

THE IMRALI POST

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

Issue № 80 / 9 December 2023 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

Contents

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	2
Demonstrations in Northern and Eastern Syria to demand news of Abdullah Öcalan.....	2
Vigil demanding freedom for Abdullah Öcalan continues at Maxmur Camp.....	3
KCDK-E expresses great concern about the situation on Imrali after earthquake.....	4
Activists at Geneva vigil salute the hunger strike of political prisoners in Turkey.....	5
‘As long as the isolation of Öcalan continues, no constitution will be democratic’.....	6
Families of Imrali prisoners submit application for an urgent meeting.....	7
Öcalan Books Day kicks off in Geneva.....	8
Prisons in Turkey.....	8
Prisoners enter 7th day of hunger strike for Öcalan.....	8
ÖHD: The demands of prisoners on hunger strike should be met.....	9
Ill prisoner Tanhan dies 43 days later after being sent to hospital.....	10
Lawyer of journalist Silêman Ahmed still denied visit to his client.....	10
‘The government will be responsible for every death in prison unless a solution is found’.....	11
Journalist Gök, jailed since April, released with a travel ban.....	12
Day 9 of hunger strike in 106 prisons in Turkey.....	13
No release for 75-year-old ill political prisoner Elbi.....	14
Journalist Ahmed, incommunicado for 44 days.....	15
Repression against prisoners on hunger strike.....	15
Journalist Dicle Müftüoğlu remains in prison.....	16
Prisoners in Eskişehir call on everyone to join the campaign “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan”.....	18
Reşahat Ada: We will fight together with our children in prison.....	19
Hunger striker Tatlı: We need a struggle network against isolation in Imrali.....	19
Prisoners released after 30 years.....	20
Disciplinary punishment imposed on prisoners on hunger strike in Urfa.....	21
Military aggression and occupation.....	21
‘They gave me my daughter in a cardboard box’.....	21
Turkish army shells civilian settlements in Rojava.....	22
One civilian injured in Turkish attacks on villages in Afrin-Sherawa.....	24
33 cases of abduction and arrest recorded in Turkish-occupied Afrin in November.....	24
3 gangs killed, 6 civilians wounded in ongoing clashes in Girê Spî.....	25
Turkish attack kills a civilian in South Kurdistan.....	26
HPG: Turkey continues to commit war crimes.....	26
SDF arrests an ISIS ringleader in Raqqa.....	27
4 killed in SDF operation against Turkish-backed gangs in Zîrgan.....	27
RIC releases November sleeper cell report.....	28
Two YRK guerrillas martyred in Turkish airstrike in Pencewîn.....	29

HPG reports ongoing guerrilla resistance and Turkish attacks.....	30
Turkish attack injures 2 children and a woman in Til Temir.....	31
Femicide.....	32
Makbule Özer to go back to prison.....	32
Zeinab Jalalian forced to make a confession and express remorse to gain access to medical care.....	33
Men killed 35 women in Turkey in November.....	34
Saturday Mothers vow to continue their struggle for justice.....	35
Human Rights Violations.....	36
IHD demands investigation into child suicides.....	36
DFG: 11 journalists taken into custody and 5 sent to prison in November.....	37
Member of HEDEP Youth Council detained in Muş.....	38
Protest against the demographic change and the settlement of Palestinians in Afrin.....	38
KHRN releases report of human rights violations in Rojhilat in November.....	40
HEDEP Spokesperson: We are preparing to enter the elections with our candidates all over Turkey.....	42
Turkish court drops case on Vartinis Massacre.....	43
Lawsuit against London police for the criminalisation of the Kurdish community.....	45
Asylum seekers denounce attacks in the emergency shelter in Berlin-Tegel.....	46
Turkish gendarmerie attack Özak Tekstil workers.....	47
Journalist İrfan Uçar detained in Antep.....	48
Turkish soldiers attack lawyer who spoke with his clients in Kurdish.....	48
HEDEP member severely tortured by the police in Istanbul.....	49
Final resolution of the 18th EUTCC Conference.....	49
Interview.....	51
Kalkan: No oppression, persecution, massacre can turn Kurds away from the goal of freedom.....	51
Kalkan: Repression in Turkey is like a nightmare.....	56
Opinion.....	58
Being brothers and sisters by killing and denying!.....	58
MP Gökalp: There is no safety of life and property in Bitlis.....	60
Dilan Güvenç: We face a constant anti-Kurdish assimilation policy.....	62



Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Demonstrations in Northern and Eastern Syria to demand news of Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | 5 DECEMBER 2023

After the 5.1 magnitude earthquake in the Sea of Marmara was reported in the news, the people of Northern and Eastern Syria took to the streets to demand what is the condition of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Citizens in Girkê Legê district, members of civil institutions, Martyrs' Families Council, Revolutionary Youth Movement and Young Women's Union held a march.

The march turned into a rally in the town centre. Speaking there, PYD member Idris Mihemed said: "Leader Abdullah Öcalan represents our will and honor. The lack of news from the leadership caused us concern, especially after the earthquake."

Mihemed called on international organizations to fulfil their responsibilities, visit Imralı Prison and explain the situation of Abdullah Öcalan.

Mihemed said: "We will not stop in any way. We will be in the squares until we hear from the Leader. Leader Abdullah Öcalan represents the people who want freedom."

Hundreds of citizens from Dêrik district and Koçerat region of Qamishlo Canton also held a march to demand what happened to Abdullah Öcalan.

Til Hemis

The Til Hemîs People's Assembly made a statement on Öcalan. Assembly member Belqîs Elabdullah called on international organizations and human rights institutions to end the absolute isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and to obtain information about his situation.



Vigil demanding freedom for Abdullah Öcalan continues at Maxmur Camp

ANF | MAXMUR | 5 DECEMBER 2023

A new group take over the vigil for Abdullah Öcalan, which has been going on in Maxmur camp since 20 July, every 5 days.

Activists who participated in the vigil demand the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Leyla Hilalî told RojNews: "Our protest was organized against the severe isolation imposed on our Leader. In the last 3 years, the isolation imposed on our Leader has become even heavier. All kinds of rights and legal violations are being committed against our Leader. We have been continuing our vigil for 4 months. As women and mothers, we took our place in the 28th group of this event. Every member of the society participates in this event. We will do whatever we can to break this isolation. During the vigil, we sometimes watch Leadership documentaries, and sometimes we hold discussions with people who come to visit us."

Calling all women to stand by Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, Leyla Hilalî said: "What is expected from us now is to protect the current process. It is time to stand up against isolation, betrayal and occupation. I invite women all over the world, especially Kurdish women, to support the work our Leader has done for women."

Kamuran Mijini, one of the vigil activists, said that they will continue their actions until the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan is ensured and added: "We started the vigil on 20 July. Women, young people, children and the elderly all come to visit us. We will continue our actions until we achieve freedom for our Leader."



KCDK-E expresses great concern about the situation on Imrali after earthquake

ANF | 5 DECEMBER 2023

On Monday, a 5.1-magnitude sea and earthquake occurred in Gemlik. This was followed by 13 aftershocks with strengths of up to 4.5 on the Richter scale. The island of Imrali, where the Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan is held in total isolation, is in the area of the earthquake. The KCDK-E, the umbrella organization of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, said in a statement: "There is no news from Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. He is being held captive by the fascist AKP-MHP regime under strict isolation on Imrali. Not a single legal pretext can be produced for this isolation. After 24 years of difficult isolation conditions, Rêber Apo suffers from various chronic illnesses. There has been no sign of life from Imrali for almost three years. The earthquake has increased our concerns."

The KCDK-E criticized the fact that no visits from relatives and lawyers are permitted and that no written or telephone communication is possible, and called on the international institutions to fulfil their responsibilities and do something about this isolation, which contradicts every legal principle.

The association condemned the authorities for not providing any information about the situation on Imrali after the earthquake: "Since there is no sign of Rêber Apo's life and he is not allowed to receive his lawyers or his family, we are increasingly worried about his life. For the Kurdish people, Rêber Apo is the red line. The people see him as their future and demand immediate visits in Imrali to be allowed. It is particularly urgent to make it possible for lawyers and family visits. The fascist isolation and torture system that has been imposed on him for years must end immediately."

In view of Öcalan's isolation, the KCDK-E called for broad resistance: "It is our task to resist this system of isolation and to end the uncertainty about his life. All our institutions, our people and our friends must mobilize to break the isolation. The fight for the freedom of Rêber Apo will grow."

The KCDK-E said: "As KCDK-E, on the occasion of the earthquake, we once again demand to be informed about the life and condition of Rêber Apo and we call for immediate protests."



Activists at Geneva vigil salute the hunger strike of political prisoners in Turkey

ANF | GENEVA | 6 DECEMBER 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 Imralı, the Turkish occupation attacks on Kurdistan, the massacres committed in Kurdish territories and the silence of the UN.

During today's vigil, taking place around a tent in Nations Square, where the UN office is located, activists saluted the hunger strike actions of prisoners in Turkey and North Kurdistan, which started on 27 November as part of the international campaign "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish question".

Mehmet Latif Çelebi, Co-President of the Geneva Democratic Kurdish Community Centre (CDK-Ge), called for participation in the central march to be held on 13 December, as the Geneva sit-in is entering its 4th year.

Librarian Anne Claude took the floor on behalf of the Serhildan Group, an internationalist organisation that declared its foundation in Switzerland after France and Belgium on the basis of solidarity with Kurdistan and the Rojava Revolution.

Noting that Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has been imprisoned under isolation for 24 years, Anne Claude said, "For 3 years, this isolation has been turned into torture and has been put into practice in its most severe form. Concerns about Abdullah Öcalan's life have increased."

After the speech of Anne Claude, who stated that as Serhildan Group, they will organise an event on the history of Kurdistan this evening, the activists started a sit-in protest.



‘As long as the isolation of Öcalan continues, no constitution will be democratic’

ANF | 6 DECEMBER 2023

The alternating hunger strike launched in prisons as part of the international campaign “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish question” is spreading. Political women prisoners in Gebze Prison also joined the strike.

The women prisoners who participated in the hunger strike, which is on its 10th day, sent a message to the public, saying the following:

“For 25 years, Mr Öcalan has been preparing peace projects, road maps and proposals in İmralı and presenting them to the progressive public opinion of Turkey and the world for putting an end to the tragedies experienced today, including in the Israeli-Palestinian war, which has prompted the whole world to rise up, and for the establishment of the ‘Middle East Peoples’ Union, a project for the peoples of the Middle East to live in peace and brotherhood, and has been waging a great struggle for peace.

25 years ago, the international powers that put Mr Öcalan under isolation with an international conspiracy and built the ‘İmralı Isolation System’ wanted to neutralise Mr Öcalan in order to keep the Middle East and Turkey as an arena of peoples. They gave the guardianship of the İmralı Torture System they established to the Turkish state. This severe isolation is an isolation imposed on the whole country and our peoples’ longing for peace and democracy. It is a political project that is constantly kept alive in order not to solve the Kurdish question, which is the main issue of the Republic of Turkey, and thus the Middle East problem. Those who maintain this isolation system, which is a crime against humanity and against the most basic human and rights law, even in violation of the existing inadequate laws of the Republic of Turkey and international law, are also the ones who established this isolation.

As long as this isolation continues, no constitution will be democratic. In these months, when the Republic of Turkey enters its second century, we call on all humanity to urgently embrace the task of lifting the heavy isolation in İmralı for the democratisation of Turkey and a democratic peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. This duty belongs to all of us.

As women prisoners in Gebze Prison, we congratulate the campaign ‘Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish question’ initiated by our esteemed patriotic, revolutionary-democratic people outside. We believe that the campaign will surely reach its goal and we are starting our hunger strike action in order to support the campaign.

As long as the İmralı isolation continues, our country and our peoples will be isolated from democracy, peace, human rights and freedoms. As long as İmralı isolation continues, isolation will continue in Turkey and the Middle East. End isolation! Long live the struggle of our peoples for peace, democracy and freedom!”

Families of Imrali prisoners submit application for an urgent meeting

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 DECEMBER 2023

The family members of Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners applied to the Turkish judicial authorities for permission to visit their relatives. The urgent application was submitted on Friday to both the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office in Bursa and the prison administration of Imrali Island Prison, where Öcalan and three other political hostages of the Turkish state are being held. The urgent application came after the seaquake that occurred in the Gulf of Gemlik at the beginning of the week. The families are demanding reliable information on the condition of the Imrali prisoners.

The seaquake on 4 December had a magnitude of 5.1 and was centred around four kilometres from the coast of the port town of Mudanya at a depth of just under nine kilometres. Mudanya is located on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara in the Gulf of Gemlik. All boats travelling to Imrali depart from there. "The fact that the island prison is located in the earthquake zone raises concerns about the health situation of the families of the prisoners detained on Imrali and requires a review of their situation," the application states. In addition to the family members, lawyer Mazlum Dinç, who is also Öcalan's authorised representative, is also demanding immediate access to the island. The authorities have not yet responded.

Abdullah Öcalan has been in solitary confinement on the prison island of Imrali since his abduction to Turkey in 1999. The last contact with him was a telephone conversation with his brother in spring 2021, which was interrupted after a few minutes. Öcalan last had contact with his lawyers from the Istanbul-based Asrın Law Office in August 2019. After an eight-year interruption, a hunger strike led by politician Leyla Güven, who has since been imprisoned again, resulted in a total of five visits by lawyers. The last family visit to the island was approved in March 2020. Since then, isolation in the high-security prison has been driven to the level of total incommunicado detention.

Öcalan's three fellow prisoners Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş, who were transferred to the island prison in 2015 as part of the dialog between the Kurdish leader and the government in Ankara, are also affected by the isolation on Imrali. The Turkish judiciary generally uses arbitrarily imposed "disciplinary measures" against the Imrali prisoners as a legal cover for the injustice on the island. The last of these "punitive measures" was imposed in October. The "Roadmap for Negotiations" written by Abdullah Öcalan in 2009, which was submitted to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) as a defense brief, is also repeatedly used as an excuse to prevent visits.

Öcalan Books Day kicks off in Geneva

ANF | GENEVA | 9 DECEMBER 2023

The reading day event, organized within the scope of the “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish question” initiative launched globally on 10 October, was held at Boulevard Bookstore in Geneva.

The event was organized within the scope of the “Global Öcalan Books Day” declared on 10 December, and was promoted by the Serhildan Network, which continues its work in the city of Geneva and the Democratic Kurdish Community Center (CDK).

Serhildan Network activist Daniel Traub told ANF: “Abdullah Öcalan's book days will be continued with various activities around the international campaign in the coming period.”

Pointing out the absolute isolation of Abdullah Öcalan that has been maintained for nearly 3 years, Daniel Traub said: “With this campaign, we want to make all the people of the world hear about the philosophy that Abdullah Öcalan created around his ideas.”

Traub said that they will continue to fight to end the isolation imposed on Öcalan and ensure that he meets with his family and lawyers. As the last stage, we want Öcalan to regain his freedom.”

The days of reading Abdullah Öcalan's books will continue in the cities of Zurich, Bern and Bellinzona.

— ★ —

Prisons in Turkey

Prisoners enter 7th day of hunger strike for Öcalan

ANF | 3 DECEMBER 2023

The alternating hunger strike action launched in prisons in Turkey and Kurdistan to demand the isolation system imposed on the whole society in the person of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, as well as his freedom, continues on its 7th day.

The hunger strike, which was launched on 27 November, the 45th anniversary of the PKK's founding, within the scope of the “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish problem” campaign, will continue until 15 February 2024, the day Abdullah Öcalan was abducted.

Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has not been allowed to meet with his family and lawyers for 33 months in İmralı Prison, where he has been kept in isolation since 1999.



ÖHD: The demands of prisoners on hunger strike should be met

ANF | URFA | 3 DECEMBER 2023

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) issued a statement in Urfa expressing solidarity with the hunger strike of political prisoners in Turkey that has been going on for a week. The prisoners are taking part in the international campaign for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish question. Their demand is the lifting of Öcalan's isolation on the prison island of Imrali.

The statement issued in Urfa was supported by the co-chairs of the ÖHD, Ekin Yeter and Serhat Çakmak, and numerous other lawyers. Lawyer Ayşe Şehriban Demirel from the central board of the ÖHD pointed out that Abdullah Öcalan has been in solitary confinement since his capture on 15 February 1999 and that the isolation has been further tightened since 2015: "This absolute isolation continues and reflects the AKP/MHP government's view of the Kurdish question and its policy of annihilation. There has been no news from Abdullah Öcalan since 25 March 2021."

Demirel recalled the statement made by the then Minister of Justice, Abdülhamit Gül, in 2019 that there was no obstacle to visits to Öcalan by his lawyers and family members. However, she said, more than four years have passed since then and the complete isolation of the prison island of Imrali from the public continues. The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited Imrali in September 2022, but no report was published, said Demirel and added: "It is an obvious fact that the strict isolation on Imrali has spread to all prisons. The hunger strike initiated by the political prisoners demands the lifting of isolation and a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and is a decisive step."

