

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Contents

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	2
‘Free Ocalan’, A Song by Dirk Campbell.....	3
New group of young people take over hunger strike in Maxmur.....	3
Activists from Vienna take over Freedom for Öcalan vigil in Strasbourg.....	4
Kalkan: 25th year of illegal imprisonment of Abdullah Öcalan in Imrali.....	4
Prisons in Turkey.....	6
Prisoners beaten for opposing strip-search after transfer.....	6
HPD MP Semra Güzel remains in prison.....	6
Prisoners’ Voice Platform calls on people to show solidarity.....	7
Prisoners in İslahiye T Type jail tortured by guards.....	8
Ill prisoner in Van High Security Closed jail not given medical treatment.....	9
Prisoners in Adana Kürkçüler Closed jail deported to Bolu.....	9
Military aggression and occupation.....	10
HPG: Turkey’s attacks on guerrilla areas continue unabated.....	10
HPG: Turkey attacks guerrilla positions with phosphorus bombs.....	11
Turkish drone strikes a vehicle in Qamishlo.....	11
HPG reports 74 Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas.....	12
Embargo and attacks against North-East Syria continue despite the earthquake.....	13
Attack in Sheikh Maqsood kills one, injures two others.....	16
Kalkan: Recent decision to stop all attacks by Kurdistan freedom guerrillas.....	17
HPG reports 90 Turkish attacks on guerrilla positions.....	18
AANES calls for international action against Turkish attacks.....	19
Earthquake in North Kurdistan.....	20
KCK warns of depopulation after earthquake: Kurdish-Alevi people should not leave their homeland.....	20
Solidarity events in Italy to support victims of earthquake.....	23
Survivor of Van earthquake comes to help victims in Adiyaman.....	23
Labor and Democracy Platform in Batman calls for enhanced solidarity.....	24
Italian actor Ascanio Celestini joins Heyva Sor aid campaign.....	25
Turkish soldiers attack earthquake survivors.....	25
Six of the 10 earthquake victims detained in Iskenderun sent to prison.....	26
Quake survivors in Samandağ: No tents have arrived, we will die of cold!.....	26
‘There is an international and regional morality crisis’.....	27
Earthquake survivor in Nurdağ: HDP people were the first to come to our aid.....	28
Crisis Coordination in Hatay announces urgent measures for the earthquake-ravaged city.....	29
6.4 magnitude earthquake in Hatay.....	31
Volunteer Gün: I did not see the state helping earthquake victims in Adiyaman.....	31

ECDC warns about possible spreading of infectious diseases in earthquake-hit areas.....	32
Lawyer Akkaya: State of emergency led to an increase in lawlessness and violence in Hatay.....	33
Magnitude 4 and 4.5 earthquakes in Amed and Hani.....	34
Kenanoğlu: Erdoğan came to Hatay but people did not see him.....	34
People still in need of tents in earthquake-ravaged Hatay.....	35
Film “Kobanê” screened in Vienna in solidarity with earthquake victims.....	37
MSD warns against further displacement of Kurds in the aftermath of earthquake.....	38
Italian comedian and actor Paolo Rossi calls on everyone to donate to Heyva Sor.....	40
HDP: There is no reliable information about child victims of earthquake.....	40
Lawyers launch Justice Vigil to protest violations after earthquake.....	42
‘We received no aid because we are Alevi’.....	43
Turkish police dismantle tents for earthquake victims in Mersin.....	44
EU eases sanctions on Syria to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid after earthquake.....	44
Heyva Sor a Kurd: KDP does not allow humanitarian aid to cross Peşxabûr Border Gate.....	45
Feminist Solidarity Network for Disaster sets up Purple Tents for women affected by earthquake..	46
Femicide.....	47
‘Jin, Jiyan, Azadî’ resistance in Rojhilat Kurdistan and Iran continues.....	47
TAJÊ: KDP targets Yazidi women and their faith.....	48
Ecocide.....	48
Dozens of olive trees cut down in occupied Afrin.....	48
Raqqa Zenûbiya Women’s Community Office launches campaign to plant 4,500 saplings.....	49
Turkish state-linked mercenaries cut down nearly 2,500 olive trees in Sherawa.....	49
Human Rights Violations.....	50
Eleven journalists accused of PKK membership, facing up to 15 years in prison.....	50
Journalist Mir Ali Koçer summoned to testify for social posts on earthquake.....	50
Fascists in Cologne attack tent opened in solidarity with earthquake victims.....	51
Şenyaşar family resumes Justice Vigil in Urfa.....	51
Up to 225 years jail term sought for 17 people in ‘KCK Academy Case’.....	52
KJK: Every Kurdish house should be turned into a Kurdish school.....	53
Racist attack against HDP Istanbul headquarters.....	54
Living multilingualism in Rojava.....	54
Radio and Television Supreme Council fines 3 TV channels over earthquake broadcast.....	57
Former HDP Nusaybin province co-chair Şiyar Koç taken into custody.....	58
Man found dead after discussion with an imam.....	58
Interview.....	59
Besê Erzincan: Our people can overcome any disaster by their self-organization.....	59
Opinion.....	62
Karasu: The earthquake has shown the absence of the state.....	62
Kalkan: Social and political consequences of earthquake in North Kurdistan/South-East Turkey.....	65
Who Are We?.....	67

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

‘Free Ocalan’, A Song by Dirk Campbell

We are here publishing a song recently composed by Dirk Campbell entitled ‘Free Ocalan’.

Listen to the song here: <https://www.peaceinkurdistancampaign.com/free-ocalan-a-song-by-dirk-campbell/>

Peace in Kurdistan have composed a few lines to accompany the piece, which are as follows:

Chained to the rock of İmralı
 He resists.
 The incarceration of the will of his people
 He persists.
 A Manifesto for a Democratic
 Civilisation
 He insists.
 His freedom is a must.
 Long live Abdullah Öcalan.

Here is a brief biographical text written by Dirk Campbell, the composer of the piece:

“I was born in Ismailia, Egypt in 1950 and lived in Kenya from 1951 to 1962. Both Egypt and Kenya under British rule at the time and my father was in the army. The Kenyans resisted occupation in the Mau Mau rebellion of 1952-1954 and were brutally crushed by the British. After private education in England and a few years as a progressive rock musician I began to develop more of an interest in the (non-western) musical traditions of the world, which I had been exposed to as a child, also my own Celtic musical roots. This led to an exploration of the music of the near East including the Balkans, Greece and Turkey. Living in London enabled me to make contact with expatriate communities, and I learned zurna from a Kurd named Ersin at the Kurdish community centre in Balls Pond Road. This led to familiarisation with the culture and history of the Kurds and my first encounters with PKK activists. During this time I was developing skills in a number of world instrumental traditions, writing music for film, television and radio, and performing with the RSC. My daughter Anna went to Rojava in 2017 to join the internationalists with the YPJ and was killed during the Turkish invasion of Afrin on March 15th 2018. I am an activist myself primarily on the environmental front, with groups including Extinction Rebellion, Fossil Free London, Just Stop Oil, Divest and the dirty water campaign.”

New group of young people take over hunger strike in Maxmur

ANF | MAXMUR | 18 FEBRUARY 2023

The hunger strike launched to demand freedom for Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan in Martyr Rüstem Cudi Refugee Camp (Maxmûr) has reached 17 days. The hunger strike has been taken over by the 9th group of residents.

The 8th group handed over the action to the 9th group in a ceremony on Friday. Dicle Benek, on behalf of the 8th group, offered condolences to the victims of the earthquake. "Our Leader has been in prison for 25 years and we have not heard from him for a long time. The aim of our action is to ensure the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan. For this reason, the young people in Maxmur, will continue this hunger strike until we hear from our Leader. We call on all young people and women to take part in the struggle to ensure freedom for Öcalan."

— ★ —

Activists from Vienna take over Freedom for Öcalan vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

A group of activists from Vienna took over the Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg.

Activists Ozan Şêxanoğlu, Yektan Hilwan and Bavê Metîn Kobanê are part of the delegation which took over the vigil, which was started by the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative on 25 June 2012.

The spokesperson of the group, Ozan Şêxanoğlu, said: "The freedom of our Leader is the freedom of all peoples" and emphasized that all peoples must make an effort to free the Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Making a call to the European Union and the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), Şêxanoğlu said: "We have not heard from our Leader, who has been in isolation for 24 years, for two years. We have been before the Council of Europe for years. Europe says nothing, sees nothing. They are hypocrites. We want to hear from our Leader immediately."

Şêxanoğlu expressed his condolences to all people for the losses due to the earthquake, and called on the Kurdish people to unite and support the victims.

Şêxanoğlu finally said: "Let's form a circle along the Leader line and liberate him in 2023."

— ★ —

Kalkan: 25th year of illegal imprisonment of Abdullah Öcalan in İmralı

ANF | BEHDINAN | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

Duran Kalkan, a member of the KCK Executive Council, spoke about the International Conspiracy that led to the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan.

His remarks were as follows: “First of all, I would like to respectfully greet the historic İmralı resistance and Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. We have left behind another February 15th [anniversary of the illegal abduction of Abdullah Öcalan on February 15, 1999]. Leader Apo has called this day the ‘Kurdish Genocide Day’ and our people refer to it as a ‘Black Day’. Recently, strong protests against the conspiracy took place in many places around the world. The Kurdish people and their international friends have thus taken a clear stance. All the cities of North and East Syria, many different places in Europe, the four parts of Kurdistan and abroad were full of protests against the conspiracy and for the physical freedom of Leader Apo. The people have thus made it clear that they do not want to live with the conspiracy and its current form, i.e. the İmralı system of torture and isolation.

On behalf of our party leadership, I would like to thank everyone who recently took to the streets and filled the squares for the physical freedom of Leader Apo and against the international conspiracy. An important stance has thus been put forward. This shows that a struggle worthy of the 25th year [of the International Conspiracy] will be waged in the future. The protests on February 15 show how the struggle in the 25th year will be. 24 hours a day, all four parts of Kurdistan and abroad will be active. There will be constant protests against the İmralı system of torture and genocide and for the physical freedom of Leader Apo.

The aim of the conspiracy was to kill Leader Apo and, based on this, to destroy the PKK and to bring the Kurdish genocide to a conclusion. They have been trying for 25 years to realize this goal, but they have failed. For 25 years their plans have come to nothing. But they are still continuing with their plan. Today’s İmralı torture and genocide system and the aggravated isolation clearly show this. Against this, as a movement and as a people, we have been carrying out a historical resistance. The previous seemingly fateful situation of the Kurds has been overcome on the basis of the resistance of Leader Apo, our movement and our people. This is a very important development. In the 25th year, we want this to come to a conclusion.

We will increase both the legal and political struggle on this basis and spread it everywhere. It has already been 23 months that we have not received any news from İmralı. The people are really angry about this. The Asrin Law Office made a statement recently and published its 2022 İmralı Report. How can this report be summarized? There has been absolutely no communication [with Abdullah Öcalan] throughout the new year. We have absolutely no information. Health and safety issues are on the agenda. The institutions responsible for this have not made any statement. The CPT said that they had gone there [to İmralı]. There was no statement last year either. The pressure [on Abdullah Öcalan] is at an extreme level.

They want to keep the İmralı system going. But this will change in the 25th year. Our determination is based on this and we will wage a struggle accordingly. In this 25th year, we say ‘enough is enough’. The

walls of İmralı must be torn down and the physical freedom of Leader Apo must be ensured. We hope that everyone will approach this matter accordingly. Legal circles, political forces, those who were in favor of the conspiracy, those who supported the conspiracy and those who stood against it will re-evaluate the situation. The forces responsible for the conspiracy need to evaluate the last quarter of a century. They have been involved in carrying out a genocide against a people. Everyone can see this. What do they want from the Kurdish people, from their will for freedom, from Leader Apo? We hope that they will now show the ability to act with a little conscience and review their situation in order to correct their historical mistakes."

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Prisons in Turkey

Prisoners beaten for opposing strip-search after transfer

ANF | 18 FEBRUARY 2023

Seyfettin Kurt, Murat Kozat and another unidentified prisoner were transferred from Karabük T Type High Security Prison to Samsun Kavak S Type High Security Prison. During the transfers on Wednesday and Friday, the prisoners were subjected to strip-search, which they opposed and were then attacked.

The guards involved told the prisoners 'This is the Republic of Turkey. We are God here,' Seyfettin Kurt told his brother Ümit Kurt.

"15-20 guards insulted and battered the prisoners. My brother told me on the phone that they were never treated after the torture they suffered, which left bruises on their bodies. We are concerned for the lives of prisoners," said Ümit Kurt.

Bayram Kozat, brother of Murat Kozat, who is serving an aggravated life sentence, stated that his brother was battered and put in solitary confinement.

"My brother Murat and Seyfettin Kurt are in the same prison. Seyfettin was transferred on Friday, and Murat on Wednesday. Both were subjected to torture. We tried to get information about visitations but we were not given any information. We have not been able to hear from my brother since his transfer. As his family, we have concerns."

— ★ —

HPD MP Semra Güzel remains in prison

ANF | ANKARA | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

On 1 March 2022, the legislative immunity of Semra Güzel was lifted by a parliamentary vote. On 3 September, Semra Güzel was unlawfully arrested after being targeted by a political lynching campaign.

On 22 December, Güzel was stripped of her status as a member of parliament in a parliamentary vote on the grounds that she had failed to attend parliamentary sessions for a long time. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the İYİ (Good) Party voted for stripping Güzel of her MP status. She is still behind bars.

The second hearing in the trial of Semra Güzel was held at the Ankara 22nd Heavy Penal Court on Monday. The female politician, who lost her relatives in the Maraş-centred earthquake on February 6, was not present at the hearing which was attended by many lawyers.

Lawyer Senem Doğanoglu demanded that the case be dismissed.

Lawyer Arzu Eylem Kayaoğlu emphasized that the constitution was being violated through the courts.

Lawyer Sinem Coşkun said: “My client has been subjected to political lynching.”

The court board adjourned the hearing to 28 April, ruling that Güzel remain in prison, the documents of the Constitutional Court applications be submitted to the court, and Güzel be allowed to make first defence in the next hearing.

Background

The main accusation against Semra Güzel is based on photographs taken of her together with her fiancé, Volkan Bora, in a Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) camp in Iraq in 2014. The photographs were taken during the peace process between the Turkish government and the PKK that took place from 2013 to 2015. Güzel visited a PKK camp in 2014 and took photographs with her fiancé, who had joined the PKK in 2009 when they were still students at Harran University. During the peace process, many HDP leaders, including the party's co-chairs, visited the PKK headquarters in Iraq, and met and took photographs with PKK leaders.

These meetings with the PKK took place at the formal request of the Turkish government as part of peace negotiations. In this same period, the Turkish government encouraged Kurdish families to meet with family members in the PKK to convince them to support a peaceful settlement and to return home.

Güzel stands trial on charges of “membership of a terrorist organisation”. In the 58-page indictment, the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office accuses the 38-year-old Kurdish woman of being part of the “hierarchy” within the PKK. The “evidence” for the accusation is mainly statements made by an anonymous witness with the alias “Ezel”. He is alleged to have recognised Güzel as an “activist” of the Kurdish women's movement TJA as well as the grassroots alliance DTK in photos as early as August 2018, only a

few weeks after the parliamentary elections in Turkey, during a prosecutorial interrogation at the anti-terrorism headquarters of the Diyarbakır (ku. Amed) police. Both organisations are legal in Turkey, yet they are treated as a “PKK structure” and criminalised.



Prisoners’ Voice Platform calls on people to show solidarity

ANF | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

The Prisoners’ Voice Platform (TSP) said that 17,600 prisoners and approximately 70,000 relatives were affected by the earthquake in the prisons in the affected area and emphasized that the Turkish state should quickly answer relatives of the prisoners and give them information about their condition. The TSP said that they have been working since the earthquake to meet the urgent needs of the people, the prisoners and their relatives.

The platform said in its written statement: “The Maraş-centered earthquake caused tens of thousands of people to die and hundreds of thousands to be injured in Kurdistan, Turkey, Rojava and Syria. Millions of people were left homeless on those cold winter days. The loss of life increased because the state did not start the search and rescue operation on time. The efforts of the volunteers who rush to the aid of the people continue to encounter the obstacles of the state.

According to the statement of the Civil Society Association on the Penal Execution System (CISST), 17,600 prisoners in jails located in the earthquake region were affected. It is estimated that approximately 70,000 prisoners’ relatives were also affected by the earthquake.”

The statement added: “The Turkish state initially claimed that the prisons were not affected by the earthquake. The state had to admit that the prisons were also affected after the news and images were published on social media. However, the state left the prisoners to die for days. Due to the continuous aftershocks, the law enforcement officers who opened fire on the prisoners who wanted to go out in the open areas in the prisons killed three prisoners and injured 12 others. Later, it was announced that some prisons had been evacuated and the prisoners were transferred to other prisons. Many relatives said that they have not heard from their relatives in two weeks and that they cannot find out where they have been transferred. This situation exacerbates the suffering of the prisoners and their relatives.”

The statement continued: “It is a humanitarian demand that the relatives of the detainees in the earthquake zone receive information about them. The Turkish state should quickly meet this demand.

We have been working since the first day to meet the urgent needs of the people, the prisoners and their relatives who have suffered great destruction as well as the abandonment of the state.

We expect every sensitive person to show their solidarity and help the work we carry out to contribute to the survival of the prisoners and their relatives. Solidarity makes you live!”



Prisoners in İslahiye T Type jail tortured by guards

ANF | İSTANBUL | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

Political prisoners in İslahiye T Type Prison were attacked by the guards during the morning count. The guards attacked the 6 prisoners in the C-23 ward, saying “you don't show us any respect”.

