

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Hozat: We won't make our leader an item in any negotiation!

ANF | Behdinan | 17 July 2024

Besê Hozat, co-chair of the Executive Council of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union), commented on current developments in an interview broadcast on Medya Haber TV on Tuesday evening. In the program, Besê Hozat said that the Turkish government is trying to blackmail the Kurdish freedom movement into making concessions by isolating Abdullah Öcalan. The Kurdish people's leader has been on the prison island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara for over 25 years, and all contact with the outside world has been lost since March 2021.

Besê Hozat said: "In the last few days, some information has reached us. We think it is important to make this public. A reliable source close to Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan has promised contact with Öcalan if the Kurdish movement makes certain concessions in return. First, a conversation with Öcalan's brother could be arranged, and later with his legal team."

Hozat did not comment on the content of the concessions demanded, but explained: "Our source of information is reliable. We also know the group of people who passed on the information in this way. We know the policy that they have been pursuing together with Erdoğan for years."

Unacceptable

Abdullah Öcalan is a political hostage of the Turkish state and is being used for blackmail attempts. The KCK rejects this dirty attempt and will not enter into such negotiations. According to Turkish law and international standards, Öcalan has the right to contact the outside world. Throwing this right into the balance for a deal with the Kurdish movement is a disgusting and unacceptable approach, said Besê Hozat. Anyone who advocates for a constitutional state in Turkey “must take a stand on this”, she said, adding: “On İmralı, Turkish and international law is being violated. The system of isolation that has been in place for over 25 years has taken on an absolute form in the last four years. This system is spreading throughout Turkey. A regime of isolation and torture now prevails in all jails. Prisoners who have served their sentences are not released. Seriously ill people are dying in prison. Eighty-year-olds are being arrested and put in prison. Small children are growing up in prison.”

Hozat continued: “The lawlessness established on İmralı has spread to the whole of Turkey and is being used in concentrated form against Kurdish politicians and against revolutionary people. What do all the writers and intellectuals who define themselves as leftists, democrats and advocates of the law in Turkey say about this? If they can't think of anything, why do they see themselves as intellectuals?”

Besê Hozat described the way the lawlessness on İmralı is being dealt with as a litmus test that shows the level of real opposition. At the same time, she said, it also shows how important the fight for Öcalan's release is. “Actually, everything is a result of the freedom offensive. It is the point to which this offensive has brought the fascist regime. It has lost its balance and does not know what to do.”

It is now important to continue the legal and political fight. The torture system on İmralı has been placed on the agenda of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) will discuss it in September. Hozat added: “The ECHR said years ago that what is happening on İmralı is torture and violates rights.” Europe is still watching and is even participating. The struggle has resulted in international institutions addressing this issue. “We must keep at it and must not let up now,” said the KCK Executive Council co-chair, underlining once again that the situation on İmralı is synonymous with the Kurdish question and Abdullah Öcalan is the person to contact for a democratic solution.



Turkey's response to the UN: There is no isolation in İmralı, but a ban on visits

Serkan Demirel | Geneva | 17 July 2024

The 80th session of the United Nations Committee against Torture continues at the Palais de Wilson of the UN Geneva Office. Within the scope of the sessions, human rights violations in Turkey are being discussed and debated. Rapporteurs of the UN Committee against Torture, representatives of non-governmental organisations presenting reports on Turkey and the Turkish delegation are attending the sessions.

In their presentations, the UN Special Rapporteurs against Torture drew attention to the extent of rights violations in prisons in Turkey and Kurdistan. Special Rapporteur Maeda Naoko, who took the floor here, discussed the isolation of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan in her presentation.

Speaking on behalf of the Turkish delegation in the afternoon session, Fatih Güngör, Deputy Director General of Prisons and Detention Houses at the Ministry of Justice, responded to the special rapporteurs' questions on rights violations in prisons.

Güngör claimed that the standards in Turkish prisons are in line with international conventions and argued that, contrary to the reports of many non-governmental organisations, there is no isolation regime in prisons.

Güngör also briefly answered the question about the İmralı isolation, and although he did not admit the existence of a special practice in İmralı, where Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan is held in incommunicato conditions and has not been heard from for 40 months.

Güngör started his speech by stating that Abdullah Öcalan was tried by the State Special Security Courts under Article 125 of the Turkish Penal Code and sentenced to life imprisonment without parole, and defended the disciplinary penalties and bans on lawyer visits that Öcalan has long been subject to on arbitrary grounds.

In an attempt to disguise the İmralı isolation with a legal cover, Güngör stated: "Abdullah Öcalan is currently serving his sentence in İmralı High Security Prison together with 3 other prisoners. Persons who do not act in accordance with the law may be subjected to a series of sanctions by the Prison Administration Observation Board. Some misdemeanours committed in prison may result in a ban on visits. Disciplinary sanctions are under the responsibility of the Prison Disciplinary Board. Once the decision has been taken, the prisoner is informed and can appeal to the Execution Judge. They can even take the matter to an authorised court. Accordingly, family visits for prisoners in İmralı have been suspended for 3 months. Therefore, visits by relatives are prohibited during this period. No objection or complaint has been filed against this decision, which became final and enforceable in April 2024. Lawyer visits were suspended for 6 months by court order in May 2024. This decision was appealed, but the appeal was rejected in June 2024 and the decision became final.'

The 80th session of the UN Committee for the Prevention of Torture will end on 26 July. The programme will continue with the Turkey session tomorrow as well.

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Appeal to the CoE, CPT and ECtHR: Don't be a partner in the crime of isolation

ANF | Strasbourg | 17 July 2024

Besê Hozat, co-chair of the Executive Council of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union), spoke to Medya Haber TV and stated that the Turkish government is trying to blackmail the Kurdish freedom movement into making concessions by isolating Abdullah Öcalan. The Kurdish people's leader has been on the prison island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara for over 25 years, and all contact with the outside world has been lost since March 2021.

Besê Hozat said: "In the last few days, some information has reached us. We think it is important to make this public. A reliable source close to Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan has promised contact with Öcalan if the Kurdish movement makes certain concessions in return. First, a conversation with Öcalan's brother could be arranged, and later with his legal team."

Following Hozat's remarks, members of the Democratic Kurdish Community Centre (DTKM) in Strasbourg made a press statement in the area where the Freedom Vigil, which has been continuing for 13 years to ensure the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Sîdar Amedî read the press statement on behalf of DKTm Strasbourg and said the following:

"Leader Öcalan has been subject to torture and isolation in İmralı for 26 years. His lawyers and family cannot have any meetings with him. No news has been received from him for almost four years. All contact with the outside world has been cut off and no information about his health and life can be obtained. Leader Öcalan is completely cut off from the outside world. No response has been given to his lawyers' and family's requests for a meeting on the grounds that he has been sentenced to a disciplinary penalty.

This justification was systematically put forward and disciplinary penalties were repeatedly given for 3 months each between 2021-2024. Again, according to the information provided by his lawyers, a new 6-month ban on lawyer visits was issued on 3 May. Thus, Leader Öcalan has been banned from seeing his lawyer for 6 months at least 13 times in the last 8 years. Leader Öcalan is being held by the Turkish state in Imrali island prison at the most extreme point of non-communication. With this inhuman isolation, Leader Öcalan is not allowed to have any contact with the outside world, including with his lawyers and family.

The Kurdish people and humanity are not even aware of the existence of Leader Öcalan, and efforts are made to make us get used to this and to accept the aggravated torture and isolation he is subjected to. İmralı is an international torture island, a prison of absolute isolation. Leader Öcalan, who is now 75 years old, has been subjected to cruel torture under the name of solitary confinement for 26 years. For 40 months, no information has been provided about his health status and it has now become impossible to know where he is now and what his physical condition is.

Our concerns are at the highest level and, as Kurdish people, we have no patience left. Millions are demanding an end to this system of torture and isolation. The CPT, which contributes to this uncertainty, is silent. The CPT has the right to visit all prisons in countries party to the convention, including Turkey. This right allows the CPT to send a team of experts to İmralı. We demand that the CPT visit İmralı without justification or excuse and immediately provide information about Leader Öcalan. We also demand that the Council of Europe take immediate action.

The Council of Europe (CoE) must put into practice the right to 'enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms' granted by Article 3 of its statute. Leader Öcalan has been deprived of all human rights. He has not been able to meet with his family or lawyers for 40 months. The CoE should send a delegation to İmralı to meet with Leader Öcalan and obtain clear information about his health condition. The CPT and the Council of Europe should give up their silence that serves the Kurdish genocide and listen to the voices of millions of Kurds.

We know that the conspiracy against Leader Öcalan is international. International powers have planned and implemented this isolation system from the beginning. With their attitude, they continue to contribute to the continuation of the İmralı system. The genocidal war waged by the Turkish state against the Kurdish people is in the interests of international powers. They sacrifice the Kurdish people in order to use Turkey in their ongoing interest policies in the Middle East.

As KCDK-E, we have entered a process of mobilisation against the crimes against humanity and disciplinary penalties imposed in İmralı, which will far exceed all the actions and activities carried out so far. We call for embracement of Leader Öcalan with the most effective actions in order to get a decisive result against the genocidal Turkish state that wants to occupy-annex Kurdistan through treason and collaborator forces.

The Turkish state, which acts as the guardian of the international conspiratorial forces, is making a dastardly bargain by exhibiting its new dirty schemes against our leader after 26 years.

The resistance of our leader against the deepened isolation and torture system is too strong and powerful to be subject to any bargaining and blackmail. This blackmail also shows the desperation of the Turkish state and international powers. The leader of oppressed peoples, Mr Öcalan, is not treated in accordance with universal legal norms. The situation of our leader, from whom we have not received any news for years, worries us. In this sense, we call on the relevant institutions, the ECtHR, the CoE and the CPT, to take urgent action. Isolation, torture and isolation are crimes against humanity. As Kurdish people, we will not give you the opportunity to commit this crime any further."

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Turkey fails to answer questions on İmralı isolation at UN session

Serkan Demirel | Geneva | 18 July 2024

The 80th session of the United Nations Committee against Torture, which started on 8 July at the Palais de Wilson of the UN Geneva Office, continued today with a session on Turkey. Rapporteurs of the UN Committee against Torture, representatives of non-governmental organisations submitting reports on Turkey and the Turkish delegation attended the session.

Today's session continued with the answers of the Turkish delegation to the questions of the UN Special Rapporteurs and new questions of the Special Rapporteurs to the delegation.

The Turkish delegation gave a forced legal explanation to UN Special Rapporteur Maeda Naoko's question about the isolation in İmralı by saying 'There is no isolation but a ban on visits' in yesterday's sessions. The delegation faced a question today about the isolation conditions of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

New questions from the special rapporteur on the isolation in İmralı

The UN Special Rapporteur against Torture, Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov, took the floor in response to the defence of Fatih Güngör, Deputy Director General of Prisons and Detention Houses at the Turkish Ministry of Justice, on the disciplinary penalties and lawyer bans imposed on Abdullah Öcalan and 3 other prisoners in İmralı, and asked about the continuity and legal dimension of the bans.

Special Rapporteur Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov emphasised the importance of prisoners being in contact with their lawyers as a safeguard against torture and ill-treatment and asked the following questions:

"It was stated that Mr Öcalan was not in contact with his family and lawyers due to disciplinary restrictions imposed on him. Is this restriction imposed only once, for a period of three or six months, or is it repeated immediately after the end of each sentence?

If this penalty was applied several times, how long was Mr Öcalan deprived of communication in total? In other cases, how long can detainees be deprived of contact with their families or lawyers?

Contact with a lawyer is very important as it is a safeguard against torture and ill-treatment. Can you therefore provide us with information on the legislation that allows for such restrictions on contact between lawyers and persons deprived of their liberty and to what extent this is in line with international standards in this field?"

The Turkish delegation left the questions from the Special Rapporteur Tuzmukhamedov unanswered.



Lawyer Bilmez: The Ministry is lying, they are trying to deny isolation

ANF | Geneva | 18 July 2024

The 80th session of the UN Committee against Torture is taking place in the Palais Wilson of the UN office in Geneva. Human rights violations in Turkey are currently being discussed and debated. Reporters from the UN Committee against Torture, representatives of non-governmental organizations who submit reports on Turkey, and a delegation from the regime in Ankara are attending the meetings.

UN Special Rapporteur asks about Öcalan's isolation

The UN Special Rapporteurs against Torture pointed out in their presentations the extent of the violations of rights in the prisons of Turkey and Kurdistan. Special Rapporteur Maeda Naoko, representing Japan, took the floor and in her report addressed in particular the isolation of Kurdish representative Abdullah Öcalan.

In the afternoon session, Fatih Güngör, Deputy Director General for Prisons and Detention Centers at the Ministry of Justice, responded on behalf of the Turkish delegation to the Special Rapporteurs' questions on rights violations in prisons.

Güngör claimed that standards in Turkish prisons were in line with international conventions and argued that, contrary to reports by many non-governmental organizations, there was no isolation in prisons.

Güngör also briefly addressed the question of isolation in Imrali, where Abdullah Öcalan has been held in solitary confinement since 1999 and in prohibited incommunicado detention for more than three years.

Güngör stated that Abdullah Öcalan had been sentenced to life imprisonment without revocation by the State Special Security Courts under Article 125 of the Turkish Penal Code and defended the disciplinary sanctions and the ban on lawyer visits to which Öcalan has long been arbitrarily subjected.

Güngör tried to justify Öcalan's isolation by claiming that he "is currently serving his sentence in Imrali Maximum Security Prison together with three other prisoners. Individuals who do not behave in accordance with the law can be subjected to a number of sanctions by the Prison Administration Supervisory Board. Certain offenses committed in prison can lead to a ban on visits. The Penitentiary Disciplinary Board is responsible for imposing disciplinary measures. Once the decision is made, the prisoner is informed and can appeal to the execution judge. He can even bring the matter to a competent court. Accordingly, family visits for prisoners in Imrali have been suspended for three months. Visits by relatives are therefore prohibited during this period. No objection or complaint has been filed against this decision, which became final and enforceable in April 2024. Visits by lawyers were suspended for six months by court order in May 2024. An appeal was lodged against this decision, but it was rejected in June 2024, so that the decision became final."

Lawyer Bilmez: "The law has been suspended on Imrali"

Ibrahim Bilmez, lawyer for Abdullah Öcalan, told ANF: "Every three months, both Mr. Öcalan and his fellow prisoners on Imrali receive disciplinary punishments. This practice contradicts prison law as well as the law in general. Disciplinary punishments cannot be imposed in this uninterrupted form. Our clients have repeatedly appealed against the punishments imposed. As we know, the justice system does not work at all when it comes to Imrali. These appeals have not led to a single positive answer. As lawyers, we have not been able to obtain a positive decision from the Turkish judiciary on any of our applications for 25 years. So it may be that our clients do not file an application because they have lost trust in the observatories and courts, because justice does not work in their case and because they believe that the result will always be the same. Unfortunately, at the moment, we cannot even know that."

“We learn the reasons for the sentences from the CPT reports”

The legal team does not even receive the verdicts of the law enforcement authorities and courts. Bilmez explained: “Another important point is that these decisions are not communicated to us, the authorized lawyers. Normally, the procedure has to work like this: we have to be able to find out about the sanctions imposed on our clients in order to be able to appeal. Despite all this, we continue to file applications on behalf of our clients on a presumptive basis. We also appeal under these conditions, because we know that the sentences are always imposed in periods of three months. It is about calling isolation caused by the disciplinary punishments that have been imposed in İmralı Prison every three months for years by its name. We cannot even know the reasons for the punishments directly. We can read them from the CPT reports. For example, prisoners have the right to meet with three people for one hour a week for sports activities. This can be on a volleyball court one time and on a basketball court another time. We do not even know whether this right is recognized at the moment, but the reasoning behind one of the punishments reported in the reports was as follows: sports were played for 45 minutes and the last 15 minutes were spent talking while running. That says it all. Are you seriously being accused of not playing volleyball for 60 minutes but talking for the last 15 minutes? So the statements made by the ministry official to the UN are not true. It is just an attempt to cover up this illegal practice.”

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Prisons in Turkey

14 July 1982, the day the Great Resistance began in Amed prison

ANF | 14 July 2024

On 14 July 1982, a death fast began in the prison known as "the hell of Amed". With society outside still in shock after the 1980 military coup, the prisoners launched a campaign of resistance to protest the prison conditions. The action is considered the initial spark and a revolutionary sign that fueled the resistance in North Kurdistan.

55 days after the death fast began, PKK cadre Kemal Pir lost his life. Prisoners Mehmet Hayri Durmuş, Ali Çiçek and Akif Yılmaz also died in the course of the action. The Death Fast has since been referred to as the "Great Resistance of 14 July".

The four hunger strikers died. At the age of 30, Kemal Pir died on the 55th day of the death fast, after losing his eye-sight. Until this day, he is honoured as an embodiment of the radical and internationalist spirit of the movement and a bridge between the struggling Turkish and Kurdish people.

The four PKK leading figures fell martyr as a result of the hunger strike. At the age of 30, Kemal Pir died on the 55th day of the death fast, after losing his eye-sight. He is an embodiment of the radical and internationalist spirit of the movement and a bridge for the struggling Turkish and Kurdish people.

Mehmet Hayri Durmuş had announced the start of a death fast in court. "There is violence in prison. – he had said - Dozens of friends have been killed, hundreds of people wounded and it is still unclear how many people will be killed. Yes, I say "Enough is enough" and I am entering the death fast from today."

The court board did everything in its power to deter M. Hayri Durmuş from his decision, but he was determined: "No, I am determined. It is not an action that I have developed on an emotional basis, it is a decision I have made by thinking and concentrating deeply. The PKK is a serious movement, I am here as someone who is primarily responsible for this movement, I have to carry out my duties seriously. First of all, you have to accept the Kurdish people and recognize the PKK movement that is its representative, and therefore, our political identity. But I do not give up my decision because I know that your mentality will not change..."

Kemal Pir and Ali Çiçek, who were among the prisoners who listened to Hayri holding their breath in the great silence of the hall, joined the death fast together with three other prisoners.

When the judge asked Kemal Pir, "You too, Kemal?", he replied: "Yes, yes, me too. I have said dozens of times before, 'If someone raises the flag again, I'll be the second one.'"

Akif Yılmaz, who was not in the courtroom, also joined the death fast. Representing the military council of Kenan Evren in the dungeon of Amed, Esat Oktay Yıldırım took Akif Yılmaz to the 36th Ward where Hayri, Kemal, Ali and other activists entered the death fast two days after 14 July.



KCK: When resisted in the spirit of July 14th, the enemy will be defeated

ANF | Behdinan | 14 July 2024

The co-presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the July 14 resistance. July 14, 1982 marks the beginning of a death fast in Amed prison. It represented the height of prison resistance in the 1980s.

The KCK statement includes the following:

"On the 42nd anniversary of the Great July 14 resistance, a day which our movement has declared a national day of honor, we remember all the immortal martyrs of this historic fight. We honor the martyrs of the freedom revolution, including comrades Kemal Pir, Mehmet Hayri Durmus, Akif Yılmaz, and Ali Cicek, with love and appreciation. We bow respectfully before their treasured memories and renew the promise we have given to them.

We congratulate all of our patriotic people and humanity on this sacred day of national victory. The tenets of victory formed by this resistance are what protected, and continue to protect, the honor of our people who were left to face complete annihilation and genocide. In this regard, the July 14 resoluteness lives on in our people's battle for national freedom.

The July 14 resistance is one of the most important events in Kurdish history. When seen in terms of national, social, political, cultural, and intellectual developments, the significance of this day becomes clearer. It is crucial to strive to understand and comprehend this resistance, it is also vital to remember and comprehend the great historical figures who spearheaded it. The comrades Kemal, Hayri, Akif, and Ali are pivotal historical figures not only for the Kurdish people, but also for humanity as a whole as they demonstrated human ideals in the most noble manner despite the most terrible circumstances. They should undoubtedly be viewed and appreciated as magnificent human monuments.