Emphasizing that the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan is torture, Demirel continued: "Isolation violates the norms of national and international law. The isolation must be ended immediately, and the demands of the political prisoners must be met. We are closely monitoring the health and detention conditions of the prisoners who have gone on hunger strike in defence of their democratic constitutional rights. We call on all legal institutions to take responsibility in this matter. All political parties, non-governmental organisations and democratic institutions should take responsibility for a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question by immediately ending the isolation on Imrali and meeting the demands of the political prisoners on hunger strike."



Ill prisoner Tanhan dies 43 days later after being sent to hospital

ANF | ESKİŞEHİR | 4 DECEMBER 2023

Another ill prisoner died a few days after being released. Cemal Tanhan (68), was a seriously ill prisoner. He was held in Bolu F Type Closed Prison and had spent 29 years in jail. He was taken to Bolu İzzet Baysal State Hospital after suffering a stroke on 23 October, and from there he was transferred to the General Surgery Department of Eskişehir City Hospital on 27 October. Tanhan, whose release was decided on 6 November, died 43 days after being first taken to hospital.

Tanhan's family and relatives set out for Eskişehir to collect the body. The family stated that Tanhan will be buried in İzmir.

Not released despite 4 requests

His daughter, Ayşe Tanhan, told Mezopotamya Agency that she had talked to her father's doctor about his health on 27 November. She said, "My father's doctor said, 'We removed the water accumulated in his lungs. We will change the medications he takes. If the treatment goes well, we will try to wake him up. This way, maybe we can transfer him.' But my father has been receiving treatment for a long time. His condition was getting worse every day, because he was in prison. His treatment started late. Maybe if he had been treated early and had been outside, he would not have worsened like this."

The Human Rights Association (IHD) Ankara Branch applied 4 times in 2023 for Tanhan's release. The first application was made on 12 January 2023 to the Prison Detention Houses (CTE) and the Turkish Grand National Assembly Human Rights Investigation Commission. The second application was submitted to CTE and the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission on 7 April 2023. The third application to the same institutions was made on 23 June 2023 and the fourth was made to the CTE, the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission, the Prison Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Health on 9 October 2023. However, not one of these requests got the hoped results and Tanhan was not released.

— ★ —

Lawyer of journalist Silêman Ahmed still denied visit to his client

ANF | 4 DECEMBER 2023

There has been no news from journalist Silêman Ahmed, who was abducted by the KDP 40 days ago. The KDP prevents lawyers from meeting Ahmed.

Nerîman Ahmed, one of the lawyers of the journalist's defense group, told RojNews Agency that they made at least 10 applications to meet with their client. However, all requests were rejected.

Nerîman Ahmed said: "Preventing our meeting with Silêman Ahmed is a clear violation of the law and lack of justice. If a person is accused of anything, he must meet with his lawyers and the lawyers must review his file."

According to Iraqi law, anyone detained has the right to have a lawyer. The person must not testify without a lawyer. Even if a person does not have a private lawyer, the state must appoint one.

— ★ —

'The government will be responsible for every death in prison unless a solution is found'

ANF | 4 DECEMBER 2023

In a written statement on Monday, the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) Law and Human Rights Commission said: "Prisons in Turkey have become centres where political prisoners in particular are subjected to violations leading to the loss of their lives. So much so that the news of death, torture and health violations coming from prisons is unceasing. Sick prisoners either die in prison or are released in the terminal period, when their lives are irreversibly at risk and it is too late".

The statement continued:

"At least 37 prisoners died in prisons this year alone and at least 81 prisoners died in 2022. Some prisoners died shortly after their release from prison because they were not released on time. The perpetrator of some of these deaths is the ATK (the Institute of Forensic Medicine), which gave prisoners the report that they "can stay in prison" even though they are too ill to survive in prison.

Today, we have received the news of the death of Cemal Tanhan, who was released after the ATK reported that he "could stay in prison", was not released despite the applications, and his illness progressed irreversibly. Cemal Tanhan (68), a seriously ill prisoner of 30 years in Bolu F Type Closed Prison, was hospitalised after suffering a stroke on 23 October. Upon his application, his execution was postponed on 6 November, and he was intubated on 13 November.

Tanhan was not subjected to a biopsy despite the fact that he had dropped to 40kg, could not walk or speak due to cancer and was diagnosed with a mass in his lung. Tanhan's treatment was obstructed and his release was also prevented despite the Human Rights Association (IHD) Ankara Branch applying 4 times in 2023. In the ATK report dated 5 April 2023, it was decided that he could stay in prison.

The process has shown that Cemal Tanhan's death was not a natural death, but a result of the prevention of his treatment and the failure to release him on time. The fact that he was released after it was too late does not remove the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice, the ATK and the prison administration.

As HEDEP, we repeat once again that we will hold all those responsible for violations of the sick prisoners' right to life accountable before the law. We once again call on the government to find a humane solution to the situation of sick prisoners in prisons. We remind once again that they will be responsible for every death unless a solution is found."

— ★ —

Journalist Gök, jailed since April, released with a travel ban

ANF | AMED | 5 DECEMBER 2023

On 25 April, coordinated dawn raids in Turkey targeted homes and offices of over a hundred people, including journalists, lawyers, rights defenders, political activists and artists in 21 provinces, based on unclear charges.

128 people were taken into custody, including 10 journalists who were referred to court after giving their statements to the police in the scope of an investigation launched by Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

The detained journalists included Mesopotamia News Agency (MA) editor Abdurrahman Gök and reporters Ahmet Kanbal and Mehmet Şah Oruç; editor-in-chief of Yeni Yaşam daily newspaper Osman Akın; the publisher of the only Kurdish print newspaper in Turkey, Xwebûn Weekly, Kadri Esen; JinNews reporter Beritan Canözer, and journalists Mehmet Yalçın, Mikail Barut, Salih Keleş and Remzi Akkaya.

After their referral to court, Abdurrahman Gök, Beritan Canözer, Mehmet Şah Oruç and Remzi Akkaya were sent to prison in Amed on 27 April on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization" and "spreading propaganda for a terrorist organization". Canözer was released on 23 June, after the indictment against her was accepted.

The second hearing of the lawsuit filed against Mezopotamya Agency (MA) Editor Abdurrahman Gök for allegedly "being an illegal organisation member" and "making propaganda for an illegal organisation" was held at Diyarbakır 5th Heavy Penal Court on Tuesday.

So-called witness Ümit Akbıyık was connected to the hearing via Audio and Video Information System (SEGBİS).

Gök's lawyer Resul Temur asked the witness whether he knew about the murder of Kemal Kurkut. Akbıyık said that he knew about it from the press but he did not know who took the photograph.

Gök stated that he has been under arrest for 8 months because he had exposed the Diyarbakır Police Department with his photographs of Kemal Kurkut. He said: "A journalist does not do journalism using the language of the government."

Lawyer Mehmet Emin Aktar said that the witness was a permanent confessor of the police.

MLSA lawyer Veysel Ok said that Gök was on trial for “disturbing the government”. Emphasising that Pel Production is a legal company, Ok said that Gök did not work for the company.

The court ruled for Gök’s release on condition of a ban on leaving the country. The hearing was adjourned to 12 March.

Following the court ruling, Gök was released from prison, met by his family members and a number of colleagues from Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG), Mesopotamia Women Journalists Associations (MKG), Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) and Society of South-Eastern Journalists.

Abdurrahman Gök is a photo reporter and is also internationally known for his journalistic work, as it was only thanks to his efforts that the public learned that the death of the young art student Kemal Kurkut, who had been shot dead by a police officer on the fringes of the Newroz celebrations in Amed in March 2017, was in fact a premeditated murder. Gök had pressed the shutter release of his camera eight times and documented that the official version, according to which Kurkut was a “suicide bomber”, was only invented by the police. Nevertheless, the shooter was acquitted.



Day 9 of hunger strike in 106 prisons in Turkey

ANF | 5 DECEMBER 2023

Members of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) and PAJK (Party of Free Women in Kurdistan) imprisoned in Turkey went on hunger strike on 27 November in support of the international campaign “Freedom for Öcalan, A Political Solution to the Kurdish Question”. According to the prisoners’ representative Deniz Kaya, the hunger strike is to be carried out in alternating groups from 27 November to 15 February, the anniversary of the international conspiracy against Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Sick and elderly prisoners as well as prisoners with less than two years remaining on their sentence will not be included in the action.

Deniz Kaya also announced that the prisoners will also publicise the campaign’s demands by writing letters to foreign representations, human rights institutions, the media, political parties and non-governmental organisations, and will regularly ask the Turkish Ministry of Justice about Abdullah Öcalan’s isolation on the prison island of Imralı. In addition, they will remind the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) of its neglected responsibility. The ongoing court proceedings will be used to denounce the isolation in public spaces and raise awareness about it, said Deniz Kaya and called on the prisoners to act collectively and to refrain from individual forms of action.

With the participation of the PKK and PAJK prisoners in Çankırı E Type Closed Prison and Samsun Kavak S Type Prison, the number of prisons where the hunger strike action is taking place has risen to 106.



No release for 75-year-old ill political prisoner Elbi

ANF | VAN | 7 DECEMBER 2023

75-year-old political prisoner Ferzende Elbi was sentenced to life imprisonment for his peace work. He was one of those who were involved as “old and wise” people in the peace process before 2015. Elbi was also one of the activists who worked in reconciliation commissions in Iğdır (Reşqelas) to promote understanding among the population. For this, he was sentenced to life imprisonment along with three other alleged members of the Peace Commission in 2021 for “membership of the PKK-KCK” and “separatism”.

Ferzende Elbi is in custody in Eskişehir, about 1,500 kilometers from his hometown. He is now in a wheelchair and can no longer look after himself. Nevertheless, he is refused release.

Relatives: “Elbi must be released immediately”

Elbi’s brother, Halit, said: “My brother is 75 years old. He suffers from age-related problems. He has vision and hearing problems. He has frequent nosebleeds due to his high blood pressure. New hernias and similar problems arise all the time. This is all in his medical reports. Therefore, given his health problems and age, we have called for his release. We have repeatedly contacted the Ministry of Justice, but we have not even received a response.”

Elbi added: “We call on the Ministry of Justice to find solutions for all ill prisoners. The public is very sensitive about this issue. We tell him that he is fine so that he is not psychologically affected. We try to comfort him, but he is an old and ill person. How far will this situation go? They held peace meetings with the governor and his deputy, they brought the people together, and then he was imprisoned without charge and without law. But no matter what happens, there must be fair trials and solutions should be found in the spirit of the right to life.”

HEDEP MP Hun: “Someone’s right to life is being violated here”

HEDEP MP Yılmaz Hun submitted a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Justice regarding Ferzende Elbi. In an interview with ANF, he explained that the repression of Elbi and the other ill prisoners was a “violation of the right to life”. He continued: “Elbi is a wise, loved and respected person, a person who has promoted peace. He was one of the wise men, a messenger of peace. He was convicted because he advocated peace. His health problems have progressed. He has several illnesses. He finds it difficult to talk to his family. He comes to visit in a wheelchair because he cannot walk himself. He can no longer take care of himself. He is unable to live alone. The forensic medicine institute nevertheless certified that he was fit to be held in prison. There are many reports on his condition, but we do not have access to these reports. We have submitted a parliamentary question and contacted all relevant institutions. We have submitted a petition that he cannot remain in prison at this age and under these conditions. We are currently waiting for the result of our applications.”

Co-defendant already died due to lack of treatment

Along with Ferzende Elbi, Ehettin Kaynar, Kerim Boran, Mehmet Çelik, Abdülmecit Kaya and Abdullah Ateş, all well over 70 years of age, were also sentenced to life imprisonment for alleged membership in the peace commission. Many of them were already seriously ill at that time. As was the case of Ehettin Kaynar, who suffered from hepatocellular carcinoma. Due to a lack of treatment, his situation in prison continued to deteriorate. Only when the disease had progressed to an incurable state was his sentence suspended for six months and he was released from Karabük T-type prison on 2 September. Six weeks later he was dead.

— ★ —

Journalist Ahmed, incommunicado for 44 days

ANF | 7 DECEMBER 2023

Rojnews editor Silêman Ahmed has been incommunicado for 44 days.

Despite all the freedom campaigns for Silêman Ahmed in the last month and more than 10 requests submitted by lawyers for a meeting with him, no results have been achieved and the Duhok Security Service has prevented the lawyers from seeing Silêman Ahmed.

The lawyers still have not been able to establish a connection with Silêman Ahmed and have not been able to access the file that was used as a justification for his detention.

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

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

— ★ —

Repression against prisoners on hunger strike

ANF | 7 DECEMBER 2023

On 27 November, political prisoners from the PKK and PAJK began a hunger strike for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish question. The hunger strike is currently being organised in groups every ten days. There are already reports of reprisals against prisoners joining the action.

The management of the Ereğli High Security prison in Konya threatened the hunger-striking prisoners on a massive scale.

Vacip Çoban, the brother of Ismail Çoban, one of the prisoners participating in the hunger strike in Ereğli Prison, spoke about the actions of the prison administration. Çoban stated that his brother had asked him during his last meeting to inform the public that the prison administration had threatened the prisoners on hunger strike with the words: “We will apply the Imrali system to you, we will prevent your release.” The prison management also exerted psychological pressure on the prisoners by saying: ‘You will stay here until you die, you will never leave this place’. “The fact that these are not empty threats is shown by the prison commissions’ approach of refusing to release political prisoners even after they have served their sentences due to their participation in protests or lack of remorse.

Ergin Altuntaş, co-chair of the Association for Support and Solidarity with Families of Prisoners and Detainees in Çukurova (Çukurova TUAY-DER), confirmed the rights violations that have come to light in this prison. Altuntaş said that there had always been a special crackdown on political prisoners in the detention centres, but the violations had increased after the start of the hunger strike. “They lined up the prisoners and openly threatened: ‘From now on, the imralı isolation system will be applied here’. They informed the families of the prisoners on hunger strike that they would not release any of them, even after serving their sentences. There is also information that prisoners are being placed in padded cells,” said Ergin Altuntaş.



Journalist Dicle Müftüoğlu remains in prison

ANF | AMED | 7 DECEMBER 2023

Journalist Dicle Müftüoğlu will remain in prison, ruled a Turkish criminal court in Amed (tr. Diyarbakır) in a hearing held on Thursday. The court board rejected a request by her lawyers to lift the arrest warrant and release the Kurdish journalist who is wrongly accused of terrorism.

Dicle Müftüoğlu, who works as an editor for the news agency Mezopotamya (MA) and is co-chair of the Dicle Fırat Journalists’ Association (DFG), has been in custody in Sincan Women’s Prison in Ankara since May on suspicion of founding and leading a terrorist organisation and alleged membership of it. Her lawyers, including Resul Timur, Veysel Ok and Emine Özarslan, argue that the accusations against the journalist are related to her work for the free Kurdish press - also because she was detained in the course of a wave of arrests only shortly before the parliamentary and presidential elections.

“Essentially, this is about criminalising freelance journalism as a profession,” said the journalist in her defence, firmly rejecting all of the accusations made against her. “Whether the charges against me or those against my more than sixty colleagues currently imprisoned in this country, none of them have anything to do with the actual reasons for our imprisonment. Such trials are never really about “terrorist” activities, but about investigative journalism that criticises the government,” said Müftüoğlu and described the com-

plaint submitted by the public prosecutor's office as a copy-paste collection of absurd evidence. "This is an attempt to silence us," she said.

Lawyer Temur criticized the fact that the public prosecutor's office was trying to criminalise Müftüoğlu's entire activity as a media professional by arbitrarily classifying MA and the DFG as "illegal institutions". In doing so, he said, the judicial authority is mainly relying on the testimony of prosecution witnesses, who are also used in other trials against Kurdish press people or in the political show trial against the HDP known as the Kobanê trial. One of these informants was the "anonymous witness K8Ç4B3L1T5", who had stated in another trial against Kurdish media professionals that he had worked as a state agent for the Mezopotamya news agency.

The second informant in the Müftüoğlu case is said to be Kerem Gökalp. According to lawyer Resul Temur, the man was formerly a member of the PKK and defected to the KDP, which rules in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in 2019. In November of the same year, the KDP handed him over to Turkey, and his "career" as a prosecution witness began immediately afterwards, Temur said. "This person made use of the Turkish repentance law to avoid a long prison sentence and incriminated numerous people as part of a deal with the Turkish authorities. His statements don't add up in any trial in which he appears as a witness. According to our information, he did not testify against Dicle Müftüoğlu at all. Nevertheless, the prosecution claims to have opened the proceedings against our client on the basis of his statements. He claims to have met her 'in the mountains' in 2012. We have refuted this claim and proved that she did not leave the country at that time. Due to a serious accident that year, Dicle Müftüoğlu was physically unable to look after herself, let alone go travelling."

