

THE İMRALI POST

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

Issue № 42 / 19 March 2023 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

Contents

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	2
Young people from Solothurn take over Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg.....	2
People in north-eastern Syria demand Öcalan's freedom.....	3
Families apply to visit their relatives on Imrali.....	4
TCŞ and TêkoJIN members in Paris demand freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	6
KCK: Time to Overthrow the Fascist Government!.....	7
Prisons in Turkey.....	10
Ill prisoner says repression in Ahlat T Type Closed jail increasing.....	10
Military aggression and occupation.....	11
PYD: Autonomous administration offers the best model to solve problems.....	11
MSD: All democratic forces should participate in national dialogue.....	12
HPG: Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas continue.....	12
35 years ago, the massacre of Halabja.....	13
Syria's Assad announces demands to meet Erdogan.....	15
HRE repels attempted attack on a village of Shehba.....	15
14-year-old kolbar injured in attack by Iranian forces.....	16
SDF: Nine of our fighters were martyred in helicopter crash.....	17
Twelve areas in Şırnak declared 'special security zones'.....	17
5 years ago, the invasion of Afrin.....	18
Street in Erciş named after a perpetrator of Zilan genocide.....	19
Earthquake and Flood in North Kurdistan.....	20
Tents housing earthquake victims in Doğanşehir flooded.....	20
Death toll from floods in North Kurdistan rises to 18.....	21
Life is paralysed in Adıyaman forty days after the earthquake.....	22
HDP commemorates earthquake victims in Antep and Maraş.....	23
RSF exposes censorship of critical articles on Turkish government's earthquake handling.....	24
People build a new life in Antakya: "This land is ours".....	24
Femicide.....	27
Police in Van take 9 women into custody.....	27
A Tribute to freedom fighter Anna Campbell.....	28
Human Rights Violations.....	29
Editor of Bianet Kurdish service taken into custody.....	29
20 activists brutally detained in Istanbul.....	29
Nine young people sent to prison in Istanbul because of social media posts.....	30
Kurdistan Alliance and IHD call for the Halabja massacre to be recognized as a genocide.....	31
Journalist Hamdullah Bayram taken into custody.....	32
International Press Institute: Reporters face numerous hurdles in Turkey.....	33

Iranian regime executes seven Kurdish prisoners in Urmia jail.....	33
Newroz	34
Sozdar Avesta: Newroz means uprising and rebirth.....	34
First Newroz fire lit in Ankara.....	37
KONGRA-GEL calls for mobilization to welcome Newroz.....	37
Women lit the first Newroz fire in Istanbul.....	38
Newroz fire lit in the mountains of Kurdistan.....	39
General Elections in Turkey	39
Labor and Freedom Alliance votes to enter the election as a coalition.....	39
Interview	41
Andok: Democratic Confederalism suits the demands of all social groups.....	41
Andok: The Rojava Revolution attracts and fascinates all humanity.....	44
Andok: The PKK is a women's party.....	48
Opinion	50
Erdoğan-Bahçeli fascism has come to a dead end.....	50
Karayilan: The only solution is Leader Abdullah Öcalan.....	52
Who Are We?	54

— ★ —

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Young people from Solothurn take over Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 16 MARCH 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil was launched on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, with the aim of ensuring the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and breaking the absolute isolation imposed on him. The vigil continues in its 560th week and has been taken over by young people from Solothurn, Switzerland.

The group includes Sercan Kılıç, Serhat Çelik, Yetiş Binici and Baran Demir.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Sercan Kılıç said: “We want our Leader to be released. That's why we've been keeping this vigil here for 11 years. We are young people from Solothurn. It is the youth who will liberate the leadership. We will continue to stand guard until our leader is released. Our aim is to liberate our Leader and the Kurdish people who are under oppression. There is persecution in four parts of Kurdistan today. The Turkish state uses chemical weapons. The international community does not hear our demands. As young people, we will continue our struggle until our Leader is freed and our people regain their freedom.



People in north-eastern Syria demand Öcalan's freedom

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

The North and East Syria People's Initiative launched a signature campaign on January 22 in cooperation with the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative – Syria demanding to end the isolation against Öcalan and secure his physical freedom. The campaign, carried out in all regions of North and East Syria, ended on March 13 after the collection of 2 million 626 thousand 828 signatures.

According to the Freedom for Öcalan Initiative-Syria, the signatures will be delivered to the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), international law institutions and relevant parties through the Asrın Law Office that represents Öcalan.

The campaign was launched in cooperation with North and East Syrian communes, municipal councils, districts and towns under the motto "The people of North and East Syria call for the lifting of the isolation of Öcalan and his physical freedom."

Speaking to ANHA, campaigners stated that Öcalan should be released because millions of people trust his leadership.

Mehmud Gedo expressed the reason for his endorsement: "I supported the campaign to secure the physical freedom of Öcalan. He has been held in the İmralı prison for 24 years and everyone knows that he is cruelly imprisoned there."

Gedo said: "Our aim is to convey our voice to international powers and relevant parties. All countries of the world should know that millions of people are calling for Öcalan's physical freedom."

Gedo remarked that Öcalan's physical freedom would mark the beginning of a solution to all conflicts and crises in the Middle East. He concluded: "Öcalan serves democracy with his ideas and philosophy."

Another campaigner, Ehmed Esad, stated that the campaign is an important way to draw attention to the situation of Öcalan and to secure his physical freedom.

A citizen named Ehmed Hec Hisên said that he endorsed the campaign because he thought that the freedom of the people would not be possible without the physical freedom of Öcalan. He said: "Öcalan was arrested after an international conspiracy. All the countries in the world should know that peoples cannot be free without the physical freedom of Öcalan."

Hec Hisên urged the international community and relevant parties to meet the demand of the campaigners and said that urgent intervention is needed to secure the physical freedom of Öcalan.



Families apply to visit their relatives on Imrali

ANF | ISTANBUL | 17 MARCH 2023

There has been no news from Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan for two years and there is absolute isolation imposed on him.

Abdullah Öcalan's brother Mehmet Öcalan and his guardian Mazlum Dinç, Ömer Hayri Konar's brother Ali Konar, Hamili Yıldırım's brother Polat Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş's sister Melihe Çetin applied to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to request a visit to their relatives.

Families also applied to the Directorate of Imrali F Type High Security Closed Penal Institution through the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

Lawyers are requesting to meet with Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan twice a week. However, applications for visits are systematically left unanswered. In some cases, months later, lawyers are informed that disciplinary action has been taken against the Kurdish people's leader and therefore no visit can be granted.

It came out on January 12 that the Bursa Execution Judge's Office had notified lawyers of a new three-month ban on family visits for Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners on 4 January. The action was described as a "disciplinary punishment", the motives and details of which, however, were not mentioned.

Concerns increased after the CPT visit to Imrali

Concerns over the situation of the Kurdish people's leader increased after the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited Turkey on September 20-29. In a statement on 3 October, the CPT announced that Imralı F Type High Security Prison was among the institutions it visited.

However, Asrın Law Office reported that during the CPT visit, there was no meeting with Abdullah Öcalan, and that this increased their concerns. Asrın Law Office said on 29 November: "We have heard that Mr. Öcalan did not see the CPT delegation during its visit to Imrali Island in September 2022."

Conditions of extraordinary isolation

The Imralı F Type High Security Closed Prison was built specifically for Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999 and has since been operated based on a special status and through special practices.

Under the so-called aggravated execution regime, Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners, Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, have been held under conditions of extraordinary isolation for a long time, 24 years in terms of Öcalan and eight years each in terms of other inmates.

Despite all their attempts, lawyers from the Istanbul-based Asrın Law Office, which represents Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners, have not been able to receive even a single sign of life from their clients since 25 March 2021. They could not obtain any information regarding their health status, their

detention conditions, their legal situation in 2022. It has been 23 months that their clients have not been heard from in any way.

Öcalan held in a single cell since 1999

According to the “[2022 Annual Assessment Report on Rights Violations and the Current Conditions in İmralı Island Prison](#)” released by Asrın Law Office on 15 February 2023, Abdullah Öcalan has been held in a single cell in İmralı Island Prison since 15 February 1999. For the first ten years, he was the only prisoner in the island prison. In November 2009, new cells were added to the prison and five other prisoners were brought in. Nevertheless, Öcalan continued to be kept in solitary confinement 23 hours a day on weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends.

Until 2011, Öcalan’s right to see his lawyers was limited to one hour one day a week, but in fact, he was constantly prevented from availing himself of this limited right, with the authorities alleging the pretext of “adverse weather conditions” or a “technical defect” of the coaster going to the island. In the twelve years since 27 July 2011, he has only been able to see his lawyer five times, between May and August 2019. The last of these five meetings took place on 7 August 2019.

Since 2014, Öcalan has received five visits from family members. His brother’s visit to the prison on 3 March 2020 marks Öcalan’s last direct contact with his family. Also, in 24 years, he communicated with the outside world via telephone on only two occasions (on 27 April 2020 and 25 March 2021). During the last phone call on 25 March 2021, the connection was lost after only two minutes and could not be restored. Öcalan has not been heard from since.

Incommunicado detention

The report by Asrın stated that their clients’ situation was described as a form of “incommunicado” detention by the CPT in its report of 5 August 2020 (paras. 48 and 49). The CPT emphasized that such a state of affairs was unacceptable, urging the Turkish authorities to end it as soon as possible. “Incommunicado” detention means that the detainee or convict is completely prevented from any contact with the outside world and therefore cannot communicate with anyone, including his/her family, friends, and lawyers.

The “incommunicado” detention continued without interruption in 2022 despite lawyers’ weekly applications to the authorities in which they requested for the families and lawyers to be allowed to visit the prison. From 25 March 2021, the last date of contact with İmralı, until the end of 2022, a total of 238 applications for lawyer visits and another 79 applications for family/guardian visits were made. These applications were left without any response. Likewise, lawyers did not receive any letters, telegrams, or faxes from their clients during this period; nor was there any contact via phone.

Restrictions through fabricated decisions

“After we applied to different international mechanisms, we learned from the government’s responses that our clients’ right to communicate via phone had been restricted for six months by decisions of the prison’s Management and Supervisory Board dated 18 October 2021, 30 March 2022, 9 May 2022 and 9 June 2022, respectively. These restriction orders were not communicated to the lawyers; the procedures were carried out secretly, bypassing the lawyers. Thus, it was understood that our clients’ right to communicate

via phone is subject to periodic restrictions through fabricated decisions that are issued once every six months.

Moreover, we have not received any response to the numerous letters sent to our clients at regular intervals throughout the year. It is not known whether these letters were delivered to their addressees at all. In turn, we have also not received any letters, telegrams or faxes written by our clients in 2022.

In addition, the de facto and unlawful bans on family and lawyer visits that have been in place for many years have been maintained systematically and without cease so that not a single family or lawyer visit could take place in 2022. In this respect, 2022 was marked by the absolute impossibility of establishing any contact with our clients in İmralı Island Prison.”

— ★ —

TCŞ and TekoJIN members in Paris demand freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | PARIS | 18 MARCH 2023

Tevgera Ciwanên Şoreşger (TCŞ) and Jinên Ciwan ên Tekoşer (TekoJIN) members came together in front of the Kurdish Cultural Center in the Drancy suburb of Paris, as part of the “Werin Cenga Azadiyê” campaign demanding freedom for Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The young people marched towards the train station of Bobigny with photos of Abdullah Öcalan and PKK banners. Here they held a minute's silence for the Martyrs of the Revolution in Kurdistan.

Later, a statement was read on behalf of TCŞ. The statement said: “While Leader Abdullah Öcalan put up a great resistance on Imrali Island under conditions of aggravated isolation and torture for 24 years as a result of an international conspiracy, the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and the guerrillas do not bow to Turkish fascism and special war policies. International institutions such as the CPT, the Council of Europe and the United Nations do not show any reaction to actions contrary to international law taken against our Leader. We have had no news from him for about two years.

TekoJIN members said: “The physical freedom of our Leader is directly related to the freedom of women and the Kurdish people everywhere. The isolation imposed by the Turkish state on Leader Apo is proof that it fears the ideas that strengthen this revolution.”

— ★ —

KCK: Time to Overthrow the Fascist Government!

ANF | 18 MARCH 2023

In a written statement, the KCK Executive Council Co-Presidency welcomed the 2023 Newroz and said: “Our peoples, especially the people of Kurdistan, should take to the squares in millions during Newroz and hold the AKP-MHP, the murderer of the thousands of people lost in the earthquake, to account.”

The statement reads as follows:

“We have entered a new Newroz period, a symbol of resistance and revival. First of all, we would like to wish everybody ‘Newroz pîroz be!’ and celebrate the Newroz of all our peoples with the spirit of resistance and struggle. We celebrate the 2023 Newroz of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan], who has paved the way for us to struggle and regain our existence by resisting and has given us the consciousness and will to do so. We celebrate the Newroz holiday of the people of Kurdistan, who have continued the tradition of Newroz by continuously resisting oppression until the present day and have thus become one with Newroz. Newroz is the holiday of all oppressed social groups, women, youth, laborers as well as peoples, and expresses their feelings of freedom. In this respect, we celebrate the Newroz of women, youth, laborers and all resisting social groups.

Newroz is an attitude of resistance created by the oppressed against the oppressors by paying a price for freedom. This historical characteristic of Newroz has also been valid in the age we are in. By paying a great price to regain existence and achieve freedom, Newroz has been reunited with its true meaning. Undoubtedly, it was the Kawa of our time who reintroduced the meaning of Newroz. We therefore commemorate with great respect, love and gratitude all the martyrs of revolution and democracy in the person of our great Newroz martyrs and Kawas of today - Mazlum Doğan, Zekiye, Raşan, Ronahi and Bêrîvan. They became the Kawas of our time, revived the Newroz tradition and resurrected the people of Kurdistan with Newroz. We bow with respect in front of their struggle and reiterate our promise of success and victory to our martyrs. There is no doubt that victory is possible if the struggle grows along the lines of the martyrs. Our movement has walked on this path until today and has made great progress. From now on, our movement will continue to walk on the path of the martyrs without stopping until we achieve victory and live up to the memory of the martyrs. No one should have any doubt about this.

Newroz has expressed the truth of the history and tradition of the peoples’ resistance reflected in mythology, epic and folk songs. It has survived until the present day by being celebrated as a holiday. We know very well that, just like today, there have been cruel Dehaks in history, and the peoples oppressed under the oppression of Dehaks have revolted under the leadership of blacksmith Kawas, destroyed the castles of oppression and made the peoples exist and free again.

Since Newroz puts an end to oppression and gives new spirit and meaning to life, it has been given the meaning of a new day. In this respect, the meaning of Newroz is hidden in its name. This is to recreate oneself on the basis of freedom, spring and feast. For thousands of years, when the cruel Dehaks emerged in Kurdistan and the Middle East and started to persecute the peoples, the blacksmith Kawas emerged against these oppressors and their oppression and started rebellions. The fires of rebellion spread in waves and the oppressors were defeated. Today, in the same ancient geography of Kurdistan and the Middle East,

the great resistance and struggle led by the modern Kawa against the modern-day Dehak proves this historical fact.

