

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Contents

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan.....	3
Long March for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan to take place from 6 to 11 February.....	3
50 detained in police attack on demo against isolation and war in İzmir.....	4
Activists in Sydney protest isolation of Abdullah Öcalan.....	5
Activists in Avignon protest isolation of Abdullah Öcalan.....	6
Young people in Wan protest isolation.....	6
Activists in Toronto call on the CPT to act against the isolation of Öcalan.....	7
PYD Youth Assembly launches Mobile Library to condemn isolation imposed on Öcalan.....	7
Activists from Cologne take over Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg.....	8
HDP announces permanent action in front of the Ministry of Justice.....	9
HDP and DTK apply to the Ministry of Justice to visit Öcalan.....	10
HDP MPs: Isolation of Öcalan is against both national and international legislation.....	10
HDP deputies' vigil against isolation enters third day.....	11
Prisons in Turkey.....	12
Scores detained in brutal police crackdown on Justice Vigil in Istanbul.....	12
HDP: Open the archives to fully clarify the 19 December prison massacre.....	14
Council of Europe ministers deeply regret Kavala's ongoing detention and urge his immediate release	15
Political prisoners in Ereğli enter 77th day on hunger strike.....	16
Seven Rojava prisoners sent to Konya Ereğli T Type jail.....	17
Situation of prisoners on hunger strike in Ereğli jail worsening, say relatives.....	17
Electricity, water, and natural gas cut off in the cells of prisoners on hunger strike.....	18
Military aggression and occupation.....	19
Turkish state mercenaries destroy graves of Yazidi people on Cejna Êzi.....	19
Call to French government about the 'Paris Massacre': Remove State Secret!.....	19
Guerrilla resistance against Turkish invasion continues.....	21
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader visits Northern and Eastern Syria.....	21
300 organizations and public figures sign petition calling for an end to Turkish attacks on NE Syria	22
HPG: Turkish army continues to commit war crimes.....	23
Three workers injured as Turkey attacks waterworks near Kobanê.....	24
Armed attack on Kurdish association in Paris results in casualties.....	24
New footage of the armed attack against Kurds in Paris published.....	25
Chemical weapons.....	26
HPG reports continued chemical attacks in guerrilla areas.....	26
Turkish use of banned gas bombs against guerrillas documented again.....	26
HPG reports twelve chemical weapons attacks in one day.....	27

Iran	28
At least 469 people killed by security forces in Iranian protests.....	28
Kurdish citizen goes into a coma due to torture in Bukan prison.....	29
General strike in Iran and East Kurdistan.....	30
Unable to crush protests, Iranian regime turns to executions.....	31
Report shows systematic repression of human rights activism in Iran.....	33
44 lawyers arrested in Iran since September 16.....	33
Femicide	34
Documentary director Sibel Tekin sent to prison.....	34
Kongra Star releases final declaration of annual meeting in Qamishlo.....	34
17 women and 21 were children killed by Turkish attacks in North-East Syria in 2022.....	36
Human Rights Violation	41
Activists from Rojhilat detained in Turkey at risk of deportation.....	41
HDP and HDK condemn AKP-MHP coalition for war policies which force millions to migrate..	41
HDP executive detained in Izmir is in intensive care.....	42
Senyaşar Family receives arbitrary parking fine over banner demanding justice.....	43
Police raid offices of PAK, PSK and Azadi Movement in Amed.....	43
Former co-mayors of Hakkari sentenced to 11 years in prison each.....	44
HDP under police blockade in Istanbul: The downfall of the criminal empire is imminent.....	45
HDP members detained in Mersin accused of attending funerals.....	46
MED-DER: Struggle for mother tongue will continue.....	47
Two Kurdish political activists from Rojhilat face deportation to Iran.....	48
89 families in Serdeşt Camp return to their homes in Shengal.....	48
At least 828 refugee workers killed on the job in Turkey between 2013 and 2022.....	49
Eight detained during house raids in Kocaeli and Batman.....	50
HDP: Government is using the judiciary as a stick to batter critical politicians.....	50
Öcalan's lawyer Newroz Uysal faces 15 years in prison.....	52
Government plans to block treasury grants to HDP in January.....	52
Family of HPG member Êrîş Rizgar Kato takes his body after 7 months wait.....	54
Turkish TV channel receives fine because of the host "praising terrorism with mimics".....	54
Journalist Hayri Demir sentenced to imprisonment.....	55
KNK member Tahir Köçer arrested in Germany.....	55
HDP deputy Güzel stripped of her parliamentary seat.....	56
Police operation against DBP, many taken into custody including co-chair Bayındır.....	57
Police take seven people into custody in Istanbul.....	58
Police operation against DBP: 14 taken into custody including general and local co-chairs.....	58
Opinion	59
Karasu: Isolation is a policy of genocide.....	59
Who Are We?	63

Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Long March for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan to take place from 6 to 11 February

ANF | 18 DECEMBER 2022

The Preparatory Committee of the Long March for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan has called on everyone to attend the action which will take place from 6 to 11 February 2023.

The Committee writes. “More than 23 years have passed since Abdullah Öcalan was kidnapped, abducted and imprisoned on February 15, 1999, as part of a secret service operation that violated international law. Almost completely cut off from the outside world, he has been in solitary confinement on the Turkish prison island of İmralı ever since. Since 2011, the Turkish state has continuously violated his basic rights as a prisoner, denying his lawyers any visit or contact with their client, and since 2015, political delegations and his family have also been denied access to the one-person İmralı prison. The conditions of solitary confinement imposed on Abdullah Öcalan are unique in the world and are contrary to all international conventions on the protection of prisoners’ rights.”

The Committee added: “Regardless of the undeniable key position Abdullah Öcalan holds for a solution to the Kurdish question, the isolation, and attrition system of İmralı continues to be maintained, thus deliberately torpedoing a solution of the Kurdish question and the conflict in the Middle East. The state of health and the conditions of Abdullah Öcalan’s imprisonment have a direct influence on the course of the war, and a tightening of the conditions of imprisonment can lead to a direct escalation of the armed conflict. A relaxation of the prison conditions or a complete release of Abdullah Öcalan would have a positive and stabilizing influence on the region and would be a decisive contribution to a peaceful settlement of the existing conflicts.”

The Committee continued: “Despite the indescribable conditions of his solitary confinement, he has never given up hope for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the Middle East. For several years, Öcalan negotiated with the Turkish government to reach a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. In 2005 and 2006, some 3.5 million Kurds signed a petition, stating that they considered Abdullah Öcalan their political representative. In 2015, again, some 10.3 million signatories petitioned for his freedom.

The conditions of his solitary confinement lack any legal basis and the fact that no information about his health is leaking out is a cause of concern for millions of people. Therefore, from 6th February to 11th February, we want to take to the streets together for the complete freedom of Abdullah Öcalan.

For an end to war, isolation and political persecution – for peace, freedom and democracy!”

Brief info:

- Gathering on February 4th in Geneva
- International Conference and Joint Exchange.
- Long march from February 6th to 11th , 2023.
- Large demonstration in Strasbourg on February 11th
- Athletic shoes and warm clothing are appropriate for the march. Sleeping bags should be brought along.

Those interested can contact: longmarch2023@proton.me

Covid 19 pandemic appropriate measures will be observed throughout the march.

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50 detained in police attack on demo against isolation and war in İzmir

ANF | İZMİR | 18 DECEMBER 2022

The Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK), Free Women's Movement (TJA), Democratic Regions Party (DBP), Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), United Forces of Struggle (BMG) and the Aegean Association for Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners and Convicts (EGE-TUHAYDER) organized a demonstration at the Konak Square in the western province of İzmir on Sunday in protest at war and the isolation regime imposed on Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Yet before the beginning of the protest march, the crowd was encircled by the police before a violent crackdown in which at least 50 people were taken into custody and handcuffed behind their backs, according to the Human Rights Association (IHD) observers.

Young demonstrators protested the crackdown chanting the slogan "Human dignity will prevail over torture" as they started to march towards Konak Square, which was already besieged by the police, with nobody being allowed to approach.

The activists were faced with another police crackdown after they managed to reach the square.

On the other hand, police also prevented HDP deputies Serpil Kemalbay and Felaknas Uca from making a statement at the Konak Square. The journalists covering the demonstration were also kept away from the square.

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Activists in Sydney protest isolation of Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | SYDNEY | 18 DECEMBER 2022

Kurds and their friends attended the action promoted in Sydney by the Democratic Kurdish Community Center (DKTM) to protest the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan.

The statement made on behalf of the organizers at the protest held in the Town Hall square, emphasized that the isolation of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan will never be accepted. Activists said that he should be released.

Drawing attention to the growing concerns after the last visit of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), the Organizing Committee said: "Our leadership has been in isolation for 24 years. No visits to lawyers or family have been granted for 21 months. We do not accept the isolation and we will constantly struggle until the Kurdish leader is free."

Peter Boyle, a journalist with the Green Left Weekly newspaper, called on the Australian government to put pressure on the Turkish government to end the isolation.

Boyle said: "Mr Abdullah Öcalan, the founding leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), has been serving a life sentence in the İmralı Island Prison in Turkey's northwest since 1999.

He has been held totally incommunicado since he had a short an interrupted phone call with his brother in March 2021.

The last in-person visit by his lawyers was in March 2020."

Boyle added: "The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has the authority to visit the prison independent from Turkey, and meet with Mr Öcalan if they see fit. In September, a CPT delegation visited İmralı but did not meet with Öcalan.

Depriving Mr Öcalan any contact with the outside world constitutes cruel and unusual punishment, which is banned by both Turkey's Law on Execution of Penalties and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Extended isolation is also recognised as a form of torture. The United Nations has deemed it torture to hold prisoners for more than 15 days without meaningful human contact."

Boyle continued: "The ban on communication with his lawyers violates Öcalan's right to legal representation, as recognised in both Turkish law and the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Australian government should make the strongest representations to Turkey for an immediate end to this obscene violation of human rights and the rule of law.

It should be campaigning in all international forums for Mr Öcalan's to be immediately taken out of isolation and allowed visits from lawyers and family.

It should campaign for his release from imprisonment because his release would be a big step towards peace and justice in the Middle East.

Our PM Anthony Albanese was one of many people who during the campaign against South African apartheid called for the freedom of Nelson Mandela as a step towards peace and justice.

Abdullah Öcalan is the Nelson Mandela of the Kurds. He needs to be freed if there is going to be peace and justice!”



Activists in Avignon protest isolation of Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | AVIGNON | 19 DECEMBER 2022

The isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan was protested in an action in the French city of Avignon.

The action in front of the train station was promoted by the Avignon Democratic Kurdish Center.

The Avignon Democratic Kurdish Assembly co-chairs gave speeches on behalf of the crowd, who drew attention to the isolation with posters of Abdullah Öcalan and PKK banners, often chanting “Bijî Serok Apo”.

Activists said that the İmralı isolation would not be accepted, and issued a call to all Kurds in Europe to take to the streets to demand the freedom of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan.



Young people in Wan protest isolation

ANF | WAN | 19 DECEMBER 2022

A group of young people in Wan protested the aggravated isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan. The youth also condemned the police attack on the Justice Vigil carried out by the relatives of the prisoners in Istanbul. Young people participating in the march often chanted slogans such as “Bijî Berxwedana”, “The fascist state will be held accountable” and “Kurdistan will be a graveyard for fascism”.

In the statement made after the march, the activists stated: “We will hold those responsible accountable for the slap at Istanbul HDP Provincial Co-chair Ferhat Encü.”

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Activists in Toronto call on the CPT to act against the isolation of Öcalan

ANF | TORONTO | 19 DECEMBER 2022

Activists gathered outside the Kurdish Community Center following the call of the Toronto Democratic Kurdish People's Assembly to denounce the attacks carried out by the invading Turkish state against the Kurds. The activists also called on the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) to make a statement regarding its visit to the Imrali prison where Kurdish leader Öcalan is imprisoned.

During the protest, a statement on behalf of the Toronto Democratic Kurdish Assembly said: “Öcalan did not meet with the CPT. Why did he not meet? Either because of his health problems or to protest his on-going isolation. The CPT is not fulfilling its duty.”

“Our enemies are playing with fire. No one should put the patience of the Kurdish people to the test, the Kurdish Assembly warned. Citing Öcalan who said that ‘we started young, we will finish young,’ the Democratic Kurdish Assembly said: “The PKK was established by the youth. Our current commanders consist of young fighters. From here, we send greetings to the Imrali prison and those who are fighting.”

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PYD Youth Assembly launches Mobile Library to condemn isolation imposed on Öcalan

ANF | QAMISHLO | 20 DECEMBER 2022

The PYD Youth Assembly launched the Mobile Library action in the city of Qamishlo at the Jazira region level to condemn the isolation imposed on Leader Abdullah Öcalan and to call for his freedom.

The analysis and thoughts of Leader Öcalan are presented during the action. The van has been decorated with photos and flags belonging to the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and banners saying “You cannot darken our sun” and “We will break the isolation in Imrali”.

Parliament member Sara Hesên read the statement made by the PYD Youth Assembly in front of the 12 March Martyrs’ Monument in Qamishlo.

The statement said: “The Mobile Library action is being carried out to condemn the isolation of Leader Öcalan. The invading Turkish state’s attacks on the free mountains of Kurdistan and Northern and Eastern Syria, as well as the isolation of Leader Öcalan, are an indication of the success achieved by the guerrillas. That’s why the invading Turkish state is trying to block their ideas by isolating Leader Öcalan, because it fears the unity of the people and the guerrillas. With the spirit of resistance, we will ensure the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan and break the isolation in Imrali.”

The Mobile Library action is expected to continue until 26 December, and will visit all provinces and districts in the region. Today it will be in Amude.

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

ANF | STRASBOURG | 21 DECEMBER 2022

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil started on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, to demand freedom for Kurdish people’s leader Abdullah Öcalan and to break the isolation imposed on him in Imrali. The vigil has reached week 548.

A group of activists from Cologne took over the vigil this week. The group includes Abdullah Peker, Sipan Atmani, and Mehmet Şerif Ersoy.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Abdullah Peker said that they came to France to demand freedom for Kurdish people’s leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Peker said that as Kurds living in Europe, they have been holding the vigil for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan for 10 years, and added: “We are asking the European states; why are you silent? We want to hear your voice. We want to appeal to our people: stand up. Let’s resist this enemy, the occupying Turkish state.”

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HDP announces permanent action in front of the Ministry of Justice

ANF | ANKARA | 21 DECEMBER 2022

Deputies of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) have today launched a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Justice in Ankara demanding an end to the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and an urgent visit to him in prison.

A delegation consisting of Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chair Berdan Öztürk and HDP deputies Ömer Öcalan, Feleknas Uca, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Şevin Coşkun, Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit, Sezai Temelli, Abdullah Koç, Nuran İmir, Hüseyin Kaçmaz and Erdal Aydemir took part in the march to the Ministry office and the sit-in that followed.

The delegation was stopped by the police near the Ministry of Justice. During the protest, the politicians carried banners reading "Isolation is a crime against humanity", "The law must be applied to İmralı" and "Let lawyers go to İmralı".

