

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Action against isolation promoted by Kongra Star Aleppo

Coordination continues

ANF | ALEPPO | 17 JULY 2023

The tent action launched by the Kongra Star Aleppo Coordination in cooperation with the PYD with the slogan “We will increase the struggle to ensure the freedom of Leader Öcalan with the spirit of İmrali resistance. We will break the isolation and we will defeat the occupation”, and continue with the presence of civil society organizations and political parties.

Speaking at the action, PYD General Assembly member Mewlûde Eli said that what Leader Abdullah Öcalan has done for his people is invaluable and added: “Whatever we do, we will be indebted to our Leader, because he sacrificed his life to save his people.”

Speaking at the protest, Kongra Star Coordination member Nercis Bekir said: “Our Leader has been subjected to all kinds of violations, yet he has not bowed down. The aim of his struggle is to save his people from the dominant system. We should support the ideas and philosophy of the Leader and increase the struggle.”

Emire Tofan, member of the Martyrs’ Families Council, protested the isolation and said: “The will of the people who protect the ideas and philosophy of the Leader cannot be broken. Because what the Leader has established is greater than their plans and policies, and the people will not stop until their freedom is ensured.”

Martyr Kelhat Council Executive member Mihemed Heci pointed out that the conspiracies against Leader Abdullah Öcalan targeted the will of his people.

Lawyers Union co-chair Elaudin El Xalid Kalo said that “the crimes committed against Leader Abdullah Öcalan show that the invading Turkish state does not want a solution and aims to destroy the Leader’s ideas and philosophy.”

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Vigil in Maxmur Refugee Camp to demand freedom for Öcalan

ANF | MAXMUR | 21 JULY 2023

A vigil has been launched to demand freedom for Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan in Martyr Rustem Cudi Refugee Camp (Maxmur Camp).

Speaking on behalf of the first group, Maxmur People’s Assembly co-chair Neşat Kara said: “As it is known, 100 years have passed since the signing of the Lausanne Treaty. 100 years ago, Kurdistan was divided into four parts by international agreements and the Kurdish people were left without status. The hegemonic powers that occupied Kurdistan at that time are now confronting the Kurdish people with denial, destruction and isolation. Turkey wants to leave the Kurdish people without a leader.”

Neşat Kara underlined the heavy isolation imposed on Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan by the AKP-MHP fascist government, and continued: “The Kurdish people have not heard from their Leader for 28 months. The hegemonic powers of the world and the forces occupying Kurdistan want to leave the Kurdish people without status with their policies of genocide, destruction and denial, as well as the heavy isolation in Imrali. We, the Kurdish people, will do everything to achieve freedom for Leader Apo. We will continue our struggle and resistance until the isolation is broken.”

— ★ —

Prisons in Turkey

84-year-old Mehmet Emin Özkan finally released after 27 years in prison

ANF | AMED | 17 JULY 2023

Mehmet Emin Özkan was finally released after 27 years in prison. The 84-year-old political prisoner has been innocently held in Turkish prisons since 1996 and is seriously ill. The execution of his sentence was suspended for three months due to his critical state of health. According to his daughter Selma Özkan, the Kurdish man, who was sentenced to life imprisonment, was hospitalised again on 13 July due to acute health problems in the high security prison in Amed (Diyarbakır). Yesterday, he was transferred from the intensive care unit to a normal ward and was then taken back to prison. When his son asked for the doctor's report at the court building, the public prosecutor in charge told him that his sentence had been suspended for three months. The relatives then drove to the prison to pick Özkan up.

On the IHD list of seriously ill prisoners

Özkan was received outside the prison with applause and trills of joy and could only walk with support. His family brought him home.

Mehmet Emin Özkan was sentenced to life imprisonment as an alleged PKK member for the murder of Turkish Brigadier General Bahtiyar Aydın in the Lice district of Amed in September 1996. The judiciary has known of his innocence since 2014 at the latest. Two witnesses later stated that they had made false statements under torture. After the European Court of Human Rights confirmed in a ruling that Özkan's right to a fair trial had been violated, the trial was reopened in Turkey.

Özkan fell seriously ill in prison and was not able to care for himself without the help of his fellow prisoners for years. He was included in the list of “seriously ill prisoners” by the Human Rights Association (IHD). His family fought for his release for years.

“We will resist to the very end”

Speaking to Mezopotamya agency (MA) at his home after his release, Özkan, who suffers from hearing loss, said: “We have resisted until today and kept our promise. I am not sorry for the price I have paid so far. We will resist to the very end. The prison conditions are quite severe and our friends there are putting up great resistance. Words would fail to express the resistance there. The Turkish state has not been able to break this resistance no matter whatever it did.”

Özkan noted that his jail time would have entered the 28th year in 3 months, adding: “All the heavy burden was on the shoulders of the Kurdish people. We knew it. The people have resisted up until today. I wish everyone success.”

Killing of Bahtiyar Aydın

Turkish Brigadier General Bahtiyar Aydın was shot dead in Lice on 22 October 1993. The PKK denied involvement in the murder of the brigadier general, while the Turkish government blamed the guerrillas. One day after the murder, the Turkish military carried out an act of revenge against the people of Lice. Sixteen people fell victim to a massacre, and another 36 people were injured, some seriously. The army set fire to a total of 402 houses and 285 workplaces, and the number of people displaced is still unclear. Later it came out that Aydın had been shot by his own people.

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Commission established for Dağ and Er

ANF | HEWLER | 18 JULY 2023

Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er, who were arrested by the KDP, continue their hunger strike, demanding an end to arbitrary searches, physical violence, insults and the imposition of prison uniforms.

The two Kurds are held in Hewler Prison and have been on hunger strike since 18 May.

According to Rojnews, the chair of the Kurdistan Region Human Rights Board and the General Director of Prisons announced that a commission was established by the Kurdistan Region Minister of Social Work to meet the demands of Dağ and Er.

Background

Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er are accused of shooting dead the Turkish vice-consul and intelligence officer Osman Köse and two other people in a luxury restaurant in Hewlêr, the capital of the South Kurdistan autonomous region, on 17 July 2019.

In February 2020, Dağ and Er were sentenced to death by the 2nd Criminal Court in Hewlêr in a show trial under pressure from Turkey. Immediately following the trial, the two activists were placed in a prison cell next to ISIS jihadists.

On 22 September 2020, the death sentences were confirmed by the Court of Cassation.

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Fadıl Şenyaşar was not released at hearing in Malatya

ANF | MALATYA | 19 JULY 2023

The 2nd hearing of the case, which combines the “workplace” and “hospital” files, regarding the massacre perpetrated against the Şenyaşar family by the bodyguard and relatives of former AKP Deputy Ibrahim Halil Yıldız on 14 June 2018 in Suruç (Pirsûs), in the province of Urfa (Riha) was heard at the High Criminal Court.

Fadıl Şenyalar, who has been detained in a solitary cell in Elazığ Prison for more than 5 years, said at the hearing: “I have been detained for 5 years, I do not accept this. I am being held here unjustly. I do not accept the accusations. There is no gun, but I am under arrest. If a gun were found, it would be confirmed that I did not shoot. They are hiding the gun because I did not commit the crime. I repeat my previous defenses and demand to be freed pending trial.”

The other defendants in prison, Enver Yıldız, Celal Yıldız and Mekail Şimşek, rejected the charges and requested release. Reacting to the defendants’ description of the Şenyaşar family as “terrorists”, Emine Şenyaşar said: “They killed my children and husband and they call us terrorists. Terrorists are those who murder people in the hospital. My son was arrested without guilt.”

The court board decided to remove Emine Şenyaşar from the hall. The family’s lawyers protested the decision and prevented Emine Şenyaşar from being taken out.

Ferit Şenyaşar, Green Left Party MP for Urfa said: “While we were on our Justice Vigil, 8 prosecutors changed. After 4 years, this case came to Malatya. There was a massacre at the hospital. We received crime scene investigation footage 5 years later. This is not justice. There were ministers, governors and district governors in the hospital. When the massacre took place, the then AKP MP Ibrahim Halil Yıldız came out of the hospital waving his hand. His immunity is over, he needs to be tried and arrested. We want the police chief, who was the witness of the massacre, to be heard. Abdullah Erin, the former Governor of Urfa, said that the hospital camera records are in the state archive. A crime against humanity has been committed. My brother has been innocently imprisoned for 5 years. We demand his acquittal.”

No release for Fadıl Şenyaşar

Announcing its decision, the court board decided to reject the request for the detention of those convicted pending trial, to evaluate the request for the hearing of the then Minister of Food and Agriculture Ahmet Eşref Fakıbaba to be heard at the next hearing, to keep in prison Fadıl Şenyaşar and Enver Yıldız, considering the “strong suspicion of crime”. Celal Yıldız and Mekail Şimşek will also continue to stay in prison.

The court board decided to set the next hearing for 6 October. Emine Şenyaşar protested the decision by saying, “How is this justice? There is no state, there is no justice.”

Justice Vigil expected to move to Ankara

Ferit Şenyazar, who made a statement at the Justice Vigil in front of the Urfa Courthouse on 16 July, said that they would bring their action before the Ministry of Justice in Ankara, if a proper decision were not taken in the trial in Malatya.

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Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er enter 64th day of hunger strike

ANF | HEWLER | 20 JULY 2023

The hunger strike launched by Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er against the violations of rights they are suffering in Hewler prison at the hands of the KDP, continues on the 64th day.

Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er were arrested and sentenced to death by the KDP in 2020. They have been subjected to gross violations of their rights since the day they were imprisoned. The two Kurds, who have been on hunger strike many times to end the oppression and violations, finally went on a hunger strike on 18 May against the violations of their rights and the imposition of the prison uniform. As their demands have still not been met, they continue their hunger strike.

In a phone call with his family on June 23, Mazlum Dağ stated that their health condition was bad, there was no doctor and medicine in the hospital, no one had visited them for 10 days, and that Er had lost 20 kilograms and he had lost 10 kilograms.

During their visit to Hewler on Wednesday, the families of both prisoners said: “Our sons’ rights are violated in prison and they are subjected to physical and psychological torture. Our sons are being held together with ISIS gangs in prison. But our sons are political prisoners. On this basis, we want the prison administration's approach to them to be humane.”

As a result of increasing public pressure, a commission was established by the Kurdistan Region Human Rights Board Chair, the General Director of Prisons, and the Kurdistan Region Ministry of Social Work to address the demands of Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er.

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Prisoner behind bars for 30 years denied release for the second time

ANF | 20 JULY 2023

In Turkey, the practice of not releasing political prisoners after they have completed their regular sentence has become widespread in recent years. The legislation defines this procedure, which is mainly used as a means of pressure in the case of sick prisoners, as follows: “If the convict commits an intentional offence that entails a custodial sentence between the time of conditional release and the supervision period, the convict’s release shall be suspended. It is sufficient that the second offence is committed within the supervision period. However, since the term “offence” is not defined here and it is the responsibility of the prison administration to impose sentences, prisoners are arbitrarily punished. When suspending release, prison administrations use every step prisoners take as a pretext to punish them. The suspension of release by the monitoring committees is now so widespread that it is difficult to obtain any data at all. According to available figures, at least 217 political prisoners have been affected so far. Some of these prisoners were later released, while others have not been released to date.

Sinan Sütpek was jailed on 3 May 1993 in the Hilvan district of Urfa and sentenced to life imprisonment. Despite the fact that he has served his sentence, 30 years, he is being denied release from prison on the grounds that he does not have “good conduct.”

Sütpek has been held in prisons in Urfa, Adıyaman, Bursa and Maraş so far and is currently jailed in Yozgat province in central Anatolia. Shortly before his release, he was transferred from Elbistan to Yozgat after the devastating Maraş-centered earthquakes in early February.

While Sütpek was meant to be freed on 3 May, his release was suspended for three months. Earlier today, he once again appeared before a administrative observing committee, which once again postponed his release until after three months.

According to reports, Sütpek will object to the committee decision through his lawyer.

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Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er end hunger strike

ANF | HEWLER | 21 JULY 2023

The families of Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er, who were arrested in Hewler in 2019 and put in Hewler Prison, announced that the hunger strike launched by the two Kurds on 18 May against rights violations was ended after their demands were met.

Kudret Dağ, the mother of Mazlum Dağ, said that they came to Federated Kurdistan to learn about the health situation of her son and added: “We are happy that our sons have ended their hunger strike after 65

days of fast. We call on the relevant parties to prevent the children of the Kurdish people from experiencing rights violations in prisons.”

Şahin Er, father of Abdurrahman Er, said: “The health condition of our sons, who have been on hunger strike for 65 days against rights violations and torture, was not good. Therefore, we are happy that they have ended the hunger strike. We have received the promises regarding the fulfilment of their demands. We thank all political parties and parties who supported us in South Kurdistan.”

Mazlum Dağ’s uncle Hamid Dağ said that they met with the Independent Human Rights Institution and the advisor to the Minister of Social Affairs and added that many political parties supported them.

A commission was established on Wednesday by the Minister of Social Work of the Kurdistan Region to meet the demands of Dağ and Er.

The two Kurds were arrested in the Kurdistan Region on 17 July 2019 for allegedly attacking Turkish diplomat Osman Köse and Iraqi citizens Neriman Osman and Beşdar Ramazan at the Turkish Consulate General in Hewler.

Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er were arrested and sentenced to death by the KDP in 2020. They have been subjected to gross violations of their rights since the day they were imprisoned. The two Kurds, who have been on hunger strike many times to end the oppression and violations, finally went on a hunger strike on 18 May against the violations of their rights and the imposition of the prison uniform. As their demands have still not been met, they continue their hunger strike.

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Siirt TUAY-DER launches letter campaign in solidarity with prisoners

ANF | SIIRT | 21 JULY 2023

The Prisoners’ Families Association (TUAY-DER) launched a letter campaign to express solidarity to the detainees. The association made a press statement at the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Siirt (Sêrt) provincial building. Kadri Bilgiz, director of Siirt TUAY-DER, drew attention to the situation of ill prisoners and said: “As it is known, prisoners are kept under harsh conditions. The place of ill prisoners is not jail. They need to be kept in an environment where they can receive treatment. And this space is their homes. We have started the campaign to send letters to all prisoners. Ill prisoners are not alone.”

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Military aggression and occupation

HPG reports another Turkish attack with tactical nuclear bomb

ANF | BEHDINAN | 16 JULY 2023

The press centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) issued a statement on the guerrilla actions and the attacks by the Turkish army in the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement, the guerrillas shot down a Turkish drone at Girê Cûdî in the western Zap region on 14 July. The Turkish occupation forces at Girê FM were struck seven times with heavy weapons within two days. In Xakurke, mobile units of YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) hit a Turkish unit at Girê Şehîd Şahan with heavy weapons.

