

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Erling Folkvord laid to rest in Oslo

ANF | OSLO | 20 MARCH 2024

Erling Folkvord was a Norwegian friend of the Kurds. He passed away on 1 March in Stockholm. A farewell ceremony was held in Oslo.

His family and friends made speeches accompanied by Kurdish music and messages. Among the messages was that from the KCK Executive Council co-presidency. The message said: “Erling had an important place in the hearts of the Kurds. His struggle for democracy and justice will never be forgotten.”

Speaking on behalf of the Norwegian Democratic Kurdish Community Council, Endam Eziz said: “Erling laid the foundation of the work carried out for the Kurds in Norway. He reflected what he saw in Kurdistan, which he visited many times, in his works.” After the speeches, Folkvord was laid to rest.

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Freedom of Leader Öcalan Committee calls for international action against isolation

ANF | QANDIL | 21 MARCH 2024

At the Newroz celebration in Qandil, a message was read on behalf of the Committee for the Freedom of Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

“Newroz is the day for the people of Kurdistan to stand up against oppression and tyranny. The Newroz fire instills great enthusiasm and determination to struggle in our people,” said the committee and continued: “The enemy should know well that the Kurdish people are not alone. The Kurdish people are a society with the strongest ideas today. It has armies with the most disciplined and self-sacrificing spirit.”

Calling on the international community and the Kurdish people to break the İmralı gates and lift the isolation, the Committee said, “The physical freedom of Leader Öcalan is one of the most important issues for human history, peace and the peoples of the Middle East.”

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Prisons

Kurdish politician Köçer sentenced to two years and five months in prison by Munich Regional Court

ANF | MUNICH | 16 MARCH 2024

The Munich Higher Regional Court on Friday sentenced Kurdish politician Tahir Köçer to a prison sentence of two years and five months for membership in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The court came to the conclusion that the 59-year-old was the PKK area manager in the Nuremberg area and the region manager for Bavaria from the beginning of July 2021 until his arrest in December 2022. The conviction for “membership in a terrorist organization abroad” was carried out in accordance with Sections 129a/b of the Criminal Code.

On 22 December 2022, the police searched two private apartments and the Medya Volkshaus in Nuremberg as well as a third apartment in Hanover. They arrested Tahir Köçer in Nuremberg. It was only on 8 January 2024 that the main hearing against him was opened before the Munich Higher Regional Court.

Tahir Köçer is the former co-chair of the Confederation of Mesopotamian Societies in Germany (KON-MED), the largest umbrella organization of Kurdish organizations in the Federal Republic, and a member

of the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK), the Kurdish parliament in exile. He is the father of five children.

Politician Nursel Aydoğan and KON-MED co-chair Ruken Akça were among those attending the hearing.

Lawyer Brenner: Political criminalization

Tahir Köçer's lawyer, Michael Brenner, said: "This verdict shows once again that the courts are not willing to stop the criminal prosecution of Kurdish activists in Germany. A persecution that is made possible primarily by the prosecution authorization of the Federal Ministry of Justice. This must finally be repealed by the government and if this does not happen, it would be up to the courts to no longer see themselves bound by it."

Regarding the oral justification for the verdict, the lawyer said: "Mr. Köçer's imprisonment in Turkey, the torture he endured, the many family members murdered by the Turkish state, were particularly highlighted and taken into account in mitigating the sentence - but the bottom line is that a Kurdish politician was sentenced to almost two and a half years in prison for things such as collecting donations, organizing meetings or writing reports. This political criminalization is made possible by Section 129b of the Criminal Code and the authorization to prosecute the PKK."

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Prisoners enter 112th day of hunger strike to demand freedom for Öcalan

ANF | 17 MARCH 2024

The hunger strike launched by political prisoners in jails in Turkey and North Kurdistan to demand the physical freedom of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish question, has reached its 112th day.

Abdullah Öcalan and Ömer Hayri Konar, Veysi Aktaş and Hamili Yıldırım, who are held in İmralı, have not been allowed to meet with their families and lawyers for 36 months.

In order to end the isolation in İmralı and ensure the physical freedom of Abdullah Öcalan, the "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish question" campaign was launched on 10 October 2023, with simultaneous statements made in 74 cities around the world.

As part of the campaign, political prisoners went on hunger strike on 27 November 2023.

Hunger strike to continue until after local elections

The prisoners had originally said that they would bring the hunger strike, which is carried out alternately, to a new phase as of 15 February, if no steps were taken regarding their demands. However, in a statement they announced that they would continue the hunger strike until after the local elections to be held on 31 March.

In a statement, Deniz Kaya said on behalf of the PKK and PAJK prisoners on 12 February: “We will continue our hunger strike action, which we started on 27 November 2023, in order to end the isolation imposed on our Leader, and which we announced to the public that we will take it to a new phase on 15 February, so that it does not affect the election activities. We would like to state that we have extended the hunger strike until the post-election period so that it does not hinder the elections.”

The statement also said: “We declare to the public that if the isolation of our Leader continues until after the election, we will take our action to the next level and continue until we get results,” and called on all democratic institutions and circles to take responsibility to meet their demands.

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Prisoner Tüzün kept in isolation for 10 days despite being seriously ill

ANF | 18 MARCH 2024

Ismail Tüzün was deported from Adana Kürkçüler F Type Closed Prison to Kırşehir High Security Closed Prison on 8 March.

It was reported that he was subjected to a “mouth search” and “strip search”. Ismail Tüzün has been in prison for 20 years.

Tüzün, who did not accept these abuses, was tortured by the guards and was put in a single cell. Despite his illness, Tüzün has been kept in solitary confinement for 10 days.

Tüzün has many health problems such as neck and lumbar hernia, diabetes, and stomach and intestinal tumour growth.

Tüzün, who was on the “ill prisoners” list of the Human Rights Association (IHD), denounced the abuses he suffered through his family, who called for public awareness.

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Prisoners continue hunger strike for Öcalan

ANF | 20 MARCH 2024

The hunger strike launched by political prisoners in jails in Turkey and North Kurdistan to demand the physical freedom of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan and a political solution to the Kurdish question, has reached its 115th day.

Abdullah Öcalan and Ömer Hayri Konar, Veysi Aktaş and Hamili Yıldırım, who are held in İmralı, have not been allowed to meet with their families and lawyers for 36 months.

In order to end the isolation in İmralı and ensure the physical freedom of Abdullah Öcalan, the "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, solution to the Kurdish question" campaign was launched on 10 October 2023, with simultaneous statements made in 74 cities around the world.

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IHD Van Branch says rights of prisoners on hunger strike are violated

ANF | VAN | 22 MARCH 2024

Human Rights Association (IHD) Van Branch published its reports about Van High Security, T and F Type, Patnos L Type, Ahlat T, Iğdır S, Erzurum Dumlu No. 1 and 2 High Security and Kars T Type Prisons. Branch president, lawyer Mehmet Salih Coşkun said that they interviewed a total of 23 prisoners.

He said that even the most basic human rights of the prisoners were suspended and isolation increased badly. Coşkun added that the prisoners' communication rights were also blocked.

Coşkun also spoke about the use of dispersion as a further punishment of both prisoners and their families who often could not go to visit their children for years. The lawyer also touched upon the situation of the seriously ill prisoners and said: "The execution of the sentences of the seriously ill prisoners should be

stopped, and the necessary procedures should be taken for their immediate release. Again, all ill prisoners should be treated completely in a way that befits human dignity.”

Pressure on prisoners on hunger strike

Referring to the ongoing hunger strikes in prisons, Coşkun listed the rights violations as follows:

- Daily health checks of prisoners on hunger strike are not carried out at all in some prisons, and in prisons where they are, they are not carried out by the infirmary physician, but are sometimes carried out by the health officer and sometimes by the prison guards on duty,
- Prisoners on hunger strike are not given any subsistence food in some prisons, and in some prisons they are given salt, sugar and baking soda, but not yoghurt, fruit juice, etc.
- While vitamin B1 is vital for prisoners on hunger strike, it was only provided in the last days of the hunger strike in some prisons, and vitamin B1 or B12 complex was not given at all in some prisons.
- Disciplinary investigations were opened due to hunger strikes, disciplinary punishments were given to prisoners who went on strike, disciplinary punishments such as 'withholding from cultural and sports activities' were given, as well as 'deprivation or restriction of communication and means of communication' in some prisons.
- In some prisons visited, it was determined that prisoners who went on strike were removed from other prisoners and taken to a separate ward (section).

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Military aggression and occupation

KCK: Remembering the massacre of Halabja and comprehending its significance for today

ANF | 16 MARCH 2024

36 years have passed since 16 March 1988, when thousands of Kurdish men, women and children were killed by poison gas by Saddam Hussein in the southern Kurdish city of Helebce (Halabja).

Every anniversary of the mass murder is a day of pain, anger and remembrance for Kurds. To mark the anniversary, the co-presidency of the Executive Committee of the KCK released a statement calling for intensifying the fight against the anti-Kurdish genocide.

The KCK said: “Today marks the 36th anniversary of the Halabja massacre, an atrocity which claimed the lives of thousands of people, committed by the homicidal, colonialist Baath dictatorship. We strongly condemn this barbaric and heinous act, as well as the genocidal fascist Saddam regime which carried it out, once more. We respectfully commemorate those who lost their lives during the tragedy, we honor all the martyrs of revolution and democracy in the person of the Halabja victims. Thus, we reaffirm our commitment to their memories. Every massacre committed against the Kurdish people will be retributed.

The statement added: “The Halabja massacre is one of the most horrific and brutal massacres to have occurred in human history. The massacre has exposed just how dangerous, vicious, and bigoted a nationalistic, racist nation-state mentality can make people. It also demonstrated the depth of Kurdish enmity.”

Using chemical weapons, thousands of Kurds – men, women, children, and the elderly – were mercilessly murdered. Although this happened before the eyes of the world, not a single state raised an objection. The USA, Europe, and the UN, among other states, remained silent. Only when their interests were in jeopardy did they take a stand against the Saddam administration. But they failed to do anything at all in response to Anfal.

The killings perpetrated within the framework of the Kurdish genocide are being formulated by the forces of capitalist modernity. These forces designed a Middle East based on the division of Kurdistan and the unresolved Kurdish question, resulting in the genocide of the Kurdish people, thus, becoming complicit in all attacks and atrocities committed against the Kurdish people. For nearly a century, these forces have been pursuing this very agenda in North Kurdistan, through their incursions into Rojava, their attacks on Shengal [Sinjar], and the refugee camp in Makhmur. Encouraging the anti-Kurdish AKP-MHP administration is equivalent to condoning genocide.”

The statement continued: “It’s important to comprehend how the Halabja massacre developed historically. Politicians, writers, and thinkers of Kurdish descent ought to pay attention to this and see that the real, historical narrative is told.

The ‘Patriotic Union of Kurdistan’ (PUK) and the Iraqi state came to an agreement in 1983 when the latter sought reconciliation after failing to advance the cause of the Kurdish people. The resolution of the Kurdish issue based on autonomy was part of this accord. Nevertheless, this accord was broken by Turkish state intervention. The Turkish government declared that it would not, in any form, accept the resolution to the Kurdish issue. After Jalal Talabani, who had been to Baghdad to negotiate and sign the deal, was openly informed by the Iraqi side as to the reasons behind the accord’s disintegration, Talabani returned to Kurdistan empty-handed. With the courage bestowed upon him by the Turkish state, Saddam turned his attention to the Kurds and launched the Anfal campaign after that date. The only way to address this massacre and its predeceasing ones correctly, passes through the comprehension of this historical fact. Only then would it be possible to halt the genocide perpetrated on the Kurds and prevent further atrocities.”

The statement said: “Genocide and massacres targeting the Kurdish people persist to this day. The Turkish state continues to implement this scheme during the administration of Tayyip Erdoğan. They use intimidation, violence, and occupation to try to stop the Kurdish question from being resolved in every part of Kurdistan. In an attempt to block the Kurds from reaching a settlement with the Syrian government in Syria, the Turkish state is again conducting the same policies it did in Iraq. The Kurdish people have en-

dured massacres throughout history, and it is the Turkish state that obstructs a resolution to the Kurdish question.

As we remember the martyrs of Halabja on this 36th anniversary, we also need to strengthen our national unity, develop a deeper understanding of historical truths, and improve our ability to combat the enemy who is murdering and annihilating our people.”



MSD reaffirms commitment to the cause of Syrian people on 13th anniversary of Syrian Revolution

ANF | 16 MARCH 2024

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) issued a statement on the occasion of the thirteenth anniversary of the revolutionary movement in Syria.