After a sit-in action outside the Ministry office, the delegation ended the first day of the protest.

HDP deputies will continue the rotating-indefinite action in front of the Ministry of Justice. They will stage a sit-in in front of the ministry at certain hours every day.

Background

Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan has been kept in isolation in İmralı since 1999. There has been no news from him for the last two years.

Lawyers are requesting to meet with the Kurdish people's leader twice a week. However, applications for interviews are systematically left unanswered. In some cases, months later, lawyers are presented with disciplinary action against their client as a justification for the rejection of their applications.

Recently, it was learned that after the ban on visits imposed on 13 April ended on 18 October. However, it was automatically extended for another six months.

Concerns over the situation of the Kurdish people's leader increased after the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited Turkey on September 20-29. In a statement on 3 October, the CPT announced that İmralı F Type High Security Prison was among the institutions it visited.

However, Asrın Law Office reported that during the CPT visit, they heard that there was no meeting with Abdullah Öcalan, and that this situation increased their concerns. Asrın Law Office made a statement on 29 November saying: "We have heard that Mr. Öcalan did not attend the meeting during the CPT's visit to İmralı Island in September 2022."



HDP and DTK apply to the Ministry of Justice to visit Öcalan

ANF | ANKARA | 22 DECEMBER 2022

A delegation consisting of Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chair Berdan Öztürk and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputies Ömer Öcalan, Feleknaş Uca, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Şevin Coşkun, Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit, Sezai Temelli, Abdullah Koç, Nuran İmir, Hüseyin Kaçmaz and Erdal Aydemir took action in front of the Ministry of Justice in capital Ankara yesterday, December 21, demanding urgent contact with Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.

HDP deputies who staged a sit-in action outside the Ministry office will continue their protest in a rotating-indefinite manner in front of the ministry at certain hours every day.

DTK Co-Chair Bedran Öztürk, HDP MPs Sezai Temelli, Remziye Tosun, Abdullah Koç, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir and Şevin Coşkun have on Thursday submitted a request to the Ministry of Justice to meet with Abdullah Öcalan from whom no news has been received for nearly two years.



HDP MPs: Isolation of Öcalan is against both national and international legislation

ANF | ANKARA | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputies have launched an indefinite-alternating vigil in front of the Ministry of Justice in Ankara demanding an end to the isolation imposed on Kurdish leader Öcalan.

HDP MPs Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit and Sezai Temelli spoke to ANF about the anti-isolation vigil they have launched.

The regime in İmralı should be removed

Koçyiğit noted that Kurdish leader Öcalan has not been allowed to meet with his family and lawyers for nearly two years, causing concerns about his health. She said: "The applications submitted by his family and lawyers for a visit are repeatedly rejected. We have heard that the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited the İmralı island prison but Mr. Öcalan did not meet the committee's delegation. We do not have detailed information about the CPT visit to inform public opinion. Furthermore, we have serious concerns about Mr. Öcalan's health. The isolation imposed on him must be lifted as

soon as possible and a statement about Mr. Öcalan's health must be made by his own lawyers or his family.”

Koçyiğit stressed that isolation is a torture method and a death penalty spread over time. She continued: “Isolation is a crime against humanity in both domestic and international legislation, it is torture. If Turkey is a state limited by its own laws, then the Ministry of Justice and AKP government must do what is necessary. This is not a favour; this is a right that should be granted to all prisoners in Turkey. It is also very important for the democratization of the country to eliminate this special regime in İmralı.”

Isolation affects entire Turkey

According to Sezai Temelli, the biggest step for Turkey's democratization would be to lift isolation. He stated: “Turkey's most important problems are justice, law, war and the Kurdish question. Turkey is in a very serious and deep crisis because of these issues. However, Turkey's problems can be resolved through the removal of isolation. That is why we are persistently fighting to end isolation. As a first step, we demand that Mr. Öcalan's lawyers meet with him as soon as possible.”

Temelli remarked that the isolation that started in the İmralı prison has spread across the country: “We have launched an indefinite-alternating vigil against the isolation in front of the Ministry of Justice. We came together as deputies and made our first statement yesterday. This will continue as a vigil against isolation on a daily basis. We have seen once again how isolation has spread all over Turkey. Just like in the İstanbul Justice Vigil, we are under a police blockade in Ankara today. The law enforcement does not tolerate even the slightest democratic right, almost like a paramilitary force. Journalists barely received permission to report on our statement. Yet, the police later removed the journalists from the area again.”



HDP deputies' vigil against isolation enters third day

ANF | ANKARA | 23 DECEMBER 2022

The permanent vigil launched by HDP deputies in front of the Ministry of Justice demanding the end of the aggravated isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan continued on its third day. HDP deputies Murat Çepni, Kemal Bülbül, Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit, Nuran İmir, Şevin Coşkun, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Erdal Aydemir, Sait Dede, Celadet Gaydalı and Muazzez Orhan participated in today's vigil.

‘Request of millions’

Speaking on behalf of the deputies, Murat Çepni said: “Our vigil in front of the Ministry of Justice marks its third day. From here, we are calling out once again to those who have insisted on the deadlock of the Kurdish question. We are here to convey the demands and requests of millions of the Kurds and our peoples to the Ministry and government officials. Abdullah Öcalan has been held in aggravated isolation in the İmralı prison for 21 months. We want to undertake responsibility and to express our concern over the issue of isolation, which is implemented for the continuation of corruption and oppression in this country.

Some people take advantage of the deadlock on the Kurdish question, and of the policies of war. We expose these corrupt policies and urge others to take a stand.”

‘People should take a stance against attacks’

Today, we have seen a new practice of the deadlock on the Kurdish question. The co-chair of our ally Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and its executives were detained early in the morning. The reason is the same. The government continues to crack down on those who are critical, insist on a solution, and favor democracy and freedom. This operation against the DBP is a direct attack on the political will of the Kurdish people. All our peoples, especially the Kurdish people, should take a stand against these attacks and expand the struggle.

The isolation is not only executed in the İmralı prison but has spread throughout the country. Isolation is applied in the same way everywhere. While the winners are always a handful of bloodsuckers and warlords, the losers are millions of workers and our peoples. The HDP will continue its actions against isolation until a result is achieved. Isolation is a crime against humanity, and it should be lifted as soon as possible. We are calling out to the government, especially the Ministry of Justice, to stop this crime. If İmralı is under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Turkey and the Constitution, then stop enforcing special laws and lift the aggravated isolation.”

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Prisons in Turkey

Scores detained in brutal police crackdown on Justice Vigil in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 18 DECEMBER 2022

With a march in Kadıköy district of Istanbul, relatives of prisoners were set to end their Justice Vigil on Sunday. But the police carried out the same ritual they have been doing week after week for months to prevent the public from being informed about the situation in the country's prisons. Since last March, the initiative has been taking to the streets of Istanbul to make their cause visible and heard: The release of seriously ill prisoners and those who continue to be imprisoned because they have not repented despite completing their sentences. But almost every rally by the group, which is mainly made up of mothers fighting for the lives of their imprisoned children, has been violently suppressed since the peaceful action began.

No to isolation

“Freedom for all ill prisoners and prisoners who have not been released despite having served their prison sentence - lift isolation” was the motto of the march on the occasion of the final justice vigil, which was called for by organisations of prisoner solidarity, the alliance United Forces of Struggle (BMG) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in addition to the relatives' initiative. Thematically, the calls and mobilization for these demonstrations were also about the rejection of solitary confinement on the Turkish prison island of İmralı, which affects Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş, as well as the demand for contact between the İmralı prisoners and their outside world.

Violence against media workers

The police cordoned off the center of Kadıköy in the early morning. Especially in the side streets around the starting points of the march, anti-riot units of the police patrolled, armored vehicles and transport vehicles were brought into position at numerous points. The first attack on demonstrators occurred at the terminus of the Söğütlüçeşme rapid transit line. The police stormed into the crowd without warning and made the first arrests. Several journalists, who had previously been pursued by plainclothes officers, were forcibly pushed out of the square. The number of people detained here is still unclear.

“We want them alive”

Meanwhile, a larger crowd of several hundred people marched on Kurbağalidere Street, shouting slogans such as “Long live the resistance in the jails”, “Long Live Leader Öcalan”, “Law, Justice” and “No to isolation”. Activist Kumri Akgül, sister of Erdal Özel, a prisoner isolated in a solitary cell in Tekirdağ, spoke some moving words: “Stop death in prisons! We want our loved ones alive and we can no longer bear to see them come out of the dungeons of this country in a coffin at best. We want justice - everywhere.”

Kicks against Peace Mothers

The police cordoned off the demonstration during Akgül's speech and formed a threatening chain so that no more people could enter the area. As the crowd around the kettle grew faster and faster, police stormed into the crowd. It was mainly prisoners and members of the Peace Mothers' Assembly who were attacked. Officers tore off the white headscarves of some of them - their distinctive sign and symbol of motherhood and mourning - and gave them potentially life-threatening kicks while they were still on the ground. Dozens of people were detained and tied with their hands behind their backs before being dragged across the floor and taken to the prisoner transport van. Prisoner Zeynep Calihan was taken to hospital with a suspected broken leg.

Ferhat Encü punched in the face

The police caused a further escalation when members of the HDP protested against the violent crackdown. HDP Istanbul co-chair Ferhat Encü was punched in the face on camera and MP Hasan Özgüneş was subjected to insults. Mehmet Zeki Kaya, cameraman of the opposition channel Artı TV, who captured the scenes, was detained and correspondent Umut Taştan was beaten up by the police.

Dozens detained

In the meantime, the police only succeeded in breaking up the still ongoing demonstration of the prisoners' members after several attempts. According to the latest information, around 50 people have been taken into police custody, not all of whom are known by name.

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HDP: Open the archives to fully clarify the 19 December prison massacre

ANF | ANKARA | 19 DECEMBER 2022

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Law and Human Rights Commission co-spokespersons Nuray Özdoğan and Serhat Eren issued a written statement on the anniversary of the massacre in prisons that took place in 2000. It was called "Return to Life operation".

The statement said that 22 years have passed since the massacre, called operation "Return to Life", carried out on 19 December 2000 against prisoners on hunger strike against the F-type prison practices in prisons, which caused the death of 30 prisoners and the injury of nearly 300 prisoners. The political leaders of the period who ordered the massacre carried out in front of the Turkish and world public opinion and the perpetrators who committed the crime continue to be protected by the policy of impunity."

The statement continued: "The prison brutality of 12 September, the massacre in Amed prison on 24 September 1996, and the massacre of 19 December 2000, were put into effect as a continuation of each other and as a product of the same mentality. This torture practice, unfortunately, continues. The rights of the prisoners defined by national and international law have been ignored, and the aggravated isolation system has been transformed into a form of government."

Open the archives

The statement continued: "The isolation, which has become a form of administration in prisons, has spread to the whole country by going beyond the prison walls. The prisoners' struggle against diseases in prison conditions, their right to access health services, their sentences prolonged, their exposure to strip searches, the prohibition of their social rights, the implementation of personalized execution regimes show that the policies of massacre and severe isolation have continued in the 22-year period since December 2000."

The statement added: "The policies that led to the violation of the right to life in prisons that have spread over time should end, and ill prisoners should immediately be released. The protection of the prisoners' right to life should be granted and the end of torture and ill-treatment practices secure.

In order to confront the 19 December massacre and finally reveal the truth, we demand that the state open its archives and initiate a judicial and administrative investigation against those responsible for this massacre, which is a crime against humanity. If not today, these truths will definitely come out tomorrow, and those responsible will give an account of every crime they have committed before an independent judiciary.”

Background

During the week of December 19-26, 2000, 10,000 Turkish soldiers violently occupied 48 prisons to end two months of hunger strikes and “death fasts” by hundreds of political prisoners. The hunger strikers are protesting the state’s plan to transfer its prisoners from large wards to US-style “F-type” cells holding one to three occupants. Operation “Return to Life” — which left 30 prisoners and two soldiers dead — lasted a few hours in most prisons, and up to three days at one prison. Eight prisoners have reportedly “disappeared”, and at least 426 prisoners have been wounded. 1,005 prisoners have been transferred to F-type cells.

The armed operation ostensibly aimed to “rescue” members of illegal, radical left organizations from “forced” starvation at the hands of their leaders. But the official number of prisoners conducting death fasts has reportedly increased to 353 since the operation, up from 282. Unofficial reports say that up to 2,000 prisoners are starving themselves, with the active support of 10,000 others.

Human rights groups suspect security forces of burning prisoners with firebombs during the operation. According to the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, some bodies were buried without being identified, and other deceased prisoners’ families and lawyers were not admitted to the autopsies.

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Council of Europe ministers deeply regret Kavala’s ongoing detention and urge his immediate release

ANF | 20 DECEMBER 2022

The Council of Europe ministers stressed that the “unconditional obligation to implement the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judgments is a shared responsibility of Turkey, including the judiciary.”

The statement was released at the “Supervision of the execution of the European Court’s judgments” meeting.

The COE “deeply regretted Osman Kavala’s ongoing detention and urged his immediate release. While welcoming and encouraging high level contacts, the ministers urged general measures to ensure full independence and impartiality of the judiciary, including from the executive branch, in particular structural independence of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors.”

Background

Businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala has contributed to numerous civil society organizations in Turkey since the '90s.

On 1 November 2017, he was arrested on both Article 309 and Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code. Article 309 (“attempts to abolish, replace or prevent the implementation of, through force and violence, the constitutional order of the republic of Turkey”) was related to an investigation into the 2016 attempted Turkish coup d'état attempt, and Article 312 (“the use of force and violence, to abolish the government of the Republic of Turkey or to prevent it, in part or in full, from fulfilling its duties”) was related to an investigation on Gezi Park protests.

The ECHR pronounced its judgment on 10 December 2019, and said that Kavala’s “arrest and pre|trial detention took place in the absence of evidence to support a reasonable suspicion he had committed an offence (violation of Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Convention) and pursued an ulterior purpose, namely to silence him and dissuade other human rights defenders (violation of Article 18 taken in conjunction with Article 5, paragraph 1).”



Political prisoners in Ereğli enter 77th day on hunger strike

ANF | 20 DECEMBER 2022

Dozens of political prisoners in Konya Ereğli High Security Prison started a 10 day indefinite alternating hunger strike on 4 October.

The hunger strike has been going on indefinitely and irreversibly since 16 November, when many more prisoners joined the protest.

The oppression and rights violations against the prisoners gained a new dimension in the summer months. Many prisoners were deported from Konya Ereğli T Type Closed Prison and other prisons to Ereğli High Security Prison on 23 August. Prisoners placed in solitary cells were later sentenced to a one-month ban on visits and a one-month ban on communication. The number of prisoners placed in single cells increased to 40 in four months. Prisoners are not allowed to see each other, even during air time. Political prisoners are also held in the same section as those accused of being members of the Gülen Community. Even the basic needs of the prisoners are not met, and they are given stale food.

One of the prisoners, Yakup Brukanli, set his body on fire on 28 October in response to the severe isolation and increasing rights violations.