Numerous guards tied the prisoners' hands behind their backs and laid them face down in the corridor. The prisoners were beaten and tortured there. The director of the prison, who came to the scene later, told the prisoners that the guards were new and that they attacked the prisoners “because they did not know you”.

Prisoner İlhami Işçi's family stated that the prisoners were attacked because they were political prisoners. They said that it became difficult to find basic foods in prison after the earthquake, and added that such acts of violence also affect the prisoner's psychology.

The family said: “The guards beat them during the morning count. Their mouths and noses were bleeding. They were beaten so badly for no reason. The guards also cursed them. They told them “you are terrorists”.



Ill prisoner in Van High Security Closed jail not given medical treatment

ANF | VAN | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

Seyfettin Demhat was arrested in 2015 and sentenced to 27 years in prison. Demhat, FMF suffers from (Familial Mediterranean Fever-Familial Mediterranean Fever; FMF), a genetic disease. Abdominal pain, pain in the chest, stinging sensation and joint pain-swelling occur due to inflammation in the peritoneum, which can last for 3-4 days, accompanied by fever. Recurrent attacks cause protein accumulation in the body, chronic kidney failure, and other disorders over time. Demhat uses colchicine medicine for this disease, but this medicine does not cure the disease. It only reduces the attacks of the disease and prevents it from harming other organs.

Demhat, who has been struggling with this disease for years, no longer responds to the drugs he uses. His whole body is inflamed. Demhat was taken to the hospital and the doctor said that a daily injection in the abdomen should be done. Each of these medicines is 20,000 TL. If these injections are not done, all of Demhat's internal organs will collapse in a short time. The state does not cover the costs of treatment, as Şengül Martı, sister of Seyfettin Demhat, confirmed. “They told us that we have to cover the expenses. But

we are not in a position to cover these costs. My brother's condition is deteriorating. Prison conditions are not suitable for ill prisoners. My brother is now in a life-threatening situation. We demand his release as soon as possible.”

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Prisoners in Adana Kürkçüler Closed jail deported to Bolu

ANF | ADANA | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

Many prisoners staying in Adana Kürkçüler Closed jail were transferred to Bolu. A person who works as a tradesman near the prison said that there has been vehicle activity in the prison since Thursday. Lawyer Mehtap Sert, member of the Human Rights Association (IHD) Central Prisons Commission, confirmed that a large number of prisoners were transferred to Bolu.

Information on how many people were deported and for what reason and whether there was any damage in the prison after the earthquakes could not be obtained.

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Military aggression and occupation

HPG: Turkey's attacks on guerrilla areas continue unabated

ANF | BEHDINAN | 19 FEBRUARY 2023

Turkey continues its attacks on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) unabated despite the earthquake disaster.

On Saturday, Turkish troops carried out dozens of attacks on positions of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) and Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) in the Zap region.

A total of 63 attacks with tanks, howitzers and heavy weaponry hit the guerrilla areas around the Girê Cûdî resistance massif as well as in Çemço and Sîda, the HPG press centre reported in a statement on Saturday.

In addition, the HPG reported that the resistance areas of Girê Bahar and Girê Amêdî, which are also in the Zap region, were bombed at least six times by Turkish warplanes on Friday.

Turkey's belligerent aggression continues despite a ceasefire declared by the Kurdish side under the impression of the devastating earthquake catastrophe in the Turkish-Syrian border region almost a fortnight ago. The Kurdish guerrillas, the HPG and YJA Star, are nevertheless implementing the call for a cessation of all hostilities and are still in a defensive position.

Only defensive actions are carried out now and then by the guerrillas. The HPG reported in today's statement that a defensive action was carried out by guerrillas with heavy weaponry at Girê Cûdî on Friday.

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HPG: Turkey attacks guerrilla positions with phosphorus bombs

ANF | BEHDINAN | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

In its daily statement about the war in southern Kurdistan, the press centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported that the Turkish army used phosphorus bombs in addition to unconventional bombs on Monday.

"Our resistance positions in the Çemço area and near the village of Sîda in the Sheladize sub-district in the district of Amadiya, were bombed 23 times on 20 February with phosphorus-containing shells fired from tanks and prohibited bombs," said the HPG statement on Tuesday.

The same positions of guerrillas were attacked 17 times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on the same day, according to the HPG statement.

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Turkish drone strikes a vehicle in Qamishlo

ANF | QAMISHLO | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

In the north-eastern Syrian canton of Qamishlo, a vehicle was bombed by a Turkish killer drone on Wednesday. According to unconfirmed reports, one person was killed as a result of the attack. There are no clues as to the identity of the person.

The drone strike occurred early on Wednesday afternoon on the road connecting Qamishlo and the city of Tirbespiyê further east, near the village of Biwêra. Near the site of the attack is the Nimetli checkpoint operated by Asayish, the security forces of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES).

For years, Turkey has been using drones for the extralegal killing of “enemies” in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria. The attacks are targeted against representatives of the AANES structures, members of combat units and the civilian population. Since the beginning of the year, the Turkish state has carried out at least a dozen such drone attacks in violation of international law - even in the midst of the earthquake disaster.

Only last Thursday, a 70-year-old civilian was killed in a Turkish drone strike in Tel Rifat. The man lived in Aleppo and had survived the earthquake, while a 50-year-old man was injured. A few days earlier, a member of the diplomacy committee of the Movement for a Democratic Society (TEV-DEM) had been killed in Kobanê as a result of a Turkish drone strike. In January, a 12-year-old was killed in an air strike by Turkey near Qamishlo, along with other civilians.

Targets for drone attacks by NATO member Turkey in violation of international law are also structures for the fight against ISIS. On 19 January, a base in Rimêlan used for military coordination with the international coalition against ISIS was bombed. The drone strike killed a SDF fighter who was responsible for coordination with the anti-ISIS coalition. Another member of the multi-ethnic military unit was wounded.



HPG reports 74 Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

In its daily statement about the war in southern Kurdistan, the Press Office of the People’s Defence Forces (HPG) reported continued Turkish attacks against the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG statement on Thursday, the Turkish army carried out 74 attacks against guerrilla forces with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on Wednesday, February 22. The attacks were again directed against resistance positions of guerrillas in the Çemço region and in the immediate surroundings of the village of Sîda. Both areas are located in the Sheladize sub-district in the district of Amadiya.

Wednesday’s attacks also targeted the Girê Ortê and Girê Cûdî resistance areas in Metina region.

Turkey’s attacks came 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 on 6 February. The Kurdish guerrillas, which include the HPG and the YJA Star (Free Women’s Troops), are implementing the call for a cessation of all hostilities and are in a defensive position.

In a statement on 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 ex-

periencing 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.

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Embargo and attacks against North-East Syria continue despite the earthquake

NUJIYAN ADAR | QAMISHLO | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

The embargo seeking to choke the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), that even bans basic needs and medical supplies, continues. Despite the recent earthquakes centered in Pazarcik and Elbistan, neither the embargo nor attacks against the region have stopped.

There are four border crossings between North-East Syria and Syria. These crossings are opened only intermittently. The crossing in Tabqa is open for passengers but has remained closed for commercial transits since March 20, 2021. The Al-Bu Asi crossing on the Aleppo Road, which is also in Tabqa, is open only for passengers. The Tayha-Abu Kahaf crossing in Manbij has been closed since March 20, 2021. The Salihiye crossing in Deir ez-Zor is open for passengers but is currently closed. There are two crossings in Manbij between North-East Syria and the areas under Turkish occupation and where mercenaries are stationed. The Umm al-Julud and the Awn Al-Dadat crossings are used for both commercial transport and passengers.

Semalka Border Crossing: The border crossing is located on the Tigris River between Rojava and Bashur (South Kurdistan, North Iraq). It was opened for patients and commercial transport after the Hêwler Meeting between Rojava Kurdistan People's Assembly and the Encumena Niştîmanî ya Kurd (Kurdish National Council) in 2013. However, the crossing is used as a political trump by the Pêşxabûr (Faysh Khabur) Border Crossing Administration on the other side, which keeps exacerbating the embargo on the Rojava Autonomous Administration areas.

Al-Waleed: This is a border crossing opened between Rojava and South Kurdistan on April 4, 2017 in the Kocherat region of the Dêrik district. The Al-Walid Border Crossing, 35 km from the Semalka Border Crossing, is controlled by the KDP forces. It was opened in 2017 to allow the passage of construction materials such as cement and iron.

Til Kocher (Al-Yaroubia) Border Crossing: It is the second largest border crossing between Syria and Iraq. The border crossing, which is 60 km from Derik, 90 km from Qamishlo and 135 km from Heseke, was liberated from ISIS by the YPG and YPJ in October 2013. From 2014 onwards, aid from the UN is allowed through the other three crossings on the border of Jordan and Turkey. However, all passages, including the aid delivered to the region, have been suspended after a vote of Russia and China.

Tal Abyad Border Crossing: The border crossing is used for commercial transport between Syria and Turkey. The crossing has been under the occupation of the Turkish state and its mercenary groups since October 2019. It is called Akçakale Border Crossing by Turkey.

Serêkaniyê Border Crossing: The border crossing, located between the city of Serêkaniyê in Rojava and the city of Urfa in Bakur (North Kurdistan, Southeast Turkey), came under ISIS occupation in 2013 under the control of Damascus government forces. The crossing, which later came under the control of the People's Defence Units (YPG), was captured by Turkey-backed mercenary groups after the October 2019 invasion attack. It is called Ceylanpınar Border Crossing by Turkey.

Bab Al-Salam Border Crossing: Located 5 km away from the Syrian city of Azaz, the crossing opens into Turkey. At the end of 2013, a bomb-laden vehicle exploded at the border crossing, which is under the control of mercenary groups affiliated with the Turkish state. It is called Öncüpınar Border Crossing by Turkey.

Bab Al-Hawa Border Crossing: It is located on the border of Turkey's Hatay city with the Dana-Atarib towns of Syria, where the M4 and M5 international roads intersect. The border crossing, notorious for weapons, oil and gas traffic, came under the control of the Jaysh al-Shur group at the beginning of the Syrian uprising. The border crossing, covered with al-Qaeda flags, was the scene of an explosion in September 2012. Another explosion hit the Cilvegözü customs point on the Turkish side on February 11, 2013. The border crossing, which is under the control of Turkey and its mercenary groups, is used for smuggling goods, historical artifacts and shipments of Turkey-backed mercenary groups from the occupied regions. It is called Reyhanlı Border Crossing by Turkey.

Kasb Border Crossing: The border crossing, located in the town of Kasab in Syria's Latakia city, opens to the city of Hatay. The crossing was built in 1986 and opened in 1988. The crossing came under the control of Jabhat al-Nusra in March 2014, and under the control of Damascus government forces later on. It is called Yayladağı Border Crossing by Turkey.

Qamishlo Border Crossing: The crossing on the border between Turkey and Syria was one of the most important commercial crossings between the two countries for a long time. It was closed by the Turkish government after the Syrian civil war. It is called Nusaybin Border Crossing by Turkey.

Dirbesiyê Border Crossing: The crossing on the border between Turkey and Syria served as a commercial crossing between the two countries for a long time. It was closed by the Turkish government after the Syrian civil war. It is not an international crossing but is rather used for passengers. It is called Şenyurt Border Crossing by Turkey.

Jarablus Border Crossing: The border crossing, which is 125 km away from Aleppo, is used for the passage of Jarablus residents to Syria. It is called Karkamış Border Crossing by Turkey.

Ramtha Border Crossing: The crossing between Syria and Jordan is the oldest crossing of Jordan. The crossing, which is 6 km away from Syria's Daraa province, is under the control of Damascus government forces.

Nasib Border Crossing: The crossing was built in 1991 and went into service in 1997. Located in Syria's Daraa province, it opens to Jordan and is used for commercial transport between Jordan and Syria. It is also used as an export crossing route for Gulf countries. The crossing, which came under the control of Jaysh al-Shur and Jabhat Al Nusra in April 2015, was taken by Damascus government forces on July 6, 2018, and still remains under their control.

Quneitra Border Crossing: It was opened on May 31, 1974 by the United Nations (UN) Observatory in accordance with an agreement between Syria and Israel. The crossing, located near the town of Quneitra in southwest Syria, is in the ceasefire zone between Syria and Israel. It is used as a commercial crossing route under the supervision of the Red Cross.

Masnaa Border Crossing: It is an international border crossing between Syria and Lebanon. The crossing route connects the capitals of these countries.

Dabousieh: The second important crossing after Masnaa. It is a 45 km long crossing opened in 2007, connecting the villages of Al-Abbudiyya in Lebanon and Dabousieh in Syria.

Jusiyah Border Crossing: The border crossing, which is 40 km away from Homs, is known as Al-Kaa in Lebanon. The crossing was closed in 2012 and was reopened in 2017.

Talkalakh Border Crossing: It is a border crossing opened in 2009. It is called Al-Bukaya in Lebanon.

Tartus Border Crossing: The border crossing between Arida and Tartus in Lebanon was opened in 1998. It is used for the passage of commercial passengers.

Al-Tanf Border Crossing: The crossing, located in the Abu Kamal region of Syria's Homs province, opens to the al-Walid region of Iraq.

Al-Qa'im Border Crossing: The border crossing between Syria and Iraq is used for passenger and commercial transport. The crossing came under ISIS occupation in 2014 and remained closed until 2017, when the Iraqi government regained its control. The crossing, which was reopened on September 18, 2019, is opened intermittently.

There are many unofficial crossings opened for the shipments of mercenary groups in the regions of Idlib, Azaz, al-Bab, Jarablus, Afrin, Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) and Serêkaniyê (Ras al-Ain), which are occupied by the Turkish state. There are also train routes for passengers and commercial transits between Syria-Turkey, Syria-Lebanon, Syria-Iraq and Syria-Jordan. These roads have been closed for more than 10 years due to the civil war.

Closure of border crossings has a negative impact on the region

The closure of the border crossings in Syria and North-East Syria has a negative impact on the region. The case of the Til Kocher Border Crossing alone shows the extent of this effect.

Since 2014, in accordance with international resolutions, humanitarian aid has been delivered to Syria through four border crossings. Two of these crossings opened to Syria from Turkey, one from Jordan and

the third from Iraq (Til Kocher). According to the resolution, which was renewed after a meeting of the United Nations Security Council in 2020 and the veto of Russia and China, the decision to allow humanitarian aid materials only through the two border crossings from Turkey to Syria was extended for 6 months, and the border crossings of Til Kocher and Jordan were closed. The same decision was extended a second time in June 2020, allowing humanitarian aid delivery to Syria through the Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa border crossings. Since these crossings are controlled by the Turkish state and its mercenaries, humanitarian aid could not be delivered to the Autonomous Administration region. The main reason for closing the Til Kocher Border Crossing, the second largest crossing between Iraq and Syria, is to keep the Autonomous Administration in a dire situation.

1 million refugees in camps are also affected

There are 17 refugee camps in North-East Syria, 6 in the Cizîre Region, 5 in the Afrin Region and 6 in the Euphrates Region, including the camps where families of ISIS members are held.

Cizîrê Region: 58,762 people are housed in the Hol and Roj camps, and 48,331 people in the Serêkaniyê, Erîşa, Washokanî and Newroz camps.

Afrin Region: The Berxwedan, Shehba, Afrin, Veger and Serdem camps house 7, 243 people. In addition, more than 3,000 people moved from Aleppo to the camps in Shehba after the recent earthquake.

Euphrates Region: 33, 820 people are housed in the Til Semin, Mehmudli, Tewahîna, Manbij (new), Manbij (old) and Ebu Xeşeb camps.

More than one million migrants and refugees reside in the North-East Syrian regions, far from their native lands. Although there are about 100 international aid organizations operating in the region, migrants and refugees are only provided with limited and temporary aid.

The never-ending embargo

The Turkish state, which has been carrying out attacks against North-East Syria since 2012, whether covertly or openly, has not ceased its aerial and ground attacks against the region despite the earthquake on the 6th of February, since when 400 reconnaissance flights, 21 air strikes, 3 howitzer attacks, 7 mortar attacks, 25 DShK attacks, 3 BKC attacks and one B-7 machine gun attack have been carried out in North-East Syria. An SDF fighter was martyred in a Turkish drone attack in Kobanê. On February 13. In another attack, a vehicle was targeted by a drone attack on the Qamishlo-Tirbespiyê road on February 22.

Attack in Sheikh Maqsoud kills one, injures two others

ANF | ALEPPO | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

An attack was carried out on a vehicle belonging to the Economic Committee in the Kurdish neighborhood of Sheikh Maqsoud (Şêxmeqsûd) in the northern Syrian metropolis of Aleppo. One person was killed, two others were injured. According to initial information from security forces, an explosive device was detonated in the vehicle. The scene has been cordoned off and local authorities have launched an investigation into an "act of terrorism".

The explosion occurred on Friday afternoon in the Al-Shaqif (Şiqeyêf) region, north of Sheikh Maqsoud. The team of the Economic Committee of the Joint People's Council in the autonomously administered neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah (Eşrefiyê) had gone out to assess buildings as part of inspections carried out since the devastating series of earthquakes in the Turkish-Syrian border region nearly three weeks ago. Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah are located in the earthquake zone of Syria.

The People's Council has not yet given any information on the identity of the victims. There are also no indications of possible suspects yet. Security circles suspect that this was a targeted attack by the Turkish secret service (MIT).

