

# THE İMRALI POST

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

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# Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

## International campaign for the release of Öcalan continues

ANF | 12 November 2023

As part of the international campaign for the release of Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish question, several demonstrations by the Kurdish internationalist youth movement took place on Saturday in various countries, including in Germany.

The demonstrations were organized by the Movement of Militant Young Women (Jinên Ciwanên Têkoşer, TêkoJIN) and the Revolutionary Youth Movement (Tevgera Ciwanên Şoreşger, TCŞ). The organizations demand immediate access by the legal team and family members to Öcalan, who is imprisoned in Turkey, and ultimately his release under conditions that allow him to play a role in finding a political solution to the Kurdish question.

## Hamburg

Before the demonstration started in Hamburg, Emin Amed gave a speech on behalf of the Kurdish youth movement. The activist talked about the prison situation of Abdullah Öcalan, who has been “completely isolated from the outside world on the prison island of Imrali for years.

Öcalan’s voice is more necessary than ever for peace and an end to the dictatorship in Turkey because he is the only political actor with a plan for the Kurdish question, without which the Turkish people cannot find peace.”

Amed emphasized that the youth see themselves as responsible for the freedom of “Öcalan, because he is the red line for the Kurdish people. Therefore, our resistance will continue until the isolation of the representative of Kurdish society is lifted and his voice reaches the outside world.”

## Düsseldorf

A demonstration in Düsseldorf saw a sea of white flags with Öcalan’s portrait could be seen, as well as a large front banner with the campaign’s slogan. “Bê Serok Jiyan Nabe”, in English “No life without the president” was one of the central slogans during the protest.

“Young people have a pioneering role to play in the fight for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan,” said a participant in the demonstration. He called on young people who strive for a life based on values such as women’s liberation, grassroots democracy and just ecology to support the global campaign for the release of Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish question.

## Bremen

In Bremen, Kurdish youth activists took part in a demonstration called “Freedom for Rojava” to express their demand for a free Öcalan. Organized by the Bremen branch of the “Defend Kurdistan” initiative, the protest was essentially about Turkey’s attacks against the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria, which violate international law.

It was said that Turkish head of state Erdoğan has been attacking the region militarily for years with the clear and obvious aim of displacing Kurds. “But both German politics and the media landscape here ignore this unjustified violence,” said one demonstrator.

## Frankfurt

People from Mannheim, Mainz, Darmstadt, Gießen, Hanau and Offenbach also took part in a demonstration in Frankfurt for the release of Abdullah Öcalan.

A call was made to take part in a demonstration in Berlin on 18 November against the ban on the PKK’s activity in Germany that was imposed thirty years ago.

## Vienna

Further demonstrations as part of the Öcalan campaign took place in Austria's capital, Vienna, as well as in Zurich and Lausanne in Switzerland.



## People of Hakkari call for participation in 'Freedom March' in Gemlik on 18 November

ANF | Hakkari | 12 November 2023

The isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan continues, while applications for visits filed by his family and lawyers are blocked without providing a reason. People everywhere are protesting the aggravated isolation policies against Öcalan.

The citizens of Gemlik called for participation in the 'Freedom March' to be held on 18 November to demand the end of the isolation and the physical freedom of the Kurdish People's Leader.

Metin Demirel said that isolation is an inhumane practice. He said that the Kurdish people should not remain silent about the isolation: "In order to break the isolation, we must all stand together. There is a great injustice imposed on the Kurdish people. That's why we don't accept it. All Kurdish people should be in Gemlik on 18 November. Everyone should participate in the 'Freedom March' that will be held there. Because we do not accept the isolation imposed on the Leader."

### Kurdish people should rise up on 18 November

Mehmet Emin Ulutaş also said that isolation is a crime against humanity: "Isolation is unacceptable. In order to break the isolation of the leadership, the entire Kurdish people, every individual, family, lawyers, politicians, civil society organizations and everyone must come together. Leadership is a great opportunity for Middle East peace. Taking this into consideration, Turks and Kurds should act together to end isolation. We do not accept isolation. On 18 November, the Kurdish people should stand up and shout with one voice, 'We do not accept isolation.'"

Xanim Sezen said: "We absolutely do not accept the isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan," and added that millions of Kurdish people want Abdullah Öcalan to be released. "We, the Kurds, have never bowed down. Hopefully, success will be ours and our Leader will be released. Not only the Kurds, but all the oppressed people of the world are behind our leader and want his release. Today, there is great oppression on the Kurdish people. We absolutely do not accept this cruelty. The Kurdish people will always exist. We do not accept the isolation imposed on our leader. Success will belong to the Kurdish people. Everyone should be mobilized for the Gemlik March to be held on 18 November. With this march, let our voices be heard by the whole world and our Leader be released. All prisoners should be released."

## They isolate Öcalan because they don't want peace

Mesude Ağırtaş called for participation in the march and said: “We want peace, but there are those who do not want peace to come. That's why they impose isolation.”

Mehmet Demir stated that isolation is cruelty and injustice.

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## Conference at University of Roma 3 today addresses isolation of Öcalan

ANF | Rome | 14 November 2023

The actions and activities carried out by the Italian Time for Freedom for Öcalan Committee within the scope of the campaign launched internationally on 10 October demanding “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish problem” continue.

A conference in two sessions titled “Political prisoners and prison system in Turkey” and “Civil rights and freedoms in Turkey” will be held at Roma Tre University today, Tuesday 14 November, at 3.30pm.

The conference will be at the Aula Magna of the law department of University of Roma Tre, Via Ostiense 159.

In the presentation of the conference, the organizers write: “In both crises that have shaken the international community in the last period, the Republic of Turkey has tried to carve out a leading role by proposing itself as a neutral nation respecting human rights, and thus capable of obtaining concessions and mediating agreements between all parties in conflict.

However, within national borders, human rights, particularly of journalists, activists and opposition politicians, are systematically violated. This situation is well represented by the condition of total isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan, Ömer Hayri Konar, Veysi Aktaş and Hamili Yıldırım, detained in the İmralı maximum security prison.”

The organizers added: “Even outside its borders, the Turkish government has been responsible for various violations of human rights, as demonstrated by the bombing campaign that the Turkish air force carried out between 5 and 10 October 2023 in Northern and Eastern Syria, and targeting energy infrastructures in Heseke, Qamishlo and Amûdê.

With this conference we intend to discuss with various experts the current human rights situation in Turkey and the prospects for the future.”

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## Activists from the Netherlands take over Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | Strasbourg | 15 November 2023

The vigil launched by the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg with the aim of ensuring the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and ending the isolation imposed on him, continues.

A new group of activists made up of Ahmet Kaya, Ozan Batga, Şoreş Bozkurt and Şiyar Ateş, who came from Amsterdam, took over the vigil in its 595th week.

Group spokesperson Ahmet Kaya said that Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has been in isolation for 25 years and that no news has been received for the last three years, and emphasized that the struggle will continue until he is liberated.

Ahmet Kaya said: "We call on our people living in the four parts of Kurdistan and the people of Europe to support our leadership. The security, health and freedom of our leadership are very important for our people."

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## Activists on vigil in front of the UN in Geneva reiterate their demand for "Freedom for Öcalan"

ANF | Geneva | 15 November 2023

A vigil by the Democratic Kurdish Community in Switzerland has been taking place in front of the UN headquarters in Geneva since 25 January 2021. Every Wednesday, activists stage a protest in front of the United Nations building to demand the release of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan. The action is carried out as part of the 'Dem dema azadiye' [Time for Freedom] campaign and directed against the isolation of the Kurdish leader on the Turkish prison island of Imrali, the Turkish occupation attacks on Kurdistan, the massacres committed in Kurdish territories and the silence of the UN.

Today's vigil began with a minute of silence paying tribute to Seyit Riza, chieftain of the Dersim Rebellion in 1937-1938, and his companions who were executed on 15 November 1937.

Addressing the crowd, Tuba Yilmaz, co-chair of the Democratic Kurdish Community Center in Geneva, remembered 283 Kurdish children who were killed by a fire in the cinema of Amûdê while watching a movie in solidarity with the Algerian struggle for independence on 13 November 1960.

Tuba Yılmaz also expressed her concerns over the health and safety conditions of Abdullah Öcalan, who is being held in aggravated isolation and has not been heard from for 33 months. She stated that the only way to relieve the Kurdish people's concerns about their leader was to ensure the success of the international campaign "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, A Political Solution to the Kurdish Question" launched by friends of the Kurds in October.

"Leader Öcalan has been subjected to isolation since 2015 and, for the past 33 months, the isolation has continued in a fashion that goes against international law and human rights. The Kurdish people do not accept it anymore. Leader Öcalan is the meaning of our lives. We have no patience left. The ending of the isolation is not enough. Our sole demand is the release and physical freedom of Leader Öcalan. Kurdish women and youth movements will continue their actions at the forefront in the meantime. We will definitively make the campaign successful and ensure the freedom of Leader Öcalan."

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## Kurdish and internationalist activists protesting for Öcalan in front of CoE detained

ANF | Strasbourg | 15 November 2023

Imprisoned for more than 24 years on the prison island of Imrali, the Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has been held incommunicado for 33 months now, without any contact with the outside world. The complete lack of information regarding the situation of Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners – Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş – raises growing concerns about their safety and health. Countless requests for visits filed for years by the lawyers and families of Imrali detainees have gone unanswered.

Kurdish and internationalist activists staged a civil disobedience action in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on Wednesday to protest the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan and demand his physical freedom.

In a statement about their action, the activists reminded the Council of Europe of its missions and duties and criticized its failure with regard to the protection of human rights and taking action against violations of human rights.

The demonstrators provided information about the conditions of Abdullah Öcalan and other political prisoners in Turkey, pointing to reports denouncing torture and inhumane treatment in prisons.

The activists asked to see a detailed report from the CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture) which visited Imrali last September.

The demonstrators also demanded to learn about the details of Tuesday's meeting between Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, ask-

ing if the human rights violations and the absolute isolation of Abdullah Öcalan were among the matters discussed.

“Is the Council of Europe aware of Öcalan’s situation and why does it share no information?” they also asked.

The protesters called for the Committee of Ministers to discuss the situation of Abdullah Öcalan during the next meeting. They demanded an end to the isolation of Öcalan, his physical freedom, a solution to the Kurdish Question in the Middle East and dialogue with Abdullah Öcalan.

The activists were taken into custody by the police as they continued their action. Subjected to violence and held in handcuffs, the demonstrators chanted the slogans “Bijî Serok Apo” [Long Live Leader Öcalan] and “Bê Serok Jiyana Nabe” [No Life Without the Leader].

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 İmralı 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, where Abdullah Öcalan has been held since February 1999, has since been operated based on a special status and through special practices.

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

Despite all their attempts, lawyers from the Istanbul-based 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 33 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.



## Civil disobedience action at EP Liaison Office in Marseille demands freedom for Öcalan

ANF | Marseille | 15 November 2023

Kurdish youth activists staged a civil disobedience action at the European Parliament EP Liaison Office in Marseille to denounce the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and demand his freedom.

Imprisoned for more than 24 years on the prison island of İmralı, the Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has been held incommunicado for 33 months now, without any contact with the outside world. The complete lack of information regarding the situation of Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners – Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş – raises growing concerns about their safety and health. Countless requests for visits filed for years by the lawyers and families of İmralı detainees have gone unanswered.

The activists entered the building with a banner in French which read "Stop European complicity, Freedom for Öcalan" and chanting the slogan "Liberté pour Öcalan".

Demonstrators denounced the "complicity" of all institutions in Europe and the world in the unlawful treatment of Abdullah Öcalan and called for action to stop the torture system implemented against the Kurdish leader who is held in incommunicado detention.

Activists presented a dossier about the İmralı torture system to the EP officials and continued their action outside the building.

The İmralı F Type High Security Closed Prison, where Abdullah Öcalan has been held since February 1999, 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 33 months that their clients have not been heard from in any way.

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## Vigil launched in Basel to demand freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | Basel | 16 November 2023

Work continues in Switzerland within the scope of the “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish problem” international initiative, which was launched on 10 October in dozens of cities around the world.

A vigil was launched at the Basel Democratic Kurdish Community Center with the participation of Kurdish, Swiss, Catalan, Uruguayan, French and Kenyan activists who demanded freedom of Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

During the vigil to be held every Wednesday by the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Committee, Abdullah Öcalan’s books will be presented, as well as film screenings. Open public meetings will also be organized.

The vigil started with a press conference.

Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) member Ali Matur said that they will spread the action started in Basel to all of Switzerland. Matur called on the people of Kurdistan, especially women and young people, to support the international initiative.

### Meetings with institutions in many cities

The Swiss Kurdish Women’s Union (YJK-S) held meetings with representatives of the press, political parties and civil society organizations in the cities of Aarau, Lucerne and Zurich.

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## Öcalan given a new ban on lawyers' visits

ANF | Istanbul | 16 November 2023

There has been no news from Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan since his interrupted phone call with his brother Mehmet Öcalan on 25 March 2021. While the lack of news continues, it was learned that the Kurdish People's Leader was given a new ban on lawyers' visits.

According to Mezopotamya Agency, Asrın Law Firm lawyers applied to the Bursa Execution Judgeship to request a visit to Imralı on 6 November 2023. After the application, the lawyers learned that their client had been given a new 6-month ban on 31 October 2023.

The judgeship rejected the request for the content of the ban decision and the file sample, citing "security" reasons. The lawyers' appeal to a higher court against the ban decision was also rejected.

Asrın Law Firm will now apply to the Constitutional Court (AYM) against the ban decision.

### 12 bans on lawyer's visits

Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan was banned from seeing lawyers for 6 months on 26 April 2023. The lawyers applied for a visit as soon as the ban ended. As a result of the application, however, they learned that a new 6-month ban was issued on 31 October.

With the latest ban, Abdullah Öcalan has been prevented from seeing a lawyer at least 12 times in the last 8 years.

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## Prisons

### Prisoner Tanhan has '10 percent chance of survival', his family says

ANF | Istanbul | 12 November 2023

Cemal Tanhan, who was released from Bolu F Type Closed Prison on 6 November due to health problems, was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

68-year-old Cemal Tanhan, who had been imprisoned for 30 years, was taken to Bolu İzzet Baysal State Hospital on 23 October after suffering a stroke, and from there he was transferred to the General Surgery Department of Eskişehir City Hospital on 27 October. Tanhan continues his treatment in the hospital.

Speaking to Mezopotamya Agency, his daughter, Ayşe Tanhan, gave information about her last meeting with the doctors. She said that the doctors told her that “the cancer has penetrated into his bones. Because he had pneumonia, his lungs had blisters.”

Tanhan added: “They cannot provide treatment because my father’s condition is serious. The doctor told us that he had a ten percent chance of survival. He is conscious but does not react to us. It hurts so much. I last went to visit him in Bolu Prison on 2 October. He couldn’t stand up then. We got him up with the help of his friends to take a photo. Three weeks after I returned from my visit, my father had a stroke. If he had been released even that day, maybe his situation would not have been this serious. My father had previously submitted petitions regarding the health problems he was experiencing. He applied to the Human Rights Association. But he was not released.”



## Cards sent to writers and journalists behind bars in Turkey

ANF | Amed | 15 November 2023

To mark International Writers in Prison Day on 15 November, representatives of the Kurdish Literature Association and Kurdish PEN in Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) sent greeting cards to imprisoned writers and journalists and issued a statement in front of the post office in the district of Yenişehir. The action was supported by journalists, representatives of non-governmental organizations and political parties.

Ömer Fidan, co-chair of Kurdish PEN, said: “We will continue to defend freedom of expression and thought and continue our struggle.”