Regarding the latest attacks by the Turkish army, HPG reported that the resistance areas of Sîda and Girê FM in Zap in particular remain in focus. According to the statement, the Turkish army used a tactical nuclear bomb against a guerrilla position in Sîda at 8 am on 15 July. In both areas, Turkish forces' attempts to demolish guerrilla positions with construction machinery continue.

On 14 and 15 July, HPG registered a total of 261 artillery attacks on their positions in Sîda, the western Zap region, Gundê Dergelê, Gundê Şêlazê, Girê Hekarî in Metîna, and Girê Şehîd Heqî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran and Ava Lolanê in Xakurke. The areas of Golka and Girê Hekarî in the Metîna region were bombed ten times by fighter jets on Friday.

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Turkish drone attack injures a civilian in Manbij

ANF | 16 JULY 2023

The Press Office of Manbij Military Council (MMC) released a statement providing information about a latest attack by the invading Turkish state.

According to the MMC statement on Sunday, a Turkish drone struck a car in the Manbij region at around 11:30 local time today.

The attack in the village of Hesên to the south of Manbij left a civilian injured.

The civilian, named Ehmed Casim, was taken to hospital and discharged after treatment.

Since 2020, Turkey has systematically used armed drones to assassinate those who play an important role in the women's movement and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. The beginning of this drone war was June 23, 2020, with the deaths of Zehra Berkel, Hebûn Mele Xelîl and Amina Waysî, members of Kongra Star Coordination. They were killed in a targeted drone attack on a private house in the village of Helinç near Kobanê.

Since then, Turkey has been systematically and deliberately launching drone attacks against the population of North and East Syria. It frequently targets civilians and infrastructure to weaken the social movement in North and East Syria. Since the beginning of the year alone, the Turkish state has carried out 31 drone strikes in North and East Syria. In the process, 48 people have been killed, including 13 civilians, and 38 people, including 12 civilians, have been injured.

In recent weeks in particular, Turkey has launched a new phase of its operations against the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, escalating with airstrikes. Since June 12, Turkey has expanded its shelling and drone strikes into northern Syria, hitting 35 locations with more than 50 projectiles, killing dozens of people.

On the morning of the 20th of June, the Turkish state carried out a drone strike in the village of Til Şeir, northwest of the Tirbespiyê district in Qamishlo Canton. The Turkish drone targeted a vehicle carrying officials of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) on a busy and crowded road, killing three people and seriously injuring one.

The attack came while the vehicle was on its way to visit civil facilities of the AANES. The co-chair of the Qamishlo Region Council, Yusra Darwish, the deputy co-chair, Leyman Shouish, and their driver, Farat Toma, were killed. Co-chair Gabi Shamoun was grievously injured.

The attack was a double-tap air strike. Co-chairman of Qamishlo Region Council Gabi Shamoun, who was seriously injured in the attack, said that the driver died immediately after the first strike. He was able to get out of the car and tried to open the door to pull his colleagues out of the car before it burst into flames, but then the second strike hit.



Four more civilians kidnapped in Turkish-occupied Afrin

ANF | 16 JULY 2023

According to local sources, the so-called "Military Police", a paramilitary criminal network established by the Turkish state in the occupied Afrin region, kidnapped Hisên Reşîd Hemze (39) and Mûrad Hisên Mihemed (26) from the village of Kefer Sefir in Jindires district.

On the other hand, the invading forces kidnapped 60-year-old Ridwan Mistefa Hecî from the village of Bedina in Rajo district, and 42-year-old Omer Hemîd Hecî Mehmûd from the Shiye district. The aftermath of the kidnapped civilians remains unknown.

The Human Rights Organisation Afrin-Syria reported that members of the ‘Sultan Suleiman Shah’ mercenaries, also known as ‘Al-Amshad’, forced the residents of the Kaxire village in Mabata district to pay a ransom of 40 thousand dollars.

According to data from human rights organisations, over 800 civilians have been kidnapped since the invasion of Afrin in 2018, and more than 7500 abducted. While some of these people were released in return for ransom, the fate of many remains unknown.

The Human Rights Organization Afrin-Syria reported on June 1 that the Turkish state and its mercenaries (police, civilian police, al-Jabha al-Shamiya and al-Amshar gangs) had kidnapped at least 53 people, including 4 women, for arbitrary reasons in May. Thousands of dollars in ransom were demanded for the release of the abductees.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Remains of HPG guerrilla retrieved by his family after 30 years

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 16 JULY 2023

Hamit İlbaş, father of 7, joined the ranks of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) in 1985 and fell a martyr in a clash with the Turkish army in Cizre district of Şırnak on 3 February 1994. The fallen guerrilla fighter was buried in the foothills of Mount Cizre by his companions at the time.

Two years ago, the İlbaş family applied to the prosecutor's office to retrieve the remains from the scene, as per the account of a witness. After a long legal process, the remains of İlbaş were reached by his family and buried in the Mem û Zîn Cemetery in Cizre today.

Speaking about the procedures, an uncle of İlbaş, Abdurrahim İlbaş, said: "The court asked for a DNA test and finally granted permission. A body was discovered in the area where we dug to find his remains but the DNA did not match. There were some other graves there. We eventually found his remains and the DNA matched. This morning, his family retrieved the body by their own means, while the Cizre Municipality provided no assistance in the process."



Turkish army bombs rural areas in Hizan

ANF | BITLIS | 16 JULY 2023

In the province of Bitlis in northern Kurdistan, the Turkish army is carrying out attacks on areas in the district of Hizan which were declared a temporary special security zone on July 15. For the local population, the measures, which will initially last for 15 days, mean a de facto state of emergency.

According to the Mezopotamya news agency, the bombings are being carried out by several attack helicopters. The target of the attacks is a region southeast of Hizan, which includes a hazel forest known to keep the local village economy alive, as well as ten densely populated villages and hamlets. The attacks are justified by a military operation against the guerrillas.

While the Turkish bombardment in the region continues, the Green and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) Bitlis deputies Hüseyin Olan and Sema Çağlar Gökalg visited the region on Sunday. Speaking here, Olan said: "Many areas have been under bombardment for almost 10 days and the region is suffering from ecocide. The goal is to depopulate the villages in this region. Local people are in a difficult situation and their peace is totally disturbed."

MA further reported that military loudspeakers repeatedly sounded threats and announcements to residents that access to cultivated land was prohibited, even for irrigation purposes. Meanwhile, two people from the village of Xûlepûr who had been detained by the gendarmerie the day before were released on Sunday morning. The two locals reportedly wanted to irrigate their fields and apparently had no knowledge of the access ban.

The mountainous region, which was reclassified as a temporary "special security zone" on Saturday, is still under the jurisdiction of the gendarmerie until the end of July for the time being.

The villages in Hizan, which are cut off from the outside world, are the focus of the Turkish army for the second time within a few weeks. It was only at the beginning of July that a curfew was imposed on the area, which has now been declared a restricted zone, due to a military operation. For five days, the inhabitants of the affected villages were forbidden to leave their homes. During the operation, the army carried

out bombardments in the immediate vicinity of villages, causing massive property damage and starting field fires in some areas.

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Turkish drone crashes in Raparin countryside

ANF | 17 JULY 2023

According to information provided by local sources, a drone of the invading Turkish state crashed in the village of Zurgan in the town of Sengeser in Raparin region on Monday.

Information about the background of the incident was not immediately available.

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Turkish bombardment injures two Syrian soldiers in Ain Issa

ANF | 17 JULY 2023

Two soldiers of the Syrian regime were injured in a bombardment carried out by Turkish forces in northern Syria on Monday.

According to reports from the ground, the Turkish attack was directed against a military post between the villages of Hiwêce (Hawijah) and Tibah to the east of Ain Issa district early this morning.

The injured soldiers were taken to hospital for treatment.

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Young man from Rojava killed by Turkish forces in northern Iraq

ANF | 17 JULY 2023

A young man from Tirbespiyê, named Rodî Silêman Ehmed, was killed by Turkish forces near Zakho city in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

Speaking to the Rojava-based Hawar News Agency (ANHA), Rodî Silêman's father stated that their son had crossed into South Kurdistan to leave for Europe from there.

The 25-year-old man was living in the village of Sîha Mezin in Tirbespiyê.



Ten sealed-off villages in Hizan threatened with depopulation

ANF | BITLIS | 17 JULY 2023

The Turkish army has been besieging villages and hamlets in the Hizan district in the province of Bitlis in northern Kurdistan since the beginning of July. After the declaration of a curfew and the launch of a military operation on 2 July, the region was declared a "special security zone" on 14 July.

The threatened villages and hamlets are Harat (Bilgili), Akunus (Yaylacık), Govan (Sarıbal), Nanılan (Yeniçay), Xalepûr (Yolbilen), Kekulan (Çalışkanlar), Sureh (Gedik), Pertavan (Akyazı), Kûran (Erencik) and Ureh (Otluk) and the surrounding hamlets.

The area is bombarded by the Turkish army from the air and shelled with mortars. Parallel to the military attacks, soldiers are looting fields and hazelnut orchards. Residents of the region, who appealed to the authorities, were told by the district governor that their lands would be expropriated. The villagers say that the aim is to expel the population once again. The affected villages were already depopulated by the Turkish state in 1994. After the legal regulation on the return to villages, many people came back. Ten villages are now threatened with repopulation.

Olan: The operation is a pretext, the aim is depopulation

Huseyin Olan, a Green Left Party MP from Bitlis, is in the region with his parliamentary group colleague Semra Çağlar and was able to visit some of the sealed-off villages. Many other villages are also inaccessible to the MPs. According to Olan, the special security zone is temporarily in place until 28 July. Especially in the village of Xalepûr, there is a large military contingent, mortar shells are hitting the villages at night.

Regarding the latest situation on the ground, the MP said: ‘In an area of two or three square kilometres, the army is trying to make its way through orchards and cultivated fields. Nature is being destroyed, the terrain is being levelled. According to our observations, the villagers are being forced to leave the area. Allegedly, some people are present there and the operation is set to continue until those people are caught.’

The ecosystem is damaged to create a clear view from the observation towers

Noting that observation towers had been set up in the region last year, Olan continued: ‘The area is being made barren under the pretext of the operation. Hazelnut trees and orchards are being destroyed. Water is no longer reaching the gardens due to the destruction of canals. The land is officially owned by the villagers and the people are desperate. The district governor is reported to have said that the land will be expropriated. Mortar shells are fired all night long. Unexploded shells in particular could pose a great danger to the local people. The operation is called a security measure, but the action goes far beyond that. The ecosystem is damaged to create a clear view from the observation towers. The people’s crops are drying up, this has to stop.’

Olan stated that the Green Left Party MPs had submitted a question on the issue in parliament and asked the deputy minister of the interior for an appointment. The request for an appointment was not answered, and the governor of Bitlis also refused to talk. “We cannot find a contact person and we advise those affected to contact the authorities with a statement of damages,” he added.

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Turkish armored vehicle kills a young man in Gire Spi

ANF | 18 JULY 2023

An armored vehicle of the invading Turkish state ran over a young man in the Turkish-occupied canton of Gire Spi (Tal Abyad), which has been occupied since October 2019.

According to reports from the ground, the victim was identified as Fayîz Elî El Heco from the village of Kafifa, 20 km southwest of Girê Spi Canton.

The young man suffered heavy wounds which claimed his life.

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SDF: Syrian efforts to align with Turkey against AANES will impede the resolution of the crisis

ANF | 18 JULY 2023

The Military Council of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) held its periodic meeting in light of current political and military developments in Syria, reported the SDF Media Center on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Mazloun Abdi, the Commander-in-chief of the SDF, along with all the leaders of the SDF military councils and factions, in addition to officials from military offices and institutions. The gathering brought together all members of the SDF Military Council.

At the onset of the meeting, the participants discussed and evaluated the reports submitted by the military councils and institutions. They also deliberated on the prevailing political and military situation on the ground, including the attacks carried out by the Turkish occupation and ISIS terrorists in the region.

The meeting emphasized that attempts to initiate a normalization process between the Syrian government and the Turkish regime are merely a new beginning to worsen the humanitarian and political situation in Syria. It warned that any Syrian endeavors to align with the Turkish regime’s agenda against the Autonomous Administration in northern and eastern Syria will lead to adverse consequences for all regions in Syria and impede the future resolution of the Syrian crisis.

During the meeting, the attendees also evaluated the consequences of the ongoing Turkish occupation attacks, which have been extending to northern, eastern, and northwestern Syria. The responsibilities of the international parties involved were also taken into account.

A significant emphasis was placed on the need to enhance coordination with the Russian forces in the western Euphrates region to act as a guarantor in preventing further escalation.

The meeting extensively discussed the efforts of parties affiliated with the Damascus government to create discord, destabilize the region, and undermine security in northern and eastern Syria. The relevant authorities were directed to promptly address and counter such attempts.

Furthermore, the meeting assessed the level of threats posed by the ISIS terrorists, taking into account their adoption of new terrorist tactics and the ongoing attacks by the Turkish occupation. The meeting acknowledged and praised the efforts and sacrifices made by the military forces and people in countering these threats. Additionally, it emphasized the necessity of continuing to make progress to ultimately eliminate these terrorist cells.

In this context, the meeting highlighted the cooperative efforts with the international coalition, emphasizing the crucial significance of enhancing coordination, expediting security and military operations, and expanding them to curtail ISIS' potential resurgence and prevent ISIS from exploiting the current circumstances.

At the domestic level, the meeting placed the utmost importance on preserving the unwavering strength of the home front against all attacks and adopting resolute measures to address those who promote and spread discord. In addition, the meeting also underscored the structure and composition of the Syrian Democratic Forces as an exemplar of cooperation among the various components in the region.

In terms of organization, the meeting delved into the defensive preparedness of the forces and evaluated the essential measures required to safeguard the region and its inhabitants. The meeting also prioritized the development of military functions in alignment with the predefined objectives and directives of the forces. Consequently, a comprehensive work plan was formulated for the upcoming period, underscoring the pivotal role of military councils at both the field and organizational levels within the military forces.

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MSD: 19 July Revolution set a model for the future of the country

ANF | 18 JULY 2023

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) released a statement on the occasion of the 11th anniversary of the 19 July Revolution in Rojava.

MSD pointed out that the 19 July Revolution represented the spirit and freedom of the Syrian peoples who rose up to build a new Syria free of repression, centralization and tyranny. This revolution, it said, proved to the whole world that the people of Syria have the power to change and build, and that no other power can break their will.