The 2023 Newroz marks the 50th anniversary of the great march for freedom that Leader Apo started on Newroz. Because of this, Newroz 2023 has a special meaning for us. Fifty years ago, Leader Apo held a meeting with a group of friends at the Ankara-Çubuk dam and took the first organized step towards the Kurdistan revolution. The great freedom march that continues to this day is the continuation of this step that Leader Apo took fifty years ago during Newroz. Leader Apo has always emphasized the importance of this meeting on the day of Newroz and wanted us to understand it. From the very beginning, Leader Apo acted with the idea that the Kurdish people, whose country was torn apart and oppressed under the clutches of genocidal colonialism, could only resurrect with the spirit of Newroz and built the Kurdistan Freedom Revolution on the basis of resistance. Throughout history, the people of Kurdistan have been able to exist by living according to the Newroz tradition and resisting oppressors and oppression.

Leader Apo understood and acted accordingly against the policies of denial and annihilation of today's genocidal colonialist order, which far exceeds the oppression of the historical Dehak. He has understood that the Kurdish people can only be saved from extinction by Newroz, by taking the resistance tradition of Newroz as a basis. The Kurdistan Freedom Revolution was shaped according to these principles determined by Leader Apo. It is the result of this characteristic that the Kurdish Freedom Movement was not defeated, that it survived against all attacks, that it raised the Kurdish people, who were thought to be finished and exhausted, to their feet again and made them fight for their freedom and realized the revolution of resurrection. The people of Kurdistan have also reconstituted their essence according to the principles of freedom and resistance determined by Leader Apo. In this respect, they have essentially restored the Kurdish people to their historical essence and identity. Because the genocidal colonialist order alienated the Kurdish people from their historical and social identity and essence. By creating the PKK and bringing it together with the people, Leader Apo reunited the Kurdish people with its true essence and identity, that is, with Newroz. For this reason, Leader Apo has defined the Kurdish people as the people of Newroz.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest bastions of oppression in human history was the Diyarbakır Prison. In order to extinguish the sparks of freedom ignited by Leader Apo and to plunge the people of Kurdistan into darkness forever, today's cruel geniuses built Diyarbakır Prison, one of the greatest fortresses of oppression in human history. The revolutionaries of Kurdistan were strangled in this fortress of oppression and the people of Kurdistan were supposed to be completely suffocated there. Comrade Mazlum Doğan lit the Newroz fire by igniting three matchsticks, and by making himself Newroz, he tore the darkness that was supposed to cover the people of Kurdistan and became a real contemporary Kawa by illuminating the path of freedom. Zekiye, Raşan, Ronahi and Bêrivan, who walked on the path illuminated by our great Newroz martyr Mazlum Doğan, lit their bodies with the Newroz fire and illuminated the whole Kurdistan and the world. The people of Kurdistan have destroyed all the strongholds of oppression one by one and recreated themselves by walking on the bright path lit by the bodies of the Newroz martyrs.

The people of Kurdistan took to the squares in their thousands and turned Newroz into an uprising, becoming the people of Newroz again. Just as the fire lit by blacksmith Kawa spread throughout the mountains and plains of Kurdistan in history, the Newroz fire lit by the great Newroz martyr Mazlum Doğan and raised by the bodies of Zekiye, Raşan, Bêrivan and Ronahi spread to Cizre, Nusaybin and from there throughout Kurdistan and turned into a great popular revolt. Newroz became a revolt, resistance and up-

rising for the people of Kurdistan. In this sense, Newroz is the death of the oppressors and the birth of the oppressed.

Newroz was welcomed as a day of resistance, revival and freedom not only for the people of Kurdistan, but also for all the peoples of Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the world, and was celebrated as a holiday by all peoples. In fact, Newroz is a tradition developed and created by the peoples resisting together against the cruel Dehak. Today, all peoples should join hands and take to the squares with feelings of brotherhood and solidarity, celebrate Newroz with their own colors, languages, identities and feelings, and reveal their solidarity against the oppressors by igniting the Newroz fire.

Today, the fascist AKP-MHP government aims to extinguish the fire of freedom ignited by the contemporary Kawa Mazlum Doğan and his successors, who have revived the people of Kurdistan, by carrying out the Kurdish genocide. In this respect, today's fortress of oppression is the genocidal colonialist Turkish State that wants to destroy the Kurdish people, and today's oppressors are the AKP-MHP, who established and govern this order of oppression. The fascist AKP-MHP government shows its inhuman character to the whole world by keeping Leader Apo imprisoned in the absolute isolation and torture system in İmralı and by committing crimes against the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, which it is afraid to fight against and cannot defeat, by using chemical weapons. Genocidal colonialist Turkish fascism wants to carry out the Kurdish genocide by invading South Kurdistan [North Iraq], destroying the Rojava Revolution, attacking Şengal and the Mexmur Camp, massacring Kurds wherever they are, bombing the geography of Kurdistan every day and destroying its nature. There is no doubt that Tayyip Erdoğan, who is at the head of this order of oppression, is the cruel Dehak of our time. Against this tyrannical order of AKP-MHP fascism and the cruel Dehak, the people of Kurdistan should take to the squares in millions and with the spirit of uprising in this Newroz, as they have done in the past, and express their protest strongly against the cruel Dehak of today, as they have done in history. Our peoples in the four parts of Kurdistan and abroad should celebrate Newroz by taking to the squares wherever they are and igniting the torch of resistance and freedom of the contemporary Kawa Mazlum Doğan against the cruel Dehaks of today. The people of Kurdistan should strongly demand the physical freedom of Leader Apo in the 2023 Newroz, the 50th Newroz of the Leadership [Abdullah Öcalan], and take a very strong stance against the occupation, genocide and massacres of AKP-MHP fascism. Newroz is the day when the resistance against oppression is revealed in the strongest way. The people of Kurdistan must show this level of resistance against the AKP-MHP oppression everywhere in the Newroz of 2023. As we have expressed on many occasions, the fascist AKP-MHP government has an anti-Kurdish mentality. We have brought this government to the brink of destruction with the struggle we have waged as a people and movement against this anti-Kurdish fascist and genocidal mentality. Now, it is time to completely destroy this fascist power.

In this Newroz, millions of people must destroy the fascist AKP-MHP government by igniting the torch of resistance against oppression and oppressors. After the earthquake, it has been revealed clearly that the AKP-MHP and the order established by it is an order of massacre, plunder and destruction. The reason why the earthquake resulted in massacres is the fascist AKP-MHP government. AKP-MHP fascism has stolen all the riches of Turkish society and given them to the gangs and barons who are waging this war. It has thus become clear that this government does nothing for the life and future of society.

Our peoples, especially the people of Kurdistan, must take to the squares in millions on Newroz to hold the AKP-MHP, the killers of thousands of people lost in the earthquake, to account. Although our people are mourning this year due to the earthquake, this must turn into anger during Newroz. Our people

should take to the squares in millions, light the Newroz fire and show their protest, anger and attitude against the AKP-MHP, the modern day Dehaks. Our peoples should celebrate Newroz everywhere with their language, identity, culture, national colors and clothes. With the glorious Newroz, the darkness will be illuminated, the peoples will gain their freedom, the castles of oppression will fall and the oppressors will disappear. Based on this belief, we would like to once again congratulate the people of Kurdistan, the peoples of the Middle East and the world, women, young people and all those who resist on the 50th Newroz of the Leadership.”

— ★ —

Prisons in Turkey

Ill prisoner says repression in Ahlat T Type Closed jail increasing

ANF | BITLIS | 15 MARCH 2023

Naif İşçi, an ill prisoner in Ahlat T Type Closed Prison, talked about the inhumane practices they were subjected to in a phone call with his family.

İşçi stated that the jail administration’s attacks on political prisoners intensified every day. “Both the prison director and the guards are very bad towards us. Most of the time they punish us for no reason. They want to ignore the end of our sentences. They don’t give us our books or newspapers. They don’t change our cells. Our ill friends are not treated and they are not taken to the hospital. The prison warden has changed. Since he changed, there hasn’t been a day in which our friends haven’t been punished.”

Prisoner İşçi said: “We want lawyers and deputies to focus on this. The situation here is not good. The repression is too heavy and we are constantly attacked.”

— ★ —

Military aggression and occupation

PYD: Autonomous administration offers the best model to solve problems

ANF | 15 MARCH 2023

In a statement marking the 12th year of the civil war in Syria, the General Assembly of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) said that the autonomous administration offers the “best model” to solve problems.

The PYD General Assembly pointed out that the demonstrations launched by millions on March 15, 2011 did not turn into a revolution due to foreign interventions.

The PYD said that the crisis continued even after 12 years, emphasizing that the people had conquered fear through the uprisings that started in Qamishlo in March 2004 and spread over Kobanê, Afrin and Aleppo.

The PYD underlined that the sectarian, regional and international powers and structures that claimed to offer a solution have actually deepened the problems.

Emphasizing the negative role of the Turkish state, the statement said: “Syria is going through the most critical period that will determine the coming period. Therefore, Syrian national forces must act wisely in advance and frustrate plans that are not in favour of the Syrians.

“We regard the revolutionary mobilization that started in Syria in March 2011 as a historical necessity. The demands of the Syrian peoples for a democratic transformation were fulfilled after the 19 July 2012 revolution. The Autonomous Administration is the best model for solving problems. Hence, it is our duty to warn the peoples of Syria about the plans that are being implemented against them.”

The PYD called on the peoples of Syria to fight to make a real revolution by acting jointly with the democratic forces that are struggling inside and outside the country.

MSD: All democratic forces should participate in national dialogue

ANF | 15 MARCH 2023

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) held a press conference to mark the 12th anniversary of the civil war that started in Syria on March 15, 2011.

MSD Co-Chair Emine Omer read out the statement at the Foreign Relations Office of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) in Qamishlo.

Noting that the popular movement in Syria started in Daraa, the statement said: “The direction of the Syrian Revolution shifted, and the parties that have nothing to do with the hopes and dreams of the Syrians took advantage of the situation. In the meantime, historical achievements were also made. Old ideological and political patterns were removed, and people’s self-confidence increased. These two achievements should be preserved.”

The statement praised the courage and sacrifices of Syrian men and women against oppression and occupation and underlined that the MSD supported the demand of all peoples in Syria for a dignified life and freedom.

The MSD statement concluded: “We call on all patriots and volunteers to carry out work worthy of the sacrifices of the people, to unite and to achieve national unity. In the same way, the international community should pay heed to the demands of the Syrian people for democratic change, peace, security and a dignified life. All democratic national forces should participate in national dialogue for a democratic and decentralized Syria.”

— ★ —

HPG: Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas continue

ANF | BEHDINAN

The Press Centre of the People’s Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the recent attacks by the Turkish army in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). According to the statements;

15 March 2023: The invading army carried out 28 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on guerrilla positions in the Saca, Çemço and Sida areas in the region of Zap on Tuesday.

The Kurojahro resistance area, as well as the guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sida were shelled 47 times with attack helicopters, howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

16 March 2023: The invading army carried out 48 attacks on guerrilla areas on March 15.

In the region of Zap, Turkish forces attacked the guerrilla positions in Sida, facing a response from the guerrillas in an act of self-defense.

The Turkish army carried out a bombardment with unconventional bombs against the guerrilla positions in Çemço.

18 March 2023: HPG stated that the guerrilla positions in Çemço were attacked with banned weapons on 17 March, Friday.

On the same day, the Turkish army also carried out aerial bombardments on the guerrilla positions in Çemço, Girê Cûdî Resistance Area and the areas of Golka and Girê Çarçêl in Metina.

73 other attacks with howitzers, mortars, tanks and heavy weapons were directed against Girê Ortê in Metina, Girê FM Resistance Area and the guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sida on 16 and 17 March.

Çemço and Sida belong to the Sheladize sub-district near the town of Amadiya in Duhok governorate and have been the focus of the occupation forces since the partial withdrawal of the Turkish army from the Zap region at the end of last year.

Turkey's attacks continue 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 experiencing even more suffering in this affliction", said Cemil Bayık, co-chairman of the executive council of the KCK.

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

— ★ —

35 years ago, the massacre of Halabja

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

Today marks the 35th anniversary of the chemical attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja in South-Kurdistan. Systematically terrorizing the Kurdish population, Saddam Hussein attempted to silence his critics and at the same time test his chemical and biological weapons.

Saddam Hussein was the first leader in modern times to brutally use chemical weapons against the Kurdish people. Between 1987 and 1988 he had chemical attacks directed towards 40 Kurdish villages, and tested his weapons on thousands of innocent civilians. The worst of these attacks destroyed the town of Halabja in March 1988.

Chemical weapons used in Halabja

The attack was meant to kill as many people as possible. The first barrage shattered protective glass in windows throughout the city, making sure the gas reached its targets.

Saddam's regime mixed mustard gas and nerve agents to increase the effect of the chemical attacks. Mustard gas attacks the nose, throat and lungs, while Sarin, Tabun and VX attack the eyes and respiratory channels.

One gas had a strong, sweet aroma, like apple blossoms, said survivors, intended to make people inhale deeply to find out what was causing the smell. Another chemical was used as a paralyzing agent, causing people to collapse to the ground.

A third and lethal gas was used because it's heavier than air. Anyone who fell, or crouched low for safety, or took shelter in a basement. They were dead within minutes.

Men, women, and children died indiscriminately as toxic gas seeped into their homes, through broken windows, filling the spaces where they'd taken shelter.

Chemical weapons also contaminate food and water supplies, soil and wildlife.

Effects of the attack in Halabja

5000 civilians, among them many women, children and elderly, died within hours of the attack. More than 10.000 people were blinded or injured in other ways that destroyed their lives. Thousands of people lost their lives in epidemics or from birth injuries in the following years. Thousands more were forced to leave their homes.

Up to 5,000 people perished that day. Thousands more were injured, most of them civilians.

An old man, a survivor of that day, Abdurrahman Reşit Emin, told ANF that he lost his mother and two siblings in the massacre which he describes as "moments of a grimness that would not end". Emin said that the air was covered with the smell of apples: "We were dumbfounded. The sky in Halabja was shaken with sounds of warplanes, of which there were around 10-15, as I might not remember the exact number. Everything happened so fast. Thousands of people drew their last breath in ten minutes. Dead bodies were lying everywhere one looked. The rest left the city and took the migratory route. Those left to poverty and sickness were as many as the dead. Everyone became miserable. Some lost their minds, some went blind."

Syria's Assad announces demands to meet Erdogan

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad spoke to the Russian news agency Ria Novos. His statement came after a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

Al-Assad told Ria Novosti that a meeting with Erdogan would be possible “when Turkey is openly and unhesitatingly ready to withdraw completely from Syrian territory.”

Al-Assad raised concern over the Turkish support for mercenary groups in Syria, saying that “Ankara should stop supporting terrorism”.

Al-Assad stressed: “This is the only scenario for a meeting with Erdogan to take place”.

