THE İMRALI POST

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Conference ‘Paving the Way to Peace’: The people must be made the subjects of the process

ANF | Istanbul | 22 June 2025

A conference entitled ‘Paving the Way to Peace’, organized by Social Initiative for Peace, is being held at the Eyüp Sultan Cultural Center in Istanbul.

The conference is attended by numerous politicians, intellectuals, artists, and representatives of civil society. The event emphasizes the need to rebuild the peace process and strengthen democratic solutions.

Former ECtHR judge Rıza Türmen delivered the opening speech, emphasizing the importance of social participation and democratization in resolving the Kurdish issue.

Türmen stated that peace is not only possible through the laying down of arms, but also through the elimination of the causes that gave rise to those arms, saying, “For the peace process to be successful, the people must be made the subjects of the process. If the causes of war are not eliminated, war will break out

again." Türmen stated that the repressive regime in Turkey is an obstacle to the socialization of peace and security-oriented policies must be abandoned.

Türmen remarked that the Kurdish issue is not merely a matter between the Kurds and the state, saying, "The issue is not just a problem between the Kurds and the state; it is a problem that concerns the entire country. Therefore, the solution will emerge with a common will to live together. To this end, we must find a common language for a solution."

Referring to the structure of the commissions planned to be established in the Parliament, Türmen said that the opposition party CHP should not only be a supportive actor in this process, but also an active actor offering solutions.

A message sent to the conference by Tülay Hatimoğlulları and Tuncer Bakırhan, Co-Chairs of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), said the following:

DEM Party Co-Chairs: Peace is the establishment of a democratic, equal, free, and just life

"We are going through a period of great transformation in the world. The order established a century ago in the Middle East, the epicenter of global transformation, is crumbling. The conflicts that began on October 7 are continuing with the Israel-Iran war. The Israel-Iran war means that the Middle East will be thrown into a huge ring of fire. The immediate cessation of this war, which carries the risk of nuclear weapon use, is of critical importance for both the world and the region. In such a historic period, it is of great importance to talk about peace in Turkey. Peace is the courage of peoples to hear and understand each other and to build a common future together. Peace will come to life through the resolution of the Kurdish issue and the realization of Turkey's hopes for democratization. The suffering experienced in the Kurdish issue is not just a wound for one people, but a deep wound for the entire society. The path to healing this wound lies not in denial but in recognition, not in suppression but in democratization, not in bans but in justice. Building peace is possible by expanding collective wisdom without excluding the opposition and without multiplying injustices.

Peace is the establishment of a democratic, equal, free, and just life. Peace is too important to be left to the mercy of political institutions or those in power. In this sense, we believe that your conference will make a strong contribution to the growth of hopes for peace. We hope that your conference will strengthen democratic consensus, free politics, and universal principles of law. Every effort you make to socialize, multiply, and root peace will bring us closer to a solution. With these feelings and thoughts, we warmly greet all those who contributed to the Conference on Paving the Way to Peace, the distinguished speakers, and all participants."

Özgür Özel: Peace is the shared responsibility of all of us

The message sent by CHP Chairman Özgür Özel stated the following: "Peace is not merely the end of conflict; it is the establishment of justice, the recognition of rights, and the creation of an inclusive social order in which differences can coexist in security. True and lasting peace is built on the principles of freedom, equality, and mutual respect. The foundation of social peace lies in pluralistic democracy, participa-

tory governance, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights within the framework of universal values. Every step taken around these values is of vital importance for the common future of the entire society. As the Republican People's Party, we believe that the language used in this process should be unifying, inclusive, and hopeful. Speaking of peace, desiring peace, and building peace are the shared responsibility of all of us. I hope that this meaningful gathering will strengthen social dialogue, lay the groundwork for mutual understanding, and reinforce the shared will for a future of peace.

Messages of solidarity

Ekrem İmamoğlu, the detained mayor of Istanbul, Ahmet Davutoğlu, the leader of the Future Party, Ali Babacan, the leader of the DEVA Party, and the Unity for Democracy platform also sent messages to the conference.

İmamoğlu: The most important issue we need to resolve is the Kurdish question

Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu said, "The most important issue we need to resolve is the Kurdish question," adding that "peace can only be achieved through the silence of weapons and strong democratic politics." Imamoğlu emphasized the need to take the necessary administrative and legal steps for democratization without delay, adding, "It is impossible to speak of real and lasting peace or social harmony in an environment where any segment of society is excluded and the opposition is suppressed."

Davutoğlu present a 10-point solution proposal

Ahmet Davutoğlu, the leader of the Future Party, presented a 10-point solution proposal titled "The Kurdish Issue: Fundamental Elements of a New Democratization Process." The proposals included a democratic and pluralistic change of mindset, a civil and liberal constitution, freedom of expression, equal citizenship, education in mother tongue, and strengthening local administrations. Davutoğlu emphasized the need to develop a Turkey-specific, inclusive, and democratic approach to the Kurdish issue.

Babacan: Solution is possible through equal citizenship

DEVA leader Ali Babacan stated in his message that the solution to the Kurdish issue is possible through equal citizenship and the recognition of fundamental rights.

DİB: Struggle against the authoritarian regime is a historical responsibility

The Unity for Democracy (DİB) platform emphasized that the struggle for peace, democracy, and social justice against the authoritarian regime is a historical responsibility.

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Final declaration of 'Paving the way to peace' conference released

ANF | Istanbul | 23 June 2025

The Social Initiative for Peace published the final declaration of the conference titled "Paving the Way to Peace," held in Istanbul's Eyüpsultan district. The declaration said: "Our conference convened to raise hopes for peace and democracy at a time when our region is under fire. These ancient lands, now targeted for reordering by Israel and the United States in pursuit of imperialist interests, face the threat of total war. The massacre and occupation of Gaza marked the beginning of this process, which gained new momentum with intervention against Iran. Just twelve hours before our conference began, the United States attacked Iran. Under these conditions, ending the war immediately, ensuring nuclear disarmament across all countries in the region, including Israel, and swiftly implementing the International Criminal Court's decisions regarding Israeli officials and war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu must be urgent priorities.

The war, launched for the sake of mines, energy resources, and control over energy corridors, will bring nothing to our region but destruction, sorrow, and death. In this process, conflicts among peoples, social unrest, deepening poverty, and the oppression of women are being manipulated by global powers as convenient tools. In the face of this imminent threat, achieving peace and equality in our country and securing peace based on universal standards of democracy and justice is no longer just a necessity, it is now a matter of great urgency. Within this context, we must also emphasize that resolving the Kurdish question within Turkey would positively contribute to democratization across the region, including Iran. This peace policy must become part of a broader foreign policy rooted in dialogue and negotiation, one that ensures security, equality, and freedom for all peoples of the region, regardless of ethnicity, origin, religion, sect, gender identity, sexual orientation, or belief. This includes Kurds, Alevi communities who have faced the threat of genocide, and women whose rights and freedoms are under constant threat."

Call to become active agents of peace

The declaration emphasized that Abdullah Öcalan's "Peace and Democratic Society Call" on February 27, along with the decision by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to dissolve itself, represented a highly significant step toward peace. It continued: "But has the time not already come for administrative and legal steps to bring this valuable declaration to life? How much longer must we wait to see concrete action? There is no doubt that the success of the peace process depends on advancing democratic reforms. For this to happen, the ruling power must abandon its hegemonic and authoritarian approach to politics. The Kurdish question can only be resolved within the framework of democracy and based on human rights. The rights of the Kurdish people can only be safeguarded if the fundamental rights and freedoms of all individuals are protected by the rule of law. A participatory democracy can only be achieved by loosening the rigid centralism that suffocates local administrations. Equal citizenship can only be realized through a pluralistic democracy that respects the identities of Kurds, Alevis, Circassians, and all other communities. We are standing at the threshold of a historic opportunity, a chance to live with dignity, equality, freedom, peace, and prosperity. At this crucial moment, our conference calls on all segments of society that stand for peace, democracy, and life itself to actively engage in this dynamic period that will shape the country's future. We urge them to become agents of peace and to raise the collective call for democracy and peace."

Urgent steps that must be taken

The declaration listed a number of urgent steps required to advance peace and democratization:

- In accordance with the final clause of Article 90 of the Constitution, Turkey must act in line with the European Convention on Human Rights, and the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Constitutional Court regarding individual applications. The Istanbul Convention must be reinstated. The Anti-Terror Law, the Turkish Penal Code, and all relevant legislation must be reviewed in light of ECHR and Constitutional Court decisions, and anti-democratic provisions must be removed.

- As repeatedly stated in ECHR rulings, all unlawful orders and resulting practices, including detentions and arrests, stemming from the illegal application of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations must be ended immediately.

- All political prisoners and detainees, including those imprisoned under the Kobanê and Gezi Park cases, must be released, as their continued detention violates ECHR rulings.

- All operations targeting municipalities must be halted immediately. Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Ekrem Imamoğlu, as well as other mayors and municipal officials, must be released.

- Regardless of the charges or convictions, all ill and elderly prisoners must be granted their freedom.

- All cross-border military operations must come to an end.

- To facilitate negotiations and ensure public access to accurate information, the conditions under which Abdullah Öcalan, recognized by both the government and the Kurdish side as a key interlocutor, can work and communicate with representatives of various sectors of society must be restructured in accordance with ECHR principles.

- Article 34 of Law No. 6758, which gave legal status to the appointment of trustees in place of elected local officials during the State of Emergency through Decree-Law No. 674, must be repealed. Local administrations must be granted expanded administrative and financial authority through shared governance with central authorities. Public administration must be restructured based on the principle of decentralization. Reservations placed on the European Charter of Local Self-Government must be lifted, and Turkey must become a party to the additional protocol regulating the right to participation.

- A legal framework for the democratic resolution of the Kurdish question must be established by parliament. The proposed "Commission for Peace and Democratic Resolution," responsible for monitoring the disarmament process, must be formed without delay, based on principles such as equal political party representation, gender equality, gender-sensitive perspectives, qualified majority decision-making, and the inclusion of civil society.

- Political leaders, public figures, and especially members of the media must abandon the language of hostility, domination, and confrontation. Peace cannot be built through the language of war, conflict, and division.

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Final declaration of 'Memory and Justice' conference in Amed announced

ANF | Amed | 24 June 2025

The final declaration of the conference titled 'The road to peace: Memory and Justice,' held on June 21–22 in Amed (Diyarbakır) by the Human Rights Association (IHD), has been made public. A press meeting was held at the IHD Amed branch to announce the declaration, with the participation of IHD co-chair Hüseyin Küçükbalaban.

Küçükbalaban said that they listened to the families and civil society organizations, and that the need for peace was once again strongly felt. Highlighting that the families and victims once again made it clear what steps need to be taken by all parties, Küçükbalaban said: "We have seen and witnessed that some parties have taken important steps over the past eight months. However, we also see that the state has yet to take any serious steps that are visible to society. Despite Devlet Bahçeli's symbolic gestures, his statements about extending a hand and his remarks that the dove of peace cannot fly with one wing, it is clear that the government has not taken any meaningful initiative at this point."

Abdullah Öcalan's 'Call for Peace and a Democratic Society' was followed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) declaring a ceasefire, explained Hüseyin Küçükbalaban. He said: "On May 12, the organization convened its congress and made the decision to disarm. However, the necessary steps to safeguard this process have not been taken. There were expectations for progress on the situation of seriously ill prisoners, political prisoners, and Mr. Öcalan's conditions. But no concrete steps have been taken. Similarly, Devlet Bahçeli's call for the establishment of a commission has not received any response so far. While we acknowledge that the move toward disarmament is important, we also see the end of violations of the right to life as vital. The media continue to report intensified attacks by the Turkish military in Southern Kurdistan (Başur). These attacks pose serious risks both to the PKK militants, who have declared a ceasefire and convened a disarmament congress, and to hopes for peace. New military operations, ongoing clashes, and further loss of life would only sabotage the process. The state must demonstrate a comprehensive political, military, and bureaucratic will to take steps toward building peace. At the very least, military operations must cease and a path towards political dialogue must be opened."

The final declaration was read by Ercan Yılmaz, Chairperson of the IHD Amed Branch.

Yılmaz explained that the conference was carried out with the participation of citizens affected by the conflict process, as well as numerous civil society organizations, professional chambers, researchers, human rights defenders, and academics working in various fields. He emphasized that this broad participation not

only enabled an assessment of the current situation but also strengthened the conference's capacity to bring forward proposals that could contribute meaningfully to peace.

Findings

Yılmaz outlined the identified issues as follows:

'' *Lack of truth and reckoning: The policy of impunity continues, and there has been no official confrontation with past violations.

*Continuation of security-oriented policies: Despite the ongoing process, security-focused approaches and military operations have not been fully abandoned. These remain among the primary obstacles to social peace.

*Exclusion of civil society: Civil society organizations that possess knowledge, experience, and documentation about the conflict are not being adequately included in the ongoing process.

*Weak representation of women, youth, and diverse identity groups: Negotiation processes are often confined to narrow, male-dominated structures. The absence of a women's perspective, in particular, leads to consequences that may jeopardize the process.

*Failure to document collective memory: The lack of documentation of witness testimonies obstructs the path toward confronting the past.

*Lack of a language of peace: The political authorities, especially media outlets close to the government, use a tone that is far removed from the language of peace, undermining public trust in the process.''

Recommendations

Ercan Yılmaz also shared the key proposals that emerged from the conference:

"* In order to achieve lasting social peace, gatherings should be organized where all communities affected by the conflict are represented. Special focus should be placed on initiatives that foster mutual understanding between social groups often labeled as being from "opposing neighborhoods."

* The release of seriously ill and political prisoners, who are among the consequences of the unresolved Kurdish question, requires urgent action by the parliament. Legal practices that violate the principle of equality, particularly those found in the Anti-Terror Law and the Execution of Sentences Law, must be eliminated.

* The release of public officials currently held by the PKK would contribute to the healthy progress of the peace process.

* Rulings issued by the European Court of Human Rights and the Constitutional Court of Turkey that confirm rights violations must be implemented without delay to uphold the principle of legal security and to guarantee the right to a fair trial.

* Civil society actors must be recognized as legitimate stakeholders and actively included in the process.

* Independent truth commissions should be established. State archives must be opened to researchers, and the testimonies of victims should be documented.

* Conditions must be created to enable citizens who have been displaced to return to their villages.

* Public sector workers dismissed by emergency decrees should be reinstated, and legal security must be ensured.

* Women's equal participation in peace processes must be guaranteed.

* The Diyarbakir No. 5 Prison Memory Museum must be completed and opened to the public as soon as possible.

* Mother tongue and cultural rights must be constitutionally guaranteed, based on the principle of equal citizenship.

* The appointment of trustees that violate the right to vote and be elected must be reversed, and elected mayors should be reinstated to their positions.

In his closing remarks, Ercan Yılmaz added: "The testimonies of relatives of the victims have once again revealed the urgent need for a new social foundation rooted in truth and justice. Contributions from participants across different fields throughout the conference made it clear that peace is not only a political issue but also a deeply social one. The breadth of participation and the diversity of perspectives expressed have demonstrated the need for discussions on conflict resolution to be conducted on the basis of pluralism."

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Pervin Buldan: Lasting peace is the most urgent need of our country and the Middle East

ANF | Ankara | 24 June 2025

Pervin Buldan, member of the İmralı Delegation of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and Deputy Speaker of Parliament, spoke at the Parliament's council after being elected as the new Deputy Speaker.

Pervin Buldan paid tribute to Sırrı Süreyya Önder, the former Parliamentary Deputy Speaker of the DEM Party who lost his life in May, and greeted the imprisoned politicians.

Pervin Buldan stated that Önder acted in accordance with a democratic, fair, and pluralistic approach of governance, saying: "He succeeded in uniting everyone in a common feeling, a common emotion. Words were jewels of unique affection in his language. His words, which met with truth, were not meant to de-

stroy, but to repair and build. He knew very well the deepest, most painful wounds of this country, and he strove to find a remedy for them. For this reason, he believed strongly in peace, stood on the side of peace, and walked for peace. He was a very valuable peace activist. His dream of peace is my path. And his memory will always light our way. I express my endless gratitude for his friendship, companionship, and every moment he contributed to the struggle for democracy and peace."

"As I stand here, I will act with a commitment to democratic principles and with impartiality and equality," said Pervin Buldan, continuing: "My efforts will be focused on ensuring that the will of the people is truly reflected in parliament. I will strive to ensure that the voices of all different groups from across the country, especially women, the oppressed, and the marginalized, are heard and listened to on this floor. I will adopt an approach that prioritizes pluralism and participation so that every political opinion and every idea can be freely expressed. In this challenging period we are going through, it is essential that the Grand National Assembly of Turkey fulfills its historic responsibility to build peace in the country and the region. On this basis, the most important agenda item facing parliament is to build an equal and democratic life with democratic laws based on the rule of law, fundamental human rights, and a democratic society, and with a new social contract based on social consensus. It is my greatest hope to work toward this historic responsibility."

Pervin Buldan concluded her speech as follows: "A lasting peace is the most urgent need of our country, our neighboring regions, and the entire Middle East today. With this in mind, the most important address for the fundamental steps that must be taken in the legal and political arena to ensure that the climate of peace becomes permanent and that the democratic resolution process can proceed on a secure foundation is, of course, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Honorable members of parliament, as members of the 28th term parliament, we can present an honorable peace and a democratic republic to 86 million people. There is no obstacle in our way. I believe that we will achieve this together. Peace is the responsibility of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. As I conclude my remarks, I extend the following call to you all, to the entire parliament, from where the beloved Sırrı Süreyya Önder left off: let us all together become the leaders of peace."

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DEM Party meets with the Minister of Justice

ANF | Ankara | 24 June 2025

The Group Deputy Chairpersons of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit and Sezai Temelli, and Öztürk Türkdoğan, Co-Spokesperson of the DEM Party's Law and Human Rights Commission, met with the Turkish Minister of Justice Yılmaz Tunç on Tuesday. The meeting at the Ministry of Justice lasted one hour.

Speaking to the press after the meeting, Sezai Temelli said, "It was a very important meeting for us. There are very serious problems arising from the practices in prisons. We held mutual consultations on these issues and also expressed our search for a solution. We hope that the ministry will take the necessary steps and the problems are resolved as soon as possible. That was the framework of our meeting. We emphasized the urgency of finding a solution. The minister said they were aware of the problem and were working on

it. We requested that this issue be brought onto the agenda without delay. The prisoners are struggling for their lives. While the priority is sick prisoners, we also raised the issue of all prisoners affected by the implementation of these measures."

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Erdoğan: We are pursuing the process as a state policy

ANF | 24 June 2025

On February 27, Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan made a historic call that caught the attention of the entire world. In his call, he stated that in order to shift the Kurdish issue from a grounds of violence to one of democratic politics and law, the first condition was for the PKK to convene a congress, dissolve itself, and lay down its arms.

In response to this call, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) held its 12th Congress between May 5 and 7 in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) with the participation of 232 delegates. At the congress, all delegates unanimously decided to end activities carried out under the name of the PKK.

While Öcalan's call opened the doors to a new historical, political, and social process, the PKK's decision stands as a historic step that has strengthened the hope for a shared future between the Turkish and Kurdish peoples.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan spoke to reporters before leaving for The Hague, Netherlands, to attend the NATO Summit.

Referring to the process that began following Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan's February 27 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society', Erdoğan said, "We are determined to bring this process, which we are conducting as a state policy, to a successful conclusion."

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İmralı Delegation: The process has reached an important stage

ANF | Ankara | 26 June 2025

The Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Imrali Delegation members Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar met with the Speaker of the Parliament, Numan Kurtulmuş, in Ankara on Thursday.

Speaking to the press after the meeting, which was closed to the press, Pervin Buldan said that it was somewhat of a courtesy visit as Kurtulmuş has been re-elected the Speaker of Parliament three weeks ago.

"At the same time, we discussed and consulted on the stages reached in the peace process. Our visit, which was quite positive and constructive, lasted about half an hour," she said.

