

THE İMRALI POST

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

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Vigil in Maxmur to protest isolation of Öcalan continues

ANF | MAXMUR | 31 JULY 2023

A vigil was launched on 20 July in Martyr Rustem Refugee Camp in Maxmur to break the isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan. The third group of refugees took over the vigil.

During the changing of the vigil, Emin Mijini made a speech on behalf of the second group, and condemned the isolation imposed on Leader Öcalan. “As is known, a heavy isolation has been imposed on Leader Öcalan for a long time. This isolation is directed not only against Leader Öcalan, but also against

the Kurdish people and the whole of Kurdistan. The Kurdish people need to develop their unity and solidarity against this isolation.” After the speeches, the Ishtar Assembly group took over the vigil.

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil in Strasbourg marks its 580th week

ANF | STRASBOURG | 2 AUGUST 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil was launched on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, with the aim of demanding the physical freedom of Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan and breaking the absolute isolation imposed on him. The vigil continues in its 580th week and has been taken over by activists Hüseyin Bayat, Sedat Çetin, Serkan Menteşe, Sidar Çetin and Deniz Kırıktaş from Rennes and Nantes.

A statement by the group said: “The leader of the Kurdish freedom movement has been held in prison for 24 years and subjected to aggravated isolation.”

Noting that the freedom vigil in Strasbourg has been going on for 12 years, the activists called on the Kurdish people to provide further support for the struggle and stand up for political prisoners.

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Civil disobedience action for Öcalan at CPT, EP and ECHR

ANF | STRASBOURG | 3 AUGUST 2023

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

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

In its annual report about rights violations in Turkish prisons, the Human Rights Association (İHD) stated that Öcalan has not been heard from for 29 months.

Kurdish activists staged civil disobedience actions to denounce the isolation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan at the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), European Parliament (EP) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg on Thursday.

Chanting the slogans “Biji Serok Apo” (Long Live Leader Öcalan), the activists called on the CPT, EP and ECHR to fulfil their responsibilities and take action against the aggravated isolation regime imposed on the Kurdish leader.

The activists called on the youth and everyone else to be in constant action until Öcalan gains his freedom.

In an attempt to prevent the action, French police attacked the demonstrators with pepper spray.



Families of İmralı prisoners apply to visit their relatives

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

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

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

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

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In a statement on May 2, 2023, Asrın Law Office said: “We have not heard anything from Öcalan since 25 March 2021. Despite all the requests and efforts of his lawyers and his relatives, we are not aware of the living conditions and state of health of Öcalan and our three other clients on İmralı. This situation worries us and the whole society.”

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

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

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

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

* We have no information about the detention conditions, the treatment and the state of health of our clients on Imrali.

* According to Article 66/3 of Law No. 5275, convicts have the right “to make immediate use of the prison's telephone and fax facilities in the event of the death, serious illness, epidemic disease or natural disaster of their heirs, descendants, spouses and siblings”. Nevertheless, Öcalan and our other clients were deprived of this right even in the case of death, let alone illness, of their family members, and this prohibition was not relaxed even during the 6 February earthquakes.

* Öcalan could only use a single-channel radio for 14 years and only had access to television, which is available to all prisoners, in 2013. However, as a report from May 2018 shows, TV channels were restricted, and newspapers were delivered after a delay of 40 days.

* Öcalan was held in solitary confinement in the island prison for ten years and nine months from 16 February 1999 to 17 November 2009, after which five more of our clients were transferred to Imrali. Although these prisoners were later exchanged, as outlined in the 2016 and 2019 CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture) reports, our clients could only meet for six hours a week and spend the rest of the time alone in their cells.

Concerns increased after the CPT visit to Imrali

Concerns over the situation of the Kurdish people's leader increased after the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited Turkey on September 20-29, 2022. In a statement on 3

October, the CPT announced that İmralı F Type High Security Prison was among the institutions it visited.

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

Conditions of extraordinary isolation

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

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

Despite all their attempts, lawyers from the Istanbul-based Asrın Law Office, which represents Abdullah Öcalan and his three fellow prisoners, have not been able to receive even a single sign of life from their clients since 25 March 2021. They could not obtain any information regarding their health status, their detention conditions, their legal situation in 2022. It has been 23 months that their clients have not been heard from in any way.

Öcalan held in a single cell since 1999

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

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

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

Incommunicado detention

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

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

Restrictions through fabricated decisions

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

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

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

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Prisons in Turkey

Ill prisoner denounces torture

ANF | MERSIN | 1 AUGUST 2023

Vahdettin Erdem is being held in Konya Ereğli High Security Prison. He made a call to the public by describing the torture and anxiety he experienced in a phone call with his family.

‘My dead body will come out of here’

Vahdettin Erdemci was arrested in Siirt (Sêrt) in 2014 on charges of “destroying the unity and integrity of the state” and was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment. His son, Halef, said that his father was tortured by the guards and added: “Although my father complained to the institutions many times, no action was taken. In the last meeting, he said that he would be found dead in the cell one day. We are worried about my father's condition. He is a 55-year-old ill prisoner. If anything happens to him, the prison administration will be held responsible.”

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Release of prisoner who spent 30 years in jail postponed for three months

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

Ramazan Ildem was arrested in Kızıltepe (Qoser), in the province of Mardin (Merdîn) in July 1993, when he was 22 years old. He was given a life sentence by the Diyarbakır State Security Court (DGM), for “Destroying the unity and integrity of the State”.

Ildem spent time in eight different prisons before being eventually transferred to Bafra T-Type Closed Prison. He was supposed to be released on 4 July, but the Prison Administration and Monitoring Board (IGK) decided against it, saying that he did not “show remorse”. Ildem's release was delayed for another 3 months.

Ildem's mother, Halime, said: “We were waiting to bring him home after 30 years in prison. We made our preparations, we were going to meet him. He phoned and said that he had been sentenced to another 3 months.”

Ildem's mother said: “An injustice is being done. The enemy never gives up. My only request is to leave my son to take care of his cause, his work, and his language. I believe that he and his friends are walking on an honorable path. We are looking for this too. There is nothing better than this. Is he going to drop everything and step aside to get out of prison? No such thing is going to happen.”

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Human Rights Association publishes yearly report about the situation in Turkish prisons

ANF | ANKARA | 2 AUGUST 2023

The Human Rights Association (IHD) published its report on the situation in prisons in Turkey in 2022. The report was compiled on the basis of petitions to the association, regular reports from prisons and information gathered during prison visits. It records 10,789 violations across a wide spectrum. The number of unreported cases is likely to be much higher.

Figures in the report is just the tip of the iceberg

The IHD said: “The problems in Turkish prisons go far beyond the violations listed in this report and its appendices. It is not possible for NGOs to obtain information and figures to show the current extent of violations carried out in Turkish prisons as they are blocked from access and reporting. The violations in this report reflect only a very limited part of the current situation based on the data available to the IHD.”

In this sense, the report also criticized the lack of transparency of data on prisons, noting that the General Directorate for Prisons and Detention Centers does share certain statistical data, but not, for example, data on LGBT+ prisoners, political prisoners, foreign prisoners, sick prisoners, prisoners with disabilities and female prisoners with babies, not even deceased prisoners.

Wide range of violations

According to the report, the main human rights violations are the right to health, the prevention of release, social rights, torture and ill-treatment, discrimination, the right to a fair trial, economic and social rights, and communication and information rights. The report also pointed to numerous requests from prisoners to be transferred to prisons closer to their families, which prison authorities often ignore.

At least 81 prisoners died in custody

The report painted a bleak picture of the state of affairs in Turkish prisons: at least 81 prisoners lost their lives in 2022. Of these, 36 died of illnesses, six of them shortly after their release. The report also reported 25 deaths under suspicious circumstances, 19 alleged suicides and 10 cases of attempted suicide or stated suicide intent.

The IHD report highlighted that all of these prison deaths could have been avoided. The human rights organization calls for appropriate measures to ensure access to health rights and respect for human dignity and to protect the physical and psychological integrity of prisoners.

New prisons being built, overcrowding increasing

Overcrowding is a major problem in Turkish prisons. The number of inmates exceeds prison capacity, resulting in inhumane prison conditions. The number of inmates is constantly increasing. While the num-

ber of prisoners in 2013 was 144,098, on 3 July 2023 there were a total of 360,722 people in prison. The total prison capacity is 296,202. The occupancy rate was 97.17 percent in 2013 and 115.59 percent in 2022.

Right to life at stake

The report also addressed the poor health care provided to prisoners. Many prisoners with chronic illnesses do not receive the medical care they need. According to the report, as of April 2022, there were 1,517 sick prisoners in Turkish prisons, including 651 seriously ill prisoners. The situation resulting from the Covid pandemic in particular has once again made the lack of health care clear.

Violence and abuse widespread

The report also documented a number of cases of violence and torture in prisons and called for an end to the long-term isolation of prisoners, which can lead to severe psychological damage. Regarding the nature of the violations in this area, the IHD said that 1,852 violations were found in this area and added: “It is about torture and ill-treatment practices in prisons; Beatings/threats/insults and provocations, strip searches, searches of the oral cavity, constant roll calls, marching in military order, denial of the right to go outside, problems in the cells and in the wards, coercion to inform, surveillance of living quarters by cameras...”

The report also underlined the need to pay particular attention to the rights of women and juvenile prisoners, as they face particular challenges in the prison system.

The report also underlined that Kurdish People’s Leader Abdullah Öcalan has not been visited by his lawyers since 7 August 2019 and has not been heard from in any way for 29 months, no positive or negative feedback has been given to his applications for visits, and a new disciplinary sanction was imposed on 18 July.



Court returns indictment involving two journalists

ANF | ANKARA | 3 AUGUST 2023

Ankara 28th Heavy Penal Court has returned the indictment prepared for 49 people, 5 of them in prison. Among the 49 are Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) co-chair, Dicle Müftüoğlu, and MA editor Sedat Yılmaz.

The reason of the court for the rejection of the indictment is not known, due to the confidentiality order about the case file, wrote Mesopotamia Agency.

Background

Dicle Müftüoğlu and Sedat Yılmaz were taken into custody in Diyarbakır on 29 April within the scope of an investigation launched by the Ankara Chief Prosecutor's Office.

The two journalists met with their lawyers after a 24-hour ban. The lawyers said that Müftüoğlu and Yılmaz had been kept handcuffed for 15 hours while being transported from Diyarbakır to Ankara, and deprived of food for 24 hours.

Müftüoğlu and Yılmaz were arrested by the night court where they appeared and were sent to the Sincan Closed Women's Prison and Sincan 2nd F Type High-Security Prison respectively.

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Military aggression and occupation

Six Turkish soldiers killed in Guerrilla action in Metîna

ANF | BEHDINAN | 31 JULY 2023

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla carried out an action against the Turkish army in the Girê Ortê Resistance Area in Metîna.

According to the information received from HPG sources, at least six Turkish soldiers were killed, including the high ranking officer who coordinated the operation.

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Turkish troops uproot trees in military operation area in Hizan

ANF | BITLIS | 31 JULY 2023

The Turkish army has been besieging villages and hamlets in the Hizan district in the province of Bitlis in northern Kurdistan since the beginning of July. After the declaration of a curfew and the launch of a military operation on 2 July, the region was declared a "special security zone" on 14 July. The measure remained in place until 28 July, but the military siege in the region continued.

A large number of troops and so-called village guards are conducting an operation, which is mainly focused on the surroundings of the villages of Hûzeran, Best, Sûreh, Xûlepûr and Kekulan. The affected region in the Hizan district includes a hazel forest, which is known to keep the adjacent village economy alive, as well as ten densely populated villages and hamlets, on which a curfew had already been imposed at the beginning of July in the course of an air-supported military operation. For days, the inhabitants of the affected villages were forbidden to leave their homes and people were cut off from the outside world. During the operation, fighting took place and the army carried out bombardments in the immediate vicinity of villages.

During the ongoing operation, the hazelnut trees in the village of Xûlepûr are being uprooted by scoops dispatched to the area. Local sources state that Turkish troops are destroying trees to make way for military movement and activities.



HPG: 12 soldiers were killed in guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 31 JULY 2023

The Press Office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the ongoing war and the latest developments in the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

“Twelve soldiers of the invading Turkish army were killed in guerrilla actions on Sunday. “The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla continues to deal heavy blows to the Turkish occupation army with creative tactics. The guerrillas’ successful fight is based on underground defences and mobile units in the field, and twelve occupiers, including an officer, have been punished and one other injured within the last 24 hours. In addition, one enemy position and one A4 weapon were completely destroyed. Four other positions and a piece of construction equipment used by the Turkish army to demolish tunnels were damaged in the guerrilla actions,” said the HPG statement on Monday.

HPG listed the details of the actions by the guerrillas and attacks by the Turkish army as follows:

Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region

In the Girê Cûdî resistance area, the guerrillas carried out seven attacks on the Turkish occupation forces on July 30, killing three soldiers and wounding another. Four of the actions were carried out by the guerrillas from YJA Star (Free Women's Troops).

Zap region

In the resistance area of Sîda, YJA guerrillas struck a Turkish army position with heavy weapons on July 30. The position and an A4 weapon were destroyed and three soldiers were killed. At six o'clock today,

guerrillas carried out another action with heavy weapons against the Turkish forces trying to demolish a guerrilla position in the area. The construction equipment used in the process was damaged.

Metîna region

The Turkish army, in cooperation with the KDP, launched an operation in Metîna on the night of July 30 and attempted to capture the Girê Ortê resistance area. A position in the area where the coordinator of the operation was located was targeted by mobile guerrilla units yesterday. The coordinator and another soldier were killed in the attack. Simultaneous actions by guerrillas with heavy and semi-automatic weapons killed four soldiers. The dead were taken out of the area by land by the Turkish army with the support of the KDP.

Attacks by the Turkish army

Regarding the attacks by the Turkish army on July 30, HPG reported nine airstrikes by fighter jets on the areas of Gundê Meyrokê and Xêrê in Gare and Goşînê and Sinînê in Xakurke. The regions of Zap, Metîna and Xakurke were also attacked with artillery fire dozens of times.

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UN complaint lodged over deadly Turkish airstrikes on hospital in Shengal

ANF | 31 JULY 2023

The Yazidi town of Shengal (Sinjar), which was subjected to genocide by ISIS mercenaries on August 3, 2014, was liberated on November 13, 2015, after months of resistance led by HPG guerrillas and Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ). The people of Shengal formed their self-defence and self-government as the greatest response to further massacres and betrayal in Shengal.

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

The Turkish state carried out airstrikes on the Sikênîyê Hospital in Shengal on August 17, 2021, killing eight people and injuring more than 20 others. The Ministry of Justice of Turkey asserted that 10 PKK members had been "neutralized" in the airstrikes.

The hospital was serving the Yazidi and Arab populations at the same time. Mothers, children, young men and women from Shengal were treated here. It was bombed not once but four times. People from the surrounding area risked death to retrieve the fallen and wounded from the rubble.

The Turkish airstrikes that destroyed the civilian Sikêniyê Hospital in 2021 have been made the subject of a formal complaint to the UN Human Rights Council.

The Guardian [reported](#) that four claimants, either survivors or witnesses to the airstrikes, say the attacks violated their right to life under international law, as guaranteed by Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

It is the first case to be brought on the issue of Turkish airstrikes against the Yazidi people. The complaint has been prepared for the Germany-based non-governmental organization for Yazidi people's rights called 'Women for Justice.'

