

# THE İMRALI POST

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

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# Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Asrın Law Office: End the torture; open the doors of İmralı!

ANF | ISTANBUL | 30 APRIL 2024

No news has been received for 38 months from Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş in İmralı F Type High Security Closed Prison, who are held in İmralı Island Prison in the Sea of Marmara.

Lawyers of Asrın Law Office held a press conference at the office building in Beyoğlu, Istanbul on the detention process of their imprisoned clients.

Lawyer Rezan Sarıca pointed out that the state of "detention" in İmralı is not limited to bans and disciplinary penalties, and said, "It is a level of absolute incommunicado, in which they cannot have physical contact with their lawyers and families, and even minimum communication is not allowed through a prevention of their communication by phone and letter. This state of prevention continued in the event of the death of close family members, epidemics and earthquakes that the families of our clients were directly exposed to. After the interrupted phone call on 25 March 2021, it was not possible to hear from all 4 of our clients again. Under these circumstances, we have no information about the health and detention conditions of our clients."

### **The release of Veysi Aktaş prevented**

Sarıca stated that the 30-year sentence of Veysi Aktaş, who was held in İmralı, ended on 28 April, but his release was prevented:

"According to the legal status summary previously prepared by the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, Aktaş was supposed to be released on 28 April. During this period, due to the absolute isolation conditions in İmralı, we wanted to at least provide legal assistance by letter and get his views on the release procedures. For this purpose, we sent him registered letters with return receipt on different dates. However, we did not receive a reply to those letters. Due to the isolation conditions, we cannot even confirm whether the letters reached him or not. We have also applied to the prosecutor's office and the Execution Judge recently as a precautionary measure and requested that we be given a copy of the execution documents in order to provide legal assistance to our client. However, these requests were also left unanswered.

### **'A crime of duty committed'**

As his lawyers, we made attempts on 28 and 29 April to meet Mr Aktaş or to find out if there were any obstacles to his release and to make the necessary objections. Unfortunately, we were verbally informed by the İmralı Prison Administration that his release was postponed for 1 year by the decision of the observation board. This decision is clearly against the law and means the usurpation of Mr Aktaş's freedom. It is not legitimate to take this decision with unfavourable regulations of the law. On the other hand, we have not been handed the decision on the 1-year postponement despite our request. Both our request petitions and our objection petitions, which we are authorised to submit as his lawyers, were not received by the relevant authorities, and a crime of duty was committed by not even processing them.

The prevention of Mr Aktaş's release, the rejection of applications on this issue, and the lack of information make the situation of our clients, who have been held in a state of incommunicado for 38 months, even more sensitive. Beyond the prevention of lawyer and family visits, İmralı is kept closed to visits by monitoring mechanisms, including visits by different individuals and institutions, and contact is not allowed even in cases such as the death of close relatives, severe illness and natural disasters, and requests for information about our clients are left unanswered. The refusal to authorise the release of the CPT report, the failure to comply with the UN Human Rights Committee's request for cautionary measures despite the elapsed time, the fact that Mr Aktaş was not released despite the expiry of his conditional release period, and the fact that this process was carried out without a lawyer are developments that justify maximum suspicion.

### ‘Complaints against those responsible are left unanswered’

Despite their advancing age, our clients have been held for a very long time in harsh prison conditions that are detrimental to their health. In addition to chronic health problems, it is inevitable that they have a series of health problems due to both age and the harsh prison conditions they have been held in for a long time. Despite the allegation that the treatment our clients have been subjected to is torture and inhumanity, the Execution Judges, who are responsible for monitoring the execution conditions of the convicts and ensuring their relations with the outside world, are in the position of the authority directly issuing the prohibition decisions that justify the incommunicado detention. However, complaints and criminal complaints against those responsible are left unanswered and no investigation is carried out.

### ‘We expect the authorities to fulfill their legal responsibilities’

In accordance with universal legal norms and human values, every initiative to be developed against torture also has a high value for making the country sensitive to democracy and human rights. For this reason, we expect sensitivity from everyone who feels responsible, and we expect the authorities to fulfill their legal responsibilities as soon as possible and put an end to torture immediately.

The doors of İmralı must be opened towards freedom.

Mr Aktaş, who has been deprived of his freedom despite having completed 30 years of execution, must be released without delay.

We submit our expectations for an immediate end to the 38-month detention conditions to which our clients in İmralı have been subjected, and for them to be allowed to meet with their families and lawyers, to the attention of all those who are in favour of rights and law, democracy, humanitarian conscience and values."



## Turkish Ministry claims there is no isolation in İmralı where Öcalan is held

ANF | 30 APRIL 2024

The Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) MPs applied to the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission (İHİK) on 7 December 2023 demanding the lifting of the isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and granting of family and lawyer visits.

In the application, it was pointed out that Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, who are held in İmralı Islan Prison, are not allowed to communicate by phone, fax and letter; family, guardian and lawyer visits are prevented; and their ties with the outside world are completely cut off.

It was also stated that from 27 July 2011 until today, only 5 lawyer meetings took place between May and August 2019, with the last meeting date being 7 August 2019. On the other hand, only 5 family meetings have been allowed since 2014. The last face-to-face family meeting was on 3 March 2020, and only two telephone talks were granted in 24 years (27 April 2020 and 25 March 2021).

It was also pointed out that no news was received from Abdullah Öcalan after his interrupted phone call with his brother on 25 March 2021. In addition, 238 lawyer and 79 family-guardian visit applications were submitted between the last meeting and the end of 2022, but none of them were responded to.

In their application, the MPs finally demanded a visit to İmralı and a meeting with a family member, lawyer or political delegation.

According to the Mesopotamia Agency, the Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses responded to the application. The Directorate claimed that the prisoners in İmralı "equally benefit from all rights granted by law and regulations".

Referring to the ECtHR judgements, the Directorate stated that "in order to talk about the concept of isolation, the prisoner's communication with his lawyer, relatives or other prisoners must be completely eliminated". The directorate argued that there was no isolation in İmralı and claimed that "within the scope of Circular No. 4511 dated 22 January 2007, all convicts in the penal execution institution are allowed to benefit from common activities, that their meetings with their lawyers and relatives are not prevented, and that they participate in sports and other common area activities with other prisoners in accordance with the legislation". It also claimed that the findings in the application were "baseless".

The Directorate noted that in 2023, the Administrative and Observation Board of the Institution issued a 6-month telephone restriction decision for Abdullah Öcalan and other prisoners in relation to face-to-face visits and telephone calls with his guardian and family members. The Directorate claimed that these decisions were not appealed against.

The lawyers of Asrin Law Office have announced many times so far that they had not been notified of the decisions mentioned in the directorate's response.

The Directorate also claimed that Abdullah Öcalan "benefited from letters, faxes and similar communication methods in 2023".

The Directorate pointed out that prisoners have the right to appeal against the practices of the institution and stated that "the administration has no possibility to interfere with the decisions of judges with judicial independence by any means of suggestion or recommendation".

## Asrın Law Office asks Ministry of Justice when the last visit to İmralı took place

ANF | ISTANBUL | 1 MAY 2024

Deputies of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) applied to the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission (IHIK) on 7 December 2023, to end the isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and to allow family and lawyer visits. Responding to the application regarding the İmralı isolation, the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses claimed that Abdullah Öcalan, who has not been heard from for 38 months, has benefited from his rights.

Asrın Law Office, the bureau of lawyers who defend Abdullah Öcalan, responded to the Ministry, in a post on social media stating: "We invite the Ministry of Justice and the General Directorate of Prisons to explain when the last lawyer's visit and family visit was held in İmralı."

The Turkish Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Criminal Affairs and the Turkish Ministry of Justice were tagged in the post.



## Lawyers file another application to visit Öcalan in İmralı

ANF | ISTANBUL | 2 MAY 2024

Asrın Law Office lawyers İbrahim Bilmez, Emran Emekçi, Cengiz Yürekli and Suzan Akıpa submitted a new application to the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and İmralı Penal Institution Directorate to meet with their clients Abdullah Öcalan, Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş, who are under absolute isolation in İmralı.

Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan is completely cut off from the outside world. While there is no response to requests for meetings, in some cases, months later, his lawyers are presented with a justification of disciplinary penalties.

According to Asrın Law Office, "From 27 July 2011 to date, only 5 lawyer visits were allowed between May and August 2019. The last of these five meetings was on 7 August 2019. Only 5 family visits have been granted since 2014. The last face-to-face meeting was with Öcalan's brother was on 3 March 2020. Öcalan has only been able to make two phone calls since the first day (on 27 April 2020 and 25 March 2021). The last phone call on 25 March 2021 was interrupted after a very short time and there has been no news from him since that day."

In a statement on 25 March, Asrın Law Office said, "The current state of absolute non-communication is maintained through de facto and arbitrary practices as well as 'judicial decisions' that have no basis in Turkish legislation. The disciplinary penalties that are cited as reasons for the ban on family visits and the

decisions that prevent visits by lawyers are contrary to the legislation and constitute a criminal offence for the authorities. In addition, the right to correspondence and telephone communication is not recognised. However, in accordance with the Mandela rules, it is not possible to completely cut off contact with the outside world. Under all circumstances, minimum communication of prisoners with the outside world must be ensured. Not only are the minimum criteria not fulfilled, but also the files and decisions on which these practices are based are hidden from lawyers. With these practices, İmralı Island is kept behind a veil of secrecy. Access to the slightest information about the current situation of our clients held in an island prison has been prevented for 3 years without interruption, especially by their families and our lawyers. We do not have any information about our clients' right to health and other fundamental vital rights guaranteed under domestic and international law.”

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## Prisons

### Seven of the nine Kurdish activists arrested in France released

ANF | PARIS | 28 APRIL 2024

Last week, nine Kurdish activists were arrested in the Paris region and in Bouches du Rhône as part of an investigation by the National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office (PNAT). The defendants are accused of "terrorist criminal conspiracy", "financing of terrorism" and "extortion by an organized gang in relation to a terrorist enterprise". Seven of the nine men indicted were released.

The Kurdish Democratic Council in France (CDK-F), welcomed the release of Kurdish activists, while urging the French authorities to abandon "all unfounded charges and restrictions imposed on Kurdish activists, and (...) to abandon the prosecutions against them.

The CDK-F said in a statement: "We welcome with relief the news of the release of the seven Kurds arrested on false terrorism charges, although their indictment continues to reflect unjustified stigmatization of the Kurdish community in France.

We strongly condemn the persistence of this desire for criminalization, which reveals a worrying influence of foreign political agendas on French legal procedures.

These events once again demonstrate the maneuvers of certain segments of the French authorities, influenced by the Turkish intelligence services, aimed at satisfying the repressive demands of the Erdoğan regime. This strategy, which uses justice as a foreign policy tool, threatens the very principles of our democratic republic.

The indictment and placement under judicial supervision of the persons concerned, without substantial proof of the facts of which they are accused, highlights the absence of real justice and the manifest abuse of

power. We demand the immediate lifting of all unfounded charges and restrictions imposed on Kurdish activists, and call for charges against them to be dropped."

The statement added: "We also demand a transparent investigation into the external influences that led to these arrests, to ensure that future decisions are made freely, free from any foreign manipulation and with full respect for human rights and French sovereignty. We remain united in the defense of the rights of the Kurdish community in France and the protection of our democratic values."

The Kurdish Democratic Council in France said it "will continue to closely monitor this situation, pledging to support its affected members and to fight for justice and an end to the political criminalization of Kurds in France. We call on all democratic forces and human rights defenders to join us in this crucial cause."

