

THE IMRALI POST

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

Issue № 36 / 7 February 2023 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

Contents

Earthquake in North Kurdistan.....	2
Earthquake in North Kurdistan: at least 284 dead, over 2,000 wounded.....	2
Hundreds dead, thousands trapped under rubble.....	3
Heyva Sor calls for emergency rescue for earthquake victims.....	5
HDP deputies call off march to Gemlik, go to earthquake area.....	10
Earthquake in North Kurdistan: At least 1,004 dead over 6,000 injured.....	11
KCK: Everyone needs to mobilize all available means to help.....	11
Earthquake in North Kurdistan.....	12
Earthquake in North Kurdistan - Live Blog.....	13
RTÜK and Police busy to hunt journalists.....	16
MP Tiryaki: Earthquake victims are left to their fate in Pazarcik.....	16
Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	18
Kobanê and Manbij start collecting signatures to the petition demanding freedom for Öcalan.....	18
Young Internationalists in Canada will march for the freedom of Öcalan.....	18
Activists from Nuremberg take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg.....	19
Maxmur residents launch hunger strike for Öcalan's freedom.....	20
Annual Abdullah Öcalan Conference to take place at House of Lords on 15 February.....	20
Justice Vigil by HDP deputies against Imrali isolation ends on its 32nd day.....	21
Protests are taking place in Europe on the 24th anniversary of the International Conspiracy.....	22
Lawyer Arricale: CPT does not opt for publishing its report without Turkish permission.....	23
Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Committee in South Kurdistan calls for protests.....	25
Long March for Öcalan's freedom kicks off in Germany.....	26
Guerrillas: We will continue our fight to defeat the international conspiracy.....	26
Women living in Hanau send cards to Abdullah Öcalan.....	28
Long March in the Netherlands ended in Amsterdam.....	28
Internationalists launch long march in Geneva.....	29
Prisons in Turkey.....	29
Prisoners in Espiye turn their protest into indefinite-non-alternating hunger strike.....	29
Yakup Güneş released after 30 years in prison.....	30
Prisoners in Turkey continue hunger strikes against detention conditions and arbitrary measures....	30
Military aggression and occupation.....	31
Rockets hit Turkish military base in Bashiqa.....	31
Turkey and their mercenaries kidnap 39 people in Afrin in one month.....	32
HPG publishes balance sheet of war for January: 31 soldiers killed.....	33
Guerrillas continue actions against the Turkish army.....	35
HPG announces identities of 5 YJA Star guerrillas martyred in Besta.....	36
HPG: Five Turkish soldiers killed in guerrilla action at Girê Hekarî.....	36

Iran	37
Women prisoners in Iran raise concern over executions and torture.....	37
‘Jin, Jiyan, Azadi’ resistance continues despite escalating crackdown.....	38
Femicide	39
HDP Adana MP Hatimoğulları calls for serious investigation into femicide.....	39
Men killed at least 31 women in January.....	40
Ecocide	41
More farmers in Rojava switch to solar energy as an alternative to diesel generators.....	41
Human Rights Violations	42
3 million signatures for the removal of PKK from terror list submitted to the European Commission.....	42
Several Kurds detained in police raids in Marseille.....	43
Bar associations in solidarity with bar president threatened with death.....	43
Şenyaşar family’s justice vigil enters day 696.....	44
Police take three women into custody in Van.....	44
Kızıltepe and Savur municipalities’ co-mayors sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison.....	45
Security guard in refugee shelter in Germany turns out to be a Turkish spy.....	45
Kurdish activist arrested in France extradited to Germany.....	47
10,520 refugees were deported from Turkey in one month.....	47
14 students sentenced to prison for protests at Boğaziçi University.....	47
IPI monitoring: At least 227 journalists faced trial in Turkey in 2022.....	48
After canceled visit to Germany Erdoğan makes election campaign by phone.....	49
Erdoğan’s war policy condemns people to hunger.....	50
JINNEWS journalist Yıldız and HDP executive Tufan detained in Izmir.....	51
Interview	51
“Erdoğan relies on an anti-Western stance in the election campaign”.....	51
Opinion	55
Hozat: Kurds are waiting for concrete steps, not words.....	55
Who Are We?	63

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Eartquake in North Kurdistan

Earthquake in North Kurdistan: at least 284 dead, over 2,000 wounded

ANF | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

Turkey’s disaster management agency AFAD said at 10.05 am Turkish time that the earthquake in North Kurdistan left at least 284 dead and over 2,000 wounded.

A powerful 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit North Kurdistan and parts of Turkey and Syria at around 4.17 am on Monday, killing dozens, leveling buildings and sending tremors that were felt as far away as the island of Cyprus.



Hundreds dead, thousands trapped under rubble

ANF | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

According to the information released by Turkish state officials, 912 people have lost their lives and 5 thousand 385 people have been injured so far. Search and rescue operations are still continuing. In many places, people carry out search and rescue by their own means.

10:31 am

Beştaş: We have to heal the wounds of the earthquake together

HDP Group Deputy Chair Meral Daniş Beştaş called for solidarity, saying that “we have to heal the wounds of this earthquake together under very harsh winter conditions”.

The Freedom March Against Isolation, which is scheduled to take place in Yüksekova today, has been postponed due to the earthquake. An HDP delegation went to the earthquake-affected areas. In a statement made in Yüksekova Beştaş said: “It is a very sad day; millions of people are worried right now. Hundreds of people are still under rubble. There is traffic jam in many places. We have to heal the wounds of this earthquake together under very harsh winter conditions.

The governor in Maraş said that he could not share information about the death toll, injuries or damaged buildings. This shows that the situation is very grave. Moreover, we receive very bad news from Antep, Hatay, Osmaniye, Adana, Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Malatya and many other cities. An international call has been made to foreign countries to help rescue operations.

‘Let’s open houses, send equipment’

Beştaş said: “I call on everyone who is not affected by the earthquake and whose buildings are intact, to stand in solidarity with those affected. I call on them not only to open their houses but also to show solidarity by providing diapers, food, blankets, all kinds of logistic assistance. Furthermore, there is traffic jam. Please don’t use your cars unless it is necessary to provide help and support. Let’s be careful not to spread false information. Because panic will make things worse.

As the HDP, we will stand by our citizens who have been effected by the earthquake. All our plans have been postponed. The Freedom March Against Isolation has been canceled. We will focus on the earthquake. Our Co-Chairs, party members, deputies, Parliamentary Group and provincial and district organizations will be in the earthquake zone.”

10:29

20 people died in Şanlıurfa

Many buildings have been destroyed in Şanlıurfa and its districts. It is reported that 60 buildings have been destroyed in the centre of the city and in the districts of Hewag (Bozova), Berecûk (Birecik), Pîrsûs (Suruç). At least 20 buildings in the central Haliliye and Eyubiye districts of the city have been destroyed and 20 people who were rescued from rubble lost their lives and around 100 injured were taken to hospitals.

In suburbs in question, at least 40 buildings have been destroyed, and many people are still trapped under rubble.

A damaged building collapsed in Bahçelievler neighborhood as debris removal was in progress. An official warning has been given to stay away from damaged buildings.

10:22

Bingöl-Dersim-Siirt

Governor Kadir Ekinci, who made a statement after the earthquake in Bingöl city, said that they did not receive any serious damage throughout the city. It is reported that some buildings have been damaged in 8 villages of the Genç district.

Due to the earthquake in Dersim and Siirt cities, people spent the night on the streets. Several houses have been damaged.

10:22

Elazığ

The earthquake was powerful in Elazığ city as well. Damage has been reported in some parts of Fırat University Hospital. Many buildings in the city have been damaged.

10:22

Batman

2 buildings have been damaged in the Komando Street in the Raman District of Batman province. Many buildings in the city, including Batman Training and Research Hospital, have been slightly damaged.

10:21 am

3 injured in Shehba

Some houses in the Babinis and Til Qerah villages of Shehba canton have been destroyed by the earthquake. Zehredin Cabir (60), Dilişan Hemliko (36) and Ebdo Hebib Elo (4), who were under rubble, were injured.

10:14 am

Gathering places in Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye

As part of the rescue operations carried out by the Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye People's Assembly, those whose houses have been damaged on the east side of Şêxmeqsûd neighborhood have been transferred to the designated centers. Following the rescue operations carried out by the 21 communes of the Assembly, families affected by the earthquake have been placed in the Arin Mirkan and Afrin parks in Eşrefiye neighborhood, as well as in mosques and schools in both neighborhoods.

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Heyva Sor calls for emergency rescue for earthquake victims

ANF | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The Heyva Sor a Kurdistan released a written statement:

“A 7.8 magnitude earthquake occurred in the Pazarcik district of Maras city in North Kurdistan today (February 6). Later, a second earthquake with a magnitude of 6.4 occurred in the Nurdağı district of the city of Gaziantep. Furthermore, a third earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 hit the Îslahiye district of Gaziantep.

The earthquake was strongly felt in many regions of North Kurdistan, especially in the cities of Amed, Malatya, Sanliurfa, Adiyaman, Gaziantep in Edene, Hatay, Kilis, Osmaniye and Kayseri in Turkey, and in Cizre, Euphrates and Shehba Regions in North and East Syria. It is reported that the earthquake also affected the neighbouring countries. Hundreds of citizens lost their lives, and thousands were injured. Moreover, thousands of people are still under the rubble. Many houses and buildings were destroyed. Winter conditions negatively affect search and rescue operations.

Our institution has decided to send emergency aid to earthquake victims.

The Heyva Sor a Kurdistan only collects financial aid and will deliver it to families in need of urgent help in a short time.

We call on the people of Kurdistan and countries in Europe and other continents to help earthquake victims.”

Account information for financial aid

Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê e. v.

Wilhelmstr. 12

53840 Troisdorf

Kreissparkasse Cologne

IBAN: DE49 3705 0299 0004 0104 81

BIC/SWIFT: COKSDE33XXX

www.paypal.me/heyvasorakurdistance

The statement also shared the bank accounts and addresses of the partner institutions as follows:

FRANCE

Association Humanitaire Soleil Rouge – RojaSor

Tel: +33 (0) 180 89 42 67

E-mail: contact@rojasorfrance.com

CIC TROYES HOTEL DE VILLE

IBAN: FR7630087335000002074770150

BIC/ SWIFT: CMCIFRPP

www.rojasorfrance.com

SWITZERLAND

Kurdistan Roter Halbmond Schweiz (Croissant Rouge du Kurdistan Suisse)

Rue des Savoises 15, 1205 Geneva

Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (Cantonalbank)

Conto N°: 10-725-4

IBAN: CH62 0076 7000 L543 3416 5

BIC/SWIFT: BCVLCH2LXXX

www.heyvasor.ch

HOLLAND

Stichting Koerdische Rode Halve Maan (Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê)

Fokkerstraat 539 Links, 3125 BD Schiedam

Email: info@stichtingkrhm.nl

www.stichtingkrhm.nl

SWEDEN

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Email: info@rodasolen.se

org no. 802481-5782

SWISH:123 40 138 68

BANK GIRO: 5589-7672

IBAN: SE04 5000 0000 0537 4106 6753

BIC: ESSESESS

www.rodasolen.se

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Brünner Straße 130-134/3/8, 1210 Wien

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Registered Charity Number: 10 93 741

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The Co-operative Bank

Bank Sort code: 089299

Bank Account Number: 65863091

IBAN: GB55 CPBK 0892 9965 8630 91

BIC: CPBK GB22

www.heyvasoruk.org/

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Organisasjonsnummer: 009124. 84734

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IBAN: NO 15 1503 4052 953

BIC/ SWIFT: DNBANOKKXXX

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Mezzaluna Rossa Kurdistan Italia ETS (Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê)

Via Forte dei Cavalleggeri,53 Livorno

Banca Etica

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BIC/ SWIFT: ETICIT22XXX

www.mezzalunarossakurdistan.org

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ASBL Croissant Rouge du Kurdistan-

Koerdische Rode Halve Maan VZW (Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê)

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Numéro d'entreprise:465 073 725

BNP PARIBAS FORTIS

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HDP deputies call off march to Gemlik, go to earthquake area

ANF | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Democratic Regions Party (DBP), People's Democratic Party (HDP), Free Women's Movement (Tevgera Jinên Azad-TJA), the Federation of Legal and Solidarity Associations for Families of Prisoners and Convicts (MED TUHAD-FED), and the Association for Assistance and Solidarity with Families Losing Their Relatives in the Cradle of Civilizations (MEBYA-DER) have suspended the march that was supposed to kick off today from Qoser (Kızıltepe) and Gever (Yüksekova) to reach Gemlik.

The march was postponed. The delegation headed by co-chair Pervin Buldan will be involved in aid and solidarity activities in Diyarbakır, while the delegation headed by co-chair Mithat Sancar will be in Adana.

DBP co-chair Saliha Aydeniz said: “When it comes to people, the state always falls short. We know that our sensitive people, sensitive NGOs, volunteers in every field do more work and are involved in the process of rescuing people. Once again, I call for sensitivity. This disaster happened today and you know that there was a reason why we were in Yüksekova today. We are in Yüksekova today for our march against isolation in Imrali. Due to this disaster, we postponed our march. Postponing our plans for isolation for a while, we go as delegations to every earthquake area. Today is the day of solidarity and healing our wounds. It is the day to heal the sufferings of our people.”

— ★ —

Earthquake in North Kurdistan: At least 1,004 dead over 6,000 injured

ANF | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

At least 1,004 dead and 6,000 injured. Thousands of people are under the rubble. The earthquake also hit Northern and Eastern Syria.

13:07

Dozens of houses were destroyed in the village of Körücek in Elbistan

Dozens of houses in the Kurdish Alevi village of Körücek in Elbistan were destroyed after the new earthquake.

12:28

Search and rescue equipment is missing in the earthquake area

Those in the earthquake area reported serious deficiencies in search and rescue equipment.

Six people died in the earthquake that hit Northern and Eastern Syria

The Northern and Eastern Syria Autonomous Administration said that 6 people lost their lives and 44 people were injured as the result of the earthquake that hit North Kurdistan in the morning.

Speaking to the Northern and Eastern Syria Autonomous Administration website on the subject, head of the Health Committee, doctor Ciwan Mistefa, said that 6 people lost their lives and 33 people were injured in the Şêxmeqûd neighborhood of Aleppo. 5 people were injured in Shehba, 4 people in Kobanê and 2 people in Manbij.

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KCK: Everyone needs to mobilize all available means to help

ANF | BEHDINAN | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The Co-Presidency of the KCK Executive Council issued a statement about the earthquake that hit Kurdistan.

The statement reads as follows:

“Today, in the morning hours, a major earthquake centered in Pazarcık, Maraş, struck several cities in North Kurdistan and other cities nearby. We would like to express our condolences to the people of North Kurdistan and Turkey and wish God’s mercy to those who lost their lives and a speedy recovery to the injured. We deeply share the pain of our people and all those affected by the earthquake. There are also reports that the earthquake has affected several cities in Rojava and Syria and caused casualties there. We

would therefore like to express the same feelings and wishes for our people in Rojava and the people of Syria.

