

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

New ban on lawyers and family visits imposed on Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | 31 MAY 2023

Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has been kept in isolation in Imrali since 1999. There has been no news of him for the last two years. Requests for a visit remain unanswered for a long time. The judiciary feels no need to provide a justification. Although arbitrary and systematic obstacles are sometimes justified by disciplinary sanctions, this is only reported to their lawyers, sometimes weeks, sometimes months later.

According to the Mezopotamya Agency (MA), the lawyers last applied to the Bursa 2nd Execution Judge on 23 December 2022 to counter the rejection of family visits.

However, this application was rejected on 3 January 2023, citing a three-month ban on family visits. No justification was given for the ban, except that it was a "disciplinary punishment".

Lawyers filed an appeal to the Bursa 1st High Criminal Court on 10 January to have this decision lifted. The court rejected the objection on the same day without giving any reason.

Visits banned after earthquake

In addition to the repeated applications for visits presented every week, lawyers and family members applied for visits immediately after the earthquake that occurred in Maraş on 6 February and affected many provinces.

Following this request, it was reported that Abdullah Öcalan, Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veyisi Aktaş, all in isolation in Imralı, had been given a ban on visits for 3 months on 21 December 2022. The ban should end on 10 January 2023.

New bans on visits

Despite this, the lawyers continued to apply for a lawyer's visit twice a week and a family visit once a week.

The lawyers continued to file applications in April, but all were rejected. Meanwhile, it was learned that a new ban on visits was decided on 15 March. This new ban ended on 30 March.

The decision to ban visits was brought to the Bursa 1st High Criminal Court on 14 April. This objection was rejected on 30 April. Thus, a new ban was imposed on Abdullah Öcalan.

New six-month ban on 26 April

When the lawyers applied to the Bursa Execution Judge on 27 April 2023, no response was given.

Instead, the lawyers were notified by the Bursa 1st High Criminal Court through a communiqué that included a decision taken by the Bursa 3rd Criminal Court on 26 April that a new 6-month ban on visits was imposed on Abdullah Öcalan.

Lawyers made individual applications to the Constitutional Court (AYM) against the new ban.



Members of Kurdistan Youth Movement take over the Freedom for Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg

ANF | STRASBOURG | 1 JUN 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil, launched in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 25 June 2012, demanding freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and an end to the isolation imposed on him, continues in its 5671st week.

Members of the Kurdistan Youth Movement from Paris took over the vigil on Wednesday. Speaking on behalf of the group, Serhat Keklik said: “With our action, we appeal to the European Parliament and the public opinion. Our leader has not been heard from for a very long while. We want to raise our concerns once again and we reiterate our promise that we will not deviate from the path of the leader and will embrace him all the time.”

Keklik continued: “The Kurdish people have never been discouraged by the exploitation in place for hundreds of years, and they will never be. Until they achieve their freedom and the freedom of their leader, the Kurdish people will never give up the struggle all around the world. They will continue their fight against the colonialist forces. We appeal to the Kurdish people and the youth again; never stop resisting and fight-

ing until our leader and Kurdistan are freed. We invite everyone to join the vigil for the freedom of the leader.”

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Professor Denis O’Haern: İmralı isolation is unprecedented

ANF | 2 JUN 2023

There has been no news from Abdullah Öcalan for over two years. The last contact with the Kurdish leader was on March 25, 2021, when he was able to talk with his brother Mehmet Öcalan. The short phone conversation happened about a year after a previous call, on 27 April 2020, and it is the first time since then that Öcalan had actual contact with someone outside.

Lawyers of Öcalan were able to meet their client on May 2-22, June 12-18 and August 7, 2019, for the first time in 8 years. Since August 7, 2019, all applications requesting a visit have gone unanswered.

In addition to domestic efforts, international campaigns were also launched to demand an end to the incommunicado detention of Öcalan. On May 11, three members of the International İmralı Peace Delegation held meetings with several institutions in Istanbul, including the Asrın Law Office, which represents Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners.

Members of the delegation attended the Council of Europe Summit held in Iceland on May 16 and brought up the isolation of Öcalan and demanded his freedom.

One of the members of the delegation, Denis O’Hearn, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Texas at El Paso, spoke to the newspaper Yeni Özgür Politika about the isolation of Öcalan.

O’Hearn, who has written widely in the fields of isolated imprisonment and Ireland, published a book titled “Nothing but an Unfinished Song: Bobby Sands, the Irish Hunger Striker Who Ignited a Generation” about the life of Bobby Sands, a militant of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

İmralı is worse than supermax prisons

Denis O’Hearn, who studies maximum security prisons known as H-Type, F-Type or “SuperMax”, stated that the system in İmralı was unique in the world.

He said: “The only places close to the İmralı isolation system and total incommunicado are the notorious SuperMax prisons which the US introduced in both the US and Afghanistan after the Iraq war. I have not encountered any kind of isolation and total incommunicado to which Öcalan has been subjected for the last 2-3 years in any other country. If there were similar prisons, human rights groups would definitely have brought it up.”

Speaking about these prisons, which are also called ‘hell on earth’, O’Hearn said: “I had the chance to meet some prisoners and I know very well that these prisons are put out of sight in great secrecy. Nowhere in the world are there similar practices which do not allow lawyers and families to visit prisoners as in İmralı. At least in our recent history, I have not come across such an incommunicado isolation anywhere else.”

Prisons in Nazi Germany

In a reference to the Nazi era prisons, Denis O’Hearn remarked: “You know, there were prison camps during the times of fascist Germany, but even back then there was communication with the Soviet prisons. In fact, the West is ashamed of the notorious SuperMax prisons and does not talk about them. But Turkey is not ashamed of İmralı, they openly maintain this isolation system without shame.”

The Turkish state must face sanctions

Criticizing the silence of the European Union in the face of isolation, he said: “What is done to Öcalan is done for all the world to see and no one raises a voice against it. I believe that it is definitely a double standard.”

O’Hearn continued: “They should impose sanctions on the Turkish state for what they have been doing to Öcalan. But the European community is not taking any steps in this regard. Pressure should be put on Turkey to comply with human rights and international laws.”

İmralı isolation is torture

Reminding the Nelson Mandela Rules, O’Hearn said: “According to the Mandela Rules, if a prisoner is denied communication with the outside world for more than 15 days, this is called pure torture. This is absolutely torture. Europe is supposed to say to Turkey, ‘What you are doing to Öcalan is torture’. But they don’t do that.”

The isolation of Öcalan must be brought to light

O’Hearn concluded: “The best thing that the international community and human rights organizations could do is not to allow Turkey to cast a veil over what is being done. Öcalan cannot be put out of sight on İmralı Island. What is done there must be brought to light, known and heard not only in Turkey but all over the world. What is being done to thousands of other Kurdish prisoners must also be heard and known. Everything must be brought to light.”

Prisons in Turkey

Political prisoner Mehmet Şahin released after 30 years

ANF | 2 JUN 2023

Mehmet Şahin, a political prisoner in Şakran No. 2 T Type Prison, was released after 30 years and 4 months. Şahin, who was detained in Batman (Êlih) in 1993 accused of "separatism", was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Diyarbakır State Security Court (DGM). Şahin, who was in Batman, Antep (Dilok), Çankırı, Siirt (Sêrt) and Şakran Prison, was released by the Administration and Observation Board after a 4 months' delay.

Şahin entered prison at the age of 30. He was greeted with flowers by the executives of the Aegean Association for Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners (EGE-TUHAYDER), as well as his relatives in front of the prison.

Speaking after his release, Şahin said: "I don't see going out of prison as complete freedom. Free freedom is in the minds of people. If the sea was ink and the trees were paper, I wouldn't be able to express my feelings towards the friends I left behind. We did not live an ordinary life in prison. Freedom is beautiful. Yes, I'm excited. But my only wish is that all my fellow prisoners find their freedom. We want a world where not only Kurds but all peoples can live freely."

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Military aggression and occupation

Religious scholar Alkan condemns cruelty to the mortal remains of guerrillas

ANF | AMED | 27 MAY 2023

The Turkish state's inhumane practices against mortal remains of those martyred during the resistance against state brutality continue.

Delivery of guerrillas' bodies to families takes months, sometimes years. Inhumane treatment of mortal remains is also frequently reported during deliveries. Funerals of guerrillas are subjected to similar maltreat-

ment. While many corpses are buried in secret without informing the families, those who manage to receive bodies face unprecedented pressure from state officials.

The bones of Hakan Arslan, who was martyred during the resistance against state terrorism following the curfew declared on December 2, 2015, in the Sur district of Amed province, were delivered to his father in a bag after 7 years.

The body of YJA-Star guerrilla Hamiyet Yalçinkaya (Leyla Amed), who was martyred in an armed clash in the Besta region of Sirnak province in January, was delivered to her family months later.

Speaking to ANF, religious scholar Abdullah Alkan, a member of the Religious Scholars Assistance and Solidarity Association (DIAYDER), said: “The oppressors do not allow us to organize funerals for our children in line with our own faith. It is a cruelty that they deny us this right. This act is wrong, both according to Islam and universal human values. In Islam, the body of the deceased is sacred. Those who run the state based on Islam have no respect for their own race and other races.”

Alkan pointed out that the imams of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) do not obey what is said by Allah, but what is said by the Diyanet. He added: “Diyanet has forgotten its beliefs and values and relies on a fascist tradition.”

The religious scholar concluded: “If a religion does not favour the oppressed, it means that it has been emptied of its content and has moved away from its essence. Because religion has always stood against oppressors like Pharaoh.”



HPG reports 41 attacks on guerrilla areas in South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 27 MAY 2023

In its daily statement about the war in Kurdistan, the Press Centre of the People’s Defence Forces (HPG) reported dozens of attacks on the Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

“The Turkish occupying army continues its attacks although our forces are in a position of inaction. While these attacks carried out for the maintenance of the power of AKP/MHP fascism are continuing, the occupants who are used against our forces are also dying. The only reason for the bombing of our resistance positions - in two cases with banned weapons, five times with fighter jets and in 34 cases with howitzers, mortars and tanks - and the death of four occupants is AKP/MHP fascism.”

According to the statement published by the HPG, the guerrillas have responded to and repelled various attacks by the Turkish army for the past three days.

On 24 May, fighters of the YJA Star (Free Women’s Troops) performed self-defence against an attack on a guerrilla position in Sida.

On 24 May, the guerrillas defended themselves with sabotage tactics against attacks on Sîda, and three soldiers were killed.

On 24-25 May, the Turkish army attacked Sîda, against which the guerrillas defended themselves.

On 25 May, the guerrillas defended themselves against an attack on the resistance area Girê FM and destroyed a surveillance camera installed by the Turkish army.

On 25 May, guerrillas responded to another attack on Girê FM, and one soldier was killed.

On 24-26 May, the guerrillas defended themselves against attacks on the Girê FM resistance area.

On 26 May, the Turkish army attacked Girê Şehîd Şahan and Girê Şehîd Axîn. The guerrillas fought back in self-defence.

HPG further reported that on 24 and 25 May, the Turkish army used prohibited weapons against guerrilla positions at Girê FM and Sîda in the Zap region.

On 23 May and 26 May, the areas of Girê Şehîd Piling, Girê Hekarî and Girê Amêdî in Metîna and Girê Cûdî in Zap were bombed by fighter jets a total of five times.

On 23 May, 34 attacks with howitzers, mortars and tanks targeted the areas of Girê Şehîd Piling, Girê Hekarî, Girê Amêdî, Girê Cûdî, Girê FM, Girê Bahar, Çemço and Sîda. The Turkish invading forces continued to try to demolish guerrilla positions at Girê FM with heavy construction machinery.

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Attacks by invaders leave fields on fire in Ain Issa

ANF | AIN ISSA | 29 MAY 2023

Fire broke out in many agricultural lands in Ain Issa due to the attacks of the Turkish state and its mercenaries on the eastern countryside of the northern Syrian town.

On May 27, the invading Turkish state and its mercenaries targeted the agricultural lands in the village of Fatsa, which is 15 km away from the centre of Ain Issa town. As a result of the aggression, tens of hectares of barley and wheat fields were burned, according to ANHA.

The fire squad could not reach the scene due to the attacks of the invaders from their military base in the village of Şirgirakê, opposite the M4 Highway.

In the meantime, a fire broke out on Saturday as a result of Turkish bombardments on the village of Silêbê. The fire was quickly extinguished by citizens before it spread.



Iraqi minister says agriculture under threat since Turkey does not release water

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

In a statement on Monday, the Iraqi Minister of Water Resources, Aoun Diab Abdullah, highlighted the negative effects of water scarcity on Iraqi agriculture.

Abdullah stated that: “Turkey has limited the flow of the Euphrates River, which runs into Iraqi territory through the Syrian border. Less than half of the agreed amount is allowed to flow. The lack of water is posing a serious threat to agriculture. Rice planting in particular is facing a major danger. Previously, 300 thousand acres of land were used to produce rice, but now only 3,000 acres of land are available.”



Israeli airstrikes target the surroundings of Damascus

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

Last night, Israeli missiles hit near the Syrian capital, Damascus. Citing a military source, the state news agency SANA reported that "the Israeli enemy" fired missiles from the Golan Heights at places near Damascus at around 11:45 pm on Sunday. The Syrian Air Defence Forces intercepted the missiles and shot down some of them. The Israeli attack caused only material damage, SANA said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said the Israeli missile strike hit a Syrian Air Force base that hosts militias of the Lebanese Hezbollah.

Israel has carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria in recent years, targeting strongholds of Iran-backed militias. On 2 May, Israeli missile strikes on Aleppo's international airport and the adjacent Nayrab military airport resulted in deaths and injuries, and the international airport was temporarily shut down.

According to North Press, Israel has attacked 21 bases of government forces and Iran-backed militias in Syria since the beginning of the year. Most of the attacks took place in the Aleppo and Damascus governorates. In April, Israel carried out 11 airstrikes on various Syrian areas, including the governorates of Homs, Damascus, Daraa and Qunaitra.



HPG reports 133 attacks on guerrilla positions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 30 MAY 2023

The Turkish army continues its cross-border attacks on the guerrillas in the Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement released by the Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) regarding the latest bombardments, six airstrikes by Turkish fighter jets have targeted the area west of the Zap and Şehîd Şerîf in Xakurke in the past three days.

In addition, the Turkish forces carried out 127 attacks with howitzers, mortars and tanks against the guerrilla positions in the regions of Zap, Metîna and Xakurke. The vicinity of the Lolan River in Xakurke, Girê Hekarî in Metîna, the Girê Cûdî and Girê FM resistance areas west of the Zap and guerrilla positions in Çemço and Sîda on the eastern side of the river were targeted by the attacks. At Girê FM and in Çemço, the Turkish army tried to demolish guerrilla positions with construction machinery.

The guerrillas exercised their right to self-defence several times and responded to the attacks, including in Sîda on 27 May, in Girê Hekarî on 28 May and in Girê FM on 28 and 29 May.

