

THE IMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Asrın Law Office calls for an end to torture in İmralı

ANF | İSTANBUL | 26 JUNE 2023

Tele1 Editor-in-Chief Merdan Yanardag’s criticism of the absolute isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan in a televised speech has generated a discussion in public.

Yanardag said: “The isolation against Abdullah Öcalan has no legal basis. It should be lifted. He is not even allowed to meet his family and lawyers. How is such a system of execution possible?” After his remarks, Yanardag was subjected to an investigation.

A statement released by Asrın Law Office on Monday said: “What should actually be investigated is the İmralı isolation regime itself and its implementers.” The statement noted that Öcalan is not allowed to meet his family and lawyers, which is a most natural and legal right, for unlawful reasons. Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş, who are held together with Öcalan in İmralı are also not heard from, it added.

Most violent stage of torture

The statement continued: “The denial of fundamental rights and freedoms is also a form of torture. Despite repeated efforts for more than 27 months, Mr. Öcalan and other inmates have been cut off from the outside world, and there is no reliable information about their health conditions and detention conditions. This is the most violent stage of torture in Imrali. It is obvious that what is wrong and illegitimate are these practices themselves.

It should be known that attacks on our client's personal rights are not separate from these policies. Contrary to the government propaganda, it has been declared by millions that Mr. Öcalan represents freedom and democracy. In 2006-2007, more than three million people in Turkey submitted their signatures to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and more than 10 million people petitioned to the Council of Europe in 2013, demanding the freedom of Mr. Öcalan.

As a result of our application in 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Committee submitted its precautionary decision taken on September 6, 2022 to the government. On 19 January 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee reminded the government of its decision, stating that ‘Öcalan and other inmates should be allowed immediately to meet with their lawyers without any restrictions’. However, we see that the government still does not comply with the international verdict which it is obliged to comply with. Failure to comply with this decision and the continuation of other forms of isolation constitute the crime of wilful misconduct and torture. We call on the government and the Ministry of Justice to comply with the UN Human Rights Committee’s precautionary decision and to bring an end to the incommunicado and torture practices immediately.”

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Lawyer Muğuç: Isolation started with Kurdish denial

ANF | AMED | 29 JUNE 2023

The isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan in Turkish custody for 24 years has been aggravated in recent years. There has been no news from Abdullah Öcalan for the last 28 months. All the applications filed by his lawyers and family to visit him on the prison island of Imrali are constantly rejected by the authorities.

Muhittin Muğuç, an executive member of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), spoke to ANF about Öcalan’s isolation, which, he said, has no legal basis and came into the lives of the Kurds long ago.

Isolation started with Kurdish denial

Muğuç emphasized that isolation did not come into the lives of Kurds on Imralı, stating: “Isolation has been a part of our lives since the Kurdish people were left out of their position as a founding and fundamental element of the Republic, and no identity other than Turkish was acknowledged. This isolation was

aggravated even more by the denial of the Kurdish identity, banning of the Kurdish language and changing of the names of villages and settlements that represent historical memory. Isolation was brought into existence once it was executed on Abdullah Öcalan and other prisoners on Imrali, and then extended to all prisoners. None of the prisoners on Imrali is allowed to see their families or their lawyers. This is no longer a legal issue and has gained a social dimension.”

NGOs should be more effective

Muğuş criticized non-governmental organizations for adopting a passive approach towards isolation. He said: “The reason for this passive approach is the fact that campaigns against isolation are not result-oriented. This indicates that non-governmental organizations have moved away from society, and they do not organize themselves socially, as a result of which, campaigns against isolation remain weak. It is not possible for non-governmental organizations and other relevant institutions to get results without organizing individuals and society. It is not possible for non-governmental organizations to play an active role against isolation and other issues unless they embrace fundamental rights and freedoms and raise awareness within society.”

The state forces society to adopt an ambivalent approach

Muğuş emphasized that all these processes were affected by the fact that the state, which has kept the people under its thumb in a controlled manner, established psychological superiority. He concluded: “The most obvious demonstration of this fact is the most recent arrest of a journalist who spoke against isolation. The state apparatus that issued the arrest warrant clearly knows that this investigation will result in non-prosecution or acquittal. Still, the journalist in question was arrested to ensure state control on society. With these practices, the state is trying to prepare the ground to force society and its representatives to adopt an ambivalent approach concerning isolation. We, the ÖHD, are a non-governmental organization that advocates the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms under all circumstances. The ÖHD has always said that it has a right to have a say in every social issue, and it has a mission to conduct practical and effective work against isolation as well.”

Prisons in Turkey

Court rejects request to release 84-year-old seriously ill prisoner Mehmet Emin Özkan

ANF | 23 JUNE 2023

The 30th hearing of the retrial case of 84-year-old seriously ill prisoner Mehmet Emin Özkan, who was associated with the murder of Turkish Brigadier General Bahtiyar Aydın in 1993 in the Lice district of Amed, was held at the Adana 7th High Criminal Court.

Özkan could not attend the hearing due to a problem with the Audio and Visual Information System (SEGBİS) from Diyarbakır No. 1 High Security Closed Prison, where he is detained.

Özkan's son Ahmet Özkan, lawyers of the Human Rights Association (IHD) Adana Branch Yasemin Dora Şeker, Yakup Ataş, Cahit Atak and Tugay Bek attended the hearing.

The prosecutor demanded that Özkan remain in prison.

Yasemin Dora Şeker, one of the lawyers, said: "It has been proven that there is no definitive and convincing evidence, concrete information and finding that the defendant took part in the incident, and we believe that a verdict of acquittal should be pronounced, since this re-trial has been completed."

Lawyer Şeker said that the Diyarbakır Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital's report dated 8 March 2023, underlined that "Özkan's life is in danger" and that his sentence should be suspended.

The lawyer said that "Özkan, who was old when he first entered the prison, has aged even more in the past 26 years also because he is kept in prison and does not receive the necessary treatment, as confirmed by the doctor's reports. And this poses a real threat to his life. Because he is now in further need of care, struggling with chronic diseases, breathing difficulties. He is bedridden, experiencing multiple organ failure, unable to walk, speak, and often loses his memory. Moreover, there is no indication that our client poses a threat to 'public order and public security' if he were to be released."

88-year-old severely disabled prisoner denied release

ANF | 24 JUNE 2023

Abdülalim Kaya, born in 1943, was charged for a press statement in which he had participated in 2008. After the trial, the 5th Heavy Penal Court in Diyarbakır (ku. Amed) sentenced him to five years in prison on 24 December 2009 for “propaganda for an illegal organisation”. The sentence was confirmed by a higher court in 2011.

In October 2020, Kaya underwent surgery for prostate disease. After being discharged from hospital, he was arrested at his home on 14 October 2020, before the stitches were removed, and taken to the H-Type Closed Prison in Bursa. Kaya has only one functioning kidney, suffers from dementia and heart disease, and is also visually and hearing impaired. In September 2021, an expert opinion determined that he was severely disabled by 91 per cent.

His son Ismail Kaya demands his immediate release, stating that his father is not able to care for himself: “He is taken to the visiting cabin with the help of the guards and cared for by his fellow prisoners. It is a very hard time for us, every visit to him leaves us with deep wounds. The conditions in prison are very difficult for my father. I call on the public to pay attention to the situation of my father and other sick prisoners. He must be released as soon as possible. We are also trying to reach out to the international public. If my father only comes out of prison as a corpse, all those who have kept silent about this will be responsible. I have sent my father's file to many institutions, but so far there are no results.”

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HDP: Turkey systematically violates the prohibition of torture

ANF | ANKARA | 26 JUNE 2023

The HDP's Law and Human Rights Commission Co-Spokespersons Nuray Özdoğan and Serhat Eren released a statement marking the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the “Torture Convention”) which entered into force on 26 June 1987.

The written statement on Monday said:

“The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which is recognized by the United Nations and to which Turkey is a party, entered into force on June 26 1987, which was declared as the Day of Solidarity with the Tortured. States that recognize the Convention are responsible for waging an effective fight against all forms of torture, ill-treatment, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

The statement added: “Unfortunately, Turkey has not respected its obligations under the Convention to prevent torture and to introduce fair trials to prosecute those responsible for torture.”

The statement by Nuray Özdoğan and Serhat Eren further said:

“Torture is a crime against humanity, which does not require a complaint or reconciliation, and against which there is no statute of limitations. However, the main problem is whether the actions of public officials are defined as torture or not.

According to the 2022 statistics of the Ministry of Justice, the number of verdicts of non-prosecution during the investigation phase of torture cases and the acquittal decisions during the prosecution phase are much higher than the verdicts of conviction. These statistics and concrete cases show that the judiciary refrains from defining certain acts as torture and reduces torture crimes to minor crimes such as simple bodily harm or deprivation of liberty, leaving perpetrators unpunished. This attitude of the judiciary protecting public officials that are accused of torture encourages them to commit similar crimes. Torture is normalized, in particular by the legal decisions that protect and acquit perpetrators in trials where the victims are Kurds. Moreover, those subjected to torture and ill-treatment are subjected to unfair investigations, and members of the press who report and expose cases of torture also face detentions and arrests.

The extent of the crime of torture is quite remarkable in places of confinement. Especially in prisons, maltreatment that includes blocking access to health, disciplinary punishments, prevention of release, isolation and torture keeps increasing day by day. Prisoners are kept in solitary confinement, subjected to stand-up counts and strip-searches, and arbitrarily denied release by means of irrelevant disciplinary punishments. There has been no news for 28 months from Abdullah Öcalan in İmralı Prison, where the most absolute isolation is practiced. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) still has not revealed to the public its observations during a visit to the island prison on September 20-29, 2022. This state of incommunicado continues in İmralı, increasing the torture of isolation.

The prohibition of torture is the common heritage of humanity and one of the most fundamental values of democratic societies which favour rule-of law. A regime for human rights cannot prevail without the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. Contrary to the rhetoric of “zero tolerance of torture, human rights and the rule of law”, the AKP government has left its mark with disappearances in custody, abductions, imposition of spying through pressure and threats, brutal detentions, police violence during peaceful demonstrations and official encouragement by the Minister of Interior. Torture and ill-treatment practices have spread from detention centres to the streets.

We stand by the victims so that the perpetrators of torture and persecution committed in the streets, police stations, prisons, repatriation centres should be held accountable and sentenced. Our struggle to protect the common heritage of humanity and human dignity will continue in the judicial and political spheres.”

83 suspicious deaths in prisons, 4,275 cases of torture in custody in Turkey

ANF | 26 JUNE 2023

The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV), the Human Rights Association (İHD) and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) Human Rights Branch made a joint written statement to mark the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, annually held on June 26.

The statement pointed out that the whole country has almost become a place of torture as a result of government rule based on oppression and control. It noted that the official discourse that introduced “zero tolerance for torture” remained rhetorical.

The statement said: “State officials at every level should abandon the discourse that praises and encourages torture and the torturers, and torture should be publicly condemned in line with the recommendations of international organizations.”

Deaths in prisons, torture under detention

The statement shared the data on torture cases as follows:

- According to the TİHV Documentation Centre, 1 person died suspiciously under detention in 2022, and at least 6 people in the first 5 months of 2023.
- In the first five months of 2023, 270 people turned to the TİHV to denounce torture and ill-treatment.
- In 2022, a record high number of people (1201) appealed to the TİHV because of torture they or their relatives were subjected to.
- According to the İHD Documentation Unit, at least 1,347 people were subjected to torture and ill-treatment in official places of detention in 2022.
- 50.7 percent of the applicants to the TİHV stated that they had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment in the police headquarters, 5.7 percent in police stations, and 6.4 percent in gendarmerie units.
- 30.7 percent of the applicants to the TİHV revealed that they had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment under detention and in transportation vehicles.
- In 2022, 546 applicants to the TİHV declared that they had been exposed to torture and ill-treatment in public spaces and during demonstrations, and 177 in places such as houses and workplaces.

- As a result of intervention by the law enforcement forces in peaceful demonstrations and events, at least 5,434 people, including 144 children, were subjected to torture and ill-treatment in 2022, and at least 1 thousand 557 people, 49 of whom were children in the first five months of 2023. At least 50 people were injured during these police interventions.
- At least 230 people in 2022 and at least 76 people in the first five months of 2023 were subjected to torture and ill-treatment in public spaces. At least 33 people were subjected to torture and ill-treatment during police raids in 2022 and 2023.
- According to the İHD Documentation Unit, a total of 2,928 people, 42 of whom were children, claimed that they had been subjected to torture and ill-treatment in unofficial places of detention and in other places in 2023.
- There is still no news from Yusuf Bilge Tunç who was kidnapped in Ankara on August 6, 2019.
- At least 4 people were kidnapped or barely escaped kidnapping in 2022. In the first five months of 2023, 1 person was kidnapped or faced kidnapping attempts.
- According to the applications submitted to the İHD and other available data, it is reported that 198 people were exposed to forced spying, kidnapping and threats in 2022.
- According to the İHD Documentation Unit, the number of prisoners who claimed to have been tortured and ill-treated was 247 in 2022.
- According to the TİHV Documentation Centre, at least 65 prisoners in 2022 and 10 in the first five months of 2023 died of illness, suicide, violence, neglect, etc. According to the İHD Documentation Unit, at least 83 prisoners died suspiciously in 2022.
- In the first 6 months of 2023, 54 prisoners submitted applications to the TTB denouncing problems with access to healthcare in different prisons, imposition of handcuffed examinations, insistence of the law enforcement to be present during examinations and violation of privacy, etc.”

■ Suggestions

- The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TİHEK) should be replaced by a new fully independent national prevention mechanism in accordance with the UN Optional Protocol to Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and UN Paris Principles.
- The Law Enforcement Supervisory Commission should be made impartial and independent.
- Documentation and reporting of torture should be done in accordance with the principles of the UN ‘Istanbul Protocol’.
- Allegations of torture should be investigated quickly, effectively and impartially, investigated by independent committees, and international ethical and legal rules should be respected at every stage of judicial proceedings.

- Prisons should be opened to the independent supervision of human rights and legal organizations.
- All CPT reports should be revealed to the public, and all their recommendations should be followed.”

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Conditions in Turkish prisons are becoming increasingly heavier

ANF | 27 JUNE 2023

Conditions in Turkish prisons have deteriorated rapidly, particularly in recent years under the AKP-MHP government. Starting with the isolation of the Kurdish representative Abdullah Öcalan on the prison island of Imralı, a different concept of repression, psychological terror and physical torture was extended to all prisons in Turkey and North Kurdistan. This became particularly clear after the prison reform pushed through by the AKP-MHP regime in March 2020. Political prisoners are particularly affected by this law, as they are meant to be broken by any means necessary.

A year after the reform, the Execution and Evaluation Committee (IGK) was set up in the prisons, which systematically prevents the release of political prisoners, even after they have served their sentences.

The release becomes arbitrary and depends on whether the prisoners show “real remorse”, according to the authorities..

Ferit Orak is one of those prisoners. He was due to be released on December 16, 2022 after serving 14 years in prison. However, his release was prevented twice by the IGK until he was finally released on 16 June. The Mesopotamia Agency news agency interviewed Orak about the conditions of detention.

An extra year and a half with no prospect of release

Orak said that in the past few years alone, more than 20 people have not been released in Bolu’s F-type prison because of the IGC. Only two prisoners were ever released. He said: “The release of the prisoners is arbitrarily postponed by three to six months. Why aren’t these people released? They are not even informed of the reasons. When the release day comes, a paper is thrown through the door, that’s all. There used to be justifications, but now even that isn’t necessary. In Bolu prison, this has become another form of torture for the prisoners, as the release is simply revoked at random. One example is that of Deniz Güzel, who has already been in prison for an extra year and a half. And as if that weren’t enough, sentences are given for ‘breaking the camera’, ‘resisting prison staff’, ‘not standing up at roll call’ or ‘failing to remove the rubbish’.

“The prisoners shall be killed”

Referring to the situation of seriously ill prisoners Muzaffer Alkış, Levent Cin and Cemal Tarhan, Orak said: “Alkış and Tarhan were taken to Istanbul Forensic Medical Institute. They are between 70 and 80 years old and can no longer eat and walk independently. Despite all their health problems, they were certified as capable of staying in prison. The last time I saw Cemal Tarhan, he was walking down the corridor, supported by friends. The judiciary and the prison administration want to kill him in prison. Ill prisoners are comrades who have been in prison for more than 30 years. It is being said quite frankly that they will only come out of prison in a coffin.”

Ill prisoners are denied treatment

Pointing out that in Bolu prison alone three prisoners had died within a year, Orak said: “Mehmet Emin Çelebi had cancer and when he was dying he was sent to Ankara. He died two or three days later. There are other seriously ill prisoners, like Hayati Kaytan and Civan Boltan.

Boltan lacks one arm and one eye and is unable to meet his basic needs on his own. When we reported on his situation, we were told: ‘We know Civan Boltan, we know what happened to him, we don’t treat him. Hayati Kaytan has a tumor on his head, he has had multiple surgeries and his life is in danger.’”

