

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Contents

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	3
Koma Cûdî releases new album dedicated to Öcalan.....	3
Activists at Geneva vigil demand “Freedom for Öcalan”.....	3
Women activists from Paris take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg.....	4
Prisons in Turkey.....	5
Another political prisoner dies because of the AKP-MHP policies.....	5
DBP Co-Chair Keskin Bayındır released from prison.....	5
Seriously ill prisoner released from jail after 30 years.....	6
Military aggression and occupation.....	7
HPG reports 16 attacks on guerrilla areas in South Kurdistan.....	7
Turkish-linked mercenaries kidnap citizen in Girê Spî.....	9
Journalist Nûjiyan Erhan killed by KDP mercenaries commemorated in Shengal.....	9
MSD: Afrin should be declared a demilitarized humanitarian zone.....	10
HSM: The AKP-MHP regime wants to launch a war before the elections.....	11
Call for international action against Turkish occupation and crimes in North-East Syria.....	15
Increased reconnaissance flights over Maxmur refugee camp.....	17
Turkey bombs a village in Amadiya, South Kurdistan.....	17
Femicide.....	18
Women are supported through new projects in North-East Syria.....	18
Six Kurdish female activists jailed in İzmir.....	19
Ecocide.....	20
Farmers in Shehba sell their cattle due to the embargo and shrinking grazing land.....	20
Magnitude 5.6 earthquake injures at least 6 in East Kurdistan.....	21
Death toll from flood in Urfa rises to 21.....	21
Human Rights Violations.....	22
Police take HDP Bursa Provincial co-chair into custody.....	22
Many taken into custody in Antalya.....	23
Journalist Bayram remanded in custody.....	23
Kurdish teen brutally beaten and thrown into a swamp by the police.....	24
Lawyers take acquittal of people responsible for Umut Bookshop bombing to Constitutional Court.....	25
Street seller and his two sons beaten by police in the street.....	25
Newroz.....	26
Newroz fires lit in Tirbespiyê and Heseke.....	26
Thousands of people in Van celebrate Newroz.....	26
Kurds and Arabs light the Newroz fire in Tabqa.....	27
Newroz in Van: “Biji Serok Apo”.....	27

Newroz in Siirt: We will break the isolation on Öcalan.....	28
Newroz in Batman: “Bê Serok jiyan nabe”.....	29
Newroz in İzmir: “Freedom for Öcalan”.....	30
Newroz in Istanbul: We will build a new life together.....	32
Police take 200 people into custody after Newroz celebration in Istanbul.....	34
Newroz celebrations in many cities of Europe.....	34
YJA Star guerrillas: We will increase the resistance with the fire of Newroz.....	36
Mothers of martyrs light Newroz fire in Manbij.....	36
Police take many into custody ahead of Newroz celebrations.....	37
Newroz celebrations in many European cities.....	37
Thousands of people lit the fire of Newroz in Rojava.....	38
Turkey killed 4 Kurds who wanted to celebrate Newroz in Jindirês.....	39
Thousands of people attend Newroz celebrations in Qandil region.....	39
Shengal Autonomous Administration celebrates Newroz.....	39
People of Kobanê celebrate Newroz.....	40
First Newroz fire in Rojhilat lit by the grave of Jina Mahsa Amini.....	41
Foza Yûsif: We will break the İmrali system and liberate the occupied areas.....	43
Newroz in Amed: “Freedom for Öcalan”.....	44
Kurds celebrate Newroz in Damascus.....	46
Kurds celebrate Newroz in Britain.....	46
Newroz celebration in Bologna.....	48
HPG and YJA Star guerrillas celebrate Newroz in Medya Defense Zones.....	48
General Elections in Turkey.....	49
Taşdemir: Next elections are of crucial importance, especially for women.....	49
Iraq to hold provincial elections on November 6.....	50
Kılıçdaroğlu meets HDP co-chairs in Ankara.....	51
Constitutional Court rejects HDP's application demanding postponement of closure case.....	54
Labour and Freedom Alliance will not nominate a presidential candidate.....	55
Co-Chair of German SPD party visits HDP in Ankara.....	57
HDP to run in elections under the umbrella of the Green Left Party.....	57
Interview.....	58
Economist Müftüoğlu: There is a need for an alternative economic program.....	58
Opinion.....	60
Bayık: The Lausanne alliance must be broken.....	60
Newroz, a story of resistance against tyranny.....	63
Who Are We?.....	64

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Koma Cûdî releases new album dedicated to Öcalan

ANF | QAMISHLO | 20 MARCH 2023

The Kurdish band Koma Cûdî has released a new album called ‘Apo Newroz e’ dedicated to Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The Koma Cûdî spent significant time on the album ‘Apo Newroz e’ which is the product of a collective work.

Writers, intellectuals and artists in Rojava, Europe, Rojhilat (East) and Başûrê (South) Kurdistan supported and made suggestions for the album ‘Apo Newroz e’. The lyrics of each track were written by different artists. The recording was made at the Orkêş Studio in Amûdê. The lyrics of the track ‘Apo Newroz e’ were written by Ednan Îbrahim, and its music was composed by Şivan Cizîrî and Baran Dilbihar.

The album includes the following tracks: Çiyayê Cûdî, Çiya Li Deştêkir, Kewê Gozel, Desmala Govendê, Mizgîna Azadiyê, Destanê Êzîdxanê, Avaşîn, Lehengên Botanê, Mamiz and Ho Reşo-Dara Li Homê.

You can watch it from this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKoluL7R0RM&t=33s>

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Activists at Geneva vigil demand “Freedom for Öcalan”

ANF | GENEVA | 22 MARCH 2023

A vigil by the Democratic Kurdish Community in Switzerland has been taking place in front of the UN headquarters in Geneva since 25 January 2021. Every Wednesday, activists march in front of the United Nations building to demand the release of Kurdish people’s leader Abdullah Öcalan. This week the focus of the protest event was Newroz, Kurdish New Year.

Today’s vigil began with a minute of silence in memory of the martyrs who fell fighting for the freedom of the Kurdish people and Kurdistan.

Speaking here, the co-chair of the Democratic Kurdish Community Center in Geneva (CDK), Erdal Atasoy, stated that March is the month of resistance for the Kurdish people, wishing a happy Newroz to Öcalan, the guerrillas resisting in the mountains of Kurdistan and the Kurdish people.

Atasoy pointed to the enthusiasm that marked this year's Newroz celebrations in Amed (Diyarbakur) and all around the world, attributing this spirit to the founding of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) by Öcalan and a group of companions on Newroz 51 years ago.

Remarking that millions who attended Newroz celebrations this year have highlighted their demand for "Freedom for Öcalan", Atasoy said that this call should be answered from Europe as well.

Criticizing the UN's silence in the face of the isolation regime imposed on Öcalan and the massacres against the Kurds, Atasoy said as the hundredth anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne approaches, actions to be organised on this occasion would be of historic importance to the Kurdish people and the peoples of the Middle East.

The activists turned their backs on the UN in protest at its silence on Öcalan's isolation and massacres in Kurdistan as the 52nd regular session of the Human Rights Council took place at the UN headquarters.

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Women activists from Paris take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 23 MARCH 2023

The women's movement activists Xezal Mamedova, Gülbahar Süleymanoğlu and Nurcan Sümübül took over the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg. The action has been going on for 561 weeks. The women's delegation came from Paris.

In a statement, the activists celebrated Newroz, saluted Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, the Freedom Movement and the guerrillas fighting on the mountain. The women said in their message that their actions will continue until the physical freedom of the Kurdish People's Leader is ensured.

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Prisons in Turkey

Another political prisoner dies because of the AKP-MHP policies

ANF | ANKARA | 22 MARCH 2023

Abdullah Oran (63), who had been imprisoned in Ankara Sincan Prison for 2 years, died on 19 March. Oran's body was taken to the Forensic Medicine Institute (ATK) on the same day. It was claimed that Oran died of a heart attack.

Relatives of Oran's family in Mardin came to Ankara. Family members will take Oran's body to the Qoser (Kızıltepe) district of Mardin to bury him.

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DBP Co-Chair Keskin Bayındır released from prison

ANF | AMED | 22 MARCH 2023

A Turkish court in Amed (tr. Diyarbakır) has ordered the release of Kurdish politician Keskin Bayındır from pre-trial detention. However, the trial against the co-chairman of the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) will continue, the lawyers announced on Wednesday. A date for the next hearing has not yet been set.

Bayındır was detained in Amed last December after a nationwide raid and searches of DBP representations in nine cities and was subsequently remanded in custody. The Turkish judiciary accuses the 39-year-old politician of "membership of an armed terrorist organisation" - meaning the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). If convicted, he faces a prison sentence of up to 15 years.

The prosecutor relied on allegations, speculation and conjecture in the indictment. He has no real evidence, and his accusations are primarily directed against the DBP, whose declared goal is to represent the interests of the Kurdish population and decentralise Turkey, Bayındır's defence argues. Most of the "circumstantial evidence" is based on statements by alleged witnesses, only a few of whom are known by name. One of them allegedly stated to the police that the DBP operated as a "recruitment office" for the PKK.

Another witness, according to the police, said that the DBP, a sister party of the HDP, which is threatened with a ban, supported the "goal" of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK, the umbrella organisation

of the Kurdish liberation movement, to which the PKK also belongs) to establish an independent Kurdish state. The “efforts for this perspective” are allegedly implemented in the party headquarters in Amed, despite the fact that the PKK is not calling for a state for the Kurdish people but advocates political self-government and cultural co-existence based on its paradigm of a democratic nation.

At today’s start of the trial, Keskin Bayındır vehemently rejected the accusations against him and his party, stating that the proceedings were being conducted without any legal basis and basically reflected the attitude of the Turkish judiciary towards the Kurdish question, which was being tackled exclusively with violence in Turkey. He said that it was not his political actions and the actions of his party that were legally illegitimate, but the attacks by the judiciary and law enforcement agencies on basic democratic rights. “The accusations made against me are beyond reason and logic. In particular, the allegation that I took part in banned actions is absurd,” the politician said.

Bayındır thus alluded to the participation in a total of fourteen events that have been reclassified as terrorist activities in the indictment against him. These include public press statements against arrest operations of members of Kurdish civil society, the dismissal from office and arrest of former HDP MPs Leyla Güven and Musa Farisoğulları, an event in commemoration of the more than one hundred people killed in the ISIS attack on a peace rally in Ankara in 2015, and conferences of the HDP and the Kurdistan Alliance. Interviews given by Bayındır as DBP co-chairman, for example on the unresolved Kurdish question and the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan on the prison island of İmralı, are also taken as evidence of his alleged PKK membership.

“All these incriminated events were demonstrably legal, thus my participation does not constitute a criminal offence,” Bayındır emphasised at the end of his defence speech. The public prosecutor’s office demanded the continuation of pre-trial detention without giving reasons. The court did not comply with the request and ordered the release of the politician. After the trial, Keskin nevertheless had to return to the local prison, where the final formalities for his release were completed. He then left the prison and was greeted by a large crowd. It is not yet clear when the trial against him will continue.

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Seriously ill prisoner released from jail after 30 years

ANF | 23 MARCH 2023

Abdulhalim Kırtay, one of the seriously ill prisoners on the list of the Human Rights Association (İHD), was released after 30 years. He was detained in the Farqîn (Silvan) district of Amed in 1993 and then tried at the State Security Court (DGM). He was sentenced to 36 years in prison for “threatening the unity and integrity of the state”. Having completed 30 years, three quarters of his sentence, Kırtay was released from the Balıkesir Burhaniye T Type. Relatives living in Yalova welcomed him in front of the prison. Kırtay is so ill that he could barely stand up.

During his stay, Kırtay stayed in prisons in Rize, Siirt, Van, Amed, Batman, Kırklareli, Yozgat, Antep, and İzmir.

Many calls to release him went unanswered

Severely ill prisoner Kirtay was last treated at İzmir Menemen State Hospital in November 2022. Although his condition was reported to be serious, Kirtay was hospitalized in handcuffs for 4 days while he was being treated, and was subjected to ill-treatment.

Kirtay's daughter, Herdem Merwanî, said that they learned that her father would be released when a prisoner called her family on the phone and said: "Our relatives living in Istanbul and Yalova went to wait for my father. The news of my father's release after 30 years is like a dream for us. 30 years is not a short time. It is a lifetime. We were little kids when my father was arrested. We didn't live our childhood because my father was taken from us, we could not hug him, we only had short phone calls."

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Military aggression and occupation

HPG reports 16 attacks on guerrilla areas in South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 19 MARCH 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) released daily statements providing information about the recent attacks by the Turkish army in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). According to the statement;

18 March 2023: The Turkish army carried out 16 attacks on guerrilla positions in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). The guerrilla positions in Çemço were attacked with prohibited weapons on Saturday. On the same day, the guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sida were shelled 15 times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

20 March 2023: The People's Defence Forces (HPG) and the Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) exercised their right to self-defence against the Turkish invading forces in the Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) at the weekend.

The HPG Press Centre statement on Monday said: "The Turkish occupying army is committing war crimes and continuously attacking our forces who are preserving their existing position. In self-defence, our forces carried out actions in which an occupier was punished, and a drone and a surveillance camera system were destroyed."

According to the statement, the guerrillas responded to a Turkish attack against a position in the Çemço area in the Zap region on Saturday, killing one soldier. On Sunday, a surveillance camera installed by the Turkish army around a guerrilla position in Sîda was destroyed.

In the Girê FM resistance area in Metîna, a reconnaissance drone was shot down on Saturday evening. According to the HPG, several Turkish drones flew over the area to discover the guerrillas' positions.

According to the HPG, the Turkish army carried out 26 artillery attacks on Girê FM and guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sîda in the Zap on 18 and 19 March, using howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

The guerrillas have not carried out any planned actions against the Turkish occupiers since the severe earthquake in the Turkish-Syrian border area on 6 February for humanitarian reasons and are in a defensive position.

23 March 2023: The Turkish army carried out 33 attacks on guerrilla positions in the Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on 22 and 23 March.

HPG reported that Turkish fighter jets bombed the Girê Amêdî Resistance Area on 22 March.

32 further attacks by the Turkish army were carried out with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sîda as well as on the Girê Amêdî and the Girê FM resistance area on 22 and 23 March.

24 March 2023: The invading army carried out 34 attacks on guerrilla areas on March 22 and 23.

HPG reported that Turkish fighter jets shelled the areas of Deşta Kafya and Girê Zengil in Garê, and the area of Şehîd Şerîf in Xakurkê 7 times on March 22 and 23.

On March 23, the guerrilla positions in Girê FM, Çemço and Sîda were targeted by 27 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

Çemço and Sida belong to the Sheladize sub-district near the town of Amadiya in Duhok governorate and have been the focus of the occupation forces since the partial withdrawal of the Turkish army from the Zap region at the end of last year.

Turkey's attacks continue despite a ceasefire announced by the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK). The decision was taken after the devastating earthquake disaster in the Turkish-Syrian border area on 6 February. The Kurdish guerrillas, which include the HPG and the YJA Star (Free Women's Troops), are implementing the call for a cessation of all hostilities and are in a defensive position.

In a statement on February 9, the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), an umbrella organization of the Kurdish freedom movement of which the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) is also a member, called for a halt of military actions in Turkey, in metropolises and cities. "It is necessary to prevent the people from experiencing even more suffering in this affliction", said Cemil Bayık, co-chairman of the executive council of the KCK.

The Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces (HSM) expressed support for the KCK's call and said on February 11 that the guerrillas were ready to do their part to alleviate the suffering of people.

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Turkish-linked mercenaries kidnap citizen in Girê Spî

ANF | AIN ISSA | 22 MARCH 2023

Local sources said that the Ehrar El Şerqiye mercenaries affiliated with the Turkish state surrounded the village of Zêbeqiye in Girê Spî Canton on Tuesday evening and kidnapped a citizen named Mihemed Elî Osman. The sources stated that it is not known where the kidnapped citizen was taken and added that, despite all the efforts of the family, it was impossible to learn what happened to the man.

Kidnapping is a way of making money for the mercenaries linked to the invading Turkish state. Mercenaries demand ransom from the families of the people they kidnap in exchange for his/her release.

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Journalist Nûjiyan Erhan killed by KDP mercenaries commemorated in Shengal

ANF | SHENGAL | 22 MARCH 2023

Journalist Nûjiyan Erhan, who was killed six years ago by a sniper of the Roj mercenaries affiliated with the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party), was commemorated in Shengal. The memorial ceremony organized by the Yazidi women journalists' association Ragihandina Jinên Êzdîxanê took place at the Şehîd Dilgeş û Şehîd Berxwedan Cemetery on Mount Shengal.

The association remembered Nûjiyan Erhan and all the women journalists killed in the course of their work and said: "When the ISIS gangs carried out the brutal attack on Shengal in 2014, our friend and colleague Nûjiyan came here and reported the events with great courage. Her entire life was built on the search for truth and freedom. On the frontline, she became the voice of Shengal with her camera, reporting both the betrayal and the resistance of the Yazidi women and freedom fighters."