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HPG releases identities of two guerrillas fallen in Besta

ANF | BEHDINAN | 31 MAY 2023

The HPG Press Center shared the following information regarding two guerrillas who fell as martyrs in Besta: "On 14 May 2023, a comprehensive enemy operation was carried out in the Çemkê Tehlo and Serê Forest areas in the Besta region of Şîrnak. Having been informed that a group of our comrades were in this area, the Turkish army carried out repeated attacks with the support of 8 warplanes, 2 combat helicopters and many contras. The area where our forces were located was tried to be surrounded and bombarded by combat helicopters for two days. On 16 May, our comrades Bawer Med and Rênçber Givara effectively struck the enemy force that came upon them. The Turkish army suffered heavy losses and bombarded the area twice using warplanes, and later by throwing yellow and apple-scented chemical weapons from helicopters. Our comrades, Bawer and Rênçber, fought to protect themselves epically for two days before eventually falling as martyrs. The Turkish army hid the heavy losses it suffered and admitted that only 4 soldiers were dead. However, as far as our forces can clarify here, the Turkish army lost 17 men."

The statement continued: "The attacks by the Turkish army became more extensive on 17 May and expanded towards the Serê Forest area. Here, too, there were clashes between our forces and the Turkish army, and in these clashes, our leading commanders, Comrades Dilşêr and Şerger, responded to the enemy and fell as martyrs.

We extend our condolences to the esteemed families of our comrades Şerger and Rênçber, and the patriotic people of Kurdistan, who duly fulfilled their duty by adding their most valuable children to the freedom struggle of our people, which requires great effort and sacrifice.”

The statement said that “detailed identity information of our comrades Dilşer Çiyareş and Bawer Med was shared in our statement dated 23 May 2023.”

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HSM commemorates June 1 Offensive: Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas are ready to carry out all tasks

ANF | BEHDINAN | 1 JUN 2023

The 1 June offensive in 2004 represents a historic turning point for the Kurdish freedom movement. After a deep crisis, attempts to dismantle the PKK from within and a comprehensive restructuring, a renewed PKK entered the stage of world history on 1 June 2004 with a wave of actions. Five years earlier, the crisis of the freedom movement had been heralded by the abduction of its leader Abdullah Öcalan in an international conspiracy. Subsequently, patriarchal, pro-imperialist, feudal forces tried to hijack and destroy the freedom movement. However, through the resistance of the Kurdish movement in the mountains and of Abdullah Öcalan on the prison island of İmralı, the PKK was able to renew itself and spread a genuine, anti-authoritarian alternative to capitalist modernity with the model of democratic confederalism. Thus, 1 June became an important commemoration day for the Kurdish freedom movement.

The Central Headquarters of the People’s Defence Forces (HSM) released a statement on the occasion of the 1 June 2004 offensive, which includes the following:

“As is known, in 1999, with the help of the reactionary forces in the region and the international hegemonic powers, the Turkish state brought its attack against Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] to an absolute climax and tried to achieve results in this way. Through his great foresight and his upright attitude in spite of all reprisals, Leader Apo was able to frustrate this international plot and open the way to a democratic solution process to the Kurdish question. On this basis, he called on all guerrilla forces to halt the armed struggle and withdraw from the state borders of Turkey. Our movement and our armed forces heeded this call, and we withdrew from the north [Northern Kurdistan].

Despite this prudent and solution-oriented approach of the Leader and our movement, the Turkish state did not take any steps towards a solution in the period from 1999 to 2004. Instead, it pursued a policy of decomposing our movement by allying with criminal tendencies. The AKP government, which came to power in the same period, took advantage of the regional developments and tried to complete the failed international conspiracy by launching a new concept of annihilation and destruction. For five years, in the face of all denial, annihilation and repression, our movement showed the utmost patience and an awareness of its historical responsibility by not firing a single shot. However, it had no choice but to start a historic offensive of determination and resistance against the international conspiracy and liquidation efforts

of the AKP government. On this basis, the historic offensive of 1 June was put on the agenda, going down in history as the name of the Kurdish people's dignified attitude and holy resistance against the continuation of the international plot through the concept of 'either surrender or annihilation' and the decision on the line of Leader Apo.

A second 15 August

There is no doubt about the fact that the 1 June 2004 offensive has the role of a second 15 August [15 August 1984 - the beginning of the armed struggle of the guerrillas] in the defensive war to protect the existence of the Kurdish people. The new phase of the struggle, which was launched with the 1 June offensive, was an important response to the policy of annihilation launched by the Turkish state with the support of the forces behind the international conspiracy. It formed the basis for rekindling the hopes for a solution through dialogue that Leader Apo had been striving for since 1993, for laying the foundation for building the KCK system and for finding the possibility of practical implementation of the Leader's paradigm.

The spirit of 1 June unites the struggle of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas in the mountains and the Kurdish people in the cities. It not only laid the foundation for hope, but at the same time forced the Turkish state back to the negotiating table, even if it ultimately thwarted all peace efforts through its insincerity. It is clear that the 1 June Offensive played an important role in creating a climate for discussing the solution to the Kurdish question, whether through the ceasefires that were repeatedly called from 2006 onwards or through talks in Oslo and İmralı. In this sense, this historic offensive can be considered in its political impact and can be said to have made an important contribution to the growth of our struggle.

“The guerrillas are ready to carry out all their tasks”

Without doubt, Leader Apo's work, his efforts and the paradigm of democratic modernity he developed, as well as the guerrilla struggle led by our brave martyrs, are the main sources of this growth and these developments. The 1 June Offensive not only initiated a phase of mass movement in the struggle against the enemy, but also triggered a mass movement in the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla itself. All the developments around the overcoming of the impasse in which the guerrillas found themselves in the war that had lasted for years, the restructuring processes to build a modern guerrilla, according to the demands of the age, are under the deep impression of the 1 June Offensive. The guerrilla of democratic modernity, the guerrilla of the new age, was formed on this line. It displays the capacity to defend open spaces against the most modern technology at the highest level. At the same time, resistance, struggle and the reality of war have gained a new perspective through a deepening of the spirit of sacrifice. Today, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas are not only fighting on the ground like the classical guerrillas, but are fighting at a masterful level on the ground, in the air and underground.

There is no doubt that the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas, who have been putting up epic resistance for 39 years against all odds, have the determination, strength and conviction to confront and frustrate any attack against the existence and freedom of our people. The guerrillas have proven their invincibility in the past eight years with their successes in professional terrain-based unit warfare tactics and tunnel warfare tactics against the attacks of the AKP/MHP/Ergenekon regime. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas are always ready to carry out all tasks that fall upon them for the freedom of our people and the Leader.

We once again congratulate all our people, our friends and all our comrades on the 19th anniversary of the historic 1 June Offensive, and wish great success to the freedom fighters, our people and all the fighting forces in the 20th year of our glorious offensive.”

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Turkish state gangs in Afrin killed a child and kidnapped at least 53 people in May

ANF | AFRIN | 1 JUN 2023

The Afrin-Syrian Human Rights Organization said that the Turkish state and its mercenaries (police, civilian police, al-Jabhe al-Shamiye and Emşat gangs) kidnapped at least 53 people, including 4 women, for arbitrary reasons in May. It was stated that thousands of dollars in ransom were demanded for the release of the abductees.

The Turkish state, which has established a total terror regime in the occupied region, systematically kidnaps people and demands ransom from their families. The abducted are usually kept at different points in the Afrin canton, where they are subjected to brutal torture.

A child was killed

According to the Human Rights Organization, Ankara-affiliated gangs that randomly opened fire in Afrin after the second round of the presidential elections in Turkey, on 28 May, killed a child in the Mehmudi camp and injured 25 other people.

Public property loaded

Part of the war crimes committed by the Turkish state consists in the confiscation and looting of public property.

In the month of May, more than 900 olive and fruit trees were cut down in Afrin city center as well as in the Mabata and Raco districts. The wood of these trees is sold in Afrin, Ezaz, Idlib and Jarablus markets.

Ethnic cleaning, colonial buildings

Ethnic cleansing activities continue in Kurdish lands. The Turkish state, in cooperation with Qatar, Kuwaiti and Palestinian organizations, is constructing colonial buildings in the villages and districts of the Afrin canton. Approximately 50 new colonial buildings were built in the village of Şadêr in the district of Şêrawa. Excavations were also carried out on 30 hectares of land in the same area.

The Human Rights Organization reported that the World Aid Committee “Insur”, in cooperation with Palestinian associations, has built “Emel 2” colonial buildings on Lelun mountain in the southeast of the Afrin canton.

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NATO Secretary General says he will visit Turkey soon

ANF | 1 JUN 2023

Speaking at the beginning of the meeting of foreign ministers of NATO member countries in Oslo, the organization's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, said that he met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the beginning of the week and that he will go to Ankara “in the near future”.

Stoltenberg stated that he would make this visit to accelerate the process that will allow “Sweden to become a member of the alliance.”

Sweden's NATO membership is not progressing due to the Turkish state's veto. The Turkish state is trying to export the oppression of the Kurds to Sweden.

On Tuesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Turkey and Hungary to end the months-long veto, saying that “the time [for membership] has come.”

Blinken stated that there was “no reason” to waste any more time.

After decades of neutrality after the end of the Cold War, the two Scandinavian countries, Sweden and Finland, decided to review their stance.

After the start of the Ukraine war, in February 2022, both countries applied for NATO membership in May 2022.

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Aerial attack targets a house in Shengal

ANF | SHENGAL | 1 JUN 2023

According to reports from the ground, an aerial attack has been carried out in Shengal (Sinjar), the main settlement area of the Yazidi community in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

Footage from Shengal shows that the attack carried out at 14:30 local time targeted a house in the town.

Details about the attack were not immediately available.

The attack came on the 13th day of the Iraqi military siege of the Maxmur Refugee Camp in the region, and after the May 28 presidential election in Turkey, where the dictator Erdoğan was able to hold on to a narrow majority.

On May 23, an armed unmanned aerial vehicle (SIHA) belonging to the Turkish army hit a house in the village of Xelef in Shengal's Barê district in the morning hours. According to the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ), Said Êşur from Khanasor was killed in the attack, which also left a guest injured.

"This attack reveals the goal of the invading Turkish state. It is not the first attack directed against the Yazidi people. It is a continuation of the Yazidi genocide," YBŞ said in a statement after the attack.

Shengal under attack since 2017

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 Kasim 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 uninterrupted since 2017.

Five soldiers killed as guerrillas respond to attacks in self-defence

ANF | BEHDINAN | 1 JUN 2023

In its daily statement about the war in Kurdistan, the Press Office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported that Turkey's attacks on the guerrilla-held Turkey's attacks on the Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) continue unabated.

The Turkish army attacked the Medya Defence Zones 10 times by fighter jets and 44 times with howitzers and tanks. Guerrillas responded to the attacks on the basis of legitimate self-defence, killing 5 soldiers of the Turkish army.

On the western front of Zap, Turkish troops attacked guerrillas at Girê FM and tried to dig out positions on May 30. The guerrillas responded on the basis of self-defence and the position building was stopped. Later in the day, the occupying forces launched another attack, which was also answered.

On May 31, the Turkish troops that attacked the guerrillas at Girê FM and tried to get deployed in the area faced a response from the guerrillas and the area was subsequently bombed by the Turkish army.

In Avaşîn, five members of the Turkish occupation forces were killed by guerrillas during clashes on May 30. According to the HPG, the fighting took place in the Wexelê area, which has been heavily contested for some time.

On the same day, the HPG recorded at least ten air strikes by fighter jets. The attacks were directed against Girê Çarçel and Gundê Şelazê in Metîna, Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî and Girê Amêdî in the west of Zap, and Girê Zengil in Gare. The Turkish army carried out another 44 bombardments with tanks and howitzers. The targets of these attacks, which also took place on May 30 and 31, were Girê FM and Girê Cûdî on the western front of the Zap as well as the resistance positions in Sîda in the east of the region. On both days, the Turkish army also tried to demolish the guerrilla positions in Girê FM with construction machinery. In parallel, the guerrilla positions in nearby Çemço were shelled with heavy and medium weapons.

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Talabani: There is no way other than unity to protect our country

ANF | 1 JUN 2023

In a statement marking the 48th founding anniversary of his party, Bafil Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said that "there is no way other than unity" to protect Kurdistan.

Talabani remarked that solutions to the problems should be based on dialogue and deliberation, and impositions should be avoided. He said: “Let’s lead Kurdistan to a beautiful future together. The life and success of our people should be our biggest concern”.

Talabani said: “Our party and personal interests should not make us forget about our great aspirations. Kurdistan is going through a sensitive process; serious changes are taking place.”

Talabani insisted that “there is no way but unity” to protect the land and strengthen the sovereignty of the region, adding that the “The PUK always prioritizes cooperation and joint work to serve the people of Kurdistan”.

Talabani concluded: “The PUK has always called for unity and solidarity. For us, our strength relies on our unity and solidarity. All our efforts and demands in Baghdad seek to secure a genuine representation of the people of the region and their legal rights. The PUK has been trying to overcome the obstacles together with their colleagues in Iraq. We want to secure a beautiful future for our people and our country by promoting a genuine common life.”



HPG releases balance sheet of war for May

ANF | BEHDINAN | 2 JUN 2023

The People’s Defence Forces (HPG) released the balance sheet of war for the month of May, when the Turkish army bombed the guerrilla positions hundreds of times. 54 Turkish soldiers died in armed clashes and 13 guerrillas were martyred.

The HPG statement released on Friday said: “The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, which represents the free will and legitimate defence force of the Kurdish people, has been putting up historic resistance against the attacks of the colonialists so that our oppressed people could have an honourable future with their language, culture and history. Our forces, who keep fighting selflessly against all attacks, are defending every inch of Kurdistan’s lands with great will. Following the Maras-centred earthquakes on February 6, our forces declared inaction and have been complying with it for approximately 4 months. Despite this decision, which was based on human values and aimed at healing the wounds of survivors in a spirit of solidarity, the invading Turkish army continued its attacks under the guidance of the fascist AKP-MHP regime and its minister of special war, Hulusi Akar. The invading Turkish army committed war crimes by bombing all the areas where the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas are positioned and the guerrilla resistance areas, especially the Medya Defence Zones, by fighter jets, attack helicopters, howitzers, mortars, tanks and artillery, as well as chemical and prohibited weapons. The colonialist Turkish army launched large-scale military operations throughout May, especially in Bakure (North) Kurdistan, with the participation of hundreds of soldiers and militias, using all kinds of advanced weaponry.

The invading army committed war crimes

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla maintained its position despite all the attacks, responded to the invaders on the basis of self-defence, and as a result, armed clashes erupted. The colonial army, which wanted to achieve results by using all its advanced weaponry, could not break the resistance of our forces.

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, who resisted the colonialists in every area from Bakur to the Medya Defence Zones and did not allow the occupation and the invaders, embraced the spirit of resistance of the Martyrs of May, including Haki Karer, Halil Çavgunlar, the Resistance of the Four in Amed prison and Hozan Mizgîn. Our comrades, resisting the colonialists who tried to destroy the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla in Bakur, gave the necessary response to the invaders in Mardin, Amed and Botan in the footsteps of the Martyrs of May and in the spirit of the June 1 Offensive.

The colonialist Turkish army, helpless in the face of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrillas, committed war crimes by bombing the Guerrilla Resistance Positions 8 times by prohibited bombs and chemical weapons throughout May. Moreover, the resistance positions in the Medya Defence Zones were bombed 126 times by fighter jets, 11 times by attack helicopters, 435 times with mortars, howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. 54 Turkish soldiers were killed, and 2 others injured in the ensuing clashes. 13 of our comrades were martyred in the attacks of the enemy.