One of comrade Hayri's last words, as he fearlessly went to his death, reveal the feelings, thoughts, and personalities of those behind this great resistance. He demonstrated his love and loyalty to the people, to freedom, and to the struggle by requesting that the word "indebted" be engraved on his tombstone. Despite having resurrected a nation, they felt indebted for having not done more. In this regard, the Kurdish youth, women, and society should always remember these great historical personalities and their battle with gratitude.

The historic resistance of July 14 is an important event that needs to be examined and researched in many respects.

The entire Kurdish society was sought to be completely annihilated through the fascist junta of September 12. In an atmosphere where Kurds, women or child, civilian or not, were being put through the most brutal and inhumane methods of torture, the heroes behind this resistance proved that victory can be achieved. Through their action, they defeated serfdom in Kurdistan. With the July 14 resistance, the Kurdish people achieved victory for the first time and began a new chapter.

The July 14 resistance served as the foundation for the subsequent victorious historical process. The tenets established on 14 July proved a deciding factor in the PKK's formation and method of struggle. Based on these concepts, Rêber Apo [Leader Abdullah Öcalan] took efforts to strengthen the struggle, educating and deploying guerrillas throughout the country, and launching the August 15 offensive, achieving the resurrection revolution and accomplishing the Kurdistan freedom struggle.

Undoubtedly, one of the most notable aspects of the July 14 resistance was that it was an act of enormous bravery and heroism that was carried out fearlessly. The fascist September 12 coup d'état was imposing genocide on society. Thousands of revolutionaries were being thrown into prison, being tormented and tortured with the goal of forcing society to submit to the fascist regime. The prison of Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) was notorious for its barbaric torture methods. The anti-Kurdish, massacring, torturing, racist, and fascist mentality inside Diyarbakir jail had eroded human dignity to its lowest point. What was done to the revolutionaries and patriots of Kurdistan in Amed prison exemplified Turkish colonialism's homicidal nature. Acting under such circumstances, and overcoming such a deeply ingrained and structuralized fascism at its peak, is unprecedented in human history. The actions and consequences of the July 14 resistance are distinctive.

The current AKP-MHP regime replicates the September 12 ideology, assaulting all cultures, particularly Kurdish society, women, humanity, and nature, in order to accomplish this goal. Again, the most recent invasion attacks against Southern Kurdistan are aimed at annihilating the Kurds. The AKP-MHP-KDP-ISIS alliance's invasion and genocidal attacks on Southern Kurdistan must be met with the spirit of the July 14 resistance.

If we join in our struggle, the murderous imperialist enemy will undoubtedly be defeated and the people's resistance will prevail. On this basis, we call on all the patriotic people of Kurdistan, the Arab peoples, and the democratic libertarian socialist forces to take a strong stance against the occupation of Southern Kurdistan and to organize an all-out resistance.”

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Prison sentences for 24 Kurdish politicians upheld

ANF | Hakkari | 18 July 2024

The 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation upheld the Hakkari 1st High Criminal Court's decision to sentence 24 Kurdish politicians to prison sentences ranging from 8 to 17 years in 2019.

The Court of Cassation found the sentences given to 24 people, including former co-mayor of Yüksekova Municipality, Remziye Yaşar, who was deposed in the case known as 'KCK Yüksekova Case, 'in accordance with the law'.

— ★ —

Selahattin Demirtaş sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in prison

ANF | Mersin | 19 July 2024

The verdict was delivered in the case against Selahattin Demirtaş, former Co-Chair of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), for his speeches between 2015 and 2016.

Mersin 14th Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced Demirtaş to 1 year and 6 months in prison on the charge of 'publicly degrading the government of the Republic of Turkey, judicial organs, military or police organisation' as set out in Article 301 of the Penal Code and to 1 year and 6 months on the charge of 'inciting people to hatred and hostility' as set out in Article 216 of the Penal Code.

The court sentenced Demirtaş to 3 years in total and reduced the sentences, with discretionary mitigation, to 1 year and 3 months each, and did not reprieve the sentence.

Selahattin Demirtaş, who led the HDP's gender-parity dual leadership together with Turkish politician Figen Yüksekdağ between 2014 and 2018, has been innocently held in Edirne prison since 2016. While the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has already demanded his release several times, the Turkish government ignores the corresponding rulings.

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Military aggression and occupation

Turkish army destroy cemetery of guerrilla martyrs on Gabar Mountain

ANF | Şırnak | 13 July 2024

According to Mezopotamya Agency, the cemetery where martyrs YJA Star and HPG guerrillas were buried on Gabar Mountain in Şırnak was destroyed by the Turkish soldiers.

The stones of nearly 100 graves were broken in the martyrs' cemetery built in the countryside of the village of Basret, which is linked to Şırnak and was evacuated in the '90s for "security" reasons.

The gravestones were smashed with sledgehammers by soldiers and contra-guerrillas. The images showed many empty graves next to the graves.

In addition, the mosque and toilet section built right next to the cemetery were also destroyed, while the generators and kitchen supplies left in the cemetery by people were stolen by the contra-guerrillas who went to the area to cut trees.

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KCK calls for all-out resistance against occupation and treason on anniversary of Zilan Massacre

ANF | Behdinan | 13 July 2024

The Co-Presidency of the KCK Executive Council issued a statement to mark the 94th anniversary of the Zilan Valley Massacre. On 13 July 1930, the last Ararat uprising was crushed in the Zilan valley.

94 years later, it is still unclear how many victims the massacre claimed. Eyewitnesses estimate that up to 55,000 civilians and partisans were killed.

The KCK said in its statement: "We are approaching the anniversary of the Zilan Massacre, which has left enduring imprints in the memories of the Kurdish people. The genocidal imperialist Turkish state burned down hundreds of villages and towns, slaughtering tens of thousands of Kurds, including children and the elderly. We strongly condemn this barbaric massacre, which was conducted by the Turkish regime, and humbly remember those who have lost their lives in the massacre. We gratefully commemorate all martyrs of the democratic revolution, bow respectfully in front of their cherished memories, and renew our devotion to them.

The Zilan Massacre, which was executed with the purpose of completely annihilating the Kurdish people, constitutes one of the most vicious and brutal massacres in human history. This massacre, a part of the ruthless slaughter campaign that was inflicted throughout the region of Serhat, resulted in thousands of Kurdish people being mercilessly massacred. Back then, the valleys of Kurdistan were stained with the blood of slaughtered Kurds. Such atrocities could only be the result of intense enmity, as the massacres in Zilan Valley and Dersim clearly revealed."

The statement continued: "The Zilan Valley Massacre, like all other massacres inflicted on the Kurdish people, occurred before the eyes of the world, yet no one raised objection to the Turkish state's war crimes. Today, again, the world keeps silent about the attacks and massacres perpetrated on the Kurdish people. States around the world became implicated in these atrocities by their links with the Turkish government and the assistance they offered. We once again condemn this complicity and urge everyone against supporting the Turkish state's genocide against the Kurdish people.

Undoubtedly, tyranny, attacks, and massacres have not caused the Kurdish people to abandon their fight for freedom. The Kurdish resistance in Agiri, Dersim, Mahabad, Qamishlo, and Halabja has never stopped. Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] traveled to the site of the Zilan Valley Massacre in 1977 to have the first meeting with the revolutionaries of Kurdistan, during the initial stages of the Kurdistan freedom struggle. Today, as a people, we are undefeated in the face of the onslaught. We reject all genocidal attacks as we march step by step toward independence. With their unwavering stance and continuous struggle, the Kurdish people provided the appropriate response to the massacres."

The KCK statement added: "Today, the fascist AKP-MHP administration continues to commit massacres and genocides against the Kurdish people. Since its establishment, this fascist regime has relentlessly attacked the Kurdish people. The recent invasion attacks on southern Kurdistan are a continuation of the historical massacre and genocide onslaught. In the wake of invasion attacks on southern Kurdistan, the KDP has become an active participant in the Kurdish genocide.

As we recall the Zilan Valley Massacre, we denounce the ongoing genocidal attacks in Kurdistan and the collaborators who enable them, and we urge our people to reject this occupation and betrayal."

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Village guards who resigned denounce threats

ANF | Batman | 13 July 2024

While the Turkish state's invasion attacks against the Zap, Avaşin and Metina areas have been continuing since April 2022, new comprehensive attacks have started. The Turkish state, which established checkpoints in the region and continued its military shipments, sent a notification to the village guards in Şirnak, Hakkari, Siirt, Batman, Amed, Bingöl and Mardin to participate in the operation. Many village guards began to resign, stating that they did not want to join the operations.

Threats issued

It was learned that the village guards were threatened and sent notifications. In addition, they were called to police stations and also threatened there. Some village guards were also subjected to violence.

17 July set as date for deployment

The village guards are going to be deployed to the operation area in groups of 45 people on 17 July. It was stated that the village guards who were called to duty resigned and did not want to participate in the operation. It has been learned that more than 20 village guards have resigned so far.

The village guards said that they laid down their weapons and called on other village guards to do the same. The village guards underlined that they would not fight under any circumstances.

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KDP forces detain media team covering Turkish occupation attacks

ANF | 14 July 2022

According to RojNews, a Channel 8 team consisting of 3 people was detained by KDP forces while covering the Turkish state's attack and occupation activity in the Amadiya region of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

The local security force, Asayish, reportedly detained Channel 8 reporter Nijyar Mohammed, cameraman Behez Akreyi and their driver Hawar Yusuf. No reason was given for the detention of the media workers who were taken to Duhok Police Headquarters.

Previously, a team of journalists covering the attacks in Amadiya was detained by KDP forces, but the journalists were released after a few hours.

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Fire breaks out in village bombed by Turkey in Amêdiye

ANF | 15 July 2024

The Turkish state is committing war crimes by directly targeting villages in Southern Kurdistan, thus trying to force the villagers to leave.

On Sunday evening, UAVs bombed the villages of Sergelê, Kevne Mêzê, Mêzê, Guherzê and Belave in Duhok's Amêdiyê district.

As the result of the attacks, some houses in the villages of Kevne Mêzê and Mêzê in the Berê Garê region were completely burned down. It was impossible to establish whether there were any casualties or injuries due to the bombing.

The Turkish state has deployed thousands of soldiers and hundreds of armored vehicles to the region in recent months. The Turkish state, which has established military bases and checkpoints, especially relies on the KDP in invasion attacks.

Since Turkey expanded its "Operation Claw Lock" occupation offensive, which began in Southern Kurdistan in 2022, to the small town of Amêdî in the Duhok governorate in June, there have been heavy attacks in the region every day.

According to the NGO Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT), at least eight villages in Amêdiye have been forcibly evacuated by the Turkish army in the past four weeks, and more than 180 families have been displaced. In addition, more than 6,500 hectares of forest and cultivated land have been destroyed as a result of the military violence.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which dominates the regional government in Hewlêr (Erbil), is actively supporting the Turkish state in its expansion efforts.



Martyr Doğan Zinar Unit carries out 7 aerial actions in memory of 14 July Resistance

ANF | Behdinan | 15 July 2024

The HPG Press Center shared the following information about the aerial actions carried out in Zap:

“Our Martyr Doğan Zinar Unit carried out effective and productive air strikes in memory of the 14 July Resistance in Amed Prison.

Between 3 and 11 July, the bases of the invading Turkish army in the Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region were targeted by aircraft. The invader bases in the Girê Amediyê Resistance Area were hit from the air twice, the bases in the Girê Bahar Resistance Area were hit from the air once, and the invaders in the Sergelê Resistance Area were hit from the air 4 times. In these actions, at least 5 invading Turkish soldiers were killed, 8 were injured, 2 Kirpi type armored vehicles were destroyed and the occupying bases suffered heavy casualties.”

The statement added: "The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has gained a significant level in terms of tactical depth, creativity, technological mastery with its continuous air actions. The occupying Turkish state has not disclosed any losses in order to hide the level that the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has reached and the impact the losses will have. Turkey wants to hide the heavy blows it received from the air when and where it was least expected. As the Kurdistan Freedom Guerilla, we will continue to inform about the aerial actions carried out by our Martyr Doğan Zinar Union, along with images, to our patriotic people and the public in general, as we have done so far."

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Kirkuk Provincial Council delegation in Ankara

ANF | 15 July 2024

Following the first meeting of the Kirkuk Provincial Council held on 11 July, Rekan Jiburi, the acting governor of Kirkuk, and a delegation of members of the Kirkuk Provincial Council of the Turkmen Front are visiting Ankara upon the request of the Turkish state, RojNews reported on Monday.

The delegation consists of Siyade Alliance President Xemis Xencer, Rekan Jiburi and members of Kirkuk Provincial Council of Turkmen Front.

The source, who did not disclose his name, stated that the delegation is in Ankara and the date of their return is uncertain.

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Delegation from Baghdad visits Sulaymaniyah after Hewlêr

ANF | Sulaymaniyah | 15 July 2024

The Turkish state has escalated its invasion attempts and attacks in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) in recent weeks. In addition to thousands of troops, hundreds of armoured vehicles have been deployed and checkpoints have been set up in many places. Conducting intensive bombardments on civilian settlements, the Turkish state has evacuated dozens of villages and continues to threaten hundreds of others.

A high-level security delegation led by the National Security Advisor Qasim Ereji visited Hewlêr (Erbil) last week following the decision of the Iraqi Army General Command and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani.

Prime Minister al-Sudani stated that "We do not accept Turkey's harassment and violations against our territory". However, no concrete measures have been taken so far to prevent the invasion attacks.

The delegation is examining the security situation in the Kurdistan Region following the calls and reactions against the Turkish invasion campaign, attacks and troop deployment in Iraq and South Kurdistan.

Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim Ereji arrived in Sulaymaniyah on Monday after holding a series of meetings in Hewlêr last week.

The Iraqi National Security Press Office issued a statement regarding the visit of the Iraqi delegation. Accordingly, Qasim Ereji met with PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) Chairman Bafil Talabani during his visit to Sulaymaniyah.

It was stated that the security coordination between Baghdad and the region was also discussed during the meeting.



HPG: Four Turkish soldiers were killed in actions by the guerrillas

ANF | Behdinan | 15 July 2024

The Media and Communication Centre 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, guerrillas carried out nine actions against Turkish occupation troops in various regions of Medya Defense Zones from 12 to 14 July and at least four soldiers were killed.

According to the statement, seven of the actions by the guerrillas were carried out on the western front of the Zap region. Several attempted advances of Turkish troops, including in Girê Cûdî and Girê Bahar, were thwarted by the guerrillas who also targeted Turkish military technology, destroying a surveillance camera system. The guerrillas struck the positions of Turkish invaders and targeted Turkish war technology with heavy weapons in Girê Amêdîyê.

In the area of Golka in Metîna region, guerrillas hit and disabled a construction vehicle that was being used to expand the Turkish military infrastructure in the region. The guerrillas also struck the invaders in Kanî Biyê near Heftanîn, where a soldier was shot dead by a guerrilla sniper.

Regarding the attacks by the Turkish army, HPG reported at least 27 air strikes by warplanes from 12 to 14 July. The aerial bombardments were mainly directed against areas in Xakurke, Zap and Gare, but also targeted populated villages such as Mijê and Spîndarê were also hit. Further attacks were carried out by combat helicopters.

According to the statement, the guerrillas' resistance areas in Serê Metîna, Golka, Şêlazê and Dergelê in Metîna as well as Girê Bahar in Zap and Girê Şekif in Xakurke were bombed.

On the other hand, the guerrillas' tunnels in Girê Cûdî Resistance Area was bombed with banned explosives on Sunday.



Turkish military deployment to Amediyê continues while warplanes bomb Biradost

ANF | Behdinan | 16 July 2024

The Turkish state continues to send troops and armored vehicles to South Kurdistan in cooperation with the ruling party KDP.

In the meantime, the attacks carried out by the Turkish state against South Kurdistan, in cooperation with the KDP, continue. On Monday night, Turkish state warplanes bombed the villages of Sinîn, Panereşk, Tarista and Geliyê Reş in the Biradost region.

There was no information about the damage caused by the bombardment.

Sources said that a fire broke out in the area after the bombardment, and could not be taken under control due to the continued warplane activity.



YRK: Turkey attacks our areas in cooperation with the KDP to destroy the gains of our people

ANF | 16 July 2024

The East Kurdistan Unions (YRK) released a statement about the Turkish attacks on their areas in line with the genocidal campaign waged by the Turkish state against the Kurdish people in various parts of Kurdistan.

"Alongside the war that has been going on in many parts of Kurdistan for a long time, the surveillance activities and drone attacks of the Turkish state in our region have increased. Along with the tough war against the Kurdistan Freedom Movement in Behdînan region, our regions are also the target of various air strikes. Every day, many surveillance drones fly over our areas and for a long time these surveillance activities have continued with air strikes. The enemy is targeting our areas, the vineyards and gardens in our villages and causing great damage," said the YRK statement.

On Sunday 14 July 2024, after several days of surveillance, several drones and warplanes bombed the vicinity of Nizarê village near Pênciwên (Penjwen) three times at 18:12, stated the YRK.

The statement pointed out that: "The aim of these attacks and this occupation is to destroy the gains of our people. The enemy should know that we will defend ourselves with all our strength and protect the

gains of our people. In this sense, we have strong determination. Our people need to be sensitive to this situation and clearly show their stance against the dangerous invasion attacks of the Turkish state. These movements and attacks are not simple. The attacks are carried out in cooperation with the KDP with the aim of destroying the gains of the Kurdish people. Therefore, the attention and determination of our people must be at the highest level. In the coming days, we will provide more information about these attacks to our people and the public."

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Turkish Sikorsky army helicopter shot down at Girê Bahar

ANF | Behdinan | 17 July 2024

On 16 July at 1:35 a.m., the People's Defense Forces (HPG) shot down another Turkish Sikorsky army helicopter at Girê Bahar in the western Zap region of "Şehîd Delîl." The action was confirmed by the HPG Press Center that released a preliminary statement.

Guerrillas have reported that another helicopter was shot down in the same region on 10 July. The following day, the guerrillas released a video showing the action.

Sikorsky helicopters are the backbone of the Turkish invasion. They are transport helicopters, usually armed with at least one heavy machine gun, which are used to transport troops and supply them in difficult terrain.

In particular, the Turkish invasion troops trapped in the guerrilla areas are dependent on supplies from the air and the transport of dead and wounded by helicopters. The guerrillas are increasingly challenging the Turkish army's air supremacy.

After more and more Turkish drones have been shot down by the guerrillas, helicopters are now also being shot down in increasing numbers. At the same time, the guerrillas have learned to use the airspace effectively and efficiently as a new dimension for actions. Guerrilla drones are increasingly attacking Turkish bases.

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PKK calls for unity against the KDP's collaborative betrayal

ANF | Behdinan | 17 July 2024

The Foreign Relations Committee of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) released a statement calling for action against the collaboration of the KDP, the ruling party in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), with the Turkish state that has been conducting an invasion campaign in the region as part of its genocidal campaign against the Kurdish people.

The statement released by the PKK Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday reads as follows:

"The KDP is in an attitude that openly betrays the interests of the Kurdish people by developing the most disgusting conspiracy, propaganda and plans of all time. The KDP has fallen into such a characterless situation that it can take part in the war against the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla in fateful unity with the fascist AKP-MHP regime, which perpetrates genocide against the Kurdish people, subjects them to massacre, forced migration, immoral and inhuman insults and humiliating practices on the corpses and cemeteries of the martyrs, the most valuable sanctities.