More meetings will follow

Buldan thanked Kurtulmuş for his interest and attention, saying, "We will be meeting with him more frequently in the coming days as the process has reached a certain stage. We will share details in the coming days, but I would like to emphasize that we have reached an important stage."

Pervin Buldan stated that they would also meet with MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, CHP (Republican People's Party) Chairman Özgür Özel, and AKP (Justice and Development Party) Chairman Erdoğan within two weeks before going to İmralı for a meeting with Abdullah Öcalan.

"We believe that it is important for this process to move forward through dialogue and within the parliament," she added.

The Parliament will play a vital role

Mithat Sancar said the following about the parliamentary commission that is expected to be formed in relation to the process: "It has been discussed for a long time that the Parliament must step in for this process to continue with strengthened social participation and support and for more solid steps to be taken towards peace. This was also our wish. There was a consensus among the public and political parties that the most important step to be taken in this regard was the establishment of a commission in the Parliament. Talks are ongoing regarding the nature of the commission, its working conditions, and other details. We have no doubt that the involvement of Parliament will put this process on a much firmer footing. Parliament will play a vital role in terms of social legitimacy, legal assurance, and steady progress. Our Speaker of Parliament is very determined and committed to this issue. Seeing that he is open to all kinds of work on this issue is an important opportunity for Parliament to play its role. We consider it important for all parties to express their criticisms and objections constructively during this process, as this will strengthen dialogue and the search for consensus in Parliament. Yes, everyone may have criticisms, objections, or reservations. However, expressing these in a democratic manner and with a view to reaching consensus in Parliament will greatly contribute to social peace."

Answering questions from journalists, Pervin Buldan said their meeting with Erdoğan will take place as soon as possible, likely next week, as they are waiting for a response.

Our friends in prison must be released immediately

Buldan was also asked about the newly announced reasoned decision in the Kobanî trial. The reasoned decision states that the defendants were tried on charges of "establishing or leading a terrorist organization," "aiding in the disruption of the unity and integrity of the state," and "incitement to commit a crime." With the announcement of the reasoned decision, consisting of 32,630 pages, the appeal process for the politicians on trial has officially begun. The appeal process is only seven days.

"The reasoned decision does not contain any tangible evidence of a crime committed by our friends, who have been held in prison for 7.5 years without any justification or legal basis. All our friends, Figen Yük-

sekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş in the first place, must be released, and this unlawfulness must come to an end immediately. When we look at the reasoned decision, we see that the Kobanî Case is null and void."

The commission is meant to be established as soon as possible

Asked about the number of members and details of the commission, Mithat Sancar said that Kurtulmuş is currently awaiting written opinions from other parties: "Once those opinions are received, we will present our own proposal. After that, an assessment will be conducted. If necessary, an additional round of discussions will be held. The composition, authorities, working methods, and establishment of the commission will be determined by consensus. This is what Mr. Numan Kurtulmuş has conveyed to us. He said he would do everything in his power to establish a commission based on a common view among all parties. This is also our request and desire: that the commission be established as soon as possible and have a structure that will function effectively. He is indicating a timeframe before the parliament adjourns. It is understood that this will be the case."

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Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg enters its 14th year

ANF | Strasbourg | 26 June 2025

The Freedom for Öcalan Vigil, which was launched in Strasbourg on June 25, 2012, with the aim of achieving the physical freedom of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and ending the İmralı torture system, continues with determination.

The vigil is held in Strasbourg, where institutions like the Council of Europe, the CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture), and the European Court of Human Rights and the European Parliament are located.

The action, which is carried out every week in front of the Council of Europe by groups of Kurds living in Europe and their friends, has entered its 14th year.

The vigil also aims to promote Abdullah Öcalan's ideas, raise awareness of the Kurdish people's struggle, and build public pressure on international institutions to take responsibility.

Zülfü Bingöl, one of the organizers of the round-the-clock vigil for the past eight years, stated that the action will continue with the same determination, saying, "The freedom of Leader Öcalan is our main goal. Leader Öcalan is the will of the Kurdish people. Without the liberation of his will, the liberation of the Kurdish people is not possible."

The action, now in its 680th week, was taken over this week by members of the Democratic Kurdish Community Center in Bern, Switzerland. This week's vigil group includes Dilovan Soğun, Metin Mintaş, and Mehmet Leblebici.

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Öcalan: Sheikh Said's line will attain its true meaning through today's democratic nation paradigm

ANF | Brussels | 27 June 2025

Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan sent a message to the conference "The Sheikh Said Uprising, the Azadî Movement, Sheikh Said and his companions, memory and collective resistance in its 100th year" in Brussels. The message Öcalan sent to the conference said the following:

"To the 1925 Uprising's 100th Anniversary Conference

Azadi Society, Sheikh Said and Companions, Memory and Collective Opposition

The historical reality we commemorate in the person of Sheikh Said goes beyond a mere uprising or local rebellion. This reality is a traditional struggle for existence that has left deep traces in the social memory of the Kurdish people. That struggle is the rebellion of Kurdish society against the imposed monist mentality, manifested with faith, tradition, and will.

Sheikh Said, as a pioneer who took on social responsibility in the circumstances of his time, took a strong stand against the policies of denial directed at the Kurdish will. This uprising, which found meaning in his person, was not only political but also a social reaction. This reaction is a historical expression of the Kurds' loyalty to their own truth.

The centralist and monist politics implemented in the early years of the Republic aimed to eradicate the Kurdish people from existence. Sheikh Said opposed this policy, saying, "We wanted justice, but you gave us death," and carried the voice of a people to the gallows. These words are the simplest and most powerful demonstration that truth does not retreat in the face of oppression. Additionally, his words, "Dear prosecutor, we were meant to have a feast with lamb?", are an expression of the conspiracy he faced. His words, "My grandchildren will surely avenge me," express the hope for resistance he handed down to future generations.

There is another point that should be emphasized here: as with every historical resistance, the uprising led by Sheikh Said was a product of its own time. Relating it to today's struggle for freedom is possible not by romanticizing it, but by drawing structural lessons and reestablishing historical continuity along a libertarian and democratic line.

I have taken up this tradition as a basis for the revolutionary transformation of free Kurdishness. The struggle I am waging aims to bring together the meaningful legacy of resistance from the past with a future system based on democracy, pluralism, and social peace. Sheikh Said's line will attain its true meaning when it is combined with today's democratic nation paradigm.

Free Kurdishness is possible through loyalty to the history, culture, and moral-political values of the people. Our people must be vigilant in this regard and uphold the sacred legacy left by their historical leaders.

On this basis, I pay respectful tribute to Sheikh Said and his companions; I once again emphasize my determination to uphold the values of their struggle on the path of freedom and truth, and I extend my greetings to all participants with the hope that your conference will be successful.

Abdullah Öcalan

İmralı, June 2025"

—★—

Prisons

Journalist Erkılınç denied medical treatment in prison

Zeynep Kuray | Istanbul | 22 June 2025

Journalist Perihan Sevda Erkılınç, a reporter for *Özgür Gelecek*, who suffers from celiac disease and asthma, was unlawfully detained during a home raid just before May Day and is now in worsening health. Eren Keskin, co-chair of the Human Rights Association (IHD), visited her in Bakırköy Women's Prison and spoke to ANF, drawing attention to the fact that Erkılınç is being denied medical treatment in prison and has lost significant weight.

"Police prevented her from taking asthma medication and using the toilet alone"

Keskin visited Erkılınç on Thursday, 19 June, and said that the long-time journalist for *Özgür Gelecek* was detained during a house raid on 29 April, just before May Day. During the raid, police tried to prevent Erkılınç, who has asthma, from taking her inhaler with her. "Sevda was only able to take her medication after persistently explaining the severity of her condition to a police officer. They even tried to stop her from using the bathroom alone during the raid. She had to argue about this too and was only allowed to relieve herself after a female officer left the door slightly ajar," said Keskin.

"Strip search was imposed"

Keskin noted that Erkılınç was held in custody for three days at Vatan Police Headquarters before being unlawfully arrested at Çağlayan Courthouse. On top of this, she was subjected to a strip search upon arrival at Bakırköy Women's Prison. Keskin stated that Erkılınç resisted and refused this degrading practice, entering the prison without being subjected to a strip search.

"Access to infirmary denied"

Keskin explained that Erkılınç suffers from both asthma and celiac disease, and added: "People with celiac disease must follow a strict gluten-free diet, or they can suffer immediate attacks. When I saw her, she was extremely thin because she cannot eat. Although she informed the prison administration about her condi-

tion, she said they made it very difficult for her to get the proper nutrition. Sometimes they bring food she can eat, but mostly they don't. She said they only give her gluten-free bread once or twice a week, so she is forced to survive on just cheese. She also stated that her requests to visit the infirmary have been denied, which means she can't access medication either."

"Still no indictment"

Keskin also pointed out that although Erkılınç was detained on the grounds of May Day, an indictment has still not been prepared: "Each day she remains in prison further deteriorates her health. She is truly ill and dangerously underweight. Prison is not a suitable environment for someone with celiac disease. She is not properly fed, nor allowed to see a doctor. These are serious problems. Moreover, Sevda is a journalist, and this is known to everyone. The only reason for her arrest is her journalistic activities. This in itself constitutes a major rights violation."

"She must be released immediately"

Stressing that the imprisonment of journalists for their professional work is a grave injustice, Keskin said: "On the one hand, there is talk of peace, but on the other, repression against freedom of expression and the right to organize is intensifying. People are being arrested for doing their jobs and are losing their health while being held in prison for months. This is unacceptable. Sevda Erkılınç must be released immediately."

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Report exposes serious human rights violations in Bolu Prison

ANF | 23 June 2025

DEM Party MP Newroz Uysal Aslan has published a detailed report documenting severe and systematic human rights violations in Bolu F-Type High-Security Prison. The report outlines numerous infringements on the fundamental rights of political prisoners—from medical care to freedom of expression—and calls on the Turkish Grand National Assembly to respond urgently.

Based on observations and feedback gathered over the past three weeks, the report contains what Uysal Aslan describes as "alarming" evidence of structural deficiencies in the prison system. The MP calls for these practices to be halted immediately and for an independent investigation by the parliamentary Human Rights Commission.

Restricted access to medical care

Of particular concern is the situation of ill prisoners. According to the report, many are either not transferred to hospitals at all or are subjected to degrading conditions during medical visits—such as being shackled or placed under armed guard—which leads some to forgo treatment entirely. For severely ill inmates, this could be life-threatening.

Suppression of the Kurdish language

Another major concern is the treatment of Kurdish-speaking prisoners. Letters written in their mother language are reportedly withheld on the grounds that prison staff cannot understand them. The administration allegedly requires prisoners to pay for translation services themselves. This is viewed as a clear violation of the right to communicate in one's mother tongue and as part of a broader repressive assimilation policy.

Censorship of books, newspapers, and personal notes

Inmates are limited to possessing three books, and critical publications such as Özgür Politika, Ronahî, and Demokratik Modernite are frequently confiscated. Even personal notebooks and calendars are reportedly seized—an act Uysal Aslan describes as a direct assault on freedom of expression and information within the prison system.

Interference with the 'Right to Legal Defense'

The report also highlights troubling restrictions on prisoners' right to communicate with their lawyers and MPs. Letters are often withheld under vague claims that they may cause "public outrage." This, the MP argues, not only impairs legal defense but also infringes on the public's right to be informed.

"Good Conduct" used as a tool of coercion

The report states that assessments of "good conduct"—a requirement for early release—are increasingly being used arbitrarily to pressure inmates. Political beliefs or associations within the prison are cited as reasons for denying sentence reductions. Disciplinary boards are effectively assuming judicial powers, while appeals against their decisions are routinely dismissed without proper justification.

Call to Parliament

Uysal Aslan urges parliament, particularly the Human Rights Commission, to take immediate action. She demands:

Unrestricted access to healthcare for ill prisoners,

An end to all forms of discrimination against the Kurdish language,

Lifting of censorship on publications and correspondence,

And full legal oversight of disciplinary and parole procedures.

"We call for prison practices that respect human dignity," said the MP. "Justice must not be reduced to vengeance—it must be rooted in healing and restoration. Bolu's F-Type prison is just one example. But the fight for justice will continue until the system truly changes."

—★—

Bombardment targets Evin Prison in Tehran

ANF | Tehran | 23 June 2025

The Evin Prison, one of Iran's most notorious political prisons, was targeted in an attack in Tehran.

According to local sources, loud explosions were heard in the area and thick smoke rose in the vicinity of the prison.

The Iranian state news channel Fars published surveillance camera footage allegedly showing the impact at one of the prison entrances. According to the footage, a drone or a projectile with limited explosive power was used. Some social media accounts report that prisoners were injured. Parts of the wall and ceiling of the women's wing reportedly collapsed.

Following the attack, Iranian officials closed all entrances and exits to the prison. A number of ambulances and fire crews were dispatched to the area. While the Iranian government has not yet made an official statement on the incident, Israeli officials have neither confirmed nor denied the attack.

Journalists, human rights defenders, political activists, and opponents of the regime are held in Evin Prison, which is notorious for serious human rights violations.

There are many female political prisoners currently imprisoned in Evin, including Pakshan Azizi, Warisha Moradi, Mahboubeh Rezaei, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi. Additionally, many male detainees who have been convicted of political crimes are also being held there.

Built in 1972 during the reign of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Evin Prison had a capacity of 300 inmates. After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, it was converted into a prison complex with a capacity of 15,000 inmates. In the 1980s, it came to the fore with allegations of torture and executions of opponents. The prison has previously drawn international attention due to numerous fires, riots, and human rights violations.

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Women in Evin Prison warn against “imperialist liberation illusions”

ANF | 25 June 2025

In a powerful open letter, four incarcerated women activists held in Tehran's Evin prison have condemned Israel’s airstrikes on Iran and warned against the growing tendency among some opposition circles to place hopes in foreign-backed regime change. The letter, published by the Persian service of ANF News Agency,

denounces both the Iranian regime and Western imperialist interventions as part of the same repressive system.

The signatories – Varisheh Moradi, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, Sakineh Parvaneh, and Reyhaneh Ansarinejad – described the Israeli bombing of Evin prison as a calculated escalation targeting defenseless detainees. They accused the Israeli state of committing war crimes in Gaza and systematically dismantling regional autonomy. The objective of these attacks, they argue, is not democracy but "a weak and submissive Middle East."

"The idea that our liberation can come through foreign powers is a dangerous illusion," the letter states. "These powers have never brought freedom – only exploitation, war, and new forms of domination. The only path forward lies in resistance from below, through self-organization and the power of society."

Resistance, not proxy politics

The political message of the letter is clear: neither Iran's authoritarian regime nor the "imperial fantasies" of Washington or Tel Aviv offer a genuine path to democratization. The authors sharply criticized efforts – such as those by exiled figure Reza Pahlavi – to portray Israeli military aggression as an opportunity for regime change.

"Those who support this war are traitors to Iran, traitors to the peoples of the Middle East, and traitors to the decades-long struggle of the oppressed," the women write. "Future generations will remember with shame those who stand on the corpses of the defenseless and trample them."

The signatories

The four women are among the most prominent feminist voices in Iran. Varisheh Moradi is a member of the Community of Free Women of Eastern Kurdistan (KJAR) and previously fought against the Islamic State (ISIS) in Kobanê. For her advocacy of women's rights, autonomy, and Kurdish cultural identity – and her participation in the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" protests following the femicide of Jina Mahsa Amini – she was sentenced to death for alleged "armed rebellion."

The other three signatories are serving sentences of several years for their involvement in women's rights activism, labor organizing, and journalism. Together, they represent a generation of young activists confronting the intersecting systems of patriarchy and state repression.

Condemnation of Israeli attack on Evin Prison

Evin prison was bombed by Israeli fighter jets on Monday, resulting in multiple casualties among prisoners, judicial staff, and visitors, according to Iranian authorities. Verified information remains limited. Evin is widely known as a symbol of political repression, housing numerous political prisoners including ethnic minorities, women's rights defenders, and dissidents.

In their statement, the four women called on international human rights organizations to reject the proxy-war narrative and instead prioritize the protection of detainees. Their demands include an immediate ceasefire and the release of all political prisoners.

A struggle on two fronts

The letter from Evin is a clear rejection of a geopolitical logic that seeks to replace authoritarianism through militarized intervention. Instead, the activists articulate a grassroots, radically democratic vision driven by feminist, labor, and ethnic movements resisting all forms of domination – whether internal or external.

"Our hope lies not in drones or missiles, but in the resistance of our bodies, our voices, and our solidarity."

—★—

ÖHD report: Release of 93 prisoners blocked in Marmara prisons

ANF | Istanbul | 26 June 2025

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) Istanbul Branch shared findings from its report covering the period from January to June 2025. The report documents systematic rights violations in prisons across the Marmara Region, including prolonged solitary confinement, strip searches, denial of the right to healthcare, arbitrary disciplinary punishments, and politically motivated obstructions to release.

The report stated that prison administrations blocked the conditional release of 93 prisoners on arbitrary grounds such as "lack of remorse" and "not disassociating from the organization." It was noted that these practices have become systematic in facilities such as Bolu, Tekirdağ, and Bakırköy prisons.

The report also highlighted that there are currently 47 seriously ill prisoners in the region. Despite receiving forensic medical reports stating they were unfit to remain in prison, some have not been released. One example cited was an 85-year-old prisoner and another with both arms amputated.

Strip searches, handcuffed examinations, and publication bans

The report documented the imposition of strip searches and handcuffed medical examinations on prisoners in Çorlu and Gebze prisons. It also noted that Kurdish-language and opposition publications were withheld, social rights were restricted, and communication was obstructed.

Call from Abdullah Öcalan

In the final section of the report, the ÖHD recalled Abdullah Öcalan's 27 February 2025 call for peace and a democratic society, emphasizing that lifting the isolation imposed in Imrali Prison is crucial for achieving social peace. The report concluded by stressing the urgent need for comprehensive, human rights-based reforms in both the prison system and broader state institutions.

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KHRN: Iran secretly executed three Kurdish prisoners

ANF | 26 June 2025

Kurdish prisoners Edris Ali, Azad Shojaei and Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul were executed Wednesday morning in Orumiyeh Central Prison for alleged "espionage and collaboration" with Israel, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported.

According to the report, the three men were executed in secret, without being allowed final visits with their families.

Ali and Shojaei, from Sardasht in West Azerbaijan Province, and Rasoul, from Qaladiza in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, had previously been sentenced to death on charges of "enmity against God" (moharebeh) and "spreading corruption on Earth" (efsad-e fel-arz) through alleged "espionage for Israel".

The three prisoners were executed in haste despite the fact that the Supreme Court had not yet formally communicated their death sentences to their lawyers.

The men were transferred to solitary confinement on 24 June in preparation for execution, and were executed in the early hours of 25 June, without any prior notice to their families or legal representatives.

After learning of the executions, the families went to the prison, but the authorities have so far refused to hand over the bodies.

Mizan News Agency, affiliated with Iran's judiciary, confirmed the executions in a report published yesterday morning, and stated: "Edris Ali, son of Saleh, Azad Shojaei, son of Abdolrahman, and Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul, son of Ahmad, who had smuggled equipment into the country for the purpose of assassinating figures, were arrested and tried on charges of enmity against God, and of spreading corruption on Earth by collaborating with foreign governments hostile to Iran in favour of the Zionist regime. Following the completion of due legal procedures and the confirmation and finalisation of the verdicts by the Supreme Court, Edris Ali, Azad Shojaei, and Rasoul Ahmad were punished for their actions and hanged this morning."

However, contrary to the claims of the judiciary, the three prisoners, who worked as kolbars and tradesmen in border regions, denied all accusations of collaborating with Israel throughout their interrogations and court proceedings.

Even the official report from the Ministry of Intelligence states that the men were unaware of the contents of a shipment they brought into Iran, which may have contained equipment used in the assassination of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh in 2020.

Other individuals involved in transporting the shipment from Sardasht to Tehran were arrested but later acquitted.