As further evidence for the claim that Müftüoğlu is a "terrorist", the Diyarbakır chief public prosecutor's office cites an analysis of her mobile phone data from 2013 to 2020, which allegedly show that she was logged into the network in cities such as Van, Amed, Şırnak and Adana "at certain times at the same time as suspected terrorists in one area". In addition, money payments from family members to her to financially support her studies are interpreted as "terror financing" and stays in hotels for professional reasons - for example for journalistic support of a 2016 conference in Ağrı on the Dersim genocide in 1937/1938 - as "participation in a meeting of the terrorist organisation". From this and, among other things, from a trip that Müftüoğlu took in 2017 to the Kurdistan region of Iraq to observe the independence referendum at the time, the prosecutor's office claims that it could be concluded that she was not a journalist but was acting "on terrorist instructions". The public prosecutor's office is pleading for a sentence in the upper range and is demanding a conviction under Article 314/1 of the Turkish Criminal Code. This means that Müftüoğlu faces a prison sentence of between seven and a half and fifteen years if she is convicted. The trial will continue on 18 January 2024.

Dicle Müftüoğlu has been the focus of Turkish prosecution authorities for some time. At the end of 2020, she was sentenced to one year and three months in prison for a photo she shared online in 2014 of the fight against ISIS in Kobanê in northern Syria. At the time, she was editor-in-chief of the DIHA news agency, which was banned by emergency decree in autumn 2016 following the alleged coup attempt in Turkey. The court accused her of "propaganda for a terrorist organisation". A few weeks later, a new investigation was initiated against her, also for alleged terrorist propaganda online. The journalist was arrested again in June 2022.

Prisoners in Eskişehir call on everyone to join the campaign “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan”

ANF | 8 DECEMBER 2023

The alternating hunger strike of prisoners in jails in Turkey and Kurdistan, demanding “freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and a solution to the Kurdish problem”, continues on its 12th day.

PKK prisoners in Eskişehir H Type Prison, who continue the rotating hunger strike that started on 27 November 2023 as part of the campaign “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, political solution to the Kurdish problem”, called on everyone to do their best to make the campaign successful.

The statement said: “Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has been held in Imralı Prison under an unprecedented system of isolation and torture for 25 years. He is not allowed to benefit from any legal rights, he is not allowed to meet with his family and lawyers, and there has been no news from him for approximately 3 years. This situation has reached a stage that threatens his life safety and health.”

The statement continued: “Although the isolation and torture regime implemented in Imralı Prison is clearly contrary to national and international legal norms, it is persistently and increasingly intensified day by day, and the CPT, which is responsible for preventing torture, as well as international institutions and organizations continue to participate in this unlawfulness by remaining silent.”

The statement added: “The concept of war to violently suppress the Kurdish people's struggle for democracy, equality and freedom, based on the isolation and torture system in Imralı prison, has dragged the state system and social structure in Turkey into a multifaceted structural crisis in the last 8 years. Continuing the war will lead to a further deepening of the crisis. The way out of the crisis is through ending the Imralı isolation system, gaining physical freedom for Mr. Abdullah Öcalan, and solving the Kurdish problem through political means.”

We do not accept Imralı torture system

The statement added: “We, as PKK prisoners in Eskişehir H Type prison, do not accept the Imralı isolation and torture system, which is imposed on us and our people in the person of our Leader. Our leadership is our reason for life. We see the freedom of our leader as the freedom of all oppressed peoples, especially the Kurdish people, and the entire democratic society. We continue our rotating hunger strike, which has been started since 27 November 2023, in order to be a part of the campaign ‘Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, political solution to the Kurdish problem’.”

Let's make the campaign successful

The prisoners “invite all our people, all women and youth, all workers, revolutionary-democratic circles and everyone who calls themselves human, to join this campaign and do everything they can for the success of the campaign. We offer our greetings and respect with the deep belief that we will definitely succeed together.”



Reşahat Ada: We will fight together with our children in prison

ANF | AMED | 9 DECEMBER 2023

Hamdusena Ada, who started a hunger strike in Diyarbakır No. 1 High Security Prison, was arrested on the allegation of “membership in an illegal organization” after being arrested in the Lice district of Amed in 2011. Shortly after her arrest, she was deported to Rize Prison. As a result of long efforts and petitions, she was transferred to Diyarbakır Prison again.

Speaking to ANF, Hamdusena Ada’s older sister, Reşahat Ada, said that they had previously held a ‘Justice Vigil’ for 14 months to draw attention to the situation of ill prisoners and the ongoing torture and usurpation of rights.

Ada said: “Our children fought for their own people and identity. They didn’t do anything bad. Our children sacrificed their lives for this land. After my sister went to prison, they deported her to Rize. She stayed there for a long time. As a result of our efforts, they sent my sister here again. They are tortured in prison. We do not want this to happen anymore. We support the rightful struggles of our children. Stop torture and isolation now.”

They resist to live and keep alive

Ada said she saw her sister before she went on hunger strike and added: “When we visited her, she said that they would start a hunger strike to break the isolation imposed on Leader Apo. Their morale was good and they continue to resist. They are resisting to live and keep alive. We want everyone to support this voice and resistance. Until the isolation is broken, our children in prison and we in the four parts of Kurdistan will continue to resist. Everyone has to listen to the resistance in prisons.”



Hunger striker Tatlı: We need a struggle network against isolation in İmralı

ANF | BATMAN | 9 DECEMBER 2023

The rotating hunger strike, which was launched on 27 November to ensure the physical freedom of Kurdish people’s leader Abdullah Öcalan, who is held in İmralı F Type High Security Prison, and to end the isolation imposed on him, continues on its 13th day. Prisoner Gülgeş Tatlı, who went on hunger strike in Kayseri Bünyan Women’s Closed Prison, called for support for the hunger strikers.

Hatice Tatlı, who met with her sister in prison on 5 December, said that her sister was in the first group to go on hunger strike. Tatlı, who said that her sister had bullets and shrapnel in her arm, back and abdomen, added that her sister said that the hunger strike was vital, there was not a single minute to waste and everyone should do their part.

‘Women’s struggle will bring victory’

Noting that the pressure and cruelty in prisons continue to increase, Tatlı quoted her sister saying: “We will continue to resist in prison. Another leg of the resistance is those outside.

The isolation needs to be lifted immediately, and society need to mobilized for this. We will continue the resistance until the hunger strike gets results. The lawlessness in prisons is at a level where it harms human dignity. By resisting in prison, we have created a struggle network against these problems. It is impossible for us to accept the aggravated isolation that has continued since 1999. No person with the consciousness of honor, conscience and patriotism can accept this. If there is something that we do not accept and that disturbs our conscience, a struggle network should be created against it. We started this network from prison. There are hundreds of women on hunger strike in many prisons and in our prison. The struggle developed under the leadership of women will bring victory.”



Prisoners released after 30 years

ANF | VAN | 9 DECEMBER 2023

Seyit Oktay was arrested in Van in 1993 and was sentenced to life imprisonment on the charge of “disrupting the unity and integrity of the state”.

Oktay was released after 30 years in jail. During his time in prison, Seyit Oktay stayed in many different jails such as Antep, Van, Muş and Tokat.

After being released from Tokat T Type Closed Prison, Oktay was welcomed by his family members and set out for his hometown, Van.

During his years of captivity, Oktay wrote some books including “Mountain Scent”, “Aramaic Tablets” and “Aryen Med Epic”.



Disciplinary punishment imposed on prisoners on hunger strike in Urfa

ANF | URFA | 9 DECEMBER 2023

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) published a report following visits to T Type Prisons No1 and No2 in Urfa. According to the report by the Urfa branch of the ÖHD, political prisoners in both prisons are on hunger strike against the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan and for a solution to the Kurdish question.

In Prison No2, lawyers visited Emin Güler, among others, who is taking part in the hunger strike despite having a severe disability of ninety percent. According to the ÖHD, Güler was wanted to be moved to a single cell on the very first day. The prison management justified the measure by wanting to keep him under control. However, because no single cell was available, he was taken back to his ward. He was given a disciplinary penalty for his participation in the hunger strike and is not allowed to take part in internal prison activities for a month. In addition to Emin Güler, prisoner Maksut Dürmüş is also on hunger strike in the same ward.

Disciplinary proceedings were initiated against prisoner Selami Çiftçi at Prison No1 because of the hunger strike. According to the report, Çiftçi was introduced to a psychologist who tried to convince him to stop the action. Prisoners Aydın Oba and Kadir Demir in the same prison have also been on hunger strike for four days.

— ★ —

Military aggression and occupation

‘They gave me my daughter in a cardboard box’

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 2 DECEMBER 2023

Menfiyat Elçiçek (Axin Seydo), a guerrilla fighter in the ranks of YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) lost her life in a clash with Turkish troops in the countryside of Şırnak province in northern Kurdistan on 14 September 2018.

Although her family exhausted all legal means to obtain the body, the authorities refused to hand it over for five years. The family of Menfiyat Elçiçek was informed by the police on Wednesday that the body was in the forensic institute in Istanbul and would be handed over there. The remains of the fallen fighter were handed over to her family in a cardboard box on Friday. On the way back home, the family wrapped the

remains in a shroud and placed them in a coffin for the funeral. The remains were then buried in the İdil district of Şırnak under police siege.

Mother Asiye Elçiçek said that she had been trying for 5 years to get her daughter's body but the delivery of the body in a cardboard box was a method of torture. Asiye Elçiçek expressed great anger against the delivery of the fallen guerrillas' bodies to the families in this way and said: "They are afraid of us".

Asiye Elçiçek said, "After completing the procedures in Istanbul, the authorities said, 'bring your car closer to the morgue'. We brought our car closer to the morgue. They gave my daughter to me in a cardboard box. When we arrived in Adana, I could not bear this situation anymore. In Adana, we shrouded the body, put it in a coffin and brought it to İdil."

Elçiçek continued: "Our pain is very fresh, as is our anger. When I received my daughter's body like that, my first words were 'I would sacrifice my life for these bodies.' The police surrounded me but could not do anything. I had been waiting for my daughter's body for 5 years. I always said, 'I wish I could find my daughter's body.' We hurt so bad in our heart while waiting. May God not let anyone get away with it. When I received my daughter's body in that cardboard box, I felt sad and angry, but part of me also felt good. Because some mothers are still looking for the bones of their children. I brought her body home, and my head is high."

Asiye Elçiçek said, "No matter what they do, they will not defeat us. They are the ones who will be afraid of us. Whatever they are doing, they are doing it out of fear of us."

— ★ —

Turkish army shells civilian settlements in Rojava

ANF | 2 DECEMBER 2023

The invading Turkish army and allied mercenaries launched an aggression in the region of the Zirgan town in Heseke Canton on Saturday. The attack with heavy weapons targeted the villages of Wihêla Ereban, Wihêla Kurdan and Bûbê.

The occupation forces also shelled the village of Şewarxa in Afrin's Shera district on Friday.

On the other hand, the Press Office of Manbij Military Council reported attacks by the Turkish troops and mercenary allies. Accordingly, the attacks with mortars were directed against the populated villages of Erep Hesen and Yalanlı to the north and northwest of Manbij.

Turkey is bombing the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria on an almost daily basis. The attacks, both from the ground and from the air, are carried out with the de facto approval of the international community.

Eighty per cent of the infrastructure in northern and eastern Syria was destroyed in the widespread bombardments carried out by Turkey between 4 and 10 October. Since 22 November, Turkish drones have been bombing the civilian population at random.

AANES calls for international action against Turkish attacks

In a [statement](#) on 24 November, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) called for international intervention against Turkey's attacks on the civilian population in violation of international law. "The attacks by the Turkish state must be stopped and those responsible for the killing of innocent civilians must be brought to justice as war criminals in accordance with international legal standards," said the AANES on the current wave of attacks by Turkey.

AANES stated that the AKP government is using the attacks on the autonomous region to divert attention from problems at home. "To this end, Turkey is inventing false justifications to deceive the public. Attacks on civilians are war crimes that cannot be justified by anything," stressed the AANES.

Remarking that the fight against ISIS is also being severely hampered, AANES pointed out that: "The Turkish state is causing chaos and terror in the region. The attacks are leading to an extreme deterioration in the humanitarian situation. We demand a clear position from all actors."

Manbij, a key strategic position in Turkey's plans to expand its illegal occupation zone

Manbij is located 30 kilometres south of the Turkish border and occupies a key strategic position in Turkey's plans to expand its illegal occupation zone in northern Syria. The city, which is administered by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), is located on the important M4 motorway, which runs through northern Syria like a lifeline and was already a strategic supply route for ISIS.

In 2022, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan named Manbij, along with Tel Rifat, as the first target for a new Turkish invasion of northern and eastern Syria. Attacks on the town and neighbouring villages, which are carried out by jihadist militias loyal to Ankara as well as the Turkish army, have been taking place for years. The Tuesday before last, two people, including a minor, were injured in a drone attack on a settlement north of Manbij.

Afrin, one of the most peaceful and secure parts of Syria, occupied since March 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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



One civilian injured in Turkish attacks on villages in Afrin-Sherawa

ANF | 4 DECEMBER 2023

At least one person was injured in several Turkish drone strikes in the southeast of Afrin on Sunday. The elderly wounded man lives in the village of Bêñê, which has been attacked at least three times on Sunday by drones belonging to the Turkish army and its mercenary allies.

One attack hit the home of the injured man, while two others targeted bases and posts of Syrian government troops. There is said to have been material damage of unknown extent.

The village of Bêñê, located in Sherawa, borders the city of Tel Rifat and is just a few minutes' walk from the Shehba camp, where hundreds of families from Afrin live.

In the town of Eqîbê, around four kilometers southwest of Bêñê, Turkish state kamikaze drones also targeted the Syrian regime's troops on Sunday. Here too, the drones are said to have caused material damage.



33 cases of abduction and arrest recorded in Turkish-occupied Afrin in November

ANF | AFRIN | 4 DECEMBER 2023

In a statement released by the Afrin-Syria Human Rights Organisation on the inhumane crimes committed by the Turkish state and its gangs against the occupied Afrin region in 2018, it was said that 33 kid-

nappings and arrests took place in November. On the other hand, 15 people from Afrin and Shehba were injured in continued attacks against the region.

The Human Rights Organisation stated that the construction of colonial houses, started by the Watan organisation in Mabeta district in line with the instructions of the Turkish state's policy of changing the demographic structure has been completed. Accordingly, the colonial area of 'Qeryet Besme' built in Şadirê village of Şêrawa district is gradually expanding.

The Human Rights Organisation stated that the Turkish state, not content with its policy of demographic change, is destroying nature in the olive fields of the citizens it seized in Afrin region. The gangs sell the downed trees to traders, steal the products of the citizens and extort money from the locals.

According to the statement, the Sultan Suleiman Shah (al-Amshat) gangs extorted 5 million 400 thousand dollars from Kurdish farmers in the districts of Mabeta and Shiyê in November alone.

— ★ —

3 gangs killed, 6 civilians wounded in ongoing clashes in Girê Spî

ANF | 4 DECEMBER 2023

The fighting between Jabha al-Shamiya and Ahrar al-Sham gangs in Girê Spî Canton, which is under the occupation of the Turkish state and its gangs, continues since yesterday (3 December).

According to the Hawar News Agency (ANHA) citing local sources in the region, 3 gangs were killed in the clash in which medium automatic, individual, artillery and tank weapons were used, while 4 other gangs were wounded and transferred to a hospital in Turkey.

At the same time, 6 civilians from the local population who were heading towards the village of Jazla from the conflict area were wounded, the source said. According to reports, the Jabhat al-Shamiya group under the control of a gang called Raêd al-Dehish has been stationed near the picnic area in the town of Eyn al-Arûs, while the Jabhat al-Shamiya gangs under the control of Abu Amir remain in the Îskan neighbourhood south of Girê Spî.

The reason for the conflict between the gangs is unknown so far. It was also stated that there is a curfew throughout the canton.

— ★ —

Turkish attack kills a civilian in South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 5 DECEMBER 2023

Warplanes of the occupying Turkish state bombarded Bamernê neighbourhood of Duhok in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on Tuesday. As a result of the bombardment, a civilian named Alî Cemîl Kelaş, from the Batufa neighbourhood of Dohuk, was killed and another person was wounded.

The occupying Turkish state continues to commit war crimes by attacking the Medya Defence Zones with banned explosives, chemical gas and drones loaded with explosives, causing great damage to civilians and residential areas.

In its statement on 2 December, the HPG Press Liaison Centre stated that the villages and guerrilla areas in the Medya Defence Zones were bombed 39 times by the occupying Turkish army on 30 November and 1 December, and that the vineyards, gardens and residential areas of the people of the region were damaged in these bombardments.



HPG: Turkey continues to commit war crimes

ANF | BEHDINAN | 5 DECEMBER 2023

The Turkish army is waging a war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) based on the systematic use of chemical weapons, banned bombs and air strikes. In a statement published on Tuesday, the Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported a series of such attacks carried out in numerous regions of the Medya Defense Zones between 1 and 4 December.