The co-chair of the Kurdish Writers' Association, Fatma Taşlı Tunç, called for the release of all imprisoned writers and journalists.

Sultan Yaray, co-chair of the DBP (Democratic Regions Party) in Amed, said: “The fact that writers are arrested because of their thoughts is a disgrace. No one in the world should be imprisoned for their thoughts. We salute all imprisoned writers from here. The free days are near.”

After the declaration, the participants visited the Dicle Fırat Journalists' Association (DFG). Serdar Altan, co-chair of the DFG, said that many Kurdish writers and journalists are in prison because they have written the truth. This also includes DFG co-chair Dicle Müftüoğlu, Altan said, and added: “The repression has continued since the 1990s until today. There is resistance against it. The work continues and the resistance continues.”



# Military aggression and occupation

## YBŞ: We will continue and further expand the struggle with a strong alliance in Shengal

ANF | 12 November 2023

The Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ) Command issued a written statement on the 8th anniversary of the liberation of Shengal.

ISIS mercenaries launched genocidal attacks on Shengal on 3 August 2014, killing thousands of Yazidis during the occupation, and kidnapping thousands of women and children to reduce them into slaves. The fate of thousands of people is still unknown.

HPG-YJA Star guerrillas cleared Shengal from ISIS mercenaries on 13 November 2015, with the support of volunteer Yazidi youth and YBŞ-YJŞ.

The YBŞ said: “With the betrayal of the KDP, our people faced a genocide 8 years ago and resisted it. The heroism and efforts of the freedom guerrillas and YPG-YJŞ fighters put an end to that genocide. We will never forget this.”

The statement continued: “These heroes, under the leadership of Mam Zeki, Egîd Civyan, Dilşêr Herekol, Nujînan, Çeko, Memo and Rosyar, Şoreş Xinizi, Seîd, Berxwedan, Zerdeşt, Şilan, Nujiyan, Dijwar, Azad, and Dîdar, increased the struggle for the liberation of our sacred lands. We bow with respect to the memories of these heroes.”

Stating that ISIS mercenaries were “trying to ensure that there was nothing left” of the Yazidi people, the YBŞ said: “Of course, it was not easy to fight against such a mentality. At that time, the struggle and the war for freedom were inevitable for us. Despite all the violence against our people in 2014, we organized with our leading fighters with a single philosophy and waged a fight for freedom. Together with the freedom guerrillas and YPG-YPJ fighters, we prevented the enemy from achieving its goals.”

The statement added: “We continue to carry the legacy left to us by our heroes together with our people. If we were able to defeat the enemies of humanity in these lands, we could continue this struggle with a strong alliance against all attacks against us today. Our people should strengthen their faith on this basis, not forget those days and expand this struggle in the name of all our heroes and for the liberation of those still captives.”

YBŞ pointed out that: “We will continue to resist all kinds of betrayal, attack and oppression, no matter the cost. In particular, the occupying Turkish state wants to occupy our lands once again to finish what ISIS didn't. They want to carry out another massacre against us through treason. Through MIT and its

collaborators, they are carrying out attacks using special warfare. However, this ancient society will resist occupation and genocide again, just as it did in 2014.”

The statement concluded with the promise to expand the struggle: “We will follow the path of all the heroes who sacrificed themselves and crown the struggle with victory. On this basis, we salute our heroes, especially Leader Öcalan, our heroes’ families, our people, YPG-YJŞ fighters and our Kurdistan freedom guerrillas who wrote a heroic epic against the occupation in the free mountains.”



## Eight Turkish soldiers killed in guerrilla areas

ANF | Behdinan | 12 November 2023

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

According to the HPG Press Center statement on Sunday, eight Turkish army soldiers were killed during guerrilla actions in the strategically important Girê Amêdî resistance area west of the Zap River on 10 November. The guerrillas used light, semi-automatic and heavy weapons as well as sabotage tactics against the occupying forces. In addition, an excavator equipped with a hydraulic hammer was struck with heavy weapons and forced to retreat. The Turkish army is trying to destroy the guerrillas’ tunnel systems with this type of construction machinery. In the Girê Cûdî resistance area, YJA Star guerrillas intervened with heavy weapons against the Turkish army’s attempt to airdrop soldiers in the area on 11 November.

The HPG reported that the Turkish army has once again used banned weapons against guerrilla positions. According to the statement, the guerrilla positions in the Girê Ortê resistance area in Metîna were attacked fifteen times with chemical gases and twice with banned explosives between 9 and 11 November. In Sîda in the Zap region, the Turkish army used prohibited explosives twice on 9 November. Four attacks with explosives-laden drones were carried out on positions in the Girê Cûdî region on 10 November. In the Girê Amêdî area, the HPG reported the use of banned explosives five times on the same day.

The guerrilla areas of Girê Bahar in the western Zap region, Gundê Şêlazê in Metîna as well as Goşînê and Girê Şehîd Hawar in Xakurke were bombed five times by Turkish fighter jets in the past two days. The HPG also reported helicopter bombardments in the western Zap region and in Xakurke as well as artillery attacks in the same regions and in Metîna.



## Turkish attack injures two Syrian soldiers in Aleppo countryside

ANF | 12 November 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that two regime soldiers were severely injured in an attack by a Turkish kamikaze drone which targeted a position of regime forces in Al-Shikh Issa village within areas where regime and Kurdish forces are deployed in the northern Aleppo countryside.

According to the report, the injured soldiers were taken to a hospital in Aleppo for treatment.

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## Internal Security Forces capture 2 ISIS mercenaries in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | 13 November 2023

The Press Center of the Internal Security Forces of North and East Syria said in a written statement that 2 ISIS mercenaries were captured in the northern countryside of Deir ez-Zor.

The statement said: “Following the searches and raids carried out by the Internal Security Forces against ISIS and the activities that threatened the security of civilian workers and created fear in the public, 2 ISIS mercenaries were detained.

The Anti-Terrorist Units (HAT) and International Coalition Forces, on 12 November carried out the two arrests.

Our forces will continue to be on duty to ensure the safety of the community. Our people should also inform our security forces if they encounter suspicious situations in the region.”

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## Remembering the dead children of cinema Amûdê

Nujiyan Adar | Amude | 13 November 2023

The cinema fire in Amûdê is one of those stories that have become deeply embedded in the memory of Kurdish society. It was November 13, 1960, when hundreds of schoolchildren were forced to watch the Egyptian film “The Midnight Spirit” (Chabah nisf al-layl) on a Sunday in the only cinema in the town in northeastern Syria, the Şehrazad Film House. At the time, the Ba’athist regime had ordered a “week of solidarity” with Algeria’s struggle for independence from France and was collecting donations for the “Algerian brothers.” In Amûdê, therefore, all students had to go to the cinema, for an entrance fee of thirty piasters.

The film had already been shown several times, and each time the cinema was overcrowded. Actually, it had a maximum of 200 seats on about 130 square meters, but on that day 61 years ago, far more than 400 children sat in the auditorium. Their eyes were staring at the screen, over which a horror film from 1947

flickered, when after a short time it was far too bright. But the brightness was no longer coming from the projector, but from a fire. The flames quickly spread to the wooden roof truss of the hut-like building, which was covered with straw and mud. Within a very short time, the entire movie theater was on fire. Panic broke out as the children tried to reach the exits. However, there were only two narrow doors available, which could only be opened inwards. 282 children between the ages of eight and fourteen died an agonizing death.

Whether the fire was organized by the regime - two Syrian soldiers stood guard at the entrance to the cinema - or overheating due to overuse caused the film's player to suddenly burst into flames is still the subject of speculation today. But the fact that the regime authorities ignored the indications about the fire danger and insisted on the continuation of the film screenings, that not a single teacher was in the hall on the day of the fire and that even the children of the regime officials had not come to watch *Midnight Spirit*, that the tragedy was never investigated by the Syrian regime, leads many people to this day to assume that the cinema fire in Amûdê was a targeted and deliberate massacre. This is because discrimination against Kurdish culture and language was part of state policy in Syria; political activities were suppressed by force by the regime.

Mohammad Saed Agha Daqqouri, an Arab resident of Amûdê who happened to pass by the burning cinema at the time, was able to rescue between 20 and 30 children from the fire before he himself perished in the flames. The monument erected years later in the Baxçê Pakrewan Memorial Garden on the site of the Şehrazad movie house to commemorate the disaster also tells his story. It was donated by Algeria as an expression of solidarity with the people of Amûdê. As a memorial, there is also a fountain in the garden. Into it had taken refuge the rescued children, who were saved by Mohammad Saed Agha Daqqouri. The pictures of the dead and their stories pave the walls of the memorial site. Hundreds of children's eyes gaze upon the onlookers and admonish them.

"The children of Amûdê had to support Algeria not only with money, but also with their burned bodies" - these are words of Reşîdê Fatê. The Kurd, then a child, who survived the cinema fire. "I was almost twelve years old and was in fifth grade. I watched the film on one of the balconies in the auditorium. There were hundreds of kids sitting downstairs. It was as if they were going to be crushed at any moment. At some point, it became bright on the screen, the movie stopped. The next moment, there was a very loud noise, as if an airplane was flying low. Immediately after that, it was ablaze," Reşîdê Fatê said in past interviews, adding: "I then looked at the children in the lower rows. One by one they fell to the ground, crushed or trampled. They all screamed in panic, trying to reach the doors. I jumped from the balcony and ran to the south exit. But it was locked from the outside. We all pushed against the door with all our strength. After an eternity, it broke away and we rushed outside. Only there did I realize that my feet were burning."

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## 375 more Yazidi IDPs return to Shengal

ANF | Shengal | 13 November 2023

The Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement announced that 365 more Yazidi IDPs have returned to their hometown, Shengal.



According to the ministry, the IDPs from Shengal were staying in the Persef Refugee Camp in Zakho and have returned to their hometown voluntarily.

The return of the Yazidis from camps to their homes continue and the returnees are provided with basic needs, stated the ministry.

Since the beginning of 2023, over 4 thousand IDPs have returned to Shengal. According to Duhoq Migration Department, 26 thousand Kurdish families are living in the camps in Duhoq, where there are 11 refugee camps housing people from Rojava and 4 camps housing Yazidis.

The KDP, the ruling party in the autonomous Kurdistan region in northern Iraq, has been preventing the return of Yazidi IDPs who moved to Duhoq, Hewler (Erbil) and Zakho after the ISIS onslaught in 2014.

Shengal (Sinjar) is the last contiguous settlement area of the Yazidi community. Thousands of Yazidis were murdered and thousands of women and children were taken prisoner in the 3 August 2014 onslaught on Shengal by ISIS militants. While ISIS gangs began murdering Yazidis in Shengal, the Peshmerga left, leaving the Yazidis behind. HPG-YJA Star and YPG-YPJ fighters came to the Yazidi people's aid in the face of ISIS aggression.

After months of resistance, the fighters who saved the Yazidi people from a larger genocide liberated Shengal. After the liberation of the city, the HPG and YPG/YPJ subsequently withdrew in 2017. People who returned to their land after Shengal's independence reformed, established defensive units and built their institutions.

UN bodies and the European Parliament have recognised ISIS crimes as genocide, as have Armenia, Australia, the US House of Representatives, the Scottish Parliament and the German Parliament (Bundestag).

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## Turkish drone targets vehicle in Shengal

ANF | Shengal | 13 November 2023

While the people of Shengal were celebrating the 8th anniversary of the liberation of the region from ISIS mercenaries, the Turkish state targeted a vehicle in the town of Sinûnê using an armed drone.

No information has been obtained yet regarding the outcome of the attack.

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## Internal Security Forces Press Center says their member El Muxîr fell as a martyr in Tabqa

ANF | 14 November 2023

North and East Syria Internal Security Forces Press Center announced that Internal Security Forces Member Xalid Eşwî Al Muxîr, whose car was targeted while on duty, fell as a martyr in the Mensure town of Tabqa on 13 November.

The Press Center said of Al Muxir, who started fighting in the ranks of the Internal Security Forces a few years ago. “He was a loyal member of the Internal Security Forces. He took part in the war against mercenaries on many fronts. He fought until the end with all his strength and courage.”

The statement continued: “He sacrificed his life to serve his country and people. He derived his strength from his love and loyalty to his country. He always put himself forward for duty. He was a comrade of ours who took part in every stage of the struggle until he was martyred.”



## Two YBŞ fighters martyred in Turkish air strike in Shengal

ANF | Shengal | 14 November 2023

The YBŞ (Shengal Resistance Units) made a statement regarding the attack carried out by the Turkish state using an armed drone. The drone targeted a vehicle in the town of Sinunê on Monday night.

The statement said that two fighters named Berxwedan Şengali and Argeş Feqîr were killed in the attack, and added: “Last night, at around 23:00, on the anniversary of the liberation of Shengal, two of our comrades named Berxwedan Şengali and Argeş Feqîr were killed and one of our comrades was injured in the air attack carried out by the invading Turkish state against a vehicle belonging to our forces. We offer our condolences to the families of our martyred friends and wish recovery to the injured.”

The statement continued: “The invading Turkish state carried out this attack on a day that is sacred for us. There is no doubt that this attack is an indication of the Turkish state’s intolerance towards the liberation of Shengal. They never accepted the liberation of Shengal and did everything to frustrate the liberation of this people from a genocide. Our people welcomed the anniversary of the liberation of Shengal with great enthusiasm and celebration, in a festive atmosphere. On just such a day, a cowardly and despicable attack was carried out. With this attack, the Turkish state wants to continue the attacks of ISIS. The Turkish state has been acting in partnership with ISIS since the beginning, and this reality has not changed today. With these attacks, they want to take revenge on ISIS and keep the ISIS mentality alive.”

The statement added: “Our friends Berxwedan Şengali and Argeş Feqîr were targeted in a civilian vehicle on Monday when they went to visit their families. Both of our friends became fighters at their young ages.

They played decisive roles in the YBŞ ranks. They set an example for their comrades with their sacrifices, camaraderie and devotion to the revolution. Because both of our martyred friends were comrades of Çekos, Agirs, Pîrans, Dîndars and Çiyas. Both of our comrades were from the Feqîran tribe, which had many martyrs in the struggle, such as Dijwar, Çiya, Serhed and Serhildan.

Our comrade Berxwedan came from a family devoted to its land and faith and joined the YBŞ ranks in 2017. He undertook very important and great duties within YBŞ.

Our comrade Argeş is also from the Zero family, which has many martyrs. He joined the ranks of YBŞ in 2016. He was an expert in the military field. He took up his duties with great enthusiasm. He continued his search for freedom with great love.

Those who are the enemies of these lands want to prevent returns to Shengal by targeting its security and stability. These are the enemy's plans and expectations. Our expectation from our people is that they stand against the attacks. Other than that, we have no choice. We can only stop these brutal attacks with our social unity. Because the power of the people is superior to all powers. We saw this truth in the liberation of Shengal.”



## Shengal Autonomous Administration calls for action against Turkish attacks

ANF | Shengal | 14 November 2023

The invading Turkish state has once again targeted the Yazidis on the 8th anniversary of the liberation of their land, Shengal, from ISIS on Monday. The aerial attack by the Turkish army hit a car in the town of Sinun and killed two fighters of the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ) amidst celebrations marking the anniversary of the town's liberation.

The Autonomous Administration of Shengal made a press statement denouncing the never-ending deadly attacks by the Turkish regime.

Speaking here, Şême Remo from the Yazidi Women's Freedom Movement (TAJÊ) stated the following: “The enemy carried out this attack on the anniversary of Shengal's liberation and amid the ongoing return of our displaced people from camps in the Kurdistan Region. Those who liberated Shengal from ISIS and those who defeated ISIS are being attacked by the Turkish state. We will not bend our knees before the enemy, whatever the cost. We will never give up our struggle. Our martyrs are a part of us.”