“From Kobanê to Manbij, from Raqqa to Deir ez-Zor and other regions, the children of North and East Syria made history against terror and triumphed. They proved themselves to lead and govern, and built the Autonomous Administration, which is the hope of all Syrians across the country,” said the MSD.

The statement continued: “We celebrate this national victory of all Syrians. The 19 July Revolution embraced the entire composition and established a bond between the spirit of patriotism with the Syrian national identity. As a barrier to any and all attacks directed against the security and sovereignty of the Syrian territories, and the unity of lands and peoples, the 19 July Revolution gave women the opportunity to play their role in their lives and fulfil their mission to rule in all spheres of life. It also encouraged young people to take part in the building and development of these experiences.”

Remarking that the 19 July Revolution won many gains, set a model for the future of the country and offered initiatives for the resolution of the crisis in Syria, MSD said: “We should focus on these initiatives, analyse them and utilize them as a search for a solution. We should produce solutions to realize our people’s hopes for change, democracy and diversity.”

The statement concluded: “After all these sacrifices, we cannot ensure justice for the people of Syria without a democratic project that embraces all Syrians. This democratic project will enable a solution to all the problems faced by the Kurdish people and other components. In addition, it will build a national circumstance free of exclusion and denial, and pave the way for building a new Syria with a civilized role.”



HPG reports continued Turkish attacks and guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 18 JULY 2023

The Press Centre of the People’s Defence Forces (HPG) reported continued Turkish attacks and guerrilla actions in its daily statement about the ongoing war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

Accordingly, guerrillas have carried out a total of seven actions against Turkish occupation forces in the Zap region over the past two days. The actions targeted the Turkish troops at Girê FM on 16-17 July, in which heavy weapons were used. The massif is located on the western wing of the Zap Front, which has been the focus of the Turkish invasion for some time.

According to the HPG, the Turkish army has launched a new occupation operation in the Avaşîn region. The offensive has been underway since 12 July and covers the areas of Gundê Mehmud, Şehîd Agir and Astengê.

Regarding the continued attacks of the Turkish forces on Medya Defense Zones, HPG provided the following information:

On 15 and 16 July, guerrilla positions in the resistance area of Sîda and at Girê FM were attacked several times. Attempts were made to demolish the tunnel facilities with heavy construction machinery. On the other hand, the Turkish army carried out 14 airstrikes on both days. Eight of the strikes were directed against the Western Front Şehîd Delîl in Zap, five against Girê Rosto, Girê Berbizina, Girê Kolît and Ava Lolanê in Xakurke, and one against Gundê Karawa in Gare.

On 16 July, the Turkish army carried out 326 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons, hitting various areas in Zap, Metîna and Xakurke regions. The targets of these attacks were Sîda, Şehîd Delîl, Golka, Gundê Şêlazê and Girê Şehîd Kamuran. In addition, Girê Cûdî was bombed four times by Turkish attack helicopters on 17 July.

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Four workers injured in explosion at arms factory in Ankara

ANF | ANKARA | 18 JULY 2023

Four workers were injured in an explosion at a defence factory in the capital Ankara on Tuesday. According to CNN Turk, a fire also broke out and spread to a nearby forest area. According to official information, the flames have since been extinguished and the incident is being investigated.

The detonation occurred at a plant of the Institute of Mechanical and Chemical Industries (MKE), which is located in the Mamak district. MKE is a state-owned company in Turkey responsible for manufacturing and supplying all weapons, equipment and ammunition for the Turkish armed forces. The factory in Mamak produces detonators, fuses, pyrotechnics and illuminating ammunition for the army, gendarmerie and police.

Only in June, five workers were killed in an explosion at an MKE factory on the outskirts of the capital. The weapons factory in the district of Elmadağ produces grenades and explosives as well as chemicals for dynamite.

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13 Kurdish parties except the KDP form an electoral alliance in South Kurdistan

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

13 Kurdish parties except the KDP have formed an alliance for the local election to take place in the disputed regions of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

The alliance formed in Kirkuk covers the disputed territories covered by Constitution Article-140, which lays down a clear road map to define the final boundaries of the territory to be administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

The alliance aims for the Kurds to win the elections in the regions in question, mainly in Kirkuk.

A statement regarding the alliance stated that the local election would be contested with a joint list in the disputed territories of South Kurdistan. It called for those outside of the alliance to join it and to defend the Kurdish gains.

The alliance does not include the ruling KDP, which is known for its close relations and cooperation with the fascist AKP-MHP block of Turkey, and Yekgirtûya Îslamî (Islamic Union Movement).

The parties in the alliance are as follows:

- Tevgera Goran / Gorran Movement
- Tevgera Demokrat a Gelê Kurdistan / Kurdistan Democratic People's Movement
- Tevgera Azadî / Freedom Movement
- Partiya Kedkarên Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Proletarian Party
- Partiya Sosyal Demokrat a Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Social Democratic Party
- Partiya Gelê Turkmen / Turkmen People's Party
- Partiya Komînîst a Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Communist Party
- Partiya Zehmetkêşan a Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Laborers' Party
- Komeleya Dadgerî ya Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Community for Justice
- Hevpeymaniya Nîştîmanîya Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Patriots' Alliance /Permanent Ruling
- Hevpeymaniya Nîştîmanîya Kurdistanê/ Kurdistan Patriots' Alliance /Temporary Ruling
- Yekitiya Nîştîmanîya Kurdistanê / YNK / Patriotic Union of Kurdistan /PUK
- Yekitiya Neteweyî ya Demokratîk a Kurdistanê / Kurdistan Democratic National Alliance

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YPG: Rojava Revolution became the revolution of peoples

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

The General Command of People's Defense Units (YPG) released a statement marking the 11th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution which began 11 years ago today, on 19 July 2012, when three predominantly Kurdish-inhabited areas of Syria declared their autonomy from the central government.

The statement released by YPG General Command on Wednesday includes the following:

“Without a doubt, the Rojava Revolution was one of the major developments experienced in the world in the 21st century. Just like the October Revolution in Russia influenced the entire world in the early 20th century, the Rojava Revolution in the early 21st century had an influence first on the region and then on entire humanity. In this sense, Rojava is a renaissance in the reality of the Middle East and a revolution in

the reality of humanity. Developed on the basis of a democratic nation and the strategy of revolutionary popular war, the Rojava Revolution became a revolution of peoples through the common struggle and heroic epics of the Kurdish, Arab, Assyrian, Armenian and Turkmen peoples.

We celebrate Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan), who is the architect of our revolution and leader of a democratic nation, as well as our martyrs, peoples and humanity that made history in the realization and defense of the revolution on the 11th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution, which is also the founding anniversary of the YPG.

Not only hope for humanity, but also a blow to the enemies of the revolution

The Rojava Revolution is not only a hope for humanity, but also a blow to the enemies of revolution. It frustrated the plans of hegemonic powers. The great project seeking to intervene in the Middle East was stuck in the freedom struggle and uprisings of peoples. The Rojava Revolution put fear in the heart of the hegemonic powers, the fascist genocidal Turkish state in the first place.

The YPG, which first organized under the name of YXK in 2011, announced its founding with the 19 July Revolution. With the formation of the Women's Defense Units (YPJ) in 2013 and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in 2015, it emerged as a substantial defense force in defending the whole of Syria. The defense forces thus became a shield against occupation and genocidal attacks and foiled the goals and objectives of the self-seeking powers. The Rojava Revolution became a response to these schemes.

While the peoples of the region were torn from one another by the Treaty of Lausanne a hundred years ago, attempts are being made today to divide this country and peoples into a thousand parts and make them lose for another hundred years. For this very reason, it is the common responsibility of every person who calls himself a 'human' to oppose this division and crown the Rojava Revolution with victory.

The Rojava Revolution is a women's revolution

Another truth revealed by the Rojava Revolution, unlike any other revolution in history, is the fact that it was led by women. The reality of the Rojava Revolution in this regard is unexampled. Women in Rojava achieved a level of awareness and aimed for freedom based on Leader Apo's philosophy of free women and free society. That is the reason why they led the revolution with great determination and made history on the very front lines of battle, which resulted in repercussions all around the world. This reality paved the way for the recognition of the Rojava Revolution as a women's revolution. This reality is represented by Leader Apo's definition that 'Rojava Revolution is a women's revolution.' Continuing in its 12th year as a women's revolution, it becomes a source of inspiration and hope for all humanity under the leadership of women.

Martyrs are the true architects of the revolution

The true architects of the Rojava Revolution are our martyrs. On this occasion, we remember our fallen comrades with love and gratitude in the person of our commander, Herekol (Hisên Şawîş), who fell a martyr on 19 July 2016. A leading figure of the Rojava Revolution, Commander Herekol improved himself with the philosophy and ideology of Leader Apo and made a great sacrifice in the development of the revolution on this basis. A brave companion of ours, born in the fertile lands of Rojava, Martyr Herekol

fought for the freedom of the Kurdish people and all oppressed peoples from his youth to martyrdom and made great endeavours to fulfil his duties. He undertook a historic mission in the most challenging times of the 19 July 2012 revolution and carried the torch of revolution to the present.

On this basis, it is more urgent and important than ever to build a front of all-out resistance against the powers and policies that seek to weaken and victimize the Kurds more than what was done a hundred years ago. We believe that all the peoples in the region, especially the Kurdish people who deserve to be recognized and to maintain a free existence among the peoples of the world, will claim the 19 July Revolution and build a free and democratic future through a common struggle.”

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KCK: All patriotic forces should unite around the Rojava Revolution and ensure national unity

ANF | BEHDINAN | 19 JULY 2023

The Executive Council Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) released a statement on the anniversary of the Rojava Revolution which began 11 years ago today.

The statement by KCK Executive Council Co-Presidency reads as follows:

“On 19 July 2012, a historic step was taken in Rojava and the Rojava Revolution, one of the most important developments in human history, was accomplished. Eleven years have now passed since this historic development. For eleven years, the Rojava revolution has defeated genocidal, colonialist, reactionary and fascist aggression and continues today to be the hope of equality, freedom and democratic life for the people of Kurdistan and all the peoples of Syria, the Middle East and the world. We congratulate the great Rojava Revolution, which has resisted and thwarted all counter-revolutionary aggression for eleven years and is now firmly rooted in life, and we salute this historic development.

We congratulate the people of Kurdistan, the peoples of northern and eastern Syria, the peoples of Syria, women, the peoples of the Middle East and the whole world on this great revolution. We remember with great respect and gratitude all the martyrs of the revolution and democracy and we reiterate the promise we made to them. The revolution of Rojava is the common heritage of the peoples of Kurdistan and the Middle East, of women, of the oppressed peoples of the world and of all those who struggle for equality, freedom and democracy. It is a part of the struggle of humanity for equality, freedom and democracy and a great step on this basis.

The Rojava revolution is the result of the decades-long freedom struggle of the Kurdish people. The decades-long work of Leader Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] is the main factor for the realisation of this revolution. He laid the intellectual and organisational foundation of the revolution with his work. The Rojava revolution developed on the basis of Leader Apo's ideas, paradigm and personal work. We congratulate Leader Apo on the Rojava Revolution and express to him our gratitude for ensuring such a historic development.

The international struggle and solidarity have made a great contribution to the development and maintenance of the revolution in Rojava. One of the most fundamental aspects of the Rojava revolution is definitely the international struggle. Many revolutionary fighters from all over the world came to Rojava with internationalist feelings, and dozens of them have fallen as martyrs. On the eleventh anniversary of the revolution, we remember the internationalist martyrs with respect and gratitude. It is a very significant and immeasurable struggle with great sacrifice. This struggle and sacrifice continues today and the youth, the women, the peoples, all those who are struggling for freedom, democracy and socialism stand in solidarity with the revolution of Rojava worldwide. We congratulate all those who are in solidarity with and fighting for the revolution of Rojava and express our greetings and respect.

The Rojava Revolution is based on humanity's experiences of struggle for equality, freedom, justice and democracy throughout history and on the lessons of previous revolutions. Leader Apo reviewed the historical development of humanity and showed the difference between the statist system based on exploitation and slavery and a social system based on equality, freedom and democratic life. He created a new paradigm that enabled revolutions to develop on a libertarian basis. Since the previous revolutions were carried out through the means of state systems, the desired results could not be achieved, and they were swallowed up by the statist system. Leader Apo overcame this historical impasse by developing the intellectual and organisational foundations of non-state socialism. It is the understanding of non-state socialism that distinguishes the Rojava revolution and determines its quality. This paradigm developed by Leader Apo means the reconstruction of life with a democratic and social mentality without recourse to power and means of power that lead to the exploitation and domination of people over one another. The Rojava revolution has developed on the basis of this understanding and great steps have been taken in this direction. This is a very important development for humanity's struggle for equality, freedom and democracy.

The Rojava revolution is rightly seen and expressed as a women's revolution. One of its most important characteristics is that it is based on women's libertarian understanding. The development of the Rojava revolution on the basis of women's freedom is the strongest dimension of the revolution and the essential feature that distinguishes it from others. It also means great power, because the fundamental element of social life is women. In this regard, it is a factor that should be understood when it comes to the Rojava Revolution that the revolution is against the male-dominated mentality and is based on women's freedom. In any case, women are playing a decisive and leading role in the realization of the revolution in Rojava. Because of this feature, the Rojava revolution is attracting the attention of women and all those who are striving for freedom in the Middle East and around the world. It is seen as hope.

The revolution of Rojava with its understanding of a democratic nation and democratic autonomy is the best model for solving the problems in Syria and the Middle East. The problems in the Middle East are rooted in the nation-state mentality and system. The revolution in Rojava has proved that these problems caused by the nation state can be overcome not through fragmentation and division, but, on the contrary, through the mentality of a democratic nation and the system of democratic autonomy, that strengthens the understanding of the coexistence of peoples. The nation states in the Middle East were produced after the First World War in accordance with the interests of the system of capitalist modernity and by the forces of this system. In this way, the Middle East was shaped in accordance with the interests of capitalist modernity and imperialist powers. Peoples and historical geographies were fragmented, and peoples were brought into a dependent state by setting them against each other by means of nationalism, religious fanaticism and chauvinism.

