

# THE İMRALI POST

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

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# Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

## DEM Party demands re-examination of their application on İmralı

ANF | ANKARA | 6 MAY 2024

DEM Party Şırnak MP Nevroz Uysal Aslan and Urfa MP Dilan Kunt Ayan submitted an application to the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission regarding İmralı Island Prison where Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and three fellow prisoners are held in isolation.

The 2 deputies, who are also members of the Human Rights Investigation Commission, made the following statement:

"On 16.11.2023, a detailed application was made to the Human Rights Investigation Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey about Mr Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in isolation for 25 years and has not been heard from for the last 38 months, and Mr Hamili Yıldırım, Mr Ömer Hayri Konar and Mr Veysi Aktaş, who are held in the same prison, and the Commission was called upon to assume duty and responsibility to put an end to this inhumane practice. However, the Commission acted in the same way and method as in previous applications, and avoided its responsibility by transferring the ministry's unexplained reply to us without examining its accuracy. For the Commission to re-examine and re-evaluate the ministry's response to the application and to reconsider the application and to make an on-site examination, we, as members of the Dem Party Commission, demand the following;

- Initiation of an investigation in order to clarify the information and determinations in need of explanation in the ministry's response to the application dated 16.11.2023 and numbered 1503,
- Invitation of Ministry officials to be heard by the Commission,
- Considering the political, social and legal dimensions of the problem, the Commission should organise a visit to İmralı Island Prison and conduct an on-site inspection without referring it to the Sub-Commission to Investigate the Rights of Prisoners and Detainees.

A new application dated 06.05.2024 was made containing the requests.

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## Temelli: An investigation committee should go to İmralı immediately

ANF | ANKARA | 6 MAY 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.

Responding to the application last week, the Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses claimed that the prisoners in İmralı "equally benefit from all rights granted by law and regulations".

Claiming that there is "no isolation" in İmralı and the findings in the application are "baseless", the Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses argued that Abdullah Öcalan "benefited from letters, faxes and similar communication methods in 2023".

At a press conference in the Parliament, DEM Party Group Deputy Chairman Sezai Temelli evaluated the developments on the agenda. Reacting to the claim of the Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses of the Turkish Ministry of Justice, Temelli said: "There has been no family visit for 4 years and 1 month, and no lawyer visit for 4 years and 8 months. For 38 months, there has been absolute miscommunication. Still, the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses writes 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". Indeed, there has been a state of absolute noncommunication, and no news has been received from İmralı for 38 months."

Temelli continued: "We do not even have any information about Mr Öcalan's health status. The report says that an internal medicine doctor and a psychiatrist visit him every 3 weeks and examine his health on the island. There is no information about this. Moreover, 3-week periods are very long. The most important reason for all this darkness, the injustice we are living in, and the political crisis we are going through is the İmralı isolation. We know this very well now. This isolation has been going on for more than 24 years and Turkey continues to grapple with political crises and to be trapped in great lawlessness and injustice. We once again call on the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission to put an end to this as soon as possible. It is a necessity for an investigation committee to go to the island immediately."

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## Öcalan given new 3-month family visit ban

ANF | 7 MAY 2024

According to the Mezopotamya Agency, a new 3-month family visit ban was imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and the other prisoners in İmralı, Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş.

Bursa Execution Judgeship responded to the application made by lawyers to grant a family viist. The court said that a new "disciplinary punishment" was given to Abdullah Öcalan by the Disciplinary Board Presidency on 28 March. The decision was finalized on 12 April.

Pointing out that the process was carried out without their knowledge, the lawyers applied for the disciplinary decision, file and evidence to be given on 26 April. However, their applications were rejected. The lawyers' objections against the "disciplinary punishment" decision were rejected on the grounds that the decision was final.

There has been no news from Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan since 25 March 2021, when he had a very short phone call with his brother.



## Activists from Duisburg take over Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 8 MAY 2024

The Freedom for Öcalan Vigil has been held in Strasbourg since 25 June 2012, with the aim of ensuring the physical freedom of the Kurdish People's Leader and eliminating the Imrali system.

The action is on its 619th week and has been taken over by a group of Kurdish activists from Duisburg.

The group includes Mesut Avras, Abdullah Tolayman, Murat Erzem, Edip Elitaş.

### 'We will continue our struggle to free the leader'

Group spokesperson Mesut Avras said: "We know that the Council of Europe has a role in keeping Réber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] in captivity in Imrali for 25 years. We're here to protest this. Europe is supposedly the center of democracy and human rights, but unfortunately, this democracy and human rights are not valid when it comes to Kurds and the Kurdish Movement. We have been showing our stance against this at the door of the European Council continuously for 12 years. We condemn the Council of Europe's attitude towards the Kurdish People's Leader and the politics of the Kurdish people. We will support the Kurdish People's Leader with our action and struggle until we get results."

### 'Let's increase the struggle for a free future with our leadership'

Calling on the Kurdish people to increase the struggle for a free future, Avras said: "The Kurdish people are going through an important process. There has been no news from Imralı for more than 3 years. We condemn this and ask our people to support the process. Let them step up the fight against the International Conspiracy and the Imrali isolation. Let's strengthen our actions to break the isolation, to welcome a free future and a free Kurdistan with our Leader, on the basis of the *Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, Solution to the Kurdish Question* campaign that has been carried out for months."

Once again condemning the attitude of the Council of Europe against İmralı and the International Conspiracy, Avras emphasized that "the rightful struggle of the Kurdish people will win."

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## Joint letter to the CPT calls for urgent action against the isolation of Öcalan

ANF | 8 MAY 2024

Peace in Kurdistan in Britain has written a joint letter calling for an end to the absolute isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and for the CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture) to immediately send a delegation to the island. In addition to its members, Peace in Kurdistan's letter was signed by renowned linguist Noam Chomsky, former Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn, Simon Dubbins of Unite the Union, the largest trade union organisation in Britain, Prof. Dr. Michael Gunter, Prof. Dr. Bill Bowring, Prof. Dr. Mary Davis, SNP MP, Prof. Dr. Michael Gunter, Prof. Dr. Bill Bowring, Prof. Dr. Mary Davis, Prof. Dr. Michael Gunter, Prof. Dr. Bill Bowring, Prof. Dr. Michael Gunter, Prof. Dr. Michael Gunter, Prof. Dr. Bill Bowring, Prof. Bill Bowring, Prof. Dr. Mary Davis. Dr. Mary Davis, SNP MP Chris Stephens, Siin Fein MP Chris Hazzard, Mickey Brady, Labour MPs Kate Osamar, John McDonnell, and dozens of academics, trade unionists, writers and journalists.

In the letter sent to Alan Mitchell, President of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, of the Council of Europe, with the title 'an urgent call for immediate and immediate attention', it was pointed out that no news has been received from the Kurdish People's Leader for 36 months now. The letter emphasised that the Turkish state has attempted to transform İmralı Island into a "floating coffin".

The joint letter to the CPT reads as follows:

"We, the concerned members of a network in the United Kingdom comprising various trade unions, Members of Parliament, human rights activists, lawyers and civil society organisations, are writing to you to make an urgent appeal that requires your immediate consideration.

For the past 36 months, Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, who is seen by millions of Kurds as their legitimate political representative, has been held in an extreme form of incommunicado detention by the Turkish state on the prison island of İmralı. During this illegal and inhumane isolation, Mr. Öcalan has effectively been "disappeared" and dropped into a void of "non-existence," as he is being denied all contact with the outside world, including his lawyers and close family members.

Throughout this period, Turkey has attempted to transform İmralı Island into a "floating coffin". Mr. Öcalan, who is now 75 years old, has been subjected to cruel torture through isolation for 25 years but over the last three years, no information at all has been provided concerning his health, giving cause for serious disquiet. At this point, even his whereabouts cannot be confirmed, and his physical condition is a highly sensitive issue for many Kurds who see him as embodying their national voice.

It is for these compelling reasons that we are kindly asking you, the CPT, to take some immediate action, only this will allay any fears. As the CPT, you are legally entitled to visit all places of detention of states which are party to the Convention, and this includes Turkey. This invest you with the powers and ability to send your team of experts to Imrali, where the Turkish government are obliged to grant you unrestricted access to visit where Mr. Öcalan is being held captive and to allow you to interview him in private so he can communicate with you in confidence free from any duress.

We would like the CPT to act in accordance with Article 3 of the CoE Statute, which states that: *“Every member of the Council of Europe must accept the principles of the rule of law and the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”* Mr. Öcalan is a citizen of a CoE member state that has been denying him his human rights for two and half decades, and for the last three years, has been depriving him of his basic legal rights to meet with his lawyers and speak with his family.

All we ask, with complete sincerity, is that you please carry out your responsibilities immediately by sending a delegation to visit Imrali Island to speak with Mr. Öcalan and check on his well-being. Following that, we would greatly appreciate it if you could encourage Turkey to allow him to receive a visit from his family and lawyers, to bring them in full compliance with CoE and CPT obligations. This would help address an urgent human rights issue and concern for millions of Kurds and could also renew the spirit of reconciliation, which is urgently needed to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

With gratitude for your time and in the hope that you understand this as a heartfelt plea.”

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## Activists on vigil in Geneva protest the isolation of Öcalan and attacks on Kurdistan

ANF | GENEVA | 8 MAY 2024

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

This week's demonstration, which is held at a tent set up in Nation Square where the UN Office is located, started with a minute of silence in memory of Haki Karer and the martyrs who fell in the month of May, after which Ramazan Amed, member of the Action Committee, made a speech on behalf of the demonstrators.

This week, activists from the Revolutionary Youth Movement (TCS) and the Struggling Young Women's Movement (TEKO-JIN) took part in the sit-in, reminding international states and organisations of their responsibilities.

Reminding the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the UN and international organisations and states of their responsibilities against torture experienced by Abdullah Öcalan who is held in total isolation, Amed stated that the occupation attacks in South Kurdistan are carried out in partnership with the Turkish state and the KDP. Remarking that these attacks are aimed at the massacre of the Kurdish people and the total occupation of Kurdistan, Amed said, "As the Kurdish people, especially those of us living in Geneva, we will not leave the streets as long as the occupation attacks do not end and Leader Öcalan is not freed."

After Amed's speech, which called for solidarity with the guerrilla struggle against the ongoing attacks in four parts of Kurdistan, a press text was read by Ramazan Qoser, an activist of TÇŞ.

The activists continued the sit-in with slogans embracing the 'Dem dema azadiye yê' campaign.

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## DBP meeting final declaration: Abdullah Öcalan is the subject of peace

ANF | 8 MAY 2024

The Democratic Regions Party (DBP) released the final declaration of the meeting held in Amed on 5 May 2024 with the participation of Co-Chairs Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar and Keskin Bayındır and Party Assembly (PM) members.

The results of the 31 March Local Elections, the absolute isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, the Kobanê Conspiracy Case, the war policies that the ruling powers want to deepen in the Middle East geography, the AKP-MHP government's expansionist occupation plans for Southern Kurdistan and North-East Syria, the poverty imposed on the people, the high inflation and the state of political crisis in which the political power is in, were evaluated in depth and solutions were discussed on the basis of raising the struggle for democratic politics.

"Our Party Assembly saluted the will of our people at the ballot box in the 31 March local elections and the honourable resistance of the people of Van against the trustee attempt, and put forward with a high determination that the democratic struggle should be increased in the coming period," the final declaration said.

### 'Abdullah Öcalan Must Be Freed'

The final declaration stated, "Our Party Assembly has once again expressed that the isolation on Mr Abdullah Öcalan, who has made it his mission to establish peace as one of the basic conditions for building social and political peace, should be lifted and he should be physically freed. Our Party Assembly believes that the dismissal of the Kobanê conspiracy case, which, obvious with all the evidence that is a political conspiracy case, targeting democratic politics and whose final hearing will be held on 16 May, and the release of all political prisoners will be an important step towards ensuring social peace."



Noting that the state of absolute incommunicado on Abdullah Öcalan continues, the final declaration stated: "Mr Abdullah Öcalan, who is a chance for the democratic solution of the Kurdish question, has been kept under isolation in İmralı Island for 25 years, which is a crime against humanity, and has not been allowed to meet with his lawyers and family for the last three years. No news can be received from Mr Abdullah Öcalan in any way. This situation makes the people of Turkey, especially the Kurdish people, anxious, raises concerns about his health, and most importantly threatens the peace of the country and the region, killing the hope of coexistence. The 31 March 2024 Local Elections have shown that the isolation and war policies of the AKP-MHP government have collapsed, the peoples have demonstrated their will for peace against the government and once again expressed that the isolation on Mr Öcalan must be lifted as soon as possible."

### **‘ Abdullah Öcalan is the Subject of Peace ’**

"As the Democratic Regions Party, we will take the political will of the Kurdish people in the Kurdistan geography as a basis and will continue our struggle for a democratic, equal and honourable peace", the declaration continued, "The political, military, economic and class war waged by the AKP-MHP government together with the Ergenekon remnants against the Kurdish people has been defeated. Despite all the pressures, the Kurdish people have said that isolation is a crime against humanity and have clearly given the message that the subject of peace is the Kurdish People's Leader Mr Abdullah Öcalan. On this basis, it is necessary to start allowing lawyer meetings with Mr. Öcalan and to enter into a process of dialogue and negotiation."

### **'Election Results are the Liquidation of the Decomposition Plan'**

Regarding the elections, the declaration said the following: "Although the AKP and MHP fascist government wanted to usurp the will of the Kurdish people by using all the means of the state, in some places by using transported voters, in some places by using the state's force apparatus, the Kurdish people gave a strong response at the ballot box against the trustee mentality. All political parties, especially the fascist ruling coalition, and all political parties that pursue racist, sexist and monist policies were buried in the ballot box with the will of women who struggle for freedom. The fascist government is trying to hide its electoral defeat by attacking women, youth and the gains of the Kurdish people. The policies implemented throughout the history of the Republic, which have never succeeded, will bring the end of the AKP and MHP fascist government as well as other governments.

The message of the Kurdish people in the elections has given us the courage and determination to expand democratic politics in every field. The Kurdish people have demonstrated in the Van resistance that they will defend their municipalities against trustees to the end. It should be known that our people will defend their political will to the end and will not allow trustee practices against the threat of trusteeship, which is wanted to be waved over our municipalities like the sword of Damocles with the dirty special war propaganda launched immediately after the elections. The municipalities are ours, those who hope to benefit from usurpation and plunder will find the invincible will of the Kurdish people against them.

Now before us is the struggle to shape our paradigm of democratic local governments in flesh and bones without any obstacles. We will build democratic confederalism on the basis of assemblies and communes together with the peoples and we will definitely succeed."

## 'The System of Exploitation Plans to Deepen the War in Every Field'

The final declaration pointed out that: "Kurdistan, the cradle of democratic civilisation, the Middle East and its geography have been the centre of wars, massacres, physical and cultural genocides since ancient times. In the face of these attacks, the oppressed peoples have continued to defend human values by paying great prices and have never compromised their struggle for existence.