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## Journalist Dal subjected to strip search

ANF | ISTANBUL | 28 APRIL 2024

Journalist Esra Solin Dal, who was recently arrested in Turkey on terrorism charges, was subjected to a strip search in prison.

Mezopotamya (MA) news agency, for which Dal works, said that the incident occurred on Saturday after the journalist was transferred to Bakırköy women's prison on the European side of Istanbul. The MA editorial team described the process as "cruel and inhumane". Dal's defense announced a lawsuit against the prison authorities.

### The "usual accusation"

Esra Solin Dal was remanded in custody in Istanbul on Friday night along with her colleagues Mehmet Aslan and Erdoğan Alyumat. The Turkish judiciary accuses the three media workers of engaging in "terrorism" under the guise of journalism. They are suspected of being members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) - a standard accusation systematically used by Turkish repressive authorities for people who are in any way connected to the Kurdish opposition, civil society and the free media. Six other members of the press who were taken into custody as part of the same investigation were released on reporting conditions.

### DFG: We condemn the torture of Esra Solin Dal

The journalists' association Dicle-Firat (DFG) also denounced the strip search that Dal had to endure in prison. "Strip searches are one of the most serious forms of torture against human dignity," the Amed-based organization said in a statement, strongly condemning the attack on the journalist. However, the free media cannot be discouraged or subjugated by attacks like these. Our resistance to repression remains steadfast, as does our commitment to exposing torture."



## ECHR condemned Turkey for humiliating strip searches

Even if it is denied by the Turkish government, the so-called strip searches in police custody and in prison have been re-established as a popular torture method in Turkey in the last decade. Often involving the use of force, strip searches take place much more often than is known and affect both prisoners and their relatives, especially women. The Kurdish women's movement speaks of “patriarchal dominance” over women in connection with strip searches, a method very much used by British forces in the North of Ireland.

According to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), strip searches may be necessary in certain cases, for example to ensure security in a prison or to prevent unrest. However, they will have to be carried out appropriately. Behaviour aimed at humiliating prisoners or inducing feelings of inferiority demonstrated a lack of respect for their human dignity and constituted degrading treatment.

The ECHR has already condemned such a case, which occurred in 2016, as a violation of rights in a judgment against Turkey. However, this did not stop the regime in Ankara from continuing the practice of strip searches. Civil law organizations in Turkey, including several bar associations from the Kurdish provinces, have been criticizing strip searches as a systematic method of torture for years.



## Imprisoned Kurdish activist's health worsens amid denial of medical care

ANF | 28 APRIL 2024

Osman Esmaili, a 64-year-old Kurdish labour activist, is being denied access to specialised medical care and leave due to opposition from the Ministry of Intelligence, raising concerns over his deteriorating health, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported.

Esmaili, who has been imprisoned since November 2023, suffers from a number of health problems, including a hernia and spinal stenosis.

According to KHRN, a doctor accredited by the Iranian Legal Medicine Organisation in Kurdistan Province has warned that the activist is at risk of becoming disabled in his legs if he continues to be detained and denied medical care.

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network reported that Esmaili was transferred to Sanandaj Central Prison on 12 February to begin treatment, but no progress has been made in his treatment, apart from a few simple tests.

On 9 April, Sanandaj Central Prison sent a letter to Branch Four of the Enforcement of Judgements Office in Saqqez, Kurdistan Province, stating that Esmaili was suffering from various health problems and

requested his release due to his physical inability to continue his detention, but this request was rejected by the Ministry of Intelligence.

In recent days, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) has expressed concern over Esmaili's physical condition and called on the International Labour Organization (ILO) to urge the Iranian government to provide him with immediate medical care and release him from prison.

On 2 January, Branch Two of the Saqqez Criminal Court ordered Esmaili's temporary transfer from Saqqez Prison to Evin Prison in Tehran for medical follow-up. However, Evin prison officials refused to admit him, citing shortcomings in his case file, and he was returned to Saqqez prison.

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## Call for freedom for former HDP MP Hüda Kaya

ANF | ISTANBUL | 28 APRIL 2024

The Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul Branch made a statement and demanded the release of former HDP MP Hüda Kaya, who has been held hostage since 1 November 2023.

IHD Co-Chair Eren Keskin and DEM Party MYK (Central Executive Board) member Musa Piroğlu also attended the press conference. Hüda Kaya's lawyer, Zilan Leventoğlu, recalled that her client was arrested on the grounds of "suspicion of fleeing".

Zilan Leventoğlu stated that Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued an unlawful fugitive warrant and rejected the objections.

Hüda Kaya's daughter, Nurcihan Rençber, emphasised that they oppose unjust practices and called for "freedom for Hüda Kaya".

IHD Co-Chair Eren Keskin stated that Hüda Kaya had been wronged and that Turkey had violated conventions.

Musa Piroğlu from the DEM Party stated that they are at a time when the law is suspended and Kaya is one of those who have suffered the most wrath.

Former HDP MP Züleyha Gülüm also demanded freedom for Kaya and said, "Those who demand freedom and justice in this country will successfully conclude this struggle."

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## Kurdish political prisoner released after 30 years in jail

ANF | URFA | 29 APRIL 2024

Kurdish political prisoner Cebrail Vural was released after 30 years in jail. The Kurdish prisoner was 20 years old when he was arrested in Mardin province and sentenced to life by the Turkish State Security Court (DGM) for "undermining the unity and integrity of the State". He suffered torture and ill-treatment during the 30 years he spent in captivity and contracted several serious illnesses.

Upon his release from prison, Cebrail Vural declared: "We dream that the Kurds are united in a free and equal life. These dreams are neither impossible nor unrealistic. In this regard, my fight will continue to the end."

### Torture for 70 days

The Vural family, which suffered its share of the oppression of the 90s, lived in the village of Siyamed (Akça) in the Derik district of Mardin and in the hamlet of Bozbayır. The oppression by the state and village guards was so intense that Cebrail Vural's uncle's two children and two nephews were killed by the Turkish state. Their homes and villages were burned, and the family had to take refuge in the Viranşehir district of Urfa where state pressure continued.

In March 1994, police searched their home in Viranşehir and Cebrail Vural was taken into custody. During the state of emergency (OHAL), Cebrail remained in detention for 70 days. The family had no news of Cebrail, who was subjected to severe torture for 70 days and sentenced to life in prison. Under torture, he lost weight. At some stage he only weighed 55 kilos, far too little for a man who is 1.90 meters tall.

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## Imprisoned journalist Derya Ren's release postponed for 3 months

ANF | 29 APRIL 2024

The release of JINNEWS Reporter Derya Ren, who was detained in the political genocide operations on 25 October 2022 as part of an Ankara-based investigation and imprisoned on the grounds of an approved sentence, was postponed for 3 months on the grounds of 'disciplinary penalty'.

Kurdish journalist Derya Ren has been in prison since October 2022. The basis for her imprisonment was a sentence of over four years' imprisonment for allegedly supporting a "terrorist organisation", which has since become legally binding. At the time, Ren worked for the all-female news agency, JinNews. The conviction was in connection with her work as a journalist.

In Turkey, prisoners who face more than three years in prison can, under certain circumstances, apply for conditional release after serving just one third of their sentence. Ren first applied for this right in August last year. At that time, the competent court in Amed (tr. Diyarbakır) refused to grant early release because Ren refused to move to a cell of non-political prisoners. This behaviour "clearly shows the journalist's lack of remorse and lack of insight into her guilt", it was said in justification of the decision.

The supervisory committee at Diyarbakır Women's Prison has now made a similar decision regarding another application for Ren's release from prison. The committee, which is made up of prison staff, stated that she had behaved "irregularly" and had therefore been given a disciplinary penalty. "In view of the lack of a positive social prognosis, a release scheduled for 6 May is out of the question," said the supervisory committee. Ren's lawyers announced that they will challenge the decision in court.



## Kurdish political prisoner on hunger strike in Urmia Prison tortured

ANF | 29 APRIL 2024

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported that Kurdish political prisoner Keyvan Rashozadeh has entered the 12th day of a hunger strike in Orumiyeh (Urmia) Central Prison, in West Azerbaijan Province, raising concerns over his deteriorating physical condition, according to his mother, Nazdar Roudsaz.

In a video message, Roudsaz revealed that her son had been subjected to torture in recent days, including beatings by prison guards after his hands and feet were tied.

Rashouzadeh was transferred from solitary confinement to a secure ward in the prison on 27 April, marking the 10th day of his hunger strike. He was later returned to solitary confinement after announcing a dry hunger strike the following day.

In her video message, Roudsaz, holding the prisoner's young son, said: "I am the mother of Keyvan Rashozadeh. They sentenced him to seven years and six months in prison. He has served five years of his sentence, but no one cares about his condition. When I go to the supervising judge, he ignores me. When I go to the Ministry of Intelligence, they say they have no information and will not intervene, adding that the prison director and the supervising judge are aware of his condition. In the last few days, my son has tried to check on his condition, but the prison authorities have beaten him. Prison guards came, tied his hands and feet and beat him. They broke his neck, head and hands. Since then, he has not eaten or drunk anything. Keyvan's father is ill, Keyvan himself is in prison, and this child's mother is also ill. We are left without a guardian. We are innocent, but no one sees our pain. We do not know what to do."

Rashozadeh, who has been imprisoned since October 2019, has only been granted one temporary leave, for a few days last year. His applications for further leave and conditional release have been rejected.

The political prisoner was transferred to solitary confinement on 17 April after security forces raided the section housing political and religious prisoners and physically assaulted them.

He was then transferred back to the main prison yard, where he was tortured with baton blows by prison guards, as ordered by officials.

## Background

On 8 October 2019, security forces arrested Rashozadeh along with four other civilians, Omid Saeidi, Kamran Ghassemi, Nayeb (Massoud) Hajipour and Abdolaziz Gol-Mohammadi.

After a month of interrogation in the Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Orumiyeh, these civilians were transferred to the juvenile section of Orumiyeh Central Prison.

In December 2020, after a year of uncertainty in prison, Branch Two of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Orumiyeh sentenced them each to 10 years and one day in prison.

It charged the civilians with “acting against national security” through their membership of the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan.

Their sentences were later commuted to seven years and six months.

In December 2020, Rashozadeh, Ghassemi and Saeidi went on a week-long hunger strike to protest against the uncertainty of their situation, the pressure from the Ministry of Intelligence and the failure of the prison authorities to respect the principle of separation of crimes in the juvenile section of Orumiyeh Central Prison.

In June 2022, he also went on hunger strike, sewing his lips shut for several days in protest at the refusal of the prison authorities and the Ministry of Intelligence in Orumiyeh to grant his request for leave.



## Journalist Veyisoğlu released on condition of judicial control

ANF | ISTANBUL | 30 APRIL 2024

At the Mecidiyeköy metro stop in Istanbul's Şişli district, the police beat a refugee woman and detained her. Meanwhile, political journalist Ekim Veyisoğlu, who was filming the police violence, was first harassed in an attempt to prevent him from filming and then taken into custody, together with a friend he was with.

Veyisoğlu and his friend, who were taken to Şişli Police Headquarters, were charged with "resisting a police officer" and "violating the right to privacy". While Veyisoğlu's friend was released, Veyisoğlu was referred to the prosecutor's office and then referred to the court with a request for arrest. Veyisoğlu was released on the condition of judicial control.



