

THE İMRALI POST

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

Issue № 48 / 9 May 2023 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Activists in Strasbourg: It's time for Öcalan's physical freedom!

ANF | STRASBOURG | 4 MAY 2023

The Villiers Le Bel group, consisting of activists Azad Güneş, Enseri Doyar, İbrahim Kulak and Fırat Riha, took over the 'Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil' in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, which has been going on since July 25, 2012.

Azad Güneş, one of the vigil activists, said: "I believe that we should approach Öcalan with self-criticism every moment we live and breathe."

Güneş said: "The unprecedented resistance of Öcalan, who has been subjected to aggravated isolation for 21 years, against all the state's policies of intimidation, suppression, and crackdown is the biggest reason for the isolation. Since Öcalan does not take a step back, the state attacks and yet encounters the resistance of the ages."

'Öcalan's physical freedom should be our priority'

Pointing out that a key election would be soon held in Turkey and North Kurdistan, Güneş said: "Our first priority should be the physical freedom of Öcalan. He is not just a leader who represents a people. He is now an international leader who can offer the greatest alternative to the world state systems."

Güneş continued: "Öcalan, who offers the paradigm of democratic modernity against capitalist modernity to the peoples of the world, should be freed physically through a joint struggle of the peoples of the world."

Treating the state mentality as a whole, Öcalan studied the origins of the states. He embraced everything that was ignored, excluded and exploited by the states and introduced a new dimension of resistance. Under the current circumstances, defending Öcalan is defending the entire universe, the entire working class, women, youth and children.

Therefore, it is a historical duty and responsibility of the peoples of Kurdistan, the working class of Turkey, women and youth, peoples of the world, workers and young people to stand up for Öcalan. It is time to defend the world-renowned leader, to further universalize his ideas and to secure his physical freedom."

Families apply to visit their relatives on Imrali

ANF | 5 MAY 2023

There has been no news from Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan for over two years and there is absolute isolation imposed on him.

Abdullah Öcalan's brother Mehmet Öcalan and his guardian Mazlum Dinç, Ömer Hayri Konar's brother Ali Konar, Hamili Yıldırım's brother Polat Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş's sister Melihe Çetin applied to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to request a visit to their relatives.

Families also applied to the Directorate of Imrali F Type High Security Closed Penal Institution through the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

Lawyers are requesting to meet with Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan twice a week. However, applications for visits are systematically left unanswered. In some cases, months later, lawyers are informed that disciplinary action has been taken against the Kurdish people's leader and therefore no visit can be granted.

It came out on January 12 that the Bursa Execution Judge's Office had notified lawyers of a new three-month ban on family visits for Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners on 4 January. The action was described as a "disciplinary punishment", the motives and details of which, however, were not mentioned.

Concerns increased after the CPT visit to Imrali

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 Imralı F Type High Security Prison was among the institutions it visited.

However, Asrın Law Office reported that during the CPT visit, there was no meeting with Abdullah Öcalan, and that this increased their concerns. Asrın Law Office said on 29 November: "We have heard that Mr. Öcalan did not see the CPT delegation during its visit to Imrali Island in September 2022."

Conditions of extraordinary isolation

The Imralı F Type High Security Closed Prison was built specifically for Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999 and has since been operated based on a special status and through special practices.

Under the so-called aggravated execution regime, Abdullah Öcalan and his fellow prisoners, Hamili Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, have been held under conditions of extraordinary isolation for a long time, 24 years in terms of Öcalan and eight years each in terms of other inmates.

Despite all their attempts, lawyers from the Istanbul-based Asrın Law Office, which represents Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners, have not been able to receive even a single sign of life from their clients since 25 March 2021. They could not obtain any information regarding their health status, their

detention conditions, their legal situation in 2022. It has been 23 months that their clients have not been heard from in any way.

Öcalan held in a single cell since 1999

According to the “2022 Annual assesment Report on Rights violations and the Current Conditions in İmralı Island Prison” released by Asrın Law Office on 15 February 2023, Abdullah Öcalan has been held in a single cell in İmralı Island Prison since 15 February 1999. For the first ten years, he was the only prisoner in the island prison. In November 2009, new cells were added to the prison and five other prisoners were brought in. Nevertheless, Öcalan continued to be kept in solitary confinement 23 hours a day on weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends.

Until 2011, Öcalan’s right to see his lawyers was limited to one hour one day a week, but in fact, he was constantly prevented from availing himself of this limited right, with the authorities alleging the pretext of “adverse weather conditions” or a “technical defect” of the coaster going to the island. In the twelve years since 27 July 2011, he has only been able to see his lawyer five times, between May and August 2019. The last of these five meetings took place on 7 August 2019.

Since 2014, Öcalan has received five visits from family members. His brother’s visit to the prison on 3 March 2020 marks Öcalan’s last direct contact with his family. Also, in 24 years, he communicated with the outside world via telephone on only two occasions (on 27 April 2020 and 25 March 2021). During the last phone call on 25 March 2021, the connection was lost after only two minutes and could not be restored. Öcalan has not been heard from since.

Incommunicado detention

The report by Asrın stated that their clients’ situation was described as a form of “incommunicado” detention by the CPT in its report of 5 August 2020 (paras. 48 and 49). The CPT emphasized that such a state of affairs was unacceptable, urging the Turkish authorities to end it as soon as possible. “Incommunicado” detention means that the detainee or convict is completely prevented from any contact with the outside world and therefore cannot communicate with anyone, including his/her family, friends, and lawyers.

The “incommunicado” detention continued without interruption in 2022 despite lawyers’ weekly applications to the authorities in which they requested for the families and lawyers to be allowed to visit the prison. From 25 March 2021, the last date of contact with İmralı, until the end of 2022, a total of 238 applications for lawyer visits and another 79 applications for family/guardian visits were made. These applications were left without any response. Likewise, lawyers did not receive any letters, telegrams, or faxes from their clients during this period; nor was there any contact via phone.

Restrictions through fabricated decisions

“After we applied to different international mechanisms, we learned from the government’s responses that our clients’ right to communicate via phone had been restricted for six months by decisions of the prison’s Management and Supervisory Board dated 18 October 2021, 30 March 2022, 9 May 2022 and 9 June 2022, respectively. These restriction orders were not communicated to the lawyers; the procedures were carried out secretly, bypassing the lawyers. Thus, it was understood that our clients’ right to communicate

via phone is subject to periodic restrictions through fabricated decisions that are issued once every six months.

Moreover, we have not received any response to the numerous letters sent to our clients at regular intervals throughout the year. It is not known whether these letters were delivered to their addressees at all. In turn, we have also not received any letters, telegrams or faxes written by our clients in 2022.

In addition, the de facto and unlawful bans on family and lawyer visits that have been in place for many years have been maintained systematically and without cease so that not a single family or lawyer visit could take place in 2022. In this respect, 2022 was marked by the absolute impossibility of establishing any contact with our clients in İmralı Island Prison.”

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Asrın Law Office demands contact with Öcalan amid rumours of alleged talks on İmralı

ANF | 6 MAY 2023

A sham debate has been going on in Turkey for some time, speculating about talks with Abdullah Öcalan in the run-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections on May 14. The Asrın Law Office, which represents Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners on the prison island, assesses these rumours as manipulation, saying: “We have to emphasise again that we have not heard anything from Öcalan since 25 March 2021. Despite all the requests and efforts of his lawyers and his relatives, we are not aware of the living conditions and state of health of Öcalan and our three other clients on İmralı. This situation worries us and the whole society.”

The statement by Asrın Law Office pointed out that: “During the election campaign, the political centres are engaged in a propaganda race around Öcalan. Under these circumstances, we would like to inform the whole society that the lack of news and the strict isolation conditions continue and that all these discussions are going on without Öcalan’s knowledge, contribution and participation. What is right and should be done is to give Öcalan the opportunity to meet with his lawyers immediately. The law and minimum ethics also require this. Under these conditions, where Öcalan has no opportunity to express himself, we don't think speculative discussions that would mean ignoring or blocking out the reality of isolation and lack of news are right.”

In its statement published on May 2 in connection with the talks in question on İmralı, the Asrın Law Office said:

- We have not received any messages from Öcalan and our three other clients after 25 March 2021, when a telephone conversation with his brother was interrupted and could not be continued. We do not know the reason for this interruption.

- We have no information about the detention conditions, the treatment and the state of health of our clients on Imrali.
- According to Article 66/3 of Law No. 5275, convicts have the right “to make immediate use of the prison's telephone and fax facilities in the event of the death, serious illness, epidemic disease or natural disaster of their heirs, descendants, spouses and siblings”. Nevertheless, Öcalan and our other clients were deprived of this right even in the case of death, let alone illness, of their family members, and this prohibition was not relaxed even during the 6 February earthquakes.
- Öcalan could only use a single-channel radio for 14 years and only had access to television, which is available to all prisoners, in 2013. However, as a report from May 2018 shows, TV channels were restricted, and newspapers were delivered after a delay of 40 days.
- Öcalan was held in solitary confinement in the island prison for ten years and nine months from 16 February 1999 to 17 November 2009, after which five more of our clients were transferred to Imrali. Although these prisoners were later exchanged, as outlined in the 2016 and 2019 CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture) reports, our clients could only meet for six hours a week and spend the rest of the time alone in their cells.

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Turkish Justice Ministry issues statement on Imrali

ANF | 7 MAY 2023

The Turkish Ministry of Justice issued a statement on the rumours of pre-election talks with Abdullah Öcalan. According to the ministry, only a technical team has been to the prison island of Imrali to inspect storm damage to service buildings. The storm on 5-7 February caused damage to the roofs of the service buildings and facilities used by the security forces, as a result of which the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office asked the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Centres for an assessment on 1 March 2023.

The statement issued by the Ministry of Justice on Saturday also said:

“In this sense, on 21 March 2023, a technical team of a total of four persons, consisting of a mechanical engineer from the Support Services Department of the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention, civil and electrical engineers from the Support Services Department of the Ministry of Justice, and the investigating magistrate in charge of the Construction and Real Estate Office of the Support Services Department of the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention, who leads and coordinates the team, was assigned to carry out an inspection in the said facility after obtaining the official approvals. Based on the aforementioned approvals, technical investigations were carried out on the island and the report on the necessary changes and reinforcements was submitted to the Directorate General. Only the service buildings and the facilities used by the Gendarmerie Security Command on Imrali Island were inspected, but

no inspection or audit was carried out in the prison department where the prisoners are housed. While the documents and facts are obvious, news and statements that are nevertheless made distort this fact.”

Prisons in Turkey

Mother who received her son's body by post: Do not surrender!

ANF | 5 MAY 2023

In a photo taken a few years ago, Halise Aksoy is seen with a package on her knees. Inside the package were the bones of her guerrilla son, Agit İpek.

İpek, who joined the People's Defence Forces (HPG) in 2010, fell as a martyr in an armed conflict in 2017. His family waited for the DNA results for three years.

Aksoy did not know what was inside the package until she received it from the Diyarbakır Courthouse in April 2020.

Aksoy said: “While I was waiting for the official documents, they showed a package lying on the floor and told me, ‘Your bones have arrived’. I was petrified. They delivered my son's bones by post. I took the package after signing the official papers and went home by taxi.”

However, state officials were not satisfied with delivering her son's bones in a package and continued to persecute the mother systematically.

A few months after the package delivery, Aksoy's house was raided by the police on December 24, 2020. Her house was messed up, and photos of her children were confiscated.

On March 4 and May 18 in 2022, Aksoy was detained after being subjected to violence and later released.

The Turkish government, the judiciary and the police did not find this much pressure and torture sufficient.

Aksoy was among those who were detained in the Amed-based police operations carried out in 21 cities on April 25, 2023. On April 28, she was arrested along with her daughter Mızgin Karataş on the charge of “being a member of a (terrorist) organization”.

According to a report from the Mezopotamya News Agency, Aksoy said in her first message from prison: “Don't surrender to those in power.”

Her son-in-law Harun Karataş, who was released after being detained along with mother Halise Aksoy and her daughter Mızgin, described the police raid: “Police officers arrived at around 06.00 in the morning,

they were both official and plainclothes police. We reside with Halise mother. A little further from Halise mother's house, the police raided another place where we used to reside. Even though no one was there, they broke the door and entered inside. They raided Halise mother's house as well. They detained us based on only one witness statement. In fact, we are not strangers to the persecution of state officials.”

Harun Karataş (37) who lives with his 4-year-old son Çiya, added: “When Halise mother was arrested, she said, ‘Don't surrender to them’, in a message she sent to her daughter. She said that she would resist this way in prison. This is a message for those of us who are outside prison. We have seen every kind of persecution and we have never submitted. We will never submit.”

Halise Aksoy's lawyer, Necat Çiçek revealed that her client was arrested based on the statements of witness Ümit Akbıyık. The lawyer said: “The accusation against Halise Aksoy is based on Ümit Akbıyık's statements. She is also accused of using her home as a ‘safe house’. Her phone calls with journalists are considered as a crime. When asked about her son Agit, Halise mother replied to a court: “My son was martyred.” The court asked her to explain the concept of ‘martyrdom’. She replied: ‘My son is a martyr for me’. The mother chanted the slogan ‘Biji Kurdistan’ (Long live Kurdistan) after the court decided to arrest her. She told her daughter Mizgin: “Don't surrender to them.”



Imprisoned journalists urge people to protect their right to receive news

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) co-chair Dicle Müftüoğlu and Mesopotamia Agency (MA) editor Sedat Yılmaz were detained on 29 April during an operation in 15 cities as part of an Ankara-based investigation.

Journalists were remanded in custody on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” for their professional activities on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day.

Müftüoğlu and Yılmaz sent a message from Sincan Prison, where they are imprisoned, emphasizing that the free press would win.

Müftüoğlu said that 5 of her journalist friends were detained after their arrest and all equipment was seized during the raid.

Müftüoğlu stated: “After a 15-hour bus journey, we were brought to Ankara. We were asked about our journalistic activities and telephone conversations by people working in different fields that we did not know. In the past, it was considered a crime to cross the road under the same tree. Now say hello to people we now suspect is indicted is considered an 'organization' meeting. On 3 May, World Press Freedom Day, the handcuffs we had been holding for 4 days were tightened even more. We were brought to this place

where I am, or rather, where I am kept with a show. We were put on a single line for show purposes. They tried to bend our heads forward.”

The journalist continued: “Of course, the government that created this situation in which writing facts and defending freedom of expression to the press is a crime, will surely go. The government, which has been trying to consolidate its throne with all the operations it has carried out for the last 10 months, will be defeated thanks to the struggle of those who want freedom. We will also try to make the democratic public aware of what is happening, even if we are in jail. We know that what is wanted to be imprisoned here is the truth, not us. That’s why we call on all our colleagues to raise their voices and defend truth and journalism. We call on all NGOs and society to stand up for their right to be informed. The dark, pitch-black sky today is the sign of the rising sun. Against all blackouts, we will win. The free press will win. Greetings and love.”

Journalist Yılmaz stated: “First of all, I would like to thank the professional institutions for their solidarity and efforts. All of the accusations against me are based on the news that I have written and signed in my 23 years of professional life. This information, which can be accessed through open sources, was tried to be illegalized with an unnecessary investigation. They used a secret witness whose presence or absence was unknown and who apparently did not know me. It was an election operation. And also an operation related to my determination to stand in solidarity with my colleagues who were arrested before me. Those who carried out this election operation will go in that very same election. Greetings and love to all.”