Brukan, who had second-degree burns, burned his entire right arm and waist, and could not use both hands and right arm. However, he was not taken to the hospital and was treated in handcuffs in the infir-

mary. Brukan, who was at risk of getting an infection, was not taken to the hospital despite the numerous applications filed by lawyers.

In the face of the deepening of the isolation, the escalation of arbitrary and systematic violations of rights, and the imposition of “remorse”, the prisoners started an indefinite and non-alternating hunger strike and are now on the 77th day of protest.

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Seven Rojava prisoners sent to Konya Ereğli T Type jail

ANF | 21 DECEMBER 2022

According to the information received, seven Rojava prisoners held hostage in İzmir Şakran No. 4 T Type Closed Prison were deported to Konya Ereğli T Type Prison.

Yılmaz Suncak, who is imprisoned in the same prison, said in a phone call with his family that the Rojava prisoners were deported on Friday.

Suncak said that the prison administration did not give any reason.

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Situation of prisoners on hunger strike in Ereğli jail worsening, say relatives

ANF | 21 DECEMBER 2022

The 10-day indefinite alternating hunger strike launched on 4 October by prisoners against rights violations and severe isolation conditions in Konya Ereğli High Security Prison continues since 16 November.

The situation of the prisoners on hunger strike is getting worse, but the relatives of the prisoners who asked to talk to the director were told that “he is on holiday.”

The mother of prisoner Mehmet Can Yiger, who called the jail administration to learn about her son’s condition, said: “When we went to visit my son in prison, his situation and that of his friends was not good. The detainees who went on the first hunger strike were very weak. They kept saying that they forgot something while talking to us. I think they have started to lose their memory. Their condition is getting worse and worse.”

Yiger's mother said: "We wanted to talk to the prison director and the prosecutor when we left the visit. The officials told us that they were in a meeting, and we should leave the campus as soon as possible. They sent us out of there. We have been calling to meet with the prison director all last week, but they keep avoiding us. We called on the day they indicated, but were told that the director was on holiday. We don't know what to do now. Our children's situation is bad and getting worse, but the prison is not responding to the demands of the detainees and their families, by constantly making excuses."

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Electricity, water, and natural gas cut off in the cells of prisoners on hunger strike

ANF | 22 DECEMBER 2022

A group of prisoners launched a hunger strike in Ereğli High Security Prison in Konya on October 4 to protest rights violations and severe isolation conditions and turned their action into an "indefinite and non-alternating" hunger strike on November 16. The prisoners report that electricity, water and natural gas cuts have started in the prison lately.

İbrahim Sütcü, who is on hunger strike, said in a phone call with his family that they are kept in solitary cells without their demands being met. He noted that the prison conditions are gradually getting worse.

"Now, they have also restricted the supply of water, electricity and natural gas. We can hardly use water, they cut it off immediately. They cut off the electricity early in the evening and provide natural gas for only one hour. They keep us in new cells which are still under construction, and when they cut off the gas, we get very cold. We are isolated in one-person cells and there is no communication between us. They also prevent our complaints. Our friends who are in the first group of hunger strikers have grown very weak, and they suffer from memory loss. Their condition is getting worse."

Sütcü urged human rights and legal organizations to show solidarity with the prisoners against violations of rights in prisons.

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Military aggression and occupation

Turkish state mercenaries destroy graves of Yazidi people on Cejna Êzî

ANF | SHEHBA | 18 DECEMBER 2022

In occupied Afrin, Turkish state mercenaries destroyed the graves of Yazidi people in the village of Basofan on the night of the Yazidi Feast Cejna Êzî.

ANHA received fotos of how the graves were destroyed.

Cejna Êzî is one of the most important holidays of the Yazidi religious community and is celebrated after several days of fasting before the winter solstice.

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Call to French government about the ‘Paris Massacre’: Remove State Secret!

ANF | PARIS | 19 DECEMBER 2022

PKK founder Sakine Cansız (Sara), KNK Paris Representative Fidan Doğan (Rojbîn) and Kurdish youth movement member Leyla Şaylemez (Ronahî) were murdered by the Turkish state in Paris, the capital of France, on 9 January 2013.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the massacre, the French Kurdish Women’s Movement (TJK-F) and the French Democratic Kurdish Council (CDK-F) held a press conference.

A large protest march will be held in Paris on January 7th. The series of protest actions will begin on 4 January 2023 with the slogan "Remove State Secret! End 10 years of impunity.

End 10 years of shame!

The statement made at the meeting in three languages (Kurdish, French and Turkish) is as follows: “We commemorate the 10th anniversary of the murder of our comrades Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan and Leyla Şaylemez, in Paris, on 9 January 2013. These 3 women were fighting for the freedom of the Kurdish people and Kurdish women in particular. This inhuman attack against our comrades was carried out by Turk-

ish intelligence forces, with the instructions of the fascist Erdoğan, and with the open and covert support of local forces.

We commemorate our comrades Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan and Leyla Şaylemez with gratitude and affection, and we bow respectfully before their memories. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary, we condemn once again with great anger the fascist Turkish state that planned, decided and carried out this massacre, and all the forces that gave open or covert support and approval to the killings, remained silent and prevented those responsible from being exposed.

The 9 January Paris massacre went down in history as a black mark. As Kurdish women, we know very well those who carried out this event. We know these forces from the NATO conspiracy against our Leader Abdullah Öcalan, who was expelled from Syria on 9 October 1998 and kidnapped on 15 February 1999. We recognize these forces from their approval of the chemical weapons attacks used by the Turkish state against our guerrillas and our people in Kurdistan. All NATO members, as well as the Turkish state that carried out all these attacks, are responsible for this massacre. On the 10th anniversary of the Paris massacre, we condemn these forces once again.

The French State is responsible for the enlightenment of the 9 January Paris Massacre and for bringing those responsible to justice and prosecuting them. However, for 10 years, serious and concrete steps have not been taken by the French state to shed light on this event. Justice is still in the dark. That's why we say in this 10th year: 'Remove the state secret! End 10 years of shame!'

Actions start on 4 January

Everyone, friend or foe, should know that as Kurds and Kurdish women, we will struggle until those responsible for this massacre are brought to justice. Starting from 4 January 2023, we will be in action until 9 January 2023, especially the people and women of Kurdistan living in France. We will commemorate our martyrs.

On Wednesday, 4 January, we will meet women and friends from Kurdistan in front of the Kurdistan Information Office. We will carry out our act of justice.

On Saturday, 7 January, we will hold our justice march with the participation of our people across Europe.

On Monday, 9 January, we will hold our commemoration event, again in front of the Kurdistan Information Office, with an official ceremony to be organized by the Municipality of Paris.

We call on all of our people, women and friends, and all peoples who demand justice and freedom, to join our actions in the strongest way and with the same anger and determination as on the first day after the killings.”

Guerrilla resistance against Turkish invasion continues

ANF | BEHDINAN | 20 DECEMBER 2022

According to the Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG), three soldiers of the Turkish invading forces were killed in guerrilla actions in the Çemço area in Sheladize town on Monday. The army bombed guerrilla positions near the village of Sîda and in Çemço in the southern Kurdish district of Amadiya twice with unconventional bombs and five times with chemical weapons. At the same time, the resistance areas were attacked four times by fighter jets, six times by attack helicopters and dozens of times with howitzers, tanks, mortars and heavy weapons.

At 10.40 a.m. on 19 December, a sabotage action by the guerrillas targeted Turkish soldiers trying to approach the guerrilla positions. At 12.00, snipers from the YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) attacked the Turkish forces in the Çemço area and shot dead a soldier. In the same area, the guerrillas struck the invaders with heavy weapons at 5.40 pm and killed two more soldiers.

The Turkish army carried out several attacks in the region on the same day. Between 10.30 and 11.00, unconventional bombs were used twice against guerrilla positions near the village of Sîda. Between 11.00 and 17.00, soldiers burnt car tires and plastic materials in front of the positions and directed the toxic fumes into the tunnels.

At 15:00, chemical weapons were used five times against guerrilla positions in the Çemço area. Here, too, smoke from lit plastic and car tires was introduced into the guerrilla positions.

In the Gare resistance area, the Deşta Kafya and Girê Bihar areas were bombed four times by fighter jets. The areas of Kurojahro and Saca were attacked six times by helicopters. The areas of Sîda, Çemço, Girê Hekarî and Girê FM were shelled dozens of times with howitzers, mortars, and tanks.

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Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader visits Northern and Eastern Syria

ANF | 21 DECEMBER 2022

SDF Commander-in-Chief Mazloum Abdi received the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Pavel Talabani, and the Commander of Combined Joint Task Forces-Operation Inherent Resolve CJTF Major General Matthew McFarlane during their visit to the north and eastern Syria.

The meeting was attended by Nowruz Ahmed and Mahmoud Barkhdan, members of the SDF General Command and the co-chair of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Autonomous Administration Badran Ciya Kurd, as well as General Wahab Halabji, Commander-in-Chief of the Counter-Terrorism Forces

in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Commander of the Combined Special Operations Joint Task Force-Levant, Brigadier General Claude Tudor.

In a statement, the SDF said that “the meeting focused on joint efforts to combat the terrorism of ISIS cells, support stability and security in the region, and develop the dialogue between the parties to achieve common goals of political and security stability in the area.”

Mr. Talabani also met with the Democratic Union Party (PYD) co-chairs Asya Abdullah, Salih Muslim and PYD Co-Presidency Committee member Foza Yusif.



300 organizations and public figures sign petition calling for an end to Turkish attacks on NE Syria

ANF | QAMISHLO | 21 DECEMBER 2022

The Center of Civil Diplomacy in North and East Syria, in cooperation with 17 civil society institutions, launched on December 2nd a campaign to collect signatures from civil society institutions in the Middle East and the world, to demand the end of Turkish aggression against North-East Syria.

Today, the Center of Civil Diplomacy in North and East Syria revealed the results of its campaign through a statement, which reads as follows:

“We, as a civil society in North and East Syria, call on the United Nations to stop the Turkish attacks. Although Turkey launched a military campaign against the civilian population in North and East Syria, the relevant international institutions remain silent.

From November 20th until today, the Turkish state has been committing war crimes, killing more than 19 civilians including women, children, health workers, and journalists and targeting by means of warplanes more than 45 vital infrastructure sites, especially power and petrol stations, oil and gas fields and grain silos. Hospitals, schools and mosques were also destroyed. Besides the daily attacks, Turkey still threatens to launch a ground military invasion against the region.

To demand an end to this ongoing aggression, eighteen civil society organizations in North and East Syria started on the 2nd of December a campaign to collect signatures to call on international institutions, especially the United Nations, to break their silence.

During our campaign, more than 300 organizations and civil society institutions, as well as public figures including politicians, writers, authors, intellectuals, artists, religious leaders and athletes from 29 different countries around the world signed the petition, calling on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to take action against the illegal attacks launched by the Turkish state against the people of North and East Syria.

Turkey is deliberately violating international humanitarian law. Killing civilians, as well as attacks on civilian infrastructure are war crimes. Silence means complicity. So far, the United Nations has remained silent, which can be understood as permission for Turkey to attack the civilian population in North and East Syria.

Accordingly, we call on the United Nations to fulfill its humanitarian and human rights responsibilities to stop the Turkish state's attacks on North and East Syria and to protect the lives of civilians.

Stop the Turkish aggression on North and East Syria!"

The campaign can be signed electronically at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1D7GDBpe59jzlqVMYMaO-MBMH_8fuidqIvaelF_Y54/viewform?edit_requested=true

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HPG: Turkish army continues to commit war crimes

ANF | BEHDINAN | 22 DECEMBER 2022

In its daily overview of the war in Kurdistan, the Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) reported that Turkey continues to commit war crimes in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

"The Turkish occupation army has attacked the guerrillas' resistance positions twice with banned high-impact bombs, as well as bombardments by fighter jets five times and with howitzer shells and heavy weapons dozens of times."

According to the HPG statement, the attacks with unconventional bombs on Wednesday took place in the Çemço area and near the village of Sîda in the Sheladize town in Amadiya district. The airstrikes were directed against the areas of Kanîsarkê and Deriyê Hirçê as well as around the villages of Gundê Mêranê and Gundê Şiyê in Gare, the area of Girê Berbizinê in Xakurke and the resistance area of Girê Cûdî. The areas of Girê FM, Girê Amêdî, Çemço and Sîda were attacked with howitzers and heavy weapons.

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Three workers injured as Turkey attacks waterworks near Kobanê

ANF | KOBANE | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Turkey attacked workers at waterworks in the village of Şêxlera Jorîn in the west of Kobanê. Three workers were injured in the bombing and one car was completely destroyed. Heavy property damage was caused at the waterworks.

The injured workers are Fadil Bazar (49), Bozan Şêx Nebî (48) and Muslim Hemo (55). They were taken to the hospital in Kobanê and are being treated there.

The Turkish army's attacks on the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria since 19 November have hit numerous villages and civilian infrastructure, such as schools, clinics, and electricity and water supplies. Dozens of people have been killed, including 16 civilians. Most recently, three people were killed in a drone strike near Kobanê on Saturday, the youngest victim being a twelve-year-old.

Since the heavy bombardments by fighter jets at the beginning of the new wave of attacks, artillery attacks on the self-administered areas have taken place every day. The permanent attacks on housing estates and infrastructure are intended to drive the population into flight in preparation for the occupation of further parts of the country.

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Armed attack on Kurdish association in Paris results in casualties

ANF | PARIS | 23 DECEMBER 2022

The Kurdish Cultural Center in Strasbourg Saint Denis Neighborhood in Paris was targeted by an armed attack on Friday.

According to eyewitnesses, a person was driven to the street where the association is located and started to open fire on the association afterwards.

The assailant is also reported to have fired on a Kurdish restaurant and a hairdresser's salon on the same street.

According to the police and hospital sources, three people have lost their lives and three others were injured as a result of the attack. Initial reports had spoken of two dead and four injured.

The French police have encircled the area and do not allow anyone to approach the scene.

An eyewitness spoke to Medya Haber TV and said that a person approached the association and opened fire on those outside.

Citing police sources, AFP reported that the assailant, in his 60s, had been arrested. An eyewitness said that seven or eight shots had been fired.

The attack came ahead of the approaching 10th anniversary of the triple murder in Paris of Kurdish women Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan and Leyla Şaylemez on 9 January 2013.

“A gun attack has taken place. Thank you to the security forces for their swift action,” tweeted deputy Mayor Emmanuel Gregoire. “Thoughts for the victims and those who witnessed this drama.”

Gregoire also tweeted that a medical-psychological emergency unit has been set up at the town hall of the 10th arrondissement of the capital.

“An investigation has been opened into the murder over voluntary manslaughter and aggravated violence,” the Paris prosecutor’s office told BFMTV.

“A 69-year-old man has been arrested and placed in custody,” the prosecutor’s office said.

According to BFMTV, the Minister of the Interior, Gérard Darmanin, has announced that he is returning to Paris, sending his thoughts to the victims' families and recalling that the perpetrator of the shooting has been arrested.