War is the *raison d'être* of the ruling powers. The ruling powers have started wars in every crisis period when they realised that they would lose and tried to overcome political crises by deepening the war. This is the purpose of the sovereign powers to keep the wars alive and continuous. This is also the main reason why the ongoing problems in the Kurdistan geography cannot be resolved democratically. The system of exploitation, which wants to control new market areas, trade routes, demographic structure and form of government, plans to deepen the war in every field in our region.

While the winners in war are the rulers, the losers are the peoples, nature and the hope of coexistence. The AKP-MHP government is also a pro-war government. It maintains its power with uninterrupted war and hostility against the Kurdish people. Chemical gases and bombs are being used in the mountains of Kurdistan, assassinations and murders are being committed, underground and above-ground energy resources, communication, transport, lighting facilities, food warehouses, water networks, faith institutions, schools, universities and hospitals in Rojava are being bombed, civilians are being massacred, in short, the gains of the Kurdish people are being targeted.

## War in Southern Kurdistan

Turkey, together with the Regional Government of Northern Iraq, wants to expand its battlefield in Kurdistan and is trying to establish permanent base areas in Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq). It continues its occupation attempts with periodic attacks against Northern and Eastern Syria. The reality of a political power that tries to exist with Kurdish hostility and mobilises all the resources of the state for war is dragging the people of Turkey into the abyss, causing the people to live in poverty and misery more and more every day.

## We Will Continue to Shout the Voice of Peace

As the DBP, we want everyone to know that we will continue to express the peoples' will for peace loudly against the government that wants to deepen the war and that we will be in resistance against the war. With 100 years of oppression and occupation attempts, the state mind, which has been implementing a policy of decomposition for 10 years, has seen in the last elections that the struggle for freedom will not end, but will continue to grow stronger. The state mind must see and realise this reality. Our party will raise the politics of life against the politics of death and will continue to shout the voice of peace in an organised resistance."

# Prisons

## Release of prisoner Çelebi postponed

ANF | AMED | 5 MAY 2024

People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Şirnak MP Newroz Uysal Aslan said on her social media account that the release of Nurettin Çelebi, who has been held in prison for 30 years and is now in Antalya S Type Closed Prison, was postponed on the grounds that he didn't show "good behavior".

Pointing out that she was informed by the prison administration that his release was blocked by the 'Special Committee', Newroz Uysal Aslan said: "Nurettin Çelebi was expected to be released after the Administrative and Observation Board meeting on Saturday. However, in my meeting with the prison director, I was informed that the 'special committee' wanted to obtain a declaration that the prisoner had no connection with any illegal organisation, but the prisoner refused to make such a statement, and the special committee said that he didn't show 'good behaviour'. In response to my question about 'special committees', which we heard about for the first time, the directorate informed me that special committees have been established in all prisons for 'terrorism crimes'"

Aslan said: "We asked, apart from the Administration and Observation Boards, who else constitutes the 'special boards' established in prisons? What is the legal basis for the creation of these special boards? Since when have the Special Committees established as parallel bodies of the dual execution regime been in operation?"

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## Political prisoner leaves jail after 30 years

ANF | IZMIR | 5 MAY 2024

Kemal Zengin, a political prisoner held in Izmir Şakran T Type Closed Prison, was released after spending 30 years in jail. Zengin was welcomed in front of the prison by his family and members of the Aegean Association for Assistance with Families of Detainees and Convicts (EGE-TUHAYDER).

Zengin was arrested as a result of a tip-off in the Ceylanpınar district of Urfaa in 1994. As a result of the trial conducted by a State Security Court (DGM), Zengin was sentenced to life imprisonment on the grounds that he was a "member of a terrorist organization". Zengin, who went to prison at the age of 20, was released at the age of 50.

## 'All political prisoners must be released'

Zengin said: "While my release makes me happy on one side, it makes me sad on the other. This sadness is because of the friends we left behind. Many of our friends are seriously ill prisoners and are not released. We also have friends who completed their sentences but continue to be kept in jail. That's why my release gave me mixed feelings. It is very difficult to be released with these feelings. We would like all political prisoners to be released at the same time. That's why one side of us is sad, and the other side is happy."

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## DFG and MKG: Journalism is not a crime, release the journalists

ANF | AMED | 6 MAY 2024

Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) made a statement on the detention of journalists Nurcan Yalçın and Derya Us during house raids in Amed (Diyarbakır) earlier today.

"Although the reason for the detention was not disclosed by the police, we know that it is one of the operations carried out to criminalise our profession. The AKP-MHP government, which has increased the pressure on the press in recent years, is increasing the judicial harassment against Kurdish journalists in particular day by day," said the DFG statement on Monday.

The statement recalled that Mesopotamia Agency (MA) reporters Esra Solin Dal and Mehmet Aslan and journalist Erdoğan Alayumat were also imprisoned recently within the scope of the investigation initiated by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and said: "Esra Solin Dal was subjected to strip search and is still being held in solitary confinement. Approximately 40 Free Press workers were arrested in separate operations in the last two years. With today's operation, which is a continuation of these operations aimed at silencing Kurdish journalists, they are trying to prevent us from practising our profession. Kurdish journalists, who never give up writing the truth despite all the pressures, will continue to resist this. We will continue our struggle for the truth to reach the people and for our colleagues to be released. We call on all professional organisations and colleagues to stand in solidarity to protect journalism. Journalism is not a crime. Release the journalists."

Mesopotamia Women Journalists Association (MKG) said, "As war, poverty, crisis and lawlessness deepen, journalists who reflect the truth and make the voice of the people heard are wanted to be silenced. We emphasise once again that we consider the detention of our journalist friends as an obstruction against the truth."

Stressing that women journalists would not give up delivering the truth to the public, the statement said, "We do not back down in the face of pressure and detentions. We call for the immediate release of Esra Solin Dal, who was arrested last week and subjected to strip search, and Nurcan Yalçın and Derya Us, who were detained today, and we shout out once again; journalism is not a crime."



## ÖHD: Human rights violations in the prisons of Aegean region increasing

ANF | İZMİR | 7 MAY 2024

A report was prepared by the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) İzmir Branch Prison Commission following its interviews with political prisoners in 17 prisons in the provinces of İzmir, Denizli, Muğla and Balıkesir.

The report was presented at a press conference attended by ÖHD İzmir Branch co-chair Özcan Sarioğlu and a number of other lawyers.

Prison Commission co-spokesperson Eylem Zengin said that the report showed that no steps were taken for ill prisoners. Zengin pointed out that both examination and treatment of ill prisoners were prevented by the prison administration and added that insufficient examinations were carried out in the hospitals to which the prisoners were transferred and that handcuffed examination was imposed.

Zengin said that the rights violations suffered by prisoners "increased" and pointed to the "violations of the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment." Zengin added that the policy of dispersion, by which prisoners are sent to jails far from their families, meant that families have to travel long distances for visits.

The report also pointed out that prison administrations took arbitrary decisions by putting themselves in the position of the judiciary. In particular, issues such as the failed response to the petitions submitted by prisoners and the arbitrary extension of conditional release dates were discussed in the report, which also said that "in the last few months, the release of prisoners whose conditional release date was reached has been constantly delayed on the grounds of lack of 'good behavior'. Obviously, prison administrations have begun to abuse the powers given to them by the new regulation."

The report also touched upon the severe isolation conditions imposed on prisoners held in İmralı F-Type High Security Prison, and called for the establishment of national and international control mechanisms. It emphasized that independent health committees should enter prisons and carry out inspections.

The report called for an end to the rights violations by the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigation Commission and other relevant institutions and organizations.



## Journalist Esra Solin Dal still in isolation in Bakırköy Women's Closed Prison

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 MAY 2024

Mezopotamya Agency (MA) journalist Esra Solin Dal was remanded in custody on 26 April accused of "being a member of a terrorist organization". She had been detained in house raids on 23 April within the context of the Istanbul-based police political operation. The journalist continues to be held in a single cell in Bakırköy Women's Closed Prison.

Her lawyers said that Esra Solin Dal's request to move to the ward with other prisoners was rejected by the prison administration for "security reasons".

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## Lawyer Binbir: Prisoners are not released by arbitrary decisions

ANF | 9 MAY 2024

Every day new ones are added to the rights violations, oppression and arbitrary practices of the Turkish state against prisoners. Lawyer Zeki Binbir stated that nearly 400 prisoners' right to conditional release of has been cancelled on arbitrary grounds.

Speaking to ANF, Zeki Binbir, Co-spokesperson of the Prison Commission of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), said: "Political prisoners are being prevented by the judiciary. This obstacle is being imposed by the 'Administrative Observation Board', which came into force in 2020. First of all, we need to discuss the execution law. The execution law has been amended 32 times since the day it entered into force, and no stability has been achieved. With the amendment made in March 2020, prison administrations were given wide powers. With this authority, it was ensured that releases were postponed based on completely arbitrary statements against the persons who had completed their sentence. As an association, we have worked on this issue. Until today, the right to conditional release of nearly 400 prisoners has been cancelled on arbitrary grounds."

### Decisions are Unconstitutional

Binbir stated that the prison administration imposed 'remorse' on prisoners and continued: "There is very intense pressure from the prison administration on this issue. It is especially used against prisoners of 30 years. The releases of prisoners are postponed by making abstract statements, which are not permitted in the Turkish Constitution and any of the laws, the subject of accusation. The decisions are absolutely against the constitution. Unfortunately, the families of the prisoners are also affected by this situation. Either the day before their release or the day of their release, their execution is postponed for six or three months by the decision of the Administrative Observation Board."

## The Laws are not Applied Equally

Stating that political prisoners who have been imprisoned for 30 years for political reasons are not released, Binbir said: "We know very well that this practice is against the gains of the Kurds. We see this discrimination only in the case of political prisoners. The best example of this is Ogün Samast. He was granted good conduct and released, but political prisoners who have no disciplinary penalties and have not committed any crime are prevented from being released. We consider this as a purely political point of view. Unfortunately, the laws are not applied equally."

## Violations Continue to Increase

Zeki Binbir said that as the ÖHD they are working intensively on the prisoners whose release has been postponed and added the following: "As lawyers, we are following this matter. We are starting our objections and legal processes based on the decisions and documents we receive. Currently, all political prisoners in Turkey are subjected to many rights violations in prisons. The right to life and health in particular are violated. Prisoners are struggling for life. The problems in prisons continue to increase day by day."

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## 10 years in prison and release order for former Nusaybin Municipality co-mayor Kaya

ANF | MARDIN | 10 MAY 2024

The hearing of the case of former Nisêbîn Municipality co-mayor Sara Kaya, who was arrested and replaced by a trustee after she was detained in a raid on her house in the Nusaybin (Nisêbîn) district of Mardin (Mêrdîn) on 13 January 2017, was held on Thursday.

Sara Kaya, who was sent to prison by the Mardin 4th High Criminal Court on charges of "membership in an illegal organization", "abuse of office" and "inciting the public to hatred and hostility", did not attend the hearing as she is participating in the protest by prisoners who demand freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. The protest involved the non-participation in the hearings.

Kaya's lawyers were present at the hearing, and so were her family, a DEM Party delegation as well as Mardin MP Kamuran Tanhan.

Lawyer Mehmet Emin Kaya took the floor, drawing attention to Kaya's long detention period of 7 years, 3 months and 29 days, and requested her release.

In its opinion, the prosecutor's office requested that Kaya be punished within the scope of the Supreme Court's reversal order and asked for Kaya's release due to her long detention.

Announcing its decision, the court sentenced Kaya to 10 years and 6 months in prison on the allegation of "membership in a terrorist organisation" and decided to release her with a "ban on leaving the country".

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## Indictment against nine journalists sent to court

ANF | ISTANBUL | 10 MAY 2024

On 23 April, Mezopotamya Agency (MA) reporters Esra Solin Dal and Mehmet Aslan, Yeni Yaşam Newspaper employee Enes Sezgin, Free Press employees Saliha Aras, Yeşim Alıcı, Beste Argat Balcı, Şirin Ermiş and Erdoğan Alayumat and former MA reporter Doğan Kaynak were detained in house raids.

On 26 April, journalists Mehmet Aslan, Esra Solin Dal and Erdoğan Alayumat were taken before the Çağlayan Courthouse and arrested on charges of "being a member of an illegal organisation", a systematic and arbitrary tool of repression.

Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office completed its investigation against the journalists and sent the indictment to Istanbul 25th High Criminal Court.

The court has 15 days to decide whether to accept the indictment.

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## Military aggression and occupation

### Damascus government's embargo on Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah continues

NUJIYAN ADAR | ALEPPO | 5 MAY 2024

Two Kurdish neighbourhoods of Aleppo, Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah, have been subjected to a continuous embargo by the Damascus government since the occupation of Afrin. Workshops and factories, which employ 15 thousand people, are rendered inoperable due to the embargo.

The neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah have a population of over 200 thousand. They are organised under 7 assemblies and 89 communes, including three women's assemblies and 46 women's communes, four general assemblies and 43 general communes. Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah General Assembly Deputy Arın Henan and Democratic Union Party (PYD) General Assembly Member Emîn Elîko spoke to ANF about the embargo.



### **‘The aim is to shake confidence in the Autonomous Administration’**

Noting that an embargo was imposed on Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah after the occupation of Afrin, Emîn Elîko said, "The only thing that has changed is the way the embargo is applied. Some of the small groups affiliated to the Damascus government loosen the embargo, while others tighten it. They are exchanging among themselves. In the end, they all represent the same mentality. Their acts are aimed at breaking the will of the neighbourhood residents. This mentality, which also tries to break the morale and motivation of the population, aims to shake confidence in the Autonomous Administration."

### **‘The embargo aims to leave the people without food and water’**

Emîn Elîko pointed out the political, social and economic dimensions of the embargo and continued: "They are doing everything they can to cause the economy in the neighbourhood with more than 200 thousand residents to collapse. These people make a living with their own labour. This labour is provided through the workshops in the neighbourhood. There are a thousand workshops and factories in the neighbourhood. The fabrics needed by the workshops are not allowed to pass through. About 15 thousand people work in these workshops and factories. If each person has at least four children, the bread of 60 thousand people is played with. The embargo aims to leave the people without food and water. They deprive a child of milk and a patient of medicine.

We have a hospital serving the people in the neighbourhood. However, the needs of the hospital cannot be met, medicine cannot be supplied, oxygen cannot be accessed. Whichever pharmacy you go to in the neighbourhood, you cannot access the medicine you want, but these medicines are available in the city of Aleppo, which is right next to us. The reason why they are not available in the neighbourhood is that the checkpoints of the Damascus government confiscate these medicines or do not allow their passage."

