

## Analyst warns Turkish offensive in Kurdistan Region would continue

The government of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan needs military operations in the Kurdistan region as an epic move to attract the attention of Turkish nationalists and therefore it will continue this military operation under the pretext of confronting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Kurdish issue analyst said.

Dr. Ismet Konak envisioned in an interview with KurdPress a vague prospect for a peace process between the Kurds and the Turkish government.

A new round of Turkish military operations in the Iraqi Kurdistan region has begun under the pretext of countering the presence of the PKK forces in the region, and the Turkish army has been targeting mountainous areas in northern Kurdistan Region for the past days. The army has advanced about 10 kilometers into the territory of the Kurdistan Region. Turkey has been launching military operations in the Kurdistan Region under various names since 2018, at the same time as intensifying military operations against Syrian Kurdish forces.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has stepped up its crackdown on political dissidents alongside escalating military attacks, at a time that thousands Turkey pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) supporters, parliamentarians and mayors have been jailed. On the other hand, US President Joe Biden, who had announced before his election his readiness to support the opposition in Turkey, especially the Kurds, has not made any move in this regard.

To discuss these issues, KurdPress has interviewed Dr. Ismet Konak, a researcher on Kurdish issues. Dr. Konak warned against continuing Turkish government's offensive as long as Erdogan is in power. Regarding the support of countries such as the United States or Russia for the Kurds, he said that they are pursuing their own interests and prefer Turkey to the Kurds.

### Turkey military operation in Kurdistan Region

"As is known, in 2015, Turkey established a military base in the town of Bashiqa near Mosul. In the Garê operation, the Turkish helicopters took off from Bashiqa. In fact, the Turkish army, at first, planned to enter Şinjar, but both Iranian and Iraqi states didn't allow it. Thereupon, the Turkish troops decided to attack the Garê mountain. Actually, that was not an operation to rescue the hostages detained by the PKK; on the contrary, it was an operation to capture one of the prominent figures related to the PKK. In this regard, minister of the interior, Suleyman Soylu threatened to tear "Murat Karayilan" into a thousand pieces," the analyst said about continuing Turkey military operation in the Kurdistan Region under the pretext of fighting the PKK.

He further pointed to the supporters of Turkey operations in the Kurdish region and stated that "The Turkish authorities were probably given intelligence by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), U.S. military or Baghdad about Karayilan. Thus, I think PDK is responsible for the Turkey's military presence. The member of the Kurdistan Parliament, Soran Umer, whose immunity was revoked with the PDK's pressure, claims that an agreement signed between Turkey and KRG provides the Turkish army with the opportunity to perform military operations within the Kurdistan region. It is obvious that AKP and PDK live "cheek by jowl", and recently, this partnership has harshly been criticized by many Kurds. In my opinion, PDK should act by taking into account the Kurdistan interests."

Dr. Konak reiterated that "The Garê operation may not be a stop, because the Erdogan regime, which steeped in corruption, and lost its legitimacy, needs an "heroic epic". Like his predecessors, he gives Kurds the role of a bad character. Erdogan's impulse to be "Rostam", a legendary hero in Persian mythology, will cause new military operations."

### Turkey ruling parties' attempt to annul pro-Kurdish HDP

About the efforts of Turkey ruling parties to annul the HDP, the Kurdish affairs analyst told KurdPress that "It is clear that Turkey is a dumpster of the banned political parties. From the past till now, the Turkish "democracy" has been grinding the indigenous ethnic identities like a "guillotine". Today, AKP and MHP, the latest representatives of the prohibitive mindset, are attempting to close down the pro-Kurdish party, HDP. Actually, it has already been "de facto" made dysfunctional. The HDP members and executives are arrested almost every day; likewise, MPs' immunity is arbitrarily lifted. In spite of everything, HDP is the third largest party in the parliament, and I don't think it will be shut down. Banning the HDP would mean "throwing gelignite into the sawdust store". That will politically and economically cost Turkey a pretty penny."