The majority of the most recent attacks took place in Metîna and Zap. In the resistance area of Girê Çarçel, HPG reported five attacks with explosive-laden drones, which were directed against the guerrilla positions there. The Turkish occupying forces used chemical warfare agents. In addition, the defence positions in Girê Çarçel were bombed twice with unconventional explosive devices.

The Girê Ortê massif was also the target of two attacks with chemical weapons and banned bombs. The guerrilla positions in the Girê FM resistance area were attacked once with banned explosive devices. Eighteen other attacks by drones loaded with explosives targeted the guerrilla positions in Girê Cûdî, which is located on the western front of the Zap region. The area of Şehîd Diyar in Zap region was bombed once by explosive-laden drones.

On the other hand, HPG recorded nine air strikes by fighter jets on 1, 2 and 3 December, which were directed against the areas of Deştâ Kafya in Gare, Xinêra Jor, Ava Lolanê and Goşînê in Xakurke and Gundê Dergelê in Metîna. In addition, combat helicopters bombed various targets in the Zap and in Xakurke. At the same time, artillery and tank attacks targeted the western Zap front, Metîna and Xakurke.

In the meantime, the guerrillas are continuing their resistance against Turkish invasion abated. According to the HPG, guerrillas struck the occupying troops in Girê Amêdî twice on 2 and 3 December. One of the actions, in which medium-weight weapons were used, left a position of the Turkish forces damaged. In the other action, guerrillas hit the occupying forces with heavy weapons.

— ★ —

SDF arrests an ISIS ringleader in Raqqa

ANF | 5 DECEMBER 2023

The Media Centre of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced that a ringleader of ISIS was arrested in the Akrad neighbourhood of Raqqa on Monday, December 4.

According to the SDF statement, the operation was carried out by Military Operational Teams after careful preparation and observation.

The arrested SDF member was identified as Abdul Razzaq Mahmoud Zabaki (Abu Khattab) from al-Bab in the Turkish-occupied zone in northern Syria. According to the SDF, he was responsible for distributing weapons and ammunition to the ISIS cells in the city of Raqqa and the surrounding area.

SDF vowed that their forces would continue their operations against the cells of the terrorist organization to clear the region of the terrorist organization and maintain internal peace in the region.

— ★ —

4 killed in SDF operation against Turkish-backed gangs in Zirgan

ANF | 6 DECEMBER 2023

In a written statement on Wednesday, the Press Centre of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reported that an operation was carried out in Zirgan against the gangs affiliated to the occupying Turkish state.

The SDF statement said:

“Within the scope of legitimate defence operations against the attacks of the occupying Turkish state and its gangs, our forces targeted a military vehicle belonging to the gangs of the occupying Turkish state in Til Mihemed village at 14.30 yesterday. While 4 gangs were killed in the action, their vehicles were destroyed.

Before the operation, our forces followed the movements of the gangs preparing to attack the areas and points where our forces were located.

We will respond to all attacks of the occupying Turkish state forces and gangs, and we will act according to international law and legitimate defence rules against all kinds of attacks.”

— ★ —

RIC releases November sleeper cell report

ANF | 6 DECEMBER 2023

The Rojava Information Center (RIC) published its November sleeper cell report. The report said that “ISIS sleeper cells launched 11 confirmed attacks in Northern and Eastern Syria, killing 4 SDF and Asayish personnel and injuring 5, and injuring 7 civilians.”

The report added that “Due to the volatile situation in Deir ez-Zor, with Iranian-backed militias close to the Government of Syria increasingly active, some attacks that occurred on SDF posts in that region were not confirmed as either an ISIS sleeper cell attack or an attack by a local armed group. For this reason, the actual quantity of ISIS sleeper cell attacks may have been higher. With this continued violence in Deir ez-Zor – which began in earnest in September – ISIS is able to operate with an added layer of security distractions for the SDF.”

The key points of the report are as follows:

- 11 confirmed ISIS sleeper cell attacks across NES in November, a decrease from October’s 17
- 4 military personnel killed and 5 injured, 7 civilians injured in these attacks
- 10 raids conducted on ISIS sleeper cells, resulting in 17 arrests and 1 ISIS official killed
- Cryptocurrency exchange company Binance faces penalties over ISIS financing
- Wives of detained ISIS fighters hold protest in al-Hol camp
- After clashes between Iran-backed proxy forces and the U.S. military, SDF Commander in Chief Mazloun Abdi states that such tensions benefit ISIS
- Australian court rules against further mandatory repatriation of its citizens from NES’ camps

— ★ —

Two YRK guerrillas martyred in Turkish airstrike in Pencewîn

ANF | 6 DECEMBER 2023

The Press Liaison Centre of the Eastern Kurdistan Defence Units (YRK) released a statement announcing the martyrdom of two guerrillas as a result of a Turkish attack in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement on Wednesday, the two guerrillas, Berxwedan Kelhor and Rêdûr Baz, lost their lives in a Turkish aerial attack in the Pencewîn district of Sulaymaniyah on 11 November 2023.

Paying tribute to martyr Berxwedan Kelhor, YRK said: “Our comrade Berxwedan Kelhor was born in 1980 in a patriotic family in Shabad in Kermanshah. He grew up in the difficulties of the system, he never lost hope. Difficulties led him to seek a free life. When he read Leader Apo’s (Abdullah Öcalan) books at university, he recognised the Kurdish Freedom Movement and gradually deepened his search for life. With the Rojava Revolution, he developed an interest in getting to know Leader Apo’s ideas and philosophy closely and questioned life. In 2017, he joined the guerrilla ranks and saw this as the right decision he made in his life. For a while, he turned to the field of revolution and laboured in Rojavayê (West) Kurdistan and fought against ISIS. Our comrade Berxwedan Kelhor participated in struggle with a self-sacrificing, humble and unwavering stance. He was always loved and respected by his friends. The feeling he had at the beginning when he recognised the Freedom Movement grew as he read Leader Apo and gained experience in guerrilla life, and he worked with great sacrifice. Comrade Berxwedan Kelhor, like Şahîn Dalaho, Rizgar Zirne, Diyako Kelhor and dozens of sons from the region, vitalised the heroism and wrestling heritage of the Kelhor region in the Freedom Movement. In this respect, he also kept the reality of the region alive and became a follower.”

The statement continued: “Martyr Rêdûr Baz was born in Maku, also in a patriotic family. He grew up with stories about Kurdistan guerrillas in his childhood. He grew up in a family and regional environment which witnessed both martyrs and participation in the Freedom Movement. This had a great influence on his participation in the guerrilla ranks. At a young age, he met the pressures of the Iranian state and turned towards the guerrilla ranks. He had a stance that always showed improvement in life. At the same time, by educating himself and getting to know the reality of Leader Apo more and more every day, he wanted to get to know the reality of both himself and his country closely. The more Comrade Rêdûr read and got to know Leader Apo, the more he strengthened his curiosity and excitement within the Freedom Movement. He was a friend who was always in search. This led him to overcome the obstacles in front of him, to develop and to be loved by his friends.”

The YRK Press Liaison Centre expressed condolences to the families of both martyrs and to all patriotic Kurdistan people and said, “We once again state that we will protect the legacy of our comrades until the end. We promise that we will walk in their path and further expand our struggle until we bring the dreams of our martyrs to victory.”

HPG reports ongoing guerrilla resistance and Turkish attacks

ANF | BEHDINAN | 8 DECEMBER 2023

The Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) issued a statement providing information about guerrilla actions and the Turkish army's attacks in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG statement on Friday, HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) guerrillas destroyed three surveillance cameras installed by the Turkish occupation forces and one soldier was killed. In addition to its airstrikes and artillery attacks, Turkey continues to use chemical weapons and unconventional explosives.

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

Western Zap region

In the Girê Amêdîyê resistance area, two surveillance cameras were destroyed by snipers on December 5 and 6. At Girê Cûdî, a sniper attack on Thursday targeted a Turkish unit that wanted to cut down trees in the area. One soldier was killed.

Metîna and Xakurke

In the Girê Ortê resistance area in Metîna, the guerrillas intervened on December 4 and 5 with light and semi-automatic weapons against Turkish soldiers who were preparing chemical weapons attacks against a guerrilla position. A surveillance camera was destroyed at Girê Çarçel in Metîna on December 5. In Xakurke, the guerrillas struck the occupying forces in the areas of Girê Şehîd Axîn and Girê Şehîd Kamuran with heavy weapons and an enemy position was destroyed.

Attacks by the Turkish army

Guerrilla positions at Girê Ortê were attacked eleven times with chemical gas and seven times with unconventional explosives on December 3, 4 and 7. In the Girê FM resistance area in the western Zap region, Turkish forces attacked the guerrilla positions with unconventional explosives on December 5.

The guerrilla positions in the Şehîd Diyar area in Zap were bombed by a drone loaded with explosives on December 5. In Sîda in Zap, HPG recorded a total of three attacks with unconventional explosives against guerrilla positions on December 5 and 6.

In addition, HPG reported 26 airstrikes by Turkish fighter jets. The attacks on December 3, 5, 6 and 7 were directed against the areas of Gundê Bêşîlî, Gundê Xankê and Gundê Dergelê in Metîna; the areas of Sinînê, Ava Lolanê, Kolît and Geliyê Lolanê in Xakurke; the areas of Deştâ Kafya and Gundê Gûzê in Gare and Girê Bahar in the western Zap region. Further attacks by combat helicopters hit the region of

Xakurke on December 7. HPG also reported artillery attacks by the Turkish army in the Zap, Metîna and Xakurke regions.

— ★ —

Turkish attack injures 2 children and a woman in Til Temir

ANF | 9 DECEMBER 2023

The military violence of the Turkish army and its jihadist allies against the autonomous region of North and East Syria continues.

According to reports from the ground, the occupying Turkish state shelled the village of Deşîşe in Til Temir on Saturday. The house of a villager named Ebduselam El Mela was hit and 2 children and a woman were wounded.

Muna Ebduselam Mihemed (10), Kemal Ebduselam Mihemed (16) and Nûriye Mihemed El Hisên (40) were taken under treatment at Til Temir Hospital.

Til Temir is a good 30 kilometres from the Turkish border and borders in the north on the illegal occupation zone that Turkey is running along its southern border in solidarity with jihadists in Rojava. Since 2019, the Christian-majority district has been in the aggressors' crosshairs as part of a war of attrition, with periods of high intensity alternating with periods of low intensity. Over thirty villages have since been either occupied, depopulated or extensively destroyed. Almost as many villages lie directly on the front line - and thus in the permanent sights of the occupying forces.

The constant incursions by Turkey and its Islamist allies constitute violations of the ceasefire and de-escalation agreements concluded between the guarantor powers Russia and the USA with Turkey after the occupation of Serêkaniyê (Ras al-Ain) and Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) in October 2019. Both Moscow and Washington nevertheless give Turkey a free hand. Other regions of the AANES are also permanently targeted by the Turkish military, which, however, remains largely unnoticed.

— ★ —

Feminicide

Makbule Özer to go back to prison

ANF | VAN | 3 DECEMBER 2023

Makbule Özer is scheduled to begin the remaining part of her sentence in a Turkish prison on Monday. The 81-year-old Kurdish woman from Van-Edremit (Wan-Ertemêtan) was arrested last year along with her husband Hadi Özer for “supporting terrorism”. The couple was sentenced to over two years in prison. In the case of Makbule Özer, the sentence was suspended for one year due to her poor health. She was released in September 2022 after four months in prison.

Now the Institute of Forensic Medicine (ATK) has issued a certificate of fitness to custody. The institute said that Makbule Özer was brought in for evaluation in a wheelchair and suffers from asthma, shortness of breath, limited mobility and reduced vision. Nevertheless, the ATK supported her detention in a “Type R” penitentiary. The abbreviation stands for “rehabilitation”. Her health status should be checked again after three months.

Makbule Özer explained to ANF that during her detention last year she was constantly sick and had to be taken to the hospital again and again. “I can no longer walk, but I will be taken back to prison. I cannot use my hands and feet and have many illnesses. Because it’s so difficult for me to breathe, I’m sometimes put on an oxygen machine. When I was in prison, the other women took care of me. Without these friends I wouldn’t have been able to survive there.”

There is no justice for Kurds in Turkey, Makbule Özer said, adding: “We Kurds are oppressed. In the hospital I saw people who were much worse off than me. They were taken back to prison on a stretcher. There are so many ill and old people in prison. They must all be released. Innocent people are arrested and given many years of punishment. Thieves and murderers will be taken out of prison, but we Kurds will be punished. There is no justice for us. I’m not just thinking about myself. In prison I’ll be a burden to my friends again. You did everything for me. If I go back to prison next week, I might not get out alive.”

Why were Makbule and Hadi Özer arrested?

On 23 July 2018, Turkish police anti-terror units stormed the house of Makbule and Hadi Özer in Edremit. Seventeen people were there at the time, including four minors. The elderly couple, three family members and an acquaintance were terrorized, insulted, beaten and threatened by the officers for around three hours.

They were then arrested and interrogated in police custody for two days. The transfer to the responsible public prosecutor’s office took place on 26 July. Şükran Yıldız, who was visiting the Özers on the day of the raid, was arrested for alleged PKK membership. Makbule, Hadi, Medeni, Übeydullah and Emrullah Özer were released.

The background to the raid was an incident that occurred a good week earlier in the Rêya Armûşê (İpekyolu) district, 45 kilometers northeast. On the night of 15 July 2018, special paramilitary units of the Turkish police carried out an operation in a house on Yalım Erez Street. Two YPS (Civil Defense Units) members had barricaded themselves there. Only later did it become known that they were Metin Ünalnış (Numan Serhat) and Bilal Şimşek (Serhıldan Ararat). Both fighters initially fought a battle with the operational units. The YPS named two dead and six injured police officers, the Turkish governor only spoke of three wounded officers. Only the two people “who prepared an illegal action” are dead.

Human rights organizations had expressed the suspicion that Metin Ünalnış and Bilal Şimşek may have been victims of extrajudicial executions when their ammunition ran out. Several arrests were made that same night.

<https://anfenglishmobile.com/women/makbule-Ozer-to-go-back-to-prison-70570>

— ★ —

Zeinab Jalalian forced to make a confession and express remorse to gain access to medical care

ANF | 3 DECEMBER 2023

Kurdish woman Zeynab Jalalian, who is imprisoned in Iran, was tortured repeatedly by officials from the Ministry of Intelligence seeking to force her to confess on camera in exchange for the provision of medical care. This was reported by the Kurdish news agency Kurdpa, citing a number of informed sources close to the political prisoners. Various human rights groups in East Kurdistan are also involved in the case.

Jalalian was forced to “confess” her wrongdoings in a programme on Iranian state television, express remorse for her previous political activities and agree to cooperate with the authorities of the mullahs’ regime. Only then would the Ministry of Intelligence be prepared to grant her the necessary medical treatment, suggested officials to the 41-year-old woman during a recent interrogation, during which she was handcuffed and shackled. The Ministry of Intelligence is also making the transfer to a prison closer to Jalalian’s family home in Maku in eastern Kurdistan and an end to the repression against her and her family dependent on her “confession”.

Kurdpa learnt that Jalalian rejected all the demands of the Iranian regime’s interrogators. “I have nothing to regret,” the political prisoner is reported to have said despite psychological pressure and physical abuse. This is not the first time that the regime has subjected access to appropriate medical care and the transfer of Jalalian to a prison close to her home to the condition of a “confession” on camera.

Zeynab Jalalian, who was born in Maku in 1982, was arrested in Kermanshah in summer 2008 and sentenced to death in January 2009 by a local revolutionary court for “enmity to God”. The conviction is linked to Jalalian’s membership of the “Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan” (Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê - PJAK). She had previously spent eight months in pre-trial detention in a Ministry of Intelligence facility. During her trial, which lasted only a few minutes, she had no access to a lawyer. The death sentence

against Zeynab Jalalian was commuted to life imprisonment in November 2011. She is currently the only female prisoner in Iran to be given this sentence. She is currently in a prison in Yazd - around 1400 kilometres away from where her family lives.

Zeynab Jalalian is seriously ill. In 2020, she was transferred four times to different prisons across the country within a few months by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence. During this odyssey, she contracted Covid-19 and asthma and still suffers from shortness of breath. It is therefore likely that she will suffer permanent lung damage. She also suffered wrist and ankle injuries during the transports and was physically abused by Iranian security forces. As her injuries were left untreated, she now suffers from long-term injuries. In addition, she suffers from other serious health problems, including heart, intestinal and kidney diseases, paralysis, tooth and jaw inflammation, because of the prison conditions and mistreatment in prison. As a result of repeated blows to the head, her eyesight is severely impaired. So far, Jalalian has only received brief medical care outside prison once, after testing positive for COVID-19 in the summer of 2020. At the time, she had temporarily gone on a hunger strike in order to secure her return to the detention centre in Khoy - unsuccessfully.



Men killed 35 women in Turkey in November

ANF | 7 DECEMBER 2023

Men continued to kill and exercise violence on women. The report on femicide and violence against women for the month of November tells of at least 35 women killed by men and a total of 60 women to violence, abused eight boys and girls, and harassed at least three women.