Ali and Shojaei, who are from the border village of Duleh-ye Garm in Sardasht, and Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul, from Qaladiza in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, were arrested by Ministry of Intelligence forces in Sardasht in July 2023 and taken to the Ministry's detention centre in Orumiyeh, West Azerbaijan Province.

The three men were held in solitary confinement for several months and subjected to severe physical and psychological torture in an attempt to force them to confess to the charges of "espionage for Israel" and "transporting equipment used in the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh".

During their initial interrogations, they denied all the charges; however, under torture, they were forced to make false confessions.

After more than three months in detention, they were allowed to make their first phone call to their families, and after more than eight months in solitary confinement, they were transferred to Orumiyeh Central Prison.

Their trial was held on 23 September 2023 at Branch Two of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Orumiyeh, presided over by Judge Ghorban Shahini and Judge Esmail Bazarkari as advisor, and they were sentenced to death a month later.

They were denied access to legal counsel during the investigative phase and were only permitted to have lawyers once the case had reached court.

In a separate case, they were sentenced to three years and seven months in prison and fined for "alcohol smuggling".

On 5 November 2024, Judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangiri stated during a weekly briefing that three people had been sentenced to death in an investigation into the assassination of Fakhrizadeh.

Without naming the three men, Jahangiri noted that the defendants had been charged with "espionage for Israel" and "importing assassination equipment disguised as alcoholic beverages" through West Azerbaijan Province.

He said: "In the case of the assassination of Martyr Fakhrizadeh, three people were sentenced to death at the preliminary stage for spying for Israel. In this case, eight people were arrested in West Azerbaijan Province, three of whom smuggled the equipment used in the assassination under the guise of trafficking alcohol. These three individuals have been sentenced to death in the first instance and their cases are now under appeal".

After their lawyers filed appeals, the case was referred to Branch Nine of the Supreme Court. However, before the death sentences were formally communicated, the prisoners were executed.

The lawyers only discovered through the official judicial portal Sana that the Supreme Court had upheld the death sentences on 21 June 2025.

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Release of former co-mayor of Karayazı arbitrarily postponed

ANF | 27 June 2025

Melike Göksu, who was elected co-mayor of Karayazı district in Erzurum in the 2019 local elections with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), was arrested on September 18, 2019, on charges of "being a member of an illegal organization." Göksu was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months in prison, and was replaced by a trustee appointed by the Ministry of the Interior.

Göksu faced arbitrary obstruction despite being eligible for conditional release.

Held in Sincan Women's Closed Prison in Ankara, Göksu had her release prevented for three months by a decision of the Prison Administration and Observation Board on the grounds of "not attending the board meeting".

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Kurdish activist detained in Iran denied treatment despite serious health concerns

ANF | 27 June 2025

Ghader Kharamanfar, a 60-year-old Kurdish civil rights activist held without charge, has been denied medical treatment in Mahabad Prison despite suffering from several serious chronic health conditions, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported.

Kharamanfar, who has been in custody since December 2024, is suffering from coronary artery disease, fatty liver, high blood pressure, and knee osteoarthritis.

Both prison doctors and a specialist physician have described his health as "concerning", emphasising the urgent need for his hospitalisation outside prison facilities.

According to KHRN, the political prisoner was transferred in handcuffs and shackles to a hospital in Mahabad on 19 June, where he was examined by a specialist doctor for only one hour. Despite the physician's diagnosis that he required hospitalisation and immediate treatment, he was sent back to Mahabad Prison after being given only medication.

KHRN has also learned that his continued detention under a temporary order is due to opposition from the Ministry of Intelligence and the Mahabad Prosecutor's Office, despite the fact that he has been confined for more than six months.

Kharamanfar, from Mahabad in West Azerbaijan Province, was arrested without a warrant by Ministry of Intelligence agents on 15 December 2024 during a wave of arrests targeting Kurdish activists and civilians.

He was initially held in the Ministry's detention centre in Orumiyeh before being transferred to Mahabad Prison two months later.

On 4 February 2025, Hajar Amiya, the wife of an activist, was summoned to the Ministry of Intelligence office in Mahabad, where she was interrogated and threatened for several hours.

Officials warned her that her continued activism would result in the arrest and house detention of other family members.

Agents also contacted her children using her mobile phone and issued threats to them.

Kharamanfar has been repeatedly summoned and arrested by the Intelligence Organisation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Ministry of Intelligence in Mahabad in recent years.

One of his children, Aram Kharamanfar, was also expelled from Maragheh University a few years ago as part of the continuing pressure on the family.

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Military aggression and occupation

German government: We have no information about Kelly Freygang

ANF | 21 June 2025

Germany's Foreign Ministry announced that it does not possess any information beyond media coverage concerning Hamburg-born Kelly Freygang, who was killed by a Turkish drone in Kurdistan. This statement was made in an official response to a written parliamentary inquiry submitted by Cansu Özdemir, foreign policy spokesperson for the Left Party.

According to the German Federal Government, it has no further knowledge about the internationalist YJA Star fighter Kelly Freygang (Tîjda Zagros), who was killed by a Turkish armed drone in the South Kurdistan region, beyond what has been reported in the press.

Last week, Hamburg MP Cansu Özdemir posed the following question to the government: "31-year-old Hamburg-born Kelly Freygang lost her life on April 29, 2025, in an attack by a Turkish drone. It is known that German-made weapons technology or components thereof have been used in Bayraktar-type drones. A report published by Civaka Azad on June 3 also stated that Kelly Freygang was targeted by such a drone. Can the German government definitively say that German-made weapons played no role in Kelly Freygang's death?"

"No information on the Kelly Freygang case"

In its written reply, the Foreign Ministry said: "The federal government has no indication that it possesses information about the Kelly Freygang case beyond that which has appeared in the mainstream media."

Cansu Özdemir: The government is hiding behind its ignorance

Speaking to ANF, Cansu Özdemir said she will continue to pursue the issue, saying: "Instead of condemning Turkey's illegal attacks under international law and investigating whether German-exported weapons played a role in Kelly Freygang's death, the federal government once again hides behind its ignorance. In 2023, Germany exported weapons worth €346.8 million to Turkey. This includes components used in Bayraktar drones. The weapons system responsible for Kelly Freygang's death is exactly that."

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Internal Security Forces Spokesperson: ISIS mercenaries are trying to reorganize in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | Deir Ez-Zor | 22 June 2025

Mehmûd El Xelûf, spokesperson for the Internal Security Forces in the Deir ez-Zor Canton, pointed out that regional conflicts and crises between forces in the Middle East have led to the resurgence of ISIS, particularly in the Deir ez-Zor region.

Speaking to ANHA, El Xelûf said that the vast desert area in Syria, especially west of the Euphrates, has become a living space for ISIS mercenaries, providing them with opportunities to become active. He added, "The security vacuum that emerged after the fall of the regime and the absence of an organized military force have allowed ISIS cells to roam freely in these areas."

El Xelûf noted that Internal Security Forces and the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces), with support from the International Coalition forces, carried out operations against ISIS mercenaries in Deir ez-Zor over the past four months, resulting in the capture of numerous members and leaders of the organization.

During interrogations, the captured mercenaries confessed that ISIS was attempting to reorganize and recruit children in particular, and preparing to carry out attacks against security forces and civilians in the region.

Providing information on the measures they have taken, El Xelûf said that the Internal Security Forces reinforced checkpoints in Deir ez-Zor, increased night and day patrols, and tightened controls at border crossings.

Mehmûd El Xelûf called on the people of Deir ez-Zor to cooperate with the security forces and to inform them of any suspicious activity, saying, "Security is a shared responsibility, and social solidarity is the first rule of defense against terrorism."

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Attack on a church in Damascus: at least 15 killed

ANF | 22 June 2025

A suicide bomber exploded himself during Sunday mass at the St. Elias Church, in the Diwêla neighborhood in eastern Damascus.

The attacker entered the church and first opened fire on worshipers with a Kalashnikov, and then detonated an explosive belt.

Security sources reported that at least 15 people were killed and 15 others injured. Some local media outlets stated that children were among the wounded.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. However, the Syrian Ministry of Interior stated that a member of ISIS entered the church, shot at people inside, and then blew himself up using an explosive vest.

This incident marks the first suicide bombing in Damascus since the downfall of Bashar al-Assad's rule in December.

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PJAK calls on Azerbaijani Turkish people to strengthen their unity with the Kurdish people

ANF | 23 June 2025

The Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) Council has released a statement calling on the Azerbaijani Turkish people and pro-freedom organisations to strengthen their unity with the Kurdish people in the face of the ongoing war between Iran and Israel. The PJAK emphasised the importance of forming joint civil institutions to confront potential threats and declared its readiness to cooperate with Azerbaijani democratic organisations.

The PJAK statement on Monday includes the following:

"Recent developments and escalations in the Middle East, particularly the outbreak of war between the governments of Iran and Israel, have reached a new level. Undoubtedly, a war of such magnitude will have

a historic and long-lasting impact on the fate and future of the Iranian people. This is equally true for both the Kurdish and Azerbaijani Turkish peoples. Due to the geographical proximity of Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks in areas such as Urmia, the war and related developments will have serious consequences for both peoples.

Throughout history, whenever the Azerbaijani Turkish and Kurdish peoples have joined forces in the face of challenges, embracing sisterhood, brotherhood, cooperation and coexistence, they have achieved remarkable outcomes. Conversely, whenever these two peoples have been divided by ill-wishers and foreign interference, both have suffered bitter and unfortunate consequences. The memory of difficult times endured through unity and joint efforts, as well as bitter times of division and tension caused by enemies and adversaries, is firmly etched in the collective memory of Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks alike.

In this period, with the shadow of war between the Islamic Republic and Israel looming over both peoples, it is only appropriate that we turn to our historical experiences. This will enable us to navigate this dangerous historical turning point together and emerge safely.

The Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) has always endeavoured to transform the shared history of Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks into a valuable opportunity to advance freedom struggles and establish a democratic system, both in thought and in action. Now, more than ever, we are committed to this effort. This is because, amid the war engulfing Iran, the government's security apparatus and those intent on stirring up discord between Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks are trying to spread fear and mistrust, creating atmospheres of Turkophobia and Kurdophobia among these interconnected peoples.

We explicitly declare that PJAK will mobilise all its resources to strengthen the valuable bond between our two peoples, minimising the damage caused by the current war. We are accountable to both peoples and will utilise all our capabilities to thwart the malicious plans of the Iranian regime and other regional adversaries.

In this context, we propose that Kurdish and Azerbaijani Turkish civil and grassroots organisations take the initiative in forming joint institutions. These institutions should be established in cities and regions that are the shared homeland of both peoples and work together to confront the risks and potential harms posed by this war.

The Free Life Party of Kurdistan is ready to cooperate with all Azerbaijani organisations seeking freedom and democracy to strengthen the spirit of democratic convergence between our two peoples. By doing so, we can fulfill our historical duty to confront the destructive effects of war on and prevent the regime and other opportunistic regional states from creating division between Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks.

We firmly believe that the Kurdish and Azerbaijani Turkish peoples have the ability to manage their own affairs and support each other without any outside interference. Therefore, we urge the governments of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan to refrain from promoting any policy that portrays Kurds as a threat to the Azerbaijani Turks, if they truly care about their interests. Any attempt to foster Kurdophobia and depict Kurds as dangerous will only divert the Azerbaijani Turks' democratic struggle in Iran from its rightful path and serve only the interests of the Islamic Republic regime.

We, the Free Life Party of Kurdistan, declare to the Azerbaijani Turks: you are our sisters and brothers. Rest assured that you face no threat from us. In these dangerous times, when war is spreading everywhere, we are fully committed to preventing any harm from reaching you. This is because, in our view, the freedom and realisation of the rights of the Kurdish and Azerbaijani Turkish peoples are deeply tied to the nature of the relationship between them.

The long-denied freedom and rights that both the Kurdish and Azerbaijani Turkish peoples have dreamed of for decades can only be achieved by extending hands of friendship, building comprehensive cooperation, navigating the current turbulent period, and constructing a shared democratic and free future. Whatever responsibilities fall to us in this regard, we will carry them out with sensitivity and vigilance. Likewise, we hope that other political and civil organisations will join us as partners and allies on this path."

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Syrian Democratic Council condemns the attack on St. Elias Church: "a horrific act of terror"

ANF | 23 June 2025

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD or SDC) released a statement condemning Sunday's attack that targeted worshipers who gathered for Sunday Mass at St. Elias Church in the Dweila neighborhood of Damascus. The attack left a number of civilians dead and injured, and caused significant damage to the church.

MSD stated that the bombing had a profound impact across Syria, leaving a deep mark on the national consciousness: "It comes at a time when the country is still struggling to find a path to safety and stability in the midst of a complex transitional period following the collapse of the previous regime."

"The SDC regards this attack as a grave breach of international humanitarian law and a violation of Syria's religious, national, and moral values. It is a deliberate attempt to sow fear, undermine coexistence, and destabilize the rich mosaic of Syrian society. The desecration of a house of worship, combined with the targeting of innocent lives, constitutes a double crime—one that offends the conscience of humanity and defies every ethical and legal standard."

The SDC extended their heartfelt condolences and solidarity to the families of the victims, sharing their grief at this moment of profound sorrow. "The SDC reaffirms that the Syrian people—across all ethnic and religious identities—remain united in their rejection of terrorism and extremism. No act of violence will shake their commitment to living in dignity, security, and peace," it noted.

According to SDC, this bombing is not merely an isolated tragedy but a stark warning: "It highlights the urgent and growing security threats facing Syria in the post-authoritarian era, especially following the fall of the regime on December 8, 2024. The timing and location of this attack mark a serious and unprecedented escalation. It highlights a new level of threat that cannot be overlooked. This development calls for

a reassessment of the country's overall security posture. It also necessitates a comprehensive review of current strategies for protecting civilians and combating terrorism."

The SDC reiterated its firm condemnation of this abhorrent crime and emphasized that a safe and stable Syria can only be built on a foundation of democratic consensus and genuine political cooperation. "The only path forward lies in collective national action to establish a civil, rights-based state. Such a state must guarantee fundamental freedoms, protect all communities, and put an end to violence and terrorism in all its forms and sources," the statement concluded.

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PJAK Co-Chair: The only community that can lead change in the Middle East is the Kurds

ANF | 24 June 2025

In an extensive interview to RojNews, PJAK Co-Chair Peyman Viyan shared her views on the Iran-Israel war, the Kurds' stance, and possible solutions.

Peyman Viyan explained their view of the current war as follows:

'This war will determine the fate of the Middle East for all sides'

"This war in the Middle East may escalate and grow because it will determine the fate of the Middle East for all sides. There are hegemonic powers and nation states in this war, which is a fight between hegemonic powers and nation states. On the other hand, there is a people who seek their own governance in their own hands. Therefore, this war is not progressing as the hegemonic powers or the nation-states have envisioned. There is also an alternative power: the power of the people… This power is defined as the third line or power. It is based on the will and leadership of the people. Therefore, we can say that this war will bring about significant changes."

'The regime has not responded positively to objections'

"As of 2010, a war was waged through proxy forces affiliated with states. Now, the war has begun directly between states," said Peyman Viyan, adding: "This war against Iran is the result of Iran's despotic policies, which insist on dictatorship, remain closed to change, insist on torture and execution to the end, suppress internally, and externally base themselves on the Shiite Crescent, which has been broken. Society and the people are disturbed by these policies. The regime has taken no steps to respond positively to these objections."

'Iran was given two choices'

Peyman Viyan continued: "They gave Iran two choices: war or surrender. Of course, they wanted Iran to surrender completely. When that didn't happen, they resorted to general pressure and a war strategy. Iran is the Middle East. Therefore, the design of Iran or intervention in Iran means the design of the entire Middle East and intervention in the Middle East. This war is developing as a result of that.

The nation states in the region have left almost nothing in the name of the essence of Islam. There are other examples: ISIS, the Taliban, those who have now come to power in Syria... They want to renew their masks and implement their new plans and projects."

'The problems cannot be resolved through war'

Peyman Viyan said, "We believe that the problems of the people cannot be resolved through war," and continued: "The Middle East needs a democratic system. The Middle East is the cradle of humanity, philosophy, and democracy. Unfortunately, it has now become a land of war, conflict, migration, and massacres. This is the result of the nation-states that brought massacres to the Middle East. Nation-states in the Middle East were built through war and massacres. Now they are destroying it through war and massacres.

'The Democratic Confederalism system is the best remedy'

We say that it is time for the peoples to live together in a multi-colored, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious society. The Democratic Confederalism system is the best remedy that can be implemented as an alternative system. The peoples of the Middle East need a "system of peoples" to be freed from war, massacres, and conflicts.

A third line, a new system, is needed in the Middle East. The segment that will best lead this system, guaranteeing both its own freedom and that of society, is women. The nation states of the Middle East have perpetuated themselves through the blood and massacres of their peoples.

Now is the time for solidarity and cooperation among peoples. We must come together, form joint committees, and develop our own solutions. Neither nation states nor hegemonic powers have any plans for resolving the problems in the Middle East.

The sole objective of hegemonic powers is the underground and surface resources of the Middle East. Therefore, if people develop a program for life now, they can protect their wealth and culture. We are now in a period where the peoples of the Middle East can take the lead."

'Iran has two weak points'

Pointing out Iran's weak points, Peyman Viyan continued: "Iran has two weak points: the first is the Kurds, the second is women. These two groups have the potential to overthrow the regime. If we pay attention, Israel is striking Iran; however, Iran is still sharing messages against women saying, 'Pay attention to the headscarf.' Its entire fear is that a new uprising will begin under the leadership of women.

On the other hand, its other major fear is Kurdistan itself. The regime has militarized all of Kurdistan's borders with Revolutionary Guards. The aim is to prevent the potential for a revolution from erupting. For this reason, we say that a new process could be a process for all the peoples of Iran."

'The only community that can lead change is the Kurds'

Peyman Viyan stated, "The only community that can lead change in the Middle East is the Kurds. This is true in all parts of Kurdistan, including Eastern Kurdistan. The only alternative power in Eastern Kurdistan is PJAK. Everyone sees PJAK's potential to lead the people and its readiness to do so. All external states are well aware of this truth."

Asked if the US and Israel have requested direct dialogue with them, Peyman replied, "No, there has been no such request for direct talks."

'Turkey is directly involved in this issue'

Peyman Viyan pointed out that the Turkish state wants to incite conflicts, especially in areas where Kurds and Azeris live, and said: "Some cities in Eastern Kurdistan are multi-ethnic. Azeris, Armenians, Assyrians, and Kurds live side by side. They want to foster division among the peoples. Conflicts are being deliberately created in regions where Kurds and Azeris live together.

Turkey is directly involved in this issue. Turkey is the country that fears most that the Kurds will gain status in Eastern Kurdistan. It is creating conflict between the Kurds and the Azeris. They are trying to develop Pan-Turkism in Iran. Pan-Turkists affiliated with Turkey are trying to cause constant problems among the peoples.

They are trying to develop this, especially in the Urmia area. They want to destroy solidarity among peoples. Therefore, there are certainly some dangers. But we are prepared.

People are more aware than ever before. The people know who can lead them. As I said, there are obvious dangers of intervention. But there is also a force here with enormous potential to counter this."

'We are going through a very sensitive and historic process'

Lastly, Peyman Viyan delivered the following message to the Kurdish public:

"We are going through a very sensitive and historic process. This is a decisive moment. Those who fail to organize themselves and maintain their unity will miss this historic opportunity. If the regime or forces intervening in the regime gain strength, they will once again subject the people to oppression. Therefore, our fundamental expectation of our people is that they remain united in their homes, on the streets, and in all areas of their lives. They must learn how to defend themselves. They must establish defense committees and discuss how they can defend themselves. They must know how to protect their health by forming health committees. They must determine their politics and know what alternatives exist to the power they prefer. We are currently in a period where our people must struggle 24 hours a day; they must be prepared for this. The people need to govern themselves. They must build a democratic system. To become democratic, they must lay the foundations by establishing communes and committees. While doing this, people

must know that we are ready. I declare that we stand with our people in every sense to crown this process with victory."