It is definitely the KDP that attracted the occupying-genocidal Turkish state to southern Kurdistan and paved the way for occupation and annexation. The destruction of nature in Kurdistan, forced displacement of people, burning and ruining of villages are all the results of the joint concept created by the collaborator KDP and the Turkish state.

The KDP does not only act together with the occupying Turkish state in the military field. At the same time, it legitimises the Turkish state's invasion and annexation of southern Kurdistan, shamelessly negotiates with many circles for this purpose, and uses all its diplomatic means to this end.

The KDP is trying to defame the PKK through propaganda based on lies, deceit and intrigue, thus changing the agenda and trying to cover up its crimes. Our people know very well that the PKK is a women's libertarian, ecological and democratic social movement. They also know very well the KDP's masculine mentality, its anti-woman character and its hostility toward ecology and nature. Now, without blushing or feeling ashamed, the KDP is still in a state of carelessness, blaming the PKK for the fires that broke out in Hewlêr (Erbil) and Kirkuk. However, it has been confirmed by some concrete information and documents that these fires were set with the co-operation of MIT (Turkish intelligence) and Parastin (KDP intelligence). The occupying Turkish state bombs and burns the villages and forests of southern Kurdistan every day, every hour. The KDP is an accomplice in this.

The so-called Kurdistan Region Security Council, which is in essence the security council of the Barzani family, holding the PKK responsible for the explosive planted in the car of Ekrem Salih, one of the KDP officials, is a deliberate, purposeful and despicable accusation. We express our clear and unequivocal rejection of this unjust and baseless accusation. After this statement by the KDP, which has gone out of its mind to the point of threatening the administration of our party, the KDP will definitely be responsible for any incident that will happen to any of our comrades anywhere in southern Kurdistan.

Our people and we know very well that many revolutionaries and patriots were murdered in different parts of southern Kurdistan on different dates with the co-operation of MIT and Parastin. The Kurdish people know very well that the murderers who committed these murders freely fled to Hewlêr thanks to the opportunities created by Parastin. It is certain that Parastin is responsible for these murders.

The Kurdish people are going through a very important, historic and critical period. Our patriotic people, all intellectuals and academics of Kurdistan, all patriotic and revolutionary parties and organisations must unite in the line of patriotism against the collaborative line of treason represented by the KDP. On this basis, they should act knowing that only the existence, freedom and gains of our people can be protected."

Tribal leaders in Iraq call for action to “stop Turkey’s crimes against humanity”

ANF | 18 July 2024

Reactions continue to come from various circles in Iraq to the Turkish state's attacks on southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). 39 more tribal leaders condemned the attacks of the Turkish state which has been conducting an invasion campaign in the region.

The tribes emphasised that Turkey is supporting ISIS gangs to invade Iraq, while the PKK is fighting against them.

The joint statement by the leaders of 39 tribes reads as follows:

“Turkey's systematic attacks on people and nature in the Kurdistan Region continue. Villages and cities are being evacuated, burnt down and people's safety of lives is being jeopardised. The local population is forced to leave their homes and the region is being turned into a military zone.

We know that Turkey is currently receiving support from ISIS against the PKK, which has long been fighting ISIS. Turkey's main purpose is to occupy parts of Iraq and especially Kurdish areas. These criminal attacks reach the level of war crimes and affect human nature. These criminal offences, developed in partnership with the KDP, are taking place in front of the eyes of the Baghdad government, the international community, the US and the Coalition forces.”

The statement concluded with the following call: “As honourable Iraqi tribes and leaders, we reject these systematic attacks and call on the international community, the Baghdad government and the Iraqi parliament to uphold their humanitarian, moral and legal responsibility in the face of these inhumane crimes and to stop the attacks.”

The tribal leaders who signed the statement are as follows:

Şeyh Yaser Câsim el-Adıb – Bo Butoş Tribe; Şeyh Vasfı el-Ubeyd – El Ebi Tribe; Hemed Raşid Hemed el-Feyhan el-Me'muri; Şeyh Ali el-Emad es-Sekban – el-Bıdıyr Tribe; Tarık Abdülhasan Mez'al el-Gazali – el-Gezalet Tribe; Şeyh Hâbâr Ubeyd el-Ferhud – Kureyş Tribe; Şeyh Feysel Şâkir el-Kemendar – Beni Lâm Tribe; Şeyh Saleh İsa el-Umran – Beni Icêl Tribe; Şeyh Ali Haşim el-Mubarek el-Nafi'i – el-Bu Nafae Tribe; Mir Muhammed Suban el-Şıblawî – Şıblawî Tribe; Şeyh Ali Ahme el-Hatim el-Hasnawî – Beni Hasan Tribe; Şeyh Saad Hasan el-Xuyon – El-Sray Tribe; Şeyh Xalid Attar Falih el-Kasab – Kuleyb El-TeXalibe Tribe; Şeyh Racih el-Heci Hicce – el-Bu Ciyaş Tribe; Şeyh Ferhud el-Şealan el-Süleyman – Beni Zaid Tribe; Şeyh Kazım Natur Seud el-Ebdılı el-Ensi – el-Ibabille Tribe; Şeyh Musir Muhyisin el-Şecan – el-Tubi Beni Hecim Tribe; Şeyh Hasan Yusuf el-Duraissawî – Deaisat Tribe; Şeyh Hemud Falih el-Xiyun – Beni Esed Tribe; Şeyh Taklif el-Abıd Ali el-Daneh – Ciburi Tribe; Şeyh Ali Ereybi el-Saadi- el-Sawadi Tribe; Mir Maan Casım Mezher – Zubeyd Tribe; Şeyh Hüseyin Mehewi Bendewi; Şeyh Xalid el-Mıdıh-Aacib Tribe Tribe; Şeyh Hüseyin Ali Xeyun – Ebudi Aşireti; Şeyh Muhammad Abdul Emir el-Şealan – Egara Tribe; Şeyh Faysal Şahir Kamandar- Beni Lem Tribe; Şeyh Erşeh el-Beniye el-Maliki – Beni Malik

Tribe; Şeyh Fawaz el-Şealan – Rule Tribe; Şeyh Mucil Ali el-Waqaa – Cibur Tribe; Şeyh Hatim Ali el-Süleyman – Duleym Tribe; Şeyh Vasfi el-Asi – Ubeyd Tribe; Şeyh Haşim el-Abdullah el-Nammas – el Sade Busalamah Tribe; Şeyh Hasan Mirzacındo- Fakara el-Êzidin Tribe; Şeyh Sabah Xazi el-Heneş – Tayi Tribe; Şeyh Casım Muhammed el-Muteri – Muteri Tribe; Şeyh Wa’amid el-Me’muri – Musewiye: Musewiye Tribe; Şeyh el-Qadi Ali Sami el-Sahil – Beni Tamim Tribe; Şeyh Ahmet al-Başaa el-Zubeyir – Cıden Tribe

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224 Self-Defense fighters graduate in al-Mansoura

ANF | 18 July 2024

In the presence of leaders from SDF forces and Self-defense forces, members of the civil associations and families of the graduated fighters, a new self-defense course graduated, on July 14, from Martyr Jamal Kobani Academy in al-Mansoura, Raqqa.

224 fighters participated in the two-month course, named after “Martyr Abdulrahman Sofi”, during which they received political lessons in addition to intensive military training on various types of weapons.

The graduation ceremony started with a minute of silence in tribute to the souls of the martyrs, followed by a military parade performed by the graduate fighters in which they reflected their ability to move and maneuver on the battlefield.

The academy leader Hazim Barha delivered a speech in which he congratulated all fighters for completing the training course successfully, and stressed the need to put the training they received into practice in order to be ready for joining their fellow fighters in the frontlines.

The graduation ceremony was concluded by the performing the military oath by the graduated fighters.

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HPG: Four military vehicles destroyed by guerrillas

ANF | Behdinan | 19 July 2024

The HPG and YJA Star guerrillas continue their resistance against the Turkish invasion in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The HPG Press Center said in a statement on Thursday that a Turkish military column near the village of Sergelê was attacked by the guerrillas and four vehicles (2 Kirpi type armored vehicles and 2 trucks) were destroyed.

A fire broke out in the Girê Bahar area after being bombed by Turkish attack helicopters. The HPG gave the following details of the guerrilla actions and the latest attacks by the Turkish army:

“Resistance in the western Zap region

On 15 July at 00:30, guerrillas attacked a Turkish military column on the way to Sergelê from two flanks. Two BMC Kirpi armored vehicles and two transporters were destroyed in the operation. The number of dead and injured could not be determined. The vehicle debris was removed by the Turkish army.

In the Girê FM area, the advance of the occupying troops was prevented by an act of sabotage on Wednesday. In Girê Bahar, soldiers were attacked with semi-automatic weapons on Wednesday evening and a Turkish army position was damaged.

Airborne operation in Xakurke thwarted

In Xakurke, the guerrillas thwarted an airborne operation by the Turkish army on 14 July when soldiers were to be dropped from transport helicopters on the Girê Şekîf. The Sikorsky helicopters were shot at and forced to leave the area. On Wednesday, a military camp in the area was attacked with heavy weapons.

Turkish army attacks

The Turkish army used prohibited explosives against guerrilla tunnels in the Girê Cûdî and Girê FM areas 11 times on Wednesday. On the same day, the Medya Defense Areas were bombed six times by fighter jets. The bombed areas were Şehîd Şerîf and Kolît in Xakurke, Dêreşê in Gare, and Girê Bahar and Girê Amêdî in Zap. Girê Bahar was bombed by attack helicopters today, and a fire broke out in the area after the attack.”



KDP makes an agreement with the Iraqi Turkmen Front in Kirkuk

ANF | 19 July 2024

According to RojNews, the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITC) MP Erşat Salihi announced in a TV programme on Thursday that they reached an agreement with the KDP, the ruling party in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq which is in close cooperation with the Turkish state, on the appointment of the Kirkuk Provincial Council chairman and the governor.

Speaking to RojNews, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) spokesperson Sadi Ahmet Pire said that they would not accept such an agreement regarding Kirkuk.

Remarking that these initiatives are being made by the forces in the region, Pire called on the parties in question ‘don't tire yourselves in vain’.

Rewend Mela Mahmud from PUK stated that the governor's office of the city is the right of PUK and they will not compromise on this.

According to the results of the provincial general assembly elections held in Iraq on 18 December, 'Kirkuk Our Power and Will Coalition' led by PUK came first in Kirkuk with 5 seats. While the Arab Coalition won 3 seats with 102,558 votes, Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITC) won 2 seats and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) won 2 seats. KDP suffered a serious decline in the elections.

Following the PUK's success, the negotiation traffic between Turkey and the KDP intensified. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Head of National Intelligence Organisation Ibrahim Kalin and most recently AKP President Tayyip Erdogan held meetings with the Barzanis under the KDP administration in the Federal Kurdistan Region after the elections.

The ITC statement regarding Kirkuk was made at a time when the Turkish state is expanding its occupation attacks in the region with the open complicity of the KDP which is harshly criticized by Kurdish forces and parties because of its partnership in the unlawful and anti-Kurdish genocidal campaign, operations and activities in the region.

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Feminicide

Gülistan Murad: Communal economy strengthens women's self-defense

Nujiyan Adar | Qamishlo | 17 July 2024

The Rojava revolution is also an economic revolution. On the basis of a communal democratic economy based on needs, a new, alternative system to capitalism and industrialism is being built step by step. The focus is on empowering society. Strengthening the autonomous women's economy plays a special role in this.

In this ANF interview, Gülistan Murad from the economics committee of the Kongra-Star women's movement spoke about the importance of building the women's economy and developing this area. She also highlighted problems that economic reconstruction has to contend with.

You keep talking about "women's economic self-defense." What does that mean?

I think it would not be wrong to describe the Third World War as an economic war. This economic war is directed directly against the economy of society. The women's economy has been hit hardest in this war. For this reason, we consider economic self-defense to be very important. Women must have a strong position in the economy. For this reason, we are committed to ensuring that women achieve economic inde-

pendence. By ensuring economic self-defense, the power of women is also shown. So-called natural disasters have been increasing recently. These disasters cause great economic and ecological damage. However, they are no longer natural disasters. They have developed into war disasters that directly affect the economy. The destruction of the economy leads to social crisis and chaos. More than half of the women we have visited have not yet been able to achieve economic independence. Women who cannot defend themselves are exposed to physical and psychological attacks in all areas of life. The emancipation of women is directly linked to the economic independence of women. Of course, this doesn't mean that women who achieve economic independence are completely liberated. Women can only liberate themselves by achieving spiritual freedom based on the right foundations. But economic independence is an important step on the road to emancipation.

When women cannot defend themselves against economic violence, they are exposed to the attacks of patriarchy. This is where the importance of self-defense becomes clear. A woman who can defend herself economically can organize herself, make her own decisions and implement them. She has the right to have a say. Self-defense requires strong self-confidence and strong willpower. We can easily see the differences between women who have achieved economic independence and those who have not. A woman who has achieved independence is the one who shapes her own life. A woman who is economically dependent on a family or an individual is denied a say and is deprived of alternative choices.

Could you say something about the concept of economic self-defense in general?

Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] says that 'the strongest economy is the economy created by the hands of women.' The economy created by the hands of women was stolen from women, and women were alienated from this economy. With the Rojava Revolution, a new level of struggle for women to build the economy of a region and guarantee self-defense was achieved. An economy based on individualism is not beneficial for society and women. Self-defense can be achieved by creating a collective economy. This is how the defense of a country's economy is practiced. The struggle for self-defense is the struggle for building a new country. A woman whose country has not achieved economic independence cannot realize her economic self-defense. The struggle for self-defense is a struggle for mentality. The socialization of the economy will lead to the strengthening of self-defense.

What are the reasons why women have not been able to achieve the desired level of economic self-defense so far?

We do not have an economic system that can include all women. We have tried to reach women through cooperatives, but we have encountered obstacles here. There have been difficulties due to women's self-image and the way society deals with the economy. Women do not see the economy or work as their own. Indeed, we are clearly feeling the consequences of the damage done to women by centuries of patriarchal social conditioning. Self-defense has not been able to reach the desired level because women have not been able to free themselves from traditional ways of thinking, have continued to see themselves confined to the home and have not been able to overcome this situation. Women who have never had economic freedom, who have never had a say, and whose rights have been violated by the Baath regime for years, cannot easily escape this clutch. Moreover, we have not managed to completely change the patriarchal mentality that limits women in their responsibilities and that sees it as a danger when women gain economic independence. To date, we have not managed to make society understand that self-defense is not just a military

thing. It is our fundamental duty and responsibility to convey to women the need for self-defense, from the military to politics, from politics to education, from education to economics and diplomacy.

Wars also had a negative impact on the economy. The war environment, which caused deep damage to society, led to the destruction rather than the strengthening of the economy. The economy that was supposed to develop in the atmosphere of war was offered only limited opportunities. To ensure economic recovery, the damage must be repaired, and the conditions created for the creation of strong alternatives. In fact, the permanent war highlights the importance of economic self-defense. In a country experiencing economic collapse, society and women are exposed to massive migration pressure. There are people who cannot afford to live in a place that does not offer job opportunities.

Can you tell us something about the economic model you created with the Rojava Revolution and your measures to strengthen women's economy?

With the Rojava Revolution, we want to build a communal economy. An economy that produces in the service of society. We strive to create a model that enables production in a collective spirit. The foundation for the communal economy was laid through cooperatives. The cooperative system was a novelty in Rojava. Under the Baath regime, we did not have a system of self-government that integrated women's economies and integrated them into society. The economic system was in the hands of the state and society was like a recipient of orders from the state. Society had no say in the development of its economy. The cooperatives created jobs for women and offered them great opportunities to strengthen their economy and manage themselves. Indeed, social justice was achieved. By creating a system of social justice, the community was promoted. Many women could not find job opportunities. With cooperatives, women are given job opportunities and a space to realize themselves. 80 percent of the cooperatives are engaged in agriculture. The agricultural cooperatives, which were established in the seven cantons to provide every woman with a job opportunity and thus economic independence, also contribute to strengthening the country's economic development.

How does women's economic independence affect the relationships between women, their families and society, as well as the efforts to achieve gender equality?

The economic empowerment of women promotes equality and equal opportunities for women and men. The economic independence of women increases their self-confidence and enables them to make their own decisions. This strengthens their self-confidence and self-esteem. This enables a more balanced distribution of power in family relationships and a more effective role in decision-making processes and supports the formation of healthier and more equal relationships within the family. Women are thus encouraged to become more involved in the economic sphere and in various areas of society. This leads to greater social participation and enables women to be more active in the social sphere. This helps to reduce poverty and increase social prosperity. This in turn leads to a stronger and more sustainable society in general. For these reasons, measures and programs to promote the economic independence of women are an important step towards creating a fairer, more balanced and more sustainable social structure.

What are the plans and projects for the future?

Our main goal is to spread the understanding of the communal economic model. We have decided to focus on education in the near future, which is why we plan to open a business academy. We plan to develop

cooperative projects that serve society and women. Our discussions on this are ongoing. Our main goal is to build a self-sufficient economic system.

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Work on Women's Social Contract continues

ANF | Heseke | 18 July 2024

The Women's Council of Northern and Eastern Syria held a meeting in the city of Heseke with the participation of 130 women from different organizations. After the meeting, a committee consisting of 30 women was formed to draft a Social Contract for Women.

"A historical step was taken in North and East Syria for women," Hediya Şemo, spokesperson of the Rojava Yazidi Women's Union told JINHA News Agency, adding: "Women always have important roles and missions in their society; however, their roles and missions were taken away from them following the emergence of patriarchal systems. Today, hundreds of women struggle and make great efforts to protect their own truth and history. The revolution in Rojava took place thanks to the struggle and efforts of women. Since this revolution brought many valuable gains with it, forming a committee to draft a social contract for women was essential. As Yazidi women, we attended the meeting because Yazidi women have been subjected to genocidal attacks throughout history. We should organize ourselves to protect ourselves from genocidal attacks."

'The contract is an indicator of success and democracy'

In her speech, Siham Qeriyo, Co-chair of the People's Assembly of Northern and Eastern Syria, drew attention to the importance of the presence of Syriac women in the contract. "As Syriac women, we attended the meeting and will play our role in drafting the contract. The contract is actually an indicator of success and democracy. Women of all nationalities and ethnic groups will work together to draft the contract. I believe that their unity will be a role model for the whole world."

'A historical step is being taken'

Enahîd Qasebiyan, co-chair of the Armenian Women's Union of North and East Syria, pointed to the genocidal attacks on Armenian, Syriac and Yazidi people and said, "History is full of genocidal attacks. The Ottoman Empire committed genocide against us, Armenians. Syriac and Yazidi people were also subjected to genocidal attacks. Today, the Turkish state is an occupying state. Today, a historical step is being taken by women of Northern and Eastern Syria. As Armenian women, we will also play our role in drafting the women's social contract to protect our values, Armenian women, from genocidal attacks and prevent possible genocides. As Armenian, Syriac, Kurdish and Yazidi people, we share the same pain. The Women's Social Contract is a victory for us to preserve our existence."

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Human Rights Violations

DEM party delegation visits village of Bilêxşê

ANF | Batman | 13 July 2024

The ongoing military operations in the Kurdish areas of Turkey are reminiscent of that carried out in the 1990s, when thousands of villages were destroyed and the villagers displaced.

In the Gercüş (Kercews) district of Batman (Êlih), a military operation against the guerrillas took place from 22 June to 6 July. The village of Bilêxşê was besieged for days and finally stormed by soldiers. The residents had to go and report to the mosque, before their houses were searched. Eleven people were beaten and taken into custody. In addition, three people were arrested in Batman. The detainees were released after being questioned.