The claim to the UN states that the hospital was near a YBŞ (Shengal Resistance Units) checkpoint but no armed units directly protected the facility, which was built in a civilian area.

Further, the claimants state that Turkey failed to investigate the killing of civilians resulting from the airstrikes and provide victims with effective remedies, constituting a violation of their rights to a prompt, independent and effective investigation under the same covenant.

According to the Guardian, the complaint was submitted late last week and took two years to prepare.

Aarif Abraham, the director of the Accountability Unit, a human rights NGO that supports Women for Justice said, "This is a critically important and symbolic case involving clear-cut violations of the fundamental rights of Yazidi citizens by the Turkish state."

"There is no lawful excuse for targeting a civilian hospital with three successive airstrikes in 30 minutes, killing eight civilians and seriously injuring over 20 others," he added.

Abraham believes that the UN Human Rights Committee may help to secure justice.

"Turkey has long enjoyed impunity and the international community's silence for targeting non-Turkish nationals outside its territories on the pretense of targeting terrorists. The Human Rights Committee is the only body which holds the realistic prospect of holding Turkey accountable and providing the victims with meaningful redress," he said.

Dr. Leyla Ferman, the chief executive of Women for Justice, on the other hand, said: "After the victory over Islamic State in Shengal, the Turkish airstrikes pose the greatest security risk."

KCK: Our movement has nothing to do with the killing of the former head of KDP intelligence service

ANF | BEHDINAN | 31 JULY 2023

The Foreign Relations Committee of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) released a statement refuting the KDP's claims regarding the murder of Mihemed Mirza Sindi, one of the former heads of the KDP intelligence service, Parastin.

Denying involvement in the killing of Mihemed Mirza Sindi, KCK said they believed that the murder of Mihemed Mirzan Sindi was carried out as a result of the internal conflicts within the KDP and Parastin, in order not to reveal the crimes committed against the Kurdish people.

KCK warned that: "The KDP uses the institutions of the Kurdistan Region, especially the Kurdistan Region Security Council, to cover up the crimes of the occupying Turkish state and the MIT [Turkish intelligence service]."

The statement by KCK Foreign Relations Committee includes the following:

"On many occasions, the KDP has issued untrue statements in the name of the Kurdistan Region Security Council which are deceptive and full of lies. Each time, it targets the Kurdistan Freedom Movement with baseless accusations. In recent days, the KDP has again issued a statement in the name of the Kurdistan Region Security Council, accusing our movement of being responsible for the murder of Mihemed Mirza Sindi, one of the former heads of Parastin [KDP intelligence service]. This statement is an indication of underestimating the political awareness of the Kurdish people, while it also reveals how the KDP uses the government institutions in the Kurdistan Region for its own interests.

While the Kurdish people all over the world and in Kurdistan are currently discussing the Treaty of Lausanne and trying to learn lessons from history, the KDP not only avoids participating in these discussions, but also acts jointly with the occupying Turkish state in [the South Kurdish areas] Xakurkê and Metîna in order to keep the Treaty of Lausanne alive. The KDP wants to deceive the people of Kurdistan with statements that do not reflect the truth and create divisions among the Kurdish people.

The power that benefits the most from these actions of the KDP is undoubtedly the occupying Turkish state. Because the KDP uses the institutions of the Kurdistan Region, especially the Kurdistan Region Security Council, to cover up the crimes of the occupying Turkish state and the MIT [Turkish intelligence service]. The intention of the MIT and Parastin behind holding our movement responsible for the death of Mihemed Mirza Sindi is to hide the massacre committed by the MIT against the family of Mela Ehmed Celaledîn. It is well-known that the decision for this massacre was taken by MIT's headquarters in Dohuk.

As the HPG [People's Defence Forces] stated, our movement has nothing to do with the killing of Mihemed Mirza Sindi. All of the accusations are baseless. We believe that the murder of Mihemed Mirzan Sindi was carried out as a result of the internal conflicts within the KDP and Parastin in order not to reveal the crimes committed against the Kurdish people. From Şengal [Sinjar] to Metîna and Zaxo, the KDP

and Parastin are acting in partnership with the terrorist Turkish MIT. Many revolutionaries and patriots have been killed as a result.

We therefore call on the Kurdish public, all institutions and organizations in the Kurdistan Region, intellectuals, freedom supporters and on Iraq to be sensitive towards these provocations by the KDP. The Turkish state should not be allowed to wage special warfare against the Kurdish people by taking over the official institutions in the Kurdistan Region through the KDP.”

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HPG releases balance sheet of war for July

ANF | BEHDINAN | 1 AUGUST 2023

The HPG Press Center released the balance sheet of war for July. The HPG statement on Tuesday said: “The Treaty of Lausanne, which divided our country into four parts by ignoring the Kurdish people and the reality of Kurdistan, aimed at carrying out the genocide of our people by dividing them into nation-state systems. That treaty was a death warrant for the Kurdish people and led to countless massacres, invasion attacks and edicts over the course of a century. As a result, the Kurdish people lost hundreds of thousands of martyrs, all their justifiable objections were tried to be suppressed with massacres, and their identity and demand for a free life was ignored.”

The statement continued: “The Kurdish people, despite all their inadequacies and their fragmented stance, have managed to carry their existence to the present day and still continue their struggle by resisting relentlessly against this death warrant issued a hundred years ago. Our party, the PKK, which has led the freedom struggle of the Kurdish people in the last 50 years, tore up the death warrant imposed on the Kurdish people with the Lausanne Agreement.

The colonialist genocidal Turkish state and its fascist special war regime introduced a comprehensive genocide concept on 24 July 2015, the anniversary of this agreement. In the last 8 years, the Kurdish people and the freedom movement have shown relentless resistance, fought epic struggles, paid a great price, but by preserving its existence, it has proven that it is an undeniable and inalienable reality.”

Turkish state continues invasion attacks

The statement added: “Turkey carried out 17 operations. It attacked 283 times using warplanes, 168 times using combat helicopters, and hundreds of times using howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons. It attacked our positions in the Resistance Areas 9 times using banned explosives. It used a total of 6 tactical nuclear bombs, 4 times against our positions in the Sîda Resistance Area of Zap, and 2 times against our positions in the Girê FM Resistance Area of the Martyr Delîl West Zap region.”

130 actions, 74 soldiers punished

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla continued to defend the Kurdish people and Kurdistan against all enemy attacks without interruption. Our forces throughout the month of July carried out 130 actions. As a result of these actions, 72 soldiers, one of whom was a high-ranked officer, were killed and 16 were injured. In addition, many military vehicles and materials were destroyed and damaged.

7 guerrillas fell as martyrs

The Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla is following the line of martyrs by continuing its struggle with the spirit of sacrifice created by the 14 July Great Death Fast Resistance.

In July 7 of our comrades fell as martyrs: Mîrza Bargiran (Mîrza Sezek), Bengîn Barman (Hero Karataş) and Rêdûr Sîser (Güven Özcan), in Bakurê Kurdistan; Viyan Mêrdîn (Leyla Elçioğlu), Zinar Serêçiya (Zinar Mihemed Ebdilxanî), Bawer Arîn (Mesut Demirkıran) and Berxwedan Farqîn (Serdar Meçin) in the Medya Defense Zones.”



Afrin Liberation Forces publish balance sheet of actions they carried out in July

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

In a statement, the Afrin Liberation Forces (HRE) said: “The invading Turkish army and its gang groups continue to attack our areas. Our forces carried out effective actions against these attacks throughout July.”

The statement continued, detailing the actions as follows:

“- On 7 July, two bases of the invading Turkish army in the Bab region were targeted by our forces. As a result of the actions, one gang was killed and 2 invading soldiers were injured.

- On 10 July, a raid was carried out against an invading gang base in the village of Kibeşînê in Sherawa. In this action, 6 gangs were killed and an AK-47 gun and a thermal camera were confiscated.

On the same day (10 July), an action was carried out against the invading Turkish army base in the Ezaz region. An occupying soldier was killed in the action and 2 invaders were injured.

- On 29 July, a raid was carried out against a base of invading gang groups located between Maree and Ezaz regions. In the action where control of the base passed to our forces in a short time, the enemy tried to send reinforcements twice, but had to retreat with the intervention of our forces instead. As far as we

could establish in the action, 5 gangs were killed and 4 gangs were injured. As a result of the action, 3 AK-47s, a BKC, a B-7 gun, 2 bags and 3 motorcycles were destroyed.

- On 31 July, a raid was carried out on the base of the invading gangs in the village of Birc Heyder in Sherawa. In the action, 3 gangs were killed, an AK-47, a rack and 5 magazines belonging to this weapon, a daytime scope and a phone were confiscated.

On the same day (31 July), 4 mercenaries were injured in the action that took place in Sherawa.

A total of one soldier and 15 mercenaries were killed in the actions, and 4 soldiers and 8 mercenaries were injured. The actions were carried out in memory of the martyrs of June.”



PKK calls for total resistance against AKP/MHP fascism

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

The AKP/MHP regime’s attacks on the Medya Defence Zones and Rojava, waves of arrests and reprisals against the people of Northern Kurdistan and Turkey have been increasing rapidly since the elections. In a statement on Tuesday, the Executive Committee of the PKK called for total resistance and warned against agents and collaborators, saying: “All our people and their friends, especially the youth and women, should be very attentive and not give agents a chance. We know that the struggle against the murderous attacks of fascism is inseparable from the struggle against betrayal by agents and collaborators. Therefore, it is important and necessary for all patriots and democrats to carry on this struggle effectively everywhere and in every place.”

The statement of the Executive Committee of the PKK reads as follows:

The attacks are primarily aimed at Öcalan

“After the illegitimate elections, the fascist dictatorship of Tayyip Erdogan and his People’s Alliance has restructured itself. As expected, it has increased its attacks, repression and terror supported by NATO and the KDP against North and South Kurdistan, Rojava and Shengal, but also against the whole society in Turkey and our people at home and abroad. The aim to be achieved by these fascist-genocidal attacks is clear: to suffocate Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan) in the isolation of İmralı, to crush the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla, to liquidate the PKK and to complete the cultural genocide in North Kurdistan, to intimidate our patriotic people and their democratic friends and to occupy South Kurdistan and Rojava.

There is no doubt that these attacks are primarily aimed at Leader Apo, who has been held hostage on İmralı for 25 years and has not been heard from for 29 months. Requests for visits from family members and lawyers are continuously refused. While on the one hand, these visits are prevented under the pretext of constructed disciplinary sanctions, on the other hand, it is made impossible for Leader Apo to regain his physical freedom on the basis of European law. The unprecedented physical and psychological repression

and torture on İmralı have reached a new high. Therefore, all those who call themselves patriots and democrats must be vigilant and fight against this system of annihilation. This is the most basic measure for sustainable democracy and patriotism.

Leader Öcalan has been waging the greatest and most meaningful freedom struggle against the system of torture and genocide on İmralı for 25 years. This resistance must be interpreted and embraced correctly. This resistance represents dignification of human virtue against any form of genocidal attacks. It keeps alive Kurdishness and humanity that are wanted choked. This truth must be understood correctly and the struggle for freedom and democracy must be expanded, based on the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan. On this basis, we salute our people's attitude that embraced Leader Öcalan in Lausanne on the hundredth anniversary of the genocidal treaty, and the call of our friends, European trade unions, intellectuals and municipalities that called for the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan in Brussels on July 26. On the same basis, we call for the expansion of actions to demand the physical freedom of Leader Öcalan against the system of torture and isolation on İmralı.

The attacks are based on support from NATO, Astana and the KDP

It is obvious that the attacks against the freedom guerrillas and Leader Apo have been intensified. Since 19 July, new invasion attacks have been launched against Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna and all kinds of prohibited weapons, including tactical nuclear weapons, have been used. AKP/MHP fascism is mobilising all the forces and means of Turkey to occupy the Medya Defence Zones, which it has not been able to occupy despite its attacks since August 2016. It is quite clear that it relies on the support of NATO, Astana and the KDP to develop these murderous occupation attacks.

Undoubtedly, as in the past seven years, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla continues to resist heroically and does not let the fascist genocidal attacks of occupiers through. As can be read in the press every day, our guerrilla forces are dealing heavy blows to the occupiers with their actions. As with the İmralı resistance, it is also necessary to recognise the historical importance of the current guerrilla resistance for Kurdish freedom and democratic humanity. In this context, we salute all our guerrilla forces, the commanders and fighters of the HPG and YJA-Star who are fighting against the fascist enemy in the Medya Defence Zones, especially in Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna, as well as in the whole of Kurdistan, and congratulate them on their success. We believe that the guerrilla actions will continue to spread and will continue to deal heavy blows to the enemy.

Call for total resistance

The fascist attacks that Tayyip Erdoğan and the fascist dictatorship of the People's Alliance are trying to develop in the new period must be seen as a whole. These attacks have ideological, political and military dimensions and are directed against all sections of society, especially against youth and women. They are not only directed against the Kurds, but also against the peoples of Turkey and the whole of humanity. With boundless exploitation, nature and human values are being destroyed. In this context, we welcome the struggles against the destruction of nature, as in Akbelen, and the resistance of journalists who nevertheless shout out the truth. We call on all our people, the peoples of Turkey and democratic humanity to strengthen the resistance against the fascist aggression of the AKP/MHP regime and for freedom and democracy in all fields.

Spying activities mustn't be given a chance

It is obvious that AKP/MHP fascism does not only rely on technical means in these attacks, but also increasingly on agents, collaborators and traitors. It tries to use all means and methods at its disposal to recruit agents. This ranges from intimidation to bribery. Fascism tries to infiltrate patriotic and democratic groups in particular, in order to attack the castle from within, so to speak. In this context, all our people and their friends, especially the youth and women, should be very alert and not give such spying activities a chance. We know that the struggle against the fascist-genocidal attacks of fascism is inseparable from the struggle against treachery by agents and collaborators. Therefore, it is important and necessary for all patriots and democrats to continue this struggle effectively everywhere and in every place.

August, a month of genocide and resistance

Now a new August begins for us as a movement and as a people. August is not only a month of revolutionary breakthrough, but also a month of genocide and resistance against it. In fact, we are completing the ninth year after the Shengal genocide started by ISIS on 3 August 2014 and the great resistance against it. The tenth year is beginning. First and foremost, we condemn these genocidal attacks and once again salute and celebrate the great resistance of our Kurdish Yazidi people. In the person of Mam Zekî Şengalî, we remember with respect and gratitude all the heroic martyrs of this great resistance. We are convinced that this resistance will become stronger in its tenth year and that democratic, autonomous life will continue to develop.

We, as the PKK, have stood by the side of the Yazidi Kurdish people against the genocidal attacks of ISIS from the first moment and have contributed to the struggle for the freedom of Shengal with dozens of martyrs. Later, when it was said that 'the PKK is an obstacle to civilian political life', we withdrew our guerrilla forces from the area. But although five years have passed since, the powers that said so and are dealing with the region have not come up with a serious democratic solution. Instead, as the 9 October agreement shows, they have decided to establish a new system of oppression and domination over our Kurdish Yazidi people. On this occasion, we warn these powers and call on them to abandon their sinister aspirations, fulfil their promises and support the free development of the democratic, autonomous life of our Yazidi Kurdish people. We also declare that we are following this situation closely in order to prevent our Yazidi Kurdish people from being exposed to a new genocide.