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, which represents a free future and a dignified life for our people, has dealt heavy blows to the invaders, and the struggle of the likes of Leyla Sorxwin, has once again shown to the whole world that the hope for freedom in Kurdistan can never be destroyed. Our comrades Bahoz Çiya, Dilgêş Zagros, Bawer Korkmaz, Dilşêr Çiyareş, Bawer Med, Rênçber Givara, Şerger Caf who became immortal by fighting selflessly against the colonialists in Bakur Kurdistan and our Apoist militants Egîd Zilan, Diyar Xosnas, Botan Zagros, Bawer Zaza and Canşêr Adar in the Medya Defence Zones became immortal by resisting on the line of victory.

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, which has grown by preserving the legacy of the struggle of our martyrs, will certainly carry the freedom cause of our people to victory.”

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AANES accuses regime of blocking evacuations from Sudan

ANF | 2 JUN 2023

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) accused the government in Damascus of blocking evacuation missions from Sudan. The regime has cancelled an AANES contract with a private airline and is imposing “prohibitive conditions” that make it impossible to organise further rescue missions for Syrian citizens, the AANES Foreign Affairs Department said in a statement on Friday.

AANES has so far brought more than 360 people to safety, including many women and children, with two evacuation flights from Sudan. Cham Wings Airlines (Ajnehat Al Sham) aircraft were chartered for the rescue mission, bringing a total of 369 Syrian nationals to Qamişlo. However, according to AANES, Damascus is demanding that further evacuation missions from Sudan to the capital Damascus take place. Syrians stranded in the embattled country are pressured to be voluntarily taken to Syrian regime territory. In addition, the regime claims the evacuation flights organised by the AANES for itself.

“We call on the Syrian government to immediately end its blockade,” said AANES. Because of this action, it said, hundreds of people are stuck in Sudan who could have been back home long ago. “Now they have to fear being forcibly flown out to Damascus. This indicates that a further transfer to the autonomous region could be prevented. Damascus must pull out all the stops to allow citizens of this country stranded in Sudan to return safely. We call on the government to fulfil its moral obligations and responsibilities towards these people,” the statement said.

Hundreds of people have been killed in the military clashes that broke out in Sudan about six weeks ago and about 1.4 million are fleeing to safer areas.



Maxmur Refugee Camp

Kurdish activists protesting for Maxmur in Bern detained

ANF | BERN | 26 MAY 2023

The Iraqi army has been besieging the Maxmur Camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) since 20 May. The camp, which is self-governed by refugees from Northern Kurdistan near Hewlêr (Erbil), is intended to be fenced in and turned into a huge open-air prison with watchtowers. The 12,000 residents of the camp are resisting this, day and night. On Thursday, the Iraqi military positioned additional units at strategically important locations around the camp.

Kurdish activists staged a civil disobedience action in protest at the Iraqi army's siege of the Maxmur camp in the premises of the Iraqi Consulate in Bern, the capital of Switzerland.

The action was staged under the motto “Rise up against the invasion of life” by 14 activists who were taken into custody by the Bern police, who arrived at the scene after a call by the Consulate staff.

The Kurdish youth movements in Europe, TCŞ and TekoJIN, called for solidarity with the detained activists and their immediate release.



Resistance against Iraqi military siege in Maxmur Camp continues

ANF | MAXMUR | 27 MAY 2023

The resistance in Maxmur Refugee Camp against the Iraqi military siege continues unabated. The Iraqi army has positioned hundreds of soldiers with armoured vehicles and heavy construction equipment in the vicinity of the self-managed refugee camp in order to dig trenches and barbed wire and erect watch-towers, despite the negotiations conducted with the Maxmur People's Council. The people of Maxmur have been resisting this for over a week and have erected tents where people discuss and sing.

Meanwhile, visitors from the nearby town of Maxmur arrived at the camp. The visitors declared their solidarity with the camp residents and said they had not forgotten how the PKK and the camp had defended them against ISIS in 2014.

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.

The Maxmur camp has already been under a heavy embargo by the KDP since 17 July 2019. The people of the camp are not allowed to enter the cities of South Kurdistan and to enter the camp for basic needs from outside. Many people have lost their lives due to this embargo. The closure of the camp poses a serious danger to the lives of people, because among them are many seriously ill refugees.

Delegation meets UNHCR representative in Geneva, demanding action for Maxmur

ANF | GEVEVA | 27 MAY 2023

On May 20, the Iraqi army, accompanied by representatives of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and Defence, arrived in Maxmur without prior notice to fence the camp with barbed wire. The military arrived with dozens of armoured vehicles to enforce the orders of the government in Baghdad. In addition to fencing, this includes stationing Iraqi police and military units, closing all entrances and exits except for the main access, installing military concrete barriers on the access road and setting up observation towers. The residents of the self-managed camp are against the militarisation of Maxmur and are standing guard against the siege.

A delegation of the Democratic Kurdish Community in Switzerland (CDK-S) visited the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Geneva and called for immediate intervention against the military siege of Maxmur Camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). Part of the delegation, besides CDK-S representatives Ahmet Yaman and Ramazan Baytar, was Swiss politician and doctor [Beppe Savary-Borioli](#), who was in southern Kurdistan last autumn on behalf of IPPNW to investigate chemical weapons use by the Turkish army.

In conversation with Alex Tyler, UNHCR representative for the Near/Middle East and North Africa, the delegation informed about the situation in Maxmur Camp and reported on the determined resistance of the people against the militarisation of the refugee camp.

After the conversation, Ramazan Baytar said: “We have emphasised that the Iraqi government is responsible for the security of the people in Maxmur, but it is not fulfilling this responsibility. Groups like ISIS are still present in the region. Different minorities and religious groups fight each other. The area is also a conflict region of international hegemonic powers. Iraq is not providing security for the residents of the camp.”

It was conveyed to UNHCR representative Tyler that the military siege of the camp by the Iraqi army, which has been ongoing for a week, and the embargo imposed in 2019 are unacceptable, Baytar continued: “We also pointed out that UNHCR and the United Nations have an obligation to ensure the safety of the population,” Baytar added.

Beppe Savary-Borioli stated that Tyler had agreed to forward the delegation's demands.

Lawyers: Iraqi siege of Maxmur Camp is contrary to international law and agreements

ANF | 27 MAY 2023

The Iraqi army has been besieging 12 thousand refugees in the Martyr Rustem Cudi (Maxmur) camp in Nineveh province for days. Although the United Nations (UN) recognized Maxmur as a refugee camp in 2011, the Iraqi army is digging ditches and trying to fence in the camp with barbed wire and watchtowers.

Lawyers speaking to ANHA stated that the Iraqi government's attempt to blockade Maxmur camp residents was contrary to international law.

Kawa Fatimi, a member of the Hesekê Lawyers Union, condemned the actions of the Iraqi government and the collaboration of the KDP. He said: "In cooperation with the UN, the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Region authorities, and in accordance with the Geneva Conventions on the rights of refugees, an agreement was reached to protect the Maxmur refugee camp."

Fatimi continued: "Despite the agreements in question, the Iraqi government besieged the camp residents and targeted them with weapons. It also ignores the air strikes of the invading Turkish state. This is a clear violation of international law."

"Refugees in the Maxmur camp have been subjected to attacks by the invading Turkish state and blockades by the governments of Iraq and South Kurdistan since 1994. Although the camp is under the protection of the UN, the rights of its residents are repeatedly violated," said Fatimi, adding: "The camp cannot be besieged because it is under the protection of the UN and Geneva Conventions."

Fatimi requested the UN to urgently send a delegation to Iraq to monitor the situation and inform the Iraqi government about its violation of international agreements.

Lawyer Beşire Cemaledin called on international organizations to fulfil their humanitarian and legal duties concerning the Iraqi government's maltreatment of camp residents and to end the siege.

Cemaledin said: "The international agreements signed in 1951 and the protocols in 1967 guarantee the protection of refugees and the rights of those who reside in the Maxmur camp."

The 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees are the basis of asylum law and complement each other. Hence, 139 governments that signed the 1951 Refugee Convention must comply with it.

Iraqi army reinforces troops in Maxmur on the eighth day of siege

ANF | MAXMUR | 27 MAY 2023

In the course of the siege of the Maxmur refugee camp in Southern Kurdistan, the Iraqi army has reinforced its troops in the area. Intense military movements have been observed in the region since the afternoon. An ANF camera was able to capture the transport of several army vehicles. Among them are armoured personnel carriers as well as vehicles with mounted machine guns.

The military siege of Maxmur Camp has been going on for a week. The camp near Hewlêr (Erbil), founded by refugees from Northern Kurdistan, is intended to be fenced in and transformed into a huge open-air prison with watchtowers. The Iraqi army positioned hundreds of soldiers with armoured vehicles and heavy construction equipment in the vicinity of Maxmur in order to dig trenches and barbed wire and to surround the camp with watchtowers, despite the conducted negotiations with the People's Council of Maxmur.

In response, the people of Maxmur are resisting unabated. They have erected guard tents where people discuss and sing. The people of the self-governed camp are against the militarisation of Maxmur. The People's Council suspects that this sudden and persistent manoeuvre by the Iraqi army could be a signal of a wider political plan.

However, the People's Council locates the real source of the crackdown on Maxmur in Ankara. The Turkish state calls the camp a "breeding ground" for the PKK and repeatedly threatens to "cleanse" it. In recent years, Maxmur Camp has been repeatedly bombed by the Turkish air force. In August, a father of six was killed in a Turkish drone strike.

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Italian delegation denied visit to Maxmur

ANF | 28 MAY 2023

A delegation made up of 10 people from the Italian association Towards Kurdistan entered Iraq on the morning of 20 May.

The delegation's goals were to help build a health facility in Serdest, the village in the region of Shengal where the Yazidi population, victims of the genocide carried out by ISIS in 2014, and, from 26 May, to visit Maxmur camp, given that, for years, the association has supported the health care within the camp.

The delegation said in a statement: "On the morning of 26 May we left Khamasor, towards Mosul, as scheduled. In Mosul, three drivers and two girls from the camp came to pick us up. They were happy to

see us. We headed for Maxmur, but at the last check point, 20 Km from the camp, our passports were confiscated with the order to go back and immediately go to Baghdad airport to board the first plane to Italy. A substantial expulsion, even if not a formal one.”

The statement added: “We had informed the Italian embassy in Baghdad of our intention to arrive at Maxmur. From the foreign ministry's crisis unit, we received a phone call and a message inviting us instead to accept the diktat of the Iraqi government which had authorized us to carry out the trip. We were then ‘accompanied’ by an armored army escort to Mosul to then continue to Baghdad. We refused to go to the airport in the absence of a formal deportation order and wanted to meet the Italian embassy and, above all, the UNHCR, under whose protection is Maxmur camp.”

The delegation said that “the real problem in which the Italian Foreign Ministry and the UNHCR should intervene for Maxmur is to stop the continuous bombing from Turkey on Iraqi territory, to guarantee the people of the camp the peace, life and serenity they have the right to. The real problem is the violation of human rights.”

The delegation delivered the document to the Italian Embassy in Baghdad and will send it to UNHCR and UNICEF Iraq.

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Gelali: Turkey wants Maxmur to be emptied

ANF | 28 MAY 2023

Reşad Gelali from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) spoke about the siege implemented by the Iraqi army against Maxmur. He drew attention to the cooperation between Turkey and the KDP and said that the KDP wanted to take control of the camp first, but failed to do so. Therefore, now, it wants to empty the camp and hand it over to Turkey.

Calling on the United Nations, the institution responsible for the camp, and the international community to take action against this siege, Gelali said: “Maxmur camp and Maxmur province complement each other. They can't be separated. They've been together in good times and bad. I do not see them as refugees, they are indigenous people. They've been living in the area for over 25 years.”

Gelali added that Maxmur should be protected within the framework of international law.

Calling everyone to support Maxmur, Gelali demanded that the tension in the region be ended, and said that the people of Maxmur are beside those living in the camp.

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Iraqi army launches new attempt to surround Maxmur

ANF | MAXMUR | 28 MAY 2023

On Sunday morning, the Iraqi army again started to surround the Maxmur camp in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). The army is still trying to erect fences and watchtowers around the camp. Large contingents of troops have been assembled for this purpose. Meanwhile, the people of the camp continue to resist. People are active around the clock, keeping watch and blocking the army.

The Iraqi army has been besieging Maxmur since 20 May. Although the military siege was promised to be lifted after negotiations with the residents of the camp, this has not been kept. The Iraqi government is apparently taking action against the camp under pressure from the Turkish government and its ally, the KDP, the ruling party in southern Kurdistan.

The Maxmur Camp near Hewlêr (Erbil), founded by refugees from Northern Kurdistan, is intended to be fenced in and transformed into a huge open-air prison with watchtowers. The Iraqi army positioned hundreds of soldiers with armoured vehicles and heavy construction equipment in the vicinity of Maxmur in order to dig trenches and barbed wire and to surround the camp with watchtowers, despite the conducted negotiations with the People's Council of Maxmur.

In response, the people of Maxmur are resisting unabated. They have erected guard tents where people discuss and sing. The people of the self-governed camp are against the militarisation of Maxmur. The People's Council suspects that this sudden and persistent manoeuvre by the Iraqi army could be a signal of a wider political plan.

However, the People's Council locates the real source of the crackdown on Maxmur in Ankara. The Turkish state calls the camp a "breeding ground" for the PKK and repeatedly threatens to "cleanse" it. In recent years, Maxmur Camp has been repeatedly bombed by the Turkish air force. In August, a father of six was killed in a Turkish drone strike.

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People of Maxmur: We will resist to the utmost and not live in a prison camp

AWYER BOTAN | MAXMUR | 28 MAY 2023

The Iraqi army has been besieging Maxmur Camp for over a week, surrounding the self-governing camp with barbed wire and trenches and installing surveillance towers. The population is putting up determined resistance around the clock and responds immediately to any attempt to advance the militarisation of the camp. When the Iraqi military digs trenches with shovel excavators, the people oppose them in an organised way and fill the trenches back in.

After a young resident was injured by a gunshot on the first day, the Iraqi state is now apparently using attrition tactics. There are military movements around the camp at irregular intervals, most recently on Sunday morning.

Maxmur Camp is home to about 12,000 people with official UN refugee status. These are people who were displaced from their villages in Turkish territory thirty years ago and their descendants. Members of almost every family have died in the Kurdish liberation struggle, and many are still fighting with the guerrillas in the mountains for a dignified and free life with their own identity.

The camp, which is officially under the protection of the UNHCR, is described by Turkey as a “hotbed of terror” and has been continuously attacked by drones for years. The Barzani family, which collaborates with the Turkish state, imposed an embargo on the camp in 2019. Only a few years earlier, KDP chairman Massoud Barzani had visited Maxmur to thank the residents and the PKK for their successful efforts in defending Kurdistan against the so-called “Islamic State” (IS). In 2014, the ISIS hordes were just outside Hewlêr (Erbil), the seat of government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

ANF spoke to the people in Maxmur who are standing guard in tents and resisting the fencing of the camp. Emine Şirnexî said that they are being oppressed by both Ankara and Baghdad and continued: “What do these states want from us? We are refugees! First, they imposed an embargo so that we would die, but we did not die. Whatever they do, it will not work. No one can break us. We will resist to the utmost. They have to come and kill us already. There is no other way.”