"The KDP, in cooperation with the Turkish state, attacked Xanesor (Khanasor) on 3 March 2017 to complete what ISIS had not fully succeeded in doing. Comrade Nûjiyan stood up to the attacks as a journalist together with the Yazidi people. Because of her revolutionary stance, she was deliberately targeted by the KDP and succumbed to her injuries on 22 March.

As the Êzdîxan Women Journalists' Association, we have inherited a great legacy from Nûjîyan Erhan and continue her work with determination. Like our companion Nûjîyan, we report the reality of Yazidi women to the world public." After the speech, flowers were laid at Nûjîyan Erhan's grave.

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MSD: Afrin should be declared a demilitarized humanitarian zone

ANF | 22 MARCH 2023

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) released a statement concerning the killing of four Kurdish civilians while lighting a Newroz fire in Afrin's Jindires district on the night of March 20.

"The recent killings cannot be separated from occupation, displacement and maltreatment of the Kurds. Also, this crime has political, security and social repercussions. The occupying power and its henchmen that occupied Afrin are responsible for this crime. On the other hand, anyone who remains silent towards the occupation and forced displacement is also responsible for this crime," said the MSD and highlighted the following demands:

"Afrin should be declared a demilitarized humanitarian zone and all armed groups should withdraw from the city. The indigenous people of the city should be safely returned to their lands under the supervision of the international community.

Those responsible for the massacres and frequent violations of rights against humanity must be held accountable.

The administration and security of the Afrin Region should be handed over to the local people and a fair prosecution system should be established.

All abducted and detained citizens should be released. Whereabouts of those forcibly abducted should be revealed, and those who were harmed should be helped.

The media and international law organizations should be allowed access to Afrin."

The MSD concluded: "May the torch of Kawa the Blacksmith light Syria. Victory will be secured through the commitment and solidarity of the honourable Syrians. Newroz will be a symbol to end oppression and secure freedom and justice."

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HSM: The AKP-MHP regime wants to launch a war before the elections

ANF | BEHDINAN | 23 MARCH 2023

The People's Defence Centre (HSM) Headquarters Command delivered a message to its commanders and fighters, celebrating Newroz and stating that 2023 Newroz is meaningful and important in many ways as it marks the 50th anniversary of Öcalan's breakthrough and the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne.

The HSM message includes the following:

“2023 Newroz has a special place in our hearts. Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan started his historic march 50 years ago on Newroz. Öcalan's meeting with six people at Çubuk Dam in Ankara in 1973 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Kurdistan. It was a milestone for our struggle and our people. Since then, the Newroz fire has been growing stronger and the struggle for resistance and freedom has been expanding. On this basis, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Öcalan's historic march. We also congratulate our comrades, mothers of martyrs and all our people on Newroz.

Having gained its meaning through the resistance of our heroic martyrs in the past 50 years, Newroz has evolved into a day of resistance and a day of enhancing the national spirit. We commemorate all the martyrs of the revolution in the persons of contemporary Kawa, Mazlum Doğan, and Zekiye Alkan. We will raise the freedom struggle of Öcalan and keep the memory of the heroic martyrs alive.

Öcalan consciously started his historic journey on Newroz

Newroz has an important place in the history of our people and in the history of the peoples of the region. Newroz is the day of victory against the cruel tyrant Dehak's regime. Newroz is a day of unity, resistance and victory. The Newroz fire has always been lit by our people as a fire of resistance and celebrated as the day of victory. As a genuine festival, Newroz has always played an important role in the history of our people and the peoples of the region. However, as part of the occupation policies carried out against Kurdistan, the enemies have long sought to define Newroz as an ordinary day. However, Öcalan consciously started his historic journey on a Newroz day and has always seen Newroz as a day of resistance, a day of expanding the freedom struggle, unity and solidarity.

Our most important actions took place on Newroz day. Comrade Mazlum Doğan carried out a historic action in the Amed prison on Newroz under difficult conditions. Since then, Newroz has always been a festival of new breakthroughs and promoting the spirit of resistance and success. Today our people take to the streets to welcome Newroz and celebrate it with a national spirit. As a result of 50-year-long efforts, Newroz has gained its true meaning.

Kurdish people have always resisted denial and destruction

2023 Newroz is meaningful and important for us in many ways. First, this year's Newroz marks the 50th anniversary of Öcalan's breakthrough. Secondly, this year's Newroz marks the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, which is a treaty of denial and destruction of Kurdistan. The last century has witnessed great tragedies and massacres against our people. Yet, our people have never come to terms with the Treaty of Lausanne and have always resisted the policy of denial and destruction. Even today, the struggle against the recognition of the Treaty of Lausanne continues and has reached a very important stage in this century.

Thirdly, this year's Newroz is welcomed at a very important and historical period of time. For the last eight years, the Turkish state has been trying to eliminate the freedom movement and the achievements of the Kurdish people, and to invade Kurdistan through a policy of genocide. The Turkish state declared a general war against the freedom struggle and this war continues. Under the leadership of the AKP-MHP alliance, the fascist Turkish state has sought to achieve results by attacking the Freedom Movement with the help and support of NATO and the collaborationist Kurdish line. To this end, the Turkish army resorted to advanced warfare, including chemical and tactical nuclear weapons, against the freedom guerrillas of Kurdistan.

In order to achieve its goals, the genocidal fascist regime chose Öcalan and the Kurdistan freedom guerrillas as its main targets. The fascist regime has thus introduced a very severe isolation and psychological torture system in the İmralı prison. This system implemented at İmralı is unprecedented. However, Öcalan manifested a very important and historic stance, will and patience against these attacks. Kurdistan freedom guerrillas in turn put up historic resistance led by comrades Azad Sîser, Çiyager, Delal Amed, Egîd Cıvyan, Çiçek Botan, Atakan Mahîr, Cumali, Çavrê, Nûri, Bager, Mizgîn and Delil. This resistance frustrated all the attacks of the enemy on the social and political spheres. The Kurdish politics and Turkey's democratic forces also resisted. Our people rose up in the streets, in prisons and elsewhere. This historic resistance, which has been going on for 8 years, has thus frustrated the enemy.

The enemy plans to declare victory on 100th anniversary of Lausanne treaty

The enemy wants to eradicate our movement through the employment of banned weapons with the help of the collaborative Kurdish line, agents and traitors and hegemonic powers. It aims to destroy the achievements of the Kurdish people everywhere, especially in Rojava, Bashur (South Kurdistan) and Shengal. The enemy was thus set to declare victory on the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey and the Treaty of Lausanne. The enemy's plan was to eliminate the freedom movement in four parts of Kurdistan in 2023, to destroy the achievements of the Kurdish people, and to declare the success of the genocidal policies and the Treaty of Lausanne on the 100th anniversary of the Republic. However, the enemy could not achieve this goal thanks to the heroic martyrs, the efforts of Öcalan, the sacrifice of our people and the determined stance of all the members of the freedom struggle. In other words, the enemy did not win nor achieve results. This was achieved thanks to the resistance of our heroic martyrs. The breakthroughs by our movement, especially in Heftanin in the last three years and in Zap, Metina, Avaşin, Bakur and Rojava in the last two years, have enabled the Kurdistan freedom struggle to reach its peak.

In 2022, the resistance led by comrades Bager, Avzem, Rûbar, Mizgîn, Delîl, Nalîn, Nûrî, Helbest and Doğan in the Medya Defence Zones and in the region of Zap and its vicinity represented a significant response to the enemy, leading to its defeat. This historic resistance and struggle continues. 11 months have passed, but the historic resistance continues. The resistance currently being carried out in the areas of Çemço, Martyr Doğan, Martyr Botan and Martyr Munzur shows why the struggle in 2022 was a historic one. This struggle has entered a new phase in 2023. The resistance carried out against the enemy that resorted to forbidden and advanced weapons in the areas of Çemço, Martyr Doğan, Martyr Botan and Martyr Munzur is not an ordinary and easy thing.

This resistance has created a new method of warfare. It marks the opening of a new page in the history of war. It demonstrates the way to resist and win against an advanced warfare with human intelligence, courage, will and skills. This resistance is the victory of human will against a technologically advanced warfare. Therefore, it is indeed historic and very sacred. We salute all the resistance fighters and heroes who have fought in the areas of Çemço, Martyr Doğan, Martyr Botan and Martyr Munzur. Their resistance represents our 51-year-old revolution and the Apoist self-sacrificing spirit. It is the symbol of Zap's sacred resistance. It is the symbol of the Kurdish people's determination and of victory. Today, we are lighting the fire of Newroz, deriving inspiration from this historic resistance and celebrating Newroz. Today, our people take to the streets with this spirit and celebrate Newroz with great enthusiasm.

Turkish government invests in war

After last month's earthquakes, it came out that the AKP-MHP regime was not prepared for this disaster. This fascist regime has spent all of Turkey's economic income on war and took no precautions against the earthquake. This earthquake turned into a massacre for the Kurdish people, the Turkish people and the Arab people. The genocidal and fascist AKP-MHP regime is responsible for this massacre. There are fault lines all over the world. People take precautions against them and when there is an earthquake, they survive the earthquake with minimal or no loss. However, the fascist AKP-MHP regime stole the country's money, enriched its supporters through public tenders, and spent the money on war without making any preparations for the earthquake. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives. We are very sorry for this. We offer our condolences to our people, Turkish and Arab people, and wish the injured a quick recovery.

Our people celebrate the 2023 Newroz with a rage against the earthquake massacre. In fact, Newroz is a day of resistance, unity, rebellion and success against genocide. Even though we feel very sad, it is very meaningful to celebrate Newroz. We see that our people welcome the 2023 Newroz more meaningfully than any other Newroz before. Our people develop their national ties with the spirit of the Newroz fire, strengthen their social ties, protect each other, promote the spirit of national unity and seek to conclude their march to freedom. All in all, 2023 Newroz is not an ordinary, but an important and historic Newroz. The historic march marks its 50th anniversary and is about to achieve success.

Turkey continues its attacks despite the ceasefire

Another issue is the upcoming elections to take place in Turkey and Kurdistan in May. This is also an important issue. 2023 Newroz is celebrated amid the pre-election political and social struggles. The spirit of Newroz is the spirit of resistance and freedom. Elections have important meanings. When we look at the current developments and the agenda, we can say that 2023 Newroz will be the beginning of a new era,

when the policies of oppression and genocide will fail, the struggle for freedom and democracy will achieve victory, and 2023 will be a year of success for the people against fascism and genocide.

As is known to all, our movement declared inaction after the earthquakes in Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria. Our Headquarters Command also confirmed this decision. However, the fascist AKP-MHP regime turns a blind eye to this extraordinary situation and continues its attacks against our forces. This fascist state does not respect any conscience. It wants to maintain its power and keep the regime alive over the deaths of our people. We have declared inaction, which is, however, disturbed by the enemy. Our people and the public are already aware of the situation and see how humane, popular and social our attitude is, and how unscrupulous the occupying Turkish state is.

Akp-Mhp regime may increase its attacks before the elections

The AKP-MHP government may escalate its attacks before the upcoming elections on May 14, which are certainly of great importance for the future of Turkey and all peoples living in the country. The peoples living in Turkey are not going to elect some candidates in this election; they will also make a decision to change the system. Still, we know that the AKP-MHP regime wants to maintain its power and regime. For this very reason, it is not a remote possibility that the fascist regime may introduce various dark plans, schemes and conspiracies in the next two months. The AKP-MHP regime wants to go to the polls by escalating tensions and creating a crisis. They have made some preparations to do so.

For instance, the government has made changes to the election law and introduced new reforms in the top institution that inspects the elections. This shows that the AKP-MHP government will resort to all forms of ways and methods to maintain its power. It is not clear whether this fascist regime will respect the election results. This is a matter of debate. There is suspicion that new operations may be introduced. In fact, the first operation in the political sphere was carried out by the oppositional İYİ Party, whose leader, Meral Akşener, suddenly withdrew from the oppositional electoral alliance called Table of the Six following a furious statement. This was an operation.

This was an operation apparently organised by state agencies to dissolve the Table of Six and to stop and weaken the opposition. But the table was not dissolved and there was severe unrest in the İYİ party base, with tens of thousands of resignations, and a general reaction among the people. When those who had prepared this plan realised that the operation would backfire, that Akşener's party would most likely be liquidated and the alliance would still win, they thought it appropriate for Akşener to return to the table.

No one should misunderstand our decision of inaction

They had to make this decision. This was an important result for the democratic forces of Turkey and Kurdistan. And why? Because the people of Turkey want change. That turned out to be the case, and this situation strengthened the opposition even more. Now the first operation has failed. But we should know that a second operation is expected to be directed against the Kurdistan freedom struggle and in the political field. They will increase the pressure on Öcalan. They will undoubtedly carry out more military attacks on the Kurdish freedom struggle. It is even possible that new attacks will be launched against Rojava or the Medya Defence Zones. Therefore, in this important and historic process, no one should misunderstand our decision of inaction.

We should know that the stance of our movement is right, but the enemy does not listen to it. On the contrary, it is increasing its attacks and consolidating the chauvinist, racist wave in the society of Turkey. It wants to start a war before the elections. For this, it will carry out attacks. All of us, all friends, must be prepared for such a situation. No one should abandon caution. On the contrary, everyone must develop strength. In this critical and delicate period, the military forces as well as the political and social forces must be very careful and be prepared for all possible developments. More attention and caution are needed today than ever before.

We welcome the 2023 Newroz under such conditions. As members of our movement, the freedom guerrillas of Kurdistan, fighters and commanders, we must treat every Newroz as a means for questioning. We must look through and evaluate ourselves, our situation, our ways to join the Newroz march to victory, and purge ourselves with the purity of the Newroz fire.

We must face the reality of Leader Öcalan and the heroic martyrs so as to fulfil our role and mission on the historic Newroz march on the 51st year of our march. With the resistance spirit of Zap, we must avenge all massacres and all our martyrs. We must welcome 2023 Newroz with the spirit of self-sacrifice, revenge and success. We must turn 2023 Newroz into an occasion to achieve the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan and Kurdistan.

On this basis, we must welcome 2023 Newroz with great spirit and undertake the missions of the current period with this spirit. We wish a happy Newroz to Leader Öcalan, all companions, our people and the people of the region. We salute all our comrades with love and respect and wish them success on the 51st year of the historic march.”

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Call for international action against Turkish occupation and crimes in North-East Syria

ANF | QAMISHLO | 23 MARCH 2023

32 political parties and organizations in North and East Syria released a statement concerning the murder of four Kurdish locals who wanted to celebrate Newroz in the Jindires district in the Turkish-occupied Afrin city in northern Syria.

The press statement made in front of the North-East Syria Diplomatic Relations and Research Centre in Qamishlo said the following:

“The Al-Sharqiya group affiliated with the Syrian National Army opened fire on a group of Kurdish locals who wanted to light a Newroz fire in Afrin’s Jindires district, claiming the lives of 4 citizens and injuring some others.

This crime reveals the current situation in the regions occupied by the Turkish state and its mercenaries. Afrin has been suffering for the last 5 years from terrorist acts of murder, torture and theft by ISIS remnants, Al-Nusra and the Turkish state. The Turkish state settles armed groups to replace the local Kurds in an attempt to change the demographic structure of the region.

The Turkish state and the opposition are responsible for both the recent killings and other crimes committed in the region. Moreover, attempts to justify an armed group seek to cover up the tragedy and the truth in Afrin and other occupied areas of Syria.

As the parties in North and East Syria, we commemorate the martyrs and wish the injured a quick recovery. We call on the international community, the United Nations Security Council, the USA and Russia to take steps to end the Turkish occupation of Afrin, Serêkaniyê, Girê Spî and other regions in North-East Syria.

We urge all Syrian peoples to step up the struggle to end the Turkish occupation of Syrian territory, to stand by the citizens of Afrin who stand against massacres, and to promote the right of IDPs to return to their houses.

This crime has been committed at a time when efforts are made to speed up the implementation of UN Resolution 2254 [which calls for a cessation of all hostilities, respect for Syria's sovereignty and a political solution for Syria], to achieve a lasting solution to the Syrian crisis and to build a decentralized and democratic country where justice, freedom and equality are secured.”

The parties and political groups that issued the joint statement are as follows:

Partiya Yekitiya Demokratîk, Partiya Kesk a Demokratîk, Partiya Aştiyê ya Demokratîk a Kurdistanê, Yekitiya Lîberal a Kurdistanê, Partiya Komunîst a Kurdistanê, Partiya Demokrat a Kurdistanê-Sûriyê, Partiya Demokratîk a Kurdî li Sûriyê, Partiya Partiya Partiya Kurdistanê Demokrat a Kurd li Sûriyê, Partiya Kom-bûna Nîştimanî ya Kurdistanî, Tevgera Guhertinê ya Demokratîk a Kurdistanê, Tevgera Nûjen a Kurdistanê, Yekitiya Karkeran a Kurdistanê, Desteya Nîştimanî ya Erebi, Partiya Nûjen a Kurdistanê, Desteya Nîştimani ya Erebi, Partiya Nûjen a Kurdistanê, a Demokratîk a Kurdistanê Tevgera Çaksazi or Kurdî-Sûriye, Partiya Asûrî or Demokratîk, Partiya Biratî or Kurdistanê, Partiya Roj a Demokrat a Kurd li Syria, Yekitiya Nîştimanî or Azad-Rojava, Tevgera Civaka Demokratîk, Kongra Star, Democratization, Partiya Karate, Partiya Partiya Tevgera Peşeroj a Kurdistanê, Partiya Demokrat a Kurdistanê-Rojavayê Kurdistanê, Desteya Koordîneyê ya Nîştimani (Tevgera Guhertinê or Demokartik), Partiya Yekitiy a Suryan, Partiya Sûriya Peşerojê, Şepêla Çep a Şoreşger li Sûriyê, Partiya Yekitiya Demokratîk a Kurd li Sûriyê.