## Lawyer of Rojnews editor Silêman Ehmed in KDP custody prevented from meeting with his client

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 30 APRIL 2024

Silêman Ehmed, the editor of Rojnews Arabic Service, was abducted by KDP forces at the Semalka (Faysh Khabur, Kr: Pêşxabûr) crossing point on the Iraqi-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 189 days now.

Ehmed's lawyer said that he went to the Duhok Security Prison to meet with his client but was prevented from doing so by the KDP Asayish (Local Security) forces.

Lawyer Rêvîng Yasîn, who went to the Duhok Asayish Prison yesterday upon the promise of the Duhok Human Rights Commission, said the following regarding the unlawful obstruction: "Today, a delegation from the Human Rights Commission went to Duhok Prison and reported that Silêman Ehmed was there. They told me that I could go there to see him, but our meeting was prevented. I waited from 09.30 until 14.00 to have his power of attorney signed and to meet Silêman Ehmed. My efforts were fruitless. I once again informed the Duhok Human Rights Commission that the Duhok Asayish did not allow me to meet with my client, and the Human Rights Commission promised to contact Duhok Prison to arrange a meeting with Silêman Ehmed."

Yasîn said, "Tomorrow, if the Human Rights Commission also fails to prevent this obstruction, we will organise a press statement and declare to Kurdistan and international public opinion that the commission has done nothing."

The KDP intelligence service accuses Silêman Ehmed, 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 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 Ehmed 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 Ehmed 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 Ehmed.

Rojnews Agency condemns the unlawful abduction of Silêman Ehmed, 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.

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## Journalist Esra Solin Dal held in solitary confinement in prison

ANF | 30 APRIL 2024

Human rights lawyer Eren Keskin announced on Tuesday that Kurdish journalist Esra Solin Dal has been held in solitary confinement since her transfer to the Bakırköy Women's Prison. "Solin, who was arrested for her reporting on isolation and femicides, is now being held in isolation herself," Keskin wrote on the X platform after visiting Dal in the prison.

Esra Solin Dal, who works for the Mezopotamya news agency (MA), was imprisoned in Istanbul last week along with two other media professionals. The Turkish judiciary accuses them of practising "terrorism under the guise of journalism". They are suspected of being members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) - a standard accusation that the Turkish repressive authorities systematically pull out of the box for people who are in any way connected to the Kurdish opposition, civil society and the free press.

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## TJA member Zelal Bilgin sentenced to 8 years and 5 months in prison

ANF | AMED | 30 APRIL 2024

Free Women's Movement (Tevgera Jinên Azad -TJA) member Zelal Bilgin had previously been sentenced to 8 years and 5 months in prison by a court in Amed (Diyarbakır), but the sentence was overturned by the Court of Cassation.

Zelal Bilgin's lawyer, Diyar Çetedir, attended the first hearing held at Diyarbakır 4th High Criminal Court following the reversal.

The prosecution demanded that Zelal Bilgin be sentenced on the charge of "membership in an illegal organisation".

While lawyer Çetedir demanded the acquittal of his client, the court rejected the request to hear the secret witness and finalised the case in the first hearing after the reversal. The court reduced the imprisonment sentence of 9 years by 7 months and sentenced Zelal Bilgin to 8 years and 5 months.

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## Journalist Alayumat deported to Marmara Prison

ANF | ISTANBUL | 1 MAY 2024

Erdoğan Alayumat is one of the three journalists who were remanded in custody on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization" after being detained in house raids on 23 April within the scope of the police political operation carried out in Istanbul.

Alayumat was deported from Metris Prison to Marmara Prison No. 5.

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## CPJ, MENA Rights Group file Urgent Action to UN on disappearance of Rojnews editor

ANF | 1 MAY 2024

Silêman Ehmed, 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 190 days now.

Lawyers from the 'Silêman Ehmed 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 Ehmed 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 Ehmed.



Rojnews Agency condemns the unlawful abduction of Silêman Ehmed, 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.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the MENA Rights Group (MRG), filed an Urgent Action on April 12, 2024, to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, asking for the Iraqi Kurdish government to clarify the fate and whereabouts of Syrian journalist Sileman Ehmed, who was arrested in Iraqi Kurdistan on October 25, 2023.

Ahmed is one of 3 journalists currently imprisoned in Iraqi Kurdistan, according to CPJ data.

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## Prisoners Uğur and Örkmez attacked by other women inmates in Izmir jail

ANF | İZMİR | 2 MAY 2024

Sedanur Uğur and Sibel Örkmez were detained and subsequently remanded in custody during the action that took place in Izmir on 2 April against the usurpation of the will of the people of Van. They were attacked in the cell where they were kept with judicial detainees in Şakran Women's Closed Prison. The two women said that they did not want to stay with judicial detainees, but continued to be held with judicial detainees and were targeted by the prison administration.

Uğur and Örkmez were targeted because they refused a standing count in the ward and were attacked by other prisoners on 26 April.

Approximately 30 detainees attacked Uğur and Örkmez, while the guards threatened them. The women received assault reports had bruises on their arms and various parts of their bodies.

After the attack, the women were taken from the ward and kept in a cell for 2 days, and then they were transferred to another ward where judicial detainees were located.

It was learned that Uğur and Örkmez's lawyers will file a criminal complaint about the incident.

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## After spending 31 years in jail, prisoner sees his release date postponed again

ANF | 2 MAY 2024

Zeki Kayar was arrested on 23 November 1993 and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was given an additional prison sentence of 1 year and 6 months on top of his previous conviction. This sentence was approved in 2018 and affected Kayar's release process.

Kayar's release date was postponed from 23 November 2023 to 5 January 2025, after the sentence was approved. However, after he was transferred to Adana-Kürkçüler F Type Closed Prison, his release date was changed to 2031.

Kayar's lawyers applied to the Adana 1st High Criminal Court upon the new release date, but have not yet received a response. Kayar said that he would apply to the Constitutional Court if the situation is not corrected and requested support from civil society and human rights organizations.

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## Iran executes Kurdish prisoner of conscience after 14 years in jail

ANF | 2 MAY 2024

Kurdish prisoner of conscience Anvar Khezri was executed this morning in Ghezel Hesar Prison in Karaj, Alborz Province, after 14 years in prison, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) has reported.

Khezri was one of seven Kurdish prisoners of conscience who had been sentenced to death in a joint case on charges of "spreading corruption on earth" (efsad-e fel arz).

Four of Khezri's co-defendants, Ghassem Abasteh, Ayoub Karimi, Davoud Abdollahi and Farhad Salimi, have been executed in recent months.

On 30 April, Khezri was transferred to solitary confinement and denied a final meeting with his family, KHRN has learned.

Khezri was arrested on 21 January 2010 after he was summoned to the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province, and then taken to the Ministry of Intelligence's detention centre in Orumiyeh, West Azerbaijan Province.

In February 2019, Khezri stated in a letter that he had attempted suicide during interrogation at the Ministry of Intelligence detention centre in Orumiyeh in protest at the physical and psychological torture he had been subjected to.

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## Military aggression and occupation

### Several ISIS operatives captured and one eliminated in Deir ez-Zor countryside

ANF | 28 APRIL 2024

The SDF commandos, in cooperation with the international coalition forces, carried out a series of successful security operations in the northern countryside of Deir ez-Zor, resulting in apprehending and eliminating several ISIS operatives.

In the first successful operation, SDF forces apprehended the terrorist Khaled al-Khalifa al-Suhail. He had joined ISIS at its inception in Deir ez-Zor, and he conducted surveillance and participated in attacks against SDF forces in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. Following the liberation of these areas, the terrorist al-Suhail fled to Turkey in 2021. However, he re-entered Syria in 2023 and resumed clandestine activities for ISIS.

In the second operation, SDF forces apprehended the terrorist Faisal Muhammad Mubarak, also known as Abu Muslim al-Faouri. The terrorist al-Faouri joined ISIS during its control of Palmyra and the Homs countryside. He remained active even after the group retreated to Deir ez-Zor, fighting against SDF forces in al-Baghouz. Until his arrest, al-Faouri secretly conducted terrorist acts and gathered intelligence for ISIS.

In the same context, on Thursday morning, two ISIS operatives targeted the civilian Hassan al-Hussein al-Salameh and another civilian while traveling by motorcycle near Hajin town. SDF forces pursued the attackers, resulting in the elimination of one terrorist and the wounding and apprehending of another.

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## Two seriously injured by Turkish shelling of a village in Sherawa

ANF | 28 APRIL 2024

According to ANHA, the village of Bêne in Sherawa district of Afrin-Shehba Canton was subjected to a bombardment by the occupying Turkish state and its gangs on Sunday.

A young man named İbrahîm Biro and Arif Seîd (48), who were working in a field near the village, were seriously wounded by the bombardment.

The wounded civilians were taken to Avrîn Hospital in Fafin district of Shehba.

The villages of Sherawa are frequently targeted by the Turkish army and the proxy invasion mercenaries SNA (Syrian National Army) founded by Ankara. The district is located in the south-east of Afrin and is not fully occupied. The attacks on the region often result in deaths or injuries. In Turkey's plans to expand its illegal occupation zone along its southern border, however, the region occupies an important position, as it connects Afrin with Tel Rifat.

The formerly self-governing canton of Afrin has been occupied by Turkey since March 2018. Since the beginning of the attack two months earlier, which violated international law, human rights violations and war crimes have been on the agenda in what was once the safest region in Syria. In addition to a classic colonial policy, Turkey is also practising a policy of ethnic cleansing, which has already displaced hundreds of thousands of people from their ancestral settlement areas. The demographic change in favour of Turkey and its Islamist invasion mercenaries, crimes such as kidnappings, torture, extortion and murders as well as ongoing artillery attacks occur on a daily basis and with the de facto approval of the international community.



## HPG: Turkish occupation operation in Metîna has entered a new phase

ANF | BEHDINAN | 29 APRIL 2024

The Turkish state launched an occupation operation against the region of Metina in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on the night of 16 April.

In a statement on Monday, the Press Office of People's Defense Forces (HPG) provided information about the latest developments on the ground.

The statement said: “The occupying Turkish army advanced from Girê Çarçel line towards Girê Şehîd Dilbirîn in its ongoing invasion operation. On 26 April, from 20:00 to 23:00, the Golka Resistance Area was bombed by attack helicopters. Then, Sikorsky helicopters airdropped troops on Girê Şehîd Ezda in Golka Resistance Area. Simultaneously, diggers were dispatched from the KDP-controlled Qedîşê village towards Golka Resistance Area. The occupying Turkish army, with the support of the KDP, aims to both settle in the area and advance on the war tunnels by deploying diggers and building roads. Currently, the occupying Turkish army forces are stationed on the hills of Şehîd Hesên, Şehîd Sorxwîn, Şehîd Ezda and Şehîd Dilbirîn in Golka Resistance Area. In this way, the invasion operation launched against the Metîna region on 16 April has expanded with the support of the KDP and entered a new phase.”

On the other hand, HPG reported that Iraqi forces took up positions in Girê Pîrbîla, Neqeba Şabanîkê and Şeranîş areas in Heftanîn region on 26 April. Simultaneously, the occupying Turkish army went into action in the areas of Şehîd Kendal and Keşan.

In the Şehîd Delîl West Zap region, guerrillas targeted the Turkish invaders in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area with heavy weapons on 27 April, and those in Girê Cûdî Resistance Area on 28 April.

