

THE İMRALI POST

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

Issue № 35 / 30 January 2023 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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Conference Invitation

New YouTube channel ahead of IV Challenging Capitalist
Modernity Conference in Hamburg

ANF | HAMBURG | 23 JANUARY 2023

The Network for an Alternative Quest launched a new [YouTube channel](#) ahead of the IV Challenging Capitalist Modernity Conference to be held in Hamburg in April.

The new channel offers videos from the previous three conferences as well as other materials.

The preparation for this year's fourth conference is underway. The conference will be called: "We Want Our World Back – Resist, Reclaim and Rebuild" and will be held between 7 and 9 April in Hamburg, Germany.

Youtube-channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfvAXN4TnvIRL_dUQXiQJ3g

Register at registration@networkaq.net

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Conference Invitation

Dear Friends,

You may have participated in one of our past three conferences: "Challenging Capitalist Modernity I: Alternative Concepts and the Kurdish Case," in 2012; "Challenging Capitalist Modernity II: Dissect-

ing Capitalist Modernity — Building Democratic Confederalism,” in 2015; or “Challenging Capitalist Modernity III: Uncovering Democratic Modernity — Resistance, Rebellion and Building the New,” in 2017. For three days, hundreds of students, intellectuals, activists, and movements came together and discussed not only the things they were critical of or the existing obstacles, but also how these obstacles can be overcome and what alternatives these criticisms give rise to. Many ideas from around the world and from the Kurdish freedom movement, and in particular its key thinker, Abdullah Öcalan, came together to strengthen our collective understanding and practice.

In 2019, we were in dialogue and discussion with many people around the world to determine what the fourth conference should discuss. However, due to Covid 19, we had to postpone this conference. Now, we are excited to announce that we will convene under the name “Challenging Capitalist Modernity IV: We want our world back — Resist, Reclaim and Rebuild.” The fourth conference will take place on the 2023 Easter weekend, April 7–9, in Hamburg/Germany.

However, due to Covid 19, we had to postpone this conference, but we are now very happy to announce that the fourth conference will take place on the 2023 Easter weekend, April 7-9, in Hamburg/Germany.

At this fourth conference, we will continue to focus on the critique of capitalist modernity, but our discussions have shown us that it is more important than ever to discuss alternatives, organize and educate ourselves. Thus, the main theme of this year’s conference will focus on rebuilding: Arts, Education, and building Democratic Confederalism.

As with each conference; we would like to give substantial time to possible solutions and alternatives. This year we will continue with the traditions of “Call for Papers” and “Call for Workshops”. There will be a call for both on the website. There will also be a call for interpreters, as the conference will once again be multilingual. Please check the website for updated information.

The past three conferences not only brought together leading intellectuals but also gave young activists, students, and scholars a chance to present their ideas. In this fourth conference, we want to once again build bridges between different communities and movements in Kurdistan and worldwide.

Technical Information

Date: 7–9 April 2023

Place: University of Hamburg, Audimax.

Translation: Simultaneous in Kurdish, English, German, Turkish; possibly Italian, Spanish and/or French.

Food: Lunch is 3€ for registered participants; tea, coffee, and water will also be available.

Livestream: The entire conference will be streamed in several languages.

Cultural activities: There will be cultural activities on Saturday evening.

Accommodation: Sleeping in private homes at no extra cost between April 6–10, 2023

Registration open: Registration is now open; register early to secure a place. Registration cost 20 € for students/unemployed and 30€ for others requested to defray the expenses of the conference

Registration: Please register at registration@networkaq.net, and tell us if you need accommodation. This is required for smoother registration on the day and to secure an accommodation.



Call for Papers

Dear friends,

On behalf of the Network for an Alternative Quest, we invite you to contribute to our fourth conference, which will be held between 7–9 April 2023, in Hamburg.

The Network for an Alternative Quest was formed to build bridges between the Kurds and different and alternative movements and thoughts in a context as a response to the need of discussing the Kurdish Freedom Movement (KFM) and its relations to other movements and emerging struggles around the world. For this purpose we started organizing conferences that addressed the key ideological and philosophical issues of our times and KFM's position on it.

Now, our goal evolved into creating a platform where movements, intellectuals, individuals, communities could come together to discuss ideological, philosophical, aesthetic and political issues and learn from each other.

With this fourth conference we want to demand an end to the destruction of our world and nature, and form a call to collectively struggle to stop ecocide, feminicide, societycide, genocide, and epistemicide. Our world has not seen such a pace of destruction before. In the last four hundred years not only are different languages and cultures becoming extinct but everyday numerous plants and animals, too, are becoming extinct. Capitalist modernity and patriarchy have brought us not only to the brink of the destruction of the human society as we know it but also our planet.

However, it is not all hopeless. Women and peoples in Kurdistan as well as all around the world are resisting and building free life wherever and whenever possible. We do not need to search another world elsewhere; we want our world back!

The past three conferences that we have organized brought together intellectuals, activists, students and political and social movements giving us the opportunity to discuss our different ideas. In this fourth conference we want to specifically focus on building ways to exit the road that capitalism put us all in. Your contribution would enrich our discussions very much — in this long journey of women, the colonized and peoples our words have ever more meaning when they intersect.

We would like to give the opportunity to those interested to contribute to the conference by responding to one of the call for papers we have announced below:

Abstracts: Not more than 300 words. And, should be sent to info@networkaq.net until 5 February 2023.

The selection process will end on February 15, 2023. The accepted papers then to be sent (not more than 3000 words) in by March 15, 2023.

The paper can be in any of the conference languages (i.e. Kurdish, German, English, Spanish, Italian)

Below are the sessions of the fourth conference:

Challenging Capitalist Modernity IV:

We Want Our World Back—Do Autonomous Education and Organize

Day 1 and part of Day 2: Capitalist Modernity – The Multicide Regime

Session I— Ecocide

Call for papers for session I: “Bookchin and Beyond”

Murray Bookchin’s writing on social ecology was a major inspiration for Abdullah Öcalan’s “Beyond State, Power, and Violence”. How do the two thinkers relate to each other in terms of ecology? What are their main differences?

Session II—Societicide, Feminicide, and Epistemicide

Call for papers for session II: “Capitalism since Sumerian Times?”:

Abdullah Öcalan dates capitalism back to the Sumerians arguing that it is not only an economic system but also a mode of governance. How can this thought be substantiated and how does it contribute to the discussions of the origin and spread of capitalism and its colonial nature?

Part of Day II: Resist, Reclaim and Rebuild

Session III—Resistance and Change begins in Art

Call for papers for session III: The role of arts/culture and media has been the most effective self-defense tool by exposing the lies of capitalist modernity and by inspiring people to dream of better worlds and building free life. How have the Kurdish freedom movement and others used this self-defense tool most effectively?

Session IV—Autonomous Education

Call for papers for session IV: Abdullah Öcalan states that “every revolutionary movement is essentially an education movement.” How are Abdullah Öcalan’s and the ideas of Paulo Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” overlap? And, how does their approach compare to other revolutionary movements?

Day III: We want our world back – and here is how!

Session V—Organize to resist, reclaim and rebuild

Take a look at our Network for an Alternative Quest website (www.networkaq.net and/or our youtube-channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfvAXN4TnlRl_dUQXiQJ3g) to find out more about our previous conferences.

Contact e-mail: info@networkaq.net

Network for an Alternative Quest: International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan-Peace in Kurdistan"
 • Cenî - Kurdish Women's Office for Peace • YXK - Association of Students from Kurdistan • Kurdistan
 Report • ISKU - Informationsstelle Kurdistan e.V. • Civaka Azad - Kurdish Center for Public Relations •
 KURD-AKAD Network of Kurdish Academics • Jineolojî Center • Academy of Democratic Modernity •

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Call for participation in the Long March for Öcalan in February

ANF | 16 JANUARY 2023

The Long March, traditionally carried out by young people every year to demand the physical freedom of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, will be held on February 5-10 this year from Heilbronn to Freiburg in Germany.

The Long March Preparatory Committee released a written statement concerning this year's march which will be carried out under the motto "Join the struggle for the freedom of Öcalan!".

'Join the freedom march'

The statement calling on the Kurdish youth to come together around Öcalan, includes the following:

"It's time for the youth to demonstrate what Öcalan has taught us and show that it will be difficult to stop a youth striving for freedom. Youth is the greatest power. Let's not let them stop us! We are a trouble to the colonial and antidemocratic system! We call on all our youth to join the 2023 Long March to liberate Öcalan. We call on all our youth to join the march for the freedom of women, democracy and ecology! The march will kick off from Heilbronn on February 5 and conclude in Freiburg on February 10.

Öcalan has been politically committed to finding a solution to the conflicts in the Middle East since the 1960s. As a Kurd, he has experienced the Turkish state's fascist policies of assimilation and denial towards the Kurdish people. When he started to engage in politics, he realized that there was a particular exploitation of Kurdistan as a whole. This exploitation can still be seen in the fact that Kurdistan is not recognized but mentioned as Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Hence, Öcalan began to organize among student groups. Over the decades, he organized and educated the Kurdish people and the peoples of the Middle East. This has frustrated not only the plans of the Turkish state, but also the plans of other powers that take advantage of the exploitation of Kurdistan and the chaos in the Middle East. At a time when the whole world was declaring that 'socialism has lost', Öcalan raised its red flag again. As a final blow to socialism, Öcalan was extradited to Turkey in 1999 after an internationally coordinated secret service operation!

Öcalan has been kept in prison on the island of Imrali since. With his articles, he has been trying to understand and solve social crises such as war, religious fanaticism, sexism, environmental destruction and all other issues. Öcalan cannot be regarded as a simple prisoner. What makes a person so dangerous to be completely isolated and cut off from the outside world by violating his/her human rights? After all, the Imrali prison is unique compared to other prisons. In other words, no murderer, rapist, war criminal or financial fraudster is punished like Öcalan! All states that claim to be democratic, especially European states and their institution, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), are aware of the human rights crimes committed in the Imrali prison! Yet silence and inaction prevail! Because no state unconditionally respects human rights! This is our duty, the people's own duty.

Öcalan has devoted his life to fighting for women's freedom, grassroots democracy and ecology, and he has done it unconditionally. He has been resisting alone for a quarter-century on the prison island. The Kurdish leader has been tortured for 25 years in solitary confinement, which is unique in the world, and is constantly isolated through new disciplinary punishments. Denied basic human rights, he is not allowed to see his family or even his lawyers. This injustice and torture against him in the Imrali prison should alarm all humanity, because when a politician who promotes women's freedom, grassroots democracy and ecology is forced into silence, the rights of women, peoples, and the environment are also attacked. The absolute isolation on Imrali aims to break the democratizing influence of Öcalan on the politics of Turkey and the entire region.

‘We have to step into action’

All this shows that we have to step into action! Can you imagine being locked in a 12-square-meter room for twenty-five years? Öcalan wrote from the prison: “During my time on Imrali, I had the opportunity to rethink all questions from a distance... I hope to use the definitions of state, power, war, nation, and nation-state in a more realistic way and thus point out the solutions for a democratic society.

For Öcalan’s freedom, join the freedom struggle!”



Young man who set his body on fire to protest isolation loses his life

ANF | AMED | 17 JANUARY 2023

On Monday evening, a young man set his body on fire in the central Sur district of Amed (Diyarbakır). The young man, identified as Mehmet Akar, succumbed to severe burns in hospital on Tuesday. In his suicide note, he makes it clear that he set himself on fire in protest against Öcalan's isolation on Imrali.

25-year-old Akar has experienced the Turkish state's warfare first-hand. In 2019, his family claimed that he had been abducted "to the mountains" and participated in the "vigil" organised by the Turkish Secret Service MIT in front of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) building in Amed. A few days later,

Mehmet Akar himself spoke out and explained that he had not been abducted. Rather, he said, he had not gone to the mountains but left his parental home because he was to be married off against his will. Later, he also stated that his mother had been manipulated by MIT.

Farewell letter from Akar: “Biji Serok APO”

Akar’s farewell letter reads: “Hello friends. I would like to welcome the action of Comrade Bubo. There is no news of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. Neither his family nor his lawyers are allowed to see him. The applications are rejected without justification. We are concerned about the health condition of Leader Apo.

In protest, I will set my body on fire at 21:21 in Amed’s Keçi Burcu (Goat Bastion). May the light of the fire that ignites my body illuminate İmralı. I hope that this action will lead to the physical freedom of Leader Apo.”

Second self-immolation within a few days

The self-immolation of Mehmet Akar was preceded by the action of Veysi (Bubo) Taş in Mardin. On 12 January 2023, 65-year-old Veysi (Bubo) Taş burned himself to death in the industrial area of the central district of Artuklu in the province of Mardin in protest against the total isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. After unsuccessful treatment in hospital, Taş lost his life and was buried by his family. Commenting on the action, the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) said: “Veysi Taş has carried out a great action and called on our people, our international friends and the democratic forces to intensify their struggle and make it a success until the health, safety, and freedom of Leader Apo are guaranteed.” At the same time, however, KCK demanded that such an action should not be repeated. The Kurdish freedom movement has repeatedly appealed not to carry out self-immolations.

Akar’s family one of the first families in intelligence operation

Hacire Akar, the mother of Mehmet Akar, is considered one of the first participants in the “vigil” orchestrated by the Turkish intelligence service in front of the HDP building in Amed. She went to the police station in Amed on 22 August 2019 and filed a missing person's report, claiming that her son had been “abducted to the mountains”. Following her application, she went to the Amed HDP provincial organisation building, broke windows and started a sit-in protest. She claimed that her son had entered the party building and had not come out. She accused HDP members that her son had been abducted from there to the mountains. Anadolu Agency (AA) and other pro-government media also reported that Mehmet Akar had been “abducted to the mountains”. However, it became known that Mehmet Akar was to be forced into marriage.

On 23 August 2019, Mehmet Akar addressed the Mezopotamya news agency and stated that he had not been kidnapped but had left because he was being forced to marry his niece. Akar reported that he was at his sister Ceylan Mutaş's house in the district of Bağlar when he was forcibly detained by his father Aziz Akar and older brother Mustafa Akar and taken to his house in the Soğanlı district. He reported at the time: “Because I refused to be forcibly married, they came to my sister's house when I was asleep and took me to the village by force. They insulted me, took my phone, wallet, mobile phone and money. They did not let me leave the house. I didn't eat anything either.” Regarding his family's participation in the “vigil”,

Akar said, “Nobody kidnapped me, it has nothing to do with the HDP. It is fundamentally wrong for my family to be there. I told my family: ‘I have nothing to do with you’, I didn't go anywhere, I am here. I will definitely not go to them. They should not blame anyone. I left home on my own accord. Nobody instructed me and nobody sent me anywhere. I did not go anywhere, I am here. It is also wrong for my family to continue the sit-in protest there. This has nothing to do with the HDP. I am not dependent on anyone. I left home alone. My family should not blame anyone. I will not meet with my family. I can decide my own life. I don't accept forced marriage by my family.”

The “Vigil”

Despite this manipulation by the police, which has become public, other families continue their sit-in protest in front of the HDP headquarters. The HDP has stated from the beginning that this protest was orchestrated by the state. It has now emerged that parents who report their children missing or who are known to be with the guerrillas are being pressured by the Turkish security forces to take part in the protest. At the same time, they are promised payments and other benefits if they stand in front of the HDP building. There, the “vigil” repeatedly attacks visitors to the HDP office. These attacks take place under the eyes of the police. Any resistance is a pretext for police violence.

Deputy minister of the interior took part in forced marriage ceremony

According to the report, Akar was arrested and held for eight days at the Diyarbakır police station. He was then released under house arrest with an electronic anklet. The family took advantage of his situation and married him off against his will on 19 October 2019. The wedding was also attended by Deputy Interior Minister Muhterem İnce and former Diyarbakır governor Hasan Basri Güzeloğlu, former Sur district governor Abdullah Çiftçi and former AKP regional chairman Süleyman Serdar Budak. Government officials also claimed at the time that they had given Mehmet Akar a job. But it became known that Akar earned his living as a taxi driver.

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Activists from Freiburg take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 19 JANUARY 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil was launched on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, to demand freedom for the Kurdish people's leader and to break the isolation imposed on him.

The vigil has entered its 552nd week and was taken over by activists from Freiburg this week.

Activists Aytaç Özveren, Tevfik Dövüş, Abdullah Güven, Arif Şemo and Reşit Demir are part of the new group.

Speaking on behalf of the activists, Aytaç Özveren said: “We do not accept the isolation imposed on our Leader. We haven’t heard from our Leader in months. He is not allowed to see his lawyers. We condemn the fascist Turkish state and the policy it implements against our Leader. We will never forgive the Turkish state for this injustice done to the Leader of a people. We call on our people to do their part now, because tomorrow it may be too late. Our President is our honor.”

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Thousands in Marseille protest the isolation of Öcalan and the silence of Europe

ANF | MARSEILLE | 21 JANUARY 2023

The Democratic Kurdish Community Center (DTKM), Arin Mirkan Assembly and the Revolutionary Youth Movement (TCŞ) organised a demonstration in the French city of Marseille on Saturday in protest at the aggravated isolation imposed on Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan in Turkey’s Imrali Island Prison, where he has been held since his capture as result of an international conspiracy in 1999.

Banners displayed by demonstrators criticised the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the United Nations over their responsibility for the isolation regime executed at Imrali.

The march from Canabiere Square to the European Parliament Marseille representative office was followed by a rally where speeches were made in the name of Kurdish institutions and called on the CPT and other European institutions to stop ignoring the demands of the Kurds.

“European states and authorities make fun of the Kurdish people’s will. We warn that our actions will be carried to a further level unless the CPT announces the truth,” the TCŞ said.

The following statement on behalf of DTKM vowed to make any effort for the freedom of Öcalan, who has not been allowed to meet with his family and lawyers since 2011.

“As Mr. Öcalan’s ideas promote a democratic living, peace in the Middle East, co-existence of cultures, faiths and peoples, ecology and women’s freedom, his situation does not concern the Kurds alone,” said the statement, criticising European bodies for failing to take a concrete step and hold Turkey accountable. According to the DTKM, the European silence and failure to apply its own laws makes it accomplice to Turkey’s crimes against humanity.

DTKM called on the European Union to go into action immediately and urged Turkey to abolish the aggravated life imprisonment introduced for Öcalan.

Urging the Council of Europe and affiliated bodies to uphold their responsibilities, DTKM called on all the powers that were involved in the international conspiracy against Öcalan to review their anti-Kurdish policies.

DTKM ended its statement by calling upon all democratic circles to strengthen the freedom struggle of Abdullah Öcalan.

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ESP and SGDF members on hunger strike in Adana demand end of isolation imposed on Öcalan

ANF | ADANA | 22 JANUARY 2023

The hunger strike promoted by the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) and the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF) against the isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan and the violations of rights in prisons continues.

After Izmir and Istanbul, the hunger strike moved to Adana. The hunger strike started with a press conference held at the Adana Branch of the Human Rights Association (IHD) with the slogan "Let's raise solidarity, break isolation". ESP Adana provincial executive, Emrah Topaloğlu and SGDF member Tuncay Yıldırım Özen have taken over the hunger strike.

SGDF member Tuncay Yıldırım Özen drew attention to the violations of rights, ill prisoners and absolute isolation in jails and said that the government actually "took away the right to life of the detainees." Özen added that they have gone on hunger strike to demand the end of the absolute isolation.

Mustafa Mızrak, the elder brother of Birgün Mızrak, who is imprisoned in Bakırköy Women's Prison, said that her sister is a musician and added that the prison administration confiscated her notes, photographs and compositions, as well as her flute because "it could be used to hide explosives."

AATUHAY-DER co-chair Nimet Sezgin said that the state does not even comply with its own law and called for solidarity and a common struggle.

Emrah Topaloğlu read the joint press text issued by the organizations and said that "the heaviest of the rights violations were carried out against Öcalan, in İmralı Prison."

Topaloğlu added: "Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan has been completely cut off from the world. We are on hunger strike to demand the end of isolation in prisons, starting from the isolation on Öcalan and the ban on visits."

Topaloğlu and Özen will visit some civil society organizations and political parties while on hunger strike.



People's Initiative in North-East Syria launches petition for Öcalan

ANF | QAMISHLO | 22 JANUARY 2023

In a press statement in front of the Democratic Society Movement (TEV-DEM) office in Qamishlo on Sunday, the North and East Syrian People's Initiative announced the launch of a petition demanding the physical freedom of the Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in Imrali Island Prison since his forced departure to Turkey on February 15, 1999.

Xufran Kewkeb and Mistefa Ehmed Kurdi read the statement announcing the campaign launched jointly with the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative-Syria. The press briefing was attended by many people from the Kurdish, Arab, Armenian, and Syriac communities.

"The peoples of North and East Syria call for an end to the isolation of Leader Abdullah Öcalan and for his physical freedom," said the press statement detailing the campaign, which includes the following:

"As the people of North and East Syria, we are concerned about the situation of Leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has not been heard from for about 22 months. Last granted a visit to Imrali on August 2, 2019, lawyers have not been allowed to meet with Leader Öcalan in any way since.