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Call for participation in Madımak massacre commemoration

ANF | 25 June 2025

The Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association (PSAKD) held a press conference at the Mülkiyeliler Association (an organization of alumni from the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University) to announce the commemoration they will hold on July 2, marking the anniversary of the Madımak massacre in which 33 intellectuals were killed. Cuma Erçe, Chairperson of the PSAKD, addressed the press conference together with members of the association and made the following call: "We invite all our friends who stand for labor, secularism, and equality, who dream of a free and fraternal Turkey filled with light, who are the voice of the people and the light in the darkness, to join us in Sivas on July 2 or to take to the streets wherever they are. We call for united struggle against fascist and fundamentalist encirclement. We have not forgotten, we will not forget, and we will not let it be forgotten."

The perpetrators were protected by the political authorities

Cuma Erçe described the Madımak massacre, in which 33 people lost their lives, as one of the darkest and most shameful atrocities in the history of humanity. He stated that even after 32 years, neither their pain nor their anger has diminished. Erçe said: "Justice has not been served. While the majority of the perpetrators went unpunished, those who were convicted were pardoned and released. A crime against humanity was allowed to expire under the statute of limitations. There has been no confrontation with the massacres that took place before Sivas, no reckoning with what happened in Sivas itself, nor with the massacres that followed. None of the atrocities have been accounted for. No one has been held responsible. Because the perpetrators were directly protected by the political authorities."

Alevis must have a voice in the constitution

Cuma Erçe also spoke about the ongoing debates surrounding the resolution of the Kurdish question. He stated: "A peace that does not pass through Haji Bektash, Dersim, and Madımak is incomplete and unjust for Alevis. No issue, especially the Kurdish question and the Alevi issue, can be resolved without confrontation and reckoning. Alevis have always stood on the side of peace, but any peace built without truth and accountability is doomed to collapse from the very beginning. Today, discussions on a new constitution are also underway. Yet once again, Alevis are not at the table, nor are workers, women, or Kurds. A social contract written without us can never be equal, free, or fraternal. Alevis are not only the conscience of this country; they are also a founding will. That is why Alevis must have a voice in the new constitution, not merely as a topic, but as subjects and as a founding force."

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Turkish army shells a village near Amadiya

ANF | Amadiya | 25 June 2025

On Tuesday, the Turkish army fired artillery at the village of Dêreşê near the district of Amadiya in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) for over an hour and a half. According to local reports, the shelling began at around 5:30 p.m. and continued until around 7:00 p.m.

Video footage from the scene shows several buildings in the residential area damaged in the attack, including a village school, a mosque, houses, and a stable. No confirmed information on possible injuries was initially available.

According to Kamaran Osman, spokesperson for the local branch of the Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT), not only Dêreşê but also the surrounding villages of Girgaşê, Mijê, Kevne Mijê, and Spîndarê were hit by Turkish artillery. The NGO documented a total of 76 strikes.

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ISIS commander captured in special operation led by the YPJ in Deir ez-Zor countryside

ANF | 25 June 2025

On June 24, the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), in coordination with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), carried out a special operation in the town of Al-Shuhail in the countryside of Deir ez-Zor. During the operation, a senior ISIS commander and one of his operatives were apprehended.

In the high-level operation led by the YPJ, the captured ISIS commander and his associate were reportedly planning to carry out a terrorist attack targeting civilians in the region, according to a statement by the YPJ Media Center, which further said the following:

"These terrorists are frequently involved in planting explosive devices and landmines on public roads with the aim of assassinating civilians and military personnel. Their actions threaten the security and stability of Deir ez-Zor, while they also engage in propaganda for the ISIS terrorist organization by distributing promotional leaflets.

Our forces had been pursuing these cells for a long period before successfully capturing them in a special, well-coordinated operation. A large quantity of ammunition was also seized during the raid. The YPJ had been closely monitoring and tracking these ISIS terrorists based on extensive intelligence. Following careful surveillance, the two ISIS members were arrested, and several military supplies, documents, and propaganda materials belonging to the terrorist organization were confiscated.

The captured ISIS commander, Abdul Qadir, had carried out numerous terrorist attacks against local residents. He was responsible for planting and distributing landmines among ISIS sleeper cells. He also spread fear and unrest among the population by distributing threatening leaflets—especially targeting families affiliated with the Autonomous Administration or those with children serving in the Syrian Democratic Forces. Moreover, he was involved in extorting money from civilians to fund ISIS operations. Families who refused to pay were subjected to threats via the leaflets.

The Women's Protection Units reaffirm their unwavering commitment to defending their people from ISIS terrorists. They will continue their struggle until peace and stability are fully restored in the region."

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SDF calls for transparent investigation into the attack on Mar Elias Church

ANF | 26 June 2025

The Press Center of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a statement refuting the claims made by the spokesperson for the Syrian Ministry of the Interior regarding the origin of the suicide bombers who carried out the attack on the Mar Elias Church in the Christian neighborhood of Al-Duwaila in Damascus. The attack on June 22 left a number of civilians dead and injured, and caused significant damage to the church.

The SDF statement reads as follows:

"The spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior in the Damascus Government has claimed that the two suicide bombers who carried out the terrorist attack on the Mar Elias Church in the Dweila neighborhood originated from the al-Hol Camp in North and Eastern Syria and were not Syrian nationals. We confirm that this information is incorrect and is not based on facts or real events.

In response to these allegations, the relevant departments within our forces immediately initiated a thorough review and investigation of the records pertaining to the residents of al-Hol Camp, including those who have exited the camp in recent months. The investigation confirmed that the only individuals who left the camp during this period were Syrians, and their departure occurred at the request of the Damascus Government. Additionally, Iraqi nationals were repatriated to Iraqi territory based on verified lists submitted by the Iraqi authorities, who ensured their relocation to the al-Jad'ah Camp.

It is important to clarify that al-Hol Camp accommodates families of ISIS members—both Syrian and foreign—comprising primarily women and children. The camp does not house foreign terrorist fighters. This directly contradicts the claim made by the Ministry spokesperson that the "non-Syrian nationals" perpetrators of the church attack originated from the camp.

Our forces—the only Syrian force to have fought and defeated ISIS in al-Baghouz in 2019—continue to carry out their responsibilities in partnership with the International Coalition to combat terrorism. We re-

main morally and nationally committed to this mission and stand ready to expand our efforts as necessary, in full coordination with International Coalition forces.

As we mourn the victims of the Dweila massacre, we urge the Damascus Government to conduct a transparent and credible investigation and to publicly release its findings and supporting evidence. This is the only way to prevent the recurrence of terrorist attacks."

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Autonomous Administration of Shengal warns KDP over election fraud

ANF | 27 June 2025

The Autonomous Administration of Shengal said in a statement that the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) has turned the compensation owed to Yazidis, who were harmed during the era of the Saddam Hussein regime, into a tool for election propaganda.

It was claimed that the KDP has been collecting voter cards from the public by promising to deliver compensation payments, describing this as a deceptive election tactic aimed at misleading the people.

The administration called on the population to remain vigilant against such manipulation and to remember the role the KDP played during the 2014 genocide campaign.

KDP took most of the compensation

The statement noted that of the 25 million Iraqi dinars allocated by the Iraqi state as compensation for the damages suffered during the Saddam Hussein era, only 10 million would reach the people, while the rest had been seized by the KDP. The Autonomous Administration stressed that the KDP is now using the remaining compensation as an electoral bargaining chip, calling this unacceptable.

KDP cannot represent the Yazidi community

The statement emphasized that the KDP no longer holds any legitimate connection to the Yazidis. "We call on our people not to fall for the KDP's schemes, to remember its role during the 2014 genocide, and to remain aware of what it did to Shengal through the October 9 Agreement. It must be known that the KDP has always acted based on self-interest and has never taken any step without expecting something in return. Therefore, the KDP cannot represent the Yazidi community. Our people, who are aware of what the KDP did during the genocide, must not be deceived."

False promises

The Autonomous Administration stated that the KDP's claim that it would distribute compensation to Yazidis in Shengal, while it cannot even pay the salaries of its own employees amid the ongoing economic crisis, has no basis in reality. The administration stressed that the public should not believe such promises.

The statement concluded with the following call: "No one should fall for the KDP's tricks. If this compensation is to be paid, it must be done through the official institutions of the Iraqi state. This process must not be turned into an electoral tool to exploit the Yazidis for political gain."

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Feminicide

Forcibly displaced women from Afrin call for international action to end the occupation

ANF | Raqqa | 22 June 2025

Women who were forcibly displaced due to the Turkish state's occupation of the Afrin-Shehba Canton made a press statement in Raqqa, demanding that the occupiers be removed from their land.

Accompanied by many women who had been forcibly displaced and members of Kongra Star, Erîfe Hebeş read the press statement in front of the Euphrates Basin building in the Raqqa Canton.

The statement said that the Turkish state and its mercenaries continue to commit serious human rights violations such as abduction, ransom, torture, and extortion against civilians in Afrin, Shehba, and other occupied areas.

Recalling the recent murder of a child named Mistefa Cemîl Şêxo, in Afrin, Hebeş stated that the incident was a clear violation of international conventions on the protection of children's rights.

The statement also drew attention to the responsibility of the Syrian Transitional Government for these crimes and called on the United Nations (UN), UNICEF, and Amnesty International to take action.

The women demanded that these institutions fulfill their human rights obligations and that the mercenaries supported by the occupying Turkish state be removed from Afrin and other occupied areas.

The statement concluded with the following call: "The Afrin region must be opened to international monitoring, displaced persons must be allowed to return safely to their homes, and the Turkish state must immediately cease its human rights violations."

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Saturday Mother Emine Ocak in intensive care

ANF | Istanbul | 24 June 2025

According to the information received, the mother of Hasan Ocak, who was tortured to death in custody, and Saturday Mother Emine Ocak had a heart attack due to respiratory failure on 20 June.

Her daughter, Maside Ocak, wrote on X that her mother was being kept under observation in the intensive care unit.

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Kurdish women: We are the subjects of this process

ANF | Amed | 24 June 2025

The Kurdish Women's Unity Platform held its 3rd conference in Amed (Diyarbakır) under the slogan "With the unity of Kurdish women, towards national unity." The event took place at the Amed Chamber of Commerce and Industry and brought together dozens of women from various cities across Kurdistan and Turkey. During the conference, participants addressed recent political developments and current challenges, with a particular focus on the role of women in the reconstruction process. They stressed that unity among Kurdish women is essential and called for women to take part in this process with their words, ideas, and presence on the ground.

Banu Ay, a member of the Amed provincial board of the Human and Freedom Party (PÎA), shared significant remarks on the peace process in Kurdistan, the societal role of women, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Emphasizing that women will play a decisive role in peace and social transformation, she said, "In this process, we do not want to be a mere drop, we want to be an ocean."

Women are at the forefront of this struggle

Banu Ay provided insights into the work of the Kurdish Women's Unity Platform and emphasized the need for women to become more visible in both cultural and political spheres. She pointed out that Kurdish women have endured deep suffering throughout history, and that this pain has made them more resilient and more conscious.

She underlined that the grief of losing children has especially strengthened women's commitment to peace and insisted that peace must be built under the leadership of women: "For centuries, women have paid a heavy price. We want to put an end to this pain and to these tears. Women's contribution to the peace process must not be symbolic, it must be constructive and guiding. Preserving Kurdish culture, language, and traditions must be part of this process. The right to education in one's mother tongue is a fundamental demand, and women must be at the forefront of this struggle."

We must act side by side for Kurdistan

Banu Ay emphasized that women from different political backgrounds can unite around the common cause of Kurdistan. She said, "We may have political differences. But when it comes to the unity of Kurdistan, we must reach a consensus and act together. We need to adopt a constructive and unifying stance. We are doing everything we can. In peace, we do not want to be mere bystanders, we want to be real subjects. As women, we must stand at the forefront wherever transformation takes place."

Esra Kahraman, a member of the Women's Time Association, drew attention to the role of Kurdish women in the peace process and the struggle against the invisible war imposed on women across the Middle East. She stated that Kurdish women hold a leading position in efforts for both national unity and lasting peace.

Esra Kahraman highlighted the significance of the conference and said, "There is an unnamed war taking place in the Middle East, and the ones most affected by it are women. That is why, as women, we are not only demanding peace, we are actively taking part in building it."

Kurdish women are the pioneers of peace

Esra Kahraman stated that the conference series would continue simultaneously across the four parts of Kurdistan, and that the ultimate goal was to establish a platform that would strengthen women's struggle for regional peace through a final joint conference. She added that this platform would not only focus on peacebuilding efforts but also lead the fight against violence and cultural destruction.

Kahraman continued: "Building peace does not simply mean silencing weapons. Fighting against violence, cultural destruction, and inequality is also an essential part of the peace struggle. For this reason, women's participation in the process is not only a moral responsibility but also a political necessity. Kurdish women are not merely supporters of peace, they are its pioneers."

Raising their demands for peace and equality against the ongoing war and conflict in the Middle East, Kurdish women declared once again through this conference that they will lead the way in social transformation.

Members of the Democratic Islam Congress (DIK), Diba Keskin and Dilan Aydın, also spoke at the conference, emphasizing that women are the carriers of peace and the true subjects of a solution.

Kurdish women have been in struggle for decades

Diba Keskin emphasized the importance of women's struggle, pointing to the ongoing transformation in the Middle East and how it is being shaped by a male-dominated war order. "There is a significant transformation happening in the Middle East. For the past nine days, a major war has been waged at the hands of men. In the construction of a new life, the Kurdish people and especially women, must take part with their ideas and experiences. Today's gathering is a part of this process. Kurdish women have been engaged in a struggle for forty years. Today, this struggle has reached a powerful point. Kurdish women have sub-

stantial experience, a strong voice, and the power to offer solutions. We are here with our ideas, our slogans, and our proposals because women have borne the heaviest burden of war on these lands," she said.

Diba Keskin stated that women want peace to bring an end to the suffering, emphasizing that they are not merely demanding peace but actively building it as key agents in the process.

Another speaker, Dilan Aydın, also emphasized the importance of the conference, explaining that they do not see this gathering merely as a space for discussion, but as a platform for generating practical solutions for the future. She said, "Life itself is already a space of intense struggle, and within that intensity, we are now face to face with war. Today, in the midst of this war, we are discussing peace, the future, and the role of women."

We aim to produce concrete solutions

Dilan Aydın highlighted the participation of women from many cities in the conference and described it as a source of hope.

She said: "Here, we are not only speaking for ourselves, but also addressing the problems faced by millions of women. We are tackling issues such as special war policies, violence, and inequality. Through this conference, we aim to move forward and develop concrete and applicable solutions on the ground. With this gathering, women are not merely identifying problems, they are coming together to create solutions and expressing their will to take part in the peace process on the basis of collective wisdom and unity."

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Female journalist threatened after exposing forced prostitution ring in Şırnak

ANF | Şirnak | 27 June 2025

Investigative journalist Zeynep Durgut for the Mezopotamya news agency (MA) has been threatened after publishing an investigateive report on an alleged forced prostitution ring in the Kurdish province of Şırnak. According to her own statements, she received threatening phone calls from relatives of Kenan Tatar, who is described in the report as the "gang leader."

The threats began after the publication of a detailed report last February in which Durgut reported on a 25-member group that had come under investigation by the authorities in 2013 on suspicion of forced prostitution, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation of minors, among other things. Among those at the center of the investigation is Kenan Tatar, who, according to the indictment, is considered one of the group's leading figures.

"We know who you are, where you come from. There will be consequences," Durgut claims to have been told in one of the calls. The journalist and her lawyer subsequently filed a criminal complaint with the public prosecutor's office in the district of Cizre.

Following the announcement, women's organizations, media associations, and political parties organized a solidarity rally in front of the courthouse in Cizre on Thursday. In a joint statement, the Free Women's Movement (Tevgera Jinên Azad, TJA) condemned the threats as a deliberate attempt to intimidate critical journalism. "The threat against Zeynep Durgut shows that attempts are being made to suppress the truth and silence the public. We will not allow this," said TJA representative Berivan Kutlu.

Speaking at the rally, Zeynep Durgut said: "The special war policy in Şırnak has been a reality for years. I will not be intimidated and will continue to bring the truth to light as a free journalist." The event ended with the slogan "The free press will not be silenced."

Background

The underlying case dates back to 2013. At that time, the Şırnak public prosecutor's office launched an investigation against 25 people on suspicion of forming a criminal organization to promote forced prostitution. The investigation lasted eleven years.

In 2024, a comprehensive indictment was finally filed with the 3rd Heavy Penal Court in Şırnak and admitted – to the surprise of many, as the long-established Tatar family has connections to the highest government circles and is one of the largest families serving as "village guards" in Northern Kurdistan. The charges include forming a criminal organization, child and human trafficking, sexual abuse of minors, pimping, and extortion.

The indictment names Ibrahim Tatar as the alleged ringleader. He was arrested in 2013 and released from pre-trial detention in 2024. Kenan Tatar is listed as his associate. Along with 23 other defendants, three non-commissioned officers and a sergeant are also accused of using their military positions to force women and minors—including people from Rojava and other countries—into prostitution.

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Ecocide

Forest regeneration begins in Şêxan after years of tree cutting

ANF | Mus | 24 June 2025

In several cities across Kurdistan, ecological destruction continues as tree-cutting operations persist under the pretext of "security." Şırnak (Şirnex), Bitlis (Bedlîs), and Bingöl (Çewlîg) are among the most affected areas. In addition to security concerns, authorities frequently cite "rejuvenation" as justification, even though trees are often cut from their roots to prevent regrowth.

In Şêxan (Shekhan), where deforestation continued uninterrupted for two years, the cutting was halted this year after villagers raised strong objections. Thousands of young trees were cut down across dozens of hectares, and the foothills of the mountains in the highlands were shaved so severely that the damage was

visible from a distance. This year, however, no further cutting took place. Roots that had once been torn up have begun to reemerge, and the foothills, brown and barren last year, have turned green once again in a quiet but determined revival. Villagers condemned the destruction and stated that they will continue to resist deforestation efforts in the region.

Tree cutting continued non-stop for two years

Between 2023 and 2024, a large-scale tree-cutting operation began in the Şêxan region of Muş. The operation targeted areas populated with young trees and continued uninterrupted for two years. During this time, dozens of hectares were destroyed. Nomadic herders and livestock living in the highlands were severely affected by the destruction. The aftermath resembled a scene of plunder. When Serhat Eren, a MP for Amed from the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), submitted a parliamentary inquiry on the matter, the official response claimed the cutting was part of a "rejuvenation" effort and had been carried out with ecological balance in mind. The statement also claimed that only old trees were removed. However, visual evidence from the area during the cutting period contradicts the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's claims.

Villagers stopped the cutting

Despite the devastation, the area has begun to turn green again this year with the arrival of warmer weather. Small sprouts have appeared in place of the cut trees, and the land is slowly attempting to regenerate. Villagers we spoke with stated that, following their objections, the cutting was halted and prevented from spreading to a wider area. The tree cutting carried out in the highlands, known for its natural beauty and frequented every summer by nomadic herders, not only caused ecological damage but also harmed small livestock grazing in the region.

If there are no trees, we don't exist

Local residents strongly opposed efforts to expand the destruction and did not allow the cutting to continue. Similar to practices seen in Şırnak, the Provincial Directorate of Forestry faced backlash from the public after attempting to hand over local trees to private companies and village guards through tenders. In villages located at the foot of Mount Andok, locals refused to sign petitions that would have granted permission for the logging. As a result, they effectively prevented the operation. One villager we spoke with expressed the community's determination to resist: "These trees are everything to us. If they disappear, so do we. They want to destroy us along with the trees. Last year, they wiped out an entire area. This year, they had their eyes on our land again but we did not allow it. By protecting the trees, we are also protecting our living space and our water sources."

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Deforestation for the construction of a military post in Yazidi village in İdil sparks protests

ANF | Şirnak | 24 June 2025

Construction of a military post has begun at the entrance to the historic Yazidi village of Kiwex, which dates back 2,900 years. According to residents of the village, massive deforestation is currently taking place in the adjacent forest area, partly on private land.

