

# THE İMRALI POST

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

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## Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

KOMAW members take over Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in  
Strasbourg

ANF - Strasbourg - 18 May 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil, launched on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, demanding freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and breaking the isolation imposed on him, continues in its 569th week.

Members of the Martyrs' Families Institution (KOMAW) took over the vigil that Kurds living in Europe and their friends take over in groups every week.

The group includes Xane Yıldız, Selamet Mat, Selim Oltan and Mehmet Şirin Akbaş.

Speaking on behalf of the group, the mother of martyr Xane Yıldız, expressed her anger and feelings about the isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and said: "We made a promise to President Apo [Abdullah Öcalan]. We call out to the whole world, to those who handed over our Leader to the Turkish state. We want our Leadership free. He has not been allowed to see his lawyers or his family for 2 years. I am 80, but even if I were 100 years old I would sit here. On this occasion, I send my special greetings to all our heroes in the mountains of Kurdistan."

Yıldız said that the mothers can no longer tolerate the injustices inflicted on the Kurdish people, and added: "They have filled the prisons. They put our girls, our mothers, our boys in prison. No state stood up to protest this mistreatment. Aren't we human too? We also have rights. We were driven from our land. We want our leadership to be freed. We want our country."

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## Prisons in Turkey

### Journalists on trial: We will stand up for truth and our dignity

ANF - Ankara - 17 May 2023

The first hearing of the trial against free media journalists ended with the release of all reporters except Hamdullah Bayram.

The high court ruled that a journalist's place of employment cannot be a sole ground for arrest over the suspicion of "membership in a terrorist organization."

Lawyer Resul Timur requested all imprisoned journalists to be released.

The court decided to separate Hamdullah Bayram's file and have his file merged with the case file in Urfa; remove the judicial control measures imposed upon Zemo Ağgöz and Mehmet Günhan; to issue a writ to investigate if there is any investigation about Mesopotamia News Agency and JinNews; to hear Ferhat Çelik and Sadiye Eser as witnesses.

The trial is adjourned until 5 July 2023.

Those indicted journalists are: Mezopotamya News Agency editor Diren Yurtsever; Mezopotamya reporters Berivan Altan, Ceylan Şahinli, Deniz Nazlım, Emrullah Acar, Hakan Yalçın, Salman Güzelyüz, and Zemo Ağgöz Yiğitsoy, freelance journalist Öznur Değer; pro-Kurdish news website JİNNEWS reporter Ümmü Habibe Eren; and former Mezopotamya reporting intern Mehmet Günhan.

Journalist Hamdullah Bayram, who was arrested on 20 March 2023 as part of the same investigation, remains in prison.

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## 78 percent disabled prisoner in wheelchair is not released

ANF - Şirnak - 18 May 2023

Nurettin Başaran is a disabled prisoner who was arrested and sentenced to 25 years in prison following the curfew announced in the Cizre district of Şirnak in 2015. Despite his 78 percent disability and a Forensic Medicine Institute (ATK) report saying that "He cannot stay alone", Başaran is not released from prison. The situation of Başaran, who refused to have an operation in prison, is gradually getting worse. Even the basic needs of Başaran, who is kept in a solitary cell, are met by a caregiver in prison.

Speaking to Mezopotamya agency (MA), Başaran's wife, Kaniye Başaran, demanded the release of her husband so he could get proper treatment. Başaran stated that her husband needed an electric wheelchair that he could use alone, which they, however, cannot afford.

### He cannot meet basic needs

Başaran called for the release of her husband, who cannot even meet his basic needs alone and is in need of treatment. She added: "A caregiver helps him in prison. Is there anything more difficult than this? It is very difficult for us to go to visitations. The prison is far away from us, and we don't have a car. We change buses several times for a visit to the prison. He is not able to stand up at all. We want him to be released and treated outside."

### He may lose one leg

Başaran stated that her husband would lose one of his legs if he did not have an operation. She added: "He is receiving drug therapy. Still, his health is deteriorating day by day. Everything is very difficult for a person who cannot meet his/her needs in a prison. We demand the release of all sick prisoners."

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## Prisoner Mazlum Dağ denounces torture by KDP forces in Hewler Prison

ANF - 21 May 2023

Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er (also known as Muhammed Beşiksiz) are accused of shooting Turkish Vice Consul and intelligence officer Osman Köse and two other people, Neriman Osman and Beşdar Ramazan, in a luxury restaurant in Hewlêr (Erbil), the capital of Southern Kurdistan autonomous region, on 17 July 2019.

In February 2020, they were sentenced to death by the 2nd Criminal Court of Hewlêr in a show trial under pressure from Turkey. Immediately after the trial, the two activists were even placed in a prison cell of ISIS jihadists. On 22 September 2020, the death sentences were confirmed by the Court of Cassation.

In a phone talk with his family on 14 May, Mazlum Dağ spoke about the torture they suffered in prison.

According to the Mezopotamya Agency (MA), Mazlum Dağ stated that they suffered physical torture at the hands of the KDP forces in prison, saying the following: “We are subjected to arbitrary search, physical violence and insults. We were forced to wear uniforms a few weeks ago, which we rejected. We have been told that we would be deprived of our right to phone and infirmary, and that we would be placed in single cells.”

The family of Dağ stated that they could not get in touch with their son after 14 May, raising concerns over his life.

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## Military aggression and occupation

### Turkish drone strikes a house in Shengal

ANF - Shengal - 16 May 2023

The South Kurdistan-based RojNews agency reported that an armed drone of the invading Turkish state struck a house in the Khanasor (Xanesor) town of Shengal on Tuesday.

Details about the attack and its aftermath were not immediately available.

The Yazidi town of Shengal (Sinjar), which was subjected to genocide by ISIS mercenaries on August 3, 2014, was liberated on November 13, 2015, after months of resistance led by HPG guerrillas and Shengal

Resistance Units (YBŞ). The people of Shengal formed their self-defence and self-government as the greatest response to further massacres and betrayal in Shengal.

Having declared its Democratic Autonomous Administration, Shengal became the target of both the Turkish state and South Kurdistan's ruling party, KDP. While armed groups affiliated with the KDP and the Turkish army launched attacks in 2017, the central Iraqi government also resorted to various methods to eliminate the autonomy in Shengal.

The Turkish state has recently taken action for further massacres in Shengal. YBŞ commanders Pîr Çeko and Agir Cefri were killed on February 27, and Yazidi Public Security Executive Member Şêzad Şemo Kasım was killed on March 1 by Turkish air strikes. These attacks by the Turkish state took place right after an operation by the YBŞ and Shengal Asayish against MIT (Turkish intelligence service) agents deployed to Shengal by the KDP. Two MIT agents, named Seed Casim Mirad and Selah Berces were captured during the operations of the Shengal security forces, which were carried out on February 24 and dubbed "Revenge Operations".

The attacks of KDP-affiliated mercenaries and Turkish state forces against Shengal have continued uninterruptedly since 2017.



## Tribes in Shengal reject pro-KDP community leader

ANF - Shengal - 16 May 2023

South Kurdistan's ruling party KDP has stepped into action for the implementation of the October 9 Agreement against the Yazidi town of Shengal. The 'Shengal Agreement' was signed between the previous government of Baghdad and Hewler (Erbil) on October 9, 2020.

According to reports from the ground, the KDP is currently forcing the new Iraqi Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, to implement the agreement. The KDP is said to be favouring Hazim Tahsin Beg as the Mir of the Yazidis. Mir is a title for community leaders among the Yazidis.

The Shengal Tribal Leaders Union made a statement responding to the KDP's plan.

The statement pointed out that the KDP was planning to intervene in Shengal through the election of a new Yazidi Mir. The statement said: "Recently, they have started to create unrest among the communities in Shengal to cause a mess. They want to destroy the common life in Shengal. Everyone knows very well that the Yazidis are not against any other religion."

The statement continued: "Because the KDP knew that some of their plans would be exposed during the Iraqi Prime Minister's planned visit to Shengal, it promoted Hazim Tahsin Beg as the Mir of the Yazidis and blocked the Prime Minister's visit through false statements.

We call on Hazim Tahsin Beg not to speak on behalf of our people and the Yazidis anymore. Hazim is no longer considered a Mir because he is acting in the interests of certain political parties.”

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## Governor declares 14 regions in Şirnak as "temporary special security"

ANF - Şirnak - 17 May 2023

In a statement, the governor of Şirnak said that 14 regions in Cizre, Silopi, Uludere, Güçlükönak and Beytüşşebap districts were declared as "temporary special security" zones from 16 to 30 May. Entry and exit to these regions was prohibited.

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## Three injured in attacks on Ain Issa

ANF - Ain Issa - 17 May 2023

In Ain Issa in the north of Syria, three people were injured on Wednesday morning in bombardments by the Turkish army and jihadist proxy forces. The howitzer attacks targeted the village of al-Jadida (Cedîdê) to the west as well as the M4 highway and continue. The bombardments were launched from Turkey's illegal occupation zone. Further information on the extent of the attacks and the condition of the injured is currently not available.

Ain Issa is located south of the Turkish occupation zone around Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) and is strategically important as a link between the self-governing regions of Euphrates and Cizîrê. The town is located on the important M4 motorway, which runs through northern Syria like a lifeline and was a strategic supply route for ISIS. For three and a half years now, Ain Issa has been in the crosshairs of the invading forces. Immediately after the occupation of Serêkaniyê (Ras al-Ain) and Girê Spî in October 2019, a war of attrition was launched against the city, phases of high intensity alternating with phases of low intensity. The bombardments are primarily directed against civilian settlements. Dozens of villages in the region have been destroyed and depopulated by Turkey's belligerent actions. A Turkish air offensive last November reduced large parts of the infrastructure to rubble.

In the past days and weeks, attacks by Turkish drones have repeatedly hit Ain Issa. A fortnight ago, the village of Seyda (al-Saida) near the centre was attacked, causing severe damage to houses and cultivated areas of the population. On 4 May, a fighter of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was killed in Turkish bombardments in Ain Issa.

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## Five-year-old child hit and seriously injured by armoured vehicle in Silopi

ANF - Şırnak - 17 May 2023

A five-year-old child was hit and seriously injured by a Turkish army armoured vehicle in the Silopi district of Şırnak province. The child was taken to Silopi State Hospital where a spinal fracture was diagnosed. He was then transferred to a private hospital in Elazığ and was admitted to the intensive care unit.

The child was playing in front of his parents' house in the Dicle neighbourhood when he was hit by the armoured car on Tuesday evening. His condition is said to be critical.

Time and again, there are alleged accidents caused by armoured police and military vehicles in Kurdish cities. According to a tally by the Human Rights Foundation Turkey (TIHV), at least 19 people have died in so-called armoured accidents in the Kurdish region between 2018 and 2022, including nine children and young people. Another 50 people were injured, 14 of whom were under the age of 18. The perpetrators are not held accountable, and soldiers and police officers generally do not fear criminal consequences.

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## KDP does not allow the passage of injured and ill locals through Semalka border crossing

ANF - 17 May 2023

The Semalka (Faysh Khabur, Kr: Pêşxabûr) border crossing is located between the town of Pêşxabûr on the east bank of the Tigris in Duhok province on the side of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) and the town of Semalka in Dêrik on the side of western Kurdistan (northern Syria). It is currently the only way to get into North-East Syria, but also to get out and bring medicine and humanitarian aid supplies into the region. Only aid organisations and NGOs active in northern and eastern Syria were informed of the closure of the border crossing by Southern Kurdistan's border control authority last week. However, no reason was given. The closure of the crossing could cause a disaster and further complicate the humanitarian situation in the region.

In a written statement, the Semalka Border Crossing Administration, affiliated with the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), reacted to the unilateral closure of the border crossing on May 11 by the KDP-affiliated border administration.

The Semalka Border Crossing Administration stated that the KDP was trying to use the border crossing as a means of pressure by citing groundless reasons. It added: "Our people should know that the KDP wants to break our will and impose its power by using the border crossing against us."



The statement remarked that the KDP did not allow the passage of injured locals through, leading to the death of some of them. “At the same time, many citizens were prevented from crossing into Bashur (South Kurdistan) on the grounds that they were against the Kurdish National Council (ENKS). Citizens who want to go to Bashur face an intelligence investigation.”

The statement emphasized that the Autonomous Administration had never closed the border crossing in spite of the KDP’s approach. It continued: “We have not taken any measures on our part to avoid any harm to the people in the region. We have always called for humanitarian issues to be kept out of political issues.”

The Semalka Border Crossing Administration rejected the KDP’s claim that ‘the crossing is used for the delivery of explosive materials,’ saying: “We use the border crossing for humanitarian purposes. With these accusations, the KDP wants to cover up its violations against our people in Rojava.”

The statement pointed out that the border crossing remained open on the side of North and East Syria. It added that the KDP opened the crossing to ENKS officials, but did not allow injured and sick individuals to pass.

The Sêmalka Border Crossing Administration called on the Kurdistan Regional Administration to stop the pressure on the citizens of Rojava.



## KCK: The May martyrs are pioneers

ANF - Behdinan - 17 May 2023

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement paying tribute to the martyrs who fell in the month of May.

The KCK statement released on Wednesday includes the following:

“Many revolutionaries and patriots, who played a historic role in the start and the spread of the freedom struggle in Kurdistan and who were well known by the patriotic people of Kurdistan, were martyred in May. Our movement has designated the month of May as ‘Martyrs’ Month’ because of this. We would therefore like to commemorate all the martyrs of revolution and democracy in the person of the May Martyrs with great respect and gratitude. We bow with respect in front of their great memories and reiterate our promise that we will carry their struggle to victory.

The month of May has an important place in the Kurdistan Revolution. The most courageous and sacrificing children of the people of Kurdistan, who were comrades of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] when the Kurdistan Freedom Struggle was in its infancy and who participated in the holy march for freedom by putting everything on the line, were martyred in May. Haki Karer, the first martyr of the party foundation process of our movement; Halil Çavgun and his friends, the pioneers of the Hilvan-Siverek resistance; Ferhat Kurtay, Necmi Öner, Mahmut Zengin and Eşref Anyık, who reached martyrdom by setting their bod-

ies on fire against the fascist and anti-Kurdish torture system in the Diyarbakır prison; Mehmet Karasungur, one of the military commanders of the Kurdistan revolution, and many other immortal heroes were martyred in May. The comrades who were martyred in May are the pioneers in the development of the culture of courage, sacrifice and heroism for the freedom of the country and the people in Kurdistan. In this respect, it is very important to commemorate the month of May and the comrades who were martyred in May with great gratitude and to show our determination to walk on their path. With this consciousness and these feelings, our people need to commemorate the martyrs of May more than ever and protect their memories wherever they are.

One of the events that will always be remembered with anger by the martyred and patriotic people of Kurdistan in May is the Hewlêr Massacre and its martyrs. In 1997, the KDP massacred dozens of our wounded friends who were being treated in a hospital in the city. This massacre and betrayal by the KDP will never be forgotten by our people. Unfortunately, the KDP still continues its treasonous attitude today, siding with the Turkish state in the occupation of Kurdistan and the realization of the Kurdish genocide. It thus helps the occupying Turkish army against the guerrillas that defend Kurdistan. The KDP continues its collaborative and treasonous attitude in the Medya Defense Zones as well as in Rojava, Şengal and Maxmûr. The KDP is fully aligned with the Kurdish enemy, the genocidal colonialist Turkish state and the AKP-MHP.

May is also an important month for the Turkish Socialist Movement. Many revolutionaries from the Socialist Movement of Turkey, especially Ibrahim Kaypakkaya, Deniz Gezmiş and his friends, were martyred in May. We would like to commemorate these great martyrs with respect and gratitude. And we once again state that we are committed to their memories and that we will continue their struggle. Leader Apo has always attached great importance to the struggles and ideas of these great revolutionaries of the Socialist Movement of Turkey and has demonstrated in his practice that he is a follower of this struggle.

In such a critical period when fascism is trying to institutionalize itself in Kurdistan and Turkey, there is more need than ever for the Kurdish people to further develop the unity and solidarity of the Kurdish people with the Socialist Movement of Turkey and to increase the struggle against fascism. This is what the martyrs expect from us. Therefore, we need to live up to this and we must definitely achieve this. On this basis, everyone must understand and live the reality of the martyrs more deeply and increase the struggle.”

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## HPG reports Turkish military operations and clashes

ANF - Behdinan - 17 May 2023

In its daily statement about the war in Kurdistan territory, HPG Press Office said that the Turkish army continues its attacks and operations against the People's Defence Forces (HPG) and Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) unabated despite the cessation of militant actions by the guerrilla forces.

HPG reported ongoing operations by the Turkish army, and clashes between the guerrilla forces and Turkish troops, resulting in losses on both sides.

According to the HPG, fighting erupted between the guerrillas and Turkish soldiers during the Turkish military operation in the Besta region of Şırnak.

According to the latest information, four Turkish soldiers and one village guard were killed in the clashes in the Besta region, where two guerrillas also died. Detailed information about the fighting in the region will be announced once available, HPG added.