The reason this earthquake has caused such great loss of life and material damage is the Turkish state and the ruling AKP-MHP government. After every earthquake, this government resorts to some token initiatives and tries to create the perception that it helps the people. These attempts are purely for the purpose of saving their own faces and covering up their crimes. The AKP-MHP government does not take any precautions against earthquakes, and spends all the resources and means of the country on its own cronies and the war against the Kurdish people. While it would be possible to prevent the damage caused by such earthquakes by taking the necessary measures, the AKP, which has been in power for more than 20 years, has not taken any such precautions so far and has thus caused great losses of life. Since there are fault lines and a high risk of earthquakes in Turkey and Kurdistan, buildings and infrastructure should be built accordingly. However, the AKP-MHP government, which is a corrupt war government, steals the budget allocated for earthquakes and spends it on its war policy instead of taking precautions with regard to earthquakes. Therefore, the cause of all loss of life and material damage is the AKP-MHP government, which is responsible for taking precautions but has not done so at all.

We call on everyone, especially the people of North Kurdistan, to show a high spirit of solidarity and mobilize all their available means to help. Our people should not wait for the state, but need to use whatever means they have and try to heal their own wounds. In addition to the rescue efforts, taking into account the seasonal conditions, they need to open their homes to those whose houses have been destroyed and share their means with them. Democratic institutions also need to be in solidarity with the people, reach out to those in need of support and help them. The people of Kurdistan living abroad need to stand in solidarity with their country and provide support as well. This earthquake, which has caused huge losses of life and material damage, can only be overcome with the solidarity of the people and democratic institutions, sharing their means and supporting each other. We would like to once again express our condolences for the loss of life in North Kurdistan and Turkey, Rojava, Syria and elsewhere, and wish a speedy recovery to all the injured. We express our solidarity with all those affected by the earthquake and share their pain and feelings. We believe that we will overcome this difficult and painful time together by showing solidarity with each other as peoples and by sharing our means.”

— ★ —

Earthquake in North Kurdistan

ANF | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The number of dead and injured continues to increase. At least 2,316 people have been confirmed dead and over 13,293 injured. 6,217 buildings have collapsed.

21.00

People in Dilok (Antep) reacted to the authorities

20.16

AFAD arrived at the epicenter after 15 hours

AFAD teams and rescue equipment entered the Bazarcix (Pazarcik) district of Maraş, the epicenter of the earthquake, 15 hours after it happened and started work in 4 buildings there.

19:47

Most of the new buildings collapsed in Adana

In Adana, most new buildings have collapsed, said Labor Party General Executive Board Member Halil İmrek.

HDP Co-Chair Buldan: It's time for solidarity

— ★ —

Earthquake in North Kurdistan - Live Blog

ANF | 7 FEBRUARY 2023

The number of dead and injured continues to increase. At least 3,381 people have been confirmed dead and over 20,486 injured. It has been reported that the number of buildings collapsed may be 11,302. So far, 5,775 of them, however, were confirmed to be destroyed.

07:47

Solidarity call from Shengal

The Shengal Martyrs' Families Committee and the Autonomous Assembly called for solidarity with the Kurdish people who suffered after the earthquake in Rojava and Bakur Kurdistan.

The statement said: "Our people are going through difficult and painful days. As the people of Shengal, we offer our condolences to those who lost their lives in the earthquake and wish the injured a speedy recovery. We call on all Yazidi people to help our people who were damaged by the earthquake."

07:42,

HDP: Now is the time for solidarity!

The Peoples' Democratic Party Democratic Local Administrations Board also made a written statement regarding the earthquake that took place in Bakurê Kurdistan.

The statement said: "Our municipalities are trying to fulfill their responsibilities in cooperation with our Earthquake Crisis Coordination Center. We have put all the power and facilities of our local governments into use in solidarity with our people affected by the earthquake."

07:26

People in Amed spent the night on the street

In Amed, most people had to spend the night on the street or in their cars. While the search and rescue efforts continued in the wreckage of 7 buildings that were completely destroyed in the city, none of the needs of the people who were “advised” not to spend the night in their homes were met. While 37 areas of the city were designated as shelters, neither shelter nor food was delivered to those places.

11:25

Earthquake kills 84, injures over 750 in Amed

It is reported that Monday’s earthquakes have killed 84 people and injured at least 759 people in Amed (Diyarbakır).

The death toll is increasing after the earthquakes with epicenters in Maras and Antep. As the situation continues worsening, dozens of powerful aftershocks continue to jolt the region.

Search and rescue efforts continue in the wreckage of destroyed buildings in Amed, one of the Kurdish cities most affected by the earthquake.

Many people have been rescued from the wreckage of collapsed buildings in Kayapınar, Bağlar and Yenişehir districts.

The citizens, whose houses have been damaged, spent the night in Kosuyolu Park under freezing temperatures.

Citizens gathered in the park reacted to the state's incapacity to provide tents, blankets, and food.

According to the latest data from the Crisis Desk, established by the Urban Protection and Solidarity Platform in Amed, 84 people have lost their lives and at least 759 people have been injured, 19 of them seriously.

The crisis desk in the city reported that 23 buildings have been destroyed and accommodation is provided in nearly 300 locations.

11:59

Shelter in Shehba offered for earthquake victims

Melek El Hisen, Co-Chair of Afrin and Shehba Cantons Council, called on those effected by the earthquake in Aleppo and other regions to come to Shehba for shelter. Hisen urged the Damascus government to lift the embargo on Shehba Canton.

12:16

Dead bodies kept in the hospital garden in Elbistan

Dead bodies are kept in the hospital garden in the Elbistan district of Kahramanmaraş since the emergency department of Elbistan State Hospital became unusable from the earthquake. No other measure has yet been introduced.

There is a shortage of medicines and med kits in the Elbistan State Hospital.

While the people of Elbistan spend the night outside in the cold weather, despair is mounting because of those still trapped under the rubble.

Search and rescue teams in the district remain insufficient.

No state official has reached the villages yet. Locals whose houses were destroyed in the earthquake have taken shelter in intact houses. As the state has not provided any aid to the villages where there has been no electricity and water since yesterday, those living in other cities took action to provide aid to villages by their own means or through local associations.

Some associations in Istanbul have delivered aid to the regions affected by the earthquake.

Footage from Elbistan State Hospital shows the latest situation on the ground.

12:58

HDP |DBP delegation arrives in Pazarcık

Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Co-Chair Saliha Aydeniz, HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) deputies Sezai Temelli, Fatma Kurtulan, Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Zeynel Özen, Mahmut Toğrul and Murat Sarısaç, as well as party executives, conducted investigations in the Pazarcık district of Maraş, the epicentre of the first earthquake.

DBP Co-Chair Saliha Aydeniz made the following statement after the investigations on site:

“There is no building left not destroyed or not damaged in Pazarcık. We know that there are still people under the rubble. There is not a single rescue effort in some places. People ask: “Where is the state?” No single rescue work has been witnessed in the last 36 hours. While there was a possibility to pull people alive from the wreckage from the first minute of the earthquake, this was not done. I would like to express very clearly that the state has remained under the rubble from this earthquake.

Government officials keep saying that they are at every point to provide help. They boast about the roads and residences they have built. These roads and residences have been destroyed everywhere. Citizens have rescued the people from the rubble by their own efforts and solidarity. This state, this government, is doing nothing here. As the HDP delegation, we will remain here and show more solidarity everywhere. Today, our delegations have visited other regions affected by the earthquake. Our provincial and district organizations are collecting aid. We will keep increasing solidarity.”

RTÜK and Police busy to hunt journalists

ANF | 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Making a statement about the earthquake, RTÜK President Ebubekir Şahin targeted journalists by saying: “It is not possible for us to ignore manipulative broadcasts.” Police, on the other hand, announced that proceedings were initiated against 63 people.

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and the General Directorate of Security made a statement regarding the earthquake, with its epicenter in Pazarcik, which caused the death of thousands of people. RTÜK President Ebubekir Şahin, targeted the journalists covering the earthquake and said: “It is a legal obligation for broadcasters not to share information that harms the search and rescue activities carried out in the earthquake area, scare people and spread disinformation.”

Şahin added: “It is not possible for us to ignore the organizations that make manipulative broadcasts with malicious intent.”

The General Directorate of Security announced that action has been taken against 63 people regarding the posts considered as provocation.

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MP Tiryaki: Earthquake victims are left to their fate in Pazarcik

ANF | MARAS | 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Co-Chair Saliha Aydeniz and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputies Sezai Temelli, Fatma Kurtulan, Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Zeynel Özen, Mahmut Toğrul and Murat Sarısaç conducted investigations on Tuesday in the Pazarcik district of Maraş province, the epicentre of the two devastating earthquakes on Monday.

Search and rescue efforts insufficient

Speaking to ANF, Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki stated that search and rescue operations were very limited: “We observed that many buildings were damaged and destroyed in Pazarcik. We even saw citizens who lost their lives under the wreckage of some buildings.”

“We also witnessed that volunteer teams carried out search and rescue operations in some buildings. But we observed that they also had limited equipment. There were people from Alanya and Malatya provinces carrying out search and rescue operations.”

Serious problems with shelter

Tiryaki also stated that people had serious problems with taking shelter, adding that there were almost no tents:

He continued: “There are also serious problems with regard to taking shelter. Since most of the buildings are damaged, people do not enter the buildings, they remain outside. I can add that there are almost no tents. People stay in barracks and cover themselves with plastic. Moreover, water and electricity have been cut off.”

The MP added: “Furthermore, there are serious problems in the distribution of blankets and basic needs for heating. Almost no aid has been sent to most neighborhoods. We saw people who could only eat a glass of soup. We witnessed that people, associations and institutions are trying to deliver aid by their own means.”

‘Hundreds of buildings destroyed in Maras downtown’

“We are in Maras downtown now. Hundreds of buildings have been destroyed completely, and search and rescue operations are carried out in very few buildings. In a large part of the buildings, the citizens are left to their fate. People are trying to help and reach their relatives by their own means. The situation in Elbistan is much more dramatic than this, much worse. Because Elbistan was the epicenter of the second earthquake.”

‘There is a serious organizational problem’

Tiryaki commented on the statements of Turkish President Erdogan, who declared a state of emergency in 10 provinces and said that only disaster and emergency management presidency (AFAD) will be allowed to carry out search and rescue operations.

Tiryaki said: “We have not seen any activity from the army. There is such a serious lack of organization here. When it comes to the state of emergency, it is not very convincing that they are reaching everywhere and declare a state of emergency at the same time. In fact, they have reached nowhere. When we passed through the city, local people thought we were government officials and booed us. They said that “no one is coming to help us.”

There is a serious organizational problem. There is an organizational issue in transportation. There is an organizational problem in the delivery of aids. They also prevent political parties and municipalities from helping survivors. In many places, they stopped fundraising or confiscated the collected money. They also prevented citizens, parties, associations, and municipalities from providing help. It is a great injustice that they both prevent aid and not help survivors. They are persecuting them twice.”

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Kobanê and Manbij start collecting signatures to the petition demanding freedom for Öcalan

ANF | MANBIJ | 31 JANUARY 2023

Kobanê and Manbij are the new cities which began collecting signatures to the petition demanding freedom for Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Many cities in Northern and Eastern Syria have already collected signatures.

The campaign in Manbij started under the supervision of the Democratic Society Academy.

The activist responsible for the campaign in Kobanê Martyr Xebat Neighborhood, Xalid Mehmud, told ANHA: "Our aim is to prove that millions of people see Leader Öcalan as their will and to convey that millions of people support the demand for his freedom. Our people should come to the signature centers and participate in the campaign."

— ★ —

Young Internationalists in Canada will march for the freedom of Öcalan

ANF | 31 JANUARY 2023

A march for the release of Abdullah Öcalan is organized every year by the youth of the revolution as well as international collectives.

Internationalists from Gaspé (Gespe'gewa'gi), in Canada, will march to Percé on 6 and 7 February to demand freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.

The internationalists sent a statement to Nûçe Ciwan explaining that they "denounce the problems that neoliberal programs propose, namely the destruction of our natural environment, the incessant wars everywhere around the world and the barbaric colonial ideas perpetrated by our economic system.

Canada's relationship with Turkey means that we have blood on our hands. Our desire for a better world under a globalized system must become a globalized desire. That is why we call ourselves internationalists."

The internationalists wrote about themselves the following: “In order to bring a critical look at human and ecological liberation movements and to be better inspired by them, activists living in Gespe'gewa'gi (Gaspé) have formed a group of internationalists whose objective is to raise awareness among the people of the territory of intersectional, anti-colonial, anti-capitalist or anti-authoritarian struggles from here and elsewhere, as well as to create various actions of support and popular education in connection with these struggles.”

— ★ —

Activists from Nuremberg take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 31 JANUARY 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg was launched on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg. Through this action, every week, a different group of Kurdish activists coming from different parts of Europe demands freedom of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and an end to isolation. The vigil has reached day 554.

This week, a group from Nuremberg took over the vigil. The group includes Hasan Çiçek, Mazlum Doğan and Özgür Kara.

Speaking to ANF on behalf of the group, Hasan Cicek invited all Kurdish people, especially young people, to resist in order to break isolation. He underlined that the 24th anniversary of the international conspiracy which led to the capture of Öcalan was approaching.

Hasan Çiçek said: “As we approach the anniversary of the International Conspiracy, we have taken over the vigil on behalf of the patriots in Nuremberg. We will put an end to the conspiracy as well as to isolation. Our Leadership is in prison. The will of the Kurdish people is displaying a unique resistance. We invite our people to be sensitive, support and resist. We welcome young men and women to the ranks of the resistance. There is tremendous resistance in the prisons. We salute this resistance.”

Cicek also commemorated Veysi Taş and Mehmet Akar, who set their bodies on fire to draw attention to the systematic isolation against Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. “I want to say this: as our party has declared, we do not approve these kinds of actions. Our Leadership does not approve of them. This should be taken as an instruction from the Leader.”

— ★ —

Maxmur residents launch hunger strike for Öcalan's freedom

ANF | MAXMUR | 1 FEBRUARY 2023

The vigil launched in the Martyr Rustem Cudi Refugee Camp in Maxmur on December 10, 2022, to demand freedom for Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, has been shifted into a hunger strike.

'Our struggle will continue until Öcalan is free'

In a statement to the press, Maxmur People's Assembly Co-Chair Yusuf Kara said: "In February we remember the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sake of humanity, and we mark the conspiracy against Öcalan. We have repeatedly stated that the system adopted in the İmralı prison remains unprecedented. The isolation imposed on our leader is carried out for the material and political interests of the fascist states with the help of NATO, since Öcalan has defied capitalist modernity."

Kara added: "No one can darken our sun. As the people of Kurdistan, we must take a clear and effective stance against this fascism, isolation, and genocide. The people of Maxmur have been carrying out a vigil for Öcalan's physical freedom for 52 days. This vigil will now be turned into a hunger strike. We will continue our actions until Öcalan is free."