Another woman on guard, Emine Pîranî, pointed out that the Iraqi army is deploying armoured cars against civilians. “Why didn't they come when ISIS attacked? How can they claim now that they want to protect us?” asked Emine Pîranî and said: “We don't accept this. Everything is the result of Erdoğan's policy of blackmail. We will not accept this cruel oppression. Being besieged and fenced in is massive oppression. We have not harmed anyone, and we defend human rights. We do not sell people and we are open to peace and brotherhood, but we will never accept this siege.”

Teacher Hekar Gabarî said that the siege was demanded by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: “We will not accept the siege because it means captivity. We are intended to be taken into captivity. Thirty years after our escape, they want to put us in a prison camp. We will not allow that.”

Gabarî appealed to all the Kurdish people, saying: “Support us, stand up everywhere and protest in front of Iraqi representations. If we join hands, we can break the siege.”

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Medical care crisis in Maxmur due to the embargo and siege

REBER COLEMERG/AWYER BOTAN | MAXMUR | 29 MAY 2023

The Maxmur refugee camp is in the headlines due to the ongoing resistance against the Iraqi army's attempts to encircle the camp with barbed wire and watchtowers. While the current attacks by the Iraqi

army began on 20 May, a heavy embargo has been in place for years against the radical democratic model project.

This embargo particularly affects the medical care of the camp residents. Dr. Mihemed Ünver works as a doctor in the camp. Speaking to ANF about the dangerous medical supply crisis, he said: “There were already difficulties when the camp was last surrounded, but now it is even more dangerous. Iraq has refused to allow medicines and medical supplies into the camp this year. Before that, the KDP prevented our emergency patients from receiving supplies for about three years. The Iraqi siege, which has been going on for over a week, has further exacerbated the health crisis.”

Dr. Ünver stated that they formed mobile health teams to provide health care, but the lack of medicines is seriously felt. “The teams try to care for the camp’s population despite the limited possibilities. However, for one person injured in the Iraqi military attacks, not even an ambulance could be provided to transport him to hospital,” said Ünver, warning that the situation in the camp threatens to deteriorate even further and that no medication has been provided so far.

Calling on everyone to raise their voices to end the siege and embargo, he stated: “People must fulfil their moral, humanitarian and national duty. The community in the camp is living here because of oppression and persecution. People are living here for the sake of all Kurds. That’s why they can’t stay silent. The Kurds should protect the Maxmur camp.”

To conclude, Dr. Ünver called on the UN and UN-affiliated health organizations, the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders to conduct investigations in the camp.



‘Maxmur mothers are symbols of will and resistance’

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 31 MAY 2023

Women activists and journalists living in Sulaymaniyah spoke to Rojnews about the resistance and determination of Maxmur women against the Iraqi army's attempts to besiege the Rüstem Cudi Refugee Camp in Maxmur in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

Pointing to the leading role of women in Maxmur in the resistance ongoing since May 20, journalist Şato Muhammed said: “Women all over the world face harassment and oppression. There are many women who were forced to commit suicide or were killed because of what was imposed on them. However, there is also resistance from organized women in response. Mothers in Maxmur are also women of resistance.”

Muhammed continued: “Mothers in Maxmur are resisting the attacks of the invaders and the enemies of the Kurds. These mothers have no weapons other than their will.”

Activist Cihan Selah condemned the Iraqi army's attempt to besiege the Maxmur Camp, defining the action as a violation of human rights. "If the Iraqi government maintains this attitude, it will violate all human rights. The camp residents have been living there for years."

Selah added: "The women in Maxmur are resisting the Iraqi army and we respect their will. Whenever a disaster happens, the Kurdish people stand against the attacks with the will of women and a sense of resistance. This resistance will continue until it succeeds."

According to Selah, the resistance of the Maxmur women showed the enemy that no force could break their will.



Iraqi Parliamentarian: Actions taken against Maxmur Camp violate human rights

ANF | 31 MAY 2023

The Iraqi army has been besieging Maxmur Camp since May 20, surrounding the self-governing camp with barbed wire and trenches and installing surveillance towers. The residents are putting up determined resistance around the clock and respond immediately to any attempt to advance the militarisation of the camp. When the Iraqi military digs trenches with shovel excavators, the people oppose them in an organised way and fill the trenches back in.

The resistance of the camp residents continues on its 12th day.

Iraqi parliamentarian Grant Qeys, who is also a human rights activist, spoke to Rojnews about the Iraqi army's attempts to besiege the Maxmur Camp.

Qeys said: "Preventing humanitarian aid access to the camp is a violation of human rights. Because, in general, the situation of refugees in the country is serious and dangerous".

Qeys stated that the Maxmur people were facing a plan deemed as dangerous by human rights reports. She said: "The people of the camp are exposed to the cruelty and injustice of the invading Turkish state with the help of some parties against the camp and the KDP."

Maxmur Camp is home to about 12,000 people with official UN refugee status. These are people who were displaced from their villages in Turkish territory thirty years ago and their descendants. Members of almost every family have died in the Kurdish liberation struggle, and many are still fighting with the guerrillas in the mountains for a dignified and free life with their own identity.

The camp, which is officially under the protection of the UNHCR, is described by Turkey as a "hotbed of terror" and has been continuously attacked by drones for years. The Barzani family, which collaborates

with the Turkish state, imposed an embargo on the camp in 2019. Only a few years earlier, KDP chairman Massoud Barzani had visited Maxmur to thank the residents and the PKK for their successful efforts in defending Kurdistan against ISIS.



People of Maxmur enter 14th day of resistance

ANF | MAXMUR | 2 JUN 2023

The Iraqi army has been trying to surround Maxmur refugee camp with fences and towers since 20 May.

The people of Maxmur have been responding to the siege attempt with a resistance vigil day and night for 14 days.

Over the past two weeks, the Iraqi army has repeatedly tried to carry out the siege by digging trenches around the camp and attempting to enter it. However, each time it encountered the determined resistance of the people of the camp.

The people of Maxmur said that they have been living under the KDP's embargo for years and they will not allow the camp to be turned into a prison.

The people of Maxmur want the implementation of international refugee law, and called on the Iraqi government not to give in to the pressures of the Turkish state.

Many meetings were held between the camp representatives and Iraq. The United Nations also came to the camp for the first time in years and held talks. However, the promises made to the people of the camp that the siege would stop have not been kept until now.



Femicide

Report calls for Taliban's treatment of women and girls as a crime against humanity

ANF | 26 MAY 2023

The Taliban's severe restrictions and unlawful crackdown on women and girls' rights should be investigated as possible crimes under international law, including the crime against humanity of gender persecution, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists said today in a new joint report.

The report, '[The Taliban's war on women: The crime against humanity of gender persecution in Afghanistan](#)', presents a detailed legal analysis of how the Taliban's draconian restrictions on the rights of Afghanistan's women and girls, together with the use of imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, could amount to the crime against humanity of gender persecution under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists consider that the prosecutors of the International Criminal Court should include the crime against humanity of gender persecution in their ongoing investigation into the situation in Afghanistan. The organizations are also calling on other states to exercise universal jurisdiction or other lawful means to bring to justice Taliban members suspected of responsibility for crimes under international law.

"The Taliban's campaign of gender persecution is of such magnitude, gravity and systematic nature, that cumulatively the acts and policies form a system of repression which aims to subjugate and marginalize women and girls across the country. Our report indicates that this meets all the five criteria to qualify as a crime against humanity of gender persecution," said Santiago A. Canton, Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists.

"Since their take over, the Taliban has imposed draconian restrictions on the rights of Afghanistan's women and girls. Let there be no doubt: this is a war against women – banned from public life; prevented from accessing education; prohibited from working; barred from moving freely; imprisoned, disappeared and tortured, including for speaking against these policies and resisting the repression. These are international crimes. They are organized, widespread, systematic," said Agnès Callamard, Secretary General at Amnesty International.

The report covers the period from August 2021 to January 2023 and bases its analysis on a growing body of evidence collected by credible sources, including Amnesty International's 2022 report [Death in Slow Motion](#), civil society organizations and UN authorities. It also provides a legal assessment of why women and girls fleeing persecution in Afghanistan should be presumptively considered refugees in need of international protection. It complements the work of UN experts and women's rights groups to lay the founda-

tion for the robust response needed to ensure justice, accountability and reparation for the crimes against humanity of gender persecution.

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Rojbin Çetin sentenced to ten years in prison

ANF | AMED | 27 MAY 2023

The Kurdish politician and activist Sevil Rojbin Çetin has been sentenced to ten years in prison for membership of the PKK. When she was arrested, the Kurdish woman was severely tortured.

Sevil Rojbin Çetin has been sentenced to ten years in prison. The Kurdish politician and activist was accused of membership in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) before the 2nd Court in Van and took part in Friday's trial via a video link from the women's prison in Diyarbakir. Before the verdict was announced, she again denied the allegations. In her defense, Çetin said she saw the trial as part of the Turkish state's campaign of political annihilation against Kurdish local politics and the women's liberation movement. The prosecution was essentially based on the testimony of anonymous witnesses.

Sevil Rojbin Çetin is an activist of the Kurdish women's movement TJA (Tevgera Jinên Azad) and was also a member of the local political committee of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). In June 2020, she was attacked in her apartment in Amed by masked special forces from the Turkish police. Before Çetin was arrested, she suffered torture for around three and a half hours, in which eleven officers are said to have been involved. They first set two dogs against Çetin. She suffered severe bite wounds on her legs. She was then pinned to the ground and beaten and kicked by police officers who held a gun to her head. At the end of the torture, Çetin was stripped half-naked and photographed. The Kurdish woman, who was suffering from cervical cancer, had to spend almost two weeks in police custody before a court ordered custody. She is currently being held in Diyarbakır Women's Prison.

Çetin is not in prison for the first time. In March 2014, she was elected district mayor of Êrdmed (Edremit) in the province of Van in the municipal elections. Just two and a half years later, she was removed from office and imprisoned along with about a hundred other mayors. At that time, Çetin stayed behind bars for around fourteen months, accused in the context of the resistance for the self-government in North Kurdistan. In 2019, she was imprisoned again, this time for activities for the Movement of Democratic Free Women (DÖKH). The trial initiated by the public prosecutor in Mardin was linked to the trial in Van.

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Saturday Mothers attacked and detained again on the 948th week of action for the disappeared

ANF | ISTANBUL | 27 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 948th week. Despite a contrary ruling by the Turkish Constitutional Court, the initiative was again denied access to their ancestral rally site in front of the Galatasaray High School on Istiklal Avenue.

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

When the Saturday Mothers and their supporters arrived in the square, they were surrounded by the police and at least 18 people were taken into custody. Journalists were obstructed while documenting the police crackdown.

Those detained in the crackdown include Human Rights Association (IHD) President Eren Keskin and IHD Istanbul Branch Chairperson Gülseren Yoleri.

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.

More than 40 female students in Iran expelled from university

ANF | 30 MAY 2023

The practices of the Iranian regime to suppress the women-led uprising after Jina Amini was murdered by the “morality police” continue. In a statement, the Student Union Council in Iran stated that more than 40 female students at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Tehran University were expelled in the last month alone.

The statement pointed out that the students who were not allowed to enter the campus by university security were not informed beforehand and that there was no documented evidence against them that would constitute a crime.

The statement added that the security forces were trying to put pressure on the students, and conveyed the following information: “A few days ago, more than 20 students staying in the dormitory at Jalal Al-Ahmad’s University of Tehran were banned from education for a semester and were expelled from the dormitory they were staying in. The University of Tehran administration uses disciplinary punishments such as deprivation of education and expulsion of students as a tool to protect their authority. Their aim is to suppress the popular uprising.”

The statement said that Sepideh Rishno, an art student and story writer at Al-Zahra University, who rejected the compulsory headscarf rule after her arrest, was also banned from education for two terms, and a new lawsuit was filed against her. Rishno was summoned to testify by the Public Prosecutor’s Office in Evin.

The statement also said that some students from various universities, including Beheshti University in Tehran, were summoned by the security police and asked about a meeting to protest the wave of executions.



Green Left MP candidate remanded in custody

ANF | İZMİR | 1 JUN 2023

Persecution of Green Left Party activists and former candidates, continues.

Izmir parliamentary candidate Meryem Yıldırım, who was taken into custody on 30 April as part of an investigation based in Eskişehir and subsequently released on house arrest, has been remanded in custody on Wednesday.

Following the prosecutor’s objection to the house arrest decision, an arrest warrant was issued for Yıldırım, who went to the Izmir Courthouse on Wednesday to give a statement.

Yıldırım was arrested by the judge on charges of “membership in an illegal organization” and sent to Şakran Women’s Closed Prison.

Since the beginning of April, and throughout the election campaign, a series of operations targeting Kurdish political parties, legal and media organizations have been carried out, resulting in numerous arrests.

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International Federation of Journalists demands release of 12 women journalists in jail in Iran

ANF | 2 JUN 2023

A large number of journalists were arrested during the unprecedented uprising that started in September 2022 after the murder of a young Kurdish woman named Jina Amini by morality police in Tehran.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) condemned the pressure and restrictions on journalists and called for the defense of the public's right to information.

The IFJ has released a list of imprisoned journalists, stating that there is a "serious warning".

The statement said: “The imprisonment of journalists is a warning sign at international level. We once again condemn the baseless accusations against our colleagues and ask the Iranian authorities to drop all charges against them. Journalism is not a crime and the Islamic Republic of Iran must release all imprisoned journalists and media activists.”

The female journalists in prison have been named as follows: Nilüfer Hamedi and Elaha Mohammadi, who announced the news of the murder of Jina Amini, Iman Bahbsand, Weda Rabbani, Farzana Yahya Abadi, Farkhunda Ashouri, Hashem Moazinzadeh, Maral Dar Afrin, Amir Maskani, Siamand Mohtadi, Gina Mudarres Karaji and Kamiar Fakour.

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Human Rights Violations

Twenty-one HDK members sent to prison

ANF | TEKIRDAG | 27 MAY 2023

As part of the police political operations, 24 people were taken into custody in house raids in many cities on 23 May. Members and executives of political parties and non-governmental organizations within the Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK) were taken to Tekirdağ Security Directorate.

The 24 were taken into custody accused of “membership in a terrorist organization”. Those remanded in custody were Servet Taşkın, Rahmi Diren, Cezmi Yaman, Turgut Haskan, Turgut Gökçe, Çetin Kale, Adnan Kurt, Ceylan Deniz Adıyaman, Senem Özbey, Zübeyde Karaođlan, Mehmet Akyürek, Ayla Erođlu, Ömer Faruk Kırnıç, Aytekin Bulut, Ayşe Yolkesen, Hilmi Karaođlan, Seza Büyükkılıç, Sinan Göksel and 2 persons whose names were not learned.

After the arrest warrant, HDK co-spokespersons and Green Left Party MPs Cengiz Çiçek and Esengül Demir, made a press statement with lawyers and families. Çiçek said: “What we saw was a show. This is not the first time we have been faced with these kinds of shows. Detainees are being targeted.”

Çiçek said: “The HDK wants peace in this country. We want a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. The HDK is a structure that carries out a democratic struggle in these lands. We want to say this to the regime: we're here, we're not going anywhere. You are the one going.”