Bombing for weeks

DEM politician Mustafa Mesut Tekik visited Bilêxşê after the siege was lifted. Tekik is co-chair of the DEM provincial association in Batman and was stopped six times by the military on his way to the village. "We formed a delegation from the DEM party, and we immediately tried to get to the affected area. We tried several times to go to the village. The forest was burning, and we wanted to do something, but extinguishing the fire was forbidden. The people in the village wanted us to come. The fire had spread to the houses, the area was being bombed by fighter jets and helicopters, and we could hear constant gunfire and explosions. Then houses were stormed and people arrested."

"The villagers are psychologically exhausted"

When the DEM delegation arrived in the village, it was empty, Tekik said, adding: "Apparently there were clashes two hundred meters away from the village. The fire was finally put out by the rain. Otherwise, the situation could have been even worse. The villagers are psychologically exhausted. They were exposed to bombing for days, saw dead people, were not allowed to leave the house and could not receive medical care. The traumas they suffered earlier are returning. There were heavy clashes in this area in the 1990s. People need solidarity, they are experiencing new traumas. We stand by the people and condemn the oppression that is taking place."

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At least 50 people kidnapped in Turkish occupied areas in first two weeks of July

ANF | 13 July 2024

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said that the Turkish state and its mercenaries have kidnapped at least 50 people in Girê Spî and Serêkaniyê since the beginning of July.

According to SOHR, on 3 July alone, 30 people, including journalists, were kidnapped in Girê Spî. On 9 July, 12 people, including Himes mercenaries, were kidnapped in the city of Serekaniyê and sent to Turkey, and on 6 July, 10 people, including 6 children, were kidnapped. On 12 July, 3 people were kidnapped in Serekaniye, Girê Spî city.



SOHR reports ongoing violations in Turkish-occupied Afrin

ANF | 14 July 2024

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that a member of the “Suleiman Shah” faction, aka “Al-Amshat,” sold a house near Al-Maslakh camp in Al-Ashrafiyah neighbourhood in Afrin city to another militiaman for 2,000 USD. The house belongs to a civilian from “Kondi Mazan” village in the western countryside of Afrin.

Another house near the entrance of Afrin city belonging to a family from Deir Sawwan village in Shera district in the Afrin countryside was sold by a member of the Turkish-backed “Al-Mu’tasem Ballah” faction for 900 USD.

Similarly, a member of the “Ahrar Al-Sharqiyah” faction sold a house in Al-Villat Street in Afrin city for 2,500 USD. The house belonged to a civilian from Kafr Dallah village in Jendires district in western Afrin.

On the other hand, members of factions of the “National Army” felled 60 olive trees and nearly ten walnut trees in Bilbile district. The trees belong to a civilian forcibly displaced to northern Aleppo countryside.

SOHR also stated that Turkish-backed factions continue to impose taxes on civilian properties in Sheikh Hadid district (Shia) in the Afrin countryside. Members of “Al-Amshat” imposed taxes on 40 olive pressers of an estimated 2,000 USD every presser, as well as imposing taxes on houses in the same district for 2010 USD every house.

In the meantime, a Turkish-backed militiaman forced a civilian from Jolaqa village in Jindires district to pay a levy of 1,500 USD in return for taking back his house, which is located near the entrance of Afrin city.

The “Olive Branch” area which is controlled by Turkish forces and their proxy factions experience ongoing violations against civilians who are unable to file complaints against Turkish-backed militiamen, fearing arbitrary arrests and killing.



68 percent disabled man arrested for his social media posts

ANF | Istanbul | 14 July 2024

68 percent disabled Mustafa Yaşar was arrested on 8 July due to his social media posts. Yaşar was sentenced to 1 year 6 months and 22 days for "making propaganda for an illegal organisation" and was sent to Metris Prison.

Yaşar's lawyer, Gülizar Tuncer, stated that the posts shared by her client were of friends he knew from prison and revolutionaries who died.

Yaşar had health problems due to two separate death fasts in 1996 and 2000, and was released from prison in 2019. He has a disability report and suffers from Wernicke Korsakof disease.

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A Turkish torturer at the UN Committee against Torture sessions

ANF | 18 July 2024

The 80th session of the United Nations Committee against Torture continues at the Palais de Wilson of the UN Geneva Office. Within the scope of the sessions, human rights violations, torture and isolation in Turkey are being discussed and debated. In addition to the rapporteurs of the UN Committee against Torture, representatives of non-governmental organisations who have written reports on Turkey are also attending the sessions, as well as a delegation on behalf of the Turkish state.

The Turkish delegation, chaired by Ambassador Kılıç from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, includes some remarkable names. One of the members of the delegation is Rüşti Yılmaz, who was appointed as the 1st Legal Counsellor of the Ministry of Interior while serving as chief inspector of police after Ali Yerlikaya was appointed by Erdoğan to replace Süleyman Soylu. Rüşti Yılmaz is a member of the Turkish delegation at the Palais de Wilson of the UN Geneva Office in his capacity as Chief Legal Counsellor of the General Directorate of Security of the Ministry of Interior. Yılmaz was the police chief between 2015 and 2021, who established a 6-person torture team in Urfa.

When Erdoğan decided to end the 'Resolution Process' immediately after the elections in June 2015 in order to implement the so-called 'Decomposition Plan', he claimed that the PKK was responsible for the murder of two police chiefs in the Ceylanpınar district of Urfa. At the time, many people who were later found to be innocent in the subsequent trials signed statements prepared by the police after torturous interrogations. One of the people most frequently mentioned in the judgement process known as the 'Ceylanpınar Trial' was Rüşti Yılmaz, the head of the Intelligence Branch in Urfa. The defendants in the Ceylanpınar Trial testified that they had been tortured by Rüşti Yılmaz and that they had been forced to take the blame.

Rüştü Yılmaz's crimes include not only the preparation of the Ceylanpınar Conspiracy. When he was in charge of intelligence, he was among those who turned a blind eye to the reckless use of the borders of Urfa by ISIS gangs and organised the transfer of weapons to them via these borders. On 15 July 2016, in the aftermath of the coup attempt, some former members of the pro-sect police force said that Rüştü Yılmaz was also the person who had hindered the investigations against ISIS.

The Suruç Massacre also took place when Rüştü Yılmaz was the director of intelligence in Urfa. ISIS members came from Adıyaman and carried out a suicide attack in Suruç, as well as a bomb attack on the HDP rally in Diyarbakır on 5 June 2015. The lawyers stated that Rüştü Yılmaz turned a blind eye to the ISIS gangs moving to the attack sites and detonating the bombs in both attacks and filed a criminal complaint against him on the grounds of negligence of duty.

However, these criminal complaints were not processed and decisions were taken in favour of Yılmaz, preventing the prosecution of state officials. It was also seen in many investigation files that Rüştü Yılmaz was the person who paved the way for ISIS gangs into Urfa, Diyarbakır and Antep, where attacks took place, or were sent to other cities in Turkey or North Kurdistan through these cities. Although Rüştü Yılmaz's name was mentioned in many of these attacks, which resulted in nearly 800 casualties, not a single investigation was opened against this person because the necessary legal permissions were not granted by the ministry.

Rüştü Yılmaz was specially assigned to perpetrate torture after the 'coup attempt'. Yılmaz, who was on duty in Urfa in the mentioned period of time, formed a special team of 6 people and tortured the supporters of the (Gülen) Sect and members of the HDP.

Rüştü Yılmaz, who committed countless crimes of torture and inhuman massacres, was first appointed as chief inspector of police. In 2023, he was appointed as the 1st Legal Advisor of the Ministry of Interior by a decree signed by Erdoğan. The same Rüştü Yılmaz is attending the 80th session of the United Nations Committee against Torture, where Turkey's torture crimes are discussed, representing the Turkish delegation.



IHD: Nearly 4 thousand rights violations in North Kurdistan in 6 months

ANF | Amed | 19 July 2024

The Human Rights Association (IHD) published its report on human rights violations recorded in North Kurdistan in the first six months of 2024. The IHD said there were 3,900 violations, including 1,164 arrests, in the Kurdish regions during the first half of the year.

The IHD Amed branch office presented the report, which was analysed by regional representative Mehmet Tahir Saçaklı and IHD deputy chair Rümeyza Deniz Kaya.

Kaya said that human rights violations continued intensively and systematically in North Kurdistan during the first half of 2024 due to authoritarian policies.

Kaya noted that many civilians have been deprived of their economic and social rights due to their opposition identity: "In the first six months of 2024, preventable deaths have seen a significant increase in our region. The violations of the right to life caused by the context of persistent conflict due to the unresolved Kurdish question also continue with all their seriousness."

Kaya underlined that "violations in prisons also continued to increase. Numerous rights violations, such as isolation and solitary detention, violations of the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment, transfers/deportations, obstruction of the right to receive and impart information, extension/cremation of executions, obstruction of the right to health care and violations of the right to life, were frequently observed in prisons. We have noted on several occasions that the officials responsible for these violations have not been the subject of effective administrative and judicial investigations or, due to the policy of impunity, have not been sanctioned or that the sanctions imposed have not prevented the recurrence of these violations."

The report detailed the following violations:

Violations of the right to life

- In the region, one citizen was killed, and four were injured by law enforcement under allegations of "arbitrary killing, use of firearms, disproportionate force, failure to comply with a stop warning" resulting in extrajudicial execution.
- In regional prisons, three inmates died from illness, and two were reported to have committed suicide.
- At least 18 citizens died, and 76 were injured due to official errors and negligence.
- At least four law enforcement officers died under suspicious circumstances, allegedly by suicide.
- Attacks resulted in the deaths of two political party members and injuries to 25 people. At least five journalists were subjected to verbal and physical assaults while covering news. At least two healthcare workers, one laborer, and one student were injured in physical attacks.
- In regional cities and cross-border conflicts, at least 21 law enforcement officers were killed, and 20 were injured. These conflicts also resulted in the deaths of at least 44 armed militants.
- Explosives and mines left in rural conflict areas killed two citizens (including one child) and injured two others (including one child).
- At least 33 citizens (eight children, 19 women, and six men) died under suspicious circumstances in regional cities.

Violations related to the conflict environment

- Hundreds of areas in five cities and their districts were declared special security zones 21 times.
- A curfew was imposed once in one city.
- The body of at least one militant was not returned to their family, while the bodies of three militants were delayed despite various attempts. One cemetery was attacked.

Violations against women's right to life

- At least 30 women died, and eight were injured due to domestic violence.
- At least 10 women died, and four were injured due to attacks in public spaces. At least one woman was sexually assaulted.

Violations against children's right to life

- At least seven children died due to domestic violence.
- At least two children died, and two were injured due to violence in public spaces.
- At least 15 children were sexually abused in public spaces, and one child was abducted.

Violations of the prohibition of torture

- At least 11 citizens were subjected to torture and ill-treatment in custody, 36 citizens outside of detention centers (streets, home raids), and 48 inmates in prisons.
- At least three citizens were coerced into becoming informants by law enforcement.

Violations of personal freedom and security

- At least 1,164 citizens, including 88 children, were detained in regional cities.
- At least 165 citizens, including four children, were arrested. Three citizens were placed under house arrest.
- At least 527 homes/businesses were raided.

Violations of freedom of thought and expression

- At least four events were banned.
- Investigations were launched against at least 520 citizens in 74 investigation files.

- Cases were opened against 39 citizens in 10 case files.
- Various prison and monetary penalties were imposed on 56 citizens in 13 files involving politicians and journalists.
- Three political party buildings, one newspaper, and one municipal building were attacked or raided.

Violations of freedom of assembly and demonstration

- Law enforcement intervened in at least 34 meetings and demonstrations.
- At least two meetings and demonstrations were canceled by governors and district governors.
- Governors issued 56 bans on meetings and demonstrations.

Violations in prisons

- At least 44 inmates were transferred to other prisons without justification or against their will.
- At least 116 inmates' right to healthcare and one inmate's right to family visits were violated.
- Investigations were launched against 65 inmates, and four were given disciplinary punishments.
- Seven inmates were subjected to solitary confinement.
- The executions of 22 inmates were postponed for various reasons (not appearing before the board, disciplinary punishment, not showing remorse, not attending ceremonies on religious and national holidays).

Violations of economic and social rights

- At least 29 workers died, and 20 workers (including one child) were injured in workplace accidents due to unsafe working conditions.
- At least one person was dismissed, and at least three were subjected to administrative investigation and exiled.

Trustee appointments

- A trustee was appointed to one municipality in the region. Administrative investigations were initiated against four municipalities.
- The passports of at least nine co-mayors were subjected to "general security" measures at the request of the General Directorate of Security. An investigation was launched against one co-mayor for insulting the president.

Violations of the right to health

- The right to health of at least 416 citizens was violated.

Violations of environmental rights

- At least five forest fires and tree cuttings occurred in the region.
- The right to housing of at least one citizen was violated.

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Journalist Topaloğlu deported to Marmara Prison

ANF | Istanbul | 19 July 2024

Journalist Sadık Topaloğlu and his friend Mehmet Savaş were taken into custody on 10 July and sent to prison on 13 July by the court on the charge of "being members of a terrorist organization".

It was learned that Topaloğlu and Savaş, who were first sent to Metris Prison, were deported to Marmara Closed Prison No. 5.

Topaloğlu's lawyer said that Topaloğlu was already sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison on the same charge in 2022, hence this case breaks the principle that one person cannot be charged with the same offense twice. The first case is currently pending at the Court of Cassation, the top appeals court.

The Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) said in a statement: "Journalist Topaloğlu was tried in 2022 within the scope of the investigation that was the basis for his arrest and was sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison. The sentence was given on the basis of the testimony of a secret witness."

The statement continued: "Topaloğlu has been a journalist for more than 15 years. We condemn the media that targeted him while the trial process is ongoing and the presumption of innocence is violated. We emphasize once again that we will defend journalists and journalism in an environment where the law is disregarded, the presumption of innocence is erased and all opposition groups are criminalized by the government with 'terrorist' rhetoric. Journalist Topaloğlu, who is at risk of losing his eyes if not treated, should be released immediately."

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12th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution

TEV-DEM calls for revolutionary people's war against occupation and isolation

ANF | 17 July 2024

Making a written statement on the 12th anniversary of the 19 July Revolution, the Democratic Society Movement (TEV-DEM) emphasised that many gains were achieved in the 19 July Revolution, which started in Kobanê in 2012 and raised the hopes of the peoples.

The statement noted that the revolution was a very important experience in which great changes took place at the social, cultural, political and self-defence levels and in which women and youth played a leading role.

The statement emphasised that the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES), which has become an active political and social power, is waging a great struggle to protect the gains of the revolution.

Drawing attention to the occupation attempts of the Turkish state, TEV-DEM said that the occupying Turkish state, which attacked the region and took advantage of the international conditions to frustrate the will of the revolution, pursued an unlawful policy to take revenge on the people of the region and to drive Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan apart from the people.

TEV-DEM pointed out that the main aim of the Turkish state, which is carrying out invasion attacks against the Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq) and attempting to re-establish relations with Assad in Syria, is to legitimise its occupation, break the will of the people of the region and frustrate the 19 July Revolution.

Calling on the people of the region to celebrate the 19 July Revolution, TEV-DEM called for active participation in the freedom campaign against isolation and to organise and raise the struggle on the basis of revolutionary people's war to protect the historical heritage and to prevent the occupiers and betrayers.

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12 years ago, the Rojava Revolution

ANF | 19 July 2024

On 19 July 2012, the Kurds found their own “Freedom Day” when the people of Kobane took control of their own destiny, repelling Assad’s Syrian forces and embarked on establishing their own self-government. On the following day, 20 July, the people in Afrin joined them in this endeavour, setting off a wave of successful resistance in the coming days and months across the region that emerged as Rojava. The heroic resistance of these embattled Kurdish men and women immediately inspired solidarity from onlookers around the world and peoples of all nations rallied to the defence of Kobane.

What has become known as the Rojava Revolution drew its direct inspiration from the leadership and writings of Abdullah Öcalan; it was a practical implementation of his core political ideas and unique contribution to the politics of Kurdistan and the broader Middle East region, with global implications and valuable lessons for the entire peoples of the world."

Women were in the lead and continue to play a crucial role in the new model of society implemented. All the different nations and beliefs in Rojava and Northern Syria joined the 19 July Revolution with their own features and identities.

They started to work together to build a new democratic system on the road to democratization.

In the developed democratic system, democratic solutions to issues related to women as the oppressed gender were elaborated, and a political and social system started to take shape as an alternative to the global capital and capitalist system.

The so-called Arab Spring began in Tunisia in 2010 and spread to other Arab and Northern African countries. It also reached Syria.

As the popular movement took its first steps in Syria, the Baath regime responded with even stricter oppressive methods in place since 1963 to protect its power.

With the beginning of the Syrian Revolution on 15 March 2011, the peoples of Rojava and northern Syria called for freedom, democracy and equality, organising many demonstrations.

Peoples living in northern Syria also demanded an end of the policy of denial imposed by the Baath regime.

Rojava and Northern Syrian women with their various features began to take the lead in the struggle that developed. The essence of the work carried out in the struggle in Northern Syria and Rojava was a struggle for democracy of the peoples, but it was women who added their particular flavour to this.

Öcalan’s ideas formed the basis of the organization

In Rojava and Northern Syria women had the lead of the demonstrations and there is no doubt that the ideological and practical perspective of the struggle was taken from the philosophy of the PKK (Kurdistan Worker’s Party) leader Abdullah Öcalan. They were against the regional and international conspiracy.

In Rojava and Northern Syria, women set up their own organization in 2005 and called it Yekitiya Star.

Yekitiya Star, the first step in the struggle for women's liberation, gradually reached a new level of organization in political, military, social, diplomatic and cultural fields with the beginning of the revolution.

Although in the region it was above all Kurdish women who were involved in the freedom struggle and organization, soon other women from the whole region were incorporated and joined both the struggle and the organisation.

In this way, the women's organization that started as Yekitiya Star soon widened to include various ethnic and religious structures and went on to cover various fields such as political, military and social.

Women strengthened their solidarity in the Syrian revolution

Following the slogan of strengthening the solidarity of women in the Syrian revolution, Yekitiya Star founded the Syrian Women's Initiative that carried out many different works.

The preparatory meeting of the Syrian Women's Initiative under the leadership of Yekitiya Star was organized in the Cizire region with the slogan "Whatever their nation, belief and society, the women of Cizire are one".

The Syrian Women's Initiative foundation conference was held in Qamishlo on 28 March and the first office was opened in the same Qamishlo on 17 November.

Training programs were organized for women in different parts of Rojava and Northern Syria. In the last period, trainings were held in the new liberated areas. In Afrin, Kobane and Cizire, Mala Jin (Women's House) were opened.

The understanding was that women should be able to solve their problems, to implement social justice principles, to provide social development against reactionary minds, to participate in all spheres of society for an ecological, democratic and free society.

On 21 January 2014, the Democratic Autonomous Administration and the Women's Council were established. This enhanced the opportunities and projects for women to be carried out in the fields of administration, diplomacy and economy.

From Zehra Penaber to Raqqa: Liberation Operations

Kobane city has witnessed many historical and heroic epics.

Women's Defense Units (YPJ), in this city, have resisted the patriarchal system in the name of all women and received support from women all over the world.

After ISIS attacked Kobane on 15 September 2014, women got actively involved in defending the city against the mercenaries that threatened the world and imposed slavery on women.

Women fighters took their place in the front lines throughout the resistance, and carried out many actions.

Arin Mirkan became a symbol of the fight with the action she carried out on 5 October 2014.

Zehra Penaber, Hebun Derik and Evindar, are among the legendary commanders whose names will go down in history. They showed the whole world that women can defend themselves and defeat the ISIS mercenaries.

Avesta and Barin, symbols of Afrin resistance

Women have gained historical achievements against the invading Turkish army and its mercenary allies through the legendary resistance carried out in the Afrin mountains.