The statement said: “The Syrian people ignited a revolution against oppression, tyranny, and the Ba’ath regime that ruled Syria for decades. Syria did not witness any democracy during that period. The Ba’ath regime persisted in its arbitrary actions and repression against its opponents, disregarding global changes and their impact on societies and nations. The Ba’ath regime insisted on its stance despite the Arab Spring waves that swept the region, in which they impacted the aspirations of all people yearning for freedom and the restoration of their dignity.”

The statement added that “after thirteen years, the Syrian people still suffer from dire living conditions inside Syria. They face the gravest challenges of migration and displacement abroad. The values of coexistence and the foundations of national unity are now under a severe threat by regional forces intervening directly through proxies. These forces, guided by explicit and declared agendas which hinder Syria’s path toward political and social stability and democratic transition. The crimes committed by the Ba’ath regime, the opposition and its Turkish-backed factions have impacted the Syrian people negatively.”

The statement said that “to address this, free Syrians should bear responsibility to make innovative national initiatives, and the international community should support all Syrians to empower them in reclaiming their national destiny. Although the Syrian Revolution faced numerous challenges and changed its path in some regions due to the leadership's failure, it has continued its peaceful approach in other areas such as in Suwayda. Additionally, the movement has developed in certain regions, leading to the establishment of a governance system in the form of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES). This historical alternative stands in contrast to the oppressive regime and the terrorism of ISIS, offering hope to all Syrians.”

The statement underlined that “the AANES aimed at freedom, dignity, and social justice, advocating for a decentralized democratic Syria. We, as the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the cause of the Syrian people and their just demands. We strongly condemn the crimes committed by the Ba’ath regime, which targeted innocent children, women, and the elderly over the past

thirteen years. We commemorate with deep sorrow the innocent children of Daraa, whose violated childhoods serve as a driving force for all Syrians aspiring to freedom, standing up against oppression and tyranny. We strongly condemn the targeting of Syrians' dignity and their right to live safely, as we condemn violations and crimes committed by opposition factions affiliated with the Turkish occupation in the occupied areas. These actions aim to sow discord among the components of the Syrian people."

The statement said that "the most recent crime was perpetrated against the innocent child Ahmad Khaled Mada, who was murdered in Jindires town by a criminal whom Turkey had resettled in Afrin. These crimes are considered as a stark expression of ethnic cleansing policies against its original Kurdish inhabitants, and as part of a deliberate demographic change. We congratulate the free Syrians on this occasion and call upon them to unite their efforts, coordinate, and work towards overcoming the interventions and challenges that face national efforts. In this context, we affirm our commitment to achieving the democratic transition alongside various Syrian democratic national powers and parties. Our goal is to establish a great front that leads the Syrian Revolution and corrects its path in the interest of the Syrian people."

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Talabani: Kurds need unity and solidarity

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 16 MARCH 2024

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) President Bafil Talabani made a statement on the occasion of the 36th anniversary of the Halabja Massacre. The genocidal campaign with chemical weapons claimed the lives of at least five thousand Kurds in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) 36 years ago.

Talabani said, "Kurds need unity and solidarity instead of distancing themselves from each other. We must put differences at the service of our common interests. Let us not forget that the fate of all of us is one. Our responsibilities towards our country and nation should replace different opinions. Our work should be for everyone."

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YJA Star guerrillas carry out action against Turkish soldiers in Girê Amediyê

ANF | BEHDINAN | 17 MARCH 2024

The HPG Press Center issued a statement about a YJA Star guerrilla's action against the Turkish soldiers in the Girê Amediyê Resistance Area, resulting in the killing of one soldier.

The statement also gave details of the bombing carried out by the Turkish army. The statement reads as follows:

“Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region:

On March 14, at 14:25, the invaders in the Girê Amediyê Resistance Area were targeted and shot by our YJA Star forces. One soldier was killed.

Attacks carried out by the invading Turkish army with banned explosives;

On March 13, our battle position in the Girê Amediyê Resistance Area of the Martyr Delîl Western Zap region was bombed 3 times with explosive-laden drones.

Attacks carried out by the invading Turkish army;

Between 10 and 16 March, the Dergelê, Serê Metîna, Bêşîlî, Şêlazê areas of the Metîna region were bombed 8 times, Şehîd Delîl was 10 times in the Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî Resistance Area of the Batî Zap region, the Ava Lolanê, Kolît, Girê Şehîd Şerîf area of the Xakurkê region 13 times, Garê region Girê Zengil, Xêrê, Deşta Kafya, Deriyê Hîrçê, Sêdarê 6 times, Martyr Îbrahîm Resistance Area of the Zap region were bombed once. In total, the region was bombed 38 times.

On 10 and 11 March, the Kolît and Geliyê Lolanê areas of the Xakurkê region were bombed by combat helicopters.”



TEV-DEM: Inhumane crimes are being committed in Afrin

ANF | 17 MARCH 2024

The Movement for a Democratic Society (TEV-DEM) in the autonomous region of North and East Syria has issued a statement on the occupation of Afrin six years ago. The Turkish army invaded the northern Syrian canton in January 2018 after a widespread aerial bombardment by jihadist mercenary gangs and captured the city of Afrin on March 18.

“Six years have passed since the occupation of Afrin. We bow to the 58-day resistance of the people and the historic stance of the heroes and heroines who fell in this battle. The people of Afrin are still resisting today,” said the TEV-DEM statement on Sunday.

TEV-DEM pointed out that crimes against humanity have been committed in the region for six years: “The only thing the Turkish state and its gangs have offered since the first day of occupation has been the looting and destruction of cultural infrastructure and human, social and historical values. In the last six years, Afrin has been exposed to the brutality of a racist and chauvinist mentality. The brutal face of this mentality is revealed in the policy of demographic change, which aims to separate Afrin from Syrian territory. This includes measures such as the arbitrary construction of colonial settlements and the transfer of agricultural land to subsequently settled gang members. At the same time, cultural assimilation continues in the region through the introduction of the Turkish language and currency, while crimes such as theft,

looting and kidnapping continue to be committed by gangs as a result of Turkey's dangerous and dirty policies against the Kurdish population. Hundreds of people from Afrin are missing and their fate is unknown. Many citizens are being held hostage in Turkish dungeons and ransom is being demanded for their release. Nature is being plundered, the property and assets of the population have been confiscated and millions of olive trees have been felled. Inhumane crimes continue to be committed against the people in the region. Just recently, a child was brutally murdered in the district of Jindires. This was a threatening message to the remaining people in Afrin to leave the region."

The occupation of Afrin was carried out with the approval of the international community, TEV-DEM emphasized and added: "The failure of the international community's policies and the lack of role of the United Nations and humanitarian and legal organizations have led to the people in the region facing a real catastrophe. While Afrin was once recognized as the best model of democracy and fraternity of peoples, today it is going through a painful process due to the intolerance and hatred of the Turkish occupying state and its gangs. The displaced people from Afrin are fighting tirelessly in the refugee camps in Shehba in the hope of returning to their homes despite the attacks by the occupying forces and the embargo by the government in Damascus. As TEV-DEM, we call on all political and social forces, non-governmental organizations and the relevant parties in Syria, especially the UN, to intervene immediately in the events in Afrin. Afrin has been forgotten and has become the home of terrorist gangs directly supported by the Turkish state."



Autonomous Administration: We will mobilise all our means for the liberation of Afrin

ANF | 18 MARCH 2024

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria made a written statement on the sixth anniversary of the occupation of Afrin and presented a six-point road map.

Stating that Afrin was occupied as a result of conspiracies and negotiations by international and regional powers, the Autonomous Administration noted that the region has been experiencing a tragic situation since the occupation.

The Autonomous Administration said, "The reason for this situation is the practices of the gang groups acting under the directives of Turkey, disregarding all moral principles, international law and laws. The demographic structure of the region is being changed; massacres, abductions, all kinds of torture, rape and killing practices against women continue. While historical artefacts are being destroyed, the geography is being destroyed."

Noting that the presence of the Turkish state and its gangs in Afrin also means the occupation of Syria, the Autonomous Administration said, "The path of the martyrs and heroes of Afrin will be our path to victory and the liberation of the occupied areas. In this context, we wholeheartedly salute the resistance of our people in Shehba."

The struggle to be waged for the liberation of Afrin and other occupied areas was listed in five points:

1- The liberation of Afrin and other occupied areas is our strategic option. We will mobilise all our means for the liberation of Afrin and the honourable return of our people.

2- There can be no solution and peace in Syria without the liberation of Afrin and other occupied areas. We call on all nations to support our forces for the expulsion of Turkey from the region and the liberation of Afrin.

3- What is happening in Afrin is the trampling of all values. We call on the relevant international institutions and organisations to investigate the facts in Afrin and bring those responsible, including Turkish officials, to justice. The crimes committed there are happening on the directives of the Turkish state. International law and human rights organisations must fulfil their moral duty.

4- We want to inform the Syrian public opinion that the presence and practices of the occupying Turkish state in Afrin have exceeded the borders of Afrin.

5- We call on all Syrian national forces to form unity and support the resistance of our people by mobilising their means for the liberation of Afrin. The liberation of Afrin and other occupied areas is the liberation of all Syria from the politics of discord, contradiction and fragmentation.

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Shengal Autonomous Administration: Afrin will be cleared of savage gangs

ANF | SHENGAL | 18 MARCH 2024

The statement was made at the Şehîd Dilgeş and Şehîd Berxwedan Cemetery of Martyrs on the slopes of Mount Shengal with the participation of families of martyrs and organisations affiliated to the Autonomous Administration.

The statement made by Riham Hasan, Co-Chair of the Executive Committee of the Shengal Autonomous Administration, said: “Until 2018, Afrin was a place that could be a model of democracy where Yazidis, Arabs and Kurds lived together with their own language and culture for thousands of years. Due to the interests of the hegemonic powers and the silence of the international community, Afrin was occupied by the invading Turkish state and its gangs on 18 March 2018.”

Riham Hasan noted that the resistance of the people of Afrin against the occupation until today is historic and commemorated those who were martyred during the resistance.

Pointing out that the Turkish state has been committing inhumane crimes in the region for the last six years, the Autonomous Administration said, “The same inhumane practices that the ISIS gangs committed

against the Yazidi people in Shengal with the support of the occupying Turkish state are continuing today in Afrin and the whole world is witnessing this. Yesterday it was Shengal, today it is Afrin.”

The statement also reacted against the silence of the world and emphasised that what happened in Shengal and Afrin will never be forgotten.

The statement continued: “We say that Shengal and Afrin are one. We believe that with the resistance and struggle of the people of Afrin, Afrin will soon be cleared of those savage gangs and the people will return to their homes. Just as the Ottomans collapsed in the past, today the defeat of ISIS in Kobanê, Manbij, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa and Shengal will bring the end of the Turkish state.”

Condemning the occupation, the Autonomous Administration of Shengal appealed to all international organisations and called on them to “take your responsibilities and put an end to the genocidal practices of the occupying Turkish state and its gangs.”



YPG: Our struggle will continue until Afrin and all occupied regions are liberated

ANF | 18 MARCH 2024

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 Air Force 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 jihadist forces on its borders. As a result, Afrin offered peaceful sanctuary to over 300,000 internally displaced people from elsewhere in Syria.

The YPG (People's Defense Units) Command released a written statement on the sixth anniversary of the occupation of Afrin and stated that the occupying Turkish state organised a comprehensive attack on Afrin for 58 days in 2018 with the support of international forces and the most advanced war technology with the involvement of gang groups.

“It is clear that the Afrin attack was carried out with the approval of the imperialist powers that have influence in Rojavayê (Western) Kurdistan and Syria. Afrin Resistance of the Age is an unprecedented process and event in history. The sacrifice and resistance of our people and forces in Afrin put a strain on the occupying state and proved once again that our people can defend themselves against any attack with their own power. Hundreds of our comrades and the people of Afrin, taking part in the relentless resistance with limited means, such as Avesta Xabûr, Îlan Dara, Artêş Hakkarî and commander Karker Êrîş, were martyred whilst fighting with great sacrifice.”