The Syrian President added: “Why should such a meeting be organized if it will not lead to a final end to the war in Syria?”

— ★ —

HRE repels attempted attack on a village of Shehba

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

According to a written statement released by the Afrin Liberation Forces (Hêzên Rizgariya Afrinê, HRE) on Thursday, a Turkish-backed mercenary group attempted to attack the village of Til Enab in the Shehba region at around 19:15 local time on Wednesday.

“Our forces responded and repelled the attempted attack. During the ensuing fighting, the mercenaries suffered losses,” said the HRE statement.

Until 2018, Afrin was administered according to the cantonal principle of Rojava and was considered the most peaceful region in Syria. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced by the Turkish invasion. Many of them have since been living in tent cities in the neighbouring region of Shehba, which has been declared by the Turkish state as the next target of occupation alongside Manbij.

The HRE was founded in 2018 after the occupation of Afrin by Turkey. With the aim of liberating the region from the occupiers, the resistance group carries out targeted actions against the Turkish troops and their jihadist mercenaries. The HRE wants to end the occupation of Afrin and see themselves as part of the resistance against Turkish expansionism.

— ★ —

14-year-old kolbar injured in attack by Iranian forces

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

According to Kolbarnews, Iranian state forces opened fire on several kolbars in the border region of Nawsoud at night on March 15.

Nawsoud is located in Hawraman district, north of Paveh city in Kermanshah province.

A 14-year-old boy named Mani Habibi was injured as a result of the attack and taken to Paveh City Hospital for treatment. It is reported that the teenager faces no risk of death.

According to Kolbarnews, Iranian state forces have killed at least 3 minors in different border regions of Kurdistan since the beginning of 2023.

The February data by the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization revealed that 3 kolbars died in traffic accidents last month. 12 kolbars were injured and one was killed as a result of direct fire by the Iranian regime forces.

According to the Kolbarnews annual balance sheet, 215 kolbars suffered injuries and 43 others lost their lives in 2022. Of these, 189 were injured or killed by the direct fire of state forces. Of the slain kolbars, 29 were killed by fire from Iranian Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guard) forces, and one other by Turkish soldiers. Other deaths were caused by challenging weather conditions, fall from high, traffic accidents and heart conditions.

Kolbars and kasibkars are targeted systematically by Iranian and Turkish security forces. Each year, dozens of them are killed with no punitive measures being taken. Apart from systematic attacks, kolbars are struggling to make a living under harsh weather conditions, dangerous geographical locations and mines.

Kolbar or “kolbar” is derived from the Kurdish words “kol” and “bar”. Kol means “back”, bar means “load”. Kolbars make their living by carrying goods on their backs across dangerous borders. The goods they carry include cigarettes, mobile phones, blankets, household items, tea and rarely alcoholic beverages. They have to pass through dangerous roads between South Kurdistan and East Kurdistan. The goods brought are sold at relatively high prices in commercial centres such as Tehran. However, kolbars who carry out the transportation of goods at the expense of their lives receive a very small amount of wages.

Kasibkar refers to those people who receive the goods kolbars carry to South Kurdistan and find buyers in towns.

SDF: Nine of our fighters were martyred in helicopter crash

ANF | 17 MARCH 2023

The Media Center of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a statement announcing the death of nine of their fighters after two helicopters carrying them crashed on their way to the city of Sulaymaniyah in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

The SDF statement released on Friday includes the following:

“Within the framework and efforts to combat ISIS cells, a group of our SDF Counter-terrorism Units (YAT) headed to the south of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to exchange security and military expertise that will help enhance the units’ combat and security capacity in their ongoing tasks that are combating terrorism and protecting the region of North-East Syria. While the two helicopters carrying our group of fighters were on their way to Sulaymaniyah city on the evening of March 15, 2023, they crashed due to bad weather conditions, leading to the martyrdom of nine of our fighters, including the commander of the YAT forces, Shervan Kobani.

The Counter-terrorism Forces (YAT) have sacrificed their best fighters and leaders in the fight against terrorism and led fierce wars in Kobani, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor. These units are critical partners of the international coalition in the fight against ISIS and are trained in advanced fighting methods. Moreover, they are actively working to develop their combat capabilities and strengthen the mechanisms of joint action with the involved partners to fight ISIS in the region.

While we express our condolences to the families of our martyrs, and our people, we affirm that the sacrifices of the martyrs will remain a beacon for continuing the resistance to protect our people and region. At the same time, we call on the concerned authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to cooperate in retrieving the bodies of the martyrs and handing them to the regions of North-East Syria according to the customs and traditions.”

— ★ —

Twelve areas in Şırnak declared ‘special security zones’

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 17 MARCH 2023

Several regions in the northern Kurdish province of Şırnak have been declared temporary special security zones. According to the governor’s office, the measure, which is initially limited to fifteen days, is designed to be preventive. The aim is to prevent national security and public order from being jeopardised and to prevent “violent incidents”.

The order is related to a military operation that has been carried out in Şırnak against the Kurdish guerrillas for just over a week. The province, which borders the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and thus the Me-

dya Defence Zones controlled by the guerrillas, is home to the 23rd Infantry Division of the Turkish Land Forces. For the affected population, the measure means that a de facto state of emergency will prevail until the end of the month.

According to the current status, twelve places in Şırnak have been declared special security areas. These are located in the districts of Cizre, Silopi, Beytüşşebap, Uludere, Güçlükönak and in Şırnak. Among others, the four peaks of Mount Cudi, the Besta region, Kureyşin, the Serin Walley and the Faraşin region are affected. The residents in the settlements and villages there were ordered by the governor's office to adhere to a curfew.



5 years ago, the invasion of Afrin

ANF | 18 MARCH 2023

On 20 January 2018, the Turkish state launched a war on the region of Afrin, the western canton of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.

Day and night, towns and villages, refugee camps and historical sites were bombarded by Turkish war-planes and artillery. The attack by Turkey and its allied jihadist militias continued until the 18th of March.

Since then, the canton of Afrin in northern Syria has been under Turkish occupation. War crimes have been systematically committed since the invasion. A large part of the population displaced from Afrin has been living in precarious conditions in the neighboring Shehba region.

Hundreds of civilians were killed and many hundreds more were injured in the course of this war. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced and forced to leave their homes. Since then, Afrin has been under Turkish occupation and all of the previously established achievements of self-organization of local communities have been destroyed.

The diversity of the people living there is no longer expressed and the women's rights that were fought for have been effectively abolished under the Turkish occupation. The vacant houses of displaced families were handed over by the Turkish military to families of fighters from Islamist and other Turkish-backed militias.

New regional administrations were established under Turkish control as part of the demographic change of the region. At the same time, the Turkish invasion has provided encouragement and an opportunity for ISIS to reorganize.

The region of Afrin in particular played a central role as a center of the women's revolution and in the establishment of direct and participatory democratic structures in North and East Syria. Here, women's institutions and women's communes and councils were established, based on direct democracy, and helped to break down gender inequality. Numerous historical archaeological sites in the region, part of the heritage of local matriarchal societies, were deliberately destroyed during the Turkish state's invasion and fol-

lowing occupation in order to erase and occupy the memory of a region and a piece of women's history. Among them, for example, the Tel Aştar temple in Ain Dara, dedicated to the goddess Iştar.

The destruction extends to massive devastation and irreversible damage to Afrin's rich nature and ecosystem of mountains, rivers and fertile soil. Numerous fields have been burned and tens of thousands of trees, including a large number of olive trees, have been cut down as a result of the occupation by Turkey and its jihadist militias.

The grassroots democratic structures previously established by the local people, with communal organised communities and councils, which enabled the pluralistic coexistence of the different peoples as well as their political participation, was replaced with the Turkish occupation by a project of demographic change and the annihilation not only of local Kurds, their language, culture and history, but of the diverse coexistence of the people in the region.



Street in Erciş named after a perpetrator of Zilan genocide

ANF | VAN | 18 MARCH 2023

Erciş's government-appointed mayor and District Governor Nuri Mehmetbeyoğlu named the busiest street of Erciş downtown after Süleyman Erdiñç, one of the local militia members who took part in the 1930 Zilan Genocide.

Perpetrators rewarded by the state

More than 50 thousand people were killed during the genocide committed by the Turkish state in the vicinity of the Zilan Valley in 1930. Pro-state militias in Erciş played a leading role in the genocide. The most prominent of these militias were brothers İdris and Süleyman Erdiñç. Properties and lands of the people killed in Erciş were handed over to İdris and Süleyman Erdiñç as a reward for their participation. The mayor's office of Erciş was also granted to this family.

Zilan genocide continues

Writer and sociologist İkrâm İşler from Erciş stated that naming a street in the district after Süleyman Erdiñç, a perpetrator of the genocide, means that the state protects those who massacred the Kurds. Remark that the state should apologize to the Kurdish nation for the bloody massacres, İşler said: "Naming a street after a perpetrator of a genocide reveals that the Zilan genocide is still going on and the state is proud of the killers."

Erdinc brothers took part in the massacre

İşler recalled that 15,000 people were massacred in the Zilan Stream in 1930, according to official sources. He continued: "Unable to suppress the rebellion in Ağrı at the time, the state perpetrated this massacre to

intimidate and deter them. The massacre was carried out by an army of 300-men strong murderers. It was carried out not by the army troops in Erciş, but by a group of mobs with psychological problems gathered together by Ahmed Derviş, an officer who was specifically dispatched from Erzincan. Ahmet Derviş came into prominence with the massacres during the uprising in Konya. He was known to be a furious murderer. He was specifically commissioned for the massacre in Zilan. They organized the massacre with the officials on the spot after he arrived. Mayor İdris and his brother Süleyman Erdiñç also took part in the planning group that sought to “teach the Kurds a lesson to be remembered forever”. Those plans are the cause of our suffering that is still fresh today. The militias from Erciş, who acted together with the furious murderer Ahmet Derviş, were later rewarded by the state and praised in a report by the Cumhuriyet Newspaper.

“We will continue to kill you”

İşler pointed out that these perpetrators are still considered heroes by the Turkish state, yet for the Kurdish people, they are traitors and murderers of their own nation. He stated: “Honouring a genocide perpetrator by giving his name to a street deeply hurts all our people. We understand that the state has not forgotten this massacre and wants to perpetuate mass slaughters. It also shows the state and citizens still do not speak the same language. It is terrifying to see that nothing has changed in 93 years. We just hope that this is done out of carelessness. If this is a conscious attitude, then it is much worse. The same holds true for the racist attack by displaying a picture of a notorious murderer together with images of white Renault Toros cars during the Bursaspor-Amedspor match. It means that the state wants to say that we will continue to kill you.”

Mahmut Yıldırım, also known by the alias "Yeşil" (Green) was a former intelligence officer held responsible for dozens of extrajudicial killings in the country's predominantly Kurdish-majority regions during the notorious 1990s. White Renault Toros became a symbol of the enforced disappearances at the time as many people would be put in those cars while being abducted.

— ★ —

Eartquake and Flood in North Kurdistan

Tents housing earthquake victims in Doğanşehir flooded

ANF | MALATYA | 15 MARCH 2023

The tents housing earthquake victims were flooded as a result of the heavy rain that hit Doğanşehir (Wêranşar) in the province of Malatya (Meletî).

Tens of thousands of citizens live in tents in Malatya, where 32,000 buildings collapsed or were severely damaged in the 6 February earthquake. Heavy rains have hit the province for 3 days, flooding the streets.

The rain is expected to continue until tomorrow, Thursday.

— ★ —

Death toll from floods in North Kurdistan rises to 18

ANF | 17 MARCH 2023

On Tuesday and Wednesday, heavy rain caused flooding in several places in North Kurdistan and southern Turkey. The disaster hit a region that was struck by a severe series of earthquakes only five weeks ago. Hundreds of thousands of people in the region are currently homeless and sheltering in emergency shelters. In addition to numerous roads and houses, the rain masses have also flooded emergency shelters. In Iskenderun in the Arab|Alevi province of Hatay, water penetrated tents.

Floods have claimed the lives of 16 people in Urfa and 2 people in Adiyaman. Emergency forces continue to search for three missing citizens.

In the district of Tut in the province of Adiyaman, which was largely destroyed by the 6 February earthquake, the floods swept away a residential container. Two people were killed and three others were reported missing. The container was located in a garden and was inhabited by earthquake victims.

In Urfa, the water entered homes, shops and public buildings and flooded roads, bridges and tunnels. Also affected is the 150-metre-long Abide tunnel in Haliliye, which was inaugurated by AKP leader Tayyip Erdogan only three months ago as a major service to the population. At least six people, including firefighters, were in the tunnel, which was flooded by muddy water, and were swept away by the floodwaters during a rescue operation. One person rescued himself by swimming out of the tunnel. Rescue divers have since been deployed to the tunnel which connects the motorway between Urfa and Antep.

The intensive care unit in the basement of the Eyyübiye Training and Research Hospital in Urfa was also flooded. The patients were transferred to surrounding hospitals. The Archaeological Museum also suffered water damage.

The mayor of Urfa, Zeynel Abidin Beyazgül of the ruling AKP, was met with boos from an angry crowd as he inspected the rescue work. The anger increased when information spread that a bodyguard of the AKP politician pointed his gun at the protesting crowd. Bayazgül was taken to his car under police protection and had to leave the place.

In Doğanşehir district of Malatya, tents inhabited by earthquake victims were washed over.

Floods also hit Rojava on Thursday, claiming the lives of two children in Kobane and Heseke. In Kobanê, which is directly opposite Urfa, a three-year-old child named Şerîn Ehmed was swept away by the floods in the Botan neighbourhood to the west of the canton. Near Heseke, a 14-year-old named Eymen Hisên El Ehmed, died in the hilltop village of al-Mabtouh on Mount Kizwan (Çiyayê Evdilêzîz), about 40 kilometres west of the city.

Heavy rainfall also resulted in floods in the Yazidi city of Shengal (Sinjar) in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), killing an 18-year-old from the village of Kerse. All villages and districts in the region have been affected by heavy rainfall this afternoon.



Life is paralysed in Adıyaman forty days after the earthquake

RONI ARAM | ADIYAMAN | 17 MARCH 2023

Forty days after the earthquake in the Turkish-Syrian border region, heavy rains have caused floods in Urfa and the earthquake areas of Adıyaman and Malatya. İzzet Karadağ from HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) Crisis Coordination in Adıyaman spoke to ANF and stated that life has been crippled by the floods. Although weeks have passed since the earthquake disaster, there are still not enough tents and no housing containers in the region. Seventy percent of the population has left the area.

Life is paralysed

İzzet Karadağ said that the tent area of the disaster management agency AFAD was flooded: "There has been flooding and heavy rains are expected to continue. Especially the tents set up by AFAD in the southern part of Adıyaman were flooded. Tents set up by individuals in front of their houses or on vacant land in this region have also been flooded. Life has been paralysed. There is still no water supply in Adıyaman. There was already no drinking water, the entire town was not supplied with water. But now the water supply is also cut off. There has been no water for two days. There is still mud everywhere. Rumour has it that four people have died and three people are missing. These people have still not been found. AFAD is carrying out work, but it is very limited. On the one hand, it is clearing the debris. On the other hand, it is about protecting tent areas from new floods. Work is being done, but the measures are very incomplete."