Regarding the continued attacks of the Turkish army against guerrilla areas, HPG said that Turkish fighter jets carried out 12 strikes on 27 and 28 April, targeting the Berdesor area of Hecûmran region; Serê Metîna, Bêşîlî, Bazê, Dergelê, Şêlazê Resistance Area in Metîna region; the Gosînê area in Xakurkê region and Girê Bahar Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region.

On 27 and 28 April, Serê Metîna, Şêlazê, Dergelê, Golka, Girê Çarçel Resistance Areas in Metîna region were bombed by attack helicopters.

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## Two Yazidis kidnapped in Azaz

ANF | 29 APRIL 2024

According to information received from local sources, two Yazidi civilians named Mihemed Ehmed Tirkî and Eli Zekûr El Hebdî were abducted in Azaz by the 'Military Police', the paramilitary criminal apparatus of the Turkish state.

During the visit of ENKS representatives to Afrin a short while ago, Turkish-backed gangs kidnapped 3 citizens in Afrin.

The Turkish state has established a complete terror regime in the occupied regions. Kidnapping, arbitrary arrest, torture, blackmail, threats, looting and extortion are daily occurrences.

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## Internal Security Forces capture 3 mercenaries in Şedadê

ANF | 30 APRIL 2024

In a statement, the Internal Security Forces Press Liaison Center announced that the Anti-Terrorist Forces (HAT) captured 3 mercenaries in Şedadê, in the province of Hesekê.

The statement of the Internal Security Forces said: "As a result of the successful actions carried out by our forces against terrorist organizations and the monitoring carried out within the scope of clearing our regions from terrorist cells, 3 mercenaries were captured as the result of an operation carried out together with the Damascus forces."

The statement continued: "After HAT collected information about 3 mercenaries, it organized a special operation in the town of Shedadê on the night of 27 April. Within the scope of the operation, the 3 mercenaries were captured and materials they had in their hands were seized.

The seized materials were: an explosive weighing 9 kilograms, material used to remotely detonate explosives and 2 phones.

Our Security Forces confirm that they will fulfill their duty towards their people until they capture all the mercenaries and clear all our regions in Northern and Eastern Syria from them."

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## 10 killed in HRE actions against occupation forces

ANF | 30 APRIL 2024

The Afrin Liberation Forces (HRE) published a balance sheet of their actions against the Turkish occupation forces and allied mercenaries in northern Syria for the period from 2 to 29 April.

According to the HRE, four Turkish army soldiers and six members of jihadist mercenary groups were killed in various actions in Afrin and the surrounding area. Twelve other members of the occupying forces were wounded in the actions, the details of which are as follows:

On 2 April, a mercenary was killed by a sniper in the region of Bab.

On 6 April, a mercenary was killed by a sniper in the Marê region of Azaz.

On 13 April, 2 mercenaries were killed and one other was wounded, and a vehicle was destroyed in an action against the gangs in Eble village.

3 mercenaries were killed in action in the Mare region on 18 April.

On 23 April, a Turkish soldier was killed and 3 others were wounded in an action with heavy weapons in the Daxilbaş base of the occupying Turkish army.

On 26 April, a mercenary was killed by a sniper in the Azaz region.

On 28 April, a mercenary was killed by a sniper on the Azaz region.

On 29 April, 3 Turkish soldiers were killed and 5 soldiers were wounded in two separate actions against the bases of the occupying Turkish army in Enabkê and Kefirmizê in Shera district of the occupied Afrin Canton.

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## Another civilian kidnapped in Turkish-occupied Afrin

ANF | 30 APRIL 2024

Another civilian kidnapped in Turkish-occupied Afrin

The northern Syrian canton of Afrin has been occupied by the Turkish state and allied mercenaries since 2018.

According to reports from the ground, Ali Ebdo Şêxo (52) was abducted in the village of Badîna, in Afrin's Rajo district. The aftermath of the kidnapped man remains unknown.

According to the Crime Documentation Centre, at least 28 people have been abducted in Afrin since the beginning of April.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 13 Turkish soldiers killed in guerrilla action in Metina

ANF | BEHDINAN | 1 MAY 2024

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) issued a statement on the ongoing war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). According to the statement, 13 soldiers were killed in Metîna. In Xakurke, three civilians from East Kurdistan/Iran were killed in a Turkish air raid, and further troops of the Iraqi army have been stationed in Heftanîn.

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

### "Metîna region;

The guerrillas carried out a coordinated two-flank attack on a Turkish invasion force in the Metîna region on 30 April morning. The HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) guerrillas observed the unit in the Şêlazê Resistance Area and struck them at the appropriate moment from close range with light and semi-automatic weapons. At the same time, professional guerrilla snipers took part in the action, which left thirteen soldiers dead.

### 3 civilians from Rojhilat martyred in Turkish attack

#### Xakurkê region;

On 28 April, the area of Xinêreya Jor in Xakurkê region was bombed by Turkish warplanes. The Turkish media reported a successful strike against the guerrillas, claiming that our guerrilla forces suffered losses in this bombardment. The information provided by the Turkish occupying army is a complete lie. We did not suffer any casualties during the bombardment, and it turned out that three civilians from Rojhilat were killed in the attack.

#### Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region;

On 29 April at 06:40, the invaders in Girê Cûdî Resistance Area were struck by YJA Star guerrillas with medium automatic weapons.

On 30 April at 16:35, the invaders moving in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area were struck with medium automatic weapons and the movement of the invaders was stopped. The action was carried out by YJA Star forces.



**Heftanîn region;**

On 27 April at 04:30, Turkish warplanes bombarded the vicinity of Demka village in Kashan region. After the bombardment by the Turkish army, Iraqi forces took position in Demka village.

**Attacks carried out by the Turkish army;**

On 29 and 30 April, Turkish warplanes carried out 12 attacks, including 8 strikes on the Girê Bahar and Girê Amediyê Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region, 2 strikes on the Sinînê area in Xakurkê region, as well as the Dergelê Resistance Area in Metîna region and Şehîd Îbrahîm Resistance Area in Zap region.

On 28 April, 30 April and 1 May, the areas of Serê Metîna, Şêlazê, Dergelê, Golka, Qesrokê and Girê Hakkarî in Metîna region were bombed by attack helicopters."

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**HBDH militia set fire to a factory in Kocaeli**

ANF | 2 MAY 2024

In a written statement on Thursday, the HBDH (Peoples' United Revolutionary Movement) Workers' Justice Militia said, "On 25 April, a cable, plastic, iron, steel factory in Kocaeli Industrial Site was burned by setting fire to mining cables. At around 8.00 in the morning, we carried out a burning action against the workplace, which we identified as a supporter of the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party)!"

"We carried out this action in retaliation for the occupation operations in Kurdistan. We repeat; the war will not be limited to the mountains, we will carry it to the cities," the statement said.

"As the fighters of the United Revolution, we carry the war in Kurdistan to the cities in the heart of the capital," said the HBDH militia, adding, "We take sides with the oppressed people. With the actions we carry out, we disturb the sleep of fascism and bring the bosses to their knees."

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## Young man wounded as a result of Turkish state's bombing in Manbij

ANF | MANBIJ | 3 MAY 2024

The Turkish state bombed the village of Seyadê, located in the northwest of Manbij. As a result of the bombardment, 20-year-old Ehmed Eli was injured and many sheep killed. Ehmed Eli was taken to Firat Hospital where he received treatment.

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## Military operation in Gever on the 7th day

ANF | HAKKARI | 3 MAY 2024

The operation launched by the Turkish army in the highlands in the countryside of Tiloran village in Gever district of Hakkari continues on its seventh day.

The military operation was launched in the countryside of Tiloran village on 27 April.

The operation targets Sipêrêz Mountain in the countryside of the village as well as Horê, Berê Sor and Warê Conî plateaus.

The surroundings of Tiloran village are also besieged by the soldiers, while identity checks are carried out at the entrance and exit of the village.

There is also Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) activity in the region.

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## HPG: 4 soldiers killed, 5 surveillance cameras and 1 tent destroyed

ANF | BEHDINAN | 3 MAY 2024

Four members of the occupying forces have been killed by guerrillas in the Metîna region, which is threatened by a Turkish invasion. According to the press office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG), details of the latest actions by the guerrillas and attacks by the Turkish army in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) are as follows:

**"Metîna region;**

On 2 May at 18:30, the invaders who entered a tent in Golka Resistance Area were targeted and struck with medium automatic weapons. In this action, 4 invaders were punished, and the tent was destroyed.

**Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region;**

On 29 April at 19:45, 1 surveillance camera belonging to the invaders in Girê FM Resistance Area was shot and destroyed.

On 1 May at 13:30, 15:00 and 15:40, 3 surveillance cameras belonging to the invaders in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area were shot and destroyed.

On 1 May at 16:45, 1 surveillance camera belonging to the invaders in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area was shot and destroyed. This action was carried out by our YJA Star forces.

**Attacks carried out by the occupying Turkish army;**

On 1 and 3 May, Turkish warplanes carried out 22 attacks, including 10 strikes on the Deşta Nehlê, Deşta Kafya areas in the Garê region, 4 strikes on the areas of Bêşîlî, Şêlazê, Bazê Resistance Area in the Metîna region, 5 strikes on the Girê Bahar Resistance Area in the Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region, 2 strikes on the Sinînê area in the Xakurkê region, and 1 strike on the Şehîd Îbrahîm Resistance Area in the Zap region.

On 1 and 3 May, Golka and Şêlazê Resistance Areas were bombed by attack helicopters."

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# Femicide

## Emine Şenyaşar continues her protest in front of the Ministry of Justice

ANF | ANKARA | 2 MAY 2024

The Justice Vigil carried out in front of the Ministry of Justice by Emine Şenyaşar, whose husband and two sons were murdered by the bodyguards and relatives of former AKP MP İbrahim Halil Yıldız in Suruç (Pirsûs), in the province of Urfa (Riha) on 14 June 2018, continued on its 91st day.

Şenyaşar, who came to the ministry with her son Ferit Şenyaşar, People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Urfa MP, said: "Locking the door of the ministry and hiding inside is helplessness. My 2 sons and my husband were murdered in a public hospital."

The woman held two banners, one reading "Our only demand is justice" and the other "Justice for the Şenyaşar family, justice for everyone".

Speaking on 1 May, Emine Şenyaşar requested once again that the camera recordings of the incident be released. Şenyaşar also reiterated that her son was unjustly detained and demanded his immediate release.

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## Prison sentence requested for Kurdish politician Leyla Zana

ANF | ANKARA | 3 MAY 2024

The fourth hearing of the case filed against Leyla Zana on the charge of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" was held at Ankara 27th High Criminal Court on Thursday.

Leyla Zana attended the hearing with her lawyer from Silvan Courthouse via Audio Video Information System (SEGBİS).

The Turkish judiciary filed a lawsuit against Leyla Zana's four speeches and three social media posts during the election campaign in 2014-15, accusing her of "propaganda for a terrorist organization".

At a previous hearing, the prosecutor said that she should be sentenced for "being a member of a terrorist organization".

While the prosecutor repeated the same opinion in the fourth hearing, Leyla Zana's lawyer, İbrahim Çeliker, requested time to counter it.

The court accepted the request and set the next hearing for 2 July.

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## Men kill two women in Ankara and Antalya

ANF | 3 MAY 2024

Turkey ranks first among OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries in terms of violence against women. Thousands of women were murdered during the 20-year AKP government.

This time, news about femicides came from Ankara's Sincan district and Antalya's Kepez district.