Increased reconnaissance flights over Maxmur refugee camp

ANF | MAXMUR | 24 MARCH 2023

According to reports from the ground, there have been frequent reconnaissance flights since March 3 over the Maxmur refugee camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

RojNews reported that reconnaissance aircraft have frequently flown over the camp after Iraqi Defence Minister Sabit Muhammed Said met Turkish intelligence service (MIT) head Hakan Fidan during a visit to Turkey on March 3.

It is further reported that reconnaissance aircraft conducted low level flights over the camp at around 13:40 local time. It is not known to which country the aircraft belongs.

In recent years, the Martyr Rüstem Cudi Refugee Camp has been targeted multiple times by the invading Turkish state's armed drones.

The last drone attack targeted a house inside the camp on August 29, 2022, killing a citizen named Ebuzêd Dêrhini, the father of 6 children.

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Turkey bombs a village in Amadiya, South Kurdistan

ANF | 24 MARCH 2023

Turkish fighter jets shelled the village of Sigêrê, affiliated to the Nihêlê town to the east of Amadiya city in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to reports from the ground, the village was evacuated as a result of the village, while information on the damage caused was not immediately available.

Citing residents of the village, RojNews agency reported ongoing aerial activity over the village. It is not yet known whether the bombardment has resulted in a loss of lives due to the ongoing flights in the region.

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Femicide

Women are supported through new projects in North-East Syria

NUJIYAN ADAR | QAMISHLO | 23 MARCH 2023

The Syrian Free Women's Foundation was established in Qamishlo in 2014 under the name of Free Women's Foundation with the goal of supporting women in the economic, cultural, social and health areas. The foundation expanded its activities and changed its name to the Syrian Free Women's Foundation in 2021.

Working under the motto "A free woman is the foundation of a free society", the Syrian Free Women's Foundation also tries to reach women's institutions around the world and to call attention to the living conditions of women in Syria and the Middle East. The Foundation opened offices in Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Tabqa, Kobanê, Derik, Girkê Legê, Heseke as well as in Washokanî, Girê Spi, Hol camps, and has also undertaken many projects in the cultural, health and social areas. It provided training to thousands of women in many regions of North-East Syria and offered a medical centre, kindergarten, tailor shop, overlock seam and music workshops, in addition to courses in English, Arabic and Kurdish.

Training cycles

The Health Committee of the Syrian Free Women's Foundation conducted 716 seminars on first aid training and medical teams were established. 757 women were trained to become nurses. Moreover, 105 medical training cycles were offered for war preparations. The Arî Clinics serving women and children continued its activities uninterrupted, providing treatment for 5,195 women and children.

A mobile clinic, organized by the Syrian Free Women's Foundation with the help of a group of volunteer women, continues to visit villages. The mobile clinic served 219 villages and treated 1,326 patients. 5,195 patients were treated in medical centres in Qamishlo, Heseke and Girkê Legê. On the other hand, an alternative medicine centre in Dirbêsiyê and Heseke provided support for women and children, from natural remedies to physiotherapy.

Apart from health education, the Education Committee focused on ideological education for the construction of a democratic, ecological and pro-woman life. 381 training cycles were offered, and 546 families were visited.

Vocational training programs were also offered to support women financially. 108 sewing training cycles were thus opened, and 517 women received certificates at the end of the courses. 342 women received certificates in 85 hairdresser training cycles. The foundation, which considers children as its target group, offered playgrounds and music courses. In total, 381 training cycles were introduced for 2,755 people.

Activities in 2023

The priorities of the Foundation include opening alternative medical centres in other cities and procuring medicine for treatment from the rich lands in North-East Syria instead of purchasing it from foreign countries. The Foundation will also focus on the education of orphaned children and deal with their health problems in 2023. It furthermore aims to develop relations with other women's organizations and institutions in Syria and the Middle East. Children's parks will be built in the Washokanî Camp and other camps. Existing music education centres for children will be strengthened in cities where the Foundation has offices.

Speaking to ANF, Melike Hesaf, an executive member of the Syrian Free Women's Foundation, said: "The establishment purpose of the Foundation is to support and train women to provide job opportunities. The purpose of our health training is to make women competent in first aid. There has been an intense war in our region and our people want to possess advanced skills in the health area as part of the Revolutionary People's War."

Hesaf stated that they would undertake more efficient projects in 2023. She concluded: "We opened our health centre in Kobanê this year. We will increase our support for our office in Kobanê. We have alternative medical centres in Heskê and Dirbesiyê. One of the priorities of this year is to open alternative medical centres in the cities where we have offices, primarily in Qamişlo and Dêrik. We will supply alternative medicine materials from there. We will produce the herbs we need by our own means. Our music education centres for children will be more efficient this year, after some of our offices were suspended last year."



Six Kurdish female activists jailed in İzmir

ANF | İZMİR | 24 MARCH 2023

As the parliamentary and presidential elections approach, the Turkish state is intensifying its repressive course against the democratic opposition. The Kurdish women's freedom movement, one of the most dynamic and organised forces in the country, is currently in particular focus. Six of its activists have been jailed in the western Turkish coastal metropolis of Izmir for alleged membership in a "terrorist organisation".

The people concerned are women who have been actively campaigning for a democratisation process in Turkey for years: Idil Uğurlu, a member of the Executive Council of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP); Behiye Yalçın, spokeswoman for the Izmir Peace Mothers Initiative; Berfin Çiçek of the HDP Youth Council; and Free Women's Movement (TJA) activists Hayat Izgi, Newroz Çelik and Selma Demir. They were detained in raids on Wednesday and taken to the Turkish Police's Counter Terrorism Department (TEM).

The reason for the action against the activists was not known at first, as a 24-hour ban on lawyers was ordered. In addition, the investigation file was placed under secrecy. The reasoning behind the order was that “personal contact between the suspects and legal persons, as well as the authorisation to examine the contents of the file or make copies of the documents” could jeopardise the purpose of the investigation. Berfin Çiçek was transferred to court on Thursday evening and hastily arrested.

The specific charges against the women were finally named during the judicial hearing on Friday. According to the prosecution, they are suspected of “membership” in the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). It was stated that corresponding information had been obtained in the course of TEM investigations regarding the participation of the activists in TJA events as well as on the basis of “statements” of alleged witnesses. Further details on the events “incriminated” were not given, with the public prosecutor’s office only stating that they were actions in 2020. In that year, the TJA carried out the campaign “Em xwe diparêzin” (We defend ourselves) against sexual assault, violence and all forms of oppressive policies against women.

Meanwhile, the arrested women were transferred to the Şakran Women’s Closed Prison in Aliğa in Izmir. Kurdish student Barış Kırmızıtaş, who was arrested at the same time as the activists two days ago, was released after police interrogation. According to the lawyers, it is not yet clear if and when charges will be brought against the accused.

The TJA (Tevgera Jinên Azad) was founded at the end of 2016. Previously, its predecessor organization, Congress of Free Women (Kongreya Jinên Azad) was banned by emergency decree. The TJA operates as a registered association and is legal. Nevertheless, the movement is treated by Turkish law enforcement agencies and the judiciary as a “PKK structure” and criminalised accordingly.



Ecocide

Farmers in Shehba sell their cattle due to the embargo and shrinking grazing land

ANF | SHEHBA | 24 MARCH 2023

Cultivated areas and grazing lands have shrunk due to decreased rainfall in North-East Syria. As a result, people have started to sell their animals in livestock markets. Moreover, the costs of animal husbandry have increased remarkably.

Animal feed, barley and medicines for animals have become very expensive due to the Damascus government’s embargo on the region, in place for five years.

People involved in stock breeding are forced to sell some of their cattle as they buy barley and fodder to take care of the rest.

One kilo of animal feed in Shehba costs 35 thousand Syrian liras. Fodder costs 1,500 liras and the prices of medicines required for animal husbandry have doubled due to the embargo.

Speaking to ANHA, Mihemed Xemisî said: “Due to the increase in animal feed prices, we have to sell our sheep so as to buy feed.”

Another citizen who owns 20 sheep stated that most of the animal owners made a living from cattle farming, but they had to sell their cattle due to high feed prices. He said: “Animal husbandry has gone into a decline, which is negatively impacting the local economy.”

Ebdurehman Mihemed, who owns sheep, said: “I make my living by selling milk, but I have to sell the sheep because the price of animal feed is high, and it doesn't rain.”

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Magnitude 5.6 earthquake injures at least 6 in East Kurdistan

ANF | 24 MARCH 2023

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake is reported to have occurred near the city of Khoy in East Kurdistan (Iran).

At least 6 people have been injured following the earthquake that also caused material damage.

While the electricity was cut off in many villages due to the earthquake, a village house in the Salmas region was destroyed.

The earthquake was also felt in Tabriz, Urmia and its vicinity.

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Death toll from flood in Urfa rises to 21

ANF | URFA | 24 MARCH 2023

Heavy rain caused flooding in several places in North Kurdistan and southern Turkey on March 15. The disaster hit a region that had been struck by a severe series of earthquakes on February 6. Hundreds of thousands of people in the region are currently homeless and sheltering in emergency shelters. In addition to numerous roads and houses, the rain masses have also flooded emergency shelters and water penetrated tents where survivors are living under challenging conditions.

The body of truck driver Emin Ergün was discovered in Urfa after 9 days. The man had been caught in the flood on the main road between the districts of Bozova and Hilvan. His lifeless body was discovered today in the Bozova district and taken to the Forensic Medicine Institute for post-mortem examination. The death toll from floods in the city thus rose to 21.

In Urfa, the water entered homes, shops and public buildings and flooded roads, bridges and tunnels. Also affected was the 150-metre-long Abide tunnel in Haliliye, which was inaugurated by AKP leader Tayyip Erdogan only three months ago as a major service to the population. At least six people, including fire-fighters, were in the tunnel, which was flooded by muddy water, and were swept away by the floodwaters during a rescue operation. One person rescued himself by swimming out of the tunnel. Rescue divers were then deployed to the tunnel which connects the motorway between Urfa and Antep.

The intensive care unit in the basement of the Eyyübiye Training and Research Hospital in Urfa was also flooded, and the patients were transferred to surrounding hospitals. The Archaeological Museum also suffered water damage.

The mayor of Urfa, Zeynel Abidin Beyazgül of the ruling AKP, was met with boos from an angry crowd as he inspected the rescue work. The anger increased when information spread that a bodyguard of the AKP politician pointed his gun at the protesting crowd. Bayazgül was taken to his car under police protection and had to leave the place.

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Human Rights Violations

Police take HDP Bursa Provincial co-chair into custody

ANF | URFA | 20 MARCH 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial co-chair, Mehmet Dilek, was taken into custody by the police after a raid on his house in the morning.

The politician was taken to the Istanbul Provincial Security Directorate. The reason for Dilek's detention could not be learned.

After the Newroz celebration in the Arabayatagi Market Area in the Yıldırım district on Sunday, many people were detained.

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Many taken into custody in Antalya

ANF | ANTALYA | 21 MARCH 2023

As part of a new political operation carried out by the Antalya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, many houses were raided on Tuesday morning.

According to some information, detention warrants have been issued against 21 people on the charge of "providing financing to those detained for being members of leftist organizations". The raids were carried out by the Provincial Gendarmerie Command.

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Journalist Bayram remanded in custody

ANF | 22 MARCH 2023

Journalist Hamdullah Bayram works for Yeni Yaşam newspaper. He was among the 11 journalists who were detained in various raids carried out on 25 October in Ankara.

Nine of the journalists, working for the Mezopotamya Agency (MA) and JINNEWS agency, were remanded in custody on 29 October.

Bayram had an arrest warrant against him and was detained on 16 March. The prosecutor's office demanded his arrest.

Three and a half months after the October raids, the journalists were indicted for "being members of a terrorist organization."

The 11 journalists are facing prison sentences of from 7.5 to 15 years. The Ankara 4th Heavy Penal Court accepted the indictment.

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Kurdish teen brutally beaten and thrown into a swamp by the police

ANF | AMED | 22 MARCH 2023

According to the Mesopotamia News Agency, a 14-year-old Kurdish boy named Y.D. was abducted by the Turkish police while on his way home with a friend at around 22:00 on the evening of March 21.

It is reported that the police first took the boy to a secluded area on a country road for no apparent reason.

According to the report, the boy was forced to say that he was “Turkish”. Then he was tortured and forced again to “insult the Kurds and sing the Turkish National Anthem”.

After suffering brutal torture at the hands of the police, he was thrown into a swamp by the stream with his mouth and hands tied.

A villager saw the Kurdish teen and took him to a hospital.

Y.D risks losing an eye as a result of the torture he was subjected to.

Y.D told his family: “Four policemen took me to a secluded place. They forced me to say that I am Turkish. They beat me with a gun butt, and tied my hands and feet. Then they threw me into a pit.”

The family’s lawyer, Ramazan Karalp, told the press: “The teen lives in the centre of Lice district. While on his way home with a friend in the evening, he was stopped by the police. Policemen released his 10-year-old friend and took the boy to a secluded place. They beat him with gun butts and forced him to say that “he is Turkish” and to “insult the Kurds”.

When the teen refused to do so, they ordered him to memorize the National Anthem by tomorrow, saying: ‘If you don’t memorize it, we will come and shoot you in the head’. Then they threw him into a swamp next to a stream passing through the district centre. They left him on the ground with his mouth and hands tied. A villager found the teen and took him to a hospital right away. The teen was then transferred to Dicle University Medical Faculty where he is being treated, facing the risk of losing his right eye with ongoing bleeding.”

Lawyers take acquittal of people responsible for Umut Bookshop bombing to Constitutional Court

ANF | ANKARA | 23 MARCH 2023

The Supreme Court upheld the acquittal of non-commissioned officers Ali Kaya and Özcan İldeniz and Veysel Ateş (who confessed to the crime), who were caught red-handed after they bombed the Umut Bookstore in Şemdinli (Şemzînan), in the province of Hakkari (Colemêrg) on 9 November 2005. The lawyers brought the acquittal to the Constitutional Court (AYM).

In the application made to the Constitutional Court, the lawyers stated that “it is unacceptable in terms of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Constitution for the national courts to leave this crime without sanction, granting it impunity after it was determined that the state officials deliberately killed, injured or attempted killing in an incident.”

What happened?

A bomb attack was carried out against the Umut Bookshop in Şemdinli, in the province of Hakkari, on 9 November 2005. The bookshop belonged to Seferi Yılmaz, who later was elected mayor of the city.

Ali Yılmaz and Mehmet Zahir Korkmaz lost their lives in the attack. The people responsible for the attack, non-commissioned military officers Ali Kaya and Özcan İldeniz and informer Veyse Ateş, were caught by people while fleeing.

In the vehicle of the perpetrators, four folders with 300 pages were found, including three lists with the names of 105 people written on them, as well as sketches, maps, ID cards and written permissions. Another document contained a picture of 18 prospective delegate candidates of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP).

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Street seller and his two sons beaten by police in the street

ANF | ERZURUM | 24 MARCH 2023

The attack took place on Cumhuriyet Street. The police asked Nuri Bayraktar, a street seller, and his two sons to close the little stand they put up on the street.

When Nuri Bayraktar refused, he was subjected to the violence of the police.

The police also tortured Bayraktar’s sons, Doğan and Ömer, who protested the violence against his father in the middle of the street.

Citizens in the vicinity also reacted to the arbitrary attack of the police. The police then opened fire in the air. Bayraktar and his two sons were taken into custody and taken to the District Police Department.

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Newroz

Newroz fires lit in Tirbespiyê and Heseke

ANF | 19 MARCH 2023

Newroz celebrations continue in Northern and Eastern Syria.

Tirbespiye: A march with torches was held in the Tirbespiyê district of the Qamishlo Canton. The march was organized by the Syrian Revolutionary Youth Movement and the Young Women's Union.

Photos of Leader Abdullah Öcalan and flags of the Syrian Revolutionary Youth Movement were carried during the march.

Speaking at Martyr Nejîbr Square, Tirbespiyê-Syrian Revolutionary Youth Movement Executive Member Mizgîn Hisên said that young people will continue to fight for the physical freedom of Leader Abdullah Öcalan. Young people ended the march by lighting a Newroz fire.

Heseke: A Newroz fire was also lit in Heseke, in the neighbourhood of Salihiyê. A minute's silence was held at the beginning of the event for the martyrs of the revolution. Then the Newroz fire was lit and people danced around it.

