

THE İMRALI POST

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

Issue № 97 / 12 April 2024 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Graphic novel about Öcalan's life presented in Berlin

ANF | BERLIN | 6 APRIL 2024

On 4 April, the 75th birthday of the Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, around 300 people came together at SO36 in Berlin-Kreuzberg for the presentation of the graphic novel "Abdullah Öcalan – An Illustrated Biography" by Sean Michael Wilson and Keko. The mood in the hall was one of excitement. The past few days, especially the great victory of the democratic forces and the Kurdish freedom movement in the local elections in Turkey and North Kurdistan and the subsequent "Van Revolution" against the regime's attempted political coup, had left their mark on those present. The audience reflected the heterogeneity of people who feel touched by Abdullah Öcalan's ideology and struggle. From old activists and long-time political prisoners to members of parliament, exiled politicians, freedom fighters, internationalists and young activists, many people came to the presentation in the evening.

Graphic novel published in six languages

The event opened with a dance program by the Koma Feraşîn and Koma Çiyager groups. Reimar Heider from the international initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan” presented the graphic novel and said that the book will be published simultaneously in German, Kurdish and Turkish in Germany, the Netherlands and Rojava. Publication in English and Arabic will follow soon.

4 April: Öcalan's 75th birthday

Heider said: “We are celebrating the 75th birthday of the most famous and probably most important political prisoner in the world: Abdullah Öcalan. There have been attempts to cut him off from the world for 25 years, but his ideas now reach more people than ever before.”

Martina Anderson: “Öcalan has overcome the limits of imprisonment”

Former Irish political prisoner and former Sinn Féin MEP Martina Anderson said: “As a former Irish Republican political prisoner, I know the indomitable spirit that accompanies those who refuse to bow to oppression. Abdullah Öcalan has embodied this spirit over the past twenty-five years of unjust imprisonment. His leadership in the Kurdish freedom struggle left an indelible mark on the world stage.”

About the graphic novel, Anderson said: “This graphic novel is not just a retelling of history, but a beacon for Öcalan's theories that continue to shape freedom struggles today. It provides a deep understanding of issues of women's freedom, democratic confederalism and the remarkable attempt to build a grassroots democratic system in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. His ideas on democracy, women's liberation and freedom have resonated not only within the Kurdish community but also beyond its borders, igniting the flame of the remarkable Rojava Revolution in Northern Syria.”



Vigil for Öcalan in Maxmur handed over to the 53rd group of activists

ANF | MAXMUR | 7 APRIL 2024

The vigil that started on 20 July 2023 to demand freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan in the Martyr Rustem Cudi Refugee Camp (Maxmur), continues on its 264th day with the 53rd group of activists.

At the ceremony, which started with a minute of silence in memory of the freedom guerrillas at the Youth Organization, Rojbîn Otun made a speech on behalf of the 52nd group.

Rojbîn Otun said that the fascist Turkish state has been pursuing a severe isolation policy in İmralı for 3 years and said: “The Kurdish people have been waging a struggle against this approach of the Turkish state

for a long time. Various actions and events are organized all over the world to ensure the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan. The Turkish state ignores these actions and closes the doors to all solutions. Hegemonic states also turn a blind eye to this attitude of the Turkish state. Stopping the current war is possible by ensuring Leader Öcalan's physical freedom.”

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4 April celebrated in Strasbourg at Freedom for Öcalan Vigil

ANF | STRASBOURG | 8 APRIL 2024

A celebration was held in Strasbourg for the 75th birthday of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. The event, organized by the Zîn Women's Initiative, was held in the area where the Freedom for Öcalan Vigil is taking place. The vigil began in 2012.

Zîn Women's Initiative Member Helena Dersim said: "Leader Öcalan's birthday is the birthday of the Kurdish people. Our leader devoted his entire life to the struggle for us. His birthday is also the re-awakening of a people who have forgotten their existence."

Referring to the absolute isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, Helena Dersim said: "We have not heard from our Leader for more than 3 years. It is the primary duty of every Kurd to break this absolute silence and liberate our Leader."

Sîdar Amedi, one of the TEV-ÇAND artists who attended the celebration, said that he met with his son Mazlum Içli, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Kobanê Conspiracy Case, on 3 March, and drew attention to the indefinite rotating hunger strike continued by political prisoners in prisons. Amedi said: "Today, our comrades in prison are on hunger strike to ensure the freedom of our Leader and to break the isolation imposed on him. We have to increase our actions for the freedom of our Leader."

Stating that the political prisoners continue their indefinite alternating hunger strike against the isolation, Amedi said: "We will be living in isolation until the isolation is lifted."

Agit Ural, spokesperson of the group consisting of members of the Kiel Democratic Kurdish Community Center, which took over the Freedom Vigil in its 615th week, said: "We have been continuing our actions alongside the European Parliament and the European Council for years. European institutions are complicit in the isolation. They think we will forget our leadership. But we will never forget our Leader, because he gave us a new life."

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Freedom Vigil activists in Strasbourg: EU should stick to the laws it passed

ANF | STRASBOURG | 8 APRIL 2024

The Freedom Vigil, which was launched by the Initiative for the Freedom of Abdullah Öcalan on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, France to ensure the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, continues in its 12th year.

The Freedom Vigil, which the Kurdish people living in Europe take over in groups every week, entered its 615th week.

The action, which continues at a location where the European institutions (CoE, EP, CPT and ECHR) meet, has been taken over by a new group from Kiel, Germany. The group consists of members of the Kiel Democratic Kurdish Community Centre and includes Agit Ural, Medine Ural, Abdullah Yılmaz and Şiyar Yılmaz.

Agit Ural was part of the hunger strike group of 14 politicians, lawyers, journalists and activists in Strasbourg on 17 December 2018. Marking Abdullah Öcalan's birthday on 4 April, Agit Ural said "Happy birthday to our leader" and started his speech by celebrating Eid al-Fitr of the Islamic world.

Reminding the hunger strike action they organised in 2018 against the isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, Ural stated the following: "Although we got some results, it was not the way we wanted. In order to get a good result, the year 2024 is important for me. It is a year of resistance. We must do whatever it takes to physically liberate our leader. We address the European Parliament. Stick to those laws you passed. The human rights you bring up remain only on paper, you do not implement them in practice. The CPT, in particular, should make a point of this. Our expectation from our people, especially our youth, is that they should be more active and raise their voices more in 2024 in order to achieve results. Just as the resistance and the spirit of unity shown in Van made the enemy take a step back, our youth in Europe must raise their voices, increase their unity and organisation so that we can get results and get our Leader out of prison. We cannot achieve a result with a weak voice, participating in one action and not participating in another. Our only solution is for the youth to come forward, to organise and mobilise the people, to lead the way."

Şiyar Yılmaz noted that they are fighting for the lifting of the isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and ensuring his physical freedom. Stating that the Kurdish people should make their voices heard as much as possible on this issue, Yılmaz said, "If we all unite, the louder our voices are, the faster we will reach our goals."

Prisons in Turkey

165 days in custody and still no news of journalist Silêman Ehmed

ANF | 6 APRIL 2024

Silêman Ahmed, the editor of Rojnews Arabic Service, was abducted by KDP forces at the Semalka (Faysh Khabur, Kr: Pêşxabûr) crossing point on the Iraqî-Syrian border on 25 October while returning to South Kurdistan from Aleppo, where he had gone on 1 October to visit his family. No news has been received from the Kurdish journalist for 165 days now.

The KDP intelligence service accuses the journalist, who comes from Rojava (northern Syria), of having links to the PKK. His arrest at the Sêmalka-Pêşxabûr border crossing between the Autonomous Region of North and East Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) after a visit to his family in Aleppo was only unofficially confirmed by the KDP-affiliated Asayish (Local Security) in Duhok six days after his disappearance in the wake of growing public reaction. RojNews describes the accusations against Silêman Ehmed as unsubstantiated allegations that have no connection to his five years of work as an editor. The Duhok Asayish, despite accusing the journalist of "conducting intelligence activities", then claimed that they did not have him in their custody.

The Duhok Judgeship, to which an application was made afterward, ruled that Ahmet's lawyers could meet with him. With this decision, Ahmet's detention was officially recognised. The lawyers who went to the Duhok Asayish with the decision in their hands were not allowed to meet with Ahmet and faced attacks and threats. The lawyers continued their investigations despite the attacks and threats and found out that Ahmet was being held in one of the unofficial detention centres of Parastin, the KDP's intelligence agency.

Lawyers from the Silêman Ahmed Defence Group have submitted more than 10 official applications to date. However, they have not been allowed to meet with their client, nor have they been provided with any information about his condition.

The abduction of Silêman Ahmed was condemned by local and international journalist organisations, including the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders.

The KDP administration, to which professional organisations as well as civil society organisations have appealed, has not made any statement regarding Silêman Ahmed.

Rojnews Agency condemns the unlawful abduction of Silêman Ahmed, who has been working as an editor at the Arabic service of the agency for 5 years, and demands his release and an explanation about his

fate as soon as possible. The agency applied to the United Nations (UN) recently for support in finding out his whereabouts.



60 women prisoners send a letter to the government to protest isolation in İmralı

ANF | ANKARA | 8 APRIL 2024

Prisoners were on hunger strike to protest the isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. The prisoners decided to take their protests to a new stage on 5 April. The prisoners boycotted the courts and decided not to have phone calls or family visits.

In this context, the 60 female prisoners in Sincan Women's Closed Prison sent a comprehensive letter to the Ministry of Justice, government and state officials. In the letter, they requested that the isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan be lifted, his physical freedom be ensured and the necessary conditions be provided so that he can play his role.

The letter said: "We are 60 female political prisoners in Sincan Women's Closed Prison. The continuation of severe isolation and torture policies against Mr. Abdullah Öcalan, the pioneer of peace in Kurdistan, Turkey and the Middle East, and his friends is a sign that the government and state officials have signed a course that drags our country into even more chaos..."

The letter continued: "Today, thousands of political prisoners in hundreds of prisons are protesting against the isolation and fighting for the immediate end of the isolation with hunger strikes. This voice needs to be heard as soon as possible. We, political Kurdish female prisoners, state that it is urgent for our country that the elected government, the Minister of Justice and all those responsible, end the isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan and his friends, and to ensure the conditions for him to play his role for peace."



IHD exposes rights violations in Samsun Kavak S Type Prison

ANF | ANKARA | 9 APRIL 2024

The Human Rights Association (IHD) Ankara Branch Prisons Commission published a report exposing the rights violations in Samsun Kavak S Type Prison.

IHD Ankara Branch co-chair Ömer Faruk Yazıcı presented the findings of the report, saying that prisoners were subjected to heavy violations of rights.

The report found that prisoners in Kavak S Type Prison were subjected to coercive practices such as standing counts and marching in single lines, and that those who needed to go to the hospital were subjected to oral searches. In addition, the report found that the use of the ID provided by the prison was imposed, and that those who did not want to use the ID were punished and subjected to arbitrary treatment by the guards. The report also said that torture was carried out and slogans of "homeland indivisible" were shouted at the prisoners.

The report said that in an incident that took place on 4 March, 11 prisoners were subjected to violence and were not given food.

In addition, 4 prisoners transferred from Denizli D Type Closed Prison were strip searched and subjected to torture. One prisoner's cheekbone was broken, and other prisoners were attacked.

The prisoners brought from Urfa T Type Closed Prison refused to be strip searched and were subjected to torture in the ward.

The report also included information about some guards acting in a provocative manner and underlined that the food portions provided were insufficient for a proper diet.

The report also said that the administration imposed various punishments after the prisoners went on hunger strike.

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Prisoners benefiting from amnesty issued by Democratic Autonomous Administration released

ANF | QAMISHLO | 9 APRIL 2024

The Democratic Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria issued an amnesty for a number of prisoners on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr (the holiay that celebrates the end of the holy month of Ramadan), at its meeting held on 6 April.

After the decision, prisoners who were included in the scope of amnesty have been released from prisons since Sunday. Many people were released from Um Firsan Prison in Qamishlo on Monday.

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37 MPs call on Serbia to immediately release Ecevit Piroğlu

ANF | 10 APRIL 2024

Ecevit Piroğlu, who has been imprisoned in Serbia for 34 months, has been on hunger strike for 59 days. Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), Labour Party (EMEP) and Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) MPs called for Piroğlu's immediate release. Thirty-seven MPs, including members of the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group between Turkey and Serbia, signed a declaration and sent it to the Serbian Embassy in Turkey.

The declaration reads as follows:

"Urgent call to the Government of Serbia,

We have learned that Ecevit Piroğlu, who has been imprisoned in your country for 34 months, is in a critical stage of his hunger strike, which he started for the second time on 12 February 2024, and his health condition is deteriorating, even at a critical stage with the risk of death.

What is the reason for not releasing Ecevit Piroğlu, given that your government and judicial authorities have firmly rejected requests for his extradition to Turkey and that the prison sentence given to Piroğlu by the Serbian court was executed on 12 January 2024?

Why is Piroğlu being denied the right to leave your country officially, as required by international conventions to which you are a party? There are two separate decisions issued by your Ministry of Interior. As a result of the inconsistency between these two decisions, is the reason for the forced detention of Piroğlu in inhumane conditions the subject of possible political negotiations with the Government of Turkey? The medical controls to be applied to a person on hunger strike are determined by medical protocols. Despite this, what is your purpose in not carrying out Piroğlu's health checks?

As political parties and democratic organisations representing millions of people in Turkey, we are closely following the process and we warn you. The demands of the internationalist revolutionary Ecevit Piroğlu, whom we know from the Gezi resistance and his pioneering struggle against ISIS, must be accepted immediately and Piroğlu must regain his freedom. We state that your government will be held responsible in the international public opinion for the irreparable negativities that will occur due to its failure to take steps. End the unlawful arrest of Ecevit Piroğlu to end his hunger strike and stop preventing his right to leave your country!"

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Kurdish activist Mehmet Çakras sentenced to prison in Germany

ANF | 10 APRIL 2024

The Higher Regional Court of Celle sentenced Kurdish activist Mehmet Çakras to two years and ten months in prison on Wednesday for membership of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). According to the Kurdish association AZADÎ, the 4th criminal division found it proven that the 44-year-old activist led the Bremen PKK region as a "full-time cadre" from 2019 to mid-2021.

The court argued that Çakras had organised and promoted meetings and events, brought people together and instructed them, collected donations and held a speech at a funeral service. Yet, he was not charged with an individual criminal offence. However, because the court was of the opinion that he had acted as a member of the PKK, it convicted him of "membership of a terrorist organisation abroad" in accordance with Sections 129a and 129b of the German Criminal Code.

Mehmet Çakras was taken into extradition custody in Milan in December 2022 at the instigation of German authorities. He was transferred to Germany at the beginning of March 2023 and initially taken to Bremen Prison. After the arrest warrant was issued, he was remanded in custody in Celle and later in Hanover Prison. The main trial began at the beginning of September last year.

The indictment also included the management of the "Hanover" area from 2018 to 2019 in addition to alleged area management activities in Bremen. This charge was dropped in the course of the proceedings. Nevertheless, in its plea a fortnight ago, the Public Prosecutor General's Office, representing the prosecution, demanded a sentence of three years and eight months in prison.

The defence lawyers of Çakras, Dr Björn Elberling and Ulrich von Klinggräff, pleaded for acquittal last week and gave detailed reasons for this as the only justifiable decision. Mehmet Çakras himself had made it clear in his final statement in court that it was not he who was on trial, but the Kurdish movement. He said he had not committed any criminal offences during the period he was accused of, but rather, he was being charged as a terrorist. This parallel to the persecution of Kurds in Turkey should give pause for thought, he added.

"With a sentence of two years and ten months in prison, the court remained well below the sentence demanded by the public prosecutor's office, but left no doubt about its will to convict and the prevailing criminalisation of the Kurdish movement," said the Kurdish association AZADÎ e.V.

"In the opinion of defence lawyer Dr Björn Elberling, the court's approach to proving the position of the person responsible for the area was particularly problematic. In order to prove the collection of donations, for example, only two text messages were interpreted in this direction, although other interpretations would have been possible. A speech at a funeral of a member of the Syrian-Kurdish PYD was just as much evidence of activity on behalf of the PKK as a statement in favour of Abdullah Öcalan. Consequently, the defence announced that it would appeal against the verdict."

Four Kurds sentenced within one month

AZADÎ further stated: "Mehmet Çakas is the fourth Kurd to be sentenced to several years in prison by a German court for membership of the PKK within a month. The prerequisite for this prosecution is an authorisation granted by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection in 2011, through which the German government is making itself a vicarious agent of the Erdoğan regime and helping to obstruct a solution to the so-called Kurdish question.