In Sincan, a district of Ankara, a man, S.K., attacked a woman, Edanur K. (28), with a cutting tool after an argument with her on the street. The young woman suffered injuries in many places and died in the hospital where she was taken. A woman named Nur G., who tried to prevent the attack, was also injured and taken to the hospital. It was learned that Nur G. is in good health.

The attacker, S.K., was caught and detained by the police.

A Pakistani woman, A. A. Q. (59), was murdered by an unidentified person or persons on the ground floor of a four-storey apartment building in Antalya's Kepez district, around 11pm on the night of 2 May. After the murder, the woman's son was questioned and taken into custody. The woman had just moved into the house on 8 April. Her body was taken to the Antalya Forensic Medicine Institute Morgue for autopsy after the prosecutor's examination. The investigation into the incident continues.

### **Hundreds of women are murdered every year**

According to the *We Will Stop Femicide Platform*, at least 315 women were murdered in 2023 alone, and 248 of them died suspiciously. JinNews found that at least 320 women were murdered in 2023. During the AKP government, which tries to eliminate women's rights at every opportunity, the policy of impunity continues to prevail.



## Ecocide

### Ecological Platform to be established in North and East Syria

ANF | QAMISHLO | 28 APRIL 2024

The Ecological Council of North and East Syria organised a conference in Qamishlo on 26-27 April with the participation of 120 delegates.

After the conference, where rich discussions and evaluations were held, the final declaration, consisting of two parts: Principle and Policy, was announced.

In the 13th article of the declaration under the title "Policy", the importance of the ecological platform was emphasised and a striking proposal was made.

In the relevant article, it was stated that "an effective institutionalisation and organisation of a platform called 'Kurdistan Ecology Platform and Earth Day' together with the North and East Syria Ecology Committee should be ensured against the policies that created the drought and climate crisis".

## Coordination with the European Ecology Committee

In addition, a proposal for coordination with the European Ecological Committee under the leadership of the Ecological Assembly of Rojava (North and East Syria), was made. This proposal involves ecological movements, environmentalists, associations, activists and researchers in the four parts of Kurdistan, as well as the Kurdish diaspora.

The Co-Chair of the Ecological Council of North and East Syria, Îbrahîm Mihemed, spoke to ANHA about the results of the conference and the proposals developed for the establishment of an ecological platform.

Mihemed stated that the discussions and participation of academics at the conference were very rich in terms of ecological science.

Mihemed also stated that extensive discussions were held in line with Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan's defences and evaluations on ecology.

## Emphasis on joint struggle

Mihemed stated that as a result of the conference, a call was made for a common struggle against the policies of the Turkish state that destroy nature and the environment. With this call, the importance of a common struggle against the hegemonic and colonial system was emphasised and a proposal was made to form an ecological platform.

Stating that they have started negotiations within the scope of the developed proposal and that they are in the preparation stage for the construction of the platform, Mihemed said, "Work will begin with the establishment of the platform. We see ecology as life. Firstly, we will determine the distance from nature and the reason for the disconnection and continue our work in this context."

Emphasising that the platform is open not only to ecological organisations but to all parties, Mihemed called on movements, organisations and academics in Kurdistan and worldwide to take part in the ecology platform.

# 1<sup>st</sup> of May

## DEM Party: We do not recognise the 'ban', we will celebrate May Day in Taksim

ANF | ISTANBUL | 29 APRIL 2024

The Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Labour Commission and DEM Party Istanbul Provincial Organisation held a press conference on 1 May. DEM Party Co-Deputy Chairperson Sevtap Akdağ read the press conference at the provincial office in Beyoğlu district.

DEM Party Deputy Co-Chair, Sevtap Akdağ, read the press statement. Remarking that the AKP is the guardian of the capitalist system in Turkey, which turns the world into hell with its policies of war and exploitation, Akdağ said: "In its 23 years in power, it has devalued our labour and our lives more than ever before. While the economy grew for a handful of cronies and capitalists, poverty increased as never before. Women, young people, workers and labourers had the biggest share of this poverty."

Drawing attention to the 31 March local election results, Akdağ stated that change is possible and listed the demands they will express on 1 May as follows: "We say 'enough' to this exploitation order that condemns workers, labourers, pensioners and young people to poverty, hunger, unemployment, debt and precariousness, and that has become a heavy burden on the back of the country. We say 'enough' to those who, hand in hand with capital, cover up their own responsibilities by blaming workplace deaths on 'fate'. We say 'enough' to those who threaten our hope of living together, who spend the budget resources created with our taxes on wars that push our peoples into an endless spiral of violence and poverty. We say 'enough' to those who have turned prisons into concentration camps for tens of thousands of our people who ask questions, question and express their demand for rights and freedom. We say 'enough' to this anti-Kurdish order that imposes not peace and hope, but insolvency. We say 'enough' to isolation, femicides and the plunder of nature."

Sevtap Akdağ denounced the Istanbul Governorate's ban of the Taksim Square for 1 May celebration. "Banning Taksim on 1 May is the last move of the government that deepens all the problems of the country, especially the Kurdish question, with violence and oppression," said Akdağ and stated that they do not recognise the Governorate's decision.

Speaking after, DEM Party Istanbul Co-Chair Murat Kalmaz said: "We invite all our people and workers to Taksim on 1 May against the exploitation of labour, the conflicts, isolation and the slaughter of workers. Let's celebrate 1 May shoulder to shoulder in Taksim Square."

DEM Party Istanbul Co-Chair Gonca Yangöz also stated that they will be in Taksim as women on 1 May to say "Co-presidency and equal representation is our purple line" and added: "We will be at Barbaros Boulevard at 10.00 on 1 May with the slogan 'From 8 March to 1 May, we are coming with women's re-

bellion' to defend honourable peace against the politics of war, to raise the resistance of our women comrades in prisons, to demand equal pay for equal work, to raise solidarity with disabled and migrant, refugee women. We invite all our people to join us."

DEM Party Istanbul MP Çiçek Otlı commemorated those who were murdered on 1 May 1977 and 1996, saying, "The streets of Taksim know us very well. We marched together with the workers when 1 May was banned. At the same time, we women, who are the subjects of the women's liberation struggle, surrounded Taksim and raised our voices against male domination from the Feminist Night March to 25 November."

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## Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria declares 1 May, Labor Day, as a holiday

ANF | RAQQA | 30 APRIL 2024

1 May, Labor Day, will now be a public holiday, said the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES).

The Legislative Council decided to change the law on Sundays and public holidays, according to a decree published on Monday. This means that 1 May will be a holiday from this year.

— ★ —

## TEV-DEM calls for participation in May Day demonstrations to demand freedom for Öcalan

ANF | 30 APRIL 2024

In a written message, the Democratic Society Movement (TEV-DEM) celebrated the May Day of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, who is under absolute isolation in İmralı, and said, "Let's celebrate this day together, let's shout once again for the physical freedom of the Leader Abdullah Öcalan on this historic day."

Emphasising Abdullah Öcalan's legacy of resistance that empowers the workers in the region and the world, TEV-DEM called on all civil society organisations and institutions to participate in the May Day demonstrations.

"We support the just struggle of all workers for a democratic, free and equal society," the message said.

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## KCK: Join the Gobar Freedom Campaign on 1 May

ANF | BEHDINAN | 1 MAY 2024

The Co-Presidency of KCK Executive Council issued a statement to mark 1 May, International Workers' Day.

The statement said: "On the occasion of the first of May, the day of unity and solidarity, we would like to congratulate all peoples, particularly all women, all classes, and especially the working class. May 1st symbolizes the struggle, unity, and solidarity of workers, laborers, and the oppressed against capitalist exploitation. The struggle of workers, laborers, and the oppressed has a very important place in the struggle for equality and freedom against exploitation throughout history.

Like all values and symbols of this ongoing struggle, the first of May has been implemented through a long fight of the people and at great cost. We respectfully and gratefully commemorate all the martyrs who gave their lives for the revolution and the struggle for democracy, and particularly those who gave their lives on 1 May. While celebrating this important day, we reiterate once again that we will remain loyal to the martyrs and hold their memory alive by further evolving our struggle."

The statement continued: "The struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation has gradually been embraced by all oppressed, and today it has become the struggle of the peoples, women, youths, and all parts of society who are in search of equality, freedom, and democracy. It has become a universal struggle that is being lived by all of humanity. The struggle for socialism has not lost any of its importance.

On the contrary, its meaning has grown, and the responsibility of the socialist movement has increased. Today, the responsibility of all democratic freedom-seeking movements struggling against capitalist modernity, especially the socialist movements, has increased. They are faced with the responsibility of leading the way in overcoming the capitalist modernist system and ensuring the freedom of all humanity.

In order to overcome the system of capitalist modernity and end exploitation, it will be decisive to act with awareness of this responsibility, to deepen on this basis, and to pursue appropriate approaches. We also need to overcome the male-dominated mentality and develop a democratic, ecological, communal life. Therefore, it is necessary to celebrate 1 May in a manner worthy of its meaning by further strengthening our unity and solidarity against capitalist modernity."

The statement added: "The historical leaders of socialism have stated that capitalist modernity will become more and more exploitative, that it will turn into an order of unlimited exploitation, and that it is the most fundamental human duty to abolish this. Today, it can be clearly seen that history has vindicated them. Capitalist modernity has brought life to an end by destroying all the values of humanity with its drive for maximum profit, by developing individualism and selfishness, and by causing ecological destruction.

Neither society nor the nature we live in can take it any longer. It has become essential to abolish this order of exploitation and to build a democratic, communal, egalitarian, free, and ecological life. The way to

achieve this is through the development of unity and solidarity, which is the essence of May 1st, and through the struggle for socialism and democracy by the peoples and particularly women."

The statement added: "The Kurdish freedom revolution has developed as a part of the struggle for socialism. Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] is not only struggling for the freedom of the Kurdish people but also for the freedom of all peoples and the oppressed, and has always sought and endeavored for this. By making the struggle of the Kurdish people a part of the struggle of the peoples of Turkey and the Middle East, he has developed a new understanding and attitude of common struggle and co-existence. Rêber Apo has had a great insistence on this development. The revolution in Rojava, the developments experienced by the peoples of Iran and Rojhilat in the light of the "Jin Jiyan Azadî" mentality, the regression of AKP-MHP's fascism in Turkey, and the developments achieved by the democratic forces have been the result of this insistence. By developing the paradigm of non-state socialism based on women's freedom, democracy, and ecology and the theory of democratic modernity against capitalist modernity, Rêber Apo tried to overcome the ideological-theoretical blockage and to give a horizon to the struggle for socialism. These contributions of Rêber Apo are of great historical importance."

The KCK called "on all socialist and democratic movements to take a stand in unity and solidarity with the Kurdish people on May 1st, in line with Rêber Apo's stance and struggle against absolute isolation, and to join the global freedom campaign aiming for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo.

The Kurdish people should also strongly embrace the first of May. They should take to the streets to show their solidarity with the working class and the peoples, shout their demands for freedom, demand the physical freedom of Rêber Apo and take the global freedom campaign to a new stage. With this attitude, we once again celebrate May 1st and call on all peoples, women, youths and our international friends, especially the people of Kurdistan, to take to the streets on May 1st, to raise the struggle for equality, freedom and democracy in solidarity with workers and laborers and to celebrate on this basis."