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Thousands of people in Van celebrate Newroz

ANF | VAN | 19 MARCH 2023

Thousands of people from many boroughs of Van (Wan) went to Newroz Park at the foot of Van Castle, to attend the Newroz celebrations. The people set out from Tusba, Rêya Armuşê (İpekyolu) and Artemêt (Edremit) heading towards the Newroz area despite the rainy weather.

Thousands coming from the central and rural boroughs are taken to the central area after passing through 4 search points. Most of the men and women wore local clothes, such as Kiras-fistan and shawl-shapik.

The crowd was chanting “Bijî Serok Apo”, but drum and zurna players were silent as a sign of respect towards the victims of the earthquake. Likewise, no group is performing on stage.

Newroz this year will pay tribute to the tens of thousands of people who lost their lives in the two earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on 6 February while at the same time reiterating the demand for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan.



Kurds and Arabs light the Newroz fire in Tabqa

ANF | TABQA | 19 MARCH 2023

Hundreds of people, NGOs, political parties, Zenûbiya Women’s Community, members of military institutions and opinion leaders filled the Newroz square in Tabqa starting from the early morning hours.

The Newroz fire was lit by Meryem Henan and Kewser Nehar, members of the Tabqa Council of Martyrs’ Families, Tabqa Legislative Assembly co-chairs Hude El Ewan and Hamid Ferec, Tabqa Military Council member Rauf and Zenûbiya Women’s Community member Neîme El Eswed. Speeches will be delivered during the ceremony in addition to artistic and cultural activities.



Newroz in Van: “Bijî Serok Apo”

ANF | VAN | 19 MARCH 2023

People of Van gathered at the Newroz Park at the foot of Van Castle to welcome Newroz, Kurdish New Year. Masses in traditional clothes are constantly chanting the slogan “Bijî Serok Apo” (Long Live Leader Öcalan) as they vow to continue their struggle.

Newroz this year pays tribute to the tens of thousands of people who lost their lives in the two earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on 6 February while at the same time reiterating the demand for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan.

Addressing the crowd, Cahit Kirkızak, in the name of the Green Left Party, said: “March is the month of resistance and struggle. The Kurdish people have never bowed down, nor will they ever. There is resistance everywhere today. Our people are writing history with this resistance. We reject the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, which is in fact imposed on the entire Kurdish people.”

Speaking after, HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) Parliamentary Group Deputy Chair Saruhan Oluç wished a happy Newroz to their companions in prisons and in exile. On this year’s Newroz, we mourn for tens of thousands whom we lost in the latest series of earthquakes. They did not die due to the earthquake, but the AKP-MHP fascist government’s failure to take measures. This is the Newroz to get rid of the AKP-

MHP fascism, to change the government and make 2023 the year of victory. We will go to the polls after 53 days and bury the AKP-MHP in the ballot boxes. In the upcoming elections, we will get rid of the government hostile to the Kurds, to get rid of the trustees that robbed people's will, to free our friends in prisons and bring the government to account. We will get rid of the government that has been imposing an unprecedented isolation for 24 months on Öcalan, who has devoted his mind and idea to peace. The government maintains isolation because it doesn't want peace and wants to perpetuate its war policy. This will be an election to end isolation."

The DBP (Democratic Regions' Party) Co-chair Saliha Aydeniz also addressed the people of Van, defining Newroz as the unity of the Kurdish people, resistance, organization and an uprising against those cruel. She vowed that the Kurdish people would continue their struggle until freedom is achieved, saluting "those who resist in the spirit of "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" (Woman, Life, Freedom) and those who unite Mr. Öcalan's ideas with revolution".

Paying tribute to the victims of the earthquakes in February, Aydeniz held the government responsible for the deaths of countless people, defining the government itself as a disaster. "The state was not there while people tried to pull the dead out of the rubble. The only thing the state did was to prevent aid efforts. We will not forgive this government which feeds on animosity against women and the Kurds. They attacked Rojava instead of carrying out search and rescue work. This is because they know that they are losing and rely on war as the only way out. We appeal to this rent-seeking state; Afrin belongs to the Kurds. We also oppose their employment of chemical weapons in areas of freedom. Losing in war, they have started to commit a crime against humanity. The more you insist on war, the more you will lose. Stop war."

Aydeniz also denounced the isolation of Öcalan, which, she said, deepened along with war. "Insistence on isolation is insistence on war, animosity against Kurds and a deadlock. The only reason for this isolation is Mr. Öcalan's belief in peace. There has been no communication with İmralı for the past two years. They want to make the Kurdish people forget about Öcalan. They will never achieve this, though. Mr. Öcalan must be freed so he can play his historic role. He is indispensable for the Kurdish people and the country will never be able to achieve democracy without him. We will fight to this end, and we will prevail. 2023 will be the year of Mr. Öcalan's physical freedom. We believe Mr. Öcalan's struggle and insistence on peace with all our hearts." The celebration continues with the musical performance of the Bajar band.



Newroz in Siirt: We will break the isolation on Öcalan

ANF | SIIRT | 19 MARCH 2023

People of Siirt are celebrating Newroz at Barış (Peace) Square, which is covered with the flags of the Green Left Party.

Chanting the slogans "Bijî Serok Apo" (Long Live Leader Öcalan), "PKK is the people and the people are here", "Be Serok jiyane nabe" (No Life Without the Leader) and "Bêxêdan jiyane" (Resistance is Life).

The ceremony began with a minute of silence in memory of tens of thousands who lost their lives in the series of earthquakes in February.

The Green Left Party provincial branch spokesperson, Eşref Tekin, addressed the crowd, saying: “Our struggle will prevail in Turkey and Kurdistan. Should the HDP be closed down, the people will continue their struggle with the Green Left Party.”

HDP Siirt MP Siddık Taş spoke about the earthquake disaster, which, he said, revealed a strong solidarity among people. “We will continue to stand together and heal our wounds together.”

Referring to the upcoming elections scheduled for 14 May, he said, “We will go to the polls and give a response to the AKP fascism. We will enhance the struggle of those who have been deprived of their liberty and put in prisons. This Newroz will be an answer for peace and freedom.”

HDP MP Feleknas Uca spoke after the Newroz fire was lit in the area, wishing a happy Newroz to Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and all political prisoners, and paying tribute to the victims of earthquakes.

Uca stated that, “We will overthrow the AKP-MHP fascist government in the 14 May elections. The isolation imposed on Öcalan is the cause of the crisis, deadlock and chaos in the country. Why wouldn’t the Gates of İmralı be opened? The solution lies in İmralı. We will fight together and break the isolation.”

The celebration continues with the musical performances of Rêzane Boti, Şêxmûse Êrkendî and Kollektîfa Ritmen Azad.



Newroz in Batman: “Bê Serok jiyan nabe”

ANF | BATMAN | 19 MARCH 2023

The Kurdish New Year, Newroz on 21 March, is celebrated today in 23 cities across Turkey and North Kurdistan under the motto “Her der Newroz, her dem azadî” (Everywhere Newroz, Every Moment Freedom) and “To Freedom with Newroz Fire”.

Newroz this year pays tribute to the tens of thousands of people who lost their lives in the two earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on 6 February while at the same time reiterating the demand for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan.

The Newroz celebrations this year are organised by the DTK (Democratic Society Congress), HDK (Peoples’ Democratic Congress), TJA (Free Women’s Movement), DBP (Democratic Regions Party), HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) and the Green Left Party.

In the Kurdish province of Batman, thousands took to the streets to celebrate Newroz, chanting the slogans sık “Bijî serok Apo” (Long Live Leader Öcalan) and “Bê serok jîyan nabe” (No Life Without the Leader).

The celebration began with a minute of silence, after which Newroz Organizing Committee Co-Spokesperson Hüseyin Sarik spoke about the importance of Newroz for the Kurdish people.

Speaking after, HDP Women’s Assembly Spokesperson Ayşe Acar Başaran pointed to the ongoing problems 42 days after the devastating earthquakes that struck 11 cities in northern Kurdistan and southern Turkey, killing tens of thousands and leaving millions homeless.

“This is the day to hold the government accountable. Countless people died but not a single official has resigned. No state official was arrested or gave an account, which is why we will call those responsible to account here today. Those who did not resign will have to flee. They will give an account of what happened,” said Başaran and continued:

“The government, which is trying hard to maintain its power through trustees, detentions, arrests and massacres, portrays deaths as a result of a natural disaster and evades responsibility. This Newroz will be the end of the destruction caused by the fascist system. I salute all those who filled this area today, and commemorate the victims of the earthquake. This year’s Newroz will be the Newroz of freedom.”

Speaking after, HDP MP Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki wished a happy Newroz to all women who made “Jin, Jiyan, Azadî” a slogan of resistance all around the world. “They have been trying to hedge against the fire of Newroz on these lands for three thousand years, but the Newroz fire has grown bigger every year. Denying the existence of the Kurds, they tried to appropriate Newroz. They carried out countless attacks to drain Newroz of its essence. Yet, the people responded to all attacks and took to the streets in millions.”

Tiryaki added: “We will bring those who respond to peace with war to account. The last word will be spoken by those resisting. It is time to speak this word and send this government away. Happy Newroz to all of you.” Speeches were followed by musical performances by Nuray Balık and Avazên Azad.

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Newroz in İzmir: “Freedom for Öcalan”

ANF | İZMİR | 19 MARCH 2023

The Kurdish New Year, Newroz on 21 March, is celebrated today in 23 cities across Turkey and North Kurdistan under the motto “Her der Newroz, her dem azadî” (Everywhere Newroz, Every Moment Freedom) and “To Freedom with Newroz Fire”.

Newroz this year pays tribute to the tens of thousands of people who lost their lives in the two earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on 6 February while at the same time reiterating the demand for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan.

The Newroz celebrations this year are organised by the DTK (Democratic Society Congress), HDK (Peoples' Democratic Congress), TJA (Free Women's Movement), DBP (Democratic Regions Party), HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and the Green Left Party.

Rebellion and anger marked the slogans and speeches during the event where HDP İzmir provincial co-chairs Berna Çelik and Çınar Altan, Peace Mothers, MED TUHAD-FED representative Salih Tekin, Green Left Party executive Ahmet Asena, HDP İzmir MP Serpil Kemalbay delivered speeches on the importance of Newroz.

Erkan Bas: We are here, together

The Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) Chairperson Erkan Baş addressed the crowd and said that the 20-year-old dictatorship has come to an end.

Baş stated: "We are here today with this hope and determination. We are here against those who left our people under the rubble. Our loved ones have been held prisoners for years. We appeal to those who want to set us against each other. We are here, united. We experienced a devastating earthquake disaster where our people fought for their lives while the rulers watched them in their palace, not even providing the people with a single tent and a cup of soup. They left us alone in our bitter days. Yet, peoples came to one another's help. We survived holding each other's hands. We weaved the solidarity of the century against the disaster of the century."

Remarking that it is time to settle accounts, Baş said: "People of İzmir are here today, standing up for equality, peace and fraternity of peoples. This sign of victory is the sign of peace and freedom, the co-existence of the Kurdish and Turkish peoples. It is the sign of Deniz Gezmiş and Deniz Poyraz. The government now seeks to close the HDP, which, however, will never be left alone. The Kurdish people will never be left alone. You cannot close the will of the Kurdish people. We are here to end your exploitation."

Önder: We salute İmralı

HDP former MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder commemorated those who died in the struggle in the person of HDP member Deniz Poyraz (a Kurdish woman who was shot dead by a Turkish fascist in the HDP building in Izmir in June 2021.)

"Peace will prevail in these lands. We will achieve peace and equality. We salute İmralı," he said.

Öztürk: Öcalan's voice is the voice of peace

DTK Co-chair Berdan Öztürk denounced those responsible for the destruction caused by the earthquake, saying: "We will bring those responsible to account. They will not be able to flee anywhere."

Remarking that the existence of the Kurds is being targeted in four parts of Kurdistan, Öztürk continued: "They have aggravated the isolation of Öcalan since 5 April 2015, seeking to bring Kurds in four parts of Kurdistan to their knees. They are focused on Kurdish enmity. The century-year-old system ignores the Kurds and Alevis. Ahead of us are elections, which will determine the course of the century-year-old system. Erdoğan and Bahçeli bear the denial of this system."

Referring to the isolation regime imposed on Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan in İmralı Prison, Öztürk said: “Isolation is torture. It is an unlawful practice. Does the opposition have nothing to say about it? If you don’t speak out against isolation, we will not believe your sincerity. Do you want democracy in Istanbul, but not in Amed (Diyarbakır)? How do you ignore the will of the Kurdish people? You cannot claim to be against war and bomb Kurdistan at the same time.”

Öztürk pointed out the Turkish use of chemical weapons in Kurdistan, asking the opposition parties in the country why they are silent on this issue. I tell this to the opposition; Öcalan’s voice is the voice of peace and guarantee of an equal life.” The celebration concluded with musical performances by Dengbêj Xalîde and Koma Hevra.



Newroz in Istanbul: We will build a new life together

ANF | ISTANBUL | 19 MARCH 2023

The Kurdish New Year, Newroz on 21 March, is celebrated today in 23 cities across Turkey and North Kurdistan under the motto “Her der Newroz, her dem azadî” (Everywhere Newroz, Every Moment Freedom) and “To Freedom with Newroz Fire”.

Newroz this year pays tribute to the tens of thousands of people who lost their lives in the two earthquakes that hit Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria on 6 February while at the same time reiterating the demand for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan.

The Newroz celebrations this year are organised by the DTK (Democratic Society Congress), HDK (Peoples’ Democratic Congress), TJA (Free Women’s Movement), DBP (Democratic Regions Party), HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) and the Green Left Party.

The Newroz event in Istanbul was held in Yenikapı Square with the participation of thousands of people who had left different boroughs of Istanbul since the early hours of the morning despite the torrential rain. The Newroz fire was lit by members of the Peace Mothers Council.

Encü: The peoples will overthrow the government

Taking the stage and speaking in Kurdish, HDP Istanbul provincial branch co-chair Ferhat Encü wished a happy Newroz to “the children of Kawa”, saying: “I salute you all for your stance. We, in millions, will call those who seek to close the HDP to account. You cannot stop this struggle through arrests, arbitrary measures and closures of parties. The people of Istanbul are ready for elections. The Kurds and other peoples will overthrow the AKP-MHP government.”

The Newroz Declaration of the Labour, Peace and Democracy Forces in Istanbul was read afterwards, saying: “Newroz is the new day, the new life. It is the day of struggle and rebellion against the one-man regime and the capitalist and rent-seeking order. We want to live in this country as honorable citizens. We

want to live equally, freely and together. We will fight together with determination against the system that puts our people and freedom under restraint and seeks to suppress us through investigations, prisons, torture and massacres. We will never take a step back. We will fight together to achieve a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question, to ensure the freedom of peoples, to build a democratic country, to achieve social justice, and to stop unemployment and exploitation. We will build a new life on a new day together.”

Buldan: We will win the elections and build our own future

HDP Co-chair Pervin Buldan said this year’s Newroz is not marked by enthusiasm but anger and pain over those who died in the earthquake and remained under the rubble.

Referring to the upcoming elections on 14 May, Buldan stated: “Everyone should know that the AKP and its junior ally, MHP, are ruling this country for the last time. There is little time left. 14 May is a significant opportunity for us. At the same time, it will be a milestone. The AKP and MHP will see how great the peoples of Turkey are, how strong-willed the Kurds are, and how women and youth have the power to change the course of the country. Democracy is written in squares, as is peace. We will declare justice and freedom at the ballot box on 14 May.”

Speaking about the government’s threats against the Kurds and other peoples in the country, Buldan pointed out that they would not allow an election campaign marked by threats and insults. “Kurds, Turks, Armenians, Syriacs and all beliefs, identities and colours will go to the ballot box hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder on 14 May to change the country and build a new life. We will win the elections and build our own future.”

Buldan continued: “This war does not need a war, but social peace. Kurds need education in their mother tongue. While this could be achieved by a rationalist domestic and foreign policy, our resources are spent on war. We reject this. The peoples of Turkey reject war and isolation. They demand the immediate lifting of the isolation imposed on Mr. Öcalan, which is actually directed against the entire country rather than İmralı alone.”

Buldan appealed to women, saying: “We promise you that we will put all laws that concern women into force after 14 May. We will reenact the Istanbul Convention and build an order where women are not murdered anymore.”

Appealing to the young people, the HDP co-chair said: “The future is yours. We will build it together. On 14 May, we entrust the ballot boxes to the youths who should allow no cheats to take place. We will win, together with women, the youth and the peoples of Turkey.”

Buldan sent her greetings to her fellow party members in prisons, including Selahattin Demirtaş, Selçuk Mızraklı, Figen Yüksekdağ, Gülten Kışanak and Sebahat Tuncel. We will celebrate Newroz with them next year. Nobody should doubt it. The future is ours.”

Speaking after, the Green Left Party co-chair İbrahim Akın said that they were mourning on one hand, and trying to build a new life with the resistance of Newroz on the other. “In the world, in Turkey and in the Middle East, the cruel rulers try to suppress our search for freedom, resistance and struggle. But they

are wrong. The traditions of Kawa the Blacksmith are continued today. We appeal to them; you will never succeed. You will never defeat us. The seed in these lands will be revived and we will prevail against you.”