The conditions make you ill

Noting the suspicious increase in infectious diseases in prison, Orak added: “The tap water is cloudy most of the time. Animal faeces, insects and worms can be found in the food. If you ask about opposition media, they say: ‘You are against Islam.’ There are no channels except A Haber, ATV, TRT, CNN Turk. Books are taken away from us. According to prison rules, you can’t keep more than three books. Letters and books in Kurdish are not handed over for months, sometimes for years. Books donated to us by bookstores are not accepted and we are told to buy them with our own money.”

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Political prisoner behind bars for 30 years denied release due to “lack of remorse”

ANF | 29 JUNE 2023

66-year-old Asim Demir has spent almost half of his life behind bars. After 40 days in police custody, the notorious State Security Court (DGM) sentenced him to life imprisonment for “disturbing the unity and integrity of the state”. Although his release would have been possible after 24 years, he is denied it even after serving a total of 30 years. The Execution and Review Committee has extended his imprisonment for the second time by three months, as Demir shows no remorse for his “deed”. In March 2023, the evaluation committee refused to release him due to “lack of remorse”.

Demir had an odyssey through Turkish prisons. He was arrested on 26 December 1992 and has been in Esiye prison in Giresun since 2021. Before that, he spent two years in Muş prison, 13 years in Antep, five years in Midyat and eight years in Ordu.

The Execution and Review Committee was established by the AKP/MHP regime in 2021. Since then, political prisoners have been repeatedly denied release on the grounds of “lack of remorse” even after serving their prison sentences. This is a direct attack on the identity of the prisoners, as they are meant to be broken by the committee.

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Demir: Solidarity can end the isolation imposed on prisons and Öcalan

ANF | 30 JUNE 2023

Violations of rights of prisoners continue. While the release of the prisoners is being delayed by the Prison Administration and Observation Boards, new violations such as isolation, access to health, torture and ill-treatment, strip searches are added every day.

Dilek Sönmez Demir, co-chair of the Marmara Association for Assistance to Families of Prisoners and Convicts (MA TUHAY-DER), spoke about the violations in prisons.

Demir pointed out the situation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in absolute isolation, and added that isolation is applied in all prisons. Underlining that the isolation has turned into a “systematic torture”, Demir said: “Prisoners cannot meet with their families. Even if they do, we know that their visit rights are very limited. Their social activities are prevented in every way.”

Demir said that there are more than 300 ill prisoners in the Marmara Region's jails and added that many of them were not released despite receiving reports confirming that they “cannot stay in prison”. Pointing out that the pressures in prisons increased after the elections, Demir said that the release of nearly 60 prisoners was prevented in the prisons in the Marmara Region alone.

Demir said: “The isolation imposed in prisons is also applied to the society. The families of prisoners will always expose isolation. In addition, civil society and rights organizations will always bring this up to the agenda. We will always promote solidarity. Because solidarity will not only break the isolation in prisons, but also end the aggravated isolation on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Let's all join hands and break this isolation.”

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Military aggression and occupation

HPG reports Turkish attacks and guerrilla actions in Medya Defense Zones

ANF | BEHDINAN | 22 JUNE 2023

The Press Office of People's Defense Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement, Turkish occupation forces in the Şehîd Delîl section of Zap's western front and Xakurkê were struck by the guerrillas. The Turkish army, on the other hand, shelled the resistance areas 6 times by fighter jets, 4 times by attack helicopters and 319 times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region

The occupation forces at Girê FM Resistance Area were struck by the guerrillas with heavy weapons at 16:00 on June 20.

Xakurkê region

Guerrillas hit the Turkish forces in the Girê Lêlikan area with heavy weapons at 18:50 on June 21.

Attacks by the Turkish army

On June 18 and 20, the Turkish army carried out six airstrikes on the areas of Golka ve Gundê Şêlazê in Metîna, the area of Girê Şehîd Heqî in Xakurkê, and Girê Bahar Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region.

On June 21, the Çemço and Sîda Resistance Areas in Zap were shelled 4 times by attack helicopters.

On June 18, 19, 20 and 21, the Turkish army carried out 319 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. The attacks were directed against Sîda Resistance Area in Zap, Girê Cûdî, Girê Amediyê and Girê Bahar Resistance Areas in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region, Golka and Girê Hakkarî Resistance Areas in Metîna, and the areas of Girê Şehîd Heqî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran and Ava Lolanê in Xakurkê.

Ehmed: The doors of the Autonomous Administration region are always open to refugees

CEMIL EBDO / MUSTAFA ÇOBAN | HESEKE | 23 JUNE 2023

Despite Turkish attacks and embargoes on the region, the self-governing areas of North and East Syria are a refuge for countless people from the region. According to the Autonomous Administration, 1.1 million internally displaced persons live in North and East Syria. Thus, those seeking protection make up a large proportion of the population.

While Europe is brutally sealing itself off from a comparatively much smaller number of people seeking protection, the Autonomous Administration, despite its precarious situation, continues to declare that it will keep the doors open for people looking for shelter there. At the same time, it is also worried about organizing the safe return of refugees driven out of Syria worldwide.

“International silence on attacks leads to new waves of refugees”

The co-chair of the Office for Immigration and Refugees of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, Şêxmûs Ehmed, told ANF: “We held talks with international organizations and presented our projects for the safe return of Syrian refugees. So far, they have not taken any action to create a mechanism that would make this possible. On the contrary, by remaining silent on the Turkish state’s ongoing invasion attacks on the region, they are allowing new waves of internal migrants.”

“We want to accommodate those seeking protection as safely as possible”

Ehmed said that in the last 12 years of the Syrian crisis, millions of people were forced to flee, and added: “During these long and difficult times, millions of Syrian citizens had to leave their country and emigrate to other countries. Many actors have exploited Syrian refugees for their own interests. The Autonomous Administration is doing extensive work to end this abuse and ensure that Syrian refugees are not exploited by colonialists and are housed as safely as possible.”

20 camps and shelters

Ehmed spoke about the accommodation provided for the refugees and said: “In our region there are 20 official camps for refugees and migrants as well as other smaller scattered facilities. In addition, those seeking protection are accommodated in some schools and houses in the cities. Around 1.1 million refugees from other regions of Syria such as Hama, Aleppo, Homs, Tadmur and Idlib live in our region. The Autonomous Administration treats them as their own citizens. We provide uninterrupted services to the camps where the refugees live.”

Reception and information offices were set up

The number of internally displaced persons coming to the region continues to be very high, Ehmed said, adding: “People come here because they see that human values such as dignity and their rights are pro-

tected in our regions. Many reception and information offices for Syrian refugees have been set up in our regions. There are also dozens of small camps set up by the refugees themselves. The North and East Syria region has always welcomed refugees and allowed them to live safely in accordance with international standards. The Administration has mobilized all its resources for refugees and migrants. In this context, there have been no violations of rights or other problems so far.”

“The doors of the Autonomous Administration are open”

The Autonomous Administration is preparing comprehensive return projects for refugees who have been driven out of Syria worldwide. Ehmed said: “We are committed to ensuring that refugees from Syria are not exploited by the colonial powers and that they can return to their country as safely as possible. We have also started work on the return of refugees living in Lebanon. As we have already said, the doors of the Autonomous Administration are always open to refugees from Syria. The United Nations and the international community should support us so that these efforts can be implemented even faster and more comprehensively. Despite talks with the International Red Cross and other international organizations about the return of Syrian refugees, no mechanism has yet been put in place to allow this. The government in Damascus and the humanitarian organizations have not fulfilled their obligations to ensure the safe return of war refugees. Only our administration works in this sense.”

“Attacks lead to new displacements”

Ehmed criticised the international community, saying: “The international powers did not support the projects developed by the Autonomous Administration for the refugees and did nothing against the Turkish state’s invasion attacks on Rojava. These attacks are forcing hundreds of thousands more people to flee. By settling their own mercenaries in the occupied territories, the Turkish state has also brought about a demographic change in the region.”



More civilians kidnapped in occupied Afrin

ANF | 23 JUNE 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that members of a patrol of the Al-Sham Legion arrested two civilians from Borj Haidar in Afrin’s Sherawa district during the past few days. The arrested civilians were taken to the infamous prison of Eiska village, in order to obtain ransoms from them, SOHR said.

According to the report, members of the “Al-Shat” checkpoint of Al-Jabha Al-Shamiya faction arrested a civilian from Zarko village in Raco district on his way from Azaz to Afrin. The civilian was taken to an unknown destination.

On June 20, SOHR reported that members of a patrol of the military police arrested a young man, his mother and two brothers a few days ago in Qurzihal village in Sherawa district. The family had been at-

tacked and beaten brutally by gunmen working for the “Al-Jabha Al-Shamiyyah” faction, during infighting between the two sides.

According to SOHR sources, the military police sided with the gunmen and arrested the four civilians without blaming any of the gunmen for attacking those civilians.

Afrin occupied since 2018

Afrin Canton was the westernmost canton of Rojava and North and East Syria, home to 200,000 ethnic Kurds. Though the population was overwhelmingly Kurdish, it was home to diverse religious groups including Yazidis, Alawites and Christians alongside Sunni Muslims.

On 20 January 2018, Turkey launched air strikes on 100 locations in Afrin, as the onset of an invasion they dubbed ‘Operation Olive Branch.’

The Turkish Airforce indiscriminately shelled civilians as well as YPG/YPJ positions, while a ground assault was carried out by factions and militias organised under the umbrella of the Turkish-backed National Army.

By 15 March, Turkish-backed militias had encircled Afrin city and placed it under artillery bombardment. A Turkish airstrike struck the city’s only functioning hospital, killing 16 civilians.

Civilians fled and the SDF retreated, and by 18 March Turkey was in de facto occupation of Afrin. Between 400 and 500 civilians died in the invasion, overwhelmingly as a result of Turkish bombing. Other civilians were summarily executed in the field.

Prior to the Turkish invasion, Afrin had been one of the most peaceful and secure parts of Syria, virtually never seeing combat during the civil war bar occasional skirmishes between YPG/YPJ and jihadi forces on its borders. As a result, Afrin offered peaceful sanctuary to over 300,000 internally displaced people from elsewhere in Syria.



HPG releases names of three guerrillas who fell in Xakurke on 15 June

ANF | BEHDINAN | 24 JUNE 2023

The Press Center of the People’s Defense Forces (HPG) has published the names of the three guerrillas who fell on 15 June while resisting the Turkish occupation in the Xakurke region in South Kurdistan. The guerrillas are Asya Kanîreş, Azad Şerger and Koçer Medya.

The HPG had previously announced that they had died as the result of Turkish air and ground attacks that followed coordinated guerrilla actions. Eighteen military personnel were killed in the ambush, including a senior officer. When the Turkish army realized that the entire unit was liquidated, the area where the bodies were located was bombed by howitzers and fighter jets.

The HPG wrote in its statement: “Asya, the courageous daughter of the Black Sea people, Azad, an esteemed socialist from Germany, and Koçer from Rojhilat, representative of the spirit of national unity, fought together in the PKK ranks, united by an ideology based on the values of democracy and socialism. At a time when nationalism was turning peoples against each other, they gave the most significant response by joining the ranks of the PKK and, with their action, became representatives of the PKK reality.”

The statement added: “With great courage and spirit of sacrifice, they advanced against the enemy and impressively demonstrated our invincibility. We will continue to resist for a life based on the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and socialism for all of humanity. This was the ideal of our comrades, who did not hesitate for a moment to make sacrifices.

The HPG promises to keep alive the memory of our comrades. We offer our condolences to the families of Asya, Azad and Koçer, as well as to the Turkish, German and Kurdish people.”

— ★ —

Eight years ago the Kobanê massacre

ANF | KOBANE | 25 JUNE 2023

The victims of the Kobanê massacre are being remembered today. 252 civilians, including 64 women and 35 children, died in the massacre perpetrated by the terrorist organization ISIS, with backing from Ankara, on 25 June 2015.

The massacre occurred after the successful defense of the city against ISIS attacks. On 26 January 2015, the YPG/YPJ declared the liberation of Kobanê. The city had been destroyed, but reconstruction had begun. Ten days after the YPG and YPJ liberated Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) on June 15 of the same year and advanced on Raqqa, the self-proclaimed “capital of the caliphate,” ISIS jihadists disguised in YPG uniforms entered Kobanê from two sides.

60 ISIS terrorists from Turkey had passed the Mürşitpınar border crossing, which was completely closed at the time, with the knowledge of Turkish soldiers - in vehicles with mounted DShK machine gun. Another ISIS platoon came through Jarablus. The attack began at dawn with the explosion of a truck bomb. Afterwards, the jihadists descended on Kobanê. The jihadists went from house to house, killing old people, men, women and children. People reported that the killers had specially shaved off their beards in order to enter the city undetected.

Nevertheless, the People's and Women's Defense Units (YPG/YPJ) were able to repel the attack. Left behind were 252 dead civilians, the youngest only a few years old, and two dozen fallen fighters. They were buried in a special memorial cemetery in the city.



HPG reports guerrilla actions in South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 JUNE 2023

The People's Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement, the attacks of the Turkish invading forces in the guerrilla areas continue in full force, facing resistance from the HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops).

Regarding the guerrilla actions in the past days, HPG Press Office said that a mobile unit of the YJA Star struck a Turkish squad at Girê Şehîd Umît in the Zap region with heavy weapons on 22 June. The occupying forces in Sîda were struck twice with semi-automatic weapons on 24 June. In the Zendûra area in Metîna, a surveillance camera and radar system installed by the Turkish army were destroyed by targeted shelling on 22 June.

The statement said that Turkish fighter jets carried out five airstrikes on 22 and 23 June on the western Zap region, Kurojahro in Zap, Deriyê Biyê in Gare and Sinînê in Xakurke. In addition, HPG reported 165 artillery attacks between Thursday and Saturday. The resistance areas of Sîda, Girê Cûdî, Girê Amêdî, Girê Bahar and Girê Hekarî were attacked with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. In Sîda, the Turkish army is still trying to destroy the guerrillas' tunnels with heavy construction equipment.



Turkish state bombs village near the city of Amediyê in South Kurdistan

ANF | 27 JUNE 2023

According to local sources, Mount Metîna, located near the village of Guherzê in Amêdiyê, was bombed by warplanes.

The bombed area is located one kilometer from the village of Guherzê. During the bombardment, there was panic among the residents of the village, who tried to protect their gardens.

A fire broke out in the region after the bombardment, but there was no information about any casualties.



Families fleeing occupied regions settle in Autonomous Administration regions

ANF | AIN ISSA | 27 JUNE 2023

Citizens in the occupied Girê Spî Canton, like citizens in other parts of Syria occupied by the Turkish state, are living under difficult conditions. Basic needs, including bread and water and fuel, are expensive.

In Girê Spî, where there is a security weakness, crimes against the local people keep continuing. Poor conditions force citizens to leave their houses and migrate to nearby Autonomous Administration areas such as Raqqa and its rural areas.

According to the information revealed by the Girê Spî Canton Council to our correspondent yesterday, 256 families have come to the Autonomous Administration region from Girê Spî in the last 3 months.

Families that arrived in the Autonomous Administration region came from Girê Spî city centre, Silûk town, the Zeydî village and other parts of the canton.

Mercenaries replace local people

Hezaa Mihemed, Co-Chair of the Girê Spî Canton Council, told our agency that the oppression and immoral practices of the occupiers against citizens in the occupied regions have increased.

Mihemed pointed out that the goal of the invaders was to replace the original inhabitants of the region and to change the demographic structure of the region. Mihemed noted that the goods and properties of the displaced people were distributed to the mercenary groups.

Mihemed emphasized that the Turkish state and its mercenaries easily committed crimes in the occupied areas, adding that “the unresponsiveness of the international forces paves the way for the atrocities”.

Families go to Raqqa

Mihemed shared the following information concerning the migrants coming from the occupied regions to the Autonomous Administration regions: “There are 6,800 migrants from Girê Spî in the Til Semin Camp and the camp cannot take care of more migrants. Thus, newly arrived migrants are going to Raqqa and its rural areas. There is a kinship between them and the families and tribes of Raqqa. In this way, they can meet their needs.”

Protests started on June 14-17

On June 14 and 17, local people in Girê Spî protested bad conditions, lack of security and high cost of living. Protestors demanded that mercenary groups not control the supply of basic needs such as water and bread.

100,000 People came to Autonomous Administration Areas

The cities of Girê Spî and Serêkaniyê were occupied in October 2019 by the Turkish state and its mercenaries. According to the Girê Spî Canton Council's data, more than 100 thousand people out of 170 thousand original inhabitants of the canton migrated to Raqqa, Tabqa, Kobanê and its rural areas in the first year of the occupation.

Of these, 6,800 people are currently staying in the Girê Spi Migrants Camp (Til Semin), which was built by the Autonomous Administration on October 22, 2019 near the village of Til Semin (35 km north of Raqqa).



Turkish state automatically extends ban covering 11 areas in Sirnak for extra 15 days

ANF | SIRNAK | 28 JUNE 2023

The 11 areas targeted by a new 15-day ban cover a large area where people from the center and districts of Sirnak get their livelihood.

According to the statement made by the governor, the ban decision in all 11 areas was extended by another 15 days.