In this context, the Kurdish people and their friends, especially Leader Öcalan's family, are worried as they have not heard from him since the phone call on March 25, 2021. All the excuses presented by the Turkish state to justify the physical and spiritual torture of Leader Öcalan are unjustified. Their work on this issue is systematic and contrary to Article 1 of the Convention for the Prevention of Torture, which was proclaimed in accordance with the standards of the UN convention.

The torture executed on Leader Öcalan is not just a deprivation of his rights, but double torture. This double torture has ill effects according to Article 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 7 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the UN General Assembly Declaration of October 9, 1975. According to Articles 2 and 4 of the Convention on the Prevention of Torture, to which the Turkish state is also a signatory and party, legal, administrative and judicial measures must be taken to prevent torture, and these acts of torture are considered 'crimes' according to these laws."

The petition is expected to last until February 15, when Abdullah Öcalan was handed over to Turkey after his capture in Kenya as a result of an international conspiracy. After the end of the campaign, the collected signatures will be sent to the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT).



Vigil for Öcalan launched in front of the Council of Europe

ANF | STRASBOURG | 23 JANUARY 2023

A three-day vigil by Kurdish organizations has begun in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on Monday. The aim of the initiative, organized by the European umbrella organization of Kurdish associations KCDK-E, is to call for measures to break the information and contact ban on Abdullah Öcalan. For about two years now there has been no sign of life from the Kurdish leader, who has been imprisoned in the Turkish island prison of Imrali since 1999. He is neither allowed to see his relatives nor lawyers, a clear violation of the ban on torture. But in the case of Öcalan, Europe is struggling with a consistent commitment to human rights and a responsible response to the injustice institutionalized on Imrali.

The vigil was introduced with a press statement. “The lack of information and communication with the outside world is of great concern to the Kurdish community,” said Yüksel Koç, co-chair of the KCDK-E, referring to the protests and actions around the world on the issue of Imrali isolation that have been going on for months. The politician recalled a visit by the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), to Imrali last September and addressed the spotty information on the matter.

While the CPT itself indicated that it had met Öcalan, the Asrın Law Office in Istanbul, which legally represents Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners Ömer Hayri Konar, Veysi Aktaş and Hamili Yıldırım, contradicts the CPT’s statements and demands the publication of the report on the visit to the island. However, the CPT is only allowed to publish this report after it has submitted its findings and only with the permission of the Turkish government.

“This, in turn, may drag on for years. We know from the past that Ankara has delayed the publication of CPT reports for a very long time. Therefore, we join the demand of the Asrın Law Office and demand that the CPT take coercive measures against Turkey to abolish incommunicado detention. The Kurdish society demands clarification about the CPT’s visit to Imrali and information about the condition of the prisoners there. This can only be done if their legal counsel is granted access to the island,” Koç said.

Lawyer Ömer Güneş from the Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Platform described the Imrali isolation as the sealing off of an entire society. “Öcalan’s solitary confinement is symbolic of the fate of all Kurds. He has not only been imprisoned, but deprived of any human rights for almost 24 years. The conditions under which Öcalan is being held on Imrali are a new edition of Guantanamo. One can compare Imrali with Guantanamo, certainly. It is only much harder there because of the total isolation. Institutions like the CPT, the European Court of Human Rights and the United Nations know this. They could get this isolation regime abolished. But because they refuse to carry out their missions, they are partly responsible for Öcalan’s situation.”

Helen Dersim of the Kurdish Women’s Movement in Europe (TJK-E) described Öcalan as a key figure for a solution to the Kurdish question. “His release can make a lasting peace possible in Kurdistan, which is divided between the nation states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, but also everywhere else in the Near and Middle East. Because he is the only actor with a solution plan for the multiple problems of a region that has been a permanent theater of war for years. Öcalan is an architect for freedom and peace and stands behind the idea of equal coexistence of all people. It is to his paradigm that we are fully attached. Peace offers

the only solution and Öcalan is essential for this process. However, without Öcalan's participation, no progress could be made towards a solution. Before negotiations on this can begin, the Turkish state must first release him. Just as Nelson Mandela was released before and not after the South African negotiations. Otherwise, at most, there could only be talks and no actual negotiations. Mandela stressed that only free persons and not prisoners could negotiate for a political solution."

Other statements were made by Ahmet Karamus, co-chair of the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK), former HDP MP Nursel Aydoğan, the former mayor of Siirt, Selim Sadak, and Kamuran Berwarî, ex-lecturer at Duhok University in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Mehmet Cengiz from the Alliance of Democratic Forces in Europe (ADGB), which unites left organizations from Turkey, also spoke. He joined the demands for the lifting of the Imrali isolation and declared that the ADGB would stand in solidarity and support for the Kurdish people in their struggle for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan".

The vigil in Strasbourg will continue until Wednesday. On Tuesday, the action will be organized by Fed-Gel, an association organised in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, together with the Federation of Democratic Societies of Kurdistan in Saarland and Hesse (FCDK-KAWA). At the end of the initiative, a rally is scheduled for the last day.

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Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg continues

ANF | STRASBOURG | 26 JANUARY 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil was launched on 25 June, 2012 in Strasbourg to ensure the physical freedom of the Kurdish people's leader and to break the isolation imposed on him. The vigil has entered its 553rd week.

The action, which is held at the point where European institutions meet and is carried out by a different group of Kurds living in Europe every week, was taken over by a group of activists from the German city of Germany this week, involving the activists Abdullah Botan, Ali Yilmaz and Murat Serhat.

Speaking to ANF on behalf of the new group, Abdullah Botan vowed to continue their action until Öcalan attains his freedom, calling on all the Kurds to stand with their leader.

Noting that Öcalan has not been heard from for 22 months now, Botan called for an immediate end to the isolation imposed on the Kurdish leader.

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Residents of Maxmur on day 48 of vigil against the isolation of Öcalan

ANF | MAXMUR | 27 JANUARY 2023

The vigil launched in the Martyr Rustem Cudi Refugee Camp (Maxmur) to protest the aggravated isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan continued on its 48th day.

In a speech during the takeover of today's vigil, Mela Eli Spêrtî said: "Öcalan has been putting up an outstanding struggle in the İmralı prison for 24 years. Through isolation, they seek to prevent the spread of Öcalan's ideas and thoughts. We believe that Öcalan will be physically freed, and the occupation system will collapse. We condemn once again the isolation imposed on Öcalan. We urge religious people all over the world to raise their voices against isolation."

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HDP deputies on day 27 of vigil against the isolation of Öcalan

ANF | ANKARA | 27 JANUARY 2023

For 27 days, MPs from the HDP parliamentary group have been protesting for the lifting of the total isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, of whom there has been no sign of life for 22 months. Day after day, the MPs try to march in front of the Ministry of Justice, but are prevented from doing so by the police and therefore make statements in front of the parliament. Today's protest was attended by MPs Şevin Coşkun, Hasan Özgüneş, Kemal Peköz, İmam Taşçier, Muazzez Orhan and Murat Sarısaç. The MPs carried signs reading "The law must apply to İmralı" and "Isolation is a crime against humanity".

Speaking here, HDP Amed deputy İmam Taşçier expressed their concerns about the health and life of Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners Veysi Aktaş, Ömer Hayri Konar and Hamili Yıldırım. "International forces handed over Mr. Öcalan to Turkey following a conspiracy, imposing some international assurances. Yet, they do not keep their promise. Since the 1916 Sykes-Picot Treaty, which divided the lands of the Kurdish people into 4 parts, Kurds have been subjected to isolation and genocide."

Taşçier continued: "The states that divided Kurdistan into 4 parts at the time do not want the Kurds to have a status and to govern themselves in their own lands. For this reason, Kurds should come together and form their unity so that they can break through the isolation and govern themselves. There are 30 million Kurds in this country, but they cannot even receive education in their mother tongue. They are not recognized by the constitution of the country, which denies the existence of 30 million Kurds. In this context, the isolation of Mr. Öcalan continues. We will continue our democratic struggle to lift this isolation. We call on the Minister of Justice and all authorized institutions to put an end to this isolation as soon as possible. As you know, Mandela became the president of his country after 27 years in prison."



International Delegation Against Isolation: Freedom of Öcalan is crucial

ANF | ISTANBUL | 29 JANUARY 2023

The “International Delegation Against Isolation” has reiterated its rejection of the torture system on the Turkish prison island of Imrali and has called for its abolition. “Imrali is an area of political and legal blackout,” explained the delegation with regard to the prison conditions there, which “not only affect Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners. We had to realize that the Imrali system in Turkey has become a model. In order to be able to restore the rule of law, it is essential that it is dissolved.

The delegation published the following recommendations:

“Practices on Imrali have transcended the definition of isolation and have reached the point of absolute incommunicado confinement. The situation makes it imperative to define this issue not only as a legal but also as a political problem.

The CPT must publish its observations

— We call again on the CPT (European Committee for the Prevention of Torture) to take responsibility given the urgent and worrying situation of absolute isolation on Imrali. We expect all human rights defenders to put pressure on the CPT. In addition, we request that the CPT make its observations of the last visit to Imrali available to the public without delay.

— Today’s forum was a get-together where we could refresh our memories and reflect on ourselves. Hence, the need for the members of the Forum to play a pioneering role in expanding and strengthening the network of solidarity and common struggle.

No more incommunicado detention

— Imrali is an area of political and legal blackout. In view of the reality of the Imrali system, not only people are denied the right to information. In this environment of obfuscation, politics as an institution also falters and loses its direction. The current worrying situation of no news from Imrali for 22 months must end immediately.

Öcalan’s freedom is crucial

— The solution to all these problems lies in a democratic and social solution to the Kurdish question. The freedom of Abdullah Öcalan is a prerequisite for the political and peaceful solution of the Kurdish question and the democratization of Turkey.

— Without dealing with the Kurdish question, at the center of which is Imrali, and its political and social dimensions and taking a stand, the democratic public cannot shirk its share of responsibility for the isolation.

— Not only Abdullah Öcalan and the political prisoners are isolated, but the entire social opposition. Life as a whole is under siege. A way out of this siege is only possible through a joint legal, political and social struggle.

— In Imrali all rights are void. It is extremely worrying that Imrali prisoners' lawyers and human rights defenders are being prevented from doing their work and are being subjected to investigations and prosecutions. This in itself is an indication that the legal and human rights field is under attack both professionally and in terms of its values.”

The rule of law must be restored

— It is unacceptable that European states ignore the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and other international conventions for the sake of their own interests and the universal values of human rights are blocked. In view of this ignorance, it is essential in this phase to build a network for the fight for law and justice on a global level.

— We reiterate our call to those responsible in Turkey to restore the rule of law in Imrali immediately. We reaffirm the responsibility of all European states in relation to this issue; and we call on these states not to sacrifice basic human rights for geopolitical and economic interests.

The situation in Imrali is critical

— Dealing with Imrali and the legal and political situation there is a touchstone to democratic standards and the political situation in Turkey.

— It is not possible to solve the Kurdish question and related problems such as poverty, hunger, migration, patriarchal oppression, cultural erosion and ecological destruction caused by war without abolishing the system of absolute isolation and torture in Imrali. Therefore, the situation on the island is crucial for the democratization of Turkey and the permanent resolution of the problems.

— The discriminatory prison regime against political prisoners, first introduced in Imrali and gradually spreading to all prisons in the country, must be ended. Respect for the basic human rights of all prisoners, especially sick prisoners, must be restored to standard.

Imrali has become the method of government

— The Imrali system is used as a domination technique. This situation is not a state of emergency, but has developed into a legal-political form of rule that has spread throughout the country. The survival of the government is placed above the future of millions of people.

— Abdullah Öcalan has been subjected to torture of all kinds for 24 years. The main goal of this practice is to liquidate the democratically legitimized struggle of the social opposition. For this reason, the primary

and fundamental goal of all societal opposition forces, legal and human rights defenders must be the complete abolition of the İmralı system.

— The Kurdish question has become a problem in the Middle East and the whole world. Therefore, the solution to this issue should be put on the agenda, especially considering the developments and consequences in the Middle East and in the world in general. To do this, it is imperative that all advanced humanity takes the initiative and takes action.”

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Play about Öcalan arrives in Bilbao

ANF | BILBAO | 29 JANUARY 2023

Abdullah Öcalan is the only prisoner in the maximum security island-prison of İmralı. *La celda sin noche* (The cell without night) is a theater play written by Basque author Galder Irusta and directed by Mireia Gabilondo.

The play will be performed in the historical Teatro Arriaga in Bilbao on 15 March.

The Play

The notes about the play say: “1999. A rifle, a book and a plant. Abdullah Öcalan is the only prisoner in a maximum security island-prison south of Istanbul. He is condemned to death for being the leader of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, at war with the Turkish state. In an eternally lit cell and in total isolation, Öcalan’s three souls try to live with his decision and with themselves, while deciding on his future and that of Kurdistan. Based on real events.”

La celda sin noche was the play selected in 2019 by ANTZ3RKIZ’s New Playwrights programme, “for its literary quality and dramatic structure, for dealing with a lesser-known subject and also for providing an overtone in defence of human rights”.

ANTZ3RKIZ brings together the Victoria Eugenia Theatre of San Sebastian-Donostia, the Teatro Principal of Vitoria and the Arriaga Theatre, in its project to promote the staging of Basque drama, to support the world of creation and to facilitate the production of shows of a certain significance in appropriate contracting conditions.

On this occasion, *La celda sin noche* has materialised in a co-production between the three Basque theatres and the Costa Rican Ministry of Culture, to be premiered on 28 July 2022.

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Concert in Barcelona demands freedom for Öcalan and political prisoners

ANF | BARCELONA | 29 JANUARY 2023

The concert “Kurdistan, Time for hope for” was organized by Azadi Platform, Ciemen and other solidarity groups.

The concert was organized for the “Kurdish people's right to self-determination and the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan and all political prisoners! Dona, Vida, Libertat! (Jin, Jiyan, Azadi!)”.

In addition to Kurdish artist Diyar Dersim, Catalan artists Clara Peya, Ebri Knight, Las Bajas Pasiones, Lil Rusia, Adala and Mabel Flores took the stage.

David Minoves from the Organization for the Defense of Languages Under Pressure, Ramon Montavani from the Italian Communist Rifondazione Party, the Catalan Republican Left Party Parliamentarian Ruben Wansberg, the United People's Party Parliamentarian Eulalia Reguan were present at the concert.

Speeches were made by Faruk Doru and the Catalonia Jineoloji Committee on behalf of the Organizing Committee.

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Prisons in Turkey

Prisoners on hunger strike call for support: Hear our voice!

ANF | 16 JANUARY 2023

Metin Uyar, who has been on a hunger strike for 40 days in the Giresun Espiye L Type Closed Prison against rights violations and the crackdown of the prison administration, talked to his family on a phone call this morning (Jan. 16). Uyar said that the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan had spread to all other prisons. He stated: “This isolation tramples down on human dignity, humanity and identity. There is a fascist tendency in the Espiye Prison. They directly attack our Kurdish identity here. There is physical and psychological torture. They do not refer our sick friends to hospitals. We are not given Kurdish books. Our wards have been raided for the last few days, and our friends taken away in handcuffs. Some of our friends were beaten and they received assault reports. We have sick friends who are about to die.”

‘We will not compromise on our honor’

Uyar revealed that intraoral searches are imposed on prisoners during hospital referrals. He continued: “They force us to make a choice between honour and health. We will not compromise on our honor even if we lose our lives, even if we are all killed. This honor is our value and our struggle. What we are subjected to is directly related to isolation. We don't even know what will happen to us after this phone call. We will resist and we will never take a step back. Our families and all relevant institutions must do their part. We want the Human Rights Association (IHD), bar associations and those who fight this torture system to hear our voices. If the isolation is lifted, this torture will end.”

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79-year-old Hadi Özer released

ANF | VAN | 17 JANUARY 2023

79-year-old Hadi Özer, who was arrested with his wife, Makbule Özer, on 9 May 2022, on charges of “aiding an illegal organization” in Artemêt (Van), was released after serving his sentence.

His wife, Makbule Özer, on the other hand, was released on 7 September 2022, with the execution of her sentence postponed for one year.

Background

80-year-old Makbule Özer and her 79-year-old husband, Hadi Özer, were detained in the Edremit district of Van with their children in the police raid on their house on 24 July 2018.

As a result of the investigation conducted against the Özer couple, a lawsuit was filed. The 2 years and 6 months’ prison sentence given to the Özer couple by the local court was upheld by the higher courts.

The Özer couple were arrested on 9 May and sent to prison. Makbule Özer, whose health condition deteriorated, was eventually released on 7 September, while her husband, who was seriously ill, Hadi Özer, remained in prison.

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Prisoners in Urfa not treated after refusing handcuffed examination

ANF | URFA | 19 JANUARY 2023

In a phone call, prisoner Sinan Çelik told his mother, Şöhret Çelik, about the rights violations they were subjected to. Çelik, who was sentenced to 13 years in prison in 2015 for “membership in a terrorist organization”, stated that there were serious violations of rights in the prison.

Çelik, who constantly suffers from stomach and enteralgia, said that they were not examined by doctors in any way. He reported that he was taken to the infirmary in the prison last week: “They said they would do an intraoral search by force. When I refused it and handcuffed examination, I was brought back to the prison without treatment.” Çelik added that he received a visiting ban when guards alleged that he pulled a knife against them.

Mother Şöhret Çelik said: “My son continues to suffer from stomach problems and enteralgia. His right to treatment is denied and be granted to him as soon as possible.”

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IHD: 1,973 violations recorded in 21 prisons in 3 months

ANF | ISTANBUL | 21 JANUARY 2023

The Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul Branch Prisons Commission published its report on the prisons. Most jails are in the Marmara region and the report covered violations registered in the months of October, November and December 2022.

57 applications received from 21 prisons

The report underlined that it covered 21 prisons from which the IHD had received applications. The jails are: Silivri Campus Prisons, Kandıra No. 1 and 2 F Type Closed Prison, Kocaeli Prisons, Maltepe No. 1 L Type Prison, Edirne F Type Prison, Tekirdağ No. 1 and 2 F Type Closed Prison, Bolu F Type Closed Prison. , Silivri Open Prison, Bakırköy Women's Closed Prison, Gebze M Type Closed Prison, Bursa H Type Closed Prison, Erzurum Dumlu No. 1 High Security Closed Prison, Antalya S Type Closed Prison, Ahlat T Type Closed Prison, Sincan Women's Closed Prison, Violations in Adana Kürkçüler No. 1 T Type Closed Prison, Kayseri Bünyan Women's Closed Prison, Şakran T Type Closed Prison, Sincan No 2 F Type Prison and Diyarbakır Women's Closed Prison.

A total of 1,973 violations were recorded, including violations of the right to life, to health and treatment, communication, access to legal counseling and to a fair trial. Ill-treatment, beating and torture were also recorded.

İmralı, the worst prison in terms of violation of rights

The report listed the violations as follows: “29 violations of the right to life, 19 detainees were threatened with death, 2 detainees were forced to commit suicide, 2 detainees attempted suicide, at least 6 detainees lost their lives. 780 cases of ill-treatment and torture were recorded”.

Refused applications by the family and lawyers of Kurdish people’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in İmralı F-Type High Security Prison since 1999 under severe isolation conditions and who has not been heard from for more than 21 months, are among the most prominent of these violations. The report underlined that 33 applications submitted by the lawyers and family were rejected.

IHD calls on authorities to find solutions

IHD Istanbul Branch president, Gülseren Yoleri, said that the main reason for the publication of the report was the attempt to push “ the authorities to come up with a solution”. Yoleri said: “We call on the authorities to act in accordance with their responsibilities and put an end to these violations of prisoners’ rights.”

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Journalist Derya Ren placed in solitary confinement

ANF | AMED | 21 JANUARY 2023

Kurdish journalist Derya Ren has been placed in solitary confinement for three days by the disciplinary committee of the women’s prison in Amed (tr. Diyarbakır). The correspondent of the women’s news agency JinNews is accused of resisting prison officers.

The background of the so-called disciplinary measure is a refused body search. The journalist, who has been in prison since last October because of a final conviction, was to be forced to undergo a strip search after being transferred to prison. Because Ren refused to submit to the degrading treatment and put up a massive fight, she was beaten, insulted and dragged along the floor by her hair by five guards, according to her lawyer, Gülistan Ataş.

Ren took legal action against the prison staff and filed a complaint over assault. But instead of punishing the officers, the victim was sanctioned.

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Prisoner who served 30 years in jail not released as court says “he shows no signs of remorse”

ANF | ISTANBUL | 21 JANUARY 2023

The release of Şevket Bilici, who was arrested on 17 July 1992 for allegedly killing a village guard in Elbak (Baskale) in Van, and later sentenced to life imprisonment for “threatening the unity and integrity of the state”, was postponed once again.

Bilici, who is imprisoned in Afyonkarahisar No. 1 T Type Prison, served his sentence on 4 July 2022. However, his release was prevented due to the decision taken by the Administration and Observation Board on 26 June.