The results of the local elections in Turkey and northern Kurdistan a week and a half ago show once again that the people of Turkey are longing for a change in policy and that the AKP regime's time is running out despite election manipulation and violence. The German government must ask itself how long it wants to stick to its long outdated Kurdistan policy and the criminalisation of the Kurdish movement, which was doomed to failure from the outset. As the AZADÎ association, we once again demand the withdrawal of the authorisation to prosecute the PKK under Section 129b of the German Criminal Code and the immediate lifting of the ban on the PKK in order to make a just peace in Kurdistan and the democratisation of Turkey possible."



Protests follow 'political sentence' in the trial against Mehmet Çakas

ANF | CELLE | 11 APRIL 2024

On Wednesday, the verdict in the trial against the Kurdish activist Mehmet Çakas was pronounced at the Celle Higher Regional Court. Mehmet was sentenced to two years and ten months in prison for being accused of membership in a terrorist organization. The defense had previously called for acquittal due to the thin evidence and the political nature of the trial. The announcement of the verdict was accompanied by a rally in front of the court with around 50 participants demanding the defendant's freedom.

Çakas was extradited from Italy to Germany in spring 2023 on charges of membership in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The main hearing began at the beginning of September last year. Defense attorney Elberling was disappointed with the higher regional court's ruling and announced that the defendant would appeal: "As is so often the case, the 'activities' that are intended to make our client a 'terrorist' consist exclusively of actions that are, in themselves, totally legal, in particular the organization of demonstrations, as well as participation in funeral ceremonies or the mediation of disputes in the Kurdish community. What was shocking was that the court did not make the slightest effort to differentiate and that it simply used a speech at the memorial service for a deceased PYD politician as evidence of PKK membership."

No individual crime was proven for Mehmet. The verdict is not yet final and lawyers will appeal.

“I have not committed a crime”

Çakas was previously persecuted in Turkey because of his commitment to Kurdish society. During his childhood, he saw how the Turkish state murdered his father and how his and many other Kurdish families' livelihoods were taken away by destroying their villages. Çakas was surprised that he was being persecuted here in Germany in the same way as before in Turkey, even though he had not committed any crime in Germany.

Defense attorney Elberling underlined the political nature of the trial when he concluded: "Ultimately, every Kurdish person who opposes Erdoğan and is committed to the Kurdish population should be condemned. Activists could find themselves under trial because of that, as shown by the Celle Higher Regional Court that condemned Mehmet Çakas as a PKK member."

Reading the sentence, the presiding judge said that, contrary to the defense's assessment in last week's plea, this was not a political trial, but a normal criminal trial. Elberling said that this statement should be refuted by the unconditional will to convict that the court has shown.

"Freedom for all political prisoners"

There were several heckles from the visitors' area in the courtroom. Among other things, people shouted: "Freedom for all political prisoners."

The rally in front of the courthouse featured several speeches, including from the climate justice group Ende Gelände. "How can it be that the fight for a better future is met with punishment? And how can this be nothing new?" asked Charlotte Schmidt. She pointed to numerous historical examples, such as that of Thoreau, who was imprisoned in 1886 because he refused to pay taxes to a state that tolerated slavery, or Mandela's 27-year imprisonment. Schmidt asked why we don't talk about food shortages, droughts and the war in Rojava instead, and called for action.



Conference at EP: Universal principles suspended, human dignity disregarded in İmralı

ANF | BRUSSELS | 11 APRIL 2024

A conference on the situation of political prisoners subjected to isolation, torture and ill-treatment is taking place in the European Parliament (EP).

Titled "Political Prisoners: Isolation, ill-treatment and torture", the conference was organized jointly by the European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH), European Democratic Lawyers (AED) and the Association for Democracy and International Law (MAF-DAD).

The conference, hosted by Massimiliano Smeriglio, Member of the European Parliament, included several sessions.

786 political prisoners in the Philippines

One of the keynote speakers, Philippine Edre Olalia, interim deputy of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and President of the National Association of People's Lawyers, drew attention to the situation of political prisoners in the Philippines and said, "Almost 40 years later, there are still 786 political prisoners."

"We must work for the release of political prisoners," Olalia said, asking the international community to scrutinise, if not impose military sanctions on the government in the Philippines. "The existence of political prisoners is proof that governments have failed," Olalia said, adding that peace negotiations should be initiated and the situation of prisoners should be addressed in this context.

Universal law suspended in İmralı

Dr Gülşah Kurt, an expert on criminal law and human rights law and member of Academics for Peace, was among the keynote speakers. Dr Gülşah Kurt discussed the situation of political prisoners in Turkey and especially the situation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Gülşah Kurt spoke about the increase in the number of F-type prisons in the last twenty years and stated that the conditions in İmralı Island Prison, where Öcalan has been held since 1999, are beyond F-type prisons. Kurt pointed out that the right to hope is not applied to Abdullah Öcalan and drew attention to the arbitrary disciplinary penalties and the barriers to family and lawyer visits. Kurt criticised the fact that states turn a blind eye to these violations and said: "We are talking about a situation where universal principles are suspended and human dignity is disregarded". She stated that there is no point in recognising these principles if even the minimum standards for prisoners are not respected and underlined the need to develop minimum rules for prisoners.

The case of Ilaria Salis

Following the opening speeches, the first panel focused on examples from Europe. In the panel moderated by Helene Debaty, President of the Lawyers' Union for Democracy, Aurora D'agostino, Co-President of the Italian Democratic Lawyers' Association (GD), spoke on "The Case of Ilaria Salis in Hungary and Prison Conditions". Aurora D'agostino said: "Ilaria Salis is an Italian citizen. She was arrested in Hungary. She has been in prison for 11 months." Aurora D'agostino stated that the arrest and conditions of Salis were learnt too late and criticised the press for turning a hand to the issue too late.

80 Basque political prisoners in Spain

Bego Atxa, the representative of 'Sare herritarra' from the Basque region, evaluated the situation of Basque political prisoners. Stating that human rights are for everyone, Bego Atxa said: "Although ETA has given up the armed struggle, there are still around 80 political prisoners, and 23 of them are women. 7 of them are held in prisons thousands of kilometres away from their families."

Human rights regress, justice is politicised in Europe

Prof. Louis Lemkow, ERC representative from Catalonia, emphasised that "there is a regression in Europe in terms of human rights". Pointing out that the situation has worsened with the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, Lemkow said, "There is an erosion of rights. Justice has been politicised. In Spain, politics overstepped its boundaries and took over the judiciary. We call this the politicisation of justice."

İmralı is a laboratory

The second panel was entitled "Turkey and İmralı Prison". The moderator, Deepa Driver, Co-President of the Haldane Socialist Lawyers Association, stated that the number of prisoners in Turkish prisons has increased fivefold, and that Turkey ranks second after Russia among OSCE members in this respect. "We should treat İmralı as a laboratory," Driver said.

İmralı isolation is unprecedented

Lawyer Lena Charlotta Lagnander, the representative of the International İmralı Delegation, made a presentation on the "findings of the delegation". Highlighting the multidimensional oppression of the Kurdish people, Lagnander said, "This current isolation is unprecedented in the world."

Speaking about the struggle of the Peace Mothers, Lena Charlotta Lagnander drew attention to the oppression of Kurdish women, saying, "They are not talking about unconditional peace. We met with them. They talked about their lives. It was a very powerful meeting. They gave us a message. They told us to tell the world what happened to them." Lagnander talked about the pressures, arrests and threats the Peace Mothers have long been subjected to, and defined the situation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan as "completely unlawful".

Isolation must be lifted

Lena Charlotta Lagnander stated that lawyer and family meetings were prevented, isolation was widespread in prisons and even speaking Kurdish was "not allowed". Lagnander stated that even those who are released from prison are charged for food in prison and that health conditions are not humane. "Isolation is torture for everyone," Lagnander said, adding: "We should also come together and talk, but we should take a decision and take steps. Democracy is under threat. Organisations like the CPT are very fragile. They have prepared a report but have not released it. We should put pressure on them to release the report. European countries should also put pressure on Turkey. With their silence, they approve what Turkey is doing. Isolation must end. Isolation must be abolished in all countries. The Kurdish people are an example for us with their honour and resistance."

Mazlum Dinç, a lawyer for the Istanbul-based Asrin Law Office that represents Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners in İmralı, spoke about "The situation in İmralı Prison and the Right to Hope" and stated that prisons and torture are used as a means of oppression in Turkey. Describing the torture suffered by prisoners and the pressures suffered by their families, Mazlum Dinç stated that great resistance was organised against this with hunger strikes and actions of self-sacrifice.

Repression and isolation in Turkish prisons

Mazlum Dinç stated that torture is systematically continued with different methods in order to liquidate the Kurdish Freedom Struggle and added, "Even for social media posts, sentences of up to four years are given." Dinç stated that ordinary prisoners are not even put in prison in the case of receiving heavy sentences such as 8-10 years, while a completely different situation is experienced in the cases of political prisoners, who are put in prisons a thousand kilometres away from their families and see the rights they obtain through resistance taken away from them.

Mazlum Dinç stated that access to health care is not possible either: "Even seriously ill prisoners are treated late and inadequately, and political prisoners are deliberately taken to death. All basic needs in prisons are forcibly met by political prisoners. Depositing money from outside to prisoners financially straitened is considered as a crime and those who do this are treated and punished as members of an illegal organisation."

Drawing attention to the fact that prisoners who have served their sentence are not released on arbitrary grounds, Mazlum Dinç said, "There is also an İmralı dimension to the aggravation of the violations in these prisons," adding that a prohibited isolation and torture system was built in İmralı in 1999. Dinç said, "A torture system was built in which none of the rules of international law apply. Although we did not have any expectations of domestic law, we still made applications. We also made applications internationally. The ECHR has already acknowledged the fact that there was no fair trial. It was also decided that a life sentence is against human rights. The Right to Hope is not applied and there is no pressure on Turkey in this regard.

An international network against isolation should be established

Dinç said that although the UN has taken a precautionary decision, meetings with lawyers continue to be prevented and added: "International organisations are acting too late regarding Abdullah Öcalan and Kurdish political prisoners, and even when they take decisions, they do not stand behind them."

Mazlum Dinç said that a more active struggle should be waged against the İmralı isolation, adding: "This is not only a problem for the Kurds. It is a fundamental problem for all humanity."

Dinç stated that powerful non-governmental organisations also ignore the issue of İmralı, citing the silence of Amnesty International as an example. He remarked that an international network should be established to fight to break the isolation. Dinç especially asked international bar associations to get involved.

Final resolution of conference on prisoners at European Parliament

ANF | BRUSSELS | 12 APRIL 2024

A conference on the situation of political prisoners subjected to isolation, torture and ill-treatment was held in the European Parliament (EP) on Thursday.

Titled "Political Prisoners: Isolation, ill-treatment and torture", the conference was organized jointly by the European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights (ELDH), European Democratic Lawyers (AED) and the Association for Democracy and International Law (MAF-DAD).

Following the conference held on April 11, 2024, the following determinations have been reached:

- Throughout Europe, particularly in Turkey's prisons, the incidence of torture and ill-treatment in prisons is increasingly apparent each passing day. Observations indicate that isolation has been transformed into an execution regime, with arbitrary exile decisions punishing imprisoned families and relatives too. The components of the conference emphasize that torture and ill-treatment in prisons constitute a fundamental issue with serious socio-political consequences.
- The situation in the Basque Country, Catalonia, Hungary such as the discriminatory execution law affecting political prisoners, and the lack of hygiene conditions were among the topics discussed at the conference. Although not addressed due to time constraints, it is known that the situation in Greece is no different, especially concerning refugees, as in the United Kingdom and Germany.
- Turkey, which ranks among the countries with a very high number of political prisoners, indicates a more alarming picture in many respects. Through the authoritarian regime constructed by the AKP and its allies, the rule of law has been transformed into a fundamental instrument of political oppression. New administrative and legal techniques targeting political prisoners are being implemented almost daily in Turkey. Examples include new prison models, arbitrary and unnotified exile practices, burning of prisoners' executions on disciplinary grounds, revocation of all kinds of supervised release rights, access to healthcare, communication bans, to name just a few. Torture and ill-treatment have become a part of everyday life through tools such as strip searches and census practices widely implemented in prisons.
- An unprecedented example of isolation is being experienced at İmralı Island Prison. For the past three years, there has been no news from Mr. Abdullah Öcalan. This severe isolation practice, which is alarming for the Kurdish community, legal and democratic forces, is also a dimension of the intensified attack against the Kurdish people, including denial and annihilation. Isolation and the war targeting Kurdish people manifests as different aspects of the same political approach. The struggle against isolation, which should be systematically conducted within the context of upholding human dignity, constitutes one of the most important dynamics of the struggle for peace and democracy, particularly in the context of İmralı Island Prison.

- Conference components have decided, in view of the above findings and the worsening situation across Europe, that an effective, collective legal and political struggle against isolation and torture in prisons must be pursued.
- In this context, conference participants call upon primarily the mechanisms of the European Union and the Council of Europe to:
- Take a more active stance and concrete steps to end the inhumane practices in Turkish prison conditions, the arbitrary execution regime targeting political prisoners, and the İmralı Island Prison, which has become the primary address for isolation torture.
- Monitor prison conditions in Hungary and take necessary steps to improve them.
- Intervene concretely against discriminatory execution regimes and other legislation in the Basque Country, Turkey, and other countries.

Additionally, a call is made to the CPT, especially concerning İmralı Island Prison, to fulfill its responsibilities more effectively in monitoring and addressing the deepening problems in European prisons.

Conference participants have expressed their concrete views and suggestions during presentations and discussions and have decided to pursue a joint struggle in the following areas:

1. To establish a network initially consisting of conference participants and open to expansion to systematically and effectively conduct the joint legal struggle against isolation and torture.
2. The need for organizing a comprehensive and widely attended 2-day conference under the leadership of lawyers and legal organizations attending the conference to discuss the torture and ill-treatment experienced by prisoners in a broader context. Such a conference can facilitate discussions on legislation and practices in different countries and provide an environment where subjective views can also be heard. A working group will be formed to prepare for this conference.
3. In support of a petition submitted by 1,330 lawyers to the Ministry of Justice in Turkey in January 2024, calling for the end of the ongoing isolation at İmralı Island Prison and the provision of lawyer visits, a similar petition will be organized by European lawyers.
4. All lawyers and representatives of civil society organizations attending the conference have decided to work to sensitize their respective bar associations and international human rights and legal organizations to the problems of prisons.

Tacettin Turan released after 30 years in prison

ANF | AMED | 12 APRIL 2024

Tacettin Turan, who was arrested after being taken into custody in Bismil district of Amed in 1994 and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Turkish State Security Court (DGM) for "disrupting the unity and integrity of the State", was released after 30 years of captivity.

After Turan was released from Trabzon Beşikdüzü T Type Closed Prison, he came to his family home in the neighbourhood of Dicle in Bismil district.

The Association for Assistance, Solidarity, Unity and Culture with Families Who Lost Their Relatives in the Cradle of Civilizations (MEBYA-DER), Association for Assistance with Families of Detainees (TUAY-DER), Free Women's Movement (TJA), Democratic Regions Party (DBP), People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) executives, welcomed Turan.

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MP Eren: Political prisoners are leading the struggle with courage

ANF | 12 APRIL 2024

Abdullah Öcalan, and his fellow prisoners in İmralı Island F Type High Security Closed Prison, Ömer Hayri Konar, Veysi Aktaş and Hamili Yıldırım, have not been allowed to meet with their families and lawyers for 36 months. The international campaign "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, a political solution to the Kurdish question" was launched on 10 October 2023 with simultaneous statements in 74 centres around the world in order to end the isolation in İmralı and ensure Abdullah Öcalan's physical freedom.

As part of the campaign, political prisoners in Turkey started a hunger strike on 27 November. The PKK and PAJK prisoners, who had previously stated that they would carry their hunger strike to a new phase as of 15 February if no steps were taken regarding their demands, postponed their decision due to the 31 March local elections. In a statement on 3 March, the PKK and PAJK prisoners announced that, "Our hunger strike action has shown the need to evolve to a new stage as of 4 April, the birthday of our Leader. As prisoners, our decision to boycott the colonial courts, whose racist, discriminatory and fascist features are highly exposed and who do not even recognise their own laws when it comes to Kurdish reality, and to reject weekly phone calls and family visits has been shaped as a result of this need."

Speaking to ANF about the PKK and PAJK prisoners' decision to boycott the courts and not to attend phone, family and lawyer visits as of 4 April, DEM Party MP Serhat Eren said, "Isolation is a system where not an iota of law is applied. All the peoples of Turkey are falling into the black hole of isolation."

The process of lawlessness started with the abduction and captivity of Öcalan

Eren noted that the process of lawlessness started with the abduction and captivity of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan in violation of the rules of international law. Remarking that the prisoners are protesting against the isolation and lawlessness system embodied in İmralı and that their demands are justified, Eren said that the isolation and lawlessness against Abdullah Öcalan is operated as the most important pressure mechanism seeking to eliminate the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom.