The governor's office announced that the ban will cover the period between 30 June to 14 July.

According to the statement, the areas targeted by the bans are as follows: "Cudi Mountain, Bestler Dereler region, Kurt Mountain, Kureşin, Kel Mehmet Mountains, Serin Valley, Faraşin, Altın Mountain, İncebel Mountain, Oymakaya and Tanin."



HPG reports massive Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 28 JUNE 2023

In its daily statement about the war in Kurdistan, the Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported on Wednesday that Turkey continues its military aggression against the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) unabated.

According to the statement, the Turkish army has carried out more than 270 attacks against guerrilla areas in Southern Kurdistan since the weekend. In four cases, outlawed chemical weapons were used.

HPG reported chemical weapons attacks on guerrilla positions in the Sîda area in Zap on Sunday, and twelve attacks by the Turkish Air Force between 24 and 27 June. The targets of airstrikes were the Bahar, Cûdî and Amêdî resistance massifs on the western front of the Zap, Girê Hekarî in Metîna, Girê Berbizina and Goşînê in Xakurke, and Gundê Çemrobotkî and Xêrê in Gare.

Four more aerial bombardments by attack helicopters were directed against the Şêxzade and Kolît areas, also in Xakurke, on Tuesday. The attacks led to field fires in the area, which have still not been extinguished after one day. On the same day, the guerrillas responded to an attack by Turkish occupation forces at Girê FM by using heavy weapons.

In the period between 24 and 27 June, the HPG also registered 256 artillery attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. The areas affected were Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî, Girê Amêdî, Serê Metîna, Golka, Gundê Şêlazê, Girê Hekarî, Geliyê Lolanê, Girê Şehîd Heqî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran and Kolît. In Sîda, Turkish occupation forces tried to demolish guerrilla positions and tunnels with construction machinery.

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Graves of guerrillas desecrated in Doğubayazıt

ANF | 28 JUNE 2023

Graves of guerrillas at Koçkiran Cemetery in Doğubayazıt district of Ağrı were desecrated. According to reports, several gravestones were painted with black spray.

In recent years, the destruction of the graves of Kurdish martyrs has become more frequent in Turkey. In most cases, individual gravesites are the target of attacks by the Turkish army or police, while entire cemeteries of martyrs are also desecrated. The Turkish judiciary does not consider these incidents to be disturbances of the peace of the dead.

Kurdish society experienced the greatest trauma in recent years in connection with the desecration of martyrs' graves at the end of 2017, when the Turkish state ordered the destruction of the Garzan Cemetery of Martyrs in the Kurdish province of Bitlis. The cemetery was located near the village of Oleka Jor (Yukarı

Ölek); where nearly 300 members of the Kurdish guerrilla organizations HPG and YJA-Star as well as the YPG and YPJ were buried. After the cemetery was destroyed, their bodies were exhumed on the instructions of the Istanbul chief public prosecutor's office and taken to the forensic medicine department there. They were then buried in the Kilyos Jewish cemetery not far from the seaside resort of the same name at the European entrance to the Bosphorus, in plastic boxes under a sidewalk in a section for "the nameless."

The Turkish state's war against the dead is not limited to graves. Bodies of martyrs are frequently kidnapped by the state and buried unbeknownst to their families, while some other burials are systematically prevented or the victims can only be laid to rest by the closest family members under a siege and blockade.



KCK: We will lead the struggle of Şêx Said and his friends to victory

ANF | 29 JUNE 2023

On 29 June 1925, the Kurdish resistance leader Şêx Said (Şêx Seîdê Pîran) and 46 of his companions were executed in the old town of Amed. A Turkish Independence Court, a special type of court that was established during the so-called war of liberation, sentenced them to death by hanging. They were accused of launching an uprising against the secularization policy of the Turkish state.

Rebellion against deprivation of political autonomy

The rebellion, which broke out on 13 February 1925 in the village of Pîran in Gêl (Eğil) near Amed under the leadership of Şêx Said, was the beginning of numerous Kurdish rebellions after the end of the First World War, against the newly formed Turkish nation-state following the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The rebellion was against the denial of Kurdish existence, the withdrawal of political autonomy and the fascist Turkish policy.

Hereditary head of the Naqşabendi order

The strength of the army camp grew steadily with the gained territory. On 28 February, the group around Şêx Said had already grown into an "army" of 20,000 men. However, their success and progress was characterized less by organized attacks by a regular task force than by the influence of Şêx Seîd. This was great not only because he was the inherited head of the Naqşabendi order, but also because he was also the leader of the tribes in the Kurdish provinces. Wherever the insurgents advanced, the locals joined them. To this day, Şêx Seîd enjoys a very high reputation in Kurdish society.

15,000 dead in the suppression of the uprising

A few weeks later, on 26 March 1925, Turkish military units began air and ground attacks on suspected retreats of the Kurdish "rebels". Initially, 25,000 soldiers had been deployed to the region. At the begin-

ning of April, the Turkish troop strength reached about 52,000 men, but the power struggles and rivalries between local tribal leaders, which were escalating in Elazığ at the time, came in handy for the state in the “fighting of the insurgency”. Some of them sided with the troops from Ankara. The result was inevitable: the uprising was crushed in blood and at least 15,000 people were killed. By the end of April, the “enemy” had penetrated to the core of the resistance. Şêx Said and his comrades-in-arms, who had meanwhile retreated to Dara Hênî, were caught on their way to Muş. A brother-in-law of the cleric, Kasım Ataç (called Qaso), who had served as an officer in the Ottoman Empire, had betrayed them. Soon after, the insurgents were transferred to Amed, where, on 28 June 1925, 53 of them were sentenced to death by hanging by the “Diyarbakır Eastern Independence Court” for “rebellion against the state”. The execution of the sentences began in Sûr on the same day. Şêx Seîd and 46 of his friends were publicly executed the next day, on 29 June.

The Kurdish movement sees itself in the tradition of Şêx Said

The Kurdish liberation movement sees itself in the tradition of the resistance of 1925 and further Serhildan as under the leadership of Pîr Sey Rîzo (Seyit Riza) and the couple Alişêr and Zarife 1937/38 in Dersim. In a message on the occasion of the upcoming death anniversary, the Kurdistan Societies Community (KCK) paid tribute to Şêx Seîd and his friends as “revolutionaries and freedom fighters” of the Kurdish people. The statement said: “They opposed the newly established Turkish state’s denial of Kurdish existence and identity and the betrayal and injustice done to the Kurdish people, and fought for the freedom of the Kurdish people. They continued this resistance no matter what, remaining committed to the values they fought for to the end. Their stance against the threat of execution by the murderous regime and enemy of the Kurdish people demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the Kurdistan cause. The fight of Şêx Said and his friends and their commitment to this fight are of great importance to the people of Kurdistan. The Kurdish people will never forget the efforts and sacrifices of these people and the memory of them.”

Execution of Şêx Said the first in a long chain of massacres

With the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923, today’s state borders of Turkey were defined - and Kurdistan was divided into four. This also laid the foundations for the disregard for the Kurdish people and the denial of their existence. Since then, Kurds have been subjected to genocide, assimilation and massacres under the sovereignty of the nation states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. The KCK said: “The Turkish state in particular has made the realization of the Kurdish genocide its main goal. As part of this goal, policies of assimilation and genocide were pursued in Kurdistan, the language, identity and culture of the Kurdish people were banned, and Turkishness was imposed on the Kurdish people.”

However, the murder of Şêx Said and his friends is the first in the long chain of genocidal practices that the Turkish state has carried out over a hundred years after the execution of these resistance leaders. In the shape of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s AKP-MHP regime, the murderous state still relies on its policy of massacres of Kurds who will not be subjugated. As a Kurdish liberation movement, we promise to prevent the intended annihilation of our people. Our solidarity goes to Şêx Said and all other fallen soldiers of Kurdistan. The struggle will continue until liberation.”

HPG: Three Turkish soldiers were killed in guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 29 JUNE 2023

In its daily statement about the ongoing war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), the press centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported that the Turkish aggression is focusing on the eastern and western parts of Zap. The guerrillas are responding to the attacks with various forms of defensive tactics and inflicting blows on the occupation forces.

At least three members of the Turkish military have been killed in the recent actions carried out by the guerrillas in the Zap region, while attacks by the Turkish air force that targeted the region in response to successful guerrilla actions claimed the lives of three guerrillas, according to the HPG. The statement said that the identity information of the three fallen guerrillas will be released in the coming days.

Regarding the actions by guerrillas, HPG provided the following details:

At the Girê FM resistance massif on the western front of the Zap, a group of occupiers was targeted by a mobile unit of the Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) on 28 June. One soldier was killed in the action, which was carried out in the form of a sniper attack in memory of Zilan (Zeynep Kınacı), who blew herself up on her own initiative on 30 June 1996 at a Turkish army parade in the northern Kurdish province of Dersim.

On the morning of 22 June, occupation forces launched an operation against the Kokerê resistance area from Şikefta Birîndara. HPG guerrilla Zagros fell a martyr in the course of air strikes by fighter jets. At around 1.30 pm, the Turkish troops attempted an advance on the ground and were targeted by mobile guerrilla units with artillery fire. Strikes by the guerrillas left two soldiers dead, after which the ground troops withdrew.

At around 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., Turkish fighter jets initially launched four air strikes on the battlefield. This was followed by six more waves of attacks by attack helicopters until midnight. On 23 June, the area was again bombed from the air. This resulted in the deaths of the guerrillas Zana and Berxwedan. The operation on the eastern wing of the Zap has been extended to the areas of Saca and Karker, in addition to Şikefta Birîndara and Kokerê.

HPG pointed out that the Turkish state is hiding its own casualties and that the number of those killed in the ranks of the guerrillas is higher than it actually is.

According to the HPG, the Turkish air force also carried out air strikes in the Zap region on Wednesday. The target was Girê Bahar, which is located in the western part of the contested region. On the same day, the guerrillas recorded at least 115 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons in different areas in Zap and Metîna.

In Sîda, the Turkish army made new attempts to demolish the positions and tunnels with excavators yesterday.



Feminicide

73-year-old Peace Mother sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison

ANF | AMED | 23 JUNE 2023

The Peace Mothers are a group advocating a peaceful solution to Turkey's Kurdish question. They wear white headscarves as a symbol of peace.

73-year-old Peace Mother Hayriye Türkekul stands trial for alleged "membership in the PKK". The final hearing of the case against Türkekul was held at the 10th Heavy Penal Court in Diyarbakır on Friday. Türkekul and her lawyer Mehdi Özdemir attended the hearing.

The prosecution evaluated Türkekul's participation in press briefings, demonstrations and activities as elements of a crime, citing her participation in a hunger strike action in solidarity with the then co-chair of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Leyla Güven, in 2019, and her membership in the Rosa Women's Association, as evidence for her membership in the PKK.

Basing on the prosecution's opinion, the court board sentenced the Peace Mother to 6 years and 3 months in prison.



28 detained in police crackdown on Saturday Mothers in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 24 JUNE 2023

Saturday Mothers have continued their action in Istanbul for their relatives who disappeared in state custody and the punishment of the perpetrators for the 952nd week. Despite a contrary ruling by the Turkish Constitutional Court, the initiative was again denied access to their ancestral rally site in front of the Galatasaray High School on İstiklal Avenue.

The Galatasaray Square in front of the high school of the same name in the central district of Beyoğlu, where the Saturday Mothers' sit-in was to take place, has been widely cordoned off by police barriers since

early morning. Galatasaray Square is considered a symbolic place for the struggle for human rights in Turkey.

The Saturday Mothers marched to the square with carnations in their hands, accompanied by the Green and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) MPs Celal Fırat, Ceylan Akça, Kezban Konukçu, Çiçek Otlı and Özgül Saki and Human Rights Association (IHD) Co-Chair Eren Keskin as well as numerous human rights advocates.

Denied access to the square, the Saturday Mothers and human rights defenders were blockaded by the police, handcuffed and taken into custody, while journalists were violently prevented from documenting the crackdown. The 28 people detained here include IHD Co-Chair Eren Keskin.

Özgül Saki, one of the Green Left Party deputies protesting the detentions, said: “The Saturday Mothers have been taken into custody for 12 weeks because of their search for their disappeared beloved ones. The weekly crackdown they face is aimed at intimidation, but the Saturday Mothers are not alone.”

Another MP of the Green Left Party, Çiçek Otlı, said: “We will not give up on Galatasaray Square. You will be brought to justice.”

The deputies were also attacked and battered by the police while chanting slogans in protest at the brutal crackdown.

In 1995, women in Istanbul took to the streets for the first time to draw attention to relatives who had been arrested and then disappeared. Since a large-scale attack on the Saturday Mothers ordered by the Ministry of Interior in the summer five years ago, Galatasaray Square has been a no-go zone for the Saturday Mothers. But this is contrary to the right to freedom of assembly and demonstration, ruled the Turkish Constitutional Court on 22 February 2023, rejecting the ministry’s objection that the Saturday Mothers threatened the “protection of public order”. “Everyone has the right to take part in unarmed and peaceful assemblies and demonstrations without prior permission,” says Article 34 of the Turkish Constitution, which the security authorities violated by banning the Saturday Mothers’ forcefully dispersed action in August 2018 and all subsequent ones. The blockade of the square is therefore invalid, said the court ruling. The Turkish Interior Ministry and the Istanbul police ignore the ruling and continue to violently crack down on Saturday Mothers.



Kurdish Women’s Library in Sulaymaniyah opens its doors to people

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 26 JUNE 2023

The project was initiated by academic and journalist Nagihan Akarsel, a member of the Jineoloji Research Center and editor of Jineoloji Journal, who was assassinated on 4 October 2022 in Sulaymaniya.

A two-day event was organized to mark the center's opening. Women gathered in the center's building chanting "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi".

Many women attended the event on the second day. Among the attendees were members of the Catalonia Jineoloji Committee, doctor Barbara Pade Theissen from Germany, the German Jineoloji Committee and women from many parts of the world.

During the event, women donated books that shed light on women's history and struggles, as well as magazines.

Botan Hoşî from the Association of Women Writers, who attended the opening from Northern and Eastern Syria, said: "Many women who wanted to come here could not come due to limited opportunities. The writers from Rojava welcome the opening of the centre."

Fatma Rojhilat, who attended the opening on behalf of KJAR (Coordination Komelgeha Jinên Azad a Rojhilatê Kurdistanê), talked about the work carried out for the Kurdish Women's Library by Nagihan Akarsel.

Rojhilat said: "This place was opened thanks to the work of our comrade Nagihan. We need to protect this work and continue it."

Sina V. Gemeinsam Kampfen, from Germany, said: "Recording the songs of our great-grandmothers is very important for democratization. It takes us to Mesopotamia, where we find our own culture, past and language. It is very meaningful for us to conduct historical research here. We are here because we want to be a part of this process. We want to contribute to and improve the centre. We are excited about this. All women should be part of this process."

Sirweey Beyan from South Kurdistan said that the historical struggle of the Kurdish women will be written and researched in this library.

Green Left Party Mardin MP, Beritan Güneş, paid tribute to the murdered women revolutionaries and said: "Everywhere there are Kurdish gains, the enemy hit us. They target our women-based paradigm. They want to strangle the Kurdish struggle. From here, from this library, we give the following message: the torch lit by Nagihan and her comrades will come to life. We will not bow down to fascism."

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YJA Star guerrillas: Zîlan means freedom and resistance

ANF | BEHDINAN | 28 JUNE 2023

YJA Star guerrilla Zemyan Deniz underlined that Zîlan means to sprout again, and added: "Zîlan has given birth to new hopes worthy of the meaning of her name."

Zeynep Kınacı (Zilan), who fell a martyr as a result of the self-sacrificing action she carried out in Dersim on 30 June 1996, was commemorated in the guerrilla areas.

YJA Star guerrillas Rûken Feraşîn and Zemyan Deniz spoke to ANF about Zilan and her sacrifice.

YJA Star guerrilla Rûken Feraşîn said that Zilan marked the line of women's freedom and added: "I met a friend of Zilan when I just joined the guerrillas. She caught everyone's attention in the environment we were in. Her personality was impressive. Zilan had only joined the guerrillas for a year, said her friend, but got to know the thoughts of leader Öcalan. The Kurdish woman who knew Leader Apo best was Zilan. She had a spirit of sacrifice in every moment of life. Her depth of emotion and understanding was very advanced."

Her spirit was strong and lives on

Guerrilla Feraşîn continued: "The comrades who prepared themselves with the spirit of Zilan put up a great resistance. The actions of comrades Sara and Rûken in Mersin also show that the spirit of Zilan is strong and alive. The resistance experienced despite the use of all technical and chemical weapons in the war tunnels expresses a steel will. For us, Zilan's line is the line of freedom and self-sacrifice."

She left a very important heritage

YJA Star guerrilla Zemyan Deniz explained how she got to know Zilan as a woman from Gelîyê Zilan and the effect it had on her.