New footage of the armed attack against Kurds in Paris published

ANF | PARIS | 23 DECEMBER 2022

After attacking the Ahmet Kaya Kurdish Cultural Center before noon, the assailant attacked the Kurdish restaurant across from it and the barber on the same street.

In the footage from the camera of the hairdresser, the attacker is seen entering with the gun in his hand and opening fire on the customers who took shelter in the back of the shop.

While one person managed to escape from the main hall, it seems that others inside managed to neutralize the attacker and seize his weapon.

The footage also showed that one person was injured in the abdomen.

The police said that they caught the attacker, and the authorities congratulated them as they caught the attacker “quickly”. However, the footage shows that the attacker was neutralized by shopkeepers and that the police arrived to the scene very late.

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Chemical weapons

HPG reports continued chemical attacks in guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 18 DECEMBER 2022

In its daily statement about the ongoing war in Southern Kurdistan, the Press Center of the People’s Defense Forces (HPG) reported continued attacks by the Turkish army and actions by guerrillas.

According to the HPG statement, a soldier of the Turkish army was killed in a guerrilla action carried out with heavy weapons in Çemço. Çemço is located in Sheladize town in Amadiya district. Two other guerrilla actions with heavy weapons were carried out in the same region near the village of Sîda.

HPG reported that the Turkish army used chemical weapons against a guerrilla position in Çemço on Saturday. In addition, the areas of Çemço, Sîda, Girê Amêdî and Girê FM were attacked dozens of times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

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Turkish use of banned gas bombs against guerrillas documented again

ANF | BEHDINAN | 18 DECEMBER 2022

The Turkish state’s use of banned gas bombs to choke the guerrilla forces in the Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) has been documented.

The documented gas bombs include a type with the inscription “Gas Grenade” which was produced in May 2014.

During the course of its military campaign launched in the Medya Defense Zones on 14 April 2022, the Turkish state has resorted to intense use of chemical weapons and internationally outlawed bombs.

According to the eight-month balance sheet published by the HPG (People's Defense Forces) on 15 December, covering the period from 14 April to 14 December, the Turkish army committed war crimes of unprecedented cruelty without hesitation by attacking the war tunnels and positions of guerrilla forces 3152 times with internationally outlawed bombs (phosphorus bombs, thermobaric bombs, tactical nuclear weapons) and chemical weapons in the past eight months of war.

The gas bombs used by the Turkish state very often are among the weapons banned by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (also known as the Chemical Weapons Convention). 193 countries, including Turkey, have signed the convention, which opened for signature in Paris on 13 January 1993 and entered into force on 29 April 1997.

The Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which closes its eyes to the Turkish employment of chemical weapons, also states on its website that, "Riot control agents, such as tear gas, are considered chemical weapons if used as a method of warfare."



HPG reports twelve chemical weapons attacks in one day

ANF | BEHDINAN | 21 DECEMBER 2022

In its daily overview of the war in Kurdistan, the Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) reported that the Turkish army used chemical weapons twelve times and unconventional bombs four times against guerrilla positions in Southern Kurdistan on Tuesday. In addition, the invading army carried out three airstrikes and dozens of attacks with howitzers and heavy weapons.

"The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has shown the whole world that it is the sole defender of the existence and achievements of our oppressed people through its resistance against the occupation operation of the Turkish colonial army. The fascist state of the Republic of Turkey cannot even tolerate the terms 'Kurdish' and 'Kurdistan' and uses all kinds of dirty war methods to achieve results in its genocidal policy. With the full support of NATO, the Turkish army is intensively using banned bombs and chemical weapons in the guerrilla resistance areas. Nevertheless, it cannot break the unwavering will and sacrificial resistance of our forces. Our forces are responding with Apoist militancy to all attacks and continue to deal heavy blows to the occupiers with effective actions. As a result of these actions, four occupants were punished."

Guerrilla action in Zap

According to HPG, mobile guerrilla groups struck Turkish invading forces with heavy weapons in the Zap region at 9.20am and 4.25pm on 20 December, killing four soldiers. The actions were directed against soldiers who were near guerrilla positions in the Çemço area, located in the Sheladize town in Amediya district and is heavily contested.

Attacks by the Turkish army

The guerrilla positions in Çemço were attacked ten times on the same day by the Turkish army with chemical weapons. In parallel, the occupation forces set fire to car tires and plastic and channeled the toxic smoke into the guerrilla positions. HPG also reported two chemical weapons attacks and four uses of prohibited bombs against guerrilla positions in the vicinity of the nearby village of Sîda. Both areas were also shelled dozens of times with howitzers and heavy weapons.

On the other hand, Turkish fighter jets bombed Deşta Kafya in Gare, Şehîd Şerîf in Xakurke and the Girê Şehîd Çekdar resistance area on Tuesday.

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Iran

At least 469 people killed by security forces in Iranian protests

ANF | 18 DECEMBER 2022

At least 469 people, including 63 children and 32 women, have been killed by security forces in the current nationwide protests. The death toll increase relates to recently verified cases from the first two months of the protests.

Furthermore, at least 39 protesters are currently at risk of execution or death penalty sentences. There is serious concern about the imminent execution of six protesters after one with a confirmed death sentence was transferred from the general ward of Rajai Shahr Prison to solitary confinement and at least five Oshnavieh protesters charged with *moharebeh* were transferred from Urmia Central Prison to an unknown location. As most families are under pressure to stay quiet, the numbers are a minimum and the real figure is believed to be much higher.

Death Toll by Province

Protesters have been killed in 25 provinces, with the most reported in Sistan and Baluchistan, Western Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Tehran and Mazandaran respectively.

Deaths have been recorded in 25 provinces: Sistan and Baluchistan: 130 people; West Azerbaijan: 53 people; Kurdistan: 53 people; Tehran: 50 people; Mazandaran: 38 people; Gilan: 26 people; Kermanshah: 25 people; Alborz: 20 people; Isfahan: 14 people; Fars: 11 people; Khuzestan: 10 people; Khorasan-Razavi: 7 people; East Azerbaijan: 4 people; Zanjan: 3 people; Lorestan: 3 people; Markazi: 3 peo-

ple; Qazvin: 3 people; Hamevdan: 3 people; Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad: 2 people; Ardabil: 2 people; Ilam: 2 people; Bushehr: 2 people; Hormozgan: 2 person; Semnan: 1 person; Golestan: 1 person.

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Kurdish citizen goes into a coma due to torture in Bukan prison

ANF | 18 DECEMBER 2022

Mohammad Haji Rasulpour, a former Kurdish political prisoner from Bukan, who was arrested by the Iranian government forces during the protests in this city, went into a coma due to torture in the central prison of Bukan.

According to the report received by Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, Mohammad Haji Rasoolpour went into a coma on Tuesday, 13 December 2022, due to severe injuries caused by torture in Bukan Central Prison and is currently being held in the special care department of “Qalipour” Hospital in this city.

According to one of the relatives of Haji Rasulpour’s family, on Tuesday, their family was contacted by Bukan prison to request the temporary release of Mohammad Haji Rasulpour to the prison with a bail of 500 million tomans (13,000 USD). He was delivered in a wheelchair while in a state of anesthesia.

Mohammad Haji Rasoolpour was arrested in his shop by the government forces on Wednesday, November 23, 2022, and after the family went to the security agencies, they were informed that he would be a guest in Bukan prison for some time.

He was once again kidnapped by the Iranian government forces on Saturday, October 1st, 2022. He was released on bail on October 17, 2022, after 16 days of detention.

Mohammad Haji Rasoolpour was previously sentenced to 5 months in prison on the charge of propaganda for the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran.

Based on the statistics registered in the statistics center of the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, during the past three months’ protests, at least 9 Kurdish citizens have been killed under torture by the Iranian government forces.

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General strike in Iran and East Kurdistan

ANF | 20 DECEMBER 2022

The nation-wide popular movement continues with street protests and strikes across Iran and East Kurdistan.

The ongoing protests have so far spread over at least 280 cities, according to the opposition.

A three-day strike was launched on December 19, which marked the 94th day of the revolt known as the “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi” (Woman, Life, Freedom) uprising.

Shops were closed in many cities of East Kurdistan, including Kermanshah, Sine, Seqiz, Kamyaran, Diwandara, Aywan, Xerb.

In Mahabad, hundreds of people attended a commemoration event for Fayeq Mamqadiri who was killed 40 days ago.

A mass march was held under the leadership of women in the northern city of Rashti. Young protestors gathered around bonfires in the streets.

In the Gulshari district of Karaj, people once again took to the streets and expressed their demands.

In the meantime, people bid farewell to Mohammad Haji Rasulpour, a former Kurdish political prisoner from Bukan, who passed away in the early hours of December 19, after spending five days in a coma at the Gholi Pur Hospital in Bukan as a result of severe torture by Iranian authorities. Rasulpour had been arrested by the Iranian government forces during the protests in Bukan and gone into a coma due to torture in the central prison of Bukan on Tuesday, 13 December.

“The Iranian authorities severely tortured Mohammad Haji Rasulpour. He died as a result of the severity of his injuries and the conditions of his care,” said the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, according to which ten detained civilians died as a result of torture during the last protests in Kurdistan cities in Iran.

An unprecedented popular movement has been taking place in Iran and East Kurdistan since the murder of 22-year-old Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini by the morality police in Tehran on September 16.

According to the Iran Human Rights Organization, state forces have killed at least 469 people, including 63 children, during the protests. It is reported that 39 people face the risk of execution at any time.

Local human rights organizations state that at least 122 people have been killed in East Kurdistan alone.

According to other opposition news sites, 700 people have been killed, and 30 thousand people have been arrested since the protests first started.

Unable to crush protests, Iranian regime turns to executions

ANF | 21 DECEMBER 2022

Since 16 September, when the mass anti-government protests began in East Kurdistan and Iran against the murder of Kurdish woman Jina Mahsa Amini, nearly 19 thousand protestors have been detained and hundreds of citizens have been arrested by the Iranian regime. The whereabouts of myriad protestors is still unknown.

The Iranian regime is using the death penalty to intimidate and suppress the protestors. More than 30 protestors have been sentenced to death so far. Protestors Mohsen Shekari and Majid Reza Rehneverdi have already been executed.

Those sentenced to death are accused of ‘killing state forces, enmity against God, spreading corruption, armed rebellion against the state and insulting the prophet’.

26 protestors likely to be executed

According to Amnesty International’s report on the executions, 26 protestors arrested during the protests could be executed soon.

The names of 6 protestors from East Kurdistan who may face the death penalty are as follows: Ferzad and Ferhad Tahazade, Karwan Sahi Pervane, Reza Islam Dost, Hejar Hamid and Shahram Mehrud Mela.

According to the information obtained, a court issued a death sentence for these six Kurdish prisoners in their absence. It also remains unknown where they were transferred from the Urmiye Prison. Uncertainty about their condition caused suspicion that they would be executed.

Three rap singers named Saman Yasin, Tomac Salih and Behram Ali Kendi are among those sentenced to death.

Saman Yasin, from Kirmaşan, is accused of ‘waging war against God and spreading corruption’.

Protests that took place during Hedis Cebafi’s 40th mourning day in Kerec in January resulted in the death penalties for protestors. Hamid Qerehesenli, Muhammed Mehdi Keremi, Said Muhammed Heseni, Hüseyin Muhammed and Reza Ariya, who were detained following the protests, are accused of “killing Rulaha Ecem, a member of the pro-government paramilitary Basij forces disguised among protestors”.

Three women sentenced to death

Furthermore, three women named Mesha Muhamed, Fehime Kerim and Farzane Qerehawslu are among those sentenced to death.

Mesha Mohammed is accused of insulting the prophet. Fehime Kerimi, who was arrested in Pakistan, is a volleyball coach. Hamid Qerehesnli and his wife, Farzane Qerehesenli, both health workers, are accused of helping to kill a Basij member disguised in Kerec.

Two activists, Milan Armun and Nestu Nikxa, face the death penalty for allegedly killing a Basij member in the Ikbatan region.

3 football players sentenced to death

Three soccer players, Emir Nasir Azadani, Said Yaqub and Salih Mir Haiim, have been sentenced to death for allegedly killing a police officer and two detainees in Isfahan.

The names of the individuals sentenced to death are as follows: Sehend Nurmiheme Zade, Mahan Sedaret Mern, Menuçher Mehman Newaz, Muhammed Berxun, Muhammed Qubadlu, Ebulfazil Mehrî Hüseyin Hacı, Muhsin Rezazzadei Qeraqlu, Said Şirazi and Ekber Xefari.

Crimes leading to death penalty

Waging war against God and spreading corruption were adapted into Iran's judicial system in 1982 and was later recognized as a criminal act in the Islamic Penal Code in 1990.

Other crimes in Iranian Islamic law include "using weapons to intimidate the people, armed rebellion against the state, planning to overthrow the state, and armed robbery". Those who commit these crimes are subjected to the death penalty, amputation, or deportation according to the Iranian criminal law. These penalties are given according to the judge's discretion.

According to Article 286 of the Iranian Penal Code, adopted in 2011, crimes of spreading corruption are considered within the scope of "crimes that concern the public security of the country, disrupting security, harming people, public and private property".

Crimes against the internal and external security of the country, administering bribes, disrupting the functioning of the country, disrupting the economic system of the country, burning by arson, destroying, distributing poisonous and dangerous substances and selling weapons are defined as examples of crimes of spreading corruption.

Armed rebellion against the authorities is also considered a crime. The Iranian regime claims that the activists who take up arms against the state should be sentenced to death, and those who do not use weapons should be sentenced to prison.

According to article 262 of the Iranian penal code, if a person insults the prophet of Islam or other prophets, she/he is sentenced to death. However, if the person is drunk or the meaning of his/her words cannot be determined, the death penalty will not be given.

Report shows systematic repression of human rights activism in Iran

ANF | 23 DECEMBER 2022

A new report published by Iran Human Rights shows that the Islamic Republic's response to any human rights activism is violent crackdowns, and that the situation of human rights defenders has significantly deteriorated compared to last year.

Many activists were unlawfully arrested "preemptively" at their homes and locations other than protests.

Activists like Golrokh Irayi-Ebrahimi, Milad Fadayi, Saba Sherdoost and Majid Tavakoli, said the report, adding that "a significant number of defenders also suffer from illnesses. Arash Sadeghi was arrested despite suffering from a rare form of cancer. Rapper Toomaj Salehi is facing charges that carry the death penalty for his protest songs. There are also teachers who were arrested or faced reprisals for refusing to hand over names of protesting/striking students and pupils, with one losing her life due to a heart attack from the pressure."

Lawyers willing to represent protesters and other human rights defenders have been particularly targeted at an unprecedented rate, with at least 46 subjected to arrests or legal action.

Iran Human Rights called on "civil society worldwide to support their colleagues who are fighting for their fundamental rights under such difficult circumstances in Iran. Artists, Bar Associations, workers' unions, journalists, women's activists and others can help save their lives by being their voices. We call on well-known figures to take coordinated action by each following up on the situation of one of the people listed in this report, and to be their voice in interviews and public appearances.