According to news compiled by bianet from local and national newspapers, news websites and news agencies, men killed at least 35 women and 8 children in November.

In November, the deaths of at least 36 women were considered as "suspicious."

Provinces where suspicious deaths occurred

Ankara (1), Antalya (3), Artvin (1), Aydın (1), Bilecik (1), Bolu (1), Çankırı (1), Çorum (1), Denizli (1), Diyarbakır (2), Edirne (1), Isparta (1), İstanbul (4), İzmir (1), Kastamonu (2), Kayseri (1), Kocaeli (1), Konya (2), Mardin (1), Muğla (1), Ordu (1), Osmaniye (1), Samsun (5), Trabzon (1).

303 femicides in first 11 months of 2023

In the first 11 months of 2023, men killed 303 women, harassed 350 women, abused 118 children, subjected 707 women to violence, and raped 17 women. Men also forced at least 336 women into sex work. While the deaths of 251 women were "suspicious," men killed at least 27 children.



Saturday Mothers vow to continue their struggle for justice

ANF | ISTANBUL | 9 DECEMBER 2023

At its weekly vigil against “enforced disappearances” in state custody, the Saturday Mothers’ Initiative in Istanbul called for justice for İbrahim Demir and Agit Akipa. Both Kurdish men were arrested 32 years ago by the Turkish gendarmerie (military police) in a village in the İdil district of Şırnak. A day later, their bodies were found in a cave; tied up, blindfolded and with signs of torture. The perpetrators were never brought to justice.

It was the 976th Saturday Mothers’ Vigil that has been held on Galatasaray Square in Istanbul’s city center since the initiative was founded in 1995. İbrahim Demir’s daughter Deniz Demir and Agit Akipa’s son Fe-him Akipa were among the participants. In their speeches, they condemned the state’s unwillingness to face up to its own truth and reveal the murderers of their fathers. “We have been waiting for justice to be served for over three decades,” said Demir. The internationally renowned forensic scientist and human rights activist Şebnem Korur Fincancı, who was recently removed from her position as president of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) by the Turkish judiciary, supported the action.

Gülseren Yoleri, chairwoman of the Istanbul branch of the Human Rights Association (IHD), spoke about the case of the disappearance of İbrahim Demir (36) and Agit Akipa (39). Both men lived with their families in the village of Xenduk, whose Turkish name is Çukurlu. Akipa was the head of the village. It was in the early 1990s that the Turkish army’s “Special War Department” intensively expanded the village guard system as part of its so-called counter-insurgency operations.

“İbrahim Demir, 36, and Agit Akipa, 39, lived in Çukurlu village in the İdil district of Şırnak. Agit Akipa was the village headman. There was a heavy pressure of village guard system on the villagers. The entrance and exit of the village were under military control. The village school was turned into a police station and some villagers’ houses were confiscated and soldiers were stationed there. İbrahim Demir and Agit Akipa applied first to the District Governor’s Office and then to the Ministry of Interior to have the soldiers evacuate the school and the houses. After the application, the pressure on them increased even more.

On December 12, 1991, İbrahim Demir and Agit Akipa took a tractor with villagers to return home from a condolence service for a political murder victim in İdil. The tractor was stopped on the road by soldiers. İbrahim Demir and Agit Akipa were detained by the commander and soldiers from the Infantry Troop affiliated with the Dargeçit Anıtlı Battalion Command in the Ağaçalı hamlet. The families went to the gendarmerie station and the Commander told them “We have never seen them”. A soldier secretly directed the families to ‘go to the caves’. The families, together with the villagers, searched the area pointed out by the soldier. On December 13, 1991, the bodies of the disappeared, tortured, tied-up and blindfolded, were found in a cave whose entrance was blocked with stones.

In the investigation launched into the incident, the İdil Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office concluded that the First Lieutenant, the Infantry Troop Commander in the Ağaçalı hamlet, and the privates and conscripts involved were suspected of “manslaughter”. Thereupon, on December 18, 1991, it sent the file to the District Administrative Board of Dargeçit District Governorship for permission to open an investigation. On

May 20, 1992, the District Administrative Board of the Dargeçit District Governorate issued a decision of “bar” and prevented the suspects from being tried.

In 2011, the families applied again to the İdil Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office through their lawyer Tahir Elçi. The Prosecutor’s Office launched a new investigation and applied to relevant institutions to access the file. However, all institutions reported that they could not find any files, information or documents in their archives. Thereupon, the İdil Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office launched an investigation against the Dargeçit District Governorate officials who had lost the file for ‘abuse of office’. However, the investigations did not yield any results. In the end, the file was closed on the grounds of statute of limitations. In our 924th week, we once again call out to those who govern the State: stop distancing the country from law and merit with practices that do not take their source from universal law. No matter how many years pass, we will not give up demanding justice for İbrahim Demir and Agit Akipa, for all our missing persons, reminding that the state has to act within the norms of universal law, and we will not give up our place of meeting with our missing persons, Galatasaray, which has been banned for 225 weeks.”

— ★ —

Human Rights Violations

IHD demands investigation into child suicides

ANF | 3 DECEMBER 2023

The Human Rights Association (IHD) Children’s Rights Commission, issued a press release demanding an investigation into child suicides.

According to the 2022 data released by Turkish Statistic Institute (TÜİK) out of a total of 4,146 suicide cases, 81 were kids aged 15, and 410 were children aged 15-19. That meant that a total of 491 children lost their lives due to suicide in 2022. In 2021, it was reported that 71 children under the age of 15 and 377 children aged 15-19 committed suicide.

The IHD statement underlined that they have been closely monitoring the alarming increase in child and youth suicides across Turkey in the past couple of years with concern. “Statistical data reveals a 40% increase in child suicides in the last two years. Upon detailed examination of these data, it is observed that suicides among girls are more prevalent in some regions.”

The statement added: “Child suicides can develop due to the adverse effects of economic, social, and cultural structures, as well as pressures created by war and conflict environments, leading to feelings of oppression, siege, hopelessness, and worthlessness. In child suicides in Turkey, factors such as economic poverty, forced early marriages, and child sexual abuse are known to have a significant impact. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict, bans, and societal tension in Kurdish provinces are known to contribute to insecurity and hopelessness, affecting suicides. All recent child suicides, especially those in Cizre, should be

thoroughly investigated. Policies empowering children should be prioritized by identifying the economic, social, and psychological reasons that lead children to suicide.

Child suicides should be investigated. Conventions related to children's rights should be implemented.”

— ★ —

DFG: 11 journalists taken into custody and 5 sent to prison in November

ANF | 3 DECEMBER 2023

Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) November report has been published. The report underlined that 11 months of 2023 have passed with heavy pressure and rights violations against journalists.

The report said that journalists were subjected to rights violations and intimidation policies in November and added: “Even on 25 November, the Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, female journalists were subjected to police violence and were prevented from doing their jobs.

In Şırnak, two female journalists were taken into custody, beaten, and their cameras were broken. We witnessed a similar scene of violence in Diyarbakır. Again, female journalists were subjected to police violence, they were prevented from shooting, and their cameras were destroyed. These images, which contrast with the meaning and importance of such a day, which is the day of fight against violence against women, also reveal the approach towards journalists, especially female journalists. We once again condemn these attacks against our journalist friends.”

The report added: “62 press and media workers, including our association’s co-chair Dicle Müftüoğlu, are still in prison. It is clear that there is an attempt to criminalize journalistic activities. All our friends should be released.”

The report continued: “In November, access to 1,022 news items and 231 social media contents was blocked, and 3 websites were closed. These figures reveal the magnitude of censorship in journalism.”

The November violations included in the report are as follows: “3 journalists were attacked. The houses of 2 journalists were raided, 11 journalists were taken into custody, 5 journalists were remanded in custody. While 6 journalists were threatened, 2 journalists were subjected to ill-treatment. 2 journalists were prevented from following the news. While an investigation was launched against 8 journalists, a lawsuit was filed against 5 journalists. The trial continued in 51 cases against 93 journalists. 20 journalists were dismissed. The number of detained journalists is 62.”

— ★ —

Member of HEDEP Youth Council detained in Muş

ANF | MÜS | 3 DECEMBER 2023

Turkish police raided several homes in the province of Muş on Sunday morning. Berfin Yekta, a member of the HEDEP (Peoples' Party for Equality and Democracy) Youth Council, was detained in the village of Kızılağaç.

In the village of Elçiler, the home of HEDEP Youth Council member Maruf Çelikel was raided and searched. Çelikel, who was meant to be detained, was not home during the raid.

During the raids, doors and windows were smashed by the police and the flats were vandalised. No reason was given for the raids.

Maruf Çelikel has been in the sights of the Turkish authorities for some time. Two months ago, the young Kurdish activist discovered a listening device in his flat. He made the incident public and reported that he was being followed and pressurised by the police to act as an informer. His home was last searched in 2022. Çelikel was detained during a police crackdown on a demonstration held in Muş on 12 October in protest at the Turkish attacks against North-East Syria.

Dozens of members of the HEDEP Youth Council have been detained in recent weeks. Over a hundred people were taken into custody in Turkey around the anniversary of the founding of the PKK on 27 November.



Protest against the demographic change and the settlement of Palestinians in Afrin

ANF | SHEHBA | 3 DECEMBER 2023

The Autonomous Administration of Afrin and Shehba Canton made a statement denouncing the settlement of Palestinians and the demographic change in Afrin.

The statement was made in Serdem Camp in Shehba with the participation of Afrin IDPs and representatives of the Autonomous Administration. The statement was read by Afrin Canton Council Members Mistefa Nebo and Rêgaz Lolo.

In the statement, it was pointed out that the conflicts between radical movements continue at the expense of the people and said: "The displaced people of Afrin, and the parties and institutions in Shehba condemn the policies of the Turkish occupation state in changing the demographic structure of Afrin and settling Palestinians in the homes of displaced citizens, especially the Kurds, with the support of Qatar and some Palestinian factions."

The statement reacted to the silence of human rights organisations and said, “We demand that the violations committed be documented, recorded and exposed as soon as possible. The public must also be informed, and the murderers must be held accountable.”

Occupied territories de facto linked to the Turkish administration

The Turkish state occupies large parts of northern and eastern Syria in violation of international law. The occupied territories are de facto linked to the Turkish administration by provincial governors and are dominated by militias commanded by Turkey. These groups consist largely of the remnants of the ISIS, the former Al-Nusra front, but also of entire jihadist militias such as Ahrar al-Sham or Faylaq al-Sham. Among them, there is regular conflict over looting, territory or plunder. There is a climate of terror. Kidnappings, torture and extra-legal executions are commonplace. These conditions mean that more and more of the original inhabitants have to leave the region. Loyal settlers are being accommodated in their place.

The rest of the Kurdish population is subjected to an assimilation campaign as the Turkish state is pursuing a three-stage plan in northern and eastern Syria. First the Kurdish population is displaced, then the region is Arabized and finally Turkified.

Colonial settlements built in Afrin

According to the Human Rights Organization Afrin-Syria, colonial settlements are being built in Afrin with support from the so-called charity organizations Helping Hand For Relief and Development-HHRD and Swasia Charity Foundation, both of which are based in the U.S.

Both organizations are reported to be playing a role in the construction of colonial residential complexes near the village of Kafr Rum in the Shera district and the Helping Hand settlement near the city center of Afrin. In addition, the International Relief and Development organization is reported to be building 100 houses on a farm in the village of Kubala in the Sherawa district.

Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

Before the Turkish invasion, the population of Afrin consisted of well over 90 percent Kurds. According to various sources, this percentage has dropped to 15-22 percent due to the occupation. The 300,000 internally displaced persons from Afrin confirm these numbers. At the same time, more than 450,000 people were resettled in Afrin, mainly members of mercenary groups and their families, as well as refugees from other parts of Syria with links with Turkey. The Barzani Foundation and the Barzani party KDP-ENKS play an important role in Turkey's expansionist moves. Since the beginning of the Rojava revolution, the KDP and the ENKS have been trying to destabilize the region through terrorist attacks, support for Islamist mercenaries and smear campaigns against the Autonomous Administration of Rojava and to pave the way for a Turkish occupation. The occupation of Afrin has led to a regime of terror.

At the same time, the Kurdish language was banned and Turkish flags and pictures of President Erdoğan were hung everywhere. Turkish ID cards were issued. Place names were Turkified. For example, Azadî Square was renamed Atatürk Square. In addition, sacred Yazidi sites were looted and destroyed.

Around 9,000 people have been abducted in recent years, and around a third of them are still missing. These atrocious acts were committed by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an al-Qaeda affiliate, as well as remnants of ISIS and Turkish right-wing extremists. In the last six months alone, 12 people have been killed by the occupiers and 173 people have been kidnapped.



KHRN releases report of human rights violations in Rojhilat in November

ANF | 3 DECEMBER 2023

In its monthly reports, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) highlights cases of human rights violations in Kurdistan and violations of the rights of Kurdish civilians in different regions and cities across Iran.

KHRN released a new report including all cases recorded and reported from across Iran through its own sources and verification mechanisms from 1 November to 30 November.

“The restrictive environment for independent human rights organisations in Iran, coupled with the pressures faced by individuals subjected to human rights violations and their families, make it difficult to publish accurate and comprehensive reports,” said KHRN.

Executions

According to KHRN’s findings, Iran executed at least 18 prisoners in Karaj, Orumiyeh, Kermanshah, Ardabil and Ilam during the month of November.

Femicide

At least five women have been killed by their male family members in Gilabgharb and the village of Qazanchi in Kermanshah in the past month.

Kolbars and tradesmen

In November, at least three kolbars, including a 17-year-old child, were shot dead by Iranian border guards, one kolbar died as a result of a fall from the border heights and another died of frostbite in the western border areas of the country.

A total of 102 kolbars were injured during this period. Of these, 98 were shot by border guards, two fell from border heights, one was injured in a landmine explosion and one was beaten.

Among the injured kolbars shot by border guards were one 14-year-old, two 16-year-olds, six 17-year-olds, two 18-year-olds and three 19-year-olds.

Work-related accidents

On 7 November, at least one worker was killed in a work-related accident in the village of Sorkheh Dezaj in Sanandaj.

Detentions and arrests

Throughout November, Iranian forces arrested at least 31 civilians, including five children, eight activists, a rapper and an imam.

At least five of the detained civilians were sent to prisons in Tehran, Ilam, Saqqez and Sanandaj.

Prison sentences

Last month, Iranian courts sentenced at least four people from Sanandaj to prison terms ranging from one year suspended imprisonment to five years in prison.

HEDEP Spokesperson: We are preparing to enter the elections with our candidates all over Turkey

ANF | ANKARA | 4 DECEMBER 2023

The Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) Spokesperson Ayşegül Doğan held a press conference at HDP Headquarters regarding the decisions taken by the party's Central Executive Committee (MYK) regarding the upcoming local elections in Turkey and North Kurdistan scheduled for 31 March.

"Our people asked us to enter the elections everywhere with our candidates", Doğan said and stated that this situation was discussed in the relevant committees, as well as at the Central Executive Committee meeting.

"Our MYK discussed and evaluated it seriously and the tendency to enter the local elections with our candidates everywhere in Turkey emerged. This decision will be evaluated at the party assembly as a proposal of the MYK. As we had announced before, our candidate applications in the places where we are the first and second party started on 27 November and will continue until 10 December. Our commissions were also established in the western provinces. In other words, we have completed our preparations to enter the local elections with our own candidates all over Turkey."

'Our strategy is to win'

Ayşegül Doğan continued her speech as follows:

"Our local election strategy is not to have others lose or win, but to win. How and with what? Winning through urban consensus. One of the most important things we will do in this process is a new pre-election model that our commission for local elections and local governments has been working on for days, both in the field, and also with reports and research. We periodically make statements and evaluations on this issue. We will determine our candidates through primary elections everywhere, that is, wherever there are conditions. We want the primary elections to take place in every province and district in a way that our participatory, ecological, gender-emancipatory local governance approach, in which the demand for peace, freedom and equality is visible, almost like a feast of democracy. We will achieve this through urban consensus while nominating candidates.

What does urban consensus mean? The broadest consensus. Trying to hear every voice in the city. When nominating a candidate, reaching out to the widest segments in the place where we nominate a candidate and trying to hear every voice. To determine the people who will govern the city by including that voice. This is also a first. It is a first like this. Normally, in classical primary election models, party members can vote. In the primary election model we have developed, not only the members of our party, not only the members of the constituent parties, but also democratic mass organisations, our families, those who have made an effort, those who have served as administrators, can take responsibility in this process, be with us and vote. Therefore, we will determine our candidates with the participation and consensus of all those who work for the right to the city. We will determine not only the co-mayors, but also two-thirds of our municipal council members and provincial general assembly members through primary elections. We are

excited, determined, hopeful, we will win. We are preparing to enter the elections with our candidates all over Turkey. Those who are trying to make the trustees permanent should know that those who volunteer, vote for our party and pay a heavy price for this will give the strongest answer to the trustee regime by winning for themselves and their cities.”