Reminding of the crimes against humanity committed by the Turkish state and its gangs for six years, the YPG Command stated the following:

“In the last 6 years, the demographic structure of Afrin has changed, the Kurdish people have been displaced, the human rights granted by international laws and agreements to which the Turkish state is a party have been violated, and the Kurds in Afrin have been deprived of their rights. Afrin is being cleansed of Kurds and the aim is to change the identity of the region. For this purpose, Kurds who want to return to Afrin are subjected to pressure and attacks by the occupying gangs. For this reason, we, as the YPG, reaffirm that we will continue our struggle until Afrin and all occupied regions are liberated. We respectfully commemorate all our comrades who were martyred in the Afrin Resistance of the Age, and we reiterate once again that we will enhance the struggle for freedom in their footsteps.”

— ★ —

Thousands march in Shehba on the sixth anniversary of Turkish occupation of Afrin

ANF | SHEHBA | 18 MARCH 2024

Today marks the sixth anniversary of the occupation of the northern Syrian city of Afrin by the Turkish state and allied mercenaries.

The brutal campaign began on 20 January 2018, when Turkey launched air strikes on 100 locations as the onset of an invasion they dubbed ‘Operation Olive Branch.’ After two months of resistance, civilians fled and the SDF retreated to avoid further losses as hundreds of civilians died during the course of the genocidal campaign in violation of international law.

Efrin and Shehba Canton Council organised a protest march in the Ahdas district to mark the sixth anniversary of the occupation of Afrin. The demonstration was participated by thousands of people from Shehba and Afrin IDPs who took refuge there after the occupation of their homes and lands.

The demonstrators carried olive branches, photographs of the martyrs of the Resistance of the Age, images from the massacres committed by the occupying Turkish state and its gangs against the people of Afrin and Shehba.

The march to the 'Leader Öcalan Garden' was followed by a rally, where Xedîce Îbo, member of the Assembly of Martyrs' Families in Afrin and Shehba Canton addressed the crowd and said: "The occupying Turkish state wants to revive the Ottoman Empire and implement the Misak-ı Milli [Project for establishing the borders of the Ottoman National Pact]."

Xedîce Îbo called for the expansion of the struggle for the liberation of Afrin.

Fewzî Mistefa, Co-Chair of the Ehdas District Council of Efrin and Shehba Canton, reacted against the international powers that remained silent against the occupation and the crimes committed in Afrin and said, "The occupying Turkish state is committing genocide crimes in front of the eyes of the world and the Security Council."

Fewzî Mistefa emphasised that they would struggle until Afrin and all other occupied territories are liberated.

— ★ —

Turkey deploys troops to Southern Kurdistan

ANF | 19 MARCH 2024

The occupying Turkish state, which continues its political and diplomatic activities within the scope of new occupation plans, continues its military preparations as well.

While both Turkish troops and KDP forces under the name of Iraqi Border Guard Units are deployed to the guerrilla areas in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), it was reported that the Turkish state dispatched military forces to Southern Kurdistan through Üzümlü (Deştan) Border Crossing in Çukurca district of Hakkari yesterday evening.

According to the reports, the force sent to the region was deployed in the vicinity of Barox village in Kanî-masî sub-district of Duhok. Military activity continues in the region.

— ★ —

Kurdistan Freedom Militia targets the Turkish state's technical intelligence devices

ANF | 19 MARCH 2024

The Kurdistan Freedom Militia (MAK-Milîsên Azadiya Kurdistan) reported that they detected and destroyed “photo traps, motion-sensitive sensors and thermal cameras” used against guerrillas.

In a written statement on Tuesday, MAK said “Our militia was on duty in Amed Martyr Kendal Martyr Remzi and Martyr Kawa areas” and stated that they continued to support the guerrilla who fought sacrificially against the occupying Turkish state.

“The ‘photo traps, motion-sensitive sensors and thermal cameras’ placed by the occupying Turkish army in guerrilla areas to provide technical intelligence were detected and destroyed by our militia during field activities on different dates,” the statement said.

The statement continued: “MAK Militias put fear in the heart of the enemy in the mountains of Amed, bearing the traces of Martyr Çiyager, Numan Amed, Azad Siser and Martyr Gulan. With these actions, our militia struck a blow to the enemy's influence and technical warfare in the mountains of Kurdistan, paying the enemy back for the ongoing attacks on guerrilla areas.

With this action, we call on all our people and young people to target the enemy and its apparatuses until we uproot the enemy from the lands of Kurdistan.

On this occasion, we congratulate our people on Newroz and call on every patriot, especially the youth, to organise and take action against the enemy in the ranks of the MAK militia in a spirit of uprising.”

— ★ —

HPG says it downed 15 Turkish drones over South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 20 MARCH 2024

The HPG Central Headquarters Command released a list of Turkish drones which were downed by guerrilla forces starting from 13 February last year. According to the statement, the most recent downing was in the Zap/Ciyareh region on 1 March 2024.

The HPG mentioned that the drones were downed with a missile system but did not provide any details.

The HPG said Kurdish people were able to acquire the missile system and provide it to the guerrilla “despite all the efforts of the enemy (Turkish state) to isolate our people in the international arena.”

The HPG's statement followed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Executive Committee member Murat Karayilan's interview on March 15, saying that they will announce "good news" on the eve of Newroz, Kurdish New Year.

The HPG also said the footage of the drones being shot down will be released soon.

"Except in a few cases, the incidents involving UCAVs were recorded, and this footage clearly shows that the enemy vehicles were shot down," the statement read.

According to the statement, the first downing of an armed drone was on February 13, 2023, over Garê in South Kurdistan.

Six of the 15 downed drones were TB2 BAYRAKTAR type drones. Five were ANKAs, two were AKINCIs and two were AKSUNGURs.

"We have never been more committed and determined to play a role against all forces which seek to threaten the brotherhood and freedom of the peoples. Today, with proven tactical expansion and technical means, our potential to fight with high performance and our determination to secure victory have become much stronger", the statement read.

The HPG's statement reads as follows:

"On the eve of a new spring, we welcome Newroz, the festival of resurrection and freedom. First of all we celebrate the Newroz of Réber Apo, who gave us the idea, the will, the spirit and the resilience of freedom, and we salute our leadership with great respect.

We celebrate the Newroz Day of the heroic people of Kurdistan to friends of our people's and all democratic humanity that follows the tradition of Newroz.

In the persona of Comrade Mazlum Doğan, a.k.a the Contemporary Kawa, who gave this day a deeper meaning with the Newroz fire in his body, we commemorate all our heroic martyrs with gratitude. And we reiterate once again that we will keep the memories of our martyrs alive in the struggle for "Free Reber Apo (Ocalan), Free Kurdistan" as the guardian of the flag of victory which our martyrs handed over to us.

It is known that the genocidal Turkish state has been developing attacks on all levels against our people's freedom struggle for years. Turkish state is trying to gain superiority over our struggle with the political, military, and technical support of regional and international powers by using their country's geo-strategic position.

The fascist AKP-MHP regime is and has been aiming to isolate our people and our movement from the world. It wants to deprive our people of their friends. However, it is also seen that the colonialist genocidal Turkish state has not been able to achieve the desired result against the just cause of our people on this issue, as in all other issues.

The UCAVs (Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) -which genocidal Turkish state has managed to produce with the support of some international powers- are the tools that Turkey has most relied on, in the total war against our movement.

The genocidal AKP-MHP regime, launched attacks against the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla and our people based on these UCAVs. And Turkish state believed that they would achieve a definite result against our struggle with this weapon.

The Turkish state has carried out dozens of attacks against our innocent people in various parts of our country, especially in South Kurdistan and Rojava, and massacred hundreds. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla foiled fascism's plan to invade South Kurdistan with the great resistance it showed on the basis of the Newroz spirit and developed new tactics against the attacks of the genocidal Turkish state.

In addition, despite all the efforts of the enemy (Turkish state) to isolate our people in the international arena, the Kurdish people's efforts matched the Turkish state's efforts and our people were able to provide the missile system necessary for this war. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has had the opportunity and ability to neutralize the UCAVs that the Turkish state and its army rely on, propagandize the abilities of it everywhere, try to change the balance of war based on it, and carry out assassinations and massacres with it in Kurdistan every day.

Since February 13, 2023, a total of 15 UAVs of various types have been shot down by our forces. The list of the incidents are as follows:

1. BAYRAKTAR TB2 over Garê on February 13, 2023
2. BAYRAKTAR TB2 over Garê on February 18, 2023
3. On June 8, 2023, ANKA over Qandil
4. BAYRAKTAR TB2 over Qandil on June 14, 2023
5. On June 21, 2023, ANKA over Garê
6. AKSUNGUR over Qandil on June 22, 2023
7. On July 5, 2023, AKINCI over Garê
8. BAYRAKTAR TB2 over Garê on July 8, 2023
9. ANKA over Qandil on July 17, 2023
10. On July 30, 2023, AKINCI over Qandil
11. On August 15, 2023, ANKA over Western Zap
12. BAYRAKTAR TB2 over Zap / Shikefta Birîndara on November 5, 2023

13. On November 6, 2023, AKSUNGUR over Western Zap
14. On December 28, 2023, BAYRAKTAR TB2 over Western Zap.
15. On March 1, 2024, ANKA type armed and tactical unmanned aerial vehicle was destroyed by our forces over Zap / Chiyareh.

Except a few cases, the incidents involving downing of UCAVs were recorded and these footages clearly show that the enemy vehicles were shot down. The footages and documents of the relevant incidents will be served to the public opinion by HPG-BIM.

The new process that has started with Newroz is a milestone on the way to freedom of the Kurdish people and a culmination of the campaign for our Leader Apo's freedom and the solution to the Kurdish issue.

On this basis, Newroz 2024 will also be the beginning of a new process. In this historical process, in which our people's struggle for freedom will be carried on at a higher level, the HPG will play its role and will show its ability to successfully fulfill the tasks of the times in accordance with the spirit of the times and will be locked to the aim of liberation of Leader Apo.

We have never been more committed and determined to play a role against all forces which seek to threaten the friendship and freedom of the peoples. Today, with proven tactical and technical abilities, our potential to fight with high performance and our determination to secure victory have become much stronger.

As we share good news for Newroz, we celebrate the Newroz of 2024 to all our patriotic people, to our comrades resisting in prisons, mountains of Kurdistan and all areas of struggle, and we wish everyone great success in the historic march to victory and the liberation of Leader Apo and Kurdistan.

Long live Newroz, the Day of Resistance of Oppressed Peoples!

Long Live Newroz to Our Martyrs Who Enlighten Our Path!

Long Live the Revolutionary People's War!

Long Live the Newroz Party PKK!

Bijî Serok Apo!

March 20, 2024

PEOPLE'S DEFENSE CENTER HEADQUARTERS COMMAND”

YCWK Amed units destroy a base station

ANF | AMED | 20 MARCH 2024

The Patriotic Youth Movement of Kurdistan (YCWK) reported that Amed units targeted and destroyed a base station.

Making a written statement on Wednesday, YCWK said, “Within the scope of the ‘Let’s Integrate with the Struggle, Let’s Liberate with Leader Öcalan’ move, an action was organised by our units on 15 March at 01:10 against the enemy’s base station on the Amed / Bismil road route. The base station was destroyed as a result of the action.”

“We want it to be known that everything belonging to the colonialist powers in Kurdistan will be in our target and at the same time we will respond harshly to the collaborators,” the statement said.

— ★ —

Attack in Manbij claims the lives of two children

ANF | MANBIJ | 21 MARCH 2024

An attack in Manbij in the autonomous region of North and East Syria on Wednesday killed a ten-year-old boy instantly and injured twelve other people aged between twelve and fifty, some of them seriously. According to hospital sources, a twelve-year-old boy has today succumbed to the serious injuries he sustained in the attack.

The attack with an explosive device, which was attached to the vehicle of a traffic police employee in the city centre of Manbij, occurred yesterday shortly before the breaking of the fast in the central neighborhood of Al-Sarb, when many people were doing their Ramadan shopping. Rescue workers rushed to the scene and retrieved the victims, including two women and three members of the Internal Security Forces (Asayîş), to various hospitals. Six of the injured have since been discharged. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

— ★ —

HPG: 41 Turkish soldiers killed

ANF | BEHDINAN | 22 MARCH 2024

According to the press center of the People’s Defense Forces (HPG), the guerrillas attacked three military bases of the Turkish army in South Kurdistan on 19 March.

According to the information, 41 Turkish soldiers were killed during the operation and various weapons and military accessories were destroyed or confiscated.

The guerrilla fighters Ekin and Canşêr fell as martyrs. The operation took place in the Girê Amêdî resistance area in the western Zap region and was named after fallen fighters Ciwan and Andok, who died in a guerrilla operation in the same area last November. The HPG consider the operation a great success.