Referring to the earthquake disaster and its bitter consequences, Akın said: “As we have seen for ourselves in the aftermath of the earthquake, none of the problems in the country will be resolved as long as this regime is maintained. They promise nothing other than lies, profit and pillaging. Our people asking ‘Where is the state?’ are confronted by the security forces of the state. Rest assured, we will send this government away on 14 May.”

Remarking that attacks against the HDP continue, Akın continued: “They have appointed trustees to our municipalities in an attempt to destroy our will. They have taken our friends prisoners. We salute all of them and promise them that they will obtain their freedom after 14 May. We will drive this government away and build a new democratic and ecological republic. HDP is not alone. Should it be closed, the Green Left Party will undertake its historic mission. We will triumph together.”

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Police take 200 people into custody after Newroz celebration in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 19 MARCH 2023

Hundreds of thousands of people attended the Newroz celebration in Yenikapı Square in Istanbul. As the crowd was leaving the square, at the end of the celebration, the police attacked people.

The people reacted and protested police who wanted to take a group of people into custody only because they were chanting slogans such as “Bijî Serok Apo”, “Bê Serok jiyan nabe” and “Bijî berxwedana in the prisons”.

The police attacked the crowd and detained around 200 people in the middle of the street. Among those taken into custody was a disabled child and some lawyers.

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Newroz celebrations in many cities of Europe

ANF | 20 MARCH 2023

Kurds and their friends celebrated Newroz in many cities of Europe. Donations for the victims of the earthquake were collected at Heyva Sor and Roja Sor stands.

Strasbourg: Kurds and their friends gathered in Strasbourg to celebrate Newroz. The celebration started with a minute's silence for the martyrs of the Kurdistan revolution. After the reading of the KCK's Newroz message, politician Faysal Sariyıldız made a speech. Sariyıldız said that Newroz means resistance for the Kurds from Kawa to the struggle of today's Kurdish Freedom Movement, and added that the fire lit by contemporary Kawa and Mazlum will lead to victory.

Talking about the total isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, Sariyıldız said that it is not possible to solve the Kurdish question without the end of the isolation, and that the address for the solution is actually Abdullah Öcalan.

Pointing out that the Turkish state did not provide the necessary assistance to the earthquake victims after the Maraş-centered earthquake, Faysal Sariyıldız stated that the Turkish state turned the earthquake into an opportunity to depopulate Kurdistan. After the speeches, Serhado, Beser Şahin and Sidar Amed took the stage.

Lubeck: Hundreds of Kurds and their friends celebrated Newroz in Lubeck. The celebration was held in the Wiesental am Schaluppenweg area of the city. Artists Saîd Dêrik, Baran Agir, Tewfik Goyî, Hejal Elanî and Îdrîs Bêrtî took to the stage.

Rijswijk: Thousands of Kurds celebrated Newroz in the Dutch city of Rijswijk. Kongra Gel co-chair Remzi Kartal underlined the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and said: "The Kurds have been fighting for centuries. This struggle is a struggle for freedom and justice. The Kurdish people will win this struggle."

Limassol: Hundreds of Kurds living in Cyprus came together in the village of Alassa in Limassol and celebrated Newroz. The event, organized by the Culture and Art Committee of the Kurdish People's Assembly of Cyprus, was attended by members of the Kurdish People's Solidarity Commission, deputies, and the internationalist youth movement in Cyprus.

Marburg: Newroz was celebrated in Marburg. The celebration was held at Bürgerhaus Cappel-Marburg and started with a minute's silence in memory of the Kurdistan Revolution Martyrs. The SPD mayor of Marburg, Dr. Thomas Spies, Hennig Köster from Die Linke, NAV-DEM representatives attended as speakers.

Torino: Newroz was celebrated in Turin. Politician Lezgin Botan said: "The election to be held on 14 May in Turkey will be the beginning of a very important process for the Kurdish people. This Newroz is dedicated to the freedom of Leader Apo."

Helsinki: A Newroz celebration was held in . Leftist organizations, the Democratic Kurdish Medical Center, the representatives of the Association for Arts, and many Kurds lit the Newroz fire on Sunday. The crowd, who danced around the fire with the slogan "Newroz piroz be", also symbolically burned the throne of the cruel Dehaq.

YJA Star guerrillas: We will increase the resistance with the fire of Newroz

TEKOSIN DEVRİM | BEHDİNAN | 20 MARCH 2023

YJA Star guerrillas spoke to ANF about their feelings and expectations for this year's Newroz celebrations.

YJA Star guerrilla Adar Ararat, started her speech by saying: "I salute the Newroz of our leadership, our martyred friends and our people." She stated that this year's Newroz has been met with great enthusiasm in the mountains of Kurdistan. Guerrilla Ararat said that despite all the efforts of the fascist genocidal state, the Kurdish people have not forgotten the historical Newroz tradition.

Emphasizing that the tradition of resistance carried by the Newroz is engraved in the memory of the Kurdish people thanks to the resistance of Kawa the Blacksmith and Mazlum Doğan, guerrilla Adar Ararat continued: "The enthusiasm and celebrations of Newroz in the mountains of Kurdistan are seen as a response to the cruel today's tyrants. This year, we will further increase the legacy and struggle of our friends. We will definitely ensure the physical freedom of Leader Apo and the freedom of the Kurdish people."

We will light the fire of Newroz with the spirit of the martyrs

YJA Star guerrilla Rojîn Befircan saluted both Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and the Kurdish people on Newroz, and said: "It is much more meaningful for me to welcome Newroz this year, especially as a woman. The meaning of Newroz this year is very different for us. During the Turkish invasion attacks, dozens of our friends fell as martyrs in front of our eyes, killed by chemical weapons. We will light this year's Newroz fire with the spirit of these friends, and we will commemorate them by making the Newroz fire even stronger."

Guerrilla Befircan said that the Newroz fire lit by Mazlum Doğan represents the spirit of resistance not only for the Kurdish people, but for all oppressed peoples, and added: "This fire this year will be even stronger. The genocidal state is attacking us and our people with all kinds of weapons. However, it cannot extinguish the fire of resistance that the Kurdish people have lit. This resistance will grow and the Newroz fire will grow stronger."

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Mothers of martyrs light Newroz fire in Manbij

ANF | MANBIJ | 20 MARCH 2023

Political parties, non-governmental organizations, military institutions' members, opinion leaders and hundreds of citizens from Manbij and rural areas flocked to the Tewq Xelil village, in the southwest of Manbij, to celebrate this year's Newroz.

After a moment of silence, the Newroz fire was lit by mothers of martyrs, namely Meha El Ebdullah, Mehna Beluk, Kewser Hemo and Fatima Mihemed, who wore traditional local clothes and released white doves which represent peace.

The Newroz program in Manbij will continue with speeches, national songs, theatre and poem performances.

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Police take many into custody ahead of Newroz celebrations

ANF | AMED | 21 MARCH 2023

The Turkish police raided houses in Amed at around 10 pm local time on Monday and detained many people ahead of the Newroz celebration today.

There is no clear information about the number and names of those taken into custody. The only name learned so far is that of a young man, Şürjan Jiyan Pehlivan, residing in Yenişehir district.

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Newroz celebrations in many European cities

ANF | 21 MARCH 2023

Newroz events were held in Freiburg, Dortmund and Aachen in Germany, and Copenhagen, Örebro and Holstebro in Denmark.

Freiburg: In Freiburg, thousands of Kurds and their friends celebrated Newroz. After a minute of silence in memory of the Martyrs of the Revolution of Kurdistan, Democratic Kurdish Community Center (DKTM) co-chair Salih Torî made a speech.

Dortmund: A Newroz fire was lit in Dortmund after a march was held. The Mothers of Martyrs lit the Newroz fire in the DKTM garden, while speakers underlined the importance of Newroz.

Odense / Copenhagen / Holstebro: Kurds living in Denmark celebrated Newroz in three cities, Odense, Copenhagen and Holstebro. KCDK-E co-chair Yüksel Koç said: "The fire lit by Mazlum Doğan, one of the leading cadres of the PKK, has become a symbol of the Kurds' day of resistance. Mazlum Doğan, who went down in Kurdish history as the 'contemporary Kawa', is celebrated by thousands in the squares of many European cities."

Aachen: Hundreds of people gathered in Aachen to celebrate Newroz. The Kurds and their friends paid tribute to the martyrs of resistance and those who lost their lives in the Maraş-centered earthquakes.

Den Haag: Kurds living in Den Haag lit the Newroz fire at an event attended by hundreds of people who gathered with torches in their hands and danced around the fire.

Saarbrücken: More than a thousand Kurds and their friends attended the Newroz celebration held in Saarbrücken. The crowd marched with torches towards Landwehrplatz, and passed through the city center before reaching Bürgerpark.

Stuttgart: Thousands of people attended the Newroz celebration organized by the German Kurdish Women's Union-YJK-E Baden-Württemberg. Young people chanted slogans during the march and said that “the tradition of the rebirth and struggle of the Kurdish people continues in the 50th Year of Struggle carried out by Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan.

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Thousands of people lit the fire of Newroz in Rojava

ANF | 21 MARCH 2023

The fires of Newroz were lit in many cities of Northern and Eastern Syria.

Manbij: Political parties, civil society organizations, members of defense institutions, wise men and hundreds of citizens from Manbij and its rural areas attended the Newroz celebration in the village of Tewq Xelil. The Newroz fire was lit by the mothers of martyrs, Meha El Ebdullah, Mehna Belûk, Kewser Hemo and Fatima Mihemed, and pigeons, the symbol of peace, were let flying.

Heseke: Representatives of political parties under the umbrella of the Democratic Syrian Council (MSD), and wise leaders of the Kurdish and Arab community, lit the fire of Newroz in Heseke with the slogan “We will liberate Leader Apo with the spirit of Newroz and defeat the occupation”.

Deir Ezzor: Citizens in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor celebrated Newroz. Speakers said that Newroz is the celebration of unity and brotherhood of the peoples.

Shehba: The people of Afrin, forcibly displaced in Shehba because of the Turkish invasion attacks in 2018, continue to be under the heavy attacks carried out by the Turkish state and the embargo of the Damascus government. Nonetheless, they lit the fire of Newroz.

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Turkey killed 4 Kurds who wanted to celebrate Newroz in Jindirês

ANF | 21 MARCH 2023

The Turkish state and its mercenaries killed 4 Kurds who wanted to light a Newroz fire in the Jindirês district of Afrin. The region has been occupied by the Turkish state and its mercenaries since 2018.

The names of the people killed by the Turkish state are as follows: Ferhan Osman (43), İsmail Osman (38), Mihemed Osman (42) and Mihemed İsmail Osman (18).

On the other hand, hundreds of Afrin residents protested the Turkish state by gathering in front of the hospital where the bodies were taken.

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Thousands of people attend Newroz celebrations in Qandil region

ANF | QANDIL | 21 MARCH 2023

Groups of people began to reach Qandil, one of the centres of Newroz celebrations, from early in the morning.

Many artists will take the stage at the celebration, where political institutions and parties will make statements.

Young people started to take part in activities in the Newroz area as of Monday evening when they lit the Newroz fire and danced around it.

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Shengal Autonomous Administration celebrates Newroz

ANF | SHENGAL | 21 MARCH 2023

The Shengal Autonomous Administration said in a statement to mark 2023 Newroz that “Our people's resistance for an autonomous and free Shengal will continue at all costs.”

The written statement on Tuesday said: “We celebrate the Newroz festival of the Aryan people, the freedom defenders and the Yazidi people. We hope that the 2023 Newroz will bring peace, stability and unity to the people.”

The statement continued: “The people of Shengal have celebrated Newroz every year with enthusiasm under the leadership of the Shengal Autonomous Administration and expressed their message. The Autonomous Administration has decided not to celebrate this year’s Newroz, both to remember the price our people have paid in recent months and to commemorate those who lost their lives in the recent earthquakes in Rojava and North Kurdistan. However, it does not mean that our people will not celebrate the coming of new year. Our people have already celebrated Newroz by lighting fires in various places.

Our people’s resistance for an autonomous and free Shengal will continue at all costs. We will light the Newroz fire every year with the spirit of guerrilla resistance on the free mountains and we will embrace this culture.”



People of Kobanê celebrate Newroz

ANF | KOBANE | 21 MARCH 2023

The Newroz celebration on Miştenur Hill in Kobanê kicked off following a moment of silence and the lighting of the Newroz fire on Tuesday.

In a speech, Mehmet Şahin, Co-Chair of the Euphrates Region Executive Council, congratulated Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, the freedom guerrillas and the people on Newroz. Şahin said that they endorsed the “Jiyan Jiyan Azadî” (Woman, Life, Freedom) uprising that continues in Iran and Rojhilatê (East) Kurdistan. He emphasized that they would make Newroz an international celebration under the leadership of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and with the democratic nation project.

TEV-DEM (Democratic Society Movement) Co-chair Rûken Ehmed said that the resistance of Öcalan in the İmralı prison for 24 years has become a school for humanity. She added: “The resistance on the leader’s line continues. We must expand the resistance and defeat the invaders.”

Ute Gedig, mother of internationalist fighter Andok (a German fighter), who was martyred in the ranks of the SDF following a Turkish attack in Serêkaniye in 2019, said: “Martyr Andok showed that the Rojava revolution and the struggle of Öcalan are a cause for the entire humanity.” The music groups of the Baqi Xido Cultural Centre appeared on stage during the event.



First Newroz fire in Rojhilat lit by the grave of Jina Mahsa Amini

ANF | 21 MARCH 2023

22-year-old Kurdish woman Jina Mahsa Amini was detained by the morality police on 13 September 2022 in Tehran on the grounds that she did not cover her head properly. She died in a hospital on 16 September, as a result of the torture she was subjected to. Since then, there has been a popular uprising unprecedented since the revolution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The uprising in Iran and Rojhilat, marked by the iconic motto “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi” (Woman, Life, Freedom), continues on Newroz Day, 21 March.

The first Newroz fire in Rojhilat was lit by Amini’s grave in the Aichi Cemetery in Saqiz city. The fire was lit by her father to the accompaniment of songs of resistance.

Background

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, “discipline and order” must be strictly observed. To implement this, there is a separate Islamic religious police force, also known as the morality police, which pays particular attention to ensuring that “dress codes” are observed in the country. Recently, the UN Human Rights Office in Geneva noted that these morality police have expanded their patrols in recent months, targeting women who do not wear the Islamic headscarf, the so-called hijab, “according to the rules”. This policy has caused society in Rojhilat [the main settlement areas of the Kurds in Iran, which lie in western Iran according to today’s nation-state borders and are the epicentre of the nationwide protests] and Iran to boil over since 13 September.

On 13 September, Jina and her brother were on their way from their hometown to Tehran when they were stopped by the morality police. They wanted to arrest Jina because of her “un-Islamic” outfit. Her “un-Islamic” outfit was characterised by the fact that part of her hair was visible under the hijab. She was therefore taken to a police station. After a few hours, Jina fell into a coma and was then taken to hospital, where she ultimately died on 16 September. While the official authorities spoke of “sudden heart problems” or later also of pre-existing conditions, it was clear to the public relatively quickly what must have happened. Jina had already been beaten and tortured by several police officers on the way to the police station and this continued at the station. People knew because thousands of others had been beaten in this way before, because Jina’s brother had to witness the first beating himself.

Hospital records leaked by a hacker group and published by Iran International, a media outlet of the Iranian opposition in exile, with CT scans said to be of Jina Mahsa Amini, confirmed the version according to which the young woman died from massive violence to the head. After her death, the Tehran clinic where Amini was treated also wrote in a post on Instagram, which was then deleted, that she was already brain-dead when she was admitted.

The Iranian government immediately tried to cover up what had happened. The police authorities demanded that Jina's parents bury their daughter's body that same night in camera. However, they refused and did not bury her until the next morning in Seqiz, which was the starting point of the popular uprisings in Iran.

On 17 September, the uprisings began in Seqiz, which quickly spread to other towns of Eastern Kurdistan such as Ūrmiye (Urmia), Serdeşt (Sardasht) and Sine (Sanandaj). Young women have dominated these uprisings from the beginning. The two central slogans that have been echoing on the streets of almost all cities in Iran for days are "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom) and "Bimre dîktator" (Death to the Dictator). At first, the Iranian state desperately tried to sell its version of Jina's death as the truth. They tried to force Jina's father to explain that his daughter was indeed suffering from pre-existing conditions. However, he did not give in to the pressure of the Iranian authorities. The doctors who treated her were also muzzled. They were not allowed to reveal a word about the circumstances of the death to the public. Then those responsible in the state put out the usual fairy tale that the popular uprisings were being directed from abroad. But the people in the country no longer buy that either. Too many people are sentenced to the death penalty in prisons, mostly because they think politically differently from Iran's rulers; too many people disappear without a trace, too many women are tortured daily and the oppression of minorities in Iran is too great.

Several political parties and civil society organisations in Eastern Kurdistan came together in the next step and called for mass protests and a general strike on 19 September. On this day, almost all shops in Eastern Kurdistan remained closed. Most universities and schools also remained empty. Instead, the masses gathered in the streets. With this moment, popular uprisings finally spread throughout the country. In the capital Tehran, as in many other metropolises and smaller cities, people have been taking to the streets. The uprisings started in the Kurdish areas of Iran, but today they are carried out in all parts of the country and by different ethnic groups. Led by women, Kurds, Persians, Arabs, Azerbaijanis and Baluchis are currently fighting side by side against the repressive regime in Tehran.