Like Arin Mirkan, Avesta Xabur has become a legendary symbol in the struggle for liberty of all women of the world thanks to her resistance in Afrin.

Barin Kobane is another woman whose name has been written in the history of women's resistance.

Barin Kobane, like Arin and Avesta, have opened the way to many more Barins, Arins, and Avestas who are ready to fight against ISIS and against fascism in the Resistance of the Age.



YPG General Command celebrates 12th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution

ANF | 19 July 2024

The General Command of the People's Defense Units (YPG) "proudly and joyfully celebrate the 12th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution with our people, the families of our martyrs, and the global community. This day, July 19th, symbolizes not only our people's independence and resistance but also the dawn of a new era in the history of Kurdistan and the broader Middle East."

In a statement the YPG said: "We solemnly honor all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives to protect this revolution. Their resistance against ISIS, the occupying Turkish state, and other hostile forces led to the liberation of the peoples of Syria and western Kurdistan and significantly impacted global security. Their heroism was pivotal in thwarting the extremist ideologies that threatened humanity.

The Rojava Revolution, which commenced on 19 July 2012, demonstrated that no armed or reactionary force can withstand the will of a determined and resilient people. This revolution has become a beacon of hope for freedom, not only for the Kurdish people but for all the peoples of the Middle East.

Today, our revolution influences a vast region, from establishing an egalitarian and just society in Syria to transforming the political paradigm of the Middle East and developing new models of democracy worldwide. This movement has paved the way for a new governance model based on direct democracy, gender

equality, and ecological sustainability. Amid regional turmoil, Rojava has become a living example of the peaceful coexistence of diverse peoples and cultures."

The statement continued: "One of the revolution's most significant achievements is the creation of a multicultural and multilingual society where Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Syriacs, Armenians, and other groups coexist harmoniously. Simultaneously, the empowerment of women in society and politics, a cornerstone of our revolution, has inspired the entire region. The women of Rojava, with their achievements in both the battlefield and societal development, have redefined traditional perceptions of women's roles and have become pioneers of social change throughout the Middle East.

We have demonstrated that in the Middle East, often characterized by ethnic conflicts and disputes, peaceful coexistence is not only possible but can form the foundation of a robust and progressive society. Furthermore, our revolution has shown that despite all internal and external assaults, the will of the people to resist can prevail. The defeat of terrorist groups such as al-Nusra and ISIS since 2012, and the successful defense against the attacks by the occupying Turkish state since 2016, attest to this. The resolve for coexistence and the capacity to protect it have thwarted these aggressions."

The statement added: "Let this day be a testament to our ongoing struggle for peace, equality, and justice in our region and across the globe. We call upon all peace-loving and democratic forces worldwide to continue supporting this unique endeavor. The Rojava Revolution is not solely for Kurds but for all humanity striving for freedom, equality, and justice.

On this occasion, we once again gratefully remember all our immortal martyrs who gave their lives for the cause of building and safeguarding this revolution. We pledge to continue this march to realize their dreams and persist in our struggle to protect our people and our revolution."

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KCK: We salute the Revolution of Rojava and value the ongoing discussions in Syria

ANF | Behdinan | 19 July 2024

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement on the 12th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution.

The KCK statement on Friday includes the following:

"On July 19, 2012, the people and their revolutionary forces in Rojava made a historic decision to liberate the region, starting from Kobane. This historical step soon resulted in the revolution of Rojava and the development of the democratic system of North and Eastern Syria. Today we are celebrating the 12th anniversary of this historical development. We congratulate on the occasion of this historical development the peoples of Rojava and North and East Syria in particular, all the people of Kurdistan, the Arab, Arme-

nian, Assyrian, and Turkmen peoples, all the peoples of Syria and the Middle East, the oppressed peoples of the world, all women and youth, and all revolutionary, democratic, and libertarian forces.

On the 12th anniversary of the revolution of Rojava, we salute the peoples and defenders of the revolution with respect, and we commemorate with respect, love, and gratitude all the martyrs who gave their lives in the development and defense of the revolution. We bow with respect in front of their precious memories, and we reiterate our promise to live up to their legacy.

It is essential to always remember and commemorate the internationalists who became a part of one of the most meaningful and greatest solidarities in history. People from all over the world came, fought, and struggled on the battlefields to defend the revolution of Rojava. Many internationalist friends were martyred in this struggle. We also remember them with great respect and gratitude. As the Kurdish people and the peoples of the Middle East, we owe them an infinite debt. We once again express our endless love and respect for them and our gratitude to our international friends who have fought tirelessly for the revolution and the freedom of the Kurdish people and all the peoples of the Middle East.

Through its character, the revolution of Rojava has brought upon new achievements and created new values for all humanity; it has gone down in history as a new development in the universal march for the freedom of peoples, women, and oppressed classes. The revolution of Rojava has developed on the legacy of the historical freedom struggle of the oppressed against exploitation, inequality, and injustice. It is rooted in history. As a result of being based on Leader Apo's [Abdullah Öcalan's] philosophy and paradigm, it has reached a new stage in the history of revolutions. With the paradigm of Democratic Modernity and the ideology of a democratic, ecological society based on women's liberation, Leader Apo has brought up an important solution to the social problem of our time. Leader Apo has offered humanity the most advanced, conscious, and organized system to overcome both the five thousand years of human exploitation and Capitalist Modernity, which has brought society and nature face-to-face with destruction due to its greed for maximum profit. Based on this, the revolution of Rojava has been the most important and advanced development of the 21st century. This is what makes it so meaningful.

The revolution, by creating a system of self-administration under the name of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria, has brought a solution to the problems faced by revolutions throughout history. Being based on women's liberation, it overcame the male-dominated mentality, which is the cause of all exploitation, and like this it enabled the development of free consciousness. These fundamental achievements have made this revolution the most important and meaningful development of our time.

The Rojava revolution and the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria have proved their maturity by managing to resist and survive against all kinds of attacks from the beginning until today. This success has been achieved through the integrated struggle of the peoples, revolutionary forces, and international solidarity. It is very important that this struggle continues with further development in such a period when the dangers aimed at suffocating the revolution continue to increase. In this regard, we call on all the peoples of North and Eastern Syria, the revolutionary forces of Rojava, the Middle East, and the forces of international solidarity to continue and develop the struggle to defend the revolution.

The Turkish state and the fascist AKP-MHP regime, which did not give up its genocidal, colonialist mentality, have been attacking from the beginning to the present day with the aim of eliminating the revolution. They were willing to enter into all kinds of dirty relationships for this interest. They organized all reactionary and fascist gangs and mercenaries, particularly ISIS, and attacked North and East Syria. When they could not achieve this, they themselves directly attacked and occupied parts of Rojava and Syrian lands. They established a regime of plunder and oppression in the occupied territories, changed the demography, and led to the emergence of all kinds of inhumane practices. They have resorted to all kinds of methods to prevent the development of a democratic solution in Syria where the peoples live together equally. They have consciously lured millions of Syrians to Turkey, have strengthened mercenaries to deepen the conflicts, and have tried to turn the peoples against each other. The fascist chief, Tayyip Erdogan, has created a very dangerous regime with a backward and neo-ottomanist mentality. This reactionary, fascist, neo-ottomanist regime is the main cause of the deepening of the problems and conflicts in Syria and the lack of a solution.

We consider it crucial to solve the problems in Syria democratically, equally, and within the integrity of Syria through dialogue and negotiations. The solution to the problems in Syria is only possible with this understanding and method. As the freedom movement, we consider this very important and support it. Everyone who cares about the future of Syria should be making such an effort. On this basis, we call on everyone to act according to this approach and call on everyone, especially the Syrian state, who are in favor of solving the problems and who are concerned about living together fraternally and equally within the integrity of Syria, to solve their problems through dialogue. If this is achieved, the fascist chief Tayyip Erdogan's plans to destroy Syria and make the Syrian peoples break against each other will come to naught.

Once again, we heartily congratulate on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution, which resembles the common values of humanity. We call on everyone to show more solidarity with the Rojava Revolution. And we also call on the peoples of Kurdistan to take a strong stance against the occupation and annexation of southern Kurdistan and to stand in solidarity."

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Interview

Kalkan: We must turn every place into antifascist struggle and resistance areas

ANF | Behdinan | 13 July 2024

PKK Executive Committee Member Duran Kalkan spoke about the international campaign demanding freedom for Abdullah Öcalan, and the invasion attacks carried out by Turkey against South Kurdistan.

The agenda is busy, there are a lot of developments. Let's start with the isolation and the struggle against isolation that gives this agenda its main character.

First of all, I greet Rêber Apo with respect. I greet everyone who is fighting for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] on the basis of our global freedom campaign. I wish them success.

The Kurdish question lies at the heart of everything. To understand the Kurdish issue, one must consider the seriousness of the torture, isolation, and genocide taking place on Imrali Island. Rêber Apo is being held under such harsh conditions; the circles that fuel the Kurdish conflict are terrified that even a word from Rêber Apo would be leaked. In this sense, isolation, torture, and genocide persist. Of course, the campaign against this continues. We have already determined that everything will be achieved through an uninterrupted struggle. This struggle is evolving, acquiring dimension. In this sense, there is a significant legal and popular movement against isolation. The guerrillas are also representing a historical struggle.

As a movement, as a people, and as all of our revolutionary, democratic, and left-wing socialist allies, we are fighting for Rêber Apo's liberation physically and a resolution to the Kurdish issue. The legal aspect of this conflict is also growing.

As previously indicated, the Imrali system has no legal basis. It has flaws in all areas, but the legal element is the most lacking. This is becoming increasingly clear. In terms of the legal struggle against the Imrali system, certain information has been disclosed through the pressure of many circles, but particularly the legal community. The Paris Bar Association has taken initiative, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has issued a call for the freedom of Rêber Apo. But lawyers also provided the world with vital information concerning the CPT after we wanted to understand the situation better. The lawyers revealed that Azerbaijan has intervened. The information about Rêber Apo, which the CPT so adamantly claimed it cannot reveal due to legal issues, was discussed by the CPT with Azerbaijan. In this regard, the approach of the CPT, and hence the Council of Europe, is critical. Rather than pursuing a legal approach, they are pursuing a political approach.

Moreover, the lawyers explained, that since 2012, the decisions of the ECHR have not been implemented. So, the ECHR will become entangled in torture before it enforces its own rulings. The institutions responsible for the ECHR are not enforcing. In other words, the source of such reckless behavior by the fascist and genocidal AKP-MHP come from deliberate omission. The so-called international democratic and European human rights institutions, are not fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. They are acting neither legally nor democratically. They are not acting humanitarian. They are engaging in self-interested political behavior. Therefore, they are complicit in this crime.

The widespread opposition to this is becoming increasingly important. The struggle is growing in every field, and it is spreading worldwide. Undoubtedly, this struggle needs to be expanded, extended, and broadened. The popular campaign for Rêber Apo's physical liberation must never be compromised. It cannot be eliminated. On the contrary, it must be continually enhanced and widened.

Of course, there are numerous problems being faced by people. Women, youth, workers, and laborers across the world all face issues. There are economic, political, democratic, and human rights issues. These are being confronted over. However, these problems are intertwined. A struggle against AKP-MHP fascism is necessary, particularly in Turkey. It is vital to establish antifascist efforts based on a variety of issues, but

these fights must be centered around the struggle for Rêber Apo's physical freedom. As a result, these issues cannot be segregated from one another. The root to all freedom problems is the freedom problem of Rêber Apo. Because everyone's freedom and democratic governance depends on the struggle for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. The freedom and democracy of the Kurdish and Turkish people, women, youth, and humanity depend on the demolition of the torture, isolation, and genocide system in Imrali, and consequently Rêber Apo's physical release.

Rêber Apo once said: "If I hadn't been able to completely integrate my life with the existence and independence of the Kurdish people, I wouldn't have been able to precisely grasp and address the difficulties, nor would I have been able to work as successfully." Now, as Kurds, women, youth, and all peoples, we must fully merge our lives with the principles of freedom and democracy in the global campaign for Rêber Apo's physical freedom. This is the way to success. This is undoubtedly the path to freedom and democracy. In this regard, all fights for freedom and democracy must include Rêber Apo's physical liberation as a primary goal. We should all pay heed to this. We should not divide our forces or opportunities.

Everyone is struggling. There is a fight among youth. Young people are taking meaningful action, particularly abroad and recently in Paris. Of course, they should. The struggle for Rêber Apo's physical freedom should be the primary priority of Kurdish youth, as well as youth throughout the region and around the world who are influenced by the paradigm of Rêber Apo.

The youth must be in a constant state of struggle because there is no other choice. Existence, freedom struggle, and prosperity cannot be achieved in any other way. In this regard, Kurdish youth, in particular, should be at the forefront of this resistance, and they are. They should also resolve the problems being faced in all parts of Kurdistan and around the world, but at the heart of these struggles is the struggle for Rêber Apo's physical liberation. Because the existence of the Imrali system of torture, isolation, and genocide fosters the growth of this fascist, imperialist, genocidal mentality and politics that underlies all issues. The problem which underlies all problems is the torture and isolation being faced by Rêber Apo, it is the Kurdish problem. The problem is that genocide is being inflicted upon the Kurds, the problem is the lack of compliance on resolving the Kurdish question. For this reason, the physical freedom of Rêber Apo and the solution of the Kurdish question are like flesh and blood. Because the Kurdish youth are at the forefront of such a struggle, they must develop and broaden their actions in all areas within the framework of our global freedom campaign. They must also lead the struggles of all oppressed societies, and workers.

The war has intensified in the Medya Defense Zones, all eyes are on the regions of Zap and Metina. In Northern Kurdistan, we have also seen guerrilla activity increase in June. How can this be evaluated?

Yes, first and foremost, I commemorate with love and gratitude all of our fallen comrades, particularly the comrades Shexmus, Beritan, and Brusk, who were martyred in the resistance in the North. Indeed, it is crucial to comprehend them correctly and protect their memories.

This is not an ordinary struggle. Developing such a resistance in the North, under today's conditions, has a different meaning. In this context, actions have taken place from Avashin to Gever in Zagros. There were clashes in Botan. Clashes broke out in Gabar and Mawa. Clashes broke out in Merdin's Kerboran area. There is conflict in the Serhat region. With spring and summer approaching, the fascist AKP-MHP began operations in all areas. In other words, the entirety of the North is a battle zone. On the other hand, there is resistance in the cities. HBDH militias fight almost daily. Also the YPS militants are fighting.

In the North, an antifascist, united battle is brewing, and our united revolutionary struggle is taking shape in the North through guerrilla and militia actions. This is a novel and significant scenario, which is substantial when compared to the previous 1-2 years. It is crucial to comprehend this right. Of course, it needs to be developed and spread more. In this regard, I commend everyone who is resisting and striving. I applaud their efforts and resistance. We need to strengthen it more.

To successfully conduct the war against AKP fascism and accomplish results, it is critical that we engage in the language that they understand.

In this respect, we must turn all areas of the North and Turkey – from mountains, plains, and cities – into zones of antifascist battle and resistance.

We must understand how to confront fascist terror with revolutionary violence. If this does not occur, that is, if they are not held accountable for their conduct, if every attack is not retaliated against, it will be impossible to break fascism, halt fascist aggression, and unite the people. In this regard, particularly the revolutionary democratic forces, the left socialist forces, must radicalize and strengthen their struggle. This is what the current guerrilla and militia activities entail and progress to. HBDH has actually reached a significant level. In reality, it must be far more advanced and powerful, but this is a separate issue. The progress which has been made by the HBDH is quite significant. We must strengthen this further.

New attacks are to be developed against the Zap and Metina regions. What is the information about this invasion supported by the KDP and Iraq? What is the latest situation in the area?

On July 3rd, there were some developments. Our co-presidency has already shared the details and our standpoint on the war in Zap, Metina, and across the Medya Defense Zones. Every day, the relevant HPG structures release information to the public. As a result, the general public is becoming more aware of the current situation. Aside from that, this is what's new: the Turkish Republic's armored troops, tanks, and vehicles have easily transported across Iraqi and KDP-controlled routes and have established themselves in several locations. They have established new positions. On this premise, they want to carry out occupation attacks. The Iraqi government is complicit in this seeing that it has made no objections. The KDP already supports and actively helps in practice, evacuating its own positions for the Turkish army.

In other words, the Turkish army and Turkish troops have established positions in many places. This was decided upon in Baghdad with the visit of Masoud Barzani. After gaining Baghdad's approval, these Turkish troops were transported on the night of July 3.

These invasion attacks are not new. On August 26, 2016, the Turkish army launched invasion attacks against Syria from Jarabulus and against Iraq from Cukurca, crossing the border. Almost 9 years have passed. Despite a 9-year war, this situation is re-emerging. During the day of the attack in 2016, Masoud Barzani was in Ankara with the same mentality that he was in Baghdad on July 3. They decided together, they gave orders together. Masoud Barzani's name is signed under the invasion and annexation attacks against Kurdistan, more than anyone else. He works more than anyone else to achieve this. In other words, his signature is under all the dirty work.

So, these current attacks are nothing new, the attack on the basis of occupation gained a different level in 2020, 2021, 2022. Most recently, on April 16, 2024, AKP-MHP fascism launched a new attack on the Metina region. Our headquarters explained this: it is a piecemeal occupation attempt which means holding empty positions and extending to new places step by step like this. Like this, they try to enter many areas of Metina.

Since July 3, tanks and armored troops have been moving by land, over the asphalt roads of Bamerne, Enishke, Qadishe, Amediye, Dereluk and Sheladize. They have arrived and are trying to hold the Sergele and Dereluk line which accounts to the valley of Zap. They want to encircle the entire Metina and West Zap area from the south, via armored troops. On the other hand, they are carrying out air strikes. They are trying to deploy soldiers from air to establish positions on especially Bahar Hill in Zap and other hills in Metina.

Previously, a military attack entailed striking and deploying from the air while advancing on the ground by clearing a passage through the terrain. The Turkish army attempted this for years, even entering some areas, but was unsuccessful. This failed to yield results. For example, it has been trying to occupy a hill for three years now. Although it attacked so much, it suffered many blows from the guerrilla and faltered. The Turkish army has realized that this method is fruitless. Now, as a result of the diplomacy and negotiations being conducted with the KDP and Iraqi state since winter, the Turkish state wants to achieve results by entering these areas with armored troops to be able to occupy them.

In other words, they want to occupy the places they cannot occupy, enter the places they cannot enter, and break the guerrilla resistance. For this, they have even established check points. Everything there, including the administration, is gradually falling into the hands of the Turkish Republic. The Turkish army is scattered across the border. The north of this entire area is de facto under the administration of the Turkish state. Annexation is being developed de facto in these areas where neither the KDP nor the Iraqi government have much power left. This has been labeled by some as “annexation,” which is correct. Under the name of a buffer zone, the Turkish, Iraqi, and KDP administrations were to conduct joint patrols in the area 20 kilometers inwards of the Iraq-Turkey borders. In some places, this ‘buffer zone’ has been trespassed by a further 20 kilometers. In other words, they have sold off land to the Turkish state under the legal guise of a buffer zone. The Iraqi government had disclosed that the agreements it has reached with the Turkish state were purely economical, which is true in some aspects. They were conducting the sale of land rather than that of goods. The KDP is already a servant. There is no other way to put how it is acting.