On the other hand, HPG reported continued Turkish attacks on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

On May 15, Turkish troops attacked the Girê FM and Girê Cûdî resistance areas, facing a response from the guerrillas.

On May 15 and 16, Turkish fighter jets carried out 6 strikes on the Girê FM Resistance Area, the vicinity of the Yekmalê village in Garê, as well as the areas of Kanî Sarkê, Girê Zengil and Xêrê.

On May 14, 15 and 16, the areas of Girê FM and Girê Cûdî, the Girê Ortê area in Metîna and the guerrilla positions in Sîda were targeted by 15 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

HPG added that these attacks did not result in casualties in the guerrilla ranks.



## HSM vows to crown the holy struggle of martyrs with victory

ANF - Behdînan - 17 May 2023

The People's Defence Center (HSM) Headquarters Command released a statement to commemorate the May Martyrs, saying the following:

“We commemorate the noble and brave son of the Black Sea people, a leading cadre of our struggle, the hidden soul of leader Abdullah Öcalan and the great international revolutionary Comrade Haki Karer on the 46th anniversary of his martyrdom. We commemorate all the martyrs of our freedom struggle with deep devotion and gratitude in the persons of comrade Haki Karer and the May Martyrs, and we vow that we will crown the holy struggle of our martyrs with victory.

The martyrdoms of the great leaders of the Kurdistan Freedom Struggle and the Turkish Revolutionary Struggle took place in the month of May, every day of which became meaningful with the heroic march of irreplaceable revolutionaries to martyrdom. For our party and our people, May 18 became the " Day of Martyrs" and May became the "Month of Martyrs". The Kurdish people welcomed each May with great meaning and spirituality, taking it as an opportunity to keep the martyrs' memories alive and achieve their goals.

Following the martyrdom of comrade Haki Karer, Leader Öcalan made the decision to establish the PKK, saying, "Blood has been shed, there is no going back." Our party, the PKK, is based on loyalty to com-

radeship and martyrdom, and loyalty to the martyrs became the main character of the PKK. Tens of thousands who joined the Kurdistan Freedom Struggle and fell as martyrs became the driving force, inspiration, morale, determination and commitment of our party in our half-century-old history. Öcalan attributed great meaning to every martyrdom, fought relentlessly to protect the values created by the martyrs, turned every martyrdom into a major breakthrough, and our movement has gradually grown on the basis of this dialectic. The enemies who planned to weaken and eliminate our party by martyring the self-sacrificing soldiers of the freedom struggle, have been defeated by the dialectic of martyrs created by Öcalan.

Öcalan's half-century-old struggle, based on his determined stance under the İmralı torture system, his historic resistance and loyalty to the martyrs, continues breathlessly. The patriotic people of Kurdistan embrace their martyrs with great honour and glory and continue their struggle for freedom with the strength and inspiration they take from their martyrs. Following in the footsteps of the martyrs, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas are resisting the most brutal conditions, the most terrifying genocidal machines created by the forces of capitalist modernity and its advanced warfare and chemical weapons.

The PKK's Army of Immortal Martyrs is growing constantly through our uninterrupted freedom struggle, as every martyrdom and the Apoist self-sacrificing stand lead us to victory. In the 47th Month of Martyrs, we are witnessing the heroic marches of our comrades who resist bravely all over Kurdistan and represent the legacy of martyrs with their stances and battles. As long as the Kurdish people have such self-sacrificing sons and daughters fighting fearlessly, the cause of freedom will never lose, and we will definitely win.

As the Kurdistan People's Defence Forces fighting under the leadership of the Party of Martyrs, the PKK, we declare our determination to always follow in the footsteps of our martyrs and keep their memory alive and crown it with victory by expanding our march for Free Leadership and Free Kurdistan every day. On this basis, we once again commemorate our martyrs with respect and gratitude and reiterate our promise that we will fight without compromising on a life worthy of their memory.”

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## PKK: The struggle cannot be won through elections alone, fascism must be fought at all levels

ANF - Behdınan - 18 May 2023

The Executive Committee of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) published a statement on the occasion of 18 May, the "Day of Martyrs", in which the election results were also addressed in particular. The PKK sees in the elections of 14 May a renewed proof of the fact that the anti-fascist struggle cannot be won through elections alone, stating that fascism must be fought continuously at all levels. The PKK vowed to develop its anti-fascist resistance for a free Kurdistan and democratisation of Turkey at all levels.

The statement by the PKK Executive Committee reads as follows:

"As is known, the Kurdistan Freedom Movement had its first martyr in Antep on 18 May 1977. Our party, the vanguard of freedom, and our freedom resistance have developed in the memory of our first

martyr, Haki Karer. Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] referred to comrade Haki Karer as his 'hidden soul'. The loyalty to the memory of our comrade Haki Karer brought further resistance and new martyrs with it. On 19 May 1978, our comrade Halil Çavgun fell in Hilvan. On the evening of 17 May 1982, the group of four lit up the dungeon of Diyarbakır with their resistance action. On 16 May 1997, around 70 of our comrades were massacred in Hewlêr due to the betrayal of the KDP. We have dozens of martyrs for every day in May. Therefore, the month of May became the 'Month of the Martyrs of Kurdistan' and the 18th of May became the 'Day of the Martyrs of Kurdistan'.

### **"With love, respect and gratitude ..."**

Now, as the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and the Kurdish people, we are experiencing a new month of martyrs and a new day of martyrs on 18 May. On the occasion of the 46th anniversary of his death, we commemorate the great leading revolutionary, Haki Karer, with deep respect, love and gratitude. Through Haki Kerer, we remember with gratitude all the fallen heroes of our 50-year freedom march. We reaffirm our pledge to achieve the goals of the martyrs and keep their memory alive. We salute Leader Apo, who defines himself as the 'spokesperson of the martyrs', and his historic Imrali resistance. In the 47th year of the struggle, we declare that we will resist and surely win on the line of the Leader and the martyrs.

### **"To commemorate in the right way"**

As is well known, the revolutionary movement in Turkey also suffered losses in May. On 6 May 1972, Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan were executed in Ankara. On 18 May 1973, İbrahim Kaypakkaya was murdered by torture at Diyarbakır Police Station. At the end of May, Sinan Cemgil and his companions were martyred fighting in Nurhak. On the 50th anniversary of their martyrdom, we remember with respect and gratitude the great revolutionaries İbrahim Kaypakkaya and Sinan Cemgil and all the heroic martyrs of the struggle for socialism and democracy in Turkey. In order to preserve this memory, Leader Apo has taken up the freedom struggle and continued the revolutionary resistance until today. On this line, the resistance will continue.

### **"The line of victory is determined by the brave martyrs"**

It is obvious that the nobility of a cause is made clear by the martyrs who have given their lives for that cause. The martyrs are witnesses and evidence of the importance of a cause and a pledge of certain victory. All gains have been and will be won by fighting in the line of the martyrs and under the leadership of the martyrs. The Kurdistan Freedom Movement is such a historic movement. The freedom struggle of Kurdistan is such a noble cause. This freedom movement owes its greatness and irreversibility to the tens of thousands of martyrs, starting from comrade Haki Karer to the heroic martyrs in the resistance of Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna today. The line of victory is determined by the brave martyrs who gave their lives without hesitation against the fascist and genocidal enemy.

### **"They are the basic source of our strength"**

Our martyrs are the fundamental force that educates, organises, unites and moves us forward as a movement and a people. They are our past, present and future. They are always and everywhere the basic source of our strength. They are always the leading commanders of our freedom struggle. It is absolutely clear that in the last 50 years in Kurdistan we have won everything in our freedom struggle on the basis of the

courage and sacrifices of our martyrs. Because we follow the line of the martyrs in the right way, we have always been successful. That is why we have continued to develop along this line, questioning, correcting and renewing ourselves. By developing the party and militancy in the right way, we have taken the road to victory.

### **"The struggle cannot be won through elections alone"**

Without a doubt, this will always continue. As a movement and a people, we will continue to educate and equip ourselves along the lines of the Leader and the martyrs. Fighting against the enemy on this basis, we will achieve new and even greater successes. The murderous colonial fascism leaves us no other choice anyway. The results of the 14 May elections are a call for us to develop a continuous and much more effective struggle against the fascist mentality and politics. The results show that the anti-fascist struggle cannot be won through elections alone, but only through continuous struggle by all means, at all levels. We will act accordingly and develop the anti-fascist resistance even more to break the isolation and ensure the physical freedom of Leader Apo, a free Kurdistan and democratisation of Turkey in all fields.

### **"More effective and versatile struggle"**

In this sense, we as Kurdish people and its friends are celebrating another month and day of the martyrs. The conditions demand from us a more effective and versatile struggle against the fascist-genocidal mentality and politics. In order to be successful in such a struggle, we need to understand the reality of the Leader and the martyrs better than ever before and successfully implement it. We need to educate ourselves even further along the lines of the Leader and the Martyrs and organise ourselves better.

On this basis, we call upon our comrades in the party, the patriotic people and their democratic friends to be more self-critical and to renew themselves on the line of the Leader and the Martyrs, to better understand the reality of the martyrs, starting from comrade Haki Karer to the companions Gulçiya, Hêjar and Dilxwa, to organise events in memory and understanding of our martyrs throughout the month of May, to visit the graveyards of the martyrs to understand the reality of the martyrs, to always follow the line of the martyrs, to defeat the fascist-genocidal enemy and to build a free life based on women's freedom in a free Kurdistan!"



## **HPG guerrilla buried in cemetery of the nameless**

ANF - Mardin - 18 May 2023

Bahoz Çiya (Erdal Marangoz), a guerrilla in the ranks of the People's Defense Forces (HPG), lost his life in a Turkish attack in the vicinity of Mount Bagok in Mardin province on May 2.

The family of the fallen guerrilla fighter went to Mardin and identified their son's body, kept in the morgue at the Training and Research Hospital.

The body of the HPG guerrilla was not handed over to his family although they had given blood samples for a DNA test.

Before the finalization of the DNA procedures, Bahoz Çiya's body was buried in the Kamor Cemetery of the Nameless in Mardin's Artuklu district on the grounds that 15 days had passed after his death.

In the meantime, the number of fighters who fell in battle and were buried in Kamor Cemetery of the Nameless has risen to 57.

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## Protest by Xosnav Ata in front of OPCW reaches day 288

ANF - Den Haag - 19 May 2023

The protest of Xosnav Ata, who demands that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) conduct an investigation against the Turkish state's chemical weapon attacks against the guerrillas, is on its 288th day.

Defend Kurdistan member Linda Weerts, as well as a delegation from Bashur Kurdistan, who attended a meeting of the United Nations about OPCW, visited Xosnav Ata, whose two nephews were killed in Turkish chemical attacks. The delegation received information from Ata about his action and said that they would raise the issue with questions at the UN.

Thanking the visitors, Ata said: "288 days is quite a long time. The OPCW hasn't talked or given a response to our requests during all this time. In the past, we had meetings with the United Nations, with Amnesty International, at the European Parliament. The European Parliament sent the collected signatures against the Turkish state's use of chemical weapons against the guerrillas to the OPCW. The Turkish state has been using chemical weapons in different parts of Kurdistan since 2021. Two of my nephews were killed because of these chemical weapons. That's why I decided to take action. We have been expressing our demands in front of the OPCW for about a year. The OPCW has so far not responded to our requests. Visits are important for the awareness of public opinion. We get morale from the visits."

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## Turkish drone attack kills civilian in Manbij

ANF - 19 May 2023

The SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) issued a statement condemning the killing of a civilian in Manbij. The man died following a Turkish drone attack.

The statement said that on Thursday evening, at about 6.30 pm, "a Turkish UAV belonging to the Turkish occupation targeted a civilian car in the village of al-Kharoufia in the southern countryside of Manbij city,

causing severe injuries to the civilian Abdul Wahab Al-Muhammad Al-Hajj Hamidi, who was immediately taken to the hospital where he died later despite medical intervention."

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## Assad arrives in Saudi Arabia to attend Arab League summit

ANF - 19 May 2023

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has arrived in Saudi Arabia for the Arab League summit. Assad landed in the coastal city of Jeddah on the Red Sea yesterday, according to a report by the state agency SANA. Saudi state television broadcast images of the long-time ruler being welcomed at the airport by the vice-governor of the Mecca region, Prince Badr bin Sultan. Assad's participation in the summit marks his return to the big diplomatic stage after years of widespread isolation.

The Arab League, founded in 1945, is an organisation with 22 members. Its goal is to strengthen cooperation in areas such as politics and economics and to mediate conflicts. The annual summit is likely to focus on the conflicts in Sudan and Yemen as well as the situation in Syria. The return of Syrian refugees, the reconstruction of the country and the containment of drug smuggling are among the topics under discussion.

The last Arab summit in which Assad participated was in Libya in 2010. The organisation suspended Syria's membership in 2011 after the regime violently put down protests in the country. This developed into a civil war that turned into a proxy war and continues to this day. More than half a million people are estimated to have lost their lives in the war, and around 14 million Syrians have had to leave their homes.

For several years, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman and most recently Saudi Arabia have been pushing for normalisation with Assad. At the beginning of May, Syria was readmitted to the Arab League. Earlier this week, Assad also received an invitation from the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Said Al Nahjan, to attend the next UN World Climate Conference (COP28), which will take place in Dubai in November. The conference is expected to be Assad's first major meeting since the start of the Syrian war, with many Western leaders also attending.

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## HPG: 13 Turkish soldiers were killed in Lice

ANF - Behdinan - 19 May 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the war in Kurdistan territory.



## Amed

In the Şehîd Serxwebûn area in Lice, the Turkish army has been trying to capture mountain peaks and establish positions since winter. At the same time, the Turkish army has begun to construct military installations in the areas of Girê Boxaza Cuma, Gundê Sîverekê, Gundê Medrese and Girê Mêrgê. In parallel, the army has been carrying out attack operations and laying ambushes continuously for six months.

At 20:15 on 30 April, a military convoy with operational units was stopped by the guerrillas between Gundê Mêrgê and Gundê Sîverekê using sabotage tactics. An armored vehicle was destroyed and 13 military personnel in it were killed. The operation in the area was continued by the Turkish army until 5 May without results.

While another military operation was launched in the same area on 10 May, guerrilla commander Dilgeş Zagros and fighter Bawer Korkmaz fell as a result of the attacks carried out by the Turkish army.

## Zap

In the Girê FM resistance area in the Zap region, the guerrillas responded to an attack by the Turkish invading forces on 16 May.

## Metîna

On 18 May, the guerrillas responded in self-defence to an attack on the Girê Hekarî resistance area in Metîna.

## Attacks on Medya Defence Zones

On 17 May, Turkish fighter jets bombed the Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî, Girê FM and Girê Amêdî resistance areas, the area around Sêgirê village and Deşta Kafya in Gare 22 times.

On the same day, seven attacks were carried out by helicopters on Girê Mozelan, Koordine, Stûna, Serzêrê and Tirvaniş in the Metîna region.

Between 16 and 18 May, the HPG recorded 37 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons on Girê FM, Girê Cûdî and Sîda in the Zap region, as well as on Girê Şehîd Heqî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran, Girê Şehîd Hêmin, Çilûçar and the Lolan shore in Xakurke.

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## Four Syrian soldiers killed in Manbij following Turkish attack

ANF - Manbij - 19 May 2023

The Turkish state bombed a military base in the village of Majra Westani, south of Manbij, using armed drones. The base was used by forces affiliated with the Damascus government. As a result of the attack, 4 Damascus government soldiers lost their lives.

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## People in Maxmur protest Iraqi army's attempts to surround the camp with wire fences

ANF - Maxmur - 20 May 2023

The Iraqi army has surrounded Maxmur camp, accompanied by dozens of armored vehicles, special units, and police in an attempt to put wire fences around it. The people living in Maxmur started a tent protest against this attempt.

Despite the heavy rain, hundreds of people gathered in front of the checkpoint to resist this decision.

Activists stated that they will continue their resistance until the siege is over.

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## The long list of Kurdish massacres carried out by the AKP

ANF - Van - 20 May 2023

In Amed, Erdogan said: "We solved the Kurdish problem," while in Turkish cities he said: "We will destroy the Kurds", pushing on the extreme nationalist feelings of part of the population. The AKP has committed many massacres against the Kurds in its 21 years of rule.

Some of the massacres committed under AKP rule are as follows:

- 12-year-old Uğur Kaymaz, along with his father Ahmet Kaymaz, was killed by the police in front of their house in the Qoser (Kızıltepe) district of Mardin on 21 November 2004, as a result of a volley of fire. The Mardin Governorate argued that "two terrorists were killed in clashes".
- The funeral ceremony in Amed for 6 of the 14 guerrillas killed by the Turkish army with chemical weapons in the rural area of Muş on 24 March 2006 was attacked. During the demonstrations that spread to the whole city and the cities of the region, 13 people, 5 of whom were children, were killed. The Prime Minister of the time, Erdogan, said: "We will do whatever is necessary [to defeat terrorism], no matter if they are women or children."