## Bakirhan: We will be in Taksim on 1 May

ANF | 1 MAY 2024

DEM Party co-chair Tuncer Bakirhan called for participation in the activities planned for today, 1 May International Workers' Day. "As co-chairs of the DEM, we will be in Van and Istanbul to give a voice to the working people who are being exploited and killed, the women, the young people and all the oppressed. I will stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with the workers in Taksim Square in Istanbul."

Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya has banned Labor Day rallies on 1 May in Taksim, but trade unions and left-wing parties and organizations in Turkey do not recognize the ban and continue to call for demonstrations in Taksim today. Bakirhan said that 1 May was declared Workers' Day as a result of long struggles and that his party uncompromisingly stands up for the rights of all oppressed people and population groups. He said: "For us, 1 May is just like Newroz and 8 March a day of fighting. The resistance of the Kurdish people and the revolutionary spirit of the 1 May are siblings."

Bakirhan said that poverty in Turkey exists "because of the lack of democracy and the gap between rich and poor is increasing. Instead of ensuring that everyone has sufficient income, the government is investing public resources in cross-border military operations. At least 425 workers have been murdered in the last three months in their workplace. I say murdered because those are dead because there are no safe working conditions and no protective measures have been taken. Women are murdered and children are abused every day. More and more people are eating out of garbage bins. I call on all working people and public employees, all women and young people, our people and the entire population to show solidarity with the workers in Taksim Square."

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## Workers meet in Saraçhane Park to march to Taksim Square

ANF | ISTANBUL | 1 MAY 2024

1 May celebrations in Istanbul are organized by trade unions together with workers, students, women, and activists. The Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK), the Confederation of Public Employees' Unions (KESK), the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB), the Turkish Dentists Association and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) are at the front of the organization of the workers' rally.

Following the governor's decision to ban rallies in Taksim Square, in Istanbul, the police blockaded the area. Workers started to come together in Saraçhane Park,

Scores of people continue to wait accompanied by the 1 May song, while the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), feminist organizations and ecologists held a march from Yenikapı Marmaray. Later, the people will walk to Taksim Square.

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## Police attack May Day demonstration in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 1 MAY 2024

Tens of thousands of workers and labourers, led by the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK), the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK), the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB), the Union of Turkish Dentists and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB), gathered in Saraçhane, Istanbul in the early hours of the morning.

The Turkish police deployed a large contingent against demonstrations to mark May Day in Istanbul. Despite a ban on assemblies at Taksim Square, trade unions, professional associations and political parties have called for gathering at the central square in Istanbul's city centre. Demonstrators have been trying to get through the cordoned-off access roads since the early morning. Many people have gathered in

Saraçhane to walk together along the main road to Taksim. The demonstrators were attacked by the police with rubber bullets and tear gas, and numerous people were taken into custody.

There are many women among the demonstrators. Activists from the Kurdish Free Women's Movement (TJA) carry signs reading "No socialism without free women". The Women's Council of the DEM Party demonstrates with a banner reading "Women's uprising from 8 March to 1 May". A feminist group calls for a "fight against patriarchal capitalism". The student group Campus-Witches calls for joint resistance against the exploitation of women's bodies and labour. Kurdish youths shout "Bijî Serok Apo" (Long Live Leader Öcalan) and "Kurdistan will be the grave of fascism".

The co-chair of the DEM party, Tuncer Bakirhan, came to Saraçhane together with DEM deputies Pervin Buldan and Kezban Konukçu, EHP (Labour Movement Party) Chairperson Hakan Öztürk, the general secretary of the "We Will Stop Femicides" platform, Fidan Ataselim, and representatives of other organisations and called for a joint struggle.



## Kurds living in Europe take to the streets on International Workers' Day

ANF | 1 MAY 2024

Kurds living in Europe take to the streets on International Workers' Day

While workers all over the world are taking to the squares on 1 May, the International Workers' Day, Kurds are also taking part in the demonstrations with their own colours.

Kurds participated in the 1 May marches organised by trade unions across Europe.

### Marseille

In Marseille, France, thousands of people gathered in Canabier Square to celebrate 1 May Labour Day. Organisations and institutions, including the Kurdistan Democratic Society Centre, participated in the event with their own colours, banners and pennants.

During the march, Kurds chanted slogans such as "Freedom for President Apo", "Status for Kurdistan", "Murderer Erdoğan", "End the occupation".

In the leaflets distributed, attention was drawn to the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan, the Turkish occupation in Kurdistan, and to the fact that the Turkish state is preparing for a comprehensive war in Kurdistan territory.

## Hennebont

In Hennebont, France, labour unions, political parties and associations gathered at the municipal square at 10:30 am. Kurds living in Lorient and Hennebont took part in the May Day demonstrations with their own colours.

In the speeches made, it was emphasised that 1 May is the day when all workers and peoples struggling against oppression unite in solidarity and express their common desire for freedom. It was stated that all peoples, regardless of skin colour, religion, language and gender, express their desire for a just, democratic and peaceful world. The May Day celebration ended with slogans and marches.

## Hamburg

1 May Day was celebrated with enthusiasm in Hamburg, Germany. Thousands of people gathered in front of Altona Municipality at 11.00 am. Kurds in the city also took their place in the 1 May demo. The march, in which trade unions, political parties and many women's organisations participated, ended at Landesbrücken harbour.

## Frankfurt

Dozens of movements, trade unions and women's organisations came together in Frankfurt Hauptwache and marched on the occasion of International Workers' Day. Amara Women's Assembly, Frankfurt Democratic Kurdish Community Assembly, representatives of PJAK (Kurdistan Free Life Party), KCR (East Kurdistan Youth Group), KJAR (Free Women's Society of East Kurdistan) and dozens of leftist organisations took part in the march. The Belgian state's attitude towards the Kurdish media was also protested with a banner.

The front cortege of the march carried the banner "Hoch die internationale Solidarität" (Long Live the Solidarity of Peoples), while the banners "Bijî Yek Gûlan" (Long Live 1 May) and "Free Kurdish Press Cannot be Silenced" attracted attention. The May Day march, in which the slogan "Jin Jîyan Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom) was frequently raised, continued until Römerplatz square.

## Duisburg

The International Workers' Day was celebrated with enthusiasm in Duisburg, Germany. The event organised by the German Trade Union Association (DGB) started at 10.00 in the morning in front of the City Hall in Duisburg-Hamborn district. Representatives of various organisations and trade unions, as well as young people, made speeches at the rally site demanding their rights. Speeches were made on behalf of the German MLPD, ATIF and KON-MED among German-Turkish and Kurdistan organisations.

After the speeches, the crowd walked about 3 km to Landschaftspark-Nord Square where the rally was held. Along the way, Kurdish demonstrators chanted "Long Live May Day", "Bijî Yek Gulan", "Bijî Serok Apo" (Long Live Leader Öcalan), "Zap-Avashin-Metina", "Bijî Berxwedana Guerrilla" (Long Live the Guerrilla Resistance).

## Mannheim

A march was held in Mannheim, Germany with the participation of trade unions and organisations. The march started at 10:00 at the Gewerkschaftshaus Square and continued through the busiest streets of the centre. In the central Marktplatz, food and information stands were set up by various organisations. The celebrations continued until 15:00.

During the march Kurdish demonstrators frequently chanted the slogans "Bijê Yek Gûlan" and "Bijê Serok Apo". During the march, large banners in Kurdish, Turkish and German, Rojava flags, TJK-E pennants and photographs of Paris martyrs were displayed.

## Stuttgart

May Day was celebrated with a big march in Stuttgart, Germany. Workers, labourers and women resistance activists from all peoples, colours and professions came together to protest against Germany's arms support to the "Erdoğan dictatorship" and to express solidarity with the YPJ and YPG resistance.

Kurds and their friends gathered at Marktplatz and started to march at around 10.30 to Marktplatz, which was chosen as the venue for the rally. A large poster of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan was also unfurled.

## Helsinki

A march was organised in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, on the occasion of International Workers' Day. Trade unions and organisations of workers and employees came together under different blocks and held a joint march. The Kurds took part in the "General Strike" block led by the NCDK (Kurdish Democratic Community Center) and formed by many leftist and anarchist organisations.

The theme of the general strike block in the march was to call for a general strike and to show the strength of the workers against the policies of the current right-wing government in Finland. Strikes have recently been organised in Finland against the government's policies, but the current government has been unresponsive and has not entered into negotiations with the unions.

The May Day march continued to the Oodi Library in the city centre. Statements criticised the policies of the right-wing government and called for a general strike.

## May Day demo in Van calls for an end to the policies of war and exploitation

ANF | VAN | 1 MAY 2024

Thousands of people took part in a demonstration in Van on 1 May. The event was organised by the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions (DISK), the Confederation of Public Service Unions (KESK) and other professional associations such as the Bar Association and the Medical Association and was held under the slogan "We do the work, we have the say". Members of the journalists' associations DFG and MKG protested against the recent arrests of media professionals in Turkey with a banner reading "You can't silence us". Activists from the Free Women's Movement (TJA) took part in the demo with a large banner reading "Jin Jiyan Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom).

At the final rally inat Musa Anter Park, the uprising of the people of Van after the local elections at the end of March was addressed. Co-mayor Neslihan Şedal of the DEM Party said in a speech: "We were here in this square on 3 April and the people won." KESK Chairman Ahmet Karagöz condemned the police attack on demonstrators in Istanbul and said: "There is a concentrated crisis in our country. Millions of workers are being exploited. The people are expected to foot the bill for the crisis, while government supporters enrich themselves. In the elections on 31 March, the people clearly said no to this policy. The people of Van have said no twice, and I congratulate you all on that. We want peace and fraternity, and we want to live in a country where there is mother-tongue education and equal coexistence. The Kurdish question must be resolved, the inhumane measures in prisons must come to an end and the budget spent on the war must be allocated to the people. That is why we are here today."

The co-chair of the DEM Party, Tülay Hatimoğulları, said in a speech that unemployment and poverty are among the biggest problems in the country: "Almost fifty million people are living on the poverty line in Turkey today. The AKP is squandering all the country's wealth on its supporters in the palaces and considers hunger and poverty to be proper for the working population. This situation is also linked to the war policy. The government is responding with tanks and missiles to our demand for a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish question, which has been going on for over forty years."

The rally ended with a concert by Fazıl Demir, Koma Janya and Babetna, accompanied by Kurdish traditional dance, govend.

# Human Rights Violations

## Karakaş: Kurdish should be used in all areas of life to defeat assimilation

ANF | AMED | 28 APRIL 2024

Amed Kurdish Language Institute co-spokesperson Mine Karakaş pointed out that assimilation policies have been implemented for centuries to destroy the Kurdish language and asked for the language to be protected.

Attacks on the Kurdish language continue in all areas of life. People who speak Kurdish are subjected to racist attacks, newspapers and magazines in Kurdish are banned, and concerts by artists are prevented if in Kurdish.

Speaking to ANF, Amed Kurdish Language Institute co-spokesperson Mine Karakaş said: "Assimilation policies have been systematically implemented on Kurds for more than a hundred years. After 2016, with the closure of all Kurdish education and course institutions, the rate of people speaking Kurdish decreased significantly. This situation only occurred in 2016. It is not a situation limited to Turkey, it is an assimilation policy that has been going on for about a hundred years."