Regarding the course of the operation, the HPG reported that special tactics and technology were used and that the guerrillas attacked Turkish military camps in the areas of Şehîd Cemre, Şehîd Cesur and Şehîd Pirdoğan with several attack units at the same time. A rocket launcher confiscated from the guerrillas while storming an enemy position was fired at a Turkish army tank. When the army positioned several armored vehicles to defend itself, they were forced to retreat by targeted fire.

A total of 41 soldiers were killed, and eleven soldiers were wounded. The guerrillas seized a B7 rocket launcher, a BKC semi-automatic weapon including ammunition, binoculars, a laser pointer, two thermal batteries with adapters, two cameras and other military accessories.

Several weapons, including an MPT-55, as well as seven cameras, 12 surveillance cameras, eight projectors, seven emplacements, three containers, two tents and a radar were destroyed in the operation, the HPG said.

More detailed information about the identity of martyrs Ekin and Canşêr will be published at a later date.

— ★ —

Femicide

Emine Şenyaşar: There is no such thing as a court

ANF | ANKARA | 19 MARCH 2024

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

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

The Justice Vigil that Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit (Urfa DEM Party MP) started in front of the Turkish Ministry of Justice continues on its 55th day.

Emine Şenyaşar, who came to the Ministry with a sign saying “Justice”, protested the continued detention of her son Fadil Şenyaşar and said that she would continue her action until her son was released and asked all mothers to support her.

Emine Şenyaşar said that she went to Malatya for the trial and added: “There is no such thing as a court. They bring a different judge and prosecutor at every hearing. While my son is in prison, those who committed the crime are walking around outside. I will continue to be here until my son is released.”

— ★ —

Emine Şenyaşar: Where should I go for justice?

ANF | ANKARA | 21 MARCH 2024

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

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

The Justice Vigil that Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit (Urfa DEM Party MP) started in front of the Turkish Ministry of Justice continues on its 57th day.

Addressing the Minister of Justice in front of the Ministry, Şenyaşar said: “Why is he hiding? Is justice hidden? Where are my children? Can people be killed in a hospital?”

Şenyaşar then said that her children were killed and added that she had been waiting for justice for 6 years. She said that those who killed her children are free while her son is still in prison and added: “As if my pain was not enough, they put my son in prison too. Where should I go for justice?”

— ★ —

KJK calls on women to lead the struggle against Turkish occupation

ANF | QANDIL | 21 MARCH 2024

Newroz celebration in Qandil started at 12.00 local time. Thousands of people attended the celebration organised under the slogan “Freedom for Leader Öcalan, a Political Solution to the Kurdish Question”.

A written message from Tevgera Azadî (Freedom Movement in South Kurdistan) was read during the celebration. Tevgera Azadi Co-Chairperson Tara Hussein read the message and made the following call: “As Tevgera Azadi, we call on all Kurdish parties and organisations to develop dialogue among themselves and not to miss this historic opportunity. Let's put aside all the contradictions between us. Historic days await our people. We must not miss this opportunity, and we must not serve those who occupy Kurdistan.”

The Kurdistan Women's Community (KJK) also sent a message to the enthusiastic Newroz celebration in Qandil. In its message, KJK called on all women of Kurdistan to lead the struggle against the occupation, stating the following:

“Newroz is the herald of light against darkness and the victory of the oppressed against oppression. We celebrate the Newroz Festival of our people in Kurdistan and abroad and all oppressed peoples. We respectfully and gratefully commemorate Zekiye Alkan, Mazlum Doğan, Rewşan, Bêrivan and Ronahi and all the martyrs of freedom who made their bodies Newroz with fire.

During the 8 March celebrations in the four parts of Kurdistan, we witnessed together the cry and call against all kinds of violence, killing, occupation and betrayal. Women heralded Newroz with their enthusiasm and successful actions on 8 March. Women in South Kurdistan in particular should lead the way against all occupation plans of the occupying Turkish state.

We call on all women; let us fulfill our responsibilities against occupation and the treacherous line and raise the women's struggle for national unity together.”

— ★ —

Visitor entrance gate of the Ministry of Justice closed to Emine Şenyavaşar

ANF | ANKARA | 22 MARCH 2024

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

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

The Justice Vigil that Emine Şenyavaşar and her son Ferit (Urfa DEM Party MP) started in front of the Turkish Ministry of Justice continues on its 57th day.

There was a sign on the visitor entrance gate of the Ministry of Justice, which read: “May God test with the same pain whoever has been preventing Emine Şenyavaşar from reaching justice for 5 years.”

It was noteworthy that the visitor entrance gate of the Ministry of Justice was closed after Emine Şenyaşar came to the area. Reacting to the closing of the door, Ferit Şenyaşar said: “When I went to pick up the chair used by my mother to sit in front of the ministry, I was told that it would not be given according to the new chief’s order. Thereupon, I entered the ministry door and took the chair. As soon as I took the chair and went out, the door of the ministry - that up until then had always remained open - was closed by the officials.”

— ★ —

Local Elections in Turkey

Several DEM Party members detained in Amed and Istanbul

ANF | 19 MARCH 2024

In İstanbul, DEM Party Gaziosmanpaşa District Organisation Executive Doğu Yılmaz and party member Süleyman Turgut were detained and taken to the Provincial Security Directorate.

In Amed (Diyarbakır), many young people, including DEM Party Youth Assembly members, were taken into custody. The reasons for the detentions were not disclosed.

An investigation conducted by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office was cited as the reason for the house raids.

While the Turkish police looted the belongings in the houses, it is reported that the number of detentions may increase.

Detainees were subjected to arbitrary and systematic restrictions on lawyers and access to files.

— ★ —

Former mayor of Artuklu taken into custody

ANF | MARDIN | 20 MARCH 2024

Sevinç Bozan, former co-mayor of Artuklu Municipality in Mardin (Mêrdî), was taken into custody at the Mardin Courthouse where she had gone to give a statement.

On Tuesday, Bozan was called to testify within the scope of an investigation launched against her for the activities organized by the Free Women’s Movement - Tevgera Jinên Azad (TJA) she had attended.

Bozan was waiting for her statement to be taken at the courthouse when she was taken into custody and taken to Mardin Provincial Gendarmerie Command. She was told her statement would be taken there today.

— ★ —

Human Rights Violations

Police take five people into custody in Mersin

ANF | MERSIN | 16 MARCH 2024

House raids were carried out by Turkish police in Mersin on Saturday morning.

Following the searches in the houses, Çukurova Association for Assistance with Detainees and Convict Families (Çukurova TUAY-DER) co-chair Ergin Altuntaş, Nurettin Özdemir, Hava Tekin Ölmez, Selahattin Baran and a person, whose name has not been established, were taken into custody.

The five people arrested were taken to Mersin Police Department.

— ★ —

New wave of political arrests in various cities

ANF | 18 MARCH 2024

House raids were carried out early on Monday morning in Şirnak city center and Cizre (Cizîr), Idil (Hezex), Silopi (Silopiya) and Kumçatı (Dergûl).

Among those taken into custody are Ayşegül Ceylan, Yakup Durak, Reşit Umut Çağlı, Agit Şerifoğlu, Ayşe Soysal, Rojhat Karaviş and one person, whose name has not been learned. Those detained were taken to Şirnak Police Department. It was stated that the number of detentions may increase.

Izmir

Following Sunday's Newroz celebrations, 7 people, including two children, were taken into custody.

19 people, including Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Çiğli co-chair Leyla Tufan, were taken into custody in house raids carried out on Monday morning.

The two children taken into custody were kept at the Children's Branch Directorate, while the other children were taken to the Izmir Police Department. According to the information provided by lawyers, the number of detentions may increase.

Batman

5 people were detained during house raids in the city. Yusuf İslam Demir, Halil Ölmez, Zeynep Aslan, Ayşe Akıncı and Mahsum İnci, who were taken into custody on the allegation of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization", were taken to Batman Provincial Police Department.

— ★ —

AKP members attempt to attack journalist Güldem

ANF | BATMAN | 19 MARCH 2024

Members of AKP youth branches attempted to attack journalist Bilal Güldem, who was accompanying his father who was being treated at Batman State Hospital, inside the hospital.

Making a statement about the situation, Güldem shared the following: "While I was taking care of my father, AKP members attempted to attack me! An attempt was made to attack me because I did not take the *ifrar* meal from the AKP Batman Youth Branch at Batman Regional State Hospital. Although they were forbidden to enter the hospital, AKP young members went directly to the tomography department and tried to distribute food. At that time, we were taking my father's CT scan. After the first attack, they attempted to attack for the second time. The staff did not allow it. Later, with the intervention of hospital security, the AKP members were taken out of the hospital."

— ★ —

Four ESP members taken into custody

ANF | İZMİR | 19 MARCH 2024

Members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) were taken into custody during police raids in different provinces, including Izmir, on Tuesday morning.

It was reported that Hıdır Ali Kılıç and Sinem Çelebi were taken into custody during the raids in Izmir, Birkan Polat in Istanbul, and Ebru Yiğit in Eskişehir. The reason for the detention was not disclosed.

It was learned that those detained would be taken to Izmir Provincial Police Department.

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YPJ Info releases report about Turkish crimes and violations in Afrin

ANF | 20 MARCH 2024

The YPJ-Info (Women's Defense Units) released a detailed report on Turkish crimes and violations in the region of Afrin. The publication coincides with the sixth anniversary of the Turkish occupation of the region.

The report said: "The Turkish occupation military forces, along with armed groups loyal to them, launched the so-called *Olive Branch* operation in the Afrin region in January 2018. This operation saw the use of various air and ground weapons, including internationally prohibited ones, resulting in severe consequences for the Kurdish community and other peoples in the area. Innocent civilians, including many children, women, and the elderly, suffered greatly, with many killed or wounded. The operation also led to a mass forced displacement of the indigenous population, with many ending up in displacement areas in the Tal Rifaat camps (Al-Shahba) and others moving to different Syrian regions."

The remaining Kurds in Afrin, said the report, "do not exceed 193,000. They are facing increasing chaos and danger while the occupier prepared the ground for crimes to proliferate. These crimes include random murder and kidnapping in secret detention centers, theft, looting, armed robbery, imposing royalties and ransom, cutting down and burning trees, and seizing public and private property by thieves and gangs. Militia members and armed settlers are also promoting drugs and prostitution, while fighting the Kurds for a living due to the lack of job opportunities and the high prices of basic food. Their intention is to force the Kurds to leave and abandon their property to the armed occupiers and settlers."

The report added: "Many human rights violations were perpetrated against the indigenous Kurdish population in a calculated fashion, such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced displacement. In an effort to alter the demographics of the region, Turkish and Arab population have been settled in the area, while cultural and historical sites have been destroyed. Many individuals, including children, lost their lives. Countless women were subjected to rape. Gangs and mercenaries unlawfully took over thousands of properties and homes from the native inhabitants of Afrin. The crimes committed were numerous and varied, including killing, detention, forced disappearance, torture, seizure of public and private property, and sexual violence in all forms.

Furthermore, there was destruction of archaeological sites, warehouses, and religious shrines used by various religions. Additionally, multiple cemeteries were bulldozed, with one being converted into a livestock market. The ongoing brutal acts in Afrin today, carried out by mercenary groups and factions directly linked to the Turkish state, are in clear violation of international human rights standards. These groups continue to attack civilians, resulting in deaths, kidnappings, imprisonment, torture, theft, robbery, and brutalization. The original inhabitants of Afrin who still reside there are facing these atrocities on a daily basis."

The report continued: "The displacement of people from Afrin has been further exacerbated by violations and crimes, particularly in the Tal Rifaat area, its camps, and neighboring villages. These areas have been

the site of conflicts and wars, and have fallen under the control of armed factions and ISIS. As a result, much of the infrastructure, facilities, and homes have been destroyed, rendering them uninhabitable. Despite this, displaced Afrin refugees still live in these areas, which continue to be targeted.”

Almost daily, said the report, “the Syrian National Army has been responsible for numerous massacres resulting in the deaths and injuries of dozens of civilians. One such tragic event took place in Tal Rifaat on 12/2/2019, when ten people, including eight children, lost their lives and sixteen others were wounded. Another episode was the Aqiba massacre, where an entire family of Afrin refugees, consisting of three individuals, fell victim – including an 11-year-old girl. Sadly, these horrors were compounded by a devastating earthquake that struck several cities in Syria and Turkey, most notably Jindires on Monday the 6th of February 2023.