The Co-Chair of the Sinun People's Assembly, Seydo Ali, said: “Eight years have passed since the liberation of Shengal and more of our people are returning home. The enemy does not want security and stability established in Shengal. Those who abandoned Shengal and fled in 2014 want Shengal to remain as it was back then. The people of Shengal must stand up and make it clear that they will not hand over Shengal to anyone. We will continue our struggle regardless of attacks.”

## Background

The Yazidi settlement area Shengal (Sinjar) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is the last contiguous settlement area of the Yazidi community. Thousands of Yazidis were murdered and thousands of women and children were taken prisoner in the 3 August 2014 onslaught on Shengal by ISIS militants. While ISIS gangs began murdering Yazidis in Shengal, the Peshmerga left, leaving the Yazidis behind, unprotected. The guerrillas of HPG (People's Defense Forces) and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) and fighters of the YPG (People's Defense Units) and YPJ (Women's Defense Units) came to the Yazidi people's aid in the face of ISIS aggression. Thanks to a months-long selfless struggle, the city was liberated on 13 November 2015. After the liberation of the city, the HPG and YPG/YPJ subsequently withdrew in 2017. People who returned to their land after Shengal's independence reformed, established defensive units and built their institutions.



## Grave of 12-year-old Uğur Kaymaz killed by the state forces desecrated

ANF | Mardin | 14 November 2023

12-year-old Uğur Kaymaz and his father, Ahmet Kaymaz, were killed by state forces in front of their house in the Kızıltepe district of Mardin on 21 November 2004. Uğur was wearing slippers on his feet at the time of his death. Thirteen bullets were found in his body and eight bullets were found in his father's body, as the autopsy revealed.

The governor of Mardin said after the murder that terrorists were involved in planning an attack. To support this claim, a Kalashnikov was placed next to the bodies and the scene was photographed. The gun was almost bigger than the twelve-year-old body.

It was only through the efforts of the family that an investigation was finally opened. As usual in such cases, the perpetrators were protected by the Turkish judiciary.

While justice is yet to be done for Uğur and his father, their graves in the neighborhood of Pireketa were desecrated as the 19th anniversary of their murder approaches.

The headstones of both graves were broken into pieces by unknown perpetrators.

Uğur's mother, Makbule Kaymaz, condemned the attack and said it was no coincidence that it came shortly before the approaching anniversary of their murder.

Makbule Kaymaz said: "I have been seeking justice for 19 years but couldn't find it. Now, their graves are attacked. After hearing about the attack, our neighbors went to the cemetery and reconstructed the grave stones before telling us about the incident. They let us know afterwards. They protected Uğur's and his fa-

ther's graves. Even the graves of the Kurds are not left in peace. We will continue to call the perpetrators to account, no matter what.”

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## 145 more Yazidis return to Shengal

ANF | Shengal | 14 November 2023

The Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement announced on Tuesday that 145 more Yazidis have returned to their hometown, Shengal, in the Kurdistan Region.

According to the ministry, the IDPs from Shengal were staying in the Bersiv Camp in Zakho. They were escorted by security forces in Duhok and Nineveh.

The return has taken place in line with the government's program for the return of IDPs and the returnees are provided with basic needs, the ministry stated.

Since the beginning of 2023, over 5 thousand IDPs have returned to Shengal. According to Duhoq Migration Department, 26 thousand Kurdish families are living in the camps in Duhoq, where there are 11 refugee camps housing people from Rojava and 4 camps housing Yazidis.

The KDP, the ruling party in the autonomous Kurdistan region in northern Iraq, has been preventing the return of Yazidi IDPs who moved to Duhoq, Hewler (Erbil) and Zakho after the ISIS onslaught in 2014.

Shengal (Sinjar) is the last contiguous settlement area of the Yazidi community. Thousands of Yazidis were murdered and thousands of women and children were taken prisoner in the 3 August 2014 onslaught on Shengal by ISIS militants. While ISIS gangs began murdering Yazidis in Shengal, the Peshmerga left, leaving the Yazidis behind. HPG-YJA Star guerrillas and YPG-YPJ fighters came to the Yazidi people's aid in the face of ISIS aggression.

After months of resistance, the fighters who saved the Yazidi people from a larger genocide liberated Shengal on 13 November 2015. After the liberation of the city, the HPG/YJA Star and YPG/YPJ subsequently withdrew in 2017. People who returned to their land after Shengal's independence reformed, established defensive units and built their institutions.

UN bodies and the European Parliament have recognised ISIS crimes as genocide, as have Armenia, Australia, the US House of Representatives, the Scottish Parliament and the German Parliament (Bundestag).

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## Three Turkish soldiers killed in actions by the guerrillas

ANF | Behdinan | 14 November 2023

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

According to the HPG Press Center statement on Tuesday, three Turkish soldiers were shot dead by guerrilla snipers in the region of Zap. The actions were carried out in the resistance areas of Girê Cûdî and Girê Amêdî, both of which are located on the western front of Zap.

Further actions against occupying forces were directed against Turkish military positions in the region. A total of six positions were damaged in a series of actions carried out by the guerrillas with semi-automatic and heavy weapons. In addition, the guerrillas took action against the flight activities of Turkish helicopters over Girê Cûdî. Military movements on the ground were stopped as a result of strikes by the guerrillas.

According to the HPG statement, two further actions were carried out against occupying troops in Metîna. Turkish soldiers in the Girê Çarçel area were the target of the sabotage actions by the guerrillas.

HPG stated that, from 11 to 13 November, the Turkish army attacked the Sîda area in Zap once with unconventional explosives. A similar attack was directed against the defence positions of the guerrillas in Girê Çarçel, where the HPG recorded eight bombings with explosive drones. The guerrilla positions in the nearby resistance area of Girê Ortê were reportedly attacked nine times with chemical weapons and eleven times with prohibited bombs.

In the same period, the Cûdî and Amêdîyê massifs were the target of nine Turkish attacks by explosive-laden drones, four attacks with unconventional bombs and one attack with chemical weapons. In addition, Turkish warplanes carried out at least thirteen air strikes targeting Girê Bahar on the Western Front of Zap; Sinînê, Lolan and Şehîd Şerîf in Xakurke; Deşta Kafya in Gare and Şêlazê in Metîna. All of these areas and parts of Barzan were also bombarded by combat helicopters and artillery.



## KCK commemorates Seyit Rıza and his companions

ANF | 15 November 2023

The KCK Executive Council issued a statement to commemorate Seyit Rıza and his companions who were executed on 15 November 1937.

The statement said: "On 15 November 1937, Seyit Rıza and his friends were arrested and executed in a conspiracy set up by the Turkish state in Elezîz [Turkish name Elazığ] where they had come to negotiate a halt to attacks and solve the problems, as part of the Dersim [Turkish name Tunceli] operation. On the anniversary of their execution, we would like to respectfully commemorate Seyit Rıza and the Kurdish leaders who were murdered with him.

The genocidal colonialist Turkish state carried out one of the largest and most brutal massacres in human history in Dersim in 1937 and 1938. Tens of thousands of Kurds in and around Dersim were massacred

with guns, bayonets and chemical gases. We once again honor those who lost their lives in this massacre and strongly condemn the Turkish state and those who took part in the Dersim massacre. The Kurdish people will never forget the Dersim massacre and will definitely ask the genocidal colonialist murderer state to account for what they have done.”

The statement added: “The Dersim massacre is undoubtedly one of the events that most clearly demonstrates the brutality of the Turkish state and its enmity towards the Kurds. In 1937 and 1938, a very brutal massacre was committed in Dersim that, for a human being, is even hard to describe. So much so that the mass murderers even slaughtered unborn babies by disemboweling pregnant women with bayonets. People who took refuge in the mountains and caves to escape the massacre were killed with chemical weapons. Every living creature was butchered, a great atrocity and genocide was experienced. It is a moral duty and the most basic requirement of being human to hold the cruel, savage and massacring state to account for inflicting such great suffering on peoples, especially the Kurdish people, and to confront it with this reality. Without doing this, one can neither live right.”

The statement continued: “The Dersim massacre is one of dozens of massacres carried out within the scope of Kurdish genocide policies. With these massacres, the Turkish state aimed to realize the Kurdish genocide. After each massacre, this was tried to be done through exile and assimilation practices. These were carried out because the Kurdish people refused to give up their identity, language, culture and values. In order to legitimize the massacres, it has always been stated that the people rebelled, which is a complete distortion.

The Kurdish people have been denied, their legitimate and democratic rights arising from being a people and a nation have not been recognized. Their language, identity and culture were forbidden, and being Turkish was imposed. The Kurdish people objected to this. The state’s response to this objection was massacre and genocide. This is what happened in Dersim and other places. Unfortunately, a century has passed since then and it was filled with a lot of continued suffering.

Without recognizing and confronting this reality, no assessment can be correct and will not find its place. If there is to be change in Turkey, if there is to be progress towards democratization, this can only be achieved by confronting the massacres committed against the Kurdish people, especially the Dersim massacre, by abandoning the mentality of denial, by openly and courageously defending and recognizing the democratic rights of the Kurdish people. This is the path to the democratization of Turkey and the Middle East.”

The statement said: “Once again, we commemorate those who lost their lives in the Dersim massacre, like Seyit Rıza and Besê, and we bow to their memories with respect. We once again respectfully and gratefully commemorate all the martyrs of revolution and democracy, and we reiterate our promise to the martyrs. By not surrendering to the genocidal colonialist state, Seyit Rıza bequeathed the Kurdish people a very valuable attitude of resistance.

The unyielding stance of Seyit Rıza and Şêx Saîd has an important place in the resistance of the Kurdish people against massacres and genocide in Kurdistan. By transforming this tradition of resistance into an uninterrupted line of struggle, the PKK has ensured the resurrection of the Kurdish people and continues to do so today. Through resistance and struggle, the Kurdish people will definitely realize the ideal of a free

life, a free leader and a free country that they long for, and by doing so, they will hold the butchering enemy to account.”

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## Turkish forces bring new reinforcements to positions in Idlib countryside

ANF | 15 November 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that a Turkish military convoy comprising over 16 military and logistic machinery entered Syrian territory through Kafr Lucien Crossing and headed towards the frontlines of Taftanaz before reaching Turkish positions in the region.

On October 28, Turkish forces brought in a military convoy through the Kafar Lousin border crossing with the Turkish side in northern Idlib, SOHR said. Accordingly, the convoy comprised 22 military vehicles carrying military and logistical materials and headed towards Taftanaz town in Idlib countryside on the opposite side of regime-held areas.

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## One SDF fighter killed, two others wounded in Turkish UAV attack near Kobane

ANF | 16 November 2023

On Wednesday evening, a UAV belonging to the Turkish state targeted a car carrying fighters from the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) in the Bogaz village, south of Kobane.

According to the SDF, the attack resulted in the martyrdom of one of their fighters and two others were wounded while they were on leave.

“Since Oct. 5, the Turkish occupation has intensified its aggressions against our regions, targeting not only infrastructure and civic services but also civilian homes, which resulted in the martyrdom of dozens of civilians, including women and children, and caused significant destruction to their properties,” stated the SDF Media Centre.

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## HPG reports ongoing guerrilla actions against the Turkish army

ANF | Behdinan | 16 November 2023

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

According to the HPG Press Center statement on Thursday, Turkey continues to use unconventional explosives, explosive-laden drones, fighter jets, helicopters and artillery against the guerrillas.

Regarding the latest actions by the guerrillas and attacks by the Turkish army, HPG provided the following details:

### **Şehîd Delîl, Western Zap region**

In the Girê Cûdî resistance area, the guerrillas intervened several times with heavy and semi-automatic weapons against advances by the Turkish army on 13-14 November. The advance of the invading troops was stopped three times in this way. A drone loaded with explosives was destroyed by the guerrillas with sabotage tactics. On 13 November, YJA Star guerrillas fired on helicopters over the area twice. Three Turkish army positions were hit in various other actions carried out by the guerrillas with heavy and semi-automatic weapons.

In the Girê Amêdîyê resistance area, guerrillas carried out ten actions on 13 November and two actions on 15 November in which heavy weapons were used.

### **Metîna and Xakurke**

The occupation forces in the areas of Girê Çarçel and Girê Ortê in Metîna as well as Girê Şehîd Kamuran and Ermûş in Xakurke were struck with heavy weapons on 14-15 November.

### **Attacks by the Turkish army**

Since 13 November, the Turkish army has repeatedly used unconventional explosives against guerrilla positions in Sîda, Girê Ortê and Girê Amêdîyê. Attacks with explosive drones targeted the positions of the guerrillas in the areas of Girê Çarçel, Girê Cûdî and Girê Amêdîyê.

In the past two days, the HPG recorded a total of ten airstrikes by fighter jets against the areas of Girê Cûdî and Girê Bahar in the western Zap region, Golka, Gundê Beşîlî and Gundê Dergelê in Metîna as well as Goşînê, Berbizina, Girê Şehîd Hawar and Şehîd Şerîf in Xakurke. The Turkish army carried out further attacks by combat helicopters and artillery on various areas in the Zap, Metîna and Xakurke regions.

## Hundreds of villages in South Kurdistan evacuated by the KDP in cooperation with the Turkish state

ANF | 16 November 2023

Turkey has been attacking the Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) for years. In April 2022, a comprehensive operation was launched in the guerrilla regions of Zap, Metîna and Avaşîn. As the invasion did not achieve the desired success, the Turkish state is attempting to establish itself in the area via the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party), the ruling party dominated by the Barzani clan. KDP forces are establishing new bases and building military roads for the Turkish troops. In order to grant Turkey free access, the villagers are being driven out of the affected areas. According to the journalist Baran Germiyanî, who lives in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, 158 villages have already been evacuated and at least 600 villages are threatened with eviction because the KDP is exerting pressure during the ongoing Turkish attacks.

In an interview with Mezopotamya news agency (MA), Germiyanî stated that Turkey has not achieved the desired results in the region and that the KDP is clearing the way for Turkey with its depopulation policy. Germiyanî said: “Not only the people, but also the nature of the region is affected by the chemical weapons used. The Turkish state is attacking Kurdish existence and nature. As a result of these attacks, which have been going on for two years, people are no longer able to cultivate their fields. In just two years, the KDP has evacuated 158 villages at Turkey’s request. Currently, more than 600 villages in these regions, where the war continues, are at risk of evacuation. The people in these villages live from livestock farming and agriculture. The attacks with chemical weapons have brought livestock farming and agriculture to a standstill. In addition, Turkish soldiers are attacking guerrilla positions in the immediate vicinity of KDP bases. The KDP is paving the way for Turkey to occupy the entire region.”

The KDP, controlled by the Barzani family, is largely dependent on and closely allied with the AKP/MHP regime. The Turkish state is trying to use the KDP as a tool to trigger an internal Kurdish civil war. The current deployment of troops by the KDP shows the extent of the danger. In recent years, the KDP has repeatedly set up ambushes against the guerrillas, marked targets for Turkish airstrikes, captured guerrillas and even “disappeared” them. The KDP’s intelligence service Parastin supports the Turkish intelligence service MIT in its attacks against Kurdish activists in southern Kurdistan. So far, a major escalation could only be avoided thanks to the patient attitude of the guerrillas, who are trying to build a Kurdish unity. However, as the Turkish army seems to be on the defensive again in its current large-scale attack on the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones, a relief attack by the KDP is becoming increasingly likely.