— ★ —

Turkish court drops case on Vartinis Massacre

ANF | 4 DECEMBER 2023

The case related to the massacre of 9 members of the same family whose houses were set on fire by Turkish soldiers on 3 October 1993 in Vartinis (Altınova) town of Til (Korkut) district of Muş province continued at Kırıkkale 1st High Criminal Court after the Court of Cassation's reversal decision.

Aysel Ögüt, the only survivor of the massacre, attended the hearing as a complainant, along with her husband Abdullah Ögüt, Peoples' Equality and Democratic Party (HEDEP) Muş MP Sümeyye Boz, the party's Legal and Human Rights Commission co-spokesperson Nuray Özdoğan, Human Rights Association (İHD) Central Executive Board member Nuray Çevirmen, representatives of the Memory Centre, Muş Bar Association President Kadir Karaçelik, lawyers from the Ankara Bar Association and Özgür Yıldız, a member of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD).

The prosecution stated that the fugitive culprit, Captain Bülent Karaoğlu, who ordered the burning of the village, should not be considered to be the sole authority and requested that the case be dropped due to the statute of limitations.

Sinan Özaraz, President of the Van Bar Association, and lawyers from the Ankara Bar Association took the floor after the prosecution's closing statement and stated that a crime against humanity had been committed in Vartinis and that crimes against humanity cannot be time-barred.

The court rejected the requests of Ankara and Van bar associations to participate in the case.

‘They murdered my family in front of my eyes’

Aysel Ögüt said, “My family was murdered in front of my eyes, I want the perpetrator caught.”

Kadir Karaçelik, one of the lawyers in the case, said: “This case is a trial that would only be held in Nazi Germany. We need to convict Bülent Karaoğlu in the public conscience. The perpetrator was clearly not searched, and it was said that he ‘escaped’. We do not agree with the decision on the statute of limitations due to the fact that the act and action falls within the scope of crimes against humanity.”

‘The state protected the culprits’

Lawyer Fuat Özgül said, “No effective investigation was conducted by the public power against the culprits here. They were protected.”

ÖHD member lawyer Özgür Yıldız said, “We are not talking about a culprit who went and committed a massacre because he could not control his anger. It is a matter of mindset.”

Lawyer Nuray Özdoğan noted that all but two of the victims were children.

The court stated that 2 months had passed since the statute of limitations and decided to drop the case.

The Vartinis massacre

It was claimed that a non-commissioned officer was killed in clashes that took place on 2 October 1993 in the countryside of Vartinis. The soldiers, who came to collect the body of the officer after the clashes, opened fire in the air while passing through Vartinis and left the area, saying, “We will come and burn your village tonight”. One day later, the soldiers went back and set the Ögüt family’s house on fire, claiming that they “aided an illegal organization”. As a result of their house being set on fire, Nasır and Eşref Ögüt were murdered along with their 7 children, the eldest 12 and the youngest just three years old. The only survivor in the family was Aysel Ögüt, who was not at home. Ögüt later filed a criminal complaint regarding the massacre.

Immediately following the incident, Aysel Ögüt, the only remaining member of the family, said that the house had been set on fire by soldiers and filed a criminal complaint.

Upon the second criminal complaint by Aysel Ögüt in 2003, an investigation started, followed by a trial in 2013, during which the following persons were charged with “purposefully burning down a house and causing multiple deaths”: Gendarmerie Captain at the time Bülent Karaoğlu, Hasköy District Gendarmerie Commando Unit Commander Senior Infantry Lieutenant Hanefi Akyıldız, Muş Police Headquarters Special Operations Unit Chief Şerafettin Uz, Gendarmerie Gökyazı, and Gendarmerie Police Station Chief Major Turhan Nurdoğan.

The trial was transferred to Kırıkkale on the grounds of security. During the hearing held on 10 June 2015, the prosecutor asked the court to sentence the defendants with 20 to 25 years imprisonment for each of the nine victims, meaning a total of 180-225 years of prison sentence for each defendant.

Before the final hearing on 1 March 2016, when the judgment of the court was expected, the only remaining member of the family, along with some friends and constituents of the Coalition Against Impunity, held a press conference. In the final hearing held at the Kırıkkale Assize Court, the prosecutor, in a modification of his earlier opinions, asked for the acquittal of all defendants except Bülent Karaoğlu. All of the defendants were acquitted.

Lawsuit against London police for the criminalisation of the Kurdish community

ANF | LONDON | 4 DECEMBER 2023

A raid on the Kurdish Community Centre in Haringey around a week ago is likely to have repercussions for the London police. A law firm in the English capital will file a lawsuit with the competent administrative court on behalf of the Kurdish Community Center. With the action, the organisation wants to establish the illegality of the operation.

Violent clashes between police and guests

The reason for the raid on 26 November was a planned cultural event to mark the anniversary of the founding of the PKK 45 years ago. As the evening celebrations were due to begin, over a hundred officers from the Metropolitan Police (Met) counter-terrorism unit cordoned off the community centre. Many members of the Kurdish community protested against the actions of the police force and violent confrontations broke out, in which three guests were slightly injured. When the incident became known, many more people arrived and showed their solidarity with the Kurdish community centre. It was only after lengthy confrontations that the police left and the event could begin.

There was no judicial search warrant

According to the Kurdish Community Centre, the raid on the private property was not covered by an authorisation basis. There was neither a judicial search warrant, nor any so-called imminent danger. Nevertheless, the police stormed the cultural celebration, which was attended by families with children, and violently and aggressively disrupted it without a legitimate reason. It is therefore clear that the raid was apparently “clearly politically motivated” and the final link in a chain of attempts to criminalise Kurds.

Raid just after the defence minister’s visit to Ankara

It is particularly noteworthy that the police operation against the Kurdish Community Centre took place just two days after a visit by UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps to his Turkish counterpart Yaşar Güler in Ankara. According to media reports, an improvement in cooperation in the areas of defence and security in the Middle East was agreed at the meeting, and arms deals were probably also discussed. “As the Kurdish Community Centre, it is not without reason that we accuse British politicians of abusing anti-terrorism legislation and the judiciary in order to advance their own political goals,” it said.

Demonstration against the criminalisation of the Kurdish community

The raid on the Kurdish Community Centre and the criminalisation of the Kurdish community in England was also the central theme of a demonstration in London on Sunday evening. Several hundred people took part in the demonstration organised by the Alliance of Democratic Forces - which includes Kurdish, Alevi, socialist and internationalist groups and movements.

Activist Trkan Budak from the board of the Kurdish community centre stated that the British anti-terror laws represented a direct threat to the right of assembly and association as well as the right to freedom of expression. “We will no longer accept that this country criminalises Kurdish self-organisation and Kurdish life, keeps silent or even supports the war against Kurds, and misuses the laws to silence our resistance against the Turkish regime. We will not allow ourselves to be sacrificed in favour of the UK’s relations with Turkey and to satisfy Erdoğan. We are also aware that this criminalisation policy is also linked to the sympathy of the British people for the Kurdish cause and the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.”

Solidarity with the just and legitimate cause of the Kurdish people

Other speakers also criticised the raid on the community centre in Haringey and the British government's treatment of the Kurdish community, expressing solidarity “for the just and legitimate cause of the Kurdish people”.

“Anyone looking for terrorists in the Kurdish Community Centre is clearly on the wrong track. It is not the Kurds, who are fighting against reactionary fascist and barbaric structures in the Middle East and paying a high price for human dignity and the whole world, who are terrorists. The real terrorists are in Ankara,” said Ercan Akbal from the Alliance of Democratic Forces. The demonstrators expressed their support for the Kurdish movement with slogans such as “No to the criminalisation of the Kurdish people”, “Turkey is a terrorist state”, “No justice, no peace” and “Freedom for Öcalan, peace in Kurdistan”.



Asylum seekers denounce attacks in the emergency shelter in Berlin-Tegel

ANF | BERLIN | 5 DECEMBER 2023

New reports of attacks, physical violence and inhumane conditions came from the Tegel emergency shelter in Berlin almost every day. As residents report, there was a case of sexual harassment of two Kurdish women by security guards on Saturday evening around 11pm. The two women had briefly left the tent in which the Kurdish asylum seekers are isolated after the Islamist attacks of the past few days when a member of the security guard approached them and told them via his telephone translation program: “You are very beautiful, will become my lovers?” The harassment didn’t stop there. The guard tried to touch the two women and an argument erupted when they pushed the man back. During the chaotic situation, the security guard from the now infamous company TeamFlex fled. Although those affected demanded that the police be called to find the perpetrator, nothing was done. So the Kurdish asylum seekers spent the whole night searching in vain for the perpetrator.

Repeated reports of attacks by TeamFlex Security

TeamFlex’s security guards are notorious for more than just their jihadist-sympathizing staff. There are repeated reports of sexual harassment by the security service. In September, 130 women from Ukraine called for the security service to be replaced due to, among other things, sexual harassment. According to the

complaint letter, male members of the security service searched the bags of women “who came out of the shower stalls and looked closely at the women’s underwear in the bags.” Similar attacks are also reported against Kurdish asylum seekers in the accommodation.

Residents report that Kurdish women have repeatedly been observed and harassed in their rooms or in the showers by “anti-Kurdish racists and jihadists.” In the past few days the Kurdish asylum seekers have repeatedly contacted the facility’s social management and other bodies. Nevertheless, nothing happened.

“We are forced into an inhumane existence”

Kurdish woman Ayşegül Bulut (28) said: “We have been held at Tegel arrival center for a month and are constantly confronted with stares, social harassment and verbal attacks. We are mainly harassed by racists of Arab origin. We cannot leave our children alone. We live in constant fear that something could happen to them at any moment. We are forced to live in a way that is inhumane and we cannot find anyone to turn to. We don't know what will happen next and we are in a constant state of panic. We find ourselves in an environment in which we are exposed to racist attacks and harassment.”

Bulut called on the public to follow the situation in Tegel with the greatest attention.

— ★ —

Turkish gendarmerie attack Özak Tekstil workers

ANF | URFA | 6 DECEMBER 2023

The workers had launched a work stoppage against the pressure, threats and dismissals they were subjected to while working at Özak Tekstil, which is located in the 1st Organized Industrial Zone (OSB) in Urfa (Riha). They were attacked by the Turkish military on the 10th day of their protest.

The workers, who came to the OSB outside the city and wanted to go in front of the Özak Textile factory, encountered the gendarmerie waiting for them today.

Workers, who were not allowed to enter the factory garden, whose entrances and exits were blocked by barriers, saying it was “forbidden”, protested to the workplace service personnel who was being allowed inside.

The gendarmerie attacked the workers who wanted to block the service personnel. Nearly 20 people, including representatives of the United Textile, Weaving and Leather Workers Union (Birtek-Sen), were taken into custody in the attack.

Other workers protesting the attack with slogans and applause continue to wait in front of the factory.

— ★ —

Journalist Irfan Uçar detained in Antep

ANF | ANTEP | 6 DECEMBER 2023

Journalist Irfan Uçar was detained at his home in the province of Antep on Wednesday for yet unknown reasons.

Uçar has worked as a journalist for many years and was editor at Azadî TV, among others. He gave up his journalistic work about a year ago to look after his elderly parents. Since then he has returned to live with his family in the Kerkût village in the district of Islahiye, where he was detained by the police this morning. Uçar was taken to the police headquarters in Antep.

— ★ —

Turkish soldiers attack lawyer who spoke with his clients in Kurdish

ANF | URFA | 8 DECEMBER 2023

Lawyer Ahmet Atış from the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) was subjected to racist violence by Turkish soldiers in the province of Urfa. The lawyer was the victim of a physical and verbal assault at a police station because of a conversation with his clients in Kurdish. According to Atış, the incident took place at the military police base in the industrial district of Urfa. The commander of the base was also involved in the attack.

Atış's clients are workers from the textile industry who have been on strike for twelve days against repression, dismissals and threats by the Özak-Tekstil company. Last Wednesday, the gendarmerie (military police) attacked the strikers and detained several of them using violence. Ahmet Atış is the legal representative of the striking workers. When he spoke to his clients in Kurdish after their interrogation, he was initially approached by a police officer who said that he didn't understand anything and that they should speak Turkish.

"When I reminded him of the legal regulations on lawyer interviews, a person claiming to be the commander of the military base appeared together with four other people in camouflage clothing," said Atış. They immediately physically attacked the lawyer who was beaten with punches. His clients and colleagues confirmed the incident.

After reporting the attack together with his colleagues, Atış went to Balıklıgöl State Hospital in Urfa and had his injuries documented. He filed a criminal complaint against the perpetrators for "intentional bodily harm, insult and obstructing the performance of his duties". He also requested that the camera recordings at the police station be examined and the identity of the suspects established.

— ★ —

HEDEP member severely tortured by the police in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 DECEMBER 2023

Edanur İbrahimoglu, spokesperson for the Youth Council of HEDEP (Peoples' Party for Equality and Democracy) and member of the party's Central Executive Board, was detained at a rally in Istanbul on Thursday. The female activist was hit so hard in the eye with a fist by an officer that it became completely swollen shut. Photos published by HEDEP on X (formerly Twitter) also show the result of the mistreatment.

The protest in Istanbul had been organized by an alliance of political parties and civil society organizations and was directed against Turkey's genocidal campaign in Kurdistan. Istanbul police anti-riot units surrounded the group and broke up the gathering. In addition to İbrahimoglu, 45 other people, including the co-chair of the provincial association of HEDEP, Murat Kalmaz, were detained in the crackdown.

The police took action against the mostly Kurdish demonstrators. Almost all the detainees were beaten without any apparent motive and forced into prison buses with their hands tied behind their backs. According to the HEDEP Youth Council, the assaults on those detained continued at the police station.

— ★ —

Final resolution of the 18th EUTCC Conference

ANF | 9 DECEMBER 2023

The Annual International Conference on the EU, Turkey, the Middle East and the Kurds was hosted by the EU Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC) in cooperation with the The Left Group, the Greens-European Free Alliance (GREENS/EFA), the Groups of the Free Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) and the Kurdish Institute Brussels.

The Turkish Republic, which celebrate its 100th founding anniversary in 2023, has confirmed and even intensified its militaristic and anti-democratic course with the parliamentary and presidential elections. As in the past, Kurds and the Kurdish regions are particularly affected by this. Waves of arrests against Kurdish politicians are not abating. For the local elections next year, it is to be feared that Ankara will once again appoint forced administrators in the Kurdish regions.

The solitary confinement of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan continues unabated. For three years, his lawyers and family have been denied any visits to the prison island, contrary to all legal requirements, both Turkish and international (UN and ECtHR resolutions).

The rise in gender-based violence since the AKP / Erdoğan came to power has reached a peak with the country's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.

The expansionist foreign policy by the Turkish state is increasing daily which cause crimes against humanity and violates international law. Since the beginning of October, there has been an increase in airstrikes on northern Syria, destroying a significant part of the infrastructure. Drone attacks, both in northern Syria and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, are killing civilians on an almost daily basis. These attacks, and in particular the ongoing active support for fundamentalist, Islamist groups, are threatening peace and deepening instability in the Middle East and changing the demography.

Against the backdrop of all these developments, a political solution to the Kurdish question, a central issue in Turkey and the Middle East, is not in sight.

The EUTCC Conference therefore demands

- the European Union to act in accordance with the demands of the European Parliament's report on Turkey, also against the background of the responsibility arising from the Treaty of Lausanne.
- the CPT to immediately publish the report on the last visit to the island in September 2022. The CPT is urgently asked to put pressure on Turkey to act and to secure the lifting of the isolation, which is against its commitments.
- the Council of Europe to take all measures resulting from the disregard of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights which Turkey is refusing to flow.
- the immediate lifting of the incommunicado detention of Abdullah Öcalan, his release according to the 'Right of Hope' legislation. Here we refer to the worldwide campaign launched in October for his freedom and a political solution to the Kurdish question, which deserves international resonance so that democracy and peace in Turkey and the Middle East have a chance.

The EUTCC Conference

- Welcomes the decision of the European Parliament to award the Sakharov Peace Prize to the Kurdish woman Jina Amini as a symbol of the maxim 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi' (Woman, Life, Freedom) post hum and declares its solidarity with the Kurdish women's resistance.

Interview

Kalkan: No oppression, persecution, massacre can turn Kurds away from the goal of freedom

ANF | BEHDINAN | 3 DECEMBER 2023

Duran Kalkan, member of the KCK Executive Council, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the founding of the PKK. Kalkan analyzes the past year of struggle and talks about the aims within the 46th year.

Kalkan said: “When the PKK decided on resistance 45 years ago, Kurds could not call themselves Kurds because of oppression. They could not say it out of shame. They were running away from their own identity. They were hiding their identities, lying in self-censorship in cultural genocide. The PKK brought about a very radical change, a revolution of personality, a revolution of humanity.”

Let's throw an eye on the passed year on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the founding of the PKK. How do you reflect the developments of the last year and what do you want to achieve in this 46th year of the party?