This earthquake resulted in hundreds of fatalities, injuries, and widespread destruction of buildings while inhabitants were inside. To add to the Kurdish residents’ woes, they faced mistreatment at the hands of the factions of the “Syrian National Army” supported by Turkey and the settlers in the area, who even resorted to stealing aid meant for the victims. Humanitarian aid, provided by charitable organizations and societies, was being seized by force and Kurdish citizens were being deprived of this aid under the watchful eye of Turkish state authorities.

Despite the entry of delegations and international organizations into the region (World Health, UNICEF and others), the situation has not improved but rather worsened. Most of the residents of the Jindires area have set up tents in the ruins of their destroyed homes out of fear of theft. An example of this is a Kurdish family who were victims of a massacre by members of the National Army factions on 3/20/2023. Four members of the family were killed in cold blood because one of their sons lit the Newroz fire, a symbol of a holiday celebrated by many peoples around the world. This heinous crime happened in front of the entire world, with no accountability for the perpetrators.”

The report listed the main crimes carried out by Turkey as follows:

“Demographic change; Spreading extremist religious thought in the name of Islam; Stealing, robbing, plundering, confiscating belongings, armed theft, and assault; Cutting and burning fruit and forest trees; Damaging archaeological sites; Kidnapping; Settlements; Bombings and attacks.”

Statistics of violations from the beginning of the occupation until 3/15/2024

- 1- Kidnapping: More than 9,186 people were kidnapped, including more than 1,000 women
- 2- Murder: More than 693 people were killed, including 97 people under torture and 104 women, including 11 cases of suicide and 74 cases of sexual assault.
- 3- Trees: Cutting down more than 400 thousand fruit and forest trees, burning more than 15 thousand fruit trees, burning thousands of forest trees, and burning more than a third of the area allocated for agriculture.
- 4- Settlements: Building more than 30 settlements and camps in the areas of Afrin

5- Antiquities: exhuming and destroying more than 75 archaeological mounds, more than 59 sites, more than 28 religious shrines, and exhuming graves.

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Two more people kidnapped in Afrin

ANF | 20 MARCH 2024

According to information received from local sources, the Turkish state kidnapped a person named Misteafa Reşid in Afrin city and a young man named Hisên El Nesîrî from Jindirês district on Tuesday. The fate of the kidnapped people is unknown.

On 11 March, 5 people were kidnapped by gangs, one from Aleppo and 4 from Jindires.

At least 16 people were kidnapped in the week between March 1-7.

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Germany seeks to extradite Kurdish refugee to Turkey

ANF | STUTTGARTH | 22 MARCH 2024

The German state's pressure on Kurdish refugees continues. Sekvan Tangüner, who was forced to seek asylum in Germany in 2019 due to ongoing investigations in Turkey, is wanted to be extradited.

Tangüner, who faces a warrant for his arrest in Turkey, was detained by Bavarian police the previous night. Having arrived in Germany in 2019, Tangüner had to go to Switzerland because his asylum request was not accepted. His asylum request was also rejected in Switzerland, and he was returned to Germany in 2023.

The family of Tangüner called for solidarity against the intended extradition of their son.

Tangüner's family stated that Sekvan had a finalised sentence in Turkey and said: "Sekvan was imprisoned in Turkey for three and a half years and then released with a signature condition. He came to Germany in 2019 because of his prison sentence and ongoing investigations. But his asylum request was rejected. The previous night, the Bavarian police detained Sekvan and put him in prison. Sekvan was brought to court in Bavaria today and was told that he would be extradited until 2 May. However, they might extradite Sekvan to Turkey without waiting for this deadline. Sekvan faces a warrant for his arrest in Turkey."

Tangüner's family called on the German state to abandon the extradition decision.

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Interview

Karayılan: Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla proved its invincibility

ANF | BEHDINAN | 16 MARCH 2024

The PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) Executive Committee Member Murat Karayılan spoke to ANF about the latest developments on the agenda.

The second part of Karayılan's comments to ANF on the agenda are as follows:

There has been a very important war in Kurdistan in the last 9 years. In the last 3 years, this war has grown even more. This war was fought not only in the Medya Defence Zones or on the Bashûr (Southern Kurdistan) line, but also in Bakur (Northern Iraq). For example, in 2023, the toughest war was fought in Bakur. But Bakur is not on the agenda of the press. The Turkish state does not announce it, and we do not hear about it in time. We hear about it a month or two later. Then that news is off the agenda. But in all the provinces of Bakur, from Dersim to Gever, from Gever to Mardin, Garzan, Serhat, Amed and Botan, a very tough war was waged. I commemorate all Bakur resistance fighters in the person of comrades Leyla Sorxwîn, Yaşar, Axîn Muş, Dilgeş Gûzereş, Canşêr Mako, Hêjar Zozan, Redûr Sîser. All these martyrdoms took place in 2023.

As is known, there has been a very tough war in Southern Kurdistan for 3 years. There is an important resistance on the Zap, Avaşîn Metîna line. After this war and resistance, the development of the move was undoubtedly very important. As is known, the move started with the action in Ankara on 1 October, by our self-sacrificing comrades Rojhat and Erdal. Then the move was continued in November. In this move, comrades Andok, Ciwan, Botan and Egît Kobanê were martyred. Again, in December, a move was led by comrades Welat, Helmet, Hüseyin and Memyan and these comrades were martyred. The move in January was led by comrades Serxwebûn and Rizgar. The hero of the move in February was the valuable martyr comrade Şervan Varto. I commemorate all these martyred comrades with respect and honour. We will be the followers of their memories. They represented a sacrificial spirit. They developed a move. We had a total of 13 martyrs in this move. I don't need to tell you the enemy's losses, they are in the hundreds. As we have explained before, they suffered a lot of losses, a number of arms and weapons were captured. The important thing is that the mill of the Turks was burnt (Aşê Romê hate şewitandin). They burnt many of our villages and regions. But the last two actions in January and February, in particular, were carried out in this style.

Undoubtedly, the actions in recent months have a message. They have a purpose. It is not only about killing the enemy; these actions have shown the performance of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla. In other words, the guerrilla showed everyone how expertly it acts, how creatively and in a coordinated manner, how it develops actions on the basis of conquest, with what kind of spirit, with what kind of style, how much control it has over the technique. Both friend and foe saw the performance of the guerrilla. At the same time, the guerrilla also revealed the truth about the mercenaries and hired soldiers of the Turkish

state. It was also clear how they ended up when they entered the war. Most importantly, the Turkish state has been giving us life expectancy for years. It always says 1 year left. The last time, in 2016, there was someone called Süleyman Soylu; he was saying that there would be no more PKK in April 2017. Unfortunately, we see that some Kurdish organisations also believe this. However, when we look at history, since our foundation, the Turkish state has always given us 1 year to live. But this struggle has been going on for all these years. This is a people's struggle, it is based on a principle, it has a will and a power. In these last years, they have increased the psychological warfare even more.

These actions destroyed the psychological warfare propaganda of the fascist AKP-MHP regime and exposed their lies. If the guerrilla wants, it can carry out actions in the centre of Ankara, in the most sensitive place, if it wants, it can set fire to military bases and liquidate them. Such a specialised fighting force can conquer everywhere, whichever city it goes to, wherever it targets, it hits and gets results. This fact has been revealed. We have faith in our strength. Especially in the last years, our power has reached a high level. Both specialisation and professionalism have been strengthened, and the Apoist fedayeen spirit has risen. In these years, the Apoist sacrificial spirit has developed in male and female comrades. Each of them can carry out actions like Rojhat and Erdal. The rise in the spirit of sacrifice, the development of specialisation, technical mastery and tactical creativity further strengthen the performance of our forces. Today we are even more conscious about how to get results and with which doctrine we can achieve success.

The guerrilla proved its invincibility in the new period as well

Our war doctrine has become clearer. How will we act against such a period when the sky turns into state terror? How will we use human will, human creativity against technology? How will we develop agile, flexible tactics and how and in what style will we use technology against them? What kind of method will we use in the sky, underground and on land? The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has reached a level in these matters. Therefore, today, more than ever, we have faith in success. With these methods, on the basis of this doctrine, we will achieve results. Of course, more creativity must be developed. We must also follow the line correctly. It has become clear how the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla will defend free areas in the 21st century, how it will act against the technology of the period, how it will be invincible if we are clear, sharp and dominant in the line, and if we can put it into practice moment by moment. On this basis, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla proved its invincibility in the new period as well. It showed how it is an invincible force against the attacks of the Turkish state that have been going on for years. Especially when they procured unmanned aerial vehicles, they said that the PKK had one year to live. They believed that they would get results with the technique and made propaganda on this basis. But in recent years, the guerrilla has produced solutions and achieved results even in the face of new techniques. On this basis, we have acted more decisively. We know what our goal is and we will achieve it.

They first want to liquidate the PKK and then eliminate the Kurdish gains

As it is known, the current Turkish state regime is made up of an alliance. This alliance consisting of AKP, MHP and the racist Ergenekon has a purpose. What is this aim? It sees the development of the Kurdish people in the Middle East as a danger for itself and wants to eliminate this danger. For this purpose, they first want to liquidate the PKK, and then they want to eliminate the gains of the Kurdish people, that is, the existing status. For this, they have a secret Misak-ı Milli [establishing the borders of the Ottoman National Pact] project based on occupation. The alliance was formed on this basis, and they have been fighting against us for 9 years. In fact, they wanted to reach the result faster, but they failed. Finally, they

wanted to accomplish a result in 2023 and declare their victory. Because the year 2023 was the centenary of the foundation of the Turkish state, as well as the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne. Therefore, they wanted to declare their victory, but they failed. They thought that they would occupy Zap and its surroundings in three months and capture all the Medya Defense Zones, but they are still around Zap for three years, they are stuck. They still haven't given up on this, they want to make a new plan again. Because Turkey's system was also very weakened in this war. It has become very weak, especially in economic terms. Because they always invest their income in this war.

Likewise, they mobilise politics, diplomacy and everything else against the struggle of the Kurdish people. They always take an extraordinary approach. That's why they want to end it as soon as possible. They cannot prolong it. But there is one thing; they have realised very well that they cannot cope with the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla alone. In February 2021, they first went to Baghdad with a large delegation, then to Hewlêr (Erbil). At that time, they told the Baghdad and Hewlêr administrations that 'it will be good if you join us, but if not, we can do it ourselves. Our technology and our soldiers are enough to expel the PKK from Garê and to clear all of these areas. But you should only support us in the field of intelligence and approve us politically, be with us.' And they said OK. Anyway, the soldiers who came to Garê at that time came from Bashiqa, not from Turkey. This shows that they received the approval of both Baghdad and Hewlêr administrations.

The Turkish state believed that it could defeat us by itself, but after 3 years of war it realised that it cannot succeed alone. That is why it is looking for allies to fight with it against the guerrilla, against the PKK. It wants more support from NATO, it wants it to put its weight on Rojava and other places, it wants more weapons. At the same time, it wants troops from Iraq to join, saying 'let's form a joint movement.' It also wants the KDP to be directly involved in the war. This is also the reason for their recent visit. There was a traffic. They also travelled to America and discussed the results among themselves. Most probably, they may come to Baghdad and Hewlêr with bigger delegations within this month and repeat their demands. Because they do not seem to have achieved their goals so far. That is why they want to insist. According to the news in the press, military and intelligence delegations held a meeting to discuss the borders. Turkey is focusing its attention on talks in order to get some other powers to fight against us by directly siding with them. This is the reason for the meeting traffic.

KDP does not refuse to participate in the war

Currently, many talks are taking place between the KDP and the Turkish state. But the content of the talks is mostly not disclosed by the KDP, it is kept secret. But the Turkish state makes statements about this from time to time. On the other hand, we also have intelligence. We receive information about what is being discussed. According to the information we have received, KDP does not refuse to participate in the war, but it says that it should not only be it, but also the PUK or Iraq. It demands this from Turkey. Obviously, KDP does not want to participate in the war under its own name, it wants to participate either on behalf of the regional government or on behalf of the Iraqi government, under the Iraqi flag. When the Turkish state wanted to meet with the PUK and the PUK rejected this demand, Hakan Fidan, Yaşar Güler and later Erdoğan himself threatened the PUK. Most recently, PUK President Bafil Talabani also expressed his attitude against these threats.