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Mistreated in prison, Kurdish politician Ayşe Gökkan files criminal complaint

ANF | ANKARA | 9 MAY 2023

Ayşe Gökkan, a Kurdish politician sentenced to more than twenty years in prison in Turkey, has been mistreated after being transferred from the women’s prison in Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) to the Sincan prison in Ankara and has filed a criminal complaint against those responsible. The former mayor and spokesperson of the Free Women’s Movement (TJA) has been in prison since the beginning of 2021, and in April her sentence of 22 years and six months imprisonment for membership of a terrorist organisation was upheld on appeal.

In the complaint of torture and ill-treatment, Ayşe Gökkan said that on 24 April she was handcuffed for hours and had difficulty breathing while being transported to the prison hospital in the Sincan prison complex. She was not even allowed to go to the toilet and the prison staff used this as a method of torture. “This torture lasted for three and a half hours. The handcuffs caused severe pain in my wrists and deep wounds,” Ayşe Gökkan wrote. After the ordeal, she was taken back to the women’s ward without medical treatment. Because she insisted, she was finally given a report for the marks of torture.

Ayşe Gökkan was born in the Suruç district of Urfa in 1965 and studied journalism. She has been arrested more than 80 times, and the preliminary proceedings against her were usually based on so-called terror charges. In 2009, Gökkan was elected mayor of Mardin's Nusaybin district with 83 percent of the vote. Most of the investigations against her occurred during her term of office. Gökkan was elected spokesperson of the Free Women's Movement (TJA) in February 2020. In December of that year, she was sentenced to eighteen months in prison in Mardin. In the trial she was accused of being in a restricted military area and causing damage to property. The charge stems from an act of civil obedience in October 2013. At the time, Gökkan was mayor of Nusaybin and protested against the construction of a wall with a hunger strike on the border with Syria.

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Military aggression and occupation

HPG reports airstrikes and artillery attacks by the Turkish army on guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN

According to the daily statement by the Press Office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG), the Turkish army continues its attacks on guerrilla areas in the Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

2 May 2023

On April 29, Turkish troops responded to the guerrillas in Metina, facing a response from the guerrillas with heavy weapons.

On May 1, the Turkish army attacked the Gire Cûdî Resistance Area in the Zap region with heavy weapons. Guerrillas responded to the attack to defend themselves.

On April 29, as well as on May 1 and 2, the areas of Girê Çarçêl, Girê Amediyê, Girê Şehîd Pîrdoğan, Girê Cûdî and Deşta Kafya were targeted by 9 strikes by fighter jets.

On April 29 and 30, and on May 1, the vicinity of the Tîrvaniş village in Metina, as well as the Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amediyê resistance areas, and the guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sîda were shelled twice by attack helicopters and 15 times with howitzers, tanks, mortars and heavy weapons.

3 May 2023

According to the daily statement by the Press Office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG), the Turkish army continues its attacks on guerrilla areas in the Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

On May 2, the Turkish army attacked the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area in the Zap region with howitzers and tanks from 9 to 12 am. Guerrillas responded to the attack to defend themselves.

On April 28, a bomb-laden drone crashed in the Girê Ortê area in Metina region. The drone was seized by the guerrillas.

On May 2, the resistance areas of Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amediyê, as well as the guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sîda were targeted by 17 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

5 May 2023

While the guerrillas have been in a defensive position for humanitarian reasons since the severe earthquake in the Turkish-Syrian border region on 6 February, the Turkish state continues its attacks against guerrilla areas.

In the region of Zap, the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area was attacked by the Turkish army with heavy weapons on May 4. Fighters of YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) responded to the attack to defend themselves.

On the same day, Turkish troops tried to demolish the guerrilla positions in Sîda with heavy construction equipment, facing a response from the guerrillas, which resulted in the death of one occupier.

On the other hand, Turkish fighter jets bombed the areas of Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amêdî as well as the area around the village of Sêgirê six times on 4 May. The areas of Girê Cûdî, Girê FM, Girê Amêdî and Sîda were also attacked 21 times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

7 May 2023

HPG reported that the colonialist Turkish army has escalated aerial attacks on guerrilla forces in recent days.

On 6 May 6, the guerrilla positions in Girê FM Resistance Area were shelled with banned weapons.

On 4,5,6 May, the areas of Ergenê, Zêvkê, Şêranê, Yekmalê in Gâre, the vicinity of the Şelazê village and the area of Girê Bihar in Metîna were targeted by airstrikes 11 times.

On 6 and 7 May, the Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amediyê resistance areas were targeted by 18 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

On the other hand, the Turkish army continues trying to demolish the battle positions in Girê FM Resistance Area with heavy construction equipment.

8 May 2023

In Xakurke region, guerrillas responded to Turkish attacks on Girê Şehîd Axîn and Girê Şehîd Şahan on May 7.

On May 6 and 7, the guerrilla positions in Sîda were shelled three times with banned weapons.

On May 5, the area of Deşta Kafya in Garê was attacked seven times by fighter jets.

On May 6 and 7, the resistance areas of Girê Cûdî and Girê FM, as well as the guerrilla positions in Sîda were targeted by 26 attacks with tanks and heavy weapons.

On the other hand, Turkish troops continue trying to demolish the guerrilla positions in Sîda with heavy construction equipment, according to the HPG statement.

9 May 2023

HPG reported that the Turkish army attack on the Girê FM Resistance Area on May 8 was responded by the guerrillas to defend themselves.

On the same day, the guerrilla positions in Girê FM Resistance Area were bombed with banned weapons.

On May 8 and 9, the Girê Amediyê and Girê FM resistance areas, as well as the guerrilla positions in Sîda were targeted by 11 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

On the other hand, the Turkish army continues trying to demolish the battle positions in Girê FM Resistance Area with heavy construction equipment.

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

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

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

On March 27, the KCK Executive Council co-chair Besê Hozat announced that the unilateral ceasefire would remain in place until after the elections to be held in Turkey on May 14.

According to the annual balance sheet of war in the Medya Defence Zones, published by the Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces on April 14, the Turkish army carried out 3,730 attacks with chemical and other unconventional bombs on guerrilla areas, 4,233 attacks by combat aircraft and 5,628 attacks by combat helicopters.

According to the balance sheet of war for the month of April, published by HPG on May 2, the Turkish army bombed Medya Defense Zones from the air and land 1081 times and attacked the guerrilla positions 8 times using chemical and banned weapons.

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Erdogan pardons the "military wing leader" of Hezbollah in Turkey

ANF | 3 MAY 2023

A presidential pardon has been published in the Official Gazette, in line with which the sentences of Mehmet Emin Alpsoy, who was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment as part of the Hezbollah Trial in Turkey, and former Lieutenant General Çetin Saner, who was sentenced to life imprisonment as part of the February 28 Trial, were revoked due to their "old age".

In the 1990s, the radical Islamist Turkish Hezbollah, which is controlled by the state, was particularly active as a death squad in the Kurdish region and was responsible for countless murdered and "disappeared" people.

Erdogan's pardon came on the eve of the May 14 elections. The pro-Hezbollah Hüdapar (Free Cause Party) is in Erdogan's electoral alliance.

Mehmet Emin Alpsoy brutally murdered 3 people in Ankara and buried them in the basement of his flat. He was then sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment as the "military wing leader" of Hezbollah.

The presidential pardon also revoked the sentences of Nihat İlliman, imprisoned for deliberate killing, and Sedat Çelik, imprisoned for drug dealing, on the grounds of "disability".

According to the data by the Human Rights Association (IHD), there are at least 1517 sick prisoners, 651 of whom are seriously ill. The government does not respond to repeated calls for the release of political prisoners. Numerous prisoners remain behind bars for arbitrary reasons even though they have served their jail time.

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86 years ago, the Dersim Genocide

ANF | 4 MAY 2023

86 years have passed, and yet Turkey is not willing to acknowledge this genocide, like many other Kurdish genocides. Those responsible for the deaths of thousands of people have never been tried nor have they been brought out into light. The broken families could never discover their past.

Thousands of people still haven't received news from their families and close friends. The whereabouts of the Kurdish children taken by the Turkish Government at the time are unknown. Many other world countries who have had similar experiences and committed genocide against their people have acknowledged the injustice and sorrow they have caused and have apologised.

However, Turkey is continuing to resist and use the "it does not exist" strategy with the Kurdish Genocide just as they have with the Armenian Genocide."

The military campaign against Dersim was mounted in response to a relatively minor incident, and it would seem that the army had been waiting for a direct reason to punish the tribes. One day in March 1937, a strategic wooden bridge was burned down and telephone lines cut. Seyyit Riza and the tribes associated with him were suspected. The army may have believed this to be the beginning of the expected rebellion. One Turkish source mentions that there was around the same time another minor incident elsewhere in Kurdistan and suggests coordination by Kurdish nationalists.

The first troops, sent in to arrest the suspects, were stopped by armed tribesmen. The confrontations soon escalated. When the tribes kept refusing to surrender their leaders, a large campaign was mounted. Military operations to subdue the region lasted throughout the summer of 1937. In September, Seyyit Riza and his closest associates surrendered, but the next spring the operations were resumed with even greater force. They must have been of unprecedented violence and brutality.

The number of slaughtered people ranged between 12 thousand, according to official figures, and 70-90 thousand according to the people of Dersim. More than 10 thousand people were exiled.

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Remains of Vakkas Tümen delivered to his family 7 years later his death

ANF | AMED | 4 MAY 2023

Vakkas Tumen (Kawa Çekdar) fell as a martyr during the resistance against the siege by the Turkish state in Nusaybin, in the province of Mardin between 2015 and 2016.

Tümen was buried in the cemetery of the orphans in Amed.

The police called Tümen's family a short time ago and told them that they could have the remains.

The family then went to Amed to get Tümen's remains. The martyr will be buried in the Ayran Kısıl neighbourhood of Birecek in Urfa.



YRK: Turkey has escalated its attacks on Asos region

ANF | 4 MAY 2023

The Defence Forces of Eastern Kurdistan (YRK) Command released a statement providing information about the ongoing attacks by the Turkish state on their areas.

The statement released on Thursday said: “The fascist, invading Turkish state has escalated its attacks on the areas of our forces with the purpose of spreading propaganda in the run-up to the elections to be held in Turkey and North Kurdistan on May 14.”

According to the statement, the latest wave of attacks by the Turkish army targeted the vineyards and orchards of the local people in the vicinity of the Gelale village in Asos region on April 26 and May 2.

YRK stated that the attacks by Turkish armed drones did not cause a loss in their ranks but damage to the vineyards, orchards, fields and bee hives of the local people.



HPG: The fascist AKP/MHP regime lies to the public about invented victories

ANF | BEHDINAN | 4 MAY 2023

Failing to achieve the desired results in the fight against the Kurdish guerrillas, the Turkish General Staff and the Ministry of Defence have been stirring up talk of supposedly “successful neutralisations” of members of the leadership of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and its guerrilla armies HPG (People's Defense Forces) and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) with a lot of sabre-rattling and further showmanship in the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey. Most recently, according to Ankara, among others, a “training leader” of the HPG is said to have been killed in a “selective operation” by the Turkish intelligence service MIT in Gare.

In a statement on Thursday, HPG denied Turkey's reports that several leading members of the guerrilla forces were killed during operations by Turkish troops in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). The Press Office of the HPG stated on Thursday that reports to this effect contradict the actual events of the war in the region and are a product of the special war machinery of the Turkish state and its media.

“The public should not believe these reports,” said the HPG and continued: “The fascist AKP/MHP regime, which insists on war, has failed because of the resilient stand of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas. For this reason, it lies to the public about invented victories. All the comrades who are said to have been killed according to the fascist regime’s warmongering media are in the line of duty. Our people should pay no attention to these reports which are spread within the framework of special war propaganda.”

HPG also reported ongoing attacks by the Turkish occupation forces in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in South Kurdistan. Accordingly, the Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amêdî resistance massifs as well as the guerrilla positions in the Çemço and Sîda areas were targeted by 13 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on May 3. On the other hand, Turkish military forces try to demolish the guerrilla positions in Girê FM Resistance Area with construction machinery.



Turkish drone targets forces protecting Hol refugee camp

ANF | 5 MAY 2023

A Turkish drone bombed the military forces that protect the Hol refugee camp, which also houses families of ISIS members.

Citing a commander in charge of the military forces in Til Hemîs, ANHA reported that a Turkish drone bombed a location in Qeyrewan, south of Til Hemîs, on Friday.

Military forces tasked with protecting the Hol Camp are stationed in the location bombed by Turkish aircraft.

Further details concerning the attack were not immediately available, while North and East Syrian authorities have not made a statement yet.

Located 45 kilometres east of Hesekê, Hol Camp is considered the most dangerous camp in the world. According to current statistics, there are 53,098 people in the camp, which consists of nine sections, distributed among 14,601 families. There are 27,118 Iraqi nationals in 7,275 families and 18,166 Syrian nationals in 5,024 families. In addition, there are 7,803 women, children and adolescents among the international ISIS members in 2,291 families. The ISIS members come from 54 countries.

ISIS is trying to indoctrinate people in the camp through the women and ISIS cells, and in particular to raise the children and young people to become a new generation of ISIS. To make this possible, ISIS tries to destroy any form of other thinking in the camp through murders.



Two SDF members killed in drone strike in Til Hemîs

ANF | 5 MAY 2023

Two members of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were killed in a drone attack by the Turkish state in the south of Til Hemîs.

According to SDF information, the airstrike at around 10:00 local time on Friday morning targeted a post in the village of Qeyrewan (Al-Qayrawan). The village is adjacent to the Hol reception and internment camp, and both SDF fighters were part of the security guards for the camp. Information about the identities of the fallen fighters will be announced later, SDF said.

For years, Turkey has been using drones for extralegal killings in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria, justifying its air war, which violates international law, with security concerns. The attacks are directed against representatives of the Autonomous Administration structures, members of combat units and the civilian population. Since the beginning of the year, Turkey has carried out at least thirteen drone attacks in northern Syria. Last year, Turkey carried out at least 130 drone attacks, killing 87 people and injuring 151 others.



Syria's return to the Arab League approved

ANF | 7 MAY 2023

Syria will return to the Arab League after years of isolation, according to officials from Iraq. The Foreign Ministry announced on Sunday the approval of the meeting of Arab foreign ministers on the return of Syria to its seat in the Arab League, according to the state agency INA.

The ministry's spokesman, Ahmed al-Sahhaf, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA): "The meeting of Arab foreign ministers agreed on the return of Syria to its seat in the Arab League."

According to reports by the Al-Arabiya news channel and the Emirati newspaper "The National", the move is linked to several conditions. Syria is to be obliged to resume talks with the opposition on a new constitution and to pave the way for elections. In addition, the government of long-time ruler Bashar al-Assad is to allow refugees to return, provide cross-border humanitarian aid and curb drug smuggling to neighbouring countries. In return, the Arab countries want to financially support reconstruction in Syria and persuade allied states to withdraw from Syria.

Syria's membership in the Arab League was suspended in 2011 because of the Damascus regime's brutal treatment of the opposition since the "Arab Spring". The uprisings developed into a civil war that turned into a proxy war and continues to this day. According to estimates, more than half a million people have lost their lives in the war, and around 14 million Syrians have had to leave their homes. Almost half of the refugees are on the run within Syria.

A political solution is the "only way" to reach an agreement, Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said at the opening of the meeting in Cairo on Sunday. He stated that interference by foreign states exacerbated the crisis in Syria. According to Shoukry, the main responsibility for a solution lies with the government in Damascus. Together with its allies, it now controls about 70 per cent of the country.

