

# THE İMRALI POST

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

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## Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Temelli: Isolation in İmralı is an issue that everyone in the country should discuss

ANF | 9 JULY 2023

Isolation in İmralı has been going on for 24 years. Yet, an even heavier isolation has been in place for two years. After journalist Merdan Yanardağ from TELE 1 spoke about this during a TV program, he was taken into custody and isolation was quickly taken off the agenda.

### **Nobody can talk about isolation**

Speaking to ANF, Green Left Party Muş MP, Sezai Temelli, protested the fact that nobody talks about the issue of isolation. "Thanks to Merdan Yanardağ's statement, isolation was once again brought onto the Turkish public opinion agenda. This is a very neglected issue for the Turkish public. In fact, the isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan is perhaps one of the most important issues that are closely related to both Turkish and regional politics. Because we know very well that as long as this obstacle stands in front of Turkish politics, politics cannot be liberated. No steps can be taken towards the issue of democratization because the authoritarian regime is almost fed by it.

In fact, there is no one who does not feel discomfort about this issue, but there is no one who speaks up against it. Large sections of society talk about unlawfulness and injustice, and there are many explanations for why politics is dragged into such a place. But no one talks about what the main reason for this is. They neither talk about the Kurdish issue nor about the end of the İmralı isolation, which will be the most important solution to this issue."

### **Freedom of expression under trial**

Temelli criticized the fact that the issue of isolation came to the fore and was dropped off the agenda very quickly. "Merdan Yanardağ's comments about isolation brought the issue onto the Turkish agenda, yet, as soon as it was there, it was swiftly taken off again. The issue was confined to the issue of freedom of expression. It was targeted with such hate speech that those who wanted to continue this discussion were silenced once again. The public should definitely discuss it. They should ask whether the issue of ending the isolation system is a matter of freedom of expression or human rights. It is absolutely necessary to talk about the rule of law, political liberties and the developments in politics in Turkey. You may be against certain ideas, but you have to deal with them politically. This is what politicians do. Lawyers, those who defend the rule of law, those who struggle for human rights, have been

Over the past eight years, we have seen that lawyers, those who defend the rule of law, those who struggle for human rights, those who put forward a different view to work towards democratization in Turkey have been silenced. So we couldn't move forward."

Temelli said: "If we live in a country that is still struggling with serious problems, and the dose of authoritarianism is increasing, and therefore, very negative things are falling on everyone's share, whether politically or economically, we have to do something about it. I believe this issue should be seriously discussed. Of course, this debate should be continued by the people, and this sensitivity should spread everywhere. I think it is important to continue the multidimensional debate, both in legal, human rights and political terms. But as we continue this discussion, let's not forget that there is a person who has been living in conditions of total isolation for 24 years. He faces all kinds of violations of his rights. Everyone should now take the initiative to put an end to this usurpation of rights as soon as possible. This is not an acceptable situation. While continuing the political discussions, we should not forget that this inhumane practice continues. In this respect, I would like to emphasize that lawyers, medical professionals, human rights organizations and civil society organizations have very important responsibilities."

## Lawyers in North-East Syria turn to the UN to meet with Öcalan

ANF | QAMISHLO | 9 JULY 2023

Lawyers from the “Initiative to Defend Abdullah Öcalan” and “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Initiative” in Syria have taken another step as part of their efforts to meet with Kurdish people’s leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in incommunicado detention for over two years.

The latest move of the lawyers came after reports that Öcalan received threatening letters from the Turkish state and administration of the Imrali Island Prison where he has been held since his handover to Turkey as a result of an international conspiracy in 1999.

Lawyers from the two initiatives made press statements in Qamishlo and Kobanê denouncing the torture system in Imrali and the aggravated isolation imposed on Öcalan.

The press statement in Qamishlo was made in front of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The statement noted that the torture system implemented in Imrali since 1999 violated all legal rights, saying, “Isolation has been aggravated in recent years and Öcalan has been denied the right to meet with his family and lawyers, since 2021 and 2019, respectively. Besides, no information is provided about his health. The Turkish state tramples on its own laws and international law, implementing isolation as a form of psychological violence.”

The initiative pointed out that the letters of threat and the disciplinary penalties given to Öcalan prove that his life is in danger and the Turkish state imposes annihilation. “On the hundredth anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, it targets the Kurdish cause in the person of Öcalan.”

Criticizing the silence of the CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture) and international institutions in the face of the isolation of Öcalan, the initiative strongly condemned the inhumane and unlawful practices of the Turkish state.

Expressing their concerns about the situation of Öcalan, the initiative reiterated their demand to meet with Öcalan, vowing to continue their struggle for his freedom and calling on the international community to put pressure on the Turkish state to stop the isolation of the Kurdish leader.

Following the press statement, lawyers submitted to the UN Office a dossier containing their demand to go to Imrali and providing information about the conditions of the Kurdish leader.

The two initiatives made the same statement to the press at the Martyr Egid Square in Kobanê and expressed their concerns and demands.

## Thousands march in Shehba to protest the isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | SHEHBA | 11 JULY 2023

Led by the Afrin and Shehba Canton Council, thousands of people marched in the Ehdas district of Shehba to protest the isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan, the ban on visits, and the attacks and threats of the Turkish state.

The march arrived at Serdem Camp, where it turned into a rally. Afrin and Shehba Canton Council executive Xebat Afrin said: "The invading Turkish state has been imposing a severe isolation on Leader Abdullah Öcalan for more than two and a half years and has banned him from meeting with his family and lawyers, using meaningless punishments as an excuse. The threatening letter they delivered to Leader Abdullah Öcalan shows the fact that the invading Turkish state could not separate the people from the Leader. They cannot destroy the free ideas of Leader Abdullah Öcalan."

Xebat Afrin said that the refugees and citizens of Shehba are followers of Abdullah Öcalan's ideology, and added that they will resist along this line until his physical freedom is ensured and the occupied areas are liberated.

Kongra Star Executive member Necah Hisên also stated that they will continue to follow Abdullah Öcalan, who showed women the way to freedom.

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## People of Shengal demand freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | SHENGAL | 11 JULY 2023

People took to the streets in the Yazidi town of Shengal (Sinjar) in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) to demand freedom for Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in incommunicado detention for over two years.

Concerns over the conditions of Abdullah Öcalan increased after reports that Öcalan received threatening letters from the Turkish state and administration of the İmralı Island Prison where he has been held since his handover to Turkey as a result of an international conspiracy in 1999.

During the march organised by the Autonomous Administration of Shengal, residents displayed banners demanding an end to the isolation and threats against the Kurdish leader.

The march was followed by a rally where speeches were held, pointing to the importance of Öcalan's freedom for the peoples in the region.

In a statement on behalf of the Autonomous Administration of Shengal, Riham Hesen stated that the Yazidi people survived the genocide and can live on their own land today thanks to the ideas of Abdullah Öcalan.

Riham Hiço, a member of the Yazidi Women's Freedom Movement (TAJÊ) Coordination, condemned the aggravated isolation imposed on Öcalan, who has not been heard from for over two years. "Concerns have increased after the latest reports that Öcalan is threatened with poisoning. Everyone should reject this and stand up for the leader," she said.

Sara Botan, Spokesperson of the Yazidi Youth Union, expressed their rejection of the threats against Abdullah Öcalan.

Botan called for an enhanced struggle to break the isolation of Öcalan and ensure his freedom.

## Background

Shengal (Sinjar) is the last contiguous settlement area of the Yazidi community. Thousands of Yazidis were murdered and thousands of women and children were taken prisoner in the 3 August 2014 onslaught on Shengal by ISIS militants. While ISIS gangs began murdering Yazidis in Shengal, the Peshmerga left, leaving the Yazidis behind. HPG-YJA Star and YPG-YPJ fighters came to the Yazidi people's aid in the face of ISIS aggression.

After months of resistance, the fighters who saved the Yazidi people from a larger genocide liberated Shengal. After the liberation of the city, the HPG and YPG/YPJ subsequently withdrew in 2017. People who returned to their land after Shengal's independence reformed, established defensive units and built their institutions.

UN bodies and the European Parliament have recognised ISIS crimes as genocide, as have Armenia, Australia, the US House of Representatives, the Scottish Parliament and the German Parliament (Bundestag).



## Peace in Kurdistan sends letter to PM about threats to Öcalan

ANF | LONDON | 13 JULY 2023

The Peace in Kurdistan Campaign sends a letter to UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak about threats to Abdullah Öcalan.

The letter said: "A few days ago, it was revealed that Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, who has been held on Imrali Island in Turkey for more than 24 years, had been in receipt of anonymous threatening letters delivered to his prison cell with the full knowledge and apparent approval of the Turkish prison authorities. The letter - or letters - included lurid accounts of how Öcalan was to be poisoned and killed."

The letter added: "The detailed reports, published by leading Kurdish organisations, must not be brushed aside as rumour or scaremongering. The letters amount to threats to Öcalan's life and must be treated with the utmost seriousness and the response must show a sense of urgency.

Reports of threats to any prisoners must be fully investigated and the responsible agencies have a duty to establish the facts that are the basis for the allegations.

Peace in Kurdistan condemns in the strongest possible terms any threats to Abdullah Öcalan, and we add our voice to those calling for a full and proper investigation into this latest incident."

The letter continued: "We support the demands for an urgent mission from the UN to visit Abdullah Öcalan in İmralı. The Council of Europe and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture must stop its vacillating and act without delay.

While held in custody, all individuals deserve a level of protection and should not be subjected to any form of threats at all. The safety of each prisoner should be guaranteed irrespective of who they are. That is a basic requirement of any justice system and there are international institutions created to ensure that codes of behaviour and standards of treatment are adhered to."

Peace in Kurdistan said: "But Abdullah Öcalan is no ordinary prisoner. He is a political leader of a national movement who commands the deepest of loyalties of millions of Kurdish people with support for him strong among the younger generation who have no personal memories of a time when Öcalan was not being held in prison.

Peace in Kurdistan has repeatedly insisted that Öcalan must be seen as a political leader and, in fact, we have consistently called for him to be freed, convinced that he has a positive contribution to make to achieving a lasting peace settlement that will bring an end to the unresolved conflict between Turkey and the Kurds. The new reports of threats to his life are deeply concerning and risk a dangerous turn of events if anything were to happen to endanger Öcalan.

Kurds will never rest until their fears are assuaged about Abdullah Öcalan's state of health and the consequences of any inexplicable harm being done to him in prison would be quite calamitous for social peace inside Turkey and with possible far-reaching ramifications that would be hard to calculate."

The letter said: "The concern for Öcalan is compounded by his isolation and the exceptionally punitive treatment meted out over the years of his detention, including in particular the evidence of an attempted poisoning incident that came to light in March 2007 when chemical substances were intended to cause him serious harm. This incident was investigated by laboratory tests after a small sample of Öcalan's hair was brought out of the prison.

These latest reports have echoes of that past incident because the threatening letters apparently mention the use of poison. This incident is once again causing the gravest consternations among Kurds and their supporters. The safety of Abdullah Öcalan must be guaranteed."

Over the recent period, Abdullah Öcalan has been kept in continued total isolation for a period of 28 months without ever seeing any visitors or even being allowed to communicate with his closest relatives or

his lawyers. Under these circumstances, nobody knows a single thing about Öcalan's present state of mental and physical health.

Peace in Kurdistan said: "This is simply unacceptable by any standards. It is unconscionable that President Erdogan and Turkey are feted and lauded by their allies on the global stage, while inside the country's prisons apparent abuses are being sanctioned.

Such unnecessary punitive isolation that Öcalan is subjected to amounts to intolerable inhumane treatment or torture. How Öcalan is being treated is a stain on Turkey and those who support it are effectively condoning state torture. No other prisoner held in Turkey is treated in the way that Öcalan is being treated. The latest reports add to the injuries that Öcalan is forced to endure and cannot be ignored."

Peace in Kurdistan called on "all governments to make representations to Turkey and for the relevant authorities who have powers to intervene to exercise their powers by acting now."

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# Prisons in Turkey

## HDP executive prevented from attending his mother's funeral

ANF | 8 JULY 2023

People's Democratic Party (HDP) executive Committee member Doğan Erbaş was prevented from attending his mother's funeral because the prosecutor's decision was not given.

Erbaş was arrested on 13 June after receiving a sentence of imprisonment. He was sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment for "being a member of an illegal organization," and 1 year 21 months and 22 days of imprisonment for "propaganda of an illegal organization."

His mother, Hanım Erbaş, died on 5 July.

Green Left Party Siirt MP Tuncer Bakırhan and Diyarbakır MP Ceylan Akça, attended Hanım Erbaş's funeral.

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## KCK: Murder plan against hunger strikers Dağ and Er foiled

ANF | BEHDINAN | 8 JULY 2023

The co-chairs of the Executive Council of the KCK (Community of Kurdistan Societies) warned in a statement of plans by the Turkish secret service to assassinate Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er. The two Kurds are sentenced to death and are held in Hewlêr (Erbil) prison. They have been on a hunger strike since 18 May against the prison conditions. According to their relatives, they are in very poor condition.

Dağ and Er are accused of shooting dead the Turkish Vice Consul, secret service officer Osman Köse and two other people in a luxury restaurant in Hewlêr on 17 July 2019. In February 2020, Dağ and Er were sentenced to death in a show trial under pressure from Turkey.

### "Dağ and Er were not involved in the incident"

In their statement, the KCK leaders stressed that Dağ and Er were not directly involved in the incident and called for this misinformation to be corrected: "It has become known that Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er have been in Hewlêr prison for more than 100 years. They have been on hunger strike for 50 days and some organizations have issued statements to draw attention to this situation. The conditions of these two prisoners should be known to the public and democratic public opinion. They should be protected. First of all, there is some misinformation about the two prisoners that is reflected in public opin-

ion. This information should be corrected and the public properly informed about Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er. They have no direct relation to the shooting of an MIT member in Hewlêr and were not involved in this action, but only assisted the friends who carried out the action and who remained on duty. However, Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er are publicly referred to as 'two patriots who shot an MIT member'. This misinformation is also reflected in the statements made by some of our organizations."

### "Targeted action against the killer of Diyar Xerib"

The co-chairs of the KCK said that the MIT member shot dead in Hewlêr is the person who ordered the assassination of Diyar Xerib. Xerib was from Sulaymaniyah and was a member of the KCK Presidential Council and the PKK Central Committee. He died on 5 July 2019 in a targeted airstrike by the Turkish army in Qandil. The KCK leaders paid tribute to Diyar Xerib and said he was a "valuable revolutionary from South Kurdistan who dedicated his life to the cause of Kurdistan and was loved by everyone."