One of the peoples who suffered most from this was undoubtedly the Kurdish people. Kurdistan was divided between four nation states and the Kurdish people were placed in the grip of denial, annihilation and genocide. The struggle initiated by Leader Apo is essentially aimed at finding a way out of this impasse in which the peoples of the Middle East find themselves and solutions to the problems. With the Rojava Revolution, these ideas and solution-oriented approach of Leader Apo were brought to life. This development was also the most correct and sensible attitude towards the Treaty of Lausanne, which has now been in existence for a hundred years. It was designed in accordance with the interests of capitalist modernity and imperialist powers and is the official expression of the process that put the Kurdish people and the peoples of the Middle East through the mangle of conflict and genocide. In this regard, defending and protecting the revolution of Rojava is the most correct stance to oppose the Treaty of Lausanne and to ensure Kurdish national unity. On this basis, all patriotic forces should act with historical responsibility by uniting around the Rojava revolution, and ensure national unity.

The people of Rojava and the forces of revolution have saved the whole world from a great danger by defeating the reactionary fascist ISIS gang. ISIS fascism was fought at the cost of more than eleven thousand martyrs, and this war was won. But although this reality is known to all, the states do not act in the spirit of justice. On the contrary, no stand is taken against the invasion attacks of the fascist AKP/MHP government that nurtures ISIS and has caused massacres and genocides by unleashing the ISIS gangs on the peoples, especially in Rojava. This aggression is approved and supported.

The decisions taken and agreements reached against Rojava and the Kurds at the NATO meeting in Lithuania have highlighted the self-serving and hypocritical policies of the states. These decisions and agreements mean serving and being partners in the policy of genocide against the Kurds. Such an attitude towards the Kurdish people and Rojava, who protected all humanity against ISIS and sacrificed thousands of martyrs for it, is absolutely unacceptable. It should be abandoned and the genocidal policy of the Turkish state and the AKP/MHP government against the Kurds should not be supported. The Turkish state and the AKP/MHP government have an anti-Kurdish mentality and build all their relations on an anti-Kurdish basis. However, no power or institution can or should build its relations with Turkey on hostility towards Kurds just because the Turkish state has such an attitude. States, especially NATO powers, should correct this wrong attitude and not support any policy that is hostile to the Kurdish people.

There is no one in the world who does not know the attitude of the Turkish state and the AKP/MHP government towards the Kurdish people. The Turkish state and its government have an anti-Kurdish character. Because of this mentality, they want to eliminate the system in North-East Syria and liquidate the Rojava Revolution. This is the aim of the Turkish state's attacks and measures against Syria and Rojava, which are aimed at occupation, annexation and genocide. The fascist AKP/MHP government wants to drive the Kurds out of Rojava by eliminating the Rojava revolution. The other justifications it puts forward are unrealistic, they only serve to distort and create an environment and legitimization for attacks. The Turkish state changes the demographic structure in every territory it seizes, displacing the Kurdish population and settling other people. This goal of the Turkish state and the AKP/MHP government is well known, and it is a policy that is not only pursued in Rojava, but in all of Kurdistan. Our people know this character of the Turkish state and the AKP/MHP government. There is no one in the world who does not know this fact. However, there are some treacherous circles who call themselves Kurds and have sold out. They side with the state and AKP/MHP and build relations with them.

The Turkish state and the AKP/MHP have given these traitors and collaborators the task of legitimizing the occupation and the genocidal attacks. These traitors, who call themselves Kurds, accept this shame for the sake of money, wealth and benefits. Various discourses and distortions are used to try to hide these facts from the people. For the Rojava Revolution and all of Kurdistan, this is a danger that must be seen and fought. In particular, the politicians, intellectuals and patriots of the Kurdish people should lay weight on this, take a stand against it and raise the awareness of the people about this issue. This is a very important patriotic task.

The plans of the Turkish state and AKP/MHP fascism against the Rojava revolution and the democratic system in North and East Syria are well known. Against the planned invasion, annexation and genocide, first of all, the peoples of North and East Syria must resist together with the revolutionary forces and break these attacks. For this purpose, they must put all their concentration on resistance, make extensive preparations for war and raise themselves to a level that can break any attack. The patriotic people of Kurdistan must also stand in solidarity with the people of Rojava everywhere and struggle actively. Young people, women, peoples, revolutionary, socialist and progressive sections and friends all over the world should show more solidarity with Rojava. They should react to the relations of the states with the AKP/MHP government against the Kurdish people and Rojava and turn this reaction into action and make the states take a step back. If there is total resistance and struggle in this way, the attacks on Rojava can be repelled and the danger eliminated. We call on everyone to take up their historical tasks and responsibilities on this basis. On the eleventh anniversary of the revolution, we salute all those whose hearts beat with the revolution of Rojava, especially the peoples of Rojava and all of North and East Syria, and we express our respect.”



AANES rejects accusations by the Syrian Foreign Ministry

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

Many states try to avoid official contact with the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) in order not to anger Turkey. Sweden, for example, has terminated its formerly good relations with AANES in order to be able to join NATO. But the Syrian government in Damascus also reacts angrily to visits by foreign delegations to the self-governing region. The state news agency SANA said on Tuesday that Syria “strongly condemns the illegitimate entry of a delegation from the French Foreign Ministry into Syrian territory”. It said that “the French delegation’s meeting with the separatist organizations constitutes a flagrant violation of Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and reveals the destructive role and the extreme French hostility to Syria, and France’s full partnership in aggression against Syria through its support for terrorist groups and separatist militias.”

The AANES External Relations Department released a statement in response, saying the following:

“On 18 July, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement to the government in Damascus about the visit of a French delegation to northern and eastern Syria. This ministry has also previously published information that has nothing to do with reality.

As the Department for External Relations of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, we reject the accusations mentioned in this statement. We are not pursuing a separatist project. Our project is Syrian-national, it serves the unity of Syria and the unity of its people.

As for the need to fight terrorism in cooperation with the government in Damascus, what has been reported is a clear distortion of the facts. Because our people have resisted terrorism, and they have done so with all their strength. The successes they have achieved are Syrian successes. The world is witnessing the victories that our people and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have achieved against terrorism in cooperation with the international anti-ISIS coalition. No one can deny this. We have liberated large parts of Syria from terrorism and saved them from separatism and the development of sectarian and ethnic conflicts, from the Turkish border to Deir ez-Zor and the Iraqi border to Raqqa and Manbij.

We also note that the meeting with the French delegation took place within the framework of our efforts to achieve stability and our will to fulfil our Syrian duty. We reiterate that the statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aim to affect our activities and efforts in communicating with all actors with whom we want to achieve stability and security in Syria.

Damascus should open itself to serious and effective dialogue. The positions that have emerged today and also at previous times do not serve the solution in Syria. We call on Damascus to abandon this rhetoric, to change the reality of the situation in Syria and to come out of the stalemate, which has not yet brought any development towards a national solution and consensus in Syria."



Occupation forces attack a village in Til Temir

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

The Rojava-based Hawar News Agency (ANHA) reported that the invading Turkish state forces and allied mercenaries attacked the region of Til Temir (Tal Tamr) in the Heseke Canton on Wednesday.

According to the report, the aggression by howitzers was directed against the village of Qibûr Qeracîne to the north of the district.

Details about the attack were not immediately available.

The strategic position of Til Temir

Til Temir holds a key position in Turkey's occupation plans because the M4 passes through the district. The international traffic route is considered the lifeline of northern Syria, because it connects the Euphrates and Cizîrê regions with each other. Since the invasion of Serêkaniyê and Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) by Turkey, in October 2019, more than thirty villages near Til Temir have already been occupied.

Attacks in the region occur almost daily, with phases of high intensity alternating with phases of low intensity. 27 villages in the Khabur valley are directly on the front line. Five of all Assyrian villages in the re-

gion have already been depopulated by Turkey's attacks. Scores of people have been killed in the attacks and dozens injured. The Syrian troops stationed in Til Temir and the Russian military are not fulfilling their function of complying with a de-escalation and ceasefire agreement agreed between Ankara, Moscow and Washington in the course of the 2019 war of aggression.

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'The Yazidi community could only preserve its existence through resistance'

ERDOGAN ZAMUR | 20 JULY 2023

One hundred years ago, on 24 July 1923, Kurdistan was divided among the states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria by the Treaty of Lausanne. On the occasion of the anniversary, Kurdish parties and organisations are protesting against the agreement and demanding a status. Çiçek Yıldız is co-chair of the Yazidi European Coordination and spoke to ANF about the history and impact of the Treaty of Lausanne.

Çiçek Yıldız said that the genocide of the Yazidi community, the repeated massacres and the expulsion from their settlement areas are a result of the Treaty of Lausanne: "What does the Treaty of Lausanne mean for us? What have we experienced in this century? Kurdish society knows the Treaty of Lausanne well. This treaty has kept the genocide of the peoples of the Middle East alive in its own reality for a hundred years. The fragmentation of Kurdistan began in the 17th century when it was divided in two between the Iranian and Ottoman states. Subsequently, they did not want the Kurdish people to live as a nation with its own will in the geography of Kurdistan. One hundred years ago, the territory of Kurdistan was divided by the new Turkish state under the leadership of Britain and France, the most influential imperialist states of the time. The aim was not only the division of Kurdistan, but also a genocide of the Kurdish people. The nations that had been entrenched in Kurdistan for a thousand years were also part of this policy. In this treaty, the will of the international powers was shaped according to the wishes of the Turkish state."

"We could only preserve our existence through resistance"

Remarking that the Treaty of Lausanne was based on the total annihilation of the Kurdish people, Yıldız stated: "The different religions, languages and historical beliefs in Kurdistan were not taken into account. The oldest of these faiths is the Yazidi faith. It was also the target of this policy. However, the Yazidis have an ancient tradition; they have not submitted to any ruling power for thousands of years. They have resisted throughout history and continue to resist today. They will impose their will through this tradition of struggle. The aim of the Treaty of Lausanne was the destruction of societies in the region, the enmity between religions and the non-acceptance of differences. The implementation of the massacres against the Yazidi community took place on the ground created by the Treaty of Lausanne. They were implemented by the newly established fascist Turkish state. Against this, historic resistance developed in the Yazidi community. Thanks to this resistance, it was able to preserve its existence. One of the aims of the establishment of the Turkish state was to destroy the different communities, languages and religions through tyranny and genocide. Our society prevented this policy of annihilation through its resistance. Through

this resistance, the communities living in the region drew hope and did not give up. This gave morale and strength to these communities and empowered them to resist.”

Yıldız continued: “In the last century, genocide was practised through massacres, expulsion and changing the demographic structure, but also through erasing the historical memory of society. For the occupation of Kurdistan, all brutal methods were tried on society. In the last century, there were massacres in Kocgirî (1925), Dersim (1937-38), Gelîyê Zilan and other places. The uprisings of Şêx Seîd, Seyîd Riza, Agirî and Qazî Mihemed were put down by the occupying states because there was no national unity. In this last century, Kurdistan was plundered, crimes were committed against the Kurdish people. At the same time, there has always been resistance. And in the last 50 years, the Kurdish people have resisted under the leadership of the freedom movement and with the philosophy of Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan). The Kurdish national spirit has reawakened. The unity formed today has renewed the future hopes of the peoples of the region and prevented the Treaty of Lausanne from achieving its goal. They wanted to conclude the genocide of the Kurdish people, but they failed.”

The Yazidi community demands self-determination

The Yazidi community has preserved its existence by resisting the genocide mentality, said Çiçek Yıldız, adding: “Today's conditions are not the conditions of a hundred years ago. The world is no longer the old world. The policies of the imperialist states have also changed according to the new world. In every respect, the old and today's conditions are not the same. The Yazidi community has formed a will. It will not accept any policy imposed in any way from outside. As a society, we fight for self-determination and reject any policy that is decided without our participation.”

For a consensus in Kurdish politics

Yıldız noted that Yazidi institutions will also be represented at the conference, which will take place on 22 and 23 July in Lausanne and which will be attended by numerous Kurdish political movements. She concluded: “We think it is important to discuss the national unity of the Kurdish people at this conference. Our priority is the unity of the Kurds. We attach importance to Kurdish politics acting together. The Kurdish people also demand unity. Those who will lead this are our political movements, politicians and intellectuals. They should act in alliance against the occupiers and defend a clear national policy. They must protect the existence and the future of the Kurdish people. The existence of all peoples and nations is based on their own politics. For the Kurdish people, national unity is very important today.”

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SOHR reports ongoing chaos in “Erdogan’s safe areas”

ANF | 20 JULY 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that violent clashes erupted at midnight between two groups of Ahrar Al-Sham Islamic movement.

Accordingly, the fighting broke out near Kawa Junction in the middle of Afrin city, after an argument between the two groups that developed into the eruption of violent clashes between both sides.

The fighting resulted in the injury of a member of the so-called “military police” who intervened to break the clash.

On July 15, SOHR reported that a displaced man from Al-Qaboun neighbourhood in Damascus was shot dead by members of Turkish-backed military police during a raiding operation against drug dealers in Sateer village in the Afrin countryside within the “Olive Branch” area.

This followed armed clashes between members of military police and drug dealers, said SOHR, noting that the victim was near the site where the clashes took place.

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Turkish warplanes bombed Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna

ANF | 21 JULY 2023

According to information obtained from local sources, the areas of Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna have been bombarded by Turkish warplanes from 8.44pm on Thursday night.

It was learned that the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area of the Martyr Delîl West Zap region was bombed 34 times by warplanes, and that the bombardment and helicopter activity in the area continued throughout the night.

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Turkey continues to cut off Euphrates water

ANF | 21 JULY 2023

The cutting off of Syria’s share of the Euphrates river water by Turkey began in 2017. Since then, the water has been cut off from time to time. But since 27 January 2021, the Turkish state has been cutting off the water systematically.

The Turkish state has been releasing only 200 cubic meters of water per second instead of 500 cubic meters. This violates the 1987 protocol between Syria and Turkey.

The level of the Euphrates has dropped a lot due to the water being cut off for 30 months. The lakes behind three dams on the Euphrates River in Syria, the largest of which is the Euphrates Dam at Tabqa, have decreased significantly.

While the Euphrates Dam reservoir holds 14.5 billion cubic meters of water, it has recently decreased by 4 billion cubic meters due to the decrease in water from South Kurdistan. The water released by the Turkish state is not sufficient to cover the needs for drinking water, irrigation and electricity generation in the region.

The Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria has called on international powers, the governments of Damascus and Iraq to put pressure on Turkey to act in accordance with international law and not steal Syria and Iraq's share of the Euphrates water. However, the governments of Damascus and Baghdad remain silent and do not take any stance against the Turkish state.

Recently, Syrian president, Bashar Assad, said during Iraqi Prime Minister Mihemed Shia Sudani's visit: "Some neighbouring countries supported terrorism and stole the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers."

Sudani stated that there are common obstacles between his country and Syria, but hopes for cooperation to ensure the fair sharing of water.