The next summit of the 22-member organisation is scheduled for 19 May in Saudi Arabia. The kingdom can invite Assad to this meeting with Sunday's decision. According to Al-Arabiya, Syrian delegations will be able to attend Arab League meetings again from now on.



MSD: Syria's return to the Arab League should be an opportunity for a solution

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

In a written statement welcoming the return of Syria to the Arab League, the Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) noted that the collapsed economy and security problems in Syria could not be overcome unless the root of the issue was identified correctly.

The MSD pointed out that corruption has destroyed state institutions, which, therefore, should be re-designed in accordance with national democratic methods in order for all Syrians to be included in the administration of the country.

Recalling that most of the international efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis had been unsuccessful, MSD said: "This is because these initiatives did not take the interests of the Syrian people into consideration. As a result, the regime continued to reject talks that could help build democracy. We also believe that the main problem in Syria is democracy, and that the country cannot restore its national institutions in an efficient way until this problem is resolved."

MSD stated that they welcomed Syria's return to the Arab League based on right interests, saying: "This step should pay heed to the suffering of the Syrians. Moreover, all active Syrian national parties should participate in the political process without any exclusion. We hope that the Arab initiative will work properly and stabilize the situation within the framework of UN resolution 2254. A suitable environment can thus be created for the safe return of refugees."

The Council emphasized that they were also ready to provide help regarding the refugee problem. It added: "We endorse the declaration of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) announced on April 18, which pointed out that they were ready to welcome Syrian refugees."

MSD also emphasized the importance of the fight against drugs, pointing out that North and East Syria faced obstacles in its fight against drugs. Noting that drug smuggling was not limited to neighbouring states and regions, MSD added that drug use was a major national problem affecting a wide range of Syrian youth.

The Syrian Democratic Council stressed that Syria's return to the Arab League should be a genuine opportunity to achieve a political solution in accordance with UN Resolution 2254 that could answer the demands of Syrians for democracy.

The statement concluded: "We are ready to contribute to and support a political process that will represent all the active national parties and realize the main objectives of Syrians to end the negative effects of the conflict in order for Syria to be a safe country and a source of stability and peace."

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Femicide

Trial against the Saturday Mothers opens today in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 4 MAY 2023

The first hearing of fourteen members of Saturday Mothers (Cumartesi Anneleri) will take place today at Küçükçekmece 1st Penal Court of First Instance in Istanbul. The human rights defenders are charged with attending an illegal demonstration and not dispersing against warning. The prosecutor is asking the court to prosecute the fourteen defenders under the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations (Law no. 2911).

On 30 August 2022, fourteen members of Saturday Mothers/People went to Altınşehir Graveyard for the Unidentified in Istanbul, where the bodies of two forcibly disappeared were found in 1995, to mark the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearances by making a press statement at the cemetery. The security forces, who were made aware of the gathering through the group's call on the social media account of the Human Rights Association Istanbul branch, blockaded the neighbourhood before the group arrived and encircled the human rights defenders and families of the disappeared in a "security perimeter", not allowing them to enter the cemetery.

The police warned the group to disperse through a loudspeaker without allowing them to leave the police blockade. All human rights defenders were detained and taken to Istanbul Police Headquarters and eventually released after their statements were taken. The same day, the group was rearrested upon the objection of the public prosecutor and released again that evening. They were later charged following an investi-

gation by the public prosecutor. The indictment against the fourteen human rights defenders consists of only four paragraphs in which it is stated that the police stopped the group before the gate of the cemetery and informed them that the district governor had banned the gathering. According to the indictment, the police warned the group to disperse and if they didn't leave they would be arrested, claiming that the police waited for the group to disperse, but as they refused to leave and lifted banners, they intervened in a proportionate manner and arrested everyone.

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Men killed at least 24 women in April

ANF | 5 MAY 2023

According to the news compiled by bianet from local and national newspapers, news websites and news agencies, men killed at least 24 women and four children in April.

The deaths of at least 16 women and three children were treated as “suspicious.”

Men threatened to kill three women in Edirne and inflicted violence on at least 56 women, abused at least 4 boys and girls, and harassed at least five women. There was one case of rape reported in the press in April 2023. There were no reports of forced sex work in the press.

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Saturday Mothers detained again on the 945th week of action

ANF | ISTANBUL | 6 MAY 2023

The Saturday Mothers have continued their action in Istanbul for their relatives who disappeared in state custody and the punishment of the perpetrators for the 945th week. Despite a contrary ruling by the Turkish Constitutional Court, the initiative was again denied access to their ancestral rally site in front of the Galatasaray High School on Istiklal Avenue.

The Galatasaray Square in front of the high school of the same name in the central district of Beyoğlu, where the Saturday Mothers' sit-in was to take place, has been widely cordoned off by police barriers since early morning. Riot police deployed with a large contingent prevented the group from approaching the square. Galatasaray Square is considered a symbolic place for the struggle for human rights in Turkey.

When the Saturday Mothers and their supporters arrived in the square, they were surrounded by the police and 23 people were taken into custody. Journalists were obstructed while documenting the police crackdown.

Those detained include the Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul branch co-chair Gülseren Yoleri, Turkish Medical Association (TTB) Chairperson Şebnem Korur Fincancı, Mikail Kırbayır, brother of Cemil Kırbayır who also disappeared in custody after the declaration of the 12 September military coup in 1980, Maside Ocak, brother of Hasan Ocak who was murdered under custody, Meryem Göktepe, sister of Kurdish journalist Metin Göktepe who was tortured to death.

In 1995, women in Istanbul took to the streets for the first time to draw attention to relatives who had been arrested and then disappeared. Since a large-scale attack on the Saturday Mothers ordered by the Ministry of Interior in the summer five years ago, Galatasaray Square has been a no-go zone for the Saturday Mothers. But this is contrary to the right to freedom of assembly and demonstration, ruled the Turkish Constitutional Court on 22 February 2023, rejecting the ministry's objection that the Saturday Mothers threatened the "protection of public order". "Everyone has the right to take part in unarmed and peaceful assemblies and demonstrations without prior permission," says Article 34 of the Turkish Constitution, which the security authorities violated by banning the Saturday Mothers' forcefully dispersed action in August 2018 and all subsequent ones. The blockade of the square is therefore invalid, said the court ruling. The Turkish Interior Ministry and the Istanbul police ignore the ruling and continue to violently crack down on Saturday Mothers.

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KDP forces arrest seriously ill female politician on her way abroad for treatment

ANF | HEWLER | 6 MAY 2023

Seriously ill Kurdish female politician Azime Arsu was arrested by KDP forces at the airport in Hewler (Erbil) while she was about to fly abroad to receive treatment.

Arzu, who comes from the Şırnak province in North Kurdistan, fought a struggle for the Kurdish people for many years and suffers from serious health problems.

While Arsu was arrested on May 2, her relatives stated that they could not learn about her aftermath since.

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4 detained in police attack on Green Left Party women's gathering in Istanbul

ANF | ISTANBUL | 7 MAY 2023

The Green Left Party held a women's gathering in the Kadıköy district of Istanbul on Sunday.

The gathering was organised under the motto "We are here, we will change things with women".

Following the meeting, the crowd was attacked by the police on the grounds of the red-yellow-green items worn by women. The three colours are among the countless targets criminalized by the Turkish state for representing the Kurdish struggle.

Four women were forcibly detained and taken to a police station.

The crowd protested the police crackdown and detentions by chanting the slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadi" (Woman, Life, Freedom).

Call for urgent international intervention in Afrin where a ten-year-old girl was raped

ANF | 7 MAY 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on May 6 that a member of Al-Sultan Suleiman Shah "Al-Amshat" faction raped a ten-year-old girl from Afrin. According to the report, the jihadist was escorting the girl and her mother on their way to Afrin when he raped the girl in gardens in the area before fleeing.

According to the Rojava-based Hawar News Agency (ANHA), the jihadist, Ehmed Memdûh (Ebû Deham), fled to the village of Kora in Jindires district after the sexual assault, which has drawn intense reaction from the local people.

Emîne Mela Hesên, Chairperson of the Afrin and Shehba Canton Women's Committee, pointed out that the Turkish forces and allied mercenaries have been committing inhuman crimes against the Kurdish population in Afrin since they invaded the region in violation of international law in 2018.

Hesên stressed that women are the primary target of the crimes committed by the occupation forces, such as murder, kidnapping and rape. She appealed to international organizations for immediate intervention.

Hesên remarked that the demographic change taking place in the occupied territory since the Turkish invasion pointed to the separation of the region from Syrian land and annexation to Turkish land.

Afrin occupied since 2018

Afrin, also known as Çiyayê Kurmênc, is a city located in the western part of Rojava, 63 km away from Aleppo and 90 percent of its residents are Kurds (pre-occupation figures). Before it was occupied by the Turkish state after intense attacks in 2018, Yazidis, Arabs and Armenians lived in unity and solidarity in the city, which has 6 districts and nearly 400 villages... Despite being exposed to a massive migration wave from Syria's other cities such as Aleppo, Deraa, Homs, Idlib, Hama and Raqqa in 2011, the city maintained peace and stability for Syria as well. It was also a potential economic hub.

The hegemonic powers that regarded the democratic management model in North-East Syria as a threat to their own interests, found a pretext and made the fascist Turkish Republic to invade Afrin on January 20, 2018 under the name "Operation Olive Branch". With this attack, fascist chief Erdogan was planning to invade the city with his army in a few days. However, an outstanding resistance was put up for 58 days under the leadership of YPG and YPJ forces with a broad participation of the people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Turkey has more than 50 military bases in the city which has been under occupation for more than 5 years. Moreover, various crimes including kidnapping, pillage, theft, torture, rape, cultural historical genocide and demographic change have been committed in almost all the streets of the city. Around 700 civilians have been tortured and killed, and around 9,000 others have been kidnapped. These figures cover only the crimes that were reported. There are also those whose whereabouts remain unknown. Furthermore, many media outlets and human rights organizations revealed that more than 100 historical sites were plundered and nearly 400,000 trees were cut down in the city.



Human Rights Violations

No contact with boat carrying Syrian migrants

ANF | 3 MAY 2023

The Violations Documentation Center in Northern and Eastern Syria said that “contact was lost with a fishing boat carrying 16 Syrian migrants, which set off from the coast of the Algerian city of Oran in the Mediterranean Sea.”

ANHA said that the boat set off last Wednesday, 26 April, from the coast of the Algerian city of Oran and was directed to the Spanish shores. Relatives of those on board said that they had lost contact with them on Wednesday.

On 3 October last year, a boat carrying migrants sank off the Algerian coast near the city of Oran. 18 people died, most of them Syrians, including 9 citizens from Kobane canton.



RSF: The Erdoğan “hyper-presidency” has stepped up its attacks on journalists

ANF | 3 MAY 2023

According to the 2023 World Press Freedom Index – which evaluates the environment for journalism in 180 countries and territories and is published on World Press Freedom Day (3 May) – the situation is “very serious” in 31 countries, “difficult” in 42, “problematic” in 55, and “good” or “satisfactory” in 52 countries. In other words, the environment for journalism is “bad” in seven out of ten countries, and satisfactory in only three out of ten.

The situation has gone from “problematic” to “very bad” in three other countries: Tajikistan (down 1 at 153rd), India (down 11 at 161st) and Turkey (down 16 at 165th).

The Erdoğan administration in Turkey has stepped up its persecution of journalists in the run-up to elections scheduled for 14 May, RSF stated.

“With 90% of the national media now under government control, the public has turned, during the past five years, to critical or independent media outlets of various political persuasions to learn about the impact of the economic and political crisis on the country. They include local TV channels such as *Fox TV*, *Halk TV*, *Tele1* and *Sözcü*, and international news websites such as *BBC Turkish*, *VOA Turkish* and *Deutsche Welle Turkish*,” the index revealed.

RSF pointed out that: “As the 2023 election approaches, the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan “hyper-presidency” has stepped up its attacks on journalists in a bid to deflect attention from the country’s economic and democratic decline and to shore up its political base. However, tactics such as near systematic censorship on the internet, frivolous lawsuits against critical media outlets or the misuse of the judicial system have, until now, enabled Erdoğan to restore his popularity rating, while he continues to be embroiled in a major case of corruption and political clientelism.”

According to the index, discriminatory practices against critical journalists and media outlets, such as stripping them of press passes, are commonplace. Judges who do the government’s bidding are trying to limit democratic debate by censoring online articles tackling corruption and similarly sensitive topics. This makes it hard to publish quality reporting. Some journalists have nonetheless tried to remain faithful to their mission to report the news with complete independence, and they are demanding recognition of a “media ombudsman”.

RSF stated that: “Journalists who criticise or question well-known religious figures are sometimes the targets of lawsuits accusing them of “insult”. References to domestic violence or various forms of abuse, especially when made by women journalists, can give rise to social media hate campaigns.”

“The spiral of violence targeting journalists critical of the ruling AKP-MHP alliance has intensified since the 2019 local elections. As the 2023 elections approach, ultra-nationalist groups, spurred on by anti-media political rhetoric, are taking to the streets to attack reporters, columnists, commentators and citizen-journalists who cover politics and discuss the economic crisis,” according to the RSF’s World Press Freedom Index.



Dozens detained in political genocide operations in 10 cities

ANF | 3 MAY 2023

Mass detentions are taking place almost daily as a new wave of repression against the Kurdish opposition has begun in the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey on May 14.

Dozens of people have been taken into custody in ten cities today.

In the Silopi district of Şırnak, police forces stormed several houses in the neighborhoods of Nur, Barbaros and Cumhuriyet. The operation was conducted in line with an investigation launched by Şırnak Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office. Those detained are reported to be young people.

In the Ceyhan district of Adana in southern Turkey, many people were taken into custody after house raids for unknown reasons.

In the scope of an investigation launched by the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office in Urfa, dawn raids were carried out in Urfa, Batman, Mersin, Konya, Antalya, Bitlis and Istanbul. 11 people taken into custody will reportedly be taken to Urfa.

Since 25 April, hundreds of opposition activists have been detained in Turkey. The detainees include politicians, journalists, artists, trade unionists, lawyers and activists, including Green Left Party candidates for the 14 May parliamentary elections.

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ESP co-chair Şahin Tümüklü and six others sent to prison

ANF | ISTANBUL | 4 MAY 2023

As part of two separate police political operations carried out by the Istanbul and Eskişehir Chief Public Prosecutor's Offices, raids were carried out on 30 April on the houses of many people, including candidates of the Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party).

A total of 23 people, including Istanbul candidate Burcu Ayyıldız, Eskişehir candidate Müslüm Koyun and İzmir candidate Meryem Yıldırım, were taken into custody together with Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) co-chair Şahin Tümüklü, ETHA News Agency journalist Nadiye Gürbüz, Socialist Women's Councils (SKM) and Socialist Youth Associations Federation (SGDF) members.

The detainees in Istanbul were accused of the press conferences they participated in, the political activities they carried out, and the statements and actions they made to react to the massacre of HPG guerrillas as a result of the chemical weapons used by Turkey in the attacks against Zap, Avaşın and Metina. The Prosecutor's Office requested the arrest of 13 people and referred them to the Criminal Judgeship of Peace.

The judge remanded in custody ESP co-chair Şahin Tümüklü, ETHA editor Nadiye Gürbüz, Kalender Polat, Sinem Çelebi, Adnan Özcan, Selvinaz Göçmez.

In Eskişehir, Müslüm Koyun, a candidate for the Green Left Party in the city, was also sent to prison.

The other people were released on condition of judicial control and house arrest.