Kiwex is located in Şırnak's İdil district and is considered an important center of Yazidi history and culture. Every year, thousands of people visit the village, which was forcibly evacuated by the Turkish state in 1993 and has since been officially declared a tourist area by the provincial administration of Şırnak.

Social structure of the village at risk

According to villagers, large-scale deforestation has been going on near the planned outpost site for about a week now. They believe that this is not only threatening the ecological balance, but also the social structure of the village.

"Trees are being cut down on our land without our consent," one resident told the Mezopotamya Agency (MA). He wished to remain anonymous due to security concerns.

Accusations against local politicians

The criticism is directed, among others, at the former HÜDA-PAR chairman in the Midyat district, Sait Sevim, and members of the Idil district council from the ranks of the ruling AKP. They are accused of organizing or approving the deforestation. According to the allegations, Sevim obtained the village head's consent to the clearing in exchange for a sum of money.

"Our village was opened up to tourism, but now they are destroying nature right before our eyes," the villager continued. Some of the affected areas are officially registered as private property. Trees are being felled without permission and without consulting the owners, he added.

Villagers call for an immediate end to the clearing

The village community also expresses criticism that the measure is being justified on the grounds of "security concerns." In their view, the planned construction of a military post cannot serve as justification for the destruction of the local ecosystem. In a joint statement, residents and supporters called for the clearing to be stopped immediately and for "this ecological intervention to be put up for public discussion."

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Human Rights Violations

Young man kidnapped in occupied Afrin

ANF | 23 June 2025

Mercenaries affiliated with the occupying Turkish state raided a house in the countryside of Afrin city on the morning of June 21.

During the raid in the village of Mûsako in Rajo district, the homeowner's 18-year-old son, Reşîd Bekir, was kidnapped.

It was reported that Reşîd Bekir was deported from Turkey four years ago via the Girê Spî border crossing. He was then abducted by Turkish-backed mercenaries and released in return for ransom.

Afrin occupied since 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Iran intensifies crackdown in Kurdistan, targeting civilians, activists

ANF | 24 June 2025

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its paramilitary Basij forces have set up checkpoints at the entry and exit points of Kurdish

cities, conducting vehicle searches and arresting several individuals. The detainees have been transferred to undisclosed locations.

Sources indicate that in response to continued Israeli airstrikes on military sites, IRGC and police units have abandoned their bases in some cities and villages in Kurdistan, relocating to government buildings.

Meanwhile, a significant deployment of plain-clothes security personnel dispatched from other provinces has been observed in the streets of Kurdish cities. These forces have detained individuals they deem suspicious without presenting judicial warrants.

The IRGC Intelligence Organisation and the Ministry of Intelligence have also been summoning and interrogating family members of Kurdish political activists living abroad, pressuring and threatening them in an attempt to coerce their relatives into halting their overseas activism.

In recent days, at least 11 Kurdish civilians and activists have been detained in Bukan, Mahabad and Piranshahr as the wave of arrests continues.

On 18 June, security forces arrested Ali Mohammadi, the father of Shahriyar Mohammadi, who was killed during the anti-government 'Women, Life, Freedom' uprising.

The following day, 19 June, saw the arrest of Esmaeil Esmaeilpour in Bukan; Aryan Mashayekhi and Sadegh Mahmoudnezhad, who had sustained eye injuries during the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' uprising, were arrested in Piranshahr; and two brothers, Edris and Kamran Rasouli, were arrested in Oshnavieh.

On 20 June, security forces arrested Rahman Hosseini and Ahmad Mam-Sharifi in Piranshahr.

On 22 June, Saadoun Ghazali (60), and Khaled and Mohammad Bekri, both from Mahabad, were arrested by security forces at their homes in the city.

According to KHRN, most of these arrests were conducted violently and without judicial authorisation, and the current whereabouts and conditions of the detainees remain unknown.

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Iraqi police raid a village in Tuz Khurmatu, arresting five Kurdish youngsters

ANF | Kirkuk | 24 June 2025

Iraqi police raided the village of Tepsewz in the Tuz Khurmatu district of Kirkuk this morning, arresting five Kurdish youngsters. The raid reportedly took place following complaints from Arab farmers.

Village representative Ahmed Cume told Rojnews that police forces tortured villagers during the raid.

Following the incident, Kurdish farmers filed official complaints against the security forces. No information has been provided about the fate of those detained. It is also unknown what charges they are facing.

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At least 700 detained during 12 days of attacks in Iran

ANF | 26 June 2025

The semi-official Mehr News Agency reported that intelligence units of the Islamic Republic of Iran detained 700 individuals during the 12-day armed conflict with Israel. These individuals were described in the report as “700 Israeli mercenaries.”

Iranian officials claimed that a spy network affiliated with the "Zionist regime" became active inside the country simultaneously with the Israeli attacks, but that this network was largely dismantled.

The detentions were concentrated particularly in the provinces of Kermanshah, Isfahan, Khuzestan, Fars, and Lorestan, while no official statement has been made yet regarding possible activities in the capital, Tehran.

It is not known whether all the detainees will be prosecuted. They are reportedly under investigation for charges such as attempted sabotage, collecting sensitive information, and coordinating with Israeli intelligence.

Three people executed

In Iran, similar accusations are often used to target dissidents and suppress public dissent. In a country lacking fair trials, executions have also occurred under similar charges.

According to Mizan, the official news agency of the judiciary, three individuals accused of spying for Mossad were executed. The executions reportedly took place on Wednesday morning.

Amnesty International calls for protection of detainees

In a statement on June 20, Amnesty International called on Iranian authorities to halt plans for arbitrary executions, stating: “They must protect all detainees accused of spying for Israel from enforced disappearance, torture, and other ill-treatment.”

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Kurdish poet held incommunicado after arrest in Oshnavieh

ANF | 26 June 2025

There is still no information regarding the fate of Omar Mohammadi, a Kurdish poet and writer from Oshnavieh, six days after his arrest.

The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) reported that security forces arrested Mohammadi on 20 June during a raid on his family home in Oshnavieh, and took him to a detention facility in Orumiyeh.

Despite repeated efforts by his family to obtain information about his condition and whereabouts, security and judicial authorities have so far refused to provide any explanation, according to KHRN.

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Interview

Kalkan: An effective struggle is needed for peace

ANF | 21 June 2025

All forms of provocation and attack are being directed at guerrillas

The Press Office of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) has issued statements on the ongoing attacks, which I want to reiterate. These attacks are continuing, sometimes intensifying, sometimes decreasing but they never cease. Prohibited weapons, including chemical agents and even tactical nuclear weapons, are being used extensively. As a result, guerrillas continue to fall in battle. Comrade Bawer, comrade Welat, and comrade Dicle were martyred at the end of May and the beginning of June. I commemorate them with respect, along with all the martyrs of the Zap resistance. Yet the guerrillas continue to suffer losses. What do they want from the guerrillas?

I want to make one point very clear. If the current situation has not escalated into a wider, more intense conflict, it is only because the guerrilla forces are respecting and implementing the ceasefire declared by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) administration on 1 March. It is because they are acting in accordance with the decisions made at the 12th Congress. It is not due to any other reason; on the contrary, all forms of provocation and attack are being carried out against them.

In fact, we did not declare this ceasefire for the sake of these ongoing attacks. We also made practical proposals so that certain sources of conflict could be resolved and clashes prevented. But this was perceived as a sign of weakness. And in response, they turned their attention back to those areas and further intensified their attacks.

The dove of peace cannot fly with one wing

The public is following the situation to some extent, but people need to understand it more clearly. We have made a decision to end the strategy of armed struggle. We are firm and resolute in this decision. We

want to carry out our struggle for freedom on the basis of a strategy of democratic political struggle. However, the implementation of this path does not depend on us alone.

Everyone talks about peace, for example. But peace cannot be one-sided. Even Devlet Bahçeli said, "The dove of peace cannot fly with one wing." And indeed, a bird cannot fly with one wing, neither can the dove of peace. So, if there is to be peace, it must have two wings.

Guerrillas attacked with approval of government and president

Of course, under attack, the guerrilla will defend itself. They attack, destroy, and kill and then they ask why the guerrilla does not lay down arms. They make calls saying, "Lay down your weapons, surrender to our justice, enter our prisons." But this is not that kind of process.

There are those who profit from war, yes, there are profiteers of all kinds. But this is happening with the approval of the administration; it is not something being done independently by a few individuals. If there are attacks on guerrilla positions in Zap and Metina, if reconnaissance aircraft are being deployed across all areas of the Medya Defense Zones, then this is all taking place with the decision and approval of the current government and the president. It is a political decision. They are the ones responsible.

The guerrilla will defend itself under all circumstances

If these attacks continue, of course the guerrilla will not be a sacrificial lamb. These are revolutionary militants. They will defend themselves under any circumstances. They will exercise their legitimate right to self-defense. Everyone must understand this clearly.

In reality, the PKK was forced into this war from the very beginning. Some say there has been conflict for 40 or 50 years and that it should now be stopped. But that is not the full truth, this conflict has existed for a hundred years. It has been ongoing since 1925. And not only in North Kurdistan (Bakur), but also in East Kurdistan (Rojhilat), South Kurdistan (Başur), and in Rojava. This is a system, a mentality and a politics that have become institutionalized, a system born of a mindset and political agenda that denies the existence of the Kurds and seeks their eradication.

The conflict did not begin with the PKK. The PKK made a decision to resist. It launched a struggle in order to defend a people who were facing annihilation. It took up resistance in response to attacks aimed at destruction, liquidation, and genocide. This must be clearly understood.

Kurdish people's dignity cannot be attacked

There has been much talk about the armed struggle. I want to address that as well. Some say, "Every form of armed struggle is wrong, it's harmful, it should not exist." They claim peace is the only way forward and say, "Let's fight for peace." Fine, we support peace and are committed to that struggle.

We are ending the strategy of armed struggle. However, the Kurdish people must not forget that every national and democratic gain was made possible through the guerrilla resistance. As a people, as a movement of freedom, we have achieved much through armed resistance. Now, we aim to advance those gains through other forms of struggle. This must be understood correctly. In this context, those who comment

on the situation should not obscure the awareness of the people. They must speak with clarity and understand the truth.

So should the guerrilla not defend itself in the face of annihilation attacks? Who could possibly prevent that? If such violence is imposed on the Kurdish people by force, what are they supposed to do? They have always resisted and continue to resist to defend their dignity. The Kurdish people are a people of honor. That honor comes from deep within history. They will not allow it to be trampled. Everyone should understand this well.

Those who think they can break the Kurdish people's dignity will ultimately be the ones disgraced. They have failed to achieve this aim so far and they will never succeed.

There is no turning back from the dissolution of the PKK

We must not fall into pessimism about current developments and the broader process. On that note, let me say this: we are determined to carry out what we have set out to do from our side. A decision has been made at the congress level. A decision has been made at the level of President Öcalan. I have mentioned this in previous statements as well.

President Öcalan has transformed himself, he has made a clear decision. He is now transforming and reshaping the party. He is reshaping the entire revolutionary leadership and structure. On this basis, he will transform the people, the methods of struggle, Kurdistan, and Turkey. We are committed to this. There must be no uncertainty about it. There is no turning back from the dissolution of the PKK. Our focus is on moving forward.

A new strategy is being determined

The decisions have now been published. A new paradigm is in place. A new strategy is being developed. There are perspectives, evaluations, and decisions regarding past experiences, past achievements, projections for the future direction of the process, and what needs to be done to steer this new phase in a positive direction. This is not something that proceeds on its own.

Those who think we will not defend ourselves are mistaken

We are fully committed to ending the strategy of armed struggle. We have made our decision. We will absolutely not pursue an armed line as in the past. But this does not mean that if we are faced with attacks aimed at annihilation and liquidation, or denial of our existence, we will not defend ourselves. It does not mean that this people will not engage in self-defense, that they will not exercise their legitimate right to resist, that they will simply do nothing and accept slavery. That will never happen. Those who believe otherwise are seriously mistaken.

If genocide is imposed, the Kurdish people will resist everywhere, at all times

The Kurdish people will continue to develop the necessary means and methods. New forms of struggle will emerge in response to the evolving conditions and realities of the new era, beyond the past. Because it is political and military conditions that determine the forms of struggle; we are not the sole deciders. We

act in accordance with the demands of those conditions. If there is a democratic environment, we will prioritize the strategy of democratic political struggle. If Turkey moves toward democratization...

But if it does not, if there is no democratization, if denial continues, if annihilation continues, if freedom of expression and organization is entirely eliminated, and if genocide is imposed on the Kurds, then the Kurdish people will resist everywhere, at all times. When faced with a policy of genocide, there is no other choice. Aside from that, we are firmly committed to advancing this process from our side.

Being right is not enough to succeed

There is something else I want to express. We have already spoken about the attitude of the AKP. Devlet Bahçeli's words are positive. In fact, they offer a glimmer of hope. But the necessary steps are not being taken. The impact of those words is gradually fading and disappearing.

This pessimism and confusion stem largely from that reality. We also try to follow how society is responding. From Amed (Diyarbakır) and Van (Wan), concerns are reflected in the media. And they are valid concerns. People themselves explain the reasons: they say this government, the AKP, will not do anything different; it manipulates, it plays games. And they are not wrong. They are absolutely justified. But being right alone is not enough to win, to succeed.

The AKP has no preparations; it is society that must take action

It has become clear that the AKP has no genuine preparations. We have been clear on this point. Those who remember 2009 will recall what happened. At first, they said, "We are launching a Kurdish initiative." But when the Kurds won the 29 March elections by a large margin, it turned out not to be a democratic initiative but a "national unity initiative." They dragged the process out over time. They tried to stall and buy time. When President Öcalan and the movement insisted on truth and reality, they responded in November as if staging a coup.

At that time, Tayyip Erdoğan said, "We are starting over from scratch." And from that moment on, he imposed violence. Now, in a similar way, it is clear once again that they have no serious preparations.

There does not appear to be any meaningful change emerging through the current process. They continue to play for time and merely observe developments. The opposition, too, has failed to put forward any effective policy on the matter. Why? Because resolving the Kurdish question is not something that creates division, it requires unity. But instead, everything is caught in conflict: a struggle for power, for personal gain. Both government and opposition are lost in this.

They do not even stop to consider what kind of condition Turkey is in. There is no serious or forward-looking initiative. It is all at the level of words. Yet everyone, society, the peoples of Turkey, expects action. They are waiting for something concrete. They want to see real change. So let me say this: it is not enough to simply criticize. President Öcalan's call was not addressed only to those in power. The decisions of the PKK were not just for these political forces. Criticizing them and asking, "Why are they not doing anything?" is not a sufficient response. It is society itself that must act. People must do something.

An effective struggle is needed for peace

It was said that calls for peace came from civil society groups: "We want peace," they declared. President Öcalan responded to this call, and the PKK made its decision: "We are ending the strategy of armed struggle." The path has been opened. In that case, a struggle for peace is necessary. There must be an active and effective fight for it.

At the moment, there is a lack of sufficient struggle. Various groups are engaged in efforts, especially in North Kurdistan and within Turkey. In other regions as well, there is some level of struggle. As I mentioned earlier, this must be united everywhere with the demand for President Öcalan's physical freedom. But it also needs to become much stronger. What we have now is not enough. Advancing democratization can only be achieved through struggle. Peace is won through struggle. That is why a more effective and determined effort is needed.

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Kalkan: The nation-state mentality is the same everywhere

ANF | 22 June 2025

Democratic politics must flow like a powerful stream

Organizing and education need to be developed much more broadly in every area. Individualism must be overcome. The PKK has thrown its doors wide open. It has halted armed struggle in order to allow democratic politics to function. That means democratic politics must now surge forward with full force. This applies to both the practice of struggle and the development of organization. It must reach every place. There should not be a single corner of Turkey left untouched. The truth must be conveyed to all people. Simply appearing in the media and saying a few things is not enough. People may not even listen. What matters is action.

People ask, "What has changed? What should we do?" The answer is that we must give up some of this individualism and overly materialistic way of living. We must be willing to change ourselves. We must dedicate ourselves to the work. To be credible, we must genuinely embrace socialization and communality. This demands tireless effort, day and night. That is how people are educated.

But it is not happening. The current government applies all kinds of pressure. Resistance to this is minimal. In Kurdistan, not a single tree has been spared. Forests and nature are being destroyed. Occasionally, this appears in the media, but only briefly. Recently, an Ecology Movement was established in Amed. We observed this and we salute it. It is a wonderful initiative, but it came and went. The Ecology Movement cannot be based only at a desk in one city. It must exist everywhere; in the mountains, the gardens, the plains, the villages, the neighborhoods. Wherever life exists, it must be present. Nature is being visibly and systematically destroyed.

There is some resistance, but it is too weak and too fragmented. It must become much more effective. We must cause an uproar over this.

They want to turn Kurdistan into a desert

The trend of moving to cities in such large numbers is not a healthy one. Especially those who have migrated from the villages of Botan, from Zagros, from the rural areas of Kurdistan to the cities. Yes, they have relocated, they have adapted. It was in line with the needs of a previous era. But now, I believe it would be very wise for them to reassess their situation. That is my recommendation. I am not imposing anything or giving orders. But in these cities, there is little to gain. If possible, those who are able should return to their villages, return to their homeland. They should reclaim their mountains, plains, rivers, underground and above-ground resources, and their trees. Life exists with them. A society lives through them.

Living in the cities, disconnected from everything, will not lead to anything meaningful. In this sense, there is a need for careful reflection. If this approach is embraced, there is so much that can be struggled for, so many actions that can be carried out.

The youth and women can take the lead in this. In fact, they should. Everyone should consider this. I offer it as a proposal: reconsider the choice to remain in the cities in that way. Out in the countryside, people can live and produce freely as a community, breathe clean air, and live a beautiful life. That is where true life exists. And it must be protected.

One's heart truly breaks. It is savage, vile... Treacherous people are trying to destroy humanity itself. Tomorrow the climate will change. There will be no water, no rain, no life. They want to turn beautiful Kurdistan into a desert. These lands, described in the holy books as "paradise," are being threatened with ruin. We must protect them. That is what patriotism means. That is what it means to be committed to freedom. That is what democratic politics demands. In this respect, better planning and deeper understanding are needed. Instead of constantly saying, "This person did nothing," or "That group failed," the real question should be, "What can I do?" Everyone must reflect, make new decisions and plans, come together, get organized, and build a multifaceted struggle. I want to express this as a call to action.

Iran could become the source of conflict everywhere

The Israel-Iran war has become a war that came clearly and loudly, one that was seen coming from afar. The danger of things escalating to this point has always existed. This is tied to the formation of the century-old system of capitalist modernity. It is also related to the Third World War, which came to the fore with the Gulf War that began in 1990–91. More specifically, it is one of the most dangerous outcomes of the process that began with the Gaza War on October 7, 2023.

We evaluated this back then, why it was happening, what was happening. Then it moved to Lebanon; we said, "It will come to Syria." After reaching Syria, it forked: one end leads to Turkey, the other to Iran. Which one would come to the forefront first? Now it is clear that Iran has come to the forefront. In fact, should this war have happened, was it necessary? We were evaluating it this way, but we also thought, "It shouldn't happen." Then we realized that we tend to assess everyone based on ourselves. According to our mentality, our politics, these are acts of murder. They have no place in life. But this mindset of power and

state, this mentality and politics, the reality of the nation-state, can bring unimaginable disasters. That's what we saw.

The capitalist modernity system was threatening Israel, but Iran was a dangerous zone. We used to say, "They might not take such a big risk." But they did excessively. Now, how far this war will spread, what the outcome will be. It's not even clear. It might not be possible to handle everything as easily as pulling hair out of butter. People may not be able to achieve what they want as if they had placed it by hand. Iran may become the source of a new fragmentation, of conflict everywhere. In other words, the war could spread. The environment is open to this.