"Before I joined the PKK, I knew Zilan by name. She was already known for her action. She left a unique historical legacy both in the history of the PKK and the history of the Kurdish people. Zilan means to sprout again and she chose the right name for herself. She has retained the meaning of her name. Just as something new is sprouting, so would Zilan. Within the Kurdish Women's Movement, like YJA Star and PAJK, new saplings are growing in the hearts of each of us. Zilan gave birth to new hopes worthy of the meaning of her name. The legend of Zilan gave birth to thousands of Zilans in the land of Kurdistan. As the YJA Star guerrilla, we will strengthen our struggle in the light of these experiences so that we can raise this flag high in the sky, no matter what. Now they are starving and thirsty in their resistance in the mountains of Kurdistan, in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna, in the war tunnels, but they are still resisting. It is our duty to protect this struggle."

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'Turkey's attacks cannot stop the women's revolution'

ANF | 29 JUNE 2023

The invading Turkish state has recently escalated its attacks on North and East Syria with drones and light weapons. Most recently, a Turkish drone bombed a car on the Tirbespiyê-Qamishlo road, killing Qamishlo

Canton Council Co-Chair Yusra Derweş, Deputy Co-Chair Leyman Şiwêş and Council Member Fırat Tuma and injuring Council Co-Chair Gabi Şemûn.

Speaking to ANHA, Rîma Mehmûd, a member of Kongra Star Heseke Coordination, drew attention to Turkey's targeted attacks against women and said: "Since the beginning of the 19 July Revolution in North and East Syria, the Turkish state has been attacking women who have played an important role in achieving the goals of the revolution."

Mehmûd stressed that Turkey's aim was to defeat the democratic nation project and the will of the people of the region. "The invading Turkish state will not achieve its goal. We will realize our revolution and the hopes of our martyrs."

Heseke Martyrs' Families Council Member Sebah Musa also condemned the attacks on North and East Syria and said: "The invading Turkish state is targeting women to break their will and interrupt their revolution."

Beha Binyamin, a member of the Women's Office of the Council of Syriac Martyrs' Families, underlined that no force could weaken the will of women. She said she was proud of the martyrdom of her comrades who defended their country, adding: "We will reinforce the idea of resistance against the fascist Turkish state."

Fatme Mervan, Co-Chair of the Deir ez-Zor Civil Council, said: "After its political and military failure, the invading Turkish state started to pursue a harassment policy against women in North and East Syria. The martyrdom of Yusra Derweş, Leyman Şiwêş and Fırat Tuma is the outcome of this policy."

Mervan insisted that women in Deir ez-Zor were fighting for the principles of democracy, freedom and the improvement of their position in society. She said: "These attacks will not stop the women's revolution. We call on the International Coalition to take a serious stance and close the airspace to Turkey."

Iman El Mihêmid, Co-Chair of the Deir ez-Zor Civil Council Organizing Office, said: "The aim of the invading Turkish state is to break the will of women and defeat their revolution. They are trying every way to deal a blow to the Autonomous Administration project."

El Mihêmid called on international powers and human rights organizations to take a serious stand against the crimes and violations against women.



Zilan, Kurdish women's symbol of resistance

ANF | 30 JUNE 2023

Zeynep Kınacı (Zilan), who sacrificed her life in Dersim on 30 June 1996, was born in Malatya province in 1972. Her family was originally from the village of Elmalı in Malatya and the tribe Mamureki.

After attending primary, secondary and high school, Zilan continued her university education at the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance at İnönü University in the province of Malatya.

She worked as an x-ray technician at Malatya State Hospital before joining the Kurdish Freedom Movement. She was from a middle-class family affected by feudalism and with reflections of a small bourgeois Kemalist structure.

Dedication and determination

Zeynep Kınacı (Zilan) led a kind of free life in the family environment. She became acquainted with leftist ideas and Kurdishness during her high school times. Her interest grew more during her university years. She later grew closer to the PKK movement.

In 1994, she started running front activities in Adana and spent a year on related work. Regarding this process, she said: “I didn’t go through a serious process of training. I actually failed to make further advances and to succeed due to the absence of sufficient support after the arrest of executive members, causes making the individual more civilian and less effective, and reasons hindering a transformation of my personality.”

In 1995, she joined the guerrilla ranks in the province of Dersim. Within her time in the ranks of the Kurdish freedom movement, she got to know all the aspects of her personality. She grew stronger in respect of dedication and determination. In 1996, she showed a militant stance in the face of the war concept formed against the national liberation movement.

‘I want to be the Kurdish women’s symbol of resistance’

Zilan, who carried out a suicide attack against Turkish soldiers participating in a flag raising ceremony in Dersim city center on 30 June 1996, used to say: “I want to be the Kurdish women’s symbol of resistance”, and became a new manifesto of life for Kurdish women and Kurdish history.

The action by Zilan, who detonates the explosive on her body after diving into the crowd of soldiers, leaves 5 soldiers dead and 35 others wounded, most of them seriously. This action was a turning point for the Kurdish Freedom Movement and leaves a lasting and deep impression on both the Kurdish people and guerrillas.

At least 600 women murdered in the 2 years since Turkey's withdrawal from Istanbul Convention

ANF | 30 JUNE 2023

It has been 2 years since the “Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence”, known as the Istanbul Convention, was repealed by the decision of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Turkey was the first country to sign the convention, which aimed at “protecting women from all kinds of violence and preventing, prosecuting and eliminating violence against women and domestic violence” on 11 May 2011. It ratified it in its parliament on 24 November 2011.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan brought the Convention onto the agenda, saying it will be “reviewed” in February 2020. It was a time in which some sects and communities also targeted the Convention, saying that it “destroyed the family structure” and “prepared the legal ground for homosexuality”.

It was in this environment of attacks on the convention that Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention with a decree published in the Official Gazette on 20 March 2021 by President Erdoğan.

Following the notification made by Turkey's decree, the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe announced that this decision will enter into force on 1 July 2021.

The withdrawal was part of the AKP government's policies towards women and their rights and gains, and, as predicted, led to an increase in violence against women.

According to the report by Candan Yüceer, a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, published on 8 March 2023, during the AKP rule, 7,990 women were murdered by men. As a matter of fact, this number increased after Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. According to the figures provided by women's organizations and news agencies, in the 2 years since the abolition of the convention at least 600 women were murdered, at least 400 women died in suspicious circumstances.

JinNews: 692 Women murdered

According to JinNews, 692 women were killed in a two-year period, while 408 women died under suspicious circumstances. According to the agency, in the period July-December 2021, 199 women were killed by men, 111 women died suspiciously.

In 2022, 348 women were murdered, 206 women died suspiciously.

In the period January-May 2023, 145 women were killed, 91 women died suspiciously.

KCDP: at least 608 women killed

According to We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP), between 1 July 2021, when the convention was lifted, and May 2023, 608 women were killed by men, 463 women died under suspicious circumstances. The number of femicides increased in the first 5 months of 2023, when 126 women were killed by men, and 101 died under suspicious circumstances.

Council of State rejected application against withdrawal

In addition to women, opposition parties, bar associations and civil society organizations filed a lawsuit with the Council of State arguing that the withdrawal was not acceptable.

The 10th Chamber of the Council of State announced its decision in July 2022. It found Erdoğan's decision "in accordance with the law", and therefore rejected the application. The plaintiffs then appealed the decision. The final decision was made in the file that was transferred to the Council of State Administrative Case Divisions and it was decided to reject the appeal objections.

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Ecocide

Turkish state plunders Şenyayla Plateau to build a military base

ANF | 26 JUNE 2023

The Turkish state is looting the Şenyayla (Şênê) Plateau, a large region at the foothills of the Andok, Serê Spi, Warê Şêra and Dorşin mountains.

After the 1980s, the Turkish state resorted to terror in the region, forcing the local population to migrate by citing "security concerns".

During a period of relative peace and quiet between 2013 and 2015, some citizens returned to their original settlements in the region, which is also frequented by nomads.

Known for its plant diversity and cold waters, the Şenyayla Plateau has been systematically banned under the name of "special security zone" since 2015.

Until 2021, the Şenyayla region affected by the destruction of nature belonged to the Kulp district and thus lay within the provincial borders of Amed (Diyarbakır). In March 2021, head of state Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had the region separated from Kulp by decree. Since then, Şenyayla has been part of the Muş province.

Targeted by the state's special policies, the plateau is facing destruction due to the intended establishment of a military zone.

The Turkish state has started to plunder the forests with the help of village guards. The construction of two military bases began last year.

The felled trees are transported to different regions and sold for profit. Images from the ground reveal that a large forest area has been destroyed during the ongoing process.

According to the Mesopotamia News Agency, a local resident wishing to remain anonymous for security reasons, said: "We went to the regimental command in the centre of Muş province in March this year to complain about the tree cutting. The Regimental Commander told us: 'We will build two bases. Either you cut the trees down or we do'."

The same source revealed that the tree cutting has continued since October last year: "The tree cutting has stopped now. The trees that have been felled since February are transported to other places. Trees are cut down by a village guard named Ü.K. from Kizilagac town. The shipping is taken care of by another person named Y.Ç. The felled trees are transported to the surrounding provinces such as Agri, Muş, Amed, Urfa and especially Batman by truck."

The so-called village guards are likely to serve as the military's henchmen for the environmental massacre in Muş. As early as 2020, when Şenyayla was still part of Kulp, a paramilitary unit based in the region had cut down around a thousand oak trees on a forested area on the edge of a restricted military area on behalf of the Turkish army. In other provinces as well, especially in Şırnak, the army is using village guards to clear forest stands for the expansion of its military infrastructure in Kurdistan.



Geliyê Godernê is being destroyed by tree cutting

ANF | AMED | 28 JUNE 2023

Tree cutting for "security" reasons is continuing in the Godernê Valley (Geliyê Godernê), located in the triangle of Pasur (Kulp), Licê (Lice) and Farqîn (Silvan) districts of Amed province. The valley will also be submerged under the waters of the Silvan Dam, which was built for "security" reasons.

The Amed Ecology Association, the Amed Bar Association and the Agriculture and Forestry Service Branch of the Union of Public Employees appealed to a court for a suspension of the execution. However, it was rejected by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office without even being submitted to the Administrative Court. The prosecutor's office rejected the application, arguing that cutting trees is not a "crime".

Ahmet Inan, from the Amed Bar Association Urban and Environmental Law Commission, spoke to the Mesopotamia Agency (MA) about the rejection by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and the ongoing tree cutting.

Dams will destroy history

Inan said that Geliyê Godernê was a perfect natural area, adding that there are Assyrian and Armenian rock artifacts, ancient rock caves and rock art in the region. Inan remarked that history would be destroyed if the region remained under dam waters, insisting that the ongoing tree cutting in the region would ensure it. Inan noted that officials dynamited some parts of Geliyê Godernê to obtain building sand. He said: "The trees that were cut down are given to village guards with a tender. More than 100 hectares of area in the region have been destroyed."

Legal attempts fail

Inan revealed that together with Amed Ecology Association, they filed a criminal complaint about the tree cutting in March. However, no action has been taken against any tree-cutting in Kurdistan, and they could not get any results from their legal applications. Inan emphasized that the tree cutting in the region caused the destruction of both livestock and agriculture. Inan said: "It also means the destruction of the habitat. It is the most fundamental factor that will even change the migratory route of birds and change the humidity and climate of the region".

No administrative decision for tree cutting

Inan continued: "Village guards take advantage of the tree cutting. If there is a legal basis for it, we will initiate legal action against it. We could launch action for annulment. However, there is not even an administrative decision about cutting down trees here. It was given to the relatives of village guards by a tender, so we can't do anything other than file a criminal complaint."

80 percent public space

Inan pointed out that more than 80 percent of Geliyê Godernê was public space and private property was very limited. He added that the tree cutting was a crime and unacceptable.

Thousand years of historic bridge

Inan said that the bridge in Geliyê Godernê had a thousand-year history and there was also rock art in the region which can be declared a historical site.

Power plant in main water source

Inan added that there was also a Hydroelectric Power Plant (HEPP) project in Sarım Stream in the region. Inan unveiled that the power plant would be built in the main water source that flows into Geliyê Godernê. Inan said: "We have also filed action for annulment. As the Bar Association, we are doing our best. We will continue to protect nature."

‘Point of no return’

Inan concluded: “Those who are cutting down trees will also need this air and water. Everything can be recovered, but the disruption of ecological balance is going to a point of no return. Therefore, we call on all the authorities here, the people living, lawyers and ecologists to express their concern over this issue.”

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Human Rights Violations

Police officers arrested for torture against 14-year-old boy in Lice released

ANF | AMED | 23 JUNE 2023

A 14-year-old boy named Y.D. was abducted by the police in a vehicle on 21 March while he was walking around Lice with a 10-year-old friend, and he was brutally tortured while his hands and feet were tied. Forced to say he was Turkish, Y.D was later threatened with death and forced to insult Kurds and sing the Turkish national anthem.

After being tortured, Y.D. was thrown into a swamp with his mouth and hands tied. A farmer noticed the boy at night and took him to the hospital. The child risks losing an eye.

After the news of this torture was published in the Mesopotamia Agency, an investigation was opened. As a result of the investigation, 5 police officers were taken into custody and three of them, Ismail Akkuş, Emre Özcan and Gökhan Bay, were sent to prison on 26 March charged with “deliberate injury”.

The other two officers, police chief Aykut Oral and officers Hayrettin Çakmak, were released on the condition of judicial control by the Lice Criminal Judgeship of Peace.

Amed Bar Association said that eventually the three detained police officers were also released.

“The Lice Criminal Court of First Instance had given a decision of non-jurisdiction on the grounds that the actions of the police officers against the 14-year-old boy were within the scope of the ‘Crime of Torture’. Upon the objection of the accused police officers, the Diyarbakır 1st High Criminal Court not only lifted the decision of non-jurisdiction on the grounds that the elements of the crime of torture did not occur, but also decided to release the three detained police officers by a majority of votes. We will continue to follow the legal process.”

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Charges filed against three journalists covering a press statement for arrested colleagues

ANF | 23 JUNE 2023

On June 16, 2022, journalists Yıldız Tar, Deniz Nazlım, and Sibel Yükler wanted to participate in a planned press statement at Ankara Ulus Square for their colleagues who had been arrested in Diyarbakir. They were detained and assaulted by police at the scene.

According to the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA), a case was opened against journalists Tar, Nazlım, and Yükler a year later, for violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations no. 2911. The prosecutor, after reviewing the footage of the gathering where the journalists were detained and assaulted, justified the case based on the journalists being part of a group that arrived in the area gradually.

The indictment prepared by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office was accepted by the Ankara 71st Criminal Court of First Instance, which scheduled the hearing for January 9, 2024.

MLSA reported that, in November 2022, journalists Tar, Nazlım, and Yükler filed a complaint against the law enforcement officers involved, using their assault reports as evidence. They accused the officers of "torture", "insult", "failure to report a crime", "deprivation of liberty", and "exceeding the limits of force".

The prosecutor handling the investigation determined there was insufficient evidence that law enforcement officers had committed the crimes of intentional injury and torture by exceeding their authority to use force. Consequently, on April 25, 2023, it was decided that there was no need for prosecution.

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The 'Little Bazaar' of poverty

ANF | ISTANBUL | 24 JUNE 2023

The poverty rate in Istanbul, one of the largest metropolises in the world, is increasing year by year. According to TurkStat data from 2022, the poverty rate in Istanbul was found to be 18.1 per cent. In Küçük Pazar (Little Bazaar), a neighbourhood behind the famous Süleymaniye Complex, people live in broken houses. In the past, the population consisted mainly of Kurds who fled village burnings, oppression and unemployment in the 1990s. Today, the settlement mainly provides accommodation for illegal immigrants and refugees. They are predominantly young, single men who live together with at least five people in a flat to be able to cover the rent and other costs. There is still a Kurdish majority in the neighbourhood, but most of them have established some order since they have been living there for years. The pressure from the police is still noticeable. The Küçük Pazar police station used to be known as a torture centre when many Kurds moved to the neighbourhood. Now there is no police station, but the police put pressure on

the neighbourhood almost every day, now also on the migrants who come to Turkey in search of a better life.

Illegal, unhealthy and unsafe

The migrants in Küçük Pazar work mainly as day labourers, for very little money and in unhealthy and precarious ways. Many buildings in the neighbourhood belong to the General Directorate for Foundations. Now the people who have lived and had businesses there for years are gradually being evicted. There are plans to completely demolish the neighbourhood and replace it with luxury hotels and shops, but since this cannot happen all at once, it is being done slowly and quietly.

No one wants to give their name

The migrant workers we spoke to did not want to give their names or be photographed because they do not have legal residence status. During our reporting, we witnessed identity checks and harassment by the police in the neighbourhood. The workers reported that identity checks are carried out mainly in the morning when they go to work and in the evening on their way back. The police demand bribes from illegal workers and send those who do not want to or cannot pay to deportation centres.

“We are seen as sick and bad people”

In a conversation we had in a coffee house where Kurds and migrants wait for a job opportunity, those present told us about the racism and fascist attacks they face. They stated that they are always exposed to racism at work, never get the money they are entitled to and are humiliated by other workers. One expressed the extent of racism as follows: “Nobody drinks anything from the glass we drink water or tea from. Even the person in charge of cleaning does not wash or touch the glasses we use. They see us as sick, contagious and bad people”.