Fighting is the right keyword here, because the Iranian state allowed the demonstrations to escalate within a very short time, resulting in real street battles in many places. After attempts to ban the demonstrations failed, they tried to beat people off the streets. The "morality police", "riot control police" and sometimes even the military were sent in to bring the situation under control. But the people drove the security forces back. Women tore their hijabs off their heads in public spaces and burned them, as the Yazidis did when they were liberated from the "Islamic State" (ISIS). The Iranian state flag was taken down from poles in many places and pictures of the Iranian leadership were burnt.

Three central demands of the protesters in the popular uprisings are:

- An investigation into the murder of Amini and conviction of the killers
- An end to femicidal policies in Iran
- An end to the Islamic regime in Iran

In recent years, there have been repeated protests in Iran. But the size and spread of the latest uprisings seems much broader. The same is true of the anger of the masses against the regime. International solidar-

ity is also very large. Especially on social media, hundreds of thousands of people exerted pressure and ensured that the uprising of women and the people of Iran in general also finds its place in the mainstream press. Solidarity actions with the protests in Iran have taken place and continue to take place around the world. Even the online activists of “Anonymous” got involved and started “Operation Iran”. According to their own information, they were able to take several state websites, the central news platform, the website of the central bank and over 300 surveillance cameras off the net.

Shortly before Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi gave his speech at the United Nations in New York on 21 September, in which he kept quiet about the developments in his own country, the internet was cut off in large parts of Iran and especially in Eastern Kurdistan. First, social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp were blocked, then the entire internet was shut down. In this way, the Iranian regime not only tried to stop communication among the protesters, but also to prevent information about the events from reaching the outside world. There are various figures on those killed and wounded.



Foza Yûsif: We will break the İmralı system and liberate the occupied areas

ANF | QAMISHLO | 21 MARCH 2023

The Newroz celebration in the northern Syrian city of Qamishlo, which is held in the Newroz area in Himo town, kicked off following a moment of silence, followed by Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan’s assessment concerning the meaning of Newroz.

Addressing the crowd, PYD (Democratic Union Party) Presidential Council Member Yûsif stated that they wanted to announce their commitment to the democratic nation project to the whole world, vowing that they would continue to fight to this end.

Calling attention to the isolation imposed on Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, Yûsif said: “Öcalan has been fighting for us for 50 years. The İmralı system is directed against all peoples. We state that in 2023, we will break the İmralı system, secure the physical freedom of Öcalan, and liberate the occupied areas.”

Yûsif added: “We will not forget Afrin, Serêkaniyê and Grê Sipi. We will continue our resistance to liberate them.” Yûsif pointed out that the autonomous system introduced in North and East Syria has created a new culture of democracy for all peoples, offering a solution to the Syrian crisis.

The Kurdish politician emphasized that the most suitable solution for Syria is democracy, and the solution lies in Syria, but not in Moscow and Ankara. She called on the Damascus government to resume negotiations and frame a democratic Syrian constitution together.

Yûsif called on all Kurdish parties to eliminate the Treaty of Lausanne, to secure their rights, and to resist oppression and chauvinism. The Newroz program continues with musical performances.



Newroz in Amed: “Freedom for Öcalan”

ANF | AMED | 21 MARCH 2023

The final celebration of 2023 Newroz, which kicked off on March 10 under the motto “Her der Newroz, her dem azadi” and dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Maraş-centred earthquakes on February 6, was held at the Newroz Park in Amed's central Bağlar district today.

This year’s Newroz, which marks the beginning of spring, was dominated by anger and frustration over the government’s handling of the devastating earthquakes in the Turkish-Syrian border region and the fact that the disaster is being politically exploited. More than 50,000 people have officially died in Turkey alone and the search for missing persons is still on. 230,000 buildings have been destroyed or can no longer be inhabited, according to government figures. More than one million people are living in tents, six weeks after the severe disaster. Meanwhile, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is making big promises, claiming to complete new houses for those affected within a year, to promote himself and his policies.

“With the Newroz fire to freedom”

This year, the stage was not colourfully decorated, but black, as Newroz 2023 was dedicated to the victims of the earthquake disaster. The motto “With the Newroz fire to freedom” and “Everywhere Newroz, always for freedom” were written on signs. In various places in the square, huge banners were emblazoned with inscriptions such as “With Jina’s hair we will strengthen our resistance” - referring to the Kurdish woman Jina Mahsa Amini, who was the victim of a state femicide in September for an alleged violation of the Islamist dress code in Iran - and “Kemal Kurkut is immortal”. This is to commemorate the young art student who was shot dead by a police officer in Amed on Newroz 2017. Other posters read “Şîna me sedema tekoşîna me ye” (Our mourning is the basis of our struggle). Flags of the parties of the Labour and Freedom Alliance, which co-organised the celebration, of the Amedspor football club and banners with the images of Abdullah Öcalan were waved.

The police this year built a 5-meter-high barbed wire fence between the main stage and the gathering area. Young people, climbing the wire fence with their banners, protested the police by chanting slogans. The police failed in their attempt to attack the young people, due to the 5-meter-high wire fence.

Ahmet Türk: For peace and a strong democracy

At the beginning of the festival, the traditional Newroz fire was lit. It is a symbol against tyranny and for resistance, but also has a political component. This was also expressed in the numerous speeches and messages read out. “The Kurdish people long for a great peace and a strong democracy,” said the political veteran Ahmet Türk. This year’s Newroz, he said, should therefore be seen fundamentally as an expression of the Kurds’ will for the “crushing of fascism” and a call to the democratic public to support this effort with determination. “Let us unite to end the despotism of Turkish fascism and the reign of the current rulers. It is up to us to pave the way to peace and achieve our ideal of a democratic nation. Indispensable for this

goal is the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. For he is not only the leader of the Kurdish people, but the architect of a peace plan that we want to implement,” said Türk.

Sancar: For a wind of change

HDP Co-Chair Mithat Sancar spoke of a decisive year in Turkey. He stated that the Labour and Freedom Alliance, which includes the HDP, EMEP, TIP, EHP, SMF and TÖP, will ensure that the voters vote Erdogan out of office on 14 May. He stated that they are calling for a “wind of change” to blow over the country. In this way, he said, it will be possible to return to the path of democracy and the rule of law.

“We will shake off the chains of war”

“Turkey is dominated by warmongers. For eight years, we have been witnessing an escalation of a war of unprecedented proportions, directed against Kurdish society and with it against all forces of democracy,” said Sancar, referring to the “Çökertme Planı” - a term that can be translated meaningfully as “decomposition plan” - which has been single-mindedly put into practice by the Turkish state since the unilateral termination of the “peace process” with Abdullah Öcalan. Between 2013 and 2015, there were talks between the PKK and the Turkish state aimed at working out a democratic solution to the Kurdish question.

“Öcalan, at a time when the Middle East turned into a sea of blood, proposed a local, peaceful and reasonable approach for all the peoples of the region in an attempt to contribute to a solution. But the table was overturned and his approach became the target of the ruling power elites. The resulting escalation of war politics has also led to the deepening of his isolation on İmralı, affecting the whole society. This state of affairs is responsible for practically all the crises in the country. Therefore, our demand is this: for a democratic solution to the crises in the country and sustainable peace, the isolation must be lifted. Because isolation means war. We are tired of wearing the chains of war and will shake them off on 14 May.”

Message from Talabani

Unusually clear words regarding the isolation of Öcalan also came from PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, in South Kurdistan) chairman Bafel Talabani, who addressed the guests at the Newroz celebration in Amed with a video message - even though Öcalan’s name was not explicitly mentioned. “Release our politicians and representatives and remove all obstacles that you have directed against the people, lawyers and doctors,” Talabani’s message said. The politician called on all Kurds to respond to attacks against the achievements of the Kurdish people with “national unity” and offered his condolences to the relatives of the victims of the earthquake. “My hope is that this year’s Newroz festival will give the starting signal for the Kurds’ common resistance. Let us put aside our differences and fight shoulder to shoulder for our achievements,” Talabani said.

Öztürk: Amed is the heart of the Kurds

DTK (Democratic Society Congress) Co-chair Bedran Öztürk paid tribute to the victims of the earthquake and Kemal Kurkut, vowing to bring those responsible to account.

Öztürk said: “The path to democracy passes through Amed, which is the heart of the Kurds, and the square of democracy. Since 5 April 2015, the government has aggravated the isolation of Mr Öcalan, who

is of great importance to the Kurdish people, the peoples of Turkey and the Middle East. Mr Öcalan's voice became the hope for freedom in the Middle East. His ideas became the hope for freedom. Our people do not accept this isolation anymore. No news has been received from Öcalan for two years now, because they are afraid of Mr Öcalan's voice. They are killing the future of Turkey's peoples by continuing their war and bombardments in Kurdistan. This is an inhumane government which seeks to destroy the status of the Kurds with an occupation mentality and Kurdish enmity."

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Kurds celebrate Newroz in Damascus

ANF | 22 MARCH 2023

Hundreds of Kurds and their friends celebrated Newroz at the Al Feyha Stadium in Damascus with the slogan "We will liberate Leader Apo with the spirit of Newroz and end the invasion".

Various speeches were made during the celebration of Newroz, which celebrated the people of the region. Attention was drawn to the importance of increasing the struggle.

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Kurds celebrate Newroz in Britain

DIREN DICLE ERDEN | LONDON | 22 MARCH 2023

The Youth Newroz, which is annually held in London, was held this year at the Kurdish Community Centre (KCC) under the leadership of the Revolutionary Youth Movement (TCS) in Britain.

The celebration started following a moment of silence in memory of the martyrs of the Kurdistan revolution.

Agit Riha made a speech on behalf of the TCS, Ali Poyraz on behalf of Martyr's Families and Şivan Heval on behalf of KCDK-Bashur (South Kurdistan). A documentary featuring the speeches of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan was screened during the event.

The speakers pointed out the fact that the freedom paradigm of Öcalan has become a hope for all the peoples of the Middle East, and the resistance and struggle against occupation, fascism, collaborationism, and male mentality are close to victory.

Pictures of Öcalan, Mazlum Doğan, Paris martyrs and YPG, YPJ, PKK and KCK flags were displayed in the event hall.

This year's Newroz event was dedicated to Kurdish artist Mir Perwer who was martyred in the Paris massacre on December 23, 2022.

Music band Koma Zelal appeared on stage at the Youth Newroz, followed by a traditional halay dance performance. Music groups Zozan Zudem and Omid Sharifi also took the stage.

A Newroz fire was lit in the KCC garden, where young people danced around the fire, singing the anthem of "Çarxe Şoreşe". As the participants jumped on the Newroz fire, fireworks were also set off.

Thousands celebrated Newroz in Liverpool

Thousands of people attended the Newroz event at the Eventim Road organized by the Northwest Kurdish Community Centre in Liverpool.

Kurds from other cities including Manchester, Hull, Wrexham and Shielfield also attended the Newroz celebration. Flags of KCK, PKK, PJAK, KODAR, YPG, YPJ and pictures of Öcalan and Mazlum Doğan were displayed in the event hall.

The Liverpool Newroz kicked off after a minute's silence to commemorate those who lost their lives in the Kurdistan freedom struggle.

The opening speech was delivered by British Kurdish People's Assembly Co-Chair Miraz Serhat. The Kurdish national anthem "Ey Raqîb" was sung by thousands of people.

Time for freedom

Serhat started his speech by commemorating those who lost their lives in the Maraş-centred earthquakes on February 6. He insisted that through struggle and solidarity, the wounds of the survivors would be healed, and fascism would be destroyed.

In a reference to the campaign motto "Time for freedom", Serhat praised the struggle against the Turkish occupation in Kurdistan and noted the Turkish army had to withdraw from a significant part of the Medya Defence Zones in the face of the guerrilla response.

Serhat stated that this spirit of resistance would destroy the AKP-MHP fascism and ensure the freedom of Öcalan.

In separate video messages, KONGRA-GEL Co-Chair Remzi Kartal, MSD (Syrian Democratic Council) Co-Chair Ilham Ehmed, HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) MP Feleknas Uca and PJAK (Kurdistan Free Life Party) Co-Chair Siyabend Muini emphasized the importance of an enhanced struggle against the invasion attacks in Kurdistan and stressed that Öcalan's paradigm would soon ensure freedom in all four parts of Kurdistan.

In a speech on behalf of KJAR (Community of Free Women of East Kurdistan), Sonya Kerimi said that the Kurdish people were closer to freedom than ever before, adding that the Kurdish women's iconic slogan 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi' (Woman, Life, Freedom) has turned into a slogan of freedom all over the world.

The crowd frequently shouted slogans in favour of Öcalan during the event.

Humanitarian organizations Heyva-Sor (Kurdish Red Crescent) and Re-Build drew considerable interest from the crowd. Artists Berhem Şamami, Suna Alan, Diyar and Nasır Rezazi appeared on stage during the event.



Newroz celebration in Bologna

ANF | BOLONGA | 23 MARCH 2023

Hundreds of Italians and Kurds attended the Newroz celebration organized by the Rete Kurdistan Emilia Romagna (Kurdistan Solidarity Network), Ya Basta, LABAS, TPO and Rete Jin Bologna.

Kurdish musician Ashti Abdo gave a concert at the celebration, where a giant banner “Freedom for Öcalan, Biji Newroz” was hung. All proceeds from the celebration were donated to Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê for the earthquake victims.



HPG and YJA Star guerrillas celebrate Newroz in Medya Defense Zones

ANF | BEHDINAN | 24 MARCH 2023

Newroz was celebrated with a ceremony by the guerrillas in the mountains of Kurdistan. In the ceremony held in the Zagros, the guerrillas celebrated the Newroz of Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan, guerrillas, the prisoners and the Kurdish people.

The guerrillas lit a Newroz fire and danced halay around it.

Speaking on the occasion of the celebrations, the guerrillas said that they would not allow the Turkish invaders to pass and reiterated their call to step up the resistance.



General Elections in Turkey

Taşdemir: Next elections are of crucial importance, especially for women

ANF | ANKARA | 19 MARCH 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Agırî MP Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir spoke to ANF about the elections to be held on 14 May.

Taşdemir said that the 2023 elections are of critical importance for the future of the country because, “after this election, Turkey will either evolve into a democracy or into a dictatorship. This will be an even more important election for women. For the last 21 years, the AKP government has been carrying out policies that reject all the gains of women, try to darken the visibility of women in all spheres of life, in public life, in the way they participate in politics and within the family, and try to cancel the subjectivity of women as a whole. There is an AKP government that is quite uncomfortable with the freedom of women, who are subjects in social life and can make decisions in political life.”

Taşdemir added: “The AKP tries to pull women back using either social perception or the law. This regime is a male and misogynistic alliance. This regime must lose in order for women's future, freedom and gains to be protected and able to develop and for women to live in a more democratic country. Women are bound to these elections for their freedom. They are aware that the way to weave a more egalitarian life is for this regime to lose.”

Importance of Law No.6284

Taşdemir also spoke about Law No. 6284, which was brought up for discussion by the People's Alliance [the AKP-MHP alliance], and continued as follows: “Law No. 6284 is a law that protects women against violence. It is a law that imposes responsibilities on states in this sense. It is a law that makes the state responsible in cases of violence against women. This law was on the agenda of the AKP for a long time. The same situation occurred with the Istanbul Convention. The government withdrew overnight from the Convention and women were very severely affected by this decision. Now, 6284, an achievement of the women's movement, has been put up for discussion. But on the way to the elections, there was serious opposition from women. Although there are different voices within the AKP, there is an ideological point of view that removes women completely from the protection of the state and wants to eliminate the responsibility of the state.”

Women pay the bill for the crisis

Taşdemir talked about what women experienced in the region hit by the earthquake and said: “The needs of women in earthquake areas were perceived as unimportant. After the earthquake, we witnessed how, in

times of crisis or disaster, all responsibility is left on women's shoulders. Women who lost their families or relatives had to carry out tasks that were the responsibility of the state to hold on to life. The state left women alone as if it was their job to do. They were left to provide for laundry as well as cooking, child care and dealing with the psychology of the family, to keep social relations alive. The disaster in the earthquake regions turned into a major crisis and women paid the heaviest bill because of the neglect of the state.”

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Iraq to hold provincial elections on November 6

ANF | 20 MARCH 2023

The provincial assemblies in Iraq were dissolved in 2019 following the anti-government protests.

According to a written statement released by the Iraqi Parliament, the provincial elections will be held on November 6, 2023.

The elections concern 15 provinces out of 18 in the country. There will be no elections in three provinces in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

In federal Iraq, provincial assemblies have relatively significant authority. They can allocate budgets for the health, transport or education sectors.

The elections on November 6 will be the first provincial elections since 2013. The candidate list of Shiite Nuri al-Maliki won the elections in 2013.

The next elections were supposed to take place in 2018 but were postponed. A year later, when a massive social movement swept through Iraq, the provincial assemblies were dissolved. The opposition and a significant part of the public regard the provincial assemblies as a hotbed of corruption.