— ★ —

Dozens taken into custody in Yüksekova

ANF | HAKKARI | 29 MAY 2023

Dozens of young people were taken into custody by police following house raids in Yüksekova (Gever), in the province of Hakkari (Colemêrg).

Special operations police, who broke the windows and doors of the houses during the raids, tortured the detainees for hours with gun butts, kicks and punches.

Those detained were first taken to Yüksekova State Hospital and then to Yüksekova District Police Department.

The following are the names of those detained: Demhat Kurt, Diyar Sedal, Rahmi Terzioğlu, İsa Terzioğlu, Aras Yaşar, Diyar Sedal, Uğur Sedal, Mustafa Bor.

— ★ —

Turkey among first five countries for users of drugs

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

The Trends and Developments report presented EMCDDA's latest analysis of the drug situation in Europe. Focusing on illicit drug use, related harms and drug supply, the report contains a comprehensive set of national data about these themes and key harm-reduction interventions.

The report revealed that the most commonly used methamphetamine in the last period increased in Istanbul and Adana in Turkey.

According to the report, the increase in the use of synthetic and chemical drugs increased visibly both in the world and in Turkey during the AKP rule.

The report's overall assessment says that "drug availability and use remain at high levels across the European Union, although considerable differences exist between countries. Approximately 83.4 million or 29 % of adults (aged 15–64) in the European Union are estimated to have ever used an illicit drug, with more males (50.5 million) than females (33.0 million) reporting use. Cannabis remains the most widely consumed substance, with over 22 million European adults reporting its use in the last year. Stimulants are the second most commonly reported category. It is estimated that in the last year, 3.5 million adults consumed cocaine, 2.6 million MDMA and 2 million amphetamines. Around 1 million Europeans used heroin or another illicit opioid in the last year. Although the prevalence of use is lower for opioid use than for other drugs, opioids still account for the greatest share of harm attributed to illicit drug use. This is illustrated by the presence of opioids, often in combination with other substances, which was found in around three quarters of fatal overdoses reported in the European Union for 2020."

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Young man detained in Yüksekova brutally tortured

ANF | HAKKARI | 29 MAY 2023

Youngsters named Demhat Kurt, Rahmi Terzioğlu, İsa Terzioğlu, Aras Yaşar, Diyar Şedal, Uğur Şedal and Mustafa Bor were taken into custody during police raids carried out this morning after the second round of presidential election on Sunday.

During the raids, the police broke the doors and windows of the houses and tortured the young men they targeted in the operation, seriously injuring them.

The detainees were first taken to Yüksekova State Hospital and then to the police station.

Photos reveal that one of these youngsters, Mustafa Bor, was exposed to brutal violence, showing the fractures on his head and bruises and bleeding in many parts of his body.

Despite the evident signs of violence, the state hospital reported that Bor only had a headache.

Lawyer Eren Baskin wrote on his Twitter account that: “Yüksekova State Hospital issued a medical report saying that Mustafa was not battered during the police raid. In the wake of pressure from our lawyers, he was transferred back to the hospital where all the traces of torture were recorded. We are waiting for the procedures to be completed.”



Hakkari Bar Association demands punishment for torture

ANF | HAKKARI | 30 MAY 2023

The Hakkari Bar Association has intervened in the torture case in Yüksekova (Gever) and demands that the police officers involved be punished.

Seven young people were detained and ill-treated in the Kurdish district on Monday. D.K. (15), A.Y. (16), Rahmi Terzioğlu, Isa Terzioğlu, Diyar Şedal, Uğur Şedal and Mustafa Bor are accused of being members of the PKK. The police were brutal in their operation, and the homes of detainees were stormed by heavily armed and masked members of a special unit. Doors and windows were smashed, and the accused and their family members were threatened and abused. Mustafa Bor was beaten for hours in his flat. According to his mother, the police officers said to her: “We have come to kill your son.”

In the meantime, all those detained have been released. The Hakkari Bar Association was able to speak with Mustafa Bor and recorded his statement. In a statement released afterwards, the Bar Association called for an effective investigation against those responsible. “Torture is defined and strictly prohibited in international conventions to which Turkey is a party and in national law. Torture violates human dignity and is unacceptable,” the Hakkari Bar Association said.

“No one, regardless of the charge against them, shall be tortured or ill-treated in any way, at any time. Immediate action must be taken against the officials involved. We demand that the judicial authorities conduct an effective and urgent investigation into torture, inhuman and abusive treatment and acts of violence and punish the perpetrators, and we respectfully inform the public that we will follow the legal process,” stated the Bar Association.



HDP Party Assembly member Aydın sent to prison

ANF | İZMİR | 31 MAY 2023

Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued an arrest warrant for Ilker Murat Aydın, a Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Party Assembly member. Aydın was detained at the Izmir Courthouse, where he went to give his statement on Monday, 29 May.

He was charged with "being a member of a terrorist organization" on the grounds of some witness statements.

Aydın, who was brought to the prosecutor's office on Tuesday, was referred to the court with a request for arrest and was sent to prison.

The Criminal Judgeship of Peace decided to arrest Aydın for the same allegation.

— ★ —

International Week for the Fight Against Disappearances ends with event at Human Rights Association

ANF | İSTANBUL | 31 MAY 2023

IHD Istanbul Branch President Gülseren Yoleri stated that disappearances in custody are crimes against humanity and added: "We will remind ourselves of the crime of the state every week."

The Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul Branch Commission Against Disappearances and Saturday Mothers/People wanted to hold a candle-lighting event in Şişli Mosque Square as part of the 17-31 May Week of Struggle Against Disappearances under Custody. They were blocked by the police. The group then moved to the IHD Istanbul Branch association building. Candles, carnations and photographs of disappeared people were left on the floor of the association building. Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul MP Musa Piroğlu and artist Kerem Fırtına attended the event where a banner saying "We want justice for our disappeared" was unveiled.

IHD Istanbul Branch President Gülseren Yoleri stated that they have been reminding the state of its crimes for 948 weeks. Emphasizing that the disappearance of people in custody is a crime against humanity, Yoleri said: "We will continue to slam this crime against humanity in their faces. We will remind them every week about how they committed this crime, who are the perpetrators of this crime, and who are those who hide this crime."

Ümit Efe, the representative of the Istanbul Branch of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (THIV), emphasized that they will stand by the families asking for justice for the disappeared. Efe said: "We will continue our search for justice. The struggle for rights and freedoms and the struggle for human rights are

justified by all kinds of darkness, repression, oppression and violence. We will win, we will continue to ask what happened to the disappeared.”

‘Everyone should join us’

Hanife Yıldız, a relative of one of the disappeared, underlined the need to protect the resistance of the Saturday Mothers. Yıldız said: “We ask everyone with a conscience to support us.”

‘No step back’

Lawyer Besna Tosun, whose father, Fehmi Tosun, had been disappeared by state forces, said that they would never stop looking for our missing people and added: “No one will be able to stop us. They can close the squares to us, but they will not stop us. The struggle will continue until the perpetrators are prosecuted. They are right to be afraid, because we will not take any step back!”



Police try to force university student to become a spy

ANF | ISTANBUL | 31 MAY 2023

A few days after banners were hung by the Kaldırac Movement to mark Ibrahim Kaypakkaya's anniversary of death on 18 May in 10 different locations in Istanbul, a reader of the magazine and Yıldız Technical University student Oğuzhan Kul, was harassed and forced to become spy on behalf of police by people who introduced themselves as police officers.

Oğuzhan Kul spoke to ANF about the harassment of the police and its reasons.

He said: “Police stopped me and said that they would do a criminal record check. They asked questions such as “are you attending demonstrations, are you a student”. Then they said ‘you have friends from ‘Kaldırac’ magazine, we know. Banners were hung all over Istanbul. We’ve been following you for two years, three years already. Does your family know? We can help you. You can reach us when you’re in trouble.”

A few days after this incident, police stopped Kul again. He explained: “After I left the house on May 20, two people who looked like undercover police officers started to follow me. They didn't make any contact, but it was something that made me uncomfortable. I passed by them. Then, two minutes later, two civilians from four days ago called me as I was walking. They were on another side of the street. I did not return. I walked until I got to the main street. Then I came back and asked them what the matter was. They replied that ‘We want to meet with you again’. I said I didn’t want to talk to you. They asked ‘How are you? Is there a problem? Did anything happen because you talked to us? We want to meet with you.’ I said ‘I am calling my lawyer, if there is a problem’. They left after my answer”.



Journalist denied treatment for speaking Kurdish

ANF | AMED | 31 MAY 2023

Xwebûn newspaper Editor Zeynel Bulut, who was arrested along with 15 colleagues in Amed on June 16, 2022, was forced to speak Turkish in Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital, where he was admitted for treatment on May 14. When Bulut explained his complaint in Kurdish, soldiers in charge at Diyarbakır Prison No. 2 intervened, saying “Don’t speak Kurdish, speak Turkish”. Bulut replied: “Don’t be racist, I can speak in any language I want. Kurdish is my mother tongue and I express myself better in Kurdish.”

A doctor intervened thereupon and tried to persuade the soldiers, saying that “the patient can speak in any language”. While the soldiers still forced him to speak Turkish, Bulut replied: “If you don’t understand, it’s your problem, bring an interpreter.”

The doctor said: “I speak Kurdish, it is quite natural for my patient to explain his problems in Kurdish”.

After the discussion, the soldiers handcuffed the journalist and prevented him from being examined. The soldiers took the journalist back to the prison after keeping him waiting in the hospital yard for hours.

— ★ —

Justice Vigil by Şenyaşar family enters 800th day

ANF | URFA | 31 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.

The Şenyaşar family made a statement in front of the courthouse in Urfa on the occasion of the 800th day of their vigil.

Executives of the Urfa Bar Association, the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) and the Human Rights Association (IHD) attended the statement.

Ferit Şenyaşar, who was elected a deputy from the Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) in the May 14 election, noted that the attack on his brothers and father was recorded by cameras.

“If it wasn’t for this struggle, the investigation into the incident would have been closed as unsolved. A lawsuit has been filed thanks to our struggle,” he said.

Şenyaşar stated that the prosecutor, who has not taken a step to bring those responsible for the murders to justice for four and a half years, sent his brother to prison.

“My brother has been kept in solitary confinement for 5 years. On June 2, I will take my place in the parliament as a rights defender. I will continue our struggle for justice in Ankara.”

Şenyaşar called on non-governmental organizations, political party representatives and legal organizations in Urfa not to leave her mother alone in her struggle.

Mother Emine Şenyaşar addressed the government and said: “There is neither a state nor a rule of law. They placed my son in solitary confinement while murderers are walking freely outside. Why don’t the authorities arrest them? Release my son. Is this justice? We are carrying out this vigil because they have persecuted us. This state favours oppression. Why aren’t the camera records revealed to the public? I do not recognize this state.”

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Six young people taken into custody in Izmir

ANF | İZMİR | 1 JUN 2023

Six young people, members of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Izmir Youth Assembly, were taken into custody in the borough of Menemen in Izmiri on Wednesday evening.

The police stopped the vehicle four of the young activists, Uğur Yıldız, Mustafa Yalçın, Emre Yalçın and Harun Yakaç, were traveling in. Abdurrahim Kaymaz and Özkan Çakal were taken into custody in a raid on their workplace in Menemen. The young activists were taken to the Izmir Provincial Security Directorate.

— ★ —

Governor in Van rejects investigation into police officer who threatened journalists with death

ANF | VAN | 1 JUN 2023

The journalists, who followed a World Peace Day rally organized by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Van on 1 September 2022, were beaten and threatened with death by the police.

One of the journalists who followed the rally, Mesut Bağcı, was beaten and his camera was broken by the police. Moreover, anti-terror police threatened Mezopotamya New Agency (MA) reporter Berivan Kutlu and JINNEWS reporter Zelal Tunç with death. A police officer pointed a gun at JINNEWS reporter Elfazi Toral, threatening other journalists with death.

After the incident, the journalists filed a criminal complaint with the Van Public Prosecutor's Office. However, Van Governor's Office did not allow an investigation into a police officer named M.K. The governor's office accused the journalists of "reporting news in favour of a (terrorist) organization and flouting the police force. The governor's office claimed that the police officer pulled his gun on the journalists in order to protect himself and his personal gun. The journalists will appeal to the Van Regional Administrative Court.



IHRNGO: At least 142 were executed in Iran in May, 307 in 2023

ANF | 1 JUN 2023

Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO) reported that at least 142 people have been executed in May, the highest monthly execution since 2015. Furthermore, at least 307 people have been executed in 2023, a 76% rise (174 people) compared to the same period in 2022.

Reiterating its warning about the escalation of executions, Iran Human Rights called on the international community to stop the Islamic Republic's killing machine with a strong reaction and practical punitive steps.

IHRNGO Director, Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam said: "The purpose of the Islamic Republic's intensification of arbitrary executions is to spread societal fear to prevent protests and prolong its rule. If the international community doesn't show a stronger reaction to the current wave of executions, hundreds more will fall victims to their killing machine in the coming months."

According to data gathered by Iran Human Rights, at least 307 people have been executed so far in 2023. Of those, 59% were executed for drug-related charges (180 people).

May Executions

At least 142 people, including a woman, have been executed in May, the highest monthly execution since 2015. The first public execution of 2023 was also carried out in May. 78 people (55%) were executed for drug-related charges. 21% (30 people) executed in May were Baluch minorities.

As well as increasing drug-related executions, the Islamic Republic has also expanded the scope of charges it uses to carry out the death penalty by executing two people for blasphemy charges and one for adultery.

Furthermore, at least four men were executed for the vague security charges of *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth) for drug-related offences. According to IHRNGO and ECPM's [2022 Annual Death Penalty Report in Iran](#), executions increased by 85% compared to 2021. The execution rate in the first five months of this year shows that the upward trend in the number of executions, which began in the second half of last year, continues with great intensity.

On 18 May, Iran Human Rights [called](#) on the international community to use all its powers to stop the Islamic Republic's killing machine after reporting 90 executions in just 18 days.

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General Elections in Turkey

Reporters Without Borders denounces Turkish media's biased coverage of elections

ANF | 27 MAY 2023

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounces the Turkish media's biased coverage of the parliamentary and first-round presidential elections held on 14 May and the presidential run-off between incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and opposition challenger Kemal Kılıçdaroglu that is to be held on 28 May.

In a [statement](#), the organization said: "Turkey's ruler for the past 20 years, Erdoğan has done everything within his power to win these elections, including denying his fellow citizens the right to reliable, pluralistic news reporting.

Over the years, all-out harassment and jailing of independent journalists on a massive scale, increased control over the state media, the purchase of Turkey's biggest privately-owned media group by a pro-government billionaire and a system of subsidies for media outlets that support the president have given him control over 85% of the national media.

This has had many consequences, including a grossly unfair allocation of airtime as well as overall editorial control. During the month from 1 April to 1 May, Erdoğan had exactly 60 times more coverage on the public TV channel *TRT Haber* (TRT News) than his main challenger. Erdoğan received 32 hours of airtime while Kılıçdaroglu received 32 minutes, according to sources within the High Council for Broadcasting (RTÜK). In other words, a public TV channel not only acted as a state TV channel but also sided with one candidate against another."

RSF added: "The unfair nature of Erdoğan's hyper-presidential system of government has also been reinforced during the past ten years by the many kinds of attacks and subterfuges that the authorities have used to weaken the opposition media and kill off pluralistic news coverage.