Children hit hardest

Poverty, which is increasing day by day, hits children the hardest. Children living in poor neighbourhoods are subjected to police harassment and have to fight for their lives in unhealthy and unhygienic conditions. Almost all school-age children in the neighbourhood have to work instead of going to school. They eat what they find in the rubbish or beg for money from passers-by. They are constantly exposed to the danger of sexual and psychological violence.

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Economic crisis hits Feast of Sacrifice

ANF | VAN | 27 JUNE 2023

This year’s Feast of Sacrifice will be celebrated in Turkey and North Kurdistan because of signs of a deep financial crisis.

On the holiday, the sacrifice of Ibrahim (Abraham) is commemorated by the slaughter of an animal. The Feast of the Sacrifice is therefore also of great economic importance for the cattle breeders. But the galloping inflation in Turkey and North Kurdistan, the war and impoverishment in the Kurdish regions are putting the rural population in an increasingly difficult situation. This is clearly evident in Van Province, where animal husbandry is very badly hit by the crisis.

Last year, small cattle could be sold for between 2,000 and 3,000 TL and cattle for 10,000 to 20,000 TL at the feast of sacrifice. The prices have increased this year. Small livestock now cost between 5,000 and 6,000 TL and cattle between 50,000 and 70,000 TL. The increase is due to inflation on the one hand, but also to the massive increase in animal feed prices in this context, on the other. Due to military restricted areas, the cattle cannot be brought out onto the pastures and must be provided with feed.

“There is no purchasing power”

Cattle breeder Zeki Kara said: “People are unemployed and poor. How are they supposed to buy animals and slaughter them? In previous years the situation was better, but this year it is much worse. The price of a sheep has doubled or tripled compared to last year. A kilo of meat now costs 250 TL. There are too many poor people in our country. We tell people that a sheep costs 5,000 TL, but no one buys it. I’ve been doing this job for 21 years, but it’s never been like this. This is a region characterized by livestock and agriculture. We have to feed the animals, but there is no profit like before.”

“Everything has become extremely expensive”

Cattle breeder Mehmet Çaçur said: “Diesel is very expensive, the costs are very high. Now we can’t even find a shepherd to take care of the animals. So people have to sell their animals. Now we sell small cattle in the market for 4,000 to 6,000 TL, but nobody buys them because people have no money.”

“We can’t sell animals”

Halil Çiçek, another cattle breeder, said: “There is no money on the market. People live in misery. We have the Feast of Sacrifice coming up. Some people buy sacrificial animals, but this time they are borrowing the money and cannot pay it back. I brought the animals here, but I have to take them back to the village if we don’t sell them. They had closed the cattle market before under the pretext of foot-and-mouth disease. If they close it this time too, we will be in a very difficult situation. I buy animals from Erdiş, Muradiye, Gürpınar and other places and try to sell them here, but there is no one to buy them in this market.”

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TELE1 Editor-in-Chief Merdan Yanardağ arrested

ANF | ISTANBUL | 27 JUNE 2023

TELE1 Editor-in-Chief Merdan Yanardağ was taken into custody on Monday. He was detained on charges of “praising a crime and a criminal” and “conducting propaganda for a (terror) organization” after

a live broadcast in which he commented on the aggravated isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan. The journalist was brought to the Istanbul Courthouse in Çağlayan to give his statement. And, arrested.

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Şenyaşar family: Feast of Sacrifice without justice

ANF | URFA | 27 JUNE 2023

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

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

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

Today the family, who continues their vigil at their home in Suruç (Pirsûs) said: "Another Feast of Sacrifice has come. Three of our people are dead, one has been locked up in a single cell for 5 years. The one who instigates the massacre is outside. The struggle will continue until those who consider themselves 'superior' in Urfa are put on trial."

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Afghans settled in the villages of Van

ANF | VAN | 28 JUNE 2023

The Kurds of Rojhilat (East Kurdistan in Iran) and Bakur (North Kurdistan in Turkey) have continued to trade despite all the oppression and massacres they have been through. For the Turkish state, visiting the Kurds on the other side is considered a "border violation", and the trade they do among themselves is considered "smuggling". Prohibitive policies have resulted in the death of hundreds of Kurdish villagers in the border region. Even though the Kurds on two sides of the border are not allowed to exchange bairam visits, Afghans can easily cross the border.

The Turkish state, which imposes bans on pastures and plateaus on the border under the banner of 'fighting terrorism', has long been killing Kurdish villagers along the border by creating the perception that they smuggle diesel. Punishing the transportation of diesel from Rojhilat and sale in Turkey with death, the Turkish state allows large companies and firms to engage in diesel smuggling.

Mahmut Yılbaş, a former governor of Van, granted permission to some pro-state people in the city to trade illegal diesel in order to provide finance to the local football team, Vanspor. While the smuggled diesel, brought in through by the state itself, was transported to western cities and sold there, young Kurds who make a living by trading small amounts of diesel were shot at the border by Turkish or Iranian soldiers. According to official figures, between 2002 and 2010, 125 young Kurds were murdered on the grounds of 'smuggling' and 'border violations'. All investigations launched into these killings ended up in non-prosecution and impunity.

Three-meter ditches

The Turkish state has been building a wall on the border for the past two years. The construction of walls extending from Ağrı/Doğubeyazıt to Van and Hakkari, seeks to cut off all the communication between the Kurds. A 64-kilometer-long wall was built on the border of Van alone and its 55-kilometer section was covered with barbed wire. Moreover, a 283-kilometre-long trench was dug.

Forbidden to Kurds, free for Afghans

With the arrival of the summer season, the pasture and plateau bans have also been extended. The 1-km area of the wall built along the border was declared a 'military zone', resulting in the pastures and plateaus of Kurdish villagers to be occupied as well. The state, which resorts to such extraordinary measures against the Kurds, turns a blind eye to Afghans crossing the border. While Kurds are killed in the event of crossing the border, Afghan refugees can easily enter the country by jumping over walls. Images from the border also confirm it.

Exchanging fest visits banned

Şahabettin Bilmez, co-mayor of Van's Saray district, who lives in the border village of Damlacık (Reşka), stated that a one-meter barbed wire was placed on concrete walls. He said: "Because of the walls that in no way enable crossing, we can't exchange fest visits with our relatives on the other side like we did in the past. However, refugees can easily cross the border as they wish. It's impossible for Turkish soldiers not to see them, but obviously they are allowed."

Border villages are emptied

Bilmez continued: "What we call smuggling was not an illegal business. To earn a living, we would just take cheese and sell it there, and bring henna. 40 percent of the Damlacık village has been emptied. The surroundings and border villages are also being emptied.

Since villagers do not have means of livelihood anymore, they are migrating to western cities. Pastures and plateaus have also been prohibited. During the construction of the wall, construction equipment destroyed our pastures and plateaus, and ditches were dug in that area. Our living conditions got worse and worse. Our people began to leave the border region. We revealed our problems to the District Governor's Office many times last year, and they replied 'it is a security problem, there is nothing to do', turning down the local people."

Lands confiscated

Cizeyir Özkaplan, who lives in the village of Sırımlı (Xirabsorek) in the Saray district, emphasized that all border villages have been turned into military bases, and deliberately evacuated. He said: “We, too, are experiencing the grievances experienced by the people in other villages. A military tower has been constructed in our village, while channels and trenches have been dug along the border. Three-meter-high trenches are being dug. I cannot go to my pasture. We talked to the authorities, but they rejected our demands, saying that the area is public property. We have our land titles, yet have had our lands confiscated. Children, women, families and animals have all become victims. That's what's going on in the region. It is a deliberate policy. Whatever they do at the border, they won't be able to cut our ties with our relatives.”

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People visit cemeteries of martyrs across North and East Syria

ANF | 28 JUNE 2023

In the early hours of the morning, thousands of people visited the Martyr Xebat Derik Cemetery in Dêrik, Martyr Dilşer Cemetery in Dugirê, Martyr Delil Saroxan Cemetery in Qamişlo, Martyr İsmail Cemetery in Amude, Martyr Dijwar Cemetery in Heseê, Martyr Rustem Cudi Cemetery in Dirbêsiyê, Martyr Dicle Cemetery in Kobanê. Citizens also visited the cemeteries of martyrs in Til Temir, Reqa, Deir ez-Zor, Shaddadi, Tabqa and Shehba.

Families and relatives of martyrs placed flowers on the graves and lit torches.

Following the Revolution on July 19, 2012, it has become a tradition to visit the cemeteries of martyrs on Eid mornings in Rojava/North and East Syria.

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Balance sheet of rights violations in occupied Girê Spî and Serêkaniyê in June

ANF | 29 JUNE 2023

The Violations Documentation Center for North and East Syria (VDC-NSY) released its report on the violations of rights recorded in June in the Sêrekaniye and Girê Spî regions under Turkish state occupation.

According to the report, at least 2 people were killed as a result of the Turkish bombings and 33 people were arrested in Sêrekaniye and Girê Spî in June. Following the occupation of these two regions, 375,000 people have been forcibly displaced.

The balance sheet includes the following figures:

- Two people were killed by bombardment.
- 33 people were arrested and 17 of them were tortured.
- 19 people were kidnapped.
- There were 5 cases of land mine explosions and detonations.

The report said that 4 people, including a child, were injured as a result of house raids by the Turkish state-backed mercenaries, explosions, torture and gunfire.

On the other hand, 2 people lost their lives and 7 others were injured as a result of ground and aerial attacks against the villages housing civilians.

Mercenary groups engaged in armed fighting against each other in the city centre 9 times.

375 thousand people forcibly displaced

“375,000 people have been displaced because of the Turkish attacks on North and East Syria and its occupation of the cities of Sêrêkaniyê and Girê Spî. Turkey is violating human rights by committing crimes against humanity, including torture, arrests, field executions (by shooting), confiscation of private property, bombings and the use of banned chemical weapons against the people of the region. In these areas, where medical teams and journalists are targeted, the security problem has deteriorated even more, and the number of explosions and murders has increased,” according to the report.

181 people tortured to death since the Turkish occupation

The report stated that 2,759 people have been killed since the beginning of the Turkish occupation in the northern regions of Syria. Out of 9,053 arrested locals, only 6,979 have been released, while the whereabouts of the rest remains unknown.

On the other hand, 181 people were tortured to death in prisons. A total of 560 Syrian refugees, including 103 children and 67 women, were killed by gunshots by the Turkish soldiers.

KESK: Raise in public workers' salary will disappear before reaching their pockets

ANF | ANKARA | 30 JUNE 2023

Public Workers' Unions Confederation (KESK) co-chair Şükran Kablan Yeşil spoke to ANF and said that promises were made to public workers regarding both wages and other personal/social rights.

She said that the promises of a minimum salary for public workers to be increased to 22,000TL (778 euro) in order to collect votes during the election, that public interviews will be terminated, and rent assistance will be provided to public workers, and added: "Now, when we look at the operation of the process itself, it is possible to see that the government is not sincere. When we look at Turkey today, it is necessary to see that the lowest public worker salary is around 11,700TL (413 euro) and is at the same level as the minimum wage announced a few days ago. The regulation of the salaries of public workers that the government said would be brought to the General Assembly before the feast, was indeed not brought."

Policies against workers

Co-chair Yeşil drew attention to the hunger and poverty line and said that, in fact, 22,000 TL being the lowest salary of a public worker is not enough either. Yeşil said: "When we think about the melting of our wages, the decrease in our purchasing power and the unfair tax system, we see that this increase will indeed disappear even before reaching the pockets of public workers. In addition, there are signs that the new economic policies will be pro-capitalist and against the workers."

Retired people ignored

Stating that retired people who have served the public for years and who want to lead a more productive life, at least in their old age, are ignored, Yeşil continued: "Today, the minimum pension has been increased to 7,500TL (265 euro). This increased rate was due to an arrangement made by the government with the bag law in the past months. However, this increase itself was not an increase that other pensioners saw. There has been no such increase in the wages of those who retired from the public sector."

Fighting for human life

Yeşil emphasized that the work to increase the minimum salary of public workers to 22,000TL is important but not sufficient, and said: "As we move towards the 7th term collective agreement, we demand that all confederations sit at the table in a place that prioritizes the workers. The existence of a safe and secure working life with humane living conditions is achieved through struggle. In this sense, we call on all public workers to unite and increase the struggle."

DBP politician Melis Akgül detained in Izmir

ANF | İZMİR | 30 JUNE 2023

DBP politician Melis Akgül was taken into custody in Izmir on Friday. The detention by a unit of the Turkish police's Counter Terrorism Department took place on Friday at Akgül's flat in the Urla district. After a raid, the politician was first subjected to an obligatory health check at a hospital. She was then taken to Çankaya police headquarters.

The background to the detention of Melis Akgül is a so-called "terror" case. The authorities accuse her of carrying out propaganda for a banned organisation. It was initially unclear how the accusation was connected. It is assumed that the alleged terrorist organisation refers to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Melis Akgül is the former co-chair of the provincial association of the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) in Izmir. The DBP was formed in July 2014 by renaming the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Its declared aim is to represent the interests of the Kurdish population and to decentralise Turkey.

Unlike the BDP before it, the DBP focuses on engagement at the local level. Until 2018, the HDP took over participation in national parliamentary elections as a sister party. Since this year, the Green Left Party has taken over this function. All three parties are criminalised and repressed by the Erdoğan regime.



SOHR: Turkish authorities deported 70 Syrian refugees

ANF | 30 JUNE 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Turkish authorities deported 40 Syrian refugees from Turkey to Syrian territory during the past two days under the so-called "voluntary return."

According to SOHR, the forcibly deported Syrian refugees crossed Gire Spi (Tal Abyad) countryside within the "Peace Spring" area. Some of them headed towards their relatives in Raqqa, Manbij and Ain Issa within SDF-held areas, while the others stayed on the roads in Ain Issa, due to the difficulties reaching their homes in Damascus and other cities within areas controlled by regime forces.

According to the observatory, the number of Syrian refugees who have been forcibly deported during the past two days by Turkish authorities from Turkey to Syria has risen to 70. Nearly 30 refugees crossed into the "Olive Branch" area in Afrin in north-western Aleppo.

SOHR reported that, during the past two days, Turkish authorities deported 30 Syrian refugees through Al-Hamam crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border, towards the Jindires district of Afrin.

According to SOHR sources, Turkish authorities forced the deportees to sign the voluntary return document and imposed a sum of 250 TLs on each person, and then the deportees were handed over to the military police (gendarmerie).

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Interview

Bayık: Turkey's policy against Öcalan complies neither with domestic laws nor international law – Part I

ANF | BEHDINAN | 29 JUNE 2023

The KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council Co-Chair Cemil Bayık spoke to Stêrk TV about the election results, the isolation regime imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan and the guerrilla resistance against the attacks by the Turkish state.

We publish the first part of the in-depth interview here:

The isolation of the Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan continues. He is not allowed to meet with his lawyers and family and is regularly being given new so-called 'disciplinary punishments'. How do you evaluate the current situation of Abdullah Öcalan?

The occupying Turkish state started to carry out massacres against various peoples right after its foundation. Many peoples were thus subjected to genocide. One of them is the Kurdish people. The Turkish state has since caused great suffering to the Kurdish people and the Kurds have rebelled against these attacks. They have put up heroic resistance and defended themselves.

The occupying Turkish state still wants to continue this genocide policy. If we do not understand this policy of the past – a policy of massacres against the peoples – we cannot understand the Turkish state's current approach towards Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. This policy against Rêber Apo, is actually a policy against all Kurds, peoples and humanity as a whole. Because Rêber Apo is the leader of a people. Therefore, we need to understand the mentality of the Turkish state well. If a state is based on genocide, it will never take into account law, justice and international rules. We can see clearly today that the policy being pursued against Rêber Apo and the Kurdish people complies neither with Turkey's own laws nor with international law.

The only thing they think about is to eliminate the Kurds. The Turkish state uses all its institutions for this. The policy against Rêber Apo constitutes a policy against the Kurdish people and human values. Rêber Apo defends human values. Therefore, the isolation of Rêber Apo is an attempt to complete the genocide. This isolation has nothing to do with the law. It is purely political. When the struggle increases,

the Turkish state softens the isolation a little bit. But when the struggle is weak, they put complete isolation back into effect. Therefore, everyone must understand their duty to take a stance against complete isolation and to oppose genocide. Then the Turkish state will take a step back in its genocide policy. This is the responsibility of our people, our international friends, all revolutionaries and socialists. Those who define themselves as patriots, socialists, democrats and intellectuals must stand against the complete isolation and increase the struggle for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo.

That is why all Kurds, socialists, democrats and international friends of the Kurdish people in the four parts of Kurdistan and abroad must wage a great struggle for Rêber Apo. Because the Turkish state pursues a policy of genocide. It wants to carry out a genocide against the Kurds and the PKK by doing the exact same thing against Rêber Apo. The Turkish state must lift the complete isolation immediately. Rêber Apo's lawyers and family must be able to visit him. Rêber Apo has rights as a prisoner. The Turkish state must recognize these rights. I also have a call for all politicians and those who fight for human rights: They need to apply to visit Rêber Apo.