Many of the human rights defenders are behind bars in dangerous conditions; international pressure and raising the political cost of the repression, is the only way to reduce the pressure on them."

— ★ —

44 lawyers arrested in Iran since September 16

ANF | 23 DECEMBER 2022

The mass anti-government protests that erupted after the murder of Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini in Tehran on September 16, continue throughout the country. Nearly 20,000 people have been detained and imprisoned during the protests. 44 lawyers, 15 of whom are women, have been arrested in the country since September 16. While 20 lawyers have been released on bail, the trials of other lawyers continue without arrest.

Lawyers banned from leaving the country

The sentences given to at least two lawyers, including Negin Kiani, have been finalized. Sina Yousefi, a lawyer and deputy head of the East Azerbaijan Jurists' Human Rights Commission, was sentenced to six months in prison and banned from leaving the country for two years. Lawyer Negin Kiani, whose sentence has been finalized, has been banned from leaving the country as well as been sentenced to prison.

— ★ —

Femicide

Documentary director Sibel Tekin sent to prison

ANF | ANKARA | 18 DECEMBER 2022

Documentary director Sibel Tekin, who was taken into custody in a raid on her house in Ankara on 16 December, was brought to the Ankara Courthouse after her procedures at the police station. Tekin, whose statement was taken within the scope of the investigation carried out with the allegation of “membership in a terrorist organization”, was referred to the Criminal Judgeship of Peace with a request for arrest.

Tekin, whose statement was taken, was subsequently sent to prison on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization”.

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Kongra Star releases final declaration of annual meeting in Qamishlo

ANF | 20 DECEMBER 2022

The North-East Syrian women’s umbrella organization Kongra Star held its annual meeting at its headquarters in Qamishlo on December 15-16 with the participation of 100 council members and committee members.

At the annual meeting held under the motto “Women cannot remain unorganized”, political, organizational problems, women’s movement, the situation of Abdullah Öcalan and the 2022 working mechanism of the Kongra Star Assembly were debated.

According to the final declaration of Kongra Star's annual meeting released on Tuesday, participants called attention to the political situation in North and East Syria and the world. "Due to the Third World War, the world is going through a political, economic, social, cultural and ecological crisis. The Middle East region has become the hotbed of wars for hegemonic countries at the expense of the peoples of the region," they said.

The declaration stated that the main basis of the war is NATO, China, Russia, Syria, Ukraine and Iran, while the invading Turkish state has always sought to take advantage of these wars to expand its sovereignty and extend its life.

"Participants emphasized the fact that the Turkish state carried out barbaric attacks against the Kurdish people and their allies in the region employing genocidal policies and methods in the region, while it, on the other hand, targeted the Kurdish regions and the guerrilla forces.

The crackdown on women is growing. However, women's organizations and movements are paving the way for a common struggle and revolt against the sexist system. The Rojava and North-East Syria revolution was led by women.

Women's resistance in the prisons of the fascist AKP has turned into a worldwide resistance. The expulsion of women from politics in Syria has been exposed," said the declaration, remarking that the co-presidency system in North and East Syria represented a success and a new step in the world history of women.

Öcalan's freedom

The declaration called attention to the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, saying: "Isolation is a policy of the global system. Öcalan's isolation is against all human rights principles." It called for a popular uprising for Öcalan's physical freedom.

"The dominant male power is worried about the co-presidency model. Therefore, women should expand their resistance and protect their achievements", said the final declaration.

Recommendations

The recommendations made at the annual meeting of the Kongra Star Assembly are as follows:

"The struggle for equality between the two sexes requires education and work. Self-education is possible by reading, self-developing and opposing the male mentality. Eradicating femicides through the unity of women and the motto women cannot remain unorganized' should be taken as the corner stone of activities. A dossier on the defense of the co-presidency model should be prepared and training should be organized to promote this model. Every woman should develop herself in every field. Women's committees and communes should be established, and economic committees should be introduced. Women's economic problems should be resolved. Women should get organized within women's organizations in order to form their peculiar identities. A committee should be established to prepare reports on free co-existence and put them at the service of society.

Ecological awareness should also be developed. This issue should not be separated from the gender issues and an ecology council should be established in a short time.”

— ★ —

17 women and 21 were children killed by Turkish attacks in North-East Syria in 2022

NUJIYAN ADAR | QAMISHLO | 23 DECEMBER 2022

The attacks of the invading Turkish state and its mercenaries against North and East Syria have continued unabated throughout 2022. According to data by the Cizîre Region Human Rights Association, 21 children have been killed, and 57 others injured as a result of the Turkish attacks this year. 17 women have been killed in the Afrin region and in the Hol Camp. 9 women have been kidnapped in Afrin.

Evîn Cuma, an administrator of the Cizîre Region Human Rights Association, spoke to ANF about the violations in the region. Cuma said that the aim of the association is to document practices that violate human rights and to submit these documents to international human rights institutions. She added: “We could report violations only to a certain extent this year, we could not document all the violations. We faced problems with reaching the occupied areas as our means were limited. Many human rights activists who attempt to go to the occupied areas get arrested, tortured or threatened. These violations were reported in a United Nations (UN) report. There has been an increase in violence, rape, and murder against women.”

Reports sent to international organizations

Cuma noted that they sent the collected documents to the Syrian Human Rights Association, which is committed to international human rights, and that the association included human rights violations in the North-East Syria region in their reports. Cuma said: “We have sent our reports to human rights institutions and organizations such as the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) and Human Rights Watch (HRW). Our aim was to deliver these documents to relevant institutions. It was not enough, but at least we made efforts.”

5 reports submitted to Belgium Human Rights Court

Cuma revealed that they have prepared five reports to be submitted to relevant international institutions and organizations this year. She gave the following information about the reports: “We have concretely documented two violations of human rights in Afrin, the injury of 11 civilians in Kobanê (a four-year-old child lost his foot), the targeting of the Kobanê bazaar, the destruction of civilian settlements, the death of five girls and the injury of four other girls as a result of an attack on an UN-affiliated education center. All information has been gathered and we will send it to the relevant international institutions and organizations.”

No serious decision has been made

Cuma pointed out that no serious decision has been taken by the international organizations against the violations committed in the region and the occupied territories so far.

The human rights violations and attacks on the occupied regions and North-East Syria reported by the Cizîre Region Human Rights during the year of 2022 are as follows:

Bombings

- * On February 15, four children were injured as a result of an attack on Til Rifet.
- * On April 6, four children were injured in shelling of the Eseye village of Zirgan.
- * On February 18, a child was injured by attacks on Zirgan and lost his fingers
- * On May 23, a child died in an attack on a ceremony in the region of Nubul and Zahra.
- * On February 6, two children were injured as a result of a bombing in Til Temir district.
- * On July 24, two girls aged 14-17 were killed by attacks on Shehba.
- * On July 24, one child was injured as a result of an attack in the Um Mehermele village of Zirgan.
- * On July 30, one child was injured as a result of an attack on Til Temir.
- * On March 26, three children were injured as a result of an attack on Ain Issa.
- * On March 22, two children were injured in attacks on Ain Issa.
- * On May 18, four children were injured as a result of an attack on Ain Issa.
- * On July 4, a child was injured as a result of an attack on Ain Issa.
- * On May 15, a child was injured as a result of the attacks on Manbij countryside.
- * On August 29, 2022, two children were killed in an attack on the village of Bêr Ereb in Manbij.
- * On July 2, two children were killed as a result of an attack on the Hesên Mezin village of Manbij.
- * On August 9, four children were injured in the Cîrnik neighbourhood of Qamishlo.
- * On August 16, three children were killed, and two others were injured in an attack on Kobanê.
- * On September 13, a child got seriously injured in an attack in Shehba and lost his life.

* On September 27, five children were injured in attacks on Zirgan.

* On October 27, two children aged three and four were injured in attacks on Sherewa.

Air strikes

* In August, two children lost their lives in the wake of a targeted strike on a vehicle in the Sinaa neighbourhood in Qamishlo.

* On February 9, one child was killed and another injured as a result of an airstrike on the countryside of Amude.

* On January 8, a four-year-old child lost his foot following an airstrike.

* On August 4, 6 children aged 6-15 were injured in an airstrike in Til Rifet.

* On August 19, five girls were martyred, and four others were injured as a result of an airstrike directed against a special educational institution under the supervision of the United Nations in the village of Şemûka in Heseke.

Mine explosions

* On March 6, three children were injured in Til Ziêtir village of Heseke.

* On March 2, two children aged 5 and 11 were injured in Shehba.

* On April 3, one child died, and two others were injured in Qamishlo.

* On September 7, four children were injured in Kobanê.

* On September 25, two children were injured in the Tabiyê village of Deir ez-Zor.

* On November 15, a 9-year-old child was injured in the hand in the Afrin countryside.

9 femicides in the Hol camp

* On April 19, two unidentified women and an Iraqi woman were found dead.

* On April 21, a Syrian woman was found dead.

* On June 16, a woman from Deir ez-Zor was found dead.

* On June 22, a woman was found dead.

* On June 23, a woman was injured as a result of blows to her arm and throat.

* On July 8, two women were killed.

* On July 17, a Syrian woman was found dead.

9 women abducted in occupied regions

* On February 4, a woman was tortured in the village of Kitix in Afrin.

* On February 27, an 18-year-old woman was arrested and raped while attempting to cross into Turkey.

* On March 20, a ransom of \$20,000 was demanded from the family of a woman who was kidnapped by Turkey-backed mercenaries.

* On April 7, a 27-year-old woman died in a missile attack in Afrin.

* On April 16, a 24-year-old mother of 5 children was abducted.

* On April 21, a 19-year-old woman was abducted by Jabhat al-Shamiya.

* On May 1, a 62-year-old woman was injured as a result of an armed clash between mercenary groups.

* On May 3, a woman from the village of Tıtka in Afrin was kidnapped.

* On June 3, a woman from the Kaxre village was abducted by the Amshat mercenary group.

* On June 29, a 20-year-old woman committed suicide in Afrin.

* On July 24, a woman was kidnapped in Sherewa, Afrin.

* On August 21, the Turkish gendarmerie detained two women.

* On September 15, an 18-year-old woman was arrested while attempting to cross the border.

* On September 30, two women, aged 34 and 32, were kidnapped in Afrin and released in return for ransom.

7 women killed, 24 injured

* On January 8, four women were injured in the shelling of the Qeremox village in Kobanê.

* On February 2, a woman was injured in the shelling of Zirgan.

* On February 9, two women, aged 18 and 23, were injured in the shelling of Manbij.

* On February 24, three women were injured in a drone attack on the Qamishlo-Amude road.

- * On February 27, a woman was injured in the shelling of Til Temir.
- * On March 31, a 42-year-old woman was injured after a landmine placed by ISIS exploded in Shehba.
- * On April 15, a woman was injured in the shelling of Manbij.
- * On May 30, a 31-year-old woman died, and another woman was injured after a car was attacked in Qamishlo.
- * On June 2, a woman was injured in an attack on Zirgan.
- * On June 2, a woman was injured as a result of a missile attack on Zirgan.
- * On July 24, two women died in an artillery attack in Til Temir.
- * On July 30, 4 women (two of them aged 25, others 60 and 63) were injured in an artillery attack in Til Temir.
- * On July 26, a 20-year-old woman died in an artillery attack in Shehba.
- * On August 4, two women, aged 23 and 24, were injured in a drone attack in Til Rifet.
- * On August 9, a woman was injured in the shelling of Qamishlo.
- * On August 9, a woman died as a result of a drone attack in the vicinity of the Covid-19 Hospital.
- On August 16, a 40-year-old woman was injured in a drone attack in Kobanê.
- * On August 24, a 21-year-old woman died in a drone attack in Til Rifet.
- * On November 20, two women lost their lives in an airstrike on the Teqil Beqil village of Dêrîk.

Human Rights Violation

Activists from Rojhilat detained in Turkey at risk of deportation

ANF | MUĞLA | 18 DECEMBER 2022

Iranian and Rojhilat refugees, who were among the refugees detained on 15 December near the port of Muğla's Marmaris district, are facing deportation. Hengaw Human Rights Organization announced that Kurdish activists among the detained refugees are at risk of being deported to Iran.

According to the information provided by the lawyers dealing with the issue, approximately 140 Syrian, Iranian and Rojhilat refugees detained are being held at the Removal Center (GGM) in the Ula district of Muğla. The lawyers said that they could not enter the GGM and meet with refugees because it was the weekend, and added that they had to wait until Monday.

Call for international solidarity

Human rights activists in Iran are among those detained: Iranian Kurdish activist Hossein Manbari (Amanj), Shugar Mohammadi, Naser Kamangar, Arzoo Molanaei and their two children, Sabah Nikkhah and his wife Shallir, and their two children. Lawyers said that their lives would be put in danger if they were sent back to Iran. Human rights organizations called for international human rights organizations and institutions to intervene immediately.

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HDP and HDK condemn AKP-MHP coalition for war policies which force millions to migrate

ANF | ANKARA | 18 DECEMBER 2022

In the joint written statement made on the occasion of the International Day of Migrants on 18 December, the emphasis was on the “AKP-MHP, a party to the war against Syria, that has caused millions of people to migrate to Turkey and other countries.”

The statement said: “The world welcomes the International Day of Migrants on 18 December, unfortunately, in conditions of war, poverty, and inequality that have made millions of people refugees.”

The HDP and the HDK continued: “Those who start or cause wars, instead of ending their war policies, resort to military solution methods in order not to allow those fleeing the war to cross their borders. States avoid creating deep-rooted humanitarian solutions to the phenomenon of migration and find the ‘solution’ in practices including fences, walls, mines, repatriation agreements and torture against immigrants. As a result of international agreements, customs, and borders for capital movements and weapons are liberalized, borders against immigrants are almost built with steel walls.”

The statement continued: "States that exploit people's forced migration are usurping all the rights of migrants and refugees as well as the Geneva Convention. Instead of defending refugee rights, they destroy them.

The migrant and refugee problem has reached huge proportions for Turkey in the last eleven years. The AKP-MHP was a party to the war against Syria which caused millions of people to migrate to Turkey and other countries. The right of millions of people to live freely is in danger due to the war policy still being waged against the Kurds in Rojava. The AKP-MHP coalition sees no harm in using millions of people who migrated to Turkey due to the war as a tool of blackmail and bargaining. In return for keeping refugees without status within the borders of Turkey, the inhumane practices carried out in Syria and Turkey are ignored by other states.”

The statement added: “We equally oppose racist aggression against Kurds, hate speech against Syrian immigrants, exploitation, and oppression of Afghan, African, or other migrant groups, and we do not accept that people are forced to migrate or are oppressed in the place where they migrate. Every person should have conditions worthy of human dignity in the territory they live in. We insist that they cannot be deprived of their basic rights even if they have to migrate.

On the occasion of 18 December, International Migrants Day, we express once again that we will continue to defend the fundamental rights of migrants and refugees. We call on Turkey and all other states to abandon their policies of war and ecological destruction, to guarantee the right to life of women, children and LGBTI+s who are the biggest victims of war, and to respect the rights of all migrants.”