For years, Turkey has been attacking the autonomous areas of northern and eastern Syria in violation of international law. The attacks are targeted against representatives of the autonomous administration structures, members of combat units and the civilian population. Just two days ago, a civilian was killed in a Turkish drone attack in Qamishlo.

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Kalkan: Recent decision to stop all attacks by Kurdistan freedom guerrillas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

Duran Kalkan, a member of the KCK Executive Council, spoke about the recent decision to stop all attacks by the Kurdistan freedom guerrillas.

Kalkan said: "The center of the earthquake and the areas hit by it are the areas where the PKK was founded. It is a geography that the PKK knows very well. In other words, 70 percent of the people exposed to the earthquake are Kurds. They are the most patriotic segments of Kurdish society. We therefore feel a lot of pain. In light of all this, our movement decided that it was not right to continue the war in an environment where so much pain was experienced and instead took the decision to create a common opportunity, a possibility. As a consequence, our movement recently made a call on everyone. This was a humanitarian decision, a conscientious decision, a decision required by the democratic politics we pursue. Of

course, this call has several targets and interlocutors. How well it was received and embraced is important. One interlocutor was the government [of Turkey]. We are at war with the current government and state system. Did the earthquake touch the conscience of AKP-MHP fascism like it touched ours? It did not. Yes, we have taken a unilateral decision not to carry out any attacks. Our forces will not carry out offensive actions unless there is an attack on them. But they continue to be attacked. The attacks have never stopped. You can follow this daily in the press. The HPG-BİM [press center of the People's Defense Forces] publishes this daily. Therefore, we can see the following: The AKP-MHP government has not given the necessary response [to the call]. It has not stopped its attacks completely. Maybe it is doing less. This could also be because of the winter conditions, but the important thing is that it continues its attacks. Everyone needs to acknowledge this and follow these developments carefully. This is the attitude of the current AKP-MHP government. It has not given the necessary response."

Kalkan added: "Of course, we did not make this call only to the government. Our addressee is society. Has there been enough response from all political circles, democratic political forces and other political forces in Turkey and the world? There were many reports in the international media. There were some positive evaluations, but was there anything that turned into politics? Have political circles shown the same sensitivity as the press? We cannot say that yet. They should be able to show this sensitivity. They should be more involved in the Kurdish problem. Other political circles, opposition circles were not very sensitive. Only the HDP and the Labor and Freedom Alliance reacted to a certain extent. But the CHP and other parties in the National Alliance could also have taken a stance. Instead of mobilizing the army to save citizens after the earthquake, the government mobilized it for the war. It keeps the soldiers on the battlefield. They could have criticized this. But this was weak. The Labor and Freedom Alliance and the HDP voiced these issues a little bit. This was not emphasized very strongly. However, this should have been emphasized. The government is the addressee, but not only the government, all political circles, social circles, trade unions, associations, women's and youth organizations, non-governmental organizations and parties are the addressees of our political decision. Everyone should be able to take a stand. They should take a stance and put pressure on the AKP-MHP government, which has ignored this decision."

Kalkan continued: "AKP-MHP fascism benefits from this to continue its attacks and broaden its monopoly. In this respect, we have so far not been able to see an effective stance of certain circles. We will continue our approach on the basis of our own understanding. As I mentioned, this decision was taken because of the effects of the earthquake. No one should misunderstand this or develop any different approaches. If they want to make better use of this, then all political circles need to reveal their attitude. Both from within Turkey and from abroad in terms of everyone who is interested in Turkish politics. If they don't, we are not the ones to blame. For now, we cannot say where this will lead. This is not a situation that only depends on us. In a sense, we have done what we could. All democratic circles, revolutionaries and popular forces have expressed their appreciation for this. The rest is up to the interlocutors. Their attitude will determine things. We will look at their attitude."

HPG reports 90 Turkish attacks on guerrilla positions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

According to the press centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG), the Turkish army carried out 90 attacks on guerrilla positions in Southern Kurdistan on Friday.

“The Turkish occupying army continues its attacks on our forces, which maintain their existing position, with all technical means and the intensive use of phosphorus and banned bombs. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla responded to the attacks on the basis of its right of self-defence. The areas where our forces are located were bombed twice by fighter planes, six times by attack helicopters and in 65 cases by tanks, howitzers and heavy weapons. In addition, guerrilla resistance areas were attacked 17 times with shells containing phosphorus and prohibited bombs,” said the HPG Press Centre statement on Saturday.

According to HPG, the guerrillas responded to Turkish attacks in the Çemço and Sîda areas in Zap. In one case, sabotage tactics were used in self-defence, and in two other actions, the guerrillas used heavy weapons. Today, a Turkish soldier was shot dead by a guerrilla sniper in Çemço at seven in the morning.

The HPG reported continued use of phosphorus shells and unconventional bombs by the Turkish invading forces against guerrilla positions near the village of Sîda. The Deşta Kafya area in Gare was bombed twice by fighter jets, and helicopter attacks were directed against the resistance area of Kurojahro and Çemço. In addition to Çemço and Sîda, the Girê FM resistance area was also affected by the artillery attacks.

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AANES calls for international action against Turkish attacks

ANF | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

It is well known that Turkey does not care about international law in its “fight” against the Kurds. Even in times of an earthquake catastrophe of apocalyptic proportions, as the Turkish-Syrian border region is currently experiencing, the government in Ankara cannot be dissuaded from its campaign against the Kurdish people. On Wednesday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan again had areas in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria bombed. The drone hit a vehicle on a busy road between Qamishlo and Tirbespiyê, killing a civilian and injuring a member of the Asayish security force. It was the third deadly drone strike by the Turkish state since the devastating earthquakes of 6 February - in addition to artillery fire by jihadist auxiliaries of its NATO partner.

“Ankara has been allowed to get away with far too much all these years,” said Bêrivan Xalid, co-chair of the Executive Council of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES). “It is therefore hardly surprising that there is no outcry of indignation from the international community even now. At the same time, Erdogan’s behaviour is inhumane and unethical, and his actions are an attack on the

values and principles of the community, which the individual states must orientate themselves with. Bombing civilians is cruel anyway. But in the midst of an earthquake disaster with tens of thousands of deaths, thousands of injured and tremendous destruction, such attacks should be considered as a barbaric act. We consider it unacceptable that the Erdogan regime is using the earthquake to continue the war against us and bomb our people. Likewise, it is unacceptable that the world remains silent,” said Xalid.

AANES therefore called on the international community to impose targeted and severe sanctions against Turkish state representatives. “Turkey is undermining the hard-won stability and security in the north-eastern Syrian autonomous regions in order to achieve its goal of dismantling AANES, and is deliberately trying to exacerbate the crisis in the country. There is already a humanitarian emergency in northern and eastern Syria, which has been further deepened by the earthquakes. The military aggression is further aggravating the region. Turkey's week-long wave of attacks in November and December had already destroyed large parts of the civilian infrastructure, including electricity plants, oil fields and grain silos. In northern Syria, the earthquakes have thus hit an area already facing immense infrastructural and humanitarian challenges from the Turkish war. Ongoing state terror directed by Erdogan further worsens the human rights situation. The world must finally take action to put an end to this injustice,” Xalid stated.



Eartquake in North Kurdistan

KCK warns of depopulation after earthquake: Kurdish-Alevi people should not leave their homeland

ANF | BEHDINAN | 18 FEBRUARY 2023

After the severe earthquake in the Turkish-Syrian border region, further areas of Kurdistan are threatened with depopulation. The epicentre was in a region with a high Alevi population, and people have lost their livelihoods. In response to an ANF request, the Committee for International and Religious Affairs of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) commented on the issue. The committee points to the Turkish stat's policy aiming at genocide and calls on the Kurdish-Alevi population not to leave their homeland and not to give up their identity.

The state is responsible for the destructive consequences

Regarding the earthquake disaster and the state's responsibility for the consequences, the KCK committee stated: “An earthquake is undoubtedly a natural disaster. Nature, of which we are a part and in which we live, has a functioning order. It is in constant motion and tries to establish its own balance according to its own language. In this respect, the earthquake is something natural. What is unnatural is the way the human species reacts to this earthquake. It is not normal for humans to experience the destructive consequences of earthquakes on such a scale, even though the fault lines are known and even the location and

magnitude of possible earthquakes can be predicted. Again, there is no doubt that the state, which has usurped society's right to self-government and monopolised all spheres of life, is responsible. The state is responsible for organising the settlements where social life takes place. Therefore, the Republic of Turkey is responsible for the consequences of the two earthquakes with epicentre in Maraş. So many people were killed because the necessary precautions were not taken, and the killer is the Republic of Turkey under the capitalist, money-grubbing and immoral AKP/MHP government. It allowed the construction of unsuitable areas for profit, enforced amnesties as construction peace several times, did not take precautionary measures and ignored the prescribed requirements in the earthquake areas in Kurdistan and Turkey. There is no doubt that the government must be held accountable for this painful and shocking picture," the committee stated.

Kurdish-Alevi population density in the earthquake area

"Beyond this direct responsibility for the consequences of the earthquake, the government once again shows "how base, selfish and misanthropic it is by not providing the necessary help to the people in the destroyed places and by preventing people who want to help from doing so. Even in this apocalyptic situation, the government is only concerned with maintaining its own power, the KCK committee stressed, adding:

"As we know, the epicentre of the earthquakes was in a region with a high Kurdish-Alevi population density. The people in the earthquake area say that the reason why the Republic of Turkey, which boasts of being one of the most powerful states in the world, is giving them aid and even preventing aid from social groups and our people is because they are Kurdish and Alevi. This is a fact, because the Turkish Republic has had only one policy towards these two identities since the day of its foundation: genocide. The Kurdish people have been subjected to physical genocide for a hundred years and are wanted to be destroyed by a cultural genocide through dissolution within Turkishness. Alevism is a faith that is wanted to be melted down and destroyed within the Turkish Islamist nation state. The reason why the aid mobilised after the earthquake is blocked is the Kurdish-Alevi identity of the population in the affected regions. This identity is wanted to be destroyed and the destruction and death toll caused by the earthquake is seen by the government as a convenient opportunity for its genocidal policy. This is because this government sees the people of this region as an enemy that must be destroyed. So, the fact that the state is abandoning the people affected by the earthquake is not the result of impossibilities, but of a very deliberate and planned genocidal policy.

1978: The Maras pogrom

This is a hundred-year-old state policy. As is well known, immediately after the founding of the PKK in December 1978, a large-scale pogrom was carried out to purge Maraş of its Kurdish and Alevi population. More than a thousand people were brutally massacred while the rest fled the country. Even then, the local population was asked to leave Kurdistan through threats, blackmail and pressure. This was done both through facilitation of departure by the Turkish state and the willingness of some European states to take in people who were cooperating with Turkey. What actually happened was the implementation of a Gladio plan. The aim was to prevent our developing movement from gaining a foothold in the Kurdish-Alevi areas. In this region, a policy of genocide and depopulation was being pursued with both historical and contemporary aims, and to a certain extent it was successful. A very large part of the population living in this

region emigrated from their ancestral land of Kurdistan to the metropolises of Turkey, but above all also to Europe.

The government wants to use the earthquake for its own benefit

The current events show that this unfinished policy of genocide and expulsion is wanted to be completed on the occasion of the earthquake. In the current situation, everything is being done to make the Kurdish-Alevi population leave the earthquake area permanently. By not helping and, moreover, by preventing non-governmental aid from arriving, a signal is being sent to the people: 'There is no more life here'. In this way, the centuries-old policy of forced emigration is to be completed. The places where Kurdish Alevis live are being depopulated. In their place, the 'migrants' instrumentalised by the Turkish state are wanted to be settled. It was reported in the media some time ago that camps for Sunni Arab immigrants are being set up in Maraş, where the entire population is Kurdish and Alevi. This alone shows what policy is being pursued with regard to the Kurdish-Alevi settlement areas and what kind of demographic change is being sought. Now the earthquake is sought to be used as an opportunity to bring this systematic policy of expulsion and genocide to a final conclusion."

The earthquake has shown how lively and solidary the society is

The KCK Committee appealed to the Kurdish-Alevi population to be aware of this policy and to thwart it by not leaving their ancestral homeland, by remaining attached to their country and culture and by resisting. The entire Kurdish people and all democratic circles have the task of supporting this resistance, it noted.

The statement continued: "The earthquake has shown how anti-social the state is, how immoral and greedy the AKP/MHP government is and how solidary and resistant society is. On the one hand, there is a shame that cannot be put into words, and on the other hand, a virtue that all humanity can be proud of. On the one hand, there are creatures who pretend to be human but have long since ceased to be human, and on the other, the most beautiful and indispensable examples of solidarity in human life. The whole world has seen these antitheses".

Strengthening the spirit of solidarity and unity

The KCK committee pointed out that: "Now is the time to strengthen the spirit of solidarity and unity, heal the wounds in the earthquake zones and intensify mobilisation to overcome the problems. Solidarity should be such that people do not have to leave their homes. Solidarity is necessary for the reconstruction of the destroyed settlements in more suitable places and in a robust manner. For this purpose, labour collectives can be formed, houses can be built, the necessary financial aid can be provided and housing can be rebuilt in a suitable manner and under the possible conditions. There is nothing that society cannot do if it joins forces, as the greatest power is society itself. It is enough to free ourselves from the individualistic life that capitalist modernity imposes on us and from the exploitation by the colonialist-genocidal regime that distances peoples from each other. After the earthquake, people from all social classes in Turkey immediately came to the disaster area to help. This showed once again how unsuccessful capitalist modernity and the regime are and how powerful society is. Everyone saw how helpless, weak and selfish the rulers are and how solidary, sensitive and communal society is. It became clear once again how alive the communal and social nature of human beings is despite all attacks. We can alleviate all pain and overcome all difficul-

ties by leaning on social society and letting it grow. Undoubtedly, democratic politics has much to do in this regard. Because it is very important and necessary to organise this solidarity network. Democratic politics means solving the problems of society. It is the task of politics to organise solidarity and togetherness in society. The sensitivity and determination so far show that this can be done. Therefore, as social forces, we must do everything ourselves without expecting anything from the anti-life, anti-nature, anti-society and anti-human rulers and the state.

We must fight back

Furthermore, we must fight against the state and the government who are responsible for this destruction. We must demand accountability by fighting back. We must hold them accountable for their actions so that we can guarantee our nature, ourselves and the lives of all peoples. Otherwise, Turkey and Kurdistan, as an earthquake country, will experience many similar destructions.”



Solidarity events in Italy to support victims of earthquake

ANF | 19 FEBRUARY 2023

Solidarity events are taking place in Italy for the victims of the earthquake in Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria. The number of confirmed fatalities in the two consecutive earthquakes on 6 February has recently risen to more than 46,000, with 40,642 deaths reported in Turkey alone on Saturday evening. Tens of thousands of people have also been injured, and thousands are still missing. Those affected need long-term support beyond emergency care.

Solidarity in Italy is great. Numerous organizations and trade unions took part in events in Milan, Parma and in the municipality of Sant’Ilario d’Enza in Emilia-Romagna. The events organized by Rete Kurdistan Emilia Romagna solidarity network informed on the aftermath of the earthquake and blamed the government for the extent of the destruction.

The funds raised for the earthquake victims will go to Heyva Sor’s Italian branch, Mezzaluna Rossa Kurdistan-Italia.



Survivor of Van earthquake comes to help victims in Adiyaman

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 19 FEBRUARY 2023

On 6 February 2023, tens of thousands of people lost their lives in two earthquakes, the epicenters of which were in Pazarcik and Elbistan, in the province of Maraş. After the earthquake that caused damage

and destruction in 11 provinces, volunteers from many cities of Kurdistan and Turkey flocked to help. One of these volunteers is Havin Kiye, who lived through the Van earthquake.

Kiye went to Adiyaman (Semsûr) to help victims. She said she is no stranger to the disaster and trauma experienced. Kiye now lives in Istanbul but came to Adiyaman as soon as she heard that there was an earthquake.

Kiye said the following about the earthquake in Van: “I was at home when the earthquake happened. I didn’t realize that it was an earthquake until I left the house. I just knew that the house we were in was going to collapse. I threw myself out, that’s when I realized it was an earthquake. In fact, I had the same feeling as the earthquake victims here today. There is only one thing that hasn’t changed then, like today. Nobody helps earthquake victims. We were in better condition compared to today’s earthquake survivors. In other words, we were the best of the worst. I look here today, no one is here. There are only volunteers and civil society.”

Kiye underlined that the official figures on earthquake zones do not reflect the truth, and added: “I do not believe these figures at all. The numbers are hidden in today’s disaster. I’m here because I can empathize with today’s earthquake victims. I try to help the earthquake victims here as much as I can. Because in Van, too, we saw the lack of state aid.”

Kiye said that Adiyaman had turned into a city of ruins and added: “I can say that Adiyaman is gone. I’m not just talking about a neighbourhood, the city itself is gone, it’s all in ruins. Gölbaşı and Besni are also in the same situation. There is no building that is not damaged. This is not just a matter for contractors. The consequences of such a catastrophe are neither humane, religious nor conscientious. When we look at the situation, we do not see a situation that fits humanity.”



Labor and Democracy Platform in Batman calls for enhanced solidarity

ANF | BATMAN | 19 FEBRUARY 2023

The Labor and Democracy Platform in Batman made a statement to the press regarding the solidarity activities they have carried out since two devastating earthquakes centered in Maraş that devastated parts of Turkey, North Kurdistan and Syria on February 6.