First because of the earthquake in North Kurdistan and Turkey and then because of the elections, your movement decided to declare a halt of all its military attacks in February. But the Turkish state continued its attacks despite this decision. Recently, the KCK announced the end of the halt of all attacks. What made you take this decision?

We declared a halt of all military attacks for a reason. A very heavy earthquake happened in Kurdistan. Thousands of our people were killed and injured. We wanted to fulfill our responsibility and alleviate the pain of our people. Another reason was to guarantee a strong framework for democratic politics. Because in war, inevitably, democratic politics cannot wage a strong struggle. Because there is a fascist and genocidal government in Turkey which interferes in everything. Therefore, our decision was a human and moral decision. In the context of the elections in Turkey and North Kurdistan, there was talk among the people that the AKP-MHP would carry out provocations. They had done this before. That is why there was such a fear among the people. We therefore extended the halt of all our attacks in order to prevent any provocations.

Despite our decision to halt all military attacks, the Turkish state did not change its war policy. It wants to destroy the PKK and annihilate the Kurdish people. That is why it was not able to understand the reason for our decision. The Turkish state thought that the guerrilla forces had taken this decision because they had been weakened. It saw the decision as an opportunity to destroy the guerrilla. Therefore, the Turkish state increased its attacks even more, both in the Medya Defense Zones [areas controlled by the guerrilla forces in South Kurdistan] and everywhere in South Kurdistan [North Iraq], Rojava [North Syria] and North Kurdistan [East Turkey]. They carried out many bombardments and continued to use chemical weapons, basically using all the means at their disposal. They took many different measures, such as arrests, killings and heavy punishments in the prisons. Since they took these steps, our decision to halt all military attacks has lost its meaning. That is why we have officially declared the end of the halt of all attacks.

Since you declared the end of this decision, the fighting in the Medya Defense Zones has intensified. Can you tell us what the latest developments there are?

The Turkish state has never understood the guerrilla's power to attack. And it still doesn't understand it. The Turkish state has certain technological capabilities and some powers are helping it. Thus, it thought that it could easily strike a blow against the guerrilla. But this is nothing more than self-deception. Immediately after we ended the halt of all attacks, many effective and powerful attacks were carried out by the guerrilla forces.

As a result of these attacks, the Turkish state has recently suffered heavy blows in many areas, especially in Xakurkê and Metîna [both areas in South Kurdistan]. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Heval [Comrade] Asya, Azad and Koçer, who were martyred in a recent guerrilla attack in Xakurkê. One of these friends was German, one was Kurdish and one was Turkish. In other words, they represented a variety of peoples. This shows the reality of our movement. It is not only a Kurdish movement, but a movement for the freedom and democracy of all peoples.

Now, the war will intensify even more because, once more, a pro-war government has been established in Turkey. Erdoğan has already said openly that they will wage a stronger military and diplomatic war. The new cabinet was formed on this basis. The Turkish state is currently increasing its attacks day by day. Our resistance against these attacks is also growing stronger. Our people and our democratic and socialist friends need to understand this reality well. When the Turkish state escalates its attacks and the war intensifies, no one should remain silent and simply watch. Wherever they are, they must fulfill their duty to the Kurdish people and the struggle for democracy and freedom.

In its statement on the end of the halt of all military attacks, the KCK stated that after the elections, the Turkish state had increased its attacks especially on Rojava. Most recently, the Qamishlo canton co-chair Yusra Derwêş, deputy co-chair Leyman Şiwêş and council member Firat Tûma were murdered in an attack of the Turkish state. Why are these attacks increasing now?

A meeting was held in Astana recently with the participation of Russia, Syria and Iran. Astana meetings have taken place many times before. But no solution was found to any problem of the peoples, neither in Syria nor in the Middle East. In fact, these meetings made the existing problems even bigger. Obviously, the forces involved also focus on the Kurdish issue in these meetings. But instead of accepting and solving the problem in a political and democratic way, they look for ways to eliminate the Kurds. After each Astana meeting, the problems in Syria and the Middle East grew bigger. The Turkish state has occupied and even annexed many areas in Syria. It has established all its institutions in these areas. It continues to forcibly remove the Kurds from Serêkaniyê, Girê Spî and Afrin and to place gangs [Islamist proxy forces] affiliated with the Turkish state there. In other words, the Turkish state is changing the demography of these areas. It does this because its policy is based on Kurdish genocide. The Turkish state has already stated that it wants all the remaining Kurdish-held territories [in Syria]. That is why it carries out all these attacks in front of the international public.

The Turkish state, which aims to eliminate Kurds and Kurdistan, is not only doing this based on its own strength. On the one hand, the participants in the Astana meeting support the Turkish state, while on the other hand, NATO remains silent. Encouraged by this, the Turkish state continues its war policy with ease. Syria should not make any false plans with the Turkish state that occupies its territory. If it does, it

will be the one who suffers the biggest blow. The powers participating in the Astana meetings have said that they will support Syria to eliminate the Kurds. Syria should not accept this because it is a trap. Syria should unite with the Kurdish, Arab and Assyrian people against these plans. It should focus on solving the Kurdish question and negotiate with the Kurds. It should fight against the occupying Turkish state and remove it from the occupied areas. This will serve Syria. If the Syrian state fights against the Syrian people, it will suffer the greatest damage. I believe that Syria understands this.

While talks were being held in Astana, Masrour Barzani met Erdogan and other government officials in Ankara recently. What is your take on these talks?

Yes, while the Astana talks were taking place, Masrour Barzani went to Turkey and met with Erdoğan, Fidan [Turkey's new foreign minister] and Yaşar Güler [new defense minister]. Afterwards, Yaşar Güler made a statement and said: "Our talks with Masrour Barzani went well and will have positive results." After Barzani's talks, Qamishlo was attacked and the co-chair of the Qamishlo Canton Yusra Derwêş, the deputy co-chair Leyman Şiwêş and the council member Firat Tûma were martyred. Of course, Masrour Barzani can go to Turkey and hold talks there. We are not against this. But if Kurds are attacked when he goes to Ankara or while he is there, and if the Kurds are attacked after he returns, there is clearly a meaning to this.

Yaşar Güler, Turkey's war minister, said that their talks were positive and will soon have practical results. Everybody knows that the Turkish state pursues a policy of genocide against the Kurds. So, what exactly does it mean that they say there were positive talks between them and that the practical results would be seen soon? That is what everybody is asking themselves now: What kind of talks were held between Masrour Barzani and the Turkish state and what decisions were taken? They need to explain this. If they don't make an explanation and if they don't take into account all the questions the Kurds have about this, then everyone will think that negative decisions were taken between the Turkish state and Masrour Barzani against the PKK and the Kurdish people. Because the Turkish state is waging a war against the Kurds.

Again and again, international support has been vital for the defense of Rojava and North and East Syria. How do you see the current international response to Turkey's attacks?

If Syria does not negotiate with the Kurds and focus on solving the problem with them, of course, the Kurds of Rojava will strengthen their alliance with the peoples. They will increase their resistance against occupation. They will not submit to the Turkish state. Everybody must be aware of this. What we want is for Syria, the Kurdish people and the other peoples to stand against the occupying Turkish state, because the Turkish state wants the war to intensify and the occupied areas in Syria to expand. If Syria does not want more of its territory to be occupied by the Turkish state, then it should improve its relations with the Kurds. The Turkish state carries out attacks and massacres. Almost every day they massacre civilians in Rojava. But everyone is silent. Remaining silent means considering the Turkish state's massacres against Kurds as normal. If Syria does not see it like that, it needs to stand against these attacks. But if it doesn't do so, it obviously considers the massacres of the Turkish state as positive. This means that it also has a share in these massacres.

Rojava defends human values. That's why everyone who calls themselves a democrat, socialist, ecologist, libertarian, artist or intellectual, everyone who is against occupation, annexation, fascism, and who supports democracy and human values must defend Rojava. Because Rojava does not only fight for itself but

for humanity as a whole. It has proved this in practice. Rojava has fought a heavy war against ISIS and has suffered thousands of martyrs and wounded. It has thus saved humanity from a great scourge. Now, the Turkish state massacres exactly those people who have stood against ISIS and who defend human values. So why is humanity silent? Some states are silent because of their interests, but why are intellectuals, socialists, women, ecology movements and all those who fight for democracy and freedom silent? They should not remain silent. Because some members of the movements I mentioned have also taken part in this struggle. Some of them were martyred. These movements have also made great efforts for Rojava. That is why humanity must defend Rojava against the Turkish state. Especially the Kurdish people in the four parts of Kurdistan and abroad must defend it.

And the population of Rojava and North and East Syria, how should they respond to the current threats and attacks?

The Turkish state wants to increase its attacks on Rojava. It even aims to occupy new areas. It is currently conducting diplomacy in the international arena to intervene in Rojava. Our people must recognize this. They need to make preparations to defend themselves against occupation. This is what we ask of them: Do not leave your land and homes when the occupation attacks start. You must remain in your land and stand against occupation until the end. If you stay and fight in your lands, the Turkish state will suffer great blows and will not be able to occupy it.

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Bayık: The government in Turkey and its decisions against the Kurds are not legitimate – Part II

ANF | BEHDINAN | 30 JUNE 2023

The KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council Co-Chair Cemil Bayık spoke to Stêrk TV about the latest developments in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the world.

The part II of the interview is as follow:

An important election recently took place in Turkey and North Kurdistan. This election was also historic due to the intensity of the state's oppression, persecution and fascism. What are the most important conclusions you draw from the election results?

The election in May was very important. Consequently, everyone is discussing the results now. It is not wrong to have these kinds of discussions. This is necessary indeed, but what is important is that these discussions carried out by the forces of freedom and democracy lead to positive developments and success. The Labor and Freedom Alliance was founded before the elections with the aim of democratizing Turkey and creating the unity of the peoples of Turkey against fascism. This was a good decision. Perhaps this alliance should have been strengthened even more. In practice, it was not developed as necessary. There may

have been shortcomings and mistakes, but lessons must now be learned from them. Then these mistakes will be overcome. Those who want to succeed need to approach this issue in this way.

All those who are part of this alliance need to strengthen their relations with the people. Because it has become clear that there are some weaknesses in their relations with the people. Without such relations, their politics will never yield any results. This is an alliance for freedom and democracy. Therefore, it must be based on society. It must organize society and express the people's will. They must take decisions together with society. If their ties with society are weak, they will not be able to achieve results through politics. The AKP gathers people of faith around it. This is a powerful section of society in Turkey. Therefore, the Labor and Freedom Alliance needs to prevent Erdoğan's abuse of these people so that he cannot use them for his politics. Because this is a big part of society. If you don't acknowledge this, don't develop a policy accordingly and don't include society, you won't achieve any results in Turkey. This was also the case in the recent elections.

That is why Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] has developed a policy against this. His policy is based on the politics of democratic Islam. Islam is dominant in Turkey. There are people from different faiths and religions, but it is predominantly Muslim people. If you don't acknowledge this, you cannot achieve any results no matter what you do. Everyone in the Labor and Freedom Alliance must recognize this. Therefore, they must go to these people based on the politics of democratic Islam. If they do so, this alliance will achieve great results in Turkey. During the recent elections, the importance of the democratic nation paradigm has also become clear. The problems in Turkey can only be solved based on this paradigm. That is why it is necessary to insist on this and to not take any steps back. Why am I saying this? Because there are attacks on this paradigm. These attacks may even have an effect on certain people. It is necessary to know why these attacks are being carried out and what their goals are. Against these attacks, there must be an even stronger support for the paradigm of the democratic nation.

There are intense discussions among the Labor and Freedom Alliance about the election results. Do you agree with what is being said about the work of this alliance?

There are people who see themselves as responsible for what happened during the elections. They want to solve the existing problems and are working hard for this. The critique they have voiced is good. They might face some difficulties, but I believe that they will achieve great results. While some are approaching this issue responsibly and focus their discussions on how to achieve success, there are others who are talking nonsense. Because they are detached from society and do not feel any responsibility towards it. They instead serve fascism and genocide. That's why they speak so comfortably. Their speeches are full of attacks on Rêber Apo, his paradigm and the PKK. While some of them do this openly, others do it in a more subtle way.

A relentless struggle has been waged for 50 years under the leadership of Rêber Apo. In the course of this struggle, many values and patriotic principles have been created. Some people stand against these values and claim to represent national interests. They attack Rêber Apo and the PKK and define themselves as defenders of national interests. But they have nothing to do with such interests. Those struggling for national interests pay the necessary price for this. But when we look at these people, we can see that they neither wage a struggle nor pay the price for it. They have not taken a stance against the Turkish state for a single day and have not paid the slightest price. They take side with the Turkish state and attack Rêber Apo, the PKK, democratic politics and the projects developed by Rêber Apo. What kind of supporters of national

interests are they? A person who defends national interests stands with whoever fights for the Kurdish society, not with those who carry out a genocide against the Kurds. We can clearly see that those who attack Rêber Apo and the PKK are on the side of the Turkish state. Fascists, racists and chauvinists are carrying out these attacks as part of Erdoğan's politics. There are not only Turks among them, but also Kurds. These people are carrying out the politics of the Turkish state.

While the peoples of Turkey and the Kurdish people are really enthusiastic about the democratic nation paradigm and are struggling on this basis, others are afraid and attack it. Those who do this are fascists, chauvinists and racists. They completely serve the politics of the Turkish state. The forces of democracy and freedom must understand well why these attacks are being carried out so that they can defend the democratization of Turkey and socialism. Because they are attacking Rêber Apo's project of democratizing Turkey. With these attacks, they want to eliminate the Labor and Freedom Alliance. Therefore, it is now necessary to support the project developed by Rêber Apo even more. We need to understand the democratization of Turkey and the unity of the peoples as our basis. If the Labor and Freedom Alliance takes this a basis, all attacks will be defeated. Then, the alliance will grow stronger.

What is the most urgent task for the Labor and Freedom Alliance to tackle now?

Erdogan's alliance still exists. The alliance built by Kılıçdaroğlu has now collapsed. The alliance that will develop the most from now on is the Labor and Freedom Alliance. Those who take part in this alliance must therefore act responsibly. In other words, they need to develop a more democratic policy both in Kurdistan and in Turkey.

Many things are currently happening in Kurdistan and Turkey. Especially in Kurdistan. For example, Kurds killed each other in Bismil the other day. Our people should not kill each other. They should solve their problems through dialog. Democratic politics should protect the people and prevent these kinds of problems between the people. Because the Turkish state wants such problems to escalate and Kurds to kill each other. That is why democratic politics must play its role in this regard.

And the Kurdish people themselves, what kind of stance do you think they should take after the elections?

The Turkish state attacks the people in every way possible as part of its genocide policy in Kurdistan. It promotes rape, sends the bones of martyrs to their families in bags, slaughters children, women and elderly people with tanks, spreads prostitution, encourages the use of heroin and turns people into spies. It exploits the nature of Kurdistan, cuts down trees, builds dams, spreads mining and destroys villages. In other words, it destroys the possibility to live in Kurdistan. That is why our people should not remain silent against all this. Wherever the Turkish state carries out these attacks, the people there should rise up. This is the right thing to do. This is what Kurdish identity, religion and being a human demands.

One last question about the elections: In light of the general atmosphere during the election and the fraud that took place, do you consider the new government as legitimate?

The elections have shown clearly that the Kurdish people reject Erdoğan. They do not accept him. Not only the Kurdish people but also the peoples of Turkey rejected Erdoğan in the election. Therefore, this government is not legitimate. The decisions it takes with regards to the Kurdish people are not legitimate.

The government in Turkey is a completely fascist and genocidal government. It only won with the help of the state's power.

June 30 marks the 27th anniversary of şehit Zilan's martyrdom, one of the PKK's pioneering cadres who carried out a self-sacrifice attack in Dersim in 1996. What is the importance of this anniversary for today?

First of all, I would like to respectfully commemorate all the martyrs of the revolution by commemorating heval Zilan, Sema and Gulan. I would also like to salute all freedom fighters. Heval Zilan took a stance against the attack on Rêber Apo [carried out in May 1996 in the Syrian capital Damascus]. She thus sent a message to the guerrilla, the Kurdish people and the Turkish state. And she clearly told the Turkish state that if it tries to eliminate the leadership [Abdullah Öcalan], it also tries to eliminate all of us, which gives us the right to eliminate the Turkish state. Today, our party, our people and our militants are still fighting in the spirit of Zilan. From the first day of the PKK, it has always been characterized by this kind of sacrificial strength. This became clear through Zilan and the friends in the Amed prison. Today, in the Medya Defense Zones – in Zap, Metîna and Avaşîn – the spirit of Zilan is being kept alive. In the prisons, not only in Turkey but also in other countries, all those who struggle for democracy and freedom for the Kurdish people are resisting based on this spirit. Nobody can destroy the PKK or complete the genocide of the Kurdish people because of this spirit of resistance. There is faith and sacrifice hidden in this spirit. If this were not the case, we would not have been able to struggle against the Turkish army for so many years. We have carried the resistance until today and have created many values thanks to this spirit.

The anniversary of the execution of Şêx Saîd is upcoming. Yet, so many years after his execution, the Turkish state has still not published the whereabouts of his grave. Why?