— ★ —

Annual Abdullah Öcalan Conference to take place at House of Lords on 15 February

ANF | LONDON | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

The Trade Unions, Freedom for Öcalan campaign and the Kurdish People's Democratic Assembly of Britain present the 2nd Annual Abdullah Öcalan Conference, which will take place on 15 February 2023, marking 24 years since Abdullah Öcalan was abducted and has since been kept in solitary confinement on the İmralı prison island, in Turkey.

The Freedom for Öcalan campaign is a UK trade union-backed initiative to secure the release of imprisoned Kurdish political prisoner Abdullah Öcalan.

The Kurdish People's Democratic Assembly of Britain is a grassroots organization committed to raising awareness and public interest in events across Kurdistan. Alongside representing the 400,000 Kurds living in the United Kingdom, we make contributions to stopping the war against the Kurdish people and paving the way for a peaceful solution in Kurdistan and the wider Middle East.

This year's conference brings together speakers from both Europe and the UK, including Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP, Lord Maurice Glasman, HDP MP Hisyar Ozsoy, Osman Baydemir and Jeremy Corbyn MP.



Justice Vigil by HDP deputies against İmralı isolation ends on its 32nd day

ANF | ANKARA | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

The Justice Vigil, promoted by the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputies against the isolation imposed on Kurdish people's Abdullah Öcalan and demanding the granting of visits with his lawyers, ended today on its 32nd day.

The deputies made a statement in the garden of the Parliament with the signs that read "Let the law be enforced in İmralı" and "Isolation is a crime against humanity".

Deputies Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit, Ali Kenanoğlu, Muazzez Orhan, Kemal Bülbül, Abdullah Koç, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Ayşe Driver, Kemal Peköz, Rıdvan Turan and Hüseyin Kaçmaz, were present at the vigil.

The Vigil ends today

HDP Group Deputy Chair, Saruhan Oluç, said that today was the last day of the Justice Vigil. He added: "There is no other example in the world similar to the isolation imposed on İmralı. Isolation is not only the prevention of visits by lawyers, family and phone calls, but it is also the point where the law is reset. Isolation is also a part of the policy of eliminating the democratic gains gained by the Kurdish people through the policies implemented by this government."

Isolation is now an international issue

Oluç said that the "whole world public opinion is discussing this isolation which the Ministry of Justice says does not exist.

775 lawyers registered to 29 international bar associations applied to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to visit İmralı on 10-17 June. No answer was given. Then, under the leadership of the European Union of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights on 14 August, 350 lawyers from 22 countries applied for a visit, but again no response was received.

Finally, we know that 756 lawyers from Morocco, Palestine, Kurdistan Region, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Northern and Eastern Syria and Jordan applied to the Ministry of Justice for a visit. In other words, over 2,000 lawyers from more than 30 countries in the world applied to visit İmralı. No response was given. The issue has become an international issue."

Mr. Öcalan wants no privilege, just law

Oruç continued: “Mr. Öcalan does not want any privileges. He said, ‘I want law, not privilege’. We also want law, not privileges, every time we apply for a visit. We want the law to be implemented.

After 32 days, we ended the Justice Watch. As of 6 February, we will start the ‘We Walk to Imralı for Solution’ march and activities, starting from Yüksekova and Kızıltepe. Because this illegal situation must end as soon as possible and negotiations must be held. We call on the Ministry once again. Make sure the law works. Respond to the applications made.”

— ★ —

Protests are taking place in Europe on the 24th anniversary of the International Conspiracy

ANF | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

The International Conspiracy which resulted in the capture of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan was protested in Athens, Darmstadt and Bonn.

Athens

A march was held in Athens organized by Tevgera Ciwanên Şoreşger (TCS) and the Kurdish Cultural Center of Greece.

Many children, women and young people supported the march that started in Akademia square and passed in front of the Greek Parliament before ending at the Turkish Consulate.

Darmstadt

After a demonstration against isolation held in Frankfurt on Thursday, came together at Darmstadt Luisenplatz on Friday. Kurds from Saarbrücken, Frankfurt, Giessen, Mannheim, and Mainz participated in the action, as well as Kurds living in Darmstadt.

On the second day of the march organized by FCDK-KAWA, activists said that the Kurdish people's Leader was handed over to the Turkish state as the result of an international conspiracy 24 years ago.

The representative of Die Linke Darmstadt said that he had participated in a long march of young people years ago, and that the demands today are the same. The representative noted that they will continue their actions for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan, for the lifting of the ban on the PKK.

The action will continue today at 13.30 in Mannheim-Wasserturm.

Bonn

The Freedom March for Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, planned for two days in Bonn by FED-MED, has started.

The people of Kurdistan, who came together in Bonn Marktplaz on Friday, started the march after reading a statement. The march continued with a rally in front of the United Nations Representation.

Making a speech here, politician Nursel Aydoğın emphasized that the Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has not been allowed any contact for 23 months. "Since the beginning of the conspiracy, isolation has been imposed on the entire Kurdish people, not just the Kurdish people's Leader. However, the resistance of Leader Apo and the Kurdish people have foiled this conspiracy. We are in a period when Abdullah Öcalan's paradigm has spread all over the world."

Nursel Aydoğın said that this year will be the year of freedom for Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

During the rally, UN officials were given a file on the content of the International Conspiracy. Then, a call was made to all Kurds living in the state and their friends to participate in the march, which will start at 2pm today, Saturday, in front of DGB Haus in Düsseldorf.



Lawyer Arricale: CPT does not opt for publishing its report without Turkish permission

ZEYNEP KURAY | ISTANBUL | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

The meetings in Turkey and North Kurdistan of the International Delegation Against Isolation, which consists of 36 people from 7 different countries and was formed to protest the ongoing isolation against Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, have ended. Michela Arricale, a member of the European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights, who joined the delegation from Italy, spoke to ANF.

'İmralı isolation remains unprecedented'

Arricale came to Turkey in previous years to follow the lawsuits of the Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD) and the People's Law Office (HHB), and she is well aware that laws are not enforced in the country. She has been interested in the Kurdish issue since 2016. She revealed that the co-chair of the organization of which she is a member in Italy is a Kurdish woman lawyer. Arricale said that she has been dealing with the isolation imposed on Öcalan for a long time. The Italian lawyer said that she joined the delegation to end this unlawfulness.

Arricale underlined that the isolation in the İmralı prison is unprecedented, adding that such a state of isolation can only be found in a novel like “The Count of Monte Cristo”.

‘International organizations don’t make the required intervention’

The lawyer pointed out that the Turkish state had to adapt the international conventions to which it is a party to its own laws but did not do so. Moreover, international organizations which are supposed to check whether these conventions are implemented by countries do not make the required interventions. Arricale maintained that these organizations have a political motivation rather than a legal one. She continued: “Due to Turkey’s geopolitical position, it has various advantages and various trump cards against European countries. One good example is the refugee problem. We can say that Turkey is using the refugee issue as blackmail to force Europe to do whatever it wants. This is not because Turkey is too strong, but because Europe is weak against these trump cards.”

‘CPT can publish reports without Turkey’s permission’

Arricale added that the same is true for the CPT which recently went to the İmralı prison. She remarked: “The CPT’s duty is to prevent torture. However, the CPT says that it cannot publish its report without the permission or approval of the Turkish state. In fact, the CPT has an option to publish its report without the permission of the Turkish state in cases where there are systematic violations of rights, as in the İmralı prison. But it doesn’t do that. As I said, this is a political issue. Because the CPT is also an organization affiliated with the Council of Europe. Turkey is also a part of the Council of Europe. When the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe asked Turkey why it did not comply with the ECtHR’s 2014 “Right to Hope” decision for Öcalan, Turkey replied that Öcalan was exempted from the Right to Hope. The Council of Europe is well aware that what Turkey is doing is illegal, but here again, there is a political motivation, and the Council of Europe does not care about the non-implementation of this decision. The ECtHR pretends as if this file does not exist. If we can force the court to issue a decision on this file, things could change.”

‘Sovereign states use law as a weapon’

Arricale contended that sovereign states in many parts of the world use the law as a weapon. She reminded that in Turkey, the government uses the “anti-terror law” to isolate, criminalize and marginalize many oppositional groups and voices.

The Italian lawyer stated that there are three different factors concerning the isolation of Öcalan. These are social, political and legal factors. Arricale pointed out that, from a political point of view, the isolation is used to isolate, destroy and ignore the Kurdish issue.

Isolation of an anarchist in Italy: Alfredo Cospito

Arricale pointed out that the isolation was not limited to Turkey alone, and that the isolation policies of all states were actually similar, citing an example from her own country, Italy. She said that the isolation and high security practices put into practice, especially for the mafia and crime rings in Italy, have become widespread against those who oppose the establishment politically. Arricale said: “An anarchist named Alfredo Cospito is currently subjected to these isolation practices. The court demands a life sentence for him

for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government. He has been on hunger strike for three months in the prison where he is kept under isolation to protest this unlawfulness, and his health condition is getting worse. His first hearing will be held on March 7, but we don't know if he will survive until then. We are really concerned about his condition. It is very difficult to mobilize the public over this issue. Because whenever you object to unlawfulness, the government immediately says that 'they are terrorists'. The main issue here is not whether we agree with that person, but there is a human rights violation that we must protest under any circumstances."

'Even the slightest violation of rights must be objected'

The lawyer emphasized that isolation is a form of torture and that it is necessary to oppose it without looking at the identity of the person who is subjected to the isolation. Arricale insisted that this issue should be addressed with its political, social and legal dimensions. She said: "We need to inform the public and mobilize the states to put pressure on this issue. We must strive with all the means at our disposal. Therefore, it is necessary to appeal to the ECtHR or the courts in the slightest violation of rights to raise a voice and to go against it. Maybe we will not be able to enforce these laws immediately, but it will be beneficial for us in future to expose these rights violations."

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Committee in South Kurdistan calls for protests

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

In southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), mobilisation for action against the international plot against Abdullah Öcalan has begun. 15 February marks the 24th anniversary of the PKK founder's deportation from Kenya to Turkey in violation of international law. Protests by the Kurdish community are taking place around the world to mark the occasion.

The Sulaymaniyah-based Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Committee issued a public press release on Saturday to initiate mobilization for protests to mark 15 February. The committee called upon the public to participate in the activities to demonstrate that the Kurdish people do not accept the plot against their freedom.

The committee also raised the issue of total isolation on the Turkish prison island of İmralı, where Öcalan and three other Kurdish prisoners are being held as political hostages. In this context, the committee denounced a failure to act by the Council of Europe and its Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT).

"As long as the institutions of Europe do not fulfil their responsibility as defenders of human rights and neglect their duties, they are considered by us as pillars of the international conspiracy," the committee said.

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Long March for Öcalan's freedom kicks off in Germany

ANF | HEILBRONN | 5 FEBRUARY 2023

The Long March, traditionally carried out by young people every year to demand the physical freedom of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, is held on February 5-10 this year from Heilbronn to Freiburg in Germany.

The six-day march is carried out under the motto “For Öcalan's freedom, come to the freedom struggle! We will physically liberate Öcalan in 2023!”

The march kicked off this morning with the participation of a number of young people from Austria, England, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Germany.

Gathering at Theresienwiese Square, the activists observed a minute's silence for the martyrs of the Kurdistan revolution.

In a statement on behalf of the Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement (TCŞ), Zekiye Doğan said: “We will achieve the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan and lead this struggle to victory. We have received no news from Öcalan for over 20 months, and we will continue to fight against the fascist Turkish state. We will achieve Öcalan's freedom and become a part of the guerrilla resistance in Kurdistan.”

The activists, wearing vests with the inscription “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan”, continue their march to the accompaniment of Kurdish militant songs. After covering 16 km, the activists will conclude today's stage in Heilbronn and gather at an evening program at the Kurdish Community Center.

The first long march was staged from Hanau to Hanover in 1983 and lasted 17 days. The demonstration took place under the impression of the prison resistance in Amed, triggered by Mazlum Doğan's action. Those who took part in the march at that time were Hozan Sefkan, Kasim Engin and Hozan Mizgîn. The tradition of the long marches is continued today together with internationalist youth.

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Guerrillas: We will continue our fight to defeat the international conspiracy

PIRAN DOZDAR / XEBATKAR RAPERIN | BEHDINAN | 5 FEBRUARY 2023

9 October marks the anniversary of the forced departure of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1998 and thus the beginning of the international conspiracy that led to the PKK leader's abduction to Turkey on 15 February 1999. Since then, Öcalan has been held as a political hostage on the prison island of Imralı, most of the time under conditions of total isolation. Kurds and their friends are going into action all around the world to demand the lifting of Abdullah Öcalan's incommunicado detention and the resumption of peace

negotiations and conditions for the Kurdish leader in which he can live and work freely in order to contribute to the solution of the Kurdish question.

Guerrillas from the People's Defense Forces (HPG) and Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) spoke to ANF on the upcoming anniversary of the international conspiracy, vowing to keep their struggle going to the very end.

HPG guerrilla Tekoşer Farqîn: Several countries took part in the international conspiracy, including Russia, which calls itself socialist. Many states claiming to be friends of the Kurds also turned out to be a party to the conspiracy. The captivity of our leader in the hands of the enemy for 25 years is a painful experience for the peoples of the world. No news has been received for a long time from our leader who is subjected to aggravated isolation and torture on Imrali within the knowledge of the CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture). Our people in four parts of Kurdistan, in Europe and beyond are taking action to live in a free country with their leader in 2023. His captivity means the captivity of all peoples.

All peoples are taking part in the PKK's revolution today and this has been achieved thanks to Öcalan's ideology, in which we have also found our reality. While the enemy suppressed all the Kurdish uprisings in the past, a new mindset emerged with the action of the leader and founding of our party, the PKK. We are leading society with this awareness today. We must prepare ourselves for the leader's physical freedom in 2023 in the scope of the "Dem Dema Azadiyê ye" [Time for Freedom] campaign launched by our party.

YJA Star guerrilla Hebûn Dilsoz: 15 February is a dark day for the Kurdish people. While the leader has been struggling on Imrali for 25 years now, the guerrilla resistance is growing even stronger with his struggle. People rose up, got to know themselves and united thanks to his struggle. As a member of the Arab nation, I condemn the conspiracy against the leader which sought to create a conflict between the Kurdish and Arab peoples, but failed. On the contrary, Kurdish and Arab peoples united, and their relations grew stronger. Today, they are fighting together for the freedom of Kurdistan. Both the guerrillas and the people dream of leading a free life with the leader.

YJA Star guerrilla Besê Anûş: I condemn the international conspiracy which is a bitter experience for the Kurds and other peoples. As guerrillas of YJA Star, our goal is to defeat the conspiracy and achieve the freedom of the leader, who is our sun and without whom we cannot live. As guerrillas, we aim to frustrate all the plots directed against the Kurdish people. We also condemn the states involved in the conspiracy, and we will continue our resistance to defeat the conspiracy.

HPG guerrilla Fûat Mahabad: Through the international conspiracy, the enemy sought to destroy the PKK but the struggle of the Kurds resonates around the globe today. This is achieved thanks to the ideology and philosophy of the leader. As guerrillas, our aim for 2023 is to ensure the leader's freedom. Any action to this end is meaningful. The Kurdish youth should join the guerrilla ranks.