The KCK said: "The KDP reflects this uneasiness by torturing Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er, who are detained in Hewlêr Prison. The prisoners have gone on a hunger strike against the torture. The KDP's uneasiness and the attitude it has taken as a result are incomprehensible and unacceptable. The population, civil society organizations, democratic institutions and the public should know that torture is taking place in Hewlêr prison and should support the two prisoners."

### MIT assassination plan

The Turkish state is planning to murder Dağ and Er in prison, the KCK Executive Council leaders said and added: "Some of the agents who spied for MIT and who were in charge of this planned assassination were arrested by our forces. One of them is a spy named Yasin Ali Hıdır. This person used to work as a prison warden. He was hired by MIT to organize other prisoners for the murder. For this he received money. After the massacre was carried out, he was promised a very large sum of money. So the situation of the prisoners is critical and the plans against them are serious. Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er are in the hands of the KDP. The KDP is responsible for their lives and safety. If something happens to them, the KDP would be responsible."

The KCK called on all democratic organizations and institutions to act urgently and said: "The prisoners are in mortal danger; they must be protected before it is too late. A delegation should be allowed into prison to see their current situation."

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## Political prisoner dies of liver failure

ANF | AMED | 8 JULY 2023

Political prisoner Bişar Yazıcı died of liver failure at the age of 52 in a hospital on Saturday. Jailed in the High Security Prison in Van province, Yazıcı was admitted to Dicle University Hospital in Amed (tr. Di-

yarbakır) after suffering liver failure two weeks ago. Since a request to appoint his son as guardian was rejected by the Turkish judiciary, Bişar Yazıcı had no one from his family by his side at the time of his death.

Kurdish prisoner Bişar Yazıcı came from a village in the Özalp district of Van. He had been in prison since 2021, serving a sentence of six years and three months imprisonment for alleged membership of a "terrorist" organisation. Several attempts by his lawyers to have the prison sentence suspended due to health issues failed.

Yazıcı's body was taken to the Forensic Medicine Department in Amed for an autopsy earlier today. He will be taken to the village of Çavuşlar in Özalp where he will be laid to rest.

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## Violations of rights in Antalya S Type Prison

ANF | ANTALYA | 11 JULY 2023

Ekrem Altay, who is imprisoned in Antalya S Type High Security Closed Prison, talked about the violations of rights he was exposed to in a phone call with his family.

Altay said that the requests of the ill prisoners to be sent to the hospital were either delayed for a long time or rejected.

Altay said that although the two prisoners in the same ward were paralyzed, they were not transferred to the hospital and added that they could not find anyone to talk to.

Ekrem Altay called on the public to act to ensure that ill prisoners have access to their right to health.

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## Trial against 18 journalists continues today

ANF | AMED | 12 JULY 2023

The first hearing of the case in which 18 journalists - 15 of whom are imprisoned - are standing trial, began today at Diyarbakır's 4th Heavy Penal Court.

The hearing continues today. On Tuesday, journalists Ömer Çelik, Mehmet Ali Ertaş, Serdar Altan, Mehmet Şahin, and Zeynel Abidin Bulut (all in jail) made their defense in Kurdish and said that on trial are the Kurdish press, Kurdish journalism, and the media that speak about the Kurdish issue.

### **Serdar Altan: This is a special operation**

After the summary of the indictment was read out, Serdar Altan, the co-chair of the Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG), spoke for 45 minutes. He talked about the pressure against the press from the Ottoman period until today. Reminding Hasan Fehmi, killed on 6 April 1909, he said that journalists have always been under threat in this region.

"Those who did not accept the existence of Kurds and the Kurdish press in those days, do not accept it today."

Altan said that they were detained on 8 June 2022, and remanded in custody a few days later. He added that he and his friends were unjustly detained while making preparations for commemorating their journalist friend Hafız Akdemir, killed by Hizbullah on 8 June 1992.

Altan continued: "The fact that we have been taken into custody on the day our friend was killed shows that this was a special operation. This is not an ordinary operation. They have assigned a special prosecutor. Our detention period was extended to 8 days. A confidentiality order was imposed on the case file. The police came and did not leave the institutions where we work for one month. Journalism equipment and materials were seized and considered as elements of crime."

Altan added: "We came to the court not to give an account, but to call you to account. Why have you kept us away from our beloved, from the streets, from our occupation for 13 months?"

### **Ömer Çelik: News programs considered criminal offence**

Journalist Ömer Çelik also defended himself in Kurdish. He said that they do not accept the accusations and added: "I want to talk about what the indictment includes. Is broadcasting a program a crime? The prosecutor has pointed to the term "ethnic." All the six programs mentioned in the indictment are related to discussions on the Kurdish problem."

Çelik continued: "Broadcasting in our native tongue is a crime, according to the prosecutor. However, this is a global right. I have made many programs but six of them have been included in the accusations. Many of them cover the issues discussed throughout Turkey. It is a program that many politicians in Turkey have attended. How can it be a criminal offense?"

### **Bulut: Kurdish journalists exposed massacres**

Zeynel Abidin Bulut also defended himself in Kurdish. He said that if it was not for the Kurdish journalists, none of the massacres such as that of Ceylan Önkol, Uğur Kaymaz, or Roboski would be known. These were all proven by the Kurdish journalists, Bulut told the court and said that "this was what was disturbing the government and the state."

## Mehmet Ali Ertaş: On trial is the entire Kurdish people

Mehmet Ali Ertaş also defended himself in Kurdish and said: "We are here today because of the news programs we made in Kurdish. There is a single newspaper in Kurdish and it is standing trial here today. This means that it is the value of the Kurdish people that are standing trial here. We are being told that we cannot defend the values of our people."

Journalist Mehmet Şahin, also a teacher dismissed after the attempted coup of 15 July 2015, spoke in Kurdish and said: "I am here speaking my mother's language. Kurdish journalists are suffering oppression as usual. The prosecution has taken on the task of eliminating Kurdish journalism."

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## Second day of hearing of 18 journalists opens in Amed

ANF | AMED | 12 JULY 2023

The hearing of 18 journalists, 15 of whom are imprisoned, continues in Amed.

The second day of the trial in which the journalists had to respond to the accusation of being "members of an illegal organization", began with the defense by Mesopotamia Agency editor Aziz Oruç.

Oruç said: "I was unjustly and unlawfully arrested because of the same news and with the same allegations used in previous trials I stood on. The indictment shows as evidence pieces of news and journalism. They say that we are not journalists but terrorists. We pay the price of doing our profession well and serving journalism."

Many civil society organizations are at the hearing today. HDP deputy Serhat Eren is also among those following the trial.

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## HDP criticizes new Execution Law as it discriminates political prisoners

ANF | ANKARA | 12 JULY 2023

A written statement made by the HDP Law and Human Rights Commission criticized the amendments regarding the Execution Law added to the bag bill at the last moment and accepted by the Parliamentary Plan Budget Committee. According to the HDP, "with Provisional Article 10 in the proposal, the conditions for the convicts being moved to an open prison and released on probation will be changed before the conditional release date, and the convicts will be allocated to open prison and probation 3 years earlier.

However, this proposal is unlawful in both form and substance. The amendment is in the nature of a special amnesty, as it was made to reduce the capacity density in prisons and resulted in the release of many convicts."

### Discrimination against political prisoners

Emphasizing that both this article and the bag law it contains must be voted on in accordance with the Parliament's Bylaws Article 92 and adopted by a three-fifths majority, the statement said: "The government has not followed this method in any bag law, including execution regulations, to date. For this reason, it is unconstitutional that this regulation, which is, in fact, a special amnesty, was brought to the parliament with this method, and accepted that way."

As to the substance, the statement pointed out that political prisoners were also excluded from the scope of the previous execution regulations, and added: "While judicial convicts can be released early with these regulations, political prisoners will not be able to benefit from it. Therefore, the content of the proposal is against the Constitution, according to the prohibition of discrimination and the principle of equality."

The HDP said: "The probation period was three years in judicial crimes, but one year in political cases. Today, the rights of political prisoners have been usurped by the decisions of the administrative and observation boards. We call on the Assembly to take a stance against this discriminatory and criminal political understanding."



## Court rules to release 15 Kurdish journalists after the first hearing

ANF | AMED | 12 JULY 2023

As part of an investigation carried out by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, 22 people, 20 of them journalists, were detained in raids on houses and media outlets in many Amed-centered cities on 8 June 2022. Among those detained, Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DGF) Co-chair Serdar Altan, Mesopotamia Agency (MA) editor Aziz Oruç, Xwebûn Editor-in-Chief Mehmet Ali Ertaş, journalists Zeynel Abidin Bulut, Ömer Çelik, Mazlum Doğan Güler, İbrahim Koyuncu, Neşe Toprak, Elif Üngür, Abdurrahman Öncü, Suat Doğuhan, Remziye Temel, Ramazan Geciken, Lezgin Akdeniz and Mehmet Şahin were imprisoned 8 days later for alleged terror charges.

The imprisoned journalists have appeared in court for the first time after 13 months in custody. The hearing ongoing since yesterday was monitored by Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG), Mesopotamia Women Journalists Platform (MKGP), Journalists Union of Turkey (TGS), Contemporary Journalists Association (ÇGD), DİSK Basın-İş, MLSA, Journalists Protection Committee (CPJ), representatives of many professional organizations, as well as lawyers from Amsterdam Law Offices, legal organizations such as Amed Bar Association, Lawyers Association for Freedom (ÖHD), representatives of MED-DER and IHD, and deputies from the Green Left Party, HDP and CHP.

Today's hearing continued with the defense of journalists who protested the indictment for labelling them as terrorists and vowed to continue to do journalism and defend their work.

"We are not here to give an account of what we have done, but to call to account those who accuse us," said the journalists.

Mehmet Çelik, who spoke as a witness, stated that he did not witness any crime being committed in the accused media outlets and companies.

Following the defense of journalists, the prosecutor requested the continuation of the imprisonment of journalists on the grounds of the "available evidence".

The court board ruled for the release of all jailed journalists on condition of judicial control.

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## Prisoner released after 30 years

ANF | ISTANBUL | 13 JULY 2023

Abdülhamit Babat, who was kept in prison for 30 years and whose release has been postponed twice, has finally left Bolu F Type Closed Prison.

Babat was detained and sent to prison in Amed in 1993 on the charge of "separatism". He was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Diyarbakır State Security Court (DGM), where he was tried. Babat, who remained in prisons in Amed, Dilok, Ordu and Ankara during this time, was transferred to Bolu F Type Prison.

Babat, who developed heart and blood pressure disease in prison during his 30-year detention, was welcomed by his family and relatives in front of the prison. He then set out with his family to go to his hometown of Amed.

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## Signature campaign for the release of Nevzat Öztürk jailed for 31 years

ANF | 13 JULY 2023

A signature campaign has been initiated for Nevzat Öztürk, a Kurd who has been imprisoned in Turkey for 31 years. His daughter Jiyan, who lives in Cologne, was three years old when her father was arrested in Istanbul in 1992 and sentenced to life imprisonment for "destroying the unity and integrity of Turkey" after 14 days of abuse at a police station. In June this year, Öztürk was supposed to have been released, but his

detention was extended by three months. As is usual with political prisoners, release depends on the approval of a control committee, which makes arbitrary decisions with sometimes very absurd justifications. Nevzat Öztürk is accused of "not using electricity sparingly" in prison and "not reading enough books in the prison library".

The Society for Threatened Peoples, together with Öztürk's daughter Jiyan, appeals to the Human Rights Commissioner Luise Amtsberg to campaign for his release. The appeal points out that the situation of political prisoners in Turkey has worsened since the failed military coup on 15 July 2016 and that imprisoned Kurds are being forcibly assimilated: "In Turkish prisons, attempts are being made to assimilate Kurds by forcing them to deny their Kurdish identity and reject their language, culture and history."

Öztürk has a heart condition and is currently in the Bolu F-Type Prison in western Turkey. The Society for Threatened Peoples reports that the 57-year-old has been transferred again and again: "Visitation and telephone bans are the order of the day. His wife and son, who still live in Turkey, have to travel 1300 kilometres to see him - only to be turned away sometimes. Here, too, state arbitrariness reigns. Will Öztürk actually be released in three months? That is uncertain. We want to campaign for this with you. Sign the appeal now and demand his release!"

Dr Kamal Sido, the Society for Threatened Peoples' Middle East expert, says: "In Turkish prisons or police custody, up to 83 people are said to have died under suspicious circumstances in 2022. Reports of torture in Turkey's overcrowded prisons are also mounting. Worst of all, however, is the arbitrary practice of not releasing prisoners even after they have served their sentences of often more than 30 years."

In recent months, many prisoners have been released who, like Nevzat Öztürk, were sentenced to life imprisonment in the early 1990s in the now abolished state security courts. However, about 200 political prisoners are not released even after serving their regular sentence. A committee decides on release at its own discretion. Without the approval of this committee, release can always be postponed for three or six months. One of the common questions asked by the committee for its social prognosis is: "In your opinion, is the PKK a terrorist organisation?"

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## Dağ and Er enter 58th day of hunger strike

ANF | 14 JULY 2023

Mazlum Dağ and Abdurrahman Er, who were arrested and sentenced to death by the KDP, have been subjected to gross violations of their rights since the day they were imprisoned. The two Kurds have been on hunger strike many times to end the oppression and violations of their rights. They last went on a hunger strike on 18 May against the imposition of the prison uniform. As their demands had not been met yet, their protests continued on the 58th day.

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



The families of both detainees condemned the increasing pressure on their sons and called on South Kurdistan intellectuals and human rights associations to protect their sons.

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## Military aggression and occupation

### SDF denies reports of alleged participation in the Ukraine war

ANF | 8 JULY 2023

The Media Center of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a statement denying reports about their alleged involvement in the war in Ukraine.

The SDF statement published on Saturday said:

“Some media outlets have published fabricated and biased news about the alleged participation of our SDF fighters in the ongoing war in Ukraine. We emphasize that these news reports are false and have no basis in reality, and they are disseminated by entities known for their unreliable sources. These supposed actions do not align with our SDF’s patriotic priorities and their struggle within Syrian territories to protect the region and its people. Our forces are not concerned with issues outside Syria.”

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## Council of Clerics in Shengal denounces the KDP’s plans against Yazidis

ANF | SHENGAL | 9 JULY 2023

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

For some time now, the KDP has been forcing the new Iraqi Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, to implement the agreement. The KDP is said to be favouring Hazim Tahsin Beg as the Mir of the Yazidis. Mir is a title for community leaders among the Yazidis.

The Council of Clerics in Shengal (Sinjar) made a statement reacting to the establishment of an assembly in the name of the Yazidis by the KDP.

The statement pointed out that the KDP sought to achieve its political goals under the name of the High Assembly of Yazidis and Mirs.