We remember all our August martyrs in the person of comrades Hüseyin Mahir, Sarı İbrahim, Agit Garzan and Atakan Mahir with respect, love and gratitude, and we reaffirm our pledge to achieve their goals and keep their memory alive."

ISIS gang leader arrested in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

The Anti-Terror Forces (HAT) of the Internal Security Forces in North-East Syria arrested a gang leader of ISIS in an operation in Deir ez-Zor.

According to a statement released by the Internal Security Forces in North-East Syria on Tuesday, the raid was carried out in northern Deir ez-Zor on July 31 morning as part of operations against terrorist cells.

The special operation was supported by the International Coalition forces in line with the surveillance activities by the Asayish (public security forces).

The arrested ISIS gang leader was responsible for financing the members of the terrorist organization in order to implement their terrorist plans to target the region. His weapons and communication devices were also seized.

The Internal Security Forces assured that they would “continue to pursue the remnants of terrorists who are trying to disturb the security and safety of our regions”.

On the other hand, the Internal Security Forces units dismantled an explosive device in an abandoned house in the city of Heseke.

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Turkey carried out 53 attacks on Afrin and Shehba in July

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

According to an ANHA report based on military sources, the invading Turkish state carried out at least 53 attacks on the regions of Afrin and Shehba during the month of July.

According to the report, the attacks were directed against 32 villages, the town of Meranaz, the district of Til Rifat, Minix Airport and military positions of the Damascus government forces.

The attacks with unmanned combat aerial vehicles (SIHA), mortars and howitzers killed a Syrian soldier and injured three civilians and nine soldiers.

The attacks also caused material damage to civilian property and cultivated lands.

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SDF conducts extensive military exercises in the Euphrates region

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have conducted extensive military exercises in the Euphrates region to enhance the combat readiness of their fighters.

“During these intensive exercises, our forces employed heavy and medium weaponry while our fighters engaged in simulated enemy target bombardments and skillfully repelled infiltration attempts. This approach enabled them to experience a real battle scenario,” said the SDF Media Center.

The exercises saw the active participation of fighters from all SDF military formations and the Women’s Protection Units (YPJ). Throughout the drills, they showcased their remarkable ability to counter all forms of attacks, ensuring the protection of the regions of North-East Syria and safeguarding the security and stability of the populace.

“These exercises form a crucial part of our SDF’s ongoing commitment to increase the preparedness of our fighters and further develop their skills. The ultimate goal is to make them proficient in turning the tide during potential battles and handling various attack scenarios with military wisdom and experience to achieve victory and defeat the enemy,” said the SDF statement on Tuesday.



PYD calls on the Yazidi community to return and rebuild Shengal

ANF | QAMISHLO | 2 AUGUST 2023

The General Assembly of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) issued a statement on the occasion of the 9th anniversary of the Shengal genocide committed by ISIS mercenaries on 3 August 2014.

The statement said that the enemies of the Kurdish people attacked Shengal because they understood that it was the historical and cultural reality, belief and resistance of the Kurdish people, and said: “We should know that in 2014, a genocide against the Kurds was prepared at the Turkish ‘national security’ meeting and this plan was implemented. In this context, they were going to attack Shengal and advance towards the Kurdistan regions until Kobanê. But they were defeated.”

Pointing out that conspiracies against the Yazidis continue, the statement said: “For this, we must look at ourselves, recognize the enemy, and seek ways to resist and strengthen the gains of our martyrs.”

The statement added: “We bow respectfully before the martyrs of Shengal and the freedom martyrs of the Kurdish people. We reiterate our promise that we will not give up on the search for freedom, honor and rights of the Kurdish people. We call on the Yazidi community to return to their lands, to reconstruct and rebuild their regions and holy places. We call on democratic forces and humanitarian aid organizations to support our Yazidi people and take into account the suffering they have suffered in the genocide.”

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KCK: We will hold those responsible for the Yazidi genocide to account

ANF | 2 AUGUST 2023

The Co-Presidency of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) Executive Council released a statement on the 9th anniversary of the Yazidi genocide carried out by the Islamic State and on the international responsibility to support the Yazidis’ efforts for self-administration and self-defense.

“Parliaments and governments of many countries have passed resolutions recognizing the Yazidi genocide. These have been positive and valuable decisions. However, the right of the people of Shengal to have a democratic self-administration [and] self-defense forces should also be supported,” said the KCK statement, which further includes the following:

“Nine years ago, the IS [Islamic State] committed a genocide against the Yazidi people in Shengal [Sinjar]. The Yazidis themselves define this as the 74th genocide committed against them. Regrettably, thousands of Yazidis lost their lives or were taken captive, thus suffering unimaginably. We would like to once again honor the memory of those who lost their lives during the genocide and express that we share the pain of the Yazidi people. With great disgust we condemn the fascist IS gangs, these enemies of humanity, as well as their collaborators who committed the genocide. We would also like to renew our promise that as the Kurdish Freedom Movement we will stand by the people of Shengal in general and by the Yazidi people until the end. We will hold all those responsible for the suffering and the genocide to account.

The Yazidi people have been subjected to attacks and massacres by sovereign powers many times throughout history because of their faith. Therefore, it is very difficult to explain the history and life of the Yazidi people, which has been marked by genocides and massacres. Apart from looking for reasons, just thinking about this reality is difficult enough. What has been done to the Yazidis can only be described as a dark mentality and as savagery. The mentality of the fascist IS gangs, who inflicted the 74th genocide on the Yazidi people, reveals this clearly.

Humanity as a whole has a historical responsibility towards a people that have experienced so many massacres and genocides throughout history. Humanity’s responsibility is to create conditions in which the Yazidi people will not be subjected to genocide again, will be able to keep their faith and culture alive and will ensure their democratic self-administration and self-defense. Only this can be the right attitude against the genocides of the past. Today’s global standard of values, righteousness, morality, conscience and

fairness is defined by the approach towards the people of Shengal and the Yazidis. Without recognizing this reality and acting accordingly, one cannot speak of humanitarian and conscientious values, of justice and democracy.

It is well-known how the Iraqi state forces and the KDP acted in the face of the IS attack. They did not resist but left the people of Shengal unprotected, thus exposing them to a genocide. If the guerrilla forces had not been there and if the YPG/YPJ forces had not rushed to the aid of the people of Shengal, there would have been a much bigger genocide. It was the fighters of the guerrillas and from Rojava, all deeply attached to Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan], who prevented an even bigger genocide. However, those who did not take a stance against the genocide today try to impose their own rule on Shengal and want to eliminate the democratic self-administration and self-defense forces of the Yazidi people. This constitutes a great insult to the Yazidi people. The so-called 'Treaty of October 9th', which was signed by the Kadhimi government on behalf of the Iraqi state and the KDP with support by the United Nations (UN), is a document representing this insult and shame. This treaty, which envisions the KDP's rule over Shengal, is completely anti-democratic. Imposing it means continuing the genocide against the Yazidis. It is very regretful that the people of Shengal and their democratic institutions were not consulted, while those who exposed the people of Shengal to the genocide made a treaty among themselves and imposed it on Shengal. Imposing this on the people of Shengal and not taking a stance against this constitutes a greater crime than the genocide itself. Everybody needs to take the right attitude on this issue and the impositions on the people of Shengal have to be stopped. Only a treaty that takes into account the will of the people of Shengal and envisions the existence of a democratic self-administration and self-defense forces of the people of Shengal can be legitimate.

The demands of the people of Shengal for a democratic self-administration and self-defense forces are legitimate. There is nothing more legitimate and natural than a people who has been subjected to genocide to demand to live its belief and culture and to have these institutions. This not only in accordance with Iraqi and international law, but also constitutes a necessity. Rejecting these demands is illegitimate. The Iraqi state needs to therefore abandon its current attitude regarding the impositions of the KDP and the Turkish state. It needs to reject these impositions and adopt an approach that respects the will of the people of Shengal and solves the problems through dialogue and reconciliation. The interests of the Iraqi state lie not in the politics of the KDP and the Turkish state, but in solving the problems with the people of Shengal through dialogue. States and international institutions, especially the UN, should not support impositions that do not respect the will of the people of Shengal. The KDP wants Shengal to be under its rule and the Yazidis to serve it. The Turkish state, on the other hand, has an anti-Kurdish mentality. It wants to carry out a Kurdish genocide. It is expansionist and colonialist. By increasing its influence over South Kurdistan/Northern Iraq and Shengal, it wants to establish hegemony over all of Iraq.

States and international organizations also have clear responsibilities towards the people of Shengal. The Yazidi people are a community with a deep-rooted faith. This people have been massacred and have faced several genocides throughout history. It should be supported and allowed to have a democratic self-administration and self-defense forces and to live its faith and culture. Parliaments and governments of many countries have passed resolutions recognizing the Yazidi genocide. These have been positive and valuable decisions. However, the right of the people of Shengal to have a democratic self-administration, self-defense forces and to live their faith and culture should also be supported and decisions should be taken in this regard. Peoples that have survived genocide have this very legitimate right. Therefore, everybody who considers themselves human and values their own morals and conscience needs to support this. The people

of Shengal want to live in a unified Iraq on the basis of the recognition of their democratic will. Only by recognizing this legitimate right will it be possible to support the people of Shengal and to stand against the genocide.”

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Four more civilians kidnapped in Turkish-occupied Afrin

ANF | 2 AUGUST 2023

According to local sources, Turkish intelligence service MIT kidnapped two civilians from the village of Dadina in Afrin's Rajo district. The two civilians were identified as Hemîd Hemîd Kêncî and Seîd Ebdo Osman.

On the other hand, the so-called 'Military Police', a paramilitary criminal network established by the Turkish state in the occupied areas, kidnapped 22-year-old Kemal Mihyedîn from the village of Cholaqa in Jindires district, and 25-year-old Omer Elî from the village of Marate. The mercenaries asked for a ransom of 700 dollars to release the two civilians.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



TEV-DEM calls for the recognition of Yazidi genocide, closure of airspace to avoid further massacres

ANF | 2 AUGUST 2023

The Movement for a Democratic Society (TEV-DEM) in North-East Syria released a statement on the anniversary of the Yazidi genocide perpetrated by ISIS in Shengal (Sinjar) on 3 August 2014.

TEV-DEM commemorated the victims of the genocide committed in Shengal by ISIS with the support of the Turkish state and other local and international powers.

“The KDP connived at the ISIS terrorists settling in the city and committing a genocide against the cultural and historical legacy of the Yazidi people. Thousands of Yazidis lost their lives and suffered gravely, especially the women and children who were taken captive. The Yazidi people dubbed this onslaught the ‘74th genocide’, as a continuation of the massacres they had suffered before. The history of our Yazidi people is full of resistance, struggle, national attitude and humanitarian values that protect the cultural legacy, essence and existence of their society. Today, these values are faced with a policy of genocide,” said TEV-DEM.

Referring to the UN-backed agreement concluded between Baghdad and the KDP on 9 October 2020 in line with the interests of the invading Turkish state, TEV-DEM stated: “This agreement seeks to complete the genocide against the Yazidi community and to crush their essence and spirit of resistance. Yet, a contemporary historic resistance was developed to build a social democratic system in Shengal and Nineveh Plain with a resurgent spirit which was encouraged by the sacrifices made by the Kurdistan Freedom Movement to claim this legacy. This resistance became the beginning of a contemporary revolution on the way to reviving and organizing the Yazidi community through the founding of democratic institutions and resistance units that defeated terror and liberated Shengal.”

TEV-DEM called on the international community, the UN Security Council and institutions for the protection of ethnic-religious minorities to uphold their moral duties and responsibilities to protect the will of peoples facing massacre and genocide and to stop the crime of demographic change.

The statement concluded: “We also call for the closure of the airspace in Shengal, Maxmur and South Kurdistan (North Iraq) regions that are continuously targeted by Turkish airstrikes. The UN, which does not recognize this genocide and avoids bringing those responsible to account, is responsible for such massacres and crimes against humanity. The UN’s negligence encourages the Turkish state to expand its occupation and commit further massacres against people.”

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YJŞ: We will preserve our self-defence and avenge the genocide

ANF | SHENGAL | 2 AUGUST 2023

The Shengal Women’s Units (YJŞ), which together with the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ) form the defence of the self-administered region, issued a statement marking 3 August, the ninth anniversary of the beginning of the ISIS genocide against the Yazidi population of the Shengal (Sinjar) region of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

The statement referred to the history of resistance of the Yazidis and remembered those killed in the 74th Ferman. Ferman is the term used by the Yazidis to describe the massacres and extermination operations in their history. The 74th Ferman is the ISIS genocide that began with the rout of the KDP peshmerga and the invasion of the self-proclaimed “Islamic State” in the region.

The YJŞ said: “Our martyrs are the foundation for a free life. They contributed significantly to the recognition of women’s free will and became a light in the darkness of patriarchy. We will follow our martyrs, who deeply internalised the ideas and thoughts of Leader Abdullah Öcalan, until the end. We remember with respect and gratitude our comrades Deniz, Bêrivan Seîd, Rusyar, Bêrivan Arîn, Nûjîn and Şilan Goyî, who participated in the liberation and struggle of Shengal and fell in different places, as well as Mam Zekî, Zerdeşt Seîd, Dijwar and Pîr Çeko, who fell after the liberation.”

Referring to the importance of Abdullah Öcalan in the struggle against patriarchy, YJŞ stated: “Patriarchy could not realise its dreams of destroying the will of women thanks to the existence of Leader Öcalan. On this basis, the women of Êzdîxan (Yazidi land) founded the YJŞ and started their freedom march. This march has been growing every day for nine years.”

Regarding the role of the HPG and YJA Star guerrillas in the liberation of Shengal, YJŞ said: “The entire Yazidi community, especially the Yazidi women, were targeted by the states from the moment they recognised themselves and were subjected to all kinds of political, cultural and physical genocide. The fighters of Leader Öcalan came to our aid and made great sacrifices to protect the Yazidi people, their culture and their future. They liberated our land and handed it over to us.”

The statement continued: “We have full confidence that we will move towards a life of dignity together with Leader Öcalan. The ruling powers are once again protecting the patriarchal system and preventing people from living a life of dignity and freedom. Leader Öcalan is held in severe isolation by the Turkish government. As YJŞ, we condemn his isolation and say ‘Jin Jiyar Azadî with Rêber Öcalan’. On this basis,

the HPG, YJA Star, YPG and YPJ put up unique resistance and paid a heavy price nine years ago when the Yazidis were subjected to genocide in Shengal. With their sacrifices, they will forever remain our pioneers.

ISIS was not an independent army. ISIS is the Turkish state, ISIS is the Taliban. ISIS attacked our Yazidi people with the sword of genocide. Once again, they wanted to silence the cries for freedom. But the aim of ISIS in this onslaught was not only physical genocide. The culture, religion, faith and way of life of the Yazidi people were also the target of this attack. They massacred our elders, who represented our living history to us, and buried them in mass graves. They abducted our children, who are our future, to indoctrinate them in Islam and make them forget their Yazidi faith. By abducting the girls and women, they attacked the values of women with their millennia-old rape culture. Besides torture, assault and rape, they also attacked our religion by trying to force conversion. Women ended their lives to protect their honour. Our society has seen all these facts.