Alaa al-Rikabi, an independent deputy who took part in the protest movement in 2019, told French news agency AFP that the provincial assemblies established by the 2005 Constitution after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime “led to massive corruption”. He added that: “We do not accept their re-establishment.”

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Kılıçdarođlu meets HDP co-chairs in Ankara

ANF | ANKARA | 20 MARCH 2023

CHP (Republican People's Party) leader Kemal Kılıçdarođlu met with HDP co-chairs Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar as the presidential candidate of the Nation Alliance. Kılıçdarođlu was accompanied by CHP parliamentary group vice-chair Özgür Özel, CHP General Secretary Selin Sayek Böke and CHP vice-chair Ođuz Kaan Salıcı during the visit to the HDP parliamentary group in Ankara on Monday. The CHP delegation was received by HDP co-chairs Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar, Party Spokeswoman Ebru Günay and HDP Group Deputy Chair Saruhan Oluç.

“All problems including the Kurdish question must be solved in parliament”

Following the meeting, Kılıçdarođlu, Buldan and Sancar held a press conference in the HDP's parliamentary party hall. Kılıçdarođlu, who was chosen as the joint presidential candidate of the CHP, IYI party and four other parties on 6 March after previous differences within the Nation Alliance known as the “Table of Six”, stated the following at the press conference:

“We conveyed our document on constitutional amendments, the strengthened parliamentary system and our common consensus text. We also discussed and brought up many of Turkey's problems. There must be an independent and impartial judiciary. There must be the rule of law. The imbalance in income distribution must be eliminated and the social state must be implemented with vigour. The protection of fundamental rights and freedoms was also expressed as a common demand. Fundamental rights and freedoms must be protected and sensitivity to the environment and climate change was on our agenda. There is environmental and climate change and serious preparations are needed. The fact that Turkey does not put this issue on the agenda while the world is making preparations means that the state is unprepared, especially in case of natural disasters.

Local administrations were highlighted, and we expressed to the honourable leaders [of the HDP] that we never thought it was right to continue the practice of trusteeship [state-forced administration of municipalities and other institutions]. In our joint consensus text, we stated that there should be no trusteeship and that those who come through elections go through elections. That is the basic rule of democracy. If you mortgage democracy, if you say, ‘I will not accept your votes, I will bring someone I want here, someone who will be appointed’, that is not correct practice. If we defend democracy, we must defend it at all costs. Defending democracy means defending human rights, equal rights for women and men, the environment and the climate, and expressing the will to take all possible measures to repair the damage that will be done. It was also stated that democracy is one of our indispensable conditions.

“Politics must no longer be a theatre of struggles”

The way for free politics must be paved and politics must no longer be a theatre of struggles. Is this country not tired of fighting? Tonight, on certain TV channels, there will again be a lot of writing and designating. Are you not tired of fighting? Why do we fight while we can embrace each other, while we can come together and discuss like civilised people? For what reasons do we fight? Why do we polarise society. Why do we divide it? We stand for unity and solidarity, we are ready to act together for the development and

growth of this country and to solve all existing problems. Politics should not create problems, it should solve existing problems. When politics creates problems, it has a negative impact on development, growth, human rights and gender equality. We are in the 21st century and we are still looking for ways to close down a party. This is not right. It is not right to close down a party so that its votes come to me. We all know and see that dissolved parties are back on the political scene under different names and people support them. There are provisions in the common consensus text on the closure of parties and this must be made more difficult. The parliament must take a decision first. There are regulations on this issue. I have spoken to the chairpersons on this issue. Violence against women must end. Society has a sensitivity to this issue and this sensitivity must be felt in the spirit of the political institution. If you promote violence against women at one level or another, it is not right. Violence against women must end and the political institution must take a clear and open stance on this issue.

All disadvantaged groups must do their part and the political institution must do its part. Ignoring disadvantaged groups and depriving them of their rights does not fit Turkey in the 21st century. The rights of all disadvantaged groups must be recognised and the way must be opened for them to live in all spheres of life in cities and villages. The judiciary must not be used as a cudgel. We never accept the politicisation of the judiciary by political power and the use of the judiciary as a cudgel for politics. According to Article 138 of the Constitution, judges decide according to the rule of law and their convictions of conscience. This is what we expect from judges. We expect them to resist the pressure of political power. Once this happens, we can build a true democracy.

We also discussed the earthquake. It was stated by the chairpersons that an urgent programme is needed to repair the aftermath of the earthquake. We also share this opinion. It is absolutely necessary to make a special planning for this region. During my visit to the earthquake area, I made an appeal to the government, and I would like to make the same appeal here. There is an urgent need to start a rehabilitation programme.

“No problem is unsolvable”

The address for the solution to all problems, including the Kurdish question, is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. I repeat once again that the address for the solution to all problems, including the Kurdish question, is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The existence of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey stems from the fact that it is a parliament that solves problems. Since its foundation, the most fundamental problems of Turkey have been solved in the Grand National Assembly. We are ready to solve all existing problems together with the parliamentarians who were elected by the people who trusted in their common sense and brought them here, and we will solve them. You will see that no problem is unsolvable. The address for solving any problem is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. All problems can be solved with the will of the people.

In our declaration addressing the second century, we clearly emphasised that the address for the solution to the Kurdish question is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and all these resolutions were unanimously adopted at our general assembly. We defend democracy, we defend human rights, we believe that no one should be excluded. We defend equality between women and men. From the environment to the climate, from human rights to democracy, from the independence of the judiciary to the enforcement of the rights of disadvantaged groups to equality between women and men: we must bring democracy to this country. There is no middle ground, no struggle. We will discuss freely; we will discuss together. If we can-

not agree on everything, we will talk again and again. There are respected people in this country from academia, civil society and opinion leaders in every city. Politics is not an institution on its own, it draws its strength from society, opinion leaders and academics. With this support, we can solve all existing problems. There is no problem without a solution.

“We will stop the fight”

This visit is obviously of great importance to you. All the cameras are here, with their advantages and disadvantages. I ask especially the representatives of the press to refrain from language that divides society. Avoid a language that polarises society. The media also have a responsibility. The media should know and take this responsibility. Why this fight while we can join hands and embrace, while we can share our painful days, while we can rejoice in our joyful days. We will stop the fight. As a candidate for the 13th President, I will end the fight in this country. I promise. I promise my nation that a human being, regardless of identity, faith or lifestyle, is a human being and has a superior place for me.

“We will respect all languages”

What I see is bitter. You see, another painful incident: It is discussed at the lectern in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. In English, it is written in brackets: This word is in English. The same goes for French, etc. Everything is written. If a sentence in the text of the speech is in Kurdish, it is written as an unknown language. For God’s sake, I appeal to the conscience of the people in this country. TRT has a channel called TRT Kurdî. How can you write here that it is an unknown language? An unknown language. How can you call a language that has been spoken for thousands of years an unknown language? Now I ask all those who have a conscience and morals: A double standard does not suit the state, it is not right. You will respect everyone’s language. Yes, our official language is Turkish, nobody says anything anyway. But as a state, you can’t have double standards. If you apply double standards, you discriminate against our citizens.

“We will make an ethical democratic start”

This means that you are playing one group of people against another group of people. This is a game that the imperial powers are playing against Turkey, and we will save Turkey from this game. Everyone will feel comfortable in this country, you will not see anyone as an enemy, you will not exclude anyone. You will respect everyone’s faith, identity and lifestyle. We will make a new beginning. An ethical, democratic beginning. We will make a beginning that is inclusive of all. A society that is free of fighting. The society will focus on how to grow, how to develop, how to solve unemployment, how to remove the imbalance between regions. There are problems in the earthquake area. Thousands, millions of people living in the earthquake area have problems. How will we solve these problems? That is what society should focus on. It should not focus on vicious debates. The members of the press have a big task here. Have I spoken a little too long, dear Chairpersons? Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. In the presence of all of you, I would like to thank the esteemed Chairpersons for receiving us so kindly.”

Buldan: Society expects the solution of problems

HDP Chairperson Pervin Buldan thanked those present for their interest and said that about an hour was spent discussing with the CHP delegation the issues raised by Kılıçdaroğlu and the fundamental problems

of Turkey: “Starting from these fundamental problems, we talked about the expectations of society and people in Turkey towards us. In the spirit of these expectations, I would like to thank the Chairman once again for the information he has given us. The reason why we received him here today was to show that we are in favour of a democratic solution to the Kurdish question under the parliamentary umbrella of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. That is why we wanted to receive him and his delegation in the Parliament. But we also talked about the society’s expectations of us regarding the solution to all the problems of Turkey, especially the Kurdish question, and what will happen after the elections. We thank the Chairman and his delegation once again for coming.”

Sancar: We will evaluate the content of the meeting

HDP Co-chair Mithat Sancar stated: “Many issues were discussed during our meeting and Mr Kılıçdaroğlu has just presented them to you in a summary. Turkey is in a deep crisis. The earthquake has once again revealed with great pain the picture of destruction in which we find ourselves. It was the earthquake that brought us to a new stage, if only because it came with so much pain on the agenda. But it is not possible to do politics and work if you ignore this pain. We had a constructive meeting, and my party believes that Turkey needs an urgent programme to rebuild the social sectors and structures that were severely damaged by the earthquake. There is an urgent need for a reconstruction programme and a new beginning. A new beginning will only be possible if a life and a system based on democracy, human rights, justice and freedom are created. We exchanged our views on these issues. The reason why we held this meeting in Parliament is to emphasise that we see the Grand National Assembly as the address of the solution. As Mr. Chairman pointed out, all of Turkey’s problems can be solved here with a broad social consensus. Moreover, we will evaluate the content of this meeting with our allies, who will take the issues discussed to our bodies, and we will make a more detailed statement to the press and the public in the near future. We thank you all.”

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Constitutional Court rejects HDP's application demanding postponement of closure case

ANF | ANKARA | 22 MARCH 2023

The Constitutional Court (AYM) rejected the HDP’s application for the closure case to be postponed until after the election. In its application made on 15 March, the HDP stated that it was not possible to make an oral defense due to the earthquakes and demanded that the case be postponed due to its effects on the elections.

HDP Deputy Chairman of the Legal Commission, Serhat Eren, stated that they will evaluate the decision taken by the Constitutional Court at the party’s Central Executive Board (MYK), and that they will announce their stance on the oral defense and the case publically.

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Labour and Freedom Alliance will not nominate a presidential candidate

ANF | ANKARA | 22 MARCH 2023

The Labour and Freedom Alliance announced its position on the presidential elections on 14 May at a press conference at the World Trade Centre in Ankara on Wednesday. According to the statement, the alliance, which was founded in Turkey last September and includes the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the Social Freedom Party (TÖP), the Labour Movement Party (EHP), the Federation of Socialist Councils (SMF), the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) and the Labour Party (EMEP), will not put forward a candidate of its own.

In addition to the representatives of the alliance, the press conference was also attended by representatives of the parties from the working group for a Kurdish alliance, of which the HDP is also a member. The joint decision on the presidential elections was explained by HDP Co-Chair Pervin Buldan in a declaration, which included the following:

“In less than two months, one of the most critical elections in Turkey's history will take place. We are at a historic moment that will decide the future of the country and society. On the threshold of the second century of the republic, the 13th president of the country will be elected, and the parliament will be re-constituted.

The economic and social policies implemented by the AKP government in the last twenty-one years have caused great destruction in all spheres of life. The freedom-restricting measures based on oppression and illegitimacy know no bounds. The multiple problems, the lack of solutions and the severe depression we are experiencing are getting worse day by day. The AKP/MHP government has stolen the present from society and is threatening its future.

This political power, which has descended on the country like a nightmare, has extended one-man rule to every inch of the country by using all kinds of ruling practices. The presidential system of government takes the breath away from the people of Turkey.

What Turkey needs most is a genuine and strong democracy based on the sovereignty of the people. We want an order in which universal rights and freedoms are recognised and constitutionally guaranteed, in which democratic principles of law prevail and social and economic rights are brought to life. This goal cannot be achieved without a strong local democracy in which local participation mechanisms function.

As a country and society, we will wake up with hope on the morning of 15 May. The days when the forces that will bring about a democratic change will win the majority in the parliament, when the parliament will be seen as an essential will for a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question, when all parties can have a free discussion on the axis of a transparent dialogue and when the citizens will build a future of equality, freedom and peace are the longing and demand of all people with a conscience.

The Labour and Freedom Alliance is the mouthpiece for the demands of the labourers and all the oppressed. It is the force of democratic change and the will to build. It is the sole representative and guarantor of the rights of our peoples. It is the address of the struggle against the overexploitation of nature. It is the guarantee of the free life of young people. It is the key for Turkey's future and democratisation.

As the Labour and Freedom Alliance, we will build a free life for women. We will never allow women to be ignored. We are the guarantor of a future where women will be equal and free in all spheres of life. We are committed to ensuring that women are represented in politics according to the principle of equality. Our alliance will reinstate the Istanbul Convention and fight with all its might to guarantee all women's achievements constitutionally.

And we are determined, with our decades of struggle, experience and wisdom, to reach the days when the democratic sovereignty of the peoples of Turkey will be established.

The way to democratise Turkey is for those who insist on labour, justice and peace and will bring about democratic change and transformation, namely us, to gain significant power in parliament. We are the real alternative for our people who are meant to be constricted between the one-man system and restoration.

In the presidential elections, we will exercise our historical responsibility against one-man rule. For the realisation of democracy, fundamental rights and freedoms and social justice in the country, we are determined to hold accountable those responsible for the great destruction and the government that has perpetuated a rule based on poverty, corruption, plunder and profit.

For these reasons, we are announcing to the public that we will not be fielding a candidate in the presidential elections. Our urgent goal and reason for struggle is to create a political climate in which people's working and living conditions are improved, justice in public administration, gender equality, respect for nature, a free life for young people, a peaceful foreign policy, an impartial and independent judiciary and liberated identities exist and, above all, a democratic constitution that includes all this.

Turkey does not need confrontation but reconciliation through the application of common sense; it needs to find lasting, realistic and inclusive solutions to our social and political problems. Those who polarise society, create tensions, foment unrest by creating internal and external enemies, and ignore the demands and aspirations of millions of citizens have no chance of winning.

The path to a common future and to the building of a political democracy leads through common struggle and common hope, through courageous steps for a new life, and through the determined defence and implementation of policies that meet the desires and needs of society. May this path be free and easy for all of us.”

Co-Chair of German SPD party visits HDP in Ankara

ANF | ANKARA | 22 MARCH 2023

German SPD Co-Chair Lars Klingbeil met HDP Co-Chair Mithat Sancar at the HDP headquarters in Ankara on Wednesday. Co-chairs of the two parties held a joint press conference after the meeting.

Klingbeil said: “As the co-chairman of the SPD, I state very clearly that we will monitor the process in the coming days and weeks. We see the fact that the deputies of the HDP and other parties are facing a crack-down, and that the immunities of HDP deputies may be lifted. It is unacceptable how mayors elected by popular vote are dismissed and put in prison. We have announced that we would closely monitor what is happening in Turkey and express our political views. It is not possible to abolish the rule of law.”

Speaking after, Sancar said: “Turkey is going through a very critical process. We have elections ahead of us. The government is responsible for the destruction caused by the earthquakes. The solidarity of the democratic forces is very important.”

When asked about the freedom of the press, Sancar replied: “After May 14, this government will go, and the press will be free.”

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HDP to run in elections under the umbrella of the Green Left Party

ANF | ISTANBUL | 24 MARCH 2023

The Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) will contest Turkey’s parliamentary elections on 14 May under the umbrella of the Green Left Party (Yeşil Sol Parti, YSP). This was announced by HDP co-chair Mithat Sancar at a meeting of his party’s advisory committee in Istanbul on Thursday.

The HDP has been subject to banning proceedings before the Turkish Constitutional Court for two years. The party’s request for a stay of proceedings until after the elections has been rejected. The YSP, founded in 2010, has been building party structures throughout the country in recent months in order to be admitted to the elections. The Labour and Freedom Alliance, which in addition to the HDP includes the Social Freedom Party (TÖP), Labour Movement Party (EHP), Federation of Socialist Councils (SMF), Workers’ Party of Turkey (TİP) and Labour Party (EMEP), declared on Wednesday that it would not field its own candidate for the presidential elections.

Against the corruption and cruelty of the existing order

Mithat Sancar explained that the alliance has revised its earlier decision of running its own presidential candidate due to the 6 February earthquake disaster: “We had announced that we would reconsider our

policy of nominating a candidate for the presidential elections. Previously, our efforts to field candidates had entered the final stages, but the earthquake not only split the ground, but the order above it also came crashing down on the people with all its weight. All the rot, corruption and cruelty of this order has inflicted heavy losses on the people. Our losses are so great that we do not even know their number. According to official figures, it is said to be about 50,000 dead, but all who have seen the destruction know that it is much more. Our pain is great, our sorrow is deep. The destruction caused by the earthquake has also shown us how heavy and serious the responsibility is to change this order. As a result of the discussions we have had, the meetings we have had in our caucuses and the consultations we have had with various circles, we have decided not to field a candidate in the presidential election together with our alliance forces.”