Eren said, "This determined struggle of the prisoners shows that the Kurdish people do not give up in their struggle and their resistance against all forms of pressure by the government. It is inevitable to return to the Dolmabahçe spirit for a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. Political prisoners are courageously defending and leading the struggle for freedom today, as in every period, and are setting an example to the whole society for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question, which is the only prescription for overcoming multiple crises."

As long as the isolation continues, the Kurdish question will remain unsolved

Defining the İmralı isolation system as the continuation of the insistence on a deadlock on the Kurdish question, Eren emphasised that as long as the isolation conditions continue, the impoverishment of society will deepen with war policies. The MP continued: "As long as the isolation continues, the Kurdish question will remain unsolved; all the policies of the state will be shaped through this war, and the people will become poorer and poorer while some people add riches to their wealth. Today, both the white-collar middle class and the poor, working peoples must grasp this reality. In a 2022 report prepared by the Democratic Progress Institute, headquartered in London, it was calculated that Turkey has lost 3 trillion dollars in the last 40 years due to its preference for war policies in relation to the Kurdish question. In 2022, when the report was released, Turkey's national income was \$905.5 billion, and its per capita income was \$10,659. The cost of 3 trillion dollars, which corresponds to a colossal amount, does not include the year 2023. 3 trillion dollars is such a huge figure that, based on the data of 2022, this amount corresponds to Turkey's national income for approximately 3.5 years."

The citizens of Turkey must now put a stop to the war

What could have been done with the 3 trillion dollars spent by insisting on war policies instead of a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question? Each of the 16 million pensioners could have been paid approximately 190 thousand dollars at today's exchange rate, i.e. 6 million liras. If the 3 trillion dollars spent on the war had been divided among Turkey's population of 85 million, each person could have been paid 35,295 dollars, or 1,125,000 liras. The citizens of Turkey must now put a stop to the war and to the insistence on the deadlock on the Kurdish question. In order to do this, everyone must speak out loudly that the isolation must be lifted. Our call for Turkey's society is to stand by the Kurdish people in their democratic demands without giving in to the state's threats and practices of 'don't touch, you will burn'. Unless we walk this path together, no people in Turkey can exist with their own identity and beliefs, and none of our rights and freedoms can be secured."

The so-called legal basis of the isolation is created by the judiciary

Emphasising that the prisoners' hunger strike drew attention to the need for the whole society to raise their voice against the İmralı isolation system, Eren said the following "At the current stage, their decision not to appear in the courts is a resistance against a judiciary that is not impartial and independent. All trials in Turkey today are formal trials. The best example of this is the Kobanî Trial. Tens of thousands of our comrades are in prison, held hostage by the instructions of the government. The so-called legal basis of the isolation is created by the judiciary, which works on instructions and has turned into a political authority. Mr Öcalan and his fellow prisoners are prevented from meeting with their families and lawyers by incessant disciplinary penalties. These decisions are not even notified to the lawyers, the appeal mechanisms are not properly operated, and the complaints made against these judges and prosecutors remain inconclusive. Isolation is a system where not an iota of law is applied. This black hole in the law is growing and spreading by creating extraordinary and exceptional circumstances in all cases. In a society accustomed to lawlessness, all violations are becoming commonplace. All the peoples of Turkey are falling into the black hole of isolation."

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Military aggression and occupation

HPG: Five soldiers killed

ANF | BEHDINAN | 6 APRIL 2024

The Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) issued a statement informing about the war in the Medya Defense Zones. According to information, five soldiers have been killed in the western Zap region in recent days during guerrilla resistance against the Turkish occupation.

On 1 April, the guerrillas used sabotage tactics to defend a tunnel in the Girê FM area against an attack by the Turkish army. One soldier was killed and another was injured.

On 2 April, a soldier was shot dead by a sniper from the Free Women's Association (YJA Star) on Girê Amêdî.

On 4 April, guerrillas carried out an action against a Turkish squad that wanted to plant explosives in a tunnel on the Girê Cûdî. Three soldiers were killed, and two soldiers were injured. The fighters confiscated an MPT-55 weapon, including a rifle scope, as well as two pairs of glasses and a headlamp.

Attacks by the Turkish army

Regarding the attacks by the Turkish army between 31 March and 4 April, the HPG reported that improvised explosive devices and drones loaded with explosives were used several times against guerrilla tunnel systems in the western Zap region.

On Monday, a tunnel at Girê FM was attacked with a chemical weapon. The gas used was white and smelled of chlorine.

In addition, the Medya Defense Areas have been bombed by fighter jets fifty times since Sunday.

The targets were the areas of Girê Kun, Xêrê, Dêreşê, Rêbînê, Mijê, Çemrobotkî, Deriyê Hirçê and Neqeba Xêrê in Gare, Serê Metîna, Dergelê, Bêşîlî and Golka in Metîna, Sinînê, Goşîne and Lolanê in Xakurke, Şehîd Îbrahîm in Zap, Girê Amêdî, Girê Bahar and Girê Cûdî in the western Zap and Zergelê and Balayan in Qandîl.



Ela: The Turkish state and its mercenaries made Idlib a center of terrorism

ANF | 6 APRIL 2024

Siwar Idlib Brigade commander of Jabhat Al Akrad Forces, Iskender Ela, evaluated the latest situation in Idlib, which is under the occupation of the Turkish state's army and mercenaries.

Commander Ela told ANHA that "the occupying Turkish state realizes its interests through this mercenary group. In recent years, especially in 2013 and 2014, Hayat Tehrîr Al-Sham mercenaries controlled Idlib by destroying the national revolutionary forces with the support of the invading Turkish state."

Ela pointed out that Hayat Tehrîr Al-Sham mercenaries put pressure on the people to comply with their policies through terrorism, massacre, kidnapping, extortion and rape, and said: "We are in communication with our people and relatives in Idlib, and they say that they cannot tolerate this oppression anymore. Public demonstrations in Idlib city also show that the people do not accept the existence of invaders and mercenaries."

Ela said that the main goal of the people is to get rid of the mentality of the invading Turkish state and its mercenaries, and added that the torture applied in the prisons in Idlib was also applied during the Baath regime, and that the number of detainees held by the Hayat Tahrir Al Sham mercenaries was the same as the regime.

Ela said that what is happening in Idlib and the occupied regions is done by order of the Turkish state and said: "Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the occupying Turkish state has been alienating revolutionaries and patriots and spreading the terrorist ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood."

Ela pointed out that the Turkish state wants to turn Idlib into a center of global terrorism: "As Siwar Idlib, we have known the aims of the Al Nusra and other extremist groups for a long time. That's why they attack us and try to destroy us. For this reason, we left Idlib and went to Afrin and joined the Jabhat Al Akrad Forces, which are under the umbrella of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Because here we saw the idea of a democratic nation, the brotherhood of peoples and equality."

Ela said: "When we talk to our people in Idlib, we see that they demand the Autonomous Administration project to be implemented. This is demanded not only in Idlib but also in all regions of Suwayda and the Baath regime."

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New colonial houses in built in Jindires, Afrin

ANF | 6 APRIL 2024

It was stated that the Turkish-backed gangs, in cooperation with the Wifaq organisation and with the support of Palestinian organisations, built new colonial houses in Afrin's Cindires district to shelter the gang families.

Sources in the region reported that 84 colonial houses, a mosque, a school and a park have been built in the area so far. 42 gang families have been settled in these colonial houses.

The occupying Turkish state, through organisations in Qatar, Kuwait and Palestine, has so far built colonial houses in nearly 38 areas in the Afrin countryside.

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Mine explosion in Daraa kills 7 children

ANF | 7 APRIL 2024

According to a news agency close to the Damascus government, 7 children died and 2 people, including one woman, were injured as a result of the explosion of a mine laid by unidentified people in the south of Senemên, north of Daraa. A mine exploded while children were playing in the Senemên district, and a total of 7 children, 4 of whom were from the same family, lost their lives in the explosion.

It was stated that 24 people, including 9 children, have been killed in Daraa since the beginning of April.

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HBDH militia sets fire to a factory in Bursa

ANF | 7 APRIL 2024

In a written statement on Sunday, the Garibe Gezer Militia of the Peoples' United Revolutionary Movement (HBDH) drew attention to the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan and the torture system in Turkey's prisons and said, "The hunger strikes that started against this persecution shed light on the darkness and teach us how the struggle should be carried out in every field."

The statement said, "As HBDH Garibe Gezer militia, we set fire to the recycling factory of the AKP Municipality in the Yıldırım district of Urfa at around 20.00 on 1 April. While the recycling factory was completely burnt down, 6 buses and containers inside were rendered unusable."

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Village guards to participate in invasion attack selected

ARARAT ARAM / KESER BULDAN | HAKKARI | 9 APRIL 2024

The AKP-MHP government continues its diplomatic and military efforts for the new Garê-centered invasion attack against Medya Defense Areas, and is also strengthening its forces in the region. In this context, ANF learned that the guards who would participate in the new invasion attack were also determined.

The Turkish state, which has previously entered into intensive contacts with the Iraqi central government and the KDP, continues to seek both military and political support for its new attacks. Forces continue to be sent to the guerrilla areas under various names, while KDP forces were previously positioned in these areas on behalf of the Iraqi Border Guard Units. It is stated that KDP's Zerevani and Gulan forces, sent to the region under the name of Iraqi Border Guard Units, went to Sida as well as Şêladize and will build 15 police stations there.

Hundreds of guards prepared

The Turkish state is also planning to use village guards against the Kurdish Freedom Movement. In this context, it was learned that there were hundreds of village guards from the Yüksekova (Gever), in the province of Hakkari (Colemêrg) preparing to participate in the invasion attack.

ANF got access to the "list of security guards assigned to the Central District Gendarmerie Command for cross-border duty". The list includes the names and surnames of the guards assigned to the 34th Border Brigade Command and the 51st Commando Brigade Command, where they are from, their mobile phone numbers, their blood types, their TR ID numbers and their duties.

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HPG exposes the facts concealed by the occupying Turkish state

ANF | BEHDINAN | 9 APRIL 2024

In a written statement on Tuesday, the Press Liaison Centre of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) said: "Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla continues to strike a blow to the occupying Turkish army. On 4 April, the occupying Turkish army sent a selective unit, consisting of lieutenants and senior lieutenants, towards our war tunnels in Girê Cûdî Resistance Area. These invaders were taken under control by our forces, first shot with sabotage tactics and then intervened with individual weapons. Our forces confiscated 1 SAR-56 individual weapon and materials from the occupiers who were killed here. However, the occupying Turkish army concealed its losses here as usual. It was determined that the SAR-56 individual weapon removed from the killed invaders had the serial number TCK 1102-22CK00541. We present the facts hidden by the occupying army and the special war media to the public with images."

The HPG also shared the following details about the latest actions by the guerrillas and occupation attacks by the Turkish army:

" Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region;

On 4 April at 10:05, 1 radar system and 1 surveillance camera system belonging to the invaders in Girê FM Resistance Area were targeted and destroyed by the guerrillas using assassination tactics.

On 8 April at 13:00, 1 projector and 1 surveillance camera system belonging to the invaders in Girê FM Resistance Area were targeted and destroyed by the guerrillas using assassination tactics.

Attacks carried out by the occupying Turkish army with prohibited explosives;

On 5 April, our war tunnels in Girê Cûdî Resistance Area of Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were bombed once with prohibited explosives.

On 5 April, our war tunnels in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area of Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were bombed once with prohibited explosives.

On 6 April, our war tunnels in Girê FM Resistance Area of Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were bombed once with prohibited explosives.

Attacks carried out by the occupying Turkish army;

Between 4-8 April, the Turkish army carried out 27 attacks by fighter jets, including 8 strikes on the areas of Serê Metîna, Banka, Bêşîlî in Metîna region; 8 strikes on the areas of Girê Berbizina, Girê Şehîd Hawar, Girê Şehîd Şerîf, Xinêrêya Jor area in Xakurkê region; 7 strikes on the areas of Girê Kun, Deşta Kafya, Gûzê in Garê region; 14 strikes on the areas of Girê Cûdî, Girê Amediyê, Girê Bahar Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region.

On 5 April, the Lolan area in Xakurkê region was bombed by attack helicopters."



Turkey continues to cut off water supply to Alouk Station in Heseke

ANF | HESEKE | 10 APRIL 2024

The occupation of the Turkish state and its mercenaries in the city of Serêkaniyê has been continuing since October 2019. So are the attacks on the region. The Turkish state and its mercenaries cut off the Alouk Station, which provides water to more than one and a half million people in Heseke and its district.

The Turkish state has cut off the water supply more than 40 times since the occupation of Serêkaniyê. According to the Heseke Water Directorate, the last water cut was 7 months ago and the water cuts still continue.

Initiatives of the Autonomous Administration

Heseke Water Directorate declared Heseke a disaster area on 3 July 2023. The Autonomous Administration is carrying out major projects to create an alternative to Alouk Station and meet the needs of the people. At the same time, 60 water tankers that distribute water to the residents of the neighbourhood were put into service for the citizens. Work is also being carried out to provide water to citizens from tankers and wells.

Around 800 water tankers distribute water to the people living in the city every day.

In March 2020, the Cizîrê Canton Democratic Autonomous Administration launched the first water project in the Hime region, west of Heseke. Within the scope of this project, 15 wells were dug and water was provided to citizens in the city for 3 months. However, the wells dried up due to low water levels.

In August 2021, the Autonomous Administration launched a project that involved drawing water from the Euphrates River to Heseke, 160 km away. However, the project was stopped due to the Turkish state reducing the Euphrates water.

The Democratic Autonomy Administration launched a new project consisting of 4 stages in August 2023: 20 wells will be opened in the rural parts of Amudê district and water will be pumped to Heseke through 62 km long pipes.

The project, which started this year, costs approximately 18 million dollars.

According to Heseke Water Directorate, the city needs an additional 130 thousand cubic meters of water daily.



Entrance to Cûdî and Gabar banned for 15 days

ANF | 10 APRIL 2024

The Şırnak (Şirnex) governor announced that the Cûdî and Gabar Mountains regions have been declared a "Special Security Zone" for 15 days.

Gabar Mountain is located in the rural areas of Şırnak center and Basa (Güçlükonak) district. Cûdî Mountain is located on the borders of Şırnak center and Silopi (Silopiya) and Cizre (Cizîr) districts.

The statement made by the governor said that the ban would continue from 10 to 24 April.

Both regions have been banned for years for "operation and security" reasons.

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HPG reports 24 airstrikes by the Turkish army on guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 11 APRIL 2024

The Press Office of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the latest attacks carried out by the invading Turkish army in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG statement on Thursday, Turkish fighter jets carried out 24 attacks on guerrilla areas on 8th, 9th and 10th of April. These included 8 strikes on the areas of Gûzê, Girê, Deşta Kafya in Garê region, 11 strikes on the areas of Şêlazê, Dergelê, Bêşîlî, Bazê, Banka in Metîna region, 1 strike on the Şehîd İbrahîm area in Zap region and 4 strikes on the areas of Xinêrêya Jor, Kolît, Kendekola areas in Xakurkê region.

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Femicide

Men killed 24 women in Turkey in March

ANF | 6 APRIL 2024

According to news compiled by Bianet from local and national newspapers, news websites and news agencies, men killed at least 24 women (in March 2023 men killed 23 women) and three children in March. T

Men killed at least 4 women despite restraining orders. One of the men was a police officer and one was a petty officer.

Additionally, the deaths of at least 31 women reported in the press were suspected cases of femicides.

Men killed 89 women in the first three months of the year.

Provinces where suspicious deaths occurred

Antalya (5), Çorum (1), Burdur (1), Bursa (2), Denizli (1), Edirne (1), Isparta (2), İstanbul (3), Karabük (2), Kayseri (1), Kocaeli (2), Malatya (1), Muğla (1), Samsun (3), Şırnak (1), Trabzon (2), Zonguldak (2).

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MKG report: Pressure and attacks on women journalists continue

ANF | AMED | 8 APRIL 2024

Mesopotamia Women Journalists' Association (MKG) shared the report they prepared on violations against women journalists during the month of March.

The introduction of the report said: "In this process, we have recorded many violations such as obstacles, arrests, physical and verbal attacks faced by journalists, the cornerstones of press freedom, while carrying out their professional activities. While securing the public's right to information, free press workers face various mechanisms of pressure and censorship aimed at depriving them of this right. Violations in March manifested themselves in the prevention of journalistic activities, detention and prosecution of press workers. This situation stands out as one of the biggest obstacles to press freedom and freedom of expression."

'Attacks on journalists also restrict the freedom of society'

The report pointed out that attacks on freedom of the press mean restriction of the rights and freedoms not only of journalists but also of society in general:

"In March, 2 journalists were detained, and 3 others were subjected to ill-treatment. In addition, one journalist was threatened, and one other was prevented from covering the events. These cases reveal the extent of physical and legal pressures faced by journalists in the exercise of their profession. As for violations of freedom of expression, one journalist was subjected to an investigation, four journalists were put on trial and four were acquitted. During the period covered in the report, a total of 10 journalists are still on trial, while 7 women journalists are in prison. We condemn all kinds of rights violations against free press workers and call on all relevant institutions and organisations to take concrete steps to end the pressure on journalists. Journalism is not a crime; it is a social service and this service must continue unhindered."