The spokesperson of the platform, Deniz Topkan, defined the earthquake as one of the greatest disasters in the history of the country, stating the following:

“All segments of society have taken on responsibility from search and rescue efforts to collecting and delivering aid in the affected areas from the first day. It is obvious that we must enhance and perpetuate solidarity to heal the wounds inflicted by such a great disaster that devastated a broad region and affected over 15

million people. As the search and rescue operations in the region continue, the basic needs of survivors, such as shelter, food and heating, have not been fully met yet, and voluntary aid activities are prevented, which is unacceptable.

There is an explicit need for further solidarity to support our people, not only those who remain in the region, but also those who had to move to other cities. We call on the government to avoid taking steps seeking to discourage social mobilisation and the sense of solidarity, and to facilitate volunteers' efforts on the ground. As the components of the Labor and Democracy Platform in Batman, we have taken action from the first moment on, begun to collect aid rapidly and tried to deliver it to the areas hit by the earthquake."

While trying to determine the needs of people in earthquake areas and delivering aid on one hand, we have also formed a new coordination to take care of our guests who survived the earthquake and the injured who have been hospitalized in our city. We have provided shelter for affected families and provided packages containing food, clothes, shoes, sanitary materials, toys for children and household goods. As far as we have been able to confirm, 900 people were taken to the public and private hospitals in our city and 43 are still receiving treatment.

In addition, we provide support for hundreds of families who have applied to us. Since the first day, our volunteers have been working with great commitment, trying to share the pain of people. We once again thank all our friends who have taken on responsibility in the process, opening their doors to victims and delivering aid to affected families.

As the rehabilitation and reconstruction process will take a long time, there is a need for medium- and long-term planning to maintain social mobilisation. With this awareness, we in the Labor and Democracy Platform in Batman will continue doing our part in the coming process.

We call on the people of Batman to contribute to the provision of the needs of victims and to continue their solidarity."



Italian actor Ascanio Celestini joins Heyva Sor aid campaign

ANF | ROME | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Italian actor Ascanio Celestini issued a video calling on people to donate to Heyva Sor to help the victims of the earthquake that hit North Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria.

Celestini was the scriptwriter and actor in *Radio clandestine* (2000), a play on the Ardeatine massacre; followed by *Cecafumo* (2002), a retelling of some fairy tales from Italian folk tradition; *Fabbrica* (2002), a tale on three generations of workers, from the late 19th century to the nineties; *Scemo di guerra. 4 giugno 1944* (2004, which premiered at the Venice Biennale) based on his father's war stories; *La pecora nera. Elogio funebre del manicomio elettrico* (2005), a story about asylums and consumer society.

His latest work is a tribute to the great Friuli writer and director Pier Paolo Pasolini. Through the testimony of a historian, a psychoanalyst, a writer, a criminologist, a hypothetical museum dedicated to the great intellectual is put together. In this place of memory, a moving journey into the legacy of the great writer.

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Turkish soldiers attack earthquake survivors

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Earthquake survivor Veysi Atar, who has been living in Adiyaman (Semsûr) for 20 years, was attacked by an official and then by the gendarmes while he was going to get his name written to the IHH Organization on Sunday with his cousin to ask for help. Atar said that the Turkish police who came later said that they could “not deal” with him.

Veysi Atar, who had swelling behind his left ear and above his left eyebrow, explained the incident as follows: “At 3.05pm, we went to the IHH to put down our names for help. Before getting out of the car, there was a person there and he said ‘we don’t give help’. I said I needed to ask something. He replied there was nothing. When I said, ‘You will have received the greetings of Allah’, he entered the car with a big stick and attacked us. Then about 10 military cars came and the gendarmes started hitting me and my cousin. They also completely damaged the car. The police arrived on the scene, but said they had no time to deal with us.”

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Six of the 10 earthquake victims detained in Iskenderun sent to prison

ANF | HATAY | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

M.Y., A.Y., A.Y., R.Y., B.A., C.Z., S.B., R.A., M.C.K. and M.B. were beaten and taken into custody by the police. The ten people were earthquake victims, and M.B. and S.B. are Syrians. They were tortured in the police station and some of them were taken into custody without shoes.

After the deposition at the police station, the people were transferred to the Iskenderun Courthouse. The prosecutor took the statements of the 10 people who were kept waiting for hours in the courthouse corridor handcuffed and without shoes. The 10 people who were transferred to the Iskenderun 1st Criminal Court of Peace denied the crime of “theft of goods stored in the building”.

The Court decided to remand M.Y., A.Y., R.Y., B.A., C.Z., S.B. in custody on the charge of “theft”, and released A.Y., R.A., M.C. and M.B. under judicial control.

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Quake survivors in Samandağ: No tents have arrived, we will die of cold!

ZEYNEP KURAY | HATAY | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Survivors of the February 6 earthquake have been left to their fate in the Samandağ district of Hatay, one of the massively affected cities, as well as the districts of Defne and Antakya. Even though 15 days have passed since the disaster, the survivors have received no tents or water. With no hygienic measures, they are facing asbestos pollution in the district where debris removal continues. The survivors waiting in queues for hours in front of the food and clothing distribution points spoke to ANF.

No electricity and water

Mehmet Ali Gümüş, who has been staying in the district bazaar in Samandag, said that they have been left without electricity and water for the last 15 days. Gümüş noted that the survivors were taking shelter in the tents delivered from Diyarbakır. He said: “I set up my tent by my own means, while the other tents were brought by volunteers from Diyarbakır.”

Gümüş remarked that hygienic measures were not taken in any way. Reproaching the Municipality of Samandag, he said: “There are two toilets here, but they neither wash them nor bring water. It's shameful that there is no municipality or any other official organization here.” Gümüş added that there is no electricity and water, and that they light a fire to keep themselves warm.

‘We are freezing at nights!’

Another resident, Nazan Yüce, pointed out that their situation has been very bad since the earthquake, adding that aid materials have not reached them there since they were confiscated by the government. “We live in the Deniz Neighbourhood, and we have neither tents nor water,” she noted.

89-year-old Faris Beyazgül, a resident of Koyunoğlu Neighbourhood, stated that they were in a very difficult situation because no tents had been delivered to them. Beyazgül said: “We are 21 people, including children and grandchildren, and sitting in nylon, freezing at nights. We have not received any tents or anything else. I don't understand it at all. A few tents came, but they were given to the relatives of the headman. No tent has been given to us.”

The residents of Samandağ, most of whom make a living from farming, stated that their cattle were also in a difficult situation because fertilizers and animal feed were not provided.



‘There is an international and regional morality crisis’

ANF | HESEKE | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

International and regional powers keep the border crossings in North-East Syria closed as earthquake victims are desperately looking for humanitarian aid.

The Til Kocher (Al-Yaroubia) border gate has been closed since 2020 after a veto decision issued by Russia and China in the UN Security Council, while the Bab al-Hawa crossing in Idlib, which is controlled by the invading Turkish state and the Jabhat al-Nusra group, remains open.

Despite a recent US decision to moderate the sanctions on Syria for 180 days, the embargo imposed on North and East Syria continues despite the February 6 earthquake that was centered in Turkey and devastated parts of Syria as well.

Speaking to ANHA, Mihemed Beşir, a member of the Cizire Region Intellectuals Union Board, said: “Obstacles must be overcome, political disagreements must be set aside and border gates must be opened to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to the earthquake-hit areas.”

Beşir stated that the KDP did not allow the delivery of humanitarian through the Semalka border crossing because of the pressure of the invading Turkish state. Beşir remarked that these parties remained hostile towards the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria because they did not recognize its political status and role.

Playwright and director Deham Setam remarked that the humanitarian aid issue is not the main concern of the states which prioritize their own interests. “There is an international and regional morality crisis,” he added.



Earthquake survivor in Nurdağı: HDP people were the first to come to our aid

ANF | ANTEP | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

The rubble is still to be removed in the rural neighbourhoods in Antep's Nurdağı district, 80 percent of which was destroyed by the earthquake on 6 February. 25 people lost their lives in the rural Hisar neighbourhood where 350 people reside. 90 percent of the buildings were damaged in the neighbourhood, and the demolition of 40 houses rendered 50 houses located next to them uninhabitable.

Only 10 houses left standing

The residents of the neighbourhood are trying to survive by their own means after the earthquake. A survivor named Veysi Çirçir, whose nephew was killed by the earthquake, said: “We are in great sadness. My deceased nephew had 4 children. After the earthquake, there are only 10 houses left standing in the Hisar neighbourhood. The rest is all destroyed or damaged.”

‘We slept outside for 5 days’

Speaking to MA, Çirçir stated: “During the earthquake, our door was locked. I jumped out of the window. Right after, I broke the door from the outside, rescued my children and brought them to a riskless point in the village square. I slept on a wooden pallet for 5 days. I was not alone. My children were with me. Since it snowed a lot, the children got very cold, but we had nothing to get warm.”

Demolished house marked as 'moderately damaged'

Çirçir, who could not find any tent to take shelter during the first 5 days, stated that they were still faced with problems due to lack of electricity and water. He noted that the tent provided afterwards was very uncomfortable due to the cold weather. The damage assessment commission listed Çirçir’s house as "moderately damaged".

“After that, I talked to many people, and they all said the opposite. Most recently, a demolition team said that my house was uninhabitable, because the house was further damaged due to the aftershocks that still continue. We are afraid to enter the house. The house is very likely to collapse soon. Still, the damage assessment commission says that the house is inhabitable.”

HDP people were misrepresented

Çirçir emphasized that the aid materials delivered to the neighbourhood have been provided through the HDP from the first day. He continued: “Since the first day, we have been receiving trucks of aid from Silopi, Cizre and Mardin. Other cities followed. The HDP people, who are constantly portrayed as “terrorists”, were the first to come to our aid. These cheerful and warm-hearted people gave us stoves, beds and blankets. They are not what others claim they are. They did not make any propaganda before us. They were misrepresented. God bless them. I thank all of them very much.”

Crisis Coordination in Hatay announces urgent measures for the earthquake-ravaged city

ANF | HATAY | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Political parties, democratic mass organisations, revolutionary institutions, trade unions and professional associations that have joined forces for crisis coordination in the province of Hatay, which was severely affected by the earthquake on February 6, issued a joint statement on the current situation and existing needs in the Akdeniz neighborhood.

The statement was delivered on behalf of the crisis team by Mutlu Aymaz, with HDP MPs Züleyha Gülüm, Nuran İmir and Ali Kenanoğlu also present. Mutlu Aymaz first commemorated the victims of the earthquake and offered her condolences to their relatives. Aymaz vowed that all efforts would be made to bring those responsible for this disaster to justice at all levels.

Aymaz remarked that many places in Hatay, especially Antakya, Defne, Samandağ and Kırıkhan, are so badly damaged that instead of repairs, complete reconstruction is needed. “What has befallen us is not only the hypocrisy of the representatives of profit-oriented politics and looting, but also the negligence, discrimination, ignoring and lack of appreciation of the approach that has accumulated over decades and has come down in concrete blocks on our people,” Aymaz said, stressing that the post-earthquake lynching and racist attacks on migrants and other identities must not be accepted in any form.

“We don’t want to report again on what has happened here in the past two weeks. There are countless videos and reports about the lack of help, the cries of those trapped and their relatives, and the mistakes and failures in the rescue work. What is needed now is to denounce the government’s political understanding and to identify the most urgent measures. The government is abusing the humanitarian, conscientious and religious values of society and, in view of the number of dead, which equals that of a major war, is speaking of “fate” in order to divert attention from its own responsibility,” Mutlu Aymaz stated.

The crisis coordination in Hatay named the following urgent measures to cope with the earthquake disaster:

1. First, the problem of housing all people in need must be solved. The unique character of the region must be taken into account and the necessary infrastructure must be provided. Instead of tent cities for thousands of people, tent neighborhoods must be built. In the long term, container settlements must be built.
2. Food, clothing, health and education needs must be met. Special needs of people with disabilities, the chronically ill and other disadvantaged groups must be addressed.
3. All earthquake victims must receive regular and continuous cash assistance not below the minimum wage.

4. The reconstruction of Hatay must respect the historical and cultural structure of the region. The return of the people who had to leave the region must be encouraged, and the region must under no circumstances be abandoned to the profiteering of the construction sector.
5. Knowing that the death of tens of thousands of people cannot be justified as a disaster or fate, all old and new bureaucratic and political leaders must be held accountable for their decisions.
6. The evacuation of earthquake victims to other regions must not be done under the supervision of institutions based on religious and mafia connections. The problem of accommodation in other places must not be solved by evacuating students' dormitories, but by opening hotels, guest houses, shelters and buildings that belong to the public but are allocated to favoured groups by the government.
7. We demand that the decision on the location of housing for the earthquake victims should not be rushed and that forests, pastures, agricultural land, etc. should not be ruthlessly plundered while pro-government companies increase their wealth.

Mutlu Aymaz stressed that they will pursue these demands and called for the struggle to be intensified, saying: "We must protect this land and our lives."

The parties and organisations involved in the crisis coordination are HDP, HDK, DBP, SYKP, Proletarian Revolutionary Stand, Kaldıraç Movement Platform for Struggle, Purple Solidarity, TÖP, ESP, Halkevleri, KESK, SMF, SODAP, Revolutionary Party, Women's Defence Network, IHD Hatay, ÇHD, BDSP, TTB, TMMOB, Partizan, Revolutionary Movement and TİP Hatay.

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6.4 magnitude earthquake in Hatay

ANF | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

At 20:04 local time, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.4 occurred. The epicenter was in Defne, Hatay.

The earthquake, which is stated to have a depth of 7.7km, was also felt in many cities, especially Amed and Adana. It was also stated that the earthquake was felt in Syria, Egypt and Lebanon.

Kandilli Observatory announced that the epicenter of the earthquake was the Samandağ district of Hatay. After the 6.4 earthquake, another 5.8 earthquake occurred.

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Volunteer Gün: I did not see the state helping earthquake victims in Adiyaman

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

Almost every day, there are people from Kurdistan and Turkey coming to all regions affected by earthquakes, whose epicenters were Pazarcik and Elbistan in Maraş, where tens of thousands of people lost their lives. Those coming from other cities of Kurdistan say they were shocked when they saw the destruction in the earthquake zones. Although disinformation spread by the mainstream media and AKP-MHP trolls in the virtual media showed that there has been little disaster and everything is going on as normal, the volunteers who came here say that they could not predict that the situation would be this bad.

Ahmet Gün, a volunteer who came to Adiyaman (Semsûr) from Şirnak to help the earthquake victims, said that he never expected to face such a disaster before entering the city and added that he could not stay at home after the first day of the earthquake and that he set out to come to Adiyaman as soon as possible.

I did not see the government

Gün continued: “As I entered the city, I realized that the situation was not good at all. We, as volunteers, wish our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and their wounds to be healed. The first thing I felt and saw when I came here was that the city was devastated. This broke my heart. It makes me very sad, especially when people act by their own means. Because I couldn’t see the state here.”

Gün said: “Again, I saw people coming from Serhat and Amed for solidarity. It was Kurdish children who were under the rubble and the people came to their aid. I expected the state to act together with the volunteers here, but the opposite is true: it was civilians who showed solidarity with the earthquake victims.”

Need for everything

Gün said: “There is a need for all kinds of food. We have come here to help our people. We are trying to do the best we can. Those whose houses are ruined need everything. That’s what those who send help should think about. A person who has everything under the rubble only has solidarity left. Therefore, this is the time for both material and moral solidarity with our people.”

ECDC warns about possible spreading of infectious diseases in earthquake-hit areas

ANF | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) warned that infectious diseases are expected to be a concern in two to four weeks in the areas affected by the two Maraş-centered earthquakes.

In a statement, the ECDC said: “Food and water-borne diseases, respiratory infections and vaccine-preventable infections are a risk in the upcoming period, with the potential to cause outbreaks, particularly as survivors are moving to temporary shelters.

The damaged utility infrastructure, including water and electricity, causing limited access to clean water, inadequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, improper refrigeration, and cooking systems, may increase the occurrence and transmission of food-and waterborne illnesses.”

The statement also said that “a surge of cholera cases in the affected areas is a significant possibility in the coming weeks. Cholera is a concern in war-torn North-Western Syria, where authorities have reported thousands of cases as the country has been trying to control an outbreak since September 2022. A planned vaccination campaign disrupted by the earthquakes should be accelerated.

Additionally, other food and or waterborne diseases can cause outbreaks in camps: viral infections such as hepatitis A, norovirus and rotavirus, infections caused by parasites or bacterial infections. The availability of clean water and control of food handling are among the top measures to prevent the spread of these diseases.”

The statement added: “Providing access to healthcare for trauma and other urgent care, shelter, potable water, and adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities will mitigate the risk of infectious disease threats.

Setting up health surveillance systems by public health staff will facilitate the early warning and detection of outbreaks. International organizations are planning to deploy mobile laboratories in the affected areas and they can also provide expert assistance to both affected countries.

Risk communication and community engagement interventions are particularly important to communicate and engage with individuals and communities to help them stay protected against infectious diseases.”

Lawyer Akkaya: State of emergency led to an increase in lawlessness and violence in Hatay

ANF | HATAY | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

Mehdi Zana Akkaya from the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), a member of the Crisis Coordination Centre established in Hatay on February 7 under the leadership of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), spoke to MA about the current situation in Hatay province.

Akkaya said: "We have received reports of the gendarmerie and law enforcement using violence against citizens in Hatay province, which was struck by a massive earthquake. Political parties and non-governmental organizations need to step in against them."