### **‘The Damascus government is helping the enemy with its policy’**

Emîn Elîko stressed that: "We are subjected to these obstacles even though they know that the people living in the neighbourhood are Syrians. Unfortunately, the people next to us also call themselves Syrians. This means that the policy being implemented is a policy of fragmentation and migration. As if the enemy's occupation of our lands is not enough, the Damascus government is helping the enemy with its policy. The enemy expelled us through occupation, while the Damascus government is trying to expel us through an embargo. Either there is a negotiation, an agreement between them, or an approach to establish a balance is taken as a basis."

Stating that the Damascus government should prefer democracy instead of an embargo, Elîko said: "Instead of choosing to oppress the Syrian people, it should choose to build a decentralised Syria based on democracy, justice and equality."

### **‘The government is conducting a dirty policy towards its people’**

Afrin Henan stated that the passage of diesel and medical supplies was also prevented during winter and said: "There are many young children and elderly people. Finding milk is a big problem. People with chronic diseases take medicine regularly. They have not been able to access these medicines for a few

months. We are facing a government that is conducting a dirty policy towards its people. If there was a government that cared about its people, the situation in Syria would not be like this. Production and project opportunities are very limited under the embargo. It is also very difficult to create working conditions. Advancing through what already exists leads to a blockage after a while."

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## KCK commemorates Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Arslan and Hüseyin Inan

ANF | 5 MAY 2024

The KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of the execution of Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Arslan, and Hüseyin Inan.

The KCK statement released on Sunday includes the following:

"We commemorate with respect Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Arslan, and Hüseyin Inan, three leaders of the socialist movement in Turkey, on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of their execution. Furthermore, we commemorate all the martyrs of revolution and democracy with respect and gratitude. Once again, we reiterate our commitment to the struggle of the martyrs and our promise of success. We condemn the policy of massacre, genocide, fascism, and those who are responsible for them with great hatred.

Also, it is with great sadness that we have learned that İlhamî Aras, one of the pioneers of the socialist movement in Turkey, has passed away as well. Comrade İlhamî Aras made great efforts within the struggle for democracy and socialism and made a great effort for the development of a common struggle in solidarity with the Kurdish people. On this occasion, we also respectfully commemorate him with respect and bow to his stance, struggle, and efforts.

While those who devoted their existence to freedom will be glorified by history, the miserable creatures of exploitation will be buried in the abysses of evil. Those who thought that they could destroy the hope of revolution and freedom with all the executions were proven wrong. Hope and the mentality of freedom prevailed. Those who thought that revolutionaries would die through executions died, and the revolutionaries continued to live in the hearts and struggles of the peoples. Like all revolutionaries, the leaders of the socialist movement in Turkey, Deniz, Yusuf, and Hüseyin, have continued to live in the hearts and struggles of the people ever since.

They have left us a great legacy. Its legacy is the utopia of democratic, socialist, free life and the strategy of common struggle of the peoples. Understanding the struggle and ideas of those leaders correctly and adhering to their memory is based on their utopia and way of struggling. Our movement has adopted an approach based on this and has upheld this approach ever since. Rêber Apo's (Leader Abdullah Öcalan) commitment to the unity of peoples and the ideal of a democratic and free life, his great struggle for half a century, and his unprecedented efforts are known. The PKK was created with the aim of a free Kurdistan and democratic Turkey based on the democratic and free unity of the peoples by Rêber Apo, who was in-

spired by Mahir Çayan, one of the great leaders of the revolutionary movement in Turkey. The foundation of this was always the interconnection between the Kurdish struggle for freedom and the democratic socialist struggle in Turkey.

The Kurdish struggle for freedom has made great progress in the line of democratic socialism and has managed to turn it into a struggle for a free and democratic Turkey and a democratic Middle East. With his unshakable faith in the revolutionary socialist tradition, Rêber Apo formed his paradigm of 'Democratic Nation' and 'Democratic Confederalism', which has shown the whole of humanity, particularly women, the true path to freedom and free life.

The hegemonic system of Capitalist Modernity is in a great crisis. It stumbled in a process of collapse. It is trying to get out of the situation through the third world war, which it has been waging with its methods for years. While Capitalist Modernity is heading towards collapse and dissolution, humanity's search for a democratic, communal, free life is getting stronger day by day. Kurdistan, Turkey and the Middle East are among the places where this is the most concrete and strongest.

The strategy of joint struggle of the Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey has yielded important results. The significant blow that the AKP-MHP suffered through it, is a significant blow that the genocidal colonialist fascist order and its perpetrators have suffered. Deepening this strategy, democratizing Turkey by working on the overthrow of fascism completely is the most fundamental duty of us as socialist, democratic and libertarian forces. History has put such a responsibility in front of us. We must embrace it and play our historical role by strengthening the unity and solidarity of the peoples. In a process in which fascism has suffered a significant blow, only with the further development of the unity of democratic forces and the growth of the struggle can the defeat of fascism and the success of democracy and freedom be realized. The democratic forces must develop their unity and solidarity and increase the struggle on this basis. We believe that this is the most meaningful attitude of being loyal to the memory of Deniz and all who came after him. Based on this, we call on the democratic forces to come together, to form a unity for a struggle in solidarity, and to realize the goal of free Kurdistan and democratic Turkey.”

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## Turkish forces and allied mercenaries attacks villages in Afrin and Manbij

ANF | 5 MAY 2024

Manbij Military Council reported in a statement on Sunday that the Turkish state and its gangs shelled the village of Qerwêran in Manbij.

According to the statement, the invaders fired 15 howitzer shells from their bases in Şêx Nasir village to Qerwêran village so far. More detailed information could not be obtained.

The villages of Soxanekê and Aqîbê in Sherawa district of Afrin were also targeted by the bombardments of the invaders.

While the village of Dêqaq in Shehba was bombarded simultaneously, more detailed information about the attacks could not be reached.

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## Child injured as a result of Turkish bombing of a village in Manbij

ANF | MANBIJ | 6 MAY 2024

The Turkish state bombed the village of Ewn Dadat, located in the north of Manbij, injuring an 11-year-old child.

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## 52 years ago the execution of revolutionaries Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin Inan

ANF | 6 MAY 2024

52 years ago, on 6 May 1972, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin Inan were hanged in Ankara. Their trial had begun on 16 July 1971. Gezmiş and his comrades were sentenced to death on October 9 for violating the Turkish Criminal Code's 146th article, which concerns attempts to "overthrow Constitutional order". According to legal procedure, a death sentence must be endorsed by Parliament before being sent to the President of the Republic for final assent. In March and April 1972 the sentence was placed before Parliament and in both readings the sentence was overwhelmingly approved.

After joining the Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi), Gezmiş studied law at Istanbul University in 1966. In 1968, he founded the Revolutionary Jurists Organisation (Devrimci Hukukçular Kürulumu) and the Revolutionary Student Union (Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği).

He became increasingly politically active, and led the student-organised occupation of Istanbul University on June 12, 1968. After the occupation was forcibly ended by the law, he spearheaded protests against the arrival of the US 6th Fleet in Istanbul. Deniz Gezmiş was arrested for these actions on 30 July 1968, to be released on 20 October of the same year.

As he increased his involvement with the Worker's Party of Turkey, and began to advocate a National Democratic Revolution, his ideas started to circulate and inspire a growing revolutionary student base. On November 28, 1968, he was arrested again after protesting the US ambassador's visit to Turkey, but was later released. On 16 March 1969, he was arrested again for participating in right-wing and left-wing armed conflicts and imprisoned until 3 April. Gezmiş was re-arrested on 31 May 1969. The university was temporarily closed, and Gezmiş was injured in the conflict. Although Gezmiş was under surveillance, he

escaped from hospital and went to Palestine Liberation Organization camps in Jordan to receive guerrilla training.

On 4 March 1971, Deniz Gezmiş and comrades kidnapped four U.S. privates from TUSLOG/The United States Logistics Group headquartered in Balgat, Ankara. After releasing the hostages, he and Yusuf Aslan were captured live near Siavs following an armed stand-off with law enforcement officers.

Their trial began on 16 July 1971. Gezmiş was sentenced to death on October 9 for violating the Turkish Criminal Code's 146th article, which concerns attempts to "overthrow Constitutional order". According to legal procedure, a death sentence must be endorsed by Parliament before being sent to the President of the Republic for final assent. In March and April 1972, the sentence was placed before Parliament and in both readings the sentence was overwhelmingly approved.

On 4 May, President Cevdet Sunay, after officially consulting the Minister of Justice and Prime Minister Nihat Erim, refused to grant Gezmiş a pardon. He was executed by hanging on 6 May 1972 in Ankara Central Prison along with Hüseyin Inan and Yusuf Aslan.

Deniz Gezmiş was born in Ankara on 24 February 1947. One of the revolutionaries in Turkey who dedicated their lives to the socialist cause. In his last letter addressed to his father just before the hanging, he was explaining the spirit of sacrifice by the revolutionary movement of Turkey: "Men are born, grow up, live and die... The important thing is not to live for a long time, but to do more things in the lifetime... My friends who were ahead of me did not show hesitancy before the death... You should not have any doubt that I will not have hesitation..."

Today, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Huseyin Inan and the many revolutionaries like them are remembered in several places.



## Residents of two Kurdish neighbourhoods in Aleppo provide their own security

NUJIYAN ADAR | ALEPPO | 6 MAY 2024

Residents of two Kurdish neighbourhoods in Aleppo, Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud, who take turns patrolling from 20.00 to 05.00, say that self-defence is as necessary as food, water and shelter.

Speaking to ANF, Fatma Mihemed (43) stated that self-defence is a fundamental duty and responsibility and said: "If we don't ensure the security of our neighbourhood, anyone can come with open arms. If we cannot ensure the security of our neighbourhood, we cannot ensure the security of our lands. We can ensure a stable and peaceful life with the security provided in small spaces. Self-defence develops with sensitivity. The fact that Sheikh Maqsoud was recognized as a stronghold of resistance was due to the strong self-defence that developed. If our self-defence had not been strong, we would not have been able to contribute strength to such a war and we would not have written our name in history with resistance. As the

people of Sheikh Maqsoud, we developed self-defence by joining hands and stood against the gangs. As in different dimensions, women lead in self-defence."

### 'A defence system based on our own power is a must'

Loqman Qadir Hisên (50) stated that self-defence is indispensable to defend a people and said: "Every Kurd must protect his/her street, neighbourhood and family. A defence system based on our own power is a must. These streets and neighbourhoods have witnessed tremendous resistance. A weak self-defence system is to perish in an intense war environment. With an organised self-defence, we can protect our streets and prevent special war policies. We are our self-defence. In this context, organised people can also develop an organised self-defence."

### Round-the-clock patrols

Şîrîn Xişman (33) remarked that she joined the patrol mission in 2018 and stated the following: "During the Sheikh Maqsoud resistance, we realised the necessity of self-defence. It is more important than bread and water. A woman builds the future of society by developing self-defence. Self-defence is necessary for every human being. Someone who cannot develop their personal self-defence cannot develop the self-defence of society. Without the Revolutionary People's War that developed in Sheikh Maqsoud, we would not be in our neighborhood today. For this reason, we patrol our neighbourhood day and night."

### 'We draw our strength from each other'

Wehîd Elî Sebrî, who joined the patrol mission despite his advanced age and health problems, said "We developed our self-defence without anyone's support. We do not expect anyone from outside to come and protect us. As the people of Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud, we draw our strength from each other. We take turns in patrol from 20.00 to 05.00. I see self-defence as my duty."



## Occupying forces escalate attacks on Manbij

ANF | MANBIJ | 7 MAY 2024

The attacks by the Turkish army and its jihadist proxy forces against the autonomous regions of northern and eastern Syria aimed at expanding the occupation zone continue unabated. The city of Manbij, which has been under artillery fire almost every day for weeks, is a particular focus of attention. The shelling of the region also continued on Tuesday.

According to the Manbij Military Council, the bombardments continue to focus on villages on the northern and north-western side of the city, which are located near the line of contact between the autonomous region and the occupied zone. Five villages are affected by the attacks, which are mainly directed against Qawukli (Al-Kavakli), Wart Wiran and Korhyuk.

More than 75 shells have hit the three villages since the early morning, all fired from the Turkish military base in the occupied village of Sheikh Nasser (ku. Şêx Nasir) north-west of Manbij. The village of Qawukli was particularly heavily bombarded; targeted by around fifty shells and mortars. A wildfire broke out in the village of Korhyuk as the shells were targeted at cultivated areas. The civil defence of Manbij was deployed and tried to extinguish the flames.

Since the occupation of Serêkaniyê (Ras al-Ain) and Girê Spî (Tall Abyad) in autumn 2019, there have been regular attacks in the area around Manbij as part of a "low-intensity war", primarily by mercenaries from the so-called "Syrian National Army" (SNA) militia organisation set up by Turkey. Since Manbij was named by Turkish regime leader Erdoğan as the primary target for a new invasion of northern and eastern Syria, the phases of high-intensity attacks have become increasingly prolonged.

Manbij is located 30 kilometres south of the Turkish border and occupies a key strategic position in Turkey's plans to expand its illegal occupation zone in Syria. The city, which is administered by DAANES (Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria), is located on the important M4 highway, which runs through northern Syria like a lifeline and was a strategic supply route for the terrorist militia "Islamic State" (ISIS). Manbij was liberated from ISIS terror in August 2016. Since then, the Manbij Military Council (MMC), which is a component of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and also includes the Enîya Kurdan (ar. Jabhat al-Akrad, i.e. the Kurdish Front) and the Idlib Revolutionary Brigade, has been responsible for the defence of the region.

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## Preparations for Kurdistan Region Parliamentary Elections halted

ANF | 8 MAY 2024

Jumane Helay, the spokesperson of the Iraqi Independent Supreme Election Commission, stated that the Commission temporarily halted the preparations for the Kurdistan Region Parliamentary Elections after the decision taken by the Iraqi Federal Court.

Jumane Helay announced that the preparations for the elections have been suspended until the complaints about the elections are finalised.

Masrour Barzani, the prime minister of the interim government of the Kurdistan Region, filed a complaint to the Iraqi Federal Court on 6 May and asked for the suspension of the preparations for the parliamentary elections for the 6th term in Kurdistan Region.

Yesterday, the Federal Court decided to suspend the implementation of Article 2, paragraph 2 of the registration and approval system of candidate lists upon the objection of Masrour Barzani of the KDP.

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## PUK: We reject the decision of the Iraqi Election Commission

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 8 MAY 2024

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) media reported that the PUK Legal Affairs Centre rejected the decision of the Iraqi Independent Supreme Election Commission to suspend preparations for the Kurdistan Region Parliamentary Elections planned for 10 June.

PUK also pointed out that the decision of the Iraqi Federal Court, which was cited as a reason for the decision to stop the preparations, was only about the distribution of the number of seats in the parliament to the electoral districts and did not cover the entire election process.