The Iraqi government had declared that the country's water reserves were empty and that water from Turkey, Syria and Iran was less than 70 percent of the previous share.

Every day in Baghdad, hundreds of Iraqis protest in front of the Turkish embassy against the closure of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and call for a boycott of Turkish ships. The demonstrators are also calling on their country's government to take action.

On 25 June, Iraqi President Ebduletif Rashid held neighbouring countries responsible for the water crisis in Iraq and said: "The water crisis is a result of clear reasons, including climate change and the actions of neighbouring countries."

On 18 July, Hisên Merdan, deputy chair of the Agriculture and Water Commission of the Iraqi Parliament, declared that the Turkish state is guilty of stealing Iraq's water.



HPG: Turkish army launched a new occupation operation in guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 21 JULY 2023

The Press Office of People's Defense Forces (HPG) announced that the invading Turkish army has launched a new occupation operation in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG statement on Friday, the operation is directed against the areas where the Turkish troops retreated from after suffering heavy losses at the hands of the guerrilla forces in winter.

HPG stated that occupation attacks were launched against the Kurojahro Resistance Area in Zap on July 14, and the Girê Ortê Resistance Area in Metina on July 19 “with open support and collaboration of the KDP”.

The intense aerial bombardments on July 20 night were followed by an invasion attack on the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area in the Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region on July 21.

“The invading Turkish army’s attacks with advanced warfare technology and support from collaborators, were met with the effective response of our forces, who inflicted heavy blows on the occupiers. Actions by our forces and attacks by the invasion forces continue,” said the HPG.

HPG provided the following details regarding the actions by guerrillas and attacks by the Turkish forces:

Zap region

The Girê Şehîd Tolhildan area in Kurojahro was bombed by fighter jets and howitzers on July 10 and 12. Troops were airdropped on July 14 in the areas of Girê Şehîd Harun, Girê Şehîd Tolhildan and Girê Şehîd Dîdar, from which the Turkish army had to withdraw in winter. The occupation forces continue their attacks on the areas of Saca, Kokerê, Kurojahro and Karker resistance areas.

Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region

Guerrillas hit the occupation forces at Girê FM Resistance Area with heavy weapons on July 19, and destroyed a jammer device of theirs on July 20.

On July 20, the Turkish army carried out 41 strikes by warplanes and 22 strikes by attack helicopters in the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area on the evening of July 20 . Following the wave of intense bombardment, troops were airdropped 10 times on the Şehîd Zagros hill at midnight.

On July 21, the Turkish forces moving from Girê Şehîd Zagros to Girê Şehîd Şilan were struck by the guerrillas 7 times and their advance was stopped in the early morning hours.

Avaşîn region

On July 17, the occupation forces in the Tabura Ereban Resistance Area were struck in a coordinated guerrilla action in the morning. The strikes by mobile guerrilla units left 3 members of the occupation forces dead, who were retrieved from the area late at night. Turkish attacks on the area are ongoing.

Metîna region

On July 19, the Turkish army launched a ground operation after advancing from the base of KDP forces in the Girê Ortê area of Metina towards the Neqeba Tirvaniş and Şehîd Piling areas in the early morning hours.

On July 20, Turkish forces moving from the KDP area in Girê Ortê placed mass surveillance equipment at various points in the operation area.

KDP troops have turned their base near Girê Ortê into a “coordination centre for the Turkish occupation operation” and acted as collaborators. The attacks of the Turkish army against the guerrillas are consistently and openly supported by the KDP and the operation continues.

Turkish attacks with tactical nuclear bombs

On July 11 and 12, the guerrilla positions in the Kokerê Resistance Area of Zap were shelled 4 times with tactical nuclear bombs.

On July 20, the guerrilla positions in the Sîda Resistance Area of Zap were bombed once with tactical nuclear bombs.

Attacks by the Turkish army

The invading Turkish army attacked the guerrilla positions in Sîda Resistance Area of Zap and Girê FM Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region, and attempted to demolish the tunnels with construction machinery on July 17, 18 and 19.

On July 18 and 19, Turkish fighter jets struck the Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region 3 times, and the Girê Ortê and Girê Hakkarî areas in Metîna 5 times.

On July 20, a total of 49 airstrikes were carried out on the resistance areas of Girê Bahar in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region, Girê Amediyê and Girê Cûdî.

On July 18, attack helicopters carried out 36 strikes on the resistance areas of Girê Hakkarî in Metîna, and Girê Cûdî in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region.

On July 17, 18, 19 and 20, the Turkish army carried out 519 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. The attacks were directed against Sîda, Şehîd Delîl, Tabura Ereban, Girê Hekarî and Golka in Zap and Metîna, as well as Girê Şehîd Heqî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran, Girê Kolît and Ava Lolanê in Xakurke.



13 young people from North-East Syria join the guerrilla ranks

ANF | 21 JULY 2023

A group of youths from North-East Syria have joined the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla as part of the “Cenga Azadiyê Serbixin” [Win the Freedom War] campaign launched by the youth movement Komalên Ciwan.

According to Nuce Ciwan, the group decided to participate in the struggle in response to the aggravated isolation imposed on Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan on Imrali Prison Island, who has not been heard from for over two years and totally cut off from the outside world.

Concerns over the situation of Öcalan increased after the Executive Council Member of the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK), Sabri Ok said in an interview on the Kurdish TV Channel Sterk TV on July 8 that threatening letters had recently been sent to Abdullah Öcalan anonymously via the İmralı prison administration.

Announcing their participation in the ranks of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, the group stated that: “The isolation of Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan) is getting worse every day and has gone beyond the limit. The merciless fascist state does not allow Leader Apo to send letters from İmralı but sends him itself threatening letters. Threatening a leader who is connected to millions should not be considered as normal by anyone. The matter of isolation concerns the Kurdish people as a whole and all the freedom-loving people. We, as the youth of Kurdistan, see this as a great threat to Leader Apo.”

The statement continued: “When Leader Apo is in question, we can simply consider anything because it is not easy to threaten a leader who has made countless sacrifices. These acts directed against Leader Apo are executed by the Turkish state to make sure that we raise hell with it. The Turkish state will give a serious account and we are here today to call it to account. As youths from North and East Syria, we are participating in the mobilization announced by the Revolutionary Youth Movement and the Union of Young Women. We know that defeating the enemy is the greatest account we can ensure. We join the guerrilla ranks to bring the enemy to account. No one can darken our day. We will send those who lay hands on our values to the trash of history. We call on all youths to come here and claim their values.”

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Femicide

Five women killed in Batman in 7 months

ANF | BATMAN | 16 JULY 2023

The policies of the AKP government towards women pave the way for new femicides. In the first 7 months of 2023, five women were murdered by the closest men in Batman (Êlih) alone.

In March 2023, a woman named Z.A. (43) was found murdered with a cutting tool in the house where she lived. T.A. (33) was shot dead in March with a firearm by her husband while she was waiting for the minibus. E.T. (77) was killed in April with a gun by a man he knew. In July, F.Y. (35) and A.E. (37) were murdered by their husbands.

Noting that the massacres of women are not independent of the policies of the AKP government, Tevgera Jinên Azad (Free Women's Movement-TJA) activist Gurbet Doğan drew attention to the importance of establishing a joint struggle network against these policies.

7, 990 women murdered under the AKP government

Some 7,990 women were murdered during the 21-year rule of the AKP, said Doğan, adding that since the abolition of the Istanbul Convention, more than 610 women have been murdered and more than 410 women have lost their lives in suspicious circumstances. Doğan said: “Unfortunately, women continue to be killed, exposed to violence, harassment and abuse every day in this spiral of violence. Every day, a new femicide is carried out because of insufficient and non-deterrent punishments, the inadequacy of education and the lack of awareness-raising activities.”



Women discuss the Treaty of Lausanne in Amed

ANF | AMED | 16 JULY 2023

The Free Women’s Movement (TJA) is organising a workshop in the northern Kurdish city of Amed (Diyarbakır) to discuss the Treaty of Lausanne on its hundredth anniversary.

Members of parliament from the Green Left Party, the co-president of the Alevi association DAD, Kadriye Doğan, women mayors from Kurdish municipalities who have been ousted and replaced by trustees and representatives of various civil society organisations are taking part in the meeting.

Discussions will be held on topics such as “Myths and Facts of the Treaty of Lausanne”, “One Hundred Years of Cultural Resistance to Lausanne”, “Minority Languages in the Treaty of Lausanne”, “Kurdistan after the Treaty of Lausanne ” and “Effects on the Syriac and Alevi Communities”.

Kurdish politician Çağlar Demirel stated in her welcoming speech that the workshop will discuss the impact of the decisions taken in Lausanne a hundred years ago. The meeting, she said, will focus in particular on the Kurdish, Alevi, Syriac, Armenian and Yazidi communities. “These discussions have so far been conducted mainly by men. The Treaty of Lausanne was also concluded exclusively by men. We will talk about how women were destroyed, denied and assimilated by a male-dominant mindset. We women have achieved great things and experienced great suffering in Mesopotamia. Now we want to discuss what we want to do after this century. This discussion is of great importance to us. Women have not accepted genocide in the last hundred years and will not continue to do so. We want to talk about the unity of peoples and make a joint decision. Men may not be capable of unity, but as TJA, the unity of peoples is a basis of our struggle anyway,” Demirel said.

Demirel pointed out that Kurds everywhere are discussing the effects of the Treaty of Lausanne and their demands today on the anniversary of the Treaty on 24 July. The results of the meeting in Amed will be published after its conclusion.



Vigil of Şenyaşar family in Urfa ends on day 846

ANF | URFA | 16 JULY 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.

Fadıl Şenyaşar, a survivor, received an almost 38-year prison sentence for killing the assailant, Mehmet Şah Yıldız, despite the fact that it was relatively quickly proven that the man was killed by his own men. To make matters worse, the trial was split into two parts. The incidents in the shop are being tried in Malatya, the events in the hospitals in Urfa.

More than five years have passed since the massacre. Yet neither Ibrahim Halil Yıldız nor the majority of his companions have had to answer for their deeds in court. The Turkish judiciary's handling of the lynchings is particularly perfidious: While only one of dozens of identified assailants has been sentenced so far, albeit to a symbolic sentence of 18 years, the court considered it mitigating that the act had happened "spontaneously out of an escalating quarrel".

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.

On the 846th day of the vigil in front of the Courthouse in Urfa, the Şenyaşar family ended their protest for the time being, announcing that they would move to Ankara if there was not "a hint of justice" in the hearing to be held in Malatya on Tuesday, July 18.

"On 18 July, my mother will either go home and spend her time in her own home differently from the past five years. Or she will take her resistance to the heart of this state," said Ferit Şenyaşar, who was elected a deputy from the Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) in the May 14 election.

The politician thanked all the people who have supported the protest in front of the Courthouse over the past years and criticized the Turkish judiciary for not making any effort to serve justice. "This is a disgrace to the judicial system. After more than five years in solitary confinement, we also want my brother Fadıl to be released," Şenyaşar said.

‘19 July Revolution became an enlightenment for humanity and a hope of freedom for the oppressed’

ANF | 17 JULY 2023

The women’s umbrella organization in North-East Syria, Kongra Star, released a statement marking the 11th anniversary of the 19 July Revolution in Rojava (West Kurdistan).

Kongra Star remembered thousands of martyrs of the revolution who fell fighting for a free life for all women and the oppressed peoples and congratulated Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, the patriotic people, all political prisoners, the guerrillas of Democratic Modernity and all revolutionary and democratic peoples on the occasion. Kongra Star pledged to follow in the footsteps of the martyrs and claim their legacy to the very end.

“Following the March 2012 revolution, the Kurds in Rojava adopted the policy of the third line. On one hand, they developed major popular uprisings on the streets against the Baath regime, while they, on the other hand, gradually constructed the infrastructure of the Autonomous Administration. The people of Kobanê, whose identity was usurped by the state in the early days of the revolution, later freed their land. Then they formed people’s assemblies and sowed the seeds of autonomous administration. Major steps were taken in the fields of health, municipal services and public safety. The fire of revolution lit in Kobanê then expanded to Derik, Afrin and Qamishlo. By then, the Kurds both governed themselves and ensured the security of their regions,” said the Kongra Star statement on Monday.

The statement continued; “The revolution of Rojava became an enlightenment for humanity and a hope of freedom for the oppressed peoples. It became the reflection of free women’s will and proved the fact that women and peoples are not without an alternative. In this sense, women organised themselves in all spheres of life and shaped the unveiling democratic will.”

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Bermal Çem releases new song to mark 11th anniversary of the 19 July Revolution

ANF | 18 JULY 2023

Artist Bermal Çem released a clip called Henasa Şoreşê (Breath of the Revolution) to mark the 11th anniversary of the 19 July Revolution. Emphasizing that all the feelings, melodies and works are based on this revolution created by the martyrs, Bermal Çem said that this is why she dedicated this song to all the Rojava Revolution martyrs.

‘We are knitting art, war and resistance together’

The artist explained this about the inspiration behind the song: “The Rojava Revolution resonated all over the world as an example. Because it was a revolution in which children, young women, mothers and fathers took part in war fronts together and had many martyrs. It was a self-sacrificing revolution against fascist forces such as ISIS and the Turkish state. The People’s Defense Forces (HPG), People’s Defense Units (YPG) and Women’s Defense Units (YPJ) and our people took part in this war, making the revolution successful. I also wanted to translate the feelings of these fighters into music and share these values. I dedicate this song to all Rojava martyrs, and all revolution martyrs. Today, all our feelings, all our melodies and the works we make are based on these values, this revolution. Undoubtedly, it is our martyrs who convey the feelings of revolution to history and the future, and who convey this revolution to the whole world. This revolution still continues. That’s why art, war and life continue to be intertwined. We knit them together.”

The lyrics were written by Medya Doz, the music was composed by Bermal Çem and the arrangement was by Hadi Morardi.

You can watch the clip from here: <https://anfenglishmobile.com/culture/bermal-Cem-releases-new-song-to-mark-11th-anniversary-of-the-19-july-revolution-68354>

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YPJ says the Rojava Revolution got its true meaning with the Women’s Defense Units

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

The General Command of the Women’s Defense Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Jinê-YPJ) issued a statement to mark the 11th anniversary of the Rojava Revolution.

The statement said: “The peoples’ understanding of revolution in the lands of Northern and Eastern Syria has created a new life under the leadership of women. While the region was in crisis because of the Baath regime and the policies of the hegemonic powers, the opportunity to determine their own destiny as a people arose. On this basis, we decided to establish a democratic confederalism system. To do so, we struggled and we defended our lands from the attacks carried out by the invaders and we fought the policies of genocide. We liberated our territories one by one, with our own strength and belief in free life, without relying on other forces.”