Torture against quake survivors

Akkaya said that violent incidents were reported after the government declared a state of emergency in response to the devastation caused by the earthquake. He stated: "Following the declaration of state of emergency, we received complaints that the gendarmerie (military police) and law enforcement used violence against citizens. Most of those who were battered and subjected to violence were refugee families. According to the reports we received, law enforcement officers beat them without question for alleged involvement in theft and their foreign nationality. 6 people were detained in house raids in the Altınözü district and Ahmet Güreşçi was tortured to death at a Gendarmerie Station. Likewise, his elder brother Sabri Güreşçi, who was tortured in the custody of state forces, was seriously injured and taken to a hospital. Moreover, there are foreign nationals who have been subjected to torture and are afraid to report it to us and to reveal their names for fear of being deported."

Military and police

Akkaya also revealed that police officers and soldiers with long-barrelled weapons patrolled the streets of Hatay in armoured and civilian vehicles without license plates. "Civilian vehicles are stopped by police officers and soldiers for no reason. We are stopped 3-4 times as we head for other coordination centres. Such arbitrary practices are in place."

Call against state of emergency

Akkaya insisted that political parties and non-governmental organizations should step in against the violence and unlawfulness rampant in the city. He continued: "In connection with these arbitrary practices, we are doing what is supposed to be done in terms of human rights. Civil society and political parties should also make efforts for the state of emergency to be lifted. This is a disaster area. However, there is a frightening environment that needs to be eliminated."

Magnitude 4 and 4.5 earthquakes in Amed and Hani

ANF | AMED | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) announced that a magnitude 4 earthquake occurred in Amed's Piran (Dicle) district. The depth of the earthquake that occurred at 6.04am was 7 kilometers.

An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.5 occurred in the Hani (Hênê), province of Amed.

According to the post of the Kandilli Observatory, the depth of the 4.5-magnitude earthquake that occurred at 10.09am local time was 5 kilometers.

In addition, at 10.17am, an earthquake with a magnitude of 1.8 occurred in the rural neighborhood of Rısnı.



Kenanoğlu: Erdoğan came to Hatay but people did not see him

RONI ARAM | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

HDP deputy Ali Kenanoğlu said, after returning from Hatay, that the tent problem is still not resolved.

More damaged buildings collapsed after the third earthquake on 20 February. Six people who re-entered their homes or were buried under the debris died. HDP Deputy Ali Kenanoğlu, who was in Hatay at the time of the earthquake, spoke to ANF.

Kenanoğlu said: "The earthquake on Monday evening marked two important points. The first is the absence of daylight and its short duration. Because when we wandered around the Hatay/Antakya region, the center and Samandağ in the daytime, the governor's office had given permission to enter the buildings for two hours so that people could take out their belongings. Therefore, people were quickly taking things out of the buildings. If the quake had occurred during the day, it would have caused a lot of loss of life. When it was late in the evening, that activity had more or less stopped, it happened to him. The second thing is that it was a short but very intense tremor. We could not stand on our feet. It was terrible."

Tent problem continues

Kenanoğlu said that the problem of tents, shelter, heating and toilets continues in Hatay: "Tents are set up near and around the buildings. People have no tents and they improvised some kind of shelter with what they have; plastic or blankets. They take shelter near the buildings. If the 6.4 tremor had continued for another 30 seconds, God forbid, the people around these buildings would have been under the rubble. Of course, government officials say to stay away from buildings, but they do not create the conditions for

staying away from buildings. You need to create opportunities for these people to shelter outside, meet their heating and toilet needs, so that these people stay away from the buildings. As HDP, we also have a coordination center here. People who come here insistently demand tents from us. In addition to that, of course, food is constantly consumed and it is an urgent need.”

Anger is growing

Noting that one can see what those tents become when it rains, Kenanoğlu emphasized that people are scared and devastated, but on the other hand, anger is growing. Kenanoğlu said: “When we went to Samandağ, people said that half of those who lost their lives there could be saved. They said there were voices begging under the rubble. Because the search and rescue teams did not come. Volunteers did not have equipment. There was no bucket, there was no one to lift those blocks...”

There are so many problems

Kenanoğlu said that President Erdoğan came to Hatay but the people did not see him. “Erdoğan and his delegation came to Hatay. Of course, we did not see him, but more importantly, the people of Hatay did not see him. A special area was reserved for him, the roads were closed and barriers were put up. People were not allowed there. They wanted to go through, but the road was blocked. They only allowed in the people they had chosen. Tayyip Erdoğan came to Hatay, but the people of Hatay did not know about it. People are angry, things are not as some media present them. Life doesn’t flow like that around here. People don’t live like that. They try to survive, but they have a lot of problems.”

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People still in need of tents in earthquake-ravaged Hatay

ZEYNEP KURAY | HATAY | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

The city of Hatay that survived two massive earthquakes on 6 February was shaken by two more earthquakes with epicentres in Samandağ and Defne districts on 20 February. In both districts, where damaged houses were destroyed by the latest earthquakes, the electricity was cut off again. Survivors stay outside, building a fire, since they fear stronger aftershocks, which continue anyway. The residents who are desperately in need of more tents spoke to ANF.

Damaged houses collapsed

The electricity was cut off in the Ekinçi neighbourhood, one of the areas most affected by the magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Defne. Damaged houses collapsed within seconds in the neighbourhood, whose residents were enraged by the pro-government media which reported that no house had been damaged. People are now looking for tents rather than worrying about their destroyed houses. On the 16th day of the earthquake, 75 aid tents delivered from Saudi Arabia caused more chaos in the neighbourhood where 30 thousand people reside. The survivors, who were not helped by any single official from the government, were further enraged.

Headman in Ekinci: We have been in desperate straits for days!

Neighbourhood headman Can Tekin Uçar, who has been trying for days to deliver tents to the residents, said: “We have been in desperate straits for days”. Uçar stated that 70 percent of the buildings were destroyed. The headman, who witnessed the collapse of two buildings during the magnitude 6.4 earthquake, reacted to some pro-government news channels that painted a bright picture of the neighbourhood.

‘We cannot find any official to ask help’

Uçar remarked that they could not reach any state officials to meet the basic needs in the neighbourhood. He noted that he went to the Disaster Coordination Centre almost every day to air their grievances to the governor’s office, district governor’s office and high-ranking soldiers, but the official replies were too cumbersome and slow.

‘No tent, water and electricity for 16 days’

The headman said that the biggest problem in the neighbourhood is the lack of tents. He added: “16 days have passed, but there is still no tent, nor water or electricity. The survivors still sleep in their cars, barracks and flimsy nylon shelters. The very few tents are not enough for everyone, but the pro-government media are reporting false news. Their aim is to prevent aid delivery to our neighbourhood.”

‘We have no power to stand’

The people of the neighbourhood emphasized that they have no power to stand it anymore. A resident said: “11 people are staying in a tent amidst the debris. Tents never come,” while another one said that “We lost everything, help us.”

AFAD Does not help

The situation in Samandağ, which was hit by a magnitude 5.8 earthquake on Monday evening, is no different from Defne District. A citizen named Şekip Yılmaz, who took shelter at a bus stop with his 85-year-old bedridden mother in Çiğdede District, said that no help came from the state while they remained outside on the street under freezing temperatures for 16 days. Yılmaz said: “We tried to stop the state-run AFAD teams passing through here for help, but they replied to us ‘May God save you’. My mother is bedridden, unable to walk or get up, and she is forced to live under these conditions. We are citizens of this country, but we have been left to our fate. We have no place to go, so we continue to stay out on the street.”

‘We can’t leave because we have belongings at home’

Ali Şahutoğulları stays in a tent that he could obtain by his own efforts and set up in front of his house, which is seriously damaged. The man said: “My father died under the wreckage of a demolished hospital because they left him in his bed. Right now, 20 people from a family are staying in a small tent that I managed to get myself. There has been no help from the state, the headman, or anyone else. Our house is

about to collapse, but we are keeping watch in front of it so that our belongings inside are not stolen. Our animals are here too. We have nowhere to go.”

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Film “Kobanê” screened in Vienna in solidarity with earthquake victims

ANF | VIENNA | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

In solidarity with the earthquake victims in Kurdistan, Syria and Turkey, the film “Kobanê” was screened in Vienna on Tuesday evening. At the invitation of the “Defend Kurdistan” campaign, many people came and filled the TOP cinema to see the feature film, which focuses on the heroic struggle to liberate the city of Kobanê from ISIS.

The proceeds of the evening were donated to the humanitarian aid organisation Roja Sor a Kurdistanê to support the earthquake victims. Roja Sor is the Austrian sister organisation of Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê (Kurdish Red Crescent), which was founded in Germany in 1993.

About the film

The film Kobanê by the Rojava Film Commune tells the story of Kobanê’s resistance against the Islamic State, which surrounded the city in September 2014. Kobanê has become a symbol of hope around the world. For 135 days, the People and Women Defense Units fought street by street and house by house to free the city. On 26 January 2015, the liberation of the city was announced.

The film follows the life of Zehra, a 32-year-old fighter. When the commander of her unit flees, she takes the lead. With great effort, the Kurdish Defense Units YPJ/YPG succeed in breaking through the siege of Kobanê against the military superiority of the ISIS and in liberating the city.

Director Özlem Yaşar and screenwriter Medya Doz met with hundreds of witnesses and fighters to prepare the film. The film, which deals in particular with women's resistance, was shot in the northern Syrian cities of Kobanê and Tabqa. Filming was delayed due to the Turkish attacks on the autonomous region of Northern and Eastern Syria.

The cast of the film “Kobanê” consists mainly of YPG and YPJ fighters who participated in the liberation of the city. For example, Awar Ali, one of the main actors who plays fighter Gelhat, as well as some members of Abu Leyla's Shams Al-Shamal Brigade. Secondary characters such as the mothers who cooked food for the front, teams from the military emergency medicine or those who dug graves for the dead also play themselves.

The film is in Kurdish and has already been shown in various cinemas in Germany with English subtitles. The gala was on 20 September 2022 in Kobanê.



MSD warns against further displacement of Kurds in the aftermath of earthquake

ANF | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) released a statement warning about the forced displacement policies of the invading Turkish state practiced in North-East Syria.

The MSD statement released on Wednesday includes the following:

“Since the first moment of the earthquake disaster on the 6th of February, the Syrian Democratic Council has put all its political and diplomatic capabilities in the service of the Syrian people who have been affected by this disaster. The Council has devoted its various relations to exerting the necessary pressure in order to open the humanitarian crossings and encouraged local initiatives inside Syria, whether civil, popular or official, the most prominent of which was the initiative of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.

Fourteen days after the disaster, the Council considered that the policies implemented during the disaster hindered the chances of saving many lives that were spent under the rubble and denied assistance to those affected.

The armed factions of the Turkish occupation prevented the aid that arrived early to the outlets of the Autonomous Administration. These factions and the interim government continued to plead in defense of the Turkish policy towards the Syrian victims, although the disaster proved that the Turkish state institutions were unable to perform their duty towards their citizens.

That is why Turkey has not provided any support to the Syrians in its occupied areas, and in consideration of Turkish internal politics, the pro-government media intends to stress that the priority is for the Turkish victims. The authorities practiced racial discrimination in the process of saving lives, and the arrival of support and aid to the needy.

We in the Syrian Democratic Council have sought to provide all facilities despite our conviction that these mercenary terrorist factions are not trusted with this aid.

We condemn in the strongest terms the policies of demographic change practiced by Turkey against the Kurds in northwestern Syria. We call on the international community to intervene and exert pressure to stop the displacement of the Kurds from their places of origin, as more than 70% of the people of Afrin have been displaced so far.

On the other hand, we warn against the Turkish occupation authorities’ treatment of the international aid provided to the Syrians, especially the donations allocated by some countries to build new homes and villages on lands owned by Kurdish citizens.

We also condemn the continuation of the Turkish attacks on North-East Syria, where the village of Mahmoudiya was attacked, while drones targeted several civilian cars during the past two weeks.

The ruling authority in Damascus, despite its emphasis on the importance of national dialogue, decided to use the disaster for its narrow political interests and rejected internal national initiatives to help the victims in line with its prior position, rejecting any openness to the democratic political forces calling for a peaceful and democratic transition.

The policies of the authority in Damascus are primarily responsible for the deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation of citizens in general and of those affected by the earthquake in particular.

The Syrian Democratic Council has previously stressed the importance of the Syrians overcoming their differences and establishing a broad democratic front to lead dialogue and negotiation with the authority in Damascus, and contributing to reviving the process and the representation of the various Syrian representatives and parties in the negotiation process aimed at implementing Security Council Resolution No. 2254. The Council reaffirms that Syrian national dialogue is a strategic and indispensable option for it, provided that it includes the active political representatives of all components of society, on the basis of achieving a meaningful and comprehensive political transition in the country.

The launch of any such national dialogue process must be with international guarantees, including the international allies of the authority in Damascus.

The Syrian Democratic Council, while condoling the families of the victims and wishing the wounded a speedy recovery, stresses that the Syrian people must hold those involved in stealing their daily sustenance accountable.

We call on the various national democratic forces to unite and find effective mechanisms to monitor the activity of the various authorities on the ground and follow up on the delivery of humanitarian aid sent to them. We also call on the democratic forces in Syria to escalate their struggle with the aim of framing their efforts and not missing more opportunities that would alleviate the suffering of the Syrians.”



Italian comedian and actor Paolo Rossi calls on everyone to donate to Heyva Sor

ANF | ROME | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

Italian comedian and actor Paolo Rossi issued a video appeal to invite everyone to donate to Heyva Sor and show solidarity with the victims of the earthquake that hit Kurdistan, Turkey, Rojava and Syria.

The well-known actor called on everyone to do their part to help the victims of the devastating earthquakes that occurred on 6 and 20 February.



HDP: There is no reliable information about child victims of earthquake

RONI ARAM | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

After the earthquakes in Maraş, popular reaction emerged against the indifference to the missing children and the accommodation of some children in a villa in Istanbul/Beykoz owned by the notorious Islamist organisation IHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation) by the Ministry of Family and Social Services. The fate of children remains an important issue as they are considered as one of the vulnerable groups in times of disasters.

HDP Children's Commission Co-Spokeswoman Türkmen spoke to ANF about what can be done for the earthquake's child victims and the current situation of the affected children.

Nuray Türkmen remarked that the state does not share information and data about the recent earthquakes, and that this has nothing to do with its feckless response to the earthquakes. She said: "There is a direct ideological and political background here, it is about an approach that considers children enemies, ignores human existence and living beings."

Türkmen said that there is serious information pollution, which is related to the structural problems of the state dating back to the pre-earthquake period. She said: "Nobody, including the state institutions, has reliable data, numbers or information. The main reason for this is not that we do not collect data or that we are not in that area. Quite contrary, everyone except government institutions has been there from the first day of the earthquake. So, we are the ones who are desperately looking for reliable information. Government agencies which have centralized information systems are the ones that are supposed to keep this information. Since all these institutions became corrupted before the earthquakes and the state could not handle the humanitarian crisis following the earthquakes, there has naturally been information pollution. Due to this chaos, all the official statements made since the first days of the earthquake have been contradictory. For example, the Ministry of Family and Social Services first urged citizens to apply for a foster family. However, immediately after, another statement was made that there was no such a situation. Meanwhile, a lot of sensitive people have applied for it."

There is an ideological, political background

Türkmen insisted that there is a serious distrust in the state. She continued: "As the HDP Children's Commission Co-Spokeswoman, I have been dealing personally with problems concerning children in the earthquake-hit regions. Therefore, we know that the information provided by the state is always conflicting, as we follow the subject from our crisis desk and from the ground. I received a lot of questions about fostering and, also about missing children. Our crisis desk helped a lot of children to find their families. This shows that state institutions have not fulfilled their duties from the very beginning. As I said, this is not a post-earthquake crisis. It is not a new crisis at all. For this reason, we are trying to do our best to collect information in solidarity. We are trying to cooperate with other institutions working in the field of

children, as well as other organizations and all sensitive citizens on the ground. After the earthquake, the issue of children has become a concern for civic struggle.”

It is natural to be concerned about children

Türkmen pointed out that: “The state should have released detailed daily reports on the situation of earthquake victims. Because they do not do this, there has been a concern about the issue of missing children. This public concern is very natural. Because we know what lost children came to mean in the country’s century-old state tradition. Moreover, we know that for the last 20 years, the AKP-MHP government has introduced policies hostile to children.

“The state does not share any information or data with us. I don’t think that it has anything to do with its feckless response to the earthquakes. There is a direct ideological and political background here, it is about an approach that considers children enemies, ignores human existence and living beings,” she noted.

Children’s basic needs must be provided

Speaking about the precautions to be taken for children, Türkmen said: “There are children who cannot even reveal their names and cannot speak. Identification checks must be made in the first place during earthquakes. Even if you could not get the child’s name during the identification process, everyone now has a mobile phone, and a photo can be taken, and they can be identified. This could have been done immediately after the earthquakes. Then, there are the basic needs. As I said, we have been at the crisis desk for days. We have created a network where our friends help the victims. Here, too, the children we are helping have basic food needs. There is still a lack of nutrition among them and this is very important.”

Serious health issues

Türkmen noted, “Apart from that, there are a lot of health problems. For example, when a child gets a fever, women abandon all their hard work and take care of the sick child. Thus, the problems experienced by children are not only related to children. The emergence of health issues engulfs women even more. Politically, we do not want to consider children only as extensions of women, but the reality is experienced differently here, and these issues need to be addressed together.”

Social solidarity must continue

Türkmen concluded: “Furthermore, there is a need for education since schools are open in other provinces but closed in the earthquake-hit cities. It is difficult for us to talk about playing games with children or providing education when their basic needs are still not met. At this stage, it is also necessary not to treat children with a trauma-oriented approach. There is a strong social solidarity, which is the way for children to overcome the process stronger.”

