

THE IMRALI POST

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Arab women in Shengal march to demand freedom for Öcalan

ANF | Shengal | 29 October 2023

A march was held on Saturday in the village of Barê in Shengal. Organized by the Shengal Arab Regions Women's Council, the march was part of the Freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and Autonomy for Shengal initiative.

Arab women pointed out that the support for the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and Autonomy for Shengal initiative is increasing every passing day and added: “As women living in the border regions, we condemn the isolation imposed on Leader Öcalan. The reason why Leader Öcalan is targeted is because Turkey wants to target the people, cultures, beliefs and especially women living in the region. Because Leader Apo is the greatest defender of peoples, freedom and women.”

The women continued: “Leader Apo's physical freedom will mean putting an end to injustice and promoting peace in the world. On this basis, we, as Arab women, will continue the struggle for Leader Öcalan's freedom. We have been organizing and educating ourselves on the basis of Leader Öcalan's thoughts for 7 years. For this reason, we know that if we do not increase our struggle for his freedom, we will lose Shengal. Leader Öcalan's freedom is the guarantee of peace and solution to the problems in the Middle East. With Leader Öcalan's physical freedom, we can make Shengal's autonomy and women's freedom permanent.”

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Lawyer Arricale: Isolation is outside of all national and international legality

Muhammed Kaya | Rome | 31 October 2023

Lawyer Michela Arricale, a member of the Research Center for Democracy in Italy, is also a supporter of the “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, Political Solution to the Kurdish Question” initiative, which was launched on 9 October to end the aggravated isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Lawyer Michela Arricale, who is also the co-chair of the International Legal Intervention Group, said: “It is clearly a violation of the principles of International Criminal Law, apart from any national and international legality. In fact, a new word was invented at the Council of Europe level to talk about Öcalan's isolation. He is not in isolation but ‘incomunicado’.”

Against modern law rules

Arricale said about the CPT's attitude of not disclosing the Imralı report that “the lack of news for such a long time leads to a rule of law that takes us back to the days when the sovereigns had the power of life and death over all their citizens. It is a situation totally outside of international law.”

Lawyer Arricale said that they will put pressure on the CPT and added: “We are currently trying to do this internationally at the level of the Lawyers Union in the Council of Europe. The CPT should at least disclose the report they keep secret. We must continue to do what we can for both Abdullah Öcalan and the other three political prisoners in Imralı and support their lawyers when they question their current conditions of detention. We must act within these institutional and judicial contexts.”

We must take action

Lawyer Arricale pointed out that international legal standards must be interpreted correctly to achieve Öcalan's freedom, and added: “We must take action and push for the correct interpretation of international standards that will lead to his immediate release. This is the essence of our current struggle. This struggle will take place both within the country and at the level of European progressive lawyers.”

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Activists from Switzerland take over the ‘Freedom for Öcalan’ vigil in Strasbourg on its 593rd week

ANF | Strasbourg | 1 November 2023

Since 25 June 2012, groups from all over Europe have been taking turns to hold a weekly vigil in front of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) in Strasbourg for the physical freedom of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. There has been no contact with Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners, Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş on Imrali Prison Island in the Turkish Sea of Marmara since March 2021.

Activists Halise Tüzer, Naile Gümüştas, Saadet Doymaz and Fehime Öztürk from the Arjın Garzan Commune in Switzerland have taken over the vigil on its 593rd week.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Halise Tüzer said she wanted to make their voice heard by the European institutions and demanded an end to the isolation of Öcalan, which, she said, is directed against the entire Kurdish people.

Demanding freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, Tüzer said: “The freedom of the leader is the freedom of women and the Kurdish people.”

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HEDEP Co-Chairs and MPs apply to the Ministry of Justice to meet with Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | Ankara | 2 November 2023

The Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) Co-Chairs Tülay Hatimoğulları and Tuncer Bakırhan and deputies applied to the Ministry of Justice for a meeting with Abdullah Öcalan, who is held in aggravated isolation and has not been heard from for 32 months.

The party demanded an urgent meeting with the Kurdish leader who is held on the prison island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara with no contact with the outside world.

Concerns over the situation of Öcalan increased after the Executive Council Member of the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK), Sabri Ok [said](#) in an interview on the Kurdish TV Channel Sterk TV on July 8 that threatening letters had recently been sent to Abdullah Öcalan anonymously via the Imrali prison administration.

Lawyers are requesting to meet with Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan twice a week. However, applications for visits are systematically left unanswered. In some cases, months later, lawyers are informed

that disciplinary action has been taken against the Kurdish people's leader and therefore no visit can be granted.

Conditions of extraordinary isolation

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

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

Despite all their attempts, lawyers from the Istanbul-based Asrin Law Office, which represents Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners, have not been able to receive even a single sign of life from their clients since 25 March 2021. They could not obtain any information regarding their health status, their detention conditions, their legal situation in 2022. It has been 29 months that their clients have not been heard from in any way.

Öcalan held in a single cell since 1999

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

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

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

Women at Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg: Let's expand 10 October's international campaign

ANF | Strasbourg | 3 November 2023

The group, which continued its uninterrupted Freedom Action in Strasbourg in its new week, called for people to embrace the campaign launched on 10 October, saying “Isolation is a policy of torturing the Kurdish people and surrendering their will.”

The action launched in Strasbourg on 25 June 2012, to demand the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and breaking the absolute isolation imposed on him, has entered its 593rd week.

The action carried out by the Kurdish people and their friends at the point where European institutions meet, continues 7 days a week, from 7.30am to 4.30pm.

The protest was taken over by the Swiss Kurdish Women's Union (YJK-S) and Arjîn Garzan Commune activists this week. The new group, consisting of Halise Tüzer, Naile Gümüştas, Saadet Doymaz and Fe-hime Öztürk, will carry out the vigil until 5 November.

‘Isolation is a policy against the Kurdish people’

Zülfü Bingöl, who is responsible for the coordination of the Freedom for Öcalan Vigil, drew attention to the importance of the campaign launched on 10 October in many countries of the world with the slogan “Freedom for Öcalan, Solution to the Kurdish Question” and said: “Isolation is torture against the Kurdish people. It is a policy aimed at pushing the Kurds into submission. We need to expand the international campaign against isolation and put an end to this torture.”

Bingöl added: “We will not end this action until our Leader is liberated. It is certain that we will get results by expanding the campaign.”

‘Our answer is resistance’

Naile Gümüştas, one of the activists, said: “The Committee for Prevention of Torture (CPT) has not fulfilled its duties. The Turkish government tried to take hostage the will of women who have been demanding peace and freedom for 25 years. We will thwart this dirty conspiracy with the will of women. We will not be happy with just getting news from our Leader. We want the freedom of our Leader. This success is the success of the Kurdish people.”

Gümüştas said: “Against the architects of absolute isolation, we say that we will respond to you with absolute resistance.”

‘Leadership and the people are a whole’

Halise Tüzer said that “the Leader and the people are a whole. The action we continue in front of the CPT is also an action carried out in the name of humanity.” She pointed out that the end of the wars will be possible with the paradigm of Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan, and added: “We will continue to fight to liberate our leader. We women owe it to the Leader. Because the freedom of women depends on the freedom of the Leader.”



World Youth Conference in Paris dedicated to Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | Paris 3 November 2023

In the Youth Writing History network, various youth organisations have joined forces in the search for an alternative life beyond capitalism, the destruction of nature and gender oppression. The network follows the principles of youth autonomy, women's liberation and system change. The global network brings together young people with different backgrounds, such as environmental protection, civil disobedience and human rights activism. Feminist, anti-capitalist and socialist groups as well as people's movements fighting for the return of their countries, culture and self-determination and educational groups also take part in the network.

The three-day World Youth Conference kicked off in Paris on Friday morning with an opening speech and a minute of silence in memory of the revolutionary martyrs. Young people from all around the world are taking part in the conference, the foundations of which were laid with the conference in Amed (Diyarbakır) in 2015 and in Kobanê in 2019.

The opening speech was made by Florian André, who announced that the conference this year is dedicated to Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan who is held captive on the Turkish prison island of Imralı and has been held in incommunicado detention for years.

Florian André noted that the Turkish state launched a large-scale war in Kurdistan after the 2015 conference in Amed, and occupied Girê Spî only six months after the 2019 conference in Kobanê.

Florian André continued: “It is time now. Young people can lead society out of this darkness. A revolution is taking place in Rojava in the 21st century. To those who argue that ideologies, struggles and paradigms have come to an end, we say no! Our struggle continues.”

The opening speech was followed by a video screening about capitalism and the struggle of young people, and presentation of messages from various countries, including Lebanon, South Africa, Rojava and Medya Defense Zones (the guerrilla-held areas in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq). The messages highlighted the importance of joint struggle against capitalism and the resilient spirit of the youth.

A representative of the Lebanon's Progressive Socialist Party International Relations spoke about the recent developments in the world and stated that the conflict in Lebanon drove people into poverty and migration. "In Gaza, war crimes are being committed amidst the ongoing war. We need to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine. Progressive youths are building the future. Our struggle against occupation will continue."

The following message came from the Women's Defense Units (YPJ) and the Internationalist Commune of Rojava. The YPJ message said: "With the hope and belief that in this gathering very important and valuable discussions are going to happen, and influential decisions are going to be made to build a world and society that is free and victorious. Because we know that the existing system has set societies on fire everywhere in the world. With war, with isolation, with genocide, all methods of annihilation of cultures and societies, there is a very brutal war going on. Because of this, we, as a force and as youth, need to struggle in a very strong and dynamic way."

The message by the Internationalist Commune of Rojava highlighted the importance of freedom and resistance as the only way out against the capitalist system amidst the arising Third World War. "We resist capitalism and build a new life here. We follow the path of Leader Öcalan. This conference is of great importance, not only for history, but for all of us."

In a message to the conference, South African Socialist Movement member Nehlali Bassum stated: "We are against decisions made about us without considering us, the young people, who are the target of the existing system. It is time for us to raise our voices. Thousands of young people are unemployed and living in poor conditions. The system does not want young people to rise up. We want to build a fair society. 25 friends of ours have been executed since our foundation. The people here have no hope left. Young people are manipulated. The source of all these is the capitalist system. It is time now. Young people should write their own history. Long live socialism!"

Komalên Ciwan Coordination member Özgür Şerker saluted the conference and all the participants, saying: "It might be that we have not seen or got to know each other. Some of us come from Kurdistan, some others from the Middle East, Europe and South Africa. However, we are all in search of a free life. In this conference, we see the spirit of the 68 youth joining hands. For this very reason, such a gathering will bring about a great victory. Humanity has suffered a lot at the hands of the sovereign and exploitative powers in history. With the capitalist modernity, attacks against humanity have hit the peak. Everything in this system serves the sovereign. All those who want to understand this system should have a look at Kurdistan, which is a litmus paper for this system. For 50 years now, we have been fighting against this under the leadership of Leader Öcalan and the struggle under his leadership has consequently spread to the whole world. For this reason, Leader Öcalan has been held in isolation for 25 years. However hard the conditions are, Leader Öcalan has never taken a step back."

Prisons in Turkey

Seriously ill prisoner Cemal Tanhan was transferred to Eskişehir

ANF | İzmir | 29 October 2023

68-year-old seriously ill prisoner Cemal Tanhan, who was held in Bolu F Type Closed Prison, was taken to the intensive care unit of İzzet Baysal State Hospital on 23 October after he suffered a stroke. Bolu State Hospital referred Tanhan to the General Surgery Department of Eskişehir City Hospital on Friday because it felt inadequate to treat him.

Tanhan's wife, Behiye Tanhan, met with her husband with permission from the Eskişehir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. Tanhan said: "Cemal is connected to a breathing device. He could barely move his mouth. We talked to his doctor who told us he had cysts in his lungs and they suspected that it may be cancer."

Tanhan stated that the doctor told her that it was better for her husband's health to see him just once or twice a week because of the risk of infection.



KCDK-E: Mazlum Dora's hunger strike achieved its purpose

ANF | Brussels | 29 October 2023

The European Democratic Kurdistan Society Congress (KCDK-E) made a written statement regarding Activist and Artist Mazlum Dora, who was arrested on 11 May 2021 and has been on hunger strike since 21 September in Stammheim prison, protesting the repression by the German state on Kurdish activists and institutions.

The statement, which underlined that the hunger strike carried out by Mazlum Dora achieved its purpose, said: "The artist was arrested on 11 May 2021 and imprisoned in Stammheim prison because of his cultural and artistic activities. Dora was detained and arrested shortly after the visit of the then Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu to Berlin. Although there was not enough evidence against him, he was sentenced to 3 years and 3 months in prison, according to Article 129b of the German Criminal Code (StGB), because his activities were evaluated as organizational activity."

Mazlum Dora has been on an indefinite and non-alternating hunger strike since 21 September, and is protesting the imposition of 129b, the raids on Kurdish institutions and the ill-treatment of Kurdish political prisoners.

The KCDK-E said: “We support the justified actions of political prisoners who are subjected to repression in German prisons that is similar to that in Turkish prisons. The hunger strike carried out by Mazlum Dora created active public opinion. Many Germans and Kurds showed solidarity and gave strength to the action. With his protest, Dora underlined the demands of dozens of political prisoners in jail because of their opinions, and protested the medieval repression practices implemented by the German state.

Mazlum Dora has become the voice of dozens of prisoners in German jails. The hunger strike action he continues as KCDK-E has raised awareness and, therefore, it would be meaningful for him to end the action and continue his struggle on different grounds. On this occasion, we demand once again that arbitrary practices against political prisoners in German prisons be put to an end and that they be released immediately.”



Rally and concert for the release of Kenan Ayaz

ANF | Hamburg | 29 October 2023

A rally for the release of Kenan Ayaz took place in front of the Hamburg remand prison on Saturday, promoted by the #FreeKenan committee and Rote Hilfe, among others. Kenan Ayaz was arrested in mid-March at Larnaka airport in Cyprus on the basis of a German extradition request, when he wanted to travel to Sweden to visit his family.

The federal law enforcement authorities accuse Ayaz of membership in what they consider to be a “terrorist organisation abroad” - meaning the PKK. After his expulsion from Cyprus, Kenan Ayaz has been in pre-trial detention since the beginning of June under more stringent prison conditions in the Hamburg-Holstenglacis prison.

On behalf of the #FreeKenan solidarity committee, a spokesperson welcomed the rally participants, Kenan Ayaz and all prisoners of the Holstenglacis Detention Centre. “It is obvious that the means of the European arrest warrant is being instrumentalised to enforce repression in other countries according to German laws. The extradition of Kenan Ayaz to the Federal Republic is a clear example. In countries like Cyprus or even Belgium, there is no ban on the PKK,” she explained.

She went on to say that it was not the Kurdish liberation struggle that was terrorist, but the Turkish state. She said that the PKK has been fighting side by side with the International Coalition against ISIS, and that a high-ranking commander, the coordinator between the anti-ISIS coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Ferhad Dêrik, was assassinated by a Turkish drone only recently.

The Azadî legal aid association for Kurds in Germany condemned the PKK ban and explained that paragraphs 129 a and b were intended to unsettle and depoliticise the Kurdish community so that no resistance would arise here against the murderous policies of Turkish President Erdogan.

Azadî also condemned the current war in the Middle East, stating: “Repression is no substitute for a political concept for a Middle East in which Palestinians and Jews, Kurds and Turks live together in peace. The

concept of democratic confederalism developed for this purpose by the Kurdish liberation movement, on the other hand, is being fought tooth and nail by the German government. In order to break out of the senseless, state-oriented spiral of violence, a new political start is needed here too. A good start would be to lift the ban on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been in place for 30 years. We demand an end to the German state's chumminess with the fascist Erdogan regime."

In its speech, Rote Hilfe pointed out that the German government was making itself a stooge of the Erdoğan regime by providing not only political but also military support. The Cypriot lawyer Efstathios C. Efstathiou also spoke in a message and stated that Cypriot society was furious about the extradition of Kenan Ayaz to Germany, and even after five months this anger had not subsided. Cyprus could not stay out of the fight for justice, Efstathiou said, and sent "a militant greeting to all those who are fighting for justice for Kenan Ayaz".

Following the speeches, Kurdish artist Umut Botan performed revolutionary Kurdish music. He saluted Kenan Ayaz and condemned the drone attacks on Rojava. Kurdish youth danced to music and after the rally went to the park behind the prison to greet the prisoners with slogans.

At the end of the rally, the committee called on the participants to observe the trial of Kenan Ayaz and to take part in the rally to mark the start of the trial on 3 November at 8.30 am in front of the Hamburg Higher Regional Court and in a demonstration against the repression of the Kurdish movement, anti-fascists and climate activists on 4 November at 1 pm at Hansaplatz.