On June 29 [1925], the genocidal Turkish state issued a death sentence for Şêx Saîd. Together with Şêx Saîd, they executed 46 patriots. The site of their graves is still unknown. The occupying Turkish state also put Rêber Apo on trial and, on June 29, 1999, it issued a death sentence for Rêber Apo as well. In other words, it issued a death sentence for Rêber Apo on the same day as it had done for Şêx Saîd. This shows the character of the Turkish state. If one understands this character and the historical reality of the Kurdish people, one can make sense of what is happening today. Then you can understand why Rêber Apo has been subjected to such brutal torture. The Turkish state wants only death for the Kurds. It enjoys massacres, deaths and genocides. That is why its approach towards Rêber Apo and the Kurdish people is to eliminate them. This is all it thinks about. That is why they have put all the means of Turkey into action. Every Kurd, every person needs to see this. Every day they need to think about how they can protect their values, about how they will stand against the Turkish state. Thus, they must understand and fulfill their responsibility. They might pay a price and suffer doing this, but in the end they will win. Our people today know who a real patriot is, who has paid a price and suffered. Because every day Rêber Apo, the PKK and the guerrilla are waging a relentless struggle for the freedom of the Kurdish people. Every day they suffer martyrs. On this occasion, I would therefore like to commemorate the martyrs of the freedom struggle once again and respectfully bow in front of their memories. I offer my condolences to the families of all the martyrs. And I wish all the fighters success in their struggle.

Opinion

Bedran Çiya Kurd: The Astana group is moving to a new stage

ANF | 24 JUNE 2023

Bedran Çiya Kurd, Co-Chair of the Foreign Relations Department of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), spoke to ANHA about the 20th Astana meeting, the accusations against the Autonomous Administration and the solution to the Syrian problem.

‘The Astana group is moving to a new stage’

Commenting on the Astana meeting, Çiya Kurd spoke of the transition of the Astana group to a new stage and said: “We did not expect anything different from the Astana meeting. The political approach of these meetings has been clear from the very beginning. The topics discussed since 2017 and the views on the Syrian issue are already known by the public. The Damascus government has also attended the recent meetings, becoming a part of the Astana group. Now, the Astana group is moving to a new stage. There are a few fundamental problems that will be discussed in this new stage. One of these issues is cooperation on border issues and the fight against terrorism. Their definition of terrorism was set at the will of the Turkish state. The Autonomous Administration, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Kurds are seen as terrorists. It is possible that some groups in Idlib also fall under this definition at the request of the Damascus government.”

‘Accusation against AANES is Turkey’s demand’

Bedran Çiya Kurd denounced the declaration of the meeting, which called the Autonomous Administration a project to divide Syria, saying that this was a great hypocrisy. Çiya Kurd pointed out that the accusation against the Autonomous Administration was a demand by the Turkish state. He continued: “The Autonomous Administration has openly expressed that it is a Syrian national project and seeks a solution within Syria. During the meeting, there was no talk of the governments under the control of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Muslim Brotherhood, although the projects being implemented there under the auspices of Turkey are well known to be occupation projects aimed at dividing Syria. Still, they always resort to accusing the Autonomous Administration and the SDF. It indicates that the Turkish state puts all its weight in these meetings and strives for the results to be as it wants. Claims that the Autonomous Administration threatens the national security of Turkey are false. It is indeed the Turkish state that threatens the national security of Syria and the regions of North and East Syria. During the meeting, they did not talk about the invasion of the Turkish state or the mercenary groups under its control. It is understood that the declaration of these talks is in line with Turkey's desires and wishes.”

‘The situation will become even more complicated and worse for everyone’

Bedran Çiya Kurd pointed out that: “Now, after this meeting, the focus will be on the relations between Turkey and Syria. They will seek to develop relations between Damascus and Ankara and intensify agreements, and this will be particularly in the military, intelligence and security aspects. There is talk of a Russian plan to create rapprochement between the two sides. They will work on how the two regimes can agree and cooperate with each other. Many alliances will be formed against the people of the region, the Autonomous Administration and the Syrians. This is a very serious mistake of the Damascus government and poses a great danger. It would be a wrong policy for Syria to cooperate with the Turkish state, which would put Syria’s sovereignty and unity in jeopardy. Therefore, the Damascus government should review itself and not fall into these mistakes. In this way, the Syrian crisis will move to a new phase, and the situation will become even more complicated and worse for everyone in the region.”

‘All violations against Syrian territory should be equally denounced’

Pointing to the meeting’s discussion of the Israeli attacks and humanitarian problems in Syria, Bedran Çiya Kurd said: “The meeting discussed the humanitarian problems in Syria, how to lift economic sanctions, increase humanitarian aid, and start reconstruction. However, the position of countries supporting humanitarian issues is clear, as they say it is not possible to start the reconstruction process in Syria unless there is a political change. The participants of the meeting condemned the Israeli attacks on Syria as a violation of international law. This is hypocrisy, because the Turkish state attacks our areas daily, killing civilians, but no one talks about these attacks or raises their voices. These attacks have also resulted in the loss of many soldiers of the Damascus government, but they are not talked about either. All violations against Syrian territory should be equally denounced and a stance should be taken. Serious decisions must be taken to end the occupation and stop Turkish attacks.”

‘The Kurdish issue in Syria is a matter of democracy’

In an interview with a Russian media outlet during the meeting in Astana, Ayman Sousan, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, stated that the Kurdish file would be completely closed with the US’ withdrawal from Syria. Bedran Çiya Kurd defined this evaluation as “wrong and inadequate interpretation” and said: “The Kurdish issue in Syria is a matter of democracy that did not emerge due to the presence or absence of the US in the region. It is a national issue that has existed in Syria for decades. Therefore, it must be treated and resolved within a democratic framework. If the Damascus government believes that America will withdraw, and that it will control everywhere and eliminate everything pertaining to the Kurds and democracy, it is mistaken. It is not possible to solve the problems in Syria in this way. The way to a solution is through a real and serious dialogue that leads to an agreement among all the Syrian parties. If the Damascus government happens to think of resolving it in any other way, it will be a mistake and push the region towards a bigger crisis out of control. The Damascus government should not think that its relations with the Arab countries and with Turkey will improve, nor that it will be able to solve all its problems without reaching a political agreement or political change. Syrian problems cannot be solved based on these accounts. Because this country needs a political change. In this way, problems can be prevented.”

‘Dialogue has been suspended’

Ayman Soussan stated in the same meeting that they do not have any relations with the Autonomous Administration, but that their dialogue is progressing with some Kurdish parties. “There have been several attempts for dialogue with the Damascus government through Russia, but they failed. The dialogue is still suspended and this is because of the mentality of the Damascus government and its lack of openness to change. They think that ‘If Turkey attacks, we will subjugate the Autonomous Administration, and if the US withdraws, we will fill the void’. For this reason, they do not think that there is a need for dialogue with the Autonomous Administration and the people of the region. The Damascus government should come into contact with the people of North and East Syria, including the Kurds, and develop a serious dialogue. Otherwise, if it wants to generate alternatives for itself and ignores the status quo in North and East Syria, it will be deceiving itself. For the sake of dialogue and solution, it should address the Autonomous Administration, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and their institutions.”

Who are these Kurdish parties?

Bedran Çiya Kurd explained that they do not know who the Kurdish parties are, which the Damascus government says it is talking to. He pointed out that there can be no other interlocutors for a solution other than the Autonomous Administration. “Perhaps they mean some people who have no authority and effect, whom they consider to be representatives of the Kurds and the region. If this is the case, it is not appropriate and unacceptable to the local people. The Damascus government should negotiate with the main interlocutors, and if it ignores these interlocutors, then it means that the government has no intention of developing a solution.”

Obstacles to dialogue

Regarding the obstacles that stand in the way of dialogue between Damascus and Qamishlo, Çiya Kurd stated: “The mentality of the Damascus government stands as an obstacle to political dialogue. It is a serious problem in the development of dialogue. There have been several talks but the Damascus government’s insistence on returning to pre-2011 has prevented success. The guarantor countries do not have projects for a solution, thus allowing the Damascus government to stick to its position. The dividedness among Syrian parties and the lack of a joint alternative project and political change also constitute a problem. The Autonomous Administration can, without any doubt, become part of the solution as a political and democratic project, but it cannot advance the political solution in Syria on its own because the Syrian crisis has become a regional and international issue that involves many parties and forces. There are many obstacles to the Autonomous Administration inside and outside Syria. There is a political struggle. Work is underway to form a democratic front with the democratic opposition groups.”

The power of Kurds and women

YENİ ÖZGÜR POLİTİKA | SELAHATTİN ERDEM | 28 JUNE 2023

Everyone can see that the power of the Kurdish people and women does not come from their money or their weapons. Because they do not have the weapons that could destroy the world dozens of times, like the nation-states gathered under the umbrella of the UN, and they do not have the money that exploits world resources like capital monopolies. Their strength comes from their emancipatory ideas, their democratic, ecological and pro-women paradigms that offer solutions to the social problems created by the capitalist modernity system.

It is known that Kurdish leader Öcalan has developed a new paradigm for the Kurdish people, women and all the oppressed to solve their problems and ensure their liberation. Everyone now recognizes that the greatest and permanent achievement created by the Kurdish people and the Kurdish freedom struggle is the fact that such a leadership has emerged. The struggle of the Kurds and women clearly demonstrates that the power of thought is more effective than the power of money and weapons.

Öcalan, the creator of such a great power of thought, has been kept under a torture and isolation system in the İmralı island prison for 25 years and no news has been received from him for the last 28 months. The maltreatment in İmralı has gone beyond the isolation and has turned into an incommunicado. Why is it so? It is obvious that they are scared of Öcalan's ideas that introduced an emancipatory and democratic solution!

Some claim that the struggle for freedom of the Kurdish people and women can be prevented by keeping the İmralı prison, the main source of power for Kurds and women, under the torture and isolation system. However, the genius in İmralı overcame this obstacle long ago. With his activities before İmralı and his defences during the trials, Öcalan had already demolished the walls of İmralı and showed the Kurdish people, women and all the oppressed the path to emancipation. Because the women's revolution under the banner of 'Jin Jiyan Azadi' in four parts of Kurdistan, the Middle East and all over the world and the Kurdistan freedom struggle that enlightened humanity is an expression of this.

Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan's democratic, ecological and pro-women paradigm that offers solutions to social problems raises everyone's awareness, gives strength and will for victory. This is the situation of the Kurdish people and women as a party, guerrillas and people. The idea of freedom, which is much stronger than money and weapons, makes the person a self-sacrificing individual that has the power of an invincible victory.

It seems that, as of June, the Kurds and women have been experiencing a new 'Self-Sacrificing Month'. June 30 marks the 'Self-Sacrificing Day' of the Kurds and women. The June 30 Zilan Self-Sacrificing Spirit is revived during the entire June, making it a month of sacrifice. As of this June, we are entering the twenty-eighth year of self-sacrifice. The Kurds and women have been fighting and winning in a self-sacrificing manner for twenty-seven years based on Öcalan's Freedom Doctrine.

As it is known, it was a victorious self-sacrificing action of PKK guerrilla Zeynep Kınacı (Zilan) against a colonial military unit in Dersim province in 1996, which makes June 30 the day of self-sacrifice. With her

self-sacrificing action, guerrilla Zilan responded to the attack on Kurdish leader Öcalan on May 6, 1996. Thus, she originated the line of the struggle to defend and embrace Öcalan. Zilan created a style of self-sacrificing resistance that would define the freedom struggle of the Kurdish people and women to victory. It is this consciousness and self-sacrifice that makes the Kurds and women strong.

For twenty-seven years, the Kurds and women have been trained and equipped with this Zilan self-sacrificing spirit and consciousness. They are selflessly resisting and winning in every field against the international conspiracy. The guerrillas in Zap, marchers in Europe, the propagandists in the press and artists, everyone embraces the Zilan spirit of sacrifice and believes that emancipation can only be achieved with courage and self-sacrifice. The Kurds and women are becoming more and more self-sacrificing and thus are getting stronger.

It is obvious that neither perpetuating the İmralı isolation nor the crackdown on the Kurds and women eliminate the empowerment mentioned above. Because the power of thought cannot be prevented, and the power of sacrifice cannot be defeated. In this respect, the attacks of Erdogan and his fascist alliance are in vain. These murderous attacks can never frighten or stop the Kurds and women who have acquired a consciousness of freedom.

On the contrary, as the attacks against them increase, the Kurdish people and women become more conscious and self-sacrificing. They embrace the self-sacrificing spirit more and more. On this basis, the Kurdish people and women are entering the twenty-eighth year of sacrifice much stronger. It is obvious that the struggle for the physical freedom of Öcalan will be carried out in a more self-sacrificing manner this year. Every Kurdish youth and woman will be more self-sacrificing in the line of Zilan and will bring the male-dominated fascist-genocidal mentality and politics to account more strongly.

Therefore, we commemorate the immortal Zilan with respect and gratitude on the twenty-seventh anniversary of her martyrdom, and state that the Kurdish people and women who became self-sacrificing in the line of Zilan remain invincible. We urge everyone who is pro-freedom and a patriot to understand the truth of Zilan correctly and to become an invincible self-sacrificing force.

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Dossier

The Rojava cycle of Ankara's 'Decomposition Plan' against Kurds— II

MUSTAFA ÇOBAN | HESEKE | 23 JUNE 2023

The cycle of the Ankara government's 'Decomposition Plan' in Rojava can also be seen in drone attacks. When we look at the first attacks against the region, we can see the targets chosen. The places where the

first attacks were carried out were the villages of Kobanê. After the women leaders of the revolution were targeted in the village of Hêlince, the house where Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan stayed for 40 days in 1979 when he went to Rojava was targeted in the village of Elpelûrê. With these first attacks, the Turkish state targeted the 43-year foundation of the Rojava Revolution. After the Serêkaniyê and Girê Spi-centred invasion operation in October 2019, the Turkish state has been bombing the region for three years with the permission of Russia and the United States, which control the airspace since June 23, when the drone attack took place.

Turkish drones attacked all over North and East Syria from Derik to Shehba more than 181 times in 3 years. In these attacks, 112 people, leaders of the revolution, were killed, while 72 others were injured. Moreover, 46 soldiers lost their lives and 50 more were injured in the attacks on the military bases of the Damascus government forces.

The drone attacks against the region in 3 years are as follows:

June 23, 2020: Kongra Star Coordination Members Zehra Berkel and Hebûn Mele Xelîl and a citizen named Emine Weysi were martyred after an attack on the Hêlince village of Kobanê.

2021: 8 ATTACKS, 17 MARTYRS

During 2021, 8 drone attacks were carried out against the cities of Qamishlo, Til Temir and Kobanê, which martyred 17 people and injured 1 person.

June 16, 2021: A house was targeted in the village of Elpelûre in Kobanê.

August 19, 2021: SDF Military Council Member Sosin Birhat, Til Temir Military Council Commander Egîd Girkê Legê, Til Temir Military Council fighters Rubar Heseke and Seyfullah Ehmed were martyred in an attack on the Til Temir Military Council building.

August 19, 2021: YPG Commander Rênas Roj was martyred in an attack on a vehicle along the road between Amude and Qamishlo.

August 22, 2021: A fighter named Çekwar Zerik was injured in an attack on a house that belonged to the War Veterans in Qamishlo.

October 20, 2021: A vehicle was targeted in the city centre of Kobanê.

October 23, 2021: YPG fighters Hozan Qamişlo, Gelî Aleppo and Amed Afrin were martyred in an attack on a vehicle in Kobanê.

November 9, 2021: Yûsîf Gulo, one of the leading patriots of the revolution, and his grandchildren Mezlûm Gulo and Mihemed Gulo were martyred in an attack on a vehicle in the Hilêliyê neighbourhood of Qamishlo.

November 25, 2021: Nujiyan Ocalan, Viyan Kobanê, Rojîn Ehmed Îsa, Merhef Xelîl Îbrahim, Welîd Mihemed Menla Hisên and Mesûd Îbrahim were martyred in an attack on the youth centre in Kobanê.

2022: 120 ATTACKS, 72 MARTYRS, 64 INJURED

Throughout the year 2022, all parts of North and East Syria, including Derik, Rimêlan, Çilaxa, Tirbespiyê, Qamişlo, Amude, Dirbesiyê, Zirgan, Til Temir, Reqa, Ayn Issa, Kobanê, Manbij and Shehba, were targeted 120 times by Turkish drones. While 72 people were martyred, 64 others were injured in these attacks. Plus, 35 soldiers lost their lives and 43 more were injured in attacks on the military bases of the Damascus government forces.

January 12, 2022: A house was targeted in the Fatisa village of Ayn Issa.

February 2, 2022: Kasra Musa village of Ayn Issa was bombed.

February 5, 2022: Houses were targeted in the Umm Edes village in Manbij and the Belûniyê village in Shehba.

February 9, 2022: A house in the Ereb Hesên village of Manbij and a vehicle in the Behira village of Amûdê district were targeted. The attack on the vehicle martyred 11-year-old Mihemed Elî Kelah, while 13-year-old Mahir Îsa Kelah, teacher Omer Xanî and Ela Cido Ehmed were injured.