HPG guerrilla Fırat Çiyager: The Kurdish people have been fighting for many years with the ideology developed by the leader. The ongoing fight in Zap, Avaşin and Metina takes strength and morale from the leader's resistance on Imrali. As the guerrillas of Kurdistan, we will successfully uphold our responsibilities to respond to the attacks of the enemy. We will enhance our struggle to ensure the physical freedom of the leader.

YJA Star guerrilla Peyman Dilsoz: 15 February is a dark day for us. However, the enemy cannot darken our sun, no matter what he does. The leader has been held captive for 25 years but does not compromise on his struggle. We follow in his footsteps, and we will continue our lives with his light.

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Women living in Hanau send cards to Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | HANAU | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The European Kurdish Women's Movement promoted an action involving sending a card to Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the 15 February International Conspiracy.

Women living in Hanau sent a card to Abdullah Öcalan, who has not been heard from for 2 years.

Fatoş Kızıl and Fatma Doğan expressed their feelings in the cards.

Fatoş Kızıl wrote: "The meaning of my existence, the one who gives meaning to my life, who realizes my hope, my Leader... Hope to see you soon with great love and respect."

Asiye Serhat: "President, I have only one thing to say to you; You are the honor of the Kurdish people. Ensuring your freedom is our duty as a requirement of being worthy of this honor. Hoping to see you soon..."

Fatma Doğan: "There are many things, but I find it difficult to express my feelings. Glad you are our guide. Thanks to you, I am experiencing my second birth..."

— ★ —

Long March in the Netherlands ended in Amsterdam

ANF | AMSTERDAM | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The Long March, organized in the Netherlands to demand Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan ended in Amsterdam on Sunday.

The crowd gathered in Wester Park, passed through the busy streets of Amsterdam and walked up to the Museum Plein. The International Conspiracy that led to the capture of the Kurdish people's leader was protested with slogans.

The march started in Den Haag on Saturday.

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Internationalists launch long march in Geneva

ANF | GENEVA | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

The seventh “Internationalist Long March”, organized annually to protest the international conspiracy against Kurdish leader Öcalan, has started in Geneva, Switzerland. The march started in Place de Neuve Square in Geneva.

More than 120 internationalist activists and many Kurdish people from Germany, Spain-Catalonia, Portugal, France, England, Switzerland, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Kenya, Ecuador, Mexico, Hungary, Austria, Brazil, and India are participating in the march. The march will continue with a press release to be made at 11.30 am in front of the UN Geneva office.

During the press release, Geneva SP Federal Deputy Laurence Fehlmann Rielle, Geneva Deputy Mayor Christina Kitsos, Geneva Canton Deputy Pablo Cruchon, KCDK-E Co-Chair Yüksel Koç and internationalist activists Clement Monatte and Franziska Schulz will deliver speeches.

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Prisons in Turkey

Prisoners in Espiye turn their protest into indefinite-non-alternating hunger strike

ANF | 31 JANUARY 2023

The hunger strike launched by the prisoners in the Giresun Espiye L Type Closed Prison to protest the rights violations and the repression of the administration has entered its 55th day. Prisoners Erdal Emeç, Aydın Oğuz and Ahmet Budak have shifted the hunger strike into an indefinite-irreversible hunger strike. In a phone call to his family, Erdal Emeç, a sick prisoner, stated that the hunger strike would continue until their demands are met.

Emeç added that they would be put into solitary cells due to the indefinite-irreversible hunger strike they have started as of today.

Prisoner Metin Uyar, who called his family on the 40th day of the hunger strike, gave the following information: “With isolation, the prisoners’ dignity, humanity and identity are trampled down. There is a fascist administration in the Espiye Prison. They are attacking our Kurdish identity directly. There is physical and psychological torture. They do not take our sick friends to hospitals, books in Kurdish are banned. Our wards have been raided for the last few days; our friends have been taken away in handcuffs. Some of

our friends received health reports after being beaten. We have sick fellow inmates who are on the verge of death.”

— ★ —

Yakup Güneş released after 30 years in prison

ANF | İZMİR | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

Political prisoner Yakup Güneş, who was in Izmir Şakran No. 2 T Type Prison, was released after 30 years.

In 1992, he was detained and arrested in Varto, in the province of Muş charged with “separatism”. Güneş was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Diyarbakır State Security Court (DGM).

Güneş should have been released on 3 November 2022, but his release was postponed for 3 months by the Administration and Observation Board on the grounds that he was not behaving well. Güneş, who entered the prison at the age of 18 and came out at the age of 50, was greeted by his relatives and the executives of the Aegean Association for Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners (EGE-TUHAYDER) in front of the prison.

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Prisoners in Turkey continue hunger strikes against detention conditions and arbitrary measures

ANF | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

In several prisons in Turkey, prisoners are defending themselves against their unlawful prison conditions with hunger strikes.

Trabzon

In the T-type prison in Trabzon-Beşikdüzü, a hunger strike has been taking place since July 2022, alternating every five days. The prisoners are resisting arbitrary measures such as the curtailment of their right to engage in communal activities, a ban on radio for political prisoners, degrading body searches, the withholding of letters of complaint to the Ministry of Justice and other institutions by the prison management, the limit of five books per prisoner, the non-delivery of newspapers and the practice of not releasing political prisoners even though the legal requirements for release on parole have been met.

Bolu

In the F-type prison in Bolu, three prisoners at a time have been protesting since November 2022 with a hunger strike against the violation of their rights and the restriction of the use of common rooms. The protest is also against the fact that prisoners are not released without confessing remorse despite completing their prison sentence.

Giresun

Prisoners in the L-type prison in Giresun-Espiye went on a temporary and rotational hunger strike on 7 December last year. Because their demands were not met, Erdal Emeç, Aydın Oğuz and Ahmet Budak changed their resistance into an indefinite and continuous hunger strike on 31 January. They demand an end to the psychological pressure by the prison management and the attacks on their Kurdish identity and physical violence by the guards, as well as the handing over of Kurdish books and adequate health care.

Şakran

In Şakran women's prison in Izmir, prisoners are defending themselves against military roll call, restrictions on books, solitary confinement and the denial of communal yard time with a ten-day hunger strike. The hunger strike was initiated by writer Leyla Saraç and continues. The Kurdish woman, who was released from prison in October 2021, was re-arrested eight months after her release and is expected to remain in prison for another year.

Afyon

An indefinite hunger strike against arbitrary cell searches and the military standing appeal has been taking place in T-Type Prison No.1 in Afyon since 3 January. Nine prisoners are now taking part in the hunger strike, which was started by two people.



Military aggression and occupation

Rockets hit Turkish military base in Bashiqa

ANF | 1 FEBRUARY 2023

Iraqi media said that the Turkish state's Zilkân military base in Bashiqa (in the region of Niniveh) was hit by 20 rockets on Wednesday morning.

There was no information about Turkish army losses.

Bashiqa military base has been frequently targeted in recent years, and the attacks are largely attributed to Iran-backed Iraqi militias.



Turkey and their mercenaries kidnap 39 people in Afrin in one month

ANF | I FEBRUARY 2023

Crimes against people and nature continue to be carried out in Afrin, which has been under Turkish occupation since March 2018.

The Turkish state, which has occupied Afrin since 2018, continues to commit crimes such as kidnapping, destruction of nature, murder, plunder, theft, rape and demographic change.

More than 39 citizens were kidnapped in one month, 7,000 trees were cut down, colonial houses and military bases were established in many areas of the region.

39 citizens kidnapped

The Turkish state has kidnapped more than 39 citizens in Afrin since the beginning of 2023. Their names have been listed as follows: Mihemed Reşid Hiso (32), Ferman Elûş Sado (28), Bekir Hisên Xêro (35), Rêber Hisên Xêro (32), Elî Kalo (40), Mihemed Ferîd (28), Mihemed Kalo (36), Ednan Ebdo (39), Mihemed Ednan Silêman (30), Mihemed Ehmed Henan Hemîd (55), Îbrahîm Menan Dawud, Mihemed Esmet Şêxo, Mihemed Selah Hisên (30), Ferîda Ebdo, Mihemed Îbrahîm Mele Mihemed (49), Dogan Mihemed Mele Mihemed (48), Enes Zekî, Elî Reşid Omer, Tewfîq Hesên (45), İmad Kemal Sado (44), Şiyar Mistefa Sado (20), Receb Silêman Şawax (42) and Eynayet Arif Bekir (56).

More than 7,000 trees cut down

The Turkish state has cut down more than 7,000 trees in Afrin since the beginning of the year.

The invaders cut down 12 trees belonging to Mihemed Fewzî Xelîl, Mistefa Xelîl and Ziyad Xelîl, 20 trees belonging to Osman Hec Hemîd, 520 trees belonging to Reşid Ebdo, Rêzan Ebdo, Mistefa Ebdo, Mihemed Îbo and Mistefa Mihemed, and 520 trees belonging to Mihemed Îbo and Mistefa Mihemed. In addition, they also cut down 100 trees belonging to Mistefa Yasîn and her brother, 300 trees belonging to Izet Ebdo Diwêkê and Omer Bilal Nasan, and 100 trees each belonging to Kemal Mamend and Mistefa Cafer.

On the other hand, thousands of trees were cut down in forest areas in Mebata and Cindirêsê.

Plunder

The occupiers continued their crimes of confiscating the property and animals of citizens in the new year.

In this context, they stole 16 sheep belonging to a citizen named Mamo Hesen, 2 sheep from Mamde Fewzî and 6 sheep from Omer Hesenkê from the village of Kimare.

In Bilbil district, the invaders confiscated the shops belonging to citizens Kîbar Hiso, Hisên Henan Birîm, Reşîd Mihemed, Seydo Menan, Osman Beko, Omer Esed Henan, Meryem Mihemed, Xalîde Elî, Emine Hesîno, Emine Hisên Koto, Cemîle Xelîl. Likewise, the house of a citizen called Ehmed Hano (65) was confiscated in Zeydiye.

Demographic change

On 4 January, the Turkish state built colonial houses called 'Ajnadîn' between the villages of Himêlka and Rifatiyê to the east of Cindirêşê. These structures were built on an area of 4,000 hectares belonging to citizens named Hesen Mecîd Mihemed and Emîn Murad Mihemed.

The main purpose of the colonial houses was to settle the mercenaries and their families here and to change the demographic structure of Afrin.

Military bases and drug centers

The Turkish state threatened citizens Îzet Ebdo Diwêkê and Omer Bilal Nasan with death, forcing them to leave their agricultural lands in Raco and establishing a military base on those lands.

The Tehrîr al-Sham (HTS) mercenaries set up a drug-producing factory in Qîbarê, a Yazidi village in Shera. The raw materials of drugs are provided by mercenaries named Abu Ebdullah Horan and Abu Ehmed Helawa.

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HPG publishes balance sheet of war for January: 31 soldiers killed

ANF | BEHDINAN | 1 FEBRUARY 2023

The Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) published a war balance sheet for the month of January, according to which, at least 31 soldiers of the Turkish army were killed, and ten guerrilla fighters fell as martyrs.

HPG Press Center stated that the fight continues at all times of the year, even in winter. The Turkish army, it said, is in a hopeless situation in the face of guerrilla resistance and has been unable to break through it

even by expanding attacks and using the latest NATO technology. Nor did the Turkish state succeed in disguising its defeat through false reports and fabricated declarations of victory.

Countless war crimes committed by the Turkish army

The statement released on Wednesday includes the following:

“The war criminal Turkish army, which leaves the bodies of its own soldiers in the field and bombs them by fighter jets and artillery to prevent them from coming under the control of the guerrillas, which puts the bodies of soldiers in rubbish bags and throws them off cliffs, has once again clearly shown that it has no moral values.

The AKP/MHP regime is committing countless serious war crimes in full view of the world public by using chemical weapons, phosphorus bombs, thermobaric bombs and unconventional explosive devices against guerrilla positions. Despite all these inhuman attacks, the sacrificial resistance of our forces has effectively hit the invading forces. This revealed a very important level and showed limits to the Turkish army's aim to occupy the areas in the shortest possible time. The Turkish army had to withdraw from various areas and was on the defensive.

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, which restructured itself and focused on the guerrilla struggle of democratic modernity despite the harsh winter conditions in the harsh geography of Kurdistan, continued its struggle uninterrupted throughout January, changing the usual methods and reorganising itself according to the conditions of the time. Our radically restructured forces put this change into practice at a time of the most intense war. With professional guerrilla units, they effectively used all dimensions of the terrain with war tunnels and emplacements and dealt heavy blows to the attackers in the most impossible places.

Our forces made history

We are experiencing one of the most active winters in the history of our struggle. It has become clear that the guerrillas can strike the enemy at all times of the year and in all terrain conditions. In this way, the idea of permanent warfare has become concrete, a warfare that is active every month and every day of the year, inflicting blows on the enemy. Our forces have not allowed the enemy to breathe and have made history in the Zap, Avaşın and Metîna areas. Their struggle has opened a new page in the history of the resistance of the oppressed peoples.

The Freedom Guerrilla of Kurdistan continues its effective and historic struggle in Northern Kurdistan with high performance. It has not only foiled thousands of operations of the Turkish army, but also met the enemy despite the wintry conditions and put up resistance unprecedented at this time of the year.

Our forces have fought sacrificially against the invading forces and collaborators at great risk in Botan. They have once again made it clear that the colonialists and collaborators will be held accountable no matter what. With their actions, they hit the colonialists in the brain and the collaborators in the heart.

The brave sons and daughters of our people have gone to their deaths without hesitation to protect the dignity of the people, to realise their dreams of a free future and to defend Kurdistan. The martyrs have

fulfilled their historic task by following the path of Egîd and Zîlan and taking on the task of carrying the flag of struggle to victory. In January 2023, ten of our companions died in the resistance. We promise that we will continue to build the resistance on the basis of their struggle and crown the memory of our martyrs with victory.”

Balance sheet of war for January

The one-month war balance between 1 and 31 January is given by the HPG as follows:

Guerrilla actions: 120 guerrilla actions were carried out, combining the tactics of sabotage, snipers, heavy weapons, hit-and-run.

As a result of the actions, 31 soldiers of the Turkish army were killed, and one soldier was injured.

Attacks by the Turkish army: As far as the HPG could ascertain, the Medya Defense Zones, especially the guerrilla resistance positions, were bombed 134 times by fighter jets and 38 times by attack helicopters, as well as hundreds of times with howitzers, mortars, tanks and heavy weapons.

The guerrilla positions were attacked 252 times with unconventional bombs and chemical weapons.

Destroyed military equipment of the Turkish army: 1 Position; 2 surveillance camera systems; 1 grenade launcher; 1 military tent; 1 telescope; 1 drone; 1 excavator

Military equipment damaged by the guerrillas: 1 container

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Guerrillas continue actions against the Turkish army

ANF | BEHDINAN | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

According to the press centre of the People’s Defense Forces (HPG), a soldier of the Turkish occupation forces was shot dead by a guerrilla sniper in the Zap region. The action, carried out by a mobile unit, took place in Çemço on Friday.