Call for judicial action for Gültan Kışanak imprisoned for 7 years

ANF | Istanbul | 30 October 2023

Kurdish politician Gültan Kışanak was first arrested at the age of 19 after the military coup of 12 September 1980 and tortured in the dungeon of Amed (Diyarbakir). Among other things, she was held in a two-square-metre dog kennel for six months. After two years of resistance in prison, she studied journalism and worked for Kurdish newspapers, including as editor-in-chief of *Özgür Gündem* in Istanbul. Later, she went into politics and was a member of the Turkish parliament. In 2014, she was the first woman to be elected mayor in Amed. As mayor of the Kurdish metropolis, she had the prison where she was once tortured converted into a museum. In the course of the mass arrests of HDP politicians in autumn 2016, she was imprisoned and sentenced to a long prison term. She is also one of the defendants in the ongoing Kobanê trial. In prison, she wrote a book and continues to speak out publicly on current issues. Gültan Kışanak is one of the best-known Kurdish politicians and has been in prison as a political hostage of the Turkish regime for seven years.

Kışanak was arrested in October 2016 for alleged connection with the 6-8 October 2014 protests in Turkey and North Kurdistan against the ISIS onslaught on the Kurdish town of Kobanê in northern Syria. The Kobanê Case was filed in 2020 against 108 politicians, of whom 18 are behind bars.

Gültan Kışanak is not released from prison despite the fact that the maximum imprisonment term of 7 years has been completed. Applications have been filed with the Constitutional Court of Turkey (AYM) and the 22nd Heavy Penal Court in Ankara for her release.

Kışanak's family and lawyers made a statement to denounce the ongoing imprisonment of Kışanak for political reasons despite the completion of the maximum imprisonment term.

The press conference in Istanbul was also attended by HEDEP (Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party) Law and Human Rights Commission member Several Ballıkaya.

Speaking here, Gültan Kışanak's lawyer, Gül Altay, noted that her client had been detained on 25 October 2016 as part of a wave of arrests against Kurdish politicians that sought to depose the elected mayors of municipalities in the Kurdish region and to appoint trustees in their place.

Altay called on the Constitutional Court to make a precautionary decision for the release of the Kurdish politician in consideration of the completion of the maximum imprisonment term. She noted that courts do not have the right to judicial discretion any more.

Altay stated that applications have been made with the Constitutional Court against the violations of Kışanak's rights, but no decision has been made yet.

Another lawyer of Kışanak, Cihan Aydın, called the Kobanê Case "the conspiracy case of Turkey", pointing out that the judiciary has lost its independence and became an "instrument" of the state.

Aydın criticised the judicial ignorance of the Constitutional Court's related decisions against the exceeding of the maximum imprisonment term in the case of Gültan Kışanak.

HEDEP Central Executive Board member Kerem Fırtına called for an immediate end to the rights violations experienced by Gültan Kışanak and demanded her release from prison.

The Kobanê Case

The Kobanê Case was filed in 2020 against 108 people, including the HDP's former co-chairs, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, several current and former HDP deputies and mayors, and all the members of the HDP's Central Executive Board of 2014.

This case was launched as a counter move by the Turkish government just two weeks after the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights made its final judgment demanding the immediate release of Selahattin Demirtaş. The indictment in the Kobanê Case is based on a Twitter message posted by the HDP on 6 October 2014. This called for democratic protests in solidarity with the people of Kobanê, the Kurdish town in Northern Syria that was fighting against the attacks of ISIS, and also against Turkey's embargo on the town. The prosecutor is calling for all the defendants to be given aggravated life sentences (without parole) 38 times for the crimes of "destroying the unity of the state and the integrity of the country" and "premeditated murder" of the people who lost their lives in the Kobanê protests. Seventeen politicians are currently being held in pre-trial detention for this case.

The Kobanê case is closely linked with the closure case filed against the HDP, for which it serves as a pre-text. In the closure case, the prosecution is mainly based on the alleged role and responsibility of the HDP in the murders that occurred during the Kobanê protests in 2014.

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HEDEP Mersin MP exposes violations of rights in Tarsus Prison

ANF | Mersin | 31 October 2023

HEDEP Mersin MP Perihan Koca said that there were serious human rights violations in Tarsus Prison.

Koca visited the prisoners and told ANF that the conditions in the jail are getting worse day by day and the applications of the relatives of prisoners are ignored. Koca said: “Prisoners staying in Tarsus Prison are experiencing serious rights violations. Today, when the constitution is suspended and the most basic human rights are ignored, the problems in prisons are increasing exponentially. While torture and ill-treatment continue systematically in prisons, violence is normalized.”

Insults, violence and punishments

Koca underlined the serious problems of hygiene, health, food and hot water in Tarsus Prison, and added that the warnings and applications of the prisoners and their relatives were ignored. Koca continued: “When they protest, prisoners are exposed to insults and physical violence by prison staff and are given arbitrary disciplinary penalties by the prison administration. They said that they wanted to have a meeting with the director regarding these violations, but all their attempts were unsuccessful. Phone call, open and closed meeting bans are imposed on them as disciplinary punishments whenever they object.”

Forbidden to speak Kurdish

HEDEP Mersin MP Perihan Koca underlined that sanctions were imposed on Kurdish prisoners, especially in Tarsus Closed Prison No. 2, due to their language and identity, and said: “In recent weeks, a guard went to the ward searches and asked the prisoners to line up in a single row to count them while standing. When they objected, they reported being heavily harassed. During the counting and searches in recent weeks, the same guard imposed a Kurdish ban on prisoners! While the political prisoners were speaking Kurdish among themselves, he told them that it was forbidden to speak Kurdish in that prison. Those in the ward were given disciplinary punishment and a political prisoner was given a one-day solitary sentence for speaking in his native language.”

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Kurdish journalist Firat Can Arslan released from prison

ANF | Ankara | 31 October 2023

As part of an investigation launched by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, Mesopotamia Agency (MA) reporters Delal Akyüz and Firat Can Arslan, T24 editor Sibel Yukler, Bianet editor Evrim Kepenek and journalist Evrim Deniz were detained on 25 July. Journalist Firat Can Arslan was remanded in custody, while the other journalists were released on condition of judicial control. During the hearing on 31 October, Arslan was acquitted of all charges.

The background to the proceedings is a trial against 18 Kurdish media workers, which is also pending in Diyarbakır and is still ongoing. 15 of the journalists were held in pre-trial detention for over a year in the allegedly contrived trial without charges and on vague "terror charges". The long detention was based on the false testimony of an anonymous "witness".

Arslan was specifically accused of spreading news about the prosecutor Mehmet Karababa and his wife. The latter wrote the indictment in the trial against the 18 media workers. During the trial, it also became known that his wife was a member of the panel of judges presiding over the trial. To avoid a scandal, they were transferred to new courts by the Council of Judges and Prosecutors.

Other charges brought against Arslan were "propaganda for a terrorist organisation" and "glorification of criminals". The charges were based on accompanying and documenting the funeral of Nagihan Akarsel. The journalist, academic and Jineolojî researcher, who was born in Konya in central Anatolia, was assassinated last October by the Turkish secret service (MIT) in the Sulaymaniyah city of southern Kurdistan. On the sidelines of her funeral, the police arrested two media workers, including Firat Can Arslan.

The trial of MA correspondent Arslan was monitored by numerous press freedom NGOs, including the Media and Law Association (MLSA) and the Dicle Firat Journalists' Association (DFG). The organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSF) also followed the proceedings closely. Its Turkey correspondent and representative Erol Önderoğlu called the trial of Arslan a "revenge action" and spoke of legal harassment. He said the case clearly showed the extent of arbitrariness in the Turkish judiciary and the damage caused by it, which could not be compensated for.

Released from prison the Sincan Prison in Ankara this afternoon, Arslan was welcomed by his family members, members of the Dicle Firat Journalists' Association, the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) Ankara branch, Arslan's lawyers and Mesopotamia Women Journalists' Association (MKGD).

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Leyla Güven acquitted of charge of sedition

ANF | Silopi | 1 November 2023

The Kurdish politician Leyla Güven has been acquitted of charges of sedition. A criminal chamber of the Silopi Regional Court in the province of Şırnak assessed the defendant's demand for accountability for massacres of the Kurdish population as not criminal in its verdict on Tuesday. The verdict is not yet legally binding.

The Silopi public prosecutor's office had accused Güven of sedition. The core of the indictment is the authorities' belief that the 59-year-old gave a "hate speech" in order to "incite hatred against part of the population, thereby attacking the human dignity of others and disturbing public peace."

Güven gave the speech in December 2020 at a memorial event for Taybet Inan in Silopi. The 57-year-old, who was known as "Mother Taybet" during her lifetime, was shot dead by the Turkish military on the street during a curfew declared in the district town in December 2015. Inan's death was particularly dramatic because the mother of eleven's body could not be recovered for seven days. The Turkish security forces shot at everything that moved. Her brother-in-law Yusuf Inan was also shot while attempting to recover Inan's dead body.

Leyla Güven, who was arrested a few days after the memorial event for alleged membership in a "terrorist organization" and has been in prison ever since, took part in the memorial event in her role as co-chair of the grassroots movement "Democratic Society Congress" (KCD). In a speech at the time, she said: "The fight for justice for Taybet Inan and all other people who have fallen victim to the genocidal policies of the Turkish state continues resolutely. We will demand accountability from the murderers who continue to commit massacres against Kurdish society today in order to destroy this people."

Leyla Güven did not attend the trial in Silopi in person, but was integrated into the trial from a prison in Elazığ via a video conference system. In her defense speech she said that she stood behind her statements. "Of course, I will criticize the state and the government if they cause incidents like this. The death of civilians in armed conflicts must be avoided at all costs. If it is nevertheless accepted, criticism of this approach is all too human – whether the state likes it or not."

Throughout her entire political life, she has only made one demand: end the war and establish a just peace. This goal goes hand in hand with absolutely preventing the death of civilians. "I will fight for this until the end of my days."



Osman Kavala: I haven't lost hope

ANF | 1 November 2023

Osman Kavala has completed his sixth year in prison. In a message he sent from prison, Kavala said: "I have been unjustly imprisoned for 6 years, despite the absence of any incriminating evidence. While waiting for an end to this, my prison conditions deteriorated when the Court of Cassation upheld this injustice."

The message continued: “I was honoured to receive the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize, awarded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), a prize named in honour of Vaclav Havel, who himself endured incarceration. Yet, the attacks by Hamas on civilians and the humanitarian disaster in Gaza caused by Israel’s bombardment left me unable to feel any content.

I hope that international organizations will become more attuned to the injustices in Palestine, which fuel terror and violence, bringing about immense sorrow, and take strong initiatives towards peacebuilding in the region that adheres to the international legal norms.”

The message added: As Havel said, “the most important thing is not losing hope”. I have not lost hope that the rule of law will eventually prevail in my country.”

Osman Kavala

After graduating with a degree in Economics from Manchester University in 1982, Osman Kavala took over the management of Kavala Group companies. Dedicated as he was to running the family business, Osman Kavala was also deeply attuned to cultural forces affecting Turkey. In response to the oppressive atmosphere in the aftermath of the military coup on September 12, 1980, he contributed to the foundation of İletişim Yayınları (İletişim Publishing House) in 1983 with the goal of inspiring positive social change.

Osman Kavala was taken into custody on 18 October 2017. On 1 November that year, he was arrested on both Article 309 (“attempts to abolish, replace or prevent the implementation of, through force and violence, the constitutional order of the republic of Turkey”) and Article 312 (“the use of force and violence, to abolish the government of the Republic of Turkey or to prevent it, in part or in full, from fulfilling its duties”) of the Turkish Penal Code. Article 309 was related to an investigation into the 2016 attempted military coup, and Article 312 was related to an investigation into the Gezi Park protests. The indictment accuses the defendants of forming the mastermind behind the scenes of the Gezi Park protests.

The trial opened on 24 June 2019. The verdict in the so-called Gezi Trial was only delivered on the 18 February 2020, when Kavala was acquitted. However, just hours after his acquittal on Article 312, the chief prosecutor of Istanbul demanded the continued detention of Kavala due to Article 309.

He was acquitted of Article 309 on 20 March 2020. However, he didn’t leave prison as, on 9 March 2020, he had been arrested on Article 328 (“securing information that, due to its nature, must be kept confidential for reasons relating to the security or domestic or foreign political interests of the State, for the purpose of political or military espionage”).

On 28 September 2023, the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation upheld the aggravated life imprisonment sentence for Osman Kavala in the Gezi Park trial, along with 18-year prison sentences for Can Atalay, Tayfun Kahraman, Çiğdem Mater, and Mine Özerden.

Jailed in Evin Prison, Narges Mohammadi is denied treatment for refusing to cover her head

ANF | 2 November 2023

Imprisoned Iranian women's rights activist Narges Mohammadi is not referred to hospital for treatment because she refuses to cover her head.

In a statement on Instagram on Wednesday evening, Mohammadi's family said, citing the prison director, that their daughter is banned from being transferred to a cardiac clinic on orders of higher authorities. According to the family, this is the second time Mohammadi has been denied transfer to hospital.

According to the family member, the prison administration even refused to take Nergis to the infirmary without a headscarf after a medical team went to the women's ward in the notorious Evin Prison to treat Narges Mohammadi by echocardiogram.

The family stated that Mohammadi is in need of urgent treatment for heart and lung problems, adding: "She is even ready to risk her life by rejecting the imposition of wearing a headscarf for medical treatment".

Narges Mohammadi was awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize in October. The women's rights and human rights activist was thus honoured for her "struggle against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all", said Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chairwoman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Norway's capital, Oslo. She said this would also honour the thousands of people who took to the streets against discrimination against women in Iran at enormous personal risk. Mohammadi's courageous struggle also involved personal sacrifices, she added.

Narges Mohammadi was born in Zanjan in northwest Iran in 1972 and grew up in the Kurdish towns of Qurwe (Qorveh) and Şino (Oshnavieh), among others. She worked as a journalist and is the deputy chairperson of the Iranian Defenders of Human Rights Center (DHRC). She has been in the resistance for women's rights in Iran for three decades. Mohammadi has paid a high price for this: her biography is a story of arrests, violence and torture.

In total, the regime arrested Mohammadi 13 times, convicted her five times and punished her with a total of 31 years in prison and 154 lashes, said Reiss-Andersen. The 51-year-old is also currently imprisoned, serving a long-term sentence in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison. In late 2022, during the height of the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" (Woman, Life, Freedom) revolution against the mullah regime's power apparatus, she revealed in a report the torture of dozens of women in the high-security prison. The uprising ignited in September last year over the state feminicide of Kurdish woman Jina Mahsa Amini, who was maltreated to death in police custody for allegedly violating dress codes. The protests were bloodily put down by the regime - and the dress laws for women have since been further tightened. Since Sunday, 16-year-old Armita Garavand has been in a coma in a hospital after an assault by so-called "morality guards" on the Tehran metro. She is also accused of violating the rules on veiling.



International organizations call on Turkey to release the HDP politicians imprisoned for 7 years

ANF | 3 November 2023

The Turkish government should abide by international law and implement the binding judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) by immediately releasing politicians Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, who formerly co-chaired the opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), four rights organizations said today.

The four nongovernmental organizations—Human Rights Watch, the Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support Project, the International Commission of Jurists, and the International Federation for Human Rights—made their call on the seventh anniversary of the politicians' wrongful imprisonment.

“The seventh anniversary of the unlawful incarceration of Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ is a stark reminder of the Erdoğan presidency's willingness to use detention for political ends to silence democratically elected opposition politicians representing millions of Kurdish and leftist voters in Turkey,” said High Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “In defying the binding ECtHR judgments ordering the politicians' release, Turkey is flagrantly violating its legal obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights and international law more broadly.”

On November 4, 2016, months after being stripped of their parliamentary immunity, Demirtaş, Yüksekdağ and eight fellow members of parliament from the HDP were arbitrarily detained and placed in pretrial detention, with four others incarcerated over the following five months. At the time, the HDP held 10.7 percent of seats in Turkey's parliament and was backed by over five million voters. While the 12 other deputies whose cases are covered in the ECtHR judgments are no longer in detention, Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ remain incarcerated.

All the former parliamentarians have been repeatedly prosecuted in individual proceedings based exclusively on their exercise of their right to freedom of expression, protected under international law. This included their political speeches and activities, which did not involve or advocate violence. When a mass trial was opened against them in 2021, many of those ongoing individual case files were merged. The vague and wide-reaching accusations against them in this trial include allegations of “undermining the unity and territorial integrity of the State” (separatism) and even “murder.” These accusations relate to their support for protests that mainly took place in cities in southeast Turkey between October 6 and 8, 2014. The politicians have been held responsible for all offences allegedly committed over the course of these protests, which were organized against the brutal siege of the Kurdish-majority northern Syrian town of Kobane by the extremist armed group Islamic State (also known as ISIS). During the protests, 37 people reportedly died.

The evidence against the politicians, on the basis of which Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ are currently detained, consists of two social media postings supporting protests over the Kobane siege sent from the HDP Twit-

ter account, together with the politicians' nonviolent political speeches, lawful activities, and witness statements against them added to the case file years later that raise serious questions of credibility.