No housing containers in Adıyaman

When asked about the situation in Adıyaman before the flood, Karadağ stated: "Before the flood, there was still rubble and destroyed buildings in many streets. They were untouched, and they still are. With the flood, the difficulties have doubled. A second disaster has struck. Although forty days have passed, it is as if the earthquake in Adıyaman happened only yesterday. There is no search for people, and the rubble remains as it is. A large part of the city has already migrated, over seventy percent. The city has emptied and those who remain have taken refuge in tents in empty areas around the city or in parks and in front of houses. There are still no containers. The municipalities of İzmir and Mersin are working on the construction of containers. They are building up areas. A company from AFAD is also on the ground, but no containers have been put up yet. There is only preparation of infrastructure."

Aid deliveries are decreasing

In Hatay, the state continues to confiscate tents and block voluntary solidarity networks. When asked if it is similar in Adıyaman, İzzet Karadağ answered: "The owners of the camps we used in the first days of the

earthquake were put under pressure. We had to evacuate these camps and built new ones. The police are constantly watching them and have asked several times who we are and what we are doing. But in the last three or four days this has stopped.”

Karadağ continued: “There are three tent areas where we as HDP work with the Alevi association Pir Sultan Abdal as Adiyaman relief coordination. We now distribute the relief goods according to addresses. People send telephone requests to our coordination. Together with our network of volunteers, we pack them and deliver them on the spot. There is still a great need for tents. We distribute the tents we provide to those in need. There is a great need for water. Sometimes we bring two trucks of water per day, sometimes one truck per day. This is still not enough. I think there are very few people besides us who bring water in such an organised way. Water is one of the biggest problems. The need for toilets and sanitation is very big. The first reason people put up tents in the gardens or near their houses is to meet these basic needs there, even though the houses are badly damaged.”

“We have difficulties in providing water, washing facilities, toilets and cleaning materials. Our possibilities are limited, and help is becoming less and less. This should also be known. An aid vehicle arrives almost every three or four days. Civilian aid is, after all, something that should be provided in times of crisis, after which the state should organise it, but that is not the case,” Karadağ concluded.



HDP commemorates earthquake victims in Antep and Maraş

ANF | 17 MARCH 2023

Delegations from the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) visited tents and cemeteries in the İslahiye district of Antep and the Elbistan district of Maraş 40 days after the devastating earthquakes that heavily damaged 11 cities on February 6.

Antep

HDP Group Deputy Chair Saruhan Oluç, HDP MP Necdet İpekyüz and HDP Antep branch Co-Chairs Ayten Kaya and Avni Binici attended the commemoration in İslahiye. The HDP delegation first met with the families of victims in a cemetery for a commemoration. The delegation then visited the tents where the earthquake survivors reside and listened to their problems. In a speech, HDP Group Deputy Chair Oluç said: “We once again wanted to share your pain on the 40th day of the earthquake. We wish God's mercy on those who lost their lives. We offer condolences to the families and our people.”

Maraş

Victims of the earthquake were commemorated in Elbistan, the epicenter of the earthquake. HDP deputies Feleknas Uca and Zeynel Özen attended the commemoration in the district.

Uca said: “40 days have passed, but there is still no remedy for the survivors. We will never forget this disaster. We will heal the wounds together. We do not expect anything from anyone. We have no expectations from the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), which sells tents and blood.”

Speaking after, Zeynel Özen said: “A profit-oriented transformation was made under the pretext of urban transformation. Shopping malls were built at the emergency assembly points. It is this mentality that killed the people rather than the earthquake. Our people died under the rubble. The only way to overcome this disaster is cooperation and solidarity.”

— ★ —

RSF exposes censorship of critical articles on Turkish government's earthquake handling

ANF | 18 MARCH 2023

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounced the recent censorship targeting online articles critical of the Turkish authorities' handling of the aftermath of the earthquake.

The government should respect investigative journalism, the group said. Erol Önderoğlu, the RSF representative in Turkey, expressed concerns that online censorship may further increase ahead of the 14 May elections.

Önderoğlu said: “After security forces, the administration and the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), now penal judgements of peace target press freedom. While the country is in need of transparency more than ever before, these decisions to block access to reports once again serve the purpose of preventing criticism against the government's post-earthquake practices.”

— ★ —

People build a new life in Antakya: “This land is ours”

ANF | HATAY | 18 MARCH 2023

After the earthquake that struck Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on February 6, many volunteers from socialist organisations went to the affected region to participate in the relief work and show solidarity. The revolutionary volunteers reached the earthquake area before the state institutions and set up coordination centres in many places.

One of these coordination centres is in the leftist Armutlu neighbourhood in the district of Antakya in Hatay province and was named after Ali İsmail Korkmaz, who was murdered by police during the Gezi re-

sistance in 2012. The centre was founded immediately after the disaster by revolutionary earthquake victims from Hatay and continues to work on many issues ranging from search and rescue operations to meeting the urgent needs of the predominantly Alevi population. The volunteers managed to rescue people from the rubble without any equipment in the first hours after the earthquake.

Working in shifts

Mehmet Ali Ceylan is one of the leaders of the coordination centre and an earthquake victim himself. He has lost relatives and acquaintances in the neighbourhood where he was born and grew up. Dozens of families are currently housed at the centre. The volunteers have created an area where the earthquake victims can find emergency shelter and a kitchen to prepare meals. Working in shifts, the volunteers clean and provide security, listen to people's problems and think about what can be done together.

Describing the first hours after the earthquake and the establishment of the coordination centre, Ceylan said: "On 6 February, everyone was shaken by an earthquake, and I was one of them. I live in the Armutlu neighborhood. At the first moment, the reflex of all of us was just to survive. We were shaken for about one and a half minutes and all we thought about was how to survive the earthquake."

A seed planted in the 80s and 90s is blossoming today

Ceylan pointed out that: "After the shocks were over, we rescued ourselves outside. The process itself was bad, but I want to point out that revolutionary and socialist people have been working here for years and decades. With this work, a seed was planted in the 80s and 90s that is blossoming today and continues dynamically. We experienced the results already in the first hour. At 04:17 we were shaken by an earthquake and within an hour we set up a team on Gündüz Street in the Armutlu district. This was actually a product of the revolutionary struggle, the socialist struggle that has existed here since the 80s. We formed a team of six or seven people very quickly. The weather was bad. It was raining heavily. Children and elderly people had fled the houses without shoes on their feet, they had no jackets. We looked for ways to find clothing and all kinds of materials we could think of to protect ourselves from the weather and the rain. We actually found what we were looking for very quickly."

It is a revolutionary task to think of the suffering of people

Armutlu is a place where the revolutionary movement is densely organised and there were large protests, especially during the Gezi resistance. The people in the neighbourhood have an oppositional streak. The revolutionary volunteers, therefore, already had a base when they came to the aid of the people in their greatest desperation and put their own worries aside so as not to leave the people alone in the first hours of the earthquake.

While describing what happened, Ceylan also addressed the importance of this place and noted that it is a revolutionary task to think of the suffering of the people and not of one's own problems in the midst of the limited possibilities of the first moment: "As I said at the beginning, we were able to provide this team thanks to our years of work in the revolutionary struggle. Then we looked for ways to get tarpaulins and mackintoshes to protect the people. Of course, our possibilities were very limited. We stopped work for half an hour to be more rational and think about how we could make it more close-knit and qualified. Only two hours later, we had become a team of ten people. With this team, we very quickly started the

search and rescue work in Gündüz Street. After the first moment of self-protection, the search began in the rubble.

While the aftershocks continued, we entered the buildings without tools, equipment, etc. and rescued a woman. We were able to go into a four-storey building without a ladder and pull out a middle-aged woman who had just had surgery. We couldn't save more people because our means were very limited. I mean, we had no resources. We had no equipment, we had nothing. Then we realised that it couldn't work like that, and we had to do things differently. We left a team of two or three people on Gündüz Street to look for possible voices in the rubble. The others went in search of a suitable site to house the survivors. And we found Defne House in the Akdeniz neighborhood.”

A community-organised centre

The life centre set up in Defne House was built from the very first moment with the participation of the people and together with them. The revolutionary volunteers of the first hour were also earthquake victims. They began to organise the first germs of a new life with the same pain as all the other people.

Mehmet Ali Ceylan is also the Antakya representative of the Kaldıraç movement. He said that the revolutionary volunteers were on the ground at a time when the state was not present, looking for solutions: “As I said at the beginning, we as the Kaldıraç Movement have worked here for years, we know every inch of ground. Therefore, we quickly came to Defne House and set up here to create a living space together with the people and our comrades. We had almost nothing, just a few packets of lentils and very few paper cups. We cooked lentil soup very quickly and distributed it in paper cups. When the paper cups were not enough, we cut plastic bottles in half and used them for both the soup and drinking water.

Then came the time when the best examples of solidarity were shown in Anatolia and Mesopotamia. On the second day, our friends came here from all over the country. A very great solidarity was shown. Our cooking place around a cauldron turned into a soup tent. The Defne House was converted into a dormitory and a hospital. Thus, the first phase of a living space took shape. We saw the result of this collective life and with it grew our belief that we could build a new life. Subsequently, the support did not stop, people came here in droves. Two dormitories, an infirmary, a food tent and other tents were quickly built. Everything was done in a very functional way in the sense of living together as a community.”

A policy of depopulation has been pursued since the earthquake

As in the areas around Pazarcik and Elbistan, which were badly damaged by the earthquake and have a predominantly Kurdish-Alevi population, cosmopolitan Hatay is threatened by a mass exodus of locals and the destruction of an ancient cultural heritage. Ceylan stated that since the earthquake, the state has been pursuing a policy of depopulation in these regions. The fabric of Antakya cannot be destroyed, people have seen what has happened and resisted it, he said, continuing, “If we are still able to live here today after more than a month, it is because we have realised that this is only possible through cooperation and coexistence. We have actually seen that here. People have realised that they can build a new life if they act together. At this point it is, of course, necessary to mention something briefly. From the first moment of the earthquake, with the shock effect, a policy of depopulation has been pursued here.”

Remarking that the first measure was to evacuate the population free of charge, Ceylan stated: “I am talking here about a gathering full of people who wanted to save their fellow human beings. The first thing organised by the state was their departure. Next, it was propagated that the dam would break, and everyone had to flee immediately. Then the volunteers were pressured and threatened with the words: ‘We will not let you play revolution here’. This was followed by an intense presence of the state in the living centres. The state made its attitude very clear. It is the attitude of a state whose history we know. It is about depopulation. We knew this policy and we knew what was going to happen. That is why we did not leave this centre of life for a moment, not for a second. We foresaw it and resisted this policy. Together we organised a collective life. They will not succeed in depopulating this place, we know that.”

We will listen to Fairuz again on these streets

Ceylan explained that the historical structure and culture of Hatay are wanted to be destroyed and that this has been the goal of the state from the beginning. He concluded: “They will never be able to destroy this city, this historical structure, this culture, this society. We will always find ways and methods to protect this history and culture. We will listen to [Lebanese singer] Fairuz on these streets again. Ali Ismail Korkmaz, Abdullah Cömert and Ahmet Atakan will continue to be present on these streets.

We will cook in big kettles again, as we already do here in the centre. We provided ourselves with electricity and created our own health clinic when there were no government representatives and no one from AFAD and the Red Crescent here. We did that because this land is ours. We are the essential elements of this area, and we will continue this life. We will always keep this culture alive. Just as this life centre has given hope to people, it will always be hope to build our future.”



Femicide

Police in Van take 9 women into custody

ANF | VAN | 16 MARCH 2023

As part of a new political police operation in Van, many houses were raided in the morning.

Green Left Party Van Co-spokesperson Gönül Uzunay, Assistance, Solidarity, Unity and Culture Association for Families Losing Their Relatives in the Cradle of Civilizations (MEBYA-DER) Van Branch Co-chair Hanım Kaya, Peace Mother Xecê Barıştıran, Serhat Migration Monitoring Association (GÖÇDER) Co-chair Gülşen Kurt, Van Detainee and Convicted Families and Assistance Association (TUHAY-DER) Co-chair Edibe Babur, Saray Municipality co-mayor Caziye Duman, who was replaced by a trustee, and HDP İpekyolu Municipality Council member Özlem Tuci, TJA member Zeynep Kaya and Songül Işık were taken into custody.

Women were detained on charges of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization”. A 24-hour lawyer restriction was imposed for the women who were taken to Van TEM Branch.

— ★ —

A Tribute to freedom fighter Anna Campbell

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

Anna Campbell (Hêlîn) fell martyr on 15 March 2018 in the defense of the city of Afrin. She gave her life in the struggle for freedom. Much has been speculated about the circumstances of her death, but an eye-witness confirmed that she died when the noqta (position) she was defending was bombarded by Turkish artillery.

decided to go to Rojava to join the Women’s Defense Units (YPJ) in the fight against the Islamic State in May 2017. Originally from Lewes, in East Sussex (UK), she was a plumber by profession, but she did many other precarious jobs like most youth in Europe.

Anna was a freedom fighter, who was her true vocation. She participated in many political struggles and movements. Anna identified with anti-authoritarian movements. Many describe her as an anarchist, feminist, queer and antispecist. Anna was part of the collective Empty Cages Collective, an anarchist-oriented group that fights for the abolition of prisons and against imprisonment as a business model. She actively participated in many anti-prison campaigns, such as Community Action on Prison Expansion, Smash IPP and Bristol ABC (Anarchist Black Cross). Anna believed in the abolition of prisons as part of a larger problem, that is the system of oppression in which we live.

Furthermore, Anna was also an active part of the fight against fox hunting, a bloody but common practice in the U.K. Anna tried to be as coherent as possible with her anti-species ideas, trying not to hurt or kill any animal. She sought the freedom of all living beings on this planet from a non-androcentric vision. Anna also participated in the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) union, being a "key organizer" in the words of the organization itself.

Anna arrived in Rojava just at the moment when Turkey, with the complicity of the US, launched an attack on the base of the YPG / YPJ on the mountain of Qereçox. Key members of the self-defense militias lost their lives during the bombing of Turkish aviation. For this reason, Anna was offered the name of Hêlîn, in honor of one of her companions who fell in the Turkish attack. Hêlîn means “nest” in Kurdish. Later, she would decide to choose the surname Qereçox, the same one used by all the YPG internationalist fighters who had crossed the border with her in those days.

Anna came with the intention of joining the Women’s Defense Units (YPJ) and fighting against the Islamic State. She was always very clear about her objectives and never gave up despite the many difficulties and contradictions that an internationalist woman has within the YPJ. Anna had an outgoing, positive and open personality, a great facility to establish relations of friendship and trust with all the people with whom she was. All those who knew her can assert that her passion for life, her enthusiasm, were conta-

gious. From the first moment she became interested in studying Abdullah Öcalan and read several of his books. During the perwerde (education) always tried to listen and participate, seeking to open intellectual and political curiosity to the companions with whom she shared the education of Shervana Nû (New Combatants). She made a huge effort to learn Kurmancî. All the people who knew her were surprised by the speed with which she learned the language.