We define the 45th anniversary of the founding of the PKK's as a day of celebration, a day that can be defined as the National Resistance Day. In this regard, I would like to congratulate all comrades, especially Rêber Apo, our guerrilla forces, the women and youth, our people and our international friends on this National Resistance Day. I respectfully and gratefully commemorate all the martyrs of our party. They are heroes, the founders of free humanity, free Kurdish people. Starting from comrade Haki Karer to the comrades who heroically fought and fall martyrs in the historic Zap resistance today. In the 46th year of this party, I wish everyone struggling for freedom great success. I strongly believe in our success.

The 45th year of the PKK was indeed a very active and intense year of struggle in ideological, political and military terms. This could be seen by everybody. Each year of the PKK has been a year of struggle more widespread, stronger and full of victories than the previous year. Each year had more difficulties than the previous one. Its magnitude is also greater as is its richness. This can clearly be defined as a fact and is also how Rêber Apo defines the years of the PKK. He also said that the life within the PKK is much better and more beautiful, much more humane, much more democratic. Also this can be seen as a fact. This means that the existence of the PKK makes life better, it makes it good. Why is it like this? Because it creates freedom. To be free means to become beautiful, to heal. Rêber Apo has expressed it that way. He said, “The one who struggles becomes free, the one who becomes free becomes beautiful. And those who become beautiful are loved.” This is the basic rule and principle of being loved and respected. Let's call this the 'Apoist principle'. The Apoist principle of love, the Apoist principle of freedom.

We have entered the 45th year planned, organized, prepared, with the claim of a great struggle. In the winter of last year, the guerrilla waged a great resistance in the South Kurdish regions of Zap, Avaşin and Metîna. They fought heroically and dealt heavy blows on the Turkish army. Of course we also encountered a terrible experience in the last winter. There was the earthquake on February 6 which created a painful situation. In reaction to this as a movement we had declared that we halt the actions in order to support the society to unite and create solidarity within. As it is known, we later extended this until the elections. This was showing our approach towards the war that is being waged. It showed our will in regard of this struggle, of the fact that we are developing the war to solve important problems. We are not a power that has tied its existence, power and interests to war like some others. We are not war barons. Instead, in reaction to our declaration of halt of actions, the war barons thought there would be opportunity and even increased their attacks. They ignored the heavy suffering of the people due to the earthquake and tried to turn our decision into an opportunity for themselves. That's how weak, pathetic, opportunistic they are. But despite all this, we fulfilled the promises we made. We followed and implemented the decisions we took. This is our attitude as a movement.

Without a doubt the elections in Turkey were also very important. It was also a great struggle. Sure, there were some serious mistakes and shortcomings that had been made. It was also clear that it was an election with an obvious outcome. It was already predetermined that this would be the outcome. Tayyip Erdoğan, based on his power and the reality of war, had already arranged everything beforehand. There was not a fair and equal election anyway. In that sense, that is to say, there was no result in terms of a change in Tayyip Erdoğan's rule, but still it can be lined out, that he suffered serious blows.

The Kurdish people and democratic forces entered the period of the elections in a unity. They showed, demonstrated and proved that they retained their strength. The Kurdish people once again showed their historical stance, their demand for freedom and once again demonstrated their will. It wants freedom. It can be said that the democratic bloc, the alliance of Labor and Freedom has won the elections at this level. In fact, it was once again clearly seen that there was no regression or weakening, that despite so much oppression and persecution, the people preserved their will and insisted on their demand for freedom. Now the post-election struggle continues. The AKP-MHP, Tayyip Erdoğan and the republican alliance have united in their fascism and continue their attacks. On this basis, they protect their power by continued attacks. There is a multifaceted resistance against this. Militarily, the guerrilla is heroically resisting and leading the way. This is proven in Zap. They couldn't even take a hill. Despite all the support the Turkish army received from NATO, despite negotiating Sweden and Finland's entry into NATO and attacking with the military support it received from there, they could not even occupy a hill. Now it is said to be stuck. Locked in. They called it a locked offensive, they themselves fell into the lock.

Very clearly, the guerrilla warfare spread everywhere. It takes place in all areas of North Kurdistan. This is very important. The struggle of the women' and the youth develops. Accordingly, the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" revolution took place. Centered in Rohilat [Eastern Kurdistan] and Iran, it spread all over the world. This was of course a slogan, a psychological perspective, a philosophy developed by [the science of women created by the Kurdish movement] Jineolojî. It spread around the world and became a global freedom movement.

Also there is the campaign that was globally announced on October 10. Against the fascist aggression of the AKP-MHP, a global campaign aiming for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo and the solution of the Kurdish question started magnificently and enabled the Kurdish people and their international friends to

enter the 46th year with greater hope, assertion and will. This is a great start, a strategic struggle. It will yield results at this level, we are convinced by this.

There were some developments and other actions. In Ankara, despite the Ministry of Interior being so protected, the headquarters of this fascist torture and persecution was successfully hit by the comrades Rojhat and Erdal in a way that did not harm any civilian. The Turkish state, which through this was hit in the brain, was shaken to its foundations. It showed the power of the guerrilla. It showed the will of the Kurdish youth. It once again revealed the anger of the Kurdish people. In other words, no matter how much fascist, genocidal, colonialist oppression and attack there are, they will not stand by and watch.

The attacks on Rojava [North and East Syria] show how desperate AKP and MHP are. They are trying to sustain themselves by attacking Rojava, arresting thousands, trying to profit from the blood of the people of Gaza. They have fallen into a completely backward and immoral policy. The Turkish government was one of the primary culprits of this conflict, of so much bloodshed in Gaza, and at the same time it tried to profit from it in order to sustain its own life in power. They tried to strengthen themselves based on it. This is simply pathetic.

The beginning of the 46th year of the PKK reveals the achievements of the 45 years of the friendship of the Kurdish community to the peoples all around the world. It reveals how they understand and embrace the reality of Rêber Apo and the PKK, and how the policy of freedom and democracy developed by Rêber Apo and the PKK has developed a great struggle. The great achievements of this 45th year undoubtedly are the result of the struggle of the previous years. But the most recent October 10 campaign clearly demonstrated that the PKK, which was formed 45 years ago by a small group as a position of resistance, is today a global movement. No matter how many times they call it a terrorist organization, no matter how many times powers like Germany ban it, it transcends all of that, it has taken the struggle beyond Kurdistan. It has made the freedom movement global rather than regional. This is a clear situation. Of course it didn't happen all at once. The developments before that revealed this. The war against ISIS, the revolution of Rojava, the women's freedom struggle, the struggle of the youth, the guerrilla struggle, step by step, brought all this about. But in the 45th year, it has been proven that the PKK, that Rêber Apo represent a global paradigm and that it shows the way to freedom of all oppressed people, that it is understood and embraced by all oppressed people at a certain level, and it has created a global stance and struggle on this basis.

Today the world is screaming "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî". This can be claimed as the most essential development. Is there a greater development than this? Is there anything greater than this for Kurdish people, for humanity, for the Kurdish people, for Kurdish women? When the PKK decided on resistance 45 years ago, Kurds could not call themselves Kurds because of oppression. They could not say it out of shame. They were running away from their own identity. They were hiding their identities, lying in self-censorship in cultural genocide. The PKK brought about a very radical change, a revolution of personality, a revolution of humanity. In these 45 years, the PKK has transformed such a Kurd into a Kurd who is now leading the global freedom movement. It turned Kurdistan, which had become the ground of the world's reactionist forces, into a bastion of freedom, a vanguard of freedom. Can there be a greater development than this? Can there be a greater achievement than this?

In this 45th year, it has become clear that those who say that the paradigm Rêber Apo is a danger and that they will destroy it, are talking in vain. These are all empty words. It is not even possible to weaken the

PKK, let alone destroy it. It is growing, developing and spreading. This will be the case much more and it will triumph in the coming period. No reactionary will be able to stand in front of this paradigm, this spirit, feeling, thought and will. They will all crumble. The victory will definitely be ours.

There were also some differences in this year's National Resistance Day celebrations. One could see this very clearly. The enthusiasm, excitement is very high, the will is very clear. On the other hand, there is so much oppression and persecution. People are being slaughtered, insulted in the streets, put into prison, exiled abroad. There is no oppression and insult the Kurdish society has not been subjected to. This society was to be oppressed, to be silenced. They wanted the Kurdish society to become pessimistic and loose hope. Normally, those who apply pressure as a result of this are doing it for this reason. But what is the concrete situation? In practice it is the opposite. Let alone becoming pessimistic, weakening, shrinking, retreating, on the contrary there is a leap forward. There is becoming more combative. Enthusiasm is much more widespread, much stronger. Hope is much stronger. People are turning pain into will. Yes, they are persecuted and oppressed, but they resist. They pay a price, but they are rewarded for it. They gain a new spirit, a new feeling, a new way of life. They are making progress. They see this clearly. In this respect, the enthusiasm and hope is higher than ever. There have been big celebrations everywhere. Celebrations took place all over Europe, all of Rojava is on its feet. Kurds are always on the move, big and small, depending on the situation where they live. They are celebrating this day. They are trying to understand the PKK. They are trying to understand the reality of Rêber Apo. They are trying to equip themselves with the thought and spirit of the PKK. Maybe millions of people have been on their feet for a few days.

The guerrilla resistance, the people's resistance, the paradigm of Rêber Apo brought us to this situation. The global freedom campaign of October 10 brought it about. The spirit, will and hope of the campaign made people so enthusiastic and excited, they took to the streets and filled the squares. Everyone is marching with the flags and songs of the PKK. They are repeating what Rêber Apo said, that the PKK is an endless novel, a poem, a folk song and it is beautiful. Very beautiful. On the day of the anniversary a group of young women openly declared that they are joining the party. What did Zekiye Alkan say when she burned herself? She said this is how Newroz is celebrated. Now those who have joined the PKK are saying the same thing. This is how to celebrate November 27th. This is how to celebrate the day of the party. This is very valuable, very respectful. I greet them all with respect and love. On behalf of our party leadership, I also congratulate everyone who celebrated the day of our party. We have seen the celebrations and received a lot of strength from these pictures.

No one can stop this society. No oppression, persecution, massacre can separate the Kurdish society from the goal of freedom. No one can break and weaken the will for freedom. This was revealed once again during the celebrations on November 27th. The guerrilla also participated in this. They participated with enthusiasm, excitement, with their actions as well as their own celebrations.

The 46th year of struggle will be bigger, stronger, richer in terms of methods. It will be more widespread in terms of means. It will spread all over the world. We have already stated that we are entering the 46th year with a global freedom campaign. This year will be a year of struggle based on the global freedom campaign. It will be a year of mobilized struggle on the basis of the physical freedom of Rêber Apo and the solution of the Kurdish question. This was the will and determination of October 10. For 46 years this will and determination rules. Our people, our international friends, led by women and youth as a whole, will be engaged in such a struggle. As a movement, especially as guerrilla, we will wage such a struggle at the

most advanced level in the line of victory. There will be absolutely no other way of approaching this, no other way of understanding this. I can state this clearly. Our goal is definitely to develop the campaign, spread it and lead it to victory. Everyone will further enlarge, develop and enrich their current activist stance. The struggle for freedom and democracy will grow and lock up. Of course fascism will be hit. Everyone will strike a blow to AKP-MHP fascism with their actions and protests wherever they are.

Last year's elections did not yield anything, but there is no such thing that only elections will yield results. The struggle continues everywhere, it continues in many ways and this struggle has the power to destroy fascism of AKP-MHP. This is definitely our goal. On this basis, we will develop the struggle in every field. Everyone should know this. Our heroic guerrillas will lead such a struggle and will do it successfully by striking heavier blows to AKP-MHP fascism and colonialist genocidal forces with bigger actions and revolutionary operations.

The guerrilla celebrated the 45th anniversary of the PKK in the most meaningful and powerful way. It did this not with ceremonies or words of celebration, but with actions. Starting from November 20, there are revolutionary operations centered on Zap and Metîna. We can clearly say that the Turkish army has suffered one of the heaviest blows in history. The balance sheets are already being put forward. They cannot deny it either. Our central headquarters reveals all the results. Revolutionary operations and revolutionary actions developed one after another in all areas of Metîna, from the Cudî mountain to the mountain of Amediye. Heavy blows were struck. There were actions in which it was stated that 10, 20, 40 enemy soldiers were neutralized. These are clear facts. In this respect, guerrilla actions have revealed what will happen this year. People's actions will follow. The guerrilla will continue this line of action.

These actions were to celebrate the anniversary of the party's foundation and to welcome the 46th year, but it is not just limited to this. It revealed the line of action for the 46th year. In fact, we can say that the action of October 1 in Ankara triggered these actions and started a new military process. Many guerrillas evaluated the situation in this way. Now these actions prove this even more.

On this basis, first of all I would like to salute the HPG and YJA Star guerrillas, all headquarters and command forces, especially the Central Headquarters, for their successful struggle. I congratulate them on their actions carried out in Zap and Metîna since November 20, which dealt the heaviest blows to the enemy in its history. I congratulate them on these actions and the success of everyone who contributed on behalf of our party leadership. I respectfully and gratefully commemorate all the martyrs. Also comrade Andok and Ciwan were martyred. Undoubtedly, war does not come without a price. The balance sheets can be expressed in a few sentences or a few numbers, but preparing and waging war is not so easy. It requires overcoming difficulties and obstacles. It requires great courage and sacrifice. It comes with a price and this price is paid by the free Kurdish guerrilla following the ideology of Rêber Apo.

The guerrilla has paid a high price since 40 years so far. August 15th marked the 40th anniversary of this breakthrough [beginning of the armed struggle]. This year it continues to give greater hope, will and determination. No one should think that everything is very easy. To understand the reality of the guerrilla is essential. Therefore, it is necessary to see the effects of this guerrilla struggle. In the 45th year, the Turkish army has not been able to capture or take even one hill, despite putting all its strength in its attacks. It was one of the years when the army received the most support from NATO. Although it received all kinds of support by negotiating the events in Sweden and Finland, the result is obvious. Despite all kinds of support from the betrayers of the KDP, the result is obvious. It is seen that the guerrilla will

crush the Turkish army. Last winter they had to clear many areas. And now some of their generals say that they have changed their strategy, that they will act differently, but the guerrilla gave a clear answer to this. They said either you pull out now, or we will clear these areas by ourselves.

Those who are fooled by Tayyip Erdoğan's rule, those who believe in the mantra of "Motherland, Nation, Sakarya", those who are in this business for money, those who have come to these areas to shed Kurdish blood, should realize what a bad business they are doing and what a dangerous process they are facing. If they have any sense, they should give up and withdraw. At this point, those who are deceived by the collaborative, treasonous and manipulative attitude of the KDP administration should also stay away. Those who want to protect themselves should stay away. The current actions have shown what they will face if they stay away.

We hear that 'village guards' are being brought from North Kurdistan. They are changed from time to time, for certain periods. They bring them from all areas of North Kurdistan, from Botan to Serhat and other places, the Turkish army cannot stand, live and exist anywhere without the KDP and the village guards. Now it can be hardly told how many of them are guards, are collaborators or soldiers. For example, they admit that a lieutenant was shot, or that a corporal or a sergeant was shot, a sergeant major was shot, but they don't admit it when a village guard was shot. But right now those places are full of village guards. They don't even feel the need to explain that they were shot. This is the value given to them by the AKP administration they serve. These village guard circles should see the reality better. There is no end to this. They should stay away from shedding Kurdish blood, fighting against Kurdish freedom and the power of freedom. They should not be a tool for enemy attacks. They should not come to such games. They should not go to war against the guerrilla, they should not engage in attacks. It is for their own benefit. They can understand this as a warning, a call. Indeed, if they won't even realize this situation, no one will take care of them. They won't even say they admit that they were shot. We want them to save themselves from such a situation. Our call is based on this.

In conclusion, I can state the following. We had a good start to the 46th year. Zap and Metîna's guerrilla forces celebrated our party anniversary appropriately. They celebrated it on behalf of the entire guerrilla, on behalf of our entire party. It gave a great excitement, morale, strength and energy to our people, humanity and international friends. I salute them all once again from the bottom of my heart, congratulate them on their success, and wish them all great success in the revolutionary war they will wage in their 46th year.

— ★ —

Kalkan: Repression in Turkey is like a nightmare

ANF | BEHDINAN | 4 DECEMBER 2023

Duran Kalkan, member of the KCK Executive Council, talked about the repression in Turkey.

The situation within Turkey is very heavy right now. A lot of repression is taking place and a war is being waged against society. How do you evaluate the situation within Turkey? What can you tell us about the propagated picture of the Turkish state media?

There is no need to list the repression in Turkey and North Kurdistan. When you look at the newspapers or the television, it almost darkens your soul. It is like a nightmare. Things are being done that should never happen, that should never be done. It is like wearing a straitjacket. I wonder what kind of state of mind the people watching those televisions are in, what kind of insanity are they in? Because they always report such news and this is happening. This is happening, and it is a clear situation. As the struggle of the guerrilla, the struggle of the people grows and develops, the Tayyip Erdoğan administration, the AKP-MHP fascism is collapsing, rotting, shaking, it could fall at any moment. Nothing can save him. He clings to more evil, he markets himself more, he markets Turkey's opportunities.