The ECtHR determined in three judgments—two pertaining to Demirtaş in [November 2018](#) and [December 2020](#), and one to Yüksekdağ and 12 others in [October 2022](#)—that their detention on the basis of speeches and social media postings was a politically motivated move to silence them, “stifling pluralism and limiting freedom of political debate, the very core of the concept of a democratic society.” The court found that their rights to liberty, to freedom of expression, and to be elected had been violated. The facts forming the basis on which Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ are detained and were prosecuted for in the 2021 mass trial are substantially the same as those contained in the proceedings which the ECtHR found to be insufficient grounds for their detention.

“Despite the European Court ruling that the grounds to justify Yüksekdağ and Demirtaş’s detention were insufficient, the Ankara public prosecutor in April 2023 requested their conviction on numerous alleged offences concerning their political speech, which may result in their life imprisonment without parole,” said Temur Shakirov, interim director of the International Commission of Jurists’ Europe and Central Asia Programme. “This underscores the ultimate political motives behind the ongoing case targeting the two and reinforces doubts about the fair administration of justice in the country.”

After Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ’s detentions in November 2016, Turkey held a landmark referendum and several crucial election campaigns. The April 16, 2017 constitutional referendum introduced a system of governance concentrating power in the hands of the president. It was followed by the June 24, 2018 presidential election in which Demirtaş ran as a candidate from his prison cell against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the March 31, 2019 local elections, and, most recently, the May 14-28, 2023 parliamentary and presidential elections.

“With two prominent figures of the opposition in detention, the country has been deprived of a significant measure of meaningful democratic debate and fair elections around these crucial campaigns,” said Reyhan Yalçındağ, vice president of the International Federation for Human Rights. “With the March 2024 local elections fast approaching, the Committee of Ministers and the other Council of Europe bodies need to use all available means to ensure the end of the continuing violations of Demirtaş’s and Yüksekdağ’s rights, including their rights to participation in public affairs, which is also a violation of the rights of millions of voters.”

The Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, responsible for overseeing member states’ implementation of ECtHR judgements, has issued six decisions and two resolutions calling on Turkey to release Demirtaş from detention. At its December 5-7 session this year, the Committee of Ministers will for the third time examine Turkey’s failure to implement the judgment pertaining to Yüksekdağ and release her from detention.

The four nongovernmental organizations have made [a joint submission to the Committee of Ministers](#) asking it to issue a decision in December calling for the release of Yüksekdağ.

“Turkey has ignored the Committee’s numerous decisions and interim resolutions calling for Demirtaş’s immediate release. This refusal to comply with Turkey’s international obligations has been repeated in the case of Yüksekdağ,” said Ayşe Bingöl Demir, director of the Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support

Project. “The Committee must intensify its scrutiny against Turkey in relation to these cases without further delay, and this must include the triggering of infringement proceedings, in line with the route rightly followed in the case of the imprisoned rights defender Osman Kavala.”

Eighteen other elected former party officials and mayors from the HDP and an affiliated party, the Democratic Regions Party, are also currently detained. Among them is the prominent former elected mayor of Diyarbakır, Gültan Kışanak, detained since October 25, 2016, and Sebahat Tuncel, former co-chair of the Democratic Regions Party, detained on November 6, 2016. Kışanak’s pretrial detention has exceeded the legal limit of seven years under Turkish law, notwithstanding that seven years’ pretrial detention is a flagrant violation of international human rights law. The detentions of the politicians are blatantly arbitrary and politically motivated, and those imprisoned should be immediately released, the organizations said.



Trial against Kurdish activist Kenan Ayaz begins in Germany

ANF | Hamburg | 3 November 2023

The trial against Kenan Ayaz began at Hamburg Higher Regional Court on Friday amid great public interest. The Kurdish activist is accused of being a member of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) under sections 129a/b of the German Criminal Code (StGB). Ayaz was arrested at Larnaca Airport in Cyprus in March 2023 on the basis of a European arrest warrant requested by the Federal Court of Justice and extradited to Germany at the beginning of June. Since then, he has been detained in Hamburg’s Holstenglacis remand prison under stricter prison conditions.

At the start of the trial, the ‘Free Kenan Solidarity Committee’ called for the immediate release of Kenan Ayaz at a rally in front of the Hamburg Higher Regional Court. In a speech, Giorgos Koukoumas (AKEL), a member of parliament who travelled from Cyprus, pointed out the political background to the trial and said that Kenan Ayaz was not accused of any acts of violence. The AKEL politician reported on the great solidarity with Ayaz and the protests against his extradition to Cyprus. He called for the PKK to be removed from the EU list of terrorist organisations and expressed his full support for the Kurdish people’s struggle for dignity.

The hearing was watched by numerous media representatives and dozens of other people, including Cypriot MP Koukoumas, the co-chair of the Hamburg left-wing parliamentary group, Cansu Özdemir, and former HDP MPs Selma Irmak and Nihat Akdoğan, who live in exile in Germany. Not all those interested were allowed into the court hall due to a lack of space, and queues formed outside the courtroom due to the court’s poor planning.

The defendant showed the victory sign upon entering the hearing room and was greeted with standing ovations by the trial observers.

The indictment does not accuse Kenan Ayaz of committing an act of violence. The indictment is based solely on the argument that he communicated and met with a large number of people in northern Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia between 2018 and 2020 on behalf of the PKK, some of whom are also

categorised as members of the PKK by German law enforcement authorities. He is also alleged to have organised legal demonstrations and rallies and participated in fundraising activities.

After the indictment was read out, the lawyers made a detailed opening statement in which the political nature of the proceedings was made clear. The defendant is expected to make a statement on the political accusations against him on 13 November. Two witnesses have been summoned for the next day of the trial on 7 November. The other hearings are scheduled for 16 November, 23 November, 24 November, 27 November, 30 November, 5 December, 7 December, 11 December, 14 December, 19 December, 20 December and 21 December 2023, each starting at 9.30 a.m.

In the opening statement, the defence lawyers Antonia von der Behrens, Stephan Kuhn and Efstathios C. Efstathiou stated the following facts, among others:

“Mr Ayaz is a political person, a political Kurd. He has suffered massive political persecution in Turkey. He has already been unjustly imprisoned twice in Turkey. He was arrested in 1993 at the age of 18, severely tortured and sentenced to 15 years in prison solely on the basis of his false and unsubstantiated statement that he had been a member of a PKK committee in Alanya for two months, of which he had to serve eleven years under the worst possible conditions. After his release, he did not leave Turkey, but took part in legal Kurdish educational work and in the election campaign of the legal Kurdish party, for which he was imprisoned again for six months and subsequently acquitted by the Turkish judiciary in 2007, but not compensated. In 2010, Mr Ayaz was charged in Turkey with alleged membership of the KCK on the basis of his educational work in Diyarbakir. He is one of 151 defendants in the main KCK trial, a pilot trial designed to criminalise and marginalise Kurdish civil society in its entirety. Although Mr Ayaz was able to flee to Cyprus and was recognised there as a political refugee, the Turkish regime is still looking for him and wants to convict him on the basis of the KCK indictment. The offences of which Mr Ayaz is accused are of a political nature.

The explanation for the fact that Kurds in Germany continue to be intensively persecuted as alleged members of the PKK as terrorists and that considerable resources are spent on this can only be that these criminal proceedings are not in Germany's domestic but in its foreign policy interests. In short, the ongoing and even increasing criminal prosecution of Kurds under Section 129b of the German Criminal Code is due to the pressure exerted by Turkey on Germany and other EU member states to prosecute alleged supporters of the PKK without restraint.

The proceedings here are therefore originally political, as they are based on a political decision, the authorisation to prosecute. Without this decision, Mr Ayaz would not be in the dock today. Not only is the decision to prosecute Mr Ayaz a political one, but also the accusation for which he is being prosecuted is that he has been politically active for certain political goals in a legal manner. This no longer has anything to do with ordinary criminal proceedings and this makes it very difficult for Mr Ayaz to defend himself against the accusations.”

Military aggression and occupation

SDF thwarts Syrian regime-backed mercenary attack

ANF | 30 October 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) Media Centre issued a statement about the attack carried out on Sunday by mercenaries backed by the Syrian regime on the villages of Abu Hardoub, Dhiban, and Abu Hamam. The SDF successfully thwarted the attack and killed 19 mercenaries.

The statement said: “On Sunday morning, mercenaries backed by the Syrian regime launched an assault employing heavy artillery, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades on the villages and towns of Abu Hardoub, Dhiban, and Abu Hamam, situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River. This offensive led to numerous casualties, including civilians.”

The statement added: “The attack commenced at five o’clock in the morning, originating from three different directions: the Syrian regime-controlled areas of Sabikhan, Dweir, and Al-Mayadin, on the western bank of the Euphrates River. Despite the relentless shelling, the mercenaries sought to infiltrate the villages and towns of Abu Hardoub, Dhiban, and Abu Hamam.

Nevertheless, our forces confronted them, resulting in intense clashes that culminated in the elimination of 19 mercenaries, including 6 in the town of Dhiban and 13 others in the village of Abu Hardoub. Furthermore, a vessel transporting a contingent of mercenaries was obliterated, and 20 mercenaries sustained injuries, among them Marwan Al-Fadel, a prominent figure in the Syrian regime-backed militia “Aousoud al-Sharkiya”. Our forces also confiscated substantial quantities of weaponry, ammunition, and military apparatus.”

The statement continued: “A mortar shell originating from the western bank of the Euphrates impacted a civilian house, resulting in the martyrdom of four civilians and the injury of ten others. Additionally, three of our fighters attained martyrdom during the skirmishes with the mercenaries.

Our forces affirm their unwavering commitment to preserving the security and stability of our territories. They stand resolute in taking decisive measures against anyone who seeks to jeopardize the safety and tranquility of our region.”

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Guerrillas continue inflicting blows on the Turkish army

ANF | Behdinan | 30 October 2023

YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) and HPG (People's Defence Forces) continue the resistance against the Turkish invading forces in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG Press Center statement on Monday, guerrillas continued their actions against the Turkish occupation army which carried out further attacks on guerrilla areas.

Details of the latest actions by the guerrillas and attacks by the Turkish army are as follows:

Zap region

Guerrillas intervened against the occupiers in Sîda Resistance Area on 28 October.

Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region

In the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area, guerrillas struck the occupiers with heavy weaponry on 28 October and three positions were damaged.

On 29 October, YJA Star guerrillas destroyed an explosive-laden drone of the Turkish army in Girê Cûdî Resistance Area. In another action on the same day, a soldier was shot dead by a guerrilla sniper.

In Girê Amediyê Resistance Area, guerrillas struck the occupation forces with heavy weapons 12 times on 28 October. Two military tents were destroyed and three positions were damaged.

On the same day, strikes by YJA Star guerrillas left a position of Turkish forces in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area damaged.

Turkish attacks with banned weapons

On 28 October, the battle positions in Girê Çarçel Resistance Area in Metina region were shelled twice by explosive-laden drones, and six times by unconventional explosives.

On 29 October, the battle positions in Sîda Resistance Area in Zap were shelled once with unconventional explosives.

On 29 October, the battle positions in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were shelled twice by unconventional explosives.

Aerial and ground attacks by the Turkish army

On 28 October, Turkish jets bombed the areas of Kanîsarkê and Deşta Kafya in Garê region, and the area of Gundê Bazê in Metina region.

On 28-29 October, the regions of Zap, Şehîd Delîl Western Zap and Metîna were bombed by attack helicopters.

The regions of Zap, Avaşîn, Şehîd Delîl Western Zap, Metîna and Xakurkê were shelled by artillery.



SDF publishes names of its fighters who died in clashes in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | 31 October 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) published the names of fighters killed in fighting in Deir ez-Zor on Sunday. The fallen are Demhat Qamişlo (Tamir Ahmed Ibrahim, born 1998 in Qamishlo), Baran Dêrik (Ciwan Remadan Murad, born 1999 in Dêrik) and Ezam Heseke (Khaled Horan al-Etiye, born 1993 in Deir ez-Zor). According to the information, they died in the village of Cerdob.

The SDF said in a statement: “When our forces responded to the attacks by the Syrian regime gangs in the east of Deir ez-Zor, three of our fighters died. Our forces foiled the attack and infiltration attempts aimed at destroying the security of the region.”

The three fallen fighters sacrificed their lives to stop the attackers, said the statement released by the SDF press office.

The SDF expressed its condolences to the families of the martyrs and said: “We firmly believe that our forces are capable of destroying all plans and attacks against the region. Our comrades’ dreams of freedom and victory will be fulfilled.”

Clashes broke out after a coordinated attack by government mercenary troops in Damascus. The groups, armed with heavy artillery, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, had attacked and attempted to infiltrate towns on the other side of the river from the western bank of the Euphrates in the autonomous region of Northern and Eastern Syria.

A mortar shell hit a residential building, killing four civilians and injuring 10 others. According to the SDF, 19 attackers were killed and twenty others were injured.

In Deir ez-Zor on the Syrian-Iraqi border there is currently increasing military tension between the US and Iran as a result of the war against Gaza.



Turkish attacks with unconventional bombs against guerrilla areas continue

Serhat Ararat | Behdinan | 31 October 2023

For three years, the Turkish army has been attacking Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna in the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq) with all its might. However, the large-scale attack, which was meant to lead to success within a few weeks, encounters a highly mobile and at the same time highly professional guerrilla force that masterfully combines both the positional warfare of tunnel systems and the battle of fast-moving units in the field.

In order to break this resistance, the Turkish army uses all means at its disposal and goes far beyond conventionally permitted weapons. Chemical weapons and unconventional bombs continue to be used against the guerrillas. In doing so, the Turkish army concentrates its forces on certain key positions. Most recently, the focus has been on the resistance areas of Girê Ortê and Şehîd Delîl in Metîna as well as Girê Cûdî on the western front of Zap.

Footage taken by the guerrillas shows the Turkish army planting unconventional explosive devices, quickly retreating and then detonating them. The footage of the detonation of the bombs shows the high pressure and the rocks flying around as a result of the huge explosions. The smoke from the detonations spreads over hundreds of metres.

You can watch the footage from this link: <https://anfenglishmobile.com/kurdistan/turkish-attacks-with-unconventional-bombs-against-guerrilla-areas-continue-70081>



SDF captures a terrorist while planting an IED in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | 31 October 2023

Aided by the cooperation of the local people, the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) successfully captured a terrorist in the town of “Al-Sabha” in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor, while he was attempting to plant an IED in front of one of the civilian shops in the town.

“Immediately upon his arrest, our forces began investigating him to find out who supported him and who motivated him to initiate terrorist acts, as well as the motives of the terrorist operation he intended to carry out, which primarily targeted safe civilians,” said the SDF Media Centre in a statement on Tuesday.

The SDF statement pointed out that: “With the cooperation of our people, we will spare no effort in pursuing terrorists and anyone who attempts to undermine the safety and stability of our regions.”



Today is World Kobanê Day

ANF | 1 November 2023

For 9 years, the Kurds have celebrated World Day for Kobanê on 1 November. But how was that date chosen?

After the attacks of ISIS on Kobanê in 2014, many writers, artists, academics, activists, historians, journalists, representatives of civil society organisations and MPs signed a statement to express solidarity with the city and demand humanitarian assistance for its residents. Thousands of people took the streets in many countries all around the world to show their support to Kobanê in its struggle against the Islamic State.

The EU-Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC) and the Peace Camping initiative against ISIS launched a petition to call for “Global mobilization for Kobanê and humanity”. 130 well-known people signed the petition in the first four days. The 130 international signatories, including American linguist Noam Chomsky; Adolfo Perez Esquivé, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 1980-Argentina; Bishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1984 and Michel Roland, President of Médecins du Monde, called for a global rally against ISIS for Kobanê and for humanity.

In the statement, the signatories wrote: “The so-called international coalition to fight ISIS has not fulfilled their real international legal obligations. Some of the countries in the coalition, especially Turkey, are among the financial and military supporters of the ISIS terrorists in Iraq and Syria. If the world wants democracy in the Middle East, it should support the Kurdish resistance in Kobanê. We encourage people all over the world to show their solidarity with Kobanê. Go to the streets and demonstrate.”

On 1 November 2014, millions of people around the world took to the streets to express their solidarity with the heroic resistance of Kobanê.

Since then, November 1 has been celebrated as World Kobanê Day.



KCK: Let's protect the revolution in Kobanê with the spirit of resistance and solidarity

ANF | Behdînan | 1 November 2023

The Co-Presidency of the KCK Executive Council issued a statement on the occasion of ‘World Kobanê Day’.

The statement underlined the recent attacks by the Turkish state on Rojava and its civilian infrastructure, but also the approach of the Turkish government towards Hamas and ISIS.

The statement said: “The states and international organizations are not taking a sincere and fair approach, they are approaching the war in Gaza according to their interests. First of all, the AKP-MHP government and Tayyip Erdoğan are taking such an approach. They claim that they are against the attacks on Gaza, but they do not hesitate to do to Rojava and the Kurds what is being done to Gaza.”