February 27, 2022: Shehba's Til Rifat district was targeted. Material damage was reported.

March 15, 2022: Shehba's Til Rifat district was targeted. Material damage was reported.

March 16, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in the Hosan village of Ayn Issa. Material damage was reported.

April 1, 2022: A vehicle was targeted between Tirbesbiyê and Qamishlo. Fighter named Derar Cuma Hemza, who was in the vehicle, was martyred, artist Ferhad Merdê and one person were injured.

April 3, 2022: Awrem Marokî, a member of the Syriac Military Council, and one person were injured in an attack that targeted a vehicle on the Til Temir-Hesekê road.

April 4, 2022: The Zirgan Internal Security Forces Centre was targeted. Three members of the security forces were injured in the attack.

April 8, 2022: A house was targeted in Zirgan, which injured three citizens.

April 9, 2022: A house was bombed in the Til Kepis village of Dirbesiyê. Material damage has occurred.

April 16, 2022: The Til Tawil village of Til Temir was bombed, which injured 1 person.

April 20, 2022: A vehicle was targeted on the road between the Êdiq and Toxit villages of Kobanê. 3 YPJ fighters were martyred in the attack.

April 21, 2022: Three people were injured in an attack on the Til Cemşîd village of Til Temir.

April 22, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in the Um Beramil village of Ayn Issa. Material damage was reported.

April 24, 2022: The checkpoint of Damascus government forces in the Zor Mixar village of Kobanê and the Mihsenlî village of Manbij were targeted. Material damage was reported.

April 27, 2022: The areas in south of Manbij were bombed. Material damage was reported.

May 11, 2022: Kobanê city centre and Aleppo Road were targeted. A patriot named Ekrem Üstek was martyred.

May 30, 2022: YPJ fighters Mizgîn Botan and Kesra Melek were martyred in an attack on a vehicle in Qamishlo. YPJ fighters Dicle Cûdî and Hêvîdar Dirbêsiyê were seriously injured.

June 1, 2022: A health clinic was targeted in the Til Rifat district of Shehba. Material damage was reported.

June 9, 2022: 5 citizens were injured in an attack that took place in the vicinity of the Martyr Delîl Saroxan Martyrdom in Qamishlo.

June 27, 2022: The Şêxler region of Kobanê was targeted. Material damage was reported.

June 28, 2022: Two vehicles were targeted in the Xanê Serê village of Derîk and a house was targeted in the Til Rifat district of Shehba. Material damage was reported.

July 2, 2022: YPJ Commander Mizgîn Kobanê was martyred in an attack that targeted a vehicle in the Til Semin village of Raqqa.

July 18, 2022: The Til Rifat district of Shehba was targeted.

July 19, 2022: Shehba's Til Rifat district was targeted. Two soldiers of the Damascus government were injured.

July 21, 2022: Kobanê city centre was targeted. YPG commanders Berxwedan Kobanê and Kendal Rojava were martyred.

July 22, 2022: Anti-Terror Forces (YAT) Commander Jiyan Tolhildan, YPJ Commander Roj Xabûr and YAT member Barîn Botan were martyred in an attack on a vehicle that moved between Qamishlo and Tirbespiyê.

July 28, 2022: A vehicle that belonged to the Internal Security Forces was targeted along the Ayn Issa-Raqa road. Security Forces members Beşar Mihemed Elî Bozan and Cîhan Mihemed Mistefa, Sara Mihemed El Hisên and Selma Elî Mistefa were martyred.

August 3, 2022: The Syriac Til Cuma village of Zirgan was bombed. A citizen was martyred in the attack.

August 4, 2022: Shehba's Til Rifat district was bombed. 9 citizens, including 6 children, were injured in the attack.

August 6, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in the Sinaa District of Qamishlo which martyred Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) Command Member Yusif Mehmud Rebanî, SDF Military Discipline Member Rûxwaz Amudê, citizen Şemdîn Şemdîn and children Ehmed Ali Hisên and Aheng Ekrem Hisên.

August 9, 2022: A house in the village of Xerze in Amude was bombed. The area around the Jiyan Covid-19 Hospital in Qamishlo was bombed. Self-Defence Forces members Dilsoz Tirbespiyê, Elî El Mislet, Muhyedîn Gulo and Mahir El Ezbê were martyred.

August 10, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in the village of Mela Sibat, west of Qamishlo. SDF Commander Dijwar Kobanê and fighter Çiya Qamişlo and citizen Edîb Yusif were martyred in the attack.

August 16, 2022: The Self-Defence Forces checkpoint in the village of Sinceq Sadûn, south of Amude, was bombed which martyred Self-Defence Forces members Baz Amûdê, Baran Amûdê, Demhat Amûdê, Şoreş Dirbêsiyê and Ronî Can.

August 18, 2022: An all-girls education centre run by the United Nations in the village of Şemokê on the Hesêkê-Til Temir Road was targeted. 5 children were martyred, 11 more were injured in the attack.

August 24, 2022: Shehba's Til Rifat district centre was bombed which martyred 2 citizens and injured 7 others.

September 16, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in Ayn Issa. The attack martyred YPG commanders Rojhat Karakoçan and Doğan Amanos.

October 2, 2022: The village of Belûniyê in Shehba was bombed.

October 6, 2022: YPG Commander Koçero Batman was martyred after a bombing against Kobanê.

October 12, 2022: A vehicle around the Newroz Migrant Camp, northeast of Derik was targeted.

October 15, 2022: The military base of Damascus government forces in the Minix village of Shehba was bombed. Material damage was reported.

October 24, 2022: An institution affiliated with the Autonomous Administration was targeted in Qamishlo which left 2 citizens martyred.

November 13, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in the Sincaq Sadûn village of Amude.

November 19-20, 2022: A vehicle was targeted in the Teqil Betil village of Derik which left 2 people martyred. In a second attack, civilians who attempted to rescue survivors were targeted. The second attack martyred 7 citizens, ANHA reporter Îsam Ebdulla, while 3 more citizens were injured. Wheat silos in the Til Hermel village of Zirgan and Dehril Erebb village were bombed which left 3 people martyred and 3 others injured. The same bombing killed 3 Damascus government soldiers and injured 5 others. A military

base of Damascus government forces in the village of Qizeli in Girê Spî was bombed which killed one soldier and injured 2 other soldiers. The Kobanê-Jarablus road, the Kaniya Kurdan neighbourhood, the Helince village and the Miştênûr hill were bombed which left Stêrk TV reporter Mihemed Cerade injured. 5 HRE fighters were martyred in an attack on the Afrin countryside. A military base of Damascus government forces in the Shewarxa village in Afrin's Shera district was bombed which killed 10 soldiers and injured 5 other soldiers. Following an attack on Shehba's Bêlûniyê and Minix villages, 22 soldiers of the Damascus government were killed, and 31 others were injured.

November 21, 2022: The villages of Kefer Antun and Malikiyê in the Shera district of Afrin were bombed.

November 22, 2022: The YAT and the Global Coalition against ISIS base between Hesêkê and Til Temir were targeted. While 2 YAT members were martyred, 3 others were injured in the attack. Til Temir's Ewca village was bombed 3 times.

November 23, 2022: The Derzîxan and Mesref villages of Derik were targeted. Çilaxa's Mehşuqê and Şirikê villages were bombed. A vehicle was targeted in Qamishlo. An electricity station in the Mizgeft village of Tîrbêspiyê, a gasoline station in the Ewda village, and the Syriac Military Forces' SOTORO training academy in the Rotan village were targeted. The Zêdiyê and Mehermela villages of Amude were bombed. The Îbrahimiye village of Zirgan was targeted and the Internal Security Forces checkpoint in the city centre was bombed by a drone which martyred one member of the Internal Security Forces and injured 3 others. The Zêdiyê village of Zirgan was bombed. 2 citizens were injured, and material damage was reported. The joint base of Russia and SDF in Til Temir was targeted which martyred one SDF fighter and injured 3 others. Til Temir's El Hemra village was targeted. The attack martyred 2 SDF fighters and injured 3 more. The forces that provided security in the Hol Camp were targeted 3 times. Kobanê city centre was bombed. A house in the village of Qîrarêşke in the Sirîn district of Kobanê was bombed.

November 25, 2022: The Dildara and Til Tewil villages of Til Temir were bombed.

November 27, 2022: 4 villages of Shehba were targeted. Zirgan was targeted 3 times.

November 28, 2022: A hospital in the Qeremog village of Kobanê was bombed.

December 10, 2022: The village of Aqibe in the Sherawa district of Afrin was bombed. Material damage was reported.

December 24, 2022: A chicken farm on the road to the Mizgeft village northeast of Tîrbespiyê was bombed. The attack left one citizen martyred and 3 others, including 1 child, injured. The villages of Girê Siwar, Girê Pirê and Tiweyêl in Tîrbespiyê were bombed. Material damage was reported.

2023: AT LEAST 52 ATTACKS, 20 MARTYRS

In the first half of 2023, there were at least 52 drone attacks against Derik, Rimêlan, Qamishlo, Tîrbespiyê, Amude, Til Temir, Til Hemis, Ayn Issa, Kobanê, Manbij and Shehba. While 20 people were martyred, 7 more were injured. Moreover, 11 soldiers lost their lives and at least 7 others were injured in attacks on Damascus government military bases.

January 3, 2023: The Til Tewîl village of Til Temir was bombed. MLKP Central Committee Member Zeki Gürbüz and MLKP member Özgür Namoglu were martyred.

January 4, 2023: The Til Tewîl village of Til Temir was bombed, which injured 2 SDF fighters.

January 6, 2023: The village of Xalidiyê in Ayn Issa was bombed. A 10-year-old boy named Eli Xelife was injured in the attack. Afrin's Soxanekê village was bombed by a kamikaze drone.

January 11, 2023: A vehicle was targeted on the international M4 highway between Qamişlo and Hesêkê.

January 12, 2023: The Qermitlo village of Qamishlo was bombed.

January 15, 2023: The Birîva village of Amude was bombed.

January 18, 2023: A vehicle was targeted around the Arî resting place in the village of Maşûqê, east of Tirbespiyê. 2 citizens were martyred.

January 19, 2023: In Rimêlan, the point where the Military Diplomacy's meetings with the Anti-ISIS Global Coalition were held was targeted. SDF fighter Rojhat Hesêkê was martyred.

February 12, 2023: A vehicle was targeted on the road to the Menaz village of Kobanê.

February 22, 2023: A vehicle was targeted in Qamishlo.

April 14, 2023: A vehicle was targeted on the Hîzam road along the Qamishlo border line.

May 5, 2023: A house in the Qeyrewan village of Til Hemis was bombed. 2 SDF members who were assigned to protect the Hol Camp, where ISIS families reside, were martyred.

May 11, 2023: A vehicle was targeted on the international M4 highway near the village of Hemdûn in Kobanê. The attack martyred SDF fighters Cûdî Egîd and Fûad Mihemed. A vehicle was targeted in the village of Xarûfiyê, south of Manbij which martyred a citizen named Abdulvahap Hac Hemedi. A military base of Damascus government forces around the Mecra Sultan village, north of Manbij, was bombed which killed 4 soldiers and injured many others.

June 10, 2023: A vehicle was targeted in the Ehdas district of Shehba. While 3 SDF fighters were martyred, 2 others were injured.

June 14, 2023: The Sherawa and Shera districts of Afrin and the villages of Shehba were bombed 7 times. While 7 Damascus government soldiers lost their lives, 4 more were injured. A vehicle was targeted on the Qamishlo-Tirbespiyê road which martyred SDF fighter Ciwan Oso and 2 citizens.

20 June 2023: A vehicle was targeted around the Til Şeir village of Tirbespiyê. Qamishlo Canton Co-Chair Yusra Derwêş, her deputy Leyman Şiwêş and Gabi Şemun from the Syriac community were martyred, while Qamişlo Canton Co-Chair Gabi Şemon was injured in the attack.



Dossier: Turkey's drone war against the women-led democratic system in North and East Syria

ANF | 24 JUNE 2023

The Kongra Star Information Committee published a [dossier](#) on the Turkish occupation state's attacks targeting female leaders in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) and the military forces.

Since 2020, Turkey has systematically used armed drones to assassinate those who play an important role in the women's movement and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. The beginning of this drone war was June 23, 2020, with the deaths of Zehra Berkel, Hebûn Mele Xelîl and Amina Waysî, members of Kongra Star Coordination. They were killed in a targeted drone attack on a private house in the village of Helinç near Kobanê.

Since then, Turkey has been systematically and deliberately launching drone attacks against the population of North and East Syria. It frequently targets civilians and infrastructure to weaken the social movement in North and East Syria. Since the beginning of the year alone, the Turkish state has carried out 31 drone strikes in North and East Syria. In the process, 48 people have been killed, including 13 civilians, and 38 people, including 12 civilians, have been injured.

In recent weeks in particular, Turkey has launched a new phase of its operations against the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, escalating with airstrikes. Since June 12, Turkey has expanded its shelling and drone strikes into northern Syria, hitting 35 locations with more than 50 projectiles, killing dozens of people.

On the morning of the 20th of June, the Turkish state carried out a drone strike in the village of Til Şeir, northwest of the Tirbespiyê district in Qamishlo Canton. The Turkish drone targeted a vehicle carrying officials of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) on a busy and crowded road, killing three people and seriously injuring one.

The attack came while the vehicle was on its way to visit civil facilities of the AANES. The co-chair of the Qamishlo Region Council, Yusra Darwish, the deputy co-chair, Leyman Shouish, and their driver, Farat Toma, were killed. Co-chair Gabi Shamoun was grievously injured.

The attack was a double-tap air strike. Co-chairman of Qamishlo Region Council Gabi Shamoun, who was seriously injured in the attack, said that the driver died immediately after the first strike. He was able to get out of the car and tried to open the door to pull his colleagues out of the car before it burst into flames, but then the second strike hit.

The identities of the victims of the attack are as follows:

Yusra Darwish: Yusra Mihemed Darwish was born in 1972 in Amude in the canton of Qamishlo. She participated in the women's movement in North and East Syria from its beginning. Darwish worked for social change and the organisation of social and political activities in the canton from the very start, being involved in community organising. When she was killed in the Turkish drone attack, she was the co-chair of Qamishlo Canton.

Leyman Shouish: Also known as Reiyhan Amude, Leyman Shouish was born in 1968 in Amude in the canton of Qamishlo. She was politically active for more than 38 years and had shown serious commitment to democracy, women's liberation and peaceful coexistence of the different population groups in the region. In her struggle for these goals, she relocated to Minbic in 2016 after its liberation from the clutches of ISIS, to help build a democratic system there. Throughout her life, she took on many duties, most recently representing the Kongra Star women's movement in Southern Kurdistan and eventually becoming the deputy co-chair of the Qamishlo Canton. She was killed in the drone attack.

Firat Daniel Touma: He was born in Iraq in 1979 and was a member of the Syriac Union Party. As a Syriac, he worked within the Autonomous Administration for the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups. He was the driver of the car that was hit and died on June 20, 2023 in Turkey's drone attack.

Gabi Shamoun: The co-chair of the Qamishlo Region Council, was wounded in the head and was taken to a hospital in Qamishlo.

"With these attacks, the Turkish state aims to destabilize the region, undermine efforts to fight ISIS, displace the original inhabitants of the area and destroy the democratic project of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. This is a continuation of the Turkish state's fascist project against Kurdish people within and outside its borders.

Turkey's attacks intensified shortly after the Autonomous Administration announced it would bring ISIS captives in northern and eastern Syria to justice without support from the international community. Over a period of many years, AANES has been calling on the international community to try captured ISIS members before an international tribunal, but this call has gone unanswered. It is also well documented that Turkey has also in the past smuggled ISIS members out of Al Hol Camp and targeted security forces at facilities where ISIS prisoners were held. The Turkish state relies on ISIS to create instability in the region.

Turkey hopes that instability will give it the advantage of occupying other regions in northern Syria. With drone strikes and constant artillery barrage along the border zone, Turkey is trying to drive the population to flee so it can continue to illegally invade the region, occupy it and force a demographic change. Turkey is attacking the region under the pretence of counter-terrorism, but the real reason is that Turkey sees the grass-roots democratic and gender-equitable system in northern and eastern Syria as a threat to its dictatorial rule and its expansionist dreams of a new Ottoman Empire.

As Kongra Star, a coalition of grassroots women's groups in Rojava (West Kurdistan / North Syria), we are committed to women's rights and democracy in the region. We observe with concern the attacks by the

Turkish state on the region and the accompanying waves of refugees, human rights violations and destabilization of the region.

We demand the following:

- Members of the Global Coalition to Fight Daesh, and the international community, must ensure that Turkey stops its aggression against the Autonomous Administration and the self-defence forces of North and East Syria. All attacks must be immediately halted.
- Turkey's plans to launch a new military occupation offensive must not be tolerated and allowed to go ahead.
- The airspace of North and East Syria must be closed to Turkish warplanes as well as armed or un-armed UAVs.
- Turkey must be held accountable for all war crimes.
- Turkey must immediately withdraw from the illegally occupied regions.

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