### **Kurdish should be official and the language of education**

Karakaş continued: "The purpose of assimilation policies is clear; to leave Kurds without identity and culture and to distance them from themselves. The more Kurds move away from their language, the more they move away from their own culture, themselves, consciousness and society. When there is no language, there is no identity, no culture, no sense of belonging to a place. When you don't belong to somewhere, you are lost. The state aims to leave Kurds with nothing. As language institutions, we have been working on these issues for years. Our institutions have made serious efforts against assimilation policies. Assimilation policies have gained momentum, especially with the development of technology since the 2000s. When we look at state policies, nurseries have now been opened even in villages. The aim here is to assimilate our four-year-old children, distancing them from their own language. Our aim is for Kurdish to be the language of education and to be recognized as an official language in Turkey. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to save a language without it being the language of education. If you do not educate a child in his native language when he is young, it is really difficult for him to return to his roots and learn the language."

### **We need to take care of our language**

Karakaş added: "We must speak our own language in the streets, at home, everywhere. We must speak Kurdish with our children at home. A child who does not grow up with his own native language will have



more difficulties in life. We are not successful enough in our field. We need to protect our language and use it in every aspect of our lives."

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## Two young men imprisoned in Urfa

ANF | URFA | 29 APRIL 2024

Two young people who were detained in a house raid on Thursday as part of an investigation conducted by Urfa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office were remanded in custody.

The two young men, accused of "membership in an illegal organisation" were taken to the courthouse after the procedures at the police station. Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Party Assembly Member Muhsin Aydoğdu, who chanted "Victory will be for the resisting Kurdish people", was beaten by the police.

The detainees were kept in the corridor of the courthouse in handcuffs for a long time in violation of the legislation. The handcuffs were removed after the lawyers' objection.

Zozan Polat, Mahmut Çoban Muhsin Aydoğdu and Ömer Kıstak were then referred to the Criminal Judiciary of Peace by the prosecutor's Office. Polat and Çoban were released on judicial control conditions. Aydoğdu and Kıstak, on the other hand, were remanded in custody on the grounds of "alleged membership in an illegal organisation" due to the press statements and activities they participated in. They were then taken to Hilvan Prison.

The mass waiting in front of the courthouse protested the arrests with slogans.

Speaking in front of the courthouse, DEM Party Urfa Provincial Co-Chair Bekir Karakeçili said, "The decision is not legal but political. The government continues to perpetuate lawlessness through the judiciary. These unlawful decisions do not benefit anyone. We call for an end to these unlawful judgments as soon as possible. No one should hope to benefit from these unlawful judgments. The people gave you a good lesson in the last election. We will carry the flag left by Muhsin and Ömer to a higher level."

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## TÖP board member Gözen taken into custody

ANF | IZMIR | 30 APRIL 2024

Social Freedom Party (TÖP) spokespersons board member Juliana Gözen was taken into custody. Gözen was detained on the charge of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" and was taken to Izmir Provincial Police Department.



## Speaker of Parliament visits DEM Party to discuss the path to a new constitution

ANF | ANKARA | 2 MAY 2024

Parliament Speaker Numan Kurtulmuş visited the DEM Party Parliamentary Group and met with co-chairs Tulay Hatimoğulları and Tuncer Bakırhan as part of negotiations for a new constitution.

Speaking after the meeting, Kurtulmuş said: "Within the framework of the constitutional work we started on Tuesday, we are continuing the second day of contacts today with the 3 parties that have groups in the parliament. We made our first visit to the DEM Party. We shared our views and the framework of this process with them. We conveyed to them our demand that this process be carried out in an open, transparent and democratic manner. The esteemed Co-Chairs and Group Deputy Chairs will share their views on this issue with the public after negotiating with their friends. Our wish is that a constitutional work that can be agreed upon by a large majority of political parties in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey is put forward and that it is accepted in the Parliament. We will make a more detailed explanation about this matter at the end of the visit to the 3 parties."

DEM Party Co-Chair Tülay Hatimoğulları stated the following:

"As the DEM Party, we believe that Turkey needs a constitution-making process. We have made various statements on this issue. While we are going through a period in which even the 12 September Constitution is not being implemented, our views on changing the 12 September Constitution and taking steps to build a democratic Turkey are known by the public. In this period, of course, there is a need for a road clearing. In order to build a democratic constitution-making process in Turkey, it is very important for us that the current repressive process and antidemocratic practices are eliminated and the provisions of the constitution and the ECtHR judgments are implemented.

Today, we underlined that we view the violence that took place on 1 May negatively and that the constitution-making process may have difficulties under such circumstances. Our greatest wish is that a serious road clearing is done, a democratic ground is created, and a constitution-making process is carried out on a ground where the rights of all differences, all different peoples and beliefs in Turkey are constitutionally guaranteed on the basis of the right to equal citizenship with the widest range of social consensus. This is, of course, also important for us.

Finally, there is a deep economic crisis and poverty in Turkey. The constitutional debates must be resolved in a way that does not cover up this urgent and alarming problem of the country. We have a duty and responsibility towards our peoples, the poor, workers and labourers of this country on the floor of the parliament and together, as all political parties."



## Report on human rights violations in Rojhilat in April

ANF | 2 MAY 2024

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

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

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

### **Executions**

According to KHRN's findings, Iran executed at least six prisoners in April, four on drug-related charges and two for "premeditated murder".

The executions took place in prisons in Orumiye, Hamadan, Kerman, Karaj, Saqqez, and Ardabil.

### **Landmine explosions**

In the past month, landmine explosions killed a civilian in Gilan-e Gharb and injured another in Saqqez.

### **Kolbars and tradesmen**

During this period, at least four kolbars were shot dead by Iranian border guards and 22 kolbars were injured.

Of the injured, 18 were shot by Iranian border guards, two fell from heights at the border, one was beaten and one was injured during the pursuit of the border guards.

### **Detentions and arrests**

Throughout April, Iranian forces arrested at least 45 civilians, including eight activists, a journalist, and a former political prisoner.

At least 13 of the detained civilians were sent to prisons in Oshnavieh and Naqadeh to serve prison sentences.

## Sentences

In the past month, Iranian courts have sentenced at least 10 people to punishments ranging from three months to 10 years in prison.

Among those sentenced was Kurdish rapper Saman Yasin, who was sentenced to five years of exile imprisonment in Babak, Kerman Province, by the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran after one year and seven months of detention.

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## More than 20 people taken into custody in Bursa

ANF | BURSA | 3 MAY 2024

Within the scope of an investigation carried out by the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, simultaneous police raids were carried out at many different addresses in the morning. More than 20 people were taken into custody in the raids, including Sabiha Toktaş, Saliha Toktaş, Nesiba Akan, Yusuf Yağız, Mahmut Yıldırım, Sadiye Çelik, Nurcan Apakan, Elif Karatekin, Mazlum Aymaz, Emine Borne, Yusuf Vural.

It was learned that those detained were taken to Bursa Provincial Police Department, accused of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization".

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## Co-mayors of Van react to the pressure on the press

ANF | VAN | 3 MAY 2024

The co-mayors, Secretary General Cavit Tatar and Press Advisor Serdar Altan came together with the representatives of the press operating in the city on the occasion of 3 May World Press Freedom Day.

Van Metropolitan Municipality Press Advisor Serdar Altan, who made the opening speech of the meeting organised for the first time in Van on 3 May World Press Freedom Day, said: "The reason why we chose such a day is the situation the country is in in terms of press freedom. The oppression against journalists is obvious and press freedom has not progressed for 30 years. There is a struggle against this."

Co-mayor Neslihan Şedal recalled that dozens of journalists were murdered in 1993 when 3 May was declared as press freedom day. Neslihan Şedal said "Many of our friends were killed in unsolved murders" and drew attention to the efforts of women journalists working in the press.

Co-mayor Abdullah Zeydan started his speech by commemorating Celal Başlangıç, a journalist who lost his life last night. Stating that Celal Başlangıç was a brave journalist, Zeydan said: "We commemorate with

respect all our press members who were murdered for revealing the truth to society in all its aspects. The democratic level of a country is related to the level of freedom of the press. We are going through a period in which the press is under pressure and journalists are criminalised while doing their duties. Last week three of our press labourers were imprisoned. I hope these pressures will come to an end."

The co-mayors then answered the questions of the press members and listened to their suggestions.

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## Interview

### Rozerîn Öcalan: It's the first time a radical boycott action of this level has developed in prisons

ANF | BEHDINAN | 3 MAY 2024

The protest carried out by political prisoners from the PKK and PAJK for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan and a solution to the Kurdish question has reached a new level with the transformation of the hunger strike into a communication boycott.

Rozerîn Öcalan from the PKK-PAJK Prison Committee said in an interview with ANF that "the boycott of family visits, the rights to make phone calls and not appearing in court represent a revolutionary approach. This resistance requires a firm stance and a strong will."

*What impact did the campaign "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and a solution to the Kurdish question" have on the outstanding results at the local elections?*

We can easily say that the work carried out with the campaign "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and a solution to the Kurdish question" has positively influenced and shaped the electoral process. This work took place with the active participation of hundreds of institutions, well-known personalities and friends around the world. The Ankara action of comrades Rojhat and Erdal and the revolutionary operations by the guerrillas created a great fighting morale in society. Hunger strike resistance and the vigils for justice initiated outside under the leadership of our mothers, the Freedom March in Northern Kurdistan, 8 March and the magnificent Newroz celebrations had a major impact on the outcome of this election.

The fact that Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] was put on the agenda also had a positive effect on the election campaign. The election campaign has once again shown that you cannot achieve results if you do not put Rêber Apo on the agenda. The fact that Rêber Apo in Northern Kurdistan was relied upon, albeit not sufficiently, has brought about some developments.

The walls of fear have been largely overcome, and despair has been replaced by the belief that the battle can be won. With the Serhildan of Van, all intimidation and desperate attempts were destroyed. Under the leadership of Kurdish young people and women, a strong spirit of resistance emerged again.

Our comrades in the prisons also joined the campaign by going on hunger strike from 27 November 2023. It was important that the prisons quickly organize themselves and take their place in the campaign, in keeping with our movement's tradition of resistance. Despite all the reprisals, difficult conditions and all kinds of attacks, they did not hesitate to resist the total isolation of Rêber Apo. With the hunger strike, prisoners made a significant contribution to the campaign and took on a vanguard role because they had such a great impact on the public. The prisoners also contributed to the success in the local elections.

The heroic resistance of the guerrillas in the mountains and the revolutionary operations carried out immediately after the announcement of the offensive completely thwarted the enemy's "plan of defeat." Now the Turkish army's will to fight has been broken, the moral and psychological superiority has completely passed to the guerrillas. The Turkish state, despite all its special war apparatus and media, was unable to prevent this, and the apoist spirit displayed by the guerrillas made society lively, moral and resistant again and significantly influenced the election results.

*From 4 April, the hunger strike was transformed into a communications boycott. How do you evaluate this?*

This is the second stage of the prisoners' campaign. It is a higher level. It is of utmost importance that our friends in prison have, for the first time at this level, begun such a radical process under the slogan 'I choose to live in the same conditions as Rêber Apo.' Cutting off all connections to the outside world, giving up family visits, giving up the right to phone calls, not appearing in court, despite all repression and isolation, is a revolutionary approach that requires a firm stance and a strong will.

It is known that since 2014, the AKP-MHP fascism has mobilized all its power and resources to liquidate the freedom movement. The prisons are one of the most important areas of this attack. This is where fascism is trying to institutionalize itself in every way and it is precisely here that our friends initiated the second stage of their resistance. This is the greatest answer to fascism. Therefore, we welcome this second step and we accept it as a revolutionary decision at the right time and in the right place.