Cumane Helay, the spokesperson of the Iraqi Independent Supreme Election Commission, announced on Wednesday that preparations for the Kurdistan Region Parliamentary Elections were temporarily suspended.

The decision came after Masrour Barzani, the prime minister of the interim government of the Kurdistan Region, filed a complaint to the Iraqi Federal Court on 6 May and asked for the suspension of the preparations for the parliamentary elections for the 6th term in Kurdistan Region.

On Tuesday, the Federal Court decided to suspend the implementation of Article 2, paragraph 2 of the registration and approval system of candidate lists upon the objection of Masrour Barzani of the KDP.



## Turkish shelling leaves agricultural fields on fire in Rojava

ANF | SHEHBA | 8 MAY 2024

The occupying Turkish state is systematically committing grave war crimes by targeting agricultural lands and basic infrastructure services in North-East Syria.

On the night of 7 May, the villages of Um El Hosh, Minix, Radar and Hilisa in Shehba region were bombed. While a howitzer shell fired on Um El Hosh village did not explode and continued to pose a threat, a field was completely burnt.

Speaking to ANHA, Zekeriya Şahod, a resident of Um El Hoş village, said that the entire village was bombed, while Mihemed Mihemed said that the shells hitting the village caused panic among the residents.

Zekeriya Cimo stated that an artillery shell fell in front of his house and has not exploded yet, while a field on the borderline was completely burnt as a result of the shelling.



Yûsêf Heded said, "We planted barley and wheat here, but the daily shelling by the occupying Turkish state poses a danger to us. In addition, our barley field was completely burnt due to the bombardment and we still cannot approach our field due to the danger."

The occupying Turkish state and its gangs bombarded Hirbil and Um El Hosh villages in Shehba region on 8 May. After the bombardment, a fire broke out in the fields in the village.

After the bombardment, reconnaissance aircraft movement was observed in the region.

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## Access to Gabar and Cudi mountains banned once again

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 9 MAY 2024

In recent weeks, many regions in North Kurdistan have been subjected to arbitrary and systematic bans.

According to Şırnak governor's office, the region of Gabar Mountain, located in the rural areas of Şırnak and Güçlükönak district, as well as the region of Cudi Mountain, located on the borders of Şırnak center, Silopi and Cizre districts, were declared a "Temporary Special Security Zone" for 15 days.

The Governorate announced that entry to both regions was prohibited until 24 May.

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## Turkish state's gangs set fire to agricultural lands in Rojava

ANF | 9 MAY 2024

According to the Hawar News Agency (ANHA), the gangs of the occupying Turkish state set fire to the agricultural fields under the control of the occupiers in the eastern countryside of Zirgan district.

According to the report, the fire spread towards Mihermelê village. The fire brigade and emergency teams extinguished the fire and stand ready to protect the agricultural fields.

The occupying Turkish state and its gangs set fire to pastures, forests and cultivated fields on the war front near the occupation zones.

On the other hand, as a result of the bombardment of the occupying Turkish army against the villages of Manbij Canton on 7 May, a fire broke out in the fields in Korhiyok village.

In Shehba, a fire broke out in Um-Hosh village as a result of the bombardment of the invaders.

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## Reconnaissance drone activity over Afrin-Shehba Canton

ANF | 9 MAY 2024

Reconnaissance drones of Turkey are circling over parts of the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria. According to the Hawar news agency (ANHA), the flights are focused on the canton of Afrin/Shehba.

Since the morning, large parts of the region have been overflowed by the Turkish state's armed combat drones without any significant interruption. The people are worried as Turkey has already carried out around a hundred drone attacks against northern and eastern Syria since the beginning of the year.

Just three weeks ago, a civilian vehicle was attacked by a Turkish killer drone near Kobanê. The husband of Halime Mihemed Osman was at the wheel of the car, which was travelling near the village of Ênbetê (Ayn Al Batt), around twenty kilometres east of the centre of Kobanê. The women's rights activist is the spokesperson for the local branch of the organisation Sara, which campaigns against violence against women and girls. The mother of five had her right leg shattered in the attack and it has since been amputated. Osman's husband, on the other hand, was injured in the head, eye, arm and leg and, despite his injuries, he managed to free himself and his wife from the burning vehicle.

Turkey's drone war against the regions of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) began in June 2020 with the assassination of three representatives of the women's umbrella organisation Kongra Star in Kobanê. Since then, hundreds of other drone attacks have followed. According to data from the Rojava Information Centre (RIC), Turkey has already carried out at least 93 drone attacks this year, eight of which targeted vehicles. At least 26 people have been killed and a further 27 injured. The figures are likely to be higher, as the RIC only publishes confirmed cases. The RIC balance sheet for the past year lists 198 drone attacks. In these attacks, 105 people were killed and 123 injured.

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## Turkish air strikes target villages in Binarê Qendîl

ANF | QANDIL | 10 MAY 2024

The Turkish air force has bombed the region of Binarê Qendîl in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. According to the co-mayor Dilşêr Îbrahîm, the attacks yesterday evening were directed against the villages of Kuzîne and Drabî.

While there was also initially no indication of any casualties, fighter jets continued to circle in the skies over the region. According to Îbrahîm, air activity attributed to Turkey has also been observed in Pîşder, south of Binarê Qendîl, since Thursday evening.

Binarê Qendîl is located in the Zagros Mountains and borders on Iranian territory. The region is decoupled from the ruling structures of Baghdad and Hewlêr (Erbil) and is organised on a communal level. For

years, it has organised itself according to the model of democratic autonomy and the basic principles of the gender-libertarian paradigm of the Kurdish freedom movement. The community consists of the five regions of Navdeşt, Dola Şaroş, Qelatûkan, Maradu and Dola Baleyan and a total of 63 smaller and larger villages, which are repeatedly subjected to attacks by the Turkish army.

In April, a woman was injured in an airstrike on Binarê Qendîl. At the end of September, a 55-year-old woman died as a result of a drone attack in the village of Bokrîskan, while a man survived with serious injuries. The region is also a thorn in the side of Iran's leadership. Last October, a shepherd was shot dead by Iranian border troops in a mountain pasture area. The most brutal attack on Binarê Qendîl to date was the Zergelê massacre in August 2015, when Turkish fighter jets bombed the village in three waves, killing eight civilians. A further 15 people were injured, some of them seriously.

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## YRK: Turkish state carried out UCAV attack in Pênciwen

ANF | 10 MAY 2024

YRK (East Kurdistan Defence Units) Communication and Press Centre reported that the occupying Turkish state bombarded the Ler mountain range in the Pênciwên region in Sulaymaniyah countryside on 9 May.

YRK stated that their forces were not harmed in the bombardment carried out by drones.

Air strikes by Turkey in violation of international law have been routine for years in the regions of Pênciwen and Mount Asos, which lies a good 200 kilometres from the Turkish state border. Other areas of the territory of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Iraq, especially those where Kurdish guerrillas are suspected, but also civilian settlement areas such as Shengal, are also regularly bombed by the Turkish army.

In an [interview](#) with ANF on 19 June 2023, Şiyar Şevger, one of the commanders of the YRK, stated that attacks against the Kurdish people in all four parts of Kurdistan continued uninterruptedly and behind it was an agreement between Iran, Turkey and Iraq to disarm the Kurdish freedom movements.

"There is an agreement according to which the Iranian intelligence service passes on the information it receives about PJAK to the Turkish state and the Turkish army carries out attacks on the basis of this information. Every day, reconnaissance planes circle over our areas, the collected information is passed on to the Turkish state by the KDP and Iran, and then attacks on us take place on this basis. However, the Turkish and Iranian states have not been able to achieve any results in these attacks so far and have failed against our Apoist movement," Şevger said.

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## HPG reports ongoing guerrilla actions against the Turkish army

ANF | BEHDINAN | 10 MAY 2024

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

According to the statement on Saturday, details of the latest guerrilla actions and Turkish attacks are as follows:

### “Xakurkê region

On 8 May at 11:30, the invaders in Girê Şehîd Axîn were targeted with heavy weapons. After this action, the Kolît area was bombed by a drone loaded with explosives.

### Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region

On 9 May at 08:25, the surveillance camera belonging to the invaders in Girê Amediyê Resistance Area was shot with an assassination tactic and destroyed.

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

On 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 May, Turkish warplanes carried out 39 airstrikes, targeting the Dêreşê, Girê Zengil, Meyrokê, Girê Reşît, Heftebax areas in Garê region 11 times, Şêlazê, Bêşîlî, Bazê, Dergelê, Serê Metîna Resistance Area in Metîna region 9 times, the Girê Bahar Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region 5 times, Sinînê, Lolan and Kolît areas in Xakurkê region 7 times, Şehîd Îbrahîm Resistance Area in Zap region 2 times, Silê, Kozîne and Zergelê areas in Qendîl region 5 times.

On 6, 8 and 10 May, attack helicopters bombed Şêlazê, Golka, Dergelê and Qesrokê Resistance Areas in Metîna region."

# Femicide

## We Will Stop Femicide Platform: 32 women killed in April

ANF | 5 MAY 2024

The *We Will Stop Femicide Platform* (KCDP) published its April report. According to the report, 32 women were murdered, while 13 others died in suspicious circumstances.

### 19 women murdered by their husbands

The report noted that of the 32 women killed in April, 19 were murdered by their husbands, 5 by their intimate partners, 3 by their relatives, 2 by someone they knew, 1 by her father, 1 by her brother, and 1 by her son.

According to the report, 18 of the women were murdered at home, 4 on the street, 2 in a public place, 1 in a car, 1 in a field, 1 in a deserted place, 1 in a hotel, and 1 in a haystack.

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## 11-month-old baby detained with his mother in Amed

ANF | AMED | 6 MAY 2024

A woman named Dilan Polat Dirin was detained during a house raid in the rural neighbourhood of Karahasan in Lice district of Amed.

Dilan Polat Dirin was allegedly detained on the charge of "sending money to prison" and was taken to District Gendarmerie Station.

According to reports, Dilan Polat Dirin had to take her 11-month-old baby to the police station to breast-feed.

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## Confederation of Young Syrian Women to be established

ANF | QAMISHLO | 6 MAY 2024

The conference "Young Women's Leadership in the Revolution" organised by the Young Women's Union in Qamishlo under the slogan "Towards the Women's Revolution with Jin Jiyan Azadi" ended with the reading of the final declaration.

The final declaration was read in Kurdish and Arabic by Beritan Roj, Young Women's Union Assembly member, and Nadiya Yusuf, Young Women's Union Coordination member.

In the final declaration, it was stated that the conference was organised with the participation of 150 delegates from Syria, the Middle East and many countries of the world who were looking for an alternative to the capitalist system, and that topics such as "Democratic Nation Building and Women's Confederalism" and "The role and mission of young women in the construction of Democratic Confederalism" were discussed within the scope of the philosophy of Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

According to the final declaration, important views and decisions emerged at the conference, and the decisions taken were listed as follows: "Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan) gave the most meaningful value and power to women's freedom. On this basis, he determined the perspective of the women's revolution and drew the road map. Aesthetically, he built a foundation from ideas to active self-defence (women's army) and from the body to self-organisation. With these principles, what young women should do for themselves is to struggle for freedom. The qibla of freedom is the physical freedom of Leader Abdullah Öcalan. In this context, the following decisions have been taken:

### For the Leader

- 1-The physical freedom of Leader Abdullah Öcalan will be taken as the basis of all our work and thoughts.
- 2- Under the campaign 'Jin Jiyan Azadi Serbixwe Azadi' (Woman, Life, Freedom, Let's Win Freedom), a broad front must be organised for the physical freedom of Leader Apo, extending from Syria to the Middle East.
- 3-For the physical freedom of Leader Apo, on the basis of opposing sports that create addiction and deepen the system of exploitation, women's sports tournaments will be organised as an alternative based on healthy, moral and political societies in the Middle East, and this tournament will be held in Rojava.

### To Build and fight for a System of Young Women

Young women take the 5 principles of women's liberation as a basis for the development and victory of the women's revolution. On this basis, they summarise the road map of their work as follows:

- 1- Women take an active role in the establishment of the 'women's confederalism system' and lead it.
- 2- Women carry out the necessary work for the establishment of a confederation of young Syrian women.

## Message for Kenyan Women

After the reading of the final declaration, a message written on behalf of the Young Women's Union for young Kenyan women was read.

At the end of the statement, leaflets titled "Establishing democratic modernity with the Jin Jiyan Azadî formula" were distributed and the slogans "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi", Bijî Serok Apo" (Long Live Leader Öcalan) and Bijî berxwedana guerrilla" (Long Live the guerrilla resistance) were chanted.

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## Woman taken into custody with her 11-month-old baby released

ANF | AMED | 6 MAY 2024

Dilan Polat Dirin and her 11-month-old baby were taken into custody in Lice earlier on Monday morning.

The woman was detained together with seven other people, including journalists Derya Us and Nurcan Yalçın.

Dilan Polat Dirin was allegedly detained on the charge of "sending money to prison" and was taken to District Gendarmerie Station. She was sent to the courthouse after her statement and eventually released on condition of judicial control.

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## Artist Pınar Aydınlar sentenced to approximately 1 year and 7 months in prison

ANF | DERSİM | 7 MAY 2024

The first hearing of the lawsuit filed against artist Pınar Aydınlar for "making illegal organization propaganda" through her songs she sang at the 21st Munzur Culture and Nature Festival and her posts on social media concluded.

The hearing was held at the 2nd Heavy Penal Court in Dersim. Aydınlar and her lawyer attended the hearing via video conferencing system SEGBİS from Istanbul 26th Heavy Penal Court.

The prosecution agreed the songs the artist sang at the Munzur Festival were within the scope of freedom of expression, but argued that the posts on her Facebook account should be considered as "illegal organization propaganda".

The court sentenced Pınar Aydınlar to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days for "making illegal organization propaganda".

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## MKG: 10 women journalists were detained in Turkey in April

ANF | AMED | 7 MAY 2024

The Mesopotamia Women Journalists Association (MKG) announced its report on rights violations against women journalists in April.

The report emphasised that the Free Press, which defends the people's right to information and does not give up writing the truth, continues to be targeted: "The AKP government, which could not digest the defeat it suffered in the 31 March local elections, continues its pressures and attacks against the Free Press after the elections as well as before the elections. While the month of April was marked by detentions and arrests of journalists, journalists were brought before judges this month as well, as they are every month, on the grounds of their news reports."

The report recalled that 9 journalists were detained on 23 April within the scope of an Istanbul-based investigation and stated the following "3 journalists, including 1 woman, were imprisoned on charges of 'membership in an illegal organisation' based on their news reports. The government, which tries to spread intimidation and fear by detaining and arresting journalists, both usurps the people's right to information and violates the Constitution. As MKG, we appeal to the government; for the democratisation of Turkey and the solution of problems, remove all obstacles to freedom of the press and freedom of expression and stop putting journalism on trial. Journalism is not a crime, it cannot be put on trial."