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Health care in Shehba becomes increasingly difficult

NUJIYAN ADAR | QAMISHLO | 4 MAY 2023

The northern Syrian canton of Shehba is under an embargo by the Assad regime and Turkey. The self-governing canton is home to around 157,000 of the 300,000 people who fled Afrin after the Turkish invasion in 2018. About 10,000 of them live in camps under the most difficult conditions.

The canton of Shehba borders the Syrian governorate of Aleppo in the south. The original population of the canton, which is characterised by deserts, consisted of 90,000 people. Accordingly, there is hardly any infrastructure. The canton is part of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) and receives practically no international aid. The local and regional self-government tries to provide for the isolated region with its own very limited resources. Therefore, conditions in the camps are particularly difficult for the displaced.

Embargo, attacks and earthquakes

The refugees in the camps of Afrin, Serdem, Shehba, Berxwedan and Veger, like the entire population of Shehba, live under hostile encirclement by the regime in Damascus and Turkey or their jihadist proxies. As a result, it is difficult to supply the region with fuel, aid and medicine. The Assad regime lets practically nothing through. The series of earthquakes since 6 February has made the situation even worse and particularly affected Shehba and Aleppo. Many buildings were already battered by the war and bombardments and collapsed. In Shehba, the situation was exacerbated by the fact that 2,205 families from Aleppo who came from Afrin had to be accommodated in the camps in Shehba after the earthquake, as they otherwise had no alternative for survival. The regime in Damascus did not lift the embargo against the self-governing districts of Sheikh Maqsoud (Şêxmeqsûd) and Ashrafiyah (Eşrefiyê) in Aleppo even after the earthquake. The same is still true for the Shehba region. Nothing is being allowed through and the Turkish state's attacks on the region, which have been going on for five years, continue uninterrupted.

Survey to identify the most pressing problems

The women's movement Kongra Star has launched a representative survey of 500 families randomly selected from the camps. The plan was to survey 1,000 families, but this was not possible due to the embargo. The survey focused on women and children and looked at their health and economic situation and the educational opportunities of the people in the camps. Almost all of the women interviewed live in tents with five or more people.

Economic problems affect health

About 80 percent of the women interviewed said that there were hardly any job opportunities in the vicinity of the camps. This aggravates the situation of women in particular, as the relationship of dependency on their husbands is thus reinforced. Furthermore, poverty also has a negative impact on women's health. The percentage of women who do not receive medical care despite being ill for financial reasons is 82 percent. The conditions in the camps and the embargo by the Assad regime are the main reasons for the deterioration of health care. The weather in the region is very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Due to

the embargo, heating in winter is very limited, if at all, and the necessary electricity cannot be generated either. Due to the destruction caused by the Turkish attacks, the region has to rely on diesel generators, which, however, can hardly be operated due to a lack of fuel.

The lack of health facilities is a serious problem for all people in Shehba. There is a particular lack of facilities specialising in gynecology or pediatrics. Women have to make the dangerous journey to Aleppo for delivery or treatment during pregnancy. At the same time, there is also a lack of facilities for training people specialized in health care for women and children.

The living conditions of people with disabilities

People with special needs, in particular, suffer from the conditions in the camps. Among the families interviewed, about ten percent are people with disabilities. There is an urgent need for care and support for children with disabilities. The lack of care exposes them, as well as their families, to great stress.

Lack of privacy and problems with hygiene

The participants in the survey said that the lack of privacy was one of the biggest problems in their daily lives. The reasons for this are that the tents are very close to each other and more than six people live in one tent. The women report that this is a great psychological burden for them and often even leads to depression. Although the issue of hygiene was not explicitly mentioned in the survey, almost all the women interviewed complained about such a lack. In the camps, many people live in very confined spaces and use the same toilets and washing facilities. Hygiene facilities are particularly important for women during menstruation. The lack of access to clean water, the malnutrition of children and the lack of play facilities for the children are a further psychological burden for women.

Many women complain about the feeling that they cannot raise their children well under these conditions. This leads to an increase in stress levels. All women who participated in the survey reported that they had difficulties providing their children with sufficient food. 80 per cent of the women particularly underlined the psychological consequences of not being able to properly care for their children and give them toys or spaces to play.

Shehba is not on the agenda of international organisations

Speaking about the background of the survey, Menal Mihemed from Kongra Star said: “More than five years have passed since the Turkish army invaded Afrin. The people from Afrin were forced to flee their homes and now have to live in camps in Shehba. Despite the invasion, the attacks and the displacement, international agencies and institutions are not interested in the living conditions of the people from Afrin in the five camps and do not offer any help. The people are dependent on the means of the autonomous administration. One of the most important issues in our region is to improve the living conditions of the refugees. It is about ensuring their return to their homes. But the international institutions, organisations and powers do not care about that. It is not an issue for them. We conducted this survey to give a voice to the people suffering from the embargo and the attacks, and we got a clear picture of the situation. People, especially women and children, are struggling with the biggest problems and trying to survive somehow. The damage that the health and economic conditions are doing, especially to women and children, is huge.”

Hardly any expectations left of the international community

Menal Mihemed stated that Kongra Star has conducted similar surveys and studies before: “Our surveys are not just about research. The results are forwarded to women's organisations and human rights institutions in the Middle East and European countries. Information is also provided to well-known personalities who can make a difference. For us, passing on information to the international powers is not a question. Because they have not yet taken any concrete steps regarding the problems of the people, women and children living in the camps, especially in Shehba. Our main goal is to reach out to democratic and freedom-minded people, those who stand up for human rights. As Kongra Star, we see it as our duty to make the voices of our people, women and children, heard.”

Disease prevention almost impossible

The results of the survey were published in seven languages, said Menal Mihemed, summarising the findings as follows: “Both the living conditions in the camps and the embargo imposed by the government in Damascus contribute to the deterioration of the health situation. With many people living in a confined space, the risk of spreading infectious diseases is high and it is almost impossible to prevent this. The lack of medicines is one of the biggest problems. There are no medicines in Shehba for many diseases such as tuberculosis, heart diseases, diabetes, etc. In emergencies, people have to travel to Aleppo and pay ten times as much for medication. Most people cannot afford it.”

Menal Mihemed warned that the situation for the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people would get worse if the embargo and attacks continued, and appealed to the international community to finally take the situation seriously.



Kurdish politician in Cyprus custody goes on indefinite hunger strike

ANF | NICOSIA | 4 MAY 2023

Kenan Ayaz, a long-time Kurdish activist, was arrested on 15 March at the airport in the port city of Larnaca in Cyprus on the basis of a German extradition request for alleged PKK membership, as he was about to fly to Sweden for a family visit. Since then, the 49-year-old activist has been in custody. While a Cypriot court submitted the extradition request on 19 April, Ayaz appealed against this decision and the proceedings are ongoing. Ayaz spent twelve years in prison in Turkey because of his political identity.

In a statement through his lawyers, Ayaz told the Cypriot press that Germany's extradition request was not legal but political and the court conformed to this unlawfulness.

“With its decision, the court took sides with the fascist, colonialist, invading Turkish state, which has become a genocidal machine. The court thus became a party to the genocidal attacks directed against our people, and approved the great invasion and massacre against the people of Cyprus in 1974,” Ayaz stated.

The Kurdish activist pointed out that the action taken by Germany was in association with the Turkish state, saying that the court had a “historic responsibility” to end this lawlessness.

“I cannot remain silent on my deprivation of liberty through unfair and inhuman treatment. As the threat remains serious and concrete, I announce starting an indefinite hunger strike as of May 4th, 2023, which will continue until I see my demand answered. I denounce the unlawfulness of the extradition request and express my rejection of it.”



Kurdish politician Ayaz on hunger strike in Cyprus prison denied family visit

ANF | NICOSIA | 5 MAY 2023

Kenan Ayaz, detained in Cyprus and facing extradition to Germany, is on an indefinite hunger strike in protest at the action taken against him.

Ayaz's family and representatives of Teofilos Kurdish Cultural Centre went to Nicosia Prison to visit the Kurdish politician.

The prison administrators replied that Ayaz would not be allowed to meet anyone because he had gone on a hunger strike.

Kurdish representatives revealed that they had not received any positive or negative news from Ayaz since he started the hunger strike.

In a statement, they said that the absolute non-communication state imposed on Ayaz was similar to “the practices of the fascist Turkish state”.

The statement added: “The Cyprus state not only fulfilled the demands of the fascist Turkish state, but also started to become a partner in the fascist practices of the colonialist Turkish state.”

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In a statement through his lawyers, Ayaz told the Cypriot press on May 4 that: “I cannot remain silent on my deprivation of liberty through unfair and inhuman treatment. As the threat remains serious and concrete, I announce starting an indefinite hunger strike as of May 4th, 2023, which will continue until I see my demand answered. I denounce the unlawfulness of the extradition request and express my rejection of it.”



Metina: Journalists will continue to resist

ANF | AMED | 5 MAY 2023

In the past eleven months, 34 journalists from the Kurdish media have been arrested in Turkey. Roza Metina, the spokeswoman for the Mesopotamian Women Journalists Platform (MKGP), editor of the women’s news agency JinNews and PEN member, spoke to ANF about the repression against the Kurdish media. She said that the regime in Turkey is “at war with democracy” and prisoners are abused and threatened. “The government wants to control the whole of society and is trying to intimidate people through arrests and torture of journalists to prevent the public from the truth. The AKP-MHP government wants to keep its dirty practices from being exposed. That’s why it’s so focused on repressing the free press. The government has a large part of the media in Turkey in order to control the entire society. Therefore, the political annihilation operations continue. Dicle Müftüoğlu, co-chair of the journalist’s association Dicle Fırat, was arrested and handcuffed from Amed to Ankara. The goal is to intimidate journalists through torture and repression. As representatives of the free press, we will never back down, we will continue to fight to reveal the truth to our people.”

“Women journalists particularly targeted”

The regime is particularly afraid of the women’s struggle, said Roza Metina, adding: “The journalists are resisting. They are insulted, threatened and subjected to repression in all areas. Despite all this, they continue their work. They say: ‘We will not leave the pen of our arrested colleagues, we will continue their work and resist them.’ Last year, 22 media workers were arrested on 8 June. 16 journalists were sent to prison after a week in police custody. It was only ten months later that the charges against them were prepared. On 22 October, many journalists were arrested again in Ankara. These arrests were followed by many more arrests of journalists, politicians, lawyers, writers and artists. The goal of these political annihilation operations is to prevent the public from learning about the dirty tricks that the ruling party will use in the upcoming elections. These operations are not only aimed at the elections, but are part of the suppression of the Kurdish people’s struggle for freedom.”

“Support the Free Press”

Metina said: “It is a great injustice that journalists are in prison for practicing their profession. The AKP-MHP government is trampling on the law. It uses the judiciary as a stick. Journalists resist this injustice in all areas. Therefore, their resistance is very important and meaningful. For this reason, everyone should support the free press. Supporting journalists means support your own dignity, future, language and your own life.”



Police beat people protesting the killing of street musician

Aymaz

ANF | ISTANBUL | 5 MAY 2023

After the racist murder in Istanbul of the Kurdish street musician Cihan Aymaz on 3 May, protests broke out in the city.

On Wednesday, the Green Left Party organized a memorial event at the crime scene. Relatives of Aymaz also spoke at the commemoration. Following the rally, two activists were followed and arrested by the police. The two young men were taken to Rihtım Police Headquarters. There they were insulted by the police, threatened and mistreated for several hours. They were then brought before the public prosecutor's office, accused of “resisting the authorities”. They were eventually released after questioning.

The two torture victims turned to the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD). As lawyer Müslüm Kocaoğlu, who represents the two, reports, the traces of abuse were medically certified. Kocaoğlu explains that his clients were able to identify the torturers in uniform through the investigation files.

What happened

On Tuesday evening, the Kurdish street musician Cihan Aymaz (30) was murdered by a Turkish fascist on the open street in Istanbul-Kadıköy.

Mehmet Caymaz, the suspected murderer, is said to have asked the musician to start singing the nationalist-racist song *Ölürüm Türkiyem* (I die for you, Turkey). Aymaz probably refused, then the perpetrator stabbed and fatally injured the musician. He died in the Hospital. The killer was arrested.



DFG releases report on rights violations against journalists in

April

ANF | AMED | 5 MAY 2023

The Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) published its “April Report on Violations of Rights Against Journalists”. The report said that the freedom of thought and expression, the right to receive information and the freedom of the press were being eroded gradually on the eve of the 14 May elections.

The report also drew attention to the reports by the international press institutions and said: “Unfortunately, these reports reveal the fact that press freedom in Turkey is getting worse rapidly. The only way to

prevent it is to stop detentions, arrests, violence and censorship against journalists and to make room for the opposition in the digital media. In the month of April, pressures against journalists continued just like in the previous months.”

As part of a Diyarbakır-based investigation on April 25, Mesopotamia News Agency (MA) editor Abdurrahman Gök, MA reporter Ahmet Kanbal, Yeni Yaşam Newspaper Editor-in-Chief Osman Akın, publisher of the weekly Kurdish-language Xwebûn newspaper, Kadri Esen, JINNEWS reporter Beritan Canözer, journalists Mehmet Şah Oruç, Mehmet Yalçın, Salih Keleş, Mikail Barut and Remzi Akkaya were detained. Journalists Beritan Canözer, Mehmet Şah Oruç, Abdurrahman Gök, Mikail Barut and Remzi Akkaya were then imprisoned on charges of “membership in a (terrorist) organization”.

The DFG report stated that pressures on journalists continued with police raids on April 29 in some cities and the detention of Mesopotamia News Agency editor Sedat Yılmaz and DFG co-chair Dicle Müftüoğlu, as part of an Ankara-based investigation. The report said: “Journalists, Pınar Gayıp, Zeynep Kuray, Eylem Nazlıer, Serpil Ünal, Esra Soybir and Yadigar Aygün were detained after making a statement in front of Süreyya Opera House to protest the arrests of their colleagues.”

The rights violations identified by the report are listed as follows:

Violations of the right to life: Attacked journalists: 4; Journalists whose houses raided: 13; Detained journalists: 27; Arrested journalists: 5; Journalists subjected to ill-treatment: 2; Threatened journalists: 2; Journalists blocked while reporting: 10; Violations against journalists in prison: 1

Violations of the freedoms of thought and expression: Journalists under investigation: 6; Journalists sentenced: 2; Prison sentence: 3 years 4 months 17 days; Journalists on trial: 34; Jailed journalist: 86

Blocking and censorship: RTÜK broadcast bans: 4

Bans on internet-digital medias: Internet sites closed: 1; News denied access: 88; Social media content blocked: 30



Police take 9 people into custody in Dersim, Hatay and Istanbul

ANF | 6 MAY 2023

Police raided many houses in the morning hours in Dersim, Istanbul and Hatay. The police also raided the office of Yeni Demokrasi Newspaper in Dersim and confiscated the newspaper archives and books. Yeni Demokrasi journalist Ertan Çıta and a person called Hıdır Güler were taken into custody in Dersim.

According to the paper, at least 9 people, including Partizan readers, were taken into custody in 3 provinces. It was stated that there were arrest warrants for many people. Those detained in Dersim will be taken to Istanbul.

Some of the people taken into custody were named as follows: Ertan Çıta, Ali Asker Akkoç, Nihat Konak, Aysel Kaya, Nesimi Ataş.

— ★ —

Work on infrastructure in Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye stops because of embargo

ANF | ALEPPO | 6 MAY 2023

The neighbourhoods of Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye in Aleppo, are highly populated by Kurds. The two neighbourhoods have been self-governed thanks to the 19 July 2012 revolution.