On 13 September 2023, the KDP dispatched hundreds of armored vehicles and heavy weapons to Bradost after forcibly evacuating the nomads from the region through threats, repression and use of force. A part of the KDP force attacked the positions of the guerrillas at Gewriya Zîne in the Goşîne area the following day.

Local sources report that nearly 286 families, including nomads and farmers, had to leave their fields and orchards in the region due to KDP pressure.

The Turkish state has recently started to build a new military base in the Bradost region. With the new military base, the Turkish state penetrated some 10 km into the border of the Kurdistan Region.

Local sources report that around 100 soldiers were airdropped by helicopters at the Turkish base in Bradost.

The new base is located in the area of Duriya and separates it from Xakurke, bringing the areas of Tarstan, Kem Kora and Sinîn Lolan under the control of the Turkish occupation state.

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## Turkish attack injures four Syrian soldiers in Shehba

ANF | 16 November 2023

Four members of the Syrian government forces were injured on Thursday as a result of an artillery attack by Turkish forces in the self-governing canton of Shehba. The soldiers were taken to a hospital in Aleppo with shrapnel injuries, according to military sources.

The attack targeted a post of regime troops in the village of Samuqa, which is located about twenty minutes by car east of Tel Rifat in the immediate vicinity of the Shehba region.

The Turkish army and allied jihadist militias are repeatedly attacking Damascus government troops. The attacks take place both in the illegal occupation zone and in the autonomous region of North and East Syria.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), two regime soldiers were injured on Sunday in a Turkish kamikaze drone attack against a post in the village of Şêx Îsa on the route between Tel Rifat and Samuqa.

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# Femicide

## Femicide in Istanbul

ANF | Istanbul | 13 November 2023

A man named Tuncay Sağ murdered his ex-wife, Pınar Bektaş, a mother of three children, in the Gazi borough of Istanbul. The couple divorced a year ago.

According to the information obtained, Pınar Bektaş, from Erzirom Tatos (Tekman), was stabbed to death on Sunday evening by Sağ.

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## TAJÊ salutes the anniversary of Shengal's liberation from ISIS

ANF | Shengal | 12 November 2023

After the ISIS onslaught on 3 August 2014, the Yazidi town of Shengal in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) was liberated on 13 November 2015 thanks to a months-long struggle led by the PKK guerrillas and YPG/YPJ fighters.

The Yazidi settlement area Shengal (Sinjar) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is the last contiguous settlement area of the Yazidi community. Thousands of Yazidis were murdered and thousands of women and children were taken prisoner in the 3 August 2014 onslaught on Shengal by ISIS militants. While ISIS gangs began murdering Yazidis in Shengal, the Peshmerga left, leaving the Yazidis behind, unprotected. The guerrillas of HPG (People's Defense Forces) and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) and fighters of the YPG (People's Defense Units) and YPJ (Women's Defense Units) came to the Yazidi people's aid in the face of ISIS aggression. Thanks to a months-long selfless struggle, the city was liberated on 13 November 2015. After the liberation of the city, the HPG and YPG/YPJ subsequently withdrew in 2017. People who returned to their land after Shengal's independence reformed, established defensive units and built their institutions.

The Free Yazidi Women's Movement (TAJÊ) released a statement marking the 8th anniversary of Shengal's liberation and saluting the guerrillas and all those who contributed to the liberation of Shengal from the darkness of ISIS. TAJÊ paid tribute to the heroes who sacrificed their lives during the struggle to liberate the city.

“Upon the call of Leader Öcalan, the heroes of Rojava, the fighters of the YPG and YPJ, came to our rescue. They opened up a humanitarian corridor and saved the lives of thousands of Yazidis who fled ISIS during the onslaught. The people of Rojava embraced the Yazidi people and welcomed them with open arms. Fighters of the YPG and YPJ fought shoulder to shoulder with the guerrillas and played a historic role in the liberation of Shengal. With great morale and motivation, hundreds of martyrs raised hope and defeated the fear of death in Shengal.

Seeking revenge, the valuable children of the Yazidi people fought shoulder to shoulder with the PKK guerrillas and YPG/YPJ fighters. Shengal was liberated under the leadership of Martyr Berxwedan and Martyr Berivan and the flag of victory was raised in the skies of Shengal. The struggle of Leader Öcalan led the resistance to victory. We celebrate today for all our companions who are fighting in the footsteps of the martyrs today.

We once again commemorate with respect and gratitude Mam Zeki and Mam Beşir who fell as martyrs while leading the work for social construction in Shengal from the perspective of a democratic nation aim-

ing for a democratic and free life. They played a leading role to the last moment of their lives. Mam Zeki is the symbol of the Yazidi people's alliance. We congratulate them on free Shengal.

We congratulate Leader Öcalan, our martyrs, the PKK guerrillas, the YPG/YPJ fighters and the entire Yazidi community on the 8th anniversary of Shengal's liberation.

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## Petition for Kurdish KJAR activist Varishe Moradi

ANF | 13 November 2023

Around three and a half months have passed since Varishe Moradi was the victim of a forced disappearance by state forces of the Iranian regime in East Kurdistan. Despite constant research, her family has still not been able to find out her whereabouts.

Authorities provide no information about Moradi's whereabouts or the reason for her arrest. Women's rights activists from Iran and East Kurdistan have therefore come together to form the "Campaign to Find Varishe Moradi". They are trying to create publicity and are using a petition to call on international bodies to take measures to clarify the fate of the Kurdish woman. Their goal is to put pressure on the regime through maximum attention. "We want the release of Varishe Moradi and all other political prisoners."

### Varishe Moradi

Varishe Moradi (alternate spelling Warisheh), also known as Ciwana Sine, was arrested on 1 August during a police check near her hometown of Sine (Sanandaj) and taken to an unknown location. The activist, who is a member of the Coordination of the Community of Free Women of East Kurdistan (KJAR), the umbrella organization of the Kurdish women's movement in Iran, was committed to women's political and feminist issues such as protection from violence, equality and self-determination and worked towards positive social transformation in many with targeted projects areas - much to the displeasure of the mullahs' regime.

The petition call reads as follows: "We, as a group of political, civil, and women's activists in Kurdistan and Iran, announce a campaign called "Where is Warisheh Moradi? Freedom for Warisheh Moradi", to both condemn the forced disappearance of this active woman and to find out about her fate and health. We also declare that this campaign will continue until the release of this political and women's rights activist.

In this regard, we appeal to all international bodies, the European Parliament, the United Nations Human Rights Council, The Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED), The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Amnesty International, The Commission on the Status of Women, the UN Fact-Finding Iran, the Red Cross, and parliaments and parties at the international level, to pressure the Iranian government to take immediate and appropriate measures regarding the fate of Warisheh Moradi and other political prisoners in Kurdistan and Iran.

We demand all organizations, political and civil activists to support and join this campaign by engaging in various activities so that we can all put pressure on the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran to force it to answer regarding the situation of Warisheh Moradi. Our experience reminds us that our actions matter and have an impact. Our actions and voices together can put pressure on the Iranian regime.

Time is crucial. Tomorrow might be too late! So, let's be the voice of Warisheh today. To be the voice of Warisheh Moradi, please sign and share the petition."



## NuJINHA reporter injured in Gaza

ANF | 13 November 2023

A reporter for the NuJINHA news agency has been injured in an Israeli attack on Gaza City. Naghem Karajeh was reporting as a correspondent for the Kurdish women's news agency when she was injured by Israeli shelling of the Shejaiya neighbourhood in her home on Sunday. According to NuJINHA, the 25-year-old reporter was injured in the head and right foot. However, Karajeh was unable to go to hospital or call for an ambulance due to continued attacks. Information on the severity of the injuries was not initially available due to poor internet connections.

The Shejaiya district borders the Rimal neighbourhood, where the Al-Shifa hospital is located. On Saturday night, the largest hospital in the Gaza Strip came under heavy artillery fire and has been out of action ever since. According to hospital reports, there were still 1,500 people seeking protection and 650 patients in the complex on Sunday, including around 40 babies. According to her, yesterday's attacks in Shejaiya hit several residential buildings, of which only rubble and ashes remain. "There are dead bodies everywhere in the streets," NuJINHA quoted its reporter as saying.

According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the Israel-Gaza war is the deadliest war for journalists in over 30 years. According to a survey by the organisation, more media professionals were killed in the first month of the war than in any other comparable period of conflict since the CPJ began recording such deaths in 1992. According to the survey, at least 40 journalists covering the war have died since 7 October: 35 Palestinians and one Lebanese are believed to have died in attacks by the Israeli military, while four Israeli reporters are said to have been killed in Hamas massacres in Israel. At least eight media professionals are believed to be injured, three missing and eight arrested.



## Arrest warrant for two Iranian journalists

ANF | 14 November 2023

The Iranian regime's pressure and attacks against journalists and activists continue.

It was learned that the chief prosecutor of Evin Prison issued an arrest warrant for 2 more female journalists.

The chief prosecutor of Evin Prison issued an arrest warrant for journalists Seide Shafii and Nesim Sultanbegi.

Recently, female journalists Niloufar Hamidi and Elahe Mohammadi were sentenced to 12-13 years in prison on the grounds that they reported on the murder of Jina Amini.

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## Three female journalists detained in Iran in two days

ANF | 15 November 2023

Three female journalists were detained in Iran in two days. The house of journalist Shagaig Moradi was raided in Tehran on Monday. During the search at Moradi's house, many of her belongings were seized. Moradi was arrested and sent to prison.

Iranian regime forces also raided the addresses where media activist Nasim Tawafzadeh, the managing director of the "Marur" news site, and Helaleh Natigeh, the environmental correspondent of the "Merav" news site, lived. It is unknown where the two detained journalists are being held.

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## KJK: No life without women and freedom

ANF | 17 November 2023

The Kurdistan Women's Community (KJK) has issued a statement to mark 25 November, the International Day Against Violence Against Women. In the statement, the umbrella organization of Kurdish women analyzed international developments as well as the situation in the four parts of Kurdistan.

The KJK listed the points that it believes are relevant in the global women's liberation struggle and said: "We celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in the shadow of conflicts and wars triggered by male-dominated understanding. The male-dominated system and dictatorial regimes around the world have made violence a goal of protection and the exercise of power. The patriarchal system is driving our world towards destruction in a spiral of violence, femicide, ecocide, genocide, sexism, racism, war and conflict. In essence and in practice it is a war against women. In Palestine, Nagorno-Karabakh and in Kurdistan, especially in Rojava, society is exposed to massacres, displacement and migration. Habitats are destroyed as well as cultural and social memory. We condemn this policy of massacres and genocide carried out for the benefit of male power and we declare that we will fight against it anywhere and at any time."

## **In Kurdistan, women are a constant target**

The statement added: “Massacres and violence, which have their origins in fanatical religious, racist and sexist politics, continue in Kurdistan to the extent of genocide. The absolute isolation and 25-year imprisonment of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan], the architect of our women’s revolution, on the island of Imrali, the murder of our pioneers in Bakur, Başûr and Rojava [in the north, south and west of Kurdistan] through assassinations and an asymmetrical war technology, a special war policy against young women, sexual violence and torture and sexist attacks are the most concrete practices of misogyny in our country. Women are the target of the colonialist, fascist and ISIS mentality-driven system in the four parts of Kurdistan.”

The statement then listed the issues related to the various parts of Kurdistan and the international developments.

### **“Bakur**

In Bakur, the progress of the women’s revolution is trying to be stopped by criminalizing the co-chair system, and jailing women’s institutions, women parliamentarians, mayors, journalists and activists. In Turkey, which tops the list of countries with the most prisoners, there are 13,977 women and 2,511 children in prison. In November, the number of femicides reflected in official data was 234. These acts of violence and massacres are legitimized and, at best, defined as abuse; the politics of violence and rape are almost toned down and normalized.

### **Rojava**

The self-government system in Rojava, based on democratic confederalism, in which the active participation of women reaches 60 percent, is tried to be rendered dysfunctional. In October, the fascist AKP regime targeted 50 percent of electricity, water and energy resources, depriving a total of two million people of their basic needs. Combating violence against women remains an important priority for Rojava and the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria.

### **Rojhilat**

In Rojhilat, the misogynistic Iranian regime wants to break the influence of the slogan Jin Jiyan Azadî [Woman Live Freedom] heard around the world by increasing the threats of execution and the oppression of women. The execution of 17 women this year and the kidnapping of KJAR activist Varishe Moradi by Iranian regime forces, are the most concrete example of the climate of fear that the regime wants to spread.

### **Başur**

In Başur (South Kurdistan), women are exposed to the attacks of capitalist modernity. The mentality that gives room to religious and sexist orientations leads to an increase in attacks on life. The desire to hide the increasing number of violent acts every day also leads to the spread of violence. The fascist Turkish state continues uninterrupted attacks on Shengal, which has fought for its existence through self-government and self-defense against the ISIS genocide, essentially taking over the struggle of the women of Shengal.



## Internalization of women into the system

Not only in our country, Kurdistan, but all over the world, there is a policy of internalizing women into the system using various methods and instruments. One dimension of this policy is to silence women economically and socially by allowing them to participate in the male-dominated system. It is noteworthy that in each period in which the struggle of women on a global scale increases, different perspectives, tendencies and practices come to the fore that emphasize the ideological contradictions and obscure or obscure the priorities and commonalities. In this way, women are supposed to be prevented from resisting male dominance.

## Self-critical approach

The only way to combat this is to move forward together in resistance to this system that is waging war on women. The development of the women's struggle, which has reached a high level of organization and solidarity and is opposed to violence, the politics of humiliation of women and the male-dominated system at the global, regional and local levels, has frightened the system. The male-dominated mind immediately acted and tried to weaken the women's struggle by, on the one hand, drawing women into the system and, on the other hand, escalating violence and femicide. This should also be understood as a self-critical approach. It is clear that to defeat this policy we must focus on the points that connect rather than divide. On this occasion, we invite all women fighting for women's freedom to review this situation, unite by building stronger and lasting alliances, and lead the fight together. We say it's time to get back up, and much stronger.

## Our attitude and our call

As women who want to make the 21st century an era of women's liberation, we say: Let us use 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, as an opportunity to organize ourselves more, expand alliances and actions, and... to come together!

Let us continue our fight against all mentalities and practices of the male-dominated system in order to illuminate the lives that are intended to be darkened by violence, femicide, genocide, war and massacres!

Instead of limiting women's resistance and struggle to certain days, borders and times, let us make every moment a time for women's freedom.

Let's develop our self-defense. As the revolution in Rojava proves, self-defense is the only way to protect ourselves from male-state violence in all areas of life.

Let's stop the politics and wars based on religious fanaticism, racism and sexism with joint actions and activities at local, regional and global levels!

Let us strengthen our work to raise awareness based on Jineoloji as a science of women and life and women's liberation ideology!

## From Kurdistan to Palestine, from Afghanistan to Armenia

From Kurdistan to Palestine, from Afghanistan to Armenia, we will defeat every policy of war, aggression, genocide and feminicide. Aware that the prerequisite for peace is freedom, we as women will once again take the lead in the radical fight for peace. Women's liberation struggle is always the guarantee of a "deep democracy" whose borders are drawn not by states but by peoples. We will be the builders of the democracy that peoples, women and the oppressed long for.

## Men who want to free themselves from the traps of patriarchy

What is also important for us is the attitude of men who want to free themselves from the traps of the male-dominated system, who support the slogan Jin Jiyan Azadî all over the world, who break the mould of male supremacy and strive to support the march of women into the freedom to accompany. We will make men's transformation part of women's freedom.