Running for election as HDP poses serious risks

It is now necessary to further elaborate and strengthen the roadmap for the parliamentary elections, said the HDP co-chair, adding: “The Constitutional Court has rejected our request to postpone the date for the oral defence. In this case that has been pending for 24 months, the Constitutional Court has decided that it cannot wait another month. We know very well what this decision means. We see it as a continuation of the decision to hang the sword of Damocles over our heads during the elections. Now the ball is in the Constitutional Court’s court, or more precisely, in the government’s court. In other words, from now on, the fate of the case is left to the government. We are aware that we do not have the right to leave the future of this country and the hope for democratic change to the government. There is a broad consensus that we should not do that. For this reason, we have come to the conclusion that there are serious risks in contesting elections as the HDP and have decided to contest elections under the umbrella of the Green Left Party.”



Interview

Economist Müftüoğlu: There is a need for an alternative economic program

RONI ARAM | ISTANBUL | 24 MARCH 2023

Economist Özgür Müftüoğlu remarked that the Labour and Freedom Alliance should provide a paradigm that will guide the government, carry the struggle of the working class further, and express the demands of the workers and the poor. Müftüoğlu emphasized the importance of an economic plan which questions the system.

Özgür Müftüoğlu, a Labour Economics expert and economics writer, was interviewed by ANF.

Turkey's economy has been in a crisis for a long time. How did the recent earthquakes aggravate the crisis?

It is necessary to see not the earthquake itself, but its economic, humanitarian and social repercussions as a result of the economic policies that the government has pursued so far. We have seen that the economic choices, for example, that concerned the Covid-19 pandemic, did not favour people's health. Moreover, following the earthquake, we have seen that building inspection did not respect the human factor. Resources were transferred to armament expenditures and to the capital, which allowed companies and banks to make huge profits. The result of the economic choices was revealed by the earthquakes. We could not realize it properly during the pandemic, but the earthquakes made it much more visible. At the same time, it has shown the incompetence of the government. The earthquakes showed that the government could not even meet the basic needs of the people, since it was not prepared for such disasters. Because the resources had already gone elsewhere. Now something more alarming has emerged.

It is claimed that the earthquakes caused 103 billion dollars, namely 2 trillion Turkish liras in damage. The earthquake will have a negative impact on agricultural and industrial production in the region. It seems that this will further trigger price increases. After all, there was serious agricultural production in this region. The current account deficit is well known, exports have decreased. Imports have increased tremendously. In the past, there was an improvement in the opposite direction. For instance, while export prices stood at 63 percent in January 2002, it stood at 57.6 percent in January 2023. These figures were reported before the earthquakes. So, all economic data point to a negative outlook.

How will the economy recover in the next period?

The government has introduced huge construction projects considering the election period, of course. As was the case before, the government put forward a resource transfer mechanism in favour of its cronies without paying attention to human life and disaster relief. Because of this situation, unfortunately, similar disasters will appear again in the future.

There are two aspects. On the one hand, the political situation is already known. The tenders were given quickly and the government, which could not even provide tents for 40 days, claims that it will build new houses for the survivors in a year. On the other hand, there is the opposition Nation Alliance as a serious alternative to the government. This alliance is talking about key issues, but what kind of program will be followed economically? This is not very clear. There is a financing problem to cover the loss. Who will pay for this? We are already facing a major economic crisis. We were dealing with it before the earthquake. Now, the earthquake loss has been added to this.

What are the options?

There aren't many options available. Either the government will impose the burden on large sections of society with indirect taxes and so on at the expense of further impoverishment of the workers, or it will offer a second option. It should not be forgotten that the current economic program favours cronies which have made incredible profits in all these processes, even during the pandemic. Shall we put the burden on cronies? That's the real question. When we look at the situation, the choice of the AKP and MHP government is obvious. The government is preparing to put the burden on the people. I think that the Nation Alliance does not have a very different option here.

Why is it so?

This is so because of the relevant discourses of Bilge Yılmaz, one of the economists of the İYİ Party, as well as of Ali Babacan and the CHP. It shows that the economic choices of the opposition will not be much different from those of the government. They will be a continuation of the policies pursued by the ruling AKP so far. In the meantime, everyone seems to have forgotten Mehmet Şimşek's ministry, his program and its social consequences. Şimşek is portrayed as a wunderkind of economy. Unfortunately, there is an opposition that praises the economic program that Babacan, Mehmet Şimşek and the AKP have been implementing for the last 20 years.

There is no alternative to the economic program that exacerbated the pandemic, the earthquakes and the flood. Currently, we have an economic policy that cannot provide for the shelter and health care needs of society and security of life. How will this change? Will the opposition's program really resolve the problems? I think that this point is important.

What needs to be done, what kind of plan should be adopted as the elections are looming?

I don't know if a new program will replace the old one, but as I said, there is great uncertainty about the economic program that will be implemented no matter which alliance wins the elections. There is no program put forward to prevent the working classes and the poor from getting poorer. For instance, the Labour and Freedom Alliance did not clearly reveal its policies in this sense either. Of course, it suggested a program, but it did not come up with anything that would give confidence. It is very likely that the Labour and Freedom Alliance will not come to power following the elections. However, they will be the ones who will put the most serious pressure on those who will come to power. In this sense, the Labour and Freedom Alliance should provide a paradigm that will guide the government, carry the struggle of the working class further, and express the demands of the workers and the poor. An economic plan that has no problems with the system would not work.

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Opinion

Bayık: The Lausanne alliance must be broken

ANF | QANDIL | 21 MARCH 2023

The KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council Co-Chair Bayık sent a message to the Newroz celebration in the Qandil region of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

Pointing to the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, Bayık emphasized that this agreement must be broken.

Bayık's message is as follows:

Öcalan founded the PKK in 1973's Newroz

“Öcalan laid the foundations of the PKK in the 1973 Newroz. He shaped the party and the people of Newroz with the spirit of Newroz. I congratulate Öcalan, our people, all parties in Kurdistan, our people in Europe and abroad, our friends, the people of the Middle East, the comrades in prisons, the comrades in the mountains, all YPG, YJA Star militants and activists on Newroz.

I commemorate our national leader Mazlum Doğan and Mahsum Korkmaz, as well as Zekiye, Raşan, Berivan and all martyrs in the persons of comrades Raperin and Yaşar Botan, who were martyred recently.

We welcome Newroz this year with pain and sadness

We welcome Newroz this year with great sadness and pain due to the earthquake. I offer condolences to our people. Our pain is great. We, the PKK and Kurdish people, always use our pain as a force for resistance, organization and struggle. Our people showed great support and helped the survivors. This is very valuable. Socialist and democratic people, young women friends made significant efforts in the aftermath of the earthquake. They shared all they had with the people. I believe that women and young people in particular will assume their role and leadership on Newroz.

No one should abandon their houses and lands

Taking advantage of the recent earthquakes, the invading and genocidal Turkish state seeks to reintroduce the Eastern Reform plans in the affected regions. Everyone knows, sees and talks about it. Maybe our people migrated to other places for some reason. But the weather conditions are good now, so everyone should get back to their places. No one should leave their houses, villages and lands. Following the earthquake, we announced a humanitarian, moral and conscientious decision to mobilize everyone to help the survivors. We said that we would cease our actions. Why? Because all the people took care of the earthquake survivors, they offered help to meet their needs. We wanted them to use all their energy for this. That's why we made this decision. It was a humane, moral and conscientious decision. Some forces and parties had asked us to declare a ceasefire before. We made this decision at that time, but those who had asked us to do so did not embrace it. The Turkish state increased its attacks. These attacks still continue. The invading genocidal Turkish state invalidated our decision, our people need to know this fact.

The upcoming elections will shape the future

As is known, elections will be held in Kurdistan and Turkey on May 14. This is not an ordinary election. It is an election that will shape the future of Turkey, leftist forces, freedom and democracy, and the Kurdish people. Either fascism will dominate Turkey completely, which would lead to a disaster for the Middle East, or this election will pave the way for a democratic republic. Hence, AKP-MHP must be defeated in this election. In order for this to happen, all forces of freedom and democracy must make great efforts. The Labour and Freedom Alliance is becoming the key to determining Turkey's future. The role of this alliance is crucial, everyone is talking about it. Therefore, the alliance must play its role effectively. Because everyone expects it. The AKP-MHP fascism will use all means available to remain in power and resume

the Kurdish genocide. It will increase its attacks, repression and provocations until the elections. We must act against it. We will never take a step back. We will base on resistance.

The treaty of Lausanne must be eliminated

We are about to mark the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne. The Kurdish massacre has been carried out through this treaty so far. Now, our people must break this policy and alliance and pave the way for a free and dignified life for themselves. This should be accepted by everyone. Our people must express that they want to live freely on their own lands. We do not accept anything else. Everyone should recognize this. Let's remove the Lausanne alliance. This is what is required of us. We are in the final phase. Everyone should understand this and aim for victory. The AKP-MHP alliance must be overthrown in order for the way to be paved for a democratic republic in Turkey.

The guerrillas are currently making history in the mountains of Kurdistan. The guerrillas have not allowed the invading genocidal Turkish state to achieve its goals. The guerrillas have defeated the Turkish state. It wasn't just the guerrillas who resisted it. Öcalan, our people and the guerrillas united against the occupation, frustrating their plans for the elimination and genocide of the Kurdish people.

We did not allow occupation

The guerrillas did not allow the genocidal Turkish state to completely occupy South Kurdistan, nor did it allow Turkey to realize its National Pact objective. Just like the guerrillas and Öcalan, our people should enhance the resistance everywhere. Our people should turn the Newroz area into an area of resistance and victory. Everyone would argue that nothing could be done under the most difficult conditions in Amed prison. However, a great victory was won under the leadership of Mazlum and Kemal. They dealt a major blow to the Turkish state. We have come to these days thanks to that resistance and spirit. Both our movement and our people have resisted in this spirit and won great victories under all circumstances. Our people have never accepted a life without dignity, identity and status. They will never accept it. Everyone should understand this. That's how 50 years of resistance has developed. We must strengthen our national unity. All betrayals against the Kurds must be condemned and opposed. The spirit of Newroz never accepts spying and betrayal. Spying and betrayal should not be accepted among the Kurds.

This year will be the year of Öcalan's freedom

We do not accept a life without Öcalan, and our people have long been expressing this. We will make this year the year of physical freedom of Öcalan. Long live Öcalan, long live the spirit of Newroz. Long live our fight for freedom and humanity.”

Newroz, a story of resistance against tyranny

ANF | 21 MARCH 2023

To this day, on Spring Equinox, March 21st, Kurdish, Persian, Afghan and other peoples of the Middle East celebrate Newroz or New Day and Kawa the Blacksmith.

The legend has it that on 21 March, millennia ago, a Kurdish iron-smith named Kawa led a successful rebellion against a cruel Assyrian king named Dehak, who terrorized all the people of Mesopotamia, the land between the Euphrates and Tigris.

Dehak had been possessed by Ahriman the Evil who wanted to seize control of the kingdom and did it through Dehak.

The king had been possessed by two snakes passed on to him by Ahriman who also told the king that the only way to alleviate the terrible pain he would feel, would be by feeding the snakes with the brains of young boys and girls.

From that dark day onwards two children were chosen from the towns and villages that lay below the castle.

Below the king's castle, a blacksmith who made iron shoes for the famous wild horses of Mesopotamia and pots and pans for the people of the town. His name was Kawa. He and his wife were weakened by grief and hated Dehak as he had already taken 16 of their 17 children.

One day the order came from the castle that Kawa's last daughter was to be killed and her brain was to be brought to the castle gate the very next day. Kawa lay all night on the roof of his house, under the bright stars and rays of the shining full moon thinking how to save his last daughter from Dehak's snakes. As a shooting star curved through the night sky he had an idea. The next morning he rode on the bare back of his horse, slowly pulling the heavy iron cart with two metal buckets rattling on the back. The cart climbed up the steep cobbled road and arrived outside the castle. He nervously emptied the contents of the metal buckets into the large wooden bucket outside the enormous castle gates. As he turned to leave he heard the gates unbolt, shudder and slowly started to creak open.

He took one last look and hurried away. The wooden bucket was then slowly lifted by two guards and taken into the castle. The brains were fed to the two hungry giant snakes that grew from Dehak's shoulders. When Kawa got home he found his wife kneeling in front of a roaring log fire. He knelt down and gently lifted her large velvet cloak. There, under the cloak, was their daughter. Kawa swept back her long thick black hair from her face and kissed her warm cheek. Instead of sacrificing his own daughter, Kawa had sacrificed a sheep and had put the sheep's brain into the wooden bucket. And no one had noticed. Soon all the townspeople heard of this. So when Dehak demanded from them a child sacrifice, they all did the same. Like this, many hundreds of children were saved. Then all the saved children went, under darkness, to the very furthest and highest mountains where no one would find them. Here, high up in the safety of the Zagros Mountains, the children grew in freedom.

They learnt how to survive on their own. They learnt how to ride wild horses, how to hunt, fish, sing and dance. From Kawa they learnt how to fight. One day, soon they would return to their homeland and save their people from the tyrant king. Time went by and Kawa's army was ready to begin their march on the castle. On the way they passed through villages and hamlets. The village dogs barked and the people came out of their houses to cheer them and give them bread, water, yogurt and olives. As Kawa and the children drew near Dehak's castle both men and women left their fields to join them. By the time they were approaching the castle Kawa's army had grown to many thousands. They paused outside the castle and turned to Kawa. Kawa stood on a rock. He wore his blacksmith's leather apron and clenched his hammer in his hand. He turned and faced the castle and raised his hammer towards the castle gates. The large crowd surged forwards and smashed down the castle gates that were shaped like winged warriors and quickly overpowered Dehak's men.

Kawa raced straight to Dehak's chambers, down the winding stone stairs, and with his blacksmith's hammer killed the evil snake king and cut off his head. The two serpents withered. He then climbed to the top of the mountain above the castle and lit a large bonfire to tell all the people of Mesopotamia that they were free. Soon, hundreds of fires all over the land were lit to spread the message and the flames leapt high into the night sky, lighting it up and cleansing the air of the smell of Dehak and his evil deeds. The darkness was gone. With the light of dawn, the sun came from behind the dark clouds and warmed the mountainous land once more. The flowers slowly began to open and the buds on the fig trees burst into bloom.



Who Are We?

The International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan” was founded in March 1999, a month after Öcalan's abduction from Kenya and his imprisonment by Turkey. Since its initial foundation, the International Initiative struggled for Abdullah Öcalan's release from prison so that he can play his rightful role in the establishment of a just peace between the Turkish state and Kurdistan's Workers Party (PKK). The International Initiative also aimed at contributing to the repairing of the ties between the Kurdish and Turkish peoples, as well as all other peoples of the Middle Eastern regions.

In order to achieve its aims, the International Initiative followed several related paths. Influencing international and national audiences through international campaigns to interfere with Turkish state's policies towards Abdullah Öcalan has been one of these paths. A second area of work the International Initiative committed itself is the dissemination of Öcalan's views through art, publications and conferences. Finally, the International Initiative has also been active in raising awareness for Öcalan's conditions and the human

rights violations he faces through reports, fact-finding delegations and lobbying.

Campaigns

The International Initiative organizes signature campaigns to influence the policies towards Öcalan. One such campaign which was launched in 2012 by one thousand preliminary signatories including Gerry Adams, Prof. Antonio Negri, Prof. Immanuel Wallerstein, Prof. Achin Vanaik, and other intellectuals, politicians, MPs, and NGOs from South America, Europe, Asia, Russia, and the Middle East. The campaign reached 10,328,623 signatures and may be the biggest signature campaign for the freedom of a political prisoner that the world has ever seen. It significantly challenged the isolation that was enforced on Öcalan and possibly paved the ways for the peace talks that the Turkish state and Öcalan led between 2013 and 2015.

The International Initiative also organizes video campaigns that educate the public on Öcalan's life-story, his prison conditions and the demands for his freedom.

Publications

The International Initiative translates, edits and publishes books written by Öcalan in different languages including in English, German, French, Spanish and Arabic.

It compiles brochures from his works on specific topics, such as democratic confederalism or women's freedom.

It edits books on Öcalan that discuss his main ideas.

The International Initiative also publishes regular reports on Öcalan's prison conditions and his isolation.

Conferences

The International Initiative organizes biannual conferences and invites scholars, activists, students and politicians to discuss Öcalan's ideas in order to initiate a conversation between different Movements around the world.

Delegations

Every year on February 15th, which is the date of the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan, the International Initiative organizes a group of internationally acclaimed people to take a

trip to Turkey for a fact finding mission and publicizes their findings.

Lobbying

The International Initiative lobbies in the European Council, CPT and other international organizations against the human rights violations against Abdullah Öcalan and his total isolation in İmralı prison.

Art for Öcalan

This campaign aims to express the relationship between Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish people, freedom and women's freedom and to educate the wider public on the past and present of the Kurdish people. The International Initiative has already collected art from Brazil, South Africa, USA, South America, Italy, Germany as well as Kurds from different parts of Kurdistan. These works have been printed in postcards, t-shirts and canvas and made available for solidarity sale.

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