The Turkish state played the father role in the founding of ISIS. It continues to play this role perfectly before the eyes of the whole world. The reality of hegemonic states was revealed in the war against ISIS. In contrast, our goal as YJŞ is to protect and preserve our roots through the self-defence force we have built. We have come a long way with this philosophy, because these days have been achieved throughout history with resistance and work, and won with blood. We have protected Shengal with this force and transformed the 74th Ferman into resistance, organisation and freedom. We owe this to the philosophy of Leader Öcalan and his fighters. We are aware that our people are intended to be forced to leave their country and migrate through different special war policies.

Western states, the Turkish state, the Iraqi government and the Barzanis signed an agreement in 2020, which they call the 9 October Agreement. Although with this agreement they are continuing the genocide by law, they should know very well that the Yazidis are no longer the same. The Yazidis now have defence forces and institutions like the YJŞ and the YBŞ. We, the YJŞ, claim our roots, do not give up our land and our homeland and we lead an honourable life with great struggle and resistance. The defence forces leading the Yazidi people taught us that society must not be defenceless. On this basis, we declared our autonomy and built our own forces.

As YJŞ, we declare that we will not forget the 74th Ferman. The revenge for the Ferman, the freedom of Leader Öcalan and the autonomy of Shengal will be ensured. With this conviction, we salute all the women who sacrificed their lives for freedom and who are walking the path of freedom. On the ninth anniversary of the genocide, we call upon women to take to the streets under the slogan: 'Revenge for genocide is possible through women's organisation and defence'. We must return to our country and keep alive and preserve our culture, religion and history."

SOHR: Turkey deported more Syrian refugees to occupied regions

ANF | 2 AUGUST 2023

While the Kurdish population in particular is being systematically expelled from the areas occupied by Turkey in northern Syria, the Turkish state is pursuing an intensive settlement policy.

One of these occupied areas is the region of Girê Spî (Tal Abyad). The formerly multicultural, self-governing region was occupied by Turkey in 2019 and is now controlled by the Turkish intelligence service and jihadist mercenaries. According to the Girê Spî Cantol Council, more than 100,000 people had to flee the region after the Turkish invasion.

People loyal to the Turkish regime are now being resettled in their place. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), Turkish authorities have deported more than 160 Syrian refugees, including women and children, through the border crossings between Syria and Turkey towards Gire Spi (Tal Abyad) and Serekaniye (Ras Al-Ain) within the “Peace Spring” area on Wednesday.

According to SOHR, a group of young men among the deported people were sent to the Gire Spi area without their families.

In parallel, three young Syrian refugees were arrested after they passed the border towards the “Peace Spring” area by Ankara-backed factions, in order to obtain ransoms for their release.

“The suffering of the Syrians continues after their deportation to the areas that are controlled by Turkish forces and their proxies, amid the continued forced deportation processes by the Turkish authorities,” said SOHR, stressing that Turkey seeks to settle the deportees in the complexes built in the north of Syria under the name of “Safe Return” and to bring about a demographic change in the area.

According to SOHR, the deported people are subjected to violations and pressure by the factions while they cross through Jilan Banar crossing separating between Gire Spi and Serekaniye, and have their contents and steal the expensive and valuable items inspected and searched.

During the month of July, ANHA documented the arrival of more than 250 refugees to the occupied canton via the Girê Spî (Tal Abyad) border crossing. The Turkish state deported 160 Syrian refugees, most of them from the cities of Hama, Aleppo, Idlib and other cities in the first week of this month. This was followed by the deportation of 42 others as part of its settlement project in the occupied areas. During the past week, Turkey deported 4 families and a number of young people to be settled in the Girê Spî Canton.

According to a local source from the occupied canton, these refugees are settled in the homes of the forcibly displaced people, seizing the property of the indigenous population and cultivating their fields in cooperation with the mercenaries of the Turkish occupation.

Speaking to ANHA, the deputy co-chair of the Girê Spî Canton Council, Heza Mihemed, warned of the consequences of the resettlement policy and the change of the region's demography. He noted that the Turkish state tried to annex these lands to his alleged empire.

Mihemed remarked that the Turkish state was deporting the Syrian refugees as part of a well-thought-out plan aimed at settling them in the homes and properties of the forcibly displaced people who emigrated due to the Turkish occupation of the canton following the aggression of October 9, 2019.

ANHA has documented the entry of more than 22,000 refugees into the occupied Girê Spî canton since the Turkish authorities announced in early April 2022 that one million refugees would be deported to the occupied areas of Syria.



HPG: 12 Turkish soldiers were killed in guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 2 AUGUST 2023

The Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the guerrilla struggle against the large-scale attack of the Turkish army on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG, fierce resistance is taking place in the Girê Cûdî mountain massif west of the Zap region, and the defence of the area is being led by the YJA Star (Free Women's Troops).

“Led by the YJA Star, our forces in the Girê Cûdî resistance area are dealing heavy blows to the Turkish occupation army and preventing the stationing of troops in the area. The Turkish army suffers heavy losses at Girê Cûdî every day, which it hides from the public. In the total of 17 actions carried out by our forces in the Girê Cûdî resistance area in the last 48 hours, 12 occupants were punished, and one tent was destroyed. In addition, a demolition excavator and five emplacements were hit and damaged. The actions are revenge for our companions Robîn Avent and Yıldız Şahin Botan, who died as selfless militants of the YJA Star in the Girê Cûdî resistance area.”

HPG gave the following details of the guerrilla actions at Girê Cûdî over the past two days:

31 July, 4.40 a.m.: A Turkish army unit was shot at and hit.

31 July, 8.30 a.m.: A soldier was shot dead while trying to enter a guerrilla position.

31 July, 9.00 a.m.: A YJA Star sniper shot dead a soldier whose unit was trying to establish a position.

31 July, 14.30: An advancing Turkish unit was fired upon and hit.

31 July, 3.40 p.m.: Fighters of the YJA Star struck an enemy position with heavy weapons.

31 July, 16.00: An advancing unit was struck with semi-automatic weapons.

31 July, 16.50: The YJA Star hit a Turkish position with heavy weapons.

31 July, 17.00: A Turkish unit trying to climb a mountain peak was targeted with sabotage tactics and three soldiers were killed.

31 July, 6.00 p.m.: A YJA Star sniper shot dead a soldier attempting to advance.

1 August, 6.50 a.m.: A Turkish Army sniper observing the area through a telescope was shot dead by an HPG sniper.

1 August, 8.15 a.m.: YJA Star fighters targeted an army advance with heavy weapons and damaged an enemy position.

1 August, 9.30 a.m.: The YJA Star guerrillas targeted an advance attempt with semi-automatic weapons, killing one soldier.

1 August, 11.00 and 11.40 a.m.: Further advance attempts were stopped by the guerrillas with heavy weapons and two positions were damaged.

1 August, 2.25 p.m.: A military tent was struck with heavy weapons and destroyed. Two soldiers were killed.

1 August, 9.30 p.m.: Two soldiers were killed in an action with heavy weapons.

HPG also reported a guerrilla action with heavy weapons on Tuesday in the resistance area of Sîda, where the Turkish army is trying to demolish the guerrillas' tunnel facilities with heavy construction equipment. The equipment used was hit in the shelling and put out of action.

According to the HPG, Turkish fighter jets have bombed guerrilla areas in the Xakurke, Avaşîn, Zap and Metîna regions seven times in the past two days. Artillery attacks were carried out in Zap and Metîna.

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Nine years ago the Yazidi genocide in Shengal

ANF | 3 AUGUST 2023

The Yazidi (Êzidî) Kurds, who have been living in the Mesopotamian region for thousands of years, have, throughout history, always been subjected to genocides and cruel betrayals and massacres and, on 3 August 2014, suffered the 74th genocide (or *Ferman* as they call it).

The Yazidi Kurds, who call the genocides perpetrated on them 'Ferman', the Kurdish term for decree, fell this time into the grip of almost total annihilation, captivity and enslavement by the ferocious ISIS gangs. But what was more suffocating for the Yazidis than the stranglehold of ISIS, was the betrayal that clad itself in a black garment.

A well-prepared genocide

When the ISIS gangs stood at the doors of Shengal, thousands of Peshmerga and asayish members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) chaired by Masoud Barzani, who until that very moment controlled the Shengal town, made a quick getaway without shooting even one single bullet. As a result of the flight of the KDP Peshmerga, thousands of Yazidis were slaughtered by the ISIS gangs, thousands more were abducted, predominantly women and children, and sold at markets into slavery. Interestingly, shortly before the genocide took place, the KDP forces seized all the arms and weapons the Yazidis had at that time and took into custody three of the twelve guerrillas of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) and the Free Women's Troops (YJA-Star), who came to the rescue of the fleeing Yazidi people. All this made it indeed very clear, how well prepared and organized this extensive genocide actually was.

The UN report on the genocide

According to the investigations of the High Commissioner of Human Rights of the United Nations, which were made public in October 2014, the results of the attacks launched on 3 August 2014 were as follows:

- around 5000 Yazidi men were massacred
- around 100 Yazidi men were beheaded
- 7000 Yazidi girls and women were abducted and sold at slave markets
- A number of Yazidi girls and women were raped
- Some Yazidi women were forced to marry ISIS commanders

The estimated number of unknown cases was much higher than what was written in the report of the United Nations.

Genocides against Yazidis throughout history

The Yazidis, who follow one of the most ancient faiths of Mesopotamia, have suffered in the course of history 74 genocides. Most of those mass murders were perpetrated by the Ottoman empire. Because most of these genocides to wipe out the Yazidi community were ordered by the leading Ottoman Shahs via a fiat, the Kurdish Yazidis dubbed those genocides, therefore, with the Kurdish term for "decree". The first genocide was ordered in the year 1246 by the lord of Zengi of Mosul, Bedreddin Lulu, the last one by the Neo Ottoman AKP and its ally KDP and perpetrated by the ISIS gangs. In each and every genocide, the name of Islam was used.

Some of the genocides that were perpetrated in the course of history against the Yazidi community and mostly ordered by the Ottoman Shahs, are listed here:

- * In 1246 the massacre of Lalesh, directed by the lord of Zengi of Mosul Bedreddin Lulu
- * In the 16th century mass murder of the Yazidis in Shêxan was ordered by a fatwa of Shekhulislami Osmani Ebu Siud Efendi and by a decree given by Sultan Suleyman
- * In 1638 the governor of Amed, Melek Ahmed Pasha had a massacre executed in Shengal
- * In 1650 mass killing of the Yazidis was decreed by Murad IV, perpetrated by Governor of Van, Shemsi Pasha in Mosul
- * In 1715 a massacre was committed in Shengal by the Governor of Baghdad, Hasan Pasha
- * In 1733 mass murder of the Yazidis in Shexan by the Governor of Baghdad Ahmed Pasha
- * In 1752 mass murder in Shengal by the Governor of Baghdad, Suleyman Pasha
- * Between 1732-1733 Nadir Shah ordered a massacre of the Yazidis in between Surdash and Kirkuk
- * In 1733 the mass murder of the Yazidis at the shore of Lake Zap by the Celiliyan
- * In 1735 Nadir Shah commanded the mass killing of the Yazidis in Mahabad, Saldûz and Meraxi
- * In 1742 Alî Takî Han, one of Nadir Shah's loyalists, committed a massacre of the Yazidi people in Saldûz
- * In 1743 Nadir Shah perpetrated a mass killing of the Yazidi Kurds in Kirkuk, Hewler and Altunköprü
- * In 1773 Nadir Shah ordered a massacre of Yazidis at the shore of Lake Zap
- * In 1787 the Celiliyan committed a mass murder against the Yazidis in Shexan
- * In 1798 Deputy Governor of Baghdad Abdulazaz Bin Abdullah Beg had a massacre against the Yazidis perpetrated in Shexan
- * Between 1753 and 1800 Ottoman Shahs ordered the pillaging, imposition of heavy taxes, enslavements and genocides of the Yazidi Kurds (about six major attacks were conducted in Shengal, Shexan and Mosul)
- * In 1809 Governor of Baghdad Suleyman Pasha ordered a mass killing of the Yazidis in Shengal
- * In 1824 massacre against the Yazidis in Shengal ordered by the Governor of Baghdad Ali Pasha
- * Between 1832-1834 mass killings were commanded by the Lord of Soran Muhammed Pasha
- * In 1835 Governor of Mosul Muhammed Ince Bayraktar had a massacre perpetrated in Shengal

* In 1836 Reshid Pasha had a massacre committed in Shengal

* In 1837 Hafiz Pasha had a massacre committed in Shengal

* In 1844 mass killing of Yazidis took place in Botan

* In 1892 the Islamisation politics of Abdulhamit the 2nd on the Yazidi community led to mass murders of the Yazidis

For more detailed information, one is advised to read the book “Yazidis in the clutches of fatwas, genocides and massacres” written by Prof. Dr. Kadri Yildirim and the book titled “A people defying genocides, the Yazidis” by journalist Mazlum Özdemir.

The massacre of 2007

One of the more recent mass killings against the Yazidi Kurds took place in 2007. On the 14th August 2007 attacks were carried out by four bomb laden trucks in the villages of Siba Shex Xidir and Til Izer of Shengal. As a result, 300 people were killed. No investigations were launched in this case whatsoever. It was reported that this massacre was perpetrated by a group of gangs called Ensar El Sune affiliated with Al-Qaeda, which tried at that time to get some foothold in Southern Kurdistan. However, many sources say that the Turkmen Front of Iraq (ITC) was involved in the attack, which was forged by the Turkish secret service in Southern Kurdistan.

The Yazidis called this attack until the 3rd August 2014 “the last decree”.

Shengal’s status before 3 August genocide

The Kurdish Yazidis were predominantly living in the Shexan district of Duhok, Shengal district of Mosul and the villages of surrounding districts. In 1975 under the Iraqi Ba'ath regime, the Yazidis were forcibly resettled. In each and every genocide they faced, the Yazidi people saved themselves from the protective arms of Mount Shengal. But in 1975 they were removed by force from the villages of the mountains and resettled in Khanasor, Til Izer, Sinune, Siba Shex Xidir, Kocho and Dugurê and around 15 other villages on the foothills of the mountain.

When, in 2003, the US intervened in Iraq and toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein, a new constitution was prepared for Iraq. According to article 140 of this constitution, Shengal was left as a so called “disputable area” between the government of Southern Kurdistan and the central government of Iraq. A referendum was planned for 2007 to be held in Shengal as well, but until today that referendum was never realised.

However, unlike the cities of Kirkuk, Jalawla, Khanaqin and Tuz Khurmatu, the KDP established its monocracy in Shengal. The city was allegedly “under the protection” of the Peshmergas and asayish of the KDP and the federal police of Iraq.

Shengal's situation prior to 3 August genocide

After imposing its absolute rule on Shengal in 2003, the KDP promoted backward traditions of society and profited until the end from the caste system of the Sheiks, through which it kept the Yazidi people under its control. The KDP even used the faith of the Yazidis for its own advantage and supported this sheikh system, keeping tabs on the entire Yazidi people.

One of the commanders of the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ) Tîrêj Şengal talked with the ANF about the latest genocide of the Yazidis and the system, which the KDP had established in Shengal, saying: "They made everyone who went to them into one of their Peshmerga and paid them a wage. They told them, go eat and drink and get your money, but do not think. They did not appreciate it when people were talking about things like honour, freedom and values. So the people stayed unorganised and uneducated until the end."