## No life without women and freedom

On the occasion of 25 November, we remember with respect and gratitude all women who fell in the women's liberation struggle and all women who were murdered by male-state violence. As the Freedom Movement of Kurdistan Women, we say that we will stop the massacre of women by expanding our self-defense and organization. We women are the pioneers of democratic, modern resistance against the patriarchal system and state-class civilization. We have found a magical formula to change the world: we will not accept a Jiyan (life) without Jin (woman), a Jiyan without Azadî (freedom)."

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## HPC-Jin demonstrates in Kobane on the occasion of 25 November

ANF | Kobane | 17 November 2023

Women's Civil Defense Forces (HPC-JIN) staged a demonstration in Kobane as part of activities organised by the Joint Actions Platform of North-East Syrian Organizations and Institutions to mark 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The march was attended by hundreds of women from Kobane, Raqqa, Manbij, Tabqa, Mensura and Gire Spi.

Speaking after the march from the Free Women's Square to Şehit Egît Square, Zehîde Elî, member of HPC-Jin Executive Board in Ain Issa district, saluted "all women who are resisting oppression in prisons and occupied territories" and condemned the policies of violence directed against women.

Zehîde Elî stated: “Every government tries to weaken society by leaving women vulnerable. However, we, women, have enlightened ourselves with the ideas of Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Bêrîtan, Zîlan and Jina Amini are the greatest examples that paved the way for a free life for women. We, Kurdish women, defeated ISIS in Kobane and will continue to remain standing to the end. We will enhance our struggle further every day.”

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## Human Rights Violations

### Kurdish journalist Ahmed Azad Çağan at risk of deportation from Switzerland to Turkey

ANF | 12 November 2023

Kurdish journalist Ahmed Azad Çağan, who applied for asylum in Switzerland, has been taken into custody to be deported to Turkey.

The journalist had to take refuge in Europe due to threats to his life in Turkey.

Swiss authorities, however, decided to deport the Kurdish journalist despite his asylum request.

The decision to deport Çağan is considered a step to jeopardize his life and has been met with reactions from journalists and activists.

Campaigns on social media call for action against Switzerland’s decision to deport the Kurdish journalist. Activists call for Çağan’s safety of life and freedom of expression to be secured.

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### DBP elects new co-chairs, vows to enhance the struggle

ANF | Ankara | 12 November 2023

At an extraordinary congress in Ankara, the DBP (Democratic Regions Party) elected its new party leadership, consisting of a woman and a man.

The delegates elected 39-year-old Keskin Bayındır and 45-year-old Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar as the new co-chairs of the party. With the change of its leaders, the party is also preparing for the local elections planned for next year.

In a speech at the congress, the former co-chair of the party, Saliha Aydeniz, spoke about the attacks against the Kurdish people and their resistance. “The state, which has employed any means possible against the Kurdish people, could not make them bend the knee. We are fighting for our future. This is a struggle for the freedom of the Kurdish people, and we will wage this struggle no matter where we are. The DBP stands with those who are resisting in prisons, and those who fight for the language and freedom of the Kurdish people. We will continue our struggle against the isolation imposed on the Kurdish people and their leader. The struggle will go on until Mr. Öcalan and the Kurdish people are free. Freedom will prevail.”

Keskin Bayındır pointed out that the DBP has a 30-year-old history of struggle, saying: “Hundreds of our companions have sacrificed their lives on this path. We are marching on our way today thanks to their struggle. The DBP will continue its march with the strength it draws from its past. We will keep our struggle going in all areas.”

Speaking about the aggravated isolation of Abdullah Öcalan, Bayındır said: “We, the DBP, are determined to break this isolation and ensure Öcalan’s physical freedom. The capitalist states seek to finish off the Kurds. In response, we will fight for Kurdish national unity. We will uphold our responsibilities.”

Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar called for the resistance to be enhanced, stating: “The Kurdish question is what determines the regime change in Turkey. It will be insufficient to describe isolation as an unlawfulness alone. It is a state policy that wants to imprison the democratic solution to the Kurdish question at İmralı. We invite everyone who fights for equality in Turkey to join the March to Gemlik on 18 November. Breaking the isolation on Öcalan is achieving a solution to the hundred-year-old question of this country.”

The DBP is a sister party of the HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party), which is currently being banned. While the HDP and the HEDEP (Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party), which emerged from the Green Left Party, see themselves as parties for the whole of Turkey, the DBP’s focus is on the Kurdish provinces. The DBP was formed in July 2014 by renaming the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Its declared aim is to represent the interests of the Kurdish population and decentralise Turkey.



## No news from journalist Ehmed, abducted by the KDP 20 days ago

ANF | 13 November 2023

RojNews journalist Silêman Ehmed was abducted by KDP security forces in South Kurdistan on 25 October. Twenty days passed and still no news had been received about where he is being held or why.

The employee of the Arabic-language editorial team of the RojNews agency initially was kidnapped by the KDP forces at the Sêmalka-Pêşxabûr border crossing between the Autonomous Region of North-East Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq after visiting his family in Aleppo.

The last contact with him was a telephone conversation with his mother when he was already in the KDP's area of responsibility. Six days later, the Asayish (local security agency) in Duhok announced that they accused the journalist of being a member of the PKK and, therefore, they had arrested him.

Ehmed comes from Afrin and has been working for the RojNews agency in South Kurdistan for five years.

Once again, RojNews condemned the illegal abduction of Silêman Ehmed and demanded immediate clarification about his situation as well as his immediate release. The agency holds the KDP responsible for the life and safety of its editor.

Many Kurdish media organizations, such as the Kurdish PEN Center (Navenda PEN a Kurd), the Dicle Firat Journalists' Association (DFG) based in Amed and the Mesopotamian Journalists' Association, as well as international associations such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the CPJ are calling on the KDP to release Silêman Ehmed.



## German Left Party criticises Erdoğan's visit to Berlin

ANF | Berlin | 13 November 2023

The German Left Party criticised Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's planned visit to Germany. Erdoğan has "a history of supporting terror" in the Middle East and is suppressing the opposition in his own country, said the co-chair of the party, Martin Schirdewan, in Berlin on Monday.

"Someone who, like Erdoğan, suppresses the democratic opposition at home, who bombs the Kurds in northern Iraq and Syria and helped pave the way for ethnic cleansing in Nagorno-Karabakh, cannot be a partner for a credible German foreign policy in my opinion," said Schirdewan. "On the contrary, a credible German foreign policy would show a clear stance against this state visit and not roll out the red carpet for Erdoğan. Erdoğan must not be a normal state guest for Germany," the politician warned. He stated that there were fears of new "dirty deals" between the German government and the Turkish president.

Erdoğan is coming to Berlin this Friday. At a dinner in the Federal Chancellery, Olaf Scholz wants to discuss "the entire range of political issues" that affect both countries with Erdoğan. Among other things, the different attitudes towards the Middle East war, the future of the EU-Turkey agreement on migration management and cooperation within NATO will be discussed. In addition to the Chancellor, the Turkish president will also meet German President Frank Walter Steinmeier. Various organisations, including the "Lift the PKK ban" campaign and the anti-militarist alliance "Disarm Rheinmetall", have announced protests against Erdoğan's visit.



## Kurdish filmmaker Reber Dosky detained in Turkey for three days and deported

ANF | 14 November 2023

Turkey detained Kurdish journalist and documentary maker Reber Dosky for three days last week. According to [Villa Media](#), he was met by security service agents when he wanted to fly back to the Netherlands. Dosky just managed to let his girlfriend know what was happening, and she alerted the Dutch consulate.

Dosky, who has lived in the Netherlands for 25 years and made documentaries for HUMAN and others, was detained in connection with terrorist activities, according to the officers. Dosky was in Turkey for a new project. It is unclear whether that project-in-progress was the reason for his arrest. Commenting on his arrest, Dosky said, “You never know exactly what the trigger is. I assume it is because of my work that they put a terrorism stamp on it.”

According to Dosky, the attention from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had an effect. “I could clearly see that the agents were impressed by the Dutch authorities’ interference. It seemed like the Turkish agents were not quite sure what to do with me either.”

Dosky was transferred to the deportation centre in Urfa, where he said he saw inhuman conditions - including a migrant being put in a freezer as punishment. “At roll call, someone was missed. I then had to remind them about the freezer,” Dosky said.

Trade union NVJ contacted Dosky and his partner after the arrest. Secretary Thomas Bruning said: “We are happy that he has been released, but for the time being it is impossible for Dosky to continue his work in Turkey. It is deeply sad that critical journalists in Turkey can be rounded up and deported indiscriminately. The NVJ has brought the matter to the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and members of the House of Representatives.”

### About Reber Dosky

Reber Dosky, born in Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq in 1975, is a Kurdish-Dutch filmmaker. After studying film direction at the Film Academy in Amsterdam, he graduated with his first documentary, *The Call* (2013). In 2014, he founded his own production company, [Adar Film](#). After the short documentary *The Sniper of Kobani* (2015) received a lot of attention, his breakthrough came with his first feature documentary, *Radio Kobani* (2016), which won the IDFA Award in the Dutch competition, and many other awards at festivals all over the world. In 2019, he won the IDFA award for best documentary with *Sidik and the Panther*. Reber Dosky aims at telling broad stories about social and political issues through showing their impact on one man’s life.

## KCDK-E calls on Germany not to receive the dictator Erdoğan as a state guest

ANF | 15 November 2023

The debate surrounding Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's announced state visit to Berlin on Friday continues. The Democratic Kurdistan Society Congress in Europe (KCDK-E) released a statement calling on the German government to withdraw the invitation and not to receive the dictator and war criminal as a state guest.

The KCDK-E statement said: "The bloody dictator Erdoğan supports every form of terror in the Middle East, suppresses the opposition in Turkey, commits massacres in Kurdistan and is coming to Germany on 17 November. Erdogan is a war criminal who is occupying Kurdistan with his army, bombing Kurds and realising bloody plans in the Middle East. Germany, one of the most important countries of European democracy, is setting an example by receiving this murderer before the big protest march against the PKK ban in Berlin. If the German state is truly committed to human rights, democracy and universal values, it should take a clear stand and not invite the dictator Erdoğan. Erdoğan cannot be a normal state guest in Germany because he is a war criminal."

The KCDK-E said it does not consider it a coincidence that the Turkish president's visit is taking place one day before the planned long-term demonstration "Lift the PKK ban, strengthen democracy" in Berlin. "Rather, the overlap in timing points to new dirty deals between the German government and Turkey. Olaf Scholz wants to discuss 'all political issues' that affect both countries with the dictator Erdoğan, who has been invited to a dinner at the Federal Chancellery. They will no doubt also discuss the war in the Middle East, migration control, the future of the EU-Turkey agreement, NATO cooperation and dirty plans against the Kurdish people."

Referring to the broad criticism of the visit and announced protests, KCDK-E stated: "As Kurds, we condemn this visit, which coincides with the central demonstration against the PKK ban on 18 November in Berlin, and we call on the German state to immediately abandon this attitude and cancel the invitation. We call on our people and all those who stand for humanity to mobilise for a massive protest march in Berlin on 18 November to give an appropriate response to the dictator Erdoğan and the German government that invited him."

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## Six civil servants detained for opposition to Turkification in occupied Gire Spi

ANF | Gire Spi | 15 November 2023

The Turkish forces and allied mercenaries continue their unlawful treatment against the local people in the Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) city in northern Syria, which they invaded in 2019.

According to local sources, the occupation forces detained six civil servants who opposed the policy of Turkification in the city of Girê Spî, where the Kurdish names of schools, parks and squares have been changed into Turkish.

Mercenaries from the so-called “Girê Spî Local Council”, which was established by Turkey and acts as a colonialist institution, have dismissed and detained the civil servants in question.

In October, the same mercenaries had arrested 5 teachers who rejected the imposition of education in Turkish.

One of the areas occupied by Turkey in northern Syria is the region of Girê Spî. The formerly multicultural, self-governing region was occupied by Turkey in October 2019 and has been controlled by the Turkish intelligence service and jihadist mercenaries since. According to the Girê Spî Cantol Council, more than 100,000 people had to flee the region after the Turkish invasion. People loyal to the Turkish regime are resettled in their place as the Turkish state is pursuing an intensive settlement policy, systematically expelling the Kurdish population from the occupied areas.

Following the occupation of the Girê Spî Canton by the Turkish state and its mercenaries on October 9, 2019, thousands of its residents were forcibly displaced. A policy of “Turkification” was systematically imposed on the local people who remained in the canton. While Turkish has been adopted as the language of instruction, educational materials have been reorganized according to schools in Turkey.



## Hrant Dink’s killer released from prison

ANF | 16 November 2023

Ogün Samast killed Agos newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief Hrant Dink in front of the newspaper building on 19 January 2007. On Wednesday he was released.

Samast was caught at Samsun bus terminal on 20 January 2007 and sent to prison on 24 January 2007. He was transferred from Kandıra F Type prison, where he was serving his sentence last February, to Bolu F Type prison. The prison administration decided to release Samast on the grounds of his “good behavior”.

Samast was released on Wednesday evening from Bolu F Type Prison, where he had been serving his sentence since February.



## First reactions

Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) co-chair Tuncer Bakırhan said: “The release of the hitman who killed our beloved Hrant Dink in a vile attack is a political assassination attempt by the AKP-MHP alliance against the common will of life and the demand for peace of the people of this country.

From Hrant and thousands of our friends, we have learned not to bow down and to persistently defend peace. We will expand our fight against the murderers and the political power behind them; we will continue to resist until justice and peace prevail in this country.”

HEDEP co-chair Tülay Hatimoğulları said: “Gülten Kışanak, Selahattin Demirtaş, Osman Kavala, Can Atalay are in prison just because of their thoughts, but Ogün Samast, the murderer of Hrant Dink, is free! We will continue our fight against this discriminatory execution practice by the government, those responsible for Hrant's murder and the political power behind it. We will continue our struggle for peace, which our beloved Hrant left us as a legacy.”



## HEDEP: Education in the mother tongue is a human right

ANF | Ankara | 16 November 2023

HEDEP İzmir MP Burcuğül Çubuk argued that education in the mother tongue and free meals in schools are interconnected, and said that the government cannot put the two rights against each other.

Discussions on the “2024 Central Government Budget Bill”, which was submitted to the Presidency of the Parliament with the signature of Turkish President Erdoğan, continue in the Planning and Budget Commission. The budget meeting of the Turkish Ministry of National Education witnessed the protest of HEDEP MPs. The deputies came to the meeting hall with posters saying “Education in mother tongue is a right” in their hands to protest the fact that no resources were allocated to Kurdish and other languages, as well as the lack of any emphasis or expression in this direction. Protesting the abolition of free meals in kindergartens, HEDEP deputies also carried posters saying “One meal is a right”.

HEDEP Batman (Êlih) MP Zeynep Oduncu and İzmir MP Burcuğül Çubuk spoke to ANF about the reasons for their action.

### Budget for education is insufficient

Oduncu said that multiple crises have made the people unable to meet ends and added: “The government promotes and spends money in war policies and continues to ignore the demands of the people. The budget allocated to education is insufficient. Inadequacy in schools and the increase in poverty have brought young people who are worried about the future to the point of ending their own lives. Students who are already sent to school by poor families under difficult conditions give up studying if they also have to

pay money for food, dormitory and books. That's why we demand that healthy, sufficient and free meals be provided in schools.”

Oduncu said that they draw particular attention to education in the mother tongue, and added: “We underline that education in the mother tongue, a human right and the most legitimate right of the Kurds, should be included. That's why we took action during the budget negotiations.