However, the two neighbourhoods have been exposed to attacks by gangs supported by Turkey for 11 years, and are also under the strict embargo imposed by the Damascus government.

In addition, they house hundreds of families who fled from other conflict areas. The infrastructure system was damaged as a result of these attacks as well as the 6 February earthquake and is tried to be repaired. However, the recent tightening of the Damascus government embargo, which has been going on for 5 years, affects these efforts badly.

The Shehba-Afrin Canton Administration said on 27 April that Damascus had tightened the embargo and therefore all work had stopped. On 1 May, Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye neighbourhood councils announced that the work had stopped for the same reason.

One of the important works stopped due to the embargo is infrastructure repair work. Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye People's Municipality Infrastructure System Protection Committee member Hisên Ehmed, told ANHA that due to the embargo they could not procure needed materials such as sewer pipes, iron and cement, and added that the Damascus government forces, which increased the checkpoints at the entrances of the neighbourhood, did not allow the passage of necessary materials for 20 days.

Ehmed pointed out that there are problems because some parts of the sewerage network are broken or cracked pipes, and therefore there is a danger of sewage water flowing onto the ground of the buildings. He said: "A few days ago, a building where sewage water flowed on the floor had to be demolished."

Ehmed said that the repair works should be speeded up by intervening as soon as possible, and called for the embargo to be lifted.

— ★ —

51 years ago the execution of revolutionaries Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin Inan

ANF | 6 MAY 2023

51 years ago, on 6 May 1972, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Huseyin Inan were hanged in Ankara. Their trial had begun on 16 July 1971. Gezmiş and his comrades were sentenced to death on October 9 for violating the Turkish Criminal Code's 146th article, which concerns attempts to "overthrow Constitutional order".

After joining the Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi), Gezmiş studied law at Istanbul University in 1966. In 1968, he founded the Revolutionary Jurists Organisation (Devrimci Hukukçular Kuruluşu) and the Revolutionary Student Union (Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği).

He became increasingly politically active, and led the student-organised occupation of Istanbul University on June 12, 1968. After the occupation was forcibly ended by the law, he spearheaded protests against the arrival of the US 6th Fleet in Istanbul. Deniz Gezmiş was arrested for these actions on 30 July 1968, to be released on 20 October of the same year.

As he increased his involvement with the Worker's Party of Turkey, and began to advocate a National Democratic Revolution, his ideas started to circulate and inspire a growing revolutionary student base. On November 28, 1968, he was arrested again after protesting the US ambassador's visit to Turkey, but was later released. On 16 March 1969, he was arrested again for participating in right-wing and left-wing armed conflicts and imprisoned until 3 April. Gezmiş was re-arrested on 31 May 1969. The university was temporarily closed, and Gezmiş was injured in the conflict. Although Gezmiş was under surveillance, he escaped from hospital and went to Palestine Liberation Organization camps in Jordan to receive guerrilla training.

On 4 March 1971, Deniz Gezmiş and comrades kidnapped four U.S. privates from TUSLOG/The United States Logistics Group headquartered in Balgat, Ankara. After releasing the hostages, he and Yusuf Aslan were captured live near Sivas following an armed stand-off with law enforcement officers.

Their trial began on 16 July 1971 and Gezmiş was sentenced to death on October 9 for violating the Turkish Criminal Code's 146th article, which concerns attempts to "overthrow Constitutional order". According to legal procedure, a death sentence must be endorsed by Parliament before being sent to the President of the Republic for final assent. In March and April 1972 the sentence was placed before Parliament and in both readings the sentence was overwhelmingly approved.

On 4 May, President Cevdet Sunay, after officially consulting the Minister of Justice and Prime Minister Nihat Erim, refused to grant Gezmiş a pardon. He was executed by hanging on 6 May 1972 in Ankara Central Prison along with Hüseyin Inan and Yusuf Aslan.

Deniz Gezmiş was born in Ankara on 24 February 1947. He was one of the revolutionaries in Turkey who dedicated their lives to the socialist cause. In his last letter addressed to his father just before the hanging,

he was explaining the spirit of sacrifice by the revolutionary movement of Turkey: “Men are born, grow up, live and die... The important thing is not to live for a long time, but to do more things in the life-time... My friends who were ahead of me did not show hesitancy before the death... You should not have any doubt that I will have hesitation...”

Today, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Huseyin Inan and the many revolutionaries like them are remembered in several places.



Iran executes at least 582 people in 2022

ANF | 7 MAY 2023

The 15th annual report on the death penalty by Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) and ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty) provides an assessment and analysis of death penalty trends in 2022 in the Islamic Republic of Iran. It sets out the number of executions in 2022, the trend compared to previous years, the legislative framework and procedures, charges, geographic distribution and a monthly breakdown of executions.

The report reveals the highest annual number of executions since 2015. At least 582 people were executed, an increase of 75% compared to 2021.

The trend continued in 2023. At least 199 people were executed in the first four months of 2023. 51 of those executed were Kurds and 42 of them were Baluch citizens. The Iranian regime did not reveal the identities of the 31 people who were executed.

In 2022, Iran’s authorities demonstrated how crucial the death penalty is to instil societal fear in order to hold onto power. Weeks into the nationwide “Jin, Jiyan, Azadi” protests, triggered by the state killing of Jina (Mahsa) Amini on 16 September 2022, hundreds of protesters were facing show trials at the Revolutionary Courts, many with charges punishable by death.

The report said: “Two protesters were executed in December 2022. Strong international backlash, parliamentarians volunteering as “political sponsors” to save death row protesters, and targeted sanctions against individuals and entities involved in the repression, have raised the political cost of executing protesters. In response, authorities intensified the execution of prisoners on non-political charges.”

Some highlights from the report are as follows:

At least 582 people were executed in 2022, a 75% increase compared to 333 in 2021.

- 71 executions (12%) were announced by official sources, compared to 16.5% in 2021 and an average of 33% in 2018–2020.

- 88% of all executions included in the 2022 report (511 in total) were not announced by the authorities.
- At least 288 executions (49% of all executions) were for murder charges, the highest in more than 15 years.
- At least 256 (44%) were executed for drug-related charges, compared to 126 (38%) in 2021 and an average of 26 per year in 2018–2020.
- Only 3 of the 256 drug-related executions (1%) were announced by official sources.
- At least 23 people were executed on rape charges.
- At least 15 people, among them 2 protesters, were executed for security-related charges (moharebeh and efsad-fil-arz).
- Two people, including one protester, were hanged in public spaces.
- At least 3 juvenile offenders were among those executed.
- At least 16 women were executed.
- At least 273 executions in 2022 and more than 4,029 executions since 2010 have been based on death sentences issued by the Revolutionary Courts.

At least 624 prisoners sentenced to death for murder charges were forgiven by the families of the murder victims per qisas laws.



Demographic change in earthquake-hit Pazarcık in favour of the government

ANF | MARAS | 7 MAY 2023

The lives of around 13.5 million people in eleven provinces of Turkey were affected by the two successive major earthquakes in the Turkish-Syrian border area on 6 February. According to official figures, 50,783 people lost their lives and 5,649,000,317 buildings were damaged in Turkey. There was no news for a long time from the Pazarcık district, the epicentre of the first 7.7 magnitude earthquake. When the first teams reached the district, they were presented with a horrific picture. Sixty percent of the town had been destroyed. Search and rescue operations were suspended on 11 February. Pazarcık has a predominantly Alevi Kurdish population.

The Pazarcık Election Coordination of the Green Left Party, which is contesting the parliamentary elections on 14 May in place of the HDP, which is threatened with a ban, spoke to ANF about the current situation in the town and said: “People in the earthquake zone are angry with the government and state institutions for their late intervention. The main reason for the disastrous picture is the government's profit-oriented and inhuman policies. Pazarcık was one of the last settlement areas to be reached by official agencies, relief efforts were organised by volunteer teams, non-governmental organisations and political parties were obstructed by the state.”

“People in the diaspora also showed tremendous material and moral support. While the solidarity platform was growing, the district governorate confiscated the relief goods collected in Hasankoca. It was informed that relief goods would only be distributed by the disaster management agency AFAD. After this intervention, rumours circulated that trustees were to be appointed in the towns. This state of siege imposed on our people in the midst of destruction must not be forgotten. The people of Pazarcık are angry with all the institutions of government, and this anger will be reflected at the ballot box,” said the Green Left Party Election Coordination.

Demographic change in favour of the government

Pointing out that many people have migrated to their relatives outside the city and abroad due to the destruction of their houses after the earthquake, the Green Left Party Coordination explained that the government's depopulation policy in areas with a dense Alevi population, which has been in place for years, has gained momentum with the destruction of the earthquake:

“The state had sought a demographic change in Pazarcık even before the earthquake. It is resorting to the method of depopulation here. It is a place that has experienced a strong migration over the years, both to the city and abroad. Many people have migrated from the Kurdish-Alevi villages of Pazarcık due to livelihood difficulties, oppression and lack of services. After the earthquake, the remaining young population is encouraged to leave. Efforts are made to turn Pazarcık into a large old people's home. On the other hand, the population in Sunni-Turkish villages increases because the people living here are encouraged to stay with the support provided by the state. The demographic structure is being changed in favour of the government.”

The earthquake zone is crucial for the election outcome

Green Left Party Election Coordination stressed that the announcement of the Turkish Supreme Election Board (YSK) to set 17 March as the deadline for eligible voters to register their residences was aimed at influencing the outcome of the elections in favour of the AKP. The response from the earthquake zone is of crucial importance as it will decide the fate of the government, said the Election Coordination, adding:

“The AKP government is left only with changing legal regulations and electoral fraud. In depopulated areas, people supposedly entitled to vote are turning up. The aim is to use fake votes. At the same time, the region is being cleansed of opposition and the government is conducting election propaganda with aid packages from the Red Crescent. It is trying to exploit people's plight. However, people are aware of everything and will show their reaction at the ballot box. The region is a disaster area, so we cannot campaign with the usual enthusiasm. We are out on our campaign buses every day, but we only turn up the music when people demand it, because there is mourning. We continue our work with public meetings and vis-

its, and we will do our best to make sure that people here can vote. On the election day, our vehicles will be out in the villages and in the centre. Pazarcık has the advantage of having tent camps in the centre. We will do everything to put an end to AKP rule.”

— ★ —

Armed attack in Beytüşşebap, one dead

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 8 MAY 2023

Temel Temel, 50, who lives in the village of Setkar in Beytüşşebap (Elkê) in the province of Şirnak and is the brother of former BDP mayor Yusuf Temel, was attacked with guns in front of his house on Sunday evening. He died at the scene. Regional sources claimed that he was assassinated.

Temel's body was taken to Beytüşşebap State Hospital morgue. Relatives rushed to the hospital after learning of the killing.

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ISIG: At least 585 workers lost their lives in first four months of 2023

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 MAY 2023

The Occupational Health and Safety Assembly (ISIG) released the four-month balance sheet for occupational homicides. The data are compiled from the workers' colleagues, families, occupational safety experts, occupational physicians, unions and the press.

According to the report, at least 585 workers lost their lives in the first 4 months of 2023. In particular, 120 in January, 213 in February, 130 in March and 122 in April.

ISIG said: “So far this year, at least 5 workers have lost their lives in occupational homicides every day. We say at least because what we have detected is reflected in the press or reported to us. On the one hand, it is almost impossible to obtain information about workers who lost their lives in the earthquake zone (we have obtained information about 110 worker deaths so far). On the other hand, due to the earthquake agenda, the media coverage of work-related murders in other cities has decreased.”

The report said that the number of workers who lost their lives during the AKP rule increased to at least 31,131 people.

According to the ISIG report, worker deaths in 21 years of the AKP government are as follows:

146 workers in the last two months of 2002, 811 workers in 2003, 843 workers in 2004, 1096 workers in 2005, 1601 workers in 2006, 1044 workers in 2007, 866 workers in 2008, 1171 workers in 2009, 1454 workers in 2010, in 2011 1710 workers, 878 workers in 2012, 1235 workers in 2013, 1886 workers in 2014, 1730 workers in 2015, 1970 workers in 2016, 2006 workers in 2017, 1923 workers in 2018, 1736 workers in 2019, 2427 workers in 2020, in 2021 2170 workers, 1843 workers in 2022 and 585 workers in the first four months of 2023.

General Elections in Turkey

Green Left Party in Edirne attacked, three people injured

ANF | EDİRNE | 3 MAY 2023

The Green Left Party continues its election campaign work ahead of the 14 May elections. Racist attacks against the party are being carried out in many cities. The AKP-MHP supporters are targeting Green Left Party members at their election stands. The latest attack happened on Saraçlar Street, one of the busiest streets in Edirne.

Three people, including candidate Serdal Zımba, were injured in the attack.

Zımba and Sara Ay had their arms broken and another party member was injured when the stand was attacked by a group of people.

Five of the attackers were reportedly detained. After the attack, the Green Left Party members were taken to Edirne Provincial Security Directorate for medical examination and statement procedures.

The Green Left Party Edirne Provincial Organization said in a post on its social media account: “We were attacked by a group of fascists even though the police were right next to us at our stand in Edirne. Our candidate and a 60-year-old female friend had their arms broken in two places. We will never take a step back from our stance against oppression.”

— ★ —

Karakuş: The government seeks to intimidate society with police operations

ANF | VAN | 3 MAY 2023

Hundreds of opposition politicians, journalists, lawyers, artists have been arrested in Turkey in the past few days. So far, 53 of them have been sent to prison by the Turkish judiciary on politically fabricated

charges. The ongoing operations against the Kurdish and left-wing opposition represent a massive attempt at intimidation in the run-up to the elections on 14 May.

The co-chair of the human rights association IHD in Van, Mehmet Karakuş, called for the immediate release of the detainees.

Karakuş emphasized that such an attack by the regime was expected because the government carried out mass arrests against the democratic opposition before every election. The political Kurdish movement and the entire opposition were always put under pressure. Karakuş said: “The military police (Jandarma), the police and the entire bureaucracy exercise repression. This is the result of the policy of repression that is carried out by the judiciary. We have often seen such a situation in the field of human rights.”

Karakuş continued: “Arrest warrants were issued against 216 people as part of an investigation launched in Amed. A ban on lawyers was ordered, the file was kept secret. It is not about individuals, but about the achievements of the Kurdish political movement in the upcoming elections. The AKP-MHP alliance knows that they will lose. After 20 years, the government has reached an impasse and now wants to overcome it with these methods.”

Karakuş said that the judiciary is the means for the government to attack human rights activists, journalists, artists and politicians, and added: “The regime wants to maintain its power by focusing on new areas for the elections. If we look at the aims of the raids, it becomes clear that the aim of the judiciary is to intimidate lawyers, who have important tasks in the electoral process, and journalists, who ensure the public's right to independent news. The government cannot admit its failure and is therefore using all means possible. The government has done this countless times in the past and never reached its goal. Attacks on human rights bring defeat, not victory. The government wants to keep lawyers, politicians, artists and journalists off the election agenda. The operation has since expanded to Istanbul and may continue before 14 May. The goal is to prevent participation in the elections, but these violations will make the government lose and all attacks will come to nothing. Those arrested must be immediately released.”

— ★ —

Türk: These elections are a historic opportunity

ANF | MERSİN | 3 MAY 2023

The Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) Mersin Provincial Organization held a meeting with civil society organizations and opinion leaders to discuss the election activities. The meeting saw the participation of Kurdish politician Ahmet Türk, as well as Green Left Party candidates, People's Democratic Party (HDP) provincial and district administrators.