PUK's national stance will make it stronger

I personally do not know Kek Bafil [Talabani], I have not seen him. I have seen Mam Celal [Talabani] a lot, I can say we were friends, but I have never seen Bafil. But I read and listened to his statements in the press. It was very natural, very clear, very normal and national. What does he say in his statement? He says 'Why should we fight a Kurdish party? We do not fight any Kurdish party' Is there anything more natural than that? Every Kurd, every Kurdish party should say this. The PUK President's statements against these threats and pressures will undoubtedly raise the PUK. Because this is a stance, it has a national aspect. This stance will further strengthen the PUK. In the past, Mr Celal Talabani had also said, 'We would not give even one of our cats to Turkey'. Bafil Talabani is following in his footsteps. This is a national stance. It has nothing to do with us. This is how he enlightens his politics. Anyway, every Kurd should act like this.

KDP instructed its forces to prepare themselves until the end of March

Another remarkable situation is that the officials of the Turkish state have recently been saying 'we agree with the KDP'. In other words, they say that 'the KDP will cooperate with us more from now on.' One wonders what further co-operation means. They are sharing intelligence. This is called spying. In the past, only the Parastin organisation used to do it, but in the last two years they have expanded the framework. Asayish (Local Security Forces) also does it, as well as special forces like Zêrevan. When our comrades pass through a place, either when they see it on their cameras or when someone hears about it, direct air strikes by the Turkish state follow. We witness such things every day. Let no one say that we are slandering them, this is not slander. If anyone does not believe, let him/her stay with us for a day or two and he/she will see for himself/herself. There are roadblocks, embargoes, siege attempts. Those who bring us two sacks of flour are thrown into prison. We know how many Kurds from that region are in the prisons of Duhok and Hewlêr, and we know about those arrested in Behdînan. On the other hand, when they see one of our friends on the road, they pick him up. Of course, they have the right to detain him if he has no identity card with him, but we see that they torture him. It is shameful to torture each other among Kurdish parties. You may be against it, but the person you detain is a politician. You can arrest them for violating your laws, but why torture them?

We know that our arrested friends are currently under torture in KDP prisons. During the interrogation, they ask questions within the scope of intelligence, such as 'where is Cemal's location, where is Cuma's location, how many of you are there?' They want to get information. Why is this so? Mele Mustafa Barzani has a place in Kurdish history. Mele Mustafa Barzani has an important saying such as 'whoever spies for the enemy, whoever takes the enemy's weapons is a Cahş (traitor). So how do those who say they are the descendants of Mele Mustafa Barzani do this? Isn't it a shame? It is a shame; it should not be done.

It should be known that I know a lot about the KDP, but I won't say it. There are some things that if we say them, all the ties between us will be broken. I don't want the ties broken completely, that's why I don't say everything. Things about us, the projects they have realised, the projects they haven't realised, we know them all, we have information. But I do not understand what is beyond this. The Turkish state says that they will cooperate more from now on, but what is beyond cooperation would be a war. We have already received information; they have instructed their forces to prepare themselves until the end of March. This is not a good thing.

In the 21st century, an intra-Kurdish war is a great shame

I want our people to know this, especially our honourable people of Behdînan, as everything is happening in front of their eyes. We are sacrificial people. The young women and young men of the Kurdish people do not receive any salary or money, we sacrifice ourselves for the holy cause, for the defence of Kurdistan's land. We are such people and we do not want an intra-Kurdish war. We are trained to fight against the enemy, and we act in this way. Therefore, let the people of Behdînan, Bashûr and all Kurdistan know that we do not want a civil war. Although so much has happened, we are protecting ourselves from a civil war. Believe me; if we hadn't warned our comrades every day, if we hadn't constantly prevented things, who knows how many times we would have ended up in a civil war by now. If we kill each other as Kurdish people in the 21st century, this will be reactionism, a great shame for us, a shame for Kurdish politics. The world would laugh at us. They would say, 'Look, what the Turks say is true, the Turks say these are not a nation, but tribes and they have fallen against each other for their own interests.' That's why we don't want it to come to that stage.

KDP officials should approach strategically, not tactically

Another point is that the Turkish state wants this. The Turkish state wants the KDP and the PKK to be in a conflict. We know the Turkish officials; they are the same age as us, we went to school with some of them, we have followed some of them closely, we have known them for years, we know their psychology. They want to destroy not the PKK, but us Kurds. The PKK can have dialogue in some respects; in essence, they want to destroy all Kurds and eliminate the status of Kurds. This is their aim, nothing else. For example, they want to take Garê, and they want to achieve this with the help of the Kurds. What will happen if they take Garê? Garê is a strategic place. Below Garê is the road between Hewlêr and Duhok. Apart from that, it dominates the Mosul Plain. They want to unite it with Bashiqa anyway, because it is 30 kilometres away from Garê. In other words, it wants to gradually settle in Bashûrê Kurdistan and somehow throw itself into Kirkuk. It is already training and preparing Turkmens close to it. A few days ago, there was a fire in Hewlêr. Who claimed responsibility? Ahd-i Milli did. Everyone knows that Ahd-i Milli is a Turkmen organisation that is chauvinist, Turanist and affiliated to MÎT [Turkish intelligence service]. MÎT is training them. So, did they burn the place down without MIT's knowledge? They had already burned some places down in Kirkuk before.

The approach should be strategica but not tactical. The Turkish state, the MHP, Ergenekon and the AKP will abolish the Kurdish status. It will abolish the federation and autonomy in Bashûrê Kurdistan and Rojavayê Kurdistan. Maybe they can assign tasks to their collaborators, their own men. This is their mentality; this is their aim. They have overt and covert politics. Their covert politics are exactly like this. They want to achieve results in this way. We say that this should not be done. KDP officials should also see this. Approach a little strategically, do not approach so tactically. The 'further support' mentioned by the Turkish state means war. What will happen if they fight? I, or we as the Movement, will call on the people of Kurdistan, Kurdish friends and all Apoists. We will say, 'Apoists in every part of Kurdistan, you shall attack, too.' If there happens to be a war, it will be like this. There will be war all over Kurdistan. If KDP forces go to Metîna with the Turks and attack our comrades, if they come to Garê and do the same thing, then we will do the same. It will be beyond us thereafter. Let our people know this. Well, what will happen then? Everything will be lost. I am not threatening anyone, but I want everyone to know that we have

our sacrificial forces. We can reach anywhere. We also have technical power, we can reach everywhere, every city. We shouldn't think so badly about each other.

We call on everyone to be sensible and responsible

We especially want the Barzani family to approach this issue responsibly. Let this not happen, let this evil not happen. If this happens, then the Kurds will have no status left. This is what the Turks want. The situation is this sensitive and dangerous. That is why everyone must take responsibility. I have previously appealed to artists, intellectuals and writers. Some of them made efforts, but nothing came out. But this issue concerns everyone. It is not a matter between parties, it is a national issue. The status of the Kurds will be annihilated. Everyone is thinking about how the Middle East will be designed. What will become of Syria and Iraq? The Turkish state wants to take control before anything happens. It wants to take Iraq and Syria under its protection and achieve its Misak-ı Milli goal. They form alliances and act on this basis. We also need to form an alliance among ourselves. What we need is an alliance. Civil war means going astray, deviating from the national line, working against national unity. Therefore, we call on everyone to be sensible and responsible.

Civil war would be a disaster for the Kurds

There is a limit to everything. If they keep coming at us, if they finally blockade us and join the war together with the Turks... They are already co-operating now anyway, and beyond that would be a direct war. We want them to stop co-operating with the Turks. They should stop spying under the name of intelligence sharing. It is shameful. The mentality of ending us with Turkish techniques is not right. As the PKK, we will not disappear. We are an ideological movement, we have millions of sympathizers, thousands and tens of thousands of cadres. The PKK is not only stationed in Behdînan. The PKK is huge. What would it be like if Kurds all over Kurdistan turned against each other during a battle with the PKK? Wouldn't everything be lost then? This is why I said three years ago that this would be a disaster. I say it again; civil war would be a disaster for the Kurds. Everything would be lost. No one should say that they can save themselves, that they have this or that behind them. The greatest support is the people; we have our people behind us, we believe in our people. We will fulfil our duty with courage and determination. We will do whatever is necessary. We have nothing big to lose. But we will lose this period. We believe in ourselves in this matter; let no one worry. We have the Newroz Festival ahead of us, a national spirit develops in Newroz. Everyone should experience a national feeling. National unity must develop. What should not happen now is a war against each other. This is the issue.

Dear people, you should know that we are making efforts in this sense, but not everything depends on us. Because, as I said, our opponents are advancing further every day. They are blocking the road more and more. For example, they are monitoring the area around Sergelê with cameras. Have a conscience! We are fighting hand-to-hand with the Turkish state in Girê Amediyê, two kilometers above here. They have millions of soldiers, tanks, cannons, helicopters, airplanes, everything. They are thousands, we are hundreds, we are fighting against each other. If they were conscientious, if they were fair, they should have helped us. We are Kurds, we are defending the territory of Kurdistan, and we are the side under attack and blockade. And yet they stand up and help the Turks. Oh, conscience! We need chivalry!

I am very surprised. What kind of commanders are they that they are guarding Turkish troops? They set up ambushes in front of us to prevent us from reaching Turkish soldiers. So many of our actions have been

sabotaged by them in this way until today. We know that it is them. Our friends still do not attack them, and they turn back without carrying out actions. It is clear that without the support of the KDP, the Turkish state cannot establish a base anywhere. Even if they do, we will throw them out of there. They should stand aside and watch. This is what we want anyway. We are not asking them to help us, we are asking them to step aside and let the one who defeats the other side determine the outcome. The Turkish state already has every means possible, while we have faith, belief and love for our country. Let them come. If they can destroy us, then it's good for them. Watch them. But no, they help them. Intelligence, road-blocks... They take measures from a kilo of flour to a lemon. It can't be like this. It's not conscientious, it's not fair. When we look in the press, they talk about Kurdishness morning and night, but not in practice. These are contradictions. We hope that these contradictions will be eliminated and corrected. It is dangerous to cooperate with the Turkish state. That's why we wanted to warn everyone. We expect everyone to act responsibly.

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Karayılan: No one should dream of putting the PKK community at their service

ANF | BEHDINAN | 17 MARCH 2024

The PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) Executive Committee Member Murat Karayılan spoke to ANF about the latest developments on the agenda.

We publish the third and last part of Karayılan's comments to ANF on the agenda.

The Turkish state's strategy is to take Iraq under its tutelage

In the negotiations between the Turkish state and the Iraqi state, it seems that the Iraqi state made some promises to the Turkish state, but they did not fully agree. It seems that the Iraqi government, namely the government of Prime Minister Sudani (Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani) is not fully informed about the situation. When we look at some of their approaches and movements, there are deficiencies in terms of strategy and politics. There seems to be a lack of awareness. For example, the Turkish state has occupied many parts of Bashûrê Kurdistan. More than 50 thousand Turkish troops are on Iraqi soil. Former Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi officially asked the Turkish state to leave Bashiqa. Turkey did not leave but doubled their forces. Then it martyred an Iraqi general in the Bradost area. Despite this, Iraq is taking a soft approach. However, there should be a permanent policy.

For example, they advanced to the areas occupied by the Turkish state, to Ava Marîk on the Zap line. They advanced a few kilometers, and the Turkish state stopped them there, saying, "You cannot go one step further from here." The dispatch of troops there and the deployment of those troops in Heftanîn and Metîna under the name of border security is politically legitimizing the occupation. In other words, the Turkish state occupies the area and Iraq deploys its troops there with the permission of the Turkish state. This is an acceptance of the occupation. The Iraqi government should have told the Turkish state that 'you withdraw, and we will settle there.' But now they are going there with Turkey's permission, they are asking for per-

mission. Two weeks ago, the Turkish state stopped Iraqi soldiers on their way to Reşperex at Ava Marîk. Those soldiers are currently there as prisoners, and the Turkish state holds all the dominant places. The Turks are in a dominant position over them.

Even if they go to Reşperex and Çemço, they will be stationed in confined places, whereas the Turkish state is already positioned in the dominant areas and will not leave them. With the permission of the Turkish state, they want to go to some places under the control of the Turkish state. What does this mean? What advantage does this have for Iraq, for the Iraqi people? This is only a legitimization of the occupation of Iraq. This is wrong. The Turkish state evacuates some places that are not necessary for them and tells Iraqi troops to go there. The Turkish state uses Iraqi and KDP forces to prevent the guerrillas using those places. In other words, it makes them a reserve force for its occupation. It places them in non-essential, non-strategic areas. In my opinion, there is nothing beneficial for Iraq here. They cannot take a single step without the knowledge of the Turkish state, so they have no independence. In this way, they are in the service of the Turkish state.