Burcugül Çubuk said: “When we look at the 2024 budget, we see that in it inflation, hunger, poverty, homelessness, or young people committing suicide are not taken into account.” In fact, said Çubuk, the government paints “a rosy picture as if there were no femicides and no war. When Kurdish provinces are mentioned, they get goose bumps, and concepts such as equality and democracy do not come out of their mouths. Naturally, we saw very clearly in this budget that we do not live in the same country as the AKP-MHP fascist alliance. This is a budget that doesn't reflect reality. Education in the mother tongue and free meals in schools are interconnected. The government cannot rule by putting the two against each other.”

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## “Rojava, Syria's Ticking Time Bomb” documentary premieres worldwide in 11 languages

ANF | 17 November 2023

After an intensive three-year production period, the highly anticipated documentary film, “Rojava, Syria's Ticking Time Bomb,” has made its global debut on major networks, spanning 11 languages.

Viewers can now access the film in English, German, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Pashto, Persian, Portuguese, Finnish, Kurdish and Turkish.

Directed and written by Kawa and Gulan Akrawi, the documentary is coproduced by the renowned German TV channel WDR. The film first took the spotlight on WDR's prestigious program, Die Story, and has since been showcased on leading European networks. Today marks its global broadcast on DW Deutsche Welle, reaching audiences around the world.

The documentary film “Rojava, Syria's Ticking Time Bomb” is also available for streaming on Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Google Play, and Vimeo on demand (for the Turkish version.)

“Rojava, Syria's Ticking Time Bomb” sheds light on the pressing issues within Rojava for a diverse global audience to witness and explore the region's complex challenges—an eye-opening experience.

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## Kurdish poet and author Fadıl Öztürk taken into custody in Izmir

ANF | Izmir | 18 November 2023

A Turkish police anti-terror unit has arrested the Kurdish poet and author Fadıl Öztürk. The 68-year-old was taken into custody in Izmir on Friday as part of investigations by the public prosecutor's office in the Aegean metropolis, his lawyer said.

Öztürk is suspected of having spread “terrorist propaganda” in columns for the anti-government internet portal Artı Gerçek and on social networks. Öztürk’s wife, Berrin Biçek, was also arrested on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda.

This is not the first time that Fadıl Öztürk has been targeted by the Turkish justice system. He was in prison for the first time in the wake of the military coup of 1980. At that time, the Dersim-born poet was sentenced to life imprisonment in the trial against the left-wing Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Way, also Dev-Yol), a political movement that existed from 1977 to 1985 . After ten years in prison, which were characterized by torture, he was released.

In 2018, Öztürk was arrested once in connection with the texts he wrote for Artı Gerçek and was later sentenced to almost two years in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda, which was suspended for five years under conditions. This probation has not yet expired.

Öztürk and Biçek are currently being held in the anti-terror headquarters of the Izmir Police Headquarters. After the interrogation is completed, the couple will be transferred to the Izmir Public Prosecutor’s Office.

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## Interview

### Besê Erzincan: Building a woman-led life

ANF | Behdinan | 12 November 2023

Besê Erzincan, coordinating member of the KJK (Community of Kurdistan Women), spoke about the origins of the Kurdish women's movement on the Xwebûn program on Jin TV hosted by Arjîn Baysal. The KJK is an umbrella organization for the women’s army YJA Star, the women’s party PAJK, youth work and other committees that are autonomous in themselves.

*How did the KJK system come onto your agenda? How did it come about? What was the process before this system, what kind of work was done? What were your goals?*

The KJK system has a historical background. Since the founding of the PKK to this day, women's activities have always been carried out. Our system first started with Heval Sakine Cansız, one of the founders of the PKK. Rebêr Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] has always valued the work of women. Political parties were created in the Middle East, but women have never been among the founders. Rebêr Apo has analyzed the history of Kurdistan, the history of the Middle East, the history of Mesopotamia and the history of society and personally saw that the struggle would not be successful without women. For freedom and democracy to emerge, women must be included. If we look at the life of Rebêr Apo, his approach was always in this direction. When the KJK was founded, there had already been a forty-year-long struggle. According to Heval Sakine Cansız, there have always been women in the army.

After 1986, Rebêr Apo analyzed the family. Then he said that an independent women's organization should be founded. On this basis, the JJWK was founded. The Women's Army was founded in 1993 and the YAJK (Yekîtiya Azadiya Jinên Kurdistan) in 1995. In 1999 a women's party was founded. In 2005, after the declaration of Democratic Confederalism, the KJB was founded. And in 2014 the Komalên Jinên Kurdistan (KJK) was created.

Each stage was a big step for women's work. With each stage, women's work became larger, deeper and broader. At the beginning, there was a deepening in the military sector. Of course, there was also work in the social and political areas, but this work was fragmented. Rebêr Apo said that a women's system would need cadres. On this basis, the women's party was created. So the KJK was built upon a forty-year legacy and has a very large paradigm and philosophy. Women are under attack within the system, their ability to organize and defend themselves has been crushed. A great deal of decomposition has taken place. Our goal is to organize women and build women-led lives.

*You mentioned Democratic Confederalism. This system is based on the paradigm of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. Why did you choose an autonomous system?*

The KJK works on many levels. Rebêr Apo always wanted women to have an independent will, an independent thought and an independent consciousness and that they could organize themselves. In the current system, there is no longer any living space for women. Women are seen as either belonging to the man, the state or the system. They are no longer recognized as individuals and are no longer able to make decisions for themselves and their lives. You can no longer stand on your own two feet. This is the case in the nation-state system. Because of this, women cannot express their energy, their thoughts and their potential. Self-organization is important so that women get to know themselves, become aware, come together and work together.

The state, men and authorities should not have any influence on women. It is the first time in history that there was an organization like the KJK. After the revolution, women could not form an independent organization, so they went home and continued to live as before. We said not to make that mistake. Rebêr Apo has dealt with many revolutions and seen many shortcomings regarding women. He said we should make a real revolution, not a formal one. An autonomous organization is necessary so that all women can take part in the revolution and express their will and ideas. If we were generally organized, women's color

would not come to light. We have to fight as women. We cannot make a purely national and class revolution.

We have broken away from the system of capitalist modernity. We want to build a new life for women, men and society. The KJK system is not just for women. We want to lead society. We work not only for the freedom of women, but also for the freedom of men and society. If we look at other revolutions, we see that they do not have such a broad goal. The KJK system is also the basis of the confederal system.

*You talked about being an army, being a party. What is your relationship with the YJA Star and the PAJK?*

The KJK system is like an umbrella. It is not a centralized system. Within the KJK system there are the PAJK, youth organizations and the YJA Star. All are organized within this system, but each organization is autonomous within itself. Each organization makes its own decisions and takes its own precautions. However, the PAJK has a special status as it leads the entire system. Every organization has an autonomous mechanism. We can say that it works like a network. Then people come together and make decisions about strategic issues.

The KJK stands for a very comprehensive and social system. The cadres take the lead, but there is no hierarchy. Anyone who wants freedom, equality and justice, believes in socialism and wants to work for women's freedom can join the organization. Our paradigm is clear, it is a democratic, ecological, gender-liberating paradigm. We want to organize society on the basis of municipalities, councils, academies and cooperatives. With this system we want to build a new society, a new life. The nation-state system is based on the enslavement of women. We reject this and say that we will build a new life based on free women. We want to build a free, democratic and ecological life.

*A system based on Abdullah Öcalan's paradigm was introduced in Rojava. It is true that the war continues, but the revolution also continues. Can one find traces of the democratic, ecological and women's liberation paradigm you mentioned in Rojava?*

Rojava is organized based on the paradigm of democracy, ecology and women's freedom. The revolution in Rojava is a women's revolution. There is a women's system there. For example, there is the YPJ. Being a woman in the military protects both women and the country. The whole system is based on a co-board. For the first time, so many women are taking part in a revolution and in actions. In none of the past revolutions has there been equal representation. Today, thousands of women are involved in social, political, environmental, economic, health, community, communication and cultural activities. In addition to all these activities, there is a women's academy. Training courses are offered to solve women's problems. Women are becoming more aware. In Rojava, women educate themselves, have willpower and participate in activities. Arab, Circassian, Syrian and Armenian women are organized together. In addition to these activities, youth work is also very strong.

*In recent years, great determination has developed in Rojava, especially among women. This is thanks to the municipalities and councils, because everyone has a say and can have a say.*

The municipalities and councils are the basic system in Rojava. All members must join a municipality. This is the foundation of Democratic Confederalism and the Women's System. Decisions have to be made

from the bottom and go up. There are women's councils in every village and every city. In these women's meetings, problems affecting women's lives are discussed and resolved. Not only the problem but also the alternative life needs to be discussed. We know that the system of capitalist modernity intervenes in all areas of life. As women, we have to organize ourselves in all areas of life and create alternatives. On the one hand, the system pretends to serve; on the other hand, it enslaves society. Our alternatives should be both local and general. Women should be given a say in the region. We want to raise awareness across society. Because if people are not informed, they cannot make the right suggestions.

*Is the situation the same in other parts of Kurdistan?*

This system is not just specific to Kurdistan. It is a system for the entire Middle East and even the entire world. Its founding may have begun in Kurdistan, but our goal is to create a confederalism system led by women and community organizations worldwide. It may not be called KJK, but at its core it will be the same. We believe that if we create a free, ecological and democratic women's confederation system in the Middle East and the world, we will be able to build a democratic modernity.

*Do you think you have reached every woman in the world? Do you have such a goal and do you consider yourself sufficient in this regard?*

The idea of women has been spreading in Kurdistan for more than forty years. This is a great development, but we still have a long way to go. The KJK system will develop step by step. The work doesn't end with the organization. We have short-term, medium-term and long-term goals. The male-dominated system has been organized for five thousand years. We cannot say that we will change this system in five to ten years. Our goal is to develop the fight step by step every year. Challenging work is being carried out in terms of action, education, diplomacy and women's unity. Women's work never ends.

We had many difficulties, paid many prices, gave many favors, worked hard, but we developed step by step. Of course, we cannot say that we have introduced our system to everyone. But everyone knows that the Rojava revolution is an example. She is recognized all over the world. The slogan "Jin Jiyan Azadî" was shouted around the world. For the first time, there was a riot with a slogan for women. Kurdish women are also recognized in the field of diplomacy. Jineolojî is becoming more and more known, Rebêr Apo is known. There may be difficulties, but there is also progress. When we talk about how much we as militants of the KJK and PAJK play a leading role, we have shortcomings in this regard. But we also see our development and we will win.

*They also talk about world women's confederalism. This is a program in itself. Many conferences were organized in cities such as Berlin and Frankfurt. At these conferences, people see how this system is implemented. How do you see the reactions of women in the world?*

If you take the right step, you will definitely get a positive response. There is such a need in the world. There is currently migration, war, crisis, poverty and violence against women in the world. The system of capitalist modernity has created great hostility against women. This system is misogynistic. Women have no problem when it comes to action and rebellion. However, collaboration is more problematic. Our goal is to create a flexible and shared organizational network that brings all women together and enables a new life. The KJK is a model. It addresses the problems of women. At the conferences, women show great interest in Kurdish women, listen to them and respect them. There is a rejection of the 5,000-year-old male-

dominated system. Women are rising up, but they don't know what kind of system and life they will build. But women are slowly coming together. The KJK system gives the right answer to the problems experienced.

*How does the KJK fight against sexism? How does it defend women? How is free life constructed?*

The KJK system wages an important battle against sexism. It is a very broad system in terms of education, system and life. Throughout history, women's ability to defend and organize has been destroyed. However, life was built around women. In this system there was no government and no state. Under the male-dominated system, men attacked women in all areas. Women became slaves. The nation state is based on sexism. There is a great conflict in relationships between men and women. All life is organized on the basis of men's interests. Women have no rights in society. We want to correct these mistakes in the women's system. The co-board system is one of the pillars of this. The more a woman organizes, the more she can fight against sexism and transform her life.

*How do men react? What kind of change does the KJK envision for men?*

It is not easy for men to change. This has to do with the development of women. When a woman develops, changes, transforms, can make her own decisions, becomes free, then men must also go through a change. There are some men who understand women and want to change themselves. Others are against women, and some feel responsible for nothing. We need to do very comprehensive work on changing men. We have to be very persistent. Many of our male friends are educating themselves. Our KJK system forces men in society to change. If he doesn't change, the women's system will not accept this man. We have to continue our fight and educate ourselves. It doesn't happen overnight.

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## Karasu: Gemlik march should be part of the struggle for democracy

ANF | Behdinan | 17 November 2023

KCK Executive Council member Mustafa Karasu said that democratic forces in Turkey should also be part of the Gemlik march on 18 November, and added: "Undoubtedly, the Turkish state will prevent it or try to prevent it. It is a fascist government, but we cannot give in to fascism. This fascism cannot be destroyed without paying a price."

*First of all, we would like to have a look at the situation of Abdullah Öcalan; his continuing resistance in İmralı, as well as your evaluation of the campaign with the aim of Öcalan's physical freedom and a status to Kurdistan, which was announced on October.*

The isolation on İmralı is being carried out in line with the genocide policy of the Turkish state. Just as the Kurdish people are being heavily oppressed, an intense isolation is being imposed, and the voice of the people is wanted to be silenced. Also Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] is being tried to be silenced as the

leader of the Kurdish people. On this basis, isolation is being imposed under false pretexts. In this respect, it can be stressed out that isolation is a reflection of the policy in Turkey. By looking there, we can understand what the policy in Turkey is against both the Kurdish people and the democratic forces.

Both lawyers and families request meetings, but they are not allowed to see the prisoners on İmralı. There is no justification for this attitude of the state. The unspoken justification is the policy of genocide against the Kurdish people. As part of the genocide policy, Rêber Apo is kept in isolation, silenced and not allowed to speak. In the same way, the Kurdish people are under pressure, they are silenced, they are not allowed to speak and this is how the genocide policy against the Kurdish people is carried out. The connection of the AKP with the Kurdish policy and the genocide policy is clear. It is not about any prisoner or convict meeting with his family or meeting with his lawyers. It is about the Turkish state's policy towards the Kurdish people.

There is a struggle against this policy. This struggle began when the international conspiracy [October 9, 1998, when Rêber Apo was forced to leave the Middle East. The following odyssey ended on February 15, 1999, when Rêber Apo was abducted and taken to the prison island of İmralı.] against Rêber Apo. The struggle against the international conspiracy was initiated under the slogan: "You cannot darken our sun". Since then, there has been a struggle against both the conspiracy and isolation. This struggle has gradually turned into a struggle for the Kurdish people in general and for the democratic forces all over the world. Because the policies and attacks against Rêber Apo are attacks against the Kurdish people and humanity.

Today, the struggle of the Kurdish people has reached an international dimension. The peoples of the world see Rêber Apo as their leader, the democratic forces, intellectuals and socialists do the same. In this regard, we can say that 25 years of resistance of Rêber Apo and the resistance against genocide and conspiracy in the Turkish Republic have brought the struggle against the international conspiracy and isolation to a new dimension. It has reached a very important point. The struggle of the peoples and democratic forces of the world against the conspiracy in the form of the newly announced campaign on October 10 clearly shows the level that the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and for the freedom of Rêber Apo will reach in the future.