Thus, a large region of Southern Kurdistan has been sold off to the Turkish Republic. Everyone needs to know this. The world public opinion, the people of the South, and of Iraq must see this. As of July 3, this has been officially approved. This is what the Iraqi and KDP administrations decided on July 3. On this basis, they are evacuating villages and bombarding them non-stop. They are evacuating villages in Metina, Berwari, all of them. Thus, the areas of Xakurke, Avashin, Zap, Metina, and Heftanin are completely under the military and administrative control of the Turkish Republic which wants to displace society from there. The Turkish state has been burning and destroying villages to achieve this, already having destroyed hundreds of villages. Now it is trying to drive people away by bombarding them every day, using forbidden weapons and terrorizing them. This is the current situation. The question is whether the Turkish state can hold this up.

This is what the Turkish state wants, it is what Iraq and the KDP have accepted. But they have overlooked the great resistance of the guerrilla against this. There are clashes and actions every day. There are 10-15 actions a day. The Turkish state is trying to get hold of new positions, namely Bahar Hill. The press also disclosed that the Turkish army have deployed a small force in another place. Helicopters are being shot down, they can't land. So, there is resistance. What will be the attitude of the public? The outcome will be determined by the resistance of the guerrilla, the attitude of the people of the South and Iraq.

In terms of the buffer zone, Erdogan initially demanded 40 kilometers, he wanted to extend it to that level. This was part of the negotiations during the winter. Devlet Bahçeli, on the other hand, says he will take all of Mosul and Kirkuk, he officially disclosed this. Both the people of the South and the people of Iraq need to know and see this. But it seems that, so far, that the Turkish state has not been able to find the strength or the means to carry out such an attack. They do not believe they will succeed. Erdogan had declared that by the summer of 2024, they would eliminate the PKK in Iraq. Here we are in the middle of the summer, and he is still struggling to land on a few hills and occupy them. In fact, they had vowed to attack many parts of the Media Defense Areas. He couldn't do it; he couldn't find the strength. We need to understand, firstly, that the Turkish Republic could not achieve that which it had planned for 2024. The current attacks are a speck of that which they had plan.

Secondly, what started on July 3rd is indeed annexation, a de facto annexation is developing. In other words, the administration and governance in a large area is being passed into the hands of the Turkish Republic under the name of a buffer zone. Thirdly, it is unclear what the outcome will be in this area. It has been unsuccessful with this ambitious method of occupying the land through the ground and deploying from the air.

Now, how much power could these armored troops possibly bring to this failing scenario? Of course, that remains to be seen. So, we need to see the strength and success of the resistance of the guerrilla. The revolutionary operations last winter really dealt the enemy a crushing blow. This can be clearly seen. On this basis, I would like to add the following:

First of all, I greet with all due respect and love the guerrillas who are heroically resisting on Bahar Hill, all the hills of Delil, western Zap and all of Metina. We will resist, everyone should know this. The guerrilla will resist. The guerrilla and the patriotic Kurdish people will resist to the end against the occupation of Kurdistan and genocidal attacks against Kurdish freedom. How the collaborators and traitors do, is up to them. Of course there will be a struggle against them too. But the patriotic people and the Kurdistan freedom guerrilla will resist regardless.

On the ground, the war continues as such. The Turkish army has armored troops, special forces, elite forces. In some areas, they are deploying ISIS mercenaries that they bring down to attack the people. In reality, the AKP-MHP has mobilized various ISIS and KDP groups and mercenaries in these areas after having used these forces in Syria and other places. Now, in the South, these same gangs are present, they carry out attacks. They are the ones waging the war. The unsatisfied Turkish state also wants to bring in village guards to the conflict.

What can we say? Our Central Headquarters Command has warned these village guards, we agree. They should stop acting crazy, otherwise they will pay the price dearly. No one should be a tool of such a sinister

ter, evil, dastardly scheme. Now that the guards have been warned, when they face the consequences of their choices, we cannot be criticized.

This is definitely an important situation. On the other hand, our administration released statements regarding Iraq and the KDP. The Iraqi administration has lost the qualifications of being an administration or a state by selling lands that were supposedly under its governance to others. They did badly. Especially the Iraqi administration did badly. Only recently was it praising our fight as a movement against ISIS. We also had relations. But now, in exchange for some benefits, for some interests, for simple material interests, it jeopardized its relations with friends.

For the people of Iraq and South Kurdistan, it must be seen that the situation is really very serious. Their own lands are being destroyed before their eyes and the people are being evacuated. Should the Turkish state succeed, they will not stop at this. They have always said that they “will take” Kirkuk and Mosul. The fascist AKP-MHP has set eyes on the entire South, stretching as far as Sulaymaniyah. So, the people should be reacting more, they must struggle more. Organizations, parties, political intellectuals, artist circles, youth, women; in other words, the entire people of the South should react more strongly, influencing the Iraqi peoples.

People in all regions of Kurdistan and around the world should vigorously oppose this latest occupation attack, which has progressed to the point of annexation, particularly against the perpetrators and those who participated in and authorized it. People should react, and this is our expectation.

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Kalkan: 14 July resistance brought us to where we stand today

ANF | Behdinan | 15 July 2024

PKK Executive Committee Member Duran Kalkan spoke about the 14 July resistance.

Kalkan said: "I commemorate the heroes of this resistance, comrades Hayri Durmus, Kemal Pir, Akif Yilmaz and Ali Cicek, with deep respect, love and gratitude. For 42 years, we have struggled as a movement and as a people according to their decisions and tenets. All the gains of Kurdish freedom were achieved on this basis. Everything we have done is a fruit of the great dungeon resistance of 1982. Every victory is the product of the resistance of Mazlum, Ferhat, and the July 14 Great Death Fast resistance. On its 42nd anniversary, this fact is now seen much better. It is understood much better.

So, what was it? What did this resistance mean? When you ask a question like this, the reality is better envisioned. What would have happened without such resistance? I mean, we should all be able to ask this question, even if we are afraid, even if it is frightening. Yes, if the August 15 resistance took place, if the guerrilla made preparations abroad, if Rêber Apo was successful in his work abroad, if the guerrilla returned to the country, if the August 15 breakthrough was achieved, if there is a great guerrilla resistance, if the people entered serhildans, if the revolution of national resurrection was achieved, if the women's liberation revolution is now globally pioneering, and if we have affected many revolutionary movements, if all

of these things developed; it is because of the July 14 resistance. Without it, none of this would have developed. The decision of success was given right there."

Kalkan added: "Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] understood this correctly, he analyzed it well. He worked tirelessly day and night according to the tenets created in the dungeons. He expended great mental and physical strength. And through his labor, he created these developments. But in doing so, he certainly drew his strength from the prison resistance, from the July 14th Great Death Fast resistance. This is a clear fact. So, the decision was made then and there. For a free life, for a life with dignity, for a life of freedom, against all kinds of collaborationism, against dehumanization, the dungeon resistance created the basis. It was Mazlum, Ferhat, Hayri, Kemal, Ali and Akif who created this life. They laid the foundations for the development of all national liberationist consciousness. Therefore, they actually changed the course of history, the unfortunate history of the Kurdish people.

In other words, we are at the beginning of re-writing our history, writing our existence and our demands for freedom. The July 14 and generally the prison resistance have brought us to where we stand today.

They saved our honor, they saved the honor of the nation. That is why Rêber Apo called it "National Honor Day". The PKK and the people accepted this as such. On this basis, I congratulate the National Honor Day of the comrades, especially Rêber Apo, and our people. We have adhered to the July 14th Honor Resistance until now, and we have made progress. It is certain that we will achieve victory by adhering to it from now on. I can easily express this."

Kalkan continued: "In this respect, it is necessary to see this in the reality of the struggle. July 14 is a line of resistance. In other words, it is an ideological, political, organizational and operational line. A line of sacrifice. Rêber Apo described this as "an action sufficient in every respect to implement the line of the party". An action that can represent the whole nation, and the party. An action that started the Apoist sacrifice line. Then we saw this line win further with the resistance of the guerrillas and the spirit of Zilan. It was definitely the reality of July 14th that started this, that made this decision.

What should we say about the conditions we are in now? I mean, by evaluating it like this, by attributing meaning to it, by seeing its greatness, we gain depth of meaning. But this is not enough. We should always question our own situation during such anniversaries. This is absolutely necessary. Therefore, we must question ourselves according to the tenets created by the July 14 Great Death Fast Resistance. How correctly do we understand and successfully fulfill our revolutionary duties, our patriotic duties, our women's liberationist duties? We should reveal this by weighing up our personalities on the scales of the July 14 resistance.

In this respect, there might be those who complain, through various excuses, about not being able to develop more effective and successful actions. When we weigh all these on the scales of July 14, it becomes clear that they have no meaning or value. In those harsh conditions of the dungeon, one action led to the ideological defeat of the colonialist, genocidal mentality and system despite the brutality of the fascist military regime. Then, how do we define what is unachievable?

Those revolutionaries found a way to exist and succeed despite the bleakness of those dungeons, they found a way to resist. They thought about it and did what was right. They integrated their beings with the

cause of Kurdish existence and freedom because they were determined. So, we will also be successful once we have reached such a stage of determination. All other excuses have little meaning."

Kalkan said: "July 14 must be understood correctly and, on this basis, we must wage a revolutionary patriotic struggle that always runs from success to success. As Rêber Apo said, one can only achieve this by merging with the party as if one was a candle. This is the right line of resistance. Then we ought to understand and correct our line of action. Such struggles for freedom are not just handed over on a silver platter, they are fought for and won.

What did Mehmet Hayri Durmus say upon deciding on his action? He said, "Let it be inscribed on my gravestone that I am still indebted to my people." Even though he carried out such a great action which continues to create new successes, he saw himself as indebted. That is the standard for the level of self-criticism. So let us overcome this individualism, this self-relativistic materialism. Let's be in a more accurate, deeper, self-critical questioning that expresses the July 14 line of resistance, let's renew ourselves. Let's renew and reshape our spirit, our emotions, our thinking, our behavior, our working style, our organization. Then we will see that we are making progress.

We always win when we fight according to this line. Anyone who walks on this line, embodies it, and fights on that basis will definitely win. On this anniversary, I call on all comrades, our people and our friends to understand the July 14 Apoist sacrifice line correctly and to develop a successful practice on this basis, that is, to renew themselves by correctly evaluating the line of action and the line of self-criticism and to develop a practice that wins victory after victory. I believe this is possible and I wish success."

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Kalkan: KDP is a thorn on the side of Kurdistan

ANF | Behdinan | 16 July 2024

PKK Executive Committee Member Duran Kalkan spoke about the KDP attitude, the Turkish attacks on Rojava and South Kurdistan and the rise of fascism in Turkey.

The KDP and Iraqi officials came out and accused the PKK of burning some places. Considering the developments afterward, especially those on July 3rd, what are we to understand of these accusations, and what will be the repercussions on Kurdistan and Iraq?

This has been evaluated by a variety of groups. Some of our friends also voiced their opinions. Actually, the evaluations of the co-presidency are adequate. What can be understood is that the Iraqi state, the KDP administration, and the Turkish state all knew they were making a decision that no one would accept. They feared a backlash if it came to light that they had sold a portion of their homeland to the Turkish state. They knew there would be a reaction, so they tried to confuse and mislead with such allegations in order to cover the issue. They claimed that we had started the fires in Hewler (Erbil), but this is not something new.

There was such a tragedy in Hewler, but the occurrence of such fires is not new. In fact, they have been ongoing for months and several even claimed responsibility back then. Our Central Headquarters had deciphered these events.

In reality, these cities are being burned in such a heinous manner to divert attention away from the crimes of an anti-Kurdish, anti-human alliance. Why does the AKP-aligned press never report these fires? With so many armored forces entering certain places and so many attacks taking place, surely this would raise security concerns? This is the same Turkish state that goes to unimaginable measures if it even shoots a villager, broadcasting widely, giving full-length speeches and passing them off as news on tickers, claiming to have killed a terrorist. There have been so many attacks since 3 July. Why has the Turkish press not mentioned any of this? The goal is to minimize reaction. That's how they agreed. The Hewler conspiracy is also based on this.

They know very well that there are no PKK members in Hewler. In fact, they state this themselves. On 16 May 1997, the KDP brazenly massacred 75 PKK members in Hewler. There have been no PKK members in Hewler since then. But Hakan Fidan's MIT and Devlet Bahçeli's dogs are in Hewler. They are the ones burning and destroying, committing atrocities. The areas under the administration of the KDP are full of MIT and Bahçeli's dogs. But now the KDP is in such collusion, that it actually wants to mask its own situation.

I would like to add the following on this issue: the KDP does not want the presence of any organization other than itself in Kurdistan. It does not accept the presence of anyone who has not sworn allegiance to Barzanis. For them, this is the criterion. We can also see how they are targeting the PUK. They also wanted to make the PUK a partner to their crimes. They are that desperate now. Why? If there were no other organization or power in the South, the South would practically become a Barzani farm. This is their aim; this is why they are attacking the PKK.

Masoud Barzani should know that we are well aware of the files he had given to the Roman court for them to persecute Rêber Apo. We have every one of those files. For the past 26 years, Rêber Apo has been enduring torture in Imrali. We know the perpetrators of this conspiracy well.

This family has become a dynasty; they are called the Barzani clan. They used to wage a tribal war and have now sold off many of the tribal areas they were opposed to. They sold the areas of the Bradost, Rekani, Nerwehi, Berwari, Guls, Sindi to Turkey. Thus, they are positioning Turkey to ensure the security of Barzanis. They are spreading Barzanis everywhere. They took Diyana, they took Hewler and made it a Barzani city. They want to take Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah too. They have been feeding off the blood of Kurdistan for forty years. This family dynasty must be stopped. I mean, it has come to such a point that there is no relationship they won't establish for personal interests, for family interests. There is nothing they won't sell. The KDP has reached such a point that they could go to any length to ensure that their personal and family interests are fulfilled. The KDP used to get votes in the areas that it supposedly ruled. They even sold these areas to the Turkish Republic for their own interests.

So here, not as a clan, but as a dynasty, the KDP has been a thorn in the side of Kurdistan, the Kurdish society. It is necessary to put a stop to this. The KDP has no right to do this. In this respect, everyone must wake up. All Kurds must see the truth. Kurdish organizations must see the truth. The KDP has gone as far as to say that those who do not swear allegiance to Barzanis do not have the right to live. All Kurdish orga-

nizations must fight against this. They must unite. They must develop a more effective stance. There is no other way. The KDP has crossed the border.

In such an atmosphere, there is a serious rise in fascism. We saw this most recently in Kayseri, Turkey. There were attacks on Syrian migrants. Should we see this as an impulsive event or is there a different scheme behind this? I mean, how should this threat be perceived?

This is only the tip of the iceberg. Actually, in Kayseri, in those shootings, most of these killings were signed off as unresolved murders. This is not new; it happens frequently but with less coverage. But these killings are only the tip of the iceberg; there is more to it. The state is carrying out preparations. They are rehearsing, as one of the women from that organization explained. She said: 'sometimes we rehearse.' They really are rehearsing. We have touched on this in the past, several times. The AKP-MHP alliance and their rule should not be evaluated only economically and politically. They are mentally and psychologically brainwashing people. They are creating their own inhumane mobs. And they are organized. They have gangs and militia who are equipped and armed. They are all armed. The MHP also has such a mob. The AKP has many. They survive through these mobs, using them as leverage for all kinds of pressure and blackmail. In fact, they even conducted killings within their own ranks. The Sinan Ates case is an example. The MHP and the AKP have their own militias.

It is important to understand and evaluate this AKP-MHP government and organization more accurately. They are not just the administration of a state. They have each organized their own herds and gangs by brainwashing and provoking. This is how they run things. This is a great danger. In fact, this is how a political administration survives. It is becoming clear that just changing the government will not change the governance in Turkey.

In this respect, it is necessary to evaluate the antifascist struggle more accurately. No one is actually safe in Turkey, let alone the Syrian refugees. In fact, the government lured them into Turkey, used them as leverage against Europe for money, it then took this money, extorted it, and continues to keep them under threat of harm. Now, the government has milked all they can, they are done with the Syrians. So, they will do all kinds of things. Not only Syrians, but all those who have crossed into Turkey, have no security. Kurds are in the same situation, particularly the Alevis, and especially women everywhere are in the same situation. All other cultural minority groups are in the same situation.

Everyone should see this reality, take precautions and organize more. Where ever they may be, people should be responsible for their own security. We call it self-defense. While the attackers have armed themselves with all kinds of weapons and are training for a fascist attack, the other side is unorganized. People must be equipped. Antifascist, democratic forces must also train and organize themselves. They must turn themselves into a force of resistance. In this sense, the struggle against fascism must become more radical and stronger.

Yes, there is an antifascist democratic force. There is a united struggle, alliances are developing. But these are limited to elections. That is, within the limits of state approval. Yes, there have been reactions to the repression and the appointment of trustees. There is a certain struggle which is important and meaningful. They should be developed much more, made stronger and more widespread. But I want to express that this is not enough.

We have asked, even before these incidents occurred, that the people see the reality of the state better. Only a fraction of the potential harm was seen during the attacks against Syrians. Then we must be more vigilant, more prepared. Everyone must be more careful, organized and educated. In other words, these antifascist, revolutionary, democratic, leftist forces and circles should see the real situation better. It is impossible to ignore it. We cannot bury our heads in the sand. Some might think that this is difficult, or dangerous even, but this danger is present whether we react or not reacting is a danger in itself. So how do we ensure our own security? And how do we develop the struggle to overthrow fascism more effectively? These are the right questions.

I don't want to spread fear, I don't want to express anything too pessimistic, but it is clear that we need to take a serious approach, we need to see the real, concrete situation and act according to its requirements, according to the concrete reality of the concrete conditions. Everyone should know this. Since we are in a position of fierce struggle, we see these realities firsthand, and we just want to inform, to explain our thoughts, to warn, so to speak, as part of our duty. But everyone should really be more careful, more sensitive, more organized and educated against them.

Erdoğan's anti-Kurdish policy has come to defeat, it is failing. Since 19 July, we have seen that the liquidation attacks against the Rojava Revolution have also been increasing. There is a rapprochement between Assad and Erdoğan in this direction. What are your thoughts on this anti-PKK alliance that they want to establish?

First of all, I salute the North and East Syrian Freedom Revolution on its 12th anniversary. I congratulate the peoples of North and East Syria and commemorate their martyrs with respect and gratitude. The Rojava revolution has been a product of great courage and a daring belief. It is a strong revolutionary experience. Now it has been going on for 12 years. At the beginning, some were anticipating we couldn't maintain control for a year or two. Evidently, we are beyond this point. It is true that there are problems and shortcomings which are evaluated and criticized; that is a separate issue, but it is an indisputable fact that it is a revolutionary experience with very rich lessons. In other words, Rojava has been the force of enlightenment during our day.

Should one evaluate and understand Rojava well, it is a school of truths, a vivid and profound experience. Of course, this was at a great cost. The peoples, women and young people of Northern and Eastern Syria paid a high price. But they have created a great legacy. We hope that in the coming year they will solve more of their problems and overcome more of their shortcomings. They will act more consciously, organized and stronger for the implementation of the paradigm of democratic modernity. They will develop the ideological and cultural depth and effectiveness of the revolution much more strongly. In other words, the revolution will become permanent.

Rojava aspires to becoming a political power; it will face many obstacles which they can overcome with creativity. But these obstacles come from many directions. Foremost is the Erdoğan obstacle. The AKP-MHP fascist, colonialist, genocidal dictatorship is an obstacle. All the AKP-MHP speaks about is the 'PKK-PYD' and nothing else. Tayyip Erdoğan is probably delirious in his sleep at night. Everywhere he goes, he begs for an alliance against the PKK. Whether he meets with Putin or Assad, all he wants is some partners against the PKK. Everything he does is anti-PKK and anti-Kurdish. He mobilizes all the means of Turkey to fight against the PKK and to achieve the Kurdish genocide.