A system that serves the interests of a few

Why did the system of capitalist modernity take such a huge risk? Is the desire for domination and exploitation that great? Energy routes, greater exploitation... They say the arms monopolies will profit, trade monopolies will profit, construction monopolies will profit. Israel is being destroyed, Iran is being destroyed. Tomorrow they'll come and say, "Let's rebuild," from Ukraine to Gaza and wherever else.

Build, destroy again, build again. This is not a system that serves humanity, but one that serves the gains and increased wealth of a few. This is what the merchants are doing. On the other hand, we thought the Iranian leadership might show some foresight. In fact, we evaluated that they did not show enough foresight in Lebanon and Syria. We stand by those evaluations. And we used to say: They failed to assess things, couldn't see, exaggerated themselves, etc. But now they may be seeing reality a bit more clearly and may act more wisely.

Because when such wars break out, Ali Khamenei had once used the same phrase for Saddam Hussein; he called him a "man without foresight." "He can't manage his people." So someone who said that about another—why is he now acting differently? Why couldn't he overcome this situation? The same logic is at play: "Me," "interest," "power"…

The nation-state mentality is the same everywhere

In the 35 years since the Gulf War, Baath-Nasser nationalism, nation-state nationalism, and Arab nationalism have been defeated and crushed in the Middle East. They couldn't survive, they showed no foresight, up until the Palestinian resistance. Religious fundamentalism, through al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and ISIS, was shattered and crushed. Not only did it fail to achieve anything, but it was used for the benefit of the system's interests.

Now the Iranian, Shiite version of this nationalism and religious fundamentalism is going through the same fate, even though one might have thought it would learn lessons and produce some solutions. It turns out that the nation-state mentality, the mindset of power, is the same everywhere. Power and state authority mean conflict. This cannot be explained solely through the personalities of Netanyahu or Khamenei. They are merely representatives of a system, a mentality, and a political structure. This system must be properly understood. That mentality and politics must be properly evaluated. These bring such a heavy burden upon people. The peoples are coughing up blood. The people are the ones suffering, and clearly, they will suffer even more.

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Kalkan: Time to build national unity

ANF | 23 June 2025

The global capitalist modernity system is using Israel as a strike force. In line with the interests of supranational capital in the Middle East and their efforts to establish an energy corridor, they are reshaping the political structures that emerged with World War I.

This signifies Israeli hegemony. They will carry out every kind of attack to achieve this. Israel is not acting alone; the U.S. is behind it, and they are acting together. NATO is involved, the U.K. is involved. The system is essentially run jointly by the U.K., the U.S., and Israel. And Germany, France, all of Europe are also backing it. They've openly declared their support. This clearly shows that they want to eliminate anyone who does not submit. They imposed a surrender condition on the current Iranian regime, which Iran claims to have rejected. But Iran shouldn't have allowed the process to reach a state of imposed surrender.

Once things reach that point, you can't just say, "This is being forced on me, what can I do?" You needed to see it in time, develop policies in time, take precautions. You had to eliminate the conditions that made such an intervention possible. And how? By fostering a mindset and politics in Iran that would prevent such an intervention. Historically, Iran had the foundations for this. It is a society open to democracy, a central region where freedom-oriented ideas have developed most strongly. A very socially cohesive people. They should have been given room to breathe. From women to the broader public—there has been so much repression. Your repressive acts justified by saying "this is my belief, that is my belief" eventually bring about such attacks. And then you're left saying, "What can I do?"

There was a way out—it wasn't impossible. Some democratic reform, transformation could have been done. Women rose up two years ago with the slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom). The youth supported it. Society supported it. People just wanted to live more freely. I said it back then too: What more do you want? They devoted themselves to your rule. And they're still working. Just let them live a bit more freely. Don't they have any rights? But no.

They clung to a rigid, dogmatic system. This is where that leads. These are the outcomes of religious extremism, nationalism, sexism, and positivist scientism in the Middle East. This mentality produced this outcome.

Yet, Kurds made efforts. Other peoples made efforts. They demanded solutions. There were alternatives. Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan) developed solutions—democratization, democratic nation. Yes, Islam should exist, but it should be democratic. Leader Apo even put forth the Medina Charter as a foundational document and called for democratization. But no one listened. None of it was taken seriously. A rigid rule was imposed. Now Iran is facing off against the world.

Clearly, the system is determined. It will change this regime. There are no alternative paths left. This could have been prevented—and it should have been.

Israel's security lies in a democratic Middle East union

On the other hand, Israel says, "I will ensure my security by crushing my opposition." Similarly, the Iranian regime says, "I will ensure my security by crushing the people." The logic is the same. But security doesn't work that way. Security comes together; no one has it alone. If the Jewish community is to live freely, then the surrounding people must also be free. If the peoples of the Middle East are free, only then can Israel live freely in democratic unity with them. Otherwise, you enslave all peoples and expect to be free yourself? That doesn't work.

They should orient themselves more toward socialism. Jews were instrumental in developing the ideology of socialism. They said, "A society that oppresses others cannot be free."

Yes, a military result will come now. Clearly, trade and energy routes will produce some outcomes. They'll act on those. But this won't be freedom for the Jewish people or security for Israel. As we always say: real security lies in the concept of the democratic nation, in a democratic Middle East union.

The solution proposed by Leader Apo is the only one that can realize democratization and a free life.

Rojhilat society's stance is a good one

The Kurdish people have been the most sensitive and proactive on this issue. They faced oppression in the past and resisted. Recently, they've said, "If oppression continues, we will resist." But importantly, they've always maintained a space for developments that could bring about democratization. They've shown they are not supporters of violence or destruction. The stance of Kurdish society, particularly in Rojhilat (Eastern Kurdistan), has been a good one.

They accepted nothing short of a free life and remained insistent on gaining democratic rights. When necessary, they resisted. But they also put great effort into ensuring this happens through democratic, political means.

Now is the time to build national unity around the congress

Now, the correct stance is absolutely this. In this context, I can say: our call to all Kurdish movements could be this—this is a new situation. Developments in Iran represent a new situation for Rojhilat and all of Kurdistan. For years, we've been calling for national unity from the frontline. We said, "Let's realize this at the Kurdistan National Congress." Now is the time to work for that congress, to build national unity around it. If we can't do it now, then when?

Therefore, all Kurdish organizations and all patriots must follow such a political path. Efforts must be made for Kurdish National Unity. Individual or organizational concerns must be set aside—everyone should contribute. Especially now, the political parties, organizations, and institutions of Rojhilat Kurdistan must unite and act with one voice. They must be able to do this.

There are calls in this direction. PJAK made a statement, issued a call. We find that call appropriate and meaningful.

For example, all Kurdish organizations, all patriots should take the same stance. If they unite now, they will achieve great gains. Let them create Kurdish National Unity on the path of free life and democratic politics—they will be the biggest beneficiaries in this turbulent environment. That's a certainty.

This is our call to all parties, without distinction—to all who consider themselves patriotic groups and organizations: now is the time to act together.

The people must prioritize their own security

Finally, for the people of Rojhilat Kurdistan: this is clearly a dangerous situation. It's unclear what might happen. People must be very alert and cautious. They must be organized and prepared. Society must prioritize ensuring its own security in the face of conflict. It must strengthen solidarity and communal life. But as much as possible, they should not be drawn into conflicts. They should act cautiously. They must never stray from the path of national democratic development. They must build their national unity, build their organization.

They must prioritize relationships and alliances based on creating a joint democratic governance with all Iranian peoples. A Democratic Union of Iran is very important. The people of Rojhilat Kurdistan led a major uprising in Iran in the past two years with the slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî." They must also lead the process of building a democratic union. They must believe in themselves. They must not enter unnecessary conflicts but must always take security precautions.

And they must know and trust that Kurds from all four parts of Kurdistan and the diaspora are behind them. They stand with the people of Rojhilat Kurdistan. They will support them to the end. In this sense, trust must be placed in the Kurdish people and their freedom- and democracy-oriented forces.

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Kalkan: Turkey will survive only if it becomes a country of freedoms

ANF | 24 June 2025

The influence of Devlet Bahçeli's words is diminishing

Devlet Bahçeli spoke about the effects of the Israel-Turkey war on Turkey. There's no need for us to say anything. I just mentioned it: the impact of Devlet Bahçeli's words has diminished.

In fact, after Devlet Bahçeli's statements, I would have expected one of two things to happen. First: if this is the case, what is the correct stance? One would quickly move toward that. It would mean engaging rapidly in the struggle for democratization to transform Turkey into a democratic space that does not provide a basis for external interventions, including solving the Kurdish issue. Those who failed to do this should have panicked, been horrified. What does this mean? These attacks are also being directed at us. We are being encircled. From the East, from the West by sea — we are already encircled. They're opening

a route from Cyprus to Greece. From the South, we are surrounded via Syria and Lebanon. Now they say we are also being encircled via Iran. If they truly explained this, they would be terrified. There should have been public outrage if the right stance wasn't taken. But that didn't happen either.

Devlet Bahçeli spoke. The topic came up in one or two places. Then it disappeared. They didn't make it an agenda; they didn't debate it. Policies in this direction did not develop. But Devlet Bahçeli stated a truth. Let's state it clearly. When we say it, they say we are "threatening." Önder Apo used to say this. They would respond, "Are you threatening us?" The current government and nationalist circles understand it this way. But we're not the ones saying it; it's the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) Chairman, Devlet Bahçeli. Let them understand it however they want.

Yes, what he said is true. Turkey is being encircled. Iran and Turkey were next. Now Iran is targeted. Then it will be Turkey's turn. In this sense, the attack on Iran is indeed an attack on Turkey.

They target all political structures in the Middle East based on the Soviet Union

Turkey must understand this reality. The current attacks, all the operations conducted in the Middle East since the 1991 Gulf War, aim to eliminate all political structures in the region that were based on the 1917 October Revolution and the Soviet Union.

Some might say, "But Israel was also established in that era, in 1948." It was formed within that balance, but for a different purpose. Now they are using it to play a systemic role.

Let's pay attention. I mentioned this earlier, but it's worth repeating. Arab nationalism, Nasserism, Ba'athism, all forms of nationalism up to Gaddafi — they have all been eliminated in this process. All religious movements organized on the basis of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Green Belt have also been eliminated. Now they are eliminating everything based on Iranian Shiism, Persian nationalism, and Shia religious ideology, extending to Lebanon. They are leaving no stone unturned. Let's look at what happened to Saddam Hussein, Hafez al-Assad, the Assad regime, and other countries. They leave no trace. These are extremely large-scale attacks.

Turkey is not outside this restructuring

The Republic of Turkey led all of this. They were proud of it, saying, "We are the pioneers." In this global balance, the first state established in the Middle East was the Republic of Turkey. It waged war based on a popular revolution. It became a state through agreements with England and France, while resisting the British, French, and Greek occupations and opposing the Soviet Union. That's how the Republic was founded.

Why did Britain and France accept the Republic? Because they said, "You will fight against the Soviet Union." And Turkey accepted this and founded its state. After that, its entire purpose became:

1. Fighting against the Soviet Union,
2. Leading the development of nation-states in the Middle East.

But now, the Soviet Union no longer exists. There's no more struggle to be waged against it, nor strength to be drawn from it. The nation-state structures in the Middle East that were formed under Turkey's leadership have also been, and are being, dismantled. The last example was the Islamic regime that emerged after the revolution which overthrew the Shah. And now, that regime is facing the same fate. Therefore, Turkey's own structure is also not excluded from this. The map that led to World War I had different plans from the current system builders.

They will increase pressure and exploitation on Turkey

However, Turkey followed a different development path; it was based on the existence of the Soviet Union. It struggled with other powers and made agreements with them. Now there's no reason to maintain those agreements. There is no need anymore. Thus, they will not accept Turkey's current position. They will impose more pressure and exploitation.

Yes, Turkey joined NATO and was opened to exploitation by this system, but that is not enough for them. They want to exploit more. They want to establish more dominance. The current system and administration cannot resist this.

Turkey will survive only if it becomes a country of freedoms

So what is the solution? The solution is democratization. These dangers can only be eliminated — the conditions that allow these kinds of attacks can only be removed — if Turkey achieves a democratic structure. At the core of this lies Kurdish freedom. Freedom for all others too — Alevis, women… Turkey must truly become a country of freedoms. If it does, then it will survive and become powerful. It will lead different developments in the Middle East. It will leave no grounds that could justify external intervention. There is no other way. If it doesn't do this — as we've always said — it's now becoming clear that the same imposition is being made on Iran. Turkey will either submit to Israeli hegemony or go to war with it. There is no third option. If neither of these is acceptable, the only path is democratization of Turkey based on Kurdish freedom. In this respect, the solutions proposed by Önder Apo are the only path to salvation. Önder Apo is the only chance for Turkey to get out of this situation.

When we say this, some people say: "They're just asking for rights for themselves, Kurds always exaggerate," or "Is this all just about one person being released from prison?"

What does that have to do with anything? These are arrogant words — words of ignorant people who understand nothing.

Önder Apo, still resisting under harsh conditions in İmralı prison, is trying to contribute to these developments, yet some people pretend to criticize what he says or does. What criticism? All of them have been sworn enemies of Apo for 50 years. Now, if developments in Turkey begin to follow Önder Apo's line of thinking, their masks will fall. Everyone's true role will be revealed. Out of that fear, they are trying to suppress Önder Apo's initiative. This is purely a defamation campaign; it has nothing to do with the truth.

The struggle for peace will succeed if it follows the line of self-sacrifice

June is becoming the month of sacrifice. And we know that when comrade Zîlan carried out her action, she had only recently joined the party. How was she able to leave behind such a legacy in such a short time? Today is also the martyrdom day of comrade Sema. This month is the martyrdom month of comrades Zîlan and Ulaş. Comrade Raperîn is also commemorated.

I remember with love and gratitude all the martyrs of June, in the persons of comrades Zîlan and Sema. I celebrate our people's day of sacrifice. War, resistance, and heroism advanced on the path of self-sacrifice. Now, if the peace struggle and the democratic political struggle also proceed along the path of self-sacrifice, they will succeed. The line is the same. Only the method changes, that's all.

Therefore, our martyrs illuminate the process of change, transformation, and restructuring today; they also show how we must fight, how we must live. They show us clearly. We must see this truth well. On this basis, our people must embrace their values. They must embrace their martyrs. They must try to understand them correctly. The June martyrs are the kind who lead, open the way, and guide. The better we understand them, the more we absorb the Apocu line. We will carry out the struggle for freedom and democracy with the correct methods and effectively. We will win in every situation. In this regard, the line of our martyrs always shows us the right path and leads us to victory.

On this basis, once again, in the person of comrade Zîlan, I commemorate all the June martyrs, all our martyrs, and celebrate our people's day of sacrifice; I call on all our people to embrace the truth of the martyrs and the values of freedom they brought forth, and to advance them.

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Hozat: Without the struggle for freedom, we would not be able to talk about Kurdish identity today

ANF | 25 June 2025

In an interview with Medya Haber TV, Besê Hozat, co-chair of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council, spoke about the ongoing 'Process of Peace and Democratic Society'. She comments in detail on the discussions surrounding the manifesto created by Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, which is an expression of the process and an expression of the transformation of the Kurdish freedom movement. Among other things, Hozat also evaluates the ongoing geopolitical developments and the situation in Iran.

In recent weeks, a number of materials have been published regarding the ongoing process and changes in the freedom movement. Central to this is the comprehensive manifesto by Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan. It is being discussed intensively by a wide variety of circles. It has met with widespread approval, with many seeing it as an opportunity for a long-necessary debate, but of course, there is also criticism. Some of the criticism, for example, regarding analyses of Alevism, is quite harsh. What can you tell us about the manifesto and the discussions and criticism that have unfolded in its wake? Do you understand the criticism?

All materials related to the 12th PKK Congress have been published. One of them was the significant and enlightening 'Manifesto of Peace and Democratic Society' prepared by Leader Öcalan. In it, he comprehensively examines the various facets of human history, with a particular focus on the history of women and the Kurds. The manifesto is an assessment that places the historical realities in their proper context, almost rewriting history according to its true nature. Of course, there are intense debates surrounding this. Even though we cannot follow all of them, the essence of some debates has reached us. As valuable as these discussions are, we have also heard of approaches and criticisms that have no real basis but are only expressed with the intention of attacking Leader Öcalan. Such discourse is inappropriate and is an approach that should be criticized.

What is expressed by these individuals and groups who have no intention of engaging in honest debate but simply resort to provocation and sabotage in order to conceal their own reality can hardly be understood as criticism. It is defamation. What is needed is criticism based on serious grounds and, in general, a healthy debate.

The analysis and perspectives expressed by Leader Öcalan in the manifesto are assessments he has developed over the past decades. It is an accumulation of knowledge and deepening of understanding that has grown over time, building on the period of the struggle in the form of the group, from the founding of the PKK to the present day. Leader Öcalan has developed a deep understanding of history, and based on his analysis of these realities, he has developed his ideas over the decades. The manifesto did not simply appear out of nowhere.

Particularly through the Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, Leader Öcalan published profound, striking, and new assessments regarding Alevism, Kurdish history, Marxism, and women's history. Now, through the new manifesto, he has further deepened these assessments. Particularly noteworthy is what he brings together: the history of the region and the history of women with universal history, as well as analyses concerning the understanding of quantum and dialectical perspectives that are not based on dogmatic idealistic or materialistic ideas, to mention just a few aspects. In doing so, he criticizes many shortcomings, but without categorically ruling anything out. Instead, he values everything and sees what it has given to society and humanity.

And I emphasize this while speaking with my identity as a woman, a Kurd, a socialist, and an Alevi. When I read the manifesto with those identities in mind, I feel tremendous empowerment and energy. Through the reading and discussing it, my horizons are broadened, and I feel excitement and enthusiasm. It creates tremendous joy in me. I do not see any misjudgment regarding all these identities. On the contrary, it opens my own consciousness and strengthens my quest for freedom. I am convinced that this is how all other female comrades, all comrades in general, our people, and democratic and socialist forces feel when reading and discussing the manifesto. Without question, there are also criticisms and evaluations from

these circles, which is legitimate and important. This is a search for understanding, a search for comprehension.

When Leader Öcalan expresses his opinions and conclusions on issues that are very entrenched, it is only natural that this causes quite a stir. When dogmas are challenged, resistance is inevitable. When a new thought or idea is pitted against something that has been elevated to a dogmatic level, like a god or a religion, it surely triggers anger and frustration. This turns things upside down, and the consequences are logical and understandable.

We ourselves know how difficult change and transformation can be, as we have been confronted with it for years. This makes it easier for us to understand where the reactions come from. Some of the criticism is probably fueled by the unease that people are beginning to realize that what they have stood for for years needs to be overcome. As I said, we can understand this and still consider them valuable without a doubt. They contribute to the necessary progress. Only in this way can an even more accurate understanding and a more targeted struggle be achieved. So, we attach value to everything; the only thing I criticize are those who express their 'criticism' with the intention of denigration and provocation. These 'criticisms' come from the circles of collaborators and traitors who are only trying to obscure their own reality. These are not criticisms but attacks, and we reject them with all our might. These people should first deal with themselves and face their own reality.

Leader Öcalan's assessment of Alevism, particularly Kurdish Alevism, is accurate. The Kurdish Alevi faith is essentially the so-called 'Faith of the Rightful Way', and is based on Zoroastrianism and the remnants of Neolithic society. It is based on Neolithic society, animist beliefs, and nature worship. In fact, Kurdish Alevism is, in a sense, a belief in nature. It is an ecological belief. The influences of animism are very strong. I myself have experienced this deeply. That is, the environment I lived in, the family I grew up in, was a family where Alevi culture and belief were very strong. I am talking about the nuclear family and the environment. What I want to highlight: Leader Öcalan says that a fabricated Alevism was created by the 'Committee of Union and Progress'. Especially over the course of the past 100, 150 years, Kurdish Alevism has been tried to be assimilated through it. Kurdish Alevis have been tried to be Turkified. That is a reality that cannot be denied.