Pressure on women in the Yazidi society

Member of the Yazidi Women's Freedom Movement (TAJÊ) Xoxê Dexîl talked about the Yazidi society before the outbreak of the genocide and drew attention to the violence and pressure the Yazidi women were subject to in society, saying: "The status of the women was very weak in the Yazidi society, almost not existent. To put it in other words, a woman was as good, as much as the pressures she was subject to and as much as she was silenced! But one must not let out the continuous resistance of women against this. Yet those struggles were mostly constricted to some private people. However, when we saw after the genocide the women from Rojava and those in the guerrillas, we started to organise ourselves with their help."

Towards 3 August genocide

On the 10th of June 2014 when ISIS invaded Mosul, Shengal ran into danger more than any other district of Mosul. The Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan issued many warnings for Shengal's protection. In the context of those foresights of Öcalan, the PKK sent a unit of 12 guerrillas to Mount Shengal. On the growing imminent threats that were hovering over Shengal, the leadership of the PKK got in contact with the KDP and called attention to the grave situation. The PKK made clear that it could send some of its forces to Shengal, but the KDP did not answer this call made by the PKK.

A force of 11000 well-equipped men were on site

After invading Mosul, the ISIS gangs charged Tal Afar, a district of the Turkmen community in the immediate vicinity of Shengal. A great number of the Shia Turkmen people here fled to Shengal. The gangs were now very close to attacking Shengal next. However, instead of commencing the necessary preparations, the KDP suddenly began to seize the arms and weapons of the Yazidi people, telling them: "We will protect you". According to official statistics that were revealed afterwards, prior to the barbaric attacks of the ISIS gangs on Shengal, the number of the Peshmerga and asayish members of Southern Kurdistan and the Iraqi Federal Police, traffic police and armed units that were affiliated with some other political parties comprised altogether 11000 personnel positioned in Shengal and the surrounding villages.

“They were here for money, and fled when danger approached”

YBŞ Commander Tîrêj Şengal gave the following information about the military force in Shengal: “At that time, when the ISIS gangs took over all the areas around Shengal one after another, we still did not believe that we could be next. Because we were surrounded by a massive army of Peshmergas and even Iraqi soldiers. And we trusted them. They used to tell us: ‘We will protect you’. But unfortunately, they fled when the attacks started. Only when we asked them why they ran away, did we understand that they did not consider this place their soil and had been conscripted for the “duty to defend” only for the money. As they saw the danger approaching, they fled as soon as they were ordered to do so, without even looking back once.”

They seized the arms of Yazidi youth

Shengal Autonomous Council Deputy Co-chair Qehtan Xelîl recalled that the Peshmerga of the KDP seized all the weapons and arms of the young Yazidis shortly before the start of the genocide and stated: “On the crossing from Shengal to Tal Afar, the KDP had set up a checkpoint. When ISIS swept over ravaging, all the arms of the Yazidi youth were taken away from them here. They assured us with words like: ‘We will protect you, don’t worry, you don’t need to take up arms’. And they seized all the weapons there. However, during the genocide they did not even shoot a bullet, they did not give one martyr and had not even one of their fingers bleed. They all ran away.”



Yazidi people visit mass graves in Herdan

ANF | SHENGAL | 3 AUGUST 2023

Institutions and organizations of the Yazidi people visited the mass graves in Herdan and commemorated the martyrs of the genocide.

The people of Shengal gathered together last night, and called on the public to take a stand for the protection of the rights of the Yazidi people.

The statement read by TAJÊ member Kinê Xidir said: “Our people were massacred 9 years ago by ISIS and with the cooperation of the Barzani family. They wanted to destroy the Yazidi people and empty Shengal. Our people resisted and did not allow the enemy to achieve their aim. We call on all our people not to forget this dark day for us and to protect our martyrs. There is the blood of our martyrs in every inch of this land. We promise that we will not give up on the cause of our martyrs who died on this road.”

The statement added: “This dark day, after 9 years, stands as a black mark on the foreheads of the countries that claim to protect humanity and human rights. This massacre was carried out in front of the eyes of the whole world. But no one protected us. It is a great shame that this massacre is still not recognized as genocide. We call on all humanity to take responsibility for the Yazidi people.”



Defence forces in Shengal commemorate the victims of genocide

ANF | SHENGAL | 3 AUGUST 2023

Nine years after the beginning of the ISIS genocide against the Yazidi population, Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ), Shengal Women's Units (YJŞ) and the security forces Asayîşa Êzîdxanê gathered for a moving memorial ceremony at the Şehîd Dilgeş û Şehîd Berxwedan Cemetery of Martyrs to remember the victims. At the same time, the current danger to the Shengal region from Turkey, the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and the Iraqi government was pointed out, emphasising the need for organisation as a means against this.

Kurtay Shengalî gave a speech on behalf of the YBŞ and YJŞ and said: "August is a dark month for us, for the entire Yazidi people. The enemies and occupiers committed massacres this month and our people experienced unspeakable suffering. Thousands of people, men, women, old and young, were cruelly murdered. No one asked about us except those who had a conscience and shed tears for us."

Shengalî continued: "Those who threw themselves into the flames for us after the mass murder began were the Apoist fighters who were ready to make sacrifices. They defended our people. Commanders like Şehîd Berxwedan, Şehîd Said, Şehîd Hamit and Şehîd Zerdeşt saved our people from mass murder. No matter how great the persecution the enemy wants to inflict on us, there will always be heroines and heroes who will stand up to them. Those who imposed this mass murder on us were those who betrayed their own people for their own interests. These traitors sold out our people. That is why we must know our friends and enemies well."

Shengalî concluded his speech with the words: "We are proud of our martyrs who saved us from genocide. Our people must believe in their own strength and will. The YBŞ, the YJŞ and the Asayîşa Êzîdxanê were built with the blood of our martyrs and the strength of Leader Öcalan."



Life brought to a standstill in Shengal in commemoration of the victims of genocide

ANF | SHENGAL | 3 AUGUST 2023

In the Shengal (Sinjar) region in the northwest of Iraq, the victims of the genocide committed by ISIS against the Yazidi community nine years ago were commemorated. At ten o'clock local time, life was

brought to a standstill for five minutes in all localities. Traffic stopped, people interrupted their daily activities. In Xanesor, Sinûnê and the city of Shengal, commemoration ceremonies were held, organised by institutions of self-government. In the villages of the region, people also remembered their dead and missing.

Yusif Cuan Heci from Xanesor said they stopped life for those killed in the 2014 ferman. Ferman is the term the Yazidis use to refer to the massacres and extermination operations in their history. While in Ottoman usage the term stands for a decree of the Sultan, in the Yazidi community the word took on the denotation of persecutions and pogroms. The genocide and femicide that began with the rout of the KDP peshmerga and the ISIS invasion of Shengal on 3 August was the 74th ferman in Yazidi history. “We faced a ferman and a massacre was carried out. This day must not be forgotten, and we must commemorate those who died. The ferman was directed against all of us. We will never forget who came to our aid that day and who betrayed us,” said Yezidi Heci.

Xalid Şengalî, member of the People’s Council of Xanesor, pointed out at the commemoration that not all bodies buried in mass graves have been exhumed and identified yet: “The bones of our martyrs are still lying in mass graves. Many of these mass graves are still untouched. We demand that they be opened.”

Yezidi cleric Feqir Şivan said, “Today is a black day for us and we remember all the fallen of Êzdîxan (Yazidi land). All Yazidis must come together today. On 3 August 2014, our homeland was destroyed. But no ferman has been able to destroy the Yazidis.”

The Yazidis are believed to have been the victims of at least 73 waves of persecution since the twelfth century. The most recent was on 3 August 2014, when the self-proclaimed ISIS invaded Shengal with the determined intention of wiping out the Yazidi culture. Tens of thousands of Yazidis had no choice but to flee into the mountains. But not all of them managed to do so in time. The jihadists committed mass murders of men, abducted women and children to rape them, enslave them or recruit them as child soldiers. It is estimated that more than 10,000 people fell victim to these massacres. More than 400,000 people were displaced from their homes. Over 7,000 women and children were abducted, and over 2,500 of them are still missing today. Therefore, this genocide in its form also represents a femicide.

When the ISIS attack began, a nine-member PKK guerrilla group defended the people that had fled to Mount Shengal. With the support of other HPG and YJA Star battalions as well as YPG and YPJ fighters, an escape corridor to Rojava was cleared and hundreds of thousands of people were saved.



Turkish attack injures 5 civilians in a village of Til Temir

ANF | TIL TEMIR | 3 AUGUST 2023

According to reports from the ground, the Turkish state launched an attack on the village of Abush north of the Til Temir district in Heseke Canton on Thursday.

The attack injured five civilians named as Hisên Elî Hemîre, Ebdulbaqî Seyd Elî, Mahir Hisên Hemîre, Besam Hemîd Egele and Ebdulkerîm Deham.

The injured locals were taken to the Şehit Lêgerîn Hospital in Til Temir.

The strategic position of Til Temir

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

Attacks in the region occur almost daily, with phases of high intensity alternating with phases of low intensity. 27 villages in the Khabur valley are directly on the front line. Five of all Assyrian villages in the region have already been depopulated by Turkey's attacks. Scores of people have been killed in the attacks and dozens injured. The Syrian troops stationed in Til Temir and the Russian military are not fulfilling their function of complying with a de-escalation and ceasefire agreement agreed between Ankara, Moscow and Washington in the course of the 2019 war of aggression.

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YPG: We will always stand with our Yazidi people

ANF | 3 AUGUST 2023

The General Command of People's Defense Units (YPG) released a statement marking 3 August, the ninth anniversary of the beginning of the ISIS genocide against the Yazidi population of the Shengal (Sinjar) region of southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) in 2014.

Calling the Yazidi genocide one of the most tragic and traumatic massacres in human history, YPG stated: "The forces responsible for the Shengal region at the time, as well as all regional and international states remained blind, deaf and dumb about this genocide, which was a great shame not only for the region but the entire humanity. All world powers are responsible for defending the rights of the Yazidi community and supporting their freedom struggle to make sure that they are not subjected to similar massacres again."

Pointing to the heroic resistance put up by the HPG (People's Defense Forces), YPG (People's Defense Units) and YPJ (Women's Defense Units) to defend Shengal, YPG noted that young women and men in Shengal took part in the resistance alongside the YPG-YPJ fighters and prevented a terrible genocide.

The YPG stressed that the invading Turkish state seeks to complete the Yazidi genocide that ISIS left unfinished, calling on the international powers and states to intervene in the Turkish state that collaborates with ISIS and to call it to account.

The YPG statement concluded: “We will always stand with our Yazidi people as we did in the past and do today. In the event of an attack against our Yazidi people, we will take it as an attack directed against us and act accordingly. Our heroic martyrs entrusted us with the defence of Shengal.”

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HPG reports Turkish use of tactical nuclear weapon in guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 3 AUGUST 2023

According to the statement by the Press Office of People’s Defence Forces (HPG) on Thursday, the Turkish army used a tactical nuclear bomb against a guerrilla position in Sîda in the Zap region at six o’clock on Thursday morning. The area has been contested for some time and Turkish troops have repeatedly tried to demolish the guerrillas’ underground defences with heavy construction equipment.

Meanwhile, the Turkish army’s military operation in the western Zap region continues. According to the HPG Press Office, a soldier of the invading forces was shot dead by a sniper in the Girê Cûdî area on Wednesday when his unit tried to establish a position. On the same day, YJA Star (Free Women’s Troops) and HPG guerrillas intervened several times against attempted advances by the Turkish forces. Several positions of the Turkish army were damaged by the shelling with semi-automatic weapons. At Girê Şehîd Axîn in the Xakurke region, a Turkish unit was struck by the guerrillas with heavy weapons.

HPG also reported five Turkish airstrikes on the Gundê Zêvkê, Gundê Reşîd and Xêrê areas in the Gare region and artillery attacks on the Zap, Metîna and Xakurke regions on Wednesday.

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PADÊ calls on Baghdad to recognize the Yazidi genocide

ANF | BAGHDAD | 3 AUGUST 2023

A conference is taking place in Baghdad on the ninth anniversary of the Yazidi genocide perpetrated by ISIS in Shengal (Sinjar), which began on 3 August 2014.

The conference organised under the motto “Self-governance is the guarantee of life for the constituents in Iraq” is attended by families of martyrs, tribal leaders in Shengal and representatives of several political parties and institutions.

A conference on behalf of the Yazidi Freedom and Democracy Party (PADÊ) was read out by Azad Ebdul, who stated that the Yazidi people are still suffering nine years after the genocide by ISIS. “The survivors of the genocide cannot return to their lands for political reasons,” he said.

Defining the massacre of Yazidis as a deathful wound in the history of Iraq, Ebdul stressed that the Yazidi genocide must be recognized to avoid further massacres.

Ebdul also criticized the silence in the face of the genocide against Yazidis, adding that the laments for the slain children resound the earth today.



‘The Autonomous Administration of Shengal should be recognized as the will of Yazidis’

ANF | BAGHDAD | 3 AUGUST 2023

Ferman is the term the Yazidis use to refer to the massacres and extermination operations in their history. While in Ottoman usage the term stands for a decree of the Sultan, in the Yazidi community the word took on the denotation of persecutions and pogroms. The genocide and femicide that began with the rout of the KDP peshmerga and the ISIS invasion of Shengal on 3 August was the 74th ferman in Yazidi history.

On the ninth anniversary of the ISIS genocide against Yazidis in Shengal in 2014, a conference was held in Baghdad under the motto “Self-governance is the guarantee of life for the constituents in Iraq”.

The opening speech was made by Xezal Reşo who stated: “13 countries in the world have recognized the Shengal genocide so far. This crime against humanity must be recognized as a genocide by the Iraqi government as well. At the same time, the Autonomous Administration of Shengal should be recognized as the will of Yazidis and treated as such.”

Nayif Şemo on behalf of the Shengal People’s Assembly said: “The ferman against Yazidis is nothing new. This process began in the Ottoman era under the name of Islam and has continued up to date. During the last ferman, the Iraqi government and the KDP forces abandoned the Yazidis into the hands of savage ISIS gangs and fled. For this reason, we demand a self-governing system to be able to protect ourselves and to not face such attacks again.”

Speaking on behalf of the Shengal Families of Martyrs, Hemed Beşer said: “An international court to prosecute ISIS gangs that perpetrated a massacre against the Yazidis is yet to be founded. Iraqi government officials left Shengal alone and handed Yazidis over to ISIS. No investigation has been launched on this matter so far. We, therefore, demand that an international court be established to prosecute ISIS gangs and an investigation be launched against those who left the Yazidis defenseless.”

Dayê Şemo, in the name of women from Shengal, said: “Yazidi children were massacred on that dark day. Nine years have passed and Iraq is yet to recognize this massacre, in which Yazidi women were treated as slaves, as a genocide. As Yazidi women, we demand our rights and an immediate end to genocide.”

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Vehicle bombed by Turkish drone in the canton of Qamishlo

ANF | QAMISHLO | 4 AUGUST 2023

A car was moving between Qamişlo and Amûdê on the 712 link road early Thursday evening when it was hit by a Turkish drone.

According to security forces, several people in the vehicle were injured. Information on their number, identity and severity of injuries is not yet available.