The justice system, which does Erdoğan's bidding, has constantly harassed and imprisoned journalists. Since June 2022, at least 32 pro-Kurdish journalists and media workers have been arrested for alleged membership of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Only nine have since been released – on 16 May.”

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Green Left Party Spokesperson: We will vote to defeat fascism and overthrow the one-man regime

ANF | 27 MAY 2023

Before the second round of the presidential elections in Turkey, it has become clear that the Kurds are once again in a key position. Ibrahim Akin, co-spokesperson of the Green Left Party and MP from Izmir, spoke to ANF about the elections of 14 May and the run-off election on Sunday between presidential candidates Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (AKP) and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (CHP).

Akin noted that the AKP/MHP went into the 14 May elections with all the resources of the state and the bureaucracy and that the Green Left Party, under whose banner the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) contested the parliamentary elections due to the closure case against it, was put under pressure by the judiciary and state forces. In Kurdistan in particular, the security of the elections and the ballot boxes were guaranteed.

Assessing the 14 May election results, Akin said that the club of repression in the Kurdish provinces had a strong impact: “Despite the pressure, our voters stood up for their will and the Green Left Party became the first party in the region with significantly more votes than the others. Our party also became the third largest party in Turkey in terms of the number of MPs it won across the country.”

Nevertheless, the Green Left Party did not achieve its goals, Akin noted, adding: “There has been a loss of votes, for which there were various reasons. After the run-off election on Sunday, these reasons are to be analysed and dealt with in a process of criticism and self-criticism with the party executives and alliance components.”

Commenting on the composition of the parliament, Akin said: “When we look at the parliamentary arithmetic that has emerged after the parliamentary elections, we see that there may be considerable difficulties in creating a democratic, participatory, egalitarian and ecological constitution. We all now have bigger tasks in building a democratic order in the second century of the republic. As the Alliance for Labour and Freedom, we made a strategic decision in the presidential elections to push back Erdoğan's one-man regime. We have fulfilled this decision. The voters of the Green Left Party have also accepted and embraced this strategic decision. By this decision, Erdoğan did not win in the first round. The will of the voters of the Green Left Party was decisive in preventing Erdoğan from being elected in the first round.”

Even in the run-off election on 28 May, the Green Left Party will stick to its principles in defence of democracy and freedom, said Akin and continued: “Of course, elections are not the only means to wage a

struggle for democracy and freedom, but if we cannot make the elections a process in which this struggle can be waged, neither the ballot box nor the votes cast will have any meaning. Since the beginning of this electoral process, we have always emphasised principles rather than discussing names, and we are still at the same point. Either we stand by the idea of democracy, peace, fraternity, equality and justice, or we are against it. Today's one-man regime is the regime that has put up a front against democracy and peace.”

Akin stressed that the elections on 28 May were important for the establishment of law and justice. “Voters must go to the polls one more time to get rid of the fascist government and overthrow the dictator. We must not allow fascism to win. We will go to the polls and determine the result. We have done it before, and we will do it again. On 14 May, we stopped fascism by stopping Erdoğan in the first round of the elections. On 28 May, we will vote for the defeat of fascism. We know that one election will not change everything. But for many things to change, some things have to change first. On 28 May we will vote to overthrow the one man, as a first step to changing many things. We call on people to go to the ballot box to stand against those who market the future of the country, against the mentality that divides society and sets it against each other, and to drive out the one man and his profiteering partners. We call on our people to go to the polls and cast their votes to overthrow the one man. First we will stop the fascism of the government and then we will continue our struggle for democracy with a stronger breath.”

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Polling stations open in Turkey

ANF | 28 MAY 2023

60 million 769 thousand 268 people have the right to cast their votes to elect the President who will rule the country for five years in Turkey. Some 47 thousand 523 voters turned 18 in the period between the second round and the first round on 14 May.

People will be given one ballot paper and one envelope. After the voting process, which will last until 5pm, the election bans will be in effect until 9pm. If the YSK deems it appropriate, it has the capacity to lift the election bans at an earlier hour.

Voters will only be able to vote in the polling station they voted in in the first round.

Only one ballot paper will be given to the voters. If a mistake is made during the voting process, a new ballot paper will not be given. Voting will take place in 191,884 ballot boxes across the country.

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First irregularities registered in Yalova

ANF | 28 MAY 2023

The first irregularities in today's presidential election were reported in Yalova. Folded envelopes were found in a ballot box at Hüdaverdi Aydın Elementary School in Çınarcık. The ballot papers in ballot box 1033 are said to have come "from outside". The irregularity was recorded.

According to official counts, in the first round, Erdoğan's challenger Kılıçdaroğlu received more than 50 percent in Çınarcık.



Buldan: One vote can change the destiny of the country

ANF | ISTANBUL | 28 MAY 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) co-Chair Pervin Buldan cast her vote at Metin Kölük Primary School in Bakırköy, in Istanbul. HDP MP Züleyhan Gülüm, HDP Provincial co-chair İlknur Birol and many party members accompanied Buldan.

Making a short statement in front of the school after voting, Buldan said: "I hope that the results today will be instrumental in Turkey's democratization, peace, prosperity and tranquillity. The peoples of Turkey made a great effort to allow society to breathe a sigh of relief.

Today is an important day. We have never lost our hope that our destiny can change. We hold the same hope today. I am calling on everyone to cast their vote, because one vote can change many things. One vote can change the destiny of the country. The result we will get tonight will definitely lead to a change in the destiny of this country."



Attacks and irregularities at several polling stations

ANF | 28 MAY 2023

Reports of irregularities in the presidential run-off elections continue.

Urfa: AKP supporters attacked CHP MP Ali Şeker after he had noticed that votes were being cast collectively in the village of Karaali in Eyyübiye district and that men wanted to vote for their wives. When Şeker stated that this procedure was illegal, he was attacked by a group of 15 to 20 people. The MP was taken to hospital with a punch injury to his nose. The gendarmerie (military police) removed the attackers from the scene.

In the district of Akçakale, also in Urfa, another assault occurred when an election observer protested against block voting. AKP supporters attacked, insulted and threatened the election observer. Due to concerns for life and limb, the observer had to leave the scene, stating that he would file a complaint.

Mardin: There are also massive irregularities in the province of Mardin. Votes are being cast collectively at some ballot boxes. Already at the beginning of the voting, it was reported that in the districts of Artuklu, Yeşilli, Nusaybin and Kızıltepe, police officers went from polling station to polling station asking if there were AKP election observers. Where there were no AKP observers, the police brought “people from outside” to observe the voting. Meanwhile, armoured vehicles were stationed in the schools.

In Mardin, police were also ordered to remove lawyers from polling stations and schools throughout the province. This open attempt to enable electoral fraud repeatedly led to tensions. In Yeşilli and Nusaybin, lawyers protested against this action and declared that they would not allow this illegal act.

In Sakarya secondary school in Yeşilli district, lawyers were reportedly not allowed to enter the school, while the AKP mayor and AKP district chairman visited the polling stations and threatened election workers.

At Şirinevler Secondary School in Yeşilli district, votes are cast collectively at ballot boxes 1025, 1026 and 1027. When the CHP election observer protested against the irregularity, he was threatened by the head of the polling station.

In the district of Midyat, observers were attacked by AKP people and village guards after intervening in a group who attempted to open voting.

Siirt: In Pervari district of Siirt, observers from the CHP and the Green Left Party were threatened and denied access to the polling station in the village of Tosuntarla.

Muş: In the Sungu town of Muş, poll watchers from the CHP and the Green Left Party were expelled from the polling station by those from the AKP. Reports are coming through of block voting here as well.

Bingöl: In the village of Çavuşlar, a voter was captured voting for his relatives living abroad. While the gendarmerie did not intervene, the poll watcher who raised an objection to the irregularity was driven away from the scene.

Istanbul: AKP people attacked a woman at a polling station in Bahçelievler district.

In Beylikdüzü, AKP people attacked election observers from the CHP and the Green Left Party.

Manisa: Voting minutes were burned at a polling station in Manisa.

Antakya: Poll watchers objecting to irregularities such as block voting in Demirköprü were attacked by supporters of Erdoğan. In a Twitter post, one of the poll watchers said that his cousin was kicked in the head and his elder brother assaulted. According to the reports, the attack took place before the eyes of the gendarmerie.

Bursa : A poll watcher was attacked after objecting to irregular voting in Büyükşehir.

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People attacked by the police and prevented from voting in Cizre

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 28 MAY 2023

Voting continues in the Cizre district of Şırnak, as do irregularities. Residents waiting to cast their votes in the yard of the Metin Bostancıoğlu Primary School were attacked by the police in an attempt to prevent them from voting.

Following the attack with tear gas and rubber bullets, residents were moved away from the polling station.

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Voting for presidential election ends, counting begins in Turkey

ANF | 28 MAY 2023

For the first time in Turkey's history, the result of a run-off election will decide who will be the next president. Around 61 million eligible voters were called to cast their ballots and thus decide who will govern the country for the next five years. The candidates are incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the AKP and challenger Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu of the CHP.

In the first round of the presidential election a fortnight ago, voter turnout was historically high at around 87 percent. Erdoğan missed the required absolute majority of 50 per cent. According to the official count, he received 49.52 per cent, about 4.6 percentage points ahead of Kılıçdaroğlu. The opposition candidate received 44.88 per cent of the vote.

The third-placed far-right candidate, Sinan Oğan, won 5.17 per cent of the vote in the first round. Muharrem İnce, who had dropped out before the election, received 0.43 per cent. This meant that there would be a duel between Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu. According to preliminary data, Erdoğan's alliance of nationalists, Islamists and conservatives was able to maintain its majority in parliament.

Outside Turkey, the run-off election has already ended. Around 3.4 million Turkish voters live abroad and were able to cast their ballots in diplomatic institutions until Wednesday (24 May). By far the largest group lives in Germany, where 1.5 million people were called to vote in the run-off election. Initial results indicate a high turnout. According to official figures, 746,000 people took part in the run-off election in Germany. This was even more than in the first round of voting, in which around 725,000 people cast their votes.

In total, the proportion of votes cast from abroad has so far amounted to about two million votes. This puts the turnout at over 50 per cent. In the event of a close result, the votes from abroad could make a significant difference.

Polling stations in Turkey opened at 7.00 am (CET) and closed at 4.00 pm (CET). Results for the run-off are expected in the evening. Only then will it be known whether Erdoğan, who won with 52.6 per cent in 2018 and has been Turkey's president since 2014, will win the race again and rule for another five years - or whether Kılıçdaroğlu will succeed in changing the guard in the country's highest political office.

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YSK announces results with 75.42% of ballot boxes opened

ANF | ANKARA | 28 MAY 2023

Ahmet Yener, Chairman of the Supreme Election Board (YSK), shared new data on the election results. The data announced by Yener at 7.10 pm were as follows:

Percentage of ballot boxes opened domestically: 76.41%

Percentage of ballot boxes opened abroad: 42.01%

Total ballot boxes opened: 75.42%

Domestic results so far:

* Tayyip Erdogan: 53.54%

* Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu: 46.65%

Abroad

* Tayyip Erdogan: 60.75%

* Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu: 39.25%

Total

* Tayyip Erdogan: 53.41%

* Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu: 46.59%

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Erdoğan's first speech full of threats

ANF | ISTANBUL | 28 MAY 2023

The presidential candidate of the People's Alliance, Tayyip Erdoğan, made a statement in Istanbul Kısıklı as counting continued.

Before departing for Ankara, Erdoğan said: "We have achieved a victory where nobody is left behind."

Further in his speech, Erdoğan once again accused opposition parties of being "LGBTI supporters" as he named each party individually. He added: "In our culture, family is sacred. No one can interfere with the family. We will strangle anyone who dares to touch it."

He said: "We will be together until the grave" and asked for votes for the local elections planned for 2024. Erdoğan said: "We have 2023 ahead of us. You understand what I am saying, don't you? Are we ready to win both Üsküdar and Istanbul in the local elections in 2024?"

Targeting the opposition in his speech, Erdoğan threatened to "strangle" them.

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Kurds once again say 'no' to Erdoğan

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

Deepening the concept of war with the policies of denial in the Kurdish issue, AKP President Tayyip Erdoğan lost votes in Kurdistan once again in the second round of the Presidential elections. The opposition candidate, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, got the most votes, as in the first round.

Erdoğan lost in Sirnak and Hallari, which are on the border of Zap, Metîna and Avaşîn regions of the Federated Kurdistan Region, where he continued to implement the war concept he put into effect in 2015. Opposition candidate Kılıçdaroğlu received 76.30 percent of the votes in Sirnak and 72 percent in Hakkari.

Kurds demand change

In Amed, which has become the center of the AKP government's repression policies, Erdoğan got 28.37 percent of the vote, while Kılıçdaroğlu, fully supported by the Kurds, got 71.61 percent of the vote.

In Mardin, where anger against the government continued in the second round, Erdoğan could not get more than the 34% of the votes he received in the 2018 elections. In Batman (Êlih), Erdoğan's vote rate remained at 32 percent.

Kılıçdaroğlu, received 65.22 percent of the vote in Mardin and 67.90 percent in Batman.

In Dersim, where the AKP's war concept and special war policies are imposed the most, Erdoğan, who received 18.66 percent of the votes in the 2018 elections, was able to get just 17.19 percent of the votes on Sunday.

Kurds said “no” to Erdoğan by voting as follows for Kılıçdaroğlu: Ardahan 57.68 percent, Kars 56.40 percent, Idir 66.78 percent, 65.34 percent in Ağırî, 58.33 percent in Muş, 61.50 percent in Van, 50.21 percent in Bitlis and 55.44 percent in Siirt.



HDP and Green Left Party: Our people voted against the one-man regime

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) co-chair Mithat Sancar and Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) co-spokespersons Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar and İbrahim Akın held a press conference on the presidential run-off elections.

Akın stated that they faced an unequal and unfair election process marked by the repression carried out by the one-man regime.

Pointing out that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used all the means of the state during the election process, Akın said: “The manipulations carried out by the troll armies on social media and directly funded by the propaganda apparatus of the Palace, the disinformation produced and the montaged videos are some of the most striking examples clearly showing that the elections were not fair.”

‘Our people did not step back’

Akın said: “We have expressed and defended that the main thing in these elections was to change the regime. We made an effort to open the door to democracy by offering realistic promises to a society faced by a choice between authoritarianism or democracy. With this strategy and our fight accordingly, we stopped Erdoğan in the first round. In the second round, we continued with the same strategy with the aim of changing the regime. The results show that our voters have resolutely supported our party's policies and goals, and have strongly expressed their will in this direction. The vote preference for Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in 16 regional provinces where most Kurds live was as high as it was on 14 May. Despite all the pressure and dirty propaganda, our people did not take a step back.”



AKP members provoke Kurdish families living in Alanya

ANF | ANTALYA | 29 MAY 2023

AKP members gathered in front of Kurdish families' houses in the Sugözü neighbourhood of Alanya in Antalya to "celebrate" after Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected President. They lit a fire, accompanied by racist slogans. Family members living in the neighbourhood stated that guns were fired to hit their houses and said that racist slogans were shouted.

Stating that they informed the police about the provocation, the families added that the police did not take any action.