— ★ —

Human Rights Violations

Editor of Bianet Kurdish service taken into custody

ANF | 15 MARCH 2023

Aren Yıldırım, editor of Bianet Kurdish service, has been taken into custody today in a police raid on his house.

He was taken to the İstanbul Police Headquarters in Vatan, Fatih.

Yıldırım's lawyer Ülkü Şahin informed that access to the file was restricted and there was a 24-hour ban on lawyer visits.

Aren Yıldırım is a linguist, translator, and journalist.

His two books are called *A Guide to Spoken Kurdish* and *A Guide to Spoken Kurdish for Foreigners (Bo Bîyanîyan Kitêbî Fêrbûnî Kurdî)*.

— ★ —

20 activists brutally detained in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 15 MARCH 2023

Members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Party Assembly, the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF) and the Socialist Women's Assembly (SKM) gathered to make a statement in front of the Istanbul Courthouse in Çağlayan to demand the release of their colleagues detained on March 12 as part of an investigation carried out by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

Members of the Kaldırac organization and the Revolutionary Youth Associations also joined the crowd in an act of solidarity. The activists were blocked by the police before making a statement to the press in front of the courthouse.

Many activists were battered by the police during a mass detention. It is reported that almost 20 activists have been detained.

Journalists covering the demonstration reacted to the police, saying “You are committing a crime.” The police replied: “If we are committing a crime, so what?”

Adana

In the southern province of Adana, youth organizations protested the detention of 9 people, who included members of the ESP Party Assembly, the SGDF, SKM) and Elif Bayburt from Etkin News Agency, during the house raids carried out in three cities as part of an Istanbul-based investigation on March 12. Many people attended the demonstration at the ESP Adana branch. Yoldas Mete, who read out a press statement on behalf of youth organizations, said that the state, which did not provide aid to the earthquake survivors, targeted the young activists who showed solidarity with the people.



Nine young people sent to prison in Istanbul because of social media posts

ANF | ISTANBUL | 16 MARCH 2023

As part of an investigation conducted by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, police raided many houses in Istanbul, Ankara and Adana on 12 March. As a result of those raids, 11 people, including the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Party Assembly, Socialist Youth Associations Federation (SGDF), Socialist Women’s Assembly (SKM) members as well as Elif Bayburt from Etkin News Agency, were taken into custody.

On the same day, a confidentiality order was brought about the file involving those arrested who were taken to the Istanbul Security Directorate on Vatan Street.

It was learned that the arrested young people were accused because of posts they shared on social media about Suphi Nejat Ağırnaslı, Ivana Hoffman, who fell as martyrs in Kobanê while fighting ISIS, as well as about many other fighters who fell in the fight against ISIS in Northern and Eastern Syria.

The young people were charged with “being a member of MLKP”. The detainees reacted to the detention and exercised their “right to remain silent”.

Journalists Elif Bayburt and Barış Yılmaz, who were among those taken to the Istanbul Courthouse in Çağlayan on Wednesday to be brought to the prosecutor's office, were referred to the Criminal Judgeship of Peace to be released on the condition of judicial control, while 9 people were referred with a request for arrest. Alev Özkiraz, Birkan Polat, Can Papila, Deniz Bahçeci, Okan Danacı, Özge Doğan, Senem Nur Pektaş, Şükran Yaren Tuncer and Tanya Kara, were remanded in custody on the grounds of their posts and the statements by a witness.

— ★ —

Kurdistan Alliance and IHD call for the Halabja massacre to be recognized as a genocide

ANF | 16 MARCH 2023

Today marks the 35th anniversary of the chemical attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja in South Kurdistan. Saddam Hussein was the first leader in modern times to brutally use chemical weapons against the Kurdish people. Between 1987 and 1988, he had chemical attacks directed towards 40 Kurdish villages and tested his weapons on thousands of innocent civilians. The worst of these attacks destroyed the town of Halabja in March 1988. 5000 civilians, among them many women, children and elderly, died within hours of the attack. More than 10.000 people were blinded or injured in other ways that destroyed their lives. Thousands of people lost their lives in epidemics or from birth injuries in the following years. Thousands more were forced to leave their homes. Up to 5,000 people perished that day. Thousands more were injured, most of them civilians.

In a statement on Thursday, the Kurdistan Alliance commemorated victims of the Halabja Massacre, saying: "As we commemorate the Halabja genocide, our people have faced a new major disaster with the devastating Maraş-centered earthquakes on February 6, 2023. The death toll and the number of the injured are higher than the official figures after the earthquakes that struck cities of Kurdistan from Diyarbakir to Afrin-Jindires. We offer condolences to the families of the victims and wish a quick recovery to the injured. We call on our people and civil institutions to continue solidarity with our people in the earthquake zone.

Criticizing the international silence towards the "Hiroshima of the Middle East", the statement continued: "On that historic day, there was no reaction in the eastern world. Because they were Saddam's allies. In the western world, reactions remained very weak. Not only the USSR and China, but also the USA and the EU preferred to remain silent in the face of the Halabja genocide. Furthermore, while the Saddam regime was still carrying out the Anfal Genocide, no reaction was expressed to condemn the genocide at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit held in Kuwait on January 26-29, 1987. In fact, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which convened only three days after the Halabja massacre, remained silent on the massacre. The world remained silent in the face of the Hiroshima of the Middle East. In other words, our people were completely alone in the world when they were subjected to that genocide!

We see how the colonialists are making repeated attempts to eradicate the current political status of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Autonomous Rojava, as well as to restrict their spheres of influence and authority. Turkey did not stop its attacks on Rojava even on the first days of the most devastating earthquakes in its history. Our people still face oppression, deportation and the threat of genocide in four parts of Kurdistan.

As the Kurdistan Alliance, we call on Kurdish politicians and our people, in particular the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Autonomous Administration of Rojava, to act in solidarity and unity against this threat. We call on the democratic forces of the world and world public opinion to continue their solidarity with our people during this critical period. Down with the policies of colonialism and genocide!”

IHD calls for the recognition of Halabja as genocide

The Human Rights Association (IHD) also demanded that Halabja be recognized as a “genocide”.

The IHD stated that it had decided to recognize March 16 as the “Kurdish Genocide Day” and demanded the Republic of Turkey to recognize it as a genocide.

The IHD statement on Thursday said: “The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines the crime of genocide as murder, bodily or mental harm committed with the aim of destroying a national, ethnic, racial or religious group in whole or in part. The UN Rome Statute states that a deliberate changing of living conditions in an attempt to destroy physical existence, forced migrations, measures to prevent births within the group and forced transfer of children to another group are considered as genocide. The crimes perpetrated by Saddam Hussein's regime, especially Anfal, are crimes of genocide. Therefore, these massacres should be recognized as genocide. On March 1, 2010, the Iraqi High Criminal Court recognized the Halabja massacre as a genocide. Recognition of genocide will be a deterrent to prevent similar crimes in the future. In addition, sharing the pain of the relatives of genocide victims will help them cope with the mourning process.”

— ★ —

Journalist Hamdullah Bayram taken into custody

ANF | MERSIN | 17 MARCH 2023

Yeni Yaşam Newspaper journalist Hamdullah Bayram was taken into custody in Mersin on Thursday night.

Bayram had an arrest warrant and was in the same investigation together with 11 journalists from Mezopotamya Agency (MA) and JinNews.

Bayram was taken to Mersin Provincial Security Directorate.

— ★ —

International Press Institute: Reporters face numerous hurdles in Turkey

ANF | 17 MARCH 2023

Frane Maroevic, the executive director of the International Press Institute (IPI), visited the heavily damaged city of Antakya this week. He said: “Journalists still want to report because they believe that it is important to tell the stories of the people who survived and are still struggling to live there. But it is clear that there is going to be more pressure on journalists as the elections approach.”

Maroevic said: “It is clear that there is going to be more pressure on journalists as the elections approach. In Turkey, freedom of expression over the years has gotten worse and the state of emergency just created yet another layer to the complications for journalists doing their job.”

The Turkish presidency requires reporters to get special accreditation to work in the earthquake zone. Several journalists were detained for publishing articles critical of the government’s slow response to the disaster under Turkey’s much-criticised new disinformation law.

Turkey also blocked access to Twitter for more than 12 hours in the first days of the disaster due a torrent of critical posts about a lack of rescue workers and humanitarian aid. “It is clear that authorities are preventing (journalists) from reporting independently from the ground,” Maroevic said.

— ★ —

Iranian regime executes seven Kurdish prisoners in Urmia jail

ANF | 18 MARCH 2023

According to Mezopotamya Agency (MA), the Iranian regime executed seven Kurdish prisoners in Urmia jail.

Political prisoner Mohiuddin Ebrahimi was executed in Urmia Central Prison on Friday morning. Ebrahimi, who had met his family for the last time on Wednesday and had been taken to a single cell to be executed. His family was informed of the execution on Friday.

At least 145 people have been executed this year

It was announced that the Iranian regime also executed Ferweher Abbasnejad, Mohammad Ayyubiyani, Jahanbaxş Radluyi, Yasin Raşidi and Hasam Omri, who were said to be also in Urmia Central Prison accused of smuggling, and Nasrin Niyazi, also detained in Urmia and whose charges could not be established.

At least 145 people have been executed in Iran since the beginning of this year. It is stated that the number may be higher due to the late disclosure of information on the executions by the regime.



Newroz

Sozdar Avesta: Newroz means uprising and rebirth

ANF | BEHDINAN | 15 MARCH 2023

On the occasion of the upcoming Newroz Resistance Festival, a video message was released by Sozdar Avesta from the KCK (Community of Kurdistan Societies). At the beginning of her message, the representative of the Kurdish freedom movement recalled the martyrs of March, in particular Mazlum Doğan, Mahsum Korkmaz (Egîd), Zekiye Alkan, Rahşan Demirel, Ronahî and Bêrîvan, Sema Yüce and Fikri Baygeldi.

Avesta said: “The massacres in Halabja, Qamishlo, Gazi and the occupation of Afrin in March 2018 were committed by fascist regimes hostile to Kurdistan. I condemn these massacres and honor their victims. We have passed 8 March and are now approaching the Newroz festival. Women all over the world and especially in Bakurê Kurdistanê [Northern Kurdistan] could not celebrate 8 March in the same way as in previous years because of the earthquake.”

“With the slogan Jin-Jiyan-Azadî to the women’s revolution”

Avesta said: “With great anger and a spirit of defiance, the women demanded accountability from the patriarchal, fascist government responsible for the catastrophic consequences of the earthquake. I salute the women around the world, in Kurdistan and the Middle East who have participated in these great actions. We will mark Newroz with the colors of freedom and the voices of women calling for freedom. We are marching towards the women’s revolution under the slogan ‘Jin, Jiyan, Azadî’ and will celebrate Newroz with the demands for women’s liberation.

This 8 March showed once again that women are the core and the most important force for the liberation of society. Despite all the attacks, their insistence on freedom has shown their determination to fight together and their will. This is very important and significant. Women have shown that no force can stop them on their way to freedom. They combine their democratic and conscious attitude with the philosophy of ‘Jin, Jiyan, Azadî’. This is how we will light the fire of Newroz. This Newroz is also the 50th Newroz year of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan's] freedom march. It has been 2,635 years since the first Newroz festival.”

“Newroz is the birth of a new life”

Avesta continued: “With the emergence of Rêber Apo and the freedom movement, the Newroz fire now burns even higher and stronger. Newroz is the holiday of the resistant people. Newroz is resurrection. Newroz is new life. Newroz is the glad tidings of the arrival of spring. Newroz is an uprising against the oppressors. It is the day of the great reckoning. This reckoning began 50 years ago with the words of Rêber Apo: ‘Kurdistan is a colony for the liberation of which a constant struggle and revolutionary people’s war must be waged.’ It began with these words, and the fire that was ignited by this spark, has evolved into a torch of freedom burning throughout Kurdistan and abroad over the past 50 years. This great holiday is the expression of Rêber Apo’s struggle for revival. On this occasion I greet Rêber Apo with all my heart and I want to express my respect and gratitude to him.”

“Thousands of people are still under the rubble”

Avesta added: “We, the freedom movement, the Kurdish people as a whole and the resistant women, welcome the Newroz Festival 2023 with great determination. We will celebrate Newroz this year differently than in previous years. Because today thousands of our people are still lying under the rubble caused by the earthquake. The number of people who lost their lives is still not fully known. The number of victims is much higher than previously claimed. I would like to take this opportunity to express that I share the pain of all families. Our people are resistant people. In particular, Maraş, Semsûr (Adiyaman), Meletî (Malatya) and Dîlok (Antep) are resistance areas of the freedom movement. People like Kemal Pir in Maraş and Haki Karer in Dîlok made great achievements there. These comrades were pioneers of the freedom struggle and spread the idea of freedom for Kurdistan and Turkey. The enemy wants to change the demographics of these regions by driving people out. On this occasion, I call on our people not to leave their country. No matter how harsh the living conditions, stay on your land and resist.

“The enemy is attacking more than ever”

As a freedom movement in Kurdistan, in the spirit of our humanitarian, ethical and moral responsibility, we decided in the first few days after the earthquake to stop our actions and not to become active in the metropolises. However, the fascist enemy, dictator Erdoğan and Bahçeli continue their attacks uninterrupted. More than ever, they are attacking the freedom guerrillas as well as northern and eastern Syria, southern Kurdistan and Shengal. The Freedom Guerrillas are in a defense position. Murders are committed daily by the Turkish state. Most recently, two commanders of the YBŞ and a leading representative of the Asayîş were killed in attacks on Shengal in early March. Our condolences go to the families of these fallen, the YBŞ and all our people. Our people should understand clearly that these attacks are intended to break their will.

At this important time, we must stand up to Newroz on the 50th anniversary of the start of the freedom march led by Rêber Apo, take revenge and hold accountable for those whose hands are stained with the blood of our guerrilla fighters. This also applies if this Newroz festival is not characterized by music and celebrations as much as in previous years. Newroz means uprising and it is the day to take revenge on those responsible for the many massacres in history.

On this basis, those who continue the total isolation of Rêber Apo and commit genocide against our people must be held accountable. This year was to be the year of victory over fascism and destruction of the oppressor's palace in Bakurê Kurdistanê and Turkey. The implementation of democratic autonomy in Bakur and Rojhilatê Kurdistanê and the establishment of a democratic nation means, by resolving the existing contradictions, guaranteeing the freedom revolution. In Southern Kurdistan, Newroz should be celebrated in the spirit of national unity and resistance to colonialist attacks; Southern Kurdistan must free itself from the colonialists. For six months, a social revolution has been taking place in Rojhilatê Kurdistanê under the leadership of women with the slogan 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî'. This year's Newroz should be crowned by a democratic struggle waged by women in a spirit of revenge for those who have fallen over the past six months. The centenary of Lausanne also falls in this strategic period. The massacres against the people of Kurdistan must stop and Kurdistan must be given a status. The Kurdish people can no longer live without status, identity and home. Rêber Apo's fight for 50 years has turned into a breathless marathon.