- On 28 December 2011, Turkish warplanes bombed and killed 34 Kurdish villagers, including 17 children, in Roboski. The Prime Minister of the time was Erdogan. He thanked the Chief of General Staff of the time, İlker Başbuğ, for the massacre.
- During the three-month blockade in Cizîr (Cizre) on 14 December 2015, nearly 300 people, including elderly, young people, women and children, were killed and hundreds of people were injured. Thousands of homes were damaged and tens of thousands of people were forced to migrate.
- On 11 May 2013, two separate vehicles were bombed in Hatay's Reyhanlı district; 52 people died.
- Two days before the general elections of 7 June 2015, the HDP final rally in Amed attended by Selahattin Demirtaş was bombed. 5 people were killed, the number of injured exceeded 400.
- \* On 20 July the same year, young people gathered in Pirsûs (Suruç) to deliver humanitarian aid to Kobanê were attacked by ISIS. As a result of the suicide bombing, 33 activists lost their lives.
- Immediately after the Suruç Massacre, a great massacre took place in Ankara. Again with the help of ISIS, the peace rally in Train Station on 10 October 2015 was targeted; 103 people were killed.
- The murder of Amed Bar Association President Tahir Elçi in front of the Four-Legged Minaret on 28 November 2015 and the murder of university student Kemal Kurkut in 2017 Newroz were also covered up. The perpetrators of the state forces were protected.
- On 20 August 2016, a suicide bomber attacked a Kurdish wedding in the Şahinbey district of Dîlok (Antep). 59 people, mostly women and children, were killed. This massacre was also covered up. Moreover, the AKP government launched invasion attacks, using this massacre of which it was the perpetrator, as an excuse.

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## People of Maxmur resist against siege by the Iraqi army and police

ANF - Maxmur - 20 May 2023

The Iraqi army's attempt to fence in the Maxmur Camp with barbed wire and turn it into a huge prison has been stopped for the time being by the resistance of the residents. In the early morning, military forces with special units and police support arrived with dozens of armoured vehicles in front of the self-governing camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). Thousands of people protested against the operation.

A delegation of the Maxmur People's Council negotiated with the operation management. After hours of talks, Filiz Budak made a statement on behalf of the People's Council, saying the following:

"The Iraqi army wanted to surround the area with soldiers and police. Our will and our right to live are being disregarded. As the people of Maxmur, we have been resisting subordinating our will to anyone for about thirty years. We will continue to do so. The Iraqi government does not solve our problems and does not defend us. Now the camp is to be equipped with observation towers in the surrounding area, as if that would do any good against air attacks. It is pretended that there is no other problem. We have been negotiating for over an hour. The army is desperate to put up these towers and claims that the people are in favour of it. Supposedly, only the People's Council and some individuals are against it. We have replied that the people have a will of their own and are here on the ground. The people of Maxmur will never accept this. They have been resisting for thirty years. As a people, we will not back down under any circumstances. This is the people's decision. We will resist. If necessary, we will hold out here day and night. We have not surrendered to the Turkish state and we will not surrender to the Iraqi state. Resistance means life. Our resistance will succeed, just like in Rojava and Shengal."

The crowd reacted to the statement by chanting "Biji Berxwedana Mexmûrê" (Long live the resistance of Maxmur).

In recent years, similar attempts to fence the camp in with barbed wire have failed due to the resistance of the people. Maxmur Camp is located about 60 kilometres southwest of Hewlêr (Erbil), the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. More than 12,000 people live in the camp. Most of them were forced to leave their villages in Northern Kurdistan in the 1990s due to the repression of the Turkish state and the scorched-earth policy. After an odyssey of several years and stays in various camps, they founded the Maxmur Camp on the edge of the desert in 1998. The camp population thus forms the largest Kurdish refugee community worldwide.

The grassroots-democratically organised and self-governing camp is a thorn in Turkey's side. In recent years, there have been repeated air strikes on Maxmur, most recently in August 2022, when a father of six was killed by a drone. In an air strike three months earlier, a civilian was fatally injured by the Turkish army. These war crimes have remained without consequences to this day.

Officially, Maxmur is under the protection of the UNHCR, but in practice the UN is only nominally present. The organisation left the camp during the attacks by ISIS in 2014 and did not return afterwards.



## Women in Shengal: Maxmur is not alone

ANF - Shengal - 20 May 2023

Earlier today, Iraqi military forces with special units and police support arrived at the Maxmur Camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) in an attempt to fence in the camp with barbed wire. The attempt has been stopped for the time being by the resistance of the camp residents.

The Yazidi Free Women's Movement (TAJÊ) and Shengal Young Women's Union made a press statement expressing their solidarity with the people of Maxmur and their resistance.

The statement on behalf of the two organizations condemned Iraq's attacks on Maxmur, saying: "As the Yazidi people and women, we take these attacks as directed against us. This attempt is a result of the Iraqi and Turkish states' joint plans against Maxmur and Shengal. The people of Maxmur have been resisting for years and their resistance cannot be broken by Iraq."

The statement pointed out that attacks on Maxmur are not independent from the 9 October agreement against Shengal, adding: "Their aim is to deploy ISIS mercenaries to Shengal, to besiege Maxmur and to expand the war against the guerrillas. These plans are directed against the will of peoples. Let everyone know that this resistance and willpower can never be broken."

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## Maxmur people continue their resistance amidst an attack by the Iraqi army

ANF - Maxmur - 20 May 2023

Early on Saturday morning, a delegation from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and Defence arrived in Maxmur without prior notice to have a fence installed around the self-managed camp. The delegation was accompanied by Iraqi military personnel, including special forces, and police. The security forces arrived at the camp with dozens of armoured vehicles to enforce the order. Several conditions are to be met for this to happen: the fencing of the camp, the deployment of Iraqi police and military units, the closure of all entrances and exits except for the main access, the installation of concrete military barriers on the access road and the installation of observation towers in the area.

While the people of Maxmur are resisting the attempt to fence off the camp, members of the Iraqi army and police fired warning shots into the air to disperse demonstrators, injuring one of them.

The injured resident is reported to be undergoing surgery in the camp's own clinic. The protesters reacted to the incident by throwing stones. The situation remains tense.

The Maxmur People's Council suspects that this sudden manoeuvre by the Iraqi army could be a signal for a wider political plan and sees the source of the action in Ankara. The Turkish state calls the camp a "breeding ground" for the PKK and repeatedly threatens to "cleanse" it. In the past, there have been repeated Turkish airstrikes on Maxmur, most recently last August, when a father of six was killed by a drone. In an air strike three months earlier, a civilian was also fatally injured by the Turkish army. These war crimes have remained without consequences to this day. The attacks were followed by several attempts by the Iraqi authorities to close off the camp with barbed wire fences - which ultimately failed due to the resistance of the residents.

In recent years, similar attempts to fence the camp in with barbed wire have failed due to the resistance of the people. Maxmur Camp is located about 60 kilometres southwest of Hewlêr (Erbil), the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. More than 12,000 people live in the camp. Most of them were forced to leave their villages in Northern Kurdistan in the 1990s due to the repression of the Turkish state and the

scorched-earth policy. After an odyssey of several years and stays in various camps, they founded the Maxmur Camp on the edge of the desert in 1998. The camp population thus forms the largest Kurdish refugee community worldwide.

The grassroots-democratically organised and self-governing camp is a thorn in Turkey's side. In recent years, there have been repeated air strikes on Maxmur, most recently in August 2022, when a father of six was killed by a drone. In an air strike three months earlier, a civilian was fatally injured by the Turkish army. These war crimes have remained without consequences to this day.

Officially, Maxmur is under the protection of the UNHCR, but in practice the UN is only nominally present. The organisation left the camp during the attacks by ISIS in 2014 and did not return afterwards.



## Three SDF fighters injured in attack in Deir ez-Zor

ANF - 20 May 2023

One of the patrols of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was attacked on Abu Khashab road, west of Deir ez-Zor on Saturday.

According to the SDF Media Center, the attack resulted in the injury of three SDF fighters, while one of SDF's senior commanders, who plays a crucial role in the ongoing battle against ISIS in the area, managed to survive without injuries.

"Initial investigations have confirmed the involvement of the ISIS terrorist cell," said the SDF statement.



## KCK calls on everyone to stand with Maxmur

ANF - 21 May 2023

The KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Foreign Relations Committee issued a statement about the attacks carried out by the Iraqi army against Maxmur camp.

The KCK statement pointed out that: "The Turkish state, which occupies South Kurdistan more and more, seeks to expand its borders to Mosul and Kirkuk. Especially the people of Kurdistan and Iraq know these aims of the fascist chief, Erdogan. The Turkish state is doing everything it can to expand its occupation operations into Iraq, trying to use every opportunity. For this purpose, it systematically commits war crimes against our people living in areas such as Şengal [Sinjar], Maxmur, etc. and exhibits disrespect for the sovereignty of South Kurdistan and Iraq."

The statement noted that: "Our people living in the refugee camp in the Maxmur area were displaced from their lands because they did not bow to the fascist Turkish state and did not compromise their honorable free Kurdish identity. For this very reason, our people living in the Maxmur refugee camp have been subjected to an international clamp for years. The aim of the new impositions and embargoes is to force our people, who have not surrendered to the Turkish state, to capitulate."

## **Iraqi government should abandon the use of arms and violence against our people in**

### **Maxmur**

The statement continued: "Maxmur camp is under the protection of the UN and the Iraqi state. Our people living in this camp are constantly the target of attacks by the Turkish state. The inadequate reactions of the UN and Iraq encourage the fascist Turkish state even more. The UN and the Iraqi state have the responsibility to solve the problems of our people in the Maxmur camp and ensure their safety. What happened in Maxmur today shows that these forces, failing to fulfill their responsibilities, are trying to cover up the existing deadlock with a more serious crime. Weapons have been used against our civilian people, who have become refugees due to the oppression of the racist and fascist Turkish state and for political reasons, and attempts have been made to besiege them. Undoubtedly, this attack and the imposed practice are practices that have no place in neither human rights nor human dignity. With this method against the people of Maxmur, not only no results were achieved, but efforts were made to postpone the solution to the existing problems. It is clear that humanitarian problems will only grow if weapons and force are used against the people. For this reason, we call on the Iraqi government to abandon the use of arms and violence against our people in Maxmur camp who strive to live a dignified life, to take dialogue as a basis and to attempt to find common solutions to the problems."

### **Call on the UN**

The KCK underlined that: "This camp is under UN protection. It is not possible for the UN not to see the violence used against the people there. Its silence makes the UN a partner in this violence. If this is not the case, the UN must take action and fulfill its responsibility to solve the problem."

Violently attacking the people of Maxmur are practices that will only serve the Turkish state, which plans to invade Kurdistan and Iraq. According to certain information we have received, the Iraqi state, which should stop this unresolved policy, wants to send a larger military force against the people of Maxmur. We hope that this information is not true. The correct attitude is to appoint a delegation authorized to solve the problems and to meet with the people of Maxmur. We expect that Iraq will give up this tendency that leads to social outrage and develop a solution to the problems through dialog without wasting any time.

On this occasion, we call on all patriotic people, parties and forces from Kurdistan to stand with the people of Maxmur, to prevent possible negative developments and to defeat the plans of the Turkish state and the KDP."

## Shengal Autonomous Administration calls on all people to protect Maxmur

ANF - Shengal - 21 May 2023

The Shengal Autonomous Administration issued a statement regarding the Iraqi attack on Maxmur camp.

Drawing attention to the siege attempts against Maxmur camp, the Autonomous Administration said, "These attempts are made for different purposes. As it is known, the people of Maxmur migrated in order not to give up the Kurdish cause and not to surrender to the fascist Turkish state. The people of Maxmur were not given their rights as refugees and were subjected to the pressure of the Turkish state with the co-operation of the KDP. The UN and the Iraqi government share part of the responsibility for this different treatment.

This camp has been under embargo for 3 years. Many people have lost their lives because of the obstacles the KDP put in the way of transport. The KDP has never once approached the refugees with a sense of responsibility. Especially after Sudani became prime minister, the Iraqi government wanted to control the people by increasing the pressure on those demanding freedom."

The Shengal Autonomous Administration continued, "Just as the Iraqi government and KDP peshmerga left Shengal and left us in the hands of ISIS mercenaries, allowing the massacre of thousands of people, the same happened in Maxmur. However, the people of Maxmur stood against the gangs with their will and defended not only the camp but the whole region to prevent the gangs from taking over.

The Sudani government has launched a new operation against the will of the people in Shengal and Maxmur in order to control the people. This operation consists in the attempt to implement the 9 October Agreement in Shengal and the siege in Maxmur. We will fight together to foil these plans and use our right to defence. We also call on the government to give up these games. It should lead a democratic Iraq instead of attacking the people in agreement with other countries."

The statement said: "On behalf of the people of Shengal, we greet the women, youths, elderly and all our people in Maxmur. Our pain and fate are one with the people of Maxmur. We will be with our people until the end and we will achieve victory thanks to our will. We will wage a common struggle to frustrate these plans. We call on all our people and friends to protect our gains."

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## HPG: Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas continue

ANF - Behdinan - 21 May 2023

The Press Office of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) reported that the fascist Turkish regime continues its attacks against guerrillas who are in a state of inaction.



According to the HPG statement released on Sunday, the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) were shelled 19 times by fighter jets, and 24 times with howitzers, mortars and tanks.

In the Zap region, Turkish forces attacked the guerrillas in Kurojahro Resistance Area on May 20, facing a response from the guerrillas.

On May 19 and 20, Turkish fighter jets carried out 19 strikes on the area of Deşta Kafya in Garê; Girê Şehîd Piling and Girê Amediyê in Metîna; and Girê Bahar and Girê Cûdî Resistance Areas in Zap.

On May 18, 19 and 20, 24 attacks with howitzers, mortars and tanks were directed against the Girê Şehîd Piling area in Metîna; Girê Şehîd Heqî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran and Lolan river in Xakurkê; Girê Cûdî, Girê Bahar, Çemko in Zap, and the guerrilla positions in Sîda.

The Turkish invading forces continue trying to demolish the guerrilla positions in Girê FM and Sîda with heavy construction equipment.



## AANES expresses support for the resistance of Maxmur people

ANF - 21 May 2023

Early on Saturday morning, a delegation from the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and Defence arrived in Maxmur without prior notice to have a fence installed around the self-managed camp. The delegation was accompanied by Iraqi military personnel, including special forces, and police. The security forces arrived at the camp with dozens of armoured vehicles to enforce the order; the fencing of the camp, the deployment of Iraqi police and military units, the closure of all entrances and exits except for the main access, the installation of concrete military barriers on the access road and the installation of observation towers in the area.

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) released a statement expressing solidarity with the people of Maxmur.

Noting that the Maxmur Camp under the auspices of the United Nations has been under siege for years, AANES said: “The government in Baghdad is now imposing aggravated circumstances on the camp residents in an attempt to intensify the siege on the camp. The attitude of the Iraqi government, which imposes military strength instead of meeting the humanitarian needs of the camp residents, contradicts the principles and norms of the Refugee Protection Act. The Iraqi people have suffered a lot due to migration and the camps in AANES regions still house thousands of Iraqi refugees. The responsibility to protect them and answer their survival needs lies with the local administration and governments.”

The statement continued: “As the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, we confirm our support for the resistance of the Maxmur Camp residents who have rights and should not see their suffering increased. We call for problems to be resolved not by military force but through dialogue. The situa-

tion of the refugees must be taken into consideration in the first place. Dialogue is the basis of a solution and other options will only lead to undesirable consequences.”

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## People of Maxmur continue resistance against siege by the Iraqi army

ANF - Maxmur - 21 May 2023

The Iraqi army wants to fence in Maxmur Camp and put it under permanent siege. The population of the self-administered refugee camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) assumes that blackmail attempts by the Turkish state are behind the measure.

The people of Maxmur have been resisting the military siege for two days. On Saturday, the Iraqi army used firearms and the residents reacted by throwing stones. Ahmed Ömer, a young resident of the camp, was shot and injured. The siege of the camp continues, and people have set up a tent at the entrance to keep vigil. ANF spoke to residents about the current situation.

Sadiq Evdal said that the people in Maxmur only demand freedom and fraternity. He said that the fact that the Iraqi army was fencing the camp and erecting observation posts was unacceptable to the people. "If we were to accept barbed wire and towers, we would have already done so in our homeland. We are against oppression and insult. We have done so in the past and we will continue to do so."

Another resident, Meryem Cindî, stressed that they would not accept the siege: "We will resist. As long as we are alive and blood flows through our veins, we will prevent anyone from entering our camp."

About 12,000 people live in Maxmur. The first generation of the camp's population fled to Southern Kurdistan in the early 1990s due to the destruction of their villages by the Turkish state. The camp is self-governed by its residents according to the principles of Democratic Confederalism. After the ISIS attack in 2014, an embargo by South Kurdistan's ruling party of the Barzani clan, KDP, followed in 2019. The Turkish air force has bombed the camp several times.

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## KONGRA- GEL calls for action for Maxmur under siege

ANF - 21 May 2023

KONGRA- GEL Co-Presidency Council released a statement about the latest aggression against the Kurdish refugee camp in Maxmur, southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) where the Iraqi army has taken action to fence in and isolate the self-governing camp with barbed wire and towers.