The full statement reads as follows:

“After the liberation of Kobanê [from ISIS], November 1 was declared ‘World Kobanê Day’ and later November 2 was declared ‘World Rojava Day’. Since then, both have been celebrated by the peoples of the world. Undoubtedly, the revolution in Rojava is the result of the common struggle and work of the peoples of the Middle East and the world. The resistance and victory in Kobanê was also the result of this common resistance and struggle of the peoples. Therefore, the revolution is strongly supported by the peoples of the Middle East and the world.

We would like to once again congratulate everyone on this very important revolution and resistance of our time and express our strong solidarity with the revolution in Rojava. We send our greetings to the patriotic and revolutionary people of Rojava and Kurdistan. On the occasion of this important day, we express our gratitude to all those who stand in solidarity with the Rojava revolution, who resist, continue the struggle and make great sacrifices. We would also like to respectfully and gratefully commemorate all the martyrs of the democratic revolution. We remember them and especially all those who were martyred in the resistance of Kobanê, and we reaffirm our commitment to the martyrs and our promise of success. The victory of the revolution in Rojava and the resistance in Kobanê is due to the resistance and sacrifices of thousands of international comrades like Arîn, Avesta, Gelhat, Ulaş and Lêgerîn. They and their comrades will always be remembered and kept alive as symbols of this revolution and resistance.

When Kobanê was attacked by IS, the peoples and revolutionaries of the Middle East and many parts of the world, especially the people of the four parts of Kurdistan, mobilized for the liberation of Kobanê and joined the Kobanê resistance. Thus, the resistance grew and IS was defeated and Kobanê was liberated. The liberation of Kobanê from IS also brought about the protection and survival of the revolution in Rojava. Because with the fall of Kobanê, the revolution was supposed to be strangled and brought down. But this was prevented by the common resistance of the peoples. Although IS was supported by all kinds of reactionary forces, especially the fascist AKP-MHP government, the defense of Kobanê was successful and the revolution in Rojava survived. It was saved from the occupation and showed clearly what the common resistance of the peoples is capable of. The resistance and the victory of Kobanê have shown everyone that there is no power higher than solidarity and the common struggle of the peoples, and that no technical and material power is superior to the will of the peoples and the passion for free life that reveals this will. There is no doubt that this will and this passion will liberate the whole world from the domination of capitalist modernity. It is this will through which democratic modernity will be regained.

The real power behind IS was the AKP-MHP government. It was the AKP-MHP government that made IS attack the Kurds, Rojava, Êzidis [Yazidis] and Kobanê. IS follows the same mentality as the AKP-MHP government and acts according to its policies. Today, it is the AKP-MHP government that is managing IS and trying to revive it. It is well known that after the liberation of Kobanê, when it became clear that the revolution in Rojava could not be eliminated by IS, the AKP-MHP government directly intervened and started the occupation and annexation attacks against Rojava. Efrîn, Serêkaniyê and Girê Spî were occupied and annexed and the attacks on Rojava in general increased and continue until today.

With the new attacks that started on October 5, it has become clear that the real aim of the AKP-MHP government is genocide. In these attacks, dozens of production and residential facilities, schools and hospitals, places of worship, dams have been bombed and hundreds of people have been martyred and seriously injured. This is a clear genocide. Tayyip Erdoğan and Hakan Fidan have declared this openly and

have done it in front of the eyes of the world. But the states and international institutions did not react to these open genocidal attacks. This has made it clear that the states and international institutions have economic and political relations with the genocidal AKP-MHP government and they do not raise their voice against the genocidal attacks on Rojava because of their relations of interest. A similar approach can be seen in the attacks on Gaza and the Palestinian question. The states and international organizations are not taking a sincere and fair approach, they are approaching the war in Gaza according to their interests. First of all, the AKP-MHP government and Tayyip Erdoğan are taking such an approach. They claim that they are against the attacks on Gaza, but they do not hesitate to do to Rojava and the Kurds what is being done to Gaza. This is a great shamelessness and hypocrisy. They are trying to do this in front of everyone's eyes. But while this is happening, these developments have unmasked the AKP-MHP and Tayyip Erdoğan and made the truth better understood by everyone.

As we can see, the threat to Rojava has not disappeared. The revolution is threatened and attacked by the forces of capitalist modernity. By eliminating the revolution, they want to suppress and destroy the people's desire and struggle for a free life. The Turkish state and the AKP-MHP government are trying to eliminate the revolution and carry out the Kurdish genocide because of their anti-Kurdish mentality. But the forces of capitalist modernity are also behind these attacks and policies. Because the revolution is a free living space created by the common struggle of the peoples. The states do not want such a space to exist. Therefore, they do not oppose the attacks of the Turkish state against Rojava. On the contrary, they support them. The Turkish state is attacking Rojava and committing genocide with the support it receives from the USA, NATO, Europe and other states and with the weapons it buys from them. Therefore, these powers are partners in the genocide that is taking place in Rojava. They cannot escape this responsibility.

The developments have proved that the revolution in Rojava can only be protected by the common struggle and resistance of the peoples. As it can be seen, the sovereign powers are in conflict and at war with each other. World War 3 is taking place between the powers of capitalist modernity. It is a war caused by the conflict of sovereignty and power. As part of this, the Turkish state and the AKP-MHP government want to turn this process into an opportunity to destroy Rojava and carry out the Kurdish genocide. This is their only policy and the goal they want to achieve with their attacks. The only way to stop this is for the peoples and all democratic forces to take a stronger stance and resist with an understanding of solidarity and common struggle. The conditions require us to recover and develop the spirit of unity, solidarity and resistance that was developed during the Kobanê resistance. November 1 World Kobanê Day and November 2 World Rojava Day must be celebrated with this historical awareness and responsibility. The peoples of the Middle East and the world, especially the people of Rojava and Kurdistan, women, youth, socialists, democratic forces and all those who oppose exploitation must strongly support the Rojava Revolution in the spirit of resistance and solidarity.”

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YPG: The Kobanê resistance makes us more determined to defend the Rojava revolution

ANF | 1 November 2023

The General Command of the People's Defense Units (YPG) issued a statement to mark 1 November, World's Kobanê Day.

The YPG said: "On this important and meaningful day, which marks the first of November, International Kobanê Day, we are proud of the heroes who made the Kobani resistance known to the world, their dedication and their sacrifices, with all reverence and respect. We remember our comrades Arin Mirkan, Revan, Gelhat, Paramaz Kazalbas and Herdem, and the resistance fighters of redemption in the Sarzori school. We are grateful to those people who have become a ring of defense around Kobani with their hard work and heroic resistance. They united with the freedom fighters and brought down the dark reactionary mentality of ISIS

The statement added: "ISIS, which has become a major threat to humanity in this century in which we live, with the support of international and local forces, especially the occupying Turkish state, through unspeakable atrocities, massacres and genocide, wanted to destroy the hopes, dreams and beauty of human life.

The victory was achieved as a result of the 134-day resistance led by our forces YPJ and YPG in Kobanê against ISIS nine years ago, which no one dared to fight, like the reality of people who do not accept injustice, oppression, subjugation, slavery and captivity and want to be free. This resistance entered the pages of history. Humanity, which witnessed the resistance of the YPG and YPJ, stood alongside the freedom and honor fighters against the reactionary mentality of ISIS. By uniting the peoples and standing with Kobanê, it was not the city alone to be liberated. Rather, humanity revived its hope for life again, and light triumphed over darkness. Kobani became a graveyard for the dark mentality of ISIS and the last stone was placed on his grave in Baghouz."

The statement continued: "Today, the occupying Turkish state, the government of the AKP-MHP, represents ISIS, it uses and employs all its capabilities to liquidate and overthrow the Rojava revolution, which is considered the common heritage of humanity. Although the ISIS threat is not finished yet, the attacks by the Turkish state pose a danger not only to our region, but also to the world. The international forces remained silent in the face of the brutal attacks by the Turkish state because of their interests.

Before ISIS rises again, humanity must stand, which declared a general call and stood with Kobanê before 9 years ago for the sake of human values. This time it is necessary to embrace the Rojava Revolution, which is its own legacy, and show a stance against the dark mentality of the Turkish state. We, as the YPG and the YPJ on the occasion of the anniversary of the liberation of Kobanê we repeat our promise to our martyrs and our people to protect the Rojava Revolution against all kinds of attacks of fascism and backwardness and to preserve the gains of the Rojava Revolution."

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Turkey attacked Afrin and Shehba at least 275 times in October

ANF | 1 November 2023

According to a balance sheet released by the defense forces in the Shehba region, the invading Turkish army and allied mercenaries carried out at least 275 attacks on 55 locations in Afrin and Shehba between 3 and 31 October.

The attacks also targeted the positions of Damascus forces, killing 2 Syrian soldiers and wounding 18 soldiers and 3 civilians.

The balance sheet lists the details of the attacks as follows:

Howitzers: 1799

Mortars: 884

Grenade Launchers: 314

Missiles: 4

Tanks: 30

Kamikaze Drones: 3

Reconnaissance Aircraft: 52

Fighter jets: 1



AANES: Kobanê turned into a legacy of humanity for the peoples of the world

ANF | 1 November 2023

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) released a statement marking World Kobanê Day, 1 November.

The statement released by AANES on Wednesday includes the following:

“The city of Kobanê, thanks to its historic resistance and fighters of the YPG/YPJ, turned into a heroic deed for our people and a legacy of humanity for the peoples of the world. Defeated in Kobanê, the terrorist organization of ISIS failed to realize its ambition to establish a so-called Islamic State in Damascus and Iraq despite direct support from Turkey.

The World Kobanê Day on 1 November, when peoples of the world took to the streets to express their solidarity with Kobanê, is not only a historic development for the building of a contemporary Middle East

on the line of Democratic Modernity, but also a historic step for peoples' solidarity and support for one another in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

On the 9th anniversary of the liberation of Kobanê and World Kobanê Day, we gratefully thank our people who adopted a historic stand. The legacy of the Kobanê resistance is a legacy of humanity, but at the same time a great achievement for peoples fighting a libertarian and democratic struggle. In addition, we also extend endless thanks to our people from Syria and Kurdistan and the internationalists who came to Kobanê with a free spirit and fought for it.

Kobanê and all our regions are still under annihilation and genocidal attacks seeking to take revenge for ISIS, which is a global terrorist composition. The Turkish state is attacking our lands, committing war crimes, destroying the infrastructure that provides vital supplies for our region, and threatening peace and security. At the same time, the Turkish state is threatening the gains that were made in the course of the historic resistance against ISIS mercenaries and terror.

We esteem the worldwide support for Kobanê very highly. Standing against the Turkish state and exposing its policies and support for terror is possible through investigating the concept of annihilation and genocide against our people and protecting the revolutionary gains of our people made during their fight against terror.

We promise our people that we will remain committed to preserving the revolutionary legacy of the Kobanê resistance and the march of the martyrs of Kobanê, answering the demands of our people in North-East Syria and defending them. This will not only enable the liberation of our lands from occupation but also the successful continuation of the struggle against terror and unrest. We trust that with this determination and will, our people will liberate all the lands that are currently under occupation and build a united Syria."

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YPJ: The resistance of Kobanê has never surrendered to oppression

ANF | 2 November 2023

The YPJ general command issued a statement on World's Kobanê Day.

The statement said: "1 November is World Kobane Day, which was achieved with the united force of the people and in democratic ways. Kobanê became a clear message of resistance, that the people would not bow down to the oppression of the hegemonic forces that aimed to massacre and annihilate them."

The statement continued as follows: "In the light of the thoughts and philosophy of Abdullah Ocalan, the resistance of the Kurdish people has been achieved. With a spirit of selflessness, self-sacrificing and the joining of the people to the line of Abdullah Ocalan, the victory of Kobanê had been achieved. On this basis, we as the YPJ greet the leader of the democratic nation, Abdullah Ocalan, and again pledge our al-

liance. Abdullah Ocalan has made works and efforts that are so big and important for the fate of the peoples of the region, that they can not be put into words. If the world sees itself in the resistance of Kobanê, we also have to see that the biggest efforts that made this resistance possible have been made by Abdullah Ocalan himself. The Kurdish people in Kobane, all four parts of Kurdistan and the world stood up to the efforts of Abdullah Ocalan, and with their attitude of resistance and decisiveness have reached victory over ISIS in the Kobanê resistance.

Kobanê is the proof of the people's hope. The victory of Kobanê represents the hope for the future of the Kurdish people and all people who demand democracy and freedom. We commemorate with all respect those martyrs who have not taken any steps back against the brutality of the time. Kobanê is a result of the efforts and the vanguard role of the YPJ, YPG, and internationalist fighters. On this basis, we salute the attitude of all commanders and fighters proudly and congratulate our people, women and all forces that have decided to develop democracy on the occasion of World Kobanê Day.

The world, which had been silenced against the fascist attacks, has raised its voice again in Kobanê with the vanguard role of women. ISIS has been sent into our region as a cover-up for all self-interested and exploitative forces. ISIS clearly expresses the brutality of all the global forces that want to destroy humanity as a whole. For this reason, all four parts of Kurdistan and all democratic and freedom-seeking forces in the world have seen the genocidal attacks against Kobanê less as a physical attack on geography and more as an attack against the values of humanity. Because they saw it as a resistance to the defense of the values of humanity, the women's revolution that also started in Kobanê has become known as the defense of Kobanê and spread through the regions of North and East Syria.

The resistance of Kobanê, which has been reached through the vanguard role of women, has made it possible for humanity to take a step towards organizing itself for democracy. The defense of the homeland and society against the wave of fascism by the Kurdish youth has made it possible for a wave of freedom to come up, and all the forces that act under the cover of ISIS are covered under this wave. The ones who were the vanguard of the historical Kobanê resistance were Kurdish women. The vanguard role of women made it possible that Kobanê became the place and time that the belief in developing the system of a democratic nation grew. This hope has lit up the strengths and conviction of the whole world. With this, the resistance of Kobanê has become international and reached an internationalist level.

The revolution that has been achieved by making very valuable sacrifices is today and every day again under attack by the Turkish occupation state. Turkey, with its attacks from Kobanê to Afrin, Serekaniyê and Gire Spî continues its genocidal attacks without a break. The world that has spoken so much about the resistance of Kobanê and the bravery of its people, that has been so influenced by this resistance, is now silent about the attacks of the Turkish occupation state. Kobanê, with its resistance against ISIS, had become the city of resistance for all democratic societies. But the same city is now facing attacks by the Turkish state that are more frightening than those by ISIS. To stay silent against this is to silently agree with these attacks. Who can make these attacks stop? The unity and resistance of women and people.

Today, what will make it possible to restrengthen all the resistance of the world against fascism is to be victorious in the defense and revitalization of the spirit of Kobanê. The resistance of Kobane has brought down the borders of nation-states. We commemorate our friends Rêvan, Arîn, Medya, Zehra, Gelhat, Herdem and many more whose efforts and resistance history can never make unseen. We commemorate all the martyrs of the revolution and promise to stand up for their aims. In the end, we call upon all of our

people and the peoples of the world to say that making a free life possible will again be achieved by standing up for the resistance of Kobanê.”

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KCK calls for Kurdish-Turkish relations to be re-discussed and restructured

ANF | Behdinan | 2 November 2023

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement on the centenary of the Republic of Turkey.

The full text of the KCK statement includes the following:

“One hundred years have passed since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Now, there are debates in Turkey about what the second century of the Republic will look like. We consider it important to discuss the past century of the Republic correctly. Because the correct construction of the new century depends on a correct basis for this discussion, on learning the lessons of history and not repeating the mistakes of the past. Without this, a correct discussion of history and planning for the future is not possible. Especially when it comes to Turkey, no discussion can be correct and fruitful without taking the Kurds into account. This is nothing but a presentation of the past that does not even require discussion. The existence of the Kurdish people in this geography is a reality. They have been an essential element of the political and administrative structure that has been established both in the establishment of the Republic and in previous periods. Therefore, the correct discussion of the historical process, especially the republican period, has to be in the context of Kurdish-Turkish relations. A discussion of the Republic that is not in this context will definitely remain incomplete, erroneous and dangerous.

Unfortunately, with the establishment of the republic, the historical Kurdish-Turkish relations have deteriorated at the cost of Kurds, Turks and everyone, causing great suffering, loss and destruction. All the negatives described with the republican process have been experienced as a result of this deterioration. Since this reality has been ignored until today, none of the described negativities has been eliminated. Therefore, as the century of the Republic comes to an end, the first priority should be to reflect on and take into account this reality. This is definitely the most fundamental issue in Turkey that needs to be addressed properly. Only then can a correct discussion be held. If the right answer to the deterioration of the historical Kurdish-Turkish relations that started with the establishment of the Republic is found, then the wrong course of history can be corrected and the positive qualities attributed to the Republic or expected from the Republic, especially democracy, can be realized.

Kurdish-Turkish relations began with the arrival of the Turks in the Middle East and especially in Kurdistan. With the Battle of Malazgirt in 1071, this relationship reached a strategic level and has been on a positive course throughout history. Throughout this process, Kurds and Turks have acted and lived together, aware of each other's importance. They have survived the critical stages of history with the unity and al-

liances they have developed. Undoubtedly, this success is based on the mutual acceptance of each other and coming together around common goals.