HDP executive detained in Izmir is in intensive care

ANF | İZMİR | 19 DECEMBER 2022

The Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK), Free Women's Movement (TJA), Democratic Regions Party (DBP), Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), United Forces of Struggle (BMG) and the Aegean Association for Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners and Convicts (EGE-TUHAYDER) organized a demonstration at the Konak Square in the western province of İzmir on Sunday in protest at war and the isolation regime imposed on Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.

According to the Association of Lawyers for Freedom, 42 citizens were detained. One of the detained people, HDP Bodrum District Co-Chair Mehmet Zahir Yaşar (55), suffered a heart attack during the police

attack. He underwent an angiography at Atatürk Training and Research Hospital in Yeşilyurt. Doctors said that they could not give information about Yaşar's health conditions.

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Senyaşar Family receives arbitrary parking fine over banner demanding justice

ANF | URFA | 19 DECEMBER 2022

The justice vigil of Emine Şenyaşar, who lost her husband and two sons in an armed attack on June 14, 2018 in the Suruç district of Urfa, that involved AKP Deputy İbrahim Halil Yıldız's bodyguards and relatives, and his son Ferit Şenyaşar, who was injured in the same attack marks day 651. The family continued their vigil by putting a banner reading "Justice" on their car parked in front of the courthouse in Urfa.

Ferit Şenyaşar stated that the family's private car was given a "parking" fine last week. He pointed out that the car parked near the vigil area, which they called "Justice Corner", was fined and the fine was imposed citing a parking ban in the area. Pointing to the sign that parking is prohibited, Senyaşar said that the courthouse staff violated the ban, but only their car was fined. He continued: "If there is a ban in front of this courthouse, it should be applied to everyone. We do not want double standards in law. We condemn this parking fine. We do not accept it. We will file a criminal complaint with the prosecutor's office to object to it. If a parking fine is given to us, why are all these vehicles here?"

'Instructions of superiors'

Şenyaşar said: "The President is a party to the case. He knows well that he is misled in this case. If the president makes a statement, justice can be secured, and prosecutors will do their duty. We are right, the authorities know that we are right. But the laws are not applied, and the instructions of superiors are followed."

Şenyaşar stated that they were subjected to repeated attacks in front of the courthouse. He added: "Anyone who contributed to the injustice and persecution against us in front of the courthouse will be prosecuted when this government changes. We want justice. We will not give up on our just demand."

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Police raid offices of PAK, PSK and Azadi Movement in Amed

ANF | AMED | 19 DECEMBER 2022

Turkish police raided the headquarters of the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK), the Kurdistan Socialist Party (PSK) and the Azadi Movement in Amed (Diyarbakir).

The police carried out the raid citing no official reason.

PAK Chair Mustafa Özçelik said that the raids may have taken place due to an event the PAK held in Dağkapı Square on December 17 to celebrate the “Kurdistan Flag Day”.

Hidayet Fidan, a party assembly member of the PSK, stated that the police search continued in the party’s office and many flags were seized.



Former co-mayors of Hakkari sentenced to 11 years in prison each

ANF | HAKKARI | 19 DECEMBER 2022

Dilek Hatipoğlu and Nurullah Çiftçi, former co-mayors of Hakkari, are on re-trial after the Constitutional Court (AYM) ruled that their right to a fair trial was violated.

Hatipoğlu and Çiftçi as well as their lawyers attended the hearing held at the Hakkari 2nd High Criminal Court on Monday. Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Deputy Sait Dede and the HDP former co-mayor of Erciş, Diba Keskin, as well as numerous people attended the hearing.

In her plea, Dilek Hatipoğlu recalled that a fair trial had not been held for the last 8 years. She said: “Conditions of a fair trial are a fundamental right which must be respected. The court must secure appropriate conditions and time to use my right to defence. Prison conditions are not conducive to a fair trial. Following the ruling of the Constitutional Court, I was brought from the prison, which is 1,300 kilometers away, for the hearing. My transportation by a prisoner transfer vehicle and my solitary confinement for 15 days in the prison to which I was transferred, have posed obstacles to my defense. I demand appropriate conditions for a fair trial and defense and my release.”

Speaking after, Nurullah Çiftçi pointed out that he was deprived of his right to defence as he had been detained for 8 years.

Çiftçi said: “Transportation by a ring vehicle from the prison, which is hundreds of kilometres away, is an obstacle to my right to defence. The distance of the road and prison conditions prevent me from defending myself mentally and physically. I demand the suspension of execution of a penalty, fair trial conditions and my release.”

The court regarded the plea for a fair trial as a use of the “right to remain silent”.

In its opinion on the merits, the prosecutor demanded that the previous court ruling be upheld, and it is concluded that there is no need for the suspension of execution of the penalty.

The court rejected the plea for release, upholding the previous sentence of 11 years and 3 months for each co-mayor.

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HDP under police blockade in Istanbul: The downfall of the criminal empire is imminent

ANF | ISTANBUL | 19 DECEMBER 2022

“A reflection of the fear of a criminal regime facing its downfall” - these were the words used by HDP leader Mithat Sancar in Istanbul on Monday to describe the siege of his party’s district office in the Kadıköy district to prevent a protest event on the occasion of the police’s violent crackdown on the final “Justice Vigil” of prisoners’ families, during which an officer slapped HDP politician Ferhat Encü on Sunday. Like yesterday, the riot police were again deployed with a large contingent and armored vehicles and hundreds of officers literally heckled the party building and surrounding streets with reference to a ban on assembly issued by the local administrative authority. Leading party members were denied access to the office and even the co-chairs of the party, Mithat Sancar and Pervin Buldan, who had traveled from Ankara together with other MPs, were not allowed to leave the encirclement for a long period of time. Many people were detained again.

Sancar: The downfall of the criminal empire is imminent

“Why do I speak of a reflection of fear?” asked Sancar in a speech looking at the marching police. “Because the picture painted here at this moment reflects the fear of the rulers of the determined struggle for democracy, the stubborn and persistent resistance for freedom. What else are they afraid of? Of that day when their criminal empire is plunged into the abyss.” Sancar went on to say that concern for their own survival is also the main reason for the Turkish government’s intensified aggressiveness against all circles that are committed to a change of system in the country. It is the same with the slap in the face against Encü. “They should know: We will not give up our struggle. We will give the clearest answer at the ballot box. The rulers will not be able to escape accountability for their crimes. This country will sooner or later face an order of justice. No one can prevent today’s rulers from being tomorrow’s condemned. Anyone who thinks that police blockades like this will act as a deterrent and stop us from fighting is sorely mistaken. This government will not be able to protect itself from the big response to the slap in the face it will receive at the ballot box.”

Slap in the face as expression of deep-seated hatred against Kurds

Pervin Buldan also spoke a few words. Buldan described the violence against her former parliamentary group colleague Ferhat Encü, who sat in the Turkish parliament as a deputy from Şirnex (tr. Şırnak) between 2015 and 2018 and currently heads the Istanbul provincial branch of the HDP together with Ilknur Birol on a gender-parity basis, as an “expression of deep-seated hatred against the Kurdish people” and a “dripping black stain” stuck on democracy, justice and equity in the country. The politician also sharply criticized a kettle that the police had drawn inside the siege ring around the HDP building and

surrounded leading party members inside. “Once again, the third largest party in the parliament of this country is under a blockade by an intolerant and anti-democratic government - this time and repeatedly by security forces commanded by this regime. But our opposition to the rulers will not be banned by unlawful decrees and unjustified interference with freedom of assembly.”

Around 100 detained

Outside the siege ring, there was repeated loud applause and slogans from members of the HDP as well as members of other groups and parties united under its umbrella. The police made numerous arrests, sometimes using massive force. According to the latest information, around 100 people were taken into custody, among them several mothers of sick and political prisoners who had been fighting for the lives of their imprisoned children for months with the “Justice Vigil” initiated in March. Istanbul HDP co-chairs İlknur Birol and Ferhat Encü are also in custody. Encü had been arrested the previous day along with 68 other people and was only released around midnight. A protest taking place at about the same time in Izmir on the Aegean Sea was also attacked by the police and dozens of people were temporarily arrested. HDP politician Mehmet Zahir Yaşar, who had traveled from Bodrum, suffered a heart attack during his arrest and had to undergo emergency surgery.



HDP members detained in Mersin accused of attending funerals

ANF | MERSIN | 19 DECEMBER 2022

The HDP members detained in Mersin during an “anti-terror operation” by the Turkish police and gendarmerie last week have been released for the time being. A court in the southern Turkish coastal metropolis rejected a request by the public prosecutor's office for pre-trial detention on Saturday evening, as has since become known, but imposed “judicial control”, as a so-called “preventive measure”. The mechanism is considered an alternative to detention and is used excessively by the Turkish judiciary to keep unwelcome people under control. The basis is the law on “release under control”, which came into force in 2013.

The elaborately staged “operation” in Mersin, which was accompanied by Turkish state media, took place last Wednesday. Masked special forces broke into several flats in different districts of the province and carried out raids. As a result, a total of nine people were taken into custody, including senior and leading members of the HDP in the Toroslar, Akdeniz and Yenişehir districts.

The detention of HDP members is based on the charge of “propaganda for and membership in a terrorist organisation”, which the Mersin public prosecutor's office has raised. The alleged participation in funerals and mourning ceremonies for fallen guerrillas is apparently used as a basis, according to the HDP. In one case, the accusations are related to the so-called “Kobanê trial” in Ankara. There is currently no information on whether and when charges will be brought in Mersin. Until a decision is made to the contrary, those affected must now regularly appear before the authorities and are not allowed to leave the city.



MED-DER: Struggle for mother tongue will continue

ANF | AMED | 20 DECEMBER 2022

Attacks and bans on the Kurdish language continue in all areas of the public sphere due to the AKP-MHP government's anti-Kurdish policies. Intolerance towards the Kurdish language has recently come to the fore once again during the debates within the Parliament and media outlets.

Dilan Güvenç spoke about the pressures, crackdown, and bans on the Kurdish language.

Persistent crackdown

Güvenç maintained that the attacks and pressures against the Kurdish language have not recently emerged but rather been continuing systematically since the establishment of the republic in 1923. Dilan said that they regarded the attacks against the Kurdish language as a policy of assimilation. "The Turkish Republic is based on one nation and one language. The Kurds have never been seen as citizens. The Kurdish language and culture have been ignored systematically. Therefore, although governments keep changing, the attack on the Kurdish language and culture continues and does not change. We consider all of these as assimilation policies and a major crime. For, mother tongue is a universal fundamental right. The state resorts to various oppressive policies to prevent the Kurdish language. Unfortunately, as the Republic of Turkey will soon mark its centennial year, the crackdown on the language and culture of the Kurds prevails."

State has a problem with Kurds

Güvenç remarked that the government wanted to ban the Kurdish language in all areas of life. "The state has a problem with the Kurds. There is a Kurdish issue which is mainly related to language and culture. The state wants to create docile Kurds. It seeks to deceive the Kurds with small changes, leaving aside the demand that the mother tongue should be the official language of education. This government continues systematic attacks on the Kurdish language. Kurdish youth face racist attacks at universities. The Kurds living in central Anatolia were subjected to massacres for speaking their language. They are killed when they listen to music in their mother tongue. Bans and censorship show that the government is not serious about resolving the problem. Kurdish parliamentarians want to speak in their mother tongue in the parliament. However, the government has no tolerance towards the Kurdish language. The crackdown on the language means that the Kurds are not recognized. That's why we define this approach as racism, which has been in force since the establishment."

Millions of Kurds cannot receive education in mother tongue

Güvenç continued: "They need the Kurds because they can stay in power if the Kurds vote for them. We know this from their previous policies. They have banned the Kurdish language, but they pretend that this is not the case. The right to use the Kurdish language is not enshrined in the laws and the constitution. Denial can be seen in every field of public sphere. Millions of Kurds live in Turkey, but they cannot receive education in their own language."

We will continue our struggle

Güvenç concluded: “If the Kurds abandon their language and culture, they cannot enjoy their basic rights. Governments pursue assimilation policies because they want to destroy the Kurds as a nation. We will increase our struggle for the mother tongue against denial. We will do whatever we can to make Kurdish the official language of education, and we will continue our struggle. Kurds should speak, write and read their mother tongue in every aspect of life. We should further press for the Kurdish language to be the official language of instruction. We urge our people to speak their mother tongue more.”

— ★ —

Two Kurdish political activists from Rojhilat face deportation to Iran

ANF | MUĞLA | 20 DECEMBER 2022

Two Rojhilat refugees, who were among the 144 refugees detained near the port of Muğla's Marmaris district on 15 December, are facing deportation to Iran. While 140 of the detained refugees have been released because they have residence documents, 4 Iranian refugees are still held in the removal center in Ula district.

Lawyers who went to GGM and met with refugees on Monday announced that Kurdish political activists Shawgar Mohammadi and Hossein Menbari (Amanj) would be deported. Kurdish political activists risk execution for publicizing rights violations against Kurds in Iran.

The lawyers stated that they will initiate the necessary actions to stop the renouncement due to the danger of death.

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89 families in Serdeşt Camp return to their homes in Shengal

ANF | SHENGAL | 20 DECEMBER 2022

89 families of refugees from Shengal staying in Serdeşt Camp returned to their homes in Tilezêr (in the province of Shengal). The families have been displaced for 8 years, living in a camp under the supervision of the United Nations and supported by some humanitarian organizations. Families were welcomed by the Shengal Autonomous Administration.

Azad Hisên, co-chair of the Executive Board of the Shengal Autonomous Board of Directors, who welcomed the families on the main road to Tilezêr, said: “This wave of return is the greatest response to our enemy. Many political parties are trying to prevent the return of the people and make Shengal look unsta-

ble with their special war. By returning to their homes, our people are giving the biggest answer to the stability in Shengal.”

“People in all camps in Bashur Kurdistan should return to their homes”

Azad Hisên thanked the institutions and parties that helped the people to return on behalf of the Autonomous Administration and continued: “Our people, not only in Serdeşt but also in all camps in Bashur Kurdistan, should return to their homes.”

Serdeşt Camp manager Elî Şabo gave information about the return of the refugees and said that 89 families had left the camp on Monday, while more will soon follow. Elî Şabo stated that some international organizations provided financial support for the return of the people and job opportunities were created in Tilezêr for the returning families.

The municipalities of Girzerik, Sîba Şêx Xidir and Tilezêr, which are affiliated to the Autonomous Administration, mobilized to assist the returning families and helped them clean their homes.



At least 828 refugee workers killed on the job in Turkey between 2013 and 2022

ANF | ISTANBUL | 20 DECEMBER 2022

The Health and Safety Labor Watch (İSİG) said in a report that at least 828 refugee workers were killed on the job in Turkey between 2013 and 2022.

The report was published to mark International Migrants Day and said that killings of refugee workers made up 4.41 percent of all work-related killings in Turkey. Fifty-one percent of the killed refugee workers were from Syria and 18 percent were from Afghanistan.