Rêber Apo demonstrated his will and determination even under conditions of the most relentless torture in a place like Imrali. He spends every moment in the greatest battle against the hegemonic powers. Imrali is the center of ideological and actual resistance to both Turkish fascism and the system of capitalist modernity. Our leadership continues every aspect of our fight, even in isolation. Rêber Apo told the international hegemonic powers: 'I will not make demands on you for myself. Do whatever you want, I will show the resistance of the will and the power of a free life even in the face of the most unbearable conditions, I will take a stand against the most merciless situation, against your coercion and counter it with my resolute stance. I will not show a moment of weakness. While you want to achieve your goal of bringing me into line with your torture system, I will resist based on the democratic-ecological, women's liberation paradigm and mentality.'

In this sense, it is very important that our friends in prison spend every moment and every day with such determination and develop an attitude of resistance in the spirit of the reality of Rêber Apo and his condi-

tions. They aim to understand Rêber Apo even better, assume their responsibility in the current phase and play their leadership role.

This second phase should also be understood as a practical self-criticism. In prison conditions, where all kinds of oppression and torture are implemented, the willingness to live like Rêber Apo 24 hours a day is a very significant and worthy attitude. In this honorable attitude we must see the revolutionary spirit of comrades Mazlum Doğan, Hayri Durmuş, Kemal Pir and Sakine Cansız.

*What were the effects of the justice vigils organized by the families? How will the resistance of relatives continue?*

The vigils for justice initiated by the mothers were important in this process. The fact that they kept the resistance of Rêber Apo and our friends in prison on the agenda had a positive effect. The mothers' actions created a feeling of sociality and solidarity. People began to question themselves and become aware of their duties and responsibilities. The most important thing was that everyone openly supported Rêber Apo and demanded his freedom without fear. This had an impact not only on those involved, but on society as a whole. This determined stance and the mothers' activism played an important role both in the gradual growth of the offensive, in the mobilization in Northern Kurdistan, and in the election results and the defeat of AKP-MHP fascism.

The press has said that our mothers will take their vigils for justice to the next level. This is a very important and meaningful step. The first phase was about creating an agenda. We think they will now go into planning to further pressure fascism and get results. It appears that mothers will once again lead this process. And this will become more effective and massive, and will not take place in closed rooms, but on the streets and squares. Rêber Apo's demand for freedom will sound everywhere without fear. Of course, the most fundamental patriotic duty is that mothers are not left alone and that all our patriots and democratic forces stand on the side of mothers.

We know that the mothers, the young people of Kurdistan and the women have always stood fearlessly at the forefront of our struggle. From now on they will again be the main vanguard forces. It was always the mothers who carried on the line of the Kurdish freedom struggle. The tradition of resistance remains unbroken to this day and is constantly growing, also thanks to the determined attitude and attitude of our mothers. For this reason, our mothers have always been our source of pride, strength and morale. We will strive to be worthy of their proud patriotic attitude and to develop the struggle and bring it to a result.

*Is there anything more you want to add?*

The belief that AKP-MHP fascism will take a step back as a result of the resistance that began in Van and the great defeat it suffered has been strengthened in all areas. We can say that the pessimistic atmosphere created by the special war in our society has completely dissipated. This resistance has created an atmosphere of a fully democratic process in Turkey and Kurdistan. In this spirit, we call on everyone to unite around the campaign. Everyone should fulfill their duties and responsibilities to protect Rêber Apo and the resistance of our friends in prison and demonstrate this through actions.

In this process, Rêber Apo's defense writings should be read and discussed everywhere, efforts to understand them should be increased, and everyone should be able to participate based on their knowledge. This

happens by living and keeping apoism alive, by knowing and implementing it. This is also an important task and responsibility in the context of the movement. We would like to once again express our conviction that all of our patriots will participate in this spirit, take responsibility and participate actively and with great willingness to sacrifice in the process.

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## Opinion

### How do Ankara's war plans resonate in Baghdad and Hewlêr?

NAZIM DASTAN | 2 MAY 2024

The Turkish state is trying to implement its invasion of Southern Kurdistan with the help of the Iraqi government and the Southern Kurdish party KDP. However, the interests of the Iraqi government under Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani and the Turkish state in particular are drifting apart. Ankara and Baghdad signed the “Iraq Development Road Project” and agreed, among other things, a “Framework Agreement on Water Cooperation” and a “Memorandum on the Strategic Framework”. Iraq's hopes lie more in the economic profit expected from these contracts than in a joint war. Meanwhile, the KDP, now a quasi-colonial administrative authority of the Turkish state for Southern Kurdistan, is becoming increasingly tied to Ankara.

#### **Iran recognizes invasion as part of NATO strategy**

Furthermore, Iran has intensified its commitment to thwart the AKP-MHP regime's plans for the Middle East, at least to the extent that they run counter to its interests. To this end, it has established a serious presence in the region, particularly through the Shiite forces. Iran is aware that the war waged by Ankara is part of NATO's long-term strategy to gradually encircle Iran.

#### **The requirements for the KDP**

The new invasion operation that Erdoğan wants to launch against the Kurdistan freedom movement has both indirect and direct participants. Ankara wants to see greater participation by the KDP in this operation and is putting it under pressure. The KDP should now no longer just surround the Medya Defense Areas, mass troops in the region, block guerrilla passages and provide intelligence and logistical support to the Turkish army, but should also actively participate in the operations. There are so far no signs that the KDP is in a position to reject these demands.

#### **Two ways: either payments to Ankara or absolute allegiance**

On the contrary, the KDP sees the Turkish state's demands that it be used more intensively in its occupation plans as an opportunity to overcome its recent problems. The recent Iraqi Federal Court ruling that



oil sales must be made by the central government is one of the biggest problems the KDP has yet to resolve. Because much of their system, based on clientelism and nepotism, is based on the money made from selling oil. The court decision puts Hewlêr in a quandary. The KDP must break the illegal oil agreement it concluded with Turkey in 2014 without Baghdad's consent, which provides for a 50-year oil sale, and then pay compensation to both Baghdad and Turkey accordingly. This means that the KDP is in a situation of either paying compensation to Turkey or doing whatever the Turkish state demands of it.

### **Who did Neçirvan Barzani sit at the table with in Baghdad?**

The KDP fears a change in Southern Kurdistan in the upcoming elections on June 10th. There is a conflict within the KDP itself as to whether elections will be held or not. This issue has also led to a crisis between Kurdistan Region President Neçirvan Barzani and KDP chair Mesut Barzani. In the past few days, Neçirvan Barzani set off for intensive talks in Baghdad. He held negotiations with the Sudani government, the President of the National Wisdom Movement, Ammar al-Hakim, the former Iraqi Prime Ministers Adil Abd al-Mahdi and Haider al-Abadi, the Iraqi Defense Minister Sabit Abbasi, the chairman of the Iraqi Rule of Law Coalition, Nouri al-Maliki, Badr Organization Chairman Hadi al-Amiri, Azm Alliance Chairman Muthanna al-Samarrai, Iraqi Undersecretary of State for National Security Qasim al-Ereji and Siyade Coalition Chairman Xemis Xencer.

### **What deals did Barzani make in Baghdad?**

The agenda of Neçirvan Barzani's various meetings became known when Erdoğan was received with great pomp in Hewlêr on April 22nd. The KDP and the Barzani clan had wanted Erdoğan to play an intermediary role between them and the Iraqi central government, in return for active participation in the Turkish invasion of southern Kurdistan. The KDP tried in Baghdad to postpone the elections, which pose an existential threat to its power.

### **Iraqi military in southern Kurdistan for the first time in 30 years**

While some sources indicated that some progress had been made in this regard, at the time of the talks it was reported that Iraqi border guard units had established two military bases in Zaxo. Although it is said that the Iraqi border guard units also include forces under the control of the party (KDP) that controls the region, for the first time in 30 years after the uprising, the Iraqi army has military forces in southern Kurdistan acting on behalf of Iraq. This situation paves the way for Iraq to continue to "legitimize" its forces in the region.

### **Iraq shows itself ready to act together with Turkey**

Baghdad, on the other hand, is striving to cover the revenue from oil sales in the region as well as its energy needs and to implement its stationing plans in Southern Kurdistan step by step. In this way, Iraq is sending the Turkish state a message of willingness to act together in return for some agreements and promises. The new military forces sent to the region by the KDP against the Kurdistan freedom movement also reflect the implementation of this policy.

## Dirty deals on Kerkûk

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that Neçirvan Barzani was openly praised by Nouri al-Maliki, the president of the Iraqi Rule of Law Coalition, during the talks in Baghdad: “He can play a role in resolving the problems between us.” Similar praise was given during the Meeting between Iraq and the PUK Bafil Talabanî expressed support for Barzani.

In this context, it is said that Barzani asked the circles he met in Iraq to persuade the PUK to postpone the regional elections. In order to persuade the PUK to do this, the PDK held some discussions about Kerkûk. It is about the question of filling the post of governor of Kerkûk. The issue of the election of the governor of Kerkûk is still controversial due to the KDP's close ties to Turkey, which wants to seize the oil-rich region, and to some Arab organizations. But apparently the PUK will now be offered the governorship of Kerkûk if it accepts the postponement of the elections in Southern Kurdistan.



## Plans underway to have the Peshmerga killed as a last resort to postpone the elections Bashur

ARARAT ARAM | 2 MAY 2024

While Ankara, Baghdad and Hewlêr (Erbil) have been preparing for a new war against the Kurdistan Freedom Movement for months, the first signals of the invasion operation were launched in the Metîna region of the Medya Defence Zones. The military deployments of the Turkish Republic and KDP to the region for the operations to be carried out in stages continue.

### Metina under intense attack since last night

While the information and developments regarding the operation are being kept secret in order to prevent any public reaction, it is reported that the Turkish army has been carrying out intense attacks on many parts of Metîna since last night. It is also said that some preparations were made for the KDP to take a more active role in the operations.

### A new war scenario

While it is stated that new plans are set to be put into action under the leadership of the KDP within the framework of the operations whose preparations continue in many areas, the Turkish army will reportedly head towards the HPG points in Metîna by bringing in some forces affiliated to the KDP in the coming days.

## **Peshmerga will be killed!**

It is reported that the attacks will be organised in this way and, at the current stage, an attempt will be made to create a picture of "Peshmerga being attacked" out of the force that will be hit by the HPG's response. While it is reported that the infrastructure for such a provocation is being prepared, it is also stated that the main purpose is the KDP's attempt to cover up its problems with war.

## **To cancel the elections**

If the plan is realised, Nechirvan Barzani will appear in front of the cameras and say: "We are in a state of war. Elections cannot be held under these conditions. We are postponing the elections due to this extraordinary situation".

It is reported that the KDP, which has given all its weight to this plan, has accelerated the preparations for this provocation in order to create justifications for war, while the Turkish state has mobilised all its power for this plan to come to life.

## **The last resort...**

On the other hand, the KDP left no stone unturned to find a way out of the political crisis in Southern Kurdistan, which is led by the elections. Having failed to get results in its negotiations with the USA, the Sudanese government, the Shiite forces in Iraq and most recently Iran, the KDP is planning to create an extraordinary situation in Southern Kurdistan through such a provocation and to put into effect a different way to postpone the elections. While the KDP is preparing to have the Peshmerga loyal to it killed in order to save its power, both the Turkish Republic and the KDP intend to take advantage of this situation if the plan is realised.



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