The report lists the violations of rights as follows:

- Journalists Detained: 2
- Journalists Subjected to Ill-Treatment: 3
- Journalists Threatened: 1
- Journalists Prevented from Covering Events: 1
- Journalists Under Investigation: 1
- Number of imprisoned female journalists: 7.

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DEM Party visits Emine Şenyaşar

ANF | ANKARA | 9 APRIL 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 73rd day.

The Şenyavaşar family, who continued their protest, received the visit by DEM Party Assembly (PM) members, DEM Party Ankara Provincial Organization executives and Sevinç Çakar, whose son was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016. Sevinç Çakar came in front of the ministry wearing a t-shirt with the words "I want my son back."

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Woman raped by a soldier in Suruç

ANF | 9 APRIL 2024

In the Suruç district of Urfa, a man named K.K., who introduced himself as a specialised sergeant and former district governor's bodyguard, raped a woman named M.M. (29). The incident, which took place about 2 months ago, came to light upon M.M.'s complaint.

In M.M.'s statement to the police following her complaint to Suruç District Gendarmerie Command, she stated that she had met the perpetrator K.K. on social media and that the perpetrator told her that he could meet with someone from the municipality and arrange a job for her if she came to Suruç.

M.M. travelled to the district and was raped by the perpetrator, K.K., whom she met there.

M.M. stated that she could not tell anyone about the incident because the perpetrator threatened her family.

M.M. stated that the perpetrator, who raped her and said that he was a specialised sergeant, was on duty at Suruç District Gendarmerie Command.

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Eğitim Sen: MIT is targeting children

ANF | ANKARA | 10 APRIL 2024

On the occasion of 23 April (Turkish Children's day), the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) asked children to write the words "security", "intelligence" and "secret agent" on paper with pictures or letters. In the announcement on MIT's website, children between the ages of 5 and 14 were "invited" to use their imagination. Children were asked to draw pictures or write letters using the words "security", "intelligence" and "secret agent", which define the field of duty of MIT. Families were asked to send pictures or letters prepared by their children to the MIT address by e-mail.

Making a statement on the issue, the Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim Sen), affiliated with the Confederation of Public Employees' Unions (KESK), protested, stating that institutions such as Diyanet and MIT had gone beyond their scope of duty with such requests.

The trade union said in a statement that "such concepts are not compatible with children's reality, and such activities are not the duty of MIT. Has MIT asked the Ministry of National Education about organizing such an event? If not, this is a problem. If it asked and the Ministry of Education gave permission, this would be a much bigger problem."

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Human Rights Violations

Turkish state mercenaries torture a man and son

ANF | 8 APRIL 2024

Ferid Hiso and his son Mihemed, living in the village of Kaxirê in Mabata district of Afrin, were tortured and threatened with death by the Turkish state mercenaries.

According to information received from local sources, Ferid and Mihemed Hiso, who went to the olive fields in the village of Çolaqê, were subjected to torture. It was stated that the mercenaries threatened the father and son that they would be killed if they went to the olive fields again.

Sources reported that Ferid Hiso was being treated in a hospital in Afrin for fractures on his body. No clear information was obtained about Mihemed Hiso's condition.

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4 people, including two brothers, kidnapped, hundreds of olive trees cut down in Afrin

ANF | 8 APRIL 2024

According to local sources, four people, including two brothers, were kidnapped in Afrin, which has been under the occupation of the Turkish state since 2018.

The abducted people are Mehmûd Sebrî Ebdalo from Jalemê village of Jindires district, Fîras Nûrî Hoba and Cewad Nûrî Hoba, two brothers from Afrin centre, and Rênas Reşîd Mihemed from Şêxurzê village of Bilbile district.

In Bilbile district, the Turkish state and its gangs continue to loot people's property.

135 trees belonging to a citizen named Mistefa Reşîd Reşîd Reşo, 150 trees belonging to Dawud Kabo, 90 trees belonging to Şêx Reşîd Kedro, 40 trees belonging to Xelîl Kedro and 30 trees belonging to Xelîl Reşîd and Lîlo family were cut down.



Swedish lawyers: Säpo's criminalisation of Kurds in Sweden must end

ANF | 9 APRIL 2024

25 lawyers and legal professionals in Sweden made a written statement on the criminalisation of Kurds by the Swedish secret service, Säpo. The statement said that Säpo's derailed work is a "Kafka process*" that has no place in a modern legal system or in a democratic country, and emphasised that their primary duty is to "protect human rights and fundamental freedoms".

The full statement published on etc.se reads as follows:

There is a political persecution of Kurds in Sweden, with the security police at the forefront, since international relations with Turkey have become more important in foreign policy, backed by the Swedish government.

In recent years, the Swedish Security Service has begun to criminalise Kurds, and it is our view that the work of Säpo has gone off the rails. The Kurds' political position and activities, for which the same Kurds were initially granted protection in their new home country, have been classified as "terrorism" by Säpo for some years, an assessment that was later upheld by decision-making bodies.

In one high-profile criminal case (B 1069-23 Stockholm District Court), and the related preliminary investigation, an interrogator asks whether there are any lawyers in Sweden who are specifically targeting the PKK. In addition, an individual has been arrested in the company of his lawyer, in the lawyer's company car, on the way to the lawyer's office when the same person ten minutes earlier was in the premises of the Security Police for questioning, which the person had come to voluntarily (Södertörn District Court B 3616-24). In our opinion, being in the company of your lawyer should be covered by the one-room privilege.

The political persecution of Kurds and Kurdish institutions and associations must stop. The broad definition of terrorism adopted by the security police through information exchange with the Turkish security services should be strongly criticised. Turkey is a country that has been condemned several times by the European Court of Human Rights for violations of the Convention. It is also a country that holds thousands of lawyers, journalists and politicians in arbitrary detention.

The developments we have observed in Sweden in recent years are reprehensible

We now see the same grounds used by the Swedish Security Service against the Kurds in Sweden. The development we have observed in Sweden in recent years is reprehensible, and makes us think about what future Sweden is heading towards and what legal system we are slowly but surely accepting in a longer perspective.

The average person may think that since a Swedish authority, and especially the Swedish Security Service, claims something, it must be so. However, according to what we have been able to discern in our daily work in these cases, the Swedish Security Service has the same broad definition of terrorism as Turkey. In Turkey, however, the individual is still allowed to know what they are accused of, regardless of the truthfulness of the claim. In Sweden, in cases handled by the Swedish Security Service, individuals are not even told what they are accused of and the basis for the assessment.

It is a Kafka process that has no place in a modern legal system or in a democratic country. We are now witnessing an open criminalisation but with hidden evidence. Regardless of the fact that the basis for the Security Police's assessments is not reported, we know that these are individuals who sympathise with the Kurdish opposition in Turkey, but according to the Security Police, they are allegedly linked to the PKK.

The situation is again similar to the Turkish legal system where every Kurd who wants to claim his identity is considered a terrorist and a PKK sympathiser. According to the Security Police, these alleged links to the PKK are considered a threat to national security and individuals are not allowed to extend their residence permits and are deported. Furthermore, Kurdish organisations have their bank accounts blocked, young Kurdish job seekers do not proceed in the work permit process after security clearance, and lawyers are beginning to be targeted.

The question of the terrorist classification is a topic in itself, but it is worth mentioning that the PKK has not posed a security threat to Swedish interests and security, nor has it been claimed by Swedish authorities, regardless of the veracity of these alleged links to the PKK.

It is also worth mentioning in this context that in 2017, after an 11-year legal process, the Belgian court concluded that the PKK cannot be considered a terrorist organisation.

The assessments of the security police that individuals with alleged PKK links are a threat to national security therefore appear to be contradictory. Only a few years ago, the Kurds were one of the most important actors against the advance of ISIS and were internationally acclaimed.

Instead of suspecting and criminalising the Kurds, Sweden should support a new peace process between the Kurds and Turkey. Criminalising the Kurds and their institutions does not solve the problem, but becomes the problem.

The work of the Swedish Security Service can be likened to registering opinions. Everyone is guaranteed freedom of expression, which includes the right to express thoughts and opinions. Everyone is also guaranteed freedom of assembly, demonstration and association, which are our fundamental rights and freedoms.

The work of the security police undoubtedly involves registering the opinions and activities of Kurds in view of the questions that individuals have subsequently said they received from the security police and which have been publicly published in the above-mentioned preliminary investigation. In addition, these individuals are put in fear of not disclosing what has been revealed with reference to a confidentiality clause.

As lawyers and legal professionals, our primary task is to zealously protect the rights of our clients. We also have a special position in society and have a special responsibility to safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms covered by the 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In their activities, lawyers must endeavour to uphold human rights and freedoms. The work of the security police against Kurds and Kurdish institutions is a violation of these rights and freedoms and must therefore be stopped.



Freedom for Turkish assassin, deportation for Kurdish refugees in France

ANF | 10 APRIL 2024

While no arrest warrant has been issued for Zekeriya Çelikbilek, a member of the Turkish assassination squad recently convicted in Belgium, France has handed over several Kurdish refugees to the Turkish state in recent months.

The Democratic Kurdish Council of France (CDK-F) stated that Kurdish activist Mehmet Kopal was deported on 9 April 2024 and strongly condemned this practice.

Only two weeks ago, Kurdish activist Firaz Korkmaz was deported and arrested.

"This deportation is the result of co-operation between the French and Turkish authorities and is unacceptable and contrary to fundamental humanitarian values," the CDK-F said.

"France, a country known for its defence of human rights, has deliberately organised this deportation, fully aware of the inhumane consequences and long years of imprisonment that await Mehmet Kopal in Turkey. The fact that the Turkish media welcomed this deportation reveals the long-standing close co-operation between France and Turkey and is a matter of great concern," said the CDK-F, noting that they were also concerned by reports that another Kurdish activist, Serhat Gültekin, would soon be deported.

The statement pointed out that: "We cannot remain silent in the face of these injustices. We demand that the French authorities immediately put an end to these practices, which are contrary to human rights and the principles of the Republic. We call for international solidarity and urgent action to protect the rights and safety of Kurdish activists in France. The Kurdish Democratic Council in France remains committed to the struggle for justice and human rights and will no longer tolerate the deportation of Kurdish activists to Turkey."

While France is deporting Kurdish refugees one by one, the perpetrators of assassination attempts and assassinations against Kurds are not prosecuted in any way.

Among them is Zekeriya Çelikbilek, who took part in an assassination attempt in 2017 against KONGRA GEL Co-Chair Remzi Kartal and KCK Executive Council Member Zübeyir Aydar. According to the French newspaper Le Point, Çelikbilek lives in the city of Reims and travels freely without making any changes to his daily life.

A Belgian court recently sentenced Turkish intelligence service officers Zekeriya Çelikbilek and Yakup Koç to five years in prison each in the assassination case. Yakup Koç, who is said to be in charge of the team, has fled to Turkey, while Çelikbilek lives in France. Many sources point out that Çelikbilek was also working for French intelligence.

French journalists Guillaume Perrier and Laure Marchand published a report entitled "Is France covering up the crimes of the Turkish services?". Çelikbilek has been convicted in Belgium and is suspected of involvement in the 2013 attack in which three Kurdish women revolutionaries were murdered, and he lives in Reims. "The 55-year-old unemployed electrician was sentenced in February by the Court of Appeal in Brussels to 5 years in prison for inciting a criminal organisation to commit murder," Perrier recalled on his X account.

The journalist emphasised Çelikbilek's "undeniable" connection with MIT and shared the following: "Çelikbilek has been questioned four or five times by the French judiciary in recent months. While in police custody, he denied any connection to the triple murder in January 2013. He admitted to collaborating with a service to obtain a residence permit in France. In 2018, another prominent figure in the case, a man nicknamed "Petit Oiseau", was also interviewed and claimed that Çelikbilek was working for the French police. No arrest warrant has been issued for Çelikbilek since his conviction on appeal in Belgium on 1 February 2024. According to lawyer Jan Fermon, it is highly unusual that no order or warrant of arrest warrant has been issued."

ANF published many news items about the assassination team's connections in Turkey. The case file contained photographs of Zekeriya Çelikbilek and Yakup Koç meeting with top Turkish officials in Paris and Ankara. This team had direct links with Ankara and even the Turkish Presidential Palace.



CDK-F condemns expulsion of Kurdish activist Kopal

ANF | PARIS | 11 APRIL 2024

The Kurdish Democratic Council in France (CDK-F) issued a statement to protest the expulsion of Kurdish activist Mehmet Kopal, on 9 April.

The statement said: "This expulsion, which occurred less than two weeks after the expulsion of another Kurdish activist, Firaz Korkmaz, is the result of collaboration between the French and Turkish authorities, unacceptable behavior and contrary to fundamental human values."

The statement added: "France, a country known for its defense of human rights, knowingly organized this expulsion, fully aware of the inhumane consequences and long years of imprisonment that await Mehmet Kopal in Turkey. The Turkish media, welcoming this expulsion, reveal close and long-prepared cooperation between France and Turkey, which raises great concerns."

The statement continued: "We denounce the efforts of anti-Kurdish circles within the French state apparatus, who are exploiting the new immigration law to serve their obscure interests with Turkey, to the detriment of the Kurds. These practices, including the withdrawal of statuses, the freezing of assets, and numerous expulsions, constitute deplorable relentlessness and leave an indelible stain on the history of France. This anti-Kurdish policy threatens to seriously deteriorate Franco-Kurdish relations and negatively impact our common interests."

We are particularly alarmed by reports of a possible imminent expulsion of Serhat Gültekin, another Kurdish activist under OQTF, who also faces inhumane treatment and a long prison sentence in Turkey. Faced with these injustices, we cannot remain silent. We demand that the French authorities immediately put an end to these practices contrary to human rights and the principles of the Republic. We call for international solidarity and urgent action to protect the rights and security of Kurdish activists in France. The Kurdish Democratic Council in France remains committed to the fight for justice and human rights, and will not tolerate any further expulsions of Kurdish activists to Turkey."

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CDK-F warns of new possible deportation of Kurdish activist to Turkey

ANF | PARIS | 12 APRIL 2024

The Kurdish Democratic Council-France (CDK-F) issued an urgent statement on Thursday warning of the possible deportation of yet another activist to Turkey.

Kurdish activist Serhat Gültekin was sent to a deportation center on Thursday, said the CDK-F, adding that he risks "imminent deportation to Turkey where he faces torture and years in prison."

The statement said: "Three days after delivering Mehmet Kopal to Turkey, France wants to make a new victim. Meanwhile, a Turkish Secret Service agent convicted of an attempted attack against Kurdish officials lives in complete freedom on French territory."

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People of Maxmur Camp go to the polls for municipal elections

ANF | MAXMUR | 12 APRIL 2024

Ballot boxes were set up in 8 centres for the elections in the Martyr Rustem Cudi Refugee Camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). While the voting started early in the morning, 4 co-chairs and 20 councilor candidates are competing in the elections. As a result of these elections, two co-mayors and 7 councilors will be elected. Voting will continue until 17.00 local time.

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Local Elections in Turkey

Co-mayors of Van take office: The resisting people won

ANF | VAN | 6 APRIL 2024

Van Metropolitan Municipality Co-Mayors Neslihan Şedal and Abdullah Zeydan took over the office in a ceremony organised with the participation of Mustafa Avcı, the former Co-Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality whose office was usurped. DEM Party Provincial Co-Chair Gülşen Kurt made the first speech at the ceremony attended by many people and said: "We have etaken over all 14 municipalities in Van and made history. The people of Van have made history twice by showing their will and resistance. We bow to this will of our people with respect. We will show our service to everyone, friend and foe."

'The people of Van resisted and won'

Mustafa Avcı, the deposed Co-Mayor of Van Metropolitan Municipality, said, "Those who saw your resistance could not hold back their tears. The people of Van showed great resistance and won. Many unlawful and immoral things happened. They wanted to open a third door to this unlawfulness, but our people closed this door on them. If they happen to appoint a trustee again, they will measure and decide a thousand times. The people of Van have been great morale for everyone. Our people have paid a great price and have great honour. Such resistances do not emerge in an hour. This resistance is a result of martyrs and our struggle. They supposed that our people would turn their backs on us and leave if the government appointed a trustee, but our people did what was necessary. We received 53 percent of the votes during the first trustee period, 54 percent during the second trustee period, and 55 percent on 31 March. This means that your trustees are worthless."

'The people won'

Zeydan said, "Our people never digested the trustee and always stood by the candidates of his party. We saved 14 municipalities from the trustee usurpation and made them municipalities of the people. This

labour was our people's and they won. We will run our municipalities together with our people and start our services. Of course, we need the experience of our other friends. Now is the day to work."