The Turkish state wants to occupy the territory of Bashûrê Kurdistan and even some parts of Iraq through tricks and games. This is the aim of the Turkish state. For example, why didn't it leave Bashiqa? Now it wants to occupy Garê and connect it with Bashiqa. Once it has Garê in the back, then it will not leave Bashiqa, and it will advance even further. It could also occupy Mosul. The Turkish state's policy is a policy of occupation, but it covers it up. It uses water as a threat. It says, "I will build you a road. The road from Basra to the Turkish border will raise the Iraqi economy, I will solve the water problem." The Iraqi government says, 'all right, give me the water.' They are holding talks within this framework. They can give them water, they can build roads, but they want to trample on your will, they want to occupy your land. The strategy of the Turkish state is to take Iraq under its tutelage. This is the purpose of their talks with the KDP, their talks with some Sunni parties. It wants to trouble the government and dominate Iraq through the government. This is the purpose of talking about a common room and a joint movement. Iraq's attitude has not been clear so far. It has not said 'yes' to the Turkish state, but in my opinion, this attitude is weak. Unless they have a strategy that we don't know about, this is a blunder. It is as if they are not aware of Turkey's intentions. They want to consider it normal for the Turkish state to occupy Kurdistan's territory. This is not right. I hope that the Iraqi state and the Iraqi government will realize Turkey's policy on these issues and take a stand against this policy. There are some approaches in this way. We hope that these efforts will bear fruit and they will not fall for the Turkish state's game.

No one should dream of putting the PKK community at their service

NATO has been supporting the Turkish state since the day we were founded. Sometimes there are crises and disputes between them, but NATO has always supported the Turkish state's attacks against us. The Turkish state is now relying on NATO's support. Turkey has technical equipment, for example, armed reconnaissance drones, which Turkey says it made itself. This is true, but when we look at the parts, they were all bought from NATO countries. They were bought from Canada, the UK, Germany, Italy, the US, and some parts were bought from Ukraine. There are even some from China. In other words, Turkey buys all the sensitive parts from abroad and builds an airplane.

This is happening with the support of NATO Gladio. NATO does not want its second largest army to be defeated by the guerrilla. That's why it gives support in general terms. But we do not know the details of its practical support. But we know that it exists. For example, this spring they have traveled to Iraq, to

Hewlêr (Erbil), but before that they went to America. And it was the MÎT (Turkish intelligence service) involved in these visits, those who are related to the war. It is obvious that NATO approves the cooperation between the Turkish state and the KDP. If it didn't, it would have been difficult. But there is also this: if the KDP did not cooperate with the Turkish state, maybe NATO would not support Turkey so much against the Kurds. But when the KDP cooperates, it acts like support against the PKK. That's why it continues its support.

NATO countries, especially America, should know that we have never done anything against them. Our cause is a national cause; we demand the natural rights of the Kurdish people, democracy and freedom. We set out for this. They should not stand against the cause of the Kurdish people. The Turkish state is terrorizing the Kurdish people, using all kinds of violence and chemical weapons. NATO turns a blind eye to this, and the Turkish state takes courage from this and does these things. NATO should not do this. No one should dream that they can weaken the PKK in the mountains, take it out of the equation, cooperate with the Kurds of Rojava, the Kurds of Rojhilat, and put the PKK community at their service. Obviously, there are those who have such dreams, that is. They think that they can soften the PKK's creations and put them at their service by defeating the PKK's center. These are very dangerous plans. No one should think of such a thing because it is not possible. Every Apoist can become a militant if required, and these forces should know this.

Look, in response to the conspiracy against Rêber Apo (Leader Abdullah Öcalan), millions of people are acting in the line of Rêber Apo and shouting on the streets and in Newroz areas for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo today. Let them hear this. They should not stand against a people. This is wrong. Their politics also paves the way for an intra-Kurdish war. In this sense, they are enemies of the Kurdish people. With this policy, they want a second Lausanne. They should give up this politics. This is a secret politics pursued against the Kurds. It is not that we do not understand this. The Kurdish people understand this. Set good Kurds and bad Kurds against each other and realize your interests. This cannot happen, the time for this has passed. That's why they should revise their wrong approach, consider the demands of the Kurdish people, not their hegemonic interests, and produce policies accordingly. When you confront the biggest movement supported by millions of people, you will earn the enmity of the Kurdish people. That's why we expect these states to abandon their self-interested policies that are far from democracy and freedom and to adopt a more correct policy.

2024 Newroz is the beginning of a very important and strategic year for us. We believe that this year the struggle for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo and the freedom of Kurdistan will further develop. The opportunities and possibilities available today pave the way for success. We welcome this month and Newroz with great success. With this expectation and hope, I once again congratulate our people and the peoples of the region on Newroz and wish everyone success.

Karayılan: We have faith in ourselves and our people, and we will prevail

ANF | 21 MARCH 2024

Murat Karayılan, central commander of the People's Defense Headquarter (HSM) and Executive Committee Member of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) released a message in relation to the historic importance of Newroz this year. Karayılan outlined the importance of the struggle for the physical freedom of the Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, and made clear calls regarding the threat of a new offensive by the Turkish military.

Karayılan stated that: "2024's Newroz is not a regular Newroz. We greet Newroz this year in the midst of a historic moment. This year, the institutions representing the Kurdish people and the friends of the Kurdish people, have declared Newroz as the Newroz of the freedom of Rêber Apo".

The message of Karayılan, broadcast on Stêrk TV, includes the following:

"I extend greetings, respect, and devotion to Rêber Apo [Leader Abdullah Öcalan] on behalf of the leadership of our movement on this special occasion of Newroz. On this momentous day, I congratulate all the people of Kurdistan, the mothers of martyrs, all the people in the region, progressive humanity, and all friends, sympathizers, and workers abroad. I hope that everyone has an extremely prosperous new year. We honor our contemporary Kawa [The blacksmith Kawa of the Newroz myth slays the tyrant Dehak and gives the people back their freedom], comrade Mazlum Dogan, on this auspicious day in remembrance of all the revolutionaries and martyrs of Newroz. We acknowledge their memory and reaffirm our commitment to them.

Newroz has an important place in the history of our people and the peoples of the region, but more so in our movement and struggle. Exactly fifty-one years ago on Newroz Day, Rêber Apo initiated this struggle. Since then, he has worked tirelessly to infuse Kurdistan with the spirit and flame of Newroz. Mazlum Dogan conducted the most powerful anti-oppression action on Newroz in the confines of the Amed (Diyarbakir) prison. In his footsteps, the free Kurdish women Zekiye Alkan [She burned herself alive in protest against the banning of the Newroz festival in Amed in 1990], Raşan Demirel [She protested against the ban by Turkey's Minister of the Interior that Newroz could not be celebrated in 1992 and burned herself to death in Kadifekale], Ronahî, and Bêrivan [Bedriye Taş (Ronahî) and Nilgün Yıldırım (Bêrivan) burned themselves to death in Mannheim on March 21, 1994 in protest against the ban on Newroz celebrations in the Federal Republic of Germany and its participation in the war in Kurdistan] added strength to the Newroz flame by sacrificing themselves. Once again, across Kurdistan, particularly in areas such as Cizîra Botan and Nisêbîn, our brave people made great sacrifices. In doing so, they ignited the flame of Newroz and raised its spirit, carrying it to an important place in history and igniting a national struggle.

On October 10, 2023, our internationalist allies announced the commencement of an international campaign with the goals of solving the Kurdish question and achieving Rêber Apo's physical liberation. This campaign continues to become formulated piece by piece and will gain more strength with this Newroz. I

extend warm greetings to everyone involved in this campaign, particularly our internationalist friends, on behalf of the movement's leadership. I also salute every mother who is participating in the vigil for justice, the prisoners who are still on a hunger strike, and the campaigners who have been keeping a vigil for Rêber Apo's physical release in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg for more than a decade. I congratulate the patriots who have been holding the Freedom Vigil in the Martyr Rüstem Cudi Camp and send them our greetings.

Dear friends,

2024's Newroz is not a regular Newroz. We greet Newroz this year in the midst of a historic moment. This year, the institutions representing the Kurdish people and the friends of the Kurdish people, have declared Newroz as the "Newroz of the freedom of Rêber Apo." This has great significance and importance. With the slogans "Freedom for Rêber Apo" and "Long live Rêber Apo," our people are celebrating Newroz in such numbers for the first time, in the four regions of Kurdistan as well as overseas. Today, this slogan is being chanted in the streets by millions, if not tens of millions. What are their desires? They desire Rêber Apo's physical freedom. Rêber Apo's freedom is seen by our people as their own. They are heading to the streets for this reason. They're chanting, "Hear the voice of the Kurdish people, hear the scream for the freedom of Rêber Apo." This needs to be communicated to the cunning and unscrupulous conspirators.

I'm calling on all the relevant, worldwide conspiracy authorities: enough is enough! Reject the terror that the Turkish dictatorship is waging on the Kurdish people. Pay attention to the requests of the Kurdish people and refrain from further obstructing their future for the sake of your own advantages. Rêber Apo's liberation and the freedom of the Kurdish people are intertwined, and this demand is legitimate. Respect this fact and fulfill your moral and humanitarian obligations.

Secondly, after ten days our people will be electing the co-mayors for their municipalities. This must be drawn attention to. The regime of AKP-MHP appoints trustees and does not acknowledge the will of our people. There is no legal remedy for this. The official will of our people is being violated. Therefore, in the spirit of the 2024 Newroz, everyone—socialists, democrats, and the friends of our people—must demonstrate their will by voting and participating in the elections in order to oppose such policies. They need to demonstrate that we reject trustee politics and that we stand by our decisions. Our people ought to vote in these elections in light of this.

Thirdly, I want to emphasize that we are going through an important moment in human history. The AKP-MHP and the Ergenekon state are organizing a new assault against us, against the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas, against the gains of the Kurdish people and their friends. We are conducting diplomatic meetings both locally and globally, in preparation of this. Still, they are aware that they cannot defeat the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas on their own. They are looking for allies in order to take on the guerrillas because of this. It's clear that they have ill intentions. They want to destroy all the accomplishments and victories of our people. They seek to execute the Misak-ı Milli [The so-called 'National Pact' refers to a political declaration made by the leaders of the Ottoman Empire in 1920 during the First World War. The oath defined the territorial borders – including Kurdish settlement areas in present-day Iraq and Syria – and the basic principles for Turkey's future policy. Today, Turkish nationalists often refer to the 'National Pact' to formulate their aspirations for Turkey's territorial expansion] occupation plan and subjugate the Arab population in Syria and Iraq through Turanism, nationalism, and neo-Ottomanism. This is their primary goal. But they strive to build support for themselves by using deceit to hide these aims.

Turkey's fascist regime refers to Kurdistan—especially the freed territories—as “Terroristan.” That said, what the Turkish government is doing in these areas must be seen. It deploys UCAVs to murder and kill people, carry out acts of terror, and assassinates people using agents. The Turkish state is currently intimidating and blackmailing everyone in Rojava, Shengal [Sinjar], and South Kurdistan. One must only look to Afrin to see the heinousness of the Turkish state. Like a thug, like a barbarous state, it seeks to dominate and terrorize its surroundings. We will never, ever give up fighting against this. We want our people and friends worldwide to know that we are prepared and confident to wage a historic resistance during this time. We have confidence in ourselves, and we know that our people are with us. The people themselves possess the greatest power. We don't fear anyone because of this. We will repel every attack with great skill.

Nevertheless, national unity is what our people and the cause of Kurdish freedom need. Stated differently, a national strategy is required. The Kurdish people need a national strategy for this historical era. Thus, we as a movement are demanding the development of national unity. Those who are unwilling may not participate. Though, our patriots ought to come together and devise a shared, national plan. Everyone should be aware that during this momentous and historic a period of time we, the movement, are prepared to take any necessary action to guarantee the freedom of our people to live in Mesopotamia, in the Middle East.

We possess the depth and experience in both strategy and tactics. Our capacity to employ new strategies and techniques will allow us to resist with skill. Although we oppose war, we will respond to aggressors who seek to use force, with the appropriate force. Everyone on the planet needs to know this. Here, we declare that the Turkish government is terrorizing our nation, seeking to establish genocidal politics, and severely isolating our leader. These are all brutal and inhumane. Nobody should assist the Turkish regime in its atrocities and barbarisms. We want the NATO troops and the forces supporting Turkey to know that our march is morally and ethically justified.