History has never witnessed Kurds and Turks acting against each other. Problems and disagreements have been resolved under the motto of common purpose and future, and the strategic alliance has been preserved and maintained. The settlement problem of the Turkish communities who migrated from their homeland was also solved in this way. This problem was solved by breaking the sovereignty of the Byzantine civilization, the dominant imperial power of the time, in Anatolia and Kurdistan. As a result of this relationship and alliance, the Turks did not settle permanently in Kurdistan. When the Byzantine sovereignty was broken, Turkish communities moved westward to Anatolia and settled there. This is a situation that should be highlighted, and lessons should be drawn from it. If history is a subject from which conclusions are to be drawn, there is no more instructive example for the basis and nature of Kurdish-Turkish relations.

The first Kurdish-Turkish relations and alliance, which resulted in the settlement of Turks in Anatolia, continued to develop in the following periods. The Kurdish-Turkish relations and alliance played an important role in the attack and invasion of the Western powers, known in history as the Crusades, which were based on establishing domination over the Middle East. The Ayyubids emerged as part of this relationship and alliance and played an important historical role for the entire Middle East. With the establishment of the Ottoman state, this relationship developed further. Especially during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, this relationship grew stronger and determined the course of history.

In the 16th century, the Iranian and Egyptian empires threatened Kurdistan and Anatolia. These two great dangers were once again eliminated by this alliance, which had a historical and vital importance for both peoples. As a result, the Turkish communities that left their homeland and migrated settled in the Middle East, especially in Anatolia, and the threatening forces were eliminated and the problem of existence was solved. All this was thanks to the relationship and alliance that was developed with the Kurds. It was also due to this relationship and alliance that the Kurds were able to preserve their autonomy, develop their language, literature and culture and survive.

As can be seen, in the historical Kurdish-Turkish relations, there has never been domination over each other, making each other dependent and exploiting each other. There has been mutual recognition and respect for each other. The wide autonomy granted to the administrative structures in Kurdistan during the Ottoman period shows this fact. Other places were not granted such autonomy. Therefore, this relationship has lasted for centuries. Since Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] considers this very important, he discussed the historical development of Kurdish-Turkish relations and the foundations on which they are based in this framework and stated that this relationship should be updated according to today's conditions.

One of the historical turning points in Kurdish-Turkish relations was the period after World War I. The policies of capitalist modernity towards the Middle East had a disruptive effect on Kurdish-Turkish relations. In the 20th century, the historical relationship and balance between the two peoples was disturbed. With the arrival of the forces of capitalist modernity in the Middle East after the First World War, especially Great Britain and France, a new danger emerged. The geography of the Middle East, including Anatolia and Kurdistan, was occupied by the forces of capitalist modernity. This situation threatened the existence of the Turks and the autonomy of the Kurds. The conditions required their historical alliance once

again. The protagonists of the time were aware of this necessity and achieved historical success with this step. The process that led to the Republic was based on this historical alliance. The basis of this alliance was that Kurds and Turks should live together on an equal footing and coexist as two fundamental elements in the new state to be established.

Kurdistan was an important center in this process. Mustafa Kemal himself went to Kurdistan and participated in the meetings that were held there. It was in these meetings that the will and decision to act together against a common enemy was made. In these meetings, it was explicitly decided that Kurdish rights would be recognized, that there would be Kurdish autonomy and that Kurds and Turks would govern the state together as two equal peoples. This attitude was reflected in the constitution of 1921. The Kurds in the first parliament were present as deputies of Kurdistan and were summoned as such. There was no ban on Kurds in this period. Mustafa Kemal referred to the Kurdish autonomy and emphasized the importance of its realization in several statements. With these promises, the broken historical Kurdish-Turkish relations were restored and this critical period of history was successfully overcome. This process, which is called the War of Independence in Turkey, is based on these historical foundations and the relations established with the Kurds. Liberation from occupation and independence were achieved through a common struggle.

However, the subsequent process did not go as planned. After the dangers were overcome, the promises made to the Kurds were not kept and instead of a common homeland and state, the construction of a nation-state based on Turkishness was initiated. Through the Treaty of Lausanne with the forces of capitalist modernity, Kurdistan was divided into four parts. But not only was Kurdistan divided into four parts, but also the process of denial and annihilation of the Kurds began. In the constitution of 1924, the Kurdish identity was denied, and the nation-state model based on a monist mentality was adopted.

On the one hand, the Kurdish-Turkish relations were destroyed and, on the other hand, the republican project was thwarted. Thus, the ground that would change the fate of Turkey, Kurdistan and the Middle East, that would lead the peoples of the Middle East out of the hegemony of the capitalist system of modernity and ensure the development of a democratic politics was eliminated. From now on, the plans of the system of capitalist modernity have worked in the Middle East. The peoples of Turkey and the Middle East suffered as much as the Kurdish people. This situation shows that the Turkish-Kurdish relations, which should have been approached strategically, were approached tactically. In the conditions of the First World War and its aftermath, it was necessary to establish relations with the Kurds due to the difficulties that were experienced, but this relationship was not maintained after the danger was overcome. When this relationship was ended, the imperialist policy of capitalist modernity towards the Middle East prevailed and has continued in this way until today.

Undoubtedly, the Kurds were the first to suffer from this process. Kurdistan was divided and a very painful and heavy process began for the people. This is the process of genocide of the Kurds. The nation-states that established sovereignty in Kurdistan started to carry out genocide against the Kurdish people. The Turkish state, which was established with the promises made to the Kurds and with the support of the Kurds, was the main developer and implementer of this genocide. Kurdistan was seen as the expansion area of Turkish nationalization and everything in the name of Kurdishness was forbidden. The process that came to be known as the Republic was built entirely on the Kurdish genocide in its ambition to create a nation-state. The nation-states of Iraq, Syria and Iran did the same. When they failed, the Turkish state itself stepped in and prevented developments that would endanger the Kurdish genocide. For the sake of the ambitions of

the nation-state, the Kurdish people, one of the oldest peoples in history, who were the pioneers of the first socialization of humanity, who contributed greatly to the acquisition of language, culture and consciousness by humanity, and who are the ancient people of the Taurus Mountains, the Zagros Mountains and Mesopotamia, the cradle of democratic civilization, were to be destroyed. Unfortunately, we know very well that many peoples and communities in Anatolia and Mesopotamia, as well as in the Middle East and the world, have been genocided and their heritage destroyed for the sake of the ambitions of the nation-state.

This has also been imposed on the Kurds and is still continuing. The objection of the Kurdish people against the denial and genocide has also been met with a great campaign of suppression. Kurdistan has been turned into a bloodbath under the pretext of Kurdish rebellion. Every valley, plain and hill of Kurdistan was turned into a place of massacre. Kurdistan was burnt and destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were massacred in villages, towns, valleys and caves. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were massacred in Amed [Turkish name Diyarbakir], Dersim [Turkish name Tunceli], Zilan Creek. Helebca [Halabja] and the “Anfal campaign” [genocidal attack on the Kurds by the Iraqi state in 1988, in which at least 100,000 mostly civilians were murdered] were carried out. The “Tunceli Laws” and the “Eastern Reform Plans” [after the massacre of the Kurdish population in the region] were implemented. They tried to destroy the Kurdish language and culture through assimilation and genocide policies. The Kurdish people were subjected to forced migrations and uprooted from their homes. They were subjected to all kinds of insults and humiliations. Not only cultural but also economic genocide policies were carried out in Kurdistan. While Kurds were exploited as the cheapest labor force, the geography of Kurdistan with its underground and surface resources was plundered unlimitedly. Kurds were even forbidden to speak their own language and to receive education in their own language. This prohibition continues to this day. This most shameful practice in history has been inflicted on the Kurds. So can the nation-state mentality that caused all this be considered right? Can a Republic that caused all this be seen as right and positive?

The deterioration of Kurdish-Turkish relations has harmed Turkey and the Turkish people as much as it has harmed the Kurds. Except for the interests of a handful of minorities, none of the ideals expected from the new state and republic have been realized. Turkishness and nationalism have become nothing more than a tool of power. The Turkish people have been constantly pushed around with Turkishness and nationalism. The society was poisoned with Kurdish enmity. As a result, the people were not allowed to make serious democratic demands and progress. The Turkish people have been made incapable of thinking and doing anything other than feeding themselves. The society was not allowed to have any say in its future. A caste has been created in politics and bureaucracy that rules the society by capturing the state mechanisms. Society has been exploited by this caste and a handful of capitalists. The working people, left to starve, defected to the centers of capitalist modernity. Society was handed over to sects, big landowners and usurious moneylenders. The new state and republic were even backward compared to the old. Those who rule the state take no social responsibility. They were able to make all kinds of relations and agreements with the colonial powers and reactionaries. The republic, which was founded on the relationship with the Kurds and the struggle against the policies of the capitalist imperialist powers towards Turkey, Kurdistan and the Middle East, has taken the opposite approach. The genocide of Kurds was determined as a fundamental policy and all kinds of relations were entered into with the forces of capitalist modernity to the detriment of society. In order to continue its policies of Kurdish genocide, it has become dependent on the support of foreign powers. In order to obtain this support, no concessions have not been made to foreign powers. Kurdish hostility has rendered the state completely unprincipled. It is as if only one principle and law has been applied, and that is Kurdish enmity. The state system based on Kurdish enmity and Kurdish mas-

sacres has turned like a boomerang and hit its owner every time. Capturing and ruling the state was only possible through war. The wars to seize and rule the state were not inferior to the dynastic period. There have been practices that surpassed even that. Endless coups, ambushes, betrayal, denunciation, executions and massacres have been experienced, too many to count. Even a look at today's AKP-MHP is enough to understand the situation. The AKP-MHP government is at war not only with the Kurdish people, but with almost every section and every member of society. Both society and the state have been completely handed over to sects and moneylenders. Undoubtedly, all this is being done and legitimized on the basis of Kurdish enmity.

The deterioration of Kurdish-Turkish relations has harmed not only Kurds and Turks, but also all other peoples of the Middle East, especially Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, Persians, Jews and Assyrians. When Kurdish-Turkish relations deteriorated in the most critical period of history and a conflictual situation emerged, the policies of capitalist modernity and imperialism dominated the Middle East. The peoples of the Middle East were divided and fragmented, and peoples were made enemies with the developing nationalism. Only the forces of capitalist modernity benefited from this. The massacre and genocide of the Palestinian people, which is on the agenda of the world today, is certainly not independent of this. If the relationship that led to the foundation of the Turkish Republic had been preserved and maintained, the developments in the Middle East would have been different. The policy of capitalist modernity, which poisoned the nation-state and nationalism to make peoples turn against each other and make everyone dependent on itself, would not have prevailed and a process of democratization would have developed in the Middle East.

The PKK is a movement of rebellion, struggle and liberation of the Kurdish people against denial, massacre and genocide. In essence, it means restoring the broken Kurdish-Turkish relations. In this sense, it is an extremely important historical breakthrough. The PKK has succeeded in bringing the Kurdish people back to a level where they can play their historical role by making them conscious, willful and combative. This is a service not only for the Kurdish people, but for all the peoples of the Middle East, especially the Turkish people. It is very important that this reality is well seen and understood by everyone in Turkey. The military coup of September 12 was a step that aimed to completely end the historical Kurdish-Turkish relations. The actors who carried out this coup aimed to destroy Kurdishness completely. But as history and recent times have proven, there cannot be Turks without Kurds and Kurds cannot exist without Turks. Ending the Kurds also means ending the Turks. The PKK prevented this from happening by standing against the coup of September 12 and thwarting this move. In this respect, a legitimate and extremely necessary struggle was waged and a historical role was played. Unfortunately, the Turkish society has been prevented from understanding this reality. On the one hand, the propaganda of the forces in control of state power, on the other hand, the inadequacy of the left, socialist, democratic and enlightened sections of society who could not fully overcome nationalist influences, and the lack of a democratic public opinion have delayed the recognition of this reality. Even today, this reality has not been communicated to Turkish society. The Kurdish democratic forces as well as the Turkish democratic forces, socialist movement and intellectuals are responsible for this.

As the 100th anniversary of the Republic draws to a close, it is extremely important and necessary to refer to the international conspiracy that began on October 9, 1998 and culminated in the İmralı isolation on February 15, 1999, in terms of Kurdish-Turkish relations. Because the international conspiracy is one of the biggest blows to historical Kurdish-Turkish relations. The international conspiracy aimed to end the Kurdish-Turkish relations that the PKK was trying to re-establish, and to prevent the successful conclusion

of this process. The fact that the US, Israel and NATO were the main forces that planned and carried out the conspiracy sufficiently demonstrates this fact. By revealing the inner face of the international conspiracy and what was intended by it, Rêber Apo prevented the realization of this goal. It is Rêber Apo who has been waging this struggle for twenty-five years under conditions of Imrali captivity. Now the international conspiracy is being carried out on the basis of absolute isolation and non-communication, cutting off all contact of Rêber Apo with the outside world. It is Kurdish-Turkish relations that are being held captive in Imrali and placed in absolute isolation. It is very important that the public opinion, intellectuals, democracy forces, socialist and libertarian forces in Turkey understand this fact and emphasize and voice it.

The aim of the AKP-MHP government is to carry out the Kurdish genocide through fascism and thus to completely destroy the historical Kurdish-Turkish alliance. This was a goal that was put forward with the military coup of September 12. Historically, the Unionists wanted to do this by basing it on Turkishness. The September 12 regime, on the other hand, planned to do this mainly on the basis of religion. Today, the AKP-MHP government is trying to do this by combining the two. By doing so, it has shown that it is the fiercest and most dangerous regime. So much so that the existence of the Kurds is considered dangerous for the future of the state and they say that the Kurds must be eliminated for the survival of the state. Not only does it say this, but in order for this to happen, it engages in an intense war with the Kurds, attacking, killing, arresting and imprisoning people everywhere. With an intensive special warfare, it tries to make the Turkish society accept that this is a 'rational idea'. But this is neither rational nor moral, conscientious or legal. It is clear that this is as much anti-Turkish as it is anti-Kurdish and that it harms the Turks as well. The deterioration of Kurdish-Turkish relations and the quarrel between Kurds and Turks will only serve the interests of foreign powers. History has sufficiently proven this fact. This is also evident from today's developments. Fighting with the Kurds will neither be a national quest, nor will it contribute to the Turkish people and Turkey. This approach definitely leads to the opposite results. The AKP-MHP government's rhetoric of nationalism and the 'fight against terrorism' has nothing to do with reality. It is purely a means of gaining public consent for the war against the Kurds and covering up policies that ultimately benefit foreign powers. This creates the perception that all problems will be solved by destroying the PKK. The biggest distortion is created here. The reality is the opposite. The Kurdish question did not evolve with the PKK. There was a Kurdish question before the PKK. The PKK is not the creator of the Kurdish question, but is a result of it. Neither the Kurdish question can be solved nor the Kurds can be finished by destroying the PKK.

One of the realities that the AKP-MHP government has covered up and distorted with the lies of nationalism and 'terrorism' is Syria and Rojava. The Turkish society is being deceived with the lie: "The Kurds will establish a state in Rojava and attack and destroy us." This is the basis for attacking, occupying and annexing Syria and Rojava. In reality, neither the Kurds are building a state in Rojava nor Rojava is hostile to the Turks. On the contrary, Rojava is the most friendly place in the world with the Turkish people. In Rojava, there is a structure formed with a democratic nation mentality, and this mentality is based on the brotherhood and coexistence of peoples. To derive enmity against the Turkish people from this can only be enmity against the Kurdish people. It is very clear that the current genocidal colonialist state, which puts forward these lies and harms the Turks as much as the Kurds, cannot represent the Turks and the peoples of Turkey.

Now as the 100th anniversary of the republic has been completed, an evaluation of the past century clearly shows that democratization in Turkey cannot be realized without a democratic political solution to the Kurdish question. Without the democratization of Turkey, the social, political, economic and cultural

problems of Turkey and Turkish society cannot be solved. The change, development and progress expected from the Republic cannot be achieved. The independence of the state and the freedom of society cannot be ensured. The state cannot be taken out of the coup mechanism and out of the control of Gladio structures. All this is possible only through the democratization of the Kurdish question. Therefore, the most fundamental issue that is needed is to bring together and crown the republic with a real democracy. Within a democratic Republic, Kurds and Turks can live together with other peoples in Turkey.

Therefore, as we enter a new century, there is a dire need to revisit Kurdish-Turkish relations and to develop a relationship in line with its historical meaning. Kurds act with this awareness and demonstrate this will. Kurds see the solution to their problems in the democratization of Turkey and at the same time struggle for it. The Kurdish people definitely see the solution here, believe in it and do not seek any other solution. This is our position as the Kurdish Freedom Movement. This is the solution method that Rêber Apo believes in and defends. The development of this will also be beneficial for the Kurds and Turks as well as the other peoples of the Middle East and will serve the solution of the problems in the Middle East. New Kurdish-Turkish relations crowned with democracy will also develop the democratic alliance of Arab, Armenian, Jewish, Persian, Turkmen, Assyrian and all other peoples of the Middle East and their will to live together. This means the beginning of a new process in the Middle East where historical problems will be resolved. The second century of the Republic must be characterized by development and transformation on this basis.