Erdoğan has continuously attacked the Medya Defense Zones, launching new attacks because he has not succeeded. Had he succeeded, he would have organized many more attacks against Rojava. In other words, he couldn't do what he wanted. He failed there too. In fact, Tayyip Erdoğan's anti-Kurdish policy is also in complete defeat and failure. So is his Syria policy as a whole. Many circles are now holding elections around the world, from the US to the UK, Iran, Azerbaijan – 2024 is a year of elections. Everyone is preparing themselves. Following these elections, governments may develop new policies against or for North and East Syria. But despite all the attacks, the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria will stand strong. There are attacks every day, attacks which can not harm or weaken the existence of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. Now, Erdoğan is afraid that countries might develop policies which he will not benefit from. In fact, Tayyip Erdoğan and his cohorts fear 2025 like it was their death. This is not hard to understand.

Erdoğan is afraid that many circles will get involved. This is why he wants to quickly reconcile with the Bashar al-Assad government. This is where his effort comes from. He wants to make a new anti-PKK deal with the Assad regime before the international forces interfere. He begged Putin on this basis. He will go and beg his NATO partners. He would beg Britain, he would beg Iran. In other words, he will ask them to use their influence on Assad to encourage him to make an anti-Kurdish alliance with him. The only thing he knows and does is to be anti-Kurdish, to be anti-Kurdish everywhere. This is actually his fear. Therefore, before he no longer has the power, he will want to create an agreement to save his situation. In fact, he will continue his derelict Syria policy a little longer to extend his time in power. Why? Because he needs it.

This is also related to the state of the war in the region. Despite all their efforts, they could not spark an Israeli-Iranian war even after Tayyip Erdoğan and the AKP-MHP spent months provoking such a war. They couldn't do it. In the end, Tayyip Erdoğan was defeated. At the start, they were only doing this because of non-agreement with Israel and the USA. But now they are realizing that this war would spread to Lebanon, meaning it would spread to Cyprus. This is why they are so afraid.

So, it will come to them. They will be confronted by their own system to which they are servants. Their anti-Kurdish policies will definitely play a role in this. They could not prevent this confrontation in Gaza. Now they wonder if they can prevent it in Lebanon and Syria. They are trying to do that. The Hezbollah conflict is developing. Because there is going to be an Israeli-Iranian war in Lebanon, the AKP's press has been constantly promoting a regional war. Tayyip Erdoğan only today, without showing a sign of shame, said that he was 'against the development of conflicts in the region.' How could Erdoğan be against it when his press provoked it in the first place? For months, they have done nothing but warmongering and provocation. But they did not succeed. Now they are afraid that should something new happen in Syria, that they themselves will be put in a difficult situation, that there will not be a conflict in Lebanon like they want. So, as they are aware, their turn will come. They are trying to delay this, or to disrupt it somewhere if possible. Because Turkey's anti-Kurdish policy and the fact that this policy has turned Kurdistan into a bloodbath, has caused it to be excluded from the system. The fascism of the AKP-MHP has brought Turkey to the brink of complete disaster. There is no way out. In fact, there is absolutely no way out of here with these policies. The Turkish public, intellectuals and politicians have failed to understand this. No one really understood this situation and put a stop to it; no one asked the government where they were leading the country to. When that point in time arrives, they will become the slaves of slaves, or they will fall apart.

Ten years ago, Rêber Apo evaluated this and warned about it. He demonstrated the correct policies and solutions. So, it is clear that the solution lies in Rêber Apo's thoughts. It is clear that Rêber Apo had already presented the solution, but they cannot admit this, so they continue heading for disaster. Let's assume that Tayyip Erdoğan and Devlet Bahçeli let the country come to that point because they would benefit. What about the other segments of the people, the revolutionary democratic segments? They should see this reality better. In this respect, they should develop a more effective, more holistic struggle against this anti-Kurdish, misogynist, anti-people, fascist, genocidal mentality and system.

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Sozdar Avesta: The freedom guerrilla wages great resistance against Turkish occupation

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Sozdar Avesta, member of the Presidential Council of the KCK, talks about the historical significance of the resistance of July 14. In addition, she analyses the guerrilla resistance and, in particular, the threat to South Kurdistan from Turkish attacks and the betrayal by the Barzani family.

Avesta also goes into detail about the situation of the Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, and the responsibility of women in the revolution.

This year marks the 42nd anniversary of the July 14 resistance. This resistance had a great impact not only in the prisons but throughout the whole of Kurdistan. It also marked the beginning of a tradition of resistance. What can you tell us on this occasion?

On the 42nd anniversary of the great death fast resistance of July 14th, first of all, I commemorate the esteemed comrades of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan], comrades Kemal Pir, Mehmet Hayri Durmus, Akif Yilmaz and Ali Cicek with respect, devotion, and gratitude. Generally, I respectfully commemorate all of our comrades who raised the struggle following the example of Rêber Apo and, in this struggle for freedom, gave their lives. I bow before the martyrs. We will definitely fulfill our promise that we have given the martyrs to achieve the goals they set out for. On this honorable day, in the name of all the peoples of Kurdistan, we reiterate this promise once again.

There is a lot that can be said on this day, and nothing should be left unsaid. These heroes, these brave people, these resistance fighters, these precious comrades who defend the honor of the Kurdish people's struggle, who defend the honor of not only the Kurdish people but also of all democratic nations, have expressed what is necessary through their struggle, their stance, and their great actions. In this regard, whatever we say remains insufficient. Our duty is to commemorate these days and to pay our respects and longings to these friends.

During the fascism that followed the coup d'état of September 12, the Kurdish freedom movement was still in the process of establishing itself. With the imprisonment of these friends, the state wanted to liquidate the hope of revolutionism in Kurdistan and even in Turkey. The state wanted to prevent the move-

ment from forming, growing, and developing its struggle. For this reason, they turned against the pioneers of the freedom movement that became known as the PKK in prisons and carried out intense torture. They trampled on the values created in the name of humanity with their cruelty and inflicted intense torture to such great revolutionaries.

Against this persecution, against this massacre, on March 21, 1982, comrade Mazlum Dogan, the contemporary Kawa, lit the torch of freedom with three matchsticks and illuminated the path of struggle. The Four, who followed Mazlums path, consciously carried out their actions on the night of May 12, 1982 in order to defend human values. The resisters of July 14 also started their action with the aim of carrying the actions of Mazlum Dogan and Ferhat to a new level. This was fundamentally an act of consistent action. With this action they showed, that there is no turning back from this struggle. They conducted an action which is unparalleled.

As Rêber Apo once stated, these comrades defended our honor; they defended the identity of the PKK. In the prison of Amed (tr. Diyarbakir), this identity became known as a line of resistance against fascism. These friends themselves became the PKK. The PKK has become Kemal, Hayri, Ali, and Mazlum. Comrade Sara, one of the first female comrades to join the freedom movement, also supported these friends, and together they spread and strengthened the resistance. This resistance has become a crucial pillar in the development of the Kurdish freedom movement, a benchmark of revolutionary action in the PKK, and an expression of true loyalty to Rêber Apo and the oppressed. It showed the way to recognize the enemy and how to achieve victory against them. If the resistance in the prison of Amed 42 years ago had not been developed, if this line had not emerged, it would not have been possible to talk about a Kurdish freedom movement today.

42 years ago, there was nothing left; there was no Kurd or Kurdistan anymore. There were only some reformist movements and local associations, and they were not even associated with Kurdistan. It was these comrades, united around the ideas and thoughts of Rêber Apo, who waged an uninterrupted struggle in the name of Kurdishness, Kurdistan, revolutionism, leftism and brought it to a peak.

Rêber Apo made several deep evaluations about the character and significance of these comrades. For example, regarding Kemal Pir, he said that he was his “hidden soul.” With what spirit and with what philosophy did these friends resist? They had nothing, only their belief in freedom. They developed their resistance on this basis. Therefore, these friends developed this action consciously, knowing where their actions would lead. They said that Rêber Apo would represent them correctly and take their struggle to the end.

We are grateful and indebted to these friends. Continuing their cause, carrying it to victory, and fulfilling their goals is both a duty and a debt for us. Raising the struggle in the line of Rêber Apo and women’s liberation is only possible by struggling in the same way Kemal, Hayri, Akif, and Ali did. They developed a philosophy of free life and even they decided to sacrifice their lives, they felt indebted. Hayri Durmus requested that the word “indebted” be engraved on his tombstone, stating that he “could not fulfill [his] duties in terms of organization, style, and tempo in the appropriate way of the freedom movement. [He] could not achieve the freedom of the people of Kurdistan.”

They left behind a great tradition. This struggle has been built on these tenets.

Regarding a speech you recently gave on the occasion of the July 14 resistance, you spoke about a tradition of resistance that was created back then. You said that this resistance spread throughout all of Kurdistan, and later, through the Rêber Apos resistance in Imrali, this tradition spread to the whole world. How do you evaluate the current situation of Rêber Apo? On the other hand, the global campaign for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo continues. How do you evaluate the current stage of action?

The policies being implemented to target Rêber Apo are policies which target society. The word “isolation” is inadequate to describe the current situation. A brutal persecution is being imposed on the people of Kurdistan in the person of Rêber Apo; a policy of genocide and extermination is being carried out. Because Rêber Apo stands for truth, for an alternative ideology, philosophy, and system. He is a being that represents the people of Kurdistan, the liberated women, and all oppressed peoples. Our enemy, who is attacking Rêber Apo on Imrali Island, knows this better than us. They know what kind of personality Rêber Apo has, what kind of struggle he is waging, why he is waging it, and what level it has reached. They know, because it was they who developed the international conspiracy 26 years ago, and now for 26 years, Rêber Apo has been on Imrali island. That is why they are conducting the politics of genocide on Rêber Apo with special laws.

It is important to have a close look at the kind of resistance Rêber Apo put up against this policy of genocide. On the occasion of the resistance on July 14, I would like to particularly highlight the following: The friends managed to resist for 60 days, carried only by their conviction and faith. Today, Rêber Apo has been resisting for 26 years in the same spirit and with the same conviction. In fact, every day is, in his own words, more difficult than execution. Rêber Apo has interpreted the Imrali system comprehensively. When Rêber Apo was abducted and as the sole prisoner brought to the island, he first thought about refusing any food, drink, or even to speak and to put up such a resistance. But facing the reality that thousands have martyred within this struggle and given their lives for it, he changed his mind. He saw the inevitable necessity to live according to a philosophy of free life and accordingly to keep the struggle alive and bring the cause of the martyrs to a conclusion. He decided that no matter what the cost, he had to spend every day in that spirit, following that aim. Rêber Apo chose the most difficult path. He has been following this valuable decision for 26 years now for the people of Kurdistan and all peoples. A person normally cannot endure this aggravated isolation in Imrali for not even 26 days, let alone 26 years. It is an inhuman place, and an inhumane policy is practiced there.

So how can this isolation be broken? How can we make Rêber Apo’s physical freedom possible? For this purpose, a unique struggle has been waged for 26 years for Rêber Apo and the martyrs. The martyrs have made great sacrifices. Our people are on the streets every day. Especially since October 10, 2023, when the global campaign was launched for the freedom of Rêber Apo. Now we are in the second phase of the campaign. It has gone global. Responsibility is being assumed by the people to a large extent. However, the isolation has still not been broken, and Rêber Apo’s physical freedom has still not been achieved. International states are consciously keeping it at this level. The attitude of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) and the Council of Europe (CoE) has not changed, especially since international law is not applied to Rêber Apo. It is known that the Kurds have never been able to benefit from the law. As a result of a great struggle, on September 17–19, the CoE is supposed to discuss the “right to hope” on its agenda. We need to address this process more specifically. Activism, in terms of legal aspects, means spreading the ideas and philosophy of Rêber Apo. We should not approach it as a normal court. The mobilizations carried out so far are very valuable. I salute and congratulate all those who have participated, both in Kurdistan and on a global level.

The global campaign continues. Conferences, concerts are being organized and bar associations are making applications. Our Peace Mothers marched to Ankara, I especially salute them. But generally spoken we must strengthen our actions in the coming period.

In your speech you mentioned that Hayri Durmus requested the word “indebted” be engraved onto his tombstone. Although he gave his life, he sees himself as indebted to his people. Isn’t this a guide for the actions for the freedom of Rêber Apo?

Of course, it is very important. What has been done so far is important; that must be underlined. For 26 years, the actions and, generally, the struggle have been carried out according to the legacy of the martyrs. They show in which ways and methods actions should be taken for the freedom of Rêber Apo. In the spirit of July 14th, with an approach to historical consciousness and responsibility, for example, the friends at that time played a historical role. To whom does this duty fall the most now? Of course, it falls on the militants, workers, and pioneers of our movement who follow the path of the martyrs, but the reach of Rêber Apo’s ideas and philosophy also creates hope for humanity. In this respect, this struggle should not only be seen as the struggle of the Kurdish people; our international friends should also see it as their own struggle. And this is how they are approaching it. From this point of view, the struggle should be expanded everywhere in the spirit of July 14th. More actions should be taken in order to spread the philosophy of freedom and to build up a system. These steps are all intertwined with each other. Building Rêber Apo’s system and expanding the struggle in the line of women’s liberation, all of these are closely linked to each other. By doing this, we can break the İmralı isolation. This is why the July 14th resistance is very important – it shows us the way. It shows which approach and with which attitude and determination we should struggle for freedom. And it also shows how much sacrifice is needed to be given to achieve freedom. Our current struggle should not be seen as sufficient. This is important. Not by participating in one or two actions, but by continuing until results are achieved. This is the reality of July 14th. To go to the end, without limits or hesitation. Our friends who sacrifice their lives know that the struggle will be expanded on the basis of this line of resistance. Today, we must embrace Rêber Apo with the spirit of resistance of these friends. Only in this way can we break the isolation.

Rêber Apo developed guerrilla warfare in Kurdistan in response to the July 14 resistance. Today, particularly in southern and northern Kurdistan, but generally all over Kurdistan, there is a fierce war, and the guerrillas in Kurdistan are fighting in the spirit of July 14th. How do you evaluate the reflection of the July 14th spirit on today’s guerrilla warfare?

First of all, I salute the Kurdish freedom guerrilla with all due respect. I congratulate their sacrificing resistance since June 30th. Since 2015, every Turkish minister responsible for the genocidal policy of the Turkish state has been claiming every spring that they will end the PKK before the arrival of the next spring and that “there will be no guerrillas left in northern Kurdistan.” In the spring of 2024, the guerrilla organized major coordinated actions everywhere, from Bagok, Mawa, Serhed, Dersim, Botan, Kato, Wan, and Xerzan. Also, valuable friends of ours have been martyred in these regions. I particularly commemorate the comrades Shexmus Milazgir and Beritan Ciya Nurhak, Shervan, Axin, Brusk, Firaz, and Serhildan who were martyred lately in northern Kurdistan and in the Medya Defense Zones.

Indeed, a relentless war is being waged on the basis of the July 14 tenets. Since July 3, the guerrilla warfare in the Medya Defense Zones has entered a new phase. Because the fascist genocidal Turkish state led by the AKP-MHP has now occupied and annexed big parts of the geography of southern Kurdistan with the

support of the KDP and with the help of ISIS mercenaries this is a new process. The war is now being fought in Amediye, Dereluk, and Duhok. The freedom guerrilla is in great resistance against this occupation and annexation. And particularly since July 3, very big actions have been carried out; great blows have been dealt to the fascist genocidal state. It is known that lately a helicopter was shot down, drones are being shot down, and armored vehicles are being destroyed. With a will of steel, the guerrilla is raising a great resistance to defend Kurdistan. The YJA Star and HPG units, with their mobile teams and their tactics of war tunnels, are living a great resistance despite the massive use of chemical weapons by the Turkish state.

Guerrilla warfare has entered a new phase in southern Kurdistan. Also, in Guherze, the people blocked the road between Amediye and Dereluk. This is a continuation of the revolutionary people's war. It is the people's defense of their own values, Kurdistan, and geography. Like in 2008 in Qedishe, Bamerne, and Dereluk, when the people did not allow enemy tanks to reach Zap, the people are now again in resistance.

But it is necessary to evaluate how it got to this stage in the first place. Of course, the guerrilla resistance continues and will continue. The guerrilla is resisting sacrificially. The Turkish state is using all the chemical weapons it received from NATO against the guerrilla. But still, the guerrilla is resisting in a professional, modern, scientific way and with a will of steel. But what is the politics, especially in southern Kurdistan? A great betrayal is being carried out there in the person of the Barzani family. Of course, not all of the KDP is involved. Not every member of the Barzani family is involved. We know that some members of the Barzani family are against this betrayal. But those three Barzanis, father, son, and nephew, have sworn an oath to bring the politics of genocide against the Kurdish people to a conclusion. That is why they are openly and shamelessly advancing this betrayal. They have no shame anymore.

Recently, they have once again taken a step in this direction. The People's Defense Center has made a statement in this regard, and the commanders of the People's Defense Center have also spoken out and said that there are images that show forces of the Turkish army conducting identity checks on the roads of southern Kurdistan. They have come from another place, besieging and emptying villages, and then not letting anyone go anywhere. All of this shows the submissiveness of the KDP. They have brought the Barzani family to such a level that they can draw Iraq into this game. Every day they went to Iraq and held talks; they developed new game plans and great immorality. Most recently, a few days ago, they made a statement that there were incidents of burning markets, and they wanted to blame it on the freedom movement. They are doing this in such a way that right now they see the existence of the PKK as their own extinction.

Our people of southern Kurdistan and all the people of Kurdistan, our people in all four parts of Kurdistan, and abroad, as well as our international friends, especially the intellectuals, artists, academics, youth and women should follow the developments and should see that southern Kurdistan is being annexed. In other words, the enemy is occupying and settling there.

In one of his assessments, Rêber Apo describes the July 14 martyrs as a bridge where death itself was defeated by being turned into immortality. On the other hand, we see that the KDP functions as a bridge of betrayal and imposes betrayal on the people. As in the case of Afrin, we are faced with examples of women being kidnapped and raped, the destruction caused by the gangs under Erdogan's command in Shengal (Sinjar), and the targeting of women in areas under Turkish state occupation such as Idlib. Under these circumstances, what is your call especially for women? What stance should women take and what should they do in the face of such attacks and betrayal?

I especially want to express that the attacks and the war in southern Kurdistan and Iraq are even more advanced than the attacks in 2022. Now the state wants to achieve results. They say they will be successful, but in fact, they are in a deadlock. They know this well. They want to get out of this lock. They want the Barzanis to get them out of that situation, and they need to get the support of the Iraqi state for this. I want to come to the point of what kind of struggle our people should wage. Our people should approach with historical consciousness and responsibility, and they should form a broad alliance. Any approaches which normalize this situation is unacceptable. They should be aware of this. Those who are currently in power in southern Kurdistan have sold off the country. No one should live with this negligence. No one should deceive themselves that this war is a war against the PKK. Who is the PKK? Is it legitimate to massacre the PKK? The PKK has been defending the values of freedom for 51 years. It has given thousands of martyrs. It has paid a high price for the freedom of the people. Now in the tunnels of war, in the heart of Kurdistan, the resistance of the freedom guerrillas has never been so beautiful with Kurdish women and men defending the honor of Kurdistan. These are the values of the people of Kurdistan; they are the most honorable and wise people. All of them have positioned themselves against the politics of annihilation, following the philosophy of freedom.

They want to legitimize a political system based on the liquidation of the PKK. They deceive, saying that these attacks would be aimed at the PKK. Our people in southern Kurdistan know that if it were not for the PKK, they would have been subjected to genocide many times over. When did they forget Halabja? Did they forget 1991. Today, if people in southern Kurdistan can live easily, it is thanks to the freedom guerrilla. No one should deceive themselves. Who among the Barzani family defends Kurdishness? They have nothing to do with Kurdishness. Those who see themselves as Kurds, those who defend Kurdish values, are the Êzidî community, which has been subjected to 74 fermans (genocides). They defended Kurdish culture and language. They have defended Kurdish morality despite going through 74 fermans. Right now, the Barzani family is expressing the biggest enmity against the Êzidîs. We will also comment on those who let ISIS attack the Êzidî community in the following days. They let Shengal be attacked; they sold Shengal. They negotiated with ISIS, and now they have brought ISIS to Bamerne.