Lawyers launch Justice Vigil to protest violations after earthquake

ANF | ISTANBUL | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

Legal organizations launched a one-day Justice Vigil in front of the Istanbul Courthouse to protest the violations of rights that emerged after the Maraş-centred earthquakes.

The vigil started with a press statement in front of the Istanbul Courthouse in Çağlayan on Thursday.

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD), Lawyers for Democracy, Ankara Bar Association Head Mustafa Köroğlu, İzmir Bar Association Head Sefa Yılmaz, Istanbul Chamber of Architects Head Esin Köymen and many lawyers from Istanbul Bar Association joined the vigil.

Eren Can, a lawyer affiliated with the Istanbul Bar Association, said: “When I went to Hatay, there was no search and rescue operation. The city was completely left to its fate. We saw only volunteers there for the first 3-4 days. There were only civilians and volunteers there, and we have to thank them.”

Çiğdem Akbulut from the ÇHD said: “The state continues its activities at the expense of people. The state is behind the racist attacks, especially in Hatay.”

ÖHD Istanbul Branch Co-Chair Esra Bilen said: “People wearing official law enforcement uniforms and balaclava tortured citizens severely.”

Devrim Avcı from the Lawyers for Democracy said: “The government puts its cumbersome response to the earthquake out of sight and insults the critical voices.”

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‘We received no aid because we are Alevis’

ANF | MARAS | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

The village of Osmandede in the Pazarcik district of Maraş, one of the epicentres of the two devastating earthquakes on 6 February, has been massively devastated. The residents of the village, where almost all houses collapsed, are surviving by their own means.

The village is also the hometown of the family of Ali Deniz Uzatmaz, who lost his life in the 2015 Ankara bombing. Uzatmaz's family stated that they experienced a second disaster after their child was killed in Ankara.

Just 20 days after starting university, Ali Deniz was killed in a bomb attack in 2015 carried out by state-backed ISIS members at the Peace and Democracy Meeting in Ankara. Yılmaz Uzatmaz, Ali Deniz's uncle, spoke to ANF about his nephew and the difficulties they experienced during the earthquake.

Uzatmaz said: "After Ali Deniz, our struggle continued. We are proud of him and I'm sure he's proud of us, too. But his death gave us tremendous pain. Unfortunately, we are now suffering another pain. Our village has been destroyed by the earthquake. Many of our fellow villagers have died. Late arrival of aid by the government put us in a difficult situation. Even a week after the earthquake, there were people without tents and firewood."

'Aid came from citizens'

Uncle Uzatmaz emphasized that they did not receive aid from state-run AFAD and similar organizations because their village was a revolutionary and Alevi village. He said: "Mostly civilian volunteers have come here. We are grateful to everyone who came to help. They did not leave us hungry and without shelter. Even the tent behind me was brought by benefactors. The state has never reached here. I believe that the reason is that all the destroyed places were Alevi villages. Some keep saying that there's a lack of coordination, but I don't believe that. Officials discriminated against us on purpose. We are Turkmen Alevis, but all the villages around us are Kurdish villages."

'We removed those who died under rubble with bare hands'

Uzatmaz underlined that there is no problem between Kurdish and Turkish Alevis. He added: "The Alevis do not discriminate among humans. After we met our own needs, my father distributed aid to other villages. Unfortunately, the government discriminates among citizens. We pulled those who lost their lives in a neighbour village with our bare hands. No search and rescue team came here."



Turkish police dismantle tents for earthquake victims in Mersin

ANF | MERSIN | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

14 tents were set up on February 21 by people in the Kazanlı neighbourhood of Mersin's Akdeniz district for those who moved to the city after two Maraş-centred earthquakes on February 6. On February 23, the police removed the tents, claiming that "since this is not a disaster area, permission must be obtained from the governor's office or district governor's office". The earthquake victims were then provided accommodation in the cultural houses in the Çay and Çilek neighborhoods.

Serdar Cengiz, one of the residents of Kazanlı neighbourhood, reacted to the removal of the tents by the police. He said that they could only set up 14 tents in solidarity and provide shelter for 2 to 3 families in each tent. The tents were, however, removed on the grounds that "there was no official permission". Cengiz demanded that the sheltering problem of the earthquake victims be resolved as soon as possible.

In reaction to the removal of the tents, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Mersin MP Rıdvan Turan blamed the state for being “repressive”. Turan remarked that the state neither distributes tents nor allows tenting, calling for the state to abandon its “prohibitive” understanding.



EU eases sanctions on Syria to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid after earthquake

ANF | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

To facilitate aid to the earthquake zone in Syria, the European Union is temporarily easing its sanctions against the regime in Damascus, the European Council announced on Thursday.

“In view of the gravity of the humanitarian crisis in Syria exacerbated by the earthquake of 6 February 2023, the Council decided to adopt an additional humanitarian amendment to further facilitate the speedy delivery of humanitarian assistance,” said the Council, adding that the amendment applies for a period of six months.

With this amendment, the EU has waived the need for humanitarian organisations to seek prior permission from EU member states' national competent authorities to make transfers or provide goods and services intended for humanitarian purposes to listed persons and entities.

The series of earthquakes with a magnitude of up to 7.8 have killed more than 5,900 people in the northern parts of Syria. However, the figure has not been updated for some time and is not considered reliable. In Turkey, 43,556 earthquake-related deaths were last confirmed by officials. According to Turkish data, there were also more than 8,550 aftershocks.

In 2011, the EU imposed extensive sanctions against the country in response to the violent actions of Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad against the opposition and the population. They were directed against more than 290 individuals and 70 organisations.



Heyva Sor a Kurd: KDP does not allow humanitarian aid to cross Peşxabûr Border Gate

ANF | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

The two earthquakes that occurred in North Kurdistan on 6 February greatly affected Turkey and Syria. While the earthquakes caused great destruction in Syria, 3,694 people lost their lives.

Northern and Eastern Syria Heyva Sor a Kurd provided assistance to earthquake victims. But the policies of many sides in Syria and Iraq have left thousands of Syrians without humanitarian aid.

In a written statement, Heyva Sor a Kurd stated that it is ready to help earthquake victims. However, the Turkish state and the Damascus government did not allow humanitarian aid to reach people immediately after the earthquake.

Heyva Sor a Kurd faces many obstacles in the delivery of aid. KDP officials do not allow humanitarian aid to reach Northern and Eastern Syria through the Semalka Border Gate.

Heyva Sor a Kurd co-chair Êva Elî told ANHA: "Some aid has been allocated to Northern and Eastern Syria and is expected to be distributed throughout the month. However, KDP officials do not allow aid to pass through Semalka."

Elî added: "The Pêşxabûr gate administration does not allow aid to pass to Northern and Eastern Syria."

Preventing aid will have devastating consequences

Elî said that there are basic needs such as medicine, baby food, tents and sleeping equipment in the convoys carrying aid and added: "If Heyva Sor a Kurd can reach the earthquake victims, it will deliver 70 per cent of the aid to Şêxmeqsûd, Eşrefiye and Shehba and 40 per cent to Manbij and Kobanê."

Elî said: "Preventing the passage of aid will have devastating consequences and thousands of earthquake victims will be deprived of vital products."



Feminist Solidarity Network for Disaster sets up Purple Tents for women affected by earthquake

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

The people affected by the earthquakes in Maraş are trying to heal their wounds with solidarity. The women's organizations that came together under the "Feminist Solidarity Network for Disaster" continue their work for women and children. The network went to 11 provinces affected by the earthquake with nine trucks and delivered pads, underwear and hygienic products to women.

On the other hand, "Purple Tents" were set up in the earthquake zone. Free Women's Movement (TJA) activist Yasemin Üçer stated that women's pads, underwear and basic needs are met in the Purple Tents they set up in Adiyaman (Semsûr) and called for support for the campaign.

Many women cannot be reached

Stating that women, like all earthquake victims, are going through a difficult process, Üçer said: "We are trying to reach women in every province and district that were affected by the earthquake. We are doing what we can for women. We brought women's sanitary pads, underwear and many other products. The shortcomings, however, still persist. The campaign must be supported. Thanks to all women's organizations, we reached more women with Purple tents from the first day and their needs were met in an organized way. But there are many women who have not been reached."

Üçer said that since the day it was founded, the campaign has been given great support and added that they would make the campaign they started permanent.

By calling on all women to join the volunteers, Üçer said: "The earthquake is a great wound and its effect on women is great. We will continue to carry out this work to help women. We invite everyone to join the volunteers. We call on all women to increase solidarity."

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Femicide

'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî' resistance in Rojhilat Kurdistan and Iran continues

ANF | 19 FEBRUARY 2023

The 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî' resistance in Iran and Rojhilat has been going on for five months. Despite all the oppression, detention, arrest, murder, torture and execution by the Iranian state forces, the protests continue.

Despite the heavy military deployment in the cities of Zahidan and Xash in Sistan and Balochistan, the people held large marches and demonstrations on Friday, as they have been doing every Friday for 20 weeks.

The activists said that they rejected all attempts to stand back. Baluch activists demanded the release of the prisoners in Sistan and that the activists be brought to trial.

In his Friday sermon, Zahidan Mecca Mosque Mullah Abdulhamit İsmail Zihi once again called for a referendum for the people to have their saying in political decisions.

Release the prisoners

On the other hand, protests were held against the arrest of religious scholars who supported the demonstrators in the cities of Sine and Serdesht in Rojhilat Kurdistan.

In the village of Nenele in Sine, an action was held in front of the mosque on Friday, as it has been every Friday for three weeks. The oppression and intimidation policies used by the Iranian state were protested. In addition, activists demanded the release of Mela İbrahim Karimi Neneleyan, who was arrested by Iranian forces three weeks ago for allegedly supporting them.

In Serdeşt, the people protested against the arrest of Mela Fethullah Rustemi, the imam of the mosque of the village of Marexan and demanded his release.

Mela Fethullah Rustemi was detained at the checkpoint in Xoy, in Urmia, while accompanying a convoy helping earthquake victims on 14 February. It is not known where Fethullah Rustemi was taken.

In addition, demonstrations were held in Galik in Gulistan against the dismissal of Mela Muhammes Hasan Gurgic.

The support of the 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi' resistance continues to come from all over the world. At the opening of the Berlin Film Festival, on Saturday, various actresses chanted 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi'.



TAJÊ: KDP targets Yazidi women and their faith

ANF | SHENGAL | 22 FEBRUARY 2023

The Yazidi Women's Freedom Movement (TAJÊ) made a statement regarding the abduction of young Yazidi women in the areas controlled by the KDP, the ruling party in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), where the Yazidi town of Shengal (Sinjar) is also located.

The statement pointed out that Yazidis who settled in camps in South Kurdistan after the 2014 massacre by ISIS were held captive by the KDP, which, it said, sought to distance Yazidi women from their own culture, belief and morality.

The statement revealed that dozens of Yazidi women have been abducted by KDP forces in recent years. "The whereabouts of the abducted women is still unknown. Most recently, two young Yazidi women were kidnapped from the camps under the control of the KDP. There are dozens of other women who have been abducted, but families cannot speak up due to the KDP crackdown they face."

The TAJÊ concluded that the way to prevent these attacks is the return of the Yazidi people to their homeland.



Ecocide

Dozens of olive trees cut down in occupied Afrin

ANF | 19 FEBRUARY 2023

Jihadist mercenary groups under Turkish control have cut down 35 olive trees in the village of Kurzele in Afrin's Sherawa district.

According to reports, the trees belonged to a local named Seid Hisen.

The Turkish army and its mercenaries have been continuing the destruction of nature since they occupied the Canton of Afrin.

According to the data of legal organizations, the Turkish army and its mercenaries have cut down more than 367,000 trees, burned about 13,500 trees and more than 12 hectares of agricultural land since they occupied Afrin Canton.



Raqqa Zenûbiya Women's Community Office launches campaign to plant 4,500 saplings

ANF | RAQQA | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

The Economic Committee of the Raqqa Zenûbiya Women's Community Office launched a campaign to plant 4,500 saplings. 13 women participated in the campaign, which started on Monday and will continue until tomorrow, Wednesday.

The campaign is a project run by the cooperative and it aims to plant saplings of 14 acres of Bihûs land in the Kesrat region south of Raqqa.

According to Cihan Mihemed, Executive Member of the Economic Committee of the Zenûbiya Women's Community Office, 15 percent of the income from the project will be transferred to the committee's fund, while the rest will be used to carry out other projects aimed at improving the women's economy.



Turkish state-linked mercenaries cut down nearly 2,500 olive trees in Sherawa

ANF | AFRIN | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

According to information received from local sources in Afrin, Feyleq al-Sham mercenaries, who have been settled in Sherawa district of occupied Afrin by the Turkish state, cut down nearly 2,500 olive trees belonging to Kurdish citizens in the villages of Basûfanê and Heyder.

The Turkish state and its mercenaries occupied Afrin in 2018 and turned the canton into a crime center. They continue to commit crimes such as theft, kidnapping, rape, massacre, demographic change and natural destruction.

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Human Rights Violations

Eleven journalists accused of PKK membership, facing up to 15 years in prison

ANF | ANKARA | 17 FEBRUARY 2023

There have been two mass arrests of journalists in Turkey in the past year, once in June and once in October. On 8 June, 20 Kurdish media workers were arrested by order of the Diyarbakir (ku. Amed) Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, 16 of whom remain in pre-trial detention without charge. In a second raid on 25 October, 11 more Kurdish media workers were arrested, nine of whom are currently still in the Sincan Prison in Ankara.

Those arrested in the second trial are the editor-in-chief of the Mezopotamya News Agency (MA), Diren Yurtsever, MA correspondents Deniz Nazlım, Selman Güzelyüz, Berivan Altan, Hakan Yalçın, Emrullah Acar and Ceylan Şahinli, and JinNews correspondents Habibe Eren and Öznur Değer. MA reporter Zemo Ağgöz, who was arrested in the same trial, is on maternity leave and has been released. Reporting requirements were imposed on former MA trainee Mehmet Günhan, who was also released.

These eleven journalists have now been accused of "membership of the PKK/KCK". The indictment of the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office consists of 210 pages, mainly containing reports published by MA, a total of 149 articles. Twelve pages are devoted to statements by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK). Seized storage media and wiretap protocols are presented as evidence. According to these, the defendants' communications were monitored in the period between

February and September 2021. In addition, the testimony of a secret witness is listed with the code “k8ç4b3l1t5”. However, the testimony only states that the accused worked for MA and JinNews.

The Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office is demanding a prison sentence of between seven and a half and fifteen years for all the accused.

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Journalist Mir Ali Koçer summoned to testify for social posts on earthquake

ANF | AMED | 18 FEBRUARY 2023

Journalist Mir Ali Koçer was charged with “publicly disseminating misleading information to the public”, which is regulated by Article 217 of the Turkish Penal Code, within the scope of the Censorship Law. He was called to give a statement on the grounds of the news he wrote and his posts on social media about the earthquakes that took place in Maraş on 6 February.

Koçer testified at the Diyarbakır Police Department.

On 9 February, the Media Freedom Rapid Response said that police attempted to prevent Koçer from interviewing an earthquake survivor while covering the search-and-rescue efforts in buildings destroyed by the seism.

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Fascists in Cologne attack tent opened in solidarity with earthquake victims

ANF | COLOGNE | 18 FEBRUARY 2023

Widespread campaigns are carried out in European cities to show solidarity with the victims of the earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria.

In the city of Cologne, a tent was opened by the Solidarity Network to show solidarity with the earthquake victims. On Friday, a group of fascists attacked the activists collecting aid.

First, the fascists made verbal threats and then physically attacked the revolutionaries. People around reacted and the fascists left. The Solidarity Tent continued despite the attack, with stronger participation.

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Şenyaşar family resumes Justice Vigil in Urfa

ANF | URFA | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

On 14 June 2018, the bodyguards and relatives of AKP Urfa MP Ibrahim Halil Yıldız attacked the Şenyaşar family's shop in Suruç during the election campaign.

In the attack, brothers Celal, Adil, Mehmet, Fadıl and Ferit Şenyaşar were injured. Relatives and supporters of AKP MP Yıldız, badly injured Celal and Adil Şenyaşar, and their father Hacı Esvet Şenyaşar, when he went to the hospital to visit their sons. He was brutally murdered, being lynched in front of his wife Emine Şenyaşar.

Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit (who was injured in the attack), have been holding a Justice Vigil in front of the Courthouse of Urfa since 9 March 2021, demanding those responsible to be brought to account.

The Şenyaşar family suspended the action for 15 days due to the two earthquakes that hit the region on 6 February.

The family resumed their vigil in front of the courthouse on Monday, day 701, and made a connection between the disaster that followed the earthquake and injustice.

Ferit Şenyaşar said: "According to our belief, the reason for the increase in earthquakes is injustice. All of Turkey sees this injustice. The next day, all the deputies will go in the squares. As long as this injustice continues, who will come to Urfa and demand votes from the people? The government that runs the country takes a notebook and keeps notes. We are calling out to the government from here, they should put us down as well in that notebook."

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Up to 225 years jail term sought for 17 people in 'KCK Academy Case'

ANF | ISTANBUL | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

21 people, including Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, as well as Democratic Modernity magazine editor Haydar Ergül, journalist Ahmet Birsin and Jineoloji magazine employee Şeyma Kantarcı, were detained during the house raids on July 28, 2017.

Ergül, Birsin and Kantarcı were remanded in custody as part of the investigation carried out by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

The defendants are accused of “being members of the PKK” and a workshop of the DBP Political Academy in Bagcilar in 2016 is cited as the evidence.

