

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

The International Conspiracy in Abdullah Öcalan's words

ANF | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

Abdullah Öcalan writes widely in *The PKK and the Kurdish Question in the 21st Century* about his decision to come to Europe and about the international conspiracy which led to his abduction in Kenya on 15 February 1999.

Writing about his decision to come to Europe, Öcalan said: “My intention was to find a democratic platform for the Kurdish question. Had I found support for this, it would also have been possible to push Turkey in this direction. However, Europe seemed to be disinterested in a solution to the Kurdish problem. Had I been allowed to become politically active in Europe, it would have been the end of the war. Unfortunately, this option was not compatible with the strategy of the West.”

As to the background of the international conspiracy, Öcalan writes:

“[...] Since I have been imprisoned on İmralı I have been trying to work for a lasting peace in Anatolia and Mesopotamia. This is even more difficult than waging war. Peace based on the acceptance of different cultural identities will help to advance a renaissance of the region and further democratic progress in Turkey. Eventually, every war ends with peace. If we prove unable to end this war, we are doomed to be used for the purposes of our enemies. My efforts for peace received a wide variety of responses. Most of this was, however, opposition from various and even contrarian political circles. Some have not yet understood the relevance of the peace process for Turkey. The Kurdish issue has produced the longest and most severe crisis in the history of the republic. Without a just peace the crisis will continue.

[...]

My imprisonment also means that the republic and the people have been reborn. Their second birth had taken place through violence and war, like some kind of catharsis. The battle against the oligarchic republic was long and violent. It will be followed by a new era when we will establish a new secular and democratic republic.

The present time requires all of us to restructure and restart the whole of social life: the state, economy, politics, justice, the arts, even ethics. They have been rocked and are looking for a way out of this crisis. My imprisonment somehow serves as a catalyst. At the moment, peace - or how to win it - seems to be on everybody's agenda.

I stand for the conscious will of the Kurdish people for freedom. This will has been expressed by war for a long time – now its message is peace.

The war was defined not by what it was meant to achieve but by what its enemies were: feudalism and the oligarchic republic. Peace has positive goals: reform of the republic, democratization, secularism.

We can completely abandon separatism and violence in the present system if the Kurds are no longer excluded from a process in which they have participated together with the Turks in the course of history: the formation of a state and a nation to which both Kurds and Turks contributed alike. A republic, however, which is based on the denial of Kurdish demands for freedom, leads to separatism and violence. If the republic opens to the self-determination of its peoples within the boundaries of the republic, we might have a peaceful future together.

However, the present crisis is stabilized and kept going by external and internal corruption, criminals who profit enormously from war. The war has cost many billions of dollars and 40,000 lives. Taking on the Kurdish problem and finding a solution are overdue.

The February plot is also of some significance with a view to human rights and human rights conventions. My abduction and extradition violated these rights and conventions. It is mostly the European governments and the USA that are responsible for this breach, rather than the Turkish government. Their colonial understanding of foreign policy and the way they proceeded in my case have produced the present situation. Hence, my appeal to the European Court was meant not only simply to accuse Turkey of unlawful practices. Rather, I also wanted the unlawful and ethically wrong practices of the EU and the USA, which had been directed against me and against the will of the Kurds for freedom, to be put on trial. They had worked together assiduously in three European capitals. They all had made their contributions until a bunch of corrupt head-hunters in Africa sold themselves to a capitalist intrigue and consigned me to a Turkish airplane.

It had begun in Athens. They treated me like a slave whom they could order around at will. They hoped for concessions on Cyprus and the Aegean issue. They betrayed our friendship and shamelessly disregarded the Human Rights Convention. My situation, however, did not only concern me as an individual. Millions of Kurds who felt very close to me were betrayed just as badly.

Nor was Israel right to make me a victim of their strategic considerations. They wanted to include Turkey in the balance of power of the Near East.

I will be ready to help with the clarification of the political and legal dimension of this power play at any time.

The second station was Moscow. I was neither surprised nor angry. Nonetheless, Russia was a signatory state of the European Council and the European Convention on Human Rights. They should not have ignored my application for asylum. And they should not have expelled me despite a decision to the contrary in the Duma. However, these are matters to be brought before the European Court.

The third contribution was provided almost before the eyes of the Holy Father in the eternal city of Rome.

While I just wanted to talk about some fundamental civilizational realities, I was in fact surrounded by police for 66 days and basically held under house arrest. I had gone there to speak for the right and freedom of one of the oldest peoples in history who were not allowed to enjoy their human rights. Europe did not

respect the claim of the Kurdish people for their human rights. Instead, they took part in my abduction. It is now up to the European Court to find out how this situation came about.

My abduction from Kenya was accomplished with the agreement of the EU and the USA. Greece and Kenya had to do the dirty work and deliver me from the Greek embassy to Turkey. Again, the EU had found a way not to get directly involved in my case. They enlisted the help of some corrupt Kenyan police officers.

I think it has become clear, and former President Clinton has confirmed it, that the Greek secret service and the CIA did not participate in the ploy out of love of the Turks. I am sure that their strategic objective was to have me killed by the Turks, and that's probably true for the British too. However, I did not express any hatred towards the Turks and the Turkish general staff acted very considerately, so the situation did not escalate. Such an escalation might have cost tens of thousands of lives. Nonetheless, this plot is exemplary historically in that it attempted to pit Kurds against Turks without leaving them room for a solution of the conflict.

Why did Israel participate? Traditionally, Israel had good relations with the Iraqi Kurds. When I appeared on the scene, and in particular when we relocated our headquarters to the Middle East, I was an independent actor who disrupted their strategic balance. This made me dangerous. Furthermore, the Israeli right favored an alliance with Turkey to offset the political weight of the Arabs. It was also the Israeli lobby in Russia which had accomplished my expulsion with the help of the then Russian prime minister Primakov. I remember that Ariel Sharon had also gone to Moscow at that time. The USA, with their pro-Israel lobby strong while Clinton was weakened by the Lewinsky affair, put Italy under pressure. With the help of Mossad I became persona non grata in Europe. So I travelled from place to place until eventually there was nowhere else for me to go and I was sent as a prisoner to Turkey."

Source: Abdullah Öcalan: *The PKK and the Kurdish Question in the 21st Century*

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2022 Annual assessment report on rights violations and the current conditions in imrali island prison

Introduction

İmralı F Type High Security Closed Prison is a single-person island prison that was built specifically for our client Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999 by completely overriding domestic and international law. The prison has since been operated based on a special status and through special practices. Under the so-called aggravated execution regime, which we also refer to as the "İmralı Isolation System", our clients in the prison have been held under conditions of extraordinary isolation for a long time - 24 years in terms of Mr. Abdullah Öcalan and eight years each in terms of Mr. Hamili Yıldırım, Mr. Ömer Hayri Konar, and Mr. Veysi Aktaş.

The full report can be seen here:

https://freeocalan.org/assets/downloads/english/forms/2022_Assessment_Report.pdf



KCK: Our struggle has prevented the international conspiracy from reaching its goals

ANF | BEHDINAN | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

15 February marks the anniversary of the international conspiracy that led to the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan's abduction to Turkey in 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.

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement marking the 24th anniversary of the international conspiracy, stating the following:

“The international conspiracy against Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] is now entering its 25th year. We would therefore like to condemn all forces involved in the international conspiracy carried out on the basis of the Kurdish genocide in the person of Leader Apo. We would also like to commemorate with great respect and gratitude all the martyrs of revolution and democracy in the person of the comrades Halit Oral and Aynur Artan, who formed a ring of fire around Leader Apo by lighting up their bodies against the conspiracy under the slogan ‘YOU CANNOT DARKEN OUR SUN’. We respectfully bow in memory of them and reiterate once again our promise to the martyrs that we will lead their struggle to victory.

All the comrades who were martyred under the slogan ‘YOU CANNOT DARKEN OUR SUN’ led the struggle against the international conspiracy, played a leading role in the development of a deeper understanding of the conspiracy and its defeat and thus carried the freedom struggle to a new level. After the start of the international conspiracy, a struggle against it also began. Yet, the conspiracy continues until today.

Leader Apo was kidnapped at the Greek embassy in Kenya on February 15, 1999 as a result of a conspiracy and eventually handed over to the Turkish state. The abduction of Leader Apo and his transfer to Turkey constitute the biggest international conspiracy of the 20th century. The international conspiracy was led by the US and Israel, supported by European states and coordinated by NATO. Many other states and powers also took part in it by providing direct or indirect support. Therefore, the February 15, 1999 conspiracy is one of the biggest international conspiracies not only in the 20th century but in history. It is an indisputable fact that there are major plans behind such a conspiracy.

The answer to the question of why such a conspiracy was carried out against the leader of an oppressed and exploited people like the Kurds, and why Leader Apo was given to the enemy of the Kurdish people,

i.e. the colonialist Turkish state, by the powers that rule the world, reveals many dirty plans being carried out in Kurdistan and the Middle East. The international conspiracy and the plans behind it can be understood by asking and answering this question.

The international conspiracy against Leader Apo is related to the Middle East policy of the capitalist modernity system. The fact that the international conspiracy took place at a time when the US was planning to intervene in the Middle East and that this planned intervention was carried out afterwards proves this. Since the US considered Leader Apo and the PKK as obstacles to its policy, it wanted to neutralize them before intervening in the Middle East. Therefore, the international conspiracy was started as part of the US Middle East policy. Leader Apo himself stated that the role of the Turkish state in the conspiracy was limited to that of a guardian and that the US and NATO had actually planned and carried out the conspiracy. Because Leader Apo stood against the policies of the forces of capitalist modernity against the Kurdish people and the peoples of the Middle East and insisted on his stance of freedom, the US made such a decision and carried out the conspiracy. Many forces, especially NATO members, took part in this conspiracy under the guidance and directives of the USA.

The role of the Turkish state, as Leader Apo stated, has not been more than that of a guardian. Since the Turkish state has an anti-Kurdish character, it has approached these developments on the basis of a revenge mentality. By creating the PKK and launching the Kurdish freedom struggle, Leader Apo re-created the Kurdish people and thus defeated the plans for the Kurdish genocide. The genocidal colonialist Turkish state, enraged by this, acted with the goal of subjecting the Kurdish people once again to annihilation and denial by neutralizing Leader Apo and destroying the PKK, thus taking revenge on them. Yet, due to his high level of consciousness and responsibility, Leader Apo prevented a Kurdish-Turkish war and made sure that the conspiracy would not achieve its goal by making everybody understand the international dimension of it. Because the conspiracy was aimed at the physical annihilation of Leader Apo and the liquidation of the Kurdistan freedom struggle. This could have meant the beginning of a Kurdish-Turkish war that would last for decades. As a matter of fact, after the start of the international conspiracy, Bülent Ecevit, Turkey's prime minister of the time, said that he could not understand why the conspiracy had been carried out. This admission clearly reveals that the conspiracy was carried out by international powers within the framework of their policies.

Due to his belief in and commitment to freedom, Leader Apo gave the most meaningful answer to the international conspiracy by developing a new paradigm based on democracy, ecology and women's freedom in İmralı and by presenting this manifesto of the 21st century to the peoples, women and all oppressed. By further developing the struggle on the basis of the new paradigm put forward by Leader Apo, our movement has initiated great developments in Kurdistan and the Middle East. Today, not only the peoples and women of Kurdistan and the Middle East, but also the peoples, women and all oppressed groups all over the world support and put into practice the ideas of Leader Apo. Looking at these results, we can clearly say that the conspiracy has not achieved its goals since the utopia of free life developed and led by Leader Apo has gone beyond the borders of Kurdistan and has reached the peoples and women of the world.

Even though the international conspiracy has not reached its goals, it has not been completely defeated and put to an end either. The aim of the forces behind the conspiracy is to finalize it by continuing the Kurdish genocide, thus also bringing the conspiracy against Leader Apo to its conclusion. The conspiracy against Leader Apo therefore constitutes a conspiracy against the Kurdish people. The İmralı system is a

system created to bring the conspiracy to its conclusion. As long as the İmralı system and the physical captivity of Leader Apo continue, the conspiracy will continue as well.

The international conspiracy is being carried out today by the AKP-MHP government. The AKP is essentially a party founded to serve the goals of the conspiracy and to continue the Kurdish genocide. The AKP and Tayyip Erdoğan were brought to power for this purpose. However, when the AKP alone was not able to intensify the conspiracy and bring it to a conclusion, the AKP-MHP alliance was formed, a fascist regime was established and the Kurdish genocide policy was further intensified. All the attacks by the AKP-MHP government are based on bringing the conspiracy to its conclusion. In this sense, the AKP-MHP government is the biggest Kurdish enemy and conspiratorial power. Consequently, the complete defeat of the conspiracy is possible only through the overthrow of the AKP-MHP government, which is an anti-Kurdish, fascist and conspiratorial power. As seen once again in the recent earthquake, the AKP-MHP fascist government is also the enemy of the peoples. This great disaster is a result of the colonialist, profit-seeking policy of this fascist power.

Undoubtedly, the conspiracy has been prevented from achieving its goals due to the struggle against it. In the future, the international conspiracy can be confronted and defeated by increasing the struggle on the basis of breaking the İmralı torture and isolation system and ensuring the physical freedom of Leader Apo. It is very important that the support for Leader Apo and the struggle against the conspiracy have gained an international dimension today. The Kurdish people and their international friends aim to further increase the struggle against the conspiracy on a global scale and to completely defeat the international conspiracy by destroying the İmralı isolation and torture system in its 25th year and ensuring the physical freedom of Leader Apo. On this basis, we call on the patriotic people of Kurdistan, the international friends of the Kurdish people and all revolutionary democratic forces to show their protest against the conspiracy more strongly and to increase their democratic struggle even more. We also call on all the forces taking part in the international conspiracy to abandon their stance and to not support the Kurdish genocide policy of the fascist AKP-MHP government.”

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Three-day march in Greece: “Freedom for Öcalan, status for Kurdistan”

ANF | ATHENS | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

15 February marks the anniversary of the international conspiracy that led to the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan’s abduction to Turkey in 1999. Since then, Öcalan has been held as a political hostage on the prison island of İmralı, 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.

The Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement (Tevgera Ciwanên Şoreşger), the Democratic Cultural Center in Athens and the Kurdish Women's Movement in Europe launched a three-day march in Greece on Monday to mark the 24th anniversary of the international conspiracy.

The march kicked off from the Lavrio Camp in Athens at 10 a.m. 50 young people from four parts of Kurdistan are taking part in the march under the motto "Freedom for Öcalan, status for Kurdistan".

Activists are displaying posters of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and the flag of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), chanting slogans in Greek, Kurdish and Turkish. The activists were accompanied by residents of Lavrio until leaving the city.

The activists will gather in Athens city centre on February 15 and march to the Turkish Embassy at 5 p.m.



Young people in Maxmur march for Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | MAXMUR | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Martyr Rûstem Cûdî Refugee Camp Youth Assembly held a torch march to condemn the International Conspiracy that led to the capture of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan on 15 February 1999.

Çiğdem Ürek read the statement on behalf of the Assembly. Reminding that the International Conspiracy had entered its 25th year, Çiğdem Ürek said: "In order to protect their own interests and extend the life of their rule, the international powers targeted the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and all the peoples of the Middle East in the person of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. On 15 February 1999, Leader Apo was taken prisoner as a result of an international conspiracy. However, Leader Apo thwarted the conspiracy with his historical resistance."

Emphasizing that the young people of Maxmur will continue to support Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, Çiğdem Ürek said: "We will continue to resist despite all the attacks of the fascist state. On this basis, we call on all young people to increase the struggle for the physical freedom of Leader Apo."