He participates in more conspiracies and provocations. He turns people into bloodsuckers. He was a bloodsucker in the case of Gaza. He is still negotiating in NATO. They are continuing the Swedish bargain in order to get more power, to get more support, to mobilize more people to go to war against the Kurds, against the PKK, to make them partners in this genocidal war. They are holding people, killing them, applying all kinds of pressure. It has become so much so that it is not even clear who is doing what and what they are going to do. There is no law, no law at all. We have seen how the so-called state, the so-called institutions of the state are getting into each other. We can see the fight between the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court of Cassation is like a "head-breaker". There is such a reality. Rêber Apo said "there is no politics in Turkey." It is the mechanism of the coup d'état that is now functioning in the fascist dictatorship. Every day politics continues with coups, provocations, fascist oppression, terror and persecution. They arrest people and put them in prisons. The pressure and torture there are at an extreme level. They give sentences in vain. They don't let them go even when the sentences are over.

There is a complete arbitrary rule, there is a dictatorship. Everything is being done to keep Tayyip Erdoğan in power. Now, within this framework, as such a struggle grows, it is shaken from its foundations. Pressure and violence are also increasing. Lawlessness is developing at a very advanced level. We have seen an increasing number of arrests recently. And it seems that this will continue to increase. Because there is another election ahead of us. In order to make gains there, they will apply all kinds of pressure, terror and persecution. That is the only way this government survives, wins, claims to win elections and comes to power. All these elections are a mask for power. It wins elections with this oppression. This reality needs to be well opposed.

I can say this to our people, patriots, women, youth, political workers, the people of Turkey, the peoples, revolutionary democratic forces, our international friends and allies in Turkey, the patriotic democratic people of Turkey, women, youth, workers, pensioners; All this is a matter of struggle. Yes, there is a lot of oppression and persecution, but why is this happening?

There is a network of interests that exploits and destroys everything, and is anti-Kurdish. For this, it has turned Turkey into a hell. Also it is being shaken to its foundations. It will collapse, it wants its power through war. It is fighting against the Kurds. It supports the war in Ukraine, it has started the war in Gaza. It feeds on war from all sides. It attacks Rojava, Northern Syria, attacks South Kurdistan. It imposes all kinds of fascist repressive terror at home. This is how it survives.

Fascism will be crushed if we wage a bigger struggle, if we are more organized, if we engage in a collective struggle together. We need to see this, we need to believe this. We need to turn ourselves into such a fighting force. We need to unite more, to understand better, that is, to be more combative, to be in solidarity. We need to be more in solidarity with those arrested. We need to help the families of those arrested more. Kurdish people, women, youth, patriots in Kurdistan should definitely develop such social solidarity. No one should feel lonely or see themselves as weak.

There must be complete unity against fascism. Social solidarity must reach this level. It must be like this all over Turkey. All the oppressed people of the Turkish society should definitely develop such solidarity, unity and common struggle on the basis of the goal of overthrowing fascism. If we are like this, we will be able to stand up against all kinds of attacks, we will stand firm, we will be a fighting force. If we unite more in the struggle, if we fight effectively with new methods, we will definitely overthrow fascism and free Turkey and democratic Kurdistan.

By destroying the system of torture, isolation and genocide on İmralı, we will ensure the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. These goals are not unrealizable. Achieving these goals has become much closer. Fascism will collapse on shaky ground. It is necessary to develop a resistance that will collapse it in the strongest way. Our call is on this basis. I wholeheartedly greet everyone who struggles on this basis and wish them great success.



Opinion

Being brothers and sisters by killing and denying!

ANF | ZEKI BEDRAN | RONAHI NEWSPAPER | 7 DECEMBER 2023

The National Security Council (MGK) of the Turkish state meets at the end of each month and evaluates security problems. At the end of the meeting, a very short statement is made. And it is published in the press like the law of God. No one discusses or criticises it. For decades, the MGK has emphasised determination in the war against the Kurdish people. It is the main decision-making body that is hostile to the Kurds. However, it never uses the word 'Kurd'. They state how effectively they will fight "against terrorism and separatism".

The rulers of the Turkish state absolutely do not want to use the term 'Kurd'. They do not want Kurdishness to come to mind and be reflected in consciousness. Because their main goal is Kurdish genocide. Their main goal is to ignore the Kurdish people and to treat them as such. For this reason, even in the Turkish parliament, when Kurdish MPs utter a sentence in Kurdish, it is recorded in the minutes as an unknown language. Kurds and Kurdish must not appear in official documents and minutes. Because their equation is based on the denial of Kurds and their erasure from history.

Even when the Kurds resisted and broke the denial, there was no change in their attitude. Does Bahçeli, the partner of the current government, the one who is leading the war and the government, ever use the term Kurdish? Definitely not. When he does, he always uses it in a bad sense, to attack parties like the HDP. Erdoğan also says “my Kurdish brothers and sisters” when he gets stuck. What kind of brotherhood is it that he brags about killing the young people of those brothers and sisters? Does one ban or ignore the language and will of one’s brother? In the 21st century, Kurds are deprived of even the right to education in their mother tongue. The results of elections that Kurds contested and won according to Turkish law are ignored. Their MPs and mayors are imprisoned and sentenced as “separatist and secret organisation members”. All their municipalities are seized by the state and trustees are appointed.

The lie that Kurds are not discriminated against and everyone is equal in Turkey has become a template. The mad and the sane, military and civilian alike keep repeating the same refrain. However, these lies do not change the facts in the constitution. They do not have the power to change it. The constitution states that everyone who is a Turkish citizen is a Turk. Kurds are also Turks since they are citizens. These constitutional provisions have been in place for decades. Did Erdoğan and others ever say ‘Let’s change this article, denial does not comply with the law of brotherhood’? Has anyone ever heard such a statement from Erdoğan? No. Then the talk of brotherhood is nothing but a lie.

In Turkey, there is only one option to be brothers and sisters and equals with Turks. That is to be a Turk. Kurds can be brothers and sisters when they accept to be Turks. But when they become Kurds, they can only be “separatists, terrorists and enemies”. For this reason, every MGK meeting declares that “separatist and terrorist activities will be fought against at home and abroad with determination”.

Erdogan invaded Afrin. Of course, this could not have been done without the support and approval of international powers. Russia, in particular, agreed with Erdogan and opened the airspace of the region to Turkey. The USA and Europe were content with watching these attacks. They approved. After the occupation, Afrin residents were subjected to ethnic cleansing. Their assets and properties were plundered and taken away from them. There is no evil that has not befallen them and no crime against humanity that has not been committed. What did Russia do? Nothing. Then, Trump, in agreement with Erdogan, opened areas like Serêkaniyê to occupation. Kurds were expelled from there, too. They dispossessed Kurdish property and settled gangs from outside, their families and others in their place. With this, they took measures to prevent the Kurds from returning to their places. It is clear that this plan is a genocide.

Erdogan attends the summit of Arab and Islamic countries. He rants against Israel! Iraq and Syria are also members of the Arab League. There is Turkish occupation in both countries. The occupation is gradually expanding. The Turkish state has not stopped its attacks. In this situation, the Arab countries should have taken a stand and prevented Erdogan from speaking. But there is no such stance! Moreover, Erdogan meets with Iraqi and Syrian officials and asks them to support the new attacks and to join the war against the Kurds. Like a thief, he tries to put the countries he occupied under pressure and make them a partner in his Kurdish enmity.

Erdoğan proudly declares that he has killed more than thirty thousand Kurds since 2015. ‘I have destroyed more Kurds than any other government,’ he says. By killing Kurds and their youth, he weaves the bonds of brotherhood! Would those who want to live together with the Kurds and take brotherhood as a basis kill tens of thousands of them? Would killing or reconciliation be more in line with brotherhood? Unless there

is an opposition and a democratic movement in Turkey that asks this question and discusses the problems seriously, they will continue to shed blood and invest billions of dollars in planes and bombs.

Erdoğan wants to take advantage of the crisis environment by supporting Hamas and opposing Israel, distorting the facts and muddying the water. His main concern is to continue the war against the Kurds and create an environment for his massacres. He is also investing in the elections with propaganda over the blood of Palestinians!



MP Gökalp: There is no safety of life and property in Bitlis

ANF | BITLIS | 7 DECEMBER 2023

The province of Bitlis in northern Kurdistan is characterised by resistance, but also by repression, persecution and attacks by the Turkish army. Here, the Turkish state is trying with all its might to enforce its policy of assimilation and the destruction of all resistance through particular aggression.

Curfews, political and military operations, torture and detentions have been the order of the day in the districts of Hizan and Tatvan for around five months. During this period, hundreds of people have been detained and dozens imprisoned.

On 28 November, 110 people, including women and children, were detained during house searches in the districts of Hizan and Tatvan and the neighbouring province of Van. More than 50 of the 110 people brought before the magistrate were remanded in custody. Those arrested were ill-treated at the Bitlis police station.

A curfew was imposed on the villages of Hûzeran, Akûnis, Govan, Lanîlan, Xûlepûr, Kekulan, Sûreh, Pertawan, Kuran and Mezra Pisyan in the district of Hizan on 2 July, after which military operations began. A curfew was also imposed on the village of Peyîndas (Söğütlü) near Tatvan, which was surrounded by soldiers and village guards on 10 August. During the operations, five villagers from both districts were detained and many detainees were tortured. Forest areas in Hizan and Tatvan were also destroyed to establish military outposts.

HEDEP member of parliament Semra Çağlar Gökalp, who represents the Bitlis province in the Turkish parliament, spoke to ANF about the situation in the region. She sees the awareness and deep connection of the Bitlis region with the Kurdish identity as one of the reasons why the Turkish state is attacking there so massively. “Throughout the history of the republic, Bitlis has been one of the centres of the implementation of the policy of oppression, denial, annihilation and assimilation against the Kurdish people. For this reason, the Turkish state does not allow the development of Kurdish national and political consciousness in Bitlis. The hundred-year history of the Republic of Turkey has proven that the Kurdish question cannot be solved through war policy. Unfortunately, the government still insists on seeing its political future in the politics of war. This insistence leads to the continuation of oppression and persecution in Bitlis and almost everywhere in Kurdistan. The law still does not apply anywhere in Kurdistan. This has been the case throughout the history of the republic. Perhaps it can be said that a special law of war is applied here.

From time to time, it is described as enemy law, but there are always practices that go beyond that. The attacks by the state on the Garzan cemetery, for example, cannot be categorised in any way.”

The attack on Garzan was a crime committed by the Turkish state in December 2017 that transgresses all laws of war. At that time, the Garzan cemetery near the village of Oleka Jor in Bitlis province was the target of such an attack. The cemetery, which contained 267 dead bodies, was bulldozed, the remains of the dead were dug up and taken to the Forensic Medicine Institute in Istanbul. Some of them were then buried under pavements or in graves for people without relatives by the authorities. Some relatives are still fighting for the remains of their loved ones exhumed from the Garzan cemetery.

Gökalp described the situation of the people in the villages, especially in the summer months, as dramatic: “People are tortured as state forces go from village to village and carry out mass arrests, whether young or old, male or female, vandalise people’s vineyards and gardens and cut down trees. The areas where villages are located are also the places where military security zones and curfews are most frequently declared. The villagers are no longer allowed to enter their pastures, they are not even allowed to go to their fields or leave the village. In such an environment, you can’t talk about the safety of life and property. This is the life that the AKP government deems proper for the Kurds.”

Gökalp spoke of a state of siege in Kurdistan that has lasted since 1925, stating: “The Takrir-i Sükûn law, the independence courts, the Eastern Reform Plan, the general inspections and the state of emergency all pursued the same goal. The administrative structures, endowed with extraordinary powers, implemented a policy of systematic assimilation and extermination as well as all kinds of oppression and violence. Today, this system is enforced through the policy of trustees. All these are typical practices of the colonial system. Unfortunately, the Kurdish people know them very well and have often experienced them first-hand. The Kemalist regime developed a policy based on the destruction of the Kurdish people, to get never revitalised. What the current regime is doing is not much different. Yes, denial was abandoned to a certain extent, this was the result of great sacrifices and struggles. However, the policy of eradication and assimilation continues intensively. During the implementation of the Eastern Reform Plan, thousands of people were massacred and driven into exile in the Bitlis region, and attempts were made to eradicate all traces of the Kurdish language and culture.”

One of the aims of the repression is to expel the Kurdish population, the MP said and continued: “In Bitlis, soldiers storm the villages in the morning and detain 80-year-olds. The people are wanted to be driven off their land by making their centres of life uninhabitable. The aim is to bring livestock farming and agriculture to a standstill. The aim behind this is to destroy these economic resources of the people. Nature is being destroyed in the restricted military areas and security zones. This is a policy of systematic depopulation in question. The aim is to turn the region into a single military base by displacing the population. The village burnings of the 1990s are still fresh in the minds of the Kurdish people. We know this face of the state. Despite all the oppression and persecution, they could not drive us away from our land, and they will not be able to drive us away today. Our roots in this country are too deep for them to reach.”

Gökalp pointed out that the situation in Bitlis shows the situation in the whole of Kurdistan and added: “People who get up every morning to go to their fields and look after their cattle, to earn a living in the place where they were born with their language, their culture, their identity and their will, are torn from their beds at the crack of dawn by the grimace of a hundred years of tyranny. A nation of millions is de-

clared criminals by the state, marginalised with hate speech, assimilated by all possible methods and, if that is not possible, annihilated. But another life, another way, is possible.”

— ★ —

Dilan Güvenç: We face a constant anti-Kurdish assimilation policy

ANF | AMED | 8 DECEMBER 2023

The Turkish state continues to take massive action against the Kurdish language. Since in 2016, countless of Kurdish language associations were closed by decree. At the same time, pressure increased in all public institutions, from parliament to television stations to city administrations, not to use Kurdish.

Signposts, Kurdish signs and inscriptions on buildings were taken down and replaced with Turkish ones. Dilan Güvenç from the board of the Association for the Study of the Language and Culture of Mesopotamia (MED-DER) spoke to ANF about the current language policy developments. “Today the number of people who speak their native language is declining,” said Güvenç.

She added: “Here we see the consequences of the state’s assimilation policy. We can see how much the number of people speaking in their native language has decreased and how much it has been restricted in family and social communication. Looking at the last few years, we can easily say that the state is pursuing an openly fascist policy.

Especially after the appointment of trustees on the municipalities that were in the hands of the people, a break occurred in the development of the Kurdish language. The municipalities had previously carried out multilingual and multicultural activities. The municipalities committed themselves to the survival of this culture and this language through cultural activities. In recent years, the increasing assimilation policy towards the Kurdish language has led to a decline in interest in the Kurdish language.”

“The state sees Kurdish language as a threat”

The linguist described the bans on language as the most efficient means of assimilation and explained: “We see this language deficit in those who apply to our institution to learn Kurdish. The Turkish state must change the laws and constitution for the Kurdish identity and the Kurdish language, this is the expectation of the people. As the Kurdish language is spoken less and less every day, the policy of assimilation continues to intensify. This system has been established since the founding of the Republic and the Lausanne Agreement. This system is based on the destruction of the Kurdish language and identity. The state was founded on the principle of one language, one nation, one homeland. It wants to continue this system into this second century. The state does not want a multilingual, multicultural society and is opposing it. It sees this as a danger to himself. The Turkish state is trying to create hostility between peoples through nationalist feelings. This creates a big problem. In addition, institutions working in Kurdish society are exposed to repression and attacks. Because the state maintained its system through nationalism for years, large-scale massacres occurred. The death of a language means the murder of a society. The goal is to de-

stroy Kurdish society and deprive it of its identity. What should we do in this situation? 40 million Kurds live in Kurdistan and Turkey. First of all, we must learn and speak our own language. We must work harder to ensure that Kurdish is recognized as an official language.”

“Assimilation is part of the special war”

Stating that the assimilation policy was part of the special war, Güvenç continued: “In the second century of the Republic, the Kurdish people should be given status. This status can be achieved through the struggle for language. We will fight until our language is recognized as an official language. First of all, this system, which develops a policy of war and assimilation against the language, must change. As long as this system does not change, the repression and language bans will continue.”

It is our right to communicate freely in our language

As for the repression, the language activist said: “Our institutions that deal with culture and language were taken over by the trustees. Those institutions carried out multilingual and multicultural projects. People used these institutions to learn their own language and culture. Unfortunately, these facilities have all been closed by the trustees in the past ten years. The study of the Kurdish language has been criminalized. For example, two million people live in Amed, should these two million people learn their language in a single institution? The state should pave the way for such educational institutions. If we are supposedly equal citizens of this country, where are our rights? We want to speak our language freely, that is our right. Our organizations are committed to a multilingual and multicultural system. We will fight until the Kurdish language and culture have status and are secured by law and constitution.”



Contact e-mail: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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