KONGRA- GEL pointed out that a refugee camp under United Nations' protection is intended to be turned into an open prison on demands from the AKP-MHP government (of Turkey) and the KDP (the ruling party of the Barzani clan in South Kurdistan), defining this attempt as "unacceptable."

According to KONGRA- GEL, the measure against Maxmur comes on the eve of the presidential election in Turkey scheduled for May 28, and seeks to support Erdoğan to win the election as he is in a bit of a jam in the runoff.

"The attempt to besiege the Maxmur Camp is a part of the plan to lay siege to free Kurds. This is a plan to besiege the free life and free future of our people. The measure is directed against the entire Kurdish people outside of the Barzani family who have completely surrendered to the Turkish state politically, militarily and economically and thus act according to their plans and ambitions," said the statement.

KONGRA- GEL pointed out that: "The people of Maxmur represent the resilient spirit of the Kurds and no force can cow it into submission. The Turkish state and its collaborators fear that the gradual rise of this spirit can not be stopped. Under the leadership of Maxmur People's Assembly, all the residents of the camp, including women, children and youth, are resisting together. We salute the resistance of our people in Maxmur Refugee Camp."

KONGRA- GEL called on the people in four parts of Kurdistan and abroad, and their friends, to embrace the honorable resistance of Maxmur Refugee Camp, to show that the camp residents are not alone, and to be the voice of Maxmur people in domestic and foreign diplomacy.

"We appeal to the Iraqi government and the UN officials who remain silent in the face of these developments: the measure against Maxmur is against international law and human rights. It is unlawful, tyranny, torture and cruelty. The people will not accept this repression and injustice. Problems should be resolved not through repression and threats, but through dialogue with the elected representatives of the camp."

The statement concluded: "We once again salute the resistance of Maxmur people who raise the hope for freedom with their determined stand. Resistance will prevail, fascism and collaborators will lose."

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## Eight ISIS members arrested in Heseke, Deir ez-Zor and Manbij

ANF - 21 May 2023

Over the past few days, SDF commandos and special units have conducted four security operations against ISIS cells in the countryside of Tal Hamis, Deir ez-Zor, Manbij, and Heseke.

In a statement providing information about the operations, the Media Center of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said that eight ISIS terrorists who had been actively involved in terrorist acts and supporting the terrorist cells in the area were apprehended.

In the village of Bilqis in Tal Hamis, SDF commandos captured two active ISIS operatives who were involved in facilitating the movements of terrorist cells, providing logistical support, and gathering intelligence for ISIS cells. Additionally, the forces seized several weapons and documents.

“Our special units conducted a security operation against an ISIS cell in the town of al-Tayaneh in the eastern countryside of Deir Ezzor. This operation was supported by the international coalition and targeted and resulted in arresting one of the ISIS terrorists who had been actively involved in financing and transferring zakat funds to active cells in the countryside of Deir ez-Zor,” said the SDF.

The statement continued: “Once our forces had surrounded the location where the terrorist was hiding, he attempted to flee; however, he was tracked down by the international coalition aircraft. Consequently, the forces successfully captured the terrorist and seized various items from his possession, including documents, money, and technical equipment.”

In this context, and over the past two days, SDF forces have carried out two security operations in the city of Manbij and the al-Hasaka countryside. The first operation targeted an ISIS cell of three operatives, including a woman, who had been planning to detonate IEDs at one of our strategic points. The operation resulted in arresting the three terrorists and confiscating a silenced pistol and an IED.



## TEV-DEM condemns UN silence on Maxmur, calling for urgent intervention

ANF - 21 May 2023

The Movement for a Democratic Society (TEV-DEM) released a statement denouncing the Iraqi attempt to surround the Martyr Rüstem Cudi (Maxmur) Camp with barbed wire and towers.

Saluting the resistance of Maxmur people, TEV-DEM said, “It is known to everyone that the Iraqi government and the KDP are in an agreement with the Turkish state.”

The TEV-DEM statement on Sunday said: “The people of Maxmur, who have been living there for dozens of years, fought bravely against ISIS and made sacrifices. The KDP, which portrays itself as a party of Kurdistan, imposes taxes on people, besieges their living spaces and blocks their movement, seeking to evacuate the camp and put it into the service of the Turkish state.”

Pointing to the conspiracies faced by the Kurdish people in Maxmur and Shengal, TEV-DEM stated that the attack of the Iraqi army against Maxmur came after the Turkish Minister of Interior threatened to invade Aleppo, Mosul and Kirkuk. “This attack does not serve the Iraqis or the Kurds, but on the contrary the invasion plans of the Turkish state,” it said.

According to TEV-DEM, this latest development points to the launch of a new genocidal attempt against the Kurdish people and in explicit cooperation with the KDP that insists on the implementation of the 9 October against the people of Shengal and Maxmur.

TEV-DEM remarked that the unilateral closing of the Semalka border crossing also serves the invasion plans of the Turkish state, and goes against the efforts to build national unity and the values of the resilient Kurdish people.

TEV-DEM called on all political, national and civil society organizations, intellectuals, journalists, artists, patriots, women and social organizations to stand up for the will and resistance of the Maxmur people, and to be aware of the policies and plans of betrayal implemented by the KDP that commits historic crimes with the support of the invading Turkish state.

“This situation at the same time poses a threat to all political and national forces in Kurdistan. Our people should support the people of Maxmur by all their means. We condemn the silence of the UN, which has the responsibility to protect the refugees in Maxmur and to intervene immediately.”



## Femicide

### Women's movements in North-East Syria call for action against femicides

ANF - 16 May 2023

Women's organizations and movements in Aleppo, Qamishlo, Ain Issa, Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa made statements to condemn femicides.

#### Aleppo

The Sara Organization Against Crimes Against Women made a statement to condemn femicides. Zeyneb Elıko, a member of the Sara Organization, read out the statement in front of the organization's office in Sheikh Maqsoud (Şêxmeqsûd) neighborhood, accompanied by dozens of women activists.

The statement emphasized that violence against women and girls was one of the most common human rights violations that jeopardize their lives.

## Qamishlo

The Qamishlo and Ain Issa branches of the organization also made statements condemning the murders of Ala Mistefa El Tahir in Ain Issa on May 11, Zubeyde Ebdulwehab in Dirbêsiyê district of Hesekê Canton on May 14, and Nûr Silêman Ibrahim in Til Hemîs district of Qamishlo Canton on April 24.

Both branches of the organization called on relevant authorities to prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes.

## Raqqa

The Zenûbiya Women's Community Office, the Syrian Women's Council and many activist women condemned femicides in Raqqa.

The groups said that the women's cause was a social cause and therefore the social mentality should be changed completely.

The women called for the arrest and trial of the criminals, urging women to be united to stand against violence directed against them and to implement laws protecting women.

The Deir ez-Zor Young Women's Union also made a statement. Seher El Ewad, a member of the union, said: "We condemn crimes against women, especially in the occupied areas. Women should unite and fight all forms of violence."



# Human Rights Violations

## Cyprus to extradite Kurdish politician Kenan Ayaz to Germany

ANF - Nicosia - 16 May 2023

Kenan Ayaz 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.

As an activist of the Kurdish freedom movement and because of his political identity, Kenan Ayaz remained in prison in Turkey for twelve years. He has been living in the Greek part of Cyprus since 2013 and is a recognised refugee. He continued his political engagement in exile, publicly and legally. He is apparently not accused of any individual offences by the German judiciary either.

While the last hearing of Ayaz was held at the Cyprus Supreme Court on May 9, the decision has been announced today. The Supreme Court rejected the appeal and decided to extradite Ayaz to Germany.

Before the announcement of the decision, the Cyprus police came to the Justice Tent set up by the Kurdish Community Centre in front of the Supreme Court, and detained Ayaz's brother İbrahim Ayaz, journalist Baran Hebung and Mehmet Uçaş who were on hunger strike in solidarity with the Kurdish politician.

In the meantime, Ayaz continues his indefinite non-alternating hunger strike he launched on May 4 to protest the decision of the Cyprus judiciary. After the announcement of the decision, Kurds and their friends began to gather in front of the Supreme Court in Nicosia. Organizations in solidarity with the Kurds, the directors of Theofilos Kurdish Cultural Centre and internationalist groups made a joint statement. The statement said that the attitude of the German state was based on its economic interests with the Turkish state and the decision of the Cyprus Court was unlawful and inhumane. The statement noted that it was a shame for Cyprus to be a partner to the policies of oppression and violence against the Kurdish people by the Turkish and German states.



## MED-DER calls on the Kurdish people to focus on their mother tongue

ANF - Amed - 16 May 2023

The Mesopotamia Language, Culture and Research Association (MED-DER) made a statement in front of the Human Rights Monument in Koşuyolu Park in Rezan (Bağlar) district to mark the May 15 Kurdish Language Day.

The Democratic Society Congress (DTK), the Aid, Solidarity, Unity and Culture Association with Families that Lost Their Relatives in the Cradle of Civilizations (MEBYA-DER), the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the Democratic Regions Party (DBP), the Green Left Party Amed provincial co-spokesperson Abbas Şahin and Green Left Party deputies also attended the press briefing.

MED-DER Co-Chairs Remzi Azizoğlu and Şükran Yakut read out the statement in Kurmancî and Kirmançki dialects of the Kurdish language.

Yakut spoke about the history of the May 15 Kurdish Language Day. He underlined that the Kurds did not back away despite all the attacks directed against them.

Yakut said: "The Kurds have never backed away from their identity, language and culture. The Kurdish question and the problems over Kurdish culture and language have gradually increased. The state is aware of the power of the Kurdish people, and thus escalates its attacks."

Yakut warned that an unused language cannot develop. He said: “The state policy concerning the Kurdish language is clear. The state policy is based on racism. However, the Kurdish people should focus on their language regardless of their political goals. Women, men, intellectuals, writers and politicians should be responsible for the development of language. Kurdish intellectuals and academics should publish their work in Kurdish. They should also use their language in daily life and speech. No matter what, the Kurds must protect their language and culture. Education in the mother tongue should be the basic demand of the Kurds. Our language is our being. Happy May 15 Kurdish Language Day.”

Speaking after, DTK Co-Chair Berdan Öztürk said: “Language is identity. Every language must be defended. Kurdish is a very ancient language. Trustee mayors appointed by the government attacked our language first. An attack on the Kurdish language is an attack on humanity. Kurdish should be an official language. The Kurds have been fighting in these lands for hundreds of years. If language dies, history and identity die. Therefore, we must protect our language everywhere.”



## Human Rights Association: Enforced disappearance is a policy of annihilation

ANF - Amed - 17 May 2023

On the occasion of 17-31 May International Week of Struggle against Enforced Disappearances, the Human Rights Association (IHD) Amed (Diyarbakır) Branch said that enforced disappearance was used as a method of annihilation against dissidents.

The IHD statement on Wednesday said: “The struggle to reveal the fate of those forcibly disappeared and unidentified political murders and to bring those responsible to justice has always been ignored in Turkey. As human rights defenders, we believe that the only way to build a life based on social peace is to confront the past.

Despite the relentless struggle of the Saturday Mothers that has been going on for 28 years, unfortunately, the successive governments in the country have not taken a positive step to unravel the 'Enforced Disappearances', which are considered crimes against humanity.

The relatives of the disappeared and we, the rights defenders, who have not backed away from seeking justice against all oppression and obstructions in Diyarbakır since January 31, 2009, will undoubtedly continue our struggle under all circumstances. We urge non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders and everyone with conscience to join the struggle of the relatives of the disappeared by participating in the action we hold every Saturday at 12:00 in front of the Right to Life Monument in Kosuyolu Park.”

IHD pointed out that the Armenian Genocide was one of the realities that need to be confronted in Turkey.



The statement outlined what needs to be done as follows:

- The current administrative and judicial system, which produce impunity and injustice, should be changed as soon as possible in accordance with the principles of universal law.
- First of all, all relevant archives of the state should be opened in order to reveal the fate of those who were forcibly disappeared and to identify the perpetrators of the unsolved murders.
- We demand the establishment of a Truth Commission for Confronting the Past in order to prevent similar atrocities, to reveal the truth and to establish social peace in these lands.
- It is a human duty to keep enforced disappearance on the agenda and to demand that the perpetrators of this crime and their abettors be prosecuted in accordance with the laws.
- We urge the state to fulfil its responsibility to render an account of enforced disappearances in these lands by complying with international commitments,
- We urge the government to immediately sign the UN International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.
- We call on states that use enforced disappearance as a method of annihilation against dissidents to stop committing this crime.

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## Two detained in police raid on the office of Turkish newspaper Sabah in Germany

ANF - 17 May 2023

The German police searched the Frankfurt-based European editorial office of the Turkish newspaper "Sabah" on Wednesday morning and detained two employees. They are said to be the German coordinator of the paper, Ismail Erel, and the editor-in-chief, Cemil Albay. Mobile phones and computers were confiscated during the raid. The flats of Erel and Albay were also searched.

There is no exact information yet on the reasons for the searches. The Turkish Foreign Ministry has intervened to ensure the release of the newspaper workers. In a complaint to the Federal Government, it spoke of an "unacceptable attack on the freedom of the press". The high-circulation daily "Sabah" is considered the most important mouthpiece of the government of the incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Like the TV station ATV, it belongs to the Turkuvaz Media Group. In 2007, it was acquired by the government-affiliated conglomerate Çalık Holding and sold in 2013 to the Kalyon Group, which is loyal to Erdoğan and mainly active in the construction sector.

In Germany and Europe, the paper attracts attention above all with aggressive denunciation campaigns against critical media workers in exile. In September, for example, journalist Cevheri Güven found himself on the front page. "Propaganda imam continues to make lying and inflammatory videos in Germany, where he fled," was written next to a secretly taken photo showing Güven holding a shopping bag. The newspaper went on to proudly announce that it had tracked down the "provocateur" and his "nest of slander". The house in Babenhausen where Güven lives with his family was also photographed on the front page of the paper. In the accompanying article, the newspaper called the journalist a "terrorist", among other things.

Güven has published hundreds of videos on his YouTube channel in which he reveals, among other things, corruption cases surrounding Erdoğan and the connections of government members to organised crime. He is also repeatedly criticised in other pro-government media in Turkey. Among others, he is said to be a member of the movement loyal the exiled preacher Fethullah Gülen, which according to Ankara is responsible for the alleged coup attempt on 15 July 2016 and is classified by Turkey as a terrorist organisation.

Güven assumes that not only the editorial staff of "Sabah" is behind the spying operation. He believes that his address was passed on to the paper by the Turkish secret service (MIT) because there was a block on information in the civil register. Under normal circumstances, a place of residence cannot be traced in this way. Sabah has also published the addresses of other regime critics, including exiled journalist Abdullah Bozkurt, who lives in Sweden.



## Families of Hewler massacre victims turn to the Iraqi Parliament demanding an investigation

ANF - Sulaymaniyah - 18 May 2023

Light is yet to be shed on the Hewlêr Massacre on May 16, 1997, when KDP forces accompanied by Turkish troops attacked the Kurdish Red Crescent Heyva Sor a Kurdistanê institutions and massacred dozens of defenseless civilians. 26 years have passed, and the bodies of the martyrs have not been delivered to their families.

Relatives of the victims made a statement in the Hewarî Şar Park in Sulaymaniyah on Wednesday on the occasion of the anniversary of the massacre.

### **Applications to Kurdish institutions failed**

Muhammed Xerîb, who read out the statement on behalf of the families, said: "26 years have passed since the massacre, which is yet to be clarified. As relatives of the victims, we could not get any results from our visits to the Kurdistan Region Parliament's Human Rights Commission, Kurdistan Region President and relevant institutions. We want the bodies of our martyrs to be handed over to us. If they are alive, we want to know where they are."

## Call for the clarification of the Xelifan massacre of 7 guerrillas

The statement pointed out that the lands of Kurdistan should be protected from the invasion attacks of the Turkish state. It also called for the deadly attack on 7 guerrillas in Xelifan in September 2021 to be clarified.

### What happened?

On May 17, 1997, KDP forces carried out a massacre against PKK members who were receiving treatment in Hewler and civilians sympathetic to the PKK. Many patriotic institutions and organizations, including Dezgay Jiyana û Awedan Hospital administered by Heyva Sor a Kurdistan, were besieged by the KDP and Turkish forces and attacked by heavy weapons. While 9 guerrillas who had been injured in battle and were being treated at the hospital were killed, the aftermath of many of the injured who were taken into custody remains unknown.

Concurrently with the attack on the hospital, the Kurdistan National Democratic Union Headquarters, the Mesopotamia Cultural Centre (MKM) Hewlêr (Erbil) Branch, the PKK Representation Office, the Kurdistan Free Women's Union Association (YAJK), and the offices of Welat and Welatê Roj newspapers were also attacked with heavy weapons by the same forces. As a result of the attacks, many defenceless civilians were killed. The detention and arrest operations launched afterwards lasted for months. The massacre paved the way for a very violent conflict.