“The end of Lausanne is no longer a dream”

The will that produced people like Mazlum, Egîd, Bêrîtan and Zilan and the great women's revolution must be crowned with this conclusion. This year's Newroz is therefore important and has many special features. It is the task of all of us to increase this fight. We, the Kurdistan Freedom Movement, are determined to do so. Our agenda is clear. It is no longer a dream to achieve Rêber Apo's physical freedom and overthrow the centuries-old system, the Lausanne Treaty and fascism. The past 25 years of struggle, particularly the uninterrupted resistance of Rêber Apo on İmralı, the eight years of attacks, the increased isolation and the level that the struggle that has been going on for 50 years has reached, show us clearly what we must do now. We are convinced that with this awareness, attitude and determination, with the great hope of Newroz, our people at home and abroad will continue to fight uninterruptedly and unprecedentedly. It's time to thwart all kinds of attacks. It's time to support Rêber Apo and the freedom guerrillas. It is time to realize national unity based on the development of a democratic nation, the rights of the Kurdish people and women's freedom. It is time to guarantee a social revolution led by women.

“The time of democratic world confederalism begins”

The KCK and KJK (Kurdistan Women's Union) have built their system of ecological and democratic confederalism on the basis of women's freedom. KCK and KJK have now celebrated 18 years of construction and their system has become the hope for freedom of peoples, societies and women during this time. The democratic nation and Democratic Confederalism are now organizing themselves as democratic world confederalism. Conferences from Kurdistan to South Africa and the corresponding working meetings have clearly expressed this reality.

“Women's freedom is the basis of all freedoms”

The struggle against capitalist modernity is only possible through the development of democratic modernity and the democratic nation under the leadership of women. In this way, women's freedom forms the basis of all freedoms. The stubborn refusal of the rulers to prevent the solution of the question of women's freedom is the main problem today. Fighting against it can lead to a great victory. Today, the women's freedom movement and the peoples of Kurdistan have the ideas, the philosophy and the system to build their freedom. Led by Rêber Apo and the martyrs, the PKK and PAJK are developing the democratic-confederalist system.

With this democratic system we want to welcome the arrival of Newroz, the spring of women's freedom, Rêber Apo and humanity. With this in mind, I wish our people, all peoples and women, all the best on the 18th anniversary of the founding of the KCK and KJK. I salute again Rêber Apo, the mastermind of the democratic-confederal system, who created this idea and philosophy and gave it to humanity. I pay tribute to Rêber Apo, all women, those resisting in prisons, the freedom guerrillas, the HPG and YJA Star on the Newroz festival. We will certainly succeed on the line of Newroz, the line of Mazlum and Zekiye. On this basis: 'Bijî Serok Apo', 'Jin, Jiyan, azadî', 'Bijî Newroz'."

— ★ —

First Newroz fire lit in Ankara

ANF | ANKARA | 17 MARCH 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Ankara Provincial Organization lit the first fire of Newroz in the city. In the Yenimahalle Ergazi Bazaar area, locals and market tradesmen responded with victory signs and the slogan "Biji Newroz". After the call to the public and shopkeepers to participate in the main Newroz celebration to be held on Sunday, 19 March, the Newroz fire was lit at the entrance of the market area. Young people jumped over the fire.

— ★ —

KONGRA-GEL calls for mobilization to welcome Newroz

ANF | 17 MARCH 2023

KONGRA-GEL Co-Presidency Council released a written statement concerning this year's Newroz events.

"Happy Newroz 2023 to Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, to the peoples of Kurdistan and the region, to all our friends and allies who resist in the mountains, in the prisons and elsewhere," said the statement, which further included the following:

'Resistance will grow with Newroz'

"We commemorate all Newroz martyrs with respect and gratitude in the persons of Mazlum Doğan, Zekiye Alkan, Raşan Demirel, Ronahî, Bêrivan and Sema Yüce who defeated the brutal policies of fascism by building the fire of Newroz with their bodies.

As we mark Öcalan's 51st Newroz, we salute the glorious struggle of the Democratic Modernity Guerrilla that have succeeded in frustrating all regional and international conspiracies seeking to put out the Newroz fire lit by comrade Mazlum Doğan.

We welcome the 51st Newroz of the freedom struggle launched by Öcalan in the 1973 Newroz. Hence, the PKK is a Newroz party. The genocidal fascist state system is disintegrating thanks to an unprecedented struggle waged against the denial and annihilation policies of colonialism. With this year's Newroz, we mark the 50th year of struggle of Öcalan.

Therefore, we welcome this year's Newroz celebrations with great enthusiasm and morale created by the achievements of the struggle. We will meet the 2023 Newroz based on increasing the resistance and struggle, also considering the suffering of our people who have experienced major destruction caused by earthquakes.

Together with our people and allies, we will light the fire of resistance in the spirit of Newroz, while we will heal the wounds of the earthquake survivors through social solidarity as AKP-MHP fascism is about to collapse. Moreover, we will carry out the election campaign in the spirit of mobilization.

We should successfully carry out the multiple tasks of this process together in a spirit of mobilization worthy of the meaning and importance of the 50th anniversary of Öcalan's struggle. As the People and the Movement, together with our allies, we will focus on the physical freedom of Öcalan.

'An opportunity to defeat fascism'

The upcoming elections will offer a great opportunity to overthrow the AKP-MHP fascism. The overthrow of the AKP-MHP government will be a very important step in defeating the hundred-year-old racist tradition of the Committee of Union and Progress [İttihad ve Terakki, the driving force behind the Armenian genocide]. This monist tradition poses the biggest obstacle to a solution to the Kurdish question in all parts of Kurdistan and to the democratic future of the region's people.

In this sense, we should participate in the Newroz celebrations by considering the importance of the elections to be held on May 14 and mobilize all our friends accordingly. We sincerely congratulate all our people and friends on Newroz and wish them good luck."

— ★ —

Women lit the first Newroz fire in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 18 MARCH 2023

Peace Mothers and women from many different organizations attended the event promoted by Tevgera Jinên Azad (TJA) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Women's Assembly in the neighbourhood of Bağcılar in Istanbul. The women lit the first Newroz fire in the city.

TJA activist Filiz Peşteş Keskin said that this year women welcomed Newroz in a period of heavy social and economic crisis. She added that many women and young people lost their hopes for the future. Keskin said: "Yet, despite everything, we are meeting around the fire of Newroz with the strength and colors

of hope, just like in the story of blacksmith Kawa. This Newroz marks the arrival of spring, a symbol of hope and resistance.”

— ★ —

Newroz fire lit in the mountains of Kurdistan

ANF | 18 MARCH 2023

Guerrillas in Rojhilat (East Kurdistan) lit the first fire to mark Newroz.

Chanting the slogans “Bê Serok jiyane nabe” (No Life Without the Leader), “Jin, Jiyan, Azadî” (Woman, Life, Freedom) and “Newroz pîroz be” (Happy Newroz), guerrillas stated that 2023 will be the year when Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan’s freedom will be ensured.

Newroz is the Kurdish New Year on 21 March. On this day, Kurds all over the world celebrate the beginning of a new year. Newroz means “the new day”. It arose from the spirit of resistance of the Kurdish people and developed over the years into a celebration of political resistance against oppression and despotism. It also represents the end of winter and welcomes spring.

As a festival of rebirth, it first gained importance among the Kurdish people and was later adopted by other Iranian peoples. Kurds, Afghans, Persians, Baluchis and Tajiks celebrate this festival today, and they have all added their own national customs to it. The Newroz festival is probably the oldest Kurdish festival.

— ★ —

General Elections in Turkey

Labor and Freedom Alliance votes to enter the election as a coalition

ANF | ANKARA | 17 MARCH 2023

The Labor and Freedom Alliance published its final declaration after a meeting on Thursday.

The statement said: “The components of the Labor and Freedom Alliance are the Labor Movement Party (EHP), the Labor Party (EMEP), the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), the Socialist Assemblies Federation (SMF), the Workers’ Party of Turkey (TIP) and the Social Freedom Party (TOP). As co-chairs, presi-

dents and spokespersons, we met in Ankara to discuss the topics on the agenda, including earthquake and flood disasters, deepening crises, presidential and parliamentary elections.

The government's anti-people policies based on corruption and plunder threaten the present and future of society by causing crises. The destruction, loss of life and property in the Maraş Pazarcık-centered earthquakes of 6 February and the floods in the Urfa and Adıyaman on 15 March were the most obvious and tragic indicators of these policies. We totally reject the evaluation of the disaster as a "natural disaster or destiny plan". As the Labor and Freedom Alliance, we are committed to changing this government that is hostile to the people and nature and the order that paved the way for disasters, to hold those responsible accountable and to build a new life worthy of human dignity."

The statement continued: "We are on the eve of an election that will change Turkey. With the awareness of our historical and political responsibility that will turn the expectations of society into hope and build a democratic and free future, we say that:

- A will has emerged to expand the process that we started as a struggle alliance into an electoral alliance. We have therefore decided to enter the election as the Labor and Freedom Alliance. Technical work will be based on the ways and methods that will protect and develop the gains of all the powers that are components of the alliance, especially the HDP.
- We had a wide-ranging discussion about the presidential election. After the earthquake, we decided to re-evaluate the presidential candidate selection process. We have decided to share our common stance, which emerged as a result of the discussion we had on Thursday, with the public at a press conference to be held in a very near future.
- In an atmosphere where political bans and lawsuits, violence and oppression continue to increase, we continue our joint efforts with all segments of society to guarantee a safe election process and ballot box security.

We will fill the squares on Newroz and 1 May with the strength we derive from the struggle of the women who turned the streets purple on 8 March. Together with all the forces of democracy, we will win. We will end the one-man regime."

Interview

Andok: Democratic Confederalism suits the demands of all social groups

PIRAN DOZDAR / XEBATKAR RAPERIN | BEHDINAN | 15 MARCH 2023

This is the second part of the three-part ANF interview with KCK Executive Council member Xebat Andok.

In this part Andok answered the question ‘Why Democratic Confederalism?’

He said the following:

“Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] developed Democratic Confederalism. He is a people’s leader. A person who has waged and is still waging a struggle to solve the Kurdish people’s problems of existence and freedom. We are people who believe in this project, who believe that the Kurds’ problems of existence and freedom can be solved in this way. And we are waging a struggle accordingly. We know that throughout history there have been many people like us who have struggled for equality, freedom, democracy and existence. This struggle has always existed and is still being waged in every aspect. According to our reading of history, if we include the hierarchical stage, i.e. the historical period after the neolithic, we can look back at a process of about 7000 years since the emergence of the state. The first 1000 to 2000 years of this period were the incubation period and constitute the root cause of the social problems that people are dealing with today. It was a period in which the state had not yet been formed, but in which the male-dominated mentality and ideology were gradually being developed, in which power and individualism began to develop. It was also the period that would later give birth to the formation of state and class, but slavery in the known sense did not exist yet. The state emerged some time after the formation of this mentality, about 5,500 years ago.

Historically speaking, the state emerged in Uruk, in today’s Iraq. What we want to say by referring to this historical period is that this system is the source of all the social problems that people are dealing with today and which they cannot adequately solve because of their current mentality. For example, power, nationalism, oppressor and oppressed, class contradictions, etc. Today’s problems are gigantic and the existing mindset cannot solve them. We look at history from the day these social problems emerged until today. We say that different problems have existed since then and that they were created by the rulers. The spirit of the rulers is not communal. They want to dominate. They want to make everything their own. They are detached from the communal essence of society and from being human. They are individualists and always want to rule and dominate. Human nature rejects this because it is libertarian and egalitarian. From the time when those who ceased to be human tried to put such tendencies into practice until today, there has always been a struggle for equality and freedom. The history of hegemony is also the history of the struggle for freedom against it. Under the conditions of natural society, people lived freely, but after

they had their freedom taken away from them, they struggled and resisted against those who made them live this way.

Since then, the struggle for equality, freedom and democracy has been continuing. Today, we are a continuation of this struggle. In this respect, we are neither the first nor will we be the last. As long as there are tendencies based on hegemony, power, sexism or the subject-object mentality that fragments society, there will be a struggle for freedom against them. We read history based on this understanding. We say that there have been a great number of struggles for equality and freedom from that day until today, but the world is still unequal, there are still problems of justice and democracy. There are still problems of existence and freedom. The Kurds, women, youth and all the oppressed people are the ones who experience this most deeply. In fact, we live in a world where whole peoples have disappeared. Many peoples were forced to migrate. So there is such a reality, but on the other hand, there has also been a struggle. No one can say that the reason why the oppressed have not succeeded until today is because they have paid too small a price. Millions of people have died in the course of a single war. Kurds have been subjected to genocide for a hundred years. If we add up these hundred years of genocide, tens of millions of Kurdish people have been exterminated. Armenians have been annihilated. But there has always been a struggle to exist. Therefore, the issue is not whether you struggle too little. The crucial question is what kind of mentality you base your struggle on. When we look at it from this point of view, we can see that today the rulers have reached a high level of organization in the form of the state. They have established a monopoly and hegemony over all areas of life, ideologically, politically and militarily. As a consequence, they do not allow different mindsets and ideas to emerge. Even when you fight against the system, it is as if you were fighting based on the system's own arguments. You look at things from its point of view, with its mentality. You want to achieve your goals with the system's tools, but this is not possible.

The oppressed everywhere in the world and during all of history have always wanted equality, justice, freedom and a humane life. None of the hegemonies want this, because they are the ones who create such problems. These two sides think differently. Because they think differently, their dreams, social projects and utopias are different from each other. And they produce the respective means accordingly. The individualistic, selfish, self-subjugating spirit and way of thought of the rulers has given birth to the state. The state is the most organized institution of all hegemonic classes, of all classes that want to monopolize and dominate. There may have been exceptions throughout history, but in general, almost everyone who has struggled for equality, freedom, democracy, a humane life and justice has also had the state as their goal; the state which belongs to the rulers. We have seen this clearly in the tradition of ethnic groups or the prophets, but also in the national liberation struggle of the 20th century. This was also clearly the case in all three versions of Marxism, which is a class-based departure that tries to build a world for the oppressed. The oppressed normally want justice, equality, democracy, but this tool is not at all suitable for them, for their spirit, thoughts and aspirations. It is a tool that belongs to someone else. A tool that has emerged from someone else's individualism, selfishness and domination: the state. The state is something that normally belongs to the hegemonic class, it shouldn't belong to you. Because you cannot think differently, because there is ideological hegemony, because mentalities have been taken over, because the possibility of thinking differently has been taken away from you, you think like the hegemon, even though you actually have a different spirit.

