

TURKEY COMMITS ENVIRONMENTAL CARNAGE IN DOHUK, KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ

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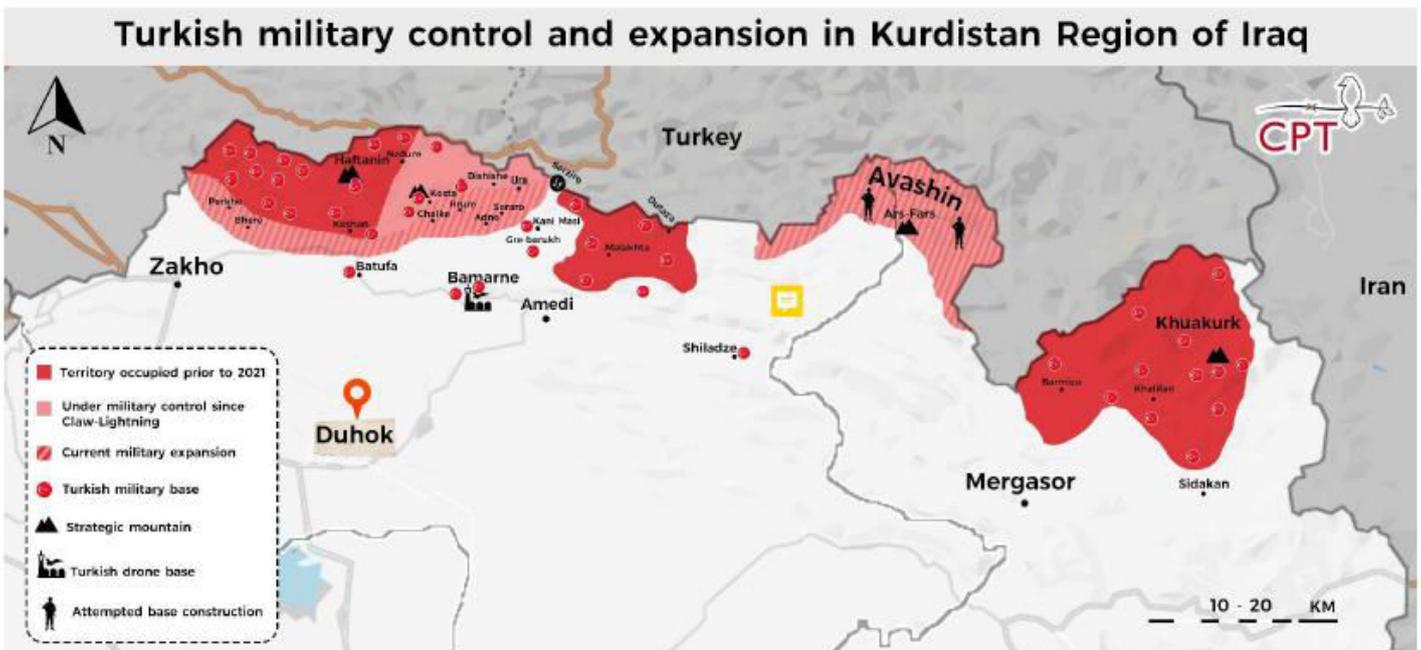
May 2021: The Turkish Armed Forces have embarked on a mass deforestation program in the [Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#).

Turkish Armed Forces have invaded and occupied territory up to 40 kilometres inside the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). They have established bases equipped with artillery targeting civilians and have escalated air offensives using warplanes, drones and helicopters on a nightly basis. These air and ground offensives are conducted in the name of going after the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), but since 2015, Turkey's offensives have killed more than 100 Iraqi Kurdish civilians, caused the evacuation of hundreds of villages, closed schools and damaged infrastructure and livelihoods in agriculture. Between April 23 and June 1 2021 alone, in offensives Turkey has called Operation Claw-Lighting and Operation Claw-Thunderbolt, 1,500 people in 22 villages had to evacuate because of constant bombardments, and a water project supplying nine villages, thousands of dunams of land, and 1,300 beehives have been [destroyed](#). In the last two days, Turkey's airstrikes on a refugee camp in Makhmour killed [three people](#), and in Dohuk, Turkey's [airstrikes](#) killed [five Peshmerga](#), injuring another four when they entered the zone of combat between Turkey and PKK allegedly to protect civilians and bring security to the [area](#). It is not the first time that Turkey's airstrikes have accidentally killed [Peshmerga](#).

As the human cost mounts, so does the cost to the environment. During the month of May, the Turkish Armed Forces burnt agricultural land and forests, and Turkish road building contractors cut down forests on the pretext of building roads and bases to defend Turkey from PKK. Some reports claim Turkey's armed forces based in the Kurdistan region are using the wood to keep warm. Others allege that profit is being made from an estimated 450 tons of wood being carted off to Turkey on a daily basis to be sold in markets. This deforestation is expanding the desertification of Kurdistan that is also impacted by climate change, drought, oil exploration and Turkey's dams lowering water flow in major river systems. Kurds are calling the extent of the deforestation ecocide, shocked by what is happening to their beloved mountains. Even members of the pro-

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Turkey KDP are speaking against Turkey's deforestation of western Dohuk. Leading figures in the KDP, like Edham Barzani (a former member of the KDP Executive Board) are raising the alarm, citing Cyprus and Afrin as examples of Turkey invading, occupying and staying in an area. After writing a letter to the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Government of Iraq and the UN, [Edham Barzani](#) said: 'I call on all parties in government to put pressure on Iraq, the United Nations and countries that respect human rights and peace, to make efforts to prevent the occupation through border violations, and start negotiations and bilateral relations.' Iraqi President, Barham Salih, himself a Kurd, called Turkey's deforestation of Kurdistan's mountains an 'environmental crime' that [must be stopped](#). One hundred NGOs have written a letter to the Kurdistan parliament calling on the government to stop the environmental [carnage](#). The Iraqi and Kurdish agriculture ministries issued a joint statement condemning Turkey's action and calling for international [intervention](#). But it seems the protests have only intensified Turkey's offensives. To further consolidate its occupation of the KRI Turkey is building roads to each of its bases and intends to [establish a new road](#) connecting Sirnak in Turkey to Dohuk's Amedi [district](#).



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