People in Qamishlo protest International Conspiracy

ANF | QAMISHLO | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Actions were held in the city of Qamishlo as well as in Til Birak, Tirbespiyê, Çilaxa and Dêrik to mark the 24th anniversary of the 15 February International Conspiracy that led to the capture of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The Cizre Region Sports and Youth Committee held an action in front of the Mihemed Şêxo Culture and Art Center in the city center of Qamişlo, with the slogan “You cannot darken our sun”.

Speaking at the march, which was attended by hundreds of people, Cizre Region PYD Assembly Executive member Zeyneb Murad said that because Abdullah Öcalan presented the democratic project to the world, the imperialist states wanted to alienate him from the people through isolation. Murad noted that they should rise up and increase the struggle to ensure the physical freedom of Öcalan and protest the isolation and torture system in Imrali.

Abdullah Öcalan's pictures and books were distributed during the action.

The International Conspiracy was protested with a march in Til Birak, a meeting in Tirbespiyê, a seminar in Çilaxa, and a statement in Derik. The statements made emphasized that the International Conspiracy's unity and struggle of the peoples had thwarted the conspiracy, and called for the expansion of the struggle to ensure the freedom of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

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The centennial truth of the Turkish state: Colonial Fascism

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE – 14 FEBRUARY 2023

To the massive loss, pain and anger that the biggest earthquake in Kurdistan in a century caused, another pain is added these days: the 24th anniversary of Abdullah Öcalan's abduction and imprisonment under isolation conditions. Just as the Turkish state intends to leave him to die on an island prison, it leaves to die tens of thousands of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds under the rubble of the recent earthquake. This autumn, the same state is going to celebrate 100 years of its own existence — 100 years of forced assimilation, massacres and cultural genocide.

To read the full statement: <https://www.freeocalan.org/>

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Six Basque trade unions demand Freedom for Öcalan

ANF | BILBAO | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Six Basque trade unions, LAB, ELA, CCOO, ESK, UGT and Steilas launched a manifesto demanding freedom for Abdullah Öcalan on the 24th anniversary of his capture in Kenya.

In the manifesto, the Basque trade unions said: “Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has been imprisoned for 24 years, in extreme conditions, in total isolation and with restrictions on his communication with the outside world. In 2006-2007, 3.5 million Kurds signed a petition stating that they consider him their political representative. As the only leader who enjoys the trust of the Kurdish

people, and as the forefather of this peaceful solution, Öcalan is an indispensable part of resolving the Kurdish conflict.”

The manifesto added: “From past experience of other conflicts, we know that for a peace process to develop, among other things, strong personalities are needed whose leadership can help communities to seek peaceful solutions to the conflict.

Nelson Mandela, Gerry Adams, among other people, had and still have the respect and trust of their communities, which is why they could and can convince them to work actively in the search for a negotiated solution. Undoubtedly, Abdullah Öcalan also falls into this category.”

The Basque trade unions underlined that “the current Turkish government run by Erdoğan held negotiations with Öcalan for two and a half years, during which the Kurdish leader proposed a gradual plan to achieve peace, from confidence-building measures, through a disarmament process under international surveillance, to a permanent political solution to the Kurdish question. Although the negotiations broke down in 2011, Öcalan's proposals, included in his “Road Map”, continue to be of the utmost importance to address and seek a negotiated solution to the so-called 'Kurdish question'.”

The manifesto continued: “The demand for Öcalan’s freedom is vital to break the military logic of the conflict and thus divert attention towards peaceful negotiations and towards a democratic resolution of the Kurdish conflict.”

The Basque trade unions demanded the following:

- “Support the request for freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and the rest of the Kurdish prisoners and political prisoners as an important step towards the democratization of Turkey and peace in Kurdistan.
- End the suffering and oppression of the Kurdish people.
- Articulate a peace process that guarantees a negotiated solution to the conflict.
- That the Kurdish people be allowed to freely decide their future and organize themselves in the way they democratically decide.”

PYD members take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil was launched in Strasbourg on 25 June 2012. The vigil continues in its 556th week.

PYD members took over the vigil that Kurds living in Europe and their friends are carrying out in weekly shifts.

This week's group includes Daxil Brahim, Ehmed Bavê Omer and Serwer Mihemed.

We will not stop until our leader is free

Speaking on behalf of the group, Daxil Brahim said that the PYD condemned the 15 February International Conspiracy and added that the conspiracy against the Kurdish people's Leader was against all the Kurdish people. "The international forces that carried out this conspiracy failed to achieve their goal. They thought that the Kurdish people would give up after a few protests. They did not know that the Kurdish people would resist for 24 years and that they would condemn the conspiracy every 15 February. They did not know that more than 60 people would set their own bodies on fire and fell as martyrs for their Leadership. And they did not know that since 25 June 2012, the Kurds will ask the CPT to fulfil its responsibility. The forces responsible for the conspiracy wanted to isolate both our Leader and the Kurdish people. We will always resist, we will never step back, we will not stop until our Leader is free. The Kurdish people will not be able to achieve their freedom unless the Leader is free."

Let's fast on 15 February

Brahim said: "We once again condemn the International Conspiracy. Let our people fast on this day."

Help earthquake victims by donating to Heyva Sor

Group spokesperson Daxil Brahim also expressed their sadness for the victims of the earthquake in Kurdistan and said: "We offer our condolences to the families who lost their loved ones and wish the injured a fast recovery. We expect our people to join the aid campaign launched by Heyva Sor. Everyone should contact Heyva Sor in their region and help our people"

Kurdish activists protest for Abdullah Öcalan in the European Parliament

ANF | STRASBOURG | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

Activists from the Kurdish youth movements TCŞ and TekoJIN demanded the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan in the European Parliament. The group shouted slogans in the audience area while holding up pictures of the PKK leader, who was abducted to Turkey 24 years ago today.

In a statement about their action, the young activists demanded immediate contact with Öcalan and drew attention to Europe's responsibility. The activists stated that the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) was not fulfilling its task due to political pressure, and the Council of Europe was allowing Turkey, a member state, to ignore the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

Öcalan was abducted from the Greek embassy in Kenya on 15 February 1999 in the course of an international conspiracy involving several secret services and handed over to Turkey. For almost two years there has been no sign of life from the prison island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara, where Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners are being held.

“With this action, we as Kurdish youth demand that Europe abandon this dirty policy against Abdullah Öcalan. Until we hear from him and until his physical freedom is guaranteed, our actions will continue,” the activists declared.

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People of Rojava protest the international conspiracy and demand Öcalan's freedom

ANF | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

24 years ago, on 15 February 1999, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was kidnapped from the Greek embassy in Kenya in an interstate coup involving several secret services and brought to Turkey. Before his arrest, he spent years in Lebanon and Syria, and many people there still knew him personally.

To mark the anniversary of his abduction and detention, demonstrations have taken place all over the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria. “We will smash the Imrali system through the people's struggle” was the slogan of the protests in Qamişlo, Girkê Legê, Dêrik, Heseke, Til Temir, Hol, Sedadê, Tabqa, Raqqa, Kobanê and Şehba.

At the demonstration in Qamişlo, PYD Chairperson Asya Abdullah condemned Öcalan's abduction as a “plot by international and local powers”. “If the Kurdish question is to be solved and peace is to come to

the Middle East, the key to this is to be found on the prison island of Imrali. Whoever wants to solve the Kurdish question must break the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan,” said the Kurdish politician and called on the international public to put pressure on the Turkish state.

The demonstration in Kobanê also marked the end of a three-day march by the Revolutionary Youth Movement of Syria and the Young Women’s Association.

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People of Shengal protest International Conspiracy against Öcalan

ANF | SHENGAL | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

On the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the International Conspiracy against Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan, a march was organized in Shengal. The march was attended by hundreds of people under the leadership of the Shengal Democratic People’s Assembly.

Speaking on behalf of the Shengal Autonomous Administration, Heso İbrahim said: “The people of Shengal owe their freedom to Leader Apo’s [Abdullah Öcalan] philosophy. After the massacre by ISIS in 2014, only Leader Apo’s fighters extended their hands to us. We will never forget this effort and we won’t forget those who betrayed us. Leader Apo is currently being held under severe isolation conditions. This isolation was developed not only against Leader Apo, but against all humanity. We call on the CPT to inform the public about his health.”

Speaking on behalf of TAJÊ, Naim Bedel said: “Before, everyone saw himself as the owner of Shengal and expected our people to serve them. However, Leader Apo’s ideas enabled us to break the chains of slavery. We call on our people to fight for the freedom of Leader Apo.”

Meyan Nasır, speaking on behalf of the Shengal Martyrs’ Families Committee, called on the Yazidi community to take action until the freedom of Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan is ensured.

The President of the Arab Villages Council, Ebu Seger, said: “We, the Arab and Yazidi peoples, must unite until the freedom of Leader Apo is achieved. We call on the UN to fulfil its responsibility.”

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YPJ Information publishes video about meaning of Öcalan for women's struggle

ANF | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

YPJ Information has published a video to mark the 24th anniversary of the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan.

In the video, three members of the YPJ and HPC-Jin evaluated the meaning of Öcalan and the international conspiracy against him for the women's struggle.

You can watch the video here: <https://anfenglishmobile.com/women/ypj-information-publishes-video-about-meaning-of-Ocalanfor-women-s-struggle-65538>

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Activists in Drancy protest International Conspiracy

ANF | PARIS | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

The International Conspiracy against Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan on 15 February 1999 was protested with a march in the suburb of Drancy in Paris.

Hundreds of people from Kurdistan gathered in front of the Drancy Democratic Kurdish Community Center, with photos of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and a banner saying "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan is now!"

The crowd marching towards the Drancy municipality condemned the 15 February International conspiracy by chanting "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan" in French.

A minute's silence was held in front of the municipality on behalf of those who lost their lives in the earthquake in Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Revolution Martyrs.

Then, a French statement on the conspiracy was read and the Çerxa Şoreşê anthem was sung accompanied by TEV-ÇAND artist Farqîn Azad.

Activists called on the CPT and the Council of Europe for the liberation of Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, and ended with the slogan "Bijî Serok Apo".

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Citizens of Kirkuk condemn 15 February International Conspiracy

EHMED KERKÜKİ | KIRKUK | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

The Kurdish people's Leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was abducted and handed over to the Turkish state on 15 February 1999, as the result of a conspiracy by international forces. Speaking on the 24th anniversary of the International Conspiracy, Kirkuk citizens said that Abdullah Öcalan's physical freedom should be ensured.

Underlining that the Turkish state imposes an illegal isolation against Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, a citizen named Xeyriye Hesen said: "All international institutions and organizations remain silent in the face of the torture against Leader Öcalan. However, these institutions should address the issue with Turkey within the framework of international law. Our leader has reached the point where, according to international law, he cannot stay in prison."

Condemning the 15 February International Conspiracy, Goran Mihemed said: "The enemies of the Kurdish people do not want the Leader's freedom. The person who could solve the crises and problems in the region is Mr. Öcalan. He is the key to solving the problems of the Kurdish people as well as the other people of the region. Mr. Öcalan fought for freedom and justice. The 'Jin Jiyan Azad' resistance that emerged in Iran and Rojhilat today is a result of Mr. Öcalan's struggle. 'Jin Jiyan Azadi', means that society cannot be free without the liberation of women. The freedom of Mr. Öcalan, who is the leader of a people, must be ensured."

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Prisons in Turkey

Prisoners in Espiye Prison end their hunger strike

ANF | MARDIN | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

Prisoners in Giresun Espiye L Type Closed Prison announced that they called off their hunger strike due to the earthquake. Erdal Emeç, told his family that the hunger strike had been called off and expressed his condolences to the people of Kurdistan.

Erdal Emeç, Aydın Oğuz and Ahmet Budak, who took over the alternating hunger strike 12 days ago, had turned the protest into an indefinite and irreversible hunger strike.

Emeç said that the reason for calling off the hunger strike was not the end of the torture in prison, but the earthquake that killed tens of thousands of people in 10 cities of Kurdistan.

Emeç said that they were tortured in the cell during the hunger strike and added: “The prison administration tried in every way to make us stop the hunger strike. They thought they could intimidate us. We know very well that what they do to us is not independent from the isolation of Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan. For this reason, they did everything they could to break our will during the hunger strike, and they kept us in isolation. We offer our condolences to those who lost their lives due to the earthquake and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.”

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Seven prisoners deported after torture

ANF | İSKENDERUN | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Seven detainees, whose names could not be learned, in Iskenderun T Type Closed Prison were tortured and called “traitors” for allegedly causing riots. The detainees were sent to another prison with injuries. It was stated that three detainees who were deported to Tokat Prison had bruises on their faces and eyes, but they were prevented from getting a report of assault.

On the other hand, it was learned that a team affiliated to the Ministry of Justice conducted investigations with the detainees in Iskenderun T Type Closed Prison, and told them that as they didn’t start any riot they could be released within ten days.

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Military aggression and occupation

SDF: One of our fighters killed in Turkish drone attack in Kobanê countryside

ANF | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said in a statement that one of their fighters was killed in a Turkish drone attack in the Kobanê countryside.

The statement said: “As the international community mobilizes aid and rescue efforts to help those affected by the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, the Turkish occupying state continues to target our ar-

eas with various weapons. This afternoon, one of our fighters was visiting a family in the countryside near Kobani city when his car was targeted by a Turkish UAV, resulting in his martyrdom.”

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Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas continue

ANF | BEHDINAN | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

Turkey continues its attacks against the Kurdish guerrillas unabated. According to the media and communication centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG), dozens of attacks were carried out on the Medya Defense Zones on Sunday. Some of the guerrillas responded to the Turkish shelling with return fire.

According to the HPG statement on Monday, the Girê Cûdî resistance area in the Zap region was one of the areas affected by the bombardments the previous day. The massif rises directly above the Zap River and is connected to the Girê FM guerrilla area. According to the HPG, artillery fired from Turkish border territory hit the area around 30 times throughout the day.

Turkey's attacks come despite a ceasefire announced by the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK). The decision was taken after the devastating earthquake disaster in the Turkish-Syrian border area. The Kurdish guerrillas, which include the HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops), are implementing the call for a cessation of all hostilities and are in a defensive position.

In addition to ground attacks, more air strikes targeted the guerrilla positions in southern Kurdistan in recent days. The Turkish army continues its belligerent aggression against Kurdish society also in northern Syria. On Sunday, a fighter of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was killed in a Turkish drone attack in Kobanê.

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HPG reports ongoing Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

The Turkish army continues to carry out attacks against the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). In a statement on Tuesday, the press centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) said: “Despite intensive attacks by high-tech weapons, we are still in a defensive position,” referring to the decision to stop all combat operations because of the earthquake disaster. However, the attacks were returned on the basis of legitimate self-defence.

In Amêdî alone, HPG recorded dozens of attacks again the day before. Most of the attacks were directed against guerrilla positions in the Çemço area. Here, as well as at the Girê Cûdî resistance massif, the HPG

recorded at least 38 artillery and tank attacks, and the area was also bombed four times by combat helicopters.

In the surrounding area of the neighbouring village of Sîda, the Turkish army carried out attacks with heavy weapons. In addition, the area was attacked with unconventional bombs. The guerrillas responded with two defensive attacks by sniper units. According to the HPG, two Turkish soldiers were killed and a third was injured.

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HPG reports fifty Turkish attacks on guerrilla positions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

According to the People's Defence Forces (HPG), the Turkish army carried out fifty attacks on guerrilla positions in Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on Tuesday. "The Turkish occupying army continues its intensive technique-based attacks on the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, which is in a defensive position," the HPG press centre said in a statement on Wednesday.