Bilici then appealed to the Afyonkarahisar Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. Bilici appealed the decision, and, on 26 August 2022, the Judgeship of Enforcement stated that there was no concrete evidence that Bilici was “connected to the PKK” and found the previous decision “contrary to procedure and law”. The judge thus overturned the decision, but the prosecutor appealed it. Afyonkarahisar 1st High Criminal Court ruled in favor of the prosecutor’s office and Bilici was kept in prison.

The Administration and Observation Board prepared a report on the postponement of Bilici’s release on 15 December and ruled that he should remain in prison, claiming that “he showed no signs of remorse and once out he could rejoin the illegal organization again”. Bilici’s next evaluation will be on 2 April.

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16 journalists in Amed spend their 220th day in prison

ANF | 22 JANUARY 2023

On 8 June, Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office carried out two separate criminal investigations. As a result of raids on several houses and media outlet offices, 22 people were taken into custody. Among them were 20 journalists working for Mesopotamia News Agency, Jin News and Xwebûn daily. The co-chair of the Dicle Fırat Journalists’ Association was also taken into custody, as were a media employee and a citizen who gave an interview to one of the journalists taken into custody.

The offices of Pel Production, Piya Production and Ari Production were also raided by police and after a 3-day search, police confiscated cameras, computers, news equipment, archives, and many documents.

Custody period extended

On 12 June, the Criminal Judgeship of Peace accepted the prosecutor's request and extended the custody period by 4 days on the grounds that the examination of the digital material confiscated by the police may take time.

During the 8 days the journalists spent in custody, they were kept in solitary cells at the Diyarbakır Security Directorate. Exercising their right to remain silent, the journalists refused to give their statements to the police on the grounds that both the investigation and custody were unlawful. The journalists were denied their basic personal needs.

Arrested for doing their job

The journalists were eventually brought to the Diyarbakır Courthouse after being held in police custody for 8 days. The prosecutor questioned journalists about the news articles they published and the programs they produced. The prosecutor asked journalists why they produced these programs (and in one instance, the prosecutor asked why the journalist stopped producing that program), why they used such language in their news reports and if they published these news articles and produced these programs upon orders from the PKK and the KCK. The journalists were also asked if they know the other journalists in custody and why they work at these production companies.

No indictment

220 days have passed and no indictment has been presented yet. The Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) said that there are 87 journalists in prison.

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Violence against prisoners in Elaziğ jail

ANF | ELAZIG | 24 JANUARY 2023

Lokman Aslan (40) is in Elaziğ No. 2 High Security Prison. He has spent 23 years in jail. When he spoke to his family by phone, he said that the guards beat up 15 prisoners.

Aslan said: "Prison food is very bad. They give each prisoner 2 olives, a piece of cheese and a piece of bread for breakfast. The guards raid the wards almost every night. They sometimes use pressurized water in their raids. Because of our reaction to these inhumane practices, a few days ago, the guards severely beat up 15 detainees, including myself."

Aslan's brother, Suat Aslan, said that they were able to meet with his brother last week after two years, and added that the visit only lasted 20 minutes. He said: "As if deporting the detainees to prisons far away

from their families were not enough, prisoners are subjected to violations of their rights on a daily basis. This violence is increasing. We call [on the prison authorities] to respect the prisoners' rights and the law.”

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Sending money to a prisoner considered 'aiding an illegal organization'

ANF | MARDIN | 26 JANUARY 2023

Mehmet Ildem is in Burhaniye T Type Closed Prison in Balıkesir. His friend A.D. was taken into custody during a raid on his house on 15 February 2021. After being detained for 4 days, A.D. was released on “judicial control conditions”. Within the scope of the investigation initiated against him, an indictment was prepared by the Balıkesir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office in which it is stated that he "knowingly and willingly helped an illegal organization". The charge refers to the fact that A.D. sent 500 Turkish liras to Ildem in September 2019.

The indictment argues that A.D. is not a relative of Ildem, who is held in the ward where PKK prisoners are staying. Ildem's petition and participation in the hunger strike the prisoners carried out in prisons between 27 November 2018 and 26 May 2019, “demanding the immediate end of the isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan,” were included in the indictment to demonstrate that Ildem A.D. was in fact sending money to a PKK member.

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Ill prisoners in Patnos jail not given their medication

ANF | AĞRI | 28 JANUARY 2023

Violations of the rights of detainees are increasing in Ağrı Patnos L Type Closed Prison. Bayram Gümüşay talked about the rights violations in a phone call he had with his family. Gümüşay said that pressures and violations of rights have increased recently.

Gümüşay added that ill prisoners were not given their medication and that their requests to be taken to the infirmary were rejected.

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Seriously ill prisoner held in a solitary cell

RONI ARAM | ISTANBUL | 29 JANUARY 2023

57-year-old sick prisoner Emin Gurban, from Çatak district of Van was arrested in 1996 and sentenced to death by the State Security Court (DGM) on 13 June 2001 for “disturbing the unity and integrity of the state”. After 25 years of imprisonment, Gurban's case was appealed to the Court of Cassation, which overturned the verdict on the grounds of procedural irregularities. At the time the sentence was overturned, the death penalty had been abolished and Gurban was sentenced to an aggravated life sentence without the possibility of release, which was upheld by the Court of Cassation.

After exhausting domestic remedies, Emin Gurban's case was brought before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). On 15 December 2015, the ECtHR ruled that the long trial and aggravated life imprisonment violated the prohibition of torture in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). An application for a retrial was rejected by the local court in Turkey. The case is before the Constitutional Court for implementation of the ECtHR ruling, but there is no decision yet.

Gurban spent his 27 years in detention in Metris, Sakarya, Bursa, Gebze and Kocaeli prisons. Most recently, Gurban was transferred to Konya-Ereğli high security prison.

Emin Gurban suffers from various health problems due to the detention conditions. According to a medical diagnosis, Gurban is at risk of developing stomach cancer. Due to the risk of cancer, there is a pathology report stating that he should be under constant medical supervision due to a wound in his stomach and that he must watch his diet. Without a continuous diet, a relapse is likely. Gurban also suffers from a biliary disease for which he had to undergo surgery in 2018.

On 6 December 2022, Emin Gurban was admitted to the emergency room of the state hospital with vomiting and other complaints. From the emergency room, he was referred to the neurology department. At the neurology department, he was found to be in a life-threatening condition and was diagnosed with infarction in an area of 70 per cent of the cerebellum as a result of two vascular occlusions in the neck.

After six days of inpatient observation, Gurban returned to prison with the decision to continue his treatment at Kocaeli Medical Faculty. His complaints, including constant vomiting, continued. His lawyer, Elif Taşdöğen, intervened with the prison administration and was assured that her client would be transferred to the university hospital.

However, on 15 December 2022, Gurban was told by law enforcement officials that he would be transferred to Konya-Ereğli Maximum Security Prison. Although he and his fellow prisoners protested against this, Gurban was picked up in a military ambulance and handcuffed to start the nine-hour journey to Konya.

Speaking to ANF, Gurban's lawyer Elif Taşdöğen stated: “We have filed a criminal complaint for abuse of authority and violation of the ban on torture. The prisoner had to travel in handcuffs for nine hours and his life was in danger during the journey. He should have been urgently transferred to a university hospital, but was transferred in this way to a prison nine hours away. This constitutes the offense of torture and

ill-treatment of the public officials who decided and implemented this act, and also the offence of abuse of office by all officials involved.”

According to the latest information from his lawyer, Emin Gurban was taken to a hospital in Ereğli on 19 December, but was taken back to prison without treatment. According to the lawyer, he can no longer look after himself and can barely stand. Nevertheless, he continues to be held in a solitary cell.

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Military aggression and occupation

Iraq establishes checkpoints across its borders with Turkey and Iran

ANF | 16 JANUARY 2023

In a press statement on December 22, 2022, the Commander of the Border Guards, Mohammed Abdulvahap, announced that border guard forces would be deployed along the Iraqi borders with Turkey and Iran. Abdulvahap said that 200 checkpoints would be established, and 3,000 soldiers would be deployed in the border areas in question.

Tahsin Xefaxi, spokesperson of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command, told Rojnews that Iraq has started to establish checkpoints and watchtowers at the zero points of the border.

Xefaxi remarked that they wanted to put an end to the violation of Iraqi sovereign rights. He said: “This is an important issue for us. Iraqi efforts to control its borders with Iran and Turkey continue. These efforts started after the prime minister of our country gave the order to deploy military forces to the borders with Turkey and Iran.”

Xefaxi pointed out that after the joint meetings of the Interior Ministries of Iraq and Kurdistan Region, coordination was also ensured with the peshmerga forces to control the Iraq-Turkey border.

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More Iraqi nationals in Hol camp repatriated

Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement announced the repatriation of 584 people from Hol camp, marking Iraq's first repatriation mission since October.

ANF | 17 JANUARY 2023

The Iraqi population in Hol camp stands at 26,875, comprising over half of the total people staying in it, according to a report by the Rojava Information Centre (RIC).

The Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement announced the repatriation of 584 people from Hol camp, marking Iraq's first repatriation mission since October.

Those leaving Hol camp will be sent to al-Jada camp in Iraq's Nineveh governorate. With this most recent repatriation mission, the total number of Iraqi citizens repatriated from Northern and Eastern Syria since 2017 has risen to 11,484. This includes those repatriated from prisons as well as camps.

A few days after Iraq's new government, under PM Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, was sworn in on 27 October 2022, the Minister of Migration and Displacement suspended the return of displaced Iraqis from Hol camp, citing the need for a more robust humanitarian and security mechanism.

While Iraq has now restarted repatriations, the security risks posed were made evident just a few days ago, when Iraq's Kurdistan Region Security Council announced the arrest of two ISIS members who came from Hol camp and had entered Iraq as part of a formal repatriation group.

In tandem with this recent Hol camp repatriation group, the SDF reportedly handed over 15 Iraqi ISIS prisoners to Iraq's authorities.

In a recent statement, Dana Stroul, the US Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary for the Middle East, emphasized the importance of repatriation in the global fight against ISIS: "We know that ISIS continues to have its eyes on these [al-Hol] detainees and sees them as the path to reconstituting and resurging".

Stroul underlined the US' ongoing commitment to "repatriating foreign fighters to their countries of origin and Iraqi fighters to Iraq as well as supporting Syrian fighters in reintegrating into their communities in Syria".

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AANES: There will be no solution or stability until Afrin and other occupied regions are liberated

ANF | 17 JANUARY 2023

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) released a statement to mark the 5th anniversary of the occupation of Afrin by the Turkish state.

The Autonomous Administration insisted that the struggle would continue until Afrin and other occupied regions were liberated.

The AANES statement on Tuesday includes the following:

“January 20 will mark the 5th anniversary of the beginning of the Turkish attacks on Afrin. The Turkish attacks targeted the democratic project, and at the same time, Turkey’s intention to invade Syria and revive its imperial past was revealed. Afrin was occupied as a result of political bargaining, and, unfortunately, these bargains and agreements are still in force. Changing the demographic structure of the occupied regions and supporting terrorism disclaims the Turkish rhetoric that its military operations serve the Syrian people. In the meantime, it shows that there are attempts to deepen the Syrian crisis and that these forces and parties have made further agreements over the Syrian people.

‘All kinds of crimes have been committed for 5 years’

With all these developments, the suffering of the Syrian people, especially those who were forcibly displaced from their lands, continues. Today marks the 5th anniversary of the Turkish attacks on Afrin. Based on lame excuses, the Turkish state has sought to expand its occupation in Syria, to crackdown on Syrian people, to support terrorism and to prevent stability and agreements.

Afrin, where stability had been achieved and thousands of Syrians had taken refuge before the invasion, has been under pressure, terror, and occupation for the last 5 years. Ethnic and cultural crimes are committed in occupied Afrin. These crimes and violations of rights are committed before the very eyes of the UN, humanitarian and legal organizations.

‘Silence increases crimes’

These crimes must be stopped immediately, and the occupation must end. At the same time, those responsible must be prosecuted and held accountable. Silence paves the way for Turkey to commit such crimes.

We believe that there will be no solution or stability until Afrin and other occupied regions are liberated from the Turkish state. The statements of involved parties concerning the existing agreements and plans and Turkey’s role in the occupied regions are unacceptable, which we strongly reject.

In this context, we salute the resistance of the people and the military forces of Afrin. We insist that the struggle will continue until we ensure the safety of our displaced people and their return to Afrin. In the meantime, we glorify the historic resistance of our people in Shehba and other camps.

We tell all the forces in Syria that Turkey is contributing to all kinds of terrorism with its occupation and ongoing threats in Afrin and other regions. The silence of these forces shows that they are a party to Turkey’s interests in the Syrian people. We would like to state that adhering to moral values is a historical responsibility in this period.

As the Autonomous Administration, we promise our people that we will continue to protect the achievements of the revolution and that we will never renounce liberating the occupied areas. We commemorate all our heroic martyrs who sacrificed their lives in Afrin and other parts of Syria, and we reiterate that we will follow in their footsteps to achieve the great victory.”

KCK: The youth must educate and organize itself to lead the struggle

ANF | BEHDINAN | 18 JANUARY 2023

On Monday evening, a young man set his body on fire in the central Sur district of Amed (Diyarbakır). The young man, identified as Mehmet Akar, succumbed to severe burns in hospital on Tuesday. In his suicide note, he makes it clear that he set himself on fire in protest against Öcalan's isolation on Imralı.

Akar's farewell letter reads: "There is no news of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. Neither his family nor his lawyers are allowed to see him. The applications are rejected without justification. We are concerned about the health condition of Leader Apo. In protest, I will set my body on fire at 21:21 in Amed's Keçi Burcu (Goat Bastion). May the light of the fire that ignites my body illuminate Imralı. I hope that this action will lead to the physical freedom of Leader Apo."

The self-immolation of Mehmet Akar was preceded by the action of Veysi (Bubo) Taş in Mardin. On 12 January 2023, 65-year-old Veysi (Bubo) Taş burned himself to death in the industrial area of the central district of Artuklu in the province of Mardin in protest against the total isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. After unsuccessful treatment in hospital, Taş lost his life.

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement about the self-immolation actions, paying tribute to the martyrs but stating clearly once again "that we do not approve of these kinds of actions."

The KCK statement released on Wednesday includes the following:

"We have been informed that a patriotic Kurdish youth named Mehmet Akar set his body on fire on the walls of Diyarbakır in protest against the isolation of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] and has consequently become a martyr. In the person of Mehmet Akar, we would like to once again commemorate all the martyrs of revolution and democracy with respect and gratitude, bow respectfully in front of their struggle and reiterate our promise of success and victory to the martyrs. In the letter he wrote before his martyrdom, Mehmet Akar stated that he did this action to protest the isolation of Leader Apo. Just a few days ago, Veysi Ateş had also carried out such an action and was martyred. It is our duty as a people and movement to protect the memory of these martyrs, who represent great love for the country, loyalty to the Kurdistan freedom struggle and Leader Apo, and to lead their struggle to victory.

Mehmet Akar's experiences clearly demonstrate how AKP-MHP fascism uses provocations and wages a special war against the Kurdish people. Mehmet Akar was a Kurdish youth with patriotic feelings who sympathized with the Freedom Movement. Like every patriotic Kurdish youth, he made efforts to fight against genocidal colonialism and take more responsibility. However, the fascist AKP-MHP government, which is a special war regime, uses conspiracies and provocations in order to break up the Kurdish youth and distract them from the freedom struggle. One of the methods used by this fascist government is to influence families in various ways to prevent Kurdish youth who are patriotic and sympathetic to the struggle from this path. Mehmet Akar, a patriotic Kurdish youth, was one of those whom they tried to break

through conspiracy and provocations. The fascist AKP-MHP government provoked his family with special warfare methods in order to distract Mehmet Akar from his path and struggle. By creating an environment of provocation, they wanted to create the perception that we kidnap young people through the HDP. However, our friend Mehmet Akar stated from the beginning that this was a provocation and that his family had been deceived. The fascist AKP-MHP government uses this issue for a deliberate campaign against the HDP with the help of its special war methods. But in reality, the AKP-MHP possesses an anti-Kurdish mentality and aims to discourage Kurds from the cause of freedom. All the special war methods, provocations and operations used by the AKP-MHP government serve this purpose. We therefore once again call on the circles that have fallen for the manipulations of the fascist AKP-MHP government: Nobody should fall for these games of the fascist AKP-MHP government. They must give up this attitude, which is the result of the provocations of this government and its special war chief, Süleyman Soylu. The fascist chiefs of the AKP-MHP, especially Tayyip Erdoğan and Süleyman Soylu, resort to these games not because they care about the Kurdish youth, but in order to make the Kurds give up the cause of freedom, the protection of their language, culture and identity, and consequently accept genocide. The aim of these policies is to make them give up being Kurdish and accept being Turkish. These special war policies are carried out by exploiting the feelings of certain people, manipulating others, and giving money to some. The fact that this anti-Kurdish fascist power keeps a number of dishonorable and collaborating Kurdish personalities at its side only serves to hide their anti-Kurdish and genocidal face. In reality, the aim of the AKP-MHP is to carry out the Kurdish genocide and to annihilate the Kurdish identity. The fascist AKP-MHP government conducts operations to kill Kurdish youth every day, and uses all kinds of lethal methods, including chemical weapons, against Kurdish youth. Today, Kurdish daughters and sons are being murdered with chemical weapons. So how can AKP-MHP fascism, which kills Kurdish daughters and sons every day, think of the benefit of the Kurds? Of course, this is not true and only represents great deception and manipulation. The AKP-MHP fascist government resorts to methods and immoral practices that are unprecedented in the world, and does not take into account any rules. It even makes family and maternal feelings the subject of special warfare and abuses them. Everyone must be vigilant in this regard and act knowing that these are games and deceptions. These families should know that they are not doing anything good for themselves and their children with this attitude. The AKP-MHP government is responsible for the lack of a solution to the Kurdish question and for all the suffering of the Kurds. Therefore, these families need to give up their wrong attitude and direct their protests against the AKP-MHP.

With his attitude, Mehmet Akar has defeated the Kurdish genocide policy and special war practices of the AKP-MHP government and the special war chief Süleyman Soylu. This attitude and the meaning it expresses has defeated all their measures. Therefore, his attitude needs to be understood correctly by everyone. Kurds are a people who are fighting for freedom. This cause of the Kurdish people is legitimate. They will never give up this cause. They continue to prove this every day with their attitude and struggle against the genocidal and colonialist policies and AKP-MHP fascism. Can this just cause be ended by influencing or deceiving some people through manipulations, provocations and special warfare methods? Can the Kurdish people, millions of people living with the consciousness and feeling of freedom, be distracted from their path by these methods? Can any results be achieved by approaching millions of Kurdish youth with such logic? Of course, this is not possible. But why insist on it when this is the case? Who benefits from this approach and these policies? It is very clear that it benefits no one except the fascist AKP-MHP regime, its gangs and collaborators. Undoubtedly, AKP-MHP fascism, which is the method of genocidal colonialism, is responsible for all massacres and deaths. It is responsible not only for the killing of Kurds, but also for all the injustice, lawlessness, corruption, and misery in Turkey. Everyone in Turkey who is patriotic, democratic, socialist, libertarian and who believes in the dignity of humanity should not remain in-

different in the face of this situation and should express their protests strongly. Everybody needs to feel this responsibility and live up to this most basic humanitarian and conscientious duty. Turkish society needs to get rid of this fascist regime. Against the isolation of Leader Apo, not only the Kurdish people, but everyone in Turkey who does not support AKP-MHP fascism and who has human values must react and take action. Leader Apo is in isolation because he defends the brotherhood of peoples, the democratization of Turkey and a common life. Therefore, everyone who is in favor of the democratization of Turkey should not be insensitive to the isolation of Leader Apo and should take action against the İmralı isolation and torture system. It is not possible for Turkey to become democratic and move forward on the path of democracy without supporting the freedom struggle of the Kurdish people and Kurdish youth.

The patriotic Kurdish people and the youth of Kurdistan need to embrace Leader Apo even more. This is a requirement of the message given to us by the martyrs. Our friend Mehmet Akar has first and foremost given a message to the youth of Amed [Diyarbakir] and has called on them to support the struggle more. By carrying out his action at 21:21 p.m., he gave a clear message to the people of Amed and its youth. This is a message with a very deep meaning. Our friend Mehmet Akar has also called on all patriotic people from Kurdistan and the youth to fight more against the isolation of Leader Apo. The patriotic people and youth of Kurdistan need to therefore take this call as a basis for themselves, protect Leader Apo even more and increase the struggle.

On the occasion of the martyrdom of Mehmet Akar, we would like to once again clearly state that we do not approve of these kinds of actions. Leader Apo has clearly stated that he values this kind of willpower very much, but that he does not approve of such actions and that more creative and different actions should be taken instead. The Kurdish people and Kurdish youth need to understand this as an instruction from Leader Apo and act accordingly. There should definitely not be any actions of self-immolation. Undoubtedly, Mehmet Akar's action is a great example of courage, sacrifice, and commitment. In this sense, it is a great action. But the style of necessary actions must be evaluated on these grounds: our struggle has developed and grown. There are opportunities to work, struggle and develop in many areas of the struggle. The patriotic Kurdish youth needs to recognize this and act accordingly. The Kurdish youth needs to join the guerrilla and fight against the enemy in order to further expand the struggle. Those who do not have the opportunity to reach the guerrilla need to fight against the enemy where they are, in every city, neighborhood and village. They need to educate, raise awareness and organize the people, and in this way widen the struggle. Young people everywhere must educate and organize themselves to lead the struggle and the people. This is the right method of struggle that must be taken as a basis. Therefore, we once again call on all patriotic friends of the people of Kurdistan to express their protests more strongly against the isolation of Leader Apo, to increase the struggle to overthrow the fascist AKP-MHP regime and to build a democratic Turkey.”