The YPJ continued: “In all the revolutions that have taken place in the world, the interests of peoples and societies have not been defended to the end. But since the Northern and Eastern Syrian Revolution was based on an ecological, democratic and free women’s society, the phenomenon of revolution in our lands achieved its meaning on the basis of its own nature. In line with this principle, the YPJ boldly assumed the responsibility for the free future of its own society as the dominant force. The inclusion of women in the

YXK-YPG from the very beginning played a decisive role in the organization of women and peoples, but also gave the defense forces a correct route to represent the interests of the peoples with the right style and methods. Of course, the YPJ has become a model as it is part of the defense forces.”

The YPJ added: “With the Northern and Eastern Syrian Revolution, women once again regained the meaning of their existence that had been taken away by the dominant male for millennia. It put up a relentless struggle against all kinds of invasions and attacks within the framework of legitimate defense, from the organization of the people to their education, to the military development of women. The YPJ fighters defended the identity, existence, language, culture and free will of their own people on the battlefield. For this reason, the Rojava Revolution achieved its true meaning with the YPJ.”

The YPJ “will continue its struggle as a dominant force against all policies of encroachment and destruction against the free will of our people, relentlessly and uninterruptedly, - said the statement, adding: “We have left behind these 11 years of great struggle, resistance, heroism and self-sacrificing spirit. Of course, our people have always been with us on this revolutionary journey. It was the unity of the peoples that made the revolution happen. For this reason, the spirit of unity of the peoples will play a decisive role in the continuation and permanence of the Rojava Women's Revolution.

Many of our valuable commanders and warriors gave their lives for the Rojava Women's Revolution. The YPJ will continue our struggle for the permanence of the revolution.”



Nûjîyan Çirav, a fighter for liberation of villages around Manbij and Kobanê

NUJİYAN ADAR | QAMISHLO | 19 JULY 2023

Nûjîyan Çirav is one of the countless disabled people of the Rojava revolution. On the front near al-Bab, she lost a foot in the fight against the Islamic State. But that didn't stop her from continuing to fight for the Rojava women's revolution. She joined the Rojava revolution in 2015.

The battle for Şikeyf

When she arrived in Rojava, the city of Kobanê had already been liberated, but some villages were still under ISIS occupation. Nûjîyan Çirav immediately took part in the offensives to liberate these villages. The first village where they fought was Şikeyf. There she immediately got into close combat with ISIS. “The fighting had spread over large areas. We were eight friends. Together we sneaked camouflaged over the Sirîn front in the direction of the village. When we reached the village, we were surrounded on all sides by ISIS,” Çirav said, adding: “However, the situation was reversed by the use of heavy weapons from the rear and we surrounded the Islamic State. During the six-hour clash, we came within ten meters of ISIS for the first time, and fierce fighting ensued. As we continued to advance, ten mercenaries appeared in front of me. I threw my grenade. I had strayed far from my friends. When I understood that the area was now clean, I called my friends. I heard their calls at the same time. They were calling Heval Cûdî. Cûdî was

wounded and Goran, who had come to the rescue, was also wounded. We got them out. Our group kept getting smaller. We were only five out of eight and we still had a long way to go. But we successfully cleared the village of Şikeyf, liberated it, captured ISIS ammunition and killed 26 ISIS mercenaries.”

At the forefront of attack

The village of Şikeyf is strategically located between Sirîn and Tişrîn. Çirav and her friends stayed there for a long time, waiting for further liberation offensives to start. Then the offensive on Tişrîn began. After three of her comrades fell in an ISIS ambush, she joined an attack column.

The liberation of Tişrîn

“We infiltrated a hill near Tişrîn,” said Çirav, adding: “After 10 minutes the fighting started. On the other side, were about twelve mercenaries and behind them were twenty more. A car bomb was already on its way to us. We had taken the strategically most important hill. All that remained was to eliminate the ISIS mercenaries in the area. And that's the way it went. The plan was perfectly implemented, and the Tişrîn Dam was liberated. After the dam was liberated, the Euphrates stood between us and the Islamic State. ISIS tried to retake the dam, but the operation in Manbij strengthened our position in a short time. With this advance, the threats to Tişrîn were eliminated, most of Manbij was liberated, and most of the ISIS mercenaries retreated towards al-Bab. Al-Bab had now become their center.”

From Kobanê to al-Bab

Çirav continued: “From Tabqa the other rural areas around Manbij should be liberated. The group of four I was part of advanced towards al-Bab. The first village we reached was the village of Erîman without any clashes. ISIS tried to attack, but we foiled these attacks despite our small numbers. The Turkish troops and ISIS were unable to penetrate the village and resorted to attacks with heavy weapons. On the second day, we were subjected to heavy mortar and howitzer attacks. The nature of the attack had changed. We had to develop a new plan and strategy. Four of us sat down and we were just working out a new plan when we suddenly came under heavy artillery fire.

Losing a foot

Each of us was thrown to one side, unable to open our eyes because of the dust and smoke. At that moment, I felt a pain in my foot. When I opened my eyes, I was lying on one side and my foot was on the other. Fearing that I would never find my foot again, I dragged myself to it and put it on my knee. I'd been wounded many times, but only minor injuries. I was shocked when I suddenly saw my foot somewhere else. I kept my foot in my lap until I reached Kobanê. When I woke up after the surgery, my foot was no longer in my lap. I demanded my foot back. But it was time to say goodbye to it. For a moment I remembered my childhood. Imagining that if my foot was white and clean it would definitely go to heaven, and if it was black and dirty it would definitely go to hell. My laughter caught the doctor's and friends' attention. When I talked about it, everyone burst out laughing.

Foot buried with Şehîd Roza

Two days had passed since my injury. A ceremony for the fallen Roza was to be organized in Kobanê. I was in great pain as my wound was still fresh. But I went to the ceremony. I wore a t-shirt and a shirt. I was surprised when my girlfriends asked for my shirt. I wondered what they were up to, but they put my foot in my shirt and buried it along with Roza.

When it was buried with Roza, I remembered the story again: if the foot was white it would go to heaven and if it was black it would go to hell. Now it was in heaven with Roza.”

— ★ —

Naime Fetah Aqil, an eyewitness and survivor of ISIS atrocities

NUJIYAN ADAR | KOBANE | 21 JULY 2023

The Islamic State attacked Kobanê on 15 September 2014. After capturing 350 surrounding villages, the Islamists supported by the Turkish state advanced into the city. The People's and Women's Defense Units YPG and YPJ put up the greatest resistance in history for months and were able to announce the liberation of Kobanê on 26 January 2015.

This defeat was the beginning of the downfall for ISIS. Yet, the Islamist terrorist militia continued to carry out brutal attacks in the region. The massacre on 25 June 2015 in Kobanê was one of the bloodiest attacks on civilians in Syria. Ten days after the YPG and YPJ liberated Girê Spî (Tall Abyad) and advanced on Raqqa, the self-proclaimed “capital of the caliphate,” ISIS jihadists disguised in YPG uniforms invaded Kobanê from two sides. About sixty Islamists came from Turkey with heavy artillery, and the closed border crossing was opened especially for them. Another group advanced from Jarablus. The attack began at dawn with a truck bomb detonating. Islamists then went from house to house in Kobanê and in the village of Berxbotan, killing the elderly, men, women, children and babies. 252 civilians and two dozen fighters were killed.

ISIS crimes to be dealt with legally

On 10 June this year, the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria (AANES) announced legal proceedings against detained ISIS members. This was preceded by years of futile efforts for an international court of justice. More than ten thousand ISIS members from sixty countries of origin are detained in the region. It is not yet clear when the trials will begin. The procedures are associated with great legal, safety and material costs. The AANES is left alone with this.

An eyewitness reports: “People's pain gave them pleasure”

Naime Fetah Aqil is the mother of Metin Kobanê, who died in the massacre eight years ago. She supports and wants to take part in the trials announced by AANES against her son's killers. “As the mother of a dead man, I want to be there when the Islamists are brought to justice. I want accountability,” said Aqil.

For the people in Northern and Eastern Syria, it is incomprehensible that the countries of origin of these terrorists do not support the international tribunal demanded by AANES.

Aqil said: "ISIS committed many massacres in Kobanê, but 25 June was a particularly black day. I think back on it with sadness and great pain. They slaughtered everyone they met; children, women, the elderly. They wore YPG uniforms and knocked on front doors to brutally murder civilians. Some doors were kicked in, women were attacked, even babies were killed. The old protected the young, but all were massacred. I witnessed the brutal action. People's pain gave them pleasure. They killed the children first to see the mothers suffer. Some people still lay in bed and lost their lives without realizing what was happening. They beheaded people and shredded their bodies. They tried all methods of torture on the innocent populace."

Naime Fetah Aqil survived the ISIS massacre and lost her son.

"When it comes to the Kurdish people, the world remains silent"

Aqil demanded that not only ISIS members but also their supporters be charged. She said: "If such a massacre had taken place in another country, hell would have broken out. The perpetrators would have received just punishment. However, when it comes to the Kurdish people, the world remains silent. Those who remained silent then and remain silent today are proving their partnership with the perpetrators."

"International institutions must act"

Speaking about the crimes of the more than ten thousand Islamists detained in Northern and Eastern Syria and the announced trials, Aqil said: "There are many orphans whose parents were killed by ISIS. With the murdered elderly, a large part of our historical memory has disappeared. Very young people were beheaded, their eyes pulled out, their bodies torn to pieces. They were cruel and infinitely brutal massacres. This horror cannot be forgotten. The Autonomous Administration's decision is correct and we support it. International institutions and organizations must act to ensure that perpetrators are charged and convicted for their crimes. The people who witnessed the massacres must judge ISIS, an organization known for mass murder, rape, executions, torture, looting and theft. I saw it with my own eyes. ISIS has killed, raped, looted and buried people alive. Despite these atrocities, the Kurdish people have held on to their humanity. The Autonomous Administration of the North and East represents the peoples of the region and has held ISIS members in detention camps and prisons for many years. They must finally be charged and answer to the families of the dead. Their crimes must be dealt with and their supporters named once again."

Ecocide

Ecocide in Turkish-occupied Afrin continues

ANF | 18 JULY 2023

Citing sources from Afrin, ANHA reports that the Turkish-backed mercenaries cut down dozens of olive, walnut and fig trees in a village in the occupied Afrin canton.

According to the report, the trees belonged to resident Imad Hisen from the village of Xilner near the neighborhood of Zediye.

In May alone, the mercenaries of the Turkish occupation cut down a total of 2,124 olive and pomegranate trees in the occupied Afrin region. Additionally, approximately 18,000 olive trees were burned. Furthermore, intentional fires destroyed numerous forest trees, according to a balance sheet published by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on June 4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to various sources, the Kurdish share of the population has fallen from over ninety per cent before the occupation to between 15 and 22 per cent.

The Human Rights Organisation of Afrin report for the first half of 2023 states that twelve people were killed in Afrin in the last six months by artillery fire, drone attacks or gunfire from the occupation forces. A particularly gruesome crime occurred in Jindires on 20 March, when four members of a family were killed. The victims, aged between 18 and 43, were shot by the pro-Turkey mercenary force Ahrar al-Sharqiya as they lit a fire in front of their house to celebrate the Kurdish New Year festival of Newroz.

In the same period, there were 173 kidnappings for which ransom was demanded. This inhuman practice has become a funding model for the mercenary groups in Afrin. The abductees are held in torture prisons, many of which are run by the Turkish intelligence service MIT. The latter uses all possible means to extort information from the prisoners. There are repeated reports of people dying under torture.

In addition to the human rights violations, nature and agriculture in Afrin have also been attacked. Mercenary groups and “aid organisations” with links to the Turkish state destroyed large areas of forest and agricultural land to make way for the settlement of pro-Turkish settlers. According to the report, 15,500 trees, including olive, walnut and almond trees, and numerous forest areas were cut down. In addition, more than 70 hectares of wheat and barley fields were burnt down. Various organisations from Palestine, Qatar and Turkey are involved in these settlement programmes.



Human Rights Violations

Ferit Şenyaşar: If justice is not provided, we will move our vigil before the ministry

ANF | ANKARA | 16 JULY 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.

Fadıl Şenyaşar, who was taken into custody after being discharged from the hospital where he was treated in Amed by the order of the prosecutor's office, was arrested in the courthouse to which he was transferred and sent to Urfa No. 1 T Type Prison.

Senyaşar, who was then transferred to the Elazığ Closed Prison, has been kept in a solitary cell for 5 years. Fadıl Şenyaşar was sentenced to 37 years and 9 months and Enver Yıldız was sentenced to 18 years in prison in the case file, which only covers the assault at the workplace.

The second hearing of the combined case file will be held at Malatya 3rd High Criminal Court on Tuesday, 18 July.

Ferit Şenyaşar said that his brother's hearing will be held at the Malatya 3rd High Criminal Court on Tuesday and added: "My brother has been detained for 5 years. He is still in detention, despite the fact that he acted in self-defense in the attack at our workplace, as shown by both camera recordings and expert reports. If a proper decision is made at the hearing, our mother will take the banner and go home. If there is no decision, we will move our vigil in front of the Urfa Courthouse to Ankara."



Turkish authorities block access to Yeni Yaşam website for fifth time

ANF | 16 JULY 2023

Following the prohibition of access to its website "yeniyaşamgazetesi4.com", the daily newspaper Yeni Yaşam continues its publication at the address "yeniyaşamgazetesi5.com".

Turkey has long imposed restrictions on Kurdish media. The initial ban on Yeni Yaşam's website was imposed in September 2020. Subsequently, in January 2022, March 2022 and January 2023, the newspaper's website was also banned.

Yeni Yaşam, which began publication in May 2018, succeeded Özgür Gündem, a daily published in the 1990s in Turkish and Kurdish.

During Özgür Gündem's initial period of publication between 1992 and 1994, a significant number of its staff, including writers, journalists and distributors, were murdered by paramilitaries. Its offices were also attacked.

Of a total of 580 issues published, 486 were the subject of legal proceedings, resulting in the sentencing of many staff members to prison terms.

Özgür Gündem resumed publication in 2011 after being closed by court order in April 1994. However, it was eventually closed by decree-law issued in October 2016.

The Kurdish media remains one of the most censored areas in Turkey, with Yeni Yaşam becoming the latest target of these ongoing restrictions.