The democratic forces of Turkey, the socialist movement, democratic faith groups, intellectuals, writers, artists, all segments of society in favor of democracy and freedom and, of course, the Kurdish democratic movement have an important responsibility to accomplish this historical task. We call on everyone to act with this sense of responsibility, to initiate a process of discussion and restructuring that reconsiders Kurdish-Turkish relations, and to realize this by ensuring the democratic alliances of the peoples on this basis, and we state that we, as the Kurdish Freedom Movement, will be in the struggle for this.

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Turkish attacks on North-East Syria continue

ANF | Qamishlo | 2 November 2023

The Turkish army has carried out yet another aggression in the north-east of Syria. The attacks, carried out by border troops, were directed against two villages in the self-governing city of Tirbespiyê (Al-Qah-taniyya). According to reports, no one was injured in the attacks, but there was an unknown amount of material damage.

The shelling initially targeted the Syriac village of Til Ebas. A checkpoint of Syrian government troops was targeted and three artillery shells hit the immediate vicinity.

The Yazidi village of Til Xatûn also came under fire on Thursday.

Another attack was directed against the village of Til Zîwan, 13 km from Qamishlo city.

Turkey is bombing the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria on an almost daily basis. The attacks, both from the ground and from the air, are carried out with the de facto approval of the international community. On Tuesday, two civilians were injured in drone attacks by the Turkish state in Manbij. One of the victims was a minor.

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HPG publishes balance sheet of war for October

ANF | Behdinan | 2 November 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) published the balance sheet of war in Kurdistan for the month of October. Accordingly, guerrillas from HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) carried out 278 actions against the Turkish army in the previous month, in which 205 soldiers - including three senior officers - were killed and 38 others were injured. Twelve guerrillas also lost their lives last month.

The balance sheet of the HPG stated the following:

"There is no question that the Republic of Turkey's policy of creating the Turkish nation state with the bloody legacy of Turkification designed to annihilate the peoples, especially the Kurds, has not achieved any results in the last hundred years. Those who mean to determine the life span of the Kurdish people, its resistance and defence every day are confronted with the reality of a rebellious people and guerrilla struggle in all fields in the new century. As long as the Turkish state does not recognise the existence of the Kurdish people and their right to live freely and insists on its genocidal policy, this struggle will continue uninterruptedly and achieve results. The resistance of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla last year and in October is a concrete indicator of this.

October was marked as a month in which our people spent every day fighting against the international conspiracy and the genocidal and colonialist system everywhere. While the resistance of our people to end the isolation policy in all dungeons, to secure the physical freedom of our Chairman, against the enemy oppression and occupation plans and to build a free life on the basis of the strategy of the revolutionary people's war is growing day by day, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla is trying to contribute its part to this struggle with its selfless resistance developed through the Apoist spirit of sacrifice.

The struggle was initiated in October with the action of our comrades Rojhat Zilan and Erdal Şahin of the Brigade of Immortals (Tabura Nemiran) in Ankara. The sacrificial action of 1 October shook the colonialist and genocidal system to its foundations and taught the fascist regime a very significant lesson. The Apoist spirit of sacrifice that comrades Rojhat and Erdal carried to the forefront with their professional action spread in waves all over Kurdistan and revealed important results. The freedom guerrillas of Kurdistan, guided by this high spirit, courage, selflessness, professionalism and zeitgeist of the era, carried out dozens of actions almost every day and dealt heavy blows to the enemy from Serhed to Amed and Mardin, from Metîna to Zap, Avaşîn and Xakurke. In Bakur (Northern Kurdistan) and Medya Defence Zones, it demonstrated a significant level of resistance and warfare by skillfully combining tactics such as infiltrations, offensive attacks, ambushes, sabotage and sniper actions. These actions by our forces, which developed continuously and with high performance, thwarted the plans of the occupying forces and left the en-

emy without results. The Turkish occupation state, its fascist regime and its special war media constantly tried to hide the truth and the results of the war in Bakur and the Medya Defence Zones from the Turkish society and the whole public opinion. The reality of the war, which was brought on the agenda of Turkey by the great action of comrades Rojhat and Erdal, continued uninterruptedly throughout October. The daily reports and scenes of this war have been presented to our people and the whole public.”

12 guerrillas fell as martyrs

According to the balance sheet, Rojhat Zilan (Özkan Şahin), Erdal Şahin (Hasan Oğuz), İbrahim Tolhildan (Bilal Şahin), Nurhak Dêrik (Ramazan Temel), Jîndar Rûmet Meyaser (Berjîn Arşimet), Zagros Besta (Ahmed Çorto), Hüseyin Pîran (Cahit Aktay), Rûken Zilan (Zeynep Sevim), Cudî Çekdar (Kıymet Özmen), Bedran Merdan (Nazım Hikmet Ülgen), Ciwan Amed (Onur Kamiloğlu) and Seyit Brûsk (Muhammed Gönyeli) fell as martyrs whilst putting up a brave struggle in October.

KDP has become the protection force of the Turkish state

On the other hand, HPG pointed out that the Turkish occupation efforts in Southern Kurdistan (North Iraq) deepened under the pretext of fighting the guerrillas. As the invasion operation launched on 7 October in the Barzan region continues, the Turkish army has stationed troops in both higher and lower areas, demonstrating that it wants to capture all strategic points in Southern Kurdistan. “Although there is no permanent guerrilla presence in Barzan, the fact that the KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party] has not even put this occupation on its agenda nor protested against it clearly shows its collaboration and the degree of surrender to which it has submitted. As various media in Southern Kurdistan have revealed through concrete documents, the KDP forces have positioned Turkish troops at their positions in Girê Amêdî and on the Metîna line, provided logistical support, built roads, defended the enemy soldiers and served the occupation plan of the Turkish state. The developments of the last month have shown that the KDP has become the protection force of the Turkish state. In the context of the invasion of Southern Kurdistan, it is behaving as an aide of the occupiers.”

The balance sheet of war in Kurdistan in October is as follows:

Attacks by the Turkish army

Airstrikes by combat aircraft: 201

Attacks with chemical weapons: 39

Attacks with unconventional explosives: 137

Attacks by explosive-laden drones: 197

Fallen guerrillas

Guerrillas martyred: 12

Guerrilla actions against Turkish occupiers

Actions by the guerrillas: 278

Ambushes: 1

Infiltrations: 1

Offensive attacks: 1

Sabotage actions: 6

Coordinated guerrilla actions: 18

Sniper actions: 56

Clash-Damage-Intervention: 83

Actions with heavy weapons: 112

Enemy casualties:

Occupiers punished: 205

High-ranking officers punished: 3

Occupiers wounded: 38

Equipment destroyed

Transformer: 1

Radio locator: 2

Drones: 6

Military positions: 10

Surveillance cameras: 13

Military tents: 17

Equipment damaged

Sikorsky helicopters: 2

Armoured vehicles: 1

Construction machinery: 3

Grenade launchers: 1

Military positions: 55



Feminicide

Kurdish girl killed by Iranian state forces laid to rest in Tehran

ANF | Tehran | 29 October 2023

Sixteen-year-old Armita Geravand was detained by the so-called morality police in Tehran on 1 October and injured in what human rights groups said was an altercation with officials of the morality police in a Tehran metro because she was not wearing a headscarf.

Geravand suffered a serious head injury after she was pushed against a pole by morality police officers in the metro. State media denied violence by the morality police. The 16-year-old, who was a taekwondo athlete according to her family, fell and hit her head due to low blood pressure, the official statement said.

The Kurdish teenager was declared brain dead a week ago and died in a hospital on 28 October after 28 days in a coma.

Armita Geravand's family wanted to bury their daughter in Kermanshah but were prevented by Iranian state forces. According to reports, the Iranian intelligence service threatened the family and forced them to bury her in Tehran.

Geravand was laid to rest in Beheştî Zera Cemetery in Tehran. During the farewell ceremony under siege, eight people were taken into custody.

The incident came only one year after the case of 22-year-old Kurdish woman, Jina Mahsa Amini, who was arrested by the so-called morality police on 13 September 2022 during a family visit in Tehran because she did not wear her hijab as prescribed. She was severely tortured and fell into a coma in custody and died on 16 September at the intensive care unit of Kasra Hospital in Tehran.

The state femicide of Jina Mahsa Amini triggered a revolution under the motto “Jin, Jiyan, Azadî” (Woman, Life, Freedom) across the country. The women-led uprisings that spread from Rojhilat to the whole of Iran have created an irreversible revolution in people's minds, resulting in the deaths of at least

500 people and injuries to thousands more. Despite the family's complaint against those responsible for Amini's death, no action has been taken so far.

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Lawyer Nesrin Sotoudeh taken into custody at the funeral of Armita Geravand

ANF | 30 October 2023

Nesrin Sotoudeh, an Iranian lawyer, writer, and outspoken human rights champion was reportedly taken into custody and beaten while attending the funeral of 17-year-old Armita Geravand on Sunday.

Sotoudeh, who was not wearing a hijab at the funeral service, is apparently being held at the Vozara Detention Center, which is used to hold women accused of failing to wear the mandatory hijab, and is where Kurdish young girl Jina Mahsa Amini was taken before her custodial death in September 2022.

Armita Geravand is only the latest young Iranian woman to die at the hands of Iran's hijab police as part of their relentless campaign to suppress the rights and dignity of Iranian women. Their physical engagement with Geravand on the Tehran metro in early October, captured on video, resulted in a fatal head injury.

Armita Geravand's family wanted to bury their daughter in Kermanshah but were denied permission by Iranian state forces. According to reports, the Iranian intelligence service threatened the family and forced them to bury her in Tehran.

Geravand was laid to rest in Beheştî Zera Cemetery in Tehran. During the funeral, which was celebrated under siege, eight people were taken into custody.

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Declared “arrested” in Turkey for kidnapping a Yazidi girl, ISIS member turns out to be at liberty

ANF | 30 October 2023

A high-ranking ISIS operative, declared “arrested” on Saturday by the governor of Ankara, has now been confirmed to be at liberty, Bianet reported. The operative was put on trial for “human trafficking” for kidnapping a Kurdish Yazidi girl and subsequently offering her for sale on the dark web.

Arzu Kurt, co-chair of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) Ankara Branch, revealed that the ISIS leader, identified as S.A.O, was called in for questioning following a hearing on October 23. After

providing a statement to the authorities under the guidance of his attorney, appointed by the Ankara Bar Association, S.A.O. was released, according to the report.

S.A.O. did not attend or was brought to court sessions for approximately two years, according to Kurt. However, he appeared to give a statement after reports emerged that the child had been handed over to the family that had abducted her, leading to questions about why the authorities did not obtain his statement earlier.

During the hearing on October 23, the court imposed restrictions, citing the need to protect the child's personal information from being disclosed in the media. This decision has been criticized for attempting to shield the case from public scrutiny and awareness.

ÖHD's Kurt emphasized that the child, who had been compelled to live with the family responsible for her abduction for nearly eight years, was once again placed under state protection.

This revelation follows earlier statements by the Ankara Governor's Office, which announced S.A.O.'s arrest after news of the Yazidi girl's alleged return to the family that abducted her. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Family and Social Services disclosed that the child, A.S.O., was placed under state protection during the operation at the same residence.

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Ecocide

Environmental activist sentenced to prison in Iran

ANF | 29 October 2023

Branch Four of the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Kermanshah sentenced environmental activist Yasser Nouri to four months in prison for allegedly engaging in “propaganda against the state”, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported.

Nouri, a former political prisoner and environmental activist from Javanrud, Kermanshah Province, was arrested by security forces without a legal order on 29 July and subsequently taken to a detention facility located in Kermanshah's Naft Square. He was released on bail 12 days later.

In 2015 and 2016, Nouri was also arrested by the Ministry of Intelligence and the Intelligence Organisation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), resulting in a five-month prison sentence and a fine.

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AKP continues its ecocide in Hakkari

ANF | Hakkari | 30 October 2023

Thousands of living creatures and plant species live in Hakkari, which has a magnificent countryside with its mountains, valleys and streams. The AKP government is trying to destroy this natural life through profit, dams, HEPPs and mines. Dozens of dams and HEPPs were built in the Hakkari Cilo mountains and Zap Valley.

There are also dozens of mines in Hakkari and its districts. Due to these mines, many water resources in the region have been polluted and natural life has been destroyed. The AKP government, which destroyed large valleys and streams with HEPPs and dams, has also turned natural life in small valleys and streams into concrete under the name of ‘improvement’. Thousands of trees in the valleys were cut down, plants and living creatures were destroyed and buried in concrete.

The streams passing through Hakkari city center and its neighbourhoods and many valleys in Gever (Yüksekova), Çelê (Çukurca) and Şemzînan (Şemdinli) are being destroyed. Those valleys and streams are home to thousands of kinds of plants, insects, reptiles and other creatures. Almost all of the stream beds in villages, hamlets and neighbourhoods have been buried in concrete.

A citizen named Isa Çiftçi, living in Hakkari city center, said that nature was being destroyed due to the so-called ‘improvement’ of the streams.

Çiftçi added: “There were not only trees there. This was also the home of many animals. They were natural wonders, especially in spring, summer and autumn. These places were sites where people breathed. There were many wild fruits. There were walnut, apple, pear and other fruit trees. We used to collect our fruits in these valleys every year and sell the extra ones in the city center. But today, these green areas have been buried under concrete. Thousands of trees in and outside the stream were destroyed. Currently, there are no trees, plants or other living things in the streams. The recuperation of streams destroyed nature.”

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Human Rights Violations

No news from Rojnews Arabic Service editor since his detention at Semalka Border

ANF | 29 October 2023

Rojnews Arabic Service editor Süleyman Ahmet's mother, Sultana Ehmed, said that their son, who stayed with them for a week, passed through the KDP-controlled Pêş Xabûr (Semalka) Border Gate to return from Rojava to South Kurdistan on 25 October, but since that day she has not heard from him.

"I spoke to my son on the phone for the last time just before he crossed the border. This shows that my son was detained by the KDP," said the mother, and called on all authorities in South Kurdistan to explain what happened and where her son is held.



HEDEP calls for the democratization of the Republic of Turkey

ANF | 29 October 2023

The Republic of Turkey has existed for one hundred years. The co-chairs of HEDEP (Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party), Tülay Hatimoğulları and Tuncer Bakırhan, called for the democratisation of the country.

The statement issued by HEDEP co-chairs on the anniversary of the founding of the Republic said: "At the beginning of the second century, the reconstruction of a democratic republic is before us as a historical task. The most important and fundamental deficit of the first century was the lack of a democratic character. Differences in culture, belief and identity could not be lived freely and respectfully on the basis of equal civil rights, and the monist mentality was predominant. For this reason, the Kurdish question could also not be solved by democratic and peaceful means."

The statement pointed out that: "Building a democratic republic is the key to the emergence of free citizens and a democratic nation. The problems of peoples and faiths, especially the Kurdish question, can be solved through a democratic republic. A democratic republic of Turkey can help solve the historical problems in the region by enabling the Kurds, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Jews, Persians, Syrians and all other peoples of the Middle East to live in peace. We must learn a lesson from the first hundred years. Without wasting another hundred years, let us build together a democratic republic that enables all peoples and faiths, the oppressed and the exploited, to live as equal and respected citizens in a democratic environment."



Two HEDEP members imprisoned in Mersin

ANF | Mersin | 29 October 2023

The Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) Party Assembly member Naif Bulğa and HEDEP Youth Council member Mazlum Kaya were detained in the southern province of Mersin on 28 October.

The prosecutor demanded the imprisonment of both HEDEP members because of their social media posts, accusing them of “disseminating propaganda for a terrorist organization” and “being members of a terrorist organization”, meaning the PKK.

Both HEDEP members were remanded in custody and sent to prison.



Iraqi Journalists Union ask Iraqi Kurdish authorities to say what happened to Rojnews Arabic editor

ANF | 30 October 2023

The Iraqi Journalists Union condemned the detention of Rojnews Arabic editor Süleyman Muhammed Ahmed and stated that the KDP should immediately say where he is being held.

Muhammed Ahmet was detained by KDP forces at the Fêşxabûr (Sêmelka) Border Gate on 25 October while crossing into the Kurdistan Region. There has been no news from him since that day.

Dr Erade Ciburi, one of the executives of the Iraqi Journalists Union, spoke to Rojnews about the case and said; “We strongly condemn the kidnapping of Rojnews Arabic service editor Süleyman Muhammed Ahmet. We want the authorities to clarify his situation as soon as possible.”

Pointing out that the abduction of journalists from Hewlêr and the border gate under the control of KDP has increased recently, Dr Erade Ciburi stated that this practice is systematic and illegal.