Journalist Hekimoğlu: Kurds did their part in presidential election

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

Tayyip Erdoğan, presidential candidate of the People's Alliance and chair of the ruling AKP, who used all the state resources during his election campaign, was elected the 13th President according to unofficial results. Speaking to the Mezopotamya Agency (MA) about the second round of the presidential election, journalist İnci Hekimoğlu said that unlawfulness has become rampant in the country, and that they will continue to fight it.

'Unlawful structure'

Hekimoğlu said that there is an unlawful structure that has suspended the rule of law and the constitution. "Pro-government mobs stormed polling stations with guns, the deputies were battered. Election frauds were reported at many polling stations."

The oppositio's ties with the grassroots

Hekimoğlu reacted to the statement of Ahmet Yener, Chair of the Supreme Election Board (YSK), who, despite violations and election fraud, said that "there was no negative situation". She said: "This is incredible shamelessness. We knew that the government could always rig the elections. But there is another problem here. I think that the ties of opposition parties with their grassroots are not as strong as they used to be. Opposition parties need to strengthen their ties with their voters."

‘Kurds did their part’

Hekimoğlu remarked that Kılıçdaroğlu, presidential candidate of the Nation’s Alliance, was the “most democratic” politician ever to chair the main opposition CHP. She emphasised that despite everything, Kılıçdaroğlu achieved a major success. Hekimoğlu stated that they voted for Kılıçdaroğlu despite IYI Party Chair Meral Akşener and Zafer Party Chair Ümit Özdağ. She said: “The Kurds did their part in the second round of the presidential election. Unfortunately, voters other than the Kurds either did not go to the polls or did not vote for Kılıçdaroğlu.”

Hekimoğlu suggested the CHP should think about why it could not achieve success in AKP’s strongholds. She continued: “After the election, there will be discussions within the parties. The nationalist faction within the CHP will take action to oust Kılıçdaroğlu. Kılıçdaroğlu was the CHP’s best chance. I hope that Kılıçdaroğlu will strengthen his position within the party.”

50 percent against Erdogan

Hekimoğlu remarked that the rise of Erdogan’s votes was a result of election fraud. She emphasized that the election results were not real results. She said: “But even if we acknowledge the election outcomes, Erdogan cannot dissolve the 50 percent opposition standing against himself for 20 years. I think that the opposition is over 50 percent. The country is also facing a major economic depression. It is not clear how they will deal with it.”

‘We will never abandon the struggle’

Pointing that the government may incline toward a more religious and “dictatorial” structure, Hekimoğlu concluded: “We will never abandon the struggle, especially as women. We will continue to stand up to this system. In doing so, we need to devise new organizational models, a new management alternative, a new economic program, a new education system, and new models. Waiting for the elections and making propaganda in election campaigns are not enough any longer. Opposition parties should come together with all oppositional groups and implement an organizational model through which they can penetrate the social fabric of society.”

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Economist Önder: Winning 52 % of the vote is not a victory

but a defeat

ANF | 29 MAY 2023

According to the unofficial result of the run-off for the presidency on May 28, AKP chair Tayyip Erdoğan has been re-elected president.

Commenting on the election result, economist İzzettin Önder said, “The result shows that our entire society is not interested in financial issues yet. The result shows that the reality of the economic crisis has concerned places such as Istanbul and Izmir. When we consider Anatolia, since most people living there are able to produce and meet their self-consumption, we see that they are not affected by prices as much as people living in cities such as Istanbul or Ankara. In these areas, the majority of people are more influenced by the traditional discourse of the government.”

Pointing to the election tactics of the AKP/MHP, Önder said, “Firstly, it is about ‘identifying the enemy’, which is something constantly done by the government. In this election campaign, it did that through lies and fake videos involving the PKK. Then, it had to deny it, but people saw it once and it was enough. This was not a fair election. They utilized all the means of the state. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan especially exploited the religion extensively. Particularly after appearing at the Çamlıca Mosque, he acted as if celebrating a conquest. These are wrong practices and ways of using religion. He used the sociological field. He always ignored the economy. He stayed away from discourses regarding the economy.”

“There is a rule in economics: ‘the polluter cleans’. They have polluted the economy and should now think over about how to clean it up,” said Önder, and pointed out that there will be an increase in exchange rates in the coming days. “The dollar will rise. It may not be immediate, but there will be a significant increase. In a TV program he attended recently, Erdoğan remarked that ‘neighbouring countries allocated various resources to us.’ He will probably borrow from Qatar and Arab countries. This debt will not lead him anywhere. Turkey will incur a huge debt. If Erdoğan democratizes Turkey a bit more in terms of universities, education and the media system and if he civilizes Turkey more in a Western-like manner, then maybe there could be some foreign investments. If these do not happen, it means that the government will become even more authoritarian. Because as people become poorer, harsh measures may come into play to keep them under control.”

According to Önder, not good days are ahead of society in Turkey. “Firstly, measures to silence people may come into play, as is already the case at the moment. After that, the state's repressive tools may emerge in a Gramscian manner. I think that Erdoğan's system will become even harsher from now on. If he directs the country towards more democratic mechanisms in institutions such as parliament, the judiciary, the university and the media, the country may find some relief. However, this will not necessarily mean that the economic difficulties will be resolved.”

When the current scene is evaluated, Erdoğan has not won, said Önder, adding: “After 20 years in power, he could not surpass 52% of votes though he used all state sources in a despicable manner and employed racist, nationalist and dishonest rhetoric. At this point, it is a significant gain and victory for people but also a wake-up call. Once Erdoğan starts implementing measures in even worse economic conditions, I believe that this awakening will further intensify. If he had been successful according to his own standards after his 20-year ruling, he should have won at least 60% of the vote. Imagine that you are governing the country all by yourself and you are barely winning 52%. This is not a victory, but a defeat. If I were in Erdoğan's position, I would thank people for the opportunities given in the past 20 years and resign for the sake of a better future for the country. If Erdoğan simply accepts the 52% rate of votes as an outcome of 20 years, it means that he has bigger plans.”

Green Left Party, HDP, HDK, DTK and DBP meet today to determine a roadmap for the future

ANF | ANKARA | 30 MAY 2023

Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) co-spokespersons Ibrahim Akin and Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) co-chairs Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar, Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK), Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Democratic Regions Party (DBP) co-chairs and spokespersons will meet at HDP Headquarters today at 10 am to evaluate the election results and determine a roadmap for the new term.

It is expected that a press statement will be made after the meeting. Today's one will be the first of a series of meetings held at the level of co-chairs and co-spokespersons.

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Racist attack targets HDP Inegöl building

ANF | BURSA | 30 MAY 2023

Two racist AKP members attacked the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) District Organization building in the Alanyurta district of Inegöl in Bursa on Sunday night. The attackers, carrying photos of Erdogan with them, fled the scene after throwing stones to the windows of the building.

Bursa Inegöl HDP District Organization made a press statement to denounce the attack. Provincial co-chairs and party leaders attended the press conference on Monday and said that they will resist bullying and attacks. District co-chair Ipek Akman said that the AKP continues to be afraid even though it won. Akman said: "We were not surprised by this attack. Are we afraid of it? No. We got our votes thanks to the will of the people. This struggle will continue until we throw you into the dustbin of history."

This attack on the HDP Inegöl District Organization building is not the first. The building was set on fire by unidentified people in December 2020.

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Karimi: Turkish elections not run in a fair environment

ANF | 30 MAY 2023

Farah Karimi, Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly following the elections, said that there are still concerns about the unequal conditions in the second round of the elections and the unfairness of the campaign.

Karimi added that Erdogan was taking advantage of the advantage of being still in office and said: “In the second round of the Presidency held on 28 May, voters were given the opportunity to choose between real political alternatives and there was a high turnout in the election. However, as in the first round of the election, biased media coverage and lack of equal conditions gave the ruling party an unfair advantage. The election board technically managed the contest effectively, but gaps in transparency and communication remained wide.”

Karimi continued: “During the calm but contentious campaign, the candidates were able to campaign freely. In an environment where freedom of expression was restricted, both private and public media could not ensure editorial independence and impartiality in their publications regarding the campaign. This reduced the ability of voters to make an informed choice. Election day was generally quiet. However, cases were noted where some procedures were incomplete, especially during vote counting.”



Erdogan’s new mandate begins with the lira at a record low

ANF | 30 MAY 2023

Turkey’s elections resulted in a record low for the Turkish lira versus the dollar. One dollar was trading at 20.09 lira on Sunday evening. The negative trend continued on Tuesday. The lira is now at \$20.22. The exchange rate in relation to the euro also fell significantly after the elections. With the announcement of the election results, the Turkish lira fell to 21.69 lira against the euro at 7.30 pm on Sunday, then jumped back to 21.47 to continue to 21.63. This sets the course for a further deepening of the economic crisis in Turkey.

The Turkish lira is in a deep devaluation crisis. According to official figures, inflation last year was 85 percent, but the regime-independent institute ENAG calculates it could be as high as 170 percent. The regime is trying to hide the inflation, but galloping rent and food prices are making the crisis felt everywhere. Erdogan tried to legitimize his failed economic policy with nationalist conspiracy narratives.

Religiously legitimized inflation policy

Economists in Europe see Erdogan’s interest rate policy as the primary cause of the crisis. Contrary to economic doctrine, Erdogan allowed the key interest rate at the central bank to fall further, causing inflation to increase. This is intended to attract investment and make imports more expensive so that people buy more local products. An absurd logic that has proven its failure for years. Erdogan dogmatically adheres to this low interest rate policy and has even fired several central bank governors because they countered his financial theory. The regime leader is using Islam for his sell-out policy. The head of the regime repeatedly used the Koran and the ban on accepting interest rates contained therein to legitimize his policy of interest rate cuts.

War budget at a record high

The crisis is not only exacerbated by Erdoğan's interest rate policy. Inflation will continue to deepen as a result of the \$34 billion in damage from the February earthquake. However, the driving factor behind the economic crisis in Turkey is the government's war policy. Enormous amounts flow into the supply of the army with the most modern weapon systems, the use of drones and so-called "intelligent bombs". The Turkish state spent a quarter of its budget on military spending in 2021. That was 139.7 billion liras, \$15.4 billion at the time. In 2022, the war budget (security and defense policy) has further increased to 181 billion lira. For 2023, this budget has almost tripled to 468.7 billion TL. This was the highest budget for the defense industry in the history of the republic.



'Media bias and restrictions contributed to an unjustified advantage of the incumbent'

ANF | 30 MAY 2023

The second round of Turkey's presidential election was well run and gave voters the opportunity to choose between real political alternatives but was characterized by increasingly inflammatory and discriminatory language during the campaign period. Media bias and ongoing restrictions to freedom of expression created an unlevel playing field, and contributed to an unjustified advantage of the incumbent, international observers said in a [statement](#) on Monday.

The joint 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) found that although the election authorities introduced some regulations ahead of the first round to ensure the smooth running of a potential run-off, the legislation does not address important aspects of holding second rounds, which has a negative impact on legal certainty and the stability of the overall legal framework.

While candidates were able to campaign freely, supporters of some opposition parties continued to face intimidation and harassment. Inflammatory and discriminatory language was used on both sides, with mutual accusations of collaboration with terrorist organisations.

"Concerns raised during the first round over the lack of a level playing field and the unfairness of the campaign remained unaddressed, with the incumbent president continuing to benefit from an unjustified advantage," said Farah Karimi, Special Co-ordinator and leader of the short-term OSCE observer mission / Head, OSCE PA delegation. "Regretfully, the use of harsher rhetoric by both contesting sides that was discriminatory and inflammatory further polarized the political environment. Voters came out in great numbers yesterday, and it is crucial that the winner makes genuine efforts to ensure the unity of the people of Turkey."

The campaign period ahead of the second round was generally peaceful. At the same time, instances of campaigning while performing official duties continued ahead of the second round, with breaches of the ban on inauguration events during the campaign period. Together with the ongoing use of public resources for campaign purposes, this provided an undue advantage to the incumbent that was also noted in the first-round campaign.

“The second round of the presidential elections has resulted in a clear winner. Nevertheless, this second round also took place in an environment that in many ways does not provide the conditions for holding democratic elections,” said Frank Schwabe (Germany, SOC), head of the PACE delegation. “Turkey must now implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and, above all, release Osman Kavala and Selahattin Demirtaş. In the future, the Supreme Electoral Council must be committed to the greatest possible transparency in order to strengthen trust in the electoral process.”

The election administration managed the preparations for the second round efficiently within a short timeframe. However, the national election authorities postponed the declaration of the final parliamentary results until after the second round, missing the deadline earlier set. It also continued the practice noted during the first round of holding closed sessions and withholding the publication of most decisions, including on complaints related to the first-round results. This further impacted the transparency of its work. Election day was largely peaceful, but there were isolated instances of violence that were mostly directed against opposition supporters. Observers also noted cases of group or family voting, while the secrecy of the vote was potentially compromised due to the layout of some polling stations.

Trials and arrests of journalists and bloggers continued ahead of the run-off, further restricting freedom of expression. At the same time, observers noted that many broadcasters did not meet a legal obligation to provide impartial coverage of the campaign and equal opportunities for the two presidential candidates, with the public broadcaster significantly favouring the incumbent and a similar bias noted in numerous private media outlets.

“It’s true and positive that voters had a real choice between political alternatives on election day,” said Ambassador Jan Petersen, head of the ODIHR election observation mission. “But voters were left underinformed by the lack of transparency on the part of the election administration, and the lack of balanced media coverage was concerning. In contributing to the unlevel playing field overall, this was certainly among the greatest shortcomings of this election. ODIHR stands ready to assist in addressing these.”

The international election observation to the second round of the presidential election in Türkiye totals 232 observers from 31 countries, made up of 181 ODIHR-deployed experts, long-term, and short-term observers, 31 from the OSCE PA, and 20 from PACE.

HDK, DTK, HDP, DBP and Green Left Party: We will carry our struggle forward

ANF | ANKARA | 30 MAY 2023

A meeting to evaluate the election results took place at the HDP headquarters in Ankara on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by the co-chairs and co-spokespersons of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the Green Left Party, the Democratic Regions Party (DBP), the Democratic Society Congress (KCD) and the Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK). Following the meeting, a joint statement was issued on the parliamentary and presidential elections of 14 May and the run-off election of 28 May, as well as on the further course of action of the parties and civil society organisations involved.

The five-point statement acknowledges the resistance of the Kurdish people and points out that every second person in Turkey disagrees with the palace regime. The HDP and the Kurdish political movement will continue to play a determining role in the struggle for democracy and will evaluate the current situation with its institutional structures and grassroots in the coming days, says the statement, which further includes the following:

1 - We experienced and are experiencing together a tough and hard time of struggle against the decomposition plan against the Kurdish political movement. The clearest answer to the continued coup politics against the Kurdish people's aspiration for freedom was given in Kurdistan with the elections of 14 May and 28 May. We bow with respect to the epic resistance of the Kurdish people who insist on a stance of freedom in the face of their statuslessness and the regime's policy of denial and annihilation. The stance against the tyrannical power has been reflected especially during the electoral process and at the ballot box. We reiterate our pledge that in the coming period, we will put this resolute stance alongside a correct, effective and result-oriented companionship.

2 - Likewise, we welcome the attitude of the peoples of Turkey towards the fascist power that uses all kinds of conspiracy, deception, lies and disinformation and uses all means of the state. The fact that every second person in society disagrees with the palace regime is a reason for us to strengthen the democratic-revolutionary social struggle in the coming period.