HPG reported that the Turkish army attacked guerrilla positions in Çemço and near the village of Sîda with prohibited bombs on 3 February. The positions and the resistance areas of Girê Cûdî and Girê FM were attacked several times in the past few days with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

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HPG announces identities of 5 YJA Star guerrillas martyred in Besta

ANF | BEHDINAN | 5 FEBRUARY 2023

The HPG Press Center published the names of the 5 female guerrillas who fell as martyrs in Besta. The statement said: “The invading Turkish army launched an operation in the Besta area of Botan on 21 January with the support of the contras. Our YJA Star forces, which took action to deal a blow to the enemy, took the invaders and the informers working with them under control, and on 22 January they targeted an informer called Nimet Encü and killed him. The cowardly enemy and fierce counterattacks, who could not afford to fight hand-to-hand with our YJA Star forces, heavily bombarded the area where our comrades were. In this bombardment that lasted for hours, two of our comrades fell as martyrs. Our forces hit the enemy force under control, killing 2 soldiers and wounding one high-ranking soldier. Our four comrades fought heroically against the invaders on 22 and 23 January, showing an epic resistance with the few means at their disposal. Eventually, they marched to martyrdom in order not to fall into the hands of the enemy alive.”

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HPG: Five Turkish soldiers killed in guerrilla action at Girê Hekarî

ANF | BEHDINAN | 5 FEBRUARY 2023

In its daily statement about the war in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), the Press Centre of the People’s Defense Forces (HPG) reported that the freedom guerrillas of Kurdistan continue the resistance against the Turkish invading forces in the Medya Defense Zones with great determination and sacrifice despite difficult weather conditions and a lack of resources.

“In actions carried out by our mobile field units, five occupants were punished, while four camera surveillance systems, four positions, one A4 weapon, one B7 weapon and one grenade launcher were destroyed,” stated the HPG, according to which, the Turkish army continued its attacks on guerrilla positions with unconventional bombs, fighter jets and artillery.

Near a guerrilla position near the village of Sîda in the Zap region, a camera surveillance system installed by the Turkish army was destroyed on Saturday by targeted fire from mobile guerrilla units.

Providing information about a coordinated guerrilla action directed against the Turkish occupation forces at Girê Hekarî on 2 February, HPG stated that guerrillas advanced from six flanks against a unit entrenched behind three rows of barbed wire and entered the enemy positions. First, three occupants were killed near one position by the use of hand grenades and light weapons. Two more soldiers were killed in the position.

“Our coordinated guerrilla teams carried out this all-out assault with sacrificial spirit despite harsh winter conditions and meters of snow, and dealt a heavy blow to the occupiers. Five occupiers were punished, while three camera surveillance systems, four positions, an A4 weapon, a B7 weapon and a grenade launcher were destroyed. Seven of our companions were martyred in the fighting and air strikes by the Turkish army. They lived and fought sacrificially for a free future for our people. Detailed information on the identity of our immortal heroes will be shared with our patriotic people and the public at a later date,” the HPG said.

According to the HPG statement, the Girê Hekarî resistance area was bombed twice by fighter jets on 2 February and shelled several times with artillery shells. On 4 February, the Turkish army used prohibited bombs against a guerrilla position in Çemço in the Sheladize sub-district of Amadiya, and attacked the area with howitzers, tanks, and heavy weapons dozens of times.

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Iran

Women prisoners in Iran raise concern over executions and torture

ANF | 31 JANUARY 2023

7 women in Iran’s notorious Evin Prison expressed their support for the jailed environmental activists in an open letter and condemned the death penalty against the anti-regime protestors. The letter also draws attention to the crackdown on Kurdish political prisoner Zeynab Jalaliyan to obtain a confession and the “execution” of Şirin Elamhouli.

The letter from female prisoners includes the following:

“The death penalty, which tramples on the right to life, is one of the most serious human rights violations. Iranian society has suffered the execution of their loved ones for decades, and most recently we have once again witnessed the executions of some young protestors. We, female political prisoners, are in a prison where some of our fellow inmates face death penalties and receive death threats.

Environmental activists are fighting to protect the environment and the future of our country. They were arrested in line with baseless statements by the Revolutionary Guards. The Revolutionary Guards subjected the people they questioned to mental, psychological and physical torture for 2 years in solitary cells to make them confess what they did not do. One of the most disgusting ways that interrogators use to obtain confessions is to show the prisoners ‘execution’ scenes and even threaten them with ‘execution’ in court.

Our two colleagues, Sapedeh Kashani and Nilofar Bayani, along with their other colleagues, were prosecuted under these circumstances and accused of being ‘spies’. They were even accused of committing ‘corruption in the world’ without any legal evidence and documents. Another friend of ours, Maryam Haj Hosseini, one of the country’s most distinguished scientists, was imprisoned for 412 days in the Defense Ministry’s “safe house” in a remote area (a mountainous region) outside the city of Tehran. She faced the death penalty after being accused of ‘corruption in the world’. Mahosh Shahriari and Fariba Kamalabadi have been kept in solitary confinement for months and subjected to heavy emotional, mental and physical torture for their beliefs. They faced the ‘death penalty’ for charges of ‘corruption and espionage’.”

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‘Jin, Jiyan, Azadi’ resistance continues despite escalating crackdown

ANF | 2 FEBRUARY 2023

The Iranian State celebrates the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution between February 1-11 annually.

Simultaneously with the anniversary ceremonies of the 1979 Revolution, young people once again took to the streets in the city of Abdanan in Ilam. Young protestors burned a Basij statue in the town square.

Furthermore, a communication tower used by an official state channel in Tabriz was set on fire by young activists last night.

Arrests, kidnappings and forced disappearances by Iranian forces have escalated as the protests continue. Yesterday, 10 people were detained in different cities of East Kurdistan and Iran.

In the city of Ciwanro in East Kurdistan, three activists, Erşiya Berzin, Kiyanoş Ezemi and Parsa Kerimi, were sentenced to a total of 58 months in prison and 222 lashes.

The Workers’ Freedom Union condemned the arrests, punishment and dismissal of a significant number of teachers in East Kurdistan and Iran yesterday. The union said that the Ministry of National Education has increased the crackdown on teachers in different ways.

The Union added: “No steps have, however, been taken so far to resolve and mitigate the economic crisis.”

World-wide support

The ‘Jin, Jiyan, Azadi’ protest is gradually receiving world-wide support. 470 people, including Nobel laureates, released a statement urging the international community to protect East Kurdistan and Iranian protesters.

The statement said that the success of these actions would lead to the end of the regime. It will be a major turning point for women and the world.

Kurdish imam and pupil arrested in east Kurdistan

In a recent statement, the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization revealed that an imam named İbrahim Salimi in the Pîranşar city of East Kurdistan and his pupil named Seyid Tarık Hasan in the Ciwanro city of East Kurdistan were arrested by the Iranian state. It is not known where the arrested imam and pupil have been taken to.

According to the same statement, İbrahim Salimi, imam of the Chiwar Yari Nebi Mosque in Pîransar, was arrested on January 31 by the city's intelligence unit.

The imam had previously been detained by the state forces on suspicion of "supporting the protests in East Kurdistan and Iran".

In the meantime, on January 29, the Iranian forces arrested Seyid Tariq Hasan from the city of Ciwanro after breaking the door of his house.

At least 9 religious scholars have been arrested since last month in the cities of Pîranşar, Serdeşt, Ciwanro and Sine in East Kurdistan.



Femicide

HDP Adana MP Hatimoğulları calls for serious investigation into femicide

ANF | ANKARA | 31 JANUARY 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Adana Deputy Tülay Hatimoğulları submitted a motion to the Presidency of the Assembly requesting Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ to investigate the deaths under suspicious circumstances of at least 225 women in 2022.

334 women killed in 2022

According to the 2022 report published by the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP), at least 334 women were murdered by men and 245 died under suspicious circumstances.

The motion noted that there was an increase in suspicious female deaths especially during and after the pandemic period. “Many femicides – said the MP |were tried to be covered up and could only be exposed with pressure by women’s organizations, lawyers, and the public. However, there are many suspicious female deaths that were not properly investigated. Many deaths are registered as suicide because of superficial investigations.”

Policy of impunity

The motion also added that there is no effective prosecution in femicide trials and that reductions of sentences for perpetrators are constantly on the agenda. There is a policy of impunity prevailing in the trials for those who commit femicides. The motion said: “It is necessary to reveal whether these women who died under suspicious circumstances have actually committed suicide or were driven to suicide. This difficult process can only be possible with effective and holistic policies, careful examination of the investigations of suspicious women's deaths and their rapid conclusion.”

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Men killed at least 31 women in January

ANF | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

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

The deaths of at least 28 women were treated as “suspicious”.

Men inflicted violence on at least 72 women, abused at least 11 girls and boys, and harassed at least seven women. No cases of rape were reported in the press in January. This, as bianet stressed, does not mean it did not happen.

Femicide

In January, men killed at least 31 women. This figure was 23 in the same month last year. Men also killed five men who were together with the women whom they killed.

Men killed at least six women despite protection orders. One of the women was trans.

Men killed 11 women because they wanted to break up or did not want to make peace. Mens “excuses” for killing 20 women were not reported in the press.

15 women were killed by their husbands, ex-husbands or boyfriends, and three women by their fathers, sons, or brothers. Two women were killed by their friends and three women by their relatives. The degree of acquaintance between the three women and the men who killed them was not reported in the press.

Men killed 20 women at home and seven women in places outside the house, such as streets, parks and workplaces. The places where men killed four women were not reported in the press.

Men killed 11 women with firearms, 16 women with sharp objects, one woman by strangling them and one woman by beating her.



Ecocide

More farmers in Rojava switch to solar energy as an alternative to diesel generators

ANF | QAMISHLO | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

Due to the ever-increasing drought and the reduction of the flow level of the Euphrates by the Turkish state, agriculture in north-eastern Syria is dependent on energy-intensive pumping systems for irrigation. However, the falling level of the Euphrates also affects the power supply, so that the pumping systems can no longer be supplied. So far, the farmers have mainly relied on diesel generators. In the current farming season, more and more of them are switching to solar technology. Depending on the depth from which the water has to be pumped, more or fewer solar panels are needed for this.

One of the agricultural workers who have switched to solar technology is Taha al-Najim. In his fields near Til Temir, it has practically not rained for three years. Al-Najim procured 102 solar panels to power his 40-horsepower pump. The pump water from a 175-metre-deep well and irrigates 420 hectares of wheat fields with it.

Speaking to ANHA, al-Najim commented on the difference between diesel-powered generators and solar energy, saying: “Solar energy is clean energy and good for the environment. However, it is usually dependent on the time of day and the amount of sunlight. For this reason, the energy generated is not sufficient for irrigating cultivated land. Diesel-powered generators can always be used, but they bring many problems, especially the high cost of diesel.”

Another farmer from Qamişlo, Yusif Ramadan, installed 96 solar panels on his field, which he uses to power a 40-horsepower pump. Ramadan stated that installing solar panels is expensive at first, but in the long run it is better than diesel-powered generators. The cost of installing a solar panel ranges from US\$110 to US\$180, depending on the brand and size of the panel, as well as the cost of making the scaffolding, cables and battery.

One of the basic principles of the self-governing region of North and East Syria is ecology. Despite war conditions, attempts are made to act in an ecologically sustainable way. Nayif Ibrahim, co-chair of the

Committee for Agriculture and Irrigation of Qamişlo Canton, said: “We support the use of solar energy because it is good for the environment and costs less.” However, he said, there are no possibilities so far to provide panels for farmers.

The Agriculture Committee and the Fuel Directorate in North and East Syria continue to distribute diesel oil to farmers to irrigate their fields. Some farmers criticize the delay in distributing diesel fuel, noting that it is not enough to run generators and pumps.



Human Rights Violations

3 million signatures for the removal of PKK from terror list submitted to the European Commission

ANF | BRUSSELS | 31 JANUARY 2023

The campaign for the removal of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from the EU list of terrorist organizations, launched by the international initiative Justice for Kurds in November 2021, has been concluded. The results of the campaign were presented at a public press conference in Brussels on Tuesday. According to the results, three million people supported the campaign to remove the PKK from the list of banned terrorist organizations.

Representatives of various organizations that have actively participated in the campaign also took part in the press conference. Yüksel Koç, co-chair of the European umbrella organization of Kurdish associations KCDK-E, emphasized that the supporters had sent an important signal with their signatures. Especially in view of the “extermination policy” pursued by the Turkish state in Kurdistan, it is significant that so many people are calling for the PKK to be removed from the EU terror list, said Koç, describing the movement as the “will of the Kurdish people”.

“The classification of the Kurdistan Workers' Party as a terrorist organization serves the Turkish state as a justification for its attacks on Kurds everywhere. In fact, this listing serves Turkey as a guarantor for genocidal measures against our people. A peaceful solution to the Kurdish question is therefore long overdue. This is the prerequisite for a functioning democracy and for stability, not only in Turkey, but in the entire Middle East. The solution to the Kurdish question guarantees the existence and livable future of our people,” Koç stated.

The President of the European Left, Walter Baier, expressed his full solidarity with the Kurdish people, their struggle for self-determination and the aims of the Justice for Kurds campaign. “The reason to take the PKK off the EU terror list is actually quite simple: the PKK is not a terrorist organization. It is the

party of the Kurdish people,” Baier said. Ludo de Brabander agreed and said that the time had come to re-assess the PKK. He added that the peace organization Vrede was also behind this demand.

After the speeches, the notarized signatures were handed over by a delegation to the EU Commission, the politically independent executive of the EU. The Commission is responsible for drafting proposals for new European legislation and implementing the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. The delegation also included the Dutch artist and propaganda researcher Jonas Staal (New World Summit). He designed the People's Parliament of Rojava, which is located in Dêrik in the north-east of Syria.



Several Kurds detained in police raids in Marseille

ANF | MARSEILLE | 1 FEBRUARY 2023

The French police carried out raids in Marseille on Wednesday, citing protest actions that followed the triple murder of Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) Executive Council member, Evîn Goyî, Mir Perwer, Abdurrahman Kızıl in Paris on 23 December 2022.

Several Kurdish patriots accused of participating in protests were taken into custody during the raids on their apartments in the early morning hours.

As the number of detainees has not been confirmed yet, lawyers for the Democratic Kurdish Community Center (DKTM) in Marseille stated that security forces have not shared any information with them yet.

According to the information provided by relatives of those affected, the detainees were subjected to police violence during raids.

The DKTM administration stated that they would make a press statement in the coming hours.



Bar associations in solidarity with bar president threatened with death

ANF | 1 FEBRUARY 2023

Diyarbakır Bar Association President Nahit Eren was threatened with death on social media. The Diyarbakır Bar Association filed a criminal complaint before the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor regarding the repeated threat against Eren, which was uttered along with the photos of his family members circulated on the social media.

Presidents of the bar associations of 81 provinces released a joint statement on Wednesday and said that “We do not want a new Tahir Elçi case”. The president of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, Tahir Elçi, was killed in the Sur district on 28 November 2015 following a press statement against the conflict in the region.