Our demands are legitimate and righteous, and we'll do anything it takes to get what we want. We believe, now more than ever, that victory is possible. We have faith in our abilities, in our people, and in our global friends. We will prevail in this momentous era by upholding the heritage of our valiant heroes and applying Rêber Apo's political ideology. Based on this, I would like to congratulate everyone on the occasion of Newroz once more and wish them luck in the march to liberate Kurdistan and Rêber Apo.”

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Bayik: PKK is the future of the Kurdish people!

ANF | QANDIL | 21 MARCH 2024

Cemil Bayik, co-chair of the KCK Executive Council, which he gave on the occasion of this year's Newroz celebrations. He emphasizes the importance of the Kurdish resistance, which is in line with the spirit of Newroz, and underlines the significance of the unity of the Kurdish people, with the awareness of their own history, regarding the current threat of new offensives by the occupying Turkish state.

The message is as follows:

“To the people of Newroz,

I would like to congratulate you on the arrival of Newroz, the celebration of freedom. This year’s Newroz overlaps with Ramadan. In this regard, I extend my congratulations to the Kurdish people and the Muslim community on this special occasion. Rêber Apo has always given importance to Newroz. He built the PKK on the foundations of Newroz, because it represents the history and cultural heritage of the Kurdish people. In the spirit of Newroz, Rêber Apo has developed the struggle for democracy and independence for the Kurdish people and for all of humanity. He sacrificed everything to make this possible.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Rêber Apo on the occasion of Newroz. This Newroz ought to pave the way to Rêber Apo’s freedom. In addition, I congratulate our people living in the four parts of Kurdistan as well as those who live abroad; I congratulate their friends, our prisoner comrades fighting for freedom and democracy, those who are resisting, and all of humanity.

In the liberation fight, many comrades from Southern Kurdistan lost their lives. In particular, those who fought in the guerrilla, such as Sadik Omer, Ali Shaban, Rauf Akri, Huseyin Suruchi, Cotkar, Dr. Sirwan, comrade Helmet, Viyan Soran, Chavre, Destina, Shoresh Germiyan, Helmet Dereluk, Hiran, and those who were recently martyred in the Gare region, including a patriot named Said, Dr. Sabri in Sulaymaniyah, and the martyrs in Shengal (Sinjar) and Rojava.

For the people of Kurdistan, March is an important month. This month marked the anniversaries of the genocides in Halabja, Afrin, and Qamişlo in Rojava, as well as the atrocity in Gazi, Istanbul. This month, the brave people of the South revolted against the government of Saddam Hussein and drove him out of Kurdistan. This uprising was led under the leadership of Sadiq Omer, and Loqman (a PKK Central Committee member from Rojava), in Zakho Derkare. Similarly, there was a revolt in Ranya. These uprisings yielded important results. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and show my appreciation to the people of South Kurdistan who, in the spirit of Newroz, took to the streets and revolted. For Kurdish people, it is an incredibly significant month in history.

Our people of Southern Kurdistan are patriotic people. They have endured years of hardship, excruciating agony, and paid heavy costs. The Kurdish people have gained important values everywhere through the example of patriotism offered by the Southern people. Even during the Ottoman era, the people of Sulaymaniyah began an uprising at Baban. Our people have been fighting for freedom ever since, for each part of Kurdistan. They never gave up on their demand for freedom, no matter how much they suffered or how much they sacrificed. They never succumbed to genocides and massacres. They led dignified lives. In history, no one other than the Kurds have fought for freedom and endured such suffering, over such a long period of time.

All of our people, but especially the people in the South, can learn from the people of Qendîl. The battleground of democracy and freedom is Qendîl. Qendîl is a privilege and an embodiment of our people’s dignified Kurdish past. Significant contributions were made to the Kurdish revolutionary fight by Qendîl. Living in Qendîl, Mam Celal, Newshirwan Mustafa, and Abdurrahman Qasimlo led their freedom movement from here. The PKK is carrying on this noble tradition today. Qendîl has developed into a historical form of resistance on behalf of the PKK and Rêber Apo. It is giving life to the memories of the martyrs that we have sacrificed.

The fascists of Turkey now seek to eradicate the southern Kurdistan region. They are occupying and annexing it for this reason. Currently, there are over 50,000 Turkish soldiers positioned across southern Kurdistan. They are constructing roads, establishing dozens of military sites, and assembling the infrastructure needed for an occupation. The murderous Turkish state seeks total control over the South. It seeks to destroy our people in the South, seize their accomplishments and riches, and turn them into slaves. This is the sole reason behind the Turkish state's assault.

The Barzani family is beneficial to the Turkish state. The Barzani family is supporting them while they are occupying the South and committing genocide. It is possible for one to observe this on a daily basis. With whatever they have at their disposal — regardless of how little this may be — the PKK militants are opposing this. On the other hand, the Barzani family and the Turkish government have substantial resources. PKK fighters are sacrificing their lives in defense of Kurdistan, the Kurdish people, and their right to freedom. All they have been their ideas, their light weapons, and their objectives. With this, they defend themselves against traitors, genocides, and invaders. They have become a significant barrier in the way of those traitors attempting to execute their dirty plans in South Kurdistan. The guerrilla has become the subject of legends, fighting in the most challenging circumstances — situations that others would consider unimaginable. Such examples exist nowhere else in the world. The Turkish state is being dealt severe blows despite all these circumstances, which are causing the occupiers to tremble. All the weapons of the occupying and murderous state are being used against the guerrillas, including tanks, drones, aircraft, artillery, chemical weapons, and tactical nuclear bombs. In this conflict, chemical and tactical nuclear bombs claimed the lives of many of our comrades.

The people in the South are fully aware of the dangers of chemical weapons and their effects as this is what they endured in Halabja. Thousands of them were martyred. Thousands of people were hurt and wounded there. However, they resisted at all costs. The effects of the poisons that were released at Halabja are still being felt by our people today. While some individuals might not be aware of chemical weapons and their effects, those in the South are fully aware. Because of this, we — especially those of us in the South — must stand with the guerrilla against chemical and nuclear weapons and provide it with the support that will allow it to fight harder and cause more damage. This is what our people's quality of life will improve with and what we will succeed with.

As is well known, the guerrilla conducted multiple operations in Zap in addition to one in Ankara. Before the Turkish state claimed to have broken the PKK's back. They were claiming that the PKK was at a powerless point. While they were trying to deceive everyone with their propaganda in Turkey and around the world, these actions exposed their lies. For this reason, they targeted Rojava — because they desired vengeance. Numerous vital infrastructures that support people's lives were bombed and destroyed.

They did this because they do not only regard the PKK as their enemies but the Kurdish people as a whole. It targets Kurds who struggle for and seek freedom, wherever they may be found. They wish the complete annihilation of the Kurds. They target the PKK, they target Rêber Apo, and the Kurdish people with this mindset. For the Kurdish people's honor, soul, identity, and future are represented by the PKK. Rêber Apo and the PKK stand in the way of the Turkish state's occupation, which seeks to carry out the Kurdish genocide. They see that Rêber Apo and the PKK is dedicated to defending the Kurdish people and their ongoing fight for independence; they see that Rêber Apo and the PKK have a strong commitment to the Kurdish people and their fight for democracy and independence. That they fight to stop the genocide against the Kurdish people. For this reason, the Turkish government is pursuing an isolationist,

repressive, persecutive, and genocide strategy against the PKK and Rêber Apo. It is afraid of them fearlessly fighting this battle. It is using dirty politics against Rêber Apo and the PKK because of this.

Despite the other NATO countries giving the Turkish state all the help they could, it proved insufficient. The Barzani family continued to help them, but it proved insufficient. With the Iraqi government, they are currently developing some plans and initiatives. On certain subjects they are allies. Together, they wish to devise a plan. It's evident that current sanctions against Iraq have had some effect and will continue to do so. From an analysis of the existing state of affairs, it is clear that a widespread battle is imminent. Still, this only demonstrates the PKK's immense force and its passion for independence, for Kurdistan, the Kurdish people, and humanity as a whole.

They wish to use their combined strength to combat the PKK and accomplish the genocide across Kurdistan. It should be evident that they won't achieve their aim. No matter how many atrocities they had carried out in the past, they were unable to eradicate or capitulate the Kurdish population. They will never be allowed to accomplish what they have tried in the past. The Kurdish people have made their choice to be free. This will continue up till the very end. Nobody can destroy a people who have made the decision to live in freedom and who are willing to risk everything for it. Regardless of how much these people sacrifice, they are going to achieve results. This should be understood very clearly by everyone.

It is widely known that we have launched a campaign to ensure Rêber Apo's physical freedom and elevate the Kurdish people to political stature. This campaign's initial phase ran till February 15 and produced many positive results. Subsequently, the second phase of the campaign was declared on February 15. Strengthening the Kurdish people's organization and unity within Kurdistan is the goal of this stage.

On the international front, it will soon strengthen relations with the Kurdish people's allies and supporters worldwide in order to exert pressure on the invaders. Because of this, every member of our community who possesses honor and conscience, no matter where they may be, needs to participate in the campaign and successfully carry out their duties. Should this effort succeed in its objective, the murderous regimes will be unable to continue their tactics of genocide against the Kurds. There will be an end to these politics. There will be an end to the massacres against the Kurdish people, the Kurdish issue will be addressed, and the Kurdish people will be on the path to freedom. In their own lands, the Kurdish people shall live in freedom, preserving their culture, language, identity, and integrity.

The physical freedom of Rêber Apo must be ensured this year's Newroz. It needs to establish status for the Kurds. The Newroz of freedom is this one. This consciousness must guide the actions of our people. We are marching for our freedom. We are carrying out our struggle in the spirit of Newroz. We will march to the end and prevail with this approach. There will be a significant benefit for humanity should the Kurdish people prevail. I want to thank you all once more for celebrating Ramadan and Newroz this year. I thus wish you all the best of luck."

Opinion

36 years ago, the massacre of Halabja

ANF | 16 MARCH 2024

Today marks the 36th anniversary of the chemical attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja in South-Kurdistan. Systematically terrorizing the Kurdish population, Saddam Hussein attempted to silence his critics and at the same time test his chemical and biological weapons.

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

Chemical weapons used in Halabja

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

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

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

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

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

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

Effects of the attack in Halabja

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

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

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

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Mehmûd Ehmed: We have broken the chains of slavery

NUJIYAN ADAR | DERİK | 20 MARCH 2024

Mehmûd Ehmed comes from Dêrik in Rojava. He got to know the PKK at a Newroz celebration in Ayn Diwar in 1987. In an interview with ANF, he spoke about the changing significance of Newroz.

Before the presence of the PKK, Newroz was celebrated more as a family festival, far removed from its original resistance character, said Ehmed and continued: “With the PKK, Newroz became a revolutionary and national festival. I experienced Newroz being celebrated differently for the first time in 1987. With the resistance of Mazlum Doğan, we realised that Newroz is a day of resistance, of the martyrs, of the struggle of the oppressed peoples for their lives, a new day, a day of unity and solidarity. With the history of the PKK, we realised the true meaning of Newroz.”

Ehmed stated: “Before Newroz, festive clothes were sewn. Traditional costumes were made even for the children. The youngest to the oldest greeted Newroz in a colourful variety. The day before Newroz, people went to the festival site. They provided security and decorated the square. The Newroz programme lasted about twelve hours. People were very interested in theatre. The struggle of the PKK and the guerrilla war were staged. The music was about the revolution, emphasised the resistance of the people of Kurdistan and drew attention to the guerrilla war. The dances reflected the culture of the Kurdish people.”

Ehmed told how Newroz was celebrated particularly strongly after the massacre of Qamişlo on 12 March 2004 in Dêrik, which was orchestrated by the Syrian regime: “The Baathist regime wanted to instill fear in the population, suppress the voice of the Kurdish people and rob them of their identity. Dozens of people were arrested after the massacre and the fate of many of those affected is still unknown today. Despite this atmosphere, the people of Dêrik celebrated Newroz in the village of Bacarîq in 2004. Some could not resist the Ba'ath regime and withdrew, but we celebrated Newroz as a response to oppression, torture and massacres with a large crowd and special enthusiasm.”

Mehmûd Ehmed remembered the revolutionary martyrs Mazlum Doğan, Zekiye Alkan and Raşan Demirel and emphasised that this year's Newroz festival should be celebrated in the spirit of brotherhood among the peoples. He added: “Our sons and daughters have sacrificed their lives to protect our country

and our honour and to prevent the Kurdish people from being erased from history. Thanks to their precious blood, we have awakened from the deep sleep we were in. We have broken the centuries-long chain of slavery. With this spirit and resistance, we must shout out our demand for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo [Leader Abdullah Öcalan] in the Newroz squares.”

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