3 - We have fallen short of our intended electoral success and acknowledge this situation. However, we address the word once again to those who think that the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and the peoples of Turkey's struggle for democracy have had the decisive role weakened by the ballot box math. We have always existed politically and have always been the hope of the oppressed. In the new period of struggle, we will continue to play a decisive role organisationally, politically and socially. This role is known especially to those who speak of 'raison d'état'. Tenaciously and persistently, we will continue to develop our role in the struggle for democracy and pave the way for an even stronger awakening to freedom.

4 - We promise victory once again to the great values of our struggle for democracy and freedom, to our friends and comrades who have participated, paid tribute and shown commitment in the dungeons, in exile, in every field and at every stage of the struggle.

5 - We will thoroughly evaluate the current situation in the coming days with our components and institutional structures as well as with our people, without being demoralised or frustrated and without giving way to a perception operation. No one should doubt that we will draw the necessary conclusions and carry forward our struggle against this anti-labour, anti-peace, anti-democracy, anti-freedom, anti-nature, anti-youth and anti-women regime without taking a step back.

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Selahattin Demirtaş quits active politics

ANF | 1 JUN 2023

Following his party's vote losses in Turkey's parliamentary and presidential elections, former HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş has announced that he had quit active politics. On Wednesday, the 50-year-old shared on Twitter two paragraphs from an interview with the news platform Artı Gerçek, which will be published in full on Thursday. Demirtaş said he will continue the resistance from prison - with the same tenacity as all his other comrades - but will withdraw from active politics for the time being.

The HDP, which contested the Turkey election under the umbrella of the Green Left Party due to a threatened closure, suffered significant losses on 14 May. According to the final results of the parliamentary election, the Green Left Party received 8.79 per cent of the vote. This means that it sends 62 deputies to the Turkish National Assembly.

"I sincerely apologise for not having been able to represent politics worthy of our people," Demirtaş further wrote on Twitter. In the post, he also expressed his gratitude for "constructive criticism" that had been directed at him. He said he will now try to benefit from it.

Demirtaş, who led the HDP's gender-parity dual leadership together with Turkish politician Figen Yüksekdağ between 2014 and 2018, has been innocently held in Edirne prison since 2016. While the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has already demanded his release several times, the Turkish government ignores the corresponding rulings.

Last Sunday, incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan won the run-off election for the presidency against his challenger Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (CHP). He was confirmed as president for another five years. While Kılıçdaroğlu had promised Demirtaş and other political prisoners their release during the election campaign, Erdoğan hinted in his first speech after the run-off election that there would be no release for Demirtaş under his rule.

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Supreme Election Board releases final results of presidential runoff

ANF | ANKARA | 1 JUN 2023

Ahmet Yener, Chair of the Supreme Electoral Council (YSK), announced the final results of the presidential run-off voting on May 28.

Yener noted that the final results had been sent to the Official Gazette for official announcement.

According to the YSK, which is a controversial state agency accused of having close ties with the government, 52 million voters in the country went to the polls in the second round of the presidential election.

The YSK said that the election turnout stood at 85.72 percent, and Erdoğan was elected president by getting 27, 834,589 votes.

Yener announced that Erdoğan received 52.18 percent of the votes and his rival Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received 47.82 percent.

For the first time in Turkey's history, the result of a run-off election decided who would be the next president. Around 61 million eligible voters were called to cast their ballots on May 28 and thus decide who will govern the country for the next five years. The candidates were incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the AKP and challenger Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu of the CHP.

In the first round of the presidential election on May 14, voter turnout was historically high at around 87 percent. Erdoğan missed the required absolute majority of 50 per cent. According to the official count, he received 49.52 per cent, about 4.6 percentage points ahead of Kılıçdaroğlu. The opposition candidate received 44.88 per cent of the vote.

The third-placed far-right candidate, Sinan Oğan, won 5.17 per cent of the vote in the first round. Muharrem İnce, who had dropped out before the election, received 0.43 per cent. This meant that there would be a duel between Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu. According to preliminary data, Erdoğan's alliance of nationalists, Islamists and conservatives was able to maintain its majority in parliament.

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Günay: Our party is preparing for a new era

ANF | 2 JUN 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) spokesperson Ebru Günay held a press conference at HDP Headquarters ahead of today's Central Executive Board (MYK) meeting that will discuss the restructuring process of

the party. Günay thanked all those who supported them at the elections and stated that they started the renewal process after the election.

Günay said: “We have left behind a period for our country’s politics as well as for our party work. We started our post-election evaluation process. First of all, joint consultation meetings among the HDK, DTK, HDP, Green Left Party and DBP co-speakers and co-chairs were held. After that, we held a meeting among the HDP components’ co-chairs and co-spokespersons. At these meetings, ideas were exchanged on the topics and methods of the post-election evaluation process. A closed group meeting will be held with our parliamentary group today. Then, on 4, 5,6 June, the Women's Assembly, Party Assembly and provincial co-chairs meetings will be held and necessary planning will be made.”

‘Criticism self-criticism mechanism’

Günay continued: “Our main goal is to prepare for the new period using a criticism-self-criticism mechanism. After the Headquarters meetings are completed, meetings will be held with our people, provincial and district organizations. All these preparations have two main purposes: first, to eliminate the deficiencies and inadequacies experienced during and before the election period; second to learn from our mistakes through a mechanism of criticism/self-criticism.

Call to all parties

Günay added that this will be a process marked by collective debate. “Our call to all our party friends is as follows: let’s make a mutual assessment of this period, passing through a genuine and restorative criticism-self-criticism process, and meet again with the determination we have brought to politics. This will allow us to go to the Great Congress with high morale. That’s our goal. We invite all our party members and veteran friends who want to be the subject of the new process to contribute, participate and restructure the process of criticism and self-criticism and restructuring. A new era has begun for us.”

Günay then answered questions made by journalists after the statement.

Asked when the Great Congress will take place, she said: “The date will be determined as a result of our discussions with people.”

Günay said the following about Selahattin Demirtaş: “ I would like to say that Demirtaş himself gave the necessary answers to the speculations and interpretation of his interview. While we were conducting these discussions, we carried out a discussion process with all of our party committees, with our friends in the HDP and currently imprisoned. Therefore, his (Demirtaş) presidential candidacy was not evaluated due to his legal situation. Furthermore, in the consultations with him, he had a proposal for a female presidential candidate.”

EP Rapporteur on Turkey: EU accession process cannot endure

ANF | 2 JUN 2023

Now that the electoral cycle is over, foreign governments are also forming their reactions and contingency plans for the road ahead, which does not look “very promising” according to the European Parliament’s rapporteur on Turkey, Nacho Sanchez Amor.

“Among the first statements by Erdoğan [after Sunday’s elections] was an attack on LGBT people and there was another aggressive statement towards the European Union regarding visa liberalization,” Amor said in an interview with Turkey recap.

“Let me be clear, if we don’t have visa liberalization, it’s just because the Turkish government didn’t comply with a benchmark that the Turkish government committed to comply with,” he continued, referring to amendments to data protection and anti-terror legislation.

Noting severe curtailments of free speech, the jailing of political opponents and the disregard for rulings by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Amor said European governing bodies would need a “new format” to manage relations with Turkey, admitting the EU accession process had failed to strengthen core democratic principles in the country.

“My main message for the coming months is we have to look for another format in our relations,” Amor told Turkey recap, adding that in his view, “We can’t continue with this cynical process designed, theoretically, to conduct membership, but [without ever] reaching this target.”

Amor went on to say Turkey’s frozen accession process made space for European officials to consider alternative approaches. Future relations may operate under an “umbrella of agreements”, Amor hinted, which would involve various components to handle migration, customs union modernization, visa liberalization, foreign policy and so on.

“But to me it’s clear that the accession process [cannot] endure, because I don’t see what could be the incentive for President Erdoğan to change domestic policies,” Amor said, adding Turkish voters had apparently endorsed the president’s approach.

He continued, “When there is no political will to become a democracy, and this is the case of the ruling elite in Turkey, there is no way to impose democratic standards if the political will is to go towards an authoritarian model of government.”

“We have to recognize the accession process has not protected any single critical-thinking, democratic body or committed person. The basic condition of accession is the political will to become a democracy,” Amor told Turkey recap.

Regarding elections, Amor said he fully endorsed the conclusions of international electoral missions, acknowledged the results and said he would seek to continue discussions with counterparts in Ankara, underlining that EU bodies would keep supporting civil society in Turkey.

On ECHR rulings, he said Turkey will be subject to infringement proceedings if it doesn't apply court rulings for the immediate release of jailed Turkish philanthropist Osman Kavala and former HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş.

Amor summed up his views on ECHR adherence by addressing Turkey directly, saying: "You're a member of the Council of Europe, you participated in the [court] process, you defended your views, and you lose and you don't comply?"

"This is not about politics, this is about seriousness," Amor continued. "This is about being reliable as a country and Turkey, at this moment, in many, many fields, is not reliable, is unpredictable and, for that reason, is suffering enormous damage to its international image."

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Interview

Sebahat Tuncel: 7 years as hostage of Erdogan's regime

ANF | 29 MAY 2023 | SOURCE: LA STAMPA

Sebahat Tuncel, a former MP for the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), answered questions from prison sent through her lawyer by La Stampa journalist Valentina Ruggiu.

Here are excerpts of the interview.

First of all, how are you?

"Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make our voices heard in these difficult conditions. How am I? I don't know how to answer this question. To say that 'I'm fine' would not be true given the conditions in which we live inside and outside prison. I can say that I am in good health. To make you understand better, I will limit myself to telling you some facts from which you can draw your own conclusions. To understand what Turkish democracy is like, just look at it: in this country, the slightest demand for rights justifies detention. This is why thousands of politicians, activists, journalists and exponents of the Kurdish and women's movement are unjustly and illegally held as 'hostage' in prisons. And the government's anti-Kurdish policy continues even in prison. For example, when the release of hundreds of Kurds is postponed or canceled under false pretexts, despite having served the years originally imposed".

How do they treat you in prison as a political prisoner?

"There are disparities. 'Normal' prisoners are granted the right to a 30-minute videophone, political prisoners and detainees instead have only a 10-minute phone call. Again, other detainees in certain circumstances have the right to an additional 30 minutes of telephone time, while political detainees are not

granted this right. In general, daily life in Turkish prisons is a constant war and requires a lot of willpower. We are subjected to solitary confinement, a practice that began on the island of Imrali and then spread to all prisons. Especially with Covid 19, political prisoners have been placed in solitary confinement while judicial detainees have been released. In some cases, double handcuffing is also imposed, i.e. two prisoners handcuffed to each other. There are not enough health personnel, the food supply is not good and we have to deal with the cameras pointed 24 hours a day at us, including when we go to the bathroom. Two principles hold true in prisons in Turkey. First, the state is always right. Second, if the prisoners are right, the first principle applies. Objecting to prison administration practices carries the risk of disciplinary sanctions such as deprivation of visits, suspension from certain activities and judicial harassment. I tried to fight against the injustices in prison. I was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months.”

How long will you have to stay in prison?

“I don’t know how much longer I’ll stay here. In Turkey, the independence of the judiciary, as well as the executive and legislative branches, has disappeared and the politicization of the judiciary has removed any possibility to predict how long we have to remain in jail. 90% of lawsuits filed against Kurdish politicians are based on political motives. As it stands, the Turkish judicial system has taken us Kurds out of the “normal” legal system. Turks have the right to do politics, organize and act, but when Kurdish politicians do it, especially if they are women and young people, then they are accused of “belonging to a terrorist organization”. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, basic human rights and constitutional rights are usurped. That’s why I and our former HDP co-chairs, MPs and municipal co-mayors have been unjustly held hostage for 7 years.”

How will Erdogan’s victory affect the future of the Kurdish people?

If Erdogan wins the elections, as a first step, he will write a new constitution to institutionalize the fascist regime. His victory is likely to lead to social disputes and rebellions in the short term. The next few days will be difficult for Turkey. Surely the misogynist, nationalist, religious and militarist alliance established by Erdogan will continue to be anti-Kurdish. Members of the judiciary who are politicized and appointed by the government will continue to act on the basis as they have to date. But I am sure that developments in the world and in the Middle East region will force Erdogan to change.

What future do you dream of for Turkey and the Kurds?

“I believe my people will be free. Self-government, our democratic, ecological, women's libertarian paradigm will come to life, and the peoples of Turkey and the Middle East will build an equal in rights, free, democratic and peaceful life. I'm fighting for this.”

Opinion

Salih Muslim: Turkish state is entering a dark period

ANF | 30 MAY 2023

Co-Chair of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) Salih Muslim spoke to ANHA about the results of the elections in Turkey and North Kurdistan and the alliance of the AKP, the MHP and Hezbollah.

Muslim described the May 28 presidential election as “an unjust election” and said: “The Kurdish people were subjected to attacks by the state. The government wanted to destroy and eliminate the Kurds in this election. It wanted to finalize the attacks carried out in Kurdistan in the last 8 years, but failed.”

Noting that the Kurds were successful in the elections, Muslim continued: “Despite all the attacks, pressure and fraud, the Green Left Party won 61 parliamentary seats. 31 of these MPs are women, which is a great achievement in itself. They defended themselves and became the 3rd biggest party in the parliament. These achievements of the Kurdish people will enable all women and freedom forces in Turkey to retrieve their essence. The Kurds have proven that they can defend themselves and lead the struggle for democracy.”

‘People of Turkey should have resisted’

Muslim underlined that the peoples of Turkey should get rid of chauvinism for a common and democratic life: “We were saying that the Turkish state might lean towards democracy and recognize the rights of the Kurds. However, we also saw in the elections that chauvinism has become a part of their existence. The people of Turkey should have resisted the political, social and economic problems at least.”

‘State seized by mafia, hezbollah and crime rings’

Muslim warned that the alliance of the AKP and the MHP with Hezbollah would pose great dangers to the Kurdish people, who, therefore, should be careful. He pointed out that the Turkish state had completely fallen into the hands of the mafia, Hezbollah and crime rings, adding: “While there are the Kurds and those who promote democracy on one hand, there are dark gangs on the other. They unleashed ISIS against us in Rojava. In North Kurdistan, they afflict the Kurdish people with Hezbollah. They gathered the Free Cause Party (Hüda-Par- the political wing of Kurdish Hezbollah), the mafia and drug lords around Erdogan to maintain his power. The Turkish state will enter a dark period, and no one will understand where it will end up. Because the state has fallen into the hands of crime rings, the mafia and Hezbollah.”

'New Afghanistan'

Remarking that Turkey resembled Afghanistan, Muslim stated: “We should act knowing that a new Afghanistan is our neighbour.

The AKP-MHP’s policy against North and East Syria has been exposed and will be maintained. If they can, they will attack again. This government poses a danger to the entire Middle East. They will consolidate mercenary groups under their control and pursue their policies through them. But the Turkish state is collapsing from within. It has gone bankrupt economically, politically and socially. International powers will not support their attacks. There is no one to back Erdogan's policies. But we must take precautions. We don’t expect anyone to protect us. Our people have assumed a historic responsibility and leadership in the Middle East and will continue to do so.”



Contact e-mail: imralipost@freeocalan.org

Websites: freeocalan.org | ocalanbooks.com || Videos: vimeo.com/freeocalan