Yet another Turkish drone attack in Rojava

ANF | 18 JANUARY 2023

A Turkish combat drone bombed a car on the road between Qamishlo and Derik. The attack occurred in the village of Maşûqê, seven kilometres east of Tirbespiyê. No information is yet available on the consequences of the attack. This is the seventh known drone attack by Turkey in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria this year.

On 3 January, the MLKP representative in Rojava, Zeki Gürbüz, and fighter Özgür Namoğlu were killed by a Turkish drone in Heseke. On the same day, a woman succumbed to her severe injuries from a drone attack on a chicken farm in Tirbespiye on Christmas Eve. In Ain Issa, a ten-year-old was injured by a Turkish drone about a week ago. On Sunday, a drone attack took place in a village near Amude, and a week ago a car was bombed on the road between Qamishlo and Heseke.

According to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Turkey has carried out 120 drone attacks and 43 airstrikes by fighter jets against northern and eastern Syria in the past year.

Turkey mainly tries to kill people who are important for stability in the areas of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES); autonomous administration personnel, members of military structures, politicians. However, the civilian population is also targeted time and again.

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Students in occupied Girê Spî forced to sing Turkish national anthem

ANF | 18 JANUARY 2023

Citing sources from the occupied Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) Canton, ANHA reported on Wednesday that the invaders forced students to memorize the Turkish national anthem to sing in the schools in the canton.

Pupils attending schools under the control of the Girê Spî Regional Assembly are now supposed to sing the Turkish anthem on the first day of the week. In reaction to it, some parents dropped their children out of those schools and re-enrolled them in private schools.

Following the occupation of the Girê Spî Canton by the Turkish state and its mercenaries on October 9, 2019, thousands of its residents were forcibly displaced. A policy of "Turkification" was systematically imposed on the local people who remained in the canton. While Turkish has been adopted as the language of instruction, educational materials have been reorganized according to schools in Turkey.

The same sources report that the Turkish invaders forced students to study the history of the Turkish state and printed photos of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in textbooks. These methods are spreading extremist ideas and nationalism in the occupied territories. In the meantime, Turkey cooperates with associations affiliated to Pakistan, Chechnya and Gulf countries for the spread of terrorism.

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PYD calls for establishment of international tribunal for ISIS mercenaries

ANF | 19 JANUARY 2023

The Democratic Union Party (PYD) made a statement on the anniversary of the attack by ISIS mercenaries on the Sinaa prison in Heseke on 20 January 2022.

The PYD underlined that the attack was backed by the Turkish state and said: “After the defeat of ISIS mercenaries in Baghouz in 2019, the Islamic State attacked the Sinai Prison in the neighborhood of Xi-wêran in Heseke, where more than 3,000 ISIS mercenaries are being held. The mercenaries that rioted in the prison kidnapped the security guards. However, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Internal Security Forces and Anti-Terrorist Forces (YAT) surrounded the prison and the area near it.

After days of fighting, the SDF took control of the prison and arrested the mercenaries who had tried to escape. At the same time, the invading Turkish state and its mercenaries attacked Til Temir. This showed that the attacks and the riot in prison were linked. It soon became clear that there was an attempt to revive ISIS and create chaos in the Autonomous Administration regions.”

The statement added that the SDF defeated this attempt with a brave resistance in which 121 SDF fighters and security forces fell as martyrs. “This attack and the danger these terrorist cells still pose, show that it is in the interests of many local states to continue the conflict in Syria and to revive ISIS to use it to fuel more unrest in the Autonomous Administration regions.”

The statement paid tribute to the 121 martyrs who sacrificed their lives to protect the region from ISIS terrorists and its supporters and saluted the resistance carried out by the SDF and Security Forces to protect the region and the support of the people.

The statement ended with the following remarks: “We call on the international community and the International Coalition to eradicate this terrorist group, put pressure on the states whose nationals are in prisons in Northern and Eastern Syria, and to establish an international tribunal for the trial of these ISIS prisoners. The intervention of the Turkish state in the Autonomous Administration regions should be stopped. As the SDF will be busy responding to external attacks, conditions will be suitable for the revival of ISIS in the region.”

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German Parliament recognizes the ISIS genocide against Yazidis in Shengal

ANF | BERLIN | 19 JANUARY 2023

The German Parliament Bundestag on Thursday recognized the systematic persecution and murder of Yazidis in northern Iraq (southern Kurdistan) by ISIS as genocide. The MPs voted unanimously in favor of the resolution, which was jointly tabled by the SPD, FDP, CDU/CSU parliamentary groups. "The German Bundestag bows to the victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by ISIS," the resolution reads. "It recognizes the suffering caused to hundreds of thousands of people by the crimes of the terrorist organization ISIS and pays tribute to the resistance of countless people in the region against the tyrannical injustice and the resolute commitment to human rights, democracy, and the coexistence of religions. Six million people became internally displaced persons in Iraq alone as a result of the indescribable atrocities, refugees worldwide—many of whom have still not been able to return to their homes. Yazidis, Christians and members of other religious and ethnic minorities, as well as Muslims resisting ISIS, became victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity. In particular, ISIS pursued the goal of complete extermination of the Yazidi community. More than 5,000 Yazidis were tortured and brutally murdered by ISIS, especially in 2014.' The resolution stated that the ISIS' crimes in Shengal in 2014 were "genocide in the sense of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide."

The vote in the Bundestag was followed by Yazidi representatives. Sevim Dağdelen, a left-wing MP, said in the debate before the vote that ISIS is supported by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey and that the weapons given to the terrorist militia also come from German production. Dağdelen criticized the text of the resolution for not mentioning the YPG by name. "While the Peshmerga fled, the defense forces from Rojava reached Shengal and saved the lives of thousands of people. This must be named." The resolution only mentions "Kurdish units", which were instrumental in the territorial victory over ISIS in Iraq. In fact, it was mainly the PKK guerrillas who came out of the mountains with hundreds of fighters and, together with the YPG/YPJ from Rojava, confronted the Islamists.

Dağdelen also criticized the German government's support of the Erdogan regime and pointed out that Turkey continues to attack the Yazidi community in Shengal. "If Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock wants to protect the Yazidis and Shengal, she must speak out against Turkey's attacks, which are against international law," she said.

Regarding the insecure situation in Shengal, the resolution says of the role of the Turkish state: "Turkey's military operations also violate Iraq's state sovereignty and have the potential to destabilize northern Iraq, including the Kurdistan-Iraq region."

The resolution includes demands from the German government. The government should expand the legal processing and prosecution of perpetrators in its own country and internationally, provide more financial support for the collection of evidence on the ground in Iraq, support a documentation centre on the crimes of international law committed by ISIS in Germany, urge Iraq to protect the rights of Yazidis and help in the reconstruction of destroyed Yazidi settlements. This was based on a petition by the Berlin-

based association Office for Yazidi Affairs [Stelle für jesidische Angelegenheiten], which campaigned for recognition. UN bodies and the European Parliament have already recognised ISIS crimes as genocide, as have Armenia, Australia, the US House of Representatives and the Scottish Parliament.

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YPJ: As long as there are occupiers in our land, we will continue to struggle

ANF | 20 JANUARY 2023

On 20 January 2018, the Turkish state began its invasion of Afrin. Since then, a regime of expulsion and oppression has prevailed in the region. On the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the invasion, the General Command of the Women's Defense Units (YPJ) declared: “On the 5th anniversary of the occupation of Afrin, we state that we will avenge our fallen with the patriotism of our people, we will fight in the spirit of the fallen of the Afrin resistance and the occupiers defeat in our country.”

The statement added: “Those who do not accept the will of the people, the enemies of democracy and freedom, seek to eliminate free land and the existence of a free society through genocide, massacre, and occupation. The current threats and attacks by the Turkish occupying state against Rojava and Northern and Eastern Syria are the result of this murderous understanding of power.

Our people defend themselves against the invasion attacks and threats carried out by the Turkish state. Our people fight for freedom in the resistance areas. Our people, who on 19 November clearly showed their position against the Turkish state's air strikes, showed that they will defend their country and its revolution from Shehba to Kobane to Derik.”

The statement continued: “We are a defense force that embodies the power and will of our people. So we will continue our fight until there are no more occupiers anywhere. We promise our people, all our comrades who shed their blood in Afrin that we will not abandon our country to the invaders.”

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Two soldiers killed in Zap as Turkey continues chemical weapon attacks

ANF | BEHDINAN | 20 JANUARY 2023

Two members of the Turkish occupation forces were killed in sniper attacks by Kurdish guerrillas in the Zap region on Friday. This was reported by the press office of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) in an

update on the current war in the Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). Both actions took place last night in the heavily contested Çemço area. One of the actions was carried out by a sniper from the YJA Star (Free Women's Troops).

According to the HPG statement, the guerrillas prevented a helicopter attack on Çemço and the neighboring village of Sîda the day before. Both villages are located in the Sheladize sub-district near Amadiya and have been at the focus of the occupation forces since the partial withdrawal of the Turkish army from the Zap in December. The area is of strategic importance and the guerrilla armies HPG and YJA Star are putting up fierce resistance. At Girê FM in the western part of the Zap, mobile teams of the YJA Star shelled Turkish military positions with heavy weapons.

HPG also reported that Turkey's use of chemical weapons continues unabated. At least 16 such attacks were recorded by the HPG on Thursday alone, all of them directed against guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sîda. Here, the Turkish army carried out dozens of bombardments with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. In Xakurke, the HPG registered five airstrikes by fighter jets against the Goşîne and Sinîne areas. The resistance area of Kurojahro was bombed eight times by attack helicopters.

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HPG reports ongoing Turkish attacks and guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 21 JANUARY 2023

According to the statement released by the Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) on Saturday, a soldier of the Turkish army was shot dead by a sniper of the YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) on Friday. During a guerrilla action in the Zap region, a grenade launcher position of the occupation forces was destroyed.

On the other hand, the Turkish army attacked guerrilla positions 19 times with chemical weapons, twice with unconventional bombs, 19 times with fighter jets and dozens of times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

Regarding the details of the guerrilla actions and the attacks by the Turkish army on 20 January, the HPG gave the following information:

“Near the village of Sîda in the Sheladize sub-district of Amadiya, Turkish troops were struck four times with heavy weapons during the day. In the first action, at eight o'clock in the morning, an enemy position was destroyed, as well as the grenade launcher positioned there. In the nearby Çemço area, a mobile team of YJA Star carried out an action with a heavy weapon.

The guerrillas also used heavy weapons against the Turkish occupiers in the Girê FM resistance area. At 9 pm, a female sniper shot dead a soldier in the area.

Attacks with chemical weapons and banned bombs and the artillery attacks of the Turkish army were directed against guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sida. The resistance area Girê Cûdî, the areas Kanîsarkê, Deriyê Hirçê, Girê Zengil, Gundê Guzê and Deşta Kafya in Gare as well as Berdesorê in Xakurkê were bombed by fighter jets a total of 19 times.”

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SDF fighter martyred in Turkish drone attack in Rimelan

ANF | 21 JANUARY 2023

On the 19th of January, an UAV belonging to the Turkish occupying army targeted a point belonging to SDF military relations used for military coordination with international coalition forces in the town of Rimelan.

“The treacherous targeting resulted in the martyrdom of one of our fighters, who was in charge of coordination and military relations with the international coalition, and one other wounded,” said the SDF Media Center in a statement on Saturday.

The statement pointed out that, “While we extend condolences to ourselves, the families of our martyrs, and the rest of our people, we pledge to retaliate for the blood of our martyrs by raising higher the banner of resistance, escalating our struggle, and to follow in the footsteps of our martyrs until achieving their aspirations of liberating our occupied areas and maintaining safety and security.”

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12-year-old injured in Turkish drone attack in Rojava loses his life

ANF | 21 JANUARY 2023

On January 18, a Turkish combat drone bombed a car on the road between Qamishlo and Derik. The attack occurred in the village of Maşûqê, seven kilometres east of Tirbespiyê.

12-year-old Ehmed Ebdulxanî Salim, who was seriously injured as a result of the attack, succumbed to his injuries on Friday evening.

Wednesday’s aggression is the seventh known drone attack by Turkey in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria this year.

On 3 January, the MLKP representative in Rojava, Zeki Gürbüz, and fighter Özgür Namoğlu were killed by a Turkish drone in Heseke. On the same day, a woman succumbed to her severe injuries from a drone attack on a chicken farm in Tirbespiye on Christmas Eve. In Ain Issa, a ten-year-old kid was injured by a Turkish drone about a week ago. On Sunday, a drone attack took place in a village near Amude, and a week ago a car was bombed on the road between Qamishlo and Heseke.

According to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Turkey has carried out 120 drone attacks and 43 airstrikes by fighter jets against northern and eastern Syria in the past year.

Turkey mainly tries to kill people who are important for stability in the areas of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES); autonomous administration personnel, members of military structures, politicians. However, the civilian population is also targeted time and again.



Invaders storm a village and kidnap six residents in Afrin

ANF | 21 JANUARY 2023

Since the occupation of Afrin, kidnappings by mercenaries loyal to Turkey continue. The so-called civil police backed by Turkish intelligence (MIT) raided the village of Kefer Zite in Jindires district.

As a result of the raid with dozens of military vehicles, the invaders kidnapped locals named Bekir Hesên Xêro (35), Rêber Hesên Xêro (32), Elî Kalo (40), Mihemed Ferîd (28), Mihemed Kalo (36) and Ednan Ebdo (39).

Abducted persons are often taken to torture centres run by the mercenary groups and are only released in exchange for high ransom payments. In the torture centres, agents of the Turkish secret service MIT are actively involved in the torture and thus try to extort information about the ongoing resistance in Afrin.

With names like “civil police”, Turkey tries to give the mercenary groups a legal veneer. In reality, however, they are a conglomerate of jihadists and Turkish right-wing extremists who compete with each other for ransoms, loot, and protection money and operate their own torture prisons under the control of the MIT. The so-called “civil police” have been given control tasks inside Afrin in particular. At the same time, the al-Qaeda offshoot HTS (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) is stationed there to a large extent.

According to the human rights organisation Afrin-Syria, 346 people were abducted by the occupying forces and their mercenary militias in the first half of 2022. Among them are 30 women. At least 18 people were murdered in this context in the first half of the year. More up-to-date statistics are not yet available.

Afrin occupied since 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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



HPG statement on the murder of five people in Mardin

ANF | BEHDINAN | 22 JANUARY 2023

The People’s Defense Forces (HPG) released a statement about the deadly attack on Wednesday night in the northern Kurdish province of Mardin. In the ambush in the immediate vicinity of a gendarmerie station, five people from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were executed with shots to the head. The victims are members of two closely related families from the Sheladize who had entered Turkey by car.

In a statement on Sunday, the Press Centre of the HPG said: “Five people from Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq) were brutally murdered in Mardin on the night of 19 January. We offer our condolences to their families, the Rêkanî tribe and the people of Kurdistan. The victims are members of the Rêkanî tribe and patriotic people from a region that is constantly attacked by the Turkish state. These attacks have already caused many deaths.”

The statement continued: “Because these people are targeted by the Turkish state anyway, the attack looks like a sinister incident. It is striking that the state is scrambling to portray this incident as a criminal act, while at the same time the public prosecutor’s office has imposed a secrecy order. This increases the likelihood that the brutal massacre is a planned counter-attack as part of the intimidation plan against Kurds. As the People's Defence Forces, we will continue to pursue the case and demand accountability.”

Regarding the day-to-day events in the war in Southern Kurdistan, the HPG reported that the Turkish army continues to use prohibited weapons against guerrilla positions. On 21 January, the HPG registered 17 chemical weapons attacks and the use of an unconventional bomb in Çemço and Sîda in the Sheladize sub-district near the town of Amadiya. The guerrilla positions in the two areas as well as in the resistance areas of Girê Amêdî, Girê Cûdî and Girê FM were also attacked dozens of times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. The Turkish Air Force bombed Deşta Kafya in Gare and the Lolan shore in Xakurke a total of four times on Saturday.

The guerrillas continue to resist the Turkish occupation. Near the village of Sîda, guerrillas destroyed a Turkish army surveillance camera installed around a guerrilla position. Mobile guerrilla teams struck the occupation forces in Sîda, Çemço and Girê FM four times with heavy weapons on Saturday.



Many unanswered questions after the deadly attack in Mardin

ANF | 22 JANUARY 2023

There is great horror after Wednesday night’s deadly attack in the northern Kurdish province of Mardin. Members of two closely related families were in a vehicle with Iraqi licence plates that was ambushed shortly after midnight on Thursday on the road connecting Nusaybin and Kızıltepe. Three of the occupants—the couple, Abdullah Salih Mustafa (69) and Çimen Şahin Halid (75) and their daughter Hindirin Abdullah Salih (39)—were killed instantly. Wahida Haydar Casim (63) and her son Ahmed Celaleddin Ibrahim (45) succumbed to their severe gunshot wounds in two different hospitals.

All the victims were from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and had made their way to Turkey together. A second daughter of Abdullah Salih Mustafa, who lives in Samsun on the Black Sea coast, was supposed to be visited. According to relatives, the couple spent several weeks in the region every year to spend time with their daughter who lives far away. Wahida Haydar Casim suffered from an eye disease and had an appointment for surgery at a clinic in Amed (Diyarbakır). Both murdered men were also respected imams in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

As footage from state and private surveillance cameras shows, the group's vehicle was pursued early on in Turkish territory. At least four men are said to have been directly involved in the crime, two of whom took up the pursuit at a rest stop where the victims had previously eaten dinner in a restaurant. The car was then stopped in an ambush by the other two attackers at the Durakbaşı height. The scenes show men armed with long guns ripping open the doors of the vehicle and literally executing the occupants with shots to the head. They then flee in their car.

Although the Turkish gendarmerie (military police) arrested six suspects on Thursday, four of them are still in custody. The accusation is that they killed the five victims in order to rob them. However, not only the fact that the perpetrators allegedly used rented cars, but also the fact that the alleged robbery took place 300 meters away from the Yeniköy gendarmerie station, may speak against the theory of a robbery-murder. But no sounds of gunshots were heard there. The police apparently only arrived after they had been informed by the emergency services. The emergency call to 112 was reportedly made by a car driver.

According to the local prosecutor, all suspects are from the Nusaybin area. One of them is said to have worked for one of the victims' families in the past and only recently returned from the KRI. During interrogation, one of the men reportedly stated that he had committed the murder in order to obtain the assets of the victims and to pay his debts.

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Families of soldiers: Many deaths registered as suicide

ANF | ELAZIG | 24 JANUARY 2023

The Turkish state continues to hide its defeat in the guerrilla areas. However, the efforts by the Turkish army to hide its losses are in vain as the information and documents published confirm the balance sheet announced by the HPG. The statement made by the Association of the Families of all Martyrs who are not considered as Martyrs recently revealed the true extent of the war. Association President Hava Gölbez spoke to the Alternative Agenda program on Medya News TV.

‘All these deaths that turned out not to be suicides’

Answering to Barış Boyraz in the program, Havva Gölbez said that it has been confirmed that some deaths “are said to be suicides, but in fact they were not and this has been proven. Of course, it takes time and a thorough investigation to prove that these deaths were not suicides.”

Gölbez, who shared striking information about the loss of soldiers in her phone interview, said that many soldiers' families have applied to them recently. Gölbez confirmed that soldiers were killed, mostly in the regions of Hakkari and Şırnak.

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Man injured in Turkish drone attack in Rojava dies

ANF | 24 JANUARY 2023

On January 18, a Turkish combat drone bombed a car near the Arî station on the road between Qamishlo and Derik.

Hisên Hesam, from the Kihêna Dirêj village of the Koçerat region in Dêrik, was injured in the head as a result of the attack and was hospitalized in Derik.

The man is reported to have lost his life in hospital this morning.

12-year-old Ehmed Ebdulxanî Salim, who was seriously injured in the same attack, also succumbed to his injuries on Friday evening.

Wednesday's aggression is the seventh known drone attack by Turkey in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria this year. Footage by ANHA shows the moment of attack.

On 3 January, the MLKP representative in Rojava, Zeki Gürbüz, and fighter Özgür Namoğlu were killed by a Turkish drone in Heseke. On the same day, a woman succumbed to her severe injuries from a drone attack on a chicken farm in Tirbespiye on Christmas Eve. In Ain Issa, a ten-year-old kid was injured by a Turkish drone about a week ago. On Sunday, a drone attack took place in a village near Amude, and a week ago a car was bombed on the road between Qamishlo and Heseke.