According to the report, violations against women journalists in April are as follows:

- Journalists attacked: 1
- Detained journalists: 10
- Arrested journalists: 1
- Journalists subjected to ill-treatment: 2
- Threatened journalists: 2
- Journalists prevented from covering news: 5



- Violations against journalists in prisons: 1
- Journalists sued (acquitted): 2
- Journalists on trial: 24
- Number of imprisoned female journalists as of 1 April: 7

### List of Imprisoned Journalists

1. Derya Ren - JINNEWS Correspondent
2. Esra Solin Dal - Mesopotamia Agency (MA)
3. Elif Ersoy - Editor-in-Chief of Yürüyüş Magazine
4. Hatice Duman - Owner and Editor-in-Chief of Atılım Newspaper
5. Özlem Seyhan - Journalist
6. Tülay Canpolat - Sabah Newspaper Ankara Correspondent
7. Selamet Turan - Journalist



# Ecocide

## Ibrahim Esed: Ecological genocide continues

HIVDA HEBUN | QAMISHLO | 9 MAY 2024

The Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria is under attack on many levels simultaneously. While, on the one hand, a massive policy of displacement is taking place and the demographics of the region are being actively reshaped in the Turkish-occupied regions, the Turkish state is using its control over the rivers to dry up or flood the region. Added to this are the worsening conditions due to man-made climate change.

Despite all the difficulties, the Rojava Revolution made the construction of an ecological society one of its cornerstones. However, creating ecological awareness under wartime conditions proves difficult. The first ecology conference of North and East Syria took place in Qamishlo in the past weeks.

In this ANF interview, Ibrahim Esed commented on the fight for an ecological life in Northern and Eastern Syria and the implementation of the goals of the ecology conference.

*Could you tell us about the pursuit of ecological approaches in Northern and Eastern Syria since the beginning of the revolution?*

We can divide the work of the Ecology Council formed by the Democratic Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria, or the institutionalization of ecological work, into two phases: before the revolution and after the revolution. The period after the revolution can also be divided into a phase before the formation of the Ecology Council and after that. If you look at the politics of the regional states, there are different developments in the different parts of Kurdistan. Even though it had the same attitude and mentality, the Ba'athist regime implemented its policies in a slightly different way. The economic and social policies developed by the Ba'athist regime were very subtle. The people in the region were deprived of the opportunity to support themselves with their land. This would create economic pressure on people.

This pressure was intended to create migration pressure from the Kurdish regions and ensure that the Kurdish population migrates to major cities and disperses. On the other hand, there was massive mistreatment of nature in Rojava. Since the people of Rojava were constantly preoccupied with economic problems, they were hardly able to perceive the destruction of nature and develop a counter-attitude. One can even say that the people of Rojava were not even aware of the destruction of their own nature. This policy was carried out by the Ba'athist regime in a very subtle and dirty way. The Ba'athist regime had turned the Cizîrê and Afrin regions into its own economic centers. The people who lived in these regions were forced to sell the products they grew for their livelihood very cheaply. The revenue from the mineral resources of these regions also went to the Ba'athist regime, and the people of the region did not benefit from these resources. In addition, there was no respect of nature in society. This situation continues to this day. Perhaps there is a connection to one's own land, but this is too weak to protect it through ecological awareness. Such an attitude is missing not only in society but also among those who call themselves intellectuals.

The 19 July Revolution [2012] had a strong impact on all areas of life. Social life changed profoundly. People's way of life, their family relationships, their relationship with nature and the organization of their lives are affected. To view the 19 July revolution exclusively as a political revolution would be very limiting. While important steps have been taken in some dimensions, some other levels remain underdeveloped due to the ongoing war and attacks by Turkey.

With the establishment of the Autonomous Administration, an attempt was made to develop an ecological life. The war delayed the necessary steps to be taken in this regard, inevitably. The Ecology Committee worked within the community framework. With the announcement of the Social Contract, an autonomous ecology committee was created. The committee was primarily oriented towards preserving the ecological work that had been done to date. For this reason, it lacked a paradigmatic dimension.

The Turkish state's attacks on Northern and Eastern Syria, particularly the occupation of Afrin, Serêkaniyê and Girê Spî, and the destruction of nature there have caused serious damage. Work began last year to identify the extent of this damage and carry out appropriate repair work. It was important to introduce the concept of ecology into society and raise awareness of it. Over the last year, the Ecology Committee has become increasingly recognized both in society and in general institutions.

*You recently organized an ecology conference in Northern and Eastern Syria. It was the first of its kind. What principles was this conference based on?*

As an ecology committee, we have developed some plans. The Committee, the Ecology Council and the Ecology Academy have begun to work on this basis. The Ecology Committee and the Ecology Academy are active. Our work to establish the Ecology Council continues. The draft statutes for the council are ready. It is within our one-year target.

One of the tasks we set ourselves was to organize the ecology conference. It took place on 26 and 27 April. Many ecology activists and academics from different countries attended it. It was a conference at which current work was evaluated and perspectives were discussed. The conference has achieved its goal.

*What was the main theme of your conference?*

We joined the initiative for the liberation of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] and adopted the following slogan: "We want to liberate Rêber Apo and solve the Kurdish question on the basis of the ecological paradigm." All analysis and messages had this slogan as a base. Today, not only Northern and Eastern Syria, but the entire world is experiencing a serious ecological crisis. Rêber Apo has developed alternative solutions for all of these crises and offers perspectives for global problems with his democratic and ecological philosophy. But he is in total isolation. Through the conference we have once again tried to demonstrate this reality to the world. In this sense, all seminars were organized on the basis of the model of the democratic nation. Discussions were held about how the ecological paradigm could offer an alternative to the environmental deadlock created by the prevailing system. This alternative has come to life in Northern and Eastern Syria.

The second theme of the conference was identifying and overcoming the shortcomings in the implementation of the ecological paradigm in Northern and Eastern Syria. In addition, seminars and discussions were held in the areas of Women's Academy, Jineolojî, Economy, Rojava Faculty, City Administration, Health and Rojava Reforestation and defense of nature. In this way, we tried to show society that ecology permeates all areas of life and that every institution is directly linked to it.

*What were the main agenda items of the conference?*

The two-day conference was held under two main themes. On the first day, democratic modernity was discussed from its emergence to resistance. The seminars by foreign scientists also took place in this context. On the second day, the conference looked at how environmental and social destruction takes place in a Kurdistan context. In this context, northern and eastern Syria as well as northern Kurdistan, southern Kurdistan and eastern Kurdistan were discussed.

A results paper was then written. The final declaration was presented to the conference delegates and the academics from abroad, activists and professors who attended the conference as guests. All institutions, organizations, non-governmental organizations, parties and environmental activists from Northern and Eastern Syria took part in the conference at delegate level. Due to the increasing attacks by the Turkish state on our region, many people from abroad who wanted to take part in the conference were unable to travel. Therefore, they took part in the conference online. With this in mind, the final declaration was prepared with the joint participation and consent of all conference delegates and guests. The final declaration con-

sisted of 21 articles. The basic principle is to condemn the isolation of Rêber Apo imposed by the Turkish state, to create ecological urban models against the unplanned, polluting and carcinogenic urbanization, to eliminate the separation between cities and villages and, above all, the attitude and practice that the villages are in service of cities to put an end to it and to create a system in which villages and cities complement each other.

*Rojava has been subject to fierce attacks for years. Both the infrastructure and the environment were massively destroyed. The Turkish state in particular has heavily attacked this region. What initiatives will you take against this?*

The Turkish state is systematically carrying out a campaign of destruction against society and the environment in Northern and Eastern Syria. Both the Turkish state and the government in Damascus attack the model of self-government on a daily basis. These attacks are diverse and target every aspect of life. The government in Damascus uses many different attack methods in the region, including the distribution of drugs. The self-government defends itself against these attacks every day with all its institutions. We as the Ecology Committee are also working against this. It is important for us to protect nature in all its dimensions.

On the other hand, tests and analysis are carried out daily on the water of the Euphrates to assess the threat of cyanide in the water following a mine explosion in Turkey. Furthermore, the fight against drought continues. It was decided to hold a global ecology conference every year promoted by the Ecology Council of Northern and Eastern Syria. After the conference we created an ecology platform.

*Will you also work to increase environmental awareness among the population?*

Currently, our society has achieved awareness of keeping cities clean and protecting them. However, that alone does not constitute ecological awareness. It is therefore still necessary to create such awareness in society. This is the basis of our long-term strategy. We continue our efforts to spread ecological culture and understanding using the means at our disposal. We have an academy for this. In this academy we want to carry out ecological work based on the paradigm of the democratic nation. We continue to work against all environmentally destructive activities and activities, both in our own region, in the Middle East and in the world. There is a draft that we have prepared to create and protect the legal dimension of ecology which has been submitted to the legal institutions. According to this draft, all institutions and organizations within the self-government are based on living in harmony with ecology. The self-government system is already based on the ecological paradigm. On this basis, we will continue our efforts to develop sensitivity and responsibility among the population.

# Human Rights Violations

## 38 people sent to prison in Istanbul after 1 May celebrations

ANF | ISTANBUL | 5 MAY 2024

65 people who were taken into custody in Saraçhane Square on 1 May, Labor Day, in Istanbul were taken to the Istanbul Courthouse in Çağlayan on Saturday after a health check.

52 people were referred to the court with a request for arrest on allegations of "opposing the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations", "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" and "resisting a public official".

38 people were sent to prison, while 14 were released under judicial control.

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## Many young people taken into custody in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 5 MAY 2024

Simultaneous raids were carried out in many districts of Istanbul in the morning. Many people were taken into custody, including members of the Revolutionary Youth Associations, Kaldıraç and Student Activity.

The new arrests came after 38 people were remanded in custody on Saturday.

Revolutionary Youth Associations announced in their statement that 5 of their members were detained during home raids.

Kaldıraç announced that doors were broken during home raids on its members.

In its statement, Student Activities stated that 2 of its members were detained, and that the number of detentions may increase and that the police have a list of 70 people.

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## Journalists Yalçın and Us taken into custody

ANF | AMED | 6 MAY 2024

Journalists Nurcan Yalçın and Derya Us were taken into custody by police this morning, in the context of an operation carried out in Amed.

The reason for the detention of the journalists could not be learned.

It was said that the number of detentions may increase.



## Filmmaker Koray Kesik still in police custody

ANF | 6 MAY 2024

One of the people taken into custody on Friday by Turkish police was filmmaker Koray Kesik.

Film director Koray Kesik was taken into custody after his house in Izmir was raided by police.

Kesik served as the cinematographer and art director for many films, including *Bakur*, *Revolutionary Youth Bridge* and *The Past is Not the Past*.

Kesik was one of the people taken into custody last Friday, following police raids on some houses in Nusaybin (Nisêbîn), where a person named Abdürrahim Dayan was detained. The reason for the detention was not disclosed.

A number of filmmakers expressed their solidarity and demanded the release of Kesik.



## 13 politicians in Mardin sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison each

ANF | MARDIN | 6 MAY 2024

The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against 21 Kurdish politicians in relation to the self-governance process in 2015-2016 in the Derik district of Mardin was held on Monday. The politicians tried without arrest did not attend the hearing held at the 3rd High Criminal Court, while their lawyers were present. The prosecutor's office repeated the final opinion presented in the previous hearing and demanded 21 politicians to be sentenced to imprisonment.

The lawyers stated that they repeated their defense statements in the previous hearing and demanded the acquittal of their clients.

The court acquitted Adil Dölcek, Hamdullah Duran, İbrahim Ektiren, Mehmet Sıddık Şanlı, Nurettin Ektiren, Remzi Kıran, Sedat Mercen and Zeynep Demir.

The court sentenced Abdülhamit Aksoy, Bedirhan Ektiren, Bedirhan Eye, Bedran Savucu, Cengiz Gezer, İhsan Demir, Mahmut Aktaş, Mehmet Bilgen, Mehmet Sıddık Aksak, Mehmet Şirin Eye, Ramazan Özdoğan, Semih Bilgen and Tarık Ektiren to 6 years and 3 months each on the charge of "membership in an illegal organisation", meaning the PKK.

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## Filmmaker Kesik released

ANF | İZMİR | 6 MAY 2024

Director of photography and documentary-filmmaker Koray Kesik, who was taken into custody in a raid on his house on the night of 2 May in Izmir, was sent to the courthouse after his procedures at the police station.

Kesik was asked at the police station about the documentary *Bakur*, which was released in 2015 and for which he was the director of photography. Police also asked questions about his participation in Newroz celebrations.

Kesik, who was referred to the Criminal Court of Peace by the prosecutor's office with a request for arrest on the allegation of "being a member of an illegal organization", was released but was banned from leaving the country.

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## Iranian forces arrest five Kurdish religious activists, civilians in Piranshahr

ANF | 7 MAY 2024

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported that Iranian security forces have arrested five Sunni Kurdish religious activists and civilians in Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province, in recent days, and taken them to undisclosed locations.

The individuals, Somayyeh Ghaderi, Hossein Bayazidi, Mohammad Soltani, Mohammad Moradi and Hadi Yousefpour, were arrested in separate incidents.

Ghaderi, from the village of Gazgasak, Soltani from the village of Khorenj, and Moradi from the village of Bikus, were all arrested on 6 May without warrants.

At the same time, Bayazidi from Piranshahr was arrested at his home in the city.

Additionally, Yousefpour, a member of the Koranic School, was arrested in a raid on his home in Piranshahr on 1 May.

The circumstances of their arrest and the specific charges against them remain unknown.

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## Police take at least 14 people into custody in Urfa

ANF | URFA | 7 MAY 2024

According to the information received, police carried out raids in Urfa (Riha) center as well as Hilvan (Curnê Reş), Hewag (Bozova), and (Viranşehir) Wêranşar districts, earlier this morning.

At least 14 people, including the district executive of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and members of the youth council, were taken into custody during the house raids.

It was reported that the raids took place within the framework of an investigation carried out by the Urfa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

It is not known what the detainees were accused of, and it is feared that the number of detentions may increase.

The names of those taken into custody are as follows: Curnê Reş: Muzaffer Akcan and Bünyamin Demir. Center: Şirin Aktaş, Leyla Dağhan, Meyaser Korkmaz, Kemal Çakmak and Nuh Albayrak. Hewag: DEM Party District executive Hüseyin Aslan, Kemal Aslan, Mehmet Aslan, Mehmet Emin Açıkgöz. Wêranşar: İsmail Topkan, Serhat İşlek, Aziz Taşkın.

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## Armed attack targets Birecik DEM Party District building

ANF | URFA | 8 MAY 2024

An armed attack was carried out on the building of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) in Birecik (Bêrecûk) district of Urfa (Riha).