That is something I remember from my own childhood. My father was born in 1920/21, and my mother was born in the 1930s. When the Dersim (tr. Tunceli) Massacre took place, my father was married and had three children. His three children, his wife, and his father – that is, my grandfather – were killed in the Dersim Massacre. Before the massacre, the Alevi faith and Kurdish culture were much stronger and had not been assimilated to such a great extent. I still grew up with Kurdish culture, and I still grew up with that Alevi culture and faith. Ask the elderly in Dersim, and they will all say, "I am Kirmanc." "My language is Kirmanc," "Kirmanckî." Alevism, Alevi identity, only became so dominant much later, after the Dersim genocide. It has now been elevated to a position that almost overshadows national identity. Now, if you ask anyone, they will emphasize their Alevi identity first. Why? Leader Öcalan has done a lot of deep research, reading, and discussing this, and we know it all from our own lives. We know it from putting it all together and reading about it historically. I personally have also done a lot of reading on Alevism. When I look at it, I can definitely say that the assessments made on Alevism, especially by the 'Committee of Union and Progress', over the past 100, 150 years, have almost homogenized Kurdish, Turkish Alevism, and Arab Alevism. However, there are very serious differences and unique characteristics. Such writings and evaluations developed on Alevism, many writings, discourses, and debates in this sense were

developed as part of the cultural genocide and religious genocide carried out on the basis of Turkification of Kurdish Alevis and Turkification through Alevism. No one can deny this. This is a fact. Therefore, it is very important to approach the evaluations and observations made by Leader Öcalan correctly, to try to understand them, to research their depth, and to examine them.

Leader Öcalan has also made similar assessments in the past regarding Seyit Rıza. That is, he valued his resistant attitude, his unyielding stance. "I was not able to see through your lies, and that troubles me; but I didn't kneel before you, and that should trouble you" — Leader Öcalan always attached great value to these last words of Seyit Rıza. He said he drew tremendous lessons from this. He stated that he developed this struggle to such an extent through the lessons he drew from this, through the inspiration he gained, that he neither deceived nor was deceived; that is, he developed this struggle along this line.

What I said with regard to Alevism also accounts for the Kurdish identity. If there had been no 52-year struggle for freedom, we would not be able to talk about Kurdish identity today. All Kurds would have been assimilated, subjected to genocide, and nothing would remain in the name of the Kurds. This is clear. The last 200 years of history, in particular, are full of massacres. It is a history filled with cultural genocide, ecocide, and all forms of genocide. The will of the Kurds had been broken before the PKK emerged, and the Kurds had been subjected to genocide. They had reached a point where they were afraid to be Kurdish and to express their Kurdish identity. They weren't able to speak Kurdish anymore. I remember we had a precious recorder at home that played Kirmanckî songs. At that time the language was banned; Kurdish was banned. There had been military operations in our village on a daily basis. They were constantly searching, insulting the people, and beating and cursing them. Those who spoke Kurdish were tortured. My mother would wake up at dawn every morning to go out to check; she would look around, and if there were soldiers nearby, she would immediately wake us up from our sleep. We would take that recorder and hide it in the hay. After the operation was over and the soldiers had withdrawn, we would take the recorder out of the hay and bring it back. We would play it when there were no soldiers around. We listened to the records and spoke our language to prevent it from being killed. Out of fear, we couldn't speak Kurdish in front of the soldiers. Those who didn't know Turkish would go mute, become speechless.

We lived through this; we saw it. I lived through it myself. Who can dare try to deny this? That is what Leader Öcalan is talking about. He is speaking about the Kurd who is afraid to express herself/himself, that is cowed, whose will is broken, that is used by everyone, that is forced into everyone's service, and that is turned into soldiers, workers, and slaves. His critics are not towards the free Kurd; it is not about the organized, determined Kurd; it is not about the Kurd who is conscious of her/his own existence and identity and who struggles for it. The Kurdish identity has been under constant attack and oppression for hundreds of years, facing serious fragmentation and disintegration, and particularly, over the past 200 years, there has been a history of horrific genocide, physical massacres, and cultural genocide. What can a Kurdish people subjected to such cultural and physical genocide have? We have lived through it! Their own language was banned, living in constant fear. It is important to understand this correctly and give it the right meaning.

Throughout history, almost a form of a tradition of betrayal and collaboration has developed in Kurdish society. When a society faces existential threats for thousands of years, it is clear that at some point that society will become fragmented and begin to decay. This is widespread in Kurdish society today. It is precisely these circles that became traitors to their own society and collaborators that Leader Öcalan refers to when he speaks of the 'Judenrat' under German fascism. Why are these circles reacting so harshly to this?

Because the analysis is accurate. They are traitors to their own society and collaborators. That is why they attack in the form of smear campaigns. They are the ones Leader Öcalan refers to when he speaks of 'Judenrat'. The history of the Kurds is full of them. It is a list that goes on and on, for naming them the time of the interview wouldn't be sufficient. A very obvious example: the structure that they call the 'village guards'. They are collaborating with the state everywhere, engaging in Kurdish hostility, attacking free Kurds, and creating a comfortable living space for themselves. They are collaborating with the colonialist enemy, with those who perpetrate genocide, acting as counter-revolutionaries and assassins. There are not a few Kurds like this. They are Kurdish by ethnic identity but are enemies of the Kurds. They are traitors. They attack the identity of the free Kurds with the greatest hostility. These traitorous collaborators, whom we call 'Judendrat', are present in politics, commerce, the media – everywhere. They are present in every part of society. I don't want to name names. There are many, and most of them are known by society. They appear on television as "terrorism experts" or "security experts," as journalists, media members, or writers. They spend 24/7 on television spreading Kurdish hostility and legitimizing the genocidal war policies.

There may be those who have misunderstood the point, feel offended by this misunderstanding, and therefore react against it. My criticism does not, of course, refer to them. They say, "Judendrat was a Jewish council during the Jewish genocide. It was a council made up of collaborating Jews. They collaborated with the Nazis. What does this have to do with the Kurds?" They may have a weak sense of history or may not understand, so they criticize. These are understandable. My criticisms are not directed at them. My words are directed at those who know the truth, are aware of what Leader Öcalan is referring to, and attack his evaluations.

The topic of Judendrat and the line of collaboration and treason must be discussed at length among Kurds. All their true faces must be revealed, and they must be condemned. If there were no Judendrats in Kurdistan, among the Kurds, the Kurdish question would definitely have been resolved on a democratic basis by now. Turkey would have become democratic, and the Middle East would have become democratic. The fact that the Kurdish issue is still being fought over despite such a heavy price, that the existence and freedom of the Kurds have not been guaranteed, that their identity has not been guaranteed, that they do not have a democratic and free status, and that they do not live freely in their country is fundamentally, and even primarily, due to these Judendrats among the Kurds. This is the line of collaboration and treason. This is a fact that cannot be denied. It is necessary to approach and discuss this issue from the right angle. And it is important for the free press, everyone who is struggling, and everyone who is fighting for freedom and democracy to give effective and powerful responses to such individuals and circles.

Similarly, Leader Öcalan has striking assessments of Marxism and also assesses the collapse of real socialism to a large extent. He says that addressing all issues on a class basis led to the collapse of real socialism. Did human history begin with class? The first contradiction in history is the contradiction between women and men. The first socialization was the socialization that developed around women. It is communal; it is clan-based. And then, with the organization of men against women and their seizure of the values formed around women, in women's sociality, and their establishment of dominance over women, over the sociality created by women, the first and deepest contradiction in history began. With it, of course, by time, classes gradually emerged.

When Leader Öcalan says this, he does not deny or reject class contradiction. On the contrary, he approaches and evaluates the truth of history in all its dimensions. Class struggle has existed for a very long time in society, but its basis has been the struggle and contradiction between the commune and the state,

that is, between the sociality created by women and the power-state system created by the male-dominated mentality. Leader Öcalan bases the historical struggle on this, and this is absolutely appropriate. He also highlights that in his later years, Marx also had similar searches and evaluations. Marx wrote and discussed the Paris Commune. He thereby reached new understandings, but neither his life nor his knowledge was sufficient, nor did the reality of that era allow it, that he would further develop it. Leader Öcalan also says that Marx, Lenin, and Engels have undoubtedly contributed great values to humanity, that a very powerful social struggle has been waged by the peoples, women, and humanity on the basis of those ideas and thoughts, and that very important values have emerged. He acknowledges this without hesitation. This is not what he criticizes. It is important to make a comprehensive assessment by re-reading all these sections, especially in the five volumes of the Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, and by re-reading the new manifesto after it. This can lead to healthier and more accurate assessments.

Again, in recent weeks, some minutes of meetings on Imrali have come to the fore. It is said that there is a discussion about Jewish identity. Leader Öcalan has already made broad and important evaluations in this regard in the five volumes of the Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization; his current evaluations are not independent of those. I recommend that those who have problems understanding the current excerpts of discussions and those who believe they have gained a complete picture based on abbreviated and therefore inaccurate summaries and make assessments based on this truly read the prison writings and, based on this, formulate their evaluations. One has to look at the whole picture in order to be able to analyze it. Throughout history, Jews have had a great deal of interest in Kurds. They have placed great importance on their relationship with Kurds. In fact, Jews say that they have a lost tribe, and they specify that this tribe is the Jewish-Kurdish tribe. These things are mentioned in history. There are still Kurdish Jews. Especially in Mosul and other places in Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq), and again in other places like Colemêrg (tr. Hakkari). There are Jewish communities among many peoples. This has been the case throughout history from the Kurds' perspective as well. The Jews' support for the federation process in Southern Kurdistan and the struggle in Southern Kurdistan against Saddam's dictatorship has been significant. This is not an evaluation we make, but a historical reality.

The Kurds are a strategic power in the region. Whoever establishes relations with the Kurds, whoever develops relations with the Kurds, and whoever develops an alliance with the Kurds gains superiority in the region. Strategic relations and alliances with the Kurds play an almost decisive role in becoming the fundamental, strategic power of the region. Everyone is discussing this now. So is, for example, Turkey as well. One reason for this process is those discussions. It is a dimension of the 'Process of Peace and Democratic Society'. And not only Turkey, but also Israel, the Arabs, and the Persians are discussing it.

The Kurds' relationship with the Persians is very ancient and historical. Again, the relationship with the Turks is a thousand years old. The relationship with the Jews is a relationship that goes back thousands of years. The fact that Leader Öcalan takes these historical realities into account and evaluates them in the context of current politics is therefore the most logical and reasonable thing to do. We need to approach history correctly, rationally. We need to approach it dialectically. We need to approach it with historical sociology. I invite everyone to approach it the same way.

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Hozat: This is a 'Process of Peace and Democratic Society'

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What stage has this process, referred to as both the 'Process of Terror-Free Turkey' and the 'Process of Peace and Democratic Society', reached, especially in light of recent geopolitical developments?

It would be fully wrong to define this process as the 'Process of Terror-Free Turkey' as the government tries to do. We reject this expression, this definition. This kind of discourse must be taken off the agenda. The name of this process is clear: it is the 'Process of Peace and Democratic Society'. Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan therefore named his call issued on February 27 the 'Call for Peace and Democratic Society'. This call was developed jointly with the state delegation by mutual agreement and consensus. Therefore, the state itself has accepted it as the 'Process of Peace and Democratic Society', that is, the name of the process. The slogan of 'Terror-Free Turkey' must be lifted. Otherwise, proper discussions cannot develop, and proper progress cannot be achieved in this process.

With the Israel-Iran war, the importance and value of this process has been revealed once again. The region is currently in the midst of a great inferno. Everything is burning fiercely. And now, after Iran, it is Turkey's turn. That underlines the necessity of these discussions. It began in Gaza, turned to Lebanon and Syria, and reached Iran; now it is Turkey's turn. The region is being redesigned. This is a process related to the redesign of the region. Therefore, it is necessary to have healthy discussions and to have them now. It is now necessary for the state and the government to take concrete steps.

As a movement, we have done what we had to do. We have taken every step. We responded positively to Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan's call. We declared a ceasefire on March 1. Then, on May 5, we convened the 12th Congress of the PKK. We dissolved the PKK at the congress. We decided to end the armed struggle. We have now ended the armed struggle against Turkey. We are not waging armed struggle against Turkey anymore. Now Turkey, the Turkish state, must take action in response to this. It needs to take action. The state has to recognize the right to democratic politics for the people. It has to make legal and constitutional reforms. The political arena has to be opened so that those people who until now had used weapons against Turkey can engage in democratic politics in Turkey. They can do work in society.

But so far, no steps are being taken on this issue. There is no going back now. What else can be done by our side beyond stopping the armed struggle? Now it is time for the other side to take action. Without legal and constitutional reforms, how will the guerrillas in the mountains come down to the plains? How will they engage in democratic politics in the villages and cities? In order for them to engage in democratic politics, legal and constitutional reforms must be made, the political arena must be opened, and the right to democratic politics must be recognized so that the guerrillas can lay down their arms and go to villages and cities to engage in democratic politics.

What we are seeing right now is demagoguery. First, it was said that the congress should be held first; now it is said that the PKK should lay down its arms first, then they would look into setting up a commission in parliament… This shows that they have no serious intentions, no interest in truly creating a solution. If there were a genuine intention to find a solution, a mindset and policy for a solution, then immediately after the PKK dissolved itself and ceased armed struggle – that is, after making the decision to end and ter-

minate it – a commission would be formed the very next day, the parliament would convene, the parliament would debate, and the necessary laws would be passed. It would pass a special law for the PKK, grant it political rights, and make legal and constitutional reforms, and the guerrillas would leave the mountains and engage in democratic politics in the villages and cities. In a serious state, a government with good intentions and a solution-oriented mindset would do this. How much time has passed since the congress that was held in the beginning of May? Now it is the end of June, and still there is nothing. This is unacceptable.

The other day, there was a conference in Istanbul: the 'Opening the Path to Peace Conference', which was truly an important conference. I followed it to a certain extent. Very valuable people participated, and there were important discussions. Perhaps the number of participants was small, but the content was of high quality. All opposition party leaders sent messages to the conference, making accurate assessments. Turkey cannot become democratic without resolving the Kurdish issue. For Turkey to become democratic, it must resolve the Kurdish issue on a democratic basis. Kurdish identity must be constitutionally recognized. Its existence and identity must be fully opened up to the political arena, the democratic political arena. The Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, must be physically freed. He must be enabled to actively engage in politics. He must be enabled to coordinate and guide the Process of Peace and Democratic Society. He was also present in those discussions. The main opposition party, the CHP, must fully embrace this process and participate in it in a very strong and active manner. If this process is strongly embraced by the opposition, civil society organizations, women, young people, Alevis, and all strata of society, and a strong struggle emerges in this sense, then we can definitely take this process out of the hands of this government. If this process is left to the current government, it will instrumentalize it, and no result will emerge. It is required for the entire society, and particularly the opposition forces, to strongly embrace this process, set the agenda, put forward projects for practical solutions, and develop an intensive debate and practical process.

Otherwise, there is still no concrete step in the current situation. One cannot talk about a complete deadlock, but one also cannot talk about a process that is going smoothly either. There is a process that is moving forward with great difficulty, with the struggle, efforts, and pressure of democratic circles, particularly the Kurds and the freedom movement, and there is a process that is keeping its warmth alive, especially with the great effort and struggle of the Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan.

The current government's approach is not towards a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue or democratizing Turkey. It demands full surrender and does nothing else. We strongly criticize and reject this approach. This government has to take a serious approach.

The region is currently in a state of chaos, and it will eventually spread to Turkey. The only way for Turkey to save itself from this is through a strategic relationship and alliance with the Kurds. It is the democratic resolution of the Kurdish issue, the democratization of Turkey. It is for all strata of society living in Turkey to obtain their rights on the basis of free citizenship. Otherwise, a great catastrophe awaits Turkey. The fact that attacks on the opposition continue to intensify shows how unserious the government is about this process. It shows that there is no serious solution, no serious plan, policy, or project for the democratization of Turkey. If there were a genuine, serious intention for a democratization of Turkey, such heavy pressure and violence would not be exerted on the opposition. The democratic political arena would be fully opened.

There cannot be democracy in Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) when there is fascism in Istanbul. If there is fascism in Turkey, the Kurdish issue cannot be resolved democratically in Kurdistan. There can be no democracy in Kurdistan. This is impossible. This pressure on the opposition is causing suspicion and concern. Why would a government with good intentions resort to such measures? They say there is corruption in CHP municipalities. Is there no corruption in AKP municipalities? I propose that an independent commission should be established. This independent commission should include members from all parties. People from democratic legal circles should be included in this commission. It should launch a corruption investigation targeting all municipalities, municipalities of AKP, CHP, and other opposition forces alike. It should investigate all municipalities. It should examine them and subject them to scrutiny. We have experience in this regard in Kurdistan. Previously, the HDP's municipalities were taken over by trustees. Now the same policy continues. With a new election, the municipalities were taken over again, and the ruins left by the trustees were uncovered. It was seen how the municipalities were plunged into debt and how they were ruined by corruption. They were all AKP trustees, AKP officials. AKP municipalities are drowning in corruption.

The Process of Peace and Democratic Society has begun. The way will be paved for democratic politics. All opposition and society will embrace this process so that it can reach a conclusion. The government is trying to create division and fragmentation within the opposition, deepening polarization in society, and creating great suspicion. They say that they will bring this process to a conclusion. They speak of "a Turkey without terrorism". This phrase alone already reveals their mindset. Their mindset is revealed in their attacks on the opposition. They have to come to their senses. This state, this government, has to come to its senses. They can no longer deceive the Kurds. They can no longer deceive the Kurds with tricks. That era is over. They look at developments and adopt a policy according to the conjuncture. The Kurdish issue is a fundamental problem in Turkey. The fundamental reason for fascism in Turkey, the fundamental reason for authoritarianism, is the Kurdish issue itself. These are policies of genocide, policies of denial and annihilation. The path to democratization in Turkey lies in the democratic resolution of the Kurdish issue. It lies in the recognition of Kurdish identity. It lies in the recognition of Kurdish freedom and existence. That is how Turkey will democratize. This is possible with the opposition embracing this process and the whole society embracing it. They are suppressing and oppressing all these groups.

The opposition should not fall for these games, recognizing this reality. This is an important process. The Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has made tremendous efforts and sacrifices. So has the freedom movement, so have the Kurds, so have the democratic forces, and so have women. They have fought hard and made great sacrifices. In order to turn this process into a true solution process, everyone must strongly embrace it, intensify the struggle, and wage a united, collective struggle.

You have already touched on the escalations in the context of the war of the hegemonic powers to redesign the region; could you elaborate on that a little further? How do you assess the current geopolitical situation, in particular with its current focus on Iran?

The region is currently a burning ground. Blood is flowing in streams. There is major ecological destruction, cities are being leveled, and all the resources of society are being exploited and destroyed. In a word, it is horrific! But sadly, none of this is new. In fact, this process began with the Gulf War. It is a process that began in the 1990s, and since then it has gradually developed step by step. The intervention in Iraq, the intervention in Afghanistan, the attack on Gaza in the course of October 7, the subsequent attack on Lebanon and Syria, the civil war that began in Syria in 2011, the war that has been going on for years…

All the developments in Iran are a continuation of a process that began in the 1990s. Also, the international conspiracy targeting Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan was part of this. That process was taken to a further stage, and then intervention in the region developed rapidly.

The intervention developed by the international powers and the capitalist hegemonic system in the region has reached a crucial level. This process must be evaluated as a very important stage of the Third World War. It is not separate from it. The region is being redesigned. The region is being redesigned based on the interests of capitalist, imperialist, global, and hegemonic capital. The political system in the region is being reshaped.

As the region is being redesigned and given a new form based on the interests of global hegemonic capital, closed, inward-looking, status quo, fascist nation-state systems are being dismantled. Because this nation-state structure does not serve the hegemonic capital system, it harms its interests. That is why they are dismantling it.