According to the statement, Turkish attack helicopters bombed guerrilla positions in the Çemço area in the Zap region eight times on 14 February. A further 42 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons targeted Çemço and positions around the nearby village of Sîda. Çemço and Sîda are located in the She-ladize sub-district near the town of Amadiya.

Turkey's attacks come despite a ceasefire announced by the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK). The decision was taken after the devastating earthquake disaster in the Turkish-Syrian border area. The Kurdish guerrillas, which include the HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops), are implementing the call for a cessation of all hostilities and are in a defensive position.

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One civilian killed, another injured in Turkish attack on earthquake-hit town of Tel Rifat

ANF | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

Even after the devastating earthquake that killed thousands in the Turkish-Syrian border area on February 6 caused an enormous amount of destruction, Turkey's attacks on affected regions in the autonomous areas of North and East Syria continue. The Hawarnews news agency (ANHA) reports that a 70-year-old civilian was killed in a bombardment in the town of Tel Rifat on Thursday. A second man was injured. He suffered a shrapnel injury to the eye, hospital sources said.

The latest bombardments on Tel Rifat are the second wave of attacks against the city in the canton of Shehba since the series of earthquakes in the border region between Turkey and Syria began ten days ago. Tel Rifat had already been targeted by heavy attacks by the Turkish army and allied jihadist militias on Tuesday last week. 15,000 people from Aleppo have sought refuge in the region after the earthquake.

The district of Ain Issa has also been attacked several times in recent days. In Kobanê, which was also affected by the earthquake, Mehmûd Beşar, a member of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the diplomatic committee of the Movement for a Democratic Society (TEV-DEM), was killed in a Turkish drone attack on Sunday.



Turkish attacks on guerrillas continue despite the KCK's unilateral ceasefire

ANF | BEHDINAN | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

On February 6, two major earthquakes struck the Kurdish regions of Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), killing tens of thousands of people and causing a great humanitarian disaster.

In a statement on Friday, February 9, the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), an umbrella organization of the Kurdish freedom movement of which the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) is also a member, called for a halt of military actions in Turkey, in metropolises and cities. "It is necessary to prevent the people from experiencing even more suffering in this affliction", said Cemil Bayık, co-chairman of the executive council of the KCK.

The Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces (HSM) expressed support for the KCK's call and said on February 11 that the guerrillas were ready to do their part to alleviate the suffering of people.

Even catastrophes like the devastating series of earthquakes in the country cannot dissuade the Turkish state from maintaining its anti-Kurdish stance. Despite a catastrophe of apocalyptic proportions with tens of thousands of dead and injured, the Turkish army continues its aggression against the Kurdish guerrillas unabated.

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported continued attacks on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). According to the statement, guerrilla areas were subject to nonstop attacks with banned bombs, howitzers and heavy weapons on Wednesday, February 15.

The guerrilla positions near the village of Sida, in the Sheladize sub-district of Amadiya, were bombed by the Turkish army with unconventional bombs on Wednesday.

On February 14, the area of Deştâ Kafya in the Gare region was shelled by fighter jets five times.

The Girê FM resistance area, the region of Çemço and the guerrilla positions near Sida were attacked with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons at least 43 times on February 15 and 16.

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Earthquake in Kurdistan

The state is trying to prevent the incoming aid trucks

ANF | HATAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

Yasin Kaplan from TOP Earthquake Coordination Center, which distributes aid to the earthquake victims in Samandağ, in Hatay, said: “Even though 6 days have passed since the earthquake, the basic needs of the people have not been met. The state does not provide aid and it is trying to prevent the arrival of trucks carrying aid.”

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HDP MP Sarısaç: The state does not have any policy to keep people alive

ANF | HATAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP Van MP Murat Sarısaç went to Antakya and İskenderun, in the province of Hatay, after visiting Elbistan and Pazarcik, in the province of Maraş, where the epicentre of the earthquake was. He said that people in all these places were devastated.

Pointing out that the necessary intervention was not made and measures were not taken after the earthquake, Sarısaç said: “We see that the state left its people in the debris. Because how you act within the first 24 hours after the earthquake is very important, and unfortunately, until the third day, people themselves were trying to remove their relatives from the debris. The state did not come. The state was somehow not there.”

This state has no policies but war ones

The state’s war and security-oriented policies are the reason for the lack of action after the earthquake, said the HDP deputy, adding that “we clearly saw that the state has no policy to keep its people alive. There is great suffering. The earthquake is over, but people are staying out in the cold.”

Preventing aid from reaching people

Sarısaç said: “This earthquake caused people to leave Pazarcık and other places. There is still no action taken regarding this forced exodus. The lack of tents, necessary food, and the lack of medicine for the many elderly people cause people to go to other cities. Here in Hatay, people are trying to go to other cities, while the state is trying to prevent aid coming here. The state is preventing the most needed tents from reaching these areas. We believe that this is based on the policy of expulsion of Kurds and Alevis from their own lands and cities. Because, just as there is a policy of occupation at the borders, we are also faced with a policy of immigration.”

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AFAD prevents people from carrying out rescue work in many places

ANF | ANTEP | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

It has been a week since the earthquakes that occurred in Maraş and affected 10 provinces. The death toll is approaching 30,000, while rescue efforts are still continuing. HDP Van MP Muazzez Orhan has been in Antep (Dilok) almost from the first day of the earthquake. She told ANF that “when I arrived here the morning after the earthquake, 24 hours had passed and there were only two rescue teams, probably fire-fighters. People were in a really difficult situation. There are many injured, dead and people still under the rubble. The last time we wanted to go to the hospital was three days ago and visit the injured. But we could not see any hospital officials. But the prosecutors there said they were taking care of the dead.”

Orhan said that not the earthquake but the lack of coordination cost people’s lives. “The number of dead reached 30,000, and this is actually due to not being able to intervene in time, and not being coordinated, rather than to the earthquake. The institutions were unprepared and the coordination was very bad. There was serious chaos.”

Underlining that AFAD does not allow others to work, Orhan said: “I also went to Nurdağı, Hassa and Kırıkhan in Hatay. I talked to the crisis desk officer in Kırıkhan and he said that they could not intervene properly in the first two days due to incompetence. When we went there, there was a crane company called Özaras-Grup from Van for the first two days and it had pulled 28 people out of the rubble in the first two days.”

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HDP deputy Özsoy criticizes the government's response in the aftermath of earthquake

ANF | MARAS | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

The HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) Amed (Diyarbakır) deputy Hişyar Özsoy conveyed his observations and assessments after his visit to the earthquake-affected regions. Özsoy said that the accounts of earthquake victims and their own observations reveal that the state did not take any precautions.

“Of course, political discussions do not help during natural disasters such as earthquakes, but why did the government grant permission for such risky structures in the first place? Was there no building inspection? Were precautions not taken in advance? Why are contractors not controlled? Why doesn't the government help people after disasters?”

The HDP deputy added: “Earthquake victims say that debris removal work is very limited. There are still people trapped under the rubble. They kill people with thermal cameras, but they do not rescue survivors with the same thermal cameras.”

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Some injured children from earthquake areas are missing

ANF | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

Some children who survived the earthquakes in Elbistan, Maras, Pazarcik, Adiyaman, İskenderun, Hatay cities and their districts with injuries, are reported missing.

One of the missing children is Mukaddes Erva Aktaş who was pulled from the rubble at 11:00 on the first day of the earthquake in the 12 Şubat district of Maras. It is reported that there has been no news about her after she was taken to an ambulance.

Feyza Aktaş, aunt of Mukaddes Erva Aktaş whose sister and mother lost their lives, said: “We are worried. Information should be provided about whether she is alive or not. It would be enough for us just to know that she is in a hospital.”

While some rescued children were transferred from the earthquake areas to hospitals in western cities, no news has been received about the missing children.

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HDP MP Kurtulan: There is no state but popular solidarity in Pazarcık

ANF | MARAS | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP Mersin Deputy Fatma Kurtulan spoke to ANF in Pazarcık where Monday's earthquake caused great destruction. She said: "We know that there is no single injury from earthquakes in many places. Experts in Turkey have repeatedly warned the government about earthquakes, but no measures have been taken."

Kurtulan noted: "We asked for measures to be taken and for buildings to be checked in the Assembly following the Elazığ earthquake."

The HDP deputy continued: "The construction industry in Turkey is uncontrolled. We ask where the money collected for the earthquake went, but there is no answer. The government does not take these measures on purpose because it does not care about citizens' safety. The HDP has been helping people from the first day. Volunteers and aid supplies are piling up here, but there is no state. Citizens say that they have not seen the state. Some people trapped under the rubble died because of the cold weather as there were no rescue efforts. Everyone says that 'there is no state'. The survivors are hungry, thirsty and finding no place to shelter. It was the HDP municipality which first distributed hot soup. With the solidarity of the Kurds and their friends in other regions, the survivors remain alive. This state could not even provide water and bread for its citizens."

"Why was the state of emergency declared after the earthquake? They are still obsessed with bans. Instead of rescuing citizens from the rubble, the government blocked the press, the opposition and social media... This is a corrupt rule," added the HDP member of parliament.

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Kurdish Red Crescent aid convoy still denied access to Syrian earthquake zone

ANF | SHEHBA | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

The aid convoy of the Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor a Kurd) is still stuck at the informal border between the north|eastern Syrian autonomous zone and the regime area. The government in Damascus continues to deny the aid organisation access to the Syrian earthquake zone, although numerous people are waiting for help. Initially, half of the goods and at least one ambulance had to be handed over to the regime as a condition for continuing the journey, but Damascus is now demanding that the entire convoy be handed over to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). "This is unacceptable to us," said Fee Baumann, who coordinates Heyva Sor a Kurd's aid convoy. "We know how closely SARC works with the regime, and we also know that our aid will very likely not get where it needs to go if we hand it over."

Baumann has been trying to get a permit for the aid transport since Saturday. The Kurdish Red Crescent convoy consists of two medical ambulances and several trucks with relief supplies such as tents, blankets, medicine, food, baby food and water. The team also includes medical personnel, including doctors and paramedics. The destination is the city of Aleppo and the Kurdish districts of Sheikh Maqsoud (Şêxme-qşûd) and Ashrafiyah (Eşrefiyê) to the north of the metropolis, as well as the neighbouring canton of She-hba. But for the third day in a row, nothing is progressing. In the earthquake region with numerous un-treated injured people, however, it is important to get help quickly, said Baumann.

“It is inconceivable that the regime is exploiting political differences even in this situation,” Baumann said. “Countless people are waiting for help, many are still lying under the rubble of their houses, and it is bitterly cold. Add to that the danger of epidemics, which grows with every passing moment a week after the devastating earthquakes.” The aid worker is frustrated, but also angry. “We are standing here with a team that can help, but we are not let through. The regime and SARC are investing time and energy in dealing with a small aid transport instead of gratefully accepting the help. This shocks even us, although we already know the corruptness of the Syrian government's system.”

Doctors without borders convoy reaches disaster area

An aid convoy from the Doctors Without Borders was able to travel to the north-western Syrian disaster area on Monday. According to the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), a corresponding permit was granted after arduous and tough negotiations with the Turkish-Jihadist occupying power. According to Ciwan Mela Ibrahim, press spokesperson of the autonomous administration, the convoy consists of 32 vehicles with relief and medical supplies. Since last week, aid workers have been holding out near Manbij to bring aid into the occupied zone. The column's destination is not only Idlib but also Afrin.

Trucks with diesel are not allowed to pass through either

Dozens of AANES trucks, loaded mainly with diesel for heating and for fueling the clearance vehicles, as well as medicine and food, are still at the same point where the Kurdish Red Crescent is waiting for a transit permit. According to Fee Baumann, however, it is not only due to the Syrian regime that the emergency aid cannot reach the disaster area. “Turkey is putting pressure on Damascus not to let aid through from north-eastern Syria. Admittedly, we have always had problems getting aid supplies here. But we hoped that, given the situation, political differences would no longer matter.” In the meantime, they have been taught otherwise.

Death toll rises to more than 37.500

One week after the devastating earthquake in the Syrian-Turkish border region, the death toll has risen to more than 37,500. In Turkey alone, 31,643 people died and more than 80,000 people were injured, reported AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) on Monday. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the number of victims in Syria is at least 5,900. Thousands of people are still missing. The UN fears far higher numbers. There is little hope of finding survivors under the rubble.

Sancar: The rubble of government has fallen on our people

ANF | ANKARA | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Crisis Coordination Centre, which was established after the devastating earthquakes in the region around Maraş on February 6 and has been working in the disaster area for eight days, met in Ankara under the leadership of co-chair Mithat Sancar. The politician summarised the findings so far on the earthquake and the management of its aftermath in a comprehensive statement. Below are some excerpts of Sancar's statements at the meeting:

A pain difficult to describe

‘We are experiencing a pain that is very difficult to describe. We are in a time when words are stuck in our throats. The cries of the people and their growing, righteous anger will never be forgotten. The government is trying to deflect from their responsibility and incompetence by calling the earthquake a ‘fateful plan’ or ‘disaster of the century’.’

Precautionary measures were not taken in time

‘It is the behaviour and policies of governments and states that turn earthquakes into humanitarian and social disasters. Lack of precaution is one of these factors. Failure to take timely precautions is another factor. Failure to provide emergency aid and relief supplies in time is also one of the main factors that aggravate the destruction. The indifference and lack of coordination of the administration is the cause of the magnitude of the disaster. The main cause of the destruction is policies that focus on profitability and exploitation instead of people and society-centred administration.’

Disaster management was two days late

‘It would be absurd to speak of a disaster management plan by a government that erects dilapidated buildings in an earthquake zone and stands behind them. The most concrete indicator of the lack of a crisis management plan is the state of the disaster management agency, AFAD. The number of AFAD staff, excluding volunteers, is 5,982. Yes, the number of staff at the agency responsible for providing emergency relief to a population of more than 85 million is 5,982! Can a disaster management plan be prepared with fewer AFAD staff than the number of collapsed buildings? Of course, AFAD staff and volunteers carrying out rescue operations on the ground cannot be excluded from this work. Their efforts are beyond any kind of appreciation. AFAD staff and volunteers must be recognised. The problem lies in the mentality of the administration and the policies of the government. AFAD, which was supposed to be an emergency organisation and coordinating body, took up rescue operations only after more than two days, due to the incompetence and inability of incompetent leadership.’

Diyanet receives 4.5 times more money than AFAD

‘The measures to protect against natural disasters and calamities are never included in the budget targets. AFAD's budget is only TL eight billion 75 million out of a budget of more than TL four trillion in 2023. The share of the total budget is less than 0.5 per cent. Comparisons are always made because they are

striking, let us make the same comparison. The budget of the Bureau of Religious Affairs (Diyamet) is 4.5 times the budget of AFAD. This earthquake has shown that the AKP/MHP government is not prepared for disasters, but has a political mentality and preferences that multiply the destructive effects of disasters.”

Chaos in the distribution of aid

“Today is the eighth day of the earthquake disaster. Unfortunately, according to official figures, more than 30,000 people have lost their lives. There are still many collapsed buildings that have not yet been searched. There are places and villages that have not yet been visited. We have tens of thousands of people under the rubble. In the middle of this winter, people are left to their fate in the cold. The need for tents, stoves, blankets etc. is not being adequately met at the state and government level. There is great chaos and confusion in the distribution of aid. People in the earthquake region are trying to survive through social solidarity and aid.”

There is also something that does not collapse: Humanity

“There is great destruction, but there is also something that is not destroyed: humanity. It is standing tall. Civil society, millions of volunteers, individuals, intellectuals, artists, trade unions, businesspeople, political parties and local communities are mobilising for relief. Out of this great destruction, great humanity is once again showing itself. Such meaningful solidarity is the most fundamental way to heal our wounds. With this solidarity, we will ease our pain and heal our wounds.”