“The fact that seven of every 10 killed workers were those who became refugees because of wars shows that wars not only displace people but also cause ‘proletarianization,’” said İSİG.

İSİG said: “Migrant/refugee workers, who are seen as ‘expendable workers’ by bosses, work for long hours without any rules, with low wages and without occupational health and safety measures.”

The highest number of killings of refugee workers occurred in the sectors of agriculture (29 percent) and construction (25 percent). “The main reasons for deaths in the agriculture sector was the transportation of an excessive number of workers in tractor trailers ... and falling of a height as a result of the failure to take measures in the construction sector.”

In Turkey there are over four million refugees, more than in any other country in the world. More than 3.7 million of them are from Syria and 300,000 of them from Afghanistan, according to government figures.

Studies show that an overwhelming majority of refugee workers work in insecure and precarious conditions, and are often paid lower than the minimum wage.



Eight detained during house raids in Kocaeli and Batman

ANF | 20 DECEMBER 2022

In Kocaeli in western Turkey and in Batman in northern Kurdistan, several flats were stormed and searched by the police early on Tuesday morning. At least eight people were taken into custody for unknown reasons.

The search measures in Kocaeli were directed against members of the Youth Council of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). Ibrahim Güler, Yekbun Şengül, Zilan Atabay, Huri Yıldızhan and Hasan Ali, of whom only the first name is known, were detained. The file is classified, and the detainees are denied access to legal counsel for 24 hours.

In Batman, Abdullah Iş, Şerif Çakar and Mustafa Erol were taken into custody during house searches, and four other people are wanted. Again, no reason was given for the action. Those detained were taken to the police headquarters in the province.



HDP: Government is using the judiciary as a stick to batter critical politicians

ANF | ANKARA | 20 DECEMBER 2022

The HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) released a statement expressing concern over the latest judicial actions against the opposition party CHP and the ongoing repression of the HDP.

The statement by HDP Foreign Affairs Co-Spokespersons Feleknaş Uca and Hişyar Özsoy includes the following:

“As we get closer to presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey, which must take place by June next year, President Erdoğan and his allies continue to use underhand methods to eliminate their political opponents that they cannot defeat politically, making use of the judiciary, which is almost completely under

their control. The latest example of this is the prison sentence given to the Republican People's Party (CHP)'s İstanbul Mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu.

İmamoğlu has been sentenced to 2 years, 7 months, and 15 days in prison by the İstanbul Anadolu 7th Penal Court of First Instance for "insulting public officials". If the court of appeal upholds the verdict, the mayor will be banned from politics, who is a potential presidential candidate, and lose his seat.

The charges against İmamoğlu are based on his critical comment about the annulment of the March 2019 İstanbul mayoral election, which was cancelled for 'irregularities' when İmamoğlu appeared to have just ousted the AKP candidate. The election was then re-run in June, when İmamoğlu won by a substantial majority. On 30 October 2019, İmamoğlu made a criticism of the cancellation of the first poll to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Strasbourg. On 4th November, Interior Minister, Süleyman Soylu, stated, "I am telling the fool who complained about Turkey in the European Parliament; this people will make you pay for this". Whereupon, İmamoğlu replied, "When we consider the ones who cancelled the March 31 election and the situation that we found ourselves in across the world and in Europe, when we consider what happened back then, the ones who cancelled the March 31 election are fools". The Supreme Election Board (YSK) filed a criminal complaint about İmamoğlu's response. Minister Soylu intervened, and İmamoğlu was sued. In his written statement to the court, İmamoğlu indicated that his expression had been a political statement and a severe criticism which had not specifically targeted anyone. But the court has ruled that İmamoğlu insulted the members of the YSK.

This case follows the government targeting of another prominent CHP name, İstanbul Provincial Chair, Canan Kaftancıoğlu, On 12 May 2022, Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeal approved a prison sentence of four years and eleven months for her. The court approved three different sentences against her: "insulting a public official", "explicitly degrading the Turkish Republic", and "insulting the president." Kaftancıoğlu was head of the CHP in İstanbul when İmamoğlu ousted the AKP in the 2019 mayoral elections. Charges were made against her following the March elections, based on social media postings that she had shared eight years ago. A local court initially sentenced her to a total of nine years imprisonment for five separate charges, including "making terrorist propaganda".

The prison sentences against İmamoğlu and Kaftancıoğlu should be understood as further crackdowns on the government opposition ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections. Over one hundred and fifty co-mayors of the HDP have been arrested on bogus terrorism-related charges, either after the local elections in 2014 or after those in 2019. The government is now using the judiciary as a stick to batter critical politicians of the other opposition groups.

The ruling AKP-MHP coalition is responding to the loss of public support by trying to implement all kinds of unlawfulness in order to stay in power.

The government's pressure on their opponents is likely to increase as we get closer to the elections. On December 19th, the Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation asked the Court to block HDP's bank accounts and suspend the budget it is allocated from the Treasury.

The silence of the international community will contribute to the aggravation of the conditions under which the opposition carries out its activities in the run-up to the upcoming elections."



Öcalan's lawyer Newroz Uysal faces 15 years in prison

ANF | 21 DECEMBER 2022

Kurdish lawyer Newroz Uysal faces up to 15 years in prison in Turkey. Uysal is part of the defense team of the Istanbul-based Asrin Law Office, which represents Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners in the maximum security prison Imrali, and is accused of membership in a terrorist organization.

At today's trial before the 10th Heavy Penal Court in Diyarbakir (Amed), the prosecution demanded a prison sentence of between seven and a half and 15 years. Uysal is charged with participating in activities of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) and in a WhatsApp group in which lawyers exchanged information about rights violations in the course of the curfews in Northern Kurdistan seven years ago.

The defendant herself did not attend the hearing and was represented by her defence lawyers Gulan Çağın Kaleli and Mehdi Özdemir. After the prosecution's plea, the court ordered the continuation of the existing reporting requirements against Uysal. The trial was adjourned until 15 March.

Newroz Uysal is one of the last people to have met Abdullah Öcalan in person. Together with her colleague Rezan Sarıca, the lawyer was able to visit her client a few times on the prison island of Imrali between May and August 2019. Prior to this, a ban on visits by Öcalan's legal counsel was maintained for eight years. The visit was won through a mass hunger strike initiated by Kurdish politician Leyla Güven. In the conversation, Öcalan and his fellow prisoners Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysel Aktaş delivered a message calling for a dignified peace and a political solution to the Kurdish question and problems in Turkey.

Since August 2019, the defense team has had no contact with Öcalan. The last sign of life was a brief phone call with his brother Mehmet Öcalan in March 2021. Newroz Uysal stated at the last hearing in the trial against her in September that the real reason for the indictment was the fact that she was defending Abdullah Öcalan.



Government plans to block treasury grants to HDP in January

ANF | ANKARA | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Habertürk TV Ankara representative Fevzi Çakır claimed that the Chief Public Prosecutor who deals with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) closure case demanded that the HDP's treasury grants be blocked. According to a decision in the HDP closure case on December 6, the chief prosecutor is expected to give his opinion on January 10. However, this new development seems to be based on rumors.

Lawyer Serhat Eren spoke to ANF about the blocking of treasury grants to the HDP. He said that if there is such a decision, the goal is to prevent treasury grants to the HDP in January. “The Chief Public Prosecutor had requested to block HDP’s accounts. However, the Constitutional Court rejected this request. Although nothing has changed legally since the day the case was opened, the Chief Public Prosecutor has made such a request again. One of the reasons for his request is probably to prevent the treasury grants that will be made to our party in January.”

MHP’s request

Lawyer Eren maintained that the Chief Public Prosecutor’s request seemed legally possible and added the move was politically introduced by the government’s ally MHP. “This request was submitted before, and the Constitutional Court rejected it. Since then, no legal justification has emerged to justify this request. The Chief Public Prosecutor was forced by the MHP to open the case. The government ally MHP had already forced the Constitutional Court to close the HDP. The Chief Public Prosecutor has made a request to render our party incapable of doing politics before a court decision has been made regarding our party. Undoubtedly, the prosecutor can make such a request theoretically and legally. But it is the MPH that has forced him to do so.”

We expect request will be rejected

Lawyer Eren explained about the legal process: “We think, or rather we hope, that the Constitutional Court will reject this request of the Chief Public Prosecutor. According to the criminal procedure law, when the Chief Public Prosecutor makes a request, the court forwards this request to the HDP. The HDP presents objections to this request, if any. The HDP is supposed to prepare a defense and submit it to the court. The court then evaluates this request of the Chief Public Prosecutor and makes a decision.”

Government crackdown on HDP

Lawyer Eren emphasized that the recent move to block treasury grants to the HDP is part of the government crackdown against the HDP that has been going on since 2015. He remarked: “After the Chief Public Prosecutor presents his opinion, the Constitutional Court will summon our party to make its defense. After the HDP makes its defense, the file will be sent to the rapporteur. The rapporteur will also submit his report to the court. The court will forward the report prepared by this rapporteur to all members. Then the court will determine a day and the Constitutional Court will make a decision that day.

The recent move should be considered as a part of the attacks against our party. Since 2015, there has been a government crackdown on the HDP. The appointment of trustees to our municipalities, the arrests of our co-mayors and deputies, physical attacks on our provincial and district organizations, the murder of our comrade Deniz Poyraz in İzmir and the maltreatment and the isolation of Kurdish prisoners in prisons ... All these are part of the government strategy put forward against the HDP and the closure case. The Kobanê conspiracy trials are also part of this strategy.”

Family of HPG member Êrîş Rizgar Kato takes his body after 7 months wait

ANF | HAKKARI | 22 DECEMBER 2022

As a result of the air attacks and clashes carried out by the invading Turkish state on 12 June 2022 in the valley of the village of Anîtos (Yoncalı) in Hakkari, 3 HPG and YJA Star guerrillas fell as martyrs. The bodies of Jiyan Konur (Jînda Cûdî), registered in Şirnex, Canan Özdemir (Canda Welat) registered in Wan and Şaban Yorgun (Êrîş Rizgar Kato), registered in Hakkari, were buried in the cemetery of the nameless in Serê Sola after autopsy procedures at Hakkari State Hospital.

The body of Êrîş Rizgar Kato was given to his family after a wait of 7 months. The family had come to Hakkari from Mersin to apply to the Hakkari Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. After the application made by the family and the match of the DNA test, the Hakkari Public Prosecutor's Office gave the family permission to take the body.

The request of family members, who requested a funeral vehicle and a ladle from Hakkari Municipality, which is run by a trustee, was rejected without giving any reason. The family members then dug up the graves with their own means and took their bodies out of the "Cemetery of the nameless" under the siege of the police. The body of Yorgun was buried under police blockade in the cemetery located in the neighbourhood of Karşıyaka in Hakkari center.

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Turkish TV channel receives fine because of the host "praising terrorism with mimics"

ANF | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Turkey's Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) imposed fines on TV channels Halk TV, TELE1 and FOX TV, with monetary fines and broadcast bans after covering the sentencing of the İstanbul mayor.

On December 21, RTÜK and CHP (Republican People's Party) member İlhan Taşçı wrote on Twitter that RTÜK fined Halk TV's Medya Mahallesi (Media Quarter) program, hosted by Aysenur Arslan, with suspensions and a 3-percent administrative fine, based on "praising terrorism with mimics" while reporting about the "terrorist PKK attack in Karkamış".

Aysenur Arslan, who received a three-day ban for her gestures, mocked the decision on Twitter. "Currently, I am practicing facial expressions in front of the mirror at home. Tomorrow I will make an RTÜK gesture."

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Journalist Hayri Demir sentenced to imprisonment

ANF | ANKARA | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Due to his critical reporting and posts on digital networks on the Turkish attacks on northern and eastern Syria, journalist Hayri Demir was sentenced to almost two years in prison for “press propaganda for a terrorist organisation”. The prosecution had also wanted to construct a “membership” out of his critical statements and demanded a prison sentence of up to 32 years. The 15th Heavy Penal Court in Ankara only upheld the propaganda charge, stating that there was insufficient evidence of “membership”.

Hayri Demir was awarded the Musa Anter Press Prize in 2013. Most recently, he published books on the situation of imprisoned HDP politicians and the imprisoned former HDP co-chair, Selahattin Demirtaş.

Demir was arrested on 16 March 2017 and released eight days later. The indictment against him, which was concluded in May 2019, was based on images and fotos on memory cards stolen from his flat in February 2016 and “recovered” by the police, as well as posts on digital networks, mainly news and photos. These include recordings of a live broadcast to Kobanê, of the 2015 Newroz festival in Amed and of a public meeting of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) on 7 September 2014.

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KNK member Tahir Köçer arrested in Germany

ANF | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Police raided several houses in Nuremberg early in the morning and long-time Kurdish activist Tahir Köçer was arrested. The Medya Volkshaus e.V. and private apartments were searched.

The Fed-Gel association, which is organized in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, condemned the searches and the arrest as an “attempt at criminalization and suppression”. The renewed repression is “disappointing for the Kurdish people,” Fed-Gel said in a statement, emphasizing that “the Kurdish people should have the natural right to organize and fight on the basis of legitimate self-defense.”

The association accused the German government of complicity with the Turkish state and condemned its silence on the crimes committed in Kurdistan. “It is not up to the German state to criminalize people who flee genocide. As Kurds living in the diaspora, we expect the federal government to listen to us and work with us to find solutions to our problems. Instead, Germany behaves like the extended arm of the Turkish state.”

Fed-Gel demands respect for Kurdish institutions and the immediate release of Tahir Köçer.

Who is Tahir Kocer?

Tahir Köçer is a member of the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) and was co-chair of the nationwide association KON-MED until June 2021. In these functions, he has appeared publicly at events in Germany for many years, such as last June at the forum “28 years PKK ban on activities. Now let's talk!” in Berlin. As co-chair of KON-MED, in the run-up to the federal elections in 2021, he formulated the Kurdish community's demands and expectations of the competing parties.

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HDP deputy Güzel stripped of her parliamentary seat

ANF | ANKARA | 22 DECEMBER 2022

Jailed Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputy, Semra Güzel, had her parliamentary seat removed after the voting held in the General Assembly of the Parliament. After the Constitution and Justice Joint Committee's report on the dismissal of Güzel's deputy due to her non-participation in legislative activities, a vote was held in the General Assembly to dismiss her.

During the voting, HDP co-chairs Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar were present at the General Assembly, while HDP deputies carried banners with the words “Semra Güzel is the people's deputy” and “Semra Güzel is the will of the people”. Deputies protested the vote with slogans.

A total of 371 votes were given, 330 affirmative and 42 negative. The AKP, MHP, İYİ Party and Republican People's Party (CHP) groups voted to remove the deputy. All MPs in the HDP group voted against it.

‘Our people will respond to this Kurdish enmity’

HDP Riha MP Ömer Öcalan said: “Our people will witness today that the Constitution has been walked on.”

Öcalan stated that the vote to remove Güzel was a revenge of the government on the HDP voters.

HDP Kocaeli MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu said: “You dropped the immunity of the deputy with fake decisions, you put her in prison. Semra Güzel is a representative of the people.”