HDP Provincial Co-Chair Hoşyar Sarıyıldız said that the Kurdish people have faced policies of massacre and extermination for centuries and added that the upcoming 14 May elections have a historical significance for this reason.

Kurdish politician Ahmet Türk also pointed out that these elections are a historical opportunity for the oppressed peoples. Ahmet Türk said: “I believe that our people will give the necessary answer in these elections to eliminate the oppression and denial policies carried out so far. When we look at it today, the Kurdish problem is, of course, Turkey’s biggest problem, but besides the Kurdish problem, there is also the problem of workers. In fact, there is a democracy problem in Turkey. If we cannot make democracy permanent in this country, if we cannot establish a democratic order, rest assured that neither the Kurdish problem nor the democracy problem will be solved.”

Türk said: “We have been making politics for years. The Kurdish people have paid a huge price and they still continue to pay. Today, 10 thousand of our politician comrades are in prison only because they express their opinions and demand the rights of the denied peoples. Our goal and our struggle should be to oppose fascism as a whole, to come together around common democratic values for a democratic future.”

— ★ —

‘Those who migrated from Adiyaman must go to polls’

ANF | ADIYAMAN | 4 MAY 2023

The Party of Greens and the Left Future, abbreviated as Green Left Party, is continuing its electoral campaign in the earthquake zone. In Adiyaman, where tens of thousands of people were killed by the recent earthquakes, the Green Left Party is touring the entire city including its villages to promote the party’s candidates. The party aims to win at least 2 deputies in the May 14 elections in the city.

Green Left Party Adiyaman Provincial co-chair Aziz Koçak and DBP Adiyaman Provincial co-chair Mehmet Dağ spoke about their election campaign.

Our people will embrace the struggle

Koçak said that the recent earthquakes devastated the city. He added that their electorate were mostly politically minded people who had already decided whom to vote in this election. “I believe that our people will embrace the struggle. Although our people had to migrate to the west following the earthquakes, I hope that they will reveal their will in the elections. We, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) and the DBP, the ally parties of the Green Left Party, are conducting an election campaign to respond to the earthquakes. Being aware of the suffering of our people on the field, we want them to vote for themselves. We ask them to take care of each other. We treat all faiths and identities equally; we do not discriminate at all.”

Those who migrated must vote

DBP Adiyaman Provincial co-chair Mehmet Dağ said: “We see that our people are welcoming our election campaign. Because during the earthquake, no other political party was there to help the survivors. That’s why we are enthusiastic about the elections. Young people and women especially show great interest in our party. We will try to bring our outside voters to the city. Votes of those who migrated due to the earthquake are very important. Our people should be vigilant about this issue. We kindly request them to

vote in the key elections on 14 May. Because the elections concern the future of the peoples economically and socially.”

— ★ —

‘Kurdish people will respond to the AKP in elections on May 14’

ANF | VAN | 4 MAY 2023

The political genocide operations directed against Kurdish journalists, politicians, artists, lawyers and trade unions in Amed, Ankara and Istanbul continue to draw reactions. Hundreds of citizens, journalists and politicians were detained, and dozens of them were imprisoned during the latest wave of political genocide operations initiated by the AKP government.

Speaking to ANF, Gülcan Kaçmaz Sayyigit and Havin Kiye, female deputy candidates for the Green Left Party in Van province, defined the recent mass arrests as political genocide attacks.

Gülcan Kaçmaz Sayyigit reacted to the detention of hundreds of people, including party leaders, journalists, artists, lawyers and representatives of non-governmental organizations during the Amed-centred police raids on the eve of the elections on May 14. She said: “We know that these operations are political and have nothing to do with legal procedures. Their aim is to intimidate the Kurds before the elections and to eliminate election security in the region. There have been many similar operations before, but the Kurdish people will never back down from the struggle for democracy, peace and freedom. In spite of those who try to intimidate us with detentions and arrests, we continue our election campaign. We will work against these anti-democratic practices and give the necessary response on May 14. No one should doubt that.”

Free press will win, artists will win

Havin Kiye noted that they had faced repression, detentions and arrests during the course of all previous elections. She stated: “Those detained recently are lawyers, journalists and artists who defend Kurdish rights. They did this on the eve of the elections because they want to intimidate society. We have been through such operations many times and we have been detained many times, but we eventually won. Truth, free press and our artists won.”

Kiye continued: “One of those arrested is artist Devrim Deniz. He was arrested on the grounds that the election campaign song he composed constitutes a crime. Another one of those arrested is Abdurrahman Gök. He is a journalist who revealed how Kemal Kurkut was murdered by the police. Despite all the pressures, Mezopotamya Agency reports on behalf of the Kurdish public. A detention warrant has been issued for other reporters of the agency today.”

“These journalists made news about the Kurdish villagers who were thrown off a helicopter by Turkish soldiers. They reported about the Roboski Massacre. That's why we are so grateful to them. Furthermore, lawyers have been arrested. Those lawyers were set to work for security throughout the elections. These

pressures will never make us fall into despair. The elections will be held very soon. The government launched these political genocide operations because it knows that it will be defeated. They are terrified. On May 14, we will make them taste that fear.”

— ★ —

Green Left Party calls on voters to go to the polls to overthrow the dictator

ANF | 4 MAY 2023

Three and a half million people abroad are eligible to vote in 73 countries and 52 electoral districts for the May 14 presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey.

Voters continue going to the polls in Germany, France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxembourg on the 9th day of the overseas voting. In Switzerland, the USA, Australia, Belgium, England, Norway, Greece and Canada, voting started on April 29 and continues on the 7th day. Voting continues in Czechia, Israel, Italy, Poland and Romania on its second day.

According to the data obtained from Turkey's Supreme Election Board (YSK), 1 million 138 thousand 743 overseas voters have cast their votes as of 13.00 today (May 4) at customs gates and foreign representations.

Voting will continue until May 9 at the overseas representations, and until May 14 at 17.00 at customs.

The Green Left Party Swiss Election Coordination said: “We are going through a historical and important process. We have resisted the most ferocious attacks in history, yet we have never submitted or been defeated. It is time to call to account these fascist gangs who are trying to destroy us and push us out of politics. We call upon everyone to go to the polls and overthrow the dictator and his henchmen.”

Overseas voters from Kurdistan also call on voters to go to the polls.

— ★ —

Danish deputy Sondergaard not allowed to be an observer at Turkish elections

ANF | 5 MAY 2023

Socialist Red-Green Alliance parliamentarian Soren Sondergaard told Danish public television TV2 that Ankara accused him of “promoting a terrorist organization”.

The Danish deputy was reportedly blocked by Ankara on the grounds that he had visited the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the past.

“It is entirely true that I visited the Syrian Democratic Forces fighting the Islamic State,” Sondergaard said, adding that he was “proud” of this.

Stating that the OECD made a formal complaint to Ankara, the Danish deputy said: “A country cannot elect parliamentarians who act as observers. This casts a shadow on the Turkish elections, it shows that they want to keep the elections under control.”

The Danish deputy also acts as an observer of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and sometimes the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

— ★ —

HDP: 295 people were taken into custody in a month as the government seeks provocation

ANF | ANKARA | 5 MAY 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Law and Human Rights Commission Co-Spokesperson Nuray Özdoğan held a press conference at her party's headquarters in Ankara concerning the latest wave of political genocide operations based in Amed, Ankara and Istanbul.

Remarking that the government labelled everyone “terrorists”, she noted that “the recent operations carried out by the AKP judiciary and law enforcement against our party and the entire opposition continue increasingly ahead of the elections.”

Özdoğan gave the following information about the detentions in the last month:

“On March 4, 12 party members, including HDP's provincial co-chair, were detained in Urfa. On the same day, 16 people, including HDP Youth Assembly members, were detained in Istanbul. On April 25, 2 HDP executive members, 25 lawyers charged with election safety, 143 people, including party campaigners and poll watchers, were detained in Diyarbakir and more people face an arrest warrant. 48 of these people, including 5 lawyers and 4 journalists, were sent to prison. Dozens of others were detained while making a press statement to protest the political genocide operations. Even lawyers were banned from meeting their detained colleagues for 24 hours. The judiciary and law enforcement continue to maintain the 4-day detention period arbitrarily in every case of detention.

On April 26, the Green Left Party candidate in Kocaeli province was imprisoned. After the election rally in Muş on April 27, many people were detained. On April 29, 19 people, among them 2 journalists and party members, were detained in Ankara. On May 3, World Press Freedom Day, 5 people, including 2 journalists, were jailed. On April 29, our election convoy in Ankara was stopped by the riot police, and 3 people, including our party lawyer, were subjected to police violence. On April 30, Gebze district co-chair

and 4 party employees were detained and imprisoned. In Eskişehir and Istanbul, 23 people, including the Co-Chair of our ally party ESP, Şahin Tümüklü, the Greens and Left Party parliamentary candidates, ESP members and opposition journalists were taken into custody. 6 people, including Mr. Şahin Tümüklü, Green Left Party deputy candidate and 1 journalist were imprisoned.

During the election campaign in Kocaeli on May 1, our parliamentary candidates Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu and Arzu Eylem Kayaoğlu were subjected to physical and verbal violence under police supervision. On May 2, 32 people, including members and administrators of the People's Democratic Congress (HDK), the HDP and the Green Left Party Youth Assembly, were detained.

Abdulcebbar İlbars, the father of Onur İlbars, who was detained unjustly and unlawfully, went to the police station to see his son, but died of a heart attack shortly after he returned home as he was not allowed to meet the son. We offer our condolences to his family. We will do our best to bring those responsible for this death to justice.

As a result of an attack on May 2 on the party's election booth in Edirne, 2 party members, including parliamentary candidate Serdal Zımba, had their arms broken and 3 party members were injured. Attacks on election vehicles, election offices, threats on social media, harassment by the law enforcement, and bans on election campaigns by governor's offices and district governors continue everywhere."

Özdoğan revealed that 295 party members were detained and 61 more were arrested in the last month in the latest wave of political operations. She added: "These figures are estimated to be higher. The government, which has involved all state institutions, judiciary, law enforcement, governorships, public buildings in its election campaign and used the money collected for earthquake victims for its election budget, has increased the crackdown on the opposition. It is doing this for a reason; the results of the election surveys."

'Election security at risk'

Özdoğan also spoke about the recent statements of top AKP figures about the elections, stating the following:

"On April 26, the AKP Deputy Chair, Binali Yıldırım, said that 'this is an election of freedom struggle against invaders'. On the other hand, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Süleyman Soylu, described the May 14 elections as a 'coup attempt'. For election safety, Soylu should be relieved of his duties in the first place. In a speech in Ankara on May 1, President Erdoğan said that 'My nation would not elect a president who receives orders from Qandil'. Subsequently, on May 2, Erdoğan's Chief Advisor, Mehmet Uçum said that 'a government change in the 2023 elections will be a blow to Turkey's full independence'. We would like to emphasize that the above-mentioned political genocide arrests increased after these statements.

There are intense provocation attempts in all electoral areas. The crimes committed against election campaigns are an open violation of the constitution. Our party and the Labour and Freedom alliance will not allow the government to turn electoral areas into scenes of violence. This country has not forgotten the violence and massacres after the June 7 elections in 2015.

Our party will go to the polls with more than 4 thousand volunteer lawyers and thousands of observers. Our party, with all its components and alliances, is ready for the 14 May elections. We would like to make it clear to our people: everyone's vote will be protected. We urge the public to be vigilant against the attacks and provocation attempts against the Green Left Party and our Labour and Freedom Alliance during the election campaign.”

KCK: Turkey is at a crossroads and there must be a radical change of mentality

ANF | BEHDINAN | 6 MAY 2023

Presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in Turkey on 14 May. Competing in the elections are the AKP and MHP alliance led by Erdoğan, joined by the Kurdish Islamist Hüda-Par; the Nation Alliance with its presidential candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (CHP) and the Labour and Freedom Alliance, which includes the Green Left Party and other progressive parties.

The KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Peoples' and Religious Affairs Committee spoke about the importance of these elections.

Highlights from the interview with ANF are as follows:

First of all, we would like to remind you that the elections that will take place on 14 May in Kurdistan and Turkey are very important. However, we do not believe that elections are the solution to everything. Such an approach would lead to big mistakes. However, the elections are important for all communities living in Turkey. For the Kurdish, Arab, Laz, Turkish and other peoples, it is about the struggle for freedom of language and culture. The Alevi, Yazidi, Assyrian, Syriac and other faith communities are fighting for equality and democracy. The elections are also very important for the struggle for the life and freedom of women who are exposed to state violence, murdered and disappeared in Turkey and Kurdistan. These elections are also very important for the youth, the labourers and all social groups.

The peoples, women and youth should participate in this process, knowing that they will play a role in a movement that will bring about the collapse of a fascist regime that is hostile to nature, cultures, fundamental rights and freedoms. The Republic of Turkey has existed for one hundred years. This period will go down in history as the century of the slaughter of peoples, especially the Kurdish people. The massacres experienced by the Alevi community in this century have also reached the level of genocide. In addition to the physical attacks, ideological and psychological attacks were also constantly on the agenda and carried out in this century.

The Turkish nation-state or the state of the Republic of Turkey has proven in its practice over the past hundred years that it has always regarded Kurds and Alevis as a security problem. Since 1923, i.e. since the foundation of the republic, the peoples have been subjected to constant pressure. However, in the last twenty years of AKP rule, the situation has escalated. There have been arrests almost daily, torture and isolation in prisons have been taken to extremes and the problems of women have drastically increased. The

economy is at a dead end and people find life a grind due to economic difficulties. The war escalated most in Kurdistan, which was fought without moral rules.

Moreover, the fascist AKP/MHP government is not satisfied with any of this and has allied itself with Hûda-Par, also known as the Hezbollah organisation, which played a role in tens of thousands of unsolved murders in the 1990s with its contra activities. The aim is to intimidate the peoples. Hûda-Par is well known; Kurds in particular are no strangers to this terrorist organisation. It is the political party of Hizbi-Contra and was put into operation as the Kurdish branch of the Turkish Gladio [NATO's stay-behind organisation], especially in the early 1990s. At the same time, this organisation is also the practical executor of the secret and dark affairs in Turkey and Kurdistan, that is, the counter forces. And the entry of these forces means the entry of Gladio in the elections under the name of a political party. It is these forces that have brought Turkey to the edge of the abyss.

In this sense, Turkey has reached an important crossroads with the electoral process. The struggle of the freedom movement, the women and the youth, the labourers and the democratic circles have brought the fascist regime to the brink of collapse. With the elections, our people, indeed the peoples of Turkey, will complete the process by giving it the death blow, so to speak. In the run-up to the elections, the crucial role and importance of the Labour and Freedom Alliance becomes even clearer. The dynamic of the struggle for democracy, rights and freedom in Turkey consists of the social segments on which the Labour and Freedom Alliance is based. The more this alliance grows and becomes stronger by including all peoples, faith groups, women's organisations, youth, labourers and the unemployed living in Turkey, the more it strengthens the struggle for democracy and opens the ground for democratic politics.

For more than twenty years, the fascist government has been the common enemy of whole society in Turkey. In this sense, it is necessary to rally around the Green Left Party, which represents the peoples, the women, the youth and the religious identities, organises itself for the struggle for democracy and freedom and formulates its political programme and guidelines accordingly, and works on this basis. There must be a radical change of mentality in Turkey. The mentality of denial and annihilation, the understanding and politics of genocide must change. Change and transformation can be achieved through the development of democratic politics, democratic struggles, social struggles and resistance.