The statement said: “Death threats against Nahit Eren on the social media are unacceptable! We do not want a new Ali Günday case, or Tahir Elçi (...) We call on the authorities to do their duty before it’s too late to prevent new tragedies.”

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Şenyaşar family’s justice vigil enters day 696

ANF | URFA | 2 FEBRUARY 2023

The justice vigil of Emine Şenyaşar, who lost her husband and two sons in an armed attack on June 14, 2018 in the Suruç district of Urfa, that involved AKP Deputy İbrahim Halil Yıldız’s bodyguards and relatives, and his son Ferit Şenyaşar, who was injured in the same attack marked its 696th day.

Mother Emine Şenyaşar could not attend today’s vigil due to her illness.

The family shared the following message on social media: “Justice has been sacrificed on behalf of a ruling AKP deputy in 2023’s Islamic Capital Urfa. No more words needed! Our struggle is on its 696th day.”

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Police take three women into custody in Van

ANF | VAN | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

Police raided many houses in Van in the morning hours.

Şengül Karaağar, Nurhan Koçak and Zilan Koçak were taken into custody following house raids in Ipekyolu district.

The detained women are taken to the Van Security Directorate. The detentions may increase.

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Kızıltepe and Savur municipalities' co-mayors sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison

ANF | MARDIN | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

The trial against Kızıltepe (Qoser) Municipality co-mayor Nilüfer Elik Yılmaz and Savur (Stewrê) Municipality co-mayor Gülistan Öncü, who were arrested after being removed from their office by the Turkish Ministry of Interior, ended.

The two co-mayors were sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison for “being a member of a terrorist organization”.

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Security guard in refugee shelter in Germany turns out to be a Turkish spy

ANF | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

It is a scandal that has parallels to the events after the coup attempt in Turkey in 2016. At that time, it was mainly imams in the mosques of the “Ditib” who had collected information for the Turkish Secret Service MIT about suspected supporters of the Gülen movement. IPPEN.MEDIA's Frankfurter Rundschau has now come across a similar case of espionage in Germany, in which the Turkish Consulate General in Düsseldorf is also involved. According to the report by Erkan Pehlivan, the Turkish mission abroad received information from a former employee of a security company who allegedly worked as a security guard at a refugee shelter in Grevenbroich, North Rhine-Westphalia.

This is according to documents classified as “secret” from the Turkish Foreign Ministry to the Interior Ministry. The names of seven men and one woman are also listed there. “In the documents sent to us from our consulate general in Düsseldorf with reference to a conversation with our citizen A., it appears that he would like to disclose the names of persons who have connections to FETÖ,” it says. “FETÖ” stands for “Fethullah’s Terrorist Organization”. After the coup attempt, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blamed the movement around the Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen for the attempted coup and classified it as a terrorist organization.

Security company employee spies on refugees from Turkey

According to the document, A., a Turk, had found the persons he accused of having connections to the FETÖ not only in Grevenbroich but also in Rommerskirchen and Dormagen. In addition to the Turkish identity card numbers, addresses and partly the telephone numbers of the spied persons are also listed.

The report of the Turkish Consulate General was forwarded to the anti-terror police "TEM", which also wrote a report on the spied persons. This report, classified as "secret", writes that they have, among other things, compared the data with other police departments.

MIT exploits people of Turkish origin in Germany

"It could well be that employees of the Turkish secret service MIT, who are active in the Turkish consulates general, are taking advantage of people like A. So, it seems that some names were at least found out beforehand by MIT and put on the list," suspects Dr. Yasar Demircioglu, Turkish constitutional lawyer and legal advisor at the "Human Rights Defenders". Like many other academics, Demircioglu fled to Germany after the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016. Former Turkish diplomats have confirmed in the past that MIT personnel are sitting in Turkish missions abroad to collect information on government critics.

In the past, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) had repeatedly warned against the activities of the Turkish secret service MIT. "The intelligence interest of Turkish intelligence services and security authorities in Germany is basically directed at all organizations and individuals who are in actual or suspected opposition to the present Turkish government. Their primary targets are the "Kurdistan Workers' Party" (PKK) and the Gülen Movement," writes the BfV in its 2021 report.

Affected person files criminal complaint for espionage

At least one of the persons concerned has filed a criminal complaint with the Düsseldorf public prosecutor's office for spying. In it, he accuses A. and officials of the Turkish Consulate General in Düsseldorf of secret service agent activity and political suspicion. In addition, the plaintiff accuses Turkey of having violated the so-called "United Nations Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961" by spying on Erdogan critics in Germany.

Gökay Akbulut of the Left Party, member of the Bundestag and deputy chairperson of the German-Turkish parliamentary group, is outraged by the case. In an interview with Frankfurter Rundschau, he says: "If it is true that a security employee in refugee accommodation spies on opposition members from Turkey and works for Turkish foreign missions, this would be an outrageous occurrence. The German government must follow up on these indications and set clear limits for the Turkish government". Akbulut calls for intervention by the judiciary and security authorities. "It cannot be that refugees from Turkey are not safe even here from the long arm of Erdogan. Therefore, all informer activities for Turkey must be stopped, and the perpetrators prosecuted."

The incident does not come as a surprise. Only recently, the AKP deputy Mustafa Acikgöz had said in his diatribe in a Neuss mosque of the "Grey Wolves" that no matter where in the world they fled to, the supporters of the PKK and Gülen Movement would be destroyed. He said the aim was to pull them out of the holes they were hiding in. The case led to a diplomatic dispute. The Turkish Embassy representative was summoned to the Foreign Office and told that hate and hate speech had no place in Germany.

Kurdish activist arrested in France extradited to Germany

ANF | 3 FEBRUARY 2023

Kurdish activist Sabri Ç. has been extradited from France to Germany, reported the legal aid fund AZADÎ in its current information service. Accordingly, the 52-year-old man was taken into extradition custody in France in June 2022 at the request of the German law enforcement authorities, and the transfer to Germany took place in January.

Sabri Ç. is accused of having been responsible for the areas of Saarbrücken and Hanover, among others, as an alleged member of the PKK.

Since 2011, Kurdish activists in Germany have been accused and sentenced on the basis of Article 129b for allegedly supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). There are currently eleven Kurdish political prisoners, including a woman, in pre-trial and criminal detention in Germany.

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10,520 refugees were deported from Turkey in one month

ANF | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

The systematic torture and oppression of refugees in Turkey is increasing. According to the January data issued by the Turkish Migration Administration, 1,503 refugees from Afghanistan detained in Ağrı, Erzurum, Kocaeli, Malatya, Kütahya and Ankara were deported using charter planes. Likewise, 3,755 refugees from Afghanistan were deported using regular flights.

According to the data, a total of 10,520 refugees were deported in the first month of 2023, while 20,295 refugees were not allowed to cross the Turkish border.

According to official data in Turkey, a total of 124,441 refugees were deported in 2022.

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14 students sentenced to prison for protests at Boğaziçi University

ANF | ISTANBUL | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

14 students in Istanbul have been sentenced to prison terms in connection with protests against compulsory administration at universities. The students were charged with multiple offenses, including resisting law enforcement. The court issued sentences of six months each for violating the Assembly Act.

Two of the accused received additional prison sentences: the first to one and a half years—for damage to property, which according to the indictment amounted to around 50 euros. The second to one year and two months for allegedly insulting officials. The sentences were suspended.

The background to the proceedings are protests at the renowned Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. Since January 2021, students and practically the entire teaching staff there have been demanding to be able to appoint the rector of the university themselves. They opposed the appointment of the rector by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Instead of “forced administration” they demand democracy, autonomy and academic freedom.

In October 2021, numerous students protested the appointment of Naci İnci as rector of Boğaziçi University. The rector was prevented from entering the campus. One person had also climbed onto the car, according to the Istanbul governor's office at the time. It was physics student Berke Gök, who received the highest sentence in today's trial. In fact, he had been pushed in front of the moving vehicle by employees of a private security company, who were acting as police auxiliaries during the protests. In the dilemma between being pushed and risking being run over, he threw himself on top of the vehicle.

Gök was also one of two students who had to be held in custody for around three months as a result of the protest. In Turkey, several procedures are currently underway in connection with the protests at Boğaziçi University.



IPI monitoring: At least 227 journalists faced trial in Turkey in 2022

ANF | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

The International Press Institute (IPI) published the 2022 annual statistics of its Turkey trial monitoring programme within its FreeTurkeyJournalists campaign. IPI has been closely following trials against journalists in Turkey in recent years as part of its local and international advocacy efforts.

As part of IPI's trial monitoring, IPI representatives conducted in-person monitoring of several journalists' trials in different Turkish cities. In addition, IPI has documented developments in more than 130 trials through its own research, complemented by updates from monitoring work done by local CSOs including the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA), P24, Bianet, and RSF Turkey.

Increase in convictions of journalists

In 2022, IPI documented 282 hearings across 137 separate trials that involved the prosecution of at least 227 journalists. Of those trials, 36 ended in a conviction (in four of them, there was a ruling for both conviction and acquittal).

In total, 53 journalists were convicted, resulting in a cumulative total of 132 years of sentencing and approximately 300,000 Turkish lira (about 15,000 euros) in fines. Twenty-three of those convictions were for terrorism-related charges and five were for insulting the president. These figures represent an increase from 2021, which saw the convictions of 28 journalists and 83 years of sentencing, according to IPI's statistics.

According to IPI's data, in 2022, out of the 282 hearings, 25 (9 percent) ended with the acquittal of all defendants and 32 (12 percent) ended with convictions. These figures are also an increase from 2021, when five percent of documented trials ended in a conviction (16 convictions).

In a total of four different cases, the journalists were acquitted of some charges against them and sentenced on other charges in the same case. By far the most common outcome was adjournment: in 78 percent of the hearings (219 hearings), proceedings were adjourned to a later date. Two cases were dismissed.

The 137 individual trials that IPI recorded saw at least 154 charges against journalists, whereby some defendants faced multiple charges. The most common charges were terrorism-related charges, which accounted for 64 cases or about 42 percent of all charges. This was followed by libel or defamation cases brought by politicians, business people, and other powerful figures, accounting for 26 charges or about 17 percent of all charges. Next came charges of insulting the president at about 16 percent of all charges. These three types of charges were also the most common, in the same order, in 2021.



After canceled visit to Germany Erdoğan makes election campaign by phone

ANF | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

Even before 14 was announced as the possible date for the parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey, the AKP-MHP government had started its election campaign in Europe. In recent weeks, many ministers, deputy ministers, AKP deputies and high-ranking representatives of the Turkish government have traveled to European countries, especially Germany, to campaign for elections.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose planned visit to Berlin and some other cities was apparently canceled at the instigation of the German government, personally sent to Europe the AKP deputy leader and responsible for foreign relations, Efkan Ala. Ala has gradually traveled to European countries to hold large-scale electoral rallies, where Erdoğan's vote will be broadcast live.

Erdoğan threatens to Europe

After European countries banned AKP leaders and ministers from campaigning ahead of Turkey's 2017 referendum, sparking a crisis with the regime in Ankara, the AKP-MHP government is now organizing its election campaign in Europe, calling it "Meeting with Europeans Turks". These gatherings have been attended by Ala and many senior AKP leaders, while Erdoğan spoke live via phone.

In these telephone speeches, Erdoğan made election propaganda and named 14 May as the date of the elections. He said at a meeting in Heusden-Zolder, Belgium, as seen in videos and photos circulated by the AKP media: “God willing, 14 May will be an awakening for us, with the ballot boxes exploding again and Europe giving the best answer to this.”

At a gathering last Sunday in a hotel hall in Amsterdam attended by hundreds of AKP-MHP supporters, called “Public Meeting with Dutch Turks”, Erdoğan said: “I believe that you are waiting with excitement for 14 May. You will deliver a very important message on 14 May, not only to our country, but to the whole world.”

Ala and his team in Germany

After France, Belgium and the Netherlands, the AKP staff headed by Efkân Ala traveled to Germany. According to reports, the AKP leaders met for two days at the Cologne headquarters of UID, the AKP’s lobby organization in Europe, and discussed propaganda activities. There are 1.5 million people entitled to vote in Germany.

The UID has not yet announced which election programs Ala and his team will take part in in Germany. However, it has already been announced that the AKP will hold election campaign meetings in many German cities in March, calling them “cultural meetings”, “people’s meetings” and “youth meetings”.



Erdoğan’s war policy condemns people to hunger

ANF | VAN | 5 FEBRUARY 2023

The AKP/MHP government’s war policy has brought the Turkish economy to the brink of bankruptcy. The population is struggling with hunger and the government is spending tax money on the war and the palace. Poverty and unemployment continue to increase, and food prices in particular have risen by 300 to 500 per cent. Millions of people are unemployed and annual inflation has reached 140 per cent. While many people cannot even buy bread anymore due to the economic crisis, the daily expenditure for the palace of Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan is 18 million TL and the annual expenditure is 6.6 billion TL.

Kadir Basut in Van has no income and has to support his family by collecting food that ends up in the rubbish. Speaking to ANF, the sixty-year-old man said that he is unable to provide for his family because of the economic crisis and unemployment. Describing his plight, he stated: “We are poor, we have no income. Since I have no money, I have to collect the products that are thrown into the rubbish at the markets. What I find here, I take home with me. We try to live with the products we pick up here. There is neither work nor income. How are people supposed to live in this situation?”

Basut continued: “The crisis has hit Van especially hard. Our region has no income. There are many people like me. I have to get vegetables like onions, potatoes, and tomatoes from the rubbish because I don’t have money to pay for these products. We try to live this way. If I had an income, I would like to buy fresh and clean produce and take it home, but it is not possible under these conditions.”

Another citizen, Aydın Kırık, said he has been unemployed for years and cannot find a job. Before the economic crisis, he could easily find a job, but that is impossible now. “The people in the government are responsible for this. They have made us as a people eat dry bread. I haven’t been able to buy fresh bread for months. A loaf of bread now costs four TL. Since I cannot afford it, I buy stale bread from the baker in the early hours of the morning at the price of two TL. I can only afford stale bread. We haven’t had meat for months either. How can I buy meat in this situation? I don’t even have money to buy bread. I collect vegetables and fruit from the rubbish in the markets. While we poor people are in this state, those who rule us have pleasure and fun,” said Aydın Kırık.

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JINNEWS journalist Yıldız and HDP executive Tufan detained in Izmir

ANF | İZMİR | 6 FEBRUARY 2023

JINNEWS reporter Nazlıcan Yıldız and Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Izmir Provincial Director Murat Tufan were detained in the house raids carried out in the morning as part of the political police operation in Izmir.

The reason for the detention of Yıldız and Tufan, who were taken to the Çankaya TEM Branch, could not be learned.

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Interview

“Erdogan relies on an anti-Western stance in the election campaign”

RONI ARAM | İSTANBUL | 4 FEBRUARY 2023

The burning of a Koran in front of the Turkish embassy in Stockholm by the Danish right-wing extremist Rasmus Paludan has increased tensions in relations with Turkey. Erdogan reacted against Sweden, saying, “If necessary, we can convey a different message about Finland.” Erdogan also repeated these words in a subsequent parliamentary group meeting of his party, AKP. He openly said that he would agree to Finland’s NATO membership while maintaining his veto against Sweden. On the same day, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson blamed foreign powers for the Koran burning.