'Nothing is bigger than the will of the people'

Neslihan Şedal also drew attention to the importance of the resistance of the people and said: "Nothing is bigger than the will of the people and no one can usurp their will. If our people won through their resistance, this shows how strong their will is. We have paid great prices in the struggle for freedom and democracy. We commemorate them all with respect and say that we will follow their struggle. We will fulfill all the requirements of decentralisation and serve our people. From now on, we will endeavour to make life meaningful for our people. We will make our city a centre for women, youth, ecological and production. Success belongs to the people of Van."

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YSK: Court decision on Zeydan is devoid of legal value

ANF | ANKARA | 6 APRIL 2024

DEM members Abdullah Zeydan and Neslihan Şedal received around 55.5 percent of the vote in the local elections in Van on 31 March. However, the Turkish regime wanted to appoint an AKP politician as mayor in their place and had Zeydan declared ineligible at short notice. The background to the decision to exclude Zeydan from the election is a court ruling on the 52-year-old politician's restoration of all civil rights after serving several years in prison, including the right to run for political office. The court had approved the application in 2022, but withdrew its own decision two days before the election on the initiative of the Ministry of Justice. Zeydan was not informed of the move, which, according to lawyers, was unlawful. Following massive protests, Ankara rowed back and finally confirmed Zeydan's election victory. The Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors (HSK) is now investigating the court that restored the Kurdish politician's civil rights.

The Supreme Election Board (YSK) announced its reasoned decision on Abdullah Zeydan, who received his certificate of election yesterday upon the return of his civil rights.

"Although the decision of the Diyarbakır High Criminal Court dated 29/3/2024 is null and void, it has not yet been finalised as such. Since Abdullah Zeydan has a finalised decision on the restoration of prohibited rights, which was submitted and accepted in due time in accordance with the election calendar, he is qualified to be elected as of the voting day on 31 March 2024."

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Co-mayors of İdil remove the 'Security' booth

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 6 APRIL 2024

Doğan Adıbelli and Türkan Kayır, candidates of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), who were elected with 71.27 percent of the votes in the elections held on 31 March in İdil district of Şırnak, took office.

The first thing the DEM Party co-mayors did was to remove the booth placed by the trustees at the entrance of the municipality on the grounds of "security" with construction equipment.

DEM Party Co-Mayor Doğan Adıbelli stated: "We have removed the so-called security booth that was placed at the entrance gate of our municipality during the trustee period. The municipality is our people's own home that they can enter at any time."

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YSK rejects DEM Party's objections for Kars, Çukurca, Baykan, Dihê, and Hilvan

ANF | 7 APRIL 2024

The objections filed by the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) to the Supreme Electoral Board (YSK) to contest the results of Kars (Qerse), Çukurca (Çele), Baykan (Hawêl), Eruh (Dihê) and Hilvan (Curnê Reş) were rejected by the YSK.

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Bakırhan: Resistance and solidarity won in Van

ZEYNEP KURAY | ISTANBUL | 7 APRIL 2024

The Kurdish people were devastated when the government and the judiciary attempted to usurp the certificate of election of Abdullah Zeydan, the candidate of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), who won the Van Metropolitan Municipality co-mayorship with a large vote difference in the local elections.

Just like happened with Hatip Dicle, the Kurdish people stood up against the usurpation of will in the Van (Wan) elections and defeated the conspiracy with the resistance. They built city by city, borough by borough, street by street.

Speaking to ANF, DEM Party co-chair Tuncer Bakırhan said that resistance, struggle and solidarity gained in Van and noted that this unity guides the attitude that should be taken in similar unlawfulness. Bakırhan emphasized that the struggle and objections continue for Bidlîs, Şirnex, Qers and other municipalities that are wanted to be usurped.

86 million people support the resistance in Van

Tuncer Bakırhan underlined that with the resistance of the Kurdish people against the usurpation of will in the Van elections, they both responded to the trustee mentality and frustrated the games they wanted to play from now on. Noting that it is important for the people of Turkey and the public to support the resisting Van people in this process, Bakırhan added that this solidarity will set an example of the reaction that should be shown against injustice and lawlessness in the future.

He said that for the first time after 1980, peoples, beliefs and political parties formed an alliance in the struggle for rights, adding: "In fact, 86 million people had an alliance in supporting the resistance in Van. Yes, the Kurdish people resisted and did not give in, but there was great support from the public outside. This was a hope that clearly showed that when we act together, we can win. If such an alliance continues and the same reflex is shown against similar unlawfulness in the coming period, good days will await us. Van's example is also a sign that an important stage has been passed, and a door has opened."

Our struggle and objections continue

Pointing out that the struggle continues, Bakırhan said that the Kurdish people are standing against the usurpation of their will in Bitlis and Sirnak, where dozens of soldiers and police were brought in to vote. "Our struggle and objections continue," said Bakırhan, adding that "the people are resisting in these three provinces. With resistance and solidarity, we will thwart the usurpations in other provinces."

People direct and pave the way for politics

Bakırhan noted that at this point, no matter what illegality is carried out, the fact that the local election results indicate the beginning of the collapse of the AKP cannot be covered up. Stating that the people of Turkey have given the message to stop this trend, Bakırhan said: "The oppressed, workers and laborers do not want to live like this anymore. By expressing its own will in these local elections, it gave the message that a democratic Turkey can be created with good politics and opposition. In this sense, the success of this election is the success of the people, not the parties. While saying no to this situation, the people also said that we can create good things together. I think everyone should get their share of the message from here. We have entered a process where the people direct politics, become actors and lead the way."

Elections to be renewed in Siverek

ANF | URFA | 7 APRIL 2024

In the Siverek district of Urfa, AKP was claimed to be the first party with a 64-vote difference. Upon the objection of Yeniden Refah (New Welfare) Party (YRP), a decision was made for a renewal of the elections. YRP applied to the District Election Board on 2 April, citing irregular voting and invalid votes. The District Election Board rejected the objection on procedural grounds. The objection was referred to the Provincial Election Board, which accepted the objection and decided to renew the elections.

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7 AKP members arrested for burning ballot papers in Hilvan

ANF | URFA | 7 APRIL 2024

7 people who burned ballot papers in the local elections in the Hilvan district of Urfa were sent to prison. 13 people, including relatives of AKP's mayoral candidate Ali Aslan Bayık, who were detained on 2 April, were referred to the courthouse last night. 7 people were remanded in custody while 6 people were released on judicial control conditions.

Among those arrested are Sabri İzol, the nephew of AKP's Ali Aslan Bayık and first-ranking municipality council member candidate, and his nephews Necip Bayık, Bedir Bayık and Mahmut Bayık. Those arrested were sent to Siverek Closed Prison No 2.

According to reports, there is a confidentiality order on the file.

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Elections will not be renewed in Halfeti, Siverek and Ürgüp

ANF | 7 APRIL 2024

Upon AKP's objection, Urfa Provincial Election Board canceled the elections in Urfa's Halfeti and Siverek districts and decided to renew the elections. The Supreme Election Board (YSK) accepted the objection of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and lifted the decision to cancel the elections.

On the other hand, YSK announced that the decision for the renewal of the elections in Ürgüp, Nevşehir in the Central Anatolian region was canceled.

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More than 30 people detained during latest protests for Van imprisoned

ANF | VAN | 8 APRIL 2024

DEM Party members Abdullah Zeydan and Neslihan Şedal received around 55.5 percent of the vote in the local elections in Van on 31 March. However, the Turkish regime wanted to appoint an AKP politician as mayor in their place and had Zeydan declared ineligible at short notice. The background to the decision to exclude Zeydan from the election is a court ruling on the 52-year-old politician's restoration of all civil rights after serving several years in prison, including the right to run for political office. The court had approved the application in 2022, but withdrew its own decision two days before the election on the initiative of the Ministry of Justice. Zeydan was not informed of the move, which, according to lawyers, was unlawful. Following massive protests, Ankara rowed back and finally confirmed Zeydan's election victory. The Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors (HSK) is now investigating the court that restored the Kurdish politician's civil rights.

Hundreds of people were detained after the historic resistance of the people for two days against the government's attempt to usurp the mayoral office from Abdullah Zeydan.

260 people detained during protests or house raids were referred to court on the charges of "being members of an illegal organisation" and "committing action on behalf of an illegal organisation". Among those detained are 15 minors and 10 lawyers. The court decided for the imprisonment of more than 30 people, including two minors.

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Amed co-mayor Bucak: We will rebuild our city

ANF | AMED | 9 APRIL 2024

Local elections were held in Kurdistan and Turkey on 31 March. Despite all the obstacles, pressures and manipulations, especially in the Kurdistan cities of the state, the Kurdish people showed a historical will and protected the ballot boxes, despite the tens of thousands of voters brought by the state to Kurdistan.

The People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) also won the elections in Amed. DEM Party Amed Metropolitan Municipality co-mayor candidates Doğan Hatun and Serra Bucak achieved historical success by receiving 64.9 percent of the votes.

Amed Metropolitan Municipality co-mayor Serra Bucak evaluated the election process and post-election projects for the city to ANF.

The Kurdish people showed great will

Noting that they have been in the field for a long time since the primary elections started in December, Serra Bucak said: "What we saw in the field throughout the election process was that the Kurdish people would demonstrate their own will and defend this will strongly. We were indeed not mistaken. The Kurdish people showed great will and that became the determinant of the election. The Kurdish people became the subject of the election despite all the pressure and difficulties. The Kurdish people eliminated all the negativity that occurred on the election day and after the election. What happened in Van was an example of this determination. Indeed, in Van, Abdullah Zeydan, whose rights were illegally and unfairly challenged, was ultimately brought back to the charge he won by the will of the people. In this respect, there is great morale and motivation. Without the Kurdish people and their will, this election success would not have happened. We increased our votes in many parts of Amed and won the election by a historical percentage."

Amed will become a women's city

Bucak said: "There was a lot of serious destruction caused by the trustees. Along with the trustees, there was the destruction and damage caused by Turkish policies. There is serious economic destruction in the country. The reasons for this are obvious. The only investments made have been in the war policy and for a bigger and bigger war budget for more than forty years. It is one of the biggest reasons for all this destruction and the deepening of the crisis. This is the situation we are currently experiencing in our cities. There is social, cultural and identity destruction, as well as an economic crisis created by the trustees in Amed . We will begin to recover as soon as possible, starting with a new policy in social and identity terms. From the moment we take office, we will first eliminate the physical damage by working hand in hand with our district municipalities. The city has a serious infrastructure problem: 17 of our districts have villages with no water supply. Firstly, we will solve these problems. Then there is the serious damage caused by the trustees in the areas of identity, language and culture. As you know, the institutions they closed as soon as they arrived were language and cultural institutions. We will bring these institutions to life again. We will open language courses within the Metropolitan Municipality that will spread to all areas of the city to develop Kurdish and its dialects. There is serious damage, especially to women's institutions. In order to eliminate these damage, we will establish our Women's Policies Department and fight violence against women, as well as open women's counseling centers that women demand from us. We will rebuild Amed as a city where women have a voice, take part in work life and politics, and where women's policy is developed."

A new transparent local government

Bucak said: "We will have a serious study on the 8-year trustee devastation, budget deficits and debts. We will share this with the people of Amed in a transparent manner. As soon as we receive the mandate, we will continue our work in all areas and start a new construction process. We will work with a structure that covers the whole society and is based on pluralism, with democratic and free cities, social municipalism and people municipalism. Young people have a serious demand for employment. This city is a poor city. There is a poverty that deepens day by day. We will create employment opportunities for our youth. We will create projects. Young people will have a say in this city. We will develop a local economy and create employment opportunities for our youth with the business opportunities we will establish here. We will

open vocational courses for young people, for the new generation. Unfortunately, the system has a very terrible approach towards young people. Our young people have addiction problems. We will work to eliminate this problem. We will carry out various studies to develop women's policies. There are serious demands for women to be present in the employment field. We will establish women's cooperatives to develop women's spaces and employment. We will improve the agricultural policies of our city and create employment areas in the field of agriculture."

We should expand the co-presidential system to every area

Co-mayor Serra Bucak said: "Thanks to women's participation and representation in politics, today we have equal representation both in the party and in local governments. This is an important achievement in terms of women's struggle. Co-presidency is an important achievement for women in all areas of local governments. We want local governments to be influenced by women's perspectives. We want to create democratic, free cities. This can only be possible from a women's perspective, with equal representation of men and women. We must spread the co-presidential system to every field."



Report: Police used violence, gas and rubber bullets during intervention in protests in Van

ANF | VAN | 9 APRIL 2024

Human rights and legal organisations announced the violations of rights during the protests in Van province following the withdrawal of the rights of Abdullah Zeydan, who was elected by the people of Van as co-mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality, in the local elections on March 31.

The report was announced at the Tahir Elçi Conference Hall of the Bar Association. Many civil society organisations in the city also attended the meeting.

The report stated that the police used tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets during the interventions, injuring citizens and detaining many people.

It was emphasised that the police used disproportionate force during the demonstrations and marches organised to protest the usurpation of the will of the people in the local elections in Van.

The report also stated that law enforcement forces blockaded the DEM Party Provincial Building, intervened with demonstrators and caused injuries.

On the other hand, the march of Van Metropolitan Municipality Co-Mayor Abdullah Zeydan with the people was intervened and many people were beaten and detained.

Mehmet Salih Coşkun, President of IHD Van Branch, explained the violations in the report in detail and stated that these violations were committed in order to suppress democratic reactions. It was noted that a detailed report on the incidents mentioned in the report will be shared in the coming days.



Halfeti: The trustee left a debt of 400 million

ANF | URFA | 10 APRIL 2024

The trustees appointed by the Turkish regime over the Kurdish provinces were voted out of office by the people of Kurdistan, as were several pro-regime mayors who were brought to power in the previous local elections, often through electoral fraud. Now the co-mayors of the DEM party are taking office. Little by little, reports are arriving of the devastation that the trustees have caused in the Kurdish cities.

In Halfeti (Xelfeti) in the province of Urfa (Riha), the DEM party won seven districts. The AKP tried to contest the results in Curnê Reş and Halfeti. However, the decision for new elections was overturned by the highest court for Halfeti and the DEM party was able to take office.

After this decision was made, the trustee appears to have left the town hall in the middle of the night, taking a number of things from the inventory. In a video published on X by DEM Party MP Ömer Öcalan, it was documented that many items were carried into a truck parked at the gate of the municipality.

The elected DEM Party co-mayors Saniye Bayram and Mehmet Karayılan went to the municipality accompanied by a large crowd and discovered that even the camera system had been stolen.

Bayram told ANF that the AKP's decision to hold new elections in Halfeti was reversed because the vote difference was too large. According to official counts, the DEM party was 906 votes (39.45 percent) ahead of the AKP candidate (34.97 percent). This result is particularly significant given the massive electoral fraud committed by the AKP. In the last local elections in 2019, the AKP was almost 3,000 votes (total 51.85 percent) ahead of the HDP (37.45 percent).

Bayram said: "On election day, the trustee drove from village to village in the back seat of his car with stamped ballot papers he had received from unknown sources. In many places, tons of such ballot papers were thrown into the ballot boxes. The remaining ballot papers were burned, and it was claimed that we had done it. When they couldn't beat us at the ballot box this time, they resorted to other tricks. They lodged an objection with the district election board. Since there was no concrete evidence, the district election board rejected their objections. This time they appealed to the state election board, which decided to hold the election again. This time we brought the decision to the High Election Committee (YSK). The YSK overturned the decision to repeat the elections and gave us our mandate. At the end of this process, justice was served."

The population, which resolutely supported the DEM party, contributed to the reversal of the decision for new elections. Bayram said: "Our people supported this election with great enthusiasm. No one left the

polling stations, even after the polls closed. People were active until the last moment and their voices did not go unattended. We fought together with our people from the election to receiving the mandates."

"We found a looted city administration"

Saniye Bayram reported on the dire state of the city administration: "According to the results of our initial investigations, the debt of Halfeti Municipality amounts to almost 400 million Turkish lira. We will inform our citizens about the economic situation of our community as part of a detailed review. During the first investigations we carried out in our community, we found that with almost two hundred employees in the city administration, there are far more staff than necessary. Personnel costs make up the majority of our community's monthly expenses. We will take the necessary measures. During our first visit we also noticed that the cameras in both the town hall and the vehicle garage had been removed and taken away. We have reported this and lodged a complaint. We will share the result with our people. We will find out the general situation in the city administration after a detailed investigation and share it with the public. We will now quickly assess the situation, take the necessary measures and take the necessary steps to adjust it. We will tailor our work to the needs of the people here. We will work for our people in a fair, equal, transparent and democratic community."

— ★ —

YSK President: Elections will be held again in 4 places on 2 June

ANF | ANKARA | 11 APRIL 2024

Ahmet Yener, the President of the Supreme Board of Elections (YSK), celebrated Eid with members of the press covering the appeal process on the 31 March General Local Elections.

