps to be taken. But it is doubtful how much Turkey and Syria agree with this. Syria is well aware of Turkey's practices and politics. Turkey is giving up everything and trying to befriend Syria and Syria accepting it as if nothing happened—this is not possible. Turkey is playing politics, trying to fool everyone, but it wants to achieve its own goals. I guess everyone knows this and Syria knows it too. I don't think Syria will join hands with Turkey and become an enemy of the Kurds. If it does that, Syria will lose, there will be no Syria left. If Syria does not want its country to disintegrate and if it wants there to be a country called Syria, the way to do this is through friendship with the Kurds. When it solves the Kurdish problem, it can avoid all dangers. Turkey knows this and is trying to foster enmity between Syria and the Kurds in order to achieve its goals there. The only situation that can protect Syria and defeat Turkey's plans is friendship with the Kurds. Syria is already saying, 'We can solve our problems if Turkey withdraws from the territories it occupies, dismantles the organization it has formed from gangs and does not give weapons to these structures.' Syria's statement that it will not start the process of relations with Turkey if these conditions are not met is appropriate in our opinion.

In short, the problems in Syria will continue. Therefore, our people must complete their preparations for war in order to defend themselves in every way possible. Whether Turkey attacks alone or together with Syria, our people can defend themselves. There is no other way. They must believe in this and prepare themselves in every aspect. They must make this a way of life for themselves. They will live their lives in war, they will be able to defend themselves and they will get their rights. Nobody will give them their rights, only they themselves can take them.

Youth organizations with different names have emerged in Kurdistan and Turkey to fight against AKP-MHP fascism. They are carrying out attacks against the politics of genocide. How do you see these organizations and attacks?

Yes, some attacks have taken place. I salute and congratulate those who are carrying out these attacks. They need to carry out even stronger attacks. What they have done so far is not enough. There is a fascist government which is conducting a heavy politics of oppression. But this does not mean that there cannot be strong attacks against them. No matter how much injustice, oppression, torture, plunder, death and injustice there is in a place, there must be strong actions there. This is the right thing to do. There are many examples of this in the world. The stronger fascism was, the stronger the resistance against it was which finally brought an end to fascism. This is what is required of democrats and socialists. Those who stand against fascism should take this as a basis. Everyone can organize actions against fascism according to their own means. These actions can be marches and protests, or attacks against the government and state institutions, agents and police.

Not only young men but also young women are carrying out these attacks. I salute and congratulate them. They need to make their actions and attacks stronger. They are not enough. Our friends in Zap, Avaşın and Metına are showing great heroism under very difficult conditions. These young men and women have

better opportunities and conditions than our friends in Zap. They can carry out stronger actions and attacks. This is what is asked of them. They should not leave those heroes alone.

This regime is on the verge of collapse, they don't have the control they used to have, they are struggling with many problems among themselves. When one thinks about it, one can carry out very good actions. Also, almost all of the attacks so far have been similar to each other. One can carry out many more different actions and attacks. There are opportunities for this. We want them to carry out actions and attacks so they can reach the guerrillas for this. If they cannot reach the guerrillas, they should be able to defend themselves. But they can increase the level of their actions and attacks even more. The state has promoted informers, maybe that's why they are afraid. However, it is possible to take precautions. There are those who know each other well, who are good friends with each other. Thus, they can protect themselves from agents and informers. Those who know each other well can carry out actions and attacks secretly in small cells. They don't need to openly say 'we did this' and thus expose themselves. It is enough if they inform the press. Thus, they can deal a huge blow to the enemy. Agents and informers cannot get in and denounce them, and in this way they can protect themselves.

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Who Are We?

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

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

Campaigns

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

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

Publications

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

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

It edits books on Öcalan that discuss his main ideas.

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

Conferences

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

Delegations

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

Lobbying

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

Art for Öcalan

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

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