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Akın: A vote for the Green Left Party means a vote for a new future

ANF | İZMİR | 6 MAY 2023

Green Left Party deputy co-spokesperson Ibrahim Akın said that there is no other political alliance in Turkey that demonstrates the ability to convey the voice, word and identity of so many different dynamics in the parliament. "Our alliance is very valuable in terms of building Turkey's third path, for democracy, freedom and peace."

Akın said: “The Green Left Party is a party that entered the elections for the first time. I can say that we have received very strong support in the last 45 days of our lives. We have rarely seen such a widely supported party in such a short time.”

Our alliance will build peace

Akın said that he entered the elections as a candidate of the Labor and Freedom Alliance. He explained the importance of the alliance with the following words: “We are candidates of the Kurdish Freedom and Democracy Alliance in the territory of Kurdistan. Therefore, we are actually making a common political representation from a place that covers all people from different identities, beliefs and political views. There is no other political alliance in Turkey that shows the ability to carry the voice, word and identity of such different dynamics in the parliament. In that respect, our alliance is very valuable in terms of building Turkey's third path to democracy, freedom and peace.”

We will be the representatives of change

Akın said: “We think that 15 May will be the beginning of the new century. Of course, not everything will change immediately. We want to be the spokesperson of the wind of change. We will be the representatives of change. We are working to make our party very strong in the Parliament. We ask a vote for the Green Left Party, and a vote for Kılıçdaroğlu to get rid of the one-man regime. The vote to be given to the Green Left Party will be decisive for Turkey's equal, free and democratic future. We call on all our people to vote for the Green Left Party.”



Green Left Party activist beaten by racists in Edirne undergoes 3-hour surgery

ANF | EDİRNE | 6 MAY 2023

The stand set up by the Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) Edirne Provincial Organization on Saraçlar Caddesi, one of the city's busiest streets, on 3 May, was attacked by racists. The party's candidate Serdal Zimba and activist Sare Ay had their arms broken by the mob. The police detained 7 Green Left Party members, the victims of the assault, instead of the perpetrators of the attack.

While 6 of the 7 party members were released, a man named Süleyman Hızmalı was sent to prison for “injury”.

Surgery lasted 3 hours

Sare Ay (55), whose arm was broken in three different places by the attackers, was taken under observation after 3-hour surgery. She should be discharged today.

Ay said that although she fell to the ground, the attackers continued to beat her.



May 14 elections: Electoral turnout doubled in Baghdad and Hewler

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

The voting for Turkey's Presidential and 28th Term Parliamentary Elections on May 14 ended in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region on May 7.

There were 2 polling stations in Baghdad, 1 in Basra and 3 in Hewler (Erbil).

Between May 5 and 7, approximately 5,741 voters went to the polls.

While 415 out of 1775 registered voters voted in the capital Baghdad, 1290 out of 3,834 voters went to the polls in Hewler.

Only 74 out of 132 registered voters in Basra were reported to have voted.

While the electoral turnout in the 2018 elections in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region stood at 10.05 percent, it increased to 26.44 percent this year.

The voting launched at the Khabour and Üzümlü border gates on April 27 will continue until May 14, 17.00.



Green Left Party attacked in Mersin, CHP in Erzurum

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

Five people were slightly injured in a racially motivated attack on a Green Left Party van in the southern Turkish coastal province of Mersin. One party worker suffered bleeding and was taken to hospital for treatment.

The attack took place on Sunday afternoon in the district of Tarsus. The Green Left Party vehicle had stopped at a red light on Atatürk Street in the Yeni Mahalle neighborhood when a mob of about 20 people stormed out of an election office of the ultranationalist MHP and started chanting hate speech. The attackers, armed with clubs and knives, then beat the speaker's van and five of its occupants through open windows. They also slashed several tires.

The vehicle was carrying a total of seven Green Left Party workers, including a woman. The party's local branch said the attack was witnessed by numerous police officers patrolling the area near the centre, but

that they did not intervene. “This is not a small scuffle based on different political views, but an attempted lynching. It was only due to the quick reaction of the driver that the loudspeaker van was maneuvered into a safe area and our team escaped this lynching attempt,” the statement said.

According to the statement, the riot police not only remained idle during the assault, but also refused to file a report. “It was only at the Tarsus police station that the reports were received, but only very reluctantly. The police let the mob do what it wanted and stood by and did nothing.”

The HDP, which is contesting the parliamentary and presidential elections on 14 May under the banner of the Green Left Party, said that the attacks and acts of violence against the opposition were planned and coordinated. “The political responsibility lies with the rulers and their spokespersons who switch from hate speech to hate speech. Provocation, escalation and stoking fear of the invented enemy are meant to polarize society and stigmatize individual groups. The incumbent government's fear of defeat endangers the security of voters,” stressed the HDP, which also condemned the attack on Ekrem İmamoğlu.

Several people were injured by stones thrown during an appearance by Ekrem İmamoğlu, the mayor of the metropolis of Istanbul, on Sunday in the province of Erzurum. The CHP politician said in a video posted on Twitter on Sunday evening that a group of people had thrown stones at him while he was giving a speech from the roof of his campaign bus. Several members of the audience were injured. The CHP circulated pictures showing people with injuries to their heads, including at least one child.

İmamoğlu accused the police of deliberately doing nothing. He said it was a provocation that the people of Erzurum had nothing to do with. Videos showed that the rally site was blocked by dozens of buses and other municipal vehicles belonging to the AKP-ruled municipality. Earlier, the CHP had complained that authorities had tried to deliberately prevent the Erzurum rally from taking place.

Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu, known for his verbal attacks, wrote in the first reaction on Twitter: “Ekrem İmamoğlu, who calls the people in Erzurum provocateurs, is himself a provocateur.” In the evening, he repeated his remarks on the pro-government channel Ülke TV and instructed the Turkish Election Committee (YSK) to take action against İmamoğlu. Numerous supporters welcomed him at Sabiha Gökçen Airport.

CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu condemned the attack on Twitter and called on party members to remain calm. He accused the government of working with the mafia and militants, saying: “Their aim is to scare people and keep them away from the polls.” Kılıçdaroğlu is running in the presidential election as the joint candidate of the “Table of Six”, an alliance of six opposition parties from different political camps, and is supported by the HDP and Green Left Party. In the event of a victory over Erdoğan, İmamoğlu is to become vice-president.

DTK Co-Chair Öztürk: We will defeat the government in May 14 elections

ANF | AMED | 8 MAY 2023

On the eve of the elections in Kurdistan and Turkey on May 14, the AKP-MHP government continues to attack the Kurds. Putting the election security in jeopardy and intimidating the opposition, the AKP-MHP is resorting to detentions and arrests.

The Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chair Berdan Öztürk spoke to ANF about the mass detentions of the Kurds in the past weeks.

Voters looking forward to elections

Öztürk stated that during the election campaign they encountered determined voters looking forward to the elections on May 14. He added that the political genocide operations triggered the impatience of the people.

Öztürk stressed that detentions and arrests increased the people's hatred and grudge against the government. He continued: "Our people know very well the purpose of arrests in different institutions on the eve of the historic elections. But we will defeat the government in the elections once and for all. When we look at these attacks politically, we see a government that has nothing to offer to society. Not only the political genocide operations, but also the attacks against South Kurdistan show that the government is persistent in its hostility towards Kurds. The AKP tries to maintain power by detaining and arresting Kurdish politicians and waging war against the Kurds, but they make a mistake."

Their days are numbered

Öztürk recalled that tens of thousands of their colleagues have been detained in the last 8 years, and half of them have been jailed. He said: "Similar political genocide operations have been experienced before. In the last 8 years, tens of thousands of our friends have been arrested and they are still in prison. But our resistance and struggle have continued for years, replacing those arrested with others. This time, too, we will respond to the crackdown. This time there is no way out. They will go. Their days are numbered."

The opposition must be sincere

Öztürk remarked that the opposition, which remains silent about the attacks against the Kurds, should be sincere in their discourse of democracy. He concluded: "The opposition must act based on principles. Attacks against the Green Left Party, the HDP, the DBP, journalists and other institutions are taking place shortly before the elections, but the opposition parties do not speak out. They keep talking about the rule of law and justice, but they do not speak about the unlawfulness against the Kurds. As the DTK, we would like to say that if this indifference continues in the coming period, the existing problems will deepen even more. If you are talking about getting rid of the one-man regime in this atmosphere where war and anti-Kurdish policies are deepening, then you should do your part."

Green Left Party: The racist attack in Mersin was orchestrated by the government

ANF | MERSIN | 8 MAY 2023

Five people were slightly injured in a racially motivated attack on a Green Left Party van in the southern Turkish coastal province of Mersin on Sunday, May 7. The attackers, armed with clubs and knives, beat the speaker's van and five of its occupants through open windows. They also slashed several tires.

The Green Left Party Mersin Provincial Organization made a press statement concerning the racist attacks they have been subjected to during the election campaign.

The executives of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP) participated in the press briefing in front of the party office.

The Green Left Party Mersin Spokeswoman, Zeliha Burcu Acar, said that the racist attacks and violence directed against them were orchestrated by the AKP-MHP government.

Acar said: "The AKP and MHP fascist alliance have already seen that they will lose the elections. That's why they are doing what they know best: resorting to violence. They are trying to intimidate us, to crumple our success. But we will not give up and we will win together with the people."

Acar continued: "In the May 14 elections, people will give the necessary answer to those who try to harm the peace and tranquillity in the country."

Acar listed the attacks that have targeted the party since May 1 as follows:

- On May 1, the attack that involved HÜDA-PAR members conducting an election campaign in the Çay neighbourhood was falsely associated with our party in an attempt to create provocation.
- On May 3, we urged our people to remain calm in the face of an attempt to attack our administrators in the Viranşehir neighborhood in Mezitli district. We anticipated that such provocations would develop.
- On May 6, the Mayor of Akdeniz district, Mustafa Gültak, targeted the HDP party assembly members in a speech he delivered to a television channel at an AKP rally. However, what was at stake, of course, was public land made available to a supporter. Insisting on his corrupt policies despite the warning of our party members to "defend the property and rights of the people", Gültak tried to cover up the corruption by citing "national values".
- A racist mob affiliated with the government ally MHP carried out a fascist attack against our fellow party members in the Tarsus district yesterday noon. While our party members did not respond to the attack and remained calm, 5 of them were injured by the racist group.

- On the same day, Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and CHP campaigners were attacked with stones in Erzurum province. These attacks against the people will remain futile.”



Voting for Turkey’s elections ends in Switzerland

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

Overseas voting for the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held on 14 May in Turkey and North Kurdistan continues. The voting in Switzerland began on April 29 and ended yesterday (Sunday) at 21:00. In the cities of Zurich, Bern and Geneva, out of 105,821 registered voters, 60,049 cast their votes for 9 days. Except for the votes at the customs, the electoral turnout stood at 56.74 percent. Registered voters in Switzerland can vote in neighbouring countries such as Germany, Austria and France until May 9 or at customs until April 14.

Electoral turnout surpassed the 2018 elections

The electoral turnout ended up high in Switzerland. While the turnout in the 2018 elections stood at 49.4 percent including the customs votes, it rose to 56.74 percent this year, excluding the customs votes. It is difficult to estimate how many of the registered voters in Switzerland cast their votes, since there is no obligation for voters to cast their votes in their country of residence. Most of the voters in Ticino, an Italian canton of Switzerland, went to the polling stations in Milan by bus and private vehicles. While some voters in the cities of Chur and St. Gallen preferred to go to Austria, those in the canton of Basel preferred to go to the polling stations in Mulhaus, France, since the city is closer to them.

Geneva

Most of the voters registered in France voted in Geneva. The number of those who cast their votes was reported to be 13 thousand 484 in Geneva, where 13,448 voters were registered, and the electoral turnout stood at 100.26 percent. It is reported that voters living in the border cities of Germany also voted in the city of Zurich.

Censorship on Kurdish press

The voting process in Switzerland was generally uneventful, except for one or two individual incidents where ultra-nationalist individuals did the Grey Wolf sign and shouted slogans in front of some polling stations. On the other hand, the Turkish Embassy in Switzerland maintained its hostile attitude towards the Kurdish press continued. The Press Office, run by Bayram Altuğ, who previously served as the Geneva correspondent for the state-run Anadolu News Agency, left the request of journalists who wanted to follow the elections unanswered. While it is clear in the law that members of the press are granted the right to follow the voting process without obtaining permission, photos of Kurdish journalist Erdoğan Zamur were handed over to the Zurich Cantonal police and Zamur was prevented from entering the polling station.

Votes will be sent to Turkey on Tuesday

Votes cast in Switzerland will be sent to Turkey on Tuesday by a private cargo plane from Munich, Germany. Green Left Party officials stated that they expected to be the first party in Switzerland, adding that more than half of the votes would turn out to be for the Green Left Party in this election.

General statistics

Switzerland General

Number of registered voters: 105.821

Votes cast: 60,048

Electoral turnout: 56.74 %

Zurich

Number of registered voters: 69,141

Votes cast: 34,514

Electoral turnout: 49.91 %

Geneva

Number of registered voters: 13,448

Votes cast: 13,484

Electoral turnout: 100.26 %

Bern

Number of registered voters: 23,232

Votes cast: 12,051

Electoral turnout: 51.87 %

OSCE “disappointed” over Turkey’s denial of accreditation to foreign MPs as election observers

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

In response to a decision by the Turkish authorities to deny accreditation as election observers to Danish parliamentarian Soren Sondergaard and Swedish parliamentarian Kadir Kasirga, who had been appointed as members of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Parliamentary Assembly’s election observation mission to the 14 May general elections in Turkey, Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observer mission Michael Georg Link and Head of the OSCE PA Delegation Farah Karimi today issued the following statement:

“As the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has conveyed Turkey’s diplomatic mission to the OSCE, we are disappointed with this step taken by the Turkish authorities, which could impact negatively on the work of the international observer mission. While acknowledging the basic right of any country to control access to its polling stations, members of an election observation mission in an OSCE country, following an invitation by the country’s authorities, must be able to perform the tasks for which they have been invited. The country that has invited the OSCE PA to observe should not – directly or indirectly – influence the composition of the mission. We are particularly disappointed that this denial is based on statements made in the framework of their general political mandate as independent members of parliament.

“We express our hope that Turkish authorities will extend appropriate support to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observers.”

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Turkish provocation at polling station in Amsterdam

ANF | 8 MAY 2023

Provocations at the polling station for the Turkish elections in Amsterdam led to a huge brawl on the last day of the elections, reported the Target Platform on Monday. Accordingly, as a dispute between an observer of the Green Left Party and an observer of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) turned into physical violence, a mass fight broke out between AKP-MHP supporters and volunteers of the opposition parties.

According to the Target Platform, the police intervened with dogs in the incident, which took place a few minutes after the polls closed. After the brawl, in which some people were slightly injured, Green Left Party volunteers were made to wait for hours by the police to leave the building. The police, who arrived at the scene with dozens of vehicles, considered the event to be a major incident. Last week there was also a big brawl in Amsterdam, but the incident on the last day of the elections was far more violent.

A Green Left Party volunteer, who declined to be named for security reasons, told Target Platform that many provocations occurred on the final day of voting. The witness stated that there was a lot of provocative behavior during the day and that AKP and MHP volunteers wearing ‘Police Special Operations Department’ and ‘Osmanlı Ocakları’ (Ottoman Hearts) – a pro-Erdogan ultra-nationalist organization – T-shirts were intimidating throughout the day.