As a result of the attack carried out by the KDP in cooperation with the Turkish state, around 80 guerrillas, hospital employees and civilians were killed, 52 of them in hospital.

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## Buldan commemorates victims of enforced disappearances: We will never give up our fight for justice

ANF - Istanbul - 19 May 2023

In a speech marking the International Week of Struggle against Forced Disappearances, HDP Co-Chair Pervin Buldan said: "We have an opportunity to eliminate fascism in the second round of the presidential election."

The HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) Co-Chair Pervin Buldan and MP Musa Piroğlu attended a commemoration held at the Gazi Cemetery as part of the May 17-31 International Week of Struggle against Forced Disappearances.

In a speech during the commemoration, Buldan said: "It is our duty and responsibility to commemorate this week with events and embrace the victims in this country where thousands of enforced disappearances, unsolved murders and extrajudicial executions took place."

“Today, at this graveyard, I would like to commemorate all the victims of enforced disappearances in the persons of Hasan Ocak and Rıdvan Karakoç. The struggle for truth and justice in Turkey has never ended and will never end. The fact that the killers of these two comrades have not been prosecuted for 28 years shows us that we need to further expand our struggle with all our friends and the forces of democracy. If there have been so many unsolved murders, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions in Turkey, this is because of the rulers and decision makers of the country.”

The HDP co-chair continued: “Unfortunately, despite the countless murders, no perpetrator has been found, and when they are, they are not prosecuted. There is a system that protects perpetrators with the policy of impunity. This has become a state policy. The current government, which has not allowed the Saturday Mothers’ sit-in in front of Galatasaray High School for weeks and has detained their members in mass, shows us that it insists on maintaining the dark alliance and mentality it has established.

There are millions of people fighting for justice and truth in this country today. Preventing these people is also preventing democracy in this country. It means preventing truth and justice from prevailing. However, I would like to declare once again that we will never give up our fight for justice and truth, no matter the cost.

It is our duty to stand against this fascism and to expand the struggle. We have an opportunity before us. We have one last chance to choose between enlightenment and darkness. On May 28, we all must take this opportunity to choose between fascism and democracy. In the second round of the presidential election on May 28, it will be important for us to go to the polls to make fascism lose and to bring about democracy. There is writing on Hasan's grave: Losers lost in Chile, Argentina and other countries. In Turkey, too, losers will definitely lose.”



## Struggle of Şenyaşar family continues

ANF - Urfa - 19 May 2023

On 14 June 2018, the bodyguards and relatives of AKP Urfa MP Ibrahim Halil Yıldız attacked the Şenyaşar family's shop in Suruç during the election campaign.

In the attack, brothers Celal, Adil, Mehmet, Fadıl and Ferit Şenyaşar were severely injured and hospitalized. Relatives and supporters of AKP MP Yıldız killed Celal and Adil Şenyaşar in hospital, and their father Hacı Esvet Şenyaşar, when he went to the hospital to see his sons. He was brutally murdered, being lynched in front of his wife, Emine Şenyaşar.

Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit have been holding a Justice Vigil in front of the Courthouse of Urfa since 9 March 2021, demanding those responsible to be brought to account.

Ferit Şenyaşar was elected as a member of parliament for the Green Left Party in Urfa in the parliamentary elections on May 14.

Emine Şenyaşar couldn't attend the vigil today because of health issues.

In a message on their Twitter account, the family said: "Our struggle for justice continues on its 788th day. It is a human duty to change the government and rulers that have no justice. Let's not remain silent and be complicit in this persecution."

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## Music Beyond Borders, a short movie

ANF - 20 May 2023

A short film "Muzika li Pişt Sınoran (Music Cross Borders)", shot by Botan International with the support of Minority Rights Group International (MRGI), was released on YouTube.

The short film written by Murat Bayram is inspired by a true story. It was directed by Ekrem Yıldız and focuses on the period when Kurdish music was banned.

This short film takes viewers back to the 1980s in Turkey, where the Kurdish language and music were forbidden. The film shows soldiers trying to prevent music from being played at a wedding, only to be left powerless when they hear the sounds of a neighbouring Kurdish village across the Syrian border.

This film highlights the ongoing pressure on the use of the Kurdish language and music and the lack of change in the past 40 years.

The music is by musician Serdar Canan.

You can watch the short film here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ebLTzyZfrs&t=431s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ebLTzyZfrs&t=431s)

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## Saturday Mothers detained again on the 947th week of action

ANF - Istanbul - 20 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 947th 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.

Those attending today's action on the 947th week included HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) Istanbul MP Musa Piroğlu, Human Rights Association (IHD) President Eren Keskin and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) Istanbul Representative Ümit Efe.

When the Saturday Mothers and their supporters arrived in the square, they were surrounded by the police and at least 10 people were taken into custody. Journalists were obstructed while documenting the police crackdown.

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.



## Report on mass detentions on 25 April: Judiciary is instrumentalized for political purposes

ANF - Amed - 20 May 2023

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) and Diyarbakır Bar Association published a comprehensive [report](#) on the mass detentions in Turkey on 25 April. In the course of the "terror trial" led by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, 191 people were detained across the country in the run-up to the elections.

As a result of the detention of 191 people, including 25 lawyers, artists and journalists, legal processes were followed by the Diyarbakır Bar Association and the Diyarbakır Branch of the ÖHD. They identified the rights violations experienced during the investigation process, which resulted in the arrest of 4 lawyers and the release of 16 lawyers with judicial control, following the deposition and interrogation procedures.

The report documents cases where the investigative authorities criminalized lawyers for the practice of their profession and linked them, without proof, to the crimes against their clients. An evaluation will be made of the existing problems that allow rights defenders to intervene through judicial activities, on the basis of the independence of the judiciary, the right to a fair trial, and the right to freedom and security.

In the report, it is concluded that the targeting of the defense lawyers by the prosecution investigations and prosecutions, which are devoid of legal basis and threatening, undermines an important mechanism

that guarantees the right to a fair trial in Turkey. The aim is to report the violations of rights by making the necessary determinations regarding the unfair trial processes, and to make the required national and international legal applications and criminal complaints as a result of the reports created.

Highlights from the report are as follows:

### **Violations of rights detected during the investigation process**

Fundamental rights and freedoms are interfered with in a very arbitrary way, and there is a process in which rights defenders, especially lawyers, professional organizations and non-governmental organizations are targeted by the judiciary and exposed to criminal threats.

It is observed that the interventions against lawyers, who are among the groups most affected by the repression regime restricting the civil space, have become extraordinarily harsh and widespread. This oppression regime makes lawyers a target in order to hinder the pursuit of rights, to scare and intimidate the society.

Professional activities of lawyers to defend and develop human rights are subject to accusations within the scope of the investigation. Lawyers working in rights-based non-governmental organizations are tried on the basis of their human rights advocacy activities.

### **Judicial threat practise**

The judiciary, which protects the perpetrators responsible for violations of human rights and freedoms with the armor of impunity and covers up the truth about the violations, tries to silence the rights defenders who speak out against rights violations, speak the truth and demand accountability with baseless claims and discourage the struggle for rights and freedom. A pattern of judicial proceedings targeting rights defenders and an unprecedented arbitrary and unlawful process are being run in the functioning of the criminal law system. The legal data examined shows that decisions such as arrest, detention, detention without any concrete evidence, investigations and prosecutions, and sentencing/conviction decisions are made against rights defenders only because of their lawful and legitimate advocacy activities.

Lawyers, including Tahir Elçi, the former President of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, were similarly detained on the basis of the statements of a confessor, with their professional activities as a subject of accusation. Lawyers' offices were illegally searched, and their belongings confiscated. The European Court of Human Rights, in its *ELÇİ and Others v. Turkey* judgment, affirmed that Turkey committed gross human rights violations, and clearly emphasized the following:

*“As a profession, lawyers have a central role in administering justice and maintaining the rule of law. The freedom of lawyers to practice their profession without undue hindrance is one of the essential components of a democratic society and one of the essential prerequisites for the effective implementation of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly the guarantees for the rights to a fair trial and personal security. Therefore, the pressure and harassment of members of the legal profession are blows to the heart of the system established by the Convention. Therefore, allegations of any form of such coercion, particularly the mass detention or detention of lawyers and their offices searched, will be subject to particular scrutiny by the court.”*  
(Application No.: 23145/93 and 25091/94)

The unpredictable practice of judicial authorities makes it almost impossible for rights defenders to know for which actions they may be held criminally responsible and what punishment they may face, and constitutes a serious violation of legal guarantees that prohibit interpreting the scope of existing crimes to include actions that were not previously considered crimes.

### **Instrumentalization of the judiciary for political purposes**

It is seen that the judiciary, which has surrendered to political manipulation more than ever in recent years in Turkey, has become an extension of the political power that wants to regress the human rights struggle due to its dependent and open structure and has turned into a tool of oppression. As stated in the EU progress evaluation report of 2021, there has been a regression in democracy, rule of law, independence of the judiciary, democracy and fundamental rights in recent years, and the judiciary has lost its independence bases due to legal and de facto interventions by the executive and legislature and is completely open to political influences.

### **Anti-terrorist law and jurisdiction practise**

Although many revisions have been made in the TMK (Anti-Terrorist Law) within the scope of the harmonization process with the European Union, a judicial practice is applied in which rights defenders are put under pressure due to the fact that the problems arising from the law are not resolved and the practitioners are given a wide margin of appreciation.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The special protection and support of lawyers, who are defenders of rights, is guaranteed by international conventions and documents. Lawyers are seen as indispensable elements of a democratic process that respects human rights all over the world. They have a warning and supervisory function against violations of rights arising from both laws and practices.

Lawyers are criminalized, targeted, faced with administrative or judicial pressure, detained, arrested or sentenced for criticizing the decisions and actions of public authorities and related third parties/institutions, in violation of national and international law, while carrying out their legitimate activities that do not contain any criminal elements. Exposing them to judicial threats is unacceptable.

Rights defenders who continue to be detained unlawfully due to their legitimate and legal advocacy activities should be released.

The judicial practice of being subject to investigation or prosecution, in part or in whole, for the clients they represent or for whom they act as attorneys, or for the activities they perform within the scope of their duties as a lawyer, should be abandoned.

The practice of making arbitrary and unlawful accusations against lawyers, especially in mass lawsuits, in an uncertain, ambiguous and unpredictable manner, such as membership of an illegal organization, should be ended.



## Renewed attack on Saturday Mothers in Istanbul

ANF - Istanbul - 20 May 2023

After the partly violent break-up of the vigil of the Saturday Mothers by the Turkish police, members of the initiative were targeted by another attack in Istanbul. A press statement planned in front of the Human Rights Association (IHD) office about the prevented sit-in at the square in front of the Galatasaray High School was also prevented. Anti-riot police besieged the small side street and forcibly pushed the activists, including some elderly people, into the building. The press statement was then delivered at the premises of the IHD.

Meral Nergis Şahin from the IHD board pointed out that the demonstration bans imposed week after week by the police and the district administration against the Saturday Mothers since 2018 were illegal. At the end of February, the Turkish Constitutional Court also found this to be the case and rejected an objection by the Ministry of the Interior, which justified the restrictions on the freedom of assembly and demonstration with an alleged threat to public order by the Saturday Mothers.

"The actions of the police make it clear that the Ministry of the Interior is pursuing a targeted policy of violence against the Saturday Mothers. This is clearly state terror," said HDP MP Musa Piroğlu. Remarking that the government has been ignoring an important ruling of the country's highest court for months, he stated: "They are resorting to unlawful detention and torture. Unless we raise a collective objection, the attacks of the state will continue. This is a problem that concerns the whole society. If we do not stand against it, the entire country will end up blockaded. Either we oppose it all together, or we get subordinated. It is our responsibility and duty to stand united against it."

Earlier in the day, members of the Saturday Mothers took to the streets in the central Beyoğlu district for the 947th time, asking for the whereabouts of their relatives who had disappeared in state custody and demanding punishment for the perpetrators. When the group reached the square in front of Galatasaray High School on Istiklal Avenue, they were immediately surrounded by police and journalists were forcibly pushed back.

Those detained during the course of today's vigil are: Hanife Yıldız, Eren Keskin, Besna Tosun, Ali Ocak, Sebla Arcan, Gülseren Yoleri, Hasan Karakoç, İrfan Bilgin, Ümit Efe, Leman Yurtsever, Hünkar Hüdai Yurtsever, Nazım Dikbaş and Taylan Bekin.

# General Elections in Turkey

## International observers from ODIHR, OSCE PA, and PACE issue preliminary report on Turkish elections

ANF - 16 May 2023

The joint observation mission from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) published a [report](#) in which they underlined that the legal framework does not fully provide a basis for holding democratic elections.

“These were competitive but still limited elections, as the criminalisation of some political forces, including the detention of several opposition politicians, prevented full political pluralism and impeded individuals’ rights to run in the elections,” said Michael Georg Link, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission. “Political interference in the electoral process is not in line with Türkiye’s international commitments.”

Almost 61 million voters were registered to vote in the country as well as 3.5 million abroad, in an election that took place against the background of this year’s devastating earthquakes. Some limited steps were taken by the authorities to enable those affected by the earthquakes to participate in the elections, but despite these and additional efforts by civil society and political parties, a high number of these voters faced difficulties in voting.

“Turkish democracy is proving to be amazingly resilient. This election had a high turnout and offered a real choice. However, Türkiye does not fulfil the basic principles for holding a democratic election,” said Frank Schwabe (Germany, SOC), head of the PACE delegation. “Key political and social figures are in prison even after judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, media freedom is severely restricted and there is a climate of self-censorship. Türkiye is a long way from creating fair election campaign conditions.”

The election administration organized the elections efficiently and generally enjoyed trust, although there was lack of transparency and communication in their work, as well as concerns over its independence. Voting day was mostly peaceful and smooth, despite a number of incidents in and around polling stations. While the process was generally well-organized, important safeguards, particularly during the counting, were not always implemented. Family and group voting were frequent, while the layout of half the polling stations observed made them inaccessible for people with disabilities.

The campaign was largely peaceful and competitive, but highly polarized and often negative and inflammatory in tone. A number of prosecutions as well as pressure on opposition politicians and parties, including ongoing proceedings to dissolve the second-largest opposition party, hampered their participation in the elections. While the constitution guarantees the equality of women and men, women remain under-

represented in leadership positions and generally in politics, and greater efforts are needed from the authorities and political parties in this area.

“Despite the promising opportunity for choice presented in these elections, there were significant challenges for citizens exercise the right to vote, and unfortunately, women were underrepresented as candidates,” said Farah Karimi, head of the OSCE PA delegation. “Hundreds of thousands of individuals, people affected by the earthquakes and particularly students, had to make significant additional efforts to exercise their right to vote.”

The misuse of public resources in some cases as well as announcements of significant social benefit programmes provided undue advantage to those in power, and blurred the line between party and state. There were numerous cases of officials campaigning during the inaugurations of large-scale infrastructure projects, while the current president often campaigned while performing his official duties.

The freedom of expression and the media, although protected by the constitution, are limited by a number of laws. The recent criminalization of disseminating false information, the fact that websites are frequently blocked and online content removed, and the ongoing arrests and prosecutions of journalists further weakened freedom of expression. During the campaign, the ruling parties and their candidates were clearly favoured by the majority of national TV stations, including the public broadcaster, despite its constitutional obligation to remain impartial.

“Voters had a genuine choice to make on election day, and the high turnout was a good illustration of the democratic spirit of the people of Türkiye,” said Ambassador Jan Petersen, who heads the ODIHR election observation mission. “However, I regret to note that the election administration’s work was lacking in transparency, as well as the overwhelming bias of the public media and the limitations to freedom of speech.”

The international election observation to the general elections in Türkiye totalled 401 observers from 40 countries, made up of 264 ODIHR-deployed experts, long-term, and short-term observers, 98 from the OSCE PA, and 39 from PACE.



## Supreme Election Board arranges overseas voting schedule in favour of Erdogan

ANF - 16 May 2023

The overseas voting schedule for the second round of the May 14 presidential election was determined according to the outcomes of the ballots.

Voters abroad will be able to go to the polls on May 20. The Supreme Election Board (YSK) reduced the voting period from five days to two days in the United States (USA), Australia, England, Ireland, Spain, Japan, Canada and Libya.

The presidential candidate of the Nation Alliance and main opposition CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu turned out to be ahead of Erdoğan in some countries such as the USA, England and Canada.

However, in countries such as France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, where Erdoğan received higher votes, the voting period has remained unchanged.

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## Election fraud uncovered: Green Left Party votes attributed to MHP in Bismil

ANF - Amed - 16 May 2023

Elections were held in Turkey on Sunday and new cases of electoral fraud are still emerging. In the Bismil district of Amed (Diyarbakir), it has emerged that votes for the Green Left Party were attributed to the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party). The fraud was discovered by comparing the official data entered into the system of the Supreme Election Board (YSK) and the protocol signed by the polling staff on the spot immediately after the counting.