“We reject any assembly that does not involve the clerics, tribal leaders and people of Shengal. There have been schemes against the Yazidis for a while, supported by the Yazidi Mir, Hazim Tehsin Beg,” said the Council of Clerics.

The statement continued: “The Mir looks after the interests of a political party instead of acting for the benefit of his people. As the Yazidi clerics, we reject any decision that shows no regard to the will of the Shengal people.”

The Council stressed that all members of the assembly in question were elected by the KDP and have no relations with the people of Shengal.



## HPG reports 430 Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas in northern Iraq

ANF | BEHDINAN | 10 JULY 2023

The Press Office of People’s Defense Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the latest attacks by the Turkish army and actions by the guerrillas in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

### **Actions by the guerrillas**

According to the statement, the positions of Turkish forces in Girê FM Resistance Area were struck twice and damaged by the YJA Star (Free Women’s Troops) guerrillas with heavy weapons on July 7.

On July 8, mobile guerrilla teams targeted the Turkish drones hovering over the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area, stopping drone activity in the region.

On July 9, guerrillas destroyed a surveillance camera system of the occupation forces in Girê FM Resistance Area.

### **Operation by the Turkish army**

On July 5, the Turkish army carried out an operation in the areas of Şikefta Birîndara, Karker and Kokerê in Zap region. While the operation continues, the Turkish forces try to get stationed in Kokerê, conducting bombardments and cutting down trees in the area.

## Attacks by the Turkish army

On July 7-8, the Turkish army carried out 16 airstrikes on the Şehîd Delîl area in Zap; Sinîné and Ava Lolanê areas in Xakurke; and Gundê Şiyê, Deşta Kafya, Gundê Meyrokê areas in Gare.

On July 7-8, the areas of Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî, Girê Amediyê in western Zap; Sîda Resistance Area in Zap; Golka area in Metina; Girê Şehîd Kamuran, Girê Şehîd Heqî areas in Xakurke were targeted by 414 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons.

On July 7-8-9, the Turkish army attacked the guerrilla positions in Sîda, Şehîd Delîl and Girê FM areas and tried to demolish the tunnel facilities of the guerrillas with construction equipment.

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## Turkey bombs a village in Afrin's Sherawa district

ANF | 10 JULY 2023

According to reports from the ground, Turkish occupation forces launched an aggression in the Afrin region on Monday.

The artillery attack at 15:40 local time was directed against the village of Mezin in the Sherawa district.

Details about the attack were not immediately available.

### Afrin occupied since 2018

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.



## Head-on collision with armoured car in Van results in casualties

ANF | VAN | 11 JULY 2023

A civilian was killed in an accident in the northern Kurdish province of Van on Tuesday. The man was driving his car when he collided with an oncoming Turkish army armoured vehicle for reasons that are not yet clear. According to the authorities, the driver was driving on the road connecting Van and Hakkari when the collision occurred near the district of district Gürpınar. The man was so seriously injured that he died at the scene of the accident.

The civilian killed is reported to be a nephew of the mayor of Gürpınar, Hayrullah Tanış of the ruling AKP party. The military vehicle, an armoured personnel carrier, landed in a ditch after the collision. At least twelve Turkish soldiers are said to have been injured, one of them seriously, according to official reports.

The road connecting the accident site was completely closed. In addition to patrols from the surrounding area, the rescue service, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), a rescue helicopter, gendarmerie and fire brigade were also dispatched to the scene. The public prosecutor's office and the police have started an investigation into the exact circumstances of the accident.

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## HPG: Three soldiers were killed in guerrilla action dedicated to July 14 resistance

ANF | BEHDINAN | 11 JULY 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported three members of the Turkish occupation forces were killed and one other injured in a guerrilla action in the Metina region of the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG, the guerrilla action with heavy weapons was directed against a Turkish military position on Girê Koordine. HPG dedicated the action to the prison resistance of 14 July 1982, when the "first spark of resistance" of the PKK was ignited in the prison of Amed (tr. Diyarbakir) as a storm of repression and persecution blew through Turkey after the military coup in 1980, when the whole country was turned into one torture chamber.

HPG also provided details of a guerrilla sabotage action in the province of Van in Northern Kurdistan, which took place on 12 June during a Turkish military operation. The action, which was carried out in the outskirts of Gundê Kaşinê in the district of Çaldıran, was directed against an Amarak armoured vehicle. Two soldiers were killed and another injured.

The statement also gave further details of the war in the Medya Defence Zones. According to the HPG, Turkish occupation forces attacked the Girê FM resistance area, located on the western front of the Zap, three times on July 10 evening with unconventional bombs. In Metîna, the Girê Hekarî massif was bombed seven times by attack helicopters.

HPG recorded two airstrikes by the Turkish army in Gare yesterday. The first attack took place at 10.20 a.m. and hit an area in Girê Zengil village. Ten minutes later, a fighter jet targeted an area between the villages of Gundê Şêx and Gundê Çemrobotkî. According to the HPG statement, the bombing caused a wildfire that has not yet been extinguished.

Yesterday, the Turkish army launched 75 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons against Sîda, Girê Bahar, Girê Cûdî and Girê Amêdî in the west of the Zap. In addition, in various areas of the region, including the FM massif, occupation forces attempted to demolish the tunnels and defensive positions of the guerrillas with construction machinery.

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## SDF denies information about movements in Deir Ezzor

ANF | QAMISHLO | 12 JULY 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) published a statement denying news about movements of their forces in Deir Ezzor.

The statement said: "Recently, some media outlets have circulated misinformation about the movements of our forces in the Deir Ezzor area, and other media have published speculations about potential operations by our forces. We confirm that all information and speculations circulated are incorrect and not based on any factual basis."

The statement added: "Over the past few days, our forces have carried out non-emergency operations with the participation of the Internal Security Forces of NE Syria. The operations come within the framework of routine military operations to maintain the level of progress in the struggle against ISIS cells and to achieve a better level of security and stability for the people of the region and in line with the magnitude of the threats posed by terrorist cells as well.

Our forces and the Internal Security Forces will remain more active in the coming period as part of our efforts to ultimately eliminate ISIS cells and protect the population."

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## UN demands special investigation into Turkish army's attacks on Kurdish women

ANF | GENEVA | 13 JULY 2023

Gender-based violence in Turkey has been on the rise both in the domestic and public sphere, and four out of 10 women in the country have experienced intimate partner violence, according to a report by United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Reem Alsalem.

The report was released as part of the UN Human Rights Council's ongoing 53rd Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Alsalem said that official statements by Turkish authorities exacerbate gender-based violence, and called on the government to reinstate the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention, which Turkey left in 2021.

In the past six years, police records show a steady increase in domestic violence throughout Turkey. The number of cases per year rose to 268,817 in 2021, nearly doubling 2016's 162,110 figure.

Alsalem said insufficient and ineffective protection measures were a key issue, and that in many cases of murder committed by former or current intimate partners, victims had previously reported violence to the police, but sufficient and effective protection was not provided.

The report also addresses violence against women in politics, highlighting the low representation of women in parliament and the fact that there is only one woman in the Presidential Cabinet. It notes that one of the main obstacles to women's participation in political and public life is the risk of gender-based violence or harassment.

Highlighting that the government does not include women's organisations in decision-making processes concerning women's rights, Alsalem further stresses that female human rights defenders, including Kurdish women, face violations of their rights to freedom of expression, thought, association, and peaceful assembly.

Child marriages in the country are another issue highlighted in the report. It states that although the legal age of marriage under the Turkish Civil Code is 18, with parental or guardians' consent, it can be reduced to 17, and in exceptional cases, with court approval, to 16. While religious marriages are not recognised by Turkish authorities, they are met with tolerance.

A survey conducted in 2014 revealed that over 26 percent of women were married when they were minors. Twenty percent of child brides were forced into their marriages.

Refugee and migrant women are less likely to report crimes against their people due to fear of deportation, and less able to relocate or seek protection, Alsalem found.



## HSM: The resistance of 14 July shows us the way

ANF | BEHDINAN | 13 JULY 2023

14 July marks the 41st 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 14 July" and was a decisive action against the burial silence after the 1980 military coup in Turkey.

The Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces (HSM) released a statement commemorating the upcoming anniversary of the great death fast, which includes the following:

"On the anniversary of the Great Death Fast of 14 July, we remember all our martyrs with respect and gratitude in the persons of comrades Mehmet Hayri Durmuş, Kemal Pir, Akif Yılmaz and Ali Çiçek, the immortal pioneers of this historic resistance. We salute Rêber Apo [Leader Abdullah Öcalan] who developed the consciousness of these comrades that created this immensely significant act of resistance. This act has defined the spirit, the line and the understanding of our resistance for almost half a century. In this sense, we also salute the comrades who led this resistance and Rêber Apo, who has created such a great re-

sistance and defended the stance for free humanity for 24 years in the torture system of İmralı. We reaffirm our pledge to move resolutely towards victory by keeping this attitude and resistance, this consciousness, this spirit and this form of life and struggle alive always and everywhere.

### **"We congratulate all our comrades on the Day of National Dignity"**

The fascist Turkish state, through the PKK cadres in the Amed dungeon, attacked all Kurds and humanity with the most severe tortures and tried to break their values and identity. But it met with huge resistance. The resistance of the Great Death Fast of 14 July was developed with the consciousness of using one's life to defend dignity and identity against the inhuman conditions of repression, torture and tyranny in the dungeon of Amed. This resistance represents the historical revelation of the Apoist spirit of sacrifice and a corresponding form of struggle and makes it the guiding principle. It is an attitude that aims at victory and has displayed an indomitable spirit of resistance under impossible and inhuman conditions and brutal torture. This historic resistance of the leading cadres of our party is an honour for all their companions and the Kurdish people. Thus, 14 July has acquired the significance of a day of national dignity. On the occasion of National Dignity Day, we congratulate the patriotic Kurdish people and all our comrades who are fighting everywhere, especially in the prisons.

### **"The resistance of 14 July has shown us the way for 41 years"**

The resistance line of July 14 has contributed decisively to the return of the Kurdish freedom guerrilla to the homeland and to the great offensive of August 15 [1984]. It has shown us our way in the struggle for 41 years. The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla has made this struggle an indispensable part of its revolutionary life in the spirit of the Apoist spirit of sacrifice. It is resisting today as it did on 14 July. This consciousness and spirit of July 14 shapes the stance of the guerrilla in Northern Kurdistan and the epic resistance in the Medya Defence Zones, especially in Zap, Avaşın and Metîna. Hundreds of our comrades in Northern Kurdistan and the Medya Defence Zones have fallen fighting in this spirit and confronting the enemy with an indomitable will. They did not let go of their brave and determined stance until their last breath. Comrades Xebat Kop and Zana Rojda held off an entire army with their epic resistance in pairs, withstood all high technology, turned a position into a great resistance fortress and defied the enemy and death.

With their stance, the two are the latest representatives of the invincible heroic stance of the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla and the continuation of this line. It has been proven that as long as the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla fights in this understanding, consciousness, spirit and style, victory in the struggle for the existence and freedom of our people will be certain, no matter whether the murderous colonialist enemy attacks with the most inhuman war techniques, uses banned bombs and chemical weapons and mobilises its collaborators.

### **"We will follow in the footsteps of the martyrs of the great death fast"**

We renew our pledge that we will continue to walk in the footsteps of the martyrs of the Great Death Fast of 14 July and fight in their way. We will achieve the goals of our martyrs and realise their dreams. As the Freedom Guerrilla of Kurdistan, we underline our determination to crown the flag of resistance handed over to us by the martyrs with the victory of the Kurdistan Freedom Revolution. We salute all those who are resisting in the belief of victory and all our patriotic people."





## Soldier claimed to have died in accident: 'Our commanders responsible if something happens to us'

ANF | 13 JULY 2023

RojNews agency published footage of a Turkish soldier recorded before his death, which the Turkish state claimed was caused by an accident on July 11.

In the video, the Turkish soldier from Sivas province states that his military unit was forcibly taken to the battle field, saying: "We have been here for 3 days and it is our 4th day today. We are left without water and everything else. If something happens to me or my comrades in arms, the commanders of our battalion and squadron will be responsible. Should something happen to me, I want this video to be conveyed to the Turkish Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defense."

The Turkish army, which systematically commits war crimes, has been exposed to have engaged in savage atrocities in its war in Kurdistan territory, including setting the bodies of its own soldiers on fire. Reports of suspicious deaths and executions are not rare in the ranks of the Turkish army, which heavily resorts to the use of chemical weapons, banned materials and inhumane methods in its genocidal campaign against the Kurdish guerrilla forces.

You can watch the footage from here : <https://anfenglishmobile.com/kurdistan/soldier-claimed-to-have-died-in-accident-our-commanders-responsible-if-something-happens-to-us-68284>



## 13 July 1930 - Zilan Valley massacre

ANF | 13 JULY 2023

The Islamic and Turkish state doctrine laid down in the constitution of the Turkish Republic of 1924 was not accepted by the Kurds without resistance. The uprising that broke out on February 13, 1925 in Amed (Diyarbakir) under the leadership of the Kurdish Sunni clergyman Şêx Seîdê Pîran (Sheikh Said) started numerous Kurdish rebellions after the end of World War I, which followed the process of the Turkish nation-state formation after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and were directed against the denial of the Kurdish existence, the entry of political autonomy and the fascist policy of Turkification.

On 29 June 1925, Şêx Seîd and his companions were executed, but the Ararat uprisings began the following May. At that time, however, the Turkish government had already established its systematic approach to the Kurdish resistance with its "Reform Plan for the East" (Şark Islahat Planı). Under the cloak of a state of emergency, this plan provided for assimilation measures, including deportations, resettlements and mass

murders. With this plan, the Kurdish question was subordinated to the military, which is still noticeable in the near present. What we call the Kurdish question today was created during those years.

### **Three uprisings on Ararat**

The first Ararat uprising failed in 1926 due to its regional limitation and lack of preparation. The second one lasted from 1927 to 1930. In contrast to the first rebellion in the Ararat region, this uprising was the first time that the idea of the unity of all Kurdish groups with the aim of an independent state came up, but it cost many victims and ended with the flight or execution of its leadership.

The third and last Ararat uprising took place in 1930. In the meantime, the Kurdish independence movement Xoybûn, founded in 1927 in Lebanon by intellectuals and feudal lords, had declared its intention to support the uprising. To this end, it sent the former Ottoman officer Ihsan Nuri Pasha, who became the general of the uprising. The partisans led by him conquered an area north of Van on the border with Iran and Bitlis. But in the summer of 1930, 80 Turkish fighter jets and two army corps crushed the independence movement in the Zilan valley in Erciş.

### **Up to 55,000 dead**

93 years later, it is still unclear how many victims the crushing of the last Ararat uprising on 13 July 1930 claimed. According to Cumhuriyet, the most widely read Turkish daily newspaper in the 1930s to 1940s, about 15,000 people died. According to survivors and participants of the uprising, up to 55,000 people were killed in a cruel way: Villagers were tied together and shot with machine-gun fire, people beaten to death and scalped, and pregnant women with their bellies ripped open. However, most of the victims were riddled with machine guns from the Soviet Union. The USSR was then the main supplier of weapons to the Turkish Republic led by the founder of the state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. For the Turkish newspapers, especially Cumhuriyet, the Kurds were "like the savages of Africa", "cannibals", "bandits" and a "plague on the Turkish race"; the newspapers celebrated the massacre of the Kurds. A few years later, this massacre was to be surpassed: in 1937 and 1938 in Dersim.

### **Villages burned to the ground after "cleanup"**

After the "purge" in the Zilan valley, as the Turkish Republic called the massacre, the property of those killed was handed over to Kurds loyal to the government. Subsequently, at least 60 villages were burned to the ground. According to the Berliner Tageblatt, the Turks even destroyed 220 villages in the Zilan area. The entire area around the valley was confiscated by the state, and years later Kyrgyz and Afghans were settled in some villages that had not fallen victim to the destructive frenzy of Atatürk's soldiers.

### **Traces of the massacre disappear under dams**

In 1992, after almost 14 years of construction, the Koçköprü dam was opened in Erciş. With the flooding of some villages in the Zilan valley, countless mass graves were flooded. Now, in the shadow of the Coronavirus pandemic, the construction of four hydroelectric power plants has resumed in the valley - despite a court order to stop construction. This would mean that all mass graves with the remains of thousands of people killed in the Zilan massacre in 1930 would disappear into reservoirs. The genocides of the past are

to be covered up by new crimes and people and environment in Kurdistan are to be destroyed. The country governed by Erdoğan remains true to its role as a conflict generator once again.

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## PYD denounces Turkish efforts to get NATO onside in its war against the Kurds

ANF | 14 JULY 2023

The Democratic Union Party (PYD) released a statement about the dialogue between Turkey and Sweden in the ongoing talks about Sweden's admission to NATO, in which the PYD is also mentioned.

“The name of our party was mentioned in the context of the talks between Turkey and Sweden as a result of the bargaining that has taken place between the two countries regarding Sweden's admission to NATO and the blackmail by the Turkish state on countries and powers that understand the suffering of the Kurdish people,” said the PYD statement on Friday.

The statement pointed out that the Turkish state is not satisfied with the neutrality of these parties and tries to win all powers, especially NATO, to its side in the war it is waging against the Kurdish presence all over the world.

The PYD stressed that they have nothing but respect and appreciation for the Swedish people and their institutions, which play a prominent role in establishing world peace, and its mediation efforts to resolve the Syrian issue.

“Our party has not practiced any action that harms the interests of Sweden and its people. Rather, we denounce the pressure and the blackmail it is subjected to in order to influence its humanitarian stance in support of democracy in the world,” the PYD stated.

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## HPG reports hundreds of Turkish attacks on guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 14 JULY 2023

The Press Office of People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported ongoing Turkish attacks on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the daily statement by HPG Press Office, the Turkish army carried out hundreds of air and ground attacks using various types of weapons from 11 to 13 July.

The focus of Turkish aggression remains predominantly in the region of Zap, where occupation forces carried out two attacks with tactical bombs, targeting the Sîda area and the Girê FM massif on the western wing of the Zap front. According to the HPG, the explosions could be heard from several kilometres away. In both areas, the Turkish forces also attacked the guerrillas' tunnel installations and tried to demolish them with heavy construction machinery. On the other hand, a long-range rocket hit the Girê Bahar resistance area.

The Turkish army carried out eleven aerial attacks on guerrilla areas during the mentioned period. According to the HPG, the targets of the fighter jets included the western front Şehîd Delîl in Zap, Girê Zengil in Gare as well as Golka and Girê Hekarî in Metîna. In the same period, the Turkish army attacked the Medya Defence Zones at least 462 times with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. Sîda, Şehîd Delîl and Girê Hekarî as well as the areas of Girê Şehîd Heqî and Girê Şehîd in Xakurke were targeted by the shelling.

Despite massive bombardments of their areas, the guerrillas are resolutely resisting the invasion of their areas. In Xakurke, an operational unit of the Turkish army came under fire with heavy weapons on 11 July. The unit was moving in the area around Girê Şehîd Qehreman when they were targeted by the guerrillas. Today, Friday, fighters from mobile units of the Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) struck the Turkish forces at nearby Girê Şehîd Axîn with heavy weapons.



## Femincide

### Saturday Mothers attacked and detained again in the 954th week of action

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 JULY 2023

Saturday Mothers have continued their action in Istanbul for their relatives who disappeared in state custody and the punishment of the perpetrators for the 954th week. Despite a contrary ruling by the Turkish Constitutional Court, the initiative was again denied access to their ancestral rally site in front of the Galatasaray High School on Istiklal Avenue.

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

Denied access to the square, the Saturday Mothers and human rights defenders accompanied by MPs Sezgin Tanrikulu and Ahmet Şık were blockaded by the police, handcuffed and taken into custody, while journalists were violently prevented from documenting the crackdown and battered.

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



## Female journalist jailed for interviewing Mahsa Amini's father

ANF | 8 JULY 2023

Journalist Nazila Maroofian, who was detained after conducting an interview with Mahsa Amini's father and fired from her position amid intensified pressure on media workers in Iran, has been remanded in custody.

Maroofian was among a number of Iranian journalists arrested while covering Mahsa Amini's death in September 2022. A court case was later initiated against her.

On Tuesday, July 4, 2023, Nazila Maroofian, who is originally from Saqqez but resides in Tehran, published a [Twitter post](#) in which she said, "Officials from the Ministry of Intelligence have searched my house and confiscated some of my digital devices, including my mobile phone and laptop."

Summoned to the notorious Evin Prison, Maroofian was remanded in custody and sentenced to 2 years in prison and 15 million Iranian Toman for "producing propaganda against the state" and "publishing lies with the intention of disrupting the public mind."

Nazila Maroofian, a student at Tehran's Allameh Tabatabai University and a reporter for Rouydad 24, was arrested on October 30, 2022, by order of the Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office based in Evin Prison in Tehran. She was arrested for publishing her interviews with the father of Mahsa Amini on the Event 24 website in October and November 2022. She was confined in Ward 209 of Evin. She was eventually transferred to Qarchak Prison and released on bail of 6 billion Iranian rials after a while.

Before being arrested, Nazila Maroofian wrote in a Twitter post, "They won't let me publish my interview a few days ago with Mahsa Amini's father. First, they called my father in the city... then they called me to

say that there was a warrant for my arrest. If you publish it, you will be sent to Evin on such and such charges!" Nazila Maroofian also worked as a reporter in Dideban-e Iran.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a media freedom NGO, Iranian authorities have arrested at least 95 journalists since September 2022, when the death in morality police custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini sparked nationwide protests.



## New feminicide in Batman

ANF | **BATMAN** | 9 JULY 2023

Aysel E. was killed in Batman (Êlih) by her husband, Murat E.

Medical teams and police were sent to the scene after the neighbours phoned them. The woman was taken to Batman Training and Research Hospital, but could not be saved. Murat E. was detained.

## Men killed 22 women in June

The We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) published the figures related to male violence for the month of June. According to the report, men killed 22 women, while 27 died under suspicious circumstances.

According to the report, most of the women were killed because they wanted a divorce, refused to reconcile, refused to marry or have a relationship, wanted to make a decision about their own life. The reason why 13 women were murdered could not be established.



## KJK launches campaign against attacks on Shengal and Afghan women

ANF | 9 JULY 2023

In a written statement, the Kurdistan Women's Communities (KJK) Coordination announced that they would run a campaign from 3 to 15 August on the occasion of the anniversary of the Shengal Massacre on 3 August and the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan on 15 August. The KJK said that they organized the campaign around the slogan "We Stand with Afghan and Shengal women against hegemon men's attacks".

## Genocide in Shengal

The KJK said: "Nine years have passed since the Shengal genocide, which took place on 3 August 2014. The whole world watched and did not intervene. The military forces of the KDP abandoned the people of Shengal and fled. First of all, we pay tribute to the women, men and children of our Yazidi people who were killed in this genocide. We strongly condemn the attacks of these brutal forces against women and life. We salute the resistance and struggle of our Yazidi people to protect their existence and identity. We declare that we will always and under all circumstances stand by our Yazidi people and women, as we did at the time of the genocide."

## ISIS and Taliban, the same mentality

The statement added: "Women are in the grip of a similar attack and massacre in Afghanistan. The negotiations between the US and the Taliban signed an agreement in Doha on 29 February 2020 for the withdrawal announced years ago. As a result of this agreement, as of 29 April 2021, the US and NATO forces began to withdraw from Afghanistan. From the end of July, the Taliban gradually regained control of the country, and with the capture of the capital, Kabul, in August 2021, they imposed their social and misogynistic rule once. The understanding-idea, power and practices of ISIS and the Taliban are the same.

The Taliban government, shaped by anti-women and hostility, continues the most reactionary and inhumane practices in history with the consent, support and contribution of international powers. Something similar to what happened in Shengal happened in Afghanistan. The whole world watched the human tragedy and massacre that took place after the Taliban seized power. The reality of West-centered global hegemony, which tries to hide misogyny, was best revealed when Shengal was handed over to ISIS and Afghanistan to the Taliban. Both genocides, massacres and femicides are a global conspiracy developed against women all over the world, especially in the Middle East. We salute the noble resistance of our Afghan sisters who did not give up their stance despite all kinds of oppressive, prohibitive and inhumane practices of the reactionary Taliban regime."

## Campaign from 3 to 15 August

The KJK said that they would launch "a campaign organized around the slogan 'We are with Afghan and Shengal women against hegemon men's attacks' from 3 and 15 August, on the occasion of the anniversary of the 3 August Shengal Massacre and the 15 August Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan. As women, we must aim to develop an organized struggle in every area and moment of life in order to put an end to the massacres of women, nature and life, which are the work of the hegemon men nourished by capitalist modernity."

## Objectives of the campaign

With this campaign, The KJK "wants to focus on the women's murder policies of the men's mentality and make it visible. With this initiative, we want to be a voice for all women in the person of Shengal and Afghan women and shout out the crimes committed in the world. We demand that the massacre of women be officially recognized as a crime against humanity at international level. We call on all women's forces, organizations and personalities to raise the common struggle in order to make the world more live-

able for women and to end women's massacres. Knowing that the just and legitimate struggle of the women of Shengal and Afghanistan is our own struggle, we call on all women's organizations to be a partner and support this resistance, which is carried out under difficult conditions. We believe in the absolute victory of organized united women's action and resistance against the hegemon's male system and its practices, which are organized in every field against women's struggle and resistance.

We call on all women's forces fighting on this basis to join the campaign. We, as women, state that the most correct answer to this brutality is the solidarity and organization of women, and we call on women all over the world to claim accountability for the feminicides in Shengal and Afghanistan."

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## TJK-E Congress calls for enhanced organisation for women's revolution

ANF | 9 JULY 2023

The Kurdish Women's Movement in Europe (TJK-E) held its 7th congress where the current political situation and further work were discussed. The women's associations organised in the TJK-E were represented by about one hundred delegates from seven countries. The congress took place from 30 June to 3 July under the motto "With 'Jin Jiyan Azadi' (Woman, Life, Freedom) to the women's revolution" and was dedicated to the Kurdish revolutionary Evîn Goyî, who was murdered in Paris on 23 December 2022.

### Öcalan and the Kurdish movement are the focus of massive attacks

A final declaration of the 7th Congress of the TJK-E published highlights central issues of the Kurdish women's movement. It was highlighted at the congress that Kurdish women would not accept the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan, which was defined as an indicator of the genocidal policy against the Kurdish people.

It was stressed that Öcalan and the Kurdish movement were the focus of massive attacks because they presented an alternative to capitalist modernity with their resistance and, as free Kurds and free women, offered an answer to the question "How to live? This paradigm gives hope for revolutionary change and freedom to the whole world, stressed the final declaration of the congress, where a decision was made to keep the struggle for the freedom of Öcalan as a priority issue. Calling for the struggle to become more radical as a whole, the congress made a concrete plan to carry Abdullah Öcalan's philosophy of freedom to the whole society, to create awareness and to organise women, the final statement said.

### Resistance against AKP/MHP fascism

Another main topic was the resistance against the AKP/MHP regime in Turkey, said the final declaration: "In the past year, the fascist AKP/MHP system has systematically continued its attacks against Kurdish women and the Kurdish people, trampling all kinds of law and human rights. The most comprehensive attacks on the Medya Defence Zones have been carried out so far. The AKP/MHP regime uses all kinds of



banned and chemical weapons and carries out these attacks with the aim of genocide. In order to prevent the aims of these occupiers and genocides and to secure the freedom of our people, the Freedom Guerrilla has put up the most glorious resistance in history. It has fought sacrificially and thwarted the aims of AKP/MHP fascism. Our Congress has made it its duty to follow in the footsteps of all the heroes who gave their lives in this resistance. This resistance has brought down the AKP/MHP fascist regime, shaped the political development, kept alive the aspirations of women and peoples for freedom and democracy, raised hopes and laid all conceivable foundations for the further development of the struggle."

The attacks of the AKP/MHP regime against women also continued during the year, the TJK-E declaration said: "Especially with targeted attacks on pioneers of the women's movement, attempts were made to stop the emerging women's struggle, to break the will of women and to smash organised structures. However, the determined attitude of the women did not allow this."

### **Women's Revolution**

After half a century of struggle as the Kurdish women's movement, social change is only possible with the claim of a women's revolution, the TJK-E stated, pointing to fundamental principles that should not be neglected in the process: love of country, self-empowerment based on one's own strength, organisedness, perseverance in struggle, ethics and aesthetics. "The campaign for a women's revolution should therefore begin at the grassroots level of society and be carried out in all areas in which the women's movement is organised, with the connections that have been built up worldwide, with all available means, persistently, resolutely and effectively."

At the congress, there was intensive discussion about the extent to which the women's movement has lived up to its claim and how it has worked out in practice. There were criticisms and suggestions regarding the methodology and the existing mental and practical problems resulting from the subtle and direct attacks of the patriarchal system on women.

"The institutions of the powers in capitalist modernity have become instruments of war. They are carrying out very comprehensive and multidimensional attacks on movements and social groups that they perceive as a threat to their own interests. The struggles of peoples and women in different places of this world have weakened the civilisation based on state and class society as never before. The struggles fought and the price paid for them are bringing women and peoples closer to freedom in the 21st century. Women's resistance is becoming more visible around the world. Most recently, the women-led 'Jin Jiyan Azadi' uprising in Rojhilat [Eastern Kurdistan] and Iran has shown that women are the driving force for change," TJK-E said.

### **Focus on education**

The Kurdish women's movement in Europe places a focus on education work for the coming period: "The women's revolution requires a radical mental change. Without mental enlightenment, the revolution cannot be successful. For us, educational work also means defining ourselves and deciding how we want to live. Only then can we find ways and methods to overcome power-obsessed, sexist and hierarchical mental and cultural structures. Our fundamental goal is a radical struggle against patriarchal thinking."

## Belgium adopts law against femicide

ANF | 9 JULY 2023

The Belgian Chamber of Representatives adopted a law for the prevention of femicide which aims to curtail violence against women in the country.

"This is a historic turning point in the fight against gender violence in Belgium", according to a press release from the Secretary of State for Gender Equality Marie-Colline Leroy.

The law defines different categories of femicide, including intimate femicide (perpetrated by a partner), non-intimate femicide (for example, the killing of a sex worker by a client), indirect femicide (such as death after an abortion or forced female genital mutilation) and gender-based homicide (for example, the death of a transgender person in the context of domestic violence).

The law enshrines a legal definition of femicide, which is understood as the intentional killing of women because of their gender. It also establishes enhanced protection for victims of gender-based violence, reported Belga News Agency.

The text would also ensure the collection of statistics on the phenomenon of femicide and provide training for police officers and magistrates to deal with cases of violence against women.

Many feminist associations gathered at the Belgian Parliament to celebrate the adoption of the law, which was drafted with the support of grassroots associations in the field.

"It's important to fight, but it's also important to celebrate the victories," said co-author of the law and Liège deputy, Sarah Schlitz of the occasion.

Stop Femicide estimates that roughly two femicides take place each month in Belgium.



## Woman tortured and killed by her husband in Mardin

ANF | MARDIN | 12 JULY 2023

Hindirin Aydoğan (45), living in Yeni TOKI neighbourhood in Kızıltepe (Qoser) district of Mardin (Mêrdîn), was killed by her husband Zeki Aydoğan.

According to the first information available, Zeki Aydoğan first tortured his wife, Hindirin Aydoğan, at home because he wanted to go to his family living in Qamishlo, and then killed her with a firearm and then fled the scene.

The medical teams arrived at the scene and found Aydoğan heavily injured. They rushed her to Mardin Training and Research Hospital, but the woman could not be saved despite all intervention.

Hindirin Aydoğan was buried by her relatives in Kamor City Cemetery in Artuklu district.

It was learned that Zeki Aydoğan, who fled after the incident, is still on the run.



## Asya Abdullah: Women should strengthen their defence system

ANF | HESEKE | 13 JULY 2023

Kongra Star, the Women's Council of the PYD (Democratic Union Party) and the Women's Council of Future Syria Party are holding a workshop in the northern Syrian city of Heseke to discuss the Treaty of Lausanne and the destruction it has caused on its hundredth anniversary.

The workshop at the meeting hall of the Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) is attended by around 60 women politicians and representatives of women's institutions, including MSD Executive Council President İlham Ehmed, YPJ (Women's Defense Units) Spokesperson Roksan Mihemed, AANES (Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria) Executive Council Co-President Bêrivan Xalid and PYD Co-Chair Asya Abdullah. Women academics, researchers and activists from Lebanon, Iraq, South Africa, Jordan and Egypt are attending the workshop online.

During the ongoing workshop, which is held under the motto "With the strength and solidarity of women, we will defeat the policy of division and the genocide of Lausanne against the peoples", PYD Co-Chair Asya Abdullah spoke about the genocides in Mesopotamia and their effects on women.

Highlighting the importance of women strengthening their defence system, Abdullah said: "Women can confront the treaties concluded against the peoples of the Middle East by enhancing their struggle. Kurdistan has witnessed many struggles, but after the seventies, women strengthened their defense system against attacks, and the resistance reached its peak."

"Through the struggle of women, we were able to gather with each other and become leaders, whether on the battle fronts or in society, under the slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî (Woman, Life, Freedom)," she noted.

"We, the women's organisations, can build our system. Knowing how to protect ourselves is very important at this stage we are going through. If women are unable to protect themselves, they will end up massacred."

Abdullah remarked that the development of the July 19 Revolution in Rojava and North-East Syria, which was called the women's revolution, came as a result of the efforts of women who fought ISIS. "So, strengthening the defence system is very important for a bright future," she added.

Pointing to the Turkish state's attacks against North-East Syria, Abdullah said that the Turkish occupation required everyone to confront the attacks.

The PYD Co-Chair concluded: "We need to strengthen our defence system in all areas of life in order to organise society and frustrate all agreements and treaties. We write our treaty with our own hands, an example of which is the Charter of Autonomous Administration, which we drafted ourselves, writing our history with our own hands."



## Women's workshop on the Treaty of Lausanne: Democratic confederalism is the only solution

ANF | HESEKE | 14 JULY 2023

Kongra Star, the Women's Council of the PYD (Democratic Union Party) and the Women's Council of Future Syria Party held a workshop in the northern Syrian city of Heseke on Thursday to discuss the Treaty of Lausanne and the destruction it has caused on its hundredth anniversary.

The workshop at the meeting hall of the Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) was attended by around 60 women politicians and representatives of women's institutions, including MSD Executive Council President Ilham Ehmed, YPJ (Women's Defense Units) Spokesperson Roksan Mihemed, AANES (Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria) Executive Council Co-President Bêrivan Xalid and PYD Co-Chair Asya Ebdullah. Women academics, researchers and activists from Lebanon, Iraq, South Africa, Jordan and Egypt attended the workshop online.

The women's workshop under the title "With the strength and unity of women, we will overcome the division and genocide policies of Lausanne" ended with a final declaration.

### "Nation state fuels racism"

Samira al-Aziz from the General Council of the Future Party of Syria delivered a statement underlining the multicultural nature of the population mosaic in the Middle East. Historically, she said, there has been a friendship and good neighbourliness between the different identities that is still alive today. However, with the nation state, racism has also grown, she added.

Regarding the importance of the Treaty of Lausanne, al-Aziz stated: "It was through the intervention of forces from outside that did not know the region, especially from Europe, that the borders of today's nation states were drawn. These borders do not correspond to the geographical or demographic reality in the region. When this system of nation states was created, on which today's borders are based, the will and perspective of the people who live there were disregarded. The Sykes-Picot, Sèvres and finally the Treaty of Lausanne a hundred years ago established these borders and fuelled racism. Because of the underlying concept of one nation, one language, one culture and one flag, there were numerous massacres and genocides in Mesopotamia, most of which were committed by the Ottoman Empire and later by the Turkish state.

People were divided not only by arbitrary borders, but also by racist and divisive policies. Kurds, Yazidis, Armenians, Assyrians and other oppressed peoples were victims of these policies. In this way, the international powers played people off against each other for their own interests."

### **"Women are at the forefront of the struggle against partition and genocide"**

Al-Aziz continued: "The current situation in the Middle East is an expression of this policy. The nation-state system is being imposed on the people by force, although it does not suit them at all. This leads to conflict and war. Most of all, the women, children and poor in Lebanon, Syria, Armenia, Sudan, Iraq, Turkey and other countries become victims of these wars and conflicts. The international powers have tried to determine the fate of the people in the region with their agreements, but the people on the ground have not accepted this. There have always been uprisings and resistance against the oppression and tyranny that this situation brings. Women have taken their place at the forefront of the struggle against partition and genocide."

### **"Democratic confederalism is the only solution"**

The women's revolution in Rojava and northern and eastern Syria represents an alternative to the politics of separation and genocide, said al-Aziz, pointing in particular to the role of the various women's movements, which show how women with different identities are self-organised and at the same time work together for the freedom of society. She added: "The idea of democratic nation and democratic confederalism is the only solution for the whole region with its wealth, culture, religion and diverse structures to live side by side in peace and freedom."

### **"The fight against racism and fundamentalism is our duty"**

Al-Aziz further stated, "It is our task as women within the framework of the democratic nation to restore friendly relations and good neighbourliness with the people of the region who have been damaged by the nation-state system imposed by international powers. As women, we must take up the struggle against capitalist modernity and the ideological pillars of the nation-state, racism and fundamentalism, and work to establish a democratic system for the people."

The final declaration delivered by al-Aziz identified nine basic recommendations, which are as follows:

1. The role of women in the leadership of society must be strengthened to stop the attack on identity based on the spread of a culture of hatred and genocide. Women face forced assimilation, annihilation and alienation as they alone are the defenders of historical, cultural and social identity.
2. In order to deal with the consequences of the Treaty of Lausanne and to prevent the Treaty of Lausanne from being reopened in a new way and disrespecting the people of the region again, the people of the region, especially Kurds and Arabs, must form a unity.
3. It is not possible to overcome the identity crisis, genocide and alienation without developing unifying intellectual projects. The experiences in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, based on the philosophy of a democratic nation and the brotherhood of peoples and the freedom of women, are remarkable and should be expanded.

4. Women must take their place in the centres of decision-making power.
5. A women's movement must be created at the level of the Middle East and a women's confederation must be built.
6. In order for the slogan "Jin, Jiyan, Azadî" [Woman, Life, Freedom] to spread throughout the world, women's achievements must be protected and passed on.
- 7) In order to stand against the policies against the region, women must strengthen their defence mechanism on the internal front at all levels.
8. The history of massacre policies against the people here must be exposed. The culture must be protected.
9. In order to make a women's coalition possible, Kurdish unity must be created. In this sense, a national congress of Kurdish women should be built.

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## Ecocide

### Rent-seeking projects destroy the nature of Van city

ANF | VAN | 9 JULY 2023

The basin of Lake Van is home to very diverse animal and plant species. There are hundreds of large and small streams and creeks in the basin. The swamps and reeds around these streams constitute a very rich habitat with breeding and feeding sites for species, but in recent years, they have been facing destruction due to corrupt policies.

The power plants and dams established along many streams and creeks in Van's Erciş, Muradiye, Gevaş and Gürpınar districts are destroying the natural habitat of various species. Moreover, the migratory routes of species are blocked due to stream improvements.

In the last few years, the AKP has built more than 40 power plants and dams around Lake Van to make profits for its supporters in the region. The AKP government, which destroyed a large part of the region for the sake of profit, continues to destroy the rest of the natural habitat gradually. Most of the streams originating in the mountains of Van's Erciş, Çaldıran, Muradiye and Gevaş districts and flowing into Lake Van have dried up thanks to the power plants and dams built along these streams. Thousands of animal and plant species in stream beds have thus become extinct.

Zilan and Deliçay in Erciş, and Bendimahi in Muradiye, are among the numerous streams flowing into Lake Van, the largest soda lake in the world.

The Bendimahi Brook, the biggest stream flowing into Lake Van, is among the prominent migration routes of breeding for the Pearl Mullet, an endemic fish living in the lake.

The brook, the depth of which reaches up to two meters during the summer months, got to the point of drying up because of the dams, ponds and hydroelectric power plants built over it as part of rent-seeking projects. The drying up of the brook has caused the death of thousands of pearl mullets, small fries, and fish roes.

The Muradiye Waterfall, known for its spectacular natural beauty, is also losing its glory because of hydroelectric power plants. The water level of the waterfall on Bendimahi Brook, 8 km from the Muradiye district, has witnessed a significant decrease because of the HPPs built around it in recent years. The decrease in the water level had a negative impact on tourism, which is the main source of income for the local people.

The State Hydraulic Works (DSİ) is supposed to provide the required amount of water for the survival of the animal species in the region but fails to do so since the ruling AKP government sells the water from HPPs and dams.



## Turkish state forces uproot hundreds of trees during curfew in Bitlis countryside

ANF | BITLIS | 10 JULY 2023

In the Bitlis province of northern Kurdistan, the residents of several villages were terrorised by the Turkish army. On the grounds that PKK guerrilla fighters had been seen in the region, a curfew was imposed in ten villages in the district of Hizan on July 2.

In the course of a subsequently launched military operation, fighting took place and houses were stormed in the affected villages. The rural areas of the villages under curfew were shelled by the Turkish army throughout the night. Following the bombardment all night long, ground attacks were launched in the morning. In Xûlepûr village, three people were detained and taken to the gendarmerie (military police) district headquarters.

During the 5-day curfew declared in the region, the Turkish state forces uprooted hundreds of trees and heavily damaged the fields of the local people.

Mehmet Saki Altun, a resident of the Xûlepûr village, stated that hundreds of fruit trees he owned were uprooted by construction equipment.

According to Altun, dozens of heavy construction equipment were deployed to the region during the course of the curfew. "After the curfew started, the house of my uncle was raided. They entered our fields with scoops and destroyed hundreds of hazelnut, walnut and apple trees. They razed 30 decares of land to the ground in a few seconds. A delegation must come to the village and conduct an examination. This insult and atrocity must be exposed. These trees are our source of income. Their only goal is to harm us and nature."



## HPG Regional Command in Mardin warns those involved in ecocide in Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 12 JULY 2023

The regional command of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) in the northern Kurdish province of Mardin issued a public warning regarding environmental destruction and assistance to the Turkish army. In various areas of the region, especially in the Omerya area, forests are being cut down on the orders of the military, said the HPG, calling on those responsible not to allow themselves to be instrumentalised for the exploitation of the environment.

"Our forces have established that these tree-cutters are in contact with the enemy's intelligence service, are controlled by it and at the same time carry out agent activity. The people of the region reject any action that serves the enemy and the plundering of Kurdistan's nature. We warn those who carry out these activities and thus, consciously or unconsciously, play into the hands of the enemy. It is a crime both to carry out espionage activities and to plunder the nature of Kurdistan. No one should commit such crimes and act for the enemy."

The Omerya region is located in the district of Nusaybin and is a strategic target of the Turkish army in the war against the Kurdish guerrillas. The area is home to the Bagok massif, which is part of a small mountain range about 1,250 metres high that begins between Nusaybin and Midyat and extends to İdil in neighbouring Şırnak province. The region is of strategic importance because it is close to the border that divides Kurdistan into Syrian, Iraqi and Turkish occupied areas. Large-scale military operations have been taking place in Omerya for months, accompanied by massive environmental destruction.



## Human Rights Violations



## Workshop on the Treaty of Lausanne ends with final declaration

ANF | HESEKE | 8 JULY 2023

The workshop "Lausanne: Course Correction, Stability and Regional Security" organized by the Rojava Center for Strategic Studies (NRLS) ended. 200 people from the cities of Kurdistan, Northern and Eastern Syria, Russia, Arab countries and international figures, political parties, academics, women's movements, social institutions and intellectuals participated in the workshop held in Heseke. Journalist Amara Bawer read the final declaration of the two-day workshop in Kurdish, while NRLS member Rakan Şêxê read it in Arabic.

### 'Lausanne legitimized genocide'

The final declaration of the workshop said: "Participants confirmed that the Treaty of Lausanne, called the peace agreement, did not bring peace and stability to the Kurdish people and the people of the region, but legitimized the genocide of peoples and cultures. It declared war on these peoples by establishing nation states."

The statement continued: "This treaty paved the way for the conclusion of many security agreements between the states of the region with steps such as national development, demographic change, political terror and changing historical facts, and denying the existence of the Kurdish people. The political, economic and security problems in the region are the result of the politicians who accepted this treaty.

### Demands and suggestions

The following suggestions and demands were listed in the final declaration:

\*We confirm that the Treaty of Lausanne has not been able to achieve regional peace and stability even after a century has passed. The states responsible for this treaty must correct and resolve the problems arising from this treaty. They should stop supporting the states that use this treaty for their own interests and end the persecution of the Kurdish people.

\* According to human rights treaties and the United Nations, states that are influential in international politics must accept the Kurdish cause and recognize the Kurdish people's right to political, cultural, economic, social and security self-determination. This right should be recognized within the framework of a national agreement and this agreement should be implemented together with the states dividing the Kurdistan territory.

\* In order to protect the Kurdish people from genocide, Kurdish forces must strengthen and coordinate their political, economic and military capabilities. On this basis, Kurdish forces should sign a national agreement regardless of their differences. All parties must abide by this agreement.

\* The Kurdish people are very sincere in this region, they do not pose a threat to the neighbouring peoples, so the states that divide the Kurdistan territories should reconsider their policies towards the Kurds and their right to life and accept the rights of the Kurds.

\* As an idea and philosophy, the democratic nation presents itself as a possible solution to the problems and in favour of regional peace, the protection of ancient cultures in the region from extremism and the liberation of the people from indifference. This project is taking place in Northern and Eastern Syria under the roof of the Autonomous Administration.

\* Protection, support and international recognition should be provided to the Autonomous Administration, which derives its legitimacy from its service, political and military institutions.

\* The continuation of the attacks against the Kurdish people in all four parts of Kurdistan is the continuation of the Lausanne Agreement, which legitimizes the killing and displacement of the Kurdish people by nationalist states.

\* The participants stated that public enemies do not comply with any international rules and agreements. The participants therefore ask the international powers to define a mechanism and accordingly compel criminal states to comply with laws and treaties.

\* We affirm that the only way to overcome the consequences of the Treaty of Lausanne and to prevent new oppressive agreements in the region is to rely on the power of the people. For this reason, the participants of the working group call on the international community, together with all its relevant organs, to fulfil their responsibilities against the policies of neglect, denial and genocide. We also call on the legal committees and interested parties in Northern and Eastern Syria to follow the recommendations of the working group to relevant international parties.

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## PUK member criticizes the KDP's prevention of guests to international workshop in Heseke

ANF | SULAYMANIYA | 8 JULY 2023

An international workshop on the effects of the Treaty of Lausanne took place in the northern Syrian city of Heseke on 6-7 July. The workshop organized by the Rojava Centre for Strategic Studies (NRLS) was attended by over 150 activists, lawyers, politicians and researchers from Europe and the Middle East, as well as representatives from North-East Syria. The government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), dominated by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), refused to allow the guests to cross the border to attend the workshop.

Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmed, politburo member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), criticised the government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) for closing the border crossing into the Autonomous Re-

gion of Northern and Eastern Syria. The PUK politician said that many people from southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) were prevented from attending the workshop as a result. "The government has a historical and ethical responsibility for Kurdistan. Instead of preventing people from travelling to the event marking the centenary of the Treaty of Lausanne, the government itself should have organised numerous seminars and conferences on the topic in Hewlêr [Erbil]," Ahmed said and criticized the Kurdistan regional government for not acting with responsibility for the Kurds and Kurdistan.

"Considering the pain suffered by the Kurdish people, the government of the Kurdistan Region bears the greatest responsibility," said Shanaz Ibrahim Ahmed and continued: "It is a disgrace that the government does not even allow a truck with baby milk to cross the border. It does nothing for national unity and denies support to its own brothers and sisters. Instead of building relations with those who fight for the Kurdish cause, the government wants to create an atmosphere that makes these people dependent on itself."

The Semalka (Faysh Khabur, Kr: Pêşxabûr) crossing point on the Iraqi-Syrian border was closed to passenger and commercial traffic by the KRI in May. The inner-Kurdish border crossing point connects southern Kurdistan with Rojava and the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria. In June, the border was reopened on a daily basis for a limited group of people, such as humanitarian aid organisations and diplomats. The last prolonged closure was for about six weeks in the winter of 2021/2022. Before that, the KDP had closed the gate between South and West Kurdistan several times on Turkish orders. With such blockades, the Turkish state tries to isolate Rojava and destabilise the self-governed areas. The KDP, dominated by the Barzani clan, has vassal status in Ankara.



## More colonial settlements built in Turkish-occupied Afrin

ANF | 8 JULY 2023

The Hawar News Agency (ANHA) reported that the Turkish state, with the support of the Muslim Brotherhood association, is setting up a new settlement in the village of Matina in the Shera district of Afrin canton, after Turkish forces and its mercenaries uprooted hundreds of olive trees.

According to the local sources, the land on which 150 houses are to be built belongs to the citizen Khalil Abdullah, who was forcibly displaced to Shehba canton.

The foreign settlers are working to cut down more trees around it in order to expand the area of the settlement and sell firewood, according to ANHA, citing local sources.

The Turkish state occupied Afrin in spring 2018 with jihadist mercenaries and has since been pursuing a policy of demographic change. Instead of the predominantly Kurdish population, mercenaries are being settled with their families. According to the report published by the human rights organisation Afrin-Syria on the current situation in the formerly most peaceful canton in the civil war country of Afrin on 1 June, the Turkish occupation forces and their jihadist mercenaries abducted at least 53 people, four of them women, under various pretexts in May.



## 80 thousand signatures demanding the recognition of Yazidi genocide submitted to Switzerland

SERKAN DEMIREL | BERN | 8 JULY 2023

80,927 signatures have been collected in the scope of a campaign launched in May demanding the Swiss government's recognition of the atrocities committed against the Yazidi community during the ISIS onslaught in Shengal (Sinjar) in August 2014.

Following a press statement in front of the Federal Assembly in Bern, a group of 50 people, including the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland MP Roger Nordman, Green Party MP Natalie Imboden and witnesses of ISIS savagery, submitted the signatures to the Federal Council Chancellery.

A statement on behalf of the group called for the atrocities against Yazidis to be recognized as a genocide. Referring to the UN reports that describe ISIS actions against the Yazidis as constituting genocide, the group pointed out that recognition of the Yazidi genocide would help prevent further massacres.

Federal Assembly members Fabian Molina, Mustafa Atıcı, Brigitte Crottaz, Laurence Fehlmann Rielle, Friedli Claudia, Barbara Gysi, Martin Landolt, Angelina Moser Tiana, Martina Munz, Jon Pult, Ursula Schneider Schüttel, Priska Seiller Graf, Lilian Studer, Nicolas Walder, Celine Widmer had submitted a motion to the Assembly on 15 June calling for the recognition of ISIS genocide against the Yazidi community.

The motion signed by 15 deputies referred to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic report and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) call upon member states to recognize the genocide, saying; "By recognizing this genocide, Switzerland will not only secure justice for the victims but also make an active commitment to criminal proceedings against perpetrators and fight against impunity in accordance with the essence of the international law. The recognition of Yazidi genocide will also help ensure that such a crime is never committed again."



## Activists in Heilbronn protest increasing criminalization of Kurds

ANF | HEILBRONN | 9 JULY 2023

A demonstration against the criminalization of Kurds in Germany took place in Heilbronn on Saturday evening. Under the slogan "We are all 129a/b - stop the repression!" numerous people protested against

the search of the Kurdish community center in Heilbronn and several private apartments. During the raids on Thursday, the door of the Kurdish association was broken open. Two activists were arrested in their homes and subjected to identification treatment. Numerous private items, telephones and computers were also confiscated. Pictures of those who died in the liberation struggle were confiscated in the Kurdish Society Center. As those affected reported, the police threatened them with deportation when they entered the club during the search.

The measure was justified with the memorials that had taken place in the past weeks.

The demonstration led from the Theresienwiese to the office of Heilbronner Voice. Banners pointed out the criminalization of Kurds and called for an end to the repression. The reporting in the Heilbronner Voice was criticized in speeches and solidarity was called for. "It is unacceptable that several thousand Kurds live here and are criminalized and racially attacked every day," said a speaker whose home was searched. "In our association we held mourning ceremonies together with relatives of those who died in the war in Kurdistan, and that is not criminal," explained the activist. These events are legitimate and the dead are fighters who were killed with chemical weapons by the Turkish state. "It is not criminal when we open our doors to people who have lost their children in this dirty war," said the speaker, pointing out that Turkey is committing war crimes and is actively supported by Germany.

### **Increasing 129a/b persecution**

In Germany, twelve Kurds are currently in custody or in prison on charges of PKK membership. Activists who are not classified as "party cadres" are also increasingly affected by criminal prosecution under article 129a/b of the penal code.

In addition, Germany relies on the recruitment of informers, immigration sanctions and intimidation in its fight against the Kurdish movement. Kurds who have been living in Germany for decades have had their passports and residence permits withdrawn, and in some cases children have been threatened.



## **Caritas involved in a pro-Turkish assimilation project in occupied Afrin**

ANF | 10 JULY 2023

The "Barzani Center for Culture and Development" was recently opened in Afrin. The event saw a show in the Turkish national colors. The very name of the organization shows a close connection to the South Kurdish Barzani family, which maintains its rule there through a combination of repression and collaboration with the Erdoğan regime. The Barzanis have always tried to expand their corrupt regime into Rojava and northern Syria. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Barzani party, the KDP, supports the Turkish occupation of the Kurdish areas in Northern and eastern Syria. The center was set up primarily with the support of the Barzani Foundation. Their cooperation partner, the aid organization Caritas, which belongs

to the Roman Catholic Church, is quite disturbing. Caritas works closely with the Barzani Foundation both in occupied Afrin and in South Kurdistan and is not very interested in the fact that Afrin was occupied in violation of international law and that its cooperation partners maintain close ties to the occupation regime.

The Kurdish inscription on the plaque clearly shows that this institution serves Turkish assimilation. The cultural center was decorated with balloons in Turkey's national colors, white and red, while the Kurdish national colors, green, yellow and red, were nowhere to be seen. Children dressed in Turkey's national colors to celebrate the opening.

Before the Turkish invasion, the population of Afrin consisted of well over 90 percent Kurds. According to various sources, this percentage has dropped to 15-22 percent due to the occupation. The 300,000 internally displaced persons from Afrin confirm these numbers. At the same time, more than 450,000 people were resettled in Afrin, mainly members of mercenary groups and their families, as well as refugees from other parts of Syria with links with Turkey. The Barzani Foundation and the Barzani party KDP-ENKS play an important role in Turkey's expansionist moves. Since the beginning of the Rojava revolution, the KDP and the ENKS have been trying to destabilize the region through terrorist attacks, support for Islamist mercenaries and smear campaigns against the Autonomous Administration of Rojava and to pave the way for a Turkish occupation. The occupation of Afrin has led to a regime of terror.

Around 9,000 people have been abducted in recent years, and around a third of them are still missing. These atrocious acts were committed by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an al-Qaeda affiliate, as well as remnants of ISIS and Turkish right-wing extremists. In the last six months alone, 12 people have been killed by the occupiers and 173 people have been kidnapped.

At the same time, the Kurdish language was banned and Turkish flags and pictures of President Erdoğan were hung everywhere. Turkish ID cards were issued. Place names were Turkishized. For example, Azadî Square was renamed Atatürk Square. In addition, sacred Yazidi sites were looted and destroyed.



## ISIG: At least 159 workers lost their lives in occupational homicides in June

ANF | 11 JULY 2023

The Occupational Health and Safety Council (ISIG) said in its June report on occupational homicides that lack of precaution, pressure and unlawfulness continued.

According to the report, at least 159 workers became victims of occupational homicides in the month of June.

The number of workers who lost their lives in the first six months of the year was at least 889. According to ISIG, 120 workers lost their lives in January, 213 in February, 130 in March, 122 in April, 145 in May and 159 in June due to occupational homicides.

In June, 43 workers died in traffic and service accidents, while 24 workers lost their lives due to crushing and falls.



## KCDK-E holds sixth congress

ANF | 11 JULY 2023

The Kurdistan Democratic Societies Congress in Europe (KCDK-E), the largest Kurdish umbrella organisation abroad, held its sixth congress from 4 to 7 July with 180 delegates. For four days, the delegates of the associations and institutions from different countries organised in the KCDK-E discussed the current political and social situation and evaluated their own work.

The leitmotif of the congress was the building of self-determined structures within the Kurdish community in Europe in the sense of Abdullah Öcalan's paradigm of a society based on grassroots democracy, women's liberation and ecology. The congress was dedicated to Kurdish activists Emine Kara (Evîn Goyî), Mîr Perwer and Abdurrahman Kızıl, who were [assassinated](#) in Paris on 23 December 2022, as well as [Fazil Botan](#) (Ahmet Şeker), a long-time commander of the Kurdish freedom struggle who died in France in June 2022 as a result of an injury.

### **The total campaign of destruction has been unsuccessful**

The KCDK-E has today published a statement summarising the main outcomes of the discussions at the Congress, which stated the following regarding the analysis of the current political situation:

"Our Congress took place at a very important time politically. On the one hand, the 3rd World War triggered by the deepening crisis of the system of capitalist modernity continues in the Middle East, with Kurdistan as its centre. On the other hand, there is a serious polarisation in the international arena caused by the war that has expanded to a wider area with Ukraine. This process, called World War 3, continues to bring uncertainties and risks for the future.

Although the Turkish state has mobilised all its forces in this process in order to achieve results in the war against the Kurds, which aims at genocide, and despite the support it received internationally, this total campaign of destruction has been unsuccessful. With a fraudulent election scenario carried out under the supervision and guidance of the institutions affiliated to the presidential system, a government of AKP, MHP and Hizbulkontra has been formed. The plan behind this is to eliminate all the achievements of the Kurdish people in the Middle East. However, the Turkish state is in a big crisis and chaos because of its war policy. It has no possibility whatsoever to suppress the resistance of the Kurdish people and the democratic forces; on the contrary, its insistence on the war policy will deepen the crisis and chaos of the fascist regime and accelerate its collapse."

## Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan remains a main objective

One of the main topics at the congress was the uncertain situation of the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been a political hostage of the Turkish state for 24 years and is completely sealed off from the world. The last contact with him and his three fellow prisoners on the prison island of Imrali was a brief phone call with relatives in March 2021, and even his lawyers have no information about the condition of their client.

"Our congress discussed the situation of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] as a separate agenda item. The congress stated that due to the hostile policy of the Turkish state together with the forces of capitalist modernity against Rêber Apo's thoughts and the paradigm of freedom he created, there is a high risk to his health and life. There has been no information from him for 28 months. The arbitrary disciplinary sentences imposed, the denial of contact with his family and his lawyers, the exclusion of Imrali Island from all international laws and the silence of the competent international organisations in the face of these unlawful practices are unprecedented in the world. And the only reason for this is the hostility towards the thoughts of Rêber Apo and in his person towards the Kurdish people. The powers of modernity have been supporting the Turkish state's policy of denial and annihilation of the Kurdish people for a hundred years. But despite all these practices, the thoughts of Rêber Apo are spreading more and more every day all over the world, giving hope to societies and faiths living in different areas, especially to women."

Based on this analysis, the demand for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan remains a main objective of the KCDK-E. Accordingly, a plan was drawn up covering all areas of work. In addition, the activities of the past year were evaluated at the congress from the point of view of social construction. Accordingly, the KCDK-E stated that the desired level in the creation of a democratic society has not been reached and the old views and habits of the past have not been completely overcome. It has not been possible to sufficiently include the Kurds living in Europe in the system of councils and communes. On the contrary, an increasing distance is perceived between the structures of the KCDK-E and the people.

To counteract this development, the KCDK-E decided to initiate projects in the fields of education, ecology, sports, people's diplomacy, culture and communal economy.

At the end of the congress, a new board of directors as well as the members of the disciplinary committee and the supervisory board were elected. The new co-chairs of the KCDK-E are Zübeyde Zümrüt and Engin Sever.



## Oluç: Turkey's EU membership depends on the resolution of the Kurdish question

ANF | ANKARA | 12 JULY 2023

On the last day of the NATO summit in Lithuania, the new NATO-Ukraine Council met for the first time today. In the run-up, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy demanded more weapons, an invitation to join NATO and security guarantees. The Vice-President of the Green Left Party, Saruhan Oluç, spoke at a press conference in the parliament in Ankara on Wednesday about the relations between Turkey and Ukraine, Zelenskyy's visit, the NATO discussions and the EU accession process.

Oluç said: "President Erdoğan has declared that Ukraine deserves membership in NATO. This is not a situation that should be passed over. It is an extremely critical statement not only for Ukraine and Russia, but also for the peoples of Turkey and Europe and their future. Because no NATO member state was ready to officially accept Ukraine into NATO. In particular, at the NATO summit before the invasion, there were no plans to admit Ukraine to NATO in the short and medium term. At that time, this debate was terminated. Why has Erdoğan rekindled the debate on Ukraine's NATO membership? The risks involved need to be discussed. The admission of Ukraine to NATO means that NATO and Russia will go to war. It means the Third World War. It means a bloodbath."

### **"If you want EU membership, fulfil the Copenhagen criteria"**

Oluç remarked that the Swedish pledge to support Turkey's EU membership is purely diplomatic and has no equivalent. Addressing the government, he said, "If you want EU membership, fulfil the Copenhagen criteria. Do you want to join the EU? We want it. When the EU said you should meet the Copenhagen criteria, did it mean you should appoint trustees? Did it tell you to disagree with the Venice Commission on that ground? Did it tell you to disagree with the European Parliament and the Council? Did the EU tell you not to follow the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights? Did it tell you to violate the European Convention on Human Rights in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria? Did it tell you to fill prisons for political reasons? Did it tell you to imprison journalists? Did it tell you to fine TV stations and arrest TV journalists? Did it tell you to go on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force? Turkey was put on the grey list and accused of not taking preventive measures against terrorist financing. Did it say that you should not prevent money laundering? Is that what the Copenhagen criteria say? Did the EU say that you should continue the attacks on Saturday Mothers and not implement decisions of the Constitutional Court? Did it tell you to threaten to close the Constitutional Court? Did the EU tell you to ban the HDP and prevent the political representation of the Kurdish people in democratic politics? Did it tell you not to reform the judiciary and postpone strikes? Did it tell you to prevent the use of the right to assemble and demonstrate? Did it tell you to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention in order to implement the Copenhagen criteria? Did the EU tell you to be heavily criticised every time in the progress reports of the European Parliament, which are important for the negotiations with the EU? Every time a progress report comes out, the Foreign Ministry makes a statement saying: 'These reports are null and void for us'. Did the EU tell you that you fulfil the Copenhagen criteria?"

Oluç said that if the "Ankara criteria" mentality is not abandoned, no steps can be taken towards the EU. He concluded, "Turkey's EU membership depends on democratisation, the rule of law and the resolution of the Kurdish question."



## Turkey builds another colonial settlement in Afrin's Jindires district

ANF | AFRIN | 13 JULY 2023

Through pro-ikhwan organizations, the Turkish state continues building colonial settlements in the lands of Afrin which it occupied in 2018 in violation of international law.

As part of the demographic change in the region, the Turkish state is building new colonial houses in co-operation with the "Deniz Feneri" [Lighthouse] company near the village of Kefir Sefirê in the Jindires district.

According to reports from the ground, more than a hundred four-storey buildings will be built in the area and the construction will begin in the winter.

Families of mercenaries from East Ghouta, Homs and Hama will be settled in the houses to be built here.

The Turkish state occupied Afrin in spring 2018 with jihadist mercenaries and has since been pursuing a policy of demographic change. Instead of the predominantly Kurdish population, mercenaries are being settled with their families. According to the report published by the human rights organisation Afrin-Syria on the current situation in the formerly most peaceful canton in the civil war country of Afrin on 1 June, the Turkish occupation forces and their jihadist mercenaries abducted at least 53 people, four of them women, under various pretexts in May.



## Two HDP Balıkesir executives sent to prison

ANF | BALIKESIR | 14 JULY 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Balıkesir provincial executive Abdulhalim Aksu, HDP Edremit District co-chair Emrah İşler, HDP Bandırma provincial executive Baran Aşar and HDP member Serdar Kocaman, who were taken into custody in Balıkesir on the morning of 11 July, were transferred to the courthouse on Thursday morning. The HDP members were referred to the court with a request for arrest after the prosecution's interrogation.

HDP Edremit Provincial co-chair Emrah İşler and HDP Bandırma Provincial executive Baran Aşar were released on condition of judicial control, while Balıkesir Provincial executive Abdulhalim Aksu and HDP member Serdar Kocaman were sent to prison on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization". Aksu and Kocaman were taken to Balıkesir L Type Closed Prison.

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## Police take 11 people into custody in Mersin

ANF | MERSIN | 14 JULY 2023

Acting on the orders of Mersin's Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, Turkish police raided many houses simultaneously.

A.R., A.B., F.B., N.A., Z.A., N.E., R.A., R.B., Z.A., K.H., A.H., M.A., M.H., and A.A.A., were taken into custody on the allegation of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" during the Newroz celebrations.

In the raids carried out in the morning, the doors of some houses were broken and the goods in the houses were looted.

The detainees were taken to Mersin Provincial Security Directorate.

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## New crime scene investigation footage of attack against Şenyaşar family published

ANF | 14 JULY 2023

New footage emerged of the attacks against the Şenyaşar family by the bodyguards and relatives of former AKP deputy Ibrahim Halil Yıldız on 14 June 2018 in Pirsûs (Suruç), in the province of Riha (Urfa).

The Mezopotamya Agency (MA) has accessed the new crime scene investigation footage.

The footage shows many bullet marks on the walls of the room where the attack on Şenyaşar family members took place, as well as on the ceiling. Some of the holes were large enough for a person to pass through. It was also reflected in the images that the floor and one of the walls of the room had blood on them, and many bullet casings from the guns used by the Yıldız family were on the ground.

## Attack in the recording room

In other footage, a police officer examines two guns and the bullets in his magazine. It is also seen in the images that the windows and furniture in the hospital rooms were broken, all the devices in the recording room where images of the security cameras are kept, were destroyed with stones and the cables were cut or pulled.

## The Justice Vigil of the Şenyaşar family

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.

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## Court accepts indictment against Merdan Yanardağ

ANF | ISTANBUL | 14 JULY 2023

Because of a much-discussed statement about the detention situation of Abdullah Öcalan, Turkish journalist Merdan Yanardağ will stand trial from 4 October. In the indictment adopted on Friday by the 30th Heavy Penal Court in Istanbul, the editor-in-chief of the opposition news channel Tele1 is accused of "propaganda for a terrorist organisation" and "praising crimes and criminals", announced the lawyers of the 62-year-old journalist. According to the statement, the journalist faces a prison sentence of between one and a half and ten and a half years.

The accusations against Yanardağ are related to statements made in a broadcast in June concerning, among other things, the total isolation of Kurdish thought leader Abdullah Öcalan on the prison island of İmralı. The journalist remarked that this form of detention would contradict current Turkish laws. "Öcalan is the longest imprisoned political prisoner in Turkey. If the normal laws of execution were applicable, he should actually be released (...). The isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan has no place in the law. It must be lifted because we can neither see him nor hear him nor discuss him. We don't know whether he is watching or not."

Öcalan is being held hostage, while at the same time he is being negotiated with, Yanardağ continued, pointing out the strict ban on contact even with his lawyers and family members: "Abdullah Öcalan is not a person to be taken lightly. He has almost become a philosopher in prison because he does nothing but

read. He is an extremely intelligent person who reads politics correctly, sees it correctly and analyses it correctly."

Yanardağ's remarks prompted the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to initiate proceedings under the terror paragraph. Turkish media quoted the indictment as saying that the journalist had caused public outrage with his statements. Accordingly, Yanardağ is guilty of legitimising and promoting "violence by the PKK/KCK terrorist organisation", and "by glorifying a convicted criminal as a political hostage, he also hurt and deeply disturbed many people."

Yanardağ was arrested by anti-terror police officers in the broadcasting building in Istanbul on 26 June, only a few hours after the programme "4 Questions 4 Answers" was broadcast on Tele1. Less than 24 hours later, pre-trial detention was ordered against the journalist in Silivri prison. Meanwhile, Tele1 has been banned from broadcasting for one week due to Yanardağ's incriminated remarks. The Turkish broadcasting supervisory authority RTÜK also fined the station five per cent of its advertising revenue in June.



## TGS: Without good journalism, there can be no democracy

ANF | 14 JULY 2023

A recent study by the Journalists Union of Turkey (TGS) highlights challenges faced by journalists in the country, including low wages, long working hours, mobbing and censorship.

Supported by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the study entitled "Journalism in Turkey: Perception and Profile" provides a deep insight into key findings about various aspects of the profession in the country.

### Political and financial problems

The study published by Bianet reveals that over half of the journalists perceive political pressure as the major hurdle impeding their journalistic practice within the country.

Following political pressure, financial sustainability, working conditions, and employer influence are identified as significant challenges. Additional obstacles include difficulties in organizing in professional groups and the diminishing societal reputation of journalism.

### Censorship and self-censorship

Among the surveyed journalists, 42.8% reported experiencing censorship, which commonly manifests as non-publication, removal, or alteration of news content.

The study further exposes that women journalists and those below the age of 35 encounter a higher incidence of censorship compared to their counterparts. Political motivations and employer relationships are the primary drivers behind these acts of censorship.

Moreover, the study indicates that 25.3% of journalists frequently or consistently practice self-censorship. Conversely, 36.9% claim they never engage in self-censorship.

One in four journalists consider career change

Worryingly, one in four journalists admitted to contemplating a career change, reflecting the disheartening state of the profession in the country.

### **Problems with news-gathering**

Media professionals also disclosed the numerous challenges they face during the news-gathering process, including legal actions taken against them, restricted access to news sources, physical assaults, and seizure of digital materials.

The study particularly highlights that women journalists endure a higher incidence of these obstacles compared to their male counterparts.

### **Mobbing**

According to the survey, 36.2% of journalists disclosed experiencing instances of workplace mobbing at least once throughout their careers.

Women journalists, younger professionals, those with a bachelor's degree or higher, and individuals working in metropolitan areas reported higher rates of workplace mobbing compared to other groups.

### **Personal life**

Striking a work-life balance and the ability to separate personal and professional lives emerged as significant difficulties faced by journalists. Additionally, limited time for professional development and the prevalence of burnout syndrome were identified as prominent concerns.

A concerning finding shows that 59.1% of journalists expressed their inability to allocate financial resources for personal growth. Among women journalists, this figure climbs to 70.6%.

### **"No democracy without good journalism"**

Commenting on the study's revelations, Mustafa Kuleli, vice chair of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), said, "We have a problem that concerns all citizens: Without good journalism, there can be no democracy, and without democracy, the country cannot thrive. In order to improve the quality of journalism, we must first improve the quality of life for journalists.

"This can be achieved through collective efforts with unions. Therefore, I call upon citizens to support journalism by paying for news, encourage journalists to come together, urge employers to abandon their anti-union stance, and call on the government to put an end to its pressure on the media."

Yunus Erduran, the study's consultant, emphasized that the data highlights the growing challenges faced by journalists in Turkey, resulting in a declining reputation for the profession and leading many journalists to consider leaving the field. The study serves as a stark reminder of the increasingly arduous conditions journalists encounter in Turkey.

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## Kalkan: Turkey wants to force NATO to agree to a genocide in Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 13 JULY 2023

In a special broadcast on TV channel Medya Haber, PKK Executive Council member Duran Kalkan said that Tayyip Erdoğan and his government want to continue Turkey's genocidal policy against the Kurds, implemented since 1923 under the Lausanne Treaty, by leaning on NATO.

Kalkan said: "This is exactly what is happening in the framework of the negotiations on Sweden's accession to NATO. The Alliance is asked to accept this situation. During the Lausanne process a hundred years ago, Mosul and Kirkuk were the subject of negotiations. Now it is Sweden's membership in NATO... Tayyip Erdoğan's government has used this as a trump card. He wants all of NATO to accept this. They want to update Lausanne, make everyone accept the genocide of the Kurds, carry out attacks to destroy Kurdishness saying that it is attacking terrorism. In Turkey's plan, NATO will support, back and give Ankara political and military support. In other words, NATO will support the genocide of the Kurds. They are complicit in everything the Republic of Turkey is doing to the Kurds. This is what is being forced upon us! That's really the deal that's being struck. That's the truth. This is the basis for intensive negotiations. Tayyip Erdoğan's government is trying to force Sweden and NATO to accept that."

### Will NATO replace Lausanne?

Kalkan continued: "If that happens now, NATO will replace Lausanne. The Lausanne Treaty, which provided the legal basis and political power of the first Kurdish genocide, will transfer its function to NATO. NATO will therefore fulfil the same function, it will become the system of denial and extermination of the Kurds. Turkey will complete the massacre of the Kurds in the second century by using NATO. That is the goal of the Turkish state, which is now ruled by Tayyip Erdoğan and the People's Alliance and conducts politics through them. Negotiations will be conducted on this basis."

Kalkan added: "Will NATO accept that? The Alliance has many members. Will they accept this fascist, genocidal mentality and policies imposed by Turkey and become an enforcer of these policies? In other words, is NATO becoming a genocidal force? Will the European Union adopt a fascist genocidal mentality and policies? Will Sweden accept this? We've said before that it shouldn't be accepted, but they made a lot of deals. There are threats, there is pressure."

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## Loving life so much to be ready to die. The 14 July Martyrs

ANF | 14 JULY 2023

Kemal Pir, was a Turkish revolutionary from the Black Sea region. He is one of the founders of the PKK. It was with the leadership of central PKK members Kemal Pir, Hayri Durmuş, Akif Yılmaz and Ali Çiçek, that on July 14th, 1982, the beginning of a death fast was announced to protest the conditions of Diyarbakır prison. All four of them died in the hunger strike. At the age of 30, Pir died on the 55th day of the death fast, after losing his eye-sight. Until this day, he is honoured as an embodiment of the radical and internationalist spirit of the movement and a bridge for the struggling Turkish and Kurdish people.

The author of the following story, Kurdish political activist and author Fuat Kav, spent 20 years in Turkish prisons, including 8 years in the infamous Diyarbakır prison. Having actively participated in the prison resistance and experienced unthinkable forms of cruelty in prison, his living memory is one of the only sources for the silenced stories behind Turkey's prison walls. To this date, the crimes against humanity in Diyarbakır prison have not been adequately investigated or exposed. Kav's memoirs from prison are based on real events and conversations, expressed in a literary form, such as in his novel "Mavi Ring".

Fuat Kav lives in exile in Europe, where he continues to enrich Kurdish political life with his commentary and wisdom as a journalist and writer.

Kemal was a legend. Like a knight struggling for his life, he continued his resistance against death. He was resisting moment by moment, cell by cell. But death was already on his doorstep, he had reached the end of his physical life.

"I must be the first to die. I must be the first to close my eyes", he had said in the first days of the death fast. He stayed true to his words. However, he was now in the dark. After a certain point, he could only dream of the world, the stars, the sun, the moon and of light. Because his eyes had lost their sight. The smile in his fiery eyes that would brighten up his friends no longer existed.

"My eyes no longer see. Everything is dark... Wow! This is what the world of the blind is like! Now I understand how cruel life must be for them", he said suddenly one night to Hayri.

"Can't you see at all, Kemal?", asked Hayri, gathering all his strength.

"No, nothing. Complete darkness... But it's not important. My days are over anyway. I don't want the prison guards to know. Otherwise, they will use it against me."

"Don't speak like this, Kemal. Who knows who will go first?"

"No, I must be the first one to die. Don't worry about it."

"I cannot handle another friend's death, Kemal. Like you, I too cry blood. That Mazlum died before us, that the four friends sacrificed themselves, all of these things deeply wounded me. And now..."

"I understand you. We lived through unbearably painful days together. I am fully aware of the responsibilities. Nevertheless, I say 'I must be the first one to die'. Please understand me, okay?" Only by changing the topic, Hayri would be able to end the talk about Kemal's unbearable wish.



He wanted to change the agenda by asking about something unrelated: “Does anyone know the song ‘Ağlama yar ağlama/mavi yazma bağlama’? It’s an amazing song. I always want to listen to this beautiful song which expresses pain, loneliness and the longing for one’s mother so plainly. It would be so great if anyone would sing it. Is there nobody here who knows this song?”

Although nobody who knew the song was around, the song had to be sung now, because Hayri had wanted it. But nobody talented enough to sing. It was as if people, who are deprived of singing skills, had been specifically selected to enter the death fast! The only person among them, who knew songs by heart, was Mustafa Karasu.

He only knew one or two songs. Upon Hayri’s request, he tried his best to put his shreds of memory together to remember the words for the songs. In fact, all of them had sung this song during one of their recreational evenings. But nobody would have been able to remember the entire song text by themselves.

What was going to happen now? Karasu came to everyone’s rescue. “Alright, let’s sing it all together”, he said. “We can do it, if we sing in choir”. They had really managed. They sang in choir and actually finished the song. But if one was to ask “how” they sang, the answer would be “awful”. At the end of the song, Karasu managed to avoid criticism by saying “We sang, even if we made the song unrecognizable. But whatever, we sang after all.” Hayri applauded the choir.

“I joined your singing”, said Hayri.

“Karasu, I joined you too. Don’t think you were the only ones who sang”, intervened Kemal.

“I don’t know, Kemal. To be honest, I didn’t hear your voice. I didn’t get a sign of your signing.”

“What kind of sign were you waiting for?”

“A proper one. I sensed signs from all the other friends, who sang, but I am not so sure about you.”

“If you didn’t hear it, then that’s something to do with you. I sang, and I won’t allow you to deny my labour.”

“Fine, I’ll listen more carefully this time.”

“Do you know the song ‘Eşkiya dünyaya hükümdar olmaz’ [The bandit cannot rule the world], Karasu?”

“No, I don’t. Or rather, I can’t remember all of the song text. But I’m sure we can sing in choir.”

“Okay, let us sing it. I will sing too, just don’t tell me you didn’t ‘get a sign’ afterwards, alright?”

“Alright, alright. I will listen properly this time. Let’s see.”

The “choir” had done as Kemal wished. During the chorus, Kemal’s distinctive voice was rising. He had the deepest voice among all and because he sang loudly, the sound was just amazing. His rich and deep voice was echoing in the prison cell. It was impossible for Karasu not to notice.

“Did you get the sign this time, Karasu?”, wondered Kemal when the song ended.

“I did, indeed. A big one in fact, dear Kemal. We might now accept you in our choir, ha!” He was truly impressed by Kemal’s voice.

“You said you ‘might’, is that right?”

“No, no, not ‘might’. I correct myself: We will accept you.”

“Alright, Karasu. I need to rest a little.”

“Rest, Kemal. I will sleep as well. We haven’t said what day it is, where we are, where we went, what we saw on our journey, and whether we fought any fascists today, comrade Kemal.”

“True! Today is the 47th day of our action. That means we are in Mardin today. I must say that

I love Mardin very much, one of the most dynamic, historic and multicultural cities of Kurdistan, a truly colourful mosaic of peoples. Today, I visited its historical sites, walked up the fortress, examined its architecture with fascination. Sadly, I couldn’t fight fascists, because there are no fascists in Mardin. But I must say that I discussed with some social chauvinists.”

“I just walked around silently. When I got tired, I went up the fortress. There, I got and drank water from the children, who sell water. For a moment, I could not help but think about all the conquerors that captured this city throughout history. When I thought about all the tyrants, despots, and executioners that must have burned down and destroyed this city several times, the oppressors of our day came to my mind. Are they any more scrupulous than the former tyrants? Kemal, are you listening...?”

Kemal had fallen asleep, dipping deep into spaces beyond the limits of thought. His weakness due to hunger, thirst, and exhaustion had carried him to these places.

Kemal’s physique could no longer handle the situation. He had lost his eyes, as well as his energy. His consciousness was coming and going. Because his eyes went blind, he often lit the filter side of his cigarettes. Sometimes he went quiet, but most of the time he spoke. He spoke without a break. The doctors’ and the guardians’ attempts to encourage the prisoners to give up their action angered him extremely; he would shout and sometimes swear. The prison doctor Orhan Özcanlı was doing his best to convince Kemal to stop his action.

“Look, Kemal. You are dying, death is approaching you step by step. Just think about it, you are reaching the end of your life. You are about to migrate from this world. Just give this thing up. There is no end to this road...”

“Doctor, look at me carefully! Open your ears and listen. Carve my words into your head. I began this cause consciously. I am well aware that death is awaiting me at the end of the road.

I also realize that I am at the end of this road right now. I can sense the presence of death and its executioner. I can hear them breathe.”

“Life is beautiful, Kemal. You ought to love life. Even if humans are mortal, they want to live in this world and thus they immensely fear death. That is why it’s a lie to claim that you are not afraid of death. We see those who see themselves as the most valiant and courageous, shake with fear in the face of death. And since you are human, too, surely you are afraid as well. But I can still save you, even in this situation of yours...”

“Who do you think I am, doctor? You still didn’t manage to know me? I am Kemal Pir. Not to be bragging, but I opened my eyes to life on the shores of the Black Sea. It is with the attributes of that region that I learned about life in its most solid, purest form among genuine people, who knew how to be friends to friends and enemies to enemies. I am Kemal Pir, who arrived to this day by meeting people of seventy-two nations in the lands of Anatolia, to then dedicate himself to the freedom of the Kurdish people. I am not sure if I made myself clear enough?”

“You did, but...”

“There is no ‘but’ about this, doctor. I introduced myself to you as it is, without exaggeration or lies, in an honest manner, in a plain language. However, if you still say ‘but’ after this, that’s your problem.”

“But life goes differently, Kemal. No matter how you describe yourself, nobody can escape thinking the same thing in the face of death. The fear of death is a terrifying feeling. It creates an earthquake of emotions that can put you into any shape or form. It’s an earthquake that can take your humanity from you.”

“Now finally something correct came out of your mouth.”

“What does that mean?”

“Is it not understandable?”

“I am speaking of life and fear. I claim that every human is the same in the face of death. Everyone is afraid of death. Whoever is in that situation will shiver like they have fever. Even if that person is Kemal Pir.”

“Look, doctor. I am fully aware of the meaning of life and death. I know exactly, who is afraid of death and who shivers in the face of it. I also know that we lead mortal lives and I am aware of notions of heaven and hell in afterlife. It is you and the likes of you, who would not know such things. They don’t understand and even if they do, they act like they don’t understand. Should I tell you another thing, doctor?”

“Sure.”

“I love life so much that I am willing to die for it. Look, you are the witness of that. You will see with your own eyes how I die for the sake of life, how I sacrifice my life without blinking, how I cling onto life by dying...”

“You will die for nothing, Kemal, for nothing. You will not achieve anything through death. You must live to achieve whatever goal you have, otherwise nobody will take action according to your goals. It is a temporary, useless fantasy to dream of being a ‘hero’. I don’t find it right or meaningful. Whether a person became a hero after their death, whether statues were erected, books written or films produced in their name, carries no meaning for me. When you are dead, you are dead.”

“You don’t believe in anything anyway. You are a person without purpose, who doesn’t think about the future, a rejecter of life, who has nothing to offer to the children of the future. That is why you look at everything in terms of their daily relevance and material worth. You think that whatever is past is past and that only the ones who will see the future should concern themselves with it. ‘Live, think and design the present’. That is why you cannot understand heroism or courage.”

“I am still convinced that there will not be a single person in the future, who will ask about you, erect your statue, write books or make films about you and say ‘there once was a brave man from the Black Sea, who lost his life for us during the death fast.’ Perhaps a marginal group will commemorate your name just to kill time, but you will never become a hero with anything to contribute to any nation or people. Mark my words,

Kemal.”

“Why do you keep mentioning heroism or the legacy of my name? Can’t a person just fulfil their societal and historical duties? Why do you need to see something in return?”

“We are talking about a serious issue, about death, Kemal. Of course there should be something in return. You are dying, at least be a hero, at least your name should be remembered, books should be written in your name.”

“The things you mention, such titles should not matter so much. What counts is duty and responsibility. To think that there should be a reward for everything is outrageous. It’s the outward expression of an internal state of losing yourself and falling out with your reality, soul and *raison d’état*.”

“I will keep on asking you this: what exactly are you dying for? For an empty goal, you will die for nothing, a wasted life. As somebody, who knows the state well, I am telling you that the state will not address you. Even if all of you die, if each and every single one of you gets carried out of here in coffins, our sublime state will not take you seriously. Know that.”

“We have been discussing for so long about such excruciating things. But you continue being a stiff, stubborn, drum-headed guy. I don’t think you are a doctor, you probably never even walked passed the medicine department. You could be a butcher, a hangman, a murderer, or maybe a monster. But it’s impossible for you to be a doctor.”

“You are insulting me, Kemal. We discuss, we talk and sometimes we argue. But we should never be insulting.”

“All of your words are full of insult. It’s impossible to discuss anything with you. A person should at least have the ability to speak and discuss like a human being.”

“Whatever happens, you should not insult me.”

“If you speak like this, I will not only insult you, but if I had the power, I would fight you. Know that.”

“I would not want to insult or do injustice to a person whose neck is in the claws of the angel of death. You will die anyway, you are on your last journey. You are saying farewell to life anyway.”

“Is this how you talk to a person who is dying for his ideals? Does this suit a doctor?”

“I can save you, I can treat you and bring you back to your old shape. Return before it’s too late, Kemal.”

“I am dying for my beliefs. That is why my death is not in vain. I have dedicated myself to the cause of humanity. I am dying for humanity. I am indebted to the Kurdish people. That is another special dimension of my fight, of my struggle. But you don’t and will never understand this!”

“Fine, I have offered. I am free of guilt. Even if you beg me to, from now on, I will not save you anymore! I know all of the things you do secretly anyway...”

The other prisoners, who had heard the conversation, wanted to intervene, but eventually gave up. They were upset by the doctor’s accusation that they were secretly eating. There was remorselessness, but this was too much. They wondered, if such things happened in other parts of the world as well. One would expect the enemy to reserve some sort of respect in the face of people who face death in the defense of their beliefs. This however was the ultimate form of trample on human dignity.

“Look at me, doctor!”

“Yes, Kemal, I am looking at you. What is it? What do you have to say?”

“Are you implying that I have been eating in secret?! Never mind, you are a dishonourable person anyway... Look doctor, in a couple of days you will see that I have not been eating.”

“Whatever, Kemal. If you want to leave the fast, I will take you to the hospital. Don’t forget, if I do this, there will be something in return.”

“Get away from me! Your executioner captain and even his superior, your stooge of a general were not able to bring me down on my knees. But you think you will?! Leave right now. I don’t want to see you!”

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