3000 activists coordinate HDP earthquake relief efforts

“As HDP, we immediately established our central crisis coordination centres in Ankara and Diyarbakır on the first day of the earthquake. In addition, we have transformed our election coordination centres in the provinces and districts where we are organised into local earthquake crisis coordination offices in order to work effectively in the earthquake regions. Currently, more than 3000 of our colleagues coordinate the work of thousands of volunteers. In addition, our caucus and our youth and women's councils are on the ground in their entirety. In the six provinces where the devastation after the earthquake was the most severe, our deputies are constantly and alternately working with our people to heal the wounds and alleviate the suffering.”

60,000 requests to the coordination centre

“To date, about 60,000 requests have been received by our coordination office. As a result, about 300,000 separate communications have been made. We have mobilised in all areas, from reporting to AFAD where people are under the rubble, to organising and delivering emergency aid to the earthquake zones. Our colleagues have personally participated in the rescue operations and continue to do so. We are trying to immediately relay the voice of every person who reaches us to every necessary agency. We will continue these efforts. Contact has been made with 12,322 disaster victims who have been transported from the earthquake areas to hospitals in Ankara, Mersin, Urfa, Istanbul and Kayseri for treatment and discharge. Supplies and material assistance continue to be coordinated.”

617 relief deliveries to the earthquake area

“So far, we have delivered 617 vehicles, including trucks and vans, to the affected provinces, districts and villages. Shelter has been arranged for 345 families. We have established four separate committees within Central Crisis Coordination: Technical, Transport and Shelter, Communication with AFAD and Communication with Provinces. Information received through the hotlines we have set up is confirmed by our colleagues and forwarded to AFAD and the provincial crisis coordination teams to ensure the provision of assistance. Our lines are manned 24 hours a day.”

The rubble of government has fallen on our people

“In the earthquake, not only ramshackle buildings collapsed on the people. The rotten order and corrupt power collapsed on our people. The rubble of the monist AKP/MHP government, which knows nothing but war, plunder, war, profit and lies, has fallen on the people. If the institutions of the state and the public are not available to the people in such times, when will they be?”

Border crossing to Syria must be opened

“Syria is also affected by the earthquake, especially the regions of Afrin, Aleppo, Latakia and Idlib are directly affected by the destruction. Due to the war in this region and the occupation position of gang groups, the struggle for survival after the earthquake is unfortunately taking place under very harsh conditions. A situation is emerging that is even more serious than the serious picture in our country. Previously, aid was transported through the Turkish border crossing of Cilvegöz [Bab al-Hawa to Idlib], but due to the destruction of the roads caused by the earthquake, the United Nations announced that it had stopped aid deliveries on the first day. After that, many countries called on Turkey to open its border gates for the rapid delivery of humanitarian aid. As we know, all Turkey's border gates to the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria are closed. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced on 10 February that 5.3 million Syrians have been left homeless by the earthquake. In this context, the uninterrupted provision of aid to Syria is crucial. International aid agencies are calling for the removal of obstacles to the delivery of aid. In the earthquake crisis, where a severe humanitarian tragedy is unfolding, the border gates must be opened immediately. This applies to all border crossings, and in particular the Mürşitpınar border gate to Kobanê must be opened for humanitarian aid.”

KCK decision to cease military actions is important

“The KCK's decision to remain inactive after the earthquake and similar decisions are important. In an environment where, on the one hand, an intense war is being waged and, on the other hand, all revenues are going to war, such a decision paving the way for the cessation of hostilities is important. Even if solidarity arises out of a disaster, it opens up new possibilities and new paths. We would like to take this opportunity to emphasise once again the value of dialogue and negotiation. The war and security policies of the state and government must come to an end at this time. We see this as an important step for the coming period.”

District Governor's Office orders search and rescue efforts to stop in Besni

ANF | ANTEP | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

The number of people who have lost their lives in the Maraş-centered earthquake continues to increase dramatically, and has now reached 32,000. There are still thousands of people under the rubble, yet the search and rescue efforts were hindered by the state authorities.

A person who voluntarily participated in the search and rescue efforts in Besni, in Antep (Semsûr), said that the Polish search and rescue team detected people alive in the 15 July Martyrs' Site, but the work was interrupted at night.

The aid volunteer said that when they went to the work area again in the morning, the debris site where they had detected people still alive had been moved and there were neither signs of living persons nor dead bodies.

The search and rescue volunteer, who asked the authorities about the situation said that the Besni District Governorate had ordered to collect debris.

After the order, the drivers of some construction equipment that participated in the search and rescue efforts protested and left Besni.

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13 schools in Kobanê damaged as a result of earthquake

ANF | KOBANE | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Bekir Cerade, from the Education committee, said that 13 schools were damaged as a result of the earthquake in Kobanê and that they will not start education until all 571 schools in the region are examined.

Education has been suspended in Northern and Eastern Syria since the first day of the earthquake. However, while schools were reopened in some regions on Sunday, schools in the Euphrates Region, Shehba as well as the neighbourhoods of Şêxmeqsêd and Eşrefiye in Aleppo have not been opened yet.

The Board of Education extended the holiday for schools in the regions for another week to ensure the buildings are safe.

Damage detected in 13 schools

Bekir Cerade, co-chair of the Euphrates Region Education and Training Board, told ANHA that “the earthquake affected schools in the region as well as many houses. We formed a committee of engineers to identify and evaluate the condition of each school.”

According to Cerade, 13 schools were damaged in the earthquake. “Our engineers said that the affected areas do not pose that much danger. However, just in case, we extended the holidays for one more week for the safety of our students.”

Education to start after all schools have been examined

Cerade said that the engineers will examine all 571 schools in the region and added that the earthquakes caused the most damage to Martyr Hogir and Martyr Seyd schools.

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Earthquake victims buried in mass graves in Adiyaman

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

On the 9th day of the earthquake, it came out that bodies pulled from the rubble are being buried in mass graves in the Besni district of Adiyaman province.

In footage taken by a volunteer working at a cemetery, it is seen that the bodies wrapped in bags are placed side by side in the mass graves built by Turkish soldiers and authorities and covered with earth by scoops.

Claims that the death toll is concealed is confirmed by the fact that no family members are seen in the cemetery during the mass burials.

The bodies pulled from the rubble are transported to the cemetery by trucks.

Another volunteer we interviewed revealed that some of the dead victims were refugees, that photos of other people were taken and uploaded on the Police Department's system so that their relatives can identify them from the photos.

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HDP volunteer in Pazarcik: Earthquake survivors are desperate, hungry and thirsty

ANF | MARAS | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

People's Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly members who have been taking part in search and rescue operations in Adana, Adiyaman, Amed, Gaziantep, Hatay, Maraş, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye and Urfa, which were heavily affected by the magnitude 7.7 and 7.6 earthquakes, spoke to Mezopotamya news agency.

Ferhat Pala, who arrived in Pazarcik district of Maraş from Van province, has taken part as a volunteer in the relief efforts in the area since the first day of the earthquake.

Pala said that they reached the area with 20 other volunteers. He added that there were no government institutions in the earthquake area, including UMKE (National Medical Rescue Team Unit) and AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency). Pala remarked: "When we came to the earthquake area, we saw the fact that the city was devastated, and survivors were miserable. Victims came to us and asked for help. We had nothing to rescue those trapped under the debris. People were criticizing the absence of the state, and their anger was huge. We stayed in Pazarcik for 7 days. We started to distribute aid coming from cities such as Batman, Mardin and Istanbul to the villages. We saw that people were still trapped under the rubble."

Pala continued: "Since we didn't have any equipment, we couldn't rescue survivors from the rubble. It was very difficult. Victims are desperate, hungry and thirsty. Despite the freezing temperatures, people still stay outside their houses. The tent problem continues. Since the first day of the earthquake, there have been no rescue teams other than the HDP and NGOs."

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Saçılık: The palace has been looting for twenty years

RONI ARAM | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

In Turkey, a racist hate discourse against refugees from Syria is raging after the earthquake catastrophe on 6 February. The agitation is not new and has been fuelled by the Erdogan government for a long time. Especially in the province of Hatay, with its cosmopolitan population, there have been violent excesses involving not only state security forces but also dubious groups with a nationalist and jihadist orientation. Hate comments against Syrian and Afghan refugees are spread on digital networks and videos of brutal attacks are published.

Speaking to ANF, Veli Saçılık, co-spokesperson of the HDP Migration and Refugee Commission: "There are many Syrian refugees in Hatay. According to our colleagues on the ground, they were living in the

worst and most destroyed houses, and many were buried under the rubble. At the same time, we also know that the survivors participated in the rescue work.”

Saçılık noted that counter-propaganda is being used here to absolve the AKP and “the palace” of their responsibility: “An environment of disinformation is being created. The discourse of ‘migrants looting houses’ is meant to divert society's anger. The aim is to create an atmosphere in which racism and even torture are legitimised, the AKP can block aid, including HDP trucks, and people are at the mercy of religious associations and foundations.”

Saçılık emphasised that the AKP and the palace have mainly engaged in plundering in the last 20 years: “They are the cause of this destruction. All these developments, especially the hate speech and lynching against refugees, are a means to cover up the crimes of the AKP and to shift the responsibility for the destruction onto people who have nothing to do with it and are even victims of it. There are news reports that the migrants are taking tents and relief goods with them. We personally sent our colleagues from here to the region and they told us that for the first five days there were no tents at all. There was no proper aid for the first five days. The people who went there to help and support were turned away by the disaster management agency AFAD, and the police. They were told: ‘Go away from here, go back home, there is nothing to do here.’ The reports of looting are deliberately spread rumours.”

Contrary to the news, it is highly problematic for refugees to access aid, Saçılık stated, and went on to say: “If they die, we won't even know they are dead because most of them don't have identity cards. The situation is very serious. People are lying under the rubble and bulldozers are entering the destroyed buildings to remove the rubble. Since we don't know who that person is and whether they are dead or not, we can't register them. These people live a life of nothingness and are humiliated.”

Veli Saçılık also pointed out that there are many members of the so-called “Free Syrian Army” (FSA) and other gangs in the Hatay region who even cooperate with the state: “For some reason, the reactions are never directed against these people. We know that the aid for Syria that comes through here is looted by them. We keep getting messages like this. For some reason, there is no reaction to what these Salafist gangs are doing in Syria and to the fact that they are travelling under state protection in Hatay and practising any kind of lawlessness they want there. The reaction is against people who are working there and fighting for their livelihood and their lives.”

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Mithat Sancar: Every collapsed building is a crime scene

ANF | MALATYA | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP Co-Chair Mithat Sancar travelled to the earthquake area himself after the meeting of his party's crisis team to coordinate aid and participate in the work on the ground. The politician made a statement in Malatya) on Tuesday, stating the following:

“Everywhere we go, we see the scale of destruction. Earthquakes are a natural phenomenon, but the consequences are political. The government and its supporters constantly claim that it is not a political problem, but only a major natural disaster, but this does not correspond to reality. To get a picture of reality, you have to go to the places where people live. You have to talk to the people and be directly on the ground. We are here and we see it with our own eyes. If you look at the president and other representatives of the government since day one, the words that come out of their mouths are nothing but threats and insults. Today, too, the junior partner of the government [MHP] threatened everyone. But the people who are being insulted and threatened are the ones who are standing up for the people that are suffering from this destruction. They are the organisations and individuals who are putting together a great solidarity to meet the urgent needs of the people.”

“Our most important instrument is solidarity”

Sancar went on to say: “People and organisations from all over Turkey and different countries of the world are here out of solidarity. The scene we see now in the Ören district is a good example of how people heal their own wounds with solidarity. These efforts are an example for all of us. The same solidarity continues elsewhere. It is our own strength that keeps us on our feet in this matter. It is also our own strength and the will of the people that will stop the government’s policy of destruction. We cannot choose any other way than solidarity to reduce the pain. Our most important tool to heal the wounds caused by this destruction is solidarity. It is about working together. Society in Turkey has shown a strong will in this regard. There is a real spirit of mobilisation. We must realise that this solidarity gives us not only comfort but also hope in the midst of all this suffering. Solidarity is important to alleviate suffering and heal wounds, but it is also our greatest source of hope to build the future on justice and rights.”

“We will demand accountability”

The HDP has been working continuously since the earthquake, Sancar said: “Since the first day, our colleagues have done their best to go everywhere they could. But we are not doing this alone. There are volunteers, democratic organisations, professional organisations, workers’ organisations, people from different circles. We will heal these wounds by joining forces and we will definitely demand accountability for this destruction. What comes next is also very important, because debris removal has now moved away from the goal of saving lives. After this time, the possibility of getting people out of the rubble alive has unfortunately become very, very remote.”

“Every collapsed building is a crime scene”

Sancar stressed that all collapsed buildings must be treated as a crime scene. The arbitrary, hasty removal of the rubble has the serious consequence of destroying evidence, the HDP co-chair said: “This evidence is very important to expose the responsibility of individuals and contractors as well as authorities and the government at the top. Together with labour and professional associations, our legal department, bar associations and legal institutes are working on this issue. Now we need to coordinate these efforts more. We must prevent the tampering of evidence. We must make efforts to hold those responsible for this destruction accountable. Colleagues here on the ground have also noted this. Still, no help has arrived from the state here.”

“All the help is coming through solidarity networks”

“All the aid that comes here is delivered through solidarity networks. It is this spirit of solidarity that keeps us going and enables us to build a better future. If we join hands, we will ease the pain, heal the wounds and work together for the future of a world where there will be no such devastation. We must unite not only to repair the consequences of destruction, but also to change this order based on corruption, profit and plunder. The pain is the pain of us all. We offer our condolences once again to all those who have lost their loved ones. We wish God’s mercy to all those who have lost their lives. To the survivors, we wish patience and offer them more solidarity and more resistance.”

From Malatya, Mithat Sancar will travel to Adiyaman to see for himself and participate in the earthquake relief.



70 percent of buildings in Adiyaman destroyed or damaged

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

The earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on 6 February, were particularly devastating in the city of Adiyaman (Semsûr).

Some 70 percent of the buildings in the city center were destroyed or damaged and some 11,000 thousand people lost their lives there.



MP Hatimoğulları: Disinformation in earthquake-hit areas intends to displace local people

ANF | HATAY | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) deputy Tülay Hatimoğulları, who is in Hatay to offer help for the earthquake victims, raised concern over the widespread disinformation in the earthquake-hit areas.

The HDP MP said “I would like to address all our people affected by the earthquake. There is rampant disinformation and fake news. Of course, we should take our security measures against looting, but one of the goals of disinformation is to accelerate migration, especially around Antakya, Samandağ and Defne.”

She added: “We will not migrate; we will not leave our lands. As survivors, let us never lose our hopes to render this place prosperous again and let us continue our struggle for life. Please, no one should choose migration unless they have valid grounds, unless they have a patient. Let's stay in our hometowns and build new living spaces together again.”

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State-backed gangs sabotage solidarity work in Elbistan

ANF | MARAS | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

In the district of Elbistan in Maras province, where the epicentre of the two successive earthquakes on 6 February was located, the coordinated solidarity work of the HDP and the left-wing organisation Partizan is being sabotaged by state-backed gangs. The increasing attacks are apparently intended to drive the volunteers out of the region.

The volunteers told ANF that refugees were initially targeted by the attacks. In recent days, the aggression has also been directly directed against the work of the HDP and Partizan. The volunteers said that initially a young Syrian man, to whom they had brought relief goods, was subjected to a lynching attempt. He was chased by twenty people and shots were fired. The young man sought refuge in an Alevi community centre. His pursuers besieged the centre with racist slogans and demanded his surrender. The chase ended only when HDP members intervened and declared that the Syrian was not a thief. The police then agreed with the management of the Alevi centre to maintain a permanent presence at the centre and to patrol the surrounding area.