As Turkey's elections approach, it is rumoured that Erdogan will use this incident in Sweden and his right to veto the NATO accession process for domestic election campaigning. Yücel Özdemir, a journalist living in Germany, recalls that Erdogan has already used an anti-Western stance as a campaign tool in the constitutional referendum and in the 2018 elections. Özdemir believes that a similar path will be taken in these elections. However, he also emphasizes that the intensification of the war in Ukraine will lead to changes in Turkey's policy of balance between Russia and the West.

Yücel Özdemir spoke to ANF about Erdogan's election campaign strategy and relations with Europe.

NATO tensions between Turkey and Sweden escalated after the Koran burning in Stockholm by far-right politician Rasmus Paludan. Erdogan said that Turkey would take a different stance towards Sweden and could convey a message about Finland. Turkey has been negotiating with these countries for some time with the permission of NATO. How is all this handled in Europe, from the Koran burning to these accession talks?

It has been clear for some years that there are tensions between Europe and Turkey in general, or between NATO and Turkey. There was a very intense discussion within NATO that Turkey would shift its centre of gravity by buying the Russian S400. Then, at the NATO summit in Madrid, Erdogan partly showed that he wants to pursue a harmonious policy with the West by changing axes. However, at the point we have reached now, the issue of his veto against Sweden and Finland shows that he is not in harmony with NATO.

When asked how long this veto would last, it was said that there were hardly any possibilities of resistance. This is exactly what we expected. In particular, names were mentioned for the extradition of people who oppose Turkey or who are called "terrorists" by Turkey in inverted commas. Turkey demanded their extradition. We expected that there would be some concession on this issue and that Sweden would make some symbolic gestures. We did not expect such a moment of crisis.

But it was not so...

Yes, that was not the case. Sweden has softened its stance on the extradition of persons specially wanted by Turkey and on the arms embargo under public pressure. Sweden will supply Turkey with the weapons it wants, and it has already become clear that there is no major problem here. However, the Koran burning has also strengthened Turkey on this veto issue. It is of course clear who burned the Koran, because the Swedish government would not do such a thing and would not stand behind it. Ulf Kristersson, the Swedish Prime Minister and at the same time President of the EU Council, has spoken out in this context and openly stated: "This is a game of foreign powers".

But is Kristersson referring to Russia when he speaks of foreign powers?

In the end, it is clear that the normalisation of relations between Turkey and Sweden and Turkey's approval of NATO are directed against Russia. And it is noteworthy that the perpetrators are right-wing extremists. In recent years, we have noticed that there are contacts between Russia and far-right, fascist organisations in Europe. There have also been contacts with right-wing extremist organisations in Austria. There has even been talk of Russia manipulating the elections in these countries. I think the Swedish Prime Minister is referring to Russia by this. Of course, we do not have complete information. Has Russia

really played an active role and mobilised its agents in this region? We do not know whether there is an attempt to draw conclusions from an already existing problem and to strain relations between Turkey and Sweden.

There is an opinion that Erdogan wants to use the crisis in Sweden as an election campaign tool. Do you think this will give Erdogan the impetus he wants?

As far as we can see, one of the main pillars of this issue is to direct it towards domestic politics. We saw this both in the constitutional referendum and before the 2018 elections. At that time, the anti-Western stance played a very important role in Erdogan's election campaign strategy. For example, he accused the then German Chancellor Angela Merkel of Nazism. There was even an intense campaign against the AKP's election campaign and relations were strained. There were also major tensions with the Netherlands and diplomatic relations were broken off for a long time. At that time, the Netherlands did not allow an AKP minister to hold a meeting there.

All this has created an atmosphere in which a political leader does not do what NATO wants and appeals to the feelings of voters at home and in Europe with an anti-Western stance. I think that this possibility is also very likely in this election campaign. Erdogan's visit to Berlin has been cancelled. There were discussions about whether the visit would take place or not. In the run-up to Erdogan's planned visit, an AKP deputy came to Germany and called for PKK supporters and FETÖ members to be exterminated in Europe just as they were in Turkey. Germany reacted to this, and according to information from diplomatic circles, there is still a government stance against the AKP's election campaign in Germany. Especially in the foreign ministry.

So is this the reason for the cancellation of Erdogan's visit? Is the door opening to a new crisis?

Yes, that is one of the reasons why Erdogan did not come. Because when Erdogan comes to Germany, he has a schedule. He meets with citizens, even if it is not on election night, and holds meetings in large halls with parts of his own supporters. In a way, he may have wanted to kick off the election campaign in Europe in Berlin, but it didn't come to that. Even if there is no intense debate about the cancellation of this visit on an anti-German basis for the time being, I think Erdogan will try an anti-Western and anti-European initiative in the coming days as the election mood rises, as he did in 2018.

On the other hand, since Sweden also holds the current EU Presidency, Turkey has at least symbolically sent a request to Sweden on the progress of the negotiations. It is rumoured that Turkey is asking the European Union to move the stalled relations forward, but of course Sweden cannot do this alone. In general, it is about the mechanism and the course of the European Union itself, but in the coming period, this will be one of the most important pillars in the election campaign in Turkey.

Speaking of negotiations, we have noticed for a long time that the European Union has not taken any serious steps towards democracy and human rights in Turkey. It does not even activate its own mechanisms against Turkey, which does not take into account the European Conventions on Human Rights or the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights. Now you say that Turkey is demanding a resumption of negotiations. It is not known how this process will take place, but the European Union is currently busy with the Ukraine war. In this process, for example, Turkey's behaviour, the renewed shift of its axis towards Russia, its right to veto NATO membership, etc. are important. If we put all these aspects side by side, will a new perspective emerge for Europe's attitude towards Erdogan?

To be honest, I am also a little curious about this issue, and I am watching it. Will the European Union and NATO see these elections as an opportunity to get rid of Erdogan? We don't have a clear answer to this question at the moment. Currently, there is no atmosphere in Europe that would favour a candidate who would disgrace Erdogan and oppose him with all his might, all his mechanisms and all his propaganda. The European Union has learned to live and work with Erdogan. In the past, the EU criticised him as an authoritarian regime for violating human rights and not recognising ECtHR rulings, and sometimes relations were strained. Especially if we look at the relations between Germany and Turkey in 2017-18. But then they suddenly normalise, as if nothing had happened.

There are mutual obligations between the two sides. At the moment, it suits the European Union that Erdogan duly fulfils the mandate related to the "refugee issue" and that trade relations remain as they are. The arms issue also continues. However, the Ukraine axis is a problematic situation within the global balance. Until 24 February 2022, the role of countries like France and Germany in world politics was generally based on maintaining a close relationship with Russia, at least without confronting it. Germany gained very important advantages here. With the change of government, however, there has been a partial change of course in German foreign policy. And not only in Germany, but also in Europe. There has been a distancing from Russia and a rapprochement with the transatlantic axis. The current mood is closer to America.

Where does Turkey stand in this equation, and how long can it maintain its position?

Turkey maintains its place in this equation. Although Turkey is a member of NATO, it has not acted like Germany and France, but has kept its relations with Russia in balance. It is also continuing its relations with the West. But how long will this last? As far as we can understand, Erdogan is going to the extreme. There is certainly a lot of pressure within the European Union or NATO to abandon this policy and isolate Russia, and the US has also recently expressed itself in this direction. In particular, if Sweden and Finland are not admitted to NATO because of Turkey's veto, there seems to be a change of axis against Turkey. So far, there has been partial tolerance of Turkish relations with Russia. They are even happy for Turkey to play the role of mediator. They were happy with Erdogan's behaviour in opening the grain corridor. But if we look at the lifespan of this thing in the Ukrainian arena, it is not very long.

Germany and the USA are now sending tanks to Ukraine. Does this indicate an escalation of the conflict and what consequences would this escalation have for Turkey? Could the politics of balance be disturbed by the course of the war?

The war is not currently being conducted on the basis of negotiations. Germany has recently promised tanks to Ukraine. In addition, there are now intense discussions about the awarding of fighter jets. The

Chancellor initially said no, but the war course is hardening more and more. At a meeting with Biden, Scholz promised the delivery of tanks on the condition that the USA also send some. Later, Biden said, “We will send Abrams, but their deployment and cost is too high.” At the moment it is uncertain when and to what extent they will be deployed. But Germany, of course, has said it will supply 14 tanks in the first phase. Small tanks have already been sent before.

This paves the way for other NATO member states to send Leopard tanks to Ukraine. So, it is important. Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic countries will send weapons towards Ukraine, and the scenario is this: In the war strategy based on Ukraine not winning and Russia losing, Crimea will be militarily taken by Russia in a major offensive in the spring. This is also a scenario for an intense war from the Ukrainian territories controlled by Russia. We do not know to what extent this scenario will happen.

The intention of the West and Ukraine is to evacuate all Russian-controlled territories and bring them under their control. This includes Crimea. This is rumoured from time to time. If the war reaches this stage, it will mean that relations between Russia and Turkey will be discussed in a different equation. As the war intensifies, I think the pressure on Turkey to limit its relations with Russia will increase. In fact, it will increase greatly.

I mean, how long can Erdogan’s political life last? We don’t know. But another important point is that when we look at the course of Turkish foreign policy, the National Alliance does not make clear statements about relations with Russia. Nor does it say anything clear about the West. The axis of maintaining the current policy is more pronounced. There is talk of a foreign policy that is oriented towards Turkey’s interests. In other words, even if Erdogan goes, I don’t think there will be a sharp turn in the new period.

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Opinion

Hozat: Kurds are waiting for concrete steps, not words

ANF | BEHDINAN | 2 FEBRUARY 2023

Speaking in a special program broadcast on Medya Haber, KCK Executive Council co-chair Besê Hozat evaluated the UN Human Rights Committee’s statement on the isolation imposed on Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan and said: “The Kurdish people have enough of statements. Now a statement from the United Nations, yesterday one from the CPT. Tomorrow there will be another one from the ECHR. The next day, there will be the Council of Europe, the European Union, the US. The Kurdish people expect concrete practical steps from these forces, not words.”

Protests against the 24th anniversary of Abdullah Öcalan's illegal imprisonment

“February 15th is a black day for the Kurds. It is a day of genocide. The aim of the International Conspiracy [attacks against the Kurdistan Freedom Movement starting with the illegal imprisonment of Abdullah Öcalan on February 15, 1999] is to bring the Kurdish genocide to a conclusion. Therefore, I would like to condemn the international forces behind the conspiracy. The International Conspiracy has been going on in various forms for 24 years without interruption. It continues in the form of the genocide attacks in North Kurdistan [East Turkey], the occupation and genocide attacks in South Kurdistan [North Iraq] and the occupation and genocide attacks in Rojava. It continues in the form of assassinations, political murders and massacres in Europe. But there is also a strong struggle against the International Conspiracy.

There has been an uninterrupted struggle for 24 years now. On the basis of the resistance of our Leadership [Abdullah Öcalan], our people, the guerrillas, women and young people, this struggle continues in a very glorious way everywhere. The resistance and struggle against the international conspiracy that has continued for 24 years have prevented the conspiracy from reaching its goals and thus defeated it. This struggle has made the movement much bigger and stronger. It has turned it into a regional and universal movement. Today, the international powers are forced to take the movement into account when determining their policy in the region. The status quo regimes in the region are forced to take the movement into account as well. This situation has emerged as a result of the 24 years of struggle against the conspiracy. This also shows clearly: The conspiracy has failed. The forces behind the International Conspiracy have been exposed and all their plans to destroy the movement have failed.”

Kurds have had enough of words

“With regard to the isolation of the Leadership, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has recently said that ‘there is a complete lack of communication and this must end’. They were forced to make such a statement due to the ongoing struggle. This struggle forces such international institutions to say this. Actually, they are all part of the International Conspiracy. The US, the UK, Israel and European countries took part in it. Many member states of the UN were involved. Many powers, from Russia to Egypt and Iran, took part in this conspiracy. Greece played an active role in it as well. The United Nations Human Rights Committee, which includes all these states and Turkey, has now made such a statement as a result of the struggle that has been going on for 24 years. After the lawyers had filed an application, they had to make this statement. This is, of course, important. This is a sign that we will definitely get results if we continue our struggle.

What the United Nations Human Rights Committee calls a state of ‘complete lack of communication’ is actually total isolation. Now, they need to take practical steps. The United Nations needs to take a serious, practical attitude towards Turkey in this regard. They need to implement sanctions. That is what we expect from them. The CPT made similar statements before. There have been serious protests against the CPT for years. Especially in the last year they have intensified. In September [2022], the CPT went to İmralı but did not make any statement afterwards. There are a lot of dubious allegations, a lot of information. It is not clear whether the CPT really went there or not, how they went or how they established contact there. A lot of information in regard to this issue has circulated recently. A lot of information about the health of our Leadership has also been spread.

The CPT has not made a concrete, clear statement yet. The Kurdish people have had enough of statements anyway. Whether it is the United Nations or the CPT. Tomorrow it is the ECHR and the next day it is the Council of Europe, the European Union, the United States of America, etc. The Kurdish people are really fed up with these kinds of statements. Our people and movement expect concrete practical steps from these powers.”

March to Gemlik on 6 February

“The isolation and torture system in İmralı must be broken. This system is against universal human rights, international law and conventions to which Turkey is a signatory. It is a crime against humanity. The Council of Europe should not be complicit in this crime against humanity. The United Nations, the USA and all the forces that are responsible for this conspiracy should not be either. They should not stand by and just watch the Kurdish genocide. This is what the Kurdish people expect them to do. There are very important protests developing on this basis.

There is the protest that MPs have been carrying out in front of Turkey’s parliament for weeks. This has created a very important, serious sensitivity of the public. In addition, on February 6, there will be demonstrations from Gever and Qoser to Gemlik. I would like to greet this demonstration in advance. This is very important. But these protests should not be limited only to Gemlik and Qoser. February 15th is approaching. Therefore, protests against the conspiracy must take place in Kurdistan and abroad in a strong way and must not stop. We must turn 2023 into a year in which we ensure the physical freedom of Leader Apo.”

We pay respect to martyrs who burn themselves, but these actions should not happen

“People chose to burn themselves in protest against the International Conspiracy. Many comrades and patriots set their bodies on fire as part of the ‘You cannot darken our sun’-protests. Recently, two valuable patriots burned themselves in protest. Of course, this creates a certain level of sensitivity in the public. This is very meaningful. It requires great commitment, faith, will and courage. Its meaning and value is great and deep. We will always remember them with respect and gratitude. But such forms of protest should not happen.

This method is not a method that Leader Apo approves of. As a movement, we have the opportunity to struggle everywhere. There are many ways and methods for us to wage our struggle. We need to choose forms of action that harm the enemy, the Turkish state. We need to overcome a style of action that harms ourselves and only appeals to people’s conscience. This is important. Such actions should not happen. In February and in the following months, we need to increase the struggle and resistance everywhere. This is how we can give the most correct and meaningful answer. I found it important to especially emphasize this.”