Between 2014 and 2018 alone, the Turkish government completely blocked access to more than 245,000 web pages, including Wikipedia and Facebook. In 2019, Turkey blocked access to 408,000 sites, 40,000 tweets, 10,000 YouTube videos and 6,200 Facebook shares, according to statistics from the TechRadar site.

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Human Rights Foundation of Turkey received 270 torture applications since January 2023

ANF | AMED | 18 JULY 2023

TIHV (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey – HRFT) Amed representative lawyer Murat Aba shared the data of those who applied to their foundation exposing the torture that the Turkish state used to suppress social demands. “Our foundation – he said - received 270 torture applications since the beginning of 2023.”

The data of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, which keeps a tally of the torture used by the Turkish state and provides treatment and rehabilitation support to the victims of torture, shows that thousands of people have been subjected to various types of torture. According to the data of TIHV, 201 people applied in 2022, but from January to May 2023, there were 270 applications.

Torture is increasing

Speaking to ANF, lawyer Murat Aba, said: “This is the highest number of applications received by the foundation. Of the 1,079 people who were directly tortured, 547 of them were tortured in police headquarters, 61 in police stations, and 69 in gendarmerie units under official detention. 331 people were tortured in the detention and transportation vehicles of law enforcement officers. Torture has increased. Of course, these figures are those collected by all the representatives of the foundation and the data of those released from detention. There are also those who were tortured and arrested in custody. Naturally, they cannot apply to us. So we actually know that the numbers are much higher.”

Figures not clear

The figures for 2023 will also increase, said Aba, adding that the Amed representative could not receive applications for months during the earthquake process. The lawyer added: “The earthquake had a special impact on the Diyarbakir office, and it affected the whole of Turkey. Because the building where our representative office is located is just behind the Diyar Galeria site, which was destroyed in the earthquake and remained closed for months. The whole area was closed. Entry to and exit from our Foundation was also prohibited. For this reason, the foundation was closed for two months. In addition, we are located on the 14th floor and the lift had problems even after we were able to open again. As a result, we could not receive applications for several months due to this problem.”

Prisoners in jail for 30 years also apply

Aba said that there have been prisoners in jail for 30 years who also applied to the foundation. “We receive about 50 applications in Diyarbakir. The applicants have been in prison for 30 years, their health rights have been violated for decades. In fact, these people are denied the right to receive treatment for 30 years. Clearly, this is torture. They are freed and suffer from multiple diseases. Once released, they need to try to adapt to city life. We do our best to facilitate this through our social workers, mental health professionals and doctors.”



Six young people calling for demonstration for Suruç sent to prison

ANF | ISTANBUL | 19 JULY 2023

The police on Monday attacked the young people’s organizations that organized the handing out of leaflets to mark the 8th anniversary of the Suruç (Pirsûs) Massacre on 20 July.

The police took 44 people into custody. The young people, who were detained on Monday night, were brought to the courthouse on Tuesday. While 35 of the 44 people were released, 9 were referred to the Criminal Judgship of Peace with a request for arrest.

Ayşe Beliz İnce, Gamze Toprak, Berkan Deveci, Yasemin Ebru Gürsoy, Merve Yeşilyurt and Ali Taha Sarabıyık were remanded in custody on charges of “Resisting officers carrying out their duty” and “Opposition to Law No. 2911”.

The arrest decision was protested in front of the courthouse, by young people chanting “Justice for Suruç, justice for all”.

Background

300 young people had gathered in front of the Amara cultural center on 20 July 2015 to hold a press conference before leaving for Kobanê. With that trip to Northern Syria, they wanted to show their solidarity and bring children's toys and humanitarian aid to the city that was being destroyed by ISIS. There are clear indications that the ISIS attackers received support from the Turkish secret service. The massacre has not yet been fully investigated. Therefore, activists continue to call for “Justice for Suruç”.

ESP accuses the Turkish regime

In a written statement, the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Headquarters, said: “The fascist regime had a single purpose: prevent the children of Gezi Park from going to help the people of Kobanê. For this

reason, ‘33 dream travellers’ were killed by the MIT-ISIS at the Suruç Amara Cultural Center on the morning of 20 July.”

The statement added: “The suicide bomber carried out this massacre but the state offered ISIS what it needed. The same mentality continued in the trial as well. While not a single person was seated facing accusations, the families, lawyers and the survivors who spoke about the massacre were threatened and offended. Yakup Şahin, the only suspect of the massacre, was protected. It was documented that Ilhami Bali, the wanted suspect, was treated in a state hospital and it was announced that he was in Idlib. It was documented that Mahir El Agal, the planner of the massacre, was killed in the region under the auspices of the TAF and jihadist gangs in Syria, and that he had a fake ID given by the state institutions.”

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Film produced by Rojava Film Commune won Best Fiction Feature in Uruguay

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

Gava Şitil Mezin Dibin (Where the Seedlings Grow) by Rêger Azad Kaya, produced by the Rojava Film Commune, was awarded the Best Fiction Feature prize at the Montecine Montevideo World Film Festival in Uruguay.

The film tells the story of a yoghurt seller from Kobanê and his two children who run into Hemûd, a boy who is looking for his home.

The day they spend together ends up full of both adventure and misfortune, and showcases the changing dynamics in the region after the revolution, when Kurdish-led forces pushed the fundamentalist Islamic State (ISIS) out.

Rêger Azad Kaya was born in the city of Ağrı in Northern Kurdistan in 1992. He studied at Akdeniz University, Department of Radio-Television and Cinema in Antalya.

He made traveling documentaries for various Kurdish TV channels. Then he moved to North East Syria and worked as a cinematographer and editor of short films. He acted in the film Ji Bo Azadiyê and shot a behind-the-camera documentary.

He worked as an actor and casting director in the film Kobanê. Then he shot his own feature film “Gava Şitil Mezin Dibin” in a collective manner.

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Armed attack on HDP office in Ankara

ANF | ANKARA | 19 JULY 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) office in Altındağ district of Ankara was targeted by an armed attack.

During the attack by unknown assailants last night, a bullet hit the glass of the meeting hall in the party office on the 5th floor of a commercial complex in the neighborhood of Dışkapı.

The attack caused only material damage as nobody was present in the office at the time of the attack.

Police do not allow anyone to approach the building and prevent journalists from taking pictures and videos.

The co-chair of the HDP provincial association, Dilbaz Temel, referred to similar attacks in the past and blamed the AKP/MHP government's incitement against his party for the attack. The government, he said, singles out the HDP as a target for attack every day with its polarising and exclusionary discourse, and it can be assumed that the perpetrators will not be caught. "However, we know who the masterminds behind it are. It is obvious that the racist discourse against the Kurds and the attempted criminalisation of the HDP incite such attacks. However, all fascist circles should know that the HDP stands for the will of the peoples and no attack can change that," said the HDP politician.

Temel announced that a criminal complaint would be filed regarding the incident and said: "At this point we want to appeal once again to all opposition circles. If you do not side with the HDP today, your turn will come tomorrow. The bullet fired at us is not only directed against us, but against democracy in Turkey. Those who think that we will be intimidated by this are mistaken. We are not afraid, neither in the past, nor today, nor in the future."

— ★ —

Journalist Sherwan Sherwani from Behdinan sentenced to 4 years in prison

ANF | HEWLER | 20 JULY 2023

A court in Erbil (ku: Hewler) has sentenced Kurdish journalist Sherwan Sherwani to 4 years in prison, accusing him of fraud.

Sherwan Sherwani's lawyer Kameran Sarmemi said: "The chief prosecutor did not attend the first hearing on the grounds that he was not prepared on the file. The hearing was therefore postponed to 20 July. In our opinion, we would have won the case back then as there was no evidence about my client at all. They adjourned the hearing to make sure that this did not happen. It is a purely political case."

Background

Members of the Kurdish security forces [known as Asayish] arrested Sherwan Sherwani on 7 October 2020 in Erbil, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's capital, and the other 4 journalists- Guhdar Zebari, Hariwan Issa, Ayaz Karam and Shivan Saeed - on 22 October 2020 in Duhok, another main city in the KRG, in relation to their involvement in anti-government protests over unpaid wages and corruption.

On 16 February 2021, the journalists were each sentenced to six years in prison for “undermining national security.” The trial against them drew sharp international criticism, as the entire proceedings as well as the sentences appeared politically motivated. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani (KDP) had publicly described the activists and journalists from the Behdinan region as “agents” and accused them of espionage only a few days before the verdict was announced. The sentence of Sherwan Sherwani was then reduced by 50 per cent, and the sentences of the other four by 60 percent. While Sherwan Sherwani and Guhdar Zebari remain under arrest, Zebari is expected to be released from prison in August unless his sentence is prolonged.

Throughout their detention, the five journalists were forcibly disappeared, some for more than three months. They had very limited access to their lawyers and family members. The five journalists told either their lawyers or family members that they had been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. During the previous court hearing, all five journalists said that they had been forced to sign “confessions” under duress, but the court dismissed those claims. In addition, the hearing was held in closed session, as security forces barred entrance, including to immediate family members.

In a letter to the UN, representatives of the states and public opinion regarding the violations they have been exposed to, the prisoners stated that, “We are deprived of any human, legal and democratic right for all to see. We were sentenced because we demanded to be granted our rights and freedom of thought. Some of us have been sentenced for opposing the invasion and bombing of our country. The government, on the other hand, is now crying crocodile tears for the victims of the Turkish bombardment.”

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Victims of Suruç massacre commemorated

ANF | URFA | 20 JULY 2023

On 20 July 2015, ISIS carried out a suicide bomb attack in the Suruç district in the province of Urfa, killing 33 young people and injuring more than 100 others. Led by the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF), the young people had gathered at the Amara Cultural Center as part of a campaign to bring toys and aid to children in Kobanê.

To mark the 8th anniversary of the massacre, commemorations have been held today in Suruç and other cities where the graves of victims are located.

The commemoration at Amara Cultural Center was organized by the Initiative of Suruç Families and attended by deputies of the Green Left Party, members of NGOs, legal organizations, political parties and a number of people.

The crowd gathered in front of the Suruç office of the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and marched together to Amara Cultural Center, where they left roses at the scene of the massacre.

Speaking here, SGDF member Senem Nur Pektaş said: "They sought to leave our dreams incomplete. Yet, the massacre couldn't frustrate our dream. 8 years later, we still demand freedom for the Kurdish nation and our fight for justice for Suruç continues. Those who sought to bury the dreams of the fallen comrades in this yard have been mistaken. The comrades of the victims are fighting for their dreams today. We will continue to flow together in the river of the revolution."

Soner Çiçek, who was among those injured in the massacre, said: "They tried to bury our dreams here, where, however, our dreams sprouted. The 33 victims had gathered here to give a hand to the Rojava Revolution. The revolution continues and we will defend it to the very end."

Ferit Şenyaşar, Green Left Party MP for Urfa, said: "Our wound continues to bleed. Six years have passed but the perpetrators are yet to be brought to justice."

Yasemin Boyraz, who lost her mother, Nazegül Boyraz, in the massacre said: "After the attack, the police attacked us. This site is located between two police stations. The police forces who have subjected us to a body search today did not do it to ISIS members that day. Instead, the victims were declared guilty."

Abdullah Öncel, President of Urfa Bar Association, vowed to continue their struggle to ensure that all those involved in cooperation with ISIS at the time would be brought to justice.

The crowd was prevented by the police from visiting the graves of victims Kasım Deprem and Osman Çiçek at Suruç Asri Cemetery on the grounds that no activity could be organised at a holy place. The group then made a statement at the entrance of the cemetery.

Speaking here, HDP Urfa provincial co-chair Ahmet Atış said: "Young people were murdered viciously and visits to their graves are banned. We call on the prime minister of the time, Ahmet Davutoğlu, not to be complicit in this crime and to speak out. The obstruction we face here today is a totally arbitrary measure."

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Journalist Beroski abducted after criticizing Barzani

ANF | HEWLER | 21 JULY 2023

On Thursday, journalist Şêrwan Şêrwani was sentenced to 4 years in prison in a hearing that lasted 3 hours.

Speaking after Sherwan Sherwani was sentenced to 4 years in prison, journalist Umêd Beroşki said: "It is Mesrur Barzani's decision to sentence Şêrwan Şêrwanî to 4 years in prison. The country cannot be ruled by a police and military mentality. Opposition in Kurdistan is being silenced. Those who silence the opposition voices of Behdinan today will silence all of us tomorrow. For this reason, we all need to take to the streets to oppose this unlawful decision."

Journalist Umêd Beroski was allegedly abducted by KDP forces on Thursday night, just hours after criticizing Mesrur Barzani.

Ayhan Seid, one of the lawyers of the Behdinan prisoners, said that journalist Beroşki was detained in Duhok.



Interview

‘Government uses the legal system as a tool to create a
submissive society’

ANF | 21 JULY 2023

The Turkish government has introduced a new legislative package that includes both tax and law enforcement reform. While “terror offences” are exempt, murder, drug trafficking and sexual violence in particular will be treated as petty offences. For example, a person who has received 20 years for murder will only have to stay in a closed prison for three years and five months. A person who has received twelve years and six months for drug trafficking should get out of the closed prison after five months. In the case of a prison sentence of ten years for sexual violence, the offender can be released after only nine months.

In an interview with ANF, lawyer Elif Taşdöğen from the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), spoke about the new legislative package.

The new enforcement act is called a disguised amnesty. In your opinion, is this true?

In order to make a healthy assessment, it is necessary to look back at one regulation. Act No. 7242, passed on 14 April 2020, amended the Enforcement Act 5275. This new regulation violated the principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination laid down in the Constitution. In addition, new regulations were introduced that granted very far-reaching powers to the prison administrations. The reason we pointed this out at the beginning is what can be expected from the law that was created on the basis of these previous contradictions. In a time of crisis like the pandemic, a law was enacted that distinguished between prisoners. The right to life was attached and shaped to people according to the nature of the offence for which they were imprisoned. Although all prisoners were equally at risk of the pandemic, this

regulation was enacted in violation of the principle of equality. All political prisoners, although there were many seriously ill prisoners among them, were exempt and not released. Many sick prisoners lost their lives because of this. The legislative package submitted to Parliament on 12 July 2023 is a continuation of the discriminatory Enforcement Act and deepens the discriminatory enforcement regime against political prisoners.

Long prison sentences for murder, sexual violence and drug trafficking will be massively reduced under the package. What does this lead to?