Shortly after the earthquake, the HDP and Partizan volunteers started to use a room of the community centre as a warehouse for relief goods and to build shelters for earthquake victims inside the centre. The management of the Alevi community centre made it clear from the beginning that they did not agree with this and reportedly did not respond to attempts to talk.

The volunteers say that the management of the community centre could not take direct action against the support for the earthquake victims and therefore cooperated with the gangs in Elbistan. For example, one person came to the camp and complained that he was not being helped. Another person then insulted the volunteers and the atmosphere became increasingly aggressive. When the HDP members tried to calm down, another person called the police and claimed that his father had been attacked. After some efforts, the HDP managed to avert the provocation attempt. The community centre management nevertheless demanded that the HDP vacate the camp.

The volunteers assume that their work is sabotaged because of their Kurdish and revolutionary identity. However, they are determined to continue the solidarity work. Meanwhile, the management has also brought soldiers and so-called “village guards” into the Alevi community centre. The paramilitary village guards are from Urfa and tried to talk to and interrogate the volunteers while they were collecting rubbish from the garden of the community centre.

In addition, the volunteers reported that they are being observed by the anti-terror police. Even drones are used for this purpose. The police have also questioned earthquake victims about the solidarity work. There is also a conspicuously high military presence in the city.



Damascus allows aid sent by Autonomous Administration to earthquake victims to pass

ANF | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

Sadiq Al-Xelef, co-chair of the General Administration of Fuel and Member of the Northern and Eastern Syria Crisis Desk, said on the Autonomous Administration's website that the humanitarian aid convoy sent by the administration to the earthquake victims entered the areas of Aleppo under the control of the Damascus government.

Al Xelef said 100 fuel tankers were heading to Aleppo.

It is worth remembering that another aid convoy is waiting to pass through the Um Jilud gate between Manbij and occupied Jarabulus.



Turkish authorities seize HDP crisis coordination center in Pazarcık

ANF | AMED | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

The Pazarcık District Office has confiscated the crisis center set up by the HDP and regional associations in the village of Hasankoca to coordinate earthquake relief. District Administrator Mustafa Hamit Kıyıcı came to the center accompanied by military officials and announced that he would appoint a coordinator to the work. The HDP members and other volunteers refused to accept the decision and left the center with loud protests.

The co-chair of the Democratic Party (HDP), Pervin Buldan, called a press conference in a hotel in Amed (Diyarbakir) after the relief supplies were confiscated and sharply criticized the prevention of relief measures for the earthquake victims.

Pervin Buldan and other HDP MPs in Amed

“Our volunteers spent ten days trying to distribute the aid supplies that had arrived to the people of Pazarcık from a large warehouse in the village of Hasankoca. According to the information we received a few hours ago, the trustee and the district governor of Pazarcık, together with the local authorities, stormed this building and the warehouse where the relief supplies were collected and threatened our volunteers with arrest,” the Kurdish politician said on the matter.

The state wants to stop the HDP aid campaign

Buldan pointed out that the state wanted to stop the HDP aid campaign. “Those who have been absent since the earthquake began, especially in the first few days, and have not helped our people in any way, have now started an initiative asking for help and in particular to stop the HDP aid campaign. I would like to appeal to the government: while people are suffering from hunger, cold, earthquake, major disaster, it is not in anyone's power and no one has the right to prevent this aid. We will continue to do our best to ensure that the population is supplied with aid. Nothing justifies the repression, the obstruction of aid and the appointment of a trustee. We will never allow the aid provided by the HDP, NGOs and other parties to be prevented by government agencies or attributed to themselves.”

For the first two days, the state was nowhere to be seen

Buldan continued: “In the first two days after the earthquake, the police, government and military were nowhere to be seen. Now we see soldiers, law enforcement and local chiefs going there to raid warehouses and stop aid. That is unacceptable.” Aid deliveries from other provinces organized by the HDP were blocked from the beginning, and entire trucks were confiscated by the AFAD disaster control agency.

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Adiyaman turned into a ghost town after earthquake

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

Adiyaman (Semsûr) was one of the cities that suffered the most damage from the 7.8 and 7.7 magnitude earthquakes, which affected 11 provinces on 6 February. The epicentre of the earthquakes was in Maraş.

In Adiyaman over 635,000 people lived, but the images shot on the 10th day of the earthquake, while the debris removal work continues, show a ghost town...

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Turkish government obstructs and confiscates humanitarian aid for earthquake victims

ANF | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP's Co-spokespersons for Foreign Affairs, Feleknas Uca and Hişyar Özsoy, released a statement reporting about the Turkish government's obstruction and confiscation of humanitarian aid for earthquake victims.

The statement released by the HDP's Co-spokespersons for Foreign Affairs on Thursday includes the following:

“While people are experiencing unbearable pain due to the earthquakes that killed tens of thousands of people and left millions homeless, the government of Turkey has been ineffective in rescue missions and in responding to vital needs of people such as food and shelter. Overcoming its initial shock and panic, the government is now using emergency rule powers to cover up its failures by hindering or unlawfully taking over the collection and distribution of humanitarian aid organized by NGOs, political parties, or ordinary people across the country.

From the first day of the earthquake, NGOs, especially trade unions and community associations, political parties, and private citizens have mobilized to help earthquake victims in the ten affected provinces. The HDP has joined these efforts by organizing and delivering humanitarian aid and establishing crisis desks in all ten provinces. However, the government has been preventing us from distributing the aid to the victims by raiding our warehouses and confiscating the aid we have collected. Four trucks carrying aid sent by the HDP's Crisis Coordination Center to the earthquake areas were confiscated and one truck was sent back. The government's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) in Adıyaman, a place that has suffered huge destruction, seized a truckload of tents sent to the victims by the HDP.

The police seized another truck carrying aid from Izmir to Osmaniye and detained three people, including the driver. 85 stoves and a truck containing tons of wood and coal sent from Siirt and Batman to the Nurdagi district of Gaziantep were also seized by AFAD, and the aid we collected was emptied into AFAD warehouses in Gaziantep. And on February 15, the district governor, accompanied by the police and gendarmerie, appointed a government 'trustee' to take over the Crisis Coordination Center that we had established in Hasankoca village in Pazarlık, the epicenter of the first Kahramanmaraş. The Center was delivering humanitarian aid to the victims in the district and over one hundred villages around it. HDP's volunteers in the town were forced to leave the town to avoid detention.

The government is destroying civilian networks of social solidarity and cooperation by abusing state of emergency powers. These confiscations seek to monopolize all humanitarian aid in the hands of the government and hide the government's ineffectiveness in responding to the crisis.

We invite the international community to closely follow the government's destruction of the networks of social solidarity and humanitarian aid when they are needed the most by the victims. Despite all obstructions of the government, the HDP will continue its efforts to provide urgent aid to the victims.



Autonomous Administration withdraws aid after continued Turkish obstruction

ANF | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) prepared 30 trucks of fuel and 20 trucks of humanitarian aid to be delivered to the occupied areas after two devastating earthquakes centered in Maraş province in North Kurdistan (Turkey) inflicted great damage to the border region on February 6.

Despite the efforts of the Autonomous Administration to reach the earthquake victims since February 8, the Turkish state, pursuing political motivations, did not allow the passage of the aid convoy. International delegations' attempts to resolve the problem also remained inconclusive.

After 9 days, the Autonomous Administration withdrew the aid convoy from the Umm al-Julud crossing, located between Manbij and occupied Jarablus, reported ANHA on Thursday.

A statement on the matter is expected to be made soon.



What's going on in Hatay?

ANF | HATAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

While theft and looting intensified in Hatay after the devastating earthquake on February 6, in parallel with the reports of torture by the civilian paramilitary forces and armed forces of the Turkish state, the police crackdown on revolutionary patriotic organizations has increased.

Attempt to steal aprons

The Turkish state forces are trying to stir trouble between the earthquake survivors and revolutionary patriotic organizations which have been on the field since the first day of the earthquake in Hatay. The Turkish state forces attempted to steal aprons from revolutionaries at night in order to put the blame for the theft and looting on the revolutionaries.

Speaking to ANF, the revolutionaries on the ground stated that in one of these repeated attempts of theft, they saw how someone involved in the machination was caught and beaten. The person in question then ran away to the policemen who protected the man and reacted to the revolutionaries, saying, "Are you attacking the police?"

While civilian paramilitary forces and police failed to steal aprons from revolutionaries, a person visited the revolutionaries a day after the incident and said, “You are working well, give me your apron, I will work with you”. When the revolutionaries became suspicious and questioned the person, the police came to the area and took the person away.

The revolutionaries stated that the incident was not an isolated one. They noted that they were to be blamed in the event of someone getting caught stealing with their apron on. According to the revolutionaries, the police are attempting to drive a wedge between them and the earthquake victims.

Attempts to defame revolutionaries

In the meantime, it came out that some people affiliated with pro-government aid organizations tried to defame the revolutionaries by telling the earthquake victims “They are terrorists, do not take anything from them.”

A person who came to the area where revolutionaries were distributing aid, told the revolutionaries that they were being defamed by pro-government aid organizations. When some people on the ground reacted, the police threatened to detain them.

Anti-terror police and MIT agents in city

It is reported that the Turkish state deployed anti-terror police and MIT (Secret service) agents to the city on the fifth day of the earthquake. The anti-terror police and MIT agents, stationed near the areas where revolutionaries and patriots deliver aid to survivors, began to monitor everyone entering and leaving these areas. It is reported that these people, who are patrolling on the side streets in civilian vehicles, pursue people in the areas where revolutionaries distribute aid, ask for their identity cards, and threaten to detain them.

MIT-linked associations

Apart from the pro-government associations and foundations which started to come to the city on the third day, there are also other people walking around wearing the aprons of the MIT-affiliated Meskhetian Turks Associations (Ahıska Türkleri Dernekleri) and the Conquest Foundation (Fetihler Vakfi). Members of the so-called Meskhetian Turks have been placed in AFAD tents, which are not provided for the earthquake survivors. They are helped by Turkish soldiers when unloading the aid materials delivered to them. Their team consists of 50 people who provide meal only once a day.

It is reported that members of the Meskhetian Turks and the Conquest Foundation ask for the phone numbers of the earthquake victims and try to get information about the work of the revolutionary patriots who distribute aid in the city. An earthquake survivor told our agency that a member of the Meskhetian Turks asked him to gather information about the revolutionaries, and that they did not speak again because he did not accept it.

It is further reported that some people wearing aprons of the state-run Diyanet Foundation gave orders to the police.



No electricity, water, stove and toilet in tent camps in Iskenderun

ANF | HATAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

The shelter problem has not been resolved yet in the Iskenderun district of Hatay, which was struck by a massive earthquake on February 6. Electricity, water, heating and toilet problems continue to exist in the tent camps established by the Turkish Red Crescent and the state-run AFAD in certain parts of the district. It is reported that new containers are being assembled in some points of the district.

In the camp established near the rubble and debris in the district bazaar in Pınarbaşı neighbourhood, mostly Syrian earthquake survivors reside. Residents of the camp said: “There is no electricity or water. Most importantly, there is no toilet. Maybe it is not a big deal for men, but it is a big problem for women. We have to stay here because we have no place to go.”

Another citizen stated that they barely found a tent. “We are not provided with tents. Officials tell us to go to the camps. However, there is no electricity or water in the camps. When we asked for containers, they replied that they are giving them to house holders. We have been left to our fate.”



‘Closure of Til Kocher border crossing is part of genocidal policies’

ANF | QAMISHLO | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

The Syrian-Iraqi border crossing Til Kocher (Al-Yarubiyah) has been kept closed since the beginning of 2020, following the veto of Russia and China at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council.

Rojava Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) Executive Board Member Ebîr Hesaf spoke to ANHA about the political background of closing the Til Kocher border crossing for humanitarian aid and opening the border gates under Turkish occupation.

Hesaf noted that the ruling states used the earthquake in Turkey, Rojava Kurdistan and Syria for their political interests.

Syrians deprived of humanitarian aid

Hesaf stated: “At a time when political issues should be put aside and the humanitarian situation should be given priority, aid delivery to the occupied Jindires district of Afrin is denied. The delivery of aid and rescue teams is prevented. The situation is the opposite in the regions where pro-AKP people are present.”

Hesaf emphasized that it was a historical shame to block aid to the Syrian people and to prevent the aid organized by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) for the earthquake victims. Hesaf condemned the closure of the border crossings so as to prevent humanitarian aid for the earthquake victims. She said: “The closure of Til Kocher crossing should be condemned by the United Nations. The region where thousands of families reside in camps is subjected to invasion attacks. There are areas in need of urgent humanitarian aid, but they do not see it.”

Hesaf commented on the political background of the closure of Til Kocher Gate: “The United Nations have a finger in it. The gate is kept closed to please the Turkish state, although the need for its opening is obvious. Turkey, the Syrian regime and Russia do not want this crossing opened because the Autonomous Administration will be officially recognized if it is opened. They do not want the Autonomous Administration recognized.”

Hesaf stressed that the closure of Til Kocher crossing was part of a plan to massacre and crush the people of the region, and an attempt to render the regions of North and East Syria unrecognized. “Unfortunately, the crossing was not opened even after the humanitarian disaster caused by the earthquake,” she noted.

“The people of the region have been resisting for years. The people of North and East Syria have organized themselves. But the depreciation of the Syrian lira against the US dollar affects this region as well. Syrian currency is used there, so the Til Kocher crossing must be opened.”

Hesaf concluded by calling for all means to be used wisely, and for popular solidarity to be strengthened in response to attacks and conspiracies.



HDP co-chair Buldan calls on Erdogan and his entire cabinet to resign

ANF | MARAS | 16 FEBRUARY 2023

The HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) Co-Chair Pervin Buldan called for Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's resignation following the earthquake disaster in Turkey. The Kurdish politician visited today with other MPs the earthquake victims in Pazarcik district of Maraş, the epicentre of the 6 February earthquake, and participated in the distribution of relief goods. The earthquake relief work of the HDP and other opposition organisations has been systematically obstructed by the state for days. In Pazarcik, a crisis

coordination centre set up jointly by the HDP and local associations was occupied by the military on Wednesday and placed under state supervision.

Buldan said that the HDP's solidarity work will continue without interruption despite the state blockade. "We can heal these wounds together, we can create the means to secure peace in Turkey through solidarity," said the HDP co-chair. She said that her party has been working with thousands of volunteers since the earthquake to assist those affected: "We have given them aid, we have tried to heal the wounds together. We have mobilised to rescue people from under the rubble. This solidarity and unity continue."

Pervin Buldan continued: "Both the people of Pazarcik and our party, together with non-governmental organisations and professional associations, collected materials in a warehouse. The relief materials delivered by trucks were unloaded there and then distributed to all the villages. There was a way to distribute all the materials to the people in the villages. That was real solidarity. It was a mobilisation to heal the wounds together. Last night, the district governor confiscated and usurped the relief materials on orders from above. To prevent solidarity and cohesion, the building was seized and a trustee was appointed. The trustee concept is not new in this country. Since the day the elected mayors in our municipalities were replaced by trustees, the AKP/MHP government has spread this concept all over Turkey."

Buldan noted there are only six HDP-ruled municipalities left in Turkey. All other cities and municipalities where the HDP won the local elections are under trustee administration. "If our mayors were not in prison today, our people would not have so many victims to mourn. All our municipalities would have been mobilised," the HDP co-chair stressed.