According to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Turkey has carried out 120 drone attacks and 43 airstrikes by fighter jets against northern and eastern Syria in the past year.

Turkey mainly tries to kill people who are important for stability in the areas of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES); autonomous administration personnel, members of military structures, politicians. However, the civilian population is also targeted time and again.



Syrian Democratic Forces arrest informers working for Turkish intelligence

ANF | 25 JANUARY 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said in a statement: "Our forces arrested several agents linked to the Turkish occupation intelligence. They were involved in targeting the military and security points with IEDs and sending their coordinates to the Turkish occupation."

The statement added: "Saleh Ali Khoja, 2001, from Abu Galgal village, Manbij, is one of the arrested agents. He explains how the Turkish intelligence recruited him. 'In 2019, I traveled to Turkey and returned in 2022 with a young man from Abu Galgal named Saleh. We entered Manbij through Jarabulus,' he said.

'In Jarabulus, Saleh and I went to the guesthouse of Sheikh Safuk before entering Manbij. While we were at the guesthouse, a man named Anad Hussein al-Nayef told us that he could help us to enter Manbij illegally,' he added.

‘On October 5, 2022, Anad asked me to send him photos of military sites in Manbij. Indeed, I photographed two sites for him, and he sent me two thousand US dollars in return. After that, I sent him more pictures of different positions. He promised to send me more money, but he procrastinated, saying that the sites were under investigation,’ he added.” On November 24, 2022, Saleh was arrested by the Manbij Military Council forces.”

The statement added: "The second agent is Ali Abdullah Al-Hamad, 1999. He is from the Al-Shamitiya village, Deir Ezzor countryside, and he lives in the al-Diriyah neighborhood, Raqqa city.

‘In December 2022, my cousin, Muhammad al-Khalaf, contacted me through a woman. Ten days later, he sent me a picture of an SDF military site located in the town of al-Chalabiya, near Ain Issa. He asked me to send him the coordinates of that site,’ he said.

‘He asked me to contact someone called Salsabil, a member of the Turkish intelligence, and send him the information I have. I sent him the number of the SDF fighters in one of the regiments and their weapons. Salsabil asked me to define the visitation times of the regiment command, which I have no idea about,’ he continued.

‘After that, I sent him pictures of some positions, one of them belonging to the Internal Security Forces in Raqqa, so he sent me /200/ US dollars through a person who lives in the Al-Hakoumiya neighborhood where I was arrested on December 27, 2022,’ he said.

‘What I did is a great betrayal of my family and my country, and I ask the Syrian Democratic Forces for forgiveness,’ he confessed.”

The statement also reported the confession of a third informer, “Khaled Mahmoud Al-Shehab, from the village of Al-Khashafiya, Al-Derbasiyah district.

‘I have a nephew named Yasser who, one day, asked me to accompany him without telling me what the destination was. We arrived at a farm where he brought an IED. That time I realized that he was working with the Turkish occupation intelligence, and I started working with him on receiving, transporting, and planting the IEDs coming from the Turkish occupation intelligence,’ he said.

‘He used to pay me between /200/ and /300/ US dollars for each IED. I received 500 US dollars, in addition to 600 US dollars for the bike,’ he confessed.

‘Money blinded my insight, so I never thought about what I was doing. One time I heard my nephew talking to the person who used to send him the IEDs. He is a Syrian man named Muhammad aka Abu Farouk. He was in Ras a-Ain where my nephew fled, leaving me to be arrested.’

Our forces continue to carry out operations to detect the Turkish-linked spy networks and agents affiliated with the Turkish occupation intelligence who are trying to hit the security and stability of our regions.”

HPG reports ongoing Turkish attacks with chemical weapons

ANF | BEHDINAN | 26 JANUARY 2023

In its overview of the war in Kurdistan, the Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) reported continued actions by guerrillas and attacks by the Turkish army in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement, the Turkish army attacked guerrilla positions with unconventional bombs, chemical weapons, fighter jets, attack helicopters and artillery on Wednesday.

In the morning on Jan. 25, mobile guerrilla teams struck the invasion forces in Çemço area in the countryside of Amadiya. Another action by mobile guerrillas with heavy weapons targeted the invaders in the Girê FM resistance area.

In the evening hours, a soldier was shot dead by a guerrilla sniper in the Çemço area.

The Turkish army, on the other hand, attacked guerrilla positions in Çemço on 25 January with an unconventional bomb and in 14 cases with chemical weapons. In the vicinity of the nearby village of Sîda, Turkish troops have been trying to demolish guerrilla positions with construction machinery since 23 January. The guerrilla positions in Sîda as well as the Girê Cûdî resistance area were bombed a total of eleven times by fighter jets on Wednesday. The Kurojahro resistance area was attacked four times by combat helicopters.

In addition, dozens of attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on Tuesday and Wednesday were directed against the guerrilla positions in Çemço and the resistance areas of Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amêdî.



Operation against MIT-KDP agent network in Shengal

ANF | SHENGAL | 26 JANUARY 2023

On Tuesday, the special units of the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ) and the security forces of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of Shengal launched a joint operation against an agent network in the Yazidi region in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). A network of spies of the Turkish secret service and South Kurdistan's ruling party, KDP, which closely collaborates with it, provides coordinates for deadly air attacks on representatives of the Shengal Autonomous Administration and its defense forces.

Since 2017, the Turkish state has been targeting the institutions of the Shengal Autonomous Administration and its representatives. After the signing of the agreement of 9 October 2021 between the KDP and Baghdad, the attacks on Shengal increased even more. In addition to airstrikes, assassination attacks have

been taking place for some time. The attacks and assassinations are not possible without the involvement of forces on the ground. Therefore, the operation is also titled an “Operasyona Tolhildanê” (Revenge Operation) and is directed against the agents involved and their infrastructure. So far, security circles have reported that severe damage was done to the network on the first day and that the background of many of the attacks was cleared up. According to the RojNews, the forces had been preparing for the operation for a long time. The operation is set to continue until the network dismantled.

RojNews reported that several suspected members of the network have already been caught and some of them have already confessed to spying for MIT or the KDP.

Meanwhile, the Shengal Autonomous Administration called for support for the operation, stating, “Yesterday, it became known that the YBŞ and Shengal security forces have launched a ‘revenge operation’ against agents. We support this operation and call on our people to do the same by sharing the information available to them.”

Referring to the victims of the Turkish attacks and assaults of the past years, the Autonomous Administration said: “It is the duty of all those who have the interests of society at heart to hold the enemy and his accomplices accountable. We have repeatedly called on our youth not to fall into the trap of the KDP and not to play the enemy’s game. We renew this call: Those who collaborate with the enemy will definitely be held accountable.”

“We wish our defence forces success and declare that Shengal is safe thanks to them. Thanks to our defence forces, our society is able to live on its own land and preserve its faith,” added the Autonomous Administration.



Turkey deports 100 Syrian refugees to the region it occupied

ANF - 29 JANUARY 2023

According to the information received from sources in the region, the Turkish state deported 100 Syrian refugees to their occupied regions in northern Syria. The aim of the Turkish state is to settle these people in houses built with the financing of Gulf and European Muslim Brotherhood groups.

The Turkish state deported these refugees from the Bab El Salam Border Gate in Ezaz, north of Aleppo.

The invading Turkish state keeps Syrian refugees in prisons in Maraş for several weeks after detaining them. Then, they deport them in groups to the areas they have occupied.

Sources said that the Turkish state is currently holding thousands of Syrian refugees in closed areas in Maraş. The majority of the deported refugees are from different parts of Syria, such as Damascus, Homs and Hama.

Turkey announced in May 2022 that they will resettle one million Syrians in the regions under their occupation.

In this way, the Turkish state is trying to succeed and complete the demographic change in Syria and especially in the Kurdish regions.



HPG: Three soldiers killed in guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 29 JANUARY 2023

The press centre of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the ongoing war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG statement, guerrillas struck a Turkish military unit seeking to demolish a defensive position with construction machinery near the village of Sîda on 28 January. A shovel excavator was destroyed during the action, which left a member of the Turkish invading forces dead and another injured.

A mobile guerrilla team carried out an action with heavy weapons against Turkish troops in the nearby Çemço area in the Zap region. Two soldiers were killed as a result.

According to the HPG statement, the Turkish army is still trying to destroy guerrilla positions near Sîda with construction equipment. In addition, the guerrilla positions were bombed six times by fighter jets on Saturday. Dozens of attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons were directed against Sîda and Çemço.



Resistance in East Kurdistan and Iran enters fifth month

ANF | 16 JANUARY 2023

The popular revolt in East Kurdistan and Iran after Mahsa Amini was tortured to death continues despite all the killings and detention operations by the Iranian state. The resistance has today entered its 5th month.

Students and workers continue protests

In 8 districts of Tehran, people shouted slogans against the Iranian state from their balconies and stated that they would continue the protests until they achieved their goals.

In the meantime, university students also continued to stage protests.

Strikes were carried out in the cities of Zencan and Maḥşahr. Workers demanded improvements in working conditions.

The names of 50 protestors detained in Jawanroud last week have been released. Detention operations continue in Sine, Seqiz, Dêwlan, Bokan and many other cities.

Despite all the detention operations, the protests continue. Commemoration ceremonies for the murdered protestors generally turn into mass protests. Another group of protestors detained by the regime forces received various sentences.

At least 500 people killed

At least 500 protestors have been killed by the Iranian state forces since the protests began. Of those killed, 120 are Kurds. While 112 protestors were sentenced to the death penalty, 4 of them have already been executed.

A mass rally will be held today in Strasbourg, France to give support to the popular resistance in East Kurdistan and Iran.



Wave of arrests spreads across Iran and East Kurdistan

ANF | 19 JANUARY 2023

In a new crackdown on protestors, the regime forces carried out several raids yesterday (Jan. 18).

Dozens of people from the city of Piranshahr and its villages were detained by the regime forces and taken to an unknown location.

Furthermore, a group of activists was detained in the cities of Shino, Kamuran and Sine (Sanandaj). The wave of detentions continues in other cities as well.

The Iranian state has broadened the wave of arrests in the cities where mass demonstrations have taken place.

More than 50 citizens and activists were detained in Jawanroud (Ciwanro) last week.

Nearly 20,000 people have been detained since the beginning of the mass anti-government demonstrations in Iran and East Kurdistan. At least 16 demonstrators died due to torture and lack of treatment in prisons. 112 demonstrators have been sentenced to death.

The European Parliament called on Wednesday for the EU to list Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization.

The recent move is considered to be an achievement of the 'Jin, Jiyan, Azadi' (Woman, Life, Freedom) uprising. The role of the Revolutionary Guards in suppressing the demonstrators is cited as the reason for the EU initiative.

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Femicide

Femicides in Iran go unpunished

ANF | 23 JANUARY 2023

Femicides in Iran have surged in the past year. While there has been a decrease in femicides since the mass anti-government protests sparked by the murder of Mahsa Amini, there has been an increase in suicides and suspicious female deaths due to various factors, especially repression at the hands of the state.

Policy of impunity remains pervasive

In the meantime, the policy of impunity for femicides remains pervasive in the country. The trial that dealt with the murder of 17-year-old Mona Haydari in Iran was held on January 18. The perpetrator, Seyyid Haydari, was kind of rewarded as he was sentenced to 8 years and 2 months in prison for “disturbing the peace” while he faced no sentence for murdering his wife and torturing her body.

Women forced to commit suicide

In cases that involve sexual assault and harassment, women generally cannot press charges. Should they take action to do so, they are forced to commit suicide by being targeted by society and the laws. It seems natural for male members of the family to kill women who are subjected to sexual assault or harassment since they are labelled as ‘dirty’ after revealing violations against them.

No reliable information

There is no reliable information concerning femicides, suicides or suspicious deaths of women in the country. While human rights organizations face problems with documenting state-sponsored femicides, it becomes even more difficult to bring up the issue in public. Moreover, internet restrictions in the country create difficulties with information sharing.

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Two more female journalists arrested in Iran

ANF | 23 JANUARY 2023

According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), writer and journalist Saeedeh Shafiee was arrested on January 22, 2023. Shafiee's husband, Hassan Homayoun, stated: "My wife was arrested at our home. We are deeply concerned about her health."

On the same day, another journalist, Mehrnoosh Zarei Hanzaki, was also arrested in Tehran and put in Evin prison.

According to data collected by HRANA, at least 79 journalists and media practitioners have been arrested since the beginning of nationwide protests on September 17.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in New York, more than 90 media workers were arrested in the country as part of the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" revolution. About half of the detainees have since been released on bail. The possibilities for reporting in the country are massively restricted; freedom of the press does not exist. In a ranking by the organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on the situation of freedom of the press and information, Iran is ranked 178th out of a total of 180 countries.

The "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" revolution was triggered by the death of Jina Mahsa Amini in September. The 22-year-old Kurdish woman died as a result of physical abuse under police custody in Tehran. Since then, tens of thousands have been demonstrating in the country against the authoritarian policies of the Islamist regime and demanding a change of system. The ruling clergy is taking brutal action against the revolutionary movement. The US-based human rights group HRANA estimates that at least 525 demonstrators have been killed by regime forces, including more than 70 children.

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Journalist who interviewed Jina Amini's father sentenced to two years in prison

ANF | 30 JANUARY 2023

A Kurdish journalist in Iran has been sentenced to two years in prison with a five-year suspended sentence. According to several human rights groups, Nazila Maroofian was found guilty of "propaganda against the state" and "spreading false information". The verdict was passed in the absence of the 23-year-old by a so-called revolutionary court in Tehran. The judge also imposed a fine of the equivalent of 310 euros and a five-year ban on leaving the country.

Maroofian, who lives in Tehran, comes from the city of Seqiz in Eastern Kurdistan, the hometown of Jina Mahsa Amini, whose death sparked the "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" revolution. The 22-year-old was arrested by the

so-called moral police on 13 September during a family visit in the Iranian capital Tehran because she was wearing the hijab in the wrong way.

Amini was taken to a police station on the pretext that she was being given “awareness and training” on dress codes. According to witnesses, the young woman was brutally beaten there, especially on the head. She collapsed and was taken to a hospital. On 16 September, the authorities officially pronounced Amini dead. The regime circulated the version that she was suffering from a heart condition which caused her death. The Tehran clinic, where Amini was in a coma, said after her death that she was brain-dead when she was admitted.

On 19 October, Maroofian posted an interview with Amini’s father, Amjad, on the Mostaghel website. In it, the man rejected the official information that his daughter had suffered from an illness. The title of the interview, which was removed shortly thereafter, was unambiguous: “Mahsa Amini’s father: ‘You are lying!’” A few days later, Maroofian was arrested in Tehran and taken to the notorious Evin torture prison. Although she suffered two mild heart attacks early in her detention, she was not released until mid-January after posting bail.

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Ecocide

Turkish state and its mercenaries continue to cut down olive trees in Afrin

ANF | SHEHBA | 17 JANUARY 2023

The Turkish state and its mercenaries cut down 50 olive trees belonging to a man called Mistefa Yasin in Afrin.

According to the information received, the ‘Jaysh El Nuxbe’ mercenaries seized the olive grove belonging to Mistefa Yasin and his brother in the village of Berava. The cut trees are located between the villages of Derwêş and Berava.

It is worth noting that foreign migrants staying in Avraz Camp and Liwa Shemal mercenaries continue to cut trees on Hawar Mountain.

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Turkish state mercenaries cut down 520 more trees in Afrin

ANF | 29 JANUARY 2023

According to sources in the Canton of Afrin, mercenaries affiliated with the invading Turkish state and settlers in the Zaviye Mountain region and Atme town have cut down more than 520 olive, apple, black plum, almond and walnut trees in the villages of Kurzêlê and Eyndarê in Sherawa and the village of Coqê in Afrin.

The cut trees belonged to citizens named Reşîd Ebdo, Rêzan Ebdo, Mistefa Ebdo, Mihemed Îbo, Mistefa Mihemed and Yûsif Ebdurehman from the villages of Kurzêlê and Eyndarê.

In the village of Coqê, 20 olive trees belonging to a citizen named Osman Hec Hemîd were cut down in Afrin. Footage of mercenaries cutting trees in the Cindirêse appeared in the press.

The Turkish army and its mercenaries have been continuing the destruction of nature since they occupied the Canton of Afrin.

According to the data of legal organizations, the Turkish army and its mercenaries have cut down more than 367,000 trees, burned about 13,500 trees and more than 12 hectares of agricultural land since they occupied Afrin Canton.

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Human Rights Violations

Swedish newspaper launches satire competition to protest

Erdogan

ANF | STOCKHOLM | 17 JANUARY 2023

The Swedish socialist newspaper Flamman has launched a competition for satirical drawings of Erdogan to protest against the Turkish president's policies: "Erdogan is trying to pressure Sweden to deport Kurds and restrict freedom of expression. Flamman therefore initiates a satirical drawing competition with a prize sum of SEK 10,000 (€1,000). The best works will be published in the magazine. Send your contribution to red@flamman.se."

Flamman editor-in-chief Leonidas Aretakis wrote in his column that the competition should serve freedom of expression and support Kurds: "After the heinous triple murder at a Kurdish cultural center in Paris, the Kurdish minority is rightly in despair. In an interview with Flamman's foreign editor Jonas El-

vander, the association's foreign affairs spokesperson, Berivan Firat, said that Turkey's persecution makes Kurdish lives insecure throughout Europe, and that Sweden is undermining its democracy by selling out the Kurds to Erdogan."

"All defenders of Kurdish rights, democratic development in Turkey and Swedish freedom of speech, now need to gather in protest. Sweden should immediately cancel the entry into NATO, which was wrong-headed from the beginning. A process that was supposed to increase our security has, on the contrary, put us in the lap of a power-hungry autocrat who wants to dictate Swedish legislation. This is precisely what the left warned would happen last Spring, when the Nato process was initiated by the Social Democratic government, wrote Aretakis.

"Now I welcome everyone, professionals and amateurs, to participate in Flamman's satire competition. The prize sum is SEK 10,000 (€1,000) and the best contributions are published in the newspaper. Send us your interpretation of the Turkish autocrat to red@flamman.se on January 20 the latest."



Emine Şenyaşar: My children were killed at the hands of the state

ANF | MALATYA | 18 JANUARY 2023

The first hearing of the trial for the murder of three members of the Şenyaşar family, who were killed by bodyguards and relatives of AKP Urfa MP Ibrahim Halil Yıldız on 14 June 2018, opened in Malatya on Tuesday.

The trial began more than four years after the murders. 19 suspects face various prison sentences for killing Esvet and Adil Şenyaşar and injuring Ferit and Mehmet Şenyaşar.

The Şenyaşar family was attacked at their store in the Pirsûs (Suruç) district of Urfa. The attack by the relatives of AKP member Yıldız continued in Suruç State Hospital, where the wounded were taken.

Hacı Esvet Şenyaşar and his injured sons Adil and Celal Şenyaşar were murdered in the hospital in front of their mother, Emine Şenyaşar.

Two brothers of the Şenyaşar family, Ferit and Fadıl, who were injured but survived, were later detained, and Fadıl Şenyaşar was arrested. However, none of Yıldız's relatives or his bodyguards were detained, despite the fact that three people had died.

Only 15 months later, on 18 September 2020, was Yıldız's older brother Enver Yıldız arrested.

Mesopotamia Agency reported that the hearing was closed to the press, and some people from the family of the AKP MP threatened a reporter from the Evrensel newspaper.

Speaking to the Mesopotamia Agency in front of the courthouse before the hearing, Emine Şenyavaş said, “Arrest the people who slaughtered my sons. Why aren’t they under arrest?”

The court adjourned the trial to 15 March.

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KON-MED protests threats issued in Germany by AKP deputy

ANF | 19 JANUARY 2023

KON-MED said in a statement that the Turkish state “aims at spreading its massacre policy to Germany” and said that “Kurds will stand up against these threats.”

KON-MED co-chairs said in a statement that “the Turkish state aims at spreading its massacre policy to Germany” and added that “the fact that the massacres carried out in Paris in 2013 and 2022, were not clarified as a result of the opportunistic relations between states as well as the support given to Erdogan’s fascism, paves the way for these massacres targeting Kurds to happen.”

‘AKP deputy incite supporters to carry out new massacres’

The statement also added: “In the past few days we saw images of the speech made by AKP MP Mustafa Açıkgöz in Neuss. He openly called for attacks against Kurds and the opposition. The AKP-MHP fascist regime does not limit their massacre policy to the Kurdish people in Northern Kurdistan and Turkey. As Açıkgöz himself said, they want to kill the opposition wherever it is. These statements are not to be ignored. Only a month ago, the same hate mentality was at the basis of the massacre carried out in Paris. There have been two massacres in the last ten years targeting Kurds, and both were carried out in France. We are fighting for these massacres to be exposed.”

The statement continued: “However, the German and the other European states, cannot see this reality. A serious threat is made in Neuss and the German government is happy with just releasing a statement. This is embarrassing for democracy and human rights. We believe that the warning from the German Foreign Ministry is insufficient. Germany is responsible for ensuring the safety of the Kurds. We call on the German authorities to take action on this issue in order to prevent what may happen.”