The case in question is ballot box no. 1234 at Esmâ Ocak Primary School. The record lists 233 votes for the Green Left Party, but in the database of the Supreme Election Board, these votes appear for the MHP, which did not receive a single vote.

Reporting many more such cases, the HDP co-chair in Amed, Gülistan Atasoy, said: "There are some ballot boxes from which the votes were attributed to the MHP in this way. Meanwhile, all the records have been compared with the information from the Election Board's database. An appeal will be filed today," said the Kurdish politician.

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## Green Left Party vows to defend votes for the party in Hakkari

ANF - Hakkari - 16 May 2023

Erdoğan's AKP party has filed an appeal in Hakkari against the validity of the parliamentary and presidential elections in the constituencies of the Kurdish province and wants to have all ballots recounted. Due to an "accumulation and severity" of alleged electoral errors and irregularities, including votes cast en bloc, input errors in the transmission of the so-called quick report and its recording in the election results software, as well as an unusually large number of invalid votes, it cannot be ruled out that "without these incidents a different distribution of seats in the Turkish parliament would have resulted", says the AKP in justification. The Green Left Party, which won the election in Hakkari by a landslide according to the preliminary results, expressed little surprise in an initial reaction to the accusations made by the AKP, criticising them as a "more than transparent political manoeuvre".

"In the face of its obvious defeat in Hakkari, the AKP is pulling out all the stops to turn the tide after all," said Kadir Şahin on behalf of the provincial Green Left Party organisation in Hakkari on Tuesday, announcing the start of a "democracy vigil" against the planned theft of the people's will. Şahin rejected the electoral errors used to justify the AKP's request for a recount of the votes as unfounded and unrealistic. He said that although the elections took place beyond fair and free conditions, violations of the basic principles of democratic voting did not come from the Green Left Party or other opposition parties. "Despite all odds, the people of Hakkari managed to go to the polls and defend their political will," Şahin said. The AKP's response to this, he said, was a heavy-handed sabotage tactic that could clearly be located as a sign of weakness. He stated that the AKP candidate, Abdulmuttalip Özbek, had a conversation with the governor while the foreign votes were still being counted, which was suspicious.

In the parliamentary election, the Green Left Party received 62.47 per cent of the vote in Hakkari, the AKP 20.59 per cent and the CHP 7.24 per cent. According to state figures, voter turnout was 83.93 per cent, and of 160,220 votes cast, 7,044 are said to be invalid. The AKP's objection relates to the constituencies of Hakkari, Gever (Yüksekova) and Şemzînan (Şemdinli), where the Green Left Party candidates Vezir Parlak, Öznur Bartın and Onur Düşünmez won the election by a clear margin, receiving a total of 95,684 votes. This means that all the deputy mandates for Hakkari go to the Green Left Party. In the presidential election, CHP candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu won the race in Hakkari, receiving 72.32 per cent of the vote.

"In order to counteract the planned vote theft, we have held various talks with the authorities. A vigil for democracy has also been launched," Şahin said. The sit-in takes place in front of the provincial election committees, one of which is in the building where the governor also sits. The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), the Human Rights Association (IHD) and the initiative of Peace Mothers support the action. "We call on all those in authority to respect the political will of the people and to remain neutral towards all parties," Şahin said. Calling on civil rights organisations to take action against the AKP's political manoeuvres, he said that the Green Left Party was determined to exhaust all means to defend votes for the party.



## Tiryaki: We are examining 193 thousand ballot papers

ANF - Ankara - 17 May 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Election Follow-up Coordination Center Spokesperson and YSK Representative Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki made a statement regarding the irregularities seen in the election minutes.

Tiryaki said: "We learned that the data was entered incorrectly, as can be seen in the SIPPOR system, which is shared with political parties, in more than a thousand ballot paper results minutes across the country. There are ballot papers where we have 230 votes, and there are also ballot boxes where we have 10 votes. There are also ballot papers where we have 2 votes. We objected to all of these, almost all of these objections were resolved and all of the data was corrected."

Tiryaki said that since the evening of 14 May, more than a hundred Green Left Party members have examined all ballot result minutes and census charts falling into the Supreme Election Board (YSK) system, and added: "We have not yet reached a conclusion that will affect the distribution of parliamentarians in any city. We continue our work. Our lawyer friends in every province and district compare the data with our colleagues and report our objections to the provincial and district election boards through our representatives and ensure that they are corrected. All of the incorrect entries we made have been corrected. We will continue our work."

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## Police in Ankara take 10 people into custody at Democracy Vigil in front of YSK

ANF - Ankara - 17 May 2023

The differences between the minutes and the data shared by the Supreme Election Board (YSK) provoked public reaction. The people in Ankara started a Democracy Vigil in front of the YSK Ankara Provincial and Central District Election Board. The police on Monday night attacked the vigil, taking 10 people into custody.

### Call to attend the vigil

Speaking at the vigil, İlay Eroğlu underlined that the signed minutes and the number of votes shared by the YSK did not match, and added: "It is clear that the YSK is trying to usurp the will of the people. We have started a Democracy Vigil and we invite all the people of Ankara to join us. Likewise, we invite all citizens to start vigils in front of the YSK buildings in their own cities. We will protect our votes and our will, and we will not be a victim of the same unlawfulness once again."

### 10 people taken into custody

Riot police attacked the crowd in front of the YSK building, saying that the Democracy Vigil was unlawful and unconstitutional and took 10 people into custody.

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## Observers from the Spanish state expose harassment in Turkey and North Kurdistan

ANF - 17 May 2023

The international delegation sent by Podemos, Esquerra Republicana, EH Bildu and CUP to observe the regularity of the election process in Turkey and North Kurdistan issued a joint press release.

The statement said: “A delegation from Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia and Spain traveled to the country to monitor the electoral process from the city of Siirt, recently affected by the earthquake. The delegation was able to verify in situ the constant and harassing police presence both at political events and when voting at polling stations.

The very delegation that had the objective of certifying the electoral day, was questioned on Sunday by the Turkish police authorities and was detained for hours in a police station and forced to leave the country as soon as possible. The intention of the Turkish government to intimidate any verification at the international level of systematic violations of human rights or the democratic system was clear.

In short, Northern Kurdistan and Turkey as a whole are under an authoritarian and repressive government, which we hope can change after the second round, scheduled for May 28.”

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## Öztürk: Kurdish people voted for democracy and justice

Zeynep Kuray - Istanbul - 17 May 2023

The presidential and 28th term parliamentary elections in Turkey on May 14 were marked by massive election fraud amidst reports that countless votes were stolen at several ballot boxes and the will of the people was undermined. In North Kurdistan, the votes of the Green Left Party were counted on behalf of the government ally MHP.

DTK Co-Chair and Green Left Party Amed MP Berdan Öztürk spoke to ANF about the election outcomes and emphasized that the Kurdish people once again voted in favour of democracy despite all obstacles and election fraud.

### ‘The fraud was organized beforehand’

Öztürk noted that the Green Left Party’s votes were stolen in many places and there are ongoing objections to the results. He said: “For 8 years, we, the HDP, the DBP and the DTK, have been subjected to a never-ending crackdown. As you know, we contested the election under the banner of the Green Left Party due to the HDP’s closure case before the Constitutional Court. We could not take part in the polling committees due to the MHP’s objection to the HDP’s observation at the polls and the Green Left Party’s lack of representation in the Parliament. Still, we had observers on the ground. The MHP organized the fraud in advance. It came out that our votes were counted on behalf of the MHP in all ballot boxes where irregularities were reported. The wet-signed voting minutes we received and the data uploaded to the system of the Supreme Election Board (YSK) do not match. The basis of fraud was prepared beforehand.”

Öztürk revealed that his party faced major obstacles from the state during the election campaign. He added that they had to cancel the Ergani rally because of government pressure.

## ‘Kurdish people responded to the oppressive regime!’

The Kurdish politician emphasized that despite all the obstacles and election fraud, the Kurdish people took a clear stand in these elections and responded to the fascists and anti-Kurdish rivals. Stressing that the Kurds said no to the system represented by Erdoğan, he continued: “The Kurdish people said no to the government that has put them through the wringer for the last 8 years. The Kurdish people said that ‘we choose honourable peace, democracy and coexistence’. Everyone should respect the election results, especially in Amed, and those who question the intentions of the Kurdish people should read the results properly. From now on, those who accuse the Kurds and their friends of separatism should pull themselves together. Our stance is clear; nationalists and fascists came together and supported Erdoğan. The Kurdish people have shown their sincerity not once, but three times. The message the Kurds gave to the peoples and parties in Turkey in this regard is clear. The Kurdish people and their allies said that ‘if you want justice and democracy, we will support you’. We pay the price every day for this cause, but the Green Left Party is still being discussed. We defend and will continue to defend the coexistence project suggested by the Kurdish people and Mr. Abdullah Öcalan for the peoples of Turkey. Normally, the Kurdish people do not vote for the CHP and its leader. The Kurdish people went to the polls not to vote for Kılıçdaroğlu, but to defend democracy and bring down the Erdoğan mentality.”



## KCK: Fascism will definitely be overthrown in Turkey

ANF - 18 May 2023

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement commenting on the May 14 elections in Turkey and North Kurdistan.

KCK stressed that the struggle for the democratic solution to the Kurdish question, for the democratization of Turkey and for the liberation of Kurdistan will continue to be waged vigorously in the future, and that their support for this process and our struggle on this basis will continue uninterruptedly.

The statement released by KCK Co-Presidency includes the following:

“On May 14, 2023, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in North Kurdistan and Turkey. Due to the danger that AKP-MHP fascism poses to the Kurdish people as well as to the society and peoples of Turkey as a whole, the elections on May 14 were considered very important and have been the most important agenda in Turkey and North Kurdistan for months. As the Kurdish Freedom Movement, as a requirement of our belief in the democratization of Turkey, the liberation of Kurdistan and the ideal of the peoples living together and equally, we have approached this process positively in terms of the Turkish society, democratic forces, laborers, women, youth and all democratic groups of society expressing their democratic will against fascism.

The fascist AKP-MHP government aimed to prevent the expression of the will of all democratic segments of society, especially the Kurdish people, by putting all state means and all conceivable methods of force,



oppression and violence into action. But the patriotic people of Kurdistan overcame all oppression and violence, thus achieving great success by demonstrating a very strong will in the elections. We can unhesitatingly state that our people have shown a strong stance against AKP-MHP fascism in the May 14 elections and has thus taught a historical lesson to the anti-Kurdish, genocidal, colonialist and fascist AKP-MHP. We would therefore like to wholeheartedly congratulate the patriotic people of Kurdistan for this meaningful and historical achievement and salute them for this historical success. Our people have not given way to fascism in any way and have turned Kurdistan into the center of the legitimate struggle for democracy. This attitude of our people represents a very important step that will bring about the end of fascism. It is very clear that in the coming period, the importance of Kurdistan for the democratization of Turkey and the liberation of Turkey's society from the clutches of fascism will be better understood by everyone and that Kurdistan will play a historical role on this basis.

It is a very important and admirable development that women actively participated in the electoral process, supported the process more than anyone else, led the electoral process and brought about a strong representation of women. In line with our belief in the will and equal representation of women, we see these results very positively. Therefore, we would like to congratulate all women on the results achieved in the elections and express our greetings.

The May 14 elections took place under conditions where anti-democratic oppression was rampant. The fascist AKP-MHP government, which holds state power and rules the state, tried to prevent the expression of the democratic will of society by increasing the pressure on it all over Turkey. But in Kurdistan and against the Kurdish people, this repression was even more severe. Since the main goal of the fascist AKP-MHP government is to carry out the Kurdish genocide, it has continued the pressure on the Kurdish people uninterruptedly by putting all the state power into action and has increased this pressure even more during the election process. With the genocide and liquidation concept, which was agreed on in the form of the 'Annihilation Plan' and put into effect since July 24, 2015, the AKP-MHP government aimed to completely eliminate the will and existence of the Kurdish people. Within the scope of this genocide and liquidation concept, the Kurdish Freedom Movement and the Kurdish people have been subjected to a policy of oppression and violence unprecedented in history. Tens of thousands of people have been detained, arrested and tortured, and dozens of patriots have been murdered. Society was tried to be intimidated and tamed through oppression, violence and starvation. There is not a single patriot left in Kurdistan who has not been investigated and tried in court. The will of the people has been usurped repeatedly, the democratic legitimate institutions of the people have been seized, legitimate representatives have been arrested and trustees of fascism have been appointed in their place. People in Kurdistan have been rendered unable to function and work through detention, arrest and oppression. Those who defend democratic institutions and democratic politics have been detained and arrested again and again. Thus, the people's institutions have been rendered inoperable and the way for democratic politics has been blocked. On the other hand, by filing a lawsuit to ban the HDP, the Kurdish people, the democratic sectors of Turkey, laborers and women were left without an alternative in the elections and the aim was to exclude them from the elections. The elections in Turkey were held in such an environment. An accurate assessment of the elections can therefore not be made without taking into account the fascist oppression and policies carried out in Turkey in general and Kurdistan in particular.

AKP-MHP fascism continued its policy of oppression and violence not only before the elections but also during the election process and increased it even more as the elections got closer. Just before the elections, extensive political operations were carried out and dozens of journalists, lawyers, politicians and those ac-

tively involved in the election process were detained and arrested. The goal of these operations was to intimidate the public and to prevent and disrupt democratic election activities and preparations. Despite all this pressure, intimidation and operations that took place just before the elections, the people did not give up their democratic stance and dealt a huge blow to fascism in the elections. While the people gave strong support to the democratic forces and democratic candidates, they further weakened the weak presence of the AKP-MHP in Kurdistan, thus basically preventing fascism from entering Kurdistan.

The results of the elections are absolutely not as they have been published. AKP-MHP fascism not only tried to prevent the democratic will of the people from being reflected by using oppression and violence, but has also distorted the results by resorting to all kinds of tricks and fraud. In order to eliminate the results achieved by the Kurdish people, the peoples and the democratic groups of Turkey, despite all kinds of oppression and violence, the AKP-MHP government has resorted to all kinds of fraud. It has been made public that this was done extensively, and that ballots and vote result lists were tampered with. But what has been detected and reflected is only a very limited part of the truth. It has been clearly revealed that hundreds of thousands of votes in Kurdistan were invalidated and many more were assigned to other parties by tampering with the lists, trying to make the Kurdish-hating fascist MHP look strong. Therefore, the real election results are not like the published results. The official results do not mean anything other than proving the extent to which the AKP-MHP government has usurped the will of the people.

AKP-MHP fascism conducted the election process entirely on the basis of hostility towards the Kurds and anti-Kurdish sentiments. It tried to influence the masses through Kurdish hostility by provoking nationalist, racist and chauvinist feelings. Undoubtedly, with the support of intensive media and special warfare, it has influenced a part of the masses in Turkey and has managed to keep them on its side. However, in general, this policy has not been successful, and the majority of Turkish society has shown its attitude in favor of a democratic and political solution to the Kurdish question and of acting together with the Kurds. This is an important attitude and development. Although the nationalist and chauvinist delusions in Turkey have not been completely exhausted, the positive relations of the Kurdish people with the Turkish society represent a very important and strong ground for the democratization of Turkey and the liberation of Kurdistan in the future. In fact, the Kurdish people and the revolutionary democratic forces of Turkey entered the elections with the understanding of a democratic alliance, which was the main factor in the successful results of the elections.

Undoubtedly, with a more conscious approach and work, it would have been possible to achieve much more positive results. The conditions and means for this were sufficient. But narrow and superficial approaches prevented better results. It is important that this is discussed in detail and the necessary conclusions are drawn. While it was a very correct and important attitude for the democratic forces to enter the electoral process by forming an alliance, the fact that this alliance was kept narrow, that it was not handled at a level that could meet the demands of the phase, that the understanding of being content with small results was not sufficiently overcome, and that as a result the forces of democracy entered into a competing attitude when they should have fought against fascism in unity everywhere and at all times, must be seen as an important inadequacy. We believe that the democratic political arena and the socialist and democratic forces of Turkey will analyze the process from this perspective and draw the necessary conclusions.

There is no doubt that the struggle for a democratic solution to the Kurdish question, for the democratization of Turkey and for the liberation of Kurdistan will continue to be waged vigorously in the future. We believe that the Kurdish people and all the peoples of Turkey, women, workers and laborers will further

strengthen this struggle and bring it to a conclusion with stronger alliances and forms of unity. As a movement, our support for this process and our struggle on this basis will continue uninterrupted. Fascism will definitely be overthrown in Turkey and Turkey will be democratized. Fascism has no future to offer to the peoples and to humanity. It will only lead to destruction. The future of Turkey and Kurdistan will be determined and shaped by the struggle of the peoples, the democratic forces and women. The results of the elections clearly show that this will be the case. Based on this belief, we would like to once again congratulate the patriotic people of Kurdistan, the women and the democratic forces of Turkey for the successful results, express our greetings and wish them continued success.”

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## HDP and Green Left Party: We are determined to make the regime lose in the runoff

ANF - 19 May 2023

Turkey's presidential election will go to a runoff on 28 May. The executive councils of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and the Green Left Party held a meeting in Ankara where they discussed the election work and the results.