Yener said that the objection process to the decisions of provincial and district election boards was completed as of yesterday and the extraordinary objection process will end on 14 April.

Giving information about the results of the objections of the parties, Yener said: "The AKP's objections were accepted in 2 places. Likewise, CHP's objection in 1 place was accepted. The objections of the MHP in 1 place and the DEM Party in 2 places were accepted. The process continues. Today, our board will convene at 14.00."

Yener announced that the elections in Pınarbaşı district of Kayseri, Hilvan district of Urfa, a town in Edirne and a constituency in Sivas will be held again on 2 June.

— ★ —

Interview

Co-Mayor of Kızıltepe: They did not even leave a seat to welcome our guests!

ANF | MARDIN | 8 APRIL 2024

On 31 March, the local elections in northern Kurdistan saw the trustees appointed by the Turkish regime swept out of office. In the meantime, the newly elected co-mayor Hamdiye Bilek Turgay of the DEM party has taken office in the Kızıltepe district of Mardin. In an interview with ANF, she stated that the trustee had plundered the city administration. She was left with a mountain of debt totalling 106 million liras. The city's monthly income totalled 38 million liras, while expenditure was 43 million liras. The trustee even took the furnishings of the town hall with him. The city administration's vehicle fleet has also disappeared.

You received your mandate on Thursday and went to the municipality together with the people. What did you find there?

We weren't even left a seat to receive guests. That shows everything. They even took away the armchairs that our city council had bought for receiving guests before the trustee was appointed. We had to receive our visitors on chairs. There are currently no vehicles belonging to the municipality. We drive everywhere in our own cars. There are two sewage treatment vehicles in the garage, one of which is defective, and the rental vehicles have been withdrawn. Eight lawnmowers and four generators were taken away. Even the gazebos in the garden where staff and guests used to rest were removed. In several neighbourhoods, even the permanently installed equipment in children's playgrounds was dismantled and removed. As we have a high visitor density, we have not yet been able to fully inventory and identify the defects. These are the things that come to mind first.

Kızıltepe Municipality was one of the municipalities in Kurdistan where bribery and rent relations were brought to the top by the trustees. With the criminal complaint filed against the trustee of Kızıltepe, Hüseyin Çam, by the person he directly demanded bribes from, we have learned how public tenders were handled by him. It is not hard to guess that you took over a municipality in debt. How are things looking for you financially?

We have taken over the municipality with a debt of 106 million lira. There are three different loans from the provincial bank. One of these loans amounts to 40 million, one to 34 million and one to 20 million. The monthly instalments for these loans total 5.4 million. As of the moment we took office, the municipality's monthly income totalled 38 million, but expenditure currently stands at 43 million. So, expenditure is higher than income. Not to mention the 106 million lira debt I mentioned. One loan is old, and two instalments remain, but the debts of 38 and 43 million are new, and only the first three instalments of these debts have been paid. We have taken over the rest of the debt and it seems that these loans were

taken for tenders for paving stones. With this amount allocated to paving stones, all the roads in a district can be renewed. As you know, previous corruption and tendering problems have always centred on paving stones. The condition of the roads in Kızıltepe is obvious. This was only done to fabricate spending items. We will have a clearer picture and publish it in the next few days. Of course, we will settle these debts, but what they are trying to do to us is to put the people in a difficult situation that will deprive them of even basic services.

Are there enough staff in the municipality at the moment for things to run their natural course? They have formed their own staff, but there is information that the staff they brought with them have also left in many places. What is the situation in Kızıltepe at this point?

They have withdrawn the staff they procured from İŞKUR (Employment Agency) or from subcontractors. The contracts have expired. We only have eleven employees left in the cleaning department. We have informed the Metropolitan Municipality (of Mardin) and asked for reinforcements, but as the same thing has happened there, there is a serious staff shortage there too. They also have no cleaning staff left to reinforce the districts. The neighbourhoods are full of rubbish on the eve of Eid. They are punishing our people this way. Of course, we will go out and collect the rubbish from the streets. The kind of street cleaning we saw in Van will also happen in Kızıltepe.

This is one thing, and the other concerns staff in general. If there is no legal obstacle to the return of our employees dismissed by the trustee, we will reintegrate them into the municipality administration. Many of our truly qualified and deserving staff have been made redundant so they could bring in their own supporters. So, they have attacked the people both economically and morally. Our aim is to redress all these grievances. We will quickly move to a functioning order with competent people who know and understand the needs of the people here. We absolutely must do this in order to eliminate this damage.

We know that people continue to visit the municipality intensely. There is an intense sense of embrace. How are these visits going? What are the people's expectations for the upcoming process?

Once we received our mandates and entered the town hall, we opened the doors wide. When people came to the town hall under the trustee administration, they were fined even when they parked their car in a side street. They were indirectly penalised for coming into the town hall and forcing the trustee mechanism to do their work. People could only enter the town hall by passing through a checkpoint. This was a very serious form of intimidation and repression under the pretence of security. The first thing people said to us was: "Now we can come back to the town hall". The handover of the municipality to our administration reflects their will. They feel justifiably proud and happy about it.

People realise the state in which the municipality has been left to us and the fact that the resources have been exhausted by the trustee with the aim of putting us at odds with the population. People say that they will stand by us under any circumstances. This applies to the old, the young and the children. There is a wonderful embracing. Yesterday, children climbed into the pool at the municipal square. I teased one of them and said that we hadn't changed the water yet, and the child said: "Never mind, it's the municipality's swimming pool." Our people have been missing the feeling that something belongs to them for years. Of course, we also experience very emotional moments. Uğur Kaymaz's mother came. As soon as she arrived, tears flowed from her eyes and from ours, too. "Thankfully, we can finally see these days," she said. As you know, the trustee removed the statue of Uğur Kaymaz.



Karasu: A democratic revolution has definitely taken place in North Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 7 APRIL 2024

Mustafa Karasu, a member of The KCK Executive Council, spoke about the situation that emerged after the municipal elections in Turkey and North Kurdistan.

In recent months, there have been large-scale protests against the international conspiracy, along with colorful 8th March celebrations, and the mobilization of tens of millions of people for Newroz. In addition to this, the guerrillas' have been uninterruptedly serving fatal blows to the Turkish army with the revolutionary actions they have been carrying out. This atmosphere was intensified by the Command of the People's Defense Headquarters (HSMK) who released very important information during Newroz.

Again, the outcomes of the municipal elections in Northern Kurdistan and Turkey have been historic. To begin with, how do you evaluate the municipal elections of 2024?

Before I get to your question, I would like to start this interview by stating that the political will of our people in Wan was attempted to be usurped. Wan is the only place in Turkey where the metropolitan and district municipalities were won by a single party. This usurpation has once again revealed what kind of anti-Kurdish mentality the AKP-MHP fascist government has.

DEM party candidate Abdullah Zeydan was put into the election. The High Election Committee (YSK) accepted this, and the people went and voted for him. He won by a landslide. This usurpation is clearly a conspiracy against the people. This is their message to the people that no matter who they choose, if the government wants to do something differently, they will do it differently. This is, in fact, the denial of the social and political will of the Kurdish people. They are not recognizing the Kurdish people's right to self-government, even locally. It is a political genocide practiced by the genocidal colonialist mentality.

The Kurdish people must not accept this attitude of the AKP-MHP fascist government in any way. The AKP usurper cannot represent the people of Wan. They cannot govern that municipality. All districts of Wan legally belong to the DEM party. The people of Wan and all Kurdish people must continue their struggle to stand against these usurpers. They must repel those who set up this conspiracy. Not only the people of Wan, but all Kurdish people must play their role in this repulsion. This is how the struggle for democracy and freedom develops. This is how freedom and democracy are won. This is how the Kurdish people win the right to self-government, the right to govern themselves. In short, these attacks can only be repelled through struggle.

These municipal elections were historic. Both in Kurdistan and in Turkey, a major blow was dealt to the special warfare regime, which is being waged against the peoples with all the means of the state. All of their lies, the deception, oppression, intimidation, and fear, they all collapsed. The truth cannot be hidden, this was seen in the elections. This situation marks the success of the peoples of Kurdistan and Turkey

who did not kneel to any kind of attack and oppression by the state. In this respect, we congratulate them, the people who have been kept under a heavy plan of subjugation since 2014, for the stance they have put forward. I would especially like to congratulate the peoples, laborers, democrats, women, and different ethnic and religious communities in Turkey for their stance against AKP-MHP fascism.

It is necessary to understand that if it were not for the great struggle and stance of the Kurdish people and their allies—including the leftist democrats and Alevis—against the AKP-MHP fascism, the peoples and laborers of Turkey would have collapsed under the heavy pressure of the AKP-MHP fascism. This great struggle must be given the acknowledgment it deserves. It was this struggle which resulted in the AKP-MHP fascism's failure to create the Turkey it wants.

Especially after the May 2023 elections, there was an air of negativity, hopelessness, and pessimism that the special warfare under the AKP-MHP rule, the Turkish intelligence service (MIT), and even the Kurdish collaborators in alliance with the AKP wanted to create. With such psychological warfare, it was aimed that the Kurdish people and the opposition forces were destroyed. So much so, that politics in Turkey and Kurdistan would now be redesigned by this government, and in the second century, Turkey would be shaped in this way. However, the Kurdish Freedom Movement, which has been the leading force in the struggle for democracy in Turkey and the Middle East for years, did not allow this to happen. It immediately launched a move to disperse this pessimistic atmosphere and raise the struggle.

The Kurdish freedom movement emphasized from the beginning that when the heavy isolation and psychological warfare imposed on Rêber Apo is broken, so will the oppression in Kurdistan and Turkey. The global campaign with the name 'Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, a Political Solution to the Kurdish Question' was launched for this purpose. This campaign symbolizes a struggle against the special and dirty warfare of the AKP-MHP fascist government in Turkey and Kurdistan. There is a great embrace for Rêber Apo all over the world. This embrace is a direct struggle against the Turkish state, which keeps Rêber Apo in solitary confinement and carries out a policy of genocide against the Kurds. Therefore, it is a struggle against the Turkish state, which implements a fascism based on anti-democracy in Turkey, because the AKP-MHP fascism has maximized its hostility to democracy in order to harm the Kurds.

On this occasion, we celebrate April 4, the birthday of Rêber Apo. As part of the freedom campaign for Rêber Apo, our people and our international friends should take this opportunity to respond to the AKP-MHP fascism's hostility to Kurds and democracy by going to Amara and celebrating his birthday there.

For years, AKP-MHP fascism has been portraying the struggle of the Kurdish people as though it was dividing Turkey, saying that it is fighting against terrorism, promoting chauvinism with all kinds of tools and means, especially in the press and media, and gaining a certain support in Turkish society. However, although the AKP-MHP government has been attacking with all means of warfare uninterruptedly for nine years with the support of foreign powers, it has not been able to suppress the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom in any way. With the revolutionary operations that started in the fall of 2023, the guerrilla dealt heavy blows to the Turkish army one after another. With these blows, the fascist dream in Turkey has been destroyed. Thus, the failure of the AKP-MHP, which declared itself a government of war, has been seen not only in Turkey but also in the world. Undoubtedly, not only the Kurdish people, but also all the peoples in Turkey who are under the oppression of AKP-MHP fascism, have gained morale and courage to stand against this power. These war policies of the AKP-MHP have started to be questioned.

In the reality of Kurdistan, where the AKP-MHP government is waging war, the protests against the February 15 conspiracy, the Freedom March that took place in Kurdistan in February, the revolutionary actions under the slogan of 'Jin Jiyan Azadi' carried out by women on March 8 in Kurdistan, and the Newroz celebrations in Kurdistan, Turkey, and the world, has predetermined the attitude of the Kurdish people in the election.

While evaluating the great defeat of AKP-MHP in the elections in Kurdistan and Turkey, it is necessary to see the attitude, performance and impact of the Kurdish people and freedom forces after the elections of May 2023.

The AKP-MHP fascist alliance wanted to strike a blow against the Kurdish people in the municipal elections. On the contrary, it was the DEM party, with the Kurdish people and their friends, that dealt a heavy blow to this fascist power in the municipal elections. In this context, what did the results of the municipal elections in Kurdistan show us?

The AKP-MHP alliance wanted to completely break the will of the Kurdish people in the environment that was created after last year's elections. It made plans to deploy soldiers and police all over Kurdistan, especially those close to the war headquarters. The alliance with Hûda Par was realized within this framework. Süleyman Soylu did not highlight the value of the state's cooperation with Hûda Par for nothing. It is commonly known that they are cooperating with the KDP to suppress the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom. The KDP's policy in this municipal election was in line with that of the AKP. So much so that AKP, MIT, and some Kurdish collaborators have worked in various ways and with various manipulations to create the idea that the AKP will take a step in the solution of the Kurdish questions after the elections. This was done so that the AKP gains votes in Kurdistan. For years, the KDP has been approving the Turkish Republic's policy of Kurdish genocide in Northern Kurdistan and Rojava. They assumed that with this approach, the Turkish Republic would accept them as an authority. This is the KDP's problem and what determines its policy.

After last year's elections, the Green Left Party started a process of questioning and self-criticism about the disconnect in its relations with society and its shortcomings and inadequacies in its electoral tactics. Especially the weakness in social relations and organization was questioned. In this process, the agents of special warfare and their collaborators have tried to change the chemistry of the Kurdish democratic movement by misleading the efforts of the Green Left Party, by distorting the source of the problems and giving false reasons, and even by misrepresenting the direction of the Green Left Party and deviating its line. In short, the Kurdish democratic political line put forward by Rêber Apo was tried to be deviated and put into the nationalist-liberal line. Of course, these were futile efforts. Because the Kurdish democratic political movement was not developed by someone sat at the table, it follows a tradition created by the serhildans in Kurdistan and the Kurdish democratic revolution. Like this, the psychological warfare against the Kurdish people after the May 2023 elections was repelled.

When this year's elections approached, a very important decision was taken and a primary election was held. This primary election was not based on only party members like in other parts of the world. All local democratic dynamics were included in this process. This did not only create enthusiasm and excitement among the people; it also attracted the entire Kurdish democratic dynamic, to join this process. There were some shortcomings and inadequacies. But it was a very important and courageous initiative. This initiative

expressed the confidence of the Kurdish democratic political tradition in the people and the Kurdish democratic accumulation.

Of course, it was an important democratic stance that HDP co-chairs courageously took responsibility for the inadequacies in the election process and announced that they would not run again. This gave confidence to the people, as they once again saw that their party was sincere and different from other parties. The HDP and the Green Left Party held their congresses, conferences, and meetings and clarified their policies and positions. In doing so, they touched the people. This has led to an important clarification in the minds of the Kurdish people and their friends. After the May 2023 elections, an attitude and stance in line with democratic mentality was correctly developed. There was not a wobble or a shift in the wrong direction. These facts must be seen when one talks about the great success of the municipal elections.

The Kurdish people have been waging a great struggle for freedom and democracy in North Kurdistan for more than 50 years. It is clear that a democratic revolution has taken place in Kurdistan. There may be incomplete aspects, but a democratic revolution has definitely taken place. Three to four generations have been molded with the values of this democratic revolution. This democratic revolution, molded by the paradigm of women's freedom, has deepened, and the democratic consciousness of society, especially women and youth, has developed. We should see the actions and stance of Kurdish mothers as the most concrete proof of this.

Society is no longer dependent on an authority, nor is it an ordinary mass of individuals. After more than 50 years of organized struggle, it is a community of people with a will that has gained consciousness and asserted itself as a will. Armed with democratic values, it wants its will to be recognized. For this reason, it has reacted with great anger and rage against the dismissal of the co-chairs it elected in the local elections and the appointment of trustees, as well as the imprisonment of MPs and party executives. Appointing trustees against the will of such a people is the heaviest attack on them. Our people rightfully saw this as a Kurdish hostility. These people have changed, they have recognized themselves, and gained an important stance through more than 50 years of great struggle and heavy sacrifices. On the other hand, the survival of the Kurdish freedom movement and its struggle in every dimension in the face of all these brutal attacks has allowed the people to put more belief and struggle forward. There is an unbroken bond between the guerrilla and people. The attacks against the guerrilla only serve to deepen the anger of the people, which is what pushes them to struggle against genocidal colonialism.

The first thing the appointed trustees did was attack institutions related to Kurdish language and culture. Some of these institutions were closed. Women's institutions that contribute to Kurdish democracy were closed down. Heavy attacks were carried out, especially against women. More female politicians have been imprisoned in Turkey, than in any other country in the history of the world. In general, Turkey holds the record for politicians in prisons. The proportion of women among these politicians is unprecedented anywhere in the world. All this has increased the reaction of the Kurdish people against the AKP-MHP government, which is conducting a fascist policy through appointing trustees. As a whole, the attacks on the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom everywhere have also revealed a serious attitude against this government.