Thanks to the freedom movement, the people of Shengal were protected and freed. What are they doing now? They have built a political system of their own will, established their councils around mount Shengal, and formed their own self-defense forces. They have pulled themselves together and want to live humanely in their own land. But almost every day, Turkish warplanes attack them. A few days ago, they attacked members of the free press. I pay tribute to Mirad Mirza, a reporter and journalist for Chira TV. I wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. But I also celebrate and salute the struggle of our people there. The Iraqi state must see this. What did they negotiate for Shengal? Why did Barzani go to Baghdad a few days ago? The governor of Shengal was appointed by the Mosul parliament. If Barzani says that he is not against the people of Shengal, why did he protest against this? He insists on putting the October 9 Agreement from 2020 into effect. He insists on putting into effect the agreement to complete the ferman. The

people of southern Kurdistan should see how far the Barzani family is from the Kurdish people. They are enemies of the free Kurd. They are really hung up on betrayal and want to destroy Kurdishness. Now this is over. They present themselves as the defenders of the Kurds; they are not! That period is over.

In Afrin, women are kidnapped and massacred every day. Who is leading this situation, who is guiding the enemy? Just like the Roj mercenaries, it is the ENKS that is now mobilizing ISIS gangs. There are massacres of women everywhere; massacres of women in Shengal, massacres of women in Afrin. The attacks on the revolution in North and East Syria continue. Against this situation, the resistance of our people in southern Kurdistan is especially crucial. They should know the Barzani family well, especially the father, nephew and son. The people of southern Kurdistan are a people of value and honor. They are followers of an ancient history; they are patriots. They have heroes such as Viyan, Helmet and Destîna. Comrade Helmet was from the heart of this people. He was a member of the KCK Executive Council, the inheritor of the spirit of the July 14 resistance and a member of the PKK. He was martyred as a result of the KDP's betrayal.

Without the PKK, Kurdishness would cease to exist, the free women's movement would disappear; slavery and slaughter would revive. For this reason, we must raise the struggle around the freedom guerrilla with the spirit of the July 14 resistance, together with the stance that is being shown in Imrali. Everyone must take a stance against this politics of genocide and attacks in their own sphere of life. There is no middle ground anymore; either you take a stance against enemy attacks or you side with the line of betrayal. How far is this going to go? From South to North Kurdistan, wherever there is a Kurd defending freedom, they want to kill them. The fascist chief Erdogan has built his entire diplomacy on the destruction of the Kurds. For this, I call on all Kurds, especially the people of southern Kurdistan, to raise their struggle.

Kemal Pir once said, "We love life so much that we would give our lives for it." And they truly developed a comprehensive struggle for a free life against slavery. On the 12th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution, this revolution has been recognized worldwide as a women's revolution, and great successes have been achieved in the name of women. However, today there are major attacks against these gains. Erdogan and Assad, despite their 13 years of war, are trying to make peace to destroy women's gains. How should the worldwide echo of the Rojava Women's Revolution be evaluated? How can the achievements be protected by women?

The revolution was led by women; the women's voice and women's leadership within the process led to the development of the revolution in this way. KONGRA Star led this process. I congratulate our people and all of those in the world who are in favor of freedom on their revolution. Thousands of people gave their lives for the defense of the revolution and the free women's ideology. I commemorate our martyrs with respect and salute the mothers of the martyrs, the women of the resistance, and especially the young women who add their color to the revolution.

The revolution in North and East Syria is a great and lasting revolution. Just as the October 17 revolution had a century-long impact, the North and East Syrian revolution took its first step under the leadership of women in the 21st century and was built in this way. This revolution, based on the philosophy of free women and the line of free women, is a revolution full of wisdom and values. In the current system, women are fundamental. From the committees to the upper levels of the autonomous structure, the co-presidency system is being implemented, and the free woman system is being implemented. This has been a great hope for the women of the world, and many internationalist women's groups are fighting for the

preservation of the revolution. Just as they wanted to suffocate the PKK's first steps in the prisons, the North and East Syrian revolution was subjected to great attacks before it completed even its first year.

In the first year of the revolution, the fascist Jabhet-ul-Nusra, attacked Serekaniye. When they were defeated, this time they organized ISIS. Now, for 12 years, the revolution has been besieged by the fascist and genocidal Turkish state, and several places have been occupied. They also wanted to poison the revolution with the betrayal of the Barzani family. Despite all this, the revolution has made serious progress. It has developed its own system. It has a unique system of self-defense and is defending the area. Most importantly, it has an ecological, free, and democratic system led by women, and they can take this to an advanced stage and turn it into a system that will benefit all of humanity.

Of course, there are also great threats to the revolution. The fascist chief wants to develop a new process with Syria because he wants to destroy the opportunities developed by the peoples in northern and eastern Syria. This is his aim. There is no doubt that the peoples of North and East Syria have built this revolution by defending it against the ISIS mentality. It is a democratic, equal revolution that protects and sustains all peoples and their beliefs. Therefore, Arabs, Assyrians, and all peoples and beliefs living there need to protect this revolution. They need to be aware of the dangers that exist. Against these dangers, they should develop and advance their defense on the 13th anniversary of the revolution. They must develop the revolutionary people's war and self-defense further. It should not turn into a situation where there are only professional forces that are used for defense. This is a people's revolution, a women's revolution, a revolution of rights and beliefs. For this reason, these communities must protect themselves and the revolution. On this basis, they need to strengthen both their unity and defense. They must build their lives accordingly. The revolution must now be protected in this way.

What kind of resistance are the freedom guerrillas putting forward today despite all the impossibilities? How has Rêber Apo been putting up such a strong resistance for 26 years? Just as the struggle has resisted from July 14th until today, the revolution in northern and eastern Syria has been marching on these sacred values for 12 years. I am strongly convinced that the women and youth will protect their revolution. Because they have recognized freedom, this is the revolution of freedom and the revolution of free women, and women all over the world are inspired by it. Their eyes are on North and East Syria. In terms of the system, women's education, democratic functioning, education based on Jineoloji, all women's eyes are on this revolution. Because this revolution has hosted and pioneered many achievements. These achievements have become values of freedom for all societies.

On the other hand, the North and East Syria administration will decide on the solution. However, we believe in the following. The Syrian state and the Turkish state do not have the right to make an agreement to destroy the will of the Kurdish people and other peoples of the region. They need to see this. Now the biggest problem in the region is the Turkish state. Until now they were slandering the Assad regime. Today, they can behave differently for their interests. The problem is very big, it is not that easy. They have organized hundreds of thousands of mercenaries. Thousands of those that were placed in Idlib, Serekaniye and other places have now been brought to the Medya Defense Zones. They are a scourge not only for Syria but also for Iraq. They are also dangerous for Iran. Especially the Turkish state has been the biggest danger for the region. For this reason, the Syrian state's interest lies in the formation of a democratic Syria. It is in its interest to negotiate with the democratic autonomous administration.

On this basis, the revolution will develop further. The role of women is important here. The development of women's defense, economy and the building of the system, which has now become the property of the women of the world; we find the development of the revolution in this direction in its 12th year very important and valuable. In its 13th year, I am strongly convinced it will develop even further. Once again, I congratulate this great revolution, this powerful revolution that is an inspiration to humanity.

This process is very significant. I would like to repeat the following call. A struggle is being waged in a very difficult process. Rêber Apo has been continuing this resistance with a great, honorable, and respectable stance for 26 years. Again, the freedom guerrilla is waging a great resistance. Our people are standing up all over Kurdistan. All the dangers need to be seen, and one shall not leave the revolution on the shoulders of the guerrilla alone. Let's not leave the resistance with İmralı limited to the resistance of the prisons. In the prisons, they have been a great resistance since November 27th of last year in the line of Kemal, Mazlum, Akif, Ali, and Hayri. They stated that they would continue their resistance, first with a hunger strike, then, as they expressed through a press statement, by protesting the situation of Rêber Apo by not appearing in courts and meetings with their lawyers and families. The prisons have been conducting a great resistance along this line for 42 years. We need to continue this struggle and resistance as a whole. Again, we call on our people, intellectuals, academics, artists, women, and young people to unite around the July 14 resistance, the freedom guerrilla, and the line of Rêber Apo and to raise the struggle. On this occasion, I call on the youth to join the guerrilla. Especially the youth of southern Kurdistan should join the guerrilla. Southern Kurdistan is in great danger right now.

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Opinion

Reflections of Turkish annexation from Washington to Baghdad

Atakan Ararat | 15 July 2024

The Turkish state's attempt to annex southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) has mobilised many circles. All the parties in the Iraqi arena, from the US to Iran, are making direct or indirect statements. Attempts have been made even to reflect the Turkish state's invasion plans at the NATO summit. While the initiatives of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, who are in the US for the NATO summit, are being handled in this direction, the US statement that "coordination should be ensured with Baghdad and Erbil" and Iraq's statement that "no green light has been given" also point to occupation operations with "defined borders".

Turkish army in search for further settlement in the region

However, the Turkish army, taking advantage of the instability in Iraq and southern Kurdistan, accelerated its search for further settlement in the region. Trying to settle in a large part of Behdînan, the Turkish Republic continues to evacuate the region by burning villages. While the annexation of southern Kurdistan

and Iraqi territories is carried out on the basis of international and regional agreements, the silence of the interlocutors, especially Baghdad, leads to such interpretations.

The Shiite community against Turkish occupation

The first serious reactions in Iraq came from Qeys El- Xezali, the leader of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq Movement. The Shiite leader's statement "The Turkish army should withdraw from all Iraqi territories" is considered as the attitude of the overwhelming majority of the Shiite community in Iraq. In addition, the political circle led by Xezali is also known as an important part of Hashd al-Shaabi. The Coordination Framework, which is also strong and based in Baghdad, also makes statements in this direction, while the Sudani government follows a path that pacifies the reactions.

The role undertaken by the Sudani government

The Sudani government, minimising possible reactions in the region and in Iraqi public opinion, sent a delegation led by Iraqi National Security Advisor Qasim Ereji to Erbil after the meeting held on behalf of the Iraqi National Security Council. The main purpose of the delegation is to analyse the developments after the Turkish invasion mobility in southern Kurdistan. While Ereji and his entourage were hosted in Erbil as guests of Masrour Barzani, the delegation is expected to report the Turkish annexation to Baghdad based on the information provided by Barzani. However, while both Ereji and Barzani are labelled as "local collaborators" of the Turkish occupation and annexation in the public opinion in southern Kurdistan, one of Baghdad's main objectives is to prevent any reflexes that may arise.

Iraq's discomfort: An occupation beyond its control

In particular, the Sunni political circles from the Iraqi central government have almost become the spokesperson of the Turkish occupation policy in Baghdad. Although statements from the central government wing, such as "no green light has been given" and "we reject the attacks", are confusing, this situation seeks more answers to whether Iraq has reached an occupation agreement with the Turkish state. The statements made by the Sudani government against Turkish operations from some official mouths are due to the fact that the Turkish Republic has gone beyond the agreement it reached with Iraq and has settled further in both southern Kurdistan and Iraq. As a matter of fact, the Turkish army ravaged the region and created new barracks with new military bases. Taking over some administrative tasks as well, the Turkish Republic is preparing to bypass both Baghdad and Erbil in the long run. Baghdad's biggest "discomfort" is to go beyond the agreement reached during Erdoğan's visit to Baghdad and to oppose a picture that is against its interests.

US approval on the basis of agreements

The remarks of US Secretary of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller, who said during the Turkish state's first attempts to annex Behdînan that "coordination should be ensured with Turkey, Baghdad and Erbil" are also interpreted in this framework. While pointing to a concept that the US is also aware of, the "cautious" statements give the message that the Turkish Republic's act of knowing no boundaries is an operation with "defined borders". The main concern is perceived as preventing a situation getting out of control.

Turkey's international search went all the way to the NATO Summit

The Turkish state, which accelerated its search for grounds for occupation in the international arena, wanted to carry this situation to the NATO summit held in the US. It is also stated that Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein of the KDP discussed this situation with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and some US representatives in Washington within the scope of the summit. Hussein is expected to visit Turkey in the coming days and meet with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Turkish Undersecretary of National Intelligence Ibrahim Kalin and Turkish Minister of National Defence Yaşar Güler. Hussein stands out as one of the biggest supporters within the Iraqi central government in legitimising the Turkish annexation.

Hussein's efforts to exonerate the KDP

Moreover, Hussein is trying to conceal the role and place of the KDP in the Turkish occupation in the international arena and to point out the Kurdistan Freedom Movement as the target of the reactions. Hussein, who is also trying to recover the Barzanis' prestige in diplomacy and politics, is doing this with the "official" opportunities provided by the Iraqi central government.



Turkish invasion is doomed to fail

Kawa Tolhildan | Behdinan | 17 July 2024

On 3 July, the Turkish army began attacking the areas of Girê Bahar and Sergelê in the western Zap region in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on three fronts. This operation was an attack that differed from the previous ones and highlighted some important points. The most striking thing is that, for the first time, the Turkish occupying army openly advanced with military convoys from the Amêdîyê district in the Duhok governorate via official KDP positions and checkpoints to Sergelê in front of the eyes of the world public.

The attack was carried out in a combination of air-to-ground operations and aimed to take the guerrillas by surprise, break their defences by overpowering them, declare a quick victory and occupy the area. However, the Turkish army had to abandon its plan and retreat to the eastern and western slopes of Girê (Hill) Bahar. There they quickly found themselves trapped by the guerrillas.

The first offensive was crushed

At the beginning of the operation, the Turkish army relied on covert units to infiltrate the region. At the same time, it attempted to station itself in central locations and set up checkpoints. Air strikes were intended to restrict the guerrillas' radius of movement. From the beginning of the attack, the guerrillas systematically implemented a counter-strategy. They initially observed the covert units and eliminated them one by one. Most of the soldiers were killed, others fled. Some soldiers even fell from the rocks and died. While the soldiers tried to establish positions, the guerrillas struck them on five fronts. The army was com-

pletely on the defensive, and when it was not possible to establish air superiority, the troops lost almost all military capacity.

The first step in war is very important. As many experts in the art of war have said, winning a war is based on adequate planning. It is obvious that the Turkish occupation army did not base its plans on the guerrilla warfare and the problems it would face. The failure of the occupation army in the very first attack gave the guerrillas a further boost of motivation. We will all see how badly the Turkish army will perish in the coming days. The images broadcast by Gerıla TV are proof of this.

In recent years, it has become clear that the initiative on the ground has passed to the guerrillas. The Turkish army has therefore relied almost entirely on aerial operations. There is actually no real fighting army on the ground. This is proven by the fact that the guerrillas suffered very few casualties in the ground battles. In contrast, the invasion forces suffered serious losses. The guerrillas' aerial developments this year are decisive. The drones, a technology in which the Turkish army pinned all its hopes, are now regularly shot down in the combat zone. So far, 17 armed combat drones have been taken out of the sky by the guerrillas. These drones are the pride of the Turkish state, and the defeat could not be clearer. The fact that two Sikorsky helicopters have also been shot down by guerrillas at Girê Bahar in the past few days adds to this.

Two guerrilla units carried out 40 airstrikes

Guerrilla airstrikes have also reached a new level. In the past two months, the 'Şehîd Doğan Zinar' and 'Şehîd Axîn Mûş' units have carried out 40 airstrikes. The losses inflicted on the invasion forces during these actions were undoubtedly heavy. While the guerrillas continue to neutralise the Turkish drone war, they are now also able to operate effectively in the airspace themselves.

The most important effect of these actions is of a psychological nature. Neither the trenches nor high walls can protect the soldiers from guerrilla attacks. Although the army uses the most advanced technologies, it has not been able to prevent these guerrilla actions. The creativity of the guerrillas is more than evident here. Kamikaze drones are currently being used in the war in Ukraine and Gaza, but it is clear that drones cannot achieve results against the guerrillas in Kurdistan. This also shows that the guerrillas are able to outmanoeuvre the most advanced war technology.

Another notable point is that the guerrillas filmed these attacks from all angles, even from the air. If the guerrillas were trapped in the region, as Erdoğan claims, how could they feel safe enough to film these attacks in such an organised manner? It is clear that the Turkish state cannot and will not answer this question.

The guerrillas determine the action

With sophisticated defence and offensive tactics and creative techniques, the guerrillas assert their dominance on the battlefield. They have proven their skills in tunnel warfare. With specialised units on the ground, the guerrillas deal heavy blows to the attackers. The reality created by specialised aircraft makes the situation a nightmare for the occupying troops. The guerrillas have developed into a professional army that controls the conditions of war on the ground, underground and in the air.

All of these factors had a major influence on the fighting around Girê Bahar and Sergelê. What happens in the combat zones is observed and recorded by the people there. The fact that many people remain in the region despite the war is due to the fact that they have seen the guerrilla resistance with their own eyes. The guerrilla air strikes in particular have created a completely new atmosphere.

The KDP and the Turkish state want to hide the reality

To prevent this reality from coming to light even more clearly, the Turkish state and the KDP have arrested journalists in the region in recent days. The KDP has threatened to imprison those who take and disseminate pictures from the region. If the Turkish occupation army was as successful as the Turkish media claims, why is it afraid of the facts being spread by the people who are in the region? It is obvious that the opposite of success, namely a historic defeat, is the case. The reason why the Turkish army has stepped up its attacks on the villages in the region in recent days is the anger caused by this defeat. Kurdish and Syriac villages in the region are being bombed, people's fields and gardens are being burnt and people are being forced to flee. Villages are being forcibly evacuated so that the Turkish state can realise its occupation ambitions. But the guerrillas stand in the way of these intentions. At the same time, Kurdish youth in southern Kurdistan are mobilising to resist. There can be no question of the defence forces giving up or being defeated.

The destruction of nature is one of the aims of this operation. The Turkish state is cutting down trees and setting fire to fields and forests. This is being carried out by the army, paramilitary village guards and the private sector. These attacks are part of the campaign of destruction against the Kurdish people. Trees are being felled that are older than the Turkish state. This fact is another good illustration of the reality of Turkish attacks.

The KDP's behaviour in this area shows that it has become part of the occupation operation. There are many contradictions and differences of opinion in the Iraqi government. Some express concern about this invasion, while others openly condemn it. It is obvious that the Iraqi government is not united. The Turkish state is taking advantage of this situation. It is trying to make Baghdad unable to act through Iraq's internal contradictions. In other words, it is pursuing a policy of exacerbating the existing crisis. However, this situation is not acceptable to the people of Iraq. They have seen how nine people were killed in Perex by the attack of the Turkish state. They see the catastrophic consequences of the invasion attacks and the prohibition signs that de facto designate the Amêdîyê region as Turkish-occupied territory. In the coming days, the Iraqi government will either have to take a stand or face a wave of protests. If it does not take a stand, it will be practically paving the way for the occupation of Dohuk, Hewlêr (Erbil) and Mosul by the Turkish state.

The Turkish state has lost all initiative

After 14 days of the invasion operation in the Amêdîyê region, it has become clear that the Turkish state is in serious trouble. From the outset, it has lost control of the region and the initiative in the war. The guerrillas are attacking the invasion forces from all sides. They are fighting in the spirit of a hundred years of revenge and reckoning with the Turkish state. In the coming days there will be developments that will surprise many. We will see how the Turkish occupation army will be defeated and the guerrillas will win with their methods and tactics.



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