The tool that you have taken as a basis for solving your problems is not a tool that belongs to you, but a tool that belongs to someone else. You only think that it belongs to you. With regards to this issue, our Leadership [Abdullah Öcalan] has said: "Freedom requires its means to be as clean as its goals". The state is

dirty, oppressive, rapist, cruel and monopolist. State and power are among the creators of all social problems. Therefore, no state can bring about equality. There are so many states on earth that call themselves democratic and libertarian. Which state has really solved the problems of justice, freedom, equality and democracy within its borders? None of them have. This is simply impossible, because its chemistry is degraded. The state is existentially, inevitably evil. It cannot be good in the hands of anyone. History has sufficiently shown us that the state is not good even in the hands of the best. Real socialism and the different national liberation movements are examples of this.

When we look at history in this way, we see that the oppressed, all parts of society, those who struggle for equality and freedom, all groups who want to live equally and freely, have struggled throughout history. Yet, they have not been able to find a tool or a form of social organization that suits their demands, dreams and utopias. Our claim is that Democratic Confederalism is precisely such a model that suits the demands of all social groups, all oppressed people. It is non-state, because it is the product of the oppressed, it conforms to their demands. The struggles waged by all the oppressed throughout history must finally reach their goal. All revolutions are made by the peoples, but they have always been put down because the peoples were not able to channel them outside the state. The perception that there cannot be an organization outside the state is so dominant that the peoples have been seeking a state. Therefore, without falling for such a deviation, you need to free yourself completely from the mental codes of the rulers and obtain a tool that suits your egalitarian, libertarian spirit and aspirations. That tool is Democratic Confederalism. It is a system outside of the state in which society organizes itself and thus becomes self-sufficient.

This framework put forward by Leader Apo means that the huge price that has been paid throughout history within the scope of the struggle for democratic communal values, equality and freedom will finally bear results. To the extent that this is realized, the goals of the historic struggle for democratic communal values, equality and freedom will be put into practice and systematized. This is a historical reckoning. Against the 7000-year-old hierarchical statist system – the system of the rulers – this means the establishment of a system on behalf of the peoples. It has such a historical meaning.

We are Kurds. As a people, we are still faced with problems of existence and freedom. We are a people that certain forces try to annihilate. Kurds have been struggling against this for at least a century. This struggle can be traced back all the way to the 19th century. The Kurds have given tens of thousands of martyrs in this struggle for existence and freedom. If they do not solve the problems of existence and freedom, they may even fall victim to a genocide. Whether or not this will happen depends entirely on how much the Kurds organize themselves. The hegemonic forces of colonialism and of capitalist modernity have already decided to carry out a genocide against the Kurds. In fact, when we look at the current situation, all the practical deeds of these forces are based on this.

As the vanguard of a people that is faced with the problem of existence and freedom, the PKK is also waging a struggle. It has given tens of thousands of martyrs in this struggle. The society that the PKK has created has very strong values that come from its very social essence. The PKK does not want its struggle to be in vain, just like it does not want the struggles of all the social groups that struggled before the PKK to be in vain. Today, the PKK focuses on how to solve the Kurdish problem outside the state in order for its 50-year struggle to bear results. In this context, the formula the PKK has found is Democratic Confederalism: A system based on Democratic Autonomy in which the Kurds in the four parts of Kurdistan can continue their existence in a democratic-autonomous way, have freedom of expression and organization, and be themselves. Where has the state taken you? We can see this not only in the case of the Kurds. We also

see this in the case of real socialism or Vietnam. We see it in everyone who fought for national liberation. We see it in everyone who has turned towards power. Regardless of whether we have the potential to establish a state or not, regardless of whether there is such a possibility or not, we act with the belief that the solution to the Kurdish problem lies outside the state, not in the state.

So what do we replace the state with? As we have mentioned, our approach is based on the democratic-confederal system which has Democratic Autonomy at its foundation. This means to not dissolve into the system, so that there won't be any rulers, aghas and oppressors among the Kurds. Kurds have fought for equality and freedom; they have demanded justice. They struggle for their existence to be recognized and for them to have the opportunity to live as Xwebûn ['to be oneself']. So the result of the struggle must be in accordance with this. Otherwise, there is the example of South Kurdistan [North Iraq]. There, too, Kurds are faced with problems of existence. So much struggle was waged there, but now the results are obvious: It is well-known that a dynastic system has been established there; that someone/a family has taken over all the riches of Kurdistan based on so-called elections which are completely based on fraud; and that they have tried to turn all Kurds into collaborators of capitalist modernity, colonialism and genocide. We seek to prevent such a situation, such cancerous cells from arising among the Kurds, so that the Kurdish struggle results in equality and freedom in line with its real purpose. Let relations be equal and free. Let us move towards classlessness. Let there be no formation of classes. Let there be justice. Let all people be active. Let all people govern each other. Let all people be responsible for each other. In order to achieve this, for us Kurds, Democratic Confederalism, i.e. Democratic Autonomy and the democratic-confederal organizational and social system, is the solution option for us."



Andok: The Rojava Revolution attracts and fascinates all humanity

PIRAN DOZDAR / XEBATKAR RAPERIN | BEHDINAN | 16 MARCH 2023

This is the third part of the four-part ANF interview with KCK Executive Council member Xebat Andok.

In this part, Andok talked about the Rojava Revolution and analyzed the conditions for Democratic Confederalism to develop.

In the course of the 'Arab Spring' a great upheaval took place. In the wake of these developments, have you been able to introduce Democratic Confederalism as an alternative well enough?

There have been moments in history that can easily be called times of chaos, e.g. in the case of the 'Arab Spring'. In the Middle East, the stance of society against the current hegemonic system and despotism is very strong, because the region is the center of slavery and class and state formation. Whenever there is an opportunity, this stance becomes visible. Iran is an example of this, just like today's struggle of the Kurds. In the 'Arab Spring' we could see that although Arabs are supposedly hegemonic, the Arab people stood up everywhere. In such uprisings, the people demand equality and freedom. But what will they replace the

state with? Democratic Confederalism is what needs to be put in its place in order to avoid being integrated into the system. We have developed this solution, but we have not spread it sufficiently in the region and have not been able to find the opportunity to organize accordingly all over the Middle East. There have been inadequacies on our side. Since we are a movement that is faced with the issue of existence and is being attacked within the scope of a very intense liquidation concept, we have not yet been able to turn Democratic Confederalism into a project that appeals to all the peoples of the Middle East. In a way, we are late. In the course of the Arab Spring uprisings took place all over the Arab world. Regimes were overthrown only to be replaced by a different version of the same regime. The result was not what the peoples had wanted and desired. In other words, freedom, justice, equality and democracy were not achieved.

Doesn't the practical implementation in Rojava constitute an important success?

In Rojava, Leader Apo had been working hard for years. He still has the power to influence society there. The people of Rojava have sent thousands of young people to the ranks of freedom. Rojava is the area where Leader Apo's ideas have had the greatest effect. When there was a period of chaos in Rojava, the people immediately carried out their own people's revolution. Rojava is currently subjected to genocidal attacks, several forces are trying to distort the revolution, there is intense pressure, and there are many inadequacies due to the mentality, organization and internal problems. Consequently, very little of Democratic Confederalism has so far been put into practice there. Despite this, the Rojava Revolution is at a point today that attracts and fascinates all humanity. Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Circassians, Armenians, Assyrians and Syriacs are all autonomously organized within the existing system. A Kurd is not superior to an Arab. An Arab is not superior to a Circassian. They organize as autonomously as they want on the basis of their own communes and assemblies. On the other hand, all of them know that their liberation is not limited to themselves. They know that they need each other against their common enemy. Therefore, they have joined forces. They are both autonomous and united. Rojava is moving towards a system in which all groups of society organize themselves. It is doing this under the conditions of World War 3. It is doing this while the genocidal Turkish state is trying to destroy the revolution with the complete support of international powers. And the Turkish state also gets huge support and encouragement from the Kurdish collaborators and traitors. Despite such an abundance of enemies, Democratic Confederalism has found the opportunity to be put into practice in Rojava, albeit in a limited way. Democratic Confederalism is the reason why people from different parts of the world continue to come to Rojava and take part in the struggle. They experience there what social, egalitarian and libertarian Democratic Confederalism is like. All the people who come to Rojava not only gain experience from there but also try to protect the revolution against the attacks of the ruling, statist forces.

So is it a prerequisite for Democratic Confederalism that states do not exist?

Today, it is a historical necessity that – in accordance with their purpose – the struggles for freedom and equality result in a non-state social system. This is necessary so that the results of the PKK's struggle for existence and freedom are in accordance with its purpose; so that all relations within Kurdish society become equal, free and democratic, and not distorted. Serious attempts are being made to become non-state. Under the conditions of World War 3, Democratic Confederalism was declared by Leader Apo in 2005 so that the peoples would be able to pursue real projects and their struggles would not be in vain. Democratic Confederalism is not something that will emerge only after the complete disappearance of all states. This is not its aim. It does not aim to destroy states and replace them with yet another political power.

Democratic Confederalism entails the awareness that we are in an age of states. Consequently, it is a formulation of how to live together with states within their borders, based on dignity and self-preservation. Democratic Confederalism stands in constant tension and contradiction with the states that have always and everywhere existed, because their chemistry is different. As mentioned before, we are not talking about something that will happen in some distant future. We are talking about something that is happening and must happen already now.

What kind of changes can Democratic Confederalism bring about in life?

The PKK has tens of thousands of cadres. Thus, the PKK is also an example of a society. It has its own way of life. The current lifestyle of the PKK is completely organized in accordance with Democratic Confederalism. We are already experiencing this. We are not talking about something we ourselves don't live. We don't make propaganda saying that something can happen that we ourselves haven't realized already, that we can't show is possible. Therefore, we are talking about something we are living already. To put it more concretely: So what changes, what can change? Since the answer to these questions is based on a paradigm, it is better to look at the paradigm itself. This is based on a paradigm whose foundation is democracy, ecology and women's freedom. This is a specific perspective. This is how we define life. We derive our definition of life from the nature of society and humans. And we are consequently looking for a system that suits this nature. When we look at the pillars of the paradigm, it becomes clearer what Democratic Confederalism stands for in life. Most importantly, this is a democratic paradigm.

How do you live democracy within the PKK? Or what does democracy look like in a place where the democratic-confederal system has been organized?

Democracy is one of the terms that has been most distorted by the states; one of the words that states have literally taken control of. Democracy has nothing to do with the state, because the system in which the people govern themselves is called democracy. Who can govern themselves in a state system? Is there any example of 'self-administration' other than going to the polls every 4 or 5 years?

So there isn't any democracy in the state?

No, there isn't. Even in the most progressive states, democracy is very, very limited. But within the PKK we have direct democracy. We make all the decisions about our own lives ourselves. We lead all the discussions ourselves. We ourselves guarantee our right to speak. No one has the right to have a say over us or about us. We have a say about ourselves, about our own lives and problems. We take all the decisions ourselves. Our smallest unit is the team. And each team takes its own decisions. If there are problems in life, the team decides how to solve them. It does not implement someone else's decision. It also determines how the decisions it has taken will be put into practice. The team chooses a coordinator for itself. In Democratic Confederalism, all coordination is elected. The elected coordinator is not a superior or anything like that. Her or his duty is to put all decisions that have been taken into practice. Otherwise, there is no possibility for a coordination to put itself in the place of a team, assembly or commune and take decisions on its behalf. The moment it becomes clear that a coordination is so overbearing and superior that it takes decisions according to its own mind and whim, it will be dismissed from office.

Could you compare the state system with the system that you defend and live?

In the democracy we predicate ourselves on and live in, every human being is valuable and unique. In state systems, no human being considers themselves as valuable, because everything happens despite the human being. People are completely reduced to their basic instincts. They are treated like a herd. All that is required of people is this: there is money that needs to be obtained for the necessities of life; and people are running after that money, dedicating their whole lives to it, and almost cracking and becoming depressed due to the stress connected to this. A very, very large part of the problems that people experience within the hegemonic, statist system, especially under the conditions of capitalist modernity, stem from the feeling of worthlessness. This stems from the fact that they are made to feel that they are unnecessary. They are not treated like human beings. In Democratic Confederalism, the greatest value for us is human beings. In our system, people compete to improve each other. Not to eradicate each other, not to do anything against each other. Everything is for human beings. We do not mean a human-centered understanding of the universe, but the human being really is unique. All religions, sciences and philosophies say that human beings have unique qualities, many talents and huge potential. The hegemons don't say this because it doesn't suit them. But since we are not hegemons and since we want to live in accordance with our own essence and nature, we want the same for everyone. In the system of Democratic Confederalism, human beings are very valuable, unique, political, have a voice and are part of a discussion. Their brains, tongues and hearts are wide-open. They consider themselves responsible for the problems of themselves and their comrades, as well as for the problems of all humanity of which they are members. In this system, the mind is in a constant mode of production. In such a system, people are as active as possible. You literally get rid of the dead soil that you have been covered in. The human is thus formed based on her/his own reality, essence and potential.

Does this organizational system and approach also have something to do with the PKK's ability to survive and continue to grow in the face of the continuing heavy attacks against it?

Yes, it definitely does. How can the PKK maintain its existence under the conditions of the hierarchical state system, capitalist modernity and in an environment where the genocidal Turkish Republic has the support of the whole world to attack us? We know very well how valuable our lives are, how valuable each of us is, how powerful human beings are. Therefore, we constantly bring out that power in ourselves. We resist against all the attacks with this power we unleash. The very fact that the PKK continues to exist and to trigger off developments shows very clearly how much people can change and transform in this type of organizational system. Both within our movement and within the democratic-confederal system – to the extent that it finds the opportunity to be put into practice – human communities undergo development in accordance with their own strong essence, thus revealing their true potential. They feel that they are valuable. They become communal. Their emotions become much stronger. They become one and form a whole. The system of Democratic Confederalism is an environment in which human development is lived in the most powerful way.

Andok: The PKK is a women's party

PIRAN DOZDAR / XEBATKAR RAPERIN | BEHDINAN | 17 MARCH 2023

This is the fourth part of the ANF interview with KCK Executive Council member Xebat Andok.

In this part, Andok talked about the Rojava Revolution and analyzed the conditions for Democratic Confederalism to develop.

Why the emphasis on women's freedom?

The first slave in history was a woman. The hegemon man did this. Consequently, the oldest libertarian and the one who has resisted the longest for the sake of freedom is the woman. Even our enemies have said that 'the PKK is a women's party'. And this is true. The PKK really is a women's party. It is not only a party with a large number of women in its ranks, it is a party that bases many of its fundamental strategic and ideological characteristics on women. In this respect, it really is a women's party. It sees the solution to problems in the emotional intelligence of women. The women and men in the PKK argue that it is necessary to think outside the existing male mindset, that this mental structure, shaped by the male-dominant ideology of the ruling/statist system, must be changed. The male mindset is the reason why there are so many problems. Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond this mindset. The intelligence you will acquire when you step out of this mindset is the emotional intelligence of women. All men and women in the PKK have a duty to adapt their mentality and way of thinking to the emotional intelligence of women. To the extent that they do this, they become more humble, democratic, faithful, sensitive, responsible and stronger. This is why the PKK is a women's party. The kind of social form that the PKK bases itself on and that it wants to create is natural society. If it is not interfered with from the outside by different distorted mentalities, natural society is a society centered around the mother-woman. It is a society that develops under the leadership of women. Therefore, the PKK's goal is the realization of a society led by women. The PKK itself is also led by women. The most valuable thing for us is the strong stance of women that have discovered their own essence and nature. The empowerment of women means the empowerment of men, because it changes and transforms them. The woman throws away the existing statist, sovereign aspects of men and wages a struggle against him. Empowered women make life beautiful. The leadership of such women is something that all men in the PKK predicate themselves on, believe in and have faith in. From this perspective, the social system, the form of society that the PKK is based on is the natural society led by women. The PKK predicates itself on the nature of society.