Buldan stated that she had come with an aid truck and would continue to do so in the future: "If attempts are made to stop us, then we will find ways to provide aid to our people on our own terms." In any other country in the world, the government would have resigned after such a disaster, Buldan said, calling on the president and his cabinet to resign: "If this government had a conscience, they would have resigned by the second day at the latest. However, they don't have the face to resign, and they don't have a conscience either."

Ten days after violent earthquakes hit the Turkish-Syrian border area, the official death toll has risen to more than 42,000. In Turkey, about 36,200 people died, according to the disaster service AFAD. From Syria, the World Health Organisation (WHO) last reported around 6,000 dead.

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Kesen: HDP mayors replaced by trustees are helping earthquake victims

ANF | MARAS | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) mayors who were replaced by state-appointed trustees have been working in the party's Crisis Coordination centres set up in the areas hit by the earthquake. One of these

mayors is Davut Kesen, who was elected by the people to co-lead the Kayapınar Municipality. He, like dozens of other mayors, has been replaced by a trustee.

Kesen Davut Kesen has been helping the victims of the earthquake since the beginning. He spoke to ANF about the current situation in Maraş and the HDP aid efforts.

There is no state to help people

Davut Kesen said that when they arrived to help, immediately after the earthquake, they were faced with the absence of the state. “The people first, and then the HDP have been helping the victims. We saw neither trustees nor municipality officials. People can’t get back to their houses that have been heavily damaged. That’s why we immediately looked for tents. We have a lot of experience due to the fact that our region is subjected to earthquakes. Big and small aid come to the region from every village. It is important to collect the aid in one center in order to better meet the needs of the victims.”

The government showed its racist mentality once again

Pointing out that the state does not exist anywhere except in the center of Maraş, Kesen said: “There have been trustees since 2006. But in 2019, the HDP won in most of the region and what has been done? Five months after the elections, trustees were appointed to most of our municipalities, except for 6 districts and towns. Today is the 8th day of the earthquake and it seems that AFAD tents have just started to arrive. The mentality and racist behavior of the current government showed itself once again in the region. One cannot even find words. This racist mentality showed itself in Hatay, Maraş, Malatya, Adıyaman and in Diyarbakır. The state gave some help in the center of Maraş and that was it.”

Pointing out that while the main duty of the municipalities is to support people, Kesen underlined that neither the trustees nor the AKP and MHP municipalities provided any support to the people in the field. “We are in Maraş right now. Although Maraş Municipality is in the hands of the AKP, the mayor himself has not even come to meet the victims. While he should have mobilized everything in his power here, he did not.”

Kesen said: “Our Silopi friends are mobilized in Pazarcık with their means. We also set up a soup kitchen here. Same in Malatya. We serve three meals a day here. As HDP people, we got organized based on our previous experiences.”

‘We won’t leave our people alone’

Kesen continued: “We will continue to help our people and we will mobilize all our resources. All of our mayors who have been replaced by trustees work in the field. If our municipalities had not been taken from us, maybe we would not have lost many lives in this way. At the very least, we would have made significant efforts to avoid all these casualties.”

1,464 unaccompanied children after earthquake

ANF | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

The Turkish authorities made a statement regarding the situation of unaccompanied children who were affected by the two Maraş-centered earthquakes.

The statement said: “There are 1,464 unaccompanied children and 759 children under treatment. 79 children were taken into care after their treatment. 626 were handed over to their families after identity checks. We have 1,197 children whose identities have been identified and 267 who have not.”

On the other hand, it is also claimed that unaccompanied children in the earthquake region were given to organ mafias.

Children and Women First Association announced that it will file a criminal complaint regarding the allegations. In a statement, the organization said: “We had many reports of missing children, but it has been revealed that the children pulled out of the rubble could not be returned to their families for various reasons. Now we see that children are handed over to people who introduce themselves as their families, even though they can't say the day, place, apartment they were missing from. According to what was conveyed from the field, there are examples where our children who were rescued from the rubble were not notified to official institutions and recorded.”

We will protect our children

The statement added: “We will not allow the tragedy of our minors to be exploited by mafias or criminal organizations, nor will we allow them to be abused. Sects and congregations are a disaster for our children as big as an earthquake. But we will protect our children.”

The association called for participation in the press conference they will hold after the criminal complaint they will make at the Antalya Courthouse today.

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Turkish authorities say 38,044 people lost their lives in earthquake

ANF | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) issued a statement regarding those who lost their lives in the earthquake.

The statement said that after two earthquakes with a magnitude of 7.8 in Maraş Pazarcık and 7.7 in Elbistan, 4,734 aftershocks occurred, and 38,044 people lost their lives.

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Earthquake victims in Adiyaman: We have nothing left

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

Adiyaman (Semsûr) has been heavily affected by the two earthquakes with epicentre in Maraş, that occurred on 6 February. 80 percent of the city's buildings collapsed or suffered heavy damage. The survivors of the city have migrated either to the metropolises or to the villages. Speaking to ANF, earthquake survivors demand that their needs be met, and said that even tents have not been provided.

Nedim Dinç: We have all suffered in this earthquake. It rained for two days. If it weren't for the rain, maybe so many people wouldn't have died. For three days we waited by the fire in wet clothes. It was the governor's responsibility.

The governor said there was only one collapsed building and one damaged building. For two days, we rescued people by our own means. I brought a pickaxe and hammer, and pulled out the wounded from the rubble. I also pulled out three dead bodies. No one came to Adiyaman for two days. The city was completely destroyed by the second earthquake.

I took the children to Siverek. I rented a house. I'm here to get my stuff and I will also go there. I will live there. What should we do? Everyone emigrated. Nearly 200 of my relatives died. Adiyaman was destroyed.

Gulê Aydın: We were able to escape. We were scared. We are on the streets. We are in tents, in front of the fire. We have nothing. Everyone needs food, a tent. Our houses were destroyed.

No tents yet

Gaffure Aydın: We are victims. We're lying around, sleeping in the car. They are bringing some aid, food supplies, blankets, etc. but it's not enough. How can we live without a house? We are on the streets with children, we are sick. We ask the government to find us houses. Tents have not arrived yet. Many people have died, but at least those who survived should be able to continue to live. No aid came to Adiyaman for the first three days. If it had, so many people wouldn't have died.

The state doesn't go to the villages

Murat Bayır: There are many ruined houses in the village. We need tents, wood, coal, dry food, diapers. Everyone is a victim right now. State officials may go to the city center, but they never visit the village. We have nothing left. There are 28 dead in our village. Since the people in the city moved to the village, the problem was even bigger. There are 11 people staying in a tent.



Lausanne Municipality makes a donation to Heyva Sor to help earthquake victims

ANF | LAUSANNE | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

In a brief statement, the Municipality of Lausanne said that there was an urgent need for help for the population affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and therefore donated a total of 80,000 francs to Heyva Sor a Kurdistan and Mediar to be delivered to the victims of the earthquake.

“Following the severe earthquake that hit southern Turkey and northern Syria on Monday, 6 February, - said the statement - our municipality has decided to provide emergency assistance to assist the affected population. 80.000 francs were allocated to Medair, whose headquarters are in Ecublens and to the Swiss Kurdistan Red Crescent (Heyva Sor) whose headquarters are in Lausanne. The two organizations operate in both Turkish and Syrian territories and provide the population with urgent shelter and basic needs.”

Lausanne Municipal Committee member Sevgi Koyuncu said: “The assistance provided by the municipality for earthquake victims is very important.”

Derya Çelik, another Kurdish municipal committee member, underlined the importance of the donation. Çelik stated that efforts should be made to push the Turkish state to allow the aid of non-governmental organizations to pass.

Increased support for Heyva Sor campaign

On the other hand, support for the campaign launched by Heyva Sor a Kurdistan for earthquake victims continues to increase. Kurdish women living in Zürich sold their home-made food at a stand in Albisriederplatz and donated the income to Heyva Sor. The Kurdish friendship group Kocharal visited the food stand. Kurdish friends in Kocharal sold the items they had collected among themselves in the market and donated 1,500 Francs to Heyva Sor.

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Campaign member and Mathare Social Justice Center Coordinator, Kenyan Gacheke Gachihi, visited the stand, as did Indian and Colombian activists.

All activists called on everyone to join the campaign launched by Heyva Sor a Kurdistan for earthquake victims.



Volunteers in Batman open their homes to earthquake victims

ANF | BATMAN | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

After the earthquake with epicenter in Maraş that hit 11 provinces, the Labor and Democracy Platform, which includes HDP and unions, continues to help the earthquake victims in the Crisis Coordination Center they set up in Batman (Êlih).

The Platform, which is working with 150 volunteers, said that dozens of trucks were delivered to the earthquake zones in coordination with the HDP members who have been in the areas affected by the earthquake since the very first day.

The platform said that they communicated with the families one-to-one, and that help was provided according to what everyone needed.

293 families reached in 5 days

The spokesman for the Platform said that 1,561 people from 293 families reached them within five days, and were given aid.

The spokesmen also said that many people approached them offering houses to rent and some even offered money to pay for the hotel for some families.

The Platform said that some of the families who came to Batman initially went to AFAD officials, but AFAD did not take care of them.

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MP Çepni: Earthquake turned into a disaster because of government policies

ANF | ANKARA | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP İzmir MP Murat Çepni remarked that the state responded to the earthquake very late and seized the aid organized by non-governmental organizations. He added that the government regarded the aid mobilization as a threat to itself.

ANF interviewed Çepni as he continued to help the earthquake victims in Malatya on the 11th day of the devastating earthquake on February 6. The HDP deputy stated that Doğanşehir and Akçadağ districts and villages suffered from major destruction. “There has been massive destruction and deaths in the centre of Malatya and Akçadağ. There have been huge casualties in the villages as well. Of course, the destruction in the villages is slightly different from the cities. For example, there were also problems with transportation

to villages due to the snow and the freezing temperatures at nights. Furthermore, aid materials were delivered to the villages very late. The victims struggled against both the earthquake and the cold weather.”

Government blocks aid organizations

Çepni said that his party has faced many obstacles from the government since it arrived in the earthquake-hit areas. He remarked: “Immediately after the earthquake, we went to the affected areas. Aid trucks from all over Turkey were unloaded in our warehouses and we delivered them to the villages we visited. This work is still ongoing. Yet, the government is blocking our efforts. For example, tents are confiscated, but it is not known where they are sent to. Sometimes, the earthquake survivors bring materials from the surrounding provinces on their own. They, too, are confiscated and prevented. The state, which was not fast enough to save lives, regards the non-governmental aid as a threat to itself.”

People could have been saved even with bare hands

Çepni emphasized that if the state had supported the solidarity of the people in Malatya, as in many other cities, there would not have been a huge death toll. He continued: “In villages, people were trapped under old single-storey village houses. Normally, the state has the capacity to reach here quickly with its own forces. In other words, if the state had been able to reach these villages with tools, equipment and manpower, these people could have been rescued even with bare hands. This was not done. State institutions reached here almost on the 4th day. Contrary to the state propaganda, if there were no voluntary organizations, the death toll would have increased even more. Therefore, the state considers the elimination of its own shortcomings by the people as a matter of survival.”

Disaster is political

Çepni stressed that the earthquake turned into a disaster due to the bad policies of the government. He concluded: “The disaster stemmed from political choices. This is not a natural disaster. This is the result of the state's unpreparedness, lack of plans, rejection of scientific facts and the policy of disorganizing the people. The corrupt policies of the government led to this disaster. The issue is not just the heating and shelter problems of the victims. The issue of how these destroyed cities will be rebuilt is also important. The government says that it will do it within a year. It still regards the matter as a construction issue. However, it may take a year to examine and scientifically analyse the destruction. Is the government going to build these cities in places where earthquake fault lines pass? Will it rebuild cities elsewhere? All these issues need to be understood and explained. Therefore, we aim to discuss the reconstruction process in cooperation with scientific institutions, scientists and democratic mass organizations. The HDP will bring all these issues to the agenda.”

Three communists from Greece detained in Hatay

ANF | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

Three communists from Greece went to the Armutlu district of Hatay, one of the 10 provinces that suffered devastating damage as a result of the Maraş-centered earthquake on February 6.

The communist volunteers, who had been taking part in search and rescue efforts for four days, were taken into custody by the Turkish anti-terror police without citing any reason.

The Greek volunteers, named Alexis, Tahsis and Mihail, were handed over to the Foreigners Department.

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HDP MP Dede: Earthquake left 80 percent of Adiyaman devastated

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

The 7.8 and 7.7 magnitude earthquakes that struck 10 provinces in Turkey and North Kurdistan killed more than 38 thousand people in Turkey alone. Although 12 days have passed since the earthquake, tens of thousands of people are reported to be still under the rubble. Non-governmental organizations, especially the HDP, are continuing to help the victims in the earthquake-hit areas that the state has left to their fate. In 10 provinces where the Turkish state disregards human life, search and rescue efforts have been brought to an end and the removal of the debris has begun.

In the meantime, the AKP-MHP government is trying to take advantage of the disaster. The fascist Turkish government is blocking aid from the HDP and non-governmental organizations and seeks to make profit on the reconstruction of buildings in the earthquake-hit areas.

HDP deputy Sait Dede, who has been in the area since the first day of the earthquake, spoke to ANF about his observations.

Adiyaman devastated massively

Dede remarked that the HDP responded to the earthquake in an organized manner from the first hours of the earthquake. He said: “We immediately turned the election coordination units established in all our provincial-district organizations into crisis coordination. I mostly stayed in Adiyaman. When we reached the city, we saw that it was terribly devastated. We realized that there was absolutely no organization and coordination. It was not clear who was doing what. 80 percent of the city was in ruins. In the first days, there was no electricity. After three or four days, only some districts were given electricity. Thousands of people were under the rubble and others who were rescued were waiting outside in the cold weather. Res-

cue efforts started on some wrecks on the second day, and on some other wrecks on the third-fourth day. But the efforts were very insufficient.”

Government was not present in earthquake areas

Dede said that people everywhere were complaining about the state’s non-existence. He continued: “There was literally no one around. But volunteers began to come to Adiyaman from all cities. Aid trucks began to arrive from all parts of the country. In fact, the government was almost non-existent during the first three days. In the meantime, the non-existent government was trying to block volunteers and aid deliveries. Despite all this, solidarity was at its peak. People did everything they could. But unfortunately, people’s capacity was very limited because construction equipment and professional rescue teams were required. The death toll would have been much less if intervention had been made in an organized manner on time. When we went to the rural areas, we saw that some villages had not been reached by rescue teams for three or four days. People tried to pull their relatives from the rubble by their own means and by volunteers. The survivors were waiting outside in the freezing cold. The government was not present there. There were no tents, no shelter, no heating. There were only aid materials brought by the volunteers. There were the peoples of Turkey and NGOs. There were people coming from Hakkari, Şırnak, Mardin, İzmir, İstanbul, Mersin, Adana and Samsun. State officials appeared much later.”

Solution lies in democratic local governments

“Thousands of people in the earthquake area told us that they had heard the voices of their relatives trapped under the rubble during the first days, but later, their voices were not heard anymore because there was not early and correct intervention. There are still thousands of people under the rubble. Now, there is a serious need for winter tents, containers, hygiene materials and dry food. Unfortunately, our observation in the field shows that the death toll is much higher than officially acknowledged. Because there was no record, the people buried their relatives immediately. A system based on profit, corruption, war and exploitation collapsed and thousands of our people died under the rubble. The strict centralism of the nation-state blocked even tents and rescue efforts. We have seen once again with great pain that the solution lies in democratic local governments.”