The bombed car was engulfed in flames and burned down, according to ANHA news agency. The fire brigade was called in to extinguish the fire and remove the wreckage.

In self-governing northern and eastern Syria, people have been dying for years because of the illegal drone attacks carried out by Turkey.

The attacks are aimed specifically at representatives of the self-governing structures, members of the associations of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the civilian population.

In the first half of 2023 alone, the AANES was bombed at least 34 times by Turkish killing machines. 44 people died and 29 others were injured.

A third of the victims were civilians. The last drone attack against the AANES happened last Friday near Amûdê. Four members of the Erka Xweparastin Self-Defense Forces were killed.

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KDP tries to besiege Zap

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

KDP forces first dispatched a large force to the Amadiya district of South Kurdistan (North Iraq) and from there to guerrilla areas on 2 August.

The KDP forces opened new roads in the mountains and moved towards the guerrilla areas from the Zap dam.

It was learned that the KDP, which is trying to take positions especially in Geliyê Reşawa, Gera Çelka and Mêrgê, wants to create new posts.

Local sources said that the KDP's dispatch of a large force towards Zap and its advance towards the guerilla areas were aimed at completing the siege's attempt by the Turkish army in Zap.

In recent years, the KDP has been provoking heavy reactions among the Kurds with its open support for the invasion attacks by the Turkish state.

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Turkish state and its mercenaries kidnap 35 citizens in Afrin

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

The crimes carried out by the Turkish state and its mercenaries against the people and the environment in Afrin continued.

According to the Afrin-Syrian Human Rights Organization, the Turkish state and its mercenaries kidnapped 35 citizens in July. Among them were 4 women. All citizens were taken to an unknown location.

The number of citizens abducted since the beginning of this year has reached 143, 20 of them women.

The Turkish state cut down more than 2,036 olives, pomegranates and other trees in the Afrin Canton in July. It also burned more than 250 olive trees in Sherawa district.

Since the beginning of this year, more than 15,500 trees (olive, walnut, almond, fruit trees) have been cut down. More than a thousand trees were uprooted and 70,000 hectares of wheat and barley fields were burned.

The invaders continue to build colonial buildings in occupied Afrin. According to Afrin Human Rights Organization and the Syrian Human Rights Organization, the Turkish state has built 2 more colonial sites in Shera and Jindirêse districts to separate the occupied regions from other regions, as well as to change the demographics of the region through Ikhwan associations.

A Qatari organization has completed the construction of a colonial building in the village of Elkê in Shera district. The building was started at the beginning of 2020.

The Turkish state, with the support of Palestinian Brotherhood organizations, is building new colonial structures, called the Turkish "Hacer El Sedeqe Association", in the Jindirêse district center to house hundreds of mercenary families.

According to local sources, the Turkish state forcibly relocated more than 2,000 families to the entrance of the village of Hemam in Afrin's Jindirêse district.

The security problem in occupied Afrin is increasing. There is a daily conflict between the mercenaries over the distribution of goods taken from citizens, the settlement of immigrants and the control of smuggling routes.

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Thousands in Shengal demand the recognition of the autonomy of the Yazidi land

ANF | SHENGAL | 4 AUGUST 2023

On Thursday, thousands of Yazidis took to the streets in the city of Shengal (Sinjar) to commemorate the beginning of the ISIS genocide and demand recognition for the region. The large demonstration started in front of the building of the People's Council of Shengal, chanting slogans against the betrayal. This refers, among others, to the KDP, allied with Turkey, which disarmed the Yazidi population in the run-up to the genocide, made false promises of protection and then withdrew its thousands of heavily armed peshmerga right before the ISIS onslaught, leaving the people to face genocide.

Mîr Nayif: The rights of the Yazidi people must be recognized immediately

At the closing rally, the Yazidi representative Mîr Nayif took the floor first and said: “We will not forget the ISIS genocide of the Yazidi people, nor the sudden flight of the KDP forces nine years ago, which left our people defenceless. Because the KDP did not defend Shengal, ISIS was able to enter the region and massacre or abduct thousands of people. Although the genocidal attacks of ISIS against the Yazidi people came on the agenda of the international community, it reacted sluggishly. The rights of the Yazidi people must be recognised as soon as possible, and the necessary steps taken to achieve this.”

Xwedêda Ilyas: further massacres can be prevented by a free and autonomous Shengal

Xwedêda Ilyas then took the floor on behalf of the Shengal Autonomous Administration and underlined that the liberation of Shengal was the result of the great efforts of the guerrilla fighters and the YPG/YPJ and that the people could only return to their homes because of these efforts. Xwedêda Ilyas said: “The return to Shengal is the most important response to the genocide. As the self-government of Shengal, we are aware that further massacres and persecutions could be prevented by a free and autonomous Shengal.”

Kurtay Shengalî: Our people no longer rely on a foreign power

Speaking on behalf of the Shengal Resistance Units (YBŞ), Kurtay Shengalî said: “Our people no longer rely on a foreign power. They have come to the conclusion that no mass murder, no persecution can be prevented if they do not trust in their own power. Genocide and persecution can be prevented by strengthening the YBŞ/YJŞ and the Asayîşa Êzdîxanê (local Yazidi security forces). The place where we are now was liberated by the blood of hundreds of martyrs. The guerrillas came from the mountains and liberated the region where we are now. This fact should never be forgotten. To forget the betrayal of the KDP

would be the greatest betrayal this society could commit against itself. Today we send a message to our people saying that they have a force that can defend them at great sacrifice. That force is the YBŞ-YJŞ and Asayîşa Êzdîxanê.”

Naim Bedel: ISIS murdered us with Iraqi weapons

Naim Bedel from the Yazidi Women’s Freedom Movement (TAJÊ) spoke at the end of the closing rally and recalled the betrayal by the KDP, saying: “It would be insufficient to say that only the KDP betrayed us. Because Iraq was also responsible for the defence of Shengal. The Iraqi forces fled even before the KDP forces and paved the way for ISIS, which slaughtered us with the weapons it had taken from the Iraqi army. ISIS murdered us with Iraqi weapons. Iraq has still not punished anyone for the crime of withdrawing from Shengal. Before the genocide, some officials of the Iraqi army fled and joined forces with ISIS. But today, they are again carrying out their old duties and responsibilities. As the Yazidi community, we demand the immediate prosecution of those who allowed the genocide to happen.”

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HPG reports ongoing Turkish attacks and guerrilla actions

ANF | BEHDINAN | 4 AUGUST 2023

The Press Centre of the People’s Defence Forces (HPG) released a statement providing information about the guerrilla struggle against the large-scale attack of the Turkish army on the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG, a soldier of the Turkish army was shot dead by a sniper of the YJA Star (Free Women’s Troops) on August 3. The action took place in the Girê Cûdî resistance area, which lies on the western front of the Zap region. The YJA Star guerrillas there carried out an action against the occupation forces with heavy weapons and severely damaged a position of the Turkish army.

Two more military positions on Girê Cûdî were targeted and damaged by the guerrillas during the day, and a grenade launcher position of the occupying forces was destroyed.

Providing information about the attacks of the Turkish army against other guerrilla areas in Zap on August 3, HPG stated that the Girê Amêdî resistance area on the Şehîd Delîl front was bombed once by fighter planes. In Şikefta Birîndara, several explosive charges detonated which had been set by occupying forces to destroy the defensive positions of the guerrillas. The Şehîd Delîl front and parts of Avaşîn and Metîna were also attacked by the Turkish army with artillery.

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Four SDF fighters killed in Turkish drone attack in Qamishlo

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

The Media Center of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a statement announcing that Thursday's Turkish drone attack in Qamishlo killed four of its members and injured two others.

“On the ninth anniversary of the ISIS massacre against Shengal (Sinjar), a tragic incident occurred as the Turkish occupation once again targeted our leaders and fighters who bravely fought and struggled against ISIS over the past years. On Thursday, August 3, at 7:15 pm, a UAV belonging to the Turkish occupation attacked a car carrying six of our commanders and fighters on the way to the village of Harmi Sheikho, Qamishlo city, while they were heading home to spend their monthly vacation, resulting in the martyrdom of four fighters, and two others were wounded,” said the SDF statement on Friday.

Among the martyrs is Aram Muhammad Ibrahim, a comrade who had already lost a part of his body during the war against ISIS. Additionally, our comrades Diyar Juma Khalil, Ahmed Fadel Smou, and Barzan Mustafa Sheikmous have displayed unwavering dedication in protecting the region and its people, actively participating in countless battles against terrorism.”

SDF added that further details will be published at a later time.

In self-governing northern and eastern Syria, people have been dying repeatedly for years as a result of drone attacks carried out by Turkey in violation of international law. The attacks specifically target representatives of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), members of the SDF and the civilian population. In the first half of 2023 alone, AANES was bombed at least 34 times by Turkish killer drones, leaving 44 people dead and 29 others injured. A third of the victims were civilians. On Friday a week ago, four members of the self-defence forces were killed by a Turkish drone near Amûdê.

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AANES calls on the Global Coalition to take a clear stand against Turkish attacks

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

On August 3, at 7:15 pm, a UAV belonging to the Turkish state attacked a car carrying six SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) commanders and fighters on the way to the village of Harmi Sheikho, Qamishlo city, while they were heading home to spend their monthly vacation. The attack resulted in the martyrdom of four fighters, and the injury of two others.

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) issued a written statement regarding the deadly Turkish attack, saying the following:

“The invading Turkish state has carried out yet another attack before the eyes of the whole world, resulting in deaths and injuries. The attack is a clear attempt to divert attention from fighting ISIS mercenaries in the first place and to achieve the desire to strike stability in our regions.

We in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria have previously highlighted the need for the International Coalition forces and parties that have guaranteed a ceasefire to take a clear stand. The continuation of attacks against fighters who confront terror and extremism is a dangerous sign. We affirm that the security of our people and our regions is our top priority, and we will strive to ensure that with all our might.

We extend our sincere condolences to the families of the martyrs, and we wish a speedy recovery for the wounded. We will continue to follow in the footsteps of our martyrs, protect the gains of our people and secure their aspiration to build a democratic future.”

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Femicide

Women in North-East Syria join the KJK campaign for women in Shengal and Afghanistan

ANF | QAMISHLO | 31 JULY 2023

The Kurdistan Women’s Communities (KJK) Coordination announced on July 9 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 campaign is organized under the slogan “We Stand with Afghan and Shengal women against the attacks of hegemonic men”.

Women’s organizations in North-East Syria announced their participation in the KJK campaign at a press conference in Qamishlo on Monday.

The press statement was read by Rihan Loqo, Spokesperson of Kongra Star, the women’s umbrella organization in North-East Syria.

Referring to the ISIS onslaught in Shengal 9 years ago, the statement said that the genocide perpetrated by ISIS in Shengal on 3 August 2014 was watched by the whole world and not intervened. “In front of the very eyes of the world, thousands of people were brutally murdered, while thousands of women and children were kidnapped, sold in slave markets and subjected to psychological, cultural, physical and sexual attacks,” it said.

Remarking that women in Afghanistan are in the grip of a similar onslaught and massacre, the statement said: “The Taliban, which gradually secured its control of the country after the withdrawal of US troops starting from 29 April 2021, seized the capital Cabul in August 2021 and once again declared its misogynist rulership, targeting the identity and existence of women.”

The women’s organizations commemorated the martyrs of resistance in Shengal and Afghanistan under the motto “We produce life against femicide”. The statement stressed that women in Shengal and Afghanistan found hope with the women’s revolution in Rojava and North-East Syria, vowing to answer this hope and demand with all their might.

The activities to be carried out in the scope of the campaign were listed as follows:

Activities will be organized across North-East Syria.

Candles will be lit everywhere on August 2.

Women’s organizations and movements will organize a forum in Raqqa on August 7.

Protest demonstrations will be organized on August 10.

Screening about the Shengal massacre will be organized in parks.

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KCDP: 25 women killed by men in July

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) published its report on femicides for the month of July.

According to the report, 25 women were murdered in July, and 9 of them died under suspicious circumstances.

Of the 25 women murdered, 32 percent were killed by their husbands, while 48 percent were killed in their homes, and 64 percent were killed by firearms.

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NADA supports the KJK campaign for Afghan and Yazidi women

ANF | 4 AUGUST 2023

The Kurdistan Women's Community (KJK) launched a campaign to draw attention to the struggles of women in Shengal and Afghanistan. Between 3 August, the anniversary of the Islamic State attack on the Yazidi area of Shengal in South Kurdistan in 2014, and 15 August, the day the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 2021, the fate and struggles of women will be discussed.

The Democratic Women's Alliance in the Middle East and North Africa (NADA) released a statement expressing active support for the KJK campaign.

"No to genocide against Yazidi and Afghan women", said the NADA statement and continued: "We remember the victims of the genocide in Shengal where women, children and an ancient community were targeted. We condemn the Taliban's seizure of power after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and their atrocities against the Afghan people. On this occasion, we express once again that we will always stand with the oppressed women and peoples."

NADA called for the prosecution of ISIS and the Taliban over their crimes, mainly against women, and the trial of the countries and parties that have directly or indirectly supported them, as is proved by a great deal of evidence.

"The United Nations, European Parliament and many national parliaments have recognized the atrocities in Shengal as a crime against humanity. Besides, we demand the official recognition of the Shengal genocide. A strong international effort must be given to rescue thousands of Yazidi women and children from the grip of ISIS. We also call for compensation for those affected by genocidal attacks, clearance of mined territories and support for the system built in Shengal."

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Ecocide

Tree cutting continues in Akbelen

ANF | MUĞLA | 31 JULY 2023

After days of vigil by the local people and environmental activists, tree cutting was supposed to be stopped in the Akbelen Forest in Muğla's Milas district, as the governor's office announced the suspension of the work on Sunday.

The protest began after YK Energy, co-owned by Limak Holding and İÇTAŞ operating the Yeniköy and Kemerköy thermal power stations, had obtained the necessary permissions to open 740 decares of land within the Akbelen forest in İlıkizköy to convert it to an open coal mine providing lignite for the thermal power stations. The company, however, met with the resistance of the İlıkizköy villagers.

A tree logging team from the Forest Administration entered the Akbelen forest at 6am on 17 July 2021, and cut nearly 30 trees before the İlıkizköy villagers reached the spot. The villagers have been keeping a vigil in the forest ever since.

After 7 days of vigil, which was attended by more people every day, the governor of Muğla announced on Sunday that the tree cutting had ended. Yet, deforestation work has continued today on the hill overlooking the camp where the protesters are located.

The activists started to march towards the scene, but were blocked by the soldiers stationed in the area to confront the protesters. Masses continue keeping vigil in the forest to stop any attempt at further clearing of trees.



The fires in Cudi tell of the Turkish army, quarries, oil companies

ANF | 2 AUGUST 2023

The forest fires, which started between Cudi and Silopi on 26 July, continued to burn until 29 July.

Since the area where the fire first started is a “military security zone” and entrance and exit to it is only allowed with special permission, the control of the fire is closed to the intervention of municipalities and civilians.

Fires in the same region many times before

Every year, at the same time, a fire starts on Mount Cudi. Cizre Municipality co-mayor Mehmet Zırığ, who was replaced by a state-appointed trustee, talked to ANF about the latest situation regarding the fire.

Mehmet Zırığ said that entrance and exit to the area is prohibited due to the fact that the entire area is a military zone, and added that they received news about the fire from people in the surrounding villages.