The statement underlined that “the German State does not refrain from repressing Kurdish institutions every time” and added that “it did not surprise us to see such a light response to the heavy threat made by an AKP deputy. The German government, which does not hesitate to support the Turkish State at every opportunity, is personally responsible for any attack against the Kurdish people or their institutions.”

‘Institutions promoting hate should be investigated’

The statement pointed out that “the AKP-MHP policy is carried out not just by the coalition’s representatives, but also in mosques affiliated to Osmanen Germania and DITIB, with which Erdoğan is closely as-

sociated (Rocker-Club). Kurds are often targeted by these institutions. These associations and mosques have nothing to do with religion or culture. They are inciting society to create chaos. For this reason, we believe that an investigation should be initiated immediately against these institutions, which have been operating in Germany for years. The activities of these communities as well as the groups that incite society to hate should be banned.”

‘Kurds should stand up against threats’

KON-MED ended its statement by reiterating that Kurds will “stand up against all these threats” and added that “the attitude of a state that talks about democracy and human rights at every opportunity does not correspond to its actions. All institutions affiliated with the AKP-MHP fascist and murderous regime should be banned as they promote hate. We believe that the German people do not accept these policies.”



Ipekyüz: Labor and Freedom Alliance will play an important role at next elections

ZEYNEP KURAY | ISTANBUL | 20 JANUARY 2023

When the HDP said it will nominate a presidential candidate, new hope arose. A breathing space, the possibility of a new alternative for the people who are feeling stuck between the government and opposition alliances. The tens of thousands who attended the rally organized in Kartal by the HDP were the best answer that the alternative alliance proposed by the party represents a new hope.

Speaking to ANF, HDP Batman MP, Necdet Ipekyüz, said that the participation and enthusiasm seen in the Kartal rally proved once again that the Labor and Freedom Alliance will play an important role in the upcoming elections. Ipekyüz said: “Those who pretended not to see us should know that their calculations will turn up wrong. We will prove them wrong.”

Ipekyüz responded to those speculating that announcing a candidate would actually “benefit the People’s alliance”, saying that “first of all, the ‘table for 6’ alliance [the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP), the nationalist Good Party, the conservative Islamist Felicity Party, the Future Party, the Democracy, and Progress Party and the Democrat Party] should tell the people why they have not contacted us and why they did not take into account the voices coming from the fields of labor and freedom. They have adopted a very sectarian and arrogant language until today.”

‘We are standing for a democratic republic’

Ipekyüz underlined the fact that elections in Turkey are generally seen as a competition between two alliances: one that will further develop the presidential system, and the other talking about restoring the parliamentary system. “We say that as we enter the centennial of the republic in Turkey, we are developing an

alternative way that can solve the unsolvable problems. We are taking steps for a democratic republic so that what happened in the past won't happen again.”

‘Those who are afraid spread fear’

Noting that they were of course exposed to great pressures while walking on this road, Ipekyüz said that the Constitutional Court (AYM) blocked his party's aid, and that a case for closure is still ongoing. Ipekyüz said that the aggression against his party shows that they are on the right track and summarized the events with a Kurdish saying: “Those who are afraid to spread fear. Those who continue to apply this pressure on us should remember that 6 parties have been closed so far, trustees have been appointed to municipalities, there have been arrests, but despite all this, our party has grown. The repression did not stop us nor our people, as the massive turnout in Kartal showed. We are on the right track.”

‘Unity is the antidote to polarization’

Ipekyüz underlined that “today is the day to speak out”, and called on those who are still undecided and confused to “unite. Today is the day to stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder. Hand in hand. The antidote to polarization is unity. We are ready to solve real problems in this country. We are the solution. We are the third way and our door is open.”

— ★ —

Germany says 24 activists were blocked from attending Paris commemoration

ANF | BERLIN | 20 JANUARY 2023

On January 7, a mass demonstration was held in Paris to protest the deadly attacks against the Kurds. Tens of thousands of people commemorated Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan, Leyla Şaylemez, who had been murdered on January 9, 2013, and demanded French authorities to expose those responsible for the triple murder of Evîn Goyî, Mir Perwer and Abdurrahman Kızıl in Paris on December 23, 2022.

The German police arbitrarily blocked activists from participating in the mass demonstration, stopping the buses on their way to the demonstration in Paris and banned many people from leaving Germany.

Left Party Deputy Gökay Akbulut addressed the arbitrary obstruction of activists at the Federal Assembly and said that the blocking of activists was a continuation of the years-long criminalization of the Kurds by the German state. Akbulut asked the Federal Government how many people had been blocked on January 7 and why such a decision had been taken.

In a short response obtained by ANF, the Ministry of Interior said that on January 7, 24 German citizens seeking to attend the commemoration in Paris were blocked by the Federal Police (Bundespolizei). However, the Ministry did not present any explanation as to why the police blocked the citizens.

Akbulut asked the government to explain why the activists were prevented, saying, “The freedom of travel, a fundamental right of the citizens, was violated by the police. This decision means that the Federal Government makes concessions to Turkey.”



10 detained in police attack during ESP press statement in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 20 JANUARY 2023

Istanbul police detained at least ten members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) while issuing a press statement on Friday. The reason given for the detentions was a ban on meetings, other events and gatherings in public spaces issued by the district governorate. The detainees face charges and fines for violation of the right of assembly.

For the planned press statement, members of ESP and its youth organization, the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations of Turkey (SGDF), gathered in front of the women's prison in the Bakırköy district. The action was to end a three-day solidarity hunger strike initiated by ESP and SGDF in protest against the solitary confinement conditions of the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, who is held on the prison island of Imralı. At the same time, the hunger strike was also intended to send a signal against the institutionalized disenfranchisement of political prisoners. For some time now, hunger strikes against the unacceptable prison conditions have been taking place in almost all prisons in Turkey, including Bakırköy.

“Strengthen solidarity—break isolation” was the motto of the ESP hunger strike, which could also be read on a banner. The police surrounded the group and asked the participants to leave the area around the cordoned-off place. “Freedom of expression and fundamental rights cannot be banned” was first heard from the crowd as a reaction to the police action. Afterwards, the slogans “The revolutionary prisoners are our dignity” and “Down with fascism—long live the resistance” were shouted.



Metalworkers go on strike in Kocaeli

ANF | KOCAELI | 24 JANUARY 2023

The United Metal Workers Union (Birleşik Metal-İş) began a strike on Monday at Schneider Energy and Grid Solutions Energy factories in Kocaeli. The collective negotiations came to a deadlock in both factories.

The strike action covers approximately a thousand workers in two factories.

The metalworkers are demanding a wage increase of 110-130 percent for the first six months amid their lower purchasing power due to high inflation.

Collective agreement signed at other companies

Birleşik Metal-İş has taken the decision to go on strike starting in 11 factories of 5 companies in which some two thousand workers are employed.

Collective labor agreements were signed at Schneider Electric, Arıtış Cryogenics, and Hitachi Energy just a few hours before the strike started.

In Hitachi Energy, the workers secured a pay rise of 91 percent for the first six months and 18 percent for the second six months, as well as a 100 percent rise in social allowances.



Greece extradites journalist Murat Verim, Turkey puts him in jail

ANF | 24 JANUARY 2023

Journalist Murat Verim, who was sentenced to 4 years in prison for “aiding an illegal organization” in Mardin, was detained in Greece, where he had sought shelter.

Verim was deported to Turkey. The journalist was taken into custody at the Turkish border, and sent to prison on the grounds that he had a firm prison sentence. He was then sent to Edirne F Type Closed Prison.

Verim's trial continues due to two separate lawsuits filed against him.



Suspicious death in Yüksekova Courthouse

ANF | HAKKARI | 24 JANUARY 2023

Ferhat Atılğan, living in Yüksekova (Gever), in the province of Hakkari (Colemêrg), was summoned to the Prosecutor's Office on 23 January 2023 to testify. He went to testify at around 3pm and allegedly ended his life by suddenly jumping out of the window in the room where the prosecutor had taken his statement.

Although the Prosecutor's Office and the Police said it was a suicide, the death of Atılğan aroused suspicion.

Why was no autopsy done?

The young man's body, which would have been sent to Hakkari for autopsy under normal circumstances, was in fact examined superficially by a prosecutor and a doctor in Yüksekova, and a death report was prepared there. The body was handed over to his family within half an hour.

Ferhat Atılğan was detained last year for sharing a photograph of himself wearing a kufya on social media. He was now called to give a statement because his DNA allegedly matched that found on a glove used to throw a Molotov cocktail.

The Public Prosecutor said he would refer him to court with a request for arrest. At that time, while the prosecutor and the clerk were in the Office of the Prosecutor, Ferhat Atılğan suddenly ran towards the window and threw himself.

According to the information given by the authorities, Atılğan, who was frequently imprisoned, taken into custody and summoned to testify in the past years, allegedly committed suicide by throwing himself from the Prosecutor's Office window because of the distress of being arrested again.

Family calls for investigation

The relatives of the young man, however, are not convinced by the official statements and asked for the death to be fully investigated. "This cannot be a suicide. – they said—It is not plausible for him to jump out of the window during the deposition at the prosecutor's office. The body was immediately handed over to his family without an autopsy. This death is very suspicious."

— ★ —

50-year-old woman jailed in Şırnak

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 24 JANUARY 2023

Hazine Oruç, a resident of the Hespîst village in İdil district of Şırnak, was detained by Turkish soldiers following a raid on her home.

The 50-year-old woman was reportedly taken into custody after a court upheld the 1 year and 8 month prison sentence handed to her.

Oruç was taken to Şırnak Courthouse where she was remanded in custody after the sentence was read out to her. She was then sent to the T Type Prison in the city.

— ★ —

RND: Erdoğan's planned visit to Berlin will not take place

ANF | 24 JANUARY 2023

The RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland (Editorial Network Germany) reported on Tuesday that a working visit by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin planned for this Friday will not take place, according to sources close to his AKP party.

The Chancellor's foreign policy adviser, Jens Plötner, and Erdogan's adviser, Ibrahim Kalin, were unable to agree on topics and a time for the meeting, the RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland (RND) learned from sources close to the Turkish ruling party. During the visit, the German side wanted to publicly criticize the election campaign appearance of AKP deputy Mustafa Acikgöz in Neuss. Erdogan wants to bring forward the parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey, originally planned for June, to 14 May.

“Rumours” about election campaign appearance

Among other things, Acikgöz had called for the “annihilation” of supporters of the PKK and the Gülen movement at a mosque in Neuss close to the ultra-nationalist Grey Wolves. Erdogan blames the latter for a failed coup attempt in July 2016. Erdogan's Berlin plans led to speculation that he might use the visit for an election campaign appearance. The spokesman for the German government, Steffen Hebestreit, answered a question to that effect on Monday: “I have no information but there have been rumors in that direction.”

— ★ —

Pressure on LC Waikiki warehouse workers to leave the union

ZEYNEP KURAY | ISTANBUL | 25 JANUARY 2023

Workers employed by subcontractor company Kluh in the Istanbul Esenyurt LC Waikiki warehouse who were fired through Code 46 for being members of the Limter-İş Union affiliated to DİSK, have been protesting for 16 days. The workers got no answer to their reemployment demands and are urging the public to boycott LC Waikiki stores. The workers are determined to resist until they get their rights.

Mehmet Salih Yılmaz, one of the dismissed workers, spoke to ANF about the protest.

Forced to do all kinds of work

Yılmaz, who has been working at the LC Waikiki warehouse in Esenyurt for 5 years, pointed out that when he first started, he thought that they would work within LC Waikiki, only to find themselves working for the subcontractor company Kluh. For 5 years, Yılmaz said, they have been working under very bad conditions. He added that although he worked in the warehouse as a janitor, he had to do a lot of other things. “We were hired as janitors, but we even had to clear the road when it snowed. Although it was not

our job, we had to serve tea, place the cardboard on the floor. During the pandemic, they made us make masks and give medicine to people with Covid-19. Since there was a lack of personnel, they had one person do the work of 5 people.”

Yılmaz said that when they refused to do the extra jobs, the company threatened to fire them. “Despite all this workload, we were also getting a minimum wage. While bonuses were given to those working within LC Waikiki own structure, we were not getting any of our rights. We became members of the Limter-İş Union in order to improve the conditions, then we gathered and demanded both our wages to be increased and the abuses to end. They promised to review our working conditions and asked us to elect 6 representatives. I was one of the six people chosen. When they learned that we were unionized, they asked us to elect representatives, but after we did so, we were the first to be dismissed, appealing to Code 46.”

‘LC Waikiki is responsible for this harassment’

Yılmaz said that 8 more unionized workers were dismissed under Code 46 and added that after they started to resist, the pressure on those who continued to work in the warehouse increased even more. “They force our friends who are unionized to resign from the union. They forbade the workers from meeting with us after work. They put a security guard just where our resistance tent is. LC Waikiki managers do this themselves. It is not the subcontractors. They are constantly threatening the other workers with dismissal, to prevent them from supporting our resistance.”

Code 46 used to repress workers

The dismissed workers were not given any compensation because they were fired using Code 46. They have difficulty finding another job, and they can not receive unemployment benefits. Yılmaz said that he had one child and that he was the only breadwinner of the family. Yılmaz underlined that the family has no income and that they have rent and debts to pay.

The resistance at the Esenyurt warehouse has been going on for 16 days, yet, said Yılmaz, no manager has entered into a dialogue with them. “We have been calling for dialogue for two weeks, but we couldn't find any interlocutor.”

‘There is no room for fear, united we will win’

Yılmaz called on people to boycott the LC Waikiki stores, and sent a message to his comrades working in the warehouse: “You should not be afraid. There is no room for fear, united we will win.”

Another Kurd arrested in Turkey after an illegal refoulment from Greece

ANF | 25 JANUARY 2023

Mehmet Sayit Demir has been arrested in Turkey after an illegal *refoulment* from Greece. The Kurd, a former board member of the HDP from Amed (tr. Diyarbakir), crossed the Evros border river with his wife Feride on Monday to apply for political asylum. The couple was robbed, abused and then handed over to the Turkish military.

According to the couple's son, Azad Demir, who lives in Germany, his parents were picked up by the police and then handed over to "gangs". Lawyer Berdan Acun confirmed this to Duvar. His clients called him and said they had been caught on the Greek side. "They said the police turned off their phones and confiscated them and they were taken to a location where gangs are staying at the border. They were mistreated along the way. Greek military police were also at the location of the gangs. There, too, they were subjected to torture and verbal abuse. Their money and anything of value were confiscated." The gangs then handed the man over to the Turkish military, according to the Turkish lawyer.

Mehmet Sayit Demir was sentenced to six years and eight months in prison in Turkey in February 2021 for alleged membership in a terrorist organization and was banned from leaving the country. He is now in Edirne F-Type Prison. Feride Demir was released.

— ★ —

HDP pays tribute to Serdar Tanış and Ebubekir Deniz who disappeared in Silopi 22 years ago

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 26 JANUARY 2023

Serdar Tanış and Ebubekir Deniz have been missing since they went to Gendarmerie Headquarters on 25 January 2001 in Silopi, in the province of Şırnak. The families of the disappeared politicians have been demanding justice and the truth for 22 years.

HDP Silopiya District Co-chair Asuman Kulter said: "In the 22 years that have passed, we, as the comrades of all the *desaparecidos*, have not taken a single step back from the honorable struggle Serdar and Ebubekir left us. We have become millions of Serdars and millions of Ebubekirs. The judiciary, which has been protecting murderers with its policies of impunity for 22 years, is today wielding a sword against our party, the HDP. We will never stop defending the struggle for democracy, peace and freedom."

Background

The families filed a criminal complaint. Silopi Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against 47 soldiers in Şırnak Gendarmerie Regimental Command. The investigation, which did not involve Şırnak Gendarmerie Regimental Commander Levent Ersöz and Silopi District Gendarmerie Commander Süleyman Can, both of whom families call responsible for the incident, resulted in the verdict of non-prosecution in a short time.

ECHR fines Turkey

Subsequently, the families' applications to Diyarbakır and Malatya State Security Court (DGM) got no results, either. If there was a deadlock in domestic law, the European Court for Human Rights (ECtHR) fined Turkey 172 thousand euros for the disappearance of Serdar Tanış and Ebubekir Deniz. However, the investigations which were launched with the efforts of families following the ECHR decision ended once again with nothing.

On 2 January 2014, the bones of a person in a blanket were found in Dargeçit Municipality Cemetery during a dig. The authorities took DNA samples from two families to determine to whom the bones belonged. Following the DNA testing, Istanbul Forensic Medicine Institute announced that the bones did not belong to the disappeared HADEP members.



Constitutional Court rejects HDP's request to postpone closure case

ANF | ANKARA | 26 JANUARY 2023

The Constitutional Court convened today to discuss the application submitted by the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) requesting that the closure case be postponed until the 2023 elections are over. The court rejected the request by a majority of votes.

The Constitutional Court set March 14 for the HDP to make its defense on the merits.

A rapporteur of the court asked for the rejection of the HDP's request on Wednesday, claiming that "the court has a good grasp of the case, and the file of the case is sufficiently voluminous."

The Constitutional Court is currently being asked to order the closure of the HDP, a political party with 56 deputies in Turkey's parliament. An indictment against the party seeks to ban 451 politicians and party members from organized political activity or membership of political parties for a period of five years and forfeiture of the party's assets. On January 5, the Constitutional Court agreed to a request by the chief

prosecutor of the Court of Cassation for an interim measure of freezing the party's bank accounts containing treasury support which political party groups in parliament are entitled to receive.

During the closure process, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation can present corroborating evidence to the case file, while the HDP can present additional defense. The HDP has already submitted to the Constitutional Court its defence in response to the accusations and HDP officials will make a verbal defense on a day to be scheduled.

After this process, a Constitutional Court rapporteur, who will collect information and documents related to the case, will prepare a report on the merits of the case. In the meantime, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation and the HDP will be able to submit corroborating evidence or additional written defense.

After the distribution of the report to members of the Supreme Court, the President of the Constitutional Court, Zühtü Arslan, will set a date for a meeting where the members will come together to discuss the closure request.

A 15-person Constitutional Court committee will make a decision in the closure case against the HDP. A 2/3 majority of the members attending the meeting, i.e. 10 out of 15 members, will decide whether the party will be closed pursuant to the Article 69 of the Constitution or whether the party will be partially or completely deprived of treasury aid depending on the severity of the accusations in question.

The final decision will then be notified to the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation and the HDP and will be published by the Official Gazette. Should the Constitutional Court rule that the party members who are facing a political ban caused the closure of the party through their remarks and actions, these party members will not be able to serve as a founder, member, administrator, and supervisor of another party for 5 years, starting from the publication of the final decision in the Official Gazette.



Victim of “helicopter torture” in Van faces up to 15 years in prison

ANF | MERSIN | 26 JANUARY 2023

The second hearing of the lawsuit against Osman Şiban, who was tortured and thrown off a helicopter by Turkish soldiers in the Çatak district of Van province in 2020, was held at Mersin 2nd High Criminal Court on Thursday. Şiban is accused of “membership in a terrorist organization”. While Şiban and his lawyers were present at the hearing, two witnesses were connected to the courtroom via the sound and video information system (SEGBİS).

The 51-year-old Kurdish man stated that he neither recognized those two witnesses nor agreed with their statements. “When the state finally allowed people's return to the previously evacuated village, I went back

there and built a house, where I stayed during certain months of the year. No member of a terrorist organization ever came to my house. I live in the highland, and I did not witness any activity there either. I stay in my house there for two months a year. My house is empty for the remaining 10 months. I demand my acquittal.”

One of the witnesses, Y.S., claimed that the information he gave to the police was reliable and Şiban was “a member of the organization,” meaning the PKK.

While the prosecutor demanded that Şiban be sentenced for “membership in a terrorist organization,” his lawyers requested additional time to defend their client.

The court accepted the lawyers' request and postponed the hearing until April 11.

Background

The indictment of Osman Şiban is seen as an act of revenge by the controlled judiciary and the military. The Kurdish man is both a witness and a victim of one of the most serious attacks by the Turkish army on the Kurdish civilian population in recent years. Together with 55-year-old Servet Turgut, Osman Şiban was detained on 11 September 2020 near Çatak district during field work by soldiers from a Turkish operations unit. After severe torture, they were pushed out of a military helicopter, and they suffered serious injuries.

After the ordeal, Osman Şiban and Servet Turgut were taken to different hospitals. The military told the medical staff that the two men were terrorists and had been injured when they tried to escape from a helicopter. Şiban survived the ordeal while Servet Turgut died after twenty days in a coma.

As evidence for Osman Şiban's alleged PKK membership, the indictment lists, among other things, three spare fuel canisters that were allegedly discovered in open ground in a hamlet in Çatak. Because Şiban's house, which he only lives in during the summer—the rest of the year he lives in the coastal metropolis of Mersin - is close to where they were found, the canisters could only have been taken there by the 51-year-old, the prosecution argues. They also say that the area of the hamlet where Şiban's house is located was flown over by a reconnaissance drone on 9 September 2020. The evaluation of the collected data is alleged to have shown that at the time of the control flights, there were activities in the area that “did not fit coherently into the usual flow of life”. Last but not least, the prosecution refers to the statements of a supposed witness who - if he exists at all - claims to have stated that Osman Şiban's house had been regularly visited by PKK cadres Murat Karayılan and Mahsum Korkmaz (killed in Gabar on 28 March 1986) in the 1980s and 1990s.