If we look at the definition in criminal law, it says that imprisonment is “the sanction for conduct defined in the law as a criminal offence. The penalty is imposed to comply with the offender and to prevent him from committing offences again (deterrence) ...” Of course, it is not only about deterrence. It will be necessary to consider other objectives because it will become apparent that the regime is contrary to the purpose of criminal law as a whole. The second purpose of penalties is to accommodate the other party, i.e. the injured party. The third purpose is to reintegrate the sentenced persons into society. If we look at the current regime, we can clearly predict that it is incompatible with the purpose of criminal law and will have very risky consequences. First of all, the deterrent effect, which is the main purpose of sentences, will disappear. In addition, people who thought they would be sentenced to a heavy penalty would settle out of court with the injured parties or their families before they were sentenced. This allowed victims to obtain their rights without having to file a lawsuit for compensation. Such settlements will no longer be possible because with this ordinance, defendants will almost never be imprisoned. In other words, the penalties will no longer have a deterrent effect. In addition, people who understand the system of impunity will think about taking the law into their own hands. This would shake the dynamics of society.

Accused persons according to “terror paragraphs”, which are especially directed against politicians and journalists, are exempt from these regulations. Why?

In fact, after each new regulation, we see very clearly that all prisoners who come from the opposition are excluded from the scope. The current government wants to have an intimidated, fearful population. It wants a society where no one raises a voice against its regulations and laws, that has to accept everything as the government wishes. It does not want to see a population that questions illegalities and fights against them if necessary. Consequently, the government continues its oppressive regime to create a submissive society. To do this, it uses the legal system as a tool.

As this approach has become permanent, one of the most important articles of the constitution, the “principle of the rule of law”, is being violated. It should also be noted that the state apparatus is responsible for the citizens’ trust in the judiciary. The judiciary must meet the actual expectations of society and not the current draft law. In its current form, this draft needs a comprehensive renewal due to the inequalities and injustices it contains, as well as the inherent enemy criminal law of the Turkish state. It is imperative to repeal the regulations that lead to double standards in detention. Prison time reduction must be in line with the right to hope. Real and lasting changes must be created for sick prisoners. All this must be done on the principle of equality.

We, lawyers, human rights defenders, activists and all marginalised people must speak with one voice and unite in the common struggle against this and all other similar new legislation that affects the whole of society.



Salih Muslim on Rojava Revolution: “We must understand why 11,000 martyrs sacrificed their lives”

ANF | HESEKE | 17 JULY 2023

The Democratic Union Party (PYD) is organizing a forum in Heseke under the title “19 July: Revolution of Women and Peoples, Guarantee of a Democratic Syria”.

The forum discusses the development and strategy of the 19 July revolution, women’s leadership in the revolution, alliance of peoples and ways to find a solution to the Syrian crisis.

150 people including representatives of political parties and the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) are attending the forum, where PYD Organization Office Co-Chair Perwîn Yûsif delivered the opening speech and provided information about the objectives of the forum.

Speaking after, PYD Euphrates Region Organization Office Co-Chair Firatê Ehmed Xoce said: “The 19 July Revolution, the spark of which was lit by the Kurdish people in Kobanê, has enlightened the path of our people and all the peoples of the Middle East. The revolution provided the people with belief, freedom and commitment to democracy. The PYD has played a leading role in the revolution and organized women and young people, the main pillars of the revolution. The 19 July Revolution is based on the Democratic Nation paradigm.”

PYD Co-Chair Salih Muslim stated: “The 19 July Revolution of peoples takes the 3rd line as its basis. We started the revolution in Kobanê. The change and transformation taking place for the past 11 years is a revolution in itself. We have defended all circles of society, women in the first place, from the attacks of the ruling and hegemonic powers, astonishing everyone with our great revolution and resistance against attacks. We have managed to protect our gains through the invaluable sacrifices of thousands of martyrs. It is thanks to the fraternity of peoples that the blood of all peoples intermingled during the revolution.”

Muslim continued: “We must understand well why 11,000 martyrs sacrificed their lives, why our young men and women are still fighting on the frontlines, and are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect the gains of the revolution. Everyone should follow in the footsteps of the martyrs.”

Speaking after, AANES Deputy Co-Chair Hemdan El Ebid congratulated all pro-freedom peoples on the 19 July Revolution and remembered the martyrs of 14 July, which marks the anniversary of the beginning of the death fast in the prison of Amed (Diyarbakır). The hunger strike in 1982, in which Mehmet Hayri Durmuş, Kemal Pir, Akif Yılmaz and Ali Çiçek gave their lives, went down in history as “the great death fast of July 14” and was a decisive action against the burial silence after the 1980 military coup in Turkey.

Referring to the previous revolutions that ended up in failure, El Ebid said the reason for this failure was the lack of a primary objective. He remarked that the 19 July revolution differed from other revolutions in history by being the common revolution of all peoples. “We are very happy to adopt the philosophy of the

fraternity of peoples and a common life. Staying outside of the government and opposition line, we have united on the line of the 3rd way.”

Sarya Efrîn, a commander of the Women’s Defense Units (YPJ), congratulated Abdullah Öcalan, all the heroes and brave fighters on the 19 July Revolution, which, she said, was achieved thanks to the labour and resistance of leader Öcalan.

Speaking about the state of possibilities during the beginning of the revolution, Sarya Efrîn said: “Since the first sparks of the revolution in Rojava, our people have fought with limited means. Our people, young and old alike, have proven their capability to rise and stand up against the invading Turkish state and mercenaries, as well as all hegemonic powers. This revolution has served as a model for all peoples. It gained recognition for women’s struggle and love for revolutionism. The YPJ, which was first formed in very few numbers, has become an army and liberated many areas from occupation. We need to strengthen our self-defense mechanism to secure the gains of the revolution, to ensure the leader’s presence among us and to realize the dreams of our martyrs.”



Opinion

Egîd Kobanê never lost his hope

NUJIYAN ADAR | QAMISHLO | 18 JULY 2023

Egîd Kobanê fought in the ranks of the People’s Defence Units (YPG) in Rojava. He was at the forefront of the liberation of the area around Serêkaniyê (Ras al-Ain). In the process, he lost an eye and fell into the hands of jihadists.

After the Rojava revolution, Turkey sent large groups of the Al-Qaeda offshoot Jabhat al-Nusra together with Kurdish collaborators across the border in the second half of 2012, occupying most of Serêkaniyê and establishing a regime of terror. As court records from the time show, the “Islamic State” (ISIS) was also involved in the occupation. Women in particular were terrorised with corporal punishment and severe assaults, Yazidi villages were wiped out, churches were destroyed and many other serious crimes were committed. Serêkaniyê was to become a bridgehead for Turkey in the destruction of the Rojava revolution that had just begun. Turkey brought permanent logistical and personnel support for the occupiers through the then open border crossing. Nevertheless, small groups of trapped YPG units, together with the people, began liberating the city from the eastern neighbourhoods despite the numerical and technical superiority of the occupiers. Due to an incursion by al-Nusra near Alouk in the east, the defence forces were initially largely cut off from supplies from this side as well.

Expulsion of the occupiers

This was preceded on 19 December 2012 by an attack on the Kurdish population and defence forces by the pro-Turkish mercenary coalition led by the Al-Qaeda offshoot al-Nusra. Abid Xelîl, the chair of the Serêkaniyê People's Council, was assassinated by the occupiers. Afterwards, fierce fighting broke out around Serêkaniyê. Negotiations were to follow. During the “talks”, activist Selah Eyo Şêxo and Asayîş (Public Security) member Xalid Omar Hemo were captured and murdered by mercenaries. This was the last straw. Now there was an extended struggle in Serêkaniyê to liberate the city from al-Nusra and its allies, which resulted in the expulsion of the occupiers.

Egîd Kobanê remembers

But large parts of the surrounding area were still under ISIS control. Egîd Kobanê was one of those who fought in the front line after the liberation of Serêkaniyê to open a corridor to Kobanê: “At the beginning of 2014, the war had already reached a high level. The mercenaries and the Turkish state had started to turn against Kobanê. We wanted to open a corridor from Sêrekaniyê to Kobanê. If that didn't work, we at least wanted to stay on the ground and carry out actions. At that time, villages like Mabrûka were in the hands of the mercenaries. We were fighting to liberate Rawiya, Dehman and Mabrûka.”

On the front line

In the initial phase of the offensive, our friends wanted us to stay in the rear because we had no combat experience. We took up defensive positions in the liberated villages. One friend was killed in the fighting, and then he was taken behind the front. I took his keffiyeh off, to see that it was Heval (Comrade) Behrî. Heval Behrî had met the YPG through me and decided to join. When I saw that he had fallen, I insisted that I go to the front. Because the greatest revenge for him would be the liberation of the occupied territories, and I wanted to take part in the offensives. I achieved my goal and joined a group to liberate Dehman village. The fighting was so fierce that we couldn't lift our heads from the bullets. There was only a five-meter gap between the mercenaries and us. We had to liberate the village from the mercenaries in groups and in a coordinated way. I was in the attack group, because by liberating the village I would be able to avenge Heval Behrî.

The fronts intermingle

First, I reached a safe position with fallen and injured friends. When I returned, news reached us that the mercenaries were going to attack with a vehicle bomb. Before we could get into position, the car sped towards us and exploded. Suddenly we could no longer see our hand in front of our eyes. We could not open our eyes because of the dust and were stunned by the ferocity of the explosion. The fighting had become so fierce that we could no longer distinguish between friend and foe. There were killed and wounded on our side. Heval Şahoz, two friends and I took up positions again. Three men in camouflage clothes passed us like ghosts and moved towards the mercenaries. When we heard ‘Heval! Don't go that way! This is ISIS territory ...’, a small skirmish ensued. We killed two of them and the other escaped.

I lay down by the side of Martyr Şahoz

The village of Dehman had been in the hands of ISIS for a long time. Therefore, they had reinforced their positions, tunnels and underground fortifications. After the car exploded, the mercenaries took up attack positions and came out of houses, underground tunnels and defensive positions. When a rocket exploded, Heval Şahoz collapsed next to me from the blast wave. He fell. I thought only Şahoz had fallen, but later I realised that other friends had also fallen. There were a lot of mercenaries and we had hardly any ammunition left. When I stood up, I felt a slight pain, I couldn't see my surroundings well. I went closer to Şahoz and tried to clarify whether it was him or not. It was Şahoz. When I tried to get up, I fell to the ground, I couldn't keep my balance, I couldn't see anything in front of me. I called out to my friends, but there was nothing. I called out again, but there was no answer. I realised that the other friends had also fallen. So, I lay down next to Şahoz, took the kalashnikov and waited motionless. I ran my hand over my face. One eye was hanging out and the other eye was clouded by the gunpowder vapour.

I waited silently and full of hope

I was not able to move. If I had moved, I would have run in the direction of the mercenaries. The fighting continued for a long time. I stayed in that place for a long time. But if I did not leave, there was a danger that I would be captured. But if I went, since I could not see anything, I might get lost and be captured. I decided to go, come what may. 'You must try,' I said to myself and got up. After walking for a while, I fainted. When I woke up, I was in the middle of the fighting. When the fighting stopped, I found that I was on the side closer to the mercenaries, and the wounded mercenaries were lying scattered around me. My hair and beard had grown very long. The number of wounded was very high; they took them all away without examining them closely. They thought I was a gang member because of my hair and beard and took me away. They did not know who I was. I waited in silence. I did not lose hope because I knew that the friends would come. My only fear was to move away from the village. Suddenly, bullets began to whistle through the air, and I sighed deeply as I heard the trilling of the female fighters. The mercenaries had suffered a heavy blow. When Heval Newal called out, 'Heval Egîd!', I realised she was coming towards me. She asked me, 'Are you alive?' I could not speak, only squeezed her hand."

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Rojava Revolution, 11 years on

ANF | 19 JULY 2023

The 'Rojava Revolution' began 11 years ago, on 19 July 2012, when three predominantly Kurdish-inhabited areas of Syria declared their autonomy from the central government.

Since then, a democratic, autonomous administration has attempted to create a grassroots, gender-equal and ecological society in these areas. Communes and councils, the democratic representatives of the population, organize life and administer society.

The political model has thus established itself in decided opposition to the old Ba’ath regime. Numerous people within society are involved in a wide variety of local and social activities – from the communes and councils to working in the health sector, the women’s movement or in self-defence structures.

In its history of the Rojava Revolution, the Rojava Information Centre (RIC) underlined that “Rojava has also been synonymous with the war against the Islamic State (ISIS), the occupation of Turkey, overcrowded refugee camps, water shortages, crop failures and widespread poverty. But against the backdrop of an ongoing war, occupation, an embargo due to the Syrian Civil War, and a precarious humanitarian situation that makes basic staples scarce, Rojava has held its ground for ten years. The areas controlled by the democratic ‘Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria’ (AANES) have grown since 2012 and now include a third of Syrian territory and nearly a fifth of its population.”

Eleven years on, the “continued existence of North and East Syria (NES) – the more inclusive name of the region, which encompasses Kurdish-majority Rojava and the Arab-majority areas on the banks of the Euphrates – is an achievement in and of itself. In the eleven years since 2011, the Rojava Revolution has remained committed to its former values and consolidated its achievements, even as all other gains of the so-called ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings were squashed or coopted by national governments.”

RIC said: “The Rojava Revolution began eleven years ago in Kobane. As a result, an ‘autonomous administration’ was established to manage society based on the values of (direct) democracy, gender liberation and ecology. For ten years, this administration (under different names; see below) has fought off a number of internal and external enemies. In addition to the military, diplomatic and economic disputes with the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, it is above all the wars with Turkey and ISIS that threaten the very existence of the region’s political project. Turkey has invaded NES twice since 2016, and continues to occupy large swaths of northern Syria. ISIS was only territorially defeated in 2019, after more than four gruelling years since it was first pushed back during the 2014-2015 Battle for Kobane. Since then, however, ISIS has remained active in NES, staging occasional large attacks, while waging an irregular war of attrition in the Deir ez-Zor region and beyond. It has by no means been defeated.

Despite all these adversities, NES society has continued to establish and develop (relatively) stable political structures. Legal institutions, such as peace committees, have been introduced. These consensus-based bodies are responsible for resolving conflicts and have largely replaced the hierarchical court system common in Western societies. In addition, two social contracts – akin to a local constitution – were adopted in 2014 and 2016, as the product of a collaborative social process during which collective discussions determined which topics would be included. Work on a new social contract, which will better reflect all regions under the AANES umbrella, is currently underway. These social contracts have formalized the already-decentralized decision-making processes in the region and consolidated much of the legislative power of local councils. Many of these changes in NES can be described as a radical democratization of society and life. This, in turn, is changing the way people think and conceive of legal concepts such as law and justice.”

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