Türkdogan: A new constitution should support a decentralized system

ANF | Ankara | 31 October 2023

At the opening of parliament, Turkish head of state and government Tayyip Erdoğan announced that a new constitution for Turkey would be written as quickly as possible. HEDEP deputy co-chair and renowned human rights lawyer Öztürk Türkdogan called for a new constitution for Turkey and Northern Kurdistan based on pluralism, participation and human dignity, saying it represents an opportunity for the country. HEDEP has already prepared a draft for such a constitution.

“The military and the AKP enforced their constitutions in a state of emergency”

Türkdoğan MP is responsible for the HEDEP Committee on Law and Human Rights. In an interview with ANF, he underlined the urgency of a completely new constitution to solve the country's problems. “The current constitution was written by the coup generals of 1980 and enforced under martial law. It is a curious fact that the constitutional amendment that introduced the presidential model in 2017 was also pushed through by the AKP under conditions of emergency. In fact, the government is not satisfied with the constitution that it has made itself, but I think the essential question is what kind of constitution the government is looking for here.”

“The constitution-making process is an opportunity”

Türkdoğan said that after the AKP came to power in the 2000s, it commissioned intellectuals to prepare a draft constitution and that after the 2011 elections, the four parties in parliament formed a reconciliation commission to work on a draft constitution for about a year.

“As a result of this work, they agreed on about 60 articles on individual rights and freedoms, fundamental rights and liberties. The government system of the state, i.e. whether it should be a strictly centralized or a decentralized state, was discussed, as was the question of whether mother tongue education should be free or not. The new constitution was actually an opportunity, because a 'dialogue process' began in 2013. In countries like Turkey, i.e. in countries that have not completed their conflict and resolution processes and these have fallen by the wayside, constitution-making processes also represent an opportunity. In other words: during the constitution-making process one has the opportunity to address the most fundamental problems to solve.”

“The problems cannot be solved with a rigid centralized system”

The lawyer said that “the most fundamental problem facing Turkey is the Kurdish question. The Kurdish question cannot be solved through a rigid centralized state system. It can only be solved with decentralized models in which the powers of local governments are strengthened - some call it democratic autonomy, some call it autonomy, some call it empowered local governments. Such structures were envisaged in the draft constitution of 1921. Therefore, the process of constitution-making should be approached in this spirit. The President has stated this, but he needs to follow up on it. We remind him of this and urge him to do so. A new constitution, a civil constitution, is all well and good, but what kind of constitution do we want to have? If this is about the family model or results in an even more rigid, centralized state system, then, of course, we will stay away. But if it's about us first sitting down at the table, talking about the constitution together and deciding what we want, then of course we're there.”

“We will definitely talk about the Kurdish question”

Türkdoğan continued: “We view the constitution-making process as a place where solutions to fundamental questions are discussed. When this process begins, we will, of course, discuss the Kurdish question. We will discuss the Alevi population's demands for equal citizenship rights. We will discuss social gender equality in alternative to the concept of family. We will talk about the right to freedom of expression. We will talk about freedom of the press. We will talk about torture and ill-treatment in prisons. We will talk

about freedom for political prisoners. We will talk about economic prosperity, about a fair distribution of income. We will talk about restoring our right to draft the budget, that is, the right to draw up a budget that returns the people's money to the people. We have many topics we need to talk about. If someone avoids talking about it, then they are not doing politics. The process of making a constitution is precisely where politics is made.”

“AKP has brought with it a shift to the right and a conservative push”

Türkdoğan added: “The AKP has pushed through a shift to the right in Turkey. It has various Islamist references. This contradicts the secular line that Turkey has pursued since its founding. There is no end in sight to the process of rightward development and backward turn. Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention on the Protection of Women from Violence shows where the AKP is going in this process. It could be one of the AKP's political goals to use the headscarf as a pretext to incorporate this process of limitless expansion of conservatism into a constitution. I'm not sure how other parties behave in this process. At the moment, the AKP does not have the power to achieve this alone. The other parties should be reminded that if they are willing to give up basic social principles in order to maintain their alliance with the AKP, if they are willing to give up the secular structure of this country, then their political identity is also changing. Everything in Turkey has changed in an incredible way.”

“HEDEP's draft constitution is ready”

Öztürk Türkdoğan stated that HEDEP's draft constitution was ready and many problems could be solved with a new constitution. The HEDEP MP emphasized the democratic principles of openness, pluralism and participation: “The constitution must start with human dignity, with the principle of equality in terms of dignity and rights. When we talk about pluralism in democracy, the denial of Kurds or Kurdish identity and the denial of other peoples will stop. There are formulations for this. You don't necessarily have to name all the peoples, you have to propose an approach that includes them all. There must be a wording in the constitution that ends the denial of world views and religions. Pluralism is related to these issues: linguistic pluralism, ethnic pluralism, religious pluralism. When we think about minority rights, this is the real constitutional guarantee of these rights. Participation is very important. If you accept pluralism, you cannot dismiss the mayors elected by the Kurds in a place with a large Kurdish population. This violates the principle of participation. The trustee policy must be abandoned. There can be no open government if the country continues to be governed by secret decisions of the National Security Council. At the moment, the government is already doing what it wants. If it comes to the public with a new constitution, then the constitutional principles common in modern democracies must be anchored in it. Turkey must chart a path forward. We must ensure social peace as quickly as possible. The way to get there is to deal with our social problems. The process of creating a constitution is also a process of coming to terms with it.”

An ecological and social constitution without discrimination

Türkdoğan emphasized that, in HEDEP's opinion, a new constitution must guarantee all the rights and freedoms that are contained in international agreements to which Turkey is a party. It is also essential to include the rights of social groups and communities in the constitution: “Some parties in Turkey agree with us regarding the rights and freedoms of the individual. We recall that Kurds, Alevis, Arabs, Lasis, Circassians, as well as the various faiths and religious groups also have rights, and we want these collective

rights to be guaranteed in the Constitution. We remember that nature also has rights and we say that there should be constitutional guarantees for the protection of nature. We want social systems to be anchored in the constitution so that people have an income that enables them to lead a dignified life. We want a decentralized government system. Turkey achieved this with the constitution of 1921. It accepted these principles. We need to stop the politics of denial and sit down together. We want community coexistence, as enshrined in United Nations resolutions, to become a constitutional principle. In short, with this constitution we want to solve the Kurdish question, guarantee the rights of the different communities, ensure the Alevi demands for equal citizenship rights and, of course, also make progress in gender equality.”

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RojNews news agency calls on Iraqi authorities to act for the release of missing journalist

ANF | 31 October 2023

There is still no trace of the journalist Silêman Mihemed Ahmed, who disappeared in South Kurdistan on 25 October.

The news agency RojNews now said with certainty that Ehmed was abducted by forces of the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party). Silêman Ahmed has been working for the agency’s Arabic-language editorial team for five years and disappeared after visiting his family in Aleppo, while he was at the Sêmalka-Pêşxabûr border crossing between the Autonomous Region of North and East Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

The last contact with him was a telephone conversation with his mother when he was already in the KDP’s area of responsibility.

RojNews’s Baghdad bureau chief, Muhammed Cihadi, called on the Iraqi authorities to take urgent action for the journalist. Cihadi said that his colleague was kidnapped by the KDP in order to suppress opposition opinions and free voices. “We demand intervention from the Iraqi authorities so that Silêman Ahmed is released. Hewlêr (Erbil) was once considered a safe place for journalists and activists. “The government in Hewlêr is now systematically taking action against media professionals and is thereby damaging the reputation of the Kurdistan Region,” said Muhammed Cihadi.

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Father of Leyla Şaylemez, on trial for attending commemoration for his daughter, acquitted

ANF |Amed | 31 October 2023

Kurdish Youth Movement member Leyla Şaylemez was murdered along with PKK founding member Sakine Cansız and KNK representative Fidan Doğan in Paris on January 9, 2013. The contract killer died in custody, and the principals have not been charged or convicted to date.

The father of Leyla Şaylemez, Abdulbari Şaylemez, was put on trial in Turkey for allegedly “making propaganda for the PKK” at a commemoration event for the victims of the triple murder in the heart of the French capital.

The hearing took place at the 4th Heavy Penal Court in Diyarbakır on Tuesday. Speaking here, Abdulbari Şaylemez said: “My daughter Leyla was murdered in a terror attack in Paris. On 7 January 2017, I attended a commemoration event at the invitation of the Municipality of Paris. I attended the event to pay tribute to my daughter and I do not think that it constitutes a crime.”

Abdulbari Şaylemez noted that he had been banned from leaving the country for 5 months because of the ongoing trial and the ban was an unjust measure against his person and the family as he did business in Germany. He demanded his acquittal.

The lawyer of Şaylemez stated that his client did not chant a slogan during the commemoration event in question, citing the video analysis report as proof.

While the prosecution demanded that Şaylemez be sentenced for “spreading terror propaganda”, the court board ruled for his acquittal.



Former HDP MP Hüda Kaya detained in Istanbul

ANF | Istanbul | 1 November 2023

Former HDP MP Hüda Kaya was taken into custody at Istanbul airport in line with an investigation launched by Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. The 63-year-old politician is being investigated for “taking part in an illegal demonstration” and “resisting state authority and not dispersing despite warnings”.

Hüda Kaya was a member of the HDP in Turkey's parliament from 2015 until this year's elections in May. The internationally renowned book author and activist for women's and human rights has been in prison several times, and her children have also been arrested. Hüda Kaya's son was arrested and put on trial in 2011 in connection with the PKK. The trial ended with an acquittal. In 2013, Kaya went to Qandil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq with her son and spoke to the PKK leadership there. She wrote a series of articles about her impressions and worked as a journalist for the daily newspaper Özgür Gündem. In 2019, her son Muhammed Cihad Cemre was sentenced to fifteen months in prison for “terror propaganda”. In July 2022, he was arrested again on alleged terror charges.



SOHR: Turkey forcibly deported more than 200 Syrians to Aleppo

ANF | 1 November 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Turkish authorities have forcibly deported 215 Syrians through the crossings in “Euphrates Shield” areas in the northern countryside of Aleppo during the past 48 hours.

According to the observatory, 200 Syrians were transported to the Bab Al-Salamah crossing by 4 buses, while 13 Syrians were transferred to Jarablus border crossing. The authorities took fingerprints and eye scans of the Syrians to ensure that they would not return to their territory. They also forced them to put their fingerprints on papers proving their voluntary return to Syria, SOHR stated.

“Turkish authorities continue to forcibly deport Syrians through the land crossings with areas controlled by the Turkish-backed factions in “Peace Spring” and “Euphrates Shield” areas, as well as Bab Al-Hawa crossing north of Idlib, which links Turkey with HTS-held areas,” the observatory reported.

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Former HDP MP Hüda Kaya remanded in custody

ANF | Istanbul | 1 November 2023

Former HDP MP Hüda Kaya was taken into custody at Istanbul Airport on the orders of the Turkish General Prosecutor’s Office. An arrest warrant was issued against the 63-year-old politician in connection with the Kobanê trial.

Hüda Kaya was an HDP member of parliament in Turkey from 2015 until the May elections. The internationally known author and activist for women’s and human rights has been in prison several times, and her sons have also been in prison.

Kaya was remanded in custody by the Ankara 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace.

The Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) Central Executive Board (MYK) issued a written statement regarding the arrest of Huda Kaya. “The government’s hatred for Kobanê does not subside. Hüda Kaya’s arrest is the result of the politics of revenge. Her detention and arrest is the result of the government’s policy of revenge against our party, our politics, those who do not think like him and the social segments that do not surrender.”

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Police take 9 people into custody at Idil Cultural Center in Istanbul

ANF | Istanbul | 2 November 2023

The police on Thursday raided the Idil Cultural Center in Okmeydanı, Istanbul, and detained 8 Grup Yorum members and one of the centre's visitors.

The 9 people, whose reason for detention could not be learned, were taken to the Istanbul Police Department in Vatan.

The names of those detained are as follows: “Rezzan Şengül, Fırat Kaya, Rıdvan Akbaş, Vedat Doğan, Hakan İnci, Eser Çelik, Barış Yüksel, Seher Adıgüzel, Sevcan Akdoğan.”

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Journalist Tolga Şardan remanded in custody

ANF | 2 November 2023

T24 writer journalist Tolga Şardan was remanded in custody within the scope of the investigation initiated ex officio by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, on the grounds of the content of his article titled “What is in the 'judicial report' submitted by MIT to the Presidency?”. According to the accusation, the article contained words and statements that constitute the elements of the crime of “Publicly Disseminating Misleading Information to the Public” regulated in Article 217/A of the Turkish Penal Code.

Şardan, whose statement was taken by the prosecutor's office via SEGBİS by the Criminal Court of Peace in Ankara Courthouse, was referred to the Criminal Court of Peace with a request for arrest and was remanded in custody.

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CPJ: Iraqi Kurdish authorities should immediately reveal whereabouts of journalist Ahmed

ANF | 2 November 2023

Iraqi Kurdish authorities should immediately reveal the whereabouts of Syrian journalist Sleman Mohammed Ahmed, unconditionally release him, and stop harassing journalists, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Wednesday.

On October 25, Ahmed—an Arabic editor for the local news website RojNews—was arrested by Iraqi Kurdish authorities at the northern Faysh Khabur border and taken to an unknown location, according to news reports, the journalist’s brother Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed, and RojNews editor-in-chief Botan Garmiyani, who both spoke to CPJ.

The journalist’s brother and Garmiyani said that Ahmed was returning from a visit to his family in Syria when his family lost contact with him at Faysh Khabur, which is part of the Duhok Governorate.

“Iraqi Kurdish authorities should immediately disclose the location of Syrian journalist Sleman Mohammed Ahmed, drop charges against him, and release him unconditionally,” said CPJ’s Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator Sherif Mansour, in Washington, D.C. “It is unacceptable that journalists in Iraqi Kurdistan regularly have to contend with all sorts of harassment, from illegal detentions to physical attacks. Iraqi Kurdish authorities should allow journalists to work freely and without fear of reprisal.”

The Security Directorate (Asayish), which is responsible for border security in Duhok Governorate, said in a statement on its Facebook page that Ahmed’s arrest had nothing to do with his journalism but was because of his “secret and illegal” work for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK).

CPJ has documented numerous incidents of journalists being attacked, arrested, or detained in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Ali Auni, head of the Duhok bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which controls Duhok Governorate, declined to comment.

CPJ’s phone calls to Zerevan Barushki, director of Asayish, did not receive a response.

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Journalist Kocakaya sent to prison for an article she wrote in solidarity with Özgür Gündem

ANF | 2 November 2023

The Supreme Court approved on 21 July the prison sentence of 1 year and 3 months in the case filed against writer Dilşa Kocakaya. On Wednesday, the writer was arrested for allegedly making “organization propaganda” in the article she published in solidarity with the Özgür Gündem newspaper, which was closed by the Decree Law (Decree Law).

Kocakaya, who was taken to Edirne Police Department, appeared in court and sent to prison.

Dilşa Kocakaya’s family has not yet been informed about which prison she was taken to.

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Nine people from the delegation monitoring guerrillas' withdrawal in 2013 sent to prison

ANF | Van | 2 November 2023

A decision was made in the case in which 9 people who were part of the delegation that followed the withdrawal of HPG guerrillas to South Kurdistan in 2013. They were tried without detention on the charge of “being a member of a terrorist organisation”. Nine people who were arrested in Van on 3 June 2022 and released on 20 September of the same year have now been given prison sentences ranging from 6 years 3 months to 7 years 3 months.

Only the lawyers of the people on trial attended the verdict hearing held at the Van 2nd High Criminal Court. The statements of the commission members that “the PKK fulfilled its duties in the solution process, but the government did not release those detained in the KCK case, did not lower the election threshold, and did not improve the conditions of PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan” were also evaluated as aimed at “creating a perception” in the public opinion.

The court panel sentenced Abdulkерim Durmaz, Harun Okay and Atilla Kumli to 7 years and 6 months each for “being a member of a terrorist organization”; and also sentenced Behice Abi, Evin Keskin, Ömer Işık, Salih İpek, Yakup Aslan and Yılmaz Berki to 6 years and 3 months in prison on the same charges.

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Two out of five people detained in Şırnak remanded in custody

ANF | Şırnak | 3 November 2023

Five people, including two minors, were taken into custody during house raids carried out in the Silopi district of Şırnak on 1 November.

After their referral to the courthouse, two of the detainees, Mesut Avil and Hasan Azma, were remanded in custody for allegedly “spreading propaganda for the PKK”. The other detainees were released on condition of judicial supervision.

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Interview

Kalkan: We are continuing to struggle for a democratic nation and democratic confederalism

ANF | Behdinan | 3 November 2023

KCK Executive Council member Duran Kalkan spoke about the anniversary of the Turkish Republic and said: “We care about Turkey and take its development seriously. Our struggle is also for the democratization of Turkey.”

The Turkish Republic was founded one hundred years ago; how do you evaluate the development of the country in the last one hundred years? What is your approach as KCK?

As long as the AKP-MHP government continues, as long as the fascist, colonialist, genocidal attacks against the Kurds and the system of torture, isolation and genocide of Imrali continue, the resistance will continue, this war will continue.