Union leader Bozgeyik: War policies lead to economic crisis

ANF | ISTANBUL | 27 JANUARY 2023

KESK Co-Chair Bozgeyik maintained that the war policies promoted by the government led to unemployment, inability to make a living and poverty. He said: “The peoples of Turkey know that the main reason for the economic crisis, unemployment, and poverty stemmed from the security policies introduced by the government.”

KESK Co-Chair Bozgeyik spoke to ANF about the economic crisis in Turkey. Bozgeyik pointed out that the government introduced policies in favour of the capital-owning class. He said: “We are facing severe poverty due to the lack of public investments for employment, education, health, workers, public workers, retirees, women, and youth. Since the next elections will be held in 2023, the ruling AKP will transfer more resources to public expenditure to regain its voters and to maintain its power. In that respect, economic problems of citizens will continue to increase in 2023.”

Poverty will increase

Bozgeyik noted that high inflation and increases in food, electricity, natural gas prices and rents could not be stopped by an increase in the minimum wage, a 30 percent raise for public workers, and an increase in pensions. He said: “As of January, the hunger limit is more than 10 thousand Turkish Lira (TL), the poverty line is 27-28 thousand TL. Retirement salary remains below the hunger line and the minimum wage. When we consider that the average salary of a public worker remains at the hunger limit, we believe that the problem of severe poverty and inability to make a living will increase further this year.”

Security policies are main reason

The KESK Co-Chair drew attention to the government's strategy to manipulate citizens, through pro-media outlets and propaganda. Bozgeyik continued: “Authoritarian government policies are the main reason for high inflation, severe poverty and an inability to make a living. We have always stated that pro-war policies were the main reason. Russia's war on Ukraine has aggravated problems. People did not find it convincing when we previously argued that the war policies that had been in force for a long time in the Middle East sparked and escalated the economic crisis. Now, the peoples of Turkey know that the main reason for this economic crisis, unemployment, severe poverty and high inflation is the war and security policies promoted by the government.”

Huge response to HDP social media campaign “Our treasure is our people”

ANF | ANKARA | 27 JANUARY 2023

As part of the response to the closure case, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) launched the “Our treasure is our people” campaign against the blocking of the party’s accounts for which Treasury aid was provided. The campaign was prompted by the party base. The hashtag is #HazinemizHalkimiz.

Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Co-Chair Saliha Aydeniz, Socialist Refoundation Party (SYKP) Co-Chair Cavit Uğur, Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Co-Chairs Özlem Gümüştaş and Şahin Tümüklü, Green Left Party Co-Spokespersons İbrahim Akın and Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, Socialist Solidarity Platform (SODAP) Spokesperson Kezban Konukçu and Revolutionary Party Chair Elif Torun Öneren supported the campaign by posting a video.

HDP Co-Chairs Mithat Sancar and Pervin Buldan also made a call on video. Evaluating the blocking decision against HDP as extortion, Sancar said: “The treasury aid, which is our right, has been unlawfully blocked. We call on all people to reject this decision. Our treasure is our people.”

Pointing out that the decision to block the accounts taken by the Constitutional Court is political, Buldan said: “Our people will protect their party and will stand by us both morally and financially in the electoral campaign. We say loudly again: Our treasure is our people.”

— ★ —

Data of deportees passed on to AKP-MHP regime

ANF | BERLIN | 27 JANUARY 2023

Despite massive persecution, Germany regularly deports people to Turkey. According to initial estimates, the numbers have increased significantly over the past year. But beyond the deportations, those affected are endangered by the data being passed on by German authorities. According to statements by officials to the daily newspaper DIE WELT, the Turkish authorities often require extensive information about the nationals to be deported in order to issue the travel documents required for deportation. Among this information is the complete decision from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and, if necessary, a corresponding court decision. This is highly sensitive data that contains crucial statements made in the asylum procedure.

Bünger: “Authorities pass on sensitive information without a legal basis”

This information prompted Clara-Anne Bünger (DIE LINKE) to ask the federal government, whose response confirms that the Turkish authorities are regularly provided with extensive and sometimes very sen-

sitive information. However, the federal government cannot rule out such an approach, since the majority of deportations are the responsibility of the federal states. However, the Federal Government confirms that sensitive information such as the reason for the deportation, the dates of the first entry to Germany and the decision on the obligation to leave the country or the threat of deportation, the data on the legal and final force of the decision on the obligation to leave the country and information on the exhaustion of legal remedies are also transmitted.

Bünger said: “The information mentioned only relates to the relationship between the person who is obliged to leave the country and the Federal Republic of Germany – there is no legal basis whatsoever for passing it on to the Turkish authorities.”

The federal government said that court judgments are “generally” not required by the Turkish authorities, thus confirming that the Turkish authorities do demand these judgments in individual cases.

Bünger said: “I very much hope that the decision whether to pass on or not sensitive information is not subjected to the personal discretion of individual officials. The federal and state governments must ensure that it is clear to the responsible authorities that sensitive information from the asylum procedure must not fall into the hands of potential persecuting states!”

— ★ —

Migrant from Afrin to lodge a complaint with the UN about Turkey

ANF | 27 JANUARY 2023

The invading Turkish state has been changing the demographic structure of Afrin since the invasion of the city in 2018. It has so far built more than 22 colonial houses in all the villages and districts of the occupied canton. Families living in different parts of Syria and mercenary families from different parts of the world have been settled down in these colonial houses.

On January 4, in the Jindires district, an association called “Ecnadin” from Palestine built a colonial house on the estate of a migrant who settled down in Shehba.

ANHA spoke to the migrant man whose estate was seized by Turkey to build a colonial house. The man named Hesên Mihemed had lived in the Şitka village of Mabeta district before the invasion of Afrin. He was forcibly displaced by the Turkish state on March 18, 2018.

Hesên Mihemed stated that the invading Turkish state cut down 280 olive trees on the 4-hectare land which belonged to him and his cousin, Emin Murad Mihemed, between the villages of Hemilde and Rifetiye in the Jindires district. Turkey seized their estate to build colonial houses. Mihemed will file a complaint with the United Nations.

Mihemed called for punishing the invading Turkish state for its forced displacement of local residents in the occupied Afrin.

Previously, local sources reported that the invading Turkish state had built colonial houses called “Ecnadin” to settle 200 mercenary families on 4-hectare land owned by Hesen Mecîd Mihemed and Emin Murad Mihemed in the Cindires district.

Hesen Mihemed now lives in a dilapidated house in the Til Sosin village of the Ehdase district in Shehba Canton.

— ★ —

Three killed by special operations police in Bursa

ANF | 27 JANUARY 2023

A special operations’ police officer killed three civilians in Orhangazi district of Bursa.

According to reports, the victims are the mother of the policeman, Bedriye E., his brother Remzi E. and his brother’s wife.

The police officer also injured another brother of his, Mehmet E. who was then taken to hospital.

The police officer is reported to have surrendered after the massacre.

— ★ —

Çanakkale Governor bans concert by HDP Youth Assembly

ANF | 28 JANUARY 2023

The concert that the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Çanakkale Youth Assembly wanted to hold in Çanakkale was banned by the Governor’s Office.

Mesopotamia Cultural Center (MKM) artists were to attend the concert, which was to take place at the Ercan Adsız Conference Hall in the Çanakkale Municipality. However, it was banned because permission was allegedly not asked at least “48 hours before the actual performance”. Çanakkale Security Branch Directorate said that they would have prevented the concert because it had no permission.

The HDP Youth Assembly protested the ban decision and said that “this ban was a clear act of censorship.” The young people added that “the names of the invited artists, the scope of the concert, all information about the concert were notified to the Governor’s Office with a petition a while ago, but we were not

notified of any rejection by the Governor's Office. Our concert was banned at the very last minute, on the day of the event. We declare that we do not accept this ban and that we will definitely hold our concert in the coming days.”

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Highest number of applications to ECtHR was from Turkey in 2022

ANF | 28 JANUARY 2023

The highest number of applications to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) was made from Turkey last year, according to the figures released by the court.

Out of about 45,500 applications to the court, 26.9 percent were from Turkey, 22.4 percent were from Russia, and 13.9 percent were from Ukraine, the figures showed.

The European court gave 80 decisions about Turkey in 2022, finding at least one rights violation in 73 of them. No violations were found in five decisions.

Right to freedom and security (27), right to property (20) and right to a fair trial (16) were the most violated rights, according to the European court verdicts.

There were 74,650 cases pending at the court, and 74 percent of them were from five countries — Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Italy, and Romania — at the end of the year. Over 20,000 cases against Turkey are pending at the court.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in February 2022 launched infringement proceedings against Turkey because of its failure to release Osman Kavala, a businessperson and a rights' defender, despite an ECtHR Grand Chamber verdict.

In 2022, the Council established a contact group with Turkey for the implementation of the decision.

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74-year-old jailed in Adıyaman

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 28 JANUARY 2023

A 74-year-old man has been imprisoned on terror charges in the northern Kurdish province Adıyaman. The man is suspected of being a member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the public prosecutor's

office announced on Friday evening. The court in Adıyaman subjected three other people who are being investigated in the same case to judicial control. Until a decision is made to the contrary, the persons concerned must now regularly appear before the authorities and are not allowed to leave their place of residence. Mehmet Ok was transferred to the Type T prison in Urfa later that evening.

The jailed 74-year-old man is Mehmet Ok. He is the elder brother of Sabri Ok, a member of the executive council of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK). The arrest was made earlier this week by the provincial command of the Adıyaman Gendarmerie (military police). During the search of his house, various items “associated with the terrorist organisation” were seized. For example, a seized cloth in green, red and yellow colours is considered proof of the alleged PKK membership, as is a magazine from 2008 and photos showing Ok with his daughter Arzu, who joined the guerrillas years ago.

The operation against Ok and the three other people involved, who are his relatives, two of them live on the Turkish Aegean coast in Izmir and in Çorum in the Anatolian Black Sea region respectively, is based on the statements of an anonymous witness. The anonymous witness stated that the accused were in contact with Sabri and Arzu Ok and were responsible for “material procurement” for the PKK. Ok denies the allegations and his lawyers doubt that the alleged witness even exists. It is suspected that he is a fictitious character from the Turkish police's leniency pool for political trials.

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Despite warnings, Turkish government's election campaign in Germany continues

ANF | COLOGNE | 29 JANUARY 2023

In the run-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in Turkey in May, leading figures of the AKP/MHP government are on a campaign tour in Germany, disregarding the guidelines of the German government. These activities became public knowledge after the appearance of AKP MP Mustafa Açıkgöz in a mosque in Neuss on 13 January, who called on his followers to destroy opposition members of the PKK and the Gülen community. However, the extent of election campaign events of the Turkish ruling party in Germany is apparently much greater than is generally known.

The weekly German newspaper, the “Welt am Sonntag”, reported in today's issue that more than 100 appearances by Turkish government politicians have taken place in mosques and clubhouses in Germany since September.

“What is discussed behind closed doors rarely gets out. And when it does, there are shocking insights like the one on 13 January in Neuss. At that time, the AKP member of parliament Mustafa Acıkgöz spoke in a mosque, which is attributed to the right-wing extremist ‘Grey Wolves’, about ‘destroying’ supporters of the banned PKK and the Gülen Movement, which is considered a terrorist organization in Turkey. They must be pulled out of the holes they have crawled into, also in Germany,” says the article, citing information by journalist Eren Güvercin based in Cologne.

Since 2017, election campaign appearances by foreign politicians have been banned in Germany three months before the vote. The reason for the new regulations were disputes in Germany in the run-up to the Turkish constitutional referendum. Since then, all political appearances by foreign government representatives outside of election campaign periods must be applied for and approved by the federal government ten days in advance.

After the calls for murder by AKP MP Açıkgöz in Neuss, the Foreign Office “invited the Turkish ambassador for a talk” and stated: “Appearances like that of a Turkish MP in Neuss must not be repeated”. It was “unequivocally reminded that foreign election campaign events must be approved by us in advance”. If Turkish representatives did not play by the rules, consequences would have to be considered, the ministry said.

Nevertheless, appearances by leading AKP politicians have continued to take place in Germany. The Turkish Minister of Agriculture, Vahit Kirişci, who travelled to the capital for “Green Week”, met several times in public spaces with his supporters and gave speeches on the upcoming elections. On 20 January, Kirişci spoke at a meeting of the International Union of Democrats (UID), the AKP’s lobby organization in Germany, under the slogan “Turkey’s Programme of the Century” about his party’s election promises as “Vision 2023”.

Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Yasim Ekrem Serim, who traveled to Germany last week for official talks, met with leaders of Turkish fascist groups, including ADÜTDF chairman Şentürk Doğruyol. The ADÜTDF, the umbrella organization of Turkish nationalists, which organizes itself as an extended arm of the MHP, is being monitored by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

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Interview

Emine Osê: Erdogan seeks to eliminate North-East Syria with Russian support

ÖMER HORO/HIVDA HEBUN | RAQQA | 20 JANUARY 2023

The Deputy Co-Chair of the Autonomous Administration, Emine Osê, stated that the recent reconciliation talks between Turkey and Syria mediated by Russia are about how they will fight against North-East Syria together. “As the Autonomous Administration, we are mobilized politically and diplomatically against these attempts,” she said.

Emine Osê spoke to ANF about the Turkish threats to attack North-East Syria and the recent rapprochement between Turkey and Syria mediated by Russia.

Is a new invasion attack by the Turkish state possible?

The November 20 attacks started after repeated threats from the Turkish state. In the past, the Turkish state attacked with drones whenever it got a chance. It especially used the Istanbul bombing as an excuse. The attacks that followed targeted the entire infrastructure of North-East Syria, which led to serious material damage. 11 civilians were killed in an attack on the Teqil Beqil village. In fact, Turkey had a detailed plan for invasion, but it was not ready to attack from the ground.

Recently, there have been talks between Turkey, Syria, and Russia. What is the main purpose of these talks, what is the common interest that brings them together?

Erdogan has been saying that he had no problem with talks with Syria, thus laying the groundwork for this end. However, it turned out that Erdogan's desire for talks was not aimed at solving the Syrian crisis. On the one hand, there are the invasion attempts. On the other hand, he tries to convince his allies. Now, he is experiencing the same thing with the Damascus government as well. It is Russia that puts pressure on this. Russia supports Erdogan more than ever to win the elections. Russia even puts pressure on Syria for Erdogan to win. In the talks so far, Erdogan stipulates the elimination of the SDF and the Autonomous Administration. The Damascus government is concerned about when the Turkish state will leave Syrian territory and the situation of the Turkey-backed armed groups. This is an issue that the Turkish state cannot take a step back on that quickly. Turkey was planning to annex these territories to its lands and present them to the Turkish people before the upcoming elections in his country. However, Erdogan will end up very badly if he happens to negotiate over mercenaries. Undoubtedly, all Erdogan's efforts are to eliminate the Autonomous Administration and defeat the SDF with Russian support. The only subject of talks so far is how they will fight against us together.

Does such a plan have any chance of success?

The method adopted by the Turkish side offers no solution, nor is it easy. The Turkish state will not give up its ambition to invade North-East Syria. If Syria insists on Turkey's withdrawal from the areas it has occupied, it will not be possible for their alliance to succeed. However, if Syria renounces its demands due to Russian pressure and legitimizes the invasion of the Turkish state, then there will be nothing left of Syria.

What attitude will you in the Autonomous Administration adopt?

Anyone living in North-East Syria will defend their country against attacks. To protect their achievements, they will stay in their own territories and resist. In the meantime, the SDF will confront these attacks more powerfully than in previous years. It has the power to stop them. As the Autonomous Administration, we are mobilized politically and diplomatically with all our might. All we strive for is to prevent a war. We are also ready for a second step.

Does the International Coalition have no mission there?

The current position of the International Coalition is not promising. They should express that these areas have been liberated from ISIS and that they must protect these areas unless a political solution. In this way, neither the Turkish state nor the Damascus government would dare to attack at every opportunity.



Özsoy: Turkish-Syrian rapprochement seeks to eliminate Kurdish status

RONI ARAM | ISTANBUL | 22 JANUARY 2023

After Turkey failed to get the green light for its military operation in northern Syria, the possibility of a meeting between the president in Damascus, Bashar al-Assad, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came up on the agenda. Especially after the explosion at Taksim in Istanbul on 13 November 2022, the AKP/MHP government has intensified its war rhetoric. Although Turkey had no authorization for a ground operation, attacks on Rojava were carried out by drones and fighter jets.

Now there is talk of a meeting between Erdoğan and Assad, especially as Turkey is heading for elections. Erdoğan is now using diplomacy to get the 30-kilometer zone he wants in Syria before the elections and to send refugees there. According to various sources, Assad has been asked by the United Arab Emirates to “take a photo with Erdoğan”. In addition, this diplomatic traffic is also supported by Russia.

However, high-ranking Syrian sources told Almayadin News that Damascus would not give a date for a meeting as long as Turkey did not withdraw from Syria. This report is also supported by another statement by Assad. After his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy, Alexander Lavrentiev, Assad said that Turkey should stop its operations in Syria and its support for opposition groups.

So, will Turkey's Syria policy take the form Erdoğan wants by the time of the elections? What position will be taken when Iran comes into play, and what does this situation mean for the Kurds? HDP MP Hişyar Özsoy, co-spokesperson of the Foreign Relations Commission, addressed these questions in an interview with ANF.

Turkey did not get the desired green light for its military operation in northern Syria, but there is now talk of a possible meeting between Assad and Erdoğan. Will this possibility be realized before the elections, as Erdoğan would like? Which scenario is conceivable?

Especially in the last three years, Turkey has started a process of normalization with all the powers in the Middle East with which it had problems before. There were serious tensions with Egypt, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, and it is moving towards normalization, even if only partially. But there are still problems that have not been resolved. This is because the problems between these countries and Turkey are generally structural. They can only be solved through expressions of goodwill and nice speeches and meetings.

The most important link in this normalization is, of course, Syria. The effort to bring about normalization with Assad before the elections and Erdoğan's persistent attempts show two things. First, it is a bankruptcy of Turkish policy towards Syria. More precisely, Erdoğan is experiencing the bankruptcy of his general policy in the Middle East. That is why he is seeking normalization. What we call normalization is ac-

tually an attempt to restore relations by making a U-turn. This bankruptcy also shows a weakness. Because while Erdoğan is persistently trying to meet Assad before the elections, Assad is taking his time. As far as we can tell so far, Assad does not want a meeting before the elections. Turkey, however, through Russia, is pushing hard for such a meeting.

Could there be a meeting forced by Russia?

It's difficult to predict at the moment, but Damascus doesn't seem very interested in this question. Damascus also sees Turkey as an occupier. Moreover, Damascus probably knows that Turkey has no intention at all of leaving Syria. Erdoğan wants to make a profit before the elections, which he can sell in two ways. First, if he meets with Assad and if it is an official conversation, the first thing he will probably do with his media army is to create the impression that the refugees can be deported from Turkey in the near future. Secondly, he might try to bring about a partial normalization with Assad and prepare the ground for an attack on the Kurds.

We understand Hulusi Akar's words to mean the following: 'We say that we are fighting for the integrity of Syria, but in reality, it is about ending the Kurdish gains in Syria together with Damascus'. But the fact that they are accelerating this so much three months before the elections should be seen in the context of the elections. I think it is important because Erdoğan will try to sell a story to society with a change of policy in Syria, both on the Kurdish question and on the issue of refugees. We will see whether this will be the case or not. But normalization with Syria overnight is not that easy. Erdoğan definitely does not want to give Assad what he is asking for. I think this issue will take a long time.

For example, there are reports that Assad was advised by the United Arab Emirates to take a photo with Erdoğan. On the other hand, you also said that Turkey is making this demand through Russia and seems to have Russia's support. From this point of view, how long will Damascus resist, or can it resist at all?

There are two aspects here: First, Assad does not want to give Erdoğan points and credit before the elections. Because Assad has seen what Erdoğan has been doing for ten years, letting gangs and all kinds of mobs fight in Syria. Secondly, the question of normalization is not a simple matter. Because both the US and the UK have made it very clear that they are against normalization between Erdoğan and Syria under the auspices of Russia. Therefore, it is not an issue that only Erdoğan can decide. There has been an ongoing war there for ten years. Therefore, this situation will pull Turkey a little more towards Russia. The West still has a very serious problem with Assad. How far can Turkey, as a NATO country, normalize that? As I said, I think that is not necessarily in Erdoğan's hands.

For example, there is talk that Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will visit Washington. Even if Cavusoglu can't convince Washington, he will at least try to guarantee Washington's silence for the Syria talks, but I think that won't succeed either. Because, at least for now, the US is not giving the green light for such normalization.

You said Turkey is gradually moving towards Russia and the US does not want that. More specifically, what impact will this situation have on the ground?