Under all these factors, the Kurdish people dealt a heavy blow to the trustee policy in the local elections. It destroyed the trustee policy. This also revealed a stance of struggle against the heavy pressure on the Kurdish people and the occupation operation against the Medya Defense Areas and Rojava Kurdistan.

The concentration of soldiers and police in the region, using Hüda Par and enlisting the support of Kurdish collaborators, did not yield any results. We can say that Şirnak is one of the most successful places for the Kurdish people. The state has usurped Şirnak, which it abuses as a war headquarters. But still, Şirnak was the victor in this local election. The state has lost! The people of Şirnak have shown the whole world with their attitude, that the state has lost all of Kurdistan. I congratulate the people of Şirnak and salute them respectfully. They have clearly demonstrated that Kurds are strong-willed and honorable people; they have also given morale to the entire Kurdish people. The state's seizure of the municipalities by concentrating soldiers and police in 5-6 districts is an absolute expression of its defeat. It is a confession that there is no element of the State left in Kurdistan except the military-police force. The people know that they won the elections not only in Şirnak but also in Uludere, Çukurca, Şemdinli, Esendere, Qileban, Savur, and Beytüşşebab. In fact, these are among the places where people are angry with the state and are breaking away from it. All this was achieved even though the atmosphere of the elections were not democratic or fair. The results express the opposite of this reality. Had the atmosphere been fair, the world would have better understood the stance of the Kurdish people.

The center of war in Kurdistan is Şirnak, and its governor is Wan. The DEM party has won all the big districts of Şirnak. The victory of the DEM party in all districts of Wan is actually the victory of the entire people of Kurdistan against the genocidal colonialist special warfare headquarters. The people of Wan should be congratulated. The people of Kurdistan are successful in all cities and districts. We congratulate them all. Therefore, we will not name them one by one. Though, in Hilvan and Batman, where the Kurdish democratic movement won its first mayorship in 1979, the DEM party's success also has great significance. On this occasion, I would like to commemorate Edip Solmaz, Nadir Temel and Dürre Kaya with respect and gratitude. Hilvan municipality is also wanted to be usurped. Out of respect for Nadir Temel and Dürre Kaya, our people must continue their struggle with determination; they must never allow this usurpation.



Karasu: Kurdish women are at the vanguard of a revolution to change society

ANF | BEHDINAN | 8 APRIL 2024

In the second part of this in-depth interview, Mustafa Karasu, a member of The KCK Executive Council, spoke about the mark left by women in the past local elections and in the struggle.

Women also made their mark on this election. Despite all kinds of attacks, women took an important lead in the election work and had the biggest share in the success achieved. How do you evaluate this?

When talking about the political struggle in Kurdistan, any view that does not evaluate the role and influence of women is incomplete. Every revolutionary and democrat must recognize this fact. Those who do not see the great role of women in the democratic and freedom-oriented development of Kurdistan, in political achievements, and in the change of life cannot make any ideological, social, or political evaluation correctly.

By advancing the paradigm of women's freedom, Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] put forward the system of co-presidency and equal representation. He pushed the political field to make a revolutionary initiative. This created great excitement and enthusiasm among women, who are the catalysts of society and determine the character of society. The democratic revolution in Kurdistan has reached a new dimension. We should look at this as making the democratic revolution invincible and as infusing the democratic revolution with the elixir of invincibility. In fact, Rêber Apo's paradigm of women's freedom is not only a paradigm based on the equality of men and women. It is a paradigm that shapes the whole society in the line and morality of women's freedom. It is a line that will clean the whole society from its dirt and make it clean in conscience and morality. Rêber Apo has shown that the paradigm of women's freedom will create such a society by evaluating historical society.

Kurdish women are currently at the vanguard of a revolution that changes not only Kurdish society but also the world with the 'Jin Jiyan Azadi' philosophy. With this revolutionary initiative, Kurdish women have become the honor and pride of the Kurdish people. All Kurds should feel great enthusiasm and joy from this honor created by Kurdish women.

Kurdish women reached this level as a result of a great struggle. Rêber Apo's struggle for freedom in Kurdistan has brought women to this point. The system of co-presidency is the most concise product of this great struggle. Those who do not understand and see this, do not understand the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom.

There is a story about Kurdish women's struggle for freedom that I often tell. In the 1980s, families would come to visit us in prison. Mostly, families from Batman would travel to Amed prison on what they called the 'yogurt trains'.

One of these families was Mother Hanim and Father Ahmet, the parents of comrade Ercan Kavak. Two of their sons were in prison, while another one was sentenced. This last son later joined the guerrilla and is now a martyr. No matter which prison we were exiled to, they would follow us. One day in an open meeting, the mother said to us, "My son, this uncle Ahmet of yours used to kick me if I dared to stick my head out of the door, even if it was just a little bit. He wouldn't want me to leave the house. Now, as your mother, as the mother of the Apoists, I go everywhere, be it Amed, Urfa, Ceyhan, or Ankara. Now it is your uncle Ahmet who sits at home, but I go everywhere to support the struggle."

The impact that the Apoists' struggle in Batman had on society made our mothers embrace their sons and the cause of their sons, and they liberated themselves through this struggle.

Again, our sisters and young Kurdish girls were born into this world of struggle, and they took up the struggle everywhere without hesitation. They sacrificed themselves during Newroz, the symbol of the Kurdish people's struggle for existence. It is necessary to see this reality and these facts well when we discuss and evaluate the impact of women on today's political struggle.

Any Kurd who follows the system of co-presidency is an honorable Kurd, a free and democratic Kurd. If one of the candidates for the co-presidency is a man, he must feel honored. There cannot be a more honorable, free and democratic stance. The men who understand co-presidency correctly, will feel more rewarded than the women. Rêber Apo gave this award and honor. As a matter of fact, Kurdish society chants the slogan "Jin Jiyan Azadi" in the squares because they see this reality revealed by Rêber Apo. This is the

essence and basic slogan of the Kurdish revolution. Because it is this philosophy that ensures freedom, democracy, autonomy and self-governance of Kurds with their own identity, culture and will.

Co-presidency does not mean that one co-chair is superior to the other. They are equal, they make all decisions together democratically. One is not superior to the other. In this respect, saying who will be the official co-chair and making this an agenda means crippling and denying this understanding of co-presidency. It means seeing officialdom as an advantage, even as a power of authority. This would be to misunderstand co-presidency, to cripple its essence. In this respect, such discussions are a philosophical fallacy. Those who accept co-presidency cannot and should not participate in such a debate. Yes, there is an obligation to make an official declaration, though, the official declaration of someone is only a formality. It is not and cannot be an issue that concerns the Kurds and the co-chairs.

However, because the system obligates that one person is named as president, and considering the heights reached and successes gained by the “Jin Jiyan Azadî” revolution, it is only just to name women as official candidates. This is what befits the Kurdish people and the revolution they have realized. Perhaps, in very special and exceptional cases, a male candidate can be named. All male co-chairs should demand that women become official co-chairs, as a necessity of achieving the honor of co-presidency. This is the correct philosophical view, political view, democratic and libertarian view. This is not about making someone superior and authorized. It is about the representation of democratic and libertarian thought, about making this the soul of our revolution. This is what will elevate all patriotic men.

We, too, have suffered for years in fully grasping the paradigm of women’s freedom and fulfilling its requirements. We still cannot claim that we have fully grasped it, but we are trying to change ourselves through an internal struggle. Rêber Apo has constantly educated us and made us understand the line of women’s freedom and about the struggle to kill and uproot the masculinity that has historically settled in us. Of course, from the very beginning we were saying that there would be no revolution without women. We were excited about women’s participation in the revolution, but there was also a misconception that after the revolution took place, everything would return to its previous form. Rêber Apo saved us from our misconceptions. From this point of view, all Kurdish people, especially male patriots, should correctly understand Rêber Apo’s historical, sacred work and revolution and glorify it by transforming themselves.

The reason why we have stated that the official preference in the co-presidency is in favor of women is to make this aspect of our revolution visible and effective all over the world in the future. Because this revolutionary democratic aspect now affects the whole world, especially Turkey and the Middle East.

The AKP-MHP fascism wanted to fully institutionalize the fascist one-man regime it established by ensuring its dominance in metropolitan cities, especially Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Çukurova. However, the peoples of Turkey put a stop to this fascist plan with their support for the opposition. How should the picture that emerged in Turkey be evaluated?

The AKP-MHP fascism’s aim to turn Turkey into a fully institutionalized fascist country by dominating all metropolitan municipalities was dealt a heavy blow in the local elections. We were always emphasizing that the AKP-MHP fascist government was in a state of collapse and dissolution. We were saying that the AKP-MHP government, which wanted to destroy the Kurdish people, had collapsed. We were not stating this for propaganda. We were stating this because we were following the war against us and its results. It has once again become clear how true our evaluations are.

It was the fascist character and hostility toward democracy that led the AKP-MHP fascism in Turkey to such a collapse. All this is based on Kurdish enmity, which has brought this government to the present situation of collapsing. The enmity against democracy is the source of the moral, political, conscientious, and cultural collapse that is experienced in society. It is a genocidal war against the Kurds.

Also, the economic collapse played an essential role in the election loss. It is the war against the Kurdish people that created the economic crisis; it is this dirty war. All the resources of Turkey are abused for this war. Wasn't it Erdoğan himself who screamed at the people, "Don't you know the price of one single bullet?" when the people gradually started to raise their voices because of the economic problems? He openly said that a crucial cause of the economic problem was the expenditures allocated to the war. He was repeating every day that the state budget was mainly allocated for war, pointing out that they were building this many military vehicles, making this kind of military investment. This is what happens when, instead of solving Turkey's political problems through democracy, the government turns to war and compulsion. There are presidential special funds, as well as special funds allocated to MIT, as well as funds allocated for spying and funds allocated to the gangs that Turkey feeds. There is no mechanism to monitor these. There is no publicly available overview of where these funds go and who coordinates them. All of these are the triggers of economic problems, and this had an impact on the election. It is not the lack of resources that creates this economic distress. It is mainly political reasons that caused the economic collapse. It is the lack of democracy based on Kurdish hostility that the war policies pursued.

The AKP-MHP government has put Turkey into a multifaceted crisis. The core of it is the crisis of society. In order to crush the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom, it has both been hostile to democracy and polarized society to an unprecedented level. The government has declared everyone except AKP-MHP supporters and allies, as traitors. It has turned Turkey into a country of political civil war and has created a polarization that has not only the potential to destroy themselves but the whole of Turkey. In this situation, neighbors have become enemies of each other. Society has thus been traumatized. This is unprecedented not only in Turkey but also in the world. In this way, not only an unscrupulous, unjust, and immoral political environment has been created, but also a social life of this color.

Conscience is one of the most basic human characteristics. This requires a basic approach to social values and justice. In the AKP-MHP government, not only is there not a shred of conscience left, but it has also tended to shape society in this way.

This situation has gradually increased the discontentment in society against the AKP-MHP government. Because this policy is not just a short-term practice; it has become its fundamental policy. This has gradually disturbed those parts of society that, until now, had voted for the AKP. Societies, regardless of their beliefs and cultures, cannot endure such a polarizing life for a long time. The AKP-MHP government, which dragged society into a civil war, is now starting to pay the price for this. Political powers and those with vested interests may be constantly unscrupulous and unjust, but society cannot be like that. In the end, the demand for conscience, morality, and justice within society rebels against this. This is the reason why many AKP voters did not go to the polls in this election. The AKP-MHP has put a straitjacket on society.

The current multiple crises are the consequences of the policies of this government. From politics to society, culture, art, the press, sports, and the economy, there is no area that is not in a deep crisis. Turkey has become a country of general social crises and multi-level crises, while at the same time special warfare is constantly being waged by the government. The people's attitude in the municipal elections should

be seen as an objection to this reality. Otherwise, an approach that ignores Turkey's reality and the root of its issues would mislead one to believe that the increasing prices of potatoes and onions is what drove the AKP-MHP administration to this point. This, in turn, distorts the search for solutions to problems. Due to misconceptions, the search for the underlying truth of problems is not undertaken. This leads to the prolongation of the lives of fascist governments like the AKP-MHP.

The AKP-MHP has indeed become a power of organized evil. It is a power that violates even the essentially fascist and undemocratic constitutions and laws of Turkey. Even the existing constitution and laws are not enough for their authoritarian, fascist character. For this reason, if they had the power, they would make an even more authoritarian, fascist, and genocidal constitution that would form the basis for genocide against all different ethnic and religious identities. They would completely legalize this authoritarian system that oppresses society, especially women and laborers. The peoples of Turkey put a stop to the creation of such a country.

Turkey has been under an authoritarian system for 100 years now. In this century, it has also been a country where an intense struggle for democracy has been waged. From the very beginning, Kurds objected to this system which ignored them. Therefore, they were subjected to oppression, persecution, and genocide. However, the desire to live freely with their own identity, history, and culture continued. Although the genocidal policy of the Turkish state has been put into practice very widely and effectively, it could not completely eradicate Kurdish existence.

Also, socialist forces waged a great struggle against this state. In the history of Turkey until the 1970s, socialists were imprisoned mainly for political reasons. Despite their ideological and political inadequacies, they played an important role in the struggle for democracy and freedom. In the 1960s and 1970s, the struggle for democracy by the socialist forces had reached a level that should not be underestimated. The organization, influence, and power of the left in the 1970s are well known. These leftist forces also took a stance on the Kurdish question, advocating federation and autonomy in addition to a separate state. In short, I cannot mention them one by one right now, but there have been many socialist movements in Turkey that have taken part in the struggle for democracy, and they have paid a high price for this cause. This struggle has played a significant role in the development of the idea of democratizing Turkey. Important political transformations in Turkey's history have always been attempted by those who demand democracy. Or this is how they have been able to influence society and gain its support. The wind created by the Democrat Party in 1950, the wind created by Ecevit's CHP in the 1970s, the support of Özal's party after 1980, and the AKP's coming to power in 2002 talking about democracy are the results of the impact of the struggle for democracy in Turkey, on society. It would be incorrect to not recognize this historical reality when evaluating the objection that is currently emerging in society against the AKP-MHP government.

As a matter of fact, throughout the history of the republic, there has been a longing for democratization among the pious segments of the Islamic faith against the modernist approaches of political parties. They have expressed their desire to live their beliefs freely in a democracy. And the AKP has used this desire of the people for its own interests to increase its own political power. The historical inadequacy of political Islam in the struggle for democracy has resulted in the AKP government's hostility to democracy after gaining a certain benefit at the beginning. Today's democratic forces need to recognize this reality and draw the pious people who yearn for democracy into the struggle for democracy. Because there is also a serious and

important search for conscience, morality, and justice in non-powerist social religious beliefs. The AKP government is hostile to these values.

Undoubtedly, the struggle for democracy among the Kurdish people, especially for the last 50 years, has brought about radical changes in society. Their insistence on the struggle for democracy and freedom in the face of the most severe oppression has played an important role in keeping the spirit of democracy in Turkey alive. In this respect, the struggle of the Kurdish people has become the most fundamental democratic dynamism in Turkey. In the struggle against AKP-MHP fascism in Turkey, the role of the Kurdish people's struggle for democracy, which is carried out in unity with the democratic forces of Turkey, is very important. To stress this point out, the level of democratic consciousness and freedom that the Kurdish society has reached is the motor of the struggle for democracy in the whole of Turkey. It affects not only the radical democratic forces and socialists, but also the opposition forces within the system that are disturbed by the AKP-MHP fascism.

Another point must also be emphasized. Due to the struggle and influence of all democratic forces, especially the Kurds, the AKP-MHP government lost its influence in the cities that determine the political, economic, social, and cultural direction of the country. It is very important that in these places, society expresses its desire for democracy and freedom against AKP-MHP fascism. Considering that many Kurds live in these places, it can be understood how important the common stance of Kurds and the people of Turkey is to the democratization of the country. Whether the opposition within the system correctly evaluates this is another matter. However, it is clear that society in Turkey is in search of democracy. This is a fundamental factor that enables Turkey to look to the future with hope. It is the result of those who have been struggling for democracy and freedom for a hundred years.

It is also important to note that the change of leadership in the CHP after the May 2023 elections has created a new dynamism in the basis of the CHP. Such results often occur when failed administrations change. Undoubtedly, this was not the decisive factor, but it must be recognized as a factor.



Karasu: The struggle for democratization form the basis for talks and negotiations

ANF | BEHDINAN | 11 APRIL 2024

In the third part of this in-depth interview, Mustafa Karasu, a member of The KCK Executive Council, said that "The struggle for democratization and the development of an understanding of democracy form the basis for talks and negotiations."

The Kurdish people and their friends in the struggle for democracy have again left their mark on the defeat of the AKP-MHP fascist alliance. All opposition circles are drawing attention to the role played by the DEM party. How should the attitude of the Kurdish people and their friends around the DEM party be understood?