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Ahmet Türk: Disaster caused by the government is greater than the earthquake itself

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

A delegation consisting of HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) Spokeswoman Ebru Günay, Kurdish politician Ahmet Türk, DTK (Democratic Society Congress) Co-Chair Berdan Öztürk, DBP (Democratic Regions Party) executives and HDP deputies have today joined the relief efforts in Adiyaman.

The delegation visited Adıyaman Cemevi (Alevi place of worship) where donations are collected, and the kitchen established by the Çınar Municipality.

Speaking here, Ahmet Türk said the following: “Today we are on the 12th day of the disaster. Unfortunately, our people are facing a great disaster. According to our research, tens of thousands of people lost their lives in Adıyaman alone. Unfortunately, the governor of this city does not know about the city’s residents. The Governor of Adıyaman is not even aware of the scale of the disaster. When we came here, there was not a single effort to rescue people trapped under the rubble. But our people, not only Kurds, but all those from all over Turkey, came here. In particular, NGOs, left-wing political parties and the HDP have tried to reach everywhere since the first day. But the state blocked NGOs and opposition parties.

As you know, the government seized the place where our friends collected aid in Pazarcık district of Maraş. They even appointed a trustee there. We want to reach the villages, but they are trying to prevent it. They confiscate humanitarian aid supplies. The disaster caused by the government is greater than the disaster caused by the earthquake. The government has remained irresponsible for days. There has been no coordination for days. Many state institutions stopped their work because they waited for instructions from a single man. No rescue efforts were made for two days while people were under the rubble. This was the biggest disaster.

However, no matter what they did, we have tried to reach every place together with our people. Our party is making great efforts, not only in Adıyaman, but also in Pazarcık, Maraş, Elbistan, Hatay, Gaziantep, together with non-governmental organizations, pro-democracy people and academics. No matter what they do, we will try to eliminate all these troubles and pains together.

Speaking after, Ebru Günay said: “The state could not rescue our people trapped in Adıyaman and could not send aid teams. It did not send tents. It condemned the survivors to hunger, thirst and cold weather. From the very first moment, as the HDP, we have worked to help the earthquake-stricken areas and mobilized to provide help. From the first day, we have been in every city hit by the earthquake. We have carried out our work together with our volunteer friends there. Today we are in Adıyaman Cemevi. Special thanks to Adıyaman Cemevi for opening its doors to us.

There is a huge crowd here right now. At the same time, a meal center organized by our Diyarbakır Çınar Municipality is providing service here. Out of more than 50 municipalities, we only have 6 municipalities that were not appointed trustees, and they mobilized from the very first moment to deliver aid to the earthquake victims. If our municipalities had not been usurped, we would have healed the wounds of the earthquake victims and our people who faced the disaster by now. Unfortunately, we have seen very clearly for the last 12 days that the government will not heal these wounds. Furthermore, the government is trying to prevent the help of philanthropists and volunteers. This government is creating new wrecks. However, we will continue these aid efforts together with the Democratic Society Congress, Peoples’ Democratic Congress, DBP and all our components.”

Human Rights Violations

Gendarmerie tortures a person to death in Hatay

ANF | HATAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2023

Some civilian groups, police and soldiers tortured and killed people who were allegedly stealing.

Ahmet Güreşçi and Sabri Güreşçi were taken into custody by the gendarmerie in the Büyükburç District following a raid on their house. Ahmet Güreşçi was brought to the hospital from the police station. He died in the hospital.

Other people taken into custody, told lawyers that Ahmet and Sabri Güreşçi were tortured by the gendarmerie, and that they suffered fractures in their ribs and wounds on their faces. In addition, the gendarmes threatened the detainees with rape.

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HDP files criminal complaint against authorities for torture against civilians

ANF | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

In a written statement, the HDP said: “Our Law and Human Rights Commission as well as our party lawyers, filed a criminal complaint against public officials and non-public officials who personally committed and/or participated in the lynching attacks and torture that developed as a result of the perception created by the government while the Turkish society was trying to heal the wounds of the earthquake.”

In the criminal complaint, proceedings were requested for “torture and harassment crime”, “misuse of office”, “willful injury”, “deliberate killing”, “insult”, “deprivation of liberty”.

The criminal complaint pointed out the violation of both national and international legislation and said: “The images published on social media, people who are presumed to be law enforcement officers are torturing some civilians they claim to have committed crimes such as theft or looting. We see that torture is praised and instigated.”

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Turkish soldiers beat refugee asking for help for his children trapped under the rubble

ANF | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

Hatay is one of the cities hit by the 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes on February 6. In the city, where Syrian refugees and the Arab Alevi population predominantly live, soldiers and policemen subject earthquake victims to violence and torture the citizens, blaming them for looting.

In a video sent by volunteers of the HDP Crisis Coordination, a refugee living in Hatay talks about the violence he was subjected to. The refugee, whose face and eyes are swollen, says: “On the day of the incident, a team from China carried out search and rescue operations with devices in the building debris. There were also press workers. Rescuers identified signs of life under the rubble. I have two children trapped under the building where rescue efforts have taken place. The team needs a digger or crane to continue. The soldiers here used violence against me when I voiced these demands. My two children are still trapped under the rubble.”



HDP files criminal complaint concerning earthquake

ANF | ANKARA | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP’s Law and Human Rights Commission and party lawyers filed a criminal complaint against officials who issued unsupervised zoning permits and public institutions, organizations, individuals and contractors who neglected building controls and are responsible for the devastation in Maraş, Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Hatay, Malatya, Adana, Amed, Osmaniye, Kilis and Urfa, the cities affected by the earthquakes.

The criminal complaint requested punishments for the following officials and institutions:

Those who caused an increase in the death toll as a result of late, incomplete or incorrect search and rescue efforts,

Relevant municipality and ministry officials who did not carry out building inspections,

Officials who issued occupancy permits and residential used licences for the buildings that collapsed following the earthquakes,

Contractors who build the destroyed buildings and those who were involved in preparation of architectural plans, projects, drawings and calculations and their implementation,

All kinds of technical officers, building inspection officers and related persons who were involved in the construction phase of the destroyed buildings,

Authorities who approved zoning plans without considering fault lines,

Persons and institutions that issued building registration certificates in defiance of building standards as part of the building amnesties.

The criminal complaint demanded that all the accused in question be punished for deliberate killing and injury and destroying property.

The complaint also requested authorities to take urgent measures to prevent the suspects from escaping or hiding.

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İzmir Bar Association: Right to life violated in earthquake-hit zones

ANF | İZMİR | 14 FEBRUARY 2023

The İzmir Bar Association reported the problems experienced in Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Adiyaman and İskenderun, which were affected by the Maraş-centred earthquake on February 6. A delegation, consisting of a group of 6 lawyers including the head of the İzmir Bar Association, Sefa Yılmaz, revealed their observations in the earthquake region at a press conference at the bar association headquarters on Tuesday. A statement was read out by Yılmaz on behalf of the delegation.

Right to life violated

Yılmaz said that the rescue efforts of the state-run AFAD were limited in the earthquake area and could only be carried out on the second day of the earthquake, adding that the right to life was violated.

Yılmaz listed the problems in the region under the following headings:

- It is getting more difficult to obtain news. The Internet is insufficient. A social media shutdown was introduced. Earthquake victims could not communicate with their relatives. The right to communicate has been violated.
- Field Hospital is now being established. No medicine. There is no space for medical intervention.
- The right to accommodation has been violated. Tents and containers were not delivered. The tents erected by citizens were removed on the grounds that they were not in accordance with the procedures.
- There was severe discrimination in the first four days; minority religious groups were ignored. Violence and torture have increased due to hate speech.

- Our aid supplies were confiscated by AFAD officials in order to distribute them from a single centre. The aid of NGOs was not allowed, except for certain pro-government religious communities and orders.
- There have been violations of rights related to judicial proceedings. Prosecutors were sent to the region after a week to collect evidence, to allow burial services and to investigate into lootings. The İzmir Bar Association is making efforts to send 20 lawyers to Hatay.
- An epidemic may erupt in earthquake-hit areas in the near future. Widespread looting was observed in the first four days. Afterwards, there has been violence, including murders against people who were accused of looting.
- There has been an effort to change the demographic structure of the region. It is claimed that 400 thousand survivors will move to İzmir city. They are coming to the cities of Antalya, Mersin, Ankara, İzmir. Other regions will also attract migration. It is not possible to solve this problem in a short time.
- No foreign aid is coming. There is a serious need for the state capacity which remains unavailable. People trust NGOs, not the state.



No exceptional circumstances justify torture, says human rights organizations

ANF | 15 FEBRUARY 2023

The Turkish Medical Association Human Rights Department, Human Rights Association and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) said in a written statement that “no exceptional circumstances, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture.”

The wounds, individual and social destruction caused by the earthquakes that struck on 6 February 2023 in 11 provinces with a population of 13.5 million people are deepening with each passing day.

According to the official statements, in these 11 provinces (Adana, Adıyaman, Antep, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Hatay, Kilis, Malatya, Malatya, Maraş, Osmaniye and Urfa), where search and rescue operations are still ongoing, the number of people who lost their lives increased to almost 36,000 and the number of people injured to 105,000.

The human rights associations said: “We would like to express once again that we feel the pain of those who lost their lives deeply and intensely in our hearts. We extend our condolences to the whole society, especially to the relatives of those who lost their lives, and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.”

The human rights associations added: “We have mentioned in various statements the serious problems in search and rescue operations, health services and aid provided to survivors, and the lack of coordination proportionate with the gravity of the disaster and drew attention to human rights violations. We have particularly underlined that the heavy pain and destruction caused by the earthquake can only be overcome by upholding the principles and values of human rights and by increasing social solidarity.”

The human rights associations underlined that “the human factor has a great impact on the destruction caused by earthquakes due to the failure to fulfill the scientific requirements of earthquake preparedness, serious mistakes, negligence and misconduct/corruption before and after the earthquake. Therefore, the consequence of the earthquake must be regarded as a grave violation of human rights in itself. Therefore, the human rights perspective should be the guide not only for political power but also for society in dealing with all the problems caused by the earthquake.”

Writing about the violations of rights reported from the earthquake zone, the human rights associations said: “We have been watching with horror some of the images of violence and torture shared on social media, which are in need of confirmation. Especially after the political authorities’ statements defending the declaration of the state of emergency on the grounds of preventing “alienators” and “looters,” the increase in such allegations and reports of such violations is quite thought-provoking. We observe with great concerns that the security measures and sloppy rhetoric of criminalization are rapidly turning into discrimination, hate speech and violence, including torture and other acts of ill-treatment. These developments are directly destroying what we need most today: Social solidarity, the only way to heal wounds. Despite all the ostentatious and assertive rhetoric, the delay in the support and relief efforts due to the insufficiency of public power, which has increased the number of those who lost their lives, and the justified anger that has arisen in society as a result of the this, has been misdirected at the wrong targets and hate crimes against asylum seekers and refugees who are also survivors of the earthquake, the declaration of some people as “looters” without concrete evidence and information, and the use of violence amounting to torture and other acts of ill-treatment without due application of law are not acceptable in any way.”

call on the authorities to fulfill the obligations of universal law, which Turkey has accepted in the framework of the UNCAT’s warning and reminder, and to maintain respect for human rights.

The statement ended with a call:

- “Authorities at all levels should abandon discourses that praise and encourage torture and torturers, and the political authorities should immediately condemn acts of torture unequivocally before the public in line with the recommendations of international mechanisms at the highest level and provide assurances that such acts will not go unpunished.
- Documentation and reporting of torture should be done according to the principles of the “İstanbul Protocol”, a UN document.
- Allegations of torture must be investigated in a swift, effective and impartial manner by independent committees, and international ethical and legal rules must be followed at every stage of judicial proceedings.
- Procedural safeguards must be fully implemented in conditions of detention.

- The presidential decree of 11 February 2023, extending the detention period from four to seven days in places where a state of emergency has been declared, should immediately be withdrawn.
- The state of emergency must be lifted without delay.
- In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that we will resolutely continue our active duty in the identification and documentation, reparation and legal processes of torture and other ill-treatment allegations, and we would like to remind that those who have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment may apply to our organizations.”

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Interview

Duran Kalkan: 2022 was the year of women’s resistance

ANF | BEHDINAN | 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Duran Kalkan, member of the KCK Executive Council, about the most important developments in 2022, strengths and weaknesses of the different parts of the global democratic forces and likely developments for the year 2023.

We would like to start by asking you what you think the most important event of 2022 for the system was? What kind of a year was 2022, especially for Kurdistan and the Kurds, but also for the Middle East and the world? And what are the possible developments in 2023?

At the end of the year, important events of 2022 are being discussed. Various circles are evaluating the year from their point of view, trying to draw lessons from it. As a movement, we mostly make our evaluations within the framework of the plans for our own struggle. Throughout the year, we have many important days, such as the anniversary of the foundation of our party [November 27], Newroz [March 21], the anniversary of the August 15, 1984 offensive, the anniversary of the International Conspiracy [February 15] and the struggle against it. Therefore, we don’t only have one, but many new years in the course of each year. Consequently, we make our evaluation of the year according to the calendar which is based on our struggle.

It is important to evaluate the year 2022: A year of great resistance and a year of war. We can clearly say that in the course of the last year important results have emerged in the world and in Kurdistan, and important experiences have been made. The struggle and the war are now entering a new year. This, of course, is happening on the basis of the results of the struggle in 2022. The new year will unfold accordingly. We can therefore say that 2023 will be a year full of new developments.

The most important event of 2022 for the system of capitalist modernity was undoubtedly the Ukraine war. It started on February 24 and has been continuing for almost a year now. We can say that this war has completely shaped 2022. But it would be wrong to therefore conclude: 'The contradictions and conflicts of the system of capitalist modernity only unfolded in Ukraine. Consequently, the Ukrainian war determined everything and contradictions or conflicts in other areas did not exist'. On the contrary, the center of the system is the Middle East. The center of the contradictions and conflicts, the center of the crisis and chaos experienced by the system of capitalist modernity is the Middle East. Capitalist modernity did not start the Ukraine war after having solved its problems in the Middle East. On the contrary, it began this war after having failed to solve them. In the summer of 2021, the forces of capitalist modernity fled from Afghanistan and were forced to hand over the country to the Taliban. In February 2022, with the help of the Ukraine war, capitalist modernity started to try to maintain itself in the existing crisis-ridden and chaotic environment and transform certain contradictions into new ones. Today, all the contradictions and conflicts of the Middle East still continue. And the same can be said about other parts of the world.

Russia and the United States need to be understood as the driving forces behind the Ukraine war. Even though there is a Ukrainian government, even though it is regarded as an actor in the war and even though NATO, and therefore Europe, has also been involved in various ways, the US and Russia appear to have paved the way for this war. The US-Russia relations, contradictions and conflicts have clearly led to the Ukraine war.

The war started with Russia's attack on Ukraine. But the original aim of this attack was not to create a state of war like the current one. In fact, the Putin administration had aimed to topple the Zelensky administration. With a one or two-day attack, or even a limited operation, it wanted to overthrow or take over the government and thus put an end to the anti-Russian politics of Ukraine. But Russia did not succeed in this. And this was not because of the Zelensky administration. Rather, the US and NATO have made Russia's operation fail. What started as a limited operation has now turned into a months-long war. At times, this war intensified and at other times the intensity of the military conflict decreased. The war has concentrated on certain parts of Ukraine and the country has suffered heavy destruction. The NATO states and Russia have tested important weapons in the course of this war. They have emptied their arms depots. Thus, arms monopolies have made new sales. The trade of military goods has accelerated, leading to considerable profits.