### Possible US- Turkey deal over Syrian Kurds

"First of all, it should be noted that Turkey still is a "valuable" member of the NATO; likewise, there are strong trade links between both sides. Thus, U.S. wouldn't easily lose its "partner" in the middle east. While Turkey is a partner, the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) is just regarded as military force by U.S. In this context, in Syria, Biden's administration also will act, by taking into consideration the Turkey's interests. Both Russia and U.S. impose "pragmatist policy" all over the world, and they generally need "cannon fodder" to sustain regional wars. In this sense, Kurds should be careful and think rationally. In Efrîn, Girê Sipî and Serêkanî, they were stabbed in their back, even though they extremely trusted the U.S. and Russia. In Rojava, the Turkey's role in particular is to "put grass onto church bell". Erdogan regime, trying to undermine the autonomous administration in Rojava, particularly makes concessions to Russia. The projects such as TurkStream, Akkuyu NPP and the purchase of the S-400 system are indicative of this "concessive" policy. The S-400 air defense system also is a blackmail against the U.S. In recent months, there have been many reports that U.S. has imposed sanctions on Turkey over the purchase of air defense system; however, according to my opinion, sanctions will not be effective enough to remove Erdogan from the power.

They may weaken him economically, but also cause an "anti-American sentiment", which will keep Erdogan in power," Dr. Konak said about a possible US and Russia betrayal towards the Syrian Kurds and preferring Turkey to Kurds for achieving interests.

The researcher underlined that "By the way, in these days, the Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits is often discussed. As is known, in accordance with this treaty, U.S. cannot boost its military presence in the Black Sea. Erdogan administration may open the above-mentioned convention up to debate in order not to break with the West and U.S.; thus, he may consolidate Turkey's position in Syria."

#### **Joe Biden's capability to decrease pressure on Kurds and Turkey opposition**

About the new US administration relation with Turkey under the presidency of Joe Biden, Dr. Konak said: "Undoubtedly, compared to the Trump administration, Biden will restrain Erdogan. However, Kurds may be disappointed, if they wait for the radical steps. The relations of states are determined not by "subjects", but by the interests of the capitalist class. The neo-liberal world is formed on the basis of "rent". For this reason, the Kurdish people should never be cheated by the "illusion" in front of the cameras. The most important thing is to be confident, and decisively impose all of international "dynamics" the right to the "self-determination", because Kurds are the natives of the land on which they live."

#### **Selahattin Demirtas's demand form Turkey opposition parties to form a coalition**

"Needless to say, the suggestion of Demirtas is of high importance, but in my opinion, it is almost impossible to make a "united coalition" against AKP and its "spittoon", MHP. Especially IYI Party, the nationalist opposition party, wouldn't take part in a possible coalition. The ideology of this party is also based on the "Turkishness". Despite everything, the opposition parties, including the HDP, should maintain their political positions until they overthrow the Erdogan dictatorship. Five major opposition parties should tactically form the mighty "voltron" when necessary," he said about the demand of Demirtas from the opposition parties to form a coalition against Turkey ruling parties of AKP and MHP.

#### **A possible new peace process between Ankara and Kurds**

The analyst expressed his pessimism over the resumption of the halted peace talks between Turkey and the Kurds and stated that "I think there will be no peace process under Erdogan's rule; moreover, HDP will probably say no to the kind of suggestion. Accepting the Erdogan's offer, which is full of traps, may politically put the HDP at risk. It is clear that the Turkish state system ruled both AKP and MHP has been rotten. There is a proverb in Anadolia as follows: 'No food is cooked from stinking meat.'"

"New peace process will most likely take place after the collapse of the Erdogan administration, and more concrete results will be achieved. Kurds will definitely gain their rights everywhere, including Turkey. "Nights do not last until the doomsday (in Ottoman, tulu-i hasr)" said Tevfik Fikret, the renowned Turkish poet," he said about a new peace process after Erdogan.

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