Stating that the region in question has been burned for many years for different reasons, Zırığ said: “The fire is not completely under control. We are informed that there are still burning in places. It is an area where there are dozens of police stations and entrance and exit to it is prohibited. There are evacuated villages in the region and villagers can only go with special permission for vineyard planting. According to

the information given to us by the villagers, it is not possible to see whether the fire has been extinguished. We know that the fires in this region reached the villages of Silopi in the past years.”

Mehmet Zırığ stated that no government agency had responded to the Silopi Municipality, after it called to denounce the fire on the first day.

Zırığ added that a few town municipalities close to the fire area are run by AKP members, so they do not have any information about whether those municipalities have taken any action.

Pointing out that the area where the fire broke out is a region where illegal tree felling is done, Zırığ emphasized that the increasing number of quarries and oil exploration companies in and around Cudi Mountain are the main reasons for the fires.

Zırığ continued: “There is a military security concept in the Cudi, Gabar and Besta regions, where trees are cut and fires are set up by public institutions. Since the region is a military region, no institution is allowed to intervene in the fires. The Cudi and Gabar mountains have recently been opened for stone and coal mines. This is an area where oil exploration companies operate intensively. The companies did not leave any places to be excavated on Mount Cudi. We know that there are oil exploration companies in the area where the fire took place.”

Zırığ said: “It is sad to see that, while people rightly raised their voice for Akbelen and drew attention to what happened there, it keeps silent about what is happening in Kurdistan.”

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Tree cutting of trees in Akbelen continues, so does resistance

ANF | MUĞLA | 1 AUGUST 2023

Despite the Muğla Governor's statement that “the tree felling has come to an end”, the cutting of trees in the Akbelen Forest continued on Monday. As soon as they realized that, environmentalists and villagers rushed to the spot where the cutting of trees was going on to stop it. The gendarmerie tried to prevent them from reaching the area. However, they did not succeed and the protesters managed to stop the tree felling.

Izmir Bar Association President Sefa Yılmaz surveyed the area and condemned the operation which would lead to serious problems for the environment and the ecosystem. “The Izmir Bar Association will continue to protest this slaughter carried out just for the sake of profit.”

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Human Rights Violations

Group Isyan Ateşi members banned from entering Dersim to attend Munzur festival

ANF | DERSİM | 1 AUGUST 2023

Grup Yorum, Group Isyan Ateşi (Fire of Rebellion) and Veradardz Folk Group were banned from performing at the 21st Munzur Culture and Nature Festival.

Last Monday evening, 31 July, members of the Group Isyan Ates and 7 people were taken into custody in Seyid Rıza Square while they were reading the leftwing paper Partizan.

The detainees were released after giving their statements on Tuesday morning. Group members Yusuf Rencüzoğulları, Melisa Yılmaz and Ali Rencüzoğulları were quickly taken to Erzincan Mengücek Gazi Training and Research Hospital by armored vehicle. The three artists were banned from entering Dersim.

The group members, who were taken out of the city, made a statement in front of the hospital. Yusuf Rencüzoğulları said on behalf of the group: “Last year, after we were banned at the 20th Munzur Culture and Nature Festival, a helicopter was flown over us on the Muti Bridge and we were kept waiting for 2 days. We were detained in the middle of the street within the provincial borders by the Tunceli Governor's Office, while on our way to attend the 21st edition of the Munzur Culture and Nature Festival, without any justification. Although we were told that we would be released during the detention process, we were taken out of the province. No oppression and attack by fascism will be able to chain revolutionary art. We will defend revolutionary art everywhere. Revolutionary art cannot be banned.”

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Lawyer of Jina Mahsa Amini's family stands trial for “propaganda against the state”

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

The trial of Saleh Nikbakht, the lawyer representing the family of Jina Mahsa Amini, which was scheduled to take place today, has been postponed due to administrative issues, reported the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) on Tuesday.

Nikbakht is facing charges of “propaganda against the Islamic Republic system” for speaking out against the opinion of the Forensic Medicine Commission regarding Amini’s death in an interview with foreign media and Etemad newspaper.

Amini died in police custody in September 2022, sparking nationwide protests that resulted in the deaths of at least 500 people and injuries to thousands more. Despite the family’s complaint against those responsible for Amini’s death, no action has been taken so far.

Nikbakht’s trial was scheduled to take place in Branch 28 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Tehran, chaired by Judge Moghiseh, on 1 August.

Nikbakht had objected to the Forensic Medicine Commission’s opinion, which stated that Amini’s cause of death was “heart attack” due to an “underlying disease.”

He had called for “re-examination and the formation of a new committee with the presence of prominent and trusted physicians in the medical community of the country” to investigate the matter.

However, judicial authorities deemed his objection to be a violation of the law and have taken steps to bring charges against him for “propaganda against the state”.

Branch 2 of the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor’s Office in Tehran arraigned Nikbakht on 11 March on the charge of “propaganda against the state” over his interviews with journalists abroad. He was later released on bail pending trial.

Jina Mahsa Amini was arrested by the morality police on 13 September 2022 on one of Tehran’s streets for wearing her hijab “inappropriately”.

Less than two hours after being taken to the Morality Police building on Vozara Street in Tehran, she was taken to Kasra Hospital in an unconscious state due to the severity of the blows to her head inflicted by the officers.

According to published reports, Amini was brain-dead when she was hospitalised. She died three days later, on 16 September, at Kasra Hospital in Tehran.

Although the Islamic Republic, as usual, announced Amini’s cause of death as a heart attack caused by an underlying illness, her family rejected this claim, insisting that their child was perfectly healthy before her arrest.

Several eyewitnesses among the detainees in the same van that took Amini to a detention centre, later confirmed that police officers used violence and beat the young woman severely, fracturing her skull.

According to Amini’s lawyer, Saleh Nikbakht, no judicial action has been taken in this case and the investigation has been conducted without the presence of her family and lawyer.

Economic crisis affects nomads in Hakkari

ANF | HAKKARI | 3 AUGUST 2023

In Hakkari (Colemêrg) is a region of mountains and springs and livestock is the main source of livelihood of the people. The nomads, who go to the plateau in May, stay there for 6 months. They feed their animals here and earn their living with milk, yogurt, cheese and herbs they collect in the mountains. The products produced here are sold to those who come from outside the city, especially the people of Hakkari. In the highlands, women take care of everything. There is usually a division of labor among women. While some women milk the animals, others cut the wool, and others make products such as yoghurt and cheese.

Zeynep Özer, who has been continuing the tradition of the berîvan by going to the highland in Hakkari for years, said that most of those who came to the highland quit this job. Stating that people do not know what to do due to the economic crisis and high price hikes, Özer said that those who have livestock cannot earn money and cannot afford food, drink and clothing. She said that everything became much more difficult with the economic crisis, and added: “There were 14 or 15 families on our plateau before, but now there are just 5 families. Most of those who came to this plateau before had to sell their sheep. Before the crisis, we used to go to the plateau by car and spend 50 TL, but now we have to pay more than 350 TL. It was very difficult for us to come and go to the plateau. For these reasons, many people have to quit this job. If it continues like this, I will have to leave too.”

‘We are affected’

Özer said: “We have become unable to meet the needs of animals. Animal prices have increased, but the increase in other products is higher. The medicines we take for animals are very high, the shepherd’s salary and needs are challenging us. Due to the increase in the cost of living, the number of people who do this job is decreasing. Previously, this plateau was in a festive mood. But now everyone is depressed. The reason for this is the economic crisis, as well as war and deaths. What we produce here is no longer enough to make a living.”



At least 225 people arrested in Iran in July

ANF | 3 AUGUST 2023

At least 225 people were arrested in Iran in July alone, with the rate of arrests increasing by 34 percent compared to June.

According to Mesopotamia Agency (MA), at least 131 of those arrested are Kurds and 19 are Baluchi. In addition, 29 of those arrested are women and 7 children. Many students and academics are among those arrested. 16 religious activists were also arrested, as well as 8 journalists and 7 artists.



Interview

Bayık: Leader Abdullah Öcalan's physical freedom should be on the agenda everywhere

ANF | 1 AUGUST 2023

KCK Executive Council co-chair Cemil Bayık participated in the Special Program broadcast on Stêrk TV and made evaluations about the developments in Kurdistan, Turkey and the Middle East.

Stating that the conference held in Lausanne on the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, which is the genocide treaty for the Kurdish people, is very important, Bayık stated that as the Kurdish Freedom Movement, they will fulfill their role in order to fulfill the decisions taken at the conference.

The isolation of the leader of the Kurdish people, Abdullah Öcalan, has reached a level that can only be described as torture. Nobody has heard anything from him for more than two years now. At the same time, the protests against Abdullah Öcalan's isolation continue. How do you evaluate the latest developments with regards to this issue?

The policy pursued against Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] does not only concern the Kurdish people, but humanity as a whole. This is the reason why the international protests against this policy are increasing day by day. Recently, a conference during which many important decisions were taken was held in Lausanne, including the demand for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. Another example is that a few days ago in Belgium, trade unions, intellectuals and municipality members held a press conference in which they demanded the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. I would like to salute all those who made this demand and who participated in the press conference. I believe that they will play a leading role in this struggle and that they will eventually achieve their demand. I say this, because they themselves have been struggling on this basis for years.

With both the conference in Lausanne and the press conference held in Belgium, a new phase in this struggle has been opened. As a movement, we are going to take our place in this new phase. On this basis, we are going to take some new decisions in the near future. On this occasion, I would like to call on the four parts of Kurdistan and our people abroad: Every Kurd must take part in the struggle for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. Everyone knows that a very dirty war is being waged against him and that he has been in total isolation for more than two years. If the oppressive enemy succeeds with this policy, it will finalize the genocide of the Kurds. That is what they want and why they are tightening the already severe isolation of Rêber Apo. The fascist Turkish state does not recognize any humanitarian, moral or legal principles.

The forces of democracy and freedom on the international level have taken a stance against this policy that is implemented against Rêber Apo and thus against the Kurdish people as a whole. The fact that they do this through public protests makes the Turkish state uncomfortable. The state knows the importance of Rêber Apo for the Kurdish people and humanity and therefore increasing the torture of Rêber Apo gradually. Some Turkish officials have recently said some empty things. For example, Rêber Apo was apparently threatened and told that he would be killed day by day if he did not do what they wanted from him. Tuncer Kılınç [former Secretary General of the Turkish National Security Council] even said, 'Every day in İmralı is equivalent to execution, we execute him every single day'. That is the basis of the policy pursued on İmralı. Therefore, the most important agenda for everyone must be the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. Thus, we can thwart the policy being pursued against Rêber Apo and the Kurds as a whole. This is the duty of us all.

Our people understand the policy of the Turkish state very well. Every day there is news about Rêber Apo being given a disciplinary punishment. Thus, they prevent the visits of his lawyers and family. If a person cannot meet with his family or lawyers, cannot write letters, nor anything else, how can he have committed a crime? These are purely political decisions. By representing his people and humanity as a whole, Rêber Apo wages a historic resistance against this dirty policy. That is why the Turkish state wants to achieve results based on hatred against Rêber Apo. They impose such a severe isolation so that his voice cannot reach the people. I believe that those who took part in the conference in Lausanne and the participants of the press conference in Belgium will come up with new actions for the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. We as a movement will take part in this. We are going to make a public announcement accordingly in the near future.

Eight years ago, on July 24, 2015, the Turkish state launched a major attack against the Kurdish people and the South Kurdish Medya Defense Zones. These attacks have been going on uninterruptedly now for more than 8 years. In its latest statement, the HPG stated that the KDP participates in the Turkish army's operations in the South Kurdish area of Xakurkê and in other areas as well. What can you tell us about this? How is the situation with regards to the ongoing war?

The last 8 years are very important for our struggle. Of course, we have gone through many difficult times, but in the last 8 years we have been fighting an even tougher war. The Turkish army, the second biggest army in NATO, receives all kinds of weapons and support from NATO members and other states. They use every kind of weapon when it is against the PKK and the Kurds; from chemical weapons to tactical nuclear weapons. For the last 8 years, the Turkish state has used all its means in its war against our movement. It attacks the guerrillas 24 hours a day with tanks, artillery, fighter jets and chemical weapons. The HPG recently stated that there have been more than 500 attacks a day.

The attacks on our forces are enormous and in a way unprecedented. The aim of the Turkish state is to complete its genocide against the Kurdish people. Apart from the PKK, no other force would have been able to resist such attacks for 8 years, not even for 8 months. Rêber Apo, the guerrillas of the PKK and the Kurdish people have been putting up historic resistance in the last 8 years. Since there is great resistance, we are also paying a great price. Because the struggle we are waging is not only for ourselves, but also for the Middle East and for humanity. Despite this heavy price we have paid, we have not allowed the occupying Turkish state to achieve its goal.

They aimed to destroy the PKK and carry out a genocide against the Kurdish people on the 100th anniversary of Lausanne. But against this, Rêber Apo, the PKK and the Kurdish people are putting up a heroic resistance. On this occasion, I would like to respectfully greet all the HPG and YJA-Star guerrillas who have been fighting against the invaders in and outside the tunnels, thus waging a historical resistance. I would like to express my gratitude and congratulate them on their success.

On the other hand, there is the practice of the KDP and Barzani. All Kurds with a political awareness have expressed protest against the situation being created by the KDP and Barzani. The KDP and the Barzani family are collaborating with the Turkish state. They put all their means at the service of this genocidal state and do not see this as something wrong. They even claim to represent and serve the Kurds. But at the same time, the Turkish state martyrs Kurdish youths with the help of the KDP. Our people need to understand the relationship between Barzani's KDP and the Turkish state well.

In Xakurkê, the Turkish state and the KDP are conducting operations against the guerrillas. In [the South Kurdish region] Zap, they [KDP forces] dress themselves in the uniforms of Turkish soldiers and fight against the guerrillas alongside the Turkish soldiers. They come out of Barzani's outpost and attack our friends [guerrilla forces]. On the day of the recent conference in Lausanne, whose aim was the development of national unity, the Barzanis carried out operations against the guerrillas alongside the Turkish state. What is the meaning of joining forces with the enemy and of carrying out operations against the guerrillas? Everyone should think about this.

There are only two lines in Kurdistan today: one is the line of freedom and the other is the line of betrayal and collaboration. The Kurds cannot side with the Turkish state, they can not shed the blood of Kurdish youth together with the Turkish state. This has nothing to do with being a Kurd. Our people need to take a stand accordingly.

On the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, all parties except the KDP came together in Lausanne. They expressed their unity in the very place where the treaty leading to the Kurdish genocide was signed. How do you evaluate this recent conference?

The recent conference in Lausanne is a step towards national unity of the Kurdish people. It has created hope not only among the Kurdish people but also among other peoples living in Kurdistan. A hundred years ago, a document was signed in Lausanne that led to the genocide of Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Assyriacs, Alevis and Ezidis. Rêber Apo has been struggling against the alliance that was forged at that time in Lausanne and has tried to show the truth of this treaty. That is what the conference that took place a few days ago has shown clearly to the world. During the conference it was stated clearly that the genocidal policy implemented since Lausanne is not going to be accepted any longer.

The Turkish state and its collaborators made great efforts to prevent the conference from taking place. But they did not have enough power to succeed. The constantly growing resistance of the Kurdish people in all parts of Kurdistan and abroad, and of the increasing number of their international friends made the conference happen.