There was a very meaningful call by 78 intellectuals, which we appreciate very much and which I mentioned before. But let's take this opportunity to say that we did not start this war, these attacks. I mean, everyone refers to 2013-14 and calls this period the 'period of the solution process'. It was not us who broke this process. Rêber Apo made it clear and stressed that the state prevented the meetings. Since then, they have not let him speak. The aggressor is the Turkish state, is the fascist, colonialist, genocidal AKP-MHP government. Everyone should focus on them and struggle against this genocidal occupation aggression. If everyone fights on their own front, if the results of the struggles are united, this fascism will collapse. It is already collapsing. That's where all this aggression comes from.

Our leadership, the Co-Chairs of the KCK Executive Council, made a centennial statement. It was comprehensive and important and showed our stance. We care about Turkey, and take its development seriously. Our struggle is also for the democratization of Turkey.

There is no change in the state administration, in the fascist dictatorship of Tayyip Erdoğan and the so-called “People's Alliance”, but I don't want to say it like that. Because I don't want to imply that there is an expectation that there will be any different by changing the leaders of the regime. Of course, we don't have that expectation. We are not saying that there is no change at all in Turkey, but if you look at what has been done, you cannot see any light on the horizon. It is the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and the day after, on October 30, 2014, the so-called ‘çöktürme planı’ [which means something like “plan to force them to their knees” and is the plan of the Turkish state to deny the existence of the Kurdish question and to try to destroy everything Kurdish] was prepared. An attack plan that is actually a genocide against the Kurds. This fascist dictatorship of Tayyip Erdoğan is implementing this plan. He has been in an all-out attack for 9 years. He says that he is attacking the PKK. Of course, they are attacking the PKK, but not only them. They are increasing the pressure and isolation in Imrali, they are in-

creasing the attacks on the guerrillas, but they are attacking all Kurds. And the collaborators take part in this. It is especially the KDP and Hûda Par who support the Turkish state. They have lost everything that makes them Kurdish.

The centenary of the founding of the Republic should have been an occasion to question itself and demand accountability for the past century. The state says that it has done so, but what are the results of its research? Tayyip Erdoğan stands on stage every day, but he doesn't talk about the problems in the history of the Republic. Does he remember that he once said against Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, "There was a genocide in Dersim"? There was a genocide in Dersim committed by the Republic, whose 100th anniversary is supposedly being celebrated. Did genocide take place only in Dersim? No. There were many massacres and genocidal attacks in Amed, Urfa, Bingöl, Serhat, Koçgiri and many others. Blame the world, blame Israel for their attacks, but don't forget that you are the pioneers of such attacks.

They say that Israel is expelling the Palestinians. This is undoubtedly true, but at the same time, Tayyip Erdoğan is denying the existence of the Kurds. He says, "Anyone who considers himself a Kurd should leave our country". And also, he once said about all the Kurds living in Northern Kurdistan and Turkey: "Let them go to hell". The Kurdish society does not forget this.

Staying there for a moment, what can you tell us about the historical relations between the Turkish and Kurdish people? And would you say is necessary for the next century?

A good account of the last century should be based on the account of the last thousand years, because the Turkish people arrived in this region a thousand years ago. It was Alpaslan himself who first established relations with the Kurdish tribes and communities and sent his own soldiers to the Kurds. Sultan Sencer also talked about Kurdistan. Rêber Apo was the first to do research into it. The Turkish people who broke away from Central Asia first came to Kurdistan and Arabia. Today they say that they fought in Anatolia and made it to their homeland. But how did this happen and who did they rely on when they fought? There is a widespread denial of history. They are trying to rewrite history and cut out the Kurds. For example, they produce a lot of TV series that propagate this storyline.

Kurds and their ancestors have been the ancient people, the ancient society of this geography in these lands for thousands of years, maybe even tens of thousands of years. The Turkish people were supported by the Kurds and Arabs of the region and also received support from many Christian communities, especially the Armenians and Assyrians. There is no problem in having a homeland and a nation, but it should not be forgotten how it was achieved. There are many questions in this regard: From whom and what kind of support did they receive? How did they arrive in Anatolia? What did they rely on when they created their homelands in Anatolia? Who did the Ottoman Empire rely on when it became an empire? How did it take over the entire Middle East in the first quarter of the early 16th century? Now they talk about the imperialist occupation. It was the Kurds who fought against this imperialist occupation. The Kurds were the most effective force in the congresses of Erzurum and Sivas. Mustafa Kemal relied on the Kurds as they were again the strongest force in the parliament opened in Ankara. There was no Kurdish denial in the parliament.

When the Republic was established, the Turkish nationalists seized the state power and started to punish all those who supported them as if they had committed a crime. They did this both internally and externally. Starting with the Circassian Ethem, they shot the guerrillas of Anatolia and continued with the liq-

liquidation of all the Ottoman generals, all those who participated in the war, who kept the army alive and enabled it to fight. It was the Kurds who defended Turkey and fought against the British and the French.

After the establishment of the Republic and the seizure of state power, a definition of Turkishness was developed and written in the constitution of 1924. The constitution that is still in force today. It says: 'The one who is bound to the state of the Republic of Turkey by the bond of citizenship is a Turk. Now, when and where does a Turk exist? According to this, it is only within the borders of the Republic of Turkey. There are no Turks outside the country because they are not bound to the Turkish state by their citizenship. Then there is no such thing as the Turkish world, which they often fantasize about. The Turkish Republic was founded on October 29, 1923, so there were no Turks before that date, because their existence is bound to the existence of this state. Now, to deny the Kurds, to deny other peoples, to deny Turkish history, culture and reality. Such denial is not only very wrong, it has many bad results.

So it is very important to look at the last century. It is a process that actually began in the 18th century and has continued ever since. But there is a basic contradiction. They say, 'We come from Central Asia, we are the continuation of the Seljuks and the Ottomans'. But you have to ask: What were the Seljuk-Kurdish relations, the Ottoman-Kurdish relations? What about Kurdish relations in the Republic? Are they the same? Why are they not studied? Why have there been so many political changes? The logic of the nation-state, the fascist, colonialist and genocidal logic, and the Turkish mentality that was developed with the Turkish Republic, this colonialist, genocidal mentality and policy, especially in the approach to different languages, cultures and peoples, must be broken. In this way, Turkey can democratize and find itself.

Why do they feel the need to ignore and destroy others, to commit genocide? If, in the past, it was because of national weakness, that has also been overcome. But this century is really not like the previous ones. It is a century of tragedy, a century of bloodshed. The Republic must be evaluated. It must be seen for what it has created, but it must also be seen for mistakes and negativity, for what it has destroyed and damaged. Self-criticism is necessary. Tayyip Erdoğan blamed Kılıçdaroğlu for this, but he has been in power for 22 years. It is the longest government of this republic. He has been the ruler for a quarter of a century. He has practiced this government mentality and policy. So he must be held accountable. He is responsible for the mistakes and errors, he has to correct them. But there is no such approach, there never has been. There is a strange mentality of always seeing oneself as right and seeing others as wrong and blaming them. This does not allow others the opportunity or the chance to live. Such an absolutely hegemonic, power-oriented approach, which sees everything as its own right and does not see others as having any rights at all, is a bad approach, a dangerous approach. It is absolutely necessary to get rid of it.

The fascism of the AKP-MHP has poisoned society. They have washed the heads of people. They have brought out hordes of anti-Kurdish fascists and gathered them in the squares. How can this society get rid of them? It is a difficult situation. In some parts, they are even trying to imitate what Hitler did. It is known how much German society suffered to get rid of Hitler's mentality even after his fall.

Now, they are imitating Hitler blatantly in Turkey. Turkey's intellectuals, politicians, revolutionary leftists, socialist forces, women's and youth organizations, workers and labourers should understand this reality well. Social chauvinism is very strong and there is such a fascist bombardment that people cannot get rid of the influence of this mentality. There can be no democratic mentality unless we get rid of it. In that case, the democratic movement cannot develop and a democratic society cannot be formed. In order to democratize the mentality and politics in Turkey, a very intensive struggle and education is needed.

This reality needs to be well understood by the socialists and democrats of Turkey. Intellectuals should take this as the basis of a big struggle. In other words, the field should no longer be left to the AKP-MHP fascism.

We made a lot of efforts, and had hopes that there could be a radical change; still it didn't happen. Many times we have brought this fascist mentality and politics in Turkey to the point of collapsing, but the global hegemonic system has always supported and protected it. They are doing it right again now, because they benefit from it. They carry out their exploitation of Turkey based on this. Now it would be right, preferable, to enter a new century with renewal, democratization, criticism and self-criticism, to make a new beginning. We have not been able to do this, as we also have shortcomings in this regard. As one of the forces waging the struggle for the democratization of Turkey, we failed to do so. This is clearly a shortcoming. We see this, and give our self-criticism accordingly. Our movement bore the burden of the struggle against fascism of September 12. The Kurds, the PKK, and the movement, bear the biggest burden in the struggle against the AKP-MHP fascism.

What is needed in the new century? Yes, we couldn't make sufficient change, but fascism was very weakened, it was exposed. It has been exposed both internally and externally, and has entered into a state of isolation. While they were saying that they would join the ranks of modern nations, they are now isolated from the world. The government under Tayyip Erdoğan has brought this about. So, if the mentality and policies of this government do not change, Turkey will face even greater disasters. Everybody should take responsibility and we as a movement are doing the same.

We have explained our position, we have made our evaluations, we have given criticism and self-criticism accordingly. Everyone should do this. In particular, the socialists, democrats, intellectuals, politicians, women and youth organizations of Turkey should do this. Of course, the rulers and those who are involved in state politics in different ways must also be forced to do this. This mentality and way of politics must be destroyed. The approach of 'one language, one nation, one state, one country' is fascism at its worst. These are the basic characteristics of nation-state fascism.

Tayyip Erdoğan considers fascism as greatness and, at the same time, he accuses others of being fascists. He has reached this level of unconsciousness. His principles are fascist principles. When he reached the state power, he became like this; an unrecognizable Tayyip Erdoğan emerged. So much so that they call him a world ruler, a statesman, they flatter him. There are many sycophants and he is very susceptible to them. In fact, he has put himself in the most negative situation. The second century did not begin with a radical change, but the ongoing process cannot be prolonged. This fascist mentality and policy will be destroyed. What could not be done in a century will develop in a few years on the basis of a new democratic Turkey, 'democratic nation' and 'democratic confederalism'. This is our belief and hope. We will continue our struggle on this basis.

Opinion

Reckoning with the last century

Selahattin Erdem | 31 October 2023

Founded on 29 October 1923, the Republic of Turkey has now existed for a hundred years, and unfortunately, the new century is beginning under the fascist-genocidal government of Tayyip Erdoğan and his People's Alliance. The last elections on 14 and 28 May were an important opportunity to change this situation. But this chance could not be used sufficiently, or, Erdoğan-Bahçeli fascism prevented it. Now it is necessary to do with the anti-fascist revolutionary struggle what was not possible with elections and to open the way for democratisation in Turkey by overthrowing the fascist dictatorship.

As 29 October approached, imposed on society for a century as “Republic Day”, the Erdoğan government’s efforts to declare itself a state increased. Tayyip Erdoğan wanted to proclaim his absolute power, his position as the “second Atatürk” on this centenary. He prepared intensively for this. On this basis, he wanted to organise enthusiastic celebrations that would last for days and perhaps weeks. He had prepared everything accordingly, including the elections in May.

But the calculation did not work out. Tayyip Erdoğan’s lie “I have finished off the PKK” was clearly denied by the sacrificial action that hit the Interior Ministry on 1 October. The developments that followed further exposed the Erdoğan government and showed everyone that it is weak and finished. Therefore, his bayonet has fallen, so to speak. No doubt, he is trying to make everyone feel his power by organising extravagant celebrations again. But it will not go beyond the appearance of a plucked chicken.

Within this framework, false speeches will continue to be made and racist-chauvinist nationalism will escalate as much as possible. The sycophants will continue to praise Tayyip Erdoğan and say that he is the “second Atatürk”. Turkey’s society is being suffocated by this demagogy and prevented from taking a correct and proper reckoning of the last century. For this reason, the socialist and democratic forces must be vigilant and work to prevent this chauvinist propaganda from poisoning society too much. The consciousness of society must be raised through a real and correct reckoning with the past century.

But what is the basic framework for a correct reckoning? To find an answer to this question, it is first necessary to take a brief look at the events and struggles in the period before the proclamation of the republic. On the one hand, the Kurdish people fought against the British and French occupation, and it was mainly the Kurds who defended the country. The army that fought against the Greek occupation was again the Ottoman army under the command of Kâzım Karabekir, which survived in Kurdistan. In Anatolia, many individuals and groups, including Ethem the Circassian, were at the forefront of resisting the occupation. In short, this multi-layered struggle prepared the ground for the establishment of the Republic.

The parliament that proclaimed the republic was founded on the basis of the congresses of Sivas and Erzurum, in which Kurds actively participated. Until the proclamation of the republic, the Kurds participated very actively in the work of the parliament. The borders of the Misak-ı Milli [National Pact] were defined

as “the land where Turks and Kurds live”. Mustafa Kemal himself announced that the Kurds would be given autonomy in the new statehood. The 1921 constitution explicitly contained this provision. The Kurds were thus a fundamental force and an essential constituent element in the preparation of the republic.

However, after the proclamation of the republic and the establishment of state power, the policy of the founding period was reversed, and a different policy was pursued. Essentially, all those who had contributed to the establishment of the republic were liquidated one by one. This process began with the liquidation of Ethem the Circassian and continued with the liquidation of Kâzım Karabekir and other founding pashas. Many organisations and communities that had participated in the liberation struggle were banned. The autonomy system for the Kurds was removed from the constitution and a new understanding and strategy emerged with the unified concept of a “Turkish nation” that ignored the Kurds and envisaged their annihilation.

In short, the state of the Republic of Turkey was founded on the understanding of ignoring and destroying the Kurds. It has been hostile to the Kurds for a century and has shaped all its other policies accordingly. This genocidal attack has continued in a planned and organised manner throughout the last century. Governments have changed, there have been military coups, but this main ideology and strategy of the Turkish state has not changed. The governments have handed each other the programme for the Kurdish genocide. Legend has it that Adnan Menderes [Turkey’s first prime minister to emerge from free elections. He ruled from 1950, was overthrown by the military in 1960 and executed on the prison island of İmralı in 1961], when he was taken to the execution site after being overthrown in a coup, was asked by the officers accompanying him as a rehearsal: “What is Turkey’s most important problem?”. Adnan Menderes, who reportedly could no longer stand because he had taken too much medication, is said to have answered without hesitation: “The Kurdish question.”

Of course, a mentality and a policy that imposes genocide on the Kurds as an important part of the population in Turkey can never be democratic. The flip side of the genocide against the Kurds is the fascist oppression, exploitation and persecution in Turkey. All the country’s resources are being used for genocide, which is why Turkey has fallen behind in every respect. As a result, Turkey, which had all kinds of wealth, has been made a third-class country in the world.

Now that the centenary is over and a new century is beginning, Turkey’s situation with its state and society is obvious. Monist nation-state fascism is being rigorously implemented. Under such a regime, Mesopotamia and Anatolia, which were called paradise in history, have become hell. Society is in crisis and the state is on the verge of collapse. By continuing the genocide against the Kurds, the state has been based on a system of endless war for a century. The words of Mustafa Kemal, “peace at home, peace in the world”, are today implemented by the government of Tayyip Erdoğan as “war at home, war in the world”. On 17 October, the foreign mandate that occupied other parts of Kurdistan [in Syria and Iraq] was extended for two more years.

The mentality and policies based on the genocide of the Kurds have poisoned the last century for Turkey’s society. The phrase “When it comes to the motherland, the rest is secondary” represents the hostility towards the Kurds. A century of this hostility has led to a lack of confidence among the Kurds. Despite this, they have always fought for the unity of the peoples. However, the Turkish state’s insistence on genocide has made them highly insecure. If today they are still trying to live together as a “nation of Turkey”, the

only power that makes this possible is Abdullah Öcalan. If Barzani had enough power, he would not leave a single Turk.

Entering the second century of the Republic of Turkey, the current fascist AKP/MHP dictatorship is betting on deepening and continuing its anti-Kurdish and genocidal mentality and policies. But we should also know the following: The Unity and Progress Committee [İttihad ve Terakî, a Turkish nationalist organisation that was active between 1889 and 1926 and organised the genocide of Armenians in 1915], which relied on a hostile and genocidal mentality and policy towards Armenians, brought about the collapse of the 700-year-old Ottoman Empire by planting a fig tree at its root. Now AKP/MHP fascism, which has the same mentality and politics, will collapse the century-old Turkish state. Because there is no other result that this mentality and politics can lead to. Of course, the whole burden of collapse and destruction will also be carried on the backs of the peoples. Therefore, it is necessary to smash AKP/MHP fascism and save the peoples from such a catastrophe without destroying the country and society. The reckoning with the last century is to envisage a radical change in the genocidal mentality and politics as we enter the new century and to wage an organised and holistic democratic-revolutionary struggle for this.



Contact e-mail: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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