Taking into account the practice in Rojava, what does the relationship between men and women in the democratic-confederal system look like?

In the Rojava Revolution, if you look at what the relations between men and women are like in the face of all the attacks, you can see how active women have become, and how much men have given up their hegemonic features. They have become prone to change and transformation. We can see how a meaningful life, equal and libertarian relations unleash the potential of women and how life thus becomes more beautiful. In the democratic-confederal system, relations between men and women will be equal and free. No one will be superior to anyone. No one will dominate anyone. Everyone will live as equal and free beings according to their uniqueness, on the basis of their essence. Since there are no obstacles in front of anyone,

you can live out the potential in your essence as much as you want. There are unlimited possibilities. The same is true for men. A meaningful, equal and free life is precisely the life envisioned in the system of Democratic Confederalism. In its purest form, this kind of life is already being tried to be lived within the PKK today.

Your paradigm also has an ecological dimension. Why is this important as a complementary dimension?

Currently, we are faced with serious droughts. Everyone talks about them, but they know that droughts are not a natural reflex. It is something created by capitalist modernity. In this context, people talk about the greenhouse gas effect or the burning of fossil fuels. There are so many environmental disasters and ecological problems. All of them are caused by the hegemonic and insatiable human being. The main cause of all ecological disasters and environmental problems are the rulers. The forces of capitalist modernity. There is a war against nature. Nature is literally groaning. Today, this has reached a point where the question is how long nature will be able to continue to exist. There are problems like thirst, droughts, etc. Because they are hegemonic men, these ruling state factions, who are the pioneers of the hierarchical state system, are hostile to all groups of society on the one hand, and especially to women on the other hand. They are hostile to nature because they see it as a blessing given to them and do not look at it as a living being. They approach nature as if it was a machine, an object and a resource.

Throughout history, all rulers have been hostile to society, women and nature. To all the oppressed. There is first nature and second nature, in which human beings and society form one. Women, nature and society are all oppressed. But there is no such approach to nature in the system of Democratic Confederalism. It approaches nature like a mother. We all come from nature. We define nature as the first nature. We see ourselves as a part of nature, as its offspring. Just as an offspring should not commit crimes against its mother, we, as second nature, should not commit crimes against the first nature, which is our mother. It is important for us to know that we live surrounded by living things. By tampering with the system of that living being, we also eliminate our own conditions of existence. We see nature as being alive. This is the approach to nature within the PKK. At least we strive for this approach to prevail. We conduct our internal struggle on this basis. We are a community that does not harm nature. We are a community that tries to live according to what nature provides. If we spread this attitude on a wider level within the peoples, within the whole society, humanity will no longer commit crimes against nature.

Could you elaborate a little more on the issue of 'third nature'?

The third nature is the coming together of human beings and nature in the right way. It means that human beings participate in nature as they should be. Throughout the history of the hierarchical state system, so many crimes have been committed against nature and its balance has been tampered with. As you push back the ruling statist mentality, as you break its hegemony over life, as you open up space for democracy, freedom, equality and open minds, and as you develop the appropriate social organization, you also improve communication with nature. You create a generation that is more sensitive to nature, a human species/social reality that has a more sensitive, responsible and democratic stance towards nature.

The deviation that has emerged with imperialism and male-dominant thinking, has turned itself into the state. It has given birth to the formation of classes and has survived until today. Human beings, society, women and nature cannot live with this. The struggles all over the world show clearly that they can't live like that anymore. The hierarchical statist system, the power system, is a deviation. It cannot be lived with.

The current version of it, i.e. capitalist modernity, cannot be lived with at all. Its only goal is profit and selfishness. Its soul is full of selfishness.

Is Democratic Confederalism the real alternative to this system?

As an alternative to this, Democratic Confederalism constitutes a system of communal life that is in accordance with the nature of human beings and society. It is a system in accordance with the mentality that predicates itself on the communal nature of human beings and society who strive for a life in harmony with nature. As a movement, we want and struggle for the realization of Democratic Confederalism as a system in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the whole world. The ruling, hegemonic powers all over the world today have established themselves as a system through the organization of states. Similarly, Democratic Confederalism is a system in which all oppressed people all over the world, all social groups subjected to the oppression and attacks of this system can come together, unite their struggles and organize themselves. On the one hand, there is Democratic Confederalism, and on the other hand, there is the state. The system of the ruling, statist powers is the state. Basically, it is the nation-state today. The system of all groups in society is Democratic Confederalism. It may be called the KCK in Kurdistan and something else in a different place, but its essence does not change. The essence is to establish a non-state system that is in accordance with the nature of human beings and society.

— ★ —

Opinion

Erdoğan-Bahçeli fascism has come to a dead end

RONAHI NEWSPAPER | ZEKI BEDRAN | 15 MARCH 2023

The heavy destruction and loss of lives caused by the series of earthquakes in Turkey will also strike the Erdoğan government. Despite more than a hundred thousand deaths, the fascist government thinks of quitting neither power nor war. While people were trapped under the rubble, they continued to bomb guerrilla areas and North-East Syria. Turkish drones continue to kill people in all of Kurdistan, including Shengal. Erdoğan had to announce elections after the opposition took a tough stance and the constitution did not make way for him. The elections will be held on May 14. In general, some claimed that Erdoğan would not go even if he lost elections, or he would try to stay in power by prompting a civil war. They can resort to any madness in order not to leave the power. However, things have changed with the earthquakes. The government declared a state of emergency. It also came out how decayed their ground is. There is no civil war they can win for sure. Those gathered around them are not ideological cadres. Most of them are career-hungry people seeking profits.

They have also transformed the state into a crime ring. State institutions have been undermined. This fact became more visible after the earthquake. Erdoğan failed to divide the opposition alliance, also known as the Table of Six. The crackdown on the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) has not stopped, but yielded no

results so far. At the utmost, they might decide to close the party before the election. They could not narrow down the voter base of the HDP. The Labour and Freedom Bloc will maintain its determined and effective stance. It has also become clear that if the HDP supports Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (the opposition's presidential candidate) in the election, Erdoğan is very likely to lose in the first round. Erdoğan, on the other hand, has now desperately embraced the pro-Hezbollah Hüda-Par. He also allies with Doğu Perinçek, a controversial ultra-nationalist politician known for his shady provocations in the past.

He stole Erbakan's party and electorate, for which he had worked for decades. He could not entrap the Saadet (Felicity) Party. He had to ally with Fatih Erbakan. He created an interesting power constellation. His alliance looks like a patchwork and full of contradictions. But this is not a problem. For Erdoğan, anything is possible as long as he remains in power. Principles, laws, crimes do not matter. Erdoğan says that the government has done everything to deal with the earthquake disaster. He vowed that new houses would be built quickly for the survivors. But life says otherwise. Millions of people have lost their families, relatives, beloved ones. They witnessed how countless people died because rescue teams never came. Many died of cold. People have suffered a lot.

Erdoğan's lies and pro-government media cannot deceive the earthquake survivors. For they have seen for themselves what actually happened. The government has lost its credibility. Government ally Bahçeli still thinks that he can maintain the fascist government by threatening and insulting his opponents. The votes he would get would not be more than 5 percent. Still, he is trying to design Turkey. He thinks that he can do anything because he is backed by dark forces. He never thinks that he will be held accountable. He owns the political system and is above the law! Once upon a time, army generals like Çevik Bir held similar views. Those who reposed on the state and the army believed that they had the right to do anything they liked. However, their fate was not so bright. It would be good for people like Bahçeli not to underestimate the people and the forces of democracy. Erdoğan and his cronies are in fear and panic.

Instead of giving an account to people or stepping down from the government, he goes to the earthquake-hit regions and blames the opposition parties. This is pure shamelessness and indecency. He has been in power for twenty years. Is it the opposition that blocked aid? Is it the opposition that undermined earthquake preparations? There is no such thing. On the contrary, he turned a blind eye to what the experts and the opposition said and remained greedy for money and power. The outcome was a great disaster for the people. When it comes to aggression and hostility towards the Kurds, neither disasters nor earthquakes stop them. The government did not even allow the army to help the earthquake survivors so that the war motivation of the army would not be shattered. In the face of criticism, the chemical Hulusi (Defence Minister) says that the army protects the borders.

Which enemies and armies are pounding at Turkey's borders? Moreover, it is the Turkish army that keeps violating and occupying other borders. Tens of thousands of Turkish troops are now in Syria and Iraq as an occupying power, and the Turkish army spends billions of dollars on war expenditures. A government that does not care about its own citizens in order to continue its genocidal policies rules Turkey. The whole world has seen and understood it. It can thus be said that Erdoğan is not respected in the world. Will his friend Putin be able to save him? Or could a few billion dollars and black money he got from here and there affect the outcome of the elections? It can easily be said that those who link their fates to those people, the pro-Hezbollah circles and to the likes of Doğu Perinçek will have a dark future.

Karayilan: The only solution is Leader Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 17 MARCH 2023

Member of the Executive Council of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Murat Karayilan spoke about current issues in a special program on Stêrk TV. Among other things, Karayilan addressed the importance of Abdullah Öcalan for a solution to the Kurdish question. There has been no information about the Kurdish people's Leader for almost two years.

Underlining that Abdullah Öcalan is the key to the solution to the Kurdish question, Karayilan said: "As it is known, a system that is unique in the world is being implemented against Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. This is a deep system of psychological torture. Its aim is to massacre the Kurdish people and to carry out the policy of genocide in Kurdistan. For this reason, such unprecedented isolation and torture is applied to Leader Apo. They don't want Leader Apo's voice to be heard, but Leader Apo's work and methods, and the meaningful stance he has shown, have gone beyond all prison walls. Today, the influence of Leader Apo's thoughts is not limited to the four parts of Kurdistan, but spreads to the Middle East and the whole world. The thought, line and paradigm developed by Leader Apo is being discussed and mostly accepted by many people around the world today. Everyone who hears this idea and understands its content finds it very remarkable and owns it.

Leader Apo's views and ideas are a new wave and are spreading all over the world today. On this basis, we must now carry out the struggle for the physical freedom of Leader Apo in a stronger way. The time has come for Leader Apo to be free. We are now at this stage. We must fight not only against the isolation, but also against the isolation, mainly for the freedom of Leader Apo, and the moves we will start must develop on this basis."

As to the Turkish state's depopulation policy in the Kurdish regions west of the Euphrates after the 6 February earthquake disaster, Karayilan, who himself comes from Urfa (Riha), called on people to return and to continue solidarity. We publish the translation of an excerpt of the TV interview, conducted in Kurdish, in which Murat Karayilan assessed the likelihood of an intensification of the Turkish state's attacks on Kurdistan.

The television journalist asked: "The Community of Kurdistan Societies (KCK) called for a cessation of all military activities after the earthquake for humanitarian reasons. Does the Turkish army take this decision into account in practice? How long do you intend to continue this inactivity?"

Karayilan replied: "The decision of our movement was correct. It is a humanitarian and social approach. Our headquarters also approved the decision and did what was necessary. The Turkish state and the AKP-MHP government have not acted in the same way and have continued their attacks. Nevertheless, our forces have stuck to this decision to this day. I would like to point out that in the war being waged in Kurdistan, the Turkish state uses all types of technology. In winter, the enemy's technology largely loses its effectiveness. Therefore, this situation offers the guerrillas various options. For example, it provides the opportunity to attack and eliminate the enemy. In our central headquarters and in all combat areas, especially in the Medya Defense Areas, there were corresponding plans for the winter. Within this framework, actions were carried out in the areas of Girê Cûdî, Girê Hekarî and Girê Amêdî. In 2022, a very historical

resistance took place. This resistance was successful: it did not allow the enemy to achieve their goals. However, the guerrillas wanted to crown this resistance with a victory in winter. The planning of the guerrillas went in this direction. After the earthquake, when the co-chair of the KCK Executive Council decided to stop operations due to the situation of the population, our headquarters had to abandon its plans for the winter. As I said, the possibilities for us are greater in winter. It's not like it used to be. In the past, for example, war was mainly fought in summer and stopped in winter, but we have now recognized this new situation and our planning takes into account that the enemy relies on heavy technology in war and this is mostly unsuccessful in winter. Then the earthquake happened and the guerrillas had to stop their actions."

The enemy keeps attacking

Karayilan continued: "The enemy wants to take advantage of that. For example, it attacked in Besta. We had casualties there. Attacks on the Medya Defense Areas also continue uninterrupted. Likewise, the enemy has not stopped its attacks against other parts of the country. Our people and the public should know that we maintain our stance for humanitarian reasons, but the AKP-MHP state doesn't take notice of this situation and wants to destroy us. It wants to keep expanding the war. There is no humanity in this state. There were so many people under the rubble after the earthquake. Instead of helping them and getting them out of there, the state continued its attacks. [Turkish Defense Minister] Hulusi Akar justified the army's inaction in the rescue work by saying: 'Do you want us to withdraw our troops from Iraq and Syria?' In any case, the earthquake and this war are closely linked. Turkey spent all its money on the war. Nothing is invested in the infrastructure. That's why there was such a high number of dead. The official figures are not correct. More than a hundred thousand people lost their lives. So many places were destroyed and the AKP-MHP still think they're right and they're continuing to wage war. A great catastrophe has happened but they continue their attacks undeterred. The public should know this and, of course, our friends should not misunderstand. If we are attacked, we will of course defend ourselves militarily and provide the necessary response. This is a government of opportunists, hypocrites and conspirators. If they see the guerrillas loosening up, they will attack immediately. That is why our forces must be cautious everywhere and not let up in their measures."

Intensification of attacks in the run-up to the elections likely

Karayilan added: "As is well known, Turkey is in the run-up to elections and the AKP-MHP government wants to create a nationalist and chauvinist atmosphere. To this end, it tries to reinforce an anti-Kurdish feeling. Within this framework, there is a possibility that the state will step up its attacks. We unilaterally decided to stop actions because it was the right thing to do, but we know that the enemy has no humanitarian feelings and wants to seize every opportunity. It wants to keep his power and for this reason it is likely that it will intensify the attacks on the Medya Defense Areas, South Kurdistan and Rojava. Everyone should be prepared for that."

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.

Contact e-mail: imralipost@freecalan.org

Websites: freecalan.org | ocalanbooks.com || Videos: vimeo.com/freecalan