An attack was carried out on the district building on Abdulkadir Erdil Street in Meydan District at around 3.30 am.



The building suffered material damage.

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## Filmmakers protest prohibition of screenings of 'The Rule of Law' documentary

ANF | ISTANBUL | 9 MAY 2024

The Ankara screening of Nejla Demirci's documentary *The Rule of Law*, which tells the struggle for justice of Doctor Yasemin Demirci and Teacher Engin Karataş, who were dismissed from public service by the Decree Law, was banned by the Çankaya District Governorate on 2 May. The screening of the film in Istanbul was also banned by Beyoğlu District Governorate on 3 May. The film was to be shown within the scope of the 19th Workers' Film Festival.

Filmmakers, cinema associations and independent festivals made a written statement condemning the ban of the documentary.

### Call to fight together against censorship

The statement emphasized that the ban decision is unlawful. The signatories said that they do not recognize the decision. The statement called for solidarity and added: "With the notifications made to the screening venues by the district governors of Çankaya in Ankara, Beyoğlu and Kadıköy in Istanbul, the screenings of the film, the interviews to be held afterward and the panel titled 'Censorship in Festivals' were effectively prevented. As cinema industry organizations, institutions and filmmakers, we totally reject censorship and the unlawful ban of our films from meeting the audience, and we invite everyone to stand together and raise their voice against censorship."

### Signatories

Among the signatories of the statement are: Akhisar Cinema Association, Altyazı Cinema Association, BSB Professional Association of Cinema Work Owners, Disk/Sinesen (Cinema Workers' Union), docİstanbul Documentary Research Center, Documentarist, Istanbul Documentary Days, Pembe Hayat Kuir-Fest, Seyri Sokak Video-Action Collective, Cinema TV Union, International Workers' Film Festival, New Film Magazine and many filmmakers.

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## Second attack targeting DEM Party office in Birecik

ANF | URFA | 9 MAY 2024

Following the armed attack on the district building of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) in Riha's Bêrecûk (Birecek) district on Wednesday, a second attack took place at night. A second attack on the district building of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) in Birecik (Bêrecûk), a district of Urfa (Riha) happened on the night between Wednesday and Thursday.

In the second attack on Abdulkadir Erdil Street, the windows of the building were damaged by a hard object, causing material damage.

While the identity of the attackers has not yet been determined, Halil Begit, the older brother of Mehmet Begit, who was detained in connection with the first attack on Wednesday and resigned from the DEM Party after the election, is still in custody. The investigation continues.

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## Minister of Internal Affairs says 72 people taken into custody in past few days

ANF | 9 MAY 2024

In a statement on his social media account, Turkish Minister of Internal Affairs Yerlikaya announced that a total of 72 people were detained in house raids in 10 provinces.

People detained during the operations carried out in Mardin, Antalya, Elazığ, Adıyaman, Amed, Eskişehir, Istanbul, Balıkesir, Hakkari and Urfa were accused of "membership in a terrorist organization" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organization".

Many people taken into custody have been released after giving statements on Wednesday.

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## Özgürlükçü Demokrasi newspaper employees sentenced to prison

ANF | ISTANBUL | 9 MAY 2024

The final hearing of the retrial against six journalists and a distributor working for Özgürlükçü Demokrasi [Libertarian Democracy] newspaper concluded.

At the hearing held at Istanbul 23rd High Criminal Court, journalists were charged with "being an illegal organisation member", "making illegal organisation propaganda", "inciting people to hatred and hostility" and "praising crime and criminals".

The court acquitted journalist Mizgin Fendik and separated the case of Pınar Tarlak.

Lawyers Sercan Korkmaz and Özcan Kılıç were present at the hearing. The court sentenced Mehmet Ali Çelebi to 3 years and 9 months and journalists Reyhan Hacıoğlu, İhsan Yaşar, İshak Yasul and Hicran Ürün to 3 years, 1 month and 15 days each on the arbitrary and systematic charge of "aiding an illegal organisation", meaning the PKK.

In addition, the ban on travelling abroad imposed on the journalists on trial was lifted.

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## DEM Party: There can be no normalisation by excluding oppressed peoples and identities

ANF | ANKARA | 10 MAY 2024

Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Spokesperson Ayşegül Doğan held a press conference at the headquarters of her party in Ankara and evaluated the developments on the agenda. Ayşegül Doğan started her speech by commemorating journalist Celal Başlangıç, who lost his life, and touched upon the agenda of the Central Executive Committee (MYK) of her party. Ayşegül Doğan pointed out that Istanbul was blockaded during the 1 May rally and dozens of people who participated in the 1 May rally were detained and arrested.

### New Elections in Hilvan

Noting that re-elections will be held in Hilvan district of Urfa on 2 June, Ayşegül Doğan said: "We started the election campaign 2 days ago. I would like to remind those who say that the elections were held under democratic and fair conditions about the process in Hilvan. On the night of 31 March, the ballot papers were burnt in Hilvan in the first place. Then the polling officers were beaten and an investigation was initiated by the Hilvan Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. One of the 7 people arrested as part of the investigation was a member of AKP's district election board. Despite all this, the data flow stopped for a while due to the ballot papers being burnt and the polling officers being beaten. The DEM Party won the elections in Hilvan with a difference of 521 votes. But the election we won is being repeated. Hilvan is now wanted to be taken from the DEM Party by conspiracy. We call on all the residents of Hilvan to claim their rights and will, which are wanted to be usurped, in the strongest way by increasing the 521 vote difference on 2 June."

## Attack on Party Building in Birecik

Drawing attention to the attacks on the party building in Birecik district of Urfa, Ayşegül Doğan said, "In the meantime, those who turned a blind eye to the usurpation of rights in Hilvan remain silent in the face of the armed attack on our Birecik district building. As I said at the beginning, the ones responsible for the possible incidents in Birecik are those who turn a blind eye to all these incidents, those who remain spectators, those who do not raise a voice and those who are partners."

## New Constitution

Ayşegül Doğan continued: "On the one hand, constitutional debates continue. We are talking about a party tradition that has been struggling for a civilian constitution, a democratic constitution and a new constitution for decades. But is it enough for the constitution to be civil only? No, it is not. It must also be new and democratic. The constitution must be a social contract. Our party attaches great importance to the ways and methods to be used for a new and democratic civilian constitution in order for it to be based on a social consensus and to have the quality of a social contract. For the constitution to be truly new, it must show that it completely renounces the old. One of the most important indicators of this is the Kobanê Conspiracy Trial to be held on 16 May. Therefore, the decision of the Kobanê Conspiracy Trial to be held on 16 May will be important. Once again, we call for public sensitivity."

Doğan concluded: "Discussions on normalisation and détente in politics was one of the agendas of our Central Executive Board (MYK). There can be no real and genuine normalisation or détente by excluding the oppressed peoples, different identities, languages and beliefs living in Turkey."

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# Interview

Karasu: On 31 March elections the AKP-MHP lost, and this loss really started a new course in Turkey

ANF | BEHDINAN | 5 MAY 2024

In the second part of this analysis, Mustafa Karasu, a member of the KCK Executive Council, spoke about the results of the local elections and the new attacks of the Turkish state in South Kurdistan.

The first part of this analysis can be read [here](#)

*To take a look back at the municipal elections in North Kurdistan and Turkey; How do you evaluate them? Do you share the view that the AKP has lost and a new era has dawned in Turkey?*

I think the outcomes of the municipal elections on 31 March need to be evaluated thoroughly. The Kurdish people and the democratic forces need to analyze this well. With these elections, the liberalized form of 12 September was to be brought to power. A new Turkey was to be created. In fact, Erdoğan was going to create the Turkey that was aimed at via the coup d'état on 12 September. This is how this government should be evaluated. But here is the government 22 years later, clearly not having achieved its aims. Especially in the last nine years, the partnership between the AKP and MHP has really descended on the people of Turkey like a nightmare. An order of unprecedented oppression was established, and it oppressed both the Kurdish and Turkish people likewise. The AKP-MHP created polarization in Turkish society with a policy that is unprecedented anywhere in the world. No other fascist country has done this.

There is a situation where one neighbor is looking at the other as if it were an enemy. Special warfare has been applied to the whole society. Should this not have lasted so long, maybe society would have been able to bear it. But such a prolonged special war was waged that society showed a great reaction to it. In fact, we can say that the reason why the AKP government regressed so much on 31 March was actually the revolt inspired by the righteous values of society. Rights, justice, law, conscience, and equality; these values exist solely in society. Society rebelled because all these values were under heavy attack. There was oppression and exploitation.

Of course, the AKP-MHP fascist government lost, and this loss really started a new course in Turkey. In fact, the presidential and parliamentary elections in May 2023 produced similar results. The government cheated and played games there too. Since then, the government has done nothing to alleviate the discomfort in society. Instead, they became comfortable because of their success in previous elections. In actuality, they had lost the elections then too. We need to see it like this. How else would it be possible to explain that there has been such a huge change within ten months? I mean, the shift existed before. I want to point this out: the elections were rigged. The people of Turkey really breathed a sigh of relief in these elections. And this aspect is very important. The idea that the AKP could not be defeated seems almost unchallenged. It had tied the whole society to itself with its special war. This has been broken.

There is a quote by Abraham Lincoln. It is actually a really good saying: 'You can fool some of the people all the time, and you can fool all the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time'. Because society is a historical phenomenon. The individual may be affected here and there, but in terms of the integrity of society, in terms of its sense of rights, justice, and equality, society has always had the high ground. We saw this in the election. In this regard, the election was a great victory. But one should not assume that everything will change just through elections. Bahçeli openly said, 'We did not build this country with a ballot box.' Erdoğan carries the same mindset. Erdoğan is not on the point of giving up his power; they are not democrats.

These elections should not be regarded a complete success, but as a beginning. It would be a mistake to think that this election would fix everything. In this election, the democratic tendency of society came through. This is, in a way, the success of the democratic front. We should see it like that. It was the united stance of the democratic part of society that showed its power in these elections, it was also the attitude of the Kurdish people.

The Kurdish people stood against the trustee policy. They already wanted to take the local administration of their own lands. They want to govern their own cities in Kurdistan locally. But there is a fundamental problem for the Kurds. The main task of the Kurdish people is to find a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. The Kurds have been waging a great struggle for democracy for more than 40–50 years. They are struggling for the freedom of the Kurdish people, and at the same time, they are struggling for the democratization of Turkey. Because the Kurdish question cannot be solved without the democratization of Turkey.

In this respect, if we ask why the Kurds showed such an attitude in the election and why they united with all those who want democracy, the answer is clear. Because the Kurdish question can only be solved through the democratization of Turkey. In this respect, Kurds base their attitude on whether democratization will develop or not. The election is not about the election of this or that party or the victory of this or that party.

Will democratization develop, or not? Will the tendency towards democratization rise in Turkish society? These are the main questions. The attitude of the Kurds is based on this.

As we have stated before, it is not like one person will come and solve the Kurdish question. Such an expectation simply shows a misconception of the reality of Turkey. It means that the Kurdish policy of the Turkish state has not been understood. Will there be a break in Turkey? Will it democratize? The answers to these questions may bring us closer to the solution to the question. One who thinks that the Kurdish question will be solved without the democratization of Turkey, or that someone who is not democratic will come and solve it, shows that the enemy has not been understood. We are facing those who want to commit genocide against the Kurds, against the Kurdish reality, and dominate them. What they want is to completely destroy the Kurds. This is their basic, fundamental policy. This can only change with a democratic mentality. In this respect, when asked why the Kurds made that choice, the answer is clear. However, if Turkey democratizes, if the votes of the people serve democratization, then it is because of the attitude of the Kurds. Because for the Kurds it does not matter who is elected, it matters whether there is a development towards the democratization of Turkey or not.

On the other hand, we need to look at what needs to be done now. The elections took place; the CHP came to power. One cannot expect too much from them. Of course, the people have demands because the CHP became the first party as a result of the joint attitude of all democratic forces. There are expectations, there are clear demands of the people and of society. It is necessary to develop the struggle for democratization. It is necessary to pave the way for this. If this is the case, a positive process can be evaluated correctly. If the results are evaluated in this way, progress will be made regarding Turkey's democratization. The same applies to the solution to the Kurdish question.

Of course, political parties should be put under pressure; it is necessary that they are answerable to the demands of democratization. One of the aims of an organized society is to exert influence on politics, to direct and lead politics. That is what society wants. When it comes to the reality of Turkey, it is necessary to struggle for its democratization. It is necessary to build alliances for this. It is necessary to develop ways and methods of struggling with this. The struggle for democracy cannot be developed without alliances. Democratization will not develop in Turkey if Kurds just say that they will elect their own municipalities in Kurdistan, and that is it. In this respect, we need to make use of the current environment for the democratization of the whole of Turkey.

The organized power, alliances, and struggles of society will change a lot. Wan is full of very important lessons. Why did they give Abdullah Zeydan the certificate of registration in Wan? They gave it to him as a result of a great struggle. The people in Wan stood up for this. The democratic forces supported Zeydan. All the socialist forces supported him. The opposition within the system also supported the attitude of the people of Wan. They did not accept the government's policy. It did not accept the usurping of that certificate. It is necessary to be aware of this. If it weren't for this resistance, trustees would have been appointed not only in Wan but also in other municipalities in Kurdistan. Each of them would have been deprived of their municipality for this or that reason. When the 'Supreme Election Council' (YSK) announced that Abdullah Zeydan should be given the certificate, it knew that if it had not, Amed, Elîh, Şîrnex, Şîrnex, Qers, Colemêrg, and all Kurdish provinces would have risen up. The whole of Kurdistan would have been like Wan.

The Turkish intelligence service (MIT) gave a report in which they stated that if the certificate was not given within the following few hours, all Kurdish cities, especially Amed, would rebel until iftar the latest. The MIT gave this report to Erdoğan, and of course, in order to avoid such a situation, Erdoğan immediately told the chairman of the YSK to give Abdullah Zeydan the certificate. Erdoğan later gave a statement, shamelessly saying: "Some terrorist organizations were trying to provoke, and we prevented it."

The struggle of Wan and the attitude of the people in Şîrnex and other cities were effective. In fact, the government had made a decision before the elections. They were going to appoint trustees, just like in 2019. But they were too weak in the election. The opposition got stronger, and the CHP became the first party. More precisely, Turkish society reacted against the AKP and MHP; they showed a tendency toward democratization which weakened the current government's hand. In this process, when the people of Wan stood up, this affected the whole of Kurdistan. In return, the government was forced to take a step back. This happened with the development of struggles and alliances. In fact, the Wan resistance created a natural alliance. This is very valuable. What needs to be done now is to develop the alliance of democracy. There was the Alliance of Labor and Freedom; it needs to be expanded further.