Because of the development of this new stage of struggle, it is no longer possible to keep Rêber Apo in captivity. No matter what they do, they can no longer keep the lock on those doors. Those doors will be opened and Rêber Apo will regain his freedom. This is our struggle as well as the struggle of the peoples of Turkey, as well as the world's struggle for democracy. The struggle to free Rêber Apo is the struggle against isolation and the struggle for democracy in Turkey. In this respect, we really would like to congratulate our international friends and our people on their successful struggle. They have taken a very important step. Still, in many parts of the world, peoples, democracy forces, freedom forces, women, young people are participating in the campaign for the freedom of Rêber Apo and they are constantly expanding this campaign. In this way, they are not only struggling for the liberation of Rêber Apo; they are also struggling for the spread of his paradigm throughout the world and for the development of the peoples' struggle for freedom. The more the peoples of the world get to know Rêber Apo, the more they will struggle for freedom, the more effectively they will struggle for democracy, the more powerful they will struggle for socialism. The struggle for the freedom of Rêber Apo has turned into an ideological as well as political struggle, a struggle for the freedom of peoples, of the oppressed, and of women. This fact needs to be seen.



This multifaceted struggle has emerged around Rêber Apo. This is not only due to his personality, but also because of the paradigm that he has put forward. It no paradigm just for the Kurds, it is about all humanity. Since it is related to all democratic and freedom forces, the struggle to liberate Rêber Apo has become a struggle for humanity, a struggle for democracy, freedom and socialism. This struggle will grow like an avalanche, because it has such a character, such a nature. The 25-year struggle against the international conspiracy, the struggle against isolation, had very important results at that stage. No struggle so far has been in vain.

Rêber Apo's struggle for freedom has indeed had great results. This may not be sufficiently understood today, but the more the struggle around him evolves, the more this understanding develops. Like I said, it is a struggle to bring all humanity to a free life, a democratic life, and that is an important step, and in this respect. Especially next year, this will increase even more. I would like to salute once again those who started the campaign on this basis. I wish them all, everyone who has worked for this campaign, success in their work.

*Shortly there will be the march of Gemlik [Originally a rally in June 2022 aiming for Gemlik, the city from where ships depart to the prison island of Imrali. The rally was forbidden and several people were arrested.]. You have called on the people to join this march before. What can you tell us about it and its meaning?*

The Gemlik march is important. It is a march for Rêber Apo, a march for the struggle against isolation. In fact, it is a march of struggle against genocide. That is why it is so important. The Kurdish people claim their leader. A people that cannot claim its leader, if it cannot claim its organization, how will it be liberated? Peoples struggle for freedom with their leaders and organizations. Without a leadership, without an organization, there can be no struggle. Especially if this leadership has become the soul of the whole people and organization, how can a struggle be waged without such a leadership? Neither the organization can wage a struggle nor the people can wage a struggle. In this respect, of course, our movement and our people have been protecting Rêber Apo at the highest level for 25 years and will continue to do so.

But it is very important not only for the Kurds but also for the peoples of Turkey and the democratic forces of Turkey. If fascism is carrying out so many attacks to genocide the Kurds, if fascism is institutionalized for this reason, if it has become so arbitrary, so reckless, to suppress the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom, for the genocide policy, then not only Kurds but also the democratic forces in Turkey should support the Gemlik march. They should be part of this march.

The struggle for democracy in Turkey cannot be waged without understanding the position of the Rêber Apo, nor without understanding the Kurdish reality. How can there be a struggle for democracy in Turkey without embracing the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and its leader? Can there be democracy without Kurds? Democracy cannot develop in Turkey when Kurds are killed at the same time. It is simply not possible. Moreover, democracy is being opposed because every democratic step benefits the Kurds. We emphasized this many times. The reason why there is hostility to democracy in Turkey is such, is that the Kurds do not benefit from democracy. Whenever the smallest democratic right emerges, it is immediately attacked so that the Kurds cannot benefit. In this respect, of course, the youth and women of the Kurdish people should join the Gemlik march from everywhere. There should be more flow to Gemlik from the metropolises; from Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir and nearby places. There should be a flow from all over Kurdistan. All hindrances should definitely be broken down. Even a march that is organized just to show an atti-

tude in the hope that democracy and struggle will develop is attacked so much; so how will freedom be won? How will the freedom of the Kurdish people be won? In this respect, the Kurdish people need to be determined and insistent on this issue.

We see the insistence and determination of the people. Everywhere people say that they will march to Gemlik. Women and young people say they will march in the democratic political sphere. The democratic forces are embracing it, and say that they will join the march. This march must be part of the struggle for democracy.

Right now there is a lock, a barricade in front of democracy. How will democratization develop without breaking this? The Turkish state prevents marches, it prevents demonstrations and meetings. Only marches and meetings that support the government are allowed, thus the institutionalization of fascism continues. In this respect, the march to Gemlik is also a march against genocidal colonialism and against fascism. There was going to be a march last year, but there was Corona and other factors, so it was postponed. But this time there will be a strong embracement of Rêber Apo. Especially because the campaign is so advanced in the world, the Gemlik march should be considered as a part of this campaign. Therefore, undoubtedly, the Turkish state will try to prevent it. It is a fascist power, but fascism cannot be surrendered to, it must be fought against, a price must be paid. This fascism cannot be overthrown without paying the price. So we cannot surrender. Surrendering to this fascism means the end of the Kurdish people. In this respect, we believe that the Kurdish people, the young people, who have embraced their leader throughout the last 25 years, will embrace their leader and participate strongly in this march. And, of course, again, the democratic forces of Turkey should also be a part of it. If they are so indifferent to the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom, to the policy being carried out against the Kurdish people's leader, their struggle for democracy in Turkey cannot be credible. The struggle waged by those who remain indifferent is not a struggle for democracy. They are deceiving society. In this respect, I call on both the Kurdish people and their international friends, the struggle for democracy in Turkey, to participate strongly in this march.

*While the world is speaking about the war in Gaza, the war in Kurdistan is also continuing. What can you tell us about the progression of war?*

Since February 2011, there has been a widespread war in the South Kurdish Medya Defense Zones [regions controlled by HPG and YJA-Star guerrilla forces]. Since then, the Turkish army has used all the means at its disposal, both in terms of technology and in terms of its relations with international forces as well as with local Kurdish collaborators, but it has not been successful until today. Such a long time that they have been waging war, and they are still not successful. Yes, they have built positions on some mountain peaks, but they are isolated and cannot control their surroundings because there are many tunnels that have been built in the last years by the intense work of our comrades there. On the one hand, the guerrillas are fighting the enemy. On the other hand, they continued to work on the expansion of the tunnels. They are answering the attacks of the Turkish army with the tactic of moving teams. These teams are a very essential part of the resistance.

Today there is also a large tunnel war being waged in Gaza. Comrade Cemal spoke about this a few days ago. It is now three years that the Kurdish people are waging such a war against the Turkish state, but there has never been an international outcry about the Turkish army's use of poison gas and chemical weapons. Everybody remained silent. Right now there are protests all over the world, exposing the war by Israel. At

the same time, international institutions and the international public opinion remain silent about the use of chemical weapons by the Turkish state in Kurdistan, although there are so many continuous attacks.

It is said that the state of Israel has used so many bombs in the Gaza Strip until now, which together would be the power of two atomic bombs. It can easily be said that the Turkish state has used ten times the number of bombs in the Medya Defense Zones. The war between the state of Israel and Hamas has been continuing for about a month. The war in the South Kurdish Medya Defense Zones has been being waged for three years. Every day without a break. Still, the resistance was very widespread and it was essentially the moving teams that prevented a further approach by the Turkish army.

The Medya Defense Zones are resisting, the people are resisting and all over Turkey there is significant resistance. Lately there have been some actions by the guerrillas in the North Kurdish area of Serhed. Although the Turkish state is attacking on every front, they still remain without success. It is now dozens of years that they are waging a dirty war and are getting support by multiple international forces of Europe, America and of the whole NATO. They say that the war that Turkey is waging is a 'legitimate interest in self-defense'.

This struggle and resistance were formed by the people. It has created a new reality for society, which is the most significant achievement of the resistance. Out continuing struggle and resistance will break the Turkish state and on the basis of free Kurdish people, the democratization of Turkey and the Middle East will evolve.

*In the ongoing war, the KDP is playing a crucial role as a collaborative force. What are the latest evolutions on this front?*

There is no point in highlighting what the KDP has done again. It is obvious what they are doing, what kind of policy they are pursuing. The evidence is openly available. What is needed is the appropriate attitude. It depends on the attitude of the Kurdish people and democratic intellectuals. Recently, there have been calls for both the KDP and the PKK to make peace. By doing so, the actions of the KDP are normalized. This must be prevented. The current situation needs to be well understood and analyzed.

The KDP has been helping the Turkish state in every possible way for a long time. What the KDP is doing now is to provide new opportunities for the Turkish state. The KDP is also mobilizing its forces in these areas so that the Turkish state can dominate these areas. This approach must stop. Those who do not intervene show their real interests. We should learn from our history. I would like to ask all Kurdish political parties, intellectuals and artists: "If the KDP is not stopped today, when will it stop? If any other party had approached in the same way that the KDP is doing now, what would have been the reactions? What attitude would have been taken?"

The other day, someone who knew nothing but PKK enmity went to England and held a meeting. He said that the PYD stole the revolution in Rojava. What a shameless guy. Of whom did they 'steal the revolution'? The people mobilized, and the Kurds controlled the areas where they lived, then when Daes [ISIS] came, they fought it and spread the system of self-government. The fact that a KDP member stands up and says that the PYD 'stole the revolution in Rojava' and says that on the basis of this, the Turkish state is right in its attacks, its legitimization reveals what the reality is. Therefore, I don't want to say much more than that.

*You have already mentioned the ongoing war in Gaza; how does the Kurdish Freedom Movement evaluate this war? How do you analyze the position of Turkey in this war?*

The war in Gaza is really being waged in a very ugly way. What Hamas is doing is surely unacceptable, but what Israel is doing right now is really inhumane. It is burning and destroying everywhere without even caring about women, children or the elderly. This is unacceptable. Of course, it is necessary to stand against this. But we need to be consistent in standing against it. Those who do not accept crimes against humanity need to oppose it correctly and should do so consistently.

The Turkish state is saying that they take the side of the Palestinians, but it embraces Hamas. Of course, the attack on the Palestinians needs to be opposed. But the Turkish state's 'support for the Palestinians' actually weakens the support for the Palestinian struggle. It does not support the Palestinian struggle, because it looks like a fascist, a mass murderer who is standing by the Palestinians. This is, of course, a situation that weakens the Palestinian struggle. Can a people wage a just struggle like the Palestinians side with a fascist government? What did Turkey do during the time of self-governance resistances? Didn't it destroy whole cities? Didn't it demolish Nusaybin, Cizre, Şırnak? Didn't the Turkish state burn people alive in basements? Didn't they kill women and children in the streets? The bodies of murdered children were kept in refrigerators. Now such a state goes and claims to defend the Palestinians. They say that they are doing the same thing. This is not embracing Palestine, this is overshadowing the Palestinian cause. Today, the Israeli state kills children and women. But let's look at Erdoğan for a second. A few years ago he said, "We will do what is necessary, whether it is a woman or a child". He said it with great anger and later showed that it was not just a saying. They killed both women and children. Hundreds and thousands of civilians were massacred.

In this respect, of course, this reality of the AKP government must be well exposed. Erdoğan goes and speaks about 'defending the Palestinian cause'. In reality, he is destroying it. What did Erdoğan do in Rojava? He occupied Afrin. 500 civilians were martyred in the resistance and so many fighters were also martyred in this time. If they hadn't withdrawn the population, the Turkish state would have leveled the whole of Afrin to the ground. This is certain.

The AKP's embrace of Palestine is a situation that weakens the Palestinian cause, it weakens its credibility. Israel is already saying "What are you talking about, you are doing the same thing yourself". Can it be right that a force that is itself so immoral puts itself before you? There are many people and a lot of democratic forces defending the cause of the Palestinian people, but the AKP government is not one of them. They are not interested in the cause of the people, they just follow their own interests. In fact, by doing this, the Turkish state wants to get the support of various Arab powers in the Middle East and genocide the Kurds. In the end, Erdoğan is doing all this to genocide the Kurds. Everyone should be aware of this. Otherwise, the AKP's problem does not care about Palestine. It is looking at it for justification. It will carry out all kinds of attacks on Rojava, and then it will come out and say, "Those people did it, and I am doing it too."

The AKP government, the Turkish state, lives such a reality of dirty war. There is no credibility in anything they say. It is not to defend the peoples, not to defend human values. It is purely to gain political advantage for itself, to put pressure on the Kurds based on it, to put pressure on the democratic forces.

*Talking about the politics in Turkey, it can be said that there are some changes regarding internal affairs. Does this have any influence on the movement?*

This Minister of Interior has been in office for 5-6 months. Under his responsibility, twenty thousand operations were launched in this short period of time. Among these operations, the war in the Medya Defense Zones was never mentioned. These are operations carried out by the gendarmerie and police and 98% of these operations were against civilians, HDP members, youth and women. They oppressed the villagers, all the peoples.

The interesting thing is that 20,000 'operations against terrorism' are carried out and at the same time they say 'there is no terrorism anymore, we have ended it'. How can you say you have brought an end to terrorism when you carry out 20,000 operations in 5-6 months?

In Turkey it is said that Süleyman Soylu was the bad cop, and that now this Ali Yerlikaya has become the good cop. The reason why Ali Yerlikaya has become so prominent is because of his covering up of gang organization. He just focuses on the oppression against the democratic forces and the Kurdish people. Some opposition forces were also instrumental in this. The Turkish state is a state of special warfare. Everything they do is in favor of special warfare. Special warfare means deceiving society, deceiving the world, turning the truth inside out. Now the Saturday Mothers have been released. Who was preventing their actions until now? Erdoğan was preventing them. On Erdoğan's instructions, the Saturday Mothers were prevented from entering the streets to protest. Erdoğan said, "We are getting too much exposure, it is not a big deal, let them be allowed." There is also the resistance of the Saturday Mothers to this. Because when they are persistent, the government is exposed.

The policy against the Saturday Mothers was really harsh for a long time. Now they release a little bit of the pressure. The repression in the first place was clearly a message.

They waged so much war against the Kurdish people, against the democratic forces, that they forbade even the most basic forms of protest. In this way, they created a deterrent pressure and fear in society, to prevent them from struggling. But because of the continued exposure of this policy, they had to take a step back.

No one should fall for their special war. The government opposition is cutting its own branch. By doing so, they normalize the attacks against them. We have already heard what this one man said on TV. Who does the Ankara Security Directorate report to? Ali Yerlikaya said to this. "If there was a riot like July 15th, we would simply kill them". This is Ali Yerlikaya's approach. He spends all his efforts on the Kurds and the democratic forces. If he went against the gangs he should start with Süleyman Soylu.

The democratic forces and the left forces in Turkey cannot fight against fascism without understanding the Turkish state's special warfare. The PKK wages a successful struggle and survives because it understands the special war. Otherwise, if the special war is not understood, we would also be dragged into its tail, we would also fall for its tricks, and those who fall for them can easily be destroyed.

Looking at the Constitutional Court. They make decisions, but then do not comply to it. The Constitutional Court receives 100 decisions, but does just accept one or two of them. The Constitutional Court in Turkey will become a part of the fascist power and will be known as such if they continue like this. In order not to be perceived as such, it objects in one or two cases. However, recently it approved an even worse

article, an article that criminalizes incitement, encouragement and propaganda. It is a very elastic law. Anyone can be imprisoned.

The Constitutional Court overturned the decision about the Member of Parliament Can Atalay (TİP). They wanted him out. In response, the Court of Cassation took a very harsh stance, even blaming the Constitutional Court and demanding that its members be put on trial. This is an interesting thing, unprecedented in the world. This actually shows the crisis and chaos in Turkey. Fascism is having so much difficulty in its struggle against the democratic forces and the Kurdish people that it has come to this situation. If they did not have difficulty in the struggle, they would not have taken such an attitude.