Undoubtedly, it is the Kurdish basis of the DEM party, the basis of the democratic alliance that voted for the DEM party's candidate in Kurdistan. They also voted for the DEM party in places where the DEM party barely had a chance of winning, such as the Akdeniz district of Mersin. In the center of Dersim, the DEM party candidates supported by the alliances won. In Kurdistan, the DEM party voters went to the polls in masses. The results are evident.

In this election, the DEM party was not in a general alliance or consensus in Turkey. But in very strategic areas of Turkey, it pursued a policy together with all democratic forces to make AKP-MHP fascism lose. This policy was called 'urban consensus'. We should talk about the unification of all social forces that want democracy. Rather than speaking about one party candidate winning, it is necessary to see the fact that all social forces that want democracy came together and took a stance against AKP-MHP fascism. This is how the attitude of people should be read. This should be seen as an attitude of winning not for a party but for democracy and the forces of democracy. The CHP must also understand it in this way. These are votes for democracy and democratization. This is the people's response to fascism.

AKP-MHP fascism has oppressed and polarized society to such an extent that it has united all opposition forces against itself. It has united all social forces demanding democracy, against itself. The DEM party's policy towards the provinces of Turkey, was to stand with those who are radical and democratic within the system against AKP-MHP fascism. Just as it has been in a struggle against AKP-MHP fascism in Kurdistan, it has also maintained this attitude in the cities of Turkey. In the face of the fascist and anti-Kurdish occupying policy of the AKP-MHP government, DEM party members could not be expected to adopt any other attitude. In fact, in every place where the MHP nominated candidates, the people voted for the victory of CHP candidates on the basis of urban consensus, without hesitation. In places where the MHP fielded candidates, Kurds could not have been expected to adopt a different attitude.

Undoubtedly, in a very limited way, there were also some people who voted directly for DEM party candidates due to the wrong attitude of the opposition forces in 2023, because the DEM party did not withdraw its candidates anywhere. Thus, it did not leave those who wanted to vote differently in their own base without a choice; it prevented them from voting reactionarily or with the wrong tendency. This should be seen as support for the struggle for democracy. Because the votes given to the DEM party are also among the votes of the democratic front.

Everyone in Turkey should recognize the crucial role of the DEM party, that is, the Kurds and their allies, in the struggle for democracy and the collapse of the AKP-MHP government in the municipal elections. The attitudes against the AKP-MHP government can clearly be seen on the scoreboards. The provinces won by the CHP in Kurdish geography are in a position to stand against the AKP-MHP fascism and push it back. This is an objective fact revealed by the democratic attitude of the Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey. The democratic forces in Turkey are voicing this fact.

It should be known that if there were a parliamentary election right now, everyone whether they are Kurd, Turk, Alevi, Sunni, women, and youth, would vote directly for the DEM party. In this respect, as Meral

Daniş Beştaş said, the CHP should not see these votes as its own. This is what Özgür Özel stated in his first speech after winning the election. This is the right attitude. If this attitude of the DEM party's base is not understood correctly, neither the correct policy nor the correct approach will emerge. Everyone knows that the DEM party's base in Istanbul is around 10%. This is, of course, the common vote of Kurds, Alevis, democratic left forces, and women. At least 8% of these votes have become part of the forces demanding democracy in Istanbul. They played an important role in Imamoglu's victory, which was stronger than in 2019.

The DEM party still holds its position as the third biggest party; evaluations claiming otherwise are superficial. Half of the votes received by the DEM party are in Kurdistan, half of them are in Turkey. Because the DEM party's base in Turkey includes the votes of left-wing democratic forces, Alevis, including Turkish Alevis, women from different societies who vote for the DEM party's line of women's freedom, and other ethnic and religious communities, In this respect, DEM's vote in Turkey is currently estimated to be around 11%. An assessment that DEM's votes have fallen is a superficial evaluation. Those who want to say that DEM's votes have fallen by looking only at the votes received in Kurdistan, leaving aside the votes in Turkey, or even those who want to make DEM look unsuccessful with ulterior motives, are only those who distort reality. DEM is the most successful party in this election. It is also the most successful party in strengthening the forces of democracy in Turkey and pushing back fascism. DEM is the third-biggest party in Turkey. Cheating and vote-stealing will not change this reality.

Everyone should see the role of the DEM party and its base in the struggle for democracy in Turkey. The right politics and the right struggle can only be done by recognizing this reality. The DEM party and its base do not want the forces that are in search for the democratization of Turkey to be mistaken.

Especially within the framework of the elections in the Turkish areas, DEM's alliance with the peoples of Turkey, through its policy of urban consensus, has yielded an important result. The special warfare was launched with the collaboration of some Kurdish individuals against the HDP and the Green Left Party after the last election. Thus, they attacked the alliance and partnership between the Kurdish people, the peoples of Turkey, and the forces of democracy.

When we look at the success of the DEM party and the fact that the AKP-MHP fascism lost, can we say that those standing for "the policy of alliance makes the Kurds lose" are wrong?

The general policy of the HDP and the Green Left Party in the May 2023 elections was not wrong. Their intention and desire was to strengthen democracy against fascism. This is what was expected from the HDP. However, while implementing this policy, there were shortcomings and inadequacies in some tactics and methods. Some mistakes were made. Since the right policies, tactics, and methods were not put into practice, the desired results could not be obtained. More creative, gradual tactics and methods could have been applied to frustrate the policies of the fascist alliance. On the other hand, the unprincipled and undemocratic attitude of the opposition forces within the system, which made some democratic discourses against AKP-MHP fascism, was of course used by malicious circles. The revelation of the secret agreement between the ZP and Kılıçdaroglu created a justified reaction among the Kurdish people. Those with ulterior motives tried to use this to attack the policies of the HDP and the Green Left Party in this election. In fact, they did not aim to expose this mistake of the opposition forces within the system, but they targeted the DEM party, that is, the unity of struggle created with the forces of democracy in Turkey, in which Kurds have a position.

Again, attacks were made on the HDP because some deficiencies were seen by their base. It was said that Kurdish votes were being used to elect nominees who had no interest in the Kurdish cause. However, the HDP, as the party of the democratic forces of the Kurdish and Turkish people, had overcome the threshold. While in the past it used to have a maximum of 30-35 deputies, now it has a minimum of 60 deputies. In this respect, the statement that Kurdish votes are used to elect such deputies is also a distortion and demagogy. In fact, by lowering the threshold to 7%, the AKP-MHP fascism wanted to prevent its opposition from voting for the HDP so it would overcome the threshold. It did this even in places in Turkey where the HDP would usually not get any MPs, so that the HDP would not get votes from the anti-AKP base. Those who voted for HDP were people close to HDP's ideas and principles. However, they lowered the threshold so that these votes would not be cast; thus, they calculated that it would reduce the HDP's votes.

The attitude to be taken in the face of this situation, is for the HDP to work to win the votes of wider segments by embracing its own founding idea. In this respect, adhering to the founding idea of the HDP is very important for Kurdish democratic politics. This is not just a project to get 20–30 more deputies. This is a strategy to democratize Turkey. Kurds cannot develop their struggle for freedom and democracy with a few more deputies or with Kurdish deputies only. In order for democracy to develop in Turkey, on the basis of the solution to the Kurdish question, they must hold on to the idea of the HDP like a lifeline.

The Kurds will always win if the DEM party continues its policy to form an alliance with the democratic forces of Turkey. Saying, “What do we care about the democratic forces? What do we care about the democratization of Turkey? Let's just take care of ourselves” is a lack of politics and a great loss for the Kurds. Kurds should not listen to such superficial and vulgar discourse.

The fact that the urban consensus of the DEM party has created hope for democracy in Turkey has once again demonstrated the correctness of the HDP's ideas and principles. It should be known that the HDP tradition has never pursued a policy of winning for someone. The policies and tactics it has implemented have only been carried out to win for the forces of democracy and the Kurdish people. If approached in this way, a correct evaluation can be made.

Immediately after the elections, some people, the basis of special warfare, were saying that the Kurdish voter turnout in Kurdistan and the DEM party's votes in Turkey had fallen. Considering the success of the DEM party, why do they voice such evaluations?

It is clear that Kurdish voter turnout has not fallen at all. Such a thing cannot be said for Kurdistan. However, it is certain that some AKP supporters in Kurdistan did not go to the polls. Some of the AKP Kurds are also disturbed by the state practices, trusteeship, and war policies in Kurdistan. Because the war is affecting them too. In this respect, the appointment of trustees – the rejected the will of the Kurds – also disturbed some Kurds who had previously voted for the AKP. They are disturbed by the AKP government's constant war rhetoric. They start to realize that the war is a cause of poverty. On the other side, the DEM base in Kurdistan went to the polls in masses. For this reason, in many places, the DEM party won municipalities by clear margins compared to the past. In the Wan election, the DEM party was the only party in Turkey to win both the metropolitan city and the districts. This example of Wan shows that Kurds rushed to the polls. It is a lie and a distortion to say that the DEM base in Kurdistan did not go to the polls. The reality is the opposite.

In Turkey, the DEM party's votes have not fallen. If there had been general elections, its votes would have far exceeded the 2023 general elections. The political revival among Kurds is clear evidence of this. The revival in Kurdistan directly affects the metropolises of Turkey. In this respect, while it is obvious that the Kurds cast their votes with the same intention as the democratic forces of Turkey due to the urban consensus, the statement that the DEM's votes have fallen is a very simple demagoguery. Even a child can see that this is not true. The AKP and some Kurdish collaborators are already in a race to find fault with DEM. They are ready to defame, whether their words are right or wrong does not matter to them. These are disinformation campaigns made by elements of special warfare and its collaborators on social media. The Kurdish people and democratic forces should not pay attention to them.

Despite all the oppression, persecution, arrests, deception, and deployment of disguised troops, the Kurds and their friends of struggle won a great victory in Kurdistan and crushed the AKP-MHP fascism in Kurdistan. What should be done to expand this electoral success? After the defeat in the 2019 local elections, the AKP-MHP government increased its attacks and launched an invasion attack on Rojava. The fascist chief Tayyip Erdogan said after the election that they "will not give in to terrorism." What should be done against this?

The Kurdish people have won a great victory in Kurdistan. Given the repression, this victory is even more significant. Everyone should appreciate this. Especially Kurds should feel honored. Not only the people of North Kurdistan, but Kurds in Rojhilat, South Kurdistan, Rojava, Shengal [Sinjar], and all over the world should be honored and proud to see such a reality.

The Kurdish people, especially the youth and women, should take this success as a basis for stronger organization and struggle. They should experience the joy of this success and should celebrate. They deserve it. But still, we face a genocidal colonialist power. The Turkish state is not only colonialist; it is also genocidal. It is not enough to say it is only a colonizer.

Some may say that the AKP has been hit, and it may give up this policy. This means ignoring the reality of the Turkish state. If Turkey was only a colonizer, maybe it could change its policy in such a situation. Since it is genocidal and its existence depends on the destruction of the Kurdish people, unless a strong democratization develops and this genocidal mentality is overcome, no softening can be expected in the solution of the Kurdish question in Turkey. The solution to the Kurdish question will not come by with some talks and negotiations, unless fundamental democratization develops. The solution to the Kurdish question is not a matter of the will of one person or a group. To say that one person within the state can solve it means not understanding the reality of the Turkish state and the Kurdish policy it pursues. In short, such expressions are the result of a superficial and narrow political view.

The struggle for democratization and the development of an understanding of democracy form the basis for talks and negotiations. Otherwise, we would be mistaken if we said that the state would take steps in the face of political imbalances or this strain. We need to know very well the genocidal character of the Turkish state. The 'law' of this state is genocide. This can be overcome either through a fundamental breakthrough or by developing fundamental democratization. This is how a democratic solution can be realized.

In this respect, this success should not lead to complacency and should instead be the basis for strengthening the struggle against this enemy. Particularly young people and women should be more involved in the

struggle. Every Kurd should be organized. Organizing is a democratic right and expression; this should be used well.

After the elections, Erdogan used the term ‘terroristan’ again and stated that they would attack. Erdogan sees not only Rojava but all of Kurdistan as a region of terrorism. Whoever claims the Kurdish will, whoever says they want to speak their mother tongue, their culture, their identity, and their own self-government, is seen as a terrorist. Erdogan said he would launch invasion attacks right after the election and that he would send young people to the war fronts. If the enemy prepares for new attacks, then it is necessary they be confronted.

Wherever the genocidal colonialist fascist Turkish state attacks, all Kurdish people must stand up. The attacks on Rojava, the attacks on South Kurdistan and the Medya Defense Zones, the attacks on Shengal – they are attacks on all Kurds. All Kurds in the four parts of Kurdistan and in the world must stand together against these attacks and stand up everywhere. In the spirit of the battle of Kobanê, Kurdish youth should come to wherever there is an attack and protect. Now the most attacked areas are the Medya Defense Zones, Rojava, and Shengal.

The attack on the political will of the Kurds that could be observed in Wan, should not be seen as an ordinary attack. This is an attack on the Kurdish people’s freedom struggle as a whole. All Kurds must show their attitude during such attacks. Not only Wan or the cities and towns are subjected to such attacks, but all Kurds must take to the streets and defend their democratic will in the face of these attacks. In this regard, we salute the people of Wan and the Kurdish people in other cities for taking to the squares and putting their struggle forward against this attack.

In the elections, the AKP and its fascist alliances suffered a heavy defeat in Turkey as it became the second party for the first time, while the opposition as a whole achieved a historic success. So, taking into account the June 7, 2015 elections, what course of action should the Turkish opposition take to ensure the complete defeat of the AKP-MHP fascist alliance?

Undoubtedly, the election results have given hope for the future of Turkish society. It provided a basis for the struggle for democratization. This election strengthened the alliance between the Kurdish people and the democratic forces of Turkey. It played an important role in the development of Turkey’s democratic unity on the basis of democratization and the solution of the Kurdish question. In fact, with this election, the Kurdish people and the democratic forces of Turkey have once again demonstrated that they do not have a problem of survival, as the AKP-MHP fascism claims. The will to ensure Turkey’s unity on the basis of democratization and the solution of the Kurdish question have been put forward against the AKP-MHP policies that are tearing Turkey apart and leading to division.

However, the latest successes do not automatically lead to the total defeat of the AKP-MHP fascist alliance. In the 2015 elections, the AKP government lost as well. But the forces of democracy and opposition forces, including the HDP, did not adopt the right attitude. They failed to utilize the AKP’s electoral defeat to oust it from power. Political tactics and moves that remove the legitimacy of the AKP, have not been made. They just followed the AKP’s agenda. After the June 7 elections, opposition forces failed to unite. But the AKP immediately set out to expand its own front.

The radical democratic forces in Turkey must organize faster and unite their forces immediately. The current disorganization must be overcome. The Labor and Freedom Alliance must be expanded much more. Because without the radical democratic forces leading the struggle for democracy, it is unthinkable that the opposition forces within the system will play much of a role in democratization. They may even squander the opportunities they have. When I listen to some opposition channels and the speakers who appear there, instead of expanding the forces of democracy and opening up to a wider spectrum, instead of the policy of narrowing the base of AKP-MHP fascism even further, there are approaches such as being content with the status quo and even continuing classical policies. Turkey was established as a republic in the 1920s. Under the conditions of that period, an authoritarian republic was formed. But now this republic needs democratization. If the opposition within the system does not act with this approach, the opportunities that have emerged can be squandered again.

The struggle for democracy and democratization is a question of alliance everywhere in the world. It is a mistake to think that only one party or group can bring about democracy in a large country like Turkey, where there are so many different communities. The radical revolutionary democratic forces and the opposition forces within the system should act with this consciousness. In fact, no political force or movement in Turkey that does not aim for the solution of the Kurdish question can struggle for democratization and develop democracy in Turkey. All discourses about democracy that do not aim for the democratic solution of the Kurdish question are deceptive and have no meaning other than self-deception. As a result of such discourses, Turkey will just continue to be trapped in the 100-year-long grip of authoritarianism.

In any other country in the world, after such an election, the current government would be called to resign and a general election should be held. This is a democratic tradition. All democratic forces should call on this government to resign. This government has lost its social base and legitimacy with this election. Remaining in power means a usurpation of authority. Without taking this stance, the forces of democracy cannot develop an appropriate struggle for democracy. This government will want to continue its rule by using state means and new games and conspiracies. It will resort to every means to change the tendency towards democracy in society. From this point of view, the struggle against the government must be sustained, and it must be forced to resign.

In order for the struggle for democracy to truly develop in Turkey, those who say that they are democratic must demonstrate this with their stances. The will of the Kurdish people has been usurped. In this respect, all democratic forces, including the opposition forces within the system, intellectuals, writers, artists, and all ethnic and faith communities, must take a common stance against this hostility to democracy. The Kurds and forces that voted for democracy in Turkey and played their role in bringing down AKP-MHP fascism expect this. The first reactions were already positive. The continuation of these approaches is important for the unity and common struggle of the democratic forces. Such an attitude is an attitude that must be shown, not only for Kurds but for democracy in all of Turkey.

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