The HDP and Green Left Party released a statement after the meeting, outlining their objectives for the coming days in a ten-point plan.

1- We consider it extremely important that the Green Left Party, despite all the pressure and coups, has succeeded in achieving the third largest representation of Turkey in parliament. However, it is also clear that, all in all, we did not achieve the election result we wished for and expected. Whatever the conditions, we will continue to fight to organise ourselves more strongly and to achieve greater success.

2- First of all, we note that we are already working towards the elimination of the identified shortcomings. It should not be forgotten that we come from a tradition where the principle of criticism and self-criticism applies. The election results have reasons that go beyond the voting process. They require a comprehensive discussion phase. In order to avoid former mistakes in the new beginning, we will convene meetings after 28 May and hold discussions with our people and our district and provincial associations. Without resorting to any thin excuses, we will take stock of identified weaknesses and inadequacies and do what is necessary. No one should have any doubt about this.

3- However, the election is not over yet. On 28 May, the second round in the presidential election will take place. In line with the tradition and culture of our parties, we value everything that contributes to and paves the way for the struggle for freedom and democracy and creates opportunities. Elections are undoubtedly part of this. Just as past votes that did not produce the desired results were used as a reason for new persistence, tenacity and a strengthening of the struggle, the current electoral process will also become a reason for extended organising, resistance and struggle.

4- The AKP/MHP government and the People's Alliance are carrying out incessant attacks against Kurds, women, youth, the oppressed and the social and political opposition. Our parties are the primary target of an attack concept that clamps down on society by creating a climate of oppression and fear. Until today, we have succeeded in resolutely thwarting all war concepts, plans of decomposition and the politics of rejection and denial - because the foundation of our reality, which is supported by resolute resistance, has been built with the will of this people. We are the subjects of a resistance that finds its way and its future in the social struggle against the politics of the rulers based on lies and does not retreat.

5- In this period of hard struggle, all oppositional sections of society, especially the Kurdish people, have put up considerable resistance. We would like to emphasise once again that we are here, and we are strong! This idea, this tradition of struggle will never end. We will continue our struggle to build the broadest democracy alliance in Turkey and push back fascism.

6- With the parliamentary election of 14 May, an anti-woman, anti-working class and anti- Kurdish power alliance became visible. Against this composition, the people have once again given our party the responsibility to defend the struggle of women, the struggle of the working class, universal human and collective rights, the general principles of international law and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality and justice. Let no one doubt that we will defend the interests of society in parliament, in the streets, in short, at all levels and fields of politics to the end.

7- As the third strongest force in parliament, we are determined to make the regime that we did not let win in the first round of the elections lose in the run-off. In the coming days, we will continue our way with the determination of our peoples that gives us breath and life, and we will surely win. We are firmly convinced that in the coming days, both our organised structures, components and alliances and our people will once again show their determination at the ballot box without flinching from this regime that is the enemy of justice, peace and freedom.

8- On the eve of a new period of struggle, we will once again succeed in making the breakthrough to reach the light at the darkest moment of darkness and realise our goals. We reaffirm our pledge to the great values of our struggle for humanity, to all friends and companions who have participated in the dungeons or in exile at every level and stage of the resistance, making sacrifices and diligence to achieve victory. The most important tool for this is undoubtedly our political stance and strategy, which is the hope of peoples, faith communities, cultures, the oppressed, women and youth. The only way to succeed, to win, to inspire hope and to achieve victory is to better show this policy and bring it together with the peoples.

9- Fascism has been stopped by years of struggle of our peoples with great efforts and sacrifices. We should be aware that the continued survival of this rotting fascism by means of state resources, oppression, violence and electoral tricks will cause new suffering to our peoples. It is in our hands not to allow this to happen. For this, the electoral process, which is not yet over, is a great opportunity. In the next few days, we can put an end to this nightmare and put an end to evil without falling into pessimism and despair. We have the opportunity to make the second round of the presidential election a great end and a new beginning.

10- It is necessary that all our peoples, organisations and friends inside and outside the country go to the polls for the runoff election and deliver the ultimate blow to fascism instead of postponing the struggle until after the elections. Our greatest self-criticism after the valuable criticism of our people will be to de-

feat the one-man regime. We will spend the critical period ahead of us in determined action and work. Convinced that we will win, we have decided to intensify our work from today.

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## ‘We will respond to the fascist government stronger on May 28’

ANF - Amed - 20 May 2023

In an interview with ANF, Şahin stated: “We said before that we would do our best to eliminate and overthrow the 21-year-long fascist government without making any compromise. While doing this, we will act with an awareness of the power before us. Because we did not just fight the AKP-MHP, but also the Nation Alliance and a regime that holds all state apparatuses to suppress the opposition.”

### **We will make self-criticism**

Şahin acknowledged that his party needed self-criticism over certain issues. He continued: “Some of our activities during the election campaign may be subject to self-criticism. These are concerned with technical issues. We will make criticism and self-criticism when dealing with them. Right, we could have received over 70 percent of the vote in our strongholds. We certainly had some shortcomings. However, we should also emphasize that our party has been subjected to a massive crackdown in the last 8 years. For example, many of our votes were counted on behalf of different parties, since the Green Left Party could not employ poll watchers. We corrected some irregularities we could detect, but we have many votes stolen from us.”

### **Second round points to success**

Şahin pointed out that: “Our initial decision will not change. We will reveal our stance more strongly on May 28. We will overthrow this fascist government. When we look at the activities of the Green Left Party, the HDP, the opposition, the marginalized and the oppressed, we see that a government that has not been defeated for 21 years is slowly losing ground and the presidential election is heading to a runoff. This did not happen by itself. The struggle and votes of the people made it possible. This also proved a great success. There is a government that holds all state apparatuses to suppress the opposition. Despite all this, we achieved success in the first round of the election.”

### **No lack of motivation**

Şahin reiterated that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu would again be supported by his party on May 28. He added: “We did not lose motivation because of the number of our elected deputies, and we will respond even more strongly on May 28. Especially in Kurdistan, we showed our stance with Kılıçdaroğlu receiving more than 70 percent of the votes. In the second round, we can do better and defeat the existing oppressive government. We will continue to develop the struggle further.”

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## Voting begins in Italy

ANF - Rome - 21 May 2023

In Italy, Turkish and Kurdish people went to the polls for the second round of the presidential elections. The polls are open between 20 and 22 May.

In the first round of the elections in Italy, presidential candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu came first with 73.85 percent of the vote, while Recep Tayyip Erdogan got 23.95 percent.

The Italian Green Left Party Election Coordination brings people to the polls for the second round with the aim of increasing Kılıçdaroğlu's vote rate to 80 percent. The coordination carries people from Turin, Bologna, Veneto, Florence to Rome and Milan by hired buses, minibuses and taxis.

In Rome and Milan, people began to wait in queues from 7.30am on Saturday morning to vote.



## Voting continues in Melbourne

ANF - Melbourne - 21 May 2023

Turkish and Kurdish people living in Australia are going to the polls for the presidential run-off elections in Turkey as of Saturday.

Long queues were formed since 7am on the first day of the election in Melbourne, where voting continued until 10pm.

Melbourne Green Left Party coordination brought voters to the polls. The Green Left Party and the CHP watched over the vote to prevent any irregularity.



## Higher number of voters in Switzerland on first day

ANF - Bern - 21 May 2023

Polling stations have been set up in many cities abroad for the second round of the presidential elections to be held in Turkey and Kurdistan on 28 May. People started to cast their votes in 31 polling stations set up in Bern, Geneva and Zurich in Switzerland. As of Sunday evening, 3,662 voters in Bern, 4,830 in Geneva and 10,502 in Zurich had cast their votes, a total of 18,894. On the first day of the first round, 6,232 voters across Switzerland had voted.

There are 105,821 registered voters in Switzerland. The participation rate in the first round was 56.7 per cent.

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## Interview / Opinion

### Kalkan: Kurdish people remain resolute in their demand for freedom, equality and democracy

ANF - 19 May 2023

Duran Kalkan, member of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council, spoke to Medya Haber about the latest developments in Kurdistan, the Middle East and the world, including the discussions about Abdullah Öcalan during Turkey's elections, the current situation of Abdullah Öcalan and the results of the recent elections in Turkey.

#### **Discussions About Abdullah Öcalan During Turkey's Elections – “No one put forward Turkey's fundamental problems and offered solutions to them”**

“In the current environment of absolute isolation, they also brought up Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] as part of the election debates. They wanted to base the elections in Turkey and the election debates on this issue. Of course, this is understandable in a way. Turkey's most fundamental problem is the Kurdish problem. As the representative of the Kurdish will for freedom, Leader Apo is being held in İmralı. Therefore, Leader Apo was undoubtedly going to be put on the agenda. Because the Kurdish problem needed to be discussed. And when the Kurdish problem is discussed, there cannot be a discussion without Leader Apo being on the agenda. But this was not the case. The Kurdish problem, its causes and the ways of solving it were not discussed, which is why Leader Apo was also not really put on the agenda. On the contrary, those who have inflicted the greatest terror and genocide on the Kurdish people for 100 years tried to accuse Leader Apo, the Kurds, the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and our party of terrorism. In a very cheap way, they tried to make the domestic and foreign public accept this. They think they will just be able to do this and that the process in Turkey will just continue like this. They expect the Kurdish people to simply do what they want. They think that the Kurdish society will submit to this. They thought they could divide and fragment the Kurds. They are after tricks and games within the scope of the special warfare. This is a very simplistic and immoral attitude. We need to emphasize this again and again. Beyond making a lot of promises, there was no one [during the elections] who put forward Turkey's fundamental problems and offered solutions to them. Leader Apo was put on the agenda because he has the power and the will for a solution. Indeed, there is no political force that promises a free and democratic future for the society in Turkey. There is no such political mentality and attitude. On the contrary, they think that the Kurds deserve genocide and Turkey deserves fascist oppression and terror. The centuries-old state system

works on this basis. The politics of the last period is completely based on this cheap approach of both the government and the opposition.”

“They are very angry. Why has Leader Apo brought the Kurdish question to light? Why does he develop libertarian and democratic ways of solving the Kurdish question? Why does he propose a common solution and life? They are very angry because he is proposing a politics and mentality that is an alternative to the existing politics in Turkey. Because he is clearly showing everyone how false their rhetoric is, and that their true face is marked by fascism, colonialism and a genocidal mentality and politics. Leader Apo’s resistance in İmralı is enlightening. In fact, they understand this well, but they do not approach this issue correctly, humanely and in a libertarian and democratic way. Their approach is fascist, colonialist, genocidal, manipulative, brutal and warmongering. They have an anti-Kurdish, anti-social, anti-woman mentality and politics. Of course, they do all this not because they don’t know, but because they know very well. They do all this on purpose.”

### **Current Situation of Abdullah Öcalan – “No information about İmralı has been published for 26 months”**

“First of all, I would like to salute the historic resistance in İmralı of Leader Apo. His isolation continues. There is absolutely no change. The lawyers also evaluated this situation recently. They stated that the promises made have not been fulfilled. Beyond that, no information about İmralı has been published for 26 months. Because of this, there is undoubtedly a lot of concern. There is a lot of anxiety and anger in the Kurdish society. On the other hand, the struggle for the physical freedom of Leader Apo continues. Women, youth and our people are waging an uninterrupted struggle together with our friends all over the world. I would like to greet them all once more and wish them success. I want to emphasize once again that all of these struggles are very important.”

“There is also great support from external circles. The struggles of international friends, academics, trade unions, laborers and intellectuals are important. We need to increase this even more. Both the struggle for the physical freedom of Leader Apo is growing and the participation in this struggle is getting stronger among our international friends. Because as the thoughts of Leader Apo spread, people increasingly demand that the author of these thoughts should not live in a torture and genocide system like İmralı, that he should have physical freedom and that he should be able to develop his thoughts further and put them at the service of humanity. Leader Apo has the most comprehensive and systematic power of thought that offers solutions to the problems of humanity. With the new paradigm, he has put forward such a systematic way of thinking. Therefore, the more these ideas are spread and the more the struggle increases, the more people feel their responsibility and support the struggle even more. This means that we need to expose the İmralı torture and isolation system, this genocide system, and we need to spread Leader Apo’s thoughts even more. As we do this, the struggle against the İmralı torture and isolation system on the basis of the freedom of Leader Apo will grow. There is no doubt about this. Most recently, a delegation called the ‘International İmralı Peace Delegation’ came [to Turkey], visited the related institutions, exchanged views and held discussions. On the basis of the opinions they heard, they said that they will strengthen the struggle against the İmralı torture and isolation system in the international arena. This is a very altruistic and consistent attitude. We therefore expect important work from their side.”



“Leader Apo has been held in the İmralı torture and isolation system for 25 years. This 25th year is a year in which the situation of Leader Apo needs to be evaluated legally. Yes, the Turkish state is responsible for creating and running the İmralı system. But NATO and the European Union are also responsible. All its institutions, the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and the CPT are also responsible. Politically, various states are responsible. The US administration, the UK, Israel and all European states are responsible for the international conspiracy and therefore for the abduction of Leader Apo and his 25 years in the torture and isolation in İmralı. No one can escape this responsibility. In this 25th year of the İmralı torture and isolation system all these powers have to make a new assessment. This is a legal requirement. But there does not seem to be any movement from anyone in this direction. Three months have passed since February 15th [anniversary of abduction of Abdullah Öcalan on February 15, 1999] but there is no attention for this issue. This is not acceptable. The legal circles concerned with the defense of Leader Apo need to be more sensitive. They need to make more efforts and investigate more. It is necessary to put this situation on the agenda more through struggles that expose the İmralı torture and isolation system. If they do not approach the Kurdish problem and its solution ideologically and politically on the basis of Leader Apo’s ideas, they should at least take legal initiatives to address the situation of his detention in İmralı. They need to start an initiative immediately. We cannot accept this silence. Our people, humanity and the oppressed will not accept this.”

“Understanding the İmralı resistance correctly means understanding the Kurdish problem and the Kurdish reality correctly. Therefore, it means understanding the reality of Turkey, the Turkish state system, the global system of capitalist modernity that created this state and the general power and state system correctly. This means understanding correctly what is being imposed on the Middle East and humanity today. All these issues are closely intertwined. In this sense, this means leading a conscious, organized and successful struggle against all forms of oppression, exploitation, tyranny, fascism and massacres. Only if such a struggle is led successfully, the İmralı resistance and the thoughts of Leader Apo will be understood correctly and their requirements will be fulfilled.”

### **Elections in Turkey – “Despite all the oppression and persecution, the Kurdish people remain resolute in their demand for freedom, equality and democracy”**

“An election has taken place recently. Of course, it is debatable how fair, free and equal this election was. It is well-known that it was not fair or free. What kind of pressure, arrests and obstructions took place during the election? Everyone is discussing this now. It is debatable how much of an election there really was. On the other hand, what kind of fraud took place during the election process is also being discussed. But with all that said, there was indeed an election on May 14th which has led to certain results. Even though the results are not yet official, many circles are already making evaluations. Because these elections were very important. It was said that Turkey would start its second century and the results of these elections would determine the mentality and politics by which this century would be shaped. The leadership of our movement is currently evaluating the results. It will undoubtedly publish its views and the policies it will pursue on this basis very soon. We have not reached such a conclusion yet. Therefore, I can only state some individual observations here.”

“There is talk of fraud and pressure, but there are also various evaluations concerning the election results. Some say there was no winner, some say that they won and others say the election was unfair. Many things are being said. But first of all, I would like to salute our patriotic people who worked for the election on

the basis of the calls of our leadership, who went to the polls on May 14th and cast their votes, who voted in favor of the libertarian and democratic forces and women in line with our interests. I congratulate them on their success. I would also like to wish success to the MPs that our people have elected to fulfill their duties. This election has clearly shown that there is no change in the stance and attitude of the Kurdish people. In almost all of Kurdistan, the level of votes is more or less the same as in the previous elections. There were very few ups and downs. Despite all the oppression, persecution, massacres and imprisonment, the Kurdish people remain resolute in their demand for freedom, equality and democracy. There is absolutely no regression, no weakening. This is very important. This is the case in Kurdistan as well as for the Kurds who have been displaced to Turkish cities. This deserves a big thank you. This attitude of our people reveals that no persecution and torture can weaken them. This is the greatest success. Some circles say that the votes have decreased. Certain parties and organizations say they will make self-criticism. Of course, they are one thing, the stance of the people is another. Society and political circles should not be confused with each other. Those who made mistakes should undoubtedly find the reasons that led to this with the help of criticism and self-criticism. But there is absolutely no regression in the stance of the Kurdish people. In fact, there is even more anger and combativeness. If this has not been translated into sufficient actions, those in charge of educating and organizing the people should evaluate their own situation. The fault lies with them. Therefore, there is no mistake or deficiency in the stance of society which needs to be saluted and celebrated. On this basis, we salute and congratulate the entire Kurdish people for their correct and successful stance in the elections.”