Heavy war and Turkey’s war crimes in South Kurdistan continue

“The situation is not like [the Turkish Defense Minister] Hulusi Akar recently said. He said that ‘Operation Claw-Lock’ is finished. But this is not true. The attacks continue. There is a very serious war [in the South Kurdish areas Zap, Metîna and Avaşîn] right now. The Turkish state attacks with chemical weapons dozens of times every single day. It has doubled its use of chemical weapons there. It uses chemical

weapons every day in a narrow valley. And it continues to use tactical nuclear weapons. It still uses a lot of banned weapons. So the invasion attacks are not over.

The casualties [of the Turkish army] are very high. They have really suffered huge blows. They don't know what to do anymore. They have suffered thousands of casualties and wounded there. The Turkish army has therefore really suffered a great defeat. The war in Zap is still going on in full intensity. In the valley called Çemço, the war continues in full intensity. Despite using banned chemical weapons so much there, they are not getting any results. The families of the dead soldiers and various organizations made a statement the other day. It is clear that these families are becoming more active.

There are no funerals because their children are missing. They died in the war but not even an explanation is given to these families. Now, their protests are increasing. Previously, there had already been people applying to the HDP, to civil society organizations and human rights organizations. Then they [Turkish state officials] intervened. They paid them some money and also threatened them, thus obstructing these developments. Obviously, the Turkish state has not achieved anything in this war. It will continue to insist on war. But no matter what it does, it is no longer possible to achieve any results. This war has been a clear defeat for the Turkish state. Our friends have resisted heroically, and we have paid a great price. But we have defeated the plans of the Turkish state in 2022. Now, it is unable to get out of its blockage. It had made a very comprehensive occupation plan.

This plan for South Kurdistan has been dealt a serious blow. The Turkish state is committing all kinds of war crimes in the areas where it has gotten stuck. Therefore, putting the use of chemical weapons on the agenda remains important. There was a serious public discussion about this issue and this must continue. The Turkish state is committing very serious war crimes, crimes against humanity. The struggle against this must continue. We must expose the Turkish state in regard to this issue. We must struggle and hold the Turkish state to account for this in every possible way.”

Unavoidability of change in Iran due to women's revolution

“There has been uninterrupted resistance led by women for months. This has led to great social change and transformation. The Iranian state will not stay like this. There will definitely be serious changes in Iran. We will see the effects of this much more clearly in the future. Women's struggles have really gained a regional and universal character. In other words, it is changing the world. The 21st century, the Leadership said, 'will be the century of women'. Indeed, the 21st century has already become the century of women. Now, under the leadership of women, societies are standing up, humanity is standing up. This is very important. In other words, society has been resurrected. Everywhere, demands for freedom, equality, justice, and democracy are being voiced loudly and women are leading the way.

Women will really change the world. Women will liberate the world. Women will democratize the world. Women will lead the revolution in the region in particular. Women will be the vanguard of the democratic Middle East revolution. We have been seeing this very concretely in Kurdistan for decades. The Kurdish Women's Freedom Struggle in Kurdistan has seriously influenced and mobilized the women of the region. Today, the center where this has intensified is Iran and East Kurdistan [West Iran]. The state has not been able to suppress this easily there. That is why it is increasing the pressure. It is trying to create fear among the people with its execution policy, trying to break the will of society. But these policies of violence will

not yield any results. This regime will not get any results with executions. This will only put the regime in an even deeper deadlock. Therefore, these policies must be abandoned.

The execution policy is one of the most brutal practices in the world. It is a crime against humanity. The regime has to stop this. We are in the 21st century. Everywhere people are on their feet. Women are on their feet. They want freedom, justice, and equality. No one, no state power can prevent this. Not Iran, not Turkey. Neither can other states. There is a very serious awareness. The world has turned into a small village. A development in one place affects the other. They strengthen each other and create synergy. What is the right thing to do now? It is to change this policy. To put an end to these executions.

To abolish the execution laws. It is to take democratization as a basis. Iran can only get itself out of this impasse through democratization. If Iran democratizes itself, if it recognizes the rights of women, young people, Kurds, Baloch, Arabs, Persians, in other words of all the identities living in the country, Iran will really become an example for the region. It will become the most democratic power in the region and the most powerful state.”

Importance of HDP’s new campaign ‘Our Treasure is Our People’

“They cut the HDP’s treasury aid, thus trying to break the will of the party and to make it unable to carry out election work on its own. But this won’t be successful. The HDP is not a state party. It is a democratic party of the peoples. It draws its strength from the peoples, from society. For years, the HDP did not remain on its feet by working with the help of the treasury. It relied on the people, took its strength from the people, worked and struggled with the support of the people. In this sense, the campaign launched recently by the HDP is really important. This expresses the essence of the HDP.

Yes, HDP’s treasure is the people. It has worked like this for years. In other words, a party that feeds on the state cannot be very effective for the people. It will gradually get integrated into the system. This then leads to a shift with regards to the mentality, politics and work and to the breaking away from the people. We can clearly see this happening to the parties within the system. But now, the HDP will go to people more, go to houses, streets and neighborhoods. House by house, person by person, street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood, district by district, province by province, the HDP will mingle with the people, with society. It will embrace society, listen to its problems, find solutions for them, think about them, organize from the bottom up and thus reach the people. Exactly in this way, the HDP will take a form that is in line with its essence, program and political understanding. The new campaign ‘Our Treasure is Our People’ should therefore not only be limited to this election period. It needs to be the permanent understanding and working style of the HDP. It needs to be its philosophy of struggle. This process will lead to the growth of the HDP, the strengthening of the Labor and Democracy Alliance, and a very successful political struggle both in this election process and the time afterwards. I truly believe in this.”

Decision to hold early elections in Turkey

“Normally, the elections were going to take place in mid-June. Now, they have announced that the elections will take place a little earlier. Of course, this is connected to their own plans. The fascist AKP-MHP government is gradually losing votes. The MHP is really in a state of collapse and this is getting deeper and deeper. They want to enter this electoral process without any further erosion, before the voters turn against them even more. On the other hand, there is a serious economic crisis. This is a structural crisis, not a

temporal one. The entire society in Turkey feels great anger. There are clear consequences of this economic crisis. As a result, things are developing to the disadvantage of the fascist AKP-MHP government. As this process drags on, the economic crisis deepens. Poverty, hunger, and the protests in society are increasing. This has played a very important role in their decision to have the elections take place on an earlier date.

They tried to somehow get results based on the politics of war. But this hasn't worked out either. In the following months, they will continue their war policy and increase the war even more. The fascist AKP-MHP government is becoming weaker and weaker. It is disintegrating and collapsing. With their war policy, genocide policy, fascism and all kinds of oppression and violence, they have not been able to break the will of society. The Kurdish society and the society in Turkey as a whole are waging a great struggle. Before this struggle increases even further, they want to take advantage of the situation by having the elections take place a little earlier. But this will also be useless. They will not get much result from this either."

"Lately, special psychological warfare has increased a lot. They have done everything to break the will of the Kurdish people, to promote decay in society and to destroy its moral values. They consider all sectors in Kurdistan, from the civil servants to the police, the gendarmerie and the village guards, as elements of special warfare. They have pursued this policy in Kurdistan also against children and women. But they won't be able to achieve anything like that. The women's struggle continues. The stance of women continues in a strong way. The same is true for Turkey. There is a strong women's movement there that continues its struggle. These special war policies have therefore not yielded many results. How exactly does this policy of social extermination against women and society as a whole look currently? They have been organizing contra groups in Kurdistan, so-called 'Osman Ocakları'. This scoundrel Soylu [Turkish Interior Minister] has created a movement called the 'National Beka Movement'. By putting these kinds of scoundrels, traitors and collaborators in such groups, Soylu uses them for the genocide policy against Kurdish society. The degeneration of society, various murders and massacres in Kurdistan and attacks on HDP buildings were all carried out by these groups. They have intensified the special war on the basis of degenerating society on the one hand, while on the other hand, committing physical genocide. But they have still not been able to reach their desired results."

Need for common struggle of opposition to overthrow AKP-MHP government

"The 'Table of Six' has not developed any program for the solution to the Kurdish question. This is why Kurds have voiced serious criticism. The HDP has also made calls [on the 'Table of Six']. This criticism continues to grow. At the current moment, it would not be realistic to expect a program from the 'Table of Six' for the democratic solution to the Kurdish question. They have not overcome the politics of denial and annihilation. But they claim the following: 'We will rebuild the rule of law in Turkey. We will bring about reforms. This state will function according to the law. We will overcome this fascist dictatorship. This claim is of great importance for Turkey's society. There used to be a law in Turkey. But that law never applied to the Kurds. In other words, the law had nothing to offer to the Kurds. That is a fact. Turkey's laws are not of such a democratic nature."

"It is important to meet at the following point: The common denominator of the Labor and Freedom Alliance and the 'Table of Six' is to overthrow the fascist dictatorship. This is their only common denominator. Otherwise, there is still no common ground in regard to democracy, the solution to the Kurdish question or the democratization of Turkey. This is a fact. If the 'Table of Six' really wants to democratize Turkey, the way to do this is the democratic solution of the Kurdish question. How will you democratize Tur-

key without solving the Kurdish question on a democratic basis? This is not possible. As long as the policy of denial, extermination, and genocide continues, there will be no democracy in Turkey. In this case, Turkey will gradually move towards fascism again. This is a fact. The overthrow of this fascist government will put the democratic solution to the Kurdish question and the construction of a state on the basis of democratic law on the agenda. Different dynamics will emerge. The tendency towards democracy will gain more ground for organizing, working, struggling, and conducting politics in Turkey. In this sense, if the Labor and Freedom Alliance and the ‘Table of Six’ agree on overthrowing this fascist dictatorship, it is extremely valuable to wage a joint struggle on this issue. Without the support of the HDP, without the support of the Labor and Freedom Alliance, it is not possible for the ‘Table of Six’ to win the election. The HDP and the Labor and Freedom Alliance play a key role. If they want to win the support of the HDP and the Labor and Freedom Alliance, they need to adopt a democratic stance. And their candidate must be determined according to these criteria. This is important.”

Germany’s recent decision to recognize Yazidi

“It is important that Germany has now recognized the Yazidi genocide. Twelve countries had done so earlier. At the same time, the following hypocrisy exists in European countries: they recognize the Yazidi genocide, but they do nothing. Normally, if a country recognizes a genocide, in order to prevent such a genocide from happening again, it needs to also recognize the self-administration [in Şengal]. Because this is how these genocides can be prevented. If the Yazidis and Şengal do not have a self-administration and self-defense forces, they may experience genocide again in the future. Germany and the other twelve countries that have recognized this genocide therefore need to recognize the self-administration and self-defense forces of Şengal. Only this will bring an end to this hypocritical policy. But if their recognition does not turn into something practical, if it does not result in recognizing the self-administration, nothing much will happen in practice. Germany has pursued a special policy for the Yazidis for decades. It has a very special policy on this issue and carries out serious missionary work. Germany is trying to pursue a policy of taking the Yazidis under its influence.”

“The more we struggle, the more we get results. This recognition did not happen spontaneously. The Yazidis, the people of Şengal have waged a very serious struggle for the genocide to be recognized. They have waged a serious political, diplomatic and social struggle. As a result, the recognition happened. This has given great courage to the Yazidis. They can now further increase their struggle on this basis. They can make other states recognize genocide as well. At the same time, they can also make them accept the self-administration. The self-administration of Şengal must be accepted by the whole world. In this regard, Yazidis need to wage a very active political, legal, diplomatic and social struggle everywhere.”

“The Şengal genocide, the 74th genocide, was a genocide directly initiated by the Turkish state. The Turkish state carried out this genocide together with the Islamic State [IS]. This attack did not take place independently of the Turkish state. Kidnapped [Yazidi] children have repeatedly been found in Ankara. All the Yazidis who went to Turkey were scattered all over the world. Many Yazidi women and children are still in the hands of IS. The Turkish state is part of this genocide. So if you recognize the genocide, you need to also recognize the Turkish state’s role in it. It took part in these genocidal attacks. Therefore, a corresponding attitude must be taken.”

Rising discomfort of Swedish and Finnish societies with support for Turkey

“Sweden and Finland have recently lifted their arms embargo against Turkey. Turkey is slaughtering Kurds every day with the weapons it buys from Sweden, Finland and other European countries. It is committing genocide. Therefore, with this attitude, they [e.g. Sweden and Finland] became complicit in the genocide policy of Turkey against the Kurds. All this is happening with the weapons provided by Sweden, Finland, Germany, and other European countries. I would therefore like to condemn this attitude. The Turkish state wants the whole world to be anti-Kurdish. This is what it is imposing on Sweden and Finland today. It has turned its NATO membership into a very serious asset to blackmail others. It also blackmails other countries with gangs [Islamist proxy forces] every day. Explosions [i.e. Islamist attacks] took place in many places in Europe in the past. The Turkish state assassinates our friends with the help of these gangs. Like a tyrant, it exports its fascism and violence everywhere. It exports its state terror everywhere and tries to impose its policy on everyone. The Turkish state says: ‘You will be anti-Kurdish just like me. You will prevent them from organizing demonstrations. You will actively support our Kurdish genocide policy and become an enemy of the Kurds.’ Now, by lifting their weapons embargo, Sweden and Finland are in a way serving this policy.”

“We would like to criticize this attitude very seriously. The government that recently came to power in Sweden has made many concessions to Turkey. It extradited a patriot and exerted heavy pressure on Kurdish institutions there. But then it realized that the Turkish state knows no borders and that it keeps asking for more. Sweden has its own laws and understanding of democracy. It is a state known in Europe as a state of law, as a democratic state. Now it is increasingly trampling on its own law. This is causing serious discomfort in Swedish society. Serious criticism is gradually developing among the Swedish people. If the government continues like this, it will lose the next elections. This is certain. If there is an election in Finland, the current Finnish government will fall as well. There are serious protests by society in Finland. Society continues to criticize this policy. Thus, the government has realized that if this continues, they will lose their power. They themselves cannot cope with the pressure of society. As a result, both the current Swedish and Finnish governments have softened their stance a bit.”

“In addition, Turkey has entered an election process. Turkey’s society is very unhappy about the current situation. A serious opposition is developing against the current fascist government. Europe is also taking this into account: where will the relationship with this fascist regime in Turkey lead? This fascist government in Turkey also harms Europe. Turkey is a member of NATO. But it does not implement NATO’s decisions. It does not apply any rules. It has signed the International Convention on Human Rights and other international conventions. But it does not implement any of them. The European Parliament takes decisions, yet the fascist government does not implement them. The CPT says something, but it does not implement it. This government does not implement the decisions taken by the European Parliament either. How far will this go? Apparently, the European states are also uncomfortable with this situation. Criticism is increasing in Germany and the press in the UK is also increasingly voicing criticism. So are France and the USA. There is serious pressure from the respective societies on these states and governments.”

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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