The Green Left Party volunteer explained that tensions had risen mainly because of an irregularity: “A woman observer from the Workers’ Party of Turkey (TİP) refused to give a ballot paper to someone who wanted to vote because he was not registered as a voter. Seeing this, an AKP observer called the man who intended to vote: ‘Come over here, let’s have a look’. When the TİP woman objected to his call, the man who insisted on voting insulted her. After a brief argument, the man was escorted out of the building.”



246 academics, lawyers, artists, journalists call on people to vote for Green Left Party

ANF | İZMİR | 9 MAY 2023

246 people, among which are academics, lawyers, artists, journalists and writers, as well as human rights defenders, announced that they will vote for the Green Left Future Party (Green Left Party) in the 14 May elections. At a press conference held in İzmir Sanat in Kültür Park, the 246 signatories read a text called “For a dignified life and a free future, my vote is for the Green Left Party!” In addition to HDP executives, Green Left Party co-spokesperson İbrahim Akın, İzmir 1st and 2nd constituencies candidates and many citizens attended the press conference.

Nilgün Toker: We want to get rid of this regime

Academic Nilgün Toker said: “We have been warning about a fascist environment for a long time. Since the declaration of a state of emergency in this country, there has been a process in which the state of emergency has been normalized. I call it a fascist dictatorship. We are going to an election under fascist pressure. This means we are not in an electoral environment where a democratic, pluralistic contest is possible. We want to get rid of this fascist regime with these elections. We are entering an election where people who have not surrendered to fascism want to show their stance by defeating fascism. We said that there is no other way but to be united. We are united. Peace and justice expressed in the Green Left Party are the will of those who have paid a high price for demanding human rights. That's why our votes will go to the Green Left Party.”

‘I vote for the Green Left Party for a free future’

Academic Zerrin Kurtoğlu read the text titled “My Vote for the Green Left Party for an Honorable Life and a Free Future”.

The text reads as follows:

“In order for a democratic, egalitarian and freedom-based new Constitution to be made by the citizens through equal participation and negotiation,

- To fully ensure the separation of powers, to make the balance and control mechanisms effective, and to have an independent and impartial judiciary,
- To end centralization and build a strong local democracy,
- For a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem,
- To put an end to unemployment, poverty, flexible and insecure work, exploitation of labor and work-related deaths,
- To put an end to the trustee regime, which ignores the will of the electorate and has become a form of government,
- To end the usurpation of rights and discrimination through Decree-Laws (KHK), for the right to have rights,
- To end the domination of men over women and to establish gender equality,
- To eliminate all kinds of inequality and discrimination in social, cultural and political fields,
- For freedom of belief and conscience, plurality of beliefs and equal citizenship,
- To defend the right to life of everyone living in the country by combating anti-refugee racism and to ensure peaceful and equal coexistence,
- In order to live in an ecosystem where there is no hierarchical order between living things and where all living and non-living things coexist,
- To build a Democratic Republic based on the principles of local democracy, a democratic and ecological society, gender equality, freedom and human rights in a pluralistic political system,
- My vote is for the candidates of the Green Left Party, as they are the collective voice of a free new life; workers, women, Armenians, Alevis, Kurds, Turks, Yazidis, Circassians, Roma, Muslims, Bosnians, Laz, Jews, Christians, Georgians, Assyrians; all peoples and beliefs living in this country, refugees and migrants, children, young people, the elderly, the disabled, believers and non-believers, all oppressed identities, those who cannot speak their mother tongue. In short, my vote for the Green Left Party for a dignified life and a free future”

Green Left Party co-spokesperson Ibrahim Akin said: “This election is an opportunity for us. Indeed, Turkey has an opportunity to change its destiny. It is an important election not only for Turkey but also for the region. We represent 17 parties. Every vote is very important.”

Akin called on people to attend the Green Left Party rally to be held at Gündoğdu Square on 12 May at 17.30.

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Voting rate in Britain reaches 50 percent

DIREN DICLE ERDEN | LONDON | 9 MAY 2023

Voting in Britain for the elections in Turkey and Northern Kurdistan started on 28 April. Polls were set up in the cities of London, Manchester, Leicester and Edinburgh. Voting ended on Sunday.

The British Electoral Coordination, made up by hundreds of volunteers and a large number of organizations organized around the Green Left Party, welcomed the voting rate. In the 2018 elections, the rate was 48 percent. In Britain, where the number of registered voters is 127,281, some 64,45 people cast their ballots.

These elections, in which an average of 50 percent of the total registered voters cast their votes, also represent a new level and record for Britain.

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Interview

Ferac: The key to a solution to the Kurdish question is on İmralı

AWYER BOTAN | SULAYMANIYAH | 6 MAY 2023

Journalist and writer Letif Fatih Ferac spoke to ANF about the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, the election campaign of the Green Left Party and the KDP's cooperation with Erdoğan-Hüda-Par.

Ferac noted that Öcalan was unlawfully taken prisoner as a result of an international conspiracy on February 15, 1999. He said: "It is against the law to isolate a jailed person for years and not to allow him to meet with his family and lawyers. Öcalan must be allowed to meet his family, lawyers and journalists. The Turkish state maintains this illegal isolation system with the support of the US and NATO."

Ferac continued: "Once talks are held with Mr. Öcalan, the groundwork for a solution would be laid. Especially during the peace process, Öcalan focused on resolving the Kurdish question. It was even discussed

that Mr. Öcalan could be released from prison and placed under house arrest. Europe bears responsibility for Öcalan just as it did for Mandela. Öcalan has a great will. Despite all the pressure, he did not take a step back from his resistance. If he is allowed to meet his lawyers, he can give important messages at this stage.”

“The AKP and Erdogan have recently wanted to meet with Öcalan to ask him to contact Qandil. But Mr. Öcalan refused it. Why? Because Europe and the US forces lied about the Kurdish question and did not keep their promises. The PKK was ready for peace and solution, it was ready to enter the cities without arms. Peace Mothers stepped in, and everyone was ready for peace. But the peace process was suspended, and tens of thousands of people were arrested. For this reason, Mr. Öcalan refused contact,” Ferac said.

‘AKP and Erdogan will be defeated by the freedom alliance’

Addressing the elections to be held in Turkey and North Kurdistan on May 14, Ferac said he believes that the Erdogan government will lose against the votes of pro-freedom forces. He emphasized that the Kurds are the third power in Turkey and Kurdish politics should increase their seats in the parliament.

Ferac continued: "These elections are important for us because we will stop the invasion attacks that have been targeting Kurdistan for at least 5 years. We will prevent political assassinations in South Kurdistan, the invasion attacks against Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Maxmur and Shengal, and the use of chemical weapons. The Kurdish policy of Erdogan and the AKP turned out worse than Atatürk's. On the one hand, Erdogan says that "the Kurdish people are my Muslim brothers and sisters," and on the other hand, he poisons them with chemical weapons and rains bombs on them. If Erdogan loses power in these elections, new steps will be taken for a solution to the Kurdish question. This is very important. It should be known that the key to the solution lies not in Washington, Paris or Ankara, but on Imralı.”

Ferac pointed out that: “The peoples of Turkey cannot even afford bread now. The Green Left Party is fighting for solutions to the existing problems, not only for the Kurds, but also for the peoples of Turkey. Because not only in Kurdistan, but also in many cities of Turkey, peoples are subjected to persecution by the government. Thousands of politicians, dozens of journalists and intellectuals have been arrested because of this persecution. That is why Erdogan must finally be defeated.”

Cooperation with the enemy is treachery

Referring to South Kurdistan's ruling party KDP's cooperation with the AKP and Hüda-Par, Ferac said: "If this cooperation aims to oppose the Green Left Party and the Kurdish people, this is called treason. There are various types of treachery. It is treason for a cleric in Amed to pray for Erdogan's victory, and for a party from Hewler (Erbil) and Sulaymaniyah to support Erdogan. It is treason for collaborators in Şırnak to hand over a freedom guerrilla to the enemy.”

Ferac also criticized the arrest of journalists and politicians in the latest wave of political genocide operations carried out by the AKP-MHP government. Ferac concluded: “In this process, Erdogan and the AKP do not want the public to be informed about the facts. Journalists, politicians, and intellectuals have been arrested for this very reason. The Kurdish people will never bow to oppression. They have paid a huge price, but they will eventually triumph.”

Opinion

Bayık: 14 May elections are a historic opportunity and people need to make good use of it

ANF | 3 MAY 2023

The KCK Executive Council Co-Chair Cemil Bayık said that the 14 May elections are a historic opportunity and called on “all peoples and everyone who is against fascism in Turkey to make good use of this historical opportunity.”

Here are excerpts of the interview.

CPT and Council of Europe serve the genocide policy of the Turkish state

Bayık said: “For a long time there has been absolutely no contact with Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. This absolute isolation is the continuation of the conspiracy [imprisonment of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999]. Of course, this absolute isolation causes concern and anxiety in our movement, our people, socialist circles and circles that struggle for democracy and freedom. It is understandable that all of them continue to express their concerns and worries.

Most recently a conference was held in Hamburg. Leader Apo’s ideology, philosophy and paradigm were discussed there. Germany put obstacles in the way, but despite this, the conference was very successful. I would therefore like to respectfully greet the organizers and participants of this conference.”

A rally was also held recently in Düsseldorf [Germany] to break the absolute isolation of Leader Apo and to realize his physical freedom. There were marches in Marseille and many other places, too. I would like to wholeheartedly greet and congratulate all our people and international friends who participated in these rallies. This clearly shows that if Leader Apo’s paradigm is well understood, everyone will accept it. Then everyone will consider this paradigm as a hope and consequently support Leader Apo. That is to say, if we spread the paradigm everywhere and make people understand it well, the support for Leader Apo will increase even more. The realization of Leader Apo’s physical freedom will become much more likely on this basis. For this reason, everyone needs to act responsibly and increase their struggle. It is necessary to understand the conditions under which Leader Apo has been waging his struggle and how he developed this paradigm. If this is done, I think the pressure on the Turkish state will increase and Leader Apo’s physical freedom will be achieved.

The position of the CPT and the Council of Europe on this issue is very interesting. They throw the ball to the Turkish state and the Turkish state throws it back to them. The Turkish state is carrying out a genocide policy against our people. The policy of the CPT and the Council of Europe on this issue completely serves this genocide policy of the Turkish state. They thus become part of this genocide. They should not

be part of this. They should respect their own laws, rules and principles. If they show respect and do not support the genocide, I think the Turkish state will not be able to impose such an absolute isolation on Leader Apo.”

Heavy Attacks by Turkish state

Bayık continued: “Why did we take this decision? Because the AKP-MHP government had left hundreds of thousands of people in the earthquake zone to die. We can not remain indifferent to this because we are a socialist movement. We are a humanitarian, moral and conscientious movement. Our people had to be saved. Deaths had to be prevented. All energy had to be mobilized for this. This is why we took the decision to halt all attacks by the guerrillas. Shortly after, the elections entered the agenda. All the peoples of Turkey have since been saying ‘no more’ to the AKP-MHP government. They have been wanting change. But the AKP and MHP were trying to prevent this change with provocations and to thus remain in power. Almost everyone said that provocations could take place. Taking this into account, we decided to extend our decision to halt all attacks until the election in order not to sabotage the change and to eliminate the grounds for possible provocations. It is important for everyone to understand this decision correctly. We have thus lived up to our responsibility. Although we have taken such a decision and have not carried out any attacks in the cities, the Turkish state has continued and increased its attacks. It has done this both in Turkey, in the Media Defense Zones [South Kurdistan/North Iraq], South Kurdistan and Rojava. And it has arrested many people who pursue democratic politics. It has also increased the torture in prisons.

The reason for all this is the stance taken by NATO and the European Union. Taking advantage of this, the AKP-MHP government has continued to increase its attacks. Despite all these difficulties, we continue to fulfill our responsibilities. If NATO and the European Union did not support the Turkish state, this fascist, colonialist and genocidal state would not be able to carry out these heavy attacks. Therefore, NATO and the EU are in a way part of these attacks. They are practically part of the genocide policy pursued by the Turkish state. My call is for them to abandon this policy. They should not be a part of the Kurdish genocide.”

Coming end of AKP-MHP government

Bayık added: “The AKP-MHP government has turned the Turkish state into a mafia state. There is no constitution, no laws and no justice. They trampled on all of this. Thus, they have dragged Turkey into a quagmire that is very difficult to get out of. Because this situation stems from their mentality. They label everyone who does not serve them, who is not with them as enemies of Turkey and of democracy. They label them terrorists and traitors. They think that they can cover up what they have done, that they can deceive everyone, that they can maintain their power in this way. That is why they call everyone who does not serve them terrorists and traitors. And they accuse them of serving the PKK.

But this has now come to an end. Maybe they have been able to do these things until now, but at this stage, these accusations and this pressure are backfiring. They wanted to shut down the HDP but they couldn't. Now, a few days before the elections, they carried out an operation and arrested politicians, artists, journalists and lawyers. And it is clear that they will continue these operations. Because the socialists, the democracy and freedom forces in Turkey have built an alliance: the ‘Labor and Freedom Alliance’. On this basis, they are entering the elections as the Green Left Party. The AKP-MHP considers this as very dangerous and wants to prevent this development. It wants to reassert its power on this basis. The recent

operation is a clear intervention in the election. On this occasion, I would therefore like to call on everyone to respond to these attacks at the ballot box. The AKP-MHP mentality must be brought to an end at the ballot box. And no one should take a step back. On the contrary, everybody should work harder, organize and make the AKP-MHP pay for this.

The AKP-MHP has a fascist and genocidal mentality. That is why it is hostile to everyone. It poisons society with hostility towards Kurds, Alevis and socialists. It promotes nationalism and chauvinism. Along with this, it constantly increases its war machine. It even bases its election propaganda on these things. Thus, the AKP-MHP uses the society of Turkey for its own purposes. But now, it is blocked and about to loose.

The women are the ones who grasped the reality of the AKP the earliest. Women have gained consciousness. That is why they started the struggle against this government before everybody else. This shows that women determine the future of society's desire for change. The struggle led by women is now bringing an end to the genocide carried out by AKP-MHP fascism. The AKP, which previously had partial support from women, is now deprived of this support. The women have realized that this government and this party are carrying out a feminicide. Therefore, they have stopped their support. The AKP, which had maintained its power with the support of women, can no longer remain in power because they don't have that support anymore. No force that loses the support of women can succeed.”

May 14 Elections in Turkey

Bayık said: “Socialists, patriots and all those who struggle for democracy and freedom in Turkey now have a historic opportunity. There is the opportunity to develop Turkey into a democratic republic. In order to make use of this historic opportunity, the Green Left Party must become a strong part of parliament. It is the Green Left Party that will determine the future of Turkey. Almost everyone is saying this. That is why the Green Left Party needs to play its role well. A great struggle has already been waged. Great martyrs have fallen, a great price has been paid and great pains have been endured.

The Green Left Party must therefore not say that it has done enough already. It needs to be focused on reaching more people, on influencing, organizing and mobilizing even more people. On this basis, it must become a strong part of parliament. Because this election is not just any election. It is an election that determines the future of Turkey, the future of the Kurds, Alevis, women, laborers, youth and all peoples. Either fascism will be institutionalized in Turkey, or the country will take steps towards becoming a democratic republic.

There is no such thing as easy. Therefore, everyone must work and not be satisfied with anything. Everybody must do all they can to get the maximum results. If they do this, I can easily say that AKP-MHP fascism will come to an end and Turkey will take a step towards democratization. The AKP-MHP no longer has anything to give to society. Therefore, I call on the Labor and Freedom Alliance, the Green Left Party, the Kurdish people, Alevis, women, youth, laborers and all the people in Turkey who are against fascism to make the best use of this historic opportunity.”

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