The US is conducting its Syria policy on two levels. They work intensively with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Kurds east of the Euphrates, but they also work with Turkey in the Idlib area. Is it

possible for Turkey to hold Idlib against Russia, Iranian militias and Syria without the US? Therefore, it may well be that the US will partially change its Idlib policy if Erdoğan gets closer to Assad. One reason why the US supports Erdoğan in Syria is that Turkey is still a NATO member. Yes, there are problems and tensions between the US, NATO, the West and Turkey. But at the end of the day, Turkey is still seen as a NATO ally and keeping Turkey, a NATO member, there instead of leaving Syria entirely to Iran's and Russia's initiative, is of course, a rational situation if you look at it from a NATO and US perspective.

So would they pursue a flexible policy?

The problem is that Turkey is not doing this in spite of these forces, but that these forces are still keeping Turkey on the ground as a NATO power. In the Idlib region, there is almost complete harmony between Turkey, NATO, and America. When it comes to the Kurds, tensions increase. So, in this respect, the US is going in two directions in Syria. They work with both the Kurds and Turkey. If America could bring the Kurds and Turkey together, it would probably take a stand, but Turkey does not want to meet with the Kurds under any circumstances, it attacks them at every opportunity.

I think we can assume that this normalization plan is aimed at the status of the Kurds anyway. What consequences will this process have for the Kurds?

The most important reason for the rapprochement between Assad and Turkey is, of course, the Kurdish question. Both are firmly opposed to Kurdish demands for political status such as autonomy and federation. Therefore, they are natural allies for each other. Of course, Turkey can and should hold talks with Syria. There is a 900-kilometer border, so of course they will talk. However, the aim of talks between Syria and Turkey should not be to eliminate the Kurds or undermine their achievements. Any normalization and any negotiation that does not include the Kurds will be used against them. This will also further aggravate the Kurdish question in Turkey.

For a long time, Turkey has supported a series of unknown thieves, gangs, and legionnaires to eliminate Kurdish gains. But this policy is finally coming to an end. Therefore, if Turkey wants to seriously harm the Kurds and prevent them from gaining status, there is only one way out, and that is to sit down with Assad and make an agreement.

Turkey will probably sell out all the opposition groups it has supported so far and look for ways to push the Kurds back into statuslessness together with Assad. How long can this go on? It depends on the positioning of the regional, global and local powers. But I would like to see Turkey, which is home to the largest Kurdish population, actually seize the opportunity to put aside its hostility towards the Kurds and take a joint position with them in the Middle East. But they would also fall at the feet of Assad, whom they call the murderer of 500,000 people, "as long as he does not see his Kurdish mother". We are confronted with such an anti-Kurdish policy, but one that is doomed to failure and bankruptcy.

You spoke of regional power factors, and in this context, it is also about Turkey's confrontation with Iran in Syria. How do you assess that?

Iran and Turkey are two competing powers in Syria. From Iran's point of view, Turkey is not only a regional power, a neighboring power, but also a NATO member. The struggle for supremacy between Iran and Turkey in Syria will therefore naturally continue. In this respect, Iran even has an advantage. For Iran

is in the field as an ally of the regime that won the war. The Turkish-backed forces are losing, and Turkey will probably put them all up for sale in the near future. In many areas already under Turkish control, there are now protests against the Turkish government and Erdogan and his efforts to move closer to Assad. The groups that Erdogan has been using for ten years are now starting to speak out because they believe they could be sold out.

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Opinion

Bayık: Europe, the CPT and Turkish state are carrying out a policy of isolation together

ANF | BEHDINAN | 23 JANUARY 2023

Cemil Bayık, KCK Executive Council co-chair spoke about the latest developments in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the world, the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan as an attempt to prevent his voice from reaching the world, the need for international pressure on France to prevent a cover-up of the recent Paris massacre, the end of the internal and external support for the AKP-MHP government, the heavy social consequences of Turkey's war in Kurdistan and the possibility for Syria to solve its problems with the Kurds:

Total isolation of Abdullah Öcalan to prevent his voice from reaching the world

Since the occupying fascist Turkish state pursues a policy of genocide against the Kurdish people in the person of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan], our friend Veysi Taş took a stance against this dirty policy, refused to accept it and thus proudly marched to martyrdom. On this occasion, I would like to respectfully commemorate our friend Veysi. He spent time in the Diyarbakır prison where he was tortured after September 12 [military coup in 1980]. In recent years, he has been imprisoned again. Only 6 months ago he was released from prison. However, the patriotism of Kurdistan, especially the patriotism of Mardin, was deeply rooted in the personality of this friend. Without this, he would not have supported Leader Apo, the people of Kurdistan and humanity this much. There is a video he left behind in which he explains the purpose of his action. I invite every patriot to watch this video, because Veysi Taş did not fall martyr for himself. He fell martyr for the Kurdish people. Our friend Veysi was martyred for opposing the annihilation policy against Leader Apo and the Kurdish people. With his action, he called on everyone to take a stance against this policy. It is true that people have taken a stance against it and that this has had a certain effect. But it is not enough. Everybody must oppose the policy of isolation and genocide at the highest level. Otherwise, there is a real danger. Our friend Veysi wanted to draw everybody's attention to that danger. Therefore, everyone needs to fulfill their responsibility according to this call.

Today, a genocide policy is being pursued against Leader Apo and the Kurdish people. Because Leader Apo represents the Kurdish people. He is the leader of them. Whatever the Kurdish people have achieved so far, they have achieved with Leader Apo. This is the reason the Turkish state pursues a policy of genocide against Leader Apo. They are taking revenge on him. The Kurdish people and humanity are aware of the role of Leader Apo and the Turkish state is well aware, too. Obviously, the Turkish state does not want to change its policy of genocide but instead insists on it. It is clear where this policy is taking Turkey. Everyone can see this. But they cannot achieve any results with this policy.

There was Gramsci, the leader of the Communist Party of Italy. The Italian capitalists decided that Gramsci should not be allowed to make use of his intellect for 20 years, so that he would not be able to think and solve Italy's problems. They were very afraid of Gramsci and his thoughts. Today, the Turkish state is conducting the same policy against Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. They are conducting this heavy isolation policy so that Rêber Apo does not think, does not produce, does not fulfill his duty for the Kurdish people, for humanity, so that his voice does not reach society. It is the Kurdish people and their international friends who will change and break this isolation policy. Because the enemy [Turkish state] insists on this policy. When it recognizes that such a great struggle is being waged, the Turkish state will be forced to change its isolation policy.

There is also the attitude of the Council of Europe and the CPT. The Turkish state has deliberately spread many rumors about Leader Apo. The rumors they spread do not match each other. Therefore, one does not understand what the truth is. This causes a lot of concerns. That is why Leader Apo's lawyers made a statement. They said that even though the CPT said it had gone to İmralı, there had been no meeting. We want the CPT to make a statement. Our people and our international friends have reacted to this situation, but the CPT has still not made a statement. This has increased everybody's concerns. The Council of Europe must also make a statement. The duty of the CPT is to prevent torture. But calls for the prevention of torture go unanswered. The role they play is very bad. What does this mean? It means that Europe, the CPT and the Turkish state are pursuing this policy of isolation together. This policy amounts to more than isolation. Because they call it absolute isolation. In other words, they have cut off all relations of Leader Apo with the world.

The Kurdish people and their friends are waging a great struggle. And they will continue to do so. Both in Turkey, Europe, and the Middle East. Many lawyers in many countries have collected signatures, made statements and have said clearly: "We are against this policy. We want to go to İmralı and see Leader Apo." But the Turkish state has not yet responded. The work of all of them is very meaningful. For this reason, I would like to greet all lawyers and offer my respect. The Union of Turkish Bar Associations has taken steps recently as well. It has thus fulfilled its duty. It applied to the Turkish Ministry of Justice. However, the Ministry of Justice has not yet responded. The Hakkari Bar Association has also filed an application. These efforts are the right thing to do, but they should not be limited to applications. They can put pressure on the Turkish state. People in Europe can go in front of the CPT and protest against it. If European lawyers take this step, I believe this will have an important impact. In other words, our people and our international friends need to increase their protests against isolation. The steps taken so far are very important but not enough. These efforts need to be increased even more. Leader Apo was given a 3 months disciplinary penalty again recently. These kinds of penalties are not legal but purely political. Thus, they want to break the will of Rêber Apo and the Kurdish people and achieve their genocidal goals.

Need for international pressure on France to prevent the cover-up of the recent Paris massacre

“A massacre was carried out by the Turkish state in Paris 10 years ago. Our friend Sara [Sakine Cansiz] and her friends were martyred as a result. 10 years later, they have now carried out a second massacre in the center of Paris. Both in the first massacre and in the second, those leading our Freedom Movement, our people, and the women’s movement were targeted. This is not a new policy. Many occupying, genocidal states have used these tactics to defeat socialist and people’s movements and the oppressed. Today, this tactic is also being applied against our movement. The women’s movement has a strong impact not only in Kurdistan but all over the world. They don’t target women without a reason. As much as the AKP-MHP government and the Turkish state are enemies of the peoples, socialists and democrats, they are also enemies of women. They are ideologically against women. Who are the women that are being targeted the most? Those who have fought against IS and Al-Nusra, those who have done a great service to humanity, those who have saved humanity from a great disaster. IS committed three massacres against the French people in France. Now, they have carried out a massacre against the Kurdish Freedom Movement there. All this does not happen without a reason. Those who lead the Kurdish people and the Freedom Movement are targeted because they fight against IS and Al-Nusra. They have protected France against IS, against the massacres of IS. They are taking revenge for this on Kurdish women and their pioneers. That is why our friends Sara and Evin [Emine Kara] were targeted.

The Turkish state is not a normal state. It is a state built on special, psychological warfare. It is completely based on this. If this state does not wage war for just a single day, it cannot survive. In the history of the Turkish state there has always been enmity against peoples with different identities and beliefs. They want to establish a state based on the Turkish nation and the Turkish religion. In other words, they want to establish a nation state. In order to achieve this, they seek to eliminate all those who stand in their way. This is the reason they carry out massacres from Afrin to Sulaymaniyah, from Turkey to Europe. They are not only targeting PKK militants, but also many patriots and Kurdish people. This is how they want to scare everyone by carrying out these massacres. This is why they are doing this in Europe, e.g. in the center of France. They are not doing this because they are very powerful. If they were, they would maybe do such things inside Turkey but not outside the country. It is not easy to assassinate people outside Turkey. Because there are international laws. They are in trouble, weak and afraid. They feel the danger for themselves. That’s why they commit such massacres. They are desperate and stuck. That’s why they are in a great rage which they show with these kinds of massacres.

So how has the AKP-MHP government become so desperate? Who has brought them to this point? Of course, the struggle carried out by the PKK and the Kurdish people have brought them to such a desperate point. This struggle has revealed the truth. The more they want to destroy the PKK and complete the Kurdish genocide, the weaker they get, the more desperate they become, and they don’t know what to do anymore. Their end is clearly coming.”

The guerrillas and Leader Apo have been fighting for a long time. But recently, women’s struggle has also had a great impact. That’s why the people of France, the French state and some French state institutions took a stance against the recent massacre by saying: “These people have fought against IS and have protected us. The fact that the Turkish MIT has killed them means we ourselves have been killed”. That’s why

they took a stance in support of our martyred friends, the movement and the Kurdish people. They called on everyone to stand against this massacre. Kurdish women clearly deserve this. Because they have waged a great struggle for years and have paid a great price for this. Therefore, it is absolutely right to stand up for Kurdish women, for the Kurds and the Freedom Movement. I would like to thank the people of France for this and pay my respects. Our people really stood heroically and strongly together against these massacres. I would therefore like to congratulate and greet everyone.

The approach of some of France's state institutions and the people working there has been appropriate. But some in the French state wanted to cover up the massacre. They are still trying to do that. In order for them not to succeed, both the people of France, our people and our international friends need to put a lot of pressure on them. Covering up the massacre is a great shame for France. France cannot get rid of this shame. It is a state of law, therefore it must obey the law. Just like in the case of the first massacre, it is very clear that the MİT carried out the second one as well. The MİT cannot carry out an assassination without Erdoğan's approval. This is 100 percent clear. Everyone knows this. With regard to the first massacre, everything has been revealed. It is also clear who is behind the second one. Someone who had been released from prison 12 days before took a gun, targeted our friend Evîn at the Ahmet Kaya Kurdish Cultural Center and fired bullets at her until she was martyred. This is not a coincidence. On the day of the massacre, a meeting was to be held at the Ahmet Kaya Center. It is clear that the aim was to commit an even bigger massacre. That is why no one can cover up this massacre. My demand is for a committee to be formed for the massacres in Paris. The Kurdish people, their international friends and the people of France need to work together to ensure that this massacre will not be covered up, that the massacre will be brought to light and the truth will be revealed.

End of internal and external support for the AKP-MHP government

“Their true face has been revealed. Now everyone understands what they are really like. They did not come to power as they claim. The system of capitalist modernity brought them to power. Because this system had a goal. Turkey is a NATO country, and they wanted to achieve their goals in the Middle East with this country. For this reason, the AKP and Erdoğan were specially prepared. With the system's help and according to its goals, the AKP came to power. The AKP told very big lies to deceive everyone in Turkey. Everyone believed them in a way and many people in the country helped the AKP. They came to power with help from outside and inside the country. The AKP had the support of capitalist modernity because they wanted to make Turkey a role model for the Middle East, especially for the Arabs and the Islamic world.

Just like the AKP deceived the people of Turkey, it also deceived the other forces. Since capitalist modernity supported the AKP-MHP, this government was able to push its agenda forward. In order to achieve its goals, it established relations with IS and Al-Nusra. The AKP-MHP helped, trained and strengthened these Islamic proxy forces in every possible way. They used these forces especially in Syria, but also in Iraq and other countries. And they still continue to do so. Together with these Islamic proxy forces they caused great destruction in the Middle East. Realizing that capitalist modernity no longer supports them as it used to, this government has started to cause problems for the system of capitalist modernity. That is why it is no longer respected abroad. Because the AKP has really plundered Turkey. The forces of capitalist modernity have recognized that Erdoğan has done everything only for himself and his family.

The AKP has increased Turkey's social problems. The Turkish state and all its institutions are bankrupt today. People have become poorer and poorer, while the rich have become richer. They have created a huge

gap between themselves and society. The AKP may have been a party at first, but it no longer is today. It has become like a mafia organization. Just as the mafia does injustice, carries out illegal actions and commits murders, the AKP is doing the same in Turkish society. They have gotten rid of the constitution and international law. They have created great fear, oppression, and injustice in Turkey. This is why the AKP has reached its end now.

The AKP formed an alliance especially with the MHP. By allying with the MHP, they also took over the MHP policy. There is no difference anymore between them and the MHP. All their initial talk about democracy and freedom has come to nothing. The people have realized this and don't want to carry this burden anymore. That is why the AKP is finished now. The AKP sees Rêber Apo, the PKK, the Kurdish people, women, and the guerrillas as the reason for their demise. They see the democratic politics represented by the HDP as the reason. That is why they are angry at Leader Apo, the PKK, the guerrillas, Kurdish women and the HDP. The HDP works for the democratization of Turkey, the solution to the Kurdish problem, the Alevi problem and the women's problem. It also works for the solution of economic and ecological problems. But the government does not want these problems to be solved. They are against democracy, freedom, women and Alevis. Therefore, the AKP-MHP's politics are directed against the HDP's politics just like the HDP's politics are against them.

Recently, they decided to obstruct the HDP from receiving aid from the treasury so that it won't be able to start its election campaign. Because elections are coming up in Turkey. The HDP's position is decisive in these elections. That is why their primary goal is to obstruct the HDP. This way, they think they can remain in power. It is very clear that they want to shut down the HDP. They are making preparations for this. Thus, they want to prevent the HDP from taking part in the elections and create divisions among the Kurds so that they can stay in power. They also want to obstruct those who want to ally with the HDP. In other words, they are using all their means to block the HDP. But they will not succeed. They shut down many parties in the past, but the Kurdish movement has only gotten stronger day by day in the field of democratic politics.

Many organizations have recently said that they will help the HDP. This is undoubtedly the right thing to do. The HDP needs to trust the people on this issue and thus defeat the dirty plans of the AKP-MHP against the Kurdish people and the peoples of Turkey. The HDP has been working on this basis until now. This is very meaningful. If there was another party in the HDP's place and the AKP-MHP and the Turkish state had put this much pressure on it, this party would not have been able to cope and would have failed. The HDP's stance against the AKP-MHP oppression is really honorable. The democratic and socialist forces of Turkey and all honorable Kurds also look at the HDP in this way and support it. The HDP, which has pursued democratic politics with determination and courage until today, needs to strengthen its alliance from now on. It needs to move forward by strengthening the Labor and Freedom Alliance.

Heavy social consequences of Turkey's war in Kurdistan

“The cost of the war has been very big for the peoples of Turkey. The Turkish state is using both internal and external resources for this dirty war. Its fate depends on this war. They stay in power by continuing the war, especially against the Kurdish society. The AKP-MHP is doing the same. All means have been put at the service of the war. They lie and conduct intense propaganda in order to get results. Along with this, they try to destroy society with methods such as heroin, prostitution and spying. This is the policy of the state today. They carry out this policy against the Kurdish people in Kurdistan. Because their aim is to

eliminate the Kurdish people. In order to achieve this, they encourage the Kurdish youth to engage in prostitution, heroin, and spying. Maybe people weren't aware of this until now, but today both the Kurdish people and the people of Turkey have realized the reason for all the hunger, poverty, and oppression. Turkey's social, economic and political problems are a result of this dirty war. The weapons they used in Zap and Avaşın [areas in South Kurdistan/North Iraq] were not even used during the 10 years of the US in Vietnam.

Just like this war is weakening them domestically, internationally the Turkish state's reputation is diminishing as the truth is being revealed more and more. There has never been a period in the history of the Turkish state when it was so disrespected. It is the AKP-MHP that did this. The AKP-MHP has trampled on all laws. They claim to be building a new Turkey. But in fact, they want to build fascism in all areas and have organized many gangs for themselves. These gangs steal, commit murders and make arrests. Everything is legitimate for them. It is very clear that Turkey cannot continue like this. Not only the Kurdish society, but also the society in Turkey cannot accept this. Even the states that have helped the AKP-MHP so far cannot help them like before anymore. The AKP-MHP government has become a huge burden to society and the international arena. I therefore believe that the AKP-MHP government will fail in the upcoming election.

Possibility for Syria to solve its problems with the Kurds

Recently, there were reports in the press that Russia, Turkey, and Syria held talks. These talks are said to be taking place at a high level. But the problems between Turkey and Syria are huge. As everyone knows, these issues cannot easily be solved. Syria should not be hostile towards the Kurds. If it becomes an enemy of the Kurds, this will bring about the end of Syria. Syria has survived until today thanks to the Kurdish struggle. If the Kurds had not fought against Al-Nusra and IS, Syria would not exist today. Syria has survived and has not been divided, the regime continues because of the Kurds' struggle. Syria needs to recognize this.

The Islamic proxy forces have destroyed all of Syria. Not only Syria, everyone outside Syria is aware of this. Who trained these forces? Who helped them? Who gave them weapons? It is the Turkish state that controls them. Everyone knows this. The Turkish state will never give up on these Islamic proxy forces. When they say that they will solve their problems with Syria, they are simply lying. They want to deceive Syria by saying this. The aim of the Turkish state is to massacre the Kurds. How will it achieve this goal? By luring Syria into becoming part of its policy. Syria should not become a tool in this. If Syria gets involved in this policy, there will be no difference between Syria and Erdoğan.

Why does Turkey urgently want to hold a meeting? Erdogan wants to take some steps with regard to Syria and use this to win the upcoming elections. Russia has its own interests in the alliance between Syria and Turkey. Turkey also pursues its own interests. Its goal is clear: Turkey says that the Kurds should have no status in Syria. According to them, anything related to the Kurds needs to be eliminated. Syria's interest does not lie in the extermination and genocide of the Kurds. Syria's interest is to ally with the Kurds and solve its problems with them. Syria must not fall for the games of the Turkish state. Erdogan has played with the future of Syria. They helped the Islamic proxy forces to defeat Syria. Erdoğan is behind all the massacres committed by these proxy forces. Erdoğan is behind all the destruction in Syria. That is why Syria should not play along with Erdoğan's election games. If Erdoğan wins the elections, Syria will suffer the greatest harm.

“Of course, the Kurds can also suffer harm, but Syria will suffer the most. The Erdogan regime does not want Syria to remain the same. It wants to change Syria with the help of the Islamic proxy forces. The Kurds have protected Syria until today. Maybe they have also made some mistakes. Therefore, Syria may have some criticisms in regard to the Kurds. But this should not reach a level of hostility. The Turkish state is already hostile towards the Kurds, democracy, and freedom. But Syria, which might have some criticisms against the Kurds, should not make the situation reach a level similar to Erdoğan’s hostility. If Syria does that, it will bring about its own end. I believe that Syria will not become a tool of this dirty policy. Instead, it will develop relations with the Kurds and solve its problems with them. This is what will ensure the integrity of Syria. Therefore, this is what I would like to call on Syria to do.”

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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 orga-

nizes 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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