I remember our Constitution teacher at school was Mümtaz Soysal. Mümtaz Soysal today is very important in Turkey. He was known as a professor of the Constitution. In his lectures, the decisions of the Constitutional Court were clearly evaluated. Everyone had to abide by them back then. How many universities are there in Turkey? There are 100, I don't know how many, faculties of law, political sciences. Today these are just a few minutes in a lecture.

All professors have said that the decisions of the Constitutional Court are final. Interestingly, now they say, no, the decisions of the Constitutional Court are not final. The state has come to such a situation. Now Erdoğan is saying that the constitution is contradictory, we need a new constitution. Not only on this issue, but also on other issues, you didn't implement the article of this constitution that you say is bad. The reality is, that they will make an even worse constitution. When the AKP came to power, they softened some laws in order to harmonize with the European Union and to show themselves as democratic. Now they will probably reverse them and make them worse. The new constitution will not be more democratic or more liberal than the old one. Neither will it be more liberal than the 1961 Constitution, nor will it be more liberal than the others. In this respect, everyone is already saying; either you implement a bad one so that we can see the new one. You don't even implement the bad one.

In this respect, a very interesting situation has emerged. Even this reveals what the crisis in Turkey is. This is again related to the struggle by the democratic forces and the Kurdish people. The reason why they are in this situation is because they are worried that the Kurds will benefit from the smallest democratic right. If the problem was not the Kurdish problem, if there was no genocide policy being carried out against the Kurds, they would not be in this situation.

The democratic forces in Turkey do not understand. They want to eliminate and suffocate even the crumbs of democracy in Turkey for fear that the Kurds will benefit. Because, they say, if it happens, the Kurds will benefit. They are already saying, what will happen if Duran Kalkan becomes an MP? Will the Supreme Electoral Council give its approval? Is that how it is? They are in such an approach that deceives society and deceives the world. They really don't know what to do anymore. But as I said, they don't see the reasons. This is, of course, very important. These reasons need to be seen. Why are they doing this? Why don't they comply? Why don't they release Kavala? Because the Kurds will benefit if there is a stretch. They are doing it so that the Kurds don't benefit. They even put the Saturday Mothers under such pressure.

In this respect, whoever wants to fight for democracy, whoever wants to fight for freedom must see this reality and fight for democracy together with the Kurdish people. Without raising the struggle for democracy together with the Kurdish people, nobody can be a democrat, nobody can fight for democracy, they deceive themselves. Even if they say they do, they cannot get results. Because as long as the Kurdish ques-

tion is not solved, as long as the genocide policy is implemented against the Kurds, this oppression regime will continue. Because they will put all kinds of pressure on the Kurds, they will put all kinds of anti-democratic policies into effect in case the Kurds are injured. This reality really needs to be grasped. We repeat it very often. But we repeat it because it is a subject worth repeating. On this basis, everyone needs to better grasp this fascist reality that has emerged, what this situation is.

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## Journalist Akdeniz: Situation of migrant workers in Turkey is catastrophic

ANF | Istanbul | 17 November 2023

The burned body of the Afghan refugee and father of three, Vezir Mohammed Nourtani, was discovered on 11 November in a forest near Zonguldak in northern Turkey. It turned out that he was a worker in MHP politician Hakan Körnös's illegal mine. He collapsed at work. He was then severely beaten, thrown into the forest and burned there. Apparently he was still alive when he was burned, suggesting that this was probably done to prevent the illegal mine from being exposed. Körnös was arrested along with other accomplices. They are accused of beating Nourtani to death and then burning him.

Similar cases come to light more and more often. A well-known case, for example, was that of the Syrian worker Mustafa al-Recep, whose body was wrapped in a blanket and thrown into an orange grove near Adana in 2019. The worker had died in an industrial accident, or industrial homicide to better define these accidents. However, these well-known cases are just the tip of the iceberg and show how landowners and entrepreneurs in Turkey exploit the labor of migrants to the fullest only to then "throw people away".

Ercüment Akdeniz, journalist and expert on the working conditions of migrants, spoke to ANF about migrant workers in Turkey.

*The number of fatal accidents at work has increased sharply. Migrant workers are particularly affected by this. Why is that?*

After the introduction of the licensing system in Zonguldak, i.e. after the privatization of the previously state-owned companies, the proportion of unionized workers fell. This created a mafia-like structure there. Certain capital groups, particularly those associated with the MHP or various other groups, quickly grew like mushrooms. The illegal mines can be described as follows: mines or quarries are dug even in illegal residential areas. Mounds are dug up. During my visit to Zonguldak, I actually saw numerous illegal mines, whose entrances are located, for example, on the side of roads and under bridges.

On the other hand, the social structure of Zonguldak also plays a role in this context. The tradition of mining work, passed down from father to son, has now disappeared from Zonguldak.

*Why?*

After the labor murder in Soma, for example, only the minimum wage is paid there. It has therefore become difficult to find qualified workers who do not want to go into these illegal mines due to the lack of occupational safety and health protection.

However, people working there have no choice but to risk their lives. These are most often migrant workers. In Zonguldak it is not people from Syria but from Afghanistan who are normally employed. Of course there is a story behind it. Those who come from different regions of Afghanistan know in advance where they will work. We also saw this when a boat of migrants sank in Lake Van. It was clear where these people would work, in which workshop, in which province and where they would sleep.

Of course, if a worker loses his life, the sanctions can be very harsh, especially if he is a citizen of the Republic of Turkey and the factory does not have a license or the mine is illegal. However, if it is a migrant, there is a regulation, but not so strict. Still, there is some kind of regulation, which is why people have started to give preference to employing illegal immigrants. In the illegal mines in Zonguldak and in all other sectors in general, there is a very brutal labor regime. The relatives of those involved in accidents, if they are here, usually cannot complain, otherwise they will be deported. They are defenseless, have no rights, are at risk and are constantly threatened or deported because the mechanism of corruption extends from the security forces at the border to the smugglers to the bosses of the companies.

*So the Zonguldak's case is not an isolated one?*

Exactly. For example, we don't know how many migrant workers die on construction sites and are buried there without anyone knowing it, or how many people die while working in the fields and are simply thrown in a corner. These crimes demonstrate the need for re-investigation of anonymous cemeteries, deaths, autopsies and police reports. There is a political responsibility here. It is unclear whether a motion to investigate will be submitted to Parliament or whether the parties will meet, but there is great responsibility. This needs to be addressed. Reportage from Maxmur Camp

Sipan Vidanova from the Internationalist Commune of Rojava criticizes the great silence surrounding the constant attacks on the self-governing refugee camp of Maxmur in Southern Kurdistan and describes its revolutionary character.

sed as these events have increased noticeably and can no longer be hidden. There is strong racism here, which means that people are placed above others because of their origins. Anyone who comes from outside is treated as some kind of subhuman, regardless of their country of origin. There are citizens and locals, then there are those who cross the border illegally and are treated as if they are worth less. On the one hand, they don't want them to cross the border, and a wall is even being built to seemingly prevent migrants from doing so, although in reality it is a filter system.

*What do you mean by "filter system"?*

In fact, this system is about bringing as many workers as you want across the border. This illegality, marginalization or racist exclusion leads to migrants who have overcome all these barriers being forced to accept everything as sub-proletarians. And I mean, accept everything, even death. In the past, this was pri-



marily how Kurdish workers were treated, but today it is foreign migrants. A wedge is being driven between the local workers and the migrant workers, and since the latter are exposed to extreme exclusion, they will do anything to have a job, because they need it. This is capitalism's new migration regime. This exists not only in Turkey but in many parts of the world, but in Turkey it shows itself in a very striking way.

Officially, 32,000 people have been killed in workplace accidents since the AKP came to power. Of these, 900 are refugees or migrants. That is a very high number. Of course, the main question is how many more deaths have gone unrecorded. Regarding migrant or local workers who work in these illegal mines, we are sad to say that there is usually no news about them dying "normally". But if you measure these events against the level of violence, then you can see that there is a very serious problem here. Because there are workers who die due to occupational diseases and neglect of the simplest precautions that can be taken.

It should be added that there are illegal mines not only in Zonguldak but also in Kınık and Izmir. Young children live in terrible conditions, and local and migrant workers die side by side. The way out lies in their joint organization and their joint struggle. Here, too, we unfortunately have to give the unions a very bad report. They only care about cReportage from Maxmur Camp

Sipan Vidanova from the Internationalist Commune of Rojava criticizes the great silence surrounding the constant attacks on the self-governing refugee camp of Maxmur in Southern Kurdistan and describes its revolutionary character.

ontributions or pushing nationalism. That suits the bosses well. I think they do this in complicity with them.

This horrific and unsafe transfer of migrant labor is leading to more and more deaths. This is the result of a global migration management strategy in which Turkey is involved. What are workers' organizations, unions and democratic forces doing against this strategy? That is the question everyone should ask themselves.

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## Opinion

### Reportage from Maxmur Camp

ANF | 18 November 2023

Sipan Vidanova from the Internationalist Commune of Rojava dedicated a report to the Mexmûr camp in southern Kurdistan.

The camp near the small town of the same name is a self-governing refugee camp of mainly people from Northern Kurdistan who resisted the repression of the Turkish state as part of the scorched earth policy and have built a free life in the middle of the desert.

If you drive along the road from Kirkuk towards Mosul, your impressions are characterized by a lot of dust and the pungent smell of petrol. After this monotonous image continues, the Mexmur refugee camp appears in the distance. The numerous gardens and trees make it feel like you are approaching a desert oasis.

The camp is located between Kirkuk, Mosul and Erbil. The majority of the approximately 12,000 people in this camp come from the Botan region in northern Kurdistan. In the course of the burning of villages, looting and deliberate expulsion by the Turkish occupying state in the early 1990s, many were forced to leave their homes. From then on, the story of the exodus of the people of Maxmur begins. A story of unimaginable pain and difficulties, but also a story of a struggle to defend dignity, a story of resilience. Since its departure from Botan, the camp has changed location five times. From then until now, the camp has been under constant attack by the fascist Turkish state. Air raids, secret service operations, attacks by Islamist militias. These attacks are supported and sometimes even carried out by the KDP, whose practice resembles that of a branch of the Turkish secret service (MIT).

Until the first permanent housing structures were erected in 2003, tents were the only protection against weather conditions. It is important to note that temperatures of over 50°C are the norm in Maxmur's long summer. In the early days, there were not even any tents. The situation of the population of Maxmur today, in which at least the most existential survival needs can be more or less satisfied, is the result of a long struggle. When the first school was founded in a tent in 1994, there were not even pencils for the students, but nevertheless, they were taught in the Kurdish language. A freedom that still does not exist in Turkey today.

Armed drones of the Turkish occupying state fly daily over the refugee camp, which is located over 200 km from the border with Turkey. The fascist Turkish state spares no expense or effort in trying to use the camp's young people in particular for its own purposes. There is hardly a cell phone in the camp on which an MIT agent has not called at least once. Sometimes it is threats of violence, especially against relatives living in Turkey, sometimes it is material enticement. Another means that the secret services try time and time again is to circulate drugs and prostitution in order to control young people in particular. Whenever people came from the camp to other cities, whether to work, study or for health treatment, the enemy left no stone unturned. Another widely used tactic is to induce emigration to Europe. When the Islamic State attacked Mosul at lightning speed in 2014 and threatened to spread in all directions, the Iraqi Army and KDP forces in charge dropped everything.

In this context, a group of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) rushes to Maxmur to avert the worst. As a result, a small contingent of HPG guerrillas remains to protect the camp from possible attacks.

Under these harsh circumstances, the camp's society organizes itself in a radically democratic way according to the paradigm of Rêber APO. From the commune to the People's Council, the Women's Council and the Youth Council, the organs of democratic confederalism were established and filled with life. In the economic sector, the number of cooperatives is growing and the economic transformation is progressing despite the obstacles posed by the existing embargo.

Around 4000 pupils are taught in Maxmur's schools today. From kindergarten to high school, around 200 teachers cater to the needs of children and young people. However, as education is of enormous importance, there are also various academies where the population is educated in subjects such as jinology, ecology, democracy and much more.

After health care was absolutely disastrous, especially in the early years, there are now two hospitals in Maxmur that not only care for the population of the camp, but also numerous patients from the surrounding area.

The stories of the people of Maxmur are not just enough to fill books, but libraries. Countless families have lost members in attacks on the camp. Many of the camp's daughters and sons have become martyrs in the armed struggle. Whether in the mountains or in Rojava. But instead of being victimized in all these adverse circumstances, the people maintain an extraordinary dignity and live with their heads held high.

It is absolutely impossible to make the history and reality of these people understandable in a few lines. At least I can mention the deep reverence one feels when getting to know these people and their struggle.

Without even beginning to forget the reality of Maxmur's people, the camp offers a certain potential to show that another world is possible and, above all, how. In addition to the lack of freedom due to its status as a refugee camp, an impressive process of liberation is taking place within society. Guided by Rêber APO's philosophy of freedom, society is being transformed step by step. The revolutionary significance of the camp is no secret, especially to its enemies, and this aspect alone is enough to justify murderous attacks and silence the international state community.

This year too, the camp is by no means spared attacks. In spring, it is the Iraqi army that approaches the camp at dawn in armored combat vehicles. As in the previous year, the aim is to fence in the camp. The Iraqi government is not acting in its own interests, but under pressure from the Turkish state, which is threatening to stop the flow of the Tigris River, which is vital for Iraq. The population immediately stands in the way of the soldiers. On the front line, mothers block the access road. When the soldiers persist, the young people respond to the attacks with stones, causing the soldiers to flee. At this moment, Iraq opens fire. A youth is hit in the chest by a bullet and only by great luck does he escape death. The siege by the Iraqi army lasts 16 days. During this time, the entire population keeps watch at key points and whenever soldiers approach, they scare them away. In the end, the other side gives up the operation.

While the simmering Israel-Palestine conflict overshadows everything in the media, the Turkish occupying state is expanding its attacks on Rojava enormously. All supply structures are being targeted and the number of civilian casualties continues to rise.

But Erdogan also seizes the opportunity with regard to Maxmur and attacks the camp unnoticed by the world public.

On October 7, a Turkish combat drone bombed the forecourt of a mosque. A woman and two children are injured. Another drone attack follows a week later. Again, a woman is seriously injured. On October 13, a Turkish UAV bombs a car near Erbil. The occupants are all from the camp. Three female passengers are injured. The driver of the vehicle is the newly engaged Dilovan İşlek. The rocket hits the driver's side and 27-year-old Dilovan becomes Şehîd.

Although Maxmur is a refugee camp and the UN is therefore responsible, it shows no attitude towards the attacks. A frequently used excuse is the presence of guerrilla forces in the vicinity of the camp. It is claimed that it is a military camp. In order to dispel this propaganda and because the original task of the guerrillas around Maxmur had been fulfilled, the guerrillas withdrew their forces in September. Following the announcement of this, a battle broke out between Iraq and the KDP on Qereçox Mountain, at the foot of which the camp is located. Among the KDP's casualties is a member of the Turkish secret service, which once again confirms an obvious fact.

It is certainly not news that the UN, EU and other states are no help to a people who have an idea of freedom and are not prepared to sell themselves. Fairy tales about the humanism of the EU and UN can no longer be made credible to anyone, and the people of Maxmur know this only too well. Solidarity can only be expected from the global democratic society. The fact that stories like Şehîd Dilovan's are also being heard outside Kurdistan and that the attacks by the fascist Turkish state are not going unnoticed lies solely in the power of freedom seekers around the world, above all the internationalist youth.



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