“The result of the presidential election is not clear yet. Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu will compete in the second round. The results of the parliamentary elections are more or less certain. The general picture is this: All the parties that had taken part in previous elections have lost votes. There is no winner, no one who increased their votes. Some new parties have entered the scene. They got one and a half, two, two and a half percent of the votes. Parties like the TIP, the Welfare Party or the Zafer Party. They got the votes that were lost due to attrition. The other parties have lost votes compared to the previous election. Of course, everyone is questioning the reasons from their own perspective. It was the People’s Alliance that most skillfully compensated for this decline. For example, the AKP has witnessed the biggest decline. It has dropped from 42 percent to 35 percent, 7 points. There is a slight decline in the votes for the MHP. But by adding new parties to their alliance, they reduced the loss of votes for the alliance. They are the alliance that has the most MPs in the parliament and actually won the election in terms of the parliamentary arithmetic. In fact, such a result was expected for the National Alliance. But the National Alliance was not able to show this strength. The reasons for this need to be discussed.”

“They themselves will undoubtedly discuss this in a better way. Many parties had come together. They were showing a democratic stance and were expressing their agreement with each other. Obviously, they were not able to explain this well because they couldn’t stand firm. I guess they made a mistake in the alliance. Entering the elections jointly did not yield many results for them. They should have had the political maturity to understand that. Entering the elections on the basis of the CHP led to losses for both the CHP and the other parties. This did not lead to a plus. They focused too much on their own supporter base in their propaganda. They were not able to show clear solutions to Turkey’s problems beyond the AKP’s practices. They focused a bit on the economy and justice, but not on the war. They did not dwell on the Kurdish problem. They mostly stayed under the influence of the People’s Alliance and simply tried to respond to it. They were not really able to show their differences which basically means that they were not different. It also turned out that they were not very organized.”

“How did the AKP get these votes when it really suffered so much attrition? They say it has lost a lot of votes. Of course, it will, but the fact that it still received so many votes under these conditions should not be taken lightly. We need to focus on the reasons. One important reason is the pressure. One reason is that they influenced people with money. But there are two other fundamental reasons. First, the AKP is an organized force. It really has a party organization. As part of one’s election activities, it is not enough to go to the press and say a few things, or to gather your own base of supporters and talk to them. An organized and planned effort to go to people who are not your own is very important. In this sense, one can consider the AKP and MHP as the most organized parties. Another thing is that they have really formed a community. They have created a mass of people based on racist, chauvinist, nationalist and Turanist ideas and an understanding of the history of the MHP, which brainwashes people in Turkey with money, education, art and literature. They get their votes from these people. In this sense, the AKP and MHP have carried out very dangerous and serious work. They have created a new understanding of history, a new form of relationships, a new capital, class and community by destroying what the Turkish state had created until the 1970s. In this sense, Kemalism is over. Since September 12 [1980], a new community has been formed, especially in the form of the AKP-MHP. This means that the racist, Turanist and genocidal mentality and politics of the Committee of Union and Progress has reached its peak today. The Kurds are suffering from this, but this is actually harmful for everyone. This constitutes a danger for everyone. Everyone needs to understand this well. There should not be a simple approach to the AKP.”

“We also made mistakes. We do not hide them. We make self-criticism and evaluate the mistakes. The Alliance for Labor and Freedom says that they will also make self-criticism. They should. Of course, these results cannot be seen as a complete success. They set goals, but these goals have not been achieved. But people should not be held responsible for this. There is not the slightest regression among the Kurdish people. They are against fascism, colonialism and genocide. They continue to struggle for freedom, equality and fraternity by paying any price needed. They have clearly shown their stance once again in the May 14 elections. But the organizations and parties were supposed to organize beyond this and make this even bigger. Why didn’t this happen? They should question themselves on this basis. There is a very important reason: they made mistakes in the way they formed their alliance. Yes, they turned a lot towards left and revolutionary democratic organizations. This was not wrong, but they were still not able to achieve complete unity with them. On the other hand, a distancing from the anti-capitalist democratic and Islamic circles took place. Yes, there should have been more orientation towards the left democratic movement, but there should have also been an alliance to embrace all democratic circles, including the Islamic circles. On the other hand, they are not really organized. When it comes to elections, it is not enough to make propaganda and cause excitement only in their own circles. Instead of going to circles outside their own, they only promoted the enthusiasm and excitement of their own base. They mostly made these circles go to the polls. That was also insufficient. They lack organized work. On the basis of mass work, party organization, party work and women’s and youth organizations, they lack a work that constantly reaches out to the masses who are unaware of them. They will probably evaluate and question this more.”

“The AKP has lost the most votes. But the election results were a bit different from what had been predicted. We have to accept that too. There was not a very serious change in Kurdistan. We can say that clearly. On the contrary, the anger and protest of society was very high. But society’s leaders and pioneers were not able to transform that anger into organization and action. The mistake was made by those who should have achieved this. On the other hand, the fact that the AKP still managed to get so many votes should make the entire opposition self-critical. The demand for change was there among everyone, even among foreign circles. Not being able to achieve this change is, of course, a serious shortcoming. So,

the opposition in particular should question the reasons for this shortcoming more accurately and seriously.”

“We cannot say anything about the presidential election. Obviously, someone has recently given certain directions to Tayyip Erdoğan with regards to this issue. He has been open to this. He sees it as empowering. His last speeches before the election showed this a bit. So did his attitude after the election. This is how it is, and he will obviously continue to do so. The opposition says that they will resist, but its chances have decreased compared to before.”

“Regardless of who becomes president, the current election results have shown the following: Whoever forms a government will no longer be able to run things alone. For example, if the People’s Alliance forms the new government, it cannot run it as it has been doing so far. Turkey needs change and this change can only be achieved by creating as much unity as possible. Those who impose only their own will on society will yield more protests, suffer more damage and eventually lose. First of all, the message of the elections is that a united approach in which everyone can participate, and which will prevent Turkey from collapsing under the weight of its problems, will be more constructive. Second point: Yes, the election was important, but we reached the elections after a great struggle. The election was part of our antifascist, revolutionary and democratic struggle. This struggle will be shaped by the outcome of this election, but it will not end. It will definitely continue. Therefore, elections alone are not a method of struggle. Fascism cannot be overthrown only through elections. This is only possible with multifaceted methods of struggle. This is a long-term struggle. The elections have provided important proof in this regard. They revealed that there is still a great power of resistance both in Kurdistan and in Turkey. The spread of the antifascist and democratic struggle in Turkey has become clearer. Therefore, from now on, the struggle can be further strengthened in many ways. It will not stop. The struggle will develop and continue. AKP MHP fascism and the People’s Alliance included some dangerous circles, such as the Hizbi-Kontra. If they try to continue their massacre and destruction attacks and occupation attacks on the basis of the ‘Annihilation Plan’ with the help of these circles, of course a great resistance will take place against them.”

“As a movement, we took the decision to halt all military attacks after the earthquake and later extended it until the elections. Our aim was to support the election process. But the AKP and MHP administration did not respond to this attitude. They continued their attacks as much as they could. They attacked us during their election campaign. It almost seemed as if there was an election between the AKP and the PKK. They made the PKK the only target and launched all kinds of annihilation attacks against the guerrilla. These attacks are still going on. The guerrilla had to defend itself against these attacks on the basis of legitimate self-defense. Fascism attacked and an armed resistance developed all over Kurdistan under the leadership of Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna [South Kurdish areas controlled by the guerrilla forces]. If the attacks continue in this manner, the guerrilla, the people, women and youth will continue to resist. The elections have created a very favorable ground for this resistance. They did not cause any damage. The will of the women and youth was revealed. They are in a position to wage all kinds of struggles. Therefore, I can say this: Only a holistic approach can lead Turkey to an exit. Other than that, there is only the option to wage a great struggle. Therefore, the antifascist and democratic struggle will continue. This struggle should not be considered to only take place in the form of elections or an armed struggle. It is necessary to see it as a multifaceted struggle. The fascist attacks are multifaceted. The National Alliance only envisioned the replacement of the current presidential system with a parliamentary system. This is a very schematic approach. This is not really in line with the struggle against fascism. The current administration

has reversed all the achievements of the first 50 years of the republic. This opposition has not been able to resist any of this. So many artists, writers and democrats have been put in prisons, attacked and forced to flee abroad. Thus, this administration carries out an intense social genocide against society. It is trying to poison the minds of young people. It is necessary to fight against this poison in every aspect. This poison is harmful to the whole society of Turkey. It also constitutes a huge danger to humanity. If the politics of this fascist, colonialist and genocidal mentality is not stopped, it will cause huge dangers for everyone. So, the struggle will continue. We need to be more versatile and creative in our struggle. The revolutionary and democratic forces need to lead the struggle even more from now on.”

“Where has the AKP come from? Islamic circles should also be careful about this issue. The AKP has turned the Islamic circles into the MHP. It has made them racist, chauvinist and nationalist. It has destroyed the Islamic approaches. Because it is the MHP that determines the ideological line. Today, the AKP has turned into the MHP. In this respect, all of those circles need to stand up for their own identities. Everyone needs to wage a multi-faceted struggle that will save them from the AKP, which has turned into the MHP; from a racist and nationalist AKP whose mentality and politics have declared everybody its enemy. The struggle against fascism is a common struggle. Fascism is carrying out a total attack. Therefore, the antifascist resistance and democratic resistance must also be total. Some circles have joined, some have not. Those who did not participate are now suffering the greatest damage. Therefore, everyone must see the facts and understand them correctly. In the antifascist struggle for democracy, we must be able to succeed in an all-out struggle that will eradicate this racist, chauvinist, fascist and genocidal mentality and politics from Turkey; that will save society, the youth, women and peoples of Turkey from this poisonous mentality and politics. On this basis, I would like to wish everyone success.”

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## If Erdoğan wins again, Turkey will see a watered-down version of Taliban and ISIS rule

Ronahi Serhat - 21 May 2023

The elections took place not in an anti-democratic climate, but under conditions of fascism. In fact, every moment beyond the election was also marked by resistance and struggle. The women, the Kurdish people and the democratic forces of Turkey successfully expressed their will at the ballot boxes despite repression, all kinds of obstacles and theft of votes. Even though we cannot say that the will of the democratic, liberal and ecological structures could be fully shown because of electoral fraud, the result that came out in spite of fascism and in spite of dictatorship is all the more significant. The people of Kurdistan and the democratic forces of Turkey have made their will clear at the ballot box and the Alliance for Labour and Freedom has managed to become the first political force in Kurdistan and the third strongest force in Turkey. It is the only alternative for democratic change, a democratic solution and freedom for the whole of Turkey. It is not just about opposition to a government, instead it is about a spirit of resistance leading the struggle for democracy. The Alliance for Labour and Freedom is organising radical democracy to build a future for all individuals, whether Kurdish, Turkish, Armenian, Alevi, Yazidi, Sunni, female, youth or male, and every component of society in Turkey and Kurdistan based on freedom.

The attitude of the Kurdish people towards the predatory, genocidal and fascist AKP/MHP system is clear. They have shown their will in the elections on 14 May. The Alliance for Labour and Freedom did not set out with the sole aim of winning elections. It will go down in the history of democracy in Turkey with an unforgettable historic mark by fulfilling its historical role in the overthrow of Erdoğan's dictatorship in the presidential election on 28 May. The Alliance is aware of its historical task and responsibility towards women, youth and the peoples of Turkey and Kurdistan and will act in this sense.

Now it is the turn of the peoples in Turkey!

There is very little time left before the elections, so it is necessary now to draw attention to certain errors. Now that the parliamentary election, in which the parties contested with independent lists or alliances, is behind us, all those who oppose Erdoğan should focus on winning the presidential election. It would be a big mistake for the CHP to plan the presidential election, like the parliamentary election, solely in terms of its own base. Kılıçdaroğlu is not running alone as the candidate of the CHP or the Nation's Alliance. In the 14 May elections, he received votes from all of Kurdistan and half of Turkey. This shows that he is entering the race as the people's candidate. This is a phenomenon that goes far beyond the CHP or the Nation's Alliance. In this situation, the CHP should work with the organised political representations of all those who voted for Kılıçdaroğlu on 14 May. The CHP representatives should overcome their narrow-minded attitude. It can be seen that the small parties that make up the Nation's Alliance are quite satisfied with the number of deputies they have received and have now retreated to their corners. It is obvious that they are only participating for show, while Meral Akşener (Leader of İYİ Party) has maintained her resentful, protesting and enforcing attitude from the beginning. Defeating the Erdogan dictatorship in the presidential election is a task for Turkey as a whole society. The lies, robbery and vileness of this government know no bounds. It rules by fraud and blackmail and has turned the country into a party state.

Those who compete in Turkishness, nationalism and love of the fatherland and permanently argue about who is more nationalistic are in reality neither interested in Turkey nor in the people. In their mentality, there is only one place for women, that as an object, as a sexual object. Their only interest is hostility to the Kurds, their power, their own interests and seats. They are not interested at all in the reality in Turkey, in the fact that the country is on the brink of the abyss, in the people who are falling into poverty, who are deprived of any fundamental rights and freedoms and are condemned to a life of dignity and alienation.

Those who spread the legend that [the far-right presidential candidate] Sinan Oğan has appeared like a rabbit out of a hat and believe that they can save Turkey by endearing themselves to him are under a great delusion. Sinan Oğan benefited to a critical extent from the electoral fraud and intense media propaganda and was purposefully built up to be the decisive player in the second round. However, if the political strength of the Kurdish people is taken into account, the attempt to complete the marathon presidential election with Oğan could be a dead end. To impose nationalism as the only option on a society that yearns for democracy is to play into the hands of the regime. Oğan, who himself seems surprised at what he has become, is being portrayed as a figure crucial to Turkey's fate. It has been discussed for days whether he will give preference to Erdoğan or Kılıçdaroğlu. Why has Oğan emerged as a presidential candidate at all if Turkey would have a good fate with Erdoğan? Why are people not asking about this? After all, you run for president if you don't want Erdoğan's dictatorship anymore. So those who are against the government and have an opposition and a struggle to show, present themselves to society as an alternative.

In this respect, it is opportunism and short-term political profiteering if Oğan, who does not care about Turkey, tries to expand his negotiating power as much as possible in the field of tension between Kılıç-daroğlu and Erdoğan. In any case, it is well known what a nationalist attitude means, so there is no need to assess this further at this point. Those who dream of democracy with the cudgel of nationalism in their hands should turn back from this delusion. Instead of spreading more nationalism, the priority should be to unite the people and thus bring the country out of darkness.

Erdoğan has used religion to exploit and plunder the people. He has made Turkey completely dependent on foreign countries, cut off the people from production, made even agriculture dependent on the outside and condemned the people to hunger. With him, education and health have reached an all-time low. He tries to gloss over all his crimes with the "defence of the fatherland against terror". He is a disgrace to the people of Turkey.

He is the disgrace of those who have lost so much of their personality that they consider it an honour to serve Erdoğan. He is the disgrace of those who remain silent in the face of injustice and defile their consciences. Now is the time for the people of Turkey to be freed from this disgrace! It is time to do justice and settle accounts with this criminal gang.

Erdoğan and his dictatorship, whose actions are all crimes that have driven social and political immorality to new heights and shamelessly legitimise the rape of children and crimes against women against society, are doomed to fall. Erdoğan is the epitome of the Taliban and ISIS mindset. We know that the HÜDA-PAR was not included in the People's Alliance just because of the votes, because it does not have a significant share of the votes. Through the AKP list, murderers, misogynists, rapists, people who abuse religion, thieves and rip-off artists were brought into parliament. A few self-absorbed male journalists who have made a name for themselves in the Turkish media argue that there is nothing to fear and no danger when HÜDA-PAR has four MPs. Presenting oneself as knowing and trying to put women to sleep is a typical expression of patriarchal attitudes. One consoles oneself by pretending that there is a difference between Erdoğan's attitude and the Mullah regime, the Taliban or HÜDA-PAR. It is a denial of the facts. If they do it unconsciously, then they must be warned. But if all this is done to reassure women and society, then it means nothing but tacit complicity with HÜDA-PAR.

Women will not sit side by side with murderers and rapists in parliament, instead they will fight. They will extend the social struggle everywhere and lead it effectively. The programme of HÜDA-PAR is an even more open expression of the AKP's attitude. Those who are appalled by HÜDA-PAR's terrible ideas regarding women need only to look at women's policies and their implementation by the Erdoğan regime and the AKP. Under the rule of the AKP, attempts were made to put into practice the views of the HÜDA-PAR regarding women through religious orders, educational institutions, the religious authority, cultural and other institutions. Throughout his rule, Erdoğan has directly targeted women and attacked the basic values and dignity of society. If Erdoğan wins again, Turkey will see a watered-down version of Taliban and ISIS rule in the aftermath. However, women will mobilise and bury the re-election of Erdoğan, the representative of green fascism on the line of the Taliban, ISIS and HÜDA-PAR, at the ballot boxes on 28 May. The women and the youth are the decisive forces that together will determine their own future and the free and democratic future of Kurdistan and Turkey. In the historically decisive elections on 28 May, women will defeat the misogynist Erdoğan, who has driven sexism to the level of fascism.

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