Now, one aspect of this plan of reshaping is Iran. The intervention in Iran must be evaluated within this context. The intervention in Iran is not simply taking place because "it is producing nuclear weapons". These are justifications, pretexts. They intervened in Iraq with the very same justification, pretext. It is an intervention aimed at the state system in Iran. And now after that, it will be Turkey's turn. Because this system has become a burden for the global imperialist hegemonic system. They are an obstacle to global capital. The same accounts for Libya, Syria, and Iraq. One has to look at this issue from a broad perspective. This war is a war to reorganize Iran. Even if this regime survives this intervention, it will not be able to survive for long in the process that follows. They have brought it to that point. Even if it survives, it will continue to exist for a while in a very weak state and position. But after that, it will change; it will have to change. This is a direct attack on the Iranian system and regime. It is an attack aimed at changing the regime. And its impact will be felt throughout the region.

The US has officially entered the war. From the beginning, there has been a Middle East intervention initiated by the US, the UK, and Israel. As a result of all these interventions, Israel, the core power of capitalist modernity in the region, is being made into the hegemonic power of the region. Israel's influence throughout the region will continue to grow, and so will the influence of the US, the UK, and the West continue to grow. All the states and political systems in the Middle East will be integrated into the global system. That is their goal.

This will also affect Iraq, which is already in a state of great chaos. It has not been able to emerge from it. It seems that this chaos will deepen even further. Internal conflicts may come to the surface more. The same is true in other countries and regions. If Turkey does not evaluate the Process of Peace and Democratic Society correctly and does not take practical steps, Turkey will also be severely affected by this, and this process will truly begin in Turkey after Iran. That is why this process is important.

What has also become apparent through the process is that all nationalist, religious, and unitary nation-state systems are ultimately facing such destruction and decay. For example, there have been demands for freedom, democracy, rights, and justice in Iran for a long time. 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadî' was not just an uprising of the Kurds or women. All societies and peoples living in Iran, even those within the system, embraced it. Freedom was demanded. The Iranian regime turned a blind eye to all of them and suppressed them. It tried to counter them with executions. It tried to break their will and subdue society. With oppression, vi-

olence, and prisons. This created tremendous decay. As a result, the Mossad and the CIA were able to virtually conquer and occupy Iran from within. They have even set up drone depots inside the country. They have organized tens of thousands of agents.

They have recruited agents from within the state. They have taken over from within, like a Trojan horse. This level of decay is the result of this policy. If Iran had adopted a democratic policy, carried out fundamental democratic reforms, responded to the demands of women, responded to the demands of the Kurds, the Baluchis, all peoples, and responded to the demands of all strata of society; if it had truly carried out fundamental reforms and democratized, would tens of thousands of agents have worked against Iran, would they have been hostile? Would the Mossad, CIA, MIT, and all kinds of intelligence agencies have been able to effectively occupy the country from within? Would they take over the country? The real war was waged from within. Yes, Israeli warplanes and US warplanes did their part, but many assassinations were carried out from within. Starting with the Revolutionary Guards, the ideological cadres of the system were purged and destroyed. There is a terrible state of decay. That's why no powerful answer to the situation emerges. Okay, society is not speaking out against the attacks because there is a very deep-rooted tradition of anti-Western sentiment in Iran. But that doesn't mean it will always be that way. This regime has created tremendous anger and reaction in society. It seems difficult for it to survive. Even if it does survive, it seems very unlikely that it will last for long.

The Kurds have made their position clear. Of course, the Kurds will rely on their own strength, their own organization, and their own defense. The Kurds cannot secure their existence and freedom by relying on, trusting, or expecting any other power. I want to stress that the Kurds' strategy of struggle is clear; it is the strategy of Democratic Nation. The Kurds have a common life project and understanding with all peoples. This was clearly seen in the statements made by PJAK. Also they are fighting with such a strategy. Therefore, we are striving to develop a common struggle, common organization, and common self-defense with all Iranian and Kurdish peoples. Only in this way can they protect themselves, defend themselves, and secure their existence and freedom. This is important.

The Kurds are a decisive, strategic force in this region. The Kurds live in a strategic point in the region. They carry out an organized struggle, relying on their own strength. The Kurds have the right to engage in politics and diplomacy, and they are engaging in politics, diplomacy, and tactical relations and alliance efforts. They develop strategic relationships with the people and civil society and try to benefit from the tactical relationships. In other words, they assess the situation and search for the biggest benefit for society.

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Hozat: Kurds must respond by developing national unity

ANF | 27 June 2025

How do you assess the situation of the Kurds of Rojhilat (Eastern Kurdistan/Western Iran) in particular? Will the organizations in that part of the country actively engage in armed struggle? Where should the focus on the struggles of the people in Rojhilat lie?

As far as we can tell, the Kurdish people have certain preparations in place, but as long as no force attacks them, they will not attack either. They will protect themselves, defend themselves, and strive to maintain and secure their existence and freedom. But no matter what force attacks them, they will respond with the most effective response and carry out the struggle. This is the fundamental spirit and understanding of the Kurds' struggle. We have seen this approach in the statements and attitudes of the Kurds of Rojhilat (Eastern Kurdistan/Western Iran). In Rojhilat Kurdistan – and this also applies to Kurdistan in general – national unity is decisive. It is decisive to act together, to develop and carry out this process with a common policy, a common understanding, and a common approach. There have been various calls from Rojhilat organizations on this issue. These calls should not remain mere words, they must be put into practice, and must truly take shape. A common national unity stance and practice should emerge among Kurdish organizations. This will have a huge impact on the Kurds' victory. National unity is very important for the Kurds in this process.

Some work in this regard has been done lately, which is very valuable. Just a few days ago, there was a national unity conference for Kurdish women in Southern Kurdistan. This is a very important initiative. It has happened before in other places. Workshops are being held in many places, and various meetings are taking place. There was a general Kurdish national conference in Qamishlo. This needs to be developed everywhere, in every part, and needs to be turned into a general Kurdish national congress and unity. This is a historical process. The Kurds must respond by developing national unity and will gain a lot from this.

Beyond what you have already mentioned, how do you assess the current situation in Kurdistan, the situation in society?

There is tremendous plundering in Kurdistan, there is a ecocide going on, and it is part of the genocidal policy towards the Kurds. The ecocide is generally continuing in the world, but Kurdistan is one of its centers, but there is also a struggle against it. In many places, there are protests against the new mines, power plants, dams, and the plundering of nature. Now they have started digging wells in many places. They claim to be extracting oil, gas, and shale gas. They have left no part of nature untouched. It is an ecocide. The reactions against it remain feeble. There needs to be a stronger response. The struggle against ecocide needs to be understood as part of the necessary self-defense. There needs to be a strong struggle in Dersim, Botan, Serhed (tr. Serhat), everywhere.

Policies serving the same cause are being implemented against society. Drugs, prostitution, and espionage are rampant. We always discuss politics, but there are also social issues that can truly be described as gangrene. There is intense special warfare. The corruption and degeneration of society is excessive. These are being carried out as part of a cultural genocide, as part of the sociocide. To a certain point, there is awareness, sensitivity, organization, and a stance of self-defense on this issue. However, it is fragmented, scattered, and weak. It needs to be strengthened. There have been marches against this in many places, and they are meaningful, but it is necessary to develop this sensitivity further, spread it throughout Kurdistan and Turkey, and turn it into a comprehensive social struggle, a struggle of self-defense.

There is also terrible violence against women. Actually, there is multidimensional violence. Therefore, women's self-defense is crucial. Organized, united women's struggle is vital. Therefore, it is necessary to unite into a comprehensive struggle, a struggle for self-defense, and to carry it out consciously and organized. Only then can we repel these attacks of special warfare and break their impact.

In this regard, educational work is of great importance. That means raising awareness on this issue and educating and organizing society, children, youth, and women. Organization and education must be carried out hand in hand; action and education must be carried out hand in hand. This needs to be carried out more strongly. We truly celebrate every effort that is made in this regard, but as I said, it needs to be carried out in a more organized and stronger way.

Now that we have reached the end of our conversation, is there anything else you would like to add?

I would like to take the opportunity to commemorate Heval Zîlan with great respect, love, and gratitude. Heval Zîlan's approach stands for the path to freedom, and her stance is a manifesto of freedom in terms of the struggle for women's liberation. I have had the opportunity to get to know Heval Zîlan's passion for freedom, her quest for freedom, her stance, her sacrifice, her devotion, her loyalty, and her attitude towards life quite closely. Heval Zîlan was a planned, disciplined, goal-oriented, and determined personality. Her understanding and comprehension of leadership, and her participation in the reality of leadership, were flawless. Her loyalty to our leader was boundless, and her understanding of the reality of the leader, the way she joined his struggle, and her implementation of it were truly flawless. This is an attitude and a line that should be taken as a basis for all women comrades, all women, our people, our society; that is, for everyone who is fighting for freedom. And we must carry out the struggle for peace and a democratic society on this line with great determination, resolve, passion for freedom, commitment, high participation in the truth of leadership, correct participation, and loyalty, and we must definitely achieve success. The most correct loyalty to our Heval Zîlan and being worthy of her is also connected to this.

The month of June is a month in which we have historically given great martyrs. There are Sema Yüce, Filiz Yerlikaya (Gulan), Bêrîvan Zîlan, Raperîn Amed, Leyla Wan, and Hanım Yaverkaya, who were with us in the early years of our struggle. All of them fought with that spirit and that belief in the line of Heval Zîlan and fell heroically fighting for it. They were strong comrades with a passion for freedom, loyalty, a commitment to struggle, and determination. There are also many valuable male comrades who fell as martyrs this month. For example, Heval Helmet (Diyar Xerîb), who was also a member of the KCK Executive Council. We worked together for a long time. He was truly a valuable comrade. His understanding of our leader was very developed and very strong. His feelings of patriotism were very deep. He was a true patriot, a very honest and pure comrade. I remember him with great respect, love, and gratitude. He is a symbol of the national unity line of South Kurdistan. The national unity work must develop along the lines of Dr. Sirvan, Helmet, and Viyan.

Again, I commemorate comrades Fazıl Botan, Ali Piling, and Ferhat Şiblî, who were also martyred this month. I remember them all with great respect, love, and gratitude. I remember all these comrades and, through them, all the martyrs of the revolution and freedom with great respect and love. We will work with all our strength and energy until our last breath to bring their struggle to success; we will fight, and we will definitely succeed.

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Opinion

Laçiner: A new definition of socialism is now essential

ANF | Istanbul | 22 June 2025

The perspective text submitted by Abdullah Öcalan to the 12th Congress of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) continues to generate discussion in the public sphere. His critiques of real socialism, his formulation of Democratic Nation Socialism, and the clarity he offers regarding how it functions have especially drawn interest from socialist circles.

The debates that began after Abdullah Öcalan's historic call on 27 February intensified following the convening of the PKK's 12th Congress and the public release of the perspective text submitted to the congress. The document has been met with keen interest from socialist circles in Turkey. In particular, ongoing discussions have focused on his criticisms of real socialism, his definition of Democratic Nation Socialism, and how socialism might develop in both Turkey and Kurdistan.

Journalist and writer Ömer Laçiner shared his evaluation of Mr. Öcalan's new perspective and the Kurdish Freedom Movement's new paradigm in an interview with ANF.

The definition of democratic nation socialism must be clarified

Ömer Laçiner noted that it is natural for the definition of democratic nation socialism to spark debate. He stated, "Mr. Öcalan's definition of 'democratic nation socialism' brings together three concepts, democracy, nation, and socialism, that share certain common or compatible features but also contain conflicting aspects. The definition, however, does not answer the crucial question of how these contradictions can be reconciled, which renders it ambiguous. Since its content has not been sufficiently clarified, it is understandable that it is being debated."

A completely new definition of socialism is necessary

Laçiner emphasized that such debates are to be expected but insisted that arriving at a new definition of socialism has become a necessity. He continued, "In my personal opinion, the problem goes far beyond 'mistakes made by certain socialist leaders' or criticisms directed at them. Considering the point reached by the two-century-long struggle for socialism, I believe the discussion must start from the founding logic and mechanisms of socialism itself. For that reason, I see the formulation of a completely new definition of socialism as an urgent requirement."

Conflicts existed even in the matriarchal era

Ömer Laçiner affirmed the continuing relevance of Karl Marx's thesis that "history is the history of class struggles," but noted that such conflicts also occurred during the matriarchal period. He explained, "Although we cannot speak of class formations or class struggles in the eras defined as primitive communism or, more specifically, as matriarchy, we also cannot claim that the small communities of that time, which lived in isolated groups, did not come into conflict with one another. This is what anthropological studies reveal. Therefore, reading and interpreting our history, though not solely, through the lens of 'conflict' is, in my opinion, a valid approach. I believe Marx's understanding of historical processes and conflicts, in which contradictions become increasingly sharp at each stage but also bring forth the conditions and possibilities to overcome these conflicts, still retains its value today."

The call for internationalism is essential, and the left needs a revival

Laçiner also emphasized the importance of the call for internationalism in Mr. Öcalan's perspective text, stressing the need for a renewal within the socialist movement. He concluded, "Internationalism is one of the indispensable principles and standards of leftist and egalitarian thought and practice. It could be argued that the crisis and weakening of the broader left and socialist movement throughout the past century have manifested particularly in this area. Therefore, any leftist movement that feels the need for revitalization and reconstruction must give due importance to this matter. Reviving the spirit and attitude of internationalism, and making efforts and initiatives in that direction, is a primary duty."

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A century-old issue and a path to resolution

Fuat Ali Riza | 25 June 2025

June 29 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the execution of Kurdish resistance leader Sheikh Said and his companions in Amed (Diyarbakır) in 1925. Commemorations are especially strong this year, as the centenary brings renewed attention to a brutal historical injustice. Even after a century, the burial places of Sheikh Said and his comrades remain unknown. For those who ask, "What is the Kurdish question?", here are two answers: execution and the denial of a grave.

It is well known that Sheikh Said and his companions resisted the Turkish Republic's 1924 Constitution and the Treaty of Lausanne, both of which denied the existence of the Kurdish people and laid the foundations for their erasure. Their resistance was a stand for Kurdish existence and freedom. They demanded the application of the principle of "the right of nations to self-determination," a principle widely accepted at the time by both socialist and capitalist blocs. It had been articulated by Vladimir Lenin on the left and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson on the right. The League of Nations, predecessor to the United Nations, also recognized this right.

Moreover, Kurdish–Turkish relations date back to the arrival of Turkic tribes in the Middle East. Kurds played a pivotal role in the Seljuk victory at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. Their support was equally vi-

tal in the Ottoman Empire's expansion into the Middle East. Within the Ottoman administration, Kurdish principalities enjoyed a distinct form of autonomy.

When the Ottoman Empire collapsed after World War I and the search began for a new state, Mustafa Kemal launched his initiative from Kurdistan, beginning with the Erzurum and Sivas congresses. The National Pact (Misak-ı Milli), drafted from Amasya to Erzurum, defined the homeland as "the lands inhabited by Turks and Kurds." When the Grand National Assembly opened in Ankara on April 23, 1920, nearly half of its delegates were Kurdish. In what came to be called the "War of Independence," it was the Kurdish people who fought against British and French colonial forces. The Assembly's 1921 Constitution even included provisions for Kurdish autonomy. At that time, the Ankara government described itself as a joint administration of Turks and Kurds.

The first major rupture came with the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923. At Lausanne, the Kemalist movement struck an agreement with its former enemies, Britain and France, and turned against its former ally, the Soviet Union. In doing so, it also accepted the exclusion of the Kurdish people's rights from the treaty. It appears that Britain and France agreed to the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923, on the condition that the new state would both sever ties with the Soviets and deny any recognition of Kurdish rights. With the backing of these victorious colonial powers, the Republic of Turkey drafted a new constitution in 1924, abandoning its prior political framework and formally codifying the denial of the Kurdish people. From that moment on, the state set out to eliminate Kurdish existence entirely. This is how the "Kurdish question" was born, as a mentality and policy of denial and annihilation.

The uprising led by Sheikh Said in February 1925 was the Kurdish people's first major response to this policy of erasure. The century-long Kurdish question and the resistance movement for Kurdish existence and freedom developed out of this foundation. In turn, the Republic of Turkey's consistent response to Kurdish resistance has been one of suppression and execution. For the past hundred years, this vicious cycle of rebellion and annihilation has continued in lockstep.

Yet Sheikh Said and his comrades were neither opposed to Turks nor to the republic itself. Their resistance was in response to broken promises. Since the Erzurum and Sivas congresses, the Turkish nationalist movement had promised Kurds autonomy, promises later ignored in both the Treaty of Lausanne and the 1924 Constitution. Sheikh Said and his companions demanded the realization of this autonomy, which had been declared by Mustafa Kemal himself.

The same demands persisted in the years that followed, and there was hardly a Kurdish city or town that did not rise up in resistance. After the Amed –Bingöl uprising in 1925, the Serhat (northeastern) region rose up in the 1930s. In 1937–1938, Dersim (Tunceli) became the site of yet another rebellion and genocide. Seyit Riza, the leader of the Dersim resistance, was invited by the state to Erzincan for negotiations. Upon attending, he was arrested and executed in Elazig (Xarpêt). To this day, the burial sites of Seyit Riza and his companions remain unknown.

On the fiftieth anniversary of this policy of denial and annihilation, Abdullah Öcalan, the Kurdish people's leader, launched a new resistance for existence and freedom with the Çubuk Dam meeting. This resistance, developed with modern consciousness, organization, strategy, and tactics, could not be crushed by the Republic of Turkey as easily or quickly as it had done in previous eras. As a result, the Turkish state

turned to its historical allies in the Kurdish genocide, regional and international powers, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Eventually, an international conspiracy led by the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), and Israel resulted in the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan on February 15, 1999, from Kenya. He was imprisoned in the Imrali system of isolation, torture, and annihilation. In a grim historical echo of the first Kurdish resistance, Mr. Öcalan was sentenced to death by the Imrali court on June 29, the same date Sheikh Said and his comrades were executed. Today marks the 26th anniversary of that sentence.

The Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, not only sustained his resistance against the policies of denial and annihilation but also endured through the death sentence and the Imrali isolation system. As we now mark the 26th and 27th years of that resistance, and as the Kurdish question itself reaches its hundredth year, new and significant opportunities for resolution have emerged. In October 2024, when Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chairperson and government ally Devlet Bahçeli issued a "call for a solution," Mr. Öcalan responded positively and presented a concrete "Solution Project." This development created a serious and historic chance to resolve what has long been Turkey's most fundamental issue: the Kurdish question.

The primary reason such an opportunity has emerged lies in the fact that the resistance led by Mr. Öcalan, now over fifty years strong, has not been crushed or dissolved by the Turkish state as earlier Kurdish movements were. The ongoing conflict has imposed an immense burden on both Turkish society and the state itself. The second reason is the level reached by the Third World War unfolding in the Middle East since the 1990s. For a Turkey that has failed to resolve the Kurdish question, the growing regional conflict presents a severe threat. Devlet Bahçeli has referred to this as a "state survival crisis." The war between Israel and Iran, now in its tenth day, along with the direct involvement of the United States and the broader goals of the conflict, affirm Bahçeli's diagnosis of an existential threat.

At this moment of profound crisis for the Republic of Turkey, the project and roadmap proposed by Abdullah Öcalan, democratization grounded in Kurdish freedom, presents an invaluable opportunity. Clearly, a Turkey that resolves the Kurdish question and undergoes democratic transformation on this basis will leave no ground for foreign intervention. A democratized and unified Turkey can not only neutralize all forms of attack but also offer a new democratic model for the Middle East.

However, instead of recognizing this historic moment and embracing Mr. Öcalan's solution project, some have adopted evasive, dismissive, and delaying attitudes. Worse, there are efforts to launch defamation campaigns against Mr. Öcalan. Let it be known to all: no one can cover the sun with mud! Any slander thrown at Mr. Öcalan will only stick to those who hurl it, darkening their own hands and faces.

With the hope that everyone will correctly assess the past hundred years and clearly recognize the current opportunity for resolution, I respectfully commemorate all the martyrs of Kurdistan on the hundredth anniversary of the execution of Sheikh Said and his comrades.

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