I want to emphasize this point. Those who oppose the alliance policy are those who want to weaken the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom. Consciously or unconsciously, it does not matter. The policy of forming alliances must be appreciated and developed. There may be shortcomings and mistakes, but let's develop alliances. Let's include every part of society. This cannot be done by simply saying that we will only organize ourselves without alliances. We will make strong alliances by organizing ourselves. If we don't organize ourselves, we cannot form strong alliances. But not much can be achieved if we only organize ourselves. We need to develop our organization in Turkey through alliances, we need to expand. We need to attach great importance to this. There are narrow, inadequate approaches in this regard; we need to overcome them. If we want to democratize Turkey and solve the Kurdish question on the basis of democratization, then we need to attach great importance to this alliance policy. This is to be done on a very broad spectrum. It may be true that you cannot agree on everything. This is a reality, but one needs to be aware that, all over the world, democracy has always developed through alliances.

The struggle against reactionism, fascism, and authoritarian regimes is based on alliances. So, what should be done from now on? We need to improve our organization. We need to develop our organization in Turkey and in North Kurdistan. We particularly need to organize the youth and women, and while doing so, we need to develop alliances both in Kurdistan and Turkey. Importance should be given to the alliances in Kurdistan and Turkey likewise. Approaches that do not value the alliances in Turkey are wrong. All other

political parties in Kurdistan should seek alliances with democratic forces in Turkey. If this happens, I think the outcomes of these elections will be great. If there is no united struggle, the AKP and MHP government will continue with their oppressive policies.

If the government in Turkey does not have a democratic mentality, if it cannot put forward a democratic solution and approach to the Kurdish question, then it will attack the struggle of the Kurdish people. Because the Turkish state's reality - whether it be its laws or its constitution - is built on suppressing the Kurdish people's struggle for liberation.

It is different when there is no struggle, but if there is a struggle, which there is now, then of course they will attack. We evaluated even before the elections that they would attack no matter what the outcome of the elections was. It was said that they might soften their approach after the elections. This is wrong. People ask questions like: 'Will the war against the Kurdish people be stopped?' or 'Will the democratic organization and democratic struggle of the Kurdish people be accepted?' There is no such thing at the moment. Just the other day, the Minister of Justice said, if you act the way we tell you, then we will allow you to exist. In other words, he's saying to give up being Kurdish. He criticizes the DEM Party. Why? Because the DEM Party defends Kurdishness, because they want the Kurdish problem to be solved.

Back when the government appointed trustees to Kurdish municipalities, what was the first thing they did? First of all, they closed all Kurdish and women's institutions. Their oppression continued because it was not opposed. What was their justification? Separatism. Their justification was always "homeland-nation-Sakarya".

Now they're putting the flag on the agenda. This is incorrect. Rêber Apo spoke about his position regarding the flag 30 years ago. He said that we have no problem with it. The problem is not the flag, but the chauvinist connotation attached to it. The problem is the "Homeland-nation-Sakarya" mindset. They want to influence society by manipulating them through the flag. They want to increase the pressure by saying, "Look, this is what was done to our flag."

Now they are discussing the constitution in an environment where such resentments are intensifying. You have imprisoned thousands of politicians, you use the judiciary and the courts as a beating stick, you use all kinds of oppression. People are being arrested every day. For 7 years, Erdoğan has been arbitrarily arresting people. Why would you put an 80-year-old woman in prison? Erdoğan is killing sick people in prisons. The message he is sending to the Kurds is this: 'Look, we are ready to kill all of you. If you struggle, this is how we will respond.' In such an environment of oppression, a constitutional debate will be held.

The point of a constitution is that it makes a state more democratic. Only the leftists and democrats demanded the abolition of the September 12th constitution. They have been voicing the need for a new constitution for over 40 years now. Since the 82nd Constitution, the Kurds have been voicing the need for change the most for a democratic solution. Erdoğan and Bahçeli also want a change of constitution, but their aim is to develop one which is worse than the September 12 constitution. If they don't even implement their current constitution, how could they be expected to implement a new one?

Of course, the Kurds want a new constitution more than anyone else because the characteristics of the current one is completely based on the Kurdish genocide. This is the essence of the current constitution. Tur-



key has a single-article constitution; all the other articles depend on it. And what is that one article? The genocide of the Kurds. Therefore, of course, Kurds want it to change, but there is no democratic mentality or ground for this at the moment. That democratic environment needs to be created; everyone needs to put forward their thoughts in this regard. Kurds are criticized as soon as they open their mouths because they speak Kurdish, what they call an “unknown language.” How will there be a democratic constitution when you do not even accept the existence of the Kurdish language? How can there be a constitution without Kurds expressing their rights and demands on a democratic basis? First of all, a democratic environment must be created. Otherwise, the ongoing discussions are meaningless. The process of making a constitution should be seen as a struggle for democratization. This struggle for democratization will lead to a constitution that the Kurds want.

Ozgur Ozel said something about Erdoğan, that he is a good politician but a bad person. It is obvious that Erdoğan is a bad person because he established his regime through evil. He has not left a single wrong-doing over the last nine or ten years, he has done all kinds of evil to the societies of Turkey. But Erdoğan is not a good politician. He is a mercenary of special, psychological warfare. He uses the entire country's resources for special warfare in order to keep his own power and suppress democrats, as well as the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom. This is what Erdoğan thinks about day and night. What he thinks about day and night is evil. We have seen this for the last nine, ten years.

Erdoğan must be understood like this. A bad person can never be a good politician. This can clearly be said about Erdoğan, who presents himself as a religious person. He has no religion because he has no conscience. The main aspect of religion is that it appeals to conscience and to justice. Erdoğan has nothing to do with this. That is why he has no religion. The most fundamental characteristics of religions are rights, justice, law, and conscience. Billions of people have adopted these religions because they truly follow these values. Does Erdoğan follow them?

We don't know what the results of the Erdoğan-Ozel meeting will be, but we are certain that Erdoğan will bring up the Kurdish question. He will try to influence Ozel by saying that the Kurds are dividing Turkey, that they are the enemies of Turkey. He will invite Ozel to take a common stance against separatism, 'let's fight together'. Erdoğan will say. This is already a trap. This is enmity against democracy. Uniting against the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom means opposing democracy. Erdoğan will lure Ozgur Ozel into the enmity of democracy. We will see what the outcome will be.

The peoples of Turkey have rejected the policies of the AKP-MHP. They took a stance against the current government and did not vote for them. The attitude of the people is as obvious as is the AKP-MHP's attitude. The people really want democratization. They want the current policies to stop. They are fed up. Of course, from the opposition, they expect not the continuation of the current policy but instead an attitude against that policy; a different policy that will meet the democratization aspirations of the people of Turkey.

*Erdoğan's attempts to seek allies on an international level are continuing. Most recently, he visited Baghdad and Hewlêr [Erbil]. How do you assess this?*

We are following the negotiations between the AKP-MHP government and Erdoğan in Iraq and South Kurdistan. We received some information in this regard. Iraq has shown a certain compromise and flexibility on some issues, but it did not accept everything Turkey said. It is necessary to be aware of this. Turkey

did achieve the success they are propagandizing on Turkish television. They did not achieve the very important results they keep talking about.

At the moment, the most unreliable politician in the world is Erdoğan, and the most unreliable government is the AKP-MHP one. How can anyone trust them? Erdoğan had relations with Syria, and what he did there is obvious. What kind of policy did he pursue in Syria? He is the biggest source of chaos there. He is making the Turkish-affiliated gangs attack everywhere. Also, his relations with Egypt are like this. What he did in Libya is obvious as well. Erdoğan is a very unreliable politician. It is wrong to expect that the AKP-MHP government will get great results from their initiatives and that it will get very strategic, long-term results. Nobody trusts them. Iraq doesn't trust them either.

The AKP-MHP regime actually wants to legitimize its expansion policy through the 'development road'. As soon as Turkey finds the opportunity, when they find a weakness in a neighboring country, they will invade it. They exploit all the resources yet, still, they do not leave. The Iraqis know this. The Arabs have learned this very well. Everyone has learned about Erdoğan's politics. Russia also knows what the AKP-MHP government is and tries to use it. We do not think that the Turkish government has achieved much. They have made some compromises, such as a joint fight against terrorism, an agreement on some economic issues. But how will this unfold in practice? In practice, Iraq is not in a position to do what they claim.

Although there is a tendency in the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Sudani to establish closer relations with Turkey, a majority of the other political parties are against Turkey. I don't believe that Sudani trusts Turkey. We know that they haven't achieved much in this direction, but we need to be careful and cautious. If Iraq does really follow Turkey, it will be the first to lose. It will realize that this relationship with the Turkish state will cost it dearly. But we don't think that it will come to this point. We don't think that the stated struggle against us and economic agreements will yield many results.

*Finally, a question regarding the current attacks and the threats of possible new operations. How do you evaluate this situation?*

Of course, the Turkish state is attacking and continues to attack. I'm convinced that they will increase their attacks. They particularly target the Medya Defense Areas. They are attacking Xakurkê and there is a possibility of an operation in Gare. Certain attacks will continue, but the resistance against these will also continue. This needs to be clear. Erdoğan should not think that he will enter, just by saying 'I will enter.' It is not that easy. Doing this is not as easy as simply saying it. When the time of war comes, and they face the guerrilla. It will not be easy for them to achieve their goals.

They are using the KDP. Their forces wanted to advance in some places, but they stumbled upon resistance. The KDP cannot do this, and they should know this. If the KDP continues like this, they will face a war between us and the KDP. The guerrilla is patient and careful, but if the KDP continues, there will definitely be a response. They should know this. The KDP is pushing the line. As a matter of fact, the guerrillas have responded to the KDP before and will respond again. They should not expect the guerrilla to tolerate their behavior. If they continue, they should be ready to bear the consequences.

As the AKP-MHP attacks to achieve the genocide of the Kurdish people in their homelands, the attacks against Kurds increase in the diaspora too. There is no need to evaluate the attacks against Kurdish televi-

sion too much. These are openly fascist attacks because only fascists would do this. It is almost as if this is the duty of a section within NATO. Brussels is the center of NATO. Is this what France wanted? The Minister of Justice must answer for this. The former Minister of Justice gave a statement in this regard. He said: 'To act in such a self-interested way means to lose humanity.' They exposed themselves in this way. It is impossible for them to get results. The press will continue doing their job, they have already voiced this.

The whole of Europe should think about this raid, the method, and the form of the raid. They must see what they are doing. This means openly supporting the Turkish state's genocide of Kurds and being a partner in its crime. This should not be regarded as a simple raid against the press and television. It means being a partner in the Kurdish genocide. It means supporting the genocide policy of the Turkish State. They have fallen into this situation. The AKP government and those behind it cannot survive. European society will not accept this. The journalistic struggle continues; no one can stop it.

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## Opinion

### Why doesn't the KDP enter the elections?

NAZIM DASTAN | 7 MAY 2024

In 1975, the majority of the Peshmerga force, which numbered more than 100 thousand, laid down their arms and went to Iran with the conviction of Mele Mistefa Barzani. This event, which took place after the Algiers Agreement between Iraq and Iran on 6 April of the same year, went down in the history of Southern Kurdistan as "Aşbetal/ Liquidation". Aşbetal means "stopping of the mill" among the people, while its political meaning was the withdrawal of the Kurds from the mountains with Mele Mistefa Barzani's declaration that "the revolution is over". With this, for the first time in the history of Kurdistan, a resistance and rebellion were liquidated by its own leader.

#### 1970s...

While the events in Bashûr (Southern Kurdistan), which has paid a heavy price, are not limited to the beginning and end of this event, the period from 1961 to the 70s covers one of the most visible periods of war and struggle. As a result of Barzani's foreign-dependent policy, the struggle of the people of Bashûr suffered one of its first blows with the "Declaration of Peace" signed on 11 March 1970 with Saddam Hussein, then vice president of Iraq. While the main goal of the Ba'ath regime was to completely destroy the Kurdish struggle, Barzani's policies almost served this purpose.

#### Mele Mistefa's Remarks to Keyhan Newspaper in Tehran

After declaring the end of the revolution in 1975, Mele Mistefa and his entourage would end up in Tehran. Barzani, in an interview he gave to Emîr Tahirî of Keyhan Newspaper in Iran on 10 May 1975,

said "My job is done. I no longer have a role as the leader of the Iraqi Kurds. I was not aware of the Algiers Agreement. However, I support this agreement because it is an agreement for the benefit of the Iranian peoples. Anything that is in the interests of Iran is in the interests of the Kurds". The newspaper, on the other hand, would call Barzani's words "An important period of Iraq was closed forever" and would reveal how Aşbetal led Bashûr through a historical turning point.

### **Qasimlo, the Provisional Committee and the the Barzanis**

Dr Abdulrehman Qasimlo, one of the revolutionary leaders of Rojhilatê (Eastern) Kurdistan and leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, was also present on the stage of history at that time. Qasimlo sheds light on that period and the developments in his book titled "Ihaneta Qiyade Mueqete Bi Netewê Kurd/ The Treachery of the Provisional Committee against the Kurdish People".

In his book, Qasimlo states that the people of Southern Kurdistan were happy that they were able to obtain some of their rights from the Iraqi state with the agreement signed on 11 March 1970, and notes that the Barzanis banned the actions of the people of Southern Kurdistan against Iran for a long period in order to 'protect their gains'. After the 11 March Declaration, Qasimlo wrote that he sat down with Mistefa Barzani and said, "This is a pleasing situation for us that the Kurdish question will be solved in Southern Kurdistan and most importantly, the Kurdish movement there will no longer need the Iranian state. After the 11 March Declaration, some leaders of our party went to Barzani. Barzani was asked not to prevent the KDP officials and peshmerga from travelling to Rojhilat from Bashûr to help the development of the forces of Rojhilat. Barzani said to our party leaders: "Under no circumstances should you travel to and from Iran and it is not right for you to be in the public eye in Bashûr. In particular, there should not be any headquarters of your Peshmerga forces on the border".

### **Qasimlo: KDP Worked Together with SAVAK**

"There is now an autonomous administration here and we have Kurdish ministers. It is better for you to establish relations with Iraq and move to the cities under their control", Qasimlo cited Barzani as saying: "After Barzani's personal suggestion, we moved our work towards Iraqi cities. With the decree of the Shah of Iran, the organisations belonging to Barzani started a great black propaganda against us. They called our relations with Iraq 'they sold themselves'.

The Parastin formation of the KDP, together with SAVAK (Iranian intelligence), had placed its agents among the Rojhilat organisations in Bashûr. They called themselves the 'Provisional Democratic Committee'. I have documents showing that SAVAK sent them logistical support, especially ammunition, via Parastin. This organisation, which was established on paper, was working not only against us, but also against the other parts of Kurdistan, Bakûr and Rojava, in order to prevent the formation of a strong Kurdish party that had established its unity." His words provide some data about the historical development of today's KDP.