Concepts and views on stateless societies, hunter and gatherer tribes and settled life, Neolithic Period, Totem, Shamanism and Zoroastrianism, which were discussed at the DBP’s Political Academy, are considered “organizational ideology” in the indictment.

At a previous hearing on June 21, 2022, the lawyers pointed to the expert report and revealed that the audio recording, which was claimed to belong to Ergül, actually did not belong to him.

The file was sent to the Public Prosecutor’s Office to prepare an opinion as to the accusations at the 16th hearing held on October 27, 2022.

The prosecution submitted its opinion to the court on February 13, claiming that the audio recordings belonged to Ergül and other defendants, in spite of the expert report.

Moreover, an opinion was also prepared against journalist Birsin, whose testimony was not taken and who was not prosecuted.

The prosecutor’s opinion requested up to 225 years jail term for Eşref Yaşar, Mehmet Şah Güneş, Sedat Çaycı, Mevlüt Aykoç, Mehmet Şirin Aykol, Ahmet Sağınç, Ercan Doğru, Aygül Turhan, Mustafa Elma, Şeyma Kantarcı, İskender Karakoyun, Münevver İlingi, Hacı Aslan, Abdullah Geldi, Ahmet Birsin, Haydar Ergül and Aysel Diler for alleged “membership in the PKK”.

The next hearing will reportedly be held on February 23.

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KJK: Every Kurdish house should be turned into a Kurdish school

ANF | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

The Kurdistan Women’s Communities (Komalên Jinên Kurdistan, KJK) Education Committee released a written statement to mark the 21 February International Mother Language Day.

Mother tongue shapes the identity and culture of the peoples, said the KJK statement released on Tuesday, which includes the following:

“First of all, we salute the Kurdish leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who has made great efforts for the Kurdish people and the Kurdish language and we express that we owe him.

Language constitutes the social identity of human beings and is not just an instrument of exchange. The powers exploiting Kurdistan have thus deprived our people of education in the mother tongue so as to destroy our collective memory. Efforts promoting mother tongue education in the Martyr Rustem Camp and four parts of Kurdistan under genocidal attacks are praiseworthy.

Every pedagogue or educator of the Kurdish language strives to preserve this social value with great faith in spite of major impossibilities and obstacles. As an oppressed folk, we should celebrate the International Mother Language Day with even greater awareness and turn this day into a day to empower the mother tongue and to protect all our national values.

Sovereign powers never grant freedom to the peoples. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also works in accordance with the programs of governments. Although this institution publishes maps and reports about cultural languages that are facing the threat of extinction, it has no initiative for the preservation and development of the mother tongues of peoples. Therefore, the maps and reports released in this regard do not make any sense.

Today, humanity is facing serious crises due to the financial crisis and contradictions experienced by the capitalists. Of course, peoples unable to protect themselves under such circumstances will be doomed to extinction. For this very reason, every Kurdish family should transform their home into a school where the Kurdish language and culture are developed, under the motto that ‘language is our identity and existence’. On this basis, as we mark February 21, International Mother Language Day, our people, especially Kurdish women and their mothers, should unite around Kurdish teachers and scholars, provide support and continue their struggle until the right to education in the mother tongue is granted.”



Racist attack against HDP Istanbul headquarters

ANF | ISTANBUL | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

A racist attack was carried out against the HDP’s Istanbul headquarters on Tuesday. An assailant named Mehmet Beyazit attacked party members, saying that “You are terrorists.” Party members were able to counter the assailant, who turned out to be living in the Kağıthane district. According to his account, two people named Mehmet and Ferhat from the Harmantepe Mosque sent him to attack the HDP.

Party members handed over the assailant to the police and filed a complaint about the assailant, who was then taken to Kasımpaşa Police Station. It is reported that the assailant will be referred to a courthouse tomorrow to be questioned by a prosecutor.

Immediately after the attack, the Istanbul Governor’s Office issued a statement, claiming that the assailant had a criminal record of “insult”, “sexual harassment-threat” and “damage to property”. While the statement claimed that the assailant had a record at Bakırköy Psychiatric Hospital, the information is yet to be confirmed by independent sources.



Living multilingualism in Rojava

CEMIL EBDO – MUSTAFA ÇOBAN | QAMISHLO | 21 FEBRUARY 2023

UNESCO proclaimed 21 February as Mother Language Day in 1999. While this day has only a marginal significance for many people, many whose language and thus also their identity is threatened, persecuted and marginalised see this day as an occasion to protest or also to take stock.

Monistic nation state leads to assimilation and genocide

The monist state models of the “Syrian Arab Republic” and Turkey are based on assimilation and, if this is not possible, on the exclusion and annihilation of other identities. This conception of the state resulted in genocides and mass murders of Armenians, Syrians, Assyrians and Kurds. The Kurdish language was almost extinct when a renaissance began with the PKK uprising in Northern Kurdistan. PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan developed a grassroots democratic, multi-identitarian and open model that would break the boundaries of the nation-state. Democratic confederalism first manifested itself in Northern Kurdistan in communal self-organisation. With the revolution of Rojava in 2012, democratic confederalism became a model of self-government that functioned on a large scale and became exemplary globally. Beyond the principle of national liberation, from which new oppressive nation states have always emerged, a model was built in Rojava in which all identities collectively self-organise. This model shook capitalist modernity and represents the first serious alternative to the ruling system. Special value is placed on language as a carrier of culture in Rojava. Thus, democratic confederalism in northern and eastern Syria represents a rebirth of Kurdish, Syriac and many other languages and identities.

The Kurdish identity before the revolution

The Baathist regime in Syria suppressed, persecuted and marginalised the Kurdish language for 65 years. In schools, children were literally beaten out of their mother tongue. The “Syrian Arab Republic” was explicitly founded on the basis of one identity, Arabic. Those who did not conform were ostracised and persecuted. Kurds in Rojava were denied citizenship, accused of being migrants from Northern Kurdistan and deprived of basic rights. At the same time, the Ba’ath regime implemented an “Arab belt” policy along the border. Kurdish villages were renamed, an Arab settlement policy was implemented, and the Kurdish population was subjected to countless reprisals.

A spark is lit

Until the 1970s, there was a feeling of powerlessness among the Kurdish population. In 1979, the PKK began to take root in Rojava. Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK moved in the region and Rojava became an important area bordering Northern Kurdistan. While on the one hand the Assad regime tried to use the PKK as a means of pressure against the Turkish state in its conflict with Turkey, the freedom movement did not allow itself to be instrumentalised and carried out educational programs in the Western Kurdistan region, which was then called the “Little South”. The Kurdish language was spread again by the militants of the freedom movement in the region and the Kurds in the region learned to speak and write in their

language again. Countless people in Rojava were shaped by this experience and got to know leading cadres of the freedom movement personally. They tell of the courage and awakening that this phase gave the people, and the deep attachment to the freedom movement that emerged. Thus, the Baath regime's calculation backfired, sowing the seeds of revolution in the region that were to sprout in 2012. The regime was aware of the danger and repeatedly repressed the activists. Countless people disappeared in the regime's torture cells, but the freedom movement could no longer be stopped.

Kurdish language institute founded

With the beginning of the uprisings in 2011, an institute for the development of the Kurdish language was founded in Afrin. In view of its destabilization, the regime initiated a liberalisation of its anti-Kurdish policies at some points. These sham reforms created the framework in which the institute could be founded even before the revolution.

Mother tongue anchored in the social contract

After the revolution, the now grassroots-governed region of Rojava took a third path and allowed itself to be instrumentalised neither by the regime nor by Turkey and its Islamist mercenaries. Instead, an outstanding social contract was drafted in which the mother tongue is an important cornerstone. The social contract states: "No distinction shall be made between the languages of the democratic federal region of Northern and Eastern Syria. Each person is free to use its language and develop it in the fields of society, administration, education and culture." This represented a revolution within a revolution for the region. No identity is to be excluded.

Kurdish becomes the language of education

Educational institutions and academies were established for the protection, development and study of the endangered Kurdish language. The institutes opened for the training of teaching staff also played an important role in the development of the Kurdish language. With the revolution, the self-administration of Rojava came into being. Based on the paradigm of the Democratic Nation presented by Abdullah Öcalan, the self-administration decided to recognise Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac as official languages in the region. What had begun with clandestine Kurdish courses literally took off. Between 2012 and 2013, Kurdish was introduced as the language of instruction, and since 2014, teaching materials in Kurdish have been offered.

From Kurdish-language school to university

The first Kurdish-language school in northern and eastern Syria, the Şehîd Fevzi School, was opened on 6 September 2011 in the Shera district of Afrin. Then, on 26 September 2011, the Şehîd Osman Silêman School was inaugurated in the city centre of Kobanê. After that, other schools were established in many parts of the Cizîrê region. Afrin University was inaugurated on 27 October 2015. On 5 July 2016, Rojava University in Qamishlo opened its doors and Kobanê University followed on 30 September 2017. Departments for Kurdish language and literature were established at the universities and academies.

Mutual language learning as an expression of co-existence

While the Kurds were learning Arabic in addition to their own language, the Arabs, Syriacs and Armenians in the region also began to learn Kurdish with great zeal. The historical heritage created by the interaction of languages and cultures became a system with the Rojava Revolution. Every person in North and East Syria speaks and develops their own language freely and also learns the language and culture of their neighbours.

Trilingualism in the public space

The revolutionary developments in the language sector were not limited to education, but quickly reached the public sphere. Trilingualism showed up on the blackboards at shops as well as on traffic signs, notices and announcements. Thus, the break with the rule of the monistic nation-state became visible in every street.

Armenians and Syriacs learn their mother tongue

The Armenians and Syriacs also experienced a renaissance of their language. In Syria, Syriac was only allowed as a liturgical language. Now it has become an official language and there are mother tongue classes. Starting in 2014, a training facility for teachers was established for this purpose in Qamishlo. Institutions followed in Tirbêspiye, Dêrik and Heskê.

The Armenians organised themselves under the umbrella of the Armenian Council of North and East Syria and quickly built their own teaching infrastructure as part of self-government. At the moment, the introduction of Armenian as an instruction language is being prepared.

Circassians and Turkmen also live their language

Circassian and Turkmen minorities also live in northern and eastern Syria. The region around Manbij in particular represents a veritable mosaic of identities. While the Erdoğan regime tried in vain to instrumentalise the Turkmen population for its attack plans, Circassians and Turkmen joined the self-administration and established autonomous councils. The Circassians developed their own language education system through their councils and associations. After the liberation of Manbij on 25 April 2018, the Turkmen set up their own committee and also started mother tongue education within this framework.

834,000 people receive education in their mother tongue

The goal of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria is for people to be able to learn in their mother tongue in all subjects offered. This goal has already been achieved to a certain extent. At 4,153 schools, 834,691 pupils are taught in their mother tongue. The list is still headed by the Arab population, followed by Kurds and Syriacs.

Radio and Television Supreme Council fines 3 TV channels over earthquake broadcast

ANF | ANKARA | 23 FEBRUARY 2023

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) has fined three TV outlets because of their broadcasts about the two earthquakes that occurred on 6 February.

FOX TV received a fine because of the remarks made by the moderator about the fact that the disaster management agency was preventing aid from other entities. The outlet was handed an administrative fine.

The council imposed five broadcast bans on Halk TV over its "Great Disaster Special Broadcast" program.

The bans were imposed because of remarks made by Ahmet Şık, an MP with the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP), which, according to the council, violated a provision in the RTÜK Law by which "Broadcast services cannot be against the existence and independence of the Republic of Turkey and the inseparable integrity of the nation and the country."

A third fine was given to TELE1 for the "rumors conveyed as if they were the truth" during a program.

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Former HDP Nusaybin province co-chair Şiyar Koç taken into custody

ANF | MARDIN | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

Şiyar Koç, former co-chair of HDP Nusaybin (Nisêbîn), in the province of Mardin (Mêrdîn), who lives in the rural neighbourhood of Mendere, was taken into custody. The politician had just returned from the earthquake zone where he went voluntarily.

He was detained after a raid on his house earlier this morning.

Koç was detained as part of an investigation launched by the Mardin Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, and was taken to the Mardin Provincial Security Directorate.

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Man found dead after discussion with an imam

ANF | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

A 37-year-old man from the town of Doğubayazıt in the Kurdish province of Ağrı argued with an imam in front of a mosque. The police were called in and took both men to the local police headquarters, where the discussion continued. The man ended up in a detention cell because he allegedly slapped the cleric in the face. Shortly afterwards, he died. He is said to have strangled himself with his cardigan, according to the official version.

The case, made public by the Mezopotamya (MA) news agency, occurred on Friday. The dead man is Ahmet Bugrur, father of three children. His brother Resur Bugrur told MA: “We don't know what could have caused the alleged quarrel with the imam. At around 8 am, I received a call from the police station. I was told that Ahmet had been taken into custody. I went there immediately, but none of the officers gave me any information. At around 10 am, other family members and relatives arrived in front of the police station. We waited for information about the reasons for my brother's arrest. About 30 minutes passed, then an ambulance drove up. Another half an hour later, a hearse arrived. Shortly afterwards, we were told that Ahmet had hanged himself with his cardigan.”

Bugrur's relatives then demanded to speak to the officers on duty and to view footage from the CCTV cameras in the station and custody area. “The police stated that there were no officers on duty in the area at the time of the incident,” said Resul Bugrur. He stated that the inspection of the video footage was refused without giving any reason. “A paramedic we were able to speak to only told us that Ahmet was already dead when the ambulance arrived. In addition, we were able to learn that a person who was said to have been in the neighbouring cell at the time of the incident was taken away head over heels.” It is unclear who this person is.

The detention cell in which Ahmet Bugrur is said to have taken his own life was examined by forensics “after the victim was found”, according to the police headquarters in Doğubayazıt. The Kurdish man's body was taken to the forensic medicine department of the training and research hospital in Ağrı for a post-mortem examination. “Even though bruises and haematomas were found on the neck, no clear cause of death could be determined,” reads the preliminary autopsy report, which MA was able to view. The Institute of Forensic Medicine in Amed (Diyarbakır) will now clarify the cause of death.

Ahmet Bugrur was buried yesterday evening at the Koçkiran cemetery in Doğubayazıt. His family, meanwhile, who do not believe in the suicide theory presented, had filed a complaint against the Turkish police.

The Baran Tursun Foundation, a non-profit organisation based in Izmir in western Turkey, has documented hundreds of deaths in custody or due to police violence since 2007. Ahmet Bugrur is “case number 435” according to their statistics. However, the foundation suspects that the number of unreported cases is much higher, as not all cases are made public.

Interview

Besê Erzincan: Our people can overcome any disaster by their self-organization

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 FEBRUARY 2023

Besê Erzincan, coordinating member of the Kurdistan Women's Community (KJK), spoke in an ANF interview about the earthquake disaster in Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria.

How do you rate the earthquake catastrophe in Kurdistan and the picture that emerged afterwards?

Many cities in Turkey and north-eastern Syria were affected by this earthquake, including Pazarcık, Elbistan, Maraş, Malatya, Adıyaman, Antakya, Amed, Sehba, Aleppo, Idlib and Latakia. According to unofficial data, there are hundreds of thousands dead and wounded. The destruction, loss of life and migration following this earthquake, dubbed the Catastrophe of the Century, deeply affects all of humanity, our people, our friends and all of us. On this basis, we express our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this earthquake disaster and wish the injured a speedy recovery.

Reality of state and government exposed

This terrible earthquake has reposed the reality of the state and government of Turkey in a very clear way. The founding principle of the Republic of Turkey is based on the policy of Turkicization and Sunnization of all peoples and faiths, especially Armenians and Kurds. Today, under the guise of political Islam, this fascist, monistic, nationalistic, religious and sexist state mentality has dogmatized and hardened even further and reached its climax with the AKP government as a special war government. The approach taken under the leadership of the fascist Erdoğan to Turkify Anatolia and Mesopotamia and expand the old Ottoman, expansionist policies in these regions is well known.

Since the AKP-MHP government has made a name for itself in this context as being hostile to people, women and religion and sees this as a principle of existence, it considers it its right to carry out all sorts of ugly practices in order to remain in power. It will not leave its policies of genocide, denial and extermination, no matter how severe the societal catastrophes. With great dishonesty and hypocrisy, state officials are now declaring that the earthquake catastrophe is destiny. However, it is not destiny. It is not destiny that leads people to death. It's not the earthquake. It is the government's anti-social, anti-grassroots policies, negligence, theft and corruption. The AKP-MHP government with its fascist nationalism is dividing and fragmenting society and turning people against each other. At the same time, it demands that society, shaped with extreme nationalism, turn a blind eye to the genocidal policy it is pursuing against the Kurds. It seeks to perpetuate its power by trying to profit from hostility toward the Kurdish people.

This inhuman government has enriched itself with its opportunistic, profit-oriented policy. It has propagated a fascist-nationalist discourse to intensify the exploitation of society. Through its profit-oriented and war-based economy, it has enriched a handful of male-dominated monopolists and impoverished society.

The government deliberately did not intervene in Kurdistan

The AKP-MHP government deliberately did not intervene after the earthquake in North Kurdistan. Although the first hours and days after an earthquake are vital, nothing serious has been done and government agencies have not been mobilized to the region in any way. Because the population in the earthquake region is predominantly Kurdish and Arab Alevi. Our people were clearly and intentionally left under the rubble.