In terms of the military outcome, the following can be noted in the case of Russia: Some of its plans have failed. It has so far seized and occupied a few parts of Ukraine close to its own border. It has also challenged the US and NATO. Russia has entered into a war with them and has thus tested itself militarily. The Zelensky administration has not achieved anything. Some say that this administration has proved itself. Yes, it has proved its servitude and dependence on NATO and the US. Most recently, Zelensky had a meeting with US President Biden. This is probably his biggest achievement. In military-political terms, it is the US that has achieved clear results. Besides the gains of the arms monopolies, we can say that the US is the power that has made certain gains.

In the past, French President Macron had said that NATO was brain dead. In fact, NATO had been in a state of disintegration. Through the war in Ukraine, the US reorganized NATO. NATO has now reestablished its effectiveness. With Sweden and Finland joining NATO, this alliance is now being broadened. Also, the US has achieved a confrontation between Europe and Russia to a certain extent. It has created a situation of contradiction and conflict. Previously, there had been contradictions and conflicts between the

Biden administration and the Putin administration. Now, the US has involved Europe in this conflict. These are the results achieved so far.

On this basis, the US had actually planned to go even further. Based on the developments in NATO and the war in Ukraine, it wanted to create a Saudi-centered alliance against Iran in the Middle East. It also wanted to form a broad alliance against China in the Pacific. The US tried to take steps in this direction with the Biden administration focusing greatly on both areas. Biden himself made many visits and held various meetings to achieve this. Some have called this 'the 3 NATOs of the US': by creating a Middle East NATO and a Pacific NATO their plan was to create NATO-like alliances against Russia, China and Iran in all these different regions. This is the point we have reached politically today.

Militarily, the conflict is undergoing a rather slow period right now. The two sides have not reached a ceasefire. NATO says that the war will continue. Russia is in favor of ending the war because there is simply nothing more it can do. But the US wants to continue in order to preserve its above-mentioned achievements. It also wants to involve Europe in all this. This is the outcome of the Ukraine war at the end of 2022. How long will this last? How far will it go? These are issues worth discussing. Will the current state of NATO continue? More importantly, will the US be able to maintain the Europe-Russia contradictions and conflict in this form? This is debatable both at the level of states and societies. Russian society does not approve of war. In the near future, European societies will show a stronger opposition to the current situation, especially due to the gas-energy crisis caused by the Russia-Europe conflict. Therefore, the states will no longer be able to pursue this policy. Europe cannot sustain such a protracted state of war with Russia. If the US tries to impose this on Europe, it will lose. Therefore, the current situation does not seem to be of a permanent nature. Yes, this war has led to certain results, but they are not likely to turn into anything permanent.

Germany's foreign minister recently went to the United States and offered to 'share leadership'. Years ago, the US itself made this proposal to Germany. Now, the current German government has responded positively to take over responsibility for the system. Germany has also announced certain decisions concerning its military. It is important to follow closely where this attitude of Germany will lead, because this could have dangerous consequences. If the German capital really started to follow such an approach, this would be the third attempt [after World War I and II]. This could lead to dangerous consequences. Therefore, the contradictions in this area will continue too. The US has already made France a little more active. It has also detached the UK from the EU and made it act more closely towards itself.

On the other hand, the alliance in the Middle East has not worked. The US wanted to create it with the help of the Saudis. But this hasn't worked at all. It has simply failed. There are discussions about whether the US will completely withdraw from the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has recently held talks with Iran and, shortly afterwards, with China. In this context, there are people saying that China will further reduce US influence in the Gulf. The US has clearly not been able to create an anti-Iran alliance of Arab states together with Israel. This project also looks like a fiasco.

The Pacific alliance against China has existed for a while to a certain extent. China-US tensions have been a reality for quite some time and will continue in various forms. But China – in contrast to US-American attempts – does not want to confront the US. The Chinese leadership has declared this openly. They are waging an economic struggle. China has also said that it will improve its defense capabilities, but it does not want to pursue the same policy as the US policy of turning China and the USA into two opposing

blocs. It wants to prevent various circles from taking sides with the US against China. Rather, China seeks to establish relations with everyone. The country is economically and militarily powerful. And it will continue to increase its influence.

In light of all these developments, what the US seems to have achieved with the Ukraine war does not seem to be of a very permanent, long-term nature. It seems like all this won't last. There are the issues of China and Russia, while the problems in the Middle East continue as well. Germany wants to get more attention and is taking steps accordingly. Meanwhile, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) gathered recently. This has made clear the following: Some people calculated that the world would turn into two blocs, like the Soviet-US blocs during the Cold War. But there is no such formation of two blocs because today there exist a great number of powers globally. The primary contradictions and conflicts of capitalist modernity have deepened. There are many centers, and the contradictions between them are increasing. The process that we refer to as World War III continues by intensifying ever more. The system does not possess the strength to get out of its crisis and chaos. For the system, there is simply no way out. Therefore, it is very obvious that the current state of war will continue. The system does not have a solution. It cannot find the exit. Its crisis and chaos are substantial. There is no way to alleviate the system's state of chaos. Capitalist modernity wants to continue its rule and prolong its life with the help of wars such as the one in Ukraine. It wants to wage wars like the one it started in the past in various areas such as Iraq or Afghanistan, i.e. low intensity wars in different regions. This is the state that the system of capitalist modernity finds itself in today. It does not have the power to get out of World War III. Quite to the contrary, the system can only try to prolong its life on the basis of the current crisis and chaos, i.e. by continuing these low-intensity wars. In this sense, the contradictory and conflictual situation will continue. The system has no way out. It does not seem capable of overcoming this situation with its own strength. This is up to the anti-systemic forces [i.e. the democratic forces]. This has become clear once more. What does this mean? There were the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq. The US and NATO withdrew from Afghanistan. When this happened, everyone expected that there would be no more wars. But what happened in the end? The Ukraine war started shortly afterwards. This means that this system cannot stay alive without war. It rules humanity based on the threat of war. This is how capitalist modernity maintains its hegemony. It constantly produces war. It cannot get out of this circle of war and conflict. Everyone has come to understand this a little better now.

There was also the time before [the Ukraine war] when the system produced diseases. There was coronavirus, and before that there were the bird flu and the swine flu. This system produces all kinds of germs. Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] says [in his 5-volume book *Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization*] 'the system is a cancerous system'. This is a very important conclusion. Capitalist modernity produces disease, war and many more threats and dangers for humanity. People have come to realize this more and more. For example, people all over the world have suffered from coronavirus. Some monopolies have made a lot of profit through this and the states have achieved greater control over society. Workers and whole societies have been subjected to even more intense exploitation. They are more oppressed and controlled today. The control of intelligence services and states over people's lives has increased. Under the rule of capitalist modernity, the world is being turned into a prison. Meanwhile, a handful of monopolists are making profits. They benefited from the coronavirus, the war in Afghanistan and are now profiting from the war in Ukraine. The arms monopolies and war barons are making huge profits. But the suffering of societies continues to increase. People are being exploited, their lives have become unlivable and they are leading a life in hunger. This is the current situation of the system of capitalist modernity. These are the consequences of 2022 and the Ukraine war. Basically, there is nothing new on the Western front. Capitalist

modernity has nothing new to offer, nothing to alleviate its crisis. It does not have any sensitivity for democracy. Everyone had expected the Biden administration to be a little more open to democracy. Biden made a black woman vice president. People had hoped that this administration would be more open towards women's freedom, the freedom of peoples; that it would act a little more democratically, or rather be more sensitive to democracy. We also looked at the first images of this administration and thought so too. If these expectations had become true, we would have wanted to use them, to approach this positively. But what we have seen in practice is more war, more diseases and a deepening crisis and chaos. We have seen nothing in terms of sensitivity to democracy. The contradictions and conflicts, crises and chaos of capitalist modernity are deepening. And it is clear that they will continue to deepen even more.

Let's talk about 2022 a little more. What was the last year like for the forces and the movements of democratic modernity around the world?

Yes, this is an important question. In 2022, there was various new developments with regards to the forces of democratic modernity. Not so much in quantity, but rather in the form of increasing ideological depth and qualitative developments. And there have also been certain quantitative developments.

The women's liberation struggle undoubtedly stands at the forefront of all these developments. The women's liberation revolution continues to spread around the world. It is spreading in terms of consciousness, organization and action. We have seen this clearly in the past year: women's resistance and struggles in every field took place all over the world, in almost every country. Even in countries considered backward in relation to modernist standards, there was women's resistance. Women continued to demand freedom and organize themselves. We saw this in Africa, Asia, North and South America and in the Middle East. The Kurdistan Freedom Struggle is based on the women's freedom revolution. In 2022, we saw the effects of this on Turkey, Arabia and Iran. Based on the slogan 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî', which spread from East Kurdistan [West Iran] to all of Iran, the women's freedom struggle has made itself known to the whole world. It has thus given a global scale to the ideological framework of this struggle based on Leader Apo and the revolutionary slogans of Kurdish women. Many people have said before that the 21st century will be the century of women. In fact, the year 2022 has proven this with all its developments and actions. In Africa, the Arab world, Iran, Kurdistan and Turkey and in other parts of the world, from India to Latin America, very effective women's actions took place last year. There is a development with regard to women's consciousness of liberation. In the past, they used to demand women's rights, the struggle against harassment and rape and more women's achievements. Now the demand for women's liberation, equality based on women's identity and the women's freedom revolution are being expressed loudly. Demands in this direction are being formed into programs. The Jineolojî developed by Leader Apo continues to spread around the world. The man and woman created by the hierarchical and statist system are dissolving. Jineolojî codifications are unraveling them more.

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that there is a deepening of consciousness and organization. This is not only a reaction to the crisis and chaos of capitalist modernity and the oppression, persecution, harassment and rape by the male-dominated mentality and politics. Rather, there is an ideological attitude, a state of consciousness that strives for a democratic society based on women's freedom. This is very important. Leader Apo has developed the most comprehensive analyses of this issue. Jineolojî, has unraveled all the codifications of the 5000 year old male-dominated system of power and state, and even of the hierarchical period before that. It has developed a holistic understanding of what women's freedom means, thus

showing how a democratic society based on women's freedom can develop. These ideas therefore need to be more widely spread.

And there are also processes of organizing. There are women's organizations in many fields. They are based on consciousness, struggle and organization. In 2022, the rulers of capitalist modernity held their meetings and the UN – although with great difficulties – tried to maintain itself as a meeting place of states. In the case of the forces of democratic modernity, it was the women's liberation movements that made efforts to organize at a global level by holding several meetings with this aim. World women's conferences in Tunisia and Berlin took place under the slogan 'Liberating Life' and important discussions were held there. Two international meetings were held in a single year with women from 30 to 40 countries. They are all organized in the different places they come from. Today, the women's movements are discussing the situation of global organizations with a louder voice. They are discussing building a Global Confederalism of Free Women. This is what their current agenda and discussions are focused on. This is the level of organization they have reached today. Other circles are not this far yet. In terms of the forces of democratic modernity, the only force with this level of organization is the free women's movement. This is very important and meaningful. We attach great importance to this. Indeed: 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî! Woman is life and life must be free! Democratic society must be organized around free women. This is the meaning of 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî'. We can clearly see a development on this basis. Just as the Paris Commune marched under the slogan 'Freedom, Equality, Fraternity', now the women's liberation revolution, as the vanguard of the 21st century, has made 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî' the revolutionary slogan of the 21st century. Thus, women are definitely reaching their true identity. As the representatives of life itself, they are claiming their real place in life and society. Thus, life must be free. Anything not free cannot be called life. Humanity cannot accept any other kind of life. A democratic society can only be formed around free women. It cannot be formed in any other way. This is a global development. It is a development that increasingly defines this century.

At the same time, there is a serious decline in terms of youth. There are several issues in this context that we need to criticize. There are issues that need new initiatives. The youth of the past was different. It is not at that level anymore. It does not have the position it used to have both in terms of consciousness, organization and action; in terms of being a global power.

On the other hand, in terms of the workers and laborers, the class contradiction and the oppressed classes, the following can be said: They are waging a certain struggle at the level of unions, parties and associations. But these class movements are stiff and dogmatic. They have not been able to renew themselves according to today's requirements. For example, they have not developed an ideological and organizational stance that can be an answer to the women's liberation revolution, to a democratic society on the basis of women's liberation. Trade unions have not been able to renew themselves, just like the old parties. Therefore, their global relations and alliances are weak. They exist mostly at the level of individual countries. But they need to be renewed. They need an ideological and theoretical renewal and a restructuring of their organizations. It is also necessary to create a global organization on this basis.

In the past, environmental movements played an important role and recently the green movement has made significant progress. They also tried to create a global movement. Thus, they emerged as an important means of struggle against capitalism in terms of protecting nature and drawing attention to climate change. But lately, this movement has been rather weak. A part of the green movement has been integrated into the system based on the approach 'we will become a political party'. They have turned to organizing in the form of parties and to becoming political, but not based on a democratic society. Rather, in

the sense of becoming integrated into capitalist modernity, of becoming a part of power and the state. They can indeed become part of all this. I am not criticizing them for this. I am not saying that they should not take part in state administrations at all. But if they had taken part in this as an alternative force, as a part of democratic society, they would have been able to contribute to the struggle for freedom and democracy. Instead, they do this by becoming a little bit more part of power and the state. Therefore, the ecology movement has made steps backwards ideologically. In this sense, it has become divided. Forces that become part of the system in this way cannot adequately fight against the looting of capitalist modernity and its destruction of nature and society. For example, in Germany, they [Green Party] are part of the government. The German foreign minister is trying to turn Germany into a partner of the leading forces of the global capitalist system. It considers this as a good policy. But we cannot observe any democratic attitude towards the oppressed. Such an attitude is very weak among them. They have features that make them become increasingly part of the state and power system. In this respect, the ecology movement has lost a lot of its strength. This makes it necessary to re-evaluate these movements. The state of the green movements needs to be evaluated and discussed. It is necessary to oppose the tendencies among them that opt for integrating into the state and power, i.e. their tendency towards becoming parties and political. Opting for this tendency should happen based on democratic society.

The ecology movement itself has also shown serious weaknesses. Other movements, parties, revolutionary democratic forces are limited to their own countries and therefore not in a position to develop a regional or global identity. They are weak when it comes to renewing themselves. They talk by heart, are dogmatic and stiff. They are weak when it comes to evaluating the new world, understanding current developments and producing comprehensive solutions. In terms of ecology and women's liberation, there is a need for more intellectual deepness and a mentality revolution. Current approaches to these issues are superficial and narrow. The approach to women's liberation, for example, is not revolutionary and comprehensive. So is the approach to ecology. That is why they cannot clarify, deepen and concretize the issues of revolution, power and the state, democratic society and free life. They are thus unable to break away from power and state. Those who cannot do this reproduce the system of power and state. No one can say 'the other's state is bad, but mine is good'. What guarantees that your state is good? After all, the state is an instrument of oppression and exploitation. This is how all socialists define the state. This has been the theoretical approach of socialists from the beginning. Eventually, they fooled themselves with approaches like 'my state is good'. If they had defined the state correctly, if they had stuck to their definitions, they would have understood it as an instrument of oppression and exploitation. They would have realized that the instrument of freedom, democracy and socialism cannot be the state; that freedom, equality based on diversity, sharing and communalism can only be realized on the basis of democratic governance and a democratic society. In this sense, the forces of democratic modernity need theoretical and ideological clarification. Leader Apo's analyses are very revealing, eye-opening and guiding. Everyone needs to read, study and benefit from them. These analyses are an opinion that has been put at the service of humanity. This opinion cannot be monopolized by anyone. Therefore, there need to be more efforts to read and understand Leader Apo's views and the theory of democratic modernity, and on this basis reorganize and develop the forces of democratic modernity on a global level. This is what we call for.

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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