HDP Sırnex MP Nuran İmir said: “We will never bow to this intolerance that has developed against the will of the Kurdish people.”

HDP Group Deputy Chair, Saruhan Oluç said: “You are not fighting politically against a political opponent. Despite all your pressures, we will maintain our determined stance in the field of democratic politics. You will never be able to expel us from the field of democratic politics. We protest your decision.”

The HDP deputies left the General Assembly to protest the decision.



Police operation against DBP, many taken into custody including co-chair Bayındır

ANF | 23 DECEMBER 2022

A political police operation was carried out against the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) with raids in its offices in many cities and the detention of many of its executives. In Amed, the Headquarters Information Office was besieged in the early hours of the morning.

DBP co-chair taken into custody

The house of DBP co-chair Keskin Bayındır was also raided. The police took Bayındır into custody. Bayındır was taken to Diyarbakır Provincial Security Directorate.

Peoples' Democratic Party (HPD) Spokesperson Ebru Günay, Group Deputy Chair Meral Danış Beştaş, deputies Dersim Dağ, Remziye Tosun, İmam Taşçier and Feleknas Uca came to the DBP Headquarters Information Office, while the search was continuing. HDP Provincial co-chairs Zeyyat Ceylan and Gülistan Atasoy are also waiting in front of the building where the searches were carried out.

Raids in many cities

A raid was also carried out on the DBP's Headquarters in Balgat, Ankara. The police, who did not provide information about the investigation, closed the street where the building is located.

Party buildings were raided in many cities, including Mêrdîn, Şirnex, Wan, Êlih, Riha and Dîlok. The doors of the party buildings were broken in the raids.

Detentions

According to the information received, the party's Şirnex Provincial co-chair Zeki İrmez, Wan Provincial co-chairs Şengül Polat and Harun Okay, Riha Provincial co-chair Hidayet Enmek, Dîlok Provincial co-chairs Ethem Ünal and Zeliha Aslan, Merdîn Provincial co-chair Şerafettin Aslan were taken into custody.

The number of those detained within the scope of the investigation carried out by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office is said to be higher. The detained politicians would be brought to Amed.



Police take seven people into custody in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 23 DECEMBER 2022

As part of a new operation carried out by Turkish police in the morning hours in Istanbul, many houses were raided.

The raids were carried out in Küçükçekmece, Ataşehir and Sancaktepe districts, and involved the houses of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Sancaktepe district executive Kerim Kılıç. The names of the other people taken into custody are as follows: Ahmet Özbey, Kerim Kılıç, Melek Akdoğan, Şükran Altunkaynak, Devran Kaya, Muhittin Güler and Kaddafi Ünal.

The seven people detained were taken to the Istanbul Security Directorate.

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Police operation against DBP: 14 taken into custody including general and local co-chairs

ANF | AMED | 23 DECEMBER 2022

Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched another political investigation targeting the DBP under the name "PKK/KCK".

In this context, the Criminal Judgeship of Peace ordered to search all the DBP's provincial organization's buildings.

Within the scope of the investigation, party buildings and houses were raided in 9 cities in Kurdistan, including Amed.

While detention warrants were issued for 15 people, 14 people, including DBP co-chair Keskin Bayındır and provincial co-chairs, have been taken into custody so far.

Some of those detained are as follows: "DBP co-chair Keskin Bayındır, Amed Provincial co-chairs Hayrettin Altun, Seval Gülmez, Sirnex Provincial co-chair Zeki İrmez, Wan Provincial co-chairs Şengül Polat, Harun Okay, Riha Provincial co-chair Hidayet Enmek, Dîlok Provincial co-chairs Ethem Önal, Zeliha Aslan, Merdin Provincial co-chair Şerafettin Aslan."

Searches continue in the provincial buildings of the party in Agirî and Êlih. It was learned that detention warrants were issued for the provincial co-chairs of both cities.

The detainees are expected to be brought to Amed within the day.



Opinion

Karasu: Isolation is a policy of genocide

ANF | BEHDINAN | 23 DECEMBER 202

KCK Executive Council Member Mustafa Karasu evaluated the isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Karasu said: “Recently, there have been discussions about whether the CPT [European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment] had gone to Turkey and held meetings on İmralı or not. There were even reports saying that the CPT had held meetings there but had not published the results. The fact that there was a meeting, but the results of the meeting were not shared with the public caused certain concerns and reactions among the Kurdish people and the Freedom Movement. Most recently, the lawyers stated that the CPT had gone to Turkey and had not met with Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. In terms of clarifying the situation in İmralı, the CPT did not make any statement.

This of course has raised our concerns. Why does the CPT not make a statement? This has raised our concerns about the health and security issues [of Abdullah Öcalan]. Why didn't they meet? This is a really serious situation. In this respect, of course, our Movement, and our leadership have recently made statements. They said that the situation of Leader Apo is a red line for our people, for our Movement, that the situation of Leader Apo concerns all Kurds, all people, and called for the uninterrupted continuation of rallies, marches and demonstrations until we hear from Leader Apo. This shows the seriousness of the current concerns, which are based on objective reasons. Because it is a serious situation when a prisoner cannot meet with his family for years and when the public cannot receive news about his health. It is a violation of human rights, let alone politics, it is a violation of international rules. Every prisoner has the right to meet with his family and friends, but Leader Apo has not been allowed to meet with them for 21 months. Disciplinary punishments are given as a reason for this. What disciplinary punishment can there be? Leader Apo is in solitary confinement. What could be a disciplinary punishment while being in solitary confinement? There is no such thing. This is purely a legal justification to prevent him from being seen. Why this silence of the international powers, Europe, the USA, Russia or other countries, why their silence against the isolation and oppression that the Turkish state is applying in İmralı? This means that the Turkish state wants to carry out a genocide against the Kurds, which is also why it persecutes their leader. The silence reveals that the same understanding exists in Europe and among international powers. So they are also part of this genocide system. The Turkish state seeks to commit genocide against the Kurds. That is why this heavy isolation was imposed on Leader Apo. This heavy isolation is actually part of a genocide policy. It is part of a genocidal approach. This is the way the policy of exterminating the Kurds is implemented in İmralı. If Europe and the USA do not speak out against this, they will become complicit in this genocide. Everyone must see that a policy of genocide is being implemented against the

Kurds. Without accepting this reality, that is, without recognizing that the policy implemented against the Kurds constitutes genocide, no one can develop correct policies.”

Resistance Against Policy of Death Penalties in Turkish Prisons

Karasu continued: “There is great resistance taking place in the prisons. I would like to greet all comrades with respect and love. They are waging a historical resistance against the Kurdish genocide. What is happening there is also part of the genocide policy. The pressure in the prisons is part of the genocide to annihilate the Kurds. Just like we say that the policy against Leader Apo is a policy of genocide. The situation is the same in prisons. The aim of all these policies is to annihilate the Kurds and to break their will. The comrades in the prisons are showing their willpower. They are saying that you can annihilate us, you can kill us, but you cannot break our will. This is a very meaningful resistance, a very meaningful attitude. Every day, corpses come out of the prisons. They deliberately commit massacres in the prisons. They have abolished death penalties but are carrying out executions in practice. Every death there is an execution in prisons. They have sentenced the prisoners to death. In the prisons, they are killing our comrades every day. There is very heavy pressure, there is hardship and there are many difficulties. They put the prisoners in solitary confinement. They send them to remote places in Turkey so that their families cannot see them. They release sick prisoners a week, 15 days before they die. The support for the resistance in the prisons cannot be left only to the families of the prisoners. The imprisoned comrades do not struggle for their families. They are not fighting for themselves but for their people. Not only for the Kurdish people, but for the peoples of Turkey, for the peoples of the Middle East. So we really need to support these comrades more.”

Reliance of Turkey’s war in South Kurdistan/North Iraq on weapons from Foreign

Powers

Karasu added: “So many airplanes and helicopters have carried out bombardments. So many artillery shells and chemical weapons have been used. The balance sheets [published daily and monthly by the HPG] reveal how heavily this war is going on. The area is constantly under surveillance from the air by reconnaissance planes, but despite this, the guerrillas are sacrificially resisting against the occupying forces. They resist these attacks from their tunnels and in the form of mobile units. The guerrillas have thus created a coordinated and integrated war doctrine. The guerrillas resist against all kinds of weapons from all over the world. Turkey buys weapons from everyone, i.e. from the USA, Germany, and England. If they stop supplying these weapons, Turkey won’t be able to fight this war anymore. Why does Turkey have so many disputes with Sweden? Sweden has imposed an embargo and Turkey is preventing Sweden and Finland from entering NATO because of this arms embargo. This is the main reason. So this is about more than extraditing certain individuals. This is what they claim, but the main reason is that they want to buy weapons. They are buying weapons from other countries. They will now buy even more of the airplanes they have bought from the US before. So do the Turkish Navy, the Land Forces and the Air Force. All of them are dependent on weapons bought from foreign powers.”

Karasu said: “The guerrillas are really waging a huge resistance. This has great political meaning. In other words, the Kurds are still able to stand on their feet today, because of this resistance. This is not only resistance for the Kurdish people, but also for the Turkish people and the peoples of the Middle East. This is a resistance for the overthrow of fascism in Turkey. Without this resistance, not only the Kurdish genocide

would take place, but a heavy reactionary dictatorship in Turkey and the Middle East would also not let the peoples breathe. Therefore, everyone needs to understand this struggle and its great importance. We are fighting a tough struggle and will continue until the end.”

Turkey’s Plan to Clear all Kurds from North and East Syria

Karasu continued: “They are using the explosion in Istanbul as a justification for their attacks on Rojava. The woman who has been arrested and who is said to have carried out this explosion, has three brothers who died in the ranks of the Islamic State [IS]. One of her brothers is currently a commander of Turkey’s Islamist proxy forces [in Syria]. She had gone to Turkey from Idlib. Who controls this area? It is under the control of the Turkish state. Yes, the places occupied by the Turkish soldiers [in Syria] have today become IS bases. IS members are organizing there. The relationship between IS and Turkey is very strong. The MIT [Turkish Secret Service] is organized within the ranks of these Islamist proxy forces. It directs them, uses them as it pleases and twists them around its finger. IS sent its fighters to destroy the Rojava Revolution. Why has Turkey become the highway for IS members from all over the world? Because of its Kurdish enmity. They don’t want the Kurds to achieve anything in Syria or to gain rights there. Rojava is being attacked so much, the infrastructure there is being destroyed and the people’s life opportunities are being completely eliminated, but despite this, international forces remain silent. In fact, the policy that the Turkish state is currently implementing in Rojava is a policy of genocide. Just as it is a policy of genocide in North Kurdistan [East Turkey], Turkey’s policy towards Rojava constitutes a policy of genocide. There is no other reason. Erdogan says he will clear a 30 kilometer corridor. This means eliminating the Kurds who live there. Kurds all live in these border regions. All Kurdish cities are on the border with Turkey. A 30 kilometer zone means that Turkey will control the whole region where Kurds live and will settle Islamist proxy forces there. This is genocide. Therefore, remaining silent means giving consent to the Kurdish genocide. This is the same for the US, Russia and Europe. Now what do they say in the face of this genocide policy? They say that they understand Turkey’s security concerns. What security concerns? If there are security concerns that need to be understood, it is the security concerns of the people in Rojava that they need to understand. Not only their security concerns, but also their concerns for their very existence. What security concerns does Turkey have? Does Rojava have such an approach? Do the people of North and East Syria have such an approach? They only want a democratic and free life in their own region. They don’t want anything else. But the Turkish state is hostile to this goal. Therefore, to say that we understand Turkey’s security concerns’ in the face of this situation constitutes complicity and encouragement [for Turkey’s policy].”

Karasu added: “The people of North and East Syria need to resist until the end. If there is going to be a war and the Turkish state attacks, resistance against the occupation must be put forward everywhere. The invaders must be uprooted. Then, the people must continue this war together with their self-defense forces. This struggle cannot be carried out only by self-defense forces. There are millions of people there. They need to wage war together with the self-defense forces. Yes, Rojava and North and East Syria could become a swamp for Turkey. The peoples of the world also support Rojava and North and East Syria. In a way, they are grateful to Rojava. They have emotional ties with it. States are only based on their own interests, but the peoples of the world stand by the Rojava resistance. When the Rojava resistance unites with the support of the peoples of the world, it will become a swamp for Turkey.”

Kurdish Issue Shows Undemocratic Attitude of European Powers

Karasu continued: “Sweden and Finland want to join NATO but Turkey has said “we won’t accept this unless you cooperate with us against terrorism”. So what have Sweden and Finland done? They immediately lifted their arms embargo. After that, Sweden started to extradite certain people. This means that Sweden has become completely complicit with the Turkish state. It is complicit in the genocide against the Kurds not only in Rojava but also in North Kurdistan. It is complicit in the attacks on the Medya Defense Zones [in South Kurdistan/North Iraq]. The Turkish state uses chemical weapons in the Medya Defense Zones. The international powers always talk about democracy. They claim to be against the use of chemical weapons, but then they say “we understand the security concerns of the Turkish state” – but exactly this state is using chemical weapons. It is really important for everybody to see this. The approach of Europe and the international powers really needs to be exposed. They don’t have any values like freedom or democracy, only their own interests. In other words, through the struggle of the Kurds, all of Turkey’s masks are falling. The same goes for Europe. The Kurdish struggle unmasks Europe. How democratic Europe really is becomes clear when we look at its approach to the Kurds. If we want to see how democratic and libertarian Europe is, we need to look at its attitude towards the Turkish state’s Kurdish genocide policy. The Kurdish people already know this. The peoples of Europe will also realize this and ask those responsible to account.”

Lasting Impact of Women’s Uprising in East Kurdistan and Iran

Karasu underlined that “women’s demands for freedom and democracy constitute the most comprehensive system of freedom and democracy. Therefore, it is not possible to stop this uprising in Iran with executions and other punishments. This kind of approach is the result of a wrong evaluation and perspective. “If we execute, if we punish, society will be silent”, this attitude will only pave the way for even greater explosions. In this respect, everyone, every society and every political attitude needs to change its approach to women. The struggle in Iran will bring about great changes. It will definitely change politics in Iran. Politics and society are already changing in the country. Society has changed in these three months. The Iranian society of today is no longer the Iranian society of three months ago. Iranian women and Iranian youth are not the Iranian women and youth of three months ago. A new social reality has emerged. Of course, this is based on Iranian history. Iran is an area where many different ideas have emerged throughout history. It is a very rich geography in terms of philosophy and thought. In that respect, it is a very productive geography. All of them are standing up today in the name of women’s freedom. They want freedom, they want democracy, they want change. This will not only affect and change Iran, but also the Middle East and the whole world.”

Who Are We?

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

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

Campaigns

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

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

Publications

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

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

It edits books on Öcalan that discuss his main ideas.

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

Conferences

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

Delegations

Every year on February 15th, which is the date of the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan, the International Initiative organizes a group of internationally acclaimed people to take a trip to Turkey for a fact finding mission and publicizes their findings.

Lobbying

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

Art for Öcalan

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

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