From those days until today, many phases of Kurdistan's struggle have fallen victim to this "political mind".

## Today and the Election Agenda

Nowadays, the regional parliamentary elections are at the top of the agenda in the streets of Bashûr. The people of the region are closely following the KDP's 'mobilisation' to save its power. In this dizzying traffic, the KDP is insistently going to Washington, Ankara, Tehran and Baghdad to postpone the elections. One of the greatest characteristics of the people of Bashûr is that they have a very strong memory. The people of Bashûr, who have been familiar with the dynamics of the war since the 1950s in their own words, also express the reasons for the current dynamics with very strong interpretations. They know that all the efforts of the KDP to prevent the regional elections expected to be held on 10 June are the result of the 'leaning on the enemy' policy it has been pursuing in Kurdistan since the 1950s.

### Mam Jalal: KDP Would Win Even in China!

Experiencing the weakest period in its 80-year history, the KDP has been making a great effort to prevent the Southern Kurdistan Regional Parliamentary elections from taking place for a long time. Especially with the change in the electoral law, striking details about how the KDP has been the first party in the region since 1992, when the parliament was established, are coming to light.

The biggest fears of the KDP are that the Iraqi High Election Commission, which was assigned to organise the elections, revealed as a result of first research that there were approximately 400 thousand fake voters and that the 11 seats it obtained without elections under the name of a minority quota would be taken away. According to the law, approximately 30 thousand votes correspond to 1 seat, while 400 thousand fake voters correspond to approximately 13 seats. The fake voter lists consist of fake IDs and dead voters. While KDP's election frauds are not limited to this, Jalal Talabani, who realised this in time, summarises it with the historical saying "KDP would win even if it entered the elections in China."

### What Might Happen if the Elections Take Place?

If the KDP enters the elections under the specified conditions, it means that it will lose power in Southern Kurdistan after 30 years. While new political processes are expected to emerge in this situation, the KDP has not included this situation among its options. In the new period, the KDP is far away not only from being the second party, but even from reaching a position that can provide the same balance as the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) if the elections take place. While the US is in favour of holding the elections, Turkey, which is against it, provides support to prevent it. While the attitude of Iran, one of the third important actors of the region, on this issue is also curious, Nechirvan Barzani's attempts to convince Iran about the postponement of the elections continue. While this is the main agenda in Barzani's bag on his way to Iran, it is also thought that Iran may utilise this situation to distance the KDP from the USA, Israel and Turkey.

### KDP's Approach Brings More Openness to Foreign Interventions

In the event that the elections take place, and the result coincides with the predictions, the question of how the KDP, which took Hewlêr (Erbil) from the PUK with Saddam Hussein's tanks in 1996, will view the new government's ability to enter the parliament in Hewlêr is at the top of the voters' agenda. Even if such a result comes out, the KDP does not intend to legally hand over any institution, from the Internal

Security Forces to parliament, from parliament to Asayish (Public Security). In this context, if the legal processes are not followed, the Iraqi Federal Police have the right to intervene in the region according to the law. This situation, on the other hand, offers a ground for forces such as the USA, Turkey and Iran to intervene in the region.

### **Barzanis are Also Competing With Each Other**

While the attitude of the Barzanis and KDP members is gradually making Southern Kurdistan open to foreign interventions, the crisis in question is also causing contradictions and cracks within the family. While Nechirvan Barzani wants the elections to be held, KDP Prime Minister Masoud Barzani and regional prime minister Masrour Barzani favour postponement. The contradictions between the Barzanis go back to the suspicious death of Idris Barzani, the father of Nechirvan Barzani. While Nechirvan Barzani seems ready to sacrifice Masoud and Masrur Barzani in case of a change in the balance, he does not stay away from the policies that prepare the infrastructure for this. In the new possible political balances, PUK's candidacies for the presidency of the Kurdistan Region and the prime ministry of the region disturb the KDP at the highest level, and in case one of the candidacies is realised, the concern of "What will happen to me?" is increasing among the aforementioned parties. Even though it is not put into words very much, the rivalry between the Barzanis can sometimes turn into an "invisible" politics.

### **The Main Cocern is the Non-occupation of the Bashur Territory**

While the voters' comment that "If the KDP agrees to enter the elections, it must have a vested interest" is another striking detail about the KDP's negotiations, the main concern is that the remaining 49 percent of Bashûr lands should not be lost as a result of the "policy of offering". As a matter of fact, the loss of 51 percent of the territory of Southern Kurdistan to Hashd al-Shaabi and the Iraqi army after the referendum held in 2017 as a result of similar insistence is a memorable experience.

### **Negotiations Continue**

While the KDP's actions are preparing the environment for deepening a civil war with other Kurdish parties, especially with the PUK, the negotiations over the region continue. While the parties are sending messages to each other through local actors in a place where proxy wars are going on, Barzani is in Tehran, and PUK President Bafil Talabani is holding talks in Washington. Although it seems distant, the possibility of an agreement with the PUK and the possibility of postponing the elections in return for some concessions are also among the discussions. While the instability in question is expected to continue in the near future, the bill for these processes is borne by the people.

## Kahiloğulları: The regime cannot establish legitimacy through violence

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 MAY 2024

More than a month has passed since local elections in Turkey. Erdoğan's AKP suffered the biggest electoral debacle in two decades in the vote on 31 March. The CHP's victory had shattered the regime leader's aura of invincibility, and his Islamist-conservative party became only the second-strongest force for the first time since its founding in 2002. However, current developments in Turkey and the entire region make it clear that Erdoğan and others are not prepared to give up their power and see the assertion of their interests at risk. The policy of war and repression is being persistently expanded.

Pelin Kahiloğulları, one of the spokespersons for the Party for Social Freedom (TÖP), believes that Erdoğan has passed his peak. The politician, who was born in Hatay in 1990, admits that the AKP government has been able to overcome every defeat since the Gezi Park protests eleven years ago and get back on its feet. However, the results of the local elections have now clearly shown that Erdoğan is no longer untouchable and that there are real opportunities for the opposition to implement a radical change of course in Turkey.

### The regime has lost its legitimacy

In an interview with ANF Kahiloğulları said: “The AKP regime had already lost massive amounts of legitimacy before the parliamentary and presidential elections last year and was only able to avoid losing through intensive fraud,” adding that “the AKP opened up new fields of employment, she sai with a number of measures in the run-up to the elections, apparently reduced unemployment and partially mitigated the consequences of the economic crisis. However, people would have had to pay a high price for this after the elections. In this way, the AKP was able to prevent a situation and a defeat like the one in the current elections.”

### Erdoğan is no longer a strong unifying element

Kahiloğulları said there were various factors that brought to the AKP current defeat: “One factor is the worsening of the effects of the economic crisis on everyday life. The rise in unemployment and the impoverishment of millions of people, including pensioners, comes on top of the daily rising cost of living. The economic plan to increase the wealth of capital, also known as the Mehmet Şimşek program [Mehmet Şimşek is Erdoğan's finance minister], and the 12th development plan have impoverishment accelerated even further. In addition, fraud as practiced in the presidential election, was not possible in these elections. Another factor lies in the fact that Erdoğan's ‘leadership role’ - although he went through almost every city in the election campaign toured – began to weaken relatively quickly as CHP politician and Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu came to the fore as an alternative leader.”

## It will be difficult to restore legitimacy now

Pelin Kahiloğulları noted that the results of the local elections of 31 March 2024 and the parliamentary elections of 7 June 2015 could be compared with certain limitations. She said: “After 7 June, a similar transfer of moral force to social opposition was observed. However, I must underline that the government's loss of power and legitimacy crisis are deeper today than they were then. When the AKP was supposedly negotiating a grand coalition with the CHP, it was making preparations in the background to turn the republic into a country of bombs. It tried to regain the power it lost on 7 June by creating a 'shock effect' with successive attacks in Diyarbakır, Suruç and Ankara. So she used direct violence. As we know, the regime was able to achieve its goal with the elections of 1 November 2015. Today it is much more difficult for the ruling powers to restore legitimacy through naked force. Of course, I am not saying that it is not possible, after all, the reality of the government and the state is suitable for this. But the path chosen to emerge from the economic crisis will deepen poverty and unemployment and increase people's anger.”

## Violence leads to chaos

Kahiloğulları said: “The government is also aware of the spreading resistance of the workers, the ongoing striving for freedom of the Kurdish people, the current situation of women, Alevis, environmentalists, farmers defending their land and young students make the path of naked violence a dead end. It will pave the way for a complete dilution of power. Addressing such a social reality only with naked force will maneuver the government into a predicament where violence will become ever more widespread and even indiscriminate, and will increase the likelihood that the country will plunge into chaos.”

## A new social consciousness

Kahiloğulları recalled the special phase before the 2015 elections, the Gezi protests and the broad search for a democratic life together with the Kurdish freedom struggle: “Back then, we were able to create the political alliance and a program that was necessary for such a critical time. The alliance was not specifically expressed. Nevertheless, the peoples of Turkey, the Kurds, the workers, the women, the youth, the environmental activists continued and continue their resistance by manifesting their demands. Sometimes the resistance came to the fore, sometimes it retreated. I believe that this process of resistance, which has continued in some ways since Gezi, has created a new social consciousness. On the other hand, we cannot ignore that the state of constant violence and tension simultaneously dissolves the values that hold society together and causes social decay. Therefore, I must note that if the current angry reactions of the people cannot be integrated into a broad democratic position, the said decay can quickly increase and from here an environment suitable for fascism will be created.”



## Barzani's visit to Tehran and its repercussions on Iraq

ARARAT ARAM | 8 MAY 2024

The ruling party in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the KDP, left no stone unturned to postpone the parliamentary elections in Southern Kurdistan, and held some talks in Iran this time as a result of these attempts. Nechirvan Barzani travelled to Tehran and his first stop was Iranian religious leader, Ali Khamenei. Barzani then met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi with the accompanying delegation and met with many people at the state level respectively.

### **New Decision by Iraqi Court as Negotiations Continued in Tehran**

While the reflections of the meeting on the region are expected to continue in the coming days, some developments took place in Baghdad even before the negotiation table was lifted in Tehran. While Barzani posed for the cameras with the General Commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Army, Hussein Salami, the Iraqi Supreme Federal Court, which had previously taken opposing decisions against the KDP, made a new decision. The court, under the influence of Iran, took the objection application submitted by Masrour Barzani on the grounds that the distribution of the seats to the regions was not legal, into its agenda with jet speed. According to the decision, the suspension of the implementation of the judgment will continue until the objection application is finalised.

### **How will the Seat Distribution Ratio Be?**

Within the scope of the decisions taken months ago, the Iraqi Supreme Federal Court decided that the Kurdistan region parliamentary elections, which were previously held under the name of one region, would be divided into 4 regions in the next election. These were determined as Sulaymaniyah, Hewlêr (Erbil), Duhok and Halabja. Accordingly, the 4-region election system consisted of 100 seats. The seat distribution ratio was determined as 34 for Hewlêr, 38 for Sulaymaniyah, 25 for Duhok and 3 for Halabja.

The same court also cancelled the KDP's minority quota of 11 seats. In this way, while the KDP would guarantee 11 seats even before the elections, the court decided to abolish this situation on the grounds that it was "unconstitutional". The new decision opens the doors for change on this issue as well.

### **Signal of Postponement or Preparation?**

On the other hand, if the new application is not finalised until July, the Iraqi Supreme Election Commission's duty to conduct the elections will end. While this course of developments signals the postponement of the elections, it also strengthens the interpretation that the KDP is preparing to enter the elections by securing itself in return for some concessions.

### **Talabani in the USA: We Do Not Accept**

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Chairman, Bafil Talabani, who met with US officials in Washington at the same time, reiterated that the elections should be held on time. Talabani's party PUK made counter statements saying that both Masrour Barzani's application and the court's decision were illegal.

While the Iraqi election law states that objection applications can be made 6 months before the elections, such an action one month before the elections does not comply with the constitution.

### **What the Kayhan Newspaper Says**

While these were the first reflections of the talks in Tehran on Iraq, Barzani's Tehran traffic was glorified by some media organisations affiliated to KDP. As the Iranian media praised the talks, the Kayhan Newspaper, affiliated to Iran's religious leader Ali Khamenei, shared some data about the talks apart from the news reflected.

The newspaper used Barzani's remark "Imam Khomeini was our leader too" as the headline, and in the rest of the article, Barzani's words "If it was not for Iran's revolution, it was not clear what fate would await the Kurdish movement," were emphasised. These words and the way the news report is structured are reminiscent of the interview Mele Mistefa Barzani gave to the same newspaper in 1975, when he went to Iran after Aşbetal [Aşbetal means "stopping of the mill" among the people, while its political meaning, "Liquidation" was the withdrawal of the Kurds from the mountains with Mele Mistefa Barzani's declaration that "the revolution is over"]. While the only thing that has changed in the Barzanis is the grandfather-grandson, Kayhan Newspaper has changed hands from Shah Reza Pahlavi family to Ali Khamenei.

### **What Role Did Tehran Assign to the KDP?**

While Tehran has been seriously disturbed by Israel's nesting in Hewlêr in recent years, it has brought this issue to the talks as part of the siege and attack plans developed against it. In connection with this, it also sees the plans developed by the KDP with the US and the Turkish state as an external threat. Trying to balance the KDP as a buffer against the Washington, Tel Aviv and Ankara bloc in the ever-rising tension, Tehran intimidates the Barzanis, but also tries to keep them alive in a partial way to frustrate what is being done against them. In this context, Tehran pushed Baghdad to take a few steps and pressed the button to improve relations with Hewlêr.

### **New Phase With Iran: New Foreign Intervention**

While Barzani's remark "We have entered a new stage in our relations with Iran" after his return to Hewlêr is of interest to many parties, it is also stated that Barzani, who worked for 2 months to make this meeting possible, accepted all the demands of Iran. While the possibility of the realisation of these developments on the ground brings along many interpretations, it is a matter of curiosity how Israel's reflex against this will resonate, most of all on the US front. The pursuit of the KDP, which plays the role of an apparatus in the conflicts between international and regional powers to save its own power in these conflicts, has brought the territory of Southern Kurdistan one step closer to new foreign interventions.

### **Rojhilat Parties' Test With Xerxwaziya Barzani**

The existence of Rojhilat (Eastern Kurdistan, Iran) parties in Bashûr (Southern) Kurdistan is another issue that disturbs Iran. While the fate of these forces will be directly linked to the recent talks in Tehran, the KDP had assumed some roles in the "disarmament" of these parties as a result of the previous talks. However, the KDP acted otherwise and attempted to organise the parties in the region against Iran in a way to serve its own plans. In this context, the KDP has repositioned most of the aforementioned parties under

the umbrella of the 'Xêrxwaziya Barzani' formation and is trying to keep these forces as political and military trump cards.



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