It is well known that the region lies on the earthquake line. Earthquakes are extreme natural disasters. The level of technology that humanity has reached, however, is capable of bringing the death toll to zero. In countries like Japan, for example, earthquakes are stronger than in North Kurdistan. Despite this, the number of injured and dead remains extremely low. The fascist AKP-MHP government is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, both with its settlement policy, urban planning and receivership regime before the earthquake and its grossly inadequate aid policy after the earthquake.

How do you rate the behavior of the AKP/MHP government after the earthquake?

The fascist government is not only responsible for the deaths and massacres that followed the earthquake. At the same time, it kidnapped orphans and handed them over to sects and state institutions and prevented and stole incoming aid. People who set off to help the earthquake victims are met with distrust and hatred. They are mistreated and attempts are made to dissuade them. In Pazarcık, Maraş, Adıyaman, Hatay, the Alevi Kurdish and Arab population should leave their places of residence and emigrate. The state not only fails to provide assistance; it exacerbates the situation. This policy is carried out openly and secretly and deeply hurts society.

In Turkey, never before has the state been so hostile towards society as a whole, and especially towards our people, as under the AKP government. The fascist Erdoğan government tried to take advantage of this situation in an ugliest, despicable, cruel and ruthless way at a time when the population was suffering the greatest pain. This is the end of humanity. The fact that the AKP thinks only of its own supporters, even in the worst of situations, when people are starving and freezing, shows how profoundly immoral it is.

The Erdoğan government has taken the most atrocious measures against society since it came to power. For example, before this earthquake, an amnesty for the construction of buildings was issued several times. Thousands of contractors went unpunished despite committing every irregularity. Turkey has developed into a paradise of lies, fraud, the mafia, usury, lawlessness, and arbitrariness. Already, the illegal and unjust appointment of colonial administrators for the towns and communities in North Kurdistan has shown the audacity and greed of this fascist power. It has denied society a will of its own and has relied on the power of the state to do so.

No help can be expected from the state

Therefore, to expect the bloodiest government in the history of Turkey to help the peoples, the Kurds, the Arabs, the Alevi and the women after the earthquake is really naive. We should not forget that what a government has done in the past is the basic indicator of what it will do now and in the future.

The AKP government, with its fascist, colonialist policies, has plunged Turkey into great destruction and tragedy in every respect. Although the possibility of an earthquake was noted by scientists in advance, no action was taken. On the one hand, the Erdoğan government did not take any measures and made no preparations. On the other hand, it did not let the momentum and initiative of society, local initiatives, civil society organizations and opposition parties come to the rescue and confiscated the collected aid, making the massacre even worse. Therefore, Erdoğan, Bahçeli, Soylu and other ministers at the head of the fascist government should resign immediately. However, they continue to make the most shameless statements as if nothing had happened, and on top of that, make the most serious allegations against the opposition. With this earthquake and its results, the ugly and cruel face of the AKP government was revealed. The people of Turkey, the women, are going to give the necessary answer to this fascist government in the elections. The AKP will be buried under the rubble.

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Opinion

Karasu: The earthquake has shown the absence of the state

ANF | BEHDINAN | 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Mustafa Karasu, member of the Executive Council of the Kurdistan Community of Societies (KCK), spoke to ANF about the earthquake and its aftermath.

The earthquake has shown the absence of the state

Mustafa Karasu underlined the great solidarity of the people throughout Turkey and Northern Kurdistan on the one hand and the failure of the state on the other as a clear sign that the state has been completely absent. And this, he said, will have important consequences. “The state initially downplayed the catastrophe - now it speaks of a completely unexpected catastrophe of the century. So it tries to relieve itself. There are magnitude eight and magnitude nine earthquakes in Japan. The ground is constantly shaking in Mexico. However, very few people die in these very strong earthquakes. It is said, with good reason, that it was not the earthquake that killed people, but rather the lack of precaution, poor preparation and flawed policies.”

Religious feelings are abused

Karasu also accused the AKP regime of abusing people's religious feelings by speaking of a "plan of destiny" and "fate" in relation to the earthquake. "When the AKP-MHP regime speaks of 'fate' or 'destiny', it means that it is the work of God. Should one say such a thing? Maybe some people say that too. There are some fanatics. 'We have done wrong, so Allah has punished us,' they say. That is what destiny means."

Karasu continued: "Erdoğan steps shamelessly in front of the camera and speaks with audacity. Enough with these insolences. Erdoğan is trying to protect his palace, his regime that was shaken by the earthquake."

Talking about suffering is persecuted by Erdoğan as 'disinformation'

Regarding the suppression of any criticism by the regime, the KCK representative said: "The people are complaining. People express their pain. They say they have been left alone. They show openly and clearly how much they are suffering. What is Erdoğan doing? He calls what people say 'disinformation' and 'lies'. We are dealing with such a regime. A special war regime that twists facts and lies straight in the people's faces." At the same time, the regime is making unfounded promises. Karasu addressed Erdoğan and said: "First give an account of your crimes, then we will see what you will do."

This is not incompetence, but the result of the policies of the regime

As to the government discourse that there may have been a few shortcomings, Karasu said that clearly this is an understatement and added that "due to a lack of precautionary measures and a lack of preparation, people faced the earthquake without any protection. That's the reality. How can one speak of inadequacies? We are talking about hundreds of thousands of people buried under rubble and dying. Specific warnings had been made in advance. These are not shortcomings. It is clearly the result of this government's endless pursuit of profit and its failure to take action against such a disaster. Like everyone else, we too ask ourselves: what happened to the tens of billions of dollars collected from the earthquake tax?"

Help must go neither to AFAD nor to the state

Karasu emphasized that a great deal of aid is now flowing into Turkey from abroad and from civil society. "This aid – he said – should not be left to the AKP and AFAD, because it is well known how the regime has embezzled the enormous sums of earthquake tax collected since 1999. The same is bound to happen with aid money, which is why the aid has to reach the people in a different way. This can happen through civil society, the city administration, professional associations such as engineering and bar associations, women's organizations, political parties and relatives of earthquake victims. Relevant organizations could set up a fund to collect money for the victims and for preventive measures. In this way, Turkey can be protected from the consequences of future earthquakes. Nobody should rely on what Erdoğan says in front of the camera. And above all, our people, patriotic circles, civil society and the peoples of the world should not send aid to AFAD. This aid should be channeled to the people through NGOs, through structures that use this money in the right way. Because this government cannot be trusted. We are not saying this from a subjective perspective. We're not saying this because we're fighting this government. What we are doing is exposing the reality of things."

“Politicians are responsible for the corruption of contractors”

Karasu emphasized that the arrest of businessmen from the construction industry is only a way to deflect blame from the regime: “Yes, some contractors may have stolen cement or iron. The contractors are not blameless. Because they don’t build stable houses, although Turkey is an earthquake zone. But politics is responsible for that. One has to question whether the government has fulfilled its supervisory duties. After the Marmara quake it was claimed that the buildings should now be made earthquake-proof. Taxes were collected for this, decisions were made for this. But why didn’t anything happen? Why weren’t the buildings on the tectonic fault lines made earthquake-proof?” Karasu said that this responsibility cannot be placed on contractors alone, and called for the government’s resignation. Those responsible in the government and at AFAD must be punished.

“Neoliberalism has normalized theft and greed in Turkey”

Karasu also said that the contractors’ actions correspond to the reality in Turkey: “Greed for profit and theft have become normal in Turkey. Everyone wants to steal something from somewhere. Who is the role model? It’s the government. All of Erdoğan’s relatives have enriched themselves incredibly. The AKP clique has enriched itself. How? With their ruthlessness, they have seized the wealth of society. If Erdoğan’s relatives act this way, if those around him act this way, his contractual partners will also act this way. With the advent of neoliberalism in Turkey, unscrupulous profiteering and theft have become the norm. Erdoğan said: ‘Europe envies us.’ In Europe, if a prime minister or minister accepts bribes to enrich himself, his relatives and friends by exploiting his authority, then this politician will be prosecuted. Is there something like that in Turkey? Erdoğan and the AKP government cannot save themselves by blaming constructors.”

The state of emergency is a tool of oppression

After the devastating earthquake, the AKP regime declared a state of emergency in the affected provinces. The state of emergency is to last for three months and gives the military and police special powers. Karasu said that the leadership in Ankara has not just created a temporary tool to suppress criticism of the government because of the ongoing chaotic conditions in the earthquake area and to cover up the truth. “The state of emergency became a state of repression for the government from the beginning. Repression has increased and anyone who speaks out will be imprisoned. It is not about reducing the suffering of the people or taking action against alleged looting. The supposed looters are only used as an excuse to attack the people. In Turkey, the state of emergency is used as a justification for repression. You have to take action against it, you have to uncover it. The state diverts attention to save itself. People are lynched, killed and massacred by state forces because they are accused of being thieves, when in fact they are earthquake victims. Erdoğan and the AKP government are using this situation to silence society. Some of the people beaten and murdered are volunteers. They came to Kurdistan from western Turkey to help the people. This is how the state tries to hide its own guilt.”

Turkey will enter a process of radical change

Karasu said that political awareness in Turkey will change as a result of the earthquake. There will be a revolution of conscience. He made an appeal to “democratic and revolutionary circles and all those who love

their people, women and youth. You must understand this situation and play your role in Turkey's transformation. After this earthquake, Turkey can no longer remain as it is. It will have to change. It will have to enter a process of radical change. It was already in such a process, but with this earthquake it has become inevitable for Turkey to change, become democratised, develop democratic politics and democratic life. Everyone should join the fight to achieve this change. It is time to overthrow this government and change Turkey. I call on everyone to play their part, reject the status quo ante and struggle to build a new Turkey."

Rebuilding life west of the Euphrates

At the same time, Karasu appealed to the region west of the Euphrates to be rebuilt. "The areas there have become practically uninhabitable. I call on all our people, living today in the metropolises and in Europe as well as in the areas west of the Euphrates, to contribute to the reconstruction of the region. At the moment, there are people who are leaving their homes for various reasons, including the cold. We must once again transform the region into a place worth living in. We should rebuild it and thus prevent emigration. Since the Maraş massacre, a depopulation policy has prevailed in the region. The earthquake could now complete this policy. I call on all democratic forces, the Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey to be sensitive and to play their part in the reconstruction."



Kalkan: Social and political consequences of earthquake in North Kurdistan/South-East Turkey

ANF | BEHDINAN | 24 FEBRUARY 2023

Duran Kalkan, a member of the KCK Executive Council, spoke about the social and political consequences of the earthquake in North Kurdistan/South-East Turkey.

Kalkan said: "This is a real catastrophe for society. Whatever the reason, this has very heavy consequences. On the first day, our movement made a statement. It not only shared the pain of our people but also called for an attitude towards this tragedy and suggested how to fight against it. A mobilization on this basis has since taken place. On this basis, I would like to wish mercy to those who lost their lives and healing to the wounded. I share the pain of our peoples in Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria. I wish resilience to our people who have suffered from the earthquake. I would like to express that solidarity and sharing will keep us alive. Although we do not have detailed information, as far as we are able to follow the press, the consequences are really heavy. We also know the region. We are also children of those lands. We were born and raised there. We know large parts of it directly. The severe winter conditions have made the situation even worse. In the middle of the winter, such a tragedy happened. And the affected area is huge. About 20 million people live there."

Kalkan added: "A certain degree of solidarity has since been shown in our society. I would like to thank everyone who has shown solidarity. Solidarity has also come from abroad. But the Turkish state was always taken as the basis [for the solidarity efforts]. Yet, the Kurdish policy of this state is known. The AKP-

MHP's approach to the Kurds is also known. Some circles could have tried to directly help the local community. As a matter of fact, there have been people who have openly said that there is discrimination against Kurds, Alevis and revolutionary democratic leftist circles. The AKP-MHP administration has used this earthquake to implement a total fascist attack, extermination and a terror administration. This is based on an attitude that tries to prevent social solidarity. Therefore, many circles could have taken this into consideration. I would like to once again express my deepest condolences to all our people. We will indeed turn this pain into consciousness, organization, solidarity and on this basis, into a democratic struggle and liberation."

Kalkan continued: "Scientists are now discussing a lot about the causes. Of course, as a force waging a political struggle, we also have a number of things to say about the issues that concern political questions. This area is an earthquake zone. It is located on a fault line. Although everybody knew about the fault line, so much destruction has taken place because none of those buildings had a license. They turned a blind eye to everything for the sake of profit. TV channels now show Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches from the past where he talks about how they solved the problems of Hatay, Malatya or Adıyaman. Now the earthquake has shown that all this was a lie. Nothing had been solved there. In other words, a lot of profit was made there. The earthquake is a natural disaster. Nature has its own laws. But not taking any earthquake precautions and not living accordingly has led to this disaster, to so many dead and injured people. Yes, we cannot prevent earthquakes. But the earthquake could have been expected and measures could have been taken to minimize the number of casualties. A life suitable for earthquakes could have been built. Now we can prevent and change all this."

Kalkan said: "This profit-seeking system, this exploitative system, this system that is desperate and destroys nature, does not minimize the damage that such an earthquake can cause, but maximizes it. We have seen this in the wake of the latest earthquake. What happened on the line stretching from Adıyaman to Maraş, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Antep, Hatay, Osmaniye and Adana has shown this clearly. Is there any settlement suitable for such an earthquake zone in the area? So it is not the earthquake that is to blame, but those who did not build their lives according to the earthquake. Of course, there is also a system that organizes life in this way. The system of state and power. And societies give way to state and power. They shouldn't. They should hold them responsible. The state is a force of profit, a force of exploitation. It thinks of nothing else. Now some are asking where the state is? In the aftermath of the earthquake, the capital factions are rubbing their hands, talking about how much they will build. Because they think that new possibilities of profit have emerged for them. Instead of saying where the state is, we should ask where is our control over our own lives? What is the Turkish power and state system like? What is its approach towards the Kurds? What is life like that is being built? Now, while we are trying to overcome the painful and heavy consequences of the earthquake, we must also take these realities into account, correct them and build the future correctly. Will we be able to overcome these consequences not by complaining, crying and whining, but by really thinking and pondering on the causes and consequences? That is, by analyzing the consequences well and finding the causes of them? Will we be able to eliminate the causes and make sure that something like this will not occur again? This is the important issue."

Kalkan ended his remarks by saying: "It seems that they will increase the violence and oppression even more. In other words, they will make huge profits by building many new buildings. They will create many areas of exploitation. For this to happen, they will continue the political pressure, military pressure and terror. They have declared a state of emergency for three months and took up postponing the elections based on this. They cheat, use repression and the state of emergency to then claim that they have won the

elections. Can there be an election in this environment, under the state of emergency? It is very clear that there won't be any elections. We have always said that the AKP has not yet decided on the elections. Now it is trying to use the earthquake as an excuse to prevent them. They might very well increase the pressure, terror and impose war as a part of this policy. Tayyip Erdoğan, with the guidance of Devlet Bahçeli, will thus aggravate his own guilt. He will try to turn the earthquake into a blessing for himself and extend his stay in power. This must not be allowed to happen. The results of the earthquake have revealed the reality of AKP-MHP fascism. No one can make anyone believe otherwise. Neither in Turkey itself nor abroad. Some put on a smiling face in order to gain profit, to get a share from the exploitation, but nobody should assume that they like Tayyip Erdoğan very much and that they will always support him. The AKP's profit-seeking policies and settlement policies are responsible for this outcome. For 20 years it has built these kinds of buildings and the latest developments are a result of this. The AKP-MHP government is responsible and will be held accountable. In that sense, no matter what it does, it cannot save itself. The earthquake will destroy this government even more severely. If it is wise and reduces violence, maybe it will find a place for itself. If not, it may lead to a situation that will have much more severe consequences for them. Let us state this as a warning.

The situation of the other political forces is important. Of course, they should be more active in this context. They are partly, but they should be even more active. They are a government themselves, they have come together with every party. Alliances have been formed. These alliances should play a role. They have the power to govern. They should be able to develop better work to reduce the effects of the earthquake. But this has not been seen so far. It is very weak. The Alliance for Labor and Freedom has made certain efforts. They have realized the seriousness of the situation. This is good. But their efforts are being obstructed. Neither the opposition, nor the Alliance for Labor and Freedom or various associations, institutions, charity organizations should adhere to the obstruction of AKP-MHP fascism. The attitude of associations, civil society organizations, parties and various social groups is important, the attitude of society as a whole is important. In the face of such a situation, always expecting something from the state, always complaining and demanding, will not allow them to achieve anything. On the contrary, all these institutions, associations, non-governmental organizations, trade unions and parties should approach society without any obstacles. They should share the pain of society and heal its wounds. There must be a complete mobilization, a process of solidarity. The organization of society must increase.

The great importance of social solidarity and sharing has once more become clear. It has become clear how important it is to be a democratic society, to be a democratic nation, to develop a system of Democratic Confederalism instead of a state. In this sense, let us draw rich lessons from these developments. Let us educate ourselves. It is clear that there is a lack of education. We are also responsible for this. Everyone is responsible. Society must have the right consciousness. Those who have accumulated so much in the cities can go to the villages. To the villages, not to the places where the AKP-MHP wants people to go. The people living in their village communities should definitely not leave their homes. Some families have said that they will not leave their land. This is very true, they should not. They can build a life in which disasters like earthquakes will not kill them. They can build community life in a better way based on solidarity. In other words, all those polished things of capitalism are not life. We should not seek these kinds of things. Our society must be resilient. We therefore call on all revolutionary democratic forces and democratic political circles to take the lead in this matter, to raise awareness in society, and to make a strong effort to heal the wounds of society without adhering to any of the obstacles or bans put in place by the AKP-MHP. Once again, I would like to express that we share the pain of our people. But I think that if we approach the issue at hand in this way, we will overcome the pain faster.”

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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