This recent conference was very important. I would like to take this opportunity to send my greetings to all those who contributed to the conference, who took part in the decision-making process there and who will put these decisions into practice. They have achieved something historical and have thus done a great

service to the Kurdish people and all the other peoples. Everybody wanted the KDP and Barzani to participate in this historic conference. Everybody wanted them to stand on the side of their people and not on the side of the occupiers on such a historic day. But they did not attend the conference because they had tied their fate to the Turkish state. All those who wanted Kurdish unity and freedom came together at the recent conference in Lausanne. It was just the Barzanis who did not come. In Lausanne, the Kurdish people organized a conference, while Barzani and his KDP were carrying out operations against the guerrillas together with the Turkish state. The Kurdish people tore up the Lausanne alliance, but Barzani tried to keep it alive. This is the meaning of their decision to side with the Turkish state and to not attend the conference.

The Treaty of Lausanne means the denial and extermination of not only the Kurdish people but of all other peoples and different beliefs in Kurdistan, which is why the people living in Kurdistan do not accept it. The decisions taken at the recent conference are important and need to be implemented. It is not enough to just take decisions, they must be followed up on. Not only the PKK, but all the peoples living in Kurdistan are responsible for this. Maybe everyone's responsibility is different, but everyone must take some form of responsibility and fulfill it. Everyone in Kurdistan and abroad needs to fulfill their duties according to their power. This should not remain limited to the conference itself. A strong step was taken at the conference a few days ago and this must be followed up on. It is necessary to do this with a variety of activities until we achieve results.

At the conference, calls were made for the physical freedom of the Kurdish people's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, and for the Kurdish people to build an alliance among themselves and organize a national unity conference. As the biggest force in Kurdistan, what is your response to these calls?

First of all, I must state that we take all the decisions and calls made at the conference in Lausanne as a basis for our own work and will help in every way possible to put these decisions into practice. We are ready to do whatever is asked of us.

The decision taken to achieve the physical freedom of Rêber Apo is very important. Everyone had expected the conference to take such a decision, because Rêber Apo is the representative of the Kurdish people. The people want to live freely on their land and with their own identity. The central demand to achieve this is the freedom of Rêber Apo. If he is not freed from İmralı, the freedom of the Kurdish people will not be achieved and democracy will not become a reality, neither for the Kurds, nor in Turkey as a whole. Everyone who wants the Kurdish question to be solved, who wants the Kurds to live in freedom and who wants Turkey to be democratized must stand against the isolation of Rêber Apo. If they don't, neither freedom for Kurdistan nor democracy in Turkey will be achieved. Anyone who calls themselves a democrat, socialist, artist, intellectual, anti-fascist or freedom seeker must take this demand as a basis for themselves. The measure of democracy, socialism and Kurdish identity is to stand against the isolation of Rêber Apo. There can not be any other measure. No one should deceive themselves. Based on this, the Kurdish problem and the problems of democracy in Turkey can be solved.

Another important decision of the conference was to organize a conference of Kurdish national unity. There has never been a people in the world that has been divided, dispersed, tortured and displaced as much as the Kurdish people. No people has ever lived under such domination by others. That is why national unity is so important for the Kurds. There are just a few exceptions, one of them being the Kurdish society. Kurds have been divided so much, that they have been left powerless. Their enemies are encour-

aged by this fragmentation. The liberation of Kurdish society can definitely only be achieved through unity.

Today, even though there is a good opportunity for the Kurds, we are faced with a dangerous situation. If Kurdish unity is established soon, the Kurds can achieve their freedom. That is why this decision taken at the conference is very important and historic. All Kurds and even all peoples living in Kurdistan should work for the realization of the national unity conference as soon as possible. If Kurdish unity is achieved, the Kurdish people will win and their hopes will be realized after so many years of struggle. I would therefore like to call on everyone to fulfill their responsibility.

The AKP conducts its politics based on the 'Submission Plan' that it has been putting into action against the Kurdish people since 2015. They have been going back and forth between NATO and Russia, but recently also held talks in several Arab countries. How do you evaluate this?

We see every day on the news that the fascist AKP-MHP is starving all the people in Turkey. They have condemned people to poverty. They are conducting a politics of deception based on lies and demagoguery. Thus, they try to hide the plight of the people. Because the AKP-MHP knows that when the people realize this, they will not be able to stay in power any longer. They also deceive the people with empty words such as, 'There is terrorism.', 'There is separatism.' or 'The Kurds will tear Turkey apart, they will destroy us. That's why we have to defend ourselves.' By deceiving and scaring the people on the one side and by constant war on the other side, they try to stay in power.

Outside Turkey, they also pursue such a policy. By referring to Ottoman history, they promise to take back the land of the Ottomans. That is why the Turkish state does not have much credibility in the international arena. Since they have invested all their resources in the war, their economy has collapsed and their politics is in a deadlock. They are now making the people pay the bill for this. Every day, they announce price hike after price hike. The only thing people care about nowadays is how to live, how to keep their children alive. The AKP-MHP is consciously pursuing this policy and wants the people to only care about bread so that they forget about the other things and the AKP-MHP can maintain its power. Again, they are taking advantage of the lack of opposition in Turkey. There is no opposition to explaining this policy of the government to the public, to educate the public with regards to this issue. This is one of the main problems in Turkey right now.

Therefore, the Labor and Freedom Alliance needs to make society understand the problems created by the government. It must organize and mobilize society on this basis. Because apart from the Labor and Freedom Alliance, there is no other opposition in Turkey that can do this. If they make the people understand the situation in the country, organize and mobilize them, the people will rise up. Because the people are not satisfied with this government, they oppose it. If the Labor and Freedom Alliance is able to make use of this, the AKP-MHP government will not be able to cause so much trouble to the people of Turkey anymore. They are oppressing the people heavily every single day. The people are even in need of drinking water and even their electricity is often cut off. Our people in Kurdistan are being martyred in deliberate accidents with armored vehicles every single day. But no one holds anyone to account. The poor have become poorer and the rich have become richer. Hunger, plunder and oppression are increasing every day, while nature is being destroyed.

The Turkish state recently started to cut down trees in the [Akbelen] forest [in Southwest Turkey]. Even an 88-year-old woman who clung herself to a tree so they wouldn't cut it down, was taken away by the police. They are eliminating human life. They know no limit and encourage rape, massacres and the destruction of human life. A policy of especially using heroin and prostitution against women and young people can be seen in Kurdistan. They also encourage spying in Kurdistan. And people are constantly getting arrested and tortured. That is why the forces of labor and democracy have to focus on all these problems. It is their task to uncover this situation and to show society who is responsible for it. Then, the people themselves will take action.

The AKP-MHP government has become weak but still tries everything to look strong. The problems in Turkey are increasing day by day. This is not just an economic crisis, there is also a social, political and moral crisis which they are not able to solve. They aim to get out of this crisis by creating fake agendas and by selling everything they can. There is nothing left they haven't sold. The Turkish state has gone to many different countries to solve its monetary crisis. But this will not lead to any real solutions. They cannot solve the problems unless they give up the dirty war they are waging against the Kurdish people. What has to be understood is, that the root of all these problems lies in the war that is being waged against the Kurdish people. If Turkish society wants to get rid of their problems, they must tell the AKP-MHP that it is enough, and stop this war. They need to accept the existence of the Kurdish people and its demands, change their policies towards the Kurds and solve the problems through dialogue. Turkey cannot get out of the crisis in any other way.

Nine years ago, the Islamic State [ISIS] committed a massacre against the Yazidi people. The guerrilla fighters of the HPG and YJA Star came to rescue Şengal [Sinjar] and thus prevented further massacres. Do you have any message on the anniversary of the 74th genocide against the Yazidi people?

Our Yazidi people have experienced 74 genocides. The purpose of the 74th genocide was to exterminate all Yazidis through genocide. But they did not fully achieve this goal, because the PKK prevented this. Even before the genocide, Rêber Apo instructed our movement to protect our Yazidi people. If our 12 friends who went to Şengal as a first group, had not intervened against ISIS, if the forces of YPG, YPJ and HPG had not gone there and if a corridor had not been opened, ISIS would have carried out a genocide against the whole Yazidi people.

The Yazidi people cannot live anywhere else than on their own land in Şengal. They can still live there today because of the intervention of the guerrilla forces of the PKK as well as of the YPG and YPJ forces. This intervention prevented the completion of the genocide. IS was going to slaughter everybody they caught and displace all others, thus making a return impossible. If the intervention of our friends had not happened, the Yazidis would not exist anymore today. Because once you leave your land, you can no longer survive. This danger was averted and a high price had to be paid. But as a result, today, the people in Şengal continue to live according to their identity, religion and values.

Today, our Yazidi people are stronger than they were before the 74th genocide. There are still many problems that have to be solved, e.g. the attacks by the Turkish state and the Barzanis. But despite all these problems, the Yazidi people have their own institutions today and can defend themselves. They have formed a very important alliance on this basis, which needs to be strengthened even more in order to achieve a solution for Şengal. Achieving a status for Şengal and the Yazidi people is important for them. There are also peoples and beliefs other than Yazidis within this alliance.

I would like to take this opportunity to honor the martyrs of our Yazidi people. Without these martyrs and the resistance, the Yazidi people might not exist today. The situation of not only Yazidis but also Kurds and other peoples in the Middle East would be very different. That is why this resistance has created new values not only for the Yazidis, but also for other peoples and humanity as a whole. Therefore, once again, I salute our Yazidi people and congratulate them on their struggle. I would like to pay my respects to them and encourage them to believe in themselves and to further strengthen the alliance they have established. If they continue to struggle on this basis in a determinate and courageous way, they will definitely achieve their goals.

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Open Letter

Open letter from TAJÊ to countries that have recognized the genocide

ANF | SHENGAL | 3 AUGUST 2023

The Yazidi Women's Freedom Movement (TAJÊ) Diplomacy Committee sent an open letter to countries that recognize the genocide committed by ISIS against Shengal on the occasion of the 9th anniversary of 3 August 2014.

The letter said: "Today marks the ninth anniversary of the genocide on 3/8/2014 that Şengal district was subjected to. It was a very difficult day for the Yazidi community, especially the Yazidi women. 9 years ago, on 3 August 2014, ISIS gangs attacked Şengal district from northern Iraq, where the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party withdrew from Şengal without any resistance, and this withdrawal opened the way for ISIS terrorist gangs. Zaidi all acts outside human morals, such as "murder, captivity, slavery, rape, forced recruitment of children, captivity of women...", Thousands of Yazidi girls, women and children have been arrested and kidnapped, as about 3,000 of our family members and relatives are still in the hands of ISIS gangs and their fate is unknown until now."

The letter continued: "These crimes against humanity committed by ISIS against the Yazidi community have been accepted as genocide by 12 countries. The acceptance of genocide on the Yazidi community by these countries is a positive step. We have seen the Yazidi women are very happy about the international action, but nevertheless, steps should be taken to prosecute ISIS and its pirate partners.

Although in some European countries many ISIS mercenaries were tried individually and were tried for their crimes, our demand and will in comprehensive legal cases has not been fulfilled so far. It is very important to prosecute these criminals, but more importantly, on which anti-human forces and organizations depend, all actors and states that supported and supported the terrorist gangs "ISIS" and that provided lo-

gistical, military, educational, economic and political support must be investigated, clarified and prosecuted in an international court as crimes against humanity, although nine years have passed since the genocide, some of the guilty parties such as individuals, organizations and states have not been tried before an international court, and this behavior has led to the continuation of criminals and perpetrators to continue their attacks on the Yazidi community, today, the air strikes of the Turkish state are the clearest example of this fact.”

The letter added: “Thousands of our women and children are still grieving. Şengal has not been rebuilt and we have not seen humanitarian, legal, political, security or health aid either. The global public, countries and international organizations have not fulfilled their responsibilities. This is a source of concern for the Yazidi community. The threat to our society has not gone away until now, especially since the air raids of the Turkish state harm the security of our society and Iraq as well. As the Yazidi community, we were waiting for our wounds to heal, so that social and political solutions could be developed. Unfortunately, the allies of ISIS, such as the Turkish state, have not stopped their fascist, genocidal and conquest efforts.

As Yazidi women in Şengal, we formed our organization TAJÊ - the Yazidi Women’s Freedom Movement, in order to be able to strengthen ourselves and express common political positions. We hold conferences, educate women, organize marches and implement daily projects for the continuation of the life system. In the economic, health, cultural and other fields. We believe that only knowledge and the strengthening of our society, especially the development of women, can lead to new regimes. Self-governance, self-organization and self-defense are among the most basic human rights, and we have found it necessary to organize ourselves in order to prevent massacres and other injustices.”

The letter continued: “Despite the social trauma and the widespread destruction of infrastructure in Şengal, the security situation still poses serious problems for our lives in Şengal. The attacks carried out by the Turkish Air Force since 2017 are systematic attacks and came after the liberation of Şengal district from the criminal gangs ISIS.

At the same time, the goals of these attacks by the Turkish state are not far from the goals of ISIS, and the victims of these attacks are from the Yazidi community who lived through the genocide 9 years ago and who defended and liberated Şengal from ISIS. These attacks violate international law and are considered war crimes, because civilian hospitals are targeted, but so far the international community has not taken a step to prevent the atrocities of the Turkish state. Silence against the brutality of the Turkish state has allowed these attacks to continue.”

The organization representing Yazidi women in Şengal, called on the international community to :

“1. All influential political institutions and organizations in the world must consider the massacres committed by the Islamic State "ISIS" against the Yazidi community as genocide.

2. Accountability must be demanded from all persons, institutions and organizations that were responsible for the matter: First and foremost, ISIS mercenaries and their partners, the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, must be held accountable.

3. On June 10, 2023, the Autonomous Administration of Northeast Syria decided to publicly prosecute ISIS mercenaries in the prisons of the northeastern region, so we as the Yazidi community were very happy

with this decision, we fully support this decision, and there are ten thousand ISIS gang members in the prisons of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, and as women and the Yazidi community, we ask the countries that have recognized the “genocide” to support the Autonomous Administration’s decision to prosecute ISIS, and they must rise their duties and responsibilities.

4. On October 9, 2020, the Şengal Agreement was signed. This agreement was without the will of the Yazidi community, and of course, as the Yazidi community, we see this agreement as a continuation of the genocide and attacks on our society and we do not accept it, so we ask the countries that have recognized the genocide to see the danger of this alliance to the Yazidi community and the local population and not to accept it.

5. In order to stop the air raids of the Turkish state, a decision must be taken to ban the airspace, and to close the airspace over Şengal, which will lead to blocking the way for the marches and warplanes of the Turkish state, through diplomatic efforts and the necessary sanctions.

6. Assistance in rebuilding the Şengal district, with cooperation.

7- Organizing and making joint efforts to save women and children from the hands of ISIS gangs.

8- We welcome with respect the efforts of the Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD) to rescue prisoners from the hands of ISIS gangs, and they call on the international community to support the efforts of these Syrian Democratic Forces and to develop joint alliances."

The letter ends with the following message: “We thank you at the outset for your interest. We believe that the positions of countries like yours, which implement systems and work to bring human rights above all else, will give humanity important gains in fighting the enemies of humanity, such as ISIS. If you have any questions or requests